

"Letter from Mr. D. H. Englar"

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by Jay A. Graybeal

More than a century ago, the American West still offered many opportunities for homesteading. A number of Carroll Countians made the long journey and many of their descendants still reside throughout the western states. Among those who made the trip west was Daniel H. Englar who left the vicinity of Medford and moved to Cando, North Dakota in early 1896. An interesting letter from Mr. Englar was published in the April 25, 1896 issue of the Westminster American Sentinel.

Mr. Daniel H. Englar, who recently left the vicinity of Medford, this county, with his family and a small party for North Dakota writes us, from Cando, in that State, something in relation to their trip to the far away Northwest, and of his observations and impressions by the way and since their arrival at their destination. He says that after reaching Cherry Run, on the B. & O. R. R., they took an accommodation train, with which they had made close connections, and ran to Hancock Station, where they were transferred to an express train and were in charge of A. C. Harvey till they arrived at Pittsburgh. Continuing he says: "We arrived at Chicago, at 11 A.M., and were met by Mr. Max Bass, the popular agent of the Great Northern R. R., and after having our tickets fixed went out to see the city and call on some friends, as we did not leave till 8:30 P.M. First went to see Will Englar, son of D. W. Englar, of Wakefield, a partner, I believe, of the Guarantee Construction Co., General Contractors of fire proof buildings. Found his office in Medina Temple, a seventeen story building, and went to it on the seventh floor, by the elevator. But he had gone to Brooklyn on business and we did not get to see him. Called on a few other friends during the afternoon. At 8:30 my wife and son took the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad for Des Moines, Iowa, while myself and the others took the Wisconsin Central, at the same hour, for St. Paul. Minn. As we traveled in the night I cannot say much of the country through Illinois and Wisconsin. About daylight we crossed the St. Croix river, and were in Minnesota. From that point a little snow, which had fallen in the night, was seen, but disappeared quite rapidly in the warmth of a sunshiny day. Arrived at St. Paul at 8:10 A.M., and had a chance to see the town, as we did not leave till 8:30 P.M. We called on Cousin Will Burns' family, where we also met Mrs. Burns' mother, Mrs. Michael Bartholow, who is an aunt of my wife, and we spent a few hours very pleasantly. We left St. Paul in special cars and a sleeper, provided by Mr. Bass for an excursion party expecting to locate in North Dakota, which numbered 425, nearly all members of the Brethren's Church. On the 24th of March Mr. Bass had charge of an excursion party of 1,050, principally Brethren. I have met quite a number of them and all seem well pleased with the country. Running up the Red River Valley on the Minnesota side a nice country was seen till after passing through a little town called Ada we crossed the Red River at Grand Forks, into North Dakota. Then we ran through a section of country where the wheat, oats and barley stubble stands up perfectly straight yet and appears to be 15 to 18 inches high, having been cut with self binders. I venture to say that one oats stubble here would be as large as six in our country. I saw some oats yesterday that weighted 45 1/2 lbs to the bushel, and they claim here that it makes 95 to 100 bushels per acre. From Grand Forks to Devil's Lake, a distance of 100 miles, there are along the railroad, 45 elevators, most of them with a capacity of 50,000 bushels, and none less than 30,000. Will try to write something of interest on this subject in the future. After leaving Grand Forks we ran through a most beautiful country, but on nearing Devil's Lake City, the county seat of Ramsey county, the ground is more rolling, but looks very productive. Devil's Lake is a body of water 50 miles long by 12 miles wide on an average. I remained in the city from Thursday till Saturday morning and then went to Church's Ferry

and spent the forenoon. Arrived in Cando, the county seat of Towner county, about 2 o'clock and went direct to council meeting held in the public school building, an imposing structure, which, with grounds, heating apparatus, and school fittings, cost about \$10,000. The Brethren also held a meeting there on Sunday. Brother Boone, who came from Virginia on the 24th of March excursion, preached. Everyone seems well satisfied with the country. Of course it looks a little dreary. Last year this time they had wheat up several inches. This year there is very little sown yet. At this place there are five elevators with a capacity of 50,000 bushels each, and one steam mill, with, I think, about five carloads of wheat lying along the side tracks. Elevators and farmers bins are scattered over the grounds. But more of this anon." Daniel H. Englar.

Daniel Englar's description of his long journey and the bountiful agriculture of the region no doubt made others think of relocating.

Photo caption: The conductor and passengers posed in this early twentieth century photograph of the interior of a railroad passenger car. Daniel H. Englar and his family rode in a similar car to homestead in Cando, North Dakota in the spring of 1896. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.