

wood. Using swede saws, Dad and his sons cut jack pine and poplar for 75¢ a cord; this was for cutting, hauling, and loading it into boxcars (each car held approximately 17 cords). It was hauled to Beconia to Trapp's store, traded for supplies for the home, and clothing. This wood was loaded in cars at Beconia, and shipped to Winnipeg. Later in 1926 the track was built to Pine Falls, and the wood was loaded at Gunn's Spur Siding. A carload of wood sold for \$12.75.

It was a lovely quiet spot to live; in spring the blossoms of cherries, plums, and saskatoons bloomed everywhere along the winding roads. There were also violets, cowslips, roses, tiger lilies, and lady slippers. We would pick bouquets for our teacher on our way to Beconia School (No. 2162) which we attended, about 3 miles from where we lived. They lived here amid all types of conditions - droughts, fear of forest fires, bears, flies and grasshoppers. The mosquitoes were horrible; they made smudges at night for the cattle, and had a smudge pot by the house to keep the mosquitoes away.

Cattle were allowed to roam and fend for themselves, and would have to be watched to keep them away from the tracks when the train came. The cows wore bells so you could hear where they were, and were quite tricky to find in the thick bush at times. I recall an incident when my father went for them to a certain spot where he heard bells, but when he got there, no cows were to be found. He came home tired and worried, as it was getting dark. Early the next morning he went out and listened for the cow bells and located them, but someone had beat him to it and had already milked them.

Our parents had an "icehouse" built of logs about 18 x 20. Father and my brothers would cut ice on Gull Lake every year in December, using big saws and ice tongs to lift the huge blocks out of the water, a cold, wet, slippery, dangerous job. The blocks were hauled home, stacked up in the icehouse and packed with sawdust all around to keep the ice from melting. They kept milk, meat, etc. in stone crocks set on the ice during the summer months. In the late 1920's people started coming to Gull Lake from Winnipeg to camp, some buying lots, building cottages, and staying for the summer months. These families would come to my parents' farm to buy milk, cream, ice, eggs, and vegetables. There was no way to keep milk at the stores, other than canned milk, so our parents started a small dairy business, delivering milk and cream, etc. to the people on the northeast side of Gull Lake every morning at 8 o'clock. It was hard work milking, bottling, cooling the milk before delivery, and then washing and sterilizing dozens of bottles and making butter. But it was a cash income which they needed, and as the family grew up, all pitched in and helped. (Milk sold at 10¢ a quart).

It was a whole new life for our parents. Although they couldn't speak English too well, they managed, and enjoyed meeting and making new friends. We met the Fraser's (Lindy and Peter) as our older brothers brought some friends, (Doug and others), who, later on decided to live at Gull Lake and became our dearest friends and neighbours. They helped each other through the years, cutting ice, in financial difficulties, comforting at sad times, visiting and sharing many good times. Our parents' first car was about a 1922 used "Star" made by

MagLaughlin Motors, and was purchased from Edward Schwark of Morris, in 1928 for \$50. and a carload of wood. It was quite an experience, learning to fix flat tires, and make repairs. They had starting problems and the car was often towed home. We kids thought it was just great to get a ride to and from school when it rained. About this time Dad scraped up enough money to buy our first gramophone, and a few Wilf Carter and Carter Family records at 3 for \$1.00.

We were a large family and had great times together when we were growing up. Our mother had all 12 of us without a doctor or hospital and cared for all of us, with little money and sometimes meagre supplies of food and medicine. We wore hand-me-downs or purchased second-hand clothing. Starting in early fall she spun all the wool for the socks and mitts for the family and made thick warm quilts from the sheep they raised. She still managed to go into the bush and help Father and my brothers cut wood. She had the knack of making everything in large quantities without recipes, be it bread, butter, sauerkraut by the barrelsful or jam by the gallons.

Mother and Dad always lent a helping hand whenever and wherever needed. Dad repaired things and filed horses teeth down so they could eat hay, often saving the horse. They planted a huge garden, so we children were never bored; we kept busy weeding, and we all picked gallons and gallons of wild strawberries and saskatoons, and baskets of blueberries. Mother canned these and we sold some at the store, and to campers. In the spring of 1939, their good well caved in, and digging another in this spot was impossible and dangerous. With the family of 12 growing up, we had rather cramped quarters, and they needed more land, so they decided to leave this place and bought a farm a little southeast of Gull Lake on 16-17-7e, cutting wood to make payments (160 acres for \$500) which was a lot then. This farm had a good well, and an old 3-room log house. With a little fixing it was livable, and they moved there in the fall. The four younger children attended Gull Lake school a short 1/4 mile from home. Our parents continued with their milk delivery again from here the following spring, and did this for about 20 years.

In 1950 Dad and my brothers built a new home, where they lived their remaining years. Henry lives there now.



*Julius and Emilie Bloch.*