

## General Information

### The Pioneers

They came, with little wealth, to take up homesteads,  
But with determination, to find a home, and to make good,

To own a quarter section was their day dream,  
They sought a place to grow their family's food.  
They came by horse-drawn wagon, or by railway,  
And drove for days, to find a likely looking place.  
There were no roads, no sign posts by the wayside,  
Of deer foot paths, just a tiny trace.

It took them days to find the place they sought for,  
They slept in wagons, or under stars at night,  
And ate meals, cooked at little campfires.

Then travelled onward, with a dream in sight.  
Until at last, each found what he was seeking,  
And built a tiny home of prairie sod or logs,  
As snug and warm as they knew how to make it,  
With cracks well filled, with mud or moss from bogs.

No land was cleared by man-made snorting monsters,  
To bulldoze trees, the way they do it now  
But calloused hands, with axe and hours of labor  
And slow and patient oxen with a plough —  
That turned the soil, single furrowed

As back and forth they walked, with lagging feet,  
Until at last, a small field, of a few black acres  
Was planted broadcast, to produce a little wheat.  
There were few comforts, no luxuries for the women,  
Who came to homes in land, unsettled then,  
And worked long hours, happy and uncomplaining,  
They shared their dreams, and trusted in their men.  
Children were born, without the aid of doctors,  
They were so few, so far away, in this new land,  
And many a homestead mother's babies  
Were born, with only Dad to lend a hand.

Washings were done in tin tubs, with a washboard,  
Scrubbed, like bare floors, with lye soap, the only aid.  
Backbreaking trips were made to carry water,  
The cows were milked, bread baked and butter made.  
Clothes for the family, all the quilts and bedding,  
Were sewed at home, in lonely little shacks,  
Junior's pants, were cut from father's old ones,  
And sheets and pillow cases, made from flour sacks.  
As mothers worked, they patiently taught their children

To read and count, no one should be an untaught fool.  
And then at last, the great day finally happened,  
When every district had a little one-roomed school.  
I remember many teachers in our district,  
Some young, still in their teen, but very good,  
Able to teach all the grades, and handle all the problems,

From cleaning school, to chopping kindling wood.  
We sometimes cried, when the year's term was ended,  
If 'teacher' wasn't coming back that fall.

Most of them came from other parts of the province,  
To unknown hardships, but we loved them all.  
Sometimes a minister, on a horse, came to the districts.

They preached in schools, christened, buried, sympathized,

And like the teachers, learned to live with hardships,  
So homesteads kids, could grow up, civilized.

The pioneers are gone now, they rest from weary labor  
The country school bell's silent, in its yard no childish laughter

But they, who started this, and other districts.  
Have given all they had, to us, who follow after.

No child today, will ever know the hardships

First settlers faced, the loneliness, the fears,

And I am proud, that I was born on a homestead,

And was the daughter of two early pioneers.

Ella Jane Jewell

### People and Origins

This area is a cross section of United Nations. People of every nationality may be found in each of the districts, sometimes a certain origin might predominate but in essence every one was thrown together and were lucky if they had a few friends who had come out with them. For the most part they had to face the elements and change to meet the demands of existence. Many had never faced a -40 temperature in all their lives. Snow and wind, rain and hail, upset many a good plan. The people who stayed in the area and managed to make a living are the real pioneers for they have faced hardship and discouragement and they or their children are still around to prove that happiness and hard work probably go together.

### The Fairford Trail

Numerous stories are told of the old Colonization Road from Oak Point south to Winnipeg. Pioneers ventured north along this road from Stony Mountain to settle on their homesteads. Some mention is made of cattle buyers driving their cattle to market south over this trail. South of Oak Point the trail crossed mainly prairie, winding around the sloughs and keeping to the ridges. The northern section was heavily wooded and the trail kept to the sand ridges turning and twisting, sometimes going 12 miles to actually gain one. The low spots were bridged with logs, chopped down by the traveller and laid side by side. These corduroy crossings were rough travelling and the rains would some times cause the logs to float. Then the crossing was very dangerous for horses or oxen. This northern section was commonly called the Fairford Trail. There were stopping places along the road where you could get meals and a bed on the floor. Prices were 25c for a night's stopping. If you could not afford the 25c you slept on the trail. As the trail proceeded north it took to the shores of Lake Manitoba, cutting off from Dog Creek along the Silver Bay, Moosehorn Bay, Watchorn Bay, cross the Dog Gone and Dog Hung Creeks, through the bush to Aitkin's corner. Here it crossed the Breikreitz Creek in front of Randall's and on to the sand ridge north. On the trail, Mr. Watchorn kept the P.O. of Bayton and farther along Ernest Ashley kept the Ashkirk P.O. a few years later. The trail crossed Henry Nachtigall's yard and on to Wm.