

# Grampa and his brothers

## The search for homesteads

John Aldworth West (Grampa)'s siblings fell into 2 categories: those who remained in England and those who lived their lives in Berkshire (Oxfordshire) included all 4 of Grampa's Sisters: Emma, Elsie, Molly and Ruth and 2 of his brothers: Will and Percy. Their stories are very much about the effects of the first war in England. Only one of his them had a child: Percy's daughter Mary (Irish). Of course Mary was well known & beloved to us in Vancouver as she visited us many times.



Grampa and 3 of his brothers: Asher, Frederick and Heber had similar stories, due in no small part to the fact that they all wound up in Vancouver area and seem to have kept in touch and in some cases partook in joint homestead projects.

In my book, *Leaving Venn*, I outline the arrival of our grandparents and their first two children (Jack and Elsie) in Namao (north of Edmonton) and their subsequent homestead in eastern Alberta. Further research has revealed that the section of land near Lloydminster was shared by brother Frederick (southwest quarter) Asher (northwest quarter) and Grampa (northeast quarter), with varying degrees of



completion. Grampa and gramma and their growing family completed all the homestead requirements: a house and a prescribed number of acres of crops within the 3 year limit, but lost it all to debt when the farm was foreclosed by the bank in 1912.

Frederic worked his land for a couple of years, but didn't complete and Asher appears to have chosen land near Ceylon in southeast Saskatchewan, where he lived from 1905 to 1930. Asher and Mary were married before leaving for Canada and had no children. The third brother Heber arrived before Gram-

pa and since he appears in the 1906 census as a servant for a family in Namao, it appears

he was involved in Grampa's choice to come first that area. Neither Asher nor Frederick fought in the first war. Of course Grampa's war stories (from both the Boer War and





the First War) are well known to us. Heber also fought in the war and was an early member of the new Canadian Machine Gun Corps, serving for three years, attaining the rank of Corporal and receiving the Canadian Army Class A medal. Neither Frederick nor Asher fought in the war, but like Asher he moved to the Fraser Valley in the '30s, Asher to Panorama Ridge (Newton), where he had a chicken farm and Frederick to Coghlan (Langley), where he had an orchard. Frederick married Minnie Simmons in England in 1914 and had a son Dennis. For

reasons we aren't meant to know, he left his family in England and to our knowledge never returned. His son, Dennis was a sort of Vagabond for most of his life, living a nomadic life, what we would today call "living rough".

After the war, Heber married Ellen Victoria (Vic), and living in Grand Prairie with newborn Ruth (Arlet), moved in 1922 with his family to Vancouver. His family tragedy unfolded in 1928 when the family separated leaving Heber alone, never seeing his daughter Ruth or son Robert again.



## Finding the homesteads

Connie and I have been inspired by this research to take a trip through Northern British Columbia and down through Alberta and Saskatchewan to see the lands that our ancestors settled a hundred years ago. In all cases the homesteads were the “first use” of the land after Canada made them available from through the Dominion Land Survey from 1871. Our late September and early October trip will take us from:

1. Grand Prairie (Heber) to
2. Earlie (Grampa, Frederick and Asher), to
3. Doddsland (Heber & Asher) and
4. Ceylon (Heber).



*See inside for geographical details*

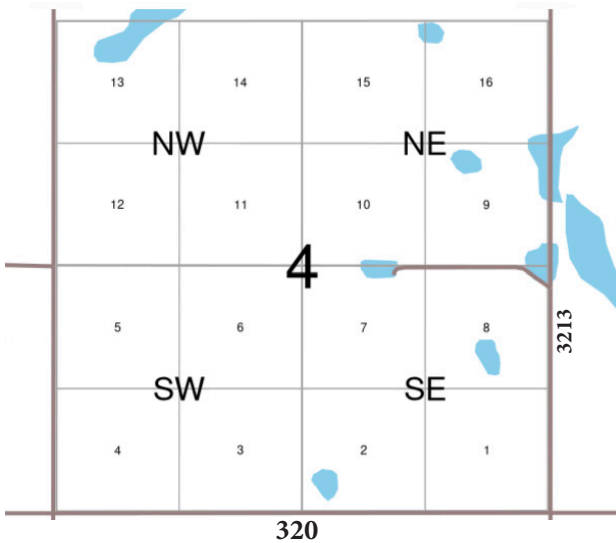
2

**EARLIE NE-24-48-3-W4**  
Southwest of Lloydminster, AB



3

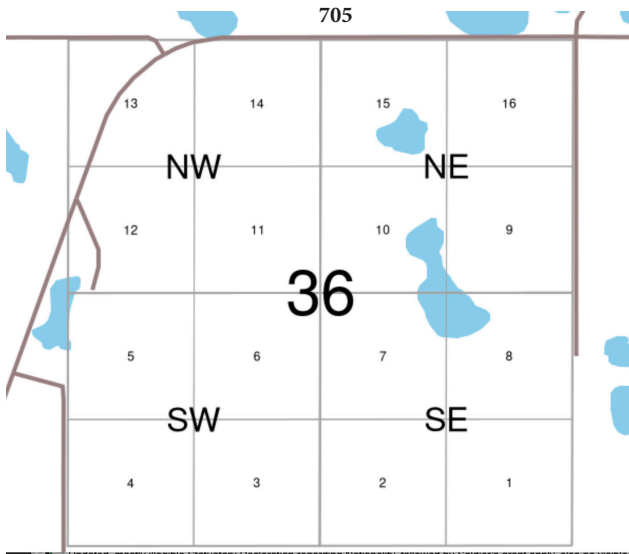
**DODSLAND - (Heber) NE-4-32-21-W3**  
West from Dodsland on 31 to rr 3213  
and south to 320



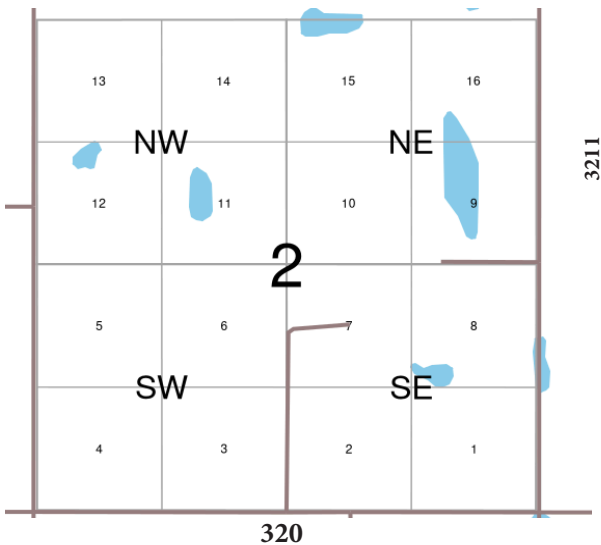


4

**CEYLON - SE-36-5-22-W2 (Asher)** South from Ceylon on range road 2202 (hiway 6, then West on Hiway 705 to where the road turns southwest. Then turn around and take first or second road south.



**DODSLAND - (Asher) SE-2-32-21-W3**  
Continue East on 320 to range road 3211



# 1 GRAND PRAIRIE

(Heber) West of Grand Prairie on 43, past Dinosaur museum on left and turn right on 724.  
- Set gps for Evergreen Park arena and go south on 82 to Twp rd. 712, then west on 712 and south at first road (nw 10 on right).  
- Continue gps south on 82 and right on 710 to 83a. NE33 is ahead on left, between 83 and 83a

