

Ym night letters  
little  
I'm destroying  
some letters etc

Chinook  
July 26, '11

Dear Mamma:-

Since my last letter all of our crops have been hurt by drought. It was still raining when I wrote you but the rain stopped almost immediately before it had amounted to much and very hot weather set in. Since then we have had some rain but only a small part of what we need. The grain now is ripening prematurely. It looks as if we wouldn't have any heavy rain for some time. If it rains very soon we will have a small oat crop but if it delays we will likely get less than a fourth of a crop. The wheat will be from a third to a half a crop.

Unless we have heavy rains this fall our prospects for next year will be very poor as it takes two years moisture to make a big crop. The way it looks now we will have a losing proposition on our hands with this summer fallow we have rented though it would have paid us if it had been wet.

This district is showing up very favorably this year in comparison with the rest of the prairie provinces. There are small localities here and there where prospects are fair but as a whole the wheat crop will be very small. The timber belt 100 miles north of us never suffer from lack of rain

but in a normal year get too much for wheat as the grain grows too rank and doesn't ripen before frost which comes early in those districts. A man came in to Chinook from Winnipeg the other day and said we had the best crops all the way. Also people coming from Calgary have told us the same. In the Medicine Hat district south of us 40 miles to the boundary there will scarcely be an acre of grain cut this year. Some homesteaders come through here recently driving over land from Regina <sup>(Kankatchewan)</sup> and they said there was not any crop till they got within thirty miles of here.

Mr. Rolinger at Gleichen who last year had wheat yielding fifty bu. to the a. and oats yielding 141 bu. to the a. writes that this year he has 180 acres that will be too short to cut, headed out at from 6 inches to one foot high. He expects to have some pretty good wheat and barley on his summer fallow however.

It is going to be almost impossible to raise any money in this country this fall, almost ~~no~~ work for threshing and all kinds of people wanting jobs. If there are any good districts people will flock to them for work. North of us one hundred miles there has been plenty of rain but how much work will be there is a question. That is a country of small farmers who have more diversified farming due to its being rather ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> raise grain there because of frost.

There will be lots of cheap horses this fall as many were bought "on time" this spring and must be paid for this fall.

However there will be almost no buyers. We have been trying to sell a team or Duke or a pony but it doesn't seem possible.

As to meeting our obligations this fall. Mr. Meade will allow the \$100 we owe on Duke to run. I guess we will have to find the money to pay for Buchanan's team or he borrowed money on our note as collateral. That amounts to nearly \$300 including the interest. Mr. Hillis will have to wait for his money I am sorry to say. Then our bail insurance and a loan of \$50. at the bank amount together to about \$200 nearly. Our life insurance policy will take \$200 more. I don't know what we will do about our taxes but they have to be paid. We have to meet a number of machine notes amounting to over \$300 but we will have to let most of these run though if we do we must pay 10% besides getting the life pledged out of us by collection agents. These machine companies are very unlikely to take drastic measures but they will attempt to secure the life out of a person. Then we have our mortgage payments to make total \$160 with \$50 principal on mine which however they likely not make me pay. There are a number of other bills we must meet besides our current expenses. We will need new clothes for winter. I have scarcely a rag to my name either for good wear or for working.

We can prove up on our preimptions now any time as the law has been changed. Selden owes about \$275 before

he can get full title while I owe about \$5.00. Interest on these amounts are only 5% so we are in no hurry to pay up.

The garden is very nice this year in spite of the drought. We just live on garden stuff and eggs. People who do not understand "dry farming" haven't gardens worth looking at. We have fine big <sup>some</sup> table beets, as big as my two fists. I never saw nice lettuce both early leaved and straight. I believe the straight is Los lettuce and the outside leaves are as <sup>long</sup> as this sheet of paper and the inside one are blanched a beautiful yellow and very crisp and sweet. The potatoes look fine but are late the biggest of them being smaller than hen's eggs. We have onions from seed bigger than marbles. The carrots are our main standby and are very sweet and crisp being milder I believe than those grown in the east. Our peas and string beans amount to almost nothing not because of drought but because the rabbits keep them eaten down to the ground. There are more rabbits on our place than for miles around due to my little plot of alfalfa. We have killed a few but they are no good to eat now and will be splendid in the late fall when they are fat from eating grain.

The gophers destroy quantities of grain this weather. They get no drinking water even dew for weeks at a time and so they must eat the juiciest forage they can get which

is at this time the juicy kernels of the green wheat and oats. They stand on their hind legs and pull down a wheat stalk till it breaks and take out a few kernels then attack another stalk. Earlier in the year they mow off the ground in spaces rods wide where they take one or two bites out of the center of the stalks where it is very juicy. They can scarcely be induced to eat poison at this time of the year as they prefer the grain but we poisoned many this spring. They come in from quite a distance to the green fields. They attack short grain much worse than long and small fields much worse than large.

I guess we have nearly 50 young chickens. Our first hen hatched pretty well but this last week or more I have been away flowing leaving Selden here. He wasn't very well acquainted with the hens with the result last week six hens left their nests to undertake the care of altogether ~~ten~~ chickens. They left nests full of eggs some with live chicks in them, some not ready to hatch for over a week. Two hens are caring for one chick. Each hen is so jealous of the other that when the chick goes under one the other tries to shove

till she gets the chick under her own wings. I guess they shove all night. Neither one of the hens is willing to leave the chick far enough to get it to follow as the chick leads the way the two old hens clucking and ruffling up their feathers. When one finds a dainty morsel and clucks to the chick the other rushes up and scratches like wild meantime clucking encouraging as to her ability to find a more delicious bug or weed seed. I'm afraid so much attention will tend to spoil the chick.

Willie.

Uncle wants to bore a well for us and we need one very badly. He offers to wait for his money till next fall. The lumber for the well will cost us maybe \$50.00. I guess we will get the well bored as he intends selling his machine and it may be difficult to get a machine to come in here later as all our neighbors have wells.