

Binscarth, Manitoba.

My late father, I.B. Griffiths, (Bert, to ^{his} many of his friends), was born in Walsall, Staffordshire, England, in 1882, and after completing his education, the last two years of which ^{were} spent at South Wales College, ^{he} decided to come to Canada, to learn farming, ^{which he did} this being done in September, 1903. Upon arriving, he went to the farm of Mr. Arthur Burgess, in the Seeburn District, to do this. As can be expected, the experiences during this first year, were many and varied--one of which was helping to 'dig out' after a three-day blizzard in March 1904, during the whole time of which neither Mr. Burgess, nor my Dad dared to leave the house to feed or water any of the stock, which was, of course, in the barns--this said storm took place toward the end of March!

In the Spring of 1904, my Dad's brother Percy, came to Canada, where he, too, 'hired out' to learn to farm--on the farm of Mr. Sandy McDonald, also of the Seeburn district.

In the Fall of 1904, they decided to buy a half section of land, (prairie) from the Rev. Mr. Beattie, a Presbyterian minister.

During the following year they broke some of this land, and then in 1905, sold it to the Orr brothers, who had come from Eastern Canada; accompanied by their Mother and two sisters.

This half section of land is situated close to Chillon Siding.

The next land purchased was a half section, from Mr. Withman, soon, however, the east part of this was sold to Mr. A. Hall, and my Dad then had the S.E. quarter, 5.19.27, which, together with the adjoining quarter to the north, which was purchased from a Mr. Kehrberg, which, together with the adjoining quarter to the north south, he owned until 1965, when it was purchased by Mr. S. Souch.

Just in passing, I will say, that about that time my Uncle Percy bought the west quarter of 5.19.27, and farmed, and it was his son, Jack, who was the Director of Water Control & Conservation for Manitoba, being in the employment of the Manitoba Government, until his death, in 1967, at the early

age of fifty-five, following almost two years of ill-health.

Now, to return to the early days.---on June 13th., 1906, Mother, who was then Miss Florence Coles, born in Portsmouth, England, arrived in Winnipeg, and my parents were married at Christ Church, Winnipeg, leaving immediately afterwards for Binscarth, and the farm--the house being the typical 'log-cabin'---quite a change from ANY type of house in England!

However, here it was, that I was born, Miss Holloway, a registered nurse who lived on the farm, which until recently was occupied by Mr. & Mrs Chris. Jervis, was Mother's nurse at that time.

Dad was always interested in public affairs, so it was, that while he was really earning our living by working his farm, he at the same time, was instrumental in organizing a farmers' association, becoming its president shortly afterwards, and later a provincial director.

From that, he entered the political field, and in 1922 was elected to the Provincial House, re-elected in 1927, 1932, and in 1935 appointed to the Cabinet, re-elected by acclamation, and became Minister of Health & Public Welfare, which position he held until 1940, at which time a Coalition Government was formed, still under Hon. John Bracken, who had been Premier since 1922.

In 1940, there were Cabinet changes, so my Dad tendered his resignation, and was appointed Commissioner of the Manitoba Farm Loans Association, which at that time was being liquidated. This position he held until 1950. As well as his interest in politics and public affairs generally, he was an active member of the Masonic Order, being Deputy Grand Master of No. 5 District in 1925; he was also a member of the Canadian Order of Foresters for over fifty years.

Now, a little about the family, we belonged to the Anglican Church, Dad being a Warden for many years, Mother and I belonged to the W.A. & G. A., respectively, Mother being President twice, each time being forced to retire on account of ill-health.

I attended Normal School, taught for a couple of years, and since that time

We are members of the Anglican Church; Dad being a Warden and member of the Vestry on many different occasions, during our years at St. Matthew's Church. Mother and I belonged to the W.A. & G.A. respectively, Mother being President twice, each time being forced to resign on account of ill-health.

I attended Normal School in Winnipeg, taught school for a couple of years but since that time, seem to have been fully occupied at home. From 1935, when we left the farm, until 1941, Mother and I spent the summers in Binscarth and the winter months in Winnipeg, where Dad was, most of the time, while in the Cabinet.

In the Spring of 1941 we said 'good-bye' to Binscarth, as our HOME, and are now in Winnipeg, but somehow, to us, Binscarth is always 'home', in a sense, as while there are many changes in a district over the years, there is something about one's early memories, especially my own, which never grow less dear with the passing of time, and it is of those things about which we often speak, and wish that there were some magic way in which the seemingly relentless passing of time could be made to stop, just for a moment or two, and let us relive some of those early events, which went to make such a story as this, possible at all.

Margaret E. Griffiths

Now, back to the early days--on June 13th, 1906, Mother, then Miss Florence Coles, became Mrs Griffiths, she being a school teacher in England, but came to Canada to get married, which wedding took place in Christ Church^(wpq.) which at that time was quite near to the C.P.R. Station.

They went back to the farm a few days afterwards, the house thereon being a typical 'log-cabin', a real contrast to ANY type of house in England!! However, that was where I was born. Miss Holloway, a registered nurse who lived with her brother on the farm where Mr & Mrs C. Jervis live, was the nurse for Mother, when I came on the scene.

For a few years life was fully occupied with the making of a living on the farm, but Dad, ~~who~~ was always interested in anything in Public Affairs, especially things which he felt would tend to improve the conditions for those engaged in farming. So it was, that he joined the local Farmers' organization, and before too long, became President, and then a Provincial Director.

From that he entered the political field, and in 1922 was elected to the Provincial House, as Russell Constituency's Representative, and re-elected in 1927, 1932, and in 1935 was appointed to the Cabinet, as Minister of Health & Public Welfare, which position he held until 1941, at which time a Coalition Government was formed under Hon. John Bracken.

At that time there were Cabinet changes, and Dad tendered his resignation, and he was then appointed Commissioner of the Manitoba Farm Loans Assoc. which at that time was being liquidated. This position he held until his retirement from public life, in 1950.

As well as his interest in politics, and public affairs generally, he was an active member of the Masonic Order, being Deputy Grand Master of District No. 5, in 1925--he has also belonged to the Canadian order of Foresters for over fifty years.

Now, a little about us, as a family!

My father, I.B. Griffiths, (Bert, to his Binscarth friends) was born in Walsall, Staffordshire, Eng.; and, after completing his education, the last two years of which were spent at South Wales College, decided to come to Canada to learn farming--instead of becoming a teacher, which was his original idea. This he did in September, 1903, arriving first in Winnipeg, and then on to the farm of Mr. Arthur Burgess, in the Seeburn district.

There he worked for about a year, as the 'hired man', in order to learn the ways of western Canada's farming,---during that first season the experiences were many, and varied, one of them being helping to 'dig out', after a 'three-day blizzard' in March 1904, during which time neither Mr. Burgess nor my Dad dared to leave the house to feed or water the stock, which, of course, was all in the barns.

In the spring of 1904, Dad's brother Percy came to Canada, where he too 'hired out', with Mr. Sandy McDonald, to learn farming. In the fall of 1904 they decided to buy a half section of prairie from the Rev. Mr. Beattie, a Presbyterian minister. During the following summer, they ^{broke}~~broke~~ some of this land, but in the fall sold it to the Orr brothers, (Reg. & Fred.) who had come from Ontario. This land is close to Chillon Siding, and ^{later}~~in later years~~ was occupied by William Fraser, for several years, before he went to Waskada.

The next land my Dad & Uncle bought was half a section from Mr. E. Waithman, soon, however, the east part of this was sold to Mr. Abe. Hall, and my Dad then had the S.E. quarter 5.19.27, which, together with the adjoining quarter to the north, he still owns at time of writing.

About this same time, my Uncle bought the west quarter 5.19.27, where he too, like my Dad farmed for a number of years; leaving it in 1920, and moving into Binscarth where he worked in the U.G.G. Elevator, soon becoming the operator, but that was cut short, as on August 14th. 1925, while playing tennis, he suffered a fatal heart attack, at the age of forty-one.

It is his son Jack, who is now the Director of Water Control & Conservation for Manitoba, being an employee of the Manitoba Government, for many years.

1. Percy Griffiths & Son Jack.

In the Spring of 1904, Percy, younger brother of Bert Griffiths, left England and came to the Seeburn district to learn something of the business of farming--this he did, with one of the neighboring farmers--Mr. Sandy McDonald.

In the Fall of 1904, Bert & Percy bought their first farm, a half section of prairie, near where the Chillon elevator used to stand--the owner of this was a Presbyterian minister, always known as 'Preacher Beattie'.

During the summer of 1905 they broke some of the land, but in the Fall of that year sold it to the Orr brothers, and bought the west half of 5.19.27, the brothers worked together a great deal for many years, but in 1911 Percy married Edith Coles, sister of Mrs Bert G., and moved to his own home, which he had built on the S.W. quarter of 5.19.27.

In 1912, a son, John Adrian, was born to the couple, and, from this point, he, (Jack as he was always called) will be the main figure in this part of the history.

In 1920 the family moved from the farm into a house, newly built, in Binscarth, at which time Jack started school and his father became the operator of the U.G.G. elevator.

At the time of the move, the farm was sold, but reverted back to Percy G. after a short time, and from then, until 1969 was rented, but that quarter together with the n.w.1/4 5.19.27 is now owned by R.O. Turnbull.

Unfortunately, in 1925, at the age of 41, Jack's father suffered a fatal heart attack, while playing tennis (in a tournament) so he did not live to see any of the achievements of Jack's busy life, but his mother did, as she lived until 1954.

Back to Jack, following the year at Wesley College, Jack went to U. of Manitoba, from where he graduated with his Bsc. in Civil Engineering--it was due to illness, that he missed the final exam, thus disqualifying him from receiving the Gold Medal for that class, in 1935.

He became employed with the provincial Department of Public Works that same summer, the first few years he was with the Good Roads Department, but after a few years, was working with problems relating to drainage of land, due to flooding.

In 1951 he was appointed Drainage Engineer for the department, and that was followed, over the next years, until illness forced him to curtail his activities to some degree, but, even during those years, he was responsible for much that was being done, in regard to the building of the Red River Floodway, which came about after the flood in 1950 was so disastrous to Winnipeg, & surrounding country.

Jack's was the master-mind behind much of which was done in this great undertaking, assisted, of-course, by other clever men, from Man. & U.S.

Before the Floodway was completed a second large project was begun, in connection with the flooding of land in the western part of the province, caused by the Assiniboine river, usually in the Spring of the year.

Jack's was again the master-mind of this undertaking, --the Shellmouth Reservoir, which resulted in a man-made lake, together with a beautiful summer resort, being developed, with which many of you who read this book are fully familiar.

The Red River Floodway was first used in 1968, and the Shellmouth Reservoir a few years later.

Unfortunately Jack did not live to see either of these undertakings reach completion, as following a massive stroke in 1967, he passed away, and was survived by his widow, the former Thelma Balmer, a daughter Anne, and son John.

Tribute was paid to Jack, at the time of his death, by his colleagues in the department, here is the last sentence. of it.

"With each position he held, he brought a sincerity and personal integrity added to the dignity and effectiveness of the position, his capabilities as an engineer and administrator were respected by the public, his colleagues and his associates."

Submitted by

Margaret Griffiths

have been at home.

From 1935 until 1941, we spent our summers in Binscarth, and the winters in Winnipeg, where Dad was, most of the time while in the Cabinet--in 1941 we said 'good-bye' to Binscarth as our 'home', but somehow, it always felt like home to us--and still does to me.

In 1964, my Mother was called to Higher service, and in July of 1970 my Dad too, was called Home.

However, my life is filled with happy memories, and am blest with many good friends, both at Winnipeg, and Binscarth, and while the ones at Binscarth are growing less in number, those who remain, are TRULY LOYAL and constant/

Margaret Griffiths
(daughter)



Bert Griffiths.

Margaret G.

1963.



Dada Mather Oct. 16/58.

"239-285 Pemberton
Winnipeg, Man.
23/1/83

Dear Betty

I realize there would possibly be no account of the activities of my cousin Jack in the Biscuit history, so felt it might be of interest to some of the older ones in the district who may remember my uncle "Aunt" - also Jack.

I realize there may be more detail than you desire, but I had so much record of what his work entailed that I whittled it down as much as I could. The committee may be able to do much better & still keep any highlights. Good luck.

I know I wrote my original piece about us as a family before either

Mother or Dad passed away
so that is why I am sending
those two dates along.

It is a lot of work, but
with a committee meeting
regularly, possibly you will
accomplish it, before the
end of 1983 - Good luck.

Hope you + yours
are all well and escape
the 'flea bug' which is a
bad one this year.

Hope the typing is not
too light, I need a new
ribbon, & keep putting off
getting it - the place is
awkward to get to from here.
All good wishes.

Love -

Margaret