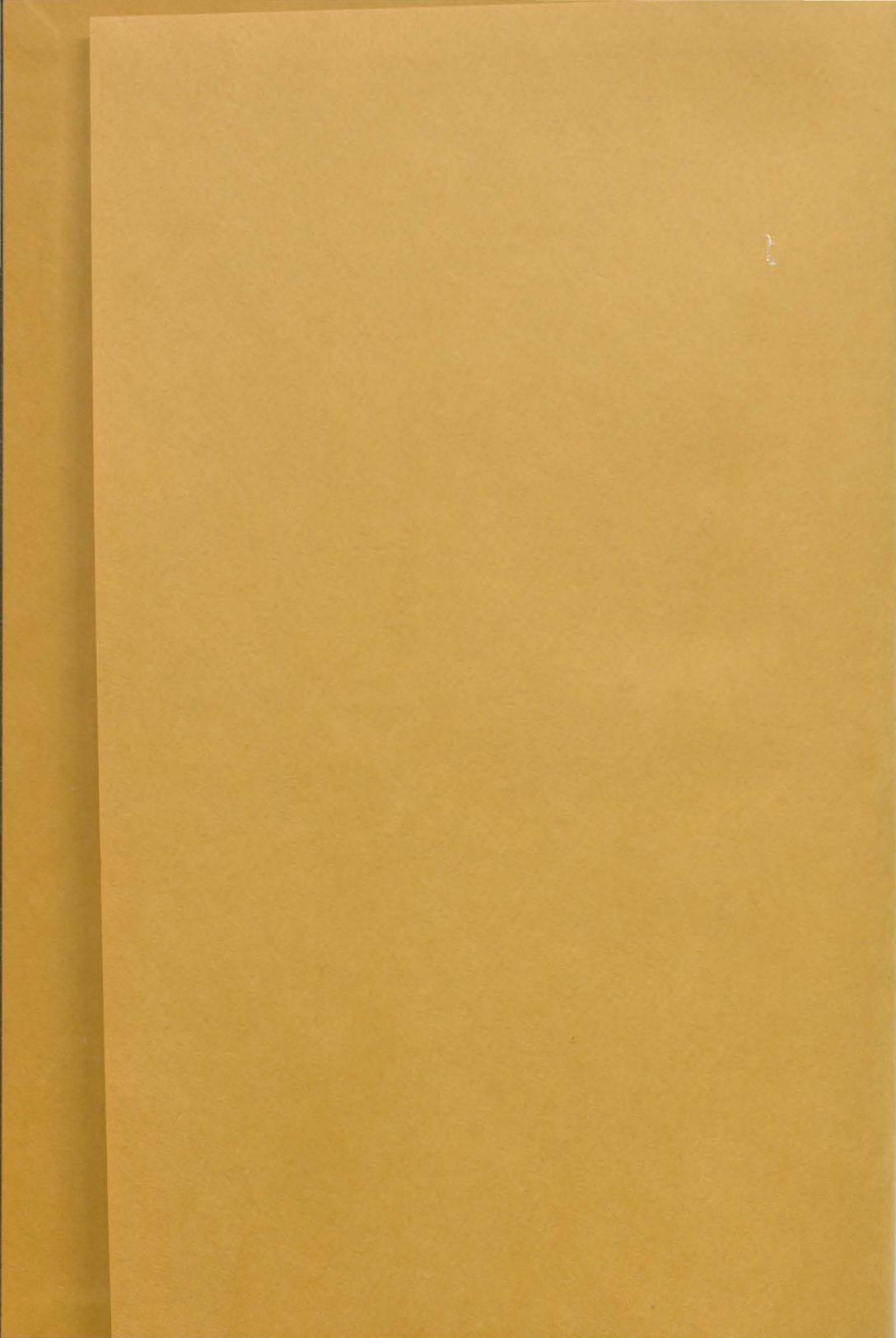


Dear
Aunt
Nell



by
Rose M. MacLeod



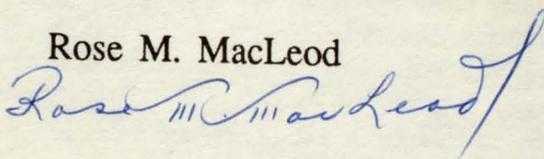


DEAR AUNT NELL

Letters (1912-1960) from Anne Pringle Hemstock to
Ella Mitchell McClelland.

EDITED BY

Rose M. MacLeod

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rose M. MacLeod". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the word "MacLeod".

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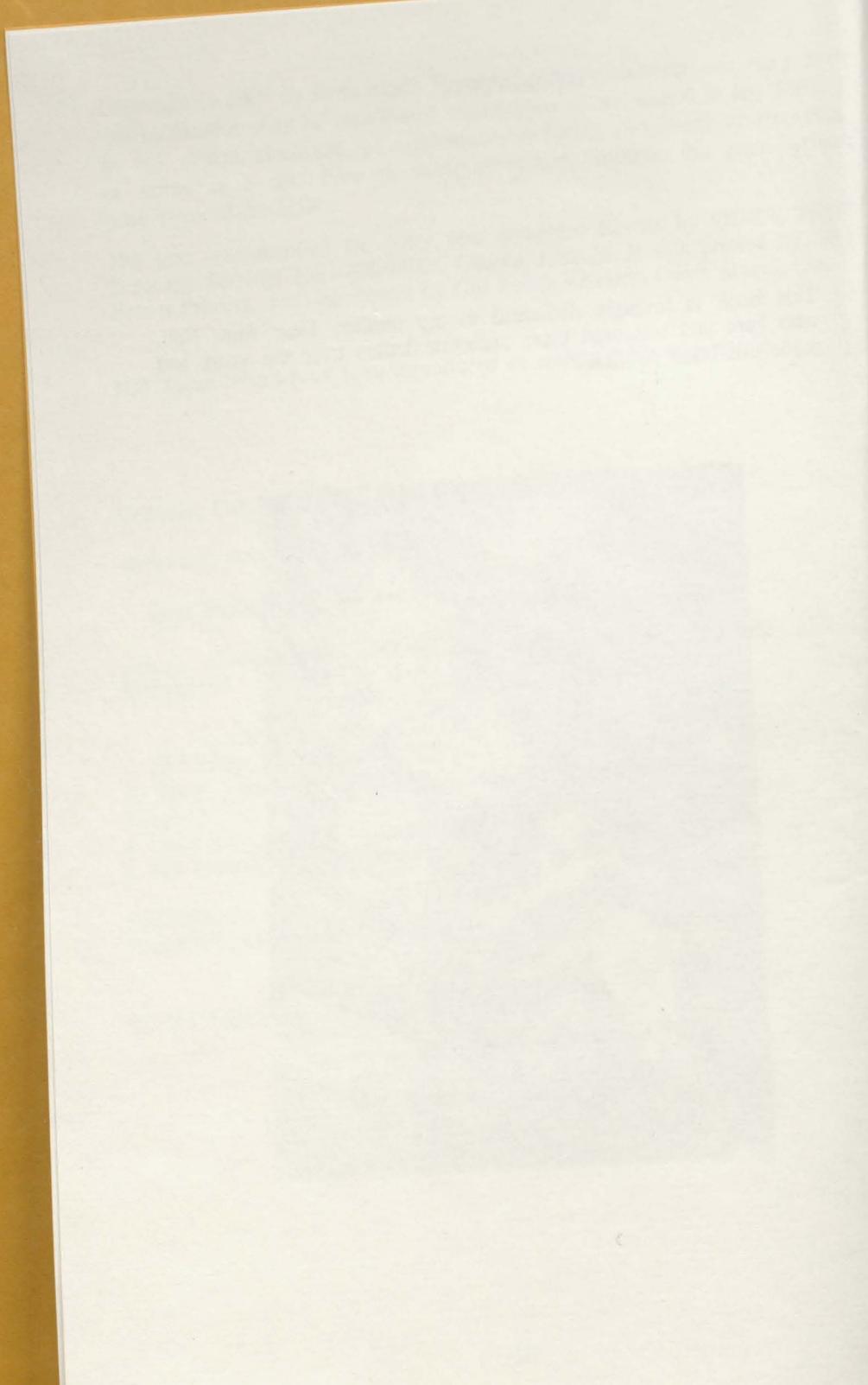
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DEDICATION

This book is lovingly dedicated to my mother, Dear Aunt Nell, who kept and treasured these authentic letters over the years and made this book possible.





FOREWORD

The book entitled, *Dear Aunt Nell*, is a compilation of authentic letters written by a niece to her beloved aunt. My sister Rose, daughter of Aunt Nell (Mrs. Robert (Ella) McClelland) saved the letters because they give a good insight into the everyday life of a family starting a homestead in Southern Alberta, near the town of Hanna. The letters cover a period of time from 1912 to 1960 and were written by Anne Pringle Hemstock.

It was in the area just west of the village of Chatsworth, Ontario, that the setting of this book had its beginning. Here Anne Pringle was born on a beautiful, old homestead on Lot D, Concession three of Sullivan Township.

After graduating from the Owen Sound Collegiate Anne Pringle attended St. Hilda's College in Toronto. After completing her education, obtaining her degree, she married Russel Hemstock and they moved to the homestead in Alberta.

Many of the letters reflect the bitter loneliness of a homesteader's wife as she struggled to cope with sickness, inclement weather, crop failure and all the other problems that beset people moving from a large city to try to wrest a living from the soil of a bleak, barren prairie. In spite of all the difficulties and in spite of the terrible loneliness and despair that Anne must have felt in times of trouble, a bright thread of hope runs throughout the letters, that conditions would eventually improve. It would have been very easy to write letters that told of the despair that Anne must have endured when everything seemed to be going wrong but she never complained and her rich sense of humour helped her through many crises.

I like to think that Aunt Nell who answered every letter as soon as it arrived must have been a source of strength and encouragement to her beloved niece and the bond between them never stopped until Aunt Nell's death in February, 1960.

It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to write this foreword and pay tribute to one little prairie mother who was a part of our great heritage.

Jas. C. McClelland.

INTRODUCTION

Burnhead was the name of the farm where Anne was born. It was originally owned by Anne's grandfather Thomas Pringle, who obtained it from the Crown in 1848.

Thomas Pringle was born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland on July 13, 1809 and died December 16, 1889. Mr. and Mrs. Pringle and their ten year old son Alexander, came to Canada and settled in Vaughan Township in 1842 but later moved to Sullivan Township.

Thomas Pringle was the chosen representative for the first provisional Grey County Council 1855-1857. He also served as reeve for a number of years. Alexander Pringle had a great yen to travel and first went to the copper mines in 1860. Two years later he prospected for gold in the Cariboo District. From there he went to Kamloops, B.C. and ranched the Duck and Pringle Ranch which was located near Duck Station on the C.P.R.

After his father retired, Alexander Pringle returned home to the homestead.

Joseph, another son of Thomas Pringle owned Lot F which was right beside his father's farm.

Mr. and Mrs. (Joseph) Pringle had a family of six boys. In 1886 Mrs. Pringle passed away. Four years later Mr. Pringle married a second time and had a family of five namely, Robert, Charles, Janet, (Mrs. Ivor Carson, Minnie (Mrs. Harold Day) and Pearl (Mrs. Doug Lindabury). Mrs. Day and Mrs. Lindabury are the only two surviving members. However the farm (now named Meadowbrook Farm) is still in the Pringle family. It is owned by Bob Pringle, (son of Don Pringle).

Alexander Pringle married Miss Isabelle Mitchell daughter of James Rattray Mitchell. Anne and John were the names of their two children. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Pringle sold Burnhead Farm to Mr. James Seabrook and then moved into Chatsworth. Tragedy seemed to dog their footsteps because three years later Mrs. Pringle passed away very suddenly. Alexander Pringle, like his father before him was up and about as usual but took a heart attack and passed away on September 13, 1911.

Other owners of this Pringle farm were Mr. and Mrs. Fred Saunders and William and Laura Carnahan who formerly owned Lots D and E and still own a lot there.

A passing stranger would never dream that Chatsworth would be associated with such an interesting pioneer history. Long before the turn of the century, this little village had two newspapers entitled, The Chatsworth

News and the Chatsworth Banner. One old newspaper dated 1888 revealed many historical facts about the village.

Away back in 1873 a train made a trip from Toronto to Chatsworth in eight hours. Not only did the citizens have a daily mail delivery, but they also had a fine telegraphic system.

McGillivray is a name which will always be associated with the post office in Chatsworth.

According to an 1890 edition of the Chatsworth News, a daily stage ran between Durham and Chatsworth in time to connect with the C.P.R. train going north to Owen Sound.

There was also a bank in Chatsworth. Many years ago, Mr. S.H. Breese operated a private bank from an office in his own home.

Andrew McGill's foundry played a large part in the life of the village because he made ploughs, fanning mills and bells. It is interesting to note that the loyal citizens commissioned Mr. McGill to make a cannon to help celebrate the consummation of confederation in 1867.

At one time Chatsworth was a very busy shipping centre. An elevator had to be erected to store the grain before it was shipped. In fact Chatsworth was almost considered to be a self-contained village.

Education was ever foremost in the minds of these energetic people. Two schools are still standing. The first log school was built at the southern end of Chatsworth on Lot 17 Division 6, west of the Garafraxa Road (meaning panther country) and was known as Hemstock's Corner. It is believed that this school was built around 1844. A frame school was built to replace the log school and is now owned by artists John and Mary Edith Mueller. The brick school at the northern end of Chatsworth was built in 1889 to replace one which had been destroyed by fire on the same site. This large school was used as a public school, continuation school and for a time a high school.

Chatsworth was the village in which Anne spent most of her childhood days among her friends and relatives.

It is true Anne learned to like many aspects of the prairie, especially the lovely prairie crocus but Chatsworth was always home to her. Every autumn Anne remembered the beautiful red maple leaves and longed to see them once more.

Three children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Russel Hemstock namely, - Dr. Alexander Hemstock of Calgary, Margaret, Mrs. Leo Pearce of Calgary and Alan of Nova Scotia.

After graduating in mining engineering, Dr. Alex Hemstock worked with Imperial Oil Ltd. as assistant field geologist and engineer at Norman Wells, N.W.T. Later he received an M.Sc. degree after majoring in soil mechanics. Then he returned to Norman Wells to do a research project on permafrost for the Arctic Institute of North America. Dr. Hemstock is married to the former Emily Keely and they are very proud of their busy family of nine children. Their names are John, Mary Jane, Bill, Cathy, Anne, Betty, Jim, Sue, and Chris.

Margaret Hemstock graduated from the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Edmonton. She married Leo Pearce who was an engineer. Mr. and Mrs. Pearce have a charming family of three namely - Brenda, married to Bruce Watson. Bruce and Brenda have a family of three children, Scott, Heather, and Shawn. Patricia Jean (Pat) Pearce is a teacher in British Columbia. Doug Pearce is married to the former Sharon Forrester and they have one child Robyn Jean born March 29, 1985.

Alan Hemstock married Diane Wiebe, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. (Art) Wiebe of Edmonton. After graduating from university, he became associated with a large company and is now stationed on the east coast. Mr. and Mrs. Hemstock have always been active in all phases of community life. When Mr. Hemstock was transferred to another province it was with regret that we saw them leave Ontario.

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Hemstock have a delightful family of five. Their names are Mark, Bruce, Heather, (Mrs. Gary Lantz), Sharon and Robbie. Mr. and Mrs. Lantz are both teachers in Ontario. They have one little daughter, Jaimie Heather born January 26, 1988.

Dear Aunt Nell's children were,- Margaret Young (deceased 1983); Lorne, (deceased 1979), Rose MacLeod, Isabel, Catherine Wright, James, Thomas, Grace Hodgins, and Kenneth.

Anne summed everything up when she wrote, -

"So many of our old neighbours are pulling out to new pastures. I hate to see them go but after all the bad years we have had, one cannot blame them. Perhaps we would be wise to go too but it is hard to pull up and just drop everything but what you can freight out."

Rose M. MacLeod
East Linton, Ont. (1989)

Dear Aunt Nell



Dear Aunt Nell was Mrs. Ella Mitchell McClelland, youngest daughter of James Rattray Mitchell of Chatsworth, Ont.

Anne



Anne Pringle Hemstock was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Pringle of Chatsworth, Ont.

Hanna, Alta

Oct. 5. 1932.

Dear Aunt Nell, - /

It was nice to get your letter and hear the news of you & your family. I wish we were near enough so that Allan & I could spend one of our long days with you now & again. Margaret started to school in September you know - & the men are down at the mine from seven in the morning until seven at night so Allan and I are alone. Of course I'm busy all the time, but it seems strange to take my cup of tea - and sandwich & sit down all by myself

~~minutes~~
Now I must close - I tried your muffin recipe - & it was very good - except for the addition of the molasses. It was much the same as my own - but the molasses makes it a bit more moist. Love to you all - Anne.

The originals of the "Dear Aunt Nell" letters are held by Rose MacLeod. With her permission, parts of one of the letters are included to show Anne's writing style.



BEATTIE'S SCHOOL (S.S. NO. 1, E, SULLIVAN) - 1897

Back Row, left to right - Archie McDonald. 2nd Row - Jim Pringle, Joe Pringle, Wes. Carson, Milton Dobie. 3rd Row - Minnie Lundy, Annie Ferguson, _____, Jennie Black, Ethel Dobie. 4th Row - Mattie Dunnington, Agnes Beattie, Minnie Pearce, Gregor McDonald, Alex Black, Belle Black, Rebecca Black, Sara Pearce. 5th Row - Mr. Alex Pringle, John Pringle, Mrs. Alex. Pringle, Jean McDonald, Valerie Pearce, Hardy Ferguson, Emma Schultz, Agnes McGill (teacher), Lily Beattie, Mabel Dunnington, Britton Lundy, Margaret Lundy, _____, Mrs. A. McDonald, Blyth McAvoy, Miss A. McDonald. 6th Row - Jennie Pearce, Alice Dunnington, Victoria Pearce, Willie McAvoy, Charlie Pearce, Henry Dunnington. 7th Row - Jim McDonald, Annie McAvoy, _____, Agnes Ferguson, Mabel Duff, Clelland Ferguson. 8th Row - John McAvoy, _____, Percy Pearce, Leola Pearce, Anne Pringle.

DEAR AUNT NELL

577, 8th St. A. E.
Owen Sound, Ont.
March 13, 1912.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Wonder of wonders, I'm writing this after breakfast, waiting for the bell to ring for school. It's generally a mad rush to get to school in time but this morning I was up at 7.30 and I was first down to breakfast.

I went out to Uncle Joe Pringle's place on the Friday afternoon train. Rob and Janet met me. Saturday we took the team and went to see Grandma (Mrs. James Rattray Mitchell, Chatsworth, Ont.). We were going to call at Uncle Jim's (James C. Mitchell Chatsworth, Ont.) place but there was a track out so we knew it was no use.

Grandma was lying down when I walked in. She couldn't believe it was I at first for Lucky had never barked and I stepped right over him to get into the house. Grandma was feeling very well that day but she hasn't been very well all winter. I think Uncle Jack looked very well. Grandma had been out to Chatsworth the day before. You would think from the way she was bringing things out and making me eat them that I had been almost starved for weeks before. She had apple pie and biscuits and apples and jelly and I don't know what all. When I was coming away she brought out three dollars, one for me, one for Kate and one for Peggy (Kate and Peggy Rutherford, Leith, Ont.). I tried to think of something she would want herself so that I could give it to her. Do you think she would mind? Kate and Peggy are going to get their new spring gloves with their money.

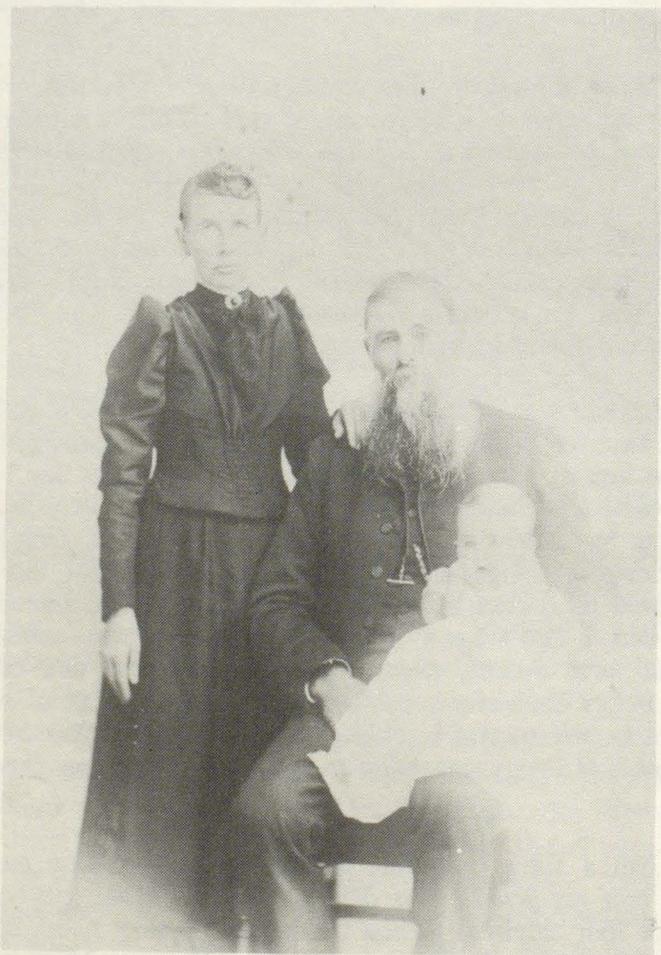
I had a letter from Mr. Breese last night telling me that a lady wanted to rent my house. He didn't know her name and he thought she had three or four children. When I didn't know more about her I thought I wouldn't let her have it. She comes from somewhere down in Bentinck. I do wish I could get it sold but I guess there's no prospect of that.

We've been having great fun snowshoeing lately. There's a party of about ten of us go out every Monday night. Last night we had a great time. We went up an awfully steep hill, then sat down on our snowshoes,

gathered our skirts around us and slid down. My! it was exciting. You didn't know the moment you would go head over heels. The only part I didn't like was that, when we came home nurse Bremner made ginger tea, hot enough to burn your toes and then she watched us drinking it. Between her sour face and the hot ginger, it was a bad dose.

It's almost 1:30 and Eppie will be after me for using so much electric energy, not to mention my own.

Yours as ever,
Anne



Baby Anne Pringle with her father and mother Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Pringle. Mrs. Pringle was the former Isabel Mitchell daughter of James R. Mitchell of Chatsworth, Ont.



John and Ann Pringle with her doll Kate.
John Little Pringle was born on July 22, 1895
and died Sept. 5, 1900 as the result of an
accident.

577, 8th St. A. E.,
Owen Sound, Ont.,
Sept. 28, 1913.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

I almost fell over myself with delight, when I saw your letter the other day. Thought I might see you yesterday. Muriel McAuley has a class of music pupils out at Kilsyth so she asked me to go out with her for the day. Of course I was delighted to go and thought I would take the horse and skip out to see you, while she was teaching her class. I had a bad cold though and when I once got into the nice warm hall I hated to leave it.

There wouldn't have been much time anyway for she didn't have her full class and so we started home at four, coming round by Inglis Falls. It was perfectly lovely driving and my cold is almost better today.

Yes, Auntie Jane McGill (Mrs. Andrew McGill Chatsworth, Ont.) is going to stay with me this winter. She finds Ottawa very cold and as they would be moving into their own house about Christmas or later, she would feel the cold a great deal.

I'm awfully anxious to see Jimmy Christmas (James C. McClelland) walking. Give Maggie (Margaret McClelland Young) eleven kisses for me.

Yours with heaps of love,
Annie P.

577, 8th St. A. E.,
Owen Sound, Ont.
Feb. 3, 1914.

Dear Aunt Nell,

This is the third time I have started to write to you so surely I'll really do it this time.

I went to her Jessie Alexander and Harold Jarvis last Wednesday night. Jessie Alexander had some excellent pieces. Her first one was of her own make up, "Behind the Scenes at the Coronation." It was very funny and as an encore she gave a parody on "The Charge of the Light Brigade"- about the Bargain Sale Rush. Then she gave a Scotch piece from Crockett's Covenanting Days. Then one called "Should Women Propose." That was simply killing. Her last one was a chapter from Oh! Christina, another Scotch one. Really I never saw any reciter hold the audience in her grasp the way she did. One moment you would be laughing and the next wiping the tears away. At least that was the way with most. My tears didn't come. Harold Jarvis is a good singer too. You should have heard the way he sang "Afton Water" and "A Perfect Day". I couldn't move when he finally stopped singing and just for a moment there was a

dead stillness, then just a burst of applause. He was better than Jessie Alexander.

I was out three nights last week and this week I began by snowshoeing yesterday evening and then there are some girls coming in to-night. Tomorrow we are going to the Savoy Theatre. There's a play on there. "The Butterfly and the Wheel". It is a divorce play and has made quite a sensation in Toronto so I'm anxious to see it. Verna would like me to go out to Chatsworth this week-end but I'm afraid I'll have to stay at home for I have an essay to write, a speech to prepare and an exam to study for.

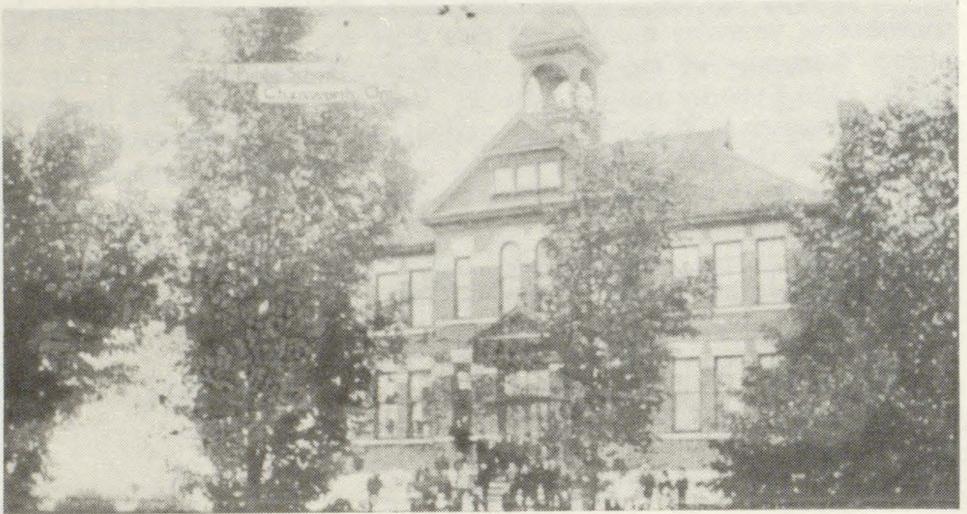
Now I must get my homework done.

Your loving niece.

Anne.



Jackie, Anne and her father 1906.



Chatsworth Public and Continuation School. Anne Pringle attended this school.

Owen Sound, Ont.
March 2, 1914.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I was so glad to get your letter. Really, I've got so few letters lately that I simply pounce on one when I do get it and they are never half long enough.

I've been terribly busy lately. We are getting out a Collegiate Annual and I'm on the Editorial Staff so you can imagine the work that there is. We are at it almost four evenings a week. In fact I scarcely get any other work done.

I was out at Chatsworth a week ago for over Sunday. Of course I had a good time. I think there's no place will ever be quite as good as Chatsworth. I was at the rink on Saturday night. Uncle Jack was there for awhile. I didn't get a chance to ask him about Grandma and when I tried to ring her up I couldn't get her.

Thomas John's (T. J. McClelland, Mississauga, Ont.) teeth are progressing wonderfully aren't they but of course he's altogether a most wonderful child. He takes after his mother that's plain to me.

I'll be out to see you soon after Easter when the spring days are here again. Didn't March come in like a lion? My! it did blow so last night but nevertheless I went to church like the good child I am.

They came in for my piano on Saturday. You can't imagine how I miss it. The parlour looks as though there had been a funeral in it. Even 'Eppie' who simply detested music says it looks bare.

Was out to Woodford on a sleigh. We got back at 3 A.M. Wasn't that shocking?

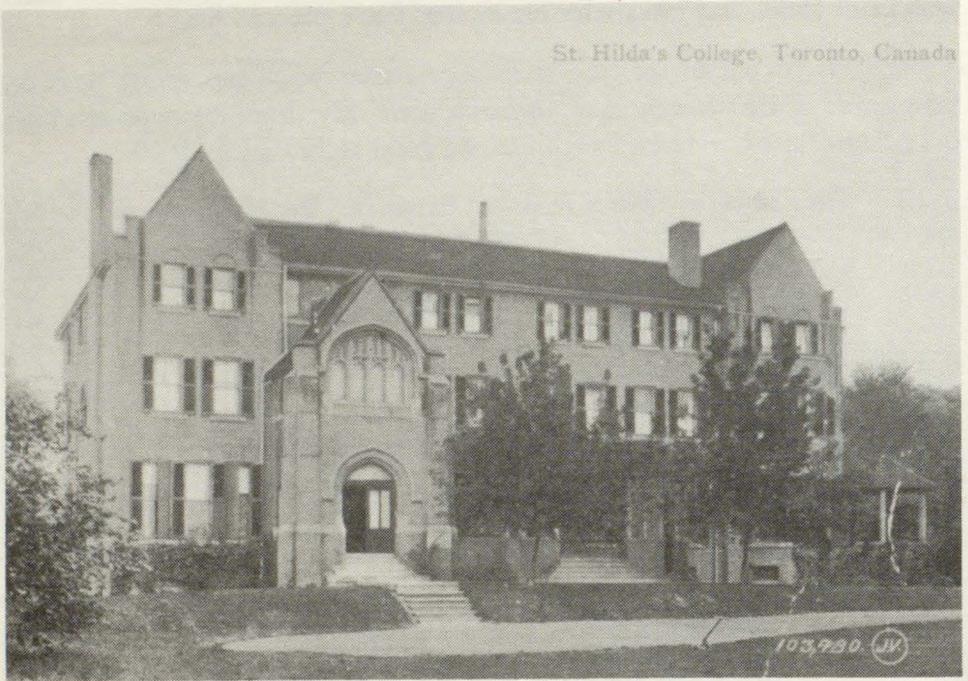
Please write soon again,

Love to all the kiddies and yourself.

A. Pringle



Anne, when she graduated from
the Owen Sound Collegiate.



St. Hilda's College, Toronto, Ont. Anne graduated from this college in 1918.

St. Hilda's College,
Toronto, Ont.,
Sept. 30, 1914.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I can't realize that I haven't been here a week yet for it seems like years and years. At this rate four years will take a long time to pass won't they? We freshies have to serve supper to the senior years tonight and after supper the Provost from Trinity is coming over to give us a little sermon.

Every night after dinner the girls dance in the big common room down here. Every girl but myself dances and they are all very kind in offering to teach me but dancing won't play a very large part in my life after college so there isn't much use in my learning now especially when I'm so horribly slow in learning.

I haven't told you about the midnight spreads that we have been having. We were initiated on Wednesday evening and then Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights we had supper about 10:30 in some of the older girls' rooms. They were awfully jolly little affairs and wonderful to relate I didn't have indigestion after them although we had all sorts of impossible things to eat.

I have decided to go up to May Robinson's for Thanksgiving.

The girl who lives next door to me writes to her sweetheart every single day and sometimes twice a day. Whatever she finds to talk about beats me.

I went to Owen Sound that Saturday afternoon and got full instructions from Edna Evans about the trip down. She's been awfully kind. She has been so thoughtful for me here too, for I think I would have despaired completely. There are so many nice girls in her year I'm just wishing I were in it too.

Well there goes the tea bell so I must run. Freshies get "squashed" if they're late.

I'd love to see you and have a good, long talk. Everything is so very different down here and you see so many sides of life that your whole outlook on life seems to be changing - at least I know mine is. Life never seemed quite so serious before and I never felt very much responsibility for anyone's welfare but my own and here your own individuality seems to lose itself in college life. Probably that sounds rather vague but my own mind is rather hazy about it yet but anyway there is some great difference and I think perhaps that partly explains it.

Don't let that last gloomy letter worry you. It isn't going to be nearly so bad after all, I'm sure and Christmas is just eleven weeks away.

With love to the family,
Lovingly,
Anne.

St. Hilda's College,
Toronto, Ont.
Feb. 4, 1915.

My dear Aunt Nell,-

I've recovered nicely from my fit of the blues or indigestion whichever you like to call it and am enjoying life once more. I've been awfully busy lately but tonight there seems to be a lull so I'm busy making the best of it. There is a reception going on over at the college but I thought I'd rather stay in my room and be cosy than exert myself talking to stupid men.

Last week was an exceptionally busy week. On Thursday night we had our big St. Hilda's dance. I didn't think at first I would go but I did and had a glorious time. The men looked so handsome in their long-tailed coats and their white gloves and some of them were in soldier's uniform. The decorations too were all patriotic and everything looked perfectly beautiful. I wore my evening dress and did my hair up high and wore my long white kid gloves. My, it was exciting! I don't wonder that people go crazy over dances. I wish there was one every week. Wouldn't Grandma be shocked if she heard that? Then on Friday night we went over to the university to see a play presented by a number of the students. It was good too but we didn't get back to college until 12.30. On Saturday I went over to a Dr. Fotheringham's for the week-end. His daughter is in our year at Varsity and is a wonderful girl. She has been all over Europe and studied two years at a Scotch College. Dr. Fotheringham is expecting to go to the front very soon. He is colonel as well as doctor to the second contingent and spends the greater part of his time at the Exhibition Grounds. Ruth and I went to the theatre on Saturday night and the clock was just striking twelve when we got in. Three nights in succession! Tonight I'm going to bed as soon as the clock strikes ten to try to make up for some of my lost time.

Love, Anne.

St. Hilda's College
Toronto, Ont.
Jan. 9, 1916.

My dear Aunt Nell,

My roommate and I are nicely settled in our new room. It is beautifully bright and sunny and I think we are going to like it very much. It's steam heated but we have a little gas stove that we may use if it gets very cold so we are surely going to be comfortable.

We all had our New Year's dinner over at Uncle Tom's (Tom Mitchell, Leith, Ont.). It was very quiet for they all felt lonely without Tom (Brig T. J. Rutherford, Leith). Aunt Annie (Mrs. Mac Rutherford, Leith) feels very badly about him and it seems to make her a great deal worse. She isn't nearly as well as she was in the summer. Peggy says she gets very melancholy sometimes. Peggy certainly has her hands full this winter and Aunt Jessie is getting frail. The Sunday I was there she fell on the ice and strained her back quite severely. She was scarcely able to move when I left but Kate had a letter yesterday and she was some better.

Your rubbers are having a rest now Aunt Nell for there isn't any snow down here and the streets are as dry as boards. The dust is dreadful on windy days for of course they haven't watering carts running now and it blows wherever and whenever it takes a notion.

Do Lorne and you play dominoes now?

There is a rumour going around college halls now that college will close before Easter and that all our exams will be over by the 21st of April. If you hear of any nice farmer wanting a housekeeper for the summer or a minister wanting a secretary just refer them to me, for since I have determined not to spend such a useless summer as last, I'm open for any kind of engagement almost, whereby I can earn my board and enough to keep me in clothes all summer and help along my fall trousseau. I'm going to apply for a school out west again although I haven't decided yet whether I'll go even if I do get a chance. School teaching doesn't appeal to me in the least.

It's almost tea time Aunt Nell so I must get dressed. Write soon. I've only got one letter since I came back - besides the ones I found awaiting me here. I got an embosser for Christmas so I'm experimenting.

Love to all the family,

As ever,
Anne.



Anne's Graduation Picture.

St. Hilda's College
Toronto, Ont.
March 10, 1917.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Little did I think when I wrote my last letter to you that Grandma was ill and you were with her. I'm so glad to hear that Grandma is feeling better and able to walk around again.

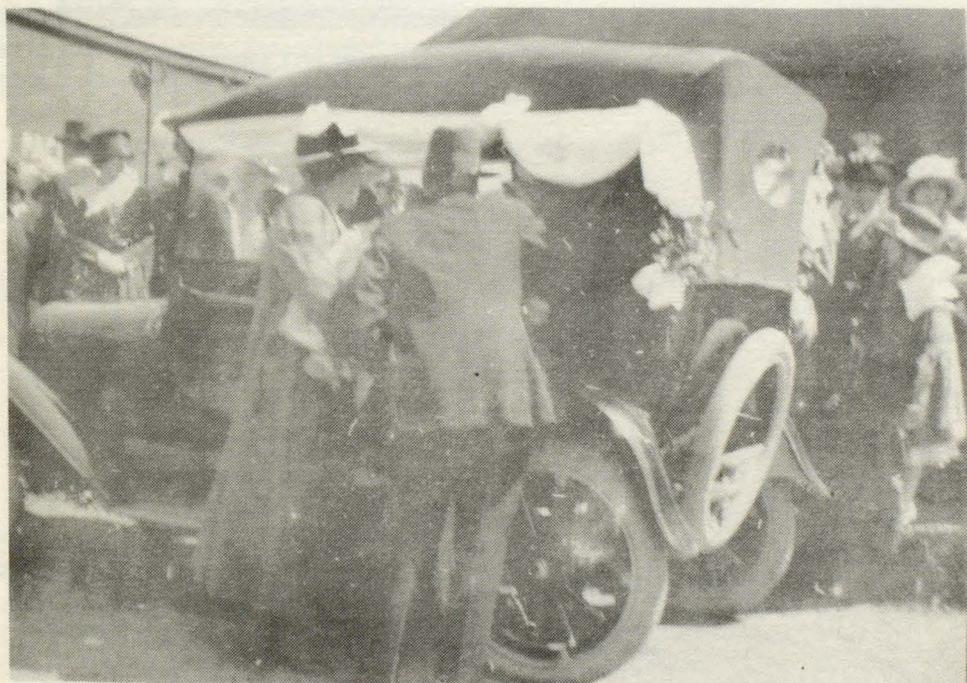
If I thought I could be any use to Grandma I'd go up for a few days anyway. Our exams begin in two weeks time and we are pretty busy but I could take a few days off.

Grandma must have enjoyed having you, Catherine (Catherine McClelland Wright) and the baby and I am sure you would make her feel

better than any of Dr. McCullough's medicine would - at least in Grandma's own opinion. I wonder how Margaret manages when you were away. She would be kept pretty busy getting all the other youngsters off to school on time and looking after Jimmie and Tommie all day - although they are such happy kiddies that they wouldn't need much amusing.

I had a letter from the Rutherfords today. They said you were expecting Aunt Grace (Mrs. Wm. S. Bannerman, Titusville, New Jersey) home this spring. Wouldn't that be nice? I hope she comes at a time when I am up in Sullivan.

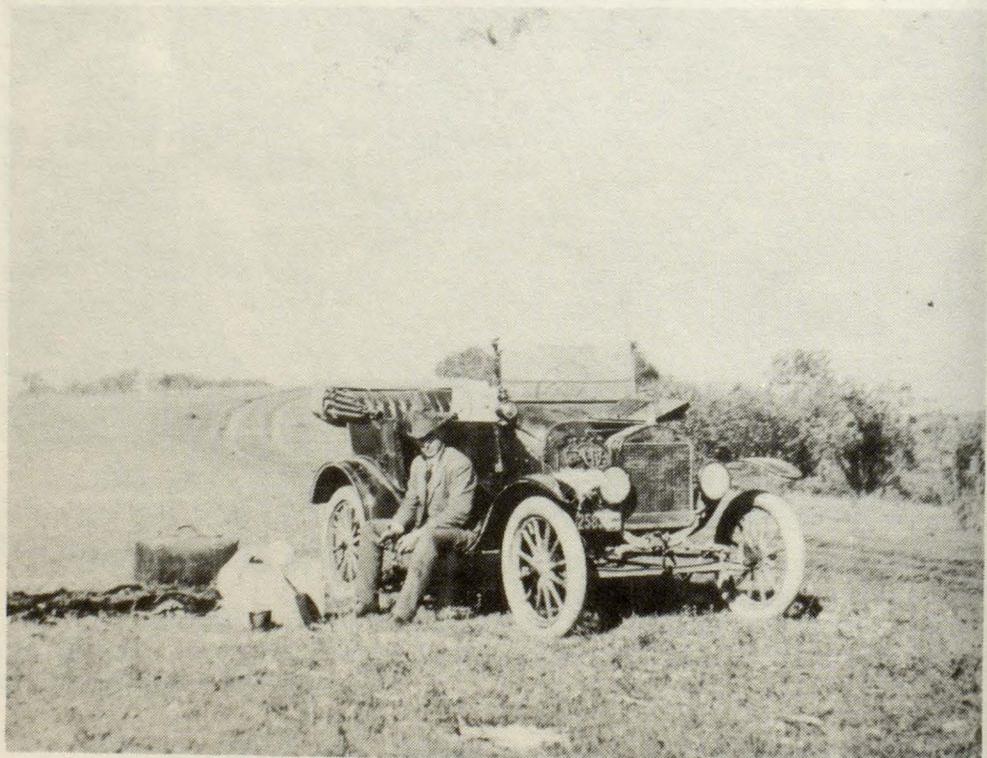
Ever your loving niece, Anne Pringle



The Decorated car which took the bride and groom to the Chatsworth Presbyterian Church on June 13, 1918 at 2:30 P.M.



Anne boarding the 3:30 C. P. R. train at Chatsworth Station after a tearful farewell to her friends and relatives.



Russel Hemstock and his car on The Honeymoon Trip.

Hanna, Alta.,
July 2, 1918.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

This has been a busy day but I've just got to get a letter written to you for to-morrow's mail. There has been a lovely, big thunderstorm this evening and everything looks so fresh, that it makes me feel like starting right in to work again. You can't imagine how many things there are to fuss over, even in a five-roomed house. It's lots of fun, most of it, and then the heavy parts that aren't fun, are the things we usually do together, so we don't mind. You should have seen Russel (Russel Hemstock) helping me with the washing this morning! The contortions of his hands and face when he was wringing things made me laugh until I was too weak to do anything myself, so we weren't much farther ahead than if I'd been alone. The boy who looked after the place in Russel's absence went to town on Saturday for a week's holidays so we've been having a regular picnic for there's no one around to make us act sensible.

I've got hundreds of letters to answer it seems to me for besides gifts to acknowledge there are many letters of congratulation etc. and I've scarcely touched the first batch of those. The evenings seem long but I usually ride out with Russel when he goes to round up the cattle or else we go for a drive in our little new tin Elizabeth. Don't you dare call her Lizzie. I haven't learned to drive it yet for Russel is new on the job himself and I want him to be an expert first, for I'll likely make some wild dashes with it.

July 3rd.

On Monday, the first, we had a wildly exciting day. Our neighbours (the Burns) asked us to go out to the Hand Hills thirty-eight miles from here to a stampede! What does that convey to you? It suggested something like the wild western shows in movies to me, so of course we went. There were six of us in their big McLaughlin car, so Russel and Charlie took turns sitting on the lunch box, much to the detriment of the lunch. You should have seen the roads!! You know there are no gravelled roads here, simply trails. The more travelled ones are worn down to regular ruts but around here most of them are still grassy. Well, we had to go through a mining district with hills straight up and down. On one hill we just got half way down, when we saw a car backing down the hill ahead at a great speed. Another one was hanging half way up, stalled, but we managed to get up with just about an ounce of energy to spare. We arrived at the stampede grounds and found two other carloads of people from here so we all had lunch together, making the shade by pulling two

cars up together, since there wasn't a shade tree in the country. It's so funny here. They have picnics out on the open prairie and garden parties in somebody's new barn or shed. Well during lunch, we had several interruptions as one girl was twirled from her saddle almost into our lemonade. The bronchos kept threatening to kick at us every time they passed. They had all sorts of saddle races, exactly as you see in movies and then thrills, real bucking horses that threw their riders. Wonder of wonders, there were bucking steers! The cowboys were marvellously dressed. One half-breed, a handsome dare devil fellow had on khaki coloured trousers or chaps as they call them with the sheepskin on the sides (also à la movies), and a brilliant, red shirt with, "Let her Buck", in bright yellow letters on his back. This marvel was topped by an ordinary cowboy's hat. To show you the contrast, one rider had regular, old English riding breeches with neat puttees and a raw silk shirt with tie to match the breeches. Oh! it was funny just to see all those men in every sort of costume having a glorious old time, quite irrespective of breeding or family or anything. The dandy rode as well as our "Let her buck lad" let me say.

Then the more daring spirits rode wild steers. Lots of the cattle here you see, are never in and never know the touch of a man's hand until they go to the butcher shops, so they had gathered about twenty of these wild things into a corral. Then they were shoved into a V-shaped place and when in there, a girth was dropped around them. Then a rider dropped on their backs and the door of the V was opened, and then all was excitement for a few minutes. Talk about bucking horses, they weren't in it with those steers. I can't fathom how those boys stuck on. Besides there were exhibitions of lassoing cattle and all sorts of other things that I thought I'd only read about and never see. It was midnight when we got home and I've been sore ever since with the effects of cheering and bumping over those trails. There were just two men killed at the affair, I may say, which seems to be a record for slowness. When you come west I'll take you to see me ride Pat but no more stampede for me. It was too thrilling.

Except for that day, we have led a very quiet life, out for tea both Sundays, out to town several times, at church twice, over to Wicksons (our nearest neighbours), several times, and the rest just us two and that's the best of all. I've only had one little weep for homesickness and that was one night when I thought no one would hear me and I was feeling rather miserable. However Russel did hear me, and was so much disturbed that I've foresworn homesickness because Russel is a dear and I'm just as happy as I can be.

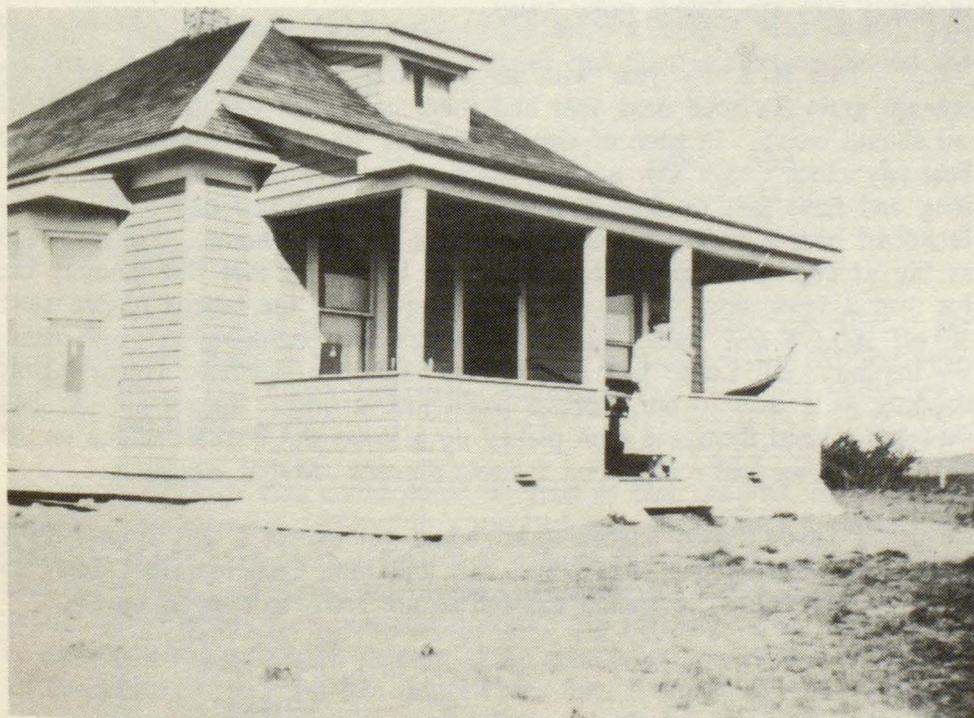
How is everyone at Leith? Oh! for just one more dip in that old bay. The water is all alkali out here and most dreadfully hard to feel clean all the time. All the men have brown or red faces here. The winds are so hard on the skin. They seem to dry it right out, and it blows absolutely all

the time, it seems to me. A cyclone passed us last Thursday by just about half a mile. We could see it coming but a draft of air from the west sent it off cornerwise from us and we may be very thankful, for it overturned a house and several shacks or barns in its course.

Now I don't feel a bit like stopping but I'd better write some more letters when the house is in peace. In other words when Russel is herding the cattle. I usually go too, but it's raining tonight so I balked.

How I'd just love to slip into your parlour this rainy evening and curl up for a chat. I'm not homesick you know - Oh no! but I'd like to be two places at once.

Lovingly,
Anne.



Anne in front of her new home in Hanna, Alberta.

Aug. 20, 1918.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

I've been intending to write ever since we read of the arrival of the youngest son of the McClelland household but housekeeping out here even in this little house takes just as much time as down east. I saw in the same paper where Aunt Minnie was with you so you would have a good nurse and a good little housekeeper in Muggins.

We are getting settled quite nicely now although summer is a pretty busy season and we are leaving some of the finishing touches till winter. Two months have gone by I'm still happy and have yet to feel a serious twinge of homesickness. The west is a grand and glorious place. I enjoyed the trip out immensely although I'm glad I don't have to live in Saskatchewan. It looked terribly flat and dry. Out here there are low, rolling hills to the west of us and to the north, while the east and south are quite open. We can see the elevators at Richdale sixteen miles away quite distinctly any day. The other morning there was a mirage and the elevators and the small buildings beside them appeared to be only about two miles away. It gives you a strange feeling to see those buildings perfectly distinctly rising up in a field a couple of miles away when you know that in reality they are sixteen miles away.

This is a dry year with us here too but there will probably be enough grain for seed next year and there is enough hay to go around so we should worry. In spite of the dry weather we have a garden that would beat any other I ever saw at your place. We have had lettuce for ever so long and have just finished a bed of big juicy radishes that Russel threw broadcast over a vacant bit of ground after we came home. The beets are as big as cups and we've been using the little ones that I'm thinning out for over a week now. The carrots aren't good for the rabbits nipped them all off short a few weeks ago and the tops are beginning to grow again. By the way, tell Lorne that last Sunday night we saw five young rabbits hopping gaily over to our cabbage patch just at dusk. Russel got the gun, shot and missed them and then picked up a stone and hit him square on the head so that we had roast rabbit for two dinners. My! it was good.

I haven't seen anyone from home yet except a girl from Varsity who is teaching not far from here. Mr. and Mrs. Cameron from Leith are going to visit friends in Hanna this fall so are going to hunt us up.

Love,

Anne.



Mr. and Mrs. Wickson (who used to be Anne's nearest neighbours), Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay in the back seat. Russel and Anne Hemstock behind the car Feb. 14, 1919.

Hanna, Alta.
Apr. 23 1921.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I was so glad to get your letter in the last mail just after I got home from the hospital but I don't get quite so many letters written now, although sonny boy (Alex Hemstock, Calgary, Alta.) is really quite good and I've had a girl so far.

I just wish you could come to visit us this summer Aunt Nell to teach me how to raise a baby. It's too bad that Alex didn't wait until the 18th that would have been a wait of five more hours. He is getting so cute now and I wish you could see his dimples when he smiles at us and tries to tell us all about his wonderful dreams. He isn't as fat as I would like to see him and hasn't been gaining as he should so I've started giving him a bottle of cow's milk for his dinner every day. It seems to agree with him and he makes no objections to taking it, so I hope he may gain faster now. He weighed 8 1/2 lbs when he arrived and weighed 11 lbs. when he was

two months old. We weigh him every Sunday when his daddy is around to oversee the process. He doesn't resemble me in the least except for the shape of his face - for he has very fair hair and dark blue eyes. Everyone says he looks like his daddy but his eyes are darker than Russel's.

This is such a cold day but we have had several days of perfect weather. Sonny has had his morning and one of his afternoon naps on the verandah all week. Russel is going to screen half of it in so that we can keep the flies and mosquitoes away from him.

The men have been seeding all week and we have about fifty acres of wheat in. Russel is sitting on the disk today all rolled up in his fur coat. It looks so funny to see it flapping about. I haven't been able to start the gardening yet as it has to be ploughed this spring and Russel wants to get his wheat all in before he starts it but it really isn't safe to plant much out in this country until the first of May anyway.

We had such a nice ride last Sunday and I was looking forward to another tomorrow but it looks and feels much like more snow to-night so I don't suppose we will be able to get out. Russel and Sidney Grimes (our nearest neighbour) took our car all to bits this spring, cleaned it all and painted it. I was betting a new lap rug that it wouldn't go when they first put it together but wonder of wonders it went off like a whirlwind. So I'm going to bequeath one of my oldest treasures a big black crocheted shawl that Mrs. Duck gave mother when we were in England. It's for the front seats. We want the new rug as sonny and I occupy that most of the time. I know that the shawl will be well looked after.

The crocuses are the only flowers out on the prairie so far and they literally cover it now. Pearl brought me in a handful of the first blossoms last Tuesday. They are quite a deep mauve when they come out first but they quickly fade to white.

Pearl and I have been house-cleaning all week. We have the three bedrooms done and the attic and cellar. We won't do the other two rooms until Russel has a day off to help us paper the kitchen. I'm putting on a varnished paper this year.

Some nights son doesn't waken up from the time I put him to bed at six until about three A.M.

Russel is busy whittling out splints for a colt's legs. Did you ever hear of a colt with club feet? We have one that turns right in at the ankles so Russel is trying to get them straightened out.

I have four chicks a month old now and there is one hen supposed to come off today. I heard some chicks peeping but didn't dare disturb her. We have three other hens set.

Give my love to all the family.

As ever,
Anne.



Alexander 1921



Alex Hemstock with his father.

Hanna, Alta.
May 7, 1925.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Tuesday is your birthday. I wish I were nearer to you so that I could make a "candle cake" for you. Alex thinks a birthday isn't proper without the candle cake. He loves to watch the candles burn and likes better the fun of eating the candy flowers that stick them on after the candles are out.

The spring has been very cold and backward until just this week but its so warm out now that I'm just aching to get out in the garden. The men have been busy seeding all week though, but Russel is going to take Saturday afternoon off and get the garden in shape.

Son and I have been alone all week as the men are working down at the other place. Of course they're home at night but they're up so early and back so late that Alex sometimes doesn't see his daddy at all. They take lunch with them and go back and forth in the car so we have the day to ourselves.

I was down in Calgary a couple of times this spring. I had eleven teeth out the first trip and then went back and had a small plate put in so

they weren't altogether pleasure trips. I had Sunday dinner with Russel Lynn (son of Robert Lynn, Kilsyth, Ont.) and his wife the first time. They have a very cosy little apartment, very beautifully furnished. Margaret is a dear wee girl with golden brown hair and eyes quite a bit like Grace in her expression and features I thought.

I spent Good Friday at Olds with Nettie Lennox - one of Miss Bremner's old girls and then came home the next day. I took son with me the last trip but he didn't enjoy the long waits in the dentist's office although he loved the street cars and the toy departments.

I found Russel sick when I got home. He was threatened with appendicitis and was very miserable. Both doctors said that an operation was necessary at once but Russel wouldn't consent and started taking chiropractic treatments. He is feeling much better and is working as hard as ever. Of course he is on a diet too which would naturally help some. We eat nothing but whole wheat bread now and have no fried meat, eggs or potatoes. No pies and very few cakes. I thought if Russel had to diet we might as well all do it and we don't mind a bit.

I'm waiting for a rainy day to get Russel to help me paper my guest room and kitchen. He's as good as a professional at that job so we can get most of it done in a day.

I haven't a single chicken out yet. My hens seem to be awfully giddy this spring. They simply won't settle down to set. I tried two of them out last week but I got so disgusted with them that I finally hung them in sacks on the clothesline and told them if they couldn't sit properly they could start laying again.

We have twenty-six little black calves, nine little pigs and the cutest colt I've seen for a long time. It keeps son and I busy looking after our livestock for we usually turn them into the pasture at night and let them range in the morning.

I wonder sometimes what I'll do when Alex has to start to school. The house seems so quiet in the mornings without his chatter and how the cats and dog do enjoy their morning naps.

As soon as Alex gets up he starts "harnessing" them and then one by one they vanish.

Again love and good wishes on your birthday, Aunt Nell.
from Anne.



Alex Hemstock.



Alex Hemstock

Hanna, Alta.,
April 19, 1926.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

It seems just like a dream that I saw you last winter. I suppose spring is in full swing in Ontario now. You would welcome it after that awful winter. Russel thinks another winter in Ontario would cure me forever of any homesickness for Ontario but I don't believe it needs even one more winter to complete my cure. It was lovely to get back to the Alberta sunshine again although it is cold. Alex keeps me busy these days hunting up egg cups and glasses for the bouquets of crocuses he brings in. They are such dear little fuzzy things I love them almost as much as the little hepaticas perhaps because they both seem to be the first real proof that spring is here.

The men are busy on the land these days. Russel hasn't seeded any yet but will probably start tomorrow. We haven't a man yet but have to meet the midnight train tonight to meet an English immigrant whom the employment office in Calgary is sending out. They are bringing out a great many families to Alberta from the "auld country". Most of the hired men around here have just recently come out. Some of them are very funny. One of our neighbours has one straight from London and the first night he brought the horses in he stood looking at them for a few minutes and then said, "Do you undress your horses every night Mr. Greenway?"

May 6,

I missed the mailman yesterday. This is the second time lately that the mailman has fooled Alex and me. Russel says it's a sure proof that we take an afternoon nap but I think it's because the postie has a new car which runs like a quiet top. We used to be able to hear his old one climbing the coulee hill a mile away so never had to watch for him and I forget that it's necessary to keep an eye open for this one, instead of an ear.

We didn't get our car out till the middle of April. Quite a few of our neighbours have new cars. A good crop always means a lively business for the garage men next spring but I guess our car went into railway tickets.

I had forty chicks come out of seventy-two eggs. Once you open the incubator the eggs shells seem to get so hard and dry the chicks can't get out.

Love, Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
May 5, 1926

Dear Aunt Nell, -

When I was studying the calendar this morning it suddenly dawned on me that a week from today is your birthday. The days seem all too short for just the everyday duties and don't leave many minutes for letters or reading.

The men are leaving this morning to go down to our other place to work for a couple of weeks so I'm planning to do lots of extras when I have most of the day to myself. They come back every night of course and I have a hot dinner for them and then they take a lunch for noon and a few extra cookies for an afternoon bite. I always seem to get more done though when I don't have to stop and prepare a twelve o'clock dinner.

We have had a lovely spring - warm and breezy for the most part some days very windy. We have an Englishman working for us and he can't get over the "blowiness" of Alberta. When they come in some nights they are almost as black as the stove and it's funny to see him look at himself in the glass just as if he could hardly believe his eyes. Son loves to stand on the back of the seed drill with Russel and he's usually as black as the men and immensely proud of it too.

Russel ploughed my garden yesterday and got it all nicely worked down. I have cabbage, cauliflowers and tomatoes growing in the big window but some kind of fly ate off my first plants - so these others are rather late. Alex is very keen to get at the garden.

Grandpa Hemstock has been very miserable since we left too. They would like to see us buy a farm near Chatsworth but the climate last winter put the crimp on us ever wanting to go back. Of course our winters are cold here but as long as the sun shines in true Alberta style we can stand the cold. It was the dull weather that we did not like.

My first batch of incubator chickens are due today. There's a great deal of peeping and chipping going on but I don't dare open the incubator for twelve hours yet. I had quite good luck with two old biddies who set early and brought out twenty chicks between them but not another hen has clucked since so I'm hoping that the incubator will prove successful. It's more easily managed than a bunch of old hens. My next problem will be to play mother to the bunch of chicks. I use a big earthenware jug and fill it with hot water twice a day, wrap an old blanket around it and the chicks cuddle against it in the folds of the blanket.

We had the well drillers here all last week but they got water on Saturday so moved off the beginning of this week. We haven't got a pump in yet as we wanted a force pump so that we could put the water in the house when we get our next good crop. The new water is still rather milky in appearance but I think it will probably clear up when we get the pump going. Anyway it isn't alkali water so when our Ontario relatives come to see us, we won't make them homesick for a good drink of water, the very first thing. Poor Uncle Joe (Pringle) and Aunt Jessie never ceased to marvel how we could drink the water we had when they were here. At least, it had one advantage none of our visitors ever had to ask for a dose of salts.

Alex wants his porridge so I must go.

Love to all,
from Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
December, 1926

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Your family will all be arriving for Christmas soon and won't you have a jolly time. I hope the measles left no bad after effects. There was an epidemic of smallpox in town this fall so we were all vaccinated. Son and Russel were very sick for four days. My vaccination won't heal up. I think I'd just about as soon have the smallpox as the cure for it.

The mailman hasn't come through since the storm and I won't let Russel start out for town till it warms up a bit. It was 40 below zero this morning but is a bit milder tonight. I don't know when we'll get our Christmas parcels and letters off.

I still have a girl but she goes home the week before Christmas. I'm not sure whether I'll need her after Christmas or not. I'll see how I get along. I try to give Alex an hour of lessons every day so that takes a good deal of time and more patience. We are so far from school though that I thought I'd better get him started at home for the first few months at school go slowly if they have had no previous training on how to study. Alex has had a gorgeous time sleigh riding down the drifts since the storm. They are just as hard as can be and he races right over the fences. The latest place is sleigh riding down the hay stack on to the huge drift beside it. It almost makes my hair stand on end to watch it.

I must close now and stack up my coal for the night. It surely is nice to know that there's half a dozen coal mines close at hand these days. I tried to get time exposures of the babe to send you for Christmas to show you the sweetest baby there ever was!!!

The seasons greetings to you all and a heap of love too.

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Oct. 19, 1927.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I was ever so glad to get your letter and I do like to hear from home folks especially well.

Alex had his operation for appendicitis the last week in August. He had two attacks in two weeks so when the second one was on we just rushed him right in to the hospital. Poor laddie - he did hate to go but he was as brave as could be and never cried a bit until they took the stitches out. Russel stayed with him until the fourth day and then we went in every night. He got home on the eleventh day and has been fine so far although he doesn't seem to be getting much fatter. It is a relief to have it over with.

Margaret is not quite as plump as she was in her younger days but she weighs twenty-four pounds, and has four teeth. She stands alone and walks all around with one hand on the wall or chairs. She is a good baby at home but makes fearfully strange when we are away. I do hope she will soon get over it.

We are busy getting ready for winter these days. We had the threshers for only two days this fall as we have only the home farm this year. It makes it much easier. Then in July we had quite a hail storm. For ten miles north of us, there wasn't a spear of wheat left standing. We were on the southern border of the storm, the north half of the crop being hailed about fifty per cent. The south half between ten and twenty per cent. We don't carry hail insurance so got off fairly well. North of us, some who had heavy insurance made fortunes and some who really needed insurance hadn't any and are poverty stricken. The crops untouched by hail

are averaging between thirty and forty bushels to the acre this year. Even our fields looked nice when they were all stooked but of course the heads weren't well filled. Russel and Mr. Grimes are stacking the green feed this week. They will start on Mr. Grimes' place tomorrow so I'm planning to get ever so much sewing done when the children and I are alone with no dinner to get for the men. I have Margaret in rompers now as they are neater and warmer than dresses for winter.

We are working hard to get a school district formed in here and a school built. There have never been enough children (eight are needed) to have a school until this fall, when a Romanian farmer with five children moved in. They don't speak a word of English but seem industrious and want their children educated so it gives us the chance we've been waiting for. Alex was to start to Grassy Slope (five miles away) in September. After his operation I hated to send him so far for a month or so at least and now I think if there is any prospect of a school being built close at hand that I will just teach him myself again this winter. It is bound to be built within a mile of here and in all probability right on the corner next to us. So he should be able to make up for lost time if he can attend regularly regardless of weather conditions. Now I must go and get my breakfast table set. I'm still lazy enough to relish a few minutes extra in bed these chilly mornings.

Alex started a letter to Kenny (K.M. McClelland) on his typewriter (a friend of ours sent it to him while he was in the hospital) but he got too sleepy to finish it.

So write again soon.

Love to all the family and a special bit for you dear Aunt Nell.

As ever yours,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Sept. 14, 1928.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

It's ages since I have heard from you but perhaps it is my own fault. Anyway here is a fresh start and I do hope you'll not wait too long

to answer it. Aren't you coming out to visit us this year? We haven't had any Eastern visitors this year and the country has looked so nice that I've wished our friends could see it. So often our visitors have come in years when things have been too dry or else too wet but this summer has been a delightful one. The crops are very good and the gardens were a marvel until last Friday night when we had a very hard frost. It caught most of my tomatoes and cucumbers. Of course the peas and beans are gone. We carried in twenty-five good-sized pumpkins today and a twenty pound crate of tomatoes. It's lovely and warm again so we are leaving the rest of the things in the garden for awhile yet. Unfortunately the frost came just one night that Russel and I were not at home to look after things or we might have saved a great deal more.

The children both took a very sick spell last week. The doctor called it intestinal flu. Margaret took it so severely and suddenly that we took her right in to the hospital. She was there over night and seemed well enough to bring home the next day but she was quite sick for two more days. There is an epidemic of infantile paralysis in Alberta again this fall with one case in Hanna so that was what scared us so badly over the children as the symptoms resemble the common flu in the early stages. They both seem almost themselves again but so thin.

Alex started to school again today. Our new school isn't finished yet so they are having school at one of the neighbours for the next week or so. It is fine to have the school so close. We simply couldn't have sent Alex to the other school when once the days got shorter for he had to leave here at seven o'clock and didn't get home until 5:30 p.m. Now I can watch him most of the way.

We had a little vacation trip this summer. Russel, Alex and I went up to Edmonton for the exhibition there and then came home by Will Pringle's at Bentley and by Red Deer, Sylvan and Buffalo Lake.

Russel will finish cutting his wheat tomorrow if all is well and the neighbourhood thresher starts out tomorrow noon. Another month of good weather would be very welcome now.

We are building a kitchen, bathroom and bedroom on this year and Russel wants me to get our plumbing order ready for tomorrow's mail. We have a great time getting it all planned out. It won't be an ideal arrangement but it will be very convenient to have the water in the house.

We don't expect to get it all complete before winter but want to get the cement work done right away.

Heaps of love to all of you,
Love Anne.



Margaret (Mrs. Leo Pearce)

Hanna Alta.
Dec. 29, 1929,

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I'm sure that Christmas was not altogether a joyous time for you this year for you would miss Uncle Bob's (Robert Mitchell, son of J.R. Mitchell Sr.) cheery presence. I was so surprised and sorry to hear of his death for I had never heard of his illness. Someone told me that he had come west to La Fleche this fall but we didn't see him. Russel's visit home was so short that he hadn't seen many of my friends.

We had a pleasant Christmas day with the Grimes this year. Mrs. Grimes is teaching again but came home the week before Christmas.

The Grimes were to come here for New Years but the day after Christmas son took the chicken pox so unless he clears up very quickly I'm afraid they won't come over as Mrs. Grimes goes back to school right after the New Year and she doesn't want to take Donald back with a pocky face. Christmas seems to be our unlucky season for last year son came home from the hospital on Christmas eve after pneumonia and this year Margaret was sick the whole week before.

Margaret found old Katie (Anne's doll) in her Christmas stocking this year and of all the gifts she got, Katie, is the dearest. She calls her the lady doll and all the other dolls of all colours and sexes are the "family" of Katie so you see in spite of the long years of retirement Katie hasn't lost her charm. Alex used to like to play with her too but he used her chiefly as a passenger on some of his model cars etc.

I had a homesick ache for a wee while last fall when Russel came home and started telling me about all the friends he saw but I hadn't the slightest desire to go when he went as I was afraid of the infantile paralysis. We hadn't so much of it in Alberta last year but have certainly had some scares with it in the two previous falls.

I had a letter from a friend of mine this year. Haven't heard from her for at least four years and she has a daughter older than mine not to mention another baby several months old. She was May Robinson of Moonstone. We used to write about once a week - all the time I was in Toronto. It's amazing how friends can grow apart so and amazing how time flies.

We hear that you had an unusually severe winter so far. We had one very cold week just before Christmas but it has been thawing all this week and there isn't really much snow left. We are due to have a change soon though for there were mirages all around this morning. One night this week looking out of our front windows we could count the lights in Coronation some forty odd miles from here. It always gives me sort of a queer feeling to see the lights of a town hanging in space - apparently only a few miles away. The mirages in daylight aren't nearly so spooky and they are always new and beautiful.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
May 9, 1930

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Your letter was such a lovely letter. I hear from so few in the east now. We miss Father Hemstock's letters. He was one of our most regular correspondents although the last year or two he only wrote at Christmas and for Russel's birthday. We get the Owen Sound paper of course but it's not like letters.

The maple sugar was a treat. I kept it up on the high pantry shelf after our first taste of it and it lasted till Easter time. Then when Alex came home for Easter he had to taste it and somehow or other the last layer of two disappeared like magic in the few days of vacation. We used to get a gallon or two of syrup every year from people in town who came from Glengarry. They had quite a large shipment sent out every spring. They finally tired of the prairie though and went back to Ontario.

This is such a lovely, rainy night. Our early spring (March, and most of April) was very warm and dry but these last two weeks we have had lots of rain, and it's been quite chilly. Russel finished seeding his wheat this week and has a few acres of oats in but usually he just gets in half day spells between rains. The soil was so very dry after last year's drought that it seems to soak up the moisture like a sponge. I haven't any garden in yet except in my windows and around the house but if its warmer next week we'll have to be busy at it. We haven't a man this year so Alex and I will have to do most of the seeding. We will use the cultivator in the garden.

It must seem very strange to have such a small family in your big house.

One little girl lives just a mile from here and her daddy farms the section adjoining us - so she sometimes comes up here in the truck with him and goes back at night. Their favourite pastime is hunting the turkey eggs. I give Margaret a cent a piece for all she brings in so they surely don't neglect any corners of the stacks or trees. I looked out the other day and caught them and the pup chasing the old gobbler. They were keeping the pup at him and they had the poor old fellow about winded.

We are having church services this year in a school just four miles north of here. The Hanna minister takes the services and he is an old Holland boy - Victor Howey. Last Sunday in a story to the boys and girls he told how he had to pick stones as a boy and about how he sometimes found puffballs instead of stones.

It reminded me of how we used to love to kick the puffballs up in Godfrey's pasture on the way to and from school (Beattie's School one mile west of Chatsworth). Russel said he'd know he was from Holland for he described some of the stone fences they built there. He is quite a good speaker and it is nice to have a real minister instead of a student. We try to get in to Hanna to church sometimes in the summer evenings. (They have no morning service in summer) but it is so far that it makes it late getting home and when Alex goes to school we like to get him to bed early.

We had a visit from the McBriens who live in Oyen. Mr. McBrien is a brother of Bobby McBrien who used to live near Chatsworth. He thinks he used to go to school with you.

I must get to bed now for if it's clear in the morning - it's 5 a.m. We try to have breakfast at 6 a.m.

I've sold practically all our eggs for incubator hatching this spring.

We hope some of our Ontario friends will take a notion to see the west this summer. It's so long since anyone has been here and I don't suppose we will be going east for some years. Russel feels as if he never wants to go again now that his parents are gone and I don't like going alone. We are planning though to see Peace River country some time this summer. The motor road through is almost completed and it should make a wonderful trip. Everyone says it is so much more like Ontario than any other part of the west with its trees and clear streams. I am keen to see it and of course Russel has always hoped that we'd eventually sell here and go up there. But if I don't stop here the first thing I know I'll have another page started and I'm too Scotch to pay postage on an empty page.

Love and Good-Bye,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Sept. 25, 1930.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I was ever so glad to get your letter away back in June.

You must have a lovely perennial border I've been trying for years to get one established but summers like this one just about blots mine out

of existence. Send me some of the hardier seeds please as few of the perennials matured enough to blossom this year. My cosmos row though was lovely and the annual hollyhocks were nice and we had ornamental beets all over the garden. Mine was just about the only flower garden in the whole neighbourhood and although it looked rather ragged it was much admired. I had over forty glads this year but the frost caught a good many of the blooms. I have the last bunch on the table now - almost gone too.

Son's garden was rather a disappointment this year. We usually get so many garden prizes at the school fair, but got first in beets only and third in red potatoes, corn and turnips. His calf though won first in its class and also won the fair championship so he was quite proud of it. He worked so hard over it that I was glad he did so well. He was up until almost ten the night before giving it, its bath with bath salts in the water etc. He won the scholarship again this year and will take the summer course since he will be eleven in February.

Our teacher is back with us. She rented a piano this term so I'm paying half the rent and she is giving Alex lessons. I would like to start Margaret too but Miss Leggat thinks she is too young.

We are having rather an anxious time in this district now as there were thirty-four cases of trachoma found in the municipality to the east of us. As it happens one of the schools on the border was closed and the children are coming to our school. One of them has the disease so all the rest of the children have to have their eyes treated with argyrol before entering the school if they have not been done at home. It's such a loathsome disease. When the health officers examined the Hanna schools they found ninety suspects and two fully developed cases. I'm taking our youngsters in to the doctor once a week just to be sure they are all right. It is so hard to stamp out and it may go on for months before it becomes very noticeable and then it is so hard to cure.

Russel is busy these days digging our winter's supply of coal. He and four more neighbours got a permit to mine their own coal this year as cash is very scarce out here. It is hard work and long hours with the chores at home night and morning. They have to move about fifteen feet of dirt but hope to have about a two foot seam of coal.

We are having lots of rain now - so much in fact that the stooked grain is already badly bleached. Most of ours was stacked so it won't be too bad we hope. The seasons seem to have got badly mixed up this year as we are having ideal spring rains now. I notice in the garden that there are millions of weed seeds and also annual flower seeds - all nicely sprouted. To plough the garden this fall should make it almost as good as a summer fallowed garden as far as weeds are concerned.

And now I must go to bed. Margaret and I are going to make grape jam tomorrow and bake bread and buns. The grapes are the cheapest we have ever had them out here - 65 cents a basket, I'm going to do down a large amount as we had no strawberries for canning this year and the shelves still look very empty. The tariff on Washington fruit may have been good for the B.C. fruit growers but fruit was higher on the prairies than for some years, and with poor gardens we need it more than ever.

Love to all the family and your own dear self.

As ever yours,
Anne

Hanna, Alta.
Feb. 26, 1931.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I'm tired of sewing tonight so I'm going to write letters and have them ready for mail day and you are first on my list.

I scarcely know where to begin as I don't remember just when I wrote to you last. Anyway looking back, there seems to be very little to tell about last summer. The two outstanding things of course, was having two visitors from Ontario all in one summer. John and Minnie (John Pringle and his sister Minnie Day). We were so glad to have them.

The crops in here last year were quite good and a fine quality but of course on account of the price, things are rather on the rocks. We still have most of our wheat and intend holding it over until the price is better, if we can. They built the long expected railway through this district last summer and laid the steel this winter so that we expect to have an elevator just five miles from here. It will mean a great saving to us as the nearest known elevator was ten miles away and the road a very poor hilly one. I don't know whether there will be a town where the elevator siding is. There are rumours of one but Hanna will likely always be our principal town.

We are having a most delightful winter just like pleasant autumn and spring days all the time. I think there has not been frost on the windows more than six times since October so you can imagine how warm it is. The pussy willows have been out for several weeks. The gophers are

chirping madly and the crows are making themselves at home. We have been looking for winter weather for so long that we can hardly believe all the signs of spring. The cars have never stopped running except for a day or so last October when Minnie Day was here. I've been studying the seed catalogues lately so Russel says that is another sign of spring. I've been trying for several years to get a nice perennial border started but I don't seem to make much headway with it. The plants seem to winterkill before I get them really established so I'm trying to get roots this year.

I'm afraid it will be some years before we'll make a trip east unless conditions improve unexpectedly. We talk of motoring to the coast next summer if we can but the summers always seem so short that we don't do the half we plan.

Russel built me a new henhouse last summer. My biddies have been laying very well. I expect to start the incubator soon as there are already some hens clucking so I will try to set them too and perhaps give them the incubator chicks. Am going to try for an approved flock by next winter as the house is up to the required standard. With an approved flock I'd have a steady market for hatching eggs. My turkeys didn't do well this summer so one of my neighbours is taking my four hens for this year and will return young hens next year when we've ploughed and freshened up all the runs here. I like turkeys as they seem easy to raise if they are healthy. Mine took roup this summer and I just couldn't get rid of it.

Love to all,
Anne

Hanna, Alta.
May 31, 1931.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Didn't I tell you when I wrote last that I felt in my bones that my letter would meet one from you on the way? Well, I posted mine to you in Hanna and came home and found yours in the mail box and very welcome it was too. Letters must have been one of the Mitchell families mutual gifts for I remember how so many people said that mother was a very fine letter writer.

Yes, Aunt Nell I'm pretty sure you'd be on the high end of the teeter if I were your partner. I weigh between 155 and 160 most of the

time. Isn't that shocking? I'm always afraid that sometime I'll weigh more than Russel, who used to weigh 160 all the time. These last few years though he's kept pretty well up to the 170 mark. I took Margaret over to the clinic at our school. She weighed 40 lbs. and measured 39 inches high. The doctor pronounced her a fine healthy child with perfect teeth and tonsils so I was very glad. Son weighed 65 lbs. and is 4 ft. 5 Inches, so he's a bit on the thin side but he is much sturdier than he used to be. He pitches a pretty fair horseshoe and baseball of course is his greatest hobby. I hope he will make his Grade VI this year. It's hard to keep him at his school work in the summer time. He's busy at the school fair work again.

We are having a very discouraging spring. Haven't had any moisture since last October. Almost every day the clouds roll up and we are sure it's going to rain but by evening it's clear again. The wheat isn't as high now as it was a month ago as the high winds and dust storms are very hard on it. I would like you to see one of our storms. No one who hasn't been through one can imagine how bad they are. One afternoon early this spring, we had to have the lights on for over an hour. Not far from here is a stretch of sandy land and it drifted across the roads just like snow drifts. One particularly bad Sunday one of the men in that district pulled four cars out of the sand drifts. His wife told me that on Monday morning she couldn't see the pattern on the quilt they had over them. It sounds queer doesn't it but I could quite believe it for I was particularly ashamed of my own house that week-end. Mrs. W. A Hemstock from Peace River was here for those few days and I was thankful that she arrived in the midst of the storm so that she could understand the dust in every corner of the house.

I got one hundred baby chicks in April but have only sixty eight left. My brooder house was old and draughty and the brooder didn't keep them quite warm enough on windy nights. They are doing well. I have about forty more of our own hatching with two hens to come off this week. I still hate setting hens and rented my incubator to a neighbour when I got my baby chicks thinking I wouldn't need any more but when I lost so many I started in to set hens and some of them have been so contrary. I have no turkeys this year. I lost a great many with roup last year so the neighbour who took my breeding stock will return young turkeys this fall - if she has any. The last time I heard from her she was just about fed up with the turkey business as the wind storms had practically demolished the straw shed they had so carefully built for the turkeys.

I wish I could get one of your teacher children into our school but Alberta is so overrun with teachers now that no one from another province has a chance.

I subscribed to a little garden paper for you Aunt Nell that I have been interested in for several years. It will be a bit of a birthday reminder

of your far away niece. The editor, Mrs. Webster lives in the Bad Lands south of Medicine Hat but she has had wonderful success with flowers. The club started by just being an exchange of flower seeds between her and her friends. It grew and widened until finally she was giving so much time to it that she was urged to make it a paying proposition.

The teacher who is with us now was a great friend of the Geo. Hutchinson family when she lived in Calgary. We just discovered our mutual friends one day last week. She knew the younger children quite well as they lived only two doors from her home. I had lost all track of them for so long, but Miss Leggat's mother happened to meet Mrs. Hutchinson again when she went back to Calgary to live this spring and when she told Mrs. Hutchinson where Miss Leggat was boarding at Hanna, Mrs. Hutchinson wanted to know if my name was Annie Pringle. Isn't the world small after all?

We had Anglican Services in our school today so as usual we had a houseful for supper afterwards. We go to all the services out here and I play for Anglican or United or whatever happens to be on that particular Sunday. Sunday is usually quite a busy day - so busy as a rule that sometimes I take Monday as a restup day, when I just do odd jobs etc.!

I enjoy the company though and Miss Leggat is awfully good at helping with the dishes after everyone is gone.

Haven't you any snaps? I'd love to have snaps of your whole family.

Love to all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
May 6, 1932.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

It doesn't seem long since your letter came and yet to my amazement it is dated Dec. 27th. How the months do fly, and next week brings your birthday and a happy one I hope it will be with many more to come. When mother's birthday came on Feb. 18th I was telling the children she would have been 79. It didn't seem possible to imagine her as an old lady. To the children my parents have always been very vague but

this Christmas Joe Pringle sent Alex my father's watch which his father had left to him. That started them asking questions and son at least should remember a lot I've told them.

You won't fully appreciate spring time after having such a mild winter. We had some real cold weather - a lot of it in fact although we didn't have a great deal of snow. When the snow went we just had one dust storm after another until people were at their wit's end. It seemed no use to put seed into such dry earth and if you worked the land it just blew away. Then finally we had east winds for four straight days and then four days of such lovely rain from Apr. 21 to 25th. It changed everything and people went to work in earnest when finally it cleared. We've had a few showers since and prospects are good. Even if the prices for products do not improve much if we have lots of feed and lots of vegetables I think we'll feel at least that our labour is not quite in vain.

This last winter was a hard one for most of our neighbours. Vegetables were scarce for very few were willing to apply for the free vegetables, and although they were fairly reasonable all fall you naturally skim a bit on them when you are buying. Feed for cattle was scarce too. There were over two hundred cars of feed oats and bundles shipped in to Hanna. We were fortunate to have enough but Margaret was just telling me today that she's going to help daddy sweep out the loft of the barn on the first stormy day so there can't be much left over.

We had not heard of Lorne's accident¹ until your letter came. His arm must have been very painful but when it was so badly bruised as well he was lucky that the doctors were able to save it.

We traded our four turkey hens for a calf this spring and I was glad to see them go. With hundreds of acres to pasture on I just couldn't keep them out of the hen yard and they were so mean with the hens. I just have twenty chickens to date. I didn't set my own incubator this spring but went shares with a neighbour - supplying 400 eggs for his incubator for a third of the resulting chickens. They should have been out a few days ago but I've had no word of them yet. Likely they're cooked! At the price of eggs though I shan't worry much. My last crate averaged me 64 cent a dozen and nine dozen out of the fifteen were extras. We have an official pool grading office in Hanna now, which makes it handy as we used to have to pay freight on the shipment to Calgary for grading.

I had a fine long letter from Kate Rutherford² yesterday. She says she is getting homesick for her furlough next year. I do hope she is sent west on deputation work when she is home as I don't suppose we will be able to afford a trip home next year unless a big boom comes soon!

I've got ground ready for several hundred strawberry plants but am waiting till Russel can give me a helping hand. Our old plantations came through the winter well so I hope we'll have lots of strawberries.

Alex is looking forward to going to Olds Agricultural College for a week in July, as he won the school fair scholarship last fall. If he wins again this year he will be entitled to a five year course at Olds when he is fifteen as they have to win for three years in succession for that scholarship. He's not much interested in farming though so I doubt if he'd ever claim the scholarship unless he changes his mind. I'm afraid Margaret will be more of a farmer than son will ever be.

Now I must get off to bed for 5:30 a.m. comes all too early for me. I never will be an enthusiastic riser but I have got past the stage of grouching over it anyway.

Russel is away tonight looking over a surface mining proposition and I've been sitting up waiting for him and writing letters. We can get a lease on the coal mine to the south end of our pasture very reasonably and as the miner who has been there is anxious to sell we will likely take over his equipment. It will mean that Russel will be away a great deal and with his tendency to rheumatism I haven't encouraged the proposition although it is about the only paying business in here under present conditions. They have been selling around a thousand tons a year but Russel thinks he could improve on that by stricter culling of the coal. Well I suppose I needn't worry about it until the deal goes through but I'm not very keen on it. One business is enough at one time.

Love to all. Don't you ever think of coming west - now that your family is all grown up?

As ever yours,
Anne H.

Hanna, Alta.,
Oct. 5, 1932

Dear Aunt Nell, -

It was nice to get your letter and hear the news of you and your family. I wish we were near enough so that Alan and I could spend one of our long days with you now and again. Margaret started to school in

September you know and the men are down at the mine from seven in the morning until seven at night so Alan and I are alone. Of course I'm busy all the time, but it seems strange to take my cup of tea and sandwich and sit down all by myself at dinnertime.

This is the busy month at the mine and the men are often very late. The rush should be over early in November but they often have fifteen or twenty loads to put out in a day.

Alan has been a very good baby so far. He is so cute now and laughs and coos at us whenever we go into his room. He isn't gaining very quickly - just weighs 12 1/2 pounds now but he seems healthy and he sleeps very well so I don't worry over his lack of fat as I did over Alex. He is very much like Alex I think, though his hair will probably be darker and his eyes are a very dark blue. You'd laugh to see how efficiently Margaret can handle him.

Janet (Pringle Carson, Chatsworth) was here for just one day, the day I came home from the hospital. I'm so sorry she couldn't stay longer but the girl I had wasn't very much of a housekeeper and everything seemed in more or less of a muddle so perhaps it's just as well. It was great to have a talk with her anyway and I certainly had a homesick pang when she had to leave. That's the only time I feel a pang of longing for Ontario - when I see someone leaving for there and know that I probably won't see it or them for perhaps years.

We had a long spell with the threshers this year. I had a family of anywhere from ten to twenty-three for ten days. Elsie was still here though so we managed nicely. The weather was most unsettled all the time they were here but it has been worse since they left - so although I thought at the time we were most unlucky we are very glad to have it all over with.

Our garden was very good this year - so with lots of vegetables in the cellar and lots of feed for the cattle we can face this winter more cheerfully than we did last year. My flowers weren't much this year except the cosmos and sweet peas. Your gladioli patch must have been wonderful. I have about fifty bulbs and they made quite a showing. I'll be glad to get your delphinium and columbine seeds. I had a collection of roots sent me from the Olds School of Agriculture last year and one of them with a very fancy name turned out to be that old-fashioned flower, Ragged Robins. Only about half of the roots grew but Ragged Robin was the sturdiest of the lot. He must have covered about a square yard of ground all from the one root.

Alex was at the Olds School for a week's short course while I was in the hospital. He liked it very much and came home with lots of

information for me about gardens and about cattle for his dad. Don't believe he will ever be a farmer though, he likes his books too well. He gets on well in school and much prefers it to herding cattle or milking. We had to keep him at home to herd the cattle when the threshers were here and he did hate it, so for Russel's sake I hope Alan will be more farm-minded.

It doesn't seem possible that Monday is Thanksgiving Day. That seems really to herald the coming of winter doesn't it? Several flocks of geese went over early in September, something we never saw before so people have been predicting an early winter. Ducks and geese are very scarce this fall so the hunters have to go far afield.

Love to all,
Anne.



Alan born July 14, 1932.

Hanna, Alta.,
May 5, 1933.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Many happy returns of the 12th. How many years young are you? I turned into my forties last March and sometimes I feel all of that. Especially when my older son stretches his neck a bit and makes himself as tall as I.

Are you having lovely spring weather in Ontario now? It's been a cold, backward spring here. We haven't had any warm springlike days at all, but such a lot of wind with its usual accompaniment of dust. Sometimes from sun-up till sun down we could only catch, an odd glimpse of our neighbours' buildings through the grey clouds that rose from the summer fallowed land between us. I was mean enough to be glad that it was blowing it in her direction instead of to us. This afternoon we had a real thunder-shower so perhaps it will warm up now, at least the dust is laid for a few days.

My family has had a fairly healthy winter for which I am very thankful. Alan is indulging in his first cold right now. He is such a good lad in spite of his eczema. It gets so bad at times and at others almost disappears. I have tried so many things but nothing seems to help. The Doctor says the violet ray treatment would clear it but he doesn't recommend it unless it gets very bad. The Doctor thinks that once he is over a year old it will gradually clear.

Margaret and Alex have been bringing in such lovely long-stemmed crocuses these last few days. They are to them - what the Mayflowers were to us when we were children - the first sign of spring. The prairie is just dotted with them now - almost as thick as the dandelions in old pastures in Ontario. By the way the dandelions have come west too. Last year there were quite a few of them around our gardens. Russel thinks they have come in with sweet clover and brome grass seed as we never saw them until we started growing some tame hay crops. The children call them "mother's old friends" - for I was so glad to see the first one in spite of the fact that they are stubborn weeds they are so pretty.

Had a letter from Grace Oium³ at Christmas. She said Aunt Minnie Chisholm and her two boys had motored down to see her last summer and had they not been hurried they would have come to see me. It's not far to Medicine Hat from here - a hundred miles or better perhaps - but the fords on the river are not good at least the hills on either side are very bad so most of the traffic has to go around by Drumheller which adds another hundred miles or more. The Fernie Mines have all been shut down lately. I wonder if that will affect the boys' jobs.

The men are busy at the seeding these days. They finished the wheat this morning but have the barley and about 80 acres of oats still to sow. We need a great deal for the cattle and horses these days as there is very little wild hay to be got now and the brome grass is hard to get established.

I have a girl for a couple of months till I get the cleaning and gardening done. Did your teacher children all have schools this year? There are a great many out here without schools as so many are closed. We are fortunate that ours is still able to keep open.

I must close now as I've got my baking to do. Have been painting my kitchen walls and woodwork these last few days. Is this your year for coming West?

I do hope so. A Happy birthday.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
March 8, 1934.

Dear Aunt Nell,

It was very nice to get your Christmas letter instead of a card. I do enjoy letters and yet I am so lazy at writing these days. Just now, however, I am getting a bit ahead with my letter answering as I am supposed to be taking it easy after several operations and almost a month in the hospital. I have been home for three weeks now and am beginning to feel much more energetic than I have for a long time, although I haven't done very much yet to use up any energy except looking after Alan. He is cutting teeth and has also a bad cold so sometimes he is quite a handful. I had a housekeeper here while I was away but she could only stay for two days after I came home. Allan made up with the new girl quite well but I have to look after him most of the time.

By all accounts you people have had a real old-fashioned winter. We had our coldest spell before Christmas. We had twenty-eight days straight when it wasn't fit to stick your nose outside the door. The youngsters only missed one day of school through it all though and seemed to thrive on it. It was nice all through February but we are having some cold windy weather now. Today we had our first spring rain and it did make everything smell so fresh. I felt as if I wanted to get out to the garden but instead I got Alex to bring some boxes of earth so we could start some tomatoes and flower seeds. We also set five hens so spring should soon be here!

Russel and Elmer are busy these days getting their grain cleaned and getting enough feed chopped to do them all through seeding. The government has to supply most of the people in here with both feed and seed this year. Fortunately we had enough of both left over from '32, and although Hanna district is one marked for grasshoppers again this year, we hope that they will either go around us or have a plague strike them.

Our love to you all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Christmas Day, 1934.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Well Christmas Day is almost over for another year. For the first time in several years we were out for the day and it was a pleasant change. We came home early though as it has been the coldest day we have had yet 36 degrees below this morning and a strong wind blowing from the north west. It is a bit milder tonight so we hope the worst of this spell is over. I'm glad it came during the holidays as I hate to have the children starting off to school on very cold mornings.

It's a long time since I've written to you so I scarcely know where to start with the family's doings. I write so few letters these days that when I do get started there seems to be so many things to tell about.

First of all we went out to see Aunt Mary Chisholm this summer. She is a frail little body but so bright and active. You can see that she is beloved by the whole town. Whenever we went to church or just down

town someone came running to speak to her. She and Colin have a very cosy little house, garden, and garage at the back and of course Aunt Mary has flowers all around the house.

They have every convenience in the house and Aunt Mary has a girl come in every morning to help her but she does most of the cooking herself and as Alex says, "Oh Boy! can she cook!"

Archie's wife is very nice. While we were there Grant Henderson (son of George, Keady, Ont.) came in one evening. He also works for the C.M.S. Co. and is a prosperous looking man. We had quite a chat over old days in the O.S.C.V.I. The girl who helps Aunt Mary is Elsie Merriam. Her grandfather was a brother of Henry Merriam's father. In the early days he went out to Dakota and from there up to near Calgary.

Elsie's grandmother keeps house in Kimberley for a widowed son. Elsie is there chiefly to keep her company but she wanted to make some money of her own so she works a few hours a day just as Aunt Mary needs her.

We had a lovely trip out there. It was such a relief to get away from our parched and dusty prairies. It was marvellous scenery all the way and beautiful roads too. Coming home we called on an old friend of Russel's - Edith Speers - Now Mrs. (Dr.) Robinson who lives in Banff. She used to teach in the school up the fourth and boarded with the Hemstocks. They live in one of the show places of Banff with a fountain on the land and gorgeous trees right near the edge of the river. She is very friendly and nice. We have called on her once or twice before.

I was sorry to hear of Uncle Will Bannerman's death⁴. It was broadcast over the radio from Vancouver while we were at Aunt Mary's place. We didn't hear it but Archie came up and told us.

We had another crop failure again this year. Grasshoppers and wind and drought all had their share. My garden was spared until our cows found it one afternoon in the fall. We were practically the only ones who had anything at all and the car which came from northern Alberta for free distribution was frozen en route so most people are tiring of potatoes and sparingly at that. Russel is unloading a car of oats these days. The prices for feed and wheat seem low enough when you are selling them but it certainly makes a hole in the pocket when you have to buy grain. Fortunately for us the mine keeps the farm on the go or I really don't know what would happen.

Thank you very much for the seeds. I still have over half of them for spring. Our perennials suffered badly last year. I think I'll just have to rely on the annuals after this unless our summers change. The continual

dust and soil drift of these last few years keeps filling in and over the flowers rows until gradually the plants are choked out. It was a real treat at Kimberley to go to the flower show. It made our prairie gardens look rather sickly to go along the streets there but of course they have all the water they need. We are always planning some system of irrigation but none has materialized yet and won't as long as we have the mine to look after during the summer.

Jan. 2nd, 1935.

This letter is taking so long to write that it gathers news as it goes. We've had a nice holiday although it has been very cold all along. We had two families in for turkey suppers and cards on two different nights last week. New Year's Eve the men folks went to a big party at one of our neighbours and yesterday we had the Blains and Grimes for dinner. Donald Grimes and Alex went skating for the afternoon and the rest of us played cards. It was after midnight when the guests finally left so I haven't been very energetic today. Fortunately school doesn't start until next Monday so we'll have time to get over all our celebrations before getting down to routine again.

Alex is taking his first year in High School at our school. I don't know what will happen next year as there will be four local pupils ready for Grade ten and no chance of the three others getting away to school. I hate to think of Alex being away from home but we may be able to wrangle a rural high school not too far away. They are getting very popular in many parts of Alberta. A number of school districts join together, rent a large empty house in a central place, instal a housekeeper and one qualified High School teacher. These pupils who are too far away to ride back and forth either batch in one of the rooms or if they can afford it, board right there. It works out quite well in some places.

Margaret is in Grade Three now. She's getting to be a great help to me. Alan is the family amusement. He talks all the time except when he is in mischief. He and Alex are very great pals.

I had a long letter from Frances Morrison⁵ at Christmas. She just writes once a year but her letters are always a treat.

The last number (Jan. 1) of McLean's magazine contained an article by Andy Thomson⁶ which was very interesting.

Now Aunt Nell dear, all my family are in bed although Alan is still talking to himself since he failed to get any encouragement from me.

Write me some of these long winter evenings. I'm enclosing some snaps of the family. Are none of you ever coming West?

Lovingly,
Anne H.

Hanna, Alta.,
Oct. 27, 1937.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Of course you'd never believe this but we've had lovely weather ever since you left. It's blowing colder today so I think I'd better take warning and get the storm windows washed ready to go on when Alex comes home from school.

Margaret and I picked a big bouquet of calendulas on Sunday morning. The flowers are smaller of course but they are so lovely and bright I think that is really a record for flowers in our garden as I never remember having them so late.

The men have been quite busy at the mine all month. They even press Alex into the bookkeeping job after school some nights when they are rushed and when they are very late they all come up for supper and breakfast here. It will soon be slackening off now though as quite a few are finishing up this week.

The U.F.O. (United Farmers of Ontario) brought in two carloads of apples contributed by B.C. growers. After all the relief recipients got their allotment there were still about two tons left so those who were willing to help pay the freight could get three sacks apiece.

A good many of them are bruised and of inferior quality so I'm picking them over and making applesauce of the poor ones. I think we may have about two apple boxes of fairly good eating apples.

Now I must get to work. This is Wednesday a.m. and the teacher is coming for supper. She had a dance in the school last Friday and made \$18.00 towards the expenses of the Christmas tree - so that was pretty fair

for a dried out district dance wasn't it? The children are busy practising already.

Write soon,
Love from Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Nov. 24, 1937.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Your letter came the very day I posted yours. I had planned to write several letters last night ready for the mailman today, but Mr. and Mrs. Binmore came over just at dinner time so we persuaded them to stay for supper to see Russel and then the moon wasn't very bright so they stayed all night. The mailman though has taken to the sleigh this trip and so takes two days for the trip (44 miles). He'll pass here tomorrow morning sometime so if I'm energetic I'll still have time to write a few letters. Dad isn't home tonight so there is no one to send me to bed.

Winter seems to have come to stay this time. It started to snow on Armistice Day and snowed by fits and starts every day for a week. It was so light and fluffy that the cars hadn't much trouble getting through, although we had more snow than we had at any time last winter. The inevitable blow came last week-end though and then what a mess the roads were. We made it through to Hanna on Saturday but Alex and Mr. Glover were either shovelling ahead or pushing behind for several miles. I was surely thankful to get safely home. It's been sunny and thawing a bit these last two days so I hope it will put enough crust on the snow to stop it blowing.

The men (Russel and Gene) are still mining but there is only one small corner of that big pit left. They didn't open up the other pit except to clear off all the top coal that was required so we call that our "holiday pit" for next summer - for we hope Russel will be able to take a few weeks off with all that stripped ahead. It has been our slackest year since we bought the mine but that was to be expected when so many have moved out - and so many of those left here were on relief tickets and that meant that ten tons was the largest amount allowed to any family. Often some of these families have bought fifteen or twenty tons. So I'm afraid some of them will have a cold winter.

I'm glad you enjoyed your day in Calgary. We haven't had our trip yet. The excursion rates are on this week-end but the roads to Hanna are so bad that we won't likely be able to go. We want to take Alan up to a specialist. The X-ray plate of his chest came back just two weeks ago. The report said that while there was nothing organically wrong with his lungs but Dr. McGuffin asked for another X-ray plate of his throat. So that was the reason we braved the roads and the weather last Saturday. Russel thinks whenever we can get away we'll take Alan to Calgary as he has been complaining of a sore throat lately and has had a cough for over two weeks.

Russel brought home a treat of Ontario apples when he was in town a few weeks ago. They were a mixture of russets, sweets, and snow apples. My! but they were delicious. Odells had three barrels shipped out and with the freight etc. They cost \$10.00 a barrel! The B.C. fruit growers shipped several carloads of apples to the prairie. The relievers got their apples first and then we got the ones in the bottom of the car. Many were small and badly bruised so I made apple sauce out of them. Did you ever try whipping up a couple of egg whites real stiffly then fold them into the hot sauce and put them into a mould and chill it?

My lily has a big bud on it and my cactus has many buds on it so it should be in full bloom for the Christmas holidays.

We have been a little scarce of milk for the kittens as well as ourselves but we are looking forward to having a fresh cow this week. Well we did but the cow had twins so the kittens will have to continue to do without milk till the next cow comes in.

Have you finished your two dresses? You'll be pleased to know that I finished the other sock for Gene. It looked like a baby brother to the one you knit. Gene said one of his feet was smaller than the other anyway. I've done yards of hairpin lace. How do you finish the edges of the pillow made of hairpin lace?

Saturday Evening.

Russel went to town today with the sleigh. It's a long, cold trip when once the cars stop. Alex and Donald went out shooting rabbits. They got five so the cats will have plenty to eat for several days.

Sunday Morning.

My lily has one flower fully open. It's larger than I've ever seen it. It's as large as a tea cup and there are more than six buds on the same stalk.

Love to the family and heaps for yourself,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Feb. 1, 1938.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Thank you for your Christmas gifts. We did appreciate them so much. The radio is on every evening now and it's hard to write letters with it on.

One of the teachers who boarded with me several years ago - always sends us a big parcel of her own and her sisters (she has three) used clothing if she hears of the crop failure at Hanna. I'm to use my "discretion" and distribute it as I see fit - keeping out first anything Margaret wants.

Jim⁷ would certainly have a lonely Christmas in Isolation Hospital wouldn't he? And you would miss him at home.

Christmas Day was very cold here - 20 below at noon so I was very, very, thankful that I was entertaining instead of going out. We had the Grimes and Greenwoods - seventeen of us in all so it was quite a party. We had dinner at two but they all stayed for supper too so there weren't many bones left over for Sunday dinner!

New Year's Day we went to Grimes and had a nice quiet day. She went to the hospital on the 4th and her baby was born stillborn two days later. She was very ill and they were alarmed about her for awhile - as she was terribly upset about losing the baby. We all felt so sorry about it.

Alex stayed over with Donald all that week and they batched, studied and did the chores. Mrs. Grimes just got home last week-end as I've had a cold and sore eyes I haven't got over yet.

We've had a very quiet winter so far - but there are a couple of dances and card parties in sight now. We have so much snow this year

that it makes travelling difficult. I've never seen such drifts around by the trees. Alan and Margaret have a great big snow house built behind the house. I can walk down the steps into it quite comfortably so you can imagine how big it is. I can even turn around in it.

We seldom miss the hockey games and always root for Toronto. The boys here were helping one of the neighbours make a rink. They cleared quite a space in a slough and hauled water to it. Then this last blizzard came and swept it full again. Alex says there must be five feet of snow over part of it so I think they'll have to wait for the spring thaw for their skating. Both Alex and Donald got various additions to their hockey outfits for Christmas and how they long to try them. The mine has usually provided them with a rink but the ice seemed to heave badly, - too many springs I guess.

Aren't they having terrific cold in Quebec these days, 56 below in one place. I guess Alberta isn't so bad after all.

Your loving niece,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Sept. 29, 1939

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I always think that when the evenings begin to get longer I will write more letters but the men get home from the mine so late that by the time the dishes are done it's time to listen to the 9 o'clock news and then like as not I'm ready for bed as soon as the children are off. After weeks and weeks of dry, warm weather, we are having a rather windy, cold period with the odd shower, so that threshing is proceeding quite slowly. We have been looking for the threshers for almost two weeks but each time it gets almost dry enough to start along comes another bit of snow or a shower. However I'm glad they're not camping with me.

Isn't this an anxious time for the mothers of military aged sons and it seems as if things get worse and worse in Europe. For a week or two when a few of Alex's last year's school pals joined up I was afraid he was going to enlist instead of going to university as we had planned. He finally decided though that he'd take his first year anyway and see how things are next year.

Oct. 17.

We've had several letters from Alex. He and Jim Hemstock are rooming together in a private residence a couple of blocks away.

In the meantime we have had the threshers so the fields are bare once more. We were lucky as we had fine weather while they were here. Just a day after they left the weather broke with a vengeance and we've had snow and cold weather ever since, even worse weather than we treated you to.

Alan and I have been harvesting our garden whenever its been dry enough. It wasn't a very big job this year as the prolonged dry weather played havoc with most things. I was pulling some parsnips for supper tonight and I think the roots were all of 18" long on most of them. Alan has been learning what roots are for in school so he was greatly interested in measuring them. He thought they were pretty smart parsnips to go so far for a drink.

Annie McElheron wrote me that the barn on our old farm had been struck by lightning. It must have been quite an old barn for it was never new in my memory.

I did think I might be seeing you all this fall but I guess the trip will have to wait over for "next year" with Alex away and daddy so very busy I just haven't the heart to go travelling.

We had our trip to Peace River this summer - a whole week's holiday. It is a marvellous country and you just can't imagine how big Peace River is. It was low water while we were there and most of the scows and cabin boats were high and dry on the shoals but at Dunvegan it took almost twenty minutes to cross by ferry. The whole country was almost parklike in its beauty and so fresh and green. We revelled in wild berries (the raspberries were at their best) and at Lesser Slave Lake Russel fished and fished then finally bought a fish for our breakfast! The road runs for miles through high, straight poplar trees with here and there a little clearing with a house, barn, a cow and a few acres of wheat. Far across the lake we could see huge clouds of smoke, one of the many forest fires that never seem to be entirely quenched. We'd all like to go up there to live. The only drawback is it is so far from any large centre. Fairview is 404 miles north and west of Edmonton. They hope eventually to have a highway through to Prince Rupert which is just about 600 miles to the west.

Give my love to the family,
Lovingly,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Jan. 22, 1939.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Thank you very much for quite the nicest Christmas gift that we received - your picture. It's a splendid picture.

I was afraid Margaret was taking the scarlet fever so I kept both of them at home all last week but she hasn't developed any of the symptoms and seems better now.

Alex has been home every week-end so far and we're so glad to have him. The roads have been open all winter but Friday night's blow filled up the side roads a bit. So Russel figures on hitching the team to the car in the morning drawing it the two miles to the Castor Trail and leaving the team at a neighbour's place while he takes Alex the rest of the way. Once a couple of cars have been through we'll be able to get out till the next blow. It's been a wonderful winter so far. Some of the old croaks are shaking their heads at the lack of snow, and consequent scarcity of moisture but I'm thankful enough to have the fine weather and trust to old Mother Nature for a June rain.

I've been busy canning citron, marrow etc. to fill my empty jars. We aren't very fond of marrows as a vegetable unless they are stuffed and baked with seasoned ground up meat. We got a nice recipe for Marrow Ginger Jam that Margaret and I like very much.

Two lbs. marrow (cooked in a very little water and mashed) 2 lbs. sugar, 1/4 lb. candied ginger finely cut and 1/2 cup vinegar.

Now I must close as we have to get up very early to get Alex off. The men have been listening to the radio and I just cannot write letters when it is on. In spite of Mr. Chamberlain's efforts I do believe Hitler and Mussolini will force a war on us yet.

With much love from us all and with best wishes to you and all the family for a happy, healthy New Year.

Lovingly,
Anne.

May 9, 1939.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Will you excuse a pencil for once. The family are using the only two available pens and I just have to get this written tonight or miss the mail tomorrow. It will be too late for your birthday as it is but at least you will know that we are all thinking of you and wishing you many happy returns of the day.

We have been having such dust storms lately! The men come in from the fields just black and with their eyes all red - rimmed and sore. It's most discouraging but everyone is hoping that the rains will soon start. Those who believe in the moon's influence on weather say, that since it has blown steadily during the past two weeks it will rain during the next two quarters. Well I hope so but I'm not that broad-minded. The only time that it's really fit to work outside is after sundown or very early in the morning.

We have only a few early vegetables sown as yet but I must get busy at the rest very soon. The men are all departing for the south place tomorrow morning so I will be alone all day and surely I can accomplish more than I have these last few weeks. Of course they need more baked things when they are batching but it seems like a holiday not to have to get dinner for a bunch of men.

Haven't heard from the Rutherfords for ever so long but I suppose they are back in Leith. I saw where Kate had been speaking at the W.M.S. in Chatsworth. I would love to see her but although we have a new car this year I don't see much chance of getting away for the length of time necessary for a trip to Ontario.

We have a half dozen or so nice cheery robins in our trees at present. Often in the spring we see them for two or three days and then they go farther north I suppose until early fall when they come back and stay around for several weeks. These, however, have been here for almost two weeks and we are wondering if they are going to nest here.

The geese went north very early this year in such huge flocks. They are a grand sight in early mornings flying with the sun glinting on their wide, white wings. Russel and Alex even saw a flock (about fourteen) of the pure white whistling swans. They were flying quite low. They are a very rare sight. I've never seen them in fact and missed them this time. Russel called me but I get called so often that I didn't hurry particularly and they were beyond the trees when I got out.

I suppose you have lots of chickens by this time. My incubator is due off this week-end along with two old biddies - who will I hope - take

care of the incubator chicks for me. Haven't had much luck with the incubator in the last few years but I got a new thermometer this year and as eggs were only 7 cents a dozen I thought I couldn't lose much if I did ruin a few dozen eggs. Farm produce prices are very low this spring. Cream is only 15 cents a pound now. Butter about 17 cents and still coming down. It makes it hard for those who depend on their farm produce to feed their families - for groceries are as high as ever.

Russel has another farm on his hands this year - a half section that Walter owns down here. He sold it some years ago and since then it has never been farmed - everything movable has been taken off, fences down, taxes unpaid, and finally thrown back. We weren't anxious to take it on but couldn't get anyone to rent it in its present shape so decided to take it for three years and Russel has two men ploughing it now. They board with Elmer (the big Finn, who was here when you were here), and Russel goes down, picks rocks and does odd jobs and get the meals for the men. Now that the other man will be going down Russel will come back here to do the chores at night and morning. Margaret and I cannot manage the kicky cow.

Glad you liked the Chatelaine. Weren't those lovely pictures of the Royal Family. Margaret would like to go to Calgary to see them. The teacher sent the names of the children in so that places would be reserved for them along the Royal route - so that they would be sure to see them if we do go. There is to be a special car for the Hanna children - attached to the morning train. Hanna is a railway junction you see and most of the families there have passes and the car is put at their service by the C.N.R. so I'm sure it will be full to overflowing.

Now I must close. The children are off to school and I'm writing this in spasms while the washing machine is doing its stunt.

Again, many happy birthdays,

Lovingly,
Anne.

Dec. 14, 1939.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Margaret and I are busy getting all our letters written and our parcels wrapped so that when Alex comes home we will be able to spend

our time listening to the tall stories of Varsity life. I 'spect you will be hearing the same type from Queens won't you? Is Tom in an engineering course too? Alex is finding his course quite heavy. He has ten subjects and has exams or quizzes in them twice each term - so they are kept very busy. He expected to skip a lecture or two on Thursday the 21st, to catch the morning local train for Hanna but no less than three tests were scheduled for that morning - so he was very much disgusted. The next local doesn't leave till Saturday morning and the only other course was to take the bus down to Calgary and then out. However there is no snow here yet so if it keeps fine Russel is going up for him - and five others likewise stranded. We surely hope it keeps open although it doesn't seem a bit like Christmas. Last year our first snow storm came on Christmas eve and we had a regular blizzard on Christmas Day. This year it is our turn to stay at home and entertain - so we'll be in luck if it doesn't turn cold then.

We spent the day in town today doing our final Christmas shopping. I sent a parcel to Aunt Mary. She does write regularly and it must be hard for her too when she is so shaky.

I did think I was going to see you all this summer but Dad had set his heart on going to the Peace River this summer so I thought I'd go in the fall for sure but once the war broke out I couldn't think of leaving home.

Russel had a busy fall as usual although the coal trade was not so very brisk. Country roads have deteriorated badly under our government and the larger trucks that used to haul from us from the eastern districts just couldn't make it through and people are getting too soft to haul their coal with team and wagons these days for forty or fifty miles - not that I blame them at all. It was surely a tough job for them. I remember when Uncle Bob and his family moved out to Innisfail how far they had to haul coal. I always felt sorry for the "reliefers" out here - who during the very bad years had to come to our mine for coal, from 50 to 60 miles with their skinny teams and rattling wagons.

Dad and the children are listening to Major Bowes and its very hard to write a letter. I hope you have a happy Christmas together and may 1940 bring Peace to all this troubled world - and so happiness to the mothers and fathers of the world.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Jan. 17, 1940.

Dear Aunt Nell,

We were so glad to get your letter last mail day. They are always a treat but this one was especially interesting to us.

And thank you too, for the Christmas parcel. We got it the day after New Years when we took Alex in to the train.

Alex only had ten days and they surely did pass quickly. Dad went up for him and three other lads who had exams on Dec. 21st. -so had to miss the Hanna local train which leaves Edmonton three times a week. He had a nasty trip - for although the roads were fine here he found them very icy near Edmonton and he was in the ditch several times. Alex drove quite a bit coming home. It's slightly over 200 miles to Edmonton from here - so he made the round trip in one day. He felt rather a wreck for the next day or so. Alex went back by train. He doesn't get home till some time in May. He is talking of trying to get a job at Yellowknife for the summer. That's the mining centre about a thousand miles north of Edmonton with only bi-weekly plane service in to it. The wages are very high but then living costs are high too. I think he'd be just as far ahead to stay closer to civilization and incidentally closer to his mother.

Yes, Margaret has grown very quickly this last year. She is taller than I am and weighs about 120 lbs. size (16 - 18) Alex could hardly believe his eyes when he came home and saw her. She had on a new blue dress and she had a marcel for the concert and she looked most young "ladyish".

We went to Fairview. Russel hadn't been there since 1914 and he could hardly believe his eyes at the changes. When he went in before, they went with horses and sleighs and followed the rivers and lakes most of the way. In summer they came out on the railway right of way, over the miles and miles of muskeg. The only place where the present highway goes over the muskeg the road is built up very high and you can see the layers and layers of old corduroy road sticking out at the sides. Russel had to stop the car and get out to satisfy himself as to the methods they had used in the road building. I hope too that we can go East but I very much doubt it.

I am busy sewing these days. It is seldom that I get such an uninterrupted week for sewing but it's been too cold for any visiting this week and for the first time since 1932 we haven't a man. Gene had expected to be here again this winter but a week ago he got a telegram saying that his 80 year old mother in Minnesota was very ill so he left at

once. I've had a cold since New Years and don't go out even to attend to my biddies.

Russel is listening to the hockey broadcast of a Calgary game so I think I'll have to go to bed without hearing Texaco news as it doesn't come on till after the game.

It is terrible to live with the war tension always present.
And now much love from us all to you all.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
April 14 1940.

Dear Aunt Nell,

This is our first pleasant Sunday in six weeks and our third day of spring weather so Alan thinks I should be outside enjoying it but I haven't rubbers high enough to travel more than a few feet from the house. We had very little snow all winter but just about the 17th of March it started and by election day (March 21) cars were getting stalled on many roads and with only a few exceptions it snowed and blew and drifted every day until last Friday. It was 7 below when we went to bed on Thursday night but the welcome chinook wind started in the night and it was thawing when we got up in the morning. Such rejoicing! Yesterday a few of the big white geese flew past on their way north. This morning Margaret and I heard a kill deer snipe calling. There still isn't a bare spot showing in the fields so you can imagine how deep the snow is. It will be very late before the men get on the land this year. They started to seed on the 16th of April last year. However moisture conditions should be excellent and perhaps with the extra warmth of the later season the grain will come on more quickly than usual.

Alex wrote most of his final exams through Easter week. He finished them on the 5th of April and then they started their month of practical work at Survey School. He says it's lots of fun wading through the snow for they have as much as we have. We expect him home on May 5th. Jim Hemstock is coming with him and on May 17th they go into camp at Sarcee for two weeks training to complete their year's C.O.T.C. work. Alex is not sure that he will be able to go yet as so many students

qualified that those from the second year (on and over twenty) are being given first chance to go.

I spent the week-end before Alex's birthday in Edmonton. It was particularly nice that week and the roads were fine. I thought I'd not risk waiting for his birthday and stole a surprise on him. Walter Hemstock (Russel's brother) was down from Fairview so we had quite a family gathering. I enjoyed it very much and felt quite young again among so many young people. The lads took us to the Varsity Senior Play on the Saturday night. It was a very modernistic play and I think they wanted to shock us a bit but I loved it. Walt laughed so much at their veiled vulgarities that I really think the boys were shocked at us. There is no audience so responsive as a Varsity bunch and I enjoyed the audience as much as the play.

Margaret was delighted to receive Aunt Joe's Boys and the book is now going the rounds of the neighbourhood. Now the craze is for the Anne books but fortunately there are a few of them in the school library. Margaret had four music lessons before the cars were laid up. The school festival comes on in May and Margaret has a vocal solo but she gets so nervous that I'm afraid when the time comes, it may not go very well. However the practice will be good for her and even if she doesn't get past the local try-outs she will have more confidence another time.

You asked about Norman Greenway. Well he was in the woods, west of Edmonton all winter. He surely is a husky looking giant now. You remember how tall he was but so thin. He looks much better than I ever saw him. He was with us all last week while Russel went down to the stock show in Calgary.

Yes, I read Beverley Baxter too. He's been a pretty poor prophet this last year. He didn't think Hitler would take up Britain's challenge last fall. Now he says if America would come in, the war would be over before next fall. Sometimes when he sticks up for Chamberlain, I don't finish reading his article as I haven't much use for Neville. However perhaps a hundred years from now, they'll know who was England's great man during the war and whether it was wisely conducted or not. Just now, it makes me physically sick when I read too much or think too much.

We were all disappointed at the outcome of the game between the Maple Leafs and the Rangers last night. They seem to get to the finals so often and then down they go! Our Alberta team will have its test in Port Arthur tomorrow night.

What did you think of Alberta's election? I wasn't surprised at the result although I had hoped the Independents would win a few more seats. We are in the much discussed Acadia Constituency in the Federal election.

The candidates are tied but the recount is scheduled for tomorrow so there may be a change. In any event unless there is a definite change there is talk of a new election. The Social Crediters are surely up in the air over it. In the Provincial election in here they had a majority of 524 - 30 when the federal came along on a perfectly wild March day. Too many of them decided to let "George" do it and stayed at home. They could hardly believe their ears when results began to come in.

I won't get another letter written to you before your birthday so please accept my best wishes now even though they are a little early.

And I must say good-night. Our mailman only comes once a week now as it takes him four days to make the trip. I may get a chance to post this as our neighbourhood is getting short of groceries and someone will have to make a break soon. Dad brought emergency rations out for most of them when he came home from Calgary but he had an Aberdeen Angus gentleman in the front of the sleigh so could only bring small orders for each one. I think we have been more shut in this last month than we have been for some years but surely it will soon be over.

Love to the family. Are any of them coming west this summer?

Lovingly,
Anne P. H.

Sunday, Dec. 8th 1940.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I don't know whether I can write letters for the radio is on the go constantly. However I've shut myself into Alex's room and I'm going to make an effort to get some Christmas mail ready. There seems so little time for letters these days and yet I can always get Alex's bi-weekly off so probably the fault is just my own laziness.

We were all so sorry to hear of Aunt Mary Chisholm's death and I do miss her letters as she was one of my most regular correspondents. She usually wrote at least once a month and sometimes she'd forget and I'd get two letters quite close together. After she got her housekeeper I think she depended more on her correspondence to fill in the days for I know she wrote oftener than she used to. You would hear from the boys, of course, that it was a stroke she had. Rena wrote to me, her letter reaching me just a few days after yours.

Another of our old friends passed away two weeks ago. Mrs Martha Buzza Gilchrist. She was a sister, I think of Sam Buzza at Leith. She had a stroke some years ago and never quite recovered the full use of her leg so she fell this spring and broke her hip. For a time they had hopes of her recovery as she was only seventy but she just gradually got weaker. Her husband Ronald Gilchrist was some close relation to the Gilchrists who were once in Chatsworth. In many ways she and Aunt Mary had led very similar lives for she was a pioneer of the prairies as Aunt Mary was of the mountains, and they had both come through some very hard times.

We didn't have a nice fall as it was quite cold and stormy. Russel kept the mine open until December and then he just had to close it down. The top coal was frozen down to the bottom coal. Nobody wanted top coal and he couldn't get it off to get the bottom coal. He had to go down to Drumheller (50 miles from here) to get powder and dynamite. They wouldn't let him have more than two sticks which didn't help him a great deal. We tried to get it in Hanna, but there isn't anybody who can handle it, unless they have a special place to put it and guards to protect it. We didn't get all our crops threshed either as we have 200 acres of stooks to thresh on the other farm. Russel has given up all hopes of threshing it at all. We can't thresh it now and if we wait till spring the rabbits and stock will have it all.

Margaret and I canned 30 quarts of strawberries, 40 quarts of beans, 20 quarts of peas and lots of pickles and other fruit and vegetables.

We are all looking forward to Christmas, when Alex will be home. He had an attack of the flu this fall and was in bed for a week. He wanted to know in his last letter how many turkeys and geese I had lined up for the holidays so he must expect a feast for the remainder of the term. They spend a lot of time training this year and I think that has perhaps increased his appetite for last year he seemed to lose his appetite when he was studying for long hours. He likes the course of studies much better this year although he had to switch his course from mining to chemical engineering as owing to some new regulation, no one wearing glasses is supposed to get a job in a mine. He is taking military training three days a week.

We are invited in to town for our Christmas dinner this year to the Grimes. We have had our Christmas with them every year since 1919 but it will be a strange one this year with Mr. Grimes so helpless and Donald away in the Air force. I think I would rather have stayed at home but Mr. Grimes seems to enjoy seeing his old neighbours and hearing them talk. He always had a very hearty, loud laugh and that seems the only thing unchanged about him but now it seems rather weird - for he'll sit and listen

to you talk, perhaps just saying yes or no and then suddenly if anything funny is said - out comes this strong, hearty laugh. He is only fifty-one but looks like a man of seventy now. We often wonder whether he will ever recover but so severe a stroke at such an early age is unusual isn't it? I am so glad they have young Dennis who is now eighteen months to cheer them up, now that Donald is away.

Old England is taking a terrific strafing isn't she? Russel was just listening to the "Overseas Mail" program and how cheerful the letters are in spite of the trials. I sent for a pamphlet of knitted things for the women of England shown in the last Chatelaine. I thought our little Red Cross group might do some of them after Christmas, on our own, for the sewing from headquarters has all been hospital soldiers supplies so far.

Speaking of the Chatelaine I sent your subscription in again and I hope you enjoy it. One of my neighbours has been sending me her copy of a Canadian magazine "Canadian Home Journal". I still don't like it as well as Chatelaine. Perhaps we've just read MacLeans and Chatelaine so long that we've got into a rut but there are so many features that we like. Beverley Baxter is one of them although Dad got so cross at him for supporting Mr. Chamberlain for so long that he wouldn't read him for weeks. Poor Mr. Chamberlain didn't live long after resigning from the office of prime minister did he? I imagine a sad heart was at the root of his ill health. Public opinion is a fickle thing and in his case changed quickly from cheers to jeers.

I haven't had a letter from Ontario for ages so I am looking forward to the Christmas mail very eagerly. Since the weekly Sun-Times went out of publication they have been sending the Saturday edition of the Daily but it very seldom has the Chatsworth news so it's not very interesting to me and I shall let it expire without much regret when the time comes.

Nelson Eddy is singing one of my favourite songs "The Hills of Home". You've likely heard it often too. I don't know why it has so much appeal to me, for I think I love the prairies more than any hills but it's a lovely thing and I think of Aunt Mary when the singer comes to the line "mountains that I know". She surely knew and loved her mountains.

You will be looking forward to Christmas and having all your family home. I have a busy fortnight ahead of me, if I do even half of the things my daughter has planned out. She's a great help though and loves all that extra bit of fussing that would be left undone if she didn't do it, like decorating cookies, parcels, and lights etc.

With best wishes to you all for a happy Christmas together. We all hope and pray that 1941 will bring our Empire well along on the road to peace, perhaps even to peace itself.

With love from us all but especially from me to you.

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Feb. 4, 1942.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I sat down at my desk a few minutes ago to look over a new seed catalogue that came in the last mail but when I looked up at my cubby hole full of unanswered letters and cards, I decided the seed catalogues had better wait awhile, at least until I had acknowledged all my Christmas gifts.

First of all thank you very much for the George Thomson picture. I like it ever so much and the deep frame on it is very quaint. We got three new pictures for Christmas - something that never happened before. Besides yours there was one of those Churchill "Mottoes" and a Van Dyke "A Dutch Child", in deep tones of brown. We put them all carefully away till spring for we found that when we tried to change our living room pictures around, we were going to have several bright spots of wall paper. We hope to repaper in the early spring and it will be nice to have some new pictures to put up. Alan's magic slate is very much in evidence while he's been working at home. Alex liked his tie "dingus de foodle" very much. I can't think of the proper name for it. He took it to the jewellers and he changed the letters for him to R.A.H. instead of A. P. H. so he was quite happy with it.

Poor Alex is having a tough time. Two weeks after he went back he took the mumps and he been in the infirmary ever since. He got up a week after he first took them and his temperature went up again so he was sent back to bed. I think he really worried himself into the relapse for he was trying for a first class this year. He headed his class at Christmas and now he's afraid he won't pass. Most of their work this year is in the lab, so when they miss that, there is no chance to make it up. There's one disadvantage when the children escape the usual children's diseases, when they do meet up with them, they usually take them harder.

School finally got started again today, although Mrs. Madge is still far from well. Rheumatic fever set in and she is quite stiff. The doctor didn't want her to teach even now but we couldn't get another teacher and

I guess she needs the money badly so she decided to try it. The school is light only seven pupils and with the exception of one student who has been every teacher's headache since she started, the pupils are quite obedient.

What a wonderful Christmas you must all have had! No wonder it seemed quiet when everybody went back to work again. You would feel much "deflated" for a few days or do you get that way? There's always a day or so after Alex goes away, when I just don't feel like doing much of anything, for we usually have lots of company in for cards or games through the holidays and it seems pretty much of a let-down to settle down to work again.

We had our Red Cross meeting this p.m. and quilted a wool comforter to be raffled at a dance we are putting on in the school next week. It is rose sateen on one side and sage green on the other. They left me to work out a design for it but I'm simply useless at that sort of thing so I finally ended up with a design which came out very evenly and I was simply astounded at how nice it looked when we got it finished. It is a large size 72 X 90 and we've already sold over \$20.00 worth of tickets. We are going to use the money to buy wool to knit for the boys from the district, who are overseas and to provide them with a box of treats four times a year. In January I turned in 9 pairs of socks, 1 sweater, 1 quilt and 1 afghan which was pretty fair for a group of eight, two of whom don't knit. The men all bring their wives to the meeting and they play cards while we work. Judging by the roars of laughter, they seem to have a pretty good time too. Then we all have lunch and get home in time for the "chores". Our man "up and left" last month so we are quite by ourselves for the first time in many months. It is nice too but it keeps Russel very busy. Fortunately the weather has been good since New Years and that makes the work ever so much lighter. Don't know what in the world we will do when spring comes as there doesn't seem to be an able bodied man left to hire out. I suppose we will have to resort to one of the numerous teenage immigrants which will be a big come-down from the type we have had of late years, for _____ queer as he was in the head was a very faithful and thorough worker.

Jack Greenwood is still in Petawawa. He has been refused twice at the last minute for a transfer overseas. The fact that he had some kind of rheumatism as a child seems to be the sticker with him as he seems to have had some recurrence of it in the damp weather in Ontario. His mother is beginning to hope that he will be kept in Canada indefinitely.

I was much relieved to hear of Kate Rutherford's safe arrival in South Africa. I wondered if she was in the same convoy as a nurse we knew, who was among the fifty sent from Canada to South Africa. We got word of her safe arrival almost the same day as I got Peg's letter about

Kate. She was a niece of Mrs. McBrien and we met her in Edmonton last summer when we visited Mrs. McBrien.

I've often thought that cousin Agnes McGill Collins⁸ might like to know that Alex thinks he may specialize in the geology branch of mining engineering. Geology is his favourite subject and he says when he gets "on his own" he's going to try to take post graduate work in it. I do hope he is feeling better. I get so worried but I can't phone so the mailman, twice a week, is a very welcome man. Fortunately the nurse lets him write and "sterilizes" all outgoing mail.

Well it's nearly 11 p.m. and everyone else has been in bed for ages. I often stay up though to get the last bit of news. Perhaps I'd sleep better if I didn't for it hasn't been very encouraging lately. I did think we were going to run them out of Libya and now it looks as if we are the ones who are to be run out. I wish Mr. King would rush conscription through without all this fuss. He certainly hasn't many followers left in Alberta as the C.C.F. is gaining ground rapidly. Well they couldn't be any worse than Mr. Aberhart and his gang and I believe they'd have more pep than Mr. King. I think they are right in urging conscription of wealth as well as man power and though they might jam the wheels of industry for a time I think people would work with a better will if they knew that the profits of war industries were more evenly distributed. It makes me boil to hear of some of our neighbour lads just over the age limit getting \$6.65 a day in the ammonia plant in Calgary, when the private soldier gets \$1.30.

But I must go to bed. It's harder than ever to get up at seven a.m. now for when the children were at home we didn't get up till nearly eight. Hope the teacher doesn't take a notion to go on Daylight Saving Time till after Easter anyway. The youngsters won't get any Easter holidays this year as they will have to go almost every day until June 30th to get the required 158 days. They are not allowed to write the exams if they have not been present at least that number of days.

Love to you all and do write before so very long again. We all enjoy your letters.

Love,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
May 4, 1942.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Many happy returns of the 12th! I don't know whether this will get finished and off in time for your birthday or not but at any rate you'll know I've made a start - early enough - and was thinking of you.

You had spring floods this year. Was it an unusual amount of snow or was it early rains which caused the floods? We have had neither and the pessimists among us are already predicting another year of drought. We had a marvellous winter, hardly any snow, cars running all winter and the highways just like summer. However April was a chilly, windy month and these last few days have been the first signs of returning warmth. We have made a good many journeys out to the asparagus bed to see if there weren't a few tips showing but we haven't found one by digging down. We usually have a feed about the end of April. I'm not fussy about the canned product but those first few stalks out of the garden are surely tasty. I have some early things planted but there's no sign of them yet.

Did you know that Alex had gone off to the Yukon for the summer? He has to put in at least three months in a mine or in the office of a mining company before he graduates so this seemed the only time to do it. He applied both at Kimberley and at Dawson City and was accepted by both companies. He hardly knew which to choose. I thought Kimberley might be better but his dad thought the Dawson job offered more of an adventure and Alex was keen on that part of it too. So he made arrangements with the Yukon Transport Company to pay his fare by instalments from his wages and he left by plane from Edmonton last Wed. Apr. 29. We haven't heard from him yet but should have an air mail letter this week. All mail goes in by plane so Alex decided he'd have to get on with just one letter from home every week. Another lad from the same course went up, so I'm glad there are two of them. Alex caught a ride to Stettler from Edmonton last Sat., hitch hiked it to Castor, phoned us to go to meet him and was almost half way home from there when we met him. He had Sun. and Mon. at home and we took him back to Castor on Tues. for the 7.30 a.m. bus. It was a short visit but it would have been just dreadful if he had gone off without coming home. We couldn't very well go up to Edmonton to see him as we haven't a man this spring and our tires are very much the worse for wear, so with none of our size available we have to drive as little as possible.

What are all your family busy at now? Did Tom⁹ join the R.C.A.F. and is Ken¹⁰ still in the air force in Quebec?

I was glad to hear that Kate Rutherford was safely over the Atlantic and with her friends again. She had a round about trip into Angola didn't she? Evidently the people were very glad to have her with them once more.

May 5th.

Russel is busy getting the crop in. Just at present he is working down on Uncle Walt's place so I have three lunches to make up in the mornings. He uses the tractor down there and goes down in the car every morning. It makes a very long day for him but Alan is getting to be quite a chore boy. He has the cows in, fed and sometimes both of them milked by the time Dad gets home. I have to help him feed the calves but he manages all the rest.

The only things we can't do are water the bull and the big horse and that doesn't take Russel long to do. I hope Alan likes the farm and wants to stay with it. I used to have "Charts for Chores" hanging on the kitchen wall trying to induce Alan to follow a regular schedule every night so that I didn't have to be constantly nagging to get things done. It never did very much good though, I must say.

The children saw two antelope on their way home from school last night and Alan whose turn it was to ride the bike came speeding home to get me to go out to the hill top to the north to see them. I was just in time to see the two white spots on their behinds flash in the sunlight once or twice as they disappeared over the farther hill. I think they are back again in our pasture this morning though for I see one small grayish shape among the calves. If the cattle are unmolested they will often feed and range with them for a week or more. They are such pretty things that I wonder anyone has the heart to shoot them. They were making such nuisances of themselves in the irrigation district south of the river though that the government declared a three-day open season on them last fall and many were killed. Perhaps that is what scared these strays away up here for we don't often see them.

I'm having the worst time with my two old geese. They both want to sit on the same nest and then they fight. I've tried my best to fix up equally popular nests in other places but no sir! they just won't look at anything else but the tumble down old coop. The poor old gander doesn't know what to do. He always goes between them when they start to fight and then they both turn on him and chase him off. It's funny to watch them but most provoking. I haven't any chicks out yet, in fact I have only three hens set yet, but quite a few more are broody now. I must get boxes ready for them to-day. Eggs have been a good price all winter and our hens have done their duty nobly so perhaps they think they have done enough without bothering about raising a family.

Now I think I might just as well get this off with the mailman today, for if I accomplish all I have planned to do this week in my garden I won't be feeling like letter writing at night. Don't you like the long evenings, daylight saving time gives us? We don't mind it at all but lots of farmers grumble over it. Hope you have a lovely birthday, Aunt Nell, and many more too.

Lots of Love,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Nov. 22, 1942.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I hardly know where to start this family's summer history. It hardly seems as if summer is over for when we look out, the stooks are still standing row on row in the fields. The snow came in October after a very unsettled fall and twice since then it has gone only to return again when we were on the eve of getting started threshing again. The crops were marvellous this year - tall and heavy - and the grain was a No. 1. Don't know what it will finally be, probably a feed grade if it ever does get threshed. We were lucky enough to get one large field cleared so that we have enough oats and wheat for feed etc. and it gave the stock some straw stacks for shelter. Lots of our neighbours though didn't get any done. It was impossible to get help. Margaret and I stooked for a week or two and then finally we got a man for a little over three weeks. He had his call then and went back to Saskatchewan. Later Alex came home for a week and we finally had a university lad from Saskatoon for a few days but Russel is still hauling in sheaves to stack for feed that were never stooked.

Mon. Morning
Nov. 23, 6 A.M.

I was up before five o'clock to get Russel's breakfast before he left for Calgary with a load of cattle. I really intended to go back to bed once they were safely on their way but I guess my coffee wakened me up too much. Anyway I decided that this was a good time for letters and it's cosy here in the kitchen. It's barely daylight now at eight o'clock and since the children are both at home we haven't been getting up until after eight. It makes a good excuse to say that we are saving on the lights. Margaret came home from town two weeks ago with the mumps so that put Alan in quarantine too. They still have another week to put in. Margaret had a very light case, only one day when she felt really miserable and so far Alan hasn't had them. Several adults have taken them in one of the

other school districts and they have been very sick so I'm hoping Russel and I don't get them.

Alan rides four miles to school this year and it makes a long day for him. However school doesn't go in until 10.30 so it's daylight when he leaves in the morning and just beginning to get dusky when he gets home. The larger area board pays 50 cents a day for his transportation so as Alan rides by himself, he thinks he is being pretty well paid for going to school this year. He is very happy in the new school for he has boys of his own age to play with for the first time in his school life. He says that boys are ever so much nicer to play with than girls for they don't cheat so much.

Margaret hates to be missing so much school. She lives at the Dormitory for Rural Students in town but doesn't care much for that part of it. I think we will have to make new arrangements for her next year. In other years they had a teacher living in the Dormitory as supervisor and then either a cook or a matron but this year none of the teachers wanted to board down there. It's near the station and not a pleasant part of town to live in. A twenty-three year old girl who was to be the cook is filling both capacities and she is far from satisfactory. Margaret may go to the Grimes in the new year.

We have all been saddened by the news of Donald Grimes' death in action in England. It came as such a shock for he had only a few more operational flights to make before being sent back to Canada as an instructor. His bomber returned safely from a flight over enemy territory but two planes were given the signal to land at the same time and they crashed killing the crews of both planes. One of the lads killed in the same plane as Donald was Douglas Lowe of Owen Sound. Just a few days before the cablegram came the Grimes had a picture from Donald of the five members of his crew and he mentioned them all by name and when the casualty lists came out, we noticed that the one lad was from the east. The pilot was a Turner Valley boy and the other two were English lads. It has been a hard blow for Mr. Grimes in his condition and the doctor put him to bed for a week. Alex feels it very much and now that they are taking men wearing glasses for fighter pilots he thinks of trying to get into the air force again. Now that he is so nearly through we are hoping that he will finish his course but I know how he feels about it all.

Alex had a wonderful summer. He loved the north and thoroughly enjoyed his work. He has the offer of the job of district geologist for the same company next year. Apparently they feel that gold may not have the same honoured place in the new economy that is bound to come after the war. They are anxious to develop some of the other minerals that abound in that country. Alex brought out many samples to assay for them this winter as well as about thirty pounds of ivory for himself. He helped unearth a huge tusk of one of the prehistoric mammoths this summer and

he had a few feet of it, (it was about twelve feet long), sent out to the university. He brought some smaller pieces home and polished them up while here. One of the men in another camp found a nugget valued at about \$3,000, but Alex seemed to be just as pleased over his tusk. He says if he ever can get back there he wants to take a colour camera for the flowers and shrubs are so beautiful in the short lived summer and he thought the autumn colouring was gorgeous. He is paying his own way this year as he is instructing in two lab. courses so he feels very independent. Not having to take military training this year he has more time for his work. After the war is over wouldn't you like to take a motor trip up the Alcan Highway?

It's still not daylight so I think I'll gang awa' to bed for a little snooze after all.

Love to all,
Anne.



The Hemstock Family 1943

Front Row L. to R. Mrs. Anne Hemstock, Russel Hemstock.

Back Row L. to R. - Alex, Alan, Margaret.

Hanna, Alta.,
March 29, 1943.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Thank you for your letter of Dec. 14th and March 7th. My last letter to you was written before I took the mumps. I was in bed one day and had a relapse so I had to go back to bed for five days.

We were up very early this morning to get Margaret off to school after her first week-end at home since Feb. 6th. It was a lovely morning so after I got them off I got my boiler on the stove with wash water and prepared for a big day. Half an hour or so later when I went out to help Alan get his horse, I thought the weather seemed colder and the wind had changed to the east but I didn't get alarmed till awhile after that, when I looked out east and saw that a thick fog or mist was coming up. Now at noon I can't see much past the trees and buildings for the blizzard. Its about our fifteenth of the winter I think and surely it will be our last. It's not cold for as quickly as the snow falls on the roof, it melts and there's quite a stream coming into the cistern. Russel hasn't arrived back yet so I'm afraid he must have had to take Margaret all the way to town with the team and sleigh. We can't get out to the highway yet with the car as one of the earliest freshets tore a big hole in the road between us and the highway so Russel just intended taking her part way and thought she'd get a ride with some of the neighbours the rest of the long, long trail. If they had to drive all the way to Hanna the storm would be on before they got to Hanna but our telephone is having one of its periodic "off" spells so I'll just have to possess my soul in patience. Alan will have to face it the whole four miles home but his new pony is quiet so he can turn around in the saddle and let her have her head. He's had some very miserable trips this year but except for one whole week in Feb. when it was very cold and when hardly any of the pupils turned up, he has only missed four or five days in all. He has enjoyed school immensely this year for he has boys of his own age to play with. He has had too many changes of teachers to make good progress, the fourth of the year now being on the job. She is just a "normalite"¹¹ but is working hard with the students. Alan wore your nice khaki helmet on a good many of the cold days this winter.

We lost our good friend Mr. Grimes this winter. He never recovered from the shock of Donald's death, although he seemed to take it so calmly at the time. We noticed the change in him at Christmas although he was still up and around then. In January he took a slight cold and he was in bed most of the time from that time until he died on Mar. 13th. It just seemed as if he lost interest in life and nothing would rouse him. Mrs. Grimes is selling her house and she already has a school south of here with a small teacherage for Dennis and her. We will surely miss them all very much.

much. Mr. Grimes and Russel were the closest of friends for all the twenty-five years they have known each other so Russel felt it keenly.

Alex still doesn't know what the end of varsity will mean to him. They can't apply for or accept any jobs except through the Bureau of Technical War Services and they can't enlist without their consent. Many engineers are being sent up to the Ft. Norman oil fields to help speed up production. In fact the Imperial Oil Co. offered all the engineers who are graduating this year \$275.00 a month with all expenses paid (i.e. plane trip in, board and lodging). They weren't allowed to accept it and the offer is still dangling over them. Alex thought he would try to get into the navy but they couldn't accept him either. He finishes university on April 22nd but he has a job instructing in the Minerology lab. until May 3rd. He hopes to come home then for two weeks before graduation and he insists that we must all go back up with him but I don't know who in the world we'd get to do our chores.

Well here's Alan home and he says it's getting colder so when he's had something to eat I guess we'll get at the chores. It's not snowing as much now but the wind is a fright. Perhaps March is going to go out like a lion too for it certainly came in like one.

Russel managed to get a call through to say that he had gone into town with one of the neighbours in their truck so he won't be home till late.

Boy, will I ever be thankful to get into the car again even if we do have to go easy on the gas. Being so far from town the gas ration hits us worse than most things. The sugar rationing doesn't bother us as we gave up tea for the duration and use it only in our one cup of coffee and on our porridge. It's a good excuse for fewer cakes. We get pretty short of butter sometimes but will have a fresh cow soon and perhaps Alan and I between us can get enough milk to have cream for an extra pat of butter once in awhile.

Lots of love,
As ever,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
May 24, 1943.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I was thinking of you on your birthday and hoping you were celebrating it happily.

I was over my head in trying to get a hundred and one things done before we went up to Edmonton on the 16th for Alex's graduation. I thought I was going to take my time and not get in one of my last minute dithers but weather and colds and chickens etc. all seemed to conspire against me. Alex came home on May 3rd and dug right in to help Dad get some seed in. We had hoped that we would have finished threshing while he was home but it rained and snowed every few days all the time he was here. It was too cold for gardening too as we had such heavy frosts at night so I've been getting it in these last few warm days just about two weeks later than usual. There really hasn't been much growth yet. The trees have come out amazingly these last few days and I notice that my little Russian almond bush is a mass of pink today. The blossoms always remind me of apple blossoms only they are so much smaller. I keep telling the children how gorgeous the orchards are at this time of year but I don't think they understand at all. Poor Donald Grimes was near London in May 1941 and he said he never imagined there could be such beauty as the orchards in blossom.

Well to get back to graduation. We left about nine on Sunday May 16. Our worst worry was as to whether we'd have enough gas to get us up there in the one tankful. However it lasted most amazingly and we didn't have a speck of trouble so we made Lacombe in time for Sunday dinner and Edmonton in time for tea with Mrs. McBrien. There was to have been a special Baccalaureate Service in Convocation Hall for the graduates and their friends but the train bringing the men students home from camp had been detained and so that service was held the next day. We went to one of the big city churches for the evening service. That was a thrill for Margaret and Alan who had never seen or heard a pipe organ. On Monday morning Margaret and I shopped for a dress a piece. Margaret fell in love with a powder blue one which fortunately fitted her nicely but I plodded through one store after another until finally about 12.30 I found a two piece black outfit which only needed slight alterations. I wasn't keen on the dress but I was just too weary to bother any more.

That afternoon we all went over for the service in Convocation Hall and then Alex took us through some of the science labs and the museum. At night Dad and I went to the banquet in honour of the graduating class with Alex and quite enjoyed the fine meal and the after

dinner speeches. About 9.30 Dad and I slipped out and son's most particular girl friend slipped in for the dance that followed the banquet.

On Tuesday morning we all had different appointments. Dad with the eye specialist, Margaret with hairdresser, Alex with the C.A.N.O.L. people for whom he is working. Alan and I went to Ella Greenwood's apartment to deliver a package from her mother. Then we met down town at one o'clock, picked up Mrs. McBrien and went to the church for the graduation. Such a jam! Though we were almost half an hour early, Mrs. McBrien and I had to be content with almost back seats under the gallery. Russel, Margaret and Alan went upstairs for a better view but Mrs. McBrien couldn't manage the steps. We could see fairly well although we couldn't hear the chief speaker, Dr. Tuttle of St. Stephen's College. It was a long afternoon but I did enjoy it. Russel, Alan and I took Mrs. McBrien home afterwards and had tea with her.

Margaret and Alex went to a tea over at Varsity. Tuesday night was the big night for the graduates with a ball in the MacDonald Hotel. Alex had the car for the night so we took the street car and went away out to west Edmonton to see some old neighbours. On the way back to the city Dad and the two children decided they wanted to have a "look-in" at the big ball so they went down town and sat in the rotunda of the hotel and watched the swains in their tuxedos and the dames in their long gowns and their black velvet cloaks. Alex caught sight of them on their way to the lounge so they took Margaret into the ballroom for a real view. I went home and had a real nap before they got in. Next morning we were up bright and early and after packing, we went over to Varsity and picked up Jim Hemstock and went downtown for breakfast, then took Alex to his office, Jim back to Varsity and were on our way home by 10:00 a.m.

Alex had all his shots (inoculations etc.) that same day and expected to leave for Norman Wells on Thursday but it turned cloudy and rainy over night so the plane didn't go. He was still in Edmonton last Sunday but with clearing weather hoped to get off on Monday. He is with the Imperial Oil Co. as an assistant geologist on the C.A.N.O.L. project. (Canadian, American, Norman, Oil, Line.)

All four mining graduates were refused permission to enlist and sent up there so they will all be together for a few weeks. Then each of them goes out with a party of under-graduate men, three probably also a cook and a guide. We may not hear from them for two or three months. They test for oil and strategic minerals at various locations, known as promising and make detailed reports and maps etc. Alex is enthusiastic about it all but it sounds grim to me never having had any love for such pioneering myself.

Russel is still away threshing. It seems an endless job this spring but the grain came through in good shape and people are feeling cheerful again. It means, however, that this year's crop won't be a big one for no one has had either time or seed to put much in. We aren't putting in a grain of wheat, just oats and some brome grass. Our wheat averaged 35 bu. to the acre so with only 14 bu. quota for 1942-43 and the prospect of about the same for this year it didn't seem worth while planting more.

Rose said you had been ill with the flu. It has been very prevalent here this spring and how it does seem to hang on! Russel and Alex both had it and Margaret was in the hospital for a few days with intestinal flu. She took more cold later and still has a nasty cough.

One of our neighbours gave me a setting of turkey eggs this spring and every single one of them hatched. I have ten goose eggs set but only have seven chickens so far with three more hens to come off. I tried to buy some baby chicks but they are as scarce as hen's teeth and it seems too late to set any more.

Lots of love and many more happy birthdays,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Sept. 19, 1943.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Your last letter to me was written on June 13th our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary and it is a lovely bright Sunday morning but there was ice on the troughs this morning so I haven't dared to go out to the garden to see whether any of my flowers survived or not. The tomatoes, cucumbers and corn were frozen about two weeks ago but the flowers were up near the trees in a sheltered corner and came through safely. I think we've had frosts every single month this summer and it has certainly been hard on the gardens. The July frost caught the beans and cucumbers just in their first blossom but rain followed it and they came on again and we were busy canning them when another frost late in August again injured the vines. Now the Virginia creeper is a mass of scarlet and the leaves are turning yellow. I love the autumn days even if they are the forerunners of winter. Ontario was always lovely in autumn and I hope the children will be able to see it in all its beauty some time.

This year is such a contrast to last year for our crops are just as meagre as they were abundant last year. In fact we have no threshing to do at all and except for stacking a late bit of oats, we are all through with our harvest. Most of the young lads have already gone to other parts of the province where there is threshing to do and things are very quiet, so quiet in fact that Margaret is wishing school would start right away. It has been such a long holiday that even Alan is getting anxious to be off to school but it doesn't start until the day after Thanksgiving. They will find it a long and dreary grind from Easter through till the end of July next year I'm afraid. As it has turned out it was a most unnecessary change in the school timetable, for help has been much more attainable this year than it was last year. More soldiers got off for harvest leave and of course most of the mines have their full quota of help again as so many men were let out of the army to go back to mining.

We got a chance to sell our mine this spring and although we sold it for just what we paid for it, in spite of a good many improvements we let it go. Even if we could have got help it meant too much heavy work for Russel. After all, it had served us well in keeping things going during the lean years on the farm. I sometimes wonder now how we ever managed to run it. I know I'd hate to go back to the job of catering for three or four extra men all summer especially under the rationing system. It would have been very hard to make up so many lunches on our present butter supply. My fruit shelves look a bit barer than usual this year but I've saved five pounds of sugar for apple sauce when the MacIntosh Reds come in. If they are real ripe and red a little sugar goes a long way.

We haven't heard from Alex for five long weeks but he warned us that it would be about six weeks or two months before we would get a letter. He and two other men in two canoes are making a trip down the Hare Indian River from Great Bear Lake to the MacKenzie River. So far as the records show, they are the first surveyors and geologists to go down the river, in fact it hasn't even been mapped except from the air so he was quite thrilled over the prospect. It was the longest assignment of the year but owing to bad flying weather they didn't get away as early as they expected so it will be a cold and dreary time I'm afraid. They make a reconnaissance flight over most of the way first and then the plane lands them on the nearest large body of water. They find the canoes and supplies previously cached for them and proceed on their way. I will surely breathe a sigh of relief when his letter finally comes. We have written every week as their mail is dropped to them by some sort of parachute, along with further supplies of food.

It did seem too bad that Tom (Thomas J. McClelland) wasn't able to stay for graduation from Queen's University but he and many others will be needed in the navy.

The whole city of Edmonton seemed to be willing to do a little extra for the graduates and their friends. My dress had to be altered and the saleslady said it couldn't be done by the next day. When she saw how disappointed I was she asked if I was a relation of a graduating student. She held a consultation with the dressmaker and came back and said that the dress would be done in lots of time. It seemed the same in so many places. Even the street cars ran a couple of specials between the south side and the church both before and after graduation. Of course Edmonton is so much smaller than Toronto or Kingston that perhaps the university means more to it.

Thursday. In the meantime we have had a twelve - page letter from Alex written at intervals from Aug. 15 to Sept. 10. They were still at work on their river but it was broadening out so that the plane must have been able to land or he must have got a chance to send it out by boat. He said it was getting fairly chilly at night and the days were shortening quickly but they were getting on well. He says they have made some exciting finds, one of them being a field of black and hardened oil right on the surface of the ground. Anything like that gets them all excited and they are eager to be able to go farther from the river but at this late day they daren't stay too long.

He says it's a tough job to make anything resembling pancake batter out of dried milk, flour and water but his are pretty good now and his bannocks are fine.

Well I must get a letter off to Alex too on this mail. We are short of a tire these days so I have to depend on neighbours and the mailman for the necessities of life and the mail. We had a blow-out coming home from town over a week ago. We put on our spare and had another flat just in our own yard so we telephoned for a permit to get a new tire but it hasn't come through yet. We'll have to have another tire as a spare but thought we'd apply for one at a time.

Wish you were here to help me make a patchwork top for a comforter for Margaret to use at the dormitory.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Dec. 12, 1943.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I think I'm very lucky to get one of your letters when so many of your own family are away from home. It must keep you busy writing to them all regularly. I know Tuesday mail days when I write to Alex roll around very quickly. Sometimes I wonder what there is to tell him but once I get started I can always find lots to say.

Alex won't be home for Christmas either. He surprised us late in October by phoning from Edmonton and coming home the following week for two full weeks. He came out, in the between season slack time, between open water and freeze up. He was undecided whether to go back or not, as his pal had applied for a job in Iran under a British Oil Company. However only chemical engineers could be released for that job so Don and he decided to try the north for one winter and signed on for a year. They live in winterized tents which are fine, Alex says, as long as you are close to a big woodpile for they cool off quickly if the fire goes down. Later when the days are a bit longer, they will be sent out with cats and muskeg schooners to new locations to survey roads and base lines while the muskeg is frozen.

We have been quite interested in all the debates going on in the States over the Cauol project but Alex doesn't think it will be abandoned as some of the most promising locations have not been drilled yet. After all if affairs had not gone so well in the Aleutians the oil from Norman might have been a very essential product in the defence of Alaska and the West Coast.

We hope to have Dennis and Mrs. Grimes with us for the holiday week-end and perhaps Veda and Jack Hemstock (Anne and Russel's niece and nephew) if their leaves will not permit them to go home. Jack is in MacLeod and Veda in Calgary and they can make it to Hanna for Saturday and Sunday and be back on duty on Monday. For their sakes I hope they get home but it would be wonderful to have them to help keep us cheerful. We will miss Mr. Grimes but Dennis is so like him in many ways that we never fail to get a laugh out of his funny little sayings. Mrs. Grimes is teaching near town and her landlady keeps Dennis through the day. The school is quite close so he can run over there and peek in the door when he gets lonely.

I hope you people are escaping the flu epidemic. Ever so many people out here are ill. Alan's teacher phoned tonight to say that her

school is closed for a few days as her baby is very ill in the hospital. I hope Russel doesn't get it. He always seems to take it so badly and usually anything like that starts his sinus trouble going and then he is miserable.

Margaret isn't home this week-end. There was a High School party on Friday night and she was on the games committee. Then there was a special practice for their Christmas Cantata this p.m. so it wasn't worth while coming out just for Saturday. Anyway we have only 18 gallons of gas left or six trips to town so we have to be "mighty keerful" of the precious stuff.

Alan was making a list of his relations this afternoon as I was writing cards. Finally he looked up in some alarm and said, "when we go East mother will we have to visit all these people"?

Alan and I went down to Calgary for a week-end not long ago to try to do some Christmas shopping. The city was crowded and beyond getting a new Singer sewing machine for myself I accomplished very little. I decided it was easier to sit at my desk and thumb over Eaton's catalogue than to try and jostle through the crowds on a Saturday in Calgary. We did manage to see some of our old neighbours and Veda so we enjoyed ourselves even though the trip was really a failure.

We always have an apple between supper and bedtime and I do like them baked with a thin syrup poured over them. That's practically the only dessert we use now for it takes less sugar than almost anything else.

I bought three pounds of mincemeat the other day so will have mince pies for dinner on Christmas Day. Fortunately we have our own turkey this year and they are lovely birds. We had one with all the trimmings when Alex was home and even then I couldn't get it into my roasting pan properly. The neighbours are pleased at the prices and grading they are getting for their turkeys. We have five gobblers and three hens. I'm keeping the hens and we are using three of the gobblers for Christmas gifts so I guess we'll eat the other two. It's a long time since we have had a surfeit of turkey at Christmas time as we had goose most of the time. I'm tired of geese though and I think I've got enough down for at least one more comforter so I'll get rid of them. They have only produced two goslings in two years so that's not very profitable poultry. Tuesday - Alan in is in bed with a cold or flu today so I suppose it' going the rounds of the school.

We sent you one of our family pictures by the last mail and we hope you will like it.

Love to all your family -
Merry Christmas to all of you.

Lovingly yours,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Feb. 13, 1944.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Thank you for the note paper. It's been so very handy for writing Christmas acknowledgments and other notes.

I was surprised to hear that Jim (James C. McClelland, with the Scots Fusiliers) had gone overseas. Several people had mentioned his promotion to captaincy. You would feel better on Christmas to know that he was safely landed in England although affairs on the Atlantic seem pretty well under control now. Our radio went out a couple of days ago and we just got it repaired in time for the noon news. Several of the boys from here are with the Seaforth Highlanders.

Christmas was a very quiet day for us. Margaret stayed in town with Mrs. Grimes until Christmas day so we didn't even have our usual gift opening ceremony on Christmas Eve. We all went in for dinner with Mrs. Grimes and Margaret on Christmas night and then Margaret came home with us. After that there was something doing every day till school opened again. I always breathe a sigh of relief when things settle down to routine and roast beef after a great deal of entertaining and turkey etc. I must be getting old.

We have been extra busy since Christmas. Alan and Russel had the flu before Christmas and I had a bad cold so we didn't get any of our poultry dressed except what we wanted to use ourselves. My turkeys were nice ones and I sold four out of the six gobblers for breeding purposes so that was one relief. Then a couple of weeks ago during a lovely, warm spell Russel and I plucked thirty roosters outside on the sunny side of a shed and I canned a dozen of them the next day. One of our neighbours took the rest in exchange for beef and we sold the others alive to the pool.

I canned most of the beef the following week and last week salted and packed down most of a pig so I feel as if the meat problem for the summer is pretty well "on the shelves".

Alex didn't think much of Christmas in the north. They went in to Norman Wells for the day with their dog teams. After a really excellent dinner, the drinking started and Alex said he and the few other sober fellows spent the rest of their day hauling their inebriated pals to bed. When New Years came, his party voted to stay on the job out in Raideo Island and cook their own turkey. Alex has been right at Norman Wells lately supervising a dirt moving project. He had some experience in that work in the Yukon that summer and was the only one who knew anything about moving dirt by force of water. Up at the wells though the soil must be partially thawed before it can be moved so Alex had quite a time rigging up a make-shift steam producer. However his contraption worked well enough to convince the boss that the idea was feasible so they were still working with it while waiting for a real outfit to be shipped in.

Margaret is enjoying life as usual at the dormitory. She came home on Friday night and then we took her back Saturday afternoon as the weather looked most threatening. I had a Red Cross meeting on and there was a tea to sponsor so by the time I was ready for home the weather had cleared and Margaret was wishing she could come out over Sunday. However we have to go easy on the gas so Russel thought she might as well stay in. We go in every once in awhile in time for church and take Margaret back. She sings in the choir.

This has been a lovely winter for Alan to ride to school. He doesn't seem to mind it much at all. They have a slough where they skate and lots of hills for skiing so he leaves his skates and skis over at the school. He puts half of his monthly cheque into War Saving Stamps and thinks school is quite a paying proposition. Because our own school is closed and he has over three miles to go he gets 50 cents a day from the Department of Education. The Department is supplying vitamin tablets to any schools who will use them this year so Alan gets one a day and I think he has had fewer colds than ever before. I wonder if they have tried that in Ontario schools?

I have given the children cod liver oil capsules for many years but then sometimes perhaps I didn't start early enough in the fall so this seems a good plan to me.

When Margaret is home the radio is on a good deal of the time but Russel and Alan don't listen to many of the programs like Jack Benny and Charlie McCarthy so I get more letters written when Margaret is in town. Do you listen to Sun Radio Theatre on Monday nights? We hardly

ever miss it and have especially enjoyed Greer Garson's plays lately - Mrs. Minniver and Random Harvest.

Hope you will have all your family with you next Christmas and New Year.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Oct. 29, 1944.

Dear Aunt Nell,

This is a most beautiful autumn Sunday. I've just come in from a walk around the gardens and scuffing through the leaves. It made me think of Ontario in the fall and all the friends down there.

Summer has been as always a busy time for us, even though we were hailed out on July 12th. Part of the crop staged a come back but we didn't have any to thresh. However we have lots of feed so are very glad of that. Crops north of here that were untouched by the hail averaged about twenty-five bushels to the acre so probably would have had a fair crop had it not been hailed. My garden was a wreck but it too recovered as we had a great deal of rain right afterwards so had just about as much as usual. The cabbage and cauliflower, strange to say, were the only things that didn't come on again. Their hearts seemed damaged and instead of one head forming several started, all very tiny ones. The turkeys have enjoyed them even if we couldn't.

Margaret is in Calgary this year at a residence school (Mount Royal). She was awfully homesick at first but she seems to be liking it better now. We took her down at the end of September and had a three day holiday. There are several girls from Delia, a town about twenty miles west of Hanna at Mount Royal and their families go together and share expenses of a car so Margaret will come that far with them and we'll meet her on Armistice Day week-end.

Alan is our only "bright spot", and I don't know how we could exist without his jokes and fun. He still has to ride four miles to school as teachers are scarcer than ever out here. He doesn't seem to mind it though as he has lots of boys his own age to play with at Alps and that's something

he never had at Dundee. A stamp album is his latest hobby so I find stamps, hinges and glue all over the house these days.

Alex is still at Norman Wells. He has been a construction engineer there all summer so he hasn't had any long trips by canoe. We expected him out early in November but he wrote last week that his plans were changed and instead of flying out directly he was going by jeep to Whitehorse in order to make a more detailed survey of the pipe line with a view to installing a larger one. The road along the pipe line was just put through this summer and is very rough yet so I don't know how long it will take him to make the trip. From Whitehorse he will fly home for Christmas and then go back and continue the survey out to the Pacific. He was quite pleased with the new assignment but I'll be so glad when he phones that he's in Edmonton.

I have thirty-five big turkeys and ten late ones. They are so pretty right now with a real bronze shine to their feathers that I hate to think of what has to happen to them at Christmas. I had good luck with my chickens this year too and I have my first flock of roosters in the fattening pens now. Most of them are over five pounds now and are ready to go whenever Russel gets time to take them in. We will sell them live weight, thank goodness.

Russel is busy putting in a stock watering dam in the section to the east of our home place which we acquired last year. He has had one of the neighbours helping him and is hurrying to finish before our fine weather breaks. Alan hopes we will have lots of snow so that the dam will fill up and he can have a boat. I wish it were nearer the buildings so that we could work out an irrigation system for the garden.

We have our Red Cross group on the go again after the summer's rest and got our overseas boxes packed a week ago. We made eleven quilts last season but don't know whether we can do that again as it seems increasingly hard to get materials, especially lining materials. The last quilt we made we had to use unbleached cotton for lining and it didn't seem a bit cosy for a quilt. I have a wool bat ready to make up into a comforter for Margaret's room at college. The top is a flowered sateen in rose and I wanted plain rose for the back but I may have to change my colour scheme.

Alan has just finished carving out a most marvellous Jack-O'Lantern and now I have to hunt a candle to put inside it. He and his dad are going out to shoot geese in the morning. They are very plentiful this year and come from the sloughs in the hills to the west of us to feed on our grain field where the grain was too short to cut. They are such beautiful geese, especially the ones with the black on their wings, that I wonder how anyone has the heart to shoot them. Chickens are better than

wild fowl any day in my estimation, at least they are a great deal easier to prepare.

Well I must find a candle or make one. Do you remember how mother used to make candles? I often tell the youngsters about stringing the wicks over knitting needles and getting them evenly spaced so they'd be right in the middle of the candles. Such a long time ago!

My love to your family and you,

As ever,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
March 11, 1945.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I should hunt up some better writing paper for your letter but I use this for the "newspapers", I write to the children, so I'm all cosily settled here in my big chair by the register. I think I'll just continue with it. Anyway it's so long since I've written to you that perhaps this will be a newspaper too instead of a letter. Russel thinks Margaret and I missed our calling and should have been journalists instead of a housewife and a student who hopes to be a nurse. Alex is so different. His letters are never more than a couple of pages long and everything is so concisely stated - a real engineer's report.

We were so glad to get your letters, especially if there's a snap or two enclosed. Sometime we'd like one of Jim (James McClelland Jr.) and his grandmother. He's a bonny wee lad and I hope it won't be long till he can welcome his daddy back from overseas. He will soon be a year old. Where is Ken stationed now?

MacKinnon Hemstock (son of John Hemstock, Chatsworth) is in India now. We think Jack Hemstock has been sent overseas recently as no one has heard from him for quite awhile. Dr. Jim Hemstock is now at Brockville, Ont. Margaret McElheron is in Italy, Agnes in Africa (daughters of Annie Hemstock and Neil McElheron), so the younger generation of Hemstocks are widely scattered. Veda Hemstock graduates from the Holy Cross Hospital in Calgary in April so we hope to go down for the event.

Margaret's graduation is on June 11th and she thinks if we go down for Veda's we must certainly go down for hers so we will have to be extra careful of our gas coupons if we are going to do all that driving.

Margaret was home last week-end and it turned out to be the very coldest and nastiest of the whole winter. When it was time for her to go back on Monday afternoon our road out to the highway was completely blocked so they took our team and drove out to a neighbour's place on the highway and he took them in to town. When they got there the bus had got stuck forty miles from Hanna. Consequently Margaret had to wait and take the train which goes out at 3:40 a.m. Well it was three and a half hours late so she didn't get in to Calgary till noon. This weekend has been perfect although the roads still aren't good. We went to town yesterday but one of our quick, short blizzards came up and filled in the car tracks so we finally got stuck about half a mile from home. I walked ahead and got the fires going while Alan and Russel wrestled with the drifts. They finally gave up and came and got Floss, our saddle horse, to heave the car over the remaining stretch. I see two or three cars passing today though so we must have cleared it for the rest of the people. Today is a real spring day and the sparrows and little chickadees are singing their hearts out. So far we haven't seen any crows.

Alex went back to Whitehorse on Jan. 8th and was there for over a month. Then he made the 600 mile trip into Norman Wells in one of the coldest spells of the winter. He said it was 42 below zero when he left Whitehorse and it varied between that and 56 below most of the two weeks he was on the journey. He said that he never felt quite so lonely as when his car developed gas line trouble about half way through the Pelly Mountains about forty miles from a pump station. He was just about to give up trying to repair it and set out on foot when he decided to give her one last try and sure enough she kicked over and he coaxed her on to within a few miles of the station. I hope he doesn't have to spend another winter in the north.

Russel has been looking after the poultry this winter and we are getting about eight dozen eggs a day now from about 140 or 150 hens. They have laid well all winter. I tell him it's the fine winter we've had but he maintains it's the fine care. To anyone else I'd admit that he was probably right. Other years he was really too busy to help much but we have cut down our stock to 24 head of cattle and that means so much less work. I suppose with the arrival of the chicks I'll have to take over again but I really enjoy the outside work, when the snow isn't too deep. The snow is almost gone around the buildings now.

March 13th.

Well this is mail day and such a lovely day! It's hard to stay indoors and concentrate on getting some mending and sewing done. When Margaret was home last week we cut out and fitted a dark green princess style dress for her of suedella. I have been overcasting the seams today. I think I'll have to get a "pinker" attachment for my machine. I see them advertised. Margaret is going to outline the collar and front seams with old gold embroidery and wear a little tie of the same shade.

Alan has missed two days at school and hasn't been late once in over two years so I think that's quite a record. All winter from Dec. 1 to March 1 our country schools start at 10. a.m. instead of 9 so it gives them much better chance to be there on time. They stay in then till 4:30 p.m. most days but our teacher who has children of her own at school, lets them out at four o' clock on dark or stormy days so that they get home well before dark when the days are short. We had high hopes of having our own school open this year when a new family moved into our district with three school age children, which would make seven in the district. However unless the war is over and teachers more plentiful, they say they can't open for less than ten pupils.

Now, I must get to work.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
May 3, 1945.

Dear Aunt Nell,

It was a treat to get your fine long letter with all the family news. I was especially glad to hear that Jim was back in Canada. He and little Jimmie will be great pals I'm sure.

Well we had a nice visit in Calgary last week-end with Margaret and the Walter Hemstock family from Fairview. Veda was graduating from the Holy Cross Hospital on the 29th so we planned to go down on Saturday

and come back on Monday. However on Thursday night our weather, which had been cold and threatening all week, broke out into a regular blizzard. By Friday morning there were over two inches of snow on the ground so all seeding operations were stopped. Russel asked me at breakfast time if I could be ready to leave in an hour if he could get the neighbour's boy to come up and do the chores. I was ready about eleven, had our lunch and left before noon. It was a dull cold day but ideal for driving for there was no glare and we got into Calgary before six o'clock. We found Margaret down at the hotel visiting with Walters'. On Saturday we all went our separate ways shopping etc. until nearly five o'clock when we met at a restaurant for a family supper. On Sunday we all went to Central United Church where Dr. Lawson preaches. Do you know that Central United Church in Calgary has the third largest membership among the united churches of Canada? The services from there are broadcast every Sunday a.m. so it was a real treat to be in the congregation for once. After church we entertained the other Hemstocks and some of Margaret's and Veda's friends at dinner. The graduation exercises were in one of the large theatres at 9 p.m. but we had to go about 8 p.m. to line up for seats as there are more want to go than can be accommodated. The stage was all decorated with flowers and the girls' own gifts of flowers were lined along the footlights. They certainly looked lovely in their starchy white uniforms and the whole service was very impressive.

After the graduation we all went back to the hotel and Catherine Hemstock (Mrs. Walter Hemstock) served lunch to about twenty guests. It was rather crowded but lots of fun. Next morning we took Margaret out to the college in time for school and we came on back home. They wanted us to stay another two days as Jim Hemstock (Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hemstock's son) was due to arrive from Ontario on Wednesday morning. He has been in training at Camp Borden and Brockville with the R.C.A.M.C. He is now stationed at Medicine Hat.

May 5th.

Since coming back, Russel has been busy on the land but it is very dry, windy and cold so far. In fact last night the temperature went down to just 11 degrees above zero so everything was so hard frozen that Russel couldn't get on the land till nearly noon. Fortunately everything is very backward so I hope nothing would be injured by the frost. My rhubarb hasn't put out its first leaves yet and iris and peonies haven't come through their layer of straw. It's the most backward spring in years. Coming after our very fine winter it's sort of a set back. In fact I think the temperature must have been lower on the average in April than it was in either February or March.

May 7th.

This letter is turning into a diary but we went in to town on Saturday night and got caught in blizzard and dust storm coming out. Then yesterday was cold and windy again and I had just got settled for a cosy afternoon by the register when one of our old bachelor neighbours came down for his semi-annual visit although Russel and he do most of the talking, I never feel that I can go ahead with my own pursuits so I knitted most of the afternoon to keep from going to sleep.

Today is V. Day. The news broke here about 7:30 a.m. just after I spent a hectic half hour trying to get hold of Alan's teacher to see if there was going to be school but the phone was so busy that we finally decided that he might as well stay at home. It was after nine when an official broadcast announced there would be school today but tomorrow would be a holiday. I think most of the schools had already declared it a holiday anyway so they will have two days holiday instead of one. Tomorrow we hope to go in to Hanna for a parade and service. I'm afraid I'll have to be left at home though as I caught more cold on Saturday night in the blizzard and feel quite miserable today. Alan has been doing my outside chores so it was lucky for me that he stayed at home. It's clear today but so cold and windy. At noon it was just two degrees above freezing.

Alex is still in the north although practically all the other employees have been brought out. He can't imagine why he has been kept on up there, unless he is to be left as resident technician. He doesn't much like that idea but the cessation of the war in Europe may change his plans so I expect he will soon be "unfrozen" and he may come out to another job.

On Saturday night Alan and I went to see the show, "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo". It was just at the most thrilling point, when the storm blew down some electric lines between Hanna and Drumheller so we will always wonder just who survived that raid. It was supposed to be the story of Doo Little's first flight over Japan. Alan particularly liked the part where the planes were taking off from the carrier. I had always rather wondered how they were all stowed away on a boat too so I quite enjoyed the picture till it came to its untimely end.

Have you ever tried keeping bees Aunt Nell? It seems to me that I remember grandma (Mrs. James R. Mitchell, Keward, Ont. (near Chatsworth)) used to keep them up near the fence back of the house. We have sent for a hive as a start this year but so far they haven't arrived as they can only be shipped in calm, clear weather. We are all fond of honey and this sugar situation gets worse and worse. I think we will have to give up our porridge in the morning as we all like sugar on it and our six

pounds a month just nicely kept us going with the occasional raisin pie and muffins now and again. I thought with the Philippines free, the sugar situation might ease up but it's just the reverse, but I guess we shouldn't grumble.

Well I think I'll get myself a hot iron for my feet and some hot lemonade and perhaps I'll feel fit for the celebration tomorrow.

Love from us all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Nov. 12, 1945.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Margaret and I have just finished mixing up our Christmas cakes, so while I keep one eye on the clock and the other on the stove thermometer perhaps I can get a letter on its way to you.

I got home on Nov. 3rd and Margaret came the following Tuesday. The stay-at-homes seemed pretty glad to see us back. Anyway we haven't heard many complaints about anything so far. They must have been kept pretty busy for Dad seemed to have got a great deal of work done outside in spite of his inside job.

We had two days with Alex and Emily. They have a cute little apartment. They were putting all their wedding gifts of money into a victory bond until they can get a home of their own. I delivered your wedding gift to them and no doubt you have had an acknowledgment before now. Alex expects to return to the north in the summer.

We have had a real cold spell since I came home from Ontario. There was snow on the ground from Manitoba right through to Alberta with more at Edmonton than we have here. A few days ago it was 20 below zero when Alan left for school. It gradually warmed up through the day but has been just around and below the zero mark almost every morning. It's hard weather to fatten turkeys as they don't move around enough to work up an appetite. We have to shut them up at nights too which isn't good for them but the coyotes were coming so close that we couldn't risk leaving them out. Russel and Alan have traps set but haven't caught anything yet.

The day we left Toronto was lovely so it was a shock to waken up in Northern Ontario the next morning and find a cold rain and sleet falling. I hope it passed you by and that you got everything done before the cold weather came.

Muriel McAuley Maltby of Hastings, Florida, arrived in Toronto the day I got there too, so we had quite a reunion.

I don't get very far with my campaign to go back to Ontario to live. Russel thinks that with Alex and Margaret settled out here I'd never be contented in Ontario and he thinks there's too much "drudgery" in connection with an Ontario farm. I don't see the last point for I think farming is drudgery wherever you are if you let it be. However I will concede him his first point for I'd probably want to be coming back once in awhile, if the children were here and they say that they are staying here.

Well the cakes are out and supper is over so I must write some more letters to be ready for the mailman tomorrow.

I've put all Isabel's (McClelland) quilt blocks and patches carefully away until after Christmas. Margaret won't be going in training till February so we are going to try to get our quilts done then.

And now, love to you all and thank you again for the good time we had at your place.

Yours lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Jan. 20, 1946.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Your letter was written just a week ago today. I had intended writing to you that day but just couldn't seem to settle down to writing and didn't write one letter that whole Sunday afternoon. Anyway when your

letter came yesterday I was glad that I hadn't written, for I don't like letters that cross over each other.

Christmas seems so far away. We build it up for so many weeks and it is over so quickly. Alex and Emily came home on Wednesday the 19th and were here until the Thursday after Christmas so we had a nice long visit with them. We were out for supper and cards three of those nights and had neighbours here twice so the days went quickly. We had the Binmores and Greenwoods here for Christmas. It was a cold, nasty day and we really didn't expect the Binmores but they came although Mr. Binmore had had a heavy cold. I guess he got chilled coming over for just about four o'clock he complained of feeling very hot. I took his temperature and found it to be 104 degrees so Alex and Dad took him right in to the hospital. The doctor said he had pneumonia. Next day he was so ill they sent for Mrs. Binmore. However that night they began to administer penicillin and he responded so well that he was able to leave the hospital on New Year's Day. We kept them here for a few days and then they went off home. We haven't been over since as we can't get in there with the car. However we will have to go in the sleigh some of these fine days.

I kept your jar of wild strawberries to have as a special treat when Alex was home but we forgot about them so had them last Sunday night. They were delicious but we couldn't help thinking about all the picking that even that one jar meant not to mention a hundred and thirty-one quarts. Alan just couldn't figure out how anyone could have the patience to pick anything as small as one of those strawberries. He isn't much on the job of picking tame ones except to put them directly into his tummy.

Margaret has been working on her quilt blocks this past week. We have several ready to embroider but we ran out of pretty quilt patches. I'm making crazy quilt blocks out of smaller print patches. With my new Singer machine which goes backwards and forwards, I find I can make quite a neat job by machine and it's so much faster. Of course my quilt won't be an heirloom piece as it will have to go into use at once.

So far our winter hasn't been extraordinary at all. We have had some snow on the ground ever since I came home which seems a long time. Until just before Christmas the weather wasn't so very cold but we had a few very cold days then. I was glad we had our turkey plucking out of the way while it was nice. Since New Years we have had lovely, sunny days, some fairly cold but mostly above zero. In Calgary all the snow has gone. Dad was down for a couple of days last week and was amazed at the difference even that distance makes in the climate.

We wanted Dad to go to the coast for a few weeks this winter as Alan and Margaret can manage the chores quite well but we couldn't persuade him to go. He has had a cold lately and his sinus trouble always

bothers him when he has a cold so I'm sure the change would have done him good.

My love to the family.
Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
May 6, 1946.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Many happy returns of the 12th.

You'd laugh if you could see me now. I'm sitting on an overturned sod with my back up against the brooder house keeping an eye on my chicks while they get their first out-of-doors airing. They are ten days old today and as it is a sunny day although not very warm I thought it would do them no harm to be out for awhile. I have one old cat though, a stray, whom I don't trust so that's why I have to stay right on the spot. I think Alan will have to train his trusty 22 on her. I certainly can't spend many afternoons in this manner.

Many thanks to you for the maple sugar and the mitts. The sugar was deelicious (sic). I had intended to save some pieces to send to Margaret but it all disappeared so quickly that she never got a snitch of it. However it almost convinced Alan that perhaps a trip to Ontario might be worthwhile if they could produce many things as good as the maple sugar. One of our friends in town, who gets five gallons of syrup from her family every year gave us a quart. It was good too, very thick and with the real maple flavour. Since then I was able to get two quarts from our grocery man who had a special shipment from Glengarry. It was fairly good.

Two weeks ago the executive of our Rest Room in town put on a tea and bazaar. I had potted out quite a few slips earlier in the spring so I painted the cans green and took some of the healthiest ones in to the sale. They sold quite readily for 25 cents for the small ones and 50 cents for a few of the really nicer ones. Plants in the down town stores were selling at 75 cents and up. (It was just before Easter). So I think that's one reason mine went fairly well. Next time I will know better what plants to take, as

the more unusual ones went out quickly and a blossom on a plant meant a sure sale.

Tuesday morning.

This is mail day and I must get this off today. There was a heavy, white frost this morning and I'm wondering if it will harm the lilac buds. We have had a very dry spring with no settled warm weather.

We've had some of our old fashioned dust storms also, one very severe one that sifted into the house even though the storm windows were still in place. When I asked Alan that night what he'd like for supper he said, "Lets have something out of a tin can. I think surely that would be clean." At the height of the storm (it lasted from 12:30 to 4 p.m.) we had to turn on the lights in the house to read. Some fields are badly blown and will have to be reseeded, if the rains come in time. One of our fields is rather badly hit but we really can't tell yet whether parts of it will have to be gone over. I know the sea gulls and snipes are thick on some of the higher ground which means that the wheat is uncovered and they get a good meal without much scratching. We've had huge flocks of wild geese around ever since March, which is most unusual. The bulk of them went north earlier than usual but these flocks have lingered on and on. Russel has been predicting a snow storm or blizzard, as he thinks the geese are good weather forecasters. However I think they just found good eating in the grain that was too thin to be cut after being hailed. There are lots of dugouts in this district now so they had lots of water. I love to hear them honking and squawking as they fly back to the sloughs at night. I'm never awake early enough to hear them flying out in the mornings.

Margaret will soon have her first three months in training to be a nurse. She loves the work and seems very happy in her new surroundings. Of course it has helped a lot having Alex and Em up there as she has been able to spend several Saturday nights with them. The last time we heard from Alex he still hadn't a job for the summer and he was through on May 4th. Imperial Oil (the Co. he worked for before) wanted him to go to South America for a year or two and then finish his course but they wouldn't pay Emily's fare and Alex felt that he would rather finish his course now so he was looking for work with another company.

My first hen didn't bring out a turkey and she set so well. If the one coming off tomorrow doesn't do better I will be very much disgusted. Russel thinks the cold weather may have had something to do with the non hatching. Alan says I should go into the pigeon business. They never fail to hatch. Dad advises a cat business. Our own cats do very well indeed and it never fails that we get three or four dumped out at our gate as well. All in all I don't get much sympathy for my hard luck!

Must close and get some work done. Again happy birthday Aunt Nell.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Aug. 16, 1946.

Dear Aunt Nell,

It's a cold, rainy August day, just a wonderful day for writing letters and this is my third. I got the other two off with the mailman at noon but this one should be ready, along with some more for anyone who chances by tomorrow.

Alan and I are alone today. Russel left early this morning to have some repair work done on the car in town. Then the rain started so he will probably have to spend the night there as no one ventures out on these roads except in a case of necessity when it's raining.

I had the decks cleared for canning beans today but it was too wet to pick them. I did peas and cauliflower yesterday. Haven't canned cauliflower for ages but we can't possibly use them all and I haven't sugar enough for the old-fashioned sweet pickles so I decided to try a few sealers canned. They look lovely and white so I hope they will be a treat some time next winter.

Well the big news for this letter is that we have a granddaughter, Cecily Anne Hemstock born Aug. 8th, weighing 5 lbs. 6 oz. We saw her on Sunday through the nursery window when we took Margaret back after her holidays. Emily was fine even though she was all alone. Alex doesn't expect to get out from the north until about Sept. 25th.

We have had visitors ever since July 11th when the Willisrofts (Verna Bowes) came. They stayed four days and Emily came the day they left and stayed till the first of August. Margaret came on July 27th and we had several of her friends here off and on until we took her back on Aug. 9th. You can imagine how quiet it is now. Margaret was a pretty lonesome girl when we left Edmonton on Tuesday and I think I even miss her more than when she went up first. She likes her work though and did quite well on her exams.

My outside flowers haven't done well this year, the long dry, hot spell just about ruined them and then the men cultivated out most of one row so I just have a few left.

I was hoping some of your family would be out this way this summer Aunt Nell but I know they are busy.

We had a visit with Will and Myrtle Pringle at Bentley on our way to Edmonton. Their family is all away now. They are planning to move to Calgary or Edmonton when they can get a place. It's awfully hard to get a house of any kind in towns or cities out here. Russel thinks he would like to get a smaller farm somewhere nearer a city but it seems hard to find anything in that line.

It's just pouring rain tonight so I'm afraid this letter may not be posted until next week.

Love from us all,
Anne.

Sunday

This has been a sunny quiet day after two days of rain. We hope it will stay clear from now on as the grain is ripe and ready for the binder. We have a nice crop, not very heavy but clean and well filled. After this rain the late grains should be very heavy.

Is anyone from your district coming west for harvest this year? We are looking for one or two men. Help is very scarce so far.

A.P.H.

Hanna. Alta.
Dec. 8, 1946.

Dear Aunt Nell,

It's time for Christmas letters once again and I'm trying to get several on their way today. I'm not making much progress as I had hoped because Alan bought a jig saw puzzle in town yesterday and is working at it on the table not far from my desk. Every once in awhile I turn around to see how he's getting on and add a piece or two. They are the greatest time killers that I know.

We hear that you have been having the tail end of our cold November weather after a very lovely fall. We had a very wet autumn, in fact the land was so wet that a good deal of the harvesting was done after freeze-up when the land was frozen enough to hold up the implements. However by working seven days a week and in some cases on night shifts almost everybody finished their wheat. Some oats were left standing. We had to leave twenty-five acres but our cattle have enjoyed it and Russel thinks there really hasn't been much of it wasted. Crops were fair but the grade is poor. However after two winters of skimping it's great to have lots of straw stacks and piles of green feed for the stock. It's nice to have lots of vegetables too for we had a very good garden.

We are hoping to go up to Edmonton to spend Christmas with Alex and the family this year. Margaret only gets two days off at Christmas so it really wasn't worth her while to come home, in fact as our trains run to Edmonton she would only have had one night and part of a day at home. It will seem strange to be away from home at this time of the year. We are hoping that the weather and roads will be good.

The granddaughter is doing quite well now and weighs twelve pounds. We are looking forward to seeing her.

Margaret has been on the Women's Surgical Ward for three months but was transferred to the children's ward last week. She is in the Choral Society at the hospital and on Christmas morning they make the rounds of the hospital singing carols. They are to sing over one of the radio stations shortly before Christmas and in one of the city churches on the Sunday before Christmas. I do hope nothing will prevent us from getting up there.

Well the house is getting a bit chilly so I think I'll hie me off to bed. We didn't get many snaps this summer but I'll enclose one of Margaret and one of Alan. Alan is growing so quickly and he's so strong. I don't know what on earth I'll do though if he goes on to High School next year. It will be just too lonesome without a child at home.

Merry Christmas to you one and all and a Happy New Year.

Love,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Feb. 10, 1947.

Dear Aunt Nell,

While I'm waiting for the glo-coat on my kitchen floor to get dry I'll get a letter on its way to you. Our mailman hasn't been able to make the round trip since before Christmas so he comes out as far as Greenways and we send our mail out that far with Alan on his way to school.

Hasn't this been a real old-fashioned winter? Russel has been in the habit of remarking that he thought the climate was getting milder each year but I think he has probably changed his mind. We haven't of course, had the storms like Saskatchewan, but we have usually had the tail end of them or else the beginning of some of their nor' westers. I think we will remember the last week in January for a long time. It was so cold. Even on the calm sunny days the temperature didn't get above 20 below zero and at night it would hit -40 degrees at least. Alan just got to school one day that week, on Monday, and in spite of the fact that he has farther to go than any of the rest, he was the only one there except the teacher and her family. She told him not to come again until the weather moderated and then shortly after he got home storm warnings began to come in over the radio and the larger school board cancelled rural schools throughout the whole division until such time as the thermometer registered above -15 degrees. It was over a week before they finally opened again. The first day Alan started out after the storms, Dixie got stalled in the snowdrifts, so he turned back and Russel took the big team the next morning and went ahead for the first two miles. We are fortunate (?) in having several young men in our district who just can't exist without their supplies of beer and tobacco so just as soon as one storm was over, they'd get out with tractors and all sorts of snow ploughs and clear a trail to the highway. Usually one car or two went behind the tractor and then they'd pull the tractor into the Greenway's yard and all get into the car and be off to town. They'd bring

out the mail for the whole district and perhaps a few of the necessary groceries so we really fared very well.

We had a very nice holiday at Christmas. Did I tell you that we planned on going to the coast after Christmas? We had talked of it earlier in the fall, but I thought Russel had given up all idea of it until the Thursday before Christmas when he said, - "When do you think we should leave Edmonton for the coast?" I was thunderstruck for we were leaving for Edmonton the next morning. Well, I rearranged my packing and put more things in and we got off on Friday morning the 20th (I think). The roads were icy so we couldn't travel very quickly, and we had to make quite a detour to get to the main highway to Edmonton, so we stayed overnight at Stettler and got to Edmonton on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday we all went to morning service the first Christmas service I've been to, since the year we were in Chatsworth for Christmas 1925. On Monday we went shopping, only to find that it was just as discouraging and much more tiring than shopping in Hanna or by Eaton's catalogue. On Tuesday Russel and Alan had their dentist appointments and I helped Emily get things lined up for Christmas Day. Margaret came over that night and stayed until Thursday night. Christmas was a stormy day up our way too, so we were very glad to be together in a nice warm house. On Thursday we went out calling on several old friends and then we left early on Friday for New Westminster. The trip through the mountains was lovely for what we could see of it but the days were so short just then. We got into New Westminster early on Saturday and went directly out to Wickson's about 17 miles. They were our nearest and best neighbours when I came out here first but they went to B.C. in 1928. I didn't see any of my own relations out there because I didn't have the addresses of any of them. We had intended going to Chilliwack on our way back but Alan caught one of his feverish colds and we had to keep him in bed the last two days we were there. I still think I prefer Ontario to B.C. The weather was so damp and foggy. Of course they had a nasty winter there too but the dampness just seemed to penetrate everything and of course their houses aren't built to withstand cold as ours are and they have hardly any central heating plants. We had been able to get excursion tickets until Jan. 7th so we landed back in Edmonton on the night of the 8th. After a hectic morning of shopping we left for home on the 9th. It was a lovely break in the winter but I was surely glad to get home to my own warm, little house.

Feb. 16th.

Cecily Anne is a lovely baby, fat and good-natured. She very much enjoyed all the attention she got over the holidays as Emily's parents were there for New Years. Alex is busy now on his thesis. Emily types it all for him. Then he re-reads, checks and corrects it and she types it again and gets it ready to be bound. It will keep them both busy. Alex will be 26 next Monday the 17th. I am so glad I still have one boy at home even

if he does think he is big enough to boss his mother around. He and Russel have been breaking in some six year old "colts" this week-end. One of them is destined to be Alan's new saddle horse. He rode him today for the first time but took good care to keep near the big snow banks where the snow was fairly deep until he was sure there wasn't going to be any bucking.

We splurged a bit on Margaret at Christmas and got her a little radio which has been a great comfort to her in her hours off. She's on duty in the Private Patients' Wing now but I don't think she likes it as well as the children's ward. Some of her patients are very nice but some are most demanding. She goes on night duty for six weeks after this shift and then gets her annual three weeks holiday, so she will likely be home in April sometime.

I am busy making aprons and knickknacks for our spring bazaar. I have made five aprons, three nighties for children, several embroidered tea towels and I'm making a pair of pillow cases now with scalloped edges. Some of the material was too heavy for hemming nicely so I'm crocheting around the scallops. It's so hard to get materials to work with. Most of the things I have made are out of scraps. Some aprons have two or three remnants put together which all takes time, but I rather enjoy that kind of planning.

Must get some more letters ready for the mailman in the morning.

Love to you all,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.

Apr. 10, 1947.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Your letter of Apr. 4 arrived today (not bad time) and I'm not going to put it in the pigeon hole of my desk as I did your last one.

I was very relieved to hear that Uncle Jim Mitchell was better again. Thank you very much for the lovely hand - knitted gloves which match my green winter coat.

We thought our winter was bad but it certainly wasn't in it with your Ontario one. We left our car on the highway and there was just slightly over three weeks that we couldn't get to town. We brought it home last Saturday but we've had so many April showers since then that I doubt if we could get to town now. Perhaps these showers will clear up the last of our snow drifts and generally start things agrowing. We heard frogs for the first time last night and on Monday night of this week the geese went over. That's the highlight of early spring for me. I love to hear the whirr of their wings filling the air and their honking seems as cheerful in the spring as it does lonely in the fall. There must have been thousands pass over here that one night. They started about 5:30 p.m. and from then until bed time, we could hear them. Since then we have seen scattered flocks going north and some of the big grey geese nest in the lakes west of here so we often see small flocks of them. I haven't heard a robin yet. Last year one family grew up in our trees but usually they just stay around a few weeks and then go on to a more wooded country.

Did you know that we have an oil well at Hanna now? It blew in just about two weeks ago. They let it "blow its top" about every three hours, so on a quiet evening we can hear it very plainly and of course we see the burning jet at night. The drilling was started in the hope of striking "dry" gas to supply the town. They struck dry gas at 3400 feet but indications were good for real gas, so they went a bit farther and struck it at 3600 feet. Whether it will be a real producer is still unknown but experts are coming into town and there is general excitement. Another well is already started. It would be a boon to struggling Hanna to have an oil field near at hand. Hanna is a railway town, a divisional station, but its prosperity has always depended on the farming community so has gone up and down with our varied good and bad years. An oil field would give it stability.

I have the same cactus as you have Aunt Nell. We call it the lizard cactus. Mine has bloomed several times. By the time yours has fully grown (the long blossom stalk I mean) it will probably be about thirty inches high. Last year I had several started for the Rest Room Bazaar. One had a blossom stalk a few inches tall and everyone was so curious about it, that all my small cacti sold like hot cakes. This year I took in three or four but they didn't sell. Probably most of those who had bought last year figured they had got "gypped" on the flowers. I wouldn't blame them for it's a very homely little flower for all the size of the stalk.

There are three students in Alan's class Grade IX which is our equivalent to the Ontario Entrance Class. He has a very good teacher, a married one with four children, two of whom are school age. I just hate to think of our last child leaving home.

Margaret gets her holidays from April 26th to May 17th, pretty early in the season but they have no choice. She still loves her work. Alex is writing his exams at intervals over the next two weeks. He sits for orals on the 21st which will be his last and is his most dreaded ordeal. Alex and Emily still don't know where they will be settling. He had hoped to be retained in the Edmonton district since the Leduc oil well is producing so successfully but they want to send him back to Norman Wells as their chief engineer there. Emily and Anne would go along of course and the salary is tempting but they are so far from civilization.

April 11

I must finish this as Alan is going out to the highway with our mail. A soft slushy snow fell most of the night and everything is so wet and muddy that I'm sure the mailman would never get through on this road.

Is anybody coming west this summer? Rumour has it that Annie McElheron (Russel's sister) is buying a new car and that she and Margaret are coming west on a trip. I hope it's true but it's a long trip to attempt for two women drivers. Anyway we are hoping for some visitors.

I am busy with some house-cleaning. I bought a new vacuum cleaner just the small size with the various attachments. I think it will probably be very good when I get accustomed to it. It saves me hauling the mattresses outside to the cleaning rack anyway. I used to enjoy rolling up a mattress and carrying it outside but I'm getting too old and rheumatic for such antics and my men never did see any sense in such "goings-on" as housecleaning.

Thank you for writing to me about Uncle Jim and I do hope he is spared for many more years. For a man without a family he is particularly fortunate in having your family's affection and care.

Lovingly yours,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Oct. 26, 1947.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Well this is the most perfect autumn day an Indian Summer day really for we had our first snowfall last Monday. We are hoping it lasts for a long time as we still have some threshing to do. Many outfits are working today but our men decided to trust the weather and start again tomorrow. The big, white geese are still with us, so we can usually expect fine weather as long as they are around. Hunters from the States, B.C. and Saskatchewan have been here ever since the season opened. I don't know how they can have the heart to shoot such beautiful birds. We have had quite a few ducks but since they nest and feed on our fields nearly all summer I think we are entitled to a feed or two of them.

This time two years ago we were just starting back west after our visit with you all. It seems so long ago that I could quite enjoy another trip but I've had my share of tripping for one year.

When Annie and Margaret left here to go to Fairview, we went as far as Edmonton. We had four days altogether up at Walt's and enjoyed it very much. They have a lovely big home and the country was simply beautiful - lovely gardens and crops - such a contrast to our own dried out fields. Shortly after we arrived there they had a heavy frost which ruined everything. On the contrary we had a long frost free fall and the August rains revived our gardens so nicely that we had an abundance of every thing even tomatoes. The crops were too far gone to make a comeback and with our unusually wet fall, harvesting what there was, has been a problem.

Nov. 2nd.

The threshers came last Monday and finished up just before supper on Thursday night. The last two days I just had three extra men as they were threshing flax and it goes very slowly. I was very glad to see it all finished. The weather has been wonderful and the geese are still with us by the thousands. One morning a big flock lit just across the road from us and the whole hillside just looked like a snow drift. The men thought there must be at least five thousand. We should have had Clare Wallace here to record their honking as they finally rose and flew off to the lake.

On our way back from Fairview we stayed four days in Edmonton. Margaret had a week - end leave and stayed with us in our autocourt cabin. It was real visit. She had been nursing in the Isolation Ward for the past six weeks but should be through with it this week-end. I'll breathe a sigh

of relief I think, as there have been quite a few cases of infantile paralysis and diphtheria in the ward.

Alex and Emily are still at Norman Wells but hope to be back in Edmonton about the end of this month.

Alan passed his Grade IX with an A Standing. Fortunately the School Board has allowed the teacher to go on teaching Grade X at Alps, so Alan will be home for another year. I was so afraid that he would have to go to Hanna and we'd be so lonely with the last chick flown from the nest.

Your little rose flowered begonia has bloomed continuously all summer and has been much admired. I must move it to a larger pot. I vowed I would put most of my flowers in the cellar this fall but the windows are full again. They all seemed too nice to put down into the dark basement. My Christmas cactus has its first bloom of the season on it now. Some of my hollyhocks bloomed the first year too, on account of the late rains and long season I expect.

This is positively my last year to raise turkeys. The coyotes came right into the yard and took two turkey hens and eggs last spring and we have to chase the turkeys all in every night now as the coyotes are very bold. Russel and Alan have traps set for them and keep their rifles handy but so far they haven't had any success. The government has reduced the bounty on them so much that they aren't hunted nearly so often.

Little Anne (Alex's daughter) is thriving but isn't walking yet. They have a native woman up in Norman Wells making a parka suit for her to keep her warm as their cement house isn't proving very warm although the floors are all kept warm by steam pipes etc.

Love,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Jan. 4, 1948.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I got "bogged down" with my Christmas cards and letters this year. I usually make a careful list of all I write to and those to whom I send cards. Well I ran out of cards this year and then I wrote short letters to

some and now I can't remember who got which. However I know I didn't write to you for I remember thinking, "well I know Aunt Nell would rather have a real letter later on, than a note now". Anyway here's the letter I promised you in my mind - my first in 1948 except to the family.

First of all, the new granddaughter arrived Dec. 29th. So far I don't know what Alex and Emily have named her. Alex called New Year's Day and said they hadn't time to decide on a girl's name but were calling her Mary Jane in the meantime. This baby weighed 7 1/4 lbs. and is fat and healthy so she will be a delight from the very start. Poor wee Anne was so thin and blue till she was four or five months old. She wasn't walking at Christmas time so Emily will have her hands full.

We had a very quiet Christmas this year. Margaret was put on night duty about ten days before Christmas and couldn't get two nights off together so that she could get home. When I got up on Christmas morning I wondered how I'd get through the day without a private "cry". However I was busy with turkey and pudding etc. all morning and then just before noon Mr. and Mrs. Binmore came. I had asked them but had not insisted as they are both getting so frail. However, it was a lovely warm day so they decided to come and we were so glad to have them. Russel and Mr. Binmore can always talk and argue for hours on end so in the afternoon Mrs. Binmore, Alan and I made candy. After supper we played cards till nearly midnight. They stayed till the next afternoon. The next Monday night we had a card party here but it turned out to be the only cold and stormy night of the entire holiday so only about sixteen of the thirty invited arrived. We had a lot of fun though and I think they all enjoyed themselves. We were alone on New Year's Day. The Blairs were to have come but their next door neighbour died on the 30th so they were helping the family and didn't feel like coming up. I think Russel and I enjoyed the quieter than usual holiday but Alan got rather restless. He is learning to dance so we let him go to the New Year's Eve dance in the community hall and that cheered him up a bit. I hope that next year our family and grandchildren can be with us.

Margaret was able to get permission to sleep out on Christmas day so she went over to Alex's and went to bed there till about 3:30 P.M. when they got her up to talk to us all by phone. Then she had dinner with them and went on duty again at seven. She said Christmas Eve was a nightmare for the nurses on duty in the emergency ward because they were on duty the full twelve hours. Fortunately she was on a very quiet ward that night - the old ladies' surgical ward so she was able to slip down and help out the other nurses from time to time. She still loves nursing even though she surely is seeing a great deal of the "seedy" side of life as it is lived in these modern days.

Among our Christmas gifts was one of Nellie McClung's books "Clearing in the West". Have you read it? She speaks of many of the people who lived along the Garafraxa Road. Another of my gifts was a gasoline iron. I don't know whether I'll ever get up courage to use it but I'll probably try it out some hot day next summer if Russel or Alan is around to light it for me.

I wonder if you have heard from Aunt Grace (Grace Mitchell Bannerman, Titusville, N. J.) since the big storm. New Jersey was mentioned several times as being badly hit.

We had lovely weather all through the holidays but the forecast is for colder tomorrow. So far, they have always managed to open up our roads but I imagine that if another big blow comes we will be hauling the Hudson out to her winter quarters on the highway. The Castor Trail is being gravelled this winter by fits and starts so we are hoping it is completed before the spring mud comes.

Heaps of love and a Happy New Year.
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Mar. 25, 1948.

Dear Aunt Nell,

It was ever so nice to get your birthday letter even if it was delayed by our bad roads until just last Saturday. I had letters from my "old faithfuls," - you, Janet (Pringle Carson), and Peggy R. (Margaret Rutherford) and also one from Annie McElheron (sister of Russel) for Russel and me. Russel and Alan slipped up on their usual birthday bumps and greetings this year as neither of them remembered till the next day, when one of the neighbours came along and brought an extra pound of butter "just for me."

Such a winter as we have had and are still having. Tonight the temperature is just zero and there's a cold nor'wester blowing with more snow coming. We had a couple of weeks of nice weather earlier in March but very little snow disappeared so when new storms started this week, the fresh snow just filled the ploughed roads so we're really more shut in than ever. Fortunately we did get to town once in the nice interval when the road was open. Russel warned me that day to lay in supplies for a month

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Dear Aunt Nell,

It was ever so nice to get your birthday letter even if it was delayed by our bad roads until just last Saturday. I had letters from my "old faithfuls," - you, Janet (Pringle Carson), and Peggy R. (Margaret Rutherford) and also one from Annie McElheron (sister of Russel) for Russel and me. Russel and Alan slipped up on their usual birthday bumps and greetings this year as neither of them remembered till the next day, when one of the neighbours came along and brought an extra pound of butter "just for me."

Such a winter as we have had and are still having. Tonight the temperature is just zero and there's a cold nor'wester blowing with more snow coming. We had a couple of weeks of nice weather earlier in March but very little snow disappeared so when new storms started this week, the fresh snow just filled the ploughed roads so we're really more shut in than ever. Fortunately we did get to town once in the nice interval when the road was open. Russel warned me that day to lay in supplies for a month

because when all this snow melts our roads will be impassable again. Little did we think that we'd have another series of blizzards before spring arrives. Going to town last Saturday the snow banks in lots of places were higher than the car and you had to constantly watch ahead for a place to pass. I think the drift at our gate must be all of twelve feet deep.

Mar, 27th Easter Sunday - but it doesn't seem possible when you look outside. One of my amaryllis came out in bloom yesterday so I have a lily for Easter even if it isn't a white one. My Christmas cactus is in bloom again too so my big window is the only springlike place in the country. Russel would contradict that statement for he has eight little black calves in the barn so that's a springlike place too I guess. I was out to see them today for the first time. It always amuses me to see how expressive their ears are. They know I'm a "foreigner" and their ears stick straight out. Then when Russel goes up and rubs them, their ears wiggle up and down in sheer pleasure. It's nice to get out and feed my hens again and generally putter around. The snow seemed to settle a bit today and the forecast is for fine weather tomorrow. So many of the farmers are getting out of feed and it will be awhile yet before any grass shows up on the prairie. Some are using straw stacks of 1941 and 1942, hammering the straw and mixing it with grain. There can't be much nourishment in that surely, except for the grain but perhaps the bulk of the straw gives the illusion of fullness. One of our neighbours stabled sixteen big steers at Christmas time to grain them for shipping. When they were just about ready the storms started and the stock trucks couldn't get in and he wouldn't drive them out so he still has them and they say they are thin now as he ran out of good feed. Russel stabled his about the same time and we were in the same fix but Russel finally drove ours the fifteen miles to town and shipped them. It turned out to be a regular blizzard and it took the train 30 hours to make the usual six hour run to Calgary. Then the market was draggy but we've been so thankful ever since that he did go. He stayed a few days visiting friends so it was a break in the long monotony of winter work.

We had fully intended driving to Edmonton for Easter to see the children and grandchildren but the "best-laid plans of men and mice gang oft alee". We hadn't told Alan, Margaret or Alex of our plans so we were the only ones disappointed. Had letters from them both yesterday. Alex is going to be at the Leduc oil field this summer. I think they plan to live in the city as Leduc is just about twenty-one miles out and he could drive back and forth if he had a car.

Margaret is fine and has just about finished her sixteen week shift in the operating room. She has enjoyed it very much and thinks that she wants to be a surgical nurse. She goes to maternity wards next.

Alan has had a hard winter and some very bad trips to school. The school is over in "the Hills" as we call them and the coulees have been just filled full of snow. For awhile he couldn't get through at all. Then he rode Dixie as far as Greenways and went the other two miles on his skis. Then he broke one ski so Russel and he went over one Saturday and spent the afternoon digging a one horse trail through the worst drifts. Unless the snow goes during the Easter holidays I know there will be some days when the water will be too deep for Dixie to wade through.

Easter Sunday

Another lovely day and I think perhaps the snow sank an inch or so. A group of neighbours have been wanting to get to town and they couldn't get the Special Areas to send out their plough again so about fifteen of them with three or four trucks and a couple of tractors started out yesterday. It took them five hours to make the fifteen miles to town but at least we have the roads open again, which is always a relief.

Do you still do cross word puzzles Aunt Nell? I haven't let them tempt me since the days of the war time Red Cross when I decided they were a waste of time. However I started hunting them up again this winter. I find I can concentrate on them when Russel and Alan have some of their programs on, when I find it hard to read or write, so perhaps they aren't such a waste of time after all. The same words are repeated so often though that they wear themselves thin in time.

By all accounts Kate Rutherford will be home this summer. How I would like to see her! I am hoping that the mission board will send her west on a speaking tour as I don't see any long trip in sight for us this year. Alan is looking forward to getting his driver's license on his 16th birthday. He is a good driver but we don't let him take the car out by himself very often. I expect I will have some anxious nights when he does start going off by himself.

Alan has just come in to get me to go and see a porcupine in the trees. We have to go in shifts as we have only one pair of skis now. I'm going to take the camera out and get some snow pictures. It's a marvellous spring day so perhaps our storms are over for this year. How I do hope so! We forgot to get a box of earth in for our early seeds last fall so I have had Russel digging under his old straw stack to get a bit of soil so that I can get a few tomatoes started. I tried a hybrid seed last year that produced tomatoes which actually ripened. They weren't very good canned but made lovely juice and chili sauce.

Love to you all. I have paint for my kitchen, bathroom and back bedroom but it's hard on my rheumatic knees and hips getting up and down. I'm trying to "borrow" Alan for half a day to do the ceilings.

Lovingly,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta,
May 2nd, 1948.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Many happy returns of the 12th. I hope it is really spring-like in your part of the country so that you can be outside on your birthday. I was just thinking today of how my mother (Mrs. Alex Pringle, Chatsworth) used to welcome the first snowdrops. I haven't seen one of them for years but I'm going to send for some and for lily of the valley bulbs too for I have a small garden behind the house where I can put plants not to be disturbed.

I think for the first time Russel and I felt just how the winter saps an older person's strength. At least I was beginning to wonder how I'd ever do the hundreds of spring tasks and Russel didn't feel a bit well through March. Between worry over feed and the constant battle with snow he really got run down. We certainly had a six months' winter with a vengeance. Some of the snow that came on Nov. 4th is still with us in the trees and on the roads where it was piled up by the snow plough. We were fortunate though not to have the bad blizzard that hit Calgary last week with ten to fourteen inches of fresh snow. We had the wind and the rain but no snow. The floods around Drumheller and the Red Deer Valley have been very bad this year. Nearly two thousand people were homeless in Drumheller and their houses, now that the water has receded, have dirt and silt about two feet deep in them. Wouldn't that be a mess to clean? The Red Cross issued a plea for children's clothing and for blood donors today in the Calgary churches.

I haven't been to town this spring, except when the roads were open briefly on Mar. 20th as we still have to go the two miles to Greenways by wagon. We hope to bring the car home this week though and will it ever be a treat to get into it again. Alan is looking forward to getting his driver's license in July and then (he thinks) we will really go travelling.

Margaret gets her holidays the last of July and the first part of August, so perhaps we will be able to get away for a wee holiday then too although she says that all she wants to do is sleep and eat at home.

Alex is working out at Leduc now and goes back and forth (by the kindness of a neighbour and his car) from Edmonton. He likes the work there much better than the office work in the city. It must be a wonderful oil field as they hope to have two hundred wells flowing by the end of this year.

I canned beef and soup last week. We have a locker now in the new Co-Op quick-freeze plant in Hanna but since we are so far from town I thought I'd better have some jars on the cellar shelves. Russel brought out a box of fresh frozen raspberries last week. My! but they were lovely, quite the best things I've tasted this spring.

I would have given a good deal to have had a daughter around this winter as there were several weeks when I didn't see a woman at all.

Now it's nearly news time 10 P.M. and as Russel has announced that we have to start getting up at 5:30 I'll have to get off to bed. I still need my sleep. I thought you were supposed to need less sleep as you grow older.

Tues. May 4th.

Our mailman is due to make his first round trip today since Dec. 19 so I must get this away. I am busy painting the back bedroom walls primrose yellow, ceilings and woodwork white.

Best wishes from us all Aunt Nell - for your birthday.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna Alta.,
Nov. 13, 1948.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Your letter came on yesterday's mail and made me so very much ashamed that I hadn't written long ago. I haven't any excuse except laziness. The evenings are long and quiet now that Alan is in town all week. Russel listens to the radio and I sit by the register and knit or read until the warmth and quiet send me to sleep. Sometimes we go off to bed before the ten o'clock news. As Alan says that's a sure sign that we're

nearing our dotage for we've always made a point of hearing that last round-up news of the day.

It was wonderful to get your letter and hear the news of your family. And you have another grandchild (Robert Gordon McClelland) - a boy - Well you are up to me now but Emily tells me there's another one - a boy for sure this time - on the way. They are building a house out in Devon, the small town that has sprung up on the Leduc oil field. They expect to move from Edmonton about New Years, but will keep their house there in case Alex is shifted back. At present he drives back and forth to work at Leduc, a matter of thirty miles a day. He finds it rather strenuous especially now that he has to leave before daylight and doesn't get home till after night.

I hadn't heard of Uncle Jack's death (Mr. W. John Mitchell, Keward, Ont.) until Kate wrote a footnote on one of her cards. I like to think that he and Uncle Jim were laid together in the little Keward Cemetery so close to their own home place.

It's nice that Jim likes Timmins. There's an old college friend of mine living there who has taught there for years (Marion Saunders). Jim will probably be her inspector. She left St. Hilda's after she graduated and took a normal course in North Bay. I saw her there when Alex and I were on our way back to Alberta in 1923. I usually hear from her at Christmas time.

Margaret has been on the maternity ward for over six months now. She is on night duty in the Private Patients' Wing. She is finding the work a little bit easier because she only had seventeen babies in the nursery. The senior nurses have to move out of the hospital residence for their last three months due to lack of space so Margaret and her pal are looking for a room near the hospital. I wish we lived up there.

We enjoyed Kate's visit so much. She's just the same dear Kate. We had a very quiet time but I think perhaps she needed the rest as she had been very busy in Vancouver.

We've had a marvellous fall but true to human nature we are still grumbling for we need moisture. Everything is bone dry and the least wind starts a flurry of dust from the fields of summer fallow. There have been some bad fires too, not very far from here. One of them, we saw on three nights before it was finally brought under control. It must have been nearly seventy miles away to the south east but it showed up so plainly at night. Another one started by combustion in a neighbour's barn but didn't get far as three threshing crews were on the job in short order and some one stayed on guard until everything could be thoroughly soaked.

Yes, Alan is in Hanna this year. It seems very strange to be cooking just for two again. When Alan comes home on a Friday night and still finds about a quarter of last Sunday's cake on deck he just can't understand it and asks if we're lovesick or just lonesome for him. He lives at the Dormitory for Rural Students and has a fine time. They have a very capable couple as supervisor and housekeeper but eleven boys and twelve girls can have a good time together even with strict supervision.

The one thing I did have in my garden this year was tomatoes. I have given them away, canned, pickled and juiced them but I still have more than I have jars for and we are a bit weary of them. They have ripened nicely in the basement but these last ones have a slightly bitter taste when I make juice out of them.

Leo (Pearce) has been the resident engineer on the Banff to Jasper highway for the summer so I suppose that with the road closed for the season he will be transferred to a more southerly highway. Margaret won't be home for Christmas this year and we aren't planning on going to Edmonton so we will have a quiet holiday.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
May 4, 1949.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Your parcel came yesterday and I was so excited I couldn't get it open fast enough and I was delighted with everything.

Well graduation is over and we had a lovely time. It was all very exciting as Uncle Walt, Aunt Catherine, Dr. Jim and his wife, Veda and husband as well as Jack and Jerald were all in the city at the same time. Alan missed the graduation. Margaret was in rather a daze all that week I think. She had got her diamond just the week before - so that was another cause for excitement. Leo's people are pioneers in the drought belt of Alta. They have been in there for years and have seen hard times and good. These last few years their cattle have paid off I guess and now irrigation will reach some of their land. Leo is an engineer and is resident road engineer at Jasper. He works in the office in the winter and is out at various road camps on the Banff to Jasper Highway all summer.

Margaret is staying on at the Royal Alex for a year as they both feel they would like to have a bit more laid by to start with. Margaret is to

be assistant supervisor in the maternity nursery I believe. They had seventy-one babies in the nursery there the day of graduation so even graduating nurses worked till the last minutes. They usually have around 55 - 60 babies but of course there would have to be an extra rush that day.

Tell Rose that two of her letters reached me while I was in the hospital so I enjoyed them more than usual. I feel fine again but a bit lazy about getting down to the business of gardening.

I put the first seeds in today. We've had an awfully dry spring though and I'm sure nothing will come up unless it rains.

Aunt Nell - you should see my long leaved cactus now. It's almost past its height of beauty for I took off nineteen old flowers this morning. It had over fifty blooms on it at one time just before we went to Edmonton. It's my pride and joy these days as everyone who comes in admires it.

And I have a grandson now too! James Donald a month old on April 30. I think he's more like the Hemstocks than either of the girls although the Keeleys think the children are all Hemstocks. The little girls (Anne and Jerry-Jane as Anne calls Mary Jane) are both talking.

Their new house is a model of convenience. Huge caterpillar tractors and trucks were at work the day we were there bringing rich top soil for the lawns and gardens. Later in the week a landscape gardener was coming to plan the lawns for the whole street. Each householder could choose his own shrubs but hedges etc. are put in as the company and landscape men dictate.

I have a picture of Margaret for you and will send it soon.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Sept. 25, 1949.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

This is your Margaret's (McClelland Young) birthday. I thought of it as I put down the date. Call her up and tell her many happy returns from me. It's a typical fall day out here, bright and sunshiny but with a bit of a nip in the wind that is taking the yellow leaves off the trees in great clouds. We had an unusually heavy frost about two weeks ago so the leaves

on the planted trees and vines just shrivelled up and were gone in a few days. The native trees though turned the most gorgeous shades of yellow but the wind is certainly stripping them today.

I wonder if Margaret wrote to Isabel to tell her how much she liked the quilt. She didn't see it you know till she got home in August and she was certainly thrilled about it. She had a busy three weeks at home sewing, getting some embroidery on the go, helping me can etc. Then when she got back to the hospital, there was a case of impetigo in the maternity nursery. It spread and spread until they had fourteen cases of it among the infants. They closed the old nursery and opened a new one and still it spread but when she phoned last week, they hadn't had a new case for six days. I've never seen the disease but I guess it's nasty to treat and hard to root out. Anyway Margaret said she was surely ready for another holiday as she had never worked so long and steadily at anything.

We have had a busy summer at home too. We had one week of Ontario visitors. I enjoyed that week very much although it was a busy one. Thelma Greenwood was married that week. I had a shower for her on the Tuesday, the Ontario relatives came on Wednesday and were here for her wedding. We took our guests along to the wedding dance. Then we had Mrs. Grimes and her new husband here for a week-end. She has gone to live in Portland, Oregon so we won't see her often from now on. Then Mrs. Binmore was here for ten days. Mr. Binmore died in June so she has been very lonely. She is losing her sight very quickly and can no longer read or sew. She goes out a good deal still and insists on keeping her own house. Fortunately she has been able to get the telephone in this fall so we can keep in touch with her and we drop in to see her every time we go to town.

Last week we had Alex, Em and the three grandchildren here all week and I was so lonely when they went home. Jimmy is a lovely baby and he's so good, not a cry except when he's being dressed. Anne is a most affectionate child always loving you and always right behind you wherever you go. Mary Jane loves only her daddy. She was just beginning to accept Russel and me as family, when they left. It was the first time Alex had been home in the summer since '41 so I think he really enjoyed it all.

And so your youngest (Kenneth McClelland) has graduated. Indeed that would be a red letter day for you and I'm so glad you were able to go.

I've heard from several sources about the big picnic you had before Kate left. I had a letter from Kate herself last mail day written while they were lying at anchor in the Congo River telling me how much she enjoyed the picnic and all the people who were there. How I'd love to be in on one of those family affairs.

Alan is away from home this year at Red Deer. There is a composite High School there with dormitories in an old air force barracks. The school year has been divided into semesters. Only two major subjects are taught in a semester and then they may fill in with one or two options or else take some Trade School subjects e.g. electricity or motor mechanics. We had rather planned on moving to Red Deer for the winter but it seems hard to arrange matters here to get away. However Alan has got over the first loneliness now. So perhaps we may just content ourselves here, until the time comes when we can dispose of the farm. We certainly miss Alan though and would like to be over nearer Devon and Edmonton so that we could see Alex and Margaret more often.

Well I hear my ducks calling me so I guess it's time to go and feed my chickens too. This has been our first Sunday without company for so long that the day has seemed endless. By the way my favourite minister Dr. Lawson of Calgary has accepted a call to the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church in Toronto. For years I have listened to his Sunday morning service over the radio and I just don't know how we'll get along without it. Anyway if the services from Timothy Eaton are broadcast, do listen to him. I think you'd like him very much.

I have one of Margaret's graduation pictures for you. Will try to get it away very soon.

Lovingly yours,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Sept. 10, 1950.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Thank you for the snap of yourself enclosed in your last letter and I have it up on my desk in front of me. I'm always so glad to get snaps as they keep me in touch with the home folks.

Well this is one of those early fall days that makes you realize "it's later than you think". It was cold last night so I pulled all my flowers that were showing any buds at all and two great bunches of sweet peas. I have two of my glass casseroles pressed into use to hold them all. The garden has been beautiful this fall. It's years since I've had such an abundance of flowers and vegetables - and we are certainly enjoying them to the full. The vines (pumpkins and cucumbers) got frozen about two weeks ago but nothing else was hurt and last night the predicted frost failed

to come and I do hope it keeps off for another week or two although it is going to be cold again tonight.

The men are busy at the big crop. We have Gene Shea back with us. He was the middle-aged, Irish American, who was with us while you were with us Aunt Nell. He has worked in the woods around Rocky Mt. House since he was here in 1941 but he got weary of trees he said and came back to Hanna so he's stooking for us. He's sixty-seven now and at first we thought he wasn't going to be able to stand the work but with the cooler weather he has picked up and he worked steadily all last week. The crops are heavy and green so stooking is a tough job. But My! isn't it nice to see so many stooks again! I like to stand out on the verandah at night and hear the hum of the power binders and see the flash of the tractor headlights all around us. No one is using combines this year as the grain ripened so unevenly and the weather has been rather wet so swathers aren't being used much either. We are hoping for a long fall and more warm weather. This is the year some of you easterners should have been here but of course no one came.

We had a nice holiday ourselves this summer. The Pearces (Sr.) took their car and we took ours and went to Devon, Edmonton, Jasper, Banff and Calgary and of course we spent most of our time at Jasper. Margaret and Leo had just got nicely settled in a place of their own so they had worked like beavers to get everything spotless before we came. Their house is a converted office building. It is on slightly higher ground than the town so that you can look across it and see Mt. Edith Cavell (18 miles away) quite clearly. Margaret had three days off (Sat., Sun. and Mon.) and Leo had Sat. P.M. and Sun. so they were able to drive us around in the evenings and an all day trip to Mt. Robson on the Sunday. Jasper is a lovely little place much smaller than Banff but just as beautiful. Alan took turns relieving Orlin Pearce or Dad at the driving. The mountains are so beautiful it's a shame we don't see more of them when we are only two hundred miles or so from them.

And I have another granddaughter, Margaret Catherine. She was born on the 27th of Aug.

Russel took me around the block (6 miles) to see the nice crops and the fat black cattle etc. He is using two nine year old "colts" on the binder this year, that have never had harness on them before. He just uses one of them at a time of course with three older horses. There are seven other such colts in the pasture.

We got a nice lot of Saskatoons this year, about 27 quarts. I put them down by several different methods to have a variety. Fruit is very dear out here this year so every time I go to town and inquire about fruit I come home and do down some more of our own rhubarb. There were no

B.C. peaches and the California ones were \$3.59 for a twenty pound bag. The pears are \$8.50 for a forty-lb. box. They say the apple trees weren't as much damaged by the severe winter as were the softer fruits so I hope apples will be more reasonable as we could dispense with lots of other fruit if we could have baked apples and sauce. Our own raspberries were winter killed but we had enough for supper several times a week for almost a month. That helped out the menu problem a lot. I had hoped to have some citrons but they went with the first frost. Alex had a wonderful garden this year. They were already using their cauliflower and cabbages at the end of July.

Russel and I took Alan to Red Deer on Labour Day. He should finish school by March.

Well I must close or breakfast will be late to-morrow morning.

Love to you all,

As ever Anne.

P.S. Monday.

We got our killing frost last night so our lovely flowers are all over for another year. I see some bachelor buttons and calendulas are still standing erect. I have scorned them for house flowers but they will look pretty nice from now on. I lifted my balsams into pots a few days ago. They will blossom nicely until nearly Christmas.

Hanna, Alta.,
Nov. 19, 1950.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

This is a wonderful afternoon for letter writing as I'm all alone. The men are away threshing, Sunday though it is and 12 below zero into the bargain. We've had a most trying fall. September was a perfect month until the 20th when it began to rain and snow. Since then we haven't had more than two or three consecutive days of fine weather. The grain is so tough they won't accept it at the elevator and although it is a poor quality, there is so much of it that many farmers haven't storage room on the farm for it. We aren't in that plight as we are still not half threshed. Greenwoods are supposed to be going to do it. They have come and done some from time to time and then go back to their own on some pretext or other.

(cattle getting stooks etc.). Now for the last week we've had zero weather so the grain goes through quite well. There's not much snow on the stooks and as the weather is cold, they can thresh, but such a job for the poor men. This morning there was a cold south wind blowing so they decided not to thresh but about noon the sun came out and they phoned to see if our men would come for the afternoon. I gave them a steak dinner so I hope they aren't too uncomfortable and cold.

Alan came home for the week-end. He arrived unexpectedly about 1.30 a.m. on Saturday morning. We haven't seen him since Thanksgiving so it was a pleasant surprise. The week-ends are so short though that it seems it's just hello and good-bye. The boys with whom he came were to leave at three this afternoon, so Russel and I took him into Hanna right after dinner. I expect we won't see him again until Christmas. He is president of the students' union in the school this year.

Margaret and Leo came down from Jasper on the 4th of Nov. and on the 6th left for a short trip through the western states in our car. They were going to visit several of Leo's relatives and then call on Mrs. Grimes (who was Margaret's first teacher) in Portland, Oregon. They plan to spend a week with the Pearces and a week here before they have to be back in Jasper on Dec. 3rd.

Alan spent a week-end with Alex. recently and enjoyed seeing the children. Alex was hoping to get down for a goose but the geese seemed to pass us by this year. Russel didn't get a shot at one although we did have several ducks. The shooting season always makes me very angry, for so many shoot for the fun of it and never a season passes but what we see wounded ducks and geese unable to fly and left for the coyotes to pick up. This year we had one of our best horses shot shortly after the opening of the hunting season. It was in a far pasture so we don't know quite how long the poor thing did suffer before we noticed it and Russel could put it out of its misery.

Gene Shea has stayed with us all fall and been a good steady help. Russel thought he could certainly out-stook the young huskies from Ontario. The other man Elmer Hongisto has been in St. Joseph's Hospital in Edmonton for several years. He is up and about the ward but never will be able to work again so he just stays there.

Norman Greenway married a Montreal girl when he was in the air force. Then they came back to Alta. and he took over his father's farm. They have two boys. He is an ardent Calvary Tabernacle member and conducts meetings in our little school nearly every Sunday.

Well the clock just struck six so I'd better go and get my solitary supper. The radio battery ran out today so it seems very quiet without it.

My big cat has been sitting on the chair beside me nudging my elbow once in awhile so he must know it's supper time.

My love to you all and I'll be looking forward to a nice long letter in my Christmas mail if not before.

As ever,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Feb. 11, 1951.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Here it is five o'clock on a beautiful winter's day and I can still see to write without the lights. I am always so glad to see the days getting longer aren't you? It makes you think that winter is really on its way out. And have we ever had a real winter! The roads were bad enough at Christmas time but Russel and Alan hauled the truck to the Castor Trail the day Alan had to go back and there it has been ever since. It's been so steadily cold ever since that Russel has only been to town once in the interval and I didn't venture even then. My teeth are fairly chomping for some fresh celery or lettuce or even an orange. My home canned stuff is lasting well. We get so tired of it except for tomatoes. We enjoy them always. The mailman is on the road so long that if we did send for anything it would likely be frozen by the time he gets to our corner on the Castor Trail and then there would be two miles behind a heavy team. However Russel reports a Chinook Arch to-night so perhaps that means warmer weather soon. I heard a plane today and wished I could flag him down and ride as far south as he could take me. Even Calgary is ten or fifteen degrees warmer than here.

I made a braided mat this winter. I used braiders (which fold in the raw edges). I can't say that my mat was a complete success but it wasn't the fault of the braiders. I haven't seemed to accomplish much this winter. I've re-covered two quilts, one a heavy one for use in the sleigh so I tied it. I have two more quilts on the way. I don't need any more quilts but the piece of print came in a bundle for aprons for the bazaar. The flowers were too large for aprons so I put some rose sateen (just the same shade as the flowers) with the floral piece and eked out enough for a quilt top. I'll have a quilting party some day if ever the roads get fit for travelling.

Feb. 14th.

Russel was right, we got our Chin ook and although it isn't thawing here, it is in the more western parts of Alberta. Last night was such a perfect night Russel suggested we go down to Rehills, two and a half miles south of here. I knew the roads were bad but I really didn't know how bad. So I took him up on the proposition and we went. It took us almost an hour and a half to negotiate that two and a half miles. It was just a case of ploughing through deep snow the whole way for any previous tracks had been filled in. We didn't get home till after 2 a.m. We had one game of canasta and lunch before leaving for home. I haven't accomplished much today beyond baking bread and the usual dusting up. I get awfully tired of canasta.

I am sorry to see Margaret and Leo leave Alberta even though Riding Mt. Park isn't so awfully much farther away than Jasper which was 445 miles from here. However it was a nice promotion for Leo who will be a resident engineer in charge of park roads there.

Alan was hoping to go up to Devon for this week-end as the Ice Cycles are in Edmonton and he'd like to see the show. Alex and Em usually take it in. Edmonton seems to be hard hit by the flu epidemic this week and the High School at Red Deer is full of mumps so I keep wondering how they all are keeping. I hope the flu passes us by as Russel always seems to get it if it's around. He hasn't been feeling any too well this winter but the doctor says the pain that bothers his side so much is rheumatic, not from the heart as he was afraid.

Our first set of twin calves arrived on a -35° below zero morning and a second set arrived a week later also on a very cold morning but they were dead. We thought we were going to lose the cow too but she seems to be getting better now. I sometimes wonder what we'd ever do without all our pets if we left the farm.

Dad got a new shotgun for Christmas. He's very proud of it but hasn't managed to shoot a coyote with it yet. The plane was around today again hunting coyotes. It's exciting to watch them diving and shooting!

Love to you all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
May 9, 1951.

Dear Aunt Nell,

This letter should have gone on yesterday's mail, which by the way, was the first mail day since last Dec. when we didn't have to go two miles to get the mail. The wheezy sound of the old truck was a very welcome one and the mailman's toothless grin was as broad as could be, especially when he saw my foot go through the remains of one of our big snow drifts and come up all dripping wet.

First of all, Happy Birthday to you. It always comes so close to Mothers' Day that I expect your family celebrates them together. I'm just wondering if Alan will get home for Sunday. We haven't seen him since Easter and that seems a long time ago.

We had Margaret for an unexpected visit at the beginning of this month. Just after they finally got their notice to leave Jasper for Riding Mt. she took a bad cold which threatened to turn into pneumonia and she was in bed for the last week they were in Jasper. Then not knowing just where they would be staying until their furniture arrived, she decided to come home for a week and complete the cure here. They didn't realize how bad our roads were at the time and what with washouts on the railway and bans on the highways we had to go to Stettler to meet her (72 miles from here). It was quite a trip too, taking us nearly four hours each way, as there were a few very bad spots. Going back, she went by train to Calgary, then to Red Deer by bus for lunch and an hour with Alan and back to Edmonton. Her new address will be Wasagaming, Man.

Well our seven month winter seems to have petered out and nobody is sorry! You would hear over the radio about our March (15 - 17) blizzard. It was a terrible three days and the marvel is that so few people were lost. We had a few near tragedies in our district but even the stock losses weren't as bad as we expected. The hardest hit was the wild life. We had a lovely flock of nineteen partridge here all winter and only one of them came through the storm. He was the outcast, that the others all chased and pecked and believe it or not, he appeared from under a feed rack two or three days after the storm, when the cattle tramped the snow down enough to leave an opening. We could walk over the telephone wires between here and the road and had a regular rampart of snow all around the buildings. Our dog, instead of scratching at the window, by standing on his hind legs climbed the snow drifts and looked down into the windows and howled. The middle day of the storm, I kept trying to knock the snow off the dining room window, to see outside, and it wasn't till the storm died down that I realized it was the huge drift of snow that blocked my vision. Sounds fishy doesn't it, but it's true.

Well it really must be spring. Here's our first oil drilling outfit passing the gate, seven big trucks of it! I wonder where they are going to try next. Last fall they went up and down this township line, tying ribbons to the fences and putting down test holes every quarter mile or so. Wish they'd find something for all their trouble, but there seems to be only gas around these parts. There's talk of installing it in Hanna this summer. That would be a blow to local coal mines.

Is there any word of visitors from your part of the country this summer? Janet Carson and Florrie Smith plan to leave for the west in June. They will come by C.P.R. to Vancouver and then back by C.N.R. to Edmonton and Hanna. Florrie may not come this far as she hasn't as long a holiday as Janet, who plans on two months in the west. I am surely looking forward to having Janet for a visit.

Now my two men folks are away threshing at Greenwoods today so it's nearly chore time for me. I haven't got my chickens yet but they should be arriving some day soon. I left ordering them until I could be sure of the roads being good and I guess many others have done the same, for there's a great rush of orders now. Gardening and chickens will have to be worked in with threshing and seeding this year so the next few weeks promise to be busy ones.

Alan's graduation is on May 23rd so he insists that we must go over for that event. I don't see how we'll manage to go but perhaps Gene will look after the chicks for me for a day. He came back from the woods about April 1 to help us finish threshing so they finally got started yesterday.

My love to you all and again Happy Birthday Aunt Nell.
Anne.

Hanna. Alta.
Aug. 30, 1951.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

We are on our third day of continuous cold rain. I mended most of the other two days and got fairly well caught up with the summer's backlog so I think I'll get some of my neglected correspondence attended to today. We have a fire in the furnace so I can toast my toes and write in cosy comfort.

We've had a very odd summer, and have had only two weeks of warm weather with only one of our usual very hot days. The crops are still

green here and the frost danger is becoming an increasing worry. We need dry, warm days for at least a couple of months now if we are to save our bumper harvest. I think I've never seen the country so beautiful, the pastures are green and lush and trees and shrubs have not been buffeted by winds so they are very full-leaved with heavy crops of seeds. Gardens are beautiful too. We decreased our garden plot a good deal this spring but I think we will have as much or maybe more produce than usual I know it has kept me busy canning and the corn is still to come. We have had feeds of it but it needs warm weather to mature it.

Well, we had one Ontario visitor this year anyway - Janet, And how I did enjoy the five days she was here! We took her over to Gull Lake when she left here and we saw Alex, Em., Alan and the kiddies. After she left I had Mrs. Binmore here for two weeks. She is nearly blind and will be eighty on the first of Oct. She refuses to leave her own home in Hanna "as long as she can keep it up." I'm always afraid she will leave her cellar door open (a trap one in the floor) and fall but she is very careful about it and thinks it much more likely that I will knock myself out on our steep cellar steps.

On reading your letter over I see you think it is very strange to be threshing and seeding alternately. Well it isn't a procedure that I'd recommend. We finally finished threshing on the fourth of July. We were fortunate enough to be able to hire a neighbour with a larger tractor and tiller than ours to start on the cleared land right away. The weeds were almost as high as the stooks were so summer fallowing was quite a job. Russel followed up with our own tiller and then seeded some of the lighter land to a cover crop of oats. We do that for three reasons,- to reduce the risk of the land blowing, to give the cattle some green feed when the grass gets dry and to reduce the area of land to be gone over again. Well this year we needn't have worried about the first two reasons but it has been such a good growing season that its been hard to keep the ground free of weeds. The cover crop has certainly lived up to its name this year. We may cut it yet if the season improves as we hope and pray it will.

Alex has been moved to Red Water about 48 miles the other side of Edmonton. It's a hard blow to leave their lovely home in Devon, especially as the only house available in Red Water is just about half the size of their own. Alex goes back to Devon for week-ends till they get moved. Alan has been with them all summer working out of Devon on a seismic survey gang so now he has to hunt a new boarding place.

Next year we hope to have a hard surfaced road from Calgary to Hanna. It's to be built to Drumheller this year but after this rain, it was reported impassable today so construction may be delayed. That will really give us a boost to have at least one good road out.

Do you know what I've been doing this afternoon? Making nighties for our Korean bale out of parts of old pyjamas. I can cut a size two to four out of them nicely. I make yokes out of plain contrasting material for added strength.

The mailman won't be around tomorrow.

Love to you all.
As ever Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Oct. 28, 1951.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

It was nice to get your good letter (Sept. 19) and hear all the news of your family.

Well, you've no doubt heard all about Alberta's winter. It got well high-lighted when the princess was in Calgary. The snow came here on the fifteenth of October, with a real blizzard which put 9 to 10 inches of snow over the prairie just overnight. All that week it snowed a bit or blew every day and last week was cold and stormy too, until Friday when a chinook came up. Today the prairie has spots of brown showing up, but there is a lot of snow around the stooks. We really haven't any hope of threshing before spring but we are hoping it will stay mild until Russel can get things in shape for winter. We were lucky to have our coal in. It caught most of our neighbours with empty bins, so they have been hauling with tractors and sleighs, or trucks all through the bad weather. The cross roads are badly blocked, so big trucks have been hauling coal to Dundee School, and then people load up their sleighs etc. from them. I guess the truckers have been charging the limit too but people just had to get fuel. Our road is blocked, the mailman hasn't been through since the twelfth and there's no word yet of cleaning the road.

Poor Margaret and Leo chose a bad time for their holiday. They had one week of beautiful weather Oct. (8 - 14) and were here for that part of their visit. Then they went to the Pearces for the next week and were to come back here for a day and we were to take them to Castor for their return trip. However we couldn't get our car out so finally Russel and Gene hauled the truck to the highway and then last Thurs. (25th) we went out by sleigh and went to town with the truck to see them off on the train. It was an awfully cold day so we laid in our winter's supply of groceries, 200 lbs.

of flour, 100 lbs. of sugar, 20 lbs. of oatmeal, 50 lbs. of onions, box of apples, etc., etc. I vowed I wouldn't go to town again till spring but perhaps I'll get there again if the chinook doesn't take a chill.

Tell Lorne that I grow a few rows of extra, early Alberta corn and that's usually the only kind that matures although I always have Golden Bantam too, just in case we have a frost free fall. One reason our crops were so late this year was that we had to thresh before we could sow the seed. We hadn't much summer fallow last year so sowed what we had to wheat. We had so much rain though that the grain never did ripen as it should and a lot of wheat which has been combined or threshed is graded tough and even damp and is grading No. 4 at that. My hens are going to learn to thresh their own grain this year as we didn't save enough to do them for a year. However we have lots of oats and chop so they won't starve.

Our school, Dundee, opened again this September after being closed for ten years. Skunks had made a den in the cellar under the teacherage, so when the bad weather came and the teacher could no longer use his car to go home, he came here to board until another teacherage could be hauled in. No amount of airing or disinfecting has been able to clear out the skunky odour. I think myself that a good fire in the stove and lots of hot water and soap might have made it habitable if they had hauled it to a new location but the school board does things the easy way. The teacher is a classmate of Alan's, a very nice lad, so I enjoy having someone young coming in. Even school lunches aren't hard to plan.

I was much interested in your leaf out of the family tree - so to speak. I knew that my mother was named after her grandmother but I didn't know that her maiden name was Isabel Rattray.

You must have had a lovely time that day at Mel. McGill's (Andrew McGill's son, Chatsworth) cottage. It sounds like a heavenly place. It's a long time since I heard of Mel. I well remember how he used to tease me that winter I stayed at Aunt Jane's in Chatsworth.

Oct. 30.

Well, I just missed a chance to mail this, so I think I'd better finish it up and have it ready. We haven't had any mail for over a week now, but surely someone will soon bring it along. Last time we heard from Alex, little Anne had been in the hospital at Radway to have her appendix out. She was getting on nicely but I'd like to hear that she was home again. Alan was home for Thanksgiving but between sleeping and goose hunting I didn't seem to see much of him. I'm wondering if he will get home for Christmas. Train and bus connections are so awkward between

Edmonton and Hanna that unless he gets the Monday off, he won't be able to make it.

Well here comes my boarder so I must get supper on the go. School-teaching must be a hungry job for he can surely enjoy his supper and I like cooking for a good hearty eater.

Love to all,
As ever, Anne.

Oct. 31

Our chinook is over and it's been snowing again, although we haven't had as much in Calgary where they've had five inches again.

Hanna, Alta.
Dec. 18, 1951.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Just another week till Christmas! It doesn't seem possible although dear only knows it is cold enough! And judging by the radio reports we are not the only ones who are having bad weather as it seems general all over Canada to-day. We have been waiting for a week for a fine day to go to town but it seems to get worse instead of better and this wind may play havoc with our roads. I haven't been in town since the last Saturday in November and my list is getting really alarming in its length.

We are looking for Alan home for Christmas but none of the others will be here. Alan won a car in a Lions' Club Raffle in Devon last week so his transportation problem is solved. It isn't a new car being a 1939 Chevrolet but it has been well kept and the garage man in Devon gave it a new coat of paint and three new tires just before the raffle so Alan is on top of the world. He hopes to come as far as Red Deer on Friday night and be there for the Christmas formal dance at his old school. Then on Saturday night, he's invited in to Hanna to a Dormitory Reunion there so that starts his holidays out with quite a bang, if only the weather will co-operate a bit.

Now I think I'd better go and stoke my fires for the night. Merry Christmas to you one and all. I do hope that 1952 will bring some of you out our way for a holiday.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
March, 17, 1952.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

And how have you been celebrating the 17th of Ireland? We listened to Lux Theatre tonight, "The Top of the Morning" but it wasn't very good. A year ago today we were just digging out from our "Big Blizzard". Today has been nice but it's snowing and blowing a bit again tonight. Even Russel, who rarely grumbles is beginning to get very tired of this winter. We had nice weather all through February, not thawing, but sunny and bright. March, though has had a lot of cold, east winds and we do hate them.

Yes, we were sorry too to hear of the King's death. When I turned on the morning news at 8 a.m. and heard all that slow measured music, I couldn't imagine what had happened. For a minute I wondered if an accident had befallen the Princess and her husband in Africa. Then I thought of Queen Mary but before the news really came I had decided it must be the king. No one else was important enough to swing the whole radio network from morning jazz to the Dead March of Saul. The funeral was impressive wasn't it, but I felt sorriest for Queen Mother Mary sitting at her window watching another of her boys pass. Queen though she is or was - she has had the full cup of sorrow hasn't she? And yet she's a staunch old lady.

I spent an enjoyable afternoon in Hanna on Friday, helping the W. I. Ladies quilt a quilt to raffle for funds. They called it a Dresden plate quilt but it isn't like mine. There were six of us at it, but we didn't get it quite finished. The bat on the inside was really too heavy for a nice job.

We still drive out to the highway (two miles) by team when we go anywhere. I don't mind the going out but oh it's miserable after a trying day in town to get into the cold sleigh and drive home. Russel is away today on a nine mile trip with the team to get our seed wheat. Ours doesn't germinate well after being out all winter. This is the second or third year we've had to buy seed wheat. This year we are trading it for oats so it doesn't seem quite so bad. We have nine horses left, mostly old friends whom we wouldn't sell for fox meat. They come in very handy in winters like this one. Many people are losing horses this winter because the snow has a crust of ice over it near the ground and the horses can't paw through that without getting sore feet. Russel hauls out feed every other day to ours and one or two of the neighbour's horses that he felt sorry for.

Didn't cattle do a flop-over after the Foot and Mouth disease broke out? We got rid of our fat steers in January and are so thankful that we

did. I think we've likely seen the peak prices for beef and pork and I expect the city folk will be glad.

The Calgary Power Company is putting in electric lights through the district immediately north of us this summer, so we have been debating the pros and cons of having the power come in here. It would cost us \$1275 and then 12 cents a foot for about half a mile. So far we haven't decided what to do as we installed new batteries etc. last summer. The power would be cheaper eventually and we could have more conveniences but we hope we can sell here before too long and I think perhaps our present plant will last us until we do. We hope so anyway.

I'm glad you liked the snaps I sent to you. We haven't added anything to the house since you were here except that we have a small house for the Delco engine beside the back door. We used to have it in the basement but once in awhile the exhaust fumes would come back into the house and upset me so we put the new one outside.

Well I must get to work. This seemed like an ideal time though to get some letters written. We had an early dinner before Russel left. Donny and Dad like a game of canasta at night so I usually play too as it isn't much of a game for two players. Usually I'd much rather knit or sew. Card games every night are an awful waste of time to me.

My long, leaved cacti plants are showing buds so spring should be just around the corner.

Alan is still in Devon. He likes his job and is doing some studying.

As ever,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
May 25, 1952.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Such a cold windy day for a holiday week end as we are having. There will be many disappointed people for the forecast yesterday was for a nice week-end. For ourselves we are glad of the rain that the cold air brought with it at first. Russel finished the seeding yesterday and I finished

my garden on Thursday so the showers will give everything a good start provided it doesn't turn cold enough to freeze.

First of all, I have a new grandson, Douglas Graham Pearce, born on the seventh of May. Margaret hasn't seemed very well since. It's the busy time for Leo, getting the park ready for its busy season, roads repaired, water and sewage connections checked and new buildings to be supervised. He is supposed to have a five day week but is usually busy with extras on Saturdays. I'd like to have gone down but it's Russel's busy time too. We have had two men here for a couple of weeks. One of them is Gene Shea again, who has been fencing and doing odd jobs. The other man has rented a half section of our cultivated land on shares so he stayed here while he was seeding it. He finished yesterday too so has left. We've had a wonderful spring, just what we needed, lots of wind and sunshine to dry the stooks and the threshing went like magic. It was surely a relief to have it done so quickly. The mice had done a great deal of damage and of course the grain lacked the usual fine colour but our wheat averaged 17 1/2 bu., oats about 30 and rye about 12. Some farmers figure there was 50% lost to mice but Russel thinks we probably lost about one-third.

Russel and I have been under the weather with colds ever since threshing. Such coughs! I cough till I just gag from exhaustion. Russel is worse at night. We are going in to town tomorrow and I think I'll see the doctor for a prescription. Russel swears by Buckley's Cough Mixture but it doesn't seem to fizz on my cough and it's such horrible stuff anyway!

And so the old O.S.C.V.I. is no more. Janet sent me the Sun Times with the picture of the fire. I think it's about time they had a modern school in Owen Sound (1880 - 1952). I saw it the last time we were home. Verna Williscroft took us for a drive around there and it was nice to see it again.

No, thank goodness we don't have daylight saving time in Alberta. It changes the time of several of our C.B.C. programs. Happy Gang comes on at 10.15 a.m. instead of 11.15 and C.B.C. news summary at seven instead of eight p.m. Otherwise we'd never know Ontario had daylight saving time. We haven't had it since war time. I hope we never do have it.

We haven't seen Alan since Christmas but are hoping he will be home this week-end. He gets five days off every three weeks when he changes from graveyard shift back to days but the roads were still not good at his last change.

So you are to have another Grace (Ford) (Mrs. T. J. McClelland, deceased 1988) in the family. You will all be getting new gowns and hats for the wedding.

Tuesday -

Well, we had our usual late spring frost last night. It catches my late white lilacs almost every year and I see the flower clusters are blackened this morning, likewise our early, potatoes, beans and corn. I haven't put my tomato plants out yet but I guess the danger point is passed now. Russel says it won't harm the early wheat but may have hurt the oats a bit.

We are going to town this afternoon so I must get a letter ready for Margaret. We had visitors on Sunday evening and I didn't get my usual time for writing letters.

Our own United Church has services in the Community Hall every two weeks and we go there of course.

Must get to work. My cold seems to be definitely on the mend today, so perhaps now I can tackle my spring cleaning.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
July 11, 1952.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

If I remember correctly our last letters crossed. You wrote to ask me about the colour of the roses on the jacket set and I had already written telling of Douglas Graham Pearce's arrival. Since then we've been down to see him and he is indeed a sweet, wee fellow almost as nice as his fond parents think he is.

At present I have the other four grandchildren here and I marvel all over again at how you ever managed with nine children! Alex and Em brought the children on Sunday night. Jimmy asked me if it was almost time for his daddy to come home. Since then, though he seems to have got over his twinge of loneliness perhaps because he and his grandpa are such pals. I have a school girl here to keep an eye on them when I have to go to the garden or hen house. They are very trustworthy though and very honest little souls. We have many a laugh over them. Catherine is a most determined little person and shouts, "no, no " to almost everything but she's

good natured most of the time. Jimmy has a funny little drawl and speaks perfectly. I asked the three big ones to go and get me some kindling for supper tonight and when Jimmy came in with his few sticks he said, "Grandma, I don't think I'll care for kindling for my supper".

We saw a great many friends and relatives in our travels to and from Manitoba. Going down we went to Moose Jaw first and from our cabin Russel called up Bert Jackman. He came over and talked till nearly midnight. We spent a night in Regina and arrived in Wasagamung about five P.M. The park is quite a pretty place and the lake is a lovely clear blue set in the midst of trees on quite a height of land.

We had six full days with Margaret and Leo. Then we left for home, visiting our relatives (Wards) at Dauphin Man. W. J Ward is still in Ottawa. He has represented Dauphin for 31 years. After visiting at the Hancy Ward home, we drove practically straight west for 633 miles. There were a few detours of course but not many. We spent that night in Nokomis - a town I had never heard of before and never want to see again. It was hot and noisy and the bed was the lumpiest I ever tried to sleep in.

Our garden is good. We had new potatoes to celebrate the glorious 12th of July but haven't had anything else except swiss chard, lettuce etc. Corn is the only poor thing in the garden. I suppose it needs more hot weather.

I am expecting Peggy Rutherford any day now. She is in Calgary with Bruce's wife at present.

July 14th.

This is Alan's 20th birthday. I was hoping he'd phone but he hasn't so far. There isn't a phone at his boarding place so I can't reach him.

In the meantime your letter has come telling me about Tom's (T. J. McClelland married Grace Ford) wedding. It must have been a very pretty wedding and I believe they went to the west coast on a trip.

I'm glad Peggy is here now because it will help stave off the loneliness after the children went home. I always love visitors but hate the first day or so after they go until I get back into routine again.

Wish some of you people were coming out this summer.

Love,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Jan. 7, 1953.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Having written to each of the family, I think you are next on my New Year's list. As usual we enjoyed your letter written on snowy Dec. 14. All my friends mentioned the heavy snowstorm on Dec. 14. We were just a bit luckier. Our fine weather lasted until late on Jan. 4th but it's surely been stormy since then, and there's a blizzard warning out for Southern Alberta tonight. That's once we'll hope we are not included. Usually our district is called East Central Alberta - but often the storms overlap.

It was certainly nice to get around all through the holidays. On Sat. night Dec. 20 we went up to Castor (35 miles north) and met Alan at the bus station at 8 p.m. We had supper there and were home by ten o'clock. Other years he has had to come around by Calgary which meant he wasn't home till noon the next day.

We went to town on Mon., finished our shopping and then went to a 25th wedding anniversary party. Tues. night we had company and Wed. Alan went in to the Christmas Eve ball in Hanna. Then we had Christmas dinner at the Greenwoods the next day at noon. It was the smallest party we have ever had there as only one of their children was able to come home. The Tues. before New Years we went to Rehills for supper and cards and Wed. we were also out for supper and crockinole. Thurs. I had the Greenwoods and Rehills here for supper and cards.

On Friday I tidied up the holiday mess and we were off to Calgary to see Alex. I told you, did I not that he has been transferred to Calgary. Their son William Russel was born on Nov. 30. Anyway they are all fine and Billy is a cute wee baby. They have a large rather old-fashioned but well built house with a rumpus room in the basement and no less than seven fireplaces all equipped with gas radiants.

Em. and I got down town for a couple of hours of shopping on Sat. while Dad bought another few pieces for our water system. On Sunday we went to church then packed and Dad and I took Alan to the Edmonton bus and we came on home. We weren't home more than two hours when the north wind and snow swept down over Alberta. Were we ever thankful to be safely home!

No, I don't raise turkeys any more. There are too many coyotes! I think they cleaned up about thirty or forty hens on me last summer. The hens love to scratch under the trees and the coyotes grab them there I think. We are going to build a high wire fence around the hen house to protect the hens. Most of our neighbours have had to do that. Just before

Christmas Mr. Greenwood killed ten roosters and the men just piled them outside her kitchen door till she got ready to do them. Not long afterwards she saw their dog, a big ungainly pup, hiking across the barnyard with something in his mouth, before she realized that he had been stealing her chickens. A coyote popped out from a fence behind the barn, grabbed the chicken from the pup, and made off across the fields. Then she went out to count her chickens and she had only eight. They found one of the missing roosters covered with straw near the barn so I guess the pup was laying up a supply of winter feed. But that is just an example of how bold they are.

I am getting some odds and ends of knitting cleared up these days.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.
Feb. 24, 1953.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Russel is in Calgary tonight, so with no radio on the go I am really getting some letters written outside of the immediate family ones. One of the neighbours came down and did the chores and the lad who is boarding here has gone off to bed so everything is very quiet.

We have been having the most beautiful winter. Once or twice we haven't been able to get out to the highway but somebody always seems to come along and open the road. I keep telling people about the winter of 1940 when we had no snow until March and then we were completely blocked up until early in May. It could happen again but it's certainly marvellous while it lasts. The days are so nice and long now that I should be getting a tremendous amount of sewing done but I'm lucky if I keep abreast of the mending. I finished a pair of curling socks for Leo this week. They have a motif of crossed brooms on the front, over a curling rock, not very realistic but perhaps he will be able to figure out what they were meant to represent. Now I'm on a ribbed pair with a panel of cable stitch down each side, I like doing them better than the ones with the motifs on two needles for I find it hard to sew them neatly up the back. I don't know who will fall heir to these. Alan doesn't appreciate home knit socks any more. "They are too sloppy". He won't wear gaiters so always gets the kind with elastic tops. I tried using sewing elastic in the tops of some of his socks but he didn't like that idea either.

We have another oil company putting down a hole just about three miles from here and the "tankie" man is staying here. He hauls the water to the outfit. Some days one or two loads will do them, then if their pits get too thick and muddy they are scraped out and he hauls like mad for a day or night till he gets them filled up again. On calm nights we can hear the machine working quite plainly and on any night if I peer out of my bedroom window, I can see the lighted derrick shining through the trees. Wouldn't it be exciting if they struck oil? They have put down a lot of holes around here but they are all dry ones. Nearer Hanna they are searching for gas and have two or three that will be used when the gas is laid in the town.

Speaking of oil wells reminded me that you said you usually looked over the Imperial Oil magazine to see if you could find a picture of Alex. Well his department (the producing department) has a special little magazine of its own, The Esso that has had several pictures in which he was included. He always sends us out a copy for over the years we have met so many of the people with whom he works. Several of the men have come here for goose hunting in the fall.

Last fall we put in a septic tank and Russel is bringing home an electrically operated pressure pump, this trip we hope. So far we haven't got the right water front for our stove but it should be arriving any day and then we should be all set as long as our water supply can keep up to the demand. While the tankie is here we thought we'd have him fill our cistern and also an outside reservoir that Russel put in last fall. His big tank holds 35 barrels so a couple of trips would fill up everything for us, and should last us quite awhile.

I hope all your family has escaped the flu or perhaps it hasn't been so bad in Ontario. It seems to have gone the rounds through most families out here at least once and often twice. Dad had it in January and we couldn't get help anywhere. So though he was running quite a fever he had to go out to start the pump engine and milk the cow. I fed the cattle and did what I could but it was an anxious time for a few days. I didn't take the flu then but one of my chins got quite frozen and I had to hold my head quite high for several days.

Yes, I have sent my old woollens to a factory in Winnipeg for a good many years. Sometimes I get lovely blankets and sometimes they aren't so nice. I don't know whether the quality fluctuates with the quality of the woollens but that's been my experience. I sent what I thought an average lot of woollens last year and ordered four baby blankets. They were such deep colours and so coarse I was completely disgusted. I have more woollens ready to go now but I think I will try sending them to another woollen factory. They are slightly more expensive but it might be worth the difference. I will let you know how I make out.

I had a long letter from Kate Rutherford last week. She is in South Africa on a holiday. Did you know that Agnes McElheron Rankin was home in Toronto for the winter? Her husband was taking a special course in London, England so she came on to Canada. Her husband is a doctor.

Well, I must get to bed,
Love to everyone,
Anne.

May 1953.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

I planned to have a letter ready for today but Russel took the notion to plant potatoes yesterday p.m. and then in the evening I got him to help me get in a few early vegetables so we were ready to go to bed as soon as we came in.

Alan has been home for two weeks so we have been going out a bit more than usual. He is leaving again this week-end to work at Devon for the summer.

Have had a cold, and backward spring after our fine winter. There is no work done on the land around here as yet. Russel has been trying to plow but gets stuck quite frequently.

It's raining again today and so chilly that Alan is putting a fire on in the furnace. It's not a week ago since I let it go out.

Many happy returns of the 12th and I'll write a letter some of these days.

Hope everybody is well,
Love
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
July 21, 1953.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Your letter is dated March 8. Surely I have written to you since then or did I just send a birthday card and promise a letter later on? Anyway this seems to be the quiet time I need and I'll get a letter started at least. Russel has been hauling grain to the elevator all day. It's such a hot, dusty job, so when he stopped in for a drink about 5 p.m. I made him rest for awhile until I got an extra early supper and he's off now to finish the bin. The elevator man is loading cars so will stay open until dark and it's grown nice and cool this last hour so the job will soon be done and with more comfort than in the heat of the day.

Well, we've had several visitors so far this season but none from Ontario yet. Mrs. Binmore came out early in June and stayed nearly two weeks with us. She is so nearly blind, that the only time I felt safe about her was when she was asleep or listening to her soap operas. She will be eighty-one in Oct. but is interested in everything and very active. On the 18th of June Mrs. Wickson came from Vancouver. She hadn't been back to the prairie since leaving here in 1927 so she saw many changes. There are still many of her old friends around here and she did enjoy meeting them. We took her back to Calgary on the 10th of July, visited with Alex over the week-end and then brought out two of our old neighbours with us on Monday. They spent most of the week here and went back on Friday. I've been busy since then as the garden got very weedy and needed a great deal of attention. Russel gave me a hand at it yesterday p.m. and it looks much better now. I have the nicest pinks or dianthus this year. The clumps are so large and just covered with bloom. They would make a lovely showing in a perennial border but I just have them in a row in the garden. Perhaps that's why they are so nice.

My second long leaved cactus was a beautiful sight this spring. There were over thirty blooms on it. It still has one late flower. My calla lily had its first bloom this summer.

Alex and Em are coming out this week-end. They like living in Calgary very much. It is a lovely city, I like it immensely and often wish we could live there but it seems hard to leave the farm for it is lovely this year too.

Yes, I remember the Herman Guses very well. Their boys went to Beattie's School. How strange that they both died at the same time. You have heard me speak of the Blains who were such good friends of ours all through the years. Mrs. Blain died early in July, and Mr. Blain took her back to Barrie Ont. for burial. We had a note from him today and he said he was glad he had made the trip for he felt contented to leave her in a

beautiful cemetery in a beautiful part of the country. It seemed rather strange to us but I guess having no family they haven't the "roots" in the west that we have.

Alan is at Devon again. He came down to Calgary the week-end we were there too.

Next morning

Another beautiful day for the haying. Our tame grass (brome) is beautiful this year. In lots of places it is over my head. Neighbours are putting it up for us on the share basis but Russel has to get in on the job too and is out cutting this morning with the team. The others have a power mower and go around at a great rate. It is a wonder they don't run over him. They also have a farm hand stacker (I think you call it) which is a wonderful labour saver and so speedy compared to hauling the hay in with wagons.

Margaret says there is polio in Manitoba so they are keeping Doug away from the beach. Last week-end there were 1100 cars entered the park on the Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. over and above the cars which had a season's ticket. They are looking forward to a new place to live next year. A house which is being built by the Parks Board for the resident engineer.

I have been putting down rhubarb, thirty jars for ourselves, a dozen for Emily and some for Margaret. The Saskatoons should soon be ready and I like to get a few for pies. That's about the only way we care for them.

Hope you are keeping well. You weren't feeling very well when you wrote in the winter.

My latest venture in knitting was a cardigan for Douglas with sailboats on the yoke. I hope it fits him.

Must go and get dinner on the way. Not much trouble getting meals these days is it, with lots of garden stuff for the picking.

Love to you all,

Anne

Hanna, Alta.,
Aug 10, 1954.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

I have a letter from you here dated May 30 and one written in Feb. which I surely must have answered before but neglected to put aside in my "answered" pile.

We were glad to hear about your granddaughter and what a pretty name Tom and Grace gave her. I think that's the first time I ever heard the name Glenna (McClelland, Chesley, Ont.). She's almost a twin for my latest grandson John Alexander Hemstock who arrived in Calgary on May 18th. He was tiny compared to Glenna only six pounds and he's had a tough time since his arrival as he had to have an operation when he was six weeks old. He is fine now and gaining well. I haven't seen Margaret's baby Brenda Anne yet. I'd love to get down before harvesting comes on but Russel hasn't got a hired man so we can't get away.

We had a long, cold wet spring, then a few weeks of hot summer weather and now another spell of cloudy, cool weather. Tomorrow is the Old-Timers picnic in Hanna, an event which we seldom miss but unless it warms up over night I think we will stay at home. There is nothing quite so flat as a picnic on a cold cloudy day. The men have quite a large amount of hay cut down, which they haven't been able to touch for over a week. The ground was even too soft for cutting for a few days. However the crops needed the rain and so did my garden. We had a nice lot of strawberries this year. I put down twenty-one pints and we have had them for dessert quite often. Russel has done the bulk of the gardening this year except for flowers. He likes gardening and takes a lot of pride in his straight rows and tidy garden.

Kate Rutherford will be home this year. I do hope I can get down to see her while she is in Ontario. At present there doesn't seem to be much chance of selling out this year. The wheat quota keeps the farmers too poor to buy land, as most all of them have granaries full of wheat which they can't sell.

Well there isn't much news to give you this time it seems. We live so quietly here that except for our own family visitors, we don't see many people. Most of our old friends have moved away either to Hanna or Calgary, leaving a son-in-law or son on their farms. Is there much farm real estate selling in Ontario or is it in the doldrums like farmland in Alberta?

Love to you all,

Anne P.H.

Hanna, Alta.,
Dec. 15, 1954.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Perhaps by the time this reaches you, you will have heard that we may be seeing you early in the New Year. We have one of the neighbouring bachelors here for the winter so it seems a good chance to get away for a little break, even if Ontario is not exactly a winter resort.

We are hoping that we can all be together with Alex and family for Christmas and I had planned on a few days with Margaret in Banff but Russel is getting anxious to be on his way so we may be leaving about the 27th. I just hope he isn't as anxious to get back home as he is to go.

I am playing for our school concert this year and the antics of the kids back stage are really funny. They can be so stiff and prim when the curtains are open, but once they are closed there is lots of expression in their faces and actions. We have fifteen children in the school again after being down to six or seven for years. Such is the up swing of the population.

We were talking to Alex to-night. Mary Jane was taken to the hospital on Sunday night for an emergency appendectomy. I think this is the seventh operation for their family this year so 1954 has been an expensive one for them. Mary Jane was fine again and should be home on Friday night he said. Alex is going to make our reservations for us whenever we can decide on the date. He wants us to go T.C.A. but I think the train is more our speed.

Mrs. Binmore is laid up with a badly bruised leg. She fell on the sidewalk and of course anything that does happen, always happens to her bad leg. She feels the time long when she can't go visiting. She was 84 on her birthday but has a regular routine of visiting the "old and sick" people.

I had a nice letter from cousin Agnes Collins (Andrew McGill's daughter, Chatsworth) last week. She was telling me that her eyesight has failed badly in the last year, so that she can't do much if any reading.

Now, Aunt Nell I have more letters to write for tomorrow's mail so any other news will have to wait till we see you.

I hope you will all have a very happy Christmas. We have just a light skiff of snow, hardly enough to call it a white Christmas but Russel is afraid we will have too much of it if he can't hurry me a bit more.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
March 7, 1955.

Dear Aunt Nell and Family,-

Well, here we are back on the old stamping ground again! Our trip seems like a pleasant dream and it's hard to get back into the routine once more. I have planted the bulbs, cacti and African violet leaves Isabel, so I hope they will do well.

We left from Chatsworth for Toronto on the morning train. Russel's sister, Annie, had a birthday party for Agnes Collins and invited us too. It was a nice party and we enjoyed it very much. On Saturday we went down town and had lunch with Nettie Laundon, who used to board at Miss Bremner's place, but who afterwards lived just out of Edmonton and now lives at Milton. On Sunday we went to church and then Kate Rutherford came over in the afternoon for a turkey supper. Cousin Mel. McGill also came back for another talk. We shopped and visited till Wednesday and at 8 a.m. we were on our way to the airport.

It was a balmy, spring-like morning when we left Toronto and as we drove out to the airport, crows were flying around but at Winnipeg it was -10 below zero and at Calgary it was -20° with a north wind blowing straight off the icebergs. It has been cold ever since. Several nights it was -40° here. Yesterday, however, it turned mild and today the snow is really soft. I got my first washing done today and it's nearly all in and ready for ironing in the morning.

Alex and his family were miserable with colds or flu when we got there. I went out to Banff for a couple of days before coming home but Russel went on home. Margaret and Leo expect to be going back to Manitoba later this month and will not likely be coming this way. I saw Alex Ward while I was there and he was much interested in the family tree. I would have gotten more information but Margaret had callers and we had to give up our family conversation.

Since coming home, Russel and I have both had colds. Mine is almost gone but Russel's is hanging on as usual. We haven't been out at all, been glad to stay home and rest.

My love to you all and thank you for everything. We did enjoy our visit with you. We have had a few games in the evening but it's been too cold to invite neighbours in.

Lovingly,
Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
Apr. 24/55.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

This is a blustery April afternoon, one minute sunny and the next minute snowing. Alan was at home most of last week and there was only one afternoon when it was warm enough and sunny enough to get around outside with comfort. He had not intended to leave for Regina, where he is to work for the summer, until today but the forecast yesterday was right for once, saying that we'd have snow with gale winds today so Alan left about noon yesterday. It was a lovely day and I kept wishing he had waited but there were about three inches of snow on the ground when we got up this morning. It's all gone now but the roads, even the paved parts, would have been slippery, so I'm glad he went when he did.

We enjoyed his visit as always. He is like a ray of sunshine, although he would laugh to hear himself called that but he is always cheerful and funny and it peps us up to have him around.

We have sold our farm. The deal is still pending. The buyer wants our twenty year lease as well the deeded land so the whole thing has to be advertised for a month in the local paper and office of special areas. The time will be up on May 5th so if no new bids have gone in, the business will proceed. We plan on going to Calgary, as soon as we can, to see about a new home, so I thought if you were going to get a letter for your birthday it had better be written today.

I couldn't very well start packing the contents of the lower part of the house until I was sure we would be moving but I've been working at the accumulation of 37 years of living, in the attic. I've never taken everything out before, just cleaned it and moved it around. Every time

Russel comes to the house there's another box of treasures to go to the bonfire. Alan helped me last week. He's quite ruthless. Everything goes. I have saved a lot of things but I suppose they too will hit the fire sooner or later. I was showing Alan my heirloom, "the three orphans". He said, "Those are real Hemstock dogs Mother. They sit on chairs!"

Alex has been at a convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma this past week. Em had hoped to go too but at the last minute her arrangements fell through, so she was disappointed.

We have missed several of our usual Sunday programs on the radio today because of Daylight Saving Time which evidently came into force today. That's one headache we don't have in Alberta even in the cities except of course for radio programmes and in the summer we don't miss them much. The programs from Calgary are not changed and they suffice in the busy time.

Now in case I don't get time to write again before May 12th have a happy birthday. It should be a real event - an eightieth birthday - but coming as it does in the middle of the week, you won't have many of your teacher children on hand. Perhaps you'll wait till Sunday.

Love from us both,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
June 27, 1955.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Just a note to let you know our new address. We haven't got into our own house yet but will be going into it the day after tomorrow. We have been just visiting around for the past month and although I have a good time everywhere I'll be so glad to get settled again.

Our house is on the north hill just three doors from a pretty little park which overlooks the city and the mountains are in the background. It's a bungalow with two bedrooms, a bath, living-room, dining room, den and kitchen on the main floor and an extra bedroom in the basement. Hope

some of your family will be out this way sometime and come to see us here.

We have had a lovely month - perfect June weather and crops and gardens are wonderful. We have a pocket-handkerchief-sized garden but Russel says some lawn will go under this fall.

We were sorry to hear that Mel. McGill (Anne's cousin, native of Chatsworth) had passed away. We haven't had any letters from the east for a long time but will look for some soon.

Love,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Oct. 13, 1955.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I've thought about you and Margaret so much lately. We were so sorry to hear of Jim Young's passing (husband of Margaret McClelland). It just didn't seem possible although now that I read over your letter written on July 3rd I see that you mention he hasn't been well.

We are finding city life rather monotonous, and if we can find a small place near the city or any other small town in the spring we may move again. I think I could adjust to it in time, although, I do miss my old Hanna friends a great deal but Russel can't find enough to do to fill the idle hours and it seems impossible to get the kind of light work he could do like carpentry or gardening. There isn't enough work around a small city lot for an ambitious guy like Russel although he has made a lot of improvements since we have come. We had no garden this year except perennials and a few quick things like radishes and onions but have a nice little plot all treated with lime and fertilizer ready for next year.

Alex and Em, have another daughter, as of the 27th of Aug. Betty Lou they call her and she really is the sweetest baby and good as gold. You hardly know she is in the house. They live over on the south side of the city. We see them usually once a week. We were over there for a lovely Thanksgiving dinner last Monday - turkey and all the trimmings. Em is a wonderful cook.

We go to a church just five blocks from here. It's a nice walk on a Sunday morning.

I am finishing up a quilt and making extra cushions for the house. Russel does his woodworking down in the basement. He made an addition to my kitchen cabinet. Then Alex helped him and they re-finished my old desk and now he is making one of those bookcase headboards for a hollywood bed. It's really going to be nice. I wish you and Isabel were near enough to come and help me quilt. I don't expect to get much done before Christmas though.

Alan was home for a week early in September and then left with three lads in his car for Oklahoma University. It is 1860 miles from our door to his residence there, but they expect to drive back for Christmas. It seems a long way to come for the twelve days they get for Christmas Vacation.

Margaret and Leo don't plan on being home for Christmas this year, but may come later in the winter. They had an unusually warm summer there and great crowds of people at the lake so it is encouraging to go ahead with more improvements. They do enjoy their house so much.

We were out to Hanna for several days early in September. Russel thought he would get in some hunting, but instead of that he got into the job of threshing at Greenwoods. So we didn't do much visiting. Harvest has been early in many parts of Alberta this year, although around Calgary we have had more rain and there are still many fields waiting to be combined.

The day of the Big Operation Life Saver Sept. 21 we had several inches of snow, so the lovely, warm days we are having now must be Indian Summer. I just hope it lasts! I still dread the thoughts of winter although our house seems to be fairly warm. I've got one warm corner in the den where there is a small gas radiant that can raise the temperature very high.

My house plants were a sick-looking lot when I finally got them in here. I saw some marvellous ones at the Horticulture Show in the Corral in early Sept. and you should have seen the dahlias! I'm certainly going to try some another year.

Well, this letter has been a rambling one. I was down town this afternoon for my regular check over with the doctor. I have lost some more pounds but I guess it's the moving and unsettled summer for he says my stomach is just the same and gave me a tonic to help me eat more. Hope you have had a good summer.

Love from us both to you all.

Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
March 12, 1956.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Thank you very much for the contents of our birthday parcel. We do appreciate all the stitches put in the articles for our benefit. The chair set is lovely Aunt Nell and is already in use.

I hope we can put Russel's socks away for next winter Aunt Nell. He still wears heavy socks during the cold weather but asked for a lighter pair this morning as it is 40 above today and really spring-like, such a very welcome change.

Well, we were glad to hear of your new granddaughter's safe arrival and what a nice name they gave her - "Margaret Ellen" (McClelland Maich, Oakville).

We have had Margaret, Leo and their family here, off and on for three weeks. They arrived on Feb. 26th by car. It was a risky business, we thought with Patricia just three months old but they got on splendidly and the two days they were travelling were both nice.

Then we had a week of cold, stormy weather while they were here and it warmed up again just as they were ready to take off to visit the Pearces south of Hanna. They came back from there last Thursday and we have had a few busy days while they did some final shopping and visiting. They left for home this morning so the house seems most awfully empty again. That's the worst part of having visitors. You hate to see them leave.

I had a tea party for them on Saturday afternoon and had some of our old Hanna friends in to renew acquaintances again. Several of Margaret's school friends have married and are living in Calgary too, so quite a few turned up for the afternoon. Two or three men came along with their wives so Dad and Leo weren't left out.

When Alex arrived home from Toronto and Montreal his family were all ill with the flu. It was really quite a virulent type and Em had three or four of them in bed at the same time. Fortunately she didn't take it herself till the children were better and Alex was home. They are all on the go again now and Alex is off tomorrow for Hay River which is somewhere near this side of the North Pole. This shouldn't be a long trip though if the flying weather is good.

Alan phoned us from Oklahoma for our birthdays. He is already looking forward to coming home in May.

Last night we were over to see some friends of Leo's and the lady has twenty-seven varieties of African violets, most of them in bloom. They were certainly lovely. Hers were all so nice and flat so she showed me how to flatten them down with a pamphlet or ruler etc.

Now I must get my supper on the go. Russel has been working over at the suite today and missed his lunch so he will be ready for an early supper.

Love and thank you from us both.

Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
May 7, 1956.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

It's time to say Happy Birthday to you again. How the years do roll around. It's a year ago today since we signed our farm away and although in some ways it seems like ages since we left the farm, in other ways, it seems as if it was just a few months ago, not a whole year ago.

Yes, indeed we were sorry to hear of Grace Oium's death (lived in Owen Sound, Ont.). She seemed a most unlikely person to have a thrombosis, so often it seems to happen to a more high strung, nervous type. You will all miss her greatly and I will miss her Christmas letters. They were always long, newsy ones telling about the doings of the Mitchell clan in particular and other friends too. She must have kept a diary, because it seemed as if it was written in sequence, event following event, as it happened. Laura Lynn had us over to dinner on the 26th of April. Both had word of Grace's death and clippings which we had not seen. Both Laura and Russel (brother of Grace Lynn Oium) looked well and had just recently spent a three week holiday in Honolulu but I gathered that Russel had been ill earlier in the winter. They were afraid of diabetes at one time but it was a false alarm. They have a lovely home in a fashionable district but made us feel very welcome.

Our family are all fine. Little John had to have an operation for rupture but he's home and going again.

Russel has a job with a builder down town so he's very tired when night comes. He is glad to be busy again though. I am left to myself for the day and will be busy with gardens and lawn from now on.

I've had a game leg for nearly a week. Don't know why they swell from time to time. Otherwise I am fine.

We are looking forward to seeing Alan at the end of the month but it will be a case of hello and good-bye as he goes to work right away in order to get in his full three months. They are coming back by Salt Lake City.

Tues.

I had planned to spend the day gardening and shopping but it is drizzling rain so I'm glad to stay inside and sew. I made a pink dress for myself last week and the pattern worked up so nicely that I want to get a dark blue or grey silk and make one for a good dress.

Well I should get back to my sewing. I have just been noticing how the buds have swollen on the trees with this warm rain. My tulips are up nicely but not out yet. I have two plants of prairie crocus in my perennial border and they bloomed beautifully. My African violets are lovely. The pink one makes me think of the hepaticas we used to find in Godfrey's bush (west of Chatsworth) so delicately tinted.

Hope you are all well. Does Isabel ever grow "Bells of Ireland" in her garden? They are green and very striking.

Love and Best wishes,

Anne.

Calgary, Alta.
Aug. 12, 1956.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

We were so glad to get your letter. Seems as if our letters from the east have been few and far between lately. Ethel (Mitchell) Hemstock (mother of Mary Lee Taylor and MacKinnon Hemstock) used to be one of my regular correspondents so I presume that she is not well.

This has been a beautiful Sunday, warm and sunny after a week of cool, unsettled weather. We need lots of warmth and sunshine now to ripen the bountiful harvest all around us. We were out to the country for a drive this afternoon and I think I have never seen the fields look so beautiful. Some of the early grain is beginning to turn but most of it is still green and standing more than waist high already. From where I sit writing at my dining room table I can see two of the flower beds in the park.

Even if my own garden isn't too beautiful we can enjoy the beauty of the park.

Yes I remember Annie Mitchell Wilson Young very well. She sang in the Anniversary choir that year that Auntie Grace Bannerman¹² was home from Alaska which must have been about 1907 or 08 wasn't it?

Peggy Rutherford and Janet Pringle both sent me copies of the O.S.C.V.I. CENTENNIAL paper and I enjoyed going over all the old names. I would have enjoyed being there but next time we go to Ontario we want to go by car and ours is too old for a trip like that. Perhaps next year we can manage a new one. Alex has a new station wagon this year and it is ideal for travelling. The two back seats come out or fold up and leave a fine sleeping place for two. He and Dad went on a fishing trip to the mountains last week-end. They each had an air mattress and a sleeping bag and were very comfortable.

Mrs. Binmore is coming in to the Blind Institute next week. She has sold her little house in Hanna and is disposing of her furniture. I feel so sorry for her for she will find life in the institution very much more restricted. However she couldn't live alone in Hanna any longer and no one was willing to undertake caring for her.

Have you heard that Margaret and Leo are being transferred to Jasper? We are so glad that they will be in Alberta again for we should be able to see them oftener. We haven't heard when they will be moving but expect it will be in September.

Alex and Em are hoping to be in Ontario in September sometime. Alex goes to Hamilton for a round table discussion on muskeg and permafrost at McMaster University. They will have your address with them in case they have a little extra time.

No, I've never seen the Peace rose. It sounds most beautiful. I've been reading about a new variety of roses the Florabundas which are supposed to be hardy enough for our climate. My neighbours planted two this year but they seem to be rather stunted so far and what buds did come on were misshapen.

I'm glad Lorne¹³ has another dog and I hope he proves as faithful and intelligent as his predecessor.

Alan is working up near Jasper now. He has enjoyed his work immensely this summer but I will be glad when his trips with the helicopter are over although everyone says it is safer than a car in these days. He will be leaving for Oklahoma early in September.

Dad and I haven't had a holiday this year so far but I guess we don't really need one for we certainly don't work very hard in comparison to other years. Even so I'd like to get away for a few days later on just for a change. The autumn is a lovely time to get away too for traffic isn't so heavy on the roads.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Oct. 17, 1956.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Nearly two months since your letter came and here I am just getting around to answering it.

The days are certainly creeping in on us now. Russel gets home from work about 4.45 p.m. and he likes his supper just as soon as he is washed and has changed into his slippers. By the time supper is over he has a very short time to work outside and perversely enough the Saturdays have always been the windiest or coldest days of the week. Tonight we did get four storm windows on for I had three of them all washed and ready so if I'm as ambitious tomorrow we may be able to finish them. It is so high to wash the outside ones though and although I'm not very heavy, the step ladder gets wobbly when I get near the top (or perhaps it's me that gets wobbly).

We have had a lovely fall but I suppose we'll be making up for it one of these days. Last Saturday it snowed all morning but melted as it came. However we noticed on Sunday that the mountains seemed to have a lot more white on them and even though we've had warm west winds since, they are still quite white. I still have calendulas blooming and the sweet peas were lovely till last weekend. That's very late for us. Russel has the garden up and he's hoping to get it dug this week-end and get a load of manure from somewhere to see if he can't mellow it up a bit.

Margaret and Leo had a bad autumn in Manitoba, so cold and damp, that I think they won't be sorry to leave although they have many good friends there now. I hope Alberta treats them to nice weather when they get here.

Alan was home for ten days before going south again but he was getting his car sanded and then repainted. It looked quite swanky again

when he had it finished. He had it done in a bright blue, half way between a cadet blue and a midnight blue. He has put on weight and added more this summer in spite of the strenuous mountain work. He was 178 lbs. when he left. Imperial Oil asked him to come back on a five year basis to complete the work started this summer but he wasn't sure whether he wanted to sign on for so long. We will surely be glad when he's through and back in Canada. In his last letter he and his roommate (another Calgary lad) were off to Dallas, Texas for a big football game on the Sat. It seemed like long way to go for a football game but Oklahoma has a strong and popular team. Even here, we follow the games almost as keenly as we do the eastern games. Alex and Em are real fans and they get us interested.

Did you get out to the memorial service at Chatsworth? Janet Pringle says they have made great improvements¹⁴ in the cemetery. We sent a contribution and hope to make it an annual one as we were glad to hear that it was being cared for again.

Alex and Em didn't get to Ontario after all. They decided the nine days was too short a time. Instead they went over the Big Bend Highway from Banff, down through the Okanagan Valley and west to Spokane. They enjoyed the trip through the Okanagan Valley as the fruit picking was just at its height and I doubt if either of them had ever seen the orchards at that time of the year.

I was glad to get the snap of Rip. He's a nice puppy and I hope he's just half as faithful as his predecessor. I do miss an animal about the place. I may settle for a budgie bird although Russel thinks I'd be crazy to get one. They have them in the most beautiful blues now and that would match my kitchen walls.

Mrs. Binmore is quite reconciled to her life in the Institute. She has a nice room and they do get good care and good meals. We have had her down here twice. We took her to our church on Thanksgiving Sunday but it is difficult for her to manage the steps.

What is Isabel's latest hobby or is she still weaving? I have just finished a little boy's sweater for the church bazaar, a rust one - with red and buff trains on it. Fancy socks are easier and more quickly done. Must get at my Christmas mitts and socks now.

As ever,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Jan. 13, 1957.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

After a week of very cold weather Alberta has come along with a lovely sunny Sunday with temperatures above zero for the first time in a week. We are invited out for supper and I thought we were going to get in a call to the Smiths in the early afternoon but Russel is snoozing so peacefully in front of the gas radiant in the den that I haven't the heart to waken him. I have so many letters to answer, that I can put in the extra hour very well and yours will be the first.

Thank you for our Christmas parcel. Everything is in use so you know it is appreciated. I haven't had a teapot stand since the one Alex made me years ago. Finally it got broken beyond repair so yours is on our dining nook table all the time. Tell Isabel her scarf is lovely and it matches my light blue hat that I wear with my fall coat. Russel wears light-weight socks most of the time, but he's glad to hunt out a pair of home knits in weather like last week.

We were thankful that the most beautiful Christmas weather lasted till all the family got safely to their appointed places. Alan left on Jan. 4 for Oklahoma, arriving there on Sunday morning to find it about 70 above. Margaret and Leo left on the fifth about 7 a.m. and were back in Jasper about 4 p.m. I packed a lunch for them so that saved a great deal of time as the children were with them.

We had nineteen in all for dinner at 5 p.m. on New Year's Day. The only part that I don't like about so many festivities is the vacuum when everybody leaves. It did seem so very quiet last Sunday that I couldn't even settle down to write letters or read. This week though one of the W.A. Ladies brought me wool for a boy's sweater and material for aprons for the spring bazaar so my days will soon be full again.

No, it was Mabel Atkinson whom I knew at school and we still write annual letters at Christmas. We visited them in Toronto when we were in the east. Her family of two boys and one girl were just about the age of ours so we always seem to have had a good deal in common. Earl, her oldest boy, flew with MacKinnon Hemstock in India during the war and has flown for the Royal Dutch air force (commercially) ever since the war. Sometimes he is in India, sometimes in the U.S. so his family lives in Holland the halfway point. Mabel worries about him a good deal.

I got roped into a quilting bee at the church tomorrow morning. It's a long time since I've done any quilting. This particular group makes and then sells wool quilts and raise money for the W.M.S. They get \$8.00

a quilt so I imagine the material must be all provided or they wouldn't have much profit. We are to have a pot luck lunch so I guess we work most of the day. Guess my washing will have to wait for another day.

Well, Russel is showing signs of waking up so we must be on our way. Hope you are all well. You have had cold weather too according to weather reports. We have very little snow and in southern parts of the province cattle are still on the range.

Love,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Feb. 24, 1957.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Well first and foremost I have another grandson to report, born last night and already named Christopher Alan Hemstock (son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Hemstock). The Christopher is after an old friend of Alex and Em's, who died early in the new year. His surname was Christofferson but everyone called him Chris. so I imagine that's what the baby will get for a nickname. Alan will be flattered by the inclusion of his name.

Then our next big piece of news concerns Alan. He passed all his January exams but decided to come home till next Sept. A girl from Edmonton Diane Wiebe, who was also at Oklahoma and with whom he'd been going around with all last term decided to give up her course in Journalism for the present and come back too so that they could be married in the spring Apr. 6th to be exact. She and her parents all came down to visit us the week before last. We liked them all. Diane is only 19 but is very sensible and pleasant. Alan was lucky enough to get on with Imperial Oil in their Edmonton office. He will be working in the mountains west of there this summer so they are looking for a small suite in the city. Diane plans on working during the summer too if she can get a job on a newspaper.

We have had a very steady, cold winter since after New Years, no storms and not much snow, but just a steady cold under clear skies, typical winter weather for Alberta. Last night it was about 17 below zero when we went to bed but I wakened near morning to hear the wind blowing like a Chinook and sure enough when the first announcer gave the temperature it was 39 above. As we sat at breakfast Russel could see the drops of

water falling from the garage roof so he went out to turn the heat off for the first time in weeks. It's to be colder again tomorrow but still above zero so perhaps the back of the winter is broken. I do hope so.

Thank you for the clipping about Miss Frances Pritchard¹⁵. I still make many things by her recipes. One thing I made this winter that I haven't made since I made it under her direction in the old O.S.C.I. and that was Bitter Orange Marmalade. I could never get the oranges in Hanna but I happened to see them in one of the big super markets one day so I made up about 15 pints of it. It has a tang that seems to satisfy or whet my appetite at breakfast and now I wish I had made more for the oranges are only in stock in January I am told.

I have been making aprons at present for the spring bazaar and some for the girls. I must find something now for our new grandson but Emily knits faster and better than I do, so I seldom knit anything but socks or mitts for her family.

Hope you are all well,
Love,

Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
April 29, 1957.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

No doubt you have heard from Diane before now as I sent your gift right on and she has been very prompt to acknowledge her gifts. I am enclosing an account of the wedding. I wore a printed silk dress as per enclosed sample with a coat to match in plain blue, lined with the same silk as the dress, pink hat and gloves (also lipstick and a wee tiny bit of rouge!). The four oldest grandchildren were invited and they were so excited. They all looked so nice. The three girls all had white dresses with figures or flowers in coral, blue and pink and linen coats to match in plain colours, white hats and gloves. They behaved as if a wedding reception was an everyday event and we were very proud of them.

Yes, I heard about the Centennial in Chatsworth church this year. I would indeed like to go but I don't think we'll get far away from home this summer.

Russel is getting restless to get to work again and we already have most of our own garden in and most of the spring chores done. We got the storm windows off today, always a big job.

We picked up Mr. and Mrs. Pearce yesterday afternoon (Sunday) and drove out to Aidrie (about 20 miles) to visit other old-timers from Hanna. The country is not green at all yet but some of the pastures were just blue with crocuses. I couldn't resist them so we got out and picked two big bunches of them. I have two plants in our back yard but they came out earlier in here where it is sheltered so are already past their prime. The tulips are doing well but they don't grow as high as they do in Ontario.

Had a letter from Margaret this morning. They were out to Edmonton for the wedding but we were all so busy that we didn't have much time for a visit although we were all staying at the same hotel with our rooms only a few doors apart. Walter and Catherine Hemstock came out from the Peace River too. We also had a visit with Bill Pringle who lives in Edmonton with his only daughter.

How is your new granddaughter coming along? I like her name - Catherine (McClelland daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ken McClelland, Owen Sound) has always been one of my favourite names. Chris. is coming along by leaps and bounds.

It's a bit early to wish you a happy birthday but the week preceding it is a busy one for me so I think I'd better say Happy Birthday to you now - just in case I get too busy for a letter later on.

Hope you will have most of your family with you for the day.

Love to everyone but especially to you.
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Aug. 6, 1957.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Surely I have written to you since your birthday but I find a letter here dated May 29th evidently written in reply to the one I had written

earlier in the month. Since then the report of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church has come, for which many thanks. It is an interesting booklet and I enjoyed the pictures.

We had a visit from Margaret and family in June. Margaret hasn't been very well. She says that she feels so tired, everything is an effort. We expect to go up in September to take over the care of the kiddies so that she and Leo can get away for a holiday. I know I couldn't cope with them myself but Russel is a good disciplinarian. They are a very busy little trio but Doug. will be going to Kindergarten in the morning so that should help.

We haven't seen Alan and Diane since early in May. Alan is somewhere in the mountains north west of Jasper. They have had a very wet and miserable summer up there so work has gone very slowly - just four days without rain in six weeks.

Alex and Em had a busy summer. They went down to San Francisco for the Lion's Club International Convention from June 20th to July 4th and then they took the children to Gull Lake for the last two weeks of July. Alex goes to Louisiana in September for a week and he says he hopes that will be the end of his long trips for this year.

We spent a few days with friends up at Rocky Mountain House last week. They were busy haying so Russel built stacks all the time he was there. It kept Mrs. Aune and I busy getting meals and lunches ready but I enjoyed being out on a farm again. How we did sleep with the only noise an occasional bleat from a lamb and the birds in the mornings. We think we live on a quiet street but when you wake in the night there is always the roar of the city in the background even if there aren't any cars or sirens to be heard near there.

I love the hot weather and we had so little of it this year. May was nice, June cool and rainy and July was warm most of the time but we have had a great deal of rain lately with below normal temperatures forecast for the rest of the month. I have had my radiant heater on in the den several evenings.

During Stampede week this year we rented two bedrooms and had the nicest guests from Salt Lake City. There were five of them, two grandparents, their daughter and her husband and their 8 yr. old daughter. They were Mormons and had never been in Canada before. I think they were surprised to find us comparatively civilized. The old man kept saying, "you are so much like our own folks, why aren't we all one?". We had a thank- you note from the old lady this week. She hopes to live long enough to come back to Canada for another holiday. They thought Banff and Lake Louise were the most beautiful places they had ever seen.

Aug. 9th

We had visitors from Hanna, Thelma Greenwood, Mrs. Greenway, and Mrs. Binmore. We get a great deal of pleasure out of visits from our old friends.

Hope you are all well. I am hoping I can get an evening course in decorating and drapes at the Technical School this winter if I can persuade Russel to take one on woodworking. It's a bit too far and awkward to go by street car.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Sept. 25, 1957.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Your letter came this morning and we were sorry to hear that Uncle Bob is in the hospital. Hope by this time the operation is over and the worst of your worry too. We will be hoping to hear good news of him before long.

As I put down the date I realized that this is your Margaret's birthday. Give her my love and best wishes when you are talking to her.

Em and Alex celebrated their twelfth wedding anniversary on the 24th so instead of buying a gift for each other they decided to take all the family including Christopher out to a swanky restaurant for dinner. Em thinks that's a good way to teach manners to youngsters and they really do behave nicely when they are out. At home they are always within reach of the wooden spoon wielded by either one of their parents so they can't get too obstreperous, unless only their grandma is in charge.

The last week of August we spent up at Jasper with Margaret and Leo. The day we went up was a perfect day for a trip through the mountains, clear and warm. We took our time, had a picnic lunch at noon beside a mountain creek and stopped several times to see a particularly, spectacular view. Alan was in camp out at the airport about eight miles from Jasper so we saw him almost every day. I even had a ride in their helicopter, but I was glad it was rather a cloudy day and we couldn't go higher than about 600 ft.

Margaret is still not at all well, gets so tired and nervous. They are going to the coast for a week early in October and leaving the children here if they can't get someone up there to stay with them. Ruth Ward's husband is working out of Jasper on the Yellowhead Pass highway and she has offered to go up and stay with the youngsters if she can make arrangements to have someone with her dad in Banff. So I'm writing today to ask him to come and stay with us.

Russel has had a busy week, helping to thresh out north of the city at some friends. I think he found it pretty strenuous as he hasn't worked very much this summer. We are going out to Hanna soon for a few days so I suppose he will be busy there too.

Sept. 29th

I don't know what interrupted me there. Your daylight saving time will end tomorrow. We don't have it here, so the only difference is that a lot of our radio programs switch to new times and television programs are also affected. We still haven't television but I hope we can see some of the line telecasts of the Queen.

After our rather cold summer we are having a perfect autumn and how we are enjoying it! We harvested our garden yesterday and planted two dozen crocus bulbs. Margaret has an African violet called Elizabeth the Queen. It is a double mauve and the flowers are nearly two inches across. I have a leaf starting to sprout in water.

My violets are very nice but Russel doesn't like the window sills "cluttered" with flowers so I'm going to take some to the W. A. bazaar next month and keep only one specimen of my favourites.

We will be looking for a letter from you or one of the family telling us how Uncle Bob is, before long.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Dec. 18, 1957.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Just a little note tonight as it is getting late and I must get this little parcel off tomorrow as it is already overdue. My Christmas schedule

was knocked askew when Russel took the flu nearly two weeks ago. He is up today for the second day in a row, so I hope he is really over it now.

And how is Uncle Bob? Much better I hope and ready for a good Christmas dinner.

We expect to have a quiet Christmas this year with just Mr. and Mrs. Pearce here. We are looking for Alan and Diane at New Years so will have Alex, Em and family then too. Margaret and Leo are not coming out as they have had a lot of snow and ice up there and the roads are treacherous. We have so little snow left here that it looks as if it may be a green Christmas. I've only had my fur coat on once or twice and that was in early Nov.

I hope you all have a happy Christmas day.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Feb. 7, 1958.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Well we are finally having some winter weather and how everybody is grouching! Personally I am glad to see even a few inches of snow even though I have to do the shovelling this year, because everything was so dusty throughout January that I don't think it could have been very healthy.

Russel has had a bad winter so far but I think if he will just be patient and take things easy that he will be fine now. He was just beginning to feel better after the flu when he took another chill on Jan. 19th. His temperature shot up so in spite of his protests I called a doctor and he pronounced it pneumonia. He wasn't improving so they decided to take him to the General Hospital for tests and x-rays. They found the trouble was a virus infection of the liver (hepatitis). He came home last Monday. He is on a fat free strict diet and must rest in bed twelve to fifteen hours a day. He is able to eat now and seems quite contented so far to take a great deal of rest but I know time is going to hang heavy on his hands when he begins to feel better. I guess I'll have to learn to play checkers or cribbage to keep him amused. I hope Uncle Bob is a great deal better.

I was thankful that Alex was in the city when Dad was sick as he could cheer Russel up when no one else could. He left for Norman Wells, N.W.T. the day Russel came home from the hospital on some consultation work but we hope he will be home before his birthday on the 17th. I always try to have them here for that event.

Margaret was all set to have her operation for her thyroid on Jan. 24th in Edmonton but the specialist decided she was not ready for it yet so sent her home after three days in hospital, to wait at least two more months.

No, Alan and Diane didn't go back to Oklahoma and I doubt if they will. Alan quit Imperial Oil and went into a real estate office but with all the uncertainty of a new election, unemployment etc. real estate has been dearer than it has been for years. They were home for a few days at New Years.

I was so surprised at Christmas to get a nice long letter from Leola (Pearce) Cross. She lives in Hensall.

Well by now it is Sunday morning the 9th so I must finish this letter and get it away with other mail before the one o'clock pick-up.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
March 16/17, 1958.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

The top of the morning to you, come tomorrow, and I hope that you really are feeling a lot better. This attack of gall bladder inflammation must have been worse than the one you had when we were in Ontario.

Thank you for your birthday good wishes. We've never had so many cards and letters as we've had this year. Our old neighbours out Hanna way all remembered us.

Russel is feeling fairly well again but not gaining in weight as I would like. He reads till he is tired and he can hardly turn a dial on the

radio without running into a political speech. I'll be glad when he can get at the garden in the spring.

We went to a political meeting the other night when Mr. Diefenbaker spoke in the auditorium of our local high school, only a block from here. It was a real lively meeting, with just enough heckling to keep things going. Mr. Diefenbaker could handle the questions very well though and got such laughter and applause from the audience at each sally that the hecklers finally gave up. Mrs. Diefenbaker was on the platform too and looked like a very pleasant person. Douglas Harkness, who is our North Hill member is a cousin of Jessie Harkness and her brothers who lived near Annan but I believe his people came west early in the century about the time Uncle Bob Mitchell and the Hutchinsons came, which must have been about 1905 or 06. Today is our anniversary Sunday at North Hill United Church and our minister mentioned the fact that in 1902 the first Presbyterian missionary service of which there is any record, was held in a tent on the hill overlooking the river. And in 1908 a church was built in about the same spot which was the forerunner of our present church. I believe there were other churches down town before that time.

I don't think there's much family news this time. Margaret and Leo are debating the pros and cons of a job in the Dept. of National Parks in Ottawa or staying on in Jasper. Leo's parents are getting up in years (both over 70) and I think he likes to be somewhere, where he can see them two or three times a year. Margaret is feeling better on the new treatment given her by the Edmonton specialist so I hope she will be able to have her operation in the spring.

Alex was in Ottawa last week and goes again next week. He is going to a Victoria convention in April on the train.

Now, I must close. It is very chilly here today only about 2 above so we are finally getting some winter weather. Russel has kept saying March would make up for all the fine weather earlier so perhaps it will! Do hope you are better Aunt Nell,

My love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
April 18, 1958.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I was ever so glad to get your letter and to know that you are on the mend again. Those two weeks in bed would seem pretty long but I guess rest and diet are the two essentials for most ills.

I've had my turn in bed since I wrote you but not for long. I came down with some kind of rheumatism with a fever. I thought it was flu at first till my hands and feet swelled up quite badly. The doctor advised rest in bed and six to eight aspirins a day. I stayed in bed for three days and then got up to oversee the job of getting ready for visitors and have been on the go ever since. My feet are almost better and can get my shoes on again but my hands are still weak and a bit sore at times. I gave up aspirin. I would rather have a bit of pain than the grogginess it gives me.

Leo and Margaret didn't have a very good holiday as Mrs. Pearce had to have an operation so much of their time was spent at the hospital. Margaret thought she would have her own operation about May 15th. Alex and Em. leave for Vancouver tomorrow. The children will have a housekeeper and Em's mother Mrs. Keeley will drop over once in awhile to keep an eye on things. Anne has been coming over on Saturdays and gives me a hand. Her favourite job is baking.

What a lot of syrup Alex Mitchell made! Do they still have the sugar shanty out behind the barn somewhere? It's 89 cents a bottle here. The bottle would not hold any more than a pint. We have bought a lot of creamed honey this year. It is very smooth and fine. Our neighbours were so good when I was laid up and brought in either jellied salads or desserts several times so I made a batch of homemade buns this week for a change and sent some to my neighbours. They seemed to enjoy the buns for very few people bake buns, bread or biscuits in the city.

Had such a nice letter from Janet Carson. She is looking forward to a visit from May (Mrs. John Pringle of Calgary). Hope when I'm May's age (over 80) I will have courage to start out on a trip to Ontario by myself!

Apr. 20.

Since starting this letter we had a message from Leo to say that he had brought Margaret into the Edmonton hospital. The medicine she was taking for her thyroid has upset her blood count so she is to have some kind of iodized radium treatment to bring her blood back to normal. It will

be several days before they could be sure how she was re-acting to the treatment. I may go up to see her early this week as train and bus connections are very good between here and Edmonton.

I don't know what year my father went out to B.C. but I imagine it was about 1872.

Well I must see about supper. Glad Uncle Bob is so much better. Do be careful Aunt Nell of your health.

Love,

Anne.

Hanna, Alta.,
May 7, 1958.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

I know you appreciate a card more if a letter is enclosed with it so while I'm resting after a bout with the garden I'll get one started to you and then if I do get interrupted it's always easier to pick up again.

It seems a shame that Maple Grove Farm¹⁶ should go out of the Mitchell name. It's amazing that the old ox yokes were still there.

I have many African violets now and many new ones which I started for the Church bazaar as I haven't got my usual amount of sewing done.

My hands and feet are back to normal size again - almost. I still can't get my rings on so the knuckles must be a bit enlarged. I'm so thankful to be as well as I am. Russel is feeling better too and is away working at Mrs Keeley's today. He is working at her flower beds, painting her lawn furniture etc. He has another job waiting for him so will be busy for a few weeks.

We have the early vegetables in the garden so there's no hurry for the rest of it yet awhile.

I spent the last weekend in April in Edmonton with Alan and Diane. Margaret was in the University Hospital there for nine days. The Doctors decided she was still not ready for her operation but she wasn't improving any so they gave her a treatment of radio- active iodine. It must

be powerful stuff. The lab. technician who gave her the dose used lead faced gloves to measure out the teaspoonful of the liquid and mixed it in a bit of water. The dose cost \$100 as well as her hospital fees etc. I hope it does the trick. She has to report back in July, and may have to have a booster shot then.

Alan and Diane are buying a home this summer. Diane is expecting a baby in July.

Yes, I can see the Rockies if I turn in my chair right now. Once the leaves come out, we only get a peek of them from one window but we only need to walk a short distance to the edge of the hill to see them spread out around us from the south right around to the west. It always surprises me to see them so far to the south and east of the city but they curve to the S.E. just south of Calgary. Come and see them for yourself.

Love and Best Wishes,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
June 27, 1958.

Dear Aunt Nell,

We are having a lovely rain this evening after a thunderstorm earlier in the afternoon. I just hope that it turns into a general rain all over the western provinces for Sask. and Man. are hard hit by drought already. The Alberta crops especially on the western half are still in good shape but can always stand an extra shower. Anyway it makes an ideal night for writing letters. I like to hear the patter of the raindrops on the windows.

Well, we've had several unexpected visitors lately and an exciting 40th anniversary. On the 7th of June I answered the door bell and there was Bob Pringle and his wife from Regina on the doorstep. We hadn't seen them for six or seven years so it was a real thrill to have them for the week-end. Bob has been a divisional superintendent with the Sask. wheat pool for over thirty years. He is due to retire Dec. 31st of this year. He says there is nothing he would rather do than go back to Ontario and buy a small farm but Kathleen who was born and raised in the west won't hear of that so I imagine they will continue to live in Regina. Before they left on Tuesday Walter Hemstock arrived from Peace River. He was attending a Board of Trade Convention so we really didn't see much of him.

The next day was the 13th. We went to Alex's place about five o'clock to find their dining table extended to full capacity and a buffet lunch all set up. There were about twenty guests besides the family and children. It was a lovely affair and very elaborate. The gifts were beautiful and everyone was so kind it was overwhelming. The buffet supper was lovely but with all that excitement, I couldn't eat anything but some aspic salad and turkey dressing. I would like to have gone back next day and have a real feast.

The next week was just as busy for me as our W. A. group had its annual Strawberry Tea. I had sewing to finish, baking to do, and I had to be at the church at 9.30 on the Wednesday to help clean berries, home to get lunch and back at two to act as treasurer. The next day there were bills to be paid and the half yearly accounts to be made up etc. However it all turned out very well and we made \$175. clear which was very good for the oldest age group.

Sun. June 59.

It is still raining and since Friday when it started, we had over 2" of rain. Unfortunately it is not a general rain, and out Hanna way and east where they really need it, they have had just about 1/2". The garden looks very bedraggled. The flowers are bent right over with the weight of the moisture clinging to them. Dad's berries should give us a bountiful supply after this. They are just beginning to ripen. California strawberries have been lovely this year and quite reasonable from 29 cents to 35 cents a basket for nearly a month now. B.C. berries are the same price but not nearly so red or attractive looking.

How are you keeping Aunt Nell? Hope you are up to the 100 lb. mark at least. I try to keep between 110 and 115. How is Uncle Bob?

Grace (Hodgins, youngest daughter of Aunt Nell) surely must have a green thumb with African violets. I don't believe even our Mrs. Hawkins could beat that record of forty-six blooms on one plant. Have you ever had the Japanese hoyo plant? I was given one last year and this year it has at least a dozen bunches of bloom. The fragrance is very sweet, especially in the evening.

Love to you all,
As ever,

Anne,

Calgary, Alta.,
Oct. 26, 1958.

Dear Aunt Nell

I've had your letter out on my desk for nearly a week hoping to feel energetic enough to get started on it anyway. Today I do feel a bit more like trying to do something. I've had another and worse spasm of rheumatism this last two weeks and my hands are like two hot, useless clumps on the ends of my arms. Fortunately Russel is feeling better lately so he has kept things on the go and today I can see that the swelling has gone down somewhat so I hope the worst is over.

We have had a most beautiful fall so far. The nights are cold now but the days are sunshiny and warm. We were having a little holiday out at Hanna when the "rheumatiz" struck me and Russel was having such a good time that I hated to interrupt. He spent most of the days in the fields, hunting and we saw so many of our old neighbours and had such good games of Five Hundred at night that we stayed on until I was in real misery. Alex and he may go back out for a day this week but I'm staying right at home where I can have a sizzling hot bath whenever the pains get bad.

We had Alan, Diane and baby Mark here for three days at Thanksgiving. Mark is a big boy already (nearly 15 lbs.) at just over three months. He's so good and laughs and coos away at anyone who will take the time to talk to him. Russel says he's never seen a young couple so completely engrossed in a child but I guess most young people are that way over the first baby at least. They were moving into a new apartment last week. Alan has a new job with Canada Cement which he seems to like very much.

I don't know whether Margaret and Leo are planning to come out for Christmas or not.

I got some new varieties of African violets when we were out in Hanna. I find growing the violets a fascinating hobby and the little earthen pots are only seven cents. Russel says I'll be flooding the church bazaars next spring. I'd rather grow violets than buy materials and sew aprons.

Well I'm just about ready for bed. I soak my hands and feet in Epsom Salts and hot water and that gives me enough relief to get off to sleep. I hope you are all well.

Our neighbours are just back from Guelph. I picked their scarlet runner beans and froze them for the owners so Russel will have to take them over to them. It was the first time I had even eaten scarlet runner

beans and we found them very sweet and tender when picked regularly. We had our own tomatoes in abundance till this week. My they were good!

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.
Jan. 20, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I seem to have two letters of yours to answer, one as far back as Nov. 16th and the other is your Christmas card. About that time I was fighting a cold (hot lemonade and aspirin every night). I kept it down until after New Years and then went to the doctor who said it was a low grade pneumonia and sent me home to bed for a few days with lots of pills. I saw him again yesterday and things have cleared up, so now I just have a tonic. I hope I will soon feel like doing things again. Once the days start getting longer one gets ambitious. Do you remember how my mother used to watch for the first peep of the sun in our old living room on the farm¹⁷? About Feb. it used to peek over the kitchen roof in late afternoon. I amused myself one night when sleep wouldn't come and pictured each of those old rooms on the farm and their furniture. Do you remember the table Uncle Bob made to hold the shells we'd brought from Scotland? Guess I'm getting old. I used to spend the night hours thinking up new ways of rearranging the furniture in my own house but now I'm going back to childhood days.

I hope you are all well. I hear you are having lots of snow and that the snow ploughs are hard pressed to keep the roads open in places. We haven't much snow here probably about three inches came on Sunday. Russel hasn't had much shovelling so far so he's glad of that. I like to have several inches to cover the perennials. Nothing can take the place of snow, especially in the city where you have so little clean material with which to mulch plants. Today the sun is shining brightly but it's - 15 degrees outside with a cold N.W. wind blowing. Russel came in from his walk to the corner drug store with both hands over his ears, wondering where in the world his old farm cap with the ear flaps was. I didn't tell him that it had gone to the Salvation Army a long time ago. I saw one chap going past today with ear muffs on and a bare head a partly bald one at that and it did look so foolish.

Walter and Catherine Hemstock called here on the 7th of Jan. on their way to Arizona for two months. They were driving through with another couple from Fairview. At about the same time two of our neighbours left, each with their trailer behind them for Phoenix. It seems to be more popular as a winter resort than California. You will remember hearing me speak of Muriel McAuley, an old Owen Sound friend of high school days. She lives in Florida and wrote asking us to come down for January. It would be nice to get away for awhile in the winter, for in summer we think our own back yard is just as nice as any place and you hate to leave garden flowers to the care of neighbours.

So you want the names and birthdays of all my grandchildren. What a contract. I'll write them down for you and indeed I would like to have your list sometime. What do Ken and Ina call their latest for short - Betty? Our little granddaughter Elizabeth gets Betty Lou most of the time but when her brothers get angry at her, they call her Elizabeth Louse! She is a provoking wee thing to Bill and John, who are great pals, and think a girl is a nuisance. Em was up for awhile on Saturday and she left the kids in an uproar. They hadn't finished their Saturday chores of sorting and folding the week's laundry, mating socks etc. and tidying their dresser drawers. So she phoned from here to see how things were going. She said to Mary J. who answered, "Well, who is fighting now?" and Mary J. said "at the moment Mother, no one. Everything is under control". We had to laugh at Em, for that is one of her favourite expressions and I guess Mary J. imitated her to a "t". We get many a laugh out of them.

Alan is going to Montreal next week. He is with Canada Cement Co. now in Edmonton and some of their representatives in the west are being sent there for a two weeks instruction course and also to attend the annual meeting of the company. He is thrilled at the chance to go east but I don't suppose he will be able to see any of his relatives there unless he happens to be held up in Toronto for a few hours and could get in touch with his aunt Annie McElheron. Alan and Diane were here for Christmas. Their baby Mark is so cute and good natured. We certainly enjoyed having him around for a few days. Margaret and Leo didn't get down for Christmas as Patsy took the mumps on the 15th. Mr. and Mrs. Pearce and the other brother Orlin went up to Jasper and spent Christmas there so nobody was alone after all. We had Alex, Em and family here on New Years-for dinner.

I was down in the basement this morning and noticed that two of my gloxinias are already sprouted so I brought them up and Russel put fresh earth on them for me. I forgot to mark them last summer before I put them down so it will be interesting to see what colours they will turn out to be.

Now, I must write some other letters. I am away behind in my correspondence and you know if you don't write letters you don't get any, and I do love letters. Tell Rose we miss her letters.

Had you heard that Alex Pringle died in Vancouver just before Christmas? He had been in the hospital for some time recovering from an operation but evidently the shock had been too much for his system.

Love to you all,

Anne.



Family of Mr. and Mrs. Alex. Hemstock
Front Row - Chris
Second Row - Betty, Jim, Susan
Back Row - John, Mary Jane, Bill, Cathy, Anne.

Calgary, Alta.
March 9, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Had not intended to be so long in writing to you, after your nice long letter. You always have so much family news especially after Christmas when you've heard from the Chisholm and Bannerman relatives which I don't hear about otherwise and about your own family of course.

This being our birthday week-end we heard from all our family. Alan and Diane called to say Happy Birthday. We had Alex and Em for supper. After supper Mary Jane who is the family ring leader took them all to the basement and after awhile she paraded them all upstairs dressed in all the old clothes and hats she could find, herself in Dad's old fur coat and cap. They were certainly funny.

Alan had a trip to Montreal early in February. On his way back he stopped in Toronto at his Aunt Annie McElheron's¹⁸ place. She offered to drive him up to Chatsworth to see his Uncle John Hemstock but he was travelling on company and business time so he refused to go. It was fortunate he didn't go because you had one of the worst blizzards and the roads were blocked for two or three days around the old Hemstock mill.

Alex was in New York and Maryland last week but was only away four days. He went to inspect another one of those big caterpillars that Imperial Oil is buying to try out in the muskegs of the north. It will cost \$30,000. just to pay the customs and freight to Edmonton let alone the actual cost of the vehicle.

Hope your winter is on the wane now. You have had a real old-time one, haven't you? March came in with a quick blizzard here. Saturday Feb. 28 was a lovely day but we were wakened in the night by a big wind and in the morning there were two or three inches of snow. By the time we got back from church the snow was melting again under a bright sky but we've had two or three little snowfalls since, especially at night. The farmers in the Hanna district are worried over the lack of snow as there will be little run-off water to fill their sloughs and dams. They fear another dry year.

I have been getting plants started in flats ready for spring. Russel has been getting ready for spring too by building lawn chairs. He has six made now and they are very nice.

I was at a W.M.S. meeting last week where the speaker was Dr. Collins of Dondi, Angola. I spoke to him afterwards and asked him about Kate Rutherford. He knew her of course and said she was a wonderful

woman and he only wished he could find a hundred more like her as Africa could use them all. He showed us many pictures and I was amazed at how beautiful the country looked and what a fine-looking people the Umbundi were. I had a letter from Kate last week. Her term is up in 1960 but she may stay on for another year or so for she doesn't relish the thought of retirement.

Isn't it nice to have the days growing longer? We had our first supper without lights on last week. That is always a red letter day in my diary.

Hope you are all keeping well.

Love to you all,
Anne.

March 19, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

Just a short note to say thank you for the birthday gift. It was a very fine piece of hand work and I do appreciate your kindness very much.

Margaret and Leo are coming out as far as Edmonton for the 10th reunion of Margaret's class of nurses on March 25th. If weather and roads are good they may be here too. Our roads here are dry and dusty but they had snow at Edmonton yesterday so conditions may not be as favourable there.

I must get myself a camera so that I can enclose some snaps of the family. Speaking of pictures reminds me that we were invited out to a neighbour's last Friday night and they showed us on their projector pictures they took last fall in Ontario around their old home at Orangeville. The colouring of the trees was simply marvellous and made me homesick for a sight of Ontario again.

I see by tonight's papers you have had another heavy snowfall. Surely this will be the last.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.
May 5, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

We woke this morning to find the trees and shrubs all bent over under the weight of a heavy snowfall. It was raining when we went to bed and the forecaster said it might turn to snow but we didn't expect this much. We have had more snow since April 23rd than we have had all winter. That day we had about six inches (12 at Banff) of snow and then it turned cold for a few days. Scarcely had that all cleared away when we had another snow-storm on May 1st and now this! However the farmers and the forest rangers are very happy about it all for the dust was blowing as it did in the hungry thirties on the prairies and there were several forest fires already started in the tinder dry timber of the mountains. It's just the city folks who grumble. The first storm was hard on the perennials for the temperature went down to zero for a couple of nights. We had such beautiful warm weather through March and April up to that point that peonies and delphiniums were eight to ten inches high. My daffodils were just breaking into flowers so we picked all of them and they came out beautifully in the house. The perennials will come again from the roots but I doubt if many of them will flower this year.

It's still snowing and blowing but the forecaster says the storm is moving eastward. Hope you are both keeping well. I put on ten pounds during the winter so will have to do a lot of gardening to work that off.

Love and best wishes for May 12th.

Anne.

Calgary, Alta.
June 25, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

On Thursday we had a shower of rain which turned into a three day rain with over two inches recorded on Thursday. The farmers will be happy as the spring has been quite dry and windy.

I was sorry to hear of Paul Bannerman's death¹⁹. He would be about sixty years of age as I know Mitchell was younger than I. Yes, Auntie Grace will feel keenly the break in her family circle. Mitchell lived with Auntie Grace, Harold is in Cal., Arthur is in North Carolina and

Henry lives in Titusville. Am I right? Strange how in one generation you lose track of cousins.

Hope Ken's little girls are safely over the measles. They are nasty things and with a cold too, sometimes hang on. So many people out here have had the flu this spring, which seems to affect their hearing.

Calgary is a hive of industry these days getting the flags and bunting etc., up for the stampede week and the visit of the Queen. I think I'll watch the big parade on T.V. this year, unless we have visitors who want to see it.

Mrs. Pearce and I went down to watch the big Shriner's parade earlier this month. The part I liked best were the mounted sections as the horses were beautiful. Lorne and his dad would have loved them. There were about fifty jet black horses with black leather saddles bound in white and then the riders all had white spats and the horses' ankles had white spats too. Then there were palominos and chestnuts in other sections, beautifully fitted out with colours to match their riders.

It is nice that Jim, Nan and family are going to be closer. I wonder if they will like it at Whitby as well as Timmins.

We were back in Hanna for the rodeo (June 3rd) and had a wonderful time meeting old friends. It was terribly dry and dusty then but they have had good rains since then and prospects are good for crops and gardens. We were glad to get back to the greenness of our back yard after the dust of the prairies.

Love to all. Do wish we could drop in to see you one of these days, since nobody ever comes our way.

As ever,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
July 22, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

This is a wonderfully hot summer's day, just the kind I enjoy and I'm out on the back lawn, in one of Russel's chairs which have nice broad

arms for a writing pad or a plate if necessary. Our summers seem so short that I feel we should be outside every minute we can.

Well, - we have had a busy month so far in July. The Calgary Stampede always brings us a bunch of Hanna visitors and we had the house full from Wed. the 8th till the following Sunday. Dad spent most of two days down at the grounds but one day gave me enough excitement and weariness.

Alex, Em and family are at Gull Lake for the month of July. Russel has a very nice garden this year. The tomatoes are heavily loaded and he has one squash on the way.

Thank you for the snap of your grandchildren, Glenna (McClelland, wife of Hedley Thompson, Walkerton) and Margaret (McClelland Maich). I can't tell who they resemble. Patty (Margaret's daughter) says when you ask her whose girl she is - "Just mine own girl Patty Pearce". So each one is a very distinct little personality. Jim's boys are husky lads.

Hope Uncle Bob is feeling better these warm days.

Love to you all,

Anne.

Calgary, Alta.
Sept. 6, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

This is a real day for letters, cold and windy with the occasional squall of rain. I hadn't noticed that many of the leaves were turning yellow but this wind has started them falling and every once in awhile a regular cloud of them sails up the street. I hate to think of autumn being upon us for with the unusually cold and rainy August it seems as if we've scarcely had any summer.

Well I think the most important news is the arrival of a new grandson at Alan and Diane's. His name is Bruce Gregg. His birthday was Sept. 3.

We had a pleasant visit out at Hanna on Aug. 16 and 17. The W.I. put on a picnic especially for the old timers who had been in the district fifty years or more. Russel qualified as a fifty year man as he had

gone in, in the fall of 1909 with Walter, his brother. Walter bought land in that district (about two miles from where we live) that fall and then Russel homesteaded on our place the following spring. The guests came from New Westminster B.C. Calgary and Edmonton.

After supper the program was broadcast by remote control by the radio station at Drumheller. So they have a record of the speeches made by the oldest man there, and the one by the first baby born in the district who is now a grandmother and still lives within a few miles of her birthplace. It was a wonderful day. We stayed overnight at the Greenwoods and then called on some old neighbours who weren't well enough to be at the picnic on our way home the next day. Russel had hoped to go out this month for some duck hunting but he has had a cold and hunting would not improve his cold. There weren't many ducks around as sloughs were dry when we were there but it has rained so much since then, that conditions may have changed considerably. Perhaps we can go later on.

You seem to be having troubles with the weather too - making haying difficult. The farmers out here are in bad shape now, so much grain in the swath and just as it gets nearly dry down comes some more rain. After the dry summer it is most aggravating. Russel thinks we need a heavy frost to clear the air. We had a touch the other night so my dahlias and nasturtiums are gone.

Lovingly,
Anne

Calgary, Alta.,
Sept 13, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

We were so sorry for you all when we heard of Uncle Bob's death - the first break in the family circle.

October 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

We have been wavering whether to go east or west for a few weeks. The west finally won out chiefly because Margaret and Leo are going to drive out later in the month and we will plan on coming home with them. We hope to go to Edmonton in the morning and spend the Thanksgiving week-end with Alan and Diane and then go on to Victoria.

I did want to go to Ontario to see you and the family and Russel says he will send me off later but I'm not much for travelling alone. However we will see.

Have I written to you since our new granddaughter arrived on Sept. 17. Her name is Susan Janet. Alex and Em brought her up last night to see us before we leave on our trip. They had no housekeeper when Em was in the hospital so Russel and I were there on and off for a week. The kids were awfully good though and we enjoyed being with them.

Our poor Alberta families are in a bad way. Such a fall! They get two or three days of nice weather and then a week of dull showery days.

As ever lovingly,
Anne.

Calgary, Alta.,
Nov. 1, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

When we got home from our travels I found a letter from Rose waiting for me saying that you were not well. I hope Rose will keep me posted on how you are but I do think of you so often. I wish now that we had gone east instead of west.

To me the highlight of our visit was an evening with Jim and Wilda Mitchell²⁰. They came to visit us at Mrs. Small's place. Wilda's sister Ellen had been visiting them this summer. She is having her 70th birthday soon and as Wilda said, is almost as white and small as Aunt Nell.

We went to Victoria by bus and went to see the Butchard Gardens. There the gardeners were pulling up asters and zinnias in full bloom in order to get their tulips and daffodils planted. They had a whole greenhouse full of begonias. I feel as if my little ones aren't worth bothering with any more. Next to Calgary I think Victoria would be a wonderful place to live.

While at White Rock we took the train to Bellingham Wash. and visited a cousin of Russel's whom he hadn't seen since he was fifteen and she was nineteen. They live on a small farm in a valley between two mountain ranges. She says that even in summer the sun goes down behind the mountain about five o'clock. Right now it goes about 3.30 p.m. and they have a long twilight. It seemed a dreary place to me but they love it and raise apples and pears also all sorts of small fruits very successfully. From White Rock we went to Pitt Meadows in B.C. where Mrs. Wickson²¹ lives. She was my first and nearest neighbour when we were first married but she has lived in B.C. since 1928 and can't understand why anyone would ever live anywhere else. My rheumatism began acting up there as it is a very low altitude and very damp. In fact they have built huge dikes along the rivers to keep the floods back in the spring. A great many Hollanders, who have come to various parts of Canada have gradually drifted into that district and they have great success in growing gardens of flowers and fruits on that slightly sour soil.

From there we went on to Jasper to visit Margaret and Leo for three days. Leo drove us around to various places including the big fish hatchery. It's very strange how the fish get to know the curators of the building. When a stranger walks up the aisles they will swim frantically up and down their troughs seeking shelter under the screens etc. but the curators can walk in and they won't move. The man who showed us around, thinks that they recognize the step of the curator or his voice but no one knows exactly.

We got home in time to greet expected Hallowe'en visitors. We usually have perhaps two dozen callers but not one child appeared. We have a supply of peanuts, gum, etc. to do our grandchildren from now till Christmas.

I will write again very soon Aunt Nell, and our thoughts and prayers will be going your way very often.

Love to all the family,

As ever,

Anne.



Bruce and Brenda Watson, Leo, Margaret, Sharon, Doug Pearce
Patty Hemstock in front



Mr. and Mrs. Alan Hemstock and Family.
Front Row - L. to R. Heather, Sharon, Rob.
Back Row - Mark, Bruce, Mrs. Diane Hemstock, Mr. Alan Hemstock

Nov. 9, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

There has been no word from Rose this week so I hope that means you are feeling better. I think it takes me awhile to get adjusted after a holiday and into the swing of things again.

This was a busy week at the church. The W.A. had its big bazaar on Wed. p.m. Our group of older women had a sewing and novelty booth and made around \$180. The sum total for all five or six groups was just over \$1000. Usually most of it is used on repairs to the manse or new appliances for the minister's wife but this year our Christian Education leader, a layman, has bought a home so we are going to help him with some of the furnishings. Both he and his wife are a wonderful help among the young people of the church who are usually harder to interest in church affairs than the older people or children.

We had a seven-inch fall of snow last Tuesday after a few stormy days but it turned warm again and the snow is almost gone by now. It made the atmosphere very damp so I nursed my rheumatism by staying inside.

I think the worst of the attack is over now but my hands are still stiff and numb. They'll have to limber up if I'm going to get all the knitting I have planned on, ready by Christmas.

We were down at Alex's for supper last night. Susan Janet is a dear wee baby and so good. Did you know that they have a Diaper Service in Edmonton. The Diaper Laundry owns all the diapers and just rents them out. What next will they think of, I wonder?

Russel helped me with a big washing this morning so I'll have to get it in and folded soon as dark clouds are rolling down from the north and the forecaster warned us at noon that another Arctic front is approaching. Russel has his vegetables up now. He keeps them in a pit near the house as vegetables won't keep in our basement. We put them in plastic bags and bring them in as we heed them.

Now I do hope there will be a letter from someone this week to say that you are better Aunt Nell.

Our poor farmers out here are no further ahead than they were in early Sept. Cattle prices are slumping badly too as they are selling so many cattle that they haven't feed for.

Love to you all and a special bit for you Aunt Nell,

As ever,
Anne.

Nov. 16, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

I was so glad to get a letter last week and hear that you were a little better.

Well, we are having a really cold spell, The high for yesterday was -12° with a bitter wind from the north. We didn't go out to church at all but listened to a Mr. Timothy Tam of Hong Kong speak from Central United Church. I do wish they would put a church service on over T.V. especially on winter Sundays when so many elderly people can't get out. I had planned to go to Central United Church at night because a Professor Kapinala of Dondi was to be the chief speaker. He spoke in Wesley Church in the morning. So after the service Alex went over and spoke to him and told him that he was a relative of Kate's. He was so pleased to meet Alex and said how much they all loved and respected Kate. Alex was going to take us to the service at night so we went over there for supper. However our plans didn't mature for during supper a nurse phoned from the hospital to say that Anne (who was to have an operation on her eyes this morning) was feeling very much upset and wanted to see her mother and dad. So Russel and I stayed with the children while Alex and Em went to the hospital to see Anne. Alex brought us home. Anne was feeling fine again when Alex and Em left the hospital. I had the fun of getting little Susan Janet ready for bed yesterday evening. Em has so many pretty little dresses for her and keeps her so immaculate. The other youngsters all love her and usually her forehead has a spot of something, candy, jam or even potatoes where somebody has planted a kiss.

Russel is away sweeping the walks as there was quite a wind yesterday. I'm just wondering how I am ever going to get my Christmas

shopping done if this cold weather persists for my rheumatism is certainly not improved by going out in the cold.

Love to all the family with a specially big bit to you Aunt Nell.

As ever.

Anne

Nov. 27, 1959.

Dear Aunt Nell,

I am glad to know that my little Auntie is on the mend again.

There doesn't seem to be much to write about since my rheumatism is pretty well keeping me static. This week the doctor changed my pills but I don't think they are giving me as much relief as the plain old aspirin so I'll go back to it when they are finished.

The Christmas decorations are very beautiful. The street car system puts on special buses for about ten nights before and after Christmas for people to see the decorations. Alex usually takes us around the north part of the city.

I am setting up my Christmas office in the den today. I get out the card table, a dining room chair, arrange my pile of unanswered letters, my new cards, stamps etc. and go to it. I do love our Christmas mail.

I've had the materials for my Christmas cake and puddings on hand for some time now but my mixer quit on me so I guess I'll have to wait until I can get Russel on the end of a big spoon some of these days.

Love to you all,

As ever,

Anne.

Dec. 11, 1959

Dear Aunt Nell, -

It was a real treat to find a letter²² in your handwriting on our doorstep. It told me you were feeling a bit better anyway. Since then I

have letters from several in the east who have said they hear you are improving slowly, so keep up the good work.

I had an appointment with the doctor at two so Dad took me down. The traffic was terrific so finally Russel drove as close as he could to the doctor's office and let me off while he went to find a parking place. I was waiting downstairs when Russel finally came. Then the fun started over again. I walked as far as I could then waited until he could go and pick up the car. We had planned to do some shopping but were thankful to get out of the down town district and back home. It was lucky we hadn't gone shopping as Alan was here when we got back and had only an hour to stay. They have bought a house in Edmonton and will be moving into it at the first of the year but hope to be with us for a few days before Christmas.

I'm sending you a little book under separate cover Aunt Nell.

As ever,
Love
Anne.

Jan. 5, 1960

Dear Aunt Nell,-

Well, all is very quiet again on this home front and although we enjoyed all the fuss and excitement, we are glad to have it quiet again. Russel has had an extra sleep both morning and afternoon just to make up for not getting his usual naps. We should soon be caught up, for although, I can't sleep in the day time I do enjoy getting to bed shortly after ten o'clock, and we kept midnight hours while the company was here.

My rheumatism is still on the go but I have been going down to my old doctor for vitamin shots and they seem to be giving me a bit more strength. Once the days start to get longer I always feel better.

It's lovely to see everybody at Christmas but it's nice to have things back to normal again, with plain bread and butter and roast beef instead of turkey and pudding.

We have had seven or eight inches of snow tying up traffic in the city streets so we are glad the good weather lasted over the holidays.

Love to you all,
Anne.

Jan 12, 1960.

Dear Aunt Nell, -

Your family has done so well in the matter of letters this week that I must get right down to business and answer them.

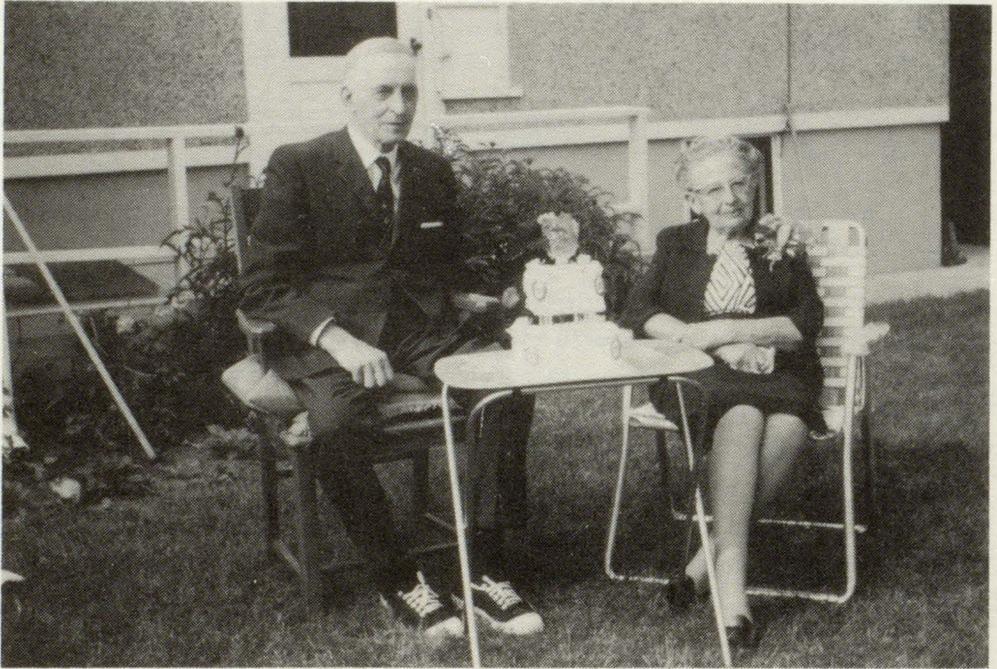
We have been pretty quiet since Christmas. We have been out visiting friends on several occasions.

Leo took us out for a drive one night to see the lights. One of the prettiest places was the Brewery Gardens. In one corner they had Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. In another, Santa saying good-bye to Mrs. Santa and getting into the sleigh with the reindeer. The main part of the Garden was Mother Goose with all her children arranged around an old mill wheel that kept turning and flashing coloured lights. Margaret's (Hemstock Pearce) kiddies surely enjoyed it all but it would have been so much prettier if there had been snow on the ground. You couldn't help but notice the dusty dry old grass.

Well I've got my Christmas cards all arranged in three piles, relatives, out of town friends, and city folks so I guess I'd better go and make the lists. What lovely cards there were this year, and isn't it a shame that they are appreciated so little.

Russel is ready to go down to the mail box, so I must close.

Love to you all,
Anne.



Mr. and Mrs. Russel Hemstock on their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary 1968.

Jan 25, 1960.

Dear Aunt Nell,-

I was glad to get a letter on Saturday and hear that the nurse was with you again. It's so nice to have company especially on a cold winter day. I was thinking of you and decided I could do a bit of visiting myself - by pen - this afternoon. For once Russel hasn't got the T.V. on. The new

Readers' Digest came on this morning's mail and he has been engrossed in it ever since.

There doesn't seem much news from this corner of the world. We did get out to church yesterday morning for there was the promise of a chinook and warm weather for awhile yesterday. By night it was snowing again and another Arctic front was moving in on us. Tonight our church is having a Burns night supper with the Haggis piped in by a real Scotchman - a recent immigrant from Scotland but Russel doesn't like driving even that distance at night so we'll just have to enjoy the various Scotch programs that are to be on radio and T.V. tonight.

This week I started a series of therapy treatments given by the Calgary Arthritic Society at the General Hospital. I have two hours a week with them and am supposed to do exercises at home for at least an hour a day.

Our first new seed catalogue came this morning. There are so many new varieties, but in a small garden space you can't try too many experiments so I guess I'll rely on my old favourites, sweet peas, petunias, pansies and nasturtiums. Russel will probably be doing most of the gardening this year.

Well the afternoon is waning and I must see about supper. I do hope that you are feeling better Aunt Nell.

Lovingly yours,
Anne.

**This was the last letter that Anne wrote to Aunt Nell.
Aunt Nell died in February, 1960.**

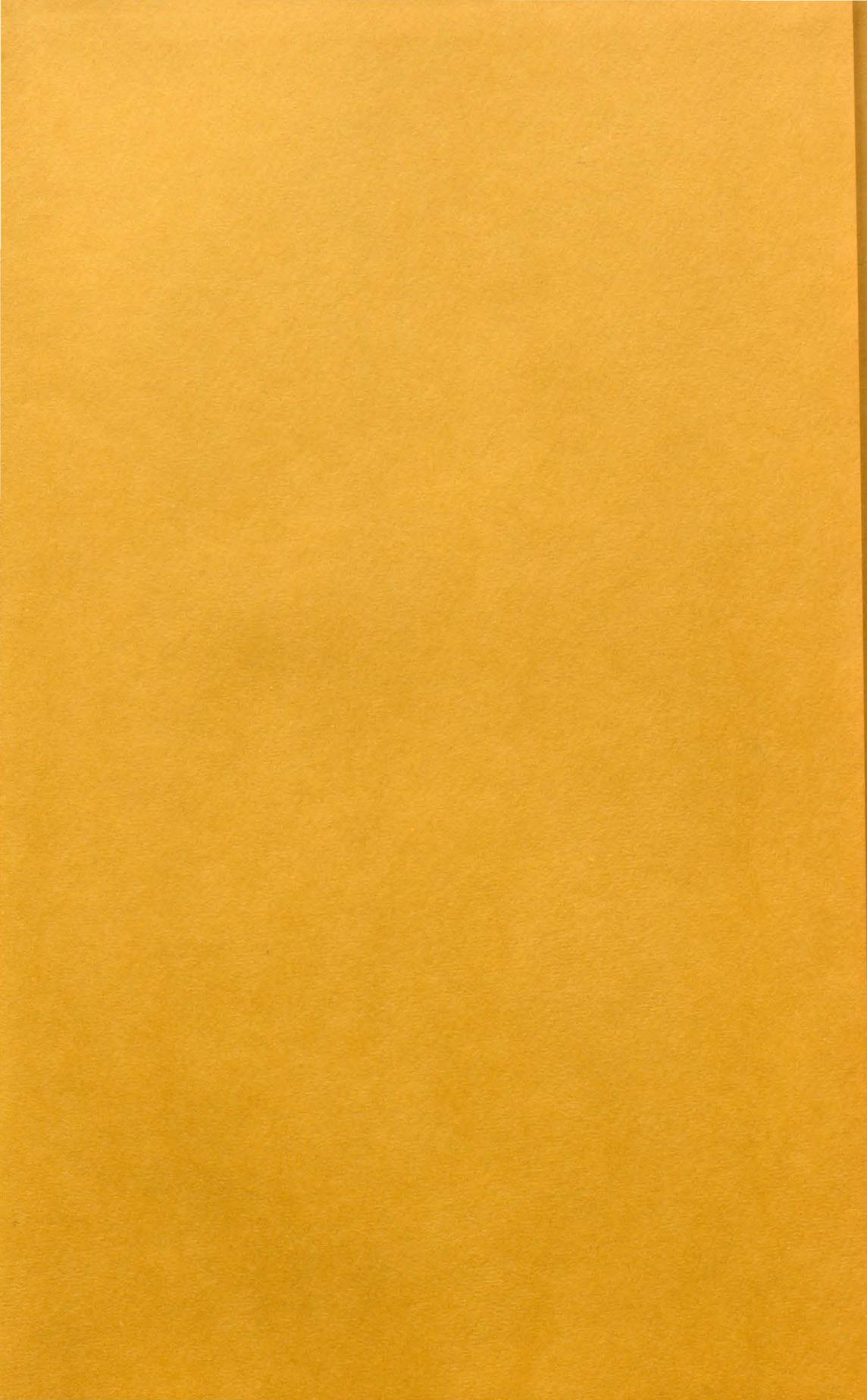
Dust storms and tumbleweeds are still a part of prairie life. Dry prairie winds still sweep over the land but everything else has changed. Only the precious memory of one little pioneer mother will live on in the hearts of her family and friends forever.

Faint, illegible text at the top of the page, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lorne McClelland. Dr. Middlebro Sr. saved Lorne's arm. The arm was badly hurt in a cutting box accident.
2. Kate Rutherford - daughter of Malcolm, Leith, Ont. was a missionary in Angola, Africa for many years.
3. Grace Oium was an elementary teacher who lived in Owen Sound for many years.
4. Rev. W.S. Bannerman was a missionary in Africa. He married Grace Mitchell (sister of Aunt Nell).
5. Francis Baird Morrison was a teacher who lived in the Chatsworth and Tara Areas.
6. Dr. Thomson attended the O.S.C.V.I. He graduated from University of Toronto and at Harvard was awarded a Townsend Fellowship. Dr. Thomson joined the Carnegie Institute in Washington D.C. and became a mathematical aide to Thomas Edison. In 1973 he was made first life member of the Canadian Meteorological Society.
7. James C. McClelland, Oshawa, Ont.
8. Agnes McGill was married to Dr. Wm. Henry Collins of Chatsworth, Ont. He was a director of the Geological Survey of Canada. In 1933 he became president of the Geological Survey of Canada.
9. Tom McClelland joined the navy.
10. Kenneth McClelland joined the air force.
11. Teachers' College student.
12. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. S. Bannerman, missionaries in Africa and Alaska.
13. Lorne McClelland, who passed away in 1979, eldest son of Aunt Nell.
14. Cemetery at the Chatsworth United Church where many Mitchell relatives are interred.
15. Miss Frances Pritchard was a "household science" teacher at the O.S.C.V.I.

16. Maple Grove Farm - Home of James R. Mitchell one mile west of Chatsworth.
17. Sandy and Belle Pringle Farm where Anne was born.
18. Annie and Neil McElheron lived west of Chatsworth for many years.
19. Paul Bannerman had been business administrator for the Glen Gardener Sanatorium until he retired. He was a veteran of W.W.1 and a member of the American Legion post of High Bridge. He was born in Clifton Springs, N.Y.
20. Jim Mitchell spent his youth in Vancouver. Wilda Fraser Mitchell was born in the Chatsworth area. They both passed away in White Rock, B.C.
21. Mrs. Wickson was a very dear friend of Anne's who helped her understand pioneer prairie life.
22. This was the last letter Aunt Nell wrote to Anne.





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