

grove of birch and poplar. A fine spring bubbled its crystal waters from the side of the ridge, and as far as natural conditions went I was more than satisfied. Next day I hied me to the Land Agent and located for the lot. The price charged by the Government is fifty cents per acre, or eighty dollars for the one hundred and sixty. I paid twenty dollars down, and was informed that I had three years in which to pay the balance at twenty dollars per year.

That night over our pipes we talked things over. I wanted to hire Mr. Thomson, which was the name of my new friend and neighbor, but his counter suggestion was that we change work. It was getting late in the season, and it would be better for me to get to work at once. I therefore decided not to go back, but to leave it to my wife to make such arrangements as were necessary, and to come to me as soon as I was ready for her. I wrote her a long letter, telling her all that I had accomplished and advising as to what she should bring with her.

The first thing to be considered was a trail from the road to my new home. Two days of hard work accomplished this. It was only passable for a single horse and a small wooden sled.

I was not a good axeman, but I was soon to learn. My hands blistered, my back and arms ached, at night I threw myself into the bunk completely tired out, but next morning I was fresh and ready. My appetite was very good, though the food was poor and very hurriedly cooked and served up anyhow.

Monday morning, bright and early, we started work on the house. We had talked about it every day since I came. It was to be 28 feet long and 16 feet wide. Two rooms only, but, unlike the usual pioneer's shack, it was to have a shingle roof. Logs were cut and flatted. I scored while Thomson hewed. Trails were cut on which to drag in the logs, and after a week of hard work we were ready for the raising. We had previously secured a team of horses and three men to help us.

The foundation was ready. The day came, with it came the men and the team. I was surprised at the deft skill these men showed at the work. The team would bring in a stick, the men would quickly roll it up on skids, mortise the ends and drop it into place. As the logs were nearly all close, the walls rose rapidly. Before night the work was completed. Even the rafters were in place. I then wanted to settle with the men. "We may need you for a day some time," was the reply of each. Only the teamster would take anything, him I engaged to bring in the lumber, shingles, windows and doors required.

Thomson was a good rough carpenter and had a few tools, and it surprised me to see what he could do with them, or rather how he could get along without tools which seemed so necessary to me. He told me that in the backwoods the golden rule was "If you haven't got what you want, use something else," and it is surprising what you can do in the line of home-made inventions when you try.