

but there was not much of it planted. They were hopeful. The second year after their arrival, the hoppers came. They had a little more crop in that year and the prospects were real good. Ma had a nice garden planted and it looked like they would be eating a little higher up on the hog in the future, but it was all ruined in one day.

One bright sunshiny Sunday afternoon in midsummer when the people had gathered at the school house for church services, there was a sound like the rising wind, then it turned dark. The grasshoppers had arrived. They sounded like hail as they hit the side of the building. Many dropped there crushed by the impact until there was a dirty squirming mess all along the side of the school. When they left, and they left almost as quick as they came, the crops and garden were all eaten up. Every growing thing of a green, succulent nature was gone. The chickens ate so many hoppers that their eggs were unfit for human food.

In some sections the hoppers didn't do as much damage as in other parts, but Ma and Dad had a total loss. Some of those settlers that had enough money to leave, did so; the rest stayed. Dad and mother were among the latter class. The hoppers didn't seem to like the prairie grass so well, so that with a little rain and sunshine it revived. The cow and oxen had something to eat.

Some sugar cane had been planted, just a small patch, and it seemed to do very well. Those cane stalks had a hard outside shell, maybe just a little too hard for the hoppers' teeth. Anyhow, this cane and the prairie hay was the only crop they had. They cut the cane by hand, stripped off the leaves and had the neighbors make molasses for them. Robert Daugherty who lived just one half mile to the east, had a sorgum mill. This was operated with a horse. The juice was squeezed out of the stalks and the sap boiled down in a big kettle.

When boiled down just right, the ensuing mass was skimmed, boiled some more and skimmed again. The net result of all this was a real dark, thick, sweetish mess which they called molasses out of politeness, I reckon. Ma said it was awful stuff, but it was sweet and it didn't cost much. These neighbors had raised quite a patch of cane, and they sold or traded their excess molasses to their less fortunate neighbors. One winter, when there was lots of