

PRAIRIE PROFILES

ISADORE DUBY AND MARY DORÉ-DUBY

by Linda C.-Dubé



Isadore Duby and Mary Doré

Isadore Duby and Mary Doré had eleven children. Besides the parents, the family consisted of five daughters (one married daughter, Leona Banks moved from Riverton, Nebraska to Swift Current, SK living there on March 14, 1906), and three sons, and three died in infancy. The oldest son, Wilfred had preceded them the year before and found work at the Saskatchewan landing. The youngest son, Henry, and son-in-law, Fred Banks, came with the stock.

Swift Current, Saskatchewan in those days, consisted of the Imperial Hotel, Coopers and Buggs, and another general store, the Catholic Church, and a few

other buildings and dwellings. The family took residence at the old 76 Ranch buildings, where Mr. Buggman, the manager, lived with his family. Also a Mennonite family had rooms there.

The ranch proved a paradise for the children of the families; the huge sheep sheds, the dog kennel, a stone floored corral with stone steps leading down to the sheep dip, were great places to play in. At the loft of the big barn was a cat and her family kittens; two of these were later taken to the homestead and in time, were the mothers of all the cats in the district. The men located homesteads about 35 miles southwest of Swift Current and twelve miles or so southeast of Gull Lake. The nearest town, Gull Lake, consisted of a depot, post office, a small store, a lumber yard and a ranch house.

The building of a sod house and stable, plus chicken house, then began. On the 12th of May, Leona Bank's baby girl was born. She was so white-skinned from the start, with big blue eyes, that her grandmother wanted to call her Blanche, and so she was named. As soon as Leona was strong enough to travel, the family came to the homestead, where Fred stayed until their own sod house was built on the adjoining homestead.

During the summer and fall, a "locaters" rig, loaded with men, would stop in. These men located homesteads and the following spring, they arrived to start building and breaking land on their future homes.

The winter of 1906 and 1907 was a terrible stormy one with snowdrifts even with the roof. The children often sat on the eaves while playing outdoors. The old ranchers claimed it was not a cold winter, but to people who were not used to seeing snow - scarcely ever, it was an ordeal. The team of mules not used to deep drifts soon perished, but the horses and cattle fared well enough on the hay that had been put up during the summer.

The biggest hazard after the homesteader's came, were the prairie fires. These fires swept for miles until they came to the railroad where they stopped. One day, Mrs. Duby (Marie Dore) and son had to pass through a ring of fire when coming home from Gull Lake. They found themselves surrounded by fire and putting the horses on the run but they drove safely through.

In 1908, it was decided a school must be built, so George and Ebby Henderson built the small wood-frame building, which was named "Banks". In the spring of 1909, the school opened with ten children in attendance and Miss Viola Lawrence as the first teacher. Quickly, the homesteads were taken up mostly by bachelors, but there were some families too.

A Ladies Aid Club was formed; the ladies met in different homes to sew on quilts and fancy work. These were later sold at a bazaar. Mrs. Duby (Marie Dore) was one of the best workers. Her tiny stitches could scarcely be seen.

The winter passed with much card playing, music, and singing, with an occasional dance. There were a lot more men than girls or women but everyone had a good time, in spite of this. In a few years, many of the bachelors married. These were mostly girls they had known before coming to their homestead. A new generation then began to make its appearance. Mrs. Duby (Marie Dore) was called to attend a patient, often without the doctor being present. For more than two years, she attended the births of many boys and girls. All the patients recovered, showing the good care she gave them. Mrs. Isidore Isaac Duby was also known as a great butter maker. In 1908, they bought a cream separator, the first in the district. It was used in making and selling of more than 400 pounds of butter, besides keeping her own and the Banks family supplied. This was no little job. She churned twice a week and it was put in the cellar or hung in the well to cool and harden. This butter, when packed and kept cool, would keep fresh and sweet for a year or more. In the fall of 1909, her second son, Emile, arrived from the east where he had been raised by his grandparents and not seen by his mother for fifteen years. At this time, land was opened for pre-emption; nearly every homesteader took advantage of this to add another 160 acres to their farms.

In 1910, the Duby family decided to build a frame house on the pre-emption. Gib White was the principle carpenter. In the spring of 1911, before the partitions were put in the upstairs, a dance was given on April 1st. A good time and supper was enjoyed, until the cake that had been made of salt instead of sugar, and iced with a salt icing was passed, and urged on the guests. There were sudden rushes for the stairs and lots of gasps and coughing going on. That fall, the Banks family moved to Colorado, where his people were living. In 1912, Wilfred and Henry decided to buy a ranch in Montana.

In 1914, Mrs. Duby's aged mother (Hermine Bombardier - Mrs Louis Dore)came from Massachusetts to make her home with her daughter. On December 4, 1916, Mrs. Duby's husband Isadore passed away. He had been crippled for many years. The following summer, her mother (Hermine Bombardier) died. All this had been a sad and trying time for her, so Mrs. Marie Hermine Duby and her daughter Marie spent the winter in Colorado with the Banks family. The following summer, they spent it in Montana with her sons.

In the summer of 1917, Henry was called to fight in World War I, returning in 1919.



Mary Doré w/o Isadore Duby w/dtrs Jennie Hessel and Marie Duby – 1924

In 1930, Leona Banks oldest daughter passed away, and in 1944, her eldest son Wilfred, also passed on. She now lives on a farm near Simmic, SK although she will celebrate her 87th birthday on March 30, 1956.

Isadore Duby and Mary Dorè had eleven children: Wilfred (1884-1944; Emile (1886-1963); Leona wife of Fred Banks (1888-1930; Henry (1890-1964); Jennie wife of Peter Hessel (1892-1960; Oveline wife of Albert Vogt (1894 - a widow and resides in Gull Lake); Alice wife of Joe Covell (1897 and lives on a farm in the Banks district); Marie wife of Alex Migneault (1900- a widow and living in Gull Lake); and three children died in infancy.

Mary Duby passed away on January 25, 1950 at 91 years of age.



Family of Isadore Duby and Mary Doré

Front: Marie and Alice Duby, Seated: Isadore (dad), Jennie, and Mary (mom)

Back Row: Henry, Leona, Wilfred, and Oveline Duby

RECOLLECTIONS OF MRS. ALICE (DUBY) COVELL

AT THE AGE OF 82 YEARS

I CAME TO Canada with my parents, Isadore and Mary (Dorè) Duby, from Riverton, Nebraska on the tenth day of March 1906. We lived on a rented farm. Father wasn't able to work anymore, as he was afflicted with a sunstroke. We were a family of five girls, Leona, Jennie, Ovaline, Marie and myself Alice and three boys, Wilfred, Emile and Henry.

We read about the land in Canada, which was open for filing at \$10.00 per quarter. Wilfred, our oldest brother, came out to look it over and picked out land that was suitable, about 35 miles from Swift Current. On March 1, we had a sale. We kept two mules and three horses, three milk cows, and some chickens. We had two freight cars, one for the cattle and feed, the other for our furniture and household effects. We were going to school at the time. The pupils all said, "Why are you going to Canada, that's where the Indians live?". We were three days and two nights on the train. Our youngest brother Henry, and brother-in-law Fred Banks, had to ride along with the livestock, milk the cows and pick up the eggs. Some days, they would be side-tracked in the large cities for a couple of days, and the youngsters would come with pails to carry home the milk and eggs, as the milk had to be thrown out. They were two weeks on the road.

Mother worked for weeks getting our clothes ready, even made our coats and baked bread and a cooler full of donuts. We stayed at the 76 Ranch, a mile out of Swift Current, for two months while the boys went out to the homestead and built a sod house. We girls got quite a thrill to think of living in a house made of earth. We were quite young, 8, 10, and 12 years old. Our older sister, Jennie, never came out to the farm with us. She was fifteen years old and got a place to stay to finish her schooling. Leona, our married sister and her husband, Fred Banks, came with us. She had a baby girl on May 12, which they named Blanche.

We were amazed to see the miles of grass knee-high. The men made 100 tons of hay that summer, and we sold a lot to the ranchers (as it was a long winter) at \$20.00 a ton. There was one family, Jim Robertson, fifteen miles away near Swift Current, and Gunn's ranch, about ten miles away, and the Ferguson ranch, about six miles from us. They were in the creek hills. Once in a while, a herd of their cattle would come and look at the house and use it for rubbing off the mosquitoes, as they were awfully bad. The cattle would just stampede and go wild. There were herds of antelope too, but they wouldn't come close to the house.

We had to drive 35 miles to Swift Current for our food supplies, which would take three days – there and back. We got enough to last six months, so we learned to economize. We had lots of milk and butter and eggs, but had to keep a good supply of flour. When we ran short of flour, we had a bag of shorts (mixture of bran and coarse ground grain) that was used. Mother mixed a bit of white flour with the shorts, and it made lovely biscuits.

We lost our rooster, so we went down to Ferguson's ranch to buy one from them. Our married sister Leona went along with us and took her two-month-old baby along. Mrs. Ferguson was so pleased to see us, as she hadn't seen a white person for years. She had two boys and one girl. They were afraid to come out of their bedroom to see us. The mother wanted to show them the baby. They had never seen one before. Mrs. Ferguson hadn't seen a baby since her eight-year-old boy was born. She had a baby sweater and bonnet that her baby had worn, so she gave it to my sister for her baby. Anyway, we went home with a rooster, for which mother raised a nice bunch of chicks.

The next thing that summer we ran out of was fuel. We took the wagon and team, drove to a lake about five or six miles away where a lot of cattle grazed, and picked up dried cow chips. That lasted a long time, made a good fire, but burned up quickly. In the winter, we hauled around two tons of coal, and we sure had to economize on that to make it last. Dad had to sit in his chair all the time beside the stove, and was glad when mother baked bread. He loved the heat from the stove.

We just got our mail once during the winter of 1907. Christmas mail was way past Christmas. When someone would go into town, they would bring all the neighbor's mail. A lot of it would be torn and falling apart. A few bachelors were living not too far away. Bill Seafoot was the nearest one to us. He was a violin player, would come over and we would have quite a jam session. We had an auto harp, mandolin, banjo, and a violin. We played cards a lot too. We also had an accordion, but we all played it so we wore it out.

There were some terrible prairie fires and you couldn't stop them. They would burn until they got to the C.P.R. fireguard. We would go out with barrels of water and sacks soaked in water, to keep the fire from spreading towards our buildings.

We three sisters were out of school for three years. In 1909, the Henderson brothers built a school. We sure were glad to get back to school. Miss Viola Lawrence was our teacher. She lives in Gull Lake and is 92 years old and a widower. She married John Small after she taught our school for two terms. I boarded two teachers, one an English girl, Kitty Lack, and Miss Daechsel for a few months. We had a team of drivers. I would drive to Gull Lake when we needed groceries. This was after I was married in 1913. I was only sixteen years old when I married William Seafoot. I was the fourth Duby girl Alice.

My father Isadore Duby was born in Maryville, Quebec in 1849 (or 55). He passed away December 4, 1916 at the age of 67. Mother, Mary Dorè Duby, was also born in Maryville, Quebec on March 30, 1859 and passed away January 25, 1950 at the age of 91. They moved to (?Riverton) Nebraska, where all eight of us children were born: Wilfred, Emile, Leona, Henry, Jennie, Oveline, Alice, and Marie Duby.

Wilfred took up a homestead west of the Ears, had it two years, then sold it. That land is now owned by Mike Klink. Henry filed on a homestead, then sold it to Mike Phalen. Later Henry and Wilfred bought a ranch in Montana. Emile also took up some land, sold it, and bought land, which my sister Marie now owns, near Simmie, SK but she resides in Gull Lake. Sister Leona married Fred Banks in 1905. They came to Canada to take up land. They just stayed four years, sold the land to Ole Torgrimson, and went to Colorado, USA. Leona died at the age of 43 in Denver in 1930. Jennie Married Peter Hassel (Hessel) in 1910. They had four daughters - Lois, Audrey, Jean, and Delores. Jennie died January 5, 1960. Oveline married Albert Vogt in 1911. She has one daughter Evelyn and they reside in Gull Lake. I, Alice married William Seafoot in 1913. We had four children, Freda, Durward, Hazel, and Phyllis. William Seafoot passed away in August 1930. I remarried in 1932 to W. J. Covell. We have one son, Orval, who farms the homestead.

Written in the 40's by The Homemakers Club

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FUNDRAISER - Selling pies and coffee in an authentic cook car, during Gull Lake Threshing Days.

Front row: Mary White, Ethel White, Bobby Cooledge, daughter ? and mom Sherry Olson

Back row: Suzie Fenwick and Evelyn Covell in doorway.

HOW STARTED -

A form letter was typed and sent to each family known who had lived in the area asking for their history. Funds were raised by: a quilt raffle donated by Susie Fenwick; a garage sale held at Floyd Thomsen's; plus the pie and coffee sales. Tickets were also sold on a bike stand raffle donated by Lloyd Thomsen. They received two grants; one from the Gull Lake and District Recreation and Culture Board, and the other from New Horizons, sponsored by the Federal Government. Donations were received from the Antelope Community Aid and Clairbank Ladies.



Scene at the Garage sale