

MAGRATH - 'THE GARDEN CITY'

Diamond Jubilee

1899 - 1974

Address by J. C. Purnell
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at Magrath, Alberta

Early irrigation in Southern Alberta was sporadic, with development of irrigation along Fish Creek near Calgary in 1879 by John Glen; along the Oldman River on the Peigan Reserve about 1877; on the Belly River in 1882 with development of the Cochrane Ranch by M. S. Brown, which was later purchased by President E. J. Wood of the Alberta Stake and is now part of the United Irrigation District. In addition, approximately 800 acres of land was irrigated adjacent to Lee Creek near the Town of Cardston. The first irrigation company was established near the Town of Macleod in 1891; this was the first irrigation company formed under Federal legislation for the development of irrigation projects of this kind.

The first serious development of irrigation came as the result of coal. It may be questioned as to why this should be the case---what would coal mining have to do with the development of irrigation? Well, it so happened that Sir Alexander T. Galt, an English explorer, purchased from the Canadian government, coal mines for development along the Oldman River near Lethbridge, formerly known as Coalbanks. In order to market this coal, it was necessary for Mr. Galt to construct a narrow gauge railroad from Dunmore, near Medicine Hat, to Lethbridge in order to connect up with the Canadian Pacific Railroad which went through the City of Medicine Hat on its way from Eastern Canada to Calgary. For the development of this railroad, Sir Galt was given 6,400 acres of land for every mile of railroad constructed. This land was given to him by the Federal government, to provide incentive for people to settle the West in order to keep it from being taken over by the United States. However, in spite of the construction of this section of railroad, the Galt Company still did not make a profit---- they had very little traffic other than their own that they handled as far as railroad returns were concerned. So, in order to balance his books,

Galt extended his railroad south from Lethbridge to the City of Great Falls and also, for this section of railroad, he was given additional land. In total, he acquired approximately one million acres; however, this land was scattered throughout the length of the railroad constructed by the Alberta Rail & Coal Company from Medicine Hat to Lethbridge and from Lethbridge to Great Falls. Having heard of the desirability of irrigation from contacts with the Mormon Church, and being encouraged to develop land for this purpose, Sir Alexander Galt hired Mr. C. A. Magrath to determine the feasibility of such an undertaking. After considerable study, and the engagement of Mr. G. G. Anderson from Wyoming, it was determined that the project was not feasible because of the scattered nature of the parcels. This did not discourage Mr. Magrath and he undertook several visits to Ottawa to visit with government officials there. After considerable discussion, it was decided that consolidation of these parcels of land into solid blocks would be permissible in order to make the irrigation of this land feasible. Following this success, Mr. Magrath negotiated with the L.D.S. Church leaders in Salt Lake City, who advised him that they would undertake the settlement of this land providing they could be given assurance of an income for their settlers. It was finally agreed that the Mormon settlers would come to Canada; they would contract to construct the main canal for the irrigation project that was envisioned by Magrath and Anderson; they would construct the canal from Kimball, which is approximately ten miles south of Cardston, to the townsites of Magrath and Stirling. It was necessary for these settlers to have a means of making a living during the time they were getting settled in a new country, so it was agreed that they would be paid one-half their returns for construction of the canal in land, and one-half in cash. Land was valued at approximately \$3.00 per acre and each farmer was then able to acquire land free-of-debt,

without any incumbrances, with which he could make his living after he had a chance to plow it, break it and seed it for the next year. During this same time, he had been living from the cash received from his labors on the canal, so both groups benefited; one using the resources and the knowledge they had of irrigation construction and settlement, and the other using the understanding they had of engineering and financial undertakings.

Initially, the Mormon settlers had difficulty securing enough labor to carry out this task; however, with the perseverance of their leaders and the continuous communication with Salt Lake City, they were able to assemble enough horses, men, and supplies to do the job.

Work on the "Big Ditch", as it became known, was started about 1898 and construction took approximately two years. The organization of the Alberta Railroad & Coal Company consisted of Mr. E. T. Galt, the son of Sir Alexander Galt, as President; Mr. C. A. Magrath, Manager; Mr. G. G. Anderson, Consultant; Mr. C. F. P. Coneybeare, Solicitor; and Mr. Hugh Macbeth as Accountant. The chief contractor on the project became the Stake President and High Council of the Alberta Stake of the Mormon Church, with most of the labor, teams and sub-contractors being of L.D.S. origin. All in all, initial construction of the canal required the removal of approximately one million, 200 thousand cubic yards of earth and approximately one million board feet of lumber to construct a facility with a capacity of 400 c.f.s. (cubic feet per second).

Along about this time, the Alberta Rail & Coal Company were experiencing financial difficulties, so they appealed to the Canadian Pacific Railroad for help. It was agreed that the C.P.R. would provide a bonus of \$100,000. according to the number of settlers and the amount of traffic

they brought to the C.P.R. along the lines of the Alberta Rail & Coal Company. However, they ran into difficulty because the amount of traffic derived from this railroad could not be estimated. It was therefore decided that the grant be changed to a \$5,000. grant each six months of operation until the \$100,000. had been paid out.

About this time, the government of Canada decided to get out of the financing of irrigation projects and, in doing so, they would only establish the feasibility of such projects and then these would be turned over to private enterprise for development.

Along about the time the "Big Ditch" was to be completed to Magrath and Stirling, citizens from the Town of Lethbridge found that they would not be getting any of this water so they made representation to the irrigation company and offered \$20,000. for construction of the canal from Stirling to Lethbridge. This construction was to include a number of laterals for distribution systems in the Town of Lethbridge and Dr. Mewburne, who was then the Mayor, induced the company to build the canal into Lethbridge. This by-law provided that "in consideration of \$20,000., paid by the Town to the Company, they would build the canal to the Town limits and deliver, for the use of the inhabitants, for fire, domestic and cultivation purposes, five cubic feet per second during irrigation season for 25 years, free of rental, and spend \$4,000. in making ditches into the Town". This contract was undertaken by the Mormon settlers and they fulfilled the contract and, in addition, took \$1,000. of the money they received from the contract and gave it back to the Town, providing the Town would plant trees within the Town limits. Water for this project was turned into the City of Lethbridge on July 4, 1900. Laterals to supply water to Magrath and Stirling were not finished until 1901, with

water reaching Magrath on July 25, just 73 years ago.

Official opening of the canal preceded the completion of the entire project and was performed by the Earl of Minto on September 14, 1900. In 1901, just prior to the completion of the canal, many people were skeptical about the desirability of irrigation in view of the fact that during the months of May, June and July of that year, they had 22.9 inches of rainfall. Many people said "we don't need irrigation---we need drainage!". Others said, "if it wasn't raining, it was blowing". At that time, land was selling for about \$8.00 per acre and people were skeptically saying "there must be something wrong with it, or they wouldn't sell it at that price!". But still there was no rush for the purchase of this land. Terms for purchase were two years' free use-----and still, few takers. With the foresight that Mr. Magrath had, he decided they should set up a demonstration farm near Lethbridge to encourage and instruct the new settlers and to demonstrate what could be done under irrigation. A model farm of 300 acres was established to join the old grade of the Crow's Nest Line three miles southeast of Lethbridge and W. H. Fairfield, then Assistant Professor of Agriculture and Horticulture, and Superintendent of the Experimental Station at the University of Wyoming, was put in charge. His advice and experience was made available to the settlers on any matters pertaining to irrigation. Mr. Fairfield arrived in April of 1901 and immediately set to work getting the land in shape. As the "Big Ditch" was nearing completion, the Alberta Rail & Coal Company, under the directorship of Elliott Galt, decided they needed a better communication link between the Mormon settlement of Cardston and Lethbridge. Therefore, in about 1901, they began construction of a narrow gauge railroad which was completed later that year. Following the completion of this railroad in 1902 came the completion of the "Big Ditch" and the first water was introduced to Lethbridge, Magrath and Stirling in that order.

In about 1910, in an attempt to intensify irrigation and make more profitable the construction and operation of the irrigation system, Mr. Magrath again contacted the Mormon Church leaders in Salt Lake City and was put in touch with a man by the name of Jesse Knight. Jesse Knight was a successful mining investor in that area and, after some discussion, it was agreed he would construct a sugar factory at Raymond, providing he would have an option to purchase some 30,000 acres at a specifically set price of \$3.00 per acre. In addition, he would have an option to purchase an additional 60,000 acres at the same price at a later date. However, in order to bind the deal and in order for the irrigation company to have a firm commitment, they required Mr. Knight to put up a bond of \$50,000. They expected some resistance to this request; however, to their amazement, Mr. Knight immediately deposited with them, a cheque for \$50,000.

In the summer of 1910, Mr. Jesse Knight undertook to plow some 3,000 acres of land in preparation for the next year's crop. This land was located in the vicinity of Raymond and required tremendous effort, with large numbers of teams with plows, and was completed before the winter snows set in and was ready for planting of the first crop of sugar beets the next year, 1911. Following the first crop and the completion of the sugar factory (the sugar factory itself only operated for about three years), in 1914, Mr. Knight dismantled the equipment and took it to Idaho, where he had brought it from originally. At a later date, 1925, a second factory was constructed in Raymond and continued in operation until only a few years ago. At present it is used primarily for the packaging of icing sugar.

Since the initial activity for the development of coal in the Lethbridge area, there had been a number of companies formed: the Alberta Rail & Coal Co., the Alberta Irrigation Company, the Lethbridge Land Company,

Northwest Coal & Navigation Company, the St. Mary River Railway Company. In about 1904, it was decided that all these companies should be combined into one company and at that time the Alberta Rail & Irrigation Co. was formed. This company was later taken over by the C.P.R. during a time of financial crisis.

In view of the increase in activity in irrigation following 1925 and the construction of the second sugar factory, the capacity of the "Big Ditch" had to be increased to 1,000 c.f.s. The projected capacity at that time was 1200 c.f.s.; the present capacity is 3,000 c.f.s., the latter capacity being required following construction of the St. Mary and Waterton Dams. This additional increase was for the delivery of water to a larger tract of land, including Lethbridge/Coaldale, Taber and the Eastern Division of the S.M.R.I.D. The construction of the "Big Ditch" to date, with the construction of the canal from Kimball to Magrath, Stirling, Lethbridge and some extensions to include the Lethbridge/Coaldale, required the use of one million board feet of lumber with 1,121,000 cubic yards of earth removed for initial construction. Enlargements required 3,250,000 board feet of lumber, with 3,800,000 cubic yards of earth removed, for a total of 4,250,000 board feet of lumber and the removal of approximately five million cubic yards of earth. Thus we see that the initial construction was only a small part of a larger, more complex, undertaking which was only made possible by the ingenuity, ambition and integrity of those original pioneer settlers in Southern Alberta. They were men of faith, self reliance, courage and integrity. The pioneer women of the time were great personalities; they were strong, steady, brave and uncomplaining. They made life tolerable in the new land, giving their new homes those 'little touches' that gave delight to all: they put curtains on the

windows, rugs on the floors, they remembered the birthdays and saw that the flowers and the gardens were planted in the spring, they were unfailing morale builders when things were going wrong. These were the citizens and the founders of the Town of Magrath---we commend you for your work, we commend you for your accomplishments, and for the enterprise that has been demonstrated in developing this community. Last, but not least, we commend you for the great strides you have made in the past, laying the groundwork for the future. One of your greatest contributions has been the foundation stock: the young men and women produced from this community. They have become leaders across the country; they have made and are making their marks across this country and others, in science, medicine, agriculture, education and athletics. There are no finer tributes to be made to the citizens of this community than the product of their youth and their leaders in the world. Some of those pioneers who ought to be remembered are as follows:

Charles Ora Card, President and Leader of the Mormon pioneers in the Cardston vicinity,

"Uncle Tom" Duce,

H. S. Allan, School Teacher,

Patriarch Hinman,

John W. Taylor, Mormon Leader,

Z. W. Jacobs, School Teacher,

William Wood, Butcher,

Walter Ackroyd, Pioneer fruit raiser,

Levi Harker, First mayor of Magrath and sheep rancher, who also helped to plow the first furrow for irrigation near Cardston, with Pres. Card holding the plow in 1895.

Mr. C. A. Magrath-Engineer/Manager of the Alberta Rail & Irrigation Co., colonizer after whom the Town of Magrath was named, who persuaded the first Mormons experienced in irrigation to come to this country to settle this land.

J. B. Riri, Sheep rancher,
O. D. Austin, School teacher, appreciated for his literary talents.

----and many, many more:

The Rasmussens

The Cooks

The Fowlers

The Sabeys

The Jensens

The Tanners

The Browns

The Fletchers

The Cliftons

and the Harris's

The Keelers and the Spencers....

ALL these citizens played their roles in the settlement of one of the finest communities in Southern Alberta, and throughout Canada.

Our congratulations go to all of you who have played any part, who have sacrificed, who have given of themselves: their time, their talents, their resources, to the establishment of this community to make it what it is on this, the Diamond Jubilee of the Garden City of Canada, MAGRATH.

An Alberta Golden Jubilee Feature

AUG 3, 1955

MAGRATH, GARDEN CITY OF SOUTH

By WALTER BROWN
IN THIS JUBILEE YEAR 1955 Magrath "The Garden City" finds itself proud of its name and striving to maintain its tradition. It looks back with pride upon the year 1905 when Mr. D. H. Elton, QC, observed that Magrath, the thriving new village on the virgin prairie was first and foremost in responding to the tree-planting campaign of "Archie" Mitchell, government agriculturist, "and soon the erstwhile 'Bald Spot' was festooned beneath a bower of trees, and flowers, and lawns, and gardens, and comfortable homes, and a happy prosperous, progressive people."

As I looked upon this marvelous transformation I said "Surely this is the Garden City."

Mr. Elton was the publisher of the "Magrath Pioneer," the first paper printed in Magrath.

We quote from the June 1, 1908 issue:

KEEP IT BEFORE THE PEOPLE
 That Magrath is the Garden City of Southern Alberta and has better facilities for fruit raising, nurseries, and orchards than any other competitor.

That Magrath has planted more trees this season than any other town her size in Southern Alberta or elsewhere in the Canadian North West.

That Magrath good stores, up-to-date implement houses, first class hotel, barber shop, drug store, res-

taurant and confectionery milliner, harness maker, boot and shoe repair, blacksmiths, a local and long distance system of Bell Telephone, large roller mill, big elevator, jeweler and watch repairer.

That Magrath is on the railway and 12 miles from the only Sugar Refinery west of Lake Superior. Beet yields are from 15 to 20 tons per acre.

That Magrath has an incorporated Board of Trade, a live Agricultural Society, a vigorous branch of the Alberta Farmer's Association.

That Magrath has excellent coal deposits of the best quality and in unlimited quantity.

It is interesting to note prices quoted by Harker-Head Company for their June stocktaking bargains: Ladies' Summer waists from 60c. Ladies' Summer Suits from \$2.45. Fine dress goods sold elsewhere at 75 cents, our price, 45 cents per yard.

Organdies sold elsewhere at 30 cents per yard, our price, 12½ cents per yard.

Strange as it may seem Magrath owes its beginning to coal, for the discovery of coal on a commercial scale at Lethbridge was the parent of irrigation and irrigation was the parent of Magrath.

MEN OF VISION

Fortunately, men of foresight were on the scene: Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior in the Canadian Cabinet; J. J. Head, representing British finance; C. A. Magrath, the local representative in the Northwest Council of Canada; and Charles Ora Card, the great Mormon pioneer and promoter of irrigation. They saw that irrigation was necessary to stabilize agriculture in Southern Alberta and that the Utah Mormons with their 50 years of irrigation experience were the logical people to do the job. A contract was signed with the LDS Mormon church and work began on the canal that would take water from the St. Mary's River at Kimball and put it on the land in the area where now stand Magrath, Raymond and Stirling.

With President Charles Ora Card holding the plow, the first furrow was turned in September, 1898. The Mormon church called many families from Utah to put over the project and by the spring of 1899, settlers were flocking in by rail and covered wagon bringing their stock with them. Their mission was twofold; to construct the canal and to settle the land. By November of that year the headgates at Magrath were completed and Hon. Clifford Sifton performed the official opening ceremony on the 14th day of that month. This day, Nov. 14, 1899 is looked upon as the birthday of irrigation in western Canada. The same year marks the birthday of Magrath. The influx of settlers to the Magrath town site was so rapid that on July 24, 1899 it officially became "The Village of Magrath" named for the man, C. A. Magrath who had been instrumental in establishing it.

On the 24th of July, 1949 at the joint celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Magrath and of irrigation in Alberta, W. A. Hamilton of Lethbridge unveiled a monument in the town of Magrath in honor of the two historic events. Mr. Hamilton was a member of the official party on the 1899 occasion.

FIRST WATER

The first water was turned into the new system in the fall of 1900 and the system has grown and expanded with the years. Large storage reservoirs at Chin Lake and other points stored surplus water for large tracts of arid land. Recently the original AR & I system, as it was originally known, has been absorbed into the SMRD, a vast irrigation project which will span the southern end of the province, stretching from Waterton Lakes on the west to Medicine Hat on the east and will eventually carry on into Saskatchewan. A dam across the Waterton River will make Waterton Lakes a great reservoir. A second dam further down the river will divert the water into a canal that will carry it across to the Belly River and across the Blood Indian reservation into the large St. Mary River dam, the largest earth dam in Canada.

From here it will be distributed over Southern Alberta putting some 350,000 acres of arid land under "the ditch" and creating one of the finest and potentially most produc-

tive irrigation districts on the whole continent.

MAGRATH LEADERS

In the limited space it is possible to mention only a few of the people who played leading roles in the development of the town. J. J. Head, the first overseer of the Village of Magrath, came to Canada in 1899. His first interests were in cattle and sheep in Cardston. He came to Magrath in 1900 and was elected overseer of the village of Magrath at its incorporation the year 1901.

Bishop Levi Harker, Magrath's first mayor was another pioneer who brought his family from Utah in a "prairie schooner" covered wagon, arriving in Cardston in 1892. He had been a successful sheep farmer in Utah, and soon established extensive herds of excellent Shropshires which became the foundation stock from which many of the great herds of western Canada were built. Another leading sheep man was J. B. Ririe, father of Ririe Bros. today.

R. W. Bradshaw was another pioneer. At the same time the Rasmussens, Cooks, Jacobs, Fowlers, Bones, Sabays and Jensen came. Mr. Bradshaw was the founder of the Rosedale Ranch, now the site of the Jensen dam, which soon became famous for its Percheron and French Coach horses. With such animals as "Pink," one of the best Percheron stallions on the continent, and many other top ranking sires and mares he soon built an excellent band of registered horses from which Southern Alberta became stocked with good horses. Mr. Bradshaw's motto for himself and advice to others was "Stay with Alberta and Alberta will pull you through."

Christian Jensen, one of the fathers of the Alberta Wheat Pool, was for 11 years president of the Canadian Co-operative Wool Growers, and pioneer irrigation farmer. Because of his contributions to irrigation the large storage dam at the Pothole Coulee south of Magrath is named Jensen dam in his honor.

Mayor E. P. Tanner has served in that office 16 years. He is the man who has brought more industries to Magrath than any other citizen. Magrath owes to him the establishment of Alberta Canning Company, the only woollen mill in Alberta and a modern sash and door factory. The "Garden City" is forging ahead, a town of churches, schools and lovely homes served by all modern conveniences. Natural gas will be installed later this year.

Lethbridge—Galts—C. A. Magrath

(Arthur R. Ford in London Free Press)

THE LETHBRIDGE HERALD, October 17, 1944

Believe it or not, but the eight daughters of Sir Alexander Galt, one of the Fathers of Confederation and finance minister in Sir John A. Macdonald's first ministry at Confederation, are still alive. Sir Alexander was born in 1817 and died in 1893 at the age of 76. This is an almost incredible fact, which Ripley somehow or other has missed.

I learned this interesting piece of Canadiana while in Victoria, B. C. When I was in the press gallery at Ottawa I became acquainted with C. A. Magrath, who was for one term member of Parliament for Medicine Hat, later was for many years chairman of the Canadian section of the International Waterways Commission and succeeded Sir Adam Beck as chairman of the Hydro Commission. Mr. Magrath is retired and living in Victoria. I renewed an old acquaintanceship by calling on him. Mr. Magrath's wife is a daughter of Sir Alexander Galt, and she informed me that her seven sisters are still all alive. Two of them, spinsters, are living in Victoria, and I met a fourth, Mrs. C. A. Springett, of Montreal, who was visiting in Victoria. Sir Alexander also had four sons, but they are all dead. If this is not worth a Ripley notice, then I have lost completely my news sense.

While in Winnipeg I met at an Empire Club meeting Hon. W. J. Tupper, the last surviving son of Sir Charles Tupper, another Father of Confederation and former lieutenant-governor of Manitoba. The eight daughters of Sir Alexander Galt and Mr. Tupper are, as far as I can find out, the only surviving children of any of the Fathers of Confederation. Likewise, at the same Empire Club meeting, I met the granddaughter of Sir John A. Macdonald, a daughter of Hon. Hugh John Macdonald. History turned back for me while I was in the West.

Mr. Magrath is one of the last of the pioneers who helped to build the West. He was born in 1860 near Ottawa, and went West in 1878 as a surveyor under Col. John S. Dennis, who was the pioneer surveyor of the West and who had been appointed that year the first deputy minister of the interior. Those were the days before the C.P.R. and when the Indians and the buffalo still roamed the prairie. Mr. Magrath probably surveyed more of the West than any other man. In 1885 he was surveying in Northern Manitoba when he received an offer to go with the Galt interests in Southern Alberta. On the advice of Col. Dennis he accepted the job and as he laughingly told me: "Mrs. Magrath was the result."

The Galts were a great pioneering family. John Galt, the Scottish novelist, was the commissioner of the Canada Land Company which opened up the Huron Tract. The City of Galt was named after him and he was largely responsible for the founding of the cities of Guelph and Stratford and the town of Godfrich. His name will always be associated with Western Ontario.

His son, Alexander, was the prime mover in the early development of the Eastern Townships. He headed a land settlement company in that

district which settled many of the pioneer families and promoted the first railways in that part of Quebec. Then late in life he became interested in Southern Alberta. He was responsible for opening up the first coal mines at what now is the City of Lethbridge. The idea was to sell the coal to the new railway, the C.P.R., and the original plan was to ship the coal by barges down the Belly River to Medicine Hat, but this did not work out. There was not enough water at the right time. Then to protect their coal investments a company with English capital was formed to build a railway called the Alberta Railway and Coal Company. In those days railways were given land grants as subsidy. The company was granted large tracts of land in Southern Alberta, most of which then were of little value for settlement. Much of this land had to be sold to keep the company floating. Irrigation had been developed in Utah by the Mormons as a means of bringing into cultivation fertile but dry country, and after investigation it was decided irrigation could be successful in Southern Alberta. An irrigation company was formed, and the first irrigation project in Southern Alberta was launched.

Sir Alexander Galt died in 1893 and his son, Elliot Galt, who had the pioneering spirit of the family and fine business ability, carried on under difficult circumstances the operations of the various companies. Mr. Magrath was particularly interested in the company's irrigation projects, and was for years manager of the irrigation company known as the Canadian Northwest Irrigation Company. He visited Utah and persuaded the first Mormons, experienced in irrigation work and farming, to settle in Southern Alberta.

When Lethbridge, which was named after an English politician who was president of one of the Galt companies, was first incorporated as a town in 1891, Mr. Magrath was elected mayor. He says that the election simply consisted of a dozen of the leading citizens of the new town sitting around and deciding that he should be mayor. The same year he was elected as a member of the first Legislature of the Northwest Territory, and he tells me that there was the same informality in the election. He was returned by acclamation. He is the last surviving member of the original Northwest Territories Legislature.

In 1908 Mr. Magrath entered federal public life and was elected as Conservative member for Medicine Hat. Three years later he was defeated by W. A. Buchanan, publisher of the Lethbridge Herald and today senator and the present time president of The Canadian Press. Their political differences and the fact that Mr. Buchanan defeated Mr. Magrath has never interfered with a lifelong friendship. In 1911 he would undoubtedly have been a member of the Borden Cabinet, but instead he was made chairman of the Canadian section of the International Waterways Commission, a post he held until 1933 and where he did distinguished service to Canada in helping to settle many border disputes. The record of public service to Canada of the Galt family has been maintained by the son-in-law, Mr. Magrath.

Irrigation Launched A

Magrath Was Child Of An Heroic New Century The Critchfie

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Looking Back at Early Days and Personalities in Old Home Town

By C. F. STEELE

OPENING of the new century brought the Great Land Rush to Southern Alberta. The country was astir, thousands from eastern Canada and the United States joined the trek into this new country of cheap land and unlimited opportunities.

The pioneers were on the march. With the new century came a surge of interest in irrigation and irrigation was the magic key that opened a new agricultural empire in this broad country of good soil but limited rainfall.

It was the building of that first canal system, the A.R. and I. project, that brought about the settlements of Magrath and Stirling. While I did not work "on the canal", being a lad at the time, my people did, joining hundreds of others in a great new enterprise.

I can well remember those epic days. It was an historic occasion when the water reached the town and started to soak the new trees and gardens and fields that later gave to Magrath its famous name—the Garden City.

JUBILEE YEAR

That was fifty years ago and this year—July 24, 25 and 26—the Golden Jubilee of Magrath will be celebrated and along with the jubilee the fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration of irrigation in western Canada. In this respect, Magrath's three-day celebration has taken on national importance.

While Magrath's elaborate gala days will take the spotlight, Stirling, too, will come into the picture. For it was fifty years ago that Stirling was born, becoming the "jumping off" place for immigrants coming into the country from the States bound for Magrath, Cardston and later Raymond. Stirling was on the railway between Lethbridge and Great Falls, Mont., and it was over that "Turkey Trail" that I came into the country in the fall of 1900 with my mother and sister to meet my father, a brother and another sister who had come in via the Overland Trail by covered wagon.

We didn't stop at Stirling, much to my relief, but rather rattled on merrily to Lethbridge.

Lethbridge wasn't bad at all to a youngster; in fact it was rather exciting with Indians about. But I will remember leaving its homes and stores and lights and being engulfed in the prairie as our wagon creaked wearily over the long prairie trail toward Magrath.

Mother had been telling us about our "new home in Canada" but on pulling into Magrath of that day, a cluster of scattered houses and here and there a dugout, I figured "home was never like this."

the waves.

Hyrum Taylor, brother of "John W." the Canadian apostle, and son of the late John Taylor, third president of the Mormon church, and his talented wife kept a general store. I remember that store because we traded there for many years. We children learned about barter in those days, trading eggs for candy. And the only candy to select from were two buckets—one hard tack and the other gum drops. But it was store candy, something in those days.

EXCITING MOMENTS

Life had its exciting moments in Magrath in the early days. I will remember the trips we used to make with grists to the roller mill at Cardston. The round trip took two or three days. The mill always fascinated me and I think then I caught something of the new spirit abroad in the land—the new development in home industry. I will remember the Knights building the sugar factory at Raymond for I was one of the boys who crawled along the rows of beets and thinned them. I was the thinner for my sister, and those beet rows were painfully long. The Indians used to come down from the nearby reservation to help in the beets in those days. They used to peddle polished buffalo horns and fancy articles of buckskin heavily beaded. Their work was well done and artistic. I learned a few words of Blackfeet and knew numbers of the Indians personally. My admiration for our Blackfeet neighbors has never waned but we were always afraid to trade horses with them although I did crave many a spotted pony trailing along after their outfits. I liked their horses more than their dogs.

The prairie grass in those days was deep, brushed the stirrups of a saddle. Farmers used to cut hay out in the "Bishop's Field," now part of the town. We boys used to help with the haying, we tramped the hay on the stacks and in the barns. It was not easy work. We also helped in the fall stooking grain. I will remember stooking grain on the big Cannon farm north of town. It was Turkey Red, as I remember it, with beards that made the job really tough for a youngster. The bundles were heavy and prickly. And the grain was thick.

THRESHING DAYS

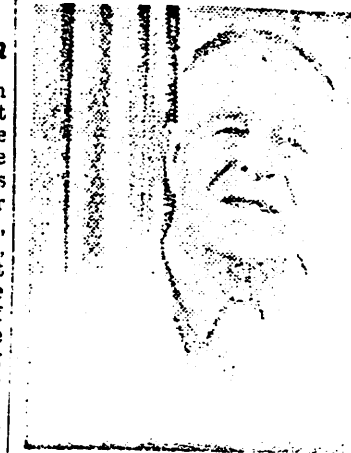
I remember the old horse power threshing outfits of that early day and the feasts we got when "the threshers came." Those occasions became traditional. Swimming in the canal, Easter walks along the Pot Hole coulee, picnics and berry picking on the St. Mary's and Friday afternoon programs at school—all these I recall. I broke my arm

night of the great prairie. Often as a boy I have laid awake at night listening to the silence about me or the cry of coyotes far too close to town for comfort. The dawns were full of mystery, "that hour when the tide of life runs low, while we are waiting for the dawn, the dawn that some day will not come." Often I have watched the pale sunrise deepen into a blaze of color across the sky ushering in the day. What could be more moving than the beauty of a prairie sunrise?

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I should like to tell you more about that strong group of men who founded Magrath. They were men of faith, self reliance, courage and integrity. They had a homespun culture that impressed me as a lad and I salute them today on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee. I must tell you more, however, of one outstanding man—Levi Harker, the first bishop and the first mayor of Magrath. He was one of the pioneers in the Alberta range sheep industry and it is a fact though little known, that he plowed the first furrow for the first irrigation ditch in the country. President Card holding the plow. That was in 1895 in the Cardston country. He was a man of sound judgment, wise in counsel and firm in the way of duty. He was a close friend of that great Canadian engineer and colonizer, Charles A. Magrath, for whom Magrath was named. Bishop Harker loved good horses and purebred sheep and he was always co-operative to a young reporter covering the fair, and that goes for J. B. Ririe, too, noted sheep breeder and exhibitor. Magrath's Deseret Agricultural Society used to put on one of the top fairs in Alberta but that is a story in itself.

It was Fred Turner who got me interested in daily newspaper work and mentioned my name to Mr. W. A. Buchanan of the Lethbridge Herald. As it worked out, I did take a job with the Herald and for a short period was a sub-reporter



MR. AND MRS.

(BY INEZ RICH BENNETT)

When Magrath was very young just a few tents and dugouts on the broad grassy uniered prairie, when the first irrigation canal in western Canada began winding its way along the northern slopes of the Milk River Ridge constructed by primitive means by men and teams, shovels and scraper when the West was young, rough and ready and the survival of the fittest held sway, the Arthur Critchfield family came from Utah, to make their home in Magrath, part of a group selected to help build a canal upon invitation of the Canadian government and also to assist in colonizing southern Alberta. Down the years, irrigation has proven so stabilizing to agriculture that additional irrigation projects are springing up in many parts of the west and proving their value. With the completion of the St. Mary's-Milk River project thousands of additional acres will be brought under the 'ditch' at the faith of those early pioneers in irrigation for stabilizing agriculture further vindicated.

see. They gave the children birthday parties, nursed the sick, comforted the dying. And they were resourceful. I will remember how Mrs. J. B. Ririe used to pull out teeth when they plagued us—and there was no freezing of gums in those days. But she used to do good job, too. They were women of breeding and refinement. There was no sham but so much of sincerity. My own mother, Jane Bridge Steele, possessed the quiet charm of English culture. She loved music and the better things of life and the sacrifices of the early days did not frighten her. The folk in those days helped each other; it was neighborhoodly. The memory of those fine pioneer women will ever be green.

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Magrath 50 Years Ago

Is Of Magrath



B. CRITCHFIELD

After fifty years in Magrath, of good luck and bad, they liked it well enough to stay the rest of their lives, in preparation for which Arthur Critchfield and Sons built a cosy modern cottage right in the middle of town in February, 1948, across the street from the grocery store, which, Mrs. Critchfield agrees, 'is just right for us.' At 77 Arthur is still active in building construction after nearly fifty years helping to build up the community with homes, barns, garages and other buildings. In fact, there are few in town that he has not built or helped to build.

Realizing that to colonize a country people are needed they are the proud parents of twelve children, eleven of whom survive, who in turn have added 37 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren. In fact, there are eight four-generation groups among them, the whole striving to live up to the example of church and community service and the first and greatest commandment, 'to love thy neighbor as thyself.'

West Virginian

Let's see how this English, Irish, Scotch, German, Yankee got his start, anyway. Like the alphabet he began as A, B, C, Arthur Biggerton Critchfield, the middle name from the fact that when he was born, his parents were members of the Biggerton religious group. He was born July 20, 1872, at Glover's Gap, Marion County, West Virginia, third child of Absalom Critchfield and Mary Campbell. His parental grandfather came to America from England and his maternal grandfather Campbell from Ireland. Sandwiched between ancestors he got the English, Irish, Scotch, German blood. To top it all off he was born a Yankee, so he can look a good many peoples in the face and say, "Hello, brother." He lived at Glover's Gap until 13 years of age. His father died when he was eight and when he was 13 his mother took the children to live at St. John's, Stafford County,

of interest in irrigation and irrigation was the magic key that opened a new agricultural empire in this broad country of good soil but limited rainfall.

It was the building of that first canal system, the A.R. and I. project, that brought about the settlements of Magrath and Stirling. While I did not work "on the canal", being a lad at the time, my people did, joining hundreds of others in a great new enterprise.

I can well remember those epic days. It was an historic occasion when the water reached the town and started to soak the new trees and gardens and fields that later gave to Magrath its famous name—the Garden City.

JUBILEE YEAR

That was fifty years ago and this year—July 24, 25 and 26—the Golden Jubilee of Magrath will be celebrated and along with the jubilee the fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration of irrigation in western Canada. In this respect, Magrath's three-day celebration has taken on national importance.

While Magrath's elaborate gala days will take the spotlight, Stirling, too, will come into the picture. For it was fifty years ago that Stirling was born, becoming the "jumping off" place for immigrants coming into the country from the States bound for Magrath, Cardston and later Raymond. Stirling was on the railway between Lethbridge and Great Falls, Mont., and it was over that "Turkey Trail" that I came into the country in the fall of 1900 with my mother and sister to meet my father, a brother and another sister who had come in via the Overland Trail by covered wagon.

I didn't stop at Stirling, much to my relief, but rather rattled on merrily to Lethbridge.

Lethbridge wasn't bad at all to a youngster; in fact it was rather exciting with Indians about. But I well remember leaving its homes and stores and lights and being engulfed in the prairie as our wagon creaked wearily over the long prairie trail toward Magrath.

Mother had been telling us about our "new home in Canada" but on pulling into Magrath of that day, a cluster of scattered houses and here and there a dugout, I figured "home was never like this."

The Mormon church built the first houses in Magrath and they were substantially built. We held Sunday School and church over a store, I remember. The late Ammon Mercer, who drove the stage from Lethbridge and kept the post office, was my teacher. And he was a good one, an earnest, kindly, well informed man. William Wood, father of Pres. E. J. Wood of Cardston, was our village butcher in the early days. He was a Crimean War veteran and had a fund of stories that fired the imagination of youth. I soon found life on the frontier not half bad. As he told us of the Crimean War and Florence Nightingale, so Walter Ackroyd, pioneer fruit raiser, brought us tales of the Civil War in the States. He had a splendid library, was a self educated man and the only genealogist in the country. George Naylor, the blacksmith, was another striking character. He had crossed the Pacific from Australia as I recall it. He had a virile, convincing style and dramatized the roll of the ship as it plowed through

hard tack and the other gum drops. But it was store candy, something in those days.

EXCITING MOMENTS

Life had its exciting moments in Magrath in the early days. I well remember the trips we used to make with grists to the roller mill at Cardston. The round trip took two or three days. The mill always fascinated me and I think then I caught something of the new spirit abroad in the land—the new development in home industry. I well remember the Knights building the sugar factory at Raymond for I was one of the boys who crawled along the rows of beets and thinned them. I was the thinner for my sister, and those beet rows were painfully long. The Indians used to come down from the nearby reservation to help in the beets in those days. They used to peddle polished buffalo horns and fancy articles of buckskin heavily beaded. Their work was well done and artistic. I learned a few words of Blackfeet and knew numbers of the Indians personally. My admiration for our Blackfeet neighbors has never waned but we were always afraid to trade horses with them although I did crave many a spotted pony trailing along after their outfits. I liked their horses more than their dogs.

The prairie grass in those days was deep, brushed the stirrups of a saddle. Farmers used to cut hay out in the "Bishop's Field," now part of the town. We boys used to help with the haying, we tramped the hay on the stacks and in the barns. It was not easy work. We also helped in the fall stooking grain. I well remember stooking grain on the big Cannon farm north of town. It was Turkey Red, as I remember it, with beads that made the job really tough for a youngster. The bundles were heavy and prickly. And the grain was thick.

THRESHING DAYS

I remember the old horse power threshing outfits of that early day and the feasts we got when "the threshers came." Those occasions became traditional. Swimming in the canal, Easter walks along the Pot Hole coulees, picnics and berry picking on the St. Mary's and Friday afternoon programs at school—all these I recall. I broke my arm on a picnic to the river and Dr. Sanders set it for me as my dear mother suffered on a chair beside me. The doctor said it really wasn't a break; the bone was bent and he proceeded to straighten it and it wasn't fun.

I remember President Charles Ora Card, H. S. Allen, "Uncle Tom" Duce, Patriarch Hinman, John W. Taylor, Mathias F. Cowley and other noted early churchmen. I like nothing better than a good sermon and we heard some mighty good sermons in those days in the old meeting house. I studied under that able teacher, Z. W. Jacobs, as a boy and he loaned me a book on Latin urging me to take up law. O. D. Austin, who later became news editor of the Lethbridge Herald, was an early school teacher of mine and he it was who opened to me the riches of literature. He could read poetry as it should be read and in no time flat I was writing—poetry!

I have vivid recollections of the frightening prairie fires of those days and the utter loneliness at

day. What could be more moving than the beauty of a prairie sunrise?

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It was Fred Turner who got me interested in daily newspaper work and mentioned my name to Mr. W. A. Buchanan of the Lethbridge Herald. As it worked out, I did take a job with the Herald and for a short period was a cub reporter under my former school teacher, O. D. Austin. I also wrote my column "Lights and Shadows," one of the oldest continuing columns in the Herald. I later resigned my job and went east to college. But I would have been remiss not to have mentioned Fred Turner, who always took an interest in the boys of our community and encouraged them when a little encouragement meant a lot.

Pioneer Women

When the honors are being passed around at the Jubilee the women of that heroic pioneer period should not be overlooked. They were great personalities—strong, steady, brave, uncomplaining. They made life tolerable in the new land giving the new homes those little touches that gave delight to all. They put curtains on the windows, rugs on the floor, remembered the birthdays and saw that the flowers were planted in the spring. They were unflinching morale builders when things were going wrong.

Their faith in the future in the face of hardships was beautiful to

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