

Correspondence from Percy Edward Millard

His years in Canada

Compiled by Ed Dwyer

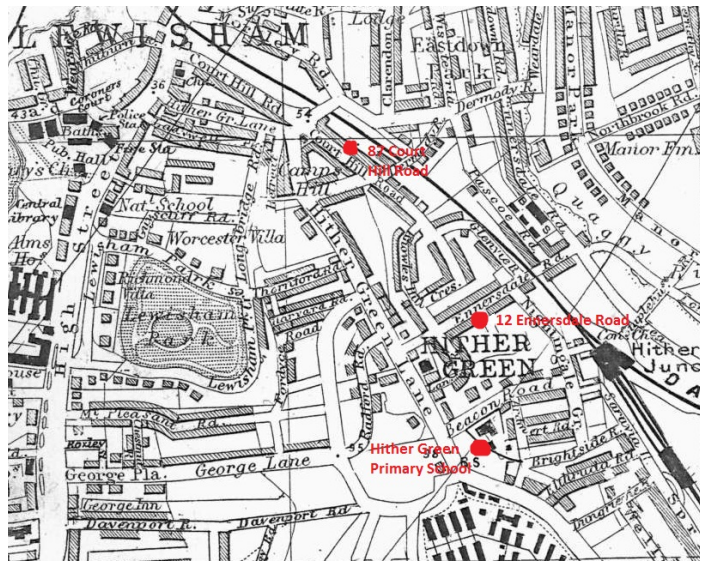
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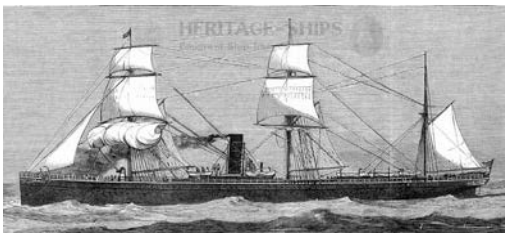
Percy Edward Millard emigrated from England to Canada in 1898. This is his correspondence home to his family. Some early letters were transcribed by his sister Beatrice, probably soon after they were received. They have been left just as they were transcribed with no editing. The rest was transcribed by Ed Dwyer, again without editing or corrections. Any transcriber's notes are shown in *italic* in square brackets.

Imagine...

You are in England. The year is 1897. You are a young man of 18 living with your mother and father in a modest end-of-terrace house in a busy built-up suburb of South East London. The house is comfortable, but not really large enough, and you have to share with two brothers and three sisters. Still, you have a happy life and your family is a loving, caring one. You enjoy choral singing, playing your flute, dancing and swimming or diving at the local baths. You have been working as a clerk, perhaps in the local bank like your father. You write clearly, and even know shorthand like your younger brother Syd and older sister Beat. You also seem to be getting on well with your girlfriend Millie, but who knows?



This is the area of London where Percy was brought up. It's taken from a map of 1904. Both houses and his Primary School are shown in red.



The SS Gallia. Built in 1878. 2,942 Tons. 430ft x 44 ½ ft. 381 Adult Passengers.

Then, for no reason you can explain, you decide that this life is not for you and tell your parents that you intend to leave England, go to Canada, and become a farmer. Your parents are dismayed, they may never see you again, letters take two weeks each way and you know nothing about farming. What are you thinking?

It takes time, but eventually they realise that you are not to be dissuaded and give their blessing and a farewell party, and on 9th April 1898 you depart Liverpool on the SS Gallia bound for St John NB and Halifax NS. You sail in 'Steerage'.

Now fast forward 120 years. Your great nephew (Edmund Dwyer) is trying to clear some of the 'stuff' that is stored in the loft of his garage. He comes upon some rolled-up typewritten copies of letters as well as bundles of original letters, sent from Canada by Percy Edward Millard to his folks back home in England. Probably no-one has looked at them for a hundred years...

S.S. GALLIA.

Atlantic Ocean.

Sunday 17th April '98

Dear Mother and Father,

When you get this I daresay I shall have arrived at my destination. I may tell you that I was sea-sick up till Tuesday night, but have been all right ever since, and have slept well every night. It is jolly hard to write at all properly with the ship rolling and pitching, - she does roll. The dining tables are well filled now, although people were few and far between at first. Fred's partner has been ill in bed up till yesterday; he has been about the worst on board- that elderly fellow was in my cabin was seasick till Friday. There are a lot of children on board, and they have been very lively all along. I think there are three babies in the Second Cabin. I don't know how many there are in Steerage, but I know one of the babies sleeps in the next bunk to me, and it goes to sleep in the day time I should think- and you know the rest. Nearly all the people seem to be going out farming, and a lot of them on spec'. There are quite twenty of us going as far as Winnipeg, among them two families of four each I think. We overtook a steamer on Thursday in the afternoon. The Saloon had games on deck yesterday- bowls and quoits, the Captain and the Officers joining in. It was the best day we have had, turned cold in the evening, and rained towards night. There is one old man on board a regular giant, who keeps us all going, although he is a bit of a nuisance sometimes with his singing and talking; he sits down by the side of the quiet ladies, and talks to them about anything; at the present moment he is leaning over me and talking to a lady. Will Cutler, Fred's partner, has spent about 30/- on Champagne since he has been on board. Sighted land this morning (Tuesday) first thing. Must now put things straight. Etc.

GLADSTONE. 25th April
1898

I arrived at Gladstone this morning at 10 o'clock, just in time for lunch. Fred is leaving me here at a friend of his keeps a hotel on a small scale, and is going a station further on, Plumas to see if his friends can take me on. It is lovely weather here, and they say it has been like it for some time; the country around is jolly fine too. I have been for a long walk this afternoon, and had half an hour's talk with a farmer who had been there about 8 years. When we got to Halifax Wil Cutler and I went by electric tram as far as they went, and then got out and walked straight on till we came to a dip that led down to a lake; I have never seen anything so lovely, the ground rising all up from the lake, and all wooded. We started from Halifax at about 9.30 p m and got to St Johns some time in the morning. I had about an hour's sleep that night, no accommodation whatever. Will was outside taking the temperature, and went to sleep next morning while we were having breakfast. The next stopping place was Quebec; we had about two hours there I think, and went about town seeing what we could see in the time. There are some fine streets in Quebec; they lead up to some mountains. Electric cars go right up to the top, and you can see the whole town. Just had my tea. We arrived at Montreal at 4.30 a.m. Thursday (started at about 6 p.m. from Quebec). It was wet in town when we got there, and no place open till 7 o'clock, so we had to wait and look after our luggage. (We five got chummy with two other fellows on board (brothers). They were going to Regina. One of them had been out before, and was taking his big brother out there this time as well as a lot of household goods. They were both very nice big fellows. (Regina you will find is just about between Calgary and Winnipeg, if you look on the map). We all used to meet in Fred's cabin at night time and have games, seven of us, a bit thick eh?.)

Well, to continue, just before 7 o'clock, a man came up to us, and got us to have some coffee and bread and butter at his house (10 cents). After that we puddled about till 8 o'clock, and then went to the Vancouver Hotel at Montreal, where we had breakfast (25 cents), porridge ham and eggs, or steak, bread butter and coffee, not bad? We left our luggage there, as we did not start till 2 p.m.. It was here that Fred had to arrange about his stopover; he went to see about it and found he could do nothing without Will Cutler; of course Bill was missing. When he did turn up, and they went to see about their ticket, the traffic

Superintendent was missing, and the clerk said they would telegraph on the Winnipeg if it was to be allowed (general swearing at William). Well, whiled away the time till lunch; most of us had it at the Vancouver Hotel; Fred, George Anderson (the fair Canadiany looking one), and Jack Lowe, one of the two brothers, went to the Albion Hotel. We had- Soup, beek, [beef?] potatoes and beans, and pudding and coffee (25 cents) Bread butter and biscuits ad lib. We all got aboard at Montreal at 2 p.m., and started, after a train load of us had gone on before.

Now then, I want to impress upon you that from Halifax to about Winnipeg, we went through nothing but forest and rock, just fancy! Hundreds of miles of forest, and miles of it burnt and blown down, and all of it as wild as nature would let it be. Our next stopping place of note was Winnipeg (Saturday afternoon we arrived), where we had half an hour to change trains. Some of the fellows left us here. All the country from the West end of Lake Superior and onwards, is flat (We passed Lake Superior in the night so we did not see it). At Portage we had to take the branch line to Gladstone. We got to Portage Saturday 11 p.m., no train to Gladstone till 11 a.m. Monday, so put up at the Bellview Hotel, one dollar and a half. Portage is a very nice place, as we (three) went for a long ramble on Sunday. (The two brothers and our other two friends left us at Portage, the brothers going to Regina, and the other two going to Wolseley as Dad Knows). Well we three went for a walk, and Fred found, since he had been away, a bridge that ought to have been over a stream, was blown down, so we could not cross over into the woods, much to Will's displeasure. We started for Gladstone on Monday morning, and picked up with half a dozen fellow voyagers, who were going to Dauphin, 100 miles past Gladstone (they had stopped over in Winnipeg). Refer to first part of letter. Two days have elapsed. Fred came back from Plumas to Gladstone yesterday, and told me that a friend of his, H.Bing, would take me on (board and lodging only), till I saw my way to better myself, so I shall start today, 27th (Fred and Will went on).

Fred says I shall get on all right with H.Bing; he has been all sorts of things in his time, ex-Champion boxer, Bar-keeper, etc., has been married six years, and has three or four houses at Plumas, where I am going; so please address letters- half a mo', not certain of the address yet, will let you know later by postcard.

So now please remember me to all and everybody, and tell them to get their letters ready to send to me, for I shall want them.

With love to you, father, sisters, brothers, friends, relations and all, 1000, 3000 miles from everybody etc.

Tenby Post Office
via Gladstone

6-5-98

I have arrived at last (got here Saturday April 30th) at Harry Bing's (a friend of Fred's). He has a homestead, and is married to an American lady. She is very nice, about 5ft.9in., and well made too. Harry is also a nice fellow, and I feel I shall be quite happy with them. Harry has five shanties on his place, and is building another one to live in, also, two horses, 10 cows and calves, two pigs, 2 ducks, 4 turkeys, about 20 chickens, 2 cats and one dog. His place is all wooded, and he is going for cattle raising more than farming. I arrive here last Saturday, did nothing that day, drove Mrs B. (with a team) 20 miles on Monday, to get some grain, stayed at a friend's house same night (I went there on my way to Bings, Fred told me to, they said they would like to see me), and came back next morning, about 35 miles altogether. My first drive, what ho'! I have been doing lumbering up to the present (a little). Got my hands blistered. Did two furrows of ploughing, yesterday, much easier than I thought. We get up at about 7 o'clock, have breakfast at 8, dinner at 12, and supper at 6.30, when we stop.

I hope you are all quite well. I am getting sunburnt already.

Did Bob settle up alright about the dress suit? Tell him I should like a letter from him and Bert Venner, I will answer them. How is Nellie? Has she got over it yet? I did not know she was so fond of seeing fellows off. I should like to hear from her. Will you remember me kindly to the Helms. I dreamt they had moved, have they? I should be pleased to hear from you all as soon as possible, and let me know if there is anything more you would like to know. With love to all etc.

TENBY POST OFFICE

15th June 1898

Dear Mother,

I received your letters on the 3rd inst. Our mail day is every Friday. The post office is 6 miles from our house, so it is just a nice walk to get the mail. We are 32 miles from Gladstone. The nearest town where we can get provisions is Plumas 15 miles away. We have had a lot of rain since I last wrote. It has brought the things on a treat. Our house is made of logs, 3 rooms, no upper storey, bedroom divided by curtains, sitting room and kitchen. When meals are ready, they say "Sit in please", a plate is before you, and you just help yourself to what you want. When any fellow is finished, he pushes away from the table, and lights up his pipe for a bit.

I have written two letters to Gordon, and had one reply. He says he will come out here as soon as his year is up, and talks about buying an improved farm about \$300-400, and not taking up a homestead.

I should like you to send me out the Strand Magazine if you would.

I am sorry to hear about Bob Charlton's illness, hope it is not serious.

Harry Bing has been in the States 5 years, Cow Punching, and Broncho busting, that is, herding cattle and riding wild horses. He has earned \$160 a month at Broncho Busting. That is as high as a man can get, but he has steadied down now after six years of married life.

The mosquitoes out here are awful, bit you all over. We have to have wire over the windows and doors to keep them out.

I did not notice that medicine until I arrived here. What was the wadding in the letter for?

Your's and Pater's photograph was quite an agreeable surprise to me.

My only expense now is stamps, barring £4 that it cost me to get here, extras on the way you know, quite unavoidable.

Harry and I went for a 16 mile drive north yesterday to get some lumber, did not meet a soul. It was a lovely drive through wood all the time. How is Irene? Growing quite a good girl and looking after Mother?

A fellow who is staying with us, (Arthur Nicholson), found a wolf's nest two weeks ago, and brought home a young wolf. It is getting quite lively.

We have 16 young chicks, and are expecting a lot of turkeys Monday. With love to you all etc.

TENBYP.O.
10-7-98

Dear old Beat,

Your letter of 24th ult to hand. I am sorry my letters read curt, but it is my nature worse luck. However, I will try to follow your instructions, and write more intelligently. I am still on the look-out for a job, but maybe I will winter with the Bings.

Daisie has answered my letter, but alas, Mildred has not yet, but where ther's [sic] life there's hope. I am glad to hear that they are both better, Daisie told me about it when she answered. You must excuse my not calling on Mrs Searby, but she must not be surprised at what the present generation do, as they [are] inclined to lead rather pre-occupied lives.

I am awfully sorry to hear of Percy Morle's development of heart disease. I will leave it to you to express my-er-feelings or er-sentiments- to Winnie, at any rate you can reciprocate them, and don't forget Percy.

The country out here is lovely now, and there are all sorts of lovely flowers. They include Tiger Lilies, Orchids (yellow) big daisies, such as you buy at drapers, Violets, white sort of Primroses, etc. Hazel nuts will soon be ripe, so will Cranberries and Saskatoons (berries). The grass is coming on very nicely, and so are the cattle. Had a swim today in the White River, about 3 miles away. Shall have another tomorrow, I think. Best love to all at home, not forgetting Irene. You might write a little shorthand to me Beat. Bert did when he wrote. Etc.

Same [address]

Dear Syd,

Thanks muchly for your letter of 23rd ult. What do you think of Winnie Morle?, she can be a very nice girl if she likes. Please forward enclosed to Bert with thanks for letter.

Get Irene to send me a letter will you?

It made you a bit wild when you missed Alf, and also got let in for a thick un. Never mind, experience is better than taught, as I found out to my cost more than once. We have nearly finished our new house, a wooden one, shingled. I will give you a summary of today's work (Sunday). Got up at 7-30, pulled a bucketful of pigweed for the pigs, came in, came in, washed, did my hair, and had breakfast, bread, butter, stewed dried apples and tea, hunted for turkeys, (they had been out all night), couldn't find them, came in, washed up, laid around and read a bit, helped to get dinner ready, consisted of bread and butter, fried salt pork, cake, dried apples and tea. Went down to the river afterwards in the wagon, 5 of us, Mr and Mrs B., Harry's brother Ab, who has been up helping with the house, and who is going back to work with his younger brother Bob, at Plumas, Arthur Nicholson, who is going to hire out till freeze up at Plumas, and self. Mrs B. was going down to Plumas to get some things for the new house, and we have to cross the river on the way. All the fellows went in. Mrs B. went on a bit and waited for the two. Harry and I came home from the dip, had tea - tea, cake, apples, bread and butter. I then went for the cattle, milked one, can milk now, then sat down and wrote letters.

So good-night from

PERCY

Save all your old clothes because we can wear anything out here.

TENBY P.O. 3/8/98

My dear Father and Mother,

How have you been getting on since I wrote last. The delay could not be helped, as I have tried to write before, but what with one thing and another, I have not been able to till now. Mr and Mrs Bing have been away for the last three days to a wedding up in the Indian settlement, 38 miles away. They returned today at 4 p.m.. There were 100 there. Harry and his wife and five others were the only white men amongst them. I have been keeping house meanwhile, it's all right. The cattle got away from me the first night after I had milked them, only one milking, and I went to get them in again, but they wouldn't go, and wandered off, I following thinking they would strike for home, but they didn't, until they lost themselves, and me too, as I gave it up. I thought I should have to sleep out, when I heard our neighbour's cattle bell, so made for it all through the brush, trees and swamps, or sloughs (pronounced slew) till I arrived at their place. I went in, and they wanted me to stay all night, but I declined with thanks, as I wanted to make a fresh start from home for the cattle in the morning. Arrived home 11 p.m., wet to the knees, and dead tired.

After seeing to the chickens and pigs next morning, I started for the cattle again, but could not find them, very likely they were lying down, for I could not hear the bell - another two hours wasted. They joined our neighbours' (Pockets) cattle during the day, so got them all up to his place at night, and while I was waiting for some milk from Pockets, bothered if our cattle didn't wander off into the bush, and it took me about an hour to get them to our home. I locked them up when I did get them in (The bull, bell cow, and milk cow only), the others would not wander away from the bell. Since then, all serene until the Bings came home, when I had time to write this letter.

Our garden is in full supplying order now. We have beans, peas, lettuce, small onions raw and new potatoes for dinner, all fresh,- and have had radishes and cress, and we have coming, if all's well,- cabbages, onions, scarlet runners, corn, turnips, beetroot, tomatoes, carrots, marrows, cucumbers, water melons, etc, quite a variety?.

We are in our new house now, it is a bit different to the old one, more room, and no rain coming through the roof. Our church is 5 miles away, service held twice a month, once a fortnight.

Please thank Aunt for photo received.

We had to kill the young wolf; we were losing our little chicks, and one morning saw him chase one round the coop, catch it, and make off to

the brush as fast as he could go, broken leg and all. So we had to knock him on the head.

I am pleased to hear you both got away to Worthing, and I hope it will do you any amount of good, Irene as well.

Thanks very much for papers. They are most acceptable. My eyes are all right now - Mother will understand. I churned the butter while they were away.

Tenby P.O. 4/10/98

Dear All,

At last I have an opportunity to write to you. I have not been to the Post Office for just on three weeks now, and am hard up for news. Since writing you last, I have changed places three times, isn't it awful? But wait a bit, and I will explain. While I was at Mr Park's place, his neighbour came and asked me whether I would work for him for a few days at brushing. I said I shouldn't mind, and would want half a dollar a day, to which he consented, so I packed my turkey, i.e., put a few necessary clothes in a sack, and went same night. I stayed there two weeks, and made myself a bit queer through eating too many raw cranberries. I then went on to his neighbours, and helped them through harvesting at the same rate. I stayed there two weeks also, pitching sheaves on to the waggon most of the time from the cocks in the field, and then pitching on to the stack. It makes your arms ache I can tell you. I had been trying to get on a threshing gang all this time, and while I was there, a fellow came by, by the name of Dilke, who owned a threshing machine, and I asked him for a job, but he was full up he said. However, he said if I cared to go to his place and do some ploughing, he would take me on, and then I should have a chance of getting on the machine. In the meantime I should help ploughing and harvesting at \$15 per month, board and lodging included, as in previous cases. I accepted, and have been here ever since, that is, three weeks next Saturday, 8th inst. We were stacking oats the first three days, the son and I, and since then, have been ploughing, so that I ought to know how to plough now, some of the furrows being $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile long, do about 18 rounds in the day.

Now something about the family, as it might be interesting. They are German, as are all the people that I have come in connection with round about as yet. The old man has married twice, has about half a dozen grown up sons and daughters by his First wife, all married except two, and half a dozen kid by second wife. I had been working with the youngest son of the first wife, Faldine by name, a very nice fellow, until last Sunday, when he left home, and has not been back since, because his father gave him a hiding for not putting two strands of wire round some oat stacks to keep the cattle out; he only put one strand of wire round, and the cattle destroyed about two loads of oats, - hence-

I am having a very good living here, all the farm products you can imagine, except ham. I thought all farmers had that, plenty of milk, eggs, porridge, etc.

The last three nights we have had frost, snow last night.
Winter will soon be here.

I am quite well, and am contented, only that I should like
Gordon out here.

Love to all, and hoping you are all well from yours

PERCY.

Dear Mother, I should like the flute if you think it worth while sending
it. I have had cramp chronic once after pitching sheaves all day, and my
eyes are not quite right yet.

Eden P.O.
Manitoba
Dec 16th 1900

Dear Beat

I received your letter dated Oct 30th on Saturday Dec 15th quite a lapse eh? It was a very nice letter refreshing me greatly.

If you can recall it I will try to answer the questions accordingly.

I have not written to Gordon for a long time, and the fact is I couldn't write if I wanted to, not being sure of his address. I was very sorry to hear of him not doing well. Do you remember the speech his Uncle made at his (Gordons') farewell supper, it struck me as being a bit too sanguine, evidently he did not know Gordon intimately or else he would not have had such great hopes of him. I wish still that he would come out and join me.

Strictly private (How is Millie) I perused the Swimming Programme with great eagerness (It being one of the things I miss greatly out here i.e. Swimming) and note that Syd won nothing. I guess he kept no reserve, as dad would say. The club seems to hold together pretty well. Syd must have beaten my best at swimming by the programme.

Was very pleased to learn Bert Venner won the Championship and would like you to tell him so, or rather Syd. I see that both Bert and Bob took as many prizes as were allowed. That was a very good plunge of Bob's. Let me know a little about them next time will you and remember me kindly to them.

I was out threshing on my birthday [20th Oct] and it never occurred to me that I was 22 until the evening when I communicated the fact to a young fellow 6'2½" in his socks [Percy was 5'7½"] whom I was threshing with, and a fellow whom I liked.

You say you are having your socials again and wish I were there. So do I. That is what I have pined for every winter, and have often fancied that I would like to come over and spend a month at home, go to a few select dances (you know) have a trot round to all my friends and then come back or rather go back to Canada.

I got Bert and Emmie's wedding card and thought it very pretty but have not answered it yet.

I am very sorry to hear of Connie's bereavement. That reminds me that Harry Bing's brother Ab the medical student at Winnipeg College volunteered and went with the Canadian Mounted Rifles as a private. I have since read that he has died of enteric fever at Johannesburg. I have not seen Harry since reading the notice. There was a great time when the [sic]

heard of him going, and Harry told me that he would have gone too if he had not been married.

I was very sorry to learn of his death, all of them being very nice fellows. Before going Ab had only one more degree to get before qualifying as a doctor, and the College were going to give him his certificate if he came back. He tried to get on the Medical Staff when volunteering but there was no vancancy.[sic]

I have neither heard from Alf or Nellie for a long time, ever so long, but I guess it is my fault as I have not answered their last letter. I wish they would overlook it and write me, but I suppose that is against human nature.

I was pleased to hear of the casualties [sic] going on around.

We quit threshing on 23rd Oct until freeze up, as we could not move the machine around, the ground being too soft, having had a lot of rain in the fall (autumn).

We were threshing near Neepawa that is about 35 miles from Glenella. Neepawa is one of the big wheat growing districts of Manitoba, 750,000 bushels being the output for one year. When we quit as I mentioned a little further back I got a job ploughing for Murdoch McIntyre where I have been staying on and off ever since. 13 miles from Neepawa.

He is a very nice fellow 28 years old and married to a girl of 20. They are a very loving couple. Both of them want me to stay with them until spring. Whilst here I saw 7 deer 26/11/00. They passed on the next farm to us about 200 yards away. I rushed in the house and got my Snider but when I came out again they were about a quarter of a mile away. I followed them up for a mile but they got away into the bush. We could hear farmers cracking at them as they went through their farms.

My gun carries just over a mile, so perhaps it was as well I didn't shoot, not knowing where my bullet, but still I was awfully mad I didn't get one. I followed them up thinking I could corner them in the fence, but got badly fooled as they went over the fence as if there were nothing there.

I heard after of one man shooting one of them before I saw them pass and I tasted some of the meat whilst out threshing.

Attention! I met a young fellow W. Blackmore by name when out threshing, no relation to your Roan School friend Mifs Blackmore although I asked him who knew the Griffiths well. Laurie, Joe & Grace used to visit them often, Laurie & his brother (Blackmore's) were great friends. We shook hands on it. They lived near our Roan School. His brother used to go but that was before my time.

Dec 3 I am out threshing again it is a pretty cold job for we have had quite a few degrees of frost lately. I am drawing water for the engine.

By bye

Love to all

From your affectionate brother

Percy

How is mother getting along and Irene lots of love for Re from Percy

Eden P.O.

Manitoba

13th March 1900

Dear Beat

I received your letter of 3rd Ult [*last month*] 2 weeks ago, and that of 15th Ult, with mother's and Clara's on Friday 8th inst [*this month*] with Syds Photo and yours. They are very nice. I will stick them around my other photo when I get settled in my shanty although that is not yet. To your first letter I must say that the Healds are very fortunate in having such a generous uncle and also will give you a brief explanation of my loss as far as I can remember.

Two winters ago I was staying with my friend M^r W^m Park. I don't know what possessed me but I bought a team of horses from him for 150\$ with harness, I gave him an order on M^r R. Wilson (whom I had worked for the previous summer for 7 months at 13\$ per month, and from whom I had drawn hardly any money) and also a note for 100\$ payable in 2 months from date of drawing up, which you know about when I wrote home for my money. M^r Park and his friend who was present at the horse transaction then advised me to take up a homestead which I had been looking at favourably for some time, and I went and homesteaded it. They then argued that that having a homestead I should then want a house and stable built on it for myself and horses and the friend (no need to mention his name) agreed to get me out 2 sets of logs for the buildings and partly build my house for me for one of the horses. You see I was hardly enough experienced in bush work to do it myself. Park and his friend must have talked it up between them for when I asked Park's advice it, he said he thought it was alright so we then drew up writings to that effect. I then had one horse on my hands that was no use to me, and between them they advised me to get rid of that one too. I asked Park what he would allow me on the note for it (He had already got the note for 50\$ from M^r Wilson) and he told me he would knock 50\$ off for the horse and harness. I readily agreed to this for you see they had me in a tight fix, and they knew it, and I thought this was about the cheapest way of getting out of it. When I got out of their company, I went to Hy Bing and told him all about it also those 2 young English fellows the one who was on the railway track with me and his chum (Ernest Giggins and Arthur Bancroft) and Harry and the other two said I would be a fool if I paid Park the 50\$ that I still owed him as it was a put up thing from beginning to end. So that when M^r Park came to me for the 50\$ I refused to pay him and gave him no satisfactory reason why either. Of course he got righteously indignant and swore he would put it in the hands of a lawyer,

and also that he would write to Dad and let him know what I was doing in this country. I laughed in his face and told him to go ahead. Meanwhile the other fellow had brought down the logs and put them on the quarter I had taken up, a few short on number of course, and M^r Park started hauling them to his place to pay his very just debt. I did not know of this until he had taken away 2 loads, when I got Mifs M^cFadden to take the rest of them as she wanted some logs for building purposes. She agreed to pay me about 10\$ for what was left, I haven't received that yet. When I had bought the horses I bought some oats and a set of sleighs etc which I left at Parks and of course he had seized them for payment. So you see, if you can follow all this that I am between 70 and 80\$ out on that deal, that's all. I don't know if it will do you any good knowing, but having had an inkling of it I suppose it aroused your curiosity or perhaps your sisterly sympathy to find out what it really was.

I leave it to your own judgement whether you think it will do Dad any good to read this or not. It is nothing to blow about. I was green and got bitten. The loss I consider is more to me than Gordon's because his was given to him and my money I had earned.

How is your knight errant coming up

With much love

From your affectionate brother

Percy

Glenella
[Sunday] Aug 11th 1901

My dear Mother,

I received your letter of 4th June about 2 weeks ago. I don't have an opportunity of writing except on Sundays and sometimes miss them on account of callers.

You remember asking what sort of songs I wanted and whether music was required. Well pianoforte music would do for me if they were recent, but I daresay you could pick up some old comic songs that I would know, it is the words I forget, not the tune. However as they say in business please do your best for me. Singing is appreciated out here.

I agreed to stay with Wm Harvie 2 months and my time was up about the end of June. I helped him put up the pole fence enclosing 6 acres, and he put in nearly an acre of potatoes after that I was ploughing for him till my time was up, when he brought me to Glenella 13 miles east and agreed to do 10 acres of breaking on my homestead. That is ploughing the land for the first time, which is about the hardest work on the farm. He would do this instead of paying me cash for wages. \$36.

When we came up it was very wet, just after those heavy rains I had told you about and he agreed to come up again in two weeks time.

The second time he came he brought his breaking plough and camping outfit but it was still too wet for the horses to work at as they would sink in the furrow, so he thought he would wait again till it dried up a bit. That is three weeks ago and I have cleared the 10 acres of brush and big trees and am expecting him every day now.

Whilst being up I have stayed with the Guests, my nearest neighbours. Andrew Guest had got a lot of saw logs up in the spruce bush 17 miles NE of Glenella but could not get it sawn and drawn home in the winter as the saw mill fellows were such a time in getting the machinery in working order. It was an outfit going in to a place where they had never had a mill before and they did not get started before spring. Guest's lumber had been lying there until I came up when he got me to draw it for him.

It was a picnic, what with very bad roads, mosquitoes the like of which has never been seen before in the country, that is to stay on for such a long time (They are generally very bad for 2 or 3 days in the mosquito season) and the bulldogs which are very much like the big flies in that you get outside in the summer (grey). They are very bad in the spruce bush when the sun is hot and will bite a horse until he is covered with blood. I have seen them settle on a horse and when they have had a gorge of blood, fly

away leaving the blood trickling down the horse's body just as if he had been pricked with a pin. They will only tackle a person when he is swimming, seems funny doesn't it.

I made 4 trips to the bush, sometimes I would start early one morning, get to the mill about 10 or 11 o/c, and then pull out in the evening, and travel most of the night, or else start from the bush early the next morning, and get out of the bush before the bulldogs got bad. I got sick once and that was within sight of Glenella. There is a big marsh E of Glenella and I was coming through that with 250 running feet of timber, when down the waggon went on one side in the mud. I had to unload all my load and had a job to get out empty. When I did get out I put a little over a hundred feet on and left the rest in about six inches of water.

I have started building a house with Guest's help, have the foundation laid. I have also bought a cow and calf from Guest. The cow is of the Jersey type, but not a thoroughbred. I gave \$32 for them (£6/8/-) [\$5 to £1] and he has use of the cow's milk till fall or autumn. We expect to start haying tomorrow. I will let you know how we get along. I am getting a third, Guest finds everything.

I don't think there is any need to give that dress suit to Bob Charlton. If he can't give what he said he would I guess he can go without. He wrote me a nice letter last week acknowledging my photo, but did not allude to the suit.

How are you all at home. I hope you are all well. I am doing fine myself getting over my little knocks.

We don't have dancing at our Socials as they are general connected with the church. Mostly one or two sky pilots there. (Beat's query)[*A Sky Pilot is a 19th century western American slang term for a religious preacher*]

I have received 2 lots of papers lately from you. The first lot I forgot to acknowledge. They are very nice.

Hy Bing is going home [*to England*] this winter and is taking Mrs Bing with him. I have given Mrs Bing our address, and have told her you would make them most welcome if they visited you.

If they did come they would not think it out of place to be asked to stay the night as we often stay overnight out here when visiting distant friends.

They had a split up on the Glencairn section this year. S Miller got Barker the foreman the sack by lying about him and afterwards had to make a public apology or else Barker would have sued him for

slander. Miller shipped out after and married and Barker is now second man on the section as the Railway C'y directly to take the foreman's job.

My cows name was Doll and I have named the calf Minnie.

I am very much obliged to you Syd for writing me. You are a model brother for corresponding. I hope this letter will do for you as it contains all the news. You did some pretty good cycling. I suppose you hunger for to trip again.

I helped Guest dig a well. We were at it about 3 days, getting down 13 feet, when we struck a spring, and the water came up 9 ft, good clear spring water just above freezing. It was solid hard pain digging, and we had to pick every inch. The pickaxe would not go in the sort of clay gravel more than 2 inches at a blow.

Will you be out of the 35/- if you don't let Bob Charlton have the suit. That is did you send the money onto me when I asked for it on the strength of getting it from Bob. All this was written 28-7-01. Since then Mrs Guest has had a baby girl 4th Aug and was up today the first time - 11th Aug.

Wm Harvie wrote me on the 10th saying he had lost a horse down a well and therefore could not finish my breaking which will put me back about a year as I don't think I can get it done now because it is too late for the breaking season.

We are right into haymaking now. We have put up 20 tons of hay and want to put up 40 more.

Harvesting is also upon us.

Love to all

From your affectionate son

Percy

Hope Aunt Alice is getting better

My love to her when you are writing

Glenella P.O.
17/11/01

My dear Beat

Yours of 20th Aug and 16th Sept duly received and neglected until time of writing. I hope Clara Pikey and you had a good time at Worthing.

How are May and Jim enjoying wedded life. Remember me to them will you. Both Alf and Syd have been best men now and the little black sheep has been out of it. How are the Sewell's getting on. I hope they are having no more trouble, and is Rhoda married yet dear girl.

Am sorry to hear of M^r East's demise. I always considered him a gentleman in the proper sense of the word.

I have not written to the Presant's neither Fred or his people. I ought to as they seem to remember me. Still I guess Dad will remember me kindly to all whenever he sees M^r Presant.

Comments and answers to your letter of August.

And the wedding! Fred's and Mary's! should have liked to have been there. I guess it was grand. I sincerely wish them good luck. Oh! I ate the piece of wedding cake in company with a young English lady, about 34. The only person at the time with whom I had things in common and could appreciate the occasion and the cake too.

What does it mean about Bert Venner thinking of matrimony. I guess I shall have to write him to find out. I suppose Nellie thinks I have forgotten all about her. They haven't written me yet. And you have not sent me their address, will Porlock. Somerset find them.

I have received the song book from Uncle and think it very kind of him and must thank him by letter.

Thanks for the CPSC's programme I see Bob still plunges good. Wasn't Bert the champion last year? I see he is still one of the best.

And now how are you all at home? Mother and Father quite well I hope, and you, Clara Syd and Re also, not forgetting Alf, Nell and the baby, kisses all round.

I get pretty lonely sometimes as on referring to a former sentence in my letter I lack things in common, or to get it down finer, I have not a single person to talk to associated with my former life. But I don't give way much to it, trying most of the time to keep as straight as I can for your sakes and my own. Although sometimes its very 'ard.

I have now 3 head of cattle. The calf died. 2 Of them I intend breaking in this winter for oxen for next year's summer work. The other is a nice cow, Doll by name. I ought to get another ox because two are not enough. I have paid \$82 for the three.

We have had fearful prairie fires this year, sweeping the whole country around, and lots of people have lost by it. Hay buildings etc. I lost a stack of hay 4^{1/2} tons and would have got my building material burnt if I had not been there, as it was the fire got underneath the pile of lumber and I had to tear it all to pieces and throw it on the ground that had been burnt. Very exciting times I can tell you. Talk about going through fire and water. I did it more than once.

Excuses for not writing before.

Harvesting commenced soon after receiving your first letter, and I went out 1st to J Taylor Aug 30. He is a Scotchman, has been out here 9 years and has lately married a young Scotch girl. I stayed there 9 weeks helping to stack grain @ \$1^{1/4} a day board and lodging included, not paid for wet days though. I could not get an opportunity to write there, as there was hardly any convenience for so doing, and also working from 6 till 8 one did not feel like it.

I then went to another Scotchman, Sept 19th a bachelor, presumably engaged to the young English lady I mentioned before Mifs Carrie Tompkins of Kensington and with whom I discussed the wedding cake. I started with him @ \$1½ a day, bad weather as before not included, and stayed about 2 weeks. I then went with 2 Canadian Bachelors Oct 5th @ \$1½ hauling manure instead of going threshing as I intended as the wages were the same. I had to fill the wagons and the two of them drove the teams. That was pretty stiff work, it being steady as one would be back from emptying his load in the field nearly always before the other wagon was filled. They both helped to fill their own loads. It was here that I first tasted tasted [sic] wild goose. It was fine. The bird must have weighed 9 or 10 lbs. and it was here also that I had my first taste of the Manitoba Partridge. They are very small, a little bigger than a pigeon, but the flesh is white and tastes fine. I put in 3 days there and then the Councillor for the district came round Oct 7th wanting to hire men and teams for some road work and offered me \$1.75 a day and board myself. I agreed to it and next day he raised my wages to \$2. I boarded with Jim Taylor offering to help him night and morning with his chores, and he in turn would board me for 25 cts per day. You would general have to pay 50 cts a day.

On this job we had to put in 10 hours a day, no time for writing you see, getting up at ¼ to 5 so as to get to work on the road which was a mile away at 7o/c. I have earn't \$46 at it already 22 days work. The work consists of making 3 miles of road east to Glenella. My homestead is NW of Glenella, and this road runs a mile south of me.

A considerable amount of money has been spent on the road. It lying along a low and wet piece of land. In fact the road was to be put through regardless of expense. There have been about 3 gangs. Jim Taylor was foreman of our gang. He had 6 or 7 teams and 2 men, and his bill has come to \$680 odd \$100 of which he has earn't himself with his team.

A Guest was foreman of a smaller gang. A Bancroft was in that gang.

I am trying to send you a paper of this country in which you will see the a/c of the road work. The work consists of first ploughing the side of what you are going to make the road and then scraping what has been ploughed onto the road thus making a grade or elevation, mound bank or whatever you like to call it.

The scraper is like a big scoop with 2 handles sticking out behind for a man to catch hold of in filling it, and a team is hitched on in front. I had the job of filling the scrapers until it froze up and then we put in 3 days at filling wagons with gravel, having to pick up the frozen ground until we got through the frost. We made a grade 100 yds long and there was an average depth of 1ft of water to work in, in some places it was over 2ft of water. We built the grade up about 4ft above the water level and 14ft broad, quite a job.

I am staying with J Taylor now 2½ miles from my homestead. He has built a new house this summer, we moved in a week ago. 2 rooms below and 3 above (used as bedrooms) Mifs Tompkins is staying here also for about 2 months. I have a room to myself, and this is how it is that I am writing. The house is built of lumber 18ft by 26ft and plastered inside, just like our house at home only the walls are not papered, they have a smooth plaster finish. My room is a little bigger than the one I had at Mr Grover's although the house is much smaller. There is an organ here Mr Taylor and Mifs Tompkins both play a bit, I drum on it sometimes.

I started threshing last Saturday 16th and expect to be at it tomorrow. I am helping J Taylor thresh for his neighbours and they in turn will help him when he comes to thresh.

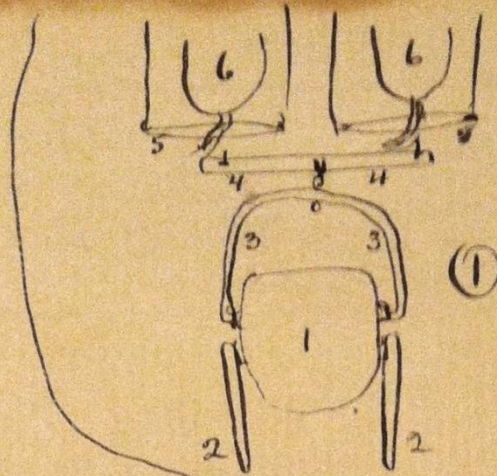
Arthur Bancroft has built a house in town Glenella paid \$25 for a lot. E Giggins has had his house broken into by a stranger and has lost anything that was of value and not too cumbersome. Arthur Bancroft had all his stuff there too.

I wish Clara and Syd many happy returns of their birthday. Am feeling fine and will now close this apology with

Love to all

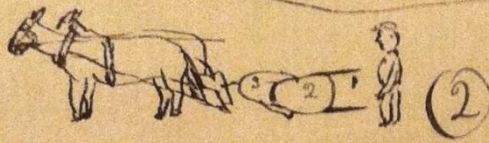
From yours affectionately

Percy



- 1 Scraper
- 2 Handles
- 3 Bale
- 4 Double trees
- 5 Wiffle trees
- 6 Horses

Looking from above



- 1 Handles
- 2 Scraper
- 3 bale



- 1 Handle
- 2 scraper

In the act of dumping
or emptying you just

have to pull up on the handles and the front of the scraper catches on the ground & tilts up emptying the dirt. The horses going all the time. For filling the scraper you have to raise or pull on the handles as in emptying but be careful not to tilt it ~~to~~ much or else it will go up as fig 3 when it is full ^{of dirt} it will ride as in fig 2 until you want to dump it. It wants quite a bit of practice

Glenella P.O.
Manitoba
Sunday Dec 22nd 1901

Dear old Beat

Yours of 22nd Ult received 10th inst by same mail as a very long letter from Alf, telling me of all his goings on for 2 years back.

Really you get ahead of me in letter writing. last time I had received two from you for the one I sent home, and now there is another one of yours waiting to be answered. Well here goes. I hope you don't mind old girl.

You tell me Gordon has arrived home. That stirs up old feelings muchly but it seems I am never to meet him from what you write.

I did think he was going to join me but perhaps it is all for the best.

You might ask him if he received my photo I sent him. I never received an acknowledgement of it.

Confidential

You say or rather write "Milly looked very pretty last night"
Thanks, anything of that description will be keenly appreciated by me.

I received her photograph some time back and it looks very nice.
I often take a look at it, but there -

Poor M^{rs} Searby still seems to have a lot of trouble.

I am telling Clara that I attended my first dance on the 19th inst.
Ask her for further particulars.

Threshing is pretty well done now, Guest and Clark are not threshed yet, I have been helping J. Taylor with his threshing and have also been threshing for his neighbours instead of him going. The farmers all turn in and help each other to thresh. They could not get a machine in until after freeze up and then only came with half a gang. Consequently the farmers had to find 7 or 8 hands. We put in a great time. One night they threshed until 10^{o/c}. I was mostly on the straw stack. Beastly job get choked up with dust & blinded with chaff although it didn't affect my eyes as it did the first year I went threshing. I always make a point of bathing my eyes first before washing and I must say now I come to think of it my eyes do not bother me at all.

I have received all my money for road work, \$46 for 23 days work taking off \$1/4 per day for board at J Taylors.

Contrary to the little cutting Ma put in regarding the promising look of the Manitoba harvest. The grain has not turned out at all as expected. The farmers getting 2/3 and sometimes only 1/2 of what they expected.

If Syd has any time to write should like to hear from him. He must take my letters as written to him collectively and personally. Should also like to hear from Re.

A Merry Christmas to you all (although rather late) and a happy new year (this will also be a little behind). I hope mother is well & that Dad is better. Alf told me Dad was not looking at all well.

Goodbye old girl

Love to all again

From your affectionate brother

Percy

[Fragment by Percy Edward Millard, undated, except for a pencil note of Mar 1903. The handwriting in pencil matches that of his sister Beatrice, and it probably came as confidential part of a letter the rest of which has not survived.]

It must be pretty thick at Helen's now from what you write. I suppose you will be surprised if I tell you that the pending engagement between Millie and Cecil does not bother me as I at one time thought it would if such a thing were ever likely to happen. Such things grow on one and of course I couldn't look. Such a dear girl as she was. It was not likely that other fellows could help liking her, and I wish Cecil luck. I think he was the best of the Richardson family don't you? (on the men's side I mean). It was not long after I had been out in this country that I saw the futility of my hopes and desires as I had often dreamed of, coming to pass, taking into consideration the conditions and surroundings out here. I could keep on writing in this strain until the ink gave out, but then we, none of us are prone at writing about our love affairs so please keep this for your eyes alone. I have not written to Millie now for more than a year now, perhaps two, no difference of opinion, just gradually dropped off, you know how it goes perhaps. And now from what you write I don't expect them (letters). So I will bury it and plant beautiful flowers on the grave.

~~My love to M^{rs} Jeggins. I have never seen her~~

"Prospect Farm"
 Glenella
 Manitoba
 Monday 26th Feb 1906

My dear Beat

I was very pleased to receive your nice letter of 26th Nov:, which arrived 13th Dec:, and don't know what you will think of me for not answering before. I can only hope that you have seen my letters at home, as they have contained all the news going.

You do seem to be having a time with your illness. It must seem very trying. Aunt Alice is a brick doing what she is for you and Uncle too. Is there any sign of a permanent improvement yet? I am so sorry for you old girl, and must ask you to try and cheer up, as perhaps it is all for the best. Do you know that is the way that I have looked at Mother's broken leg. I am sure that if it had not happened she would have worked herself to death for us selfish beggars. I don't know if I have mentioned this before to you, if so it will appear rather monotonous.

Are you getting worse in your hearing? It used to be your right ear that was bad I believe.

Don't you make any mistake about our winters being cold, They are cold and don't you forget it. Roughly I should say it averages zero for about 4 months of the year. [*Percy is using the Fahrenheit scale where 0°F = -18°C*] This winter has been exceptionally open ~~this year~~ so far. No really bad weather and only one or two ordinary blizzards. There is no snow to speak of now, and consequently no sleighing, which is making things awkward as a person cannot do any drawing (teaming) hay of firewood. Luckily I have no hay to draw, as I stacked enough it home last haying, but I have wood to get, I only got 4 loads loads [*sic*] before the snow went, and should like to get about 16 more if possible, but the winter is going on and I shall probably have to resort to the wagon which is very mean to say the least of it, drawing over the frozen ground, its bump and jar all the time, as there are no springs on the wagons out in this country.

I got some of my potatoes in the cellar frozen in out of the cold snaps in January, about 3 pails that's all. I hope I shall be able to keep them from being frozen till spring. On cold nights I put a lot of glowing wood embers into an iron pot and hang it in the cellar, it is only about 4ft deep and 6ft by 10ft length and breadth. That keeps the frost out.

I started this winter with about 27 hens, but what with the cold and being trampled on the number has got down to 22. I have them in the stable with the cattle. There is one in the house now with frozen feet. I don't know whether it will pull through. Its going to loøse all its toes.

I am trying my luck with another pup from M^{rs} Gerrie. By-the-bye did I tell you? M^{rs} Gerrie has a fine bouncing boy, the pride of the settlement (Campersdown) alias Tramp-them-down born 18th Oct last, pretty near my birthday, and they are proud of him. Both M^r & M^{rs} G are well up in years. We had an Independent Order of Forrester's Box Social on 16th Feb:, I suppose that will need some explaining. Well it means that the ladies make up a card board box and decorate it with all sorts of imitation flowers and frills, and fill it up with, er, grub I suppose is most explicit. The ladies are not supposed to let the identity of their boxes be known. They are brought to the concert, and during the programme, mostly at the interval half-time) are auctioned off to the gentlemen ~~the boxes not the ladies~~. Competition runs high sometimes when a fellow fancying he knows the box put up for auction belonging to his girl goes bidding it up, and of course the other fellows catch on and keep him at it, causing lots of fun. After the auctioning is over the gentlemen see by the names inside the box who their partners are for supper, hunt them up and have a good time. There are also refreshments for those who did not get a box, as there are generally more fellows than girls (Tables reversed eh?) That's why I am not married yet, all the nice ones get snapped up. The highest paid for a box that night was \$2.25 (9/-) *[around a day's wages for manual labour]* rather expensive eh? That was M^{rs} Gerrie's box. The boxes averaged \$1 (4/-) all round. There was a charge of 25cts (1/-) for those who partook of the loose refreshments. We made almost \$28.00 (£7). We shall see what's to be done with it at the next meeting. Our Lodge night is the first Monday in each month on or before the full of the moon (Comprenez?) that is so that we shall have moonlight for going and coming home.

I have joined the choir of the Presbyterian church at Glenella, and attend practices at the Manse, which is what we call the vicarage every Wednesday evening. I don't know whether I shall keep it up. I take a certain amount of pleasure out of it. I always did like music you know, although I never was a musician and never will be I don't think. I had got out of practice singing. If I attended church which has not been very often of late years, I couldn't go through with the singing of the hymns without having to stop for hoarseness. Now after I have been to one or two practices it doesn't bother me at all. There are ladies in the choir. The presbyterian preacher asked me the other Sunday whether I would like to join the presbyterian church, not knowing that I belonged to the English Church. I told him that I belonged to the English Church and if it was likely to make any difference in the choir I would drop out, but he would not hear of it, and said he would not have asked me had he known. So it's

alright Beat I'm not a turncoat. I might mention there is no English Church Services held within a reasonable distance, so go for the next best.

How are all the Helm's? Well I hope. My kind regards to them when you meet.

I am sorry that there has been a misunderstanding between Bert Venner and I, as to my coming home this year. I cannot see much chance so far I am sorry to say. Bert has reminded me about his photo again. I wrote home about it. Did you see the letter? Try and let them (Bert & Bob) have them as soon as possible will you? They have been kept waiting a long time.

Have you heard anything more of Annie's fiancée? Joe does not seem to think much of it. She puts us down as a lot of selfish creatures. How far did her little affair go with J Smith! or were there more? I shouldn't be surprised if that had something to do with her expression. I had a very nice letter from her the other day. She seems to be pretty busy what with one thing and another.

I was very pleased with the cutting about M^r A.W.Hiscox and feel quite proud of him. I always thought him to be a gentleman. Does he still hold the chair in spite of the agitation?

Arthur Cranfiels is in town with the village blacksmith (another old countryman from Rushy Green) and I often see him. It's very nice getting together I can tell you.

Will now close this long winded epistle. With much love to you and all, and hoping that you will have improved very much by the next time you write.

Your ever affectionate brother

Percy

"Prospect Farm"

Glenella

[Sunday] 11th Aug 1907

My dear Mother and Father,

The "Prodigal" writes again.

I have received 3 letters from you since writing last. Those of 31st May, 14th June, and lastly 19th July all of which are very interesting.

I was very sorry to hear of Milly's illness, but am pleased to hear she is recovering, and your second letter was appreciated also telling me that she was getting better although I did not answer it at the time. How are Milly and the baby now?

You also told me of Aunt Louie having rheumatism in her eye. I hope that is all right by now. I suppose Joey owing to her trip to Switzerland can hardly find time to write me. I have not heard from her for a long time. I hope they all had a very pleasant time. How is Aunt Alice getting on? I hope she is not worrying over her loss too much.

I suppose Syd and Irene have forgotten about their holidays by now. Dis they have a good time? Irene might be able to answer this for herself. I suppose I have choked Syd off from writing me by my not answering his letters.

How is my one time regular (& interesting) letter writer is Beat? Is her hearing improving? I hope it is. And here's another How!

How are Irene Margaret and her Ma doing, not forgetting brother Bill. All well and rosy I hope.

And still another.

How are the A Millard Junr family progressing. My love to them all.

It makes letter writing home a little awkward when the family starts breaking up & increasing.

My congratulations to Edie. I wish her every happiness in her married life.

Thanks muchly for part of our family tree.

I ought to write a congratulatory letter to Auntie as to her coming wedding. I hope she will have a happy married life. She has certainly taken time to consider things.

Has Aunt Brown got over her shock yet? I hope she has. How are they all at Lupus St. All well I hope.

Remember me to them kindly.

The Richardsons seem to be going right in for the marrying business these days.

I have put in this year about 8 acres wheat, 10 of oats and 15 of barley.

Seeding was nearly a month later this year than usual, so I don't know how well it will turn out.

There was snow in the bluffs on my place until 4th June.

We have had some hot weather lately, but the last 3 nights we have had heavy thunderstorms. Now things are flooded generally. Before this haying could not be done on account of the water in the meadows. Now you may guess what it will be like. The water is as high as it was in the spring.

Poor look out for cutting the crops if it does not come dry nice weather.

I went out to Riding Mountain 25th June. 13 miles W. of Glenella to see about a carpenter for building a house and found out that there was a picnic to be held the following day, so I stayed and took it in. Incidentally seeing a lot of former acquaintances. I stayed at Wm Harvie's. You know I was there 5 or 6 years ago. It was a nice change.

They have a railway running through there now, and a station within $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, so things have improved wonderfully since I was there last. The Harvies were very nice to me as they always were. Will's father is still staying with them and can get around yet.

They have 2 children now, a girl 6 and a boy 3 years old. I have lost the old mare. She died while Charlie Emmons had her breaking. I had his oxen seeding and am to get them again for fall ploughing. He had the mare and ox for breaking. I am fattening the other ox up for beef this winter. He is no good to work. I have him on the grass now.

I got a man A McDonald to build my house. It is not quite finished yet. He has been at it 3 weeks now. I let him have old Doll on a/c. I valued her at \$27. Am enclosing a rough sketch of the house to give you some idea what it looks like.*[see end of letter on separate page]* I helped building.

At the Glenella Picnic (Presby) on 28th June. It rained on and off morning, afternoon, and evening, very heavy in the evening. B.C.C. and I stayed in town overnight as we did not see the fun of tramping home in the wet, and pulled out at daybreak, before the town was up. Fortunately everything was allright at home except a few chickens drowned. The Picnic was of course a poor success.

The Glenella baseball team played 2 matches, Glen cairn in the morning and Riding Mountain in the afternoon, and licked them both. Hurrah for Glenella.

We had our Foresters Picnic on 24th July. It kept pretty nice till teatime when it rained. We did not do so bad although the results will not be announced until next meeting, on 19th inst.

The sports for this Picnic were good considering, Mr A. W. Bancroft officiating, a post which he fills very well.

The Foresters helped all they could, thereby making it as pleasant as possible for all.

We had a scratch baseball match. Glenella men and boys teams all mixed up. There was more fun in it than you could shake a stick at.

Hy Bing talks of selling out this fall. He is on the road now (Estate Agent) and if he likes it will stay at it.

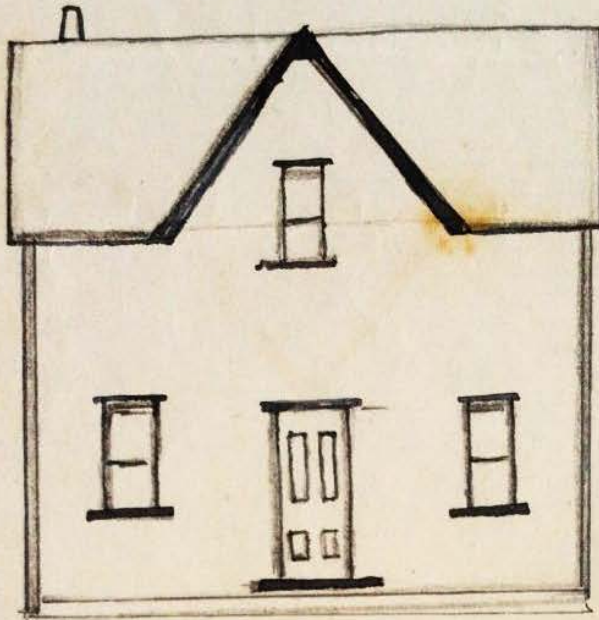
Hoping you and all are well

With love to you all

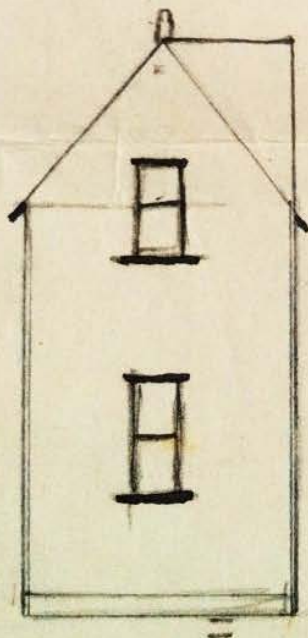
From your affect:, son

Percy.

11-8-07

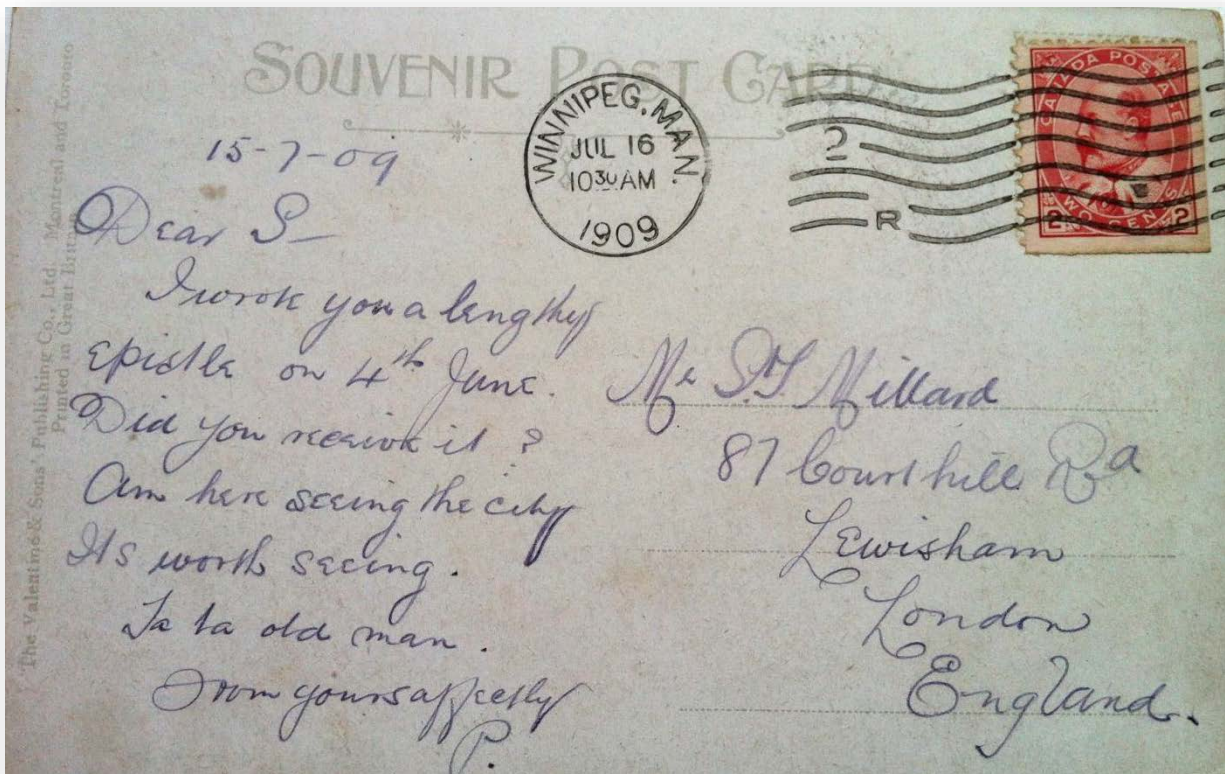


Front view
facing E
16' X 24'
14' walls
20" stone
foundation
2' thick.

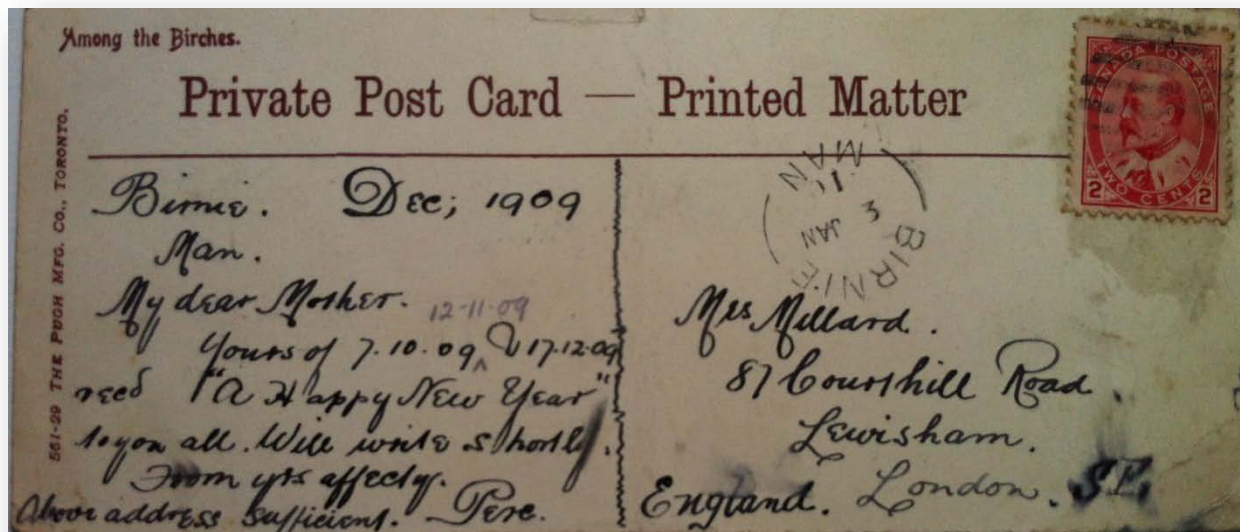


End view
N and S alike.

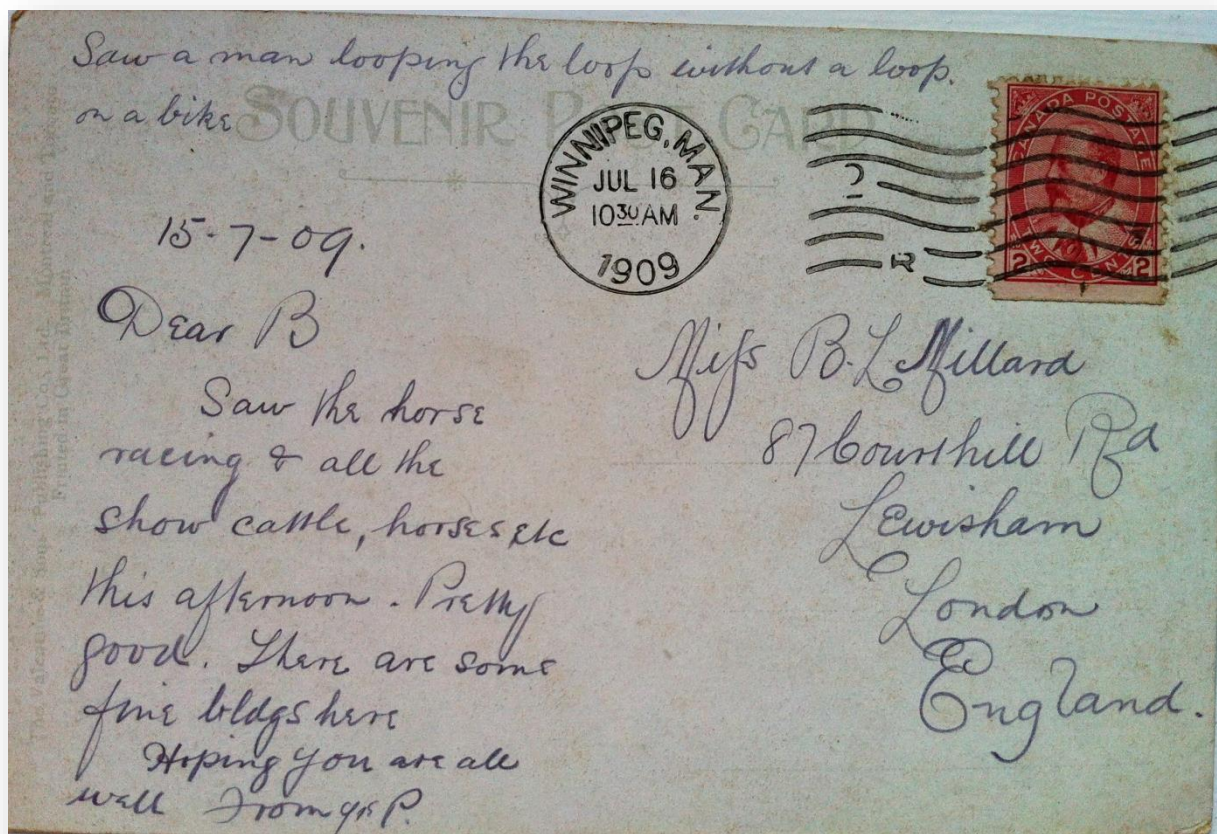
1 door on W side
opposite E door
no windows



Postcard dated December 1909 from Percy Edward Millard to his Mother



Postcard dated 15-16 Jul 1909 from Percy Edward Millard to his sister Beatrice Louise Millard



Birnie

Man

Can. 28-8-10

My dear Mother and Father,

I received your letter of 15th July on 13th Aug; with enclosures, and your last letter of 4th Aug; on 21st contents of which I have read more than once, and enjoyed very much.

I am out threshing now with Denoons, so I shall only be able to write a short letter.

I was pleased to hear of Wills success in French and hope Auntie and Clara enjoyed their holiday.

You seem to have had a pleasant holiday too. I wish you many happy returns of the 12th all.

Thanks Syd for pipe. Its very pretty. I could only go by the writing as there was no name or address, but suppose that you thought that was all sufficient.

Beat seems to have had a pleasant stay with Connie and her folks, if the weather was somewhat cold, and I am glad to hear she is better. Hope she found Connie well.

I am pleased to hear that Annie and Ethel Grover called, and that the visit was mutually enjoyable.

Remember me to the loving couple. How are Alf, Nell and my three little nieces? All well I hope. Pass kisses around to them from me.

I left my brushing job at Isaac Allans owing to the hot weather, and went with his brother Gilbert across the road. I stayed there a month for haying and harvesting. Whilst there Egbert Grover came up one evening looking for help to get their hay up. Their meadow is about half way between Birnie and the Allans. I would have liked to have gone with him, but eventually decided to stay with Gilbert, as it was a pretty nice place.

We started harvesting 10th Aug; and finished on 19th. Gilbert had an 8ft Deering binder, but owing to the crop being light, I was able to keep up with him stooking pretty well. Easy in some fields, busy in others. The last day of cutting we quit at 12 for dinner, and did nothing till 4pm, and then kept at it till 8o/c, at which time he finished cutting and I was right behind him with the stooking, or shocking as you call it I believe.

We started threshing Wed; 24th but I went to Denoons Mon; 22nd and stooked until they started threshing.

I am driving a stook team this year, Thomsons. The three brothers, Will, Bob and Peter are away, and Jimmy is running Denoons engine. Jimmy

had told me he could get nobody to drive his team as men were scarce, so I offered to. We have had 3 stoppages already on account of breakdowns. The shaft of the knife cutters on the self feeder broke the morning we started. It broke last year too. The last break occurred Friday evening whilst moving from one place to another. A bolt came off one of the slides on the engine. The slide is connected with the main shaft. The engine stopped with a chuck smashing the slide. Jack Denoon took it to an engineer that evening, got it fixed, and came back at 3o/c next morning, when Jim got up and put it on the engine. They started the engine up at 6o/c am, when they found that the main shaft $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches and weighing 500lbs had been bent, and they had to shut down again, get the shaft off and away to the engineers. They are fixing it up today and I expect to go out tonight from Thompsons. 28-8-10. I drove out with Annie today to a mutual friends - Mrs Jno Buchanan, 8 miles NE of Birnie. I intended to go on to Gilbert Allans, 2 miles further, for some of my clothes.

We changed horses at Jacks and he drove me to Gilberts. Found them all away, so helped myself. We saw Isaac Allan so that he could explain things. Got back and had tea with them, and left at 7.30 pm arrived at Birnie just as the people were leaving church. Heard that Jim had attended service and found out that the shaft had a bend in the crank and that they would have to get a new one \$150. £30.

Annie and I went to Mrs Jno Buchanans wedding née Florence Walker, when I was at Grovers, 2 years ago.

Do you hear anything of the Cranfields now? I hope Arthur is getting on alright.

Please excuse brevity. Hoping you and all are well. With much love

From your loving son

Perc

[The following is written on the reverse of this last page]

From P.E. Millard

Birnie

Manitoba. Canada

There are no more letters or postcards. Perhaps they were handed round the family. Perhaps they were lost when Percy's mum and dad's house was bombed by a Zeppelin in WW1. They could have been thrown away by someone not realising what they were. But that is not the end of Percy's story. Like many of his fellow countrymen Percy responded to the call to arms and enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Dauphin

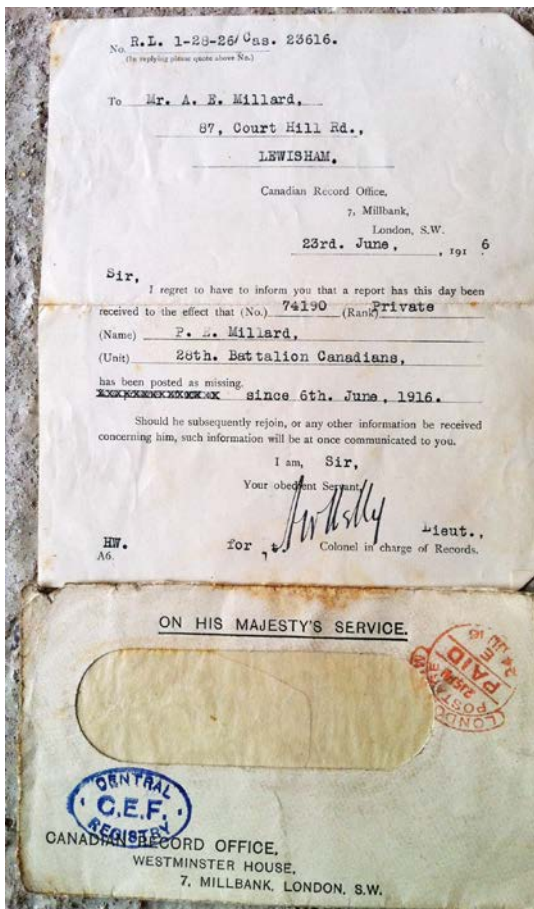
on 21st December 1914. He was put in the 2nd Platoon, "A" Company, 28th battalion (Infantry) with the rank of Private. On 29th May 1915, after basic training, his Battalion departed Montreal for England on the SS Northland (*or Southland, records differ*).

He may have had the opportunity to see his family while he was in England, but there is no documentary evidence one way or the other. He finally landed in France on 18th September 1915, where he fought as part of the 6th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Canadian Division in France and Flanders. His basic pay was \$1 a day, plus another 25 cents because he was on active service.

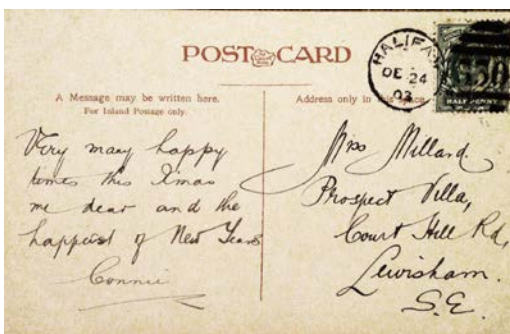
Then, in a letter dated 23rd June 1916, Percy's father, Alfred Edmund Millard, received notification to the effect that "No. 74190 Private P. E. Millard had been posted as missing since 6th June 1916". He was never found.

Searching through his war record for evidence of what happened to him, I came across two notes written in red ink. The first said that, if he was killed or injured, in addition to notifying his next of kin, his father, the authorities should also notify a "Constance Aaron, c/o The Postmaster, Wabigoon, C.P.R., Ontario". This note is dated 14th July 1916. The next note said that Constance Aaron was also entitled to receive "Assigned Pay", so a "Special Remittance" of \$30 (a month's pay) was sent t on 30th June 1916 to Miss C Aaron, 56 "The Roslyn" Fort Rouge Winnipeg, Man.

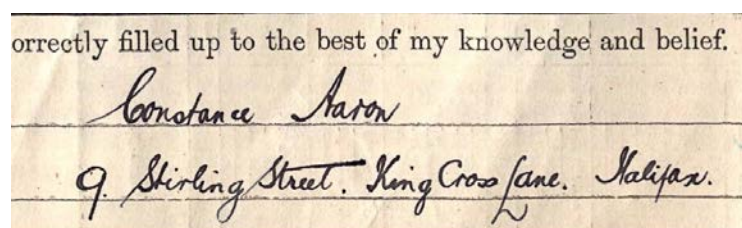
There is no mention of Constance in the letters so I didn't hold out much hope of ever finding out what the



Official Notification sent to Alfred Edmund Millard Informing him that his son was missing in action.



"Connie's" writing on a postcard.



Constance Aaron's signature on the 1911 UK Census

Beat's who lives in Halifax (Yorkshire, England). She is an elementary school teacher who signs herself "Connie", and she has very distinctive handwriting with large flourishes on the capital letters. I then did a search of the 1911 UK Census for all schoolteachers in Halifax with the given name of Constance and got 4 hits. One of them was Constance Aaron, she was a head teacher and aged 34. My next piece of luck was that she was also the head of the household, and the 1911 UK Census was the first in which the head of the household had to complete the form themselves. The handwriting matched.

Armed with this information I discovered that Constance Aaron had left England aboard the Megatonic bound for Quebec in Canada and arrived there on 2nd November 1913. The ship's passenger list has her down as bound for Glenella, where Percy had his homestead.

Checking the 1916 Canadian Census of 1916 I found Constance living at Roslyn, 65 Osborne Street, Winnipeg, MB. Her age is given as 35, but she is actually 39 years old. Then, on 1st June 1918, two years after Percy was posted missing, presumed dead, she married Hugh Rotherham Eade.

Is this the end of Percy Edward Millard's story? Well, he does appear on the Memorial in 1st St McCreary Manitoba outside the Royal Canadian Legion Office, but I would like to know if there is any other record of his life as a homesteader in Canada. Can anybody help?

Ed Dwyer, England, 2017



Percy Edward Millard at the Winnipeg Arena circa 1915. According to a note on the back the photograph was 'Approved' I found this original and the one on the cover with all the other Millard photographs, so I presume he would have sent copies home himself.

Acknowledgements

When tracing Percy's history I made contact with three people who helped with information that pointed me in the right direction. In no particular order, they are Sam Coombs of Thunder Bay, Ontario, who helped me trace people mentioned in the correspondence, Lorraine Lodge of Halifax, Yorkshire, England, who helped with the Constance Aaron connection and Dr Gordon Goldsborough of the Manitoba Historical Society, Winnipeg, Manitoba who guided my efforts. If anyone would like to get in touch with me, Dr Gordon Goldsborough has my email address.