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MASON



BRADSHAW

# Family History

by  
Irma Ruth M. Anderson

## MASON FAMILY

There were many by the name of Mason who came to America in the early colonial period. They settled in various colonies from Maine to Virginia. After reading extensively about the many different branches including the Quakers of Pennsylvania I have concluded that our line is descended from one of the Virginia families for the following reasons: first names are the same, especially Thomas, generation after generation; family names into which the Masons married are the same both in Surrey County, Virginia and Edwards County, Illinois; the family tradition of some "Pennsylvania Dutch" heritage places this line in that part of western Pennsylvania where the Germans early settled at the time when the Masons were living there; and dates fit with published records. It is possible that this family which I assume to be ours was related to George Mason of Gunston Hall who was actively interested in promoting settlement of the western frontier before the Revolution and the Illinois country after the war was over.

According to Robert M. Torrence, Francis Mason, 1584-1648, came to Virginia on the ship, *John and Francis*, in 1613 with his wife, Mary, and daughter Ann. He is listed in 1624 among the inhabitants of Elizabeth City, Virginia with his wife (2nd wife) Alice and son Francis born in Virginia. This was probably Alice Ganey b. 1598 who came to America in the ship, *Margaret and John*, in 1622. She was the mother of Col. Lemuel Mason who married Ann Sewall, daughter of Capt. Henry Seawall. Lemuel's will was probated in Lower Norfolk County 15 Sept. 1702. He had been a vestryman, justice and Burgess of that county. Their children were Elizabeth, Lemuel, George and Thomas. Thomas, in his will, refers to his "loving brother Capt. George Mason and his cousin George Newton."

This George Mason married Phillis Hobson, daughter of Peter Hobson. In his will 13 Jan. 1710 he mentions his children: Frances, George, Abigail and Thomas. Thomas married (1) Mary Newton, daughter of Capt. Nathaniel Newton. Thomas and Mary had eight children, among whom were Col. Isaac Mason who married Catherine Harrison and who developed the iron mines of western Pennsylvania and Samuel Mason who was a daring soldier during the Revolution but afterward turned renegade and became one of the outlaws of *Cave-in-the-Rocks* on the Ohio River. Thomas Mason, the last of the eight children, was born 17 July, 1755. Thomas and Mary had acquired land in 1754 in Frederick County, Virginia on Mill Creek. This was probably the first step on their way west and they doubtless remained here in the vicinity of Winchester until it was safe to move into Pennsylvania and it was opened up to settlers. Here Mary Newton Mason died and Thomas married again to Elizabeth whose maiden name is not known, and by whom he had four more children. Torrence refers to sons Thomas and Joseph (by Mary Newton) as having joined General George Rogers Clark's expedition to the Illinois country with "no further record".

At this point we note the dates of Thomas Meason's will written 1785, Hempfield township, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and recorded

1805. (During this period the name was spelled Meason as well as Mason.) The date of his son, Thomas's, birth 1755 and the first known date of our ancestor Thomas born 1780 in Pennsylvania (U. S. Federal Census 1850 Richland Co., Ill.). This will mentions son Thomas as being one of six children under the age of twenty-one. He also mentions an older son John. By 1805 Thomas had achieved the age of twenty-one and fulfilled the terms of his father's will which had probably delayed its recording.

Thomas Mason came to Edwards County, Illinois sometime in 1819 from Pennsylvania. This and the year of his birth, 1780, (Federal Census, 1850) are the earliest published facts about him. His household of twelve probably travelled the new National Road across the mountains in Pennsylvania to the Ohio River, down that river to the mouth of the Wabash, then still by water to either the English settlement at Albion or to Vincennes. He settled on land that is now part of three counties — Edwards, Richland and Lawrence — not far from the road between Vincennes and St. Louis which at that time was the boundary between white settlements and Indian lands and a highway dangerous to travel because of outlaws. One hundred and fifty years later it was the exact spot of the center of population of continental United States.

Records state that Thomas came with "William Nash and his brother" so the household of twelve in the 1820 Federal Census may have included them. As Thomas was forty years old at that time it is possible that his wife was of a second marriage. For this census there were two boys under ten, George born 1810 and Thomas, born 1 March 1820; three girls under ten, one being Polly; two girls between ten and sixteen, Louisa and Sarah; one male between eighteen and twenty-six.

The land on which the Mason family settled, and which was known as Mason's Prairie, was located about twenty-five miles southwest of Lawrenceville. It is south of the present town of Parkersburg and a few miles north of Albion where in 1818 a band of English immigrants established themselves under the leadership of a Mr. Flowers. To the east was the town of West Salem composed chiefly of German immigrants.

Fred Gerhard said in 1857 that "the most remarkable and striking feature distinguishing Illinois from other states consists in her extensive prairies". A prairie was a luxuriant growth of grass and a natural meadow. The Mason land was composed of prairie and woods. Later when the soil was exhausted, coal and oil were discovered and today it is no longer an exclusively agricultural land. Near the present boundary line between Richland and Edwards counties a school house known as Mason's School was built. It is no longer standing. Not far from the highway between Parkersburg and Albion lies the Mason farm cemetery.

There is little information available on the first Mason family to arrive in Illinois. Thomas served as justice of the peace in Edwards County and in Lawrence County after that county was separated from Edwards in 1821. The following information was obtained from Bible

records, Federal Census and Marriage Records of Lawrence and Richland Counties:

Sarah born 1805 in Pa. married Moses Johnson.  
Louisa born ca. 1807 in Pa. married Robert Thread 5 April 1830.  
George born 4 Sept. 1810 in Pa. married Emily Parker 7 Jan. 1832.  
Mary (Polly) b. ca. 1812 married James H. Parker 14 July 1832.  
Hannah married Oliver W. Phelps 4 Jan. 1823.  
Thomas born 1 March 1820 married 1) Dicy Jones 30 Dec. 1841;  
2) Almira Bradshaw Shannon 5 Aug. 1850.  
Lydia born 1824 married Reuben Selby 22 April 1839.  
John born 4 May 1829 married Catharine Jane Hay 3 May 1859.

On 1 Sept. 1829 Thomas Mason married Elizabeth Brander (Lawrence Co. File Box M166). It is logical to assume that John's mother died in childbirth and that he married soon after to have a mother for his household of children.

On record at the Illinois, Land Office is the purchase of two parcels of land by Thomas Mason of Lawrence County and one by George Mason of the same county. Because of the change in county boundaries the Census records for these families are found in Edwards County for 1820 and 1830; in Lawrence County for 1840; in Richland County for 1850. In the latter Thomas is seventy years old, his wife Elizabeth, 64. Living with them is Reuben Mason, age 20, Sarah Patterson, age 22, and Franklin Patterson, age 4. No further record of Thomas appears in the census of these counties.

Thomas Mason, born 1 March 1820, grew up in that period of Illinois history that saw the state expanding into Indian lands, increasing population and developing politically as a significant part of the western frontier. Many from the slave states (Kentucky and Tennessee) were among the new settlers. Abraham Lincoln began his law career at that time.

It was also a period of religious fervor. Led by Peter Cartwright, the Methodists established themselves early in Illinois, and it was doubtless under his influence that Thomas was drawn into the ministry probably after his marriage to Dicy Jones on 30 Dec. 1841. He was twenty-one at the time and was already in possession of eighty acres of land in Richland County which had been deeded to him by his father in November of the same year. Children of this marriage were:

Shadrach R. born 12 Oct. 1842; died 29 July 1864 at Galesville, Wis.  
Elijah born 17 Sept. 1844; died 7 Nov. 1925 at Washington, Ill.;  
married Mary Ellen Ferryman 23 Sept. 1874.  
Sarah born 22 Sept. 1846.  
Mahala born 9 Sept. 1848.

Thomas sold his property in 1845. Was it in preparation for entering the itinerant ministry?

Following the record of the birth of Mahala in the family Bible there is the simple statement "Dicy Mason, wife of Thomas Mason, died" —

no date, but it was probably 1849 or early 1850 for the next entry is the marriage of Thomas Mason to Almira Shannon on Aug. 5, 1850.

Almira Shannon (nee Bradshaw) was a widow with probably two small children. (The Bible records their death, but as their birth is not given and the dates do not fit, this assumption is made.) She came into the motherless Mason family of four children all under eight years of age. The next ten years of their married life saw six children born to them, five of whom died in infancy including still-born twins, and also the deaths of the two other children.

When the family moved to Richland County, Wisconsin in 1857 it consisted of Thomas's four children by his first marriage. Margaret was born 2 April 1858. James Eddy Mason was born 1 March 1861 and lived to be ninety-four years, eight months and eighteen days old but Margaret died before her eighth birthday.

Almira Bradshaw was the daughter of James Bradshaw and Matilda Frances McMackin and was born in Wayne County, Illinois on 4 Sept. 1829. No record of her marriage to Mr. Shannon has been found as early Wayne County records were destroyed by fire. Her photographs show a calm, poised and thoughtful person. That she was deeply spiritual and inspired affection from relatives and friends alike is evidenced by her autograph album which was inscribed by many during the latter years of her life when she visited relatives in Illinois, Indiana and Kansas. These inscriptions are revealing in showing the mind and thought of those with whom she was associated. The album was a gift from R. H. Burns on Dec. 25, 1888. Excerpts from it follow:

Mrs. Walser, Dear Friend: "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." Your friend,  
R. H. Burns.

Mount Erie, Ill., April the 23, 1889

Dear Sister: How I would love to see you once more in this life but if not permitted to meet on earth lets strive for to gain a home in that blest land where our loved ones await us.  
Your loving sister,

Lizzie Bradshaw

Dear Mother: We are all drifting into tomorrow. Today with us will be over. May we meet where the sunrise of Heaven Dawns clear on that beautiful Shore. Rebecca Ferguson

Amboy, Kan. 11/9, 1890

Dear Mother: We may write our names in albums, We may trace them in the sand, We may chisle them in marble With a firm and steady hand But the pages soon are sullied Soon each name will fade away And each moment will crumble As all earthly things decay. But my Mother there is an album Filled with leaves of snowy white Where no names are ever tarnished And each page is ever bright. In the book of Life (God's album) Where our Loved are penned with care And may we an unbroken family Find our names recorded there. The sentiments of your Affectionate Son. J.E.Mason

Richland Center, Mch 17th 89

Dear Sister: The voyage of life with you no doubt has been dotted with many trials and heartaches, but when you contemplate the great future and the preparations our Savior has made for our eternal happiness, and that the greater half of our family are now safely housed within the veil watching and waiting our coming may you with the poet be able to sing: "My hardest trials are are past, my triumphs have begun,"

Your brother, I. W. Bradshaw

Amboy, Kansas Nov. 9th, 1890

Dear Mother, That your last days may be your best and that you may be rewarded for all the good you have done here, is the wish of your daughter.

Viola Mason

Mount Erie, Ill. April 22, 89

Dear Aunt: Drop a pearl in memory's casket for me.

Your Loveling Niece, Mamie B. Yohe

Indianapolis, Ind. Aug. 28, 92

Dear Sister: Once more we meet on Earth happy is the thought Sad will be the Farewell O may we meet again if not on earth O may we meet in Heaven.

Annie Bradshaw

Woodstock, Wis. Sep. the 4th 1894

Dear Friend Sister Walser: May this your birthday be a happy day and a day to be remembered by each of us and may we so live that we can meet on that heavenly shore where parting is no more is the sincer wish of

your Friend Mary R. Mick

John Mason, brother of Thomas, appears to have been the first of the family to penetrate the frontier in Wisconsin which at that time lay beyond the Wisconsin River in the forests and wooded hills of Richland County. Deeds indicate that he was buying land there in the summer of 1856. By 1857 "John Mason of Edwards Co., Ill." was acting for relatives. When Thomas arrived to make his home in the Town of Henrietta, Village of Woodstock he carried with him the Power of Attorney for John which was signed by Milton Satterlee and Reuben Selby (a brother-in-law) as witnesses. His wife's brother-in-law, Henry Travers, came the same year and settled on Sec. 30, Town of Henrietta. Reuben Selby had entered 160 acres on Sec. 36, Town of Bloom in 1854 where he became the first wagon maker. So the Masons were surrounded by relatives and friends.

At this time Thomas Mason was a "local preacher" of the Methodist Episcopal Church but later he joined the Conference as a regular preacher and was assigned a circuit. An organization was effected under his leadership as "class leader" and was known as the East Pine Class. Later in the year he was sent to Salem, La Crosse County for a year, then to Mendota for Two years, two years at Augusta, Eau Clair County and finally to Galesville in Trempeleau County.

It was from Galesville that he enlisted in the Union forces on 14 Aug. 1862 and was assigned to Co. D, 14th Reg. Wisconsin Infantry on 5 Sept. 1862. He was killed in action at the Battle of Corinth less than a month later on 3 Oct. 1862. This brigade had been assigned to the 6th Division commanded by General McArthur which moved to the support of the Federal forces at Corinth. After several weeks of reconnoitering it was ordered to the east side of luka. Companies B and D of the 14th were thrown out as skirmishers. After rejoining their division, the entire division was ordered to Corinth which they entered on Sept. 21st. The report of the Adjutant General reads "A stand was made here, and the battle of Corinth commenced. Our regiment occupied the post of honor, the most advanced position of the line of battle, directly across the road upon which the enemy must advance, and supporting the First Minnesota Battery, with orders to hold the position at all hazards, and that, too, without being reinforced. From nine in the morning, until one in the afternoon, they were exposed to a strong cross fire from the enemy's advanced lines, and retired only when — flanked on both sides — the enemy charged upon them in column. Their loss, in this battle, amounted to ninety-eight killed, wounded, and missing. The following extract from the official report of Col. Oliver, commanding the brigade, finds an appropriate place in their record: 'Col. Hancock and his regiment, the 14th Wis. Vols. there was no discount on, always steady, cool and vigorous. This regiment was the one to rely upon in any emergency. Though suffering more loss than any other regiment in the command, they maintained their lines, and delivered their fire, with all the precision and coolness, which could have been maintained upon drill!'"

Thomas Mason's service record indicates that he served as a private but undoubtedly he anticipated serving as a chaplain. He is buried in the trench of the unknown dead at the National Cemetery in Corinth. Both of his sons, Shadrach and Elijah, were in the same regiment with him. Shadrach was severely wounded and ultimately received a disability discharge. He died in 1864 at the age of twenty-one years and nine months and is buried in the cemetery at Galesville. Elijah served until the end of the war and later lived in Washington, Ill. where he died in 1925.

Apparently Almira Mason continued to live in Galesville after the death of her husband but no doubt there were trips back and forth to Woodstock, Richland County to visit her relatives there. Death continued to be a frequent visitor to the Mason family. Little "Maggie" only lived to be seven years old. A small stone in the Galesville cemetery indicates that she passed away 10 Jan. 1866. Sarah and Mahala, children of Thomas's first marriage, were eighteen and sixteen at the time of his death. It appears that they may have married or returned to Illinois by this time as only James E. was with his mother when she married Henry T. Walser, a merchant and mill owner of Woodstock, on 20 Oct. 1866 and returned to that place to live. He applied for guardianship papers for James E. in 1867 but resigned that trust in 1877 when James Petitioned the Court that his uncle, Ira W. Bradshaw, be named guardian. As of that date, 23 Jan. 1878, James stated that he was the only living child of Thomas and Almira Mason. In his petition he also states that "the personal property of your petitioner now amounts to about the sum of eighteen hundred dollars ... in money and promissory notes."

In 1866 Henry Walser and family had arrived in Woodstock, Wis., from Edwards Co., Ill., and purchased the general merchandise store there. His wife died the same year leaving him with a family of six, the youngest, Hiram H., six months older than James Mason. Again Almira assumed the responsibilities of raising two families. Another child was born to her but only the death is recorded on the tombstone in the Woodstock cemetery of Thomas Edgar, s. of H.T. and Almira Walser, Aug. 23, 1869.

James attended the district school, then the seminary in Elroy and later, the first and only high school in Richland County at that time at Sextonville. On 20 Feb. 1881 he married Viola G. Blake who had been "helping" in the home of his uncle, Ira Wayne Bradshaw. In 1948 at the age of eighty-seven James wrote his autobiography. It tells little of his family or activities other than those connected with the training and showing of horses which was a consuming interest all his life. The following is an edited copy of his autobiography with supplements from the autobiography of his son, Roy E. Mason:

"I was born near Galesville, Wisconsin, in 1861. My father was a frontier Methodist minister but enlisted at the beginning of the U.S. Civil War, 1862, losing his life at the Battle of Corinth in 1862, leaving me a War Baby. My mother married Henry T. Walser of Woodstock, Wisconsin, in Richland County when I was five years old. He had three grown boys and girls. I never heard a cross word from him; morally, a perfect man."

"The first Christmas, one of his sons (only six months my senior) and I each received a nice little red axe for Christmas. Delighted with the axes we went out into the orchard and were cutting down dead trees, we thought. Come to find out they all looked dead in winter. So after a good scolding from my mother we did not see those axes again for some time."

"I was always wanting a horse. Mother promised me one as most parents do. However, she never got me one. Later when I was twelve years old I bought a weanling filly from my uncle with money I earned running errands for him. I paid thirty dollars for her. I broke her to drive and to ride when she was three years old, and sold her for one hundred dollars at the same age. Father Walser had furnished the feed. He himself would never handle horses but was kind to all animals."

"I seemed to have natural ability in handling and working horses, but when I would run into trouble, I would go to my mother for advice. She was a fine horsewoman though she never rode, being raised on a farm near Fairfield, Wayne County, Illinois. From that filly on I would buy and sell horses. I could get along with horses very well. These transactions were all in my teens."

"My step-father Walser was considered in those days well-to-do and owned and operated a flour mill known as a grist mill. He took one-eighth toll for grinding grain, and was as honest as the day is long. Being thus occupied from early morning until late at night, we never



saw much of him at the house. That being the case, it left mother with the responsibility of governing and managing the home. She made clothes for Hi and me just alike, very particular not to show any favor to me, thus preventing any gossip about a step-mother."

"The family owned a black, stocking-legged, bald-faced gelding; a top buggy and a light one-horse wagon in which I would deliver flour for sale to the country stores, and coming home, wagon empty. I would train him to trot. I also rode him. I would race with the town boys, perhaps run a race, or then trot a race. We could beat them at either."

"I never rode in a saddle until I was grown up, and I never had any instruction in training or riding except what I gleaned from my mother in odd moments... I had this old family horse trained to five gaits finally. I had never seen a five gaited horse and found out later what a wonderfully easy gait was the rack. My Uncle Wayne Bradshaw owned a general merchandise store and I worked for him out-of-school days, always having a horse to ride or drive."

"I had a little mare which was sired by a very fine horse known as Golden Charlie. This little mare could beat any of the local horses, running or trotting. I rode her one day to Richland Center, the county seat, which was fourteen miles away. On my return I came by a farm owned by the Pool boys. They had a Thoroughbred mare they were training to race. When they saw me riding by on this mare of which they had heard, nothing would do but they must test the speed of their Thoroughbred, which at first I refused, telling them I had ridden most of the day and didn't want her to be nervous the rest of the trip home (about ten miles). They still insisted. Finally I said I would not strip her of the saddle, nor the raincoat strapped behind the saddle, thinking that if I got beaten I'd have a good alibi. So they brought their mare out. There was a level strip along there about a quarter of a mile. I told them I wouldn't urge my mare to do more than she wanted to do. So we lined up. I said, "Say when you are ready." He said "Ready!" and gave his mare a tap. He finished about two lengths behind under the whip. I just kept on riding."

"I had this mare trained to trot in about 3:20, 'if she didn't get excited and break'. There was a trotting horse breeder who had a half mile track. I was always telling him how well she was doing. He told me he could give me an eighth mile start and beat me with his old Fannie. I told him I would bet him five dollars, and he took me up. So the next Sunday we had the race. He passed me in the last eighth. My mare heard him coming and broke the trot! This trotting horseman's name was Joel Tadder, Always one of the competitors at the county fair, Richland Center, Wisconsin. This was in the year 1881."

"When we were both twenty years old, I was married to Viola G. Blake in 1881. She is the mother of our four boys and two girls who are all married and have families of their own now."

"My wife and I for a time ran a general merchandise store in which we had a fourth class post office. Although my wife was six weeks

younger than I, she was of legal age, since she was a married woman. So she was postmistress until I was twenty-one, when I could be postmaster. We were doing pretty good with our store and post office, but there was very little cash involved in the trading. The farmers brought in their butter and eggs which they traded for goods, and it was not long before I had all my little capital sunk in 'accounts due'; thereby running my business on borrowed money. In about four years I traded the business for a little eighty-acre diversified farm. Neither did this farming venture turn out so well, and, anyway, I had got the 'Far West' fever." (During this period their first children arrived. They were twins, Roy E. and Ray W. born 29 Dec. 1881 and Chester Arthur born 11 April, 1883.)

"My friend, Edgar Simmons had two brothers and a sister all in Wyoming. They had a horse ranch twenty miles from Trabine on the south fork of Crazy Woman Creek. I decided to leave my family on the farm and go out there with him to look things over. We bought our tickets to the Golden Gate, California, for twenty-eight dollars, while the fare to Cheyenne was \$31.00, being cut rates to California. Had we gone on to California we would have gotten a rebate of \$13.00. However, we got off at Cheyenne arriving there in April. There we outfitted ourselves to make the three hundred mile trip north to his brother's ranch which was located north of the Hard Winter Davis Ranch on the Powder River. The nearest post office was at Trabine, twenty miles away."

"After a few days in Cheyenne we started for the ranch. We had two cow ponies for a team and riding, and a light covered wagon with tarps to cover our bed rolls, guns, etc. The second day out one of the ponies balked, near an old freighter, fortunately, who had an extra mule which he sold to us for seventeen dollars. We worked the mule with the good cow pony which left the other for scouting around and chasing antelopes. I really wanted to take the balkiness out of that cow pony but my partner thought I might only make him worse, so I didn't insist since I wanted to avoid disagreement."

"The third day out was stormy and it began to snow. We made early camp that night, spreading the tarp out, making the bed rolls on one end of it, and then pulling the other half up over our heads. In the morning I reached for my boots and found them half full of snow, which taught me to double my boots over, laying the boots flat with the tops under so that rain or snow couldn't get in. We were very evidently 'tender-feet'."

"Reaching our destination the afternoon of the tenth day, we met the Simmons. Charlie Simmons was mounted on a cow pony. He said to me, 'I was just going over the hill there to pack in an antelope I killed. I'll saddle another pony if you want to go along.' I said 'O.K.' So we brought it in, stopping at a little log stable. He opened the door and there were two other antelope hung up. I learned to eat antelope three times a day and like it."

"Well, I stayed at the Simmons' about a week, getting pointers on how to be a cowboy, and roping a few fence posts and horses. Wyoming at

that time was wide open western land; no fences. Stage stations were about thirty miles apart and were the only settlements aside from the big cow and horse ranches."

"One day Charlie and I rode over to a wide place in the road to meet a superintendent of the Powder River Cattle Company. This man was gathering an outfit to work on the round-up which was to collect three herds of three thousand each. I went with the third herd on the trail to the Northwest Territory of Canada. This was in April, 1886. I was twenty-five years old, about as tall as I am now, five feet eleven and a half inches, and my weight was only about a hundred and thirty, due to my finicky eating, although I was a bear on pies and cakes. But it wasn't long before I could take my tin plate up to the cook wagon and load up with any mulligan they dished out. And, of course, we were all sleeping in the open."

"I've missed telling you about my first experience riding as a tenderfoot. The superintendent had told me, 'If you want a job, I'll take you on. Get your bed roll. We pay forty dollars a month. We start from here at 1:00 P.M. to get where our horses are rounded up.' "

"This was a big English outfit owning several brands among them the 'V-V' and the '76'. We arrived at the rendezvous at dark. I thought we had travelled about forty miles. At any rate I had tried to find a soft place in my saddle without avail. The next morning we rolled out early for 'come and get it'. Then to the corrals, all hands roping out their broncs. I asked the foreman what horse I should ride. I told him I didn't want a bad horse yet. He said, 'Go in there and pick you out a good one.' "

"By this time the riders had all roped theirs out and were sitting on their horses watching this tenderfoot do his stuff. Well, in the corral I watched them go round and round all excited. Finally I spotted a black, bald-faced, stocking-legged horse like our old family horse. I threw my rope. It landed where the horse had been. Finally one of the boys came up and asked which one I wanted, he would help me out (which would have been an insult to an old cowboy). As I pointed out my choice I saw him wink at the other boys, and as his rope tightened on this horse he snorted and reared and appeared to be quite a bronc. I walked up to him, slipped my rope on, and taking the other off, led him up to my saddle outside the corral. I put the bridle on him after some resistance, got the saddle blanket, easing up to him gently. When I slipped it up on his back, he gave a big snort and buck and off it went."

"They saw I couldn't handle him alone, so this fellow offered his help. He said, 'You will have to blind-fold him, Partner.' I took out my red bandana and tied it across his eyes. Then he stood pretty well. I had noticed that my partner was careful in pulling the front cinch, and when he got the ladigo through the rings on the hind cinch, he gave it a smart pull and the bronc went into the air bucking. Then I remembered Charlie's warning. He had said, 'When your bronc wants

to buck before you mount, let him out to the end of your rope. When he quits perhaps he won't buck when you get on him.' "

"So this bronc bucked around and quit right in the middle of a little brook. Thinks I to myself, 'I'll ride him here, or I'll quit here.' I coiled my rope up to the horse and mounted, holding his head up. We rode out and joined the other riders, the buck all out of him as long as I held his head up. A horse has to have his head to do a good job of bucking."

"Each rider usually has eight or ten horses in his riding string, changing his horse at noon and also at night for night-herding. I rode this bronc that I had the trouble with more often than his turn in order to keep him in hand, and then I got his back sore, so I didn't rope him out for a couple of weeks. Finally, one day at noon, he looked all right to me, so I roped him, pulling him up to my saddle. He was as snorty as before. While I had some trouble and delay in mounting the other boys had ridden off. I was finally mounted, put my heels to him to catch up, and he gave me some ride, bucking. However, by this time I didn't mind. He was a good bronc from then on."

"We commenced rounding up the cattle for the first herd of three thousand head. This was in the territory north of the Powder River. Along in July we finished the third herd with which I went, crossing the Tongue River, the Rosebud Mountains, and down into the Little Big Horn Valley where stands Custer's monument of the terrible massacre of his soldiers. If I am not mistaken, the massacre was in 1876 on the Crow Reservation. While there we left the remains of a fat two-year old beef for the Indians, after we had taken the choice parts for our outfit. Such a gesture encouraged the Indians' goodwill. "

"We naturally had to swim all those rivers; the Big Horn, the Little Horn, the Tongue and the Yellowstone, the latter of which was the north boundary of the Crow Reservation. One of our boys was drowned in crossing the Big Horn. We called him 'Red from Texas'. We never did know what actually happened to 'Red'. The foreman had directed Red and another cowboy to swim out in the stream to an island to gather in two or three head there. The other cowboy swam his horse over without looking back until arriving at the island, and when he did, all he could see was that Red was off his horse and only his head was showing in the rapid current. Red's horse had been tired and he really should have changed horses before going in. All that we knew was that he was off and unable to swim. We searched the river for some miles without success and finally abandoned the project. I inscribed the facts of his drowning on the lid of a plug tobacco box and left it by the river nailed to a tree. We had to go on."

"We were nearly half a day getting the herd to go across the swift waters of the Yellowstone River. As soon as the leaders struck the rapid current, they would turn back, causing the entire herd to 'mill'

around and around in the water. The foreman finally persuaded two Indian bucks to swim in with the herd on their cayuses, one on the down-stream side, the other on the up-stream, and to slip from their horses as the lead steers hit the current, grab their horns and point them across the river so they couldn't turn back. This was at Custer, Montana where I quit the outfit and bought a ticket home to Woodstock, Wisconsin."

"The fall of 1887 I took a logging team up in northern Wisconsin to team in a logging camp. They used big logging bobsleds to haul the logs out of the pine forests, landing them on the ice in a mill pond which was adjacent to the saw mill. They used oxen to draw the logs out of the forest to loading skids. The ice on that pool would freeze three and four feet thick. I well remember the sixteenth day of January, 1888. The thermometer was down to sixty below zero. It was usually thirty-five to forty-five degrees all winter; no wind or even a breeze, making it possible for men to work every day. Before the Spring thaw I returned home."

"In April, 1888, I started west again with my faithful logging team hitched to my covered wagon, this time taking my wife and four boys. Thomas Mason, whom so many horse owners know today, was then five months old. I had made a cupboard to fit in the hind end of the wagon box with a door hinged at the bottom. When opened, it answered for a table with one leg to support it. Our outfit was old 'round-up' style, with the water keg on the side of the wagon box. We made camp over night at farm houses, and over Sundays."

(Such a rig as we travelled in was commonly known as a "prairie schooner". It consisted of an ordinary wagon with top, side boards and 4 bows attached on top and an equal distance apart over which was stretched a heavy white canvas, leaving an opening at the front where the driver was seated; the corners were drawn together at the rear which made a complete enclosure when desired...We also carried a small sheet-iron stove, and at meal time wherever we happened to be, my father would first place this stove at a convenient place on the ground, and after starting a fire in it would open the cupboard, secure a pail of water for mother to begin dinner with and then unhitch and feed the horses...

The route chosen was to Richland Center thence crossing the Mississippi River at Dubuque to Des Moines and Grinnel, Iowa and across the Missouri River at Nebraska City and Beatrice, Neb., thence into Kansas thru Republic, Jewel and Rooks County where on June 7th just at noon we arrived at the home of one W. P. Baker whose farm adjoined that of the one we were to settle on and make our future home and possible fortune...) — R.E.M.

"We got along fine until nearing Grinnell, Iowa, on a Saturday. I failed to persuade any of three or four places to let us camp over Sunday. Arriving at another farm, I approached the lady standing in the door and stated that we would like to camp there with her over Sunday, put my team in the barn, my wife and baby in the house, and the rest of us would sleep in the tent. She said, 'Mister, we used to do that, but so many times they seemed to be color blind, and took things with them that belonged to us. So we don't keep anybody anymore. My husband is out in the barnyard. You had better see him.' "

"I went out to the barn and found him among fine cattle and horses. He seemed easy to approach. I stated my wants and he immediately told me the same story. However, I didn't give up and complimented him on his fine stock, etc. Finally he said, 'You don't look too bad. I'll take a chance on you. Put your team in the barn. I'll show your wife into the house.' "

"We had a lovely time there. They were about our age, loved music, and so did we, I having been leader of our home band for seven years (I played E flat cornet); also I had been choir master. During our stay we talked horses and cattle occasionally. I would mention what could be taught a horse, especially ill-mannered ones. I didn't think he believed all I told him, although he did not say so."

"Monday morning I hitched up, packed all the belongings, and as always, was careful not to take anything not ours. I left the team standing with the family all adjusted in their places while I went across the yard to where the farmer and some of his men were. Just then the stable man led out a fine two-year old Clyde stallion with a very severe bit. The man had a blacksnake whip, but the stallion was standing on his hind feet trying to get to my team. I then remarked, 'He is not very well mannered.' The farmer replied, 'No. There is one horse that wouldn't submit to your treatment.'

I had been itching to get my hands on that stallion, so was emboldened to say, 'Get me a little rope, a clothesline, or anything. In thirty or forty minutes I'll stand him beside the stable door, throw the rope over his back, and you can lead out your mares under his nose. He will not move.'

'On, no,' they replied, 'not him. We have tried everything.'

'Just give me a trial,' I insisted. 'Make me out a blow-hard before your men, if you like.'

'Boys, can you find him a rope?' he finally said.

They brought me one and I got my buggy whip out of the wagon. I put the rope on him, worked him around a little while, and conquered him so that he was watching me instead of me having to watch him. I then led him up to the stable door and threw the rope over his back and said, 'Lead out your mares.'

The farmer said, 'You better take hold of that rope.'

I said, 'I would if necessary.' They led their mares out. The stallion just looked at them and never moved. Then with his following me around, I stopped, facing a big watering trough. Jumping on the edge with the horse close by, I said, 'I think he would follow me across this water.'

The owner said, 'No, I don't think so.'

I just stepped across to the other edge and said, 'Come here.'

The horse put one foot in the water and was coming. The man said, 'He will do it!'

I turned the horse over to the stable man, and he asked, 'Will he do those things for me?'

'Yes', I replied, 'if you do not unconsciously teach him not to.'

I asked the farmer my bill for lodging and he answered that I owed him nothing. I then got in the wagon and we started on our way to Rooks County, Kansas, arriving there June the seventh, 1888, on a half section without improvements or water. I pitched the tent in a draw, took the wagon cover with the side extensions off, and set it on the ground together with the tent, making what we called 'home' in a strange land..."

(During this first summer, June to September, 1888 we lived in a tent located on the adjoining farm until a sod house could be built. Our tent was pitched in a small ravine or slough, so was sheltered from the strong winds that so often arise in that then dry and desolate country. My mother continued to use the sheet-iron stove for cooking purposes, and well do I remember that about twice a week she, with us four boys, would trudge off to some neighbor's house to do the baking...My youngest brother Tommy was less than a year old and when making these trips we other boys would take turns in dragging him over the buffalo grass in mother's tin dish pan.

This country was exceptionally level and one could see from eight to ten or fifteen miles, and in such a country a mirage was not uncommon. The soil was mostly covered with a very short, curly grass known as buffalo grass; but in the creek bottoms and occasional low lands a taller grass grew which was known as blue grass and this was often cut for wild hay. Most of the houses in those days were built with sod, obtained by plowing or breaking the uncultivated ground which would be in strips of about fourteen or sixteen inches wide and not crumple apart but remain solid. These strips would be cut into lengths of about twenty inches and being of a thickness of about two inches were then gathered by the men and in

building a house were placed in about the same manner as brick is laid resulting in a building with walls about sixteen inches thick. These houses were the coolest in summer and the warmest in winter of any building known. They were usually plastered or cemented on the inside walls and then white-washed, and after a board flooring had been laid the general appearance on the inside was no different than the ordinary frame building.) — R. E. M.

"My half-brother, Elijah Mason, who lived in Washington, Illinois, had bought this half section (three hundred and twenty acres) on terms and he proposed to finish paying for the land, and if I would go on it and improve it he would go fifty-fifty with me. That looked good to me, what with all the high pressure salesmanship and advertisement, and without knowing any of the drawbacks."

"In the meantime I had to get work. The Union Pacific had just built a new road through this country. I succeeded in getting a job painting depots and outbuildings for two dollars a day, and I had to ride nine miles to and from work. I worked at anything to get a dollar."

"Along in September after it had rained, I was cutting cornstalks for a neighbor about a half a mile from where I intended to build. As I was working a local man came up to me and suggested that I come over for noon lunch and get acquainted with my other neighbors. I said, 'I am sorry, but I must keep at this job for I don't know when I'll get another.'

He still insisted until I gave in finally, and we started across the prairie toward where I planned to build. Seeing a crowd over that way I said, 'I wonder what has happened!' The man said, 'Let's stop over there and see.' When we arrived I saw the joke. The crowd of neighbors was there to break the sod and lay up a sod house for me. They built that sod house up to the plate, ready for the rafters that day. That was the Western Spirit being demonstrated.

I had no money with which to buy lumber for making the doors, window frames, nor laying the floors. But one day a man came along and said he was getting out of the country. He had a corn crib and he wanted to trade the lumber in for my tent. After dickering around for awhile, we came to an agreement. My three older boys and I took the wagon and went about twelve miles to look at the crib, agreeing to take it if I liked it. We tore that corn crib down, getting enough lumber with which to finish the house. There were shale deposits in this country, and mixed with sand, it made a fine white plaster for the inside of the house. (I hauled the sand and lime and mixed them as I had seen plasterers do and proceeded to cover the inside walls. To my surprise I made a pretty good job.) Later I also built a sod stable."



"Having been reared in Wisconsin where all farm land had first to be cleared of brush and timber, this open prairie, with its thick buffalo grass and good soil, looked fine to me. But I was completely deceived, for I knew nothing of the hot winds, hailstorms and cyclones peculiar to this area. Instead of running the country down I was determined to do my very best under the circumstances. When we arrived there everything was already burned to a crisp for lack of rain. We wondered how we should get through the winter without even a garden for food."

"Potatoes were selling there for a dollar a bushel, if there were potatoes to be found. I heard that they were selling for twenty-five cents a bushel at Logan, Kansas about fifty miles north of us. I propositioned my neighbor, Mr. Baker, about going with me for a trip to buy potatoes. We set out with our teams and wagons and arrived at Logan to find that potatoes there were fifty cents a bushel. This was fine country with plenty of corn to be had, the team was doing well, and the trip was costing no more than to live at home with our camping out. Some would have called it a vacation. We decided to go on to Minden, Nebraska where we heard there were twenty-five-cent potatoes, or until we could find twenty-five-cent potatoes. We did find them at that price in Minden, all the potatoes we could buy, plenty of corn, pumpkins, everything you could think of. This was all settled country with good improvements, and no land to be had. I loaded up my wagon with fifty bushels of potatoes and Baker's with forty, and we returned home after having been on the road for ten days. We reserved enough potatoes to last our families through the winter, sold the rest, and made enough profit to pay for all our potatoes and to cover the expenses of the trip. I had five sacks of shelled corn which I took to a horse-powered grinder and ground it as finely as I could. The finest was sifted out for family use, and feeding the coarse to the team we got through the winter on cornbread potatoes and water gravy."

"That fall one of my horses got 'loco-ed' on the range. He was so addicted to this loco weed and acted so crazy that he was just like an alcoholic. There is no cure for loco-ed horses. One Sunday I drove my family to the school house to church, and unhitched the team there, tying each to a side of the wagon. When I came out to hitch up, there was Loco standing up in the wagon box. I untied him, touched him with the whip, and he jumped out landing on all fours. I had to do away with Loco finally even though this left me with only one horse. Others had had the same experience with loco-ed horses, I suppose, for a few had oxen teams instead of horses."

"I sold my horse and harness and bought a fine pair of oxen. I secured some collars and hames and chains for tug-rope lines, and turned the collars and hames upside down so that they fit more like a yoke. The oxen proved a success, working them on the mower and header box in the harvest.

While I had these oxen, a neighboring minister wished to move to a new locality about sixty miles away. No one was willing to undertake the

removal job for such a long distance. Someone eventually suggested that he try Mason and his team of oxen. He did ask me about it although he didn't think much of oxen as a means of transportation. I told him that an ox could walk as fast as a horse, so why not? I was really grubbing in those days, and never turned down a job, no matter how bad. It took me two days going for the trip and two days coming home. Since my oxen were walking on hard road and not plowed ground, it was tough on their feet, and one ox went dead-lame by the time I got home."

"Before he recovered to the extent where I could use him again, my wife wanted me to take some grain to the elevator to sell so we could buy groceries which we needed. I was stuck without the use of this second ox. But at this time I was taking the neighbors' cattle to herd for them since the three older boys were old enough to do the herding, the two elder being twins ten years old, the younger eight. In this herd I had a couple of young bulls, and I told my wife that I would break one of these bulls to the wagon. She objected strongly, saying I would surely kill myself one of these days with my fooling around with animals."

"After much discussion I decided to go ahead and try. I loaded the lumber wagon with the loose, shelled corn which was left in a pile right out in the open prairie, and hitched the good ox to the wagon, bringing him up to the snubbing posts. I roped out one of the young bulls from the herd, and he was pretty snorty. Finally I got him to the wagon and put the harness on him while I had him closely snubbed to the post. With the lines in my hands I got in the wagon, let off the brake, and turned the good ox to the right. He being on the off side the young bull had to follow, gradually turning to the right on the open prairie, finally coming into the road going towards Palco where I drove onto the scales, sold the corn, bought the groceries and started home. By the time I got home the bull was broken."

"I finally traded around and got horses again. My first gang plow consisted of a sulky plow and a walking plow. I would hitch three horses to the sulky plow, the oxen to the walking plow, while I went along behind with the walking plow. My horses were perfectly trained to the words 'gee', 'haw', 'back', etc. In cultivating corn and such I would seldom take down the lines."

"After I got my team of horses I started breaking horses for people along with my farming and odd job activities which gave me extra horses to work.

(Father continued to work the same farm and occasionally leased other land nearby so we boys were required to work with him most of the time, out of school seasons, in almost the same capacity as any grown man. I recall when we were hardly large enough to sit safely on the plow or cultivator and hold the lines, we assisted him in his work on the farm when he would be using two or more teams...

The first school I attended was in a sod house located  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of our farm and known as the Amboy school house — the teacher, Mr. Harley Meade. Amboy post office was  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile further south.. Palco three miles north and located on the railroad.) — R. E. M.

A neighboring Easterner had a fine English Shire stallion for breeding and he had twelve head of three- and four-year old colts which had never had a halter on but which he wanted broken. I hitched up to my lumber wagon, drove the twelve miles to his place, and put it to him that I would do his horse-breaking for him. He asked how I would ever manage since I would have to take them home with me and they were so completely wild. I told him just to get on his horse and round them up so I could rope one from the ground.

My rope settled on a big brute, and plenty wild, but after only about a half hour of working him around the rope from the ground I had him following me everywhere I moved. I tied him up to the wagon and he stood with no fighting whatsoever. With equally little trouble I selected another to go with him. We drove the twelve miles home as though they were thoroughly accustomed to being led. I broke the entire twelve to all varieties of farm equipment through working them with my team."

"We were in Kansas for eight years and it seems to me that we suffered every manner of disaster only excluding flood. In these years I had had but two crops due to the extreme drought. My neighbors all about me blamed the weather, the eternal wind without which the prairie country never was, the hailstorms, and all the other afflictions of nature too numerous to mention. But I was getting along, doing the best I could in spite of adverse conditions, and I couldn't see that complaining bettered things. I told my neighbors that when I began to growl as they did I would simply get out of the country."

"This prairie wind which I mentioned, blew with such vigor at times that one had to lean against it to make any progress in walking. And conversation out doors in the wind was well-nigh impossible. We had to shout as with the very hard of hearing. So imagine what transpired when in 1893 the prairie caught fire."

"It happened on a Sunday. We had all returned from church and had brought a neighbor with us for Sunday dinner. We saw the smoke of a prairie fire about eight or ten miles off to the west, and since the fire was travelling north with the wind we never thought it would reach our locality. But along in the afternoon about three or four o'clock the wind veered to the southeast. My stable was thatched with cane and I only just managed to get my livestock out. At that time I was keeping a Percheron stallion which a company of my neighbors and I had bought. The fire almost got the stallion and me as I brought him out of the barn last. Previous to this