



They Went West from Langham

By

Ann Grimmer



Having several relations who emigrated to Canada I have grown up hearing about their lives and adventures in a new country. Because of my connections to Canada it was suggested at a Langham Village History Group meeting that I should look into other early emigrants from Langham.

I was inspired to take up the challenge by my second cousin John Turner of Victoria, B.C. who in the course of our own family history research has provided me with lots of recollections & information on the settler's early life in Canada.

Ann Grimmer

Resources used for information:

Books

S C Johnson - Emigration from the UK to N America 1763 - 1912

Roger Kershaw - Emigrants and Expatriates a guide...

Photograph

John Deere Tractors

Thanks for information to:

David Dubick the Historic Site Administrator of Eckley Miner's Village Pennsylvania

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Introduction

There were many circumstances which caused thousands of people over the last centuries to leave their old homes for a new country. Sometimes the mere spirit of adventure, love of change, the need to seek religious or political freedom or personal circumstances were enough to encourage them to take the perilous journey, as it often was in the early days. It was also prompted by a number of other causes, chiefly the huge population growth at the beginning of the 19th century, the many agricultural depressions of the same period, the continual introduction of labour saving devices, the famine in Ireland, growing competition in foreign markets and latterly, propaganda from the Colonies.

Labour saving inventions i.e. the spinning jenny, the waterframe, the “mule” and the powerloom in the space of a few years caused much unemployment, the result being that surplus labour was transferred to North America. Another factor contributing to the exodus of British labour was the introduction of steam power. After 1785 when the steam engine was introduced the need for running water power was no longer so important and as a result rural sites were given up for urban ones, where supplies of cheap coal and labour were available. Much of the work was now mechanical and boys and girls could be employed instead of skilled labour. Industries left the countryside and reappeared in northern and midland towns leaving old hands unemployed. Little wonder that poverty increased and to escape the misery many looked to emigration.

The huge increase in population during the early years of the 19th century saw the number of emigrants rise in leaps and bounds but declined somewhat after 1851, although the population continued to rise. The reason being that Ireland, which had sent the greater portion of the emigrants was now gradually declining in population. Areas in the UK had at times become overpopulated and thus gave impetus to local emigration. The Select Committee of 1826/7 reported “that the kingdom contained many districts where the amount of available labour was in considerable excess of the jobs available and that emigration was being resorted to as a remedy.” The owner of the island of Rum in the Hebrides found in 1825, that his rents were £300 in arrears due to the overcrowding of the tenants.

So he cancelled their debts, gave them cattle and shared £600 between them and paid their passage to Canada. He later reported that he had re-peopled his island on a less crowded basis and was earning £800 per annum rents from it. There are other recorded happenings such as this in Scotland and Ireland, also England. Great distress is recorded in the early 19th century in the counties of Sussex, Hants., Surrey, and Wilts. as there was no new industry for the surplus labour. Wages were reduced to a minimum and parish relief accepted as a matter of course and many were compelled to emigrate.

Conditions in the early 1800's after the Napoleonic Wars and the Agricultural Depressions after 1833 caused similar problems forcing many to leave in the hope of finding a better life. After a winter of excessive rainfall the undrained clay soils of Yorks., Bucks. and Hunts. made it impossible for the land owners to employ their usual complement of men and so many granted to those who wished a free passage to leave the Mother Country.

Of course there were many that were forced to leave via Transportation, a period of exile in a British territory during which the convict was forced to work productively, learn new

skills and self discipline and at the same time benefit the development of the colonial economy. It is estimated that 50,000 men, women and children were transported to the USA between 1614 - 1775, most from the poorest classes and nearly half from the courts in and around London. After 1615 it was usual for the death sentence to be pardoned on condition of transportation and in 1718 an Act standardised transportation to the USA from 14 years of age for those sentenced to death and introduced transportation for 7 years for a range of non-capital offences. In 1776 at the outbreak of the American War Of Independence transportation to the USA ceased and was reinstated to Australia in 1787 and Tasmania in 1803 until 1857, when it was abolished although the Home Secretary retained the right to impose Transportation for specific offences until 1868.

Child emigration schemes also operated between 1618 - 1967 and some 150,000 children were sent to USA, Australia, Canada, Rhodesia, New Zealand, South Africa and the Caribbean, under the care of voluntary organisations, churches and local government boards. The aim being to increase the population in the Colonies and improve labour and productivity there. They were also presented for the benefit and welfare of the child though few actually took into account the feelings of the child. The earliest evidence of pauper children going is from 1617, when Virginia in USA asked for children to be sent out to them and the City of London responded by sending 100 orphans from Christ's Hospital School. In the mid 18th century one in three of all paupers were under 16 years old and the strain of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1850 allowed Boards of Guardians to send under 16's overseas. Major schemes began in 1870 and in 1874 a Mr Doyle was sent to Canada to inspect and assess the welfare and conditions of the immigrants. He was highly critical of everything, especially of the amount of physical work demanded of children as young as 7 years, and as a result Local Government Boards withdrew their approval of the emigration of pauper children, though voluntary organisations continued to send non-pauper children. In 1884 the Local Government Boards relaxed their prohibition as long as certain conditions were met. During World War I there was a temporary ending of child emigration and by 1920 the mass emigration of lone pauper children had ended.

During the years 1895 - 1912 the type of person and the reason for emigrating had undergone changes. The largest proportion of men and women leaving were those who found their life here unsatisfying and were not forced to go but went largely as a result of propaganda from organisations dealing with the transportation and reception of immigrants. The Dominion Government of Canada, the Canadian Pacific Railway, railroad companies of the USA, and the wealthier land companies of the Republic especially Mississippi, Kansas, Colorado, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas all advertised, canvassed, held lectures and scattered leaflets to encourage those to leave for a new life who would otherwise have stayed put. The smaller proportion of emigrants comprised the youth of Britain's industrial and agricultural occupations, who did not leave to avoid distress but to better themselves and to acquire land cheaply.

The means of transportation to a new life gradually improved and became quicker, safer and cheaper so the motives to leave did not need to be so strong as was necessary in the first three quarters of the 19th century. The rapid expansion of industry and commerce

in the USA and Canada, the almost unlimited scope for labour, the certainty of constant employment, the ease with which land could be acquired and freedom of civil institutions all combined to swell the human stream across the Atlantic.

Over the years it would appear that the residents of Langham have behaved no differently to the rest of the population. The following are the ones that we know to have left Langham in search of a new life in a new country.

They Went West from Langham

The brave adventurous few that decided to leave Langham for a new life must have been quite unprepared for the rigours and hardships that awaited them in Canada. It is no wonder that some returned home unable to cope with the extremes of temperature, makeshift housing, hard work and long hours enforced by unscrupulous employers and the loneliness of the isolated farms so unlike the village life they had left behind.

Their first homes were often 'sod houses' built partly below ground and the walls above ground made from sods of earth or turf. Mosquitoes and sand flies were a constant problem in the summer and no doubt the sod houses alternated between being dusty and dry, damp and wet or frozen solid depending on the season. Eventually of course the homesteaders built themselves better houses and how thankful the women folk must have been.

Most of the Langham emigrants settled near to each other around Eagle Creek on the Battleford Trail and the Reverend Donaghy, a student missionary in that area, describes Battleford in 1903 as being "a real western town full of cowboys, freighters and Indians - a picture that would gladden the hearts of small boys, and the bugles sounding at the mounted police barracks gave another touch to the scene.

It was 24 hours before I saw a woman, I was beginning to think it was strictly a man's town. A scuffle in the Queen's Hotel bar that night caused a man to narrowly miss having a bullet through his head but to only have the skin and whiskers burnt off his chin. From what I saw of Battleford in 1903 it had ignored town planning and people built where it suited them best."

By 1905 the Eagle Creek Post Office and store was well established and the Rev. Donaghy and other preachers travelled there regularly, to take services, held there each Sunday throughout the summer.

Services were held in people's houses in other places but at Forsyth's store at Eagle Creek there was certain to be a more than average crowd on Sundays, as settlers for miles around came for their mail at this post office and enjoyed staying for the service

and visiting friends. There was also a school built at Eagle Creek which children throughout the area travelled to each day, and in the winter no doubt there were plenty of days when they couldn't get there because of weather conditions.



Eagle Creek Old Post Office

The homesteads were usually a mile or two apart but they helped each other out when necessary and organised social gatherings such as picnics, dances, harvest suppers etc. to break the monotony of their isolated lives. There were settlers of other nationalities in the area so their different customs all helped to enrich the variety of their lives. From about 1916 to 1920 the United Grain Growers Picnic was a popular annual event until the CPR built a railroad through the ground where it was held. There would be home-made ice cream, home cured ham sandwiches, pies and drinks such as sarsaparilla, root beer and 2% beer which was allowed in the days of prohibition for sale. There would be races, jumping and swimming competitions for children and adults with baseball and football held inside the track and horse racing and pacing around the outside. Another popular event was the Model T Ford Slow race, the winner being the one who could drive his Model T the slowest in high gear without stalling! Everyone worked hard and long hours to provide enough food to survive the severe winters on. There was very little spare money but to have enough food over winter and grain to sow the next Spring was quite an achievement. The women must have spent many hours preparing food for the ever hungry farm workers. Here is a typical day's menu for the Turner farm:

*6am: Breakfast - large bowl of rolled oats with lots of salt, sugar, milk and cream
3-4 rashers of home cured fatty bacon and 2 or 3 eggs all fried in bacon fat and frequently heart, liver or kidney as well. 3-4 large slices home made white bread with lots of butter and/or dripping and at least 3 cups of strong coffee with thick cream and sugar and maybe more toast with butter and marmalade*

*Noon: Dinner - a roast of beef, lamb or pork, all the meat being marbled with fat and sometimes roast chicken, all with potatoes, carrots, turnips and a thick gravy and several slices of thickly buttered bread, greens only available to eat in season
3-4 cups of tea with cream and sugar.*

Dessert would be large slices of pie or cookies or dried fruit all with cream

6pm: supper - almost the same again as dinner

Hardly a balanced diet by today's standards !

The town of Langham was located about 22 miles from Eagle Creek, possibly named after a surveyor, and in the early 1900's it was the nearest store for such as rolled oats, flour, salt, sugar etc. It was a two day trip there with a team and wagon or sleigh in the winter, to market wheat and to buy food.

In 1918 there was a flu epidemic and many died but the Turners missed it and later believed that it was because they unknowingly ate plenty of vitamins in the offal that they regularly ate from the animals reared on their farm, most neighbours would not eat it and passed any from their animals on to the Turners.

The 1930's were a time of hardship, often called the Dirty Thirties, for the settlers, as well as a depression there was a time of drought. Always violent thunder and lightning but never a spot of rain for the parched earth most of the season.



Snow in Eagle Creek

Many had farms and machinery repossessed and some even left and travelled further West in the hope of finding work, but conditions were the same there. Fortunately, all our Langham emigrants seem to have come through the bad times and before so long, of course, the economy improved and advances were made in

farming and machinery, lightening the load for men and women alike.

Descendants of most of the Langham emigrants are still living in the same areas though some have moved further away in Canada and America. Many of them have visited Langham and even if they have not they have heard plenty about Langham from the early Prairie Pioneers.

James F. Hubbard

James F. Hubbard was born in Langham in 1613 and was the youngest of eleven children of Henry, a yeoman farmer, and Margaret Hubbard, also both born in Langham. James went to America in 1637 first settling in Charlestown, Massachusetts and built a home near Breeds Hill, later to be known as Bunker's Hill during the Revolutionary War.

In 1643 he, along with other families of similar religious beliefs, Quakers and Baptists, moved to Long Island, New York and settled on land obtained from the Indian Chief Pamamora in 1645. James being a surveyor, surveyed this land and laid out the original Gravesend and parts of Hempstead, Long Island.

He laid out Gravesend in the shape of a wagon wheel; the centre hub being a fort and each spoke separating pie wedges of homes and land for the families. A fort was necessary for security during Indian attacks as tribes still hunted on Long Island. He served as village 'Scout' in 1648; was elected Magistrate for Gravesend in 1650, 51 and 53 and owned land on Staten Island.

There were political troubles in 1653/54 and James and others were expelled from their civil offices in Gravesend. He raised the standard of rebellion against the Dutch authority in 1655 and was arrested and locked up in Fort Amsterdam. In 1655, Martha became his first wife but later in 1664, he married for a second time to Elizabeth Baylis of Queen's Co. N.Y. and they had seven children. James died and was buried at Middletown, New Jersey.

Subsequent generations of Hubbards have moved further afield in America but can trace their family back to James F. Hubbard of Langham.

Richard Sharpe

Richard Sharpe I was baptised in Langham on 26th December 1781, second of the four children of Richard and Sarah Sharpe. On 1st July 1812 Richard I married Mary Ann Swinger, they had six children of whom four died in infancy – leaving Richard II born April 1813 and William II born August 1816.

Mary Ann was only 34 when she died in 1822 and Richard I married again to Sarah Adcock in 1826. The following March Richard and Sarah, with the two boys, emigrated to America to farm in the Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, where their three daughters were born later.

Richard senior was a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, in Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne Co. and there is a Tiffany stained glass window to the memory of him and his two sons there. Richard I died in 1836 but Sarah lived until 1890.

William II went to Philadelphia, married, and had four children. Richard II moved to Summit Hill, Carbon Co., Pennsylvania in 1836 and was book-keeper for a coal mining company before forming a contracting partnership to prospect and mine anthracite coal with Courtright, Belford, and Leisenring in 1845. Four years later the firm reorganised to include Weiss and in 1854 Courtright was replaced by Forster. Coal was shipped from their first colliery in 1855, the Council Ridge Colliery was named after nearby mountains where it is said the Indians met before the Wyoming Massacre.

A village was built next to the mine for the workers and their families, originally it was known as Fillmore but later it became Eckley Miner's Village. Richard II married in 1847 and also had four children, the family lived in Eckley to oversee the mine and the village until the lease expired in 1874. He was the last partner to leave. The family settled in Wilkes-Barre and Richard II became President of the Alden Coal Company, Director of the Vulcan Ironworks, the Home for the Friendless, and also of the First National Bank. He was a faithful member of the Wilkes-Barre Episcopal Church, like his father, until his death in April 1895. Richard II gave generously to Christian works and remembered the village of his birth when he donated £200 to the restoration of St Peter and St. Paul's, Langham in the 1870's.

Richard Sharpe III born June 1852 and grandson of Richard I, carried on tending to the family business and was involved in many charitable works throughout the Wyoming Valley; he and his sisters established The Sharpe Memorial Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania and donated two floors of the Wilkes-Barre General Hospital. His son Richard Sharpe IV was born at the beginning of the 1900's and lived in New York.



Richard Sharpes House



Florence Meadows born in Langham 12th August 1871 and was the 7th daughter of Stephen Meadows and Eliza Smith both born in Rutland. In 1903, still single, she emigrated to Canada finding work first in Saskatoon, then part of the North West Territories and then in Davidson, NWT.

In 1904 she married John Fisher, the proprietor of the American Hotel in Davidson and 1905 finds John running the Union Hotel in North Portal, Saskatchewan, where their first son was born.

In 1909 John bought land in the Rosetown area of

Saskatchewan and built a house and the family moved there in June 1910 and their second son was born in 1912. Florence died in 1943 at North Battleford, she was a respected member of the Springville district and is remembered for her kindness and nursing abilities.



Florence, John & sons on the farm



Harry Vincent Royce was 16yrs old when he left Langham to seek adventure. He sailed for Canada in March 1903 on the HMS Midian and worked in various places for several years in the west of Canada before visiting the Turner's farm in Eagle Creek, Saskatchewan. Some time after this he took up a homestead in the same area in 1912.

He married Eliza Cleghorn in 1914, the daughter of a Scottish family on a neighbouring farm and they had five children, two of whom died in infancy. John and Tom Isaac, nephews of the Turners, worked for them on the farm for many years.



Harry, Eliza & Jean



Harry Royce & JJH Turner

Harry was also an auctioneer and so was widely known in the locality, travelling with cutter or sleigh in the winter and buggy in the summer, until he bought his first Model T Ford in 1920. Harry and Eliza sold the farm in 1945 and moved into Saskatoon where he continued to keep busy with auctions and she with boarders and Knox Church. Harry died at the age of 88yrs in 1971 and Eliza in 1975.

John James Hack Turner & Caroline Marshall



JJH Turner & Caroline

John James Hack Turner 'Jim' was born in Langham in 1874, he was the son of Ann and James Turner who was gored to death by a bull in 1876 when he was only 46yrs old. His maternal grandparents were Jane and John Prideaux the licensees of the Noel Arms Public House. Jim was an adventure loving man and had had many experiences travelling in South America during 1895/8 and was a veteran of the Cape Artillery during the South African War.

Caroline Marshall was born at Preston in 1874 but had lived most of her life at Langham as she was the eldest of the three daughters of Edwin Marshall and Lucy Judge, the proprietors of the Black Horse Public House, Langham. Jim and Caroline were married and first farmed at Bulwick, Northants., but Jim was



attracted by the advertising of the golden opportunities promised of owning your own land in Canada and so in early 1905 they, and their small son, arrived by Colonist train, in the then small town of Saskatoon, Sask. Jim set off on foot to locate his quarter section 40 miles away and the family stayed in a log hotel called 'Queens'.



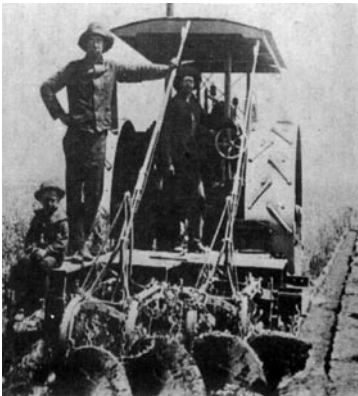
The Oxen Team

On his return he bought a wagon, a team of oxen, a plough and basic tools and they set off through a mosquito infested wilderness to build their new home in Canada. They lived in a makeshift shack to start with, a well was dug and breaking of the new land was done with a team of oxen.

Eventually, a proper house was built of wood which they called Rutland Farm and in 1910 Jim bought one of the first gas traction engines in the Eagle Creek district for ploughing and harvesting to replace the horse teams.



Rutland Farm



JJH Turner driving and son Ted seated on the plough turning the first sod

They had four sons and were a popular family serving on many community projects and teams and were members of the Anglican Church, Mrs Turner's Melton Mowbray Pork Pies being well remembered at Harvest Suppers. They retired in the late 1940's to Sutherland, Saskatoon where Caroline died in 1961.

Jim then moved to British Columbia to be with his sons George and John and passed away in 1969 at the age of 95 years George and John are both in their 90's now.



George Palmer was born in Langham in 1886 and was the 4th child of William and Eliza Palmer who lived at the end of the lane by the bridge on Church Street.

George emigrated to Alberta in Canada when he was eighteen or nineteen paying his passage by working on a livestock boat. He worked in farming in the Peace River area of Alberta before moving south to Red Deer where he floated logs for the Great West Lumber Company. Soon after 1912 he was homestead farming further west

in Caroline and later, in 1919 when he was thirty-three, he married Esther Boeken from the USA. They married in mid winter and George is said to have hitched up his team and sleigh, loaded up some hogs to sell, and driven the forty miles to Innisfail before returning later the same day to be married! The family continued in farming but moved south to Cayley in 1923 then North again to Sylvan Lake in 1930. He and Esther had three children and at the time of writing Esther is just about to celebrate her 104th birthday! George later remarried and had one more child.



George died in Red Deer Hospital during 1944 and is buried in the Sylvan Lake Cemetery.

Charlotte Marshall and Fred Austin



Charlotte Marshall, born Langham 1883 was the third daughter of Edwin and Lucy Marshall who ran the Black Horse Public House. She was Langham Church organist for the first 6 to 8 yrs of 1900 and on leaving the village to go to Canada was presented with a purse of gold (£12) by Mr. R. W. Baker on behalf of 68 subscribers.

She left Langham for Ontario, Canada and to marry Fred Austin, the son of John Austin, wheelwright of Cold Overton Road, Langham who was already in Canada. They were married in Kirkton, Ontario in 1909, and

set up a butchery business. In a year or so they moved further west and took a farm next to Charlotte's sister and husband, the Turner's in the Eagle Creek district, Saskatoon.

Fred's butchery talents were much appreciated by the homesteaders and they relied on him to do their winter butchering, he also operated the district beef ring and his sausages were very popular. Charlotte played the organ for the Anglican Church and gave music lessons and in about 1927, when the Canadian Pacific Railway was extended to Environ and grain elevators were built there, Fred became a grain buyer. They did not have children and returned to England a couple of times but could not settle and went back to Canada, where Fred died in 1942 and Charlotte in 1958 after spending her last years with her sister Caroline Turner.





John & Thomas Isaac

John Marshall Isaac born Langham 12th March 1903 was the eldest of nine children of Robert Isaac and Alice Marshall, who later became the village post mistress. He left Langham for Canada in 1920 and joined his aunt and uncle, Fred and Charlotte Austin in the Eagle Creek district. He first worked for the Royce's, another Langham family already there, and later bought his own land in the same area.

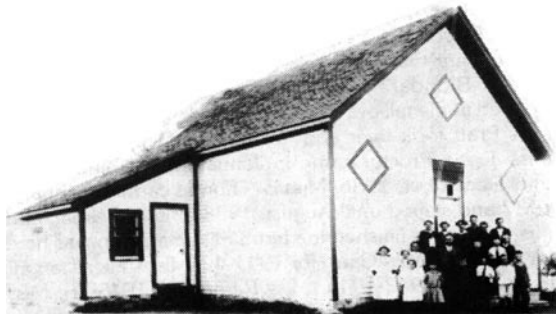
He married Dagmar Jensen in 1926 and they had three children. They raised chickens, cows, pigs and horses and shipped cream and eggs to the city by train from Environ. Sadly Dagmar died at the early age of 42yrs but John continued to farm until he retired in 1977.

Thomas Isaac born 1904 Langham, the 2nd son of Robert and Alice Isaac attended Oakham School and served an engineering apprenticeship in Nottingham before leaving for Canada in 1922, 2yrs later than his brother. He sailed in the RMS Militia to Quebec, Ontario. He worked on farms in the Asquith, Sask. area before farming on his own for a while. In 1936 he married Ella Paulson and they had three children.



Eagle Creek

Tom enlisted in the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers in 1941 going overseas in 1942. In 1945 he returned to live in Saskatoon and worked for the Saskatchewan Power Corporation, installing turbines in the Saskatchewan Diefenbaker Dam. He died in 1966.



Eagle Creek Old School



Thomas Robert Hubbard born June 1896 Langham, one of the eleven children of Thomas Robert Hubbard senior and his first wife Sarah Vines also went to Canada at the same time as Tom Isaac. Tom Hubbard was engaged to a Scots girl, Mamie Corson who was a cook at Cold Overton Hall and she joined him in Canada a year later. They also settled in the Eagle Creek district of Saskatchewan, and had two children. Tom worked on farms and then become a grain buyer. Tom died at the age of 75yrs and Mamie at 94yrs

Edwin Isaac born Langham 1907, the 3rd son of Robert and Alice Isaac followed his brothers to Canada in 1925. He did several jobs initially farming and on the railroad but after his marriage to Eileen Smith in 1935 he did a great deal of carpentry work especially for the Pool Elevator Company. He then became a grain buyer for the Asquith Co-operative and also helped to organise The Asquith Credit Union. He and Eileen had four children and in 1958 he moved to a job with the Provincial Government Laboratories in Regina and was there until his retirement in 1972. He died suddenly in 1977.



Dennis Palmer, the nephew of George Palmer, was the eldest of the seven sons of William Palmer and Emma Sturgess who lived in the cottages at the corner of Cold Overton road.



He left for Canada in 1926 and worked on farms and ranches in the Haigh River area of Alberta before enlisting in the Royal Canadian Corps of Engineers serving in England and Western Europe.

He returned to Canada and became involved in the Lassiter Project, Wanham, Alberta, established by the government for returned Canadian servicemen.



John Deere Model D Tractor 1925
Courtesy Deere & Company Archives

He arrived at Wanham in early April 1949 after fording the Burnt River with a Model D John Deere tractor. Halfway across the water 'killed' the engine and the tractor had to be towed ashore and dried out. Dennis is remembered in the area for being one of the originators of plans for a picnic and softball site on the north side of the Burnt River near the Lassiter Bridge. Volunteers

levelled and built the site and many homesteaders enjoyed picnicking and camping there and it was hoped that it would one day become a provincial park and game reserve. Unfortunately the spring floods gradually eroded the site.

Dennis never married and farmed his homestead until he retired in 1976, when he went to live in Wanham and then in a Senior's Complex in nearby Spirit River where he died in the late 1970's.



Herbert Matthew Hubbard 'Mac' born in Langham in 1904 another of the eleven children of Thomas and Sarah Hubbard went to Canada along with Dennis Palmer in 1926. On leaving the ship they both found employment, Dennis further West and unfortunately Mac took a job which turned out to have poor living and working conditions which he could not tolerate. He stayed the required amount of time for the Assisted Passage and then returned home. He later married and lived in Uppingham until he died in 1966.

Fred Williamson born about 1886, the son of Christopher and Alice Williamson of Mafeking Farm, Langham also tried his luck in Canada in the late 1920's. He worked in farming but returned to Langham after a couple of years in about 1928.

Mrs Lever and her two children from Langham emigrated to the Turner farm at Eagle Creek around 1915. Mrs Lever's husband had been killed in World War I and she went out to help Caroline Turner with housework. One son Eric, became a notable Canadian inventor. It is believed that members of the Lever family were part of the staff at Ranksborough Hall, Langham.