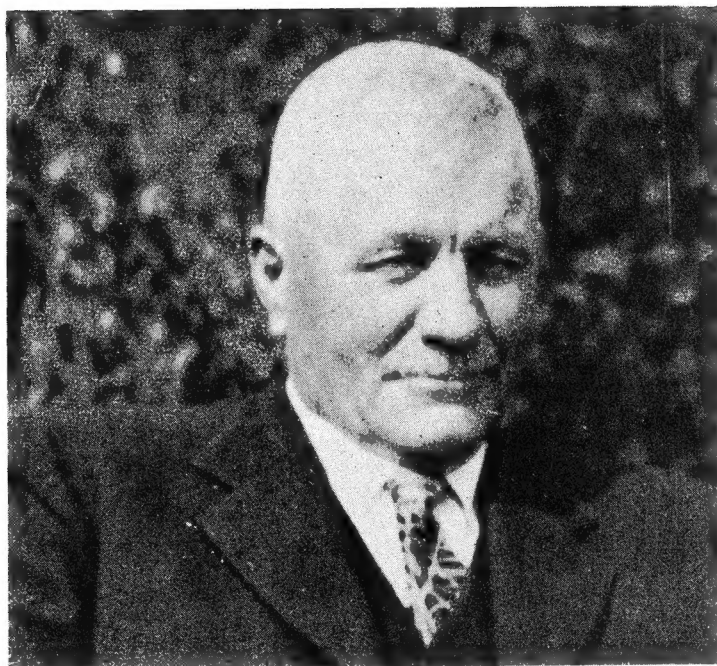


Sheridan Lawrence,  
Emperor of the Peace

1870 - 1952

Presented to  
Mrs. Irene MacLeod  
by Fred Lawrence

*The biography, "Sheridan Lawrence,  
Pathfinder of the Peace," is a private  
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**Sheridan Lawrence**  
**1870 - 1952**

**From the printed program when a Memorial  
in honor of Sheridan Lawrence and erected by  
the Government of Canada, was unveiled Septem-  
ber 25, 1955, at Peace River by Mrs. Lawrence.**



Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence

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## Preface . . .

**S**HERIDAN Lawrence, the oldest son of Henry and Margaret Lawrence, was born April 18, 1870, at South Stukely, 35 miles northeast of Sherbrooke, E.T., Quebec, on a farm that had been in the Lawrence name for 200 years. His paternal grandmother was a United Empire Loyalist from Vermont (see geneology book).

Three more sons and two daughters, James, Grace, Minnie, Harry and Arthur were born at South Stukely. The family then moved to Plevna, Ontario, north of Kingston, and rented a place. Here Isaac was born. After two years, they moved up into the bush country to a place that had been cleared by people to make potash. This was near Grindstone Lake . . . two miles from any government trail and five miles from Plevna Post Office. The first year they broke about five acres out of the heavy maple and beech and the next year raised vegetables and some 80 bushels of wheat which were harvested with a cradle.

Herc, within the next few years, a farm was established for the growing family in the wilderness. They little realized that in the far west larger and more portent events were taking place that would change the entire future of the Lawrence family. This is the story of it as told by Sheridan.



Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence and sons

## Move to the West . . .

In what was then the North West Territories, at Fort Vermilion on the Peace River, Bishop Bompas of Mackenzie River, who had wintered here, decided to establish a farm and school at this point. He arranged with the Rev. A. C. Garrioch to find someone in the east who would be suitable for the work of managing the farm and teaching in the school and he, in turn contacted my uncle, E. J. Lawrence, who was teaching school at Sorell.

My uncle was encouraged to accept the offer to go west by his wife, my Aunt Lydia, who had a keen interest in Mission work, and forthwith they decided to make their home in the new territory.

E. J. and his family came west by Winnipeg, up to Prince Albert, a long voyage, down by Waterways to Fort McMurray, on to Chipewyan and up the Peace River. Mr. Garrioch took the trail on the prairies to Edmonton, bringing in some cattle and horses both for himself and my uncle.

The adventuresome clergyman followed the old trail into the Upper Peace River Country and rafted the stock down the Peace in the fall, meeting my uncle at Fort Vermilion. Combining their talents, my uncle built the school building and Mr. Garrioch, the Mission buildings and Church. The year was 1879.

It is interesting to note that at that time agriculture at Vermilion was represented by a few old Hudson Bay servants who sowed some vegetables, some grain and a few cows and horses.

Six years later my father, Henry H. Lawrence, came west to work with his brother at Fort Vermilion. He was to be accompanied by mother, six of us boys and my two sisters. However, just as we were ready to leave, the Riel Rebellion broke out and my father proceeded by himself. After



putting in a difficult winter looking after Uncle E. J. Lawrence's stock, he arranged for his family to come the following year with Uncle I. Lawrence. In that spring, Dad put in all the crop he could with the result that we dug over 400 bushels of potatoes and had about 600 bushels of barley which I cut and threshed by hand.

Uncle E. J. had purchased, with a Mr. Melrose, a 20-inch stone mill with Watrous bolt 16 feet long and a 12 horse power upright boiler from the Watrous Canyon Works Engine Co. We put the stones up in the kitchen and cracked the barley, putting it through twice for our bread and porridge . . . living on the barley and potatoes.

We were able to buy 100 pounds of flour from the Hudson's Bay Company for \$26.00 but 100 pounds for the winter was not very much considering our sizeable family.

This same spring, 1886, Uncle E. J. arranged with his older brother in the east, I. W. Lawrence, to buy three yoke of oxen, two cows and a purebred Shorthorn bull. He also arranged to pick up the mill and engine at Winnipeg or Calgary and, at the same time, planned to meet mother and our family at the latter town. Uncle I. W. had also had a wagon built from timbers from the old home bush where the Lawrences had lived for more than two centuries.

This was a memorable journey north for us. At Athabasca Landing my uncle loaded the machinery on a Hudson's Bay Co. boat which took it to the west end of Lesser Slave Lake. He swam the oxen and other cattle across the river and drove them overland through the bush. We took the engine over portage to Peace River along with the family wagon and provisions. We swam our team of oxen over to the second island up river and cut and hauled out timbers to build our raft and rafted down the river to Fort Vermilion.

Uncle E. J. Lawrence had paddled up the river in a log canoe dug out, in the spring and had got out to near Edmonton when he met us, so we had our two uncles with us down the river, and drifting downstream they put the engine together and steamed up. So we blew the whistle as we neared Mission, some 1½ miles down river. Dad and Uncle E. J.'s eldest daughter came out to meet us in a big canoe. We

were a happy family of relatives, arriving on the 18th of August, 1886, at Fort Vermilion.

Uncle Isaac stayed until the last of September, going up river in a canoe with old Frank Deshevly. On his return he brought back the measles which were raging at Lesser Slave Lake. A great many Indians died out there as they did not know how to treat the disease and there were no missionaries there until that fall when Rev. Mr. Holmes came and established a church there. One baby died at Fort Vermilion. All our family were down with it, as well as Uncle E. J.'s family. My dad alone escaped as he had had it when he was four years old.

Bishop Young wintered at Fort Vermilion that year, 1886-87, in a house put up by Uncle E. J., assisted by his brother-in-law, Albert Kneeland, a carpenter handyman.

We fixed up living quarters after we got over the measles, storing up potatoes so as not to freeze. My dad had taken over 42 heads of cows, heifers and bulls for three years for half the butter and cheese we made. As the stock was being wintered 10 miles up the river on our Prairie Ranch, dad and mother moved up in February, 1887. There were some fair stables and a small poplar shack on the ranch. We put up a building 18 by 24 feet, of round logs, dirt and pole roof and floor of logs hewn flat with a broad axe, pole partitions with two medium windows in the side and one end.

The family arranged that I was to help dad with the stock two months each year and work the others for Uncle E.J. with his grist mill and sawmill and help cultivate about 40 acres of grain farm. Mr. Melrose, who was in partnership with E. J. Lawrence, sold his interest in the outfit and left the area.

Uncle had put up a log mill building, built a sawmill next to the grist mill and also a shingle machine. He and others started raising wheat and grinding both wheat and barley.

The country was growing with people from Fort George, Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie and Prince Albert settling at Mackenzie River, Great Sale Lake and Chipewyan. There were other settlers from up-country, Hudson Bay Co. servants, boat builders and boatmen.

Chipewyan was then up to 100 population with the sudden settling around on both sides of the Peace River at Fort Vermilion and Stoney and Lambert Points.

The older ones in the group put in some hard times and during the winter of 1886-87 several families lived on very little other than turnips. Our folks lived on potatoes and crushed barley but after we had taken over the cattle, we had milk and butter. Sometimes the Indians were starving. It did not matter if they had lots of fur since there were no provisions to buy at the stores, so they lived on what they could kill.

Usually the Indians went after moose. The weather was cold with little or no wind. They had no rifles in those days, and by the time they located a moose, loaded a shot gun with ball or shot and got down to shoot, they had scared the moose and so they starved. A lot of them came to the settlers for potatoes and other stuff. One family of Indians out in the bush ran out of meat and fur and starved to death. All died except two young women who went to the trading post for help. On their way in, both were about crazy with hunger, and each watched the other for a chance to get the drop on her. Finally one girl thought she got her sister. She ate some of the flesh and went to the post and told what she thought she must have done. Rev. and Mrs. M. Scott took her in at the Mission at Fort Vermilion and she lived with them about four years. She talked often about her dreadful experiences and cried often. Several times she went out to hunt but did not stay long in the woods. After we were married she came to visit my wife. She was married then and had four children.

My youngest brother, Willie, was born on the ranch July 3, 1888. A native woman, who was born at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, looked after mother. She was one who looked after the sick—an old style nurse and midwife. Mother and baby brother were fine under her and dad's care.

The winter had been cold and ice in the river was thick. When the weather began to get warm the water began to rise. The ice started to move, but jammed both on the island above Fort Vermilion and 15 miles below the Fort so that the water backed up and flooded about 40 miles up

river. In just four hours the water was up to within four inches of the top of the door.

At this point we had been packing up some sacks of potatoes from the cellar. We had 12 sacks up when the water was all around the house. Wood and rails and logs for small buildings began floating away. I was at the head of the cellar looking after the potatoes, but when the water came up to the door I had to move quickly. We packed the stuff back to high ground, about 100 yards away, wading around in water nearly to our waists. Our first concern was building a shelter on the side hill so mother and baby were all right. Mother, of course, was very much worried as the water came up.

Some of our cows were around but we kept them on the high ground. We had hay at Prairie Point, up river 15 miles. Brothers Jim and Arthur were looking after the stock up there and the water came up on them before they were dressed in the morning, which was Sunday. They quickly harnessed the pony and put tent and bedding and clothes on the jumper. Next they cut down rails, as the cattle were standing in water, and moved them up to higher ground and dry land. All the hay and yards were lost as water came up 10 feet.

Father walked up overland to see how the boys were faring up there. When he came to the camp where we had hauled our logs, the whole country was a swift river and there was water everywhere one looked. Wondering if the boys and stock were all drowned, he turned to go up on higher ground and he saw jumper tracks or sleigh tracks, so he shouted and the boys heard him and came running to meet him.

We then cut a road down overland clear through to Fort Vermilion. We certainly did some scheming to bring our cattle through without much hay and hold our grain for seed. In all, we were getting experience in frontier life. My uncle's folks moved back to high land as the ice rose to banks.

Rev. and Mrs. Scott were holding service in the church the Sunday morning the floods struck. Bishop Young immediately advised them to close the service and move back on higher ground, which they did.

The flood at our place went on for four days. Down at uncle's, the jam below went out after the flooding so the water went right down, but the jam on the head of the big island above the Fort stuck. When that broke it took the river over the banks on both sides, about six feet of water going straight back over the banks, sweeping away small buildings. The foundation of Uncle E. J. Lawrence's sawmill saw logs and firing wood all fairly shifted back from the river.

The minister put his organ on the top of his table, but water came up and floated it off and ruined it. No lives or stock were lost in this flood but from that time, none of our stock left the yards and feeding plains until the ice in the Peace River was broken up and away. On both sides of the river on the flats, people watch this river very carefully in the spring.



Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence and daughters





## The Pioneers Progress . . .

**F**ROM this time on, 1888, times were much better; in fact, there were no more real hard times. We all grew more than we needed for ourselves. People all bought one or two cows, so we had milk and cream. Soon we got to raising hogs, making bacon, and breeding some cattle for beef. Later on, the settlers started growing main crops consisting of wheat and barley, now that they could get Uncle E. J. Lawrence to grind and make flour. We never bought imported flour after the winter of 1887. The Lawrences changed that around soon after. They made and sold flour; barley flour, some rye flour and a good deal of straight wheat flour from Nos. 1, 2 and 3 wheat. When men brought in frozen or smutty wheat, I would not make flour with it, but would let them have good flour. That was my policy as long as I was in the country.

Uncle E. J. Lawrence, with his grist mill, saw-mill and farm, had too much to do. He resigned from the Mission and went on his own before I left for the north, leaving his wife, Aunt Lydia, to teach the school

The 42 head of cattle Dad took on shares was quite a bunch of stock to make hay for and to look after. All around, there was too much work for everyone. Uncle E. J. Lawrence with his saw mill, shingle machine and his little engine was a great help to the people that settled around, and also to the men from the different forts. Uncle's boys were now returning from school to take over the outfit. I met and talked with them in Edmonton in 1898. I told them that I was out for an up-to-date outfit, and offered to go in with them to work together, and that we would take the lead, but they would not hear of that. So I went ahead and bought an outfit and brought it in overland and up the Athabasca, meeting Uncle E. J. Lawrence at Slave Lake on his way out to get some machinery.

On my journey home in May, 1899, with my equipment on two big rafts, I met my brother Jim and he told me that Uncle E. J.'s whole outfit was burned up with over 400 bushels of No. 2 wheat.

Aunt Lydia, Uncle E. J. Lawrence's wife, died in 1898. She had been in the country all those years and had never taken a trip out. I was sure that E. J. would never come back after he heard that his outfit was burned up. Sometime later he and his youngest son were running a steam thresher at Horse Hills. Uncle got caught in the belt and was killed. Then Fred, son of E. J., ran the farm for some time but sold out to Mr. Fred Brick, and me, and we operated it for a few years.

When our boys left for the outside, I had to lighten up on farm work and do more with machinery. I cut out farming there and at Prairie Point and just farmed at the ranch; some 250 hogs at one time and up to 500 acres. I had just under 300 head of cattle.

After we got straightened around after the flood it was late before we could work the land as it was wet and covered with about two inches of sediment. There was a big crop, heavy growth that summer. It was at that time we had our first trouble with wolves. They would follow the herd and sneak up on calves and younger cattle. One wolf in particular would bite a calf on the hip. If the calf bellowed, the main cattle herd would come and the wolf would sneak or run away. Invariably, though, the young animal was done for. This wolf did a lot of damage before he was shot. Dad had my brother Harry on horseback riding around with our old Snider rifle. Brother Harry got tired of this on one occasion and came into the house. Dad came around and sent him out again with the cattle. On coming up to the herd, Harry saw the wolf right among the cattle. He jumped off the horse and took a shot at the wolf, frightening the beast so that it ran straight towards him. He was so frightened that he did not load his rifle until the wolf saw him and turned and ran. Then my brother got brave.

The next winter a lone wolf caught up with our dog, which we brought west with us. The dog was out from the house after a fox and ran down to a bluff where the

wolf was. The wolf took after the dog, running him down within 100 yards and dragging him away, his legs dangling in the snow. This dog was a fine family dog and while in the east, an excellent bird dog for both partridge and duck. I made some money with him in the east. He would run around the little lake in the marsh and locate the ducks so one had to just watch where he went and pick up the ducks he located. We were a sorry lot when the wolf killed him.

Later on we took to poisoning the wolves although it was against the law to handle poison. We were always careful about how we used it—never used it on foxes. I set one lot for a wolf on the ice at the cattle water hole. A silver fox got ahead of the wolf and the fox went half a mile before he went down. Later on a cross-fox took the bait and some skunks once took it. I shot a lot of the bush wolves as well as poisoning them, but the old wolves were not so easy to get with a gun. Poison was the thing for them. A person has to know how to use it. I took two wolf hides and shoulders, one of which had been found near a dead horse that had been seen. The wolf had been torn to pieces by other wolves during the night. This was about one-quarter mile from our house on the ranch. The policeman asked how they had been killed so I told him. I never got my bounty for them, but the authorities did not investigate.

The spring of 1888 my uncle, E. J. Lawrence, took his oldest daughter and his son out to school. They went up river in a dug-out canoe and I went along to help because Uncle E. J. Lawrence's arms bothered him quite a bit. He did not like to paddle or use a pole so he was tracking when we could where tracking was good. No slides or trees were out in the river and we made the trip to Peace River Crossing in 10 days. I returned from there to Fort Vermilion. Bishop Young went up a little before we did so we all came down the river together. Uncle E. J. was good with the pole. With his arms bothering him I would do more poling and he would do more tracking. I did not care for the tracking because we could make better time by poling. Before we arrived at Peace River we had quit tracking altogether. I became good with the pole, which is

the only way to get along with a canoe going upstream in swift waters.

Bishop Young and his man, Mr. Burton, who had gone up river ahead of us, had quite a serious accident. The Bishop took the stern with his paddle and had Mr. Burton pole from the bow. Coming to one of the swift parts, the canoe shot out quickly, Burton lost his balance and fell into the water and tipped the canoe so that the Bishop fell out. They both swam to shore and Mr. Burton ran down the bank to see what he could do to capture the canoe with all of their outfit before it drifted down the river.

Down about four miles he found two little logs on the bank. He put them in the water, tied them together at one end with his moccasin strings and straddled the other end, and with a stick, paddled out and overtook the canoe, which was down quite far. As he came to the canoe he took the gun and fired it so Bishop Young might hear it. Mr. Burton had quite a hard time getting into the canoe because it had shipped quite a lot of water as they fell out, and he got his legs very cold and cramped from being in the icy water so long. It was quite an experience for them and could have been quite serious, as the only people on the river at that time were at Battle River and Carcajou Point, and now and then a trapper.

On that trip out with my uncle I became quite a good canoe-man. Mr. Akiman, his wife and two sons were the only residents in Peace River at that time. The Hudson's Bay Company had a log shack for their freighters. Some of the freighters hitched onto carts. One man looked after four oxen on a one-ox cart, loaded with some 600 pounds of freight. Boats were built to take freight up to Fort St. John and Hudson Hope and sometimes to Dunvegan, but a lot of freight for Dunvegan went overland by carts and wagons. It was soon easy to get freighters with stock on this road far down the river. A lot of the freight was rafted. For years the natives, when building their shacks, had taken the bark from the big spruce trees to roof their shacks and houses and floor their tents and teepees. These trees, when dry, were fine for building into rafts for taking stuff down stream. Some people put up and sawed lumber by hand and built boats or scows. They were not very good boats, just big and box-like but they floated. This kind of

boat was dispensed with as soon as the owners got to their destination. While going down river the boatmen learned quickly to keep in the channel away from the woods and shore.

Uncle's folks went East and put the two children in a school at Chicago near some of our cousins. The daughter later married a doctor and they both went as Missionaries to China.

Uncle bought 10 mares and eight cows from Mr. Jack Norris of Horse Hills and brought them through to Athabasca Landing, up overland to Moose Portage, straight overland from Moose Lake to Lesser Slave Lake and around the north shore of Lesser Slave Lake, on to the Peace River. He then built a big raft, freighted the livestock down the Peace River near the end of October. Already there was some snow on the ground.

With this increase in stock, we went out and cut a lot more hay. It was a cold, tough job, but we did well by doing it for we had no losses and the cattle turned out fine. It could be noted there was a big improvement in the barns of the farm people and trappers in the area. I bought two of the colts which were real horses. One of them was the best saddle horse in the country and when one of my neighbors wanted to buy him and offered me a very good sum, I let him go.

My father came to me when I was threshing and wanted me to buy this horse back as he was getting poor from being driven too much without enough to eat. I bought him back and Dad took him under his care. It was a month before he was back to normal. It did not bother us to sell horses we bought, but some that we raised and trained, we became very attached to. They often lived and died on the place.

Mr. Robert Jones, Albert Kneeland, Uncle E. J. Lawrence's brother-in-law, and I worked for Uncle E. J. Mr. Kneeland was a fair carpenter. He and I put in some time building a house for Bishop Young. They put in a couple of years here, went from here to Chipewyan and on to Athabaska, which was Bishop's headquarters. Uncle E. J. Lawrence had arranged with Mr. Robert Jones who left South Stukley and arrived at the Fort in September, 1889.



Bishop Bompas was wondering about getting someone to start a Mission at Fort Resolution. My sister, Grace, and I decided to go north and try it out. We hoped to meet Bishop Bompas at Fort Smith, and we also expected the steamer would come up from Fort Chipewyan with freight for Fort Vermilion. Anyway we built a big raft, took on a young team of oxen, a bull and two cows, 3,000 pounds of barley flour, which we had ground before seeding commenced, 200 pounds of bacon, 100 pounds of butter and 25 pounds of cheese.

I took my brother Harry along and hired two local men to go with us to help around the rapids and chutes. We landed our raft up above the rapids, drove stock overland to the chutes, hired a boat, took the stuff to the rapids, packed half a mile on shore to the foot of the rapids, lowered the boat with a line through the rapids, put our supplies on the boat, took it to the bottom of the chutes, and packed the stuff over the chutes along the south bank. Then the Hudson's Bay Company men lowered the boat with ropes, and we let our raft loose.

It dropped through the rapids, came down and went over the chutes about half the length, one end in the water and the other end up in the air. We left it there as the steamer came around the point. The captain was a Mr. Sayers. He ran the steamer to within 20 feet of the falls, unloaded the freight for Fort Vermilion, loaded our stuff on the steamer and sailed off down river. We went into Fort Chipewyan and from there on to Fitzgerald. We hired a wagon and freighted our stuff across the portage to Fort Smith.

The steamer from McKenzie River came up to Smith and on it was Bishop Bompas who made a trip across the portage with us. He had intended to go to the outside world, but changed his mind. He went back on the boat and I took my cattle down the river a couple of miles and built a raft.

We took the stock down river to Fort Resolution where Bishop Bompas arranged for us to start operations together with Rev. Mr. Spendlove and Mrs. Spendlove who were missionaries there. The Bishop gave us to understand that he would not interfere with us. We sold the Spendloves one of our cows and looked after it for them.

I bought a house and moved it across the bay, hauled out our raft and built a stable for the cattle. Bishop Bompas brought some children from McKenzie River.

Sister Grace was very much taken with her missionary work. It was hard work for me; building, cutting hay by hand along the shores and bays near the river and small bays about five miles out. Hay had to be put on stages nearly two feet high, as wind from the lake raised the water that much at times. We broke up land for vegetables, and had a field of barley. In the four years we were there, we had no crop failures.

I hired an old man to help me build a large, two-man boat to use for fishing. We would go out three or four miles, set approximately eight nets in September and October, and hang the catch on stages. Eight to 10,000 whitefish were hung on each stage and two nets were underwater to catch fish for bait for catching trout in the winter. We did not put nets down or set hooks until the ice was quite thick. Sometimes people would lose nets and hooks in a storm from the main lake. The storms would break up this ice and pile it up on the shore, 10 or 15 feet high. The waves from the lake going across the bay broke up the ice very fast. Travellers never cut across from bay to bay until the ice got thick, and always kept fairly close to the shore.

Rev. Mr. T. J. Marsh from Toronto was sent up to Fort Liard by Bishop Bompas. The Bishop left the McKenzie River diocese and went to the Yukon. Bishop Reeve was to take Bishop Bompas's place and when he left, Bishop Bompas cut my salary from \$400 a year to \$350 and I had to board myself. Sister Grace received \$250 and had to board herself.

I decided then that I had better change my occupation as soon as Bishop Reeves came to take over. He did not come until the next year so I stayed on and kept things in shape. We kept lots of wood, and fish by the thousand, both white and trout. I went over to the mouth of Hay River with my dogs, an ox and a good man and hewed 90 cords of timber for a building 24 by 30 feet, hewed to seven inches, hauled them to the bank of the river so we could tumble them over the bank into the river and float them down when we needed them.

I fixed six-inch bunks onto a 16-inch flat sleigh and broke a trail with snow shoes through every clearing of timber, and felled the trees in line with the road so as to have a straight pull. We had no trouble but it was harder work for the men than for the dogs. My dogs were well trained. My provisions, extra clothes, and all my loose stuff was sold to Indians in this region for furs. When I was told that complaints had come in, I told them to mind their own business.

Bishop Reeve came the next year and Mr. Marsh came to Hay River and I went over to help him build. We cut lumber by hand and sold the animals and my belongings to Bishop Reeve and left by the first boat up the lake to Resolution. I was sorry to leave my sister Grace, but she wanted to stay on in the work and I felt I had had enough. In the winter the men who had been working for the Hudson's Bay Company ran short of wood and hay; they had few fish or vegetables. That last year was hard for sister Grace. The school was moved to the mouth of the McKenzie River at Aklavik. Mr. Marsh wanted me to stay with him at the salary I started with and it would have been nice for sister Grace, but I wanted to get out on my own and settle down. This idea turned out to the advantage of the whole family.

The time seemed ripe for some travel so I went east to South Stukely where I was born. I was in Montreal for six weeks, then I went to the U.S. and on to Boston with Uncle Alex and Uncle Sam who left Canada about the year 1879, the year Dad went to Ontario.

My father, H. H. Lawrence wanted to buy a little grist mill, to be run by water power, and put it on a little creek at the end of our ranch. Dad wanted to tan his cow hides for belts to run the outfit, which I did not approve of, and build the water wheel. I took flour and stock north from the ranch. I told Uncle I would buy the mill along with a 22-inch turbine wheel, so we telegraphed the Waterous Engine Works in Winnipeg to that effect. I did not want to go into this mill business as I was sure that there was not enough water in the creek, and I thought we were not capable nor had we enough experience to operate it. Uncle's outfit was doing some business, but Dad wanted this mill so I bought it for \$900. I paid to have it brought to Lesser Slave Lake, and freighted it over the portage and down the Peace River.

We built a dam on the creek, put in a penstock; a flume from the dam to penstock 55 feet long; a flume for overflow 110 feet long; and a two-storey hewn log building, 28 by 32 feet. All the lumber for the roofs and penstock flue was sawed by hand. It was a great deal of work with little return. I took charge of it and planned most of the work, sawing the lumber and framing the penstock set. Before the snow disappeared we had the mill erected, wheat set, mill machinery installed, mill set up, so that when the water started to run we turned it on and started up the mill. As I expected, it was a good all-round job; it would run steadily for two weeks, but then we had to stop and let the pond refill. However, we got a lot of enjoyment out of it. We surprised some of our friends with our work, and we were getting experience in handling machinery and building.

In 1897, Bishop Reeve wrote to me asking me to go to Fort Simpson to help him build a house as a fire had destroyed the house he had been living in. I had been working hard, and I went down, taking some provisions from the ranch in case we should run short. I took the steamer which went across the lake to Fort Ray, back to the mouth of the McKenzie River, down to Fort Providence, and on to Fort Simpson. I hired some local help, cut and hewed some 500 logs to saw with hand saw or rip saw and rafted them down the river. The river was swift and rather shallow, but we made it down to the bishop's landing and hauled them up to the new building, which had been started. We put up a saw, and put down skids on the slopes. It was an excellent place—no snow or wind. We hired some help there to saw lumber for floors and siding and roofing. I also helped harvest the potatoes and other vegetables—a fine crop.

On the last trip of the steamer, we took in the crops while the steamer was there. People had not dug potatoes, and the next day the company started and dug 200 bushels and put them in the out-house. It turned cold with snow, and about 600 bushels of potatoes were frozen. Many of the Indians would go into the potato field, shove or dig the snow from the potatoes, dig them and take them to their camps and eat them frozen. The winter was not cold that year—not many storms, no wind for a long time. It was not suitable weather for moose hunting, and times were hard for the people.



**Home in Summer**

## Horizons are Widened . . .

**I** HEARD from my brother Harry that he was going to Dawson City in the spring so I decided to return home and go with him. In the spring, Captain Walker was sent from Point Barrow out by way of the McKenzie River to take letters to Seattle. The letters stated that three of the Steamship Whaling Company's boats were crushed or in bad shape, that they had sent a man up to the Yukon, and also that they had sent Walker out through Edmonton. I came with him to Fort Chipewyan. He went on up the Athabaska to Edmonton and then on to the coast. I later heard that the man who went up the Yukon had beat Walker by a few days.

I went on to Fort Vermilion, taking the train of four of Captain Walker's dogs, which he had offered to me if I came to Fort Chipewyan with him instead of going straight south to Fort Vermilion which is the present route from Grimshaw to Hay River and Great Slave Lake. The snow was quite deep so I did not like going that way but he made this offer at Providence when he bought the extra dogs. It was a lot further but, as I thought, someone would be down from Fort Vermilion, so we had company. I took some of the man's load from Fort Chipewyan.

We made this trip from Simpson in a month, stopping over at a post each night, a distance of about 800 miles. We rode very little, because the sled was loaded with fish for the dogs. On arriving at Fort Vermilion, we found our folks fairly well. Harry had made arrangements to go overland to Hay River, down around the falls, then on to Great Slave Lake and down the Yukon River and over the mountains there.

I made up my mind that I would either stay at home or go south. Dad was not too well and wanted me to take over the outfit, so I decided to go up river with a man called Davis, who was going up with a medium sized scow. He



had four men, none of whom were very good river men, but the old man wanted me to look after him and his outfit until we reached Peace River Crossing. He was an old river driver from Ottawa and a "tip-top" man, so we got along nicely. We did not make fast time, but finished the trip up to Peace River Crossing in 17 days. We had a fair trip over the portage to Lesser Slave Lake, and fixed up Mr. Davis's scow that he had built the year before.

We saw a large group of people, who had started for the Klondyke, that wanted to go down the lake and on to Edmonton. Mrs. Paul had a young baby to look after. We fixed up the end of the boat for Mr. Paul and his family and Mr. Davis. Some of our crew were acting foolishly—drinking, etc., so it was up to Mr. Paul and me to fix the boat and put tallow over the cracks and also we made some oars to replace those that had been broken.

We launched our boat and loaded our freight on it; loaded on a number of people that had recovered from the fever of going to the Klondyke, rounded up our crew, and took the old-time Mounted Policeman, Mr. Butler, with us. We started out rowing and steering, with a big oar as a guide for steering the boat—all the folks taking their turns at the oars. The first day we travelled about 20 miles down the lake then we camped for the night. We woke up in the morning with a fair wind so we rigged up a square sail and sailed to the end of the lake and down into the Slave River in just over a half a day. Some of the people were a bit timid as the water splashed a little over the boat at times. Old Mr. Davis was blind, but had been a good river man and when he asked us to keep close to shore, I agreed to do so. Mr. Paul started to argue with him and I told him we were doing the steering of the boat, and not to argue.

When we reached the river, Mr. Davis was as pleased as he could be, saying it was the finest sail he had ever had. We had dinner on shore, each party looking after themselves. After dinner we went down the river approximately 20 miles. The river is deep with cut banks and is often crooked with the lower 20 miles full of rapids. We ran all of them and never struck a stone. Some of the people were a bit frightened, but most of them enjoyed themselves. I did most of the steering, and had some of the fellows rowing all the time. In this manner, one is able to keep the

boat where he wants it. When we reached the Athabasca River we sighted a medium-sized moose swimming across. We put full force on the oars and soon overtook the moose and the Mountie shot it. We took it to shore, skinned it, cut it up, camped, and had a big feed of moose meat. There was a little left which we gave to our friends at Athabasca Landing.

We went on to Edmonton by freighters with the McLeod brothers, whose dad was in charge of Fort Edmonton, where they had been raised. We parted with Mr. Davis at Edmonton in July, 1898. The old man was blind and could not walk by himself, but was bound to keep to trading. He lost money every year that we knew him—not being able to do things himself and depending on hired help. He traded some with Ross Brothers. His man, who was with him looking after him and his property got drunk. Taking this opportunity, Ross Brothers checked the furs and there was more fur than the books showed. The servant was just that kind of man, but he looked after the old man very ably, made the old fellow as comfortable as could be, shaved and washed him, and waited on him and looked after his needs.

The Groat family were very friendly with my uncle and my father, so after a couple of days in town I went to their place and stayed a while with them.

There had been some freighting with teams to Athabaska, up that river too, and up the Little Slave River, thence across the Lesser Slave Lake, so I decided to spend the summer and fall at Edmonton. There I could see about getting a steam engine, a threshing machine, and, if possible, a saw-mill, either there or elsewhere, as I was tired of hand-sawing my lumber and of working for other people to get lumber.

I went to Winnipeg from Edmonton and while there attended the fair, looked things over generally, and found a Watrous No. 0 saw rig and a solid tooth saw, which I later replaced with a 17 h.p. Bowes Sawyer, a wood burning boiler, and a wood saw.

That summer I worked on the farm of George Long, on the Sturgeon River, for \$20 per month. I milked seven cows, stooked behind a five-horse binder, and, in the fall helped with threshing at \$1 a day.

Mr. Long and another man had bought a new threshing machine, a 30 x 42, run by horse-power. After watching that machine I decided in favor of a steam-operated machine and after I learned how to operate one, got a 30 x 42 Peerless separator, equipped with a hand-feed straw-elevator. I also got a binder, a seeder, a disc, a harrow and other implements.

My experience with horses had been extensive and I was a good driver. I always felt I had things under control when I held the lines. I had driven oxen also therefore while at Long's I arranged to buy two teams, harnesses for them and one sleigh. Later I purchased a larger sleigh to carry the boiler planning to get the other machinery later.

One of the teams had, during the summer, broken about 100 acres. They proved the best horses ever to come into our country, so far as I knew. The other horses were a smaller team of greys, and in the spring, after I had taken all my outfit to Peace River Crossing, I sold them to Bishop Holmes.

Later I bought a third team. They were bays of about 1400 pounds each and were taken by my teamster and another man up the river to the woods and were used to haul logs to the river bank for rafts to float down the river when the ice broke up. Unfortunately, through the carelessness of the men, the team was lost. It happened this way. The man who had unhitched the horses put nose-bags on them with a feed of oats and left them standing, but fastened together by the neck-yoke while they themselves crossed the river on the ice to inspect some timber on the other side. At that point, which was below a rapid, the ice was not very firm, and while the men were away the horses wandered down to the river, started across, and, at a point where the ice was weak, broke through and were never seen again. The men found the hole in the ice where the team had disappeared when they followed the horses' tracks.

I first learned about this sad accident from Willie Gardner, a trader, when I returned to Peace River Crossing from Slave Lake.

Following Willie's report, I took three men with me and drove my big team up the river where we cut and hauled enough logs to the river bank to complete two big rafts, returning then toward Peace River Crossing on the ice until we reached a point just above the Hart River. We left the ice then as it began to look unsafe and really had taken quite a chance by staying on the river as long as we had.

When we got to Hart River, I noticed that someone had put a pole bridge across. I left my men on the bank with the team and had started across the pole bridge when I noticed a young man wearing hip boots coming down the opposite bank, apparently to help me cross. The river was open just at that point with the water swift and about two feet deep.

I saw him slip after he waded out into the water and he was swiftly borne downstream toward the bridge, a short distance below which the water disappeared under the ice.

When he neared the pole bridge I reached down and grabbed him, holding on until my men came to help me pull him out.

It caused some grim amusement to note how the helper became the helped and we all laughed over it afterwards. But, it was incident in keeping with life under frontier conditions, and was just one more experience.

The machinery I had bought was to come to Edmonton from Winnipeg early in 1899 so I had been working the previous summer on Long's threshing outfit as bagger and oiler—to gain as much experience as possible. Working with me in the summer for Mr. Long was a chap named Adam Herbison, from Washington State. He had a team, an extra horse, a sleigh, and wanted a job for the winter, so I hired him to freight with me for the winter season.

About the 9th or 10th of January, 1899, we loaded up part of our outfit onto bob sleighs at South Edmonton (it had not yet had its name changed to Strathcona) and brought it across the river on the ice and up the hill somewhere near the present Macdonald Hotel site.

Among other supplies we bought 400 bushels of oats at \$15c per bushel which sold at an additional 75c per hundred

pounds, delivered at Athabaska Landing. Two extra men were hired for the trip as we needed a man for each team.

We left Edmonton January 20, 1899, taking with us a tent, a tent stove, large extra blankets and nose bags for the horses. The weather was not cold and there was little snow. We travelled slowly, and didn't stay long at any stop that did not have regular accommodation although we had to camp the first night out. Of course that was the coldest night of the winter and I was suffering from what is now called 'flu—then we called it grippe—though it is equally distressing under either name.

The trails were poor. My team hauled the separator, and I used to put a pole through, between the separator wheels and would ride on the end of the pole on the upper side of the trail where it was not level. My illness lasted only three days—but what a three days! I felt so weak and tired; couldn't eat, and wanted to lie down and rest all the time.

After unloading at Athabaska we returned to Edmonton for the balance of the outfit.

On the way we met Mr. Carson who had taken over the freighting outfit of the Hudson's Bay Company, consisting of horses, oxen, sleighs and racks. He was on his way to Mr. Waters' place to get his equipment repaired. His outfit covered the portage between Lesser Slave Lake and Peace River.

We again met Mr. Carson and his outfit on our second trip to Edmonton and when we returned, his outfit was ahead of us so we used their camping grounds and their water holes as we followed them. The weather was good. The ice, which had been rough, was now smooth and we had a wonderful trip.

We had thus been spared the task of spotting new camp grounds, cutting new trails, finding adequate fuel supplies, cutting water holes for four teams with an axe and shovelling snow off for camp grounds.

We met Mr. Carson on Lesser Slave Lake. He had gotten through to the post at Slave Lake and was on his way back and had cut some new trails.

He thus avoided the Slave River above the rapids where some people had lost some of their horses and their freight through the ice. Some of his freighters were experienced

men from around the Sturgeon, and travelling behind them made our going simpler and easier.

We unloaded at Bishop Holmes' mission and returned to Athabaska for the rest of the outfit. As the roads were good we were able to load up heavily, and Adam Herbison, my helper, and I handled the four teams ourselves. I had let one hired man go as he did not look after things properly.

It was quite a heavy job on the lake shore, cutting water holes, shoveling snow, cutting wood, and chopping ice out for water holes and finding dry trees in the woods for fuel in the night.

The first trip was made in warm weather and took only two days. The second trip took four days as it was very cold.

We camped at the Mission where we had unloaded our first loads, bought some hay and loaded up there for Peace River. As there was little feed beyond the Mission we had to take quite a lot of hay and oats.

It took us four days to Peace River and we made it back in three, the entire job in three trips.

In March I sent Adam Herbison back to Edmonton. He later became a skilled freighter in the north, got married and settled at North Star. His children numbered four. He died at Peace River in 1938, several years after the passing of his wife.

That trip, taking the engine and separator from South Edmonton to Peace River, presented many problems. I put the engine on sleighs with extra-wide bunks, and wide planks on their underside, to keep the road. But on the prairie east of Peace River it cut off the road so badly that I left the highroad and put on two teams and made a new road to the next bush where we got back on the main road. The boiler and sleigh weighed 6,500 pounds, and except for doubling teams on the prairie road one team hauled it all the way.

About a mile from the top of the Peace River hill we cut the separator off the road.

I was driving the team when the back sleigh cut off the road and the separator started to tip to that side. I went over to the other side but the snow there was drifted deep. I brought a load of freight along the upper side of the road,



hitched it by block and tackle to the back sleigh and pulled it back onto the road, after which we proceeded down the hill.

In many places on the old trail we had to do a lot of work with axe and shovel to keep from going sideways. When we finally arrived at Fort Vermilion we found not one thing had been broken. We put the engine and the separator on their wheels and directed them safely down the river bank onto the rafts.

It was not long before various people along the river and lake shores built bunk houses and stables for accommodation of freighters and their horses, as winter freighting increased. Until the railway later came through, although steamers did some, most of the hauling was done by freighters over the winter trails.

I had my big team at Peace River and my other team, I had left with Bishop Holmes. During the ice break-up I walked the portage route to Lesser Slave Lake, where I got a small team from a native, secured my mail, and some other stuff I had there and drove back. I also took three prospectors with me who wanted to go to Great Slave Lake to prospect. They were also to help me build rafts and to go down river with me.

The trip home was made leisurely as the horses were soft and we stopped often to feed them.

We found the Hart River bridge, 20 miles out of Peace River, was gone and the ice was out at the regular road crossing. I kept my clothes on, took a sack of clothes on my shoulder, and waded across the river. The water was up to my armpits. It was cold, but I didn't mind it. One of my men tried the wading stunt also—but only once. The men gathered up poles and sticks and tied them together to make a raft, then used our harness lines and bed ropes to pull the raft back and forth until everything was taken across, after which we swam the horses over with the wagon, and off we went again.

Travelling was tough. If we started too early in the morning, the ice on the water and the mud holes hindered us. We would get stuck and all hands would have to join to help push the wagon up the hills though the team got better able each day.

Finally we reached Peace River with everything we had started with in good condition, and we turned the team over to their owner who was pleased to get them.

When the ice went out I took my three men and we went up river to where I had had the two rafts of logs left to be floated down stream after spring break-up, hauled out our dry raft logs, built two very good rafts 24 by 45 feet, floored with 4 to 6 inch dry spruce poles and with oar locks on the corners of each raft.

Then we floated the rafts down past the pole bridge, sloped down the bank to get our stuff onto the rafts, and next morning put the horses on and started down river.

There was a strong west wind blowing and it was a pretty tough job to keep the raft in the channel water. However, we made it and had a fine trip.

It took us four days to drift down to Fort Vermilion, two miles above my home ranch. There was just enough water to follow the channel to our little water-power mill half a mile from the house, where we unloaded the whole outfit all of which was in tip top shape.

Everything in the whole logging experience would have been fine but for the team that had been lost through the ice.

We found everyone at home well, but, unfortunately E. J. Lawrence's mill had burned up together with 400 bushels of wheat. The boys had got some machinery but had not received it yet. They did a little farming and then sold out. I fixed up the mill to run by steam.

In the meantime we took the rafts apart, made a foundation for the saw mill and put up the mill. We found our boys had cut and hauled in some 400 logs so we had those extra to be sawed.

The previous year's crop was still unthreshed and we had to thresh it for flour and seed. It had been cut with a mower, raked up, and stacked too flat so the snow had melted on it and the grain was tough. We started threshing two days after we arrived home.

The machine clogged up a couple of times after we started threshing. Even with the experience I had got at Mr. Long's it was difficult at times, for I had had very little experience in actually operating the machine.

Rev. Mr. Scott, our Missionary at Fort Vermilion, came over and saw that our trouble had been that we were run-

ning the separator at too-slow speed. We speeded up the machine after that, and gave it a little extra spurt when the grain was wet. Our boys also learned from their experience how to stook grain and how not to. Incidentally the next crop was cut with the binder.

After finishing that threshing we started sawing lumber. I had little trouble running the saw mill, cutting both lumber and shingles, and later found planing not too hard.

I had not been careful enough about watching the man who was at the tail saw, and shortly after we started sawing he let a 2 x 4 touch the saw, which caught it and flung it just past my head where it landed about 50 feet away. After that I watched more carefully. Although we had to employ natives and inexperienced people around the mill, no one ever got hurt.

The new 14" breaking plow enable us to clear and break quite a lot more land. We built a good new horse barn for we had some light horses including some very good saddle horses and also had one of the best teams of drivers in the country.

From the nice black mare we got from Pincher Creek, south of Calgary, we raised a colt every year. We bought one mate for her and raised another, thus giving us a dandy team of drivers, at which time we stopped raising oxen for farm work.

Fred Lawrence had a good crop of wheat and a small separator, but no horses. Mr. Scott had a nice crop also, so I decided to raft my outfit across the river to Stoney Point, do the threshing south of the river, then come back, load my outfit on the raft, drift down about two miles, then thresh on the north side of the river and thence go home overland.

That fall, 1899, we threshed 11,000 bushels, most of which had been cut by hand or with a mower. Some was grown on new land and some was of very rank growth, and part of it was frosted or frozen badly making it difficult to thresh. However, we were able to help the settlers greatly.

When we got home we found quite a lot of snow so we started grinding grain. Later we moved the mill nearer the house. In 1917 we got a Midget flour mill and then gave up using the stones and never used water afterwards for the mill.

Early in 1900 I became engaged to marry Miss Julia Scott, of the family of Rev. Scott who had been a missionary at Fort Vermilion for 16 years. They had arranged to leave the country in the spring of 1900. They left Fort Vermilion, and 16 days later arrived at Peace River in the company of a six or eight man crew in an open barge of a local fur trader. They had poled and tracked the scow all the way.

I was to follow in a month so Julia and I could be married. All of us had gripe and Arthur had to go to bed. While the rest of us didn't we felt like it.

Brother Isaac and I started up river in a canoe but when we got to Carcajou Point we found Willie MacKenzie there, waiting to go up river also so I sent Isaac home, and Willie and I continued on up river in a dugout canoe I bought.

When I got home in October, after drifting down on a raft old Mr. Ackerman helped me to build at Peace River, I learned that brother Isaac, after leaving for home in the canoe from Carcajou Point, had become more ill. He had drifted down the river, fallen asleep in the canoe, passed the ranch and Fort Vermilion, and had only awakened when his canoe was shooting through the rapids, 50 miles below Fort Vermilion and only a mile above the chutes. The rough water had splashed into his face, waking him up. As he was close to the south shore, he paddled in, crawled up the bank and built a fire. He didn't know where he was, but as he had got his matches wet he had to keep the fire going constantly.

After some time two men from Little Red River came along in a canoe and took him to Fred Lawrence's place at Fort Vermilion, where he spent some days in bed before going home.

His illness must have been quite serious as all his hair came out afterwards. His life had undoubtedly been saved by awakening near the south shore as the current along the north shore was very strong and he would, doubtless, have lost his life going over the falls.

I found everybody well at home, but the work far behind. McKenzie proved to be a good canoe man and we had a good trip up Peace River.

We went over the portage with some people from near the Brick farm who had taken money instead of treaty and

were buying mowing machines, rakes and wagons. It had rained so much the bridges were out. We built some bridges, and other times we swam or forded the streams. We followed the lake and river to Athabaska Landing and from there travelled with freighters to Edmonton, from where, after a few days, we took the train for a point near Portage la Prairie.

Julia and I were married on August 21st, 1900 and, the same evening, left for Edmonton.

At that time there were three trains per week each way between Calgary and Edmonton. We stayed for lunch at Red Deer a minute too long, missed our train, and had to stay over three days until the next train to Edmonton arrived. During the three days we waited there for our train it rained and snowed so that there was in places four inches of snow.

Uncle E. J. Lawrence had a little house on the area now occupied by the Swift Packing Plant in Edmonton. We camped with him and hired his horse to hitch to the buggy I had bought the year before at Edmonton, and we travelled in the buggy to Athabaska Landing.

Incidentally that was the last time I saw my uncle alive, for that fall, while he was running his threshing machine at Horse Hills he was caught in the belt and killed.

When we had arrived at Edmonton Adam Herbison's son met me, and I got him and his chum to haul two loads of freight for me from Edmonton to Athabaska Landing. We had arranged with Jim Cornwall to meet me in September at the Landing. We met there on September 4th and put our buggy on the scow so we could drive over the Peace River Portage on our own.

Breden and Cornwall had two boats running on Lesser Slave Lake and we made Grouard, at the west end, in nine days. It was all tracking and not poling and we used oars on the lake when we could not sail.

When we arrived there we helped Bishop Holmes dig his potatoes and got Jake Hudson to freight our stuff to Peace River. We also got a little team there to hitch to our buggy to cover the portage.

We took our time at Grouard and picked a lot of blueberries there, which were plentiful. We had a tent, a stove, and a good camping outfit, so were in no hurry.

We found the portage was almost one continuous mud-hole from one end to the other, and a lot of freight never got through there that fall.

As I had saved up \$200 I paid cash and got my stuff through.

Old man Davis had died and had been buried by Bishop Holmes. His outfit went on to Fort Vermilion where it was disposed of the next spring.

My folks had written me that mother was having to keep her butter on ice as the Hudson's Bay Company had not freighted in any salt from Fort Smith. I managed to get about 300 pounds of salt at Lesser Slave Lake and hauled it over the portage. It was not hard to get freighters when they heard I was paying cash.

Some of the traders told me that the ones who offered to do my freighting had promised to do theirs. I told them I didn't know about that, but I had to get mine done.

As we were finishing our raft at the first island up from Peace River we saw Jack Hudson coming down the hill with my freight. We pulled across the river and had Jack unload the freight onto our raft. He had been nine days making the portage and had had a tough time. He would get stuck, take half his load off, pull the other half through, unload it, and go back for the remainder. That was his method all the way.

That procedure brought a lot of mice onto the raft so my wife and I fixed up a water trap and killed most of them in one day and night.

I was quite happy to have our whole outfit with us. There was a fair amount of water in the river and we had a good big raft.

We didn't run late into the evening. We started early in the morning and kept watch for good places to tie up over night. We had put up our tent and stove on the raft and had a good trip down, taking ten days. After leaving Peace River we camped with brother Jim who lived only 15 miles from home, arriving there on October 15, Jim's birthday and got home next day.



Home in Winter

## Farming Is a Success . . .

**T**HE boys had dug the potatoes and had put them in covered piles in the field.

My first job was to finish the cellar in the house, and line the walls to make them frost-proof. After that we collected the potatoes from the field piles and put them in the root cellars. Then we finished stacking the grain and got ready to start threshing.

Father had told me the people wouldn't work unless we paid them cash or with orders on the Hudson's Bay Company. I told him that arrangement would not be satisfactory and that if people would not work we would not thresh or grind. However we would thresh for either furs or work but not one dollar was going in orders on stores for wages anywhere in the country and no further credit would be given by us.

Fred Lawrence had to sell some of his wheat at a dollar a bushel in trade to the Hudson's Bay Company to get supplies to live on as he had been burned out in the spring. I knew what that meant. Trading stores got cheap wheat, cheap grinding and cheap flour. I offered Fred \$1.50 per bushel for No. 1 and No. 2 wheat. I would pay him some money and turn over some as security and stake him to flour and other needed supplies. He accepted my offer.

At that time grinding was limited to 40 bushels per man at 40c per bushel, cash.

I bought Cousin Fred's young horses and other stuff he had to spare and later on he sold out his whole outfit to Mr. Fred Brick and me.

I started threshing with half a crew which later grew to a full crew. I was on the war path, and decided I would see the thing through. We finished our threshing, made



some flour, and discovered we had power to spare. However the grist mill was too small for it had a capacity of only a little over 100 pounds of fine flour per hour.

We gained experience as we handled and operated our machinery and as we took our wood sawing rig and crusher along with us, we did a really good business.

It was excellent training for the young men in the country then. We threshed 14,000 bushels of grain in 1900 and 1901, nearly half of it barley and oats. About a third of the wheat was frosted and only fit for feed.

In March we cut and hauled a thousand logs for lumber and shingles.

As soon as we sawed shingles we worked on the house. We took off the lumber we had cut by hand and had put on the roof to shed rain and put it across the rafters to shingle onto. Then we ceiled the upstairs, put in partitions, finished the house and put on the kitchen. The floor of the house had all been hand sawed and hand planed. Next year we hoped to get a planer.

The Roman Catholic Mission was putting up a little stone flour mill and saw mill on a little creek near North Vermilion. The Brothers had made a wooden water wheel which broke down and the Bishop got a turbine for them, but they didn't use either the flour mill or the saw mill much. Clement Paul bought the saw mill from them and they bought lumber from him. Their creek, like ours, dried up before long and that was that. We fixed up our mill and used it to make shingles.

Freight rates from Edmonton to Fort Vermilion were high—\$7.00 per 100 pounds or \$100.00 per ton. Later on, when we put in our midget mill, we could turn out 25 barrels of flour in 24 hours.

I got a fine black team so had plenty of horses and from Fred Lawrence I bought a gang plow and the old wagon we used to come into the country in 1886.

My father and my brothers, Arthur and Wilson, left the country in 1901 and settled at Boissevain, Manitoba, after visiting friends in the east. Mother stayed with us until June, 1902, before joining father, who had then bought a

house in town. Sister Minnie married Carman Holden of Boissevain, Manitoba.

When the Hudson's Bay Company brought in an up-to-date flour mill and a Sawyer-Massey 40 x 60 Peerless Separator equipped with a blower and self-feeder, I took it as a challenge, but felt I could hold my own in competition with them.

The company had never bought flour from me. I knew they had quite a lot of wheat at the Catholic Mission and when they wanted me to mill some of their wheat and offered to buy some flour if I did, I refused.

George Carter, trading for Breden and Cornwall, asked me to sell them flour, bacon and butter, provided I would not sell flour to their competitors, the Hudson's Bay Company. I agreed and sold them \$500 worth of flour, bacon and butter.

The Hudson's Bay Company had not played fair with father who had sold them butter at 25c per pound; fresh bacon at 20c per pound, or by the whole hog at 10c; and beef at 6c. But in 1901, I sold the Hudson's Bay Company \$1,500 worth of bacon and butter.

In 1903 I bought out brother Jim's outfit at Prairie Point and built a house on the ranch for him and his family. After Jim and I worked together getting out logs, looking after the stock, and making flour, he decided to take up land south-east of his across the river. I then sold some of the stock and lumber I had bought back to him. He made a trip to Edmonton with a team and I sent one of my teams and a man with him. He bought another team in Edmonton, and they brought back three loads of freight.

It was about a three-day trip down the ice from Peace River town, so Jim built a scow and a raft there and floated down the freight after break-up.

We put in his crop and he put up some nice buildings and fixed up his place. Later he sold out and moved to Peace River to live.

Mr. Wilson, the Hudson's Bay Company's manager came up to look at our crop. We had nearly 2,000 bushels of No. 4 and 1,000 bushels of No. 1 wheat. He wanted the No.

1 but not the No. 4, so I hitched up a four-horse team and broke a road through to Fort Vermilion myself.

While mother was living with us and before she went to father's at Boissevain, Manitoba, my daughter Hester was born in September, 1901, and my son Malcolm was born on Dec. 19, 1902.

Before dad left for Manitoba he was with mother on our farm. He was great with cattle and hogs and made such friends of them he wouldn't stay around when we butchered. We had to do quite a lot of butchering for the Indians were very fond of meat, especially fat pork, fat bacon and fresh lard. They didn't want salt in their butter.

We were finally getting too many stock cattle and they required too much hay-cutting. We found it hard to get extra help so we had to cut down on the stock, and we turned our attention more to grain. In 1903 we had nearly 6,000 bushels, all cut with a binder. What a difference we found between handling the bound and unbound grain in the field!

The Hudson's Bay Company had a road cut out from Fort Vermilion to Little Red River to freight their flour from Fort Vermilion. From Little Red River it would go by steam to Fort Chipewyan and the McKenzie River. My aim was to get \$1.50 per bushel for my wheat and to freight it as cheaply as possible north to Red River, though winter freight people wouldn't do it cheaply enough.

The Hudson's Bay Company ground 200 bushels of wheat into flour for me and I agreed to take 90 tons of flour to Little Red River at \$90.00 per ton and the Company agreed to pay me \$100.00 to break out the road so settlers could come in. I didn't run my flour mill that winter.

The following figures show the wheat sales I made to the Hudson's Bay Company in the years 1903 to 1911 and the money I received for it.

1903 and 1904	-----	2,097 bushels	\$ 4,273.92
1905	-----	2,367 "	3,555.35
1906	-----	2,772 "	4,327.63
1908	-----	825 "	1,238.15
1911	-----	4,013 "	6,020.00
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		12,074 "	\$19,415.05

In 1917, I shipped seven cars of wheat to the United Grain Growers at Winnipeg. It went to Peace River by the steamer D. A. Thomas.

In or about 1904 the Hudson's Bay Company decided to have a boat built of spruce lumber at Fort Vermilion. I was glad because that would enable us to ship our produce up the river to St. John, Hudson Hope and Peace River town by boat.

The company asked me to get out the timber for the boat. I agreed to do it if I could, but it was getting late. However we were able to get most of the logs for the boat to the river bank. We landed a raft of logs measuring over 60,000 board feet at the company's mill at Fort Vermilion after the ice went out in the spring, and were well paid.

That raft would be considered a small one in the east, but it was a good sized raft then for our parts. There were no power boats at our disposal, some swift water, and we could not get experienced river men.

On March 17, 1904, my second daughter Margaret was born. At that time I was on the freight trail to Little Red River. When I heard the news I had brother John take the teams; and finish the freighting and I went home.

Brothers John and Isaac wanted to start on their own and would sell out their interest for \$1,000 each. There was a big crop in sight and I told them if they would wait until next summer I would give them \$2,000 each. They agreed.

When George Bristow who had been working for me said he would like to go out together. We hired a big, imported canoe and started up river on Sept. 14, 1904. The weather was threatening but fair. We reached Peace River Crossing in 12½ days. On the way, we killed two medium-sized moose and lived mostly on moose meat on our trip. Their hides we gave to Mr. Munroe for the use of one of his teams to take us to Lesser Slave Lake from the Crossing.

We proceeded across Lesser Slave Lake and down Slave River to Athabaska Landing in Breden and Cornwall's three boats. In the crowd there were about 60—20 in each boat. We had a good trip. One of the men in the crowd was a chap named King. On the way down he was arrested as it

appeared he had murdered a man who had given him a lift on the trail from Edmonton to Lesser Slave Lake. He had piled up logs near an Indian encampment and burned the man's body with the logs.

From the Landing we went with freighters to Edmonton. We made a leisurely trip on the way down, stopping quite often and feeding the baby, Margaret, on canned milk.

We went on to Brandon by train but before leaving Edmonton I told Isaac and John, who later completed the harvesting in good shape that after their finished the threshing, to let the Hudson's Bay Company have our threshing machine belt for their machine. Our grain was threshed in good shape.

We stayed with my parents for a time, then proceeded to Winnipeg, St. Andrews and Oak Bank, and from there to the home of my wife's parents.

After Christmas in 1904, brother Wilson and I returned to Edmonton where we bought two teams of horses, sleighs and took two loads of freight to Peace River Crossing. Later we returned with two loads of fish from Lesser Slave Lake to Edmonton, where we met my wife and family and my wife's father who had returned with them. The snow was about gone, though it was turning cold.

I bought a democrat and double wagon to take with us. My wife's father went with us to take charge of the Lesser Slave Lake Church Mission while Miss Grace Munroe, who also went with us, helped my wife with the children.

I hired three men with their teams, who had done freighting for me before. They said that freighting on the Athabaska River was good, as the ice was still firm. We made a caboose on one sled, hitched it behind a second, and then hitched the wagon behind the third sled and away we went.

There were three teams in all each hauling freight and we travelled as fast as we could as it was getting warmer from the time we hit Slave River.

I was responsible for the whole outfit and in order to make speed we made no stops for lunch or tea.

We left the ice above the rapids and camped there, and I sent the three men back from there with their teams. From camp we continued overland to the lake. We heard later that a freighter whom we had passed had broken through the ice just below where we left the river and lost his load, but our team we sent back got to Athabaska safely.

We had a fine trip across the lake and then stayed at the Mission a few days before going on to Peace River Crossing. On the prairie there was no snow. In the bush there was. So we transferred our freight from sleigh to wagon as required, and got along fine.

I purchased my parents' share in the home ranch for \$6,000 and paid Isaac and John their promised \$2,000 each. Then John and Isaac went out.

The machinery for the steamer to be built with lumber from the logs we rafted down to Fort Vermilion had to be taken down by raft. We had the use of Mr. George's scow in exchange for helping him build a raft, which we built on the island below Peace River Crossing. Then the machinery was taken down on the two rafts.

A bunch of Mounties came in that spring to build a road to Fort Graham. They didn't use good judgment for they tried to cross the river on bad ice and one of their teams and a wagon broke through. One horse was drowned. They recrossed the river then and spent the winter in a barracks camp until break-up, after which they went on with Mr. George's scow.

We loaded our stuff on our raft and drifted down to Fort Vermilion in five days. My wife's father visited with us for a few days at Peace River Crossing before we left.

The crops were nearly all in and everything had gone well at home. The boys had sold wheat, beef, butter and bacon to the Hudson's Bay Company as follows:

2,000 bushels of wheat at \$1.50 .....	\$ 3,000.00
Beef .....	900.00
Butter .....	1,000.00
Bacon .....	1,200.00

We sent our parents \$2,000 on account so they could get started on their new home and have enough to settle with Isaac and John. I paid up brother Jim in full.

My second child Osborne was born on July 5, 1905, a big, husky boy.

I was sorry to see my brothers go and knew we would miss them terribly, but was glad to have them squared up so they would have money on hand for whatever they wanted to do. I also looked forward to reducing the number of my cattle as they were too much trouble to put up hay for.

I found the Hudson's Bay Company hadn't given very good satisfaction with their threshing outfit and they could not get enough experienced men. Anyway there were a lot of people after me to do their threshing this fall, though I had heard rumors that my little threshing outfit would likely be found in some fence corner come fall. If the crop was good I would certainly be out with my machine.

My little flour mill was not working but I could grind or sell flour if I wished, selling it at wholesale prices.

I also figured I could sell the Hudson's Bay Company wheat, grind it, and sell it to them at a price they could make a profit on if they delivered it by steamboat.

I felt that if the Hudson's Bay Company cut the price of wheat to 75c per bushel, in trade, which they could do, I might move out but I wouldn't run out or be run out.

In 1906 I sold to the Hudson's Bay Company, beef to the value of \$1,000. In 1906 and 1907 I sold them 2,272 bushels of wheat at \$1.65 per bushel, in 1908 825 bushels at \$1.50 per bushel and also sold them a lot of butter and bacon that year. In 1909 and 1910 the crops were of a fair quality.

Let me take time out to mention the record of addition to our family as time went on. On December 8, 1906, daughter Edith was born. On May 6, 1908, Velma, on August 15, 1909, Alice and on May 15, 1911, Daisy.

In 1910, word got around that the price of wheat was down. Apparently the Hudson's Bay Company representative was responsible for the rumor, probably with the hope of depressing the price. I knew the company was fixed for both wheat and flour, and what the company's motive was.

I wrote a letter to Mr. Levick, their district manager, protesting. He wrote back stating several things that made

me angry because they were untrue. He said there was a rumor going around that I was trading; that if I was, the company had got along before I was thought of and would get along after I was forgotten. He said that their Mr. Wilson was buying wheat at Fort Vermilion, and what he said, went.

I threw his letter into the fire but afterwards thought I should have framed it to show my friends. After considering his letter, I made my plans accordingly. My mill was ready to be set up and have the belt connected. The company had their new mill I mentioned before, but very little wheat and flour.

Mr. Ponton who ran the 5th Meridian Post came to Little Red River where I was working. He had seen Wilson of the Hudson's Bay Company and told him what he wanted. The Company had no oats, beef or pork, as I knew but they had lots of freighters who needed those things.

Wilson came to see me and found Mr. Ponton with me, and he wanted me to supply him. I told him I had offered it to Mr. Ponton, but he could have the supplies I had offered to Ponton at the price I had agreed to take provided I did the freighting and provided he would take oats I would supply from my lower place at our weights.

I could not get oats, but we could, and got, barley which we crushed and freighted to him. It was a \$1,000 order he got then and later on he gave me a further order for oats.

I kept on improving the farm and put better buildings on it.

In the summer of 1909 my wife went to visit her folks in Winnipeg. While there she took sick, but later returned, quite well.

In the spring of 1911, Mr. Wilson told me he had an order for 1,000 sacks of flour from Fort Chipewyan, but the company had neither wheat nor flour.

He wanted to know if I could fill the order. I agreed to supply them but on my own, not his, terms, and delivered to the company 4,013 bushels of wheat at \$1.50 per bushel, in tip top shape. This was the last wheat I delivered to them.



We had two bins of seed wheat which I wouldn't sell and, in all, we had over 8,000 bushels.

In 1915, I told the farmers around us to cut the price of wheat to \$1.10 per bushel and to offer it at that price to the Hudson's Bay Company. They left it with me to arrange the price with Mr. Clark, the Hudson's Bay Company's man. He referred the proposition to head office and they refused it. So I paid that price for wheat that I bought around the country, ordered a big bunch of grain sacks, arranged with the D. A. Thomas to take my grain to Peace River for \$5.00 a ton and my cattle at \$5.00 a head.

I shipped seven cars of wheat and 400 sacks of potatoes that way. The potatoes were for Peace River and Grande Prairie. The wheat went to the U.G.G. and graded No. 2 with one point dockage. That was in 1917.

I exhibited my wheat at Peace River Fair and took a lot of prizes and the Bank of Commerce silver medal for the best showing of grain. The family went with me to the fair and the round trip cost about \$200.

After the fair I went to Winnipeg and bought a Midget grist mill and took it in that summer along with a couple of wagons and other stuff we needed.

Inside our old stone-mill building, I set up the Midget and in the winter of 1917-18 we made 90,000 pounds of flour. The Fairbanks-Morse Company, from whom I had got the mill, sent full instructions for setting it up. We followed the instructions and it ran fine and gave us no trouble. We also put in a 12-inch crusher.

I bought a stallion and two Shorthorn bulls for the farm and for breeding purposes.

I should have said that after Daisy was born, in 1911, I arranged through Bishop Robins to start a school of my own. My two oldest children, Hester and Malcolm, I had sent out to Winnipeg to go to school. I brought them home in 1912 after our school was started and hired Miss Waghorn as teacher. We fixed up the house we had put up for brother James when he was with us. One end of it was arranged for a home for the teacher and the rest of it was the school room.

She taught one year during which I paid her wages and provided her board. The school was then taken over and operated by the government, and it was so operated for 21 years.

Sometimes, to keep our required minimum quota of pupils we took in other children and I paid their expenses outside of the grants. In this way we were able to keep our children at school without having to go out. In some cases indeed, the schooling of the children we occasionally took in to keep our attendance up to minimum was all those children ever got.

It made hard work for my wife though. We put outside stairs on the school building and fitted up three rooms above the school, one reserved for the minister who was at liberty to come at any time, day or night, to use it. The other two were for visitors. The minister could put his team in the stable there, look after his own cooking and food supplies and make himself right at home. It was fine all around.

We now began increasing our stock of goods and getting more heavily in the fur trade.

With our new mill in operation we made a better grade of flour and also made cracked wheat, cream of wheat, and shorts with second grade flour. In fact we made mixtures for both porridge and dog-feed. We also did an increasing business in bacon, butter, lumber, shingles and beef.

I paid cash for some goods I didn't produce myself. On goods that I didn't have, the price rose, so I worked up the price of my own stock as well as the price of fur. It wasn't long before I was holding my own.

I traded more or less generally for cash and so was able to get away from the skin and fur business.

The young people liked to trade in a way that would give them some cash. In this way all of us were handling more actual money.

We didn't raise any grain on the place that Fred Lawrence sold to Mr. Brick and me. At this Prairie Point farm the machine shed, granaries, and 3,000 bushels of wheat were burned up in a mysterious fire, so we quit farming the Fred Lawrence place. Our loss was about \$5,000.

Later we wintered cattle there and kept two men looking after the stock.

One of the men had just come in with a load of hay. He saw the house on fire, ran over and opened the door and took the lantern down from near the door. Just then the ammunition from one of the rifles began to explode so he got away from the house. This was a two-storey house brother Jim had built. They lost everything except the lantern and what they had on. This was about a \$2,000 loss.

One of them hitched up and came down to the ranch for grub and bedding and other supplies. I went up the next day, after sending him back with supplies. I took three men, some lumber and shingles, a stove, bedding, etc., and we put up a one-storey house 18 x 24 in three days.

Son Stanley was born November 2, 1912, Kathleen was born July 15, 1914.

Our teacher boarded with us and was like one of the family. Every Christmas we had a Christmas tree and a concert. At times we had more than a house full.

On seven different quarters we had a total of 250 acres broken. Some of it was covered by heavy timber and we had to use six horses on a 16-inch plow.

In or about 1912 Mr. Clement Paul bought the Hudson's Bay Company threshing outfit. He wanted the engine to operate the sawmill, which he had bought from the Roman Catholic Mission and located on the creek at North Vermilion below the Fred Lawrence place and worked until the creek dried up, like ours had done.

In 1914 the Hudson's Bay Company stopped giving credit and their fur trade dropped to almost nothing.

Mr. Paul made a proposition to me that we work together getting out timber and sawing it. When I mentioned my own outfit he said, "Give it a rest. Come onto my limit and I'll put up my sawmill, planer, engine, shingle mill, and myself at \$5.00 per day, in exchange for your time. You take the sawing and I'll run the engine." I said, "O.K."

We went up and looked over the limit and located the road sites.

He was to take his wife to the mill-site to live, and we would get busy sawing. I let him have what provisions he needed. For greater convenience and comfort we moved our outfit of teams and men to the Fred Lawrence place, which was a bit cold but all in all, fairly comfortable and had lots of room.

We cut and hauled 3,000 logs to the mill as well as some big timber for the R.C.M.P. Then we started sawing and the R.C.M.P. did the hauling and we got the work done fine. Had a good crew.

We were sawing when someone, one Saturday, set the Hudson's Bay Company post on fire. Someone who saw it started gave the alarm before any damage was done.

The police investigated and arrested one of our men. Mr. W. Smith, J.P., tried him and sent him up for a month at Peace River. The chap, although I never figured he was guilty, said he had a nice time at Peace River. He had been there before.

I had gone home that Saturday with Mr. Albert Lawrence in a boat of Miss Slade I had borrowed at Soney Point, so I saw the fire. The boat leaked badly and we only kept it from sinking by constantly baling with an old tin dish, but we crossed the river safely.

We started our sawing and while we were at it, quite a few trappers brought their fur to me to price. I always bought them. People came from as far as Keg River for supplies and that year, though people said I was crazy, I kept on buying fur. I bought fur from Indians from all around, and, in 1914, I started more men in the fur business.



With Indians at Hay Lakes in Summer

## Fur Trading Interests . . .

**I** WAS getting quite experienced in trading and handling machinery and stock, as well as in freighting stuff over the country. My activities seemed to come out well and I heard less and less of the rumor I was going broke.

Bears and wolves still got some of our livestock at times. We watched for them and shot or poisoned an occasional one. The three Paul brothers were experienced bushmen and Clement Paul had killed more wolves than any of the rest of us.

I got my share though. In six days I poisoned six wolves and nine coyotes. This cleaned out one bunch that had killed three colts and had bitten a three-year-old mare so badly we had to destroy her. The wolves followed when we brought in the horses and I got busy with my bait.

When Clement was trading at Keg River Prairie a band of about 12 wolves took after his horses and killed the stallion. When he looked into the matter he found the wolves eating at the stallion's remains. The wolves were scared away. Then he cut up the carcass into pieces and put poison in each piece and left them. The next morning he had nine dead wolves. That winter he killed a lot more.

Clement's brother Fred found nine wolves eating at the remains of a dead animal. He got three of them with poison. The remainder of the band went upriver.

Afterwards, when we rounded up our cattle at Prairie Point, we neglected to count them, and when we went to Prairie Point to thresh we found that one of our four-year-old steers was walking on three legs. The other leg had been eaten off, and the leg was smelling badly. So I shot the steer and sold the meat at half-price for dog food. It must have been a wolf or wolves that attacked the animal, but how he could escape afterwards was a puzzle.

Bears will stay around more persistently than wolves unless they are shot or shot at, though I was lucky to get every bear I aimed for.

Once when brother Isaac came in from work, my wife told him she had heard a pig squeal. He took my rifle she handed him, found the bear and shot it and drove it away. That was his first bear and he wouldn't follow it. At noon-time I was told about it and I sent a man to try to locate the bear. He found it quite close to where it had been shot.

Soon after that Isaac found another bear up the road, and he came and got my 40-65 rifle. One of the men came, where I was working, and told me, so I got an old 44-40 rifle one of the men had there in a tent, and went down to where Isaac was looking for the bear. He went one way around the bluff and I went the other way. Soon I heard a shot. Isaac hollered that the bear was wounded so I ran over and we tracked him. The bear heard us coming and turned and charged at us. I put three bullets into him and he dropped dead.

We then counted our pigs and found 50 of the 58 were alive.

Later I shot a big bear that I found eating an 80-pound pig it had killed. After that we trapped quite a few bears. One day we saw a big 600-pound bear in the river. I put out in a boat and followed and shot it as it was getting out on the bank. A bunch of Indians had just come to see me at the time and I gave the bear to them. It was very old and proved to be very tough eating.

The first bear I shot came out near where brother Jim was working. I followed it about half a mile. When I caught up to it, it was eating ants from an old log. He heard me and looked up. I shot him, and as he dropped over he continued to reach for his mouth with his paw.

During the First Great War everybody was hard up. I bought fur and anything they had to sell, hired more help, and gave out a lot of my farm produce on credit. Most of it was settled for the following winter.

This trade gave me a chance to get acquainted with the Indians and trappers in the first war year, and I always helped them out when I could.

The Chief of the Crees and his son came up to the ranch with a fine bunch of furs. They left moose and bear hides at the Hudson's Bay Company's bunk house. The rest of their fur as well as the moose and bear hides I bought, and sold them goods out of the store on the ranch.

I had a credit at both Revillon Brothers and the Hudson's Bay Company, for flour, bacon, butter, etc. and arranged to buy goods from Revillon in payment when I was short of goods. So I took the Chief over to Revillon Brothers and got him fixed up with what he wanted.

Then I drove him over to the Hudson's Bay Company to get the moose and bear skins he had left there. I was standing by the hides when the Hudson's Bay clerk came over and asked me what I was doing. I told him I was warming up and waiting for the Chief to pack up the furs I had bought from him. Then I told him I had also bought the fine furs the chief had brought in. Nothing further was said then, but I heard afterward that Wilson, the Hudson's Bay Company's manager, offered the clerk \$25 to give me a thrashing.

I was keeping watch over things. Though I had a credit at both Revillon Brothers and the Hudson's Bay Company neither would sell me any more goods, so I made them pay me up in cash and I told them there must be a good profit in their business when they could buy furs at their own prices and pay for the furs in goods at their own price. I was surprised to note that Revillon's took the same stand about credit for me as the Hudson's Bay Company did.

I arranged with the Cree Chief to freight four tons of stuff to his place at Rat River and either to be there myself to trade it, or to send a man there. We were to meet at Rat River at a certain time, which we did. On the trail we met 22 dog trains from various parts of the country.

Returning from that trip we brought back over \$2,000 worth of fur. I spent the time freighting toward Rat River and Hay Lakes, trading and keeping the people around there supplied with goods.

I learned that the Cree chief was a great hunter. He was also a great family man and had three wives, keeping them in separate teepees. He married the favorite one; when she died he married the next favorite one.



An Indian from outside came to his camp and he married the chief's daughter. But the fellow was too lazy to work and was always getting into mischief. The Chief told him to get out and find a job in the settlement if he didn't want to hunt for himself and his wife. The next day the fellow shot himself. There were no police there then and my wife's father went out to visit the Chief who felt badly about it all. Nothing was done about the suicide.

In the spring I took out three loads of supplies. There were four of us in our party and more to come. I sent a man ahead with tobacco and tea supplies and told him not to speak with anyone on the road, but to tell the people at Rat River we were coming and to meet us there. He got through that day and we arrived the next day.

The whole settlement was there with their furs and we bought a lot of fur, sold a lot of goods, and stored the rest until later in the fall.

Clement Paul and I had finished working together. We planed a lot of the lumber when it dried and cut a lot of shingles. We paid the government for the limit and Clement moved away. Later I moved too, running my outfit at Prairie Point that had been left idle when I joined forces with Clement.

In 1917 I bought a second hand J. I. Case engine from Peace River. It had lots more power than the engine I bought in 1899.

On June 30th Henry J. Hilker and his brother came on saddle horses and bought 30 of our big steers and 10 cows. We arranged to sell 40 more head to them later on, and did so. We got \$35 a head for our cattle and were relieved to get rid of them.

My wife's father and the Boiler Inspector came down the river to where I was sawing. The inspector examined the boiler and gave me a certificate good for a steam engine up to 50 h.p. The boiler was in perfect shape. The only change he made was to instal new rings and a lubricator instead of the juice cap. I was pleased to get the certificate.

Back in 1911 Fred Lawrence started the "P" Company, and I sold my outfit to them for \$20,000 in cash and \$20,000 in stock. The first \$10,000 was in cash with promise to

pay the second \$10,000 in one year. In addition they were to pay me \$2,000 and board in wages while I was to work for them. One of the directors asked me to let them back out of the deal and not ask for the \$10,000 cash payment. As it appears they were going behind in their trade and the returns from their Slave Lake saw mill, I told them I would let the wages go, and if they paid me the \$7,000 owing me for wintering the animals Fred had sent me; and paid me for the goods I had supplied to their stores at Fort Vermilion and Little Red River, I would let the deal go, and would pay them back from \$2,000 to \$3,000. That was agreed to. The result was I kept on working for myself.

Brother Isaac had a farm but his crop was hailed out and he came to help me run the farm. He stayed until December 16, 1914, when he left Fort Vermilion for Edmonton to enlist and go overseas. He had been my foreman for two years.

For the seven cars of grain, previously mentioned, that I sent by the boat "D. A. Thomas" in 1917, which totalled 7,735 bushels and 50 pounds, I received \$1.80 per bushel, after paying all expenses. Some of this I had bought the year before, but most of it was on hand when I sold the last 3,000 bushels to the Hudson's Bay Company. Shortly after that we offered to sell grain to that company at \$1.10 per bushel. I tried to get other grain raisers to join me in shipping out, but they wanted to sell some to get some cash and get some ground.

I let them have what cash they needed and kept over 1,000 bushels in addition to our new crop to start our new mill on as soon as we put it up.

Afterwards I shipped out one car of No. 4 wheat as we would not grind anything poorer than No. 3 or anything that was smutty—even for grist. So our customers got the best we could produce. When we set up the new mill we stopped using the stones and they are still in the corner. Later I bought a new up-to-date threshing outfit, and sold the old outfit which, in 1946, is still running.

The Hudson's Bay Company held their mill for a time, then sold it and freighted it up river and thence to Red Deer to the purchasers.

With my mill I was able to make about 35 pounds of flour per bushel of wheat, leaving the shorts, which I put up in 50-pound bags, for dog feed. It was prepared as porridge in big kettles with bits of meat and fish, grease or tallow, and it was so much in demand the market for cornmeal for dog feed disappeared. People could get a sack or a ton of shorts at a set price, delivered.

During that time great changes in trade with the Indians were taking place. Farmers bought crushers and ground the wheat, some weedy, and some damp, from being threshed too soon after cutting. The result was, some of the stuff heated, some mildewed, and a lot of it spoiled.

What was bought from me could be depended on. What the Indians got from the farmers after could not be used for biscuits, bannocks, or even for dog food. The results was my business was not, in the end, hurt by that competition.

The first steamer was put on the river by the Roman Catholic Mission. It had two small boilers and was driven by an engine in a poplar scow, but it was really a lake boat as it drew so much water so the outfit was sold.

Lambert brought my outfit down one fall for which I paid him \$300. Later the machinery was put in a big flat-boat, which was run down the river, broken down, and tied up on the short. The ice took it out in the spring, tipped it over and deposited it upside down on the north shore of Peace River, where the settlers later on broke it up and used it for their own purposes.

That was another enterprise that failed.

We sent some big steers down to Fort Smith to the Hudson's Bay Company and to the police but the freighters didn't understand handling cattle and some of the animals were in bad shape when they arrived. So I shipped no more cattle down river but shipped up-river instead.

We decided to take a bunch of our big cattle over the river to feed on the prairie about 30 miles south. There were three of our boys on saddle horses and we had two teams for the operation as well. With 12 inches of ice on the river it seemed safe. One team was ahead, with some cattle following, but some cattle bunched up and broke

through. The horses went in too but the boys did not get wet. We got the teams around and pulled the cattle out as fast as we could, but some of them drifted under the ice. We were happy that no horses were lost.

First, we pulled out the saddle horses with the teams which was ticklish business. I would grab hold of the rope attached to the horse's neck and hold the animal down until I got the rope off its neck. As the cattle saw the horses walk away they swam to that end of the opening in the ice as there was room for them. We worked fast, but some of the cattle got tired out. We didn't have time to watch everything but we knew that some of them went under the ice, though we did our best to save all of them. They should have been taken across the river in small lots. We went home then and decided to keep our cattle. It proved a wise decision for, when we shipped the cattle the next summer we received a better price and so didn't notice the loss too much.

I know I am getting things mixed up in going back and forth in my memory for dates and events, so you will have to be patient in reading this.

In 1913, I bought Fred Brick's interest in the old E. J. Lawrence place.

In September of 1914, I shipped by the D. A. Thomas steamer, 73 head of cattle to Peace River. In a way it was an unfortunate trip, for the steamer struck a stone at Green Island, was stove in and started taking water. The captain drove her onto a gravel bar near the head of the island. The water finally rose in the boat and covered the engine. When the decks settled to water level we drove the cattle off into the river, and all but nine swam to shore and came out on the south bank. We could likely have saved the nine also had we been supplied with a boat.

Frank Lambert and my son Stanley rounded up about half of the cattle on shore at the time, and next morning gathered up the remainder.

We made Peace River with pack horses in four days and from there shipped the cattle to Edmonton in three cars. We had a good trip and realized \$3,378 for the stock. I bought my supplies there, went back to Peace River and

built two scows. Mr. Kepler was hired to take us to Fort Vermilion. All of us, including the cattle, suffered from sore feet from walking on the gravel beach.

My brother Willie and my son Osborne had rounded up the stock on snowshoes. In the process Osborne, who had been in hospital and had left before he was fit to be out, hurt his leg. He had a rugged time on the trip, but being tough, came through all right.

Originally when I had transporting by river to do, I used rafts. Later I would go up river in the steamer, make a boat, and take my stuff down in it. Sometimes there was ice at the river's edge, but I never was caught in it. I always figured to return down river by October 20.

Looking ahead again to the 20's, my son Oswald was born December 18, 1921.

That year and the next there were several small threshers operating. In 1921 the crops were generally good, and in 1923, fair.

During those years, and in 1925, I bought quite a lot of fur and did considerable trading. You will get some idea of it when I say that in 1920-21, I sold some \$13,000 worth of furs.

In 1924 we took in from Tall Trees, Bear Lake and Hay Lakes, 10 silver, 50 cross, and 75 red fox, 150 mink, 100 skunk, 120 ermine, 80 coyotes, 85 lynx, 15 martin, 900 rats, 2 fisher and 87 horse and cow hides.

The next year we took in, from various sources in parts where I was freighting, 73 foxes, 116 beaver, 436 ermine, 326 mink, 2 wolves, 3 otter, 125 lynx and 2,028 muskrats.

During those years I sometimes paid out more in cash than I took in fur. I always paid all the fur was worth. I also sold a lot of flour, shorts, lard, butter, and bacon, some of which I got from neighbors.

I cut the freight rates from Fort Vermilion to Hay Lakes to \$50 a ton, in 1921-22, and held my own over the years in the trading business though, as time went on, trading with other traders was cut down.

About 1925, we cut a road from the Hay River road on high land southwest of Watt Mountain to Hay Lakes, which

was shorter and I cut the freight charge from 7c to 4c per pound.

I liked that route better because it didn't drift as badly and supplied feed for stock in the summer, though there were a few more hills to get over and mud holes to get through or around.

I spent nearly \$2,000 making this road as a lot of it was through bush and it eventually become the main road to Hay Lakes.

On one occasion a bunch of farmers around Fort Vermilion thought of buying the Hudson's Bay Company mill and saw that word got to me about it. They hoped to depend on the Hudson's Bay Company to get their flour. I wasn't interested as I had my own mill and my own market.

C. Lapp's man told me my store at Hay Lakes had burned up and was a total loss, for nothing was saved. I always figured there was some crooked work about the fire. But, in any case, when I heard of it I sent six teams to Hay Lakes loaded with provisions of all sorts and later sent eight more loads. I always figured the furs had been stolen and sold by some fellows who suddenly became good hunters who hadn't been before.

We sent word to the Indians to meet us there. They did so and were a very happy bunch. I took in over \$2,000 worth of fur at that time and also arranged to get out logs for a new store.

Eventually I learned that Lapp had himself sold the furs to the Hudson's Bay Company that he got with stock from my store he was managing on commission. I arranged with a legal firm to look after Lapp.

As the boys were getting bigger and more useful and responsible, I was able to be away from home more, and I put up an outfit at Hay Lakes and kept a man there. We were then strictly on our own. We paid top prices for fur, sold reasonably, and did a good business in fur trading, fire or no fire. In fact the fur business kept getting better and better.

The Indians wanted me to trade with them at treaty time at Hay River, in 1928. So, taking seven loads of supplies,

I went there, built a boat, and moved over to the north side of the river where I could meet them as they came in from the north and from Hay Lakes.

My trading was a success for I disposed of all my supplies and most of the goods one of our traders had there as I took over these goods also.

Later on, at treaty time we looked after the trade there. Still later, treaty was paid at Hay Lakes.

The Indian agent who looked after them wanted the Indians at Hay Lakes to trade at Hay River and take their supplies home from there. My son Stan, who looked after the Hay Lakes store, suggested they stay at Hay River and have the agent go there to pay treaty, and then freight their supplies in from Hay Lakes so all would not have to go to Hay River. The agent's suggestion was especially for the occasions when the water was low in the river.

The Indians took Stan's advice and that stopped all the trouble.

I had, of course, to make the trip to Hay River with goods in order to get our share of beaver pelts. There was a justice of the peace at Hay River who was in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. I was also a justice of the peace and the Indians wanted me to go there. I was glad I went as I made well on the trip and it proved good for our future business. Of course, it was a great help in trading for me to have a large mill as I could grind our wheat and make it into whiter flour than my competitors.

When I got to Hay River I was very busy. The Chief and his head men were there from Hay Lakes and there were lots of complaints about the Indian agent, most of which were looked into by me.

The agent had gone into Hay Lakes ahead of the treaty-money date. He took a policeman, the doctor, the Hudson's Bay man (the justice of the peace) as interpreter and flew into Hay Lakes on a Sunday, returning to Hay River the same day.

My son Stanley was at Hay River, on his way to Hay Lakes to be there for treaty when this arrangement was advertised. Both of us went to Hay Lakes but the trading was nearly over when we got there.

I reported this trick to Mr. Christianson at Ottawa. Mr. Christianson, who was present at our wedding at Westbourne, in 1900, assured me it would not happen again, and it did not.

In 19\*\*, my son Osborne was farming at Peace River. He offered to help me with my trading if I wished him to. I had him come to Hay Lakes where we took out some lumber and put up a few buildings.

Our outfit was good. We used the new road on the high land to haul freight on with our own teams. I had a store at Tall Crees and took what fur I had there, leaving Osborne in charge at Hay Lakes although that was his first experience with trading.

After Christmas, which I spent at home, I took one team with a small load of stuff to Hay Lakes to spend New Year's with Osborne.

New Year's is celebrated more enthusiastically than is Christmas by the Indians and at that time all the traders join in giving them a feed of biscuits or bannock at least, and perhaps, with it some butter, jam or fruit, with lots of tea well sweetened with sugar.

Both Osborne and the Indians were glad to see me. I found he had a nice bunch of furs, and we bought a lot more. That trip set the price of furs for the winter and it put prices up quite a bit.

Osborne went to Peace River by dog-team and brought back a load of ammunition and other stuff we required. As he had a man on his farm looking after things he didn't need to be there. He stayed with me until all the Indians had come in.

After the trading finished for the season Osborne went with me to Edmonton to sell our furs. Later he freighted for me with his teams, taking freight from Peace River to Fort Vermilion and Hay Lakes. He took our furs to ship out from Peace River to Edmonton. We sold at Edmonton to the highest bidder. We were able to keep pretty well informed on fur prices at Edmonton, Winnipeg and Montreal.

I paid Osborne \$500 for bringing in five tons of freight to Hay Lakes.



Gradually I cut down on farming. I kept fewer hogs and cut milk cows down to family requirements, though I kept about 100 heads of cattle on hand, which my boys looked after well. I was thus kept more free to trade.

My main store supplies I kept at Hay River, though I put in supplies of flour, sugar, dog-food, etc. at Hay Lakes and the settlement west of there. I freighted supplies with horses and used a dog team to travel around with as the roads drifted full of snow and the Indians required a lot of flour and dog feed near their homes which I could supply from there.

Revillon Freres had a post at Hay Lakes and they kept a boat on Hay River, which helped a lot in the spring when trails were bad.

I put on a motor boat that I built with lumber sawed and freighted out from the mill at the ranch. Later I sold the boat to one of the best hunters in the district. He used it to freight for himself and his friends.

One day he and some young men friends took the boat down river to an Indian camp. The boat was overloaded, and while it was being turned around for landing the motor fell off and dropped into eight feet of water. The owner offered a fine shirt to anyone who would dive down and recover it. One of the passengers dived in, fastened a rope to it and it was drawn out. I fixed the motor on solidly, started it up, and it ran o.k.

That winter we had an excellent trade. We took out our beaver and rats in June after the winter's trade was over and trappers had bought all their supplies. The rest of the furs we sent out during the winter and early spring to the Canadian Fur Auction Sales Company in Montreal.

I was also at Hay Lakes when treaty was paid.

The school problem had become acute by this time. Up until then we had taken extra children into our school, sometimes boarding them, in order to keep the required minimum enrolment up so we could get the grant.

I decided to move to Peace River from Fort Vermilion as four of our children were of school age. I sent some cattle to market and bought a house and two lots in Peace River, moving the family there.

The older boys and I continued trading, freighting, etc., and we kept a full crew by hiring others. I had sold the mill at the ranch to Stanley and Mrs. Ward Rivard and they were operating it.

My wife wrote from Peace River to me at Hay Lakes that she would like to be with me, so I told her to take the plane to Fort Vermilion and one of our boys would bring her by team in a stove-equipped caboose, to Hay Lakes. About five days afterward they drove into the yard at Hay Lakes in fine shape. That was her first ride in a plane.

When she arrived at Hay Lakes she found a big bunch of Indians at the store busy trading their furs for goods.

We spent some time building a scow for use around the lake, and to run down to the Hay River Post—a distance of 130 miles—about 30 miles of swift water and rapids. We also built a smaller scow. We had then gotten in two loads of freight for our spring trade at the Hay Lake post.

We later sold both scows to the Hudson's Bay Company after the boys and I loaded the large scow with a mixed cargo of pelts and passengers, tied the smaller scow alongside and gone down the river toward the Hay River post.

After removing our cargo and leaving the scows, we took the passengers and the pelts across the portage to Fort Vermilion. On the way we picked up 40 head of cattle and 30 hogs and continued on to Fort Vermilion. From there in company with Mr. O'Sullivan, we took our cattle, hogs and pelts to Peace River.

In 1937 son Osborne arranged with Frank Jackson of Keg River Prairie, to drive 75 head of cattle from Fort Vermilion to Grimshaw. Osborne did it, but on the way some got lost in the thick brush. These were nearly all rounded up later or butchered where found.

In the fall of 1940 tragedy struck. My son Oswald, who had a habit of sleep-walking, at my request, was put in charge of the shipping by boat of 60 head of cattle from the Fort to Peace River. On September 21st I got a wire from Carcajou Point, up the river, that Oswald was missing from the boat. It was assumed he walked off the boat in his sleep and was drowned. Son Isaac and John Ward searched along

the shore with a motor boat, a search in which the R.C.M.P. joined, but no trace of Oswald was ever found.

During the Second World War, as my sons Stanley and Walter went overseas, and Isaac went into training in the air force. I sold the mill, shipped my new separator to Peace River, sold the stock off the farm and moved to Peace River myself.

The agent himself told me afterwards that he would have lost his job over it if he hadn't been lame, and I told him that being lame wouldn't help him if he tried it again for I would camp on his trail.

During the following summer my daughter helped me in the trade. She took a democrat-wagon, extra horses and saddles to the treaty at Hay River. At least she tried, though due to very muddy roads she had to leave the democrat about half way to Hay Lakes. She did good work in trading and looked after the cash. The weather was fine, she swam every day, and generally had a good time.

Son Stanley bought a big Case tractor to save having to use and feed horses and protect them from flies, but when he tried it he found it was too heavy for use of the land.

I had over a thousand acres of land around the Fort, but a lot of it I could not pay the taxes on and there is not much sale for land in that district. My family are all out of Fort Vermilion country and all are doing fine. I am running around on roads instead of trails. I was getting fed up with camping out winter and summer; the cold and the flies on men and teams. I am glad that none of the family took up the fur trading business as a business, or as traders. Am getting our stocks and implements disposed of and getting settled in Peace River, the children are also settled around us. Walter and Jeanette are at the coast, Isaac is trucking at High Prairie. I am looking after the building of the house not yet finished but am satisfied. In the fall of 1948 I had to quit hard work and take it easy. Went to the hospital in Edmonton, from there my wife and I went to the coast for several months, improved in health and am feeling much better. I am now back in Peace River, not doing much but taking it easy.



**Freight train in winter**