

OUR PIONEERS

From the TORONTO STAR WEEKLY dated October 1934, we take the following article, written by Mrs. Sarah Guppy, in accordance with a request from the STAR WEEKLY for stories about CANADIAN PIONEERS.

"We arrived," writes Mrs. Guppy, "in Quebec in May 1912, and took the train for NORTHERN ONTARIO to Cochrane, with the intention of settling on my brother's farm 15 miles north of Cochrane, at a place called Clute.

"I shall never forget how strange everything seemed after coming straight from the heart of London, ENGLAND.

"We stayed at first at a farm two and a half miles from Cochrane. (Now known as the Murray Young Farm) It was dark the night we arrived at this place. My first thoughts as soon as I woke, were to look out of the window. All I could see for miles around, was green bush. There was a clearing of about ten acres around the house.

"My brother and friends, came from farms down south to locate in Northern Ontario. They were the first settlers in Clute, so they were PIONEERS. At that time there were no roads, only mud and a corduroy road out to where we stayed (lot 28 con. 3 Glackmeyer)

"The government, at this time, were surveying roads and a party of about 30 men were working on the road that led past where we were staying. This house had a well near the road, where we got our water.

"I was pumping away one day when I looked up and saw a beautiful black bear coming towards me. I just gave one yell and with that the men at the road saw it too, and all made towards it with their axes. I stood, a few minutes, speechless, then when it saw the men, it turned and cut into the green bush. The men came back and I ran into the house for my brother. He was away visiting at the time, but when he did come in, I told him. He tried to follow the trail of the bear, but could not as it soon got dark. I shall never forget the beauty of its shiny black fur. A large bear, it was, like we see in a zoo.

"We were just out here two weeks when the little house we lived in was burned down, and we lost everything we owned, except an large sea chest. After that we lived in tents while we were having a house built, a large log cabin. Two Indians and my brother built it. I will always remember how glad we were when it was finished, and we could move in and fix it up. It was HOME.

"Later on in the summer bush fires were very bad. We were surrounded by fire for three days. It was an awful experience. The hen house close by and the out houses were all burned down. Only for the kindness of two men and for my brother I guess we would have been burned out again. It took them all they could do to put out sparks that flew onto the house. They dug trenches around the house. There was a very small clearing around this place. Those men were burned and they could hardly see out of their eyes. The smoke in the house was fierce, but thank goodness, it rained the third day and that saved us.

"These were the early days of the north. This same country is getting wonderfully cleared now and in time? I think it will be one of the richest counties.

"My oldest brother and chum had a weird experience. They had not long taken up their farms when they had to go into Cochrane for provisions, which they carried in pack sacks on their backs, with a strap around the forehead.

"They were returning to Clute when they heard a noise and looking up saw two large bob-cats jumping from tree to tree, coming after them. These creatures follow you that way, and if you happen to stumble or stop, they may jump on you. My brother said he will never forget how he and his chum plodded on, afraid to stop, and never were they so thankful as when they came to their little hut in the woods, and soon were safely inside.

"I am sorry to say my brother died of typhoid in 1913, but his chum (MR. E. E. Phillips) who experienced that walk with him is still in Clute on his farm, married now, with a family, and carries the mail from Cochrane to Clute three times a week.

"I have two brothers running that same farm, living with my Mother. She is an old pioneer, for she oft-times stayed alone in the bush in the early days.