

### For Her Children's Sake OR A MOTHER BRAVING A WILDERNESS

TOLD BY HER SON  
OTTO G. LUTZ of CARMEL, SASK.

CONCLUDED.

Now, to take up again the main point of my sketch: the subject of mother and our affairs. As I have said before, the coming of the railroad lighted up the future and took a heavy weight off from mother's heart. Winter came as usual at the beginning of November and differed little from the preceding one, as in these parts they are all alike in duration, coldness and snowfall. During the winter some new settlers came via the new railway, but the greatest number waited till spring (1905). From then on a steady stream poured into the Colony and there was no delay in settling up those parts of the Colony that were even at a great distance from the railroad. The best homesteads were soon gone, so that many persons bought railroad land from the landagents and speculators.

During this spring mother hired a helper with whom I fenced in a plot of our homestead so that we might have a pasture for our cattle which numbered four heads by now. Mother had intended to have more land broken up during that spring, but as we had not the money for having it done, we had to postpone this work until the following year, but then it had to be done without fail, in order that mother could "prove up" or make application for her title and deed to the land. At that time the homestead regulations required that at least 15 acres be under cultivation, besides such improvements as a habitable house, barn, fencing, well, etc. Later on, the rules were made stricter and homestead duties were enforced more rigidly by the Department of the Interior at Ottawa.

CHAPTER 22.

#### REAL PIONEER DAYS, OVER.

During the winter and spring only mixed trains were sent over the new line, nor was there given mail service by the new route, for all the colony mail had still to be hauled out from Rosthern. A regular passenger-train service, twice a week, was installed during the ensuing summer, when the main line had been completed all the way to Edmonton, Alta. When some time later, a daily passenger train was put on, the mail service came with it, at last. Now it was possible to send to, or receive from Nebraska a letter within 3 days which heretofore had taken a week's time and longer.

During this summer a Local Improvement District was organized. Its main object was to cut the regular roads through the brush and woods and to fill in the grades through the sloughs and swampy flats. Of course, this task could not be accomplished all in one year and, for that matter, there still remain hundreds of miles of road till this day which wait for the builder. But we, the pioneers, made the start with the main roads at that time. These have become to-day important arteries of rural traffic for countless horse-drawn and motor-propelled vehicles. The provincial government, of course, helped along materially by letting substantial contracts for the work. Those settlers who had teams went to work with plows and graders, while others, myself included, took to axes and brush scythes in clearing the road allowances. In this way I was able to work out mother's taxes. While in Nebraska the roads run to a corner from four directions at every mile, our Canadian roads run north and south only at each mile, but east and west they run to an intersection in every two

miles. They have the regulation width of 66 feet and are not part of the adjoining farm, but are allowed for extra.

The summer came and went, and we did such work, as we could do by hand. I made of willows and wire a chicken-tight fence around the garden and helped mother at other work. Together we built an addition of two small rooms onto the log cabin, made out of rough lumber, besides a log shed for storing purposes. During the preceding summer Mary and I had dug an outside cellar which had caved in again in the following spring as a consequence of the frost's action upon the walls. We were at our wits' end, how and where to make another cellar for our oncoming, heavy potatoe crop of that summer. I told mother the best place would be under the cabin floor. But she thought that it would be too much of a job, as all the earth would have to be hauled out, through a tunnel under the cabin wall. When Mr. Eimer heard of this plan, he said that the floor rested on weak supports, which were propped up every few feet. Taking these props away the floor would have to fall by its own weight. Nevertheless, I started and dug the tunnel under the wall and foundation of the west side of the house. When I was done with this, I hammered together a sort of a wheel barrow and with this I hauled out the ground from underneath the house. The work progressed slowly, for I was then only 13 years old and my strength was not equal to the task. While this was going on, the floor above had a swaying motion, when one walked across it and we all feared every minute that it would come down. At last, after some weeks, the cellar, though small, was completed and the rocking motion of the floor above was stopped by replacing the former props with long posts and braces. The cellar was entered from the outside by a hatchway with two sets of doors. During each winter the space between the outer and inner door was packed with straw against freezing and we reached the cellar from within the house through a trap door. When the cold gets to be 30 or 40 degrees below zero, it goes through almost anything and some times the freezing point was reached in the cellar. We would set pots of red hot charcoals around in the cellar and keep a lantern burning during the cold nights and by this means we saved the potatoes from freezing.

Our crop of potatoes was harvested in September and we had so many that we hardly had room for them in the cellar. But as every body else was blessed with a good crop, too, we had to wait till next spring, before we could hope to sell any of ours. We, then, sold some to a neighbor. A kind neighbor, too, sent his hired man with a binder to cut our small field of barley and oats. It was in September and snow had fallen already, flattening the straw badly out on the ground. We did not thrash the grain, but fed it in the bundles to our chickens and cattle. All our neighbors had a small crop again that fall, and could add newly broken acres to their producing fields in the following season. But we had neither a team of horses or oxen to work with, nor could we hire the work and pay for it. The little plowing we had to have done, was the kind act of one good neighbor, and the harvesting that of another. In recognition of this work mother would wash and bake for, and furnish milk to, the one, and the other, I would help back with work at certain times. On Sunday and during the summer mother, Mary, and I walked to church, but in winter only I could

walk to church, as a rule. Thus our third summer passed and winter came and left, too, in due time.

CHAPTER 20.

#### MOTHER'S VICTORY.

Spring time came and ushered in the year during which mother achieved her victory over the stormy hardships of pioneering and homesteading. For in this same year she could file her application for a patent to the homestead, to become sole and absolute owner of an improved piece of farm land. She had fought her great battle to the bitter end and won. Henceforth, she could stay on the homestead, or leave at will, but the hard earned farm would remain hers. To make up the missing acres of tilled and planted land mother and I made the rounds of our neighbors on one fine spring day, to see who would offer to do this work for us. Mr. Eimer and a neighbor promised to do the breaking and another good neighbor worked up the breaking and put in the crop. The few acres that were already under the plow were planted to potatoes and barley.

Our herd of cattle consisted of six heads now: the Nebraska cow and her increase, namely 1 cow, 1 heifer calf and 3 young steers. These latter animals became our oxen and with two of them I broke sod on my own farm, keeping them until the summer of 1918 for all my work. As Jim and Tom were now 13 and 14 years old they were unfit for further work, and only with a heavy heart did I sell them. During that year of proving up I and a neighbor put up yet a stack of hay for mother's cattle and with mother's consent I hired out to this same man who moved on a 1/4 section of land which he had bought at Dead Moose Lake. I worked for him till November 15. He was a bachelor and together we did some tough housekeeping. He and other help had broken up about 100 acres of land and from the middle of August to some time in October my only and monotonous daily job was to sit on a disc harrow and drive 5 stubborn oxen over the land, cultivating it in every direction of the compass. It took from two to three weeks with these slowest of oxen to get over the land once, and every night my arms felt numb and lifeless from constantly using the whip and tugging at the lines. As this was the first time that I was away from home and could not go home for months, I experienced, too, the awfulness of being homesick. My pay was 60 cents per day. With the coming of the first snow in November I walked the entire distance back home, carrying on my back a bundle of clothes and in my hands a 22 rifle.

Mother had garnered her first real crop of barley and oats. She had threshed about 200 bushels of oats and about 80 bushels of barley. As the local elevators would buy only in carload lots, this grain was stored in an empty room of the house. Up till then mother had not been able to prove up on her claim, as at one occasion she could obtain no rig in which to go to Humboldt and at another time one or both necessary witnesses had not put in their appearance. Thus the winter dragged on, till, one cold and stormy day in February, our brother-in-law procured a team and sleigh and took mother and two neighbor men to town, where mother made application for her title. Mother had to become also a British subject and secured her naturalization papers from Prince Albert. A few months later, mother received notice from Ottawa that her application for title was accepted and that the document would be issued in due time. Another

few months, and mother was the happy possessor of her farm deed. These pieces of paper represented to mother everything she owned in this world outside of her children. Her last dollar and many another that my dear brother had given during all this time were spent for this homestead, and only mother can tell, how many sleepless nights and what countless, troubled thoughts the claim had cost her during those long and poverty-stricken years.

In the following summer, I hired out to our brother-in-law Eimer who had traded his homestead at Muenster for a farm at Annaheim during the preceding winter. Here I liked it much better than at Dead Moose Lake, the year before. My pay was now \$1.00 per day and my work was very much more varying. Towards fall I returned to mother again, bringing with me a well broken-in and good trained ox which mother had bought from Anna's husband. We used Dick very successfully in training our own young steers for working in the harness. From now on we drove regularly to church and to town with Dick and Tom, as we had also bought again a second-hand wagon. Our little crop was again the same in quality and yield as in the year before. When winter arrived I fixed up a kind of sleigh by fixing runners to a large box, and when the oxen were hitched to it we could get through the snow in comfort, regardless of style. In the coming spring, having the oxen for farm power now, I began to do our own farming working only occasionally for other people.

In this way a few more years slipped by and mother began to realize that her eyesight was getting so poor that she could no longer assume the burden of keeping house on a farm and the infirmities of age were also telling on her. Sister Mary had married during the preceding year and lived a few miles away on another farm. Mother and I were now left alone to live on our farm. I asked myself often why mother should continue with me alone on the farm, instead of taking to an easier and more comfortable manner of living which our good mother most certainly deserved after all the years of hard work? After a long talk over the matter and deep thinking mother and I came to the conclusion while mother was weeping tears that it would be for the best that she and I should leave her so dearly loved and fought for home in the wilderness of Saskatchewan and retire to the home of one of her children in the States. Dear, aged mother! If possible she would have preferred a hundred times to stay on the dear old place, till the Lord could take her home to His heaven above. All we children pray daily that God may spare our good mother for many, many more years, for she personifies all things that the word: M-O-T-H-E-R signifies.

(THE END.)

#### Out Of Style?

By M. C. JACOBS.

Is it considered old-fashioned to consult mother or defer to her wishes? Is the secular education girls are receiving today tending to wean them from filial love and obedience?

The following incident raised these questions in my mind: A group of girls, evidently juniors in a high school, noisily entered a street car. Their hair was fashionably done in the "bobbed" style with biscuit-like appurtenances protecting the hearing apparatus from September chill. Evidently their guardians were extremely patriotic—judging from the amount of material conserved in the manufacture of their abbreviated skirts

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