

GEORGE WILLIAM PRATT

George W. Pratt son of George and Rebecca Pratt was born June 8, 1838, in Tipperary, Queen's County, Ireland.

His parents came from Ireland to Ontario Canada, where they settled and took up a small farm.

Upon hearing what a wonderful country North Dakota was he took his family and came here, where he expected to make a better home for them. George came with his family to North Dakota on March 25, 1881.

Of this trip and the impression of the country his daughter relates:

"There was much excitement disposing of those things which they did not wish to take along. Having completed everything, a neighbor came along with his team and took them to Clinton Ontario where they were to take the train for North Dakota.

There were hundreds on that excursion train, many of them old neighbors. Of course families took provisions along, and comforts such as pillows etc. to try and make their families comfortable. Nevertheless a jolly time seemed to be had by everyone.

One thing happened which was not very pleasant and caused great excitement for a few minutes. The youngest son, then about three years old, knowing his sister had climbed up to get the comb to comb her curls, when she got down the lad was nowhere to be seen, no one could find him. His mother was about to pull the rope to stop the train, fearing he had gotten through the door and fallen off, when his sister noticed him crawl out from under a seat with a broad grin on his face.

Finally we reached the city of Fargo, which was quite small then. Some of the husbands who came to meet their families seemed to be

erying and could scarcely look at them. When inquiring it was found that they were snow blind, this was caused by the glare of the hot sun on the snow.

We were met by a relation from what now is known by the Gardner neighborhood with a team and sleigh with a small green rack on it. We got started after packing all in, and it was full to old and young, on a thirty mile trip. That trip will never be forgotten by some of that family. The country seemed just a vast waste of land, with a building to be seen here and there.

With getting upset, some getting out to run to keep warm, we eventually arrived at this man's house by night. He kept saying see that light yonder, "Well that is our destination for tonight". This light looked like a star in the heavens a million miles away. They housed about eighteen with themselves that night, on the floor or any place to lay one down. They were asked many a time if this was the great country they had heard so much about. The next day, they were taken about eleven miles further on to the village of Quincy at the mouth of the Elm and Red River, as this was near the quarter of land he had purchased the previous year. They rented a building and had a grocery store and never moved on the land as it proved too wet. A trip was made to Griggs County and land was taken up in the township 140 and range 99.

He finally moved with his family in 1883, to a small place called Cottonwood sixteen miles northwest of Cooperstown. There was no post office, only in a private home of Henry F. Clark. The mail was then carried from Hannaford to Jessie then up to Cottonwood and Harrisburg at Stump Lake. The trip was made by the mail carrier up one day and back the next.

The first home was a frame building and a sod barn. It was a long

trip to town thirty-two miles round trip, to get what was wanted, although there was a chance to get a few of the necessities of life at two farmers homes about five miles distance.

The near neighbors were Ole Alfson, Jens Tinglestad, Ole Anderson, Charles Johnson, Hans Miller and Ezra W. Haggerty.

The early farm teams were the oxen and horses. The machinery were the walking plows, seeders, harrow, and binders. The principal crops grown were wheat, oats, and barley. They usually went from thirty-five to forty bushels to the acre. The price being from thirty to fifty cents per bushel.

The early fuel was gotten along the banks of the Sheyenne river. The trees were bought cut down, the limbs taken off them and hauled home, six miles, split and sawed them about March and piled so to dry and make satisfactory for burning.

The greatest hardships seemed to be in the long trips to town, as they had to leave about daylight in order to make the trip in in good time, to get horses stabled, and fed. This means with a load one way as horses had to walk most all the time, up hill and down. Then again in these winter trips, sometimes it would come on a storm and they would be three days making the trip, as it was only a trail across country, and the temperature forty degrees below zero. The women folks quite often doing chores the best they could and worrying lest the men would be frozen on the wild prairies. Although we never went hungry, and still had some good times nevertheless.

George William Pratt was married to Mary Jane Hamilton in 1859 near Goderich Ontario. The descendants of the pioneer were Ann Jane Pratt, her married name Mrs. Alex Nical, whose home was at Grandin, North Dakota, but is now deceased, Rebecca Alma later Mrs. Thomas Elliott now living at Grandin, N. Dak. Robert Hamilton living at Cooperstown, North Dakota, Margaret Ida Pratt living at 1101 4th

Ave. South, Fargo, North Dakota, George Albert of Cooperstown, N. Dak. now deceased, Aphra Frances later Mrs. Fred Cannon of McHenry, N. Dak. and William James Leslie deceased.

George W. Pratt died January 25, 1912, near Quincy, North Dakota and was buried in the quincey cemetery.