

Introduction

In this year of 1978 reminiscing seems to be the order of the day.

Carievale was incorporated 75 years ago this year. The Carievale people are celebrating and naturally there is a lot of old history being hunted up for the event.

Carnduff is preparing a book to be edited and sold about the old town and community history. Thunder Creek district is included in this book and I was asked to help with the past history of the district. This took a lot of research. The more I found out about Thunder Creek the more I wanted to know about it.

Then one day while shopping in the mall in Estevan I ran into one of my very best friends of years ago- Jim Muldoon. I had not seen Jim for a number of years so naturally he and I and Ed, my husband got reminiscing about the old times. Jim passed the remark that he often wished someone would write a book about Thunder Creek as he always thought it was such a good district.

After thinking about it I began to feel the same way. Knowing that I could never write a book I decided to write a few pages and hope some one else would enjoy reading them.

I myself think Delbert Wruth family was such a wonderful family to belong to so why should I not write about them? So with Ed's help, hours of research and a lot of "I remember" I have put together the following story.

As far as I know everything is pretty well accurate but there may be the odd thing that could be corrected.

Thunder Creek School District

In 1892, the community under took to form a school district to establish a school. On Nov. 26, 1892 the first school meeting was held in the home of Henry Carins (Sec 10-4-32 W1)). At this meeting the Thunder Creek school district # 262 was marked out and on Dec. 10, 1892 was proclaimed an official district by lieutenant governor in Council. Mr. Robert Young was chairman and S. McMeechem and J.W. Carins trustees. A.J. Sproat tendered and was accepted to build a school house for the sum of \$356.00. James Carins hauled the lumber from Carnduff for \$2.25 a thousand. In Feb. 1893, the Board of Trustees were authorised to borrow \$500.00 so that the school house might be constructed and properly furnished.

Thus in 1893, Thunder Creek opened it's doors and for 28 years was the "little red school house" although it was painted white. As referred to in the old song reading and writing and 'rithmetic was taught to the tune of the hickory stick. It had many fond memories for those going to it including my Mother, Minnie Moore who attended at the age of 13 when she came west with her parents to the district as homesteaders, down to myself who attended it the first five years I went to school.

The first teacher was Mrs. Rebecca Titus who at the time was homesteading with her husband 4 miles from the school on what we later as Dan Cinnamon farm. Mrs. Titus was the mother of Addie Roberts and Roy Norris' mother, Mrs. Joe Norris. She drove a horse and buggy 4 miles and her two daughters age 8 and 12 came with her for \$35 a month. There were 13 pupils and and after 6 weeks of school she had the misfortune to break her arm when the horse ran away. School was closed for a short time. Mrs. Titus taught again for 6 months in the summer of 1895. Hard time struck and people moved away. For 4 years school was closed. In 1899, Mrs. Wilson from Broadview became teacher at a salary of \$38.00 a

month. She taught one term and married Tom Frost. Mrs. Frost was my mother's first teacher when she came to this country.

My mother has often told of her first never to be forgotten morning at the prairie school. There were 6 or 7 new immigrant children to start that morning. They arrived at school and, after getting acquainted with the pupils already there, inquired about the teacher only to be informed that she was not there yet. Suddenly someone shouted "Here she comes" looking to the east was the wildest looking lady coming on a horseback just as fast as the horse could come. Hair blowing one way, book bag over her shoulder blowing the other way, coattail in the wind and dinner pail rattling. That was Mrs. Frost.

Thunder Creek School was very much the same as any other country school. Teacher came, some married local lads and stayed in the district. Some left for special reasons. Some were asked to leave and some just wanted a change, I do not suppose I can list them all but I will try to list most of them.

Mrs. Titus [was the first teacher.] In 1900, W.G. Robinson was hired for 9 months [with] duties commencing March 19th with two weeks summer vacation. Salary was \$40.00 a month. Miss Anne Campbell taught for 8 months in 1901.

In 1902, Mr. E.A. Mac.Donald was hired but resigned within a month as he loaned money to some boys who used it to leave home and the parents threaten to thrash him.

Miss Minnie Walker finished his term. Up until this time school was open only in summer. In 1904 a law was passed where school should be in operation the full year. A Miss Mallock was hired but was asked to resign, Miss Ward finished her year. In 1905, Miss Nellie Jackson became teacher and stayed two terms.

In 1908, Miss Margaret Pierce became teacher at a salary of \$100.00 a year. She resigned. They agreed to accept her resignation if she taught till another teacher was hired. If she refused she was to be summoned before a magistrate. She taught until the end of March. Miss McBean followed her with a salary of \$60.00 a calendar month.

Taxation was now .5¢ per acre collected by the Sec. Treas. [Secretary Treasurer] of the Board. In 1909, trustees decided to charge children of non-resident parents 4¢ a day - Payable in Advance. Also to charge women's organisations who wished to hold entertainments in the school \$2.00 an entertainment or a through cleaning of the school.

Church services had still not been allowed in the school. During the year [1910], two teachers, Miss Henderson and Wm. Wilson were hired. Then the local board became lenient and allowed church services for \$3.00 a year. There must have been a grain Growers Association in the district as they were allowed meetings in the school for \$3.00 a meeting but for the entertainment they had the same agreement as the Ladies Club.

In 1912, Mrs. Chas. Welshman was hired at a salary of \$840.00. It was about this time in 1916 my sister Beryl and I started school as she was our first teacher.

Mrs. Welshman was teaching in 1916. Miss Gertrude Wilson followed her then Miss M.A. MacDonald who was asked to leave; Mrs. Welshman taught again at a salary of \$900.00.

In 1917, church and organisations were granted free use of the school.

In 1918, Miss Flora Harris was hired, She was a Carievale girl and married Frank Jenkins. They farmed south of Carievale until they retired and now reside in Weyburn.

In 1919, Mr. Stan Ramsey was hired for \$1000.00. There was one incident while Mr. Ramsey was teaching that always makes me remember him. One day about seven big boys stayed up in the barn loft and did not come in when the bell

rang. I remember Frank Lauritzen and Oscar Casemo were two of them. When they did come in, Mr. Ramsey lined them up in front of the school and took a rung out of his big chair and said "Hold out your hands boys". No doubt they had sore hands for a while after.

In 1920, Miss Lily Brown was hired for \$1200.00. There were 28 students in grades one to eight. Miss Helen Eddy opened the school in 1921 and taught for one month. Miss Lizzie Gilchrist was hired from September until Christmas. She proved efficient in every manner and taught Thunder Creek school until 1935. People of the district pay great respect to her. Many pupils at that time had no other teacher. Some of the pupils included my brothers Oliver and Russell Wruth.

Miss Gilchrist was one of those teachers feared and loved by most students. Her word was law and through school days and ever after her pupils held respect for her. Even the so called (Beck's Bad Boys) Joe Moore and Russell Wruth.

In 1920, a new school was being discussed. After much consideration, on July 31, 1920, our Dad, Delbert Wruth made the motion on the books to have a new school built. The Department of Education was notified that a new school was to be built before Aug. 1st, 1921. Tenders were applied for and John Griffin's was accepted at \$4500.00 and work to be completed by Oct. 15. On Oct. 10, 1921, all furniture and a telephone were moved in.

How well I remember the luxury of indoor toilets instead of the old outhouse in cold weather. In 1942, the old school building was sold to Mr. Chas. Taylor for \$171.00 and moved away. No doubt this so called old school yard reverted back to the quarter section it was on as the Dept. of Education or Board never had the title for the land. The new school was built on SE1/4 of 11-4-32 W1. just across the road to the north of the old school. In 1927, a new furnace was bought for \$99.50.

Some of the older girls cleaned the school at \$4.00 a cleaning. To wash the ceiling we pout planks on desks, table on the planks and chairs on the tables. It took two days work and each got \$1.00. Big Money eh?

Hard times came in the thirties and all expenses were cut - fire lighting 25¢ a morning, coal hauling \$1.50 a ton. Miss Balmer followed Miss Gilchrist. This was a hard role to fill and she was asked to resign.

Ethel Hudgson taught until June 1937. She married Tom Chambers. Myrtle Wilson followed her, then Phyllis Price, Art Shanks, Magdalene Melton, Iva Palmer (whose salary was \$750.00), Gertie East and Irene Lightfoot. Irene married my brother Oliver Wruth.

In 1945, Dorothy Taylor started with the exception of about five months in the old school, had had all her schooling from one to ten in that same school and I feel certain in all under Miss Gilchrist's supervision. She taught until 1954 when Geraldine Young took over. Geraldine was not a qualified teacher but her salary was \$2400.

Then Mrs. Davis was hired. She had a son and a daughter so the teacherage was moved into the school yard. She taught until the school was closed in 1959 and students were taken by bus to Carievale.

Several of the students going then were the third generation of the early pioneers of the district. Some of their grandparents had attended school at Thunder Creek.

Hardships

Life in Thunder Creek was not always the so called "Bed of Roses". People had their hardships and tragedies. As far back as 1893, crops were a failure

due to grasshopper and drought. Several settlers left and years afterwards I had the pleasure to visit with one of these people; Mrs. Craige.

She lived with her family the Northams on SE1/4 2-4-32 W1. Her family left due to crop failure. When she was 12 years old, she rode horse back and drove cattle to Virden, Manitoba. J Southcomb lived on the same homestead until his passing as an elderly man. George and Charlie Taylor's father on Sec. 16 and the Cairns on Sec. 10 and others we knew well.

In 1894, seed grain was shipped in by the government. In 1895, there were good crops but low prices, 25¢ and 40¢ a bushel according to grade.

I believe from what I have heard that one of the most dreaded occurrences in the summers were the prairie fires. With no graded roads or highways to stop its run or no fire engines to come from the town with a load of water to spray it out, it would sweep across the prairies for miles. The only way to stop it was to beat it out with wet gunny sacks or similar materials dipped in pails of water. I remember when I was a girl they were threshing at Dad's, in the west field and a fire broke out in the field. Every thresherman grabbed all available fire fighting equipment and fought fire. Somehow one spot was missed and started burning toward the machine. Charlie Brawn, the machine man stated looking for something to beat it out. It was just afternoon lunch time and Mother was there in her long shirt and petticoat. She up with her skirt and pulled off her petticoat which was held with an elastic around her waist and handed it to Charlie, who used it to fight the fire. The threshers good naturedly joked about a ladies petticoat saving the threshing machine.

Another dreaded experience was the bad blizzard and deep winter snows. One story told by old timers was one settler who went out to feed his stock and took a shovel along. He got lost and had to go with the storm and it took him to the States twenty miles or more away. He ran up against a sod building and stayed there until the storm was over.

Another time a man got lost and landed up in a granary in a field. The granary was partly filled with grain which this man said saved his life. It had a shovel in it so he shovelled grain from one end to the other all night to keep from freezing to death.

Sod buildings were often covered over with snow. Dad told of staying at Moore's one night as he was storm stayed that was before he and Mother were married. Next day on his way home he saw a man digging his way out through a hole on the roof of his sod shack.

He also told about when he lived with Uncle Jack before 1907 and how the old sod pig house got snowed over. They dug a hole in the roof and fed the old pig sow by putting grain and shovelling snow through the hole. During the winter, little pigs were heard squealing but feed and snow continued to go down through the hole. Dad said a nicer batch of pigs never was than came out of that sod house come spring.

In the early days, the grain had to be hauled to Deloraine, Manitoba; a distance of 60 miles. It was the nearest railroad and supplies were brought in from there. People took there wheat to a mill at Melita, Manitoba; about 25 miles east to get it ground to flour for baking, grits for porridge, bran for biscuits, etc. There were no trees in the district so wood was hauled from Moose Mountains by team and wagon and it took three or four days for a trip. I say "no trees" because Dad said when he came to homestead six miles north and one mile east of what we know as home, the only sign of a tree between there and Carnduff was a few small bushes on NW1/4 10-4-32 W1. When I was growing up at home, it got to be a quarter section of solid bluff. Mother said many a time when she was a girl she gathered buffalo chips (dried buffalo manure) to burn in the stove

One of the biggest headaches to come to any homesteader was the loss of his partner, his wife. This happened in Thunder Creek in 1904. Jim McNally had taken up a homestead in 1899 and got title for it in 1903 and married Mary Moore in 1904. She was my Mother's sister, no doubt he and his bride had many plans for the future and when the baby came the following year happiness reigned supreme. It was short lived as two days later his wife died. Grandma Moore took and raised the baby. Jim sold the homestead and left the district. That baby is Mrs. Gordon Swayze.

Thunder Creek was not without its fatalities during World War I. Some boys did not come back from overseas. Fred Lane was a young Englishman who was working for Henry Taylor when the war broke out. He enlisted but before he left Dad told him there would be a job waiting for him at our place when he came back. He came back and worked for Dad and around the district for years.

In 1918, the Flu struck the district a terrible blow. Annie Stovin, Bob Scraggs, Mr. and Mrs Daggett, Davy Day, John English, Mrs. Charlie Taylor all died from Flu. Dad was really sick with it too, so sick in fact that one night Dr. Brereton phoned Uncle Jack that if he wanted to see Dad he had better get down as Dad would be gone by morning. Dad fooled them and lived for other twenty years.

In the Thirties, hard times came. One could write a book on this period alone. Drought grasshoppers, dust storms took over. Several families moved away and like in the Nineties some stayed and survived. Russian Thistle was cut and stacked for winter feed for cows. Relief grain was shipped in by train and also feed. If you were lucky enough to be at the head of the line of teams and sleighs and get to a box car before the grain ran out you would get a few bushels.

The days the relief grain came to Nottingham was Dad's big days. He took some lunch and left early in the morning to spend the day visiting other farmers bent on the same mission and arrived home at dusk.

Before going any further I want to relate a little incident to show how neighbours felt about each other. One relief day at Nottingham, Bob Young, Jim Young's son, who was just a lad, hung around and left with his team and sleigh the same time as Dad. Bob stayed with Dad all the way for five miles until the had gone over two bad snow banks with a very bad dip in between the at Casemore's Corner. As soon as they had gone over them, Bob said "I think you will be all right now Mr. Wruth, so I'll leave you as I want to go to the dance tonight". Bob whipped up his team which was much faster than Dad's and was soon well ahead. It was then that Dad knew why Bob had waited for him to leave together—to see him safely over the snow banks.

Relief vegetables and fruit were shipped in from the east. In these cars came hundreds of pounds of cod fish—a big slab of dried fish about 12" by 15" in size. At first no one knew how to cook them so they were not popular or appreciated. They stunk like the south end of a skunk going north. Mother read in the Home Loving Hearts page of the Weekly Free Press that they should be soaked overnight in lime water. She bought a small tin of lime of 10¢ and had it been more she likely would not have had enough to buy it. All were soaked with a pinch of lime in water. We ate a good many pounds of cod and enjoyed them. Many families never did learn to cook them and threw them out. They were so well cured they would not rot, but just deteriorated lying in the barnyard.

Money was practically nil. Horses were sent north to better grazing land. All in all it was a disastrous time for everyone.

In World War II, Wm. Taylor, a pilot officer, gave his life for his country. Other lads in the service were Fred Baldwin, Russell Wruth, Bob Young, Jim Muldoon, Edwin Moore, Joe Moore and Dave Moore. All these boys went to

school when Miss Gilchrist taught. Fred Lane again enlisted in the service and served in the Veterans, Guard. Later, Mac Moore and Edwin McMillan served in Korea.

During all these desperate times and trying times Thunder Creek people still maintained the instinct for survival, inherited from their forefathers and kept the community together.

Good Times

Thunder Creek people had their hardships and tragedies but also had prosperous and happy times. As far back as 1895, Mr. Chas. Taylor has stated in an article of his that in 1895 there was a wonderful crop. Grace Northam stated that she was on the homestead around 1883 and come Friday night everyone gathered in some settler's home for an evening of cards, singing and dancing. She said Cairns' shack was most popular as they had an organ and so had good music for dancing. Her mother would play the organ and the Cairnsmen played the violin and mouth organ.

In 1914, the spring was good and summer ideal for crops and all had a bountiful harvest.

One big event of the early part of the century was the annual picnic. For several years the event was held in Harold Welchman's pasture, not far south of the oldschool. There was a grove of trees under which board tables and benches were set up. Everyone took food and a delicious supper was set out and enjoyed. Men played baseball. There were races for kids, tug-o-war, etc. Lets not forget home-made ice cream made in a hand-turned freezer.

About the 1920's, this event was held in Uncle Alfred's pasture because horse racing had been added, Uncle Alfred[Moore] had a very good race track laid out to practice his horses on. As there was no shade no supplies were set out and it soon became an evening event called and ice cream social. Either Nottingham, a ball team from the north or Empire, the team from the south would be invited to play ball. Some local lads brought their horses and a horse race was run.

One time they had a slow horse race. Everyone brought the slowest horse they had on the farm. Each contestant rode someone else's horse trying to make it beat his own. Russell's old school horse came in last and so won the race. Nobody could make "Old Ginny" go faster than a good walk.

Home-made ice cream was still made in an old hand-turned freezer. One item a lady was mixing the ice cream up and put in salt in place of sugar that freezer of ice cream was not popular. The lady was Mrs. Eddy but anyone can make mistakes.

All the eggs, cream and milk was donated for making ice cream. One time Ted Stovin was out collecting this material driving his horse and buggy and he called on a neighbour, Mrs. Gordon. When he told her why he had come she told him to go to H--l. He simply replied that it was ice cream they wanted, not custard.

One of the big events of school days was the School Fair. This excelled the agricultural fairs in the average town today as far as hand work and baking is concerned. Carievale and all districts schools competed in writing, wreath making, relief maps, colouring, drawing, sewing, knitting, tatting, baking of all kinds, raffia work, racing, basketball dodgeball, singing, reciting, and many others.

It was something we worked on all year and so Lizzie Gilchrist was our teacher and urged us to do extra good work as one of our biggest rivals was Carievale school where her sister Mary taught.

The Fair was held in the fall and everything was ready the night before

and Miss Gilchrist took all the exhibits in to Carievale next morning. The same morning the old school pony was replaced by a better driver and horse and buggy and excited the kids took off on the long journey to Carievale about 12 miles distant, instead of the 2 miles just across the prairie to school.

Those who competed in the evening program of singing and reciting stayed overnight at a friends home. Some of us Thunder Creek ones stayed with Mrs. English (later Mrs. Patterson). She had only one bed so shake downs were made on the floor. Maybe no one got much sleep, but a good time was had by all with pillow fight and quilt snatching. We were up in good time to get our horses, that had bedded down in Hodge's barn, hitched and out to school on time. In later years, cars were running and Russell and Joe Moore went home with Miss Gilchrist and stayed overnight in their big new home. Believe it or not, Oliver took first prize for crocheting. I took it for candymaking. Florence Taylor always took it for bread making. This was little surprising to us as kids. One thing always a a wonder to us was how Mrs. Taylor (Florence's mother) ever got make bread out of the oven it was so high. Dad always told us she had to lift the top of the stove to get it out, just like Dad.

Thunder Creek was always able to supply music for dancing. In the homestead days, Edith Young was available for piano playing. Later Jim Muldoon and Russell Wruth contributed music for dancing. The district also had it's share of actors and actresses. A three act play was put on nearly every winter. The first one I remember being in was in the old school during the winter of 1920-21. Dances were held in the old school. When the new one was built and opened some rate payers and particularly the teacher would allow no dances in the school. Dad and Mother opened their home for community dances and entertainment. A good many pie socials and basket socials, dances and parties were held at Delbert Wruth's. Even today many folks talk of the good times they had there. The Eddy girls remarked once that it was not like Christmas if there was not a dance at Wruth's while they were home for holidays.

There was no drinking allowed. In those days people could have a good time without it. One time a sleigh loaded with young folks came from Alida the worse of liquor. Dad went out and told them they would have to leave. He also told them there would be a dance in two weeks and they would be welcome to come without liquor. They came back in two weeks and scarcely missed a dance afterwards.

I said there was no liquor. But there was always a bottle of brandy in our house to be used in sickness. It was behind the old tin bread trunk in the pantry. On dance nights after lunch, Dad invited the fiddles into the pantry for a drink. That was their treat for providing the music. All ladies brought lunch to dances. A hat was passed around during the evening among the men. This collection was turned over to the ones who played music. The room they danced in was about 14 feet by 16 feet. Most times three sets of quadrille were danced at once and at times four sets. Average attendance was 80 to 100 people. They danced from 8 p.m. until 4 a.m. About the early Thirties, dancing was allowed in the school. Card parties were held in homes. Skating parties were held at Wm.. Muldoon's. They were on the bank of the creek beside a nice pond. Many a night after skating and lunch the music started and we danced 'til the wee small hours of the morning.

Thunder Creek was not without Square Dance callers. Oliver Wruth called for many a quadrille. Everyone went to the dances. Men played cards and grandmother's knee was always a soft bed for babies.

The ladies of Thunder Creek always had a Community Club meeting every month. During World War I, Mother, like all the other women knitted socks, helmets, etc., for the soldiers. They packed large boxes of supplies for the

Red Cross. During World War II, everyone made quilts and knitted articles for overseas. Every month in winter a quilt was quilted each month at their meeting. On these days both men and women gathered at someone's place early in the forenoon. The men spent the day visiting and playing cards. The women quilted and had their meeting. Everyone returned home early enough to do the evening chores before supper. On those days everyone took food and had a pot luck dinner.

One time a quilting was held at Howard Hubbard's that day everyone took pie. No one had to settle for just pie for dinner. Mr. Hubbard brought in a big roast of beef and put it in the oven. The men were forced into peeling a pot of potatoes. A good meal of mashed potatoes, brown gravy, roast beef and pie was enjoyed.

Fowl suppers were held in the school. Tables were set up in the basement. Every family was to take 4 roast chickens, a large kettle of potatoes, a kettle of vegetables, buns, butter, pickles, salad, 4 pies. After supper a programme was held upstairs.

One program I distinctly remember was about the year Earl Potts was about six. He recited a poem entitled "Down Where the Vest Begins". It was a poem about him having eaten so much that his vest would not come over his stomach to meet his pants. A hunk of white shirt showed out. He did so well he brought the house down and stole the show.

Thunder Creek was always noted for its good Christmas concerts especially when Miss Gilchrist was teaching. One of the earliest recollections I have of the programs is of the candles being lit on the tree. At that time there was no electricity so there were little candle holders with candles in them snapped all over the tree. The holders were like little tin clothes pins with candle holders on one side to hold a small birthday size candle. Just before Santa came in someone lit all the candles. It was a beautiful sight. In those days as many as possible gifts were hung on the tree and this added to its beauty. One year a great big baby doll hung on the topmost branch. It was for Beryl. That is the same doll Beryl is holding in the family pictures some of us have.

All in all it seemed the people that lived in Thunder Creek district had the ability to make good use of any talent available to them to make the district an enjoyable and pleasant place to live.

Progress: [Plows, Telephones, Cars and Radios...]

Thunder Creek district kept advancing with the times. Mr. Harry Taylor tells how in 1903 he broke 50 acres of land with three horses on a walking plow. Others tell of using the sulky plow which was still only a one furrow plow drawn by three horses but made so the farmer could ride. What a wonderful thing it must have been when Mr. Jim Brawn bought a 10 furrow plow- a breaking plow pulled with a 20-40 Hart Parr engine. This took one man on the plow and one on the engine. The engine travelled about 2 and a half miles an hour. It could not have been very satisfactory as it was not used long. Next came the two furrow gang plow requiring five horses to pull it. About the early thirties the tractors took over the field work.

Oxen are rarely mentioned in connection with taking part in the settling of the district. The only oxen I ever saw was a team the Old Man Simpson was driving around about 1915-1916.

When Robert Young took up his homestead he had bought a yoke of oxen, a wagon, a plow with him. Upon arriving from Deloraine, Manitoba, he found he had no clevis for his plow. There was no such thing as wire so he walked 50 miles back to Deloraine for a clevis. He spent the first summer in the shelter of his

wagon box turned upside down.

In 1909, the telephone was put in the district. At the time this was a wonderful invention so they thought. The first meeting held to organise the telephone system was held at John Southcombs. It was an afternoon meeting but lasted so long Mrs. Southcomb got supper for everyone there including Dad. The meeting went on into the evening so she got midnight lunch. Still it went on and on and finished late enough in the morning that everyone had breakfast before staring home. It was registered as the Audrey Telephone Circuit #41. Everyone in the district were subscribers. The list shows the names:

Wm.. Muldoon
Mrs. E. Moore
Wm.. Baldwin
Chas. Birch
Bob Dancey
G. Moore
E.I.Eddy
J. English
A.P. Lauritzen
J.Southcomb
John Taylor
H. Taylor Velchman brothers
Delbert Wruth

The first settlers were glad of their team and wagon as their mode of travelling. By early nineteen hundreds the good old horse or team and buggy was used. Bob Dancey was the first man in the district to have a car. It was a model T Ford in year 1914. Sometime before 1918, Mr. English had a car. One of first persons to have a car on our side of the district was Harry Taylor. They always had to go by our place on their way to and from Carnduff. On this particular day we knew he had gone to Carnduff to get a new car. Of course this was a big event. We all watched to see the car coming home. Just west of our place he had a corner to turn, which he missed and the car went into the buffalo wallows. Dad took the team and pulled the car out, thus giving us kids a good chance to view - this wonder - this car.

In 1925, Dad bought a new model T. Ford. In those days one did not need a driver's license. You only needed to be 16 years old. No one carried birth certificates or identification card so plenty of big boys at 14 were driving cars. It was in 1931 that anyone not owning a car had to get an operator's license costing fifty cents. The car owner got his or her license free.

In 1906, the car owner paid a registration fee of \$10.00 to \$15.00 depending on the wheel base of the car until around 1942 when it increased to \$15.00 - \$20.00.

About 1923, the first radios came into the district. Harry Taylor's and Jim Brawn's each got an Atwater-Kyent radio. It was a big box type thing about 12" x 36". It had three dials on the front, each one having to be tuned in separately. They were powered by two dry batteries which would likely last a winter, a small C battery and a six volt wet battery that had to be charged at least every two weeks. Besides the box was a large horn which had to be contended with. Each radio had to have an antenna. This was usually a wire about 100 feet long stretching from the peak of the house to some high building or near by tree or out building.

Taylor's being our closest neighbor we often were invited there on Saturday night's to hear the barn dance from WIS Chicago. This was four hours of old time music. On these night's at Taylor's everyone sat quietly while Mr. Taylor adjusted the dials. After a bit we would hear some faint music. Then Mr.

Taylor would wonder if he could get it better and start adjusting dials again. There would be nothing but static for twenty minutes to a half hour. Then we would hear a bit of music. This went on all evening but we thought it was really something just to hear a bit of music from far away Chicago.

In a few years every home had a radio. They were much smaller and better. Law required that you had a license to run a radio. The license cost \$2.00 like most laws this one was easily broken. In the hard years when money was scarce we had no license. It was a standing rule at home that if a law officer drove into the yard someone was to unhook the battery off the radio and get it out of sight. With no battery the radio was not working. We were never checked and no doubt lots of other folks in the district ran a radio a lot of years without a license. Most people had a home made wind charger to keep the battery charge up for the radio.

Electricity was put in the district in 1938. This was a great boost to the community. In early days homes were lighted with coal oil lamps. A coal oil lantern was used at the barn to do morning and evening chores. Later on an Aladdin lamp was used. It was an improvement on the old coal oil lamps but was not too satisfactory. If the air in a room got too stuffy it would flare up and the mantle got black. Next came a two mantle gas light another great improvement but nothing like the electric lights we know today.

I think one of the biggest changes over the years is the harvesting of grain. In 1903 Mr. Harry Taylor told of threshing with a steam portable machine. It was the Taylor-Simpson-Farr threshing outfit. It had no blower and straw was hauled away with two horses on a bucking pole. There was no feeder so two men stood on the machine and cut the bands. If you did not run the grain spout into a bin it was run into bags in a wagon. One man held the bags and another man tied them. When you took bags of grain to the elevator the elevator man stood with one foot on the hopper and one on your wagon and helped lift the sacks and empty them into the hopper.

The first threshing outfit I remember Dad having was Jim Brawn's. It was a big 30-40 Hart-Parr engine and a 40 inch Case separator. I don't know what outfit was threshing at our place when I was born, but Mother tells me how I was born in the other room at noon while the men were eating dinner at the kitchen table. Aunt Viola (Mrs. Geo. Moore) was working for Mother at the time.

Anyone who has ever cooked for a threshing crew knows it was no easy job. For days and days before preparations were made for threshers. Tables were laid with the best of food, breakfast at 5 A.M., which meant getting up at 4 a.m. Supper at dark which was often 9 or 10 p.m. with all the dishes to do after that.

One fall, Brawn's were threshing at our place. Oliver Russell and myself had big plans of spending some time at the outfit on our way home from school. Our plans were squashed when Dad met us and told us to go right straight home as Van Oene's little boy had fallen into a tub of boiling water and Mother was called there. I with the boy's help had to get supper. All went well till I drained the potatoes. The lid slipped and half the potatoes went into the slop pail. When Dad came in I told him what had happened. He just told our boys and our 2 hired men to go easy on the potatoes at supper.

All the time I was getting supper my biggest worry was having to wash all those dishes. My worry was short lived. Dad told the men if any of them would stay and help me with dishes he would tend their horses for the night. Needless to say I had lots of help. Dishes were finished in no time. The little boy died that night.

Quite often when they would be threshing at home there would be two wagons loaded with grain ready for us kids to take to Nottingham after school.

There was no quota system then. On these trips we had a nickel to buy five all day suckers. They were large enough - about 3" across and lasted us most of the way home. It would take about two hours to go to Nottingham with the load and over the hour to come home.

One year Dad had a bumper crop and nearly every day all winter hauled a load of grain to Carnduff a distance of eleven miles. This was by team and sleigh as trucks were unheard of at that time. Every night when we kids got home from school we hooked up the team and took the sleigh to the grain bin in the field and filled the box with wheat ready for town in the morning. This meant shovelling between 97 - 100 bushels of grain as loaders were unheard of.

As soon as the boys got old enough to run the outfit Dad bought his own machine. Some falls in the Thirties when there was not much crop we did our own threshing. Russell, Joe Moore and myself drove stook teams. Oliver ran the machine and also threw off my load when I came to the machine.

Uncle Alfred Moore and Eddy's had steam engines to run their separators and their whistles could be heard all over the district. When each had finished their fall run and pulled home they would tie the whistle open and it would blow steady till the steam went down. It always seemed like good natured rivalry between them to see who would finish first and get the whistle blowing.

Most anyone who has ever helped in harvest field at threshing time or experienced the hustle and bustle of the busy days in the house seem to have it impressed on their minds as a wonderful experience they would never have wanted to miss. The march of time goes on - from horses to tractors - from buggies to cars - to combines today that we see in the fields - cutting and threshing the bountiful yields. No more social threshing in the old fashioned ways. Just history and memories of those long gone days.

The Creek

Thunder Creek District was fortunate in having a creek running from north to south practically right down through the middle of the district. By coincidence all the families living east of the creek, with exception of Eddy's used Carievale as their town. All living west of the creek except Harold Welchmans used Carnduff as their town. At time of writing I have not been able to find out where the name Thunder Creek originated from. This creek was another one of those phenomenons that helped make the district the wonderful place it was. Two schools were practically built on the creek bank. Skating parties at Muldoon's already mentioned. When ice and weather permitted we took skates to school. After a lot of hard work we had a place cleared big enough to use for skating.

Tobogganing and hand sleighing on the banks of the creek at noon hour was a pastime. Miss Gilchrist would ring the bell at five minutes to One. That meant get ready and up to the school and ready to go in when the bell rang at one O'clock.

Although the creek ran the full 5 miles through the district it had only 2 bridges across it - one on the school road and one 2 miles north by the Puffer or Muldoon place. For several years the bridge at the school was more or less a large culvert. It washed out every spring when the creek broke up of ice. Then some of the students on the east side of the creek and especially those in high grades came across and stayed with friends on the west side to not miss school. One year Ken Stovin Sr. stayed at our place.

Miss Gilchrist always boarded at Southcombs in the winter and she would come across and stay at Harold Welchmans.

About 1922, a big new bridge was built that handled spring floods adequately, many a happy noon hour was spent standing on the bridge in the spring watching the creek break up and ice jam come down.

Thunder Creek has a good gravel crossing with very shallow banks at Southcombs SE 2-4-32 W1. No doubt this crossing had been found and used by early settlers before bridges were built. If you should travel west on the road allowance by the school in the fall of the year when the grass is dead - you can see the old three track wagon trail angling north west across the corner of S.W.1/4 of 11 and the N.W. 1/4 of 10-4-32 W1. These roads run almost directly from the crossing at Southcombs to the gravel crossing on Lightning Creek.

Another pleasant memory of the creek was the school picnics. These usually were the last day of school and Arbor Day. All work was finished by noon. That morning every family brought food either cake or sandwiches to school. Miss Gilchrist brought makings for a five gallon freezer of ice cream and the freezer and ice. Everyone took his or her turn turning the freezer. Then off we tripped with our goodies to our special shady nook by the creek for our picnic lunch of cake, sandwiches and home made ice cream.

One morning Mary Swayze had come to school as usual on horse back. That day the creek broke up and the bridge washed out. She had to cross the creek to get home. And Uncle Alfred knowing the bridge had gone came to the east side to meet Mary. He called across the creek for her to let the horse swim the creek. She let the horse "Old Skip" into the water but held the reins so tight he could not get his head free to swim. They were going down stream at a good rate before Uncle Alfred could make Mary understand to loosen the reins. As soon as she did Skip swam to shore. Uncle Alfred was one happy man for he told afterwards that he thought both Mary and Old skip were gone.

Thunder Creek was never blessed with any great amount of fish as it practically had no fish at all. There were none of those "Old Fishing Holes" to tell about. It did have two swimming holes. One good one was about the very centre of Dad's pasture S.E.14-4-32 W1. It was a good sized gravel bottom pond. On lots of summer evenings and Sunday afternoons there would be a crowd of swimmers and some onlookers there. Then no one had bathing suits or trunks like today. Boys and men wore worn out pants or bib overalls with the legs cut off. Girls had an extra print dress they wore in the water. For bath houses girls used the balm - a gilead bluff at the north end and boys and men the willow bluff at south end of the pond.

There was also a nice pond for swimming on S.E. 2-4-32 W1. Once about the year 1925 or 1926 my brothers Oliver and Russell along with Bill Eddy and Stan and Ron Taylor decided to have a real holiday from school and also work at home. They made arrangements to go camping. With food and equipment ready they pitched a tent down by the creek at this pond. They kept Taylor's horse and buggy so they could get around. My what happiness. No one to wake them in the mornings - no cows to milk - no hay to pitch. Nothing to do but eat, swim, relax, and sleep for a whole week. The only time we say anything of them all week was when Oliver came home and caught a rooster for a meal. I understand this was a real experience to prepare the rooster for a meal. That was holidays sublime in the good old days.

As kids we very seldom walked to school as we always had a horse and cart. On rare occasions when we did walk we could hit the 3 track wagon trail shortly after we left home and follow across country nearly all the way to school.

The gravel crossing on Lightning Creek was known as the Simpson crossing as it was close to old man Simpsons sod house on W.1/2 of 16-4-32 W1. This like the one at Southcombs had shallow banks. One can think that nature intended it to be this way so they would be easy to cross. We used the Simpson crossing a lot as at one time Dad owned land west of the creek. We used this crossing to go to and fro from this land. We also had some very good neighbors - Ernie

Smalley's who lived west and we used this crossing to go to and from their place.

Lightning Creek cuts across the very south west corner of the district. The first settlers in the district settled by this creek. Samuel and William Cockel took out one quarter each for homesteads and a quarter each for preemptions on Sec. 34-3-32 W1. This was in 1885. They did not stay to prove up their claims. Any one familiar with this land can understand why - as this section is mostly gravel, buffalo wallows and creek bed and good for nothing but pasture.

Lightning Creek like all other creeks had its flood waters in the spring. One time Alice Smalley came across the creek to our place in the morning with horse and buggy. When she got back as far as the creek on her road home that afternoon it had broken up and was running full force. Knowing the crossing was solid she drove her horse into the water. The creek was high enough the water came into the buggy box. She was trying to get her feet up on the seat to keep them dry when she noticed the empty cream can starting to float out the back of the buggy. She managed to grab it. She looked around to see the turkey gobbler that was in a sack in front of the buggy starting to float away. She managed to grab it with her other hand and got safely to shore all intact. She was wet.

When we went to Grandma's, to ball practice or anywhere that we had to cross Thunder Creek we used a crossing in Uncle Alfred's pasture N.E. 11-4-32 W1. This crossing was alright for folks who knew where to go to miss some big rocks in creek bed. It saved driving an extra 2 miles around by the school bridge. We used this after the creek had passed its crest. We have crossed it with team and wagon when the water was high enough to come into the wagon box.

It might be surprising to know how useful the creek could be. Like the time we were all in the wagon on our way to ball practice when Mother noticed Russell had not washed his face. When we got to the creek she made him get out, wash his face in the creek and dry it on his shirt tail. Was he mad!

Thunder Creek was also inhabited by beavers. I do not believe any of our family had the pleasure - but many did - of spending moonlight nights sitting quietly on the creek bank watching the beavers work.

Besides these 2 larger creeks there was a small creek or large ravine running almost directly south through Sec. 22-4-32 W1 and down through west half Sec. 15-4-32 W1 which was Dad's land and running still another mile south joining Lightning Creek at S.E. corner of Sec. 9-4-32 W1.

Dad's barn was built on the very edge of this creek. Many a time when spring flood came down our barn would be flooded. This creek was shallow and usually dry by late spring.

One hot spring day the creek was flowing at a good speed. We were all standing by the edge of the creek. We asked Dad about throwing our 2 half grown collie pups into the water. Dad said it would not hurt as they would swim to shore and get a good bath as well. So in the water went the pups. The smallest one with the sleek fur swam to shore. The largest pup with a heavy coat of fur could not make it and pretty soon was going down stream with the current.

Dad was a good swimmer and was not long diving in - shoes, clothing and all to rescue the pup.

Although these creeks were far from being mighty rivers they had a big influence in helping to make the district the wonderful place it was to spend several years of one's life.

The Ed Moore Family

Edwin (Ed.) Moore came west in 1898 returning again in the spring of 1899 and took up homestead on S.W. 1/4 14-4-32 W1. In August that same year, in the fall his family came out - his wife - three daughters - Mary, Ellen, Minnie who

later became our Mother - two sons, George and Alfred. Along with them came two other families, the Puffers and the Ruggles. Grandpa had built a one room shack on his land and the whole party - 17 in all - lived in his shack till their homes were built.

The first winter on the homestead Grandpa had 1 cow - 2 horses - 14 hens which he kept in a sod barn. The horses were broncos and cost \$105.00 each. Well broke horses cost about \$300.00.

Mother was 13 when she came west. One day a young man came walking past Moore's place. He stopped at the door and asked for a drink of water. Mother told me although she was still a girl this man so appealed to her that she told her sisters that was the man she was going to marry. Seven years later she married him. That man was Dad. At that time he was on his own homestead 5 1/2 miles straight north on the opposite side of the road.

The Moore's stayed on the homestead long enough to prove it up and get title which would be three years. By this time Mary was married and Grandpa sold the homestead to Puffers and with the rest of the family moved to Crosby, North Dakota U.S.A. where they again took up homesteads.

They stayed there just long enough to prove up again, sold their homesteads and came back to Thunder Creek to live on Sec. N.E. 1/4 2-4 W1. I say sold their homesteads because by that time Aunt Ellen was old enough to make a homestead claim too. With money she got from her quarter she struck out on her own and went to the Gold Rush in the Yukon and was home very little after that.

At the time of World War I, Aunt Ellen was engaged to be married to Harold Blakely. He was killed overseas and Aunt Ellen never married.

When Moore's came back from the States, Grandpa being a carpenter by trade built a big new house - 3 big rooms down stairs and 3 upstairs. Although badly wrecked it still stands. It is known to us as the Harold Welchman or Hintz house. It was while they were still living here that Mother and Dad were married. Before being married Mother worked out as a hired girl.

It seemed this wedding was the social event of the decade as many talked about it years later. Just this year Jim Young mentioned he remembers being set up on a chair and told to stay there while his Mother was dancing.

There were over 100 at the afternoon wedding. Supper was served to everyone. There was a dance that night with lunch served at midnight.

The wedding was March 20th, 1907. Mother told me often that the winter had been terrible - blowing and snowing every day. Wedding day was beautiful, calm and sunny. Next day was a blizzard. An incident that happened at the wedding. Link Waffle was sweet on Mother and apparently was real cross when she would not marry him and chose Dad instead. Waffle made his blows around the district that he was going to make a big fuss at the wedding when the Minister asked if any one knew of any reason why the couple should not get married. He was going to stand up and say a few things.

Grandma Moore had been doing his shirt washing. The week before he sent a white shirt with special orders to do an extra good job as he wanted to wear it to the wedding. They washed, starched and ironed it. Then Mother took the sewing machine and sewed across the ends of the sleeves and across the bottom of the shirt so he could not get into it. It worked. The wedding was over by the time he got there. He was too late to make his fuss.

George married Viola Hoyle, daughter of Joe and Net Hoyle. Net was a sister of Dad. Uncle George was no doubt us kids favorite Uncle. He was better at doing for others than for himself. He proved this in 1918 when Flu struck the district. He did not take the Flu and was a Good Samaritan to the whole area. Many a time he drove the Doctor with team and cutter so the Dr. could

rest between calls. Lots of times he went without sleep for days.

He called on all the sick to see what he could do to help. One of his good deeds that is often talked about was the day he called on Dave Days to find Dave and his hired couple Mr. and Mrs. Daggat all either dead or at death's door. He took the baby out of the crib, rolled it in a blanket and took it to his home on horseback. The baby was luck because at that time Aunt Viola was breast feeding baby Joe. So Mother's milk was shared by both babies.

After the Flu the baby's Aunt and Uncle - Mr. & Mrs. Raeburn claimed the baby. They would have nothing to do with the baby before because they were afraid they would get the Flu.

Uncle Alfred was a much different man and was a great hunter. Mother said his urge to hunt wolves started when he was a lad. On his way home from school he ran down and caught a young wolf and took it home on horseback. As years went by he had a pack of hounds. He made a lot of his living hunting wolves in winter. There were few days when he was not hunting, often riding as much as 40 miles or more. Then \$5 per coyote hide was a real lift financially. Today coyotes hides sell for about \$150.00.

I must not forget Grandma Moore. She was just one of those ladies, admired and liked by all. If any jokes or pranks were being played she was always in the thick of it all. She once made a dummy lady and put it in the hired man's bed when he would be coming home late. The man was Fred Lane. He was a modest old bachelor. When he saw the lady in his bed he went downstairs and slept in the big chair. He was ready to quit his job and next morning Uncle Alfred had quite a time convincing him it was only a joke.

Grandpa Moore passed away in 1915. The last years of his life we was working on a project that had he lived to complete it would no doubt have made the Moore family famous.

He was building a stoker for stooking grain. He had it finished and it had been proven to work but papers for the patent had not been returned for his signature and this patent never went through. It always seemed a shame his own sons or some interested person didn't follow through and have the stoker patented.

Grandpa had already sold [his] share in the stoker. The steam threshing machine engine and separator was one thing he had acquired and also a house in Carnduff. This same house is still standing today and is known as the old Rabeau house.

After Grandpa died Grandma still rented the house to Rabeaus. When Grandma passed away the house was willed to Mother and Aunt Ellen. They sold the house to Rabeau for \$1000.00. Each got \$500.00 from sale of the house.

Uncle Alfred used the threshing outfit for years to do his own threshing and also a lot of custom threshing.

The Wruth Family

Delbert Wruth: Dad, was born in Ont. In 1897 he and his brother Jack came to south eastern Manitoba where he worked as a farm hand till 1901 when they came to Saskatchewan and both took homesteads. Dad's was N.E. Sec. 1/4 10-5-32 W1. Uncle Jack's was S.E. 1/4 of same section. They planned to build a house directly on the quarter line and living together. When ready to build they found there was a big slough where they planned to build. So Uncle Jack married with wife and two or three children built on his land.

One had to live six months every year for three years on the homestead to get title. Dad built a bunk house across the slough on his own quarter which he called home in summer and lived with Uncle Jack in winter months.

He and Mother were married in 1907. That spring Dad sold his homestead. He left his new bride behind and he and Grandpa Moore left with team and wagon to hunt for better land to make home. They drove as far as Edmonton, Alta. They found only one place, Tillie, Alta. where they figured land was better. Dad said at Tillie you could put the post hole digger down the full length of the handle and still bring up black loam. Land was so expensive they could not afford to buy it so returned home to Thunder Creek. Dad bought the W 1/2 of 15-4-32 W1.

The first summer Mom and Dad lived in a very small shack. Mother said it was so small that the home made table which sat in middle of the room and used at meal time was turned upside down on the bed as soon as the dishes were washed so to leave room to get around.

They did not live in the little shack too long for by 1911 they built what we kids know as the west wing of the house, two rooms upstairs, a front room down stairs with a north lean-to kitchen. It was added to in 1918. Lean-to was moved off and used as a chop house. east wing was built in 1918. There was a dining room, parlor and pantry. Front room of old part was used as a kitchen. A coal shed was built on the north. Three rooms added upstairs.

They had a small stable at first. They had a horse barn just three stalls each side. A big barn was built - 60 x 100 feet with horse barn, cow barn, each with loft, feed barn, hen house, pig pens, sheep pens and pens for young cattle all under one roof.

Dad's Mother, Grandma Wruth had passed away before Dad came west. Grandpa Wruth came west for a visit soon after Dad and Mother were married. He liked the west so well he went back east to settle affairs and intended to come back west to live but passed away before he could get back west.

While visiting he helped build the big barn. Beryl recalls things that make her think she was maybe 3 or 4 years old when it was built.

Grandpa Moore gave Mom 2 milk cows and a dozen laying hens for a wedding present. That, along with Dad's outfit of horses, was their start in life.

Mom said she set some hens as many as 3 times to hatch more chickens. Each time they hatched, she took the chickens from them and raised them by hand.

Four kids came along and growing up on the Wruth farm was typical to any other farm and more so. Nearly every kind of livestock we had - horses of all sizes and shapes - from nice drivers to good old work horses. Russell had a beautiful Palomino that won races at fairs and sport days. Also were cattle, pigs, goats, sheep, laying hens, geese, ducks, turkeys, guinea fowl, both collie and hound dogs, cats and bees.

We went to school but were not allowed to miss as many days as some kids. Seldom we were kept home to work but if we were we really worked.

If it was sickness you had to mostly stay in bed all day so no sick excuse. Rainy days was no excuse to miss school. On rainy days the old cart was pulled into the barn, horse hitched to it. We climbed in the cart and a horse blanket was thrown over us and off we went the 2 1/2 miles.

We always had plenty of work to do with 10-20 cows to milk and a big garden to tend. But there was plenty of play time too. We looked forward to May 24. Potatoes were planted in the morning. After dinner the kids and Mom went on a picnic. We hooked the horse to the buggy, took lunch and gopher catching equipment and went 1/2 mile east to the pasture. Dad gave us 5 cents for each gopher tail we got.

We took traps and string to snare gophers. Mother had a 22 rifle and spent the day shooting gophers. She was an excellent shot. We did not have to go home to get supper but ate lunch out doors.

Dad was elected to the school board in 1917. Joe Stovin and Gene Eddy ran against him. Dad got 6 votes, Eddy 4, Stovin 3.

Being a trustee was no new job for Dad. While he was still on the homestead he chaired the first meeting held to organize a school district in that community. Later it was known as Rosebank. Dad, although a bachelor, was one of the first trustees elected. This is significant of the esteem people had for Dad all during his lifetime.

In 1914, a motion was on the Secretary book that the Methodist Church pay \$6.00 per annum for the use of the school for Church services and \$3.00 per annum for Sunday School. At his very first trustee meeting Dad made the first motion on the books - "to give all religious groups free use of the school." Looking through the books I could find no place where Dad was off the board again. He was still on at his passing on Jan. 1, 1940.

There are two other outstanding motions of Dad's on the school books. He made the motion to hire Miss Gilchrist as teacher and also the motion to build the new school.

A lot of the time he served as chairman. In the books his signature is just as plain and distinct signed with an indelible pencil some 60 years after he signed the books.

The indelible pencil, along with matches and a jack knife, were Dad's "trade marks", you might say. Always he had these 3 in his pocket. The pencil was never more than 2 inches long. If you borrowed his pencil and did not return it as soon as you finished with it, you soon found his hand held out in front of you, palm up. That was to say, "Where is my pencil?" Dad's Mother and Dad were both smokers. Grandma Wruth smoked a pipe and his brother Jack smoked but Dad never drew a breath on a cigarette or pipe nor chewed tobacco. He was never without matches and many a time someone borrowed matches for cigarettes.

Dad always had a jack knife in his pocket. It was easily borrowed from him but if not returned the same hand was held out palm up. He never laid his knife down when he finished using it but folded it and put it in his pocket. His knife carrying started at an early age.

When he was about 7 or 8 he and his Dad walked the railway track to their local town of Gelert, Ont.

Grandpa gave Dad a \$1.00 bill and told him to buy himself something. Years later Dad realized this was a way of getting rid of him so Grandpa could go to the pub. Dad said he spent a lot of time shopping for the biggest knife he could find. He got one 6 or 7 inches long. He carried that knife until the blade wore out. That knife was so weighty he missed it from his pocket so after that he always had a knife in his pocket as his pocket did not feel right without one.

By sheer coincidence these 3 items were never found after his burial. There seems no doubt but they were in his pocket of his suit pants and buried with him.

Another of Dad's "trade marks" was his ability to be on time for meals. When he left the house after breakfast, if nothing was said, dinner would be at 12 noon. That meant sitting down to the table ready to eat at 12 noon. If he was going to be early he named the time as he went out the door, 11:30a.m., 11, or whatever, and everyone was sitting at the table at that time. The same went if dinner was later than 12 noon, which was very seldom. Same went for supper as it was always at six unless time was set different at noon.

Mother was away from home a considerable amount of the time. She was always helping in homes where there was sickness. She often was called day or night to help when a new baby was arriving. Our home seemed to be the community

nursing home as several babies were born at our place.

Beryl quit school as soon as she was old enough to quit. She spent some time with Aunt Ellen at Pense. She came back home and one night went to a Pie Social at Nottingham. A young gentleman, Wes Potts, who bought her pie, either fell in love with the cook or the pie because it was not long before they were married.

June 20, 1928 [Wruth and Potts Wedding]

They were married in the house at home. I was bridesmaid. Wes's cousin, Herb Curtis, was best man. There was a wedding supper served to about a dozen guests. They lived in Nottingham district and you may be sure that a French cream pie (the kind they fell in love over) was always a favorite with them.

I was not married for twelve years later after Beryl. Oliver and Russell came after that, so the boys and I spent a lot of time together at home.

Any opportunity to make a few cents was put into action by us. We drove miles with the old horse and buggy or cart hunting crows eggs. Crows nests were plentiful, averaging 8 - 10 to a quarter section. When a nest was spotted, up the tree went one of the boys. If there were young crows in the nest they were thrown down and killed. If there were eggs they were popped into their caps and caps put on their heads. They carefully descended the tree as broken eggs were no good to sell. Municipality paid 2 1/2 cents for each egg, 5 cents for a pair of young crows legs, 10 cents for a pair of old crows legs.

One summer we drove miles with a little old ford truck gathering tons of old animal dry bones. They sold for \$7.00 a ton.

Of course at home a 22 rifle was standard equipment to be carried at all times. We shot rabbits for the cats and prairie chickens and wild ducks for the table. Gophers, skunks, crows, hawks, weasels, etc, because they were a menace. The gun was never used for sheer destruction. No female duck or prairie chicken was shot during laying or hatching season.

The only accident we ever had was one time Dad's hired man was cleaning a gun with the so-called safety catch on. The gun went off and hit Oliver in the chest. the bullet hit his rib and broke it - then split - part of the bullet lodged under his shoulder blade and the other piece close to this heart. He still carries the bullet.

It was probably the result of the early use of a gun that helped Russell win a Provincial Marksmanship Rifle Shooting Badge when he was stationed at Dundurn, Sask. in 1944. This achievement led to him winning the Dominion Marksmanship Badge. This event was held at Niagara On The Lake near St. Catherine's, Ontario and he was sponsored by the Canadian Army.

Mother was a wonderful shot with a rifle. One time she and the same hired man were coming home from the west farm with the horse and buggy. It was fall and plenty of ducks on the sloughs. The hired man took several good shots with no avail. Mother took the gun and got 2 ducks with the first shot. She hit the closest one in the eye. the bullet went through its head and killed another duck on the other side.

In those days with no fridges or cold storage, having fresh meat in summer was a problem. For years Thunder Creek had a beef ring. Every summer weekend members took turns having their beef butchered. It was cut up and each member got a fresh piece of beef. This rarely lasted all week so you ended up eating eggs.

Rather than eat a lot of eggs us kids would take the gun and go to the prairie chicken ground some 1 1/2 miles away and lie in wait for the chickens to come in for the night and go home with enough birds for a meal or two.

We always had a mode of transportation. Always horses to ride or drive in cart, buggy, wagon or sleigh. When gas was colored for tractors and farm work

the gas was purple and sold cheaper. We always had some sort of car to drive. Clear gas must be used in cars. It was not unusual to see several gallon jugs sitting around the yard filled with purple gas and left in the sun to fade and get clear. This way we had cheap gas to use in the car.

Dad only drove a car once. Mother always drove and us kids as we came of age. The time Dad did drive was just after we got our first car. He drove it over a mile, ran off the road and into a telephone pole. He got out from behind the wheel and never drove again. Some of us always took him where he wanted to go. When we did he expected us to "step on the gas" so to speak. He said if he had wanted to loiter along the road he would have driven horses.

Mother was a lady who could turn her hand to help with anything and everything. She was a good seamstress and made most of her clothes. She could knit, sew, crochet, make quilts, hook and braid mats and do all necessary needle work required to keep a home and family going in those years. This ability was appreciated by Beryl and I in later years as she taught us all those arts. We have made good use of these arts all our lives.

For several years Mother hatched eggs and sold chickens. She had three incubators that held a total of 1000 eggs. She had an incubator hatching each week from March to July. Chickens sold for 10 cents each.

Several winters she carded wool and sold it for filling comforters. She also grew a big garden raised chickens and helped milk as well as keeping house and getting meals.

Mother had little sentimental feelings too. When the family left Ontario to come west two things she regretted most leaving behind. One was a doll house made by her Dad for the three girls to play in and their canary. The doll house was large enough for them as girls to stand up in. It had rooms and furniture like a house. The girls, being teenagers, never had another doll house. Not so with the canary. When Dad and Mother were married there were several trees growing across the road south of the house. Mother noticed wild canaries going in and out of these trees. She found the nest. When young canaries hatched, she took a homemade bird cage out and hung it in the tree. She shoved the nest of little birds into the cage. She left the door open so mother bird could feed them. When the canaries were just ready to leave the nest she brought the cage, little birds and all into the house. The way she spoke I think she had these canaries for quite some time as she mentioned them as being good singers.

In those days going to town on Saturday night was a "must". There you did most of the weekly shopping and saw all your neighbors and took in the picture show.

To give an idea of how much Saturday night in town was a must - one night we all went to town in the old car. To say the road was bad was putting it mild. It had rained a lot and the road was not gravelled. It was bad going in but to add insult to injury it rained while we were in town. All the way home it seemed the car might slip off the road into the ditch. All jumped out except the driver and pushed on the side of the car holding it on the road till it got over the bad spot only to have the same procedure repeated at the next bad grade.

As kids we got to the Brandon Fair a few times. We got up at five o'clock, milked the cows and away with team and buggy to Carnduff - 12 miles away to catch the excursion train at 9 a.m. We tramped all afternoon and evening on the fair grounds. The train left Brandon at 11 p.m. for home. After we got to Carnduff we still had the trip home with team and buggy, arriving home about 3 p.m.

The only first class professional players entertainment we saw was when the Chautauqua came to town. They set up a big tent for four days. they had a

different show each day in the afternoon and evening. It was the lap of luxury to be able to take in some of these events.

We kids did a lot of hard work too. There were years we did our own threshing rather than hire help. Russell, Joe Moore and I drove stook teams. Oliver ran the outfit. The only difference in my work and the boys' was that Oliver threw off my load at the machine.

Rather than pay someone for sheep shearing in spring we kids did it for 10 cents for each sheep we sheared.

No job seemed quite as bad as having to put up Russian Thistle for winter cattle feed in the hard years. When the men brought in the hay rack filled with thistle you donned a heavy pair of men's coveralls. Hot and all as it was, you buttoned them up tight around the neck and tied them with string around wrists and ankles. Then put on heavy gloves and climbed into the loft to push back the thistle as they were being unloaded.

Christmas at Wruth's was always a big day. First one I remember was back before the east wing was built on the house. For days and maybe weeks we were informed that if we were not good Santa would not come.

One Christmas Mary McNally (Swayze) had stayed all night at our place. In the morning we came downstairs to see just a frozen fish sticking out of the top of each stocking. Dad had no sympathy for us, telling us we had been bad kids.

He told us to quit balling as Mother had breakfast ready in the kitchen and we better get dressed. When we went to the kitchen there was a tree decorated and presents hung from the branches. What a Christmas Eve Mother and Dad must have had fixing that tree after we went to bed?

As kids we went to Grandma Moore's for Christmas but later held it at home. There were always gifts for everyone even when some of us kids brought friends home. It might be only a white handkerchief for men or a box of candy for a lady.

Mother did all the Christmas shopping except a gift for Mother from Dad. It was always a practical gift and nothing that could not be used.

One time it was a linoleum rug for the front room. If he found pots and pans getting short there would be a collection of them under the tree.

To show how practical Dad was - instead of an engagement ring he gave her a gold watch instead as he thought it would be more useful.

We always tried to make the best of a bad circumstance. Once we started for a dance at Empire. It was late fall and a cool evening. The old car conked out so Oliver, Russell and I walked 7 miles back home. Mother had just taken a baking of bread out of the oven as we walked in. We were hungry and a lot of bread did the disappearing act.

There were silly and not so silly things we did. When corn was ready in the fall, Mother cooked a canner of corn because us kids had to eat our length in empty cobs before we finished the meal.

We lay down on the floor put the empty cobs end to end and laid down beside them. If not enough to reach from head to toe back we went and ate more. The one that could not eat the length of themselves was a loser.

In the Thirties when everything was so dry we carried water from the well and mixed a mud pond in front of the barn for swallows to use to make nests. Swallows really appreciated it as for as long as the mud stayed wet they really worked. Then we made another mud pond when we came home next night from school.

Dad had at least two dreams that he was never able to fulfil. He always thought he would like to go to the east coast, go aboard ship and sail south through the Panama Canal and back north up the west coast of U.S.A. to Canada and home by land.

The second dream concerned his herd of cattle. He had depleted his herd so much during hard years his hopes were - when times came back - to go to Winnipeg and buy a train car load of two year old heifers. This would be at least 20 head. This would give him a start on a nice herd.

Shortly after Dad passed away I married Ed Iles. Someone asked how we met. I said we never met, he just happened along. His folks lived in the district so we just attended the same dances, etc. We only lived a short time in the district after we were married.

It was not long before Russell and Ethel Campbell were married. They first met when both Wruths and Campbells were invited to Beryl and Wes Potts to spend Christmas Day. Ethel was 14 then and very shy. She spent most of the day in the bedroom playing with Velma and Earl. Russell never forgot that shy little girl. Three years later both attended a dance in Nottingham and love blossomed. They did not live long in Thunder Creek after they were married.

Not long after Russell and Ethel were married a young lady from Regina, Irene Lightfoot, came to teach at Thunder Creek. She chose that school because she imagined it to have a creek running by with lots of trees. One might say fate played a hand in sending her there because as soon as Oliver got his eyes on her the love bug bit. In less than a year they were married. They stayed in the district till 1964 and moved to Manitoba. In the meantime Mother had moved to Carievale and after 57 years the Wruth family were all gone from the district.

The Church

Probably the Wruth family was not what some people might say a religious family but we were good living folks, honored Sunday, believed in God and went to Church.

There was very little profane language or swearing around home. Seldom did my Dad swear.

One morning the horses would not go into the barn. One horse led the rest right to the barn door then take off and all the horses followed her.

This happened a half dozen or more times and Dad lost his temper and let out a few good cuss words.

Our young cousin, Dave Moore, who practically lived at our place and although brought up in a home with lots of swearing, did not swear at our place. He was trying to help with the horses. He was so astonished when he heard Dad swear he looked bewildered and said, "Unkie Delbee swore."

Another time Dad hired a man, John Hoyle. About every second word he spoke was a swear word. After a few days Dad said to him, "I have never told anyone to quit swearing but it is something we do not do around here. Anytime you feel you have to swear take a half hour off and go across to the bluff and swear. John was never heard swearing after that. One morning he was harnessing horses and one stepped on his foot. He came jumping out of the stall saying "I guess I have to go to the bluff." He did not go to the bluff.

On Sunday afternoons and evenings our place was always a gathering place for young folks. We always planned a goodly supply of food ready for extra at supper time.

Once chores were done in the morning, we all got cleaned up and did not change back in the evening to do chores as we never milked cows on Sunday night.

Thunder Creek had its own Minister and Church service which not all districts had. Ministers boarded at Chas Birch's and Church at 11 a.m. It seemed to be taken for granted that the Minister would go to Wruth's for Sunday dinner.

Then he went to Nottingham for 2:00 or 2:30 afternoon service. There was

Sunday school too. No one stayed home to fix dinner because the preacher was coming. If we were having soup, he had soup. If it was fried chicken, he had fried chicken - never any fussing.

About 1922 or 1923 Ministers started to live in the Manse in Storthoaks so 11 a.m. service was in Nottingham with 2:30 at Thunder Creek. Mother figured he would have dinner in Nottingham district with morning service there. But no, the first morning after Church he inquired about a meal and they just said the Minister always had dinner at Delbert Wruth's. So again we had the Minister for dinner for several years.

There was something very pleasant about Church at a country school house. Everyone went, from baby to Grandmother. No one was in a hurry home after service and mostly spent a half hour or more visiting with neighbors. There was no need for a baby sitter something unheard of at that time. Children were taught to behave themselves.

One Sunday when Russell was a kid maybe a year old, Mother had him at Church and she was sitting in a school desk. Russell was getting unruly and out of hand. Dad sitting with the men on a plank at the back of the school stood it as long as he could. In the middle of the service he got up, picked Russell up and went outside. In a short time he came in and gave Russell to Mother and all was quiet. I little doubt if Russell ever again kicked up a fuss in Church.

Dad did not believe one had to dress like a "Dude" to go to Church. In summer he was clean shaven, put on a good shirt, pants, suit coat and wore a tie. In winter Dad never shaved but kept his beard clipped (with hand horse clippers). He put on a clean pair of bib overalls, a dark shirt, a tie, a suit coat, his felt socks and rubbers and off to Church without perishing with cold. He said he had never been asked to leave Church because he was not properly dressed. In the school books, using the Church for services is mentioned as far back as the turn of the century.

Cairns homesteaded Section 10. The father was a Minister. One wonders if he might have been the first Minister. Some earlier Ministers names are: Rev. Mesher, Leo Stutt, Tom Currrant, Sharpley, Crookshanks.

In 1915 Rev. Major came and he married a local girl - Pearl Kidd. In 1918 the never to be forgotten Mr. Williams came. Flu struck and he turned his hand to help any way he could. When Dad was so sick with Flu Mr. Williams came to see him. As he was leaving he asked Dad if he had any liquor in the house. When Dad said "yes" he told Dad to get pouring it into him. Dad said Mr. Williams was the only Minister he ever knew who told someone to get drinking.

After Williams was Rev. Holdridge, then Rev. Johnson in 1921. Mr. Johnson was the Minister Lizzie Gilchrist was going to marry. He was drowned in Sask.. River and she never married.

Mr. Johnson was the last Minister to board at Chas Birch's.

After Mr. Johnson came Rev. Unstead, James Watts, W. O. Robinson in 1926. Mr. Robinson performed Beryl and Wes's wedding in 1928.

There was a Rev. Thompson, James Watts, H. F. Malcolm and Treffry before Rev. E.P. Johnson in 1938. Rev. Johnson preached Dad's funeral service. His daughter Hilda married Bill Eddy.

Later years there was a Rev. Almack from Redvers. Last Church services were held in early 1950s when Tom Walker, a student from Carnduff Baptist Church, came out to the school. Thunder Creek district was, one could say, 100% Protestant with the exception of the Longfees, a Catholic family who lived in the district a couple of years, back about 1915. Also Joe Doyle's for a few years.

With the teaching of God so prevalent in the district from early homestead days down through many years, it seemed to leave little doubt but

that the Church had some influence in helping to make Thunder Creek such a district.

Tid Bits

At one time Thunder Creek had its own Post Office operated by Mr. T. J. Puffer from Jan. 1, 1901 till his death in 1912. His son Fred Puffer took over till 1915.

The Post Office was in the Puffer home or, should I say, on the Puffer home as it was like a small porch built over the west door with pigeon hole boxes built around the walls to hold mail. No place can I find where Audrey Post Office got its name but inquiring, I am told Mrs. Puffer's name was Audrey and it is surmised that it was named after Mrs. Audrey Puffer.

Mail was twice a week brought out from Carievale by team and buggy or cutter. An old saying goes mail always goes through. Mother told of once it did not go through. Howard Hubbard was working for Puffers. this day he was to go to Carievale for the mail. The hired girl - Mae Brawn - went along, supposedly to do shopping. They did not come home that day. When they came next day, they were man and wife. They got married and stayed overnight in town.

A few people in the district bear special mention.

First was a bachelor, Tommy Waldon, who during the Flu in 1918 went from farm to farm doing chores for people who were sick and could not go outside to do them. Tommy never took the Flu. Just before the epidemic Flu struck, Mother had made a dozen or more fruit cakes for soldiers overseas. Tommy came once a day - fed and watered about 100 head of cattle and also horses. He milked the cows. When he brought the milk to the house, he never came in. Mother gave him a big hunk of fruit cake and a bowl of milk which he ate outside.

Another bachelor we called "Old Man Simpson" who lived a mile west of home. It was hard to realize that at one time he was on the school board and considered a good cook. He was one of the first homesteaders coming in 1885. He built a sod shack. About 1905 he built a second sod shack closer to the creek and lived there till 1938. He became a real hermit. Of later years he burned nothing but straw in his old cook stove. He had a wooden barrel which he carried on his back held by straps over his shoulder. Out he would trudge in the middle of winter to the straw stack maybe a half mile away and bring back his barrel of straw to burn.

Later years he ate only oatmeal. He put some water in an old frying pan and set it on the stove, threw in some oatmeal and started stirring and eating. By the time he had finished eating, the oatmeal would be getting cooked. He slept on a pile of straw in the corner. None of this was necessary as he was well off financially. On Christmas morning Mrs. Harry Taylor packed a Christmas dinner for the old gent. About ten to 12 noon, Herbie Taylor would go by our place on horse back to deliver the dinner to Mr. Simpson. He always got one good meal a year.

In 1938 he fell on the stove and got badly burned. Geo Taylor, neighbour folk, took him home, cleaned him up and nursed him back to health. He went back to Scotland and lived a respectable life his last few years. Some district women who need special mention are Mrs. Southcomb, one of the first homesteaders' wives, who was referred to as the best cook in the district. Thresher men always looked forward to a special meal at Southcombs at threshing time. One roast duck (wild duck), dressing and all was served on a plate with all the trimmings. There would be 12 to 15 men to feed on the outfit.

Another lady we must not forget was Mrs. Muldoon. She made the biggest and most scrumptious cream puffs one ever ate. Imagine how she felt when at a pie social in the school she had graced the top of Violet's pie with two cream puffs. The auctioneer (Uncle Geo, I think) let one fall off while auctioneering

the pie - the cream puff went rolling down the aisle.

At present time the Thunder Creek district is almost non existent as far as community functions or events are concerned. There are 9 occupied residences now in 1978 - 2 bachelor residences, 1 elderly couple, 1 couple whose children are growing up, leaving 5 families with children of school age.

It seems I might have been carried away once I started this write up. I never thought of writing this much yet there is still lots more a person could tell.

Not many months ago Carol (Wruth) Harder said to me, "You folks (meaning the Wruths) must have been well off when you were kids." I said, "Good heavens, no. We were hard up."

"But," she said, "you always tell of the things you did and the places you went."

That put me to thinking that one does not always have to have money to be well off.

I think we, the Wruth family, should consider ourselves really well off, being raised in the wonderful home we had and also living in as good a district as Thunder Creek.

Mark: Total typing time (pages 30-84): 3 hours = \$45

Notes:

- I typed (???) to indicate places where I could not make out what was written.

- Recently I have been reading a book (Revenge of the Land - Maggie Siggins) in which references are often made to quarter sections of land. The format Siggins uses is "12-4-23 W3" and you may want to standardize these in this diary as Myrtle is inconsistent in the way she writes them.

- I also suggest you standardize her use of numbers - sometimes she spells them out and sometimes she just uses the digits. This practice is quite irritating to anal retentive ones such as myself. I suggest you spell them out. ("3" to "three", etc.)

- I did not really do much editing for grammar, and this needs to be done. I corrected spelling and, occasionally, punctuation. Punctuation needs to be cleaned up big time.

- That's it.