

Stooking in Alberta, Canada

By Ida L. Wright, Alberta

Hi, Although subject seems to have changed, I just had to send you these. I am the little girl, so that would have been late 30s. One of my jobs was to take lunch out to the "stookers". My ankles used to get cut up from the stubble and the thistles but I did have to wear dresses in those days. Sandwiches were most of the time baloney and there was always good strong coffee. I didn't stook but I tried to pretend I did in the photo and could only find a leather mitt to put on as all the gloves were in use.

The grain was cut with a binder, stooked and then the threshing crew went from farm to farm. The farm wife had to feed the crew while they were on site. The straw was blown into huge piles in the middle of the field and provided feed and shelter for the cattle and horses which were allowed on the fields after harvest.

Three of the boys are my brothers, one is part of the crew and the little one is a neighbour kid who helped me carry the lunch. My parents were from Tarutino. These are fond memories for me and I commissioned a local artist for an oil painting of stooks and as they were a thing of the past in these days of combines, she did a credible job.



Feeding the crews was stressful for some ladies and my mother told me about one farm wife who always literally got sick to the stomach when they came although she still managed to do her job. The stooks were gathered into hay ricks pulled by horses then driven to the thresher. Sometimes this would disturb baby rabbits and mice who had nested in the stooks.

In the spring, the cows still being on the fields, they would find the first spring growth which of course was stink weed. How often I nearly gagged when

trying to eat my oatmeal with smelly milk.

It was no doubt hard labour but for me just fond memories.