

James, "Jimmy" Turnbull was born in Rosario in the Argentine, S.A. in 1867. His parents, Reverend George and Georgina Turnbull were Anglican Missionaries to that area in the 1860's. Jimmy was the youngest of a family of seven. He returned to England with his parents when just a lad. During the 1870's the family emigrated to Petrolia, Ontario. I believe my father went to school there as I recall him saying that the children used to sail wooden chips down the street gutters which were running, not with water, but oil and coal-oil.

In the late 1870's emigration from Ontario to the West was in full swing and people were flocking to Portage La Prairie and points west in Manitoba. The town of Rapid City was booming with seven sections of land surveyed for a town site. It was to this area my father came with his parents. By the time he was sixteen he had finished his education going as far as he could in the school of that time.

About 1881 The Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company had obtained three townships of land in the Silver Creek area with the intention of putting immigrant settlers on the tract as a colonization project. I suppose news of this had spread widely and Dad hearing of it, decided at age sixteen to head North West and have a look. He took off on foot in 1882 and headed north west by way of a branch of the Fort Pelly Trail. He eventually landed up at the homestead of Samuel Widdicombe, South East 1/4 - 36 - 18 - 28 W.1 in Ellice Municipality. Mr Widdicombe at that time kept a 'Stopping House' as the branch of the Fort Pelly Trail that my father had followed ran through the Widdicombe homestead. Here he learned that the Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company's plans had been changed. Through an oversight at Ottawa they had not obtained as much land as they had been promised.

About that time homesteading had been thrown open to young men of sixteen. It may have been at Mr Widdicombe's suggestion that Jimmy look over the North

TURNBULL : JAMES NORMAN ROBERT 1867 --1943

West 1/4 - 36 - 18 - 28 of the same section as Widdicombe's and was still open for homesteading. At any rate that was the quarter Dad filed upon in 1883. Later he pre-empted the S.W. quarter and in 1910 bought the East half from Mr Widdicombe when the latter retired. It was thus that eventually all of Sec. 36 - 18 - 28 W 1 came under the name of James Turnbull.

My father was contemporary with Dave Hall, Mathew and Willam Scarth, William and Henry Waller, Oswald Inman, William Dimond, Beatty, Hartley, Phizacklea, MacIntosh, Livingstone, McFarlane, Moffat, Cooper, Rice and Wallace. These early settlers were mostly in Russell and Silver Creek Municipalities to the North of Ellice. Falloons, Pizzeys, Grants, Ebborns, Dunlops, Fergusons, Selbys DeCorbys, Irwins are all names that I recall as neighbors in Ellice. Most of these men were pioneers in the area before the railway came through. James Turnbull hauled his first wheat to Moosomin, a distance of sixty miles. The round trip took a week. It now takes two hours with a truck hauling three or four times the quantity of grain.

While putting in his required duties on his homestead, Dad got logs for a house and barn. The logs were local poplar, trimmed and shaped with axe and adz. Later my father went North to the 'bush' or the timbered country of the Riding Mountains. This he did for two or three winters taking part in 'log drives' down the Shell River to Millwood during the spring 'break up.' In this manner he acquired sufficient lumber that would later replace the log home with a frame one. Many homesteaders put in their winters thus.

When the log house was finished Dad brought his aged parents from Rapid City and they lived with him until their deaths: My Grandfather in 1902 and my Grandmother in 1904. I have heard my father say that in those early days he would not infrequently look into his parent's room on winter mornings and see hoar frost fringing the covers on their bed.

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There were no power chain saws in the early logging days. It was all human muscle power with axe and crosscut saws. The camp cook was the king-pin of the camp community. However camp cooks came in different categories in those days , as they still do. One of the tales of the early days in the woods was of the cook who was warned repeatedly that he had better clean himself up a bit. Unheeding, he found himself escorted out to a hole in the ice of a nearby lake. A rope was forcibly tied under his arms and several brawny homesteaders dunked him up and down in the icy waters, none saying a word but the victim. A few minutes of this cleansing treatment and he was hauled out, released and directed toward the camp; all in silence. Scuttlebutt told of him 'getting the message.'

During the early 1890's my father met Cecilia Scarth, who, upon the death of her father Robert Scarth of 'Binscarth Farm' in Orkney had come to Manitoba to keep house for her brothers, Mathew and William Scarth who had taken up homesteads in the extreme south west corner of Sliver Creek Municipality. Their sister Cecilia and Dad were married in 1898 and in 1900 I was born.

In the early years of their married life my parent's home was also the home and ' jumping off ' place for several young men and women coming from the Auld Land seeking their fortune. Some of the names come to mind : Percy Gooda, G.B.Crudge, Violet Woods, A.H. (Bert) Cooke and his fiancée Lilian Basket, Charles Thorp and his fiancée. Both these couples were married from my parent's home. J.C.Smith, Desmond Proudly's Uncle was another young man from England who found our home 'a home away from home.' Jack went on to be manager of the farm for my mother during my father's long illness. To all these young men Dad tried to be friend and mentor, helping them to adjust to the problems of starting in a new land under pioneering conditions.

Some of James Turnbull's early harvests experienced threshing with horse power and bucking straw away from the separator by hand. Later, Dave Hall and

and some neighbors got together, formed a syndicate and bought the first steam tractor and threshing machine in this area of Silver Creek and Ellice Municipalities. The separator had a blower instead of a 'carrier'. Whenever a move was made the blower had to be laboriously taken off by hand and hoisted to the top of the separator. In re-setting the process was reversed. I believe my father and two uncles, Mathew and William Scarth were members of the syndicate for several years.

Pioneers of those early days made their own amusements. In winter there were skating parties, snowshoeing parties, dances and card parties at local homes, even debates and boxing bouts. As the gloves usually came after the debates I found my young mind meditating on the fact that one had better be prepared to back up his words with a pair of gloves. However I was early advised that I had better choose my words first !

Dad belonged to the Binscarth Masonic Lodge. He was one of the early members of the United Grain Growers Grain Co. He was fond of football, tennis, training horses, fishing and hunting. He saw to it that I became proficient with a rifle at an early age and that I learned how to hunt and kill game as humanely as possible.

Jimmy Turnbull left us in 1943 to go on to other 'Hunting Grounds.' He and my mother, Cecilia (Scarth) Turnbull who predeceased him in 1937 were pioneers in Ellice who left their son, his wife and family, a heritage of which to be proud.

Compiled by Norman Leslie Turnbull.



N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 36-18-28 W1

The James Turnbull homestead "Grip Fast" circa 1895.
The name was bestowed by James Turnbull's mother ,
Georgina Gordon Leslie and is still the name of the
farm owned by Robert O, Turnbull (1)

PERMISSION GRANTED TO CROP THIS
~~LEFT~~ HAND & TOP IF NECESSARY. N.W.T.
RIGHT.

The Turnbull's Story Ellice
Return to ::

N. & G. Turnbull
Birnscaith
Manitoba RoJ oGo



Family Room ('Grip Fast House,' circa 1895 .The sword in upper left hand corner saw service in the Crimean War. Sugar bowl on left hand corner of sideboard is coconut shell, silver embossed.

Inside of log house
on Dads homestead
N W $\frac{1}{4}$ 36-1828 W 1
Ellice Municipality