

CHAPTER 1

In the beginning

Came to Manitoba in the year 1873, Oct. 9. Was married on Sept. 9 and left for the west or Winnipeg now, was one month coming over the old Dawson Route and landed on the St. Boniface side of the little hamlet. A hudson bay store and a few halfbreed tents and Indian tepees on the Assiniboine River side. Oh the sight was paralizing for a young girl coming away from home and friends to a lonely uninhabited prairie. The first winter was dreadful cold but we had to work for a living. No choice then work or starve, and nothing in the country to eat only what was brought in by flat boats or the old international Red River boat. Came up the river to Union Point. Lived in a humble little log shanty for a few years, started farming on a very narrow scale no cows no sheep in the country and very few horses but still we lived. 1874 in July my little girl baby was born. I had something more to do then.

It was then I was presented with a nice young cow for baby our first cow. Our next winter was very hard no ceiling to our mansion only rafters and poor at that, but I wrapped baby up breed style in batting and pulled her through quite comfortable. Next summer was very hard. I was left for three weeks without one ounce of flour and had nothing to eat but potatoes, and my cow. Then we had a small crop and grasshoppers came and eat every green thing even to the willow bushes on the river. Settlers began to come and land taken up along the Red River. The Hudson Bay owned nearly every few lots from Winnipeg to the Boundary . . .

Written by Norman Grills' grandmother, Mrs. D. Lowe (in a collection of papers in the possession of Joe Grills of Sanford).

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Every place, every family has a beginning. Grandma Lowe's papers give graphic descriptions of conditions awaiting settlers who moved independently and cautiously into corners of the virgin territory southwest of Winnipeg — the beginning for homesteaders who settled on land that looked like it would provide them with a decent living — the beginning of a municipality — the BEGINNING of Macdonald.

The legendary Lake Agassiz once dominated a large portion of Manitoba, leaving a rich and productive deposit of silt and clay in many