



the painted box

by Wendy Thomson

Before I start sorting through all the little notes I made since moving here, I guess it should be explained exactly where Buck Creek is, as it's a community so tiny it isn't on many maps.

About 70 miles east of Edmonton and a little south on a map are Breton and Drayton Valley. Where the road going straight west from Breton intersects a road coming south from close to Drayton Valley is an old gas station and a general store. That is Buck Creek, and we're two miles east of that corner on the Breton road.

Roads are laid out in the same north-south/east-west pattern as they are back in Ontario, but here they have no names or numbers (and no signs). Everything is just "The second road to the right past the little bridge—not the big one, but the little one" or "The road you're at when you first catch sight of the double-wide with the blue shutters". It's rather confusing. The first time Gord and I went to Edmonton and came home late, we couldn't find our way back!

And one day I decided to drive around what I figured would be the equivalent of a concession and ended up going 32 miles! Many roads are put in by oil companies just as far as their wells. There's no telling which roads will go through and which will end after branching out to several wells.

Notes

Notes written the first week we were here: Hunting and fishing seem to be a way of life here. I guess it fills the freezer far more cheaply than anything else. It's rather intriguing to sit and listen to the talk of hunting muskrat. "When I go, I don't pack a lunch" said one old guy. "Just take bread and salt, catch a muskrat, and roast the hind legs over a fire back in the swamp, one for me and one for the dog. Real tasty." Out the back of the house sits an old refrigerator which I thought a real eyesore. But I see now it's used as a smokehouse for fish. There was a real smokehouse here before, we were told, but first the meat caught fire then the house itself caught fire and that was the end of that.

For lunch one day, we went into a local restaurant and had some of the best fish and chips I'd ever eaten. The fish was fabulous! I learned after, that it was catfish.

And a neighbour sent over a fresh caught salmon one day. Who could ask for a nicer snack!

Backyard elk

The hounds think this is great country too, and have started running coyote. However, after they took a trial run after a mule deer and elk, we decided to keep them tied. I kind of like the idea of having elk in the back yard.

November

November 9: A month ago, we spent our last night in Acton. I remember lying there listening to the noises of the house—or lack of noises, I

should say. With everything electrical sold, there was silence like there hadn't been for 16 years, since we moved in with no hydro.

I can't say that about our first days here. The ten calves had to be weaned, and once separated from their mamas, they bawled endlessly. The mamas commiserated from their side of the fence, and the rest of the cattle moaned along too.

Off in the bush, the coyotes pronounced "ky-yoot". I learned songs quavered and hung in the frosty air. Our three hounds sent out answering messages of threat and frustration from inside the old log cabin.

Sign in the Agriculture office: "EAT CANADIAN LAMB". 10,000 COYOTES CAN'T BE WRONG."

Ferret bite

Minnie-the-ferret bit me today—not a playful nip either, but a definite keep-your-grubby-hands-out-of-my-woodchips bite.

The previous owner had had mink or something here, and there's dozens of different types and sizes of cages piled around. He was so taken with Minnie that he gave her a four-storey cage with connecting runway.

To accommodate a ferret's whims, we laid it down on its side and Min now has more of a motel set-up than hotel. From the "hallway" she can go into a room packed to the top with straw, one half-full of wood chips, the third stuffed with wild grasses and the fourth was just big enough to hold her box with ever-present work sock for sleeping.

The day after Min was put in there, I went out to see how she was enjoying it. She was still ecstatic, rushing from room to room, tunnelling in the straw, burrowing deep in the wood shaving and just generally having a grand time.

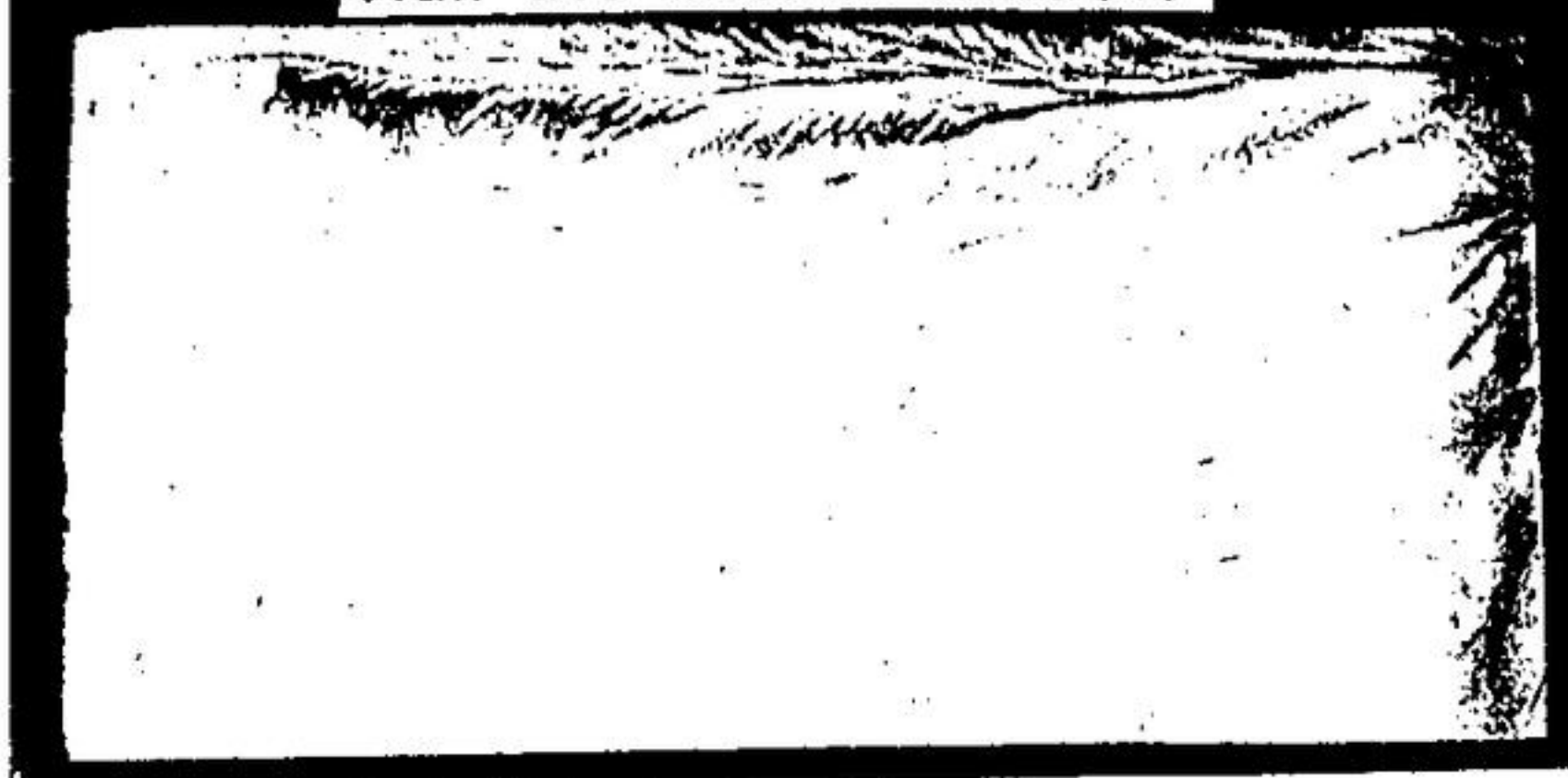
Opening the lid to the shavings section, I reached in to fluff them up a bit. Just then Min came tearing down the hall, reached in the door and bit me!

There was no mistaking that "get out!" and I got! Luckily she got the back of my hand where (big as her mouth is) she couldn't get a mouthful but left a four-fang furrow across my hand.

Last little note I can find written in October was "Looked out the window and saw Gord going by on stilts. The Alberta air must be good for him."



Half the kitchen window



Free Press Family Page



Coyote tracks barely visible

Photos by Wendy Thomson

Uncover history with note in bottle

While taking out some windows of his 36 Scene St. home, Bert Hofstede and helpers inadvertently stumbled upon a bit of history.

Inside the window frame was a small bottle, six and a half inches high, with a piece of paper placed inside it. The bottle had a greenish tinge to it, and had ESS Camp Coffee and Chicory impressed on one side, Paterson's and Glasgow on another two sides, with the fourth side free of words.

The note inside was written on a small, bedraggled, yellowed piece of paper. Some sort of oil had been smeared over it, perhaps in an attempt to preserve it.

Contents

Written in pencil and in barely legible handwriting, the note said, "This house was built in the year 1811 by

George Caswell in spare time. Potatoes this winter 1911/1912 from \$1.75 to \$2.00 per bag, butter 32 cents to 35 cents, beef steak, 22 cents a lb."

On the opposite side of the paper were names, perhaps of people who helped build the house. "Douglas O., Lucie E., Josie Mc., Gladys H., Stella C., Joe H., and Johnnie Mc." were the names.

Whoever Mr. Caswell was, he seemed to be ahead of his time, placing a time capsule in a place where it would be discovered eventually. He knew that people would be interested in the prices of items!

Because of Mr. Caswell's ingenuity many years ago, a bit more of Acton's past has been unfolded.



BERT HOFSTED made a discovery while removing a window from his Scene St. home recently. He found a bottle with a note in it, listing prices of goods in the year 1911.

Free Press

Personals

Miss Vera Morrow, Winnipeg, Manitoba, visited Mrs. D. Cripps and family.

Mrs. Dwight Haven of Camber visited here with her sister, Mrs. R. H. Elliott, Mr. Elliott and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Mainprize, David and Janet of Montreal visited over the holidays with Mr. and Mrs. Barry Mainprize and Bill Mainprize. Jack is home for a holiday from Brazil where he has been supervising the installation of turbines at a new dam.

Mrs. Jenny E. Lambe of Guelph visited the James O'Rourke's and family during the Christmas holidays.

Christmas day guests of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Johnston were Mr. and Mrs. Ward Bruce, Osprey; Mr. Garnet Bruce, Mississauga; Doctors Barry and Carol Bruce and son Michael, Carp, Ont.; Mr. and Mrs. James Sayers, Lynda and Lorna, R.R. 4, Acton, and Mr. and Mrs. Les Wilson and daughter Jennifer, R.R. 2, Rockwood.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Johnston attended a family dinner for the Johnston side of the house at Dixie Presbyterian church on December 27 and spent New Year's day with Mr. and Mrs. James Sayers and family.

Miss Gladys Sanders spent the Christmas holiday week and New Year's with Mr. and Mrs. James Sayers and family, R.R. 4, Acton.

Mrs. Norman Hart of Brantford spent New Year's Day with her aunt Mrs. Ada Allison.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon McKeown and Peter spent several pleasant days at Christmas in Ottawa with daughter Brenda, Stephen, Trevor, and Bradley Cole.

Dr. Tom McKeown, who is interning at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary, spent several days at Lake Louise skiing.

Cpl. Jim McKeown and family spent their first

Christmas in Nonnenweier, West Germany, where he is stationed with the armed forces.

Mrs. June Ost, Keri, Julie and Dean of Hasselt, Michigan, visited with relatives and friends here over the holidays.

Visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Stan Bowen and family over the holidays were their son Wayne and his wife Theresa and children Laura and Mark of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Free Press reporter-photographer Helen Leavell returned Sunday evening from a two week vacation in Florida. Although the weather did not co-operate as much as expected, she and her family, from Collingwood, enjoyed the sights of Fort Myers, Tampa, Miami, and Disney World. They also visited Nashville, Tennessee and Bowling Green, Kentucky on their way south.

What is a year?

By Peter Cavanaugh. A year is composed of many things. Of months and weeks and days. Hours and minutes and seconds too. Precious time to which every heart clings.

Each year brings four seasons for us to enjoy. With spring well ahead of the rest. And summer with all its sunshine and joy is indeed very nearly the best.

But autumn with gusty winds surely must be. The most glorious season of all. When myriads of colour bedeck every tree. And its frost-painted wonders enthral.

Winter comes last with its sleet and snows. Bringing blankets of whiteness and ice. Its pureness cleansing the air as it goes. Clearing illness and smog in a trice.

Each year brings new joy and sadness I fear. As twelve months older we grow. But we wish out the old at the end of each year. And we welcome the new as we go.

Christmas meeting for Greenock W.I.

The Greenock Women's Institute held their Christmas meeting Dec. 11 at the home of Mrs. Gordon Johnston. Mrs. R. Sinclair, the president, opened the meeting with a Christmas reading, the ode and Mary Stewart Collett. The roll call was "To name a Christmas carol and all join in singing one verse."

Mrs. J. McCulloch gave definitions of the carols and read a poem, "How Mrs. S. saved Christmas". Mrs. C. Binnie gave the meditation.

Mrs. Ed Archibald and Mrs. J. McCulloch, conveners of the program, conducted a contest on Christmas carols and a candy contest.

An exchange of gifts, something you had made, brought the meeting to a close. Lunch was served by the

hostess, Mrs. E. Patterson and Elva Pearen. Courtesy convener was Mrs. C. Binnie.

32 Sideroad

Number 32 Sideroad was designated a through highway by Halton Hills council, Monday night.

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Commercial Accountancy
Duration: 40 weeks. Cost: \$300.00 + \$8.00. Pre-requisite: Grade 10 or equivalent. This course has been designed to prepare graduates for junior positions in the accounting field. Graduates will be able to look after books to the trial balance of a small business or do payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, cash payments, etc. in a large firm.

Key Punch
Duration: 6 weeks (Monday - Friday from 9.00 a.m. to 3.45 p.m.). Hours of instruction: 90. Pre-requisite: typing 35 w.p.m. Cost: \$200.00 (Pre-registration required). When this course is completed the student should be able to key punch at 10,000 strokes per hour.

Quality Control (Sanitation and Hygiene)
Duration: 15 weeks. Starting date: Thursday January 29th, 1976 to May 6. Time: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$30.00 + \$5.00 book fee. This course is only being offered at Brampton.

Quality Control (Statistics)
Duration: 15 weeks. Starting Date: Wednesday January 28th, 1976 to May 5. Time: 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Cost: \$30.00. This course is only being offered at Oakville.

Academic Upgrading
Duration: 16 weeks for each level. Cost: \$120.00 + \$10.00 book fee for each level. The Academic Upgrading Program provides the means by which a student may continue his education to a level that approximates grade 12 in Ontario. Subjects offered are: Math, Science (Physics, Biology, Chemistry); English and Life Skills. Successful completion of this program may be used as the admission requirement to Community Colleges. The program is designed so that a student can begin at a level that meets his or her own particular need. Grade 9 - Level I, Grade 10 - Level II, Grade 11 - Level III, Grade 12 - Level IV. All levels are offered on a continuous intake basis.

Basic Job Readiness
Duration: up to 52 weeks. Cost: approx. \$5.00 per week. The primary purpose of this program is to enable the participant to acquire the skills necessary to effectively search for and obtain suitable employment, continue academic or skill training, increase financial independence, improve work habits and work appreciation. Participants will be accepted on a referral basis from agencies. The program will consist of Life Skills and Academic courses.

English As A Second Language
Duration: 24 weeks. Cost: \$120.00 12 weeks. Cost: \$60.00. There is no pre-requisite. This program will give the student a working knowledge of basic English and introduce him to Canadian culture and customs. Basic, Intermediate and Advanced classes are available. Fees for all the above courses can be paid in 8 week blocks with the exception of Key Punch and Quality Control. All classes are held from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and begin any Monday, unless otherwise stated.

For Further Information Please Call:
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