

Mary Wray Ledingham (Boyle) 1881-1959

Submitted by Lois Campbell (Ledingham)

Born: Markdale, Ontario

In 1906, at 25 years of age, Mary Boyle married her sweetheart Walter Ledingham. Walter had gone ahead a year earlier to Colgate to claim a new homestead for them. After the wedding in Ontario they headed west for their honeymoon. Mary and Walter left the security of family and friends and departed by train to start a new life and family in the uncertainty of the prairie wilderness. They left the green surroundings of Ontario, and arrived to a landscape devoid of lakes and trees but with buffalo wallows as one of the only indications of the existence of previous life.

While they temporarily lived in a sod shack Walter had built the year before, Mary and Walter constructed a new home and barn on their home quarter (now named Fairview Farms). They used oxen to plow and seed the fields and started raising livestock. They also started a family a year after arriving and went on to raise a total of 6 boys.

Mary lost Walter to pneumonia when she was just 41 (her youngest boy, Gordon, was 4 at the time) but stayed on the farm and with the help of her boys, continued to work the land and began to see it prosper after the thirties. During hard times, Mary always had an open spot at the table for anyone in need of a good meal and that is where her FHB ("family hold back") directive to her kids originated to be sure there was enough food to go around.

Mary sent four of her boys off to war and was lucky enough to have them all return safely to her after it was over. She later retired and moved into Weyburn to live, enjoying the love and support of her sons and their families until her death in 1959.

Grandma Ledingham exemplified the spirit of the pioneer women who came and settled the Weyburn area and helped it grow and prosper. Her strength, resilience and commitment to her family, of whom she was always extremely proud, helped her through the tough times and allowed her to enjoy the many good times afforded her during her years in the area.