

greater than demand, the price fell to \$1.50 a cord. It took days to earn that \$1.50!

After a couple of years of hard work and thriftiness, our parents had acquired two horses, a number of cows, a pig, and a few chickens. Because Dad was away working much of the time, Mom was left to do the housework, look after the two children, the garden, plus the numerous farm chores. She oft recalled how the three of them would walk barefoot (a rural custom in Hungary) to town to sell eggs and butter in order to buy postage stamps, or sell cream to purchase the few necessary groceries. Mail was important to them — it kept them in touch with family and friends back in Hungary, or with Dad while he was with the harvest gangs in Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba. It was Mom's letters to her family which encouraged her eldest brother, John Redling, to come to Canada in 1928. He farmed in the Ashern district for a number of years, also accompanying his brother-in-law, Joseph, on the logging trips and the harvest excursions. In 1936 he left the farm and Ashern and moved to Ontario, later settling in Fort William. There he worked until his retirement at the end of 1971. He now makes his home in Winnipeg and Ashern.

For a number of years, after the haying was completed, Dad and Uncle John joined many others on the harvest gangs. Dad worked in the Dilkie and Langenburg, Saskatchewan areas and near Pilot Mound and Fannystelle in Manitoba.

Life went on, bringing both happiness and heart-break. The family grew in number and the three older children were now in school. Then, bitter tragedy struck one January when the dreaded typhoid fever raged its way through the home, striking some more intensely than the others. Only the baby, Anne, was spared. After a valiant battle, the merciless disease claimed her one victim: their only son, Lawrence. His untimely death at the age of ten was a severe blow to Mom and Dad and a sad test of faith. (They often mentioned with gratitude in later years how a kindly Jewish storekeeper pulled them out of their deep depression with the profound words: "God gives and God takes away." Years later they were to realize even more fully the truth of that statement when God blessed them with twin boys — Joseph and Edward. Unfortunately, the frail Edward, a fair redhead, died in infancy. A few years later they were blessed with another son, Henry John.) The spring following Lawrence's death brought more anxiety when Mom fell ill, belatedly, with typhoid. Weak from nursing her sick family and from the strain of their tragic loss, she too nearly succumbed, and had to be rushed to St. Boniface Hospital where for 11 long weeks she battled grimly for life. Meanwhile, back at home Dad and his indomitable little teen-aged daughter, Mary, both still weak from their recent brush with death, struggled bravely on and were able to keep the home going. It was a joyous day indeed when Dad brought Mom home at last!

Our dad was always a marvellous story teller. Back from the harvest excursions he'd relate his experiences to the family. He had met many people and learned a lot of new things, and he could make his experiences come alive for Mom and the children. Dad was a storehouse of Hungarian folktales which had been passed down from generation to generation, but unfortunately never written



*Mr. and Mrs. Joe Koch, 50th wedding anniversary.*

down. How he could thrill us when in the evening after the outside work was done, after some coaxing he'd "tell us a story". We'd all gather round, the youngest ones on his knee, the others in a tight group around him waiting in an expectant hush for the story to begin — while Dad lighted his pipe! Mom would pick up some mending, move her chair closer, and listen too. The stories were long, and often took two or three evenings to complete.

Mom had a Singer sewing machine, treadle-type, which was bought from Roy and Olga Howard for about \$5.00. Mom stitched many a flour bag on this machine, making clothing. Flour bags in those days were colorful, and were just large enough to make pretty dresses or aprons. It was one of these "flour bag dresses" little Cecilia was wearing one Sunday when she was asked by Uncle John to go to the cellar and get him some leaf tobacco (which was stored in the basement to keep it from drying up). Cecilia, aged about four, earnestly facing Uncle John as she proudly smoothed her dress, said "Oh, Uncle John, I can't, I'm much too pretty".

July 1930 was a red-letter day in the lives of our parents. Having purchased their first home, they moved to the quarter section of land, SW-25-25-7W, where they were to live for the rest of their lives. It was an ideal spot: one-half mile to church, one mile to school and town, on a good highway. Both the house and barn were unfinished, unfortunately; and with money being scarce, both buildings deteriorated. By 1947 the old barn had to be replaced, and in 1948 the present building was erected. The house was a two-storey structure with an attic, and with a veranda running on two sides of it. Many renovations were made to the interior, but it was a cold, non-insulated building, with no shelter-belt for wind protection, and in the winter it took a great deal of wood to keep it heated. We recall on some of those very cold nights when the north wind whistled around the corners how Mom and Dad would check to make sure we had enough coverings to keep warm. Along with the warm feather-filled comforters and other blankets, Dad would sometimes throw on the horse blankets to make sure we