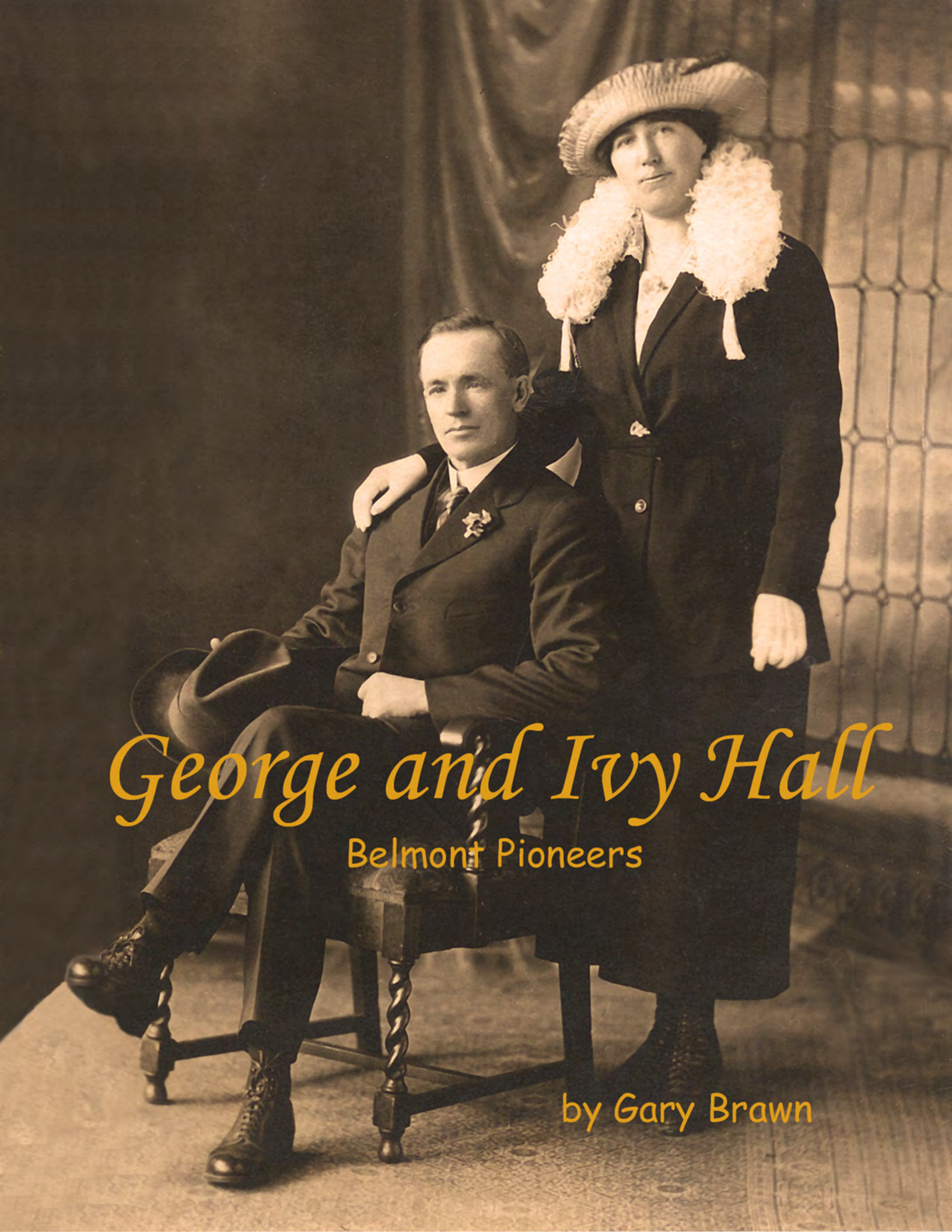

George and Ivy Hall

Belmont Pioneers

by Gary Brawn

George and Ivy Hall

Pioneers of the Belmont District

Gary Brawn

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PREFACE

Although with each passing year our memories become more precious to us, they grow increasingly dim and there are fewer relatives alive or able to provide factual clarification. It fills me with regret to think of all the fascinating information I could easily have obtained from my grandparents, or their brothers and sisters, by asking a few basic questions and seriously noting the answers. So much of family history is lost forever for failure to do such a simple thing. For this reason, it has been much on my mind for a number of years to attempt the assembly of what family stories are still available.

In 2004 my uncle, Melvin Grendon Hall, took the time to dictate reminiscences of his childhood. I am very grateful he did so. My mother, Doreen Lois Brawn, was not inclined to write out her memories, but she was prepared to answer graciously my many questions in a direct and straightforward fashion. When my mother first discussed her hopes for the story of her parents' family, it seemed a simple matter of adding her biographical recollections and reflections to those already available from Melvin, filling in the gaps with reminiscences from their brother, Philip John Winston Hall, and, finally, incorporating the story, as best we could, of the last sibling, Hubert Victor Hall, who died on March 15, 1991.

Such projects are never as simple as originally contemplated and, as those stories were pulled together, I came increasingly to feel that the context for the Hall and Smith families' moves and actions was a critical component. The following is the result.

Although a serious genealogical researcher with the modern resources available could doubtless take any family's story back several centuries, the intent of this project is to focus on my grandparents, George Hall and Ivy Agnes (Smith) Hall, their parents and siblings, and finally their children (my mother and her brothers), but only up to the point where those children left home to make their way in the world.

The Belmont and District History project published as "The Path of the Pioneers" and other local histories were a helpful resource to me, as were the homestead files, photographs, Belmont newspapers and other materials and resources available in the Manitoba Archives, the Manitoba Legislative Library and the Belmont Museum. Ancestry.ca was invaluable in tracing family lineage and connections.

I have been aware from the beginning of this project that I needed help and happily for me it was available close at hand. My wife, Angela Brawn, has spent many a taxing

hour listening to me think through various issues that inevitably arise in a project like this. She has suffered through numerous re-edits, and has been responsible for managing the photographs, critiquing my writing and solving computer challenges.

My brother, Roland Dale Brawn, is a historian by profession and could provide valuable guidance and direction. By his skills and training, he would have been the more logical of the two of us to take on this task, but he could not do so because of his employment obligations and other projects. It has been reassuring to know he has been there for advice.

This project was greatly assisted by my father, Charles Roland Brawn, who, in addition to his constant encouragement, had engaged in considerable research before I became involved and had come up with many critical suggestions for inquiries that could be made. For example, he took the initiative to interview Joseph Deedman, an early settler in the Belmont area, who was gifted with an extraordinary memory and had the considerable benefit of first-hand knowledge of my grandparents and those of the Hall family and neighbours who were among the first homesteaders in the Belmont area.

I have also sought input from the broader family and others and their input has been very useful to me. In addition to the obvious critical importance of the contributions of Melvin and Philip, I have obtained very interesting and useful information from Hubert's widow, Eileen Hall, my mother's cousin, Margaret (Robinson) Graham, and Marjorie Thomson, for whom Ivy was landlady. I was also fortunate indeed to make connection with Denise Beaton who has laboured diligently to fill in gaps in the story of the Lough and Dale families, who overlap with the Halls in several generations. I have taken advantage of my friends, Kenneth Coleman and Neil McQuarrie, who have provided invaluable assistance with both research and editing. Thank you.

I am sure I have failed to acknowledge many others whose assistance was very significant. Thank you to all those who graciously and generously supported this project. The factual errors and glaring omissions in the telling of this story are, of course, entirely my responsibility and I am sorry for those.

Gary Brawn

January 26, 2020
Brandon, Manitoba

CHAPTER 1: JOHN HALL Sr. AND EMILY LOUGH - EARLY IRISH IMMIGRANTS

John Hall Sr. 1815 - 1875 and Emily Lough 1820 -1903
Parents of:
Samuel Lough Hall 1841 - 1918
Rebecca Hall 1842 - 1920
John Hall Jr. 1845 - 1934 (father of George Hall)
Mary Jane Hall 1847 - 1916
James William Hall 1850 - 1902
Alexander Hall 1852 - ?
Emily (Emma) Hall 1853 - 1894
Matilda Hall 1856 - 1937
Harriet Hall 1859 - ?
Thomas Hall 1863 - 1931
William Hall 1864 - 1906

According to his claimed age as set forth on his marriage particulars and in various census reports, my great-great-grandfather, John Hall, was born in Ireland in 1815. I don't know whether he came to British North America as a child or as a young adult, with his family, alone or with siblings, but by the time of his marriage in 1840 to Emily (described in some reports as Amelia) Lough he was living in the Buckingham area approximately 40 km north-east of Ottawa. The connections of John Hall to possible siblings and extended family are intriguing, but not certain to me. (See Appendix 1)

The family tree for the Loughs in Canada is much easier to document. Emily's parents, Samuel Rose Lough and Catherine (Kate) McFaul, were born in County Antrim, Ireland in 1792 and 1793 respectively but Emily was born on August 20, 1820 in Vaudreuil, Lower Canada (now a suburb of Montreal). She was baptized on July 13, 1823 in St. Andrew's Church, Argenteuil, Quebec with her sister, Esther, and Ellen Dale.

Over the next century, the Dale, Lough and Hall families often lived near each other, and inter-marriage among the families was common. (Appendix 2 details some of those family connections.) Although many of the specific details may now only be guessed, clearly the Loughs and the Halls were among the wave of Irish immigrants who streamed into North America in the early part of the Nineteenth Century.

The reasons for this mass migration are many and varied, but the common thread was the despair of a people who by their economic and social circumstances had lost hope for a better future for themselves and their children in their own country.

Both prior to and following the war of 1812, the British and Canadian governments were concerned about the implicit threat of American expansion northwards. An obvious defense to this threat was to encourage increased population through immigration.

Although immigrants came from all over Europe, the flow from Ireland was exceptional because of that country's particularly desperate economic circumstances. The Irish landowning class was not resistant to this emigration, because a reduction in the number of tenant farmers, many of whom were suffering severe deprivation, somewhat eased the social turmoil that beset the countryside.

As records were not required to be kept for free emigrants to British North America until 1865, the historical information concerning the particular circumstances of the Hall family coming from Ireland is spotty at best. For example, where passenger lists were created, they were kept by the port of arrival, not departure. It has always been the case that the authorities were more concerned with those who were entering their country than those departing it.

Also, the great numbers involved overwhelmed the usefulness of the limited record keeping, especially when the variety and specificity of people's names was by tradition limited. Not surprisingly, but unhelpfully from the genealogical perspective, there are many, many John Halls who came to North America from Ireland. Regretfully, I lack the expertise to be able to determine with certainty which family produced the John Hall who is our relative.

John Hall escaped Ireland for Canada before the horror of the potato famine and the "Coffin Ships", but that is not to suggest his passage would have been comfortable.[1] Stephen E. De Vere, in a report to the Chairman of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission in 1847, described the conditions in steerage on one of the ships transporting Irish immigrants to British North America. The trip made by John Hall would have taken place within a few years of the voyage described by De Vere:

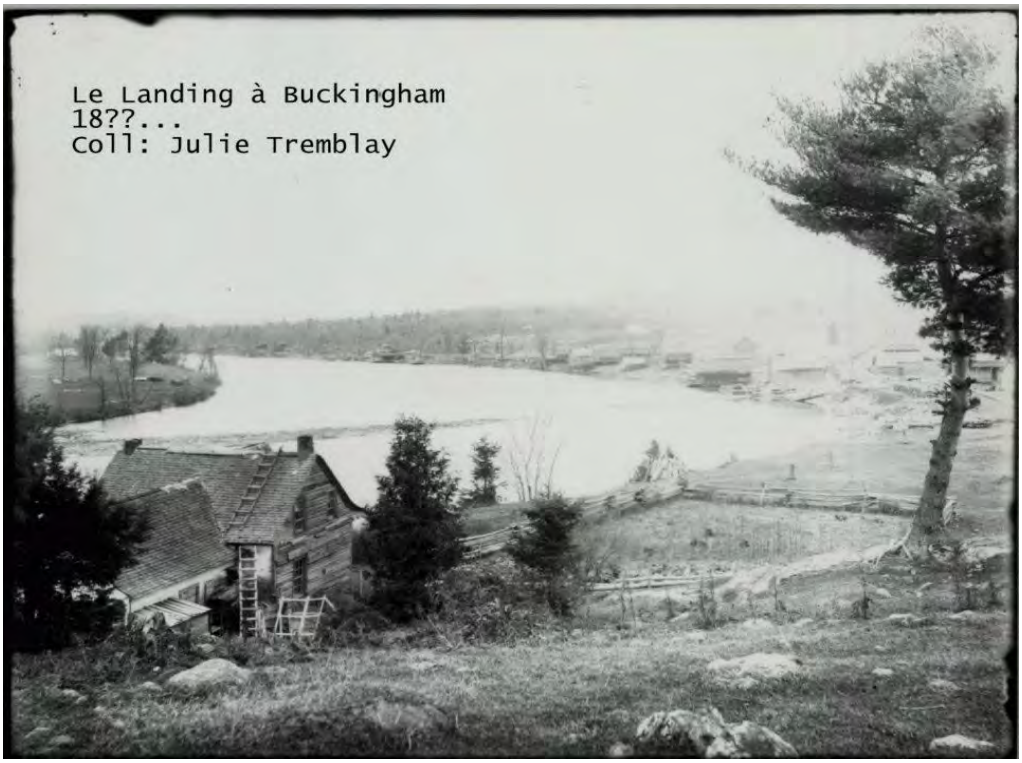
> *Before the emigrant has been a week at sea he is an altered man. How can it be otherwise? Hundreds of poor people, men, women and children of all ages, from the driveling idiot of ninety to the babe just born, huddled together without light, without air, wallowing in filth and breathing a fetid atmosphere, sick in body, dispirited in heart, the fever patients lying between the sound, in sleeping places so narrow as almost to deny them the power of indulging, by a change of position, the natural restlessness of the disease; by their ravings disturbing those around, and predisposing them, through the effects of the imagination, to imbibe the contagion; living without food or medicine, except as administered by the hand*

> *of casual charity, dying without the voice of spiritual consolation, and buried in the deep without the rites of the Church.*
>
> *The food is generally ill selected and seldom sufficiently cooked, in consequence of the insufficiency and bad construction of the cooking places [as passengers had to cook their own meals]. The supply of water, hardly enough for cooking and drinking, does not allow washing. In many ships the filthy beds, teeming with all abominations, are never required to be brought on deck and aired; the narrow space between the sleeping berths and the piles of boxes is never washed or scraped, but breathes up a damp and fetid stench, until the day before the arrival at quarantine, when all hands are required to 'scrub up' and put on a fair face for the doctor and Government inspector.*
>
> *No moral restraint is attempted, the voice of prayer is never heard; drunkenness, with its consequent train of ruffianly debasement, is not discouraged, because it is profitable to the captain who traffics in the grog.* [2]

It should not be assumed that when immigrants finally reached their destination life's threats and challenges were eased. Although many were shopkeepers or farmers, the typical male immigrant arrived almost penniless and was, by training and education, fit only for physical labour.

In 1823, a few years after landing in Montreal, Samuel Lough was recruited as a carpenter in a construction gang travelling to the junction of the Ottawa River and the Du Lièvre River, where the assembled crew began work building a lumber mill to process the logs that were so abundant in the area, leading to the creation of the village of Buckingham.

Although the Halls and Loughs in due course saw their future in farming, and established farms as soon as possible, initially the males in those families eked out an income through whatever labouring work might have been available, which in the Ottawa area, particularly for poor Irish immigrants, would have involved logging. Although John Hall Sr. for a time served as a shoemaker in the newly established village of Buckingham, this was ultimately but a detour from the path toward farming.



Early Buckingham, Canada East (now Quebec)

Agriculture in the Buckingham area was extraordinarily difficult. As transport to the region was by river and the land adjacent to the river was the most fertile, it was claimed first. In general, the land was rocky and heavily treed. Those immigrants arriving subsequent to the first wave had to take land farther away from the river, and, before crops could be planted, forests had to be cleared. In fact, for many years logging was a far more significant enterprise in the area than the growing of conventional crops. For many immigrants, labouring in the logging industry provided a critically important supplement to whatever modest income could be generated from farming.

As much of the production of timber from the Ottawa River valley was shipped to Great Britain, shipping firms quickly concluded profits could be made on the return trip if a ship's otherwise empty hold was filled with immigrants. Even though the cost of passage was low, reflecting the harsh conditions, there was still more money to be made than if the ship returned empty. This was especially common in the 1830s and 1840s. Reports like that of Stephen De Vere indicate these timber ships were dangerous. Disregard for sanitary arrangements and overcrowding created not only severe unpleasantness for the immigrants but ideal conditions for the spread of diseases such as typhus and cholera. The use of these converted lumber ships as passenger liners ended only with the coming of the age of steam in the 1860s.

The initial government surveys of land in Upper and Lower Canada created plots of 200 acres, which were frequently subdivided. Although 200 acres was a large plot of land to clear and develop, it was, with poor soil, an insufficient size to support several generations in a family. This provided the impetus for the Halls and many others to be watchful for opportunities that might improve the circumstances of the larger family. It is in this context that the Halls ultimately looked west to better their fortunes and prospects, initially to Ontario, but, within a generation, to the Canadian Prairies.

The Halls Move to Ontario

In the 1861 Census for Lower Canada (now Quebec), (See Appendix 1) John Hall Sr. was described as a shoemaker who, with his wife, Emily (Lough), was living with his family of nine children in the village of Buckingham. The Samuel and Kate (McFaul) Lough family lived nearby and was only slightly smaller in size.

By 1861, Buckingham had grown to over 1,100 residents. By far the great majority of the adult males described themselves as “labourers”, although the occupation of “shoemaker” was also popular. John Sr. was one of 13 men in the village offering that service, a reflection of the economic reality of the time that dictated repair rather than replacement of well-used wearables. In 1861 John Jr. was only 16 and his prospects for economic advancement in that place and at that time were slim indeed.

In fact, plans were already afoot for the Halls to move across the Ottawa River (and provincial boundary line) to land for farming near the village of Leonard in Cumberland Township. John Sr. had purchased by Deed dated July 24, 1860 the W ½ of Lot 13, 5th Concession from Robert and Priscilla Lough.

By 1871 the Hall family had made their move to Leonard, Ontario. According to the census report for that year, John Hall Sr. and his four adult sons were all farmers. John Sr. and Emily now had ten children living with them, two of whom, Thomas and William, having been born subsequent to the prior census. Gone from the family grouping was Mary Jane who in 1868 had married William Cosgrove and joined his household nearby. Apart from the young Hall women who might achieve economic security through marriage and, even with everyone working as hard as possible for the common good, the future for the next generation of Halls in that location looked bleak.

As the eldest son, Samuel Lough Hall was designated by custom to take over his parents' farm. By Deed dated April 6, 1875, he entered into an arrangement with his parents to acquire their land by way of mortgage and bond for $2,000. By this documentation Samuel was required to provide for his parents, John Sr. and Emily, for their lifetimes and within five years pay to his brother John Jr. the sum of $400, to his sister Rebecca the sum of $40, and to his sister Emily $20. Such an arrangement was common at this time and place and effectively replaced a will. On July 24, 1883, the beneficiaries of that Bond executed a release acknowledging the debt had been paid. On February 4, 1889, Emily Hall, by then a widow, discharged the mortgage from her son, Samuel, in consideration of payment of the lump sum of $400, thereby freeing Samuel of any ongoing financial obligation.

Although Samuel had taken over the family farm in 1875, his parents and siblings continued to reside in the area. As Emily was described as a widow on the 1881 census, clearly John Sr. had died in the five years after 1875. In addition to the uncertainty about the precise date of John Hall Sr.'s death, it is not known where he is buried, although probably it was in the Patterson Presbyterian Cemetery at Vars, near Bearbrook, Ontario (not far from Leonard), but that cemetery has been "decommissioned" and all the gravestones have been piled in a heap.[3]

Because of these developments, John Jr. was by1881 head of the original family unit that continued to include his mother, Emily, then 60, his sisters Rebecca 29 and Emma 26, and brothers James 30, Alexander 27, Thomas 18 and William 17. Although John Jr. was 36, he was still unmarried.[4]

John Jr.'s younger brother, James William Hall, was among the very first settlers in the Belmont area. James was shortly followed by all of his immediate family except for his brothers, Samuel Lough Hall and Alexander Hall, and his married sister, Matilda Moffatt. Every Hall who headed west was filled with the hope and determination that the hard trek to Manitoba would result in a better life. That included the Hall matriarch, Emily, who, with spinster daughter Rebecca, initially lived with James on his farm south of Belmont. Emily died on April 30, 1903 in that new home and was buried in the Hillside Cemetery. Emily's death came just over a year following that of her son, James.

CHAPTER 2: EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST

In the decade following the Confederation of Canada in 1867, the Federal Government increasingly encouraged the settlement of the lands west of Ontario. As much of the good land in Eastern Canada had already been settled, new immigrants from Europe, together with the children of the first wave of settlement, were anxious to fan out to seek their fortunes in the undeveloped west. Many were being enticed by land developers and speculators to the American west, where land was more accessible, and supports for travel and settlement were already in place. As the available land on the U.S. frontier became increasingly scarce, attention turned northward, initially to the Dakotas, but finally to the prairie regions across the international border.

The concurrent development of faster ripening strains of wheat made crops in the more northerly climate more reliable as a source of cash. Improved grain grinding machinery increased the marketability and value of the harder grains like Red Fife.

More critical than any other factor in the opening of the western areas of the North American continent was the mass extermination of buffalo, which resulted in the destruction of the traditional way of life for the Indigenous populations. Within a few years on either side of 1870 (when Manitoba became a province), it is estimated millions of buffalo were slaughtered. In the United States this coincided with the post-Civil War drive to “manifest destiny” that clearly required that First Nations people be removed. It was not difficult to connect the viability of Indigenous culture with the herds of buffalo on which that culture depended.

The early hunting of buffalo by Indigenous people and Métis was directed at providing food, clothing and shelter and was sustainable. The slaughter of those animals that came later was not sustainable, or intended to be. Initial commercial justification was that those massive hunts provided inexpensive hides that could be tanned and turned into a multitude of leather products including the belts and pulleys needed in the factories of the eastern states and provinces. The underlying, more critical and more honest, explanation is that it cleared the land of impediments to settlement.

By the 1870s the buffalo herds had all but disappeared from the northern prairies. Facing starvation, Indigenous peoples had no choice but to accept the reservation system in order to obtain government handouts on which they were forced to rely.

Mounds of buffalo hides ready for transport east

This reality, and the push to link the whole of the northern plains by rail, very suddenly made it practical for Western Canada to be filled with immigrants.

Politicians in Ottawa were also keenly sensitive to and wary of the expansionist ambitions of the United States, which could easily be directed north toward the virgin prairies of Western Canada, ambitions that had arguably only been slowed by the American Civil War (1861 - 1865).

The first step for development by Canada of its western frontier was for the federal government to take control from the Hudson's Bay Company of "legal" ownership of the western lands that the Company had held for almost two hundred years. Next came the dispatch west of the survey crews, which precipitated, and was delayed by, the Red River Resistance.

Under the Dominion Lands Policy, any person over twenty-one could acquire ownership of a quarter section of land (160 acres) upon payment of a registration fee of ten dollars. A settler would obtain patent (legal proof of ownership) upon satisfying a local Land Officer that he had built a habitable house (usually of sod or log), and either

had resided upon or cultivated the land for the three years following the filing of the affidavit for entry. During the first three years on his land, the homesteader was to reside on the property for a yearly minimum of six months.

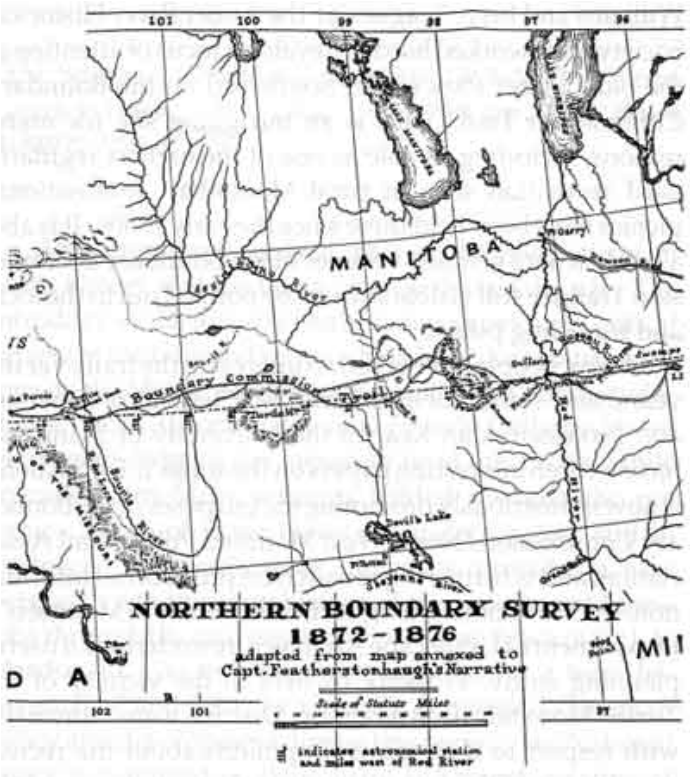
In 1879, the Act was amended to permit a homesteader to take an option (referred to as a pre-emption) to purchase the adjoining quarter section, which was intended to guarantee opportunity for expansion. All too frequently the financial pressure created by this pre-emption required the homestead to be mortgaged, and, if a crop failed, the farm family lost everything. By the mid-1880s the federal government's regulations were made more flexible and discretionary regard could be given by land officials to unusual circumstances such as the non-arable nature of the lands settled upon, sickness in a settler's family, or crop failure.

Even after Manitoba became a province in 1870, newcomers had to overcome great challenges to settle successfully in these sparsely populated and largely undeveloped lands. One of the greatest obstacles faced by immigrants, whether from Europe or Eastern Canada, was the challenge of transporting themselves and their possessions over or around the Canadian Shield.

It was not until June 1882 that the last section of the Canadian Pacific Railway connecting Thunder Bay, Ontario, to Selkirk, Manitoba was completed. Three years later the railway was extended across the entire prairies. Prior to 1882, the most direct route, but perhaps the most challenging physically, required travel by foot and boat (and 17 portages) over the Dawson Trail, which extended from Prince Arthur's Landing to the Red River.

An alternative was to take up the transportation services available in the United States. By this means, settlers could travel via the Great Lakes to Duluth, Minnesota and then by rail to Moorhead, Minnesota, and finally by steamboat north down the Red River. An option was rail travel via Chicago to Fishers' Landing (near Crookston, Minnesota), and then north.

River travel could be slowed, and even stopped, by either low or dangerously high water levels. When that happened, the immigrants had to fall back on ox and cart for transportation over the last 200 or more miles of their journey.



Boundary Commission Trail

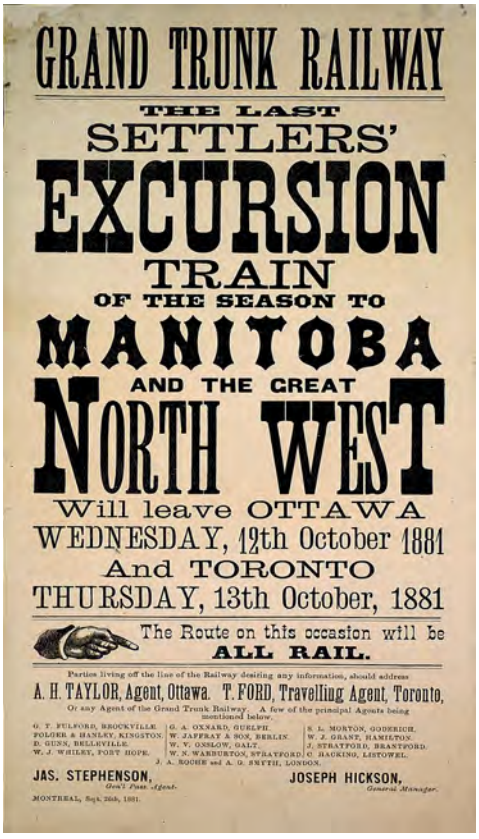
RM of Strathcona illustrating numbering of sections

CHAPTER 3: SETTLEMENT OF THE BELMONT AREA

Many of the Belmont area's earliest settlers came from eastern Ontario west through this American route, but left the Red River at Emerson, Manitoba rather than carrying on to Fort Garry (now Winnipeg). From Emerson, there was no option but to walk to a prospective homestead. In the spring of 1881 James Hall, younger brother to John Hall Jr., was one of the first five settlers to arrive in the Belmont area.

Although one may imagine that the first settlers in the region were beset by trepidation and lonely desperation, contemporary reports suggest a more accurate characterization would be excited optimism. Articles frequently appeared in the Ottawa Citizen and Ottawa Daily Free Press in the spring of 1879 describing in detail the excitement and commotion as settlers collected their possessions at the rail station for the first two train expeditions to Manitoba and the Dakotas organized through the Grand Trunk Railway.[5] (See Appendix 3)

The Halls Consider a Move West


GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY

THE LAST

SETTLERS'

EXCURSION

TRAIN

OF THE SEASON TO

MANITOBA

AND THE GREAT

NORTH WEST

Will leave OTTAWA

WEDNESDAY, 12th October 1881

And TORONTO

THURSDAY, 13th October, 1881

The Route on this occasion will be

ALL RAIL.

Parties living off the line of the Railway desiring any information, should address

A. H. TAYLOR, Agent, Ottawa. T. FORD, Travelling Agent, Toronto,

Or any Agent of the Grand Trunk Railway. A few of the principal Agents being mentioned below.

G. T. FULFORD, BROCKVILLE. | G. A. OXNARD, GUELPH. | S. L. MORTON, GODERICH.
FOLGER & HANLEY, KINGSTON. | W. JAFFRAY & SON, BERLIN. | W. J. GRANT, HAMILTON.
D. GUNN, BELLEVILLE. | W. V. ONSLOW, GALT. | J. STRATFORD, BRANTFORD.
W. J. WHILEY, PORT HOPE. | W. N. WARBURTON, STRATFORD. | C. HAUKING, LISTOWEL.
J. A. ROCHE and A. G. SMYTH, LONDON.

JAS. STEPHENSON, Gen'l Pass. Agent. JOSEPH HICKSON, General Manager.

MONTREAL, Sept. 26th, 1881.

In the fall of 1881 the Grand Trunk Railway proudly advertised it was possible for families wanting to move to Manitoba from the Ottawa River valley area to make the trek following a route that was "ALL RAIL," although clearly it was then still necessary for a good portion of the trip to be taken through the United States. The last section of travel to actual homestead properties had to be taken by some other means.

It is reasonable to ask why the Halls settled east of Pelican Lake when the whole of the west was open to them. Two of the first settlers in the area were Frank Williamson and James Hall. Both had worked with the Dominion survey crew, so very likely it was largely through their influence that the first Halls would come to the Belmont area. Frank Williamson and James Hall would have been among the labourers or carpenters on the survey crew.

Being a surveyor in this immediate post-Confederation period was very challenging. Workdays and the time away from civilization were long and the elements unforgiving. A survey party generally consisted of 20 men including a party chief, chainmen, a cook, workmen to saw trees (if clearing was required to provide a view for measurement), a recorder and men to turn angles (determining and measuring changes in direction, as opposed to distance). Travel was either on horseback or by foot. According to early records[6], the survey for the land ultimately settled by the Hall family was completed in 1879 by surveyor W. Beatty.

But the question remains, what would Frank Williamson and James Hall have seen in this area, or heard about, that would have drawn them as homesteaders. The obvious explanation is that in the early 1880's land there was available and accessible. Even if there was some reason to prefer to homestead in Saskatchewan or Alberta, it would take two decades before the remainder of the Canadian prairies was ready to be settled. Also, part of the answer to that question can easily be answered today by simple observation of the particularly attractive features of the area. The soil was rich, game and fish plentiful, and land could be cleared much more easily than in the rocky terrain of the early Halls' home district near Ottawa. (Appendix 4 contains a detailed description of the geography and topography of this area of Manitoba in 1886.)

Prior to 1890, settlers in Argyle Municipality (which at the time included what was later known as the Rural Municipality of Strathcona) had to travel to Brandon or Killarney for supplies and to deliver their grain, and were limited to the pace of their oxen. It was reported:[7]

> *In 1889 during the month of April, construction of the railway began at Morris. All along the line from Morris to Brandon men could be seen working, some with oxen, some with mules, others with horses. By Christmas time the line was completed. The work train stayed in Brandon until the next April and in May 1890 the first passenger train came from Winnipeg. Wages for construction work was $1.25 per day and $16 a month was charged for board.*

After Belmont became a stop on the Morris-Brandon branch of the Northern Pacific Railway, daily service was provided from Brandon to and from Baldur (through Belmont). Each day freight and passengers were carried from the "Wheat City" south to these settlements and each night the train returned with grain and cattle and other agricultural products, and of course passengers. The arrival of the railway was critically important in encouraging population growth in the Belmont area, as many other small prairie towns disappeared when the railway line passed them by.

CHAPTER 4: THE FIRST SETTLERS IN THE BELMONT AREA

There are no written accounts of the personal experiences of the early Hall settlers, but happily there are a number of recorded "reminiscences" by contemporaries. To provide context to the story of the Hall family, those very interesting and historically valuable stories deserve consideration. One of the most fascinating was written by Mrs. Francis Walker Thring, the first woman in the Belmont area.[8]

Martha Thring remembers:

> *In the year 1881, five men left their homes in Ontario and Quebec, to settle in the great new land. They met in Emerson, then the 'Gateway to the West'. They worked together, building a bridge over the Red River at that place, and having earned some money they decided to go and homestead. They had heard a report that a line of Railway was to be built not far south from where Belmont now stands; so that sounded encouraging. How were they to get there? They decided there was no other way but to walk, so preparing their kits, and with their feet encased in moccasins, their luggage over their shoulders, they struck out to find the promised land.*

Doubtless these men followed the Boundary Commission Trail[9]. Although Mrs. Thring suggests the original five carried all of their possessions on their backs, a homesteader could not manage without animals, the most useful of which in 1882 would have been oxen. This was still the period of the Red River cart. Horses were considered more flexible in their usefulness, but not so strong or durable as oxen. A disadvantage for long travel was that oxen were extremely slow, with 25 to 30 kilometres per day a significant accomplishment. Depending on the load, a wagon might be pulled by a yoke of either two or four oxen. A homesteader might well have one or two cows tied behind the wagon and frequently a dog kept company. Usually a sensible plan was to travel in a group in order that help was easily available if a difficulty arose. As there would have been no well-established trail for these settlers to follow, travelers would have to be prepared for both obvious challenges and a variety of unpleasant surprises. They could of course expect they and their animals would be tormented by ticks, mosquitoes and flies, but they also could anticipate there would be unavoidable detours around impassable sections; creeks would test their ingenuity, and obstinate animals their patience. As their cart or wagon would be heavily loaded, there were inevitably many occasions when it would be necessary at least partially to unpack their precious possessions and make multiple passages of the troublesome sections of the trail.

Mrs. Thring again:

> *It was a trying trip but they made it, selected their homesteads, with an additional 160 acres as a pre-emption, to be paid for at a later date. From there they walked to the Land Office at Deloraine, to enter for their land. There they decided their plans for the future. The names of these pioneers were: Mr. James Hall, Mr. Frank Williamson, Mr. Harry Williamson, Mr. James Williamson and my husband, Mr. F.W. Thring.*

Although Mrs. Thring is not specific about home areas from whence these five men came, or their prior connection, James Hall and the Williamson brothers were all from the same small community in or near Leonard, Ontario in the Cumberland Township of the County of Russell outside Ottawa. James Hall and Frank Williamson were the oldest and only a year apart in age. They were good chums and, as stated, together they had earlier ventured west with the Dominion Survey crew.

Francis Walker Thring was the odd man out, coming from the Halton, Ontario area, being married and at least nine years older than Frank Williamson, the oldest of the others. He was a widowed father (of Ann Thring) when in 1877 he married Martha, fourteen years his junior. When and where Mr. Thring met up and coordinated plans with the others is not known for certain, but probably by happenstance, perhaps on the train from Ontario, or, as Mrs. Thring suggests, in Emerson.

> *These men decided that Mr. Hall and Mr. James Williamson should return to Mr. Hall's homestead and build his little home, do his breaking on his place and also build our house, break some land, and do any other work they had time to do. The other three men were to walk back to Winnipeg and secure work at carpentering to earn money to pay for the work the other two men were doing for them on their homesteads.*
>
> *They reached Winnipeg after a never-to-be forgotten trip, which proved them sons of a pioneer race. The two who returned to the homestead spent a very busy summer and accomplished much more work than it was believed they could do. The houses were built, the land broken and some oats and potatoes grown, so all had some to start the home-making with. These men had to cook and wash, so we know they were too busy to be lonely. Night found them tired but not discouraged, ready for a rest and a good sleep.*
>
> *We remained in Winnipeg until fall then left by the Canadian Pacific train for Brandon (the first week in November, 1882). We had written Mr. Hall to meet us there with oxen and wagon to convey us to our new home. Unfortunately, our letter had never reached him. Arriving at Brandon, there was no one to meet us, so we had to find a place to store our belongings. We went to the hotel, it was called 'The Royal' and were kept by Mr. McPilling. The building was not finished, but it was crowded with travelers, land-seekers and speculators, so accommodation was hard to secure. We got a small room at the top of the*

building, none too warm I can assure you. Next morning Mr. Thring hired a pony and started for Mr. Hall's place on horse-back. I was left alone in the hotel with the assurance he would return for me in a few days. The pony at times proved more of a hindrance than a help. When they came to ice on the way he positively refused to cross over, just lay down, the rider had to dismount and pull the horse across by the halter. In due course the trip was accomplished, the tired man and the lazy horse glad it was over, each one no doubt glad to reach a resting place where they were warmed and fed.

Then the return trip was planned. They found it was necessary to have two yoke of oxen and two wagons, so they borrowed a yoke of oxen and a wagon. I am not sure who they borrowed a yoke of oxen from but believe it was Mr. Maxwell. They did not make the return trip as soon as they wished to, as it turned stormy with a heavy fall of snow. Mr. James Williamson was the guide and companion, and a most capable one he proved himself to be. Starting out in the early morning they hoped to make the trip quickly, the snow and cold however prevented them and about four in the afternoon, with night approaching, they decided it was wise to make camp for the night. Therefore, choosing a sheltered spot close to a small bluff, where they could secure wood to make a fire, they removed the boxes from the wagons and so formed a shelter from the cold. They took turns in keeping the fire going until morning when they made an early start. They arrived in Brandon at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, glad to be there and safely sheltered for the night. I was also pleased to know I was not deserted.

We were up early the next morning, loaded our belongings on the wagons, with the two cows tied behind one of the wagons ready for the trip. I was seated on the tool chest but the robe to cover my knees could not be found. While the men came to the hotel for me someone had helped themselves to the robe and a pair of new boots Mr. James Williamson had purchased for himself. We just had to make the best of the situation and go on without these comforts ….

At last we made the start homeward, it was very cold, so our progress was slow, as oxen are not noted for their speed. There was nothing for it only to be patient and persevering. It was a never to be forgotten trip. When I got cold my guides helped me down from my seat onto the cold canvas which they spread on the snow and each one taking a hand they made me dance until my blood was circulating and my body warm. Then I climbed back to my seat and we went on.

There was but one stopping place between Brandon and Millford and we stopped there for dinner about 2 o'clock, fed the oxen and rested them. Then on again, slowly but surely, arriving at the stopping house in Millford at 11 p.m. cold and tired.[10]

Early Millford, Manitoba

The house was crowded and the landlady said she did not know where she could put us but would do her best. Later she came out and told us she had made a change and would give us her room and bed. After a good sleep we awoke, rested, and started out with the stars above us, frost and snow around us, on the last lap of our journey. There was only one house on the way, a farm home, the home of Mr. Alex Nainsmith, an early settler. From there on there was no other habitation until we reached Mr. James Hall's place. Our guide, Mr. James Williamson, was an expert on landmarks and directions, so we were satisfied we were in good hands and thinking of Alexander Selkirk, we felt we might say with him 'We were Monarchs of All we surveyed'.

About 12 p.m. we stopped the oxen and our Guide said, 'I believe the house is around this bluff,' and we caught a glimpse of the light. It was a most delightful feeling to know we were safe from the severe cold after such a long tiresome trip, and free of the fear of being lost or frozen …. I was thankful to say 'goodnight' to my tool chest seat for good and enter the open door, where a fire burned, a tea-kettle steamed and warmth and hospitality were given us. Again, we got the housekeeper's bed, the two men sleeping on a shakedown[11] on the floor.

The next day was a busy one. Having brought provisions and a few luxuries from Brandon, I was able to put up a fair meal… By evening there were two comfortable beds set up ready for use and four tired people to enjoy them…

The two men had talked matters over and they decided it would be best for us to remain in Mr. Hall's house for the winter. They decided they would go to the bush East of Winnipeg and make ties for the railway to earn money to buy some of the things they required for the work on their homesteads.

*… in due time (*they*) left us for their work and we were left in possession of the ranch… The floor was made of smoothed poplar poles. There was one window in the east side, and a good door with a wooden latch; it did not need a lock for the reason there was no one outside the family to intrude….*

We spent a quiet winter, had time for reading, were very comfortable, lots of good wood to keep us warm, plenty of food, one of the cows was milking so we had lots of milk and cream – so what cause had we to complain. There were times when we did feel the want of someone to chat with, however towards spring we had numerous land-seekers. These poor chaps were often wet and suffering from snow-blindness, and a very painful trial it was. Many times, I had to make a poultice of tea leaves for their eyes and try to make them as comfortable as possible. They never knew what a pleasure it was to see them – they were 'fellow creatures from the outside world.' When I opened the door to them my first question was always 'where did you come from', and when they said 'Ontario', I eagerly asked what part, and we were friends at once. They were taken in, warmed and fed, and I trust sent on their way cheered.

So, one finds that every phase of life has its compensations. Our first winter was spent in pioneering in what was to become the Belmont District so that I have the privilege of being the first woman pioneer in the Belmont District.

When signs of spring began to appear, we began our preparations for moving to our own house. The snow was deep that winter and when it began to thaw there was a lot of water. The bluffs and long grass held the snow, therefore there were great drifts. When we were moving in, I remember the water came into the sleigh as we passed through it. We had just a mile to go from Mr. Hall's house so we did not take long to move in and put things in order. We soon had the stove set up and a good fire started, which warmed up the house. The house was 18 by 24 feet with a good thatched roof, four half windows, two on each side of the house, a good strong door with a wooden latch. Later we had it partitioned off into a living room and two bedrooms.

Soon the two young men arrived from their winter job, bringing with them supplies for their homestead duties. Mr. James Williamson had invested in a span of horses. He was very proud of his team and took great pleasure in caring for them. They were the first horses in the neighbourhood…

Mr. Thring and he worked a good deal together that spring and summer, building some houses for some homesteaders, among them was Mr. Schultz and Mr. Sid Martin. Then I came forward with my demands, a milk-house must be built for the milk and butter – so to work the two went, dug a cellar in the face of the bank, made a pitch roof over it with poplar poles, closed up the ends with poles and, leaving a space for a door in the south end, covered the roof first with hay, then sodded on top of the hay. There was no lumber to make the door so they used canvas for the door and tacked it down on one side, using loops of small rope for the other side to hook on nails. For the bottom of the door they put rope

loops to be fastened down on pegs as they do for tents. This completed, the job was handed over to me to finish inside. After due consideration, I decided I must line the inside of the roof with cotton to prevent dust falling. But where was the cotton to come from, there was no near-by store where I could buy some? Then I remembered I had some cotton sheets, so I took some of them and began operations. When the cotton was securely on I gave it a coat of white-wash, and when the job was finished I was well pleased with our milk-house, even if it was black outside it was white inside, and ready for use.

So, time passed and we were too busy to be lonely. The new settlers soon began to arrive. The first men who came to our house were Messrs. John Wanless, Tom Hall, Malcolm Matheson, Smith Bros. (J.C. and J.T.), William and Alex Adam, Miss Smith and her father and mother, Angus Cameron, Glass Brothers (William and Ernest), Fargey Brothers (James and William and Samuel), Willoughby Brothers (Ralph and George). How glad we were to see them all. Then to my great joy my first woman friend and neighbour came in the person of Mrs. Schultz, with her husband and small son. The child a little fellow with flaxen hair, the first child in our settlement.

Every passing year brought more settlers… and the settlement was filling up and improvements being made.

According to Mamie McLeod (step-daughter of James Hall and later married to George Wanless[12] who arrived in the district fifteen years after his brother, John Wanless):

Mrs. Thring nursed the sick, sometimes baking bread for bachelors, sewing on buttons or whatever needed doing. I remember being sent over to Mr. Thring's on an errand. Of course, I was told to come right back but it was a hot day and Mrs. Thring said she had some lemon pie that should be eaten. She was hoping someone would come along to help them out. She had made the pies on Saturday, expecting company on Sunday. This was Monday and I ate two pieces which compensated me for the scolding I received. She had the cleanest, coolest milk house I was ever in.

Mrs. Thring reported that the early Halls filed their homestead claims in the Deloraine Land Titles Office. An early, short-lived, alternative centre for registration of claims like those of the Halls was Wakopa, a very small village southwest of Pelican Lake. Caroline Cumming, a daughter of one of the earliest homesteaders, describes in fascinating detail a trek made to that centre from a claim site approximately 15 kilometres southeast of Belmont:[13]

Caroline Cumming remembers:

High upon the east bank and at the south end of Pelican Lake was another Métis house. It was the home of Mr. Martin a thin, wiry little man. He was often engaged by the white settlers as a guide over the trackless prairies when they needed to go to the Land Titles Office at Wakopa or Deloraine.

Donald Cumming, Father's brother, and their nephew Jock wanted to file on homesteads, so Mr. Martin was engaged to take them to Wakopa, a distance of about thirty-five miles. They set out on a bleak November day, the two land-seekers in a rig, and their guide on a small Indian pony.

Not a sign of a trail westward across the stretch of fawn grass. Often the riders in the rig got down, well-clad as they were, to run a pace to warm themselves. Not so their guide. He sat his pony clad in a thin shirt, a light-weight coat, trousers and shod, stockingless, in a pair of home-made moccasins. When asked if he were cold, always the cheery "No not much." At one place he dismounted, scratched round in the tall grass and announced, "Camped here last fall." There were the ashes, the remains of a campfire, but what his landmark was could not be conjectured.

They eventually reached their destination where Mr. La Riviere kept the Land Titles Office, regardless of the fact he could neither read nor write. The two prospective settlers filed on their homesteads and returned to Mr. Martin's, where they were pressed to stay for a meal then in preparation. While waiting they were shown the winter store of food in a lean-to at the back of the house. From floor to ceiling were packed, in their feathers, ducks, geese, prairie chickens, partridges, row upon row, meat in abundance for the months ahead.

Eva Calverley[14], who lived in Ninette, 14 kilometres west of Belmont, quotes Neil Darough, describing the arrival of his father to the area. Although Charles Darough and his family settled near Ninette rather than Belmont, the experience of the Daroughs was similar to that of the first Belmont settlers:

Neil Darough (through Eva Calverley) remembers:

In 1881, the C.P.R. sponsored cheap excursion trips from Ontario to the west to encourage prospective settlers to view the land. On one of these "excursions" or inspection trips came Charles Darough, James Overend and William S. Davies. From Winnipeg it seems probable that they travelled by river steamer to Old Millford and from there trekked south on foot.

They decided on their homesteads and then returned to Orillia, Ontario for their families. The westward journey of the settlers was hard, and particularly so for the children. The

families were detained in Minnesota where one Overend daughter died, while the youngest Darough baby died in Brandon. Here is an account of the trip and of the first years in Southern Manitoba.

In the spring of 1882 my father sold out in Ontario and we made preparations for the trip west. I was at that time twelve years old. In order to protect our homesteads from claim-jumpers, Father and Will left Orillia for Pelican Lake early in March. Arrangements for loading the stock and other possessions were in the hands of Mr. Overend and Mr. Fleming. I do not recall exactly what all our possessions were but I do recollect that we had a team of horses, a cow, four bags of flour, an old three-legged stove, and our bedding. I don't remember any furniture but we must have had some as we had two, not large, wagon loads of goods to haul to Pelican Lake from Brandon.

The Darough family with the exception of Father and Will who were by that time working on the railroad west of Portage La Prairie left Orillia early in April. As the C.P.R. was badly flooded in Western Ontario at the time our train was diverted through the States. At a place named Stevens we were held up on account of floods on the line. At this place, the inhabitants would not sell us any hay. And so, since our livestock had to eat, my brother, Duncan, Mr. Fleming and myself having located a haystack about a quarter of a mile from the siding went out each night after dark and managed to 'borrow' enough hay for the animals.

After two days in Stevens our passenger train was allowed to head for Brandon but freight trains for some reason unknown to us were not allowed to proceed. Our party, with the exception of Duncan and Mr. Fleming, boarded the passenger train for Winnipeg but they were obliged to remain to continue caring for the livestock which was still in the cars and to carry on 'borrowing' hay from the good citizens of Stevens. May the Lord bless them. They would not sell us any hay but the hay they lent us saved our horses and our cow.

At Winnipeg both the Red and the Assiniboine rivers were in flood. We were travelling on a line which paralleled the Red from North Dakota down to Winnipeg when our train stopped and we found water almost up to the platform. A steamboat arrived on the scene and after a gangplank was placed to connect the boat with train, we boarded the boat. This exchange took place about ten o'clock at night. The following morning, we disembarked and boarded a second train which in less than an hour conveyed us to the Winnipeg station.

Our first concern was to find a place to stay as we had to wait in Winnipeg until the freight train with our stock and goods arrived and until Dad came in from his work on the railroad. Mother had Mary, Tillie, Charlie, Norman, Baby Robert and myself to find accommodation for. Somehow, she managed to secure a room in the immigration sheds. But what a room! No larger than eight feet by twelve it had absolutely no furniture of any kind and no heating. Along one of the longer sides was a bunk built about three feet from the floor. All except me slept on this. I contented myself with crawling into an empty peanut sack I had managed to find and sleeping under the bunk.

About a week after our arrival Dad located us in the immigration sheds and then things looked a little brighter. Finally, after another week, the freight train arrived. When our cars were loaded in Orillia, it had been found that there wasn't room inside for the wagon, so it was dismantled and the side boards nailed on the sides of the freight car. This wagon was painted a bright red so you can imagine our relief when we saw a freight train with one car decorated with the brightly painted sides of a wagon box pull into the station. It had taken that train exactly thirty days to come from Orillia to Winnipeg and all that time the livestock had never been taken outside the car for exercise. The railway authorities wouldn't permit it. The freight train immediately continued on to Brandon and the next morning we followed on the passenger train. The livestock were unloaded as soon as they arrived but, due to some confusion in the railroad yards, it was over two days before all the other stuff could be taken from the cars in Brandon.

Before departing for Pelican Lake Dad arranged to leave half our possessions in Mr. Overend's rented cabin. On the 20th of May, the Darough family, with the exception of Will who was still working on the railroad, and accompanied by Mr. Overend, set out on the last leg of the journey to Pelican Lake. They had their team and wagon and a cow heavily in calf. The first day the party made Telford's. The Assiniboine and the Souris were still in flood. Although the Daroughs had already waited in Brandon for over two weeks until the bridge which had been washed out at Souris City could be replaced by a make-shift ferry, they had another two days wait here. Souris City at that time was a place composed of about a half dozen houses and one store. Today it is marked only by the new bridge built there in 1958 during the reconstruction of No. 11 highway. Leaving Souris City, the Daroughs camped the night of the fourth day out of Brandon on sec. 31 as the creek between it and section 20 was so heavily grown up with willows that it was impossible to get a team and wagon through. The next morning, we cut an opening through the willows, corduroyed[15] a road across the creek and then moved onto the new homestead.

It was the morning of the 24th of May 1882 that Charles Darough settled on his homestead with a family, a team and wagon, a cow. His total finances were one small Canadian nickel and a three-cent stamp. And there wasn't a neighbour in sight.

Immediately the tents - those that had already served as a home for the two weeks in Brandon - were pitched, the stove set up, the homestead looked over and work commenced. Duncan started on the land with the team and a plow that had been purchased in Brandon. Dad and I took to the woods to get out logs for the new house. Two acres which had been broken by Duncan were sowed to wheat and a good-sized patch of potatoes was planted by using potato skins for seed. The wheat was sowed broadcast by Dad and since we had no harrows the seed was covered by dragging the soil with willows. In the fall bumper crops of both potatoes and wheat were harvested. The wheat was cut by Dad with a cradle and threshed with a flail. And I must not forget the fine garden which Mother and I had dug with shovel and spade. This produced plenty of vegetables so with these and the fish from the nearby lake we had no fear of hunger in the approaching winter.

We started fishing in Pelican Lake almost as soon as we arrived and the fish … formed our first cash crop in our new home. During the winter, we fished for these large jackfish (some of them weighing as much as twenty-four pounds) through the ice and sold them to fish buyers from Brandon for two cents a pound.

It was fortunate for the settlers that there were plenty of fish in the lake … for this was the only revenue they had to keep them in food and clothing.

Our first house was built of oak logs, barked on the inside but not on the outside. The logs were chinked with mud. The roof was thatched with grass from near-by Grass Lake. There were three rooms downstairs and one large one upstairs. The partitions in the downstairs were made of sawn lumber. Where it came from I do not know.

It was soon discovered that there wasn't much farmable land on 20-5-16 so Dad bought from the North-West Land Co. the east half of 31-5-6. Here, in 1886, we broke 120 acres which was a great improvement over the forty or less we were able to break on section 20.

In 1888, we moved into our new house on 31. It too was quite an improvement over our first one. Now our oak logs were squared on two sides and dovetailed at the corners. Here we had three rooms downstairs and four bedrooms above. By this time there was a good new four-legged stove in the kitchen and a box stove for heat in the living room. All the furniture: bedsteads, chairs, tables, etc. was home-made by Duncan (the eldest son) from Manitoba oak.

A milk-house was built against one wall of our home. Its other three walls were of stone. The bank of a hill was dug out by team and scraper to provide for a log barn twenty feet by forty. On the roof of poplar poles hay was stacked. This provided a fine warm place for the livestock in winter.

In a reminiscence entitled *As It Was In The Beginning,*[16] James L. Williamson reflected on his family's early years in the Belmont district. As stated, the Williamsons came from the same area of Eastern Ontario near Ottawa as the Hall family (i.e. County of Russell, Cumberland Township).

James L. Williamson remembers:

When in the fall of 1885 the Canada geese headed south along their prairie flyways to their winter quarters, they left a land to which peace had again returned. The last North-West rebellion was over, a peace treaty had been signed at Fort Qu'Appelle, and the Indians had returned to their reservations. When the volunteer Brigade which had come west to help resist the rebellion was demobilized some of the members remained in the West but most of them returned to their homes in Eastern Canada to tell stories of the great North-West and

its boundless opportunities. A country where a man could run a furrow for a mile or more without stick or stone had a wonderful appeal to the eastern young man who had helped hew the old farm from solid bush or pick stones to erect a stone fence.

In this New West, land was free, just an entry fee of ten dollars for a quarter section (one hundred and sixty acres) with certain homestead duties to be done within three years and the land was yours. Some Wag has said that the homestead laws of that time meant that the Government bet you one hundred and sixty acres of land against your ten dollars that you could not stick it out for three years. If you managed to stay you got the land; if not the government got your money. All in all, it looked like a good bet and so it came about that soon there began a migration to the great open spaces of Western Canada; a movement which continued until the outbreak of war in 1914. People came from every quarter of the globe. In the immigration offices at Winnipeg it was said there were interpreters who could, among them, speak some fifty-two languages but one day there came a man whom no one could understand or converse with. It thus came about that Western Canada became one of the great "melting pots" of the earth. At its peak this immigration flood saw more than three hundred and fifty thousand settlers come to Western Canada in a single year. My people were in the vanguard of that movement.

Several of my father's brothers had been in Western Canada before the last rebellion, Frank, Henry and Jim. Some of these men had been on the Dominion survey with Ogilvie in the early buffalo days when they ran the fourth meridian line which is now the boundary between Saskatchewan and Alberta. They were wood workers who cut their eye teeth building frame barns in Ontario. They evidently followed the construction of the C.P.R. Main line as it wound its way west and they had a hand in framing the Louise bridge over the Red River at Winnipeg. That bridge carried the first locomotive into Winnipeg in 1879.

My father (Lancelot "Let" Williamson) was the only member of his family to be married at that time and he had remained in the east on the old farm with a widowed mother. Now he too came west, landing in Pilot Mount, Manitoba, in March of 1886 with all his worldly possessions which he listed as wife, four children, two horses, two colts, two cows and seven dollars in cash. Our destination was a log shanty fourteen by sixteen with a sod roof, on my uncle's homestead, some thirty-two miles west of Pilot Mound and within two miles of the present location of Huntly school. … A one roomed house fourteen by sixteen seems like limited quarters for two men, a woman, and four children but in that one room we lived, ate and slept, and here my mother did her cooking and washing and performed all her household duties.

It was a good house at that time when compared with the average run of homestead sod shacks of that time. Its walls were of well hewn oak logs carefully and well put together and it did service for many years, but its roof was of prairie sods. Such a roof will turn a lot of rain when new but at best it had its saturation point and its limitations. A heavy downpour which might last for an hour made little impression on a good sod roof but a two or three day drizzle would test the best of them and if it did get wet through and start to leak it would

continue to leak for many hours, or days after the rain ceased. Many a serious illness was contracted under a sod roof. …

Many things associated with those first years in Manitoba have made an indelible impression on my memory; the mating call of the prairie chicken as they made love on their dancing grounds in the spring morning and evenings, the smell of burning prairie grass, the evening flight of the wild geese, and the bitter cold of the long winters. Time has changed all these things but memory lingers. Once in a while the smell of burning prairie grass still comes on the evening breeze. It may mean little to the present-day country dweller but one whiff is all the old timer needs to start him dreaming of the long ago.

In those days, the smell of burning prairie grass could mean that some neighbour was preparing land for the breaking plough or it could strike terror into the hearts of the settler whose buildings and stacks were not well protected with fire guards. A long dry spell was sure to see some fire break away in the settlement and do a lot of damage. There were millions of acres of uncultivated prairie and once a fire got out of control and spread on a wide front it could travel so fast that little could be done to save the property and buildings which happened to be in its path. Animals were often burned and once in a while a human life was lost. A whole book of true and tragic stories could be written about prairie fires of those early days.

Likewise, the challenges of the early homesteaders to the Oakland Municipality, a short distance to the north and west of Belmont, were very similar to those of the Thrings, Williamsons, Daroughs, Halls and their neighbours.[17]

Report of Oakland Echoes, compiled by Connie Davidson:

In 1879-80 the word had spread that good land was available in Manitoba and the challenge was accepted by many men in Ontario. Some of the wives and mothers were not happy to see their menfolk move to the "wild and woolly west", as it was known at that time. It was not long, however, until they had clothes, heavy quilts and food packed for the journey west. After tearful goodbyes, the men boarded a train to ride west in coaches which, incidentally, offered slatted seats, not the upholstered type as we know them today. Upon arriving in Winnipeg, the newcomers saw mostly shacks and tents with a few wooden sidewalks. The Red River mud, known as gumbo, was something new to them and they often witnessed a wagon or ox-cart bogged to the axles where lie the paved streets of Winnipeg today. These men lost no time before buying the necessary supplies. First a team of oxen, harness and an ox-cart or wagon would assure transportation west. Next a tent, a little stove, a walking plow with a wooden beam, a couple of sections of wooden harrows and two tethering chains to secure the oxen at night, represented the daily needs of the pioneer. Finally, they purchased 100 pounds of flour, a bag of oatmeal, sugar, soda, ginger, salt,

molasses and lard. Some bought three or four hens and a rooster and began to "count their chickens before they hatched" and to envision their own supply of eggs at some future date.

Day after day these settlers trudged west across the prairies accompanied by people whom they had met on the train and who were to become their next-door neighbors. Several settlers' shacks were passed along the way and some cultivated land was noticeable. Often a bag of wheat, oats and potatoes were purchased from these settlers as newcomers were hopeful of planting an acre or two in June. It was this far-sightedness which marked these pioneers as successful farmers of the prairies.

As the caravan moved slowly across the prairie, the would-be settlers were quick to observe how different were these plains from the bush land of Ontario which they had recently left. The wild flowers such as the crocus, buttercup, violet, three-flowered avon, bluebell and tiger lily gave them hope that the soil which could produce such beauty should also produce wheat well. It had been said of this land that a man would never starve. Wild animals roamed the valleys and fowl of the air appeared on sloughs and in the marshes. Wild strawberries were plentiful. …

Finally, the incoming settlers crossed the Assiniboine River and headed south along the east side of the Brandon Hills. What a beautiful sight - the valley between the Brandon Hills and the Souris River with the Tiger Hills in the distance! A few days later these men had squatted on their chosen land. … These men began immediately to break up an acre or two, harrow down the lumps and seed the area before the season for growth had passed. The next task was to build shelters for man and beast.

In the fall, logs were hauled from the Brandon Hills from along the Souris River to be used for fuel and for construction of homes. About the only tools needed in the house-building business were sharp axes, a shovel and a trowel with which the clay was pressed into the cracks. The early roof was a thatching of straw and reeds which developed leaks after a few drying summers and was replaced in later years by shingles. Many homes were, however, without wooden floors for several years. The walls were tar-papered for additional warmth and sided with lumber which was sometimes sawn at local mills. Upon completion of the house, furniture must be acquired but not from the catalogue or the furniture stores as these facilities were non-existent. A bunk affair was built in the corner of a room for a bed. The springs of this "bed" were constructed of small trees which had been levelled and planed with the aid of an axe. This solid-spring arrangement was covered with a tick[18] filled with dry hay. Considered "Deluxe" after one had slept all summer in a tent on the bare ground! The table was often attached to the wall and blocks of wood or benches served as chairs.

Meals were plain but wholesome. Oatmeal, cracked wheat or corn meal were required for breakfast. These staples were purchased in bulk but were sold in any amount in paper bags and weighed before the customer. Sold in similar manner were tea, sugar, salt, pepper and candies. Bread was homemade and many stories were told about women who had to travel

miles to the neighbors' for yeast-starter or who had to devise schemes to keep the bread dough both warm and dry in the sod houses during chilling spring rains.

… Everyday life included cooking and sewing for the family, providing for the long winter ahead and doctoring the sick. Sickness must have brought terror to all hearts as doctors were few and distances were great. Some of the remedies used for sore throats included Epsom salts at five cents a pound or electric oil administered by applying a few drops on a spoonful of sugar. Goose grease mixed with a little turpentine was often rubbed on the chest to break up a cold. Saltpeter and vinegar in warm water disinfected the wounds of man and beast while a few drops of pain killer on sugar would warm up a victim of the chills and bring some relief. An expectant mother could count on assistance from the neighbors. Many a child had been brought into the world in a thatched roof house with only the aid of a friendly mid-wife. These children grew up without luxuries and have been none the worse for it. They have proved themselves to be worthy citizens of Manitoba throughout the years.

One of the first tasks of the settlers was to break up the prairie sod with a walking plow pulled by oxen. These beasts were often unwilling to brush off flies and would drag the plow and the angry farmer to a slough for a rest in the cool mud and water. The "breaking" was then seeded to wheat, oats or barley. The seeds were broadcast by hand just as the biblical sower in the parables had done, and were then harrowed several times to cover the grain to a depth to discourage thievery by the geese, wild ducks and prairie chickens that abounded in the area. In turn, however, these birds provided meat for the table and feathers for pillows and mattresses.

After the seeding of the crops, the settlers' next step was to break additional acreage for next year's crops. Not all settlers were financially incapacitated and could hire a portion of this work done for them, which was beneficial for the less fortunate ones. The crops matured during the summer heat and in the fall the grain was cut in rows with a scythe where it lay and cured. Threshing was done by a home-made flail which, as its name indicates, beats the grain out of the heads followed by removal of the chaff by wind-blowing. After keeping enough grain for seed the following year, some settlers had a few bushels to sell.

By hard work and good management, times became better. Broadcasting of seeds was replaced by the seeder as the scythe was replaced by the reaper. What an invention! Now the sheaves were tied by hand by using twisted bindings of grain. The reaper gave way to the six-foot binder just as the oxen had given away to horses. The walking plow was discarded in favor of the two-furrow gangplows which were equipped with handles and two levers to allow the farmer to gauge the depth of the furrow as he guided the plow. Some of these walking plows were still in use in the area as late as 1907. A labor-saving device in the form of a seat and levers to adjust the furrow depth saw many a man thrown off the plow when a shear hit a stone.

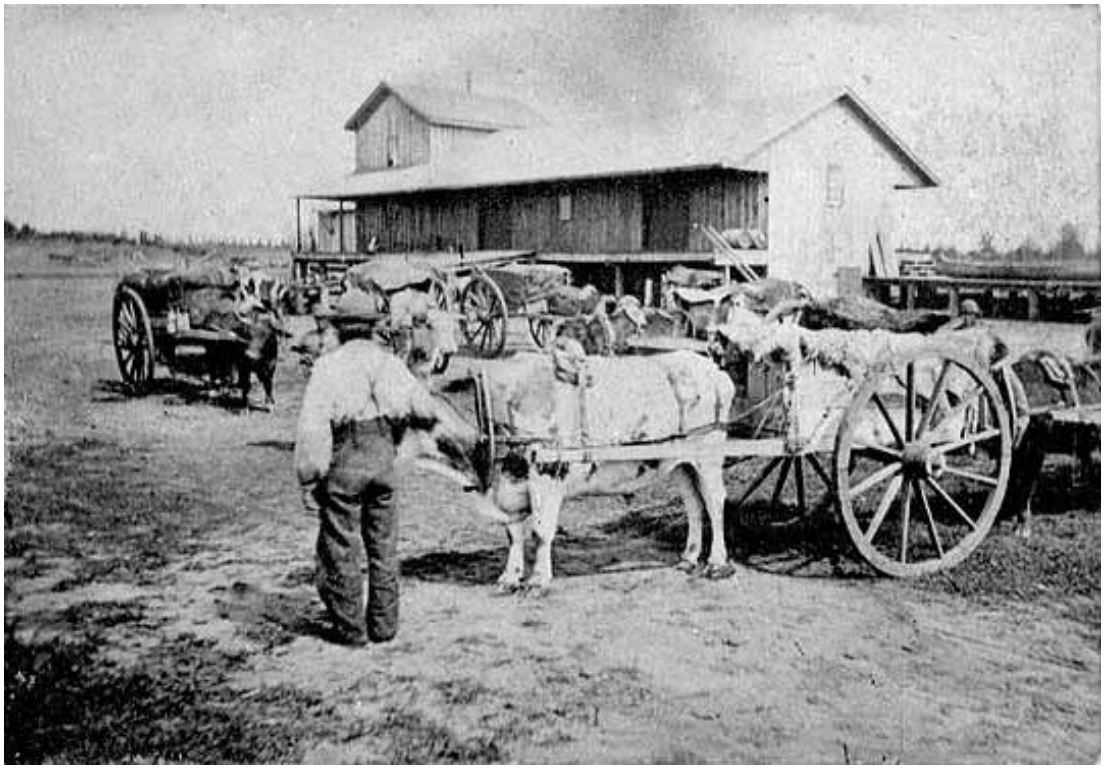
Wheat finally reached $1.00 a bushel. Now some twenty years after leaving Ontario, these farmers were able to build four to six-roomed houses, hip-roofed barns, and weather-and-wild-animal-proof granaries. Almost all the land in the area had been brought into cultivation and fenced. Shelter belts of maple, ash, cottonwood and spruce had been planted. … Wheat was definitely the staff of life to the early settlers and only the oldtimers remember the many varieties of wheat introduced to overcome late maturity, poor milling qualities and rust. …

Before the coming of the railroads, the farmers had to haul their produce to Brandon over winding, narrow prairie trails, often carrying bags of wheat and other grains on their shoulder over mudholes. All grains were handled in sacks at this time and until elevators were constructed to handle loose grains.

Stopping houses (pioneer motels) sprang up along the main routes to Brandon and served as welcome resting places to weary men and beasts. … Upon arrival in Brandon, the settlers would often stay at the Kelly House on the west side of Sixth Street between Rosser and Princess. Many friends were made along the trail and many good times were reported.

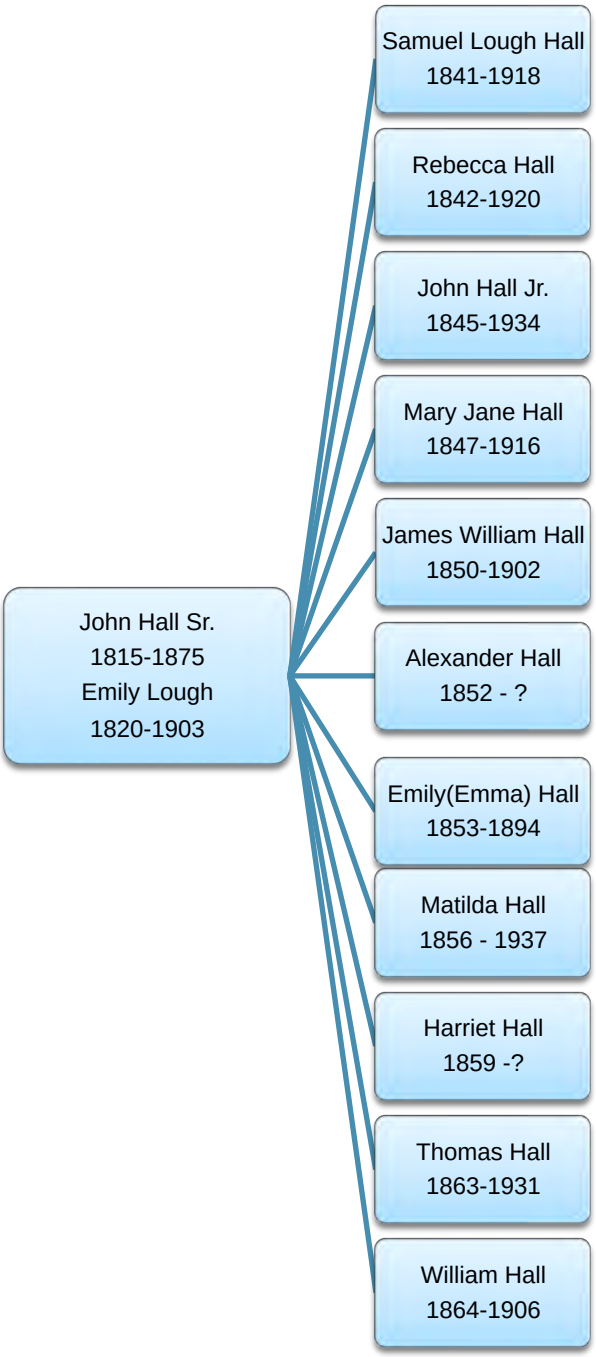
Brandon, Manitoba in 1882 with view from corner of 6th Street and Rosser Avenue looking North toward Pacific Avenue. Kelly House was one block to the South.

Brandon, view of 10th Street, 1883



Loading Ox Carts

CHAPTER 5: THE CHILDREN OF JOHN AND EMILY HALL



Samuel Lough Hall

Samuel Lough Hall 1841 - 1918 and Rachel Anderson 1850 - 1932
Parents of:
Dorothy Emily Hall 1878 - 1953
John Edmund Hall 1880 - 1950
Amanda Martha Hall 1882 - 1961[19]
William Charles Hall 1884 - 1961
Samuel Howard Hall 1885 - 1978
Lucy Mabel Hall 1888 - 1969
Thomas Walter Hall 1890 - 1965
James Gordon Hall 1893 - 1934

As stated, the eldest child of John Sr. and Emily Hall was Samuel Lough Hall, born in Buckingham, Quebec in 1841. In 1875 Samuel took over his parents' farming operation in Leonard, Cumberland Township, a short distance southwest of Ottawa. In 1877 he married Rachel Anderson, daughter from a neighbouring farm family. Samuel died on November 3, 1918, and Rachel on July 31, 1932. Both are interred at the Navan United Cemetery near Leonard (now a largely abandoned village, with no businesses, and only a few houses), and share their headstone and family plot with their unmarried children, Thomas Walter Hall and Amanda Martha Hall.

Connie Fuzesy shares:[20]

> *I remember my aunt telling me that my great-grandfather (Samuel Lough Hall) had a wonderful singing voice & was the loudest at church. He could also be very stern, even mean, but maybe that was common back then; a spare the rod, spoil the child type of philosophy.*

Of Samuel and Rachel's eight children, five established homesteads in Saskatchewan: Dorothy, Edmund, William, Samuel Jr. and Gordon. The remaining three children remained in the Leonard, Ontario area. Ultimately Walter took over his parents' dairy farm, and, when his father died, assumed responsibility for his sister, Amanda, and his mother. As was not unusual for the time, it would appear Amanda was the daughter who was designated to look after her aging parents.

Lucy Mabel Hall married William Howard Poaps who had been born in 1889 in Riceville, Ontario, but who had come to Leonard to work at his father and uncle's sawmill, eventually earning his Fourth-Class Engineer's papers. According to their son,

Gerald Poaps,[21] after their marriage on June 14, 1914 Lucy and William took up residence in Ottawa where William was employed as an engineer at the plant that powered the city's streetcars. This was a good job but after a number of months Lucy became sick, probably due to her pregnancy, and wanted to return to Leonard where she would have the support of her mother and other relatives. They did so, and William took employment as a steam engineer with the CPR Railway. That job and others that came later allowed the Poaps family to remain in Leonard where Lucy and William were able to raise seven children.

Lucy Mabel Hall and Amanda Martha Hall

On December 13, 1899 Dorothy Hall married William Dodge in Huntly, Manitoba[22] and they commenced their married life farming near Belmont. In 1902, Dorothy's brother, William (Bill) Charles Hall, was enticed to Manitoba on a harvest excursion

and, after his farm work concluded, decided to proceed further west to Arcola, Saskatchewan, that was, at the time, the end of the C.P.R. line and coincidentally the site of a land titles office in which homestead claims could be filed. Caught up with the excitement of a great adventure, energized by youthful enthusiasm, and buoyed by optimism, Bill Hall was joined by his sister and brother-in-law, Dorothy and William Dodge, and cousin, George Hall, who was not yet eighteen.

William Charles Hall (cousin of George Hall)

In due course, Bill Hall filed on the NE 1/4 of 35-6-10 W2 and cousin George on the SW 1/4. In their filings, each indicated he had obtained entry to his property on August 30, 1902. It cost only $10.00 to file a claim, and the primary conditions to be met were that within three years one had to build a house, dig a well and break a set number of acres.

Over the next few years, Bill's brothers, Samuel and Edmund, (as well as aunt, Mary Jane Cosgrove, and three of her sons) were persuaded to move to the same area around Stoughton, Saskatchewan.

The Huntoon Municipal History concerning Samuel Hall Jr. states:[23]

> *During the summer and fall of 1905 Sam worked for his brother-in-law, William Dodge, and brother, Ed Hall. Late the same fall he went back home to Ontario for the winter.*
>
> *Sam returned to Saskatchewan again in the spring of 1906 to find work in the Stoughton area. He found out early in June that a Roy Diamond who had homesteaded the SE1/4 6-7-9 W2nd M on December 19, 1903 and had broken 20 acres, never living on the land which was part of the requirements before you could gain the deed for the property, had cancelled his claims to the land on June 2, 1906, which had left it open to be filed on again. This property was only one-eighth of a mile from his brother, Bill Hall's, homestead.*
>
> *Sam and brother Ed, who had a good driving team, left Stoughton for Estevan on June 18, 1906 where it was rumoured that Sam could make application to file on this property vacated by Roy Diamond. When they arrived in Estevan, they were informed they would have to go to Alameda to file.*
>
> *The next morning, they headed across the prairie for Alameda, but found themselves lost and ended up in Frobisher. They hired a livery team to take them to Alameda where Sam filed his claim for the aforementioned quarter section of land on June 20, 1906.*
>
> *They then headed across country for Stoughton, ignored all roads, and at that time drove through water up to the horses' bellies. It being a wet spring, they passed through many mosquito infested sloughs. Besides being wet, it was also very cold and damp. Sam wore Bill Dodge's coonskin coat on most of this journey. Later, Sam would say that if he had the price of a ticket, he would have been on his way back to Ontario.*

Gerald E. Poaps, son of Lucy Mabel Hall, shared this reminiscence of a memorable trip to Saskatchewan[24]:

> *My uncle Gordon Hall, my mother's brother, had established himself on a section of land in Saskatchewan, near places called Frontier and Loomis, six miles from the Montana border (*and approximately 475 km west of Stoughton). *He came back to his place of origin in the early fall, and intended to spend the winter. He became interested in a lady from Navan by the name of Beatrice Bradley. During the winter, he was helping his brother Walter, who had fallen heir to the family farm. One winter day they were digging out some gravel for upcoming cement work. The pit was frozen, and they were working through a small opening beyond the frozen crust. Eventually the outer crust caved in, and Uncle Gordon had his leg in the way. His leg was broken and he had to ride home with a broken leg.*
>
> *The local doctor, David Irwin, was called and he placed the leg in a cast plus a couple of narrow boards. Uncle Gordon and his lady friend had planned to be married just about this*

time. They decided to proceed with the wedding as planned and he was married while lying in bed. The leg eventually came back to normal, and Uncle Gordon and his bride journeyed back to his holdings in the West. After a year or two, Aunt Beatrice gave birth to twin boys, Dalton and Delmer. It was difficult to tell them apart.

Several years later, Uncle Gordon and his family came home to the Halls and Bradleys for an over-winter holiday. While they were staying with the Bradleys in Navan, Uncle Gordon took a heart attack, and didn't survive. This left his wife Beatrice and the twins in an impossible situation. The farm in the West would have to be disposed of, as the twins were too young to run it. The Bradleys organized a motor trip back to the West. This was in 1935. The Bradley family provided a brand new 1934 Chevrolet. Aunt Beatrice's younger sister, Erma, and I were chosen to be drivers, spelling one another off.

Uncle Gordon had left a man in charge of the farm while he was away. The buildings consisted of a fairly new small house, a granary and the original sod shanty, which was now used as a horse stable. It was common practice for homesteaders when they first took possession of a section of land, to build a home made entirely of prairie sod, as there were no trees to make lumber for hundreds of miles.

The prairie sod was cut about two feet wide. The walls were built similar to a brick wall with the large sods. There were a couple of windows and a door in the south side. The roof was supported by poles with sod layered on top. A really good shelter from the cold winters. The small house had a pit dug at one side, with a couple of double doors covering it. I was told this was a storm cellar to weather out severe winds. During my short stay, we experienced a sand storm which filtered into the house through cracks around the windows and doors, leaving about one inch of silt all over the floor.

The home was a two-bedroom and kitchen arrangement. The caretaker was not prepared for our arrival. I remember he was using one bedroom, and the other one was piled high with all the horse harnesses, even on the bed. To make room for the five of us, the caretaker was moved out to the granary, along with the harnesses. In a few days things became organized and arrangements were made to have an auction sale of farm machinery and horse equipment.

The source of drinking water was a dug well about three feet square and twelve feet deep, lined with lumber. It was located about ten feet from a slew (sic) *that was used to water the livestock. I had often heard that prairie water left a lot to be desired. It was decided that the well needed to be cleaned out. The necessary equipment was gathered up, a pail, a rope, a shovel, and a ladder. Then the pumping to empty the well was begun. In about an hour the well was empty. The ladder was lowered into the well. Down went the hired man, shovel and pail. When the pail was filled, I would haul it up and dump it nearby. After about ten minutes, we heard the slump of side walls caving in. The man hurried up the ladder and quickly pulled it out. The job was considered done. Then the cover and pump was installed,*

and the well gradually refilled itself. The water had an alkaline taste, but was considered okay and no one got sick. …

The mosquito population in late evening was unbelievable. When riding back from the day's work, the mosquitos would form a cluster around my horse's nostrils, making it almost impossible for her to breathe. I used to tie part of a jute bag to the halter so that it hung over the horse's nose, and the flapping material kept them at a safe distance.

When we first arrived, the ladies had a hard time organizing food and cooking with the western way of living. It was about six miles to the nearest store.

The section of Saskatchewan we were in was practically a desert at that time. Only a few slews survived. All the little lakes and rivers had dried up, and if you look at the map, the area south east of Frontier is empty space due to the shortage of precipitation. The fuel for cooking, etc. at the time and place was called buffalo chips. At some distance away was an open pit, where a person could dig out a type of soft coal for fuel. This was free to everyone. My only coal mining experience. My first task was to pick buffalo chips. A new experience. The chip looked like dried cow manure. So dry it would burn with bluish green flame, producing an intense heat. We Easterners would refer to them as meadow muffins. Anyway, I was able to collect a reasonable supply of fuel to keep the kitchen stove going for a few days. The supply had to be replenished from time to time. …

*During our stay my uncle Edward (*sic, actually Edmund Hall) *paid us a visit. He was a bachelor, and had several homesteads scattered about the southern end of the province, in such places as Maple Creek, Estevan, Gull Lake, Swift Current, Golden Prairie and East End. It was nice to meet him, but he didn't talk too much, and was soon gone off into the sunset.*

Edmund never married, and died on January 9, 1950 in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. His closest ongoing connections were with the children of his sister, Dorothy Dodge.

Although the children of Samuel Lough Hall had many interests, concerns and ambitions that they shared with Samuel's siblings who settled, at least for a time, in the Belmont area, it only took the equivalent of one generation before meaningful contact was lost among them.

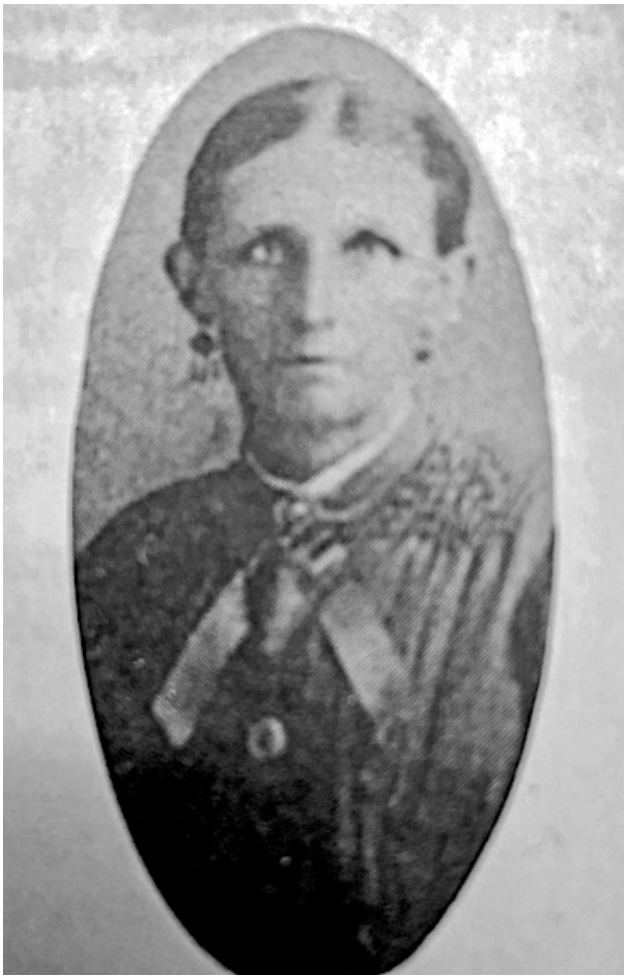
Rebecca Hall

Rebecca was born in Buckingham, Quebec on February 18th, 1842. In the 1871 census she was described as a weaver, and because of that designation it may be surmised she was a "professional weaver" whose work would be sold rather than a "home weaver"

working simply to supply the needs of her family.[25] She never married and appears never to have established an independent home. After her father's death, she remained living in the family home with her mother and siblings in a family unit then headed by her brother John Jr.

By the time of the 1891 census, Rebecca and her mother, Emily, had moved to brother James' farm south of Belmont, where they joined James' new wife, Flora McLeod, and Flora's two children, Mary 6 and Grace 5.

In 1900 Rebecca, by then 58 years old, was living in Bottineau, North Dakota with her brother, William, his wife, Annie (Thring), and their four children.[26] Following William's death on January 15, 1906, the remaining family members returned to the Belmont area. There, William's widow, Annie, assumed the role as head of that household, and they lived near the others of the extended Hall family. By 1916, however, Annie and her children had left the area, and Rebecca had taken up residence with her bachelor brother, Thomas, and they lived as housekeeper and boarder respectively in the home of their nephew, James Cosgrove.



Rebecca died in her 78th year in the R. M. of Strathcona on May 22, 1920. The report in the *Belmont Times* of May 27th, 1920 was brief:

It will be with a feeling of profound regret to the people of Belmont and district to learn of the death of Miss Rebecca Hall last Saturday afternoon, May 22nd at her home.[27]

Rebecca Hall

Mary Jane Hall

Mary Jane Hall 1847 - 1916 and William Cosgrove 1842 - 1900
Parents of:
Robert John Cosgrove 1869 - ?
William James Cosgrove 1871 - 1878
Harold Edmond Cosgrove 1877 - 1940
Irvine James Cosgrove 1879 - ?
James Ernest Cosgrove 1880 - 1880
Harriet Cosgrove Tiller 1881 - 1931
Mary Jane Cosgrove Smith 1884 - ?
Emma Cosgrove Williamson 1886 - ?

Buckingham was also the birth place, on June 2, 1847, of Mary Jane. She was 21 when on November 11th, 1868 she married the Irish Catholic William Cosgrove in Orleans, Ontario, now a suburb of Ottawa. By 1871 William was working as a "lumberer", and the couple's first child, Robert John, had joined the family. Many more children would follow, a number of them dying in infancy. By the time of the 1891 census Mary Jane and William, with six of their children, had arrived in the Belmont area to take up farming. Initially they stayed with Mary Jane's brother, Thomas Hall, on the NW 1/4 28-4-15, until construction was finished on their three-room log home on the adjacent quarter section, the NE 1/4 27-4-15. According to The Path of the Pioneers, p. 267:

> *This log house contained a large living room and two bedrooms. Later they built on another bedroom and a kitchen with a small pantry in one corner. This addition had two ply of lumber outside. Over the studs on the inside were fourteen layers of paper that could be counted. They must have been skilled paper hangers, because the patterns were all straight up and down on the studs.*

Homesteading nearby were James Hall, with his wife, Flora, and two stepchildren, his mother, Emily, and his sister, Rebecca (in the SE 28); Emily (Emma) Hall Wanless and her husband, John Wanless (in the SW 36); and William Hall (in the SW 28).

Following the death of her husband in 1900, Mary Jane and sons Tom, Jim and Harold, took up homesteads in Saskatchewan, south of Stoughton, drawn to that area by the fact other relatives (William, Samuel and Edmund, the sons of Mary Jane's brother, Samuel, and, for a time, John Jr.'s son, George) had already settled there and spoke in glowing terms of the opportunities that were available. Eventually all the Cosgroves except Harold returned to the Belmont area where Mary Jane became a leader in

church work and the Glee Club, Jim became the butcher in Belmont and Tom took over management of the family farm. Tom Cosgrove's further distinction was that he owned the first closed car in the district.[28]

By 1911, the widowed Mary Jane was living with her son, Jim Cosgrove, a cattle buyer, her brother, Tom Hall, a carpenter, and her daughter, Emma. In due course, William and Jack, Mary Jane's two oldest sons, arrived to see what opportunities for advancement were available to them in the area settled by their family, but shortly determined their fortunes looked brighter in Bottineau, which is where their uncle, William Hall, had moved and settled.

In 1913 Mary Jane married John Joseph Byrnes, who had settled in the Elgin area and was the widowed brother of her mother, Lavina Byrnes Hall. He was 73, and seven years older than Mary Jane and one suspects this was a housekeeping arrangement and marriage was simply to avoid the suspicion they were living in "sin".

Mary Jane died in 1916 and is buried under the surname Byrnes with her first husband, William Cosgrove, and four of their children, Jim, Tom, Hattie and Emma (who had married Albert Williamson) in the Hillside Cemetery in Belmont.

Mary Jane Hall

James William Hall

James William Hall 1850 - 1902 and Flora McLeod 1859 - 1893
and second wife Alice Moffatt 1861 - 1925

Buckingham was still the home of the Halls when James William Hall was born on September 27, 1850. As it was inevitable his eldest brother, Samuel Lough Hall, would be taking over the family farm in Leonard, Ontario, James purchased by Deed dated September 13, 1874 the E ½ Lot 13, Concession 5 adjacent to his father's property. On July14, 1883 James sold this land to his brother, Thomas, no doubt having satisfied himself his prospects were brighter in Manitoba and that he would not be returning. On September 25, 1885 Thomas, having reached the same conclusion, in turn sold this land to his brother-in-law, Samuel R. Moffatt (spouse of Matilda).

When James W. Hall and his four companions arrived in Manitoba in 1881, the land he chose for his homestead was the East 1/2 of 28-4-15 WPM (the NE 1/4 by homestead claim and the SE by pre-emption), a flat, arable parcel of land four miles east of Pelican Lake, and five miles south of what in due course became the Town of Belmont, the commercial and social centre of the area. He took entry in the spring of 1881, and by summer had built his first house, although it was more a rough shelter than even the most rudimentary and rustic habitation that could be imagined today. He remained on the homestead property continuously except from about November, 1882 until the 1st of April, 1883 during which period he remained in the neighbourhood but worked away from home in a sawmill,[29] of which there were a number along the Pembina Valley several miles to the southwest of James' home.

When the early settlers arrived, the land before them was mostly bush covered, although not heavily treed except for the valley areas. Joe Deedman arrived in the Belmont area in 1907. During an interview in the late 1990's, he spoke of the landscape of his new home territory:[30]

> *It was all bush. It all had to be cleared. But a lot of it did not have real heavy bush on it. In the early days, what happened fires would go through and burn the bush. A lot of it was just scrubby land, with no timber that would amount to anything. With all the acres that are broke in this Belmont district today, as far as wood goes there is more volume of wood today than there was 75 or 80 years ago. Between here and Ninette today there is more firewood than there would have been in the whole country at that time. There was no wood, hardly.*

Belmont, Manitoba and area 1901

Farming was, as it continues to be, largely dependent on the weather and market conditions. James and his fellow homesteaders met major challenges in that regard almost immediately. After a decade of ideal weather, 1884 brought a late spring and an early fall, followed by three years of drought and early frosts. 1887 brought a bumper crop, but it coincided with a collapse in the demand for wheat. Both factors contributed to very low prices. By the end of the 19th century, more homesteads were being abandoned than settled.

In March1889, the federal government advised James that his application for homestead patent for the NE ¼ 28-4-15 WPM had been submitted and that his pre-emption must be paid within six months from that date. In response James wrote the Minister of the Interior:

> *I got notice at home of application for patent that my pre-emption would have to be paid in six months. As the crop has been very poor this season I am not able to make the payment and I do not want to loose (*sic*) it. Kindly inform me what can be done and how I am to do it and oblige. Yours, James W. Hall Craigilea PO*[31]

Happily, for James, even though he could not meet the six-month deadline to acquire title to the SE ¼ by pre-emption, he was able in due course to become owner by a second homestead application.

On January 22, 1891, James married Flora McLeod (nee Maxwell), whose parents had come to the Huntly district in 1880, and whose first husband had died in Ontario, leaving her with three young children. Flora, with children in tow, moved to Manitoba in approximately 1890 to be close to the Maxwell relatives, and there met James.

Flora's infant son had died shortly after her arrival in Manitoba. She brought her daughter, Mary Margaret McLeod, to join her and James, but it was agreed her daughter, Grace, would live with the Maxwells.

The marriage of James and Flora was brief as during childbirth Flora and her newborn died on May 1, 1893. Before that date, in the Belmont district the practical issues relating to the death of a family member were usually dealt with personally and privately. The coffin was homemade, the funeral service, if any, was informal, and interment typically took place on the farm.

After the death of Flora and their baby, James made known he wanted his wife's final resting place to be in a proper burial ground. Joseph Bell (from whom the town of Belmont took its name) made available the land for what became the Hillside Cemetery, and Flora and the unnamed baby have the distinction of being the first to be buried there.[32]

By a sworn statement dated August 3, 1896, which he filed in support of his application for a patent for the SE 1/4, James stated he was 45 years old, unmarried (a widower), living with his mother Emily, sister Rebecca and step-daughter Mary.[33]

On May 5, 1897, James married Alice Moffatt, who came from the same Township as James in eastern Ontario, and whose brother, Samuel Moffatt, had married James' sister, Matilda. In 1902, the year in which James fell seriously ill, Alice persuaded her newly-married brother Charles Herbert (Herb) Moffatt and his wife, Bessie, to move from Montana to Manitoba where they took over the NW 28-4-15 WPM which had originally been the homestead of William Hall.

On April 17th, 1902, James made his last will. Four days later he died. To his stepdaughter, Mary M. McLeod, he left the North ½ of Lot 20 in the second concession of the Township of Lancaster in the County of Glengarry. As that parcel was not located in the area where he and the other members of the Hall family resided, it is to be presumed he had acquired it through his marriage to Flora.

James bequeathed to his wife, Alice, his livestock and a life interest in the NE 1/4 28 and the NW 1/4 27-4-15. James' brother, Thomas, was to receive that land upon Alice's death. That never happened, however, since Alice subsequently married Jack Wanless and the James Hall property in Manitoba was in due course transferred to the Wanless family. As stated, Jack Wanless was once married to James' sister, Emily Hall, who had died in 1894 after a long illness.

What arrangement was made to acquire the "remainderman" interest (that is, the legal claim to which the ultimate owner is entitled after the life tenant has died) of Thomas Hall is not known, but by the time Alice died in 1925, six years before Thomas passed away, all the potential complications had been sorted out.

In the obituary for Alice that appeared in the October 8, 1925 edition of the Belmont News, it was reported:

> *There passed away at Saint Boniface Hospital on Friday last Alice Moffatt, beloved wife of Mr. J. G. Wanless of Belmont. Mrs. Wanless was reported as progressing satisfactorily from her unfortunate accident some weeks ago and the end was totally unexpected. Heart failure was the cause of her sudden demise.*

Emily Hall Wanless and Jack Wanless

Alice Moffatt Hall and James Hall

Alexander Hall

The federal census records of 1871 and 1881 indicate Alexander was born in Buckingham, Lower Canada on March 29, 1852. He was baptized on July 4, 1852 in St. Andrew's Church, Buckingham, with his cousin, Catherine Lough, daughter of Samuel James Lough and Rebecca McClymont Lough. Alexander remained with his family until he was into his early thirties. He did not come with them to Manitoba, and information concerning his later life and final demise is not known.

Emily (Emma) Hall

Emily Hall 1853 - 1891 and John Gregory Wanless 1859 - 1929
Parents of:
George Frederick Wanless 1885 - 1953
Harriett Agnes Wanless 1886 - 1968
Elizabeth (Lizzie) Edna Wanless 1888 - 1964

Emily (sometimes referred to as Emma, so as to distinguish her from her mother, Emily, for whom she was named) was born in Buckingham, Lower Canada in 1853. By the time of the federal census of 1881 she was still living with her widowed mother and various siblings. She followed her brothers, James and William, to the Belmont area and in 1885 married John (Jack) Gregory Wanless who three years earlier had begun homesteading the SW 1/4 of 36-4-15, not far from the Hall farms. Emily and John had three children, Fred, Harriet and Elizabeth, but Emily's health was poor, and she died in 1894 after a long illness. In 1908 John Wanless married James Hall's widow, Alice Moffatt Hall.

While various members of the extended Hall family made homestead claims on all four quarters of Section 28-4-15 WPM, many neighbouring homesteaders either were or became relatives of the Halls. Included among them were the Cosgrove, Wanless, Williamson and Moffatt families. Most came from the same area of eastern Ontario near Ottawa. Intermarriage among the new immigrants was common. Illustrating the interconnections of the families of these early settlers was the fact John Wanless married John Hall Jr.'s sister, Emily Hall, and, when she died, married Alice Moffatt Hall, widow of Emily's brother, James William Hall. John's younger brother, George, married Mary McLeod, James' stepdaughter. Alice's brother, Samuel Moffatt, who remained in Bearbrook (near Leonard), Ontario, was married to James Hall's sister, Matilda. Confusing.

Emily Hall

Back: John Wanless and Ha
Front: Lizzie Wanless and Fr

Alice Moffatt Hall Wanless and
step-daughter Harriett Wanless

Matilda Hall

Matilda Hall 1856 - 1937 and Samuel Robert Moffatt 1848 - 1925
Parents of:
Emma Moffatt McGladry 1878 - 1906
John Frederick (Fred) Moffatt 1880 - 1963
Isabela (Bella) Letitia Moffatt 1882 - 1936
Hattie Moffatt 1887 - 1968
George Herbert Moffatt 1889 - 1963
Jean (Jennie) Moffatt 1896 - 1965

Matilda Hall was born on July 9, 1856, in Buckingham, Lower Canada. By the time of her marriage to Samuel Robert Moffatt on March 29, 1878, her family had moved to Leonard, Ontario. The Hall and Moffatt farms were, according to the census reports, adjacent to each other. Matilda, known as Tilly, and Samuel had six children in 18 years. She died on March 20, 1937 at her home in Leonard of myocardial failure at the age of 80.

Pictured are two Moffatt brothers and their wives.

Other Moffatt siblings included Alice Moffatt who married James Hall in Manitoba, and Herbert Moffatt who arrived in the Belmont area in 1902 and took over the NW 28-4-15 originally homesteaded by William Hall.

Left side: Matilda Hall Moffatt and Samuel Moffat
Right side: Emma and Richard Moffatt

Harriet Hall

Buckingham was also the birthplace of Harriet Hall, born December 26, 1859. She was baptized at St. Andrew's Church on September 26, 1860 with her cousin, John McClymont Lough. Sometime between the census of 1861 and 1871 she, together with her parents and siblings, moved to Leonard, Ontario. She is not noted on the 1881 census, nor could a record be found she suggesting she had moved or confirming her death.

Thomas Hall

Thomas was born in Buckingham on March 29, 1863. The federal census of 1881 indicates that Thomas, 18, was still living with his family in Leonard, Ontario, but by 1890 he had come to the Belmont area following the path established by his siblings James, William, Mary Jane and Emily.

By 1891 Thomas was homesteading the SW 1/4 of 27-4-15 WPM, assisted by his nephew Thomas Cosgrove. Over time he bought and sold several other parcels of land but by 1901 he was living with his nephew James Cosgrove. Thomas Hall never married and over the remainder of his life the Cosgroves were the family members with whom he was most closely involved and on whom he was most dependent.

The Belmont local history project, *The Path of the Pioneers,*[34] states:

> *Tom Hall was one of early Belmont's most prominent citizens. He lived with his nephew, Jim Cosgrove, in the house beside the Butcher Shop. He was an ardent Oddfellow and Orangeman, as well as being a staunch supporter and worker in the United Church. He was very interested in local politics and the development of the farming community. He served as a councillor in the Municipality of Argyle, and, when the Municipality of Strathcona was formed, he was a member of this council for six years. Tom was a carpenter by trade, and many of the houses and large barns in the area were built by him and Jack Lyons. He was an expert wheelwright, and worked in the Blacksmith Shop of Bill Ross, making wheels for the buggies and wagons that were used at that time. He was also a steam engineer and was operating the steam engine on the south-east quarter of 27-4-15 when it blew up and overturned in 1912. Tom was badly hurt in that accident.*

In addition to his many other volunteer activities, Tom was heavily involved in the support of local athletics. A neighbour, Malcolm Nicholson, reported:[35]

*The first baseball team (*from the Alma area) *played against Huntly. Having no catcher's mask, Tom Hall made one out of wire. It worked fine until a foul ball struck the mask and spread the wires. Later this team was reorganized and called the Alma Dreadnoughts. A league was formed with three Belmont teams, Delta and Alma.*

Thomas Hall died on February 13, 1931. The *Belmont News* of Thursday, February 19th, 1931 under the front-page headline "Sudden Death of Tom Hall" reported:

It is with extreme regret that we have to report the sudden death of Mr. Thomas Hall, one of the old-timers of this district at the age of 67 years and eleven months. The late Mr. Hall on Thursday evening last week took a run out to Tom Cosgrove his nephew's farm. On the way back to Belmont, his car got stalled almost one mile from his nephew's farm. Tom started to walk back and took sick on the way but managed to reach his nephew's farm and the following afternoon he passed to his eternal home.… It can truly be said of Tom he was a worker and not much of a talker and his place in the community will be hard to fill.

Thomas Hall

The Women's Institute History of Belmont (p. 42) described Thomas as one of the town's most prominent citizens - "A very fine witty Irishman highly respected."

Thomas Hall's attending physician at the time of his death was Dr. William F. Stevenson[36] who stated on the death certificate the cause of death was a duodenal hemorrhage.

Tom's will signed January 14th, 1930, makes clear who he felt could most use his assistance, and to whom he was closest. He directed that the SE 1/4 35-4-15 WPM be transferred to his nephew, Thomas Cosgrove, and the NW 1/4 27 and the NE 1/4 28-4-15 WPM to another nephew, James Ernest Cosgrove, subject to James making payments of $100.00 to Mary J. Smith, widow of William Smith, $100.00 to his niece, Emma Kate (Cosgrove) Williamson, wife of Albert Williamson, and $100.00 to Alice Maud Hall, spinster (Tom's sister).

William Hall

William Hall 1864 - 1906 and Anne Thring 1864 - ?
Parents of:
Frank Hall, Charles Thring Hall, Mary Hall, Annie Hall and Helen Hall

By way of an "Application for Cancellation of Homestead Entry" dated October 11th, 1882, James' younger brother, William Hall, who had been born in Buckingham in 1864, applied for the cancellation of the homestead entry of Thomas McCulloch for the West Half 28-4-15. In his application, William noted:

> *That the said McCulloch has never consummated his entry thereon by any act of possession in his own Person either by building or cultivation. That he has without leave of absence been for over 6 months not resident thereon. That to the best of my knowledge and belief he has abandoned the said lands for good.*

In a claim statement sworn on February 23rd, 1888, William stated he was seeking homestead rights in the NW ¼ and pre-emption rights in the SW ¼ 28-4-15 WPM, that he had made entry to the property in 1882 and had built his residence there the following spring.[37] The records on file with the Manitoba Archives provide an insight into William's early concerns. In a letter to the Land Agent in Deloraine from March 1888, William stated in a postscript: "Please address to Killarney instead of Craiglea as I am drawing wheat in and will get it quicker." As there were no roads between William's farm and Killarney, grain delivery presented a major challenge.

By a report dated in the summer of 1888 John J. Arsenault, Homestead Inspector, stated concerning the W 1/2 28-4-15 West (William Hall):

> *I examined the improvements of William Hall and find that his statement is correct. His improvements are not large and he just now does not live on his claim as there is no evidence of any present residence but there is evidence that he has lived there in the summer and fall. I met him in the next Township where he had been buying some stock after being out threshing in the neighbourhood. He was preparing to take his stock to his claim.*

For reasons not now known, William did not remain long on this property. Possibly the crop failure in 1888 caused him to conclude his future was not to be in Manitoba and he moved to Bottineau, North Dakota. Clearly, he maintained contact with friends and family in the Belmont area, because on June 17, 1890 he was married in Deloraine to Ann Thring, daughter of Francis W., and stepdaughter of Martha, Thring. Deloraine was the closest village in Manitoba to Bottineau, and a primitive road had just been pushed through to connect the two centres. William and Ann were both 26.

In a note from Bottineau dated July 26, 1895, William notified the Land Commissioner at Brandon: “Dear Sir, I abandon all my claim and right to my pre-emption SW ¼ of Sec. 28, Town 4, Range 15 West of first principal meridian.” The witness to this note was John Hall Jr., brother to James and William. This release of interest freed up the property so that it could be taken over by John Jr. and in this manner the SW1/4 became the “homestead” property for John Jr., and subsequently for George Hall and George’s children.

The U. S. Census for 1900 for the Bottineau, North Dakota area confirms that William Hall had lived there since 1888, was married to Annie and the couple had three children: Frank 9, Charles 6, and Annie 1. Living with them was William’s 58 year-old spinster sister, Rebecca Hall.[38] Unfortunately for the William Hall family, tragic events were imminent. From The Belmont News of Thursday January 18, 1906:

> *Yet another old-timer has crossed the bar, in the person of Mr. Wm. Hall, brother to Thos. Hall and John Hall. The sad news was received on Monday night and Mr. Thomas Hall left at once for Bottineau, N.D. to attend the funeral. Mr. William Hall was amongst the first settlers in this district and homesteaded close to the residences of his brothers, south of town. The deceased had been in failing health for the past two years and sank gradually to his rest on Monday, January15th. He leaves a widow, who was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thring, and four children, who have the sincere and heart-felt sympathy in their grief.*

By 1911 William’s widow, Annie, then the head of the family unit, which included her children Charles 17, Mary 14, Annie 12, and Helen 7, and her sister-in-law Rebecca Hall, 69, had taken up residence (the land itself being rented) in the E ½ of 32-4-15, the original homestead lands of Annie’s parents, near to the Halls, Wanless’s and Moffatts, but after a short time Annie and her children moved from the area, and in due course lost contact with William Hall’s family.

The U.S. Military records indicate William’s son, Charles Thring Hall, joined the Army in 1916, served overseas, and was not released from service until 1920. He and his widowed mother, Annie, are noted on the 1930 U.S. census as living in Los Angeles where Charles had taken up employment as a garage mechanic. Charles died in that city on July 7, 1974. What happened to Charles’ brother and sisters after they left Manitoba is not known.

John Hall Jr.

John Hall Jr. (1845 - 1934) and Mary Elizabeth Lough (1856 - 1956)
Parents of:
Alice Maud Hall 1882 - 1964
William John Hall 1883 - 1931
George Hall 1885 - 1968
Norman Hall 1887 - 1927
Fredrick Hall 1888 - ?
Bella May Hall 1891 - 1981
Rose Mary Hall 1899 - 1972

Couple on left: John Hall and Mary Elizabeth Lough Hall
Couple on right: Samuel Dale and Mary Lough Dale (Elizabeth's sister) This photo was probably taken just prior to the Halls' move from Ontario to Manitoba in 1895.

By 1881 John Jr. was the bachelor head of the original Hall family unit. But this was a period of upheaval in both the family and the Cumberland Township community. Older brother Samuel had taken over the family farm; sister Mary Jane had married William Cosgrove and had four young children (others had not survived infancy); James and William, along with many of their neighbours, were convinced future success required

that they head west. John Jr. at 36 had to get serious if he was to find a mate and have children of his own. He did not have to look far. On a neighbouring farm operated by his uncle and aunt, John and Levina Byrnes Lough, was his 22 year-old cousin, Mary Elizabeth Lough, who became his wife shortly after the 1881 federal census was taken. Their first child, Alice Maud Hall, was born in June of the following year.

When John Jr. applied for homestead rights for the SW ¼ 28-4-15 WPM on April 28th, 1905, he stated by affidavit that he was 60 years old, had entered the property with intent to homestead ten years earlier and had built his house there in the spring of 1900.[39] Clearly John and his family had moved in shortly after the departure of John's brother, William.

Early pioneer homes, like that built by John Jr., were often referred to as "batch shacks," with log walls supporting a sod roof, which would invariably leak when it rained. Mamie McLeod, who was to marry George Wanless, and who, as stated, was the stepdaughter of James Hall, noted in the Women's Institute (W.I.) Belmont History (p. 55):

> *Jim Hall's brother John came from the east in 1895 and filed on Will Hall's abandoned homestead. The shanty leaked quite badly when it rained and the family had to get into the wagon and come over to Jim Hall's. We youngsters thought that was a picnic and were always glad to see it rain. Mrs. Hall's mother, Aunt Levina, we all called her, was a dear old lady but suffered from asthma. She would sit with a dish on her lap inhaling what looked like sulphur on coals. There were no screens in those days and at times the millions of hungry mosquitoes made sleep impossible.*[40]

It is also reported in the W. I. Belmont History (p. 58):

> *Mrs. John Hall … tells of when she came to Alma district in 1895 and homesteaded on section 28-4-15. She tells of how she sold crocks of butter at fifteen cents per pound and eggs at ten cents per dozen to the crew building the railroad to Ninette; how she knit long stockings for men. A friend of hers knit socks at twenty-five cents per pair and bought a purple velvet dress with the proceeds. She remembers the hail storm on the twenty-fourth of May, 1911 and the many tragic fires in the town of Belmont.*

As challenging as daily life could be the homesteaders, time was always found for social activity. For example, as reported in The Belmont Star: Friday, January 12, 1900: *It is with pleasure we note that Mrs. J. Hall was successful in winning the first prize for comic costume, and also first for fastest lady skater, at the Baldur carnival on Wednesday night.*

Friday, February 16, 1900: Among the prize-winners at a costume ball: *Best Dressed Lady, Mrs. J. Hall, Honolulu Flower Girl.*

Friday, April 20, 1900: *A small party comprised of Dr. Mutchmor, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hall and Mrs. Booth spent Good Friday on the shores of Pelican Lake at Hudson Bay point* (now known as Manhattan Beach) *where the day was spent in merriment and dinner of the picnic style.*

It is uncertain when John and Elizabeth left the farm, but they were settled in a house in Belmont by the time of Doreen Hall's birth in 1926. Doreen claims to have few strong early recollections of her grandparents. She states she never knew her grandfather, John Hall, but she did have a clear memory of his casket in the living room of the house where her grandparents were living. That was the way it was then. The body of the deceased person would be left in the home overnight. Doreen was seven and a half years old at the time and this event in her young life made an indelible impression.

Doreen's early recollections of Grandma Elizabeth are almost all connected to her residence in Belmont. She was always to Doreen a "rocking chair grandma."

John Hall Jr.

Melvin Hall related:

I don't remember Grandma Hall ever saying anything bad about anybody. I'm told that she often helped neighbours in the district in the capacity of midwife in the early days. I also remember that she drank green tea.

Grandfather John Hall died when I was quite young but I remember that he had a long beard and at breakfast he would take a spoon of porridge and dip it in a cup of milk, sometimes dripping milk on his beard.

John Jr. died on April 19, 1934 at 89 years of age. Dr. Stevenson certified the cause of John's death was pneumonia with the contributory cause being a broken hip caused by a fall, from which he had survived for approximately two weeks.

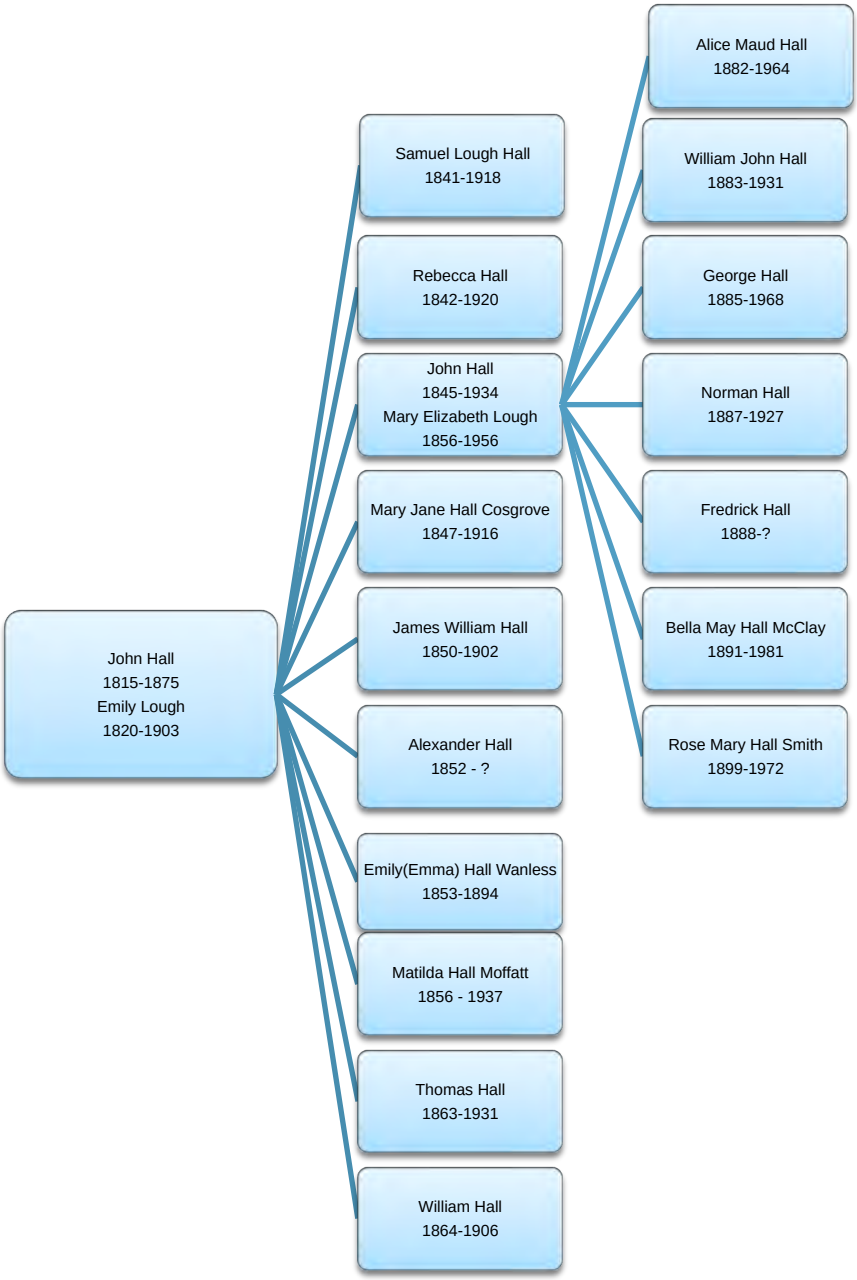
Elizabeth Hall

Elizabeth remained in Belmont for many years following John's death, cared for by her spinster daughter, Alice. In the early 1950's, a Hall family consensus was reached that Elizabeth, now well past her 90th birthday, should move from Belmont to Brandon, to be closer to medical care, if required. Elizabeth's daughter, Bella, and her husband, Tom McClay, assumed responsibility for Elizabeth. Elizabeth spent the last few years of her life with the McClays at 204 Victoria Avenue in Brandon, and that is where she died on April 16, 1956 at 100 years of age.

The Hall family: George, Alice (taking her usual unobtrusive position at the back), Elizabeth, Hubert, Ivy and (in front) Philip, in front of Elizabeth's cottage in Belmont, about 1946

CHAPTER 7: THE CHILDREN OF JOHN HALL Jr. AND MARY ELIZABETH LOUGH

John Hall Jr. 1845 - 1934 and Mary Elizabeth Lough 1856 - 1956



George Hall

George Hall 1885 - 1968 and Ivy Agnes Smith 1894 - 1971
Parents of:
Melvin Grendon Hall 1923 - 2008
Doreen Lois Brawn 1926 - 2019
Hubert Victor Hall 1930 - 1991
Philip John Winston Hall 1940 -

George (known by his family and friends as “Geordie”) Hall, was born on November 8, 1885 in the Russell district of Ontario just east of Ottawa. George’s parents were John Jr. and Elizabeth (Lough) Hall. By 1901 the whole of the John Jr.’s family were living together on William Hall’s abandoned homestead south of Belmont. The group included John 56, Elizabeth 45, Alice 19, Willie 17, George 15, Norman 14, Bella 9 and Rose Mary 3. As was stated above, George was determined to make his own way, and in 1902 joined his cousin, William (Bill) Charles Hall, to establish homesteads in Saskatchewan. Bill was all of 18 and George only 16.

In the affidavits that supported George’s homestead claim near Stoughton, he stated he had gained entry to the S.W. ¼ 35-6-10 W2 on August 30, 1902, built his house in June 1903 and subsequently broke six acres, but did not treat that house as his permanent residence until May 1904. He lived on the property from May 17, 1904 to November 13, 1904, in which period he broke a further 20 acres, cropped six and built a small stable. He returned to this modest farm from June 1, 1905 to August 10, 1905 and from November 20, 1905 until he gave up his claim. He stated that when he was not on his homestead land he was with his “folks” on Sec. 28-4-15 in Manitoba.

Although family lore spoke of George walking from near Belmont to the Stoughton area to take up his homestead, one has to be dubious of the literal truth of that suggestion. Even though only two decades had passed since the original five homesteaders arrived in the Belmont region, it was already a different world, principally because the west of Canada was quickly becoming crisscrossed with rail lines. By 1885 the last rail of the Canadian Pacific Railway cross-Canada main line had been set in place, and by 1902 there was a branch line to Arcola, Saskatchewan, a mere 40 kilometres east of what became Stoughton. As that branch line was not extended to Stoughton itself until 1904, George and his cousin Bill no doubt did walk at least the last 40 kilometres of his journey to his new home. There were only a few established homesteads along the way, but generally frontier hospitality made it easy to get a meal and a place to stay for the night.

Within a few years, George was back with his family in Manitoba. It is possible his farm near Stoughton was not successful or he did not like to be so far from his immediate family, but the more likely explanation is that he was summoned home to take over his parents' farm. As support for that speculation, it is interesting to note the report in The Belmont News of November 21, 1907: *Mr. John Hall returned Tuesday from visiting his son, George, at Newhope (*now part of Stoughton), *Sask.*

Although George's brothers Norman and Willie were of an age to share the responsibility of operating the farm, both were mentally challenged and they could not be relied upon for that purpose. As well, by this time George's father, John, was in his mid-sixties and was not so hardy or resilient.

According to Joe Deedman, George was back on the family farm by 1909 when Joe went over to visit the Halls and found them "crushing", which he states:

> *involved a gear box in the centre and three poles stick out and a single tree on there so you can put a horse on each pole, so you have three horse power. The horses go around in a circle. The halter shank is tied to the single tree ahead of them so they keep going around and around as this gear turns and a shaft goes out and it's covered over with a wooden trough so the horses step over it when they go around. John Hall was sitting on an apple box in the centre of this thing and of course he's going around with it and he has a whip and his head is on the go like this all the time to see if he can see a horse with slack traces because he would snap the whip out like this and keep the horses all pulling. Geordie was putting the grain in and shoveling the chop away from the crusher. There was a fairly big pulley on the shaft, so it wasn't turning that fast. You had a pulley that big and you had a shaft dug down in the ground and the belt come out and went to the crusher so the crusher had a pulley on it like that. You had a big pulley and that turned the crusher fairly good.*

When George Hall started to farm near Belmont, most of the land in the district was still unbroken. Breaking the land was arduous and time-consuming. Homesteaders usually used a yoke of oxen. When breaking land in the summer, it was often the case that horseflies would get so bad the oxen could not be controlled. When the yoke was taken off, it was not unusual for the oxen to rush to the nearest slough and stand in water up to their bellies to get away from the horseflies and other pest insects. They would then be left to eat grass until the temperature went down. Only then could the oxen be caught, and another attempt made at breaking the sod.

Two oxen were considered to have the same, or perhaps more, pulling power as four horses. A pair of the beasts could handle a 16 inch scrub breaking plough with a wooden beam while two horses could only handle a 12 inch plough.

If a man and a team of horses or oxen broke an acre of land in a day, it would be considered an accomplishment, at least according to Joe Deedman:

> *I helped Billy Manning break five acres on our quarter section in 1917. My job was to keep the colter[41] clean because there was pea vine in the bush, and with this straight colter it would plug up and the plough would come out of the ground. You had to have a forked stick or a three-tined fork with the tines broken off and keep poking the stuff. He had five mules on the scrub plough. The bush we were ploughing under was higher than the mules' backs. They would go through the bush like a snake crawling, this bunch of mules working their way through pulling the plough, and in the hot summer weather.*

Farming in Western Canada in the first half of the twentieth century was labour intensive and heavily dependent on that labour being inexpensive. It was the period of the "hired man" who generally was single, and prepared to work long hours for room, board and minimal wage. The widely promoted "harvest excursions" brought tens of thousands of such workers from Europe and Eastern Canada. By marriage or other good fortune some of these workers could fulfil the dream of virtually all, which was to become landowners themselves.

The census reports for 1901, 1906, 1911, 1916 and 1921 in the Belmont area show how dependent farming was on such workers. The names disclosed for hired men associated with the Halls were Oliver Holmes, Joe Howard, Thomas Langford, James Walls, Charles Maloney and Steil Skovron. Doubtless there were many others over the years.

It is questionable whether Steil Skovron's labours were provided voluntarily, as it is noted on the 1916 census that he and various others working nearby were "Prisoners obtained from Brandon Detention Camp." Their "crime" was simply that they were Eastern European and their homeland was at war with Canada and its allies. These particular individuals were described as Austrian, but most of the detainees at the Camp were in fact Ukrainian.[42]

The machinery used by the Belmont pioneers reflected pioneer creativity, but it was immediately appreciated that much more could be accomplished, with less physical toil and in less time, if the tasks could be mechanized. Again, Joe Deedman's memory is helpful:

> *I can tell you all of Geordie's tractor history from day one. The first tractor Geordie Hall bought was a Waterloo boy, my brother-in-law sold him that Waterloo boy in 1917 and Geordie used that Waterloo boy until 1926 and then he traded it in to Andrew Easton and he got a 2035 Rumley. In 1929, he dealt the Rumley off to Dave Maloney and he got a Model L Case. But that 2035 Rumley, I run that Rumley a lot after Dave Maloney got it. Dave got the 2035 Rumley from Geordie and traded Geordie a Model L Case, brand new*

tractor. So, Dave had this tractor and in 1930 I had a little Rumley tractor, a 1525, and I was going to break some bush, so Dave told me (I was married to his sister at the time, he wasn't married to my sister but married my sister four years later) he said that engine you've got is not big enough to break but this engine I got from Geordie here does. He said it's got to have some work done on it, but if you do some work on it and get it in shape you can use it. I was going to do custom breaking. So, I went ahead and fixed it. I took the radiator apart to clean it. I think Geordie had been using some used oil as cooling oil which coated the radiator up inside. I didn't know the radiator could be cleaned on the engine so I took it apart, which was a big job. I put it all back together and cleaned the radiator after I put it back together, fixed the engine up and I used it all summer to break with and I run my other little Rumley tractor at home doing my summer fallow. So then in the fall we put this 2035 Rumley on the separator and I ran the outfit for Dave Maloney and we threshed with it in 1930 and then after 1930 Dave sold the engine to his brother-in-

law, Kenny McKay.

It was not only implements that the early pioneers bought and sold. It would appear that through the first several decades of life in the Belmont area, George Hall and his family frequently bought and sold farmland in an attempt to improve their circumstances.

Joe Deedman recollected that 1909 was likely when Geordie purchased a half section of land from Geordie's brother-in-law, Tom McClay. According to Joe:

> *Then after Geordie got that half section, he wanted to sell this farm and Dave Maloney bought the farm from him. There was no agreement of sale or anything drew up and Dave Maloney sent his hired men over there and they were ploughing there and Geordie came over to Dave and said he was going to back out of the deal. So, Dave didn't argue and said 'Well, it's your farm, Geordie. I don't want to take it if you want it.' So, Geordie dropped the idea and went on with it. But it didn't make bad friends or anything as after that Geordie Hall and Dave Maloney had a threshing outfit between them, a steam threshing outfit. They had that outfit in about 1912, 1913, along in those years there.*

George had a long-standing relationship with Dave Maloney and his family. Not only did they operate their threshing business together, their families were friends and neighbours. Dave's parents had originally homesteaded in the Turtle Mountain area, and, after later trying farming in Rolette county, North Dakota, Holmfield, south of Pelican Lake, and the Yakoma Valley, Washington, they settled in 1910 near the Hall family south of Belmont.

The relationship between the Hall and Maloney families is touched on in The Path of the Pioneers[43]:

> *Berry picking was always part of summer activities as Ellen (*Dave's sister, born in 1903, and who subsequently married Joe Deedman*) was growing up, and one berry picking expedition that she and her sister Dot went on was to the Turtle Mountains to pick wild raspberries. They went with George and Alice Hall in their democrat. They started out on a Sunday morning and drove to the Freemans south of Killarney, where they stayed overnight. The next morning cousin Jack Freeman accompanied them on their journey to the Turtle Mountains where the raspberries were growing in abundance. When they sat down to have lunch they had brought, Dot fainted from the heat and long journey. Ellen remembered that they poured their drinking water over her to revive her. They left late in the afternoon with large crocks filled with raspberries, stayed overnight again with the Freemans and arrived home the next day.*

Although George had a strong connection with the land that was homesteaded by his father, John Jr., his thoughts were often on more and better land. Sometimes it is difficult to follow the twists and turns. For example, George's uncle, Tom Hall, homesteaded the SW ¼ 27-4-15 (initially CPR Land Grant property) following his arrival in the district in 1890. As stated earlier, Tom was operating a steam engine on the SE 1/4 in 1912 when it blew up and overturned, causing him to be badly injured. This was the Fargey-Cosgrove Syndicate engine. The water glass, which showed the

level of water in the boiler, was broken, and the water level got too low. When this happened a safety plug made of babbit (a soft alloy made of copper, antimony and tin) was supposed to melt and let off the pressure. However, a steel bolt had been substituted for the babbit. Since the steel bolt couldn't melt or let off the pressure, the steamer blew up. Tom Hall was thrown up into the air, and came down on the water tank, breaking his jaw.

Tom sold his farm to James Wanless (brother to Jack Wanless), who, when his wife fell ill, in turn sold the farm to George Hall (1916) on an instalment payment plan. George moved his family to the Wanless property since the buildings were better than on the Hall homestead property, and George's former house was rented to the Oliver Holmes family, who were said[44] to be distant relatives from Ontario.

By the fall of 1932, Geordie was left with little to show for his efforts after several years of poor crops. With no money to meet his instalment payment, he turned the farm back to Mr. Wanless, and the family moved back to the old homestead site.

Perhaps George could have kept that property if he had simply asked for an extension of time to make his payment. Whether because of pride, "principle," or practicality, he was not prepared to do so. George's daughter, Doreen, believes her father thought "Well, I can't pay, so I guess you just have to take the farm back" and this is what happened. With George, there was apparently never any negotiation. He simply was not business oriented. Someone else might have said, "Give me six months, or give me lower payments," or whatever, but he would not.

By the autumn of 1932 Doreen was six years old and recollects clearly it did not please anyone in her family to be returning to the old homestead property, which continued to be in a primitive state.

Fredrick Hall

Fredrick was born in November 1888 and appears as a two-year-old with his family on the 1891 Federal Census and shown to be living in Russell County, Cumberland Township, Ontario. He does not appear with the family on the next census, ten years later, by which time George with his parents and siblings had moved to the Belmont area. It must be assumed Fredrick died as a young child. Joe Deedman stated he never heard mention of "Fred Hall" in the Belmont area.

William John Hall and Norman Hall

Willie was born in Quebec on April 5, 1884 and was apparently a gentle soul, but mentally unfit to take on any farming responsibility. He was cared for by his parents for the whole of his life.

Eileen Hall (Hubert's wife), who was a registered nurse, recollects being told by William and Norman's sister, Rose (Hall) Smith, that it was important that everyone in the family know that these two boys suffered from haemophilia, a rare bleeding disorder, that often passes from generation to generation through the father. The death certificate for William states he died on November 1, 1931 from an internal hemorrhage, with haemophilia as a contributory cause.[45]

The *Belmont News* of Thursday, November 26, 1931 reported:

> *The death took place on Sunday last, November, 1931 of William John Hall, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Hall, Belmont, in his 48th year. The deceased had never been well and from a fall about the time of the recent fire he gradually got worse and passed to his home beyond on the above date. The late Mr. Hall was born in Buckingham, Quebec in 1895 (*sic*) and came in this district with his parents when a boy.*

Joe Deedman remembered both William and Norman:

> *I can remember Geordie Hall's brothers, Norman and Willie. They were quite retarded, you know. I can remember being in the home where they was when they went to feed Norman … I guess there's no harm in me telling you of them being retarded. Willie was only mild, but Norman, you couldn't take any chance with Norman. I've seen him when he come in and had his meal and his father always had a whip in his hand. They were a little afraid of him. I don't know how they made out in the winter, but in the summer time he had a little shack built beside the house. But we were kids and used to enjoy being around with these boys, you know. You don't notice things, but as you grow up your thoughts go back and you see there was something wrong with these boys but when we were young they were just the same as we were. I knew them well. Willie was always trying to invent something. He was trying to make a tractor and he worked on it for years, but he never got it made. He had hubs and wheels and things there that he played around with. Norman wasn't interested in anything like that. As long as he got his meals … well, they were a little afraid of Norman. They kept him, they did wonders to keep that boy there before they got him into a home over in Portage, but they eventually got him into the home in Portage.*

Norman was born March 10, 1887 in Russell County, Ontario, three years after William, and remained with his parents until he was admitted to The Home for Incurables in Portage la Prairie on November 29, 1911, where he remained until his

death on April 27, 1927. Dr. Stevenson's certificate, which was required before Norman could be admitted to the Portage Home, described Norman as an "Idiot" based on the grounds: "Father and Mother are full cousins. He persists in taking off his clothes and going bare naked. Though strong is not capable of work. Has to be washed and dressed."[46] The cause of Norman's death was Pulmonary Tuberculosis. Both William and Norman are buried in the Hillside Cemetery near their parents.

Bella May Hall

Bella May Hall 1891 - 1968 and Thomas McClay 1882 - 1968
Parents of:
John Alvin McClay 1914 - 1996
Mary Elizabeth McClay 1916 - 2004
George Elgin McClay 1917 - 1960
Ernest James McClay 1918 - 1923
Murton Lawrence McClay 1920 - 1943
Gertrude Mathilda McClay 1920 - 2013
Isabelle Irene McClay 1923 - 2006
Ellen Kathalen McClay 1928 - 1997

Bella May Hall was born in Russell County, Ontario on February 14, 1891. She moved as a child with her parents to Manitoba, and there met and, in 1913, married Tom McClay. The Copper Cliff, Ontario native and his father, John, had come to Manitoba in 1900, spent two years around Rolla, North Dakota, and Holmfield, Manitoba, before coming to the Belmont area. Father and son had been homesteading the SW1/4 24-4-16 since 1902 and in 1908 acquired two neighbouring quarter sections. They built their first house in the late fall of 1902, completed their obligatory and necessary homestead duties, but, as well, found farm employment in the surrounding districts to help finance the necessary expenses related to opening up their bushland on the east bank of Pelican Lake.[47]

The Belmont News of March 20, 1913 reported:

> *A very pretty wedding was solemnized at the house of Mr. John Hall on Wednesday last, when their daughter, Bella May, was united in the holy bonds of matrimony to Mr. Thomas McClay of this district. Rev. G.W. Faryon officiated. Miss Maloney acted as bridesmaid and Mr. George Hall assisted the groom. The happy couple were the recipients of many handsome and valuable presents. They will reside in this district. "News" extends congratulations.*

Thomas and Bella McClay

Both Bella and Tom were active in the Belmont community, Tom as a municipal councillor and school board trustee, and Bella as a volunteer in her church and with the Strathcona Women's Institute. For example, the Belmont News of March 22, 1917 reported:

> *A St. Patrick's supper was held at the home of Mrs. Thos. McClay by the members of the Strathcona Women's Institute last Friday evening, for the purpose of raising money to carry on Red Cross work. About forty-eight were present and a most enjoyable evening was spent. After a dainty luncheon had been served the remainder of the evening was spent in contests of various kinds which afforded much amusement as well as helping out the funds. At the close of the proceedings the amount realized was $30.75.*

Tom and Bella continued farming until 1939 when they sold their farm (three quarters in 24-4-16 WPM) and moved to Belmont where Tom operated a service station. The following year they purchased a service station at Oakville, where they stayed for only one year. In 1941, they bought a service station at Jordan Siding, Manitoba where they remained until retiring in 1954, first to Carman and subsequently to Brandon.

Bella and Tom McClay had eight children: Alvin, Mary, George, Ernest, twins Murton and Gertie, Isabel and Ellen. Ernest died as a child.

Murton served in the R.C.A.F. and was killed when his plane was shot down during World War II. According to the Belmont and District Souvenir Booklet recognizing Second World War veterans:

> *His training was received at Brandon and at No. 3 Bombing and Gunnery School at Mcdonald, Manitoba. He went overseas in November, 1942. On his 18th flight into Germany in a Halifax bomber, Merton (*sic*) was reported missing in action, August 1, 1943. This was on a flight over Berlin. He was buried on September 2nd at Saerbeck, Germany.*

None of the McClay children carried on in farming. Alvin, George and Isabelle (who married Bert McLoughry) lived in Winnipeg. Gertie (who married Jack Kenyon) lived in Rivers, subsequently Brandon, and finally Winnipeg. Mary (who married Al Bartley) lived in Chilliwack, British Columbia. Ellen (who married Harvey Dickenson of Roland) initially lived in Roland but ultimately retired to Winnipeg.

Tom McClay died in 1968 in Brandon; Bella in 1981.[48]

Rose Mary Hall

The youngest of John and Elizabeth Hall's children was Rose, who was born on the family farm in Argyle Municipality on May 31, 1899. She was still at home when Edgar Smith, the first of Ivy's relatives to arrive in the area, came to visit. Rose and Ted took a great fancy to each other and were married within a year. (See p. 84)

Edgar Smith and Rose Mary Hall

Alice Maud Hall

Alice Maud Hall 1882 - 1964
No children

Alice Maud Hall was born in Russell, Ontario on June 20, 1882. She never married and following the death in 1934 of her father, John Jr., spent much of her life as the primary caregiver for her mother, Elizabeth. Both Alice and her parents lived in modest circumstances. It was believed in the family that George bought for them the house in Belmont where Doreen was born, and where John Jr. died. At some point, perhaps because of difficulties with the stairs, Alice and her mother moved out of that first Belmont house into a smaller one-storey cottage in the north section of town.

Alice's brother, George, always felt a keen sense of obligation to provide for his mother and Alice, especially following the death of his father. Ivy often observed (without complaint) that if a cow was killed for meat, George made sure his mother and Alice received the preferred cuts. Perhaps this was worked out between George and his parents when George took over the family farm.

Alice wore a wig which, to be charitable, was not flattering to her. According to Doreen, children in the family were cautioned not to question Alice about why she had no natural hair, which probably served only to focus more attention on this feature. It is not known for a certainty what caused her hair loss, but Hubert's wife, Eileen, states she always understood it was as a result of Alice having suffered from typhoid fever and its consequences. Early in the twentieth century, hair loss was a common phenomenon that occurred as a result of highly febrile bacterial and viral infections including pneumonia, scarlet fever, typhoid fever and "Spanish flu."[49]

It is also uncertain when Alice suffered her permanent hair loss. In a photograph in the Belmont Women's Institute History of Belmont, Alice is shown as a member of the 1913 Alma Women's Softball team, and appears then still to have her natural hair.

Absence of hair may not have been Alice's only abnormality. Murray Williamson, a classmate of Melvin's, said in an interview on January 9, 2016: *Yes, she was deformed in some way. She didn't have everything right at her fingertips. She was fairly well known throughout the district.* Doreen does not completely agree with that assessment, but does acknowledge Alice appeared to be a "slow thinker."

Murray Williamson also recalled being told by a hired man that the fellow was listening to his neighbour May Chambers chatting on the phone with a female friend when a dog started barking and one of the women exclaimed "That sounds like Alice Hall's dog," and Alice piped up from her listening post on the party line and exclaimed "No, it's not my dog this time."

Alice was always the keeper of family mementoes, particularly photographs. Sadly, by the time she passed away, they had gone missing, a source of regret for the whole family. Although those photographs meant very little to the Hall children, they knew that at the time of most family gatherings Alice would bring out her shoe box of photos, and they were expected to express keen interest in them.

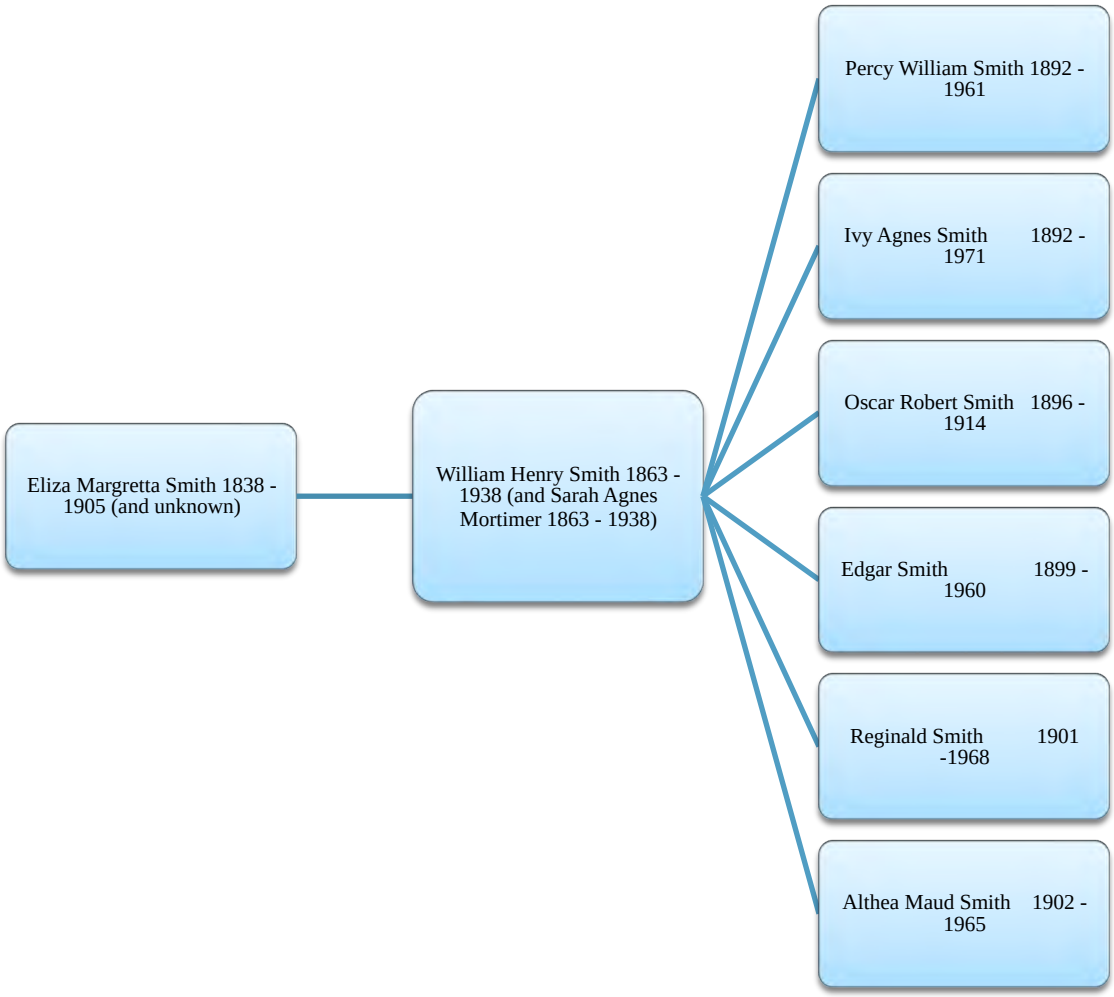
Doreen Brawn often thinks of her aunt Alice:

> *Alice always wanted to gather the family together. She would arrange for someone to provide a vehicle to take family members to the fair or some other activity and miraculously food was always there. She liked to do that. For Christmas, she always had some small gift item for each child, or perhaps a game that could be shared. As there was only one general store in Belmont, the gift choices were not greatly varied. She was always very happy to get people together.*

Alice earned her income, which was very modest, from her job as custodian of the United Church in Belmont, from house-painting or wallpapering work she did for neighbours, and, in competition with Ivy, from selling chicken and turkey eggs.[50] For several years following her mother's move to Brandon, Alice lived alone in the Belmont cottage, and later moved to a rented room at 332 - 6th Street in Brandon. She spent the last years of her life with her sister Rose, and in fact died in Rose's home in Brandon on February 3, 1964. She is buried with her brother, George, and sister-in-law, Ivy, in the west section of the Brandon Cemetery.

Alice Maud Hall

CHAPTER 8: THE SMITHS – IMMIGRANTS FROM ENGLAND



Ivy Agnes Smith was born on April 17, 1894 at Haverstock Hill, St. Andrew, England. Whereas the Halls' ethnic heritage was Irish, Ivy's was English through and through. Her family came from the village of Pewsey, in Wiltshire, where she was raised. Pewsey is west of London, not far from Stonehenge. Unlike other parts of England, which became heavily industrialized in the nineteenth century, Pewsey remained largely agricultural.

Pewsey marketplace 1890

William Smith and Elizabeth Alexander

The paternal great-grandfather of Ivy was William Smith, born in 1806 to John and Ann Smith. On July 11, 1831 William married Elizabeth Alexander, who was two years younger. Within ten years the Smiths were parents to Anna, Emma, John, Eliza (Ivy's paternal grandmother) and Martha. By 1851 the family was increased by the birth of three more children: Robert, Edward and Augusta. Contemporary records describe William as a mason or a builder. (See Appendix 5 for detail concerning the family of William Smith and Elizabeth Alexander)

Eliza Margretta Smith and unknown

Parents of William Henry Smith April 29, 1863

William Henry Smith and Sarah Agnes Mortimer

William Henry Smith 1863 - 1938 and Sarah Agnes Mortimer 1863 -1938
Parents of:
Percy William Smith 1892 - 1961
Ivy Agnes Smith 1894 - 1971
Oscar Robert Smith 1896 - 1914
Edgar Smith 1899 - 1960
Reginald Smith 1901 - 1968
Althea Maud Smith 1902 - 1964

Ivy's father, William Henry Smith, was born in Pewsey on April 29, 1863. His mother, Eliza Margretta Smith, was not married at the time of his birth, and information concerning William's father was not disclosed on his birth certificate. The fact William was an illegitimate child was not generally acknowledged in the family.

It appears Eliza and her son, William, continued to live with her parents until her marriage to Jesse Head in 1865. Eliza and Jesse subsequently had four children, but it does not appear William lived with his mother's new family following her marriage. It is, however, to be noted that in the census report of 1871 Eliza and William were both living with Eliza's mother, Elizabeth, who had been widowed in 1869. In that census, Elizabeth is described as a retired publican. By 1881 William Henry Smith, then 17, was living in Pewsey with his grandmother Elizabeth and his aunt Martha. Elizabeth died the following year. In subsequent census reports Ivy's father, William, is described variously as a gamekeeper or a carpenter.

Notwithstanding the modest financial circumstances suggested by these occupations, family and other reports[51] suggest William had travelled to both Argentina and Canada when the children were relatively young. How, when and why is not known.

William married Sarah Agnes Mortimer (known as Agnes) on May 3, 1896 and together they had eight children of whom two died as infants. Ivy's sister, Maud, remembered her father building a coffin for one of those infants.

Maud also recollected William often said to his wife: “Aggie, you have beautiful eyes.” Apparently, those eyes were an unusual violet colour.

By 1901 William and Agnes Smith, both 36, were living in Idmiston, Wiltshire with their children Percy 8, Ivy 7, Oscar 5, Edgar 2 and Reg 1 month. William was at that time working as a gamekeeper. By 1911 the family had moved to Boscombe, Allington, Salisbury, Wiltshire and included the youngest child, Althea Maud, then 8. Living with them at this time was Agnes’s widowed mother, Eleanor Lloyd 76. William continued to support his family as a gamekeeper.

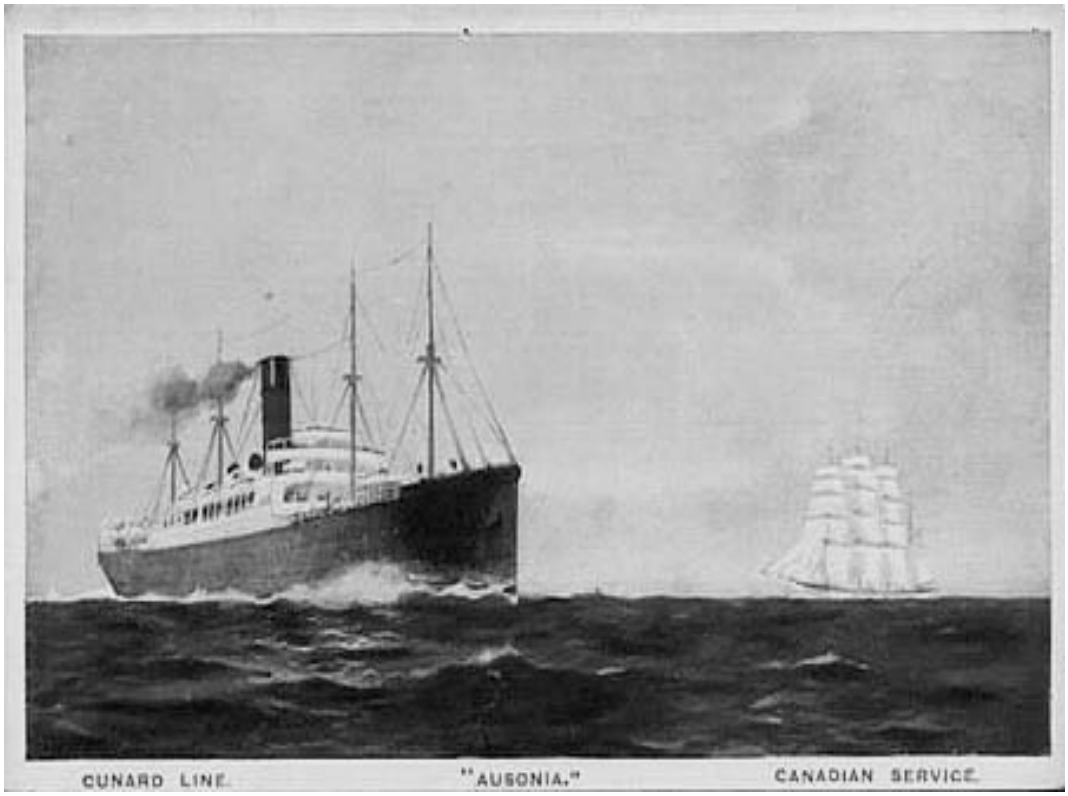
It is to be noted that Ivy was not living with her family in 1911 when she would have been 17. In fact, by then she had taken up employment at 12 Lyndhurst Gardens, Hampstead, London NW as a kitchen maid. Her employer was Eugene Karminski, a German ex-patriot who managed Credit Lyonnais in London. Living at the same address were Eugene’s wife Rita and their children Fanny, Pauline, John and Seymour, whose ages ranged from 16 down to 8. Supporting the household and living on site were a nurse, cook, parlour maid, two housemaids and Ivy.

12 Lyndhurst Gardens, Hampstead, London
October 2015

In Britain in 1911, one of seven employed persons was a domestic servant. A majority of them were females between the ages of 15 and 20 who had traveled to the city from the countryside to find employment. These young women were expected to work hard for little pay, and with minimal opportunity for career advancement. In the pecking order of servants, maids were at the lowest level, and a kitchen maid was the lowest of that group. The life of a late nineteenth century kitchen maid was extraordinarily challenging. She was the first to rise in the morning, so that by the time the remainder of the household, both masters and servants, arose from their beds, the fires throughout the house would all be lit, and the kitchen readied for the cook to prepare breakfast.

CHAPTER 9: IVY COMES TO CANADA

Ivy Agnes Smith appeared in the Belmont district in late 1918 or early 1919. Ivy's children may have assumed she immigrated to that area directly from England but this was not correct. The passenger lists for the Ausonia[52], which sailed from Southampton, England and arrived in Quebec City on May 4, 1914 included William Henry Smith, 46, married, who was noted as having been to Canada before, and was, and intended to be, a farm labourer and was bound for Lansing (a suburb of Toronto) and his daughter, Ivy Agnes Smith, 21, single, who was noted as not having been to Canada before, and was, and intended to be, a domestic, and also was bound for Lansing, Ontario. The attraction of Lansing was that members of the family of Ivy's mother, Sarah Agnes (Mortimer) Smith, had formerly moved to that area.[53]



Ausonia (Cunard Line)

(See Appendix 6 for further information concerning the Ausonia)

Ivy remained in Canada, while her father returned to England. William was back to his home before the death of his son Oscar in December, 1914, but it is not known if the deterioration in Oscar's condition caused William to return from Canada earlier than

initially intended, or if it had always been his plan simply to escort Ivy to Canada and then return. It is also not known for a certainty what Ivy did between her arrival in Canada in 1914 and her move to the Belmont area four or five years later. According to Ivy's niece, Margaret (Robinson) Graham, her mother, Maud, had given her to believe that Ivy worked, at least for a time, in the Toronto area and had a boyfriend through at least some part of that period.

Ivy Agnes Hall and mystery man

According Ivy's daughter, Doreen, Ivy often spoke of the challenges of being a home "domestic" for a well-to-do employer where the lady of the house would put on clean white gloves and scrupulously search through the house for dust that Ivy might have missed in her cleaning.

It is a regret of Doreen's that she never asked Ivy why and how and when she came to the Belmont area, but again Joe Deedman's recollection is helpful (although he is off by a year in his remembrance):

I can't guarantee this story is right, but I have a hunch how Ivy got to Belmont. In the spring of 1920[54], we had an epidemic of flu going around here … all over the globe as far as that goes. It was bad. People died by the hundreds. Dr. Stevenson was in Belmont and he was run off his legs, running out to doctor people with the flu and he couldn't find people to look after them. He couldn't get enough nurses. Ivy came to Winnipeg, she went to the Employment Office or something and there was "help wanted" at Belmont and she came here. And she nursed the Halls in 1920 when they all had the flu. That's where she met Geordie. I'll tell you a little funny story here. There's always these little jokes going around and Geordie was getting up in years and he wasn't married yet. And these Williamson boys, Albert, Arthur, Charlie, they were the joking type. So, they were talking about this fine-looking lady who was looking after the Halls who were all sick. It was Albert spoke up, I don't know whether he was talking to Arthur, it was a public phone you see and I was listening to this conversation and Albert says Geordie might tag on to that lady, which he did. That's how they met. My guess is that it was through Dr. Stevenson that she got to Belmont. Mind you, I'm not guaranteeing this. It makes sense. Why did she come to Belmont? She had to have somebody here that brought her in here. And I think it was Dr. Stevenson.[55]

It will never be known for certain the circumstances of Ivy's decision to come to the Belmont area but if indeed it was to nurse the Hall family, it would have involved taking on a serious obligation requiring extraordinary dedication and courage or, alternatively, reflecting a measure of desperation.

Ivy Agnes Smith 1917

The risks in providing nursing care to influenza patients were great. Illustration is provided by the report in the Winnipeg Tribune of November 16, 1918 that three volunteer nurses had died of complications from the disease in the course of two days. Subsequent editions of the newspaper would reference further deaths of good-hearted caregivers.

Ivy's formal education was limited and did not include training for a nursing degree. In the late autumn of 1918 in Winnipeg, however, so overwhelming was the need for providing aid to flu victims that the Emergency Nursing Bureau was organized to train volunteers and to coordinate the dispersion of desperately needed nursing services. Initially volunteers were sought from the ranks of graduated nurses, and then teachers, but very shortly need outpaced what those groups could satisfy. Finally, any woman (and it was always a woman) of good health and character could offer to take the four-day training course provided through the Manitoba Medical College and become an accredited nurse volunteer. By November 1918, 160 volunteers were making their services available through the Medical College, but, as there were up to 600 calls for help per day, many pleas went unanswered. Calls could come from anyone, but it was usual for them to be made by a doctor who had visited and made a diagnosis.

It is surprising how little is remembered concerning the devastation of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic. It was a worldwide crisis killing perhaps thirty million persons. Although it was responsible for the deaths of very possibly more Canadians than were killed in the First World War, it barely warrants a passing reference in the local history books. For example, in the Local History of the Argyle Municipality the only reference (p. 42) is:

> *The influenza epidemic, which swept the world in 1918, did not bypass Argyle. There was a ban on visitors to the area for five weeks. In December, 50 cases had been reported in Baldur and several in the rural areas.*

A cursory consideration of what preoccupied newspapers in rural Manitoba in late 1918 and early 1919 makes very clear how frightening this epidemic was to the general population, which was an appropriate reaction considering how rudimentary and uninformed medical treatment was at the time. (See Appendix 7)

The Belmont News January 16, 1919 provides a sense of the effect of the epidemic on the Belmont area:

> *Last Friday evening a meeting was held at Fargey & Smith's office for the purpose of finding out the citizens' views re a local hospital for the "flu" cases. Reeve Smith was appointed chairman and gave a short address, explaining the object of the gathering. After*

> *some discussion, it was decided to turn the schoolhouse into a hospital and this met with the approval of all those present. It was thought advisable to appoint a committee of five to make all arrangements and the following were chosen: Reeve Smith, Councilor Irwin to represent the Council and A.G. Smith, Thos. Hall and J.J. Castell to represent the citizens. Mr. W.E. Marsh volunteered to act as orderly, and Mr. Wm Young is also assisting in the work. Dr. Johnstone, of Winnipeg, arrived in town on Monday and will take charge of the hospital as Dr. Stevenson is at present suffering from the disease. All of those who have been ill are now on a fair way to recover, and will no doubt be around soon. Of course, as usual, some of the citizens are getting some of the "hot air" off their chests in regards to the school being opened as a hospital, but why don't those "wise guys" attend these meetings and bring out some of their brilliant ideas, and not wait until all arrangements have been made then holler. Ideas is what we all want and it seems too bad not to have those ideas made use of. If you cannot be a booster in a time like this, for heaven's sake, keep quiet and do not criticize those who are trying to a little for the sake of humanity.*

Having regard to the context provided by the Influenza Epidemic, it is interesting and somewhat surprising to see a note in the Belmont News from March 27, 1919[56] under the heading Local News: *A little 'hop' was held at the home of Mr. John Hall's last Friday evening. Quite a number were present and a most enjoyable time was spent.*

Could they have been celebrating recovery from the flu or Ivy's successful nursing of the family back to health?

The early Halls clearly were active participants in all the community functions, which certainly included music and dancing, albeit dancing that pre-dated the new-fangled "ballroom dances". In fact, Doreen remembers her mother, Ivy, saying George at the time of their marriage was a good dancer.

According to the W.I. History of Belmont, p. 75:

> *In the earlier days, the dances were not commercialized but more of a social event. From the eldest to the youngest the family bundled into a sleigh box as soon as chores were done and off they went to a faraway neighbor. Sometimes they drove approximately twenty miles. Every family took a box of lunch. Some of these pleasant evenings were surprise parties; some were planned. Music was supplied by violins, mouth organ and sometimes an organ. The ones who could dance, danced until dawn. Others played cards in some small corner. The younger (too young to participate in either) cuddled up in some corner and slept. After all were too tired we again bundled into the sleigh box and arrived home approximately at daylight.*

Joe Deedman suggests Ivy came from Winnipeg, but if that is so it is not clear what prompted her to move from Toronto to Winnipeg. Probably she did indeed come west

to help Dr. Stevenson, but whether it was from Toronto or Winnipeg is not known. Regardless, she made a strong connection with George Hall (although it may never be known for certain whether, to use Joe Deedman's language, George "tagged on" to Ivy or vice versa), and on March 25, 1921 they were married on the neighbouring farm (Section 24-4-16 WPM) of George's sister, Bella May McClay, and her husband, Thomas McClay, who stood up for them during the marriage ceremony. The Province of Manitoba marriage certificate states Ivy was 24 and George 39, but this is surely incorrect as their birth information indicates clearly she was almost 27 and he was 35 1/2.

The Belmont News of March 30, 1921 reported under the heading "Wedding Bells":

> *A very pretty wedding took place on Friday, March 25th, at 12 o'clock noon at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thos. McLay (*sic*), when Miss Ivy Agnes Smith, eldest daughter of Mr. W. H. Smith, of Marlborough Wiltshire England, was united in matrimony to Mr. George Hall, second son of Mr. and Mrs. John Hall of Belmont, Manitoba. The Rev. Geo. Dyker officiated. The bride was given away by her brother, Mr. Edgar Smith, and was attended by the little Misses Mary McClay and Millicent Pryke, who acted as flower girls. The bridegroom was unattended. The bride entered to the strains of Lohengrin's Bridal Chorus played by Mrs. Pryke and looked very pretty in a dress of sand coloured taffeta trimmed with georgette. She also wore a bridal veil with a wreath and spray of orange blossoms. Her traveling suit was of navy-blue serge, opening over a blouse of white crepe de chine. While the register was being signed the hymn "O Welcome was the call" was sung by Mrs. Pryke. After the ceremony the bridal party and about twenty relatives and friends sat down to a dainty luncheon which was served on a tastefully arranged table, centred with a four-story wedding cake. The newly married couple then left on the afternoon train for Brandon and Winnipeg.*

On her arrival in Canada Ivy described herself as Church of England. The fact the service was conducted by G.A. Dyker, the Presbyterian Minister from Belmont, is not surprising as the early census records indicate most of the early settlers to the Belmont area were Presbyterian, and that included the Halls.

As can be seen in photographs of George Hall, he had been seriously injured in one eye. Ivy explained George was going to put on a gate and fix a fence between the house and the barn and, when he bent down, a piece of barbed wire pierced his eye. That obviously happened before George and Ivy were married.

Wedding photograph
George Hall and Ivy Agnes Smith
March 25, 1921

CHAPTER 10: IVY JOINED BY HER FAMILY

Ivy's parents and their extended family were all from the same area in Wiltshire, England. Clearly William and Agnes Smith and their children were of the labouring class in Great Britain and no doubt were enticed by the prospects held out to them for a better life waiting in Canada. For the parents, there was an additional factor - a determination to spend their last years where their children had settled.

Although it is almost certain Ivy knew no one when she came to the Belmont district, it was not long thereafter before a stream of her relatives began to arrive from England:[57] her brothers Edgar (Ted), Percy, and Reginald and finally her sister, Maud, and their parents, William and Agnes.

These relatives obviously came with the intention of settling in Canada, if not necessarily near Belmont. Percy and Reg emigrated with English brides. These emigration decisions were made because Ivy and Ted would praise the country and in truth the opportunities for improving the family's economic and personal circumstances were indeed much greater in Canada.

Back: Agnes Smith, Edie Smith, Maud Smith, Ivy Hall
Front: Doreen Hall, Melvin Hall, Donald Smith

Oscar Robert Smith

Oscar Robert Smith 1896 - 1914
No children

The only sibling of Ivy who did not follow her to Canada was her brother Oscar. Both the 1901 and 1911 Census Reports for England include reference to Oscar Robert Smith living with the family. According to his death certificate, Oscar died on December 1, 1914 at 19 years of age at the Smith family home at Milton Road, Milton in the Pewsey District in the County of Wiltshire. That certificate discloses no occupation for Oscar, but his father, William Smith, the informant, is described as a Journeyman Carpenter.

Oscar died of "Congenital Hydrocephalus, malformation of breast and exhaustion."[58] Congenital hydrocephalus is a buildup of excess cerebrospinal fluid in the brain at birth. The extra fluid can increase pressure in a baby's brain, causing brain damage and mental and physical problems. Thankfully this condition is rare. Ivy did not often mention this brother, and therefore the degree of the disability from which Oscar suffered or the particular symptoms of Oscar's condition are not known, but he is described on the 1911 census as a gamekeeper's assistant, presumably an assistant to his father and older brother, so he must have been capable of some useful, albeit limited, economic contribution to the family.

Edgar Smith

Edgar Smith 1899 - 1960 and Rose Mary Hall 1899 - 1972
Parents of:
Ivan Smith 1923 - 1964
Joyce Marguerite Smith 1928 - 2004
Eileen Althea Smith 1934 - 2000

Edgar (Ted) Smith was born in Wiltshire County, England in 1899 and emigrated to Canada following his service in the British Royal Artillery in the First World War. He settled in the Belmont district at Ivy's urging and initially worked for George Hall, where he met and was smitten by Rose, youngest member of the Hall family. Ted and Rose, both 22, were married on the Hall family farm on January 22, 1921, approximately two months before the wedding of Ivy and George.

The Belmont News report of the wedding stated:

> *Rev. George Dyker officiated at a wedding at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Hall when their daughter, Rose Marie, was united in marriage to Mr. Edgar Smith. The bride, dressed in white satin with an overskirt of georgette, entered on the arm of her father to the strains of Lohengrin's Wedding March played by Mrs. Pryke. The bridesmaid was Miss Hilda Evit, and the best man was Mr. S. Horrocks. During the signing of the register the Hymn "O Perfect Love" was sung by Mrs. Pryke.*

In due course Ted and Rose farmed south of Belmont on NE 18-4-16 and later the SE 35-4-16. In 1934, they purchased the SW 27-5-15, a farm east of Belmont. Ted and Rose had three children: Ivan, Joyce and Eileen.

Ivan was born February 14, 1923 and attended school at Mount Hope and Belmont. Ivan farmed with his father until September 1943 when, at the age of 20 years, he was injured while attempting to break a horse for a neighbour, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Many in the family and the broader community felt bitterness and regret concerning this tragedy because it was believed the neighbour knew the horse was very dangerous and yet took advantage of a young man's reckless bravery, or perhaps foolhardiness. Ivan lived the last years of his life in the Assiniboine Centre care facility in Brandon where he maintained a regular shift at the candy and cigarette counter. Ivan passed away at age 41 on April 15, 1964.

Joyce Marguerite Smith was born in January 1928 and attended Belmont School. On October 16, 1951, she married Murray Frederickson of Baldur.

Eileen Althea Smith was born in November 1934 and attended Belmont School. She married Thomas Dunlop of Dunrea in September 1955.

In 1943 Ted, Rose and family moved into Belmont where they built and operated a family restaurant known as the Sunshine Tea Room. Ted also operated a gas station, a taxi service and, in the winter months, the Livery Stable. In 1953 Ted, Rose and Eileen moved to Cypress River, Manitoba purchasing the Ponderosa Café, which they operated as Smith's Café. In a diary entry dated February 19, 1959 Ivy stated:

> *We went to Cypress River today to see Ted, Rose and Ivan. Ted was in the hospital. They say he has enlarged heart. I wish they could get a living without so much work. Cafe business seems like all work.*

Ted was an avid fisherman and hunter. He died on November 17, 1960 of a heart attack. Rose, known for her delicious meals and fine pastry, continued to operate the restaurant until 1962 when she moved to Brandon. She had a fall in May 1972 and passed away shortly thereafter.

Eileen, Joyce and Ivan Smith

Reginald Smith

Reginald Smith 1901 - 1968 and Ivy Gertrude White 1901 - 1987
No children

Reginald Smith

Ivy's brother, Reg, was born in March 1901 in Idmiston, Wiltshire, England. In June 1922 Reg sailed to Canada aboard the Melita. In his Passenger Declaration, Reg stated he was coming to Canada to "better himself", and his specific initial intention was to visit his uncle Mortimer (probably James C. P. Mortimer) at Curry Crossing in Woodstock, Ontario. Reg described himself as a farmer, but there is no evidence he ever took such employment.

Either homesickness or perhaps remembrance of a special woman from his earlier life brought him back to England and in September 1926 he married Ivy Gertrude White. But on May 13, 1928 Reg and Ivy returned to Canada, this time on the Ausonia (not the ship on which Ivy had immigrated, which had been torpedoed in 1918, but a re-incarnation), and as landed immigrants. The information on the passenger list states Reg had earlier been to Canada and from 1921 to 1925, had lived and worked in

Brandon, Manitoba (an intriguing reference), but no family stories or information from the Henderson Directory and the like provide any information on what Reg might have done through that period. On Reg's return to Canada in 1928 he stated his destination was Winnipeg where he was to take up employment with the Canadian National Railways.

Ivy Hall's diaries indicate Reg and his wife would periodically visit the extended family in the Belmont and later the Brandon area. Farming life apparently had no appeal for Reg and after a stint in Saskatoon he and his wife settled in Vancouver where they remained for the balance of their lives. They had no children.

Ivy and Reg Smith and Ivy Hall (1963)

Reg's niece, Margaret (Robinson) Graham, visited Reg and Ivy in the mid 1960's in Vancouver when they maintained a boarding house for student nurses from the nearby hospital. She found them to be challenging hosts, who basically had no notion of, or care concerning, what activities might be appealing to a young farm girl visiting from rural Manitoba. According to Margaret, Reg thought it should be a treat for her to watch him and his friends play horseshoes in Stanley Park. When Margaret walked downtown to go window-shopping, Reg was furious. She found Reg to be a strange, fussy, impatient, intolerant person. Margaret felt Reg's wife, Ivy, was a happier, more fulfilled woman in widowhood, as Reg was very controlling and was reluctant to travel.

Percy William Smith

Percy William Smith 1892 - 1961 and Edith Mary Fox 1892 - 1987
Parents of:
Donald William Smith 1922 - 2004

Percy William Smith

Percy Smith was born on November 27, 1892 at Winterslow Hut, Winterslow, Wiltshire, England. The site of his birth was an inn, still existent, but now called the Pheasant Inn and currently used as a residence. According to his son, Donald,[59] Percy joined the Wiltshire Regiment (No. 11022) in 1914, served overseas, and was discharged in 1915 due to "gunshot wound left leg". Percy was married to Edith Mary Fox on March 28, 1918. Their marriage certificate indicates both were 25, that neither had been married before and that Percy was a Workhouse Porter who was living in Swindon at the time of marriage, and Edith a "Childrens' Trainer" who had been living at The Workhouse[60] in Pewsey.

Percy and Edie were enticed to join Edgar and Ivy in Manitoba and on March 31, 1927, with four-year-old Donald in tow, left Southampton on the Lancastria, arriving nine days later in Halifax. Percy indicated to the authorities he was to take up employment with George Hall in the Belmont, Manitoba area.

Donald Smith reports: [61]

*Edith and Percy Smith came to the Belmont District in March, 1927 (*sic, actually April) *from England, along with their four-year-old son, Donald. Edith was born at Swindon, Wiltshire; Percy in a village in Wiltshire. Donald was born while his parents were living in London.*

On arriving at Belmont, they first stayed with Percy's brother, Ted, who met them at the station with the team and wagon. They bumped ten miles through the March snow and mud to Ted's farm. Edith had never been in a wagon and thought she was going to the end of the earth. Later that summer they went to stay with Percy's sister and brother-in-law, Ivy and George Hall. That fall, Edith and Donald stayed with the Guy Jenkins family for a while. In the later fall of 1927, Percy went to work for Alf Dunkin, where they lived for three years.

Back row: Edie, Agnes, Maud & Percy Smith
Front row: William Smith, Donald Smith, Doreen Hall and Melvin Hall

In 1930 Percy and Edith took over a quarter section of their own, known as SE 23-5-16. They stayed on this farm for twelve years. While on the farm they took part in the community activities. Edith taught at the Delta Sunday School and many times played the old pump organ. There was always a Sunday School picnic which was enjoyed by all. In the winter, there was whist and dance socials at Delta School. Donald attended Belmont school, which was four miles from the farm.

Agnes Smith, Edie Smith, Rose Smith, Percy Smith, Joyce Smith, Donald Smith and Ivan Smith, circa 1930 (identification of Rose and children not certain)

*While on the farm, the family enjoyed good times and endured the hard times. One year the Marquis wheat rusted and Percy had to burn the whole crop. Another year hail and wind destroyed most of the crop. In 1942, they left the farm and moved to Flin Flon for one year (*where Percy worked as a security guard for Hudson Bay Mining Co.)*, then in 1943 made permanent residence in Winnipeg (*where Percy worked until retirement with Western Grocers). *Percy passed away on January 21, 1961 and Edith on September 28, 1987.*

The last members of the Smith family to come to the Belmont area were Ivy's sister, Althea Maud Smith, accompanied by her parents, William and Agnes. They arrived in Quebec from Southampton on the S.S. Antonia on July 11, 1927, Maud indicating on the passenger list that she was going to be joining her sister, Ivy, in Belmont and describing her occupation as a "domestic."

William Henry Smith, Althea Maud Smith and Sarah Agnes Smith
(On reverse is written “With Love to Rose & Edgar Taken August 19, 1922”)

Althea Maud Smith

Althea Maud Smith 1902 - 1965 and John Basil Robinson 1885 - 1964
Parents of:
Margaret Robinson 1946 -

Pewsey, Wiltshire in 1916 when Maud would have been approximately 13 years old

Margaret (Robinson) Graham reports concerning her parents:

Althea Maud Smith was born March 2, 1902 in Pewsey, Wiltshire. When she and her siblings were quite young, her Father taught them to box, thus my Mother was fearful of no one. Her only fear was thunder and lightning. Mom's Father was a carpenter by trade. Mom told me of her Father building a coffin for a baby sister that had passed away.

Maud was an accomplished cook by trade, who cooked for the very wealthy. She enjoyed cooking, seldom using a recipe. Her first cake failure was when she used an electric mixer. I never heard her once say, "I'm sick of cooking."

Aunt Ivy arrived in Canada in 1914 followed by her siblings. She begged Mom and her parents to come to Canada, as it was "the land of milk and honey." In 1927 Mom and her parents Bill and Agnes Smith set sail for Canada. My Mother said how awful the journey was because after three days at sea everyone was seasick. Mom asked when they set sail, "When will we have roast pork for dinner?" The reply was, "on the third day at sea." She then quickly found out that was when the passengers would all be sick and therefore more for the crew.

She went to work as a housekeeper and cook for the McClays. There was little food. When the farm hand brought her cobs of corn to prepare, she quickly told him, "that is cow feed." Consequently, she quickly had a dim view of Canada. The hired hand showed her how to prepare the corn.

Winter was fast approaching and Mom found the house too cold. She told Aunt Ivy to find her another job, as she feared she might freeze to death. Aunt Ivy told her that she knew of an English gentleman whose wife was now incapable of taking care of the house and that he was looking for help. That gentleman was my Father who quickly hired Mom. Mom took care of Ellie[62] and the house until Ellie required hospitalization at the "Brandon Mental Hospital."

On November 26, 1946 I was born in St. Boniface Hospital. Mom did not trust country doctors. When we were ready for discharge, Dad hired a taxi to bring Mom and me home. Belmont does not usually see taxis, so everyone was quite curious. Folks were even more curious as the passengers were Maud Smith and a baby. No one seemed to know that Mom was expecting. Dad was very protective of me and allowed only a chosen few to come to the house to visit. He remained that way until the day he died.

In those days, the Anglican Church did not permit divorce in my father's circumstances. In August 1949, Ellie passed away. Mom and Dad were married in Christ Church, Belmont on December 18, 1949. The reception was held at the farm. I remember it plainly, but was pushed out of the way whenever photos were taken. I often asked my mother "What was that party when you received that beautiful lamp?" She would tell me to go out and play. I learned the truth after they had passed.

Maud and Basil Robinson on the occasion of their marriage in 1949

My parents ran the farm as equals. They would always discuss which crops should be planted in which field. Of course, the chickens were Mom's responsibility as she felt that no one could manage them better than she. She raised guinea fowl and shipped them across Canada. Guinea fowl are excellent at keeping rats away because of their screech. They were extremely protective of their young, thus very mean, particularly if I approached their young.

Mom enjoyed sewing. In fact, I still have her sewing machine. She could take a clock apart, fix it, and put it together in a quiet afternoon. It would always work. Mom taught me to dance to the Saturday Night Hoedown on the radio. Mom enjoyed dancing and often spoke of the dances in England. I know she missed England terribly, as she always spoke fondly of her former home. Mom passed away December 24, 1965 of a heart attack.

Margaret Robinson, George Hall and Maud Robinson

My Dad, John Basil Robinson was born at Osgodby Hall, Yorkshire, England on December 16, 1885. He studied medicine at London Hospital for five years and was on the London Hospital Rugby team. However, Medicine was not his calling and he longed to farm. Consequently, he came to Canada circa 1910 and settled on the farm four miles from Belmont, which he named Raydale Court Farm. In those days, Canada was being settled, so therefore he had a commitment to cultivate a certain amount of land, put up a shack, and have to maintain some stock. As you can imagine, the dwelling was quite crude to start, but

eventually became the comfortable home where I was raised. Dad came to Pier I, but it burned down shortly after and it is Pier 21 where Mother and Family came.

Now, you understand, the First World War was breaking out, so even though Dad was established on the farm, he had to make sure that he was not conscripted, so on March 14, 1916, he married Ellie Brown, who according to all reports was very peculiar. There were no children.[63]

Dad maintained a large herd of grade sheep and was always interested in Pedigreed Stock. He would show his sheep at the Toronto Royal. He was a Director of the Brandon Winter Fair.[64]

Dad bought two registered Clydesdale horses. Later, he went into the Thoroughbred business and owned a stallion named "Acadian Flag." This interest lasted a long time as his second wife, Maud Smith, was also a great horsewoman.[65]

Dad was a member of Christ Church in Belmont. He donated the Pulpit in loving memory of his Parents.

Dad had a brother, Gordon, who committed suicide in England. He also had two sisters, Effie and Hilda. Aunt Effie was very close to us, sending Christmas parcels, writing letters. She would always request Canadian chocolate and a slip from us and we always requested English chocolate. Aunt Hilda was to have taken the Titanic, but since she was a real "party girl," she was too hung over to make the sailing, which probably saved her life. As I say, "a good party does wonders for one, once in a while."

I was the "apple of my Dad's eye." In fact, I am more like him than not. My Dad enjoyed sitting in his big old chair with me beside him and we would laugh and talk. My Parents gave me an excellent grounding for life as they knew they would not be around long.

Dad passed away May 15, 1964 of a massive stroke.

It may have been, as Margaret suggests, that Basil's early living arrangements as a homesteader were primitive, but The Path of The Pioneers indicates that by 1905 there had been established a Belmont Tennis Club and when Basil in 1911 made the windbreak to protect his yard site he designed it to accommodate a tennis court. By 1913 there were grass courts at the homes of Mr. Tom Wilson, Mr. Jack Wilson, Mr. Martin Watson, and Mr. Cannon, and five courts in Belmont. It was speculated in the Hall family and the larger community that Basil Robinson probably came from money and was perhaps a "remittance man," as his lifestyle interests were those generally associated with people of means. For example, he had a fascination with, and dedication to, the breeding of thoroughbred horses, sheep and cattle[66] and for a time organized sport hunting, maintaining a pack of hounds for hunting coyotes.[67]

William Henry Smith and Sarah Agnes Smith

Ivy's parents
Sarah Agnes (Mortimer) Smith and William Henry Smith

Doreen remembers Ivy's parents living with her family for a time when she was young and her father, George Hall, converting a granary near the house into a primitive "cottage" that was fixed up to give them a little privacy in the summer time. Clearly the senior Smiths while in Canada were totally reliant on their children and in-laws for their support, as it would appear they brought no savings or pension.

Melvin remembers:

> *Mom had brought over her mother and dad from England. Grandfather William Smith had heavy-duty rheumatism and always walked with crutches. I can also remember him in the summertime sitting on the north side of our house with his shotgun ready to shoot the crows that used to pick up the little chickens that mother raised. Mom thought this was OK because he loved to shoot and if a crow happened to venture by it was my grandfather's job to protect those chickens by shooting that crow. He was quite a gentleman. He loved to sing and what a great storyteller he was to the young kids. He would have them in awe while he was telling them some wild story. I was a little suspicious that he did smoke a cigarette once in a while. Now Dad was totally death on drinking and smoking but I was suspicious, but really had no evidence, that Mom seen that her father had some tobacco on occasion. That is a story that I cannot verify.*

Joe Deedman remembers:

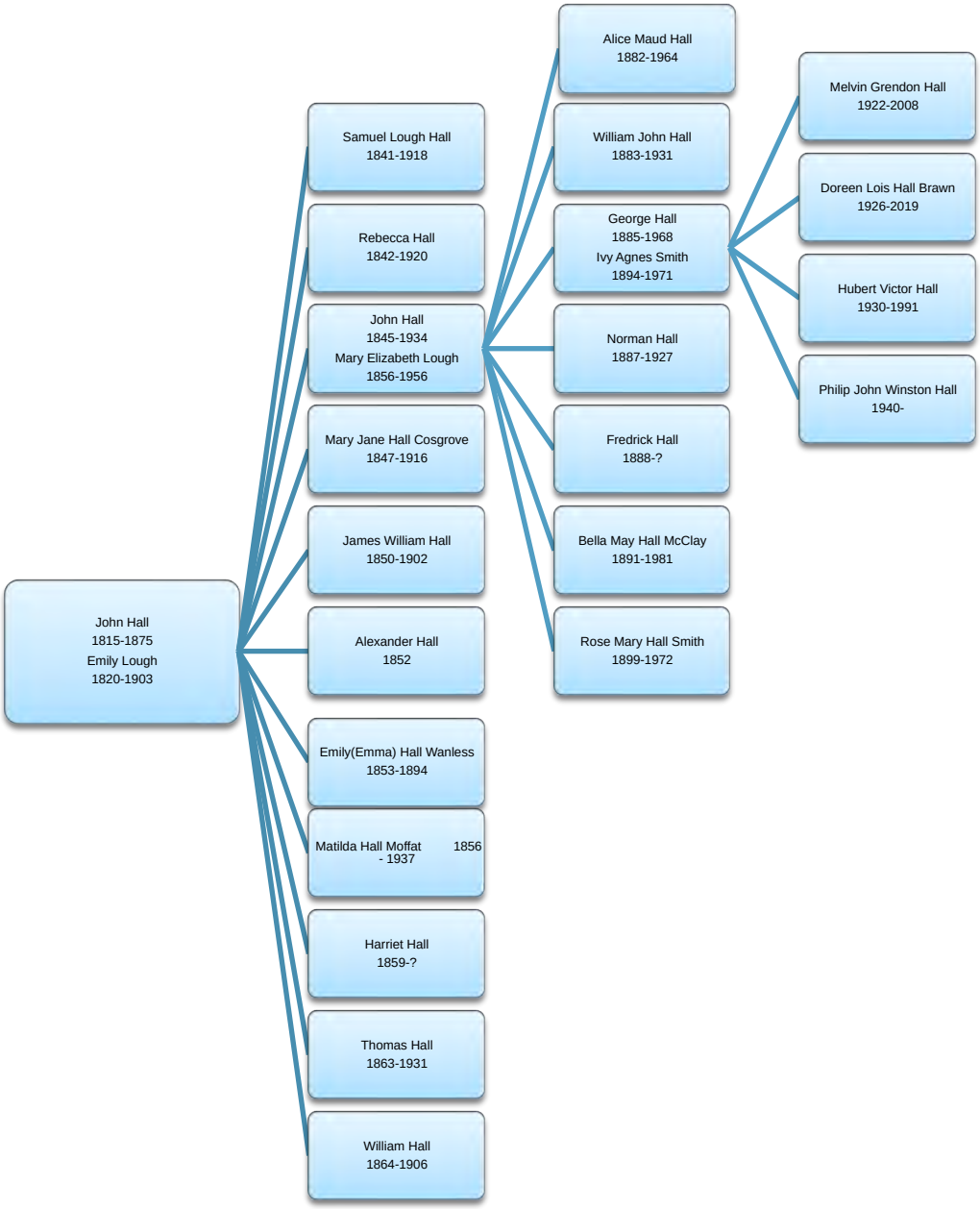
> *I'll tell you a little story about Ivy's mother. This happened in 1934. It was in thrashing time. I was running the McGill thrashing outfit that fall for them. I got off early in the morning. I was supposed to go down there and have breakfast so I gets up a little before five o'clock. The first thing that I done when I got up in the morning was to go to the gate to see that none of my stock was in my stooks before I went to work. So here I was, I looks out. Just south of the house you go out about fifty yards and there's a wide-open field. So, I went up to the gate there and see a lady at five o'clock in the morning come struggling down through the stooks. She was close enough I could see she was a lady, so I went to meet her. I knew her well as they just lived a mile from us. When I got close to her I seen who it was. I said "Mrs. Smith, you've been out all night, eh?" I could tell as she was all covered with chaff she had slept in the straw stack. She had got lost, you see. She had gone to Ivy's. They lived across the road from Ivy's. But when she went to go home, she missed her house, or something, and just wandered.*

In the photographs of Ivy's mother, Agnes is invariably wearing a dress or coat that covers as much of her neck as possible. Doreen explained that Agnes suffered from goitre, a disease of the thyroid gland that causes a swelling of the neck and was at that time not easily treated as it is now.

Both of Ivy's parents died in 1938 at age 75, after living in Manitoba for 11 years. The funeral of Sarah Agnes Smith was held May 28th, with William's coming approximately six weeks later - on July 11th. At the time of their respective deaths they were residing on the SW ¼ 28-4-15 WPM with Ivy and George. Both William and Agnes Smith are interred in the Hillside Cemetery, Belmont.

Sarah Agnes Smith

CHAPTER 11: THE CHILDREN OF GEORGE HALL AND IVY AGNES SMITH HALL



Melvin Grendon Hall and Doreen Lois Hall

Melvin Grendon Hall 1922 - 2008 and Lila Jean Hodgkinson 1926 -
Parents of:
Joan Christina Hall 1947 -
Dennis Wayne Hall 1948 -
Warren Bruce Hall 1953 -
Wallace Melvin Hall 1959 -
Janice Adele Hall 1969 -

Doreen Lois Hall 1926 - 2019 and Charles Roland Brawn 1923 - 2017
Parents of:
Gary Douglas Brawn 1946 -
Roland Dale Brawn 1948 -

As eighteen years separate the birth dates of George and Ivy's oldest and youngest children, their experiences growing up varied widely. As Melvin and Doreen Hall were only four years less one month apart in age and shared many of their childhood experiences, it is convenient to canvass some of their memories jointly.

Ivy Agnes Hall and first-born child, Melvin Grendon Hall

George and Ivy's first child, Melvin Grendon Hall, was born on September 13, 1922 at the family's home on the SE ¼ 28-4-15 WPM. It was a difficult delivery extending over two days. Dr. W. F. Stevenson attended on Ivy for this first pregnancy and birth.

When, four years later, Ivy and Dr. Stevenson discussed the plans for the delivery of George and Ivy's second child into the world, it was decided arrangements would be made for the birth to occur in Belmont, both to accommodate the doctor and hopefully to guarantee his presence in case the next child's arrival was characterized by the same level of pain and worry as was associated with Melvin's birth. Happily, especially for Ivy, the birth of Doreen Lois Hall was relatively straightforward. As there was no hospital or clinic in Belmont, at the appointed time Ivy settled herself in the home in Belmont of George's parents, John and Elizabeth Hall, and Doreen was born there on October 12, 1926.

Melvin Hall with mother, Ivy Hall, June 192

Life on the farm for Melvin, Doreen and Hubert Hall

As was typical of farm families, George Hall, as male head of the household, kept busy with his outdoor chores and farming obligations, while Ivy took charge of gardening, cooking, cleaning, mending, and generally dealing with whatever challenges the day brought to her in or around the home. Doreen doesn't remember having specific household duties as a child, but is confident her mother would not have tolerated any child in the home simply drifting through the day. Doreen recollects that for the most part Ivy considered Doreen's primary obligation was as a "gofer." This was, however, both time-consuming and physically demanding.

As electric power was not available in that part of rural Manitoba for more than 20 years after Doreen's birth, Ivy was compelled to do all of her cooking and baking on a wood range, necessitating endless trips outside by Melvin or Doreen, and later, Hubert, to bring in firewood and carry out ashes. Water had to be lugged from the well for both the needs of the household and the animals, a chore also left to the children if they were around. All of Ivy's meal preparations meant standing in front of the hot stove over four burners juggling all of the pots and pans required to provide a hearty, nutritious "made from scratch" meal for her hungry family and often a hired man.

What Doreen found when she got home from school depended on the season. In the winter, her mother would be busy in the kitchen preparing supper and, more often than not, taking freshly baked loaves of bread or cinnamon buns out of the oven. The smell of fresh bread trumped all other kitchen aromas. Ivy made her bread in round pans and Doreen's favourite treat was a piece of the crust with fresh home-made butter.

Evenings in a Manitoba farm home in the 1920's and '30's brought challenges. The only illumination to be had was from kerosene lamps, which provided barely 25 watts of light. Nonetheless, Ivy would spend time most evenings engrossed in her favourite pastimes such as sewing, knitting, quilting or hooking a rug. Although he enjoyed "puttering," George was not a hobbyist and his preferred relaxation, if there was sufficient light, would be reading his bible, or perhaps the Belmont News.

During winter days George would be busy with the livestock - watering, feeding, and of course cleaning the manure out of the barn and hauling it away. Milking was a regular evening chore shared by most of the family at various times, following which the milk would have to be separated and the separator washed.

George was responsible for looking after his horses, in which he took great pride, which meant hauling feed and water, maintaining harness and other barn chores. When the Hall family went to town it was always with horses pulling a buggy, sleigh or cutter, depending on the season. George would often have the harness on the horses decorated with ribbons, the horses' tails and manes braided and with bells ringing merrily.

"Off to Town"

Almost all rural homes had an outdoor toilet for use if the weather was suitable. In the winter, however, it was customary to have a chamber pot in each bedroom. This was much to be preferred to having to trudge through the snow to the outhouse in the middle of the night, but the pots did have to be emptied every day - a chore usually left to the parents in the Hall home. When eventually Doreen, and later her parents, moved from the farm, by far the most enjoyable indulgence of city living was indoor plumbing.

As spring approached, Ivy would busy herself getting ready to supervise the hatching of both chicken and turkey eggs, as selling eggs, chicks, and, in the fall, the adult birds, was her most significant source of personal income. She was an aggressive saleswoman and willing to advertise. For example, The Belmont News

> April 11, 1935: Local News - *For Sale Pure bred baby chicks White Leg Horns and Rocks to hatch about May 1st. Price per 100 $7.50. Mrs. George Hall. Phone or leave your orders with Mrs. John Hall, Belmont*

> and April 22, 1937: *CHICKS! CHICKS! Order your CHICKS now and get a free package of Chrystals with every 100 chicks, very effective when put in drinking water for baby chicks. Orders filled in rotation. Prices reasonable. Mrs. G. Hall*

Of course, the family would also rely on these products of Ivy's commercial endeavours for their own use and benefit.

Melvin recalls:

> *In those days, there would always be someone who came around with an old truck loaded with trade goods. It could be apples or oranges or some clothes and he would take trade for batteries, chickens or whatever you had. Mom would seize this as an opportunity to get rid of her non-layer chickens. The dealer would have a hook and he would grab a chicken. Mom would not allow that hen to leave the farm until she had inspected it to see whether it was a layer or not. Apparently by feeling around where the eggs were supposed to come from, she could tell if this was a free loader. If so, it did not have a home there, so she let the buyer have it. She was good at that and I think she loved to wheel and deal with that guy.*
>
> *Something I was not thrilled with was that in the good part of our house on the upstairs floor Mom took to raising chickens. In order to have chickens to sell, she had at least three incubators there, and she bought special eggs from bona fide Barred Rock and Leghorn people and then she sold these chickens so much a hundred. I hated the smell of those incubators because I slept up there. It's maybe why I turned against hens, but Mom actually made a living out of that and she took it very, very serious.*
>
> *Mom also went into raising purebred broad breasted turkeys. She apparently got eggs from some person who had these great turkeys and she raised turkeys as well in that incubator. Mom was very protective of those chickens and turkeys and any livestock she had around.*

George's principal spring preoccupation would be fieldwork - preparing the ground and then sowing crops. When he was unable to work in the fields, he would keep busy with the usual maintenance chores common to every farm. There were always fences and buildings to be repaired, and Ivy always had a "to do" list, which might include making chicken or turkey pens, or decorative improvements to the inside of their house.

If Ivy seemed busy to her children in the winter, in summer she was even more so. In addition to her year-round responsibilities such as cooking and cleaning, she now had her chickens and turkeys and a very large garden demanding her time and attention. George would cultivate the garden and when Ivy and the children planted potatoes he would go ahead of them ploughing a furrow. They would follow,

dropping the potatoes to be covered by the next furrow. George always admonished Melvin and Doreen, firmly but with a quiet smile, to be sure and plant them with the eyes up to be certain they grew in the right direction.

As Melvin relates:

My father was a quiet man who enjoyed farming. He raised cattle and a few pigs – and tolerated the chickens that mother raised. Like most farmers at that time, my parents milked cows and I'm sure it took all the cream and egg cheques to sustain the family. There were no electricity or water systems on our farm in those days. My father would cut ice from Pelican Lake during the winter and put it in an ice house so that they could keep the cream cool in the summer.

Mother worked very hard on the farm. Saskatoons were plentiful and Mother would pick and preserve about 300 quarts for the winter, mixing some with rhubarb for variety. We had no cistern on the farm so mother had barrels at the corners of the house to catch rain water.

Dad introduced me to all of the farm work at a very early age. He had a great trust in me and I remember very well I was seeding with four horses and I had had special instructions to make a round on what we called that big quarter, a half mile up and a half mile back and rest the horses for a required time. I got to thinking if I could cut down that rest time a wee little bit I could maybe sneak in another round in a half day. So, after thinking about this for a while, I did just that and I put in an extra round. I was fairly happy with myself until I reported to Dad what I had done. He was less than pleased as he explained to me that if you got those horses over-heated they would have sore shoulders and then they were through for the season. Actually, he was right but it certainly did kill my desire for speeding up the process.

I remember Dad having a Model L Case tractor on steel wheels and he trusted me on that thing with the one-way we had. We would go around and around that big field. He was a wee bit ahead of his time in lots of things because on this one-way he had put a seeder box on and he seeded a crop with that which turned out very well.

I guess what kept us in food and money and what have you was we had the standard mixed farm. I think our family milked about 12 cows and we had some chicks which Dad did not like. He always felt they were eating too much grain but then a pig or two and milking cows were not what I really relished. Of course, on a farm you have livestock. Yes, they are kept in a barn. The barn has to be cleaned out and in those days we had a stone boat on which the manure from the cattle and horses that had been put in the barn was piled real high. It was the summer time and I had come from the field with our four-horse team and had the job of hooking up the team to the stone boat and clearing off the manure. Dad wasn't great for beautification around the yard so we had a manure pile on the south side of our yard and several smaller piles of manure that had been thrown off. As I began moving the stone

boat, I decided I did not want to throw the manure off with a fork and had a thought. I determined I was going to use my head. I looked for the highest pile I could find. I decided to drive these horses over this big pile and was certain that when the stone boat hit that big pile it would tip and off would go the manure. The plan didn't work.

When we hit that manure pile, I discovered it was all soft. We had a horse I remember well and its name was Belle. She had legs that must have been arthritic or something because as soon as we hit that soft pile she fell down. In doing so she naturally pulled against the horses on either side of her. The lines and harness were broke and anyway it was quite a mess. I will never forget what Dad said when he came to look at the situation. He very rarely ever reprimanded anybody but when he looked at the mess that I had got into his remark was "How can one guy get into so much trouble?" He was right. It's just another case of lack of good sense, I guess.

I have no memories of my feelings about us being the only family living in a log house except I knew we were poor. Mother must have done a lot of work inside to make it livable. In the fall, Dad put manure all around the bottom of the log portion to assist in keeping the cold out. I remember on a cold night some frost would appear on the upper inside corner of the log portion. We had a cook stove in the log section of the house and a heater in the newer part of the house. During the winter mother stayed up late knitting. She would fill up the stove with wood so it would put out heat most of the night.

Doreen is adamant she had no sense as a child of being disadvantaged in any way. Perhaps objectively the Hall home was somewhat more primitive in its construction than the homes of most of their neighbours, but the challenges to daily living were shared by all. Although most settlers in the Belmont area had telephones by the end of the first decade of the 20th Century,[68] electricity was not available to be hooked up to farm sites in that municipality until approximately 1948, by which time Doreen had moved away.

Doreen:

My mother was the "mover and the shaker" in the relationship. There was nothing she felt she couldn't do. My father as a farm boy loved cattle and all aspects of farming. In my memory of my time at home, I never heard them say a cranky word to one another. There would, however, from time to time be periods of silence. I remember on occasion my mother, who did not drive a car, would say to me "Doreen, let's go for a ride." Then she would hook up the horse to the buggy and we would end up at a neighbour's place, where we would stay for tea or supper. She never said she had to get away from home, or perhaps from a disagreement with my father. She just said we would go for a ride, but I always suspected she was giving my father the message that if he didn't like something in her realm, like a certain meal she had made, he could do it himself.

My mother loved people. I think she was wasted on the farm, which was a shame. I think she had a lot to give. To show how ambitious she was, when they finally moved to Brandon, and I believe she was in her sixties, she got a job working at the mental hospital. Why would she have done that?

Mother and Dad were careful to be fair in everything. My father had the reputation of being prepared "to give the shirt off his back" for anybody, and I think he often was unusually generous.

Murray Williamson, a childhood neighbour, friend and classmate of Melvin's, recalled:[69]

I remember staying over at the Halls with Melvin as a kind of holiday. Ivy was very kind to me. I remember George gave me a pony to ride to school. He said he wanted me to have it for the winter, as Doreen was old enough they could take the horse in the cutter. He said "well, the pony is doing no good where it is." No, Mr. Hall was good to me.

Melvin relates:

My early memories relate to the normal childhood sicknesses, although I did have a finger crushed in a pump jack because of a childhood stupidity on my part. I also had an appendicitis attack in that five to eight-year-old range. I was taken to Brandon and operated on. Of course, in those days they didn't have penicillin or other miracle drugs. My mother always said that she thought that I was not going to make it. She always thought that it was her deep faith that brought me through. I did survive of course and was left with a fairly substantial scar on my right side.

I don't have many memories of the SW 1/4 of 28-4-15. It appears as if my father had lost that farm. I guess he was buying it from a person and he couldn't make the payments. I remember our family moving north onto what we used to call the Lawson Farm.[70] We spent quite a bit of time there.[71]

The farm where Melvin was born was the farm where the Hall family was living at the time of Doreen's birth four years later. The story of George losing this farm was important in the Hall family, but not much discussed.

Doreen recollected family life was much more pleasant on this property than on the "Lawson" property to which they later moved and that was closer to the highway although somewhat isolated in the bush. After a few years, there the family moved back to what they considered the "homestead." Doreen remembers:

Although that home was the one in which we lived the longest, I can remember living as a child on three different homesteads. One was straight east and one was north of where we lived for the longest time. I don't remember the reasons for these moves but at least one of the moves resulted because of my parents building a substantial extension on our house, which required that we use temporary alternate accommodations. I have an early memory of my mother expressing great concern when we lived in one of these homes about the fact our yard site was surrounded by much bush, as she was worried I could wander off and become lost.

I think I was about seven or eight when we moved into the renovated home. The new section had two stories, with what we thought of as a huge room upstairs and a huge room downstairs. The older part of the house was a "homestead" house, which had logs on the outside, but which was finished on the inside. Over the main floor of the old log house were two bedrooms. One was a small room at the top of the stairs, which was my bedroom, and the other was back further and a little larger, which was the bedroom of Melvin and Hubert. Mother and Dad slept downstairs.

The Hall homestead (after renovation)

Through the first several decades of farming in the Belmont district, crop yields varied widely from year to year, and of course the price obtained for the grains produced was similarly varied. From all reports George was a good, careful, hard-working and creative farmer, but he was not immune to the vagaries of weather and markets.

As an example, and as Joe Deedman recollected:

> *In the early days, there was a car dealer in Ninette, his name was Charlie Calverley, and he was the Ford Dealer and had the Model T and the price was $495, brand new. You know I seen in 1917, the First World War was on, and there was a labour shortage so there was some acres the farmers couldn't get it in because there were no men. There were lots of horses but nobody to drive them. So, they were afraid we were going to run out of wheat so we had a bullish market here on the wheat. Wheat went to $3.80 a bushel, pretty near. And what do you think happened. There was so much money floating around. At that price 150 bushels of wheat would have bought you a new automobile. And there were people who bought cars. Lots of them bought cars. As soon as they got the crop off and with the better conditions through harvest time, the market just plummeted back to what it was, it just went down. There was a lot of people that built barns, bought automobiles. There is such a difference. A dollar then was as much as $10 today and much more in some cases.*

On the reverse side, as Melvin states:

> *1935 had been one of the wettest years at that time in the area and Dad was going to make it big I guess. He had some farmland rented from a person called Norman Smith. Dad had planted around two hundred and twenty-five acres of wheat but it was with what they called the old Marquis wheat. It turned out that rust hit all of the wheat crops that year and it wasn't actually worth harvesting so that entire crop was burned. It must have been heartbreaking.*

Birthdays, Christmas and other special occasions

Even if the Hall family's finances were stretched as thin as possible, there were still certain social activities that were felt to be too important to miss.

For example, as Melvin states:

> *The Brandon Fair was another thing that was fairly important in our younger days. Monday was always called 'Children's Day' and my Aunt Alice conscripted Uncle Tom McClay who had the big car and he took us in to Brandon Fair. Somebody had lunch ready and we used to sit underneath those trees and have lunch.*

On special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas, the giving of gifts was considered important, but the gifts themselves were generally modest. Ivy's gifts were

generally homemade, and more times than not either socks or mitts, and only rarely (and likely then only by accident) matching. Melvin remembers:

> *Mother was a great knitter and we had to hang up our socks on Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning, there would be an orange and candies and a few things like that and likely a game of snakes and ladders or some similar game. We could count on a pair of socks and a pair of mitts that Mom would faithfully knit, mostly in the evening while she had been stoking up the fire to keep us from freezing. Anyhow she was very good at that but as years went by and we got older she would get into the knitting with lots of enthusiasm but little regard for quality control. We would still get a pair of woolen mitts but on occasion one would be the right size, the other quite a bit longer. Mom was not going to take the time to unwind that situation at all. So, we always had a bit of a joke with Mom about her knitting ability.*

Fun on the farm

Melvin also describes a number of other activities that, at little or no expense, occupied his limited free time.

> *As a youngster, there seemed like there was always a need for a few extra cents. We used to trap gophers and, if you could take the gopher's tail into the municipal office where I think you got a cent a tail or something like that, it was a source of revenue.*[72]

> *Of course, every boy had to have a .22 and I can recall straight east of our old home there was a lot of bush, actually pasture, and I took this .22 out in the middle of the summer and, gosh, I went and shot a deer. Well I went back and reported it to Dad, who was very unhappy, but in order to save the meat we dragged the thing home and took it into a granary and skinned it and did what we had to do.*

> *I think we were both nervous, especially Dad. I guess as a kid I didn't have enough brains to know what I had done but as the leaves hit the roof of that granary Dad would be startled because I think we expected policemen to surround us and give us heck, if not jail, for doing what we had done.*

> *As a young boy on the farm there wasn't a lot of activity. I think we did have a radio but there were of course no TVs, so you actually worked on your own amusement. I used to have a sponge ball and I would spend hours throwing it against a granary to create grounders and flies. I would do that for a long, long time.*

According to Doreen:

Because of the four-year difference in our ages, Melvin and I generally did not rely on each other socially or recreationally. Although, as with most farm families from the period, we had to make fun where we found it, Melvin had his chores and our father came over the years to rely more and more on him. Melvin and I do, however, share a memory of one incident occurring in spring when I was about 11, Hubert three years younger, and Melvin about four years older. They had built a raft and said "Come on, we're going to show you how to raft." The rafting was to take place on our slough, which was largely shallow but had a deep section.

Before we embarked, they explained I could not come on their raft, but rather would have a raft of my own, which turned out not to be so well constructed or as stable. Melvin said we must paddle over to the section that had trees and that also happened to be in the deep section of the slough. I was skeptical but agreed.

As soon as we were over the deep section they started to wobble my craft. But I am and was a very determined person and I resolved not to go into that water. They had their fun and finally I said, "Are you finished? Because I'm not going in that water." I am not sure what further words were exchanged, but I did not go in the water.

Melvin's version is:

I took the idea one day that I was going to make a raft so I got a couple of long trees or telephone poles or something and created a raft. Well that wasn't much fun so I got some more material and created another raft. Now I've got two rafts. What am I going to do? So, I encouraged Doreen to come out on this huge slough on this raft. I doubt if the slough was deeper than a foot, maybe a foot and a half and we are out in the middle of this slough and I suggested we might as well have a war game or something like that where we would attack the other raft.

As I recall (Doreen may have a different story), I leapt from my raft onto hers, it wiggled and jumped around. She leapt off her raft but went running across the slough. And I don't know what she said. There were some noises coming from her but I'm not sure what she said. I don't think Dad thought that was a wonderful trick to play on your sister; however, it was done.

Just recently Doreen mentioned to me that she can never remember her mother actually ordering her to do different things like specific chores around the home. Well now that I thought about this, she didn't have to do anything. I did the churning; it was my job to babysit Hubert. I can remember I had to have the wood in the house for the fires at night and that's just a memory until now had slipped through my mind. Now does that even out the little deal we had on the slough with that raft I made? I'm not sure but I'll let Doreen decide on that.

Alma School

Alma School

Melvin:

> *My first memory of Alma School was when Glen Stephenson and Murray Williamson and I first went to school. It must have been at Easter time and a pre-registration but my memory is that there was a slough north-east of the school, which had frozen over with ice, and when the bell rang Ivan Wanless and I believe Clarence Nicholson grabbed us kids and put us on their shoulders and ran back to the School. Alma school at that time had around 32, 33 children.*
>
> *Miss Anne Hawn[73] was the teacher during my education. I think we children didn't realize how good she was until we grew up and had a brain or two. She was very generous with the strap that the Department of Education had supplied to all schools. It seemed as if there was always someone who did something that warranted being taken out to the porch and given a strap on the hand. She was always very fair about this. She picked out the person she thought was the villain and maybe picked out one or two on either side just to make sure that she got the right one. This was Anne Hawn. She was loved by the parents.*

Clearly Miss Hawn made a very significant and positive impression on Melvin. Although she was also Doreen's first teacher, and Doreen would have been very much predisposed toward her, Miss Hawn was not a person to whom Doreen warmed very easily. Perhaps it was that strap, although Doreen claims to have no memory of it being used on her.

The Alma School records, primarily related to attendance, are being carefully tended by the Belmont Museum, and note Ms. Hawn received $500 per year for fulfilling her teaching obligations and had a Grade II teaching certificate, which indicates she had a grade 12 education that did not put her, by age or education, much in advance of her more senior students. This was not unusual for rural schools in Manitoba.

Melvin continues:

> *We had the normal Christmas concerts that were at schools in those days. I remember being part of that concert as a very small boy. Murray Williamson, Glen Stephenson and I were supposed to come in as the three kings. There was a doll in a crib. I guess it was supposed to be baby Jesus and Miss Hawn was going to play the piano. When she played the chord, we were supposed to start "We Three Kings of Orient Are." When we looked out on what we thought was a tremendous audience, we simply went blank and there wasn't a word came out of our mouth. Miss Hawn, as she always did, protected her kids. She just hit the piano a little harder and covered for us. There didn't appear to be any consequences of that. She never said a word. I guess she knew that we weren't too great.*
>
> *Later on, as the kids got into grade seven or eight there was always one child that would be the fireman for the winter and Miss Hawn used this to further our education by requiring us to write an application for this job. I recall, of course, writing an application and I put in for 15 cents a day. This was a fairly important job. It entailed being responsible because we had to have that school warm by the time the kids and Miss Hawn arrived. The job was to have kindling ready and anyhow I think that I did a fair job. After the season was over, I was able to pocket 13 dollars. This 13 dollars was put into a Bank of Montreal chequing account and I guess I thought that I had made it in the financial world.*
>
> *Another important reason to have that furnace doing a good job was that during the winter we had been encouraged to take a potato and put it on the ledge in front of the firebox and it would be ready by noon. Of course, to identify these potatoes we put an initial or some secret mark that we had. At noon when we opened the door these potatoes would be cooked just perfect and what a delight it was to have that nice warm potato for lunch in the wintertime. I have no memories of any disaster occurring with those potatoes such as going into the fire. We must have placed them all very carefully.*
>
> *At Alma School, there was always a fairly good softball team that Miss Hawn really supported. We went to field days and what have you. Miss Hawn would always conscript somebody to be sure that our kids were provided a ride to wherever this sports day was going to be. Mr. Herb Moffatt was our neighbour and he had a Model A green Ford and I requested that I go with him since I lived close to his farm. I think my main reason for wanting to go with Mr. Moffatt was that when he got out on the road he really wound up that Model A car. I think he got it screaming along at about 45 miles an hour, but that was OK.*

On another occasion Miss Hawn conscripted Dave Maloney who had a grain truck. All we kids piled into that truck and were taken to the location of this field day. Our teacher was an unbelievable supporter of this event. We again were fairly good. At least we thought we were and often came home as the winner. Some of the guys who went to Alma school went on play hardball. I'm particularly thinking of Glen Stephenson who was a schoolmate of mine. He went with the hardball team called the Belmont "A's" and they did very, very good. Harvey Williamson was also there.

Alma School was built in 1881 and was closed in 1970, following which they had a great reunion at the school with a huge turnout and much sharing of both good memories and sad memories. The Alma School for a long period was important for the community. It was used for church services and meetings. We never did realize how important Alma School was until we grew up and got a couple of brains. I sometimes drive by and have memories.

A much-anticipated community activity at Alma School was the annual fowl supper.[74] The emphasis was on "fowl" and deservedly so, but for many the culinary crescendo reached its peak at the dessert table with its wide variety of mouth-watering pies and cakes. A guest might reasonably conclude that every woman in the district was skilled in the kitchen as well as generous with her contribution to the feast.

As Melvin states:

Fowl suppers were a big thing at Alma School. People used to come from miles to go to the fowl suppers. Apparently, the ladies of the community were noted for the best pies and whatever goes with them. I remember this very well. There was no limit on how many pieces of pie you could eat. I think there were some great pie eaters who boasted about how many pieces of pie they could eat.

According to Doreen:

Alma School was approximately two and a half miles from the homestead we lived in for the longest time. When weather permitted, my brothers and I would generally walk to school, although not necessarily together. Sometimes I would ride horseback. Mother often had very fine horses that she acquired through her sister, Maud, who, with her husband, Basil Robinson, was involved with horse racing in Winnipeg. My mother would of course pay for these horses. For the most part, though, we would walk to school. In the wintertime, we would use a covered sleigh that my father had built. My father never drove us, so for the most part Melvin had that responsibility. We would pick up the next door neighbour, Jimmy Moffatt, who lived perhaps a half mile away across a field, and who was in the same grade as me. On our return, we would let him off first.

Melvin states:

> *I had forgotten how some of the families got to school. Sometimes we walked. I remember having a pony called Jimmy who sometimes made up his own mind whether he was going to go or not. We also had a cutter and a horse that had been a former racehorse called Prince. He was an unbelievable horse. I remember pulling up to the Alma school and if Doreen wasn't right there to jump into that cutter Prince would be standing up on his rear legs ready to take off just as he did at the starting gate at a race. But as soon as Doreen got into the cutter I let him go and he just went like the wind for a hundred or two hundred feet and then he wasn't all that excited about going fast. He had been a pacer, which meant traveling in snow at any speed was not great for him.*
>
> *Later on, Dad built a van and, as the good Samaritan that he was, he had decided that I was now old enough to hook the team up to this van and pick up the Moffatt kids, go to pick up some of the Ab Chambers kids and then to school. This went all winter until there was no sleighing. Usually on the last day that I dropped the kids off at Moffatts, Mr. Herb Moffatt would come out with a pail of honey that was my reward for picking up the kids.*
>
> *Mrs. Moffatt used to bring the most decorated cake to the Valentine's party. Of course, Miss Hawn again would organize a Valentine's Day party and we all looked in awe when Mrs. Moffatt's cake approached.*

Importance of the extended family and neighbours

Melvin recalls:

> *In our earlier years, there of course was the McClay family and the Ted Smith family and George Hall family and Grandma Hall and every Christmas and New Year's Day someone made arrangements to have the festivities at their place. One Christmas it could be at McClays and New Years at Ted Smith's and so on and of course when you get a bunch of kids, and there was a lot at that time, they are playing cards and what have you and they start getting fairly boisterous. Dad was never comfortable when cards were being played because it seemed as if, especially at Christmas time, it was really the birth of Christ we were supposed to be celebrating and all this hollering and yelling and this stuff didn't seem to be what Dad thought it was meant to be.*
>
> *I don't know whether the fact he liked it or not made much difference but it was an opinion he had. I think everyone thought Dad was a good man. He was very, very good farmer and extremely quiet man. I guess my mother perhaps made up for that. However, they seemed to have survived together for a long, long time.*

Edie Smith, Percy Smith, Rose McClay, Tom McClay, Ivy Hall and George Hall

Doreen remembers:

> *My earliest sense of my parents was that they were very gentle people and placed a great emphasis on family. My father was very reserved, probably shy. My mother came from a family that, when they got together, had much exuberant, noisy fun. And that carried over to the next generation. It was a happy event when the cousins could get together.*

Back: Doreen Hall, Eileen Smith, Hubert Hall
Front: Joyce Smith and Gertie McClay

For Melvin, Doreen and Hubert, farm life was not all work. There were frequent visits and playtime with cousins and neighbour children.

Doreen Hall on right with neighbour friends Irene and Joyce Stephenson

An enjoyable and much anticipated break from regular summer chores for children in the extended family and opportunity for get-togethers were picnics, ball tournaments and the Brandon Fair. Aunt Alice, Ivy and others would make sure food and refreshments were available in abundance.

Eileen Smith, Joyce Smith, Philip Hall and Hubert Hall

Doreen remembers:

> *During this period of my life I was very aware of how interdependent we and the neighbours were. Many were relatives, but, regardless, almost all lived by the principle that it was a moral obligation and a pleasure to cooperate and to help each other. For example, our family cooperated in a "beef ring," which was based on the notion that those who agreed to be part of the group of contributors/beneficiaries would take turns, following an established schedule, to deliver a beef animal to a designated butcher, with the meat to be subsequently shared.*

As Melvin recollects:

> *You could either have a full share or a half share. If you had the full share, it was your job to provide an animal of a certain quality to be butchered and that animal would be cut into portions and the appropriate share of meat put into bags that had been hanging on the wall. It was a little bit the luck of the draw because on some weeks you would get a cut that wasn't the best cut on the animal but it's what you had. If you had a half share you hoped that the person that had the other half put in a good animal when it was his turn. It did provide real fresh meat for us as we had no refrigeration.*

The Hall family's approach to religion

Doreen:

> *I don't think of my parents' religious commitment coming primarily from just one of them. I don't remember either one of them saying, "This is what we're going to do." I just had the sense they had a shared faith. That's all I can remember about it. My parents were always religious people, although they came to their religious beliefs from different backgrounds. On first arriving in the district, my father and his relatives were Presbyterians; my mother and her family were Church of England. During my years with my parents, there was never a nearby formal church of any denomination to attend, but church services were held regularly at Alma School.*[75] *We always went to church service on Sundays, no matter how busy we were.*
>
> *For a considerable period of my childhood, the minister was T.B. Pearson of the United Church, father to Eileen Gowing and Myra Pearson. At some point my family switched from the United Church service held at Alma School to the services held at the Mount Hope School by a Pentecostal oriented preacher (I believe unordained) by name of Carl Mabon, a neighbour in the district. How and why our family made that switch I do not know, but thereafter we supported the Pentecostal church*

In 1925 the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists reached agreement to amalgamate (the "Union") under the banner of the United Church. From 1898 until Union the Sunday services at the Alma School were conducted by Presbyterian clergy. It could be that George, with his Presbyterian background, wanted religious direction that was more "fundamental" than what was offered by the United Church.

Rev. Thomas B. and Mrs. Bessie Pe

George and Ivy (together with George's sisters) were very serious about their dedication to the Pentecostal Church, and through them Doreen, Hubert and Philip also made a personal commitment to support of that church's teaching. Ivy was always the most evangelical of the family in promoting commitment to her religion. Her existing diaries are from her Brandon period and are full of entries concerning her attendance at various church services and activities, both at Bethel Temple and at the Salvation Army. She also makes periodic reference to her observation of the patterns of attendance of other family members, most particularly Doreen and her family.

Ivy's niece, Margaret Graham (daughter of Maud), remembers seeing Ivy being chauffeured up the lane to the Robinson farm home, and her father commenting from the window, as he identified their guest, that they must all be on their best behaviour, and to gird their loins to receive helpful suggestions on leading a "Christian" life.

George and Ivy were quite religious, but Ivy was also very superstitious. Melvin relates an example of this:

> *Dad unfortunately was plagued with ulcers, especially towards the end of his life. I remember one unbelievably cold winter night. We, like every other farm family, of course had a dog and Dad was in bed and Mom was reading as she always did - a Home Loving Hearts or some article in the paper, and this dog started into the howling and my Mom made a gasp and she said "Oh, that is a warning, that means there is going to be a death in the family." Happily, it turned out that wasn't true but anyway it did startle us for a little while.*

In the diaries kept by Ivy for the last decade of her life, there are many references to being awakened in the night by a knocking, which she was convinced forecast a tragic event. She was quite open in discussing her deep belief in the truth of these "foretellings." Ivy's sister, Maud, also had a belief in the supernatural, and claimed a gift for reading tea leaves. If George shared these notions, he kept his opinion to himself.

Melvin leaves school

Melvin:

> *I stopped going to school when I was in grade nine. I believe I thought it would be best for me to stay at home, maybe because I just didn't like the trouble of going to school, I'm not sure. But something I do remember is that when I told Dad I was going to quit school he responded in a very wise manner when he said to me "Now listen, you're doing this on your own. I never want you to come back and say that I took you out of school." I've always remembered that and I thought that was good.*
>
> *However, there I am out of school and we have neighbours by the name of Pinkerton and they had a few older sheep. Dad thought it might be good for me if I was to take these sheep of Mr. Pinkerton on shares. They were older sheep and I thought that maybe there was an opportunity for me to get into the sheep business. I think the deal was half shares. We had great luck. Normally sheep would have their young in around February and I guess I had done a real good job. A neighbour by the name of Garnet Thring[76] had a whole bunch of sheep; I think there was about 65. He asked Dad if maybe I would be interested in taking them on shares. Well I'm now in the sheep business and I guess I figure here's an expanded opportunity so I took them on shares as well. I was doing fairly good with sheep even though they are the stupidest animal that ever was created.*
>
> *When they were lambing a lot of them would have twins. We always hoped they would have twins because that meant you got more on your share, but it wasn't unusual for a mother sheep to have one and then move some distance and have the other one and then forget she had the first one or abandon it, I never was sure. I do remember getting up every night. I don't know how old I was, maybe 15, 16 maybe up to 17, I'm not sure, but we did not have great housing facilities for these sheep. I think there were straw sheds and I used to get up in lambing time to check out that everything was OK. This particular night that I went out I could see that there was a sheep having a fair amount of trouble lambing so I hung around for a while and it became obvious that this lamb was not going to be born so I rolled up my sleeves and undertook to be the first Vet in the Hall family. I went inside the old sheep to explore what was wrong and the legs were all crossways and I got that all straightened out and lo and behold we now have another lamb. I was kind of pleased with this but I don't know whether the family ever heard about it. Likely I told them. I'm not sure.*

We finally got a herd of lambs and Garnet Thring decided we were going to take some of these lambs to sell in Winnipeg, so we loaded up a load of these lambs. I'm looking forward to this but I don't think too many of them were mine because I was building up a herd and was keeping the females but I did go in with Garnet Thring. I was just a farm boy going along with him and we had to have accommodations so I think he took me to the Y.M.C.A. The biggest reason likely was it would be cheap; however, we did get those lambs sold. Time did go by and sheep are something else. The fence has to be awful good and they are the greatest thing in the world to create bad, or at least unfriendly, neighbours. I imagine the cash went to Garnet because like I said I was keeping the females to build up this fantastic herd that I had in my mind.

I remember in 1939 Dad bought a new half ton Fargo truck and he had the desire to take his family, which at that time consisted of Mom, Doreen, Hubert and myself, on a trip to Ontario to visit family. Dad built a kind of a camper top and we were ready as far as transportation is concerned. Dad had made a deal with Milton Chambers and Jack Wanless to milk the 12 cows that we owned while we were away. Years later, Milton Chambers told me what a godsend that had been to Jack and himself because that gave them some revenue when Dad was away.

Doreen, George, Hubert and Ivy Hall in Duluth, Minnesota, 1939.
Melvin is presumably the photographer

The purpose of our trip was to visit a family in Ontario, the name of which I am embarrassed to say I cannot recall. That shows I don't have a great memory but I guess that Dad and Mom must have made arrangements to be there. I do recall one day Dad took me out on to what seemed like a pasture field and it looked as if he was trying to find something on this field. I don't know what it was but years later I thought that perhaps it was a

location of some building that he remembered from before he left for Manitoba. I'm not sure. Something that struck me as a boy: their barn had the siding up and down, which I guess was what was done in Ontario at that time. One of the gentlemen from that family delivered the mail by horse and buggy. I recall going with him. That was a side interest that I had. In due course, we left for home. I think I did most of the driving. Dad seemed to trust me in doing the driving.

According to notes on this photograph in Ivy's handwriting: "1939 visiting down East" From Left: George Hall, Ida Dale, Rosie Dale, Doreen & Hubert Hall

In 1939, there were still a considerable number of the extended Hall, Lough and Dale families living in the Cumberland area, a short distance south-west of Ottawa, and doubtless George would have been keen to introduce his wife and children to them. The Dale family was also formerly from the same area of Northern Ireland as the Halls and the Loughs. Samuel Dale married Emily, sister to George Hall's mother, Elizabeth. Cousins on the Hall side still resident nearby were Amanda Martha Hall, Lucy Mabel (Hall) Poaps, and Thomas Walter Hall, all children of George's then deceased uncle, Samuel Lough Hall. George's aunt, Matilda (Hall) Moffatt, had died only two years before but family connections remained.

When almost a decade later Doreen gave birth to her second child, he was named Dale, a nod to that family connection.

Melvin:

When we got home to Manitoba it was harvest time and I recall there were two men helping to bring in the crop. I don't remember whether at that time Dad had teamed up with someone for the harvest in 1939. After the harvest was completed, these two men wanted to go back to Saskatchewan to get more harvesting work as it was a little later there. I encouraged my Dad and Mother to let me go with them. I thought it would be a good experience. I don't recall any concern about me going but maybe they thought this would be a great opportunity for me to see some of the world.

I got to Brandon with these two men. I was of course following them like a leech. They had the savvy of traveling by freight. I remember in the evening about dark all of us, hoboes I guess they were called at that time, were in the bushes along the track and all of a sudden I heard the train give what they called the high ball, two big whistles, and the train with two engines on it started moving up the track slowly.

Some of the men who had a lot of experience catching freight trains waited until some of the boxcars went by but with my inexperience I grabbed the first boxcar ladder I could get a hold of. I did not have the expertise that some of the other guys had to swing myself into that open car so I climbed up on top. I was sitting on top of the car and then decided to look around. When I looked toward the engine, bingo, a cinder got in my eye. I spent a fairly uncomfortable night with that situation. Somewhere along the line, it may have been Moosomin, the train stopped for water or whatever it had to get and I was then able to get inside.

I guess we travelled all night and got as far as Holdfast and a young man stuck his head inside the car and said "Any of you guys want to work?" One night of freighting was all I needed at that time and I said, "Yes, I'm ready to go to work." So, I was fairly lucky. It happened to be a German family that I went to work for. They had a good threshing outfit and I was going to be getting three dollars a day which was great for me and I spent ten days there and after they were finished harvesting I was pleased when the boss asked if I would like to stay and help them put up hay.

The only reason that pleased me is that I thought I had maybe earned the right to be noticed, that I was maybe able to work a little bit. Nonetheless I declined this offer and said that I was planning on going a little farther, to Naicam, Saskatchewan where I had a cousin, Alvin McClay.

During the process of catching different freight trains and what have you, I finally got to the outskirts of Naicam. I wanted of course to clean up before Alvin saw me and as it is on the edge of a lot of small towns there was a small holding with a big water trough that was for their cow or cows, I'm not sure. I thought here's a good place to clean my face at least. Thus, while I'm with my head nearly in the water and washing off this black soot and what have you a lady came out of the house and screamed at me to get away from there, the

cattle drink that water. At that moment in my life I actually felt I had a little less value than an ordinary cow. It was an experience.

After I had visited with Alvin for a short time, I decided it was time to move on, so again I started to wait for my opportunity to catch a freight train going east. Now there was a bigger problem. Most of those box cars that had been empty on the way west were now full of wheat, which meant you had to ride in between these box cars that would be bouncing along. It is amazing that a lot of these folks who did this freighting didn't get killed in the process. While I was out there, the Second World War started and that of course was of concern.

On the way home by freight I teamed up with another young man. To this day, I don't know his name but he was heading back to Nova Scotia because he'd been in the auxiliary army or reserves and he had got a telegram that he was to report back to Nova Scotia. He had hurt one of his fingers fairly bad and I with my lack of experience suggested to him "Golly, if you have that telegram why don't you go to a station agent and I would be surprised if they didn't put you on a regular passenger train and get you back."

But since the war had started he was afraid, I guess, that he would be put in the army, sent wherever he had to be sent and never see his family again, so he was trying to work his way back to Nova Scotia. As I said, he had hurt one of his fingers fairly bad and one night we had decided we were going to rent a room that was above a Chinese restaurant, which was kind of standard in small towns in those days, and in the middle of the night I woke up and here this young man had the water running over his hand and was actually crying. The pain had to be awful. I have often wondered what happened to that young man.

I continued to catch freight trains and finally ended up in Minnedosa. As there were no trains from Minnedosa to Brandon, I had another problem. My mother had always warned me to not keep any money in my pocket because there are people out there who would kill you for a few dollars, so I had sent home this huge salary; I think it was 30 dollars for the ten days. Therefore, when I got off the train in Minnedosa, I had only seven or eight cents in my pocket. I invested in a loaf of bread and started walking toward Brandon.

I think there was a sign at the bottom of the hill that said that Brandon was 30 miles away, so after I'm walking what seems to me half the night a car pulled up beside me and someone said "are you going to Brandon?" and I said "well I sure hope so." They moved ahead about 20 or 30 feet. They said, "You want to get to Brandon, is that where you're going?" I said, "Yes" so they said, "Jump in." The car was loaded with people but they pushed me in there somewhere.

When I got to Brandon, still with no money, I stayed all night at a Chinese restaurant sitting on a stool. It is a wonder they didn't throw me out because I wasn't spending any money, but the next day I went to the CNR express and told the person there about my predicament and asked if there was any way that a telegram could be sent to Belmont to have my family

send me back the price of a bus trip to Belmont. In due course, I got word back and I had enough money now to catch that bus to Belmont.

You always appreciate home more after you've been away for a while, but my excursion west was an experience that, in looking back, I would not want to have missed. I didn't get into any trouble, but I could see where you could get into trouble if you were that way inclined.

Doreen leaves school

There were also big choices to be made for Doreen when she was 14. As she describes it:

Alma School covered grades one to eight. If a child was able and prepared to go further, a transfer would have to be made to the Belmont Collegiate. Toward the end of my grade eight term, Mother and I had a long talk. She was determined I was not going to stay in the Belmont area. Several times she exclaimed: "I notice the neighbour boys sniffing around here and you are not going to be involved with any of these neighbour boys." Amongst other reasons, she was concerned that many of the families in our area were related to us and each other in some fashion or other. I often heard from my mother: "I always said to your father I brought some new blood into this family." Very possibly my mother was especially sensitive to this issue because of my father's parents being first cousins which may have contributed to my father's two brothers being mentally challenged.

About the time Mother started discussions with me about my future plans following my graduation from Alma School, she was preparing for the birth of that particular blessing in her life (and ours), Philip John Winston Hall, my youngest brother. In the summer prior to Philip's birth, I came out of our house to discover Mother sitting on the step in considerable agitation. She explained she had been badly bitten by bees (she had a couple of hives, and honey production was another of her projects). She was very concerned about the effect of this on her pregnancy. Dad suddenly appeared and they rushed off to the Hospital in Glenboro. Mother later related that Dr. A. A. Keenberg asked whether she wished to keep this baby, and she assured him she most certainly did, and every possible step was taken to assure Philip's safe arrival. Dr. Keenberg thereafter supervised the pregnancy and was responsible for helping Mother with Philip's birth at the Glenboro Hospital on November 2, 1940.

For close to a year and coinciding with my mother's pregnancy with Philip, Pearl Lambkin, whose family lived just south of Belmont, was hired to assist Mother with her household duties. Pearl was four and a half years older than me. Because of her family's financial difficulties, she had to quit school at age 13 in order to work as a hired girl for farm women

in the Belmont area, which continued until her marriage almost 11 years later. There were not many attractive employment options available to a young, poor and uneducated woman in rural Manitoba in 1940. Perhaps there never are.

Pearl Lambkin and Doreen Hall (1940)

After discussions with my mother about whether I would go on in school, perhaps with a view to teaching, or take nursing or hairdressing, it was decided I would move to Winnipeg and take a hairdressing course. I was 14 when these discussions took place, and barely 15 when Mother took me to Winnipeg to enroll in the Marvel Hairdressing School course and to find a room, which turned out to be on Donald Street relatively close to the school.

. Doreen Hall, in the autumn of 1941

In the fall of 1941, my mother purchased for me a new coat, some other clothes and a few accessories she thought I would need in the big city and I was ready for the great adventure of moving to Winnipeg

I knew no one in Winnipeg, except my uncle and aunt, Percy and Edie Smith, and my cousin, Donald. I don't recall frequent or regular contact with them except that Edie came every week to the Salon for me to do her hair. I don't recollect there was otherwise any significant support, emotional or otherwise, from Edie or her family. The friendships I developed through this period were with other young women in the Hairdressing School.

The teaching philosophy and techniques at the Marvel School were not particularly sophisticated. The instructors emphasized a bit of psychology, encouraging the student to appreciate that although you don't know what you're doing, neither do most of the people who come in to have their hair done.

A student started off washing hair for lots of people, receiving appropriately critically comments on her performance. Then the jobs would get increasingly more challenging. In those days, "perms" were popular and involved big cords that would hang over the head. Mostly it was haircutting and setting in rollers under a dryer.

My course was not for a set term but it was expected graduation for most students would come within nine months. My first job was with Nu-Fashion Beauty Salon in Winnipeg, During that first year, a classmate by the name of Kay Whalen encouraged me to transfer with her to the Nu-Fashion shop in Fort William, Ontario, just to try a different experience, and because our accreditation would be recognized there. I did so because my mother had made clear I was not to give any thought to returning to the Belmont area as, in her adamant view, there was no future for me there.

By the time of my move from Winnipeg to Fort William, I would have been 16. I stayed for the full time I was there with my friend, Kay. We rented separate rooms in the home of an older couple. We did not know anybody when we went there. Our landlady said that was fine. She gave us breakfast before we went to work. We lived in a residential area, but it was not too far to walk to and from work each day.

I don't remember how much I earned in this job, but I do recall that after I had carefully saved for a year I had accumulated $40. I remained in Fort William for approximately two and a half years and through the whole period worked in the same shop and lived in the same place with the same people. I don't have a clear recollection of how I spent my non-work time. I think with my background as a farm girl from a religious family I was likely not particularly concerned or comfortable to be active socially or recreationally. I had the sense my friend Kay was quite content in this arrangement, but as her parents lived in Winnipeg, and she could visit them more easily, she probably did not have the same reason to feel isolated.

Doreen Hall (on right) with friends in Fort William

Throughout this period, I did not return to visit my family and they were not able to come to visit me. In retrospect, I don't understand how my mother ever let me go. I know she was concerned about me making inappropriate connections in the Belmont area, but I still find it hard to believe because certainly she was always very determined that nothing would happen to one of her kids. My mother and I exchanged letters, but I don't remember any telephone calls. I can't understand why I did not go home for Christmas, but I expect it was because I would have to have spent some of that $40.

At the same time, I don't recall being particularly lonely or homesick. Mother always sent trinkets through the mail, especially at Christmas or the time of my birthday. I'm sorry to say I can't remember ever sending any present in her direction. I hope I made up for that later. Communication with home was with my mother exclusively. I don't remember even a postcard from my father or brothers but of course they may well have made the same observation of me.

I was not particularly active socially but it was at a dance where I met Charles Roland Brawn, the man who was to become my husband. I don't specifically recall whether I went

there with my friend, Kay, but, as was typical of dances at the time, the women were seated along one side of the room and the men sat or stood on the other. As I had come to this social event hoping to be asked to dance, I was certainly not unhappy when Charles worked up his courage to come across the room in my direction. I don't, however, think it was love at first sight. Rather I think our relationship developed slowly as, over time, we became better and better friends.

Charles' recollection of meeting Doreen for the first time is only slightly different.

Charles states:

Periodically in my life, I have done something and afterwards have said, "Where did that idea come from?" Well, this was one of those moments. I decided to go to a dance notwithstanding having two left feet and no dancing skills. I don't know if it was a provincial statute or a city ordinance or an ethnic custom but in Fort William all of the unescorted ladies at a dance lined up on one side of the room and the unattached men on the other. I have no idea how many ladies were in that line-up but what I do know is that there was one that stood out from all the rest - tall, very good looking, well dressed and with a distinctive hair-do. I stood in a mental quandary. What if I went over there and asked her to dance and she said no. What would I do? And what if she said yes? With my dancing skills or lack thereof what would I do? Throwing discretion to the wind, I resolutely strode across the room, my footsteps echoing off the hardwood floor, certain that every eye was glued on me. I honestly have no recollection of what I said or what she said but what I do know is that if I had not asked the question, or if she had not responded favourably, I would never have become part of the Hall family.

As Doreen thinks back on it:

This was not a period when it would have been acceptable for a woman to have taken too much initiative in promoting a relationship, but apart from that, I think the relationship developed primarily because of sheer persistence on Charles' part. Several times a week he would make sure he was at the hairdressing shop when my workday ended, and so we would go for something to eat at suppertime.

Charles remembers there was this little restaurant where we would often go and one of our favourite menu items was fruit salad and toast, probably because that was the cheapest thing on the menu. He also reminds me of an occasion when we were there that a woman came to our table and stated she was a palm reader. She looked at Charles' palm and said, "You're not going to live past 30. See where your life line stops there." It pleases me that Charles proved her emphatically wrong as he was able to celebrate 93 birthdays.

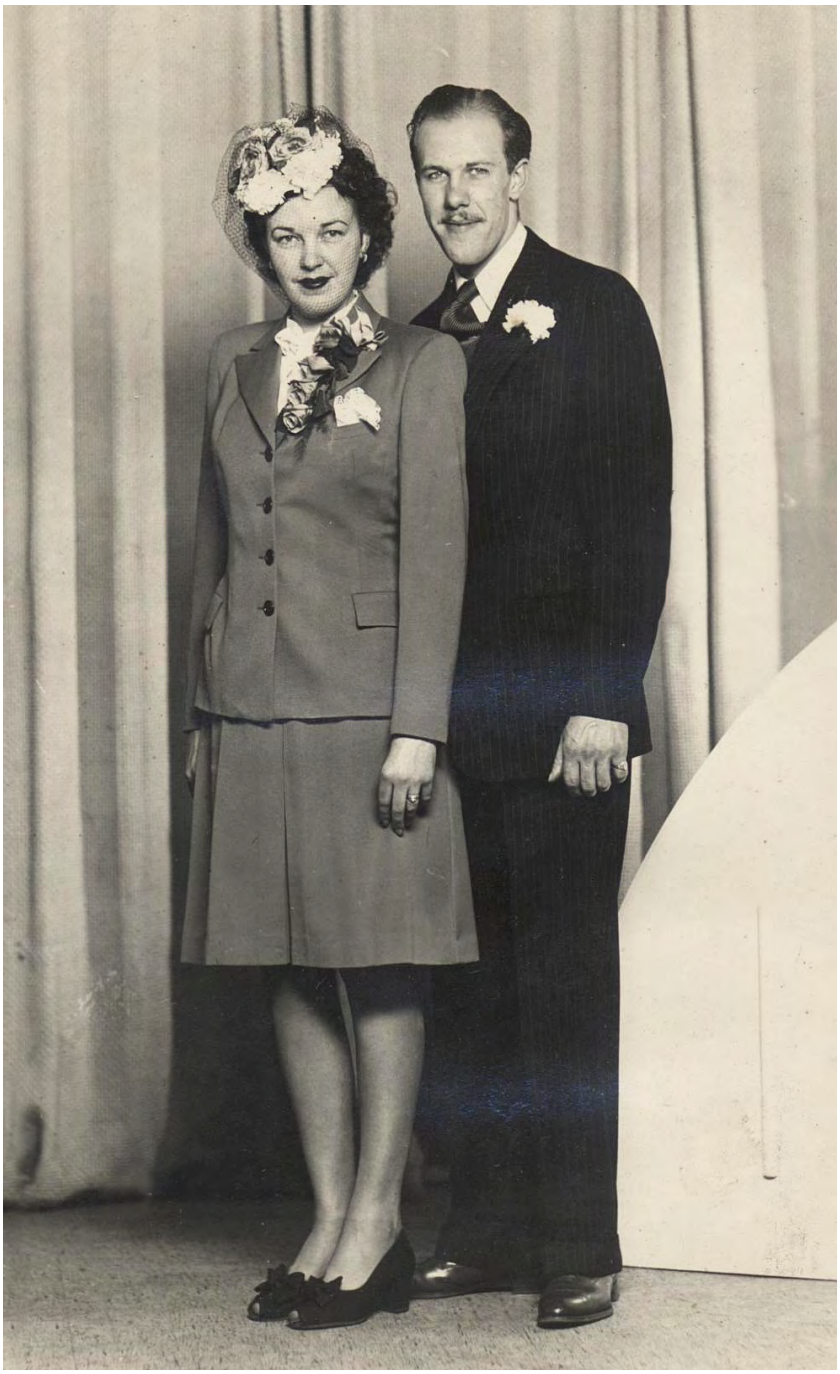
Charles had been raised in a farm family in western Saskatchewan; had joined the Canadian Armed Forces immediately following his 18th birthday, but developed pleurisy

and thereafter had to support the war effort through employment in the aircraft construction industry. Toward the end of the war, he took a job with the Port Arthur, Ontario police force, temporarily replacing a member who was serving in the army, which is how two prairie farm kids raised so far apart could meet.

Because I come from a very strong church family, I believe there was a reason why I went to Fort William and there was a reason that Charles and I met. Charles has done very worthwhile things in the community and I don't think he knew what he could do until he was put in a position to show that he could.

Charles and I were married on March 30, 1945 in Fort William, Ontario. No member of either of our families was in attendance.

Doreen Brawn on honeymoon at the Continental Hotel,
Duluth, Minnesota



Wedding photograph of
Doreen Lois Hall and Charles Roland Brawn
March 30, 1945

Life after marriage for Doreen

According to Doreen:

A short time following our wedding we travelled to visit Mother and Dad who, in my absence, had moved to a farm north of Belmont. My mother expressed great relief I was not with child, as apparently that had been her great fear. Charles and I then travelled on to Abbey, Saskatchewan, the area where Charles had been born and raised, and where his family still lived. Charles was uncertain what kind of job he wanted and together we considered various possible places to live. On our way to Abbey we passed through Moose Jaw where Charles had taken a vocational training course during the war. Charles connected with an associate from that earlier period who offered him a job in a service station, and out of that Charles took advantage of an opportunity to buy a delivery business called "Cy's Delivery", and an old Ford delivery van with which he did flower deliveries, picked up beer bottles from hotels, and basically any related jobs that came long.

That fall (1945) *I was pregnant with our first child, Gary. Mother came out to visit us in Moose Jaw. Charles and I were living in a pleasant second floor apartment. Mother was a great hands-on person and very direct. She said: "Don't like this. There's nothing for you around here. Get back to Belmont where we'll look after you." We didn't act on that suggestion right away, but we did think and talk about it, and by the spring of 1946 we reached agreement essentially to take Mother's advice. Although on June 24, 1946 Gary was born in the Brandon General Hospital, we were at that time living with my parents on their farm north of Belmont.*

Charles remembers:

Early in the summer of 1947, we returned to Abbey to visit with the Brawn family. While there, I was offered a job as an assistant Grain Buyer with Ogilvie Flour Mills. As a house was available in Abbey and there was no job waiting for me in Manitoba, we decided to stay there. Word quickly spread in the community that Doreen was an accomplished hairdresser and she was soon in demand. She worked from our home. It was in Abbey Doreen was introduced to curling. She loved it. In 1949 crop conditions were poor in western Saskatchewan and Ogilvie closed the Abbey elevator, which was old, decrepit and requiring major repair. I was offered a transfer to Hinton, Alberta, which prompted much family discussion, but in the end we decided to move to Brandon.

Ivy's realtor friend, Daisy Lockhart, was recruited to find us a suitable house. The fact we had no money was not a deterrent to Ivy who graciously and generously offered to loan us the $2,000 down payment on 335-4th Street, a two-story home with a comfortable space for our family as well as three areas we could rent out to help not only to make monthly loan payments to Ivy but to assist us with basic living expenses, as my wages were modest indeed.

Charles and Doreen Brawn in front of their home at 335 – 4th Street, Brandon

Charles again:

> *My first job in Brandon was in a small auto parts store. When I took home that first pay envelope and gave it to Doreen, she would have been entitled to do what I suspect most women would have done - look at me with a pitying glance and say, "What am I supposed to do with this?" What she did, however, was to do what she has always done when faced with a problem - deal with it head on. She gave me back $1.00 to indulge my caffeine and nicotine addictions and then worked to make sure we fulfilled all our obligations. This budget was manageable if I bought the cheapest fine cut tobacco, rolled my own cigarettes and limited myself to one cup of coffee a day at work.*

As Charles had minimal education and job training, he had to scramble to find jobs to support his young family, which by then included two preschoolers. More often than not, Charles had two jobs and over those initial years in Brandon they included auto dealer parts-man, cab driver, photographer's assistant, appliance repairman and movie projectionist (a trade he learned in Abbey).

Anticipating the arrival of television to Brandon, and having some minimal knowledge of electronics through his work as projectionist, Charles began taking correspondence courses in the repair of radios, television and other electronics. In 1952, Charles and Doreen established an electronics repair shop in the basement of their new home at

904 - 6th Street but shortly business had grown sufficiently to warrant hiring technicians to help and then building a retail sales and repair shop on 10th Street. Always driven to do better, Charles established a cabinet making business that handled the woodworking for construction of stereo systems, and separately a public-address sound business for major attractions coming to public facilities such as the Wheat City Arena. By the mid 1960's, Charles was persuaded to change careers and became a real estate broker and a real property appraiser, and established his and Doreen's last business, Brawn & Brawn Real Estate Service.

Like Doreen's siblings, Charles and Doreen were also attracted to property development and regularly had such a project on the go, whether buying, renovating and selling a single property, or as with the Thomas Mall (a project partnered with a friend, Tom Turpin) acquiring a full block of houses on a major Brandon thoroughfare to be demolished and replaced by a shopping mall.

During this period when Charles and Doreen were struggling to make their way in the wider world, if Brandon could be so considered, Melvin was working hard to establish himself in the farming community in which he was raised.

Melvin makes his way

Melvin:

> *In the period 1940 - 1942 my Dad had decided to get a two-ton Fargo truck. Dad was right handy at building things. I remember well he built a 5.2-yard gravel box that had some mechanism that would allow it to dump gravel in the centre. Dad, Wilfred Maloney and Dave Maloney, who each had a gravel truck, took on a job hauling gravel for the municipality. Of course, I was the driver of Dad's truck. They had about eight men who shoveled gravel into those trucks. When I think of these huge front-end loaders and these great big trucks they have now, boy oh boy there's quite a change.*
>
> *Dad also built a big box that hauled grain. I think it would hold about 200 bushels. We hauled grain at harvest time for different farmers. I think we got about a cent and a half a bushel to haul it into the elevator. We would do that if the farm was under six miles away. The only thing that could allow us to survive on that was the fact gasoline was three gallons for a dollar. We used to get that gas from a filling station owned by a gentleman by the name of Joe Ward. Anyhow, we hauled gravel and grain depending on what the opportunity was.*
>
> *Again, there was a small disaster even hauling grain. I was hauling a full load of grain from what was at one time the Tom McClay farm but was then owned by Jim Wanless, and*

of course the road back there was just a trail. I was sailing towards Belmont with this load of grain that was likely about 200 bushels and there was a narrow grade just west of George Durham's approach. I guess I must have got a little too close to the right-hand side and, bingo, I was pulled right into that slough. Of course, a lot of the grain, if not all, went skittering into the water. Well I have really got a mess here. Somebody got word to Dad, who was at this time working with the threshing gang at the farm of Jim Wanless, who had a big Rumley tractor.

Somehow or other they righted that truck without tearing it to pieces, which I was afraid of, but Dad in his typical way … boy oh boy I wish I had as much patience as he had at that time. Can you imagine, he walked up to this predicament and what must have been going through his mind I don't know but anyway he never said boo to me then or afterwards and how a gentleman like my dad could have that much patience with a son who seemed to be getting into trouble just about every year. We did get that truck righted and up on the road. I don't know what arrangement was made for compensation to Jim Wanless with me losing the wheat in that slough. Maybe I drew grain for the rest of the year to try to compensate for what I had done. I'm not really sure of what happened.

Towards the middle of 1942 in Belmont by chance I met a young lady whose name was Jean Hodgkinson and who finally some years later became my wife[77].

Some months later I decided to go into the air force so I dispersed my great herd of sheep and turned them into cash. I was astute enough to put the money in the bank but that pretty well ended my sheep career. I joined the Air Force on November 10th, 1942 and went of course right straight to Brandon. I guess it was at that time that I realized what a country bumpkin I really was. I hardly knew how to act at all but being resourceful I stayed with it. It was a great opportunity for me in one way. It wisened me up to the world, courtesy of the air force. I was out in British Columbia for a while; down in Bon Jolle, Quebec for a while; and posted to England for a while and seeing some of that countryside.

My mother had given me the address of some of her relatives. It seems to me there was an Aunt Min. On leave I found my way there via the train. It was at the time those buzz bombs were being dropped on London. I remember I stayed at what I guess was Aunt Min's place. I was put to bed with her son, an older gentleman who I guess was in his 40's. During the night, I could hear the air raid sirens going and he's sleeping sound. I'm thinking why doesn't this guy get out to the air raid shelter. We are going to get killed here. Anyhow not a thing. He didn't move and I guess I thought he knew what he's doing but finally we could hear one of these buzz bombs as they called them going over. The Germans put enough fuel in them to get to London and of course being a big city they didn't have to be that precise. This one bomb flew right over and I'm waiting for it to run out of gas which it did in a few seconds and there was a moment of silence and then Boom, you could feel the earth shake. The next morning when we had breakfast there wasn't one mention of that incident, because it was happening every night.

This gentleman had a job and that is really what the Germans had in mind - simply to terrorize all the working people and I guess cause havoc but as far as he was concerned it happened with such regularity it was more or less like lightning. If it hits, it hits but I never said anything and he didn't say anything. This was a bit of an experience that I had. When I left, we said good-bye and like I have done so often in my life I was stupid enough not to keep in touch with these people. They were good to me and I never did keep in touch with them by a card or letter or call. My only advice to anybody is keep in touch.

Like many veterans, Melvin spoke little of his military experiences, but the Belmont and District Souvenir Booklet provides short biographical information concerning those from the Belmont area who joined the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War. It states Melvin joined the R.C.A.F. in November 1942, and trained at Winnipeg, Vancouver, Three Rivers and received his air gunner badge at Mount Jeuliet, Quebec. He went overseas in March 1944, returning in December 1944 on the Ile de France. He received his discharge in March, 1945, having attained the rank of Sergeant.

Melvin Hall 1942

Melvin again:

While I was in the air force my dad leased his farm to Steve Dubyts. He was a very good farmer. He stayed in the old farmhouse. Dad and Mom bought a half section just outside and north of Belmont. It was unbelievable what was happening at that time. I guess a Loan Company had owned a lot of that land north of Belmont and they were putting it on the market. My Dad and Mother bought a half section with a fairly good home by the standards of those days for $500 a quarter, that's $1,000 for a half section. It had a fairly good house. Dad had some purebred Hereford cattle up there and he had a little trouble getting water

on that farm but I think finally did. He did a lot of fencing and it turned out that he eventually sold that farm for about $5,000 to Howard Lambkin.

Dad and Mom moved to Brandon which was an absolute delight for Mother. She could not believe what was happening to her. Finally, she had running water, electricity, indoor washrooms. It was just fantastic; she could hardly believe it. Dad, on the other hand might have been just as happy if he had been on an acreage just on the edge of town with two or three horses and a cow or two. I'm not sure, but that's the way I have always felt.

Mom really enjoyed it in town. She wasn't long before going to the church of her choice, on the phone visiting with cronies that she knew from church and, every once in a while, she would corral some lady who had a car and come out to the farm and visit us. We were always pleased to see her but we often wondered about her transportation.

I was discharged from the air force in February or March of 1945. I have no memories of doing this but I think I must have put my name on a list with the Veterans Lands Act to buy the Frank Kelly farm. VLA had bought land during the war to have available for returning soldiers. I was number two on that list because when Mr. Kelly sold the farm to VLA it was on the condition his son, Bill, would have first chance refusal. I was fairly sure that Mr. Bill Kelly would never farm because he had been a schoolteacher in private life and a commander in the navy during the war and I simply didn't feel he was farming stock.

However, I had put my name down for the farm and VLA decided to rent me that farm in 1945. Of course, I had a little bit of that money from the sheep that I had had way back in the thirties and a little bit of additional money and VLA had some benefits. In order to do this farming, I bought a line of Cockshutt equipment from Jack McDonald who was the dealer in Belmont. It was a Cockshutt 70, a 20-run seeder which would be ten feet in width, six harrows, a ten-foot binder and what else? There was something else but that whole deal was $2,905.

Now I'm into the farming. I planted in the centre field where there was 48 acres of wheat and there was some summer fallow and what have you - not a great financial situation for me that particular year. But I teamed up with Ernie Hill who had a threshing machine and I think our threshing is the only thing that allowed me to survive financially. Not a great crop but we got rid of 1945.

Jean and I had been going together all of 1945 and by the end of that year she decided that she would accept my invitation to get married. Why she would do that with the accommodation we had is beyond me but anyway that's what happened. We got married November 10, 1945.

Wedding Photograph of
Lila Jean Hodgkinson and Melvin Grendon Hall
November 10, 1945

Melvin:

> *Every time I could catch a ride to Brandon during 1946, I would check with VLA about buying the Kelly farm, which I still had rented. Also, the lease that Dad had with Steve Dubyts had expired and Dad took an unbelievable chance by allowing me to rent his farm.*
>
> *I am now by the standards of those days a big farmer but at that time I had virtually no money. Nonetheless I would continue regularly to call on the VLA representative and ask how I was coming on their list. In 1946 by good luck, fate or what have you I had a great crop. Late in the year in Brandon the representative for VLA said "Well, we wrote a letter to Mr. Kelly a few weeks ago and we told him that if we didn't hear from him within a certain length of time we would consider that he wasn't interested." Then he said possibly the most important thing that was ever said to me. He said "Well, Mr. Kelly hasn't got back to us." So, he took his pen and stroked out Mr. Kelly's name and said, "Now you're next on the list, all you need is $4,180.00." That was really welded on my mind.*
>
> *The entire farm could be bought for $8,500.00 but the VLA had a 29-year payment term, where I was able to put up the sheep money and I think a little service money and I was on my way. That was the start of my farming career. Oh yes, in that house on the Kelly farm we had no hydro, the well was caving in, we had $99.00 worth of furniture. What a situation to bring a bride into. I don't know whether you could get a farmyard that was so run down. The house itself was sitting on about four stones, there was an old porch on the south side at that time, the barn had most of the boards off one side. It really was quite a mess in which to start a marriage and a career.*
>
> *Subsequently circumstances and good fortune allowed me to buy a significant amount of other land, but it was not until the mid 1960's that I was able to purchase from my father the family's homestead property. I had rented his farm on crop shares for quite a few years. He came up one evening and said he had come up to sell the farm. Would I be interested? Well I was not in a good position to buy his farm but I asked for a few days and I went to my friendly bank manager and as a result of that I was able, upon the banker's advice, to go to Farm Credit or MACC and we bought the farm that included the homestead, which was great. I think Dad who hadn't been well came down before he was going to have an operation. In my mind, I think he thought that perhaps he wouldn't make it out of this operation and wanted to get the farm sold. I'm not sure about that but anyway we ended up buying the farm and Dad went and had his operation and survived it and lived for a few years after that.*

As Melvin referenced, in due course he acquired approximately 3,000 acres of farmland but also demonstrated the strong entrepreneurial spirit he shared with his siblings. He acquired significant shore frontage on Pelican Lake in order to create several cottage developments. In 1965, he and Jean purchased the Pleasant Valley property at the south end of Pelican Lake, and took it from a relatively rustic

recreational campground and golf course to an impressive development. As was stated in his obituary:[78] "He had a great knack for seeing the potential that land held and somehow was able to envisage a golf resort in the midst of what others saw as forest."

Hubert Victor Hall

Hubert Victor Hall 1930 - 1991 and Eileen Gertrude Shelvey 1928 -
Parents of:
Gregory Brian Hall 1962 - 1993
Jeffery Allan Hall 1967 -

Hall Family 1930: George, Ivy, Hubert
Front: Doreen and Melvin

Family life for the Halls was changed significantly on March 24, 1930 with the birth of Melvin and Doreen's brother, Hubert Victor Hall.

Doreen recollects:

> *As I was three and one-half years older than Hubert, I no doubt had some child-care responsibilities from time to time, but my two clearest recollections relate to challenging episodes. My first memory of Hubert was at our home. I was perhaps four years old. My parents, Melvin and Hubert and I were all together and suddenly my mother exclaimed, "Get me a spoon, get me a spoon, Hubert's having a convulsion." As it was later explained to me, this arose because Hubert was biting his tongue. I rushed to get the spoon, and I think that became among my first memories because Mother was frantic with desperately trying to make sure nothing went wrong with Hubert.*

Hubert and Doreen Hall 1930

Melvin also has a clear recollection of that same incident. He states:

> *Now I have to go way back to that first house. I do have a memory of Hubert. He must have been a baby and I was churning butter and Hubert was in my lap. Apparently, I was able to do two jobs at once, churn and babysit. Anyway, all of a sudden Hubert took into this terrible shaking and what have you and scared the daylights out of me and he had a bit of an attack. I forget what they call it but Mom came over with a spoon and put it in his mouth so that he wouldn't bite his tongue and that seemed to end that right off the bat.*

Doreen again:

My second memory involving Hubert was when he was a toddler. On Valentine's Day, I was allowed to bring Hubert to Alma School, a typical country school that was essentially one large room with a sizeable square hole in the floor toward the back of the room. Hubert spent practically the whole time, completely oblivious to the presence of the other children, hollering down the hole "Hello… hello… I'm here." At that time, I was quite embarrassed by this performance, but I could not deflect him. I'm not positive in my recollection as to how this episode was concluded, but I believe the teacher just encouraged me to let him carry on, believing he would wear himself out soon. Finally, lunch came, and Hubert's attention was diverted.

Melvin, Hubert and Doreen Hall

According to Melvin:

While we were on what we call the Lawson farm, an incident occurred that could have been an unbelievable disaster. There were two barns, one a steel barn. I don't know how old I was, perhaps ten, eleven or twelve years old, and Hubert was eight years younger than me. He was on the other side of the barn and I was throwing stones against the side of this steel barn and Hubert would stick his head around and I would say "Don't do that or I'll hit you" but anyway like a fool I kept throwing stones and by golly he stuck his head out and one of these stones hit him and I thought it was in the eye. Well, the first thing I did was grab him, rush him to the house and deliver him to Mother. Mom was very concerned but didn't really say anything to me at the time. Anyhow, I guess Mom had him in bed with her all night and as she reported in the morning she kept lifting up his eyelid and as the night was progressing she could see that it was improving. By morning she reported to me that it was OK and so I was greatly relieved. In truth, I really felt that a good licking would have been in order at that time. I did escape that punishment, but that memory wasn't the greatest one I've ever had. It could have been very, very fateful.

As Hubert was eight years younger than me, I don't have a lot of early memories of him. He and our parents obviously moved from what we called the Lawson farm down to what my mother always called the "homestead." Then because of me going into the service there is a gap in my memories of Hubert until after Dad and Mother bought the farm north of Belmont. I remember Hubert and Dad either tattooing or vaccinating some cattle and during the time I was helping them I developed the impression Hubert had the ambition of having a big cattle ranch on what was the Basil Robinson farm. I think that dream was shattered when Dad's cattle took down with Bangs Disease. This of course meant all the cattle had to be destroyed, which I guess was in the end a great thing for Hubert.

Hugh's cows

According to Hubert's wife, Eileen:

> *Hubert was born on March 24, 1930 and spent the first years of his life on the family farm near Belmont, initially attending Alma School, before transferring to Belmont High School. Hugh left school half way through grade eleven. After losing a herd of cattle to Bangs disease, the farm was sold and Hugh decided he didn't want to farm or have a cattle ranch as he had planned*

Belmont High School

The Belmont School Records currently in care of the Belmont Museum confirm that Hubert left school in December 1946 when he was in the middle of Grade XI. This coincided with the family's move away from the farm to Oberon and then to Brandon. It is unclear why Hubert did not immediately continue with his education as he was clearly a very clever young man, but this move came at what for Hubert was no doubt an awkward time in his social development, and then the options available in Oberon would have been extremely limited. By the time Hubert arrived in Brandon, he would have been almost two years behind his age group (all of whom would have been strangers to him) and he no doubt felt the prospect of success lay elsewhere. Also, there was no model for him to follow that would inspire him to move on with higher education, as no one in the family prior to him had even graduated from high school, let alone proceeded on to university.

As Hubert's passing denied to us his personal reminiscences, it has fallen to his widow, Eileen, to provide much missing factual detail.

Hubert Victo

Eileen states:

The first time Hubert Hall became known to me was in 1949. Hugh and his brother-in-law, Charles Brawn, owned motorcycles. When it came time for Pentecostal camp at Manhattan Beach, they liked to drive to Pelican Lake to visit at the Hall Cabin. Usually they chose to go home at meeting time. The climb up the steep hill was so noisy, the minister stopped speaking because no one could hear him. That's the first time I heard of Hugh.

Charles Brawn remembers this event differently:

The Hall family, including Doreen, Gary and Dale, were at Manhattan Church Camp at Pelican Lake. I could not be there as I was working as a projectionist at a Brandon Drive-In Theatre and would not have had a car available. In any event, Hubert called and told me he had bought a motorcycle but did not know how to ride it and asked if I would show him how. I went to his house and, after admiring it, asked where he wanted to go and he suggested Manhattan Beach. I must confess that what happened next was my fault and I take full responsibility for it. I drove on the way down and, on arrival, thought it necessary to circle the cabin sites before going through the chapel area to the Hall cottage. I have no idea why but I'm sure that on that particular day there must have been a reason. It did not take long to get the feeling that both the Hall family and some of the church officials felt that our presence was likely needed elsewhere and that we could probably find our way out. Hubert drove home to Brandon, so I won't take responsibility for the loud exhaust as we went out of the camp, gathering enough momentum to get up the hill.

Eileen recalls :

Ivy, with George, Hubert and Philip in tow, spent nearly a year at Oberon running a store, then moved into Brandon. Hugh took a job delivering telegrams on a bicycle. He became proficient in typing and sending and reading Morse Code. In 1948, he moved to British Columbia as a station agent, which was possible because of that knowledge of Morse Code. After a miserable winter at Crowsnest Pass and Nelson, B.C., he moved to Salem, Oregon to be a station agent for Southern Pacific R.R.

Six weeks later, he was invited to join the U.S Army or go back to Canada. He joined up for two years, spending a year and a half in Korea. Because of his skill in typing and Morse Code, he spent his time near the front line but in commanders' barracks. He was at the signing of the Peace Treaty, also had two R & R leaves and travelled in South Korea. He was able to attend Billy Graham's Crusade in Korea, the first Graham Crusade out of the States.

Melvin:

When Dad and Mom sold the farm and moved to Brandon, Hubert was ambitious and took a job delivering telegrams around Brandon on a bicycle. Apparently, there would be some slack time and, much to Hubert's benefit, the guy in charge of the telegraph office said, "Well why don't you sit down and learn Morse Code and how to type?" This is exactly what did happen and as the time goes by Hubert moves out to Eugene, Oregon working for a railroad dispatching. It happened to be about the time the Korean War was on. I guess he must have been down there on a permit, so of course his number came up and he got drafted. We pleaded with him to get the heck out of there, told him "You are going to get yourself killed." But even at that time he said "No, I'm going to become an American citizen." He of course did go to Korea but benefitted from the foresight or good luck that he could type. As there weren't a lot of young men in those days that could type, he was able to stay out of the mud and had a job somewhere that didn't get him shot at.

Charles remembers:

Some short time following the return of Doreen and me to Brandon, probably in 1949, Hubert and I agreed to drive to Winnipeg in order to watch Melvin and his Belmont curling team compete in the Winnipeg bonspiel. Melvin used this opportunity to urge Hubert to re-consider his plan to go to the United States knowing he would be conscripted and have to serve in the military. Hubert was very clear and determined to carry on with his plans and of course it turned out Hubert's instincts were sound and his many subsequent opportunities and accomplishments could be traced to that decision. Much later, when Melvin and Jean determined to develop the Pleasant Valley Golf Course, Hubert, with tongue in cheek would tell Melvin how foolish this idea was and how he would surely come to regret it.

Hubert Hall in Korea

Eileen:

> *On the boat home from Korea, Hugh wrote his G.E.D., and in September 1951 enrolled in the University of Portland. In July 1953, he came to Brandon to see his family…. He met my brothers at Bethel Temple Church in Brandon, and decided to go to the summer fair. I was a R.N. working evenings. They picked me up at 11 p.m. Three weeks later I was applying for work and residency in Oregon. I moved to Oregon in January 1954.*

In a letter to Doreen and family dated August 14, 1954, Hubert reported, “I have persuaded Eileen to transfer to a hospital in Vancouver, B.C. I won’t incriminate myself, I will only say that I am very interested, and that time will do the rest.”

Wedding Photograph of
Eileen Gertrude Shelvey and Hubert Victor Hall
September 16, 1955

Eileen remembers:

> *Hubert and I were married at Bethel Temple Pentecostal Church in Brandon on September 16, 1955. Following our marriage, we moved to Eugene, Oregon where Hugh earned a B.A. and a Master's degree in accounting and marketing. In 1958 Hubert and I went to Columbus, Ohio and in nine months he did all the course work and choosing the title for his dissertation. In September 1959, we moved to Long Beach, California where he became a professor at Cal State University in the Marketing Department. He retired from that position in 1988. He called teaching his hobby, real estate his living.*
>
> *Hugh was always involved in the Church and very generous in his support. There is a memorial cross in his memory at New Port Mesa Church. Hugh was admired for his religious convictions, strong business ethics and economic principles. His humour and joy in life is missed by all who knew him.*
>
> *Hugh was very competitive in any game. He loved baseball and hockey. As a boy, he would steal away on Sunday afternoon to go play. His dad would try to find him, but Hugh always heard his father calling and managed to hide and enjoy the game. When Hubert and his brothers played together, it always involved a lot of yelling. Whoever yelled the loudest and longest was usually thought to be the winner.*

Melvin again:

> *When Hubert came back from Korea, his military service gave him the right to further his education through the American G.I. Bill. I don't know whether Hubert even finished grade eleven when he was going to school in Belmont, but he was now given this opportunity to further his education and he just did that and with a vengeance. I was told that our Mother received a letter written by Hubert's professor suggesting he had never seen a young man with such a desire to succeed, which of course turned out to be right. He eventually became a professor in Business Administration and very, very successful down in California.*

Melvin, Philip and Doreen settled in Manitoba, but Hubert had a broader horizon. Although he sought education and life opportunities far away, he never lost his focus on and concern for his family. He loved to re-connect with them whenever possible. He returned to Manitoba frequently, but especially loved to host visits by extended family in his home in California, and constantly encouraged those visits.

Philip John Winston Hall

Philip John Winston Hall 1940 - and Carole Anne Ferguson 1942 -
Parents of:
David Michael Hall 1969 -
Trista Loree Hall 1971 -
Robert Graham Hall 1973 -

Ivy and Philip Hall, 1941, on the “old homestead”

Happily, Philip is able to share his own recollections. He states:

Mother always told me I was lucky to be here. I was never sure whether she meant she brought me into this world and she could take me out or not. Recently Miriam Fowke came up to me, grabs me by the shoulder, gives me a big hug and tells me I was a miracle child. She remembers her mother and Mom on their knees at the living room couch praying for this pregnancy. She told me they were concerned about this baby being “right in the head.” There are some days I wonder if that prayer was answered. When told of his coming brother, Hubert said, “I’d rather have a pony.”

The first thing I can remember was being rushed to Dr. Stevenson in Belmont to get a needle removed from my finger. I was playing with Mom's treadle sewing machine when I ran the needle through my finger and then broke it off.

After our family moved north of Belmont, I remember going to school in Belmont in an enclosed sleigh pulled by horses. In a Belmont reunion, I checked school attendance and sure enough I was there from September till Christmas break 1946, all "S's" - for satisfactory of course.

Philip Hall & Charles Brawn on abandoned Rumley tractor George Hall and Charles retrieved from the bush on the "Dubyts" farm (NE 20-4-15) in 1946. After George got permission from the owner, Wilf Maloney, he and Charles got it working, Charles drove it to the Hall farm north of Belmont and used it to break up about 40 acres of quack grass. It was thereafter left in the yard.

Next stop was Oberon where the family ran a general store where I think we stayed for a year or two and where I learned to skate in Oberon's rink. Two things come to mind: my big sister tried to kill me (although she denies it). I guess I got a severe sunburn and Mom asked Doreen to put some lotion on my back. She put Absorbene Jr. on. The other incident involved a .22 rifle single shot which I loaded, had the presence of mind to open the window vent with the three holes in it, stuck the gun through one of them and pulled the trigger. The only problem was Mom was in the garden, heard the shot and knew I was the only one in the house. Apparently, she ran upstairs to find me hiding under the bed and was so relieved I never got my usual whipping.

Hall family store in Oberon, Manitoba 1947

Our next move was to Brandon to a little bungalow on 2333 Princess Avenue. I went to Fleming School for three years, taking me to grade three and age nine. We then moved to 139-15th Street, a two-storey house where Mom started renting rooms and I started accordion lessons. I am sure I am the only member of the family to cut an inspirational record, with six copies being sold, all of which were bought by Mom.

It could be noted that although Melvin might have strummed a guitar at family gatherings to comic versions of Hank Williams' tunes, and Doreen and Hubert might have joined a hymn sing at their respective churches, Philip had most of the musical talent in the family. This was a quality very much encouraged by Ivy as she and the Hall family considered him to be a prodigy, a judgment Philip strongly views as without foundation. Regardless, public performance for Philip with his accordion, and later with his trumpet or euphonium, came early and often.

Marjorie Thomson remembers:

I came to Brandon in the fall of 1948 to attend Wheat City Business College from Oakner, a small town 50 miles N.W. of Brandon. Some of the girls from school and I decided to live together and we found a place at 139 – 15th Street. It was handy to downtown as no one had a car. Two sisters and I moved in and were joined shortly by my sister. The space we rented had been a sunroom as there were a lot of windows. It was divided into three rooms, a small bedroom with a partition separating it from a living area, and a very tiny kitchen with a small table and a hotplate. We had to draw straws to see which girls would get the bedroom month about and the other two would have to make up the davenport every night to sleep. We shared a bathroom with everyone upstairs so there was always a race to see who would get there first.

Ivy Hall at 139-15th Street, Brandon

The people who owned the house were Mr. and Mrs. Hall. They had two sons at home – Hubert who must have been about our age, approximately 18, (so handsome and we all drooled over him, and we went to the odd movie with him) and Philip, who was about seven or eight. Their daughter Doreen was married by that time, so we only saw her occasionally.

Philip at that time was taking accordion lessons, so every couple of weeks Mrs. Hall would invite us girls downstairs to hear him play.

We used Mrs. Hall's washing machine, the old wringer washer, and had very specific times we could wash. We paid $40 a month and with 4 girls who made less than $100 a month we could manage it.

Mrs. Hall loved to go to auction sales or perhaps yard sales and came home many weekends carrying her treasures. I can't remember if they had a car, but don't think so, as she seemed to walk everywhere. I remember once seeing her coming home from one of her treasure hunts carrying a vacuum cleaner, with all the cords and hoses wrapped around her neck. She also had two large antique picture frames around her neck. It was a hot day and she was exhausted, so we helped her unload her things. She would often have us down to see what she had found. We used to have a lot of laughs about her treasures. I am sure a lot of her finds were piled somewhere in the corner of her basement, or may have still been there when the house was torn down. But she loved it.

Mr. Hall was a very quiet man, so we never really got to know him.

Over the two years I was there girls came and went, but two of us stayed the whole time until 1950 when I was married in July and my friend in August. It was a special time in our lives, and we learned so much from our weekly visits and, since it was the first time away from home for all of us, Mrs. Hall kept track of young men coming and going.

I remember going down 15th street and was so shocked to see that house was no longer there. Many wonderful memories came flooding back as I drove by.

Philip again:

It was also during the period we lived at 139-15th Street that Dad bought a new 1950 Ford car.

I went to Park School for Grades 4, 5 and 6. The next move was to 408-12th Street, from where I went to Earl Oxford School for Grade 7, to Earl Haig School for Grades 8 and 9 and to Brandon Collegiate for Grades10 through 12.

My first job was at Union Shoes located between 9th and 10th Streets on Rosser Avenue. I shone shoes Saturday morning for ten cents a pair plus tips. I also hand washed cars at Western Motors located at 10th Street and Princess Avenue. As a teenager, I drove a Volkswagen Beetle for Brown's Drug Store delivering drugs.

While I was living at 408-12th Street a cute little dark-haired girl, who by subtle inquiry I learned was Carole Ferguson, started attending the old Bethel Temple Church at 9th Street and Lorne Avenue.

Philip Hall and Carole Ferguson

Dad was blind in one eye and many times when he went to Melvin's farm I would sit on his knee and steer while he worked the gas. I would be about 12 years old at the time.

*I did talk Mom into a '57 Volkswagen. We put a lot of miles on it, even taking Mom to visit Aunt Ivy (*Reg's widow*) in Vancouver. We had to go via the Big Bend Highway, as the Rogers Pass was not yet built. It was very rough. My job at home was to pick Mother up from her downtown shopping trips. If I wasn't available she thought nothing of asking a complete stranger to drive her home.*

The Volkswagen did not have a gas gauge, only a lever on the firewall that you moved from vertical to horizontal to kick in the reserve tank. During the changeover, the car would buck for a few seconds. It did not take me long to figure out if I moved this lever to the ¾ position the car would also buck. I confess I did this a few times, usually on a Friday afternoon with Mom in the car. This would get me a couple of dollars' worth of gas which got me through the weekend.

Mom was quite a shopper. Many times, when I was going to Winnipeg to play golf with my good friend, Harold Hamilton, I would drop her off at the Hudson Bay store and pick her up at Eaton's or vice versa. She would always have two large shopping bags full. One time Harold went to pick Mom up under the clock at Eaton's while I circled the block. He saw her and sat down close to Mom, and when she, not knowing it was Hammy, moved away, Harold moved over as well. This happened a couple of times before she looked at Harold. She said he was lucky because he almost got a smack.

One time Mom and I took the back road from Melvin's to Manhattan Beach. We got through the gravel pit and Mom thought it would be a good time for her to drive. We stopped at the stop sign, changed places and Mom got the Volkswagen in first gear, started to turn right, kept turning right, down through the ditch and out into the field before I got the engine turned off. That was a short lesson. Mother did not have the coordination for driving but she sure tried, even going to Killarney to get her learner permit.

I have to confess that after she ran a couple of stop signs, I actually jumped out of the car at 18th Street and Victoria Avenue and walked home before she killed me. Mom somehow made it home on her own.

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It was rumoured that on one occasion Mom asked a policeman to turn her car around so it was heading downhill, so it was easier to get going.

I talked Mom into buying a 1950 Morris Minor convertible which needed some work. My buddy, Dale Berry, worked for Aub Frederickson at the VW dealership at 10th Street and Louise Avenue. It needed some major motor work and Dale and I were good at taking things apart but not at putting them back together. This was the car Dale and I were to go to California in after our grade 12, later that summer. We had engine parts all over Mom's basement floor and invited Dale's mechanic buddy to check out our dismantling. This

Polish mechanic took one look and in his broken English said "sheet, all you got is sheet." We said, "Never mind that. After you help us rebuild it, will it get us to California and back?" He told us if we did get back, sell it immediately, which we did. Harold Hamilton found out what we were planning and invited himself along. Needless to say, we had a great adventure. We left and about six days into our trip, averaging about 50 mph, it was my turn at our next stop to buy gas. At our stop, I realized I had lost my travelers' cheques. I phoned home, Mom answered and I asked her to forward money. She tells me we have been away long enough and to get on home. I borrowed from the guys until we got home.

Mom was a good cook, nothing fancy, basically meat and potatoes. Many times she would have a roast in the oven and put in a chicken and even a ham as well because the oven was hot. You could tell the quality of her desserts by the amount of "smarties" on it. The more there were, the worse it was. Mom must have wanted to smack Dad a few times. When she was looking for a compliment on the meal, he would say, "I'm eating it, aren't I?"

Mom was renowned for her hats, some were quite wild, not always on perfectly straight, but she rarely left home without one on.

In 1939, while berry picking near Manhattan Beach, Pelican Lake, Mom saw a "for sale" sign on the property. She contacted Reverend Egbert Berry and told him "you Pentecostals better get down and buy that place. It's for sale." I have to thank Mother for her foresight as Manhattan has always been a special place for the rest of us, especially now with the grandkids enjoying boating, swimming and the other lake activities.

In the fall of 1959 Hubert thought it would "look good on my record" if I attended Long Beach State College where he happened to teach. While there I learned how to golf and swim. Carole and I corresponded throughout that school year.

These arrangements that Hubert made for Philip to go to College in California presented for Philip a wonderful opportunity, but created a challenging situation for Ivy, who naturally had come to rely very much on Philip.

In her diary entry for September 17, 1959, Ivy writes:

Philip left on the bus 6:30 tonight for Long Beach. I am lost without him. But I think it best for him to go when Hubert was good enough to invite him there. It seemed for a while he was not to go, there was no room on the plane for him, but it seemed to work out at the last minute for him to go…. I feel awful to see him go, it is so hard to see him go. It will make him a real man.

Philip again:

I returned home in 1960 and worked for the Manitoba Telephone System for four years during which time Carole and I started dating. The next move for my parents and me was to a house in the one hundred block of 4th Street. Mom must have known Carole and I were getting serious because she told me "if you give her a ring at Christmas, you don't have to buy a present." My mother was very practical, so I did it, December 1962.

When we set the wedding date for April 2, 1963, I think Carole's Mom wondered why the rush.

Wedding Photograph of
Carole Anne Ferguson and Philip John Winston Hall
April 2, 1963

Philip:

In 1964, I left MTS and travelled throughout Western Manitoba selling specialty welding rods. A few times when I was traveling in southwestern Manitoba Mom would come with me. She was happy to sit in the car doing her knitting while I made my calls. Looking back, I think it was a chance for her to see the country and get away, briefly, from her cooking and cleaning.

In January 1969, I left Eutectic Welding Supplies and Carole and I spent the winter working with Hubert in California. On our return to Manitoba we started into real estate buying an eight-suite apartment block and later White Swan Mobile Home Park on the North Hill.

In January 1970, we had the privilege to adopt David who was nine weeks at the time. Trista came along March 18, 1971 and Rob August 5, 1973. It was at this time Carole's Mom thought we should put a stop to this. I did.

Without a doubt, Mom was the wheeler-dealer in the family. She never liked the idea of having to ask Dad or anyone else for money. This was the reason she made her own money by raising chickens, ducks, etc. on the farm and renting rooms in Brandon. Mom was the reason I went into business rather than working for someone else. She gave me the best advice when she said "you can either work for your money or you can have your money work for you." It was something I took to heart and never forgot.

CHAPTER 12: LAST YEARS

Last years of George and Ivy Hall

George and Ivy spent the last two decades of their lives in Brandon. In addition to renting rooms, for a time Ivy worked at the Brandon Mental Health Centre. Her role is uncertain as her nursing training and practical experience were limited and not likely to be recognized. She was perhaps a ward clerk.

Ivy Hall at her post at the Brandon Mental Health Centre

According to Hubert's wife, Eileen, who was a registered nurse working there at the same time, Ivy was highly regarded for her work ethic, caring nature and happy disposition.

Ivy's efforts as a landlady were not without their challenges. Because of her strong church orientation, she was quite determined to run a reputable house, and was never reluctant to be evangelical in expressing her beliefs.

Her diary entries provide a glimpse of what she thought.

> *March 11, 1957: Much news. Mrs. Gibbs is packing up her clothes. What a character. She must be over fifty too.*
> *March 12, 1957: She did not go today but she seems to have a lot of luggage. Now I will have another room to clean.*
> *March 13, 1957: Well, thank goodness she has gone. She was a headache always. Strangers in her room. So I told her she ought to be ashamed. She denied everything…. that Mrs. Gibbs was a character.*

Being a landlady did not provide an easy path to financial well-being. Besides the worry of tenant damage and defalcation, it was, even in the best of times, just hard work. Ivy states in her diary on February 28, 1959 (when almost 65 years old):

> *I washed a big laundry. This afternoon I went upstairs & cleaned two rooms. Now I am tired out. There are times when the work is too much, although I rented one of the rooms so it pays to have them looking nice.*

In another entry, she describes feeling that she was coming down with the flu and wanted only to go to bed, but she had a tenant on the third floor who had sprained his leg and could not negotiate the stairs, so she made his meals and somehow got them up to him.

As Philip pointed out, Ivy was inclined to move frequently, either to downsize or to have more rooms to rent, depending on how she was feeling at the time. It may not be a complete summary, but a review of the Henderson Directories indicate Ivy and George lived in 1949 at 2333 Princess Avenue, in 1951 at 139-15th Street, from 1952 to 1961 at 408-12th Street, 1963/64 at 149-4th Street, 1965 at 137-2nd Street, 1966/67 at 251-12th Street, and Ivy as a widow in 1968 at 216-7th Street, and in 1969/70 at 144-4th Street. Ivy's realtor was doubtless very happy to have Ivy as her friend.

It doesn't seem that George had much influence in the decision making with respect to these moves. Doreen remembers often receiving a call from Ivy describing the terrible need in the new house (which actually was always an old house) for painting or wallpapering to be done, and generally within a short time Doreen would find herself

up some ladder at her Mother's new house with a paintbrush in hand wondering how she had been sweet talked into "volunteering" yet again for this work. Doreen's son, Dale, claims he was present on one of those occasions and overheard Doreen tell her mother, in rather stern tones, that Ivy was not to expect her to paint or wallpaper her next house. Doreen says she can't imagine she would actually say that but does acknowledge she thought it many times.

George was seven and a half years older than Ivy, and by the time they moved into Brandon from the farm he was ready physically and emotionally to take enjoyment from leisure, although relaxation for George would require that he be engaged in some productive project. Charles and Doreen took advantage of his carpentry skills to help in the building of their house at 904 - 6th Street and the cottage at Manhattan Beach. With the house, the Brawns had engaged the services of a contractor who worked for the most part on his own. Shortly after the contractor began his work, George appeared at the site, without being asked and without seeking compensation, ready to help in any way he could. Thereafter he returned daily. Frequently George would head off to Melvin's farm to help where he could. Melvin's son, Warren, recalls:

> *Grandpa Hall while patching Dad`s wooden granaries would quietly go about his duties whistling a church tune. Being around him gave a feeling of solitude as he was very quiet. I sensed he enjoyed coming back to his roots. I don't remember Dad ever giving Grandpa instructions while at Dad`s farm. Grandpa knew what work was needing attention.*

Some of George's ventures seem in retrospect challenging beyond practicality, such as constructing a tear-shaped travel trailer, which he and family members could use for their infrequent camping. He liked to putter.

Ivy and George Hall at rear of 408 – 12th Street in 1952 beside the travel trailer built by George.

George was as committed to Bethel Temple and the Pentecostal faith as was Ivy, but in a more quiet and reserved manner. His was not the personality to stand up in a church service to "testify", or to seek prominence or public recognition as a deacon, teacher or board member. His dedication was more personal and private, but absolutely sincere. Charles Brawn spoke of visiting George and Ivy's home at 408 - 12th Street and finding George in their dark, unfinished basement, enjoying the solitude and the opportunity for quiet prayer and reflection.

George Hall died on February 25, 1968 at age 81 in Brandon, after a period of hospitalization brought on by advancing dementia. Ivy Agnes Hall died on January 23, 1971 at age 76 of a heart attack in California while visiting Hubert and his family. Having observed George's final struggles, she would have appreciated that her death came suddenly. Both Ivy and George are buried in the west or lawn section of the Brandon Cemetery.

Last Years of Hubert Hall, Melvin Hall and Doreen Brawn

Hubert's death of a heart attack on March 15, 1991 (two weeks prior to his 61st birthday) in Garden Grove, California was a great and tragic shock for the Hall family, but perhaps should have been foreseen. In Hubert and Eileen's Christmas letter in December 1989, Eileen told her family and friends:

> *In May, Hugh & I traveled to Israel for a 15-day trip. This trip our doctor called a miracle trip for Hugh because Hugh was not aware of his heart problem. … After the trip on June 19th Hugh visited his doctor at Kaiser Hospital and the doctor would not let Hugh go home. Instead Hugh went to surgery on June 21st for six bypass surgery. We are very thankful that Hugh's life was spared and he has recovered very well.*

Hubert had that special and rare kind of personality that could light up a room. He had a generous and playful spirit. He was clever and hard working, but, although he was driven to succeed, he was always guided in his thoughts and actions by the moral framework encouraged by his parents and supported by his Church. Hubert shared the last 38 years of his life with his wife, Eileen (Shelvey). No doubt the fact of their similar backgrounds, both having been raised on farms in rural Manitoba, and having the same religious convictions, went far to providing a solid foundation to their relationship.

Melvin always was concerned to keep busy. From 1959 to 1974 he served as a councilor for Ward 1 in the R.M. of Strathcona (the same ward in which his great-uncle

Thomas Hall had served as councilor from 1906 to 1912),[79] and was a keen and successful competitive curler, but after his children (Janice excepted) completed school, he was happy to arrange his affairs so that he and Jean would have the flexibility to travel, which they did extensively, including a number of international trips.

Melvin was fortunate in being able to hand over to his son, Wayne, responsibility for the farming operation, and to Wally responsibility for Pleasant Valley Golf Course. Melvin and Jean were able to spend winters through that period in Mesa, where they owned a large modular home on a golf course. Frequently Melvin and Jean would be joined on their journeys by Doreen and Charles, and that couple also ended up purchasing a park model winter home in Mesa.

It is always difficult to be precise in making a proper diagnosis of such matters, but it became clear to Melvin's family members (a suggestion resisted by Doreen) for some time prior to Melvin's death that he was developing some form of dementia. He became increasingly demanding and suspicious, but with the support of his family, especially Jean, he was able to continue with his usual activities right up to the end. In early December 2008, while in Mesa, Arizona, Melvin had a heart attack and, accompanied by his son Warren, was flown by arrangement of the health insurance company in a private jet to Manitoba and transferred to the Glenboro Hospital. Jean and Janice made it there by December 8 and Melvin's family were present when he died.

Doreen and Charles celebrated 71 years together and lived independently until September 2016, when Doreen entered Fairview Personal Care Home in Brandon, where she remained until her death on February 18, 2019, when she was 92. Doreen's move to a care home was prompted by the dual concern that in the spring of 2016 she was diagnosed with Vascular Dementia, which was characterized by increasing paranoia and delusion, and at approximately the same time Charles was diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer (he died February 25, 2017).

It might be understandable for members of the Hall/Brawn family to be concerned about the repetition of some form of dementia in a number of family members across two generations. But Doreen's medical doctor of thirty years explained that it was, however, his judgment that at least her dementia was simply and primarily a function of the fact that she lived so long.

CHAPTER 13: GRANDSON GARY BRAWN'S PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

In my earliest clear memories of my grandparents, they are living with Philip at 408 - 12th Street. My mind's eye sees Ivy as larger than life and full of love and fun. She brimmed with bustle, and was always busy with an activity or a plan. As my family lived in a small and modest bungalow, the Hall house seemed huge to me, but because various spaces were rented the living area was in fact quite small, and very crowded with excess furniture and bric-a-brac. My grandmother loved shopping, but put no great value on the item of her interest being new or expensive or trendy or modern. Her hunt was always focused on "bargains." The signs for 50% off or "two for the price of one" were irresistible. She would never pay for fresh bread if cheaper two-day old bread was available.

Ivy Hall at 408 - 12th Street, box camera in hand

Ivy never attended a family gathering without her box camera. She placed a great value on a photographic record of special events. She was frequently the subject of much friendly joking as she struggled to get her camera adjusted properly. Her camera was of a style that required it be held about belt buckle height, and viewed through the top, which was a great challenge that Ivy never completely conquered.

Ivy was always demonstrably affectionate, perhaps especially with her grandchildren, and we all cherished the hugs and the warmth of her greeting. That continued from the time I was a toddler right through to our last visits together in the years following my marriage. In the latter period, I knew well I was challenging her ability to discipline herself from being too openly critical of some of my decisions - wearing a beard, straying from the church and generally being part of a generation she had difficulty understanding. During my university years, she invariably referred to me as "that yippee." She pushed hard for me to consider studying to become a Pentecostal minister, and I could not help pushing back just as hard. As unsettling as that conflict became at times, I still did not doubt her affection and concern for me.

Philip speaks of Ivy's attempts to secure a driver's license. She was a determined student, and tried many times in many ways to achieve her goal of being able to drive a car legally, no doubt seeing that accomplishment as representing real freedom. She studied, she pressed Philip and others to "teach" her, she took professional lessons, she even travelled to Killarney to take her road test believing it would be significantly easier to manage the challenges of traffic there than in Brandon. Ivy's diary entries reflect her determination to obtain a license. She records:

> *October 14, 1958 (*when Ivy was 64*): I went down to the drivers' office to write out the test, but I failed. Went to the prayer meeting at night.*
> *October 15, 1958: Went down for a not written test. Flunked again. So, I will keep trying. Another beautiful day.*
> *August 18, 1959: I went out with Leaders (*Driving School*) driving around the fair ground, it was the 3rd lesson. He did not give me much encouragement to continue. I have made up my mind to learn to drive a car, so that's it.*
> *August 19, 1959: I went out with Dale Berry* (friend of Philip's) *to take a lesson. I think I have done better with Dale's teaching than the other one.*
> *August 20, 1959: I was out taking a lesson with Dale Berry on driving the Morris car. He is a good teacher. I am learning the gear shifts at last. It makes me very happy I can drive at last.*
> *August 21, 1959: I went out again for another lesson. I am getting along very good. I am still hoping I will get a license.*
> *September 3, 1959: This is the first time I drove by myself around Brandon. I feel better now.*
> *September 4, 1959: I have been out tonight taking a car lesson backing up. I find it rather hard because I stall the motor all the time, forget to press down on the gas. However, I am going to try hard to get a license*

I recall as a child going with Ivy to the government driver-testing centre in Brandon where part of the process was for her to sit in a very rudimentary simulator and move

her right foot from an imaginary accelerator to an imaginary brake when a red light came on. Her brain was simply not programmed to do this and the level of her ineptitude was a marvel. My impression was that all in the family admired Ivy's determination, but were truly fearful she would somehow secure a driving license. Happily, she never did.

The lack of a license did, however, slow Ivy down only slightly. After Philip turned sixteen and obtained his driving permit, he was her regular chauffeur, but she had a cadre of friends and other relatives who could be called on to take her here and there. If none of that group was available, she would, as Philip says, not hesitate to ask for a ride from a stranger.

She was certainly never content simply to stay at home. Nor was Ivy reluctant to travel on her own, which she did in flying to England to visit relatives when she was 73 years of age.

Ivy in 1967 visiting her old school in Pewsey, England

For the most part Ivy's surviving diaries, which unfortunately only cover the latter portion of her life, detailed ladies' church luncheons, troubles with tenants and the weather, but she did provide more detail on her trip to England. She wrote: "August 16, 1967 - Have just left Winnipeg 6:10 p.m. on flight … Arrived at London Airport 11:15 a.m. fine day. Eileen met me at London Airport, 65 miles to Nellie's place." Over several pages, Ivy detailed her travels that were primarily in Sussex and out from Nellie's home in Rosecroft, and included a day trip to Ivy's home village of Pewsey.

She returned home September 4, 1967 and stated: “It was nice to get home. Again, it was nice to see England, but I could never live there again. The roads are so narrow, there is hardly room to pass, nothing looked quite as good as Canada. I got home by midnight on the bus. The cases were too heavy to carry so I got a taxi to drop them off."

George was not morose, but so quiet and unassuming sight of him was frequently lost in the glare of Ivy’s personality. If I visited my grandparents in their home, I would expect to find Ivy in her kitchen. Her cinnamon buns were my favourite of her culinary creations. I would anticipate George in winter would be in the basement fueling their coal furnace, or in summer in the back yard working on a carpentry project. He had a large round stone knife sharpener he would turn with a foot pedal. He kept all his blade tools clean and sharp.

I don’t remember my parents were so socially active that having a “baby sitter” for my brother Dale and me was regularly required, and I don’t remember my grandmother coming to our house for that purpose. I think it would have been more likely in those circumstances that my brother and I would be taken to the Hall home. I do recall clearly my grandfather coming to our home to watch over us one evening when we were probably in the five to seven years of age range. At bedtime, we were encouraged to say our prayers, and then grandpa proposed reading to us while we all snuggled in my parents’ bed. He had brought with him a picture book about a young boy venturing through a valley of terrors, comforted and protected through his frightening journey by Jesus. Grandpa made a gift to us of that book and made clear he hoped we would always keep the message of the book near to our hearts.

I had no sense that sports were a part of George’s early life, but he took pride in the sports accomplishments of his children. Melvin and Doreen both achieved local prominence for their curling prowess, and George would often come to watch their games. George did not live to see Philip’s achievements in golf, but was supportive of that son’s involvement in hockey.

One winter Saturday morning, I made my way to 408 - 12th St. to join Grandpa and walk down to the arena two blocks away on 10th Street to watch Philip play hockey. It had been agreed Philip and I would have permission that afternoon to go to a movie (which in itself seems strange, as my grandfather generally did not favour movies, or think them appropriate for young Christian boys). Philip played goal with his usual skill, but somehow (perhaps from a deflection) a puck passed by his glove and hit him squarely in the forehead. I remember blood and a very concerned George. By the time

we got Philip home, he was sporting a prominent swelling on his forehead, and George determined that there would be no movie that day, which I thought was very unfair.

Philip is approximately five years older than I, but that did not deter me from regularly pestering him and his friends by my presence, as they seemed always to be involved in activities far more interesting that anything I and my friends could dream up. I remember as a preschooler hanging about as Philip played marbles on his school playground, biked around the neighbourhood, engaged in a footrace down 12th Street, participated in church or school Christmas concerts, played his accordion - all sorts of exciting activities. Philip exhibited admirable patience.

In the family gatherings that brought together a large group of Halls and Brawns, games were inevitable. While others might prefer a card game, Grandpa gravitated to crokinole in which he was skilled and surprisingly competitive. He was not a person prepared to let a little kid beat him at his favourite game.

George Hall giving his grandson, Gary Brawn, a crokinole lesson

AFTERWORD

Doreen:

> *When I think about my brothers, our parents and their siblings, as I often do, I am struck by what a wide range of personalities and interests are represented. Yet my memories of the hooting and hollering and laughing that characterized a get-together of my Mother's family are not at all different from when my brothers were lucky enough to be together to challenge each other to a not altogether friendly tennis or card game. My brothers were much driven to succeed in their various endeavours, and although each has been successful in fulfilling his worldly ambitions, I admire most of all the principled manner in which they dealt with others and lived their lives.*

The story of the Hall family is far from over, and what has happened to George and Ivy's grandchildren and nieces and nephews and their families is just as significant as what happened to them, but that is for others to describe.

As was stated earlier, one can only ponder with intense regret how much more complete and interesting the story of the Smith/Hall family might have been had someone had the foresight and initiative to ask George and Ivy or their brothers and sisters some basic questions and taken careful note of the answers. Many times, it has been tempting to set this project aside out of frustration that the story is so incomplete, but to persevere seemed justified by the knowledge the task will not get easier in future, and by the conviction the next generation or perhaps their children or grandchildren will find it interesting and gratifying to know from whence they came.

A gathering of the extended Hall/Smith family, circa 1954

Standing: Murray Frederickson, Jack Kenyon, Joyce Frederickson, Melvin Hall, Gertie Kenyon with Joy Kenyon, Doreen Brawn, Jean Hall, Al Bartley, Emily Campbell, Eileen Dunlop, Tom Dunlop

Middle row: Rose Smith with Bryan Frederickson, Tom McClay, Belle McClay, Alice Hall, Ivy Hall, George Hall

Front row: Philip Hall, Jim Kenyon, Allen Kenyon, Warren Hall, Terri Lynn Bartley, Joan Hall, Wayne Hall, Gary Brawn, Dale Brawn, unknown

APPENDIX 1: POSSIBLE RELATIVES OF JOHN HALL Sr.

In the research for this project, I sought to investigate all references I could find to persons having the Hall surname and who had settled in the Buckingham, Quebec area at the time my great-great-grandfather, John Hall Sr., lived there. I hoped I could establish familial relationships among those persons. Ultimately, I was not successful, but the possible connections remain intriguing:

The challenge of tracing families from Ireland was made substantially more difficult because a Dublin fire destroyed many genealogical records which dated prior to 1922.

A potential aid in sorting out otherwise confusing Irish family connections is the traditional naming patterns followed in that culture until the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is:

- First born son named after his father's father
- Second born son named after his mother's father
- Third born son named after his father
- Fourth born son named after his father's oldest brother
- Fifth born son named after his father's 2nd oldest brother or his mother's oldest brother

- First born daughter named after her mother's mother
- Second born daughter named after her father's mother
- Third born daughter named after her mother
- Fourth born daughter named after her mother's oldest sister
- Fifth born daughter named after her mother's 2nd oldest sister or her father's oldest sister

Of course conclusions reached on this basis can be confused by a child's premature death, so that, for example, a third born child turns up on a census report as the oldest child.

In the Buckingham area at the time Samuel Lough and his family arrive and become established, there are many Halls, and it is to be expected there is some significant family connection among them. For example:

John Felton's report in 1830 placed a William Hall on lot 14 range 9, a John Hall on lot 15 range 6, and a Samuel Hall beyond the limits of Buckingham Township.

On a land petition in 1830 a group of land owners complained they had been promised 200 acres of land, but had received only 100 acres. The petitioners included John Hall, William Hall and Samuel Lough.

The “John Hall” referenced here is not George Hall’s grandfather, who by many citations was born in 1815 and therefore would have been only 15 in 1830.

Margaret Hall, born September 12, 1801 in Ireland, married John McClymont about 1820 in Canada and died March 26, 1884. John McClymont died in the late 1830’s, and Margaret married Samuel McConnnel, who was born in Ireland in approximately 1805.

On February 24, 1842 (approximately two years after John Hall’s wedding to Emily Lough), John is noted as a witness to the marriage of the widow Margaret (Hall) McClymont to Samuel McConnell in Cumberland.

Samuel James Lough, born in 1815 in Ireland, married Rebecca McClymont, daughter of Margaret Hall.

1851 census for Wakefield (near Buckingham. Buckingham census appears to have been lost.)

George Hall	Farmer	Ireland	Methodist	52	(bd 1799)
Jane Hall		Ireland	“	44	
David Hall	Labourer	Ireland	“	22	
Elizabeth Hall		“	”	18	
Sam’l Hall	Labourer	Canada	“	16	
John Hall		“	“	14	
Anne Hall		“	“	12	
George Hall		“	“	9	
Mary Jane Hall		“	“	7	
Foster Hall		“	“	5	

1861 Census for Buckingham (showing George’s grandparents and their family)

John Hall	Shoemaker	Ireland	Ch. of Scotland	46	living in 1 ½ storey frame house
Amelia Lough		Lower Canada	“	41	
Samuel Hall		LC	“	20	
Rebecca Hall		“	“	18	
John Hall Jr.		“	“	16	
Mary J. Hall		“	“	14	
James Hall		“	“	12	
Alex Hall		“	“	10	
Amelia Hall		“	“	8	
Matilda Hall		“	“	5	
Hariet Hall		“	“	2	
Samuel Hall		“	“	20	(cousin? nephew?)

Neighbours were:

Samuel Lough	Labourer	Ireland	Ch of Scotland	44	living in 1 ½ storey frame house
Rebecca (McClymont) Lough		LC	"	37	(daughter of Margaret Hall ?)
George Lough		"	"	14	
Samuel A Lough		"	"	12	
Catharine Lough		"	"	10	(died of consumption ?)
Wm H Lough		"	"	7	
Eva Lough		"	"	4	
John McL. Lough		"	"	1	
Jane A Hall		"	"	15	(cousin? niece?)

Ottawa Journal 26 August 1893, p. 6 "Mrs. Samuel Lough, who met with the accident several days ago, died recently. Her remains were interred in the Dale Cemetery followed by a large cortege of friends and neighbours."

Samuel McConnell	Farmer	Ireland	Ch of Scotland	56	
Margaret H McConnell		"	"	50	(nee Hall)
Margaret McClymont		W Canada	"	28	
Wm McClymont		"	"	25	
Hugh McConnell		LC	"	19	
James McConnell		"	"	18	
Margaret Cruikshank		"	"	14	Servant
Eliza J. Hall		"	"	11	(cousin? niece?)

Samuel Hall	Farmer	Ireland	Ch of Scotland	50	(bd about 1811)
Caroline	Wife	LC	"	36	
John		"	"	18	
William		"	"	17	
Emily		"	"	16	
Caroline		"	"	15	
Samuel		"	"	12	
Jane		"	"	11	
Julia		"	"	6	
James		"	"	4	

James Hall	Farmer	Ireland	Ch of Scotland	31	(bd about 1830)
Ann	Wife	LC	"	20	
Mary Jane		"	"	3	
James W.		"	"	2	
Mary E				4	
John Hall	Farmer	LC	"	24	(cousin? nephew)

James Hall	Farmer	Ireland	36	
Mary Hall	Wife	LC	25	
Nancy Hall			7	
Robert Hall			2	

Martha Hall, School Teacher,		Ireland	Ch of Scotland	43
Emilie Hall		L. Canada		16
Living in a log house with				
James Allen, Shoemaker		L. Canada		31
Matilda Allen				19
Catherine Allen				3
Piere Allen				1
William Fr. Allen				4 (in next census described as Frederick W. Klen)
Samuel McConnell	Farmer	Ireland	Ch of Scot.	56
Margaret (formerly McClymont, nee Hall)	Wife	Ireland		59
Margaret McClymont		UCda		28
William McClymont		UCda		25
Hugh McConnell		L.C		19
James McConnell		L.C.		18
Margaret Cruickshank		L.C.		14 Servant
Eliza I. Hall		L.C.		11

Living in a one and a half storey frame house on a quarter acre of land; Samuel had 1 horse, 1 cow, 4 sheep and 1 pig – valued at $100

According to the 1861 census Eliza J. Hall, 11, was living with Samuel and Margaret (nee Hall) McConnell, and Emily Hall, 16, was living with Martha Hall. Both Eliza Jane and Emily were children of Samuel and Caroline Hall.

Another branch of the Hall family being located in Buckingham is suggested by the fact that in the 1861 census there is a 20 year old Samuel Hall (nephew?) residing with John Hall's family and a 15 year old Jane Ann Hall (niece?) residing with Samuel Lough and his family.

1871 Census for Buckingham, Quebec

Margaret McConnell	widow	Ireland	69
Hugh McConnell	millwright	Quebec	29
James MConnell	farmer	Quebec	28
Margaret McConnell		Ontario	35

The 1871 Census for Buckingham, Quebec records Margaret McConnell (nee Hall) as a neighbour of Martha S. Hall, spinster school teacher.

Martha Hall, School Teacher, 53, Church of Scotland, living with Frederick W. Klen 13, and Catherine Klen, 12 both students.

In the 1881 Census for Buckingham, Quebec

Martha S. Hall, School Teacher, 63, living with Frederck Allen, Clerk, 22, and Catherine Allen, 21.

P. L. Lapointe (p. 150) wrote: One of the female teachers … made an undying impression on several generations of school children. Her name was Martha S. Hall and, in 1877, she already had twenty-five years of teaching experience behind her. Unable to continue teaching for health reasons. Protestant School Board Trustees approached Bolton Magrath and Gedeon Ouimet to obtain a pension for her: "Martha S. Hall, who taught in the same school for twenty-five years without even being absent for a week during any one Scholastic year and that she is now getting nearly past teaching after spending the best of her days with a small salary never more than two hundred dollars per year and no other source of income, it is not to be expected that she can have much laid past…" Gedeon Ouimet agreed to add Miss Hall's name to the list of pensioners ... and on April 1st, 1878, Martha S. Hall retired.

On p. 150 Lapointe lists Eliza Jane Hall as a teacher for the Protestant School Board in 1878 and 1879 holding a Primary diploma and earning $13 and $14 per month respectively.

1871 Census for Buckingham, Quebec

Samuel Hall	Farmer	Ireland	Ch of Scot	62
Caroline		Quebec	"	48
John	Farmer	"	"	29
William	Labourer	"	"	27
Emily		"	"	25
?	Labourer	"	"	23
E. Jane	School Teacher	"	"	20
Jullia		"	"	17
James		"	"	13
Sarah		"	"	9
James Hall		Ireland	"	40
Ann		Quebec	Ch of Eng	30
Mary Jane		"	"	13
John		"	"	9
James		"	"	7
Henry		"	"	7
Eva		"	"	4

Samuel A	"	"	2
Anna	"		4/12 (Dec'd)
John Hall Farmer	Quebec	Ch of Eng	34
Neighbour			
William Dodge Farmer	Quebec	Ch of Eng	35

1881 Census for Buckingham, Quebec

James Hall Farmer	Ireland	Ch of Scotland	76
Mary Ann Hall	LCda		45
Robert Hall Farmer			22
Joseph Hall			20
Eliza Hall			17
Edmond Hall			11
John Hall Farmer	LCda	Ch of Scotland	39
Susanna			26
Ester			4
Emma			1/12
William Hall Farm Labourer	LCda	Ch of S	37
Catherine		Ch of E	28
Samuel		Ch of S	?
Ann Hall Farmer	LCda	Ch of Eng	41
Mary Jane	"	"	22
Samuel Farmer	"	"	19
John Farmer	"	"	19
Henry Farmer	"	"	17
Evangeline	"	"	15
Samuel	"	"	12
Anna	"	"	5

1891 Census for Buckingham, Quebec

William Hall	widower	Farmer	Quebec	Presbyterian	48
Emily					8
Arthur					6
Dona					2

APPENDIX 2: SOME HALL, DALE AND LOUGH FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Samuel Lough 1764 - 1843 and Elizabeth (Betty) Dale 1765 - ?

Parents of: William (who married Mary Dale, and four of whose children married Dales), Samuel Rose, John (who married Martha Matilda Dale) and Rose Lough

Samuel Rose Lough 1792 - 1852 and Catherine (Kate) McFaul 1793 - 1851

Parents of:
Samuel James Lough 1815 - 1884
John C. Lough 1818 - 1884 (married to Lavina Byrnes 1824 - 1900)
Emily Lough 1820 - 1903 (married to John Hall 1815 - 1875?)
Esther Lough 1822 - ?
William Lough 1825 - 1844
Mary Lough 1827 - ?
Alexander Lough 1831 - 1907
James Lough 1838 - 1876

John C. Lough 1821 - 1884 and Lavina Byrnes 1824 - 1900

Parents of: at least fourteen children born between 1844 and 1872 including:
William Thomas, Emily, Alexander J., Mary, James, Samuel, Thomas, Henry, John Edwin, Rachel, Alfred, Margaret, Alice and
Mary Elizabeth Lough 1856 - 1956 (George Hall's mother)

John Hall 1815 - 1875 and Emily Lough 1820 - 1903

Parents of:
Samuel Lough Hall 1841-1918 (married to Rachel Anderson 1850 - 1932)
Rebecca Hall 1842 - 1920 (never married)
John Hall Jr. 1845 - 1934 (George Hall's father, and married to Mary Elizabeth Lough)
Mary Jane Hall 1847 - 1916 (married to William Cosgrove)
James William Hall 1850 - 1902 (married first to Flora McLeod and later to Alice Moffatt)
Alexander Hall 1852 - ? (marriage and death particulars unknown)
Emily Hall 1853 - 1894 (married to John Wanless)
Matilda Hall 1856 - 1937 (married to John Moffatt)
Harriet Hall 1859 - ? (marriage and death particulars unknown)
Thomas Hall 1863 - 1931 (never married)
William Hall 1864 - 1906 (married to Annie Thring)

APPENDIX 3: “OFF TO MANITOBA”

A story by an unnamed reporter published by *The Ottawa Daily Free Press* in 1879 describes one of the early train journeys west from Ontario under the headline “OFF TO MANITOBA Another Exodus to the Farmers’ El Dorado - How the Intended Settlers Fare by the Way”

Should the present exodus from Ontario to Manitoba continue, the latter will soon lose the somewhat ambiguous title of the "Great Lone Land" bestowed upon it in days gone by, when perhaps its loneliness had charms for the "noble savage," and those few whites who settled there early, and knowing the fertility of the land did not care to have many neighbors of their own complexion. The last few years have done much towards making known the capabilities of the Manitoba soil, and our Ontario farmers, ever far-seeing, in matters agricultural, soon began to see the advantages afforded by that country in their own particular calling. The few pioneers who had the courage to venture into the almost unknown land began to thrive, and to let their friends know of their prosperity, and as news, good or bad, travels quickly, people began little by little, to make enquiries as to this "land of promise" and the consequence was that others ventured to break up their households in Ontario, and went into the prairie province, there as it were to commence life afresh. They too were, in their turn, successful and urged their friends to go out and prosper likewise. The consequence of all this has been that each season has seen an increase in emigration to the North-West until it has reached the dimensions it has done this spring. If a sceptic wanted a proof of the esteem in which Manitoba is at present held by agriculturalists, he should have visited the St. Lawrence and Ottawa depot on Tuesday last, when he would have had all his doubts removed beyond all question. Mr. A.H. Taylor the popular agent of the Grand Trunk railroad has during the present season arranged four parties of intending settlers in the North-West, and the one it was the privilege of your correspondent to accompany so far as Detroit Junction was the fourth, which set out on Tuesday last his object being to judge for himself of what class of people were going out, what they were going to do, what prospects they had, and in fact, all about the excursion generally. The party, it should be said, consisted of 172 full passengers, representing 215 souls, exclusive of one car of passengers from Millbrook and one car from Peterborough, representing about 150 souls. There was also one car of freight from Peterborough, and two from Millbrook. These were added to the Ottawa party on the way to Sarnia. Your correspondent was told to hold himself in readiness to start at 10 a.m., sharp, but when he reached the depot it was evident that some few hours must elapse before a departure could be effected, so he employed his time by making a tour of the station yard which presented somewhat the appearance of an agricultural show ground the day before the fair. Horses, wagons, (the latter in all stages of dismemberment) agricultural implements, cattle, and all the various articles that go to make up a farmer’s stock in trade, were scattered about in every direction waiting transferment to the cars that were to convey them to their new sphere of

action in the great North-West. Besides these were household furniture and baggage of every conceivable kind, from a pianoforte down to a rocking chair, proving that while the useful was considered, the ornamental was not forgotten. There was even a house and farm buildings awaiting transportation; these belonged to Mr. Lowe, of the Department of Agriculture, who has purchased some ten thousand acres of land near Emerson, some sixty miles from Winnipeg. The buildings he has constructed in sections, finding it more economical to pursue this plan, than to consume time in putting off his building operations until the arrival of the people he has sent out to his estate. Mr. Lowe's forethought in this respect, is worthy of imitation of all intending settlers, who have sufficient of the needful at hand. He has dispatched a number of employees and thirty horses, and before the fall will have his arrangements in fair working order, and ready for active operations next spring. The stuff he has sent out filled eight cars. Doctor Schultz, M.P., seeing that there was a necessity in the Province for well-bred stock, shipped two car loads of prime Ayrshire bulls and heifers, purchased from Mr. Allan Grant of Fitzroy, and one car load of horses, including one three-year old stallion of an excellent stamp. Most of the farmers had stock of various kinds, and the contents of the cars when loaded, were of as varied a kind as those of Noah's Ark. There were two peacocks, a couple of pigs (belonging to Mr. W.A. Loucks of Winnipeg, and designated by him as "his stock") a span of mules, a bull dog, a deer hound, besides all sorts of feathered pets in the passenger carriages. Some of the cars contained large quantities of seed raised chiefly in the Ottawa district from which, as a matter of course, most of the travelers came from.

The platform was of course crowded with people assembled to witness the departure of the train, and bid adieu to their friends who were going by it. Some were tearful at leaving those with whom they had been intimately acquainted all their lives, but truth to say those who were going away were in better spirits than those who were left behind. Finally all was in readiness for the start and the voice of Mr. A. McCullough, who had charge of the train, was heard giving the warning signal of all aboard and the sixteen heavily laden cars moved out of the station amid the parting cheers of the numbers on the platform. By the way before proceeding further on the journey, it is only right to state that Mr. A. G. Peden, General Passenger Agent of the St. L. & O. Railway, Mr. R.K. Clare, General Freight Agent of the same line, and Mr. Jas. E. Parker of Mr. Taylor's office rendered yeoman's service in expediting matters at the station, but despite their efforts the start was not effected until half-past two, and the passengers were berthed in Grand Trunk first-class cars, Mr. Wainwright, the general passenger agent of the road, being anxious that everything should be done for the comfort of the party and his efforts in this respect were not only successful but were duly appreciated. Once well on the road, your correspondent made a tour of the cars. The people soon appeared to adapt themselves to their novel position; they seemed to have laid in a goodly stock of provisions of all kinds and they had disposed of their odds and ends of property about their places in the carriages with as much method as if starting on a five days' railway journey was an every day's occurrence. Here and there a bird cage was hung up, and its occupants appeared to be in as good spirits as their owners. The

children made themselves comfortable after their fashion, and seemed as pleased as possible to think they were "off to Manitoba." The female portion of the party of course, with the handiness of the fair sex, generally soon had things "put to rights," while the men lit their pipes and compared notes as to their prospects in their new homes. People who had never seen one another before struck up an acquaintance, and before the train reached Prescott everybody was on the best terms with everyone else, and the greatest good humor prevailed. After a short delay at the Junction, where another first-class car was in waiting in order that the passengers might not be overcrowded, another piece of thoughtfulness on the part of Mr. Wainwright, the train proceeded to Brockville, where Mr. Taylor was in waiting with another party from the Canada Central district. This addition brought the number of cars up at twenty-eight, and two trains were made up, with three passenger carriages on one and two on the other. Shortly after ten o'clock a start in earnest was effected, and the travelers were fairly on their way to their new homes. Before turning in for the night the musical members of the party commenced to exercise their vocal powers, each car having its separate concert. The melodies performed ranged from "My Grandfather's Clock" to Moody and Sankey's hymns. One young lady in the car in which it was the good fortune of your correspondent to be seated possessed a voice of great excellence, and sang some songs in a style that would not have disgraced many professionals. In due time the drowsy god began to make his influence known, and some of the "dodges," if the term may be used, to secure comfortable roosting places were quaint in the extreme. Of course there were no sleeping cars, and each one had to exercise his or her ingenuity in devising an apology for a bed. Some had boards which, when placed across the seats and the cushions placed upon them, made excellent couches, while others had camp chairs, which also answered well. To the females, of course, were given up as many seats as they wanted. Your correspondent not having provided himself with either planks or a camp chair, was fain to occupy half of a double seat with the Hon. Mr. Sutherland, who was on his way out to his home. Of course on a long trip, such as the one undertaken by the party, some inconveniences have to be put up with, but the exercise of a little ingenuity combined with patience and good humor, will modify them in a wonderful degree; the three virtues named prevailed, and the party only laughed at one another, when one complained of an ache in some part of the body, caused by sleeping in an unwonted position.

Towards daylight Belleville was reached, and there was a general turn-out and enquiries as to "how do you feel," to which there returned the universal reply, "First rate! Never better." Then there was a rush for the pump of excellent water at the station for the morning ablutions, and also for a cup of tea, the conductor (your correspondent does not call to mind his name) having considerately kept a stove going in the van, for which he deserves the thanks of the party. Coburg was reached about seven o'clock, where those who had not cared to carry provisions with them were supplied with a breakfast at the ordinary rate, and proper justice was done to the meal. The "twenty minutes allowed for refreshments" soon expired, and the journey was resumed without delay. At Port Hope it was expected the Peterborough and Millbank party would be met, but in consequence of the delay that

occurred in Ottawa, they had gone ahead. The run between that place and Toronto was a good one and enjoyed by everybody; the folks had settled down to various occupations, the women reading or attending to the wants of their youngsters, and the men either discussing the country passed through, the state of the crops and a hundred other subjects. The "fragrant weed" was freely indulged in and here and there a coterie of four might be seen deep in the mysteries of four-handed euchre. A short stop was made in Toronto, when the second train came along. The animals were watered and fed for the second time - the first being at Belleville - and, this important matter having been attended to, once more the journey was resumed. Of course, it was not without its incidents; a large party is never without some queer genius or another, and this one was provided with a never-failing source of fun in the shape of Moccasin Joe. The readers of the Free Press must picture to themselves an individual of low stature, clad, so far as nether extremities were concerned, in a pair of pantaloons made of an unknown material, which were stuffed into beef moccasins or shoe packs that came nearly up to his knees; add to this a "coat of no formal cut" that had decidedly seen its best days, for assuredly it could never see much worse, and a once white straw hat perched on the top of a shock head of hair, the whole being covered with a thick layer of real estate, and they will have a fair idea of Moccasin Joe as some wag christened him. What countryman he was is a question difficult to solve, for he was of the polyglot order, English, French or Gaelic were all the same to him. He was a walking edition of Burn's poems, and although he was considerably "disguised" when he went on board the train, and remained so until your correspondent left the party at Detroit Junction, he always appeared to have his wits about him until the train reached Guelph, when he got off to "refresh" and the train started without him. For some time, he was not missed, but presently someone asked "where is Joe?" A search for that worthy revealed the fact he was non est, but at Sarnia the next morning Joe was seen placidly wending his way towards the nearest hotel smoking the same dirty two inches of clay pipe he had in his mouth when he got on board at Ottawa - he had come along by the second train and was just in the same happy frame of mind as ever. Joe stood all the chaff with the most imperturbable good humor, sang a song, and then offered to treat the whole party - he was great fun if you only kept on the windward side of him - it was not well for a person whose olfactory organs were sensitive to go to leeward of him. The last seen of Joe was at Detroit, when he was standing on the hind platform of a car slowly waving his straw hat in farewell to Mr. Taylor and your correspondent. Certain it is that the party will not want for amusement if Moccasin Joe remained with them to the end of the journey.

Stratford was reached at supper time, and Mr. Taylor had considerately telegraphed ahead to the keeper of the refreshment rooms at the station to have a substantial meal ready for those who chose to partake of it, so that no unnecessary time was lost. The train was soon under weigh again, everything going smoothly and everybody feeling as jolly as Mark Tapley. By the way, speaking of the last-named individual, surely Mr. Loucks of Winnipeg must be a lineal descendant of his - for he was jollity personified - he was here and there and everywhere like a corpulent Will o' the Wisp. When he was not enquiring when and

where he could water and feed the animals under his charge, he was nursing some crying baby and comforting it in stentorian tones - somehow or other he made a most successful substitute for a nurse of the proper sex, for on one occasion he came out of what might fitly be termed, the family car, with a face radiant with satisfaction, and with evident pride informed the occupants of the car in which your correspondent was seated that a baby had been crying for forty minutes straight on end, and that during the two hours he had nursed it, it had never uttered a whimper! He supplemented this statement for about the fortieth time by exclaiming, "I say Mr. Taylor, shall I be able to get feed for those horses at Port Huron." The answer was, of course, an affirmative one that had been given also for the fortieth time, but the query began to get monotonous. Mr. Loucks is of a loquacious turn, and waxes eloquent on the subject of Manitoba, and certainly is a most enthusiastic advocate for emigration to that province. He delivered a lecture on that subject during the trip, and held forth for half-an-hour, concluding his oration by proposing three cheers for Mr. Taylor and your correspondent, who he styled "distinguished gentlemen" ahem, and they were given most lustily, he leading them with the voice of a bulldog Bashan, the crowd proclaiming the fact that they were "jolly good fellows" and someone producing a flask, their healths were drank in a very cordial manner. Between him and Moccasin Joe there was no lack of material for mirth there.

Port Sarnia was reached at about one o'clock in the morning, too late to cross to Port Huron as a drizzling rain was falling and the weather was disagreeably cold. The party made themselves comfortable enough until the time arrived to cross the river. Here is a fitting place to mention the attentive and courteous manner which the conductor of the first train treated his numerous passengers and in him the Grand Trunk have a valuable officer. Port Huron was reached about half-past seven, when the work of examining, by the Customs officers, the baggage of those persons going to Minnesota and Dakota commenced. There were not many of these however, most of them going to Emerson and its vicinity. The baggage of those going to Manitoba was bonded, as were also the horses and cattle, and all would go through without further trouble. The Customs business occupied some time, and it was afternoon before the two trains made a start for the Detroit Junction, where the passengers changed cars for the Michigan Central, Mr. E. Wiley taking charge of the party from Port Huron to the Junction. As the departure was made some one proposed THREE CHEERS FOR MR. WAINWRIGHT for having provided such excellent accommodation. These were given in the heartiest manner, and they were well deserved for the most fastidious could not find anything to find fault with.

Detroit Junction was reached about five o'clock, and the change of cars was effected without confusion. The Michigan Central, following the example of the Grand Trunk, had placed first-class carriages on, and the passengers were soon comfortably settled in them. Loucks, the irrepressible, shook hands with everybody that came in his way and if he had not been held back, would have hugged Mr. Taylor and your correspondent. The last "good byes" were said, the last hand shaken by them, and the train moved off with as happy a lot

of people that ever made voluntary exiles of themselves for the purpose of bettering their position in life.

The class of persons who went was the proper one. Many of them were farmers in well-to-do circumstances, who took with them ample capital to give them a good start in their new home, while others were farm hands and artisans who had been thrifty enough to save sufficient to pay their passage and have a tidy little sum besides to keep the wolf from the door while seeking work. With the exception of Moccasin Joe, they all appeared to be sober, industrious men, with a look about them indicating that they were not afraid of hard work,

The journey which scares some people who would like to try their fortune in Manitoba, is a mere nothing, and may be made, as your correspondent has attempted to show, into a very jolly, pleasant trip. The arrangements made by the Grand Trunk are perfect. Everything that can be done to secure the comfort of the parties is done. The trip averages about four days, and, with pleasant companions and the prospect of doing well in the new land, that time soon passes away.

APPENDIX 4: WESTERN CANADA IN 1886

John H. Warkentin, “Western Canada in 1886” Manitoba Historical Society (MHS) Transactions, Series 3, 1963-64 described the area in which Belmont is located as:

a plateau at approximately 1500 feet whose surface in 1886 consisted of undulating tree-covered slopes, meadows for grazing and many potentially arable stretches of grassland. The plateau also has its more scenic features. An impressive valley, up to three miles wide and 350 feet deep that is occupied by the Pembina river and a number of long narrow lakes, crosses the region from northwest to southeast, and the eastern and northern margins of the plateau are crowned by rough forested hilly country, partly morained and rising to over 1700 feet, called the Pembina Mountains and Tiger Hills respectively. A plain sloping from the Tiger Hills to the Assiniboine River is included in this region because the deep valley of the river and a large tract of sand dunes separated it from the Brandon region.

Settlers began to move to this plateau in the late '70s, when heavy rains made the high plains greatly preferable to the flooded lands of the Lowland region. Many farmers preceded the railways, since the Pembina Branch only reached Manitou in 1883 and was not extended through the region until 1885, and the Manitoba and Southwestern Railway (Glenboro Branch) was only built to Holland in 1885 and reached Glenboro the next year. Ontario people predominated in this region of 11,000 people, particularly in the southern rather open plains, which had been reached easily from Emerson by what was called the Boundary Commission Trail in the '70s. In the Tiger Hills to the north there was a greater variety of settlers. French Canadians from Quebec and New England had settled near St. Leon. In the western part of the hills at Grund some Icelanders who were dissatisfied with the Gimli area had started a settlement in 1880, which was progressing more quickly in 1886 than the settlement on Lake Winnipeg. British people had also selected homes in this region, and one journalist commented that "Wherever in the Pembina or Tiger Hills you come upon a picturesque spot, you find that an Englishman had caught on, if obtainable."

Mixed farming was characteristic of the entire region, and in 1886 it held 10% of the cultivated land in the west. Along the railway line grain farming was nearly as far advanced as in the Brandon region; at Pilot Mound the farms averaged 75 acres under cultivation.

Some high quality cattle herds belonged to a few of the farmers of Ontario origin, and this area resembled the Riding Mountain region with regard to the livestock enterprise. In the rougher country north of the Pembina river, among the French, Icelanders and some German settlers, agriculture was not as far advanced, less grain was grown and the stock was of low quality. As yet all parts of the Pembina region had a raw appearance, and one journalist was quite critical of the farmsteads near the Pembina Branch:

> *I expressly exclude the average farm house from everything I may say as to the beauty of the country. With a few noteworthy exceptions they are veritable Bleak Houses in appearance. Here and there a house was met with a coat of paint and some trees planted before the door, and if the farmer only knew how much more comfortable and home like it made them look, there would be very few bare farm houses left to mar the landscapes.*

The dry weather of 1886 made the grasslands everywhere in the west extremely susceptible to fire and from this region in particular there are some descriptions of the disastrous consequences of the prairie fires. Hay stacks were consumed, many farmers lost their cattle, stables and houses, and even trees on the hill tops were burned. It was reported that the prairie fires of 1886 caused more damage than the frosts of previous years. The feeling of utter frustration the fires produced is revealed by a letter published in the Brandon Times, where it was suggested that anyone caught firing the prairie in fall "would meet that summary justice which would save all legal disputes in the matter." Prairie fires remained a problem in Western Canada until settlement was sufficiently dense to make it possible to control the fires.

In this region trading points had been established before the railway lines were built, but as new town sites were surveyed on the railways the buildings in the existing centres were moved to them. Only in the area between the two railway lines did the first centres like St. Leon and Grund remain intact, but they had little hope of growing. As the townsites were laid out, occasional businessmen from older trading centres, usually located in the Lowland, came out to appraise the new districts in the region and then settled in the places where they thought it would be most advantageous to found new businesses. This approach was most often followed on the sites along the Pembina Branch because it was built through country already partly settled so that there was a farm community waiting to be served. A credit reporting agency stated that in 1886 the trading centres on the Pembina Branch expanded more rapidly than anywhere else in the West. But by 1886 there were more than enough prospective tradesmen in the region, so that one local correspondent felt it wise to "inform outsiders that there is not room for more businessmen than we have at present except perhaps in a few callings that are not represented." But it was still difficult at times to bring grain buyers to a station, and there were frequent complaints in the weekly press that no buyers have arrived at particular points. They were essential to attract trade. One village even sent delegates to Winnipeg to fetch buyers to the community. At this time trading patterns were just being established, and sometimes there were great shifts in trade when buyers arrived at a station. In the winter of 1885-6 the Icelandic farmers transferred their grain trade from Brandon (a fifty-mile haul), to a station on the Pembina Branch (a thirty-mile haul), to Holland (a twenty-mile haul), as buyers finally appeared at the latter two places.

APPENDIX 5: FAMILY OF WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH (ALEXANDER) SMITH (researched by Kenneth Coleman)

William Smith 1806 - 1869 and Elizabeth Alexander 1808 - 1882

William's parents: John and Ann Smith

Elizabeth's parents: John and Anna Alexander

William and Elizabeth's children:

- Hannah Alexander Smith 1832 - 1904
- Emma Smith 1834 - ?
- John Alexander Smith 1836 - 1910
- Elizabeth Margretta (Eliza M.) Smith 1838 - 1905
- Martha Smith 1840 - 1924
- Robert Dean Smith 1842 - 1866
- William Edward Smith 1843 - 1927
- Augusta Smith 1845 - ?
- Alfred Smith 1847 - 1848

William Smith was christened 24 Aug 1806 in Pewsey, Wiltshire, the son of John and Ann Smith. Elizabeth Alexander, daughter of John and Anna (Hailstone) Alexander, was christened 05 Jan 1808 in Pewsey.

Elizabeth had at least two siblings: Jane Alexander, christened in 1802, and John Alexander, christened in 1807.

William Smith and Elizabeth Alexander were married 11 Jul 1831 in Berkshire.

In 1841, William and Elizabeth Smith were living in Pewsey with their children Anna, 9, Emma, 7, John, 5, Eliza, 3, and Martha, 1. William Smith was at that time employed as a mason.

In 1851, William and Elizabeth Smith, 44 and 43, were living in Pewsey with their children Elizabeth (described ten years earlier as Anna), 18, Emma, 17, John, 15, Martha, 11, together with new additions Robert, 8, Edward, 7, and Augusta, 5. William Smith described himself as a builder.

By 1861, William and Elizabeth Smith, 54 and 53, were living in Pewsey with their children Eliza, Martha, Robert Dean, William Edward, and Augusta. William Smith continued to describe himself as a builder; Robert Dean Smith had taken a position as a clerk.

In 1871, Elizabeth Smith, 63, widow and retired publican, was living in Pewsey with her children Eliza M., 33, Martha, 31, and William Edward, 27, and her grandson William Henry Smith, 7.

In 1881, Elizabeth Smith, 73, widow, was living in Pewsey with her daughter Martha Smith, 41, and her grandson William H. Smith, 17.

William Smith, 62, died in the June quarter 1869 and Elizabeth Smith, 73, died in the March quarter 1882, both in Pewsey.

As described, William and Elizabeth Smith had nine children:

1. Hannah Elizabeth Smith - christened 24 Jun 1832 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne) at which time her father was a bricklayer. She married Thomas William Beaven 01 May 1855 in Pewsey when she was 22 and he was 18. The newly married couple sailed from Clapham, Surrey, England aboard the ship Lloyds and arrived in Australia 01 Aug 1855. Thomas Beaven was a farm labourer. Anna Beaven reported her brother John Smith was already living in Australia.

Thomas William Beaven, died at 38 years on 08 Oct 1875 in Fladabester, Shoalhaven, New South Wales and Hannah Elizabeth Beaven, died at 71 years on 04 Jan 1904 of heart disease in Cambewarra, New South Wales. They had one child, Elizabeth Beaven, born 01 Jul 1856 in Carrington, New South Wales and she in turn had eight children. The whole of the family made their lives in New South Wales.

2. Emma Smith - christened 20 Jul 1834 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne). Her father at the time was a labourer. She is noted on the 1841 and 1851 census reports as living with her parents, but thereafter particulars of her life and death are not known.

3. John Alexander Smith - was christened 06 Mar 1836 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne) by which time his father had risen from a labourer to a bricklayer.

John Alexander Smith would have emigrated to Australia some time before 01 Aug 1855 when his sister and her husband arrived, but no record has been located.

He married Eliza Ann Pontin in 1859 in Victoria, Australia and they had eight children, all of whom were born, lived and died in Victoria, Australia. Eliza Ann (Pontin) Smith, 43, died in 1881 in Richmond, Victoria, Australia. John Alexander Smith, 74, died 12 Sep 1910 in Blackwood, Victoria, Australia.

4. Elizabeth Margretta (Eliza M.) Smith - was christened 15 Jul 1838 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne) by which time her father was self-described as a mason. She gave birth to William Henry Smith on 29 Apr 1863 (registered 03 Jun 1863 in Pewsey, Wiltshire). No father is noted on William's birth certificate.

Eliza Margaret Smith, 32, and Jesse Head, 40, were married 18 Aug 1872 in Saint Mary's, Portsea, Hampshire. Jesse Head was a widower and had two children from his prior marriage. Jesse and Eliza had three children together.

In 1881, Jesse and Eliza M. Head, 49 and 43, were living in Pewsey with their children. Next door was Eliza's mother, Elizabeth Smith, and Eliza's son, William Henry Smith. Ten years later, the neighbouring residence was occupied by Eliza's sister, Martha Smith, and Eliza's son, William.

Jesse Head, 72, died in the September quarter 1904 and Eliza Margretta (Smith) Head, 67, died in the December quarter 1905, both in Pewsey.

5. Martha Smith - was born in the June quarter 1840 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne). She married Charles Tubb, seven years her senior, in the December quarter 1896 in Salisbury, Wiltshire.

In 1891, Martha Smith, 50, was living by her own means in Pewsey with her nephew, William Henry Smith, 27.

In 1901, Charles and Martha Tubb, 68 and 61, were living in Winterslow, Wiltshire where Charles was a game keeper.

In 1911, Charles and Martha Tubb, 78 and 71, were living at Winterslow Hut Cottages, Middle Winterslow, Wiltshire, by which time Charles had retired as a game keeper.

Charles Tubb, 86, died in the December quarter 1919 and Martha Tubb, 84, died in the June quarter 1924, both in Salisbury.

6. Robert Dear (Dean) Smith - was born in the June quarter 1842 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne) and at 24 died in the December quarter 1866 in Pewsey.

7. William Edward Smith - was born in the December quarter 1843 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne). He married Sarah Mills Newman in the March quarter 1872 in Pewsey. They had three children: Robert William (born 1874),

Elizabeth Ethel (born 1876), Alfred Edward (born 1878) and Clifford James (born 1881).

Like his father, William was a bricklayer/mason.

It is believed Sarah Smith, 37, died in the June quarter 1884 and William Edward Smith and Louisa Eliza Budden were married in the September quarter 1900 in Pewsey. William and “Lulu” (29 years his junior) had two children but only Jack (born 1906) survived.

William E. Smith, 83, died in the March quarter 1927 in Pewsey.

8. Augusta Smith - was born in the September quarter 1845 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne) and married William Longman Donne (fifteen years her senior) in the June quarter 1865 in Pewsey, Wiltshire.

In 1871, William Longman and Augusta Donne, 40 and 25, were living in Hilperton, Wiltshire with their children Edwin James Donne, 4, William Charles Donne, 3, and Henry John Donne, 1. A fourth child had died as an infant. Also living with the family was William Donne’s mother, Elizabeth Ann Donne, 67, widow. William Longman Donne was a commercial traveller.

9. Alfred Smith - was born in the September quarter 1847 in Pewsey registration district (Collingbourne) and died as an infant in the March quarter 1848 in that same district

APPENDIX 6: AUSONIA

According to www.dieselduck.net, the Ausonia was launched in August 1909 as the Tortona and purchased two years later by the Cunard line and renamed. It was used by the line principally to service travel between London, Southampton and Canada. At the outbreak of World War I (and only a short time after Ivy's trip to Canada), the Ausonia was chartered for military purposes. On June 11, 1917, the Ausonia was torpedoed south of Ireland, but limped to port. On May 18, 1918, she was on enroute between New York and Liverpool when she was torpedoed again, this time approximately 620 miles west of Fastnet. The crew abandoned ship but approximately 45 minutes after the initial attack, the German submarine responsible surfaced and sank the ship with shell fire. The crew were adrift in five boats, and those that survived were picked up on June 8 after travelling 900 miles on open seas. 44 crew were lost.

The site "livesofthefirstworldwar.org" describes in heartrending terms the circumstances of Lawrence Curtis, 4th Engineer Officer on the Ausonia at the time of her sinking who wrote a postcard to his wife from his lifeboat:

> *At sea, June 6, 1918. My Dear Wife. The (*Ausonia)
> *was torpedoed last Thursday evening at 5 p.m. over 300 miles from Ireland. The escort had left two days before, and I managed to get away in a boat, but there was no navigator only a compass and a couple of seamen. Our water (drinking) is now getting very low, also our spirits seem dead, and the thirst is damnable, so I am writing the last good-bye in the hope that it may be picked up and sent to you. Much love to you and my pets, also my mother. From your poor, broken hearted "Laurie xxx" Will the finder of this card kindly forward to the address on the other side?* … On June 8 was this final message: *Last drop of water gone, all hands dying with thirst. Laurie xxx*

Cyril H. Brooks described in the site Grace Triumphant his experience travelling from Southampton, England in May 1911, (three years prior to the voyage of Ivy Hall and her Father) on

> *a Cunard ship, S.S. Ausonia, definitely not one of her best. We were travelling with a emigrant party arranged by the Salvation Army, mostly of women. First morning out I was one of the few brave souls that showed up for breakfast. The menu in steerage class was Irish stew or boiled eggs. Irish stew for breakfast – perish the thought! And the stew too! So I had two hardboiled eggs which I soon regretted eating. I was seasick for a week and for years wouldn't touch a hard-boiled egg. Years later we learned from our good friend, George Maslen, that he traveled on the Ausonia on the previous voyage. The food was so terrible, the steerage passengers almost rioted.*

APPENDIX 7: THE GREAT "FLU" EPIDEMIC

The "Spanish Flu" epidemic arrived in Canada with the return of troops who had fought in Europe in the First World War. Eventually this deadly disease reached even the furthest corners of the world.

An initial attempt at control of the spread was through isolation and quarantine. The Belmont News of November 14, 1918 provided some editorial comment and gratuitous advice:

> *Spanish Flu may incidentally prove a blessing in disguise if it shows us the folly of exposing bare chests to the elements, of wearing spider webbed stockings in conjunction with short skirts and low shoes with soles not much thicker than of paper. Of course, we must realize that fashion is our first care and health redundant last. We ask why it should be. Folly alone can give the answer.*
>
> *The Municipality of Strathcona was quarantined last Saturday morning, but people leave the Town and go to the city and elsewhere and come back and are allowed to mix with those who are staying at home and trying to assist the health officer to keep the disease out of the municipality. This should be carried out to the letter and not become a joke as it surely is going to be if people are allowed to go in and out of the municipality. If the people want the disease to come in the best thing to do is to tear down the cards and "let her go".*

The response from medical experts was uninformed and largely ineffective. For example, the direction to its readers from the Belmont News, December 4, 1918 under the heading "Treatment of Influenza" was:

> *1. Go to bed.*
> *2. Open the bowels freely, the windows more freely.*
> *3. Keep plenty of fresh air in the bedroom.*
> *4. Drink copiously of hot water, hot lemonade or hot ginger tea. Take from three to six cupfuls.*
> *5. Take Liquor Ambniae Acetatis: children from one half to one teaspoon, adults from one to two tablespoonfuls every half hour, until free perspiration is induced, then lessen the amount given, keeping up the amount of perspiration for at least six hours, then continuing the medicine in smaller doses at less frequent intervals for at least twelve hours increasing the medicine at any time the skin should become dry. Do not waken the patient to give medicine.*
> *6. Take all the fluid food it is possible to digest.*
> *7. See that the bowels act at least once a day.*
> *8. Give no alcohol.*
> *9. Keep the patient in bed at least one week, and always two days after the temperature has become normal.*

Approximately two weeks later (December 19, 1918) the front page of the newspaper from the neighbouring community, The *Ninette News*, contained in full the press release of W. Birnie, Secretary of the Brandon Board of Trade:

> *It has been brought to the notice of the Brandon Board of Trade that reports are current throughout several districts to the effect that Brandon is practically isolated owing to the "flu" epidemic prevailing. So exaggerated are those reports that they are acting in a detrimental manner on the business of the city. Since the outbreak of the disease the total number of cases in Brandon amount to 1,169. During the month of November 260 homes have been released from quarantine and the total number of deaths has been 28. These statistics are authentic, having been received from the Medical Officer of Health, and are up to and including the 1st of December. Every precaution is being taken to prevent patients from breaking quarantine, and while the churches, schools and picture shows are closed, all places of business and all stores open, and business is proceeding as usual.*

No doubt Mr. Birnie meant his report to be comforting to the residents of southwest Manitoba, but in fact the statistics quoted are alarming.

The Winnipeg Evening Tribune of December 21, 1918 reported:

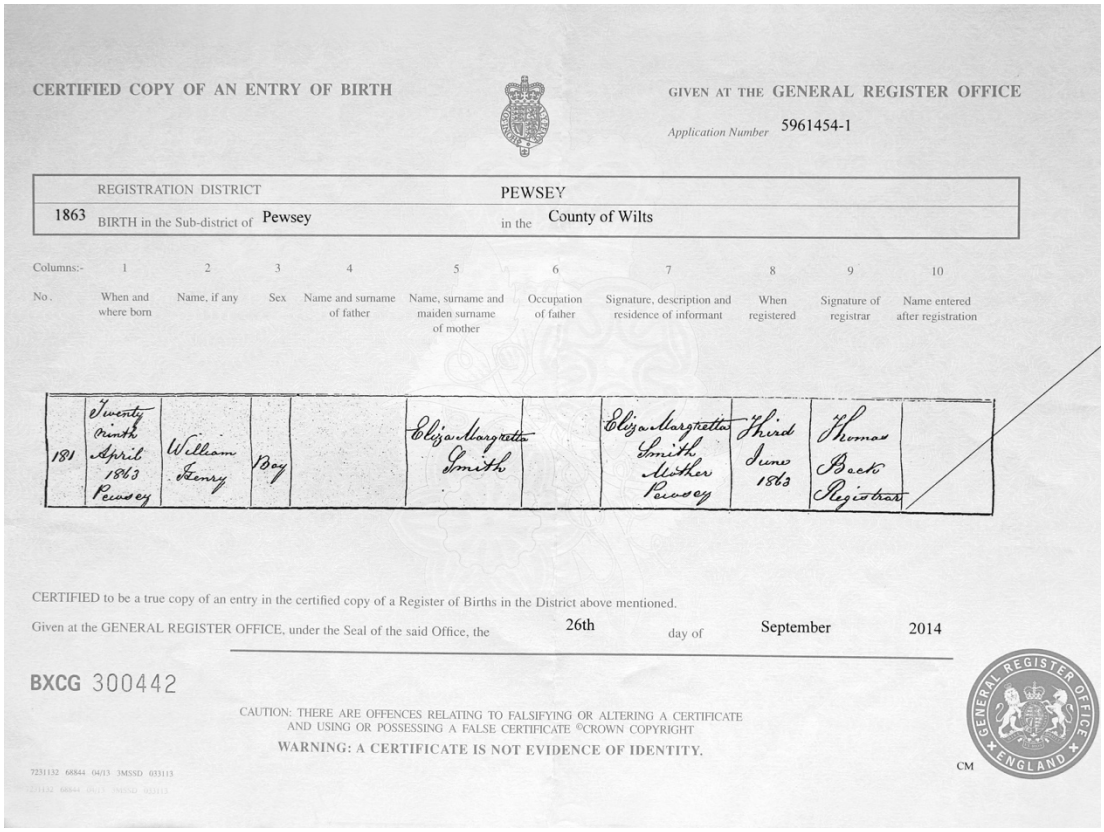
> *Seven "flu" deaths are reported in the last 24 hours, making a total of 817 fatalities in Winnipeg due to the epidemic. There 93 new cases in the 24-hour period, of which 38 were reported this morning.*

and in the Belmont News:

> January 23, 1919: *Local News - We have at present about 10 cases of Spanish "flu" in town. Keep outdoors as much as you can and avoid all kinds of gatherings as this is when mostly the danger lies.*
>
> *Communication: Dr. McDiarmid, eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, of Brandon was in town last Monday professionally, in connection with Dr. Stevenson, who was taken to Brandon on Friday to the hospital.*
>
> January 30, 1919: *Local News - Dr. Stevenson, who was taken to Brandon hospital last week is now on a fair way to recovery and an operation is not thought necessary.*
>
> February 6, 1919: *Local News - The "flu" patients of which there are few, are all doing fine. The ban which has had the town tied up since last October was lifted on Monday and everything is now in full swing again. Some are glad and some are sorry -this is only human nature - the school will open next Monday, February 10th.*
>
> February 20, 1919: *Local News - Dr. W. F. Stevenson who has been in the Brandon General Hospital for the past five or six weeks suffering after effects of the "flu" returned home on Tuesday accompanied by his wife.*
>
> March 6, 1919: *Local News - Dr. Stevenson returned to Brandon on Monday.*
>
> March 16, 1919: *Local News - The "flu" has again quieted down and things look very favourable at the present time.*
>
> April 17, 1919: *Local News - Dr. Stevenson has taken over his practice again.*

APPENDIX 8: OFFICIAL CERTIFICATES

Certified Copy of Birth Certificate for William Henry Smith



CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY OF BIRTH

GIVEN AT THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Application Number 5961454-1

REGISTRATION DISTRICT PEWSEY

1863 BIRTH in the Sub-district of Pewsey in the County of Wilts

Columns:-	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
181	Twenty ninth April 1863 Pewsey	William Henry	Boy		Eliza Margretta Smith		Eliza Margretta Smith Mother Pewsey	Third June 1863	Thomas Beck Registrar	

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a Register of Births in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office, the 26th day of September 2014

BXCG 300442

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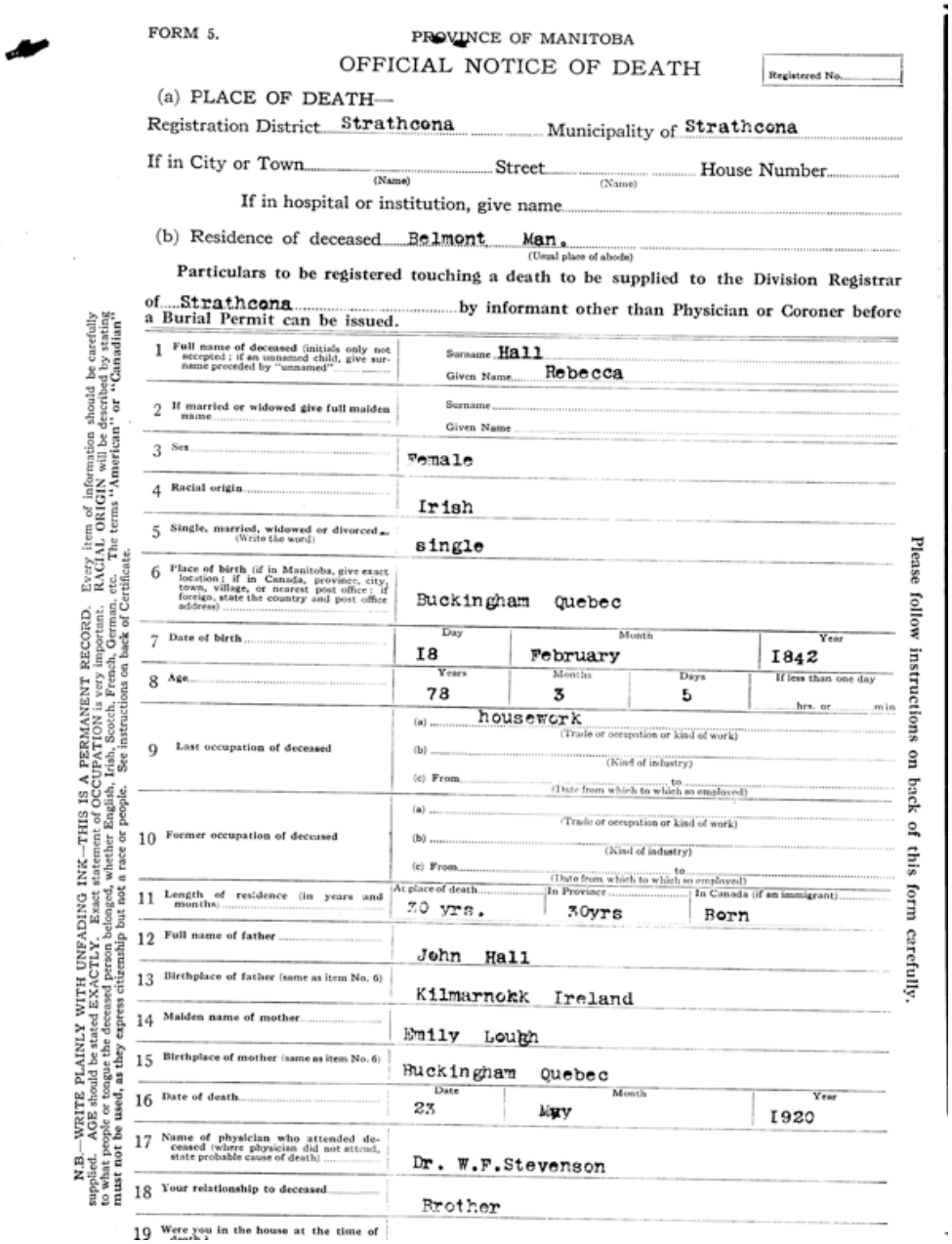
CM

GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE ENGLAND

Province of Manitoba Official Notice of Death for Rebecca Hall May 23, 1920



FORM 5.

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DEATH

Registered No.

(a) PLACE OF DEATH—

Registration District Strathcona Municipality of Strathcona

If in City or Town (Name) Street (Name) House Number

If in hospital or institution, give name

(b) Residence of deceased Belmont Man. (Usual place of abode)

Particulars to be registered touching a death to be supplied to the Division Registrar of Strathcona by informant other than Physician or Coroner before a Burial Permit can be issued.

N.B.—WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. RACIAL ORIGIN will be described by stating to what people or tongue the deceased person belonged, whether English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, etc. The terms "American" or "Canadian" must not be used, as they express citizenship but not a race or people. See instructions on back of Certificate.

1	Full name of deceased (initials only not accepted; if an unnamed child, give surname preceded by "unnamed")	Surname Hall Given Name Rebecca
2	If married or widowed give full maiden name	Surname Given Name
3	Sex	Female
4	Racial origin	Irish
5	Single, married, widowed or divorced (Write the word)	single
6	Place of birth (if in Manitoba, give exact location; if in Canada, province, city, town, village, or nearest post office; if foreign, state the country and post office address)	Buckingham Quebec
7	Date of birth	Day: 18 Month: February Year: 1842
8	Age	Years: 78 Months: 3 Days: 5 If less than one day: hrs. or min
9	Last occupation of deceased	(a) housework (Trade or occupation or kind of work) (b) (Kind of industry) (c) From to (Date from which to which so employed)
10	Former occupation of deceased	(a) (Trade or occupation or kind of work) (b) (Kind of industry) (c) From to (Date from which to which so employed)
11	Length of residence (in years and months)	At place of death: 30 yrs. In Province: 30yrs In Canada (if an immigrant): Born
12	Full name of father	John Hall
13	Birthplace of father (same as item No. 6)	Kilmarnokk Ireland
14	Maiden name of mother	Emily Lough
15	Birthplace of mother (same as item No. 6)	Buckingham Quebec
16	Date of death	Date: 23 Month: May Year: 1920
17	Name of physician who attended deceased (where physician did not attend, state probable cause of death)	Dr. W.F.Stevenson
18	Your relationship to deceased	Brother
19	Were you in the house at the time of death?	

Please follow instructions on back of this form carefully.

Note John Hall Sr.'s birth place is described as "Kilmarnock, Ireland." There is no such place, which simply amplifies the confusion about John's origins.

Province of Manitoba Official Notice of Marriage between Edgar Smith and Rose Mary Hall January 22, 1921

This form if placed in an unsealed envelope marked "Vital Statistics" and properly addressed will, by order of the Postmaster General, pass through the mails "FREE."

FORM 2

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF MARRIAGE

REGISTERED NUMBER
(For use of Registrar General only.)

Registration Division of Strathcona Municipality of Strathcona

WRITE IN LEGIBLE HANDWRITING WITH UNFADING BLACK INK. DO NOT ABBREVIATE.

NOTE.—This form must not be mutilated. All information asked for is to be given including full Christian and Surnames of all parties, and if for any reason this is impossible, the reason for the emission must be stated.

BRIDEGROOM

1. Full name Smith (Surname) Edgar (Given names)
2. Occupation or profession Farm Laborer
3. Bachelor, Widower or Divorced Bachelor
4. Age 22 yrs. 5. Religious Denomination Church of England
6. Residence Belmont Manitoba (If in Canada, province, county and Post Office address. If foreign, state, country.)
7. Place of birth Edmunston Wiltshire England (If born in Canada, province, county. If foreign born, country.)
8. Name of father William H. Smith
9. Occupation of father Carpenter
10. Place of birth of father Winterslaw Wiltshire England
11. Maiden name of mother Sarah Agnus Martomer
12. Can bridegroom read? yes Can bridegroom write? yes

BRIDE

13. Full name Hall (Surname) Rose Mary (Given names)
14. Occupation or profession none
15. Spinster, Widow or Divorced Spinster
16. Age 32 yrs. 17. Religious Denomination Presbyterian
18. Residence Belmont Manitoba (If in Canada, province, county and Post Office address. If foreign, state, country.)
19. Place of birth Belmont Manitoba (If born in Canada, province, county. If foreign born, country.)
20. Name of father John Hall
21. Occupation of father Farmer
22. Place of birth of father Buckingham Quebec
23. Maiden name of mother Elizabeth Lough
24. Can bride read? yes Can bride write? yes

25. When married 22nd. day of January (Month) 1921 (Year)
26. Place of marriage sec.28-4-15-W. near Belmont Man. (Name of church or clergyman's residence or location of dwelling house.)
27. By license or banns License F.5532 (If by license, give number.)
28. Signature of Groom Edgar Smith
Bride Rose Mary Hall
29. Witnesses Name Hilda Irene Kvitt
Address Holmfield Man.
Name Samuel Walter Horrocks
Address Belmont Man.

I certify the above stated particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

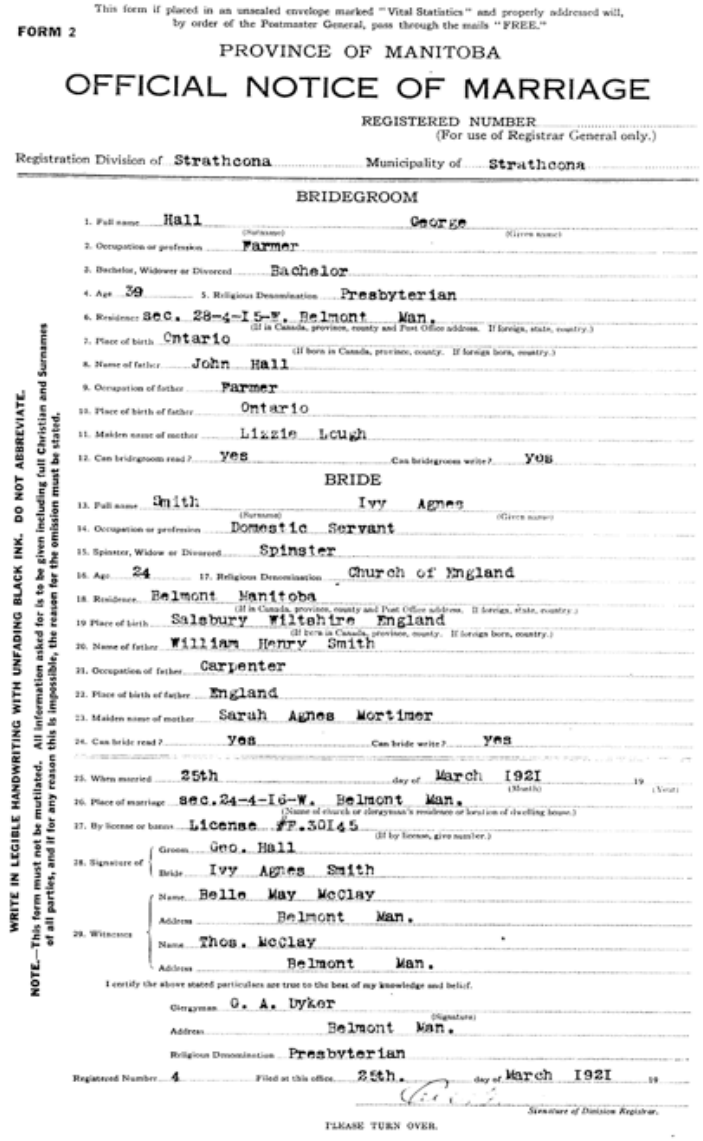
Clergyman G. A. Dyker (Signature)
Address Belmont Man.
Religious Denomination Presbyterian

Registered Number I Filed at this office 23rd. day of January 1921

Signature of Division Registrar.

PLEASE TURN OVER.

Province of Manitoba Official Notice of Marriage between George Hall and Ivy Agnes Smith March 25, 1921



This form if placed in an unsealed envelope marked "Vital Statistics" and properly addressed will, by order of the Postmaster General, pass through the mails "FREE."

FORM 2

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF MARRIAGE

REGISTERED NUMBER
(For use of Registrar General only.)

Registration Division of Strathcona Municipality of Strathcona

WRITE IN LEGIBLE HANDWRITING WITH UNFADING BLACK INK. DO NOT ABBREVIATE.
NOTE.—This form must not be mutilated. All information asked for is to be given including full Christian and Surnames of all parties, and if for any reason this is impossible, the reason for the omission must be stated.

BRIDEGROOM

1. Full name Hall (Surname) George (Given names)
2. Occupation or profession Farmer
3. Bachelor, Widower or Divorced Bachelor
4. Age 39 5. Religious Denomination Presbyterian
6. Residence Sec. 28-4-15-W. Belmont Man. (If in Canada, province, county and Post Office address. If foreign, state, country.)
7. Place of birth Ontario (If born in Canada, province, county. If foreign born, country.)
8. Name of father John Hall
9. Occupation of father Farmer
10. Place of birth of father Ontario
11. Maiden name of mother Lizzie Lough
12. Can bridegroom read? yes Can bridegroom write? yes

BRIDE

13. Full name Smith (Surname) Ivy Agnes (Given names)
14. Occupation or profession Domestic Servant
15. Spinster, Widow or Divorced Spinster
16. Age 24 17. Religious Denomination Church of England
18. Residence Belmont Manitoba (If in Canada, province, county and Post Office address. If foreign, state, country.)
19. Place of birth Salsbury Wiltshire England (If born in Canada, province, county. If foreign born, country.)
20. Name of father William Henry Smith
21. Occupation of father Carpenter
22. Place of birth of father England
23. Maiden name of mother Sarah Agnes Mortimer
24. Can bride read? yes Can bride write? yes

25. When married 25th day of March 1921 (Month) (Year)
26. Place of marriage sec.24-4-16-W. Belmont Man. (Name of church or clergyman's residence or location of dwelling house.)
27. By license or banns License #F.30145 (If by license, give number.)
28. Signature of Groom Geo. Hall; Bride Ivy Agnes Smith
29. Witness: Name Bella May McClay, Address Belmont Man.; Name Thos. McClay, Address Belmont Man.

I certify the above stated particulars are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

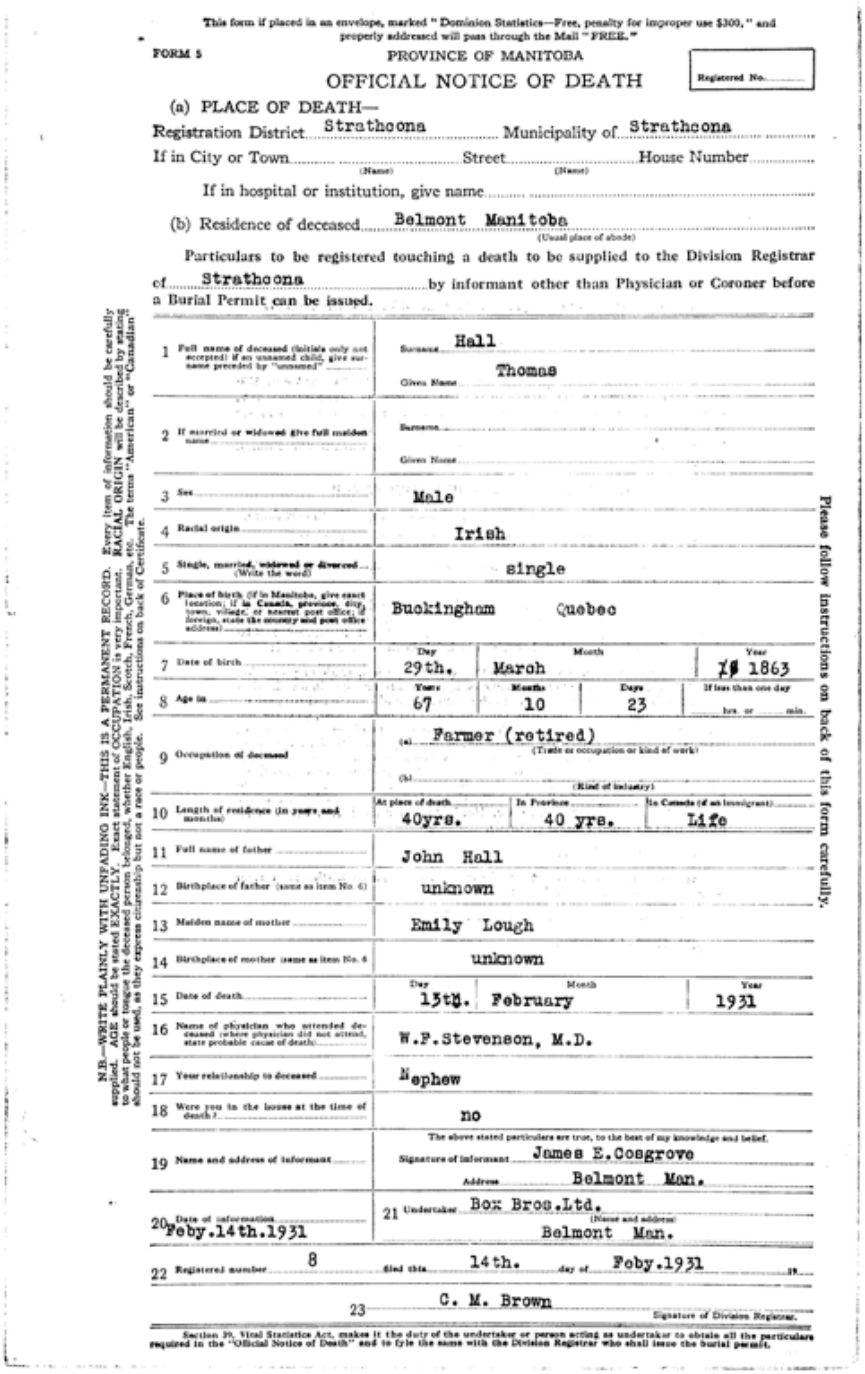
Clergyman G. A. Lyker (Signature)
Address Belmont Man.
Religious Denomination Presbyterian

Registered Number 4 Filed at this office 25th. day of March 1921

Signature of Division Registrar.

PLEASE TURN OVER.

Province of Manitoba Official Notice of Death for Thomas Hall February 13, 1931



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FORM 5

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL NOTICE OF DEATH

Registered No.

(a) PLACE OF DEATH—

Registration District Strathcona Municipality of Strathcona

If in City or Town ..... (Name) Street ..... (Name) House Number .....

If in hospital or institution, give name .....

(b) Residence of deceased Belmont Manitoba (Usual place of abode)

Particulars to be registered touching a death to be supplied to the Division Registrar of Strathcona by informant other than Physician or Coroner before a Burial Permit can be issued.

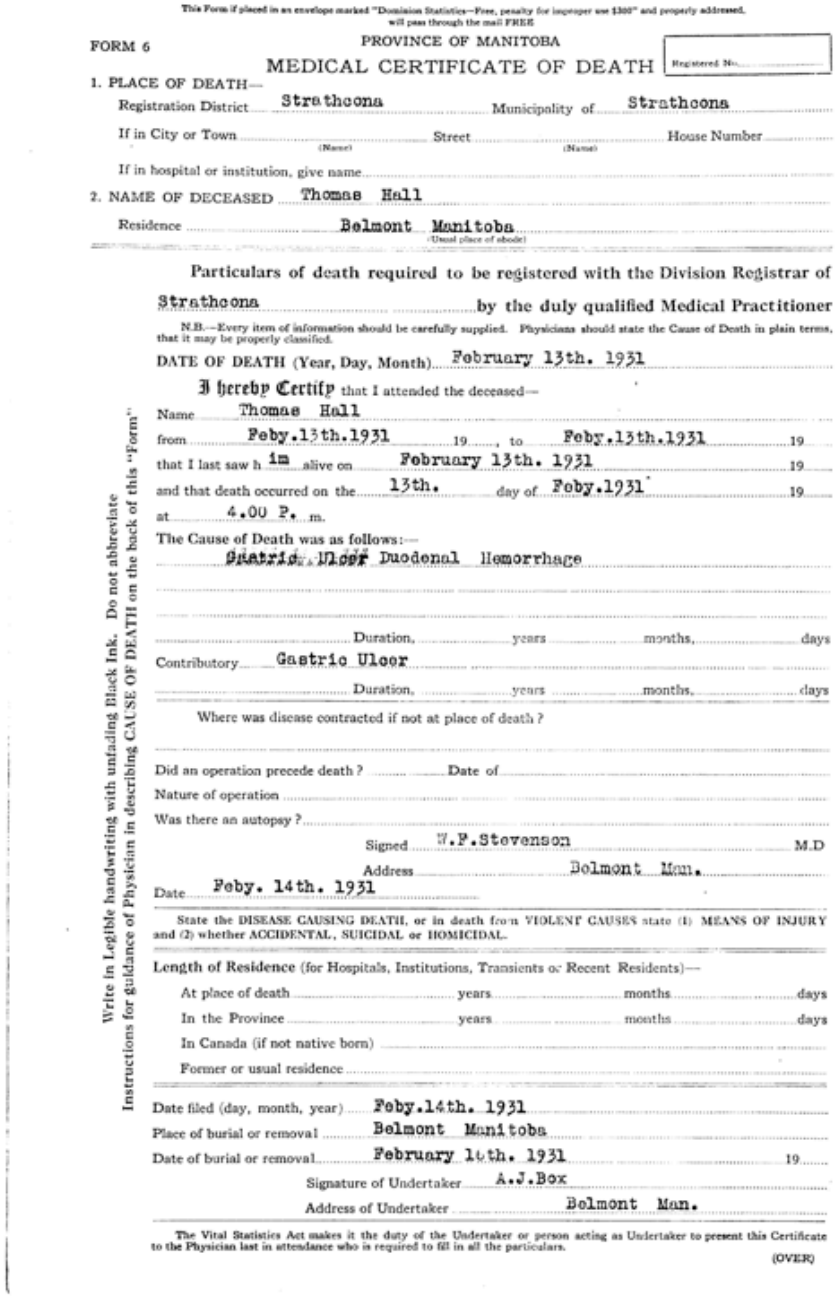
N.B.—WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. RACIAL ORIGIN must be stated, as nearly as possible, to what people or tongue the deceased person belonged, whether English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, etc. The terms "American" or "Canadian" should not be used, as they express citizenship but not a race or people. See instructions on back of Certificate.

1	Full name of deceased (Initials only not accepted) If an unnamed child, give surname preceded by "unnamed"	Surname Hall; Given Name Thomas
2	If married or widowed give full maiden name	Surname ..... Given Name .....
3	Sex	Male
4	Racial origin	Irish
5	Single, married, widowed or divorced (Write the word)	single
6	Place of birth (If in Manitoba, give exact location; if in Canada, province, city, town, village, or nearest post office; if foreign, state the country and post office address)	Buckingham Quebec
7	Date of birth	Day 29th. Month March Year 1863
8	Age in	Years 67 Months 10 Days 23 If less than one day ..... hrs. or ..... min.
9	Occupation of deceased	(a) Farmer (retired) (Trade or occupation or kind of work) (b) ..... (Kind of industry)
10	Length of residence (in years and months)	At place of death 40yrs. In Province 40 yrs. In Canada (if an immigrant) Life
11	Full name of father	John Hall
12	Birthplace of father (same as item No. 6)	unknown
13	Maiden name of mother	Emily Lough
14	Birthplace of mother (same as item No. 6)	unknown
15	Date of death	Day 13th. Month February Year 1931
16	Name of physician who attended deceased (where physician did not attend, state probable cause of death)	W.F.Stevenson, M.D.
17	Your relationship to deceased	Nephew
18	Were you in the house at the time of death?	no
19	Name and address of informant	The above stated particulars are true, to the best of my knowledge and belief. Signature of informant James E.Cosgrove Address Belmont Man.
20	Date of information	Feby.14th.1931
21	Undertaker (Name and address)	Box Bros.Ltd. Belmont Man.
22	Registered number 8 filed this 14th. day of Feby.1931 19	
23		C. M. Brown Signature of Division Registrar.

Section 39, Vital Statistics Act, makes it the duty of the undertaker or person acting as undertaker to obtain all the particulars required in the "Official Notice of Death" and to fyle the same with the Division Registrar who shall issue the burial permit.

Please follow instructions on back of this form carefully.

Province of Manitoba Medical Certificate of Death for Thomas Hall



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FORM 6

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Registered No.

1. PLACE OF DEATH—

Registration District Strathcona Municipality of Strathcona

If in City or Town (Name) Street (Name) House Number

If in hospital or institution, give name

2. NAME OF DECEASED Thomas Hall

Residence Belmont Manitoba (Usual place of abode)

Particulars of death required to be registered with the Division Registrar of Strathcona by the duly qualified Medical Practitioner

N.B.—Every item of information should be carefully supplied. Physicians should state the Cause of Death in plain terms, that it may be properly classified.

DATE OF DEATH (Year, Day, Month) February 13th. 1931

I hereby Certify that I attended the deceased—

Name Thomas Hall

from Feby.13th.1931 19..., to Feby.13th.1931 19

that I last saw h im alive on February 13th. 1931 19

and that death occurred on the 13th. day of Feby.1931 19

at 4.00 P. m.

The Cause of Death was as follows:—

Gastric Ulcer Duodenal Hemorrhage

Duration, years months, days

Contributory Gastric Ulcer

Duration, years months, days

Where was disease contracted if not at place of death ?

Did an operation precede death ? Date of

Nature of operation

Was there an autopsy ?

Signed W.F.Stevenson M.D

Address Belmont Man.

Date Feby. 14th. 1931

State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or in death from VIOLENT CAUSES state (1) MEANS OF INJURY and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL or HOMICIDAL.

Length of Residence (for Hospitals, Institutions, Transients or Recent Residents)—

At place of death years months days

In the Province years months days

In Canada (if not native born)

Former or usual residence

Date filed (day, month, year) Feby.14th. 1931

Place of burial or removal Belmont Manitoba

Date of burial or removal February 16th. 1931 19

Signature of Undertaker A.J.Box

Address of Undertaker Belmont Man.

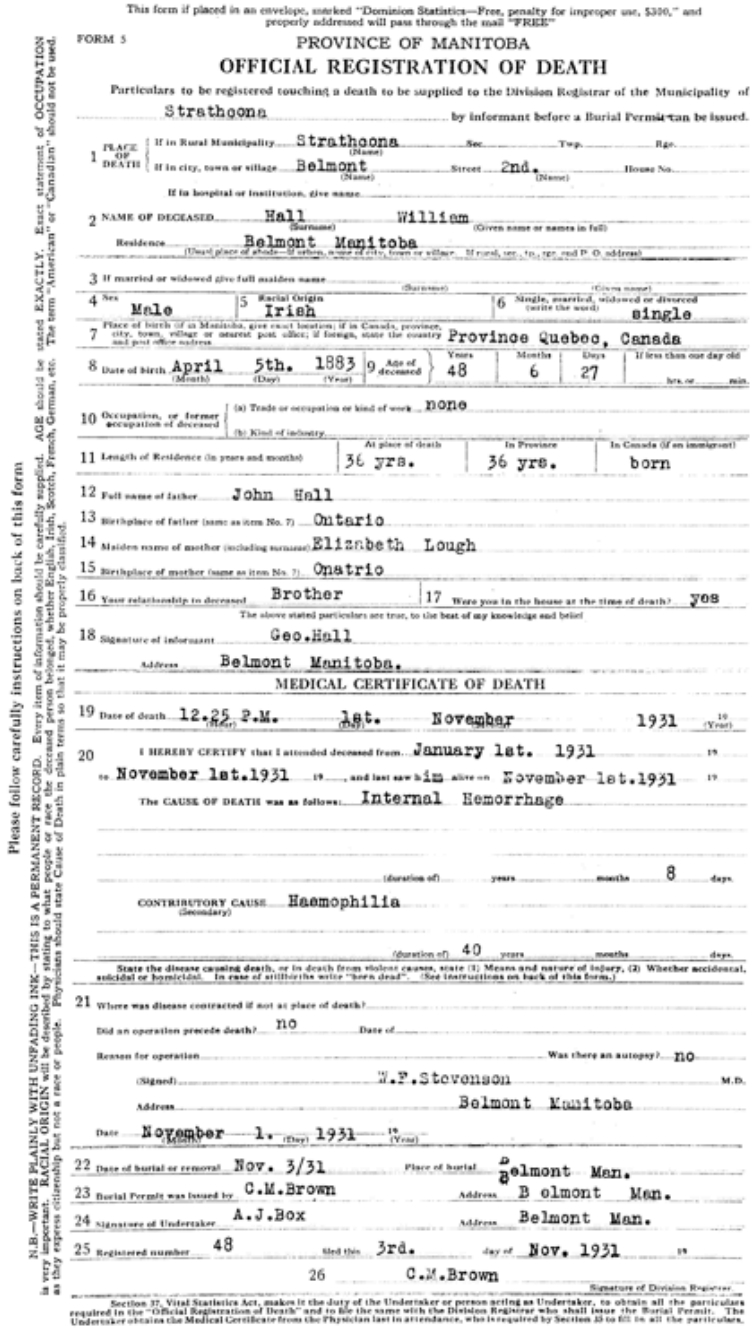
The Vital Statistics Act makes it the duty of the Undertaker or person acting as Undertaker to present this Certificate to the Physician last in attendance who is required to fill in all the particulars.

(OVER)

Instructions for guidance of Physician in describing CAUSE OF DEATH on the back of this "Form"

Write in Legible handwriting with unfading Black Ink. Do not abbreviate

Province of Manitoba Official Registration of Death for William Hall November 1, 1931



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FORM 5

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Particulars to be registered touching a death to be supplied to the Division Registrar of the Municipality of Strathcona by informant before a Burial Permit can be issued.

1 PLACE OF DEATH — If in Rural Municipality: Strathcona (Name) Sec. Twp. Rge. — If in city, town or village: Belmont (Name) Street 2nd. (Name) House No. — If in hospital or institution, give name.

2 NAME OF DECEASED: Hall (Surname) William (Given name or names in full)
Residence: Belmont Manitoba (Usual place of abode—If urban, name of city, town or village. If rural, sec., tp., rge. and P. O. address)

3 If married or widowed give full maiden name (Surname) (Given name)

4 Sex: Male | 5 Racial Origin: Irish | 6 Single, married, widowed or divorced (write the word): single

7 Place of birth (if in Manitoba, give exact location; if in Canada, province, city, town, village or nearest post office; if foreign, state the country and post office address): Province Quebec, Canada

8 Date of birth: April (Month) 5th. (Day) 1883 (Year) | 9 Age of deceased: Years 48 | Months 6 | Days 27 | If less than one day old: hrs. or min.

10 Occupation, or former occupation of deceased: (a) Trade or occupation or kind of work: none (b) Kind of industry:

11 Length of Residence (in years and months): At place of death 36 yrs. | In Province 36 yrs. | In Canada (if an immigrant) born

12 Full name of father: John Hall

13 Birthplace of father (same as item No. 7): Ontario

14 Maiden name of mother (including surname): Elizabeth Lough

15 Birthplace of mother (same as item No. 7): Ontario

16 Your relationship to deceased: Brother | 17 Were you in the house at the time of death? yes

The above stated particulars are true, to the best of my knowledge and belief

18 Signature of informant: Geo.Hall
Address: Belmont Manitoba.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

19 Date of death 12.25 P.M. (Hour) 1st. (Day) November (Month) 1931 (Year)

20 I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased from January 1st. 1931 to November 1st.1931, and last saw him alive on November 1st.1931

The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: Internal Hemorrhage

(duration of) years months 8 days.

CONTRIBUTORY CAUSE (Secondary): Haemophilia

(duration of) 40 years months days.

State the disease causing death, or in death from violent causes, state (1) Means and nature of injury, (2) Whether accidental, suicidal or homicidal. In case of stillbirths write "born dead". (See instructions on back of this form.)

21 Where was disease contracted if not at place of death?
Did an operation precede death? no Date of
Reason for operation Was there an autopsy? no

(Signed) W.F.Stevenson M.D.
Address Belmont Manitoba
Date November (Month) 1. (Day) 1931 (Year)

22 Date of burial or removal Nov. 3/31 Place of burial Belmont Man.

23 Burial Permit was issued by C.M.Brown Address Belmont Man.

24 Signature of Undertaker A.J.Box Address Belmont Man.

25 Registered number 48 filed this 3rd. day of Nov. 1931

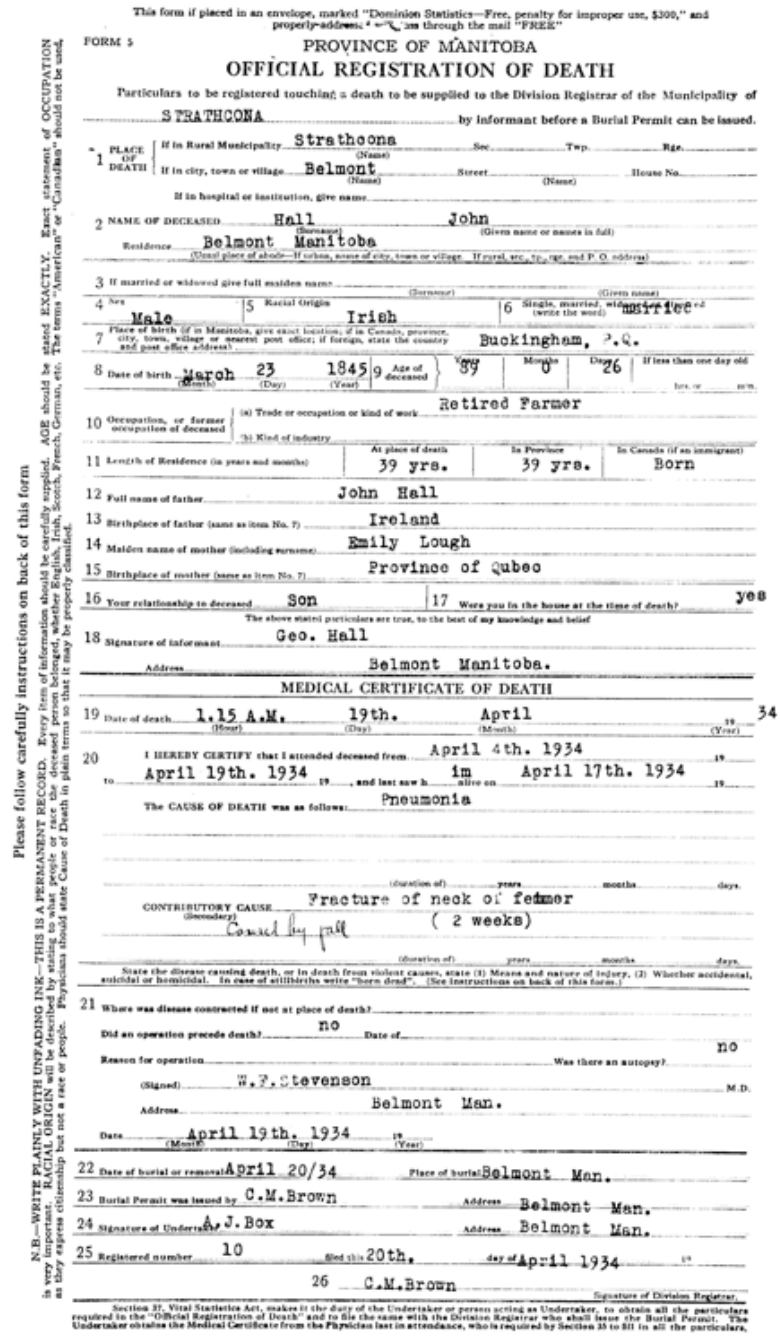
26 C.M.Brown
Signature of Division Registrar

Section 37, Vital Statistics Act, makes it the duty of the Undertaker or person acting as Undertaker, to obtain all the particulars required in the "Official Registration of Death" and to file the same with the Division Registrar who shall issue the Burial Permit. The Undertaker obtains the Medical Certificate from the Physician last in attendance, who is required by Section 38 to fill in all the particulars.

Please follow carefully instructions on back of this form

N.B.—WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. RACIAL ORIGIN will be described by stating to what people or race the deceased person belonged, as British, Irish, Scotch, French, Germans, etc. The term "American" or "Canadian" should not be used, as they express citizenship but not a race or people. Physicians should state Cause of Death in plain terms so that it may be properly classified.

Province of Manitoba Official Registration of Death for John Hall April 19, 1934



This form if placed in an envelope, marked "Dominion Statistics—Free, penalty for improper use, $300," and properly addressed, may be sent through the mail "FREE"

FORM 5

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION OF DEATH

Particulars to be registered touching a death to be supplied to the Division Registrar of the Municipality of STRATHCONA by informant before a Burial Permit can be issued.

Please follow carefully instructions on back of this form

N.B.—WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK—THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. RACIAL ORIGIN will be described by words indicating the people of which the deceased person belonged, whether English, Irish, Scotch, French, German, etc. The terms "American" or "Canadian" should not be used, as they express citizenship but not a race or people. Physicians should state Cause of Death in plain terms so that it may be properly classified.

1 PLACE OF DEATH — If in Rural Municipality: Strathcona (Name) Sec. Twp. Rge. — If in city, town or village: Belmont (Name) Street (Name) House No. — If in hospital or institution, give name

2 NAME OF DECEASED: Hall (Surname) John (Given name or names in full)
Residence: Belmont Manitoba (Usual place of abode—If urban, name of city, town or village. If rural, sec., tp., rge. and P. O. address)

3 If married or widowed give full maiden name (Surname) (Given name)

4 Sex: Male | 5 Racial Origin: Irish | 6 Single, married, widowed or divorced (write the word): married

7 Place of birth (if in Manitoba, give exact location; if in Canada, province, city, town, village or nearest post office; if foreign, state the country and post office address): Buckingham, P.Q.

8 Date of birth: March (Month) 23 (Day) 1845 (Year) | 9 Age of deceased: Years 89 | Months 0 | Days 26 | If less than one day old: hrs. or min.

10 Occupation, or former occupation of deceased: (a) Trade or occupation or kind of work: Retired Farmer (b) Kind of industry

11 Length of Residence (in years and months): At place of death 39 yrs. | In Province 39 yrs. | In Canada (if an immigrant) Born

12 Full name of father: John Hall

13 Birthplace of father (same as item No. 7): Ireland

14 Maiden name of mother (including surname): Emily Lough

15 Birthplace of mother (same as item No. 7): Province of Qubec

16 Your relationship to deceased: Son | 17 Were you in the house at the time of death? yes

The above stated particulars are true, to the best of my knowledge and belief

18 Signature of informant: Geo. Hall
Address: Belmont Manitoba.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

19 Date of death: 1.15 A.M. (Hour) 19th. (Day) April (Month) 19 34 (Year)

20 I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased from April 4th. 1934 19 to April 19th. 1934 19, and last saw h im alive on April 17th. 1934 19

The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: Pneumonia

(duration of) years months days.

CONTRIBUTORY CAUSE (Secondary): Fracture of neck of femmer (2 weeks)

Caused by fall

(duration of) years months days.

State the disease causing death, or in death from violent causes, state (1) Means and nature of injury, (2) Whether accidental, suicidal or homicidal. In case of stillbirths write "born dead". (See instructions on back of this form.)

21 Where was disease contracted if not at place of death?
Did an operation precede death? no Date of
Reason for operation Was there an autopsy? no

(Signed) W.F.Stevenson M.D.
Address Belmont Man.
Date April 19th. 1934 (Month) (Day) (Year)

22 Date of burial or removal: April 20/34 Place of burial: Belmont Man.

23 Burial Permit was issued by C.M.Brown Address Belmont Man.

24 Signature of Undertaker: A.J.Box Address Belmont Man.

25 Registered number 10 filed this 20th. day of April 1934

26 C.M.Brown
Signature of Division Registrar.

Section 37, Vital Statistics Act, makes it the duty of the Undertaker or person acting as Undertaker, to obtain all the particulars required to the "Official Registration of Death" and to file the same with the Division Registrar who shall issue the Burial Permit. The Undertaker obtains the Medical Certificate from the Physician last in attendance, who is required by Section 35 to fill in all the particulars.

Province of Manitoba Official Registration of Death for Sarah Agnes Smith May 26, 1938

This form if placed in an envelope, marked "Dominion Statistics—FREE, penalty for improper use, $300," and properly addressed will pass through the mail "FREE"

FORM 5

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION OF DEATH

SEC. 45, Vital Statistics Act, makes it the duty of the Undertaker or person acting as Undertaker, to obtain all the particulars required in the "Official Registration of Death" and to file the same with the Division Registrar who shall issue the Burial Permit. The Undertaker obtains the Medical Certificate from the Physician last in attendance, who is required by Section 41 to fill in all the particulars.

WRITE PLAINLY WITH UNFADING INK. THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. (See reverse side for instructions.)

1. PLACE OF DEATH If in Rural Municipality STRATHCONA (Name) Sec. 28 Twp. 4 Rge. 15
If in City, Town or Village (Name) Street House No. (If in hospital or institution, give name instead of street and number)

2. LENGTH OF STAY (in years, months and days)	In Municipality where death occurred	In Province	In Canada (if immigrant)
	11 years	11 years	11 years

3. NAME OF DECEASED Sarah Agnes SMITH

RESIDENCE S.W.28-4-15-w1st.
(Usual place of abode—If urban, give street and number and name of city, town or village. If rural, sec., tp. and rge.)

4. SEX	5. NATIONALITY (Citizenship)	6. RACIAL ORIGIN	7. Single, Married, Widowed or Divorced (Write the word)	8. BIRTHPLACE (If in Manitoba, give exact location; if in Canada, province, city, town, village or nearest post office; if foreign, state the country and post office address)
Female	English	English	Married	Ogbourne, St.Geogre ENGLAND

9. DATE OF BIRTH 16th.May 1863 (Month, day and year) **10.** AGE IN Years 75 Months 0 Days 11 If less than one day hrs. or min.

OCCUPATION

11. Trade, profession or kind of work as spinner, teamster, office clerk, etc. Housewife

12. Kind of industry or business, as cotton-mill, lumbering, bank, etc. Housekeeping

13. Date deceased last worked at this occupation ~~xxxxxxx~~ 1933 **14.** Total years spent in this occupation Life

15. If married give name of husband or maiden name of wife of deceased William Henry Smith

PARENTS

16. Name of father John Mortimer

17. Birthplace of father Ogbourne, St.Geogre

18. Maiden name of mother Eleanor ~~surname~~ unknown

19. Birthplace of mother Ogbourne St.Geogre (same as item No. 8)

The above stated particulars are true, to the best of my knowledge and belief.

20. Signature of informant Maud Smith **21.** Relationship to deceased Daughter
Address Belmont Man.

22. Place of burial ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Belmont Man. Date of burial May 28th.1938. 19

23. Burial Permit was issued by G.A.Embury Address Belmont Man.

24. Signature of Undertaker or person acting as Undertaker A.J.Box Address Belmont Man.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

25. DATE OF DEATH May 26th. at 9:25 a.m. (Hour) (Day) (Month) 1938 (Year)

26. I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased from May 25th. 1938 to May 26th. 1938 and last saw her alive on May 25th. 1938

CAUSE OF DEATH

I

Immediate cause Give disease, injury or complication which caused death, **not** the mode of dying, such as heart failure, asphyxia, asthenia, etc. (a) Cerebral Apoplexy

Morbid conditions, if any, giving rise to immediate cause (stated in order proceeding backwards from immediate cause). due to (b) Arterio Sclerosis due to (c) Hypostatic Pneumonia

II

Other morbid conditions (if important) contributing to death but **not causally related to immediate cause.**

27. If a woman, was the death associated with pregnancy? no

28. Was there a surgical operation? no Date of operation no 19
State findings Was there an autopsy?

29. If death was due to external causes (violence) fill in also the following:—
Accident, suicide or homicide? no (State which) Date of injury no 19
Manner of injury (How sustained)
Nature of injury
Specify whether injury occurred in **industry**, in **home**; or in **public place**

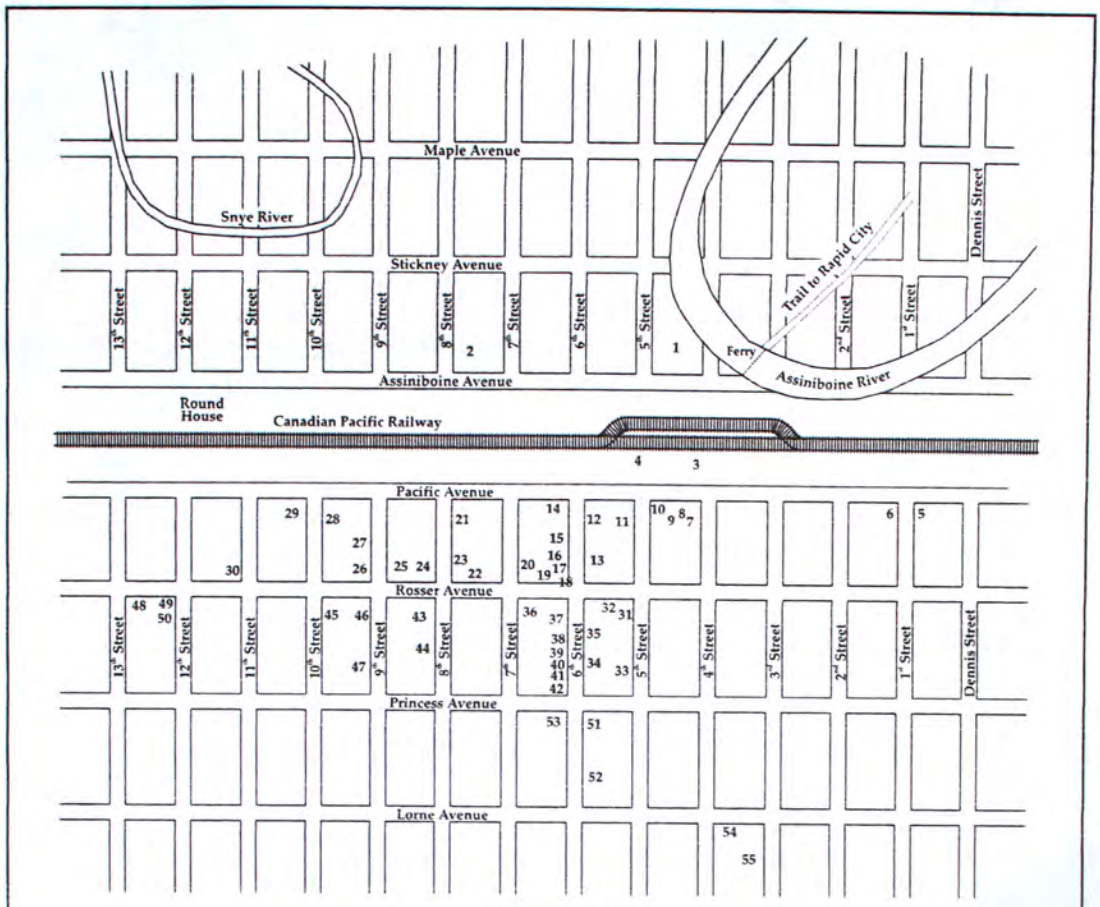
I HEREBY CERTIFY that the particulars and cause of death above written are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed by W.F.Stevenson **M.D.**
Address Belmont Man. **Date** May 26th. 1938

30. Registered number 14 filed this 27th. May 1938.

31. [signature] (Signature of Division Registrar)

Map of Brandon, Manitoba 1881 (taken from Martin Kaavanagh's 1946 book "The Assiniboine Basin", amended.



Brandon, 1881

This map, redrawn from Martin Kavanagh's 1946 book *The Assiniboine Basin*, shows Brandon as it appeared in the Fall of 1881, six months after settlement began. The locations of buildings, businesses, and residences are denoted by numbers.

1 Fisher Flouring Mills
2 Frank D. Myer and Charles Whitehead (Contractors)
3 CPR Freight Sheds
4 CPR Station
5 J. E. Woodworth & John Rounsefell (General Store)
6 J. F. Woodworth & B. F. Woodworth (Italian Goods Store)
7 Al Rowe Boarding House (Windsor Hotel)
8 George Winters (Grocery)
9 Sinkbell Shoe Store
10 Gurnett Brothers (Immigration Hall)
11 Bracket & Chute Lumber
12 Coombs & Stewart Grocers
13 H. Sage Stables
14 P. Paulin & Bergeron Hotel
15 Owen Carson (Grocery)
16 G. H. Munroe (Grocery)
17 James A. Smart (Hardware)
18 Winter & O'Neail (Grocery)
19 Munroe & Warwick (Tinsmiths)
20 White Brothers (Bakery)
21 William Buttlebank (Lumber)
22 G. B. Angus & John Lyons (Contractors)
23 Fleming Drug Store
24 D. Young (Merchant)
25 P. E. Durst (Jeweller)
26 Deacon & Hooper (Grocery)
27 L. M. Fortier (Post Office)
28 Bower, Blackburn, Mundell & Porter (Grocery)
29 McManus Boarding House
30 Leask & Rose (Drug Store)
31 John W. Sifton (MLA)
32 Mulholland Stables
33 Molesworth (Civil Engineer)
34 C. Greer (Barber)
35 Johnston & Star (Butchers)
36 North-West House. D. C. McKinnon, Prop. (Central Hotel)
37 Thomas Lee (Saddlery)
38 Thomas Barton (Saloon)
39 John McVeigh (Butcher)
40 Port Warham (Billiard Hall)
41 Methodist Church, Reverend Lawson
42 Victoria Boarding House (Kelly House)
43 William Wright & Edward Wright (tinsmiths)
44 Tebo Livery Stable
45 Queen's Hotel
46 Dickinson & McNulty (Grocery)
47 Moblo Grocer
48 Royal Hotel
49 W. J. White
50 Sun Office
51 Russell & P. McKenzie (Blacksmiths)
52 T. Palmer (Farmer)
53 Ezekiel Evans (Banker)
54 Roman Catholic Church
55 Adamson Shack

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS AND OFFICIAL CERTIFICATES

END NOTES

[1] In response to a cholera epidemic, the Government of Lower Canada (now the Province of Quebec) set up a depot or quarantine station in 1832 on Grosse Isle, an island in the St Lawrence River, some 30 miles east of Quebec City. All immigrants to Canada had to stop here before proceeding to their destination point, typically either Quebec City or Montreal, from which they would seek transport to their place of intended settlement. At Grosse Isle immigrants would be screened for disease to insure only the healthy entered the colony. Two decades or so after the arrival of John Hall Sr., it became associated with the most tragic and disturbing event in Canadian immigration history. As a result of the Potato Famine that afflicted Ireland in the late 1840s, there occurred an explosion in the number of Irish immigrants fleeing the desperate famine conditions of their homeland. The Irish Technology Toolkit web-site reports that "in 1846, an estimated 33,000 people of all nationalities landed at Grosse Isle. The following year the number rose to 84,500. Nearly 70% were Irish and many suffered from what they called 'ship fever.' It was actually typhus but it's hardly surprising they blamed their illness on the boats they arrived in, for conditions onboard were horrendous and perfect for disease to spread. About one-third of Irish passengers died during their voyage or immediately after landing. No wonder the immigration ships from Ireland became known as 'coffin ships.' But the illness wasn't confined to the ships. Grosse Isle was also hopelessly underfunded to cope with such an influx, sick or not. Accommodation was woefully inadequate and medical provision was insufficient. Inevitably, the disease spread among the supposedly healthy. Doctors, nurses, priests and even the Mayor of Montreal died alongside the immigrants. As news of the 1846-47 tragedy spread, those Irish emigrants who could afford it, preferred to emigrate to the United States rather than Canada. This wasn't an option for all immigrants, of course."

[2] Carrothers, W.A., Emigration From The Briish Isles, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966 (originally published 1929), p.194.

According to the website findagrave.com the Patterson Presbyterian Cemetery is located at 2460 Forced Road, Vars, Ottawa Municipality, Ontario. "An 1880's map of Cumberland Township shows a church on the West side of Forced Road on the east half of Lot 22,VI

Concession. The Ontario Cemetery Locator records an abandoned, un-transcribed cemetery in this same lot and records the name as Patterson Presbyterian Cemetery. The 1887 Acts and Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church records a Mission at Bearbrook with a church. All the burials in the cemetery are of the Presbyterian Denomination. Vars United Cemetery located on the west half of Lot 21, VI Concession just North East of this cemetery is also shown as having a Church on the 1880's map so it is likely that the congregation associated with the Vars United Church Cemetery was larger and after the unification of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in 1925 to form the United Church that this cemetery fell into disuse and was abandoned."

[4] This information is taken from the 1881 Census. By this time, the family are all self-described as Presbyterian, whereas the earliest census reports show them to have been initially Church of Scotland in their religious allegiance. This apparent change reflected only developments within the church itself, and not an alteration of belief.

[5] Contributed and transcribed by Eileen Bashak from various Ottawa newspapers of 1879.

[6] Dennis John Stoughton Younger (1856-1938), A Short History of the Surveys performed under the Dominion Land System 1869-1938.

[7] Belmont Manitoba 1878 to 1954, a Village History Compiled by Belmont's Women's Institute (W.I. History of Belmont), p. 80.

[8] Mrs. Thring's husband died as a relatively young man and she subsequently married the local Presbyterian minister, Rev. G. W. Faryon. Mrs. Thring's reminiscences were typed out, copied and distributed to interested persons in the Belmont area. They are relied upon in the local histories.

[9] According Graham MacDonald in the article "Manitoba History: The Boundary Commission Trail and the North West Mounted Police: A Review of Site Development Progress" available on the Manitoba Historical Society website (www.mhs.mb.ca): "From the Boundary Commission Atlas and from the survey maps of Dominion Surveyors in the 1870's, it is known that some easterly portions of the Boundary Commission Trail traversed American territory in the years 1872 and 1873 (following traditional Indian and fur trade routes along the course of the Pembina River). However, by the time of the great trek of 1874, (made by the North West Mounted Police from Fort Dufferin, just north of Emerson, to put down troubles in the Cypress Hills and around Fort Whoop-Up in present day Alberta), an exclusively Canadian route had also come into use, for it was an important aspect of diplomacy that a Canadian armed force remain on Canadian territory when in the field. … It also needs to be recognized that the original Boundary Commission Trail was one designed to be used to provision the two survey parties who were following parallel lines north and south of the 49th parallel. The trail in its earliest phase, being the child of an international joint-venture, tended to follow the path of least resistance particularly in the country west of Emerson. Its rapid transformation into a colonization route on the Canadian side, meant that the straight line being broken by the survey party working north of the border quickly became identified with a colonization route."

[10] Millford was established in1879 near the junction of the Souris and the Assiniboine rivers. The prospects of Millford were doomed when the Canadian Pacific Railway by-passed it in 1881. Millford today is marked only by its cemetery and a large stone marker.

[11] a "shakedown" is an improvised bed.

[12] W.I. History of Belmont p. 55.

[13] Caroline Cumming in "I Remember - Lights Along the Valley and Huntly", 1970 Printed by D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd. Altona, Manitoba, from the digital version available through the Manitoba Historical Society website, describing the life of early settlers at the south end of Pelican Lake, p. 10.

[14] Eva Calverley "And so … Ninette 1879 - 1919", available through the Manitoba Archives, but a reprint may also be purchased through Amazon, quoted often in local histories.
[15] A corduroy road is a type of trackway made by placing logs perpendicular to the direction of the road over a low or swampy area.
[16] W.I. History of Belmont p. 48.
[17] Oakland Echoes, compiled by Connie Davidson to mark Manitoba's Centennial, 1970, and dedicated to the Pioneers of Oakland Municipality, and available in digital form through the Manitoba Historical Society.
[18] A tick is the cover or shell of a comforter or pillow, typically filled with feathers or fabric.
[19] On her birth registration, Amanda is described as Martha Amanda Hall, but on subsequent census reports and on her headstone she is referred to as Amanda Martha Hall.
[20] By e-mail to the writer.
[21] Memories of Leonard and Other Recollections, by Gerald E. Poaps, Cumberland Township Historical Society, 2002, p. 38.
[22] According to The Belmont Star of Friday, December 15, 1899: "Mr. Wm. Dodge and Miss Dorothy Hall were united in the bonds of wedlock at Hilton, on Wednesday, Rev. Matheson officiating."
[23] Huntoon, Saskatchewan and area, 1900-1983: Hope, Home, Happiness, p. 50 (submitted by Kenneth Smale, nephew), accessible online.
[24] Gerald E. Poaps, Memories of Leonard and Other Recollections, published in 2002 by Cumberland Township Historical Society.
[25] K.B. Brett, Curator, Royal Ontario Museum, in a paper entitled "Ontario Handwoven Textiles, An Introduction of Handweaving in Ontario in the Nineteenth century": "The hand-weavers of nineteenth century Ontario can be divided into two groups: those who wove only to supply their families' needs and those who wove for the community in which they lived. They will be referred to as "home" and "professional" weavers, respectively. Most of the heavy work of shearing the sheep, harvesting, and preparing flax for spinning was done by the men. Carding, spinning, dyeing, and weaving for the home were women's work, and the children wound bobbins. Weaving was a winter activity, the summer months being fully occupied with farm work. As winter approached, the loom was brought out of storage and reassembled. On it the weaving of blankets, coverlets, yard goods, linens, and carpeting was done. With the coming of spring, the loom was knocked down and stored again."
[26] According to U.S. Census for 1900.
[27] Rebecca's date of death, November 22, 1920, as reported in the Belmont Times is in conflict with the date of death on her death certificate, November 23, 1920. According to that certificate the cause of her death was Chronic Endocarditis, with dilation of the heart and Dropsy as contributing factors.
[28] W.I. History of Belmont, p. 59.
[29] According to the sworn affidavit dated January 26, 1889 filed in support of the homestead application of James William Hall and on file in the Archives, Province of Manitoba. James also set out in the same sworn statement that in 1881 and 1882 he had one pair of oxen, in 1883 one horse and four cattle, in 1884 four horses and seven cattle, in 1885 three horses and two cattle, in 1886 five horses and four cattle, in 1887 six horses, in 1888 eight horses and one cow and up to ten pigs. The accuracy of the information in the claim by James Hall was supported by sworn affidavits of fellow settlers John G. Wanless and Francis Walker Thring. Letters Patent for the NE ¼ were issued to James W. Hall November 22, 1889.
[30] This interview was arranged and conducted by Charles Brawn on June 6, 1997. Joseph Deedman took the time and opportunity to dictate reminiscences concerning his experiences as

a young settler in the Belmont area. He was blessed with an extraordinary memory and a keen gift of observation.

[31] Craigilea was the name of the first school in the Belmont area which was conducted out of the home of J. D. Gordon. As the school functioned before Belmont was established, it served as a local site of note and used for a time as a postal depot.

[32] W. I. History of Belmont, p. 67.

[33] The facts of his application were confirmed by Francis Walker Thring. Letters Patent for the SE ¼ 28-4-15 WPM were issued to James William Hall October 7, 1896.

[34] The Path of the Pioneers, Belmont and District 1889 – 1989, Belmont History Committee, 1989, p. 360.

[35] W.I. History of Belmont, p. 78.

[36] Dr. William F. Stevenson carried on a medical practice in Belmont from 1907 to 1948 and was a wonderful and trusted resource to the Halls and their neighbours through that period, supervising the birth of both Melvin and Doreen Hall and providing critical care to all.

[37] In that same sworn statement, William Hall states by 1885 he had two horses, by 1886 three horses, by 1887 five horses and by 1888 three oxen and one colt. James Hall by sworn statement dated February 23, 1888 and Francis Williamson by sworn statement dated February 15, 1888 supported William Hall's assertions and stated that William Hall had perfected his entry in 1884. Francis Williamson stated he had known William all his life; James stated he had known William for more than five years. Both statements confirmed William was not married.

[38] Two cousins, William and Jack Cosgrove, sons of Mary Jane Hall Cosgrove, came west from the Russell County area and stopped firstly in the Belmont region, but proceeded on to farm near Bottineau, North Dakota. Jack is buried there; William's final resting place is not known.

[39] In a supporting affidavit of the same date, Lewis J. Durham, who lived on Section 26-4-15 WPM stated he had known John Hall for seven years, and could confirm John's house was built in the spring of 1900, but work had been started on it in 1896, that John and his family, composed of wife and six children, had lived on the property continuously since 1900, and now John possessed eight horses and eight cattle. Further support came from the affidavit, sworn the same date, of John McClay, who resided on Section 27-4-16 WPM. By his Homestead Inspector's Report of April 28, 1905, W. McMillan, Homestead Inspector, confirmed some of the particulars of John Hall's application and stated John Hall had a log and frame house 18' x 24', a log stable 16' x 37', a log granary 16' x 18', fencing, two wells, a hen house, eight horses and eight cattle and declared John Hall's application "bona fide". Letters Patent for the SW ¼ 28-4-15 WPM were issued to John Hall July 19, 1905.

[40] This story reflects the fact James Hall had built the first frame house in the district (W.I. History of Belmont, p. 81).

[41] A colter is a sharp disk on a plough used to cut the earth in advance of the ploughshare.

[42] See "Enemies Within Our Gates: Brandon's Alien Detention Centre, article by George Buri available through Manitoba Historical Society website.

[43] The Path of the Pioneers, p. 471.

[44] Joe Deedman in his interview with Charles Brawn said Oliver Holmes was a first cousin of George Hall, as Billy Moffatt's sister had married a Holmes.

[45] Rose may, in part at least, have ben sensitive to this issue because it was understood in the family that Ronald Bartley, a six year old grandson of her sister, Bella, had died in 1955 of Haemophilia.

[45] This information concerning Norman and his hospitalization at the Home for Incurables was provided by the Manitoba Developmental Centre in Portage la Prairie from materials obtained Incurables was provided by the Manitoba Developmental Centre in Portage la Prairie from materials obtained
from the Archives of Manitoba. Only the passage of time and the determination that the use made of the information was legitimate caused the material to be made available.
[47] The Mount Hope Years 1913 – 1959 (compiled by W. Kelly) p. 17
[48] Bella May McClay obituary: Died after a short illness in the Assiniboine Centre, Brandon Manitoba. Born in Cumberland, Ontario, she came to Manitoba with her parents at an early age, they settled in the Belmont district and she received her education at the Alma School. Bella married Thomas McClay and they farmed in the Mount Hope area for many years leaving Belmont to take up residence at Jordan Siding, Manitoba in June 1941. They resided there until August 1955 when they moved to Brandon, Manitoba. She was a faithful member of Bethel Pentecostal Church for many years then in later years the Calvary Pentecostal Church. Mrs. McClay was also a member of the Salvation Army Home League.
[49] See: "Hair Loss Following Typhoid Fever: A Forgotten Phenomenon", by Walter E. Haefeli, et al, Clinical Infectious Diseases, Volume 20, Issue 3, March 1, 1965 pp 723-724.
[50] The Belmont News Thursday, April 1, 1926 contained this ad: "For Sale – Pure-bred Barred Rock eggs for hatching, good laying strain, 14 to the setting. Price $1.00 Alice Hall, Belmont"
[51] This was suggested by Maud's daughter, Margaret Graham (in a communication with the writer), and by Percy's son, Donald (in a letter to Charles Brawn dated March 28, 1994). Also, in the Ausonia manifest, when William escorted Ivy to Canada in 1914, he stated he had been to this country before.
[52] This information available through ancestry.com.
[53] James Christopher Puller Mortimer, his wife, Rebecca (Winchcomb), and children Ethel, Mabel and John William immigrated to Canada in approximately 1912, coming firstly to Lansing, Ontario and moving subsequently to Woodstock, Ontario.
[54] Joe Deedman's memory was extraordinary, but here I think his reference to 1920 is off by a year or so, as the "flu" crisis for Belmont, as elsewhere, was from late 1918 and extended perhaps eight months.
[55] According to George Siamandas in an article "The 1918 Influenza Outbreak - The Spanish Flu Panics Canada", that appears online through the Manitoba Historical Society website: "In more than 100 prairie towns, passengers were not allowed to de-train unless they promised to stay put for the duration of the epidemic. Some towns like Lethbridge and Drumheller threw up a total quarantine." Joan Champ in a 2003 paper entitled "The Impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic on Saskatchewan Farm Families, 1918-1919" refers to a report in the February 1919 issue of the Canadian Medical Association Journal that described a 'typical' case of influenza. It began with sudden weakness, pain and chills. Coughing produced "quantities of blood-stained expectoration of nearly pure dark blood … the face and fingers cyanosed, active delirium came on … the tongue dry and brown, the whole surface of the body blue, the temperature rapidly fell and the patient died from failure of the respiratory system."
[56] Most of the editions of the various Belmont newspapers are available on microfilm through the Legislative Library of Manitoba, in hard copy at the Belmont Museum or in digital form through NewspaperArchive.com.
[57] Dates of arrival of the Smith family in Canada were:

23 April1914 William Henry Smith and Ivy Agnes Smith
19 May 1920 Edgar Smith
08 June 1922 Reginald Smith

31 March 1927 Percy Smith, Edith Smith, Donald Smith
02 July 1927 William Smith, Agnes Smith, Althea Maud Smith
May 1928 Reginald and Ivy Smith

[58] according to the death certificate.
[59] In letter to Charles Brawn March 28, 1994.
[60] Workhouses in Great Britain were the only option for poor people who had no job or home. They earned their keep by doing jobs in the workhouse. Also in the workhouses were orphaned children, the physically and mentally sick, the disabled, the elderly and unmarried mothers.
[61] The Paths of the Pioneers, p 604.
[62] Eldred Grace Brown
[63] I note from the shipping records on the Ancestry Genealogical site that in February, 1928 Basil travelled from Canada to England for a visit, but when he returned on April 15, 1928 on the S.S. Lapland he stated he had been a medical student but was now a farmer, his home was in Belmont, Manitoba and he was married to Eldred Robinson. He travelled on a 3rd Class Tourist ticket.
[64] In "The Paths of the Pioneers" (p. 46) this reference is made: "Sheep are almost a novelty in our area now, but several farmers raised fine flocks in the early years. J. Basil Robinson received many awards at fairs for his cattle, but most of his awards came from his excellent sheep. In 1929, he won 3 championships with his sheep at the Regina fair. Oxford sheep were the main ones but Basil also owned Leicester sheep which had white legs and heads and were a special breed that few people had."
[65] Belmont News carried this report concerning the success of the Robinsons with thoroughbred horses: "July 1, 1954, Raydale Court Farm owned and operated by J. B. Robinson of Belmont, has produced two colts that are winning high stakes at Polo Park, Winnipeg. In the $2,000 handicap on Saturday afternoon, Donalda, owned by J. B Robinson and Mr. Spears, was first and Epsom Lad owned by Mrs. J. B. Robinson was third. Donalda is considered the new star on the horizon for racing two year olds. Her three wins totaled $7,000.00. The filly's win was the richest Winnipeg Futurity ever. They were both sired by Reed Mace."
[66] Basil and Maud did not just briefly dabble in the horse breeding business. In Doreen's youth in the 1930's her parents, George and Ivy Hall, purchased a number of horses from them when either the horses had outlived their effectiveness as racers or had demonstrated they did not have the ability or aptitude to be successful. The Robinsons were very knowledgeable and skillful as breeders in this highly competitive realm.
[67] Strathcona, Portrait of a Prairie Municipality, compiled and edited by Freda Rajotte, published in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Churches of Belmont and Hilton, Manitoba, p. 73.
[68] The Path of the Pioneers, p. 59 (The Halls in 1909 had ring 3 on circuit 32).
[69] Interview held January 9, 2016.
[70] William and Emma Lawson came to the Belmont area in 1907. They bought the SW 36-4-15, and rented other land from John Wanless.
[71] Melvin refers to the SW 1/4 28-4-15 as the farm that his father "lost", but I think clearly it was the SE 1/4, which according to the land titles records passed from J. Hall (original homesteader in 1891) to James Wanless, whereas the SW 1/4 passed from John Hall to George Hall to Melvin Hall.
[72] The report from the June 5, 1919 edition of The News (Belmont) predates Melvin's birth and his gopher hunting activities by a few years, but gives evidence of how seriously the authorities viewed the gopher menace: "The following is a report of the gophers caught by the different

schools in the Municipality for which the municipality paid a bounty of 2c per gopher, an additional 2 ½ c per gopher will be paid by the government through the schools – Pelican Lake School 175 gophers; Mount Hope School 7; Hilton 1,239; Hiltonmye 1,159; Belmont 2,079; Huntly 443; Alma 234; Clifton Bank 110 – total 5,446." A similar program was in place for controlling the crow population.

[73] According to her obituary in the Belmont News of October 10, 1985, Annie Eleanor Reid, nee Hawn, died September 30, 1985 at her residence in Winnipeg, widow of Alexander (Ackie) Reid. Annie was born in Baldur, Manitoba May 8, 1906. She pursued her teaching career throughout her life, retiring from the Winnipeg School Division in 1969. After her funeral in Winnipeg on October 3, 1985, she was interred in the Hillside Cemetery, Belmont.

[74] Although it significantly predates the period during which Melvin and Doreen attended Alma School, reports in the Belmont News from late 1916 provide a strong sense of the significance of the Fowl Supper gatherings and illustrate the importance of entertainment to the event.

Belmont News November 30, 1916 Local News: *A Fowl Supper will be given under the auspices of The Strathcona Women's Institute in the Alma School on Friday, December 8th from 6 to 8:30 pm. A play will also be put on by the young people entitled "The Minister's Bride." Admission, adults 50c; children 25c. All are cordially invited to attend and spend a pleasant evening. Proceeds will be used for patriotic purposes. One of the most interesting features of the evening will be the drawing of the lucky ticket for the Red Cross Monogram quilt.*

Belmont News Thursday December 14, 1916: Fowl Supper – *The fowl supper and patriotic entertainment which was given last Friday evening in Alma School was most successful. The crowd which gathered exceeded the expectations of the society under whose auspices the gathering was held. Every inch of space was occupied by the people present. The supper which was laid out so nicely and daintily in the basement was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Everything was done to suit the taste and conveniences of those present. After all had been served adjournment was made to the school room for the entertainment. It was not long before the place was packed full. The play "The Minister's Bride" was the first item on the program. It was splendidly rendered. Every character did his and her part to perfection. One was amazed to find such splendid acting and many latent talents were brought to light, which had not before been apparent. The main parts were played by Miss Greta Holmes and Mr. Geo. Durham. One of the characters which caused much merriment was Mr. Ricard. He acted his part well. In the last act a concert was given by the players which consisted of songs, recitations and violin selections. Between acts Mr. Percy Pryke sang very finely a stirring patriotic song entitled ,"Our boys at the front." He was accompanied on the organ by Mrs. Pryke. Rev. Jos. Hunter acted as chairman. In the draw for the quilt Mr. John Burns of Fairfax was the successful winner, the number being drawn by little Miss Turner. The proceeds for the supper and concert amounted to $120. This with the proceeds from the quilt makes the grand total of $285. After votes of thanks were given the gathering closed with a verse of the national anthem. The ladies of Strathcona Society are to be congratulated at the success of the gathering and much praise and credit is due them for their unstinting efforts to make everything go right.*

[75] According to Eliza Chambers Stratton, Paths of the Pioneers, p. 250: "My mother, Christina Chambers, and Mrs. John Hall (Alice's mother) were instrumental in getting church started at Alma School. The minister came to Alma in the afternoon and to Belmont in the evening."

[76] According to Joe Deedman in his interview with Charles Brawn, Garnet Thring was the illegitimate child of an unwed neighbor and was taken in and raised by the Thrings.

[77] Lila Jean Hodgkinson's parents farmed north of Belmont. She and her sister, Nora, attended school in Belmont.
[78] Melvin Hall's obituary appears in the Saturday, December 13, 2008 edition of the Brandon Sun, p. 21.
[79] The Path of the Pioneers, p. 16.

George Hall came as a young bachelor with his family from eastern Ontario to help establish a home and a future in the Belmont, Manitoba area. George's family roots were in Ireland.

Ivy Smith Hall, who had immigrated to Ontario from England in 1914, met George and his family when in 1918 she volunteered to nurse the Hall family through the Spanish Influenza outbreak.

Ivy and George had limited education, were not political, never acquired wealth, but, like their neighbours, worked hard to provide opportunities for their children and in a multitude of ways are a model prairie pioneer couple.