

*The First Home. 1875 and Later*

and complete their education at the same time, by reading the papers.

Several years ago, my oldest sister told me about the cooking utensils. They were simple — a cast iron skillet, cast iron tea kettle, and three big kettles, each holding two or three gallons. These were also of cast iron. There was also tin cups and plates. To complete the cookware, we had three big pans to bake the bread in, case knives, forks, and spoons, also two large knives for slicing the bread and butchering. Ma would polish these knives and forks on a brick to shine them up. The loaves of bread that Ma baked were full grown. They really reached for the ceiling when the sowing, which was mixed with the dough, started to rise. One slice of that bread would fill up a little boy's empty tummy pretty well. It would take out the wrinkles alright. All of the people lived on pretty plain food at that time, not because they wanted too, but because they had nothing else. A cake or some cookies were quite a treat. At times there would be wild strawberries in patches on the prairie. The berries were small, but really sweet and had a delicious flavor.

There was plenty of game in the country, prairie chickens by the hundreds and lots of ducks, geese and brant in the many sloughs scattered over the prairie. Dad had brought an old army muzzle loading musket with him, and no doubt they had plenty of meat. No game laws then, they would shoot them any time. In the winter he made a box trap, and trapped plenty of chickens, baiting it with corn or wheat.

After Dad had bought a cow, mush and milk was the usual breakfast, sometimes varied with pancakes and molasses and meat. Lion Head, or Arbuckle coffee was used. It came in a one pound paper bag. It came unground. That meant another job for Ma or the kids. Dad would take a load of wheat to the mill in town, and get it ground into flour, the miller taking out his toll to pay for the grinding. They would get enough flour at one time to last for six months or more. Except when the hoppers took the crop, they always raised enough potatoes for their own use, and occasionally had some to sell. There was no cellar under the first frame house, so Dad dug a potato pit. You can still see the depression in the ground, near where the first frame house stood. It was dug deep, and the spuds put in, and thoroughly covered with