



Heritage Project

Hello!

I am Francis Bechman

Francis shared her family story during our visit to Innisfail's Lundgren Centre. Francis grew up on the busy Hogg farm. 'When the first homesteaders came to the Huxley area, Innisfail was the centre for supplies and mail,' and they would often stop at The Hogg.



The Hogg was the stopping place between Huxley and Innisfail," said Francis. "Every farm with Scottish descendants had a name and this one was established in 1904 by my grandparents Frank and Euphemia Hogg from Scotland. Everyone called her Mammy and everyone called him Pie. They died long before I was born in 1953.

"Mammy was the head of the clan, because he was sick with arthritis. She had seven children, and her third child born was my dad. All her children were born right on the farm with a midwife in a sod house. I grew up on that farm, too, until I got married to Henry 49 years ago. It was love at first sight. We had a son and a daughter – our daughter was unintentionally delivered on the farm with help from Henry! His own parents came from Holland and he was born just two weeks after they arrived in Raymond, Alberta.

"There were lots of stories from the 1930s & 40s during my grandparents' time, when people coming and going to Innisfail would stop at the farm. The farm had horse barns and bunkhouses, so they could look after their machinery and livestock and then continue on the next day. When the Second World War came, none of my relatives went overseas to fight because the boys were considered more valuable to stay on the farm. It was a huge operation with 3000 sheep, pigs, cows. I remember sheep-shearing day was huge.

"Grandma and Mom were very good cooks and there was always an open-door policy – whoever came by got fed. I still have that philosophy, even now that we're living in a smaller place in Innisfail. You've got to look out for other people. My mother had a hard life, but she never uttered a hard word."

Francis and Henry moved to town so they could participate in more social activities, and do they ever! From Men's Shed to Lundgren Centre and everything in between, this active couple are busy most days – all day long!

Francis remembers taking lunches out to the workers in their farm fields when she was a child. A highlight was black tea with cream, which was carried in mason jars and wrapped in newspaper to keep it warm. Her family always had porridge for breakfast and soup at every meal. Her Dad's favourite snack was to sneak a cut of roast while her mom was cooking, and dip it with homemade bread into the drippings! She specifically remembers Milk Gravy:

Francis' recipe - Milk Gravy

This one's easy - just two steps will get 'er done!

Add salt and pepper to meat drippings in the pan, stir in flour to make a roux
Add a bit of sugar to the roux before stirring in milk or cream