

Pioneer woman's death breaks link with past

By ETHEL KEELE

WADENA (Special)—Another of the links with pioneering days of the early 1900's was broken recently with the passing of Mrs. Menzo Van Patten of Kylemore, for whom funeral service was held in the United Church here March 5.

Mrs. Van Patten was symbolic of those brave-hearted pioneer women who left the security and comfort of an established community to settle on a homestead which, in her case, was almost 100 miles from the nearest railroad and source of mail and supplies; who set out to build a home on unbroken land whose boundaries were marked only by surveyors' stakes and where long and lonely wagon trails, snaking their way across the plains, were the only roads back to civilization.

Annie Katherine McCormick was born in Carlyle, N.D., on Dec. 4, 1881. She was married there in 1901 to Menzo David Van Patten and the following year they left Joliette, N.D. with Mr. Van Patten's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Van Patten, and his uncle, John Ringland, of Auburn, New York, to start a new home in Canada. Their destination was Yorkton, Northwest Territories.

Each of the three men filed on a homestead about 10 miles east of what was later the town of Wadena in the district between Kylemore and Kuroki. They travelled by team to the Quill Plains and commenced building houses while the women remained in Yorkton. The men returned to help with harvesting in the Yorkton district and it was not until November of 1903 that the families set out for their new homes, travelling the long distance in covered sleighs. John Ringland, batching at the homestead, his first year away from city life, had a warm fire awaiting them when they arrived. Mrs. Van Patten carrying her eight months' old baby son.

The following year the CNR line was built, its welcome rails bordering their homestead. A gravel pit on the Van Patten farm supplied road bed material and the railroad built a spur to it. There, on occasion, carloads of settlers' effects were "shunted off" and left to be unloaded and trekked across the country by team of horses or oxen. With no station or siding near at hand the Van Patten home became a whistle stop for the train, passengers and freight often deposited there with a whistled announcement of arrival.

Children and young folks of that period, now the younger oldtimers of the district, can recall the happy social gatherings in the Van Patten home as it became a community centre. Mr. and Mrs. Van Patten set up a general store in the hamlet of Kylemore, three miles from their homestead, in 1910 and on June 24 of that year Mr. Menzo Van Patten became postmaster, a position which he held for 47 years, and during which Mrs. Van Patten was his assistant. When the couple retired on Aug. 31, 1957, 80 of their friends and neighbors braved a rainstorm to gather at the hamlet schoolhouse and present them with an armchair and good wishes.

The couple had a family of six, four sons and two daughters. Frank and Dave have remained on the original homesteads; Jim is principal of Elfros School; Dick is with the RCMP, in charge of its world-famous musical ride; Mary is Mrs. Chancey Burge, of Dawson Creek, B.C. The youngest daughter, Margaret, died at the age of four years, victim of the 1918 flu epidemic. A sister, Miss Belle McCormick, lives in Winnipeg.

Roll damages car

WADENA (Special) — Ethel Murray Forbes, of the Indian branch of the national health and welfare department, Ottawa

Annie McCormick Van Patten Obituary

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