

Poems By Leon Mendoza

Leon arrived at Fairbridge on May 8, 1940 with the 9th Party. He was also the school editor of the *Fairbridge Gazette* and wrote a number of poems including the following five from the farm school newspaper.

Aim For the Best

Aim at the best,
You may fail in the quest,
 But never mind that—press on!
Keep your eyes on the height,
It's a heartening sight,
 And bid all your troubles be gone.

If dismal and troubled,
Your woes may be doubled;
 So pluck up your courage and sing.
It's cowardly quite, to slink from the fight
 Or whatever the future may bring.

So start it ... keep true
In whatever you do,
 And remember the goal.
The steeper the way,
Just remembering, pray...
 For Valiance in body and soul.

Volume VI Number 1
Spring-April 1945

Farming

Farming makes the world go 'round,
Feeds the city, feeds the town.
And you can worry, work and strive,
Yet farming keeps the folks alive.
Raising corn and raising wheat
So the folks have 'nough to eat,
'Cause farming isn't any fun
Keeps a fellow on the run.
Ploughing and sowing to be done,
And faith in the weather to be won,
Tending calves, and milking cows,
Putting up and filling mows.
There's more work than you'll allow—
Doggone farming, anyhow!

Volume VII Number 2
Autumn 1946

Fishing

I have a fishing rod and line
And I have lots of bate.
I'm fishing when it's morning
And fishing when it's late.

For bait I use a happy smile.
Or else a pleasant word.
The fish are just the strangest
Or which you've ever heard.

For every day I fish for friends;
I like to catch them too.
Now help me fish for friends to-day;
I like new friends, don't you?

Volume VIII Number 1
Old Fairbridgian Issue, 1947

Our Truck

Fairbridge bought a truck back in '39;
It is all rusty and dirty green;
The breaks they screech through want of oil,
And the whole thing is far from being clean.

The fenders are smashed and badly bent,
The body is bruised and worn,
With headlights dim and bumpers scarred,
And cushions humped and torn.

The war brought us quite a change
In the type of trucks we drive,
And one ride in the thing we've got
You feel more dead than alive.

Our truck, it carries everything,
From people down to eggs;
And to ride in our truck is really a thrill,
But thank God that we've got legs!

So we'll keep our dear old truck
For transportation only;
For without its bumps and squeaks
This place would sure be lonely.

Volume VI Number 3
Christmas 1945

The Day of Returning

You children of Fairbridge, you future world-makers,
 There's a fog in the bay, and the foreland is dim.
The lifeboat is battling with turbulent breakers
 Brave men are straining hard muscles and limb.
Stand by and wait for the day of returning,
 Be ready to cheer, and to help, and to save.
They are exhausted, just rescued from yearning,
 And will gather fresh hope from you that are brave.

You children of Fairbridge, you loyal-hearted brothers,
 There's a chap fishing grime, and he's down on his luck;
His pride will not let him beg pittance of others,
 His mind is too decent to grovel in muck.
Go out and help in the time of his weakening,
 A shake of his hand or a pat on his back
Will cheer up his spirit and set his heart beating
 With fresh, pulsing courage to shoulder his pack.

You children of Fairbridge, whose thoughts are of others,
 The Empire's new builders and pride of the race.
The old world is showing its sisters and brothers
 The power of your manhood, the strength of your grace.
So hold up your manhood and let all your preaching
 Be deeds that are sweet, for the things that are hard,
Show that the easy way is not of your teaching,
 And success is not when by the toss of a card.

Volume VI Number 3
Christmas 1945



Poem by Evelyn Donnelly

Evelyn was part of the first Party to arrive to Fairbridge after the Second World War, on July 29th, 1945, Party 13.

The Fairbridge Dogs

There's a number of dogs
On the Fairbridge grounds,
Collies and mongrels,
Spaniels and hounds.

There's Wolly and Penny,
And Paddy Hipp, too,
And a little dog, "Tippy",
Who to Fairbridge is new.

On the farm site there's Micky,
Who is all black and white,
Also there's Matty and Bitey,
(but he sure doesn't bite).

Then one day on the farm site
Certain things were found,
Dead chickens and feathers
Were all lying around.

Poor little Flicker
Was blamed for the theft,
And a little while later,
The poor dog had left

Although there are many dogs
Around on the farm
I'm sure that none of them
Will do any more harm.

Volume VIII Number 3
Christmas 1947



Poem by Andy Buglass

Andy was part of the very first Party to arrive at Fairbridge on September 25, 1935 and you can see was here for a number of years when he wrote this poem. He was 11 years old when he arrived.

Bill's Hill

Bill bought a Hill,
Hill no good,
Kids go with Bill
And kids chop wood.

When Saturday comes
We climb that Hill,
We talk an axe
To show our skill.

There's a great thrill
In showing your skill
Chopping logs
On top of Bill's Hill.

On New Year's Eve
We had some fun.
Had some wieners and a bun.
We went with Bill
To a hollow in the Hill
And we ate until
We had our fill.

Volume I Number 9,
January 1941

Note: Bill Garnett was a staff member at the Farm School for many years, and became Principal from July 1945 to January 1949. His property, still referred to as "Bills Hill", is on the right side of Koksilah Road heading north from Fairbridge. For the last 50 or so years the land has been a gravel pit and until recently a concrete plant. If Bill had retained ownership he would have made much more money selling the gravel than trying to farm it and cut any timber!! After the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School closed Bill returned to England.

Poem by John Hunter

John came with the very first party to Fairbridge arriving on September 25, 1935.

An Ode To Kingsley Fairbridge

If you should ask me who was Fairbridge,
I would answer very slow,
A man who fought and won a battle,
For he died awhile ago;
All through life he bore his crosses
Lived up to the highest code;
Dined with the highest and the lowest
Never left the honest road.
He faced misfortune with a courage
Very few of; us possess;
He never flinched in times of trouble,
Nor his inner thoughts suppressed.
To me he is a silent hero,
In the helping of mankind.
His memory shall live on forever,
In our heart and in our mind.

Volume II, Number 2
April 1941



Poem by Ronald (Scotty) Milne

Scotty, as he was known, arrived to his new home, the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School, on August 23, 1938 with the 6th Party.

My History in Journeys

My home, it was first in Scotland,
That bonny land of the heather
It kept me for my first eight years,
That could not have been better.

In accordance with my parents' wishes,
The England I was taken.
The buildings red and beautiful,
Was to be my second home.
In which I was sustained.

That night of sad departure,
We stayed in a new home
Then morning came and off we went
To travel and to roam.

While looking through the porthole
And gazing at the sea,
I pondered awhile of this new land
Of which I would be so pleased.

We then did journey on the train,
From the five Great Lakes to the West,
Through the wide and flat prairie
Was the ride I loved the best.

Entering through the Rockies
In tunnels long and dark.
We then observed the wondrous land
Like that of Jasper Park..

At last I arrived at my present day home
A school and I'll never forget
As its teaching and training has built me up
For a life-long journey I'll never regret.

