

PART 2CHAPTER 9

All the campers congregated on the mainland in the morning of Coronation Day to help build a bonfire on the bank above the main dock. Everyone worked with a will and gathered up a large bonfire piled high and solid.

Someone had the bright idea of making the party a "taffy pull". A large copper wash boiler was set up on stones over a fire. Everyone contributed all the brown sugar they had, some gave butter and other ingredients necessary for "pull" taffy. It was all put into the boiler and stirred with a canoe paddle, which added interest if not flavor.

When it had boiled the allotted time, we were all told to butter our hands, then got a gob of hot taffy which had to be quickly pulled, rolled and twisted, then pulled some more, until it became a light gold colour and was getting hard. Lastly it was quickly pulled out thin and cut with a pair of scissors into small candies ready for eating. It was really awfully good too. Everyone enjoyed it immensely.

"Taffy pulls" were a form of home entertainment at that time. Girls had their boy friends in, gathered others together and had fun and laughter over sticky hands. I have not heard of such a party for many years. No doubt barbecues, hamburgers, coke and pepsi-cola have taken its place. Another favorite thing to do was making maple cream candy or fudge. Such rivalry as there was among the girls as to who made the best fudge, sometimes there were small contests. Cooking was taken seriously in those days, a girl who could cook was pretty sure of having lots of boy friends.

My Aunt Edith Shaw was a very good cook and loved to have a lot of young folks around. One day after there had been a heavy fall of soft snow, she said, "Call your friends and tell them to come for a pancake party." This I did. "Now go out and get a large pan full of that lovely soft snow". This I also did, I had no idea what she wanted the snow for. When the crowd arrived, Aunt Edie, or "Tantrum" as all my friends called her, got a large heavy bowl and proceeded to make pancake batter, using the snow instead of eggs. Resulting pancakes were light and delicious. Everyone had fun tossing them. One boy tossed too hard and the pancake stuck on the ceiling of the kitchen, coming down plop on his face.

PART 2"UNSEASONABLE SNOW STORMS"CHAPTER 10

On Sept. 13th, 1903, a terrific snow storm struck all over Manitoba. The weather had been fair and warm so most of the harvest was completed. Suddenly it turned cold as a violent blizzard blew up. It caught everybody with very little fuel on hand. September was considered too early for putting in coal and cordwood ready for winter. I know we had next to no coal or wood and I had to wear my mitts in the house, and put on "long johns."

Trees were bent down and often broken from the weight of the snow, as the leaves had not yet fallen they caught the snow. Many farmers lost live stock, especially sheep as they were all out in pastures, they bunched together and were covered by the wind driven snow, smothering under it as if it was a blanket.

A large herd of cattle broke out of their corral and stampeded before the wind right into Whitewater Lake. Even though the lake was not deep the weight of those pressing in behind drowned a hundred or more. After the storm, locating and rescuing those still alive, also getting the dead ones out of the lake was a lengthy and costly operation.

Grain fields were buried and it took many days before the ground was dry enough for machines or horses to go on to finish up the harvest.

We had another unseasonable storm and snow in June, I do not remember the year. Mother and I had been invited to the Leonard Thompson's for the birthday of one of the boys on June 7th. It was a beautiful day when we drove out on the 5th. All sorts of preparations were in progress for a big party. Children from all around had been invited.

During the night of the 5th it turned cold when a stiff wind came up. By noon of the 6th it began to snow. Next morning there was a foot of snow and still falling. It cleared on the 7th but the wind was strong and very cold.

Needless to say the party was off. As there was no telephones at this time it was just a case of no one arriving. We three children had our fill of jelly, blanc mange and cake. The fact there was no party was a great disappointment. I wept because I so seldom had a chance to go to a birthday party on a farm. The boys were desolate because they had been looking forward so much to playing with lots of other boys. I was only a girl so did not count as a playmate.