

In 1938 she became the first woman Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; in 1940 she was made an associate geologist, and then, in the euphoria after World War II, she was made a full geologist. In 1947 she wrote *The Earth Beneath Our Feet*. In 1964 she died, quietly triumphant, at the age of 83.

E. Cora Hind

E. Cora Hind always did what she thought best. When she grew up, she redesigned the name her parents had given her (Ella), the way another woman might change her hair. The name parted on the side was not necessarily an aesthetic improvement but it suited E. Cora Hind.

She was born in 1861. Both her parents died before she was six, and her mother's sister, Alice, took her to her grandparents' farm at Artimests, Ont. She graduated from high school in 1882 and with her aunt went to Winnipeg, a small town with dirt streets, surrounded by underdeveloped prairies. She applied for a job on the *Winnipeg Free Press*, but was turned down, so she looked around for an opportunity. She found a shop selling typewriters, rented one for a month and taught herself to type with two fingers. She heard that Macdonald, Tupper, Tupper and Dexter, a law firm, had a machine but no one who could use it. They hired her, the first typist west of the Great Lakes, at \$6 a week.

In 1898 there was much speculation in the east about the effect of heavy rains on the wheat harvest, and Col. Maclean, of Maclean publications, who had used her typing services in Winnipeg, wired and asked her to survey the crop. She took a train west to Moose Jaw, then one south back to Winnipeg, looking out the train windows at the wheat fields, talking with trainmen, conductors and brakemen, stopping at occasional stations, renting a team, a buggy and a driver for closer inspection, and walking through the fields rubbing wheat heads between her fingers.

She had begun a new career, a free lance journalist specializing in agriculture. In 1893 she covered a dairy convention for the *Free Press* and was soon elected secretary of the Manitoba Dairy Association. In 1901, some twenty years after she'd asked for the job, *Free Press* editor J. W. Dafoe hired her as a full-time staffer, and she became the recognized authority on prairie agriculture in general and on wheat in particular.

She was an uncompromising perfectionist. When a Chicago paper carried the headline "Black Rust, Wheat Ruined, Outside Estimate 35,000,000 Bushels," she decided that it was

planted by speculators. Off she went on the train, and over the back roads in buggies, dressed now in what had become her distinctive costume, riding breeches, fine, high leather boots and sombrero (when she went to Toronto she added a beaded buckskin coat and a gold mounted cane). She reported that the Chicago headline was off by 20,000,000 bushels, and she was almost exactly right. She continued to be very close to exactly right for decades. In 1905 she estimated the wheat crop at 85,000,000, and it turned out to be 84,506,857. In 1907 she estimated 71,259,000 and it was 70,992,584. In 1909 she estimated 118,109,000 and it was 118,119,000.

In 1932 the *Morning Post* of London considered her achievements from a strikingly male point of view: "It would be strange enough if a man of great experience could soberly and accurately forecast the crop . . . but that such a faculty would be centered in a woman — this for some reason seems extraordinary."

E. Cora Hind lived to the age of 81, crowned not only by the golden grain of endless prairie fields, but by an honorary degree from the University of Alberta and a reputation that had made her name familiar wherever scientists were concerned with feeding man and womankind.

Margaret Lally Murray

Ma Murray, of Lillooet, British Columbia, an ungrammatical octogenarian of demure appearance, retired two years ago, at the age of 86, as editor of the weekly *Bridge River-Lillooet News*. At her retirement party she upbraided a room full of

Ma Murray

