



THE WOMAN picked up the stick of firewood from the box under the kitchen window. Mechanically, as she had done for months, she glanced outside at the endless miles of dazzlingly brilliant snow. Would the winter never go? Was this just another day? No, thank God, this day was different. This Sunday there'd be a service, if the preacher could get through. Hurriedly she heated the irons for the sleigh and prepared for the journey to the little school building where the service would be held.

Inside the plain unpainted building, men stood around the crackling stove, anxiously awaiting the arrival of the preacher. They were soon helping him off with his old raccoon coat and muskrat cap, answering his friendly questions as he unwrapped a mysterious square bundle. He had seen people like this before, and knew the privations of dry years on the prairie. "Brought my music with me today," he announced casually. Tactfully he invited the men to set up his radio. "We will study the Word of God together first," he announced, "and then we'll join in the hymns of a great city church." Tensely they waited to see if the music would come through. Then it came. To the little group in the little town beside the Saskatchewan, it was a modern miracle. "Faith of our fathers living still", they sang with the unseen worshippers; every man, woman and child, and the preacher.

THE BEGINNINGS

Such are the beginnings of many a tiny light of Christian testimony in rural Saskatchewan. It was in 1894 that a young man of 21, son of a pioneering preacher on the prairies, was deeply exercised about joining in the work of spreading the gospel. A

Christian, Mr. John McLeod, in business at Estevan near the soft coal fields of southern Saskatchewan, had written to pioneering John Rae, asking him to come to that new town. But John Rae had a winter's work ahead of him already planned, and he could not go. The challenge was passed on to his son, William M. Rae. The young son went and was joined a few days later by Ernest Smith. For six weeks they held nightly meetings. Several were saved and taught in His ways, an assembly was formed, a hall built and a work established which is still progressing well.

Three years later young William Rae took temporary employment in a flour mill and preached in a small fraternal hall. Later his father followed up the work begun and an assembly was formed.

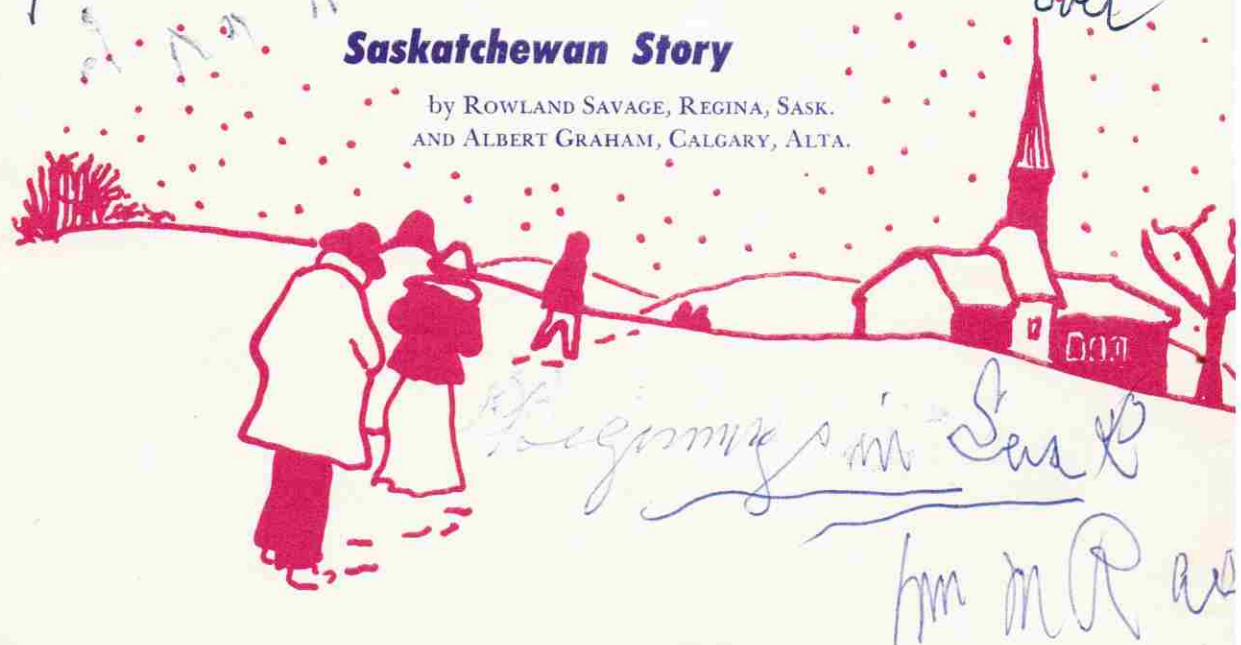
MOOSE JAW

After living in Winnipeg a few years after his marriage to Miss Margery McLean, Mr. and Mrs. Rae were invited to locate at Calgary. But feeling a burden for the number of good-sized towns between the two larger cities, they settled in Moose Jaw, a centre from which they could work out into the promising district surrounding. Joining forces with Walter Little, he pitched a gospel tent in Moose Jaw, and an assembly was begun in a rented room in 1905. Three were present at the first meeting. The offering that morning was \$1.50; the largest offering that year \$3.00, truly a small beginning. Over the years 50% of the numbers have moved away, - a distinct loss, - yet at least four are serving the Lord in full-time service, three in foreign parts. Children's work has been aggressively pursued, and the present Sunday School taxes the capacity of the Chapel.



Saskatchewan Story

by ROWLAND SAVAGE, REGINA, SASK.
AND ALBERT GRAHAM, CALGARY, ALTA.



Beginnings in Sask

hm m R ae

over

There were then no railroads, and Mr. Rae's visits into surrounding districts had to be taken by stage coach. Yet visits into such districts as Esk proved fruitful, for there a humble sod house became the birthplace of an assembly that carries on to this day.

1st visit to Esk in 1907

REGINA

The Regina testimony was the work of Mr. Stanley Wells and Mr. Duncan Currie, with Mr. Wm. Wilson arriving in the second week. Mr. Wells writes:

"Brother Currie came from Saskatoon to Regina, and I followed him a week later from Delisle on a bicycle, an unforgettable trip! I was overcome with loneliness, and sang, "Saviour, through the desert lead us; without Thee we cannot go." Two rain storms soaked me through, and because of the sticky gumbo mud, I was forced to take a train at midnight . . . I arrived in Regina a week after the cyclone (1912) to find the place in a terrible mess. I walked east, west, north, south, but no sight of Mr. Currie or his tent. No rooms to rent, so bunked with strangers for the night, to get a bed at all. Next morning after resting, reading and praying, a Voice said, "Go out!" so I went down the street, to run into Mr. Currie! He looked me over and said, "Is that the best suit you have?" Two good soakings had sadly reduced my one good suit. We pitched his tent that very afternoon and Wm. Wilson came one Sunday soon after. His voice, in its strength then, drove a preacher from his hall across the street, and brought complaints from the hospital at the back of the lot! Mr. Tom Kells, preaching then too, did not like the unpleasant smells of the old produce storage building we were then using, and to get rid of this, piled sulphur on a flat plate and lit it. When Mr. Currie heard of it, he dashed in through the fumes and put it out, before a fire started!"

Open air meetings, New Testament and tract distribution and children's meetings helped on the testimony. A. N. O'Brien ministered in the tent. Mr. Wilson stayed in town, engaged in the plumbing trade,

and was a great help. The first baptism was in Lake Wascana before a very large crowd. Brother Fish of Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, and J. J. Rouse were among the first ministering brethren to help. For many years a group of believers residing in the Craven and Tregarva areas north of Regina have been associated with the testimony. Their meeting was in the H. Seed farm home, but is now merged with the Regina assembly.

SASKATOON

Saskatoon held its first Gospel meeting in 1905 when the Barr colonists came, and the meeting went on with good attendance. Mr. Jones and son Hedley carried on the preaching. In 1907 Mr. John Gunn, contractor-builder of the C.N.R. bridge across the South Saskatchewan at Saskatoon, joined the meeting, and the Breaking of Bread commenced in the home of Mr. Jones. Brothers Jones, W. Taylor and Gunn held forth with the Gospel, and in 1908 sent for Mr. Wm. Rae, who pitched his tent for the summer.

CAMPS

Many of the assembly young people now in fellowship, and some taking over responsibilities in a commendable manner, were saved and baptized through the two Saskatchewan Bible Camps, in co-operation with the local assemblies. Strasbourg Bible Camp was started in 1938 on the farm of Mr. Herb Barber, about 70 miles northwest of Regina. Buildings have been built for the dual purpose of dormitories, dining hall, kitchen, etc., as well as for grain and implement storage for the rest of the year. The local assembly meets at the farm regularly. Since 1943 Nut Mountain Bible Camp, on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Grant, has served a rural area south of Kelvington in the northeast of the province. The local assembly on the farm carries on charitable work in distributing clothing to the homesteaders pioneering in the bush and forest country there. The camp commences each year with a community picnic, attracting from 200-500 homesteaders to listen quietly and attentively to a Gospel message while seated for supper. About 20-50

An assembly meets in the homestead of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Barber.

A blind lady in her 60's is baptised in Marion Lake, Sask.

The Nut Mountain camp si



children, the majority from non-Christian homes, gather for camp. Parents are invited to a Gospel service at each session. While the first sessions, pioneered by Messrs. McClurkin and Graham were held in the Barber's garage, barn loft and machine shed, camp buildings have been erected since 1952, and facilities are steadily improving. Although no charges or appeals for funds are made, God has supplied all needs to date, and given a surplus each year. Since camps cost a good deal over \$1000.00 a season to run, we can truly say, "What hath God wrought!" Our camps have always been the bright spot each year, and this year, 1959, all were filled to capacity, and many professed faith. Converts of other years come back in large numbers, some to take over the work as cabin leaders, kitchen helpers, etc., proving the reality of the work of the Holy Spirit in their souls.

The testimony of our assemblies in the rural areas of Alberta and Saskatchewan is one that calls for prayer and deep exercise among the Lord's people. Looking back over the past two decades, while there has been some increase in the number of assemblies in the cities, the number in the rural areas are less, rather than more. Mr. Albert Graham reminds us of two or three factors that have contributed to this: 1) the tendency to drift to the cities for better employment; 2) many have become discouraged because of the small numbers in fellowship and have drifted into other evangelical bodies. While they know there is much of unscriptural practices in these associations, they reason, "Oh well, the Gospel is preached, and we can help in that"; 3) few people are aware of the changes the larger school divisions on the prairies have meant to the pioneer Gospel preacher. It is increasingly difficult to find openings for the Gospel and ministry in new areas. Formerly, a visit to the local trustees was only a formality before using the little red schoolhouse. Now that children are transported to larger schools in town, the only available buildings are community halls, which require an average

En route to a camp picnic by wagon and team!



rent, heat and light expense nightly of \$4 - \$10, - and that often for makeshift seats of planks on trestles, and no electric light, etc. Few of the workers or brethren in isolated areas are able to meet expenses like this. Where there are small companies of Christians, no matter how small, neighbours can be invited into a home and an opening made for the Gospel and instruction of believers.

An answer must be sought for this dilemma. The Lord's people must concentrate prayer and study on the future of the work in the vast wheatlands. The prairies are a difficult field. Vast distances, shifting population, foreign communities, and harsh climate all add to the burden. Yet the work must go on, and will do so by His grace. I Cor. 15:58 and Heb. 10:35 are our motto. "Always abounding . . . Confidence . . . Great reward." ★

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mr. Savage is grateful to Messrs. Wm. Rae and Stanley Wells, and the correspondents of Saskatchewan assemblies for the information in this article. We regret that Mr. Wm. Wilson was unable to give us his recollections at this time. Photos, courtesy of Albert Graham.

Space does not permit listing all stalwart members of the early assemblies. Some names and fruit of Regina days: Mrs. Coulter, Miss Duncan (now Mrs. Ross), Miss Bertha Robbing and sister Pearl, John Sims, James Nichol, Dr. H. W. Scott, Harry Matthews; the Craven-Tregarva area, — Seed, Dickson, Smith and Clifford; Saskatoon, — Sheppards, Irvings, Robertsons, Curries, and Gracious, and younger brethren from the Old Country Paxton, Maslen, Griffen, Purcell, Grimes, Buchanan, Johnston, Turner and Mrs. Paxman. Workers of the Nut Mountain Camp, R. M. McClurkin, E. B. Godfrey, R. L. Savage, W. F. Gurnett, Mr. and Mrs. Bev Tansley, and in the kitchen, Mrs. Grant and Gordon and helpers.

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

In times like these a challenge goes forth,
Straight from the throne of God;
"Where are my true disciples,
Who will tread where the Saviour trod?
Where are the ones who are ready and
willing
To take up My cross each day;
Resisting the devil with armour bright,
Dying to self all the way?"
Who will throw off every yoke of earth,
Rising from beds of ease;
Oh! who will heed the Saviour's plea,
"Wilt thou love me more than these?
Where are my teachers, faithful and true,
Who dwell in the secret place
To learn of Me and to teach My lambs
Of My righteousness and grace?
Who will lead my own little lambs
If the sheep are out of the way?"
In times like these the challenge goes forth;
Christian, answer it while you may!

Mrs. Ada Smith,
Vancouver

mail to every camper the camp paper "Deerfoot Tracks", which is published every other month from November to May. In it, using the language of a boy, we share camp "pow-wow", enjoy a little well directed humor, and give each Christian something to encourage and challenge him in his everyday life . . . at home and at school. Boys are encouraged to write me and share any problems and interests.

Over the years, this approach to follow up work has shown itself to be successful and fruitful, and of great importance is the fact that contact with campers is maintained without a break from one camping season to the next.

IN SUMMARY

From the many reports received from Christian camp leaders the following is a summary of general practices, and a few suggestions.

Card indexing of all campers, with as much information as is obtainable about home and background. Faith Bible Camp in Manitoba reports these cards are kept up to date from year to year, enabling each new counsellor to have a full picture of the camper. Reports from the San Francisco Bay area, as well as other Camps, tell of using a duplicate form of card, one as a permanent record, the other copy being forwarded to an Assembly Sunday School Superintendent. This enables the Superintendent to know the spiritual progress of the youngster at camp.

Personal Contact by counsellors or interested workers is a most important follow-up practice. Pine Bush Bible Camp in New Jersey reports of the activities of a young man who arranges house meetings in the homes of the campers during the winter months. Birthday cards offer another contact with the campers.

Monthly News Letters to the campers are valuable helps. In Ontario, "Smoke Signals" are sent from Camp Mini Yo We administrators. In this publication are news items, reports and announcements of get-togethers, stories, and perhaps most important, a list of Daily Bible Readings and questions to be answered by the campers.

Rallies held in the metropolitan areas during the winter give wonderful opportunities for the counsellors to meet the

(Continued on page 25, column 1)

Pioneering in Manitoba

By WILLIAM M. RAE

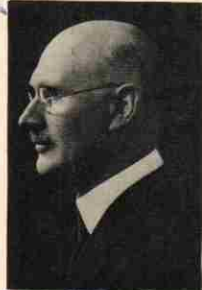
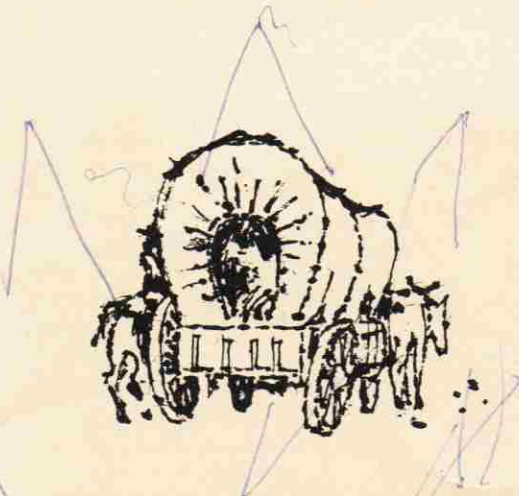
IT WAS in 1884 just 76 years ago that John Rae and family of Aberdeenshire, Scotland emigrated to Manitoba, Canada. A preacher of the Gospel for many years in Scotland he desired to see something done for God in this New Land which was then in its infancy. He located at High-Bluff about 50 miles west of Winnipeg for a very brief time after which he and family moved to Portage-la-Prairie, seven miles further west. There a small testimony was begun in his home. A couple attended very faithfully and were saved through his preaching. The writer ever remembers his father saying this was the first-fruits of his labors in Manitoba.

Two years later he was led to move further west to Brandon, a thriving new town of a few thousand people. There he began an aggressive work which seemed to be owned of God. Souls were saved and a number gathered together in simplicity, some from among the Salvation Army, some from the various Churches. A little later the writer was saved and added to the little company. From Brandon John Rae worked out north and south as well as east. Small companies were formed as the Gospel was told out. To most, in those parts, the Gospel was entirely new.

However, let me state that ere John Rae located in Manitoba there had been a few meetings in His Name in a home in Winnipeg, also at West Selkirk, some 21 miles north of Winnipeg.

Among the local workers there at that time were George Brandow, Thos. Reid, Wm. Wood, and later Richard Varder and Alex Monkman, both of whom gave their full time to the work of the Lord. Little assemblies were

Calling,



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wm. M. Rae was surely one of the great pioneering preachers of the Canadian prairies. Now in his 85th year he spends most of his time at home ministering to the needs of his co-partner who was faithful and understanding in all their pioneer and fruitful labours together for the Lord. Many hundreds saved through Wm. Rae's ministry "rise up and call him blessed".

formed along the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Among such were Balsam Bay and others. Alex Monkman lovingly and tenderly told out the Gospel resulting in the establishing of many native assemblies.

INCIDENTS OF INTEREST

It would be fully 70 years ago that the three Benner brothers arrived in Brandon. They had been saved through the preaching of the late Alexander Marshall who was then living in Orillia, Ontario, and working throughout the Muskoka area. These three brethren became exercised about giving their time to the preaching of the Gospel so began in Brandon. Samuel and George later returned to Ontario. Roland continued to labour in Manitoba, making his home in Winnipeg from which city he was called Home many years ago. A good many souls were won to Christ through their labours. George Benner later moved to the Pacific Coast, making his home in Vancouver, B.C., from whence he was called Home.

LATER YEARS IN WINNIPEG

Some 55 or 60 years ago R. J. Dickson came from Galt, Ontario, to that city with his young family and laboured all over the West until he too was called

(Continued on page 25, column 2)

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FOLLOW UP WORK

(Continued from page 10)

campers again in a camp atmosphere created by pictures of camp life, choruses, and testimonies. Faith Bible Camp in Manitoba tells of a springtime Youth Banquet for older campers to which prospective campers can be invited.

Emmaus Bible Courses are much used as effective spiritual help. Joy Bible Camp in Ontario reports having also used Bible courses published by the Young Canada Bible Hour, with excellent results.

Weekly Club Meetings have been established in the City areas for consistent contact with campers.

Special Outdoor Activities during Christmas and Easter vacations are used by the workers of Camp Mini Yo We to maintain contact. Ski weekends, weekend trips to Camp etc., all bring the camper back under the influence of Christian living.

Bi-monthly Meetings of Counsellors for Bible study and prayer, is another suggestion from Camp Mini Yo We. What more effective force does the Christian church have to help the young camper at home, than the power of prayer.

Camp work is not a summer activity only. It requires year round zeal, hard work, and spiritual wisdom. May God help us then, to be sincere in our love for these young ones; diligent in our efforts to encourage them; and willing in heart to pay the price in time and energy to help them to "continue steadfastly . . ." ★

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PIONEERING IN MANITOBA

(Continued from page 11)

Home, having been pre-deceased by his wife by some years. Winnipeg was a key point in the spread of the Gospel. Many workers carried the Gospel message to all parts of Manitoba and the West. Mr. Varder laboured faithfully from there until moving to the U.S.A. in later years. Fred Poidevin also made Winnipeg his centre. Assemblies were formed in the Dauphin country, at Minitonas, and at Bowsman by the faithful efforts of the late Fleming May, Edward Morton and Fred Poidevin who resided latterly at Bowsman from which place he passed into the presence of the Lord. Simultaneously a work was going on around Plumas. The late Angus Grant, a farmer, together with the writer saw a movement of God resulting in an assembly being formed there as well as at Ochre River and at Ethelbert. These continued for some years but by reason of the transitory character of the people and conditions many families were obliged to move away resulting in a number of small assemblies ceasing to function. Lack of work in the long winters and drought in successive years in some farming communities compelled many to abandon their farms. A good deal of hardship had to be endured in those early days but the Lord was very real to us all. The writer well remembers these conditions but a clear-cut testimony was maintained separate from the world. Some reproach was borne for Christ which only added to the joy of His people and to boldness in their testimony. It was GRACE not Grammar that counted most in those early days.

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

It was about 60 to 65 years ago that Brother O. C. Fish moved from Brandon to Portage la Prairie to help re-establish the testimony which had ceased to function. From there he laboured in the area and throughout the whole of the Province. A large assembly was built up in Portage la Prairie. I believe even though well advanced in years and frail he is still alive, the only remaining labourer I knew in those primitive pioneering days in Manitoba.* Soon we too will be promoted to Glory by "falling on sleep" or by the "SHOUT". ★

*Editor's note: Mr. O. C. Fish has since been "promoted to Glory".