

A Pioneer.

Mr. & Mrs. James Bartron II were the names of my grandparents.

James Bartron II was born Oct. 30, 1834 in Potter county, Pa. near Athens.

He was married to Sarah Hulet near Winterburn.

He spent his boyhood and youth in this vicinity working on a farm and in different lumber mills. After his marriage he lived in Baltimore and also Williamsport superintending different saw mills in which fine lumber was made. Mr. & Mrs. Bartron were active in the city life of Baltimore and it was while here he ^{was} made a Knight Templar.

Hearing of obtaining land in the west by meeting certain small requirements he determined to gain some for himself and ^{his} growing sons.

So he left his wife and children in Waverly, New York and struck out for the west, going by rail to Bismarck.

at that time the railroad extended to Dickinson. He arrived in Bismarck April 1, 1882. The trip was made by team to Coal Harbor, McLean Co sixty five miles north of Bismarck.

Five miles north of Coal Harbor this pioneer erected a log shack in township 147, section 11, range 84, and lived here alone three years.

The shack was of logs and the roof of split poles & sod. All poles & logs were secured from the woods along the Missouri River which was just a few miles distant.

The family of this pioneer arrived in Bismarck in February, 1885 on a cold bleak day. The ground was covered with snow and huge ice ^{icicles} cycles hanging from the water wagons was quite a decided change from the mild climate of New York where green grass could be seen from under the snow, the pioneer's family felt this change keenly.

II

The trip to the homestead north of Coal Harbor was made by three horses hitched to a covered wagon. The family endured intense suffering from the cold though stones were heated to keep them warm. It took several days to make the trip, driving a certain distance each day.

This home to which this pioneer brought his wife, four sons, and one girl was located on the prairie where one could look miles and miles and see nothing but a rolling prairie with not a tree in sight.

In order to have groves on these prairies the government gave the homesteaders a certain number of acres if they would plant tree claims. Year after year the pioneer, wife and five children would plant small trees and the hot winds and drought would come and burn them all and not a patch of trees could be seen on any of the prairie.

For a season or two, the men worked in a small sawmill on the river, and as carpenters making lumber from cottonwood, which was sold to the pioneers for shacks.

^{James Barton #}
This pioneer was superintendent of Fort Stevenson for a while, having been appointed by the Indian agent at Fort Berthold to oversee the Indian school that was organized by the government at Fort Stevenson (which the soldiers had recently abandoned).

In that locality, to gain a large head of horses was the ambition of each homesteader and there were always lots of cowboys to break the bronchos. The pioneer's wife often remarked that she always had more cowboys to feed than her own family. In those days it was an unwritten law that all strangers were welcome at mealtime.

While there was an Indian school at Fort Stevenson, medicine & doctors were easily gotten which made it so

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convenient for the settlers.
Major Gifford, Le Reaux, and C. A. Burton
were the other superintendents at the
Fort and C. A. Hall had Fort Berthold in
charge. Later the Indians - Rees & Gros
Ventre - were removed to Elbow-Woods
from Fort Berthold. Mr Hall's son is
still there.

The Indians were frequent
visitors to the homestead, always beg-
ging for something to eat. The Pioneer's
wife, though never really afraid of
them, yet had their former atrocities
in her mind & would give them
almost anything she had, such as loaves
of bread, & large pieces of pork or beef.

One night a small band of Indians
camped in the yard and they begged
to have one of ~~the~~ dogs. The boys
reluctantly gave the dog to the Indians
and the mother of the boys asked what
the Indians did with the dog. One of the
boys said, "The last I saw of the dog
a rope was put around its neck and

there was an Indian at each end of
the rope pulling"

"Oh! dear! the mother said, with horror,
"Are they going to eat it tonight?"

Venison was always easily secured
as living so near the woods a great
many deer were killed. At one time
there were seven deer hanging up
all dressed. There were no buffalo to be
seen at this time although they were
still numerous farther west near
Dickinson but their bones were found
all over the prairies & Indian arrows
could be found several in a day, as
these were what the Indians had
killed the buffalo with.

Large herds of beautiful, fleet antelope
could be seen but were very seldom
killed as they roamed on the prairies
and were very hard to get near enough
to shoot them. For several summers
picking up buffalo bones gave the
pioneers a little money, as big and
little would take a wagon and roam

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over the prairies picking up these white bleached bones, then the men would take the load to Minot and sell it.

Great stacks of the bones could be seen near the depot to be shipped to eastern points to be used in refining sugar.

At one time the buffalo were so numerous that a very large herd of them crossed the Missouri, while a steam boat was passing and stopped the steamboat.

A few otter, mink and muskrats could be found in the near by creeks. Coyotes and wolves could be heard every winter night. Coyotes did not do very much damage, though the dogs would be killed and eaten if they would chase the coyotes and get in a fight with them. Often young calves or colts would be taken by the wolves.

The Starter and Blow snakes were often seen in the grass but were harmless.

Lack of school was felt by this

family. The school term was usually held three or four months during the winter in Coal Harbor. The children usually managed to attend, sometimes driving and other times staying in town and attending.

Year after year crops would be planted and the hot winds would burn them up.

Besides the drought they had the prairie fires to contend with. Great huge masses of flames would sweep over the prairie burning everything before it. ^{As} Soon as the grass began to dry, which was in very early summer. The first thought of every pioneer was to plough fire breaks around the entire farm. At first one wide strip of ploughing was made, but this was found insufficient as the fires would leap over creeks, roads, or these strips; so two strips of ploughing were made several rods apart, and the grass burned between the two strips.

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When a fire was seen approaching by great leaps and bounds, all hands would rush for sacks and pails of water, dousing the sacks into the water, then whipping the fire until not a spark was left.

Once a great fire was rushing toward the house, flames eight to ten feet high. Everything was carried out and placed near a spring.

The little girl came out hugging her dolly thinking all would be well if her dolly was saved. The fire reached the fire breaks and died out.

The winters were intensely cold and long, and ^{with} quantities of snow. Blizzards after blizzard. — One instance ~~was~~ when the stock in the barn had no water for four days with the exception of some snow which was given them. After during a blizzard they were not watered until the third day.

Sometimes a rope would be attached to a persons waist or attached to the

intensely

house and barn and in that way they could go to the suffering horses or cattle, though ^{though} this was not entirely safe as the snow was so suffocating and blinding it was not wise to venture out into it.

✱ The fall that the pioneer and his family left Coal Harbor, the winter came on ^{unexpectedly} unexpectedly early.

Just before Thanksgiving a young boy about fifteen started across the prairie with a flock of sheep to Suttle Lake. A blizzard came up and the boy was frozen to death and most of the sheep were lost. Several different parties searched for his body, but it could not be found.

The next spring the pioneer's eldest son found parts of the body - parts that the wolves had left. Stones had to be put in the coffin so the mother would not notice the lightness of weight at the funeral.

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* The trading in the winter time was done by horseback. Spring was anxiously waited for so as to get to town for some of the necessities.

* Coal and wood was easily secured from the Missouri River as there are great veins of lignite coal all along the eastern banks of the river. There is also a burning coal mine from which smoke can be seen issuing. The whole top is honeycombed where the coal has been burned. Further to the east a distance from the river, Buffalo chips were used although people would haul wood from the river, going a distance of twenty miles and more.

Patrick O'Connor, the nearest neighbor, was about two and a half miles away. They were of Irish descent of the lower class but proved to be kind neighbors. Peter Longbelle located a year or so later about a mile northwest of the homestead.

The farm machinery was very limited as everything had either to be brought by steamboat from Bismarck or carted by team a distance of sixty five miles to Coal Harbor from Bismarck.

The family lived on the homestead five years and then moved to Coal Harbor. Here the older boys engaged in driving mail routes. One from Washburn to Fort Berthold and the other from Coal Harbor by the way of Hancock to Washburn. Each took two days to make the trip. The pioneer ^{had} a blacksmith shop and also engaged in farming. Coal Harbor was a small place boasting of one store and hotel combined, owned by George S. Robinson (he and his wife both English) a school and five dwelling houses. Also a log building built by Mr. Robinson for the accommodation of Indians, especially during wet weather.

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also here the Indians were one's greatest friends.

¶ Once when there was quite a large encampment of them in town some of the older ones invited all the town to one of their dances in this log building. after everyone was in two of the large husky Indians stationed themselves in the small doorway with tomahawks in their hands. and after the Indian dance they made each one pay ten cents before they could leave.

¶ One quiet afternoon when only the pioneers wife and daughter were in the house, an old Indian by the name of Texas Joe walked into the house by making himself perfectly at home. Soon he began to sharpen a butcher knife and a razor. The more he sharpened them the more nervous the pioneer's wife became. finally the little girl ran over to the neighbors but before anyone.

returned the Indian quietly put them away and left.

* While in Coal Harbor, many were the various duties the pioneer and his wife had to perform. George S. Robinson's lost their third child, a tiny baby. The pioneer made a little coffin out of rough lumber, planning as best he could. His wife lined it with cotton and white material and the baby was laid in it and buried a short distance from town. The father pronouncing a few words of benediction over the grave.

The doctor lived twenty-five miles away at Washburn and once when the pioneer's wife was very sick, one of her sons rode horseback all one night to go to Washburn and back to obtain medicine.

After eight years residence in Coal Harbor the family moved to Bismarck, to secure an education for the three youngest children.

VIII

The descendants of the pioneer are
Herbert Bartron, Bowdoin Mont.

James Bartron, Neche, No. Dak,
Merton Bartron, Douglas, No. Dak,
Artley Bartron, Seattle, Wash.,
and Mrs Walter J. Houghton, Cooperstown
No. Dak.

This pioneer passed away Feb. 1916, at Leeds
and is now resting in the Cooperstown
Cemetery.

Insert from back of page.

This is written by the pioneer's
granddaughter.

Homestead certificate no 1597, application
no 1615. Northwest quarter of section 11 in
township 147 north of range 84, west of the
5th principle meridian in north Dakota
containing sixty acres. Recorded 21st
day of October 1890.

Signed by President Benjamin Harrison

Ellen Macfarland, asst. Sec.

J. R. Conwell Recorder.

Written by Jean Bartron.
Cooperstown.
N. Dak.

1
Mrs James Bartron died April 17, 1918 in
Seattle, Washington

She was born at Athens, Pennsylvania,
Sept 22, 1842 and married Jan 18, 1866