

# REMINISCENCES AND INCIDENTS OF MY PIONEER LIFE IN 1895 - 1896

BY

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE JOURNEY

I have often wondered what it would be like to look back over the years and picture the changes that have taken place in a country that was new to you in your youth. As I near the declining years of my life, the panorama that unfolds itself is almost like the memories of a dream. I realize that changes have been many and stupendous.

Picture in your mind, two small girls with their father, arriving in Alberta on the morning of an early day in June, in the year 1895 A.D. Up to that time, my life had been spent in the large industrial city of Manchester, England and in various cities in the United States. We left Omaha, Nebraska on Monday evening at 6 pm. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Taking a train to Sioux City, Iowa and from there to St. Paul, Minnesota We traveled on the "Soo Line" through the Dakotas by way of Minot, Parkinson and North Portal to Moose Jaw in the Northwest Territories of Canada. What a dreary looking country North Dakota was in those days, with hardly a building or animal in sight, for hours at a time. The conductor on the train told my Father that it was the most monotonous run he had ever made. We went through North Portal on Tuesday at midnight and our luggage was examined there by the US customs officials, to see if we were smuggling anything contraband into Canada. It was not a long process with us as my Father was an experienced traveler and "knowing the ropes" as the saying goes, had shipped our heavier luggage "in bond" straight through to Calgary from Omaha.

I must now mention an incident that took place at the beginning of our journey and the consequences that came later on. We had a pet dog with us, a black purebred Pomeranian, which we all were very fond of, and in the hurry of changing trains at Sioux City, she was almost forgotten. My Father hurriedly gave me our tickets with instruction to wait for him in St. Paul, and he rushed back to get the dog. The train was pulling out when he arrived, but the baggage man threw the dog to Father. In the excitement, her chain and drinking dish were forgotten and my Father just managed to climb aboard for St. Paul. On arriving there and during a short stay, we were able to obtain another chain for her and also some breakfast which we later fed her in relays for one of us girls had to stay with our luggage which was quite numerous.

Nothing of importance happened during the monotonous ride to Moose Jaw, except the long wait at North Portal, owing to so many settlers' effects being examined by the customs officers. We kept our little dog with us as much as possible and gave the baggage master a tip to be kind to her. In due time, 9 am. On Wednesday morning we arrived at Moose Jaw, and the first person we noticed was a Mounted Policeman in a red coat, but at that time we thought he was a British soldier. It gave us quite a thrill, but greater still was when my Father pointed to a large building and told us to look. There, proudly floating in the breeze was a "UNION JACK", we had been living in the United States for more than three years, and I will always remember how my blood grew hot in my veins as I looked at it and thought of all it stood for. It was, to us, a link in a strange land.

We had not long to wait in Moose Jaw, just having time for breakfast and then we boarded a C.P.R. train coming from Regina, Saskatchewan. There were a lot of new settlers on board. My Father asked the conductor if we could keep the dog with us and offered to sleep in the colonist car, which I must say was most uncomfortable, unless you had plenty of rugs and cushions with you. He agreed and we all stayed there a good part of the day with our little dog. A robbery had taken place on the train the night before, the conductor informed us, and that the men, two of them, were still at large. We also saw Canadian Indians for the first time at Moose Jaw and as there seemed so many of them, I afterwards wondered if that was why the Mounted Police were there. My Father bought a number of Indian curios to send to relatives in England; these were made of beads, leather, and feathers and polished buffalo bones. We each got a pretty basket made of scented grass, for the squaws appeared very clever at this sort of work.

Our tickets were for the first class tourist coach and we had engaged a berth. My sister and I retired early, as we had experienced a more exciting day than when traveling through the Dakotas. Among the passengers were a number of young fellows, eighteen and twenty years of age; they were Norwegian colonists bound for Vancouver, with an English immigration agent in charge of them. In the afternoon, the agent asked my father if we could sing, and if so, would we sing for them as they felt lonely being so far from their own people, and being unable to speak English. Of course we were willing to do so and asked the agent what kind of a song would they like. They all wanted "Home Sweet Home" which we had to sing several times for them before they were satisfied. We then sang the lonely old Irish Emigrant song, "Isle of Bounty, Fare Thee Well". That they like almost as well as the other. We finished with several old English songs. After they thanked us in their own language.

We saw natural gas burning when we passed through Swift Current. At every place where we had stopped, there were Indians in their blankets, wearing beaded moccasins and leather leggings; they had all kinds of buffalo bones, elk bones, beaded work of every description and pretty baskets made of dyed sweet grass. There were always one or more Mounted Policemen around. Our next stop was at Medicine Hat and it was the largest town we had seen since leaving the States. Having quite an interval here, we had plenty of time to see the black bears, kept in an enclosure, near the railway. It was evening when we left there, so we went to our berth.

The next morning my Father told us of a curious thing that had happened during the night. He had decided to sleep in the colonist car with our little dog. Our portmanteaus and bags were there, as well as our traveling rugs and cushions, so he was comfortable enough and the weather was quite warm. He was the only occupant of the car. After my sister and I had gone to our berth, he decided to make up his bed and get some sleep as well, as he had been up the night before at North Portal. About midnight he was awakened by the growling of the dog, to see a man bending over him as though to rob him. At the same time, the dog sprang up, barking at the man and then my Father saw another man farther down the car. The dog's bark and my Father's call brought some of the train men, but the robbers escaped at the end nearest the baggage car. Nothing more was seen of them although a long search was made. The light was so dim my Father was unable to recognize the men but he said they were fairly well dressed. However, we heard nothing more of them.

During the trip, we also met a Mr. Jackson, a lawyer from Calgary, who gave us a lot of news about the country, especially North of Red Deer and Lacombe where we were going. He pointed out the South Saskatchewan River; we thought it would be a large river so were not greatly impressed. We told him we were disappointed because it was not as big as the Mississippi at St. Paul. We had seen some large rivers, the Hudson in New York State and the Missouri when we lived at St. Joseph, Missouri. We thought Assiniboa was pretty dreary, such a lot of alkali lakes, very short grass, and hardly any flowers. We saw plenty of antelope, coyotes or prairie wolves as they were called in those days. There were lots of rabbits and gophers and thousands of water fowl of all kinds as we traveled nearer to Calgary.

We arrived in Calgary at 2 am. Thursday morning and found that the train for the North left at 7 am. We went to the Immigration house while father rushed away to find a custom's officer to take our extra luggage and furniture out of bond. He eventually located one and just as the train was pulling out, my Father got on board. I imagine our friend, the lawyer, must have told him where the official could be located.

We had found some very kind people at the Immigration House. The Keating's, a family of Americans we got to know really well later on. There were also the Jones's, a Welch Family. They took pity on two little lonesome girls and helped us with our bags and baskets, as my Father was no where to be seen when it was time to go to the train. I had always kept my own ticket and my sister's ever since we had left Sioux City. We had been told to go North with these people anyway as they also were going to Lacombe and the conductor would see to us. Well, it really seemed that we would soon be at the end of our long journey. My father and our friend joined us as we started and he pointed out the places of interest to us again, especially old landmarks. He was a most enjoyable traveling companion and did not forget the two little homesick girls he met on the train. I will tell more about him later.

My father was lucky to be able to travel with us as there were only two trains a week between Calgary and Edmonton. He would have had to stay in Calgary until 7 am Monday morning. We were anxious to go by Thursdays train as we had written to my brother to meet us at Lacombe on June 6<sup>th</sup>. He had come to Red Deer in September 1892 and taken up a homestead eight miles south and east of Lacombe and twenty two miles east of Red Deer as that was the only town near at the time he came west. The country around Calgary as we went north was very bare looking, bleak and so cold. When we left Omaha the temperature was 90 degrees Fahrenheit, but in Calgary it felt like 50 degrees. As we traveled on, a fine rain was falling, then the rain storms became more frequent. Our first impression of a June rain here was that it was far from a warm one, such as we were accustomed to. As we traveled farther north, the country was changing, and from Didsbury on there were trees and abundant grass. We thought Innisfail the prettiest town we had seen since entering Canada. The trees were so green and good for tired eyes which had looked upon nothing but widespread prairie for the last three days.

We arrived in Lacombe at 4 pm. and were very sorry to bid goodbye to Mr. Jackson who was going on to Edmonton. We were thoroughly tired and hungry for we were to excited to sleep or eat the latter part of the journey. We wondered how my Father could talk politics, enjoy his dinner and appear so calm. The train had just crawled along and we were anxious to see our brother. He was waiting on the platform with a friend of his and introduced us to quite a few people who were his neighbours and had gone to town that day. Mail day always brought a crowd of people in mild weather as letters were eagerly looked for. Then we went to do some shopping and to see some pet bears that were chained up near the hotel. I must mention that one of the sons of the Welch family we had met at the Immigration House in Calgary, Tom Jones, tried to scare us with tales of the Indians. I often thought later that it had a strange effect on my sister as she seemed terribly frightened if an Indian came near her. Of course, we saw many of them in the next few years.

We also went to see the Methodist minister and the manse they were building for him. My brother's friend was helping with it and took us over and introduced us to Mr. Chegwin, who was the first Methodist minister in Lacombe. My father and brother, having finished buying supplies, started for our new home; riding in a heavy lumber wagon was a bit different from the soft cushions of the trains. It seemed a long cold drive but my brother assured us it was only ten miles. The road through the timber had not been cut then or opened up as the settlers called it. A steady rain was falling and in spite of our rain coats we were chilled to the bone. It was a very disagreeable ending to a tiresome journey we thought as we circled around sloughs and clumps of trees and bushes. The horses never moving off a walk. My father had insisted on putting our rain coats in one of the Gladstone bags and very thankful were we for their protection. The trip home lasted four hours as there was no sign of a road, just a few wagon tracks. The sun had set behind the hills and trees before we reached the head of the valley where my brother's cabin was situated. Mrs. Kilby, a kind neighbour, had cooked a hot supper for us and had a nice bright fire going in the stove. The fire was the best thing I had seen, it seemed for ages. After supper and a little chat, we thanked the neighbour for her kindness and retired for the night and slept like a top as we have been very much awake since 2 am. The fresh cold air and long tiresome drive had made my sister and I very sleepy. Thus, we made our debut into the Great North West.

## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY IMPRESSIONS

After a good night's sleep and a rest we felt ready for anything that might turn up. The household duties seemed very light to me as I had always been used to a large number of rooms. My brother's cabin consisted of one large room, curtained off at one corner with large rugs for a sleeping room for us girls. My brother informed us that he would not be home for dinner. He and a neighbour were burning a kiln of lime about a mile away, so he would carry a lunch with him. This neighbour from Missouri, George Hendricks, lived six miles south of us and appeared unusual, being six foot four inches tall and weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds. This distance seemed a long way off for we had been used to neighbours living in the next house in the city.

We had been hoping that our brother would show us around the farm and tell us all about this great new country. However, after dinner, we decided to do some exploring ourselves. Everything was so quiet that we found ourselves getting drowsy instead, so we wound off that first afternoon with a nap. We thought it must be the effect of our journey but my brother told us it was the altitude. Let me say here that the new settlers seemed affected the same way we were and wanted to sleep and eat all day. An Irish family by the name of Ross, who came from near Queenstown, county Cork, Ireland, lived about three miles down the valley. One of their boys, a lad of sixteen told us he could have "ate and slape" all day and we certainly agreed with him. They had arrived in the valley in April and were getting used to the climate.

My sister and I were quite venturesome and not having met with anything more dangerous than a rabbit, decided to go to the kiln taking a hot dinner to my brother. Mr. Hendricks tried to tell us there were wild animals about, such as bears and lynx and coyotes but as my brother had not told us anything about them we did not believe it. Well, we started out quite bravely with the dinner basket and did not see any of the animals he had mentioned

We were told to watch for a landmark in the shape of a large square rock as big as a table. We sighted this in the distance and made a bee line for it and just as we got close an animal poked its head around one side. To say we were scared would be putting it mildly. We were just petrified. What kind of an animal it was we had no idea as it mostly resembled a small rhinoceros, minus the horns on its nose. When we got over this shock and our voices came back to us we started to shout as loud as we could in the hope that our brother would hear us and in doing so frighten the animal. We caught a good glimpse of the creature as it ran off and the noise it made convinced us

it was a pig, but such a pig. It was dark gray in color with long legs, extended body and a great long snout, and utterly devoid of hair. After a while we plucked up enough courage to go and find the lime pit, which we knew could not be far away, as the lime stone had been dug up around where we were. Finally, we arrived and told Tom of our adventure. He had a good laugh and then told us the pig belonged to Mr.Hendricks, who had brought it along so he could feed it. On asking what made it look so funny, he told us Mr.Hendricks had shaved the hair off the pig for coolness and that it must have been wallowing in a mud hole for it really was a white pig.

That afternoon we decided to catch a wild rabbit to keep as a pet: we had noticed a number of young ones running around by themselves. My brother's cat was a wonderful hunter and frequently caught weasels, but was so savage we could not touch it. After a very arduous chase we finally caught one and put it in a hutch we had made and fastened on the log wall of the house. It was placed very high to be out of reach of wild animals if they came around. We fed our pet on lettuce and carrots out of the garden and put a little can of water in the hutch as well, then fastened the door tightly. It became quite tame and we were very fond of it. One morning, when we went out to feed the rabbit, we found the door open and our pet gone. Of course we blamed the cat and wanted our brother to shoot it, but he refused saying there were hundreds of rabbits but only one cat to keep the gophers out of the garden. We had not seen any gophers then so told him that was just an excuse. Cats were very scarce in 1895 and later we were very glad we had her for she killed a very large weasel that had taken a toll out of our chickens. This pure black cat was obtained, when very small at Blackfalds, or Waghorn, as it was then named after the first postmaster. My brother had carried it home in his pocket.

We found life on the prairie free and easy and learned, in time, to adjust ourselves to this new way of living. It was then the middle of June and the valley looked a beautiful place. Every thing was so fresh and green and the ground covered with flowers of all colours, which were all new to us except the sunflowers and bluebells. The Moccasin or lady slipper was a pleasant surprise for it resembled an orchid and we thought them pretty. There were purple shooting stars, wild geraniums, honeysuckle and masses of wild roses which were the only ones which had any scent. We noticed and thought it quite strange that the birds did not sing, just twittering a little in the early morning. There was a member of the jay family, called Whiskey Jack that would annoy us with its incessant chattering. We thought it had a strange name. The woodpeckers frightened us at times with a knocking on the house, and when we chased them away, we found a large hole in the wall, as round as though drilled with an auger.

During all this time, I had been trying to wash up a large trunk full of my brother's clothes, also some of our own. The water was so hard the soap just curdled and made sticky spots on every thing. However, I decided I had to do something about it and so asked Tom how he managed to wash his clothes before we came. He explained we would have to take some lye and proceeded to show me



how it was done. First of all, I had to sift charcoal from wood ashes and as we burned nothing but wood in the stove, that seemed easy enough. Then I had to fill up a three gallon kettle with ashes over which I poured enough water to fill the kettle. This I had to let stand until it became clear: then I poured off as much as I could, being careful not to get any of it on my hands or clothes. I was skeptical about all this but it softened the water all right. Then I started to wash his clothes.

He had been batching for two years so I expected the worst. Well, I found what I expected and more. The linen tablecloths had been used to wrap around large pieces of beef and were covered with blood stains. A friend of ours, who was a dyer by trade and came from Paisley, Scotland, had been experimenting on my brother's clothes, and the result, was a conglomeration of colours seldom seen. White linen shirts were dyed a dirty slate color, woolen football jersey was a peculiar shade of dark greenish blue, and his white cricket flannels were a murky looking dark blue. The rest of his clothes were a queer color that looked like a mixture of all colors. His pillow cases, towels, dish towels, dusters, socks, shirts, underwear and handkerchiefs were all grey. I gathered them all and then proceeded to boil them all together. Tom added to my consternation by telling me that the charwomen in England certainly earned their half crown a day, going out washing. I was too amazed to speak.

After finishing that part of the washing, I took a good look around, seeking the quilts we had given him when he left home. They were made of homespun, except one that was really a hand quilted one. It was made by our Grandmother Makepeace about the year 1840. The heavier quilts, also hand done by our Great Grandmother, were lined with homespun blankets and were very warm. I found the largest one, a lovely dark green, had been used to cover the stable door on the inside to keep the snow from drifting and to close the draft off the horses. Another had been used to blanket a sick horse and the best one, a cotton bedspread, I found covered with mud, for it had been put over the well to keep the snow out. There was no use saying anything because the damage was done, but those quilts would have been very comfortable on our beds when the temperature ranged around fifty below zero.

Log houses were not the warmest habitations in those early years. Such housekeeping, I told Tom he ought to be ashamed of himself, but he just laughed and said I was too particular. Anyway, he argued, I did not need the quilts as he had lots of blankets. My father felt sorry when he saw how the quilts had been used and said that he had helped his mother when she spun the wool for them. The quilting must have taken a long time. So much for bachelors! I am sure they did not appreciate a woman's work, for Tom said they had served a better use that way. I was too disgusted to argue but remembered what the bible said about trials and tribulations, and I thought I was having my share now. To compensate for my above indignation, he then offered to show me how to make biscuits, bachelor style, with out milk or baking powder. He used just flower salt, baking soda and water. They were very light and when buttered tasted very good.

The next adventure or excitement I had was learning to milk a wild cow and I must say I was very afraid of her; she was so large and had extremely long horns. I had seen Tom tie her to the fence and milk her and it seemed easy enough, but she sensed I was afraid of her so watched me all the time while I milked her. The mosquitos were terrible so I had to build and light a smudge for she would not stand still long enough to be milked otherwise. I would not go near her head so milked her where she stood on picket, with one eye on her and the other on the pail. I considered myself lucky if I got away with all the milk, for more often she sent pail, stool, and me spinning. Finally, I mastered her and could lead her around, but she was always nervous and bolted at the least sound. We got even with her one hot afternoon in August. My brother told us to change her picket at noon and put her on the edge of a small slough surrounded by willows. My sister and I were going into the bush to pick berries, and just as we passed the cow, she gave a bellow, tossed her head and came racing toward us. Elizabeth being curious to see what had happened, started to investigate I tried to stop her but she went to where the cow had been. At first she could see nothing from the trail to cause such a disturbance. A minute later I heard her scream and she came running as if bears were after her. The cow had stirred up a wasp's nest. which resulted in both the cow and my sister being stung, my sister in the eye. There were no berries for supper that night and my sister nursed a badly swollen eye for a week. We left the cow for the men to look after being in too big a hurry to get away from there ourselves.

I had quite a time learning to make bread. Up to that time we made soda biscuits, those before mentioned, so my father insisted on my learning to bake good bread. My brother had some Royal yeast and by following the instructions on the box, I made lovely light bread, so that was another accomplishment I had learned in the west. I have always used royal yeast cakes since then for they kept well and we could lay in a stock of them.

About this time, the middle of June, my brother decided to buy another team of horse. They left one morning for the Brewster Ranch and would not be home that night as it was some distance away. This was to be our first night alone with howling coyotes for company outside and yapping dog inside. She barked at all the noises she heard. About two o'clock in the morning, we were awakened by the barking of the dog and a flashing of a lantern in the window. I had taken the precaution to barricade the door as often Indians traveled through to Lacombe from Buffalo Lake. I called who's there and a voice asked for my father. I recognized the voice as belonging to our scotch friend, Mr. Walker. He left word for my father and brother that the Norwegian settler had just died that night; they were to go over as soon as they got back. He then went on down the valley to stay with the Jameson boys at their shack until morning. That ended our sleep and we lay in bed wondering if anyone else would be wandering about. We listened to the voices of the night. How thankful. We were when daylight came and later my father and brother returned home. We gave them the message and they went across right away, promising they would return that night. Next day the Norwegian was buried in the cemetery in Lacombe, some of the men

of the neighborhood attended the funeral. I have never forgotten that, for it did not seem possible that death could come out there among the flowers and sunshine.

It was quite a roundabout way to go to town so my brother decided to blaze a trail through the bush. My father had made up his mind not to buy any unbroken horses after their visit to the horse ranch but would try to get some from older settlers, and gentle if possible. One morning he started for Lacombe with this idea, going through the bush for the first time. Towards evening we began to get quite anxious about him, wondering if he had lost his way, so decided to go and look for him. However, before we left, the dog started barking and running towards the bush trail and in a few minutes we saw my father leading a mare with a foal at her side. The mare was only halter broken and very nervous so my father had led her all the way home from town. The colt was quite gentle and soon became a great pet. The mare would only allow us to go near her when the colt was feeding. We heard of another mare that was gently and well broken, so my father made another trip. This time it was to a horse ranch, owned by Mr. Hughes of Wolf Creek, north of Lacombe. There he bought the mare we called Molly. Who was very gentle and broken to ride so my sister and I took a great liking to her and we were soon riding all over the country, especially to Lacombe on mail days.

My brother broke the other mare to ride as well and my sister and I enjoyed these rides right up until winter. We visited some of the ladies in the Canyon district whom we had met at the Sunday services held in the Canyon school house. My father insisted that we learn to ride without a saddle, with just a blanket and surcingle, sitting sideways on the horse in case they got scared at something or if we fell off. In those days, the girls and women rode side saddles and it was some trick to learn to ride sideways without a saddle. The nervous mare was a bad actor for a long time. When we put the side saddle on her and when riding together, one of us rode her with blanket and surcingle. She was much easier to ride than Molly who seemed rough after riding Vic. The horses all seemed so nervous and if a gopher scurried across the trail or a bird flew up among the bushes, the horse would shy away and jump, and without warning and without the saddle, we usually went sailing through the air. The bumps and bruises we received, their number was legion.

The fence around our garden was made of poles put between two large posts and held in place by wire. It looked very strong to us, but Tom had warned us not to let any cattle come around and if we did see any coming we were to scare them off. What he meant was to chase them away. Well, we thought if they were anything like our cow we would not dare to go near and as we had not seen any cattle, only hearing them from a distance, we did not worry over them. We went outside as much as possible when the weather was fine. On this particular morning, my father and brother had gone up into the bush to cut logs for an addition to the shack, as they were called by the old timers. It was then we saw a herd of cattle and large bull that was pawing up the earth and bellowing. They were some distance away but seemed to be heading for the shack. Our first impulse was

to go inside and close the door; then I remembered the garden and my brother's instructions. We both rushed out one with an axe handle the other with a broom but the cows just stood and looked at us. All the time the bull was getting closer. At last we had a happy thought; we would try our umbrellas on them. We rushed back into the house, grabbed the umbrellas and ran to the nearest cow. We suddenly opened our umbrellas and that had the desired effect. In a few moments we had them all on the run heading down the valley. My brother just laughed when we told him how scared we had been and said that the cows were our neighbour's cattle and some of them milk cows. Well, they looked pretty wild to us, especially that bull.

A half a mile east of us, on the next quarter section, lived Mrs. Kilby, the kind lady who made supper for us the night we arrived. Between our farms, ran a creek, and in June and during rainy weather it was full of water. We could see no way of crossing it except by wading, so we decided to visit her late. She always rode horse back when she came to see us and carried her little girl in front of her on the horse. We thought she was pretty wonderful. We found out later that all women rode horseback, who were not too old to learn.

We had a neighbour, Mrs. Chapman, who lived on the same section three quarters of a mile away. My sister had gone there with Tom one evening and the lady had invited her to come again; she also sent an initiation to me. One Sunday afternoon, we decided to walk there. Mrs. Chapman told us a lot of things about the country and offered to show us how to make butter. My brother had bought the cow from them and I was very anxious to know how to churn and wash the butter. She told me all about it and also about her churning day. I had often wished to know how the ladies in our vicinity fixed up their log houses and what they did to the walls. I observed all I could that afternoon and was determined to make ours look nicer too, just as soon as our luggage and furniture arrived. It was three weeks since we came to the valley and no sign of them yet. My father had taken them out of bond the morning we arrived in Calgary, June 6<sup>th</sup>, and we had inquired every train day. Calgary was a little over a hundred miles from Lacombe but it might as well have been a thousand.

Mrs. Chapman asked us if we were going to the big celebration in Lacombe on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We said we were and asked what it would be like. She told us there would be Indians, lots of race horses, bucking horses and Mounted Police too. We wondered why the mounted Police. It was to be the first Dominion Day celebration to be held in Lacombe. Mrs., Chapman gave us a pressing invitation to stay to supper but we thought we should not on such a short acquaintance. She seemed surprised and we wondered why, but then we had not learned the hospitality of the west. We were also in a big hurry to reach home and ply my brother with questions. He always told us we were too inquisitive but we had to find out things, hence the questions. Anyway, we reflected, Mrs. Chapman had asked us a lot of questions. She wanted to know all about the fashion in clothes, the latest songs and plays at the theatres, and how we liked the country and about the journey from the United; states. We did not care what Tom said. He never liked to answer our questions; therefore, we would ask the neighbours.

Everyone we met asked us first thing how we liked the country. The joked about the mosquito's eating us up' we had already experienced plenty of them in the States. They joked about Indians running off with us and having our scalps taken, about wild animals killing us and lots of unpleasant things. The talk about the Indians

left great impressions on my sister and she always seemed too terrified of them. Our brother never seemed to hear the joking, and my father simply smiled quietly, but we were amazed which made the jokers roar with delight. In time we became used to it, but the scalping story remained with us. These stories were to make us tough, they said. What queer words they used for things. We called a piece of meat tough and they called people tough. Just what was meant by all that I did not find out until a long time after. There were various kinds of tough; tough luck, tough going when the trail was rough, a tough guy, a tough deal with someone and so on.

The second Sunday we were in the country, an elderly English couple walked up the valley to see the little English girls. They were Mr. and Mrs. Roe who came from the Midlands but had lived in Sheffield, Yorkshire, prior to coming here. We enjoyed their visit very much. They stayed to tea and then walked home again, refusing a ride as Mrs. Roe said the exercise was good for them. They lived in a sod house right out in the valley two miles away with their two sons Alfred and Frank. It was Alfred Roe who was with my brother at the station the day we arrived. Mrs. Roe had brought an old fashioned English Harmonium from England, it looked like a small organ. Another family of new settlers, who lived a mile farther south, were also there. They were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Simpson (the cloth dyer) from Paisley, Scotland. They had two small boys. The eldest was five and a perfectly mischievous boy; the youngest, wee Robin, was aged three. Mrs. Simpson played the harmonium and we had a regular song service, Bible reading and prayers. We all enjoyed it very much as it brought our old life so much neared to us.

A Sunday or two later we went to the Canyon school house to a noon service. The Methodist minister from Lacombe held the service and the people from miles around attended. It was there we met more people from the British Isles; Mrs. Ross from county Cork, Ireland and her sons and daughter. Mr. and Mrs. Godwin Cooper were there with their daughter and two sons. Others were a number of people from Ontario, the states and various bachelors, E.J. Tate was one of the bachelors who afterwards became a Methodist minister. We were surprised to see so many people living out here. A Mrs. Townsend and her son, Bobby, also attended at times. She became one of my friends when I was married and went to live further down the valley.

It was near the end of June when the rainy season began. Up to about the 20<sup>th</sup>. The weather had been fine. I shall never forget how the roof leaked and the only dry spot in the shack was under the big ridge pole in the center of the roof. Our furniture had not arrived yet and we were thankful for that. My brother put tar paper, sod and earth over the west side of the roof to protect the beds and our clothes. As my father was great believer in that verse, "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do". He had laid in a stock of knitting wool for just such an emergency. I was asked to knit socks for my father and brother. My sister had to darn any that needed it. So we worked away, only stopping to get meals.

Father had nothing to do except smoke and read and Tom cut wood for me to dry in the oven, and also read. I don't see why Elizabeth and I did not read too. There were cracks between the floor boards so the water ran into the cellar, saving me the bother of mopping it up.

Apart from the rainy afternoon we had had on our arrival to the shack, we had been having the most beautiful weather. Now what a change. The skies were a murky gray and mist hung all over the valley. The temperature seemed very cold. Those June rains were really cold. One afternoon before the rain had started; my brother said it looked as though we might have the June rains. The sky clouded over so he started hauling dirt and threw it up on the roof, much to my astonishment.

I must here describe the shack. It was eighteen feet long and fourteen feet wide. It was built of peeled logs; the roof had three large logs called ridge poles. Small poles were nailed to the ridge poles. A big log was placed upright in the center of the room and it supported the highest ridge pole.

These poles were covered with hay, then tar paper, then sods and loads of dirt filled up all the cracks and crevices. I did not examine the roof until after the rains. The storm started after terrific thunder and lightening; it was not a downpour but a good steady heavy rain that soaked into everything. After the first day, the roof began to leak. It seemed to be all over, but there was the corner by the stove that was dry. Here we piled all the bedding in as small a space as possible. I perched there with my head against the low roof, knitting socks. Housework was out of the question, except dishwashing if we had left the dishes on the table they would have washed themselves. It was quite a sensation to sit at the table for meals with water running steadily down the back of the neck. We put the table under the center ridge pole and the food in a row to miss the drip, the rest we'll leave to the imagination.

We were thankful for two things. First we had a good fire. So the atmosphere was humid but not cold; second, our furniture was in the baggage room at Lacombe. Neighbours had brought word of it. It was safe from the leaky shack. When the rain finally stopped, we went outside to dry off but the roof continued to leak until the next day. I suggested that we put a new roof on the shack but my brother assured us there was no need as it would not leak for another year. Just fancy. He said an ordinary rain would not come through. Such philosophy. He also said that it was the only time bachelors washed their floors, when they mopped up after a rain like that. I could quite believe it. I must mention how useful our umbrellas were. We could sit in a chair, put up the umbrella, and keep off the leaks for a short time. However, it got very tiresome holding them up for long. This life was full of ups and downs and the downs had it. We were young and could see the funny side of it which helped.

After the rain, came the mosquitos. Mosquito's! We never imagined anything like them. There were clouds of them. They drove everyone and everything frantic. All the desire was to get away

from them, but where? There was no such thing as wire mosquito netting around, so my brother said we would have to do as the Indians did, smoke them out. I have often wondered which was the least of the two evils, but I believe the smoke was the worst. It would not breed disease as sometimes the mosquito's do and so was more like a disinfectant. Smoke from green willows! Whenever I smell it yet, I think of those early days and the mosquito's and can almost feel the sting. Our blood must have tasted good to them as Elizabeth and I were bothered far more than my brother was. My father's pipe helped him. The poor horses, when we went out riding, we each carried a bunch of green willow switches on our saddles. Our bay horse took on a gray color when covered with these mosquitos. We used to ply switches and ride fast to create a breeze. Eventually I shut them out of the house with fine lace curtains we had. These I tacked over the windows and had hinges put on to open from the outside. Necessity became the mother of invention.



LACOMBE'S FIRST CELEBRATION    JULY 1<sup>st</sup> 1895

At last the great day arrived, the day when we were to drive to Lacombe for the first Dominion Day celebration to be held there. The day was fine, sunny and warm, so my brother decided to go the new way he had blazed through the bush, as it cut off about two miles. The roughness of the road did not bother us at all as it was part of the adventure. Everything was so new. When we reached the ridge of hills on the east side of Lacombe valley, we had a splendid view of the country around. We named the hill we were on Arnold's Hill as a settler by that name, George Arnold, lived in his homestead at the foot of it.

As we approached, Lacombe looked like a sea of tents, which my brother told us were Indian teepees. The Indians from the Hobbema Reserve near Ponoka, were in full force. There was as well, a lot of non treaty Indians. A lot of them wore costumes made out of Hudson Bay blankets' they were gray with black stripes running horizontally around. They must have been very hot in them. In great contrast, were Indian runners, young bucks tall and athletic, all muscle and spare of flesh. These Indians were naked except for a loin cloth. Their bodies and faces were painted red and yellow, bracelets and weasel skins adorned their arms, while eagle feathers and small skins were fastened in the long black braids of their hair. To see them run was a thrilling sight. They seemed to leap through the air, their feet just skimming the ground.

Before the sports started, a number of these real Indians as we called them sat in a large circle on the ground. In the center was a big drum and seated around it about a dozen Indians, young and old. On the outside of the large circle were squaws, some of whom were quite young. Squaws with papooses squatted on the ground nearby. At a signal the tom-toms started and the squaws shuffled around the circle chanting. It sounded like Ki- -I- I. They kept that up all the time. By and by, the spirit moved one of the bucks, for he leaped high up in the air with a yell and started to dance. It looked as though he were stalking something as he crouched along. After awhile another Indian from the inner circle around the drum leaped up and began to dance, yelling all the time. This continued until all inside the large circle were dancing except the one beating the tom-tom. Suddenly the first one stopped, came over to the drum and squatted down. There were a couple of pails of mixed candy near the drum, refreshments for the dancers. The poor squaws still kept up their shuffling and Ki-I-I-I ing, but no candy for them.

After a while all quieted down and then an old brave got up to make a speech using lots of gestures; I think he was the chief of that band of Crees. My father got an interpreter to tell us all about it. The Chief's name was Samson in English and he was telling all the others about the Good White Mother, queen Victoria, who lived across the big water, and how she looked after them. It was a very flowery speech and wound up with a warning to Beware of the Fire Water, the cheap whiskey of the white man. This was a peace-making pow-wow and the pipe of peace was smoked.

Later on, there was another kind of powwow that might have been very serious. We noticed that there were three Mounted Police in their red coats, watching the Indians very closely. There must have been five or six Indians at least to every white man there that day, perhaps more. There were very few white families here then. After dinner the horse racing started and the excitement began. As near as I can remember, they were all Indian races. As many Indians as could possibly squeeze in started and how those Cayuses ran: the Indians rode bareback when racing for I never saw a saddle on any of the racing horses. Some of the races were just a short dash; others were a half mile, a mile and some even longer. A terrific yelling accompanied them all not from the spectators, but from the riders. The white people cheered the winning horses. It seems that an Indian has to yell when he is racing. There were squaw races as well; they rode with a sucingle around the Cayuse and knelt on its back, grabbing the mane. They rode a wild race. One Cayuse stumbled just at the finish, throwing the squaw over its head' something scared it and it bolted from the track, running toward the wagons. We all thought the squaw was killed but she was only very badly bruised all over. The pony's leg was broken so it was shot by one of the Mounted Police and the Indians ate it at the Pow-wow that night. Mr.W.F.Puffer, the butcher in Lacombe, and who later became the first MLA, had also given them a large steer to be slaughtered for the Pow-wow too. I imagine the Indians would have quite a feast.

My sister and I got quite a scare while watching the Indians racing. I had noticed a group of young squaws a short distance away, watching us all the time. I suppose we looked green, as they call it out here, for we had only been in the country three weeks. They appeared to be arguing with one another, and finally a young girl, about twelve years old, stepped out from the rest and ran towards us. As she ran past me I saw her grab my sister's hand, wet her own finger, and then run back to the squaws. I looked hard at them and they all smiled at me, my sister was terrified and clung to my father. All the stories we had heard of the scalping came back to us. We asked Tom what they meant and he said the Indians had put a sign on her and must be after her scalp. She, my sister Elizabeth, had the most beautiful golden auburn hair. After this, we moved away from that vicinity and the races lost their charm. My sister begged to be taken home. Some of the Indians who were painted looked savage enough for anything. Elizabeth had very white skin and afterwards, when we saw how a lot of women used powder, we wondered if those squaws thought it was powder on my sister's skin. At any rate there was no scalping and I told my

brother he ought not to have told her what he had. We prevailed upon our father to go home early and so missed the most thrilling event, the scalp dance at night.

I imagine there was quite a wild time that night from what the neighbours who had stayed told us later. Someone had given the Indians Firewater and some of the braves tried to incite the younger ones to go after the Indian Agent. He would die with his boots on, a great expression in those days, especially used by our neighbours from just across the Line. My father said what we heard was all nonsense as the Mounted Police were there to keep order among the Indians. My sister and I got a bad scare, especially about the scalping and when we heard what happened at night. We remembered it for a long time.

There were no guns among the Indians at the Celebration, but they all carried a long hunting knife in a sheath at their sides. I shall always remember the picture they made as they sat around the drum. It was just like the stories we had read of the wild Indians in the western States years before. In spite of the watchfulness of the Mounted Police, there was a lot of firewater and as the day wore on some of the bucks began to get ugly. About sundown we prepared to leave for home. The furniture and other luggage had arrived some days before, as the neighbors had told us and as they were also leaving, offered to take some of it in their wagon. We were very glad to avail ourselves of their kind offer. After we left, the Indians danced their war dance, as well as the scalp dance. Nothing serious happened for the young Indians were not warlike and were also afraid of the Mounties. They had contented themselves with their barbecue. The next time we went to Lacombe you would not believe there had been any Indians in the country, not one teepee was left. We were certainly tired out when we reached home.

Busy days were now ahead as another room had to be build on to the shack or cabin as they called it, there being no room for all our luggage and furniture. It was very interesting to watch the log walls go up. My brother had been in Ontario one summer and had learned to swing an axe and build a log building. He had stayed with relatives of father's in Kent county, Ontario, near Lake Erie. The logs there were very large and of hardwood, a lot different from the ones out here. We were to have a board roof on the new part, no more leaky roofs for us. The living room, at least, would be dry.

Our garden was very good that year. My brother had planted it early and we really enjoyed the fresh vegetables as they were a great help to our menu. We also had plenty of fresh eggs, milk, cream and butter, but very little fresh meat. There was plenty of bacon but we did not look upon that as meat' it was just a breakfast dish. We still had potatoes from the year before but they did not taste very good. We did not eat rabbits in the summer and the partridges and prairie chickens were to small and very wild until fall. What a blessing those little snowshoe rabbits were to the settlers that first winter.

We heard of a family who lived quite a way south of us, living on rabbits and salt for awhile. They had barley coffee to drink and a little dark bread made from the x-flour the Indians used for their bannock. Nearly all of us drank coffee made from roasted barley ground in a coffee grinder. The grinder was the most necessary article in our housekeeping; it manufactured a change from tea or milk all the time. My father never drank real coffee, but the barley coffee suited him all right. It had an appetizing smell and tasted good with cream and sugar in it. Especially in the cold weather.

We had plenty of preserved blueberries and some wild berries called Saskatoon's that my brother had dried the year before. An early frost in June 1895 had killed the blooms of the strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, so only blueberries were left, those being the fall fruit that blossomed later. I was afraid to go far into the bush to search for some of these so contented myself with blueberries. These, with dried apples were the only fruit we had all winter. Such a thing as an orange or lemon we never saw in the stores. After awhile we were able to get dried prunes. Just before Christmas, we got raisins, currants, and candied peel to make a Christmas cake and a pudding, these were certainly a great treat as we had not had any for months. It seemed like Christmas to have a plum pudding once more. Ontario apples were very scarce and only bought as a luxury.

As soon as the zero weather came, the men of the neighborhood for miles around, formed parties and went to Buffalo Lake, forty miles by trail to fish. They took tents and food and camped there, returning home with a wagon box full of frozen fish. These were mostly Jackfish or Pike and were very good eating when caught in real cold water. Rabbits, fish, pork and an occasional roast of beef were our meat diet for the winter. We did not have many hens so only killed one for a treat or a birthday. Christmas Day we had a big round of beef, the real old English Christmas dinner.

After that first winter, we had plenty beef of our own to kill. My father always insisted on keeping pigs to have bacon and ham, especially for the summer corned meat as well. Canning meat of any kind was unheard of in those early pioneer days. We kept a barrel of salt beef and a barrel of salt pork, we also dried and cured pork in a cool place, usually near the milk house. This was built of logs and placed in the side of a hill. It was floored with flat stones and had a roof that did not leak; it was covered with sod and earth for coolness. On a hot day, it was great to go in to that cool milk house or dairy as it was called and get a cold drink of milk or buttermilk. We hung the hams and bacon in cotton bags in there too. The windows above the door were covered with wire screening. After the first summer, we sent to Ontario for wire netting. No more smudges for us.

It was on one of the early Sundays in July that my sister and I walked down the Valley to pay a visit to Mrs. Chapman. She had two brothers in the west, John and Joe Jameson. We had never seen John but Joe had paid us a visit one day when he came to see my brother. They were friends of my brother, having known him since he came to the valley in early September 1893. Tom and his partner had lived in their cabin until their own was built. Mr. and Mrs. Chapman and her brothers, known as the Jameson boys, arrived in Alberta from London, Ontario, on April 14 1892. Their father came in the fall of 1893 and a younger brother Nathaniel, in 1894. Their mother arrived in the summer of 1896, going to Pleasant valley to stay with her daughter for a couple of months. Mr. Jameson's house was two miles south of us on the edge of the timber. There was a real good spring of water on his land in the bush.

Mrs. Jameson came in 1896, before the cold weather and we drove over to see her. She was a real Old timer, from Ontario, being born in Little York, as Toronto was called then, in February 1835. She went with her father to the Queen's bush, in county Grey, when she was ten years old. Many were the stories she told of the emigrants who came from Ireland, Scotland, and England. She told about those times and the hardships they suffered clearing the heavy timber off their land grants. Her name was Elizabeth Wilson; the town of Listowel is near where she lived when young. Mr. Jameson, whose name was Aeneas, a Greek name, was born at Galt, Ontario. His father, also named Aeneas, built the first hotel in Galt. Mr. Jameson was born on July 12, 1833. He was sixty years old when he came to Alberta and Mrs. Jameson was sixty-one when she arrived. We always enjoyed going there for a visit and having her come to visit us. She was a wonderful neighbour and taught us many things, useful in our Pioneer life.

MORE EXPERIENCES: WE START HAYING. THE SKUNK. EPISODE OF THE BEAR. OTHER BEAR STORIES.

Haying commenced about the middle of July. My brother did not have a mowing machine of his own, so made a deal with a neighbour, Cecil Ewing, who lived near the canyon, to do up the hay on shares. There was lots of hay where we lived but not so much in his area, so this arrangement was satisfactory to both. Being a bachelor there was no necessity for him to go home, so for three weeks we had the pleasure of his company, which we enjoyed. We were quite sorry when that part of the haying was over and he returned to his homestead near the Red Deer Canyon, about five miles away. As there was still some hay to be put up, in some of the smaller sloughs in the timber, I went along. My job was to rake up the ground with a hand rake where the hay cocks had been.

There were four of these sloughs, edged with trees and willow bushes, and all leading into each other. As the hay was loaded into the rack, I raked up and cocked the remainder. It was a new experience for me but I soon got used to doing it. All went well until I reached the third slough, and as I entered I spied a large black animal on the other side of it. It looked like a big black dog with its tongue lolling out. I had never been afraid of dogs in the city, but as I looked at this animal, I felt a queer shiver go up my spine to the roots of my hair. I went on raking but took care not to go near it as I did not know whether dogs in the new country were savage or not. Just then it heard the rumble of the wagon and disappeared. I then went on to the last slough and told what I had seen. I asked Tom what it was and he said, it must have been Mr. Turnballs dog, they live west of here. I had my doubts, remembering the queer feeling when I first saw the animal. Suddenly remembering the bear stories we had heard along with the Indian tales, I made up my mind to find out if it was a dog.

It was then the middle of September, The next Sunday, we heard that our neighbour, Mrs. Chapman, while out riding after their cattle across the valley and east, had seen a bear two miles away. Mr. Chapman was with her. The horses smelled the bear and bolted, almost throwing Mrs. Chapman out of her saddle. Our friend, Mr. Hendricks, came up from his farm a few days later. He lived six miles south, down the valley. He told us that his neighbour, Mrs. Russell was sitting out in front of her cabin in the cool of the evening, when a big black bear came out of the bush close to her. She called to her children and they all rushed to the cabin and barricaded the door. My brother had tried to stop Mr. Hendricks from telling this story. I made up my mind that it was a bear

that had startled me in the hay slough, and taxed my brother about it. Of course, he told me that it was Mr. Turnbulls dog so I would not be afraid. I found out later, from Frank Roe, that Mr. Turnbulls dog was a yellow one.

Then, there was the Episode of the Skunk. As we neared home one evening from our haying in the bush, we were met about half a mile from home by our sister. She was in a state of great excitement. After calming her down a little, she told us there was skunk in the addition we had built onto the house. It was then only partly finished. It seems she had gone to her trunk to get some of her clothes, and as the door had been left open, she arrived in time to see a skunk disappear inside. She slammed the door shut and ran up the trail to meet us, for she heard the wagon coming. The entrance to our cellar was through this new addition, and we kept our milk, butter, cream and eggs in there until a milk house was built. There were shelves all around the cellar walls. Of course that was where the skunk was hiding when Tom finally located it. By this time the odor of the skunk was terrible, so my brother just shot it and hauled it out. My brother's clothes were buried in a hole. Father threw everything out of the cellar and sprinkled lime quickly over the floor and walls. Needless to say there was no supper that night; we were all too sick to eat, an unusual experience. I began to develop bad nerves after that day. Up until then I was not easily scared. We wondered what was going to happen next. For the next month, we camped outside as we could not eat or sleep in the house. That was the last of the hay making and the finishing of the house began. Also the vegetables and potatoes were dug up out of the garden and stored in the cellar as soon as the skunk smell left.

I must now go back in my story a little and mention an event that took place earlier, about the middle of July, just after we had started haying. There was a family of old timers, who had just come to Alberta in 1887 or possibly earlier than that, at least before the railway was built, whose name was Haines. They came from Wyoming and were real westerners. They had been living in a log house built into the bank of the creek, that today bears their name. There is also a small town named after them. They decided to build a large hewn log house. Well, in those days an event like that called for a dance, so invitations were issued to the whole countryside from Buffalo Lake to Lacombe. As Mr. and Mrs. Harry Chapman and her brothers, were great friends of the Haines family, they were especially invited and could bring their friends. They invited Mr. and Mrs. Simpson and family and my sister and I.

We were told to put on clothes that would stand a hard wagon ride and to take our others with us to wear at the dance. We could change when we got there. We left Chapman's right after dinner and it was after seven o'clock in the evening when we got there. It was

twenty miles away with no trail until we struck the road to Buffalo Lake, a good many miles away. It was very tiresome riding as we were sitting on a board placed across the wagon box. We went winding around sloughs and skirting muskegs, clumps of trees, and willows. Such a long, hot weary afternoon. The Chapman children were completely tired out. They went to sleep and had to be held to keep them from falling out of the wagon box. As the day cooled off into evening the mosquito's came and they sure were fierce. Very glad indeed were we when Mrs. Chapman pointed out the creek and said it was only two miles farther on. I still don't know how the ladies stood it, each holding a heavy sleeping child. Mr. Chapman held the oddest Simpson boy. We tried to keep the mosquitos away as best we could with willow switches. We were all wishing for a good smudge.

Finally we arrived, and all had a good hot supper. There was lots of roast beef, potatoes, pickles, pie and cold milk to drink. The children were put to bed and we got ready to go in to the new house to dance. Mrs. Haines was a real old time rancher's wife and gave us a hearty welcome. The dance was great novelty to us, especially the style of dancing and the calling off of square dances and quadrilles. The dancers swayed their bodies to the music and moved their arms up and down. When we had learned to dance in England, we were not allowed to move our bodies or arms just our feet. We gazed in amazement and the thrill of the evening was watching the square dances, which were fast and furious. A man mounted a table, hollered at the top of his voice, words unintelligible to us. Such a noise the dancers made, you could not hear anyone speak. My sister and I were too scared to try to dance even a waltz or polka, which we knew well. The quadrilles I could not call dancing, they were so different from what we had been taught. The girls were swung around until they were dizzy and staggered when the men released them. As the night wore on, we dance a little but never the square dances, just waltzes, the schottisches or polkas. We found them exhilarating enough, even to us young girls who could stand it. Towards daylight, they danced what was called a hoedown and wound up the dance with several of them. If the square dances were fast, these hoe downs were twice as fast and noisy, then the party ended, noisiest of all. Everyone was laughing and shaking hands, saying it was the best dance they had ever been to.

After breakfast, we started home. It was a long trail and we arrived in the middle of the afternoon, very tired but quite happy and with lots of news to write to my brother in New York and my cousins and friends in England. Such a dance and such a journey. We felt completely westernized. When we related our adventures to my father, he was very much interested. My bother had no interest in dancing; a good game of cards or an interesting book were more his line. He laughed a good deal at our description of the square dance and hoe down. He had seen one or two of these dances and considered it a waste of energy. Later on, when we learned to dance them, he thought we had taken leave of our senses. Then we laughed at him for being an old stay at home. Mrs. Chapman insisted



on us having a late dinner with them before we walked home. We were very hungry and thought she was extremely kind.

About this time there was a number of church services held in the school house, six miles away. We all drove over to the services and met a lot of new neighbours, who like ourselves, had arrived that spring and summer. Mrs. Ross, who I mentioned before, was one of those who always attended the service, walking the six miles most of the time. We often visited her and her daughter and she would tell us the most interesting stories of her life in Ireland. We like her very much. Some of the stories were very droll, some quite humorous and others very tragic. It was always a great treat to visit her and she became very friendly, especially when we told her we had seen the cove of Cork. Her farm in Ireland was situated near there.

Our other great friend was the English lady, Mrs. Roe. We visited her quite often, as often as we could because she lived only two miles away and we could walk there. Such a lot of useful information and methods of work, I learned from these ladies. I often look back on these visits too, and consider them as some of the happiest times of my early life here. It was like entering a haven of rest, such a peaceful atmosphere and so like the Old Country we loved so well. The English lady and her family had come two years before and she had learned to adapt herself to the new life. This family was my brother's greatest friends, as were John and Joe Jameson.

A very sad incident occurred in their lives in September. Mr. Roe had not been well all summer and decided to go to England for the winter. Mrs. Roe and the boys were to stay here. On arrival in Calgary he became very ill and went to the hospital there. Mrs. Roe was sent for as his condition became serious. He developed pneumonia and died shortly after her arrival. Burial took place in Calgary. We all missed him so much, and it seemed hardly possible that he was dead. He used to walk up to see us quite often. Mr and Mrs. Roe were the first visitors we had when we came to Canada. I had never thought of people dying out here and it always seemed so strange, especially someone we knew. It made a great impression on our young minds, everything had to be readjusted. Death seemed more natural in the city, but out here where skies were so blue and sunny, the earth so green and covered with flowers as well, the wild animals and birds so alive, death seemed to have no place. My father quoted that passage from the bible, "In the midst of life we are in death, humor and pathos make up life wherever we go."

About this time, near the end of September, we had a very bad storm. My father said it was the equinox. Alfred Roe was over that afternoon, helping my brother, and as it was raining so hard with high winds and terrific thunder and lightning, he decided to stay overnight for we urged him to do so. We could hear the trees falling and crashing in the timber north and west of the house. They seemed quite close at times. The log house shook when a blast hit. My sister and I were seated at the table reading some adventure stories and the men were smoking and talking. My father began telling a story of the north of England. It was one of the Ettrick Shepherd's

Tales of the Border, and was called, The Story of the long Pack. It was an adventure story that really took place in Northumberland and was extremely interesting. Just as he reached the most exciting part of the story, a blast of wind, stronger than the others, shook the building dislodging a pile of lumber stacked in the new addition and leaning on the log wall. As these fell with a great clatter and bang, we both screamed and rushed to father. I had been reading a story of Indians in the argentine and thought it must be Indians sneaking up on us in the storm. My sister was too terrified to speak; even the men were silent for awhile. Then my father spoke in a matter of fact tone saying, I wouldn't like to be on the Atlantic tonight... My brother laughed and said, neither would I. Then he and our visitor started to figure out how fast the wind was traveling. Finally, my father finished the story and to this day I still remember quite distinctly, the story of the long pack. When the wind quieted down a little we went to bed but not to sleep, the scare we had kept us awake and we lay listening to the moaning of the wind in the trees and imagined all sorts of things happening outside. We still thought Indians were prowling around and although we had asked my brother to go out and look around he could not be convince to do so. That was certainly the wildest night I ever experienced at that time of year and since coming to live here. The next day the sun shone nearly as bright as usual but the ground was very wet. It had been a nice open fall until then.

Some time later, our neighbour, Mrs. Chapman, came over with Mrs. Haines, the lady at whose house the dance was held in July. There were no blueberries where they lived, so they came to the valley to pick some before winter set in. By this time, the berry season was nearly over but I found a patch on the section north of us. We all went there to help them pick berries. We noticed a weasel running around hunting for mice and gophers. It had already turned white and Mrs. Haines said we were going to have an early winter, and this was mid-October. I told my brother when he got home and he said it was time to point up the shack. This meant mixing a thin plaster of lime and sand and filling up all the cracks in the plaster between the logs; the storm in September had loosened a lot of it. I thought that good fun and a nice change from housework and undertook to do the outside of the house myself as I liked to be outdoors. Well ! It was not so funny when I had to climb a ladder to reach the gables; balancing a board with sloppy mortar in one hand and hanging on to the ladder and the trowel with the other was not easy. I thought if my brother could do it, I could, as I was not as helpless as all that. Later I found out he intended to have a joke at my expense. I turned it on him instead, he was agreeably surprised at the result of my exertions. I had been taught that if a thing was worth doing at all, it was worth doing well. I declined the job of doing the barn, but as long as we lived in the log house and I was at home, I went over and pointed up the walls just before freeze up.

After the episode of the skunk we had a nice log milkhouse built and it was my delight to keep it well plastered and white washed. I was learning to adapt myself to this new life, gradually. I had a thorough training in cooking and sewing in England and learned to make a lot of fancy cookery, especially meats, fish and egg dishes in United States, so that made it easier for me. I had also learned to wash clothes in the States and it was the same out here.

MY FATHERS TOBACCO JAR. VISITING THE NEIGHBOURS. I GO TO THE FAIR. OTHER DANCES. THE HOOT OWL.

During the summer, Mr. Hendricks had brought his wife to visit us many times. They always rode horseback on these occasions and brought their dog along. One day the dog did something that annoyed his master, and Mr. Hendricks caught the dog by the hind legs and hit his head against the log wall. We thought that was the most cruel thing we had ever seen and never liked him after that. I used to wonder if he ever beat his wife as he had an awful temper and was so big and strong. His wife never had anything to say when he was around. One day she pointed to my father's tobacco caddy, it was a very fancy one, made of mahogany and trimmed with bands of ivory and silver. We took it off the shelf and handed it to her, never taking out the tobacco for we did not think plug tobacco would interest her. She looked it over and remarked what a nice one it was and handed it back to me. As the lid was still on I never looked in. Later, she persuaded my sister to go home with her and stay all night as her husband was going away and would not be back until the next afternoon. We all waved goodbye and went back into the house.

After awhile my father reached for his tobacco caddy to have a smoke. Such a look came over his face that I asked what was the matter. He handed me the caddy and to my surprise it was empty. The three plugs he had in it were gone. I immediately told him how Mrs. Hendricks had admired it and had told me that her grandfather had one like it. I thought that was not true, as we had never seen one quite like it. My father had bought it as a young man when he had been on a voyage to Russia, a good many years before. Tom had a great laugh when he came in and said he knew that Mrs. Hendricks chewed tobacco. My sister confirmed that fact when she came home. She told us of a cruel incident that happened while at Hendricks. The day she came home, Mr. Hendricks was back that morning and went to the barn to milk the cow. She had kicked him and he lost half the milk, he landed near the horses, that promptly kicked him, and this landed him out of the barn door on to the manure pile. He called for Pet, his wife, to come for the milk. He then grabbed a neck yoke and beat the horses, and then he went to the house for his gun and shot the cow, cut her throat and dressed the meat after skinning her. My sister told us that Mrs. Hendricks chilled the liver and they had it for dinner; as it was cold weather the rest would keep. My sister and I looked upon him as a barbarian after that.

The snow came on November 5. that year and I well remember the day as Tom and I had driven to Lacombe to buy a heater for our living room and to bring home a barrel of apples we had sent to Ontario for. They were winter apples and we were notified by the

station master they were here. It started to snow soon after we left home that morning and it was dark when we arrived home, we had gone to Lacombe in the wagon and the snow hindered our traveling. Joe Jameson came up that evening for mail and tobacco and stayed to help us unload the heater and apples. We were anxious to see if the apples were damaged. The first half of the barrel were Northern Spies and Joe said one of the best winter varieties. The rest were Detroit Red, another good keeper. Not one was bruised or damaged, a kind cousin of ours who lived at Chatham, Ontario, had personally seen to the packing of them. He was a telegraph operator there and afterwards, station agent. I think that was why we got them so speedily, he had sent a telegram telling us when they left Ontario. What a winter that was, so much snow and soon the whole country was white except for trees.

Towards the end of November, we were invited to a dance at the home of Mrs. Whitehead, some Yorkshire people who lived at Lake Side, about five or six miles away. We had to go through two miles of trees before we came out in the open. It was a dark night except for the snow. How the people found their way, I could not tell; all the trees and openings looked alike to me. We went with Mr. and Mrs. Chapman, in their sleigh and with another neighbour, Mrs. J. Mahaffey, whose husband was working in the mountains that winter. John and Joe Jameson rode horseback. My brother did not go as he did not care for dancing. We finally got there, got thawed out and then went into the room where the dance was. We were not allowed to sit down much as girls were very scarce, so before we knew it we were up dancing among the others.

It was then we learned to dance the square dances and quadrilles I have mentioned before we had a good partner who knew all the dances and we were told to listen to the caller-off, and we would know what to do. What aliman left was, we could not make out and swing your honey sounded queer to us. However, we watched the others and did as they did and got through somehow. We drove home in broad daylight after having a good lunch at midnight of sandwiches, cake, pie, tea and coffee. Before leaving we also had a hot breakfast of beef steak, potatoes, hot biscuits and jam, tea or coffee. The ladies all helped and had taken cakes and pies with them to the dance. There were always lots of young fellows at the dances; the country in those days was mostly settled by bachelors living on their homesteads. There were very few married people the first years.

The next dance was at the Brewster Ranch and that was even farther away. One of the Breswters had been away and his friends gathered there to welcome him home. We went with Mr. and Mrs. Chapman again and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. We were known as the little English girls, although I was seventeen and my sister fourteen. We were just about the same size. John Jameson played the violin at these dance, at times someone helped out and gave him a rest. The boys went with us in the sleigh to that dance as it was a long ride. There were some Bachelors from the Blind Man Valley, mostly Englishmen. There was

a Canadian boy, called Jack Tipping who played a guitar, a Mr. Plowright and a young fellow, called Ed Wigmore, who played mandolins. That was quite a band in those days.

During the interval, after lunch was served, there was quite a lot of singing and reciting. Mrs. Chapman came to us and asked if we would sing some of the latest songs for them. We did so and after the first line or two the guitar and mandolins played in accompaniment. We had to sing two or three songs before they were satisfied. We thought it strange that so few of the Canadian or American girls and women could sing but hardly ever sang in public at all. We had been taught to sing ever since we could remember.

That was the last dance of the winter for us. More snow fell and we had to stay home. Our only exercise was snowballing and racing down the trail and back. We had to get out in the fresh air. We often thought of the beautiful moonlight nights of the summer and fall. As December wore on, we started to think about Christmas. We could not go to town to buy presents, so I decided to make something for each member of the family. Knitting seemed to be the best thing. I had a smoking cap for my father, which I had sent from New York by our brother there, he had also sent a few other gifts. He sent us a boxful of useful and ornamental things and lots of candy. Included were papers from London, The Graphic, and the London News, so we fared better than some of neighbours.

We were all sorry for the little girl across the fields' she was seven years old and had no toys of any kind, no candy, nuts or apples. We got a large stocking and filled it with everything we could except a doll and went over Christmas Eve. It was a joy to one child at least.

There was no school where we lived and she was the only child of school age, so we offered to teach her. She was bright enough and very intelligent but not keen on learning so we had to bribe her with sweets to get her to learn anything. In the very cold weather we could not get through the deep drifts across the fields. One night her parents took my sister to a party some miles away and I offered to keep Lily and teach her another lesson. She was not in the mood to be taught anything as she wanted to go to the party. She was very fond of bread and jam, so I promised her a large slice of bread and jam before she would do anything. Then, I was surprised at the ease with which she learned what I taught her that night. When the lesson was over, she looked at me and said where was that bread and jam? She told me that she and her mother had not had any tea, sugar or butter, or jam all winter but her Daddy always had his tobacco. I gave her more bread and jam, also weak tea, when she was quite happy, going to bed without a murmur. I had expected to sit up and coax her to bed. She was really one of the smartest little girls I had ever met. Quick to see and hear anything and so quick to learn when she wanted to.

We had lots of prairie chickens that fall and in the winter a few partridges. These were very good eating and we enjoyed them. Some I stuffed and roasted, others I made into stew, but my fathers favorite was a chicken pie. We never tired of them as we did the

rabbits. When the first snow came, the rabbits would sit among the trees and did not seem at all afraid of us. They used to call to each other in the early morning. One very bright moonlight night, we stepped outside to watch the rabbits playing around our grain stacks when all of a sudden, quite close to us; we heard a sound like whoo whoo. We were frightened at first for we could not see anything near us. It sounded again, almost above our heads, and looking up we saw a great white owl. Perched in a tree near the house, apparently watching the rabbits playing. These owls would swoop down and pick up these small snowshoe rabbits. We used to find bits of white fur scattered around; they were very cruel. Eagle and hawks had been plentiful that summer and were not the least afraid of anything except a gun. One afternoon our little black dog was sleeping against the house when an eagle swooped down on her, intending to carry her off. Nell leaped up, barking as loud as she could, which brought my brother running from the barn. The eagle lit in a tree not too far away, so Tom went for his gun. As soon as the eagle saw the light shining on the barrel it soared away up in the sky and for a long time never came back. It had taken a heavy toll of our chickens that summer, but my brother had never happened to be around. However, that gave the dog a scare, and whenever she saw a shadow over her from the sky, she barked enough to awaken the dead. No hawks or eagles came around where she was.

I should have mentioned the Lacombe Fair earlier. As near as I can remember, it was held in October. One of us had to go to Lacombe as the men were busy, so it was decided I should go. Mr. and Mrs Simpson were going and were to travel on the old trail we had traveled the first night we came to the country. I was to meet them at a point two miles across the valley, at a certain time. I was to take my lunch. When we got to Lacombe I had shopping to do, then I would visit the fair. While shopping we met Mrs. Chapman and a friend of hers from Buffalo Lake who was Mathew Cook's daughter, Mrs. Jim Brindle. We all visited the fair together. Mrs Simpson was only with us for awhile, and then she went with her husband to see the horses, cattle, pigs, and poultry etc. We went to see the needle work section, also the home cooking and vegetables. There was a wonderful display of beautiful hand made quilts from Ontario, brought by settlers from there. There were also, lovely print dresses, aprons, hooked rugs, and embroidery of all kinds. It was a wonderful display and Mrs Brindle said she wished her mother could see the beautiful quilts. I was amazed at the quantities of vegetables and canned fruits. Some must have been from the year before as there were strawberries, raspberries and Saskatoon's. I can't recall all I saw, but there were some very large cabbages, lots of carrots, turnips, onions and potatoes. Sheaves of Wheat, oats, and barley were displayed. I do not know if any of the grain was ripe, but it may have been as we had wheat and oats that year. The next year we had nothing. Seeing all the things at the fair, urged me on to fresh efforts. The butter pats were round with cow's heads patterned on them. The hams and bacon made me feel hungry. There was home-made cheese, also honey on display. I thought the whole fair was wonderful.

WINTER. AURORA BOREALIS AND SUN DOGS. CHRISTMAS IN A NEW  
Country. MY STEPMOTHER AND YOUNGER SISTER ARRIVE FROM ENGLAND

Mrs. Chapman's brothers had gone to wash gold on the Saskatchewan River, near Edmonton, but when the first snow came, they returned to the valley. Joe Jameson came up one night to see if we were still here, he pretended the cold, the snow and the Indians had scared us out. Before Christmas, John and Joe Jameson, decided to go to the canyon to poison coyotes. There was a good trail on the Red Deer River, made by men hauling coal from somewhere near Trail Creek to Red Deer. It was bitter cold weather while they were away, with the thermometer at 40 degrees below at nights. We asked them how they kept from freezing to death as they were out in the open. They told us there was very little wind in the Canyon and on the river, as the banks were so high. They had built two large fires some distance apart, then spread spruce boughs and covered them with blankets. They slept between the two fires. They had put out their poison bait as soon as they had got there. Next morning, they picked up about twenty coyotes. The next day and a half, they got twenty-two more. They had asked my father to come for them on the third day after he had taken them down. He did so and had quite a trip as it was extremely cold. The boys sold their coyotes to Mr. Brumpton in Red Deer and got a dollar and quarter, to a dollar and a half for them. We thought that was a lot of money for coyote skins in those days. Actual money was the one thing that was scarce.

One night, Joe came over with his banjo, and we had a musical evening, singing "Darky" songs we had learned in the States. My father's favorite was a song called the Banjo am the Instrument for me, a song of a Negro slave. Joe used to sing it and it soon became a favorite of us all. That winter we learned a lot of new card games but whist remained the favorite, especially when one of the neighbours dropped in for the evening. I always played too, to make the fourth, and I used to think it very tiresome, as the game would last three hours sometimes. My brother had brought an accordion with him and we learned lots of new songs and sang some of the old English ones my father liked. Reading was my favorite recreation and my brother George kept me well supplied, he always knew the books I liked. So with a few dances, card games, visits from the neighbours, musical evenings, and our reading, the winter passed pleasantly away.

I will never forget the first time we saw the Northern Lights, and such a display. It was the real aurora Borealis with coloured, moving lights in the sky. They were to the North and East flashing high overhead at times. We thought it the most wonderful and marvelous phenomenon. One clear, cold morning, my brother called us to come outside and look at the sun. There were bright lights



on each side of it. We asked what they were, and he told us they were “sun dogs” and that we could expect real cold weather. We had had lots of cold weather already, so wondered how much colder it could be. A day or two later, the thermometer dropped to 50 degrees below Fahrenheit, and the fires had to be kept burning all night to keep things from freezing. Towards the end of January a thaw came and the sun shone brightly during the day. This thaw was called The Chinook, and was caused by a warm wind from the Pacific Ocean, coming through a pass in the mountains. It was really surprising how the snow started to melt and the drifts went down. A trail was soon opened through the bush to Lacombe and a good supply of groceries laid in. Tom told us the worst weather was to come. February was a bad month.

We had word from England that my stepmother and sister Eva, would be arriving in Alberta about the first week in March. This letter came just before Christmas. We were very excited as our first Christmas here drew near. The men folk had gone to Lacombe early in December and had gotten dried fruit, currants and raisins for the baking. My brother from New York also sent up articles for the festive season. There were chocolates, nuts and eating raisins, figs and some small toys for the little girl on the next farm.

Father invited two Englishmen to spend Christmas with us. Mr. Lockwood was quite elderly, and had been a butler for a wealthy family in England; his partner was a young fellow, about a year older than my brother. His name was Bert Richards, and he was from Gosport, near Portsmouth in England. Mr. Lockwood came from Aldreshot. My father had been a strong Liberal in politics in England and Mr. Lockwood was a conservative and also a strong churchman. I used to listen to them arguing about the British government and also about church affairs. Mr. Lockwood had very strong ideas on both, also on how teenagers should behave. I used to think he would like to shut all the children and teenagers in a room and never let them out. We were never allowed to speak when he visited us. I used to wonder if he had ever been young himself and how his partner put up with him. Everything had to be his way. Father said it was because he was a bachelor and never had much to do with children or young people. My brother, sister and I, entertained the young fellow and left father and Mr. Lockwood to their reminiscences of England in their young days. It is funny how older people always think their childhood was much better.

Christmas Day seemed quiet to us. We were used to going to Sunday school concerts and taking part in them, then, there were always parties, both at home and with relatives and friends. Next day was Boxing Day. Mr. Lockwood invited us down to their place to spend the day. He was a very good cook and had a good old fashioned English dinner for us. He had, among other things, roasted a large round of beef; in the afternoon, an Indian from Buffalo Lake, called in to get warm, his name was Peter Canchise, and he spoke English fairly well. It appeared his squaw had made moccasins to sell, and he was on his way to Red Deer to sell them. He showed us the moccasins. My father and Bert Richards each bought a pair, the others were too large for Mr. Lockwood and Tom. Before the Indian left, Mr. Lockwood

made a pot of tea, cut a pile of bread and butter and also put a plate of beef on the table. He invited the Indian to sit down and eat. He did so and when finished, much to our surprise, cleared all the rest of the food off the table. He merely said, Papoose, as he put it in one of his large pockets. After he had gone, we all voiced our astonishment of such a proceeding. That should have taught us a lesson but it did not, as I shall mention later.

The days were very fine and sunny that first Christmas, but afterwards it was very cold and fires had to be kept up day and night. We used to take turns, sitting up for so many hours. The early part of the night was usually my sister's turn, from 10 pm to midnight. One night, just before New Years, she was reading a story in one of the English Christmas number, called the Haunted Man, by Charles Dickens. I was going to take the next watch and answer some of my Christmas mail. We had all just nicely gone to sleep when my sister came running into the room. She woke me up and then threw herself on the bed. I was finally awake enough to shake her and ask what happened. She said, she had just put more wood on the fire and started to read again, when she heard a noise outside her window. Of course, she thought Indians right away and fled from the room. My father was awakened by the noise she made and got up. He was a very light sleeper and the least noise disturbed him. He told me to stay in bed and he got up, smoked, read and attended the fire until 6 o'clock when I got up. Next night my brother took the long turn and we never asked Elizabeth to do the fires again; she was too nervous. Some kind of wild animal had been around but Tom covered up the tracks so we never knew just what or who it was.

We had no blinds on the windows in those days, just muslin curtains, anyone could see through the living room and kitchen windows. At night everything was so still you could hear a pin drop. The nights were so dark and so long, just like we used to read about in our school books about travelers in Northern Canada and the North Western United States.

The weather grew colder as January passed and only a few adventurous spirits were abroad. Our neighbour, Mr. Kilby, used to come for a game of whist about once a week and some of the young neighbours defied the cold and came over for a musical. On moonlight nights when the weather moderated, some of the married couples drove over in their sleighs. Once in a while we would clear the kitchen and have a dance. Early in February, the kitchen was all finished and a room for my brother fixed up above it. My stepmother and sister had sailed for Halifax and would soon arrive in Lacombe.

We decided to kill a pig and have a party before my stepmother arrived. Mrs. Roe and her sons came over; the boys helped with the killing, and Mrs. Roe came to visit as we had not seen her very much since Christmas. A day or two later, Mrs. Roe came over early one morning and showed us how to make the english pork pies, "Brawn", a kind of head cheese, and sausages. We were very busy for a couple of days, getting the meat salted and put away. Then we

invited the neighbours over to supper one evening, when the weather was mild. These little parties were enjoyed by everyone. We sang, played games, told stories and enjoyed ourselves generally.

Soon after that my father had news that my stepmother would be in Lacombe on a certain day. My father took the sleigh and drove to Lacombe early one morning. He wanted to have the shopping done before the train came in which was about four in the afternoon. He also wished to be home before dark. The snow was very deep in the timber that spring. On the way home, my stepmother saw a wolf skulking through the trees, not far from the trail. Father whipped up the horses and soon they were home. My father told me afterwards that we were not to go up the trail into the bush on any account. It was a favorite walk as the snow was packed by the sleigh runners which made walking easy. We had often gone for a walk when the weather was mild. I often wondered after, if it was a wolf that had scared Elizabeth the night she sat up reading. The wolf they said was not far up the trail. However, it was never seen again and, in time, we ceased to think about it. There were plenty of coyotes around, howling and yapping at night. but they were cowardly and would skulk away if you went after them. A wolf was different, you could not frighten them away unless you had a gun. Lynx were plentiful too, in those early years; the first time we heard them calling, we thought it was a person calling for help. Such a weird noise. It sounded like a human voice at times. Badgers, too, were often troublesome, especially in the spring and fall. If you got between them and their hole, they would come at you and show 'fight'. We always gave them a wide berth.

## SPRING 1896

Easter was early in 1896, Good Friday being on April 3. My stepmother showed me how to make the English, Hot cross buns. We kept Easter as we did in England. We had a short service on Easter Sunday morning and sang hymns; then my father read the story of the Resurrection and we talked of the Easter services at our little chapel in England. We were Wesleyan Methodist; my father's people were all Episcopalians. My mother and also my stepmother were Wesleyans. My stepmother's birthday was on April 4, Easter Saturday; we invited some of the neighbours for tea and also to make her acquaintance.

About this time we bought a cow from Tom Ross, who lived down the valley. The new cow's name was Joan; she was a good milker and easy to handle. My brother and I wondered why Tom Ross sold her as they were always on the lookout for good cows. We found out later to our sorrow.

At last, the snow began to disappear and although it was freezing at nights, the winter had broken. There was still ice on the sloughs but mostly the ground was bare of snow. We had been shut in for so long, my sister and I decided to walk down the valley to visit Mrs. Roe. They had moved from the sod house a short time before into a hewn log house near the trail. By picking our way, we thought we could make it over the ice without getting too wet. All would have been well if our younger sister, Eva, had stayed at home. She insisted on coming and my stepmother made us take her along. We had gone about a mile, when Mr. Chapman and John Jameson came riding by. They told us that the ice would not bear us up, and we could not get around the slough unless we went a mile east. It was then about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, so we decided to risk the ice. The water would not be very deep anyway. All went well until we were about half way across, when all of a sudden we heard a crack, an ominous sound. We stopped, and one of us tried it a little farther to the left. Nothing doing, the only way to cross was to go straight ahead. We made a chair of our hands and carried Eva across, but we waded through water up to our waists. We did not linger but hurried to Roe's as fast as we could.

As soon as we got there Eva began to cry and we could not stop her. Mrs. Roe gave us some dry clothes and her boys built a big fire in the stove. We all had tea and sat around visiting. When our clothes were dry enough to put on, Alfred Roe hitched up his horses to a sleigh and took us home. We were none the worse from our wading in the water, but as soon as we got home, my sister started being hysterical again. In vain, we, and even Alfred, told my stepmother that Eva never got wet as we had carried her. But she continued to scold us. That was the last time we ever took her anywhere again, unless we had horses. Elizabeth never would, even then.

It was shortly after this that one or two families, who had come to the country by covered wagon, decided to go back and left for the United States. The hardships they had suffered in the winter just past were too much for their wives and families. Their diet that winter had consisted chiefly of rabbits, salt, turnips, black bread and barley coffee. So many of the settlers had to live like that. The long cold months had been hard on the animals too; they were unused to this cold climate and high altitude, thus many were the horses and cows, brought in by the settlers that perished that winter of 1885-1896. The tough Indian Cayuses seemed the only horses that could rustle in the snow and live. So many of the settlers, who came from the states, traveled hundreds of mile by wagon. Many were from Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. They arrived so late in the summer that the haying season was practically over and the grass then had little nourishment in it when cut after August. That and a lack of proper shelter caused the loss of stock.

There was a family by the name of Bean, who lived six or eight miles south of us towards the Red Deer River. They left Alberta in the spring of 1895 but returned the same fall, having found no better location. They were one family of settlers who had first come by covered wagon from the mid western states. They had suffered terrible hardships during the winter of 1895 and had existed as I mentioned previously. It is to the endurance and amazing courage of these early United States settlers that Alberta owes so much. They were wonderful pioneers, taking things as a matter of course without complaining, as so many of the later settlers did. This small tribute I pay them. Many of the children and grandchildren of these early pioneers are some of our most prosperous and enterprising farmers today.

The spring came with a rush. As soon as the snow was gone from the hills, we found our first crocus. They are pretty pale purple flowers shaped exactly like the crocuses in England, except they had fuzz on them. A short time after this we became acquainted with some new neighbours who came to live west of us in the bush about two miles away. They were Charlie and Frank Stevenson and they hailed from Iowa. Our colt, Topsy, developed distemper and as our remedies did not seem to help her any, our father decided to fetch these neighbours. We had become acquainted with them through Mr.A.Bagley who had come from the same town in Iowa. They immediately came over, took one look at the colt, and asked for a pail, a piece of old leather and some sulphur. They put the leather in the pail and set fire to it. When it was burning good they threw sulphur into the pail and held it to the colt's nose, poking her head close to the fumes. After a few minutes they took the pail away and backed off from the colt just as she began to sneeze and cough. You can imagine the rest; the abscess in her throat had broken and the puss flew all over. In a very short time, she was completely well again. Such a primitive method but a very good cure. We were astonished how quickly Topsy got well again.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS. THE GARDEN AND CROPS. ALSO PIGS

At least the weather was warm enough to start putting in the garden. Tom was already sowing his Red fife Wheat. He also had a small piece of ground for an experimental field, to test the different varieties of wheat, oats and barley for germination and length of time it took each variety to come up and mature. We were all interested in that part of our life. My father and I were the gardeners. George, our brother in New York, had sent us a great variety of Vegetable and flower seeds and we made up our minds to try them all. So we started early in May. The garden soil was a very deep black loam; rich soil was a good beginning. We had seen the vegetables that we could grow at the fair, so had great expectations. Mrs. Roe had shown us her garden the summer before, and my sister and I were quite thrilled by the look of it. So my father and I put in a large garden. I always loved to work in a garden and in the States I had grown lovely flowers of all kinds, so I thought I would try them here. The seeds all came up well and we kept the long rows free of weeds. By the first of July everything looked fine. We had cress, radishes, and lettuce in abundance in June.

Not long after this, my stepmother decided I should go to Lacombe to do some shopping. She called me into her room and told me I was to leave at 6:30 am the next morning. I was to go with Mrs. Chapman. I tried to tell her that would be Saturday and I was not ready to go as it was always a busy day with me. No argument availed so I had to go. I was up bright and early, ate a lunch and started to walk the three quarters of a mile to the Chapman's house.

We left from there at 7:30 am and as the bush road was almost impassable, took the road to the west past Mr. Ash's place. The trails were in terrible condition and we had to go miles out of the way to avoid the muskegs and skirt around the sloughs. The horses walked every step of the way. It was a lovely day, birds twittering and calling from the trees by the way. Flowers were plentiful and wild fowl, ducks and snipes were in abundance on lakes and sloughs. These are very good to eat, either fried, roasted or made into pie. There was no early frost that year of 1896, so I saw lots of wild strawberries in the grass around the sloughs. It was all new country to me.

However, the trip was very tiring; we sat on a board covered with a rug and placed across a single wagon box. At some jolts I thought I was going to be thrown out of the wagon. We reached Lacombe about noon, having passed the Bruce's farm and also the Nichol brother's place. It must have been twelve miles, the round about way we went. We returned home the same way as the trails made better traveling for quite a few miles out of Lacombe.

It was 7:30 pm when we reached the Chapman's place. My sisters, who had been listening for the sound of the wagon, met me on the trail as I walked home. Elizabeth and Eva eagerly gave me all the details of their day. It seemed they had been put to work to do the things I usually did, and were not at all pleased. They had also found a lost hen stuck between two upright logs in the pig's pen. The girls went with Tom later to bring home the groceries, meat and other articles I had bought in Lacombe. Quite an orgy of shopping for me that day; I very rarely went to shop, as my sister was fonder of that job than I was, hence her displeasure when she found me away in the morning. I sometimes wished she had gone in my place and got all the jolts and bumps. I was quite stiff the next day, but as it was Sunday I could rest a bit and read.

The fruit that summer was very plentiful. Gooseberries and raspberries grew on the beaver dam below the house and to the west end of the slough and near the ravine that takes an end just there. An old Indian once told my father that fifty years before we lived there, there had been lots of beaver around, there was a large four roomed beaver house not far from the dam. We found Dew berries, something like raspberries only growing on a trailing vine on the hillsides. And black currants along the creek in the ravine. There were also Saskatoon's, choke cherries and high bush berries, as large as tame gooseberries, with long blooms, dark red in color and when cooked tasted like black currants. I never found out their name but they made lovely jam and jelly. Late in September, there came lots of cranberries too. They were very sour and it took a lot of sugar to make jelly from them. I picked, canned by cold pack and preserved sixty quarts of wild fruit that summer and fall, starting with strawberries which were plentiful in June. Blueberries, the old stand by, were also a good crop and I made jam from them too. We all enjoyed it. The wild fruit was a great help to our menu. The first year, we had no variety and had to rely on dried prunes and apples to help out the blueberries.

Then we bought another pig, a large white Yorkshire sow. She became a great nuisance and was always getting out of her pen; once she followed the men folk through the bush for three miles. To the top of Arnold's hill. We hunted all over for her and finally found her in the middle of the muskeg, in the late afternoon. She was tired out with her journey, covered with mud and glad to get to her pen to be fed. No more bother with her that night. The next day the men decided to put a ring in her snout so we all went down to the barn to watch and see how it was done. We all had a grudge against her, as she always came grunting around the kitchen door just at dinner time and a grand chase we had to get her back in the pen and then usually returned to the house to a cold dinner.

My father sat on her back to hold her while my brother put the ring in her snout. At the first touch, off she went. my father hanging on to her and riding her. We all laughed so much we could do nothing to help; and father calling to us to head her off at the fence. My stepmother waved her white apron and we all chased after her with sticks but it took a long time to corner her, and drive her into the pen. That was where they finally barricaded her and ringed her for good.

Such excitement and laughter, even my stepmother said it was the funniest thing she ever saw, father riding a pig, and she laughed too, whenever she thought of it. Father couldn't see the funny side for a long time, and said it was no Childs play hanging on to that big sow. My sister and I just hated pigs, they were always doing something. Many were the stories we heard from the neighbours of the troubles they had with their pigs, so that was some consolation. Dear me. Pretty near a whole page about pigs. They were the bane of our young lives, only enjoyed when we were eating them. No wonder Frank Roe used to come over to hear them squeal when they were being killed; we thought him a regular barbarian until we had lots of pigs of our own.

One evening in May, a nasty wet night, I was told to go over to Kilby's for the mail as Mr. Kilby had just got home from Lacombe. My stepmother was expecting some special letters from England. I hesitated at first as I knew I would get a good soaking, walking across the field and slough, where the grass was so high; To go around by the road would take too long and it was getting late, also I was more liable to get lost as well among the trees. Off I started as fast as possible. The mail had arrived all right and in addition there was an important looking letter for my father and a large package addressed to the Misses Makepeace, in care of my father. I was very curious to know what was in that parcel so hurried home. To our delight it contained chocolate creams, bon bons, and French creams. What a treat after not tasting any sweets like them for two years. It was a present from the Mr. Jackson, whom we met on the train after we left Moose Jaw. We had parted from him at Lacombe. He evidently had not forgotten us.

Father's letter was very important as it offered him the job of enumeration for the conservative government. He was to do the settlements north and east of Wetaskiwin. There were Swedish and Russian colonists in the area. The Swedish settlers were very intelligent and believed in governments and they readily gave my father the information he asked for. Very different were the Russians, they looked upon anyone connected with government with the greatest suspicion and distrust. My father finally had to find an interpreter to tell them all he wanted to know; he had to find out how many people lived in that house and the fathers name, so the government would know how many people lived in the country. My father told us these Swedish and Russian settlers lived much the same as they did Europe, sleeping between feather ticks, especially the Scandinavians. He was well treated by these people who trusted an Englishman.

The Russians had no use for any form of government and at first my father could not even get a nights lodging. Luckily the weather was fine although the nights were cold. Before long he posed as just a traveller and then could stay all night. He noted how many people lived there and next morning after breakfast, paid them and asked their name. By so doing he was able to find out what he wanted to know. The Scandinavians on the other hand, asked for news of the different parts of the world. My father had a few New York papers with him to read at odd times, so he left them with these people, who treated him to the best in the house, including a good bed. They were wonderful settlers Father said, so clean, thrifty and industrious, also very religious.



Some Russians treated him well too, but it was hard to break through their reserve, suspicion and mistrust; an Englishman was all right but not as a government representative. Their houses were of logs with thatched roofs, and the doors were also thatched on a frame. As my father did not know the country he was given a guide from the Hobbema Reserve, an Indian by the name of Joseph Whitford who was a protestant. His people had all been Christianized by the McDougal Missionaries. A Mr. Bouchier, from southern Alberta, had been to our house and had given my father the necessary papers and instructions, and also told him he could get a guide at the Indian Reservation. On their long rides my father would sing some of the Methodist hymns that were well known and then Joseph Whitford would join in and sing them in the Cree Language. Sometimes father rode alone to the different settlements and often met Indians. He always carried a good supply of plug tobacco and also candy. When he met an Indian, he would say "smoke" and then father would hand out a plug of tobacco and when squaws come up it was the same thing. If there was a young squaw, he would give her candy or a small coin. They always expected something. At first the long days in the saddle tired him as he was not used to riding so far, but gradually it ceased to bother him and he thoroughly enjoyed the scenery of the different places he went. It was quite an experience for him and he gained a lot of knowledge of the country and its inhabitants.

Then we bought another cow from Mr. Howell, the druggist in Lacombe. We called her White Bess and her calf, Beauty; she was a good milker, gentle and easy to milk. It was my chore to help with the milking as Tom would often be away and I was the only one who had learned to milk. Later, we bought a Black Angus yearling heifer from a neighbour, Tom Hitson, who was staying at Kirby's that winter. Father sold our first cow, Birdie, to the butcher, Mr. Puffer in Lacombe. He used to get the Indians to tan the hides for robes. Ours was so stiff we could not use it for a robe, there was too much glue left in it. It was a very large hide, as she was a big light colored roan shorthorn, almost pure bred.

Now that the weather was fine we drove to the services in the Canyon school house. It was rough riding in the wagon but we could all go that way and the six of us helped to swell the congregation. Sometimes we drove horseback as that was the best and easiest way to travel. But we only had three riding horses so then some of us had to stay home. As a rule, Tom, Elizabeth and I went. Sometimes we took Eva along but she did not ride by herself at that time. The horses would sometimes get scared and shy at the least noise.

About this time, one of the neighbours to the west, about three miles away, Will Smith had his father and sister visiting from the States. He had invited my father and stepmother over to supper on Sunday and of course we returned the compliment and invited them to visit us. We found Miss Smith very sociable and friendly and we visited with each other a lot that summer and for as long as she stayed at her brothers.

One day along in the summer, she got quite a good scare. As she was riding through the bush she ran into a badger; she jumped off her horse, got a stick and tried to drive it away. It wouldn't move and her horse was getting restless. Finally, she gave up, ran to her horse and backed him down the trail until she came to an opening. Then she circled around through the bush until past the badger. She was very excited as the horse came galloping up to the house. She said she was not a bit afraid of the badger until it started to snarl and came towards her showing fight. It was then she ran for her horse. Usually Miss Smith was a very calm sort of person. Tom said she must have been between the badger and its hole. He warned us to leave badgers strictly alone and to go around them instead of trying to pass them in a road as she did. We rode with back with her, hoping to see a badger as we had never seen one. However, it had disappeared, and as often as we rode that trail we never caught a glimpse of a badger. This was in the early summer of 1896.

A short time before, Mr. and Mrs. Chapman had moved to the lower end of Pleasant valley. She had been such a good neighbour and friend to us from our first visit with her. We were sorry to see her leave; they were going to live near Mrs. Haines, where we went to our first dance, and it seemed so far away. Mr. Chapman decided to go where it was not so closely settled on account of his stock. Later on in August, Mrs. Chapman's mother Mrs. Jameson, came to join her husband and sons who lived just two miles south of us. She came from London Ontario and was a wonderful neighbour teaching me lots of things. As a little girl she had gone from Little York, as Toronto was then called, up into county Grey with her father in 1845. They were pioneers there in those days; as our other friend, Mrs. Roe had moved near the trail, their houses were not far apart so we could pay them both a visit the same afternoon. We were quite at home riding horseback, so distance was nothing; we could even walk there.

We were nearing the rainy season again when my stepmother became very ill and the doctor ordered her to be kept in bed. The roof of the house had been made water tight, as we supposed, so I was not thinking about a leaky roof. However the rain came down so hard and lasted so long that one part of it leaked and that was the side where my stepmother's bedroom was. As it only leaked a little, she did not want to be moved so we arranged our umbrellas as sort of a tent over her and put pans to catch any drip. She was under a canopy. We kept a good fire in the heater to ward off chill' at least we kept her dry and she looked upon it as sort of adventure. I often wondered after what would have happened if her illness had turned to pneumonia; there was only one C.P.R doctor in Lacombe, Dr. Richardson and he was worked to death. However, All's well that ends well. A favorite quotation of my brothers; he said this to us when we told him of our trials and tribulations. My stepmother soon recovered and found great pleasure walking in the garden which was coming on well, especially after so much rain.

My brother decided to have more land plowed. This was called New Breaking, and he hired one of the Roe boys with his yoke of oxen to do it for him. This was something new to us girls and we used to walk up the trail to see the oxen working. Frank Roe always cut a pile of willow switches before he started and kept them at the end of each furrow. We argued with him that it was very cruel to whip them so much, but he only gave us a queer look and told us we had never plowed with oxen. One afternoon, my father went to help him with the outfit as the flies and mosquitos were terrible. We took them a can of tea and some lunch. Frank said he could manage the rest of the afternoon so my father came back to the house with us. I heard him telling my stepmother that he had run his soul into more sin that afternoon than in his whole life. We found out afterwards that the only way to drove oxen was to swear at them. We thought that was a terrible thing but my brother and Frank just laughed when we told them they should be ashamed of themselves, to use bad language on the poor oxen. That was the only time we ever saw oxen working. They were so slow that horses were used most of the time.

Up to this time there had been no sign of frost and our garden was a thing of beauty and a joy to contemplate. Everything had grown so much after the rain that we had our share of radishes, cress, lettuce, onions and peas. Such a nice change from potatoes, carrots and turnips; these we did not appreciate. The flowers were lovely, particularly the pansies, sweet peas and asters. These were simply gorgeous and I never tired of walking among them. The mignonette scented the air; these were so different from the prairie flowers we thought. Alas, for our hopes we had walked through the vegetable garden the night of July 20 and remarked on the wonderful growth, the next morning, July 21 when we looked out our bedroom window there was a white frost over everything. An hour or two of sunshine and you could not see a green thing left in the garden. The carrots, turnips, and potatoes were as black as the ground. What a great disappointment that was. My father and I had spent a great deal of time and care, especially among the vegetables, and anticipated a nice variety for the winter. It was late in May before we could start gardening that spring of 1896, so we had to put in long hours at it. So much for experiments. My brother had warned us we might have frost but as a rule that came early in June, after the rains. We were told not to try and grow beans and corn or anything that needed lots of hot nights. In the fall, when I took up the garden stuff, the potatoes were the size of hickory nuts and the carrots and Swede turnips, the size of a small stick. Half an inch through. They were only good to flavor soup or stews. The year before, 1895, the vegetables had been so large, especially the potatoes. The frozen potatoes had a peculiar sweet taste but we had plenty of them.

As haying season approached we noticed a light haze over everything and the sun was like a red disk. This lasted for weeks and my brother told me there was a big prairie fire somewhere south and west of the Red Deer River. About this time, we heard of an awful accident that had happened to a young boy near Red Deer; he had both legs cut off by a mower, while helping his father in the hay field. The man had got off to do something to the mower when the team started up and the knife, being in motion, caused the accident. This incident made a great impression on our minds when we heard the boy was dead. It was hard enough to live on the prairies even in the best of health.

A short time later, our neighbour, Mrs. Kilby, came home from working in a hay camp thirty miles away. She had had a very bad fall and as she was too ill to work, her husband brought her home. The day after they arrived home, the little girl, Lily, came over and asked me to go and see her mother, who had sent for me. Of course, I hurried over and found such a sad state of affairs; the poor woman in bed and not a soul to do anything for her except the little seven year old girl. Her husband had to see about getting some hay up for their animals and then harvest the bit of crop they had. They had plenty of small potatoes but little else. I prepared some food for her and helped the little girl cleaned up the house and gave her a cool wash. She said she felt a little better, knowing she would not be all alone anymore, as I promised to come everyday and do what I could to help her. I was not very big myself as I only weighed seventy-eight pounds, but I knew how to do things and was sympathetic. That helped a lot she said. When I got home and told my stepmother, she said she would walk over the next day and see what could be done.

Mrs. Kilby was a great knitter and thought perhaps she could sell hand knit socks in Lacombe. We ordered quite a few pairs for ourselves, stockings as well, and she was quite pleased, as she said it made the time pass more quickly; I was glad to get away from my knitting as it was a job I thoroughly disliked. My father told some of his friends in town about Mrs. Kilby, so she soon had more orders than she could fill. It was months before she was able to get around again the doctor said she had bruised her spine, and she must lie in bed to give it a chance to heal properly. My stepmother had insisted on sending for the doctor; as soon as she had seen and talked to her. She always liked Mrs. Kilby and helped her a lot. There were a lot of blueberries that fall and the little girl used to pick them for sale.

One morning I was very busy and could not go over and see Mrs. Kilby until I took her some dinner, so sent my sister Eva to ask Lily how her mother was that morning. Eva was to pick some berries for pies. She came rushing home, quite excited. She said to me "what do you think lily said when I asked her how her mother was?" She then told me that lily said, "My papa says, if you ask me anymore questions I was to say, I don't know. I asked my sister if she had asked any questions and she laughed and said NO. But Lily told her the funniest things. Lily was a precocious child and I puzzled over that for a long time but finally decided I would go over and see Mrs. Kilby as usual. I never liked Mr. Kilby, so did not pay much attention. Eventually his wife was able to get up for a short time each day so I decided to make my visits fewer in the future. I had been in the habit of giving the little girl lessons in reading on these visits she was such a sharp child it was a pleasure to teach her.

About this time, we got word from Mr. Ried in Lacombe, that the hay balers were in the vicinity and would be at our place in a day or two. As we had quite a few stacks to be baled, we thought they would be some days at our place. Next morning Father, Eva and I left for Lacombe to get provisions as our groceries were running low. We had bought the provisions and about sixty pounds of beef which looked like a whole hind leg. We were just ready for home, when Mr. Burris, the postmaster, came running out to the road waving along letter which had been overlooked when we had asked for our mail. It was quite

a surprise to us as we were not expecting an English letter. It was from my fathers Lawyer in England and enclosed was a draft on the Bank of England for thirty pounds, payment of an old debt. We loaded up a few extras to celebrate.

We got another surprise when we got home; the hay balers had arrived for dinner. As there was no meat, one of the men offered to catch some young roosters He and some others killed, plucked and cleaned them so they had fried chicken, vegetables and pudding, all made in a hurry. By the time we reached home, a number of bales were made. Such excitement when they came. Our sister told us Tom was out after the cattle as they had had an early dinner, so while she rode around to find him; my stepmother had to be very busy cooking. The men were all good natured; she told them we had not expected them as we had word they would not be at our place for a day or two. We enjoyed having them it was something like having threshers. Most of them came from north of Lacombe, around Wetaskiwin.

I used to wonder if Mr.Kilby resented us going there and taking care of his wife; at any rate, she had been left alone and was not able to move at all. They were very poor in those days, and the little girl ran barefoot, although it was turning colder, One day she said to me, you know if I pick up nine bushels of potatoes my Papa will buy me a pair of shoes, so my feet won't get so cold. I felt so sorry for her that when I went home I hunted out a pair of my sisters hoses and took them over to her early the next morning. Such a delighted child you seldom see and how she danced up and down in them. She was quite elfish looking too and had a queer trick of looking at you sideways. She turned out to be a beautiful woman and married a wealthy mine owner in the BC mountains. Being the only child of her age in the district, everyone noticed her. We intended to see that she had a good Christmas that year and she did. It seemed to us, who had been brought up in a city and had lots of toys and amusements when we were tiny tots, that she had an unhappy narrow life for a child of her age. I remember how sorry we all were for that little girl, my stepmother especially, and how kind she was to Lily and her mother.

It was now well into the month of November and my fathers birthday was on the 30<sup>th</sup>, so we decided to celebrate the day. Mr.Kilby had been lucky enough to shoot a large deer, so we bought a haunch of venison. Such a treat after wild fowl and salt pork. The rabbits had the disease that winter and were not fit to eat for food. We had not killed our steer yet either, as they did not want to freeze it too soon. Then too, the weather had been very stormy. I think our neighbour would rather go hunting than to work at home.

As the snow was too deep to do much walking away from the house, we used to take a walk around it, as the wind kept a space clear. One morning, a bright, sunny day, we walked around the house and in the snow we saw large foot prints of some wild animal. They led right up to our bedroom window and we could see where it had lain down. We followed its tracks up over the hill into the timber and then we decided to turn back. The tracks in the snow were as large as a bears. We thought it must have been after our chickens, or

maybe the pigs, which were always closed up tight at nights. Tom saw the tracks and thought they looked like Lynx. Tom had warned us about hungry marauding wild animals when winter came. There were also, large wolves up in the bush and we could hear them at night; such a blood curdling sound. My brother and father used to see them when cutting logs for the new barn and rails for fencing. There had been one or two the year before, perhaps more, only they never saw more than one at a time. We lived on the edge of the timber that ran from the Battle River to the Red Deer, and six miles away in the canyon, bears, lynx, wolves and deer were often seen in the fall and winter. The deer traveled in a herd in November, after a snowfall but the bears holed up for the winter. Lynx and coyotes seemed very plentiful and the wolves always stayed around. We did very little horseback riding in the winter and never went into the timber. Sleighing was practically our only means of travel then.

We told our neighbour, Mr. Kilby, about the lynx sleeping under our window and he followed the tracks for two days and finally shot it. He brought it to our house and threw it into the kitchen. Such a huge beast. He told us he had to put seven bullets in it before he killed it. It must have been as hard to kill as a cat. When he threw it into the kitchen we got quite a scare. My sister would never sleep on the couch by the bedroom window again, after father had teased her and called it her bedfellow, and that settled it. It measured six feet from the end of its nose to the tip of its tail.

## EVENTS: FALL AND WINTER OF 1896

So many things happened that fall and winter. In September of 1896, the liberal government brought in Dukhobors and Galatians as new settlers. Tom and I went to Lacombe to see them. They were a wild looking people, dressed in unbleached cotton with loose trousers and long coats, belted at the waist with a leather belt. They wore sandals on their feet, and were very dark skinned with long black hair. They were called Europeans, but I had to ask my brother what part of Europe they came from; he told me southern Europe. They got off the train when it stopped at Lacombe, to walk around as they were bound for Edmonton and the North Country. Such a change of climate for them; they would have to wear their sheep skins before long, I thought. We had seen Russians when we arrived in New York who looked like them and they all wore sheep skins. It was only the Galatians who came to Alberta, the Dukhobors stayed mostly in Saskatchewan; I don't think I ever saw a Dukhobor up here. The Galacian's were originally Russians, who founded a colony in Galacia, a province of old Austria.

That spring, Joe and Nat Jameson left for the Saskatchewan River to wash for gold, and John followed in June. That was the spring, that John lost the sight of his right eye. After it healed up, he went north too. It seemed lonely without the boys, as they used to come up quite often. Mr. and Mrs. Chapman left early that summer as well. The Ross's lived a mile and a half further down the valley, so we were the only young people left. Mr. and Mrs. Mahaffey were also neighbours but lived about three miles east and south of us on the other side of the valley. Nat Jameson came early in the fall from the river, his mother had come up from Ontario that summer and was staying with her daughter, Mrs. Chapman, in their new home near the Haines Ranch. Later on, about the middle of November John and Joe came home. There were quite a few dances and parties that winter at the neighbours houses.

Shortly after the party we had for my father's birthday, Nat Jameson came up one evening with an invitation from Mrs. Chapman for us girls to go and spend Christmas with them. We had become well acquainted with Mrs. Jameson by this time, having been to visit her, and as she was going to Chapman's as well and John was driving, my father and stepmother consented to our going. We were to start right after breakfast on the morning of the 23 of December. It would take all day to get there. The worst part was getting to the trail, used by coal teams from the Red Deer River to Lacombe which went down Pleasant valley. We had to break through the timber on the east side of the valley and travel north and east to the coal trail. That took most of the morning and it was quite cold, although the sky was clear and the sun was shining. When the sun went down it was very cold. John said it was at least twenty degrees below zero.

We passed lots of teams and sleighs loaded with coal, bound for Lacombe, so the road was in good shape for traveling and we had a fast team that seemed to eat up the miles. When we were breaking a trail through the timberland, we saw tracks of wolverine. We were told they were one of the most savage of the wild animals out here; the tracks resembled those of a bear and were quite large. We also saw lots of lynx tracks and an occasional wolf track. It was a wild country in those days and not a sign of a cabin anywhere; we traveled for miles without seeing a sign of any habitation. We were very glad when we sighted the Walter's Ranch, and further on the Haines ranch. After passing the last one, Nat informed us we had only two miles to go. It was quite dark when we finally reached Chapman's on the creek. Joe was already there, and he came out and took the team after helping us girls and his mother out of the sleigh. We were all stiff and cold with sitting so long for there was no place to stop and get warm until we were near the Walter's Ranch, but we decided to drive right on. Nat had brought his banjo along and played and we sang songs and hymns until we were too cold to do anything but wrap ourselves as snugly as possible in the robes we had with us.

Such a relief to be able to stretch our limbs and we warmed up at the heater. Mrs. Chapman had the house so cozy and warm and a good hot supper waiting for us; their dogs had given warning of a sleigh coming and they guessed it would be our party. We were tired after our long ride so everyone retired early, for we knew we would be up late the next night, Christmas Eve. We were up bright and early the next morning, ready to help Mrs. Chapman prepare the Christmas dinner. Such a feast it was apples and nuts fresh from Ontario, a real treat in those days. There was lots of roast chicken, another treat as beef or deer meat was our standby. To finish off we had plum pudding, pies, cakes, and cookies of all kinds.

Christmas eve, Grandma Jameson, as we called her, told us stories of her childhood in Ontario also stories of the Banshees in Ireland, which were quite thrilling but some very scary. After that we sang songs until bedtime. Christmas Day in the afternoon we rode toboggans down the steep hill to the creek; Chapman's house was on top of the hill overlooking the creek. The day was bright and clear and we were all outside enjoying the mild day, so much warmer than the day we drove down. Christmas night passed with us young folks playing charades and acting out fairy tales. We rigged up a stage and had one or two real plays, the others enjoyed them immensely so they said. We ended the day cracking walnuts and butternuts and talking about other Christmases, in countries and places we had lived before coming to Alberta. I would like to mention that the Chapman's had two children that Christmas of 1896, a baby girl, Elsie was born on the ranch in September and now three months and Harry, aged four.

All too soon our holiday was over and the next day we were traveling the coal haulers trail back to our homes in the valley. It was a happy Christmas for all of us and its memories will always remain with the four of us who are still living. On New Years Day we had some friends who lived near, come to our Christmas dinner. My stepmother had decided to wait until we were home again, so we had two happy endings to a very disappointing year, as far as crop and garden were concerned that is.