

RECOLLECTIONS OVER THE YEARS

By Milly Bradley

1974

**Written for my family,
Shirley, Wayne and Sandra**

1936 by Irl Bradley

If I could walk that winding, leafy lane,
If I could see you and home again,
If I could only stand outside at night
And see your window glow with honey light;

If I could see our Shirley with her book
I'd give the world for one long, quiet look,
If I could here our Wayne boy call me "Dad"
My heart would cease to ache, and just be glad.

These thoughts I send away, as night comes down
To hide the river here, and seaport town.
These transient shadows soon with all have passed
And I'll be there again with you at last.

And then when the shadows creep into the west,
We'll just go home sweetheart to love and rest.

P.S

These words have blurred somehow,
Before my eyes –
Can these be tears, or is it years?
Or evening light that dies.

To Milly

At even when the dew is falling

And the sun has gone his way

And the song birds all are calling

A last farewell to the day;

After my thoughts go roaming

To a farm down the Soo.

Like a bird at eve swift homing,

They wing their way to you

I see thee, lovely maiden

As pure as the dew at morn.

Thy head with brown curls laden,

Not proudly, but royally worn.

Thy brow whose snowy whiteness

Reminds me of angels above.

Thine eyes, whose starry brightness

Tell of thoughts of heaven and love.

Yet were it not for thy Christian behavior,

Thy beauty to me would be vain.

But tho' hast excepted thy Saviour

And yielded thy life to the Slain.

- Irl.

In 1923, I met my Prince Charming. He was strong and of handsome physique. I felt very confident that a twenty-two, he had all the qualifications to protect, support and love me forever. I was still a bit of a weak sister, (I grew 2 inches more) with brown curls bobbing around my face, which seemed to be my winning card.

We were married November 15th 1924, and launched into a big wide wonderful world consisting of very little earthly possession but we had each other and nothing else mattered much. We lived in the small city of Weyburn, Sask., surrounded by relatives. When we had our first meal alone -- May 1926, it seemed almost an adventure. That summer was filled with the love and bliss of honeymooners. My health seemed suddenly to improve.

In the early winter we had a chimney fire and to board out for the rest of the winter.

At eighteen, it was fun to be free to do as I wished all day until an S.O.S from the Buffams changed that and I went to the rescue well my dear sister took off enough time to present the household with the fourth little bundle of joy.

About this same time, I realized I too, was pregnant and made many fast trips out of doors at the first smell of food cooking. When I happily returned to my hubby dear in Weyburn, it was a red-letter day and we started to plan. We had our own nest to feather.

I do not know why we decided to leave the security of a not too big, but steady income, but we moved back to Elbow, on the Saskatchewan River and once more happily shared our home with Irl's parents. Our love was mutual, and suddenly it was August.

On a Sunday afternoon, Irl and I went for a walk in the valley which was a beautiful and very different than the level prairie I had known all my life. It so happened that choke cherries were at their best and I ate until they all but choked me, then I greedily took a big branch home.

On Monday, I continued sewing baby clothes and eating choke cherries. I never really knew, but possibly they were my undoing. Before morning, I was deathly sick, both in the bowels and stomach. My hubby was helping neighbours harvest at this point. By evening my good father-in-law could be persuaded to wait no longer but to buy me an ambulance and to get Irl. He instantly went for the doctor, only three miles away, but it took time with dad's faithful old horse, Diamond. He in turn called another doctor from the next town, Loreburn, and they said I must be hospitalised. It was acute appendicitis and by now I was in extreme pain. I chose to wait until the next afternoon rather than start on a forty-mile trip by car that night. A neighbor's car was rigged for an ambulance of fashion and I made the trip to Elbow and then by train to Moose Jaw, in the baggage car with my hubby by my side nearly out of his mind with worry and grief. My mother came to the hospital at once upon getting the news.

Before the morning came, I lost my precious baby. She was not due to arrive for two months and while she seemed big and normal, God saw fit to place her among the angels. Sick as I was, I was grief stricken.

Now the ice packs had to be discontinued and with no wonder drugs it would be fatal to operate. My doctor was a Rochester doctor Ann I'm sure the wisdom of his decisions could not be questioned.

Sunday morning looked grave when my hobby turned an left at 10 AM without speaking to me, I was much puzzled but too sick to speak. My mother went on to her knees by my bed and I realized then, they thought the end was near comment but when my darling burst into the church service with pleas for special prayers... God was there and answered his prayer quickly.

In a few days the vomiting ceased, the feeding through the bowels, intravenous was discontinued and the nurses and sisters would stand by and say, "The he dead has risen." They could scarcely believe the transformation that had taken place before their very eyes. After 10 days, the usual term from eternity, I took leave by taxi by myself weighing sixty-eight pounds. My hubby and mother had both gone home it was it was apparent the crisis was over and the harvest had to be done. Mother Bradley was to come to get me the next day from the hospital.

I tell you this because at this point I had great awareness of God's healing. Only because of his power was I able to continue life with my sweetheart. I dedicated my life to God and although many times I fell short, my compassionate loving Heavenly Father saw fit to forgive me for did he do not say "Not seven times but seventy times forgive."

The fall 1926, Mother and Dad Bradley moved to the BC Coast. Within a year or so, all five sons had joined them as they were a very closely knit family. By November 8th, 1927, we were settled on the coast with little but our love, but as I was twenty-one and Irl was twenty-five, nothing could daunt us.

Before too long we again were looking forward to being parents and after the first six weeks, I was robust and full of vigour and enthusiasm. Again the S.O.S came from the Buffum family. Because she would have twins she had been ordered to bed to put in her full term. I responded to the call, but the twins couldn't be persuaded to wait so when I stepped off the train, I was greeted by my brother-in-law, Arthur, with the good news, "Two bouncing big babies." To five year old Verna, this meant a sister and a brother who was just thrown in for good measure.

Things went fairly well because Arthur could be there a good deal of the time period I left within a month and before returning home, I took a few days to visit my mother whom I had not seen in two years period I also took Paul, who was everyone's pride and joy, and left him for "Grandma" to take care of until his folks could take him home.

It was once more I wonderful day to be back home with my hubby dear to whom it may have seemed more like six months since I had been home.

It was summer now and the Glories of God's hand work were evident everywhere. The tall stately trees and beautiful snow-capped mountains were by now, one of my greatest loves.

Our Shirley announced herself on a September day before noon in 1928, in so short a time, I was almost lucky to have a doctor on hand. She had ahead of the light brown hair and her pink chubbiness made her a sure winner with all whose eyes beheld her loveliness. By the time she was eight months old, she was a beauty beyond compare and my mother heart was bursting with pride wherever I went.

In 1930, we moved to Port Alberni because of working conditions and did quite well there. My lionhearted hubby hired as a Ross carrier driver and soon became an expert. Although he scarcely knew there was such a machine, he caught on quickly and next morning he applied and went to work. He enjoyed his work and worked very hard.

Our Wayne arrived in June 1931. Like any true hearted father, Irl was overjoyed to boast having a son. He was short on her at first but soon he sprouted the prettiest head of golden curls you ever saw and he was the envy of every mother of a little girl. He wasn't very big but agile as a kitten and spent his days, even at six or seven months, trying until he succeeded opening any bottle I handed him. This seemed to have a special intrigue and he spent hours quietly working it out. He was running like a cat at a year old and kept me busy getting him out of 1 scrape or another period but such a happy humorous little tyke, he was hard to match.

In 1931, when Wayne was six months old, we laid dear Dad Bradley to rest and Mother seemed so utterly lost it seemed to fall my lot to move over to be her comfort and stay. Once again I was living in one place with my heart in another. I almost thought it lucky for me when the mills closed down permanently and my sweetheart was able to leave Fort Alberni and join us in New Westminister. I must mention here that mother did have Hart and it look like an imposition to me for him to share with more than Mother. But to make mother happy was of supreme importance to us all I guess.

Wayne was not a very rugged baby and finally with mothers' persuasion we went out and brought a goat home in the backseat of Hart's car. By the time she freshened, perhaps three weeks, mother suddenly went to the hospital and had a breast removed. When mother returned, a little goat, Toggie, was quite sure she belonged to me and me only. Anyone who has the idea that goats are unclean, couldn't be more wrong for Toggie was so fussy she would be disgusted if she got the scent of other hands than mine on her food. She'd probably pout an hour before deciding to eat. The carrot and potato peels were special goodies to her when I wash them well. She would follow me like a doggy inside the fence and call at me when she got to the corner. So she got to be a real pet to me specially when Wayne's health changed and he became a robust little tyke by the time he was a year old period all credit goes to Toggie.

Well the depression became very real by midsummer of 1932. By September, Pat, Roy and Irl made a pact to go to the North Country where you could be sure at least, of meat from the bushland and so we began plans to move once more Irl was very tired and discouraged of the always “closed indefinitely” answer at every place he applied. Hart was a service manager of a big garage and was very secure. Roy worked for less money for a wholesale grocery and also felt quite secure. Pat still worked steadily, that had been chomping at the bit for years to get back to the soil. So Pat and Earl were to be the farmers and Roy our financier until such time he could come north too.

By the middle of September, we had sorrowfully parted with Toggie -- we couldn't take her. We had secured an ancient old Ford truck never meant to bear up under the load she was about to set out with on a 600 mile journey north of Vancouver. The last thing to be loaded on was an ancient old hand washer which my poor dear packed a mile or more on his shoulders after dark as it would have ruined his pride to have done it in daylight. It must have been a last-minute purchase to take the place of my super thermal electric washer which would be quite useless to us “out in the sticks” as so we often called it.

But bless it be youth, it knows no defeat, if your name happened to be Bradley anyway. They were generously served with spirit and courage.

There was one little complication we had to decide on, the Lakes District school was about to close because they needed eight instead of six children. Once it closed, it could be a problem to reopen it again. So not only for the six they had but for the two Roy and Margaret might have to worry about when they joined us, we would have a household of seven instead of five. This must have been a tough decision for Margaret, except she worked in a bake shop, and she would have been relieved of the worry of two boys between 3:30 and 6:00 when they would have been on their own after Isabel left. Isabel so far assumed that duty since Margaret started to work, but as soon as Eleanor was big enough, they were to join us. Eleanor was born in August so she was very tiny.

So the middle of September arrived and we were in a happy frame of mind ready for a new adventure. There was Pat at the wheel, me and my small son beside him, Shirley sometimes between us, but mostly she found it more fun to ride up in the load with Charles and Harold (ages 11 and eight). The chesterfield was built into the load so they really were quite free and yet could sit down. My hubby, being very athletic and always ready for the big challenge if it should come, rode on the load and kept peace when necessary. Pat seemed to feel because he had made the trip a few weeks earlier, he was better equipped to take over at the helm.

On a perfect day in September, 1932, we set our fond farewells and took on brand new adventure with a load equally as big as our youthful ego. Everything went well and considering our late start, we were quite happy to reach Chilliwack, some 70 miles, that night. We got down our huge canvas bags of bedding and food boxes, for we were a big family of seven to feed and bedded

down for the night -- dishes were done and I set up breakfast, ready for our good early start. Things went well until we left Hope. Never had Pat visualised the many climbs after Hope from the passenger car in which he and a friend had previously made the trip. Soon our little old Ford began to complain and heat up every ascent that it couldn't go over the summit easily. I think it was at Jack Ass mountain we tried first to buy a new water pump. Alas we were too ancient -- everywhere we tried, the reply was negative. We had two tea kettles so we would stop at every little waterfall or brook and take on water for both "Lizzie" and the tea kettles, in case we hadn't enough to last to the next supply. At first this seemed tribal, but Lizzie got thirstier and every stop knocked our travels average so it was beginning to be recognized as our problem number one period the farther from the cities, the smaller the stock on hand at the little garage. Big garages had long since been forgotten. Irl began to share Lizzie's problems before she'd utterly give up, he would have thrown off to the side of the road, the huge canvas bags of bedding and anything else, as I recall, that would stand the wear and tear demanded of it, in packing it up the hill and reloading, while poor old Lizzie puffed and boiled and cooled, readying herself for the next ascent, which we knew by now, soon would be looking us in the face. Irl would push up the hills to help poor Lizzie in her struggle. But as youth old is always courageous, we'd count off the miles each night and say we only had such and so many miles ahead now. Another day of the same we'd cutoff eighty miles if we were lucky.

At this point, I must slip in a cute little thing that added fun and never fail to bring laughter to Pat, surely taking a certain amount of the strain. Away from the hard days driving. Early, Wayne learned the hum of the happy motor and the laboring of an overworked motor, so soon as she slowed a little and complainingly climbed on, he would rock back and forward on my knee as if he felt the force to "do" some things to help. Pat would like to split his sides but Wayne's babyface was completely earnest in his desire to assist in the struggle. As soon as we reached the top and we're humming our way down the dissent, Wayne would probably relax and rest his curly head back as though he had been part of the winning again and we were one hill closer to home. He was a happy little traveler and made no problems although the bottle was of major importance and the diapers were still a must. He was a great pleasure to all six of us. It would seem, had I been a very smart mother, I would have had both these problems far behind me. It was so with Shirley for I remember her at eleven and a half months, getting out of the bed all on her own while staying in my mother's home (she slept with me). She would, with a little difficulty, turn her little self around and plant herself dutifully down, then climb back up in the big bed to cuddle down and get warm. But alas, poor Wayne had a very weak stomach and with it, a bowel condition which was out of his control when nature called. I could find no complaint when he didn't have time to warn me. I interject this little detail so that you might understand the urgency to lay over a day and do what I could to replenish my supply of clean clothes, mainly for my baby of fifteen and a half months.

Well Saturday afternoon proved us all weary of the row and each knew the other would be glad for a Sunday off while I caught up on these afore mentioned household chores. I was eager to

give up at five o'clock because we came by a fairly good looking "auto court" but Pat and Irl were anxious to push on a few more miles. They had Spences Bridge in mind for the stop. As the clouds gathered we all grew a little more anxious. The roads, after we left Hope, I might add we're nothing to be desired. In many places it would be utterly impossible for two cars to meet, one had to back up to the nearest place where a little wide piece had been made for that purpose, and at times as we crawled along the edge of the cliff, it took more than a little faith in the driver to believe he could safely pilot us around the sharp curves without us all ending up over the precipice, which might be 100 to 300 feet with the river below. Here I should tell on Shirley. She figured Wayne was getting the best "look" and wanted her turn to see better period it wasn't many moments before she was ready to sit in the middle again as the gorge looked pretty deep to her.

Well the rain and the wind arrived simultaneously and we were still ten miles or so from Spences Bridge, struggling to stay on a narrow, now slippery little road that followed the river which had a might foreboding look to us all. As we slowly progress we finally caught sight of lights not too far ahead. I scarcely know why at this point, with no hesitation, I threw a blanket over my baby's head and stepped out into the pouring rain and black dark period very shortly a car came around the bend. It must have been quite a shock to see a woman with a child in her arms in the drenching rain. They stopped to inquire about what we were doing for the night. I might say, I felt a little foolish for we must have, at first glance, reminded them of a gipsy band. These folks, however, with the Good Samaritan type and gave us instructions to go to the lights we could see. It was their auto court and I should say "four" star place. They said they would put us in the store room for the night as their cabins were all taken. They gave us two hot plates "which burned all night away as they had their own lightning plant and had to use up the surplus supply", or some such excuse. It was the best news we ever received in our lives for it was far past mealtime, even bedtime for the little folks.

We took over the storeroom and although it was mighty chilly, we put out enough quick food for the children didn't go to bed hungry. We could have walked out with canned goods and things enough to last us a week, had we been that kind of people. Many times since, I blessed those wonderful people for their trust in humanity.

The two little hot plates didn't make too much of an impression on that wet chilly September night, but before morning we were warm in our beds made on the floor among the various boxes.

Sunday morning was bright and beautiful and we felt it was good to be alive.

Shortly before noon, there was an empty cabin and we moved over, bag and baggage. I went to do the washing in pan no larger than a dishpan which made it a slow process. They made us welcome to their garden which we refused to trespass, so they carried great armfuls of lovely fresh vegetables and cantaloupe over to us. These fine things certainly brought out the oohs and

aahs and our sincere Thanksgiving. We spent Sunday night there and I was sorry it could not have been the end of our trip because it surely seemed to be the foot of the rainbow.

However, Monday morning we happily pulled out but with our minds made-up that as we passed through the town of Spences Bridge, we would lighten our load by shipping things by rail that we could put on a train, like the old washing machine. So a few hours later, six hundred pounds lighter, we were sure our troubles were at end, although we still hadn't found a water pump.

From there on, Pat kept telling me we soon run out of these hills and be on level ground. Before two more days went by, I realized this was nothing short of a fantasy. Although Pat really believed it, he just hadn't been aware of the hills when he had previously traveled in a car with no baggage but I found his "encouragement" almost irritating. By next day we were away from the canyon so the roads at least looked safer.

One chilly night we pulled into Clinton and it was just starting to snow. We fixed up the little heater, as usual and shortly we were cozy and content as we crawled into our various beds for another night's rest. Next morning, the sun came up bright in a clear blue sky but on the ground, was a beautiful white carpet which was a little too generous to make us happy after we got the information of a seven mile hill just outside of town. We made it with less trouble than we anticipated although and then for quite a few miles we had good level traveling. What a welcomed relief.

By now I could feel a secret hate for those Jack Pine because I was expecting to see something which resembled farmland period to me this should be open land or Prairie.

This was Shirley's 4th birthday and was quite uneventful. It was only a fifty odd mile day to Lac La Hache but we decided to stay, it was a lovely spot on one of BC's finest lake.

Next morning was Pat's birthday. It was cold but we got away early period as we came to Quesnel we were told we would have to down only to climb all the way up again. The Cottonwood River crossing while Old Lizzie went down hill easily enough, we all knew the danger that went with brakes on such a old model truck. However, all went well until we were nearing the top on the other side of the Canyon when we got a flat tire which rests securely in a rear nude hole. Pat was not prone to bad headaches but before we were mobile again, he had a really dilly. Nothing could persuade him to take an auto court and get off the road. He had made his mind up that we would make Prince George that night. We made fair time, for Lizzie, but it was more than a day's journey by our former average. By 10:00 Irl and I were a little annoyed. By 11:00, my hubby went on a strike and said, "We are quitting. You do what you like". So on a bright chilly night, we pulled out our tiny tent for the first time. The boys slept warmly in the load but the rest of us were forced to crawl into icy beds inside the little tent. The bumps and hollows seemed nearly too much to my rack of bones and I put in a poor night. These others were ready to give up to an early start of six or seven o'clock. We built a good campfire by the babbling Stone Creek. This should have been a highlight for carefree campers but I had a hungry

crowd. We took turns washing in that icy water and left the heart for breakfast. When we left an hour or so later we were once more I fairly happy crew. Pat's headache was gone and we really felt we were on the home stretch.

The two birthdays had gone by with no celebrations except a greeting of happy birthday. I can't remember if I had a small gift tucked away for Shirley or not. Probably leaving New Westminster, we'd expect to be home before the occasion. I do remember for Wayne's first birthday, I bought him a little mouth organ and it was his main delight to get down and creep with the silly thing in his mouth. The faster he'd creep the faster he tooted. This game lasted for many months.

To get back to the story. We left Stone Creek early. We were still in quite good time as we passed Prince George. We really were on the last leg of our journey. It was now in the eighth day since we left New Westminster and to me; The longest eight days I had ever known. But nobody was downhearted even though it was after 6:00 when we pulled into the very tiny village of Vanderhoof. Most of the store were closed.

Pat wasn't sure where to go from there except to Ferg Park, who probably was responsible for selling him on the idea of this so-called "farm", in the first place. It had been available through the Soldier Settlement Board.

As the heavy clouds were foreboding, we soon headed South towards Lakes District. Pat convinced me, all seven of us, hungry and surely not too tidy, would be welcomed even without supper. I wasn't too hard to convince as I had my stomach full of camp cooking. Well Pat's prediction was right period to this day, I have never known such hospitality and believe me, the gratitude was returned in full measure.

As soon as we were finished the welcome meal, our boys were anxious to be on the way. Adam (Irl's age) and Allan (15) went along to show us the way and also help us unload. By now it was pitch dark and a steady rain was coming down. It wasn't far but around a little sloughy lake and a bit tricky to find in the dark period in short order, the load was all in the living room.

One thing I'll mention here is Irl's shoes. He had completely worn out the soles of his brand new shoes from all The Walking and pushing he'd done on that terribly long trip.

Occasionally kids say the darndest things at the darndest times and this was a special. Pat told Adam he drive them home, Charles pipes up, "Can we go for the ride?" This request was after eight days on the road. We obviously had wasted all that concern and sympathy for those boys.

The next move was to figure out where to bed down for her first night on the farm in the north.

Believe me, when we arrived at the farm locally known as the "Skitt's property" our troubles were not at an end. The Skitt's were a family of four and I was about to find the truth in the saying "There is nothing as dirty as The Dirty English or as a clean as the clean". This dirty

condition seemed to be because she'd been brought up in a wealthy household with servants had learned nothing in the domestic field. When she married poorly and came to Canada, she was so poorly qualified to run a home that soon she became bogged down and learn to live in a mess which shortly could be classified only as filth. At least I like to feel she must deserve some excuse for the situation I now faced. The only room that might have been livable, was a little bedroom where I misfortunate bunny got trapped and finally died only to rot. So we shoveled it outdoors and close that room off to be aired and cleaned the next day. As a last resort, we looked in the old stable but alas, haymakers had bedded their horses down and hadn't bothered to clean it. So we returned to the house and pushed boxes and furniture around and made the beds on the living room floor which wasn't very clean either I might say.

The next morning the sun came out but the wind was unusually cold. My wee kids were out of doors probably to keep out of the way, but kept going in and out. When my baby crawled over the filthy doorstep in pale blue rompers, his wee hands and his rompers were filthy and I, for a moment gave into a burst of tears, swearing I was going back.

However, my allies bolstered my courage and I settled into cleaning. Pat was my partner and with cans of the old Gillet's lye and barrels of water, we waged war on the dirt. One little bedroom had been turned into a milk room and I'm sure they had moved the old cream separator to every foot of every wall, when one spot became too greasy and smelly, they just moved over a little.

We worked like slaves all day long using scrub brushes and twenty-odd pails of water which had to be carried up a steep hill and heated on a wood fire. But when that night arrived, the house only had the smell of wet boards. The floors, walls, and ceilings were as clean as could possibly be.

Next day we tackled the little kitchen and it looked more like mud chips dried, than a bare floor. With hoe and muscles and then the lye water treatment, it too looked livable for the time being.

Now we had three clean rooms and managed to get rid of a lot of our boxes. The living room was small, the kitchen, very small but as there was a pantry we would manage.

Of course there was no alternative, Charles and Harold would have to sleep in the attic. You could scarcely call it "upstairs". Being boys, they didn't care – it was all in the game of "country living."

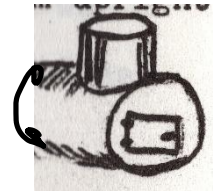
The weather was excellent, real Indian summer and we became accustomed to our small quarters. We even shared it with a gang of hunters who immediately decided to try the hunting in this new country.

Hart, of course, was first on the list. The others were strangers to me. They showed up every night in time to produce prairie chicken, plenty for everyone but as they were not equipped to do

their own cooking, the always hospitable Bradley clan shared what we had and with what they brought, we seemed to get along quite well. After a week or ten days it was good to be alone again for they were a noisy lot.

After a beautiful fall, we soon became aware that real winter was on the way – a reality we hadn't been accustomed to since leaving Saskatchewan. First we realized the inadequacy for our only heating supply, the cook stove. Pat was always an excellent handyman and he promptly started to make a furnace while Irl took on the task of getting a place ready to house it. Before either was completed we were near desperation looking forward to the day we'd be able to close out the cold draft coming from below us. Well one cold evening, Pat very joyously lit up a fire and as he rubbed his hands over the heat from the floor radiator he said "We'll soon be warm now." Alas, before long, the steam started coming up too. Before it died out that mud packing which Pat had used for insulation, we were nearly frozen in the fog we couldn't escape. The windows sweat, the walls sweat, and we nearly froze. However by midnight, the worst was over and it looked like our homemade furnace would be a real success.

You see, Pat took a forty-five gallon galvanized oil drum and laid it on its side. He built a chicken wire fence around it, leaving several inches into which he packed that wet slit, and which, when dried out, had the remarkable qualities of cement. In the front of the drum, he put a door of steel plate which fit very tightly. ON top of the big drum, he put a smaller drum upright which had to match over the big drum thus; The small drum fit the hole that was to be the radiator for our floor furnace. Believe me, after the initial fire, it was a success. We'd cram green poplar full length of the drum and close it up and the heat would pour up for twelve hours with wood to satisfy our needs. So between the two of our men, they built a power saw, and when enough men co-operated, it made a pile of logs into a mountain of wood in short order, some in cook stove lengths and some in furnace lengths. Soon we found our saw going from neighbour to neighbour and Lakes District never knew such fuel luxury before. Needless to say, it fit in our neighbourly co-operative way of life. Never did neighbours prove to be so neighbourly anywhere in those hard times in what became famously known as the hungry thirties.



Irl proved to be an excellent hunter and always brought home good moose. We used to say he felt their ribs before he shot them. But he really was careful not to shoot a poor or old moose, after all this was our daily bread, so to speak. When we shared our meat, we always got something we needed in return.

One real neighbour kept us supplied with whole wheat porridge and whole wheat flour which he ground from his own wheat. Another said we could have the entire potato crop. We dug them and put them in the cellar for winter. As hadn't hilled them and they were green from exposure, we used to put an onion with them and we made out that way. There were cabbages and carrots too and all together we thanked our Lord from the bottom of our hearts for such wonderful neighbours. The five dollars we received weekly, got us a few eggs which very few people hoped to produce in the winter, also the occasional can of honey or jam, tea or coffee and oranges once

in a while for the children. In the first few weeks, we managed to buy a team of horses and a cow. The cow was a kicker so they sold her to us at a sacrifice thirty-five dollars. She was all she was said to be but she met her equal in Irl and turned out less wicked than we expected. We poured the hot mashes into hew every morning and soon she was one of the finest producers one could hope for. So we had plenty of good rich milk and cream and butter both for cooking and table use. Many times poor old Darkie got cursed, but also blessings given freely for her goodness.

One horse turned out to be balky and no one could tolerate him. When you needed him most, he'd hopelessly refuse to do a thing about it until we'd give up. We sold him for fox feed. I believe we replaced him with another called Baldy, who wasn't the finest nature but at least we could get along with him. The other was a Indian pony named "Blanko". We sometimes wondered just how intelligent a horse could be. He got to be a great favourite and would never hurt a hair on your head. Occasionally he got independent and wouldn't be caught which surely was exasperating. I remember the time he broke loose in the blueberry patch and we had to carry our own berries home. Next day, I set out to find him. He stood stalk still, still hoping I wouldn't see him, and when I did, he yielded willingly. I got on his back, and turned him back that four miles to pick up the saddle. The patch was not too well tramped and I wasn't too sure, but when I went wrong he'd refuse to go and I'd say, "Okay Blanko you do it your way" and he did three times before we got to that saddle. He knew very well what errand we were on. Another time, Pat put a whole moose on him after quartering it. Pat then got on top and that old Indian pony took him straight home in the black dark without once crossing a stream which Pat knew he had crossed three times on the way into the bush. Yes, he was a wonderful old horse. I would put sacks and sacks of vegetables on the saddle and he'd grown as if the next one would break his back, but I knew his game. I'd get into the saddle too and he'd most happily take me home after eating the lush grass from around the garden all day. This was a mile from home; for by now, we had branched out and bought this lake bottom. We planted a large garden and lugged tons of produce home, radishes that looked like apples, hard and sweet and often one radish was more than enough for one person, lettuce that looked like cabbage, hard and white and juicy, the like I'd never seen before.

Sometimes the Dicksons would bring the car down and load it for we had enough to spare for the animals even.

One year we sowed a hundred pounds of seed and picked up two tons of the loveliest potatoes one could wish to eat. So it wasn't long, you can tell until the Bradleys were pulling their weight in the neighbourhood as well as bringing in some cash. The government loosened up and gave us seventeen dollars and fifty cents monthly for road work. With this we were able to buy shoes and such things.

I had somehow come across some blanket clothe samples from a tailor on the coast. Some were suiting weight which we used for quilts, but the heavy ones, what were they good for? One bitter

cold day, Irl came in with the big idea they'd make wonderful mittens, woolly enough to keep dry and thick enough to turn the wind. Well I struggled and clipped till I came up with a mitt that he was real happy with. Next thing I knew, he came home with a request for a pair the same for our neighbour, Eric. Well my sample overcoating box sure dwindled fast and the mitts gained great favour all over the neighbourhood. It seemed my machine was in constant use remaking little warm dress or trousers, even underwear, or something and usually there was a small toe-headed boy or girl begging for a ride on my knee as I treadled the machine.

It was an old-fashioned life, but rewarding. Isn't it wonderful how we forget the bad times, for there must have been plenty, only to remember the good times?

I remember as one summer came along I so much needed a fresh new dress. I was expert at taking out the print (with coal oil) from one of the 100-pound flour bags. This gave me a square yard of good quality cotton. When I dyed three or four of them pink and put a collar and what we called a jabo, edged in black bias, I proudly wore it anywhere I needed to go. I got more compliments, perhaps then had it come from 5th Avenue.

Our method of dyeing our flour sacks pink was to say the least, unique. Irl had a wine shirt and each time it was washed it died everything pink. We always put the flour sacks in with this shirt and we'd have an even piece of goods come out. It was a firm dye which lasted the life of the material. Many times our shirt dye was used.

It seems like a highlight in my memory where my 2 year old had little pants with side pockets for the first time period he was so intrigued he insisted on putting his hands deep into his pockets and promptly fall down because he lost his balance. Irl was harrowing a small field in front of the house. Wayne was determined to show his dad he's wonderful new pants so he walked with his hands in his pockets, fall, and finally free his hands, stand up, tuck his hands back in, and start out to meet his daddy once more. After many attempts, his daddy noticed the reverses he was struggling with and dropped the reins to go meet him. Wayne's temper was getting thin by now and he yelled "I'm getting tired of this 'dixon' dad". He was meaning discing but Irl was harrowing. This gave Irl, and the rest of us, many a chuckle later period another time he called his dad long after he'd been put to bed. "What's the matter son?" answered Irl. Wayne proceeded to relate his very real dream of bears who were after him. When Irl said, "Don't let a little thing like that bother you," Wayne sat up in the bed and said "I said BEARS".

So we always had our chuckles as well as the trying times.

I used to make 24 very large loaves of bread weekly. This made-up for the missing luxuries on the table. Lots of good butter and bread or bread and cream was always a treat. It took many months before Isabel could be persuaded to try her hand at bread and she turned out just as lovely bread as I did when she gave it a try.

Now Eleanor was almost two period she had a great urge to learn to sing period to my kids, it came natural but she seemed to sense she didn't quite have it that easy. The washing usually seemed to be my lot so while I'd work that old fashioned machine, bless her, she'd stand in that draughty old porch and earnestly try to make her notes true. I never encouraged her until she try over and over an finally do it right on key period this happened is often as wash day and she made such progress that before she was very old, she was capable of solos at the little school affairs. She was a clever but difficult little girl with a terrific determination. Once she was right she never looked back. A quality so rare today.

Shirley seemed to be one of those little girls always radiant and many times, I think, I neglected her as the younger ones seemed to come first period I sometimes look back with regret as I think how seldom I sat down and took her on my knees to cuddle.

One of our first sources of quick income we decided should be young chicks. So in undo season, we prepared a brooder near the floor furnace, which by now we could regulate so perfectly that it would burn two days and when we opened it we found just the right bed of coals for a new stock pile of wood. Chinking every little crack that showed fire, made it so even and satisfactory, our chicks grew and thrived beautifully. The rooster population had to be cut down and we were glad to be off a steady moose meat diet and live on the luxury of fried chick in. Wayne, not yet too, would cry for more and I was loathe to give him too much for fear we'd be back to that old stomach problem period we eventually let him eat his fill and by winter he was hail and hearty as the rest.

Speaking of winter, the children didn't get out daily as it was pretty cold and it was a real chore bundling them up for so short a time period despite the sunshine, Jack Frost was no joker and soon they would be back with toes and fingers tingling.

One of these sunny days we wrapped them up and send them out. Wayne was probably 20 months old and always trying the impossible. First thing he tried this day was to crawl to the top of the woodpile, which no doubt looked like Mount Everest, then down directly behind his dad who was chopping a supply of kindling with a very sharp double bitted axe. Wayne got to his feet just exactly in time to make contact with that razor sharp edge. Irl was surprised beyond belief for he didn't know the kids were out. As he picked the wheel add up, surely went hysterical nearly. Irl and I lay him on the table while Isabelle and Pat tried to control Shirley. It was 10 miles over winter roads to town and as we had small confidence in getting a good job done, we decided there couldn't possibly be any danger of infection, we would attempt to draw it closed with adhesive tape.

We resurrected the nursing bottle which he had given up a week earlier period he happily accepted it and lay quiet while we did the repair work period we put him to bed and when he got up he never once mentioned his face. It was so close as I and so close to his temple that again we felt Providence had an eye on her adventurous little boy.

So this is sort of a cross section of first years in the north. Enough sunshine to keep us happy each new day, enough clouds to help us to be strong. I have never regretted those hard years period they taught us the true values in life and made us better men and woman for the battering we lived with. This might go on to fill a book for there were many tribulations as well as the days when surely we knew He was good to us.

When Wayne was 11 years old, Sandra made a happy addition to our household. As for the Pat Bradley's the stork called twice but the death angel also left a bad scar and so it seems life is full of the bitter and sweet.

When I started this, I omitted details because I felt it would be most fortunate to finish to the end, but a month has gone by and God probably means to spare my life longer than I expected, for three months looked like a quick termination of this much dreaded disease, cancer. I am not in the slightest worried if he chooses to call me home, I can only say, for years it has been my greatest hope to see my dear Savior, Lord and King, face to face. To me this is the ultimate goal that we strive for and the few fleeting years we have on this mortal sphere.

But if He sees fit to leave me a little longer, I only hope and pray I shall not let Him down. Probably through my life, someone else may find their way to God. So my life is completely committed to His care period price is wonderful Name.

This was written by Milly Bradley during the last months of her life, summer of 1974.

***(NOTE: This book was donated by Shirley Reinke – Milly Bradley's Daughter.
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