

Culture in Red Deer. However he prefers to be a waiter in luxury restaurants in Calgary.

Throughout the years, Olga was determined that the children would get as much education as possible. In order to attain this objective she willingly lived in an old house, milked cows, fed calves, worked in the hay fields, raised chickens and turkeys and grew a large garden. At eighty-one years of age, she continues to have a keen interest in the activities of her family. In spite of the years of hard work she enjoys reasonably good health and continues to live in her house on the farm.

#### **ERIC AND PHYLLIS JOHANSON FAMILY — by Phyllis Johanson**

Eric and I have lived "Along the Burnt Lake Trail" all our lives: Eric was born September 14, 1932, in Mrs. Simon's Nursing Home, Red Deer, second son of John and Olga Johanson, and I was delivered by Dr. Mahaffy, October 1, 1942, in the Red Deer Municipal Hospital, only daughter of Ernest and Annie Pearson.

Memories of our youth revolve around the school and Burnt Lake. The school was the hub of the community and initiated hockey games, concerts, ball games, that left neighbours and children knowing one another better. The trips to school by horse, bike, cutter, or on foot are not to be forgotten. Winters found each child bundled so heavily that bending posed a problem.

The lake itself earned vivid childhood memories: of haying with over-throw stackers and horses; of horses swimming across the creek; of the train slowing down at Cygnet because of high water obliterating the tracks; of muskrat trapping during winter (this was one of Eric's ambitions); of coyote hunting; and of haying on the ice Christmas time in 1954. Water fowl, beaver, muskrats, deer and coyotes were a part of our habitat. It's hard to feature early pioneers such as my great-grandmother fishing for dinner in that same lake.

We are proud that our ancestors pioneered here. In 1895, my great-grandmother, Karen Persson, a nurse from Stockholm, Sweden, delivered Eric's father, John. Her fee: fifty pounds of flour.



*Eric Johanson Family — 1976. Back — Phyllis, Kim, Holly. Front — Kevin, Eric, Sharon, Glen and Ricky.*

Eric farmed with his father, working mostly with cattle. They ran one of the last threshing rigs in this area. The 1962 harvest saw them threshing the last time. A familiar winter scene of my family was to see Eric and John crossing the lake everyday with teams and racks for hay. My father, Ernie Pearson, liked to synchronize his trip with theirs to load and chat with them. For recreation, Eric enjoyed hunting coyotes with his greyhounds.

Eric and I were married January 3, 1964. I was teaching then. Our home on NE 2-38-1-5, sits on a ridge, a part of the original Burnt Lake Trail. We are operating the only dairy farm in the Burnt Lake district and ship quality-awarded milk to Alpha Dairy. To utilize our lake land, we raise Maine-Anjou beef cattle. Our children are: **Kim**, born April 10, 1965; **Holly**, born April 6, 1966; **Glen**, born July 2, 1967, as Red Deer's Centennial Baby; **Ricky**, born September 10, 1969; **Sharon**, born November 10, 1970; and **Kevin**, born February 29, 1972, Leap-Year day. They all enjoy their privilege of farm life and may keep our home in the family for generations to come.

#### **THE AXEL JOHANSON FAMILY — by Dora Johanson**

Axel was born in 1897 in the Burnt Lake district on the NE 10-38-1-5. He is the second oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Eric Johanson who homesteaded in Burnt Lake in 1893. In 1902, his parents moved to Sec. 1-38-1-5 which they bought from the C.P.R. for \$3.00 per acre. There they built a log house. In 1910 they moved to the W $\frac{1}{2}$  6-38-28-4.

Axel took his schooling in Burnt Lake, Shady Nook and after soldiering in the First World War for a few months, he continued his schooling in Nampa, Idaho from 1919 to 1926.

In 1910 to 1912 he freighted cement with his dad and brother Oscar for the Rocky railroad bridge that crossed the North Saskatchewan River. This round trip took from four to five days depending on the weather. The roads were poor and they could only follow ridges in order to avoid muskegs and boggy land. When the freighting was completed, they hauled lumber from the Petepher Mill to Red Deer. They often stopped at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gus Bjelke, west of Evarts, to feed their horses and to have a lunch. Axel and Oscar also hauled hay for the railroad at that time. Axel remembers plowing with oxen when he lived on Sec. 1-38-1-5. He was only ten or twelve years of age at this time and going to school was a secondary occupation. When there was nothing else to do, they went to school.

Between 1919 to 1926 during the summer holidays, he worked in the harvest fields in Washington driving sixteen head of mules on the combine. He came home after harvesting was completed and helped take off the crop at home. In 1927 his father died and three months later, his brother George died with polio. Consequently, Axel came home to stay and worked with his brother Oscar on the farm until he married.

Recreation in those days consisted of riding bucking horses with Dave Cronquist and playing baseball on the Burnt Lake team.

I, Dora Bjelke, was born in 1908 in the Diamond Valley district. I took part of my public schooling there and the rest in Burnt Lake when we moved there in the

spring of 1920. In Diamond Valley, we had to walk about three miles to school. It was a long walk in the winter time when it was cold, but we were kept nice and warm in mother's home knit stockings and mitts. Once, my brother Carl froze his ears walking to school and at recess time his ears were all flopped over. He really looked funny. I remember the lunches freezing in the winter time because the school was so cold. We had Rogers' Golden Syrup sandwiches and to this day I never buy that brand of syrup. There was always plenty of food around with father fishing in the Medicine River and snaring rabbits which were plentiful.

The land that my father homesteaded was very low and susceptible to frost, as a result we couldn't grow vegetables there and I remember Dad and Mother going to Engmans in New Hill to plant potatoes and vegetables. What a change when we moved to Burnt Lake and were able to grow beautiful vegetables and a school just across the road.

I took my high school in Sylvan Lake and Red Deer and worked for my board as so many other girls did at that time, and that meant little time for recreation. I took my Normal Training at the Calgary Normal School and did my practice teaching in Pine Hill when Miss Graham was teaching there. My last day there I remember quite vividly because I ended up by falling down the basement stairs at Sigurdsons where I was staying. In those days they had trap doors leading down to the basement and I happened to step back unawares that Mrs. Sigurdson had gone down to the basement. Somehow I lived through the royal bumps going down the stairs, although I've suffered with my back a great deal ever since.

My first school was the First Chance S.D. eight miles south of Lomond out on the bald prairie. This was quite a change for me coming from a wooded area. Going down south I travelled by train to Bow City and from there by stage coach to Lomond. I stayed only one year at this



*Dora and Axel Johanson's wedding July 18, 1934.*

school as I wanted to work closer to home. It was a good thing I left when I did because the following year everything went to rock bottom during the depression and they couldn't afford to pay their teachers, so I was lucky when I got a school at Poplar Ridge where the salary was at least a minimum of \$850.00 a year. What a contrast to what the teachers are getting today! I enjoyed my four years at Poplar Ridge very much, the people were so friendly and co-operative.

I remember one hectic experience I had while there and that was the 1934 hailstorm which wiped out the crops 100%. The children had just been dismissed to go home when I saw this big hailstorm coming up. I quickly got the children to put their horses away and come back into the school. We had no sooner come inside when the storm started. I remember having the children hiding under the desks with coats over their heads to avoid getting cut by flying glass or getting glass in their eyes, as glass was flying all over the school. I think nearly every pane of glass was broken. It was quite a frightening experience while the storm lasted.

I've always been interested in Sunday School work and the church and taught Sunday School for a number of years in Burnt Lake, until it terminated. I'm an active member of the Burnt Lake W.I. and was president at one time. I enjoy music, art, handicrafts and have often exhibited at the fairs. I still do a little showing at the W.I. handicrafts and baking exhibit held every year. In the early years of my marriage I was quite active in the Social Credit movement in the district. I remember going out to their meetings and social gatherings which were most enjoyable.

Axel and I (Dora Bjelke) were married in 1934 during the depression and moved to the W½ 6-38-28-4. At first we lived in a very small house built from lumber taken from the old green house or the haunted house as it was sometimes called. Our family finally out grew this dwelling and in 1950 we built a bigger one in which we live at the present time.

We were hailed out completely the first year of our marriage and times were tough on the farm for awhile. As for the depression years, we didn't suffer too badly. I remember the hired men we had in those days, two or three at a time. Many of them came from Saskatchewan where people on the farms were really hit hard. The government paid these men \$5.00 a month and the farmer was given \$5.00 a month to keep them. In those days we'd go to town with \$5.00 in our pocket and have enough money to put our horses in the livery stable (located where the Valley Hotel now stands in Red Deer), buy a few groceries and sometimes we'd even have a few cents left over.

We've been very fortunate through the years as far as tragedies go. We have had some very narrow escapes though. I remember Harriet was only two and one-half years of age when she got a peanut lodged in her left lung and had to be taken to the University Hospital to have it removed. Another time she had a bad runaway on the rake on Burnt Lake and was thrown off the rake and had to be taken to the hospital. Somehow she pulled through this harrowing experience although it was nip and tuck for awhile. Another time, we were sitting in the kitchen enjoying a cup of coffee when we saw Margaret driving by the kitchen window in the old lumber wagon. She had



*Axel Johanson and a team of horses — 1934-'35.*

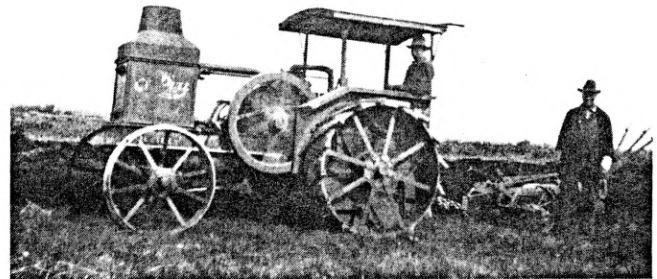
hitched up a stallion and an old mare to the wagon all by herself and there she was sitting on top of the seat just as proud as a peacock, quite oblivious to the fact that she could have been killed. Needless to say that was the end of our coffee break as we rushed out to take care of Margaret. She was only seven or eight years of age at this time.

We were blessed with four children — three girls and one boy. **Margaret**, a school teacher with a B.Ed. Degree, is married to Jim Rendall of One Hundred Mile House, British Columbia. They live at home in a trailer part time. Jim trains and shows horses, specializing in Quarter Horses. They have won many trophies through the years. **Harriet** has her B.Sc. in Nursing and is married to Nico van der Giessen, a civil engineer of Edmonton, who is presently Head Planner for the Environmental Basin in Grande Prairie. They have three children named Jaret, Nico and Michael. **Klara**, a Laboratory Technologist, is married to Bert Bystrom who farms in the Centerville district. They have three children, Todd, Sandra and Pauline. Our son, **David**, is a qualified Electrician and also an Alberta Guide and Outfitter.

Axel is an avid hunter who has hardly ever missed a hunting trip to the west country in the fall. With father and son hunting every year, we've always had an abundant supply of wild meat. Incidentally, the first year that we were married I went hunting with him. I hadn't been on a horse for two years and the first day after riding all day, I was so stiff that I couldn't get off the horse without assistance and in the morning I needed help getting on. I soon limbered up and thoroughly enjoyed myself in spite of the severe cold, and following Axel over deadfalls and windfalls. Although I had done a great deal of walking while teaching, I was totally unprepared for this kind of exercise and usually by eleven o'clock in the morning, I was thoroughly exhausted and famished. A frozen jam sandwich at noon tasted very delicious. Axel is also interested in horses and sports. Through the years when the children were growing up the Benalto Fair and Stampede was a big highlight when the children and he showed horses there. At the age of 79, (1976) Axel still does a little farming and sings bass in the Presbyterian Choir in Sylvan Lake.

## **OSCAR JOHANSON — for early history see Eric Johanson**

Oscar was the third son of Eric Johanson. He was born on the homestead July 5, 1899 and most of his schooling was at Burnt Lake. One of the outstanding memories of school days was that of a teacher grabbing him by the hair and shaking him because he had inadvertently rubbed something off his slate which he had been told to copy! He was extremely shy as a child and was deeply humiliated by this experience. Like most country boys in the early days, school attendance was rather irregular due to work pressures at home.



*George and Oscar Johanson breaking land.*

Visits between the Johanson and Cronquist boys were customary but one occasion in 1909, Oscar recalls especially vividly. While the adults were safely away at church, the boys decided to engage in some rodeo activity. After roping and saddling some big yearlings, it was arbitrarily decided that everyone must ride. As the saddle had been secured far back on the animal, the cowboys received full benefit of each buck! Fortunately no one was hurt. Oscar dearly loved to play ball, so attending the neighboring community picnics highlighted the summers. Horses provided transportation to these favored occasions. The first Benalto Stampede is also among his fond recollections.

In 1926, the doctor recommended that Oscar's father should spend sometime at the west coast to alleviate his heart condition in a lower altitude. In anticipating the train trip with his dad, Oscar asked the doctor what precautions should be taken going over the mountains. As this was during the prohibition, the doctor gave him a permit to obtain some brandy. A little past Banff the train appeared to be climbing and thus, Oscar ascertained that it must be time for medicine. Totally unaccustomed to alcoholic beverages and loathing them, Oscar filled a paper cup with brandy and presented it to his dad, who somehow managed to down it. However, when offered another dose a few miles further along his father graciously but emphatically declined. In spite of the coach being filled with the unmistakable aroma of brandy, no one questioned their bold action! It was years later that Oscar realized their procedure had been very much out of order.

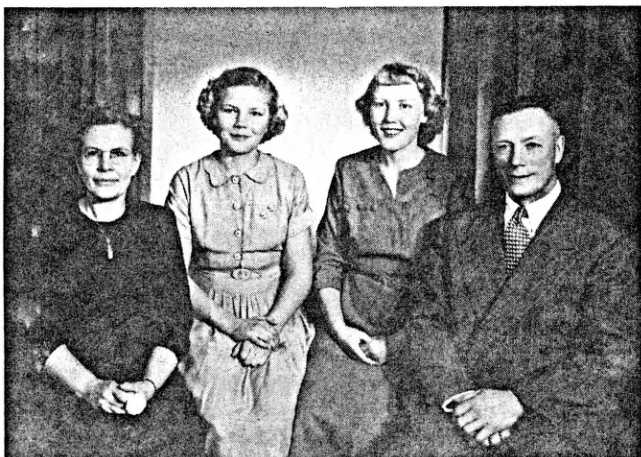
During adulthood, Oscar developed many community interests. He acted as Secretary-Treasurer for fourteen years for the Swan Lake School District (later Burnt Lake). In the early years the Secretary-Treasurer was

responsible for collecting taxes. From January 1923 until November 1961, he was Superintendent of the local Sunday School. It was Inter-denominational and was held each Sunday in the Swedish Baptist Church. For highlights, see the Church History. Oscar served as Councillor from February 1934 through 1944 for the Municipality of Golden West. When the municipality was enlarged he felt he could no longer give it the time required to do a good job. Mr. Andrew Lindholm requested Oscar take over the cemetery books, which he did, in the late fall of 1937. In 1973 he was honored, like many others, with a plaque as a founding member of the Wheat Pool (founded 1923).

On July 2, 1934 he married Elizabeth Faith Moseley and they made their home throughout the years on the Edward Carl Peterson homestead, SW 14-38-1-5. There they carried on a mixed farming operation.

On April 23, 1975 Oscar had a farm machinery sale and rented his land to Eric Johansn Jr. However, Oscar and his wife have remained on the farmstead. He enjoys very good health and looks forward to winter and curling.

His wife, Faith, was born in Brownsburg, Quebec and came west to Red Deer with the John Charles Moseley family in the spring of 1913. Here the children grew up and attended public and high school. Faith attended the Calgary Normal School and taught for a year, obtaining her first class teaching certificate. Later, she graduated from the Royal Alexandra School of nursing as gold medalist. Following this she took post graduate work in teaching and administration at McGill University in Montreal and then returned to her Alma Mater as instructor. Following her marriage, Faith did no active nursing but continued to be interested in its affairs. When the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses divided the province into large districts in 1939, she became the first chairman of the Central Alberta region. She was presented with an Honorary membership in the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses at their convention in 1970. From March 1959 through the fall of 1971, she served on the Red Deer General Hospital Board and was the first woman to do so. On October 13, 1972 she was cited by the membership for outstanding service by the Central Regional Conference of the Alberta Hospital Association. The Red Deer Quota Club honoured her as Woman of the Year on two occasions for her outstanding



*Oscar Johanson Family — 1952. Mrs. Johanson, Ethel, Dorothea, Oscar.*

contribution to the Red Deer district. In the Burnt Lake district Faith became a member of the Women's Institute and served as Constituency Convener of Red Deer West from 1964 to 1968. Very dear to her heart was the work with Oscar in the local Sunday School.

Their family consisted of two girls, Dorothea Grace and Ethel Kathleen. Music has been the main theme to date in the life of **Dorothea Grace**, Oscar and Faith's elder daughter. Her early training was received at Sylvan Lake and Red Deer. She obtained her Associate of Music in teaching Piano from the Western Board of Music, University of Alberta and earned the Provincial Silver Medal for highest marks in Pedagogy. Attending the Banff School of Fine Arts, opened new opportunities which eventually led her to move to Calgary in 1961. The training she received while teaching the Yamaha Music Course, 1967-1972, was enriching and a springboard to other avenues of Early Childhood Music. At present, Dorothea has a large enthusiastic piano class, as well as acting as travelling music teacher and serves as music advisor to several kindergartens in Calgary. For many years, teaching a class each Sunday at the Burnt Lake Sunday School was significant to her. Many meaningful summers and weekends were spent at Pioneer Ranch Camps during the years 1958-1966. From Dorothea's wide variety of interests, Photography has taken pre-eminence and it is with considerable persistence that she continues to perfect this artistic endeavor.

The equestrian heritage continued in the Johanson family after horses were no longer needed for utilitarian purposes. **Ethel Kathleen**, second daughter of Oscar and Faith, maintained a tremendous interest in pleasure horses. Coupling that interest with a concern for children, she became involved with leadership at Pioneer Ranch Camps under the auspices of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. Varied experiences there strongly influenced her personal philosophy for living. Music, Ethel's other love, led her to the University of Alberta, Edmonton and a Bachelor of Music degree in 1965 (majoring in singing). Having obtained a teaching certificate she taught elementary school. Her career was highlighted by one year in the isolated settlement of Povungnituk, Arctic Quebec where she taught and lived amongst the Eskimo people. On October 25, 1969 Ethel Kathleen married John Magnus. They live in Calgary where John has continued his Law practice. Their children are: Nolan John born March 20, 1971, Bradley Preston born September 18, 1972, Duncan Kelsey born February 14, 1974 and Christopher Anthony born May 6, 1976.

#### **OTTO HERMAN JOHANSON**

Otto was born November 13, 1875. In April 1893, at the age of 17 he came with his older brother from Ramele, Sweden to the Burnt Lake area. He lived with his brother Eric and homesteaded the SE 10-38-1-5 which adjoined Eric's south border. Otto's homestead house was of log and was built on the centre of the quarter. Under the history of the cemetery you will see that Otto donated 2.68 acres on the southeast corner of his quarter for this purpose. Later, he sold 40 acres on the southwest corner for a stopping house.

Otto was always more interested in carpentry than farming and spent considerable time in construction in