

# Our Prize Homesteaders

The following article by Jackson Hartley, Key West P.O., Sask., was awarded the Third Prize in our recent Homesteaders' Competition

I read with interest the experiences of a homesteader published in The Guide and as you were offering prizes for other experiences I thought I would write out some of mine, as they might be of interest and may be profit to some of The Guide readers. I know we have had to rough it sometimes pretty hard, but we are far ahead today of what we could have ever hoped to be if we had stayed in England. We have been blessed with good health and have liked the free life. We also have done well and given the boys a good chance to get on, which was our only ambition in coming to Canada.

I came out to Canada in the spring of 1905, being then 45 years old, with a wife and three boys. I had worked all my life from 12 years old in a woollen mill in Lancashire, where we made flannel for the British army and navy. I worked for 18 years at the same mill that I left to come out to this country, and was a hard worker for 33 years, working by the piece, so that the more work I did the more money I got. I might just say that it was one of the largest firms in Lancashire where I worked, and we turned out about 1,000 pieces of flannel a week, each piece measuring about 150 yards long, or 50,000 yards a week all the year round. I just missed three weeks' work through sickness in all those 18 years, and when I told the boss that I had made up my mind to come to take up land and be a farmer in Canada, he would not speak to me any more, as he, along with a good many others, thought I must have gone crazy to ever think of such a thing. But it did not count with me what people thought when I had made up my mind to do a thing, and both my wife and I had read all we could put our hands on about farming in Canada, and were pretty well prepared to rough it if we had to.

## Greenhorns at Yellow Grass

We sailed on March 30, 1905, from Liverpool on the SS. Bavarian, and landed in Yellow Grass on April 15. I should say that my oldest boy was 18 years old, the next 12, and the youngest 6. A friend of ours had taken up a quarter section for me and a quarter for the oldest boy, so we had 320 acres altogether to come to. Well, we were all pretty green about farming, as we could not milk a cow or harness a horse, but we were all very willing to work and to learn and did not pretend, as many do, that we knew all about it. We had a little money, so bought a team, wagon, walking plow, lumber and provisions in town and set out for our homesteads, 27 miles away. We landed where our future home was to be after a two days' trip. That was the first night in my life that I slept out, but we rolled in the blankets under the wagon and did all right, getting up in the morning ready dressed. We had left the wife and two youngest boys in town until we got fixed up a little. When we arrived there had been a prairie fire all through that section, and everything was burnt off black and nothing was left in the way of pasture. After getting fixed up a little we bought a cow and two pigs and then my wife and the two other boys came out from town to the homestead just a month from the time we left England. We then started to break and that year we broke 16 acres on our own place and 15 acres for a neighbor who came in the spring following.

## Neighbors Scarce

It was a new settlement where our homesteads were, and we were practically the first settlers in that district. We had one neighbor the first year six miles off, and the next nearest was fifteen miles away on the road to town. A very bad road it was, too, as we had to cross three creeks every time we went in, and we got stuck in the mud almost every time and had to unload every stick as

often as twice and sometimes three times. However, we got all our belongings out at last just before hay time, and then we began to put up hay, having bought a mower and rake. We had a whole marsh of two sections to ourselves and we put up 60 loads of hay. While working at this the eldest boy and the youngest when coming home with a load fell off the hay rack and the oldest lad broke his arm at the wrist. We got him home and bathed it well with hot water and put shingles on for to keep it straight. The next morning we went in the wagon to town to the doctor, and he said it had been set all right. Threshing time then came on, so I went with the team stook threshing and got through pretty well for a new hand, earning \$106.00, which I spent right away before returning home on provisions and clothes for the coming winter. We were burning wood for fuel all the time, which we got at the Rough Bark, 7 miles away. The

mer, ten of which we seeded to oats for green feed, so that we had twenty-six acres of crop. Settlers now began to come in around us and landseekers passed most every day and as we were the only folks living in there we had lots of company, as many of them stayed over night. We worked away earning what we could that summer. Then threshing time came around again and the oldest boy went out with a team and earned \$100. Our own little crop we got threshed, our seven acres of wheat giving us 126 bushels of No. 1, and our nine acres of oats 253 bushels. We sold quite a bit of hay, which helped us, besides growing lots of potatoes and other vegetables. We raised a number of pigs, too, which did well for us.

## Caught by the Blizzard

Now winter was coming on again, so we went to town to get our supply of provisions, clothes and coal with two wagons and four horses. We started



SIR WILLIAM MACKENZIE  
President of the C.N.R., snapped at the Woodbine Race Track, Toronto.

oldest boy went out to work and learn what he could as soon as his arm got well. He went to work for our neighbor first at \$5 a month for the first month, and then was to have \$10 after but he only stayed there two weeks, as he could not stand the man any longer. Then he went to another place, 20 miles away at \$20 a month, and this fellow was about as bad as the other one, so I said we would just do our own or know what was the matter.

## Misfortunes Come

Time went on and spring came around again and in the meantime we had lost the two old horses we bought at first and another one we bought later on, all for cash. So we had three horses die and a broken arm for the first year. We thought it pretty rough, but we stuck right with it. When seeding time came around the second year we bought an old drill for \$60 on time and three more horses and put in our 16 acres of crop, seven in wheat and nine in oats. We also broke another sixty acres that sum-

mer, ten of which we seeded to oats for green feed, so that we had twenty-six acres of crop. Settlers now began to come in around us and landseekers passed most every day and as we were the only folks living in there we had lots of company, as many of them stayed over night. We worked away earning what we could that summer. Then threshing time came around again and the oldest boy went out with a team and earned \$100. Our own little crop we got threshed, our seven acres of wheat giving us 126 bushels of No. 1, and our nine acres of oats 253 bushels. We sold quite a bit of hay, which helped us, besides growing lots of potatoes and other vegetables. We raised a number of pigs, too, which did well for us.

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## Start Church and School

We began to have Sunday services now for the settlers around at our house, and they were very well attended, as we had a very good preacher in Mr. Bray, of the Methodist church, an Englishman. We also formed a school district and started up a school with about 22 scholars. The middle boy went out to work this summer for four months, earning \$80. We threshed 1,120 bushels of wheat and 900 of oats that fall and had put up quite a few additions in the way of buildings, doing all our own work, besides digging two good wells on our own place and helping neighbors with digging five more. We then got our patents for our homesteads, having lived on them all the time and bought four more horses and two more cows and raised quite a number of pigs and chickens. The next year we broke out quite a bit, breaking about 116 acres all told, and then in the fall we threshed 1,300 bushels of wheat and 1,400 of oats.

## The Speculator's Harvest

When we went on our homesteads at first, we could have bought railway land anywhere around at from \$4 to \$5 an acre, but we had not the money to buy and in four years' time the same land was selling at from \$20 to \$25, and not a furrow turned on it. This was where the speculators came in, reaping the reward of the pioneers' labors. We now had a railway and a town eleven miles away and today there is a townsite next to our corner and six schools within a radius of six miles. Then we sold out and got two purchased homesteads and a homestead and pre-emption for the middle boy eleven miles from a town.

## A Summer's Work

We now have thirteen head of horses and colts and fourteen head of cattle, pigs, chickens, etc. We have had a new barn, 28 feet by 50 feet, built and a house, 24x28 feet. We hauled 30,000 feet of lumber for them last summer and broke 116 acres of new land and put in and took off 53 acres of crop. I think there are good chances in Canada for a man with a family or anyone that will work and be steady and try, and I am sure the Grain Growers' Guide is doing a grand work for the Western farmers.

After addressing a woman's cooking club, a famous lecturer was besieged by the members, who questioned him about his own household and about his kitchen in particular.

"Are you satisfied with your cook?" someone asked him.

"Yes, indeed," was the reply.

"Is she economical?"

"Very."

"Can she bake pies and bread?"

"The best in the land."

"Is she neat about her work?"

"As tidy as a pin and as attractive in appearance as one would care to see."

"How about her disposition?"

"I think it is about perfect."

"Huh!" exclaimed one of the matrons, who had been having trouble with her cook. "It's a wonder you don't marry the girl."

With a satisfied smile the lecturer replied:

"That's exactly what I did. My wife does her own cooking."

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