

However, there were few threshing machines in the district and a farmer must wait his turn. Many farmers put sheaves in stacks and this extended the threshing season. Steam power was used and this meant a very large crew, often twelve men or more. This put a large burden on the homesteader's wife as there were so many men to feed over a long period of time. Sleeping cabooses travelled with the outfit.

There were also swarms of mosquitoes which caused intense suffering to both people and animals. It was common to light smudges at night, and horses and cattle would gather around them, the smoke protecting them to some degree. Horses were also bothered by nose flies and this problem was partly solved by the use of wire muzzles.

In the early years, gophers were quite a menace as they came off the uncultivated land. This resulted in the Rural Municipality paying 2¢ a tail. This was usually done through the schools, and became a popular noon hour project. There was also a bounty on crows' eggs. I think the price was 3 to 5 cents, more than the value of hens' eggs at that time, I remember.

Prairie fires were also a menace of those early days. Farmsteads usually had fire guards, and if a prairie fire approached back firing was used from the edge of the fire guard which burnt towards the approaching fire. A great deal of organized fire fighting was done which was extremely hard work.

During the early years, settlers depended largely on wild life, rabbits, ducks, and prairie chickens for food. Also wild fruit, saskatoons, raspberries, strawberries, chokecherries and cranberries, etc., were plentiful and either eaten fresh or preserved.

While most of the original settlers have passed on, we must not forget the debt we owe all these pioneers and it can be truly said, "They fought a good fight, they finished their course and they kept the Faith."

Sod Homes

Material for building houses and stables of many of the earliest settlers was secured by ploughing furrows in a low spot or slough, where the sod was tough. These sods were cut into lengths that could be handled, using the coulter off a plow or a sharp spade. A skilful workman built in a very short space of time, the four walls of a building, using wood for door frame and door and for window frames and sash. No mortar was used. Poles from the bush made a roof. On these poles was laid brush, then sod, lapping these as you would shingles. Logs for more permanent buildings, as well as the year's firewood were hauled in winter from section 37, that mythical timber limit that supplied all Southern Manitoba.