

R.R. 1, Hody Drive
Okanagan Falls, B.C.
March 28, 1980

Mr. Ian E. Wilson
Provincial Archivist
Saskatchewan Archives Board
University of Regina
Regina, Sask., S4S 0A2

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Since this is the Anniversary Year for your Province it occurred to me that perhaps a few bits and pieces of facts relating to some of my family might be of interest to someone – the City of Yorkton for one place so, for what it may be worth, here is a sample:

“John (Jack) Granville Thynne came to Canada in 1883 to homestead with his brother William Granville (Bill) Thynne in Yorkton, Sask.” In his memoirs he states, in part, “I met up with a man named W.J.O. Boucher who was Homestead Inspector for the Government of Canada.....we journeyed together to Broadview and then moved further north where we took up homesteads at a point about 75 miles to the north and 7 miles to the north-east of Yorkton, which was at that time but a little town beginning its existence”. (Then he tells about using oxen to break land, mentions tools, etc.) Then, “The York Colony farmers from the vicinity of Yorkton were mostly farmers from York County, Ontario and proved to be a splendid type to have as neighbours. The Colony was founded by Laurence Clarke of Ontario, a man who sprang into great prominence in Canada.”

“It was in the spring of '85 that the North West Rebellion headed by Louis Riel, broke out and my brother went to Q'Apelle to serve as a clerk in the Transport Service under Major Bell.....” I joined the Yorkton Militia under the command of Major Watson and went out on special scout duty. We built a large stockade at Yorkton

Later in the account of his memoirs I note where he writes: “Bill left me in the Fall and went to Medicine Hat where he took some land 8 miles to the north and went in for sheep raising. At this time I was busy freighting near Yorkton for F. Reaman who had started a grist mill. All the freight came either from Whitewood or Broadview and I used a team of oxen for the work. We freighters generally travelled together as there was a grave risk of getting mired in the alkali flats which we encountered en route. Miller was always with me, and we took our pay in trade chiefly as there was little cash to be handled in those days. Reaman became a member of the Legislature at Regina. He was a fine man and always gave a square deal. He it was who supplied us with an outfit for trading fur with the Indians. We left for the Beaver Hills – Miller, myself and another fellow named Wellbury who had been a member of the Texas Rangers. We used Indian ponies called ‘Shaganapees’ and soon came upon the camp of our old friend, Okaneese on the White

Sand River. We managed to get some fur, chiefly fox, lynx and mink. Lynx was worth \$2.....”

There is more of Saskatchewan interest but I will just say that I do have the original picture, also some glossy reprints, of the sod-roofed log building to which Jack Thynne took his bride in 1887 to the homestead near Yorkton. It is really something!!! And of course some good pictures of him if ever required.

Also among the pictures that once belonged to Mrs. Jack Thynne (nee Eliza Linklater from Pelly, Sask.) there is a photograph of E.A.W.R. McKenzie in his Department Store showing full counters of drygoods, etc. I might tell you that while in Saskatchewan last year after attending the unveiling of the 2 plaques at the old Territorial Building in Regina, I journeyed to Pelly where I took a snapshot of the old McKenzie store building and the sign “E.A.W.R. McKenzie General Store” painted on it so many years ago is still quite plain. I understand the building was offered to the town of Pelly for a Museum but they turned it down and the building will soon be torn down. A real pity.

Bill McKenzie was a free trader as you probably know. His brother “Nat” McKenzie – N.M.W.J. – who did work for the H.B.Co. wrote a book entitled “Men of the Hudson’s Bay Co.” for the 250th Anniversary of the H.B.C. It is dated May 2, 1920. I have a copy but the cover and part of the frontice page are missing. – The frontice pages that give the Preface telling of McKenzie’s father, etc. I wish I could obtain a photo copy of the first pages – perhaps I should write to the Manitoba Archives or even to Ottawa to the Library. There should be a copy there.

If any of this is of help or interest to you or if you would like to have copies made for your archives, please let me know.

Our Okanagan Historical Society will have it’s A.G.M. on May 4 and is now busy compiling the 45th Annual Report so we are busy. I recently had the pleasure of again meeting John Bovey who now is our B.C. Prov. Archivist.

Kindest regards,
Mollie Broderick