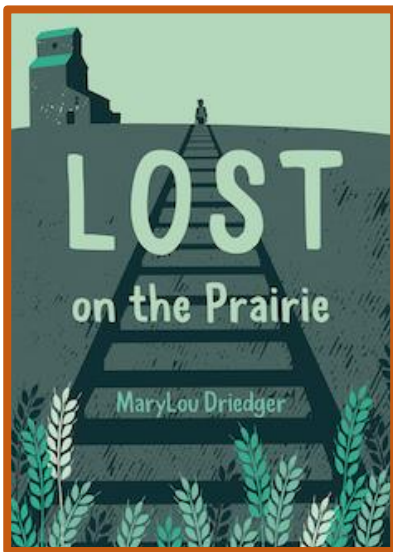
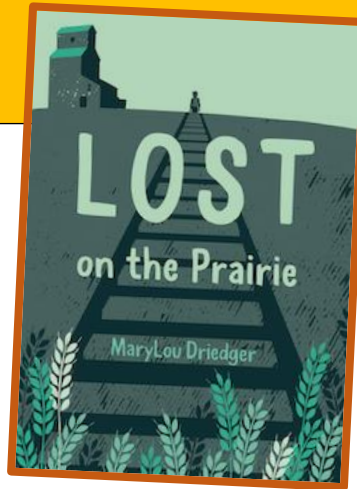


# Lost on the Prairie

by MaryLou Driedger

Newsletter- January 2021



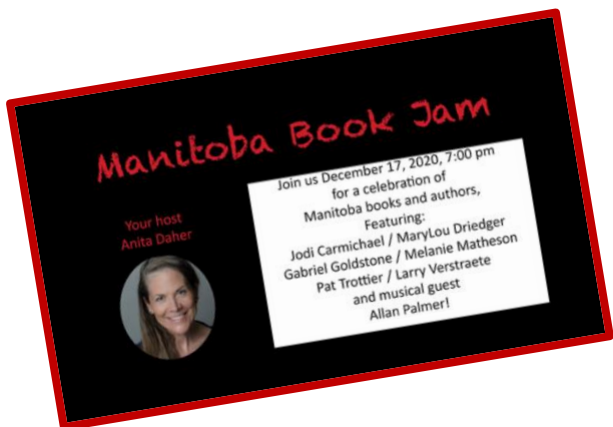
## Lost on the Prairie Has A Cover

In December Heritage House my publisher released the cover for my book. I love it! Off in the distance you can see my twelve- year -old hero Peter lost and alone on the train tracks. The elevator and wheat provide the perfect prairie setting. I even think the font used on the word *Lost* looks kind of lonely and lost. The designer of the cover is Jacqui Thomas. You can go to [My Book Has A Cover](#) to read more about her and the ideas behind her concept for my book cover design.

## I'm On the List

I follow a great blog called [Middle Grade Book Village](#). It's a place where teachers and librarians and writers can share their passion for middle grade books. I'm thrilled my book is included on their [debut authors' list](#) for April 2021.





## I Was In A Book Jam

At the end of December, I had the privilege of participating in a Manitoba Book Jam event hosted by Anita Daher the Chair of the Writers Union of Canada. The topic of the discussion was kindness and each of Manitoba authors featured got to read an excerpt from one of their published works that reinforced the message of kindness. I read a section of *Lost on the Prairie* where my hero Peter is rescued from drowning by a kind soul. The entire program can be viewed on [YouTube](#). My section comes at the 10:30 mark.



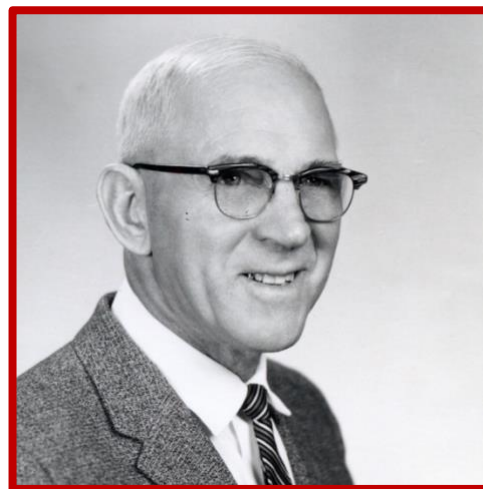
Foods I served from my novel at a writers' party

## Food in Lost on the Prairie

Food plays a significant role in my novel. One year my writers group had a Christmas party where we had to bring food associated with something we had written. I brought all the foods my hero Peter's mother packed for him when he left on his journey to Saskatchewan. You can read about that in this blog post [A Meal From My Book](#). In my novel Peter learns to enjoy some new foods when he stays with a family on the Sisseton-Wahpeton First Nation. He shares a memorable meal with Mark Twain who introduces him to a drink called a sarsaparilla.

## Puzzles from Grandpa Hugo

Peter passes the time traveling in his boxcar by playing with a kind of wire puzzle his grandfather Hugo has made for him. I got the idea for Peter to play with the puzzle and the name for his grandfather from a man named Hugo Bartel whom I knew as a child. He was the father of my mother's best friend and he made all kinds of interesting puzzles we could play with when we visited him. You can read more in my post [Hugo Bartel's Puzzles](#).



Hugo Bartel



## My Great Grandfather

This is my great grandfather Peter H Schmidt. He was the inspiration for the character of Papa, in my novel. Peter was born in 1855 in the Michalen Mennonite Colony in Ukraine, an area that was largely Polish. His family immigrated to Newton Kansas in 1874. He married Maria Harms in 1879, immigrated to Canada in 1907 and died in 1923 in Drake Saskatchewan. He and Maria had ten children. My grandfather Peter, his namesake, and the hero of my novel was their sixth child. This is the only photo I have of him.

## Introducing My Book

Recently I attended an online book club for teachers, librarians and authors who love middle grade books. [Colleen Nelson](#), a Winnipeg author with many award-winning novels to her credit, was hosting the evening where the participants shared their favorite middle grade novels from 2020. Colleen graciously gave me time to introduce *Lost on the Prairie* to everyone. Thanks Colleen. The book club was great, and I'd like to attend again.



Colleen Nelson- Photo from her website



I'm happy to send past issues of my newsletter to anyone who is interested since I have added a bunch of new readers for this one. Please feel free to forward any questions you might have as well. Thanks so much for your interest in my book.

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**MaryLou**