

THE WOODIWISS HISTORY. CAPTAIN WOODIWISS AND NEPHEW, REGINALD WOODIWISS.

Taken from W.L. Swainson's Book, 'OUR ANCESTORS ARRIVE
IN MANITOBA.'

Captain Woodiwiss came to Binscarth from England in the late nineties. Unlike some of his younger compatriots coming to Canada Captain Woodiwiss was, to use the slang term, 'well heeled.' He came to Binscarth in the late late nineties. He looked around for a while, finally purchasing land north east of town, now the Burnett farm. On this land the captain built a very fine home. He and his wife were fond of entertaining and did so on a fairly lavish scale.

*He Predeceased his second eldest son
Kenneth Gordon Leslie, who ~~died~~ had come
home to help take off the harvest and who
died from injuries received in a motorcycle
accident on June 28th 1983. Ken was twenty
two.*

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Captain Woodiwiss coming to Binscarth in the late nineties, from England, purchased land ^{to} north east of town, now the Burnett farm, and ^{north} north. probably being an older man, did not spend his money so foolishly as many of them did, however, his nephew Reginald Woodiwiss who came out a year or two later, and being only twenty years of age, when he arrived, really excelled all his countrymen for lavish spending.

When ^{eg} Reg Woodiwiss was twenty one years of age, he is reputed to have ^{Reg.} come into a fortune of a quarter of a million dollars, and before the arrival of the money, he ran on tick, getting advances on the coming fortune. When the money arrived he purchased the half section east of town, now the Allerton farm, which at that time was quite heavily covered with bush, paying forty dollars an acre for the land, which in that day and age, was worth about four dollars an acre. A gang of half-breeds were hired to cut down the trees, and he purchased a big Case steam engine and proceeded to break up the land. Of course a man with his money didn't need to do any work, and another Englishman, Mr Foster, was hired as a full time secretary and bookkeeper. Eventually the land was brought under cultivation, which ^{of} cost another forty dollars an acre ^{cost} to bring it to this stage. He went to Mr James Anderson, the hardware dealer of that day and ordered page wire and posts to fence in the entire farm, also iron gates, braces etc., and when Mr Anderson asked if he had any idea what all this was going to cost, replied, "Oh, never mind the cost." Next, a two and a half story house was erected, (this has now been cut down to a bungalow) also several stables and other buildings.

By now he was considering it was time to get married, and his sweetheart being in New Zealand, he had to go there to be married. On the return journey he had a special coach attached to the train from Vancouver to Winnipeg. Later he left on a trip to England bringing back the best of everything to stock his

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farm, including shire horses, racing horses, and hounds etc. Having his own threshing outfit and men to run it, he and his secretary rode ^around in Reg's *around* big Case car, which only men with money could afford in those days, or possibly they would ride on horseback with the hounds, and if one of the threshing gang could spy a coyote, away went Reg, hounds and threshing gang, and no more threshing till the wolf was caught or was lost in the valley to the east.

By 1910 the money was running low and debts were beginning to accumulate, In 1912 the farm was sold for twelve thousand dollars, which is what the buildings alone had cost him; this was the sad ending to a fortune of a quarter of a million dollars. I ^{ta}undersatnd that later in life he inherited more money *understand.* and no doubt by that time was much wiser, and is now living in South America.

Will Scarth of Victoria, B.C. submits the following anecdote concerning Reg Woodiwiss's threshing outfit and I quote: " It would be the fall of 1911 that an incident concerning the big outfit was a topic of conversation in our home for a long time. Our west half was intersected by a ravine which ran in such a way as to divide the land into three fields. In order to move to a new setting the outfit had to cross the tiny creek at the West end where the banks were quite low. During an interlude caused by rain, Father decided to build a crude pole platform covered with several loads of manure to make a good crossing. The location he chose required the outfit to move about a quarter of a mile further, and before the day was over, it proved the old adage that 'the longest way around can be the shortest way hme.' Always impatient to move the crew came out in the early afternoon and, ignoring Father's bridge apparently decided to take a short cut across the little ravine which to them looked a very trifling obstacle. There was some water in it, but the bottom was hard,

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so they ^uunhooked the separator, fortunately, and started over with the big ^{unhooked} engine.

The bundle racks were loading up in the new field, and about an hour later some of the men went down to see what delayed the outfit being set. There was the engine in the little rivulet, the huge bull wheels spinning fruitlessly in the mud, unable to move. The front end of the boiler was quite high which presented an element of danger as exposure of the crown sheet to intense heat could cause warping or leaking of the flues. It was obviously impossible to raise the enormous weight with jacks, so old ties were brought from the railway about half a mile distant. As youngsters we watched with fascination as the ties were chained to each bull wheel and then slowly dragged under to gradually raise the engine. By the time they finally got the monster out, pulled the separator over with a cable, and got set, darkness had fallen. Having assisted in building Father's pole structure, our Scottish hired man summed up the day's activities by remarking, "A'weel, as me old feyther used to say, A stupid head makes a tired leg."

For years later, whenever we cut hay on the lower ravine flats we had to skirt ^around the two cellar-like holes that the engine wheels had left, and ^{around} it would not surprise me at all ^{to} could I find them still there. Fortunately Reg. Woodiwiss did not come out that day, but he visited the outfit quite often. He never interfered in the operation, but it must have had a great fascination for him. Our fascination consisted of watching him navigate the big grey Case car with its shiny brass levers and headlamps. The Woodiwiss enterprise would be about the last of the really big steam outfits in the Binscarth district."

Unquote.

The foregoing History was copied verbatim from the late John Swainson's book "OUR ANCESTORS IN MANITOBA" and from Manuscript submitted by William S. Scarth of Victoria B.C. for the Binscarth and District History. ^{bm} Submitted by Norman L. Turnbull. ^{submitted.}