

Harry Laubach

- Minn. land had been "straight-cropped" with grain, losing fertility
- arrived Mont. 1910, at 10
- coyotes howled at night
- had to break up 40 acres on homestead, and have a fence
- ave. rainfall here abt 14" (half what it was in East)
- summer fallow: keep the ground black one year
- surprising toughness and hardness of this soil; in Red River Valley, 4 horses could pull a plow all day long--here cdn't even plow garden plot (from sod).
Steam outfits would pull 8-16 bottoms of plow; had engineer, fireman, plowman, coal hauler, water hauler, wrangler~~and~~ and cook; \$4-\$6/acre, averaging 20(?) acres a day.
- steam plowman killed in threshing accident
- barbers, teachers, others with no equipment filed on homesteads, neighbor wd work the soil down, rent the land and crop it.
- first thing: dig well. 1909 a wet year, coulee had springs.
- told ant hills are always near water; found one, got water at 15'
- other homesteaders had to haul water from river, 6 miles.
- unhomesteaded land was called "the promised land."
- no hargest in 1919
over

1919, hay shipped in, horses so weak they could hardly pull load of hay from rr to farm

--in NDak, slough weeds ect. mowed after freeze, shipped to Mont.--might as well have been "wood shavings"; full of parasites, some cattle died.

--sorted through strawstacks, tossing aside moldy stuff for brighter straw the cattle would eat.

--salt pork thru the summer, fresh meat in the fall

--drought killed garden too

--at first, tried to farm as "back east": plough deep, work ground good, make a deep seedbed; then went to summer fallowing in block farming, 40-60 mph winds took the soil, leading the John Deere Co. to invent the duckfoot. By leaving stubble on top, it helped hold soil, and snow in winter. Abt 1921, duckfoot 1st used.