

This is really a story about my mother Mary Nichols and my step-father Martin Smith and how they found happiness by doing things for others when tragedy touched their lives.

Before I tell you about our life in Meadow Lawn I would like to say this—My step-father, Martin Smith was one of the kindest, most considerate Christian men I have ever known.

My mother and my own father, Bill Nichols came to Pine City in the summer of 1895 to live among the pines because of my fathers and my brother Tom's weak lungs. My father caught a freight wagon to the ~~xxxxxxx~~ Twin ~~xxxxxxx~~ and hooked a freight wagon to Pine City. He leased a homestead thinking it was in a settlement called Meadow Lawn. When my mother came in August with five children and one (myself) not 2 months old, there wasn't any cabin to live in on this land. We ate, slept and lived in a tent until late in the winter when we got our log house built. Abe Dunam often came to our cabin and it didn't take him long to see what a plight we were in. Many chunks of venison and fish found their way to our home and he would laugh and say he was tired of his own cooking. Many settlers across the river befriended us. Deer hides were left so mother could make us children footwear.

The loggers were always getting hurt and mother, who was a nurse treated cuts and smashed hands up and down the river. When her disinfectant supply ran out she fell back on turpentine while the victims braced themselves with raw whiskey. Mother and father made trips out to Meadow Lawn which were gala occasions for the children. More settlers were arriving every few weeks. Royal Smith, Martin Smith's brother had moved in with his family. Charley Dile had arrived with his wife Cora and daughter Nellie. Later my oldest brother married Cora's niece who came to stay with Charley Dile. Cora Dile was a frail woman and died when her infant daughter was born.

From her Meadow Lawn got their first glimpse of tinted curtains, dress designs and my mother got from her the pattern for my first Christmas rag doll. Charley Dile always wanted to be first in everything to see how the neighbors would react. He had the first cow and sold my stepfather her calf to start a herd. He had the first pony, camera and later the first automobile. His daughter and May Smith, Martin Smith's daughter would ride their ponies to our homestead to see the new baby. Through them Martin heard of Mother's nursing ability and one day came to ask us to move out to Meadow Lawn and see if mother could do anything for his wife who was very sick. He had arranged for us to live in his old log house and we were only too glad to move closer to the settlement and leave our homestead which is known now as "The Barrens" and inhabited only by the coyotes.

Martin Smith told us he had come to Meadow Lawn with John Holler and Skyler Kilgore the summer before the Hinckley fire to stake out homesites and put up hay for their teams. John stayed to build a log-house which was destroyed along with all their hay in the Hinckley Fire. They believed in this land and came back after the fire with their wives and families. There were only three families then but John said he thought it was crowded enough for a name and the women decided to pick a name. Tilda Kilgore thought Lawns would be nice and Lucy thinking of the possibilities of feed said Meadow. John told them to put the two together so they wouldn't argue all day. It has been Meadow Lawn ever since. John Holler liked a scrap and always led with his chin but I never saw him run away from anything not even the law. Had he lived in this era he would have been a brilliant lawyer.

My father worked on the log drives and received a ducking from which he never threw off a cold. Mother returned with him to his old home where he died September 27, 1901 and was buried beside his mother and father. The only friends we had there had moved away and we returned to those in Meadow Lawn. In that short time Meadow Lawn had made a wonderful growth. A log

school house was fast becoming cramped for room. However the teacher never stayed very long after finding skunks in the school room in the morning and snakes in the lunch pails. A few hardy ones who taught children larger than they were, had to chase the boys out of the woods when they pretended not to hear the handbell. My older brothers had to leave school, after they had finished a few grades to work in the woods.

Albert Nelsen a swede who had a "green thumb" taught us the value of planting our own gardens and grain. Although we laughed at him we started to clear land for a garden so we would have winter vegetables to store in our root cellar and to have open fields for grain. Only people like us knew how precious this buckwheat was when my step-father cradeled it. We were very sorry when Albert decided to leave. Skyler Kilgore said Albert was just lonesome for Dakota's Box Elder bugs and he gave Nelson some Box Elder seeds to plant. There are a few trees left if you look for them in Meadow Lawn and I can't help but feel friendly toward them as people try to eradicate them.

Then the winter of the deep snow came. The Logging companies had moved out and the men cut cord-wood for a living. My brothers cut wood all day for 10 cents. The yards were full of cord-wood and merchants who had paid \$1.00 a cord for wood for store credit didn't want any more so we took what we could get. Sickness and death staled the land. Children were born with only my mother in attendance, no matter how bad the case. The Doctor couldn't get out of those who could pay. We learned in those months to take care of ourselves. The men went to the logging camps farther north where many contracted small pox and Typhoid Fever from drainage of surface water in the springs. There was just a barrel sunk around a spring for our water supply. The emn came home to find their families sick with Scarlet Fever and store bills waiting. May Smith Purdy's little infant girl died and was buried by the back door. My mother was undertaker and my step-father built the coffin. Mx Maggie Smith, Martins Wife died and before mother had recovered from that blow, Lucy Hooer died leaving mother to mourn a true friend and a fine woman.

I have seen my mother strip off her clothes in a shed in 40 degree weather and put on germ free ones before coming in the house. To me, a small child, it seemed funny to see Mother's hair brozen stiff to her head after dipping it in disinfectant water before she come near us.

I never knew mother to ever carry a Bible on her sick calls but I will always hear her say as she looked in the face of a new born baby, "I have done all I can for this baby, now its up to you--you are its example as long as you live". All these adversities seemed to draw each of us closer together in Meadow Lawn and to make us more tolerant. If we were a little remiss in shooting game out of season for life giving broth and food for the sick, we had a good excuse when we saw our brothers and sisters grow strong and healthy.

The hardships mother had indured had undermined her health and when Martin Smith asked her to move into his home as his wife life was much easier for her. The boys helped clear land and soon our farm was bretty well cleared and we had the first frame-house. We had milk for the first time in months. Dad brought home a half dozen chickens and Tom and I discovered some baby chicks we watched them all day from John Holler's Beedlehounds so they wouldn't kill the old hen. That was our undoing because my brothers saw us. The young roosters mysteriously disappeared one night when they were large enough to eat after the boys in the neighborhood had one of their famous "roast

The Purdy family had moved into the settlement with a saw mill and had the first threshing machine. Their mill sawed lumber for new xxxxx warm framehouse and my father built new homes for the neighbors. Hank Hamilin well educated man and his children moved to Meadow Lawn. He took a great interest in a new frame school building and helped organize a school board. He later moved to a

good position in the courthouse. I went to school for the first time in the new building. We were very proud of the heater with glowing eyes of is-inglass. I can shut my eyes now and smell the pitch gum the boys used to rub on the hot stove behind Mrs. Collet's back. I count among my best friends the children I learned to know in this school-the McAdams, Purdys and Taylors.

We had very poor corduory roads. In order to have roads for a mailroute a town board was formed to build roads under Jack McAdams supervision. Martin, my step-father served on this board for years. They not only handled town-board business but saw to it that there would be no more hungry families, by giving food to the needy. Many times things from my step-fathers scant boards went into these baskets.

After our roads were passable, a mailroute was started and my step-father found an old friend, Bill Laird to drive this route. Everyone knew when Lairds ponies stopped at a mail box and they would accidentally drop in to see who had written. Laird had a very pretty daughter, Louie and all the older boys would write her letters. Not daring to drop them in their own mailbox, my brother Tom and I would hide along the road and watch the boys slip them in some other box. We often wondered how Mr. Laird reacted when most of the mail he picked up was for his daughter. We had a county paper at that time but few could afford to take it. Most of our news from outside came from stopping the mailman and asking for news.

Jim Clyne came to Meadow Lawn with his family and was followed by his wife's brothers the Scoffields, Orson, Allen and Saniel. From Minnie Clyne mother exchanged receipts for canning fruit and vegetables doing away with the drying of corn. We liked the idea of canning fruit but my brother Tom and I were disgusted when there was no more drying corn on the roof for a couple of two-legged squirrels.

There were lots of children now in Meadow Lawn and mother, with the help of Mrs. Purdy, organized a Sunday School in our school house. Here visiting ministers came on horseback to preach. Mother later used the talent among the children to help raise funds for a church we were building.

About this time the dreaded Infantile Paralysis invaded our community. If Sister Kenny could have turned back the pages of Meadow Lawn history she would have seen Mother sewing sacks while my step-father knelt on the floor filling them with oats for hot packs, so that these children might have the chance to walk again.

Steve Smiths moved to Meadow Lawn and his friend Nels Edridge saw the possibilities of our community for his fathers summer home that his father was planning on building. My brothers and father helped erect the large barn and home he erected. This barn was used for as a relay barn for the mailmans horses. Mr. Edridge in order to communicate with his son helped organize a rural telephone. We were very much afraid of fires in this wooded section and we had a telephone fire call. I don't believe the ring was necessary as any ring brought us all to the telephone. Today I live on this farm and it is crowded with memories of barn dances where Asa and Alfred Decker, Charley Diles nephews, furnished the fiddle music. We had boxing and wrestling matches too. Vene Holler was champion in the wrestling division taking on any wrestler working on the river drives. We had a ball club we were very proud of. No one thought of skipping Sunday School in the mornings, although I believe most of our games were organized in Sunday School. We formed a Farmers Club later followed by the Grange which my brothers joined.

My step-father bought me an organ and we also had a wonderful Farmers Club Choir even if we were a little off key. We had a fine band and my brother Arlo played the drums.

Many of the boys were called to the colors in World War I. Alfred Decker and my brother Tom were sent overseas. Because of his war service my brother Tom must spend the rest of his life in a Veteral Hospital.

Today our first old settlers are dead and are sleeping in the cemetery they laid out. I can count on one hand the settler's children who still live in Meadow Lawn. Although my step-father was too young to serve in the great rebellion he often told stories about Lincoln. I have in my possession a book of his on the great rebellion and a cannon ball found on the battlefield.

Others will write about their own families but I wanted to write these first settlers that have given Meadow Lawn the frame work that has made it a community of the kindest, most warmhearted christian people found anywhere in the world.