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by now had first-hand experience with the economic doldrums in England, compounded by thousands of soldiers returning from the war in South Africa with few economic prospects. This is an apt description of Grampa's circumstances in these years and clearly the connection of Grampa's family with the Lloyd/Barr colonists. Our family didn't join the first wave of colonists in 1903, but waited until 1908 before leaving England.

Gramma, Grampa, Jack and Elsie arrived in Halifax on Mar. 28, 1908, travelled by train to Edmonton (The CNoR to Edmonton, having been completed the year before), and in the following year they went by rail to the Earlie homestead land near Kitscoty, AB. This was near the Saskatchewan border, 20 km west of Lloydminster and 200 km from Edmonton. These years were filled with tribulations for the growing family as they homesteaded near Lloydminster between 1909 and 1912.

The details of the trip to Canada and settlement on the prairies is blurry at times, but we know the following from birth certificates, passenger lists and census documents. They lived for several months in Namao, Alberta, a rural township north of Edmonton, where Phil (having been carried by his mother during the voyage) was born on July 4, 1908. It is unclear why they spent this time there except for the presence of a pioneer family in the area who also bore Gramma's family name: "Long". Grampa's family at Venn Mill also had had regular connections with a branch of the "Long" family (William Long) across the field in Garford, who also may have provided the Alberta contact. Annie Long was a legendary "angel" in the area, who was instrumental in a number of benevolent activities including founding the area's first Presbyterian church. She seems a likely candidate to have had something to do with the family's sojourn in Namao. More recently, I have discovered that Heber first came to Canada in early 1906 and was in the service

of a prominent family (George Cresswell) in the Namao area. It is also possible that this came about through the "Long family" connection. Namao was also listed as Grampa's residence in a curious document: "Canadian South African Service – Application for Volunteer Bounty". I say "curious" since he only enters his name and town of residence and the rest of the application is crossed out. Perhaps at some point he discovered that this programme required that he be a Canadian citizen at the time of his Boer War service, and he then abandoned the application, but this doesn't explain why the application was filed. In any case, he subsequently filed a regular Canadian homestead application in May of 1909.

The Earlie Homestead

The Alberta Archives office in Edmonton yielded microfilm documents for 2 quarter sections, one registered in Grampa's name

(coordinates NE24-48-3W4), and another application by Grampa for his brother Frederick (SW24-48-3W4). They show residence from May 5, 1909 until sometime after receiving notification of patent (title) on June 27, 1912, confirming the period of farming. Other family events match this time frame. Edna was born in nearby Lloydminster on July 28, 1910.

Grampa and family worked the farm from May 1909 (with 3 children) – until at least 1912 (with 5). His brother Frederick lived and worked his farm from May to November each year to fulfill his requirements for homestead completion. The homestead document of 1909 shows their residence area as Kitscoty, Alberta, so we assume that the family moved there shortly after Namao. Kitscoty was the nearest rail stop, 12 km due north of the homestead. The census of 1911 shows them on the farm, and the story of the frozen diaper in the sod hut probably relates to this time. In addition to Edna's birth in 1910, Harold's birthdate is 1912 in "Earlie", the nearest post office. It is hard to imagine clearing and tilling the soil for the first time with a team of oxen, not to mention the harsh winters in this part of the world. The documents also reveal the buildings and crop yield for each year, another requirement (in addition to clearing the land) for a successful homestead application. Sometime during 1912 or 1913, they bought (or rented) a house in Edmonton (9724 100th St.) and moved there.

In February, 2015, I visited the homestead land, which has a modern house and farm in the southwest quarter section (Fred's land), but there was no visible residence on the northeast. (Grampa's). I have spoken with the current landowners of that quarter section and found out that there is a yard site and a well on the the northeast section (s.e. corner) and a large,



probably 100 year old maple tree, not indigenous to the area. This turned my memory to the story of Grampa bringing a maple sapling to England which he planted in the front yard of Laurel House, Broad Oak, Heathfield, Sussex, the home of his parents (W.W.W. and Sarah).

Strangely, the 1911 census form (although census forms are notorious for inaccuracies), has my mom Elsie born in Alberta (not Venn Mill), and Edna & Phil as born in Saskatchewan. This is not a surprise for Edna since Lloydminster is half in Saskatchewan, but

Form 81-A
REGISTERED

File No. 1881989

Department of the Interior.

JUL 13 1912

OTTAWA, _____ 1912

Sir:—

I have to inform you that a patent for N.E. 1/4
of Section 24 in Township 48
Range 3 West of the 4th Meridian,
bearing date the
27th June 1912 has issued in your name, and that
it has been forwarded to the Registrar of the Land Registration
District of NORTH ALBERTA
who will issue the certificate of title upon receipt of your application
to him therefor, and upon payment of the proper fees, if any.

For this purpose please place yourself in communication with
that official giving him your full name and your Post Office address.

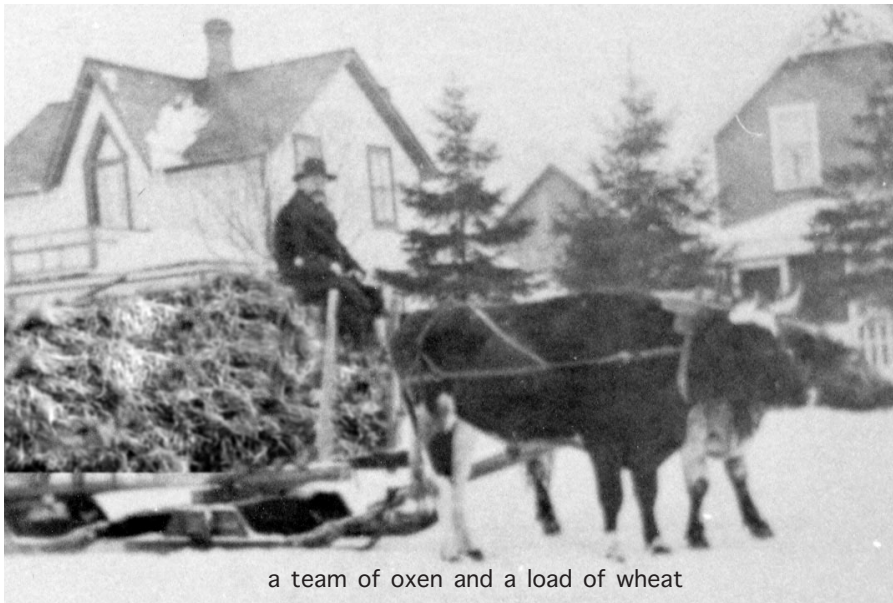
His address is _____

THE REGISTRAR,
Edmonton, Alta.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
PERLEY G. KEYES,
Secretary.

John A. West, Esq.

we know Phil was born in Alberta (Namao). Grampa wrote an account of taking a load of wheat to sell in Lloydminster, which he describes as 24 miles away. The fact that the homestead is a similar distance from Lloydminster further confirms the location and time frame of the family in “Earlie”.



a team of oxen and a load of wheat

I started out one very cold morning, about ten below zero, a few days before Christmas with a team of oxen and a load of wheat which I was going to sell and buy a few extra things for Christmas. There had been a fall of snow during the night, so I had to break the trail all the way to Lloydminster - about 24 miles. If I walked behind the sleigh for shelter, the oxen would stop, so I had to walk beside them and keep prodding them on. When I arrived in town, it was too late to try and sell my load of wheat, so I tied up the oxen in a nice warm stable and fed them. I went into the hotel for supper, after which I went into the sitting room, and not yet feeling real warm, I sat in a chair over a radiator. It was so warm and I felt so comfortable, but I soon began to feel nauseous so thought I would go outside and have some fresh air, but when I was halfway to the door I collapsed momentarily. I realized I was lying on the floor with several men looking on. I heard one say (he was the bartender at that hotel). “He didn’t get it here, let’s get him outside. “He ain’t drunk”, said another, “let’s get a doctor.” At that I opened my eyes and sat up. “Have a shot of brandy, pardner, “ offered the bartender. I didn’t like the way he had suggested putting me outside just because I had not bought any booze from him, so I said no, I wouldn’t touch your putrid stuff! I soon felt 100% ok again. I could not sell the load of wheat the next day, so I left it with a relative of my Sunday School teacher, who thought he could sell it. I drove the oxen home. I would like to have ridden one of them, but I thought they were just as tired as I was even though they had four legs to my two, so I walked and was not sorry to reach home.

December 20, 1911

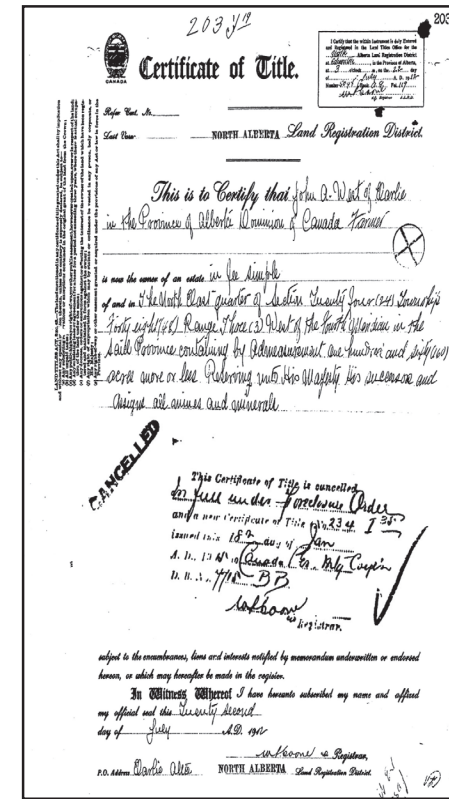
My second visit to the homestead was in the summer of 2017 to see the land in its “full glory” and to see the 100 year old maple described by the current owner, Doug Adams. This type of maple is not indigenous to Alberta and was likely planted by Grampa. (photo page 33)

A Sad Ending for the Homestead

On that same trip, I re-visited the Historical Land Titles Office in Edmonton to try to determine how and when the homestead was sold. The documents revealed a sad story. The certificate of title dated January 1912 (see right), had a stamp on it indicating that it had been cancelled by foreclosure. Other pages showed several lenders who would probably have had to be paid before the final title was granted. These included:

- Court award: \$134.83 (J.S.Lewis vs J.A.West) March, 1912
 - Mortgage: \$900 (@8% per annum) August, 1912
 - Debt: \$333.49 Albert Northern Lumber Co. Oct., 1912
 - Debt: \$620.05 to Massey-Harris Co. February, 1913
- (interestingly, in that year, in Weyburn Saskatchewan, my paternal grandfather William Arthur More was a travelling farm equipment salesman for the Massey-Harris company)
- Sheriff’s order of foreclosure October, 1913
 - Foreclosure stamp – Jan., 1915

Other than the documentation, the only reference to those years that I have found in family documents is a mid-century 1949 newspaper article & map showing oil development areas of the Canadian prairies. Its presence in my mom’s scrapbook with no explanation of why it was there indicates that, at least in my mom’s generation, there was awareness and memory of the farm years, especially since it turns out that the old homestead was in the Lloydminster oil field. Perhaps the presence of the article was a wistful “this nearly was ours?” It is hard to imagine the stress that Grampa and Gramma must have been under during those months, losing the land on which they had worked so hard and indeed for which they had come to Canada.



Back in Edmonton, Grampa appears in Henderson's Directory of Edmonton from 1912 to 1914 as a labourer in the city power department, in 1915 as a miller and 1916 as "active service". Fred was born on March 7, 1914. My mom (Elsie's) first scrap-book entry is a certificate from 1914 for Sunday School attendance at Ross Flats Presbyterian, near their house in the present day area of Rosedale. The next entry is a concert programme from 1917 with a delightful listing of Mom and Jack as ushers (photo, page 37). In May of 1915, Grampa signed up with the 49th battalion (Loyal Eddies). On June 14, his unit sailed to England, and on June 19th the Saskatchewan River overflowed its banks and Gramma with the 5 young children were forced out of their home in the Ross Flats area of Edmonton, along with 2400 others. Auntie Edna's first memory is being carried from their flooded home by a fireman. (see previous photo)

The sad history of homesteading in Saskatchewan & Alberta



Mortgaging the Homestead - Angus Reid, Canadian Museum of Civilization

The early years of the 20th century were a time of huge immigrations from Europe to Canada: Ethnic/Religious groups from continental Europe fleeing persecution (Mennonites, Doukhobors) to groups simply seeking a better life (Ukrainians, British), all expected a Utopia, which for most never materialized. During these years, Canadian Pacific Railway promoters had promised "a fortune for everyone in three years, not to mention glittering promises of practically free land." The reality was most often harsh winters, hot arid summers (especially in the Palliser Triangle, an agricultural area which included Grampa's homestead). The immigrants who had the most success were those who had strong family connections (i.e. investment capital) or who homesteaded cooperatively (religious groups). In actual fact, 40% of homesteads failed from 1871, and after the turn of the century less than half succeeded in completing their bid. Grampa's family did succeed in completing all the requirements of the homestead process (required buildings erected, # of hectares of crops planted etc.), but in the end "the bank" won. In our happy, successful family of cousins, stories of the early century homestead were virtually non-existent. I now know why.

Paraphrased from <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canada-founded-on-misery>

Ross Flats Presbyterian Sunday School, Edmonton

FRIDAY, JUNE 1ST, 1917, AT 7.30 P.M.

Twilight Musical Entertainment

BY SUNDAY SCHOOL CHOIR

CHAIRMAN: ALD. W. H. MARTIN

CONDUCTOR: MR. A. BRYDEN

ACCOMPANYISTS: MISS S. MCCREERY, MR. DOUGLAS MAIL, MASTER DONALD BRYDEN

USHERS: ELSIE WEST, JOHN WEST

-: Programme :-

Part Song	Behold the Lovely Springtime (Main)	Choir
Song	The Three Little Pigs (Gatty)	Margaret Glasgow
Recitation	Wanted: A Wife	John Glasgow
Part Song	Johnny Sands (Sinclair)	Choir
Recitation	Wanted: A Husband	Clara Krauel
Duet (in French)	Marseillaise	Ivy and Jack Thoms
Violin Solo	Mary of Argyle	Leslie Souness
Song and Chorus	Just Before the Battle, Mother (Root)	Mary Collier
Action Song	The Little Recruits	
	Zylpha Campsill, Lily Davies, Margaret Glasgow, Frieda Krauel, Zelma Bredsteen Grace Bredsteen, Eleanor Gage, Margaret Liemen, Louise Liemen Madge Truesdale, Lily Truesdale	
Gramophone Selections		Mr. H. Archbold
Song and Whistling Chorus	Whistle and Hoe	Leslie Souness
Action Song	Burlesque Band	Choir
Song and Chorus	Old Folks at Home (Foster)	John Glasgow
Violin Solo	Blue Bells of Scotland	Leslie Souness
Song and Chorus	Bonnie	Maimie McBain
Song and Refrain	Song of the Lark	Choir
Lantern Views		Alex. Davidson
Chorus	I Love to Roam in the Morning	Choir
Song	Baby Mine	Ivy Thoms
Action Song	Fishing Song	Choir
	Clara Krauel, Mary Collier, Eliza Gillette, Neta Murphy, Gladys Gage Mamie McBain, Alex. Davidson, John Glasgow, Herbert Glasgow, Leslie Souness	
School Song and War Dance	Co-ca-che-lunk	Choir
Gramophone Selections		Mr. H. Archbold