

## **Frances Dixon (-----1948)**

Submitted January, 2015 by great Granddaughter to the Dixons, Yvonne (Severson-Beckett) Gould now residing in 4671 Salal Place, Courtenay, B.C., Vancouver Island. V9N 4A1

My great-grandmother had a strong attachment to her son Willis and wanted to visit him in Canada. Great-grandpa would have been content to remain in England but less than a year after Willis came to Canada, they both embarked for Canada too. Their youngest daughter, Lillie (mother to Phyllis Bloor, presently of Weyburn), came with them on an ocean liner in March, 1911.

My great-grandma Dixon took quite readily to their new life in Saskatchewan. As a true Yorkshire woman she was a good manager and quickly turned their surroundings into a cozy home. Willis had his own space in a small shack south of theirs just a stone's throw from where the Range View school would be built in 1912. Many of the teachers who taught there in the succeeding years found a comfortable boarding place at the small Dixon home on the hill (Graham Hill, I believe).

One thing, which I'm told terrified my great-grandmother, was the severe thunderstorms which were prevalent in those days and she took several precautions against being struck by lightning. The first was to remove her eye glasses. She believed the metal rims attracted lightning. Next she would go around and cover any mirrors and then see that all knives, forks, and spoons were covered. Often she would pull down the blinds then fearfully wait until the storm was over. I don't believe she ever overcame her fear of thunderstorms.

Their neighbours were the Albert Seversons, who had arrived from Iowa two years earlier. These were the parents to my Aunt Betty (Severson) Larsen of Weyburn.

Life appeared to move along evenly in those days: a round of Sunday visiting between families, dances at which everyone gathered in the schoolhouse, the birth of children (not always happy events), and often attended by hardship and suffering. There were happy occasions, especially at Christmas time in the schoolhouse. My great-grandparents, stout hearted Victorians that they were, brought along a huge Union Jack flag from England; at each school Christmas program this flag was draped across the front of the teacher's desk as a sort of decoration. My great-uncle Willis Dixon and his cousin George Ellis were quite a pair of clowns; one of the items these two devised to entertain the gathering consisted of one chasing the other around the "stage" in mock anger, until the chaser drew a cap gun and shot his adversary. At that, the back of the victim's pants fell down to reveal white underwear with Merry Christmas written across in bold letters.

While World War I was still in progress, my great-grandparents, Henry and Frances Dixon returned to England to visit their elder daughter, Alberta Horton and her family. It was at that time that my mother Rene, who was just a young girl and an only child, became well acquainted with her Grandma Dixon. She told Rene about their life in Canada, about the neighbours, the Seversons, the George Ellis family, the Mike Schumans, the Benneweis family and others, and also about my great-aunt Lillie, who had to remain in Canada this time.

My great-grandpa Dixon was a very patient man. His eye sight was always poor but he read constantly the newspapers, the classics and other literature. He was chosen Secretary of

Range View S.D 599; it was he who had been responsible for placing many of the classical volumes at the school for the benefit of those beyond school age.

They were still in England when the Armistice was signed and their stay extended a further two years, during which time my great-aunt Lillie Butler paid a visit from Canada, bringing along her one year old son Roy. This was a happy time, I'm told, having both daughters Lillie and Berta together in England. But Willis was still in Canada, so in 1922 they packed up a second time and returned to Canada.

The Dixons were beginning to feel their advancing years. They moved their house at Graham Hill to Oungre to be closer to the stores, the doctor, and the good soft water. They lived to see five grandchildren, four being the Butler children, Roy, Phyllis, Audrey and Rodney, as well as a number of great-grandchildren. By 1947 Frances, my great-grandma was confined to her house. Her daughter Berta, who had moved to Canada by then, cared for her until her death in 1948, great-grandpa having predeceased her. My maternal grandmother Berta, who moved to B.C. where we lived, passed away in 1966. My paternal grandparents, Albert and Nettie-Marie Severson, passed from this life in Saskatchewan in 1965 and 1945 respectively.