

First Home a Dugout For Della Stuart Eby



In this article, Mrs. Della Stuart Eby, O'Neill, tells of her childhood years in the Springview area of Nebraska.

My parents decided to take the admonition given by Horace Greeley seriously — "Go West Young Man and Grow up with the Country."

So in 1884, they moved when I was just two years old, and it almost seems incredible that I should remember some of the things I do. This proves to me that the impressions made on the baby mind can linger through

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so many years—seventy some years, as in the case of this writer.

My father shipped west with some other Illinois people. This was the spring of 1884. My mother, sister, Olive Mae, four years old and myself, two years old, waited at the home of my maternal grandfather, Dr. E. R. Boardman at Elmira, Ill., until my father provided us living quarters.

David M. Stuart, my father, rode in an immigrant car along with all his possessions, as did the others going west. He, with several other men in the group, dug a big hole in the side hill. Then they drove to the Niobrara river and got pine logs for a roof, and over these they placed deep layers of sod closely packed.

I have no memory of the trip out by train with my mother and sister, but I do remember getting off the train at Bassett. The homestead daddy had taken was in Keya Paha County, seven miles east of Springview.

My father met us with mules and a covered wagon. I remember when we reached our destination and the funny little home.

Daddy had dug a well in a low place near the dugout, just the depth of a spade, handle and all. We got water by dropping a pail and pulling it up by a rope.

My father had included in the conglomerated mess of things in the immigrant car, a breaking plow and several sacks of good Illinois seed corn, which he learned to his sorrow, was not adapted to high dry Nebraska prairie land. But like all new settlers, he lived to learn. My mother, a girl raised in a home of culture, had never had to take the hard knocks of life, but she had the kind of stuff it took for early settlers, and as my father broke the sod, she followed with a spade, making a hole and dropping the seed by hand. All her life she carried scars on the

soles of her feet from that spade.

My folks found that the old stork would soon be coming up the trail and some sort of a more adequate house had to be built. Daddy began hauling logs from the Niobrara, going one day, cutting trees for the log cabin, spending another day digging little trees for our tree claim and the third day coming home. I knew what those long lonely days meant to my mother. But if there was fear or regret in her heart those dear old brown eyes never revealed it to her children.

I well remember hearing her tell of sitting all night at a little window with her trusted little revolver in her hand. A pack of hungry prairie wolves had gotten on the roof of the dugout, and she did not know when they would work through the sod roof, but she felt quite safe as she watched her babies. To her utter dismay the next morning she discovered her gun was not loaded.

After many trips to the timber or logs and to the railroad for three windows, the little two room cabin was completed. The season was very dry and that precious one-hundred acres of sod corn barely fed the mules through the winter. My father then was compelled to seek employment away from home to keep the wolf away from the door. He worked for Bill Powell in a livery barn in Springview.

On March 8, 1885, the stork left us a 12-pound boy, who was named Merrell M. Stuart. I remember daddy getting us two girls up in the middle of the night and taking us to another settler by the name of Jake Rugar, several miles away, and leaving us with the husband, taking the wife home with him to help with the delivery. The stork did not bring along a doctor to deliver the baby. Since the nearest doctor was at Niobrara, my father and the part Negro woman did the task. The little newcomer was so large and was slow in deciding he wanted to live in a log cabin in Nebraska. I have heard that the brave little mother of mine say that the baby was nearly still born. She got up and put her mouth to his, forcing him to expand and contract his lungs, and spanking him, as she had seen

her doctor father do, until the baby finally cried. Mother's health was never good after that.

Well, since we are on the subject of the stork, the cantankerous old bird remembered the trail and just twenty-two months later, he buzzed over and left us another boy. This one was named Orlo, who later in life became known to all as "Stub". The stork again arrived without sufficient help and my father again filled in. My mother's health was so impaired that it was decided she should go home for a few months to be with her doctor father and the big old home on Medical Hill at Elmira, Ill.

There, we remained for six months. As soon as grandfather decided mother was able to return to Nebraska, nothing could hold her.

In our absence my father had been working in Springview. When we got home, the mules were gone, but he had gotten a cow, for grandfather had insisted we children must have milk to drink.

One year while on the homestead, the folks planted a lot of watermelons. They did so well, mother cut up the melons and boiled the juice down until it was syrup, and I can remember how good it tasted on corn meal pancakes.

In the fall after our return from Illinois, daddy built a sod kitchen on the side of our log cabin. It just had a dirt floor and though mother swept very carefully, that floor wore down until the stove and table were so high, we could hardly reach them.

That year mother held the claim while my father worked in Springview for M. T. Boland in his general store. Mother would take him in on Sunday evening and go for him the following Saturday night. This was the time of the vigilantes. I remember one evening a man rode into our place and told mother to get him something to eat, and to hurry. Mother told him she would give him some food, but that he could not stay since she was alone with four little children. He ate and rode on. He was later killed in the Springview jail by a mob.

Mother never went to the door without her revolver when she was alone. I remember distinctly one bright moonlight night, a man rode up to our bedroom window and pounded on the window with his riding crop. We awakened and he told us he wanted to stay the night. Mother told him she was alone with four children and could not keep him, but that there was a place about two miles up the road where he might stay. He began to unsaddle his horse, and said he was dead tired and so was his horse, and he was staying.

Mother walked up to the window and flashed her revolver in the moonlight and said, "Mister just put that saddle back on your horse, you're not staying here. This gun is loaded and I know how to use it." He stood for a minute, saddled up and went on. About an hour later our door, which of course had no lock, flew open. Mother thought the traveler had returned, but the prairie wind was the intruder.

When we returned from Illinois, the problem of school for us girls had to be faced. The Pine Camp school, three miles away, had been organized. Mother walked about a mile with us, carried the baby and led my older brother. Then she sat down and watched until we reached the school house. In the evening, she would walk to the same point and watch for us.

One day I was sick in school, just a stomach ache. Our teacher, Mr. Worley, just over from England, made a bed on a bench until school was out, then he carried me all the way home.

A few nights later mother was taken very sick — heart attack. She awakened my sister and me, and told us we would have to go to the neighbors for help. I was

to go to the nearest neighbor, just a mile away, and my sister, the other way—south to Perry Wilkins, about two miles. We knew nothing of fear so we started out. Mother told us if we met anyone, just to say that our mother was very sick and alone, and that we were going for help. Mr. Cummings came to the door and soon had a team ready, then he and Mrs. Cummings put me in the big wagon and we were soon home. Mr. Cummings then went to Springview for daddy and a doctor. My sister had also reached another neighbor's house and they soon came. In a few days, I asked my mother why she sent us separately for help. She said if ever a soul prayed she did as she saw her two little girls trudge out into the dark alone.

After the illness, mother consented to move to Springview for the school year and just spend three months out on the claim, which she did until the proof was made. Then the irony of it was, the land was sold for taxes. The folks did not consider it worth paying taxes on.

The winter after we moved to Springview was the year of the long remembered blizzard of 1888, which story I well remember distinctly, with its thrills and chills and frozen hands, but that is another story.

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Inman News

By Mrs. James McMahan

Mr. and Mrs. Earl White, Fort Collins, Colo., came Thursday to visit Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Abney. They left Saturday for Minnesota where they will visit other relatives. Mr. White is a brother of Mrs. Abney.

Mr. and Mrs. William Moads, Yetter, Ia., spent the weekend visiting Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Abney.

Sunday dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Abney were Mr. and Mrs. William Moads, Yetter, Ia., and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kelly and family, Page.

Douglas Mutschallat, Page, spent Saturday night with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Anthony and family.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Kelley and family, Norfolk, visited Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Kelley and family.

Ronald Coventry, Norfolk, spent Wednesday and Thursday visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Coventry and Bob.

Charles Young, who has been employed near Culbertson returned home Saturday.

Mr. R. B. South is a medical patient at St. Anthony's hospital, O'Neill.

Ned Kelley, Lincoln, spent the weekend visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Kelley and fam-

ily and other friends and relatives.

Mrs. Larry Williamson and daughter, Orchard, visited Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Couch, Friday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. John Mattson and Mrs. James McMahan spent Thursday in Sioux City, Ia., and Lyons, Nebr., where they visited Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Gates.

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Green and son, Sioux City, are spending a few days visiting Mrs. Green's parents, Mr. and Mrs. T. D. Hutton.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Burival and son and Mr. and Mrs. Art Holz and daughter, O'Neill, visited Friday evening with Mr. and Mrs. Howard Jackson and Billy.

Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Couch spent the weekend at their home here. They were enroute from Sterling to Lexington where they will be employed.

Norbert Clark returned home Saturday from St. Anthony's hospital where he had been a medical patient for a few days.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Reynolds and daughters were Sunday evening dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull, Lynch. The occasion was the birthday anniversary of Mr. Hull.

Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie George, High Point, W. Va., and Mr. and Mrs. Bert Reynolds, Neligh, visited Mr. and Mrs. Albert Reynolds and family Saturday evening.

A group of friends honored Mr. and Mrs. Howard Jackson at a

housewarming Saturday evening. The group presented a gift to Mr. and Mrs. Jackson. Lunch was served at the close of the evening.

Mrs. Bonnie Buhlman and son returned to their home in Lincoln Friday after spending a few days visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Banks and Roger.

CWO Lorin Keyes left Sunday evening for Hawaii, where he is stationed with the Army, after visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Keyes, for several days.

Neil and Ann Kelley, Columbus, spent the weekend visiting Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Kelley and family.

Tina Sanders, O'Neill, is spending a few days with her grandmother, Mrs. J. B. Peters and Larry.

Bill DeLong, Rock Rapids, Ia., spent the weekend visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Merle DeLong. Mr. and Mrs. DeLong returned to Rock Rapids with Bill Sunday evening and will visit Mr. and Mrs. Floyd DeLong for a few days.

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GALLAGHER CLOSING OUT GALLAGHER FARM SALE

Because of the death of my husband I am unable to continue our farming operation and will offer for sale to the highest bidder at public auction the following described personal property at the farm LOCATED . . . 3 miles west of the O'Neill Drive-In theatre, 8 north and 3/4 west . . . OR . . . from Spencer dam 13 miles south, 3 west, 2 south and 3/4 west . . . OR . . . from Atkinson 13 east of NE corner, 4 north and 3/4 west (watch for Farm Sale Arrows) on . . .

Tuesday, Aug. 7

Sale starts at 1 p.m.

Lunch at Sale

MACHINERY & MISCELLANEOUS

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| F-20 Tractor with 3-rake hitch attached, on rubber | Oil and cream cans, some containing new oil | EXCEPTIONALLY LARGE ASSORTMENT OF GOOD SHOP TOOLS, PARTS AND REPAIRS LOTS OF OLD IRON AND OLD MACHINERY |
| 1952 AC WD tractor in good shape on good rubber | Feed Bunk | Electric air compressor with paint spray attachment |
| 1945 JD "A" tractor with power troll, fluid in tires and anti-freeze. All in excellent condition | Some steel posts | Power hack saw |
| Case VAC tractor | Lots of woven wire in good shape | Bench grinder |
| Old Case tractor | High wheel wagon gear | 1/2-in. electric drill |
| 2-row corn planter for "C" | Good Stock Saddle | Power jig saw |
| 2-row lister | Road drag | Portable electric saw — Good |
| Cable rack with duals on rear | Wagon gear and box | Power table saw |
| 9-ft. J. D. No. 8 tractor mower with 3-point hitch | 2 — Repeating shotguns | Battery electric fence |
| 3 — 12-ft. hay rakes | 15-ft. chest type home freezer, nearly new | Vise |
| Hay cage on rubber | 1961 International Pickup I-H 100 1/2 - ton with deluxe cab, rear bumpers, radio, new combination grain and stock rack, locked rear end, trailer hitch, only 11,000 actual miles and like new | Buzz Saw Blade — Good |
| Do-All loader with sweep head, pushoff, manure scoop and grapple fork | About 500 bu. Corn | 2 — Dehorners |
| 12-ft. AC disc | 12 Muscovy ducks | Good tap and die set |
| 10-ft. disc | 7 Geese | Some barrels |
| Tractor chains | Forney electric welder, cable and lots of welding rods | Post drill |
| 2 — Hydraulic cylinders | | Forge |
| New heavy duty hydraulic jack | | New gas tank heater |
| Truck chains | | Good tractor winch |
| Some 9-ft. J. D. sickles | | Electric breast drill |
| | | Propane weed burner and tank |
| | | Many other articles too numerous to mention |

TERMS: CASH. No property to be removed until settled for

Mrs. Robert Gallagher

Roy Kirwan, Ed Thorin, Chuck Mahony auction service, Butte and O'Neill

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