

This was written by my mother, Mabel Peterson Helton -  
it tells of an experience - Her father, Neil Peterson (a  
Danish immigrant) took a tree-claim on Medicine  
Lake, east of Armadillo in what was then the  
Territory of Wyoming, in the 1880's -

Ernest Helton

Medicine Flat

Medicine Flat lies about  
five and one-half miles  
north and east of Sundance,<sup>Wyo</sup>  
on U. S. 14. When Joe Frank  
sold his ranch to Mabel  
Waddell Vries in November  
1950, that left just two land  
owners on the whole Flat.

This reminds me that  
in the middle eighties  
the Flat was well settled.  
My parents, Mr. and Mrs.  
Niels Peterson, rented their  
pre-emption near Spearfish,  
\* Dak. <sup>territory</sup> and took a tree  
claim on Medicine Flat.  
Our home was a log house

with a loft reached by a ladder.

Neighbors were: Mr. and Mrs. Bob Moore and four children, Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson and three children, the Mrs. Schloredt family, Mr. & Mrs. John Waddell, and Hamilton Cornell his daughter and family. The Curli's home was at the north end of the flat.

There was a school-house in the middle eighties and there was a good attendance at the school held there. This old building is still standing and until this year had been in use. It's moved about several times.

(2)

I don't know just where we moved to the Flat, but we were living there in the summer of '86 when my brother was born. Mabel ~~Vines~~ <sup>Madell Vines</sup> ~~Madell~~ tells me that her father homesteaded there in 1880 and later took tree claim and pre-emption.

Eighty-six must have been a dry year, as many covered wagons passed by headed east. Campers often stopped on the Flat, as there was water from Medicine Springs and Medicine Creek. My sister who was older and I, went out to visit some campers.

We sat down by the fire  
and told them we had a new  
baby brother. When they asked  
his name, I said "Bluebell"  
and my sister quickly amended,  
by saying "Rosebud" I still  
remember how they laughed  
and how offended we were.

Len Johnson who died  
this January, and my brother  
Ray, were both born on the  
Flat and were babies at the  
same time, tho Len was  
older. I believe the Johnson  
family were our closest  
friends. Mrs. Moore was  
a kindly, motherly woman  
and she was something of  
a practical nurse.

The Waddells at that time

(3)

had no children. Mrs. Bess  
Vines (nee <sup>Mabel</sup> Waddell) is their  
only daughter. She was born  
after we left the Mat. Mr.  
Cornell was a widower.  
He lived down on the  
creek bank and must have  
irrigated his garden. He made  
a barrel of sauerkraut and  
I remember him holding  
me up so I could get a hand-  
ful. Maud Cornell, just a  
young girl, was married  
to a jockey who rode in the  
races at Sundance. They had  
a baby girl who had some  
black shoes trimmed with  
red silk tassels. I remember

that her father, La Duke, took these tassels and wore them on his jockey cap. I suppose he used them as a good luck emblem or mascot, but I thought it deecriation.

I believe all of these settlers were good neighbors in the proper sense of the word. The only means of transportation at that time was by lumber wagon and team, horseback, or walking.

Aunt told that the ~~Mit~~ <sup>Adams</sup> Adams family lived in Sundance, but I remember Mrs. Adams and son, Carl, coming to pick hops. These wild hops climbed the trees along the creek and were essential in making the home-made yeast of the '80s.

Mother carried her hop bag and also picked the hops. Carl carried his mother's bag. He said to mother, "Mrs. Peterson, if I had a nap in the middle of my back, I would carry your bag, too."

One of the years we lived on the flat there was an eclipse of the sun. Etta Moore, my sister and I were playing with our new "wax" dolls. We thought they were cold, so put them under the box heater. While we watched, the eclipse the wax melted, so our dolls' faces were never so pretty again.

At that time nearly all men wore beards. One day

my father had his shaved off while in bondage. He came to the door and asked mother to direct him to a certain place. Mother gave directions before she recognized him.

Women could vote in Wyo. even in territorial days and mother told of local politicians buying, or trying to buy, women's votes for ten yards of calico. She said she did not sell her vote.

at that time there were no county agents and no government aid to farmers. The settlers knew nothing of modern farming methods. Each settler had only a comparatively small tract of land and it was suitable for livestock rather than farming.

(5)

So the dry years took their toll. Many of the settlers sold out to neighbors or just moved away. The Mrs. Schloredt family owned and operated a ranch there for many years, but finally sold out to ~~Wald~~ Seelye.

This leaves Mrs. Ber Vines (Mahef Waddell) the only descendant of an original settler still living on Medicine Flat.

A number of people have owned land and lived on the Flat thru the years.

"Uncle Coon" (Conrad Schloredt) had the Bob Moore place and the Peterson tree claim. He and his wife built the two story white house in 1900. He sold it to

Richard Champion in 1917. The place was rented for several years and finally sold to Joe Frank in 1933. Joe Frank sold out to Mabel Maddell Vines in 1950, as I have said before.

Believe the only one of the older settlers still living is my mother, Mrs. Peterson. She lives in California and was 95 years old on Christmas Day, 1950. Many of the children of the middle '80s have also passed on, but there are a good many descendants.

The flat is good hay and stock land and present owners are engaged in stock raising.

When they moved the Indians  
(mostly a child's Eye View.)

My sister and I were in second  
grade in the Spearfish Public  
School when a band of Indians  
~~were~~ <sup>was</sup> brot thru town under  
army escort. Our teacher,  
Miss Bertha Youmans, (later  
Mrs. Thornby) told us she was  
going to ask an Indian mother  
to come in and speak to us.

Miss Youmans soon  
returned with a young  
squaw and her papoose.  
The young woman stood  
in front of the room with  
her baby and said, "How-  
how, papoose," to the assembled  
first and second graders.  
Miss Youmans was

See of to U.C. for - Not acceptable - not acceptable - not acceptable

a fine young woman and  
an exceptionally good teacher.  
Assured she wished to reassure  
her young charges, and in still  
in them a kindly feeling for  
the Indians.

However, when we started  
on our long walk home, I  
had a feeling that an Indian  
might be lurking behind a  
tree or hiding in the corner  
of the board fence along  
the road. We were glad when  
we were safely home.

We heard from our elders  
that six hundred Indians  
were being moved to a  
reservation in Montana.  
It was after the ~~Battle~~ Battle of  
Wounded Knee.

Indians

(2)

Many years later, in 1923, my sister and I visited our parents in Turlock, Calif. Mother took us to call on the Chris Anderson family. The Andersons were originally from Rapid City.

On later visits to Turlock, I came to know Mr. Anderson quite well. He often came to see my parents. He told me that he, a young man of nineteen, drove his team and hauled four squaws and their papooses. He was hired by the army. He said they started in January, 1891, to ...

his team and wagon with  
the squaw in the wagon  
bed.

Mr. Anderson told of the  
long, hard trip and said  
the squaw never complained  
- just took the cold and hard  
ships without a murmur.  
They sat on straw or hay  
in the wagon box.

Mr. and Mrs. Anderson  
are both dead now and I  
know nothing of their where-  
abouts or their family.

Perhaps some local old-  
timers have pictures of  
this ~~movement~~ <sup>moving</sup> of the Indians  
sent to P. City file -  
at Bob Lee (Sunday Ed.)

~~Gray Tommy~~  
more Peter.

(8)

When your daddy was a baby we had a big gray cat. Butler was a little chap and he used to carry you for a baby. He would wrap you up, carry you around, and even put you in the basket your daddy slept in. ~~when I was it looking~~

Tommy was still with us when Butler and Ernest slept up stairs. He used to climb up the porch pillar, then on the porch roof and come in the window. He would get in between the two boys, push himself under the covers and put his

head on a pillow between  
the two little boys' heads.

Later we had a mother cat  
we called Spot. She just came  
to us from the woods and  
was used to hunting her food.  
She could raise a family  
of kittens with little or  
~~any~~ <sup>no</sup> help. She kept the building  
all free from mice and  
hunted the smaller wild  
creatures. We fed her milk.

When the boys got pigeons  
she used to climb the ladder  
to the pigeon loft to try to  
steal the baby pigeons, or  
squabs.

The father pigeon, called  
Pa, would stand at the top

~~2 to~~

(3)

of the ladder and slap Spot  
in the face with his wing.  
After a few good swats, Spot  
gave up and left the squabs  
alone.

Black Tommy was Earl's  
cat. We moved him to Beulah  
with us when I taught there.  
The house we lived in  
was ~~near~~<sup>on</sup> the bank of  
Sand Creek. There was a  
big rock in the creek just  
below the house. Tommy  
used to sit on that rock  
and fish by the hour. He  
would reach in a black  
pan as the fish went by  
He never saw him catch

a field, but he kept at it all the time we lived there.

One spring we hatched some baby chicks while weather was still cold. We put them in a box and set the box on the warming oven of the range. They still peeped for a time. Finally all was quiet. One of the boys looked into the box and found Black Tommy curled up with the chicks, warming and mothering them.

Jack was jil. (note: written by  
my mother - 1951 -)  
EH

Jack, a magpie, was the pet  
of a family of nieces and nephews  
that lived near us. He was  
not dumb, as he had learned  
to talk.

One day I was washing. Our  
ranch horse was in a camp  
and the clothes lines were  
in the woods back of the  
house. Every time I stepped  
out I heard coughing and  
sneezing. Finally I decided  
to investigate and followed  
the sound until I found  
Jack sitting on a tree limb.  
He was firmly convinced  
that he had a terrible cold.

Sometimes Jack would sit above the granary doors and flap his wings and "shoo" when our chickens came to eat. They would fly and cackle across to the hen house. Jack would be there before them and "shoo" them back.

We put him in a cardboard box with holes punched for air and my husband took him home on his way to town. When he took the box out, Jack was gone.

One spring Jack fell in love with a wild magpie and helped build a nest.

(2)

and more surprising still,  
he - or she, laid eggs. When it  
came time to incubate the  
eggs, Jack was faithful for a  
day or two. But domestic  
life was too tame for her and  
she went back to be pet and  
pet of her human family.

Mrs. D. B. Hilton  
Sundance, Wyo

## Bright Bruin.

My husband's father was a timber contractor in the Maine woods some seventy-five years ago. He and his crew established several camps, living in the most convenient to the work. One time when moving to another camp, they decided to leave a barrel of molasses. With the aid of ropes and pulleys, they hoisted the barrel and fastened the ropes to the rafters.

When they returned to the camp some ~~months~~ <sup>weeks</sup>

later, they found the empty  
barrel on the floor, surrounded  
by sticky bear tracks. Bruin  
had outwitted them.

Dear Dick & Bob;

(2)

Those ducklings I wrote about last time grew up to be ducks and drakes. The boys kept a pair of them and named them Queen Elizabeth and Sir Francis Drake. Your daddy, Ernest, was studying European history and took the names from early English history.

Sir Francis Drake had a feather curl on his back just above his tail, as all drakes do. I believe he was a little larger than Queen Elizabeth.

~~Our~~ ducks had been used  
to the little brook on the  
ranch ever since they were  
ducklings. When we moved  
to Bendah am sure they  
were glad <sup>that</sup> the house we  
lived in was right on the  
bank of Sand Creek.

Queen Elizabeth and Sir  
Francis spent most of  
their time in the water  
when weather was pleasant.  
They fed on water bugs  
and I suppose they ate small  
fish. Sometimes they had  
such a good time they  
forgot to come home. <sup>When</sup>

the boys came home from  
 school it was time to feed  
 the chickens and ducks.  
 If Sir Francis and Susan  
 Elizabeth were not home,  
 the boys would go down  
 the creek bank calling  
 them by name. Sometimes  
 some friends would help  
~~bring~~ <sup>join</sup> them. ~~they~~ <sup>the ducks</sup> never  
 were really lost. Sometimes  
 the children found them,  
 and sometimes when the  
 boys had given them up  
 as lost, they came home  
 by themselves.

The boys then fed Sir Francis  
& Queen Elizabeth and put  
them in the duck house  
for the night.

Dear Dick & Bob: (11)

When your uncle Earl was about Dick's age we set a hen on some duck eggs. The boys patiently waited four weeks for those eggs to hatch. Finally there were several little yellow duckings with big bills and webbed feet.

The mother hen took them out with her to pick blue grass and hunt insects. Just as soon as they came near the little brook they all went in with a splash and started swimming down the ~~brook~~ stream. The poor mother hen

was worried. She could not  
swim and none of her  
other babies had <sup>ever</sup> tried to  
swim! She ran along the  
bank clucking and trying  
to call them out. Pretty soon  
Earl joined her, ~~saying~~ <sup>saying</sup> a  
poem from his stupid  
reader:

"My dear whatever are you at?  
You ought to be at home.  
I told you not to wet your feet,  
I told you not to roam."

Pretty soon the ducklings  
climbed out on the bank and  
joined their mother. She  
finally got used to swimming  
babies.