

They just rode up and took my barn! The commander said once the troubles settle down out west, they'll give it back. Said they needed it to freshen the horses on the way to Fort Carleton. It's our winter shelter for the sheep - neighbors just built the barn last year. Not sure how lucky it is now being on the North West Mounted Police trail!

You said I'm the positive one. But this gets my goat! Times like this I'd like to have you around. We came to southwest Manitoba two years ago, Warren, so you could try out the dry prairie air. That was 1882. You thrived - so the kids and I settled in. We were making plans to get our own land. But the generous soul that you are, or rather were, you jumped in to rescue the neighbour from a near frozen pond, contracted pneumonia, and now you're gone.



Mary Hathaway

What was I to do? The two teenage boys thought we should do as you wanted – file for this quarter section – north of Deloraine - near Dand. I wasn't sure. Going home to Ontario sounded real soothing. But our, I mean my, boys' eagerness convinced me to give farming a try. Your brother in law, Pastor Davies, took me to the Land Titles Office, soon as he could. Good man that. But we found a line of land-seekers two days long. So, I made camp, best I could.

There weren't many women in the line-up. Word was that single women, no matter how

determined to farm, couldn't get free land. The Canadian government allows any man, single or not, and me as a widowed woman with children, to file for free land, but not single women. Hard to get my head around that one!



Warren Hathaway

As I waited, I saw Pastor Davies chatting with some fellows. A ripple went through the crowd. And the next I knew; men were stepping aside, beckoning me forward – to the front of the line.

A year later, here we are – on our sheep farm. The older children help with the animals. I clean, card, spin and weave the wool. We sell mittens and hats for .05 each. Keeps the wolf from the door. But we couldn't have managed without help from our neighbours. They ploughed our fields, built a sod house and that barn for us. The Dand community wants our family to thrive.

Sure, we'll make do without a barn. The sheep will huddle in the hay. Family and community will persevere. All will work out in the end. But, if it's not working out, well, then it's not yet the end, right?

Good Night, dear Warren. We miss you every day.

David Neufeld adapted 'Farmer Mary Hathaway' from a story written for Vantage Points 4.