

Mary Frisby nee Dick, Griffin

Submitted by: Mary Lynn (Frisby) Rederburg

Mary Dick grew up in Iowa, U.S.A. Her mother always wanted her two daughters to know the value of hard work, so she always did her washing on a wash board. And then Mary Dick kept washing on a wash board until I, her daughter, got an electric washer and then she did too. I remember feeling sad for her carrying water, melting snow and washing so long. But she said she was lucky because she had a wringer that attached to the wash tub, and she didn't need to wring them by hand.

I didn't like washing the cream separator with all its disks. I only did it once in a while but mother had to wash it every day. Mother began milking cows after we left home but she only did it in the evening and Dad milked in the morning.

Mary Dick went to Columbia University and got her Masters in Home Ed. Harold Frisby and she met when they went to school in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Harold got a BA in Agriculture at Aimes, Iowa. They married and Harold and she moved to Saskatchewan to farm his dad's land. They both accepted the drought, grasshoppers, dust storms and army worms without complaint.

Mother always like music. She led and played for the choir for years. Years later the music store in Weyburn commented that she had bought the most music out of any customer. She liked music that had meaning for the choir to sing. She would copy the music and words for each choir member. That was permissible then! I remember her walking back and forth to practise and play for the school kids concerts. We lived 4 ½ miles from town, but the roads were impassable for cars in winter.

Mother always thought that Harold had a lot harder work load than she did, farming with horses, looking after cows and lots of other animals. Mother always baked bread and made cinnamon rolls and pies. I remember her growing wonder berries and making pies with them; they and citron seemed to grow easily in the garden. She had a big garden and flowers. I remember a neat little trimmed row of buck brush that looked so nice for a little while, until it took over and she got rid of it. We could always find her in the garden when we came home for school.

We didn't have much meat in the summer because there was no fridge, but she made good canned jellied chicken. And she always made cottage cheese that both I and the little chickens liked. Mother would pick up cow pies and poplar sticks to burn in the kitchen stove.

I was always grateful for her good advice. One girl at school kept making me so sad every day, telling me I had fat legs. Finally I told mother and she said I should tell her that she has lovely legs, but not everyone is as lucky as she is. It worked!

It was exciting at Christmas time as Grandma from the U.S. would send a big box of second hand clothing. Mother would wash them, rip them apart, reverse them and sew clothing for us. Sometimes there were a few left over and we could dress up in them.

When they first came to Saskatchewan, they thought they'd make money and in five years, they'd go back to the U.S. It didn't happen. Mother did get depressed when someone told her she should quit playing for church when she was in her 70's. It was different for her sister. She was teaching music in a school in Madison, Wisconsin; driving herself there, and then when she got to be 100, she told them she should quit. They said "Oh no, come back!" She taught one more year and then quit.

One smart saying of mother's that she learned from her father was "It's good enough if you are thankful and too good if you are not."