

# New Salem Ahead of R.R.

Goodwin and Hugh Taylor, each teaching a term in the log school. Children from the Hills, Hoyme, McKenzie, Hartman, Spoklie and Van Petten families attended the first classes. The building was sold and moved to the Van Petten farm, where it later burned down.

Rev. Thomas Phillips, Methodist Church Minister, who was leading a wanderer's life with preaching appointments in homes and at Skafse school, encouraged the building of a church. Under his direction, a grant of twenty acres of land was purchased by the Government and donated for the building site, the location being S.E. 14.

The construction of the building was under the supervision of Willis Allen, father of Mrs. Ellsworth Hills, additional labor being supplied by the settlers. Dedication services were held on February 25th, 1906, Rev. Finley officiating, and Scafe Church became one of the two churches east of Wetaskiwin, between that town and Saskatoon, a second church being built about the same time in the Spring Lake district.

Four of the early settlers who found a resting place in the little church-yard with funeral services held in the church, were Mrs. W. S. Carter, Mrs. Wm. Throssell Sr., Mrs. Lewis Hartman, contributing a small amount of money towards wages for the teacher; and Eurastus Taylor taught the first classes in his homestead shack located five miles south of Camrose on N.E. 10-46-20, now owned by C. O. Peterson. Mr. Taylor, who was described as being the typical old-time school master, taught school until a district was formed and a log school built.

## BUILDING OF LOG SCHOOL

The J. K. Van Petten family moved into the district in 1900, and added their support to organizing the district known as Skafse, the site being south of the Hoyme homestead and presently owned by Mrs. Rachel Magee. The building on that first school site was made of logs, and Miss Elizabeth Shaw was the first teacher, followed by Miss Bomber, Mrs. Easton, Mr.

Ten years ahead of the railroad, settlers poured into a small area that had Dried Meat Lake its south boundary. They were a self-sufficient group of people who freighted lumber and material from Wetaskiwin when necessary, and soon had homes built and a start made towards the agricultural development of their farms.

School was important to these settlers, which included the Hills, Hartman, McKenzie, Spoklie and Hoyme families. The organization of a school district took time, as all correspondence for the formation of a district was carried on through Ottawa, head of the Government for the Territories. These families organized a temporary school, each con-

man and Delbert Van Petten. Their resting place was sheltered by a row of a dozen spruce trees, planted by J. K. Van Petten, which stood for years as a monument to his zeal.

The little log school outgrew its usefulness, and once again the homesteaders turned their attention to replacing it with a new frame building, which was constructed in 1905. Zilbert Hills, T. Hoyme, Lewis Hartman, John Spoklie, J. K. Van Petten and Murdock McKenzie all served on the early school boards.

## OPERATED SCAFSE STORE AND POST OFFICE

Joseph Kingsbury Van Petten, a land delegate for a Kansas Land Company, arrived in New Salem district from Kansas, U.S.A., in August, 1900.

J. K. Van Petten filed on S.E. 14. Mr. McKenzie assisted with cutting logs and constructing their first log house, which will be remembered by many persons over a wide area, as it later housed the Scafe store and post office when they were asked to take it over. The Skafse Church was also built on the south half of the same section, and the Van Petten's served on the hall board and were caretakers of the church, and planted the spruce trees that sheltered the graveyard—all that now remains to mark the spot where the church, now moved to Ohaton, stood.

Van Petten sons also filed on homesteads locally, Robert, N.W. 30; Bill, S.W. 30; and Edward, N.E. 2, all in township 46, range 20.

They recall the district being sparsely settled, and some of the neighbors they recall were the Hills', Ivan Reid's, T. Hoyme's, Lewis Hartman, Bill Throssell's, Spokkeli's and McWhirter's. Rob and Will Van Petten worked the first years in a sawmill, and during the winter of 1904-05 hauled lumber from Wetaskiwin to Camrose for construction work on the budding townsite of Sparling.

Will Van Petten later settled in the Albury district, and following his death the family have continued to operate the family farm, and have made purebred livestock the first interest of the farm.

## BROUGHT FIRST THRESHER INTO COUNTRY

Lewis L. Hartman immigrated from Des Moines, Iowa, in 1895, and homesteaded six miles south of Camrose on the farm now owned by the Woods family.

He took an active part in the development of the New Salem district, served on the New Salem school board, and Mrs. Hartman was an ardent supporter of the Methodist Church at Skafse (New Salem).

The first threshing machine, a horse-power, was brought into the district by Mr. Hartman, and when the steam threshers be-

came popular he bought an outfit and threshed over a wide area of the district.

In 1913, he sold his farm to D. W. Bridal and Herbert Smith and moved to Camrose, where he was agent for the International Harvester Co.

The Will Throssell family, who accompanied them to the district in 1905, were also early homesteaders who helped to develop the district, and improved a homestead. Their land is now owned by Holly Reid.

Lew Hartman was instrumental in his brother, Albert, and family, moving to the New Salem district in 1907, later moving to Heather Brae and Albury district, where the family has taken an active part in the community for over forty years.

## 60 YEARS IN THIS AREA

The marriage of William P. Mittlestadt and Anna McWhirter in January, 1902, united two of the very early pioneer families. Mr. Mittlestadt homesteaded on section 12-47-20, and Mrs. Mittlestadt's parents, the W. McWhirter's, on the farm now known as the Golberg farm.

Mrs. Mittlestadt now resides on the original homestead, 12-47-20, which is being farmed by their son, Walter. The original house, built in 1901, now stands in the farm yard.

Coming to this district from Canby, Minnesota, when a girl of 12, Mrs. Mittlestadt recalls the severe cold when driving out from Wetaskiwin to her father's (Wm. McWhirter) homestead on Christmas Eve, 1895.

## WHEAT HAULED TO EDMONTON

The first crop of wheat raised by Zilbert Hills in the New Salem district in 1896 was threshed by being tramped out by horses feet and cleaned by a home-made fanning mill. It was hauled to Edmonton, where it was ground into flour for the family's use.

Mr. Hills filed on N.E. 4-46-20 in 1894, having come from the United States. The land adjacent to the lake was the source of a very interesting collection of Indian relics, part of which were turned over to the Camrose Historical Society.

With the help of his sons, Albion, Irving, Ellsworth and Albert, other land was bought and a prosperous mixed farm developed. The railroad was built in 1905 and the development of the town of Camrose became a source of interest, which gained his wholehearted support, and he acquired a large holding of real estate in the new town.

Ellsworth Hills homesteaded 30-45-16, located 4 miles N.W. of the present town of Daysland, in 1903. He recalls having to drive livestock to Wetaskiwin each time he made a sale, and the distance of 60 miles took several days to make a round trip. He and his brother, Albert, later took over the home farm here and developed a fine herd of purebred Shorthorns. Albert passed away in 1935, and his father in March, 1940.