

So My friend Don,

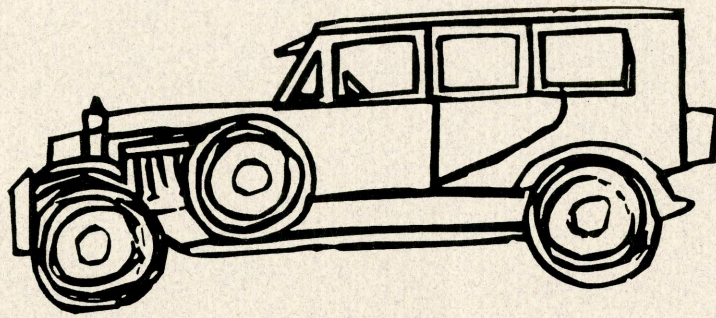
With my regards.

Fred Ingle

Farming In The Thirties

A Remembrance

Fred B. Ingle



Farming In The Thirties

A Remembrance

Fred B. Ingle



Introduction

When my father arrived in Canada early in the Great Depression, he was a seventeen-year-old immigrant from a poor home in Leeds, Yorkshire, England. For much of the thirties he worked as a hired hand on farms near Oxford Mills in the Ottawa valley. What follows is his personal remembrance of life in those times. It grew out of a series of letters we wrote back and forth to each other in the late 1980s while I was a mature student at the University of Waterloo. I was working on a degree in independent study and developing my own learning program focusing on alternate agriculture and horticulture. Farming in the thirties was more than relevant.

My father is a retired machinist but he's lived on his own farm east of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, for more than thirty years. A widower for the last three years, he still grows his own fresh vegetables as well as strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries. He tends to the perennials my mother loved so much and raises a few annuals to go with them. In a small greenhouse he built himself, he starts his own flowers and vegetables from seed. Indoors, he grows a variety of houseplants and is particularly fond of geraniums.

Now in his mid-eighties, Dad lets neighbours plant the big garden he used to tend. But he has a kitchen garden beside the house and our Sunday phone calls are full of details about it. This year the strawberries were good but the radishes were all tops. The coons got the corn again -- somehow they always know a day before Dad when it's ready. But, despite a cold, wet growing season in the north, lots of tomatoes still managed to ripen on the plants he raised from seed.

For Dad, a summer without fresh food from his garden just wouldn't be a summer at all. The lessons of the thirties linger long.

Ken Ingle
Waterloo, Ontario,
September 1996.

of the first I see.
With my regards.
Jack O'Connell

Farming in the Thirties

This is a private publication.
Front cover sketches are by the author.

Fred B. Ingie

On the Land

Most farmers grew grain every year, either oats or barley or both. Most of the time we used our own seed but had to take it to the grist mill to be cleaned of any weed seeds that might be in it.

The bulk of the work in the fields was done by hand or with horse power. The farmer would have a one-furrow walking plough, a Massey Harris binder, a one-horse rake, a set of spring tooth harrows, a set of drag harrows and maybe a set of single disc harrows.

Money was hard to come by in those days so sometimes two or three farmers would go together to buy a seeder and mower between them and would help each other with seeding and haying times. Farm machines were just beginning to come into use and they were not that good so lots of farmers were sceptical about them and preferred the old ways of doing things.

The Farm

The typical farm in the Ottawa valley in the late 1930s contained between one hundred and two hundred acres and could grow enough produce to feed the farm family plus ten other people, or so we were told at that time.

A mixed farm would have ten to twelve milking cows, one hundred or so hens, two breeding sows, four working horses and one driving horse, and probably a few turkeys. The farmers would grow oats, barley, buckwheat, timothy hay, red or white clover, alfalfa and lots of corn.

You could have three or four different kinds of soil in different fields or even in one field. So, when you were ploughing, you had to be sure you kept the top soil on top. Ploughing with a one-furrow walking plough was like riding a bicycle -- you had to keep the team going straight and, at the same time, keep the plough at the right width and depth. Once you got the first furrow ploughed, one horse would walk in that furrow and that helped a lot to keep the furrows even as you went along.

As soon as we could get on the land in the spring, the manure would be spread. We used wide manure forks to load up the wagon, drove it out to the field and then spread the manure by hand.

The land was worked up using the disc harrows or the spring tooth harrows and finished with the drag harrows to smooth out the

soil and make it ready for planting. If a field had a lot of weeds the farmer would sow it in buckwheat because it grows quite thick and smothers most weeds.

A lot of farmers believed in leaving each field, in turn, fallow once every seven years. They would plough and work it and leave it until the next year. It would give the field a rest and the following year the crop would usually be good. Once in a while a crop of alfalfa or clover was grown and ploughed under to make what was called green manure.

When a grain crop was sown, grass seed was sown with it and, after the grain was harvested, the field was kept for hay the following year and maybe a few years afterward. Some fields were kept for pasture for the cows and, as the grass began to run out, those fields were ploughed up and grain and grass grown on them and then they could be used for hay or pasture again.

When corn was grown for silage, the corn stubble was ploughed under after the corn was harvested and the farmer would probably grow potatoes or some other crop on that field the next year and corn on the field where the potatoes had been grown the year before.

During the time the hay and grain were growing we used to walk through the fields and pick out any weeds, especially mustard. Mustard is like twitch grass, it spreads very fast and crowds out other crops.

We also went through the potato patch and knocked the potato bugs off the leaves into a can containing coal oil. Potatoes were grown in a different location every year and every few years seed potatoes would be traded with another farmer a few miles away. This kept the seed from running out and each farmer had new seed.

The farmer had to make sure he had enough land for pasture and enough land for hay each year to feed the number of cattle he had and also enough land to grow the other crops he needed. Depending on the acreage and the size of the fields, he had to figure out how to do this. So, he not only had to know how to farm, he had to be a mathematician as well because, if he made a mistake or the weather was against him the next year, he could be in big trouble.

On The Land

Most farmers grew grain every year, either oats or barley or both. Most of the time we used our own seed but had to take it to the grist mill to be cleaned of any weed seeds that might be in it.

The bulk of the work in the fields was done by hand or with horse power. The farmer would have a one-furrow walking plough, a Massey Harris binder, a one-horse rake, a set of spring tooth harrows, a set of drag harrows and maybe a set of single discs.

Money was hard to come by in those days so sometimes two or three farmers would go together to buy a seeder and mower between them and would help each other at seeding and haying times. Farm machines were just beginning to come into use and they were not that good so lots of farmers were sceptical about them and preferred the old ways of doing things.

The old farmers believed in fall ploughing and spring planting except for fall wheat which was planted in the fall and began to grow as soon as the snow went. Only a few farmers grew wheat in our area and only the fall-seeded kinds.

The farmers used two depths when they were ploughing. The normal depth was between four and six inches but sometimes they ploughed from six to ten inches deep, depending on the type of soil and what they were ploughing. If the land was light and sandy, you ploughed shallow so that you did not bring up the sandy subsoil. But if you were ploughing corn stubble, you would plough much deeper in order to cover it with sufficient soil.

You could have three or four different kinds of soil in different fields or even in one field. So, when you were ploughing, you had to be sure you kept the top soil on top. Ploughing with a one-furrow walking plough was like riding a bicycle -- you had to keep the team going straight and, at the same time, keep the plough at the right width and depth. Once you got the first furrow ploughed, one horse would walk in that furrow and that helped a lot to keep the furrows even as you went along.

As soon as we could get on the land in the spring, the manure would be spread. We used wide manure forks to load up the wagon, drove it out to the field and then spread the manure by hand.

The land was worked up using the disc harrows or the spring tooth harrows and finished with the drag harrows to smooth out the

The Harvest

If the farmer had a binder he would drive into the grain field and cut one row all the way around the fence, going the wrong way so that he could cut the grain as close to the fence as possible. He would then go the other way and continue until he had the whole field cut. The machine would throw out the sheaves already tied as he went around. His wife, or one or more of the children, would stook up the grain as he was cutting, eight to ten sheaves to a stook. These were left for a day or two to dry out and then brought in on a hay wagon and put in the barn.

If a farmer did not have a binder he would probably cut the grain with the mower and bring it in loose like hay, or make a deal with a farmer who had a binder to cut the grain for him. You can lose a lot of grain when you thresh with a mower, you have to handle it too many times before it is threshed.

Making Silage

We grew enough corn to fill the silo after the corn was cut up. The silage would be fed to the cattle from the bottom of the silo inside the cow stable.

After the corn ripened it was usually cut by hand with a sickle, tied and stoked in the field. Later it was brought to the silo where it was chopped up by machine and blown inside where two men would tramp it down. There was a big, flexible pipe hanging down inside the silo and attached to the machine outside. One of the men would move the pipe around so that the silage would evenly cover all the inside of the silo. In those days we never heard of anyone being gassed in a silo while filling it.

Not all farmers grew corn as there were not as many silos then as there are now. To feed corn from the stooks was wasteful as the cows would leave all the hard stalks and some of the dried leaves whereas they would eat all the silage.

The grain would be bagged in 100-pound bags and stored in the granary; the straw would either be made into a stack outside or put in a haymow in the barn. Straw from grain did not have to be salted as, when grain is ripe and ready to cut, the stalks are very dry.

We had a dry spring one year and the hay crop was scarce but we had a good supply of straw from the previous year so once in a while we fed the cows a meal of straw on which we sprinkled molasses mixed with water. The cows seemed to like it and we were able to get through the winter without trouble.

soil and make it ready for planting. If a field had a lot of weeds the farmer would sow it in buckwheat because it grows quite thick and smother most weeds.

A lot of farmers believed in leaving each field in corn, fallow once every seven years. They would plough and work it and leave it until the next year. It would give the field a rest and the following year the crop would usually be good. Once in a while a crop of alfalfa or clover was grown and ploughed under to make what was called green manure.

Haying

When a grain crop was sown, grass seed was sown with it and the hay was cut and raked into windrows, then made into big coils and left to dry for a while. A team of horses and a wagon with a large, homemade hay rack on it were used to bring in the hay.

You would drive into the hay field up to the first coil of hay and stop while a man on the ground pitched on the coil. The driver would spread it around the hay rack and then drive up to the next coil. However, if the coils were close together, the man on the ground could pitch on two or three coils before you moved again. It was quite an art to be able to build a big load of hay so that it was even all the way around and wouldn't fall apart before you got to the barn.

The hay was brought to the barn, the team unhitched and hitched on to a rope that was used to pull the hay up on a big hay fork. One man (or the farmer's wife or one of the children) would drive the team while the other man was spreading the hay in the haymow and sprinkling coarse salt on every load. This was to stop internal combustion, as many barns full of hay burned down when salt had not been used.

One year we had a surplus of hay so we built a stack in the middle of the barnyard and, all winter long, when the cows were let out to drink at the trough, they would eat some of the hay. By springtime the stack was gone; what the cows hadn't eaten, they had trampled underfoot and we had some extra manure to spread that year. We didn't use any commercial fertilizer so this extra manure was a big help.

Feeding The Family

Every farm had a kitchen garden which was the sole domain of the housewife. It was for things like onions, radishes, tomatoes, etc., that the farm wife could easily get for a meal. Potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbages, etc., were grown in the field and stored in the basement for the winter. We grew beans and dried them but not peas; we grew peas but ate them as fast as we grew them.

Some of the older farmers believed in growing certain crops together because they believed some things complemented each other. They used to grow various herbs in the vegetable garden to keep some of the bugs, etc.

6

Feeding The Animals

We had barley and oats ground at the grist mill for feed. Cows were fed a little ground oats and barley along with clover and alfalfa. The horses were fed whole oats and barley, and timothy hay. Ground buckwheat made a good pig feed. Wheat, oats, barley and buckwheat were fed to the poultry without being ground.

Most farmers had a dog or dogs and also cats but they weren't pets. The dog was trained to handle the cows and the cats were kept to keep the mice down. They usually slept in the cow stable as it was nice and warm in there, but in the summer they stayed out of doors.

They were fed lots of milk and table scraps but we never bought special food for them. They were well looked after as they were contributing to the success of the farm. Everybody, including the animals, was there for a purpose, otherwise they would not have been there.

Poultry was kept all year round and a fowl dinner could be had at any time. All you had to do was to go out to the hen house and select a chicken or turkey. Once in a while one of the farmers would kill a steer and we would be able to buy a quarter of beef and have fresh beef for a change.

The Harvest

If the farmer had a binder he would drive into the grain field and cut one row all the way around the fence, going the wrong way so that he could cut the grain as close to the fence as possible. He would then go the other way and continue until he had the whole field cut. The machine would throw out the sheaves already tied as he went around. His wife, or one or more of the children, would stook up the grain as he was cutting, eight to ten sheaves to a stook. These were left for a day or two to dry out and then brought in on a hay wagon and put in the barn.

If a farmer did not have a binder he would probably cut the grain with the mower and bring it in loose like hay, or make a deal with a farmer who had a binder to cut the grain for him. You can lose a lot of grain when you cut it with a mower, you have to handle it too many times before it is threshed.

One day our binder broke down so we finished cutting the grain using the old cradle, bound it by hand and stoked it in the field. A cradle is like a big grass scythe only it has a slatted part fastened to it that catches the grain as you hand cut it. You had to learn how to use a cradle and it took a long time before you became proficient.

If the local thresher and his machine were ready to do threshing, the machine would be set up and the grain would be threshed with some of the neighbours helping and their wives doing the cooking for the men. The thresher was a local farmer who did this to earn some extra money. He was sometimes paid in grain and sold it to get his money.

The harvest meals were mostly meat and potato meals with one or two vegetables and pie for dessert. Everything was homemade -- no additives in those meals.

The grain would be bagged in 100-pound bags and stored in the granary; the straw would either be made into a stack outside or put in a haymow in the barn. Straw from grain did not have to be salted as, when grain is ripe and ready to cut, the stalks are very dry.

We had a dry spring one year and the hay crop was scarce but we had a good supply of straw from the previous year so once in a while we fed the cows a meal of straw on which we sprinkled molasses mixed with water. The cows seemed to like it and we were able to get through the winter without trouble.

A farmer would buy a whole cheese from the cheese factory and store it in the basement. This cheese would weigh anywhere from fifty to one hundred pounds and would last just about all winter. I believe it was cheddar. It was a hard cheese, not like the soft cheese you get now. It would be stored in the cheese box it came in.

Apples were kept in a barrel in the basement. We grew our own apples and most were good keepers. Root crops such as potatoes were kept in the basement in slotted bins. Cabbage, cauliflower and any greens were hard to keep for any length of time so they were used up quickly. Some farmers made sauerkraut if they had a lot of cabbage but not many cared for it.

Most farm basements were full of good things to eat which kept very well as the basements were unheated.

We cut in log lengths which were brought on double sleighs and piled behind the house. They were cut with a two-man crosscut saw and the limbs trimmed with an axe. This was heavy work and kept the farmer busy most of the winter because he still had his milking to do and stock to look after.

Sometime during the late winter or early spring the sawyer would come around with his big circular saw and machine and we would get the neighbours to help saw the logs and stack them in cords. One cord was eight feet long by four feet wide by four feet high in those days and that's what we delivered when we sold a cord. Like the thrasher, the sawyer was a farmer who sawed logs to make some extra money.

We also cut logs to be made into rough lumber which we used to repair the farm buildings as we did all our own repairs and made spare parts for the farm wagons, etc. We had a buggy, cutter, milk wagon, hay wagon, double set of sleighs and a stone boat. All of which needed wood when they had to be repaired. The big water trough in the barnyard which the stock drank from was also made of wood and had to be repaired and sometimes replaced.

Feeding The Family

Every farm had a kitchen garden which was the sole domain of the housewife. It was for things like onions, radishes, tomatoes, etc., that the farm wife could easily get for a meal. Potatoes, carrots, turnips, cabbages, etc., were grown in the field and stored in the basement for the winter. We grew beans and dried them but not peas; we grew peas but ate them as fast as we grew them.

Some of the older farmers believed in growing certain crops together because they believed some things complemented each other. They used to grow various herbs in the vegetable garden to keep some of the bugs, etc., away from the vegetables.

Some farms had a small apple orchard which produced enough for the family plus some to give away or trade at the village store along with eggs and homemade butter. We traded for tea, sugar, etc. We sold pigs, cows, calves, steers and stove wood. All the houses were heated with wood stoves then and some farms did not have woodlots.

We bought white flour for baking but sometimes we had buckwheat ground so that we could make buckwheat pancakes.

Wild berries were picked by the basketful. Some were made into jam and pies and the rest were preserved. We bought peaches and pears and the farmers' wives put down all kinds of fruits and berries, mostly by cooking and bottling them. There were usually shelves full of preserved fruit in every basement.

The farmer had his own meat, beef and pork, as well as poultry. It was almost always smoked or cured with salt and brown sugar, although some women did cook and bottle some. We had no electricity and therefore no refrigeration so you couldn't keep meat for very long, that's why we cured and bottled it. The odd farmer would have an ice house but that meant a lot of extra work, cutting ice on the river in the wintertime. The meat only kept a certain length of time anyhow so most farmers wouldn't be bothered; they had enough work to do, both summer and winter.

Poultry was kept all year round and a fowl dinner could be had at any time, all you had to do was to go out to the hen house and select a chicken or turkey. Once in a while one of the farmers would kill a steer and we would be able to buy a quarter of beef and have fresh beef for a change.

The Farmhouse

The wood for the stoves was always cut one year ahead of time to give it time to dry out. Most farm houses were heated with wood stoves. The main stove was in the kitchen; it was a big kitchen range with a large oven and a warming oven on the top. There was a reservoir on the side where water was heated.

Water was piped in to the hand pump on the kitchen sink. The toilet, which was an outhouse, was out in the backyard.

Coal oil lamps were used for lighting and it was the daily chore of the farm wife, or one of the children, to clean the globes and fill the lamps with oil. White gas was used in gas lanterns which some people used instead of coal oil as they gave a whiter light. They had a mantle in them and you had to pump air into the gas container. Most farmers considered them dangerous.

Chimneys were built only part way down and the stove pipes used to go up through the first floor to the second floor and then into the chimney. Bedrooms were not heated and on a cold winter morning it was good to get into the cow stable which was always nice and warm.

Drawing On The Woodlot

Many farms had a woodlot or bush as we knew it. Each year we would walk through the bush and mark any trees that were dead or dying. In the winter we would cut them down and see how many cords we had. Then we would cut other trees to make up what we needed. We used to cut about fifty to sixty cords of wood each winter but we had lots of bush at that time so we never worried if we cut a few extra.

We cut in log lengths which were brought on double sleighs and piled behind the house. They were cut with a two-man crosscut saw and the limbs trimmed with an axe. This was heavy work and kept the farmer busy most of the winter because he still had his milking to do and stock to look after.

Sometime during the late winter or early spring the sawyer would come around with his big circular saw and machine and we would get the neighbours to help saw the logs and stack them in cords. One cord was eight feet long by four feet wide by four feet high in those days and that's what we delivered when we sold a cord. Like the thresher, the sawyer was a farmer who sawed logs to make some extra money.

We also cut logs to be made into rough lumber which we used to repair the farm buildings as we did all our own repairs and made spare parts for the farm wagons, etc. We had a buggy, cutter, milk wagon, hay wagon, double set of sleighs and a stone boat, all of which needed wood when they had to be repaired. The big water trough in the barnyard which the stock drank from was also made of wood and had to be repaired and sometimes replaced.

The usual wage was \$10 per month plus room and board, including laundry. Sometimes the room and board was substandard and some hired hands were treated like slaves. I was lucky, I always seemed to choose the good places; if I hadn't, I wouldn't have stayed long.

The children got as much schooling as they could absorb. That is why the farmers had hired hands, so their children could get an education. You will find a lot of prominent people today who were born and raised on a farm. If they had had to stay home and do the work the hired hands did, they would not have been able to get the education they got.

I once got my head split open playing hockey on an open air rink which we made ourselves. I didn't go to a doctor so Mrs. Francis (the farmer's wife) put sheep tallow on the cut until it healed. It was never stitched and you can hardly see the scar on my forehead.

We didn't go to doctors much in those days. First of all, we couldn't afford the cost and, secondly, we had a lot of home remedies that worked and we got to depend on them. Living on the farm, eating good wholesome food and working hard kept us pretty healthy and, unless we had an accident, we didn't need a doctor. We were out in all kinds of weather, summer and winter, but rarely got a cold and, if we did, it didn't last long.

For a chest cold we used olive oil and turpentine mixed together. I can't remember just what the proportions were but it worked. For a sore throat we gargled with salt water and took a little pure honey four or five times a day. There was a homemade cough medicine. I don't remember all the ingredients but they included slices of turp and brown sugar. They were cooked in the oven and turned into a thick syrup and it also worked.

We did buy a few things from the drug store but only a few as they didn't have all the drugs they have now. The druggist in those days knew about as much as a doctor and we often got information from him on what to use for various ailments.

They also used to use camphor and camphorated oil quite a lot in those days. Sulphur and molasses were taken in spring to clean the blood.

Chores

Most farmers got up between 4:30 and 5:00 a.m., fed the cows and horses and did the milking by hand -- no milking machines in those days. In the summer the whole milk was put into large cans and taken to the local cheese factory by horse and cart. After the milk was emptied at the factory, the cans were filled with whey and brought back to the farm to be fed to the pigs. Whey is a residue of cheese making. It is a brown liquid and you could make butter out of it; I've eaten whey butter. In the winter the cream was separated and either taken to the creamery once a week or used to make homemade butter in the old-fashioned churn.

After milking came breakfast which could be any or a lot of the following: oatmeal porridge, bacon, eggs (mostly fried), ham, fried potatoes, pancakes, toast and coffee. Bear in mind the farmer had done half a day's work before breakfast and he was hungry. All meals were heavy food, nothing fancy but good nourishing meals.

I don't remember us eating before going to bed. Getting up so early, we were usually in bed by 9:00 to 9:30 p.m. There was no TV then but most people had a radio run by a battery.

Everyone, including the farm wives, worked at anything that had to be done on the farm. As already mentioned, in addition to keeping the homes and caring for their children, the women tended the kitchen gardens and helped their husbands with many of their farm duties as needed.

Children grew up fast on the farm in the old days; they had chores to do both before and after school. They fed the hens and collected the eggs, helped with the milking when they were old enough and helped in the kitchen garden along with other farm work.

The girls helped in the house and learned to cook and sew while the boys learned to plough and look after the horses and farm stock. By the time a boy was twelve or thirteen he would be able to do almost anything on the farm except the really heavy work.

Almost every farm had a hired hand and most of the time they were treated as one of the family. Once in a while they were treated badly and not paid their wages and some farmers made them pay for anything that was broken, regardless of whether they broke it or not.

Taxes, Roadwork And Cars

Each farmer had to put in so many days of road work every year and this would reduce his property tax. The ditches were cleaned out and the country roads built up with fresh gravel. Property taxes in those days were very low but so were wages -- about twenty or twenty-five cents an hour. A man and a team of horses working a ten-hour day would probably be credited with about five dollars for every day worked.

Farming communities in those days were pretty well sufficient unto themselves. They had everything they needed in the village store or stores. Most villages had a carpenter and a blacksmith shop and one store would usually sell gasoline, white gas and coal oil. The gasoline had to be pumped by hand into a large glass container on top of the pump and then gravity fed into the Model T Ford, etc.

We had buggies for summer driving and cutters for the winter and we often used them instead of the car. Most farmers had an old car of some kind but they were used sparingly. If they went thirty or forty miles, that was considered a day's journey. The roads were not built for speed and neither were the cars. The tires had tubes in them and they were of very poor quality so you were always having flat tires and had to learn how to patch a tube so that it wouldn't leak again. The farmers were used to this as they did all the repairs on the farm and often had to make a part by hand in order to carry on.

Also, once in a while a farmer would invent something for a specific job and he would be the only one to have that article. Some of these one-of-a-kind items might now be in agricultural museums along with other interesting articles from earlier times.

Farm Medicine

A lot of farmers used to make their own medicines for various ailments from bark from certain trees, leaves and roots which they would crush or boil and drink the liquid. I wish now that I had kept a written record of the things they used, it would be quite interesting.

I once got my head split open playing hockey on an open air rink which we made ourselves. I didn't go to a doctor so Mrs. Francis (the farmer's wife) put sheep tallow on the cut until it healed. It was never stitched and you can hardly see the scar on my forehead.

We didn't go to doctors much in those days. First of all, we couldn't afford the cost and, secondly, we had a lot of home remedies that worked and we got to depend on them. Living on the farm, eating good wholesome food and working hard kept us pretty healthy and, unless we had an accident, we didn't need a doctor. We were out in all kinds of weather, summer and winter, but rarely got a cold and, if we did, it didn't last long.

For a chest cold we used olive oil and turpentine mixed together. I can't remember just what the proportions were but it worked. For a sore throat we gargled with salt water and took a little pure honey four or five times a day. There was a homemade cough medicine. I don't remember all the ingredients but they included slices of turnip and brown sugar. They were cooked in the oven and turned into a thick syrup and it also worked.

We did buy a few things from the drug store but only a few as they didn't have all the drugs they have now. The druggist in those days knew about as much as a doctor and we often got information from him on what to use for various ailments.

They also used to use camphor and camphorated oil quite a lot in those days. Sulphur and molasses were taken in spring to clean the blood.

Learning From The Past

The farm family was rich in property in those days but poor financially. However, this never stopped them from having a good life. I believe people were happier and healthier then and they never missed the things they couldn't afford.

They worked hard and often for long hours but they had lots of good plain food which was pure and not adulterated like most of the food we eat today. Medical science has advanced tremendously over the past sixty years but we now have diseases that we never had before so modern man is no better off than the farmer of the thirties.

I think we are slowly killing ourselves and our world by disregarding nature. We have to stop polluting the atmosphere and also the food we eat. Our hospitals are full to overflowing and people today take millions of pills for all their ailments.

I believe if we could get back to eating the good plain food our ancestors used to eat, stopped smoking and worked a little harder or exercised more, we would be a lot happier and healthier.

Socializing And Sharing

It wasn't all work in those days. In the summer people would travel for miles sometimes to pick wild berries, two or three families together. They would have picnics and people would come from miles around and spend the whole day having races and ball games and eating fabulous meals supplied by the farmers' wives. There were no barbecues in those days and I don't remember having mayonnaise, they did not go in for salads. However, there were lots of pies, all different, as each lady would bring her own special ones. You could have a piece of half a dozen different pies if you could eat that much.

In the wintertime there were musicals, card parties, school plays and lots of dances. We used to dance all night until three or four in the morning and then drive home in time to change clothes and start the day's chores.

We had fair fairs, school fairs, ploughing matches and turkey suppers. There could be church teas and socials any time.

Most farmers were too busy to go visiting each other but they helped each other at all times. If a farmer took sick and couldn't put his crop in he didn't have to worry as his neighbours would get together one day and his crop would be put in for him, no charge; this is the way people were in those days. Most farmers went to church every Sunday and they went by the golden rule: if a farmer needed help you helped him, no questions asked and no reward looked for.

One or two farmers would keep a bull or a boar to service the cows and pigs in the district and you had to take your cow or sow to his farm for service when they were in heat. I do not know what they charged but it would not have been much as money was scarce. They could even have made a trade somehow as there was a lot of trading in those days. You do something for me and I will do something else for you, no money changing hands.