

The First Home. 1875 and Later

the excitement died down, the picnic went on as usual. They had a nice juicy topic for conversation for a long time.

They had the usual picnic games. A ball game and races for young and old. Also a big bowry dance in the evening. Music furnished by an organ and fiddle. The picnic dinner was spread under the trees, and everyone filled up. There was home-made ice cream to top it off. I'll bet a dollar, or something equally as valuable, that there were no more drunks that day. Dad was death on that stuff.

In the early spring of 1890, Dad bought the farm just across the road west from the home place near Rushmore for \$12.00 per acre. This was on section seven and was railroad land, but had been sold and was owned privately at this time. The whole section was rather flat, but there was a branch of the Kanaransi Creek that drained it to the east. Much of it was rather low and flat, and wasn't cropped for many years, except for patches here and there on the higher ground. At the time, there were three big boys in our family, and no doubt Dad needed the land to keep them busy, and to help balance the family budget, although I don't think they had ever heard of such a critter.

Some of the land had been broken up and farmed. Dad put the boys to work picking off the rocks and breaking up the sod. Near the west control side of the place was a rather sizable slough. There was a big rock right in the middle. It stuck out of the water quite a bit and sloped to one side. The boys would go swimming over there at times in the summer. They would get on the rock and slide down into the water. At times the water was three feet deep, depending on the rain. After a hard day's work in the summer, it was a good place to cool off in the evening. There were muskrat houses there also.

There were many patches of wild strawberries on the prairie here. These berries were rather small, but what they lacked in size they made up in flavor. They were delicious. We never get enough picked ahead for Ma to make any jam.

In the summer the younger boys and gals had to herd the cattle and colts across the road "on seven" as we called the place. It wasn't too bad to watch the cattle, but the colts and horses were rather frisky at times. The kids get plenty of exercise, just keeping them out of the crop.