

Remember Malcolm Cole who ran a small grocery store at the corner of William and Bond Streets? Remember Percy Coad who was a druggist on the south side of Kent St. near the present McCarty Jewellery store? Remember Fred A. Robinson who owned a book and shoe store on the north side of Kent Street where the Reward Shoe Store is now located? All three were young members of the Cambridge Street Methodist Church. They are now residents of Saskatoon, Sask.

The above preamble serves to introduce Malcolm Cole who moved as a young man from Kinmount to Lindsay about the year 1905. He arrived in Lindsay driving a good team of heavy horses and was given employment in the Carew lumbering business. Later he entered the grocery business.

One and a half years later he answered the call to the West and took his team of horses with him. Homesteading was his aim and he settled down on a section of prairie land to make a living. He did well as the following story from the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix relates. A picture of Messrs. Cole, Coad and Robinson accompanied the interesting story in the Saskatoon paper of the man who was given up for dead but was very much alive. The story by Lloyd Landa:

**Victim of 1906 Blizzard  
nearing 95th birthday**

**"Malcolm Cole is not dead",**

So stated a headline in the Lindsay, Ontario Evening Post of January 18, 1907, which said reports that Mr. Cole had frozen to death in a Saskatchewan blizzard was untrue.

Still very much alive, and nearing his 95th birthday, Mr. Cole told how he survived a nine-day journey through blizzards and sub-zero temperature to reach his homestead.

After coming to Saskatoon in the spring of 1906 from Ontario, Mr. Cole started a homestead and general store at Coleville, a village 15 miles south of Kerrobert, which bears his name. He said he went to Battleford, 110 miles away, in November 1906 to obtain a winter's supply of coal.

"Just as I was ready to head back home a blizzard came up, and I know it was hopeless to attempt the journey alone", he said.

Mr. Cole joined forces with a Battleford hotel-keeper commencing the arduous 110-mile trek.

"After two days, one of my team had a lame back, so we stopped by a sod shack, and I hired another fellow to join us. We were still 80 miles from Coleville".

"There wasn't one tree, one building or any sign of life for miles and miles".

He said that, at one point, his fellow travellers wanted to stop and bed down. Mr. Cole said he urged them to continue and luckily they found a sod hut inhabited by a bachelor

who fed them and kept them for the night. "We hadn't eaten all day", he said.

Mr. Cole said the man told them of a place eight miles further which had two shacks a well and a supply of hay.

"Another blizzard started up just as we got on the road, and we barely made it to the shacks", Mr. Cole said. The blizzard raged for three days and the travellers had nothing to eat except what they could scrounge from a sack of oat chop used by their horses. "It almost stuck in our throats and almost choked us, but it kept us alive".

Mr. Cole said that the blizzard finally stopped and bitter cold set in: The men resumed their journey, and were about to bed down behind a range of small hills when they saw a sod shack with smoke ascending from a chimney.

"I'll never forget that sight".

The travellers were relieved to find that a man, amply supplied with food lived there.

### **Reaches home**

"That night I ate the sweetest meal I ever ate in my life", Mr. Cole said.

On the ninth day, Mr. Cole reached his homestead. He said his wife and her mother had been alone for three weeks not knowing if he would ever return.

"The funniest thing about the whole experience, I guess was that I didn't even get frost-bitten. And that was my first prairie winter."

Mr. Cole explained the rumour that he died in the blizzard was spread by a neighbour of his whom he only remembers as being called "Winters".

"This fellow Winters was on his way to Saskatoon, when he stopped in at our homestead, and my wife told him that I still hadn't returned from Battleford. He jumped to the conclusion that I was caught in the blizzard and I had frozen to death".

He said that Winters carried the story from Coleville to Saskatchewan, where he told a clerk at Cairns department store that Mr. Cole had died. The clerk, who came from Lindsay, Ontario, Mr. Cole's home town, sent word of his death to friends in Ontario.

"We received a whole batch of condolence cards from Lindsay in March of 1907. They'd been sitting in a post office at Saskatoon all winter", Mr. Cole said.

Mr. Cole said that a few days before the sympathy mail arrived, two RCMP officers visited the homestead".

"One of the Mounties asked me what my name was, and when I told him 'Malcolm Cole', he grabbed my shoulder saying, 'you're the liveliest-looking corpse I've ever seen'. The Mounties told he that they had been sent from Moose Jaw to find my body".

As if to dispel any further doubts about his present well-being Mr. Cole remarked, "I went to see my doctor two weeks ago, and he told me that except for my legs, which are getting weak, I was as sound as a bell."

"Heck, if my legs were any stronger, I'd take you on in a footrace" he challenged the reporter.

Mr. Cole said he left the homestead in 1908 and came

to Saskatchewan, where he went into the insurance business.

“I sold life insurance for a few years, then started up in real estate, founding the Cole Real Estate Agency”, he said.

After 40 years in real estate, Mr. Cole retired in 1948. His

wife, Anna Rosa, died in 1952.

He now lives alone in a large white house on 4th Ave., north, which he built in 1949.

“I don't have any family here, but my friends visit me often and we spend a lot of time re-living the old days”, Mr. Cole said.