

(From letter from Sarah to FIP re family history)

I was born in Packwaukee, Wis., on April 13, 1970. I was the third child and the oldest girl born to Isaac and Jane Pickering. We lived on a small farm. My first recollection was of standing by my mother's knee and she was trying to teach me my A B Cs. She got disgusted with me and told me I never would know anything. I never forgot it. Not long after I started school I caught up with my brother who was two years older and when in the higher grades I would sit up until 11 o'clock, working examples, my father helping me as he was Town Clerk at that time. My brother would go to bed and sleep and in the morning he would ask me how I worked the problems. I would tell him and he would get as good a grade as I. We walked $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to school, and in the winter sometimes going up on the Lake (Buffalo Lake) when it was frozen as it was nearer that way.

I enjoyed going to the woods near the school in the spring of the year and gather winter greens that were so nice and tender. (I would like to gather some again) I also remember picking Blue berries and Huckle berries and selling them to earn some money and also to eat with sugar and cream. One day while picking berries I got a sunstroke. When I came too I was home in bed.

Our house was on one side of the road and the barn yard on the other. My father had oxen for a team. We would have to start so early to go anywhere and on our way home we children would sit in the bottom of the wagon box on some hay covered up with blankets and go to sleep until we got home, then we had to wake up and keep moving to keep warm until the fire got warm.

Buffalo Lake was about a quarter mile from our barn yard. The Indians used to camp on our land by the lake and fish and trap. One night some of the young Indians came up to our barn yard and we children were out there. They talked in their language and my brother, to be smart, jabbered something back at them. She answered back so he got scared because he did not know what she said. Steamboats ran past our house on the lake. Grandma (Metcalf) would walk to the bank of the lake and holler and Ma would answer; then go after Grandma in the row boat.

Father had sheep. He would shear the sheep, take the wool to the mill to have it carded, then my mother would spin it into yarn. Then we children learned to knit our stockings.

The spring I was 12 years old we moved to South Dakota. Father had 160 acres, a claim which seemed very large to us. I worked out by the week most of the time. We did very well until the day hot winds spoiled the crops. Then the awful hail storm that broke my father financially. I did not go to school any more, altho I would have like to. For that reason I have worked hard to get my children thru school. We attended Sunday School at Fairview, driving the ox team. There I met a young man by the name of George Knapp. I worked where he boarded, fell in love with him, and was married Jan. 18, 1885. I believe I had one of the best husbands ever lived. We had 160 acres of land in Miner County and got along fairly well financially. We burned hay, swamp hay, twisted together about the length of stove wood. That was not so bad, but hay got scarce; then we had a sheet iron boiler, which we would pack full of flax straw and turn it bottom side up on the front of the stove, removing the front griddles. It was poor fuel, it would puff out and fill our eyes with smoke and ashes and you could not keep warm if the weather was very cold.

Alize was born Jan. 1, 1887, in very cold weather, when we were burning flax straw in one of those boilers. It's a horrid nightmare. Later we traded our claim for one in Hansen County but crops failed so we sold out and went to Illinois; then to Colorado. The last few years we were on the farm we burned coal. "Dakota does not look good to me".