

## **Mossie I. Boyle nee Kitson**

My name at the beginning of this pioneer story was Mossie Kitson. It is now Mossie Boyle, and I live in one of the cottages at Pioneer Place, Weyburn. My father, Robert James Kitson, was a farmer for many years near Creemore, Ontario, but he had an urge to leave Ontario and go west to farm.

In the spring of 1905 we came to Saskatchewan bringing settler effects, horses and cattle as well as household needs by train. We did not homestead. Instead we bought 3/4 sections of land eighteen miles south of Weyburn. The family plus a hired man and a girl who was with us in Ontario came together. The girl was from Dr. Barnarda's home in England. She was not adopted, but was almost like one of the family and was a real help to my mother. Our family was Father, Mother, myself, as the oldest at age of fourteen, my brother Josh age ten, my younger brother Robert age four, and my baby sister Madeleine two months old. We came in a railway car where we slept and made our meals in a kitchen at one end of the car. Our tables were let down in front of our seats. We ate well and enjoyed the experience. We arrived in Weyburn in mid-March and lived in Weyburn until we could get some living quarters set up on the farm.

The first summer we lived in a large tent and a stable of a sort was set up for the horses and cattle. The tent was the largest I have ever seen before and since. It had two bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, and a hall up the centre, earth floor, of course, which became quite hard and we kept sweeping it every day. Our house was built during the summer and was ready for us to move into by fall. I might add we were not without any of our own folk in this new country, as Grandpa and Grandma Kitson came shortly after we came and they lived in Weyburn. My aunt and uncle Mr. and Mrs. Seth Mathers and family came the same time. My grandpa, J.J. Kitson, had been a lawyer and was now a judge and practised in Weyburn for a few years before retiring. Uncle Seth Mathers worked in the Saskatchewan Hospital until 1936 when he became ill and died in November of that year at the age of 73. He worked at fine carpenter work.

The first year my brother Josh and I went to Riverview School about three miles away. We went by horse and buggy in the summer and horse and cutter in winter. The second year the Ingleford School was built and we went to school there. We also held church and Sunday school there every Sunday. Before that we had meetings in the homes. Someone always volunteered to conduct the brief service and we never had any trouble getting teachers for Sunday school. We were all of the same nationality in this district and were all friends and neighbours who many times got together at our homes, playing the piano and singing. Some had other musical instruments. We didn't have radio and television in those days. We had a small store and post office called Ingleford Rural Office. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mackey lived there and attended to both the post office and store. The mail was brought from Weyburn by stage coach, then onto Goose Lake further south. We had Sunday School picnics at Goose Lake in the summer for a few years. Everyone enjoyed this.

After leaving school at Ingleford, I went to Weyburn to school, but my brother Josh

stayed home and helped on the farm. While in Weyburn, I stayed with my grandpa and grandma. I didn't get home many weekends in winter. We had much more snow then than we have now and roads were just country roads and treacherous in winter. Clara Mooney was a classmate of mine in school and we were good friends. Her family lived six miles north of Weyburn.

One weekend Mr. Mooney came with his cutter and team of horses to take us out to the farm. It was snowing a bit when we left Weyburn but it turned into a blizzard before long. Soon we couldn't see the road. The horses got off the road which was built up and when we got off the road the cutter upset and we all tumbled out. The horses were frightened and so were we. Mr. Mooney held on to the lines, unhitched the horses, and said he would go on home and send someone back for us. He knew the horses would take him home which they did. The storm subsided and Clara and I could see a light and it didn't seem too far away so we began wading through the snow heading for the light. We came to the road from which we had been upset, and just across the road was the entrance to a farm home not too far from the Mooneys'. They took us in and made us comfortable, and soon we felt fine and none the worse for our stumbling through the snow.

Before long the Mooney boys found us and took us home. When we went in, they had blankets all warmed up and ready to put around us, thinking we might be nearly frozen. I will never forget this, and here we were hale and hearty. Mr. Mooney didn't recover from his outing for a few days, but he soon was feeling better and in the end had no bad effects. We were all thankful for he might have been worse.

Country roads were all like this when there was lots of snow. If one had to get off the road to let someone go by, you invariably upset. You were always hoping you wouldn't meet anyone until you got to your destination. I would like to mention one of the winters when there was so much snow and storms that one didn't make it to Weyburn very often. A baby died in our vicinity and there was no way of getting a minister or an undertaker to come out over the roads in stormy weather to be at the burial. It was sad. The parents made a little casket, the neighbours dug a grave, and my father took over the service as minister and the little one was laid to rest. Even though it was sad, it was rather wonderful too. We all did our best and the Heavenly Father took over from there. I will never forget this.

I came home after getting my grade ten in Weyburn to help my mother as Alice, the girl who had come out west with us, married Bob Martin who lived a mile from us. After two years he decided to move to British Columbia and we never saw Alice again. We corresponded for a while, but she quit writing and we never heard from her again.

After tilling the land, we were rewarded with very good crops. We had to haul wheat to Weyburn with wagon and horses or a sleigh and horses, a long journey. We all liked the prairie and never regretted leaving Ontario. We were all busy with horses, cows to milk, pigs to look after, and also chickens. We just milked enough cows to supply our family with butter, milk and cream. We had a pony to ride so we children enjoyed that.

Then sadness came to our family. My father became quite ill in middle of September, 1910. We had the doctor out from Weyburn and he was quite sure he had typhoid fever and he must go to hospital. After a week in hospital, he passed away at age 48. What a blow to us all and especially to our mother. Mother carried on with farming with a hired hand and my brother who was now fifteen. Next was a happy event when Charlie Boyle and I were married June 26, 1912. We were married at home with our relatives and a few close friends as guests. The Methodist minister from Colgate, Rev. W.M. Coulter, officiated. There had been quite a number of students serve in this area in summer but now had an ordained minister. It's funny the things one remembers. We did not have a honeymoon but went right to our home of four rooms which Charlie had built on his homestead. We now had acquired more land. He told me he started with oxen to break up his land or the homestead. He said they would only work in the coolness of the early morning so he and the oxen rested in the middle of the day. I always wished I had been there to see him prodding the oxen to work. Our home was three miles from Colgate so we now took part in church work and other activities there. My mother was carrying on with the farm work very well and we used to go to see her and the family quite often.

Then sadness struck our family again. My mother became ill in August 1914. She also had typhoid fever and was taken to hospital in Weyburn. She wasn't very ill and seemed to be getting along fine and would be ready to leave the hospital on a certain day. We were just getting ready to go to Weyburn and planned to take her to Grandpa and Grandma's home for a few days when we got word she had suddenly passed away. What a blow to us all! She was only 48. She was so young to be taken from her family. This was August 29, 1914. No one dies from typhoid fever in this day and age, but quite a number who had typhoid fever passed away that year in the vicinity of Weyburn. That must be one disease that has been conquered by medical science.

Our family had to carry on without a father or mother. My husband and I took the two youngest to live with us, Robert 13 and Madeleine 10. From then on they were more like our children than our brother and sister. Robert went to school in Weyburn, Madeleine first to Colgate, and then to Weyburn. We built two more rooms to our house to accommodate our family. They both went from Weyburn, when the time came, to Normal School and both taught school for a time before deciding what they really wanted to do. My brother Josh stayed on the farm until he married Edith Mackay, a school teacher in the district, then they bought land of their own and our farm was sold.

Next was a happy event when our first baby was born November 30, 2014, a son and his name is Graham. My mother had so looked forward to this baby's arrival but she didn't live to see him and how I missed her now but life must go on and we were busy like everyone else. We were still using horses and we had cows, chickens and pigs to look after. We started our raising of chickens by setting eggs under the broody hens. Then we got to using an incubator which was set up in the dining room every spring. We were glad when the time came that we went to Weyburn and bought baby chickens.

The railway was built through Colgate. Shortly before we were married this happened, so there was no more hauling of grain to Weyburn. An elevator was built too and we could take our grain right to the elevator. The Presbyterian Church was built soon after

we were married, having begun the year before. It was a lovely church inside and out, and we were very proud of it. I had always been a Methodist but now since I was married to Charlie Boyle, I joined the Presbyterian Church of which he was a member. I was organist in this new church for several years. Then in 1923 our beautiful church burned to the ground. We did not build again, but worshipped in the Methodist Church. We soon felt part of it, with the folk there, so we have said we were probably the first congregation to a church union in Saskatchewan before it became official a few years after. We had many fine ministers over the years. I will mention especially Rev. Mr. Bray as he and his wife and family came to Colgate to live in the manse and he was our minister for several years. One of his sons Jack who was a baby when they came, became a minister and his family came to Colgate many years later and Jack was our minister for several years. We still keep in touch with them.

Going back to the farm again, we didn't have refrigerators then, so we all learned to cure pork making ham and bacon, head cheese and liverwurst. Then someone thought of a beef "ring." Soon we had that organized and one of the men was chosen to be butcher, so we had fresh beef once a week. Each person belonging to this donated an animal which he had fed as best he could. The butcher cut the beef in suitable pieces and each farmer came on that certain day of the week for his share. I am not sure how the butchers were paid, but no doubt he got his share without donating the animal. Meat was not inspected then, but none of us had any bad effects. As soon as the deep freeze started up in Weyburn, we used that and the beef ring era was over, but it did serve a need at the time and we were glad to have it.

We always had a good garden thanks to my dear husband. We canned beans, peas, and corn. We also canned chicken. Our boys to this day will tell anyone who listens, they often went to sleep with the boiler on the stove, boiling away with something being canned. Their bedroom was off the kitchen.

I wouldn't like my readers to think that pioneer days were all work and no play, far from it. As well as church social events, we put on plays at least once a year. We had some really good actors and had fun practising to be ready for the final night when we always had a full house in Bell's Hall. Then we had Chautauqua once a year for several years. They set up a large tent and gave us good entertainment and always had a large audience. The men and boys had baseball almost every Saturday afternoon all summer mostly at a ball diamond near Lomond School. My husband belonged to I.O.O.F. Lodge and enjoyed this meeting twice a month. I joined Thelma Rebekah Lodge on June 1, 1921 and now belong to Alexandrie Lodge No. 14 in Weyburn. So life was never dull for us.

We went along with Tommy Douglas to help get the C.C.F. party started and later, into power in Saskatchewan, with him as Premier. Up to this time I had always voted Liberal because that was the way my parents voted, but this party seemed to be trying to bring better things to the country folk. For instance, I never thought I would ever see electricity brought to our home on the farm, but it did come to pass. The lights were turned on September 19, 1951. Charlie and I turned on every light in the house then went outside to see what it looked like—wonderful! We were then able to get a fridge and washing

machine. We already had a propane gas stove, and the barn was all lit up too. I am a little ahead of my story. During the course of the years, we had built a barn and a house both of which we had been waiting for until we could afford to build them.

We had five children, four boys and one girl, all born before the new house was built, Graham in 1914, Robert Bruce in 1916, Stuart in 1918, Keith in 1922, and Margaret in 1930. All are living but Robert Bruce who passed away when three months old. Stuart went to the war in 1942. He was a radio technician so wasn't in danger as some. He was in England for a time, also in Gibraltar. He came home in 1945.

When our daughter Margaret was born the whole community rejoiced with us. I guess they thought we were never going to get a girl and we thought the same but she came, a little red headed girl. All our children were born at home. If she had been born in hospital, we would have thought they got the babies mixed as we couldn't recall any red head in our family, but we heard later that there were some red heads in the Boyle connection. All three boys were still going to school in Colgate when Margaret started school, so they took good care of her when they went with horse and cutter in the winter. We wrapped her in a fur cape that used to belong to my mother and the boys said she invariably went sound asleep going to school.

Keith is the only son who stayed on the farm. He and his wife Lorraine still live there. My husband Charlie had not been well for about a year so we decided to retire and move to Weyburn. So the first week in December 1960 we came to Pioneer Place to live in one of the cottages. We with three other couples were pioneers at Pioneer Place and only half the cottages were finished at that time. We liked it here and called this our dream house. We celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at Colgate in June 1962. We both enjoyed this. Charlie was in fairly good health most of the time and was able to enjoy all the social activities which we had from time to time over at the Hostel. He also enjoyed our grandchildren who loved to hear him tell stories. There were twelve grandchildren then. Now we have thirteen and one great-grandchild. He suddenly left us on December 22, 1964 to go to his heavenly home, but he lives on in the lives of all of us.

Mossie I. Boyle  
Weyburn, SK 1973