



The participants in a little play called "Little Snow-white" which was staged for Closing Day in 1941 at the McGowan school. The actors are, from left to right: Betti Lepp, Willi Friesen, Mika Stoll, Hans Janzen, Anna Janzen, Peter Friesen, Tillie Friesen, and Martin Friesen.



A group of young people gathered at the McGowan school under the leadership of Rev. Herman Lepp on a Sunday afternoon in 1941. From left to right, they are: Mika Wiens, Tina Tjart, Heinz Janzen, Jake Janzen, Margaret Klassen, Jacob Tjart, Rudi Lepp, Mika Wiebe, Herman Klassen, Rev. Herman Lepp, Mika Berg, Ernst Penner, Rudi Wiens, Mariechen Tjart, Nikolai Janzen, Anna Bergen, Heinz Lepp, and Margitta Rötcher.



In 1951 the old school of S.S.#3, Eilber, was abandoned and in the fall of that year instruction began in the new schoolhouse on Lot 7E, Conc.I, Eilber. Here a group of pupils is seen planting two white spruce trees in front of the new building. They are, left to right: Eric Peltonen, Margaret Hook, Aliette Gamache, Maxine Balesdent, Victor Levasseur, Ursula Rötcher, Veikko Kuokkanen, and Claude Levasseur.

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The classroom of the new school was spacious and well supplied with cupboards and modern furniture. The box-stove and the gasoline lamp were only preliminary fixtures. An oil space heater was installed within a few months of the opening and hydro and automatic heating followed later. Left to right, the pupils are: Eric Peltonen, Ingo Rötcher, Elsie Rempel, Ingrid Rötcher, Claude Levasseur, Henry Rempel, Aliette Gamache, Ursula Rötcher, Margaret Hook, Victor Levasseur, and Veikko Kuokkanen.



The new schoolhouse of S. S. #3, Eilber, placed on a two-acre yard, lay in a 60-acre tract of second-growth forest, which belonged to Mr. Maxime Balesdent. He gave permission to John H. Enns, the teacher, to lay out a nature trail on this land, to be used for orienteering practice and nature study. This trail was almost one mile in length and was extensively used both by the teacher, for instruction purposes, and by the pupils during noon recesses, for exploration and recreation. A number of the pupils are shown on Section 1 of the trail.



Ingrid Rötcher is watching a wild brooding ruffed grouse on her nest along the nature trail. This hen hatched a dozen or so of young grouse, which were later observed wandering through the bush and "disappearing" when the mother gave her alarm-note and herself began to lead the intruders away by her lame-wing act.



The forest in the settlement area consisted of either pure stands of black spruce on flat poorly drained land or of mixed stands of trees on higher land. The above picture shows a mixed stand of quaking aspen, white birch, white spruce, and balsam fir on Lot 7E, Conc. XII, Barker. This type of stand yielded little pulpwood, since only spruce and some balsam fir could be sold to the mill at Kapuskasing.

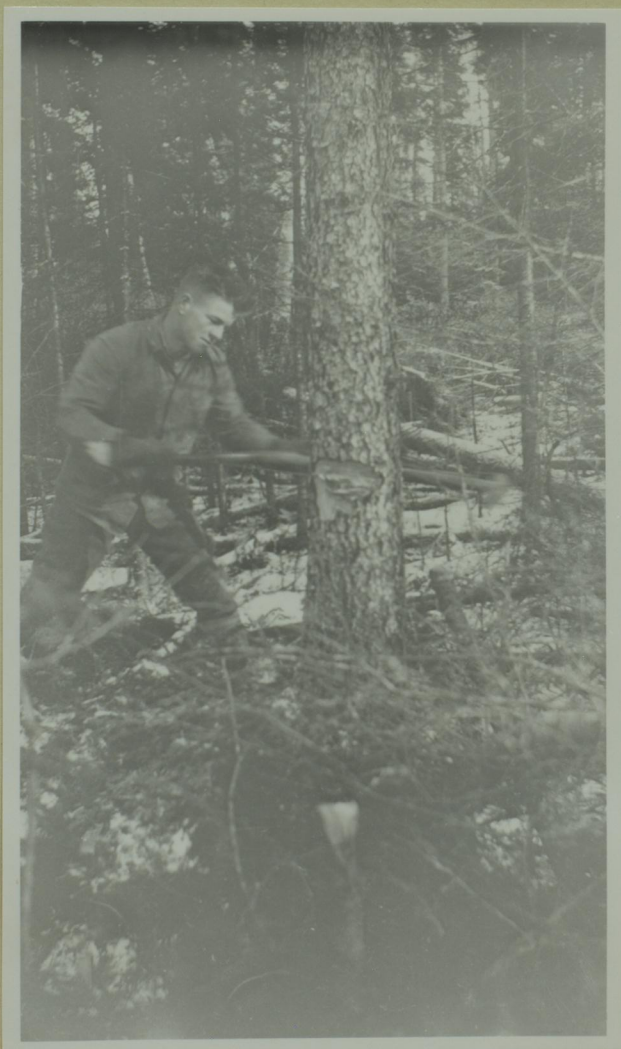


Pure stands of black spruce were known as "good bush" among the settlers. Homesteads which were covered with this type of forest usually yielded over 1,000 cords of marketable pulpwood.

See page 24.



The cutting and handling of pulpwood required four tools: the frame saw with a thin-backed Swedish blade, an axe, a 50-inch measuring stick, and a "pulp hook". Saws either had steel factory-made frames or hand-made wooden frames, like the above, introduced by the Finnish cutters. The latter were lighter and not so cold in the hand.



Before felling, a tree was notched with the axe on the side to which it was intended to fall and then sawn through with the fast-cutting saw. Settlers were inclined to cut the stumps fairly high in order to make the pulling of stumps easier. A longer stump provided more leverage, facilitating the extraction of the roots from the ground.

See pp. 109 - 111.



Once the tree was down, it had to be trimmed with the axe; i. e. it had to be cleaned of all branches.



The trimmed tree was then cut up into 50-inch lengths with the aid of the measuring stick and the saw.



At the end of each day the cutter piled the cut wood into neat piles along a prepared roadway, wide enough to accommodate a sleigh on which the wood was hauled out of the bush in the winter after the snow reached a depth of one foot or more.



After the settlers had cut all the pulpwood on their lots, it became possible, in the forties, to cut an allotted amount of wood each year on crown land farther away from home, too far, in fact, to walk the distance every day. Simple log cabins were built in the backwoods in which the cutters stayed all week, returning home only for the week-ends. This one was built by a group of settlers from Barker in Conces-



At the siding the pulpwood was loaded into boxcars or onto flatcars, as shown above. Haulers preferred the flatcars because it required less handling of the wood, but they had no choice in the matter, for cars had to be taken as they came. A full-length flatcar could hold 20 to 22 cords of wood, depending on the height to which it was loaded. A boxcar, well filled, held about 17.5 cords.



A teamster spent many an hour each winter riding back into the woods for another load of wood. The heavy horses could not trot. It took almost as long to go in empty as it did to come out of the bush with a full load. The team required little attention when going in with an empty sleigh, giving the teamster plenty of time to think.

See pp. 111 - 113.





There were times when the mill did not accept delivery of wood for a time or when freight cars were temporarily scarce. At such times haulers did not stop hauling but piled the wood into long tiers along a road near the siding, even though this necessitated double handling of the wood. Hauling time was too precious to lose any of it waiting for cars. These tiers were usually cleaned up after the spring thaw rendered the bush roads useless.

See page 34.



The reloading of the wood from the tiers onto the sleigh and finally into the boxcar seemed such an unnecessary and tiresome task, but it became the lot of every hauler at one time or other. Cornelius Penner Jr. is trying to be cheerful about it while his friend stopped by for a chat.



Settlers made their own horse-drawn snow-ploughs to clean the hauling roads of drifted snow. These ploughs were not very efficient, but they were the only means available to alleviate an otherwise impossible situation. Heavy loads would not stay on an unploughed road after a snow-storm, nor could horses pull them in knee-deep snow.



A settler's farm buildings in mid-winter. These belonged to the Heinrich Enns family on Lot 7E, Conc. XII, Barker.

The Heinrich Enns farm buildings in mid-winter



Mr. Gerhard Martens and his family on a Sunday visiting trip in a home-made sled. He is seen on the yard of Mr. Heinrich Enns, his father-in-law, at some time in the mid-thirties.



Mr. Jacob Ediger, who lived only a quarter mile from the store, got the idea the cow might as well assume the responsibility of bringing in her own "groceries". He tried to train her to pull the "drag", a ubiquitous vehicle, that was put to many uses in the settlement. See pp. 12 and 68.



Road work provided by the government was an important summer occupation from the beginning because it supplied the settlers with the indispensable roads and provided a cash income during the summer months. This picture shows a group of labourers resting on the school yard of S.S.#3, Eilber, in the summer of 1926, beside the half-finished schoolhouse. The workers are, left to right: Jacob Heinrichs, Peter Dyck,

(Over)



The same work gang that is seen resting in the picture above is here shown working at clearing the road right-of-way between Lots 6 and 7, Conc. I and II, Eilber. The white team working in the background belonged to the Nolet family from Macbey and was driven by Thomas Nolet; the team in the foreground belonged to John Christianson of Mattice and was driven by John Manson, one of his hired men. See pp. 25, 26, 49, and

Jacob Rempel (?), Franz Janzen Jr., Abram T. Wiens, Johann Rempel, *Jacob C. Töws*,  
Alcide Trepannier, Robert Travers, John Manson, Thomas Nolet, Cornelius Töws Jr.,  
Armand Trepannier, Fred Lemur, Mrs. Fred Lemur, Gideon Trepannier, Mrs. Gideon Tre-  
pannier, and two daughters of Gideon Trepannier.

*Correction: the name Lemur, given above, should be Le Mieux.*



Where the ground was too soft for horses to work on, the stumps, usually not very big in swampy areas, were pulled out with home-made winches. Here John Neufeld and John Enns are clearing a wet section of the road between Lots 6 and 7 in Conc. XII, Barker, in the month of July in 1930. The handkerchief around the neck served as protection against the blackflies and mosquitoes.

See page 50.



On high land with solid clay soil many stumps were too solid to be pulled by team or winch and had to be blasted with dynamite. The dynamite came in waxed paper wrappings about  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter and 8" in length, known as sticks. John Enns is here puncturing a stick of dynamite in order to fit it with the blasting cap and fuse. The primed stick or sticks were placed into a hole under the stump, covered with mud, and then set off with a match.



Some stumps extracted from the ground were wet and heavy and required many hands to stack them on a pile for burning. This group worked on the road between Lots 6 and 7, Conc. XII, Barker, in the summer of 1930. From left to right, the workers are: Heinrich Töws, Gerhard Martens, Jacob Wiens, Herman Lepp, John Enns, Nikolai Isaak, and Cornelius Töws Jr.



Some low spots filled with water when the stumps were extracted and required a determined disregard of "unusual" working conditions in order to get the work done. Here Heinrich Enns Jr., Herman Lepp, Abram Reimer, and Nikolai Isaak are engaging in a bit of aquatic sports in order to get their road done. This section was in Concession XI of the same road mentioned above. See map on page 99.



This off-take ditch onto Lot 7E, Conc.XII, Barker, was cut through spruce-flat and muskeg by one single man by the name of Roschko, an itinerant worker, who contracted to cut the quarter-mile ditch for so much a cubic yard of excavation. The job was done in mid-summer when the heat in the bush was stifling and the fly menace at its worst. A shovel and axe were the only tools used. A truly heroic feat, which can be appreciated only by one who has tried his hand at similar work under equal conditions. See page 51.



The first earth is being moved for Highway No. 11 opposite the railway crossing at Mile 103.40. At the left is the team of Heinrich Enns Sr., driven by John Enns. Johann Janzen and the teamster are shovelling the sods onto the wagon box which Jacob Ediger and Franz Janzen Jr. have broken from the ground with the plough. The team on the right is driven by Gerhard Bärger. Elof Christianson was the foreman on the job.





One of the first bits of land cleared on any homestead was that for a vegetable garden. Here the writer took in a horse to plough a patch of land for Wolfgang Röt-scher who lived on Lot 8W, Conc. XI, Barker, far from the nearest road. The plough had to be carried in on the shoulders of two men, since it could not be dragged in on account of snags in the ground.

See page 54.



The garden plots yielded good returns of the hardier varieties of vegetables. Even less hardy varieties responded to pampering and yielded fruits in sheltered locations that would not succeed in the open field. The Thanksgiving display shown above was arranged for the Thanksgiving Day service in church with vegetables grown in the Reesor gardens. The display shows a pumpkin, potatoes, tomatoes, cauliflower, carrots, and a cucumber.



In the month of May or early in June the settlers burnt the "slash" on areas from which pulpwood was cut in the winter. The dry tree-tops burned furiously often setting up an awesome roar that could put fear into the heart of an uninitiated newcomer. Only the needles and smaller branches were consumed by the sweeping fire. Trunks of tree-tops and trees that did not yield pulpwood became merely charred in the blaze.

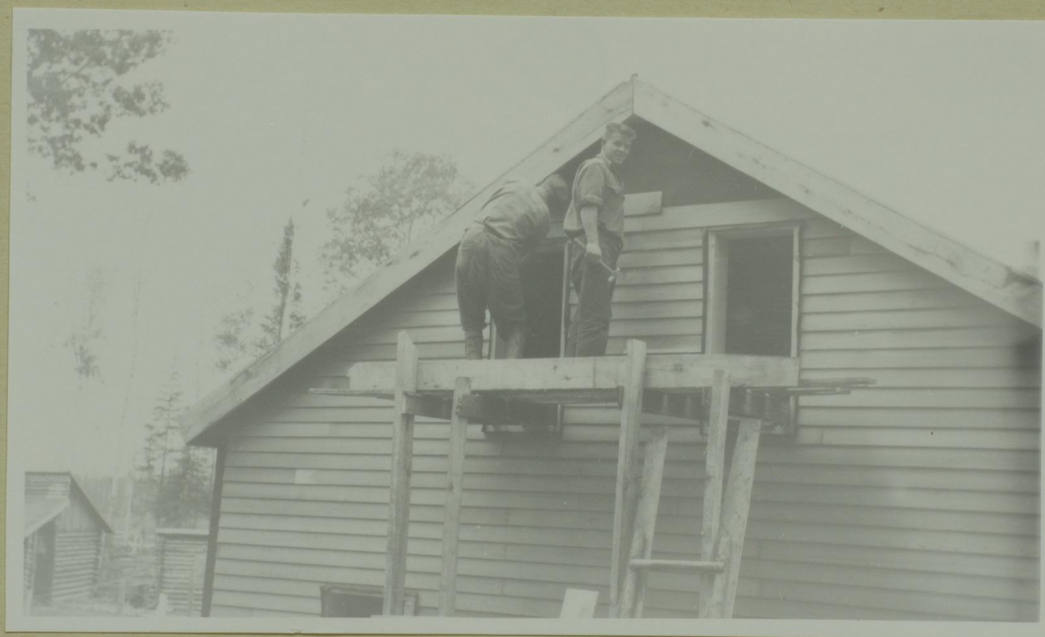


The plumes of slash burns marked the sky over settled areas throughout the last month of spring.

See pp. 53 and 80.



After the first log houses were built, second, third and fourth farm buildings followed in quick succession, as the the need for them arose. This picture shows the farm yard of Mr. Heinrich Enns in the summer of 1928. Beside the log home on the right a chicken house inthe background and a stable on the left were added in the first two years.



By 1930 many settlers began to improve their houses by adding additions, improving the inner walls and by applying some sort of siding to the outside of the building. Here John Enns and a helper are putting cedar siding to the Enns home.



Just prior to the acquisition of a permanent church building by the congregation in 1931 or 1932, a vacant building on Lot 5E, Conc. XII, Barker, was being used as a temporary place of worship, in addition to the Eilber school. The baptismal group of 1930 posed in front of that building with Rev. Jacob H. Janzen of Waterloo, Ontario, who baptized them. The young people are, left to right: Gerhard Bärger, Erna Töws,

(Over)



The inside of the temporary church mentioned above, decorated for the baptismal service by the young people in the congregation.

Herman Reimer, Cornelius Töws Jr., Isaak Janzen, Cornelius Rempel, and John Enns.



After an addition was made to the log house on Lot 7E, Conc. XII, Barker, (See p.VI) and the entire building was fitted with cedar siding, it looked like this.



The well-sweep was gone by 1930 and a lift-pump was installed to provide ready access to a copious supply of water, so welcome for a cooling ablution after a hot day among the charred sticks of a burnt clearing. The writer is getting ready to rid himself of the soot that gives him the appearance of a chimney-sweep. "Picking up" in the burnings was an annual early summer chore in the late twenties and early thirties.



In the summer of 1932 the male members of the Reesor United Mennonite Church worked at clearing the yard surrounding the building they had acquired for a permanent church.

See pages 45 and 46.



The same church yard in the fall of 1938. By then people came to church by car. The building showing in the background, at right, is the one shown on page XLIII.



A Sunday school class the writer taught in the winter of 1933-34. They are posing on the yard of S.S.#4, McGowan, and are, left to right: Margaret Klassen, Tina Epp, Mika Redekop, Justina Epp, Susie Redekop, Annie Epp, Alice Schmidt, Lena Epp, Käte Willms, Heinz Lepp, Nikolai Redekop, Jake Janzen, Heinz Janzen, David Redekop, and Herman Klassen.



The girls of the Sunday school class dressed in crepe-paper costumes which they wore for a number in their Mother's Day programme in the spring of 1934. The costumes were made by Mrs. Heinrich Bergen and Miss Erma Opperthausen.

See page 45.





The Reesor settlement had its share of weddings, for some of which the young friends of the couple arranged dramatic performances, that took place the night before the wedding day, known as "Polterabend". The couple shown at left are Anna Enns and Gerhard Martens, who were married on June 6, 1929.

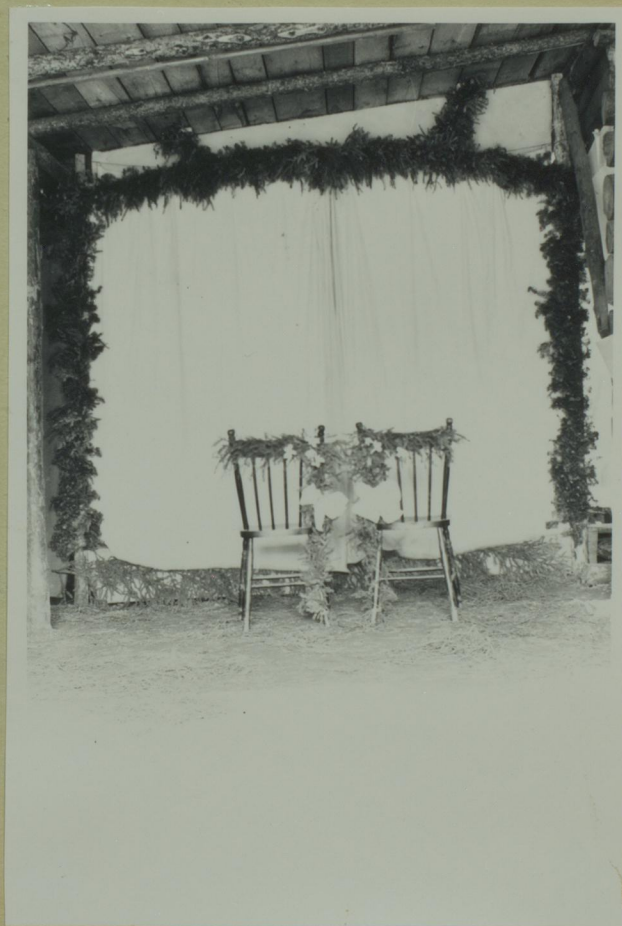


To save themselves the trouble of walking the long distance to and from "church" on wedding day, the family of the bride constructed a lean-to at the side of their house to receive the well-wishers on Polterabend and to serve as a place for the marriage ceremony. Rev. Jacob H. Janzen solemnized the marriage. See pp. 59 and 104.



In 1933, Gerhard Martens, who became a widower in 1930, married Miss Louise Enns. They were married in the Reesor church. The photo shows the decorated pulpit.

This stage was built in the barn of the Enns place for the performance of a dramatization of Sir Walter Scott's "Lochinvar". The barn door, which was utilized for the back of the stage, made the use of a live horse possible.





"Young Lochinvar" and "fair Ellen" on the "charger" that took them across Cannobie Lee on the Polterabend of Louise Enns and Gerhard Martens in 1933. Miss Lydia Martens played the role of Ellen and Mr. John Schmidt acted the part of Lochinvar. The fiery charger was Jack, the dappled Percheron of the Enns team.



The full cast for "Lochinvar". From left to right: Luise Penner as bride-maiden, Heinrich Klassen as bridegroom "a laggard in love, and a dastard in war", Lydia Martens as Ellen; John Schmidt as Lochinvar, Tina Bärger as bride-maiden, Heinrich Rempel as parson (a character not found in Scott's poem, but conveniently improvised for the dramatization), and John Enns as the father of the bride.



Joyous occasions, such as weddings, alternated with sad events. Mrs. Gerhard Martens died in her early twenties soon after her first child was born. Hers was the first grave in the settlement and on Cemetery No.1. See page 33 and 33b.



Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich Bergen lost an infant daughter in a housefire in the winter of 1933-34. Rev. Herman Lepp read a few words of Scripture at the cemetery before the little coffin was put into the grave.

See pp. 33, 33b, and 80.



Two of the earliest settlers on one of the lakes near the settlement. This lake was not named on any map and was long known to settlers as "Der kleine See" i.e. the little lake. Later it became known as Penner's Lake, simply because the Penner homestead was the last one along the road that led to it. The two fishermen are Abram B. Wiens and Johann Kröker. The lake is situated on Lots 5 and 6, Conc. IV, Eilber.



The same lake on August 8, 1953. Three boys who were born and grew up in Reesor, came back from southern Ontario to the place of their school days and their lake. They had left Reesor in 1943. They are, left to right: Herman Lepp Jr., Walter Wiens, Henry Lepp, and a friend they brought with them, whose name is Tiessen.

See page 121.