

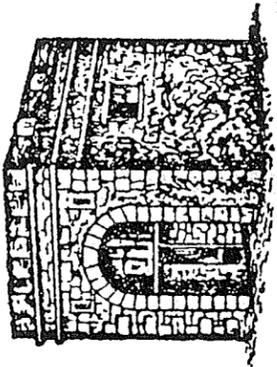
Road to the Forks

A HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY OF FORT GARRY

Road to the Forks SHIPLEY

NAN SHIPLEY

PAT WHEELER



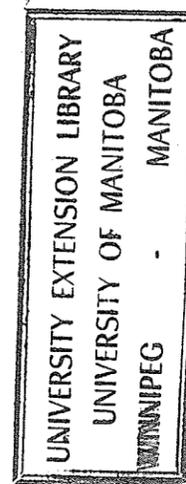
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NAN SHIPLEY

Nan Shipley has written a popular history of one of the oldest communities in the province of Manitoba. The story is based on original letters and old papers loaned by the pioneers of the community together with material found in the provincial archives. A lifelong resident of Manitoba the author has written several hundred short stories, eight books, and numerous radio and television scripts.

3.75



PATRICIA WHEELER

Patricia Wheeler is a graduate of Interior Design of the University of Manitoba. She was born in Fort Garry, and is a member of both the Winnipeg Sketch Club and the Fort Garry Palette Club. She also holds the office of art-director with the Fort Garry Horticultural Society. Mrs. Wheeler is the mother of four children. Her husband, D. H. Wheeler is an active Rotarian and member of the Winnipeg Canoe Club and Redboine Boating Club. The family's favorite pastime is boating on the Red River.

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Road to the Forks

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RETURN TO THE RIVER

THE JAMES EVANS STORY

ALMIGHTY VOICE AND THE RED COATS

Road to the Forks

A History of the Community of Fort Garry

NAN SHIPLEY

*Sincerely
Nan Shipley*

First edition printed 1970

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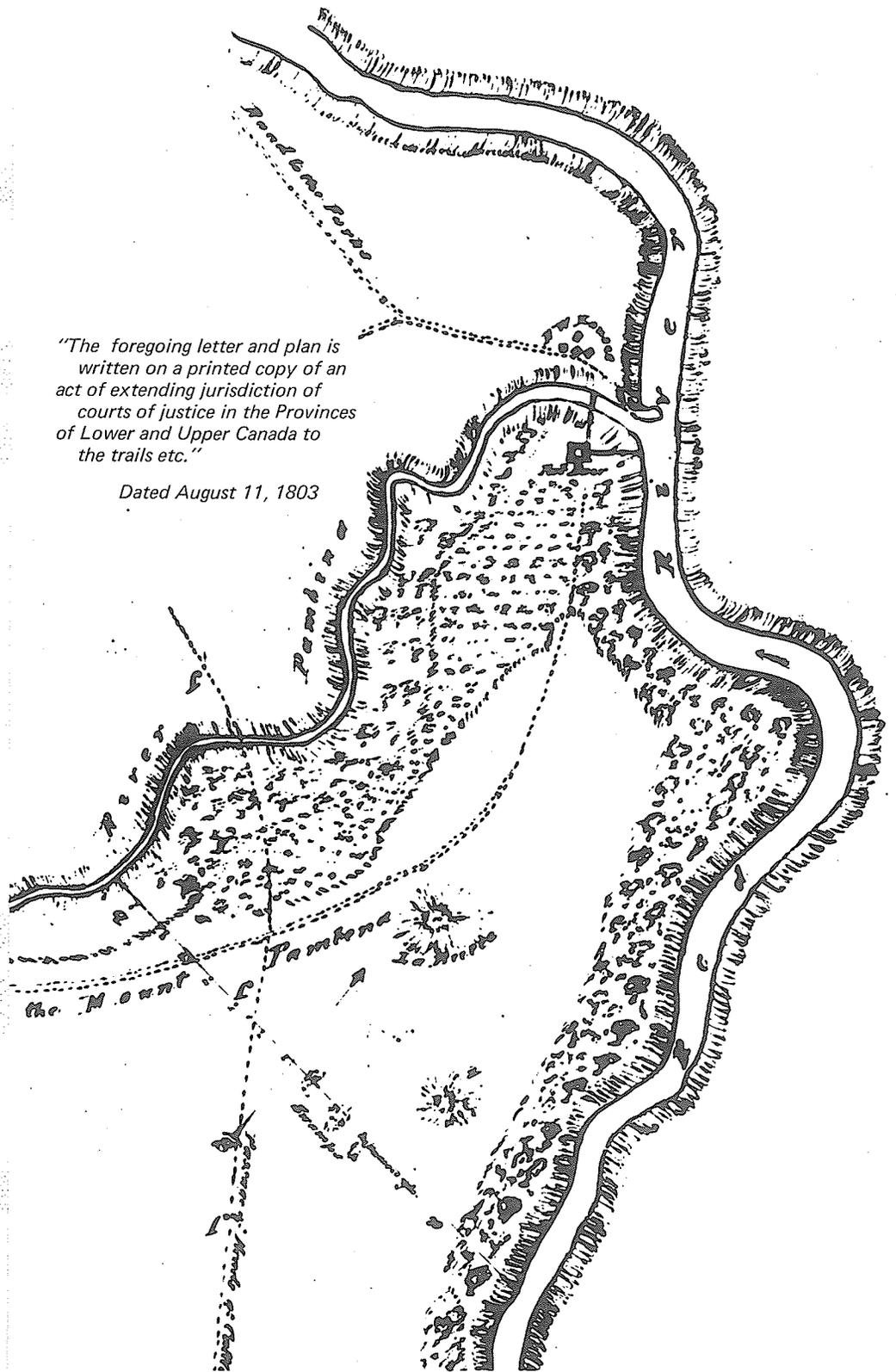
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*"The foregoing letter and plan is
written on a printed copy of an
act of extending jurisdiction of
courts of justice in the Provinces
of Lower and Upper Canada to
the trails etc."*

Dated August 11, 1803



So many present and former residents of the Municipality of Fort Garry have contributed to the preparation of this history that it would not be possible to credit each individually. But mention must be made of the ready assistance and unfailing courtesy extended by all members of the Fort Garry Council and the staff at Town Hall.

Nan Shipley.

CHAPTER ONE

The Beginning

The traveller on Highway 75 entering Fort Garry from the south, soon realizes that he is moving over the oldest trail in Western Canada, and that the Red River, glimpsed to the right, is one of the most historic in the country.

Incorporated in 1912, the Rural Municipality of Fort Garry, with a population of more than twenty-four thousand situated on the southern environs of the City of Winnipeg, has enjoyed a residential and industrial growth in the past fifty years that is little short of phenomenal.

While the continuing expansion of the University of Manitoba is probably the most spectacular undertaking, erection of the ten million dollar Victoria General Hospital, numerous new apartment blocks, modern motels, and the constantly developing industrial site along McGillivray and Chevrier Boulevards are all changing the prairie skyline dramatically.

But if man and municipality are to fully appreciate the present and build well for the future, it is necessary that both possess some knowledge and pride in their past history.

If we disregard the early sea-battles in Hudson Bay between the English and French, the area encompassed by the Municipality of Fort Garry, is the most historic in Manitoba.

ROAD TO THE FORKS

Long before the arrival of the white man the Red River and the trails by the river were used by the Indians for their pursuit of the buffalo. An old map shows that the trail from Pembina to the Forks was in use as early as 1803, at which time Pembina, a mere collection of trading posts, was in British Territory.

There is no indication of the cartographer's identity and a somewhat cryptic caption reads – "The foregoing letter and plan is written on a printed copy of an Act of extending jurisdiction of courts of justice in the Province of Lower and Upper Canada to the trails, etc. August 11, 1803."

Prior to this date the first recorded account of the area was a brief mention by Alexander Henry, the Younger, in 1800, of the Indians about the Sale River where it empties into the Red. Henry was paddling south to establish a trading company for the Nor'Westers at Pembina.

Our interest in the map is the indisputable evidence that Pembina Highway was in existence so long ago. A line drawn northward from Fort Daer and four North-West Company houses, is marked "The road to the Forks."

So the imprint of the Pembina Trail was well defined by 1812-13 when the first white settlers at the Forks of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers, were threatened with starvation and walked seventy miles south to where the buffalo were plentiful about the forts at Pembina.

To Fort Garry unquestionably goes the honour of the site of the first private house in the province. Along the Trail, just north of the Sale River, also known as the Stinking River because of its salt springs and alkali waters, there stood a sturdy oak storey-and-a-half cabin believed to have been built in 1811-12. This was the home of

Baptiste Charette, a carpenter with the North West Company. Guillian J. Charette, a descendant, gave the following information to Lillian Gibbons for her Tribune newspaper series STORIES HOUSES TELL.

“How old is it? I can’t say for certain but the Selkirk Settlers stayed there on their way to Pembina in the winter of 1812.”

This fact could prove Fort Garry to be the site of the first residence in southern Manitoba.

When Baptiste Charette’s brother, Joseph Noe, took possession of the log house he added a wing and kept a small store stocked with supplies obtained from the Hudson’s Bay Company, and the old place also served as an Inn for weary travellers for many years. The upper rooms were reached by a short flight of stairs along one wall, and at the rear of the cabin there was a dugout for storing buffalo meat. Charette’s place was known as the Half Way House because it stood midway between the Red River Settlement and Scratching River, now known as the Morris River. At one time the woodticks were so abundant here that after the river was crossed and camp made for the night, animals and men alike had little rest.

Charette’s house faced the river and what was called the King’s Road, named doubtless in honour of King George III the reigning monarch at that time.

In 1951 the Fort Garry Council approved the plan of the Chamber of Commerce for restoration of this historic old cabin, and more than \$2000 was raised for the purpose. However, closer inspection revealed that the old place had been too badly damaged by recurrent floods to justify the sum required to salvage the Charette house.

ROAD TO THE FORKS

At the same time efforts were made to purchase the old Upper Fort Garry Gate from the City of Winnipeg. This was rejected and the gate remains in its original location on Main Street opposite the Canadian National Railways' station.

Another item of interest linked to the old house is found in a letter written by Sheriff Inkster to E.L. Drewry founder of the well-known ginger ale company. When Mr. Drewry built his brewery he purchased a large home nearby called Redwood House and he was curious as to its origin.

"The house was built by my brother William in 1857," the letter states. "Oak timbers were rafted down the Red River by a man named Charette who kept a stopping-place at St. Norbert."

The window glass was imported from England and arrived via York boat along the Lake Winnipeg and Red River route. The nails and hinges came from St. Paul by oxcart along the Pembina Trail. The roof of the house painted red, the only one in the district, gave the house and the area the name Redwood.

* * * * *

In 1815 when the Selkirk Settlers were run off the land about the Red River, their crops and cabins were burned and their cattle stolen or killed by Metis in the employ of the North West Company.

The Nor'Westers were strongly opposed to settlement in the Red River country, and the following year there was another and far more serious attack when twenty-two men

were ambushed and killed by the Metis at the place on the prairie known as Seven Oaks Creek. The victims were Hudson's Bay Company men stationed at Fort Douglas and a few defenseless Scottish farmers.

Lord Selkirk, who had purchased the land from the Hudson's Bay Company on which he placed the settlers, engaged Swiss mercenaries in Montreal known as the de Meurons. They were to march to Red River, recapture Fort Douglas and make the area safe for the re-establishment of the Selkirk Colonists. Lord Selkirk intended to deal with the Nor'Westers at their headquarters at Fort William before proceeding to the Forks.

The man chosen to guide the de Meurons soldiers west from Rainy River through the northern United States to the Red River then north along the Pembina Trail, was John Tanner, a member of the Ojibway tribe.

Shaw-shaw-wa Be-nas-se or The Falcon, as Tanner was named when kidnapped at the age of nine in Ohio by Shawnee Indians, left a record of this trip in his book THIRTY YEARS INDIAN CAPTIVITY OF JOHN TANNER.

"I started with twenty men in advance of (Captain D'Orsonnes) and went to Rush Lake where the horses were sent back and the captain and fifty men came up. At Rush Lake we had snowshoes made and engaged (several Indians) to accompany us as hunters, and as we had a great quantity of wild rice we were pretty well supplied with food. We had, however, a great distance to travel over the prairie and the snow was deep In forty days after we left Rainy River we arrived at the Red River and took the fort (the Nor'Westers) at the mouth of the Pembinah without diffi-

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culty. From Pembinah we went four days to the Assiniboine. . . .”

A four-day trek in January weather through deep snow and camping under the leafless trees where the University of Manitoba now stands, required stamina of both Indians and white men. After crossing to the north side of the Assiniboine River the party was still six miles west of the ruined colony. To carry the story further — at the crossing the de Meurons were greeted by Chief Peguis and some two dozen warriors. The Saulteaux made a feast of buffalo tongues for the men from the east as Peguis did not approve of the harassments, burning and killing inflicted on the Scottish settlers by the Metis.

The rescuers discussed with Chief Peguis the best means by which Fort Douglas could be recaptured, and John Tanner explains how he and an interpreter named Louison Nolin, lay by their fires and decided that together the two of them could easily take the fort!

“But we communicated our intention to some soldiers who followed us. . . We made a ladder in the way Indians make them, by cutting the trunk of a tree with the limbs trimmed long enough to serve to step on, and placing it against the wall we went over and got down inside on top of the blacksmith shop whence we descended silently one after another to the ground. When a sufficient number of men got in we went to find the people, first placing three men at the doors of the occupied rooms to prevent them from getting together or concerting any means of resistance.”

As may readily be understood, the bloodless coup was described in somewhat different terms by Captain D’Or-

sonnens who entered Fort Douglas the following morning without a shot being fired.

An interesting aftermath to this event is the fact that not only did Lord Selkirk pay John Tanner in cash for his part in the incident but he became so interested in his life's story that the philanthropist placed advertisements in American papers that eventually led to John Tanner's reunion with his real family.

An astonishing revelation made by one of Lord Selkirk's close friends was his ability to unobtrusively take down conversations in shorthand—writing on his finger nails, kept long for this purpose!

The Pembina Trail running west of the Red River between the United States and the Red River Settlement, was winding and variable in width, depending on the season, the rainfall and prairie fires. At times it followed the river closely, at other times travellers had to find dry land and grass for horses and oxen miles west of the Red.

At the narrow crossing of the Sale River that flows from the west into the Red, the banks were heavily wooded with large oak trees, and here in 1819 logs were cut for the construction of the first church in St. Boniface, and later, according to Sheriff Inkster's letter to Mr. Drewry, for other buildings in the Settlement.

If there was only Charette's cabin on the Pembina Trail in 1812, ten years later that condition was altered almost overnight. The union of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Trading Company in 1821 meant the discontinuance of many contracts held by the Metis hunters with the latter. This fact, coupled with rumours that a new survey of the International boundary would place Pembina

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within the United States territory, decided several hundred Metis to move northward. Some settled at the Sale River to establish the village of St. Norbert, others crossed the Assiniboine River to make their home on White Horse Plain.

Like the Indian, the Metis dependent upon the buffalo, were a nomadic people, and their movements were far more leisurely than that of the commercial freighters between Pembina and the Red River Settlement. The Metis usually travelled four or five families to a party. The head of the household rode a pony while his wife and children shared the Red River cart with their entire belongings. When the carts stopped for night camps the men rode off to shoot prairie chicken or other small game to be prepared for the next day's meals.

The women and children gathered firewood and wild berries and plums in season. Each wife possessed one piece of white linen that could be spread on the grass as a tablecloth. The men were served first, usually in groups. When they moved away to smoke and loll about the campfires, the women and children had their meal.

Since Eve, primitive women of the world have carried small children on their backs in slings and shawls so that their hands might be free for labour. But the North American Indian mother used the most ingenious device of all — the cradleboard.

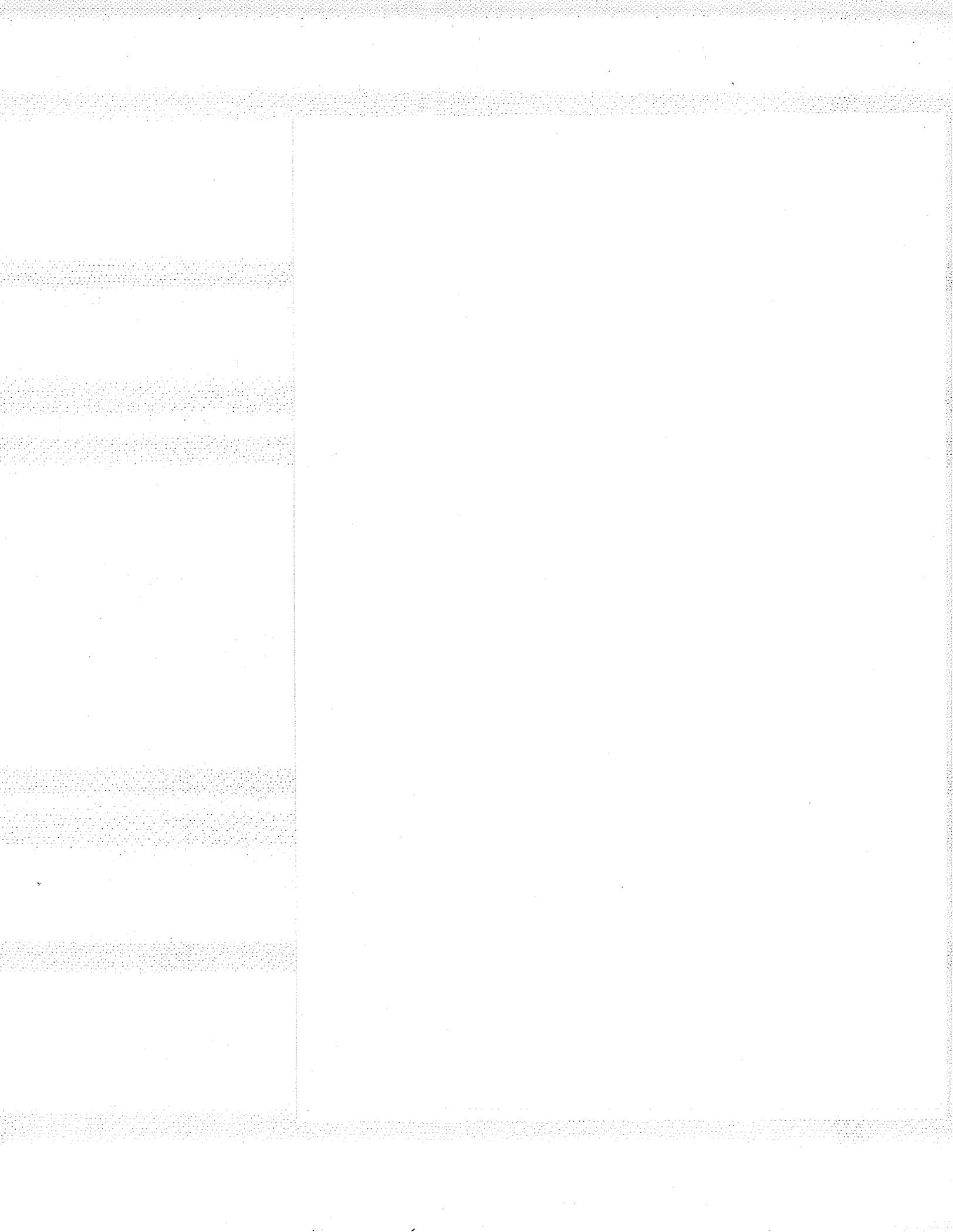
The infant was laced into a deerskin pouch on this wooden frame — a pouch lined with powdered punk or the velvety down of bullrushes to make an easily disposable diaper. A narrow arched piece of wood across the top of the cradleboard protected the child from injury should the cradleboard fall from a tree branch or be knocked over

when propped against a cart wheel. At camp the baby was removed from the pouch, well oiled and exercised.

Each Metis party carried a fiddle and danced to the music. The English travellers favoured singing to the accompaniment of a concertina or played cards on the grass.

If the Metis erected their buffalo-hide tents they slept in a circle, feet towards the centre pole, and the family dog kept watch under the cart near the hobbled horses. Regardless of how many weeks the travellers were on the trail, no one undressed. The white man might discard his hard boots and coat but like the Metis and Indian, he kept his gun within arm's reach.

In summer the night silence was deep, satisfying, broken occasionally by the howling of coyotes. In autumn when the little streams and rivers were bridged with golden leaves, the cry of southbound wild geese, ducks and swans, evoked old memories and the enchantment of the prairies seeped into a man's blood, and seldom left him.



CHAPTER TWO

The Metis Settlers

When the devastating flood of 1826 all but wiped out the Red River Settlement, two hundred and forty-three disgruntled French, Swiss and Scottish families moved south by oxcart to settle near Fort Snelling. These immigrants were the first white settlers in Minnesota, and with them tramped young Peter Rindisbacher, the Swiss painter who left many valuable sketches and portraits of early life in this part of the country.

Few travellers were unimpressed by the silence and the vast beauty of what Henry Youle Hind termed "the ocean prairie to the west." One of many scientists and explorers sent by the British Government to study the feasibility of a road from Fort William to the Settlement at Red River, Hind described the prairie in various lights and moods — "At sunrise it flashed with coloured lights, as the first rays of the sun sparkle in the dew on the long rich grass."

Those who watched the fiery glow of grass fires at night, flames leaping and twisting like savage dancers, found the sight unforgettable. Too, the migration of millions of wild pigeons and other fowl moving along the old old flyway, never failed to stir the blood.

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Of all the early travellers who left vivid accounts of their experiences along the Pembina Trail, none are more descriptive than Paul Kane, the noted artist. In the summer of 1846 he was returning from a Metis buffalo hunt in the Turtle Mountains when his guide took ill — “After leaving the dismal swamp (where the two men had spent an uncomfortable night on a narrow dry knoll) we were within a day’s march of the Red River Settlement, and my guide insisted upon me leaving him to drive the cart whilst I proceeded at a more rapid rate on horseback. This I could not do until I had seen him safe across Stinking River which the horses were forced to swim in crossing.”

The artist writes that after leaving his guide he encountered another swamp where his horse sank to his neck. “I found myself surrounded on all sides as far as I could see, with nothing but swamp. I had therefore to dismount and drag my horse along as best I could, wading up to my very middle in mud and water abounding with reptiles.”

It was the Red River carts moving through present day Fort Garry that made the first roads into the United States, a set of mud ruts that were to become an International Highway as early as the mid 1840s. By then the business of freighting furs from Red River to St. Paul was beginning to flourish as the carts returned loaded with dry goods, tea, tobacco, rakes, stoves, clothing and numberless other items welcomed by the settlers.

The Red River cart freight rates were \$4.00 per hundred weight and there were two round trips each summer arranged by local merchants and the Hudson’s Bay Company. The carts were pulled by a single oxen and one driver could handle four carts or a brigade. Several brigades, up-

wards of two hundred carts, composed a train, and these were led by a highly experienced guide on horseback in command of the whole train.

James McKay, the most famous of these guides later went into the freighting business himself and made a fortune and became Speaker of the House in Manitoba's first Legislature.

Every Hudson's Bay Company train carried its own flag — a red background with white Hudson's Bay Company lettering. The free-traders and Settlement merchants flew the Union Jack.

Travellers always chose to enter and leave a country with these oxcart trains as protection against Indians when passing through Sioux country south of Pembina. Heartbeats quickened whenever a band of painted and feathered horsemen came riding down on a cart-train. Invariably the Sioux respected the Canadian banners and demanded nothing more than a toll or gifts for safe passage through their land.

The cart drivers were strong, good natured men of mixed blood who loved gaudy costumes — beaded moccasins, a fringed leather coat or blanket cloth capote, homespun trousers and a bright sash taking the place of pockets to hold tobacco pouch, revolver and knives. They slept rolled up in a blanket under their carts, and in addition to driving, pushing, dragging and hauling the oxen and carts through mud and water, they often carried passengers piggy-back over the rough places.

Long before the carts were sighted the squealing of the high saucer-shaped wheels reverberated across the prairie at times pink with wild roses or blackened by grass fires.

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When the northbound trains met parties moving southward there was an exchange of news and gossip and sometimes fresh meat traded for flour and tea.

One notable group on the move south in search of land free of floods and grasshoppers, was led by George Flett in 1835. Flett, his wife, six sons and one daughter, with several French families and others named Ross, McLean and Livingstone, had ten carts and a year's supply of provisions as they set out for greener fields.

After a disappointing fifteen months search, the Flett family and most of their companions returned to the Red River Settlement.

In 1850 five Grey Nuns from Montreal travelled by ox-cart over the Pembina Trail en route to St. Boniface. In 1844 four of their Order had reached the settlement by canoe via Fort William to operate a school established by Monseigneur Provencher in 1838. The first teacher here was a local girl, Anglique Nolin, the Metis daughter of a one-time North West Company officer, educated in Quebec and well qualified for the position.

Nine years after their gruelling overland journey by ox-cart, two of the five nuns, Sister Laurent and Sister Desautels, opened the first school in St. Norbert. Of the one hundred and one families resident at that time, all were Roman Catholic.

There is an interesting record in a resolution of the Council of the Colony of St. Norbert dated March 28th, 1853 — "A road was laid out along the Red River on the west shore from the Assiniboine to Pointe Coulee." The men responsible for the construction work were M. Bruneau, Max

Genthon, Jean Baptiste Lepine, Solomon Hamelin, Michael Dumas, Narcisse Marion and Joseph Charette.

Ten years after Paul Kane's trip he would not have recognized the road from Stinking River to the Red River Settlement. Hundreds of carts were moving in and out of Minnesota where settlement was very rapid, and great quantities of furs and cattle were being purchased from the Red River colonists by the new Americans.

Even the powerful Hudson's Bay Company that had for years exported tons of furs, and imported all supplies through Hudson Bay by way of the Nelson River and Lake Winnipeg, now found it more profitable to abandon their York boats and use ox carts on the Pembina Trail.

The importance of this old road may be gathered from the inscription on a monument erected at Waite's Crossing on the Sauk River at St. Cloud —

“This river crossing was the ford used in 1859 by the Red River carts of the Hudson's Bay Company when they engaged in International shipping between Central Canada and England by way of St. Cloud.”

By the mid 1800s both sides of the Red River were sparsely settled from St. Norbert to the Red River Settlement, and between the two colonies the distance was sixteen miles by water or nine miles by trail. The area was referred to as East St. Vital and West St. Vital, depending on which side of the Red was being mentioned.

The Metis occupying the west side of the Red or St. Norbert, were chiefly buffalo hunters, although many worked as boatmen for the Hudson's Bay Company and were famous for their strength and endurance on the long twelve miles Portage la Loche in the far northwest.

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There are still two or three citizens of St. Norbert whose parents or grandparents were part of the old life. Jean Baptiste Lamoureaux, aged eighty-two is rightly proud of the fact that his mother was born "far out on the prairie" during the months the family engaged in the annual buffalo hunts.

CHAPTER THREE

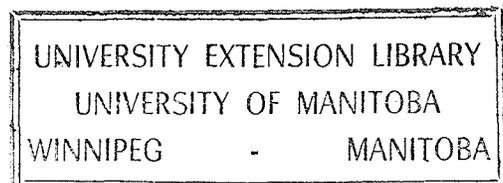
Unrest

On Saturday morning June 10th, 1859, the natural peace of the land was broken when the raucous steam whistle of the S.S. ANSON NORTHUP echoed along the Red and across the prairies. Indians and trail riders raced down to the river's edge to marvel at and cheer the first steam boat ever seen on these waters.

But there was little fear that river navigation would seriously impair traffic along the Pembina Trail. Actually, the last brigade of Red River carts sent from the Settlement to St. Cloud was not until the summer of 1871, and this was due in large measure to the fact that there had been no organized buffalo hunts since 1868. These remarkable animals were by that time on the brink of extinction.

But in 1859 the chief industry of the country was the buffalo hunt and twice a year hundreds of Metis carts returned from the western plains loaded with buffalo hides and dried meat for pemmican.

For more than seventy years Red River carts, stage coaches and colourful cavalcades brightened the Trail and the imprint of many brave men and women was left in the dust of what is today Fort Garry's Main Street.



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The poet John G. Whittier immortalized the Red River when he wrote his haunting poem THE RED RIVER VOYAGEUR. The Pembina Trail equally as historic and important to early settlement still awaits recognition and fond eulogy.

* * * * *

Adventurers from all parts of the continent converged on the Red River Settlement when gold was discovered in British Columbia in 1857. The Settlement was the last place where their stock of supplies could be replenished before setting out for the remote Northwest.

The largest group of gold-seekers, known as the Overlanders of '62, used both the Trail and the river to reach their Eldorado. When the S.S. INTERNATIONAL out of Georgetown on May 29th was too crowded to accommodate all the men and their equipment, more than a dozen with their cattle and provisions, had to depend on the regular Red River cart trains to reach the Settlement. They were the last party but one, to use either the river or the Trail out of the United States that summer.

The Sioux, frustrated by repeatedly broken treaties, and angered at being driven off their land by incoming whites — some had moved further west as many as fifteen times between 1850 and 1860 — rebelled, and in the summer of 1862 killed every white man, woman and child found between Fort Abercrombie and Pembina.

The one-cart little band of English clergymen and their wives that followed the Overlanders along the Trail two months later were undoubtedly the most defenseless and

ignorant of local conditions of any that ever tramped the long five hundred mile road.

Young William Carpenter Bompas and party reached St. Cloud early in August and met with frightful stories of Indian massacres and the assurance that no cart-train would travel through Sioux country that summer. Bompas was undaunted and after much difficulty, managed to purchase oxen and a cart in which he and his companions piled their bedding and food. Their only defense was a hastily made Union Jack that the Americans advised just might safeguard them from attack.

The makeshift flag was fastened to a pole on the cart and after a few days' travel a large band of Indians did appear blocking the Trail. One rider swept down on the group, stared at the single cart and its flag, then rejoined his companions and all disappeared.

On December 6th Abraham Lincoln signed an Order for the execution of thirty-nine Sioux leaders of the Minnesota massacres. The mass execution took place in the public square at Mankato on December 26th.

Two days after Christmas, the residents of St. Norbert were alarmed at the sight of ninety mounted Sioux trotting along the Pembina Trail. Many were bedecked in the clothing and jewellery of the whites they had killed that summer. Despite the large Union Jack the indians carried to indicate a peaceful mission, the citizens north of the boundary were still shocked by the slaughter of the summer of 1862 and fearful of the Sioux.

The visitors en route to the Red River Settlement were detained at St. Norbert by the colourful pageantry of a church service while the Hudson's Bay Company Governor,

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Alexander Dallas and Bishop Tache were hastily summoned. The two men succeeded in convincing the Sioux that there were not sufficient supplies at the Settlement to entertain so many guests. After a feast at St. Norbert, and receiving some gifts, the Indians did trot on to Fort Garry at the Forks in a most benign mood, then returned to their own country.

Two months later, the Congressional Act of February 16, 1863 expelled from the State of Minnesota ten thousand Indians. Many moved west into Montana, throwing themselves on the mercy of other tribes in the region. But that summer a great dust cloud was raised along the Pembina Trail by six hundred Sioux on their way to the Red River Settlement to ask sanctuary of the Great White Mother, Queen Victoria. Many descendents of this band now live at Long Plains near Portage la Prairie.

Although the traffic between the United States and the Red River Settlement was threatened for a time by the Minnesota massacres, it was not until October 26, 1869 that the famous Pembina Trail was closed when Louis Riel erected a wooden cross and a barrier by the old crossing of the Sale River.

Seven months prior to this event the Hudson's Bay Company's lands in Assiniboia were sold to the Canadian Government and the entire Northwest was expected to enter Confederation on December 1st that same year. Had Riel not interfered, the three prairie provinces and the North West Territories might be a single unit today. Such a division of Western Canada would have proven more powerful and valuable than our present status.

As early as 1857 the residents of the Red River Settlement had sent a large petition to the Canadian Government

asking for a transfer of Hudson's Bay Company's lands to the Canadian Government.

In August 1869 the Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonal, sent surveyors west to run the meridian lines in an effort to preserve the property of both the Indian and Metis before the great influx of expected settlers arrived to claim land in the Northwest.

A grave misunderstanding of the surveyors' true purpose led to unrest among the Metis in St. Norbert. They were already disturbed by the fact that there had been no significant buffalo hunts for two years because of the scarcity of these animals upon which the Metis' economy depended.

The summer of 1868-69 brought very trying times for all the inhabitants of the Settlement when grasshoppers and drought destroyed the crops. As the threat of serious hunger loomed inevitable, subscriptions for relief were opened in St. Paul and Ontario. The Canadian Government engaged men in the construction of the Dawson Road from St. Boniface to the North West Angle, and food and supplies were shipped in and stored in the warehouse of Dr. John Schultz, to feed the men employed on the project.

Very few Metis applied for such work. They still clung to the old way of life where the only means of obtaining sustenance was by the hunt, and without their spiritual adviser, Bishop Tache now visiting in Rome, they were uneasy and suspicious. At this time very few Metis could either read or write and depended upon their priests for translation of current political movements and advice.

They found a ready leader in Louis Riel, recently returned to St. Boniface. He had spent the ten most impres-

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sionable years of his life, from fourteen to twenty-four, in Quebec when anti-British feeling was high in that province. The last year Riel had worked part-time in the office of a rabid nationalist lawyer. Today Riel would be regarded as a Separatist.

We are all familiar with the event that occurred on October 11th, 1869 when the surveyors were working on the boundary of Andre Nault's farmlands half a mile west of Pembina Highway. Nault was a relative of Louis Riel and at sight of the surveyors, he galloped off to St. Norbert to inform his nephew that the Englishmen were taking his land.

Riel at this time was permitted to use Father Richot's presbytery at St. Norbert as a meeting place for the troubled Metis.

The rest is well known history.

But the erection of the barrier just south of St. Norbert was an act that had very serious consequences.

The Pembina Trail was the only road into the Settlement, the alternative, the Red River, soon to be ice-locked. Travellers coming from Eastern Canada through the United States were turned back at the barrier, usually minus their luggage. Mail was seized and censored, goods and food confiscated, and THE NOR'WESTER, the only newspaper closed, when the editor refused to print Riel's seditious proclamations.

Joe MacDonald, a freighter for the Hudson's Bay Company, who travelled the Trail regularly, wrote that he was sent by Governor McTavish in the Fall of 1869 "to meet the Honourable William McDougall to help his party on the way from St. Paul. Before we reached the International

Boundary eleven armed and determined Metis under Levine met Mr. McDougall and warned him that he would not be allowed to cross the line. I was then sent with my light wagon on ahead of Mr. Provencher, the Secretary to Mr. McDougall's government. I carried dispatches from Mr. McDougall to Governor McTavish in the soles of my moccasins. We were stopped at the barrier at Stinking River (Sale) by John Bruce and his men."

MacDonald and other members of his party were marched to the St. Norbert Church, and Joe said that he did not forget the rough prodding of a rifle in his back when a few years later he met the same Metis in Saskatchewan. Just what transpired at this later confrontation, Joe MacDonald does not reveal in his letters, but those who knew him well, never doubted that the encounter was interesting.

One of the few notables who made their way into the country was Sir Charles Tupper of Nova Scotia, and at that time, still Dr. Tupper. With him travelling from Ottawa, was Donald Smith, the highest Hudson's Bay Company official, en route to the settlement in the interests of the Canadian Government and his company's headquarters, Fort Garry, now controlled by Riel. Smith's brother-in-law, Richard Hardisty of Fort Edmonton, was also in the party. There was no special kinship between Dr. Tupper and Donald Smith, later to become Lord Strathcona.

Dr. Tupper's daughter had recently married Captain Cameron, aide to the Honourable William McDougall, who expected to assume the position of Lieutenant Governor at Fort Garry on the first of December. When the bridal couple approached the barrier in their fine carriage drawn by a team of horses, they were turned back by the Metis,

ROAD TO THE FORKS

despite the Captain's explosive command – "Remove that blasted fence!"

The couple lost their horses, carriage and half a ton of trunks and were forced to find shelter at the home of a Metis family in Pembina.

It was to recover his daughter's valuables and assure himself of her safety, that Dr. Tupper came west. Sir John A. MacDonald requested that he also speak with Riel if possible. Tupper made every effort to reach Fort Garry, regardless of Donald Smith's inexplicable attempts to hold him in Pembina.

Not only was the doctor a large and attractive man but when knowledge of his profession became known, he was called many times by the Metis to attend their sick, which he did without hesitation.

At Pembina he bribed a young Metis to guide him to St. Norbert, and purchased a horse to draw their cariole. One night was spent in the home of a Metis wheel-maker where guests and family alike, ate and slept on the earthen floor. It was thirty below zero and New Year's Day when Dr. Tupper and his guide reached the barrier where he told the guards that he wished to speak with Father Richot, and was waved on.

Dr. Tupper mistook the convent for the presbytery and the door was opened by Louis Riel's sister. He was informed that the priest was visiting Riel at Fort Garry, now the headquarters of the leaders of the Uprising. The Mother Superior supplied pen and paper and Tupper was told that his written message would be carried to Riel. He went through the motions of composing a note, then when it



Red River cart train in 1870s. All buildings made of logs.

St. Norbert Ferry. 1900.

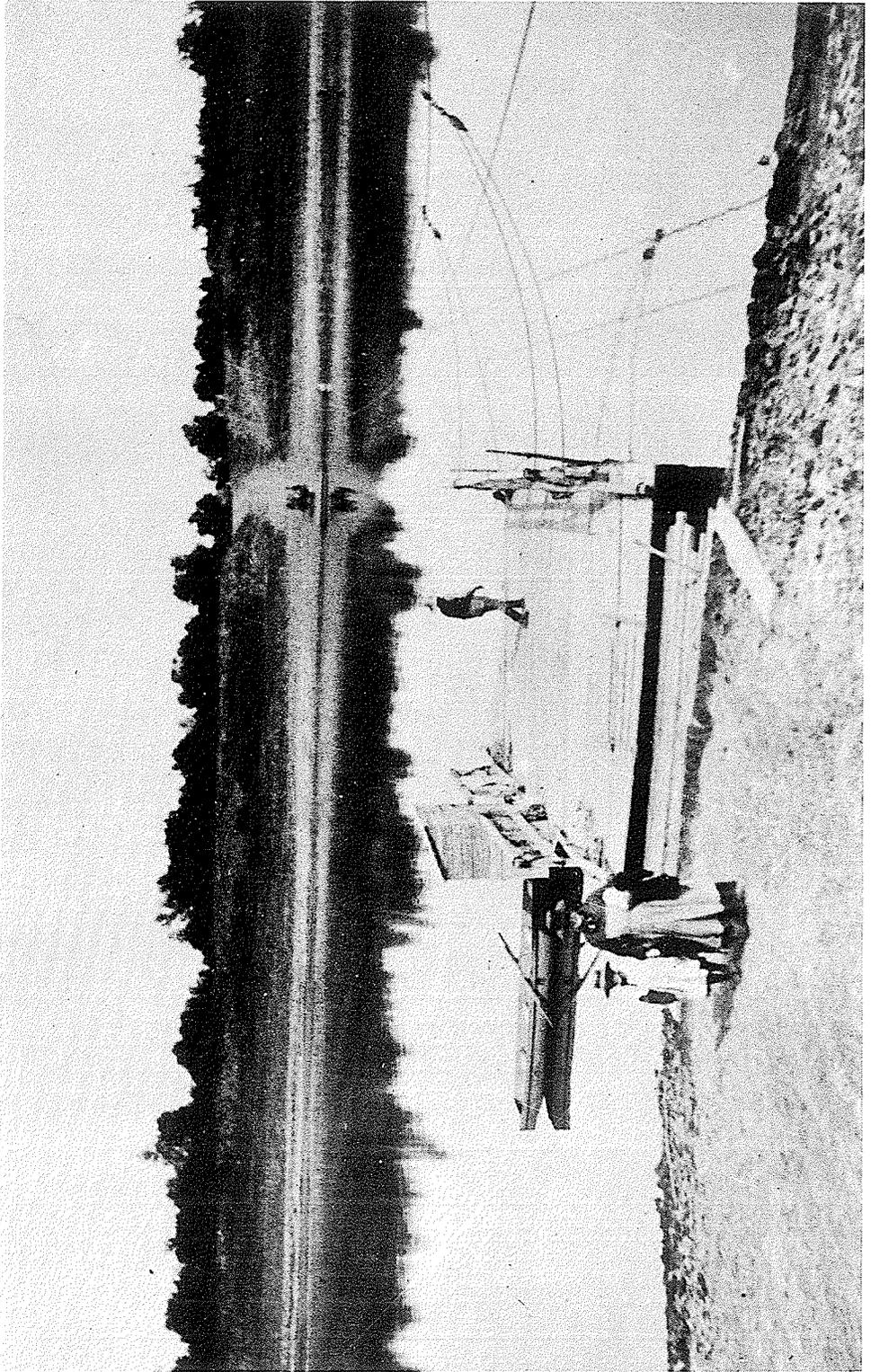
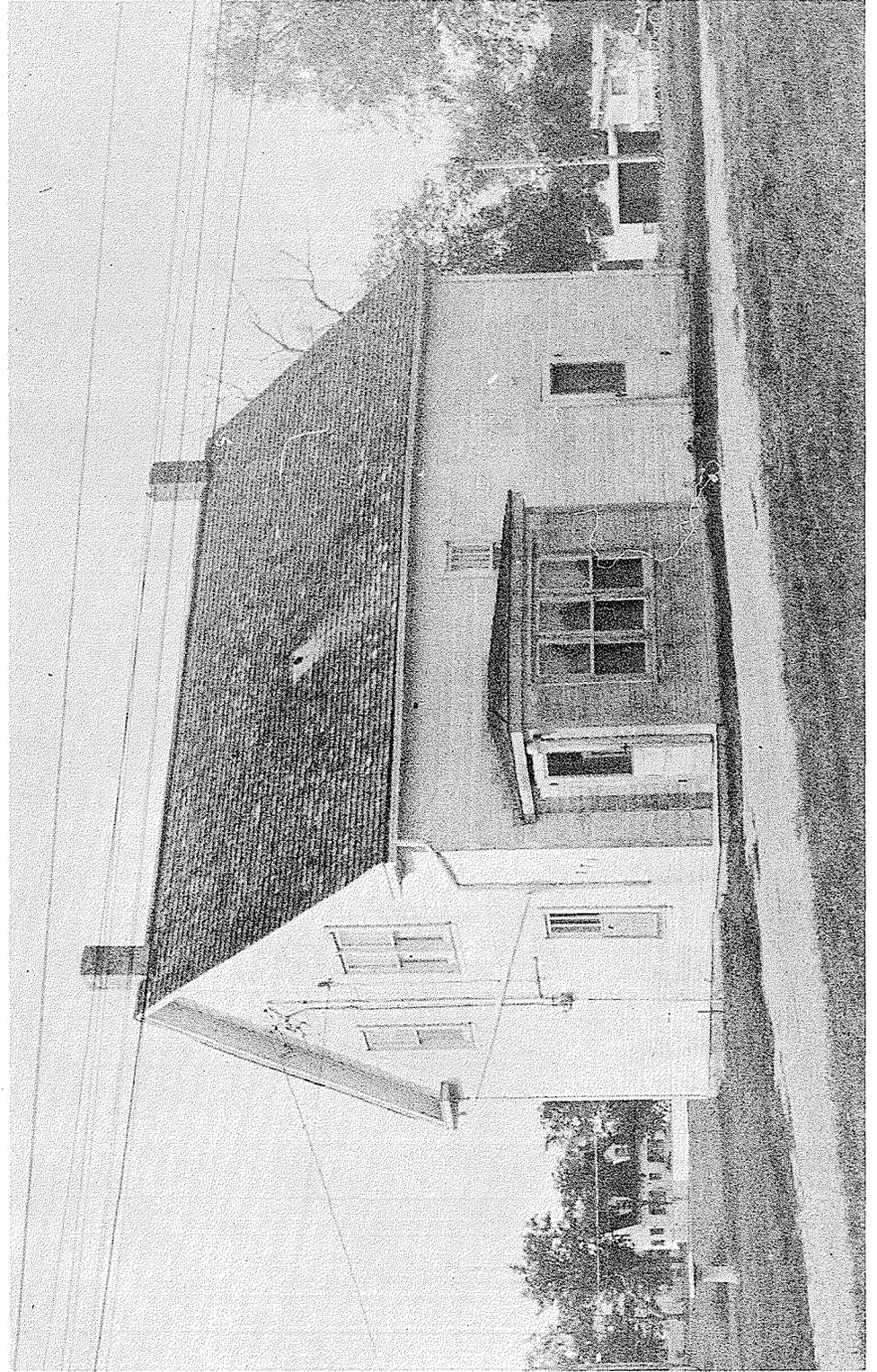


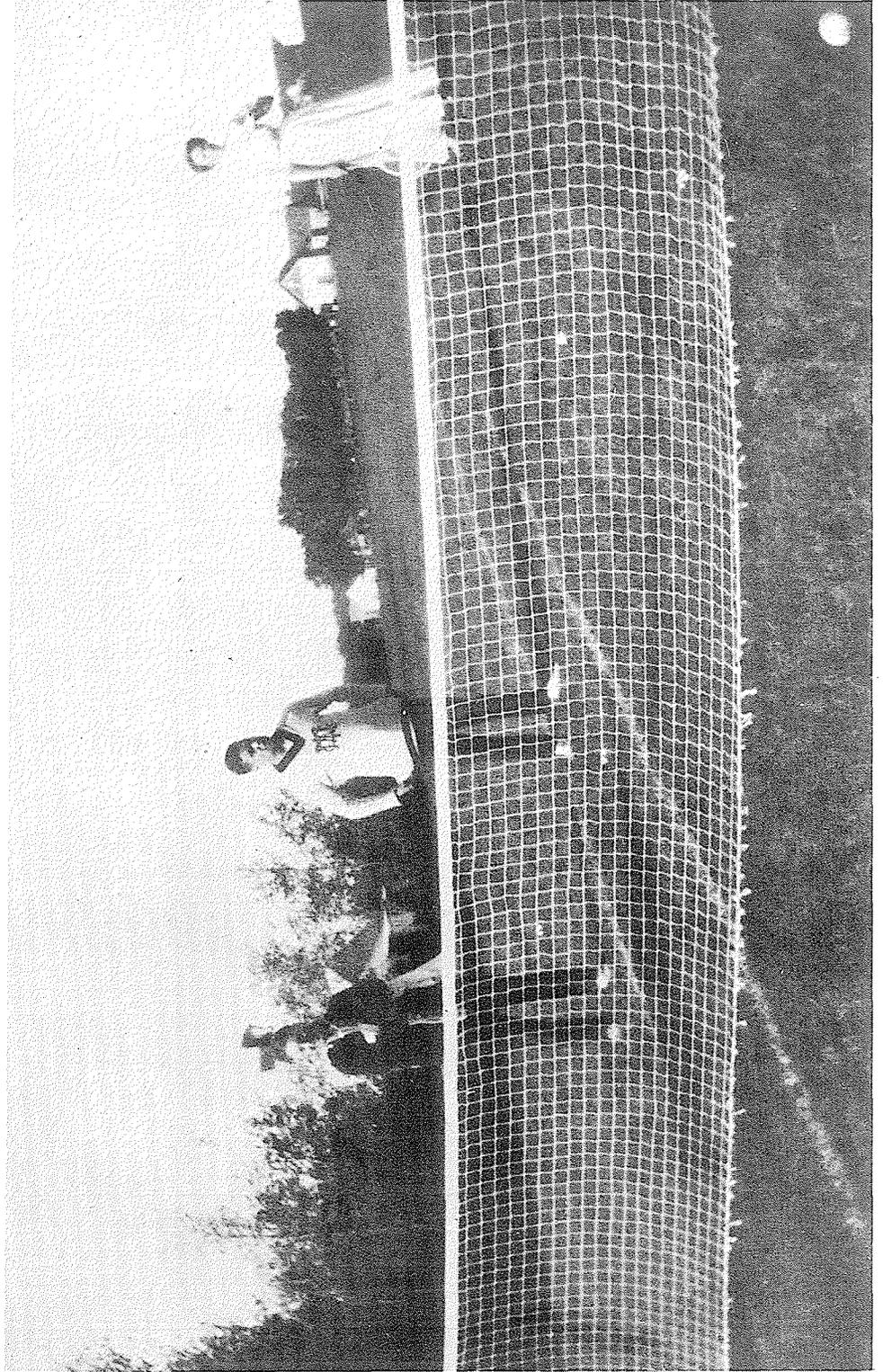
Photo: Manitoba Archives



Cranberries for jelly-making. Free for the picking or .25c per pail.

Oldest house in Fort Garry. Nuns' house. 771 Convent Ave. 1870.





First tennis court in Fort Garry. 1908.

Old wooden bridge, St. Norbert.

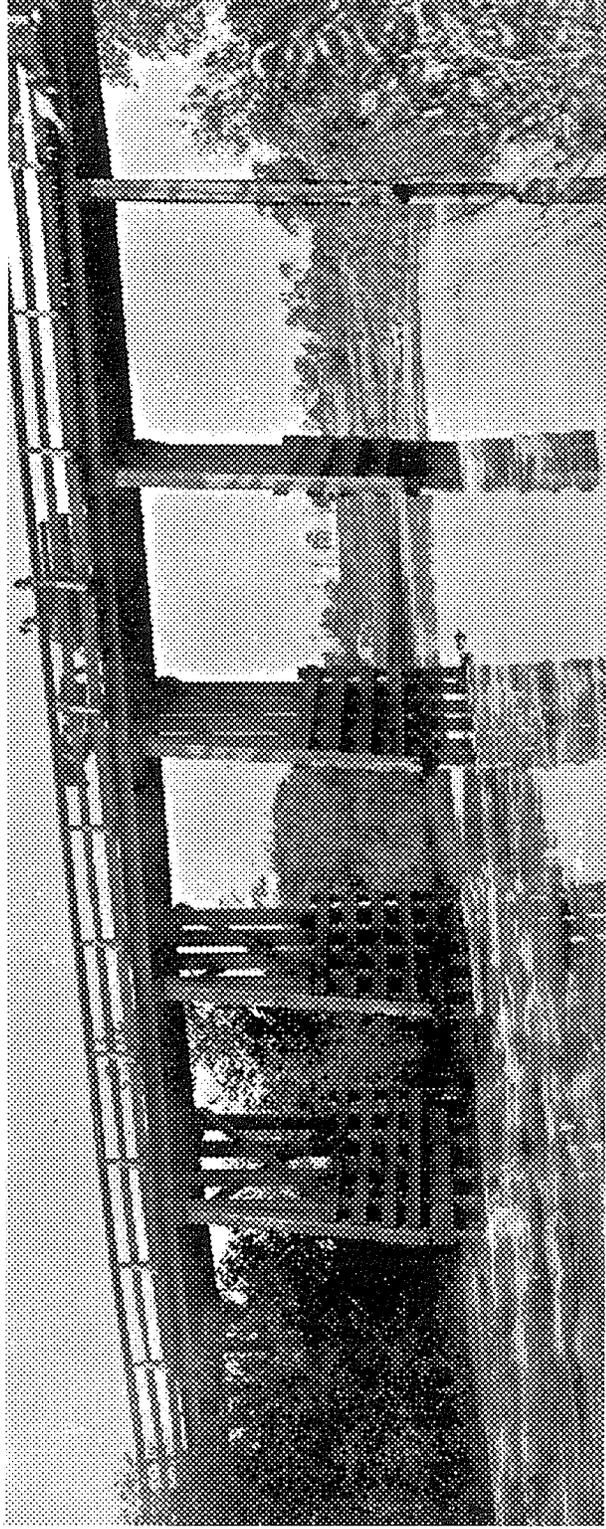
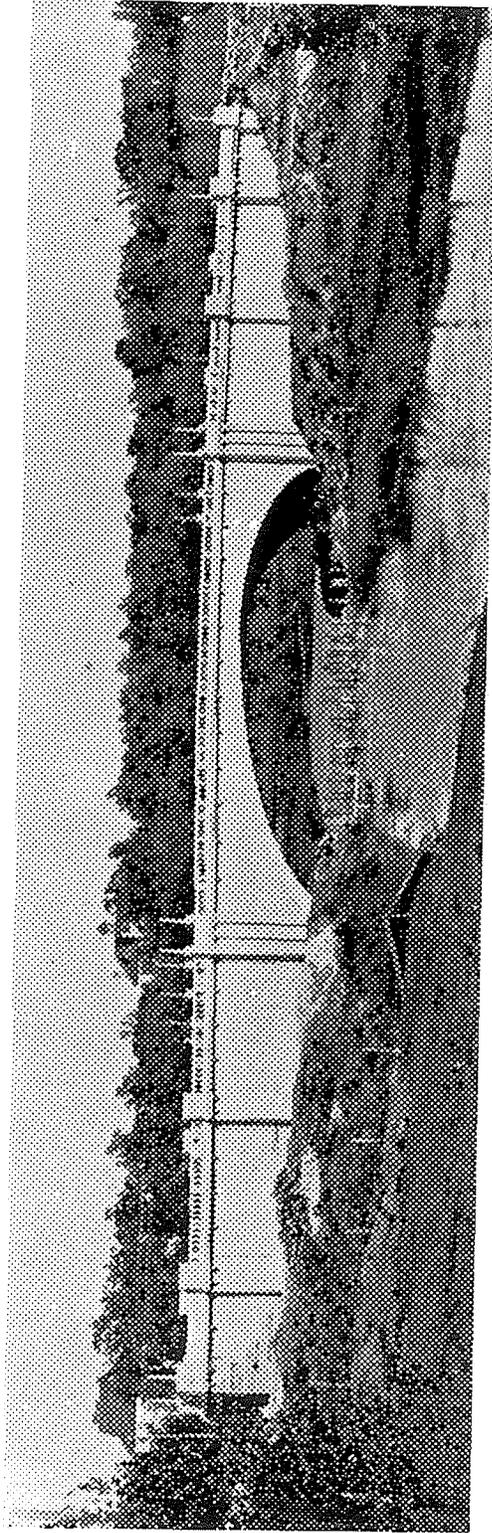


Photo: Winnipeg Free Press



New bridge at St. Norbert.

Photo: Winnipeg Free Press

Photo: Manitoba Archives



Trappist Monastery . 1952.

was announced that a light cutter stood at the door ready to receive the message, Dr. Tupper walked to the sleigh and leaped in beside the driver.

“Since you’re going to Fort Garry I may as well deliver my message in person.”

At the Fort he was shown into Riel’s office where Father Richot and Ambrose Levine were also present. Dr. Tupper said that he had come to request the return of his daughter’s property.

Riel replied that the doctor would receive these from a Metis living at St. Norbert. But there was no political discussion with Riel. Tupper was accompanied by Father Richot on his return to St. Norbert, and after the priest had declared that Dr. Schultz, one of Riel’s seventy odd prisoners was to be shot, Charles Tupper urged Father Richot to send a delegation to Ottawa immediately.

A few days later, Dr. Schultz escaped. Donald Smith who had followed Tupper to the Settlement, was now Riel’s house-prisoner and argued with the leader all through February. Parisiene, a young Metis, in a moment of panic shot young Hugh Sutherland and Riel threatened to execute Major Boulton, a new prisoner. The dead boy’s mother, Janet Sutherland, appealed to Riel in his office to spare Major Boulton’s life, and her wish was granted. A few days later on March 4th, 1870, Thomas Scott was taken from his cell and shot “because he escaped from Fort Garry prison and used abusive language to the guards.”

There is no record of when the barrier was removed at the Sale River for long after Scott’s death and when most of the prisoners were released, it was still necessary for anyone wishing to leave the Settlement to obtain a pass

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from Riel, and many of his former political prisoners were most anxious to escape the unhappy and uncertain future of the Red River Settlement.

For several years after Riel's escape to the United States in August 1870, the stage coaches paused at the Sale River to allow passengers to inspect the pile of brush and logs by the side of the road that had once barred the Pembina Trail.

CHAPTER FOUR

Progress

Gradually the flow of traffic to and from the United States was resumed. Before the Uprising, the summer of 1869 saw more than twenty-five hundred Red River carts plodding the old Trail. In one ten-day period alone, one hundred and forty tons of fur were shipped south and thousands of dollars worth of goods brought into the Settlement.

Such men as Joe Rolette, Norman Kittson and James McKay grew wealthy in the tough but rewarding freighting business along the Pembina Trail, in the 1850s and '60s.

Now in 1870 with order restored and the new province named, Manitoba was a magic word – the magnet that drew people from Eastern Canada and all parts of the United States. They arrived by steamboat, barge, raft, stage coach, oxcart and covered wagons, an unending stream up from St. Paul along the famous Trail, and from the east via the Dawson Road and the old Crow Wing Trail on the east side of the Red River.

The boldness of the American whiskey traders in the North-west, and the slaughter of a peaceful band of Assiniboines in the Cypress Hills by the Missouri River gang, proved the need for an organized protective force in the

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west. It was for this purpose that the North West Mounted Police was formed.

The first troops, one hundred and fifty men, left Ontario in 1873, travelling by steamer to Fort William and over the Dawson route, a long laborious five hundred and forty-five miles. They reached the east side of the Red River or St. Boniface in late October. One group appeared trapped on the east side when the temperature dropped to twenty below on November 2nd, and the river froze over. The following morning they were rescued by James McKay, — Manitoba's most outstanding and neglected citizen. He crossed the ice with a party of Metis carrying cowhides and ropes. The Mountie's duffle and equipment were piled on the hides and these hauled across the Red to where sleighs waited to take the men to winter quarters at Lower Fort Garry.

The next year another group of North West Mounted Police travelled from Toronto via St. Paul and marched north through Pembina and on to Emerson, where the two parties were scheduled to unite and re-organize at Fort Dufferin.

The first arrivals pulled out of Lower Fort Garry on June 7th, 1874 and their two-mile long cavalcade moving south along the Pembina Highway, was the most colourful ever seen. The men of the North West Mounted Police in their scarlet coats, white gauntlets and pillbox hats were mounted on sleek horses and followed by more than one hundred Red River carts driven by Metis. The carts were loaded with bedding, cooking utensils, medicine and all the equipment requisite for the care of such a large force.

After a brief rest at Fort Dufferin the two groups of Mounted Police embarked on their epic one thousand mile

trek westward by way of the Turtle Mountains along the old buffalo-hunt trails.

The Force employed numerous interpreters, guides and scouts and one of the most loyal and efficient was Pierre Leveille. This six-foot fearless Metis had in 1870 beaten Louis Riel to the draw when he threatened to shoot Richard Hardisty. Riel suspected that Hardisty was carrying Donald Smith's official papers to Governor McTavish and the Council of Assiniboia when Riel and his guards entered a cabin on the Trail where Hardisty and several others were resting. The big hunter and scout by covering Riel, prevented what might have been an ugly incident.

Leveille had a remarkable background. According to Royal Canadian Mounted Police records, his father fought with Napoleon and came to the Red River early in the century. He married the Metis daughter of Alexander MacKenzie, the first white man to reach the Pacific Ocean by overland Canadian route.

While the North West Mounted Police were on the march they met near the Cypress Hills, Louis Leveille, Pierre's brother. With Louis were his two sons, Paul and Gabriel. The Commanding Officer persuaded father and sons to join the Force as scouts and the two sets of brothers served faithfully for many years.

* * * * *

It was not until the arrival of the stage-coaches that the Pembina Trail was glamourized and ever since has been referred to as the Pembina Highway. An item in the Winnipeg Free Press dated May 27, 1877, reads – "There is a famous

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mudhole on the Pembina Highway which had not dried up yet despite all the fine weather since the snow had gone, and some late arriving passengers on the stage-coach from St. Paul told a moving story of helping to shove the vehicle out of the quagmire."

Alexander Beggs, a noted Manitoba historian, who was for a time stage and express manager at Winnipeg, wrote that the job was "a case of being up till midnight waiting for the stage and then on till four a.m., to start it on its return trip with mails and passengers." It was a tri-weekly service and Beggs was most happy to be relieved of the position.

When a weekly stage coach service was started between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, the first driver was James Wilson who on his retirement, bought land in West St. Vital and went into the market garden business.

The newcomers who settled in the area between the Red River and the Pembina Highway included many different nationalities. West St. Vital was an ideal situation for it offered transportation by river and land, and there was plenty of wood. But it was still a long, arduous journey from Pembina to St. Norbert, and to wander off the beaten trail could mean tragedy.

When Seraphin Rondeau and his family arrived in 1877 they became hopelessly lost in a bad snowstorm after leaving the Scratching River. When all hope of reaching shelter seemed gone, a young man appeared like a ghost out of the storm and directed the travellers to the nearby cabin of a German settler, but not before the Rondeau family observed that their saviour was without hands and feet.

This was Finlay Booth who six years before when eighteen years of age came west with his brother and parents to settle on a homestead near present day Carman. During a heavy snowstorm young Finlay became separated from his family in what was known as the Old Potato Swamp, southwest of the Highway. When he finally stumbled into the family cabin his hands and feet were so badly frozen that amputation was necessary.

In spite of his handicap Finlay Booth supported himself on his own farm until he died in 1922 at the age of 68. Such self-reliance and independence appears incredible in today's milieu of welfare cheques and exorbitant union demands.

When George Dowker, his wife and infant son, came from England in 1896 they rented a log cabin with an earthen floor from John Nisbet, a Scotchman who had settled in West St. Vital in 1879. In addition to tending his farm, Nisbet took care of the post office when mail was delivered once a week by a rider from Pembina en route to Winnipeg.

The cabin was situated on the banks of the Red River where the St. Vital cemetery now stands. George Dowker was a successful gardener in Kent, England, and loved the land. The following year he purchased a strip of property extending from the river to Fort Whyte. A new house was built of poplar logs chinked with prairie clay, at the corner of Point Road and South Drive.

Years later he sold his riverbank property and the log house was moved closer to the Highway. The young Dowkers, Tom and Laura, with a handful of their Anglo Saxon friends, attended the only school on the west side

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of the Red River managed by the Sisters of Charity on property given to the Catholic Church by Solomon Hamelin, where the vacant Grandin School now stands. Here instruction was almost entirely in French and their playmates were Metis and Indian children. They used scratchy slates and sat on long benches – boys on one side of the room, girls on the other.

There are still citizens of Fort Garry who recall walking five miles to the church of their faith; who recall also when Red River water was purchased at the door for .75c per barrel, and drinking water was carried by pail from the corner pump on Dumas Avenue. In those days Indians brought firewood into town and sold it for \$1.00 per cord, and young Laurie Dowker delivered milk by dogsled to her father's customers.

After a heavy snowfall a wooden sidewalk-snowplow appeared pulled by a steaming horse under a thick plaid blanket – the driver completely concealed in his buffalo-hide coat.

One of the happiest summertime excursions was the family's tenting-out at berry-picking time. Wild plums were picked in August, and September was the right time to gather hazelnuts.

In October the prairie skyline was dotted with orange fires where the strawstacks burned at night, and the un-failing sound of thousands of geese flying over, evoked old memories.

CHAPTER FIVE

The New Era

Of all the sights and sounds ever seen or heard in the Red River Valley, none equalled the arrival of the first steam locomotive on October 9, 1877 when the morning stillness along the Pembina Highway was shattered by a cacophony of shrill whistles, ships' bells and sporadic gunfire.

Cabin doors flew open, children ran from their barnyard chores, riders left the Highway and galloped down to the riverbank. There moving along the Red towards Winnipeg the S.S. SELKIRK shoved a string of barges. In the lead rode the heroine – Canadian Pacific Railway Number One engine, better known as the Countess of Dufferin. The little locomotive was gay with evergreen branches, coloured bunting and flags and was “alive” as engineer Joseph Whitehead, kept up a good head of steam – “and notified the inhabitants that the iron horse was coming, by the most frantic shrieks and snortings.”

Even after the flotilla of barges loaded with flatcars, caboose and railway ties, rounded the bend that is now St. Vital Park, the settlers along the Pembina Highway could hear the joyous welcome sounds of church bells, riverboat, mill and warehouse whistles that lined Winnipeg's waterfront.

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There were seventeen steamboats and scores of barges and scows moving freight on both the Assiniboine and Red Rivers when the first steam engine arrived. But there could have been no doubt in the minds of the excited spectators cheering and waving, that Manitoba had stepped into a new era. The Red River carts like the steamboats and barges loaded with cargo moving north and south between Manitoba and the United States, were now superseded by a railway which was to run east and west and so eliminate or drastically reduce, trade along the old routes of commerce between the two countries.

If the river lost most of its commercial navigational value it never lost its allure for aquatic entertainment and pleasure cruises. Some residents of Fort Garry still recall with nostalgia the brisk business enjoyed by the GERTIE H, a large paddlewheeler plying between Winnipeg and St. Norbert before the First World War.

The Pembina Highway rebounded healthily and today is probably the greatest vehicular artery between the United States and Canada in the mid-west. Long-haul trucks, transportation buses, and private cars maintain traffic at peak performance all year round.

However, railway expansion was not without its struggles, and in 1888 one of the earliest and most ludicrous took place when the Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railway attempted to lay their tracks across the Canadian Pacific Railway lines where Fort Whyte now stands.

Earlier the Manitoba Government had decided to end railway monopoly when they negotiated with the Northern Pacific Railway in St. Paul for the purchase of the Red River Valley Railway. A bid by the Canadian Pacific Rail-

way had been rejected by the Americans. Manitoba and the Northern Pacific Railway reached an agreement on the formation of a system to be known as the Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railway and at once began extension of steel westward just south of the Assiniboine River from Winnipeg to Portage la Prairie.

When it was found necessary to cross the Canadian Pacific six miles west of the city, the old railway company, still smarting from its rebuff by the Northern Pacific, determined to thwart such a crossing. It was not a popular decision.

President William Van Horne in his Winnipeg office and William Whyte, Superintendent of the Western Division in his private railway car, strategically placed at the proposed point of crossing, declared that there would be no trespassing on their property by the Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railway.

The Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable John Schultz, then issued authority for the swearing in of special constables to make certain that the crossing was constructed, and every red-blooded man in Winnipeg rushed to sign on. Next morning, October 21st, an engine and three flat cars overflowing with cheering recruits pulled away from Water Street, bound for "Fort Whyte", — a humorous title that clung to the trouble spot.

On arriving at the end of steel, six miles out on the prairie, the men from Winnipeg discovered that the track-layers were still a day's labour from the proposed crossing. They left somewhat crestfallen, but promised to return the next day, to assist in construction of the vital crossing.

When the special constables returned twenty-four hours later they found that the defencers of the Canadian Pacific

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Railway had been very busy. A fence was erected and a locomotive placed on the tracks as additional barriers to the government railway construction workers.

Three nights later the special constables tore up the Canadian Pacific tracks and set a steel diamond in place that would permit the new railway to cross the old line. Happy with this accomplishment the Winnipeg men appointed twenty-two guards for the night and returned home.

With the dawn came William Whyte and fifty robust railwaymen to rout the special constables and proceed with uprooting tactics. The dislodged diamond was then carried in triumph into Winnipeg as evidence of the superiority of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

From then on the Canadian Pacific officials maintained a force of two hundred men to guard their tracks, and kept two or three engines running up and down the rails to prevent work on the crossing. Meals were cooked nearby and carried to the guards – sleeping cars were provided, and on the last Sunday in October, Mr. G.H. Campbell, Assistant to the Superintendent, held religious services by the side of the railway tracks after which solemn hymns were sung.

On the night of November 3rd a group of men from Winnipeg managed to divert the Canadian Pacific Railway guards while another task force laid ties over the disputed crossing. So the struggle, miraculously without bloodshed, seesawed back and forth in the early winter snows of 1888.

The case was finally carried to the Supreme Court of Canada and while awaiting results, the Canadian Pacific Railway train with its guards, and the Manitoba Government train with its special constables, glared at one another across a ditch where large fires were kept burning for warmth.

Eventually the decision of the Supreme Court was handed down in favour of the Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railway to end rail monopoly in this province.

* * * * *

In the mid-1890s it became fashionable for the residents of central Winnipeg to build summer houses along the banks of the Red River. A very popular spot was the bend of the Red stretching from a private pontoon bridge near the present Elm Park foot bridge, through to Wildwood.

Close by the pontoon bridge, Mr. J.B. Hall of the Hudson's Bay Company built a fine two-storey house in 1898. It was a landmark and often referred to as the only house in the area with a telephone. It stands today as 40 Riverside Drive.

"In August of 1902 the Hudson's Bay Company employees held their picnic on the Commissioner Joe Hall's grounds near Elm Park." A Free Press item records the event.

One of the girls, Gwen Hall, had a definite flair for painting and set down many scenes about the district in the early 1900s. These pictures are now an important contribution to the history of Fort Garry as they include the well-known Dowker Market Garden, Bossyut's Dairy Farm, the first pontoon bridge, Red River boats, and Mrs. Bonneau's beautiful flower garden.

Gwen Hall's sister, Merle Hall Woodward of Saskatoon wrote recently of her childhood. "To walk to Dowker's place through the woods and come across their lovely vine-

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covered cottage and flowers was always to me, like finding an oasis in the desert.”

Gwen Hall married Mr. W.H. Highmoor, and in 1963 the family presented her painting of the Dowker Market Garden to the Fort Garry Public Library, built on the same site in 1960.

A quiet scene on canvas is all that remains of the Bossyut Dairy Farm that did a thriving business on Clarence Avenue where the pasture-lands are now covered with attractive industrial buildings. Legend claims that when there was a price on his head, Louis Riel hid in one of the cow barns.

While many of the old street names have disappeared – Rue de La Salle, Rue de Eglise, Champagne Coulee, and Old Nesbit Road, there are still a number of streets and drives converging on Pembina Highway that bear the names of the summer residents and early permanent citizens of the area – Dowker Avenue, Chevrier Boulevard, Hamelin Avenue, Manahan Avenue, McGillivray Boulevard and many more.

When the Redemptorist Fathers arrived from France in 1914 they erected a church on Manahan Avenue, La Paroisse Catholique de St. Vital. This property once belonged to Horace Chevrier, the popular fur-trader and part-owner of The Blue Store that stood on Winnipeg's Main Street, easily identified by the large stuffed bear at the entrance.

Night revellers frequently removed the bear but it was always returned by the police. A six-foot furry mass apparently wasn't an easy object to conceal, or dispose of even at bargain rates.

Horace Chevrier was married to Annie Jane Kittson, reputed to have been the proud owner of the first mink coat

in Fort Garry. The Kittson family trace their ancestry back six generations to Alexander Henry, the gentleman trader, explorer, and one of the founders of the North West Trading Company in Montreal.

The Chevrier family treasure the colourful history of a maternal grandmother named Marguerite Gingras.

Sixteen year old Marguerite Trottier lived in Pembina with her French Canadian father and Cree mother. She was a very lovely Metis girl and numerous powerful chiefs offered Trottier a fortune in furs and horses for his daughter. But he believed that she would have a better life as the wife of a white man and in 1808 Marguerite married a French Canadian named Jutras.

Like all the men of that place and period, Jutras was employed either by the Nor'Westers or the Hudson's Bay Company as hunter in winter and voyageur during the summer months moving furs across the prairie from the trading posts. Jutras travelled with Alexander Henry's canoe brigades. This famous explorer-trader was the nephew of Alexander Henry the Elder in Montreal.

In the summer of 1809 Marguerite and her six-month old baby accompanied Jutras and five other voyageurs, each man in his own canoe, on their trip from Fort QuAppelle down the Assiniboine to the Red River. At Fort Gibraltar, the Nor'Westers' Red River fortress, other boatmen would continue with the furs to Fort William.

It was the custom that two or three officers accompany the fur brigades on the entire journey and attend the annual rally at headquarters in Fort William. The two that travelled with the Jutras party in 1809 were Daniel McKen-

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zie and McDonald of Garth. Their canoes moved some distance ahead of the voyageurs and they ate and slept apart.

At the place known as Whitewood, where the river is very narrow and thick bush grows down to the water, the voyageurs paddled into an ambush and were attacked by the Sioux with arrows and bullets. The men in the first two canoes were instantly killed and two others seriously wounded. Jutras and the sixth man panicked, and leaping from their canoes, raced through the shallow water and into the woods to escape.

Marguerite and her child were left defenseless in Jutras' canoe.

By the time the Nor'Westers, who heard the shots and shrieks from the ambush, had turned around and paddled back to the scene of attack, they were aghast to find four men stretched on the sand and Marguerite still in the canoe. All had been scalped, stripped naked and mutilated.

When the shocked white men bent to remove Marguerite from the canoe they were astonished to hear her crying for her baby. They found the child, scalped and impaled to a tree with many arrows. McKenzie told Marguerite that her little girl was dead, then he and McDonald bound up her hacked hands in splints, covered her torn, sightless left eye, and tied up the loose skin of her scalp with a fresh animal bladder. This crude piece of surgery undoubtedly saved her life.

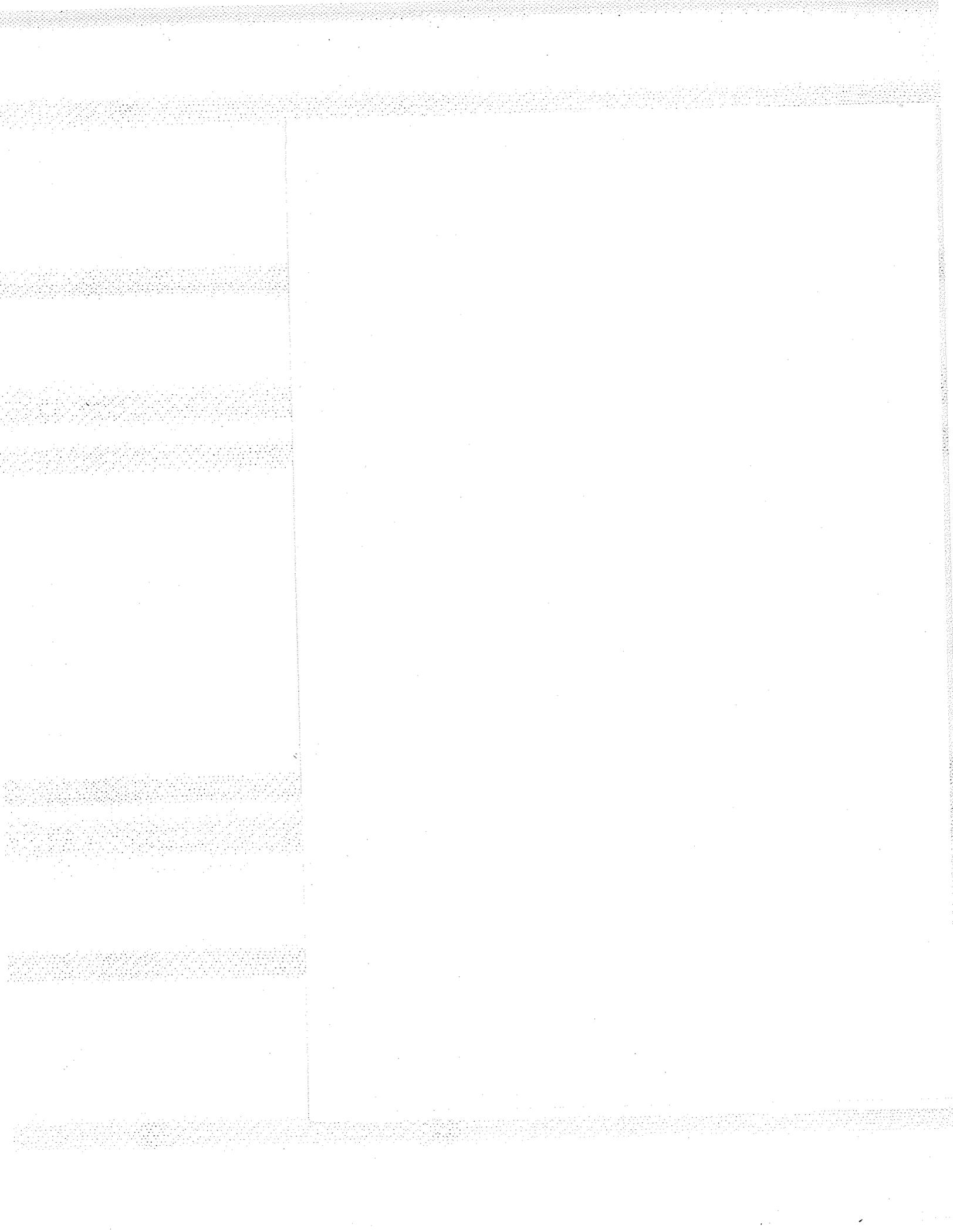
The men paddled to the Nor'Westers trading post at Souris where kindly John Sutherland in charge, and Pierre Falcon, known as the Rhyming Minstrel of the Prairies, carefully nursed her back to health.

A month later Marguerite was recovered sufficiently to join another fur-brigade going down to the Forks. Here she met her father at Fort Gibraltar and returned with him to Pembina. Months later when Jutras appeared, she turned her back in scorn on him. Marguerite's beauty might have been impaired but her charm and fine character were intact. She married into the prominent Gingras family and bore a number of children and lived to reach almost a hundred years.

Another prominent citizen of early Fort Garry was Joseph Dumas M.L.A. who married Mary Nisbet, daughter of the well-loved storekeeper and postmaster. The couple were childless and travelled a good deal gathering many antiques and rare art objects to enhance their beautiful mansion-type home facing Pembina Highway. The interior was "hand-decorated by an Italian artist named Mr. Bianco" and with the oversized stable-garage, made a very imposing residence.

Unfortunately the handsome house was destroyed by fire when the owners were attending a session of parliament and they lost all but the clothes they were wearing.

Mr. Dumas built a very charming stone and oakwood bungalow on the ruins at 1902 Pembina Highway. After the death of Mr. and Mrs. Dumas it became a place for receptions and parties known first as Club 22 then as Roxana. In 1936 its function changed again and it became The Church House, a combined home and place of worship. The march of progress finally overtook the sturdy old house; it remains today only in faded old photographs and a few lingering memories.



The New Municipality

Bishop Tache elected St. Norbert to parish status in 1857 naming it in honour of Father Norbert Provencher, spiritual leader of the Metis at Pembina in the early 1800s, and later at St. Boniface. Bishop Tache placed Father Lestanc, a young priest from France, in charge. Six years later he was replaced by Father Richot who remained in the parish until his death.

Father Richot set aside five hundred acres of land in St. Norbert for the founding of a monastery in 1892, and the Trappist Monks were established here. From the beginning, they have maintained a large farm and market such produce as honey, cheese, milk, hogs and vegetables. The household usually numbers between forty and fifty inmates and is frequently a haven for members of their Order driven out of communist countries.

Until a few days ago, the only woman permitted on the grounds was the Queen of England, and there is no record of Her Majesty ever availing herself of that prerogative.

Large Metis rallies were frequently held in St. Norbert in the early 1900s, and the roll-call at these gatherings included such history-making names as Nolin, Ducharme, Proulx, Dease and many more. During the 1869-70 Up-

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rising not all the Metis in the district were in sympathy with Riel's cause. Joseph Hamelin was imprisoned for his lack of zeal, and William Dease, a highly respected hunter-settler, was another holdout.

Because of his great influence in the community, Riel wanted the support of Dease and a group of thirty Metis appeared on his property one day to forcibly take him to headquarters. Dease shouldered his rifle and promised to shoot the first man to take one step closer.

There are on record at least three letters written by Riel to Dease in January and February of 1870, begging him to join forces – "I ask you and your people to augment our number."

Dease remained aloof. Then one evening when he was returning to St. Norbert after attending a wedding in the Settlement, he was seized and marched into Fort Garry. Riel was now weary of the game and his responsibilities and he asked William Dease to accept the leadership. When the favour was rejected, Dease was shoved against a stone wall and Riel threatened to have him shot, but it would be folly to risk a riot among the Metis in St. Norbert and Dease was allowed to return to his home.

One of the largest rallies held by the Metis occurred on October 26th, 1906, when a monument in the shape of a cross was raised at the Sale River where Riel had set his barricade thirty-seven years before. For some reason – probably land ownership – the stone cross was not placed where the original barrier stood, a hundred yards or so to the east.

On November 1st, 1969, there was a rededication ceremony to mark the One Hundredth Anniversary of the event

as a special Centennial effort by the Municipality of Fort Garry and a plaque was placed on the monument at that time. It was a drizzly, cold afternoon, brightened momentarily when, during Mayor R. A. Wankling's speech in French, a nearby resident started up his tractor. The noise completely drowned out the mayor's voice, and a wit, glancing at the driver, commented – "An Orangeman, no doubt."

The text of this plaque, in English and French, reads – "We the citizens of the Red River area are gathered here on November 1st, 1969, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of La Barriere and to dedicate ourselves to uphold the purpose of that event and strengthen the great province of Manitoba."

In 1911 when the Agricultural College had outgrown its Tuxedo site, the Roblin Government purchased five hundred and forty-three acres of land for the establishment of a new college along the Red River just north of the Village of St. Norbert.

This project promised to inject life and vitality into the area but rumours spread like prairie-fire, that a new municipality in the district known as West St. Vital, would be named South Winnipeg.

Opponents of the government saw this as a Bill to create a huge real-estate speculation by the politicians in power and an editorial appeared in the Free Press reading in part – "The public indignation at such a bare-faced proposal in the interest of real-estate speculation was so great that the name South Winnipeg was changed to Fort Garry."

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The choice could hardly have been by accident. "Fort Garry" is the oldest and most respected name in the country with the exception of the older Honourable Hudson's Bay Company appellation.

So the largest Winnipeg suburb was created, an area covering twenty-eight square miles and more than seventeen thousand acres bounded on the east by the Red River, running as far west as Fort Whyte – north to the Jubilee Overpass, and south several hundred yards beyond the Sale River.

The Rural Municipality of Fort Garry was formed under authority of an Act of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba on April 6th, 1912. The first Council meeting was held at twelve o'clock noon on May 6th in a public school, Lot 115, in St. Norbert. The building has since been destroyed by fire.

The first Reeve (known as Mayor after 1949) was Mr. R. A. C. Manning, and the Councillors, H. Young, J.P. Dumas, Pierre Dumas, Edmond Champagne, Joseph E. Grandmont and Michael Leclaire.

Even a cursory glance at the Minutes of these early Council meetings convince one that the present state of Fort Garry's civic efficiency and wise administration, is due in part to the scrupulous manner in which the municipality was served by conscientious men.

Just how seriously the Reeve and Councillors took their duties is obvious in one of the first resolutions moved and carried – "That Councillor Young be empowered to have carcass of a dead cow removed and buried. Cost of same to be paid by the Municipality."

Another piece of business reads – “Whereas the Council of the Rural Municipality of Fort Garry have been informed by their Road Superintendent that companies of the regular militia from Fort Osborne have unwarrantedly used the sidewalks (for their horses) in the said Municipality instead of the roads, and have thereby caused damage to the (plank) sidewalks to the extent of at least \$2000, and in addition have caused great annoyance and danger to the residents.”

Not to mention the noisy clatter of hoofs!

The Commanding Officer of Military District Number Ten, was handed a bill for damages and a letter was forwarded to the Minister of Militia at Ottawa.

The young municipality also took on the powerful Canadian National Railways, warning that if they did not immediately build culverts where needed for drainage, the Board of Railway Commissioners would be notified.

This no-nonsense Council advised the Town Clerk to instruct both the St. Boniface and the General Hospital that Fort Garry did not recognize any liability by the Municipality to pay for hospital treatment of any workmen employed by the contractors of the Agricultural College buildings being erected in 1913.

But the Council was fair-minded enough in dealing with their own employees as shown by the unanimous decision – “To pay the local constable, P.S. Reese, the sum of \$15.00 per month for feed for his horse.”

Two dog-catchers were also required to keep the peace, and the 1912 Council advised that “It would cost 10c to have a chicken freed from the Pound.”

The same year a By-Law was introduced referring to washing and swimming in the Red River except when

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wearing proper apparel. "Proper" meaning covered from shoulder to knees, and there was a fine not to exceed \$50.00 for breach of this law!

In those days residents never demanded services — most petitions were reported "praying" for such local improvements as community wells and graveled roads. Even the swanky Winnipeg Hunt Club politely "prayed" that the road running easterly from Pembina Highway to the Red River, known as Cadboro Road, be "graded and the surface drained."

This club was founded in 1908 in Charleswood when Mr. J. Harte brought hounds from Ireland to start fox-hunting in Manitoba. The club was moved to Southwood in Fort Garry in 1910 where Winnipeggers rode to hounds until the First World War. The present Southwood Golf Club was built where the Winnipeg Hunt Club stables and kennels once stood.

Mr. A.C. McGillivray, Highway Commissioner, did outstanding work in the preparation and maintenance of Pembina Highway. Yet it is amazing to learn that the width of Winnipeg's main roads was determined as far back as June 8th, 1840, when "The Council of Assiniboia set the width of this Trail on the west side of the Red River, a trail which led from Selkirk to Pembina, at two chains — 132 feet — with orders for brush to be cut back"

To replace the private pontoon bridge that linked the east and west side of the Red River, the Elm Park Bridge was built in 1912 at a cost of \$100,000 and operated as a toll bridge by a private company until 1945. The toll house still stands, easily recognized by the fact that it faces the bridge rather than Jubilee Avenue.

As the number of Anglo-Saxons increased in Fort Garry there developed a vital need for Protestant churches. In 1914 the nearest was St. Alban's in Fort Rouge. The first record of such religious services are to be found in the archives of St. Paul's Anglican Church on Point Road.

They reveal that when Dr. R.C. Johnson discovered the reason for congregational sparsity in his Winnipeg church on Sunday was the people's desire to spend a leisurely weekend camping on the banks of the Red River at their favourite beauty spot, Wildwood Park, he followed in his canoe and held outdoor services.

In the winter months and during inclement weather Mrs. Wiggins of the famed Cabbage Patch placed a large room at the minister's disposal and Sunday School classes were held upstairs. This clubhouse on The Point where sandwiches and hot drinks were served, was a happy rendezvous for snowshoe and sleighing parties.

Mrs. Wiggins, who was not a Protestant, personified the liberality and genuine good-neighbourliness of early life in the community that is still prevalent today.

Mrs. Florence Douglas Warren, aged ninety-three in late 1969, vividly recalled religious services in the Cabbage Patch when the river was filled every Sunday with canoes and sailboats. Motor boats had not yet made their appearance. As a member of a large British immigration party to reach West St. Vital in 1907, she remembered — "We were so impressed by the Red River. It was so large and very beautiful, especially when the moonlight gleamed on the water, and we were all mad for camping in those days."

Mrs. Warren constructed the first tennis court in Fort Garry on her property on Merriam Boulevard. "I daubed

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the grass with five cents worth of lime to mark off the courts and bought a good net for \$2.50.”

As a girl in England, Mrs. Warren had led a very athletic life and that vast expanse of Red River was just too much to resist. She had to go swimming. The first step was to make a bathing suit of navy alpaca trimmed with three rows of red braid, complete with sailor collar and voluminous bloomers. Dead silence greeted her appearance on the dock which she attributes wholly to the fact that no one could believe that a woman would willingly get wet in Red River. As she dived off the boards her last thought was – “Dear God, I hope I haven’t forgotten how to swim!”

Another effort to keep Fort Garry godly was the energetic revival meetings held by a lady missionary. She even prevailed upon Mr. Pickles, the tent maker, to provide a large canvas canopy for her “tabernacle”, but when no cash was forthcoming and enthusiasm waned, the tent maker irately whisked the big-top off the congregation one evening.

A more recent Anglican Church, St. John The Baptist, acquired their first church in a very unusual manner. In 1948 the congregation outgrew the Church House on the corner now occupied by the National Cash Register Company, and the people of Thornhill in Southern Manitoba offered their seldom used church to the Fort Garry Anglicans. The little building with its stained glass windows, was moved eighty-five miles by big truck to Manahan and Pembina Highway.

In less than ten years this too was inadequate and the Thornhill gift-church was sold when a new St. John The Baptist was built at 935 Nesbit. The Thornhill church took another journey and is now known as the St. Norbert United Church.

The first United Church in Fort Garry stood on the corner of muddy Pembina Highway and Dresden Avenue, now North Drive. In 1921 a survey of the area revealed sixty families eager for a nonconformist church, and in October of that year fifteen Presbyterian and fifteen Methodist residents met at the Cabbage Patch and agreed to organize church services. The first service was held in General Byng School on November 6th, 1921, and was conducted by Professor E. Guthrie Perry. In December the congregation moved to Boyce's Store at Pembina Highway and North Drive where they tended the stove and paid \$8.00 per month rental.

When it was necessary to vacate the school in the spring, services were held in the Municipal Hall, and during the summer a very small church was built on North Drive. This United Church of Fort Garry is credited with being the first built anywhere as a United Church of Canada.

It accommodated less than one hundred persons and the faithful sat on hard kitchen-type chairs in lieu of pews. A plain table served as pulpit. Heat was supplied by a barrel stove and stovepipes running the full length of the room. Yet there was a library – bookshelves across the back wall of the church and a kitchen area with a two-burner oil stove and a shelf to hold dishes. Water was carried by pail from the nearest well.

The Reverend Lloyd Stinson succeeded to the ministry in 1937, and when a larger building was needed the old church was moved from North Drive to Point Road, remodelled and enlarged.

By 1964 a new church had to be built and the old building was given to the newly-arrived Hungarian refugees,

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and moved to Nassau Street in Fort Rouge. It has since been demolished.

So it was that when people of a certain religious upbringing settled in Fort Garry, they felt the need for a church of their own faith, and what was once a totally Roman Catholic community now sees practically all religious denominations represented. Add to those already mentioned, the Pentecostal, the Baptist Mennonite, Lutheran, Jehovah's Witness, Church of The Nazarene, Evangelical Free Church, all with loyal followings.

The parochial cemetery west of Pembina Highway that had been acquired by the Redemptorist Fathers, was considered too difficult to reach in 1929, due to poor roads. Father Bertrand pastor of St. Vital Catholic Church in Fort Garry, obtained "with a few dollars" six acres of land situated along the Red River. Permission was granted to remove the bodies from the old graveyard to the new St. Vital Cemetery at the end of Riviera Crescent.

Education and Entertainment

By 1923 a permanent home for the oldest University in Western Canada, had been chosen. Founded in 1877 and occupying various sites in Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba was now to be built on one hundred and thirty-two acres of the five hundred and forty-three originally obtained by the government in Fort Garry, but the economic depression of the 1930s and the Second World War delayed any substantial construction for almost twenty years.

At present, the University of Manitoba has four affiliated colleges: St. Boniface, St. John's, St. Andrews and St. Paul's. There are faculties of Arts and Science, Agriculture, Architecture, Commerce, Law, Medicine, Social Work, Fine Arts, Dental Hygiene, Nursing, Pharmacy, Interior Design and Engineering.

There are courses in Physical Science and Astronomy that make good use of the Planetarium on Campus. Opened on November 15th, 1965, this twenty-four foot chamber accommodates seventy adults and is considered an excellent space-age classroom where celestial events of the past, present and future are studied. There is no admission to either the public or visiting schools, and the annual attendance runs to approximately twelve thousand viewers.

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Many "firsts" may be attributed to the University of Manitoba. In the field of Agriculture, most notable perhaps, is the new rye and wheat seed called Tetricale. In 1969 a program unique in Canada, was introduced – the Natural Resources Institute, the only University to offer such a degree program and one which shows every indication of becoming very popular and important in Canada's future development.

The current enrollment at the University is well over fourteen thousand and includes students from all parts of the world. The steady growth of the University and its international flavour has unquestionably accelerated public and private building in the Fort Garry area and kept standards high.

Another interesting seat of learning in Fort Garry is St. John's Ravenscourt Boys School located on South Drive. The history of Ravenscourt dates back to 1912 when Colonel R.M. Thomson purchased eighteen acres of land between Jubilee and South Drive on which he built a beautiful three-storey home. No expense was spared, and perhaps not the least, a two and one-half mile paved road from Jubilee down Pembina Highway to South Drive!

The house was of stone and brick and had private electric and sewage systems, a grand stairway, an elevator and fine quarters for servants. Then a few weeks before occupancy in 1914, war broke out in Europe. Colonel Thomson was among the first to go overseas and was killed in action the following year.

In 1929 Norman Young, a nephew of Colonel Thomson, became Headmaster of Ravenscourt School for Boys located in the old Tupper mansion at 158 Westgate, but he

had visions of wide acreage where large sports fields, gardens and a swimming pool could be part of the school.

The demolition of the empty Thomson house was announced in June 1934 and by newspaper the public was informed of dates when the place would be open for inspection. Few residences were being built on such a lavish scale complete with large plate glass windows, ornate fireplaces and imported white pine wood from Virginia.

Norman Young prevailed upon the Ravenscourt School Board of Directors to purchase the house on South Drive, as it contained every desirable feature for the purpose he had in mind with ample room for expansion. The house was obtained for the nominal sum of \$23,000 and opened on September 1st of that same year with an initial enrollment of twenty-five boarders. Today the figure stands above three hundred and fifty boys from many parts of the world — Iran, Mexico, Japan — and all parts of Canada.

When the Second World War broke out in 1939 Captain Norman Young was among the first to enlist for overseas service. He was killed in the Dieppe raid in 1942, a sad loss to the school and the community he had served so well.

The school was greatly enlarged when St. John's College amalgamated with Ravenscourt on June 1st, 1950. Founded in 1820 by the Reverend John West, the first Protestant clergyman to reach the Red River Settlement, St. John's represents the oldest seat of learning in western Canada, from which graduated many outstanding men.

St. John's Ravenscourt is rightly proud of the number of graduates who have, and continue to leave their imprint on national politics and all the creative arts and professions, both in Canada and abroad.

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The calibre of young students attending St. John's Ravenscourt was exemplified in November of 1969 when thirteen year old Frank Jakovak, a Grade VIII pupil, built a remarkable astronomical observatory at a cost of \$85.00 and hours of hard work. This achievement brought him first prize in the 1969 Manitoba Science Fair, and he presented the telescope and an observatory dome to St. John's Ravenscourt as a Centennial gift. Frank's current ambition – which he feels confident can be reached, is to see observatories on the moon. His present hobby is photography of the moon.

The high standard of education in Fort Garry was publicized in the September 1969 issue of CHATELAINE magazine in an article titled 65 BEST SCHOOLS IN CANADA. Of the eight Manitoba schools listed, four are located in Fort Garry – Fort Richmond Collegiate, General Byng Junior High, St. Avilla School and Vincent Massey Collegiate.

* * * * *

In 1929 a group of young people who played badminton in St. Paul's Anglican Church Parish, formed a corporation called the Wildwood Club, inserting the letter "E" in the existent name. A year later they acquired Mrs. Wiggins' Cabbage Patch as headquarters. The Wildwood housing development greatly increased the number of young people seeking membership in the Club and such attractions as tennis, golf and curling were added to create a truly family atmosphere. During the war the premises were occupied by The Royal Canadian Air Force.



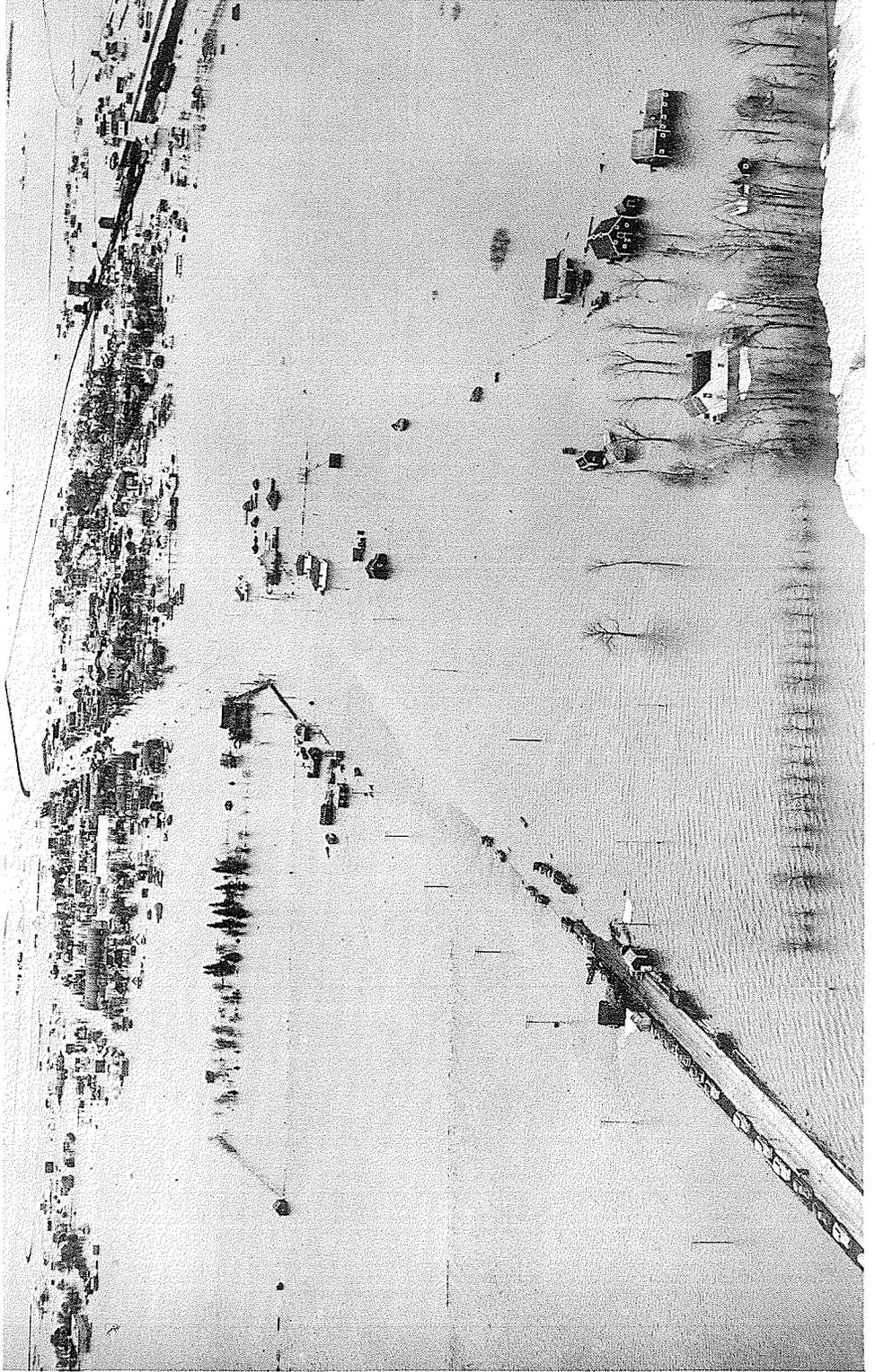
Dr. Washington's tree.



CHARETTE CABIN BUILT 1812

To Fort Garry unquestionably goes the honour of the site of the first private house in the province. Along the Trail, just north of the Sale River, also known as the Stinking River because of its salt springs and alkali waters, there stood a sturdy oak storey-and-a-half cabin believed to have been built in 1811-12. This was the home of Baptiste Charette, a carpenter with the North West Company. The cabin was demolished in 1953.

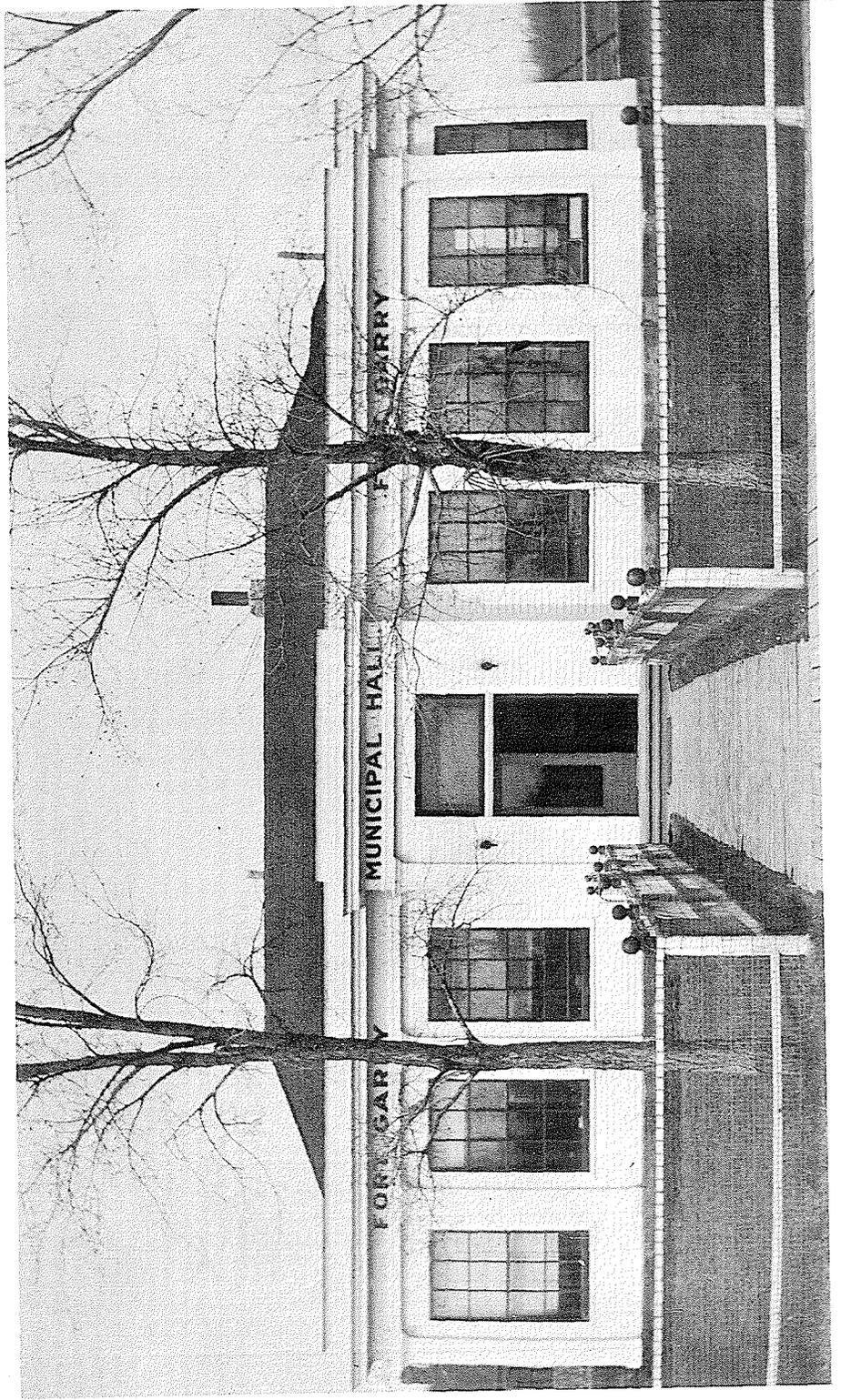
Photo: Winnipeg Tribune

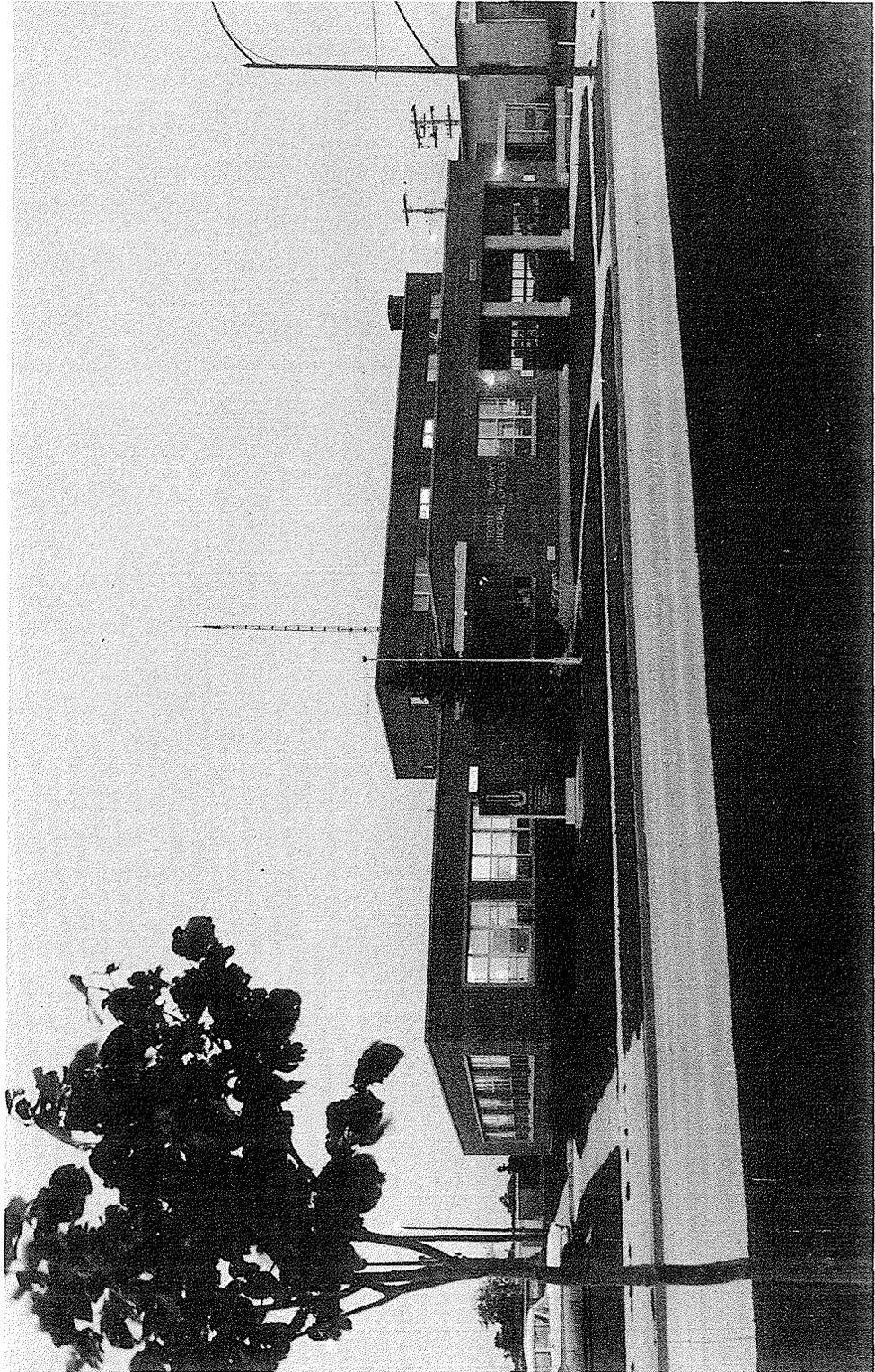


1950 floodwaters along Pembina Highway.

Photo: Winnipeg Tribune

First Fort Garry Municipal Hall built in 1915. Later Mama Trossie's restaurant.

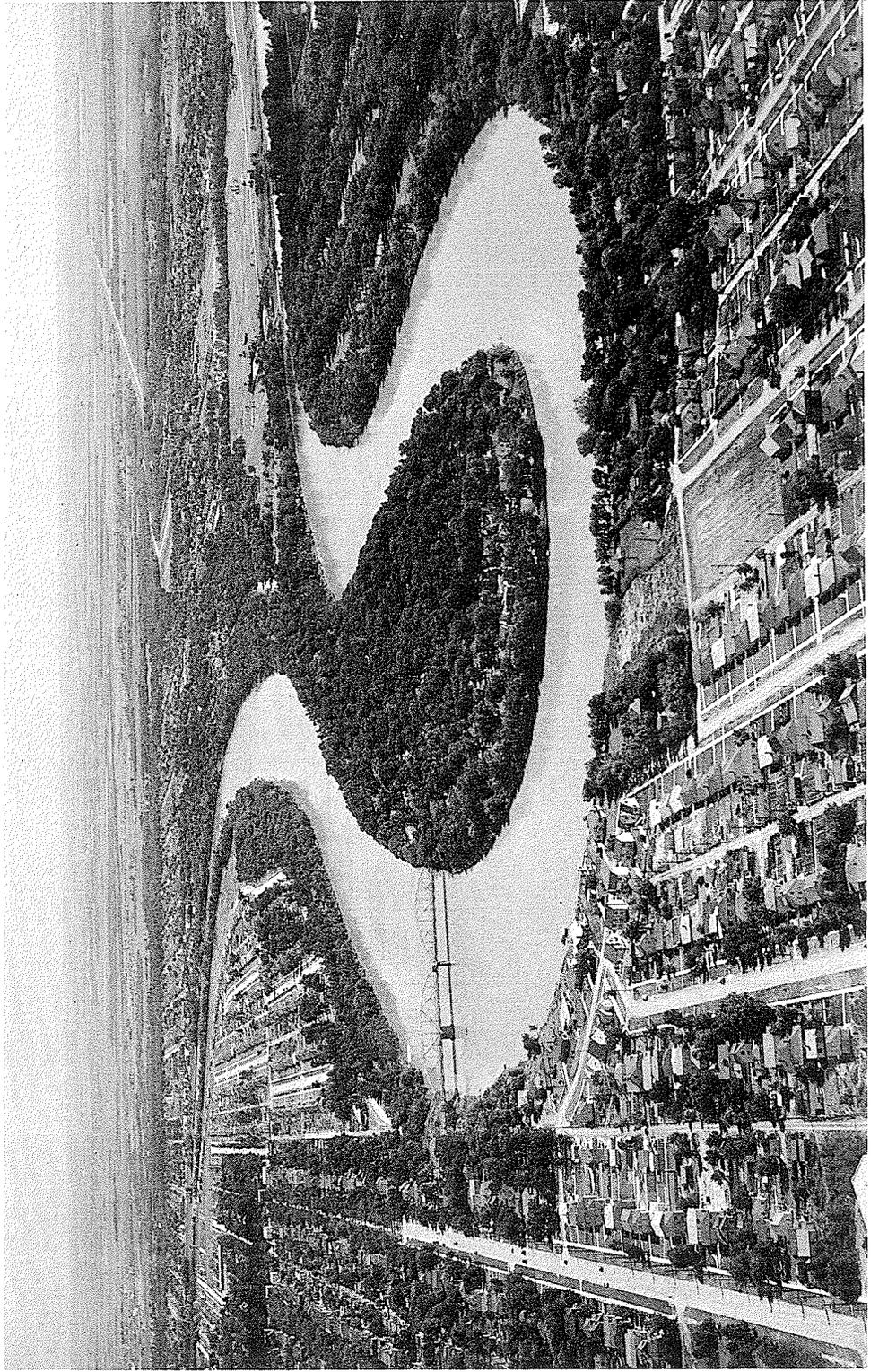


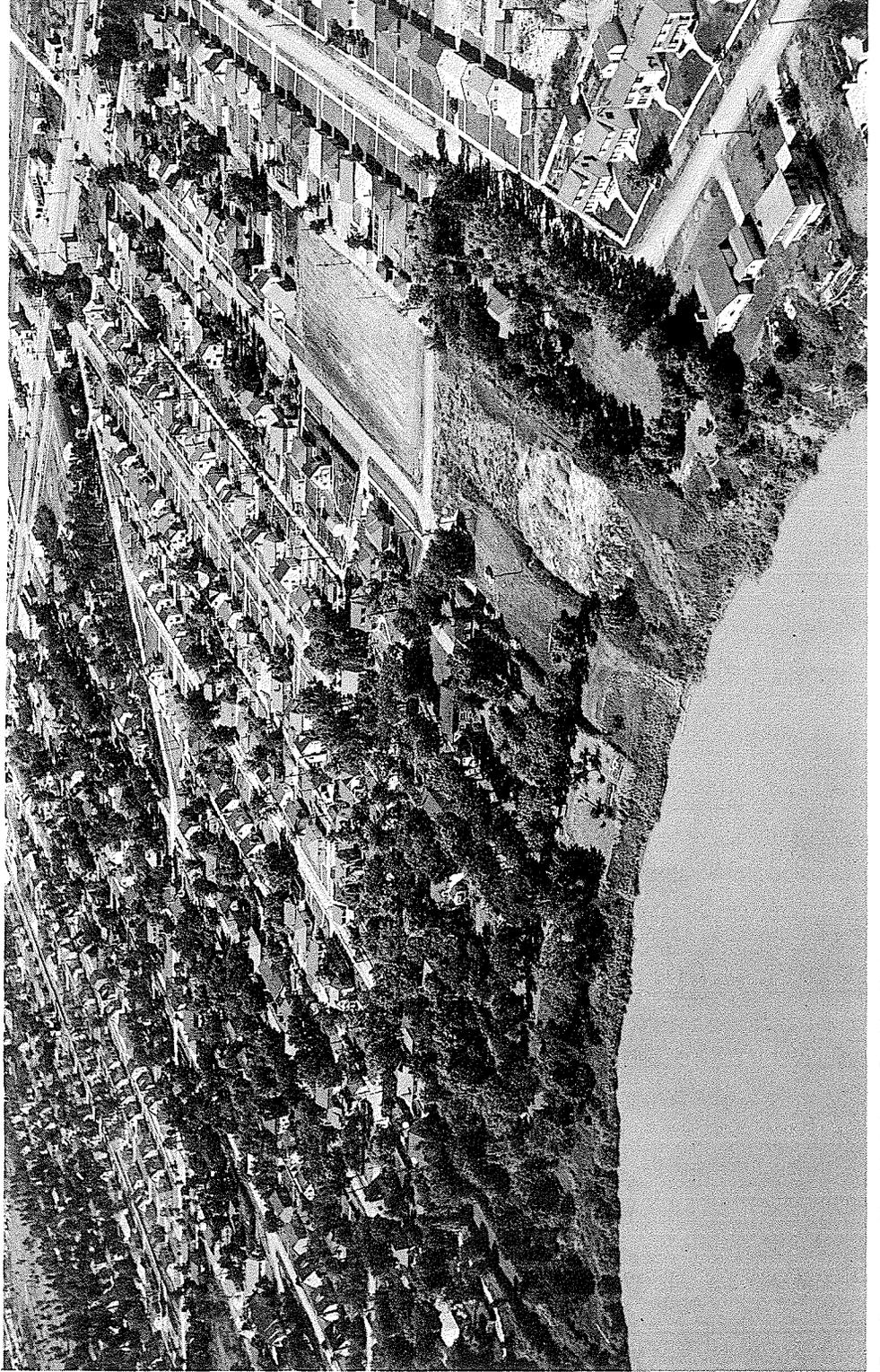


Present Municipal Hall. Built 1954.

Photo: David Portigal & Co. Ltd.

Looking east from Fort Garry. Elm Park Bridge. St. Vital Park. Before St. Vital Bridge built.





Fort Garry from Riverside Drive to Pembina Highway.



Mayor R.A. Wankling on left, presenting Order Of The Gate to former Fort Garry mayor L.R. Fennell.
January 2, 1968.

Photo: Dave Archer



Unveiling of cenotaph November 11, 1969. Mayor E.A. Wankling on left. Councillor Clem McIntosh on right.

Photo: Robinson Photography

Mr. Rolly Carlson, President of the Wildewood Golf Club stated in a paper read to the Fort Garry Rotary Club in September 1969 – “An interesting side-light (in the construction of the golf course) was that a couple of years of waiting to play were eliminated by buying greens from the old Polo Park Course, and relaying them. One green came from the Norwood Golf Course along Lyndale Drive.”

No community worth its salt is without a boys' swimming hole, and at least one haunted house or place of mystery. For a time the empty Thomson mansion filled this need when boys swimming in the Red River dared one another to run up to the dark house and shout down the echoing rainspout. Later, the roofless stone house in King's Park known as German Hall, served the purpose.

Built by a Mr. Schmidt after the First World War as a community centre for the many settlers of German origin then in the area, it fell under suspicion of sedition in the middle 1940s. The government forced its closure when it was alleged that the hall was a place of secret meetings for Nazi sympathizers.

Ghemsas Hut on river property later occupied by the Archery Club was another favoured spot for Scout outings, and where truants from school lay about often talking of unearthing the treasure legend said was buried in Prospect Park, now the Rosemount and Edderton Avenue area.

On December 5th, 1913, John Krafchenko, a railway mechanic, held up the Bank of Toronto in Plum Coulee; the manager, Mr. Arnold was shot and killed and \$8000 was stolen. Krafchenko was arrested and charged with the crime a few days later. While in prison a rope and a pistol were smuggled in to the murderer by a prison guard and

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Krafchenko escaped. He took a room on William Avenue and disguised as a woman and wearing a veil, he walked the streets for a time. He was finally recaptured and hung in July 1914. The guard who aided Krafchenko to escape was accidentally killed while serving time at Stony Mountain Penitentiary.

Soon afterwards, a search by police and many individuals was begun to recover the stolen money. Three places were suggested, two of these turned up no cache which left the Fort Garry area the only likely spot. John Krafchenko himself never revealed where he hid the loot, and perhaps school boys still dream of making the rich discovery.

* * * * *

Although both King's Park and Wildwood Park were subdivided in 1913, it was not until 1945 that these districts were properly developed. George Dowker had been appointed in 1912 by the Wildwood Real Estate Company as caretaker of the Point to safeguard the standing hardwood — a most admirable piece of foresight.

When Bird Construction Company began work in the spring of 1946 the project was declared by Ottawa to be the largest residential development in Canada at that time. The following year the Wildwood Shopping Centre was advertised as the most unique in all the Dominion — “The first of its type in Canada to offer attractively to shoppers everything they need under one roof.”

One of the best known residents of King's Park was Dr. E.J. Washington who died May 23, 1957. Dr. Washington owned a good deal of property in the area and there is

a story prized by the citizens that when the doctor allowed a portion of his land to be worked by Albert Verschou, a market gardener, he insisted that a beautiful old elm tree growing a few feet off King's Drive, be left unharmed. The tree stands on a dirt road by the side of the old market garden, land now planned for a public park in 1970 by the Parks Board. It is to be hoped that those in power will respect the beauty and age of the tree. A small bronze marker on the elm recording the doctor's wishes would not be inappropriate.

The Fort Richmond residential development did not begin until 1964 and is considered by many, a model community, populated chiefly by faculty members of the University of Manitoba and professional personnel on the staff of the new Victoria General Hospital.



Flood 1950

It was a cold, wet spring with snow and rainfall some part of every twenty-four hours, raising the level of the Red River three or four inches each day.

Newspaper accounts of this disastrous time give a most graphic picture of the events as they occurred.

“April 4th. Red River floods in North Dakota. Federal engineers say danger to Winnipeg remote.”

“April 5th. Red rose six inches in Winnipeg.”

“April 8th. No danger as flood peak expected in Winnipeg about end of April.”

“April 11th. City and provincial engineers warn city Red River flood threat near.”

“April 20th. Red spills banks in Emerson.”

From this date until a month later, a note of panic runs through all the reports. By April 28th, five hundred people had fled Morris, and several small communities were isolated when flood waters damaged railway lines, highways, carried away bridges, and knocked out telephone and electricity. As the sea to the south became a scene of utter desolation, endless streams of traffic moved northward

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along Pembina Highway. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and army officials travelled entirely by boat, and thousands of sandbags were dumped in Fort Garry as the citizens fought to save their homes by the erection of the Oakenwald and the Riverside dikes. Work went on round the clock as men and women and teenagers filled and placed sandbags and manned pumps under the eight million candlepower searchlight from army headquarters. The standard costume was overalls and high rubber boots, all well caked with mud.

Typhoid inoculations were planned in Fort Garry as danger of disease was seen during the flood when sewage lines might be damaged and drinking water contaminated. Schools and churches were closed; all social and sports events were cancelled. The rain never ceased.

“May 5th. Red cuts last link to 10 towns south of the city. Heat cut in local buildings and 300 business blocks. Dike fight grows as 12-hour rainfall predicted.”

“May 6th. City flood at crisis. Army takes control. Wildwood dike collapses and Riverside dike breaks after all night rain. Total evacuation of the city seen. Hospital evacuation begins.”

At 4:30 a.m., of May 6th, the compulsory evacuation of Fort Garry began when the dikes, the people had worked so hard to hold intact, gave way under seeping water and mounting pressure of the rising river. Within a few hours the removal of twenty thousand inhabitants was effected and five hundred and forty square miles of land lay under water south of the Jubilee Subway.

“May 10th. Recommend women and children leave city. Mass evacuation of 20,000 in St. Vital ordered. Heat shut off in 4000 homes. Leighton Avenue dike collapses.”

“May 11th. Eleven bridges, streets and subways closed. 40,000 leave city. Navy frogmen arrive. Boats take 560 off marooned train.” These were evacuees from the flooded Red River Valley – from the towns of St. Jean Baptiste, St. Adolphe, St. Agathe, Morris, St. Norbert and other points, who had boarded a Canadian National Railways’ relief train. When it struck a washout and was stranded at University of Manitoba Siding, navy amphibious vehicles, boats on wheels, known as D.U.K.W.s, the United States’ factory serial initials, were dispatched to remove the passengers.

“May 13th. 65,000 quit city homes.”

This was the day that Canada’s Governor-General Viscount Alexander, donned hip waders and toured the flooded area. He praised the work of the Armed Forces and flood volunteers, and was noticeably moved by conditions in the five-year-old Wildwood Park reported as “one of Greater Winnipeg’s hardest hit suburbs. Here, residents, most of them war veterans, fought day and night on dikes to save their homes.”

An unusual news picture appeared bearing the caption – “Before Fort Garry had to be cleared a milkman kept up delivery to customers by wheelbarrow.”

Another picture-story showed a chair braced against a chimney and water lapping at the eaves of a house – “Remaining behind in Wildwood was Frank Armstrong, director of the boat patrols in the district. The aquatic traffic-cop uses a chair on a roof-top for point duty.”

“May 15th. Crest of Red reaches city as 15,000 leave St. Boniface. Peril to Power system grows!”

Black Friday, May 19th. “Rain pushes river to 30.3 feet.”

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The next day recorded the first note of hope for many weeks – “River level drops 1.2 inches.”

The suburbs reported flood loss at \$12,000,000. The City of Winnipeg counted \$20,000,000, and the costly clean-up began.

While the Federal Government vacillated on the question of flood relief, the Fort Garry Council passed a resolution asking senior governments for a definite indication that municipalities hit by the floods would be reimbursed. It read – “The Red River is the drainage basin for southern Manitoba, and water now causing floods originate over this section of the province and across the International Boundary. The Council of Fort Garry wishes to draw the attention of the Provincial and Federal Governments that it is financially impossible for the municipalities concerned to cope with necessary flood relief and flood prevention.”

“We feel this is to a large extent a provincial matter in view of the fact that drainage waters causing the flood originate and come from drainage ditches as well as tributaries within and across the International Boundary, thus benefiting many municipalities.”

“We feel that a definite indication should be made at present by the senior governments that the municipalities will be reimbursed as this would then enable them to arrange for immediate finances to cope with flood conditions.”

When the waters receded the Manitoba Sugar Company, Fort Garry’s chief industry, reported a million dollar loss in sugar and half a million in machinery damage. The Ravenscourt Boys School required no less than \$50,000

for repairs, and the damage to the University of Manitoba exceeded \$300,000.

Many of the mink ranches, turkey farms, and market gardens, did not re-appear in the municipality and these areas were quickly absorbed by land developers. In spite of the devastation and destruction caused by the flood waters, most of the buildings along Pembina Highway were sturdy enough to respond to repair and reconstruction.

One of these is probably the oldest home in the municipality. It stands behind the old convent in St. Norbert, now a Senior Citizens' Home. It is a storey and a half rather weather-beaten white house, currently occupied by nuns working in the Home. The house faces the Red River, and the board-siding conceals a log structure dating back to 1870.

That was the year Joseph Turenne, fresh from Montreal, built the house and lived in it for eight years before moving to St. Boniface where he was employed in the Land Titles Office.

About 1885 the house became a boarding school for French Canadian boys from North Dakota, and was operated by two nuns from St. Boniface. Later it became the home of the convent caretaker. Recently the old house changed hands again, and is now referred to simply as the Nuns' House.

Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh visited Manitoba in 1951, and even before leaving England, the royal couple made it clear that one item on their tour was *de rigueur*, a visit to Wildwood Park.

When Viscount Alexander returned to England he gave King George and his family such a vivid account of the

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people's fight in Fort Garry to protect their new homes, that the Princess and her husband insisted that Wildwood Park be included in their itinerary. Many last minute changes were made once the royal couple reached Winnipeg but they would not agree to any curtailment of their plan to visit Fort Garry.

In conversation with the Duke of Edinburgh, Mayor Fennell reported on the excellent work done by the fifty-foot boats in the very place where the royal couple stood – Wildwood Park Shopping Centre – and the Duke calculated at once the depths of the flood waters.

Between 1941 and 1951 the population of Fort Garry increased by eighty-four percent, and now that fear of future floods was allayed by Duff Roblin's proposed floodway running parallel to the Red River from Morris to the Locks, the growth of the municipality accelerated more rapidly than ever.

In addition to many buildings appearing on the University of Manitoba campus, there was a tremendous influx of commercial firms along McGillivray Boulevard and Pembina Highway.

In 1955 when the Council of Fort Garry installed sewer and water in St. Norbert, this little parish that had remained wholly rural and somewhat isolated for ninety-eight years tripled its population in five years.

After the flood of 1950 the Oblate Fathers settled in St. Norbert in the building formerly occupied by the Misericordia Sisters.

Industry Culture Benefaction

The astonishing industrial and commercial development of the 1960s filled to capacity two large areas reserved for industry, and before the end of December 1969, the Town Hall was looking for more properties to accommodate additional firms.

The attractions of the Fort Garry Industrial Parks are many. No other area in Manitoba has more to offer – close to the International Airport – fifteen minutes ride from central Winnipeg, and served by two railway lines and a major highway.

The coveted Carlton Trophy for the best kept municipal roads was presented to Fort Garry in 1969.

Strict building regulations, plus beautiful landscaping and excellent architecture, have created a most attractive site adjacent to fine residential areas.

There are ten public parks in the municipality, the largest, Fennell Memorial Sports Centre, covers thirteen acres. Three excellent golf courses, well patronized curling clubs, and the brightest strip of luxury and economically priced motels and night clubs in the province are to be found along Pembina Highway.

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Since its inauguration in 1912, there never has been any doubt that the Municipality of Fort Garry has been the gateway to Manitoba's progress and adventure.

* * * * *

The Manitoba Sugar Company settled in Fort Garry in 1939 and for thirty years, remained a lone landmark far out on the prairie. In the beginning, this company had a very modest output; today it has five hundred and sixty farmers growing sugar beets under contract to the company, with some thirty-one acres seeded. The Fall turnover amounts to three thousand tons of beets processed daily and provides seasonal employment for a number of men both within and beyond the municipality. Experts in the field claim that since development of a by-product of what was formerly waste material, the Manitoba Sugar Company has the most efficient anti-pollution system in the world!

The Pioneer Electric Company, founded in 1946, built a large plant on Rockman Avenue, but the first firm to locate in the industrial park area on McGillivray Boulevard, was the Canada Wire and Cable Company in 1955.

Like a scene from a prairie calendar, the Red River and Fort Whyte elevators of the United Grain Growers Limited are silhouetted against the sky at Fort Whyte. Recently a large dark bulbous object appeared at the base of the last named elevator. This dome-shaped butyl bin, believed the first in North America – certainly the first to appear in Canada – is built of reinforced rubber and seven have been imported from England by the United Grain Growers Limited. The bins are filled with air and grain simulta-

neously and hold as many as thirty-seven thousand bushels. The obvious benefits of these grain storage bins are their portability and the low storage cost of twenty-two cents per bushel; this cost includes the cost of a blower necessary to the operation.

As agent for the Canadian Wheat Board, the United Grain Growers purchase grain from the farmer and give an initial payment. The grain is stored until the Canadian Wheat Board authorizes its shipment to a terminal elevator.

The firm also handles a complete line of farm supplies including livestock and poultry feed, cereal seed and fertilizer. The Red River elevator has a storage capacity of some nine million pounds of seeds. Forage seed is exported to thirty countries around the world and to farmers across Canada.

Many innovations may be credited to firms located in Fort Garry.

Tallcrete Ltd. has created a type of adhesive mortar that reduces the time of normal brick construction by two-thirds.

Boatco Industries Ltd. received a Design Merit Award in 1969 for its twelve-foot fibreglass sailboat.

In the summer of 1969 Pioneer Electric supplied \$4,000,000 worth of transformers for Manitoba's gigantic Nelson River Hydro development. These massive convertor-transformers weighing one hundred and ninety-two tons, are the largest ever built in North America.

Willson Stationers in the Fort Garry Industrial Park area broke with tradition in 1969 when for the first time, they employed women in their main warehouse. According to the manager, "Women are generally better at this job than

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men. Their penchant for neatness shows up well here where we stock more than fifteen thousand items.”

The Champagne Movers Ltd. of St. Norbert is in the unique business of grain elevator moving. The manager, Mr. Gerald Champagne, started moving elevators in 1962 when a number of railway lines were discontinued and the elevators at these points were no longer used. But they could be transported by the Champagne Company to areas where they were needed at less cost than new buildings could be constructed. The first elevator moved was from the Morden Experimental Farm to a cattle ranch and since then, Mr. Champagne has moved almost fifty elevators.

The Versatile Manufacturing Ltd., moved into Fort Garry in 1963. A firm in the unique business of *exporting* farm-machinery when most of Canada's implement dealers import tractors. Versatile exports sixty-five percent of their production to the United States and in early January 1970 made its first major European sale — a four-wheel one hundred and forty-five horsepower tractor to a French importing company. Mr. Roy E. Robinson, president of Versatile Manufacturing Limited, is confident that this is just the first of many such transactions with European farmers.

Orion Metals Ltd., are the manufacturers of an aluminum hockey stick that was invented by Mr. Irv Moss, a local businessman who hopes to make Manitoba the hockey stick capital of the world. The production of hockey sticks in Canada is a \$20,000,000 industry, and players often use as many as five or six sticks during a season. In June 1969 the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association approved the Moss-Shur-Stick, the trade name for this practically unbreakable stick, now being marketed by the Moss-Shur-Stick Company on Chevrier Boulevard.

Irv Moss experimented for more than a year with various alloys before he fashioned a hockey stick that won praise from Jackie McLeod, coach of Canada's National Hockey Team. The aluminum stick weighs and handles like the traditional type with the added advantage of seventy-two small perforations in the blade that cut down on wind resistance.

The community suffered a \$1,000,000 payroll reduction when, despite numerous appeals to the Prime Minister, the Federal Government transferred the Canadian Forestry Service Laboratory from Fort Garry to Edmonton late in 1969. The relocation of one hundred and twenty-five employees and their families meant a grievous social as well as economic loss to the municipality.

On the other hand, since the establishment of the Freshwater Institute on the Campus of the University of Manitoba in September, 1966, the staff has increased from forty-one to one hundred and eight. This Laboratory combines biological, technological and environmental fisheries research in one organization and its responsibility extends from Quebec to the North West Territories and British Columbia.

The location was chosen by the Federal Government because Winnipeg is the centre of the Canadian Freshwater Fishing Industry. There is also easy access to Manitoba's many lakes, and the University of Manitoba has a strong interest in freshwater resources. Technicians are experimenting with a more diversified use of our plentiful whitefish, the effects and the remedy for the many forms of industrial waste polluting our freshwaters.

The erection of the \$10,000,000 Victoria General Hospital on Pembina Highway fills a long felt need. It occupies eighteen acres, has two hundred and fifty-four beds, four

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elevators and the most up-to-date computer system in the country. Situated close to the University of Manitoba, the mutual benefits to both hospital and University, are obvious.

* * * * *

When the present Town Hall at 1350 Pembina Highway was opened in November 1954, its former site at Chevrier and Pembina was occupied by the famous Mama Trossie's Restaurant. In addition to the municipal offices in the new building, the Town Hall houses the Fort Garry Police Department, and until the opening of the new Victoria General Hospital, the local health unit.

Adjacent is the General Fire Hall, while Station Number One located at Pembina and Dalhousie, safeguards both the University of Manitoba and the St. Norbert area.

On the second floor of the Town Hall is the spacious Council Chamber. Shortly after the opening, it acquired a real treasure — an oil painting of Upper Fort Garry as it appeared prior to its demolition in 1881 during Winnipeg's great real estate boom.

This picture measures eight by twelve feet, and the story of the painting goes back to the late 1890s when it hung behind the bar of the old Starkey House in Carman, Manitoba. Horse-racing was the popular sport of the day, and so confident was the hotel owner of winning a certain race, that he wagered his valuable painting. Starkey lost the bet to Jim Britton, a farm machinery dealer. In 1902, Mr. Britton brought the painting to the office of the Cockshutt Company on Princess Street where it hung for forty years.

When the implement company moved to new premises, Ken Dale, a Fort Garry resident associated with the firm,

showed an interest in the disposition of the painting now considered too large for the new offices. The picture was offered to Mr. Dale but before he could claim it, he left the Cockshutt Company and the painting was forgotten for a number of years. Mr. Dale later traced it to a warehouse and gained possession of it in 1948.

The canvas had been punctured by a piece of steel and badly neglected, yet Mr. Dale regarded it as a genuine prize and approached Mayor Fennell of Fort Garry regarding the possibility of hanging the large picture in the new Town Hall. The incoming Mayor, Scott Neal, had the picture cleaned and repaired and it was hung in the Council Chambers in 1955.

Unfortunately, in the process of renovation, the artist's name was obliterated.

In 1969 when the history of the community was being written, it seemed imperative that an effort be made to ascertain the identity of the artist of this historic subject. Comparison with the signed canvases of Victor A. Long, a famous Canadian artist of the late 1800s, seemed to suggest a similarity of technique.

Scores of portraits of political figures, the work of V.A. Long, hang in provincial legislative buildings between Winnipeg and Victoria. He also did a number of paintings of Upper Fort Garry and the old gate. A good copy of the latter may be seen on the landing between the first and second floors of the Fort Garry Municipal Building. Others dated 1888 hang in the William Avenue Public Library and many lie in the store-room of the new City Hall where they were placed when removed from the old building.

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Citizens conscious of the historical value of these paintings, requested in early 1970 that they be secured to the walls of the underground passageway between the City Hall and the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall, where they might be enjoyed.

To date, the artist responsible for the large painting in the Fort Garry Council Chambers remains a mystery.

In 1956 the first library in Fort Garry was a one-room, rent-free unit in the Municipal Hall. It soon overflowed and proved beyond question the need for larger accommodation. Yet as early as 1945, the Fort Garry Community Club was soliciting donations of books for their library.

The Fort Garry Public Library was the first built in Manitoba as the result of approval of an \$85,000 By-law. It was opened on February 14th, 1960, close to the Town Hall in the heart of the business community.

From the beginning, school children were taught how to use the library – how to read the index cards and where to find the particular books they wanted. In addition to the annual exhibits held here displaying the work of Manitoba artists, shows representative of all craft groups operating in Fort Garry, are to be seen. There is also a large Record Lending Department and Saturday morning French Instruction Classes for pre-school children.

By the generous Will of the late Dr. A.W. Hogg, who practiced in Fort Garry for many years, additional wings were added to the main library in 1967.

A recent acquisition of which the whole community is very proud, is the new mobile library. This Bookmobile, donated by the Rotary Club members of Fort Garry on

October 25th, 1969, is a thirty-two foot long unit, staffed by two qualified librarians and is equipped with heating, air conditioning and toilet facilities.

It contains twenty-six thousand books and makes regular visits to six check points in Fort Garry – a service appreciated by readers living any considerable distance from the main library building.

On November 15th, 1969, the Fort Garry Public Library was enriched by the donation of a collection of children's books in the French language. While the presentation was made by M. Phillippe Bourdon, a choir from Crane Public School sang French songs.

* * * * *

Fort Garry has always been fortunate in the activities of its various social and service clubs.

The Fort Garry Chamber of Commerce, organized in 1951, together with the Junior Chamber of Commerce, have enthusiastically sponsored such projects as improved roads, traffic lights, and the highly successful "Shop-in-Fort-Garry" campaign.

The Fort Garry Kiwanis Club dates back to 1949, and is perhaps best known for its Kiwanis Plaza on Point Road, an attractive complex of low-rental suites for senior citizens.

Members of the Fort Garry Elks Lodge No. 504, in addition to giving substantial financial assistance to the Deaf Detection Centre, have furnished one of the Children's Wards in the Victoria General Hospital on Pembina High-

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way. They have also pledged to devote much of their time in regular visits to the little patients.

The Wildwood Branch of the Independent Daughters of The Empire, an organization well-known for its scholarship gifts throughout the province, has as one of its most recent projects assumed responsibility for furnishing the Children's Playroom in the new hospital.

The Lions Club is responsible for the Outdoor Track and Open Swimming Pool directly behind the Town Hall.

The Knights of Columbus, organized in St. Norbert in 1963, are well known for their interest in the Boy Scout Movement and the Community Club House.

Free films and lectures are offered by the Game and Fish Association and the Fort Garry Legion, No. 90, extends a warm welcome to all veterans and their friends.

The wives of most members of these organizations are also deeply involved in auxiliary activities and projects that strengthen the clubs and benefit the municipality.

Community Club life is rich in Fort Garry where every type of activity from Scottish Dancing lessons by certified teachers, to figure skating, Yoga, art and handicrafts may be enjoyed. Among the most energetic of the Community Clubs are — Fort Garry, Fort Richmond-Kings, Westridge and various church and school groups.

The popular and venerable Horticultural Society held its forty-seventh annual show in August 1969. At these shows awards are given for industrial grounds upkeep as well as for the most attractive home gardens. Junior high school students are encouraged to compete in essay contests, confining topics to forests, gardens and floral subjects.

CHAPTER TEN

The Quiet Achievers

THE ORDER OF THE GATE was created in 1967 "as a Centennial project of a continuing nature to be made annually to persons or organizations who have contributed substantially in whatever field of endeavour to the betterment of the people and the community of Fort Garry."

The award is a plaque upon which a bronze replica of the Fort Garry gate is mounted. The citation is worded to suit the individual achievement of each winner of the award.

Mr. L.R. Fennell, a former mayor of Fort Garry, with a long and honourable record of service to the community, was the first recipient of THE ORDER OF THE GATE.

Others, to date to receive the honour of this public recognition are Mr. J.E. Trottier, Municipal Treasurer, who has served the community for the past forty years, and Mrs. Donalda Lamoureux for her contribution towards the welfare of Fort Garry as a long-time Foster Mother.

Other men whose accomplishments have brought honour to the community are such figures as Dr. S.I. Hayakawa, a Japanese-Canadian and graduate of the University of Manitoba, who possesses a fondness for tam-o-shanters. Dr. Hayakawa is well known for his strong stand before militant

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students at the University of California. He now holds the high office of President of San Francisco State College.

A Fort Garry artist, Kenneth Lochhead, designed Manitoba's controversial Centennial stamp. It pleases him enormously to contemplate the fact that thirty-eight million copies of his design were reproduced.

James Gould, a technician at the University of Manitoba, built a six and one-half foot tall planetarium in his basement. Although it was created chiefly for his own amusement, Mr. Gould's planetarium is capable of giving a very entertaining program and is much in demand for small informal gatherings.

Dr. Andrew Taylor of D'Arcy Drive, who served for a number of years as Government Surveyor in both the Arctic and the Antarctic, amassed over the years, a large collection of Canadiana — paintings, some fifteen thousand books, plus many Eskimo and Indian handicrafts. The technical studies Dr. Taylor prepared for the government during his term as surveyor are very much in demand today as international interest is turned towards the North.

One of the most active achievers in Fort Garry is Mr. Robert Leslie, President of the B. Leslie Real Estate and Development Company. Mr. Leslie's father established the large Leslie Farms at Fort Whyte and his own development operations include the residential Leslie Park, the distinctive King's—Ramada Motel, and various other buildings along Pembina Highway. He hopes in the near future, to operate a Riding Academy in Fort Whyte.

Peter Orzechowski, a native of St. Norbert, correctly anticipated the increased demand for all-year tourist accommodation when he expanded his business in 1969. With the

popularity of the ski-doo and revival of outdoor winter sports, overnight and week-end motel space is no longer limited to the summer months. The very modern St. Norbert Motor Hotel fills a need for up-to-date attractive accommodation in this area.

An Honorable Mention Award by the Canadian Housing Design Council was won by Arnold Koerte of Wildwood Park in 1969 when he converted a small post-war bungalow into a beautiful ultra modern house. His project has been the inspiration for numerous other home-owners in the community.

In October 1969, the first woman was elected to the Fort Garry Town Council. Mrs. Elizabeth Ireton, the mother of six children, has a long record of social and welfare services to the community and brings valuable experience to her position.

Southwood Village, a \$2,000,000 project in Fort Garry, won for its designers, the architect firm of Libling Michener and Associates, the National Design Award presented by the Canadian Housing Design Council.

In 1969 two Manitoba films were nominated for awards at the Annual Canadian Film Awards Festival — K.G. Perkin's "History of Astronomy" and the University of Manitoba Students' production "And No Birds Sing".

Each day brings to light some brilliant innovation or quiet achievement, for the free and open environment within Fort Garry appears particularly conducive to such enterprize.

Yet in spite of the progress and swift settlement of the municipality in the last decade, it is still possible to walk on the prairie west of the railway tracks and listen to the

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joyous song of the meadow-lark. Still possible also, on clear spring and autumn nights to hear the clamour of wild geese following the eternal flyways, and be imbued with silent gratitude for the ways of the past on which our present is built.

There stands on the grounds between St. Maurice School and the St. Vital Catholic Church at Pembina and Manahan, a little wishing-well structure. Under the wooden hood hangs an old bell with the following inscription —

“This bell was blessed by Archbishop Tache Sept. 8, 1860. It stands here in this little shrine on our school grounds as a voice of encouragement for all, in memory of the pioneers.”

“In memory of the pioneers,” the pace-setters of Fort Garry have built well.

The Rural Municipality of Fort Garry's first Council, elected in 1912, records the following names –

Reeve – R. A. C. Manning

Councillors – H. Young

J. P. Dumas

Pierre Dumas

Edmond Champagne

Jos. E. Grandmont

Michel Leclair

The January 1970 list reads –

Mayor R. A. Wankling

Councillors – G. R. Hobson

D. S. Grant

Elizabeth Ireton

W. R. Moffat

J. R. G. Cloutier

P. Orzechowski

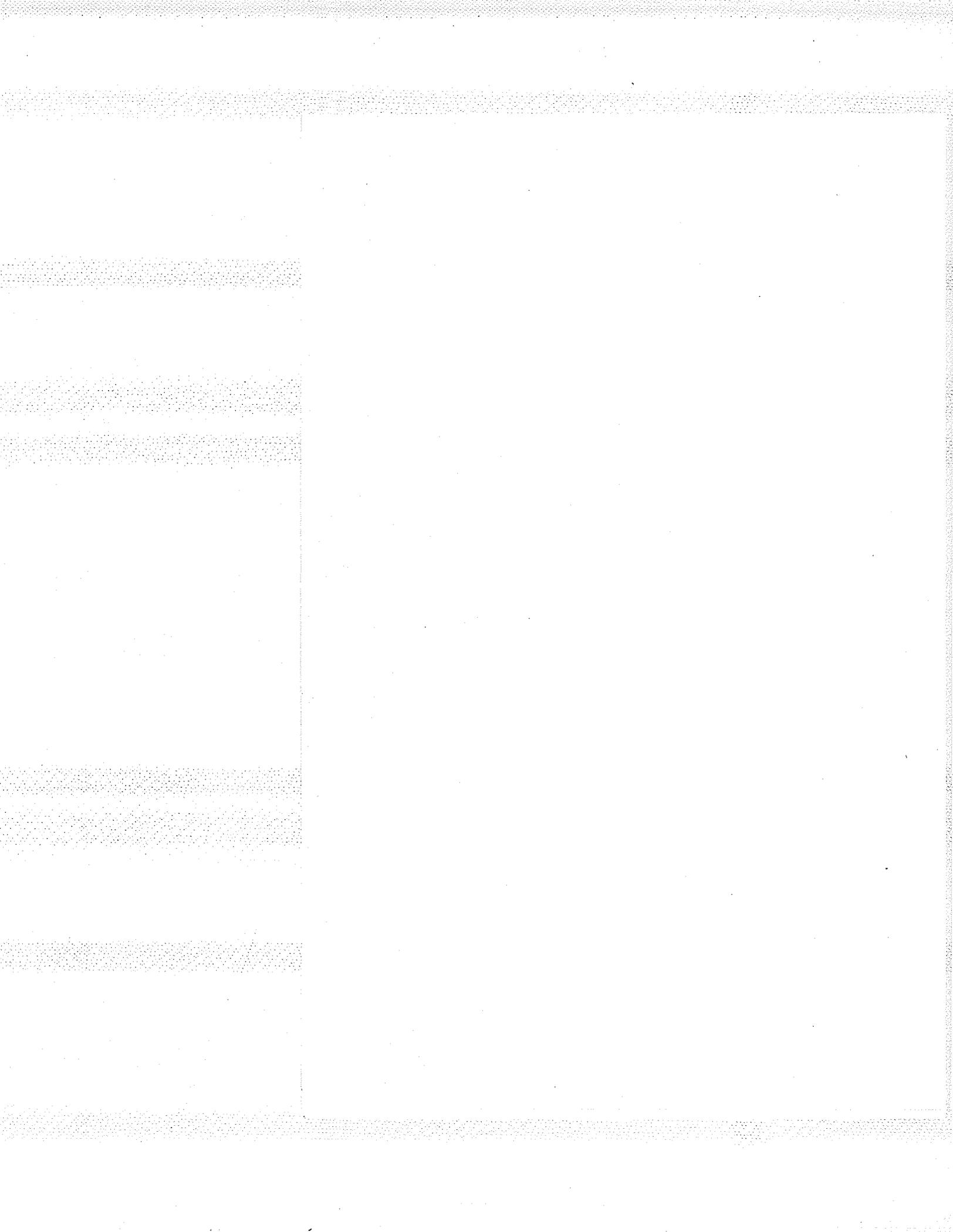


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