

Letters Home

Alice Rendell came from England to settle in Saskatchewan in May of 1903 with her husband, Willie, and their two children.

These are some of her letters home to her friends and family telling of her adventures in the Promise Land. We have done our best to maintain the authenticity of her letters and her language.

May 15th, 1903

My Dear Friends,

It seems a long time since I last had a paper chat with you all but my thoughts have been wondering many times to old pang of homesickness. We arrived here "Doris Court" our own estate yesterday. May 15th. And are now rejoicing that we are at last at our journey's end. On our reaching Mr. Barr's camp my husband went to survey the section of land allotted to him but he was not at all satisfied and would have nothing to do with it, so Mr. Barr went with him to look in a different section which resulted most happily for my husband, and he is now perfectly satisfied with his location and considers he is the proud possessor of as fine a tract of land as is possible to procure. As I am writing I can look out my tent door and see he's quite happy doing his first bit of ploughing on his own soil. There is no doubt it is the most beautiful land. We have plenty of wood and water which is a great boon and much to be thankful for. Our friend and traveling companion has the next land adjoining ours which is just as good. We are only half an hours drive from the stores in Mr. Barr's camp, half a mile from the prospective station, and only a few minutes from the school site. I must now hark back a bit and tell you something of our bitter experience while trekking up to the promise land.

On leaving Battleford we had a 90 mile journey through most awful country shaking us all to pieces, sometimes charging across great streams and gullies, at others driving through thick scrub. After a long day's journey we have arrived at the Government tent simply perished with cold and hunger. At the time we reached Mr. Barr's camp I think we all felt weary, worn and sad. My dear little Doris was taken ill the day before we arrived, and seeing how very feverish she was I was terribly anxious.

However, Willie immediately sought out the camp Doctor. She had a temperature of 104. I had to poultice her and thanks to the Doctor's kind attention she soon pulled round but misfortune seem to dog our footsteps. Barnes now sickened and we thought it necessary to call in medical advice. He was much concerned about him and told us he feared it would turn to pneumonia. Owing to skillful treatment, he managed to ward it off. I suppose all the worry and anxiety proved the last straw as far as I was concerned, for I was the next to collapse with a bad chill and bronchitis, from which I was still suffering together with an abscess in my face all of which combined makes me feel very low and out of sorts.

I am writing this on May 17th dear father's Gord birthday and my thoughts have been with him. Every good wish and we hope he spends as happy a day as possible under the circumstances.

Whilst in the Barr camp we were greatly terrified of the terrible prairies fires which simply surrounded us on all sides and we had some very narrow escapes of being burned out of house and home. At one time every man in camp, every horse, and every plough was ordered out to plough round the camp to save it from total destruction.

It was terrible to witness, a terrific wind carrying all before it and as night came on it really was in an awful sight, the pitiless flames as far as an eye could see in every direction. There was a lovely lot of grass on our land when Willie first came up to see it, but the next day it was all burnt, still all the lovely young grass is shooting up very quickly and at any rate we are now safe from fire of which I am very nervous after all I have witnessed.

16th May Willie started ploughing on Mr. Young's land on Saturday morning and in the afternoon started on his own. This morning,

Monday, he has made up his mind to a good day's work as both Willie and Mr. Young are anxious to get in a few oats for the horses, but alas both are disappointed for the snow is falling and we are thankful to keep in our tent by the fire. I think all the country around here will very pretty in a short while.

We are now hunting out a nice spot for a little house which we are anxious to get up as soon as possible. The great difficulty is to get lumber. There is a gentleman in Mr. Barr's camp who thinks of returning home. He has the plan of a little four room bungalow and the timber all complete for building it. If he does go back he will sell it out-right to Willie, but he would have to fetch it from Fort Pitt, 25 miles from here.

Barnes goes to Battleford on Wednesday to fetch the rest of our baggage and Willie's plough, harrows and a cooking stove. He will be gone a week and will take all the letters down to post and I hope bring some back. You cannot have the least idea how we long for news and some papers, any literature would be so gratefully received. There is no paper sold here under 5 cents. We have any amount of prairie chickens and wild duck all over the estate and Willie, I need to say, keeps us supplied. Yesterday and to-day we have thoroughly enjoyed a delicious dinner of prairie chicken, beans and potatoes. The beans are like little white peas and are very good. They are used here a great deal instead of potatoes which are scarce and very dear, equivalent to 3 d. per lb. We are getting some vegetable seed from Battleford to start our kitchen garden as soon as possible.

I shall be so thankful when the warmer weather sets in. I can quite understand the charms of camping then but under the present conditions it has very few charms I can assure you and what with the bitter cold and hard ground we don't get much refreshing rest. Still

with all the hardships it is certainly a glorious feeling to be able to look around on our own property and feel that each day's work is for future benefit. No landlord and no rent to pay nor taxes!! This indeed compensates for a very great deal. Best love and remembrances to all relations, friends and acquaintances.

Yours ever sincerely,

Alice Rendell

June 4th, 1903

My Dear Friends,

So much has happened since I last wrote that I hardly know where to begin. Firstly, I have to tell you of a very sad occurrence. Our poor friend and neighbour Mr. Young took a chill during the severe weather a fortnight ago. He seemed to unwell when my husband went up to see him in his own tent $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away that I suggested to Willie to drive him down to us as Barnes had gone down to Battleford to fetch back some implements etc. and his tent was vacant for some days, then we could look after him. We went for the camp doctor who thought it was a serious case. Friday and Saturday became gradually worse and was very delirious. Two doctors came on Sat and there happened to be an experienced nurse in camp and he came out to remain the night Sat. I was alone with the poor fellow whilst Willie drove the doctor's back to camp and fetched the nurse during which time he told me he knew he was going to die and wished me to note down his wishes and write a cable to his wife. He wished Willie to take charge of everything until such time as we should receive instructions from his family. He passed away at 3:30 am on Sunday, May 24th after only four days of illness. It was an awful blow to us as you may imagine. We had been such good friends and he and Willie were so much together. He was buried the same evening at 7 o'clock on his own ground, the Dr. and Mr. Lloyd making all arrangements.

We cabled to the poor wife in Munchester, and I wrote her a long letter giving her all the details and we are now awaiting instructions from her. They were coming out this month. He has 4 children, two sons 18 and 20 and two daughters 16 and 13. We have the satisfaction of

knowing we did everything we possible could to save him. It all seems like a dream.

Ever since this sad event we have had glorious weather and as one looks around on the lovely green grass and the bushes all in thick foliage one can hardly realize that a fortnight ago the ground had been covered with snow. Willie has been working very hard. He started ploughing (as I told you in a former letter) on May 16th, the day after we arrived here. Now, June 4th he has 5 acres ploughed, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre into potatoes, 1 acre barley, and 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oats. The latter are already well up and looking splendid.

About a week ago we managed to buy a nice cow and calf and I can assure you that I feel quite proud that I am not only able to have a nice drop of milk for our own use but I supply our neighbour with a quart a day, and yesterday we all thoroughly enjoyed a good cup of cream for tea. What a treat it was!!

Next Monday Barnes goes off to Onion Lake, Fort Pitt to fetch lumber to start our bungalow. We have chosen the site so I suppose it will be commenced in a fortnight's time. We have never received any home papers yet. We are going to camp this eve in hopes that the mail may be in. Barnes brought a few letters back from Battleford's, father's, Miss Harvey's (with good news of my darling Little Eric), Lillie Laxton's and Mr. Rogers'. How we poured over those letters! The first from home!

I can quite understand the alarm felt on our behalf on reading all the reports, but there was a great deal more truth than fiction in them. Mr. Barr did not carry out all he promised (though we have no cause to complain as he has always dealt very fairly with us). But there was no provision for the people on their arrival or on the journey up to the

Colony either in a way of provision or accommodation, and great sufferings in consequence, more especially among the women and children. But everyone is loud in their praise of how the women have faced all hardships and privations the they were no trifles I can assure you.

Mr. Barr is pretty well out of it now I think, but we have a splendid man in his place the Rev Lloyd and he is doing everything that can be done for the benefit of the colonists. The say Barr will be arrested but I don't know if it is true. Mr. Lloyd has gone after him to Battleford and all the Stores Committee and there is evidently something wrong somewhere. We are all right and have lost nothing through him he has always been especially kind to us in all our dealings with him.

I forgot to mention when telling you about the cow that one of the young fellows who brought it up to us was called Lyle and he told us he had an uncle of that name living at Newton Abbot. He is a clergyman but retired. We are just tortured to death with mosquitoes the poor children are nearly driven crazy with them. We have to cover our faces with mosquito netting in order to rest at all. I must now close as it is time to get done and be off and I want to post this in camp to-night. I am with my usual appeal for news from all our friends who can find time to write if only a few lines also anything in the way of literature. We haven't seen an English paper since we left home. With best remembrances to all and love to dear Father and Frank,

Yours ever sincerely and affectionately,
Alice Rendell

Llyodminster
Brittannia Colony
Battleford
NWT
Canada

July 22nd

Having heard so much of all the exaggerated reports in praise of and in condemnation of this new colony and everything connected with it I have decided to devote some of the few spare moments of my time to writing my actual personal experiences as one of the new colonist settlers hoping that a true unvarnished account of the state of affairs may perhaps, if made public, counteract a great deal of the unnecessary harm which such reports must reflect on the Colony.

To start from the commencement I left England April 8 by the Lake Simcoe as I was unable to settle up my affairs in time to join the Barr party on the Manitoba which afterwards proved more of an advantage than a disadvantage. As far as qualifications are concerned for my starting farming in Canada I may say I have farmed in the old country all my life the estate I rented in Devonshire having been farmed by my forefathers for over 200 years. I was paying rent at the rate of over 10 dollars per acre in addition to rates, tithes and taxes and wages. A crisis having come and failing to get my landlord to do anything either in reduction of rent or repairs of any kind to dwelling house or out buildings all of which were rapidly falling into ruins I determined to throw up the life of slavery for others and strike for independence in Canada for good or ill.

Having acquired from headquarters all necessary information respecting the free grant lands in N.W.T. I applied for a homestead for myself and another one for one of my men who had decided to throw

in his lot with mine in spite of the disapproval of many and dismal prophecies of failure, I, with my wife and children aged 2 and 4 left the old country, not without many a heartache for all near and dear to us that we were leaving behind yet with a strong determination to face all difficulties and succeed in the end.

Our voyage from Liverpool to St. John's was a record one and we landed in St. John's April 13 having sailed from Liverpool April 8 and from this time onward our trial of endurance commenced. We were just hustled off the Lake Simcoe like so many cattle late in the day in terrible weather, snow and sleet: hungry and miserable, no proper meal having been provided on board since early in the day.

Owing to the Manitoba being still in dock we had to land a long distance away and managed to be in the very thick of the fire which is no ancient history but was alarming indeed to those who happened to be as near it as ourselves, next door in fact. Thank God I got my wife and children also baggage in safety. We then had to wait till past midnight to get our baggage from the Lake Simcoe, viz. From Wed. till Thursday midnight just huddled together in the train almost starved with cold and hunger.

Over the next portion of our journey I would like to draw a veil. It seems all the sleeping colonist cars had been requisitioned by the Manitoba Party, consequently the accommodation provided for us by the C.P.R. was of the most miserable description both as regards comfort and cleanliness, such as no English Railway would tolerate for cattle. My wife, who is a shareholder in C.P.R. exclaimed, "It this the wonderful C.P.R. that we hear so much of with all its wonderful accommodation for comfortable traveling!" After enduring indesirable misery in the train from April 15 to April 22 we reached Saskatoon remaining there till April 29th.

Here was the huge Barr encampment, but of the arrangements there I know little or nothing as I made my own independent arrangements for my wife and children, but I much doubt if those in camp suffered much more than we did, for accommodation and food were alike miserable and even filthy. My first business at Saskatoon was to purchase wagon and a pair of horse and harness which cost me 508 dollars, a stiff outlay but a necessitous one, also camp stove, plough, harrows, and a good supply of nails and tools. I had to waste a week here "waiting for baggage" thanks to the total lack of organization on the part of C.P.R. causing us great unnecessary expense which we could ill afford.

However, we managed at last, having duly packed up our traps to set out April 29th en route for Battleford having duly provisioned ourselves for the journey, which was fortunate for there was nothing to be got on the road as represented or rather misrepresented, thus causing much misery and privation to many of the poorer class who had in great measure counted on availing themselves of this promised boon. My experience of horses and driving in the old country stood me in good stead and in spite of all difficulties inclement weather, rough country, we reached Battleford safe and sound without one mishap in 4 1/2 days which was considered very good as I had a heavy load.

We remained at Battleford from Sunday May 2nd till Tuesday, May 4th when we once more resumed our journey to the "Promise Land." This part of the journey was the most trying of all, the road terribly rough and the weather bitter. Had it not been for the government tents many must have died from cold and hunger. My wife and little girl now began to feel the effects of exposure to the bitter cold, and by the time we reached the Settlement both collapsed, thoroughly ill, in fact we were all worn out and weary with the long journey and want of rest.

My first enquiry was for a doctor who quickly came to our assistance and whose kindness and attention I cannot speak too highly of and little dreamt how frequently we were destined to call his professional experience to our aid within the next few weeks. With care my wife and little one soon recovered, when my man sickened with threatened pneumonia, and again Mr. Amos thanks to prompt attention saved him from serious illness. We remained in camp from May 10 to 15, prairie fires raging around us on all sides causing terrible damage and giving rise to serious anxiety at one time for the safety of the whole camp, necessitating summoning out all the men, horses and ploughs that happened to be available.

I lost no time in starting to view the homestead allotted to me by Mr. Barr in Township 50, Sec. 23.24 Range 1, but quickly decided it was no good for agricultural purposes, and after due application Mr. Barr escorted me himself the next day to Township 49, Sec. 36, Range 1, which land I was greatly pleased with and decided at once upon it for my location, and on May 15th, after many weeks of great anxiety, weary traveling and the facing of many and great difficulties we pitched our tents at last on our own domain with a blessed feeling of thankfulness that journeying was over and the longed for goal reached at last.

I started the very next day to plough, and in less than a week had ploughed and tilled three acres of oats and the week after 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres barley and $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of potatoes. At the time of writing this, July 22nd, I have $\frac{1}{4}$ acre Swedes also mangos and vegetables of all kinds in my garden all of which are looking splendid considering late sowing in consequence of the severest and latest spring known in the colony for 20 years. I am much pleased with my land which is good soil mostly cleared for plough with sufficient wood and brush for useful purposes.

My wife and I view daily from our tent door the rapid completion of our bungalow which is to be our future home. This has been a heavy expenditure owing to the lack of lumber having to fetch all from Fort Pitt or Onion Lake 30 miles distant. The supply is totally inadequate to the demand, which seems the great drawback in respect to all supplies and a great hindrance to the settlers generally who have so much to do in the short time and this is a matter, which greatly need the attention of the authorities.

The stores are terribly deficient of all necessaries and unless arrangements are made to improve this department and greater facilities for obtaining tools, implements and general necessaries the colonists will be heavily and seriously handicapped and the success of the colony seriously affected. This is the cry of the majority of the colonists and the difficulties above mentioned are doing much to discourage those anxious and willing to work, to say nothing of those who belong to the noble army of grumblers and only too ready to look on the black side of everything. The many who "turned back" and spread such alarming and distressing reports of the colony were mostly those who placed too much confidence and the rosy accounts of everything they read in print and relied too much on the promises made as to provisions and transport on their journey up to the settlement. That there was real ground for complaint in respect to the latter there is no doubt whatever.

On the other hand many never brought their common sense into use at all, else they would have realized that as pioneers in a few colony they must have the many serious difficulties and drawbacks to encounter and that all the courage and determination one is possessed of must needless be brought into play to surmount the inevitable drawbacks we are bound to face before we can hope to "stem the tide." I cannot speak too highly in praise of the valuable and kindly

assistance of the Government Officials who have spared no trouble or pains to smooth away all difficulties as far as they were able. We cannot live without supplies, we cannot work without tools, neither one nor the other are forthcoming as they ought to be. When complaints are made we are told, "Oh, it will be all right when we get the railway through the colony". I quite believe it, but what are we going to do meanwhile for the workers on the Railway cannot get on with their work for the very same reasons, they cannot procure the necessary tools.

Delay everywhere. Real workers eager to get on with the success of the Colony at heart will, I am sure, join with men in a very earnest plea that those in authority who have the power to do so will come to our aid, remedy the above mentioned deficiencies and thus save much needless distress and anxiety to those who have given up homes, country and friends in the old country to devote their future to the success of the New Colony.

Signed W.Rendell

Township 49, Section 36, Range 1

Lloydminster, Britannia, Sask., N.W.T.

August 6th, 1903

My dear Friends,

I see my last letter was dated June 4th. Time flies even in camp life which thank goodness terminates to-day, for this afternoon we contemplate moving up to "Doris Court" and sleep to-night for the 1st time for 4 months within shelter of 4 walls. July is the rainy month here and when the rain does come down it is like a deluge. Imagine the delight of being aroused night after night from your slumbers by rain trickling down on you as a rule it has a nasty habit of drifting just the very side of the tent you happen to be lying. I can assure you we have found it awfully trying. Next month, September, we are supposed to get what they term "Indian Summer". Then about the 2nd week of October winter sets in.

August 12th

Since writing the above we have really removed to our own very own domicile, and right proud we feel to look around, even though it be on bare boards and feel it is indeed our own home. All the weary "trekking" at an end, we look from one window and see the lovely oats and barley looking splendid. From another window I look across and see the "Master of Doris Court" ploughing away for dear life with his fine pair of horses, each acre ploughed meaning the better prospect for the coming year.

The said team are just as fat as butter, they having taken themselves off 7 weeks ago across the prairie and baffled all efforts to find them until about 4 days ago when Banree and another young fellow rode away, we having had some tidings of their whereabouts, and, greatly to our delight, they returned the same evening bringing the delinquents with them. Their long absence was getting a serious

matter as time is growing short and every available hour must be devoted to ploughing before winter sets in.

Well, the many friends who are sufficiently interested in our welfare will be wondering what sort of "shanty" "Doris Court" is, so I must try and paint it as vividly as possible in your mind's eye. It is in bungalow form, measuring 30 ft. by 30 and contains 5 rooms, 1 large attic the whole extent of the house quite fit to use for a bed room as we have had it all nicely boarded round and floored and 2 very large cellars in which we can store all necessary provisions for the winter. I shall try and send with this a little plan which will give you all a pretty clear idea of the position and size of rooms. Everyone that sees it is of the same opinion that it is quite the best house in the Colony.

There will be a verandah 4 or 5 feet wide round 3 sides of the house which will be lovely in summer and a fine garden all around as we are not stinted for ground and we hope in the spring to get up some fruit and other trees from the experimental farm to plant around. There is certainly a great charm and fascination in planning it all out knowing that it is our own property. I often say it compensates one largely for all the hardships we have passed through. Everyone assures us that we shall not have the chance of feeling lonely there thro' the winter as we are close to the township and they will all be trooping out to see us.

We have gone to more expense over our house than we intended in the first instance but so many want putting up for the winter that we felt it would repay us to have extra room. As it is we have had a lot of applications already which we have under consideration. Our bungalow will be warmed throughout by a fire placed in the octagon hall. There are no stoves as in England and we burn nothing but wood. The

fires have to be kept going night and day during the winter and we have to put up double windows, viz outside frame which can be removed in summer.

The wild flowers are very lovely and those of my friends who know me best will guess the delight they afford me. The small single sunflowers are now in abundance all over our land, also gaillardias, a kind of lily of the valley and red tiger lilies. Whilst I think of it I want all old friends who can send me some seeds in a letter as I would much like my garden to be one of reminiscences of the dear old country especially Buckland, Nether, Homefield Brooklands and Home House, and I should prize them so. The mail goes out this eve so I must reluctantly curtail this edition and reserve further news till the next budget.

Love and kindest remembrances to all relations and friends.

Yours ever sincerely
Alice Rendell

Dorris Court, Britannia
Lloydminster
NWT Canada

Oct 21st

My dear Friends,

Whenever anything of importance happens I always feel it is about time to write a general letter. Yesterday was a day never to be forgotten by any of the inmates of Doris Court or inhabitants of Lloydminster. For days past we have been anxiously watching 7 huge prairie fires raging in the distance fearing that a wind might bring heavy disaster to our homestead and town.

The night of Oct 20th was an anxious one, the terrible circle of fire closing around us. The general opinion was that we were safe for the night but I could not sleep. The next morning our worst fears were realized and we knew that a few hours would decide our fate. The only safeguard against prairie fires is a broad belt of ploughing all round your homestead. This my husband has done with the exception of one side which alas was the very side towards which the fire was sweeping with awful rapidity. Needless to say the plough was soon at work and it was literally ploughing for dear life.

Every available tub was filled with water, every sack collected together to beat out the flames when the time should come. Mr. Rendell, Barnes, and another man who is working for us were all on the alert watching with intense eagerness all the different points. Meanwhile within the house I together with Mrs. Falhank (the wife of the post master who is boarding with us this winter) and Mrs. Bunyan who nursed me when my little girl was born, stood gazing out of the

window horror stricken at the awful sight that met our eyes, we, each of us, had 3 little children and each one in arms. We mustered 9 little ones all under 6. Our little flock fortunately were too young to realize the deadly peril we were in and we had to keep on "rounding them up" preparatory to a hasty flight.

I collected a few little valuables and looked around with a very heavy heart wondering what would become of us if in an hour or two we should be homeless. At last we could stand still no longer and we three women rushed out and filling buckets with the clay soil dug up from the foundation we scattered it all over the ground immediately around the house.

The wind was blowing a hurricane, bringing or rather driving the fire straight on us. The awful roar of the flames was enough to make the bravest shudder and the smoke and smell stifling. Willie continued plowing until absolutely compelled to stop owing to heat and smoke. Our two men meanwhile drenched our roof with water and were arming themselves with wet sacks hurried to the weakest points where there was the least probability of the flames "jumping" the fire guard which was only 150 yds off the house all round. We could do nothing more than wait with bated breath.

At last came the joyful sound of "safe" from the western side but the danger was not yet over for on the north west side we were again threatened, and after the horses had been placed in safely all hands had to fly around to meet the enemy at the fresh point of attack and after a hard fight, thanks to cool heads and strong arms the dreaded fire was kept at bay and after a short time of awful suspense and anxiety my husband came back to us with the welcome assurance "all danger over, safe for another year".

We were all too overjoyed for words and after the dreadful strain of so many hours you may pretty well guess what the reaction was like. Mr. Rendall was literally fagged out, but after a little rest and refreshment we all felt better. We lost 4 ton of hay only but many have lost all their hayricks.

The fire started by the Vermilion River and was raging for days before it reached us and swept on down towards Battleford. There is no doubt whatever but that our fireguard in great measure saved the town life. Apart from the horror of it, it was a most wonderful sight. Of course on the prairie you can see an enormous distance, and for 20 or 30 miles there was nothing but flames. As it grows dusk the effect is most weird. How thankful we were that the fire reached us in daytime and not at night!

Thus ends my description of a prairie fire and I earnestly trust I may never witness such another. We have quite a houseful at present mustering 15 in all which is a big family to cater and cook for. My little ones are quite happy, the little Canadian girl being especially bonnie and thriving splendidly.

Our town site is all surveyed and the Government has decided to grant a plot of land to every colonist who cares to apply for it. Mr. Rendell and Barnes have each got one and we intend on erecting a little store on ours for the disposal of our dairy produce. We are hoping to get 2 or 3 more cows this next week. Everyone likes our butter made in the old Devonshire fashion.

I have been for a drive to-day and the town is growing very, very fast, dozens of little "shacks" springing up all around. There are two large general stores, 2 restaurants, Post Office, Butchers Shop, Blacksmiths, Vicarage all within 20 minutes walk of Doris Court. I

have had to write this at odd moments and in great haste and must reluctantly curtail this and write the rest of my news later on. I was overjoyed to receive today 6 home letters from my dear old friends in acknowledgment of the news of the birth of my little daughter.

Yours as ever, A.R.

Doris Court, Britannia
Lloydminster, Sask. NWT
Canada

Dec 10, 1903

My dear Friends,

Little did I dream this time last year that I would be sending you my New Year Greeting this year from over the sea thousands of miles away. The approach of Xmas makes me feel pretty homesick at times, tho' I hav'nt much time to brood over it which is perhaps a very good thing. Before launching into my "yarn" let me wish one and all every happiness and prosperity for the coming year and all succeeding ones.

There is to be a general gathering of the whole colony on Xmas day and great preparations are being made to make it a great success. Church Service at 10:30. High Tea at 5 followed by a Concert and large Xmas tree for the children. It is all being well organized, sub committees consisting of each 4 ladies being appointed as follows - Meat Committee, Bread, Butter and Milk. Cakes and pastry, etc, etc, all acting under a general committee. Mr. Hall who is the owner of the large store is lending his building for the occasion and on Boxing Night we hope to have a dance. Everything is going ahead now with amazing rapidity.

We have been most fortunate in having most glorious weather, continuous sunshine from day to day and hard frost at night. Our clergyman Mr. Lloyd is a very musical man and every Wednesday he holds a choir practice at his own house. The last hour is devoted to the music for the following Sunday services after which we have secular music, quartettes, trios, duets and solos, all the best music we can muster. He has now formed a "Musical Union" and we have already 110 names on the list of members. I need scarcely say I have joined and I thoroughly enjoy the practices they are so splendidly conducted. We really have a very fine choir. Every Thursday eve there

is either a concert or debate upon some popular topic. The past fortnight it has been decided by general consent to erect a structure which for the time being will serve as church, school and recreational room. Everyone is giving a log (it is of course to be built of logs) and the name of each donor to be engraved thereon by their own hand. All the work of erecting it is to be done voluntarily each one having volunteered a day's, two day's or a weeks work. Things go ahead and no mistake. With regard to the Choral Union the idea is for all the places around such as Battleford, Onion Lake, Bresaylor all to form branches and practice the same music and then have a meeting from time to time of the massed choirs. The Lloydminster choir has already been invited to Onion Lake in March (36 miles). The whole party to go is sleighs. We have a sleigh now which we use with our wagon box it is a delightful sensation flying over the snow which is not soft like in England but very hard and crisp.

One great draw back here is lack of water. We dug one well without success and have now started another. The have got down 20 feet but no luck as yet. Every drop of water I use for cooking and washing is melted snow and lovely water it is too, but of course it means a lot of labour carting it in and melting it down.

Everyone is in great excitement just now. An "everseer" has been elected (same as our Mayor) and canvassing is going on pretty smartly and I rather fancy the general favourite is Mr. Amos. So you see with one thing and another we are quite busy. And now, dear friends, a little bird tells me some of you are just working hard for the benefits of the hospital here in response to my appeal. I can find no words to express my delight and gratitude and am positive that your kindly effort in so good a cause will surely bring its own reward and I am sure many a hearty blessing will be evoked on your behalf in Lloydminster. A little lumber shack is to be put up almost

immediately so great is the need for it. I thank you all most earnestly. You would not wonder at my taking this so much to heart could you but witness what I have or been through what I myself have suffered. You cannot realize how awful it is. My next letter to you will be a true and accurate account of how we spent our first Xmas in the Colony. The little ones are all well and happy and growing very rapidly. The wee Canadian is the happiest baby I have ever seen. She will, I think, be very much like Doris. I think I have told you most of the news. I have been somewhat handicapped in my work lately owing to a sprained arm. I have managed at some time or another to strain the principal muscles of my left arm. It has been terribly painful. Dr. Amos feared at first that I had put it out of joint.

Mr. Rendell has just bought in a piece of Railway land adjoining our homestead consisting of 320 acres. As soon as the railway is up it must be most valuable and will add greatly to the value of our homestead. We also have bought a little colt 1 year old for 11 dollars and a ton of hay thrown in. The children are very delighted. Our old Sport is very well and quite at home. Our police are still with us and are very lively boys no fear of being dull where they are. They make a great pet of Doris. She always pours out tea for them. The other people are leaving next Wednesday, for which I am truly thankful. I must now close with a hearty good wishes to all.

Your affectionate friend,

Alice Rendell.

Doris Court, Britannia
Lloydminster, Sask. NWT
Canada

Dear Friends,

According to promise I am going to do my best to give you, to the best of my ability, a graphic account of how we spent our first Xmas in Lloydminster. I think as Xmas approached we all rather dreaded it knowing how this special season brings with it so forcibly the memory of all the home gatherings in the Old Country.

Fortunately, we personally, are for too busy in our surrounding to brood over vain regrets and Xmas Day was upon us almost before we could realize the fact. There was service at 11 o'clock a.m. and at 5 p.m. the "Festivities" started. Thanks to the generosity of Mess. Hall Scott and Co who have just completed a very large building for General Stores, the gathering of the Colonists took place there and it is certainly owing to their great kindness that Xmas and New Year was spent so pleasantly and happily. The 1st item on the program was a big feed followed by a capital concert divided into two parts. After the 1st half had been successfully carried through came a large Xmas tree very prettily decorated, the little gifts being distributed by an ideal "Santa Claus". I need scarcely say how delighted the little one were. The whole proceedings were brought to a close about 11:30 p.m. after a most enjoyable social gathering and the 1st Xmas in Lloydminster is a thing of the past but nevertheless it will be remembered by all who were present as a bright and happy one the more so as it was unexpected and well carried out. The effect it had upon us was that we all felt cheered by this little excitement after all we had previously passed through and somehow "longed for more". Thanks again to Messrs. Hall Scott and Co. another happy gathering was arranged for New Years Eve, and yet another for New years Day. They not only

gave the use of their splendid building for a dance but undertook all arrangements and issued a general invitation and welcome to all. The room was very prettily decorated and the floor well waxed. The Band consisted of several violins, 2 coronets, and harmonium. We started dancing at 8:30 p.m. and after a most enjoyable evening broke up at about 4:30 a.m.. We all felt years younger. We women up with Sir Roger and Auld Lang Syne and walked back to Doris Court in brilliant moonlight arriving home as the clock struck 5 a.m.

The next evening (Saturday) there was an excellent concert at the conclusion of which there was an impromptu dance this being the last chance in Messrs. Hall Scott and Co.'s spacious building. You will see that our Xmas and New Year was by no means dull or miserable, nor were our dear absent ones forgotten.

We are much amused at the reports that reach us from England as to the terrible plight we are in even to the verge of starvation. Please one and for all disabuse your minds of any such ideas. We are quite happy and contented, very much better off than we were in England, whilst as to food we live quite well as ever we did. We have 2 butchers on the town site. Our meat is delivered at the door and is of the very best quality. Certainly we have had difficulties to surmount and hardships to endure but we quite expected we should before we left England and we treasured up a reserve fund of determination and pluck which stood us in good stead when the need came. I would never advise anyone to come out here who is the least afraid of work. They are better off at home.

There is plenty of room to breathe in this country and if the work is hard the freedom, which is the indispensable attribute of the life here, makes one far less susceptible to physical fatigue than in England where one seems to have such a feeling of weighty oppression to

handicap one's energies. Here one feels that each week's work is a step forward whilst also in the old country often times a year's hard toil brought nothing but disappointment and additional anxiety.

We are proud possessors of the best house in the colony and I think I may also add the best homestead. It is generally pronounced by those whose opinion is worth having, to be of exceptionally good value owing to its close proximity to the town, our land is actually adjoining the town site.

There is no doubt whatever but that Lloydminster bids fair to be a very important centre, its growth week by week is marvelous. The Government are now erecting a large Emigration Hall in anticipation of the arrival of the new comers in the spring. Meetings are being held now to discuss and perfect all arrangements for the meeting of expected friends and families and ensure their safe conduct right up to the colony. There seems to be a terrible feeling of jealousy of something akin to it existing at Saskatoon and Battleford with regard to this colony and they are doing their utmost to dissuade people from coming up beyond those two points by spreading the most gloomy reports which are utterly untrue. Many there are who seemed to expect that luxuries sprang up on the prairies like mushrooms, ready for them without any special effort or exertion on their part. I need scarcely say that they are now sadder and wiser men.

So far we have passed through the winter splendidly and at the time of writing this it is the 19th of Jan, Brilliant sunshine for week's end to week's end. Our bungalow has kept beautifully warm, it is heated throughout by pipes connected with the kitchen stove and a heating stove in the Hall. The rooms are all pretty well of an even temperature. The worst feature we have had to contend with is want of water. We have had two wells sunk close to the house but up to now have not been

successful in striking water. Of course we are never without water whilst the snow is about/ we use nothing else but melted snow for washing and cooking, lovely water it is too.

From what I hear I fancy we are being favoured with an exceptionally mild winter to make up for the exceptionally severe spring that greeted us on our arrival to this country. Any way we have all kept well up to now. We have had a good supply of wood from our own land and the "price of coals" is another item over which we have no need to worry. We have to pay very dearly for flour. 1 1/2 dollars for 100 lb. The reason things are so dear is of course owing to the freightage. When the Railway comes through the Colony everything will be cheaper.

There is every prospect of the rail being opened up in a year from now. The telegraph will be in working order in a few weeks time. We have 2 large general stores, drug stores, a resident Doctor and Hospital in view. We have a Choral Union mustering 120 members and they are now forming a Rifle Corps, 160 members enrolled. Mr. Rendell has been appointed Lieutenant and Auditor. The temperature at time of writing registered 28 below zero. Those who have been outside say it is a bit "nippy" and if you don't take proper precautions to well protect nose and ears you soon get them frost bitten. The only remedy there is to well rub the part affected with snow until circulation is restored.

The land here is of splendid quality fit to grow anything and especially adapted for mixed farming. We have now 480 acres. By next spring several thousand more are expected to arrive in the Colony and no trouble is being spared to arrange everything for their comfort on arrival from either Saskatoon or Edmonton. Should this letter be made public and meet the eye of any who may be desirous of coming out to the Colony I can only say we shall be too pleased to answer any questions or give any information in our power. There can be no

doubt whatever but that the Colony will succeed and that
Lloydminster in a few years time will be a very large and prosperous
centre. But I earnestly hope I have here dispelled all unfavourable ideas
as to our fortune. Probably many have been commiserating out lot
have far greater need for pity than we, for whilst they are still
plodding and "hibernating" as are on the progressive probably
making greater headway in 12 months than they in as many years
for this is nothing if not a "go-ahead" country.

Best wishes to all old friends in the "old country" from,
Yours sincerely
Alice Rendell.

Dear Friends,

It has come to my ears that some of you are still athirst for "more about Canada" so I am going to try to send you a short account of how we are progressing in this far away land. Well, the town of Lloydminster is growing not "slowly" and surely, but rapidly and surely". Just recently we have a fine Bank Building belonging to the "Canadian Bank of Commerce."

Lloydminster

Nov, 1905

Dear friends,

It is such a long time since I last wrote you a general letter that I think I must make an effort to give you some idea of how we are getting on up to date. Much has happened since I wrote last and I hardly know where to begin.

Lloydminster is now quite a little town, the rail is up and our station is quite a pretty addition to the town. Little did I think that the whistle of an engine could ever sound so sweet. The passenger service is not properly organized yet as the line is still in the hands of the construction party but as soon as the line is completed and handed over to the CNR company then we shall have a regular service. It is hard for you in the old country surrounded by every comfort and luxury to realize in the smallest degree what we have all put through the past two years in comparative isolation. Sometimes without the slightest idea of what was going on in the outside world for a fortnight or three weeks together. For the winter comparatively at the mercy of the weather for news of provisions, all having to come by road from Saskatoon and when they did come the price of the commonest necessity was enough to make the pluckiest feel

downhearted when we saw the capital we had thought ample to carry us on for a year or so vanishing like dust almost in bare living.

It will be different when the train is in became a stock phrase. It was weary waiting and many of us had almost lost heart until one day we heard the rails were laid within two miles of Lloydminster and in less than a week later the first train steamed into Lloydminster. Since then there has been quite a revolution in the price of everything. Flour, which we had paid 5 dollars per 100 lb bag is now \$2.80 top price and everything else in proportion. Lumber too is coming down in price.

Town lots have been on the market and bought at high prices. Everyone is now building lumber houses instead of the log shack of the "old timers", bricks too are being extensively used for building and this winter will probably be a pretty severe test as to whether they will stand the climate or no.

To those like ourselves who were amongst the first to arrive up in the Colony in May 1903 and at most one dozen tents were all that could be seen on the bare prairie and now three large hotels are in course of erection, stores of all kinds, a fine building for the Branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, drug store, printing office from which is issued weekly out newsy little paper the "Lloydminster Times". It is just marvelous. This year has been a good season on the whole for harvest, but everything has to be done with such a rush the summer season is so short.

One needs an infinite amount of patience in this climate, the late and early frosts play such awful havoc. This year we have had 50 acres under cultivation our grain is not threshed yet as the threshing outfit has not been up our way yet but the general field is oats about 50 to

60 bushels per acre, wheat about 25. We had about two acres of potatoes and a splendid crop, but alas, an early frost spoilt half before they could be got out of the ground. From 4 lbs of seed from the experimental farm. Mr. Rendell has a yield of 136 pounds many of them weighing over 20 ounces. Our garden produce was splendid. We picked several cwt of peas and disposed of in town, one restaurant taking nearly all we could supply.

We have put on a large addition to our house in the shape of a substantial log building 14 ft by 18 ft which will serve to store the grain in winter and in summer will be utilized as a summer kitchen. Mr. Rendell is now completing a fine stable also log, 30 by 15. We have some good cows and our milk is disposed of right away and fetched from the door so that we have no bother.