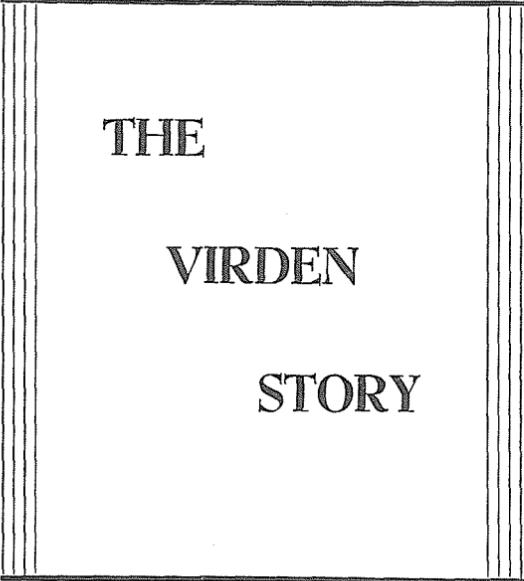
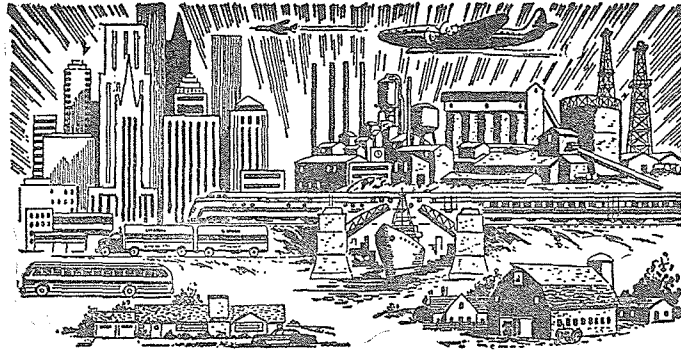


THE VIRDEN STORY



THE
VIRDEN
STORY

by
IDA CLINGAN



1882 - 1957

Viriden's 75th Anniversary Celebration
July 21 to 26, 1957



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Foreword

by

MAYOR D. J. REID

"*The Virden Story*", like the biography of a well known individual, will be of great interest to all who have at some time lived in Virden or community. Too, it will be regarded as an historical reference, for many hours of painstaking research have gone into its compilation. We compare it with a biography, as the period covered is comparable to that of the lifetime of an individual. In terms of historical extent a period of seventy-five years is a short time.



The contribution which Mrs. Clingan makes to Virden's seventy-fifth anniversary is very great. Without a story of the period, much of the enthusiasm and inspiration of the event would be lost. That contribution will be carried forward through the years and future generations will add new volumes to the Virden Story as they review the years and celebrate some new anniversary.

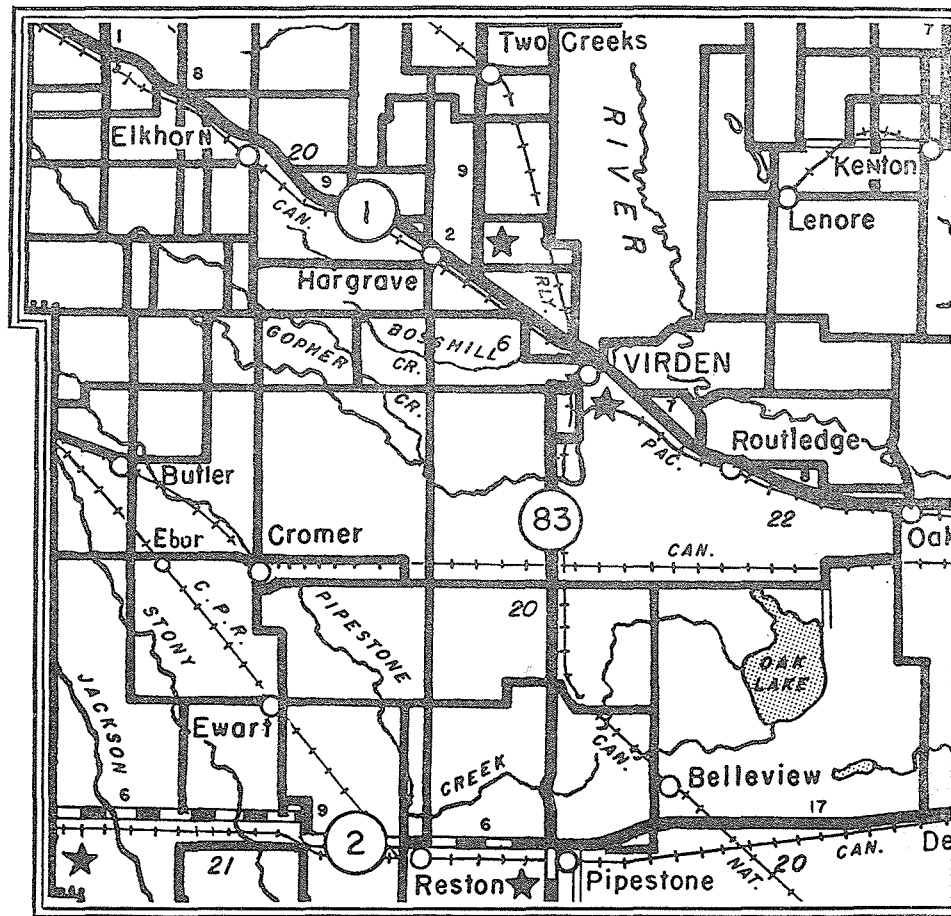
The grateful thanks of the community go to Mrs. Clingan for her work.

Dedication

*"To the Men and Women
who helped weave the fabric
of Virden's History."*



MRS. IDA CLINGAN



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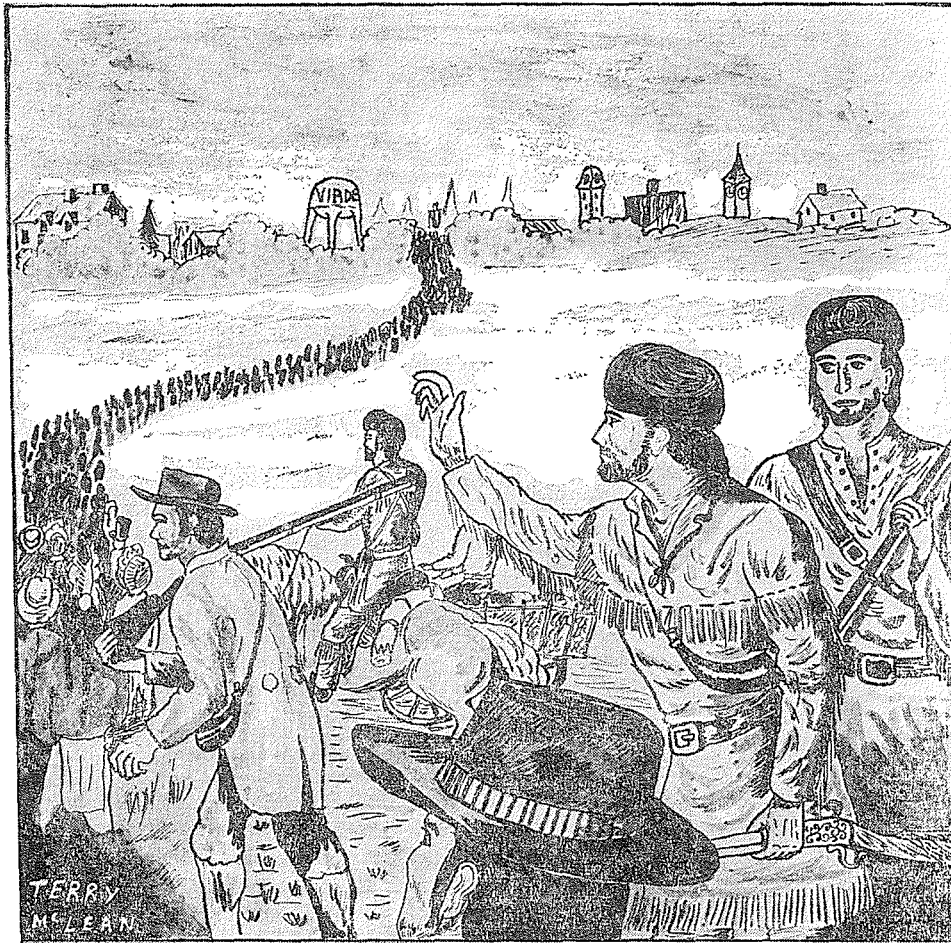
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FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE

Drawn by Terry McLean

INTRODUCTION

The first inspiration for the collecting of data concerning Virden history came from the late Dr. D. A. Stewart, superintendent of Ninette Sanatorium for years, who was instrumental in having many historical sites in Manitoba marked with cairns.

He, with a committee of which Messrs. A. G. Hay, Chris. Stinson, H. H. Goulter and T. H. Clement were members, after considerable research among old records fixed upon the location of the old trading post of Fort La Bosse. Mrs. Fred Sanford, whose home had been just over the brow of the hill, remembered what had been the remains of a chimney and beside it a depression, no doubt an excavation for a cellar, but these last visible remains had been destroyed when the C.P.R. opened an extensive gravel pit at that point when they were double tracking the railway east of Virden and raising the level of the Virden yards. The cairn was erected as close as possible to the actual site of the old fort and formed a spot of interest to those travelling along the old No. 1 highway which there had its most beautiful scenic section where it ran southeast for a mile or so along the crest of the Assiniboine valley hills. The cairn is now being cared for by the I.O.D.E. who have converted it from a desolate relic into a monument that gives the impression of keen interest on the part of the community.

In the early 1940's the Manitoba Historical Society with Mrs. R. F. McWilliams as president, made a concerted effort to obtain representatives in various localities who would collect data concerning the history of their districts. Under the supervision and instruction of the Society, I consented to act in this capacity for Virden, though, as no time limit was involved and I had no intention of doing any writing, the work proceeded slowly. Mrs. McWilliams was always helpful and interested. Some of the material collected and sent in to the Historical Society to be microfilmed and filed in the archives of the Provincial Library in the Legislative Building at Winnipeg were the diaries of Col. C. E. Ivens and John Hendry; a history of the schools up to 1929 furnished by J. H. Chalmers who was secretary of the Board for a number of years; the letters of E. A. and Chas. Holmes, young homesteaders, written to their parents in England, giving a day to day picture of real pioneer life; a history of the 18th Armoured Car Regiment 1893-1946, prepared by Capt. A. K. Paton M.C. and including a history of the 12th Manitoba Dragoons by Lieut. Col. H. A. Croll, Souris.

In addition there were photographs supplied by Mrs. Goulter as well as some old records of events. There were letters from old timers and interviews with Mrs. Fred Sanford, Mrs. Agnes Stewart, Mr. Tom

Clark, R. H. Mooney M.L.A. and Miss Margaret Sproat, written up at the time and so preserved. Dr. J. L. Johnston, Provincial Librarian, was most courteous in having heavy bound tomes of the Virden Advance brought from basement storage to the Library Reading Room, where during my infrequent and brief visits to Winnipeg, I was able to cover the issues from 1885 to 1895, deriving much entertainment therefrom and making notes, many of which are included in the pages to be presented here. Others who cordially provided information were R. W. Gyles, Lands Branch Provincial Government; Canadian Board on Geographical Names; Postal Department and Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa; Office of the Canada North-West Land Co., Winnipeg; Canadian Pacific Railway Offices at Calgary, Winnipeg, Montreal and London, England.

Old papers and a wonderful old scrap book begun in 1878 by her father, Duncan McDonald, were lent by Mrs. R. Weiler, nee Hattie McDonald of Medicine Hat. A. E. Higginbotham also contributed some old newspapers. E. C. Osmond has been responsible for information regarding the new hospital, and Miss Myrtle Lane has provided a history of the Methodist, Presbyterian and United Churches. Mr. Jas. Morton of Two Creeks also provided a short article on Pioneer Virdenites and Ellen Guthrie Bulloch's "Pioneers of Pipestone" has supplied information regarding early settlers of that district who transferred their activities to Virden. W. A. Bridgett from his marvellous memory has been able to supply reliable information.

The greatest credit must, however, go to Mrs. Carman Whiteford for procuring material for this narrative. Through the courtesy of the Mayor and Council of Virden, the Reeve and Council of Wallace and the Secretary-Treasurer, E. Anderson, town and municipal records were made available. As these quite rightly, were not permitted to leave the town office, Mrs. Whiteford spent many hours in cramped quarters, culling from their pages items showing various forward steps taken in the administration and physical growth of the community. She has been instrumental in procuring reports from clubs and organizations; in gathering information regarding the varying fortunes of business, trade, and industry and in collecting many interesting items from individuals. It has been a strenuous work for a busy woman, and without her this project could not have been carried through.

Every precaution has been taken by checking and rechecking to ensure the accuracy of the work. This has been difficult under some circumstances, because in the study of almost every organization some records have been missing. Nevertheless Mrs. Whiteford and I are hoping that this History may prove to be a reliable book of reference for future use.

To her and to all the others who have contributed to the work, I express my sincere appreciation.

Ida Clingan

CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING

When the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the west became assured, settlers flocked to take up land along its surveyed route. By 1882 grading and track-laying had proceeded to the western boundary of Manitoba and beyond. A construction centre was set up on the east bank of Gopher Creek, a mile east of the present town of Virden and here were hastily erected buildings of wood and canvas to supply accommodation for construction workers and settlers and the few small businesses and trades that would serve their needs. To keep them in contact with the outside world a post office named Gopher Creek was established September 1st, 1882, with Mr. W. F. Scarth as postmaster.

When in the early spring of 1883 a bridge across Gopher Creek was constructed a train service was set up for bringing in settlers, their effects and the supplies constantly in demand for further extension of the railway. A permanent townsite was established by the C.P.R. comprising section 22, township 10, range 26 west, for which the name Manchester was chosen and to this location the buildings at Gopher Creek were quickly transferred. However upon applying to the postal department for a post office, it was found that the name Manchester would cause duplication so the name "Virden" was substituted and on October 1st, 1883, a post office was registered under that name. It was commonly reported among old timers that the spelling should have been V-e-r-d-e-n, and in fact an item to that effect appeared in the press.

Much discussion arose in later years concerning the origin of the name. Neither the town records, the records of the C.P.R. or those of the Canada North-West Land Co. joint owner of the townsite throw any light on the matter.

The Canadian Board on Geographical Names gives two version:

1. "After Old Country estate of Lord Mount Stephen who homesteaded in vicinity originally Gopher Creek."
2. "Town, known to Plain Hunters and Indians as Gopher Creek, changed 1882 by Canadian Pacific Railway to Manchester, after the 8th Duke of Manchester. Changed again to Virden."

Both the Board and also the Manitoba Provincial Library quote a passage from a book, "The Origin and Meaning of Place Names in Canada", by G. A. Armstrong, B.A.—

"It (Virden) was so called in honor of Lord Mount Stephen, whose relatives lived there when the town was founded about 1880. They came to Canada from a place named Virden in Scotland."

Research shows many discrepancies in all these statements:

1. A letter from the Curator of The Guildhall library of the Corporation of London, England, states, "no such place name exists in the British Isles."
2. George Stephen (later raised to the peerage) did not homestead in Manitoba. On the contrary he, at an early age joined cousins in Montreal, who were engaged in the woollen trade. Taking up this venture at a most opportune time he soon became a very wealthy man. His imagination became fired by the tremendous possibilities to be met by the construction of a transcontinental railway and he worked hard for the project, becoming the first president of the Canadian Pacific Railway Syndicate which was formed for the purpose of carrying the project to completion. It was while on a trip over the route of the railway that a new vista opened before him in the wonderful suitability of prairie land for farming. With the idea of sharing his wealth he brought out some cousins from Scotland establishing them on land adjacent to Virden. The name Virden being at that time already in existence.
3. Two well informed members of the Stephen family, Mrs. Fred Sanford of Virden and Rev. J. Stephen of Dufftown, Scotland, have stated that the name Virden has no connection with their family.
4. A representative from the London office of the C.P.R. especially appointed to investigate the matter, reached the same conclusion.

All these facts furnish conclusive evidences that this popularly accepted version of the origin of the name "Virden" is not founded upon fact and therefore should be discarded.

Giving consideration to the second suggestion offered by the Canadian Board of Geographical Names, another inaccuracy at once appears. The 8th Duke of Manchester did not succeed to the title until 1890. It was his father, the 7th Duke, who entered so vigorously into the arena of western Canadian life. Few people are aware that he had any connection with the Canadian west but he had a very powerful financial as well as a personal connection.

The Canada North-West Land Co. consisting of a group of British capitalists had been incorporated in London, England, with the 7th Duke of Manchester as one of its leading directors, their objective being the development of lands in western Canada. The brilliance of the prospect

opened up by the construction of a Canadian transcontinental railway prompted the Land Company to enter the scene in a large way. Just at that time The Canadian Pacific Railway Syndicate was in dire need of funds to carry on its work so met the advances of the Land Company with cordiality. The result being that millions of acres of land passed into the hands of the Land Company and in return millions of dollars passed from the Land Company to the Syndicate, a veritable life saver for the work they were doing. The Land Company was also given joint trusteeship of the townsites of Moose Jaw, Regina, Qu'Appelle and Virden. It was principally through the energetic action of the duke that these negotiations were carried on, he himself having visited Canada in April, 1882, to inspect and select lands included in the deal. It was in recognition of his services that Manchester was the first name chosen for the townsite on 22-10-26. When that name proved unacceptable, what more natural than that he in courtesy to his wife, Louise, daughter of Count D'Alten of Hanover, should suggest Verden, the name of a beautiful cathedral city of her homeland. This may seem a tenuous thread upon which to hang an identification case but it is the only one revealed by intensive research which has included various side-lines with only negative results. In any case it is pleasurable to find this slender thread of romance running through the confusion of pioneer life and the excitement of great undertakings.

Thus before 1883 had come to an end, the tiny settlement of Virden had been provided with a name, a post office, a train service on what was soon to become a transcontinental railway. Buildings had been erected (many of them of flimsy nature) for homes or to provide accommodation for the trades and businesses, supplying the settlers' needs. There was a school; Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican services were held in homes or wherever accommodation could be found and of primary importance was the group of young vigorous and enthusiastic men and women intent upon making a success of their western venture.

So here the little settlement stood upon the open prairie, exposed to the four winds of heaven with no indication that after three or four decades it would become known as the Little Tree Town of the West and after another similar passage of time it would gain a reputation as the Oil Capital of Manitoba.

Three distinctly different pictures! the second of which inspired J. W. Wilton of the Winnipeg Tribune, after a few hours' stay in the town in the summer of 1920, and noting its attractive homes with their neatly kept lawns, colorful gardens and shady trees, to give to his article appearing in his paper the title of, "Virden The Beautiful."

The third picture was not regarded with such enthusiasm in a certain quarter. Seen from the area of the railway tracks with all the paraphernalia for handling freight and transporting oil, the streets of the town not yet settled after the upheaval caused by the installation of water and sewer mains, Bruce Hutchison, writing in Maclean's dubbed it "The Shabby Little Town of Virden." Yet within a few short blocks

the attractive homes still stood with their neat lawns, brilliant gardens and now overshadowing trees. New blocks and public buildings had been erected and whole lines of ultra modern houses with the beautiful little park set like a jewel in the midst. At night the street illuminations, and neon signs gave it a sparkle that could be seen miles distant. So to those who really know it, it is still "Virden The Beautiful".

CHAPTER 2

TRANSPORTATION

To understand the influences that gradually brought about these changes, it is necessary not only to make a study of the people involved, but to have a detailed knowledge of the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Even when western railways existed only in the minds of those who planned them and in the imagination of those who hoped to see them actually in use, settlers began to turn their attention to the prairies as the land of promise. To reach this goal the route from eastern Canada lay through the United States, entering Manitoba at Emerson on the international border.

The Red River Valley naturally became the first area of settlement having the advantages of river navigation and then the service of the first railway built in the west, a line running from Emerson to Winnipeg. So great was the demand for prairie land that the tide of immigration rapidly flowed west, taking three routes, one directly west from Emerson, settlers locating at points across the whole of southern Manitoba. From Winnipeg another branch extended northwest keeping to that side of the Assiniboine valley along what was hoped to be the route of the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway. But it was the large central area that saw the greatest influx of settlers. British Columbia, as a proviso to entering Confederation, had insisted upon being connected with the rest of Canada by a trans-continental railway and in 1881 the Dominion Government had agreed to the proposal. Though many considered the project as being of too great magnitude to be undertaken at that time, construction was immediately started westward from Winnipeg. Preceding, accompanying, or following construction, hundreds of settlers literally flocked into this central area taking up lands along the route.

Land offices worked day and night to bring order out of bewilderment, the office at Brandon, a little settlement of tents and shacks, reporting as many as 4,000 applications filed in a day. Requirements for ownership were remarkably easy. The system of survey was uniform for all the prairie, namely sections, a mile square, thirty-six of these comprising a square township. By paying a fee of \$10.00 to the Canadian

government any person who was the head of a family or who had attained the age of twenty-one years was entitled to enter for one quarter section (160 acres) or a less quantity of unappropriated public lands for the purpose of procuring a Homestead Right. In 1907 the age limit was dropped to eighteen years and a widow with minor children of her own, dependent upon her for support, could make a homestead entry as the sole head of a family. A homesteader was required to reside in a "habitable house" for at least six months of each year during three years and break a total of at least thirty acres, twenty acres of which had to be cropped. When filing on his homestead, he could also, by paying another fee of \$10.00, file on a pre-emption claim and at the end of three years when he had fulfilled requirements and was registering his homestead, he could also take over his pre-emption claim. Thus a settler would find himself the owner of a half section of land or 320 acres. Agricultural progress was at first very slow for until transportation facilities could be increased, farmers living at a distance from the one railway line had great difficulty in disposing of their products or obtaining their requirements.

RIVER NAVIGATION

It was under conditions such as these that Virden, when it came into being, found itself a focal point for a vast area extending to the western and southern boundaries and north beyond the Assiniboine valley. Though prairie settlement seemed easy compared with the heavy task faced by eastern settlers in clearing forest lands, yet the east had one advantage in its many natural waterways, which also furnished power for grist mills and saw mills.

Red River traffic had been an important factor in the settlement of that valley and continued for years, justifying the building of the locks at Lockport. The Assiniboine had been used by early fur traders and by the seventies had become an important artery of traffic, which is graphically described by Molly McFadden in "The Beaver" of June, 1953. She gives the names of the boats—Dakota, Prince Rupert, Manitoba, Minnesota, Alpha, Northwest, Marquette, which went as far as Fort Pelly, Sask. These boats were used on both Red and Assiniboine rivers. Particulars are given regarding dimensions, accommodation for passengers and cargo. In the Northwest for instance the best Wisconsin seasoned oak was used. She was the largest stern-wheeler in the new northwest. The cabin contained 80 passenger berths. The boat was a three-decker and cost \$27,000 but her owner brought 40 carloads of lumber down to Winnipeg on her maiden trip May 20, 1881, which sold for \$22,500 cash.

Carpenters were still busy on the boat when she arrived, fitting up cabins for the return trip. Two bridal chambers were to be especially gorgeous. Furnishings of the ladies' cabin were enhanced by a fine new piano. A news item of Aug. 4, 1881 states:

"The steamer Northwest arriving from Brandon via the

Assiniboine with 70 storm-tossed passengers reported that she had narrowly escaped shipwreck from gales and waterspouts at Baie St. Paul; she had on board two baldheaded eagles captured by the crew near Millford."

Owing to the swift current of the Assiniboine, the trip from Winnipeg to Fort Ellice which would require twelve days, would need only five to return. Although the river was navigable for only about three months in a favourable season, traffic was so great that the project was a profitable one. After the C.P.R. reached Brandon in 1881, steamboat travel was still carried on up the river as far as possible bringing back cargos of lumber for the Hanbury Mills at Brandon, but the building of branch lines and the lowering of the water level brought this interesting phase of transportation to an end. Some of these boats continued to do business for years on the Red River.

ROADS

On the open prairies transportation was conducted on foot or by horse-team or ox-team. Even a two horse-power outfit could make only slow progress and was unable to haul a heavy load. A farmer bringing a load of grain to Virden from the southwestern corner of the province would stay overnight at some place along the route, reaching Virden after at least two days of hard travel. Then he would dispose of his load, pick up what he could in the way of requirements and was lucky if he made the whole return trip in four days.

Even the farmers from the Reston-Pipestone area made a practice of staying over night at Cook's, five miles south of Virden, a favorite stopping place on the route. By making a pre-dawn start the following day they could accomplish their business in town and with a light load return home by nightfall. These stopping places were popular features along the routes of travel and in addition private hospitality was freely dispensed. From the Pipestone Valley a number of its early settlers became closely associated later with the life of Virden.

It is easily understood that with the difficulties of travel farmers during the first few years were not too concerned about raising large crops of grain. They had time to devote to stock raising, so that Manitoba from the first became a province of mixed farming. This was made all the easier by the fact that most farms had some land suitable for pasture and also there was an abundance of native hay which could be cut and stored for winter feeding.

It was at once felt that improvement to roads was essential for progress. At first of course there were no roads, merely prairie trails where the first traveller, making in as direct a line as possible for his objective, simply took the course that seemed easiest, avoiding sudden dips or rises, skirting clumps of scrub or groves of trees (bluffs in the vernacular) detouring around sloughs (the local term for marshy ponds), all of which could easily add miles to a long trip. Others following the

same course, a distinct trail soon appeared, rutted by the wagon wheels. When the sloughs dried up in summer or were frozen in winter, a more direct and shorter course could be followed. An allowance had been set for roads at the border of every section and as more land was taken up, more fields cultivated, more buildings erected, more fences built, prairie trails were gradually cut off and traffic was compelled more and more to keep to the road allowances. Here the first necessity was the building up of roads across the sloughs or low places. This may seem an easy matter but it was an arduous task entailing the hauling of many loads of earth, the digging of ditches, the building of culverts or bridges. To aid in the work, the Statute of Labor was passed by which a farmer for every quarter section of land he owned would contribute the labor of one man for three days each year or the labor of a man and his team for one day.

FERRIES

In addition to building up roads from the ordinary prairie trails, those who had settled in the territory beyond the Assiniboine Valley had an additional problem to cope with, a problem of no mean proportions for such a new and inadequately equipped settlement. For them it was a vital matter that they should be able to reach a railway outlet and the only railway at that time in the west was the main line of the C.P.R. A special road technique was required in dealing with the steep hills of the valley and then there was the crossing of the river itself.

Where possible a road followed the course of a ravine winding down to the bottom land. In other cases it clung precariously to the exposed sides of the valley hills. In any case it required much cutting away of hillsides. Often too narrow for the passing of two vehicles, such a road was at its best a somewhat perilous proposition. Vehicles needed good brakes for the descent and frequently the help of an extra team to haul a heavy load up the opposite hills. Across the level bottom lands, subject to spring floods, a well built road was required with drainage ditches on either side and then the actual crossing of the river had to be considered.

Not having the necessary finances for bridge-building, a number of hand-operated ferries were brought into use. There were many such in the early days, but with improved transportation methods they have become almost obsolete in the settled area of Manitoba, and soon, like Red River carts, will be seen only as museum pieces. As many persons today have never seen and will have no opportunity of seeing one of these useful but clumsy craft, it may not be out of place to describe one. It was just a sturdily built flat scow or boat, strong enough and long enough to accommodate a team of horses and a loaded wagon. A strong double cable stretched from shore to shore where it was firmly anchored and to this cable the boat was attached by ropes and pulleys, arranged at such an angle that the front part of the boat was held

considerably upstream, and so was driven across by the force of the current, helped when necessary by the ferryman's sturdy pull on the cable.

At either side the boat had a fence about three feet high and at either end was a heavy adjustable wooden platform which could be let down to serve as a smoother crossing from boat to landing place or hooked up to provide a barrier across the end.

The importance of these ferries in helping to connect the area "across the valley" with the railway is made evident by the following facts. When in 1884 the province was divided into municipalities, the Miniota municipal council, by invoking the aid of the provincial government, succeeded in setting up two ferries, one on 11-13-26, the other on 36-10-25. Woodworth council, taking similar action, built one on Sproat's farm 30-10-25. A by-law regulating the operation of this ferry was passed June 10th, 1885, some interesting details of which are available. Rates were to be: double team 25 cents, single 15 cents, saddle horse 15c, loose horse or cow 10 cents, passenger 10 cents, swine 10 cents. Legal hours 5 a.m. to 9 p.m.; double rates after hours and the council assumed no responsibility for safe delivery. From this it was evident that the Woodworth council was systematic, cautious and had a fine sense of economics.

The first ferryman was Joe Dorance who stayed at the Sproats. He must have had a fine regard for his hosts and for his job, for he never failed to call there on subsequent visits after he had moved away from the locality. An event of late autumn of interest not only to the children but to adults as well was the hauling of the heavy ferry boat by ox team with much verbal accompaniment of haws and gees up the bank to a point where it would be safe from ice break-up and spring floods. There it would stay until its services were once more required to preserve a link between an outlying community and the outside world.

It is significant that these ferry roads all converged on Virden.

BRIDGES

As more acreage was cultivated, as production grew, as traffic increased, as more money circulated in the country, the settlers realized that it was necessary to replace the ferries with bridges that would function through all the seasons of the year. It can be understood that with their limited financial resources, this would be no easy task, but with their usual push and energy, they set about its accomplishment.

In 1892 the Miniota council decided to build, with help from the provincial government, two timber bridges near the sites which had been occupied by the two ferries. One of these, known as the Mitchell Bridge, functioned for a number of years but has been in disuse since about 1940. In the year 1906 an additional timber bridge was built south of Miniota on 19-13-26, at a cost of \$4,500.00, which carried most of the heavier traffic until 1949, when a new steel and concrete bridge was

built on 24-13-27 for \$79,000.00, the cost of which was divided, two-thirds being paid by the provincial government and one-third by the Municipality. This bridge was built on Highway No. 83 which is the longest highway on the North American continent. Starting in Mexico, it runs north to the International boundary, through or near Melita, Pipestone, Virden, Miniota, Birtle, Russell, Roblin, Swan River and on through northern Manitoba.

Woodworth council also had been active at an early date, for it too had similar problems of road building and river crossing.

On June 17, 1886, Woodworth council passed a by-law to raise by debenture the sum of \$1,500.00 to build a bridge on the Sproat site. This was a timber structure and with some repairs gave service until replaced in 1935 with the present bridge. There was also another known as the Thompson Bridge. Leitch Bros., who operated a grist mill at Oak Lake, were using their influence to have a bridge built which would bring trade from a certain quarter across the valley directly to an elevator they proposed to build at Routledge. But Virden was also anxious to procure the trade from this area so agreed to grant \$450.00 upon completion of a bridge at the farm of Mr. Thompson and to help with its upkeep. This obligation they eventually discharged by giving a lump sum of \$1,000.00 when the bridge became the sole responsibility of Woodworth municipality and is still much in use.

Mr. Thompson, who had taken up poultry raising on a large scale, was popularly known throughout the district as "Chicken" Thompson to distinguish him from others of the same surname. His home buildings which stood at the east end of the bridge disappeared years ago, owing to recurring spring floods.

The work of road building went on bit by bit, year by year, consisting of cutting down steep grades, constructing more substantial bridges, and as circumstances permitted, surfacing with gravel. It was always a race to keep abreast of the increasing traffic.

MOTOR TRAFFIC

The introduction of motor vehicles brought about a revolution in highway demands. In 1913 the Manitoba government passed legislation covering Good Roads. Wallace was the first municipality to take advantage of this and began work in 1914. The scheme was financed by a municipal debenture debt of \$200,000 for roads with an additional \$40,000 for bridges. The Government contributing a similar amount, the result was a system of well-built gravelled highways which, with graded secondary roads financed by the municipality, gained for Wallace the reputation of having the best roads in the province.

The race between traffic and road-building continued at an even faster pace. The greatly increased amount of motor traffic and the use of heavier vehicles demanded broader and better roads and of a height

that could be kept clear for winter use. A Trans-Canada highway was begun, built to uniform specifications of height, width and hard topping. The portion of the highway running through western Manitoba has been completed and shows excellent results.

One lamentable accompaniment has been the appalling loss of life caused by motorists who, defying all regulations, drive on the principle "the better the highway the greater the speed."

BRANCH LINES

While the early settlers were draining their cash resources and straining their muscles in improving the routes over which they had to haul their produce, they were at the same time clamoring for branch railway lines. The C.P.R. was still struggling with the problem of finances, for even after the mainline had been completed to the coast, there was still need for much work to be done in strengthening and improving the road-bed. Nevertheless the company entered at once upon a program of branch line construction. As early as June 1st, 1884, the Manitoba and South-West Colonization Railway had been leased to the C.P.R. in perpetuity and the construction then pushed through to Glenboro by 1886 and to Souris by 1892. Here it connected with a line running southwest from Brandon reaching Estevan in the same year, 1892.

The Manitou Branch running south from Winnipeg to Morris and then west parallel to the International border reached Deloraine in 1884-5 and was carried on to Lyleton by 1902-3.

Another line connected with the Souris Branch was carried west to Pipestone about 1892, on through Reston and completed to Regina by 1904.

May 1st, 1900, the Manitoba and North-Western Railway was leased by the C.P.R. and a branch built to Lenore 1901-2.

April 6, 1900, the C.P.R. leased the Great North West Central Railway which ran from Brandon to Hamiota and had been completed in 1890. From this a line was extended to Miniota in 1902-3.

The triangle lying between the Assiniboine River and the main line of the C.P.R. was served by a double-forked branch in 1908 from Virden and from Kirkella meeting at McAuley and continuing north-westerly.

The Canadian National Railway also entered the picture with a number of lines through the western part of the province. One of these passed eight miles south of Virden and a terminal spur entered the town. At first it came only as far as the town limits where a roundhouse, fueling facilities and watertank were built, but October 11, 1907, the town minutes record a motion by Dr. Geo. Clingan and Wm. Pineo accepting the plan for an extension of the line as it is today, with provision for the crossing of 10th, 9th, 8th and 7th Avenues. A station, grain

elevator and facilities for handling freight soon followed. Another C.N.R. line running northwesterly from Winnipeg tapped the Arrow River, Miniota area.

From 1884, farmers in the whole southwestern part of Manitoba found their markets gradually coming nearer and nearer until by the early 1900's the huge area, which had been tributary to Virden, found itself a veritable network of railways. Some of these branches were poorly equipped and poorly serviced, with three, two or even with only one train a week but they served to take out the farmer's produce and bring in his supplies, eliminating those long arduous trips with horses or oxen to which he had been accustomed.

CHAPTER 3

IMMIGRATION

This study of immigration, railways, roads, bridges and highways may seem to be a roundabout way of approaching the history of Virden, but Virden was created by a railway, it has been nurtured by agriculture, and transportation has always been a life line for agriculture. Nevertheless in the structure of the development of a district, the fundamental basis is provided by the character of the settlers. To understand how fortunate Virden was in this respect it is necessary to know something of the immigration policies as applied to the west, by the three principal agencies: the Canadian Government to populate the great areas of land at its disposal; the Canadian Pacific Railway Syndicate to turn into cash the land grants made to it by the Government for financing its construction and the Canada North-West Land Company to sell the property it had acquired from the Railway in return for its timely contribution of sorely needed dollars.

The first fields to be explored for immigrants were Eastern Canada and the British Isles. The attractive terms of payment offered by the Government and the ease with which the prairie could be converted into farm fields, inspired in young men and men with families the ambition to acquire homes and estates for themselves and their descendants. Others discerned opportunity in the openings for every sort of business and profession.

The C.P.R. from the first had pursued a brisk system of advertising. As early as 1881 it had flooded Britain with folders and magazine articles extolling the great western plains. In 1882 it arranged in London and other centres, exhibits of prairie grown grains, of flour made from prairie wheat and samples of soil taken from various districts. British farmers and millers, their interest aroused, flocked to see and feel the samples. In 1883 samples of prairie grown grains were being distributed to be used as seed for test plots. All this attracted men of resources and men of experience and skilled knowledge—farmers, millwrights, business men from both Great Britain and Eastern Canada, and of these, Virden and district received its share.

It is true that lurid tales of the hardships to be met were widely spread; tales of loneliness and great distances, of isolation from all the comforts of civilization, of snow and intense cold, of blizzards when it was impossible to venture even the short distance from house to

stable where livestock required attention, of hostile Indians, even the prairie coyote being pictured as a ravenous beast of prey. But the glamorous stories sometimes too brightly tinted prevailed. Bryant's poem published at that time was widely read and quoted:

"These are the gardens of the Desert, these
The unshorn fields boundless and beautiful."

Men followed a dream, a dream of broad acres, of golden grain, of fields dotted with sleek cattle, of flourishing industries, of life in a pleasantly sociable community. They brought with them their families, their ideals, their culture and refinements of life, their household treasures and by their pluck and persistence in overcoming hardships, they made their dreams come true.

PIONEER SETTLERS

In this chronicle of seventy-five years' progress, it is necessary to know something about those who laid the foundation as well as about those who built up the old and introduced the new. It is not in any sense a collection of family histories but rather a summary of character and achievements.

Speaking of family histories, many a family in this district could supply a treasured document to be passed along to future generations but the work of preparing it should begin now before memories grow too vague. Apart from the sources mentioned in the introduction, no diaries or journals have been made available. Perhaps life seemed too hum-drum to write about. Material has been gleaned from records and press clippings, high-lighted by legends or reminiscences, giving a more intimate picture of social life.

It has been said that go where you will you cannot get away from Virden. You meet people having some connection with town or locality—on boats, on trains, in cities 'round the world, in the National Gallery, London, or at the monkey house at the zoo. The locality has contributed not only valuable service to the community but has sent substantial citizens to other centres. A thing to be noted with satisfaction in this agricultural province, when so much is being said about young men leaving the farms, is the number of representatives of second and third generations, still cultivating the land—in some cases the original homesteads.

In 1881 two young friends, Andrew Pollock and John Kerr, arrived in Canada from Scotland and chose adjoining homesteads on 4-11-26. To file on this land they had to go to Birtle, a distance of fifty miles or more by prairie travel. They had only one horse between them so Andrew would mount the animal and ride on while John followed on foot. When a suitable distance had been covered, Andrew would dismount, tie the horse to a tree and continue on foot. When John came up to the horse he would mount, overtake Andrew, ride on a similar distance and thus the process would be repeated until they arrived at Birtle, where fortunately their claims were still open so they were able to file on the land of their choice. The return journey was made in the same manner. This episode shows something of the character of the two men, their fairness to each other and consideration for the animal

in their charge, their persistence under difficulties, their ingenuity and the ability to make the most of the equipment they had. For thirty years they continued to farm side by side, taking an interest in the improvement of grain growing and stock breeding. In 1912 Mr. Kerr moved to Saskatoon where he spent the rest of his life. Mr. Pollock however continued on his farm until he retired to Virden and his son took over the management. He in turn retiring, a grandson of the pioneer is now on the homestead.

Arriving also in 1881 and locating on N.E. 28-10-26, Kenneth McIvor, whose name proclaims the country of his origin, was one of the stalwarts of the time. His intelligent use of farming methods, his knowledge of stock breeding, his intense interest in agriculture, provided an inspiration to others who were perhaps less well endowed with these qualities. Through the propagation of seed gathered from a native grass growing by the roadside, and by a system of testing, selecting seed and cultivating in certain types of soil, he became famous as the first producer of Western Rye Grass. His family attended school in Virden. His name has been frequently in the press of late owing to oil operations being conducted by grandsons on the old homestead which is still owned by the McIvor estate.

Other 1881 pioneers of the township were Francis Neden, Thomas Palmer, Joseph Mitchell, all on 12-10-26; Robert Menzies, 16-10-26; George Willis, 28-10-26; his brother, Thomas Willis, 12-10-26, whose names appeared at times in business ventures or community undertakings.

The years 1882, with the railway actually under construction, and 1883, with a train service in operation, attracted many more settlers who came better equipped to meet the harsh conditions of pioneer life.

One of the most colorful characters was A. G. McDougall. With his flowing side-whiskers, his picture could always be recognized. In 1882 he filed on N.E. 4-10-26 but was soon drawn into public service. When the county of Dennis was dissolved in 1884 and municipalities formed, he became the first Reeve of Wallace in which capacity he served during 1884-85-86, then took on the duties of secretary-treasurer. In addition he accepted the same office for the village of Virden in 1890, continuing in that capacity when Virden became an incorporated town in 1904. He held this office until 1907. Of his large family, the two eldest sons were identified with community life. W. H. was postmaster at Reston for some years. A daughter, an accomplished pianist, was prominent in musical circles. The family lived in a house on the road allowance that forms the western boundary of the town. In 1907 the Canadian National Railway practically landed on its doorstep when the spur was built running to the present station and elevator.

Wm. McDonald came to Canada from Scotland in 1873, living for a time near Lucknow, Ontario. In 1882, he came west with his seven sons and two daughters and settled near Virden, giving to his land the name Laggan Farm after the parish of Laggan in Inverness-shire. Here he farmed successfully, adopting the best methods known at that time. In 1892 wheat from Laggan Farm took top honors for its milling qualities at

an International Millers' Convention held in London, England. He donated the site for Laggan Church. He served for a time as Reeve of Pipestone Municipality, though his chief interest was always centred in farming until his death in 1907. Two of his sons, William and Peter, took seriously to the same occupation and today three grandsons farm in the Laggan district, one being on the home farm. One son of William Sr. became a druggist in Virden, another a machine agent.

Another son, Duncan, was really the family's pathfinder to the west. As early as 1878 he had joined P. D. McKinnon in a land business at Portage la Prairie. As construction began on the Canadian Pacific Railway, they rushed in the forefront of settlement, establishing a line of stores from Oak Lake to Broadview. When Virden was chosen as a townsite, Duncan set up an implement business with George Hall, and from then on his name appears at practically every step in the progress of the town. It was largely through his influence that property was secured from the C.P.R. for Victoria Park; he was a moving force behind the Agricultural Society. He was mayor for nine years, an indefatigable worker for Virden's advancement until his death in 1920.

Of his four sons and one daughter, Gordon, who continued to live in Virden, has not only a notable war record, but also a record of valuable public service to town and community. He was always greatly interested in sports. He had studied law for a couple of years in Winnipeg but left it in 1915 to enlist for overseas, where he was wounded in action. Since his return he has been active in the Legion, Virden Cemetery Improvement Association and on the council. For twelve years he was postmaster. So, at this seventy-fifth anniversary, this family represents three generations of notable service to the community.

David Clark came from Scotland in 1883, filing on 6-11-25. A son, Thomas, continued on the homestead where a granddaughter now lives, she and her husband carrying on the old tradition. David Clark also conducted a blacksmith business which was in turn carried on by his son, William. Will was always ready with a song at any of the meetings, or the variety programs then in vogue. For years he was popular as an actor of character roles in plays put on by the Dramatic Society. His sisters and brothers also were musical, so the whole family was in that way an acquisition to the community.

Wm. Sproat, whose name has been mentioned in connection with ferry and bridge, came from Seaforth, Ontario, in 1881. After some unsuccessful trips to the Land Office at Brandon he finally located on 30-10-25 W. in the Assiniboine Valley where in 1883 he settled with his wife, two small daughters and a baby son. His daughter, Margaret, has told of rushing to the river to see a steamboat passing. Before the building of the River Valley School, she attended school in Virden, often getting a ride with a farmer who in conformity with the custom of the times made an effort to bring his grain to the elevator at as early an hour as possible. The young Sproats seem to have had more variety in their lives than was enjoyed by other children living in more isolated localities. One daughter has a position in the Department

of Education, Winnipeg, one son farms on land adjoining the old homestead. Two other sons and a grandson follow the same occupation at Kipling, Sask.

C. J. Thomson had conducted a book-binding business in Glasgow. A widower with three children, he had married Mrs. Wilson, a widow with five. His friend J. H. Proctor, who had been a dental surgeon in the Old Country, had come to the prairies in 1882 and settled at Two Creeks, twelve miles to the north of Virden. Inspired by Mr. Proctor's enthusiastic reports of the country as a land of opportunities, Mr. Thomson decided to try his own fortune, so with his wife and family of eight, he arrived in Quebec in July, 1883.

His stepdaughter, Mrs. Agnes Stewart, has left some comments regarding their overland trip and first impressions of the new land. She says:

"We found the hard slatted seats of the coaches made for uncomfortable travelling but by paying an extra hundred dollars, we were able to proceed by boat for part of the way across the Great Lakes, arriving at Prince Arthur's Landing (Port Arthur), from there on to Virden by rail. Even at that time Virden was something of a village, with a railway station, three stores but no church or school buildings."

They stayed at a hotel for six weeks until they could find a place of their own. Her father and her brother, George Wilson, the oldest of the boys would explore for a location but suffered one or two disappointments upon reaching the land office at Brandon. They were finally successful in locating about four miles west of Virden naming their place Bonaly Farm. They had only a two-room house to begin with but in addition had a large tent. More rooms were added to the house, good out-buildings erected, trees planted. A comfortable farm home was the result, capable of accommodating the large family. They had brought with them to Canada a piano and an organ but from the east these had to be routed through the States, and at some point evidently went astray. It was three months before they finally arrived at Virden. Mr. Thomson served on the Virden School Board for six years, 1888-1893 inclusive, as chairman and as secretary-treasurer.

George Wilson went to Winnipeg at an early date where he became a partner in the firm of Clark Bros. Stationery. He was a patron of the arts and helped to establish the Winnipeg Art Gallery. A daughter of his was a member, (president for a term) of the Women's Committee for the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra until her recent removal to Montreal. Other members of the Thomson-Wilson family remained with agriculture and today several grandchildren are pursuing that occupation, one on the land taken up by his grandfather.

Thomas Tapp, born in England, had spent his youth in Ontario. Here he distinguished himself as a cheese-maker winning a prize of \$100.00 at an exhibition open to all Canada. In 1883 he came west and settled in the Montgomery District, first in the valley and then on 27-11-26 where a grandson now lives. He operated a cheese factory in Virden, later removing it to his valley location. He took a keen interest

in all branches of agriculture and he was among the first in the Virden District to make a success of raising fruit trees. He was a baseball and hockey fan, encouraging those sports among the young people of the neighborhood. In fact he was a live wire physically and mentally until his death in 1948 at the age of 97 years.

This family has a notable agricultural record. Of four sons, Lyman, a Wallace councillor, Percy and Walter, recently retired, all remained on the land and Nelson a POW in World War II, is in the grain business. The two daughters married farmers, two grandsons are farming, one on his grandfather's land and a granddaughter married a farmer. Three other grandchildren are connected with business in the town.

W. F. Fitch and R. J. Langtry were two of the early arrivals, both locating on 20-10-26. The former hailed from Nova Scotia. He purchased more land, farmed successfully, raised a family of three sons and four daughters who attended school in Virden. The two elder daughters were identical twins and the pride of the neighborhood. While the members of the family were still quite young, Mr. Fitch returned to Nova Scotia. One son gave his life in World War I, another is in medical practice in Yellow Knife, and one of the twins is the wife of D. B. Rogers, Editor of the Regina Leader Post.

Dick Langtry, an Ontario man, also purchased more land and continued to farm even after becoming interested in business in Virden. His wife was a sister of Mrs. Duncan McDonald, both daughters of George English. The Langtrys had four sons, all of whom went to school in Virden, and a home was established in the town. When the boys were small they had a gray pony and through the town the Langtry pony was as well known as the Langtry boys. As they grew older, it was deemed advisable to sell the family pet but the prospect was too heart-rending so that project was postponed.

When Virden was incorporated as a town in 1904, Mr. Langtry was a member of the village council and became first mayor of the town in 1905. He was also chairman of the first permanent board of the Virden Hospital. He and his family removed in 1908 to Winnipeg where he died in 1954 and Mrs. Langtry Christmas Day, 1956.

Another 1883 arrival in that district was C. E. Ivens, who had been in the British army and after settling near Virden always received the courtesy title of Colonel. In his diary he tells of daily transactions—crop results, erection of buildings, buying and selling of stock. As time went on, comments creep in concerning his work as an active member of the militia; then there are hints of romance as he casually mentions visiting the Jeffreys, a romance which culminated in his marriage to a daughter of the house. The latter part of the diary is taken up largely with municipal affairs as he was Reeve of Wallace from 1908 to 1948, with the exception of the year 1922. He retired to Virden, where he died in 1954. His only son had died as a young man. Two daughters, who married farmers, are now living in town.

Robert Moody was a pioneer of 1882 and settled on land three miles west of Virden. One son, Arthur, became a leading member of the

medical profession in Winnipeg. His son became an architect, a member of the firm, Moody and Moore, which designed Virden's new hospital. George, another son of Robert, practiced law in Winnipeg and had a son who is manager of Burn's Meat Packing Plant in Kitchener, Ontario. A third son of the original settler, Herbert, took up land east of Virden where two of his sons are farming today, his daughter being a member of Virden Collegiate teaching staff, and a younger son is accountant with General Petroleum Co. in Los Angeles.

The Jeffreys came in the same year, 1882, and settled on a farm near the Moodys. They, like so many others, had come by rail from Winnipeg to Gopher Creek, at that time end of the track. It was just a camp town with meals served in a tent and the Jeffreys lived in a tent for two months until a house could be built. This family consisted of three sons and four daughters. A son and a daughter did not marry and the others had small families but of these, two grandsons are on the land, one on the original farm.

The Stephens formed one of the most interesting units of early settlement, coming as they did on a different basis from the homesteaders and land investors who had stormed the land offices in the early years. As has been stated earlier in this narrative, Lord Mount Stephen had established a colony of his relatives adjacent to the townsite. He brought from Aberdeenshire two cousins, William Stephen and Mrs. Sanford Sr. The former had two daughters, Mrs. Bennett and Jeannie (later Mrs. Fred Sanford) and the latter had three sons Fred, George and Charles. Farms were provided completely equipped with buildings, stock and machinery. Three of the homes were built within the winding reaches of Gopher Creek, one of them still standing.

William Stephen devoted himself to the study of farming and became president of the Agricultural Society. His home was a meeting place for prominent members of the community. Jeannie, then in her teens, had the opportunity to hear discussions on many questions of local or wider importance, which with her quick intellect and excellent memory furnished her later with many stories of pioneer life.

The location of the colony had been chosen because the quality of the soil, being light and sandy, helped quicken maturity and thus there was less danger from early frost, that bug-bear of the early days. That quality, however, proved to be a disadvantage when dry years came and productivity was low. The colonists struggled bravely to maintain their standing but owing to a combination of circumstances, it was a losing fight. The younger members drifted into more lucrative pursuits and with the death of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen, the land passed into other hands.

Two men whose names were being constantly mentioned in the early days were Bouverie and Routledge. Close friends at school in England, they were drawn by the magnetism of the west. They purchased Boss Hill farm adjoining the townsite of Virden where they made a specialty of raising thoroughbred horses. Thomas Routledge furnished the motor power of the partnership. He was also connected with other enterprises, such as the extension of railway services; also for a time was super-

visor of the Bell Farm at Indian Head. The Honorable Francis P. Bouverie was a younger son of the Earl of Radnor, of Lympne Castle, Kent. Unaggressive and retiring by nature, he nevertheless took a keen and friendly interest in the life about him. He and his partner were members of the Agricultural Society. Personally and financially they helped to organize sports clubs and supported cultural societies. They were, in fact, intimate and popular members of the little settlement. In October, 1885, Virden had a few hours' visit from Lord Lansdowne, Governor-General of Canada. He was not received with the pomp and ceremony, the flying flags, the bands and the cheers of the populace that greeted Lord Byng when he came to Virden on a blazing July day after the First World War. It was just a call from Lord Lansdowne as he passed through on his survey of the great land opened by the completed transcontinental line of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He dined informally with Bouverie and Routledge. When their partnership was dissolved by the death of Mr. Routledge, Mr. Bouverie returned permanently to his home in England.

Lord Elphinstone, a prominent director of the British-incorporated Canada North-West Land Company, had sufficient faith in Western Canada's future that he invested in a 12-section farm in the North-West Territories close to the Manitoba border with plans for making it a large cattle ranch. Exploring the prairie country, he had been impressed, as Lord Mount Stephen had been, with Virden's advantages and settled his son, the Hon. Montague Elphinstone, on a farm in the Gopher Creek valley, east of the junction of King Street and the Highway. The stone house still stands there, but the enthusiasm of Hon. Monty, with no qualifications for pioneer farming and no pressing urge to follow it, waned and he returned to his home land.

Another man who came from Scotland and settled in a beautiful location on the high bank of the creek further east was P. B. Hamilton Ramsay of the family of the Duke of Hamilton upon whose estate Hess landed. He stayed with farming, later moving into town where he served on the village council for five years and was prominent in all military matters. He moved to British Columbia. His only son served in the ranks in World War I.

W. J. Gyles who had taken up land in the Kola district and married the daughter of an 1883 pioneer, O. Rethbone, of the same locality, took over Boss Hill Farm. Of his large family of eight sons and three daughters all but the four eldest were born in Virden. In the First World War five of the sons enlisted, saw active service, R. W. winning the military medal. They all returned safely. The minds of this generation, however, turned from agriculture. Two of the sons are lawyers, the others all being in business. Five of the sons and two daughters live in Winnipeg.

Later the farm passed into the hands of Herbert Grose, son of a pioneer Elm Valley farmer. He met with success in his campaign for the elimination of couch grass from his fields, a formidable pest when once it has taken hold. Retired, his son continues to till the farm, though it is literally flowing with oil. His only daughter also married a farmer.

Thomas Blakeman was another pioneer whose family has served town and district. Of his sons E. E., J. A., and R. H., E. E. stayed with farming, a son of his and two daughters remaining with that career. Alf, another son of E. E.'s, established a new business, the Quick Freeze plant in Virden. R. H. entered the educational field and J. A. farmed but took a definite place in town life as councillor and mayor. His family took up professional careers. A daughter of the pioneer settler, Thomas Blakeman, became the wife of W. F. Scarth, whose family has been described.

Capt. E. A. C. Hosmer had served with the British Army in tribal wars in South Africa. Word of the attractions of Western Canada, having penetrated even to that distant spot, he and his wife came to Manitoba and settled on 4-10-26 two miles south of Virden. They named their place The Maples and here on what had been the bald prairie he made a beauty spot of his home by the cultivation of trees and shrubs many of which he had imported. He served as member of Wallace Council and of the Virden School Board. Although not eligible for active service, he was always in the forefront of military organization, finally winning the rank of Brigadier Colonel in the Twelfth Manitoba Dragoons. He and his wife retired to Virden where they spent the remainder of their days.

Thos. Maxfield came from Ontario in 1882 and settled on 16-9-26. He had three daughters. A son-in-law, E. G. Rainey, after conducting a barbering business in town for over 30 years, went into farming just south of town. Here his wife has been doing a notable work in connection with the Public Welfare Department. Two of their sons are on the land which includes the original homestead, the other son, a teacher in Brandon schools. Another Maxfield daughter, long in a business position in Virden, now has a similar occupation in Churchill, Man.

The Mooneys, John and his brother Alexander, were real pioneers. Hailing from Ireland the former came to Manitoba in 1869 and located at Portage la Prairie. In 1870 during the Red River Rebellion, he was one of Maj. Boulton's 70 volunteers who marched from Portage to release the prisoners at Fort Garry. Unfortunately they also were taken prisoners. In 1871-72 he engaged in freighting for the Hudson's Bay between Fort Garry and Edmonton. After returning in 1873 to Ontario for a year, he and his brother, Alexander, came west in 1874 and after trying their fortunes in a couple of places, located at Virden in 1881 and 1882.

John erected a building on Sixth Ave., where he resided. This building became known as the Victoria House and under succeeding managers was conducted as a boarding house or temperance hotel as they were called in those days, a prominent and valued feature of every new settlement. Mr. Mooney's name appears in various town undertakings.

Alexander Mooney secured a homestead on 34-9-27. Of his family who can also be classed as pioneers, Albert continued on the farm to which his son has succeeded, John followed the profession of pharmacy in Elkhorn, a son being now in medical practice in Courtenay, B.C.,

and Robert settled on land adjacent to the old home. He began early to take an interest in public affairs and from 1922 represented Virden in the provincial legislature until his death on January 30, 1953. A daughter married Albert Shoemaker, a farmer now retired with a son prominent in business in Virden. Several members of the Shoemaker family are still farming, and another daughter of Alex Mooney married F. Norris, former Editor of the Elkhorn Mercury.

George English had his first sight of the prairies in 1879 when he came from Ontario with a car load of cattle. Struck by the possibilities of the country, he took up land near what became the townsite of Virden. After a train service of sorts had been inaugurated as far as Brandon, his son Elmer and daughter Frances, (Mrs. R. J. Langtry) came out but had to finish the journey from Brandon to Gopher Creek in a box car. John Cobb and Sam Swanson gave the young people shelter and food and a man called Tom Brandon drove them to their new home—a tent on the bare prairie, not a tree in sight.

Everyone helped each other in those days, so Mr. English, with the assistance of neighbors, hauled lumber by ox-team from Brandon, and with the help of a carpenter called Selina, a shack was erected, covered with tar paper. Mrs. English and the rest of the family came west and a larger house was built to accommodate the growing family which finally consisted of four sons and six daughters. Two sons took up farming, two went into business and the six daughters all married Virden business men.

The Carscadden family also came in those early days and settled in the Montgomery district. Of their large family, one son continued farming and the three daughters married farmers, six sons went into business and are mentioned in connection with Virden's enterprises. Lorne, the youngest, like so many other splendid young men of the district, sacrificed his life in World War I.

In the first wave of enthusiasm for the prairies and through the zeal of the colonization agencies, a number of young men, sons of wealthy English families were brought to the west to "learn farming" with the ultimate objective of acquiring land of their own. A number of these came to the Virden district. They were educated, cultured, possessed of social graces, trained for careers that young men of their class usually adopted—the army, navy, certain professions, diplomatic service but abysmally ignorant of what pioneer prairie farming actually entailed. A pupil would be placed with a farmer who was paid generously for tuition fee and board and the young man himself would be sent, for his personal use, remittances from home. Hence the term "remittance man".

The farmer, though astute enough in his own line, often had no qualifications as an instructor and the ludicrous mistakes of the pupil soon made him the laughing stock of the countryside. These young men, frequently misfits at home were more than ever misfits on prairie farms. Having come in a spirit of adventure rather than with any intention of making a success of the project, with no financial urge to spur them on, the experiment was bound to be a failure. A few who

took the matter seriously remained to make a success of it but as a group the remittance men all drifted away, some lured by further adventure to the ranches of the foothills. The Riel Rebellion of 1885 gave some a chance for army service. Some simply went home, but they left a mark, however faint, upon the social life of the community, a glimpse beyond the stern life of the prairie to the life of ease, culture and courtesy from which they had come.

James Scallion, born 1842 in County Wexford, Ireland, came with his parents to Canada in 1850, settling near Hamilton, Ont. and then at Thorold. James graduated from Toronto University and followed the teaching profession for five years, after which he and his brother, Thomas, conducted a business in Thorold. In 1883 he bought a section of land two miles north of Virden, erected substantial stone buildings upon it and farmed with conspicuous success. Associated with him were his brother and two sisters and their home was noted for its spirit of true hospitality. Visitors to the district were always taken there to be impressed by the advantages which the district offered. None of the four married.

James was the father of the Grain Growers' Movement in Western Canada and Honorary President of the United Farmers of Manitoba at the time of his death. He never sought positions of preferment being content to make his contributions as a private citizen. He and his sister contributed \$10,000 as a basis for an endowment fund for the Virden Hospital and a short time later gave \$5,000 as an endowment for Virden Cemetery.

Symington Gerrand was an 1882 arrival bringing his stock and equipment up the Assiniboine by steamboat. Settling first near Miniota and later on land adjoining the Scallion place, he became a prominent member of the farming community.

Those who acquired homesteads and struggled through the vicissitudes of pioneer life did so with the intention of establishing permanent homes for their descendents. Looking over these pages gives a feeling of pleasure to realize in how many cases their hopes have been fulfilled.

Settlers continued to flock into the Virden area travelling in more or less comfort by train. They did not have to trudge on foot or go by team the long distance to Brandon to register their claims nor did they have to bring their supplies in by the same slow method. Building material could be bought in Virden and there were even expert workmen who could be employed for the business of erecting a home. Neighbors were always ready to help. In fact co-operation was the key to accomplishment.

CHAPTER 5

TOWN PROGRESS

A study of those who came to settle within the townsite shows them to be of the same fine sturdy type as those who were trying their fortunes on the land. They did not come in any wild rush of speculation but with the honest intention of creating a business or industry and of fostering spiritual and cultural resources, making of the community a desirable place where they could have their homes and raise their families. They knew that this could only be accomplished by each one doing his part and so, through written records or new items, we find their names consistently appearing as contributors to some form of community service.

There was some uncertainty about the success of these enterprises as the little hamlet was so entirely dependent upon the prosperity of the country around it. The rapidly changing transportation outlook and the cutting down of the territory tributary to Virden necessitated a period of adjustment. Nevertheless, there was always an advance.

EARLY LAND SALES

The following list of sales and grants of Town Lots was furnished by the Canada North-West Land Company taken at random from files in their office at Winnipeg.

1882 Sales:

To	Lot	Blk.	Cost
W. D. Cusack, Merchant	11	83	\$300.00
David Clarke, Blacksmith	9	80	200.00
M. Whittaker, Station Agent	10	102	300.00

1883:

Granted to Presbyterian Church	22-25	102
Granted to Methodist Church	11-14	103

1884 Sales:

John Mooney, Hotel Keeper	7	81	200.00
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The following also purchased in that year—
Thos. Hargrave, John Joslin, John Cain,
Daniel Bain, J. Bigelow, Campbell and
Bayne, Young and Downs.

1885:

Granted to Anglican Church	17-20	119
Also a sale to George Clarke, Watchmaker		

1886:

Loyal Orange Lodge purchased	31	117	47.50
Granted to Trustees of Virden School	17-20	118	
Granted to Mrs. Isabella Willing, Widow, as bonus to open Grist Mill	24-25		

1887:

Sold to Allan Grant McLean, Dentist	16	100
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1888:

Granted to Christopher Atkinson, Printer, in consideration of advertisements in Virden Advance	39	110
Sold to John Hume Agnew, Barrister	28	101

1889:

Sold to Arthur Cooper, Photographer	3	100
Other purchasers were: George Coleman, Barrister; J. W. Hetherington, Shoe Dealer; H. H. Goulter, Lawyer.		

1890—Lots went to:

Rev. H. L. Watts, Anglican Minister
Hon. F. P. Bouverie

HOTELS

John Cobb came from Ontario to Winnipeg and from there, keeping abreast of railway construction, he established the first accommodation for travellers at Gopher Creek in a tent. W.F. Scarth spent the winter of 82-83 in these quarters and always declared that it was the coldest winter he ever experienced. Doubtless it was the only winter he spent in a tent but the weather records confirm his opinion.

In the migration from the old campsite to the new townsite Mr. Cobb, in the forefront, built and operated the Ottawa House, the first hotel in Virden, on the location of the Alexandra parking lot. He had the honor of being the father of the first baby born in Virden, and was generously made the recipient of a town lot in recognition of his pioneering spirit. Mr. Cobb transferred his activities to Melita where the name is still prominent in business.

A temperance hotel or boarding house of the early days was the Victoria House on Sixth, north of Dier's store, John Mooney proprietor. It had a better fate than some of the other wooden structures in the business part of the settlement, which fell prey to disastrous fires so frequent at that time. It remained into the 20th century, material from it being finally used in the construction of the Bridgett and Rutherford

homes. In its latter days it was known as the Montgomery House, that being the name of the proprietor.

To those familiar only with modern attitudes it may be difficult to realize the place filled by these temperance hotels in the days of early settlement. Though public, they had an air of privacy and hominess. The food, though plain, was plentiful and good and accommodation was on a par with that provided in other hotels. They were much patronized locally as well as by the travelling public.

Another popular stopping place of this order was the Virden House, corner of Sixth and Wellington, with Richard Bellamy as the genial host. The house must have had a commodious dining room for it was used for meetings and Mr. and Mrs. Bellamy catered for many functions. In 1887 he purchased the north half of 9-10-26 and here he, his wife, two sons and three daughters lived for years, the children all attending Virden School. The whole family took a prominent part in community doings. The elder son served in South Africa during the Boer War, the younger son became a vigorous player on the hockey team of his time. For some time after Mr. Bellamy's death the boys continued to operate the farm but finally disposed of it and the family became scattered.

In 1885, Palmer and Mitchell opened the Queen's Hotel on the north-east side of the track. Close to the elevators, it attracted a certain amount of custom but business and residence development was definitely in the opposite direction. The venture was not a success. Later it was reopened by a different management and given the name Seguin House. Again it was a failure and the building was eventually brought across the tracks and attached to the Frame and Miller Hardware store—now the McBain Block. This accounts for two floor levels in the upper story, though the new brick facade gives to the building the uniform appearance of a solid block.

Chitty and Swanson who had provided a restaurant service at Gopher Creek in 1882 in a tent, removed their quarters to Virden townsite in 1883, making them more substantial by using lumber in their construction. By 1886, they had erected a commodious (for the times) structure, giving it the ambitious name of Grand Central Hotel. Being destroyed by fire a few years later, it was replaced by the present building, the front being set off by a verandah and balconies, an architectural fancy of that period.

Thomas Chitty had, in 1882, filed on a homestead on 18-10-26. In 1892 he purchased more land and devoted himself to farming for a time. Succeeding proprietors have been Fred Baird, Beaubier Bros., Johnson, McDonald and Binney.

The Balmoral was also an old hotel. Though the lines were not hard and fast, it was known as the farmers' hotel, the Central being the travellers' hotel. Alex Patterson was its proprietor for many years, followed by John Spooner. Since his death it has known varying fortunes, and at last fell victim to the fire enemy on December 31st, 1956.

These two hotels served the needs of the public until the Alexandra was built at the time of World War I, its present proprietor being D. C.

Elliott, a substantial citizen and active in curling. The restaurant in the hotel is managed by Zylich Bros.

For the last 40 years nothing has been done to increase hotel accommodation for the public, though the demand is being met to some extent by motel and cafe service. Unfortunately housing needs are so insistent that motels are sometimes occupied by permanent residents.

For a time a restaurant of the old style was conducted by Mrs. E. M. Conroy where comfortable service, home cooking and sincere hospitality were all dispensed to appreciative customers. Mr. and Mrs. Conroy's three sons were all army veterans, the eldest, John, going overseas, with the 226th battalion in the first war, the two younger seeing overseas service in War II, Austin being now in the Trading Post, Brandon, with George Clark and the youngest, Beverly, still in army service in Virden.

On Nelson Street the Friendly Inn and the Virden Cafe have been established for some time and at the junction of King Street and the Transcontinental Highway several cafes are doing business, but the comfortable leisurely dining rooms of earlier days have been superseded by booths and lunch counters more in keeping with the rush of modern times.

MERCHANDISING

General Stores

The story of what ultimately grew from the tiny canvas-sheltered trading post reads like a tale of magic even though changes took place by degrees, the first step being the changing of the post to the comparative dignity of a general store.

George P. Dier who had a supply Post at Gopher Creek moved to the newly designated townsite of Virden and built the first store on the corner of Sixth and Nelson where the Alexandra Hotel now stands. He took J. Young into partnership and afterwards sold his rights to Mr. Downs so that the firm became known as Young and Downs. Mr. Dier's name appeared as a councillor for Wallace in 1886.

W. F. Scarth, first postmaster at Gopher Creek and at Virden, built a block on the south-west corner of Seventh and Nelson where he carried on a business of general store and post office until the latter demanded all his attention, so he disposed of his store business, and the post office took over the building now occupied by the law firm of Brayfield, Doak and Buckingham, where it remained until the present post office was built on the opposite side of Nelson Street. The Scarths lived in the cottage opposite the Firehall and later in the stone house beside the Anglican Church. His two sons are prominent in the law profession in Winnipeg, the younger one having served with distinction in both wars. In World War I he was wounded twice and won the Military medal. The elder daughter was for years on the staff of the Winnipeg

Free Press as music critic and the younger married the Hon. J. T. Thorson, now judge of the Exchequer Court of Canada.

The general store business continued in the Scarth block but under different partnerships. For a time it was known as Elworthy and Merrick, later as Merrick and Anderson, then as Pineo and Merrick. Jos. Merrick was for years a well known citizen of the town. He, with his wife and daughter, moved to Victoria where he died after a long illness.

Clarence Pineo, a grandson of the Hon. H. G. Pineo, belonged to a family with outstanding characteristics. A Nova Scotian, Clarence attended Dalhousie University where he graduated in civil engineering. When he came west he helped survey the Canadian Pacific line from Portage la Prairie to the Saskatchewan border. Upon coming west with his brother William, they were soon joined by their mother and two sisters and the family took up residence in the building on the corner of Eighth and Wellington which was long known as the Pineo House. Changes naturally took place. The brothers married, setting up homes of their own; the elder daughter married pioneer Doctor George Young, who had his home and office on Raglan Street in the house now occupied by Jas. Brownlie. This left Mrs. Pineo Sr. and her younger daughter as sole occupants of the home. The former had been trained in the accomplishments of that period. A witty conversationalist, clever with pen and paint brush, she, although an invalid confined mostly to her chair, could be the life of any party.

Clarence's interest remained with the general store business until the tide of public fancy was engaged by the possibilities of the Okanagan Valley, when he went to Summerland where he took up fruit farming. His wife having died, he was joined by his widowed sister, Mrs. Young. Besides devoting himself to the work of the ranch, he served as municipal collector for 18 years and died at Summerland at the age of 89 years.

William or Bill, as he was popularly known, was one of the most versatile characters that Virden has ever known. He engaged in a machine business in Pipestone and Virden and also became a popular auctioneer. His talents were in demand for the various entertainments of the day. He could give a most entertaining impromptu speech on occasion and take part in musical and dramatic productions. In 1906 and 1907 he was a member of the council. He was a friend to those in need and when any town service was required, Bill was always ready to help. On one occasion when it had been quite beyond the power of the caretaker to keep the cemetery in condition, Bill organized a group of citizens who went out one evening with hoes, rakes and lawn mowers and restored it to its accustomed neatness. Of his two sons, the younger died in World War I, the elder served in both wars. As neither his brother or sisters had any family, the death of William and his two sons brought to an end the name of Pineo in this district.

Another old-timer in merchandising was Benjamin Meek whose store faced 7th Avenue on the corner now occupied by the Bank of Commerce. He specialized in groceries but also carried a small line of drygoods

and clothing. Mr. Meek was a member of the first council of the Village of Virden and an active member of the Board of Trade. Of his two sons, the younger, Dr. Bert Meek of Regina, lost his life during the first war while actively engaged in performance of his duty in a hospital in France, when the hospital was bombed by the enemy. His widow, a sister of A. E. Higginbotham, still resides in Regina.

The Meek business was taken over by Alexander Murdoch and W. O. Wilson, brothers-in-law. The former had been a friend of Andrew Pollock and John Kerr and it was through their representations that he came to Virden. Not being attracted to farming, he at first engaged in the business of painting and decorating. When the Meek Block made way for a new Canadian Bank of Commerce, Murdoch and Wilson moved to the Quick Freeze premises. For a time it was Murdoch and Clow after Mr. Wilson's retirement. They later moved to the store on the corner of Wellington and 7th where M. R. Schurman had also conducted a general store. Death of Mr. Wilson and retirement of Mr. Murdoch caused the business to be dissolved. The son of the former chose education as a career and the daughter of the latter, Mrs. A. B. Rutherford, is among the most prominent women workers in town.

W. J. Wilcox was an 1882 pioneer, travelling as far west as Swift Current with railway construction and setting up a small store at any point that promised business. When Virden's townsite was definitely chosen, he decided to settle at that point and opened his first store in a tent until the location of the station was decided upon. He then acquired a small building opposite the station at the corner of Nelson Street and Sixth Avenue and sent for his young wife and baby son to join him.

Mrs. Wilcox has left a written record of that trip made in December, 1883, from Ontario to Virden via the U.S.A., Emerson and Winnipeg, which in those days would occupy from four to five days. Her record gives very good pictures of what was as yet primitive railway travel and the conditions of life as she found them upon her arrival at the new townsite.

She says the journey was "rather tiresome". Once there was a delay owing to a "little accident" in the middle of the night when the train crashed into a box car which had been left standing on the track. The passengers were all jolted into wakefulness "and my small son who was lying asleep on a seat was bounced into the air and fell on the floor." He must have been the stuff from which pioneers were made for she goes on cheerfully to say that "No one was hurt and the engineer and fireman had seen the danger in time to jump to safety."

Another delay occurred at Emerson where the engine was so encased in ice that there was much difficulty in starting it. However, the task was accomplished and in due course the train reached Winnipeg. This was the first point at which she was met by friends, who apparently took charge of her for the night. Nothing daunted, she took a train next day that was scheduled to go through to Virden. She does admit, however, "I was very tired when we got to Brandon and was delighted

when Dick Langtry got on the train. He took charge of Frank from there on, which was a great relief to me."

That winter the Wilcoxes boarded at the Bellamy House but in the spring of '84 they moved into two rooms at the back of the store, the inner one serving as a bedroom, the other as a living room. "Will made a built-in bunk which was quite comfortable. We used a packing case for a dressing table. We had a small stove, a kitchen table, some more packing cases for cupboards, and a small second-hand organ." I quite enjoyed my housekeeping in the little place as long as summer lasted but when the chilly autumn days came, we found it too cold to live there any longer so went back to the Bellamy House, where we stayed until the next summer (1885) when Will enlarged the store and made living quarters upstairs. We had three bedrooms, living room, dining room and kitchen and here we lived for two or three years, when we got some property by the pond, built a shack and lived there for one summer.

This property comprised most of the lots situated between Park Street and the pond as well as lots on the other side of Park Street. Here Mr. Wilcox had a large garden of vegetables, flowers and small fruits. Experiments were also made with large fruits and with the cultivation of the wild plum until it lost some of its astringency and became more desirable for jam.

It is difficult for the younger generation today to understand just what Wilcox's Pond meant to the young people of that era. All summer the kiddies played around it or on it. They caught wonderful specimens of wild life to be carefully preserved for a time at least in jars of water; they sailed its placid expanse in flat-bottomed boats or on rafts. No doubt all this resulted in wet feet and muddy shoes but one way of simplifying this problem was merely to go barefooted. The first freeze-up, before ice had been prepared in the rink, juvenile curlers and hockey players and indeed young and old flocked there for a skate on a sunny afternoon or moonlight evening.

After one summer in the shack, Mr. Wilcox erected a permanent home, which with a wing added later, finally accommodated the parents, eight children, a cook and a housemaid with always room to spare for an extra friend. To quote Mrs. Wilcox again:

"Dr. Young attended me when six of my babies were born. There was no hospital in the early days but I was always able to get a practical nurse and it was quite easy to get domestic help.

"Will put up a tent beside the store, for a store room, in one end of which he had frozen fish (pike) piled like stove wood. These had been brought in by Indians, who also kept us supplied with fruit—cranberries, raspberries, saskatoons. They also dried saskatoons on their blankets in the hot sun but I never bought any of those.

"Virden was a very friendly little place. There were parties, dances, entertainments given by local talent. One year we had a

glee club led by Mr. Shaw, an Englishman. Nearly everyone who could sing at all attended it. We seemed to have all the reading matter we wanted."

She found Manitoba winter weather unexpectedly severe and on one occasion her ears were so badly frozen that for a week she was unable to sleep on either side or on her back.

The foregoing is a flash-back to conditions prevailing in the early days of Virden's settlement from the pen of one who experienced them at first hand, but the Wilcox family itself is deserving of some comment.

Mrs. Wilcox played the organ in the Methodist Church for years; her husband sang in the choir. He was an enthusiastic curler and a successful duck hunter which accounts for the flat-bottomed boat on the pond in summer but transported by buckboard to Oak Lake or the marshes during the hunting season. He served on the school board and was prominent in various community undertakings. In 1907 he moved his family to Salmon Arm, B.C. where he engaged in fruit farming.

The eldest son took vocal training at the Conservatory of Music in Toronto. From Salmon Arm he had gone into business in Vancouver and became identified with the musical element in that city. The life of another son, Arthur, was sacrificed in World War I. In these days when so much is said about young men leaving agriculture for other careers, it is noteworthy that of three sons of a merchant father one should adopt the tree-nursery business as his career, while the other two graduated in agriculture from the University of British Columbia. One of the latter, Dr. John Wilcox, is now Agricultural Research Officer attached to the Dominion Experimental Farm at Summerland in charge of investigation of plant nutrition, soils and irrigation at that station. The younger son conducts a poultry business at Seattle. A grandson is principal of a school at Kitimat, B.C. and another grandson is with the Atomic Research Commission at Chalk River, Ontario.

The general store business was carried on in the old building until a new block was erected opposite the present post office. This was a pretentious structure with departments for drygoods, groceries, boots and shoes, men's wear, women's and children's wear, carpets, linoleums, wall-paper, china and departments for dressmaking and millinery. Thus was born the department store, marking the second step in business progression. A great event of early spring was the "Millinery Opening" when women had an exciting afternoon viewing and trying on models, buying these or ordering special hats to be made. These latter were made of straw braid sewed round and round to the desired shape or a foundation of wire and buckram would be covered with silk, shirred net, or velvet and of course profusely trimmed with ribbon, bows, nodding plumes, flowers rivalling those pictured in the seed catalogues, or sometimes clusters of fruit, though the latter was never so popular. Women still wore their crowning glory wrapped round or perched on top of the head and to this the creation above described was secured by means of long hatpins. Small children's hats were held on by means of elastic passing under the chin, and a little girl considered it evidence that she was growing up when she was allowed to wear the elastic

at the back of her head under the hair. A few years later this sensation was repeated when her pig-tails or curls were put up and arranged in coils or braids on her head which meant a promotion from elastic to hatpins, which in turn meant that she had attained the status of a young lady.

The business was carried on under a succession of partnerships, E. A. Ramsay being one of the first to join the firm. Mr. Wilcox himself retired from active participation in 1906, to take up fruit farming at Salmon Arm, B.C.

R. K. Scales, after being with the firm for a number of years, went to Salmon Arm and Revelstoke, B.C. His son is prominent in the Salmon Arm community, being mayor of the town and one of the outstanding citizens.

E. J. Scales joined the firm in the nineties and has only recently retired and is living quietly in town. He is regarded by those who know him not only with esteem but affection. He served on the school board and has taken a responsible position in other town affairs and in the United Church. With his inexhaustible supply of whimsical humor and his intimate knowledge of the textiles and furs he handled, a talk with him was always amusing and educative.

F. W. Clingan was a partner for a time until he, too, was attracted by the then booming prospects of the coast province. He also moved to Salmon Arm where he engaged in the marketing of fruit. He wrote many poems, a number of which were published in the Vancouver Province. After his death in 1954, his son and daughter published a souvenir collection for their friends. His son George served in both wars. Entering World War I as a private, he took part in active service in France where he won his commission, was wounded, and at the end of hostilities in Europe was in the battalion that was sent to Vladivostock, Russia. He remained an active member of the militia, winning the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and in War II served with the reserve forces in England. Upon his return to Ottawa, he resumed his position with the Export Branch of the Department of Commerce and is now retired living in Goderich, Ontario. His sister, Mrs. W. S. Dee, lives in Vancouver.

George Rothnie, son of an early grain-buyer was in charge of the grocery department for some time before becoming a partner. He has been especially prominent in the Curling Club and other sports. His brother, James, was also connected with the firm and was mayor of the town in 1925 before moving to Saskatoon.

A pioneer personality of unusual gifts employed for a time in the Wilcox store was Alfred Pitt. An Englishman, educated in Belgium, he could speak several languages. His musical training made him popular as an entertainer and he was much in demand for his rendition of Drummond's Habitant poems, favorite items on programs of the time. After trying his luck at Oak Lake and Pipestone, he went to Dryden, Ontario, where he successfully conducted a business and was mayor of the town.

S. S. and Albert Carscadden were also connected with the firm but the former left to set up a shop specializing in women's wear and the latter to conduct an investment business in Brandon in which he is still active. Harry Carscadden, too, was employed in the Virden store for a time. He had identical twin daughters of whom the community was as proud as it was of the Fitch twins.

Miss Helen Reid, who has been employed in the dry-goods department of the store and for some years has been buyer for her department, is now a partner, the firm being now known as Rothnie and Reid. Since 1882, this firm has steadily served the needs of the community through its various departments.

McLellan and English, the latter a son of George English of Montgomery district, opened a general store in 1895 where McBains' Hardware now is, including departments upstairs for dressmaking and millinery which shared in the excitement of the Easter Millinery openings. Both men took an active interest in town affairs. The business was sold to Ben McCormick who with his family was prominent in the town for years.

A. E. Adams opened a branch of the J. W. Mitchell stores in 1931 in Virden and has continued as its manager.

Hardware And Lumber

But there were other businesses for which the little store scarcely provided even a beginning, the most insistent being the demand for building material. At first, private individuals tried to meet this need. John Cobb brought in a load of lumber and of course had no difficulty in disposing of it. Margaret Sproat tells that when her father brought from the east his equipment he included a car of lumber for building. He sold George English enough maple hardwood for a dining room floor, afterwards remarking that to bring out and sell lumber would be more profitable than farming. Such a favorable opportunity was not to be overlooked, so lumber yards appeared at once. Naturally, hardware accompanied the lumber yards. Frame and Miller took the lead, opening a store on Nelson Street, where they could supply all the material for building a home and also the hardware required in its furnishing.

The business was later carried on by Mr. Miller's sons, Norman and Newburn, and after War I was sold to Gibson and McBain, who had both been in service overseas. Wallace Gibson went into General Motors products, later transferring to Port Arthur, Ontario, and is now retired, living in Victoria, B.C. Sid McBain moved the business to 7th Avenue where his son now is in charge. Bob had taken a degree in Electrical Engineering in 1947 from Queen's University but the sudden death of his father caused him to change his plans for a career.

John Cain, another early hardware merchant, built the block on the corner of 7th and Nelson, the lower floor being now occupied by

Victoria Billiard Hall and Robinson Stores. After John Cain's death, the business was carried on by his brother-in-law, James Schoenau, and following his untimely passing, it was disposed of.

Mr. Wyatt had a lumber yard on 6th Avenue where the Taylor Lumber Co. Ltd. is now located. His family, both sons and daughters, went into or became connected with business in Virden with the exception of one daughter who married a farmer, William Carruthers of the Hargrave district. Their son, Fred, is still on the home farm, but the other members of the Wyatt family have all sought other fields.

W. A. Bridgett, a pioneer of Hartney and Pipestone when he hauled lumber from Melita to build a store at the latter place, came to Virden where he worked for Jas. Schoenau for two years. Mr. Hanbury, of Brandon, took an option on the Wyatt Lumber business, placed Mr. Bridgett in charge and in 1898, the business was moved to Nelson Street into what had been the old gas-works building, and when W. J. Kennedy moved to Winnipeg, his machine warehouse was added to the store, having been purchased for the sum of \$1200.00. With another storey added to it, it was used for hardware while the gas-works part was used for furniture and other household necessities. The firm was known as the Virden Hardware and Lumber Co. Ltd. Mr. Bridgett is still active in the store, though he is now 90 years of age. He served on the council and has been an ardent sports booster. His son, Fred, follows in his father's footsteps, now managing the store and also in being a sports enthusiast. P. F. McClure, prominent in the I.O.O.F. Lodge, has been a long time employee of this firm. So also was W. H. Cheavins, now retired.

Mr. Bridgett has many amusing stories of early days, some of which concern excitement caused by the discovery of surface oil. When such indications were found on the farm of Thos. Clarke, the owner, with Duncan McDonald and others, began to dig. When at a depth of 60 feet they struck rock, their enthusiasm failed and the exploit was abandoned. Being pressed to reveal his part in the venture, Mr. Bridgett said, "I may have sold the shovels," but those who know Mr. Bridgett feel confident that he also was out there on the scene helping to wield one of the shovels that he had sold.

If all the amusing stories, the bits of gossip and slander, the tales of adventure, of tragedy and near tragedy that marked the lives of the early settlers, could be collected, they would furnish material for a modern best seller.

The lumber part of the Virden Hardware and Lumber business was taken over by the Monarch Lumber Co. Ltd. which erected its office on Nelson Street on the site of a small stone building that had served in turn as the office of Harvey Simpson when he conducted a farm investment business, as an employment office, a men's club, and as an office for Virden Summer Fair.

The Beaver Lumber Company had taken over the site of the old Wyatt Co. and was in turn succeeded by the Rat Portage Lumber Co. In 1923 the Taylor Lumber Co. Ltd. acquired the business. H. L., his

brother Ernie, and now the former's two sons are also in the firm. A large business in fuel has also been carried on. H. L. is a veteran of the First War and his older son of the Second War. They are still active in military matters in the district.

A comparatively recently established hardware store is Macleod's Limited with a varied stock of household utensils.

Fuel

Hand in hand with the building went the necessity for fuel. The prairies had not the wood resources of the eastern provinces but the Virden district was more favored than some areas, in being near the Assiniboine Valley with its wooded hills and ravines. Although disastrous prairie fires of early days had caused large tracts to be denuded of trees, yet many settlers were fortunate enough to have poplar bluffs on their land which served them for primitive building and for fuel. To dry poplar poles for firewood, the method in use was to erect them upright in conical shaped piles, these teepee-like structures being a common sight in the yards of farm homes—as common as the presence of a fuel-oil tank today. There were also publicly owned tracts, from which a man could cut and haul out wood.

Cord-wood was brought in by rail, chiefly from the tamarac swamps east of Winnipeg and this was excellent for use in the box-stove heaters of the day. Coal was imported, the hard and the soft, in different sizes of lumps from the small nut coal to huge lumps, much the same as it is today but the styles of heaters are gradually changing as with the once-common box-stove, the air-tight heaters, the globe stoves, the base burners and the self-feeders with their cheerful mica-paned doors. The fuel business has remained chiefly in the hands of the lumber or elevator companies.

The first revolution in heating came with the introduction of furnaces which provided hot air, hot water or steam heat. This in turn had an effect upon the type of building, which now had to provide a basement to accommodate the heating plant, fuel and storage. Under the "stove" regime, houses were built almost flat on the ground with the cellar a mere excavation placed well under the building where it would be less affected by heat in the summer and cold in the winter. With bins for vegetables and shelves for preserves, jams, jellies and for milk, cream and butter and, of course, the barrels of apples for winter, it had an attraction of its own. It was usually reached by a trap door in the kitchen floor and a short flight of steps. With the arrival of the furnace, the cellar steps became the basement stairs.

Another advance was made when coal-burning stokers came into general use, and a later change even more enthusiastically welcomed, especially by the man of the house, was the introduction of fuel-oil heaters and furnaces, extended in some modern homes to radiant heat and baseboard circulation. No more shovelling of coal and ashes! How different from the time when the settler started forth before dawn,

returning after dark of a long cold winter day spent in the bluffs cutting and hauling home his load of fuel. This one picture of progress demonstrates the advance accomplished in seventy-five years.

Undertaking and Furniture

Even with a healthful climate and a youthful population, the services of an undertaker were at times a necessity. Geo. Healy, C. P. Burgess, G. Ireland, T. A. Carscadden, W. H. Lee and Roy Carscadden have all conducted these services in a sympathetic manner, giving to the sad rites a dignity and serenity in keeping with the occasion.

To meet the demand occasioned by the building of more pretentious homes, stocks of furniture were handled by R. A. Clow, G. Healy, G. Ireland, T. A. Carscadden, P. Feeny, Geo. Sills and hardware stores. T. A. Carscadden included pianos in his stock and had especially large show rooms. He served on the council for three terms and was Mayor of the town in 1913. He was interested in the promotion of sport. A high school student of that period once remarked "Whenever we needed help with our sports activities we always went to Art Carscadden."

Drugs

A few bottles of patent medicines on the shelves of the pioneer store—pain killer, eclectic oil, Burdock's Blood Bitters, horse medicine, castor oil and boxes of liver pills could scarcely be considered an adequate beginning for a drug business. But Dr. Gemmill laid in a stock of drugs from which he could fill his own prescriptions. In those days prescriptions were made up by the tedious method—by the use of mortar and pestle, delicate scales and minute measuring devices. Medicines were taken the heroic way without camouflage of capsule or sugar coated tablets. A Mr. Steele bought Dr. Gemmill's supply and continued the business on the south-west side of 7th Avenue. Mr. A. Freeborn opened a drug store where A. B. Rutherford's office is now located.

In July, 1888, John Higginbotham came from Bowmanville, Ontario, and bought out Mr. Freeborn, thus beginning what has been a unique occurrence in Virden or in practically any town in the west namely a business carried on to the fourth generation with a prospect of continuing to a fifth. Returning to Ontario in November his son, J. W., came west and took over the management. He quickly assumed a place of responsibility in the community, in the Methodist Church and in town activities. With a fund of amusing stories at his command, he was popular as chairman at the gatherings and entertainments of that day. Five years later a disastrous fire, originating in a livery stable facing Wellington Street wiped out most of the block where his store was situated. While the embers of the fire were still hot, they were being hauled out and the erection of a new drug store commenced. This store was veneered with some of the first brick manufactured at Virden.

Business, which had been pretty well concentrated between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, began to spread west and south and in 1896 Mr. Higginbotham bought out Steele's drug store on Seventh Avenue and moved into those premises which are still occupied by the firm. In 1908, when he was appointed postmaster, his son, A. E., took over management

A. E. had bought the drug business of Chas. McDonald at Lenore, conducting it for two or three years before returning to Virden. He was from the first a sports enthusiast and did much to foster the sporting spirit of the town. He also took his share of responsibility in town matters being mayor through four difficult years, 1932-33, 34, and 35, when unemployment was rife, relief measures a necessity and when finances had to be closely regarded. Ed, as he was familiarly known or even more familiarly as "Higgie", found the going heavy but stuck to his post.

His son graduated in 1941 and served with the R.C.A.M.C. as staff sergeant until the end of the war, when he entered his father's store and has since taken over management. He has followed in his father's footsteps in the line of sports, helped to organize the Virden Flying Club and is now its president. He was also a member of the School Board. As he has two young sons of early school age, there is at least a prospect that the name Higginbotham and Son will continue to be known in the pharmacy business.

For a number of years a second drug store was carried on under a number of managements. Charles McDonald, son of Wm. McDonald of Laggan Farm, was owner for a time; C. H. Morrison who later became manager of Picardy's on Broadway, Winnipeg; Stanley Hall who also went to Winnipeg, as manager of Eaton's Optical Department; the firm of Ross and McMullen had it for a time but Ross transferred his business activity to Toronto. C. G. McRory operated from 1919 to 1921, then moved to McAuley where he opened the first drug store.

From then Virden had only one drug store business until Martin's Pharmacy opened in 1955 and is now in active operation.

Meat and Ice

The first settlers were confronted by a problem in obtaining a supply of fresh meat. Cured or smoked meats were used. The game hunter regarded success not only as a sport but as a most welcome variation to his menu, a wild duck or prairie chicken dinner being a treat. Every farmyard soon displayed a flock of poultry. Even some residents of the hamlet kept poultry. An early newspaper item cites geese as a public nuisance on the streets. It was a question of people raising as much of their own food as possible. Those endowed with a business instinct sought to raise more in order to be able to supply the have-nots. Summer fishing was not merely a sport. In winter, Indians fished through holes cut in the ice at Oak Lake and sold their catch in frozen form to the settlers. Fresh meat was a luxury.

In starting the first "butcher" shop some serious difficulties had to be overcome. Each butcher did his own buying of stock locally, killed at his own "slaughter house" and then brought the meat to his shop where it was displayed for sale. Winter solved the problem of preservation. The walls would be lined with sides of beef, mutton, pork, frozen solid and very clean looking. With Christmas decorations of rosettes and streamers of colored paper, it all appeared attractive and appetizing. The shop was always kept as cold as possible, often seeming colder than outdoors.

Warm weather presented a great difficulty in lack of refrigeration. Supplies on hand had to be kept down to a disposable level. Ice was the only cooling medium; and each dealer would pack his own summer supply, blocks cut during the winter from Boss Hill and Gopher Creeks and at a greater distance, the Assiniboine River, being available for this purpose. Electric refrigeration and the importation of dressed meat, made the meat-shop an entirely different proposition.

Some of those who served fresh meat to the community in what was at the beginning an almost vital need have been McIntosh, Y. and S. Jones, Keedwell Bros., McDole and Gifford, Wm. Clow and Son, W. Angell and F. and A. Finch; later the Virden Quick Freeze, Foodland, W. Baird and G. Perrin.

Through the enterprise of Alf Blakeman, a Quick Freeze and Locker plant was installed in 1945. This was a great boon to the town, and its loss has been keenly felt since its destruction by fire Sunday evening, December 23rd, 1956. Lockers had been well stocked during the summer and autumn months and the sales department of the plant well supplied with meat, frozen fruit and vegetables for Christmas trade. Fortunately there were no casualties among the occupants of the five suites on the second floor.

Ice had become a household necessity, especially in homes where basements had replaced cellars which had provided really cool storage. For years Ed Palmer packed supplies of ice, insulated with sawdust, in a large building behind his home on Princess Street. No one was more welcome in the hot summer weather than Ed, Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays with a full sized block to fill the ice-box; Fridays a small block to tide over the need for Sunday. A long hot season might bring a major disaster to housewives if the ice supply became exhausted. The introduction of electric refrigeration and the availability of frozen foods changed the whole situation.

Milk

Farmers could easily supply their own dairy needs, and even residents in the settlement might keep a cow for which the flats of Boss Hill Creek provided pasture. As the hamlet grew, necessity for a regular milk delivery became more pressing. At first this was met by individuals taking over a few customers. Mr. Bayne was among the first to set up a regular delivery. He lived a mile north of town on

what had been originally settled by two Englishmen, Blasson and Johnson, and after Mr. Bayne's occupancy was known as the Lasby farm. Milk was brought in, in large cans and sold by pint or quart from tin measures. Bottles were later made compulsory. Angus McMillan conducted business on a larger scale, being followed by W. Skinner, Craig Dairy, Hepburn, Hauk Dairy and Sexsmith Bros. When delivery became a difficult problem a distributing depot was set up in the building on the corner of Sixth and Nelson with Deno Fontana as manager.

Dairies were conducted locally until pasteurization became law, when instead of establishing a plant in Virden, it was considered preferable to bring in the pasteurized product from Brandon to be distributed from a Virden depot. Virden is now served by Modern Dairies Ltd. and Co-op. Dairies.

Tailoring

For the earliest arrivals, the few shelves of men's heavy clothing in the stores supplied just what was needed, but soon there was a demand for finer clothing, a demand which the stores at once proceeded to meet. Shirts, underclothing, socks and shoes sold readily but the ready-made suits of the day were not regarded with great favor. "Hand-me-downs" they were called and were without the cut and elegance of later products. Here was an opening for a tailoring business where quality of material and color could be selected and a suit made to individual measurements. There always seemed to be someone at hand to fill any position requiring special training. T. B. Fraser was among the first to set up a tailor shop and he continued to ply his trade until the time of his death years later.

J. D. McNiven followed the same trade. When a customs office opened in Virden, he became the officer in charge. He served on the school board and was secretary-treasurer of the hospital board. He was also a sportsman, especially interested in curling and game hunting. His son, living in Regina, is Judge of the Appeal Court of Saskatchewan.

John Yewdall followed in the business. He was prominent in musical circles in the town, being leader of the choir of the Anglican Church and musical director of the operas put on by the Virden Operatic Society. Chas. Stendall, two of whose sons are in garage business in Virden was also a tailor. George Hand set up business in the Brayfield Block, which after Mr. Hand's death was carried on by T. Fitzpatrick, who moved into modernized premises on Seventh Avenue where he continued to serve a large clientele.

When Crowe Brothers took over the corner store, they conducted it as a man's wear shop and it has been carried on in that capacity by Arnold Bain and now J. T. Donaldson. The former has been active on the Hospital Board. Now retired and living in town, he still continues with that work. Mr. Donaldson is also active in community work, especially in anything concerning boys' and girls' activities. Brown's Clothing is a recent addition to the men's wear business.

Dry Goods, Dress Shops, Shoes

Seventy-five years have certainly brought changes in these lines of merchandising, changes quite in keeping with the general trend of progress.

It has been found that some of the lines could be handled to advantage as separate businesses. Robinson's Limited with genial Dave Petch as manager has been successful in carrying lines of dry goods and clothing, while White's Clothing has specialized in clothing.

The extensive manufacture of men's and women's clothing has cut down trades that once flourished. The old dressmaking and millinery departments, dear to women's hearts, and providing local employment for many have vanished with the rapidly increasing flair for ready-mades. Eva Markham's, now operated by Mrs. N. G. Doherty, was a pioneer dress shop, and the Fashion Shop, begun by S. S. Carscadden, has had a continued career under different managements. McDougall's Clothing Ltd., promoted by Mr. and Mrs. Fred McDougall has been expanded in their new enlarged premises to include women's wear.

Foster's Shoe Shop was prominent in the nineties, on the site of the present Bank of Nova Scotia, but it was destroyed in one of Virden's disastrous fires. General stores have carried a large assortment of women's and children's foot-wear while men's furnishing establishments have given similar service to men.

Groceries

As population grew and business expanded, opportunity arose for handling groceries as a separate line. Markham Bros. and A. Hartley were among the first to make this venture. The latter had kept a general store at Routledge and remained with his Virden business until his retirement to the coast. His oldest daughter, Mrs. E. C. Osmond, is prominent in the musical life of Virden giving valuable help with the Festival and in other causes.

George Clark of Clark Bros. Grocery Store and now of the Trading Post, Brandon, was a leading spirit in the Board of Trade and for some time its secretary. Safeway began in 1929 in a new block on the corner of 7th and Wellington, added a meat department and facilities for handling frozen food. In 1939 the business was sold to former employees, S. A. Elliott and A. R. Hales. After returning from overseas, having given distinguished service in the airforce, Mr. Hales bought out his partner who went to the coast. Mr. Elliott was much missed in musical circles, having conducted an orchestra during his stay in town, an orchestra that gave freely of its services in many a worthy cause. Mr. Hales, whose father was an army veteran of World War I, continues to operate the business having been with it for 21 years.

Hewitt's Service Store was set up by James Hewitt whose father, a veteran, had been a highly respected citizen of Virden for years.

Jimmy has given wonderful service on the Fire Brigade and is a curling enthusiast. Ernie's Grocery is conducted by a brother of A. R. Hales; Bulger Bros. was recently established near the corner of King Street and the Trans - Canada Highway; Wallace Consumers' Co-operative Ltd. opened a grocery department in 1955. These stores, together with the grocery departments of Rothnie and Reid, and Adams', are all kept busy. They make a specialty of handling fresh fruit and vegetables at all seasons of the year and also have daily fresh baking, imported.

Bakers and Confectioners

In the early settlement bread baking was done in the homes with dried yeast cakes supplied by the little stores or with yeast made from wild hops growing in the Assiniboine and Pipestone valleys. Soon there appeared a good opening for a bake shop, the product being confined to bread and buns, fancy baking still being left to the home cooks. G. H. Nims was an early baker. Later George Perry conducted a more extensive business, including as it did a large line of confectionery. He was located near the Balmoral Hotel.

On the opposite side of 7th a business has long been conducted by a succession of bakers—Brown, Smith, Fraser and at present G. A. Murdoch. The variety of products has been greatly increased, now including many different kinds of bread, buns, cakes, pastries. Local products continue in demand though other stores handle imported goods.

An early confectioner was a Mr. Phillion who, when he moved into larger premises in 1887, proudly announced that he was opening an oyster parlor. Oyster suppers were very popular at that time at social gatherings of groups or clubs, or as money-making enterprises for societies or churches. No doubt Mr. Phillion's venture proved successful. When ice became available for use in the hand-turned freezers, ice cream parlors appeared. Cones had not yet been invented and the word sundae had not yet been introduced into the English language. The dictionary declares the term to be of unknown origin but in spite of that the "waif" has definitely reached a position of international importance.

Virden's lighter tastes have been well catered to through the years. Pete Fontana came to Virden at the end of the last century. Beginning in a small way, he finally had a flourishing confectionery business. He retired to Victoria but his two sons remain in business in Virden, Larry with dry cleaning and Ross with Fowler's Garage.

Others who had carried on confectionery and lunch service in the same block of stores between McBain's and the former Balmoral site were Harry Markham, Geo. Rowson, F. McNicol.

Eugene Dely bought the Cain Block and opened a business in the part now occupied by Robinson's Ltd. Later he moved to 7th Avenue where he is now located. In addition to confectionery, he installed lunch counter and booths and stocks fresh bread and other bakery products as well as a variety of fruit and vegetables.

Fruits

In the early days fruits were limited to oranges, apples, lemons and watermelons when in season. The oranges were sweet and juicy. Apples came packed in barrels from the Ontario peninsula or the Annapolis Valley, N.S.—Northern Spies for cooking, Snow apples and Russets for eating. Individuals bought one or more barrels as required and that apple barrel was a most popular addition to pantry or cellar equipment for the winter. Old timers still grow misty-eyed at mention of the apple barrel. As train services became speedier, plums, pears and peaches could be imported for fall preserving but the earliest settlers did not have even that advantage. In most seasons, wild fruits were plentiful as they still are and pioneer gardeners soon began cultivating small fruits, raspberries, black and red currants, gooseberries and strawberries. Dried apples were much used throughout the winter for pies and applesauce and when evaporated apples came on the market they were considered a great improvement as they were of a clear honey color. Apricots and prunes were also popular as dried fruits. It is notable that home preservation of fruits and vegetables has continued to a general extent even though mercantile canning has grown to be such a huge business. The introduction of deep-freeze plants for homes and locker-plants in many towns and villages has been a factor in this. In the early years winter supplies of vegetables, butter and eggs were stored in the cellars already described, but refrigeration has changed the custom completely, and Virden has always been able to keep abreast of the times.

Books

A boon to the community in its early years was Mrs. Woolhouse's Book Shop, where Burns' store is now located. In addition to books she carried a line of toys and interesting novelties. It was a pleasant place to linger, graced as it was by the presence of Mrs. Woolhouse with her white hair and engaging smile. She and her two sons, young men by that time, moved to Saskatoon when it came into prominence as a place of importance in the north-west.

William Pineo and his sister, Mrs. Young, took over the business for a time, also adding an agency for pianos. A treadle pumped organ had long been regarded as the ultimate article of house furnishing but the latter part of the nineteenth century saw sales of pianos being pushed. Old models of both these instruments showed brackets at either side on the front, to hold candles or lamps to shed light upon the music. Many homes soon acquired pianos, just as later they bought gramophones, installed radios and television sets. The piano became the centre for many evenings of home or public entertainment.

Pineo was bought out by Ed Boggs who moved to the premises occupied now by Cook's Electric. After his death the business was closed out.

Miss Elleby's

Another point of interest was the tiny shop of the Misses Amy and Rose Elleby, about where Stacey's is now situated. The two sisters and two brothers had come from England and were early settlers in the Pipestone district. Mrs. Bulloch tells of how Miss Amy went about among the settlers doing the family dressmaking. This was a custom of the times. In town a dressmaker would come in by the day but in the country they would stay until the season's requirements were filled, then would go, no doubt eagerly awaited by the next customer.

The little shop was filled with a varied stock — hats, scarves, purses, china, embroidery threads, and many other articles. It was afterwards moved to more commodious quarters in the block next the Balmoral Hotel, but neither of the sisters had good health so had to give up business. Miss Amy, though a congenital cripple, never lost her courageous spirit.

Miss McAdam's

Another shop of early days was Miss McAdams' millinery store. The term "hat shop" was not in use at that time. It was just a very small frame building where the Friendly Inn is now situated. Perhaps the business could not compete with the greater displays of the department stores for by the end of the nineties Miss McAdam was remembered only as a name, a name perpetuated in a story of a small boy who, questioned by his Sunday School teacher "Who was the first woman?" replied promptly, "Miss McAdam". This story is reminiscent of one told fifty years later. On one occasion when doctors and nurses from Brandon were holding a mental clinic in Virden, a nurse, giving test questions to a small boy to determine his I.Q. asked "Where does pork come from?" The prompt reply was "from angels". Here was a poser! Doctors and nurses gathered round to discover, if possible, the thought processes that would prompt such an answer. It was quite simple: further questioning elicited the information that his mommy bought pork from Mr. Angell's shop.

Laundries

Most small towns presented an opening for a Chinese laundry, especially for men's shirts with very stiffly starched collars and cuffs. Chan In had such a laundry at the corner of 7th and Raglan and in addition had a store where he kept a small but select assortment of china and Chinese novelties. Chan In was quite a citizen. He particularly enjoyed the hunting season and as a result favored customers would often find themselves the recipients of a pair of plump ducks. He transferred his activities to Winnipeg.

A laundry was also in operation in the present dry-cleaning building. It was the custom on fine Saturday evenings for citizens to wander up

town to enjoy the bright lights provided by kerosene lamps or by gas jets, to do a little last minute shopping to tide over Sunday or to wander through the stores on tours of inspection. There was visiting to be done, standing in groups on the sidewalk or in the store aisles and above all father's clean linen must be called for at the Chinese laundry. It was all a friendly little get-together.

Jewellery and Watch Repairs

Virden was early, too, in having a watch repair and jewellery business. A Mr. Grimmet was one of the first in this line. A. Daykin conducted a business in the block adjoining the Balmoral and during his time was one of Virden's prominent vocal soloists. G. J. Clarke set up in the premises occupied by R. V. Andrew. George Gabel followed in the same location but moved to the new block he built beside Higginbotham's Drug Store. Mr. Gabel had a long history of public service, serving five years on the council and six years as mayor. He was also prominent in the Curling Club and active in the organization of its annual bonspiel. After he sold his building and business to R. J. Timms, he retired to Peterborough, Ontario. Mr. Timms was also active in various public matters, being on the school board and its chairman for years. He became mayor in 1947. Since his untimely death, the business has been conducted by his widow and son. Mrs. Timms is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce.

A recent establishment, Williams Jewellery Store was opened but was burnt out in the New Year's Eve fire that destroyed the Balmoral Hotel. Ted Heming, Jeweller, of Brandon, opened a branch store on Nelson Street.

Going back to 1882, after looking over the foregoing pages relating to the growth of town and industry, it can be seen that, as railway construction proceeded and as settlement grew, there were always men on the alert for business openings. Some of these openings occurred through sheer necessity, the little store being one example. Another was the supplying of materials for some sort of shelter and accommodation for the early arrivals.

Livery Stables

Another necessity that became at once apparent was the providing of shelter and feed for the horse or ox-teams that battled with the long prairie trails. Here arose also the opportunity for keeping horses for hire. Hence the livery stable. One of the first of these to be erected was on the corner of 6th and Wellington. The 1886 picture of Virden, shows clearly the large door for the entrance of teams, the small door opening into the owner's office and in the second storey the opening for hay or feed or straw for bedding. This building was later used for years by the town for their equipment. Angus Cameron, J. A. Owens and Stewart

Clarke were among early livery stable keepers, as was also Bunt on the site of the present post office.

James Bolton, a pioneer of Pipestone settlement, was proprietor of the Palace livery stable where the Fowler Garage is now located. He also had the care of the hearse which was kept in a shed at the south side of what is now the dry cleaner's store. With the hearse were kept two heavy black nets which, when put over the horses, enveloped them from head to tail and came half way down their legs. Being usually bays, this gave them an appearance more in keeping with the occasion. H. Gilliard also conducted a business at the same stand.

A block was built on Wellington Street opposite the firehall. At the front corner near the Scarth cottage was a store that was used for flour and feed or for storage purposes, with living rooms above. Beside it was the broad entrance to a livery stable which occupied the back of the lot. Above this entrance was a hayloft and the story goes that a farmer bringing in a load of hay and seeing no one about, put it in at an open window which proved to be a window of the living room of the upstairs tenant. Succeeding details have been lost in the mists of time but no doubt what followed was like a movie reel run backward. J. T. Norsworthy here ran a livery and feed business. John Baxter continued to run the livery business in the same block until his retirement a few years ago. His business must have dwindled to almost nothing but there were recent times, when blizzards blocked the roads, that Baxter's became a lively centre in the town. However, snow-plows, cats and bombardiers prevent even such brief visitation to the past. The old building has been demolished and a handsome block erected on its site.

Harness and Saddlery

In the days of horses, harness-making and saddlery provided profitable employment. Much of the work was done by hand, and beautifully turned out. Those who took pride in their horses, also took pride in the accoutrements. Fred Palmer engaged in this occupation for years. He was an excellent organizer, and had charge of the collection of funds for the 1910 hospital. Interested in military matters, he was sent overseas with the Fifth C.M.R.'s early in the first war, but was taken prisoner of war, not being released until the armistice. R. J. Duke also carried on the harness trade. Ted Boiteau engaged actively in the business until failing health caused him to give up. He is well remembered by many in the community.

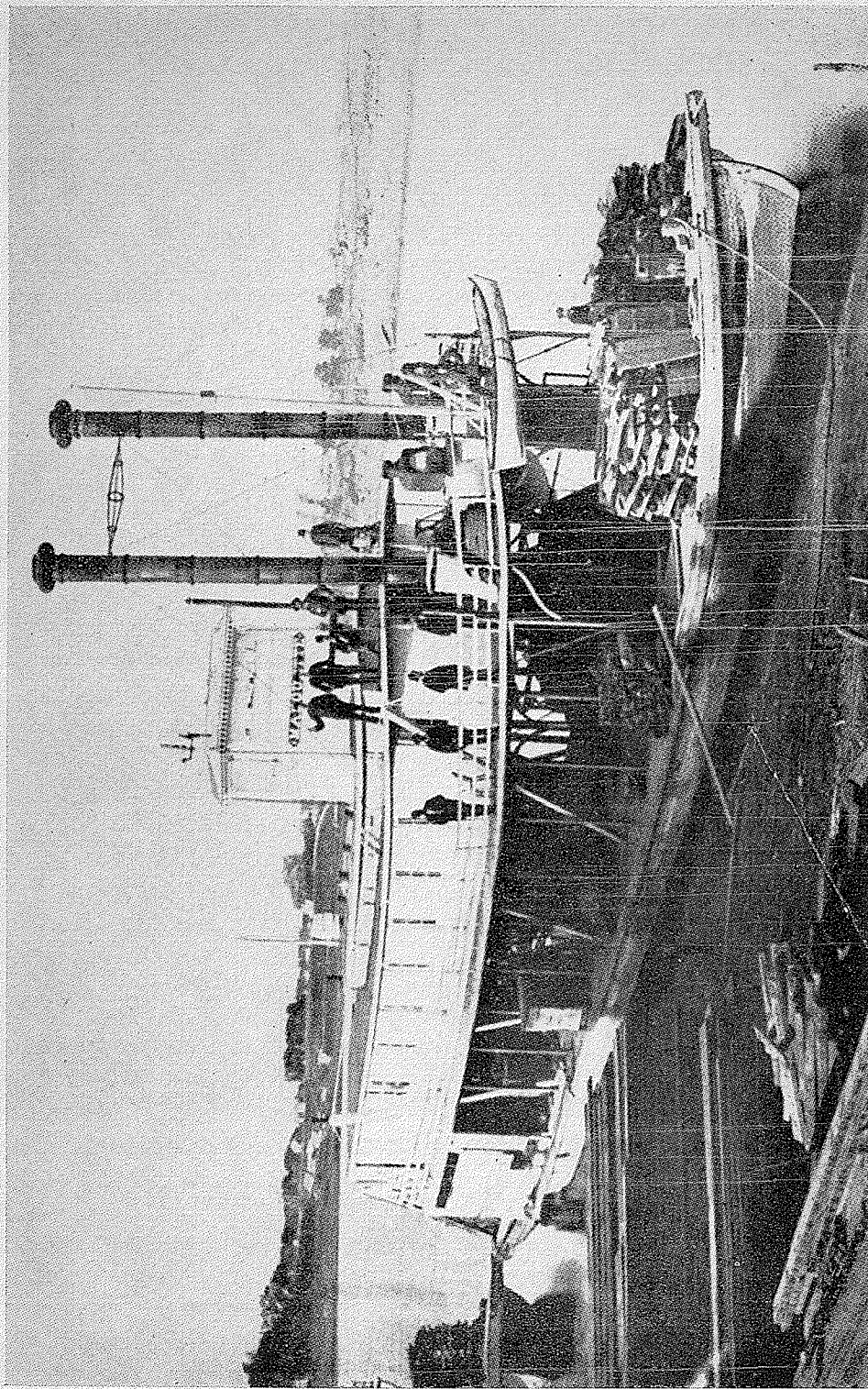
Shoe Repairs

That citizens of Virden are thrifty can be seen by their patronage of the man who repairs shoes. Ed Hallowell has been serving in that capacity for many years. He is a golf enthusiast. When J. Gross' health compelled him to relinquish farming, he took up the trade of shoe repairing and has installed modern equipment by which he can turn out fine leather accessories.



FORT MONTAGNE A LA BOSSE

This cairn of fieldstone marks the approximate site of Fort Montagne a la Bosse, a trading post of the North-West Company established about 1790. Overlooking the Assiniboine Valley east of Virden, the original site of the fort was destroyed when the Canadian Pacific Railway was built for it became a huge gravel pit from which gravel was taken for constructing the line. From the cairn a beautiful vista of the valley is seen.

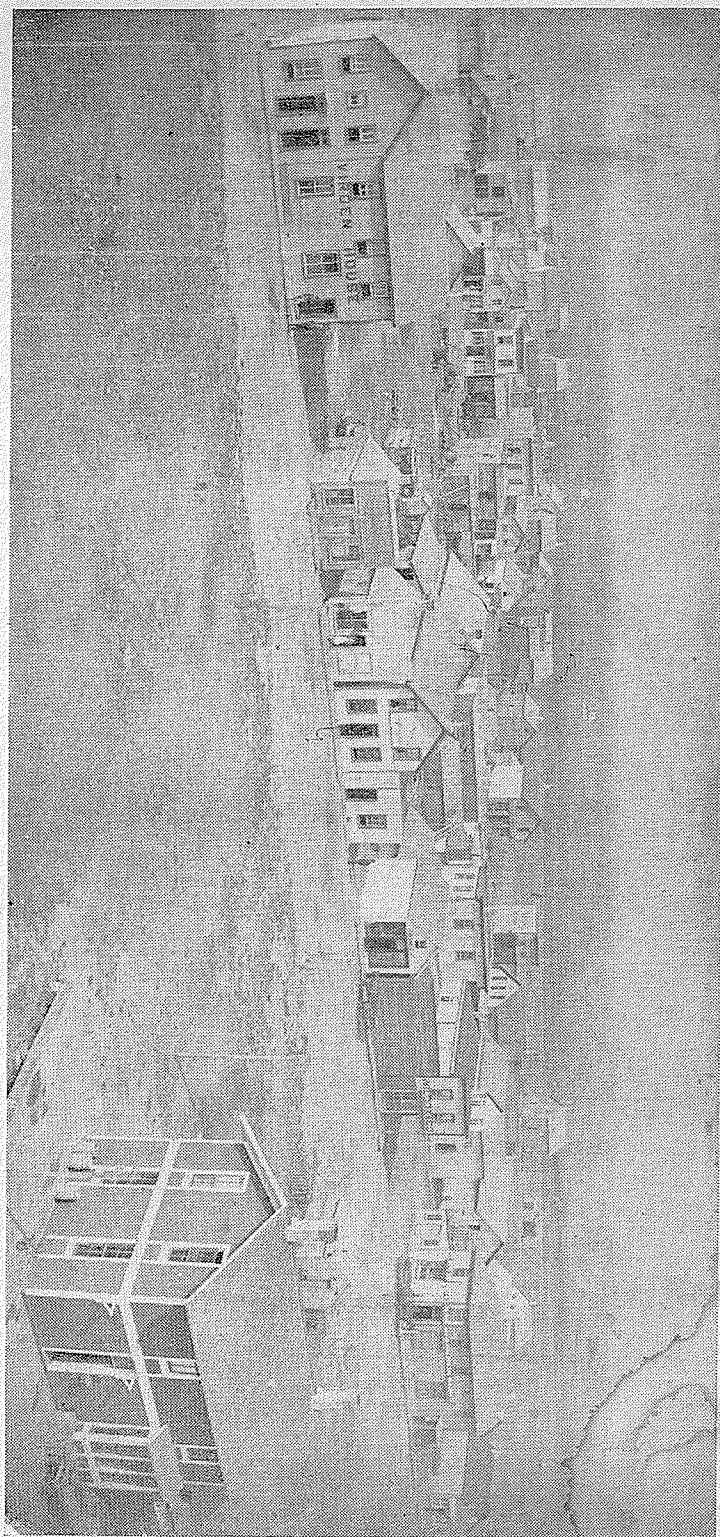


LEFT:

The S.S. Marquette, built in Moorhead, Minnesota, for Peter McArthur of Winnipeg was the first steamship to navigate the Assiniboine River through this area. She was 125 feet long with a 30-foot beam and four-foot hold, drawing 15 inches. Her engines were powerful. Captain Jerry Webber brought her up the Assiniboine to Fort Ellice arriving there on Sunday, May 18, at 6 a.m., 1879.

RIGHT:

Virden in 1886—already a substantial settlement. In the foreground is the first C.P.R. station. Not a tree is in sight.





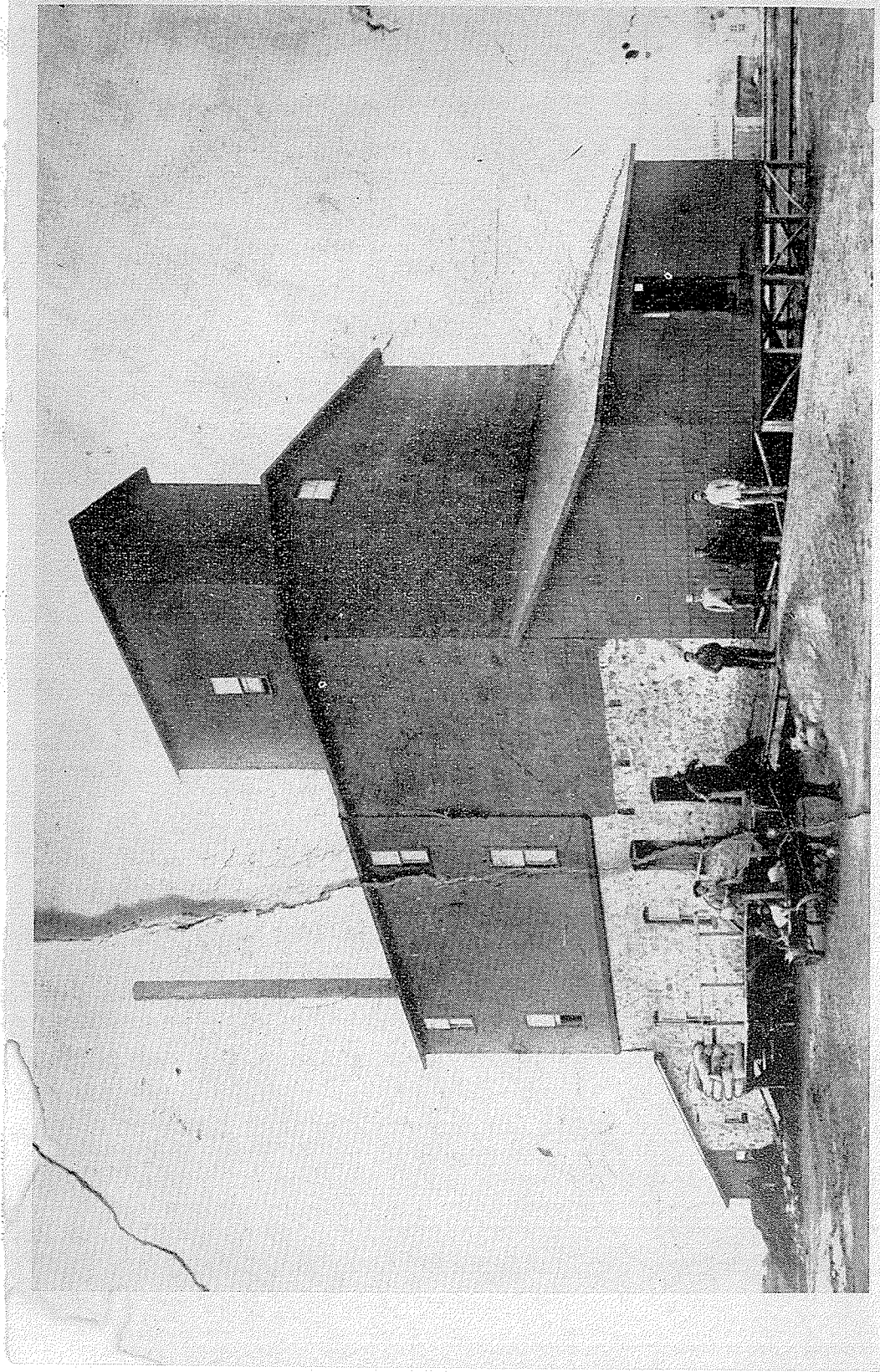
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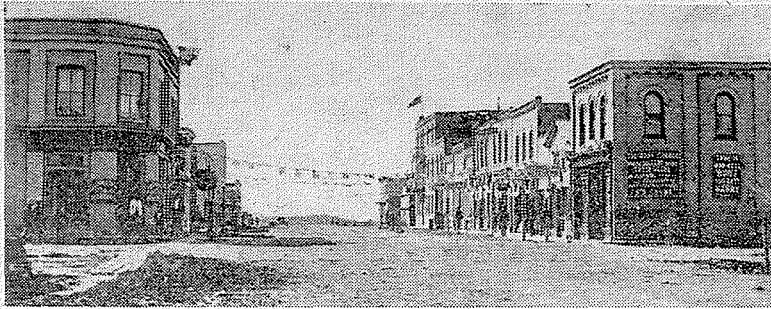
VIRDEN BAND, 1887—Five years after the establishment of Virden on its present site this band was going strong. Bandsmen in the picture are: back—C. E. Pineo, J. Bolton, W. W. Joslin, D. Watson, A. C. Sarvis, J. H. Schmidt; centre—M. B. Irwin, W. H. Hooper, Geo. Jarrett, Sam Wyatt; front—J. Watkins, Tom Colter, Bert Short.

RIGHT:

VIRDEN PUBLIC SCHOOL, GRADES III AND IV, 1898—Shown with their teacher Miss Ida Thompson (Mrs. Geo. Clingan) are the girls and boys of Grades III and IV, Virden Public School, in 1898. The picture was taken in front of the two-storey stone school, demolished in 1957. In the picture are Daisy Grant, Celia Robins, Sarah Newlove, Frank Cameron, Arthur Robins, Willie Dayton, Minto Adamson, Russell Spiers, Newb Miller, Jim Huston, Fred McDonald, Armour Bridgman, Ivan Caldwell, Donald McNiven, John Strang, Walter Cameron, Hilton Newlove, Dell Clarke, Lillian Scarth, Laura Wilcox, Dot Elliott, Nellie McGregor, Mamie Grundy, Olive McDougall. A number of the pupils have not been identified.







DOWNTOWN VIRDEN IN THE EARLY DAYS—*These pictures were within a year or two of the turn of the century. Top: Seventh Avenue looking toward the Balmoral Hotel. Traffic was non-existent. Middle: Seventh Avenue lined with wagons and horses while farmer owners did their shopping. Bottom: The Busy Corner looking down Nelson Street. In the group of men at the front of the store are Jack English, Jos. A. Merrick, Bob Gardiner and Clarence Pineo.*



ABOVE:

VIRDEN POST OFFICE AND VIRDEN ADVANCE OFFICE—The picture, taken about 1896, shows the building on the ground floor of which was located the post office and on the second floor the office of the Virden Advance. In the picture from left to right are: John Bowes, postmaster; Jim Paul, Advance staff; D. J. Benham, editor; W. H. Hall who founded the Advance in 1885, and Len Huston, a newcomer from Ontario.

LEFT:

TOP—A scene at Virden Fair in 1898. A horse show was really a horse show in those days.

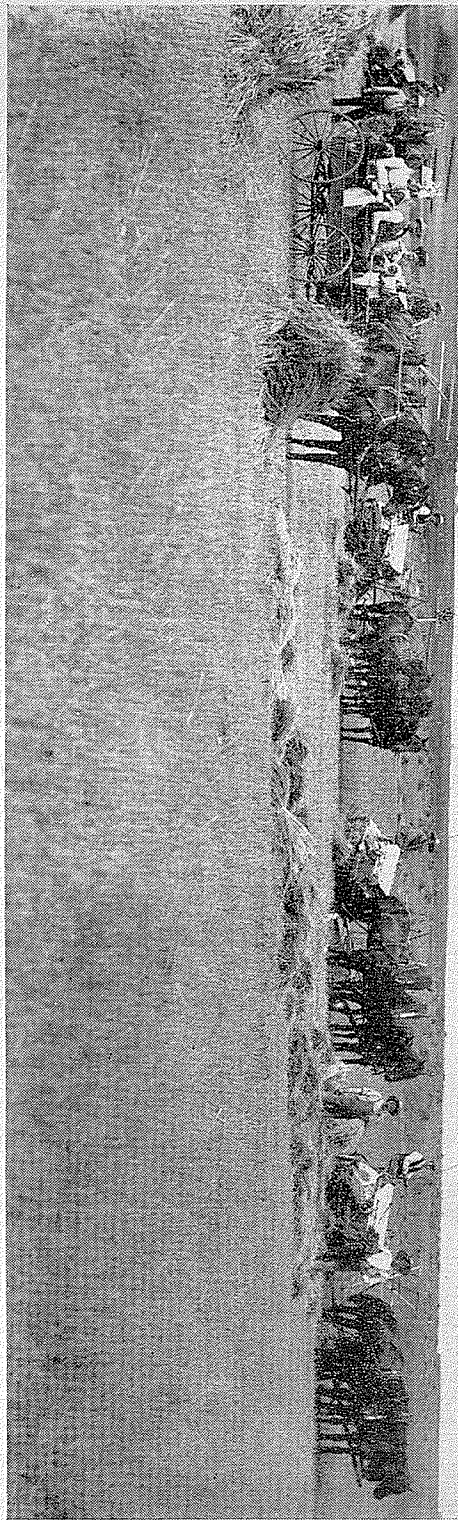
BOTTOM—Virden and district was well known for its fine drivers and here a number of cutters drawn by splendid horses are lined up on Wellington Street ready for a race(?). The picture dates from about 1900.

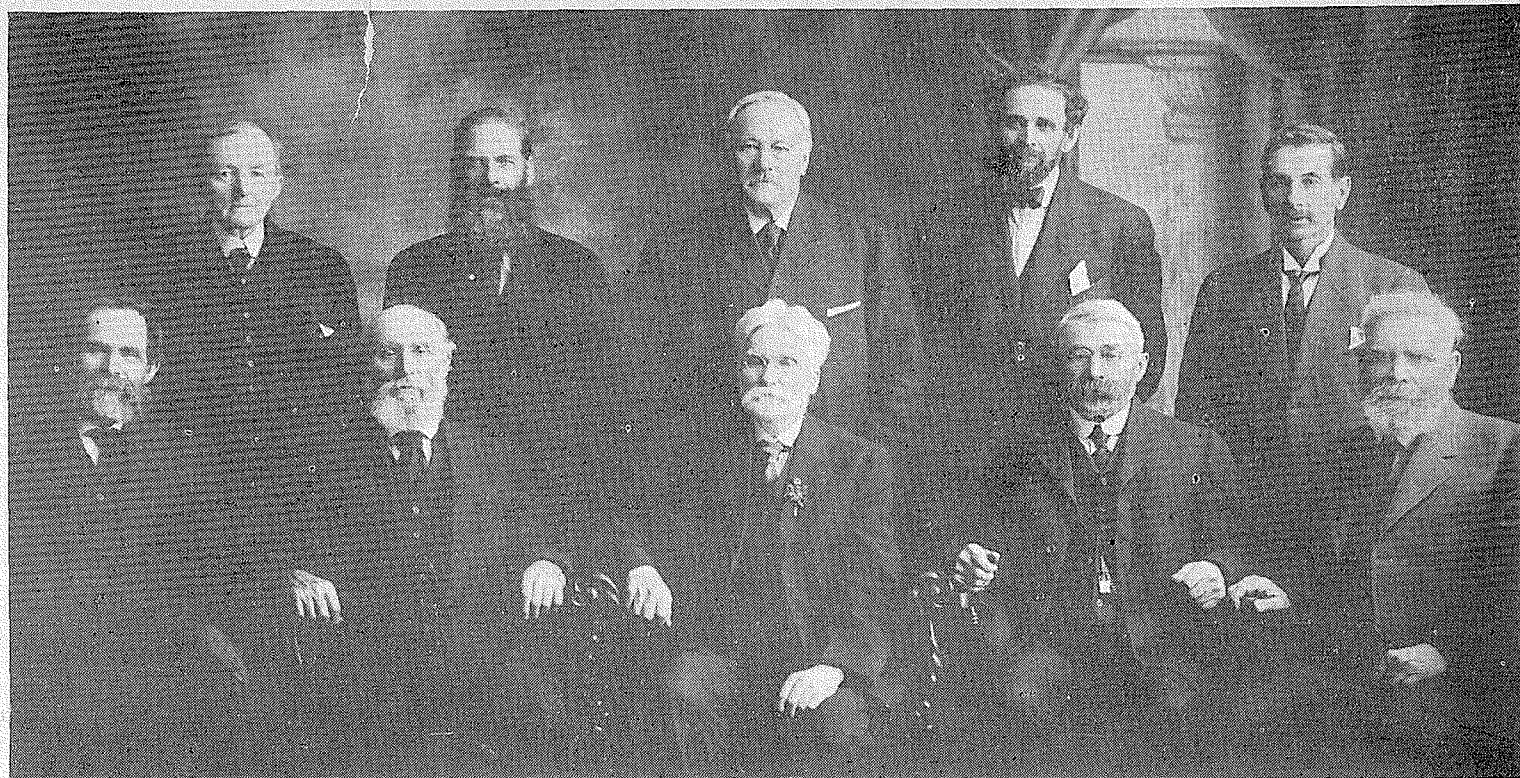
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iriden's first flour and
rist mill built around
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e Mr. Holt, August
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Nichol, George Hub-
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ing on the ramp.

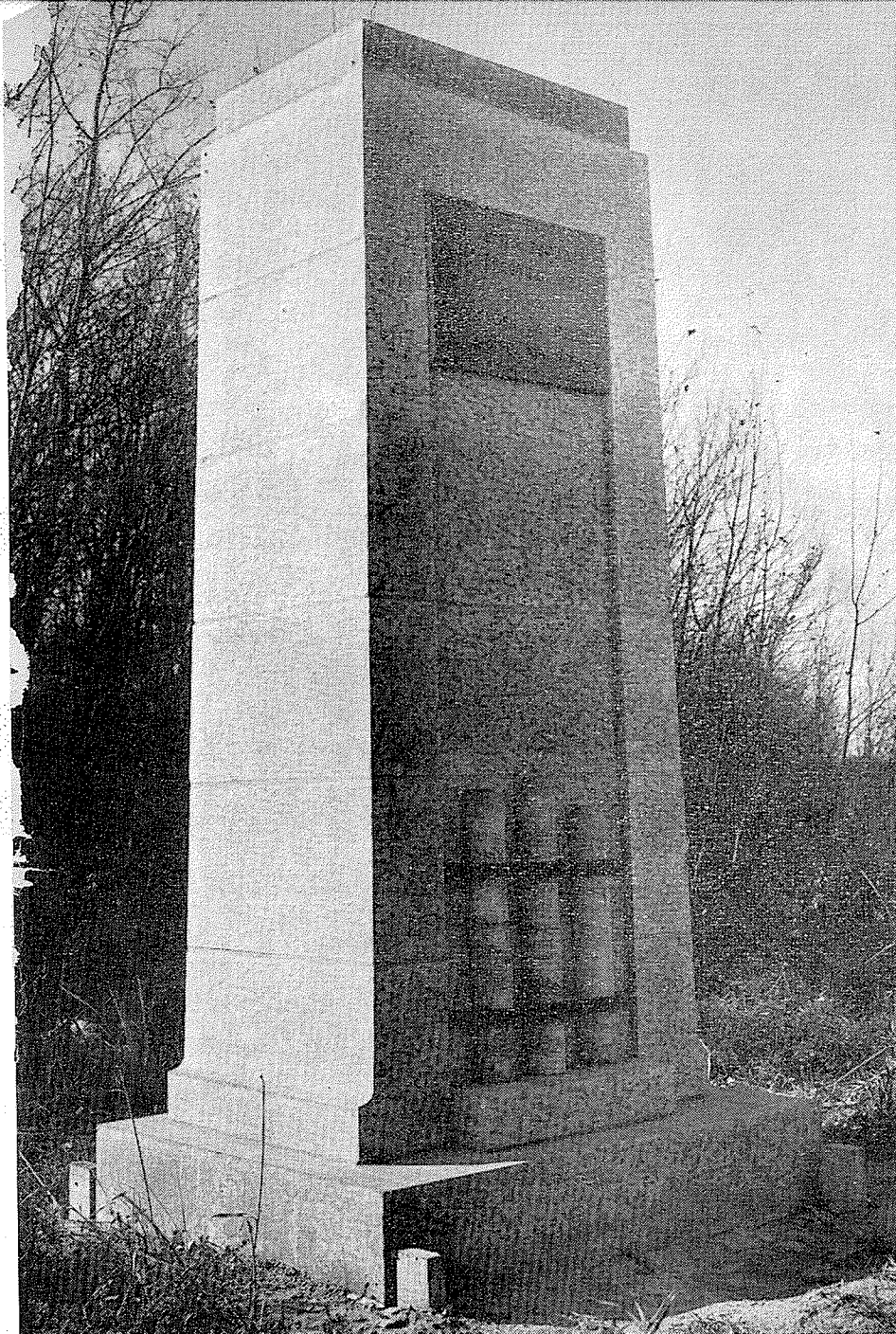
RIGHT:

Harvesting in 1899—
A typical scene at the
end of the last century
around Virden. Five
binders are at work
in this wheat field.
At harvest time many
extra men were hired
by farmers to help
rush through the big
job of getting in the
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too, was a busy
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d the harvest hands.



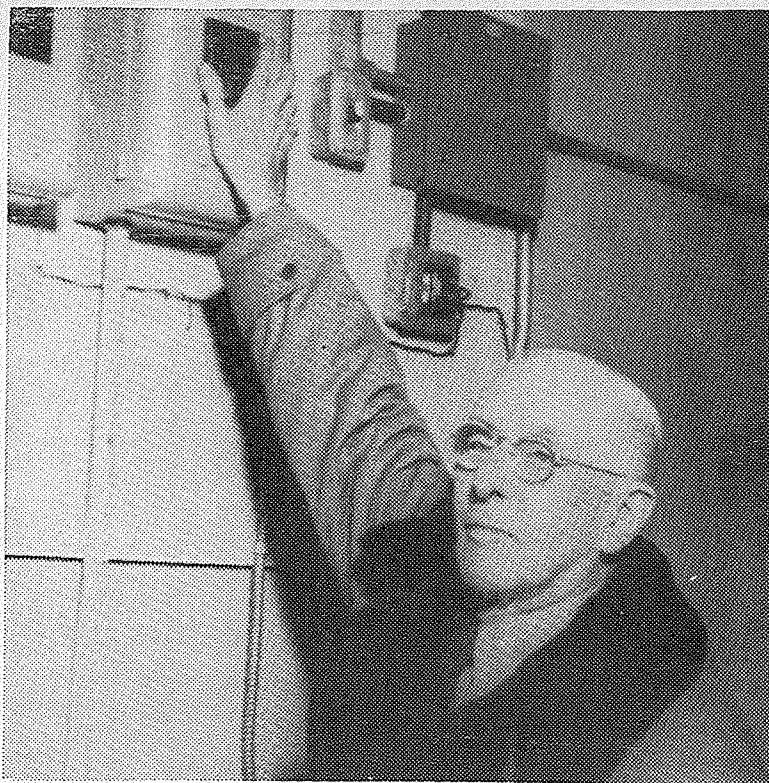


VIRDEN OLD TIMERS—This picture was taken in 1913 at an old timers' gathering in Virden. Many of these men were 1882 pioneers in the town and district. They are: back row—John Robins, born 1851; Alex Bonniman, born 1851; Henry Ellis, born 1847; George Bray, born 1846; George Carefoot, born 1852; front row—John Haw, born 1843; Thomas Gilree, born 1837; George English, born 1834; John Wright, born 1837; James Spiers, born 1840.



MONUMENT TO OIL DISCOVERY

This monument, erected by the Manitoba Department of Mines and Natural resources is located on the Virden-Maryfield road near the site of Manitoba's discovery oil well on the farm of W. Gardiner, lsd. 15, Sec. 18-10-27. The Daly field west of Virden was the result. The first flowing well in the province was on the McIvor farm, the name of which, "Roselea", was given to the great oil field north of town.

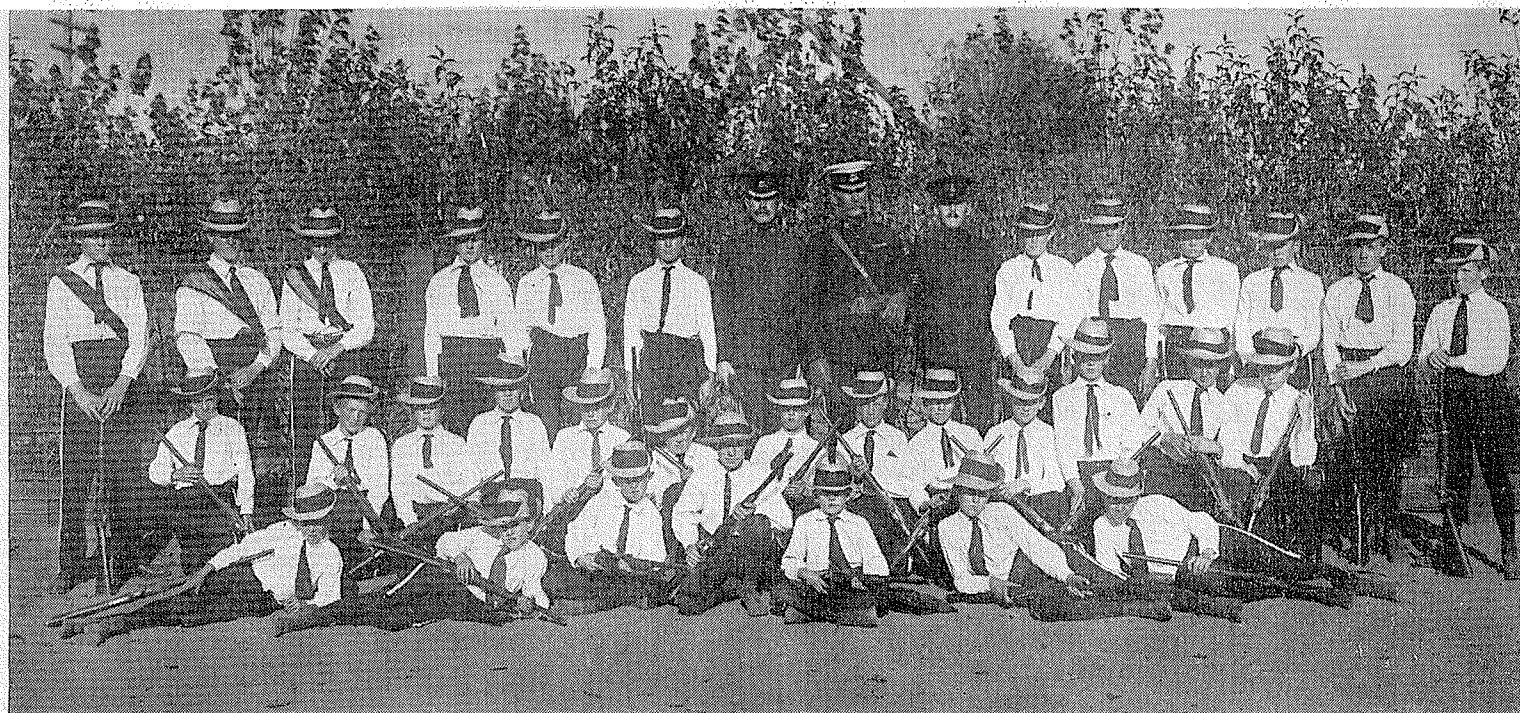


ABOVE:

On December 10, 1953, an important event took place which has had a great effect upon the standard of living in Virden . . . the official turning on of the waterworks and sewerage system, a dream of the early pioneers come true. Here W. A. Bridgett, long active in the life of the community, throws the switch.

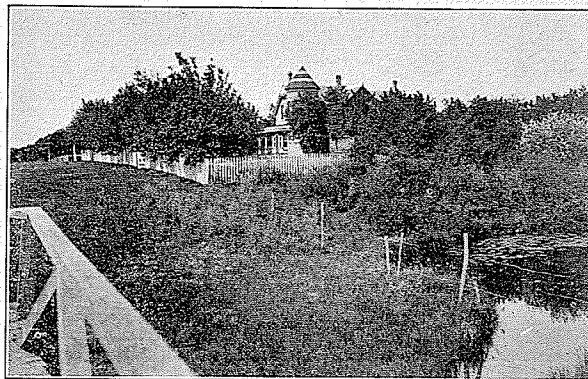
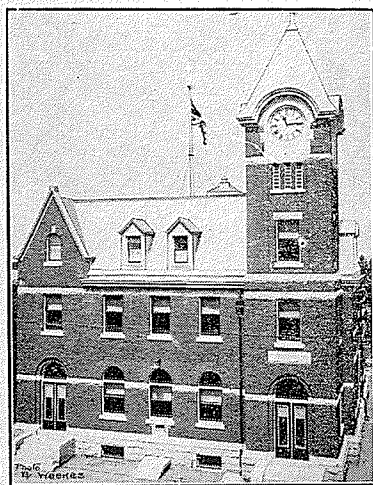
LEFT:

Virden's most famous intermediate hockey team, winner of the Championship of Manitoba in 1926-27 and 1927-28. In the back row is the executive: Dr. I. C. Fryer, F. M. MacNichol, Col. F. Palmer (President), P. H. Hamon, Dr. C. I. Strachan, J. Pritchard. Members of the team are: R. E. McGuffin, H. Palmer, A. Braden, P. Lawrence, A. R. Bain (Manager), Geo. Sanford, F. Bridgett, C. Gardner, W. McDougall, L. Reid, R. W. Simpson (Trainer).



VIRDEN CADETS EARLY IN THE CENTURY

In the picture left to right are: top—Wallace Gibson, Frank Wagg, Ernie Travis, Rupert Carr, Jack Conroy, Cleve Tapp, Dr. Geo. Clingan, Col. E. A. C. Hosmer, (?), Walter Carr, Ivan Tapp, Walter Gyles, Harold Pineo, Jack Schoeneau, George Pugh; centre—Monty Brine, Jack Carr, Henry Palmer, Pat Gyles, Jack Jones, Lyle Simpson, Leonard Brittain, Sydney Robertson, Peter Moir, Roy Carscadden, Will Scarth, Jack Cameron, Hugh McDonald; bottom—Earle Megaffin, Corny English, Coulter Megaffin, Harry Best, Glen Simpson, George Clingan, Bill Stinson.



THIS PAGE:

TOP—Wellington Street in 1909.

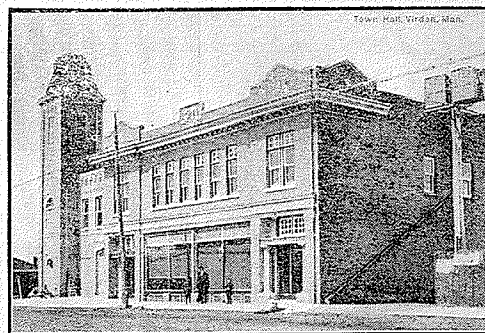
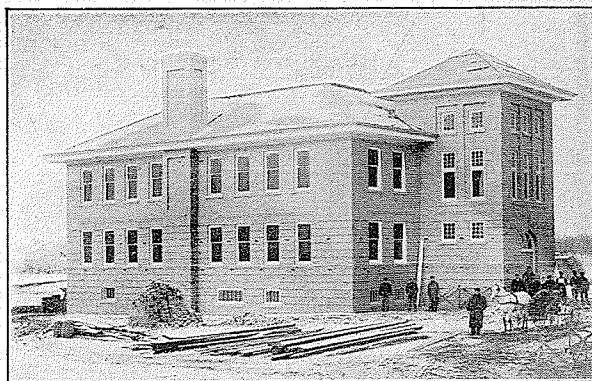
SECOND—The post office just after it was completed. An early view of "quality hill" from the bridge over the creek.

THIRD—Virden Collegiate under construction. It was opened in 1910.

BOTTOM—Virden's Municipal Hall . . . the firehall section was built in 1896, the municipal offices and Auditorium Theatre in 1912.

LEFT:

H. D. Crowe's store, "The Busy Corner", about 1910.



Blacksmith Shops

A trade that claimed early priority was the smithy. From the moment that horses began to work on the land and farmers began to use their equipment, a blacksmith shop became a necessity.

Though Virden never supplied the spreading chestnut tree, the blacksmith shop was an intriguing place. There was always an audience of children and adults observing the heavy draught horses, the lighter drivers and occasionally a clean-limbed race horse being shod and to see the sparks fly when an implement was being fashioned from the red hot metal under the blows of the smith's hammer, with a rhythm and cadence that was the inspiration for the Anvil Chorus in Verdi's "Rigoletto".

David Clark set up a shop on Raglan close to 7th where his son Will later carried on the trade. Others who engaged in the same business were J. H. Schmidt, John Haw, W. D. Wilson, J. Gardner, Jack McLeod and A. Winkler. Mr. Schmidt also engaged in carriage building and to this department he gave his personal attention. Mr. Wilson had charge of the blacksmith work for Mr. Schmidt before setting up a business of his own. He served on Virden council for two years. Mr. Winkler, of Danish nationality, was a member of the school board. A son won a Rhodes scholarship and Alex is a blacksmith, an expert arc welder, having studied metallurgy. He is also Postmaster at Harmsworth. Many oil companies found his shop just right for renewing bits. Two others are grain buyers. J. H. McEwan was a blacksmith by trade. He served as chief of police in 1941 and '42, then served on the council for twelve years. All these men have been indispensable to the life of the country and took pride in the work they turned out. Foster Carefoot and George McDonald still ply this trade, the latter adding welding to his work.

Machine Shops

In place of the smithy came the whirr and clank and clatter of the machine shop. A stone building at the corner of 6th and Wellington had long housed this business. C. W. Wainwright managed the concern at one time. T. B. Mitchell and sons Bert and Alex conducted it successfully for years and added the first garage business. Ed Newby continued as machinist and Bill Jones was proprietor there specializing in motor mechanics before he moved to a new building on King Street. Garages have been conducted by the following: W. Gibson, H. Hoover, N. Miller, R. E. McGuffin, W. Marshall, M. Thomas, Stendall, Nield Bros. and Fowler and Sons who also have a trucking business. C. Coleman is another who operates extensively in trucking. The oil industry has been an opportunity for the trucking business, Beaver Trucking operated by H. Veldhuis and O. Repka and Pete's Hauling operated by Holly Berry to mention but a few.

Draying

In the days of horse drawn vehicles draying was done by Wm. Wyatt, Jas. Bolton, W. W. Joslin, S. Clarke, E. H. Palmer, J. T. Norsworthy, Chris Millar and Jas. Burnett. They delivered express and freight, moved furniture, hauled fuel and in winter cut and delivered ice to be melted and used for the family washing. When residents moved from one town to another their furniture had to be crated and sent by rail-freight. Chris Millar and James Burnett were the last to present competition to motor trucks, they and their businesses reaching the age of retirement at the same time. Chris was popular with the children. On the snowy streets of winter, if he did not already have a commercial load, he would have a load of children, often with a train of youngsters on their sleds being pulled behind. With his sturdy team and their jingling bells, and with his load of laughing shouting kiddies, Chris would appear to be enjoying the happiest trip of his day.

Nursery Business

There was one man of whom special mention must be made. He had no antecedent or successor in his business, though he put Virden on the map as "The Little Tree Town Of The West". John Caldwell had a nursery just across the road allowance which formed the south boundary of the town and lived where G. N. Walker now lives, later building a large house further east. He not only planted trees in Virden and throughout surrounding country but extended this business all through south-western Manitoba. Virden soil was not always co-operative. As Mr. Caldwell explained, sometimes the top soil would be scarcely eighteen inches deep; below that dead sand contained no nourishment for the roots. While a tree was small it could thrive upon what it drew from this top soil, but as it grew larger it would die off or become so brittle that it would become broken in even a moderate gale. Take the manse as an example. Mr. Caldwell planted ash trees along the 8th Avenue and Raglan Street boulevards. Those along 8th all died and were replaced by maples. Any ash trees along the Raglan Street boulevard have been carefully nurtured from shoots that sprang from roots of the original trees. Golden willows were planted along the lane border, none of which survived. Of the laurel leaved willows planted from the lane to garage there may be one survivor. Firs were also planted, one sole representative still standing sturdily at the corner of the house. The other maple trees on the place were grown from seed that blew over from James Brownlie's place, from trees that John Caldwell had planted.

When the brick hospital was built in 1910, Mr. Caldwell was elected a member of the board of directors and was made chairman of the grounds committee and there again he had a hard struggle against the elements and against unresponsive soil. He served for a time on the school board. His oldest son was a prominent player on the hockey team but his three sons and daughter found their careers away from Virden. With Mr. Caldwell's death, the nursery business declined.

Farm Machinery

It is interesting to follow the evolution of farm machinery, each improved machine becoming a prized possession of its owner. In plowing for instance there was the one-horse, one-furrow plow guided by the driver trudging the miles on foot. A proud man was the farmer when he became the owner of a plow which turned three furrows at the same time while he himself rode, albeit with jolting discomfort, on the seat, driving his fine team. Then came the tractor-drawn plow guided by the driver, still riding not too comfortably but at a faster pace. By the time Virden was founded, the reaper had given way generally to the binder. By using the former, the binding had to be done by hand so it was considered a great step forward when the self-binder came into use. This necessitated stooking and stacking. As threshing machines were comparatively few in number and as their operation was slow, threshing often continued until after snow came, so stacking was general, the stacks being arranged in twos, fours or sixes so that the machine could be driven between them and fed with sheaves from both sides. In time as operation speeded up, threshing from the stook became general. The sheaves were hauled directly to the machine by horses drawing wagons with wide racks. In the meantime engines were progressing from the steam-propelled to the gas-motor.

Threshing was a busy time for the housewife with a gang of eighteen or twenty men to feed for three or four days or longer. The next innovation, a boon to both the farmer and his wife, came with the introduction of the combine and swather. The combine cut and threshed the grain in one process but as this required exact conditions of grain and weather, the swather was frequently used which cut and laid the grain in swaths or windrows later to be picked up and threshed at a suitable time. This latest invention, together with the use of tractors, has not only speeded the passing of the horse as a needed adjunct for farm work but has also greatly decreased the demand for man-power. Agriculture cannot supply jobs for the many as it did years ago.

Many of the settlers who came to the Virden area, especially those who came from eastern Canada, brought a certain amount of equipment with them. Many of them had money to buy implements as they were needed. Immediately the large dealers in farm machinery were on the alert. Early agents in the community were Wm. Pineo, Duncan McDonald and George Hall. Following is a list of Companies that operated in the west, with the names of some of the Virden agents:

Garr, Scott and Reeves Threshers	T. B. Mitchell
Waterloo Threshers	E. M. Conroy
Cockshutt and McCormack	Carnahan and McKnight
Massey-Harris	Robt. Hayes, Archie McDonald, Stanley Colter, Austin Conroy, J. C. Cory
Frost and Wood	Duncan McDonald
Moline Plow Co.	J. McDougall
McCormack and Deering Amalgamated	Carnahan and McKnight, Frewen Davis

The above became the International Harvester Company with agents Wm. Jones, Mr. Hall.

Case	Les Draper
Allis Chalmers	Wm. Jones
John Deere	P. Bachewich
Co-op. Machinery	Wallace Co-op. which also carries a line of groceries

The Massey-Harris is one of the oldest companies and still carries on in the same building that it has occupied during this century. The present agent, J. Cliff Cory, has been an active citizen, holding a place as member of the school board, member of the council and taking special interest in sports for young people.

During the years of depression and poor crops, the machine companies found collections practically nil and with the return of prosperity the farmer not only had to meet his obligations but to replace worn out equipment. A few years of good crops made a wonderful difference in the financial standing of farmers and consequently in all business of the community.

Cars

While these changes were taking place in machinery, driving equipment also altered. Rubber tires for buggies became the accepted thing which made a difference to the wheelwright's trade. Open cutters were furnished with folding tops, which at first did not meet with favor as, when raised, they were supposed to catch the wind and so make heavy pulling for the horses. Custom minimized this objection, however, and covered cutters came into general use.

The next conveyance to come into favor was the carryall, a boxed-in, wooden structure frequently home-made, with only enough open space in front for the driver to see through and to handle the reins. Fur robes were still a necessity and to this comfort was added the luxury of heat from a lighted lantern or charcoal burning foot-warmers. The comfort was really greater than that provided by the first open cars, though there was a warmth of excitement in flying over the country roads at the unbelievable rate of twenty-five miles per hour. Still, when cold weather came, the car had to be tucked safely away in its garage while Dobbin and the carryall once more ruled the roads.

The first car in Virden was owned by H. H. Goulter. It was steered by a handle and had two seats back to back thus accommodating three passengers in addition to the driver. It was a thing of terror to the horses along the road. Mr. Goulter was always considerate. In meeting a horse drawn vehicle, he would draw over as far as possible to the side of the road; he and his passengers would alight and stand in conspicuous positions, their human presence giving the horses courage to pass the approaching menace. The river hills presented a great difficulty. Mrs. Goulter or another passenger would walk some distance ahead to warn drivers of the danger, so that their horses could be held at some advantageous spot until a safe passing had been manoeuvred. This seems to be a preposterous statement in view of the calm manner

with which horses now regard the most imposing of motor vehicles, but it is quite true that the early automobiles filled them with terror from which they would shy, frequently landing in the ditch.

The first lighting medium used was acetylene gas, generated from a small tank of carbide and water attached to one of the broad running boards with which cars of that period were equipped. Changes came rapidly and regularly. A folding top with side curtains that could be fastened into place was used only as a protection against rain or sleet. As it was supposed to decrease greatly the miles per gallon of gas, it was duly folded and fastened down when the weather was fair. A convenience came with the removal of the gasoline tank from under the front seat. As the tanks were small, they required frequent filling when front seat occupants would have to alight in order that the seat cushion could be removed, the seat board lifted, and the tank filled. Tools at one time were stored similarly under the back seat and as many repairs were made by the roadside such as jacking the car, removing the tire, patching the inner tube, patches and cement being necessary items of the repair kit, replacing the tire, pumping it, gathering up all the tools, stowing them away, passengers were accustomed to popping out of the car at odd moments to offer help and advice. Mysterious administrations were performed by the driver crawling under the car, lying on his back and tinkering with bolts and nuts the uses of which he was probably sublimely ignorant. Lucky if he got the machine to work. Otherwise it might mean walking a mile to use a telephone or engage a team of horses to tow his motor to a garage.

Incidents such as the foregoing were only by the way but were an incentive to the rapid introduction of improvements. Covered cars with trunk storage space, the introduction of detachable wheels with the carrying of spares helped. This has gone on to the streamlined product of today with its luxurious upholstery, its system of light signals, its heater and radio and its many improvements in motor mechanics. Travel by motor has indeed become a luxury, but lacking as yet in the vital element of effective safety measures with the enforcement of safety regulations.

A list of dealers and Virden agents follows:

Briscoe Cars	J. Norsworthy
Dodge and De Soto	J. W. Jones
Buick and Pontiac	Thomas Motors
Plymouth and Chrysler	C. E. Stendall and Son
Fargo Trucks	C. E. Stendall and Son
Ford Machinery and Studebaker cars	McGuffin Motors
Ford and Monarch Cars	Nield Bros.
Mercury, Lincoln, Meteor	Marshall Motors
in garage built by Don Whiteford and Chas. McLean	
Chevrolet, Oldsmobile, G.M.C. Trucks	Fowler and Sons

Grain Buying

With the first hauling of a crop to Virden, a grain business began.

The large companies of the west were quick to take advantage of the opportunity and as grain was all handled in bags, box cars were sufficient for shipping. It was soon recognized, however, that greater accommodation would be required. It may be of interest to quote some passages from a letter from Mr. Alex Rothnie of Regina who had bought grain in Moosomin, Elkhorn and Griswold, who is mentioned in the introduction as having kept a journal throughout his early days in the country, so his observations are not based entirely upon memory. He says they came to Virden in 1885 and Ogilvie's had an elevator there of the same type as the one in Moosomin.

"They were what were called standard elevators which had 30,000 bushels or over capacity and were powered by steam engines. The one in Virden was managed by Sam Colter and owned by McBean Bros. of Winnipeg The Lake of The Woods did not build until about 1889. My brother George helped in the construction of this elevator and he only came to the country in 1887.

"The hauling of grain loose came into being after the gasoline engine became common about the beginning of the 20th century."

The brother, George, of whom Mr. Alex Rothnie speaks, bought grain in Virden. Upon his retirement, he became janitor of Virden's Public School and a real disciplinarian around the building. A most highly esteemed citizen, he continued to reside in Virden until the time of his death. The only one of his family now living here is his son George, of the firm of Rothnie and Reid. Another brother of George Sr. was James, also a grain buyer who lived in Virden for some years.

George Grundy was a buyer for Lake of The Woods, E. E. Bayne for United Grain Growers and T. A. Carscadden for Northern. Mr. Bennett Sr. was a buyer of the early days. Quoting from Mrs. Bulloch's book, "in 1885, there was frost, with wheat at 29c; 1886 was dry; frost again in 1888; drought in 1889 but an excellent crop in 1891." Report from another source states that frozen wheat was hauled to Virden in one of those years, in bags, until elevators were full, then piled on a site on 6th Avenue opposite the Taylor Lumber Co. location, where it lay until it rotted.

A special issue of the Advance of July 29th, 1898, states that S. S. Colter had been in the grain trade for fifteen years. He had been buying for McBean Bros. until about 1896 when he retired from that position to commence operations for himself. It was said that he and other independent buyers could offer better prices for grain than were being given by representatives of the big grain companies.

This issue of the paper also has a picture showing a line of six elevators including the mill along the C.P.R. tracks. There were Lake of The Woods, S. S. Colter, McBean Bros., Ogilvie's and Northern. By 1907 S. S. Colter's had become Imperial No. 34 and McBean's, Virden Farmers' Elevator. In June, 1893, a strip of land was bought from Bouverie and Routledge for the extension of 5th Avenue to a direct

connection with the north-south road allowance. This became known as Elevator Road as it provided a direct route from north and north-west for the hauling of grain without crossing railway tracks.

Erection of elevators throughout south-western Manitoba kept pace with the construction of branch lines and by the end of the century Virden had reached the peak of its grain trade for though production had vastly increased in eighteen years of settlement, the elevators throughout the whole south-western area of the province were now getting their share of that production. One by one the companies withdrew their business from this point, the last to retire being Ogilvie's. Its passing coincided with the retirement of James Gardner who had been its manager for many years. During these years he had been a faithful public servant, as president of the hospital board, seven years on the town council and eight years as mayor. He retired to the coast but comes back regularly to visit the town where so much of his life was spent.

When the CNR spur was brought into Virden, the United Grain Growers Ltd. built an elevator by its tracks, between 6th and 7th Avenues, with Alex Gardner as manager. This and the B. P. Kent Flour Mill are the only agencies in Virden now handling grain.

INDUSTRIES

Grist Mill

Virden's grist mill has a story of its own. By 1884 the demand had become insistent and municipal records show that a petition had been presented by Thompson and Routledge that a grist mill be erected on the townsite. Financial backing for such an enterprise was, of course, the greatest barrier to be overcome, but the matter constantly came up for discussion at public meetings and through delegations to the council.

In 1886 The Canada North-West Land Company granted two lots to Mrs. Isabella Willing as a bonus to open a grist mill and that same year the settlers saw their hopes fulfilled when the industry became a reality under the direction of Dier, Squair and Craig. From that time it continued production under varying fortunes. Dier bought out Squair, Koester bought out Dier and for some time the partnership remained as Koester, Craig and Company. In 1888 George Hall bought out Craig and by 1889 it was run by Koester Bros. By May of that year it was advertised for sale but by March, 1890, and in 1891 an advertisement appeared in the Advance for the mill as being run by Koester and Son. In January, 1891, an announcement appeared stating that accounts would be collected through a solicitor. This may have had a salutary effect for operation continued. Hubbard and Brine were connected with the mill either as partners or in charge of production.

The building had been erected in close vicinity to the C.P.R. water

tank. An early news note states that three wells had been made but a sufficient supply of water had not been found. In spite of water shortage, poor crops, difficulty in collecting accounts and competition with such big concerns as Ogilvie's, Winnipeg, and Lake of the Woods, Keewatin, Ontario, the little Virden mill continued its struggle until fire put an end to its career.

Though the B. P. Kent Grist Mill has enjoyed a wide connection which extended even to foreign countries, few citizens are familiar with its record. Mr. Kent was one of the last old-time millers who learned the trade of milling and mill wrighting by apprenticeship, first at his home town of Simcoe, Ontario, and then at Goderich. Subsequently he built and operated his own water-power mill near Brantford, Ontario. Later he built a 1,000 barrel mill at Walkerton which he operated until it was burned in 1910. Hearing the call of the west, he explored various places where grist mills were being promoted, finally erecting a 100 barrel mill at Somerset, Manitoba.

When the Virden area was definitely pushing for a revival of the gristing industry, a delegation consisting of C. E. Ivens, reeve of Wallace, A. E. Higginbotham, mayor of Virden and W. R. Gibson interviewed Mr. Kent at Somerset in 1934 and invited him to come to Virden to meet the combined councils, a conference which resulted in an agreement that a mill should be built at the corner of 6th Avenue and Raglan Street to be known as the B. P. Kent Flour Mills.

His buying was done locally unless conditions made it necessary for him to go further afield. One year, when high protein flour was much in demand, he had to go to the Saskatoon area to get a supply. The mill carried on a wholesale and gristing trade until 1940 when upon urgent requests for flour from Britain and other war-torn countries, it entered the export trade sending flour to Britain, Egypt, Bahrein and the Canary Islands. It also had some trade with the West Indies and Philippines.

In 1946 the business was formed into a limited company with B. P. Kent as president. Capacity was increased to 200 barrels a day, its products being bran, shorts, middlings, grits, whole wheat flour, pastry flour and general purpose flour. The business reached its peak turnover of a half million dollars in 1947. Since 1953 the company has been engaged in supplying retail outlets and the gristing trade.

Since B. P. Kent's death in 1953, the mill has been managed by his son, A. R. Kent.

Flour and Feed

While the first mill was in operation, there was a good opening for a lucrative business to be done in the sale of flour and feed. Alex Madill was one of the first to open a shop for this particular business. Succeeding him David Fraser conducted the business for a number of years and afterwards Mr. McIntyre had a store on the A. E. Adams

site. In addition there were, of course, the operators of the early mill continued by the mill owner of the present day.

In this as in other lines the competition of large scale production began to have an effect upon smaller industries, in fact the whole structure of business began to feel the encroaching changes of different customs and different manner of living.

OTHER INDUSTRIES

While the grist mill was being put into operation with the demand of the community to back it up, men saw opportunities for other industries. In 1889 an effort was made to organize a flax mill but circumstances not being sufficiently alluring, the project came to nothing. At the same time T. H. W. Hall started a jam factory which enjoyed a few years of prosperity. A. McKenzie carried on a business for making overalls, tents, awnings, mattresses, stack covers and binder canvases.

Brick Yard

Early in the 1890's Sherrif and Neden started a brick yard on the site of the former Gopher Creek settlement and succeeded in producing a good quality of brick. It was used in 1893 for veneering the new building erected on Nelson Street by J. W. Higginbotham on the site of the store that had been destroyed by fire. Although it was in demand locally, it may not have been able to establish a worthwhile export business to other points for its term of operation was short and it closed in 1902.

In 1906 the industry was revived, W. A. Bridgett, W. J. Gyles and G. N. Miller being leaders in its organization, but many other citizens contributed to its finances. C. W. Wainwright was placed as manager. A splendid quality of brick was produced. Of a clear, warm, cream color, it was used locally in many of the buildings of that period and found a ready market in Regina for all that could be supplied. Several explanations have been given of the cause of its collapse; the industry ceased production after a period of very successful operation. Its failure meant not only a financial loss to a number of citizens but deprived the town and district of a valuable asset.

Virden Manufacturing Co.

Another venture that had present possibilities and future potentialities was the Virden Manufacturing Co. organized in 1908 for the special purpose of manufacturing the Whiteford Justice Measure. This was an attachment to be used in the handling of grain and was the invention of Wm. Whiteford. The company was composed of Wm. Whiteford, Arthur Smith, manager, Wm. Leverington, A. W. H. Smith, Amos Odell, Col.

C. E. Ivens and others and the plant was established in a building at the corner of 7th Avenue and Raglan Street. Production was extended to include the manufacture of Williams pumps and a news item mentions that a large smokestack for the mill was turned out. The original building was replaced by a larger one which, after the failure of the company, was used as a garage by W. R. Gibson, then by Harry Hoover. Later, when the property was bought for army purposes, the structure was demolished.

William Whiteford, his brother Adam, and father, Adam Sr., came to the Virden district in 1884 and took up farming. Adam stayed with this occupation, his son continuing after him, until two years ago when he accepted a position in town. William Jr. went into another career, however, though his Justice Measure was conceded to be a useful invention. He held the position of secretary of Virden and the municipality of Wallace from 1913 to 1937 inclusive.

Another son of Adam Whiteford Sr. later came to the district and took up farming for a time but joined the western exodus.

Creamery

The creamery has always been on its present site which is conveniently located for all outlying districts. The situation was probably chosen also for its generous supply of clear water. The business in the first place was organized by J. A. McLachlan, W. A. Bridgett and others. Mr. Light, Mr. Joyce and Mr. Wrighton were some of the early butter-makers. In 1912 the Holland Creamery took over and was succeeded in 1922 by the Brandon Creamery under Mr. Fotheringham. D'Alton Power bought out this company's interest in 1935 and is still in control. He likes Virden, he says, and has no intention of leaving it. This creamery supplies butter to world markets and has won prizes. It also supplies ice cream for local demand.

Livestock Industries

As the country presented favorable conditions for stock-raising and as a number of the early farmers were interested in this branch of agriculture, it was not long before they were able to meet eastern demand by shipping car-loads of cattle. At the same time there was the business of importing horses, numbers of which were needed in the extension of railway construction. Also increased settlement and the consequent growth of the agricultural industry created further demand for horses, most farmers making a special effort to improve the strain of their stock. So the slatted stock cars became a common sight among the box cars of a freight train, and frequently a whole train would be devoted to this purpose. A man or men in charge would be provided with accommodation as it was necessary to have some one to care for the animals on the way and to conduct negotiations at their destination.

Sometimes a carload of swine would be included. On one occasion an accident in the railway yards of a small town smashed the car in which the porkers were travelling. Although, fortunately, there were few fatalities, the town was filled with squealing pigs running in all directions pursued by shouting citizens and Indians from a near by reserve. If the pigs had been greased, a holiday spectacle on a large scale would have been the result. As it was, they were finally rounded up after having provided participants and spectators with some excitement and a unique entertainment.

Among early stock buyers of the Virden district were D. McLean and J. R. Mullins whose brother, H. A. Mullins, later becoming a member of the Dominion senate, conducted an extensive business, J. R. being manager of the Virden area. The latter served a year on the council and two years as mayor, and his daughters were prominent in musical affairs.

James and H. C. (Harvey) Simpson conducted horse-buying on a large scale, bringing in large importations of eastern horses. Both men represented Virden constituency in the provincial legislature. Harvey was chairman of the committee that organized the first hospital. He also served on the village council and was overseas in World War I. The life of his only son was sacrificed in the same war. Members of his family were prominent in musical affairs, his youngest daughter becoming a prominent violinist in Vancouver. A younger brother of James and Harvey taught in Virden when there was only a two-room school, later becoming a leading surgeon in Winnipeg and serving in the first war.

The Simpson Bros. had taken up land in the Laggan district which proved of use in their business. In addition to their dealings in stock, Harvey added farm investments but among many others was caught when the slump came in land values. He and his family continued to live in Virden until after the first war when they retired to Vancouver.

Other horse dealers were J. Blakeman, I. J. Bennett, T. A. Megaffin, Jno. and Jos. Gibson and in general stock buying, D. McIntosh, Geo. Lidster, T. Cook, S. Elliott, Sam Jones, A. Finch, Keedwell Bros., and S. Katz. In modern times horses are being exported.

The Kinney Hatcheries on Queen Street have been a great help to those interested in poultry raising.

ELECTRICITY

When electricity was introduced into the town, two types of wiring were used—one for lighting and a heavier type for equipment such as ranges. Cost of service was high so most people were content to have only lighting, but it was not long before various appliances were installed, the first owners of ranges being considered very advanced indeed. As the use of appliances became more general, the lighter wiring was removed, only the heavier being retained. Those who took

initial steps in providing the town with this modern convenience were T. B. Mitchell and W. N. Miller but the business developed rapidly including Delco plants on farms and so furnished employment for a succession of skilled workers some of whom can be named: Charlie Hyde, Bill McCreary, Dave Forster, Jack Wadham, Hilton Ashton, A. W. Sararas, Cook's Electric, John Cockbill, and Virden Television.

PLUMBING

A hardware store frequently had on its staff a tinsmith who attended to making and repairing utensils and to other jobs that entailed the use of sheet metal. With the rapid change in heating systems, and the introduction of plumbing, it can readily be seen that this business could rapidly extend itself. Along its changing route occurred the names of Ivan Caldwell, H. Sutcliffe, Bill Waldy, John Bradley, Sing Cope, Ben Golding, Walter Cameron, Ed Penny, Stan Eley, and Virden Sheet Metal Co. With latest developments, go the names of J. Stacey, S. Campbell, Neale, Stothard and Chapman, McBain Hardware Ltd., F. Gallant, and A. K. Duncan. Here again is clearly indicated the progress of seventy-five years.

PUMPWORKS AND WELL DIGGING

In early days the making of wooden pumps required special skill and as there was great demand, this trade offered lucrative prospects. George Rockola was a pump maker. Williams was another man who engaged in the trade. He eventually took up providing iron pumps which was a step upward in equipment.

Well digging, too, was work at which a man could make a living, and not too onerous as water could be found almost anywhere in Virden or in the country around at a comparatively shallow depth. This occupation was of vital importance to every farmer and in every section of the town. Sometimes it was carried on as a side line by an individual who had the necessary skill and knowledge. Others made a business of it, among whom were Robt. Best, W. Priestley and Sam Campbell.

Robert Best was a pioneer farmer but a well-digger by trade and after settling in Virden became a dealer in real estate. He was one of the town's characters. He took a great interest in public affairs and liked nothing better than to get into an argument concerning local regulations. On the other hand he was a willing helper in time of trouble. With no local hospital and practically all nursing being done in the homes, he sat through many a night caring for a sick patient. A little story to show how well his reputation was known for helpfulness: When a small girl fell into the creek her smaller sister, jumping up and down with excitement and terror, cried "Somebody run for Bobby Best. Somebody run for Bobby Best." It was a heartfelt tribute to his helpful spirit. Mr. Best's only son, with so many of the other boys who had been his pals, sacrificed his life in the first war.

HOUSE PAINTING AND DECORATING

Though house painting and home decorating were to some extent "do-it-yourself" jobs, still with all the building going on there was always a demand for specialists in these lines. A. Murdoch and J. A. McLachlan were pioneers in painting. George Beeson came later and today there are Ron Fergusson, Merv. Colter and J. A. Lewis. In decorating there were Harman Bros., Matt Creelman, E. W. Forster and George Blewett, now J. A. Lewis and Wm. Dawson.

CABINET WORK

There was also some demand for fine wood-working or cabinet making. Good examples of W. Burton's work are to be found in St. Mary's Anglican Church. N. B. Walker was another who specialized in this type of work. After the second war the Virden Cabinet Shop was set up in what had formerly been Jack McLeod's blacksmith shop and turned out many useful articles. The disappearance of the old-fashioned pantry and its replacement by many cupboards, made a change in kitchen equipment. Here, too, was a chance for a do-it-yourself job in furniture making stimulated by the placing of manual training on school curriculums. Alfred Featherstone and Tom Nelson were specialists in this sort of work and Dennis Bowles has a shop on 5th Avenue.

BARBERS

Evidently Virden citizens had a flair for neatness for barber shops flourished from an early date, even though much of this business was done in homes. It must be remembered that moustaches and beards were in style and for a man to look his best these had to be carefully trimmed. W. F. Carefoot, advertising his "hairdressing and shaving parlors" in May, 1891, stated that he provided "hot and cold baths, clean towels and good razors," the last of which would be a particularly comforting item to his customers. In 1889, T. R. Goyet had advertised simply "baths." Citizens continued to enjoy good service in this line by such men as Sam Donaldson, "Professor" Jones, W. Carefoot, Jack McAlpine, Lou Bird, Ed. Rainey, Jack Stacey, Harrison Haight, Ted Treliving, Ed. Hamm, Roy Stinson and Art Joerger.

BEAUTY SHOPS

Women's "hairdressing parlors" became general before the first war when waves and curls were made by the use of hot irons. Facials and manicures by experts, the introduction of bobbed hair and the invention of permanents boosted the hairdressing parlor to the status of a beauty shop, soon to become known as a beauty salon, which it was in fact as well as in name. Many a woman issued from its ministrations, not only improved in appearance but feeling that she had been given an

uplift of spirit. J. Stacey was the first to open such a shop; Mrs. Haight followed soon after, then Mrs. Kyte. Glad's Harper-Method salon is a more recent addition.

LIQUOR BUSINESS

As early as 1885, J. Caulfield had a grocery and liquor business. A special issue of the Advance of June 29th, 1898, records that in 1884 R. E. Trumbell had a wholesale liquor store or warehouse on 7th Avenue with a branch store in Moosomin. After Mr. Trumbell's death, the business was conducted by W. W. Joslin who moved from the west side of 7th to the Cain Block where Victoria Billiard Hall now is. The public was served in the bars of the hotels. A bar was not furnished with stools but had a brass footrail running its length and was further enhanced by a long mirror on the wall behind it.

Prohibition put an end to liquor store and bars, but the prohibition machine slipped a cog when Government liquor stores were instituted and another cog with the introduction of beer parlors. The new legislation which allows increased outlets being brought into force in Manitoba seems to have put the old gears completely out of operation and it is too early to know how effective will be the machine constructed upon the new regulations.

BANKS

To help settlers finance the erection of buildings and the buying of stock and equipment, various private individuals advertised money to loan. In 1888, Robert Adamson announced the opening of a private bank under his own name. The general rate of interest was 7 or 8 per cent. In November, 1891, a branch of the Commercial Bank of Canada was opened in Virden with Mr. Adamson as manager. This bank, however, was a failure and the closing of the Virden branch brought losses to many citizens. An item states that the school board lost \$350.00 but many other depositors were more seriously affected.

The Union Bank was opened in the stone building beside the present Bank of Nova Scotia and was housed there until the corner block was built on the site of what had been Forster's Shoe Store and now Bank of Nova Scotia. H. J. Pugh was an early, if not its first manager. He was followed by J. V. Harrison. The Union was merged about 1925 with the Royal, continuing under the latter name with Alex McIntyre as manager followed by A. E. Ivey.

The Bank of Ottawa was opened about 1904 in a new block on Nelson Street next to the present Bank of Commerce. This was destroyed by fire in January, 1911, was rebuilt on practically the same plan and re-occupied by the bank. In April, 1919, the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Bank of Ottawa were amalgamated, continuing under the name of the former. The Virden branch was closed in June, 1924, the managers

during this period having been T. M. Hyndman 1904-1911, A. G. Dunnett 1911-1913 and R. L. Gutsell 1913-1924.

The Canadian Bank of Commerce opened its first office in the Cain Block with Mr. White as manager, until the B. Meek property, corner of 7th and Nelson, was acquired and a new block erected thereon. An addition was added later, fronting on Nelson. Managers who in turn conducted the Bank's business were F. G. Biggar, D. M. Kydd, J. Hood, John Caw, E. J. Nicholson, N. C. Macpherson.

During the years of depression, banks by mutual arrangement closed many of their branch offices. Virden was left with only the Bank of Commerce in operation until 1951 the Bank of Nova Scotia re-opened a branch in what had formerly been the Union-Royal quarters. W. A. Thompson was the first manager of the branch, the position now being held by R. S. Spragg.

A tribute is due the managers. They have been men who have been active in various community interests—sports, hospital, music, Chamber of Commerce and have been popular in town and district. John Caw who retired some years ago, still lives in town and takes part in its activities.

INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE

In the early days of settlement no doubt fire risk presented the first call for insurance. Fire was a real menace and a constant cause of anxiety. Those were the days when tall buildings or isolated buildings bristled with lightning rods and farmsteads were protected by having wide fire-guards plowed round them. Dangers from earth and sky, added to frequent occurrence of accidents in the homes, made fire insurance a popular investment. Life insurance came next on the list.

Companies soon had their agents at work, an individual frequently combining his work with some other occupation, the home being used as an office. In 1897 Walter Alliot had an advertisement for accountancy and fire insurance. In 1906 the names of James Bremner and John Schultz were mentioned. The latter two were long time residents of Virden, each of them spending the last of their years in the town.

Increase in population, property and variety of risks undertaken, necessitated the opening of regular offices where full-time service could be given. Shel McNicol of a pioneer Pipestone family conducted such a business, then went to Winnipeg. After returning from World War II, Don Whiteford took over and in addition to his business has been president of the Chamber of Commerce and is now secretary-manager of the central committee in charge of Virden's anniversary celebration. His organizing ability has been of great value to the town on many occasions.

R. V. Andrew, also a veteran of the war, has taken over the office on Nelson Street opened by his father years before and Vern now has his son, Bob, as assistant, another three generation firm that gives a

quality of stability to business in Virden. With insurance they combine real estate and travel service.

D. J. Reid who operates an insurance and real estate office on 7th Avenue, served in the first World War. After being on the council for three years, he succeeded to the Mayor's chair in 1953 since when he has served the town in that capacity through the difficult years of economic re-adjustment. He comes of an interesting family connected with the town in various ways. His father, William Reid, and two brothers, Alex and John, came from Scotland. William took up farming, working at first for other farmers, notably W. J. Kennedy on the land now occupied by Roy Gerrand. When he set up his own place at Hargrave he not only had a practical knowledge of crop raising but became famous in the district for his Clydesdale horses and was elected president of the Horse Breeders' Club. In 1932 he was honored as a Master Farmer. For some years he and his wife have been retired, living in Virden. A younger son, Bill, after serving in the second war tried business in Virden but returned to the army to make it his profession.

Alex Reid followed his brother's example in choosing farming, an occupation that is now carried on by his son, Andrew. A daughter, Janet, is on the staff of Virden's Public School, and a daughter, Helen, is a partner in the firm of Rothnie and Reid. For many years Jack Reid was a well known figure about town, plying his trade as carpenter, contributing his part to the building of many of Virden's homes and of the wooden bridges that were an important feature in the transportation system before concrete bridges came into general use.

George Shoemaker with a business on Wellington Street is of pioneer stock on both sides—the Mooneys of Virden and Woodnorth and the Shoemakers of the Scarth-Woodnorth district. His parents, retired, are living in Virden. It is interesting to note the number of descendants of pioneers who have stayed with the district either in agriculture or other occupations.

Stan Horner and Mrs. Bessie Brown are also engaged in insurance business.

ACCOUNTANCY

While businesses were small there was little demand for help from special accountants. Municipalities and school boards maintained their own treasurers. As business expanded, various individuals found that they could obtain part time jobs in book-keeping, which in some cases finally developed into full-time occupation.

In March, 1946, the G. M. Horne Company, chartered accountants, in Winnipeg, opened an office in Virden. May 1st, 1948, they moved into their present location on Raglan Street. Their first employee in Virden was Earl Ellsworth and their staff now consists of Mr. Ellsworth and Harold Walker.

VETERINARIES

In a country so quickly developing in stock raising, the services of a veterinary surgeon at once became a necessity. Many a farmer had acquired a working knowledge of treatment required for the various illnesses of animals, and in the true spirit of the times, he was always prepared to help his neighbor but nevertheless ministrations of an expert were often needed. Some of those who took over this responsibility through a period of years were Spiers and Whimster, Cook, Snider, Ballard, McMillan, H. N. Thompson, his two sons, Ken and Stan who went to B.C., and a third son, D. C., who since his father's death in 1953 has been the sole representative for the district. These men have always had to travel great distances in all sorts of weather; their working time has been twenty-four hours a day when needed but their contribution to one of Manitoba's leading primary professions has been great.

Dr. H. N. Thompson was greatly missed in town affairs. He was a member of the council in 1917 and '18, mayor during 1919 and '20 and again mayor in 1952 and '53.

DENTISTRY, OPTOMETRY, CHIROPRACTIC

Time was when a cavity in an aching tooth received home treatment by being plugged with cotton batting soaked in laudanum. Batting was usually on hand for quilt making and a tiny bottle of laudanum was often an item in the family medicine supply. If this treatment, together with the application of heat, was not effective, usually the tooth would be extracted by the family doctor. These drastic measures were replaced by expert dental treatment.

The settlement of the west brought opportunities for practice so graduates of dental colleges soon opened offices at various points. Virden was lucky in having J. H. Proctor, a dental surgeon from Scotland, who from 1882 farmed at Two Creeks, but who came to town two days a week for the practice of his profession. When he retired from the farm, he built the stone house at the extreme south-west corner of the town. Dr. McGinnis also came from Brandon at stipulated times.

The trend was all for fillings, the mediums used being gold, silver and a less popular white substance called composition. Gold was used on front teeth, and as a result when a patient emerged from the dentist's office he would greet the friends he met with a relieved and glittering smile. The owner of a gold-crowned molar felt that he possessed something of which to be proud.

Then the realization came that diseased tonsils and infected teeth

were a menace to general health, so it became customary to remove the tonsils and extract the teeth if the latter showed evidence of infection. The former operation proved to be beneficial so has been largely retained but the latter has been moderated through the use of medication and improved methods of treatment. The successful results of modern dental skill are amply illustrated in modern photography. At the present time there is a controversy regarding the use of fluoridized water to prevent decay.

From the days of J. J. Proctor and Dr. McGinnis, Virden has been kept up to date by the following resident dentists—Fitzpatrick, F. Morrison, R. Morrison, Dunsmore, McNicol, Strachan, Bradley and Stockton. Of these Dr. McNicol was from Pipestone and Dr. Strachan from Hamiota. Jack Bradley was a Virden boy whose father was for many years a citizen of the town. Dr. Stockton is interested in matters of sport, taking a prominent place in the Virden Flying Club.

After disposing of his jewellery business to R. J. Timms, Geo. Gabel retained an office for optometry until he retired to Peterborough, Ontario, since when Roy Brown, optometrist, has had an office in the Timms' Building.

For some years a succession of chiropractors has operated in Virden, Dr. E. R. Plewes being at present in practice.

PHOTOGRAPHY

In the early eighties photography was still in the stiff posture stage. The subject had to hold a pose rigidly through the few seconds' exposure of the plate. To help him accomplish this, a heavy iron stand of adjustable height was placed at his back. This forked at the top into two curved prongs into which the back of the head fitted firmly. Thus supported, he could sit or stand through the ordeal. The subject was always told to "look pleasant" but never hilarious. Teeth were discreetly hidden but mustaches were on display, varying from the long drooping variety to that with the stiffly waxed points; beards professionally trimmed or falling in patriarchal style over the shirt fronts; flowing side whiskers or trim side-burns; women's hair in coils or braids or curls. Women's dresses possessed many drapes and frills and furbelows. Men's attire was snug fitting, embellished by a gold watch chain, attached at one end with a fob to a vest button-hole, at the other to the watch, a time-piece of substantial proportions which dropped into a side pocket of the vest. Sometimes this chain was of double length carrying, perhaps, a bunch of keys which dropped into a pocket at the other side. Such a chain gave a great note of dignity to a full-figure photograph. An advantage about the men's styles of that day was the greater choice available when selecting Christmas presents

for them. Besides the time honored ties and socks, dressing gowns, smoking jackets (a version of the "leisure coats" of today) and other articles of attire, a watch-fob could be chosen, a stick-pin for the tie, cuff links or a moustache cup. Such a cup was practically a necessity for the man with a luxuriant drooping moustache. It enabled him to take his tea or coffee without undue inconvenience; soup being taken by means of a spoon, the facial adornment could at the same time be held up daintily by a finger of the other hand.

By the time the first resident photographer came to Virden, postures had become more relaxed. Men still wore their hirsute adornments but women's hair styles had changed, the pompadour becoming popular. This consisted in brushing the front hair smoothly over a pad called a rat and tucking it in skillfully so that the rat would not have any chance to peep slyly from some unsuspected opening. Frills and draperies were being replaced by the snug bodice with leg-o-mutton sleeves and high boned collar and the wide "gored" but plain skirt, still worn at instep length.

A. D. Cooper arrived in the mid-nineties and set up his studio. Then he erected the building, now the dry-cleaners, with a large glass enclosed addition at the back, which resembled a conservatory and had a clever arrangement of awnings worked with ropes and pulleys to control lights. The studio was furnished with several professional props one being a wicker chair or settee with an elaborate back ornately patterned with curves and scrolls. Another chair or two, an ottoman, a couple of tables, a back screen of cloudy grey all to be used in a discretionary manner, completed the furnishings. The idea of course was to have the subject stand out in prominence against his surroundings, but sometimes the wicker chair stole the show.

Mr. Cooper took an interest in various community affairs, was a member of the council in 1898 and '99 and conducted business over a large surrounding area. He was succeeded by Mr. Honey who after operating for a few years, joined the popular trek to Salmon Arm, B.C.

When Frank Weekes came, he established a studio on 7th Avenue in the building that recently became Fitzpatrick's tailor shop. Frank was an artist in posing and in obtaining effects of light and shade. His genius was widely recognized. He removed his business to Brandon where he operated for some years, and later moved to the east.

By the time his successor Mr. Henfrey came, privately owned cameras had become general, snap-shots were all the rage and amateur photography flourished. This must have greatly affected the business of professionals but Mr. Henfrey gained a reputation as being particularly successful in developing and printing reels supplied by amateurs; however he moved on to wider spheres leaving the field open to the

amateurs. Then Merv. Watt, having made a special study of the subject, used it as a side line, turning out remarkable and beautiful views of Virden and vicinity.

There still being a demand for professional type pictures of individuals, groups, weddings and special community events, Walter Stradchuk opened a business in the stone bank block on Nelson Street and since he left Stanley Hordichuk has operated a studio on Wellington Street.

CHAPTER 6

FORTUNES

Several former Virdenites have made fortunes outside of Virden which have put them in the millionaire class.

George Rockola, who was a pioneer pump maker in Virden in 1892, had four sons who were of an inventive turn of mind. For two years, about 1908, Ernie worked for the Virden Manufacturing Co. which manufactured the Whiteford Justice Measure. In 1910 the four boys went west. Eddie and Ernie homesteaded in Saskatchewan, Dave and Edison worked in Calgary and Edmonton. The latter finally moved to Halifax, N.S., where he is now, the owner of Auto Parts Co. Ltd. Dave went to Chicago where he eventually invented and manufactured an automatic phonograph known as the Rock-Ola Juke Box. This has a world-wide distribution, and has placed Dave in a high financial position.

Ernie made his way from the Saskatchewan homestead to Chicago, where, influenced perhaps by his farming experience, he invented and manufactured in St. Paul, Minn., what was known as the Rockola Grain Treater which sells throughout farming districts in U.S.A. and Canada.

These boys went to school in Virden, and to claim a little reflected credit for the town, it is possible that during their days in the old stone schools some seed of learning entering their fertile brains may have helped later to produce that inventive genius.

In 1925 Eddie Rockola passed away but their sister, Mrs. Russell Anderson still lives in Virden.

Jack Forster, son of E. W. Forster, was a partner in the discovery of the rich copper deposits near Geraldton, Ontario, which brought him into the limelight through the press a few years ago. He had already been successful in a General Motors Agency and two garages in Geraldton.

He became associated with two prospectors and with them entered upon a mining venture. Being able to fly a plane, he flew them in and out from the claims and when finally they struck it rich, he shared in the profits. He, his wife and family now live in Toronto from where he controls a large business. They still maintain their summer home

at Geraldton. Jack attended school in Virden and two brothers have for long had a place in the town, Charlie conducting the pool room where his father operated, and Dave formerly carrying on an electrical business.

Dr. Ballard, who practiced as a veterinary in Virden for a time, brought on to the market a dog-food highly advertised throughout the west, which has brought him a fortune. He lives in Vancouver.

CHAPTER 7

LAW AND MEDICINE

Two young lawyers who opened permanent offices in Virden in the early days were H. H. Goulter and J. H. Agnew. The latter, a son of a Brandon doctor, eventually had his office in the Cain Block where he practised successfully, until entering politics in 1903. He was elected on a Conservative ticket to the Manitoba Legislature. In 1904 he was appointed Provincial Treasurer, and won his by-election by acclamation. He took into partnership a young lawyer, A. W. Smith, who assumed charge when Mr. Agnew and his family moved to Winnipeg. They were greatly missed in cultural circles of the town, especially in the support they gave in the organization of musical productions. Mr. Agnew again won in the 1907 elections but, with a promising career before him, he died the following year after a short illness. Mr. Smith continued the practice for some years, later transferring to Brandon. He was succeeded by J. A. Pritchard who, as a young man, came from England and worked for a time on Bonaly Farm. A professional life appealed to him, however, so he articulated in law, took his degree and practiced in Virden until the time of his retirement to the west coast. His place was taken by A. B. Rutherford of Kenton who has been actively interested in many phases of community life. He opened an office on Nelson Street opposite the McBain Block where he is still engaged in practice.

H. H. Goulter, born in England, had settled in Portage la Prairie before coming to Virden where he was joined by his parents. They lived in the house on the south corner of 9th Avenue and Queen Street. Mr. Goulter was a leader in all cultural matters, also he was a charter member of the Virden Hospital Board and continued to give his services to that institution for many years. From a small office building on Nelson Street, he moved into commodious quarters in the block occupied by the Bank of Ottawa. Early partners were Jos. Singer and Hart McHarg. The former transferred his practice to Vancouver. The latter was among the first to enlist in the army in World War I and lost his life in an early engagement. J. H. Chalmers then became a partner and upon Mr. Goulter's retirement the firm became known as Chalmers and Brayfield. Mr. Chalmers was interested in town matters, served on the council for four years and was mayor in 1922. He took over the Land Titles office until it was closed. When the Quick-Freeze Centre acquired the former bank block, Mr. Brayfield had his office for a time in the former Union Bank building on the corner of 7th Avenue

and Nelson Street but moved to the original post-office building which he had purchased.

The discovery of oil brought up many additional legal problems of rights and titles so Mr. Brayfield took as partner J. C. Doak and when the former retired through ill health, taking up residence in Victoria, B.C., a new partner was accepted so that the firm is now known as Brayfield, Doak and Buckingham.

Something keenly felt by pioneer settlers was the lack of available medical service, Brandon being the nearest point from which such service was obtainable. During construction days and even when a more or less reliable train service as far as Virden had been established, construction trains and freight trains were sometimes used for emergency travel, a caboose providing quite comfortable accommodation. The hand pumped hand-car and later the gas car were also at times pressed into emergency use. For twenty years Virden had no hospital service nearer than Brandon.

Perhaps during the early years no group had to struggle more continuously with primitive working conditions and dangers of climate and travel than the pioneer country medical practitioners. Fresh air and the great outdoors could be pleasant in summer and early fall, prairie trails frequently making smoother travelling than the later graded roads. Spring, with a period when there was neither sleighing nor wheeling, brought the menace of sudden thaws or frosts. A road passable on the out-trip might be flooded upon returning, grades covered by water and culverts washed out thus necessitating dangerous detours, or horses might find themselves breaking through a covering of ice on what had been an open slough, resulting in injuries requiring veterinary aid. Winter, of course, brought the worst dangers with blizzards and blocked roads. As illness takes no notice of the hands of the clock, many trips were made during the long nights of winter. As there was no municipal or other guarantee, except in exceptional cases, for payment of medical fees, doctors bore on their own shoulders the expense of medical service for the indigent which during the years of depression was indeed a heavy burden. When both town and country settlers were hard pressed to meet payments on property, equipment and stock, it became a common saying that the doctor's bill was the last one to be paid.

In spite of dangers and drawbacks there were men to be found who, true to the principles of their calling, would brave these hardships in order to serve their fellow men in distress.

Dr. Matheson's name was the earliest of which mention has been made. An early news item states that Virden had "four doctors"—Gemmell, Young, Baird and Large. The last two did not remain. Dr. Gemmell started his own drug business which he sold to Robert Steele. Dr. Goulding also practiced for a time.

Dr. George Young came from the old settlement of Millford, near

Treesbank, later to become one of Manitoba's ghost-towns, made known to the public through its association with the life of Nellie McClung. Dr. Young had a territory that stretched southwest to the boundaries and many were the stories told of his adventures on the hazardous trails. He owned two dogs that travelled with him tucked in the bottom of the cutter in cold weather. John McIntosh often acted as his driver and on some of the winter drives, Dr. Young was apt to say to him, "Are you cold Jack? If so, just pull up another dog." Poultry raising was a favorite hobby with some of the citizens and on one occasion when an irate poultry fancier came to the house with belligerent protests regarding the damage done to his flocks by the Youngs' dogs, Mrs. Young, with the most innocent face in the world, was disclaiming the possibility of their canine pets having such an odious habit when one of the dogs rushed up, enthusiastically wagging his tail and holding a chicken in his mouth. Mrs. Young, nee Pineo, with the Pineo sense of humor, could not keep this happening to herself so it became one of the stories told about town.

But a night of tragedy came to Virden. James Schoenau was suffering from a serious illness and in the evening it showed some alarming symptoms. There were no phones so a messenger was at once dispatched for Dr. Young, but when his office was entered, the doctor was discovered lying dead. Mr. Schoenau an hour or two later passed away. The whole town was stunned by this sudden loss of two of its highly esteemed citizens.

Dr. Wm. Stevenson, had taken up practice in the town. He had five small daughters who acquired their education in Virden schools and grew up to be attractive young women, two of whom are still living. The untimely death of their father in one of the then prevalent typhoid epidemics and some years later the death of their mother caused the family to scatter.

A young man, Dr. Sparling, had also settled in practice and with the co-operation of Mrs. A. P. Stewart had established a hospital in a house owned by the Stewarts on 7th Avenue. This venture, however, had a short life as it was destroyed by fire, but fortunately without casualties. At the time of the fire the matron in charge was Miss Margaret McBride of Alexander, an aunt of Tom Morris, one of Virden's public-minded citizens. Dr. Sparling sought other fields for his skill and his place was taken by Dr. George Clingan. A graduate of Toronto Medical College, Dr. Clingan had been on the staff of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children when ill health compelled him to relinquish his chosen specialty so he came west to visit relatives. Change of climate, rest, and the prairie air were restorative, so upon Dr. Sparling's departure, Dr. Clingan established quarters over the post office, now Brayfield Building. In his case the bracing country drives, too, proved beneficial. When he married in 1902, he lived in the cottage opposite the firehall. It was rumored that he was taking the stone cottage beside the firehall, this property at the back being almost opposite Frank Menlove's which faced Nelson Street. Frank kept ducks and E. J. Scales, with his twinkling sense of humor, was heard to remark that the stone cottage would be a suitable place of residence for a doctor.

He would get a lot of free advertising for Menlove's ducks were always vociferously calling "Quack! Quack!" In 1906 Dr. Clingan built the house that is now the manse.

Dr. Langrill opened an office over H. D. Crowe's store and on his marriage built the house now occupied by Dr. R. S. Harris.

The second decade of the country including the war period brought many changes. Dr. St. John came from England and took up practice. Dr. Langrill accepted a position with the Health Department, Toronto, and was succeeded by Dr. O. S. Ross of Pipestone, who identified himself with various community activities, especially as member of the school board. When hostilities broke out, Dr. Clingan who had been with the 12th Manitoba Dragoons since settling in Virden, was appointed to recruit the 79th Overseas Battalion with head-quarters at Brandon. As assistant with his medical work he had Dr. Angus Murray, who later became a prominent bone specialist in Winnipeg; then Dr. G. B. McTavish who left to join the Army Medical Corps. Then Dr. Clingan employed as locum tenens during his absence overseas Dr. I. O. Fryer, now coroner for Winnipeg. During this period Dr. Mains and Dr. Gorrel practised for short terms in the town.

When the war was over, Dr. St. John remained in England, but Dr. Clingan returned to Virden to resume his practice. Dr. Fryer stayed until about ten years later when he went to Winnipeg and Dr. J. R. Monteith came in his stead. In World War II Dr. Monteith served in the air force. Later he became the leader in promoting the building of the new Virden and District Hospital. He conducted First Aid classes. He was interested and active in the formation of the Virden Local Health and Laboratory X-ray Unit in 1946 and was chairman of its Advisory Board from 1948 to 1953 inclusive.

During this time there were three doctors practicing in Virden until, in 1944, Dr. Clingan met his death in a motor accident—the third of Virden's doctors to die while in active practice. He had held the office of president of the Manitoba Medical Association and had had conferred upon him the honor of being appointed a Senior Member of the Canadian Medical Association. A baby incubator and plaque were placed to his memory in the hospital by friends. Among Virden's medical practitioners his family had a unique record. His daughter was born in Virden, his three grandchildren were born in the Virden Hospital and last year a little great granddaughter made her debut in life in the modern version of the same institution.

Ill health compelled Dr. Ross to forego active duty, so he retired to the coast, Dr. R. S. Harris taking his place. Dr. Monteith and Dr. Harris served town and district until in 1953 they formed the Virden Clinic and added Dr. Gorrie to the staff. They erected a modern and completely equipped building with Miss Janet Campbell as the nurse in charge.

These are the men who have seen the inhabitants of Virden and for many miles around through their growing pains, through their adult aches and distresses during the seventy-five years that have elapsed since Virden was first named as a townsite.

CHAPTER 8

RESUME AND A DIGRESSION

Owing to fluctuating personnel, it has been impossible to make a completely accurate review of the progress of business, trades, industries and professions which built up Virden. Information has been gathered piecemeal. The town depended upon agriculture and agriculture depended upon weather and markets. Settlement was not as rapid as had been expected in the first flush of enthusiasm. The whole of the west was opening up, presenting what appeared to be attractive opportunities. In Virden, partnerships were formed and dissolved, some businesses were sold out and bought by others, some were broken up into specialties; a few became bankrupt and disappeared. There has been no continuous record of all these changes. Nevertheless, though various details are missing, a fairly complete resume has been made of Virden's commercial and financial progress, together with the names of men who have contributed to this phase of the town's development.

The mention of Millford as a ghost town suggests that a digression may be in order. This prettily situated little hamlet began when the Assiniboine was still used for navigation and when branch line railways were only becoming a reality. No doubt it appealed to Dr. Young as an attractive location for practice, but development being more rapid along the main line of the C.P.R., he transferred his interest to Virden. Virden also had a direct connection with Manitoba's chief ghost town, Nelson, near Morden. The wife of H. J. Pugh, early manager of the Union Bank, was a Nelson, a member of the family that gave its name to this settlement. In the expectation that the south-western railway would run through its locale, the settlement had grown to the proportions of a village including some quite substantial buildings. The final survey for the railway set the route several miles to the south, so Nelson became a derelict. Some of the buildings were moved to other locations, some were left to fall into ruins.

Virden had connection with various unusual places off the beaten paths of contact. The Hosmers came from South Africa; the Robt. Hutchisons lived in Buenos Aires; the Symington Gerrands came up the Assiniboine, settled near Two Creeks, then went to Australia, expecting

to be set up in business, a plan that was not fulfilled so they returned to farm successfully near Virden; Rev. and Mrs. Hunter lived in Trinidad; Anna Jeffrey and Blanche Megaffin taught in Japan; Miss Bannerman in New Zealand; Dr. Rea, who was here as temporary Health Officer, had come from Siam in the far east and after leaving Virden eventually found himself head of the Gynaecological Department of the American Institute in Beirut, Lebanon. During the wars Dr. G. B. McTavish was posted to Egypt; Chris Dayton, Ceylon; George Clingan Jr. to Vladivostock; Bill Reid to Korea and the Kent Mill sent its products to Egypt, Canary Islands, Philippines and West Indies. This list could be extended indefinitely but even the items given show that Virden has not been kept too strictly within its local boundaris and the parts of the world with which it is constantly in contact.

CHAPTER 9

THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO THE COMMUNITY

In his narrative there has been little said up to the present about women's part in the settlement and development of the country. Nevertheless they were there as a driving force all the time. Their part was to establish substantial homes from primitive beginnings. They did much work that is today done by machinery. They baked and sewed and washed and on the farms they took charge of the dairy work, the garden and the poultry. While the farmer struggled to meet payments on stock and equipment, the grocery bill was often paid for in trade with the egg and butter money—later by the cream cheque and the fall turkey sale. Though sewing machines were in general use by the 80's, tubs and washboards were still part of the household equipment; introduction of wringers and hand-powered machines made a step forward. Electric washers and the use of detergents instead of soap practically did away with laundry work—according to advertisements—except for graceful, pretty women hanging immaculate washings on the line. Even that picturesque feature is being eliminated by the use of the electric dryer.

In butter making by means of the tedious old dasher-churn, even the younger members of the family would be pressed into service, little arms growing tired when the butter stubbornly refused to "come". With the introduction of gas-powered motors and, later, electrification, all work processes in the home seem to have been made as simple as possible.

Even when household tasks were at their heaviest, women found time to help each other, to promote religious services and to help in any welfare work that presented itself. As town and district developed, they showed themselves capable of organizing and carrying on church societies and indeed any society that stood for betterment of the community. They had only a small place in business life. School-teaching,

music teaching and the needle trades were mainly the only careers open to women but now they find themselves holding positions of prominence and responsibility undreamed of even fifty years ago. It is strange that Virden has only once had a woman representative on the school board, a field where a woman's work has often been found valuable, nor has a woman ever aspired to municipal honors. Succeeding chapters will show instances of where women have contributed outstanding services in many public undertakings.

CHAPTER 10

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

In 1882, Virden first appeared as a dot on the map of the County of Dennis. When in 1884, counties were dissolved and municipalities formed, Virden appeared as a slightly larger dot on the map of the Municipality of Wallace. This brought to Virden its third stroke of good fortune, the first being the fine type of settlers in the whole south-west area. The second the settlement's early railway facilities through its position on a transcontinental line and third, finding itself a unit in a municipality that always maintained a record for progressiveness and stability.

The reeve and council into whose untried hands was given the care of twelve townships in 1884 were:

Reeve—A. G. McDougall; Councillors—J. Frame, John Joslin, R. Bellamy, Thos. Tapp, K. N. McLeod, W. McLellan; Secretary—W. H. McDougall.

The reeve and secretary both held office until 1887 after which these offices were held in succession by:

Reeves—J. H. Frame, 1888 - 91; W. M. Cushing, 1892; W. M. Crosby, 1893 - 95; G. A. Freeman, 1896 - 1900; John Joslin, 1901 - 1902; Amos Odell, 1903 - 04—also 1922; Chris Stinson, 1905 - 07; C. E. Ivens, 1908 - 43 (except in 1922); H. C. Odell, 1944 to present. Secretaries—A. G. McDougall, 1888 - 1907; J. F. C. Menlove, 1907 - 11; T. Lloyd, 1912; Wm. Whiteford, 1913 - 1937; Assistant E. Anderson, 1922 - 37; E. Anderson, 1938 to present.

As councillors dropped out from time to time, new ones elected to take their places were:

1885 H. Chrisp, J. H. Angus, G. Wood
1886 Geo. Dier
1887 Jos. Younge
1889 D. McDonald
1890 R. Turnbull
1891 W. Wood
1893 W. Lund, W. Whiteford
1898 F. H. Thomas
1899 T. Cusack

1900 W. G. Onions, W. G. Tinline
 1901 A. P. Stewart
 1902 E. A. C. Hosmer, Wm. Barr
 1903 John Haw, J. H. Miller
 1905 W. Davey, G. Carefoot
 1906 W. J. Bray, Wm. Hopps
 1908 A. Bergmon, Ed Naylen, J. T. Crosby
 1914 W. Lasby
 1915 J. J. O'Neil, N. J. Nelson, G. E. Blakeman
 1917 H. Larmer, G. J. Swan
 1918 W. J. Chapple, H. J. Wood
 1920 M. Black
 1921 Chas. Kerr, J. Ruddick
 1923 J. W. Clark
 1924 H. E. Green
 1925 W. H. Mitchell
 1926 R. T. Nichol
 1933 Wm. Morton
 1942 W. J. Johnson
 1944 G. H. Younge
 1945 G. A. Grieve
 1946 W. G. Heaman
 1948 Lyman Tapp, W. G. Montgomery
 1949 M. J. Edgar
 1950 Wm. Glendinning
 1954 A. J. Kendall
 1956 Wm. Bond
 1957 The Council now comprises
 Reeve H. C. Odell
 Councillors Lyman Tapp, Gordon Heaman,
 Hercules Wood, Mac Edgar, Wm. Bond,
 George Grieve with Secretary E. Anderson.

Three times Wallace Council has had the distinction of having had elected from its membership the president of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities—Secretary J. F. C. Menlove, Reeve C. E. Ivens and Reeve H. C. Odell.

By 1886 Virden began to exhibit some troublesome problems of its own. There was the ever present menace of fire. In that year the dwellers in the hamlet met and formed not a fire brigade for they had no official standing and no equipment, but they pledged themselves to turn out to fires to fight with "whatever equipment was at hand." There was displayed the embryo spirit from which has grown Virden's Fire Brigade of today.

School accommodation and sanitary measures required attention. Real property and streets needed supervision. A resident could not have a garden until he had fenced his holding to protect it from straying livestock. Even a fence did not keep the neighbors' chickens from scratching up freshly sown seeds and little seedlings. Dr. Young's were not the only dogs that carried warfare against chickens, so dogs attacked the chickens and chickens damaged the gardens. At times a cow would

Another disturbance of the peace, that caused complaint among the inhabitants was the custom of young bloods from another district staging a semi-wild-west show in the wee sma' hours of a holiday night--no firearms but plenty of whoopee. All these irregularities showed the necessity for regulations and for a supervisor who would see that they were observed.

Revenue

Licenses:	2 hotels @ 50.00	100.00
	1 wholesale liquor store	75.00
	2 boarding houses @ 10.00	20.00
	2 livery stables @ 25.00	50.00
	1 drayman @ 25.00	25.00
	1 billiard room	15.00
	Dog taxes	50.00

\$686.25

Secretary-Treasurer	\$150.00
Assessor	25.00
Health and Nuisance Inspector	30.00
Books, stationery	50.00
Rent of office	15.00

270.00

Estimated Surplus	\$416.25
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\$686.25

On Friday, August 15th, a well attended public meeting was held at which each member present wrote five names of his own choice on

a ballot, the one receiving the most votes to be mayor, the succeeding four to be councillors. This resulted in the following slate:

Mayor, R. Adamson; Councillors, J. J. Dunlop, B. Meek, H. C. Simpson, W. J. Kennedy.

In this manner the first election was conducted and thus Virden emerged from its infancy and found itself standing upon its own two feet.

When the first general election took place in the fall to select a mayor and council for 1891, the same group was returned with the exception of J. J. Dunlop who resigned, T. Jones being elected in his stead. The Secretary-Treasurer for Wallace took on the same duties for the village, an arrangement that has been maintained ever since.

Fire protection was one of the first problems to be discussed. A steam engine was considered too expensive for a village; chemical engine also was considered. Forty signed up provided council could provide equipment. Officers were: Chief, D. McDonald; First Lieutenant, J. W. Higginbotham; Second, Jas. Bolton; Secretary, Ed. Stanley; Treasurer, T. Jones. Planting of trees by residents of village and farms was urged.

Those who succeeded Robt. Adamson as mayor of the village were:

1893 W. J. Kennedy
1895 B. F. Foster
1897 B. Meek
1898 D. McDonald

Councillors elected to take the places of some who resigned:

1892 R. Bellamy, B. G. Foster
1893 J. D. McNiven, P. B. H. Ramsay, W. G. Wyatt
1894 Geo. Carefoot, J. Caulfield
1895 B. Meek, P. B. H. Ramsay, J. A. Merrick and
G. Coulter
1896 W. W. Joslin
1897 W. D. Wilson
1898 A. D. Cooper
1899 F. R. McLellan, J. H. Agnew
1900 J. A. Blakeman
1901 R. Langtry
1902 S. S. Colter
1903 J. F. C. Menlove, W. H. Ireland, John Joslin

In 1904 Virden qualified for incorporation as a town and in office that year were: Mayor, D. McDonald; Councillors, R. Langtry, John Joslin, Fred Palmer, J. A. Blakeman.

The fall elections returned as the first to take charge of town affairs for 1905: Mayor, R. Langtry; Councillors, J. A. Blakeman, F. W. Clingan, W. A. Bridgett, J. F. C. Menlove.

Succeeding Mayors of the town were:

1906 J. A. Blakeman
1908 Dr. Geo. Clingan
1910 J. R. Mullins
1912 W. A. Bridgett
1913 T. A. Carscadden
1914 T. B. Mitchell
1917 D. S. Carnahan
1919 Dr. H. N. Thompson
1922 J. H. Chalmers
1923 Jas. Gardner
1925 Jas. E. Rothnie
1926 Jas. Gardner
1932 A. E. Higginbotham
1936 Geo. Gabel
1942 Dr. H. N. Thompson
1947 R. J. Timms
1948 Jas. Gardner
1950 C. Moore
1952 Dr. H. N. Thompson
1953 D. J. Reid to present time

Other councillors who took a turn at shouldering the responsibility of conducting town business were:

1906 J. J. Bennett, Dr. Geo. Clingan, Wm. Pineo
1907 J. H. Schmidt, T. A. Megaffin
1908 H. A. Brine, J. R. Duke, T. B. Mitchell
1909 J. R. Mullins, W. S. Clark
1910 T. A. Carscadden
1911 J. A. McLachlan, D. H. Golding, D. M. Handy
1916 E. H. Palmer
1917 J. H. Chalmers
1920 B. J. McCormick
1921 Jas. E. Rothnie
1922 Dr. I. O. Fryer, T. H. Clements
1923 Geo. Gabel
1926 A. E. Higginbotham
1929 W. R. Gibson, R. N. Roddy
1930 Geo. Clark
1936 R. Sumner
1938 D'Alton Power, S. G. McNicol
1942 E. A. Megaffin, R. E. McGuffin
1943 J. H. McEwen
1947 Wm. Jones
1948 A. R. Hales
1950 D. J. Reid
1952 D. G. (Gordon) McDonald
1953 J. J. O'Neil
1954 Fred McDougall
1955 J. C. Cory, C. S. Coleman
1956 Ralph Atkinson, Alex Gardner

In office this years, 1957, are Mayor, D. J. Reid; Councillors, Ralph Atkinson, Alex Gardner, Wm. Burnside, C. S. Coleman, with E. Anderson still as Secretary-Treasurer.

Sometimes a councillor would take office for a certain purpose. I. J. Bennett was interested in improving the appearance of the town. Boulevards, tree-planting, sidewalks were his chief concerns. He was responsible for damming the creek near Queen Street bridge to make an artificial pond. Lac du Bonnet was much in the public eye at that time and someone dubbed the pond "Lac du Bennett" but it was more tersely named by the children who played about it as "Ike's Lake." Dry seasons, however, with stagnant water put an end to its usefulness, but others of his projects were more lasting.

Dr. Clingan took office with the idea of giving the town a better sanitary system which continued in use for years until further improvements came about.

J. A. McLachlan, long a patron of dramatic art, had an ambition to supply Virden with a theatre that would be ample for the needs of the community. The old town hall (Legion Hall) which had been a wonderful boon from the time of its erection, could no longer give adequate service for all requirements. The result of Mr. McLachlan's efforts was the Auditorium Theatre, an addition to the firehall, providing what was long known as the best theatre between Winnipeg and Regina not only for seating capacity but for commodious stage accommodation. The building has many times over justified itself by housing many travelling or local dramatic and musical performances, school entertainments of past times, the Music and Arts Festival of today, public meetings, religious services as well as the long program of movies put on by the lessees of the theatre.

The time given by men who have undertaken the burden of town government works out to an average of about five years each but as a certain percentage were on duty for only one or two, it means that others served for a longer term, either consecutively or coming back after an interval for re-election. It is a job that is often subject to adverse criticism, especially from those who have had no personal experience of the time and worry involved, but looking back over the years, it may be seen that Virden has been maintained in good standing and has been kept up to the standards of the times in every phase. The men who have been responsible for this successful outcome of an onerous task are indeed worthy of commendation.

CHAPTER 11

POLITICS

Matters of interest affecting wider areas, of which Virden may be only a very small part, come under direct control of Provincial and Dominion governments. The means by which Virden asserts its share of influence in the conduct of these matters lies in the power of the franchise and the representative it helps to send to Legislature or Parliament.

The electoral division of Dennis was formed in 1886 comprising parts of the municipalities of Sifton, Pipestone, Wallace and Woodworth.

The following list gives dates of elections and names of candidates with the party to which they belonged, names of winners being placed first:

- 1886 December 9th—Daniel McLean, L.; T. Routledge, C.
- 1888 July 11th—Daniel McLean, L.; A. G. McDougall, C.
- 1889 May 14th—By-election caused by Mr. McLean accepting office as Provincial Treasurer resulted in his election by acclamation.
- 1892 July 23rd—J. F. Frame, C.; D. McLean, L.
- 1896 January 15th—Watson Crosby, Patron; W. J. Kennedy, L.; Jas. Frame, Opp.
- 1897 July 15th—By-election owing to the death of Watson Crosby. W. J. Kennedy, L.; Jas. Elder, Patron.

In 1889 the name of the constituency was changed to Virden.

- 1899 December 7th—Jas. Simpson, C.; W. J. Kennedy, L.
- 1903 July 20th—John H. Agnew, C.; F. W. Clingan, L.
- 1904 March 12th—By-election owing to J. H. Agnew accepting office as Provincial Treasurer resulted in Mr. Agnew's election by acclamation.
- 1907 March 7th—J. H. Agnew, C.; J. G. Rattray, L.
- 1909 January 9th—By-election owing to the death of J. H. Agnew. Harvey Simpson, C.; Robert Fork, L.
- 1910 July 11th—Harvey Simpson, C.; Duncan McDonald, L.
- 1914 July 10th—George Clingan, L.; Harvey Simpson, C.
- 1915 September 16th—George Clingan, L.; Reg Knight, C.
- 1920 June 29th—Geo. Clingan, L.; R. Knight, C.
- 1922 July 18th—R. H. Mooney, United Farmers of Manitoba (Progressive); George Clingan, L.
- 1927 June 28th—R. H. Mooney, Progressive, Acclamation
- 1932 June 16th—R. H. Mooney, P.; J. H. Heenan, C.; S. L. McBain, L.
- 1936 July 27th—R. H. Mooney, Liberal Progressive; O. S. Ross, C.
- 1941 April 22nd—R. H. Mooney, L. P., Acclamation.
- 1945 October 15th—R. H. Mooney, L.P.; Cecil L. Nichol, C.C.F.
- 1949 November 10th—R. H. Mooney, L.P., Acclamation.
- 1953 June 8th—J. W. M. Thompson, Progressive Conservative; G. A. Mooney, Liberal Progressive.

The following item may be of interest to women readers. Women of Manitoba were the first in Canada to be granted the franchise and it was the member for Virden constituency who sponsored the legislation which brought this about. It had become a popular issue in which Nellie McLung with her bright smile and flashing wit had been a leading campaign worker. In January, 1916, when the final evening of debate arrived, the galleries of the Legislative Building were crowded to the limit with men as well as women and when the vote was taken, the result of which declared the measure to have been passed, such a demonstration occurred as had never before been seen in that decorous chamber. Parliamentary regulations were thrown to the winds. Visitors in the galleries, ordinarily compelled to sit in perfect quiet, rose to their feet and cheered until the roof rang.

Women walked away from the Legislative Building with a greater air of confidence in their bearing. They were no longer in the outcast class, but had been given the privilege of taking their place in the conduct of provincial affairs.

Teen-age girls who drive cars may be interested to learn that it was the member for Virden who made it possible for them to procure a driver's license at the age of sixteen. Before that time boys of 16 years could procure a license but girls had to wait until they were eighteen years of age.

In the immense field of Federal Affairs, Virden's influence as a unit was of course proportionately very small.

Manitoba, formed in 1870 and known at first as the Postage Stamp Province, was represented in the Commons at Ottawa by Donald A. Smith, a man who had much to do with the development of the province and the building of the C.P.R. In 1872 four Federal constituencies were formed, Lisgar, Marquette, Provencher and Selkirk, Virden being situated within the last named. This continued until 1896. The widening of Manitoba's area caused some re-alignment of constituencies, Selkirk being extended to what is now the boundary of Saskatchewan. During these years Virden was represented in the House of Commons, Ottawa, by:

1871 Donald A. Smith, C.
1872 Donald A. Smith, C.
1874 Donald A. Smith, L.
1878 Donald A. Smith, L.
1882 Hugh Sutherland, L.
1887 T. Mayne Daly, C.
1891 T. Mayne Daly, C.

Donald Smith lived at Silver Heights just west of the city of Winnipeg and here he entertained the many dignitaries who visited the city in those early days. Tuxedo Hospital is now on the site of his home and the city has grown around and beyond it. He was knighted and later raised to the peerage with the title of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal. He has been called the father of the Canadian Pacific Railway and when this mighty piece of engineering was completed five years before the stipulated time, he was given the honor on November 7th, 1886, of driving the golden spike that marked its completion.

His cousin, George Stephen, later Lord Mount Stephen, was a man of a similar type and it is impossible to compute how much these two men contributed to the development of this western country, not only by pouring into it their financial resources, but by the energy and wisdom with which they conducted negotiations and by the faith they displayed in its future success.

Twenty-five years of development and growth of population brought about in 1896 a redistribution of Federal constituencies, Virden being included in the newly created Brandon Riding. From this time its representatives in the House of Commons were chosen from the following candidates, the first name in each case being that of the winner:

- 1896 D'Alton McCarthy, Ind.; W. A. McDonald, C.; W. Postlethwaite.
- 1896 By-election, C. Sifton, L., Acclamation
- 1900 Hon. Clifford Sifton, L.; Hon. Hugh J. McDonald, C.
- 1904 Hon. Clifford Sifton, L.; R. L. Richardson, C.
- 1908 Hon. Clifford Sifton, L.; Hon. T. Mayne Daly, C.; Hon. D'Arcy Wallace.
- 1911 J. A. M. Aikins, C.; A. E. Hill, L.
- 1917 Howard P. Whidden, C.; H. S. Paterson, L.
- 1921 Robt. Forke, Progressive; Frederick C. Cox; C. E. Ivens, C.
- 1925 Robt. Forke, P.; D. W. Beaubier, C.
- 1926 Robt. Forke, Lib.-Prog.; D. W. Beaubier, C.
- 1926 Hon. R. Forke, Acclamation, By-election
- 1930 D. W. Beaubier, C.; Beatrice Brigden, Labor; Hon. T. A. Crerar, Lib.-Prog.
- 1935 D. W. Beaubier, C.; C. E. Matthews, L.; C. E. Leech; J. H. Wood.

- 1938 By-elections, J. E. Matthews, L.; George Beaubier, C.; J. H. Wood.
- 1940 J. E. Matthews, L.; J. W. M. Thompson, C.; J. H. Wood.
- 1945 J. E. Matthews, L.; A. M. Brown, C.C.F.; A. E. Smith, Lab. Prog.; F. H. Young, P.C.
- 1949 J. E. Matthews, L.; John Bracken, C.; D. L. Johnson, Ind.
- 1951 Walter Dinsdale, C.; J. W. Grant McEwan, L.

The Redistribution Act of 1952 changed the number and boundaries of federal constituencies throughout the provinces. The former Brandon constituency was considerably altered in size and the name changed to Brandon - Souris.

- 1953 Walter G. Dinsdale, C.; J. A. Creighton, L.; B. P. Hathaway, C.C.F.; Dorothy J. Johnson, L.P.

In pioneer days a man's political leaning could be easily determined. There were only two political parties and he was born into one or the other. Names of the parties might change, Grits could be called Reformers, Liberals or Liberal-Progressives and Tories could become Conservatives or Progressive Conservatives but only some drastic reason or strong influence could cause a man to change his party allegiance. In a large country with many varying interests at stake, the mechanism of politics can become extremely complicated, the difficulty being to preserve a balance among the component parts.

Sometimes a candidate would run on an Independent ticket not wishing to ally himself completely with either party. In 1884 those who separated themselves from the Republican party in the United States were called mugwumps from an Algonquin Indian term, mugwump meaning great man, though the popular definition was "A mugwump is a bird that sits on the fence with its mug on one side and its wump on the other."

It was this independence of spirit that later prompted certain groups to disassociate themselves from the old parties, with the purpose of creating, restoring or maintaining what they believed to be a proper balance so far as some section or some principle was concerned. In Manitoba can be seen the rise of the Patrons and the Progressives both working for the cause of agriculture in an area far removed from

ocean travel and consequently harassed by freight-rates. The Progressives entered the Dominion Parliament and left their name attached to both old parties. Other groups followed such as C.C.F. and Social-Crediters and, though they did not control government, the weight of their opinions has no doubt helped to formulate policies along certain lines. Virden has had Progressive representation in both provincial and Dominion houses.

CHAPTER 12

BUILDING IN VIRDEN

The sod-walled shacks and stables roofed with poles covered with sod, erected by some of the earliest settlers have been much written about. They had one desirable quality in common—warmth—but otherwise the shacks were not attractive as dwelling places. They were not as numerous as might be supposed and were replaced as soon as possible by wooden houses, either of lumber or of logs, if obtainable. As most of the Virden district was open, treeless prairie, log buildings were in the minority and so the lumber business thrived. Sod stables had a longer life, often being maintained after the building of "the barn." As the number of livestock increased together with the need for winter storage of feed, large barns became dotted over the country side. A granary, too, was necessary and sheds for winter protection of machinery were quite common. On every side could be seen the picture of a farmstead with a little house looking quite dwarfed as it nestled by the other imposing farm buildings. As the family grew in numbers and age, a larger house became necessary. The farm houses of that period were often ambitiously large to accommodate not only the family but also required farm help and to extend the hospitality that was so much a part of country life. This represented the peak in country building, the farmstead with its large house, large barn, chicken house, granary, garage and other buildings giving the appearance of a small village.

All this development of farm business and buildings had its effect upon the development of Virden.

The town's first buildings were of canvas and lumber. Rev. Finlay McLeod, describing Mr. Cobb's large tent at Gopher Creek, said it was made fit for winter use by erecting log walls and laying a wooden floor. The tent was then erected over the whole. No doubt this was the place where W. T. Scarth shivered through the winter of 1882 and '83. When spring came, Mr. Cobb's domicile, supported by its wooden structure, floated down the flooded Gopher Creek to find another resting place. Mr. Cobb's spirit was not dampened by this experience, however. He just moved on to the townsite where, starting on the canvas and lumber level, he soon had what must have seemed a haven of comfort for the early arrivals, namely, the first frame hotel in the place.

The early years may be regarded as the era of frame buildings. While the erection of private residences and places of business went on as the financial status of the citizens permitted, demand soon arose for public or community buildings—a school, churches, court room, community hall, fire hall and as these had to be financed from public subscription or as investment projects, delay occurred until money would be forthcoming. That private building went on rapidly can be seen from the following list published in the issue of the Virden Advance of October 15, 1885:

Grocery and Liquor Store.....	J. J. Caulfield
(finished in 1886)	
Drug Store.....	C. A. Freeborn
Store and Post Office.....	W. F. Scarth
Books and Stationery.....	Jas. Wilson
Boots and Shoes.....	D. Smith
Baking and Confectionery.....	S. Colter
Photo Studio.....	A. Cooper
Registry Office	
Three Story Grist Mill.....	(125 bbls. per day)
Office.....	Clayton and Sons, Builders
Office.....	Lumber—Stevens and Palmer
Two dwellings.....	M. Whitaker
Anglican Church	
School	
Law Office.....	H. H. Goulter
Wilcox and Co. added another storey to their store	
on 6th Avenue	

The issue of October 29th mentions:

Boarding-House across the track.....	Palmer and Mitchell
Lumber Shed.....	Stevens and Palmer
Residence, 7th Avenue.....	Mr. Wyatt
Addition to stables.....	R. Bellamy

All the foregoing were to be ready for occupancy at the end of the year. November reported work begun on the Anglican Church (Frame Building), Marshall and Easton's house nearing completion, Anglican Church opened in December.

Buildings listed for 1886:

Town Hall	
Office.....	Agnew and Goulter
Residence.....	Mr. McKague
Residence, Nelson and 8th.....	W. J. Kennedy
(still standing)	
Residence, 8th Avenue.....	Willing

W. F. Scarth was painting his cottage on Wellington Street. Tenders solicited for building of new school. The Town Hall, 60' x 40', now Legion Hall, became a reality, financed by F. P. Bouverie, J. F. Frame, G. N. Miller, T. Routledge, Palmer and J. Caulfield. This was always called the Town Hall. Later when the new Firehall was built, that building was always known as the Firehall, though it contained the town offices.

November, 1886, records the building of a rink. The first rink of which there has been any report was on the side of the Taylor Lumber yard. It was just a shell, with lengths of five-cent cotton running from end to end for windows.

May, 1887, has the first mention of stone buildings, no doubt marking the beginning of the stone age in this trade in Virden. Much of the work must have been done by experts, for today after seventy years many examples exist of the beautiful trimming and fitting of the masonry. Names handed down in connection with this work are Jack Collins, Hugh King, Joseph Winters and a Mr. Swanson of Elkhorn. A pair of robust men with a hefty team of horses could, without difficulty, find an off-season job by hauling stones for the builders.

The lime kiln on the east river hill not far from Thompson's bridge was a busy place in the early days, supplying as it did lime for the whole country side. Lath and plaster construction continued until modern times, and many builders became adept at mixing their own mortar and lime. Some who made a special business of plastering were Mr. Wyatt, W. Harman, N. Walker and Jos. Etsell.

In that issue of May, 1887, some of the buildings mentioned were:

Store on Nelson Street.....	J. G. Young
Office Building on Nelson Street.....	Dier
Blacksmith Shop.....	D. Clark
Jarrett and Rose.....	Residences

Other buildings of the period were:

1887—July

W. J. Wilcox.....	Residence
G. J. Clarke.....	Store on Nelson Street
Mrs. Rothmund.....	Store on Nelson Street

September

John Bowes, Assistant Postmaster.....	Residence
Wm. Pineo.....	Residence

1888—January

Mr. Shaw.....	Residence at south of town
Bank Building.....	Nelson Street
Several Stables	

February

W. J. Kennedy moved his grain ware-house to the front of his lot on Nelson Street and added Odd-fellows Hall above.

April 5

Contract let for the Orange Hall to Ingersoll, agent for paper building material. Records indicate that he built at least an office and a residence of this material but no description of it has been obtainable. W. T. Carefoot residence on Wellington Street behind McGuffin's garage. Still standing.

1888—April

Rothnie residence on Wellington Street. Still standing. No less than four new buildings were erected on this street.

Ingersoll—office.....Paper material

J. F. Frame.....Residence across the creek
B. Meek purchased five lots on Wellington Street in the same block as the present firehall and built a residence which still remains, but two cottages have been built on what was Mr. Meek's lawn. In the early days it was customary to have some extent of grounds with one's property. A garden was desirable; a croquet lawn, possibly a tennis court. The poultry fancier could have room for his hobby. If the owner was in the carriage class, he could have a stable and a buggy shed.

Clarence Pineo purchased Mr. Dier's property on Wellington Street and Court Sarvis, Mrs. Wm. Pineo's brother, built a residence near by. D. McDonald, a residence on Queen Street, now occupied by Mr. W. Moffatt and Mr. and Mrs. B. G. Conroy. Other buildings noted this same year were J. H. Agnew, residence, corner 9th and Lyons. R. Adamson residence in same part of town.

All these homes listed were apparently of frame construction for the next item notes that the first stone residence was erected by J. McGuffin, a stone mason, grandfather of R. E. McGuffin, in the south part of town. This house was built on two levels where the land slopes down to the creek. Wm. Burgess lived in it for years. The following buildings are also listed:

W. J. Wilcox, residence at west side of town.

Dr. Gemmell, large house on 9th Avenue.

W. F. Scarth had commenced excavating for cellar for store corner 7th and Nelson. It was to be of stone, two stories, and with plate glass windows.

A. F. Ingersoll had constructed a "Paper" house on Wellington Street for rent.

Central Hotel was enlarged. It now had nineteen bedrooms, sitting room, bar-room, dining room, office. Walls and ceiling of bar-room were covered with painted designs. These painted designs were greatly favored at the time, especially for bar-rooms and lounges of hotels.

1888

New Methodist Church (between Horne Co. and the lane) was to be opened December 9th.

1889

Rev. F. McLeod—a two - storey dwelling on his farm now the Welch place.

Contract was let for the Presbyterian Church. Foundation was to be of stone, upper part lumber.

D. Fraser, stone residence, Wellington Street next to present firehall.

Chris. Anderson, stone residence at south end of town. Now occupied by Mrs. Barber.

Dunlop residence on Quality Hill.

The issue of February 7, 1889, gives the cost of buildings erected or additions made during the preceding year, these costs running from \$2,300.00 for the Central Hotel and \$2,000.00 each for the Wilcox and Frame houses down to \$100.00, the total amounting to \$39,350.00, quite a building program for little Virden which had not yet reached the population mark of 500, which would make it eligible for incorporation as a village.

1891

Lake of The Woods elevator.

J. W. Higginbotham bought Dr. Gemmell's residence.

Bunt, a livery stable on the site of present Post Office roofed with tin sheeted with metallic siding. George Marshall, builder.

Sam Coulter, residence corner 6th and Princess.

Fire tank, Jas. McGill contractor, \$245.00.

St. Mary's met to consider a new stone church
Wm. Wyatt, residence 7th and Princess.
Central Hotel, verandah and balcony.
George Grundy, residence, Wellington Street, now
occupied by C. Anderson.

To consider the trend of building in Virden, it is necessary first to look at the lay-out of the C.P.R. With the main line on the south-west, grain elevators were naturally built on the north-east adjacent to the side tracks. A boarding house had been opened on that side of the tracks but though tried under five different managements, it never thrived. Business persistently grew in the opposite direction, perhaps because the greater part of it in the beginning came from that great south-west area. At any rate building started in a little huddle at the intersection of 6th and Nelson close to the C.P.R. station. Business continued along Nelson and cross wise on 7th for a block on either side of Nelson. Wellington Street was favored for home building which gradually spread to the south and west, even crossing the road allowances.

When J. F. Frame, G. N. Miller, H. C. Simpson, Dunlop, A. G. McDougall and others built across the creek, following the route of King Street, that section of the town became known as Quality Hill and was even so entitled in various public records. Another desirable residence location in the neighborhood of the present 9th Avenue Public School, in which section were the homes of the Agnews, Adamsons, Goulters, Higginbothams, Fosters, Schoenaus, and the Anglican Rectory, was dubbed Poverty Flats, possibly by the irrepressible Bill Pineo and by that name it was known for years, though it failed to receive any official recognition.

The Quality Hillers knew they were Quality for the creek formed a definite line between their sub-division and the rest of the town. The boundaries of Poverty Flats had never been definitely laid down so it was left to the mood of the Flatters themselves as to whether they would lay claim to being residents of that favored section. The two names furnished material for a great deal of good-natured ribbing, not only among the dwellers in these special areas but also from those who lived beyond their outer fringes.

Another sub-division received its name in a different manner. When the C.N.R. spur was built into town, George Harris, contractor, who lived in the stone house on the corner of 8th and Princess bought up the homes of J. R. Mullins on Princess Street, J. H. Huston and Alex Madill on 7th Avenue and another, and moved them to a location beyond King Street., facing on 8th Avenue with their backs to the creek. By making two small houses of the Madill property, he had five houses in all and this cluster of buildings was known during his life-time as Harrisville. The residence of S. S. Colter, corner 6th and Princess, was moved to the north-east side of Park Street near the Wilcox house and became the house of John Haw when he retired to town.

The discovery in the 1890's that clay at the site of the old Gopher Creek settlement was suitable for the manufacture of excellent brick gave a new fillip to the building trade. The product was used in new structures and some of the old ones had a face-lifting with a coat of brick veneer. The Terrace must have been built about this time. The only building of its kind to be erected in Virden, it was owned by John Joslin and has always been in demand by those seeking homes. This type of housing was very popular at that time, partly as a help regarding the heating problem and in cities as space-saving. Winnipeg had many of them, some really impressive buildings containing commodious homes. As multiple dwellings, their place was later taken by apartment blocks.

After failure of the old brick industry in 1902 and its revival in 1906, the buildings of the later period can be distinguished by the somewhat finer quality and clearer coloring of the brick used in their construction. It was at about this time that farmers were erecting larger houses and dotted here and there throughout the countryside can be seen evidences of Virden brick. The town also began to show a tendency toward bigger dwellings. There had been a noticeably large percentage of one-storey cottages squarely built with square roofs, the general floor plan being a double room divided by an arch, the front part a "parlor" or sitting room, the rear part a dining room with a bedroom opening from each. A lean-to at the back contained a kitchen and possibly a pantry and another bed room. These houses lent themselves easily to having another storey added, the front bedroom providing a commodious hall and winding stairway and the rear bedroom could be converted into a dining room. If the kitchen were continued to two-storey height, the result would be a definitely large dwelling. Some samples of this enlarging can be seen in the H. C. Simpson house on Quality Hill, corner of 9th and King Street, afterwards lived in by the A. E. Blakemans and the Fred Hayhursts; the William Pineo cottage on King Street and 7th with the distinguishing feature of a mansard roof, now owned by A. R. Kent; the Dick Langtry cottage on Wellington and the Dr. Guest home on 10th and Lyons, later occupied by the Jack Englishes and then the W. E. Lawrences. Others of these one-storey houses were enlarged by adding wings, examples being the Agnew, Adamson and Goulter homes.

Some of the original cottages are still extant such as the D. Fraser, S. Jones, and Chris. Anderson homes.

Another style that lent itself to enlargement by adding wings or being made over completely was the two-storey type with entrance hall, double room and kitchen below and usually three bedrooms above. Examples of these are the J. F. Frame home, later occupied by I. J. Bennett, the Conroy, Monteith and McLachlan houses. New houses erected about that time were the former manse and W. W. Joslins' on 10th Avenue; the J. Singer, afterwards the Scarth, home facing the south road allowance and the present Manse on 8th. These are only a few examples but with the beginning of the century the trend both in

country and town was for larger houses. To provide more living space, sleeping porches and sun-porches were becoming popular features and the narrow verandahs and galleries were disappearing.

The erection of a number of business blocks and public buildings helped to give Virden a more substantial appearance. After the closing of the brick yard, cement blocks had a short run of popularity. The W. Dutton house on Lyons Street, formerly the Methodist Parsonage, is an example of the use of this material, which also replaced stone for basement walls.

Having gone through the period of canvas, lumber, stone and brick as material for building, it might be well to say a few words about the men who were the contractors during that time. Unfortunately some of their names have been lost with missing or non-existent records, but occasional information has been unearthed.

George Burge and John Reid have already been mentioned, the former the earliest of whom there is any record. The Marshall Brothers were leading contractors in Virden for years. They had received their training in the old country and what they erected was put up to stay. They built Carmel Presbyterian church in 1889 and 1890 and the present Manse in 1906. Alex McDougall was another contractor. Mr. McMullen was another who operated for a number of years. George Harris was also responsible for much of the building in his time. Enos A. Haw, a son of John Haw, built the brick Public School on 9th Avenue. Now 88 years of age, he completed his last contract in November, 1956, and is living with a daughter in New Jersey.

The best known and most recently active of the builders of fifty years ago is W. T. Manser who retired about 1947 and is now living with his daughter, Mrs. Hugh Sinclair at Shilo. The Virden Empire-Advance of July 14, 1954, published a detailed history of the present Post Office building, written by Anne Anderson who paid a well deserved tribute to Mr. Manser. She said he had kept a detailed account of all material used. He was awarded the contract in 1913 at a price of \$33,900. Twenty workmen were employed, all local with the exception of two Italians, brought from Winnipeg, for the special job of laying and polishing the terrazzo floor. Stone was brought from Garson quarries east of Winnipeg and cut by local masons to the required size. Steel girders came from Manitoba Bridge and Iron Works; mill work was supplied by Hanbury Manufacturing Co. of Brandon. Lumber, cement and plaster were obtained through W. A. Bridgett, inside bricks from the Virden Brick Co. Ltd.; the red bricks from the Alsip Brick and Tile Co., Winnipeg; heating and plumbing from Yates and Neale of Brandon. The plans called for a window in the tower but Sir James Aikins, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, presented a clock which was installed by George Gabel and kept in running order by him until he moved east. It is still doing duty in keeping Virdenites up to time. In 1954 an addition was added to the building by the Wyatt Construction Co. at a cost of \$75,000.

Mr. Manser, born in England, learned his trade there through five years of apprenticeship at Crowborough, Sussex, and always considered those five years as time well spent. Virden also has cause to consider them well spent in the quality of work he turned out. Other buildings erected by him were the Collegiate, Auditorium Theatre, Christian Science Church, Safeway Store, now Foodland, C.P.R. Telegraph Office, besides countless homes in Virden and surrounding district. The Virden Empire-Advance is to be commended for preserving in published form this record of important public building and the history of a prominent citizen.

Mr. Manser's son, Bill, followed his father's trade for years but gradually became interested in stock raising and now devotes himself to the raising of thoroughbred Herefords.

Insulation was the advance agent for what became a revolution in building materials all of which brought a consequent change in style of architecture. It was something that could be used in old buildings as well as new ones and home owners could be heard comparing notes as to the benefits accruing in reduction of fuel bills. Then insul-brick not only furnished an outside insulated layer but smartened up many a shabby, weather-beaten old building. Wall board and ten test were used for interior partitions.

Plywood became a sweeping success for interior woodwork. Made of thin layers of wood arranged with the grain running in different directions and put together with heavy glue under strong pressure, the finished product could neither warp or split. By further processing it was made weather-proof thus making it suitable for exterior use.

Within the last twenty years more new materials have come into favor. The most popular is "plaster board" which is a product of pre-formed plaster, with a heavy paper on both sides which actually does away with the use of plastering tradesmen. "Glass manufacturers have now on the market a glass brick which takes the place of our old field-stone, brick etc." There are new floor coverings such as plastic tile and asphalt tile in a variety of colors. These take the place of linoleums and our once highly regarded hardwood floorings. The Golding house (Carman Whiteford) and the present Manse were two of the first in town to have maple flooring and the W. W. Joslin house to have an oak floor.

Metal pipes have been replaced in many instances by varieties of plastic pipes.

New materials, new heating systems, new ideas have brought about a great change in architecture. The four-square style has given way to the bungalow or ranch-house. Bay windows, verandahs, sun porches have been succeeded by picture windows and patios. Gay colors are replacing the modest tones of the past. Open lawns have taken the place

of fences and hedges. A whole street may look like a continuous garden, dotted at intervals with bright, cosy-looking homes, set off by flowers and shrubs and trees.

Virden has many of these new style homes and it now has its first apartment block, named the Wyatt Block after the contractor who built it.

Construction of public buildings has been let by contract which has resulted in a number of instances in outside firms getting the jobs which have usually included the hiring of local workmen. Two resident contractors are kept busy: F. A. France, who kindly supplied information regarding modern building materials, and E. G. Whitaker. They both have been engaged in the building trade in Virden for years, and, like D'Alton Power of the Creamery, they find it a good place in which to live.

CHAPTER 13

PUBLIC SERVICES

POPULATION

The progress of an urban area can be calculated to some extent by the increase in population. The following statistical table furnishes food for thought in the three decades that are shown.

1891 — 696	1931 — 1,590
1901 — 901	1936 — 1,481
1906 — 1,471	1941 — 1,619
1911 — 1,550	1946 — 1,579
1916 — 1,618	1951 — 1,746
1921 — 1,361	1956 — 3,225
1926 — 1,380	

In spite of the setbacks noted in 1921, 1936 and 1946 resulting in increases more than restored balance.

POSTAL

Those living in the little cluster of buildings on 22-10-26 no doubt realized that this was actually a potential population centre when it was given a postal service under the name of Virden in October, 1883. Foregoing pages have traced the progress of this service from its corner in the little pioneer store to larger space in the store of W. F. Scarth in his new block on 7th and Nelson after which it rated quarters of its own consisting of the ground floor of what is now the Brayfield Block and the postmaster rated an assistant. Since then there has been a marked expansion in reaching the quarters occupied today with its tiers of mail boxes, 1172 in all, 1005 in use as of February 28th, 1957, and a regular staff of four in the office.

The postmasters during this period have been: W. F. Scarth—Gopher Creek—September, 1882—October, 1883, Virden—October 1st, 1883—December, 1900; Duncan McDonald—January 25, 1901—March 8, 1901; Marshall B. Irwin—May 1st, 1901—January 29, 1908; J. W. Higginbotham—March

5th, 1908—August 14th, 1930; Reginald H. Hawley—December 27, 1930—September 28, 1943; D. Gordon McDonald—September 27, 1943—November 26, 1955—Cyril J. Anderson—November 26, 1955.

Many small settlements considered themselves well served with a tri-weekly mail but Virden, being on a railway main line, was favored with a daily service, both east and west. This developed into a twice daily mail by C.P.R. and after the C.N.R. was built it, too, brought mail to Virden. Frank Dobson was mail carrier to the C.P.R. for years and upon his death, his sister, Miss Annie Dobson, held the contract which she sub-let. Edward Carr is in charge at present. The C.N.R. carrier is John Demman.

On the third floor of the Post Office building are roomy quarters for the caretaker, a position filled by Welland Ready and of late years by Wilfred Horn.

FIRE PROTECTION

Settlers soon showed themselves ready and willing to cope with public services as the need arose. There is no doubt that fire protection was the first to make itself felt. Not being a self-governed body, the little hamlet had no control of revenue until it became a village but the residents voluntarily formed themselves into a fire-fighting group though they had no equipment and no official standing. When they came to consider corporation, the most pressing responsibility seemed to be the adoption of a real fire-fighting system. A report presented to a public meeting in June, 1890, of computed revenue and expenditure showed a surplus of \$416.25 but this would have to be apportioned very economically to supply needed services. The expenses of fire protection were considered very carefully. Something of the procedure can be gathered from the following items:

In 1890 the council appointed a Fire Inspector, Inspector of Licenses and Constable at \$10.00 per month. To further emphasize the need for action, a big fire January 10th, 1891, destroyed J. W. Bailey's office and Bunt's livery stable. George Marshall's premises were saved. Equipment used in fighting the fire consisted of buckets, wet blankets, ice. On January 12th, a meeting was called for the purpose of organizing a Fire Brigade when 40 volunteered as members. January 14th they reported to council, presenting by-laws and list of equipment including tanks, bell, pick-axes, lanterns, ladders, picks, crow-bars, rope, etc. January 22nd an itemized list of articles with their cost was submitted.

6 ladders	\$ 44.00
1 lifting pole	4.00
6 fire buckets	7.50
100 feet pull down rope, hooks and chains	21.00

4 pike poles	10.00
2 pull down ropes poles and chains	20.00
4 brass hand lamps	20.00
1 bell	5.00
160 feet drag rope	6.00
2 pick axes	6.00
2 fire axes	5.00
100 fibre pails	40.00
1 wagon	40.00
Incidentals	22.00
Total	<u>\$250.00</u>

Local Estimate

100 fibre pails	\$ 10.00
2 handsaws	10.00
2 crow bars	3.00
2 chains and hooks	15.00
150 feet 1½-inch rope	14.50
2 pick axes	2.00
3 fire axes	7.50
12 common axes	12.00
2 lanterns	2.00
88-foot ladder	44.00
1 wagon	40.00
Incidentals	26.50
Total	<u>\$189.00</u>

In addition to this equipment, a water supply also had to be considered. A tank, a force pump and 100 feet of hose would cost approximately \$240.00; a well tank \$200.00. Portable tanks were considered too slow. A building and a bell would also be necessary. As yet there was no mention of an engine. The council agreed to furnish building and equipment up to \$500.00.

Apparently the surplus of \$416.25 would be entirely swallowed by the fire estimates and the 2.2 mill rate would be given a rise.

At the annual meeting January 29th, a salvage corps was added to the other departments. A bell was to be obtained by popular subscription. It was to be erected on Wellington Street and was to be rung at 7, 12 noon, 13 and 18 o'clock and on Sundays at 10 and 11, 18.30 and 19.30. The committee appointed to solicit subscriptions was evidently successful, for the bell arrived in April.

That the committee had not met with entire success is evidenced in a note of March, 1892, almost a year later that J. W. Higginbotham appeared before the council on behalf of the Fire Brigade stating that there was still a debt on the bell of \$48.00. He requested that the council assume responsibility now and hereafter and that the bell be the property of the village of Virden. Finally this was agreed to be done. The 24-hour system based on C.P.R. time was in use throughout the province for only a short period of time.

That bell did something for Virden. At noon and 6 p.m. it sent children scurrying home to be on time for meals. It may have jogged the consciousness of some of the fathers too. It was really an incentive to punctuality. The exact whereabouts of the original fire hall has not become known. It was on Wellington Street and must have been in close proximity to the present fire hall. It is recorded that when the present hall was built the original one was sold for \$15.00.

By June, 1894, Virden had adapted itself to the responsibility of being a village for it passed a by-law by which the council was authorized to borrow \$5,000.00 for the erection of a town hall which would combine premises for firehall, lock-up, court room, council chamber, and office for County Clerk. In November the contract for brick and stone for this hall was awarded to J. A. Saul at a cost of \$2,150.00 and George Marshall was awarded the carpenter work at \$1,970.00. In June, 1895, Alex Murdoch was engaged to do the painting for \$125.00. When the Auditorium Theatre was added to this building, more space was provided at the same time for town offices.

From time to time, as the years passed, requests were made for further fire-fighting equipment: April, 1896—chemical engine; February, 1897—\$5.00 to be paid to owner of first team to be hitched to chemical engine; September, 1897, J. W. Higginbotham and D. McDonald interviewed the council re the need for 250 feet more hose also a room that would provide sleeping quarters for one or two men and that the firehall comply with fire insurance demands. And so it went on. Even without fires, the Brigade was kept busy in maintaining a high degree of efficiency.

In 1905, Jas. Bolton was chief and A. D. Jolliffe secretary.

Rates of payment for helpers:

First team — chemical engine	\$5.00
First team — gas engine	3.00
First team — hose wagon	3.00
Half rate for false alarm	
Bell ringer	1.00

At the October meeting it was decided to pay J. F. C. Menlove for a suit ruined at the Blakeman fire. Other similar claims were presented so a committee, consisting of Chief Bolton, F. Palmer and W. D. Craig, was appointed to adjudge claims.

Officers elected for 1906:

Chief J. F. C. Menlove
First Lieutenant W. D. Craig
Second Lieutenant W. A. Bridgett
Secretary E. J. Scales
Treasurer R. Langtry

Captains:

Gas Engine T. B. Mitchell
Chemical Engine W. D. Craig
Hose F. Palmer
Hook and Ladder J. Gordon
Auditor J. A. Mather
Chaplain Rev. W. D. Robertson
Surgeon Dr. Geo. Clingan
Bell Ringer J. T. Norsworthy
Assistant Stanley Goynes

For manning chief equipment, one man was required for the chemical engine, three for the gas engine, six for the hook and ladder and nine for the hose, making nineteen in all to be paid at the rate of fifty cents per hour, and at half rate for false alarms. It was arranged that the telephone office should relay night calls. In 1911 records mention a conference with Miss Charlton, matron at the hospital, regarding evacuation of patients. Three new tanks were built one on Quality Hill, one on Hospital Hill and one for the protection of the Collegiate. Mrs. Cameron Lidington gave a benefit concert in aid of the Brigade. Constables were to keep order at fires and fines were imposed upon those who failed to answer calls. Regular practices were held.

The loss of two valued members both of whom moved to Winnipeg was recorded, that of R. Langtry in 1907 and J. F. C. Menlove in 1912. The latter had been called the Father of The Fire Brigade. As time went on new names appeared on the membership roll—Walter Cameron, George Beeson, Albert Carscadden, Ted Boiteau, Jas. McEwen, George Gabel.

Officers for 1912 were:

Chief S. S. Carscadden
Assistant George Sanford
Secretary J. Pritchard, E. Andrew
Treasurer J. McKnight
Bell Ringer George Rothnie Jr.
Assistant Jas. Bremner

Ringin of the bell was an accomplishment. The discoverer of a fire would often rush to the tower of the firehall and begin action on

the bell with a series of spasms and jerks with unexpected pauses. Dong, dong—ding, dong. Then the ringing would change to quick, staccato notes—ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, and someone would say "There! George Rothnie is on the job."

No consecutive list of fires had been kept during the early years. Many of them were very small with no damage of account. Many that might have become serious were nipped in the bud by prompt action of the brigade.

One Sunday evening in the autumn of 1905 the firebell rang as people were coming from church. It was the custom to run to the bell tower for information as to the locality of the fire. J. A. Blakeman rushed in with the question "Where's the fire?" The bell ringer, without turning his head, snapped the reply, "Jack Blakeman's new house." The building in question, on Lyons Street facing the present public school, was not completed and a fire had been kept going, possibly to dry the plaster, a common procedure at that time. From this a fire had started and some damage was done, but no destruction.

Perhaps the most dangerous fire that Virden has ever had occurred January 5th, 1911, in the midst of one of the worst blizzards that had ever been experienced. The Bank of Ottawa stood on the site of what was recently the Quick Freeze building and was designed on much the same plan with a central stairway, on one side of which were the bank offices and on the other side a store which was at that time occupied by a jewellery business operated by a young man, J. R. Hood. The upper floor was mainly given over to Goulter and Singer's law offices and also sleeping quarters for the bank manager, Mr. A. G. Dunnet. C. W. Wainwright, manager of the brick-yard, had built the block seven years before and the upper floor contained also the offices of the Brick Yard Company. The fire had gained some headway in the basement before it was discovered. The space under the stairway formed a natural upward air flue.

Alex Mitchell (a son of T. B.) who slept in the bank awoke to find himself almost asphyxiated but managed to grope his way to safety and gave the alarm. The proprietor of the jewellery store, and Archie McConachy of Lenore, at that time employed by Higginbothams but later to sacrifice his life in the first war, were sleeping in a room at the back of the store and made their escape through a back window. Mr. Dunnet was more dangerously placed. By the time he became aroused, the front stairway was a well of fire. Fortunately that building had an outside unenclosed back stairway, apparently not much used in winter for Mr. Dunnet was unable to open the door but was successful in breaking a window, which looked out upon the stairway and in that way came to safety.

The building was doomed from the first. The great task before the brigade was to prevent the fire spreading. The wind was blowing with hurricane force and swirling snow straight across Nelson Street carrying flaming embers for a block or more. While the brigade strove to confine the fire to the one building, a corps of helpers patrolled roofs in the

path of the fiery rain, for, if the blaze had started in that row of closely packed buildings, nothing could have saved them from the consuming blast. Windows on the opposite side of Nelson Street were cracked and broken by the heat and here, too, a battle was fought to prevent incipient fires from breaking out. Anyone who was in the thick of the fire that night will still carry the memory.

Since then the brigade has had many battles with the enemy, always winning commendation for their work. In the closing days of 1956 they had two encounters which left scars upon the business part of the town. Though unsuccessful in saving the buildings concerned, they did succeed in preventing the spread of the flames, thus saving the town from still more disastrous results. On the evening of December 23rd, the Quick Freeze Locker Plant suffered the same fate that had overtaken its predecessor on the same site forty-five years before and on the last day of the year the Balmoral Hotel, an early landmark, suffered the same fate. There were no casualties in either case.

The story of struggle and achievement has gone on through the years. The firemen have their lighter moments when they stage the Firemen's Ball, an event of the season. They have gone through the stately minuet and waltz, the rollicking polka, the Scottish dances featured by the St. Andrew's Society, the big apple and the bunny hug, the jitterbug and jive and are now showing their prowess in the rock 'n' roll. If 1957 has brought in a newer style, no doubt they have become experts. They may even have invented something that could be called "Anniversary Antics".

The names of the original stalwarts have almost faded from memory, new names have come and disappeared and now a younger generation carries on. The Empire-Advance of October 10th, 1956, carries items of interest. It notes "The acquisition this year of two new International Bickle Seagrove triple combination pumpers complete with equipment."

"There are 14 hydrants in addition to fire wells at strategic points." "Periodic fire practice as well as attendance of some of the members at fire schools from time to time, means that the Brigade keeps up to date on methods."

At the annual meeting held February 22nd, 1957, it was reported that the Brigade had attended 31 fires during the previous year, 10 of which were out of town. Of these last, seven were oil-treater fires.

In order to preserve the names of present leaders and some of the prominent workers of recent years the 1957 state of affairs is appended.

ChiefFred Sanford, a nephew of the late
George Sanford of earlier years
Honorary Chief R. E. McGuffin
Assistant Chief Jim Hewitt

Captains:

No. 1 Unit Ross Fontana
No. 2 Unit Ted Bedford
Pumpers Lorne Wallace
Assistant Mel Carefoot
Ladders Sam Simpson
Bell and Alarm Fred Eveleigh
Secretary-Treasurer Norman Rodgers

John Cockbill, Ross Fontana and Ken Cook were appointed a committee to arrange for the annual Firemen's Ball. This yearly activity is financed from the Brigade's own funds.

Other names mentioned in the report are Bill Manser, Lawrence Wallace, Glen Fowler, Gordon Coles, John Higginbotham, whose father's and grandfather's names appear on earlier lists, Colin Fowler, Norman Montgomery, Lawrence Fontana, Alvin Sararas, Bill Jones, Bill Rowson, Leslie Milne, Crosby Montgomery, Mel Carefoot, Walter Armstrong and Cliff Cory.

POLICE

After an exhaustive report of the Fire Brigade, it would seem that Virden could have no reserve of man power or money to institute or maintain any further public services but they found the means and carried out many projects. That old 2.2 mill rate must have soared to dizzy heights as time went on. So many projects must be implemented. Rules were made, by-laws passed. It was at once seen that, if these regulations and by-laws were to be observed, some one must be appointed to supervise their enforcement. So a constable was appointed. Fortunately there were few criminals to be apprehended so he was able to give attention to other matters such as supervision of licenses, enforcement of regulations concerning nuisances, health, etc.

In 1893 David Brown was appointed constable at a salary of \$30.00 per month and it was mentioned that his additional duties would include filling the water tank, taking care of the firehall and ringing the town bell.

In 1895 James Bolton was elected from a list of fifteen applicants. His salary in 1896 was \$450.00 per year, plus what was earned as provincial police. He held this position until 1938 so needless to say, Jim Bolton was known by every man, woman and child in Virden.

In 1939 Chas. Kerr received the appointment as constable; in 1941 Jas. McEwen and in 1943 Frank Knox. For some years George Smith

was assistant or deputy. Gradually the duties of this office became narrowed down to police work so when the R.C.M.P. took over in 1946 they were not expected to fill water tanks, sweep the firehall or give fire alarms.

TOWN EMPLOYEES

In the intervening years it had become necessary to employ men for different divisions of town duties such as:

Public Works George Graham, Dan McDougall,
Leslie Milne
Firehall Janitor 1939, R. G. Mitchell, Frank
Sloan; 1944, Fred Eveleigh.
Comfortable quarters for the
janitor are now provided in the
second storey of the hall.
Sanitary Officer Eli Rodgers
Assessor 1941, C. M. Pineo, Ralph Glass;
1943, Fred Dumbleton, Mrs. E. Newby.
Local Ration Board Officer Fred Dumbleton

George Graham was on duty for many years and was well known to the inhabitants of the town as he was always about, clearing up and keeping things in order. In spring he would be opening up culverts to drain the streets of water which was directed into the creek. At such times the creek was an asset to Virden. It also bore its tragedy, when Willie Huston, school-boy son of J. H. Huston, lost his life, saving a little girl from drowning in the spring-swollen flood.

On a winter morning after a heavy snowfall, early workers and children going to school particularly appreciated Mr. Graham's services when they found that he had already been 'round clearing a path with the side-walk snow plow. The town kept a team for various duties, and one of these horses was used for drawing the plow.

STREETS

Almost as soon as the prairie trails had been converted into streets in the settlement, residents began to clamor for improvements.

Virden as a village and later as a town found street improvements always necessary. The creek was a source of expense when bridges were built on Nelson Street, 5th Avenue, and 7th Avenue. The C.P.R. built

crossings and there was a petition for more light at the station. Figures published in 1897 show that there was a real program of sidewalk building with indication that property owners shared the cost. Six feet in width, the stipulated length in feet for different properties were Huston 90, Central Hotel 270, Simpson 35, Bunt 7, D. McDonald 16, Pineo and Merrick 85, and others making a total length of 658 feet. Cost was \$343.00.

In 1901 the proposed program was more ambitious, practically trebling in extent. J. A. Blakeman reported to the council that the cost of 10,200 square feet would be approximately \$1700 to \$1800. Later cement walks were laid on all the main streets. Quality Hill was not included though the old Poverty Flats section was largely benefited.

In 1937-38, 7th Avenue was hard surfaced as part of the Good Roads Highway coming through the town and financed by merchants, town and the Manitoba Good Roads Department. The work was unsatisfactory and the street had to be re-surfaced by the Good Roads Department.

In July, 1940, the main streets of the town were oiled.

SUBWAY

A subway was constructed under the C.P.R. tracks following a severe accident to a young girl who had tried to cross between cars of a supposedly stationary train. The Women's Institute was much concerned about the danger of those crossing the tracks at Nelson Street where no legal crossing existed and was instrumental in having the subway constructed. With the opening of the new Goulter School in 1956 it was thoroughly renovated and better lighting installed. It is being patrolled by the R.C.M.P. and inspected daily by G. Boulanger, town inspector.

TREES

As practically all the early settlers in town and district were from Eastern Canada and Britain they were definitely tree conscious. Far flung vistas, glorious sunsets, the cool serenity of moonrises were thrilling to their artistic sense but they longed for the sheltering cosiness of trees. Planting of these trees was always being advocated by the press. At a meeting of the town council February, 1901, the following resolution was passed "That the Council agrees with pleasure to the proposal of the Government to co-operate with farmers to encourage tree planting, and would humbly suggest that Virden be made a distributing point for

this district. Further we would recommend John Caldwell of Virden as a person well fitted to be a supervisor having had wide experience in tree planting." Copies of this resolution were sent to Mr. Stevens, Superintendent of Forestry, and to the Minister of the Interior at Ottawa.

On May 21st, 1902, Virden, being as yet a village, an important delegation of citizens waited upon Council asking that Council arrange to have some form of protection afforded for trees planted on the streets, and further that there be a yearly program extending beauty to other streets in a town already known as "Virden The Beautiful." Speakers on this occasion were Messrs. Goulter, Rothnie, J. W. Higginbotham, Joliffe, Meek, Craig, Palmer, and Chivers. This was a project that was not done by halves.

No wonder Virden became the Little Tree Town of The West, with its trees sponsored by leading citizens, planted by John Caldwell, supervised by the Dominion Forestry Department and even brought to the attention of the Minister of the Interior at Ottawa.

CEMETERY

The cemetery benefited from the enthusiasm of this project. Mr. W. Harman of Dauphin relates that when he bought lots on Wellington Street upon which he built a residence, he had been told by an old-timer that settlers who died during the winter of 1882-83 had been buried on this property and removed to the new cemetery in the spring. When this latter property was acquired it was merely a spot on the open prairie. The early planting of trees has given it the attractive appearance it has today, but for years it received little attention beyond the care bestowed by individuals upon their own plots. A new survey was made and new plots numbered but still no concerted effort was made to improve conditions until a group of women began work on their own initiative. Women who took the lead were Mrs. John Caldwell, Mrs. T. Clark, Mrs. W. H. Scarth, Mrs. A. Stewart and Mrs. Duncan McDonald. The Women's Institute under Mrs. Dayton became interested and men who helped were D. McDonald and Wm. Pineo.

From this beginning was formed the Virden Cemetery Improvement Association. Plots were marked, monuments straightened, paths marked, hedges and trees trimmed, grass cut. The Association under the chairmanship of J. J. O'Neill is responsible for maintenance. They receive the grave-digging fees (\$10.00 in summer, \$25.00 to \$30.00 in winter). They also receive donations and grants which amount to a considerable sum. The Town of Virden is responsible for the capital account and main repairs. In 1956, to balance the accounts, Wallace Municipality provided \$100.00 and Virden \$400.00. The town bought trees for the new acreage which had been added and J. J. O'Neill supervised their plant-

ing. The Association is appointed by the people. Gordon McDonald was for years a most efficient secretary and other members are Mrs. Aubrey Lawrence, Mrs. C. A. Kenderdine, Mrs. R. Gabrielle, Miss Edna Sararas, Mrs. H. Grose and Mrs. T. Hayward.

Though the results of the work of this committee are quite evident to all who visit this beauty spot, the last resting place of many who have been written about in these pages, yet comparatively few are aware of the load of responsibility that has been carried by the committee through the years.

VICTORIA PARK

The acquisition of the Park has been of inestimable benefit to the town. In April, 1897, there is official record that Councillors P. B. H. Ramsay and W. D. Wilson introduced a resolution that two rows of elm trees be planted in front of the park. In June of that year James Bolton was given instructions to clean up the property "to the satisfaction of the Council" and on June 22nd at twelve o'clock noon in the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Mrs. B. Meek, wife of the mayor, had the honor of christening this beauty spot in the midst of the village "Victoria Park." Since then it has served the town in many ways—for tennis, bowling, skating and curling, a tourist camp, a paddling pool (in 1939). Children have played there, families and groups have enjoyed a picnic meal; it has formed a setting for patriotic meetings and for memorial services by the shaft erected after the first war. All the time the work of beautification has gone on; flower beds, pleasant walks, the planting of shrubs and imported trees. Cottonwoods, like those that flourished in stately beauty throughout the town, have had to be removed owing to dry rot which attacked the trunks after they had reached maturity, but more lasting varieties have taken their place.

The work of Fred Ingram must not be overlooked. On his property on 8th Avenue opposite the park, he cultivated seedlings, shrubs and bedding plants. It was possible to obtain from him flowers of various varieties in their season. He spent the last years of his life in a work he loved and which was of value to his town.

MEMORIALS

After World War I, the Virden district gave a great deal of consideration to the form its memorial should take. Quite a large section was in favor of a community hall. This would require organization, decisions regarding plans and site, finances not only for building but of mainten-

ance and there was the possibility that the prime objective might be overshadowed by the activities that such a hall would sponsor. Others favored a monument that would have only one purpose—a token of remembrance.

While these discussions were proceeding, the Great War Veterans and Women's Auxiliary erected a Cross of Remembrance in the cemetery and to this quiet, beautiful spot each year on a summer Sunday many would come from near and far for a Service of Remembrance.

At a public meeting of town and district a final decision was made in favor of a monument as being something to which everyone could contribute, no matter how small the offering. Times were hard but an intensive canvass was organized and a beautiful monument was erected in Victoria Park in line with the main gates and to this spot Memorial Services were transferred as affording more room for the numbers attending. During Virden's Seventy-fifth Anniversary celebration many will visit these spots, remembering the splendid men who went out from this pleasant, peaceful community and will stand with heads bowed in homage to their courage and their sacrifice.

BAND

Another public service which Virden struggled valiantly to maintain was a band. It gives a place a certain prestige to have a good band and its music enlivens proceedings on any public occasion. Even though members give their services voluntarily, there are still unavoidable expenses; the cost of instruments and music, a salary for the band leader, and cost of some sort of uniforms. Of the few notes gathered up concerning this important body, most have reference to requests for assistance.

Fortunately the first item to hand is dated 1891 and states that the band gave good service on May 24th. In May, 1895, C. E. Pineo and Mr. Austin were a deputation to council re assistance to the band. Ten dollars per month was granted. In April, 1896, E. Ramsay and B. Meek were a similar deputation but the result is not recorded. In 1900 Marsh Irwin was band leader and some members at that early date were Mr. Burton, Jack McLeod and Mr. Manser.

In 1907 Bandmaster Gilchrist appeared before Council re the re-organization of the band. Assistance was promised. It was at about this time that new instruments were bought and the body became known as the Virden Silver Band. In May, 1909, a citizens' committee consisting of D. McDonald and W. W. Joslin asked for aid and re-organization; \$100.00 was granted to buy drum, cornet and music. "The leader was

to be paid \$20.00 per month for three months and \$10.00 per month thereafter so long as the band continues to function."

Dave Gilchrist held the office of band leader for some years, and after his going there was a period of less activity. From about 1912 until he went overseas in 1916 Tommy Dixon was bandmaster. Under Ted Lyman the personnel underwent a change. Ted enlisted the services of men, boys, women and girls. He acquired effective uniforms and took his band to various places in Manitoba including Winnipeg and also across the line. They entered contests, won prizes but with Ted's departure for the east, the group fell apart.

Norman Rodgers made it once more a going concern as a military band but with his departure for Rivers, interest in it grew less. Lorne Chapple is now Band Sergeant for the 12th Manitoba Dragoons and is also training the Virden Legion Junior Band of over 35 members. Lorne has been leader with a number of bands both adult and junior, his first intimate introduction to Virdenites occurring when he appeared at the Musical Festival in 1949 with his band from the small Pacific School. It was a revelation of what can be accomplished with expert training.

TELEPHONE

Even at an early period in the life of the village, forward-looking minds began to consider the possibility of introducing electricity and telephones. Their discussions were of some avail, for in January, 1893, the application of F. G. Walsh was accepted to erect poles and string wires in the town. Wallace Municipality followed in line and in July, 1907, the Secretary-Treasurer was instructed to write Messrs. Agnew, Howden and Frence asking them to meet a committee of Wallace and Virden Councils re telephone installation in the two municipalities. The following year Woodworth considered having a line which would connect with Virden, the town of Virden to assist in constructing the line. This telephone connection between the three municipalities proved to be a great convenience which was greatly enhanced when long distance service was procured.

The telephone office was established over Higginbotham's Drug Store, and later in a room in the Municipal Building. When the Manitoba Government took over the system, it had grown to such an extent that the present office was built to accommodate it. There are 1430 subscribers on the Virden exchange. In 1945 there were 545.

ELECTRICITY

Immediately upon incorporation as a village, the installation of electricity came up for discussion. In February, 1893, A. C. Foster

appeared before the Council for the Virden Light and Power Co. asking for a franchise for ten years to erect poles and furnish electric light to Virden. The request was granted provided work began by July 1st of that year. That this had not proved to be a satisfactory service was shown for even by 1897, kerosene lamps furnished the universal lighting medium.

ACETYLENE GAS

The next innovation, on a scale that assured success, was the introduction of acetylene gas. The first mention of it appears September 15th, 1900, when J. A. McLachlan and E. M. Conroy appeared before the Council to ask permission to lay pipes for acetylene gas, one to two feet underground for lighting certain parts of the streets. In 1902 there is a reference to McLachlan and Conroy offering their plant for sale and in the following year a public meeting of ratepayers was called to consider the advisability of corporation ownership of an Acetylene Gas Plant, and of borrowing \$5000.00 for the purpose. A by-law was passed later authorizing a loan of \$6000.00. Negotiations followed. Claims of the old company were assigned to the "Acetylene Construction Co." of St. Catherine's, Ontario, represented by a Mr. Wylie. John Cain received the contract for pipes and fixtures. Five light posts were installed, corner 6th and Wellington, 8th and Queen, 9th and Queen, Raglan and 7th, Nelson and 9th. Mr. Huston, hotel keeper, bought his own light post. Charge per street light per year was \$25.00. On October 23rd, 1903, Mr. Jesse C. King notified Council that the Acetylene Gas Plant was now ready and being used by the town.

As time went on, more street lights were added, and a familiar sight as darkness fell was W. C. Lidington with his long-handled lighter walking briskly from post to post bringing some degree of light to the dark streets. Beginning at about 11 p.m., he made the same rounds again, leaving the streets in darkness. Those who lived in residence suburbs such as Quality Hill and Poverty Flats made their way about at night as best they could. Electric torches were coming into use, but the faithful old lantern was still doing duty. The first gas plant was accommodated on the site of the present W. A. Bridgett store. Then it was moved to the small brick building by the creek at the corner of Nelson and 9th, from that time known as the Gas Works, which housed it during the remaining years that it functioned.

As in the case with many public services, things did not always run smoothly. There was a serious loss of gas at the mains and Mr. Lawton, Gas manager, was brought to task by council. Representations were made to the Gas Company and a demand made that the system should receive a complete overhaul. Mr. Lawton was discharged in 1909.

HYDRO

The imagination of the citizens began to turn again to the possibilities of electricity but it was some time before the idea was generally accepted. Gas was expensive but electricity would be expensive too and there was the initial cost of wiring all the old houses. Finally, however, the project was accepted and service installed with diesel engines furnishing power. As they were carrying a capacity load, sometimes the service was spasmodic, especially on Saturday nights when all business places were open, with full lights turned on. So reserves of candles or the hopefully discarded kerosene lamps were kept on hand for emergencies.

Hydro came to Virden first in 1930. Mr. MacNamara and Mr. Turner, representing the Manitoba Power Commission, explained the intention was to convert the whole town lighting system to multiple lighting. They asked permission to place the poles on the north-east side of 7th Avenue to avoid difficulty due to the telephone wires being on the other side of the street. Later Hydro was extended until many farms were electrified, the project being completed by 1953.

Nothing that Virden had undertaken had created such a revolution in the manner of the domestic life of the people. Rates were lower so users of electricity in both town and country began buying all manner of appliances. Household and farm tasks were accomplished with the aid of electric power. The night scene in town with brightly lighted streets and colored neon signs was a distinct change from the time when five light posts for acetylene gas were being installed.

WATERWORKS

In 1948 Virden undertook another project in public service that has had an incalculable effect upon the standing of the town, one that had been under discussion for forty years. It was a project that was dear to T. B. Mitchell's heart and in May of 1908 he and T. A. Megaffin presented a resolution that \$250.00 be set aside for the purpose of getting an engineer to report on water - supply and sewerage for the town. The motion was defeated, the mayor giving the casting vote against it. In July of the following year it came up again and was carried and Cecil Goddard's offer to survey the town for waterworks was accepted at \$250.00. Mayor Geo. Clingan and the Fire, Water and Light Committee visited Yorkton and other points to investigate their waterworks systems.

In addition to the expense of labor and cost of all material necessary for putting such a system into working order, two vital factors had to be considered, first a sufficient and satisfactory water supply and second a means of sewage disposal. Although in Virden a supply of clear water can be found almost anywhere at a comparatively shallow

depth there was never a great quantity of it. The C.P.R., in order to supply its watertank near the station, found it necessary to run a pipe line to the Assiniboine River. Difficulty in excavating was experienced at the top of the valley hill on account of the huge boulders that had to be removed. However the feat was accomplished, pipes were laid and a pump house built. It is this pipe line that is forming a basis at the present time for negotiations between the C.P.R. and the town regarding extension of the waterworks system.

Back in 1909 this lack of water supply was no doubt a strong factor in the failure of the efforts at that time. It was given up as not being feasible and though the matter continued to be discussed at times, it was not until 1948 that it again came up for serious consideration.

In the meantime, many residents had been installing private systems, which to begin with were somewhat in the experimental stage. When the hospital was built in 1910, sanitary measures involved the installation of such a system. Some land was bought on a lower level than the hospital area for the purpose of making a filter field but that was discarded in favor of the usual septic tank which required to be pumped out. That style of equipment is still in use at the hospital and will be until Virden's present water system is extended across the track and to other areas that are not yet included.

In 1948 a public meeting was called to discuss the installation of a town system. Surveys had been made, estimates received and the Public Utility Board asked for approval of the borrowing of money up to \$280,000. It was found, however, that another \$100,000 would be required. Much discussion and calculation followed and finally it was decided to employ the services of Wood McLellan of Saskatoon and the waterworks project was completed and in use November, 1953, at a cost of \$360,000.

From that time, owing to development of oil, there was a rapid increase in population. New homes sprang up, trailer camps grew in number, public buildings were erected including the new Goulter School. Soon the water system was running at near capacity. At once the search began for a new source of water supply. It was not until the ninth well was drilled by International Water Supply Ltd. that a gushing supply was found in the Assiniboine Valley on the east side of the river. After all final tests were made of the suitability of the water for town use, there was still the problem to be solved of bringing it to Virden. Negotiations are in progress with the C.P.R. regarding the use of this company's present pipe line, and with J. G. Trowell, superintendent for the California Standard Company in Virden regarding the possibility of running a water line under the river at the same time as this company is putting through an oil pipe line. At the time of writing, these matters are all under consideration, the town's interests being handled by the waterworks committee, Councillors R. H. Atkinson, C. S. Coleman, and the waterworks superintendent C. H. McEwen. Since writing the above, the joint project with the Cal. Standard Co. has been completed.

REGISTRY OFFICE

Progress was marked by the introduction of various public innovations. In 1885, a Registry office was installed and that it was appreciated is shown by the storm of indignation that arose over its removal to Brandon in 1890. J. H. Proctor, A. McDonald, D. McDonald and M. B. Irwin carried a protest to the government with a petition from the town but without avail.

PORT OF ENTRY

A Port of Entry was established in 1890, and continued for years. In 1885 there had been agitation for a court house and a new school. There is mention of weigh scales by the firehall in 1902 with E. W. Forster as weigh master. John Norsworthy took over from him, combining this task with his duty as bell-ringer. As he lived just across the street, this was a convenient arrangement.

LIBRARY

In 1892 Rev. Watt, J. H. Agnew and H. H. Goulter waited on the council re assistance toward establishing a Reading Room. There was more leisure for reading in those days, so this was a popular institution in many towns and did exist for a time in Virden; a quiet spot where members could drop in for a few minutes spent with newspapers, magazines, popular authors or reference works.

Years later a Library was opened as related by Mrs. A. R. Kent in the following report:

In 1918 Virden's first public library was opened. It was sponsored by the local branch of the Women's Institute, and a room in the municipal hall was donated by the Town Council.

Mrs. Wm. Gee (nee Queenie Thompson) was librarian for fifteen years, keeping the library open two afternoons and evenings a week for a small salary. Every six months five hundred books were provided by McGill University on an exchange basis, and fifty books a month were exchanged with the W.I. extension library. About 1936 the Women's Institute disbanded and the Library closed, and was not opened again until 1945, when a group of ladies headed by Mrs. K. Cappie, formed the Virden Library Board, with Mrs. Cappie as President, and Mrs. R. Alexander as Secretary-Treasurer. Executive consisted of Miss Ida Bennett, Mrs. John Wilson, and Mrs. H. Johnston.

Library stocks were replenished by private donations of books. Small expenses were covered by book rentals and a generous donation from the Rest Room Committee. A tag day was also held to augment the finances.

Since 1947 Mr. J. R. McLachlan has been President and Mrs. A. Kent Secretary-Treasurer, with Mrs. J. R. Monteith a prominent worker. It continued with a few changes on the executive and various librarians. Finances have been procured through membership cards, bridge tournaments, cookie sales, and donations. Hundreds of new books have been purchased, and today the library consists of over 2,000 good books.

Late in 1956 the Virden Oil Wives took over the duties of the Librarian, greatly enhancing the Board's financial position.

REST ROOM

An institution that has proved to be of the greatest convenience to country members has been the Rest Room. It has provided a meeting place for families in town for an afternoon on different pursuits—a meeting, shopping or entertainment and also a boon to mothers with small children. In spite of its great usefulness, it was impossible for many years to establish it on a reliable basis. It was to be open only five afternoons a week but expenses had to be met of rent and heat and the salary of the matron. No organization stood behind the project but in 1919 a Board was formed, charter members being:

President	Mrs. J. Carnahan
1st Vice-President	Mrs. W. Thomson
2nd Vice-President	Mrs. Park
Secretary-Treasurer	Mrs. W. Burge
Mrs. E. J. Scales, Mrs. E. Boggs, Mrs. Tod, Mrs. Whiteford, Mrs. T. Gibbings, Mrs. T. A. Megaffin, Mrs. W. Hayhurst, Mrs. H. H. Goulter.	

Other workers and helpers were Miss M. Sproat, Mrs. W. P. Thomson, Mrs. Peter McDonald, Mrs. T. Clarke, Mrs. E. Boiteau, Mrs. Cappie. Mrs. Tod and Mrs. G. English held in turn the office of secretary. Mrs. Paton was matron for a time, then Mrs. Weston, Mrs. Paton again in 1920, Mrs. Mundy in 1921, Mrs. Griffith, Mrs. Paton again. In the hard years following the war, expenditure could not be met so the room was closed. Another trial was made and it was opened in March, 1924, but closed in May of the same year. In spite of these reverses, it limped along. Always a room was difficult to find but the work was carried on; at one time in what is now the

furniture department of Bridgett's store. At another time it had quarters in the former T. B. Mitchell building, and for a winter in Mrs. Nelson's home. In 1930 Mrs. Loftus Johnston and Mrs. Wm. McDonald were at the head of the Board but in 1931 the room was closed.

It was re-opened in 1936 and the Board has managed to keep it going. A new Rest Room was opened in a building owned by A. K. Duncan. In July, 1947, the council assumed maintenance of this building, the committee paying operating expenses.

In April, 1951, Mrs. Goulter donated \$4,000.00 in C.N.R. bonds due 1959 to the Rest Room as a perpetual source of income.

IMMIGRATION HALL

After the four-room stone school had been abandoned for school purposes it was used as an Immigration Hall for some years under the management of C. J. Bell. It served an important purpose as a centre for immigrants who were arriving in numbers during that period and Mr. Bell was kept busy in placing them throughout the surrounding district.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

The program of public service for 1957 includes the establishing of a Community Centre on the site of the Agricultural Grounds. With the acquisition of more land to the east of the former site, accommodation can be provided not only for the activities of the Agricultural Society but also for the various summer and winter sports which have always received the enthusiastic support of Virden and community.

CHAPTER 14

THE HOSPITAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

From the early days when home care in illness was the order often with quite untrained help, the services of practical nurses were in demand. Those who had a natural bent for their work were what was known as "born nurses", which, with practice, enabled them to do excellent work. Many cases, however, required more expert care and more serviceable equipment than could be provided in a home, so a hospital became a pressing need.

Mrs. A. P. Stewart was the leading spirit in providing Virden with this service. The Stewarts lived in the house formerly occupied by Dr. D. C. Thompson and Mrs. Stewart, with the help of Dr. Sparling, a young medico who had settled in Virden, succeeded in establishing about 1900 a small hospital in a house she owned in the same block but facing 7th Avenue. It has already been noted that fire cut short the life of this useful institution.

Dr. George Clingan, who took over Dr. Sparling's practice upon the departure of the latter, had a two-bed room in the house beside the Parish Hall where he employed the services of a practical nurse, Miss G. Brady, but this was the only means of its kind provided until 1906.

There had been a strong movement on foot for some time to provide the town with this really necessary service and at last after much discussion concerning finances and much searching for a suitable site, it was decided to go on with the project. The Virden Hospital was duly incorporated in 1906 by an act of Legislature, charter members of the board being:

R. Langtry President
H. C. Simpson
J. A. Blakeman
H. H. Goulter
I. J. Bennett
Mrs. J. F. Frame

Mrs. D. McDonald
Mrs. J. W. Higginbotham
Mrs. Jas. Schoenau
Mrs. H. H. Goulter
Mrs. George Clingan Secretary-Treasurer

As temporary quarters pending the erection of a suitable building, a three-year lease was obtained on the property of Mrs. Cote on the south-east corner of 21-10-26, where Hallidays now live. This lease was later extended by another year. There were those who thought this site unsuitable owing to its close proximity to the C.N.R. with the resulting noise of train-traffic, the idea at that time being that a hospital should be set at a germ-proof, noise-proof distance from the rest of the community. The house, which had been erected about twenty years before by Mr. Downs, a merchant, was of good size and lent itself fairly well for conversion to hospital use. At the north end was a roomy hall, and behind it what became an all purpose room. The south end contained two large rooms one of which became a men's ward with four beds, the other a women's ward with three beds. At the back a one-storey wing held a kitchen-dining room for the staff, and opening off it, the operating room. An adjoining shed was made sufficiently all-weather to be used for laundry purposes. On the second floor one room was used by the nurse, another by the house-keeper, a third became a semi-private ward maintained by Boss Hill District, a service they continued to discharge until the opening of the present hospital in 1952. That means forty-six years of unrelenting care. The fourth room, a small one, became a private ward which was maintained by Mr. J. Singer in memory of his mother, Mrs. A. P. Stewart. Ten beds was the total accommodation.

The staff consisted of one nurse, Miss McAuley, and a housekeeper, Miss Clara Sparrow, who had also had some training as a nurse and so was able to relieve the matron at times. The staff was completed by an orderly who, by the way, had sleeping accommodation in the all-purpose room, on the ground floor.

Revenue consisted of patients' fees and annual government grants based on total number of days' treatment given in the year. Virden and surrounding municipalities gave grants as they saw fit, but municipal guarantees had not yet been made compulsory by law. There was of course always a percentage of indigents who were unable to pay and as the rates charged for general and semi-private wards did not cover the cost of maintenance, the one private ward barely paying its way, the deficit in running expenses was made up by voluntary subscriptions. A canvass had been made, each citizen agreeing to pay a certain sum annually, ranging from \$1.00 to \$100.00. This entitled him to a vote at the annual hospital meeting and it was one of the duties of the secretary-treasurer to see that all such subscriptions were paid by the end of the year.

There had never been a more popular public service inaugurated in the district. The Women's Hospital Aid was most energetic. It comprised such ardent workers as the charter members of the Board and Mrs. Chris Bell, Mrs. John Caldwell, Mrs. W. F. Scarth, Mrs. M. B. Irwin, her daughter Mrs. H. C. Simpson, Mrs. I. J. Bennett, Mrs. J. R. Mullins, Mrs. E. J. Scales, Mrs. J. A. Blakeman, and many others, changing as the years went on to others equally as enthusiastic and energetic. A wonderful group to work with! Each would shoulder any task assigned her and at the meetings was seldom heard that theme song, the accompaniment of many meetings, "I'll help but I will not be a Convenor." When the Cote property had been secured, the women set to work redecorating, polishing, furnishing.

The two-room school, being unoccupied at the time, was given over to the work of making up linens. One room was fitted up with borrowed sewing machines, tables and chairs. Bolts of sheeting, cotton, flannelette, and tubular pillow cotton were bought. Such a busy clatter went on, seaming, hemming, cutting out, sewing on of tapes and buttons, turning out of hand-made button holes—the finished product, bedding, tray-cloths, stand covers, curtains, bedding, patients' gowns, operating room gowns, babies clothing, bandages soon taking form. Someone had donated a large feather tick, so Mrs. Simpson and Mrs. Clingan were segregated in the other room where they were given the task of filling pillow ticks. Even after fifty years that is still a tickle-nose recollection.

At last came the day of the opening in October, 1906, when people came from far and near bearing gifts and from that day on it never ceased to be a boon to the community. It was not long until a second nurse was required. Extra domestic help was engaged for day work.

In the meantime preparations went on for the erection of a hospital building that would provide adequate accommodation for future needs. A suitable and available site had to be chosen. This matter was settled when the Board accepted four acres from the town at Nelson Street and Third Avenue. Then plans and costs had to be studied. Blue-prints were obtained from other small hospitals. Mrs. McDonald and Mrs. Clingan were delegated to visit Moosomin Hospital. They were entertained at the home of Sheriff Murphy and conducted about by Captain Taylor, RCMP. Upon entering the hotel for lunch before catching their return train, they were subjected to furtive glances of curiosity from others in the dining room which Captain Taylor explained by saying "They are wondering which of you is under arrest and which is the matron in charge."

A delegation also visited Selkirk Hospital which was on a larger scale. The Virden Board, after due consideration of reports and of various plans submitted, decided to follow the general lay-out of the Selkirk Hospital. Funds were to be provided by government grant, grants from Virden and adjacent municipalities and by private donations. F. Palmer was chairman of the canvassing committee and devised a plan of subscriptions by cash or by promisory notes, a plan which proved to be successful.

The women, too, had been extending their sphere of activity by helping to organize auxiliaries. One was already in operation in the Boss Hill district, and others were formed at River Valley, Harmsworth, Pacific, Elkhorn, Arawana and other points. When Dr. Johnson set up a cottage hospital at Elkhorn, the town and adjoining districts naturally transferred their support to their own institution but the other auxiliaries continued to support maintenance of the Virden Hospital.

As the time approached for taking over larger quarters, it was decided to inaugurate a training school for nurses. This was a plan followed by many small hospitals. In the first years their duties were much like those of nurses' aids and practical nurses. By the third year they assumed special duties. At one time Brandon Training School allowed its third year students to go out on private cases for about three weeks where they had to assume responsibility without supervision. The small hospitals provided very good training as every student was brought into contact with every sort of case that was admitted. Virden became affiliated with King George Hospital in Winnipeg where student nurses had some months' study of the treatment of communicable diseases. The matron and the doctors gave lectures on the subjects prescribed for training and after a nurse received her diploma at the end of three years, she could write her R.N. which gave her the same standing in the profession as a registered nurse who had trained in any other hospital.

In the summer of 1910, Virden Hospital took on only two nurses-in-training, extra accommodation being provided by a tent set up close to the building. In following years the class was increased to three, four, even five. Some of the graduates later held responsible positions in various institutions.

During the depression years it was found that the profession had more nurses than could be steadily employed so Virden relinquished its training school and employed only graduates on its staff. During the second war and succeeding years, the situation became reversed and it was necessary for hospitals to augment their staffs by employing nurses' aids and practical nurses. A school for the latter was set up in Winnipeg, where, with a short term training, many were able to qualify for good positions.

As has happened with so many organizations and public bodies which have lost official records, the hospital, too, has been unfortunate. No early records have been located and the foregoing has been written entirely from memory. However a press clipping from the scrap book supplied by Hattie McDonald Weiler, in describing the opening of the 1910 hospital gives reports concerning the building. The Building Committee appointed by the Board were J. A. Blakeman, D. McBeth and President I. J. Bennett, Contractor George Harris, Clerk of Works W. J. McMullen, Architect Wm. Finland, Winnipeg.

All work was done by local workers with the plumbing and ventilating

system supplied by Virden Manufacturing Co. H. H. Goulter, treasurer of the Building Fund, reported that when all costs had been paid there would be a deficit of only \$2,000.00.

The building of solid brick contained at basement level furnace room, storage, laundry, kitchen, staff dining room, sleeping quarters; on first floor, office, emergency ward, public ward with 10 beds, operating room, preparation room, diet kitchen, bathroom; second floor, public 7-bed ward, diet kitchen, bathroom, Boss Hill semi-private and three private wards—I.O.O.F., River Valley and Singer. The latter was subsequently taken over by the Masonic Lodge after the Singers had lived in Vancouver for some years and Mr. Singer had been suffering from ill health. The third floor had sitting room, bedrooms and bathroom for the staff. According to the standards of the time, it was considered a well-planned building. It was not long, however, until one defect made itself felt and that was the lack of an elevator. Carrying stretcher cases from one floor to another was no easy task.

When the day came for the opening in November, 1910, there were present the staff consisting of the matron, Miss Eaton, who had succeeded Miss McAuley, and assistant nurse, two nurses-in-training and the orderly. Mrs. D. McDonald received callers, Mrs. Goulter had charge of registration and Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Agnes Stewart listed donations. Members of the Board were present, also members of the Hospital Aid acting in various capacities.

From that time on changes occurred in personnel. I. J. Bennett was succeeded as president by Jas. Gardner. The work of the secretary-treasurer grew heavier. Owing to illness, Mrs. Clingan resigned, Rev. Peter Strang taking over and then D. M. Handy held the office for a short time. It was decided that the work merited a salary. J. D. McNiven held it for some years, then W. O. Wilson, T. H. Clement, E. Anderson, E. C. Osmond and now Miss A. McDougall.

Miss V. Hennan, an early matron of the hospital, joined up for overseas service in World War I and fell a victim of the 'flu epidemic that raged so virulently among the camps. Another nurse from this area, Miss M. Green of Joslin district, met a similar tragic fate. Miss Kettles, for some years matron of the hospital, had seen overseas service. Others well known in this community who had charge at different times were Nan Torrance, Marjorie Hitchins, Pat Pearn, all R.N.'s.

A well-known and well-loved matron of the Virden District Hospital was Mrs. Della Coleman who, in spite of ill health, continued efficiently and pleasantly to carry on her duties until increasing weakness forced her to yield. Shortly before her death, Mrs. Coleman, in discussing equipment with the Hospital Aid, had suggested the need of a fracture table. A year later when Mrs. W. T. Manser, president of the Aid, made a formal presentation to Mr. A. R. Bain, chairman of the Administrative Committee, the table bore a plaque on which was engraved

"In Memory of Mrs. Della Coleman, matron 1952-1956. Presented to the hospital on the 31st day of January, 1957, by the Virden District Hospital Aid, made possible by contributions from organizations and citizens of the community."

A few years after the opening of the hospital the passing of legislation making municipalities responsible for the payment of fees incurred by indigents, up to a certain figure, made the financial outlook better, though this figure did not entirely cover the actual cost. Losses were occasionally caused by apparently reliable people engaging semi-private or private wards and then for some reason failing to pay. For these cases there was no recourse to the municipal guarantee, so the institution was still dependent upon the voluntary support of the public. Those who sponsored wards kept them supplied with furnishings. Pacific and Harmsworth districts each had a bed in one of the public wards, for which they supplied bedding and the Women's Hospital Aid provided furnishings throughout the rest of the building as well as uniforms for student nurses.

Some time before his death, Mr. Jas. Scallion had set up a trust fund in perpetuity of \$10,000 for the Virden Hospital. This was later transferred to the Virden District Hospital on condition that the benefits therefrom go solely to this hospital. Only the revenue is expendable and this brings in something in excess of \$300.00 per year.

The Goulter Trust Fund was set up after the death of Mr. Goulter and could be expended for certain purposes. After Virden District Hospital was finished, this sum was liquidated and applied on capital cost of the hospital which was consistent with the trust deed. Mrs. Goulter also gave a further contribution of \$1,000.00 for the new hospital.

As some of the original members of the Hospital Aid dropped out others took their places. Mrs. O. S. Ross was a wonderful organizer and worker; others were Mrs. Jas. Stinson, Mrs. W. Bray, Mrs. Griffiths, Mrs. S. Gee, Mrs. R. Rolston, Mrs. Mann, Mrs. Eveleigh, Mrs. Biggs.

Many times the hospital was over crowded, extra beds being set up wherever possible. The staff was increased by taking on more student nurses and when the school was abolished more graduates were engaged. The domestic staff also was increased. Staff quarters on the top floor became altogether inadequate. By the end of the Second War it was definitely admitted that something must be done to provide more room for the work that was being done. Then the Health Department came forward with a plan for hospital areas and after much discussion and study, Virden finally accepted the plan in 1951.

Virden Hospital District No. 10 was formed comprised of:

- All of Town of Virden
- All of Town of Oak Lake.
- All of Village of Elkhorn

All of R. M. of Wallace
 All of R. M. of Pipestone
 All of R. M. of Archie
 Part of R. M. of Albert (N ½)
 Part of R. M. of Sifton
 Part of R. M. of Woodworth
 Small part of R. M. of Ellice

Three units were within this District—small hospitals at Elkhorn and Reston with a larger more completely equipped unit at Virden, overall cost to be \$290,000.00. After due consideration the site for the Virden unit was chosen adjacent to the hospital then in operation. As the sole surviving member of the Charter Board, Mrs. Clingan was given the honor of turning the first sod.

The whole of District No. 10 is headed by a Governing Board of 14 members who represent the municipalities mentioned and are appointed by the relative councils for three-year terms of office, subject to the approval of the minister of Health.

Each hospital unit has a local Administrative Committee (Virden 9 members) to administer the normal business. These members are appointed by the Governing Board and two of them must be members also of the Governing Board.

Finance is by the regular revenue from services rendered. New legislation makes municipalities responsible for paying patients' accounts to a greater extent than in the past and direct government assistance was withdrawn. Any deficit in operation is charged to the included municipalities on the basis of patient days attributed from each particular municipality. The Governing Board has sole borrowing power, if necessary, before receipt of tax monies to cover deficit.

Additional information regarding the new set up:

Virden District Hospital	32 beds
Maternity Section	East wing
Medical and Surgical cases	Centre and west wing
Major and Minor Operating Rooms	Front north wing
Local Health Unit and Diagnostic Unit	Ground floor
General Service Department	East end, ground floor
Nurses' Residence	West end, ground floor
Active Medical Staff	Dr. J. R. Monteith and Dr. R. S. Harris
Staff	nurses 15, others 12, a total of 27

Wards were furnished by the following:

Blakeman Ward	Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Blakeman, Kingston, Ontario; Mr. and Mrs. Alf Blakeman, Virden; Mr. and Mrs. E. Blakeman, Virden.
Etsell	Dr. and Mrs. E. T. Etsell, Winnipeg.
Higginbotham	Messrs. A. E. and John Higginbotham, Virden.

McNiven	Mrs. Merle Carter, Brandon; Bessie J. Moore, Chicago; Mr. Justice D. A. McNiven, Regina.
Scales	Mr. E. J. Scales, Virden.
Rex	Mrs. Jessie N. Rex, Virden.
Bennett	Mrs. M. Ada Bennett, formerly of Virden.
Woodnorth	R. H. Mooney, M.L.A., formerly of Woodnorth.
Legion	Virden Branch, Canadian Legion and Women's Auxiliary.
I.O.O.F.	Virden I.O.O.F. Lodge and Rebekahs.
Masonic	Lebanon Lodge No. 43, A.F. & A.M., Virden.
Four Bed Ward	David Russell, Two Creeks; Mrs. Mary Richardson, Winnipeg; Mrs. Jean E. Timms, Virden; Miss Mary Jeffrey, Virden.
Four Bed Ward	Canadian Order of Foresters including Court Virden, Court Elms, Court Hargrave and Court Woodnorth; Loyal Orange Lodge, Virden; Loyal Orange Benevolent Society, Virden; Harmsworth Ladies' Aid; and Springvale Ladies' Aid.
Main Nursery	Virden Lionells.
Isolation Nursery	Scarth Homemakers.

Color selections and furnishings were under the direction of Dr. J. R. Monteith.

The local administrative Committee comprises:

Arnold Bain	Chairman
W. A. Lawrence	
R. V. Andrew	
Roy Brown	
E. C. Osmond	
G. A. Mooney	
Mrs. A. B. Rutherford	
Mrs. Harold Beerman	

And so the new Virden District Hospital was opened September 15th, 1952, on a day as gloriously bright and hot as a day in August. Crowds were in attendance from all the countryside for the open-air ceremony. H. C. Odell, Reeve of Wallace and chairman of the Board of Governors of the Hospital, presided. Hon. Ivan Schultz, Minister of Health and Public Welfare, was principal speaker. Dr. J. R. Monteith cut the ribbon which marked the official opening of the building. During the ceremony W. J. Parker, President of the Manitoba Pool Elevators Association, took occasion to present the hospital with a cheque for

\$2,000.00 from his company. Others in positions of prominence were Hon. F. C. Bell, Manitoba Minister of Agriculture; Dr. H. N. Thompson, Mayor of Virden; former mayors, J. Gardner and C. Moore; chairman of committees, T. Morris and H. C. H. Brayfield; Miss Dorothy Wilson, R.N., Superintendent of Virden District Hospital; Miss Janet Campbell, R.N., Assistant Superintendent. Looking over the whole history of hospitalization and medical care it is safe to say that no other public service shows more clearly the progress that has been made in seventy-five years.

A new system of rates was adopted in line with the policy throughout Manitoba. It became effective April 1st, 1957, and is on an inclusive basis. That is instead of paying separately for ward, operating room, anaesthetics, medicines, dressings, and perhaps x-ray and laboratory tests, all will be included in one basic charge. This will bring the daily rates for public wards to \$10.00, semi-private \$12.00 - \$13.00, private \$15.00, nursery for new-born babies \$3.50.

HEALTH MEASURES

It is a far cry back to the early days when few preventive measures were taken against disease. Vaccination against small pox was being generally accepted. Each fall would bring a typhoid epidemic and at almost any season could occur epidemics of infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, chickenpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria. Then came a period when strict quarantine became the rule. Houses were marked with red, blue or white placards announcing the disease that was harbored within. Part time health officers strove unsuccessfully to enforce segregation. Many persons believed that everyone must have what were called children's diseases and that it was better to have them when young. Sometimes children were deliberately exposed to infectious germs, though results often showed that complications left serious weaknesses.

The first war brought into prominence the use of immunizing serums. These were soon adopted in the schools. The Government of Manitoba put into effect a system of organized Local Health Units which has proved effective. A perusal of a report on the history of the Virden Local Health Unit No. 7 will explain its organization and administration.

"In 1945 the Health Services Act made it possible for a group of communities to establish a local health unit which would provide the full time services of a trained physician as medical health officer, public health nurses and sanitary inspector. Provisions were also made for the organization of Diagnostic Units under the Act.

"In 1946 Virden Local Health Unit, with headquarters in the Town of Virden, opened on November 1st. It comprises the Rural Municipalities of Archie, Wallace, Woodworth, Pipestone, Sifton, Albert and Cameron, with the Towns of Virden, Oak Lake and Hartney, and the

Village of Elkhorn, with a total population of 15,726. The establishment consists of a medical director, four nurses, one sanitary inspector and a clerk - stenographer.

"In 1951 the Municipality of Miniota joined the unit in January. The Virden Advisory Board approved the organization of a Laboratory and X-ray scheme.

"In 1952 the headquarters of the unit were moved into new offices in the Virden District Hospital, and substations were set up in the Reston Medical Nursing Unit, and at Isabella.

"The Laboratory and X-ray Unit (third in the province) was opened on October 1st, 1952, in the Virden Local Health Unit, with headquarters in the Virden District Hospital, and substations with portable X-ray equipment at Reston and Elkhorn in the Medical - Nursing Units.

"In 1953 a Nursing substation opened at Elkhorn in the Medical Nursing Unit.

"Portable X-ray equipment was provided under Federal Health Grant to the Hartney Medical - Nursing Unit.

"In 1954 the Village of Hamiota and the Rural Municipalities of Hamiota and Blanshard were included in the Virden Laboratory and X-ray Unit and brought into the Virden Local Health Unit on October 1st, when nursing personnel became available. A nursing sub-station was set up in the Hamiota District Hospital. Laboratory and X-ray facilities were also provided in the Hamiota District Hospital for local residents through the services of a full-time technician and a Consultant-Radiologist."

Virden Health Unit was at first housed in the Municipal Building but was moved to the Virden District Hospital in 1952. Now in 1957 it is proposed to move the Baby Clinic to the new Resources Building as many mothers find it difficult to take their small children to the Hospital.

The Advisory Board consists of a representative from each Municipality, town and village included in the unit.

The staff consists of Medical Director, Sanitary Inspector, Nursing Staff, Technicians, Clerical Staff, Consultant Radiologist and Health Educator.

Health Unit Advisory Board Chairmen 1946-1957 were:

1946	Mr. P. Anderson
1947	Mr. R. J. Timms
1948 - 1953 inclusive	Dr. J. R. Monteith
1954 - 1957 inclusive	Mr. A. R. Hales

The following item from the report is informative:

"The area is also served by 15 practicing physicians, two dentists, two veterinarians and benefits from the facilities of 80 hospital beds."

The whole report is worth study to acquaint citizens with the great work that is being done in disease prevention and health promotion.

CHAPTER 15

CHURCHES

PIONEER MISSIONARIES

Virten has always been a church-going community. Before the Gopher Creek settlement had been moved to Virten townsite, Rev. Finlay McLeod had been preaching to construction gangs and to settlers along the line of the railway. He loved the work and was particularly happy if he ever found a group to whom he could preach in Gaelic. In his memoirs he tells of his first general service when he preached to settlers encamped around Mr. Cobb's big tent at Gopher Creek. The gathering was interdenominational for John Joslin "led the singing" and John Joslin was an Anglican as were his family and his grandchildren, each generation in turn continuing to "lead the singing."

Mr. McLeod never took a charge but when construction moved westward, he settled on his homestead in the Assiniboine Valley. It was his great pleasure to attend services in Virten, frequently walking into town and back and it seemed a fitting end when he collapsed at the door of Carmel Presbyterian Church in 1913 as he was about to enter to attend a service.

The fortunes of a young Methodist preacher, Wellington Bridgman, are traced in a book "Breaking Prairie Sod." In 1881, he was appointed assistant to Rev. Dr. George Young, Superintendent of Missions, and given a roving commission. In 1882, he was sent by train from Brandon to Griswold and from there to Virten. The superintendent had said to him, "It is reported that there are no Methodists there. I don't believe it, I wish you would go up and see." This impression had arisen from the fact that the Virten district was settled almost entirely by Scottish and English, who would most likely be Presbyterians or Anglicans.

Service was held in the "C.P.R. storehouse which had a good floor and canvas sides." Mr. Bridgman reported that early in the service signs of Methodism showed when he heard voices responding "Amen" from front and both sides of the little room. He held services at Grimmett's on the Pipestone and George English's in Montgomery District and was at that time the only travelling preacher between Brandon and Regina.

From that time the two denominations proceeded along similar lines. They held services wherever space was available—in the C.P.R. station, in a hotel dining room, in homes both in Virden and at outlying appointments.

The story is told that on one occasion when worship was being held in the dining room of the hotel and the minister in the midst of his sermon, the proprietor bustled in to say that the dining room was required at once as the train was coming in and meals must be provided for the passengers.

The congregations of both denominations longed to build places of worship but had to consider also accommodation for a minister so both compromised, the Methodists by building a church-parsonage on Raglan Street now occupied by Horne Agencies and the Presbyterians by erecting in 1883 a church-manse, on the site of the present United Church. George Burge was contractor. This manse was financed by 43 subscribers, some of whom were Messrs. Frame and Miller, K. McIvor, Jas. Madill, D. Muldrew, Wm. McDonald Sr., George Parker, Thomas Chitty and Rev. F. C. McLeod.

PRESBYTERIAN

The first regular Presbyterian services were conducted during the summer of 1882 in the C.P.R. station by a student, Mr. J. S. Hardie, but during the winter occasional services were held by Rev. Finlay McLeod. In the summer of 1883, another student, Mr. Dow, officiated at Virden and surrounding points. After the manse was completed, a regular minister was installed, the first being Rev. J. M. Sutherland, 1884-85, the second Rev. J. M. Kelly, 1885-87.

It was in 1885 that a disagreement occurred that bid fair to split the Presbyterian body. At a meeting in September it was decided by a bare majority not to use the organ to assist in hymn-singing and not to accept the new hymn-book recommended for church use. In those days it was quite customary to employ a tuning fork in church singing or in singing-schools when the preliminary effort to bring the human voices into harmony was like the tuning up of an orchestra. Opinion concerning the use of an organ was so evenly balanced that officials came from headquarters of the Presbytery to help decide the issue. The Advance of that period reported that, after a meeting lasting until 1.30 a.m., subscriptions were taken toward the organ fund.

The Presbyterian was not the only denomination to feel the effect of a changing outlook. At that time there was in the Anglican Church a strict demarkation line between Low Church and High Church forms of service, the former very plain, the latter with more ceremonial. As a rule Anglicans from Eastern Canada had been accustomed to the plain

or Low Church form, while those from Britain which included most of the Clergy, preferred the High Church. The introduction of stained glass windows, surpliced choirs, singing of the psalms, intoning of parts of the service, so acceptable to many, sometimes roused antagonism in others. The Methodists, too, were beginning to rebel against the strict discipline which forbade dancing, cards and theatre-going among its members. They were beginning also to seek a modified form of worship.

This was a period of new horizons and changing outlook even in the churches and as the years passed, it could be seen that sombreness was being eliminated and more brightness and beauty being introduced into the services of the three denominations with a consequent uplift of the human spirit. It was these changes that later helped to make possible the consideration of church union.

The difference of opinion regarding the organ had apparently no deep-lying effects for by 1887 the manse would not hold the numbers who came to worship, so the managers leased the Town Hall (Legion Hall) and here services continued to be held until 1890.

In 1887, the Rev. Alexander Currie had been ordained and inducted as the first settled pastor of the Presbyterian Congregation and here his labors continued until 1892. It was during his time that a church was erected on the corner of 9th and Wellington. George Marshall was the contractor. Some of those who were prominent in the work of the church were Robert Best, James Madill, C. J. Thompson, David Clark, James Elder, Wm. Whiteford, Wm. Ferguson. Their wives and families, too, were energetic in Sunday School, Ladies' Aid, Missionary Society and the choir.

Ministers who succeeded Mr. Currie were:

1892—1897	Rev. Walter Beattie
1897—1912	Rev. Peter Strang
1912—1918	Rev. Peter Scott
1918—1921	Rev. H. Feir
1921—1924	Rev. G. Lloyd

In two years' time the church was free of debt; the Ladies' Aid had raised sufficient funds to install seats and a pulpit. In 1900, extensive improvements were made to the building. A tower was added and the whole veneered with white brick. The interior, too, was completely renovated. In 1898, the old manse had been sold, the minister and his family being domiciled in rented quarters until in 1904 a manse was erected on 10th Avenue and La Crosse Street.

A report prepared and published in 1907 shows pictures and gives names of others who were prominent in the work of Carmel Presbyterian Church. A few of these names may be given—Jas. Lang, B. Meek, T. Jeffrey, Chas. McLaren, Jas. Wells, Theo. Goulter, J. B. Fraser,

H. J. Pugh, W. D. Craig, J. D. McNiven, Dr. Stevenson, A. Murdoch, F. Palmer, Adam Ross, Robt. Adamson. The executive of the Ladies' Aid consisted of Mrs. P. Strang, Mrs. Jas. Bolton, Mrs. W. McLellan, Mrs. C. J. Bell, Mrs. D. McDonald; of the W.M.S.—Mrs. (Rev.) Norris, Mrs. John Caldwell, Mrs. H. J. Pugh; Daughters of the Kirk—Mrs. S. Carscadden, Miss Maggie Strang, Miss Amy Craig, Miss May Bremner; Jas. Bremner, Choir Leader, Mrs. E. Riter, Organist. There is also a picture showing a staff of 20 teachers and officers of the Sunday School.

The sterling old-timers have all gone. Of those mentioned in the 1907 report, only a few of the very youngest still remain. But the work went on valiantly, supported by worthy successors of those who had gone before.

METHODIST

Rev. T. B. Beynon was the first Methodist minister appointed to Virden where he held services in the C.P.R. station. Among his country appointments he preached at Wm. Sparrow's in the Laggan district and here began a romance, the second chapter having its beginning after the church-parsonage was built. Miss Sparrow was Virden's first public school teacher, classes being held in the parsonage building. Propinquity and similarity of tastes led to marriage.

Their eldest daughter, who was a member of the Saskatoon teaching staff until her retirement, wrote of her parents that they both sang and that her mother would accompany her father on his appointments to play the organ.

After Mr. Beynon's death his widow returned to Virden where the family received their education in the Virden schools. One daughter, Anna, taught Grade I in the two-room school in the 1901 period and no doubt some residents will remember her as the teacher who guided their first steps on the paths of learning.

A regulation of the Methodist Church compelled its ministers to move to new charges at the end of three years—extended about 1905 to four years. So this return of the Beynon family to Virden gave them a place in the community that was not experienced by their successors.

As with the Presbyterians, the first building was soon found inadequate for their needs. The congregation erected in 1888 between the parsonage and the lane a small wooden church which served them until 1901 when the church that is now St. Paul's was built. About the same time a new parsonage was purchased—the house now occupied by Mrs. Wm. Dutton Sr. on Lyons Street. Some of the earliest supporters of this church can be recalled from memory—Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Wilcox, Mr.

and Mrs. J. W. Higginbotham, Mr. and Mrs. M. B. Irwin, their daughter Dell, later Mrs. H. C. Simpson, the John Haw family of which a son became a minister; two daughters married ministers one of whom later held a position on the staff of Regina College; the Blakemans, the T. A. Megaffins, Mr. and Mrs. J. Lane.

Ministers who succeeded Rev. T. B. Beynon were:

1886—1889	Rev. J. H. Jocelyn
1889—1892	Rev. A. Andrews
1892—1893	Rev. J. Dyke
1893—1896	Rev. T. A. August
1896—1897	Rev. F. E. Fletcher
1897—1898	Rev. A. J. Tufts
1898—1900	Rev. W. Bridgman
1900—1903	Rev. F. W. Locke
1903—1907	Rev. J. W. Dickinson
1907—1911	Rev. S. Wilkinson
1911—1915	Rev. R. O. Armstrong
1915—1919	Rev. W. A. Cooke
1919—1923	Rev. G. F. McCullagh
1923—1925	Rev. J. W. Melvin

During their short terms of ministration, these men were not only earnest leaders in their own church but were highly esteemed by everyone for their helpfulness in community affairs. The name of Rev. A. Andrews, a man of varied interests, appeared frequently in the press of the time. He even read a paper on "Pasturage" before the Dennis County Agricultural Society. His oldest son later became mayor of Winnipeg. Rev. Wellington Bridgman was the same who, sixteen years before, had been sent by his superintendent to Virden to ascertain whether there were any Methodists in the community. Rev. S. Wilkinson enlisted in the chaplain service and went overseas in the First War. Rev. Dr. J. W. Melvin, years after his retirement, wrote last Christmas of the work he is still doing in the church in Vancouver.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH

These were the congregations, Presbyterian and Methodist, who by 1925 achieved union of the two churches. The building chosen for worship was the former Methodist church henceforth to be known as St. Paul's United, the manse on 10th Avenue being retained as residence for the minister. In 1949 the residence of Dr. Clingan on 8th Avenue, across from the church, was bought for a manse.

Ministers who have officiated since that time have been:

1925—1931	Rev. Douglas Telfer
1931—1937	Rev. C. Best
1937—1945	Rev. W. A. Osborne
1945—1947	Rev. W. A. Wilkinson
1947—1951	Rev. K. A. Moyer
1951—1952	Rev. Wm. Welsh
1952—	Rev. D. B. Sparling

In addition to the services of praise and prayer, the combined congregations carried on the work of the Sunday School, the Missionary Society and the Women's Auxiliary. Daughters of the Kirk, and the Purl Harders assumed special duties. The A.O.T.S. and the Tyros were active for a time. The C.G.I.T. has flourished and a recently formed society consists of a group of young women "The Paulettes" who also are bearing a share of the work being done by the church.

The choir, under the leadership of J. R. McLachlan, has been an important musical feature of the town. R. E. Borland has been a member of long standing. Leaders have been B. Robertson, F. Pue, P. Stark, J. Friesen, W. N. Sangster, J. R. McLachlan.

Organists since union have included Miss M. Robertson, Miss E. Hartley, Miss M. Mains, Chas. Johnston, Miss D. Timms, Mr. C. Moore, Mrs. E. McDougall, Mrs. W. T. Carefoot, Mrs. R. Esler, Mrs. L. A. Chapple.

Honorary elders are W. B. Reid, E. J. Scales, R. Sumner; active elders are Wm. Ambrick, F. Carefoot, Wm. Cheavins, J. C. Cory, R. Gardiner, D. A. Gray, H. R. Grose, P. J. McDonald, J. J. O'Neill, Geo. Storey, H. L. Wardle, Geo. Wilson, Dave Smith, Miss Myrtle Lane. The late P. F. McClure was an active member for years.

The building has undergone structural changes. A full sized basement provides space for Sunday School, for meetings, and a variety of other functions. The reconstruction of the interior, while giving a roomier auditorium, has improved the proportions and given to the whole an air of greater spaciousness. Memorial windows have added softened color—the large window in memory of pioneers of the church and others in memory of:

The fallen in World War I

The fallen in World War II

Mr. and Mrs. I. J. Bennett

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Higginbotham

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Quite a number of Presbyterians held aloof from Church Union and in larger centres these groups continued to have their own church and their accustomed form of worship. Although that feeling of reluctance existed in some hearts, no such group was organized in Virden until May 6th, 1952. Following the example of their pioneer predecessors, they held services in the Legion Hall—Virden's old Town Hall.

By 1955 they were able to erect an attractive building on 9th Avenue and St. Andrew's church was opened September 30th of that year. The present minister is Rev. R. G. Krepps and the session consists of E. Hall, D. Gardner, W. Scott and C. Cook.

The St. Andrew's Ladies' Aid report for 1956 showed a gratifying financial standing, officers elected for 1957 being: president, Mrs. M. Dryden-Cook; vice-presidents, Mrs. S. Ivey and Mrs. S. Hall; secretary, Mrs. M. McIntosh; treasurer, Mrs. Chas. Cook; executive, Mrs. R. Gardner and Mrs. Wm. G. Tough.

ST. MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Pioneer Anglican services were conducted by students sent out from St. John's College, Winnipeg, and by ordained clergy on special occasions. These services were held in the C.P.R. station, Virden. Naturally the small body of worshippers was desirous of having a regular church building and worked with that end in view. In 1885, an item refers to a "festival" held in Gopher Creek Valley, 1½ miles from Virden at which \$65.00 was cleared. In this same month Canon Coombes of Winnipeg preached in the C.P.R. station, Virden, in the morning and at Kola in the afternoon.

Also in August, 1885, the Hon. F. P. Bouverie reported to a vestry meeting that the Canada North-west Land Co. would donate a free site and that there was \$485.00 in the building fund. The project was immediately started and in December, St. Mary's Anglican Church was opened, the first church to be erected in Virden.

Rev. F. F. Davis was the first minister appointed in charge. Just after the completion of the little church, it was announced in 1886 that there was on hand a considerable fund for the purchase of a new organ. Negotiations towards this end were carried on chiefly through Mr. H. H. Goulter. Preserved in the church archives is an original letter, dated March, 1886, from H. W. Bolton, organ builder, to Mr. Goulter giving specifications of the instrument which was to cost \$250.00.

After Mr. Davis was transferred to Lethbridge, Rev. Mr. Garton was in charge for a time and was succeeded by Rev. H. L. Watts.

By 1889, the necessity had become apparent for erecting a larger and more permanent building and with the arrival of Mr. Watts in 1890, this project was pushed ahead with enthusiasm. Field stone had become popular as a change from the hastily erected frame buildings of the preceding years and this material perfectly suited the design supplied by Mr. Watts—the result being a structure beautiful in line, proportion and general appearance. English visitors coming later declared it to be the most beautiful small church they had seen in Canada. It was opened in 1892.

Something should be said of St. Mary's choir at this time. Both Rev. W. L. Watts and his wife had well-trained voices and there was much other musical talent in the congregation. At the same time Mr. H. C. Shaw, who had been a settler at Kola, came to Virden to engage in business. He took over the direction of St. Mary's choir and, with Mr. Goulter as organist, the group gained a wide reputation throughout the west. A Winnipeg critic spoke of it as the finest choir outside the city.

Rev. E. L. King, an Englishman, trained at St. John's College, Winnipeg, succeeded Mr. Watts as rector. It was during his time that the lych gate was installed, giving to the entrance a further touch of England. He married Miss Gertrude Joslin but tragedy entered their lives. Their only son died as an infant in Virden. Mr. King transferred to Toronto and some years later, while on a holiday trip to England, he met his death in a railway accident, leaving his wife with four little daughters, who are still living in or near Toronto.

The next rector was Rev. W. H. Robertson who joined the chaplain service when the First War broke out and remained in Winnipeg after his return from overseas.

Intervening years brought the story of unremitting efforts on the part of the church organizations to improve and extend the church property. A site was purchased for a rectory at the corner of 9th Avenue and La Crosse Street. In 1910 the contract for the Parish Hall on Queen Street was let to George Harris. This entailed a loan of \$3000.00 at 7½% and in 1915 he received the contract for a new rectory (still in use) for \$1800.00 plus the old rectory and two lots. The latter building was moved back to the lots mentioned and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. Anderson. A number of improvements were made to the interior of the church and the vestry was enlarged. Heating and lighting systems kept pace with the times.

A robed choir was initiated and women were allowed to vote at congregational meetings. In 1926 they were made eligible for vestry membership.

Financial expansion was brought to an abrupt halt after the war. The personnel of the congregation had been altered and adjustment to changed conditions was slow. Rev. G. F. Findlay was rector until he left to take charge of St. James Anglican Church, Winnipeg. Mr. Findlay

was musical and with John Yewdall and John Davis in charge, the choir once more reached a peak in its career.

Rev. Mr. Tompkins succeeded Mr. Findlay as rector but went to Winnipeg to take charge of Christ Church in a poor quarter of the city, a work he preferred. Rev. Mr. Minchin, after being rector for some years, left to take charge of an Anglican school, a work for which he had been especially trained. He was followed by Rev. C. C. Landon, now a lecturer in St. John's College.

The financial burdens assumed before the war and the depression years that followed placed a heavy burden on the congregation. They had struggled bravely to meet their obligations but found at last that they must follow a policy of retrenchment. There were periods when services were conducted by lay readers R. L. Carr and John Davis. All the organizations worked industriously. The vestry accepted in turn two representatives of the Church Army, Capt. Kelly and Capt. Cummings. The latter pursued his studies, was ordained and became rector of the parish. He is now in charge of St. George's, Vancouver. Gradually, after great effort, the church drew out of its financial depression. Rev. H. H. Vines was rector for a time but took a position as chaplain with the army and his successor, Rev. W. H. Gregory, has been in charge for the last six years.

E. C. Osmond, as choir master, won success in his work, the choir winning high place in the Music Festivals. Organists have been H. H. Goulter, Miss Annie Ford, Mr. Way, Miss Amy Hayward and Mrs. E. C. Osmond.

Memorial windows which have added to the beauty of the church are in honor of Mrs. John Joslin, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wyatt, Rev. E. L. King, John Hume Agnew, H. H. Goulter, R. L. Carr and of those who gave their lives in World War I. A medallion window, presented by the city of Bruges, Belgium, to the 12th Manitoba Dragoons (18th ACR) in grateful commemoration of the liberation of the city by this regiment on September 12th, 1944, was installed at the request of the Dragoons in St. Mary's Anglican church and was unveiled and dedicated October 20th, 1952.

It had been formally presented to the Dragoons September 12th, 1948, by the Burgomaster of Bruges and received by Major H. Sinclair. Also present on that occasion were SQMS R. V. Andrew and RQMS B. G. Conroy. At that time an avenue in Bruges was renamed Manitoba Avenue in honor of the 12th Manitoba Dragoons and a bridge over which the avenue passes was adorned with two bison, the emblem of the regiment. The avenue is now lined with Manitoba Maples, gift of the government of Manitoba.

The window is inscribed "Thanks to our Canadian Liberators". It bears the coat of arms of the City of Bruges and the regiment's insignia, a prairie bison, beneath them a scroll with the words Bruges—Canada.

The foregoing description is taken from the Virden Empire-Advance of October 23rd, 1952.

Brass mounted wall plaques commemorate other prominent members—Col. and Mrs. E. A. C. Hosmer, Major Hart McHarg and Lieut. Harold Pineo. Other memorials that had been installed from time to time were: 1895—the font for Charles C. Burton; 1900—the reredos, for Edward, infant son of Rev. E. L. King; 1908—the brass lectern, for J. H. Agnew; 1923—pulpit, in memory of John Joslin; 1929—hymnal board, for Francis Read; 1945—book cupboard, for Alice Hayward; 1947—organ, World War II memorial; 1953—the carillon, in memory of Alice Monteith, mother of Dr. J. R. Monteith.

The little church is full of memories, not only of those whose names are preserved in material form but of the many men and women who have sat in its pews and its choir stalls, who have officiated on the vestry, in the Sunday School and the Women's organizations, who have borne the brunt of discouragement during the depression years and kept the church active as a spiritual factor in the lives of its people.

SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army had a unit stationed in Virden during the early years with a barracks or hall near the site of the printing office. The barracks was soon discarded, the unit reduced in number and smaller quarters found across the track. Many people knew the Army only by its open air services and were unaware of the work they did among the needy during the years of difficult adjustment. During the 1918 flu epidemic, when whole families were stricken, when a corps of voluntary nurses and helpers was formed in Virden and when Mrs. W. H. Scarth organized a soup-kitchen, the members of the Salvation Army were among the most devoted workers.

Many will remember Sgt. Major Jas. Gray, who as long as his health permitted, was the leading spirit of the group in this area. As town and welfare agencies took over the burden of relief work, the unit was withdrawn about 1935 and transferred to other areas more in need of its services.

BAPTIST

In the early part of the century, the Baptists conducted services in rented rooms. Circumstances lessened attendance among the small body until at last services were discontinued. A few years ago the congrega-

tion once more drew together and in October, 1956, they were able to purchase and open for worship, a Manse-Chapel. Dedication services conducted by leading Baptists of Moosomin, Birtle and Brandon marked the beginning of the short pulpit ministry in Virden of Rev. N. E. Todd of Brandon who passed away in January of this year. Rev. R. J. Stade of Moosomin continues in charge of the ministry of the Virden area.

SACRED HEART ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In early days the Roman Catholics of Virden area were served by priests coming from Oak Lake, Brandon or Winnipeg. The nearest church with a resident priest was St. Athanasius' at Oak Lake which had been built in 1887. It was not until 1921 that the Roman Catholics of Virden attained their objective in the erection of Sacred Heart Church on Queen Street. Ten years later it became a parish, the late Father McIntyre being the first pastor. Those who followed in this capacity were:

1933	Rev. Percy Holloway
1935	Rev. O. McInernay
1936	Father J. Webb
1938	Father Leo. McDonald
1941	Father C. E. Lynch
1942	Rev. Father Paulhus
1945	Father Desjardins
1949	Father Josef Schreiber

During the period covering more than twenty years, the congregation grew in numbers, the little church no longer being adequate to accommodate the numbers attending. With the influx of more residents consequent upon the development of the oil industry, need for larger quarters became more pressing and now in 1957 it is the intention of the congregation to build a new and larger edifice, the first sod having already been turned by Mr. August Fontana.

The church has been fortunate in having an active Women's Auxiliary.

A report on the personnel and work of the Knights of Columbus, a society formed among church members, shows the following:

It was formed in 1949 with Dr. Mastromatteo as first president and has approximately 25 members, about three quarters of the number being active. The Society or Council has been active in church and social work, their chief secular project being the promotion of baseball. For the past three years they have sponsored the Virden annual baseball tournament.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Christian Science services were first held in 1901 in the home of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. McDougall, whose sister, Mrs. Agnes Sprague, became an earnest student of Christian Science and later a Practitioner. On her moving to Virden, a Christian Science Society was formed in 1904. The following year the growing membership organized as First Church of Christ, Scientist, Virden. In 1909, a desirable site for a church building was purchased and in 1911, construction got under way, with Wm. Manser Sr. as contractor. In the meantime, services were held in the Municipal building, better known then as the Fire Hall.

The corner stone was laid on September 11th, 1911, and the edifice was opened for services on December 3rd. The Empire-Advance commented on the goodly number of visitors and members who attended the first services held in the new edifice at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Queen Street, and remarked on the beauty of color and line of the interior.

On March 26th, 1912, the church was incorporated by an Act passed in the Manitoba Legislature.

In 1916 the church was clear of debt.

Pioneer members of the church were Mrs. Agnes Sprague, Mr. and Mrs. A. G. McDougall, Miss Margaret Sproat, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Madge, Misses Ethel and Isobel Madge, Mrs. Eliza Sproat, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Williams Sr. and family, Mr. P. B. Biggins, Mr. J. A. C. Fraser, Mr. N. C. Hunter, Mrs. Evelyn Carr, Mrs. Adeline Cook.

Through the years many of the active members moved to other points and on their return visits have remarked on the excellent preservation of the building.

Members of the pioneer families, together with new members coming in from outside points, have served in different offices in the church and Sunday School and are still taking an active part in the work. Among those who have moved from this field in recent years and who gave most freely of their time and energy to the church were Mr. and Mrs. G. Power and Miss Margaret Carr.

At the time of writing this history, the officers of the Board of Directors are as follows: president, Mrs. Robert Chapman; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. John Madge.

Services are held in the church edifice each Sunday at 11 a.m. and each Wednesday at 8 p.m. Sunday School is held at 12.15.

A Reading Room is maintained in the church building where author-

ized Christian Science Literature may be read, borrowed or purchased on Wednesday evenings.

The St. James Version of the Bible and copies of the text book, Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures, by Mary Baker Eddy, along with other works may be seen in the display window in Cook's Electric Shop on Nelson Street.

PENTECOSTAL

Mrs. M. C. Myers, president of the W.M.C., supplied information for this record of the Virden Pentecostal Assembly.

The original services of the Pentecostal Church in Virden were held in the Terrace, in the home of Mrs. Fibbs in 1926. Mr. Gus Storey (who now resides in California) and Mr. James Gardner now at Penticton, B.C., conducted these services for a time. In 1927 Rev. Mr. Buntain of Winnipeg (National Superintendent of the P.A.O.C.) brought out a large tent which was erected on the grounds where Mr. C. Millar's home is now situated. The services in the tent were conducted by Mr. Grey Brand and Mr. Larson, both of Winnipeg.

That year they rented the hall above the present Robinson Store and held services there under the leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Sam Wilson. Several other ministers from time to time were in charge. Mr. Storey Sr. was an ardent supporter of the work in those days and gave to the church the house on Bridge Street for a parsonage, which is still being used for that purpose. In 1938 the congregation moved over to the little school then called the Technical School. Rev. Roy Forrest was in charge there. In 1940, they rented the Presbyterian Church Hall, now the Elks' Hall, with Rev. and Mrs. J. E. Brown in charge. A number of ministers followed until, in 1950, Rev. and Mrs. G. Galway and congregation decided to erect the present church on Queen Street, named Beulah Tabernacle, Mr. William Manser (Jr.) being the contractor. During the erection of the building, it was partially destroyed by fire but the contractor and congregation rallied together and rebuilt the church. Rev. and Mrs. D. J. Hyatt were in charge of the services from 1952 to 1956. Rev. and Mrs. P. M. Munro accepted a call in the summer of 1956 and are carrying on the work started in the terrace next door by the early pioneers of the church.

A good congregation now attends and there is a thriving Sunday School. A young people's group and a Women's Missionary group all work toward the betterment of the world and of the community.

Jehovah Witnesses also have representatives in town.

Y.M.C.A.

In 1885, early in December, a branch of the Y.M.C.A. was organized and apparently went into action at once by preparing and putting on a concert to raise funds. During that winter a series of debates was featured, subjects dealt with being "Women's Rights", "Prohibition, An Evil" and "Resolved That America was justified in seceding from Great Britain." An item regarding the last instance noted that prominent men of the town took part. Affirmative—Messrs. Sharp, Gifford, Frame and Kennedy. Negative—Messrs. Goulter, Wilson, Schoenau and Palmer.

No records have been located regarding this association; merely some notices in the press of the period.

CHAPTER 16

SCHOOLS

A young country is first settled by young people. Among the pioneers coming to Virden were young couples with children of early school age, so the establishment of a school was one of the first considerations. A letter from Mrs. W. T. B. Kennedy, nee McLeod, written in 1946 states that her sister Mary, later Mrs. W. J. Thompson of Elkhorn, mother of J. W. M. Thompson, M.L.A., taught a private school in Virden in the spring and summer of 1883.

On the 21st day of June, 1883, a School District was formed by the Executive Council under the name of "The Protestant School District of Virden No. 144", which comprised all Township 10, Range 26. From this time up to 1929 information has been obtained chiefly from a historical sketch prepared by J. H. Chalmers who was for years secretary-treasurer of Virden School Board.

To support the school just established no special tax was levied on lands beyond a certain distance. This was referred to as the three-mile limit and the four-mile limit and pupils attending the school from beyond that distance had to pay non-resident fees. These were to be collected by the teacher.

Until such time as a suitable building could be erected, classes were accommodated in the Presbyterian church-manse and then in the Methodist church-parsonage on Raglan Street. Miss Sparrow was the first teacher.

Following were J. W. Powers, who later became a notable journalist; R. M. (Mills) Simpson, a brother of H. C., who became a leading surgeon in Winnipeg; and Dan McLean who became a minister in the provincial cabinet. During this period, Harry Downs was one of the trustees.

In 1886 the trustees were B. Meek, John Cain and R. Bellamy. In that year they received a deed to lots 17, 18, 19 and 20, block 118, as a free gift from the Canada North-West Land Co. and on this site a two-room school was built. This was destroyed by fire about March, 1887. According to recollection of R. H. Mooney, M.L.A., this was not con-

sidered by the pupils as a disaster, in their anticipation of a prolonged holiday. They suffered disappointment, however, when the Board with regrettable haste succeeded in establishing classes in the town hall.

Mr. Chalmers notes that earliest official records begin with the minute books of 1887. Trustees were C. J. Thomson, G. N. Miller and John McGuffin, an entirely new Board from the year before. The teacher was Mr. Sharpe, succeeded by Mr. Erskine.

The most pressing matter to be considered was the building of a new school. The great question, of course, was finance, the school being entitled only to the special tax levied on property within the three and four-mile limits. Returns do not seem to have been very satisfactory for of the \$6556.00 levied during the years 1885-88, the school received only \$2570.09. Another trouble was non-residents' fees, for the collection of which the teacher was responsible. This was a tiresome process. A minute records the amount of these fees as, "for those who can't pay, 5c per week and for those who can pay, 25c per week."

In some way finances were arranged and a two-room school was built in 1887. Since that time and up to the present it has been a standby, accommodating the overflow when extra space was required. From time to time some structural changes have been made. The roof was altered, larger windows put in and its last face-lifting gave it a coat of stucco.

In 1887, a second teacher, Miss Lizzie Smith, was engaged at a salary of \$400.00 per annum, the principal's salary being \$660.00. James Rothnie's name appears as caretaker.

The first annual ratepayers' meeting was held in February, 1888, with 20 present, C. J. Thomson in the chair and D. McDonald as secretary. S. E. Lang succeeded Mr. Erskine as principal at a salary of \$700.00. If satisfactory, he was to receive \$725.00, which he got. J. H. Sparling was Inspector.

In 1889, Mr. Lang was succeeded by J. T. Wright. C. J. Thomson was secretary at \$50.00 per year. Geo. Rothnie became caretaker.

In 1890, Miss Belle Ingersoll succeeded Miss Smith and at the end of the year, Miss Gowanlock was engaged at a salary of \$400.00. If she proved satisfactory, she would be paid \$425.00. Actually she was paid \$450.00 so must have been more than satisfactory. W. J. Wilcox, M. B. Irwin, John McGuffin were in turn elected to the Board. Mr. Hazelwood was made caretaker.

S. E. Lang returned to Virden as Inspector. Attendance had reached 71 in junior room, 45 in senior. Census showed 157 children of school age, 139 of whom lived in Virden village.

By 1891 short term normal schools were established in some of the

inspectors. These were held in the home town of the Inspector who gave lectures to the students who in turn received practical training from observation of the teaching being done in the different classes of the school and by teaching subjects in the different grades for marks and criticism. The sessions continued for 10 weeks, after which successful students were granted Third Class certificates entitling them to teach for three years. Then, if they wished to continue with a teaching career, it was necessary for them to qualify for Second or First Class standing and take a 6 months' Normal course in Winnipeg to obtain a permanent or professional certificate.

Such a school, set up in Virden in 1891, was held at first in the I.O.O.F. Hall and then in the hall over Meek's store. Inspector S. E. Lang was in charge. The first class had 15 students, Arthur Moody, May Heritage, Belle Ingersoll, Victoria Field, Minnie Montgomery, Wm. Elder, W. H. McCracken, all from Virden; Lola M. Preston, Rapid City; Teresa Kyle, Douglas; Mary Buckingham, Elkhorn; David Iverach, Orrwold; Bessie L. Murray, Strathclair; Harry Cartmell, Thos. W. Thompson, Birtle; John Macauley, Harrowby. Mrs. Peter McDonald and Mrs. Burge also attended one of these sessions. The Virden Normal was transferred to Birtle in 1895.

In 1891 a third teacher was engaged, her class being held in the Town Hall.

Up to this time the school had to do its banking business in Brandon or Winnipeg but 1891 saw the opening of a branch of the Commercial Bank of Canada in Virden. Although this must have proved to be a great convenience, it proved also to be a disaster when the bank failed and the Board lost \$350.00.

In May the name of the school was changed to the School District of Virden No. 144 a name it retained until 1934 when it became The Consolidated School District of Virden No. 144.

Mr. Wright, the principal, resigned at midsummer and Peter Gowans from Ontario was engaged but it was found that he had not proper qualifications so H. Jones took over but resigned at the end of the year and Jas. Martin was engaged. On the Board D. Fraser and Rev. H. L. Watt replaced M. B. Irwin and W. J. Wilcox.

A petition from the Choral Society asking for the use of the school for practices was presented by H. H. Goulter. Mr. Goulter was named legal adviser for the Board. The teacher of music in the Normal School was engaged to teach music in the public school.

The year 1892 brought the Board right up against the problem of providing increased accommodation. An addition to the two-room school was discussed but that proposition was discarded and it was decided to erect a new four-room building. Adjoining land was bought for the site and the contract was let to J. A. Saul for \$4717.00.

Mr. Chalmers remarks that from the first this school seemed to have been a mistake. First there was trouble with the contractor, who had not completed his contract by the date set for opening. Finally the trustees had to take the matter into their own hands and complete the job themselves. The school was opened with Masonic ceremony at which representatives of the Grand Lodge were present.

A furnace had been installed but the heating system was found to be quite inadequate and it was necessary to close the school for a time until it could be remedied. Stoves were put in to supply additional heat, these being later replaced by adding a second furnace.

Then a catastrophe loomed when it was discovered that the end wall facing Queen Street was definitely bulging. The building as it stood was condemned but buttresses of heavy timber were erected against the wall and J. H. Schmidt undertook to put in strong iron rods running from end to end of the building, firmly clamped on the outside. It was then considered reasonably safe but needless to say nerves of both parents and pupils were on edge. One afternoon that had brought an early spring thaw, there was a rush and rumbling that caused the pupils in the upper room on the Queen Street end to spring to their feet in panic with the cry "the school's falling down." The trouble proved to be caused by an avalanche of heavy snow which, loosened by the unreasonable warmth, slid off the roof with a roar.

As time went on, no further weakening of the structure was observed and the residents of the school district came to accept this strange-looking edifice as a suitable place to which to send their children for instruction in the various branches of learning.

Principals who followed Mr. Martin were J. C. Butchart, B.A., 1893; P. D. Harris, 1896, and Chas. K. Newcombe, 1898. Changes took place from time to time on the teaching staff. A fourth teacher, Miss Morris, was added to the staff in 1893 and then a fifth, Miss Mary Buckingham (later Mrs. E. E. Bayne), the small stone school providing the extra room for this purpose. There followed: Miss McPhee, Miss Bowerman, Alberta Haw, Ida Thompson, Anna Jeffrey, Jennie McKechnie, Edith Mills. Miss Thompson and Miss McKechnie became permanent residents of Virden as Mrs. George Clingan and Mrs. H. H. Goulter.

Changes noted on the school board were the election of D. B. Fraser, Rev. Mr. Watts, J. E. Robins, Dr. F. J. Goulding, W. J. Wilcox re-elected, J. D. McNiven, J. H. Agnew.

Various events marked the years 1892-1905 during which the four-room school continued to serve its original purpose. In 1893, C. J. Thomson resigned from the Board after three years of unremitting effort for the welfare of the school. Rev. Mr. Watts was appointed as secretary. Sections 29, 30, 31 and 32 were removed from the School District. To quote Mr. Chalmers "This year marks the end of records for annual

meetings, which has proved a loss as these meetings threw side-lights on school affairs not recorded in the minutes of meetings of the Board."

In April, 1894, school was closed on the occasion of the funeral of Willie Huston, who met his death by drowning while saving the life of a little girl.

Vertical writing was introduced in 1895. For Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, the Board erected a flag-pole and procured a flag. In 1905, the Shane School District was formed and consolidation took place, the first Consolidated School in the province.

By this time all four walls of the stone school were figuratively bulging and it was decided that more accommodation for classes was an immediate necessity.

A private school had been opened by Miss Beatrice Madge in 1895 in a house near the present Bank of Commerce residence. Begun as a boarding school, of which Mrs. Geo. Reddon, nee Jessie Ivens, is mentioned as a pupil, its enrollment of day scholars increased rapidly during the first years of panic regarding the fate of the stone school. Miss Madge was a qualified teacher having received her training in Winnipeg. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. Morris Madge, taught music and some other subjects. It was a popular institution during the six years it operated. The house was later destroyed by fire.

To return to public school affairs, a new eight-room building was erected on 9th Avenue and opened with Masonic honors. Mayor Langtry was the speaker, contractor A. C. McDougall presided at the laying of the corner stone and the Virden Silver Band was in attendance.

The old school continued to be useful as an Immigration Hall. At one time George Strachan experimented with the growing of mushrooms and rhubarb in the heated basement. The B. P. Kent Flour Mill used the building for storage. F. A. France, contractor, used it for holding stores and equipment but it was not until the fall of 1956 that part of the rear wall fell, making demolition necessary. Mr. France was much interested in the contents of a metal box found under the cornerstone. These consisted of a scroll of the Masoic Grand Lodge, of copies of the Winnipeg Free Press, Virden Advance and Virden Chronicle, a brief historical sketch of the town, coins of 1892, and a packet of Fife Wheat, which, unfortunately had not withstood the inroads of time. These relics are being carefully preserved as being of historical value.

The opening of the new school in 1905 saw the teaching staff increased to 7. Mr. Newcombe received his B.A. degree and became an Inspector of Public Schools. Later he took a degree in law and was appointed chairman of the Workmen's Compensation Board, an office he held until his death. His place as principal was taken by J. A. Mathers, with W. G. Henderson as assistant. In 1906, the staff was

increased to 8 by the addition of L. J. Cranston. In 1908, A. M. Shields became principal and another teacher was added to the staff. In 1909, another addition brought the staff up to 10, with the small stone school again in use. In 1911, still another teacher was added when Miss J. M. McNiven was engaged, the staff then numbering 11.

It had already been seen that the school population was outgrowing the accommodation so in 1910 the building of a Collegiate Institute was undertaken, W. T. Manser as contractor. The Masonic Grand Lodge officiated at the laying of the cornerstone and the school was opened with appropriate ceremony in April, 1911.

J. H. Agnew had been appointed secretary of the Board in 1897, continuing in that office until 1912 when he was succeeded by H. J. Pugh. Upon his leaving Virden in 1914 Mr. Pugh was succeeded by Jos. Gibson who held the office until failing health compelled him to resign, J. H. Chalmers filling the position from 1926 to 1936. Some of those who served on the Board during these years were George Perry, F. W. Clingan, Rev. W. Robertson, E. J. Scales, H. C. Simpson, I. J. Bennett, Mrs. H. H. Goulter, W. A. Bridgett, W. P. Thomson and, representing Shane District, Col. E. A. C. Hosmer and E. E. Bayne.

Principals were A. M. Shields, T. A. Neelin, T. O. Durnin, J. M. Nason, W. A. Anderson, C. P. Kerr (1929).

The synopsis of school history by J. H. Chalmers was microfilmed and filed in the archives of the Provincial Library, December 6th, 1946.

In 1909, Miss Ethel Holmes opened a kindergarten for pre-school age children. It was held in a room upstairs in the Schurman Block, corner of 7th and Wellington. Among those who attended were Freda McLellan, Dorothy Clingan, George Keedwell, Charlie Forster, Ulyott (Bubby) Biggs. The text book that particularly intrigued them was the "Sweet Pea" reader so named from its attractive cover. The following term Miss Holmes conducted her class at the home of her sister, Mrs. R. L. Carr, who lived in what had been the John Cain house.

A report from the Department of Education throws an interesting light on the system of school inspection:

Records of the early days of school inspection indicate that Virden was in the area covered by a Rev. W. A. Burman of Griswold. From 1883 to 1886, he is shown as the clergyman appointed to visit the schools of the County of Dennis. Probably Mr. Burman carried on until 1888, when five men were appointed inspectors of schools. J. D. Hunt, stationed at Brandon, no doubt was the inspector of the Virden School. Within five years he had quit to study law. S. E. Lang was appointed inspector of schools in 1891 in what was known as the North-West division. His term of office at Virden lasted until the end of 1904. He was succeeded by C. K. Newcombe, who left in May, 1909, to do some work on Consolidation. A. J. Hatcher, living in Elkhorn, followed, moving

to Brandon on January 1st, 1916, when W. R. Beveridge took over, living in Virden, where he remained until his retirement in 1937. J. A. George was in charge for a year, then H. R. Brown for two years, Miss Brooker for a year and G. H. Robertson for a year. In 1943 Clarence Moore came to Virden where he remained until his retirement in 1949. K. B. Thorkelson has been in charge since that time.

High school inspection, apart from inspection of Public Schools, began with S. E. Lang in 1912. He was succeeded by E. Knapp in 1922. When Mr. Knapp retired in 1941, D. B. Moorhead took his place for one year, followed by L. M. Stevenson for three years, Miss Brooker for one year, E. H. Reid for one year. At the end of the school year 1946-47, all the schools of the division came under the Public School inspector and have remained so ever since.

The following men have served on the Virden School Board from 1936 to the present:

1936—Chairman W. H. Scarth
J. R. Gerrand
C. Winkler
R. J. Timms
H. H. Allen

1937—The same, but Mr. Winkler died that year and his place was taken by Dr. J. W. Bradley.

1938—Chairman R. J. Timms
Dr. O. S. Ross replaced W. H. Scarth

1939, 40, 41—The same

1942—Geo. Carruthers replaced J. R. Gerrand

1943 - 44—The same

1945—Read Horn replaced Geo. Carruthers

1946—Chairman Dr. J. W. Bradley
Dr. O. S. Ross
Read Horn
T. A. Morris
J. D. Sills

1947—J. C. Cory replaced Dr. Ross

1948—J. F. Higginbotham replaced Dr. Bradley

1949—Chairman T. A. Morris

1950—Dr. H. P. Stockton and D. S. Whiteford replaced J. D. Sills and J. C. Cory

1951—W. L. Brown and P. J. McDonald replaced T. A. Morris and J. Higginbotham

1952—Chairman P. J. McDonald
O. S. Fowler replaced Dr. H. P. Stockton

1953—T. E. Burns and D. A. Gray replaced D. S. Whiteford and W. L. Brown

1954, 55, 56, 57—The same

Mr. Fred Dumbleton was Secretary-Treasurer throughout this period until January, 1956, when he was succeeded by Mr. E. C. Osmond.

Over the years those engaged on the teaching staff increased in number. Some came and went; others have been more permanent being members of local families. Some of these have already been mentioned as their activities were often extended to spheres other than the school. Miss J. M. McNiven was principal of the public school and an active worker on the Welfare Committee of the town in addition to other community services. Miss Myrtle Lane, now principal of the Junior Public School, has been prominent in church and musical affairs. Miss H. E. Bridgett of the Collegiate staff has done much in a musical way and in working among the young people. Being a daughter of W. A. Bridgett, she is naturally interested in sport, the Ladies' Curling Club having been her particular concern. Miss Edith Moody, also a member of the Collegiate staff, took part in St. Paul's United Church choir and is now educational secretary for the I.O.D.E. Miss Mary Montgomery maintains a residence in Virden with her mother since the death of her father who was C.P.R. yardmaster for years. Alden Slawson spent his life here and has become principal of the Goulter School.

FOUR SCHOOLS

The influx of oil workers brought with it a sudden increase in school population, which could no longer be accommodated by the collegiate, the public school and the old reliable two-room school. In 1957 an ultra modern new school was opened on a site which had been part of the Agricultural grounds. This brought the accommodation to a total of 26 class rooms, Grades 1 to 4 being housed in the Junior Public school and the Primary School (the old 2-roomed stone school building) and Grades 5 to 9 in the new Goulter School. The Collegiate has the senior high school grades 10 to 12, presided over by Principal E. J. Jarvis. At the beginning of 1957, the school population was 694.

With the building of the Goulter School, a new Safety Patrol has been organized which works in connection with the R.C.M.P. The boys are on duty four times a day. Patrol No. 1 consists of Capt. Alex Forbes, Lieut. Douglas Sexsmith and patrolmen Lyle Hall, Gavin Clarke and Bill Hewitt; Patrol No. 2 is composed of Capt. Glen Madge, Lieut. Norman Schumaker and patrolmen Wayne Dunfield, Gary Repka, Gerald Lodder and Clarence Gabrielle.

The foregoing provides merely an outline of the Virden schools' progress during 75 years.

CHAPTER 17

SOCIETIES AND CLUBS

DENNIS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

There is no doubt that the earliest organization and the one that had the greatest effect upon the success of many pioneer settlers was the Dennis County Agricultural Society. In this case also, no official records have been located, but the press notices of the early period indicate that it was definitely an educational medium. At its monthly meetings papers were read and discussions were held upon the growing of crops and the raising of stock. The more expert among its members gave freely of their knowledge to those who were seeking to learn.

Even the men who had been successful farmers in the countries from which they had come found that there was much to learn about the prairies, especially as to conditions of climate and soil. According to press items, practically every serious minded farmer in the district was a member of this society.

Some early items may be of interest: The Dennis County Agricultural Society was formed in 1884. Its second annual meeting was held in October, 1886, at the Virden House with an attendance of about 60. There was a dinner with speeches, toasts, songs and discussion re the prospect of electing a member to the legislature and deploring the monopoly of grain-buying.

In December, 1887, the following directors were elected: Jas. Elder, Jas. Younge, T. Croft, John Joslin, J. Milliken, N. M. Cushing, D. McLean, M.P.P., C. J. Thomson and Thos. Frame. At a meeting on February 1st, 1888, a paper on Hail Insurance was read by A. G. McDougall. At the same meeting Mr. Jas. Elder read a paper on Summerfallowing.

The Seventh annual exhibition was held in October, 1891, on the grounds of the Turf Club. A supper was held at Ottawa House (Steve White, proprietor) for judges, directors and friends. President of the Society was John Joslin, vice-presidents C. J. Thomson and Thos. Frame, secretary A. G. McDougall.

There were almost 1000 entries in the following classes:

Horses—General purpose, 5 classes; heavy draft, 8; saddle and driving, 10; pure bred Durhams, 9. Grade cattle, 11. Sheep—medium and short-wooled, 4; long-wooled, 6. Pigs—Berkshire, 4. Poultry, 6. Grain and produce, 15. Farm dairy, 13. Manufactures—15—yarns, woollen articles, carpets, rugs, quilts. Ladies' work, 33. Art department, 7. School children's work, 4. Miss Goulter exhibited and took prizes in tatting, crazy-patchwork, hand-painting on any material, water-color painting, oil painting.

In connection with the 10th annual Fair, a list of officials published by The Chronicle, Virden, shows: president, Wm. Stephen; vice-presidents, Wm. Cushing, Elkhorn, and K. McIvor; secretary-treasurer, A. G. McDougall; directors—Thos. Frame, John Joslin, H. W. Dayton, Geo. Forke, John McTurk, Jas. Rothnie, David Fraser.

An item of November, 1897, mentions a grant of \$50.00 made by the town to the Dennis County Agricultural Fair held in the Massey-Harris premises.

VIRDEN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

When Dennis County, both as a county and as a constituency, finally disappeared, the name of the Society also underwent a change. The following report contains facts regarding recent history of the Virden Agricultural Society:

The old records of the Virden Agricultural Society have become lost or destroyed and those on hand only date from May, 1936.

There have been sixty-five summer fairs held altogether. Since 1936 a fair has been held every year with the exception of 1940 to 1943, both inclusive, on account of the war, and 1956 by reason of the building of the new school.

The Agricultural Society sponsors the Virden Calf Club and also helps finance the Two Creeks Calf Club.

The Horticultural Show has been a success in so far as the show itself is concerned and has been managed by a committee composed of members of the Agricultural Society. This committee has tried to interest home owners in Grounds Competitions both for town and country but the majority of home owners are backward in entering competitions, claiming beautification is done merely for their own enjoyment.

A Race Meet was held in Virden in 1944 and one has been held every year since, even in 1956 when the meet was held at Elkhorn.

Prominent exhibitors in the past have been: Stuart Gellie, Loftus Johnston, Alex Janaway Sr., Robert Hepburn, Wm. Reid, Alex Reid, Charles Kerr, Walter Bartlett, Wm. Hutchison, Frank Knox, Alex Smith, W. T. Cann, Duncan Campbell, Jack Madge. Stock exhibitors today are: C. H. Webster, Norman Hodson, Gordon Hutchison, Norman Bartlett, Andrew Reid, Norrie Johnston, Archie Campbell.

Officers for 1957 are: president, A. M. Paul; race secretary, C. P. M. Francis, secretary-treasurer, Mrs. F. Knox.

UNITED GRAIN GROWERS

From the time grain marketing began, there was discontent among the farmers concerning the policies pursued by the large grain buying companies. The 1886 item, already quoted, showed that it was a hot subject of discussion at Agricultural Society meetings. It was felt that united effort was necessary in order to obtain better terms for producers, but in those days it was said that it was difficult to organize farmers as each man was an independent unit so far as his work was concerned, unlike the employees of big secondary industrial concerns.

In 1891, in an attempt to set up an organized body, the Farmer's Institute was formed with such leading men as: president, James Elder; vice-president, C. E. Ivens; secretary-treasurer, Geo. H. Healy; directors—Wm. Stephen, Wm. McDonald, J. E. Robins, Watson Crosby, Kenneth McIvor, Jas. W. Scallion.

There is no available record of what the institute accomplished but at least it served to focus opinion and emphasize the need for concerted action.

Through the leadership of E. A. Partridge of Sintaluta, Sask., the Grain Growers' Grain Company was formed, Canada's first farmer owned grain company, later to be known as the United Grain Growers. In 1906, the company opened an office in Winnipeg which served the province. Many farmers took advantage of its services and as it grew it became influential in defending the Crows Nest Pass Freight agreement, in opposing the closing of branch railway lines during the years of depression and in fighting against further charges being placed upon the farmers' grain. It was the first widely organized farmers' co-operative movement.

Since then the Manitoba Farmers' Union and the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture have both been working in the interests of this primary industry.

WALLACE CONSUMERS' CO-OP.

The advantages of co-operative dealing are further demonstrated by the Wallace Consumers' Co-operative Ltd., a history of which has been submitted by G. E. Wardle. It was organized for the handling of petroleum products and incorporated in February, 1930. What proved to be an excellent business site was chosen on the corner of 7th and King and here the Wallace Co-op was begun with meagre equipment and a staff of two, W. C. McLean and his daughter, Bernice. That the scheme has been successful is proven by the facts that: the property has been extended, much additional equipment installed, a line of groceries added to the stock handled and there are now eight full-time employees.

The first board of directors was: president, C. E. Ivens; vice-president, W. Morton; secretary-treasurer, G. E. Wardle; directors, Wm. McDonald, H. R. Grose, H. J. Wood R. I. Tapp, with Ed Ivens as alternate. They were succeeded by: president, W. Morton; vice-president, W. McDonald and directors, Jas. Cope, Jas. Stinson, J. J. O'Neill, W. D. McLaren, H. C. Odell, L. Hepburn, J. A. Chapple, and J. Madge. As Mr. Wardle remarks "These men comprised the Boards during the dirty thirties."

Past presidents have been C. E. Ivens, W. Morton, Jas. Cope, Wm. Scott, C. L. Nichol, Wm. Lund, and secretaries have been G. E. Wardle, Chas. McLean, J. A. Chapple and Wm. Heritage.

All these names are in themselves a guarantee of the solidity of the enterprise.

At the annual meeting April 18th, 1957, the name was changed to Virden Co-op Ltd.

VIRDEN WOMEN'S CO-OP. GUILD

The Virden Women's Co-op Guild was organized in October, 1956, with the following slate of officers: president, Mrs. Jack Madge, Virden; vice-president, Mrs. C. H. Webster, Two Creeks; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. M. Heritage, Harmsworth; program convenor, Mrs. John Watton, Virden; convenor of social and testing, Mrs. J. M. Sproat, River Valley.

Their meetings are educational featuring a study of the principles of co-operation and testing and demonstrating various products. The Guild works closely with the local Co-op.

VIRDEN CREDIT UNION SOCIETY

As its name implies, the Virden Credit Union Society Ltd. is a financial concern. It was granted its charter in June, 1940, on application made by 15 members. The first Board consisted of: president, G. E. Wardle; vice-president, E. L. Pearn; secretary-manager, G. T. Power; other members, R. Cappie, C. Keohane, S. Dickison and G. E. English; credit committee, J. Madge, G. Grose, R. Dickison; supervisory committee, H. L. Wardle, W. C. McLean, J. K. Friesen.

The society sponsored a unit of M.H.S.A. (Blue Cross) for members, later extended to serve the district. In 1945 it took out share and loan insurance. The war years were unsettled but since that time it has gone ahead steadily. Membership is now 610. Its assets have multiplied. It has been of real value to the estates of nine members and in one case paid a loan in full for the loss of a hand.

In addition to officials already mentioned, some of those who have borne the responsibility of management and supervision have been C. L. Nichol, R. V. Andrew, Wm. Lund, R. Cappie, E. B. Weldon, W. H. Scott, A. L. Rausch, T. Hayward, F. McDougall, J. A. Chapple, Mrs. G. Power, R. E. Borland, G. H. Fowler, H. J. Mitchell, G. Gatey, L. A. Chapple.

Owned and operated by its members, the Virden Credit Union Society, by using local finances to provide local needs, supervised by government auditors, is rendering a service that provides for the future.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

One of the most effective women's organizations Virden ever had was the Women's Institute. Taking a lively interest in the affairs of the community, it used its influence in promoting projects of public service, some of which have already been mentioned. At one time the Virden branch was the largest in the province and its president, Mrs. H. W. Dayton, became provincial president. She was succeeded by Mrs. S. E. Gee (Mrs. Gee-Curtis). Mrs. Dayton moved to Vancouver but Mrs. Gee-Curtis continued to give valuable service in the community. Again lack of records makes it impossible to give the credit due to the women who worked so faithfully in the public interest.

RED CROSS

From 1939, women devoted themselves whole heartedly to war work chiefly through the Patriotic Society of the Red Cross. The story of the

Red Cross is now a world-wide story. It has functioned through two world wars and has given of its innumerable benefits wherever called for by sickness or need. With headquarters at Geneva, its branches extend even to the smallest hamlets of the Canadian west.

In Virden and rural area, the Women's Work Committee co-operated with supply headquarters in Winnipeg by contributing thousands of knitted and sewn articles. During the second war, a room in the municipal building was allotted the Committee for storage and packing, Mrs. O. S. Ross being in charge. Even in peace times, services are supplied to invalids, cripples and those in sickness and need.

The first record of a branch of the Society being established in Virden is dated 1935, with honorary president, J. W. Higginbotham; president, W. R. Beveridge; vice-president, Geo. Gabel; secretary-treasurer, H. C. H. Brayfield; executive, E. J. Scales, A. E. Higginbotham, Rev. C. Landon, I. J. Bennett, J. A. McLachlan.

The following items from the minutes give an idea of the activities of the local branch: Allotted for needy in the district—for glasses, \$12.00; dentures, \$25.00. 1937, started canvassing again; 1938, Rev. W. A. Osborne appointed to the executive; 1939, 29 present at the annual meeting. A. E. Higginbotham elected president; Mrs. A. G. Robinson, secretary-treasurer. Mrs. Clingan spoke of the need of a suitable work room for the Women's Work Committee. A vote of thanks was extended to those members who had kept the Society alive during past years, special mention being made of H. H. Goulter, J. W. Higginbotham and H. C. H. Brayfield.

1940—502 garments received for W. W. Comm.
\$1218.13 sent to headquarters

1941—Aluminum Drive resulted in 680 pounds sent to Brandon

1943—\$4555.47 raised

1942—\$5050.00 sent to headquarters

1944—\$5619.52 raised
1399 articles from W. W. Comm., Mrs. O. S. Ross, convenor
First blood donors were given transportation to Brandon

1945—\$4812.69 raised
1119 articles from W. W. Comm.

1950—Only four at meeting. \$1206.24 collected. Flood relief chief objective, Mrs. W. McDonald convenor of W. W. Comm.

1951—\$792.40 collected
256 garments
First blood-donor clinic in Virden was held in July, conducted by Hospital Aid, 152 donors

1952—Secretary-treasurer, Mr. W. Thompson
\$1246.50 collected
330 garments, 1 quilt reported by Mrs. R. Rolston

- 1953—Secretary-treasurer, Mrs. G. S. Shoemaker
\$1534.10 collected, 330 garments, 36 quilts, 173 donors
- 1954—President, Rev. D. B. Sparling
\$1690.19 collected, 235 articles, 307 blood donors
- 1955—\$2047.70 collected, 251 articles, 10 quilts, 282 blood donors
- 1956—\$1558.48, 305 articles, 16 quilts, 290 blood donors
- 1957—\$2177.45 collected, reported by Mrs. D. A. Gray, convenor
of the drive.

WAR TIME PRICES AND TRADE BOARD

Early in the second war there was set up in Virden a women's sub-advisory committee for the War Time Prices and Trade Board. It consisted of only half a dozen members but women's organizations throughout town and district co-operated with it through their appointed liaison officers. Their work was to investigate and report on any deterioration in quality, decrease in weight or size or increase in price of any goods sold to consumers. The many sub-committees throughout Canada, alert in spotting such practices, were an aid to the War Time Prices and Trade Board which won an international reputation as a stabilizing influence in preserving trade relationships and preventing inflation.

VICTORY CLUB

The first group of student pilots under the Commonwealth Air Training Plan arrived in Virden in April, 1941, and the appearance of Air Force blue on the streets became a common and every-day occurrence. Virden, noted for its hospitality and anxious to show its appreciation of the gallantry of these young men, was prepared to welcome them with open arms. This, however, for the first few months, was left to the individual and while homes were thrown open and invitations extended, contacts proved to be difficult and it was felt that results were falling far short of all that could be desired.

It was realized that, in order to make these young men feel welcome, a place in town should be acquired which they could regard as their headquarters and where they could come and go as they pleased, feel relaxed and absolutely at home and escape from barrack life, enjoy a cup of tea and a bit of social life with members of the opposite sex and at the same time make friends with the townspeople.

A meeting was therefore called and it was decided to proceed with the organization of a club which would provide the boys with a home away from home. It was to be known as The Victory Club. Committees were formed and officers appointed: Mrs. J. A. Caw, chairman; Mrs. Arthur Robinson, secretary and Mrs. Margaret Carr, treasurer.

The Provincial Government kindly donated the use, for the duration of the war, of the premises formerly occupied by the Land Titles Office. The town of Virden provided heat and light and painters from the Flying School made a good job of re-decorating the rooms.

A canvass of the town for funds was made and with the money so raised the premises were equipped and attractively furnished.

Approximately sixty ladies volunteered to act as hostesses and the club was officially opened on March 12th, 1942. From that date until it closed following the cessation of hostilities, there were always two or more ladies on duty from 3 p.m. until midnight.

The club proved a success from the start and was used not only by airmen but by members of the army and navy who happened to be in town and many letters of appreciation were received. Its facilities were used by young men from every part of the Commonwealth and from all parts of Canada and the United States.

The social opportunities resulted in many lasting friendships and the people of Virden have every reason to believe that their effort was well worth while.

ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY

With so many Scots in the district, it was inevitable that a St. Andrew's Society should be formed, so it can be taken as authentic when a newspaper item of 1888 states that in January of that year such a society was organized. An 1898 item gives a list of officers: president, C. J. Thomson; 1st vice-president, Jas. Rothnie; 2nd vice-president, Wm. Stephen; secretary, John Caldwell; treasurer, Geo. Marshall.

During the early years of the century, the Society was very active. Every winter a big dance was held with reels and the highland fling and the skirl of the bag-pipes; each summer a sports day with a Kilties Band, Scottish dances and sports that smacked of the home land. At a St. Andrew's banquet it was a treat to see the haggis borne in with ceremony by George Rothnie Sr., escorted by Piper Jock Gardner, both, of course, in highland costume.

A list of past presidents has been made available, the names of

whom carry with them a guarantee of their nationality: John Caldwell, Geo. Rothnie Sr., John Black, John Nicol, Duncan McDonald, Chas. Kerr, John F. Gardiner, Alex McIntyre, Wm. Fraser. Others who were prominent were Jas. Beaton, Adam Dickinson, John Matthewson, Wm. McLean, Dave Smith, Alex Smith, Duncan Campbell, Wm. Clark, Fred Cranna, Chas. Ritchie. Where are the records that would make it possible to preserve in more detail the history of this enthusiastic and influential organization?

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

It is safe to say that during the last 65 years the organization which has exerted the most far-reaching influence over Virden's advancement has been the Chamber of Commerce. As the County of Dennis Board of Trade, begun in February, 1892, with 50 present at the organization meeting, it embraced Woodworth, Pipestone, and later Oak Lake and Elkhorn. The following slate of officers was elected: president, R. Adamson; vice-president, Arch. Leitch; secretary-treasurer, J. Rothnie, later J. H. Healy; council—J. F. Frame, B. Meek, B. F. Foster, D. Fraser, A. A. Cameron, W. C. Chambers, Alex Leitch, W. M. Cushing.

Its general objectives can best be explained by quoting the following paragraph from the comprehensive report that has been submitted:

"Besides the many actual projects which were carried out by the Board of Trade and Chamber of Commerce the greatest contribution to the community has been and still is that of bringing the attention of government bodies to the various requirements of the community and also that of bringing "pressure to bear" on the municipal, provincial and federal bodies. This power of "pressure to bear" has increased throughout Chambers of Commerce. They have also rendered a service to these governing bodies by enlightening the people of the community with regard to legislation and governing problems.

A survey of subjects discussed and actions taken from year to year holds up a mirror in which can be distinguished matters that engrossed the attention or concern of all sections of the public over the whole period.

1892—Objectives:

1. Port of entry
2. Encouraging immigrants to settle here
3. Fixing grain standards

1893—New names added to Council: J. W. Higginbotham, J. A. Merrick, B. Meek, D. Fraser, W. J. Wilcox, R. Trumbell, W. J. Kennedy, D. McDonald, T. Routledge, J. H. Agnew.

Objectives:

1. Improvement of road to Lenore
2. Establishment of first mill in Virden
3. Establishment of banking service

1894—Change of name to Virden Board of Trade

1895—President, B. Meek

1896—President, J. A. Merrick

Establishment of employment bureau sought.

B. of T. required book case in which to keep valuable books to be bought by subscriptions from members.

Employment bureau opened with D. Fraser in charge.

Union Bank established.

Weigh scales needed.

1897—Eighty-five cars of cattle shipped this year.

Customs duty collected \$6,630.29.

President, W. J. Wilcox.

Effort to reduce fire insurance rates.

Effort to get more settlers.

1898—Effort to have fast train stop at Virden.

Topic of settlers still under discussion.

1899—President, J. F. Frame.

C.P.R. to build new station.

Request for Immigration Agent.

Grain marketing unsatisfactory.

1900—President, J. W. Higginbotham.

Bell Telephone extending long distance service from Winnipeg to Brandon. Request to have extension to Virden.

Unsuccessful. Fire Brigade Chief waited on B. of T. re the purchase of new engine. He stated that the present engine was "simply a man killer".

1901—President, J. W. Higginbotham. J. H. Healy leaving Virden.

Secretary-treasurer, J. F. C. Menlove.

Supported Government tree-planting plan.

Hail damage great. Request to government for coverage.

1902—President, H. C. Simpson.

Barge built for crossing the Assiniboine in flood.

The Board of Trade was more fortunate than many other organizations in preserving so many of its records but minute books 1903 to 1917 inclusive are missing.

1918—President, Geo. Gabel; secretary-treasurer, John Davis.

1919—President, H. D. Crowe. New names appear on the Council:
Lt. Col. Palmer, Rev. H. Feir, A. M. Shields, B. J. McCormick, J. G. Robertson, J. A. McLachlan, G. E. Lasby, C. O. Dayton, W. G. Brammall.
Oppose Daylight Saving Time.

1920—President, R. A. Knight; vice-president, Geo. Sills.
Sponsored special train to Portage la Prairie for hockey final.
Banquet in honor of hockey team. Discuss aerodrome.

1921—Annual meeting had 77 present.
President, W. A. Bridgett.
Considers depletion of fish in Oak Lake.
Government to give hangar for five planes, if town would erect it.

1922—President, Geo. Sills.

In 1923 there was only one meeting but in 1924 the group was re-organized with Dr. H. N. Thompson as president and H. L. Taylor as secretary-treasurer, with Wallace Gibson and Arnold Bain as vice-presidents. In 1925, Frewen J. Davis became secretary-treasurer and during these years and '26, '27, '28 many projects were supported, the Band coming in for special mention.

1929—President, A. G. Hay; secretary-treasurer, A. D. Maxson.

1930—President, W. N. Miller; secretary-treasurer, A. G. Hay
and the first mention of support for an airport.

1931—President, Dr. H. N. Thompson; secretary-treasurer, F. J. Davis.

These remained in office for six years. Some of the projects noted were an air circus; new rates for electricity; air tour; consultation with B. P. Kent re a flour and grist mill; relief measures; band winning Hudson's Bay Trophy; broadcast over CKX; snow - plowing No. 1 highway; need for hitching rails for horses; dust and debris on streets; hard-surfacing of No. 1 highway through town.

1937—President, Dr. C. L. Strachan; secretary-treasurer, Geo. Clark.
A shield was presented to the Music and Arts Festival.

1938—Putting air-field in condition was a major project as was the School Field Day.
Co-operation in support of Caledonian Games.

A. E. Evey reported on closing of Royal Bank.
Swimming Pool was discussed.
Renovation No. 1 highway from Virden.
Lights in lanes.
Oiling of streets.

1939—President, J. A. Caw.

A new feature was introduced at a meeting namely a radio broadcast, courtesy of Bob Cook, of the Championship fight between Joe Louis and John Henry Lewis. The former won in 2 minutes, 26 seconds of the first round.

Paddling Pool, Waterworks.

Application for Aviation Training School at Virden and Mobilization of 12th Manitoba Dragoons.

1940—During the war years there were changes in personnel. Presidents were Dr. C. L. Strachan, J. A. Caw, T. A. Morris, D. J. Reid.

Secretary-treasurers were H. Allen, Geo. Littlejohn, Stan Bray, D. Petch.

Fifteen members were on active service and naturally many of the matters discussed were connected with war conditions. Some of these were:

Co-operation with National Registration.

Accommodation of and entertainment for Flying School personnel.

Endorsation of conscription.

Gasoline rationing.

Support of re-union of service men at Beaver Club, London, England.

Other matters also received consideration:

Pasteurization of milk.

Waterworks.

Air-field to remain for post-war use.

1946—President, A. B. Ruthenford.

Waterworks still a live topic.

1947—Name to be Virden Community Chamber of Commerce.

1948—Support of Golf Club, Tennis and Bowling.

New Hospital.

1949—President, H. O. Fowler.

No. 1 highway and waterworks biggest items.

President, A. R. Hales; secretary-treasurer, C. Moore.

1950 and 1951—President, R. McBain.

Discussion centred on industries, swimming pool, preventing the closing of the farm help office, parking, location of

the new hospital, numbering of houses, scholarship fund of \$50.00 for V.C.I.

Guest speakers at all meetings.

1952—President, J. Stacey.

Change of program: no guest speaker.

Discussions included topics such as an athletic director, swimming pool, waterworks.

1953—President, D. S. Whiteford. 170 members.

In addition to swimming pool and house numbering, there were discussion on a pasteurization plant, weather modification scheme, liquor store, car stickers, highway signs, town mineral rights.

A banquet was given in honor of the heads of the oil companies.

1954 and 1955—Secretary-treasurer, E. Hamm.

Again a great variety of subjects were discussed, including those already on the agenda. The town's 75th Anniversary was added and many others.

1956—President, C. W. Buckingham.

Float at Brandon Exhibition took second prize.

House numbering proceeding.

No. 83 Highway, natural gas, industries, sidewalk on King Street.

The C. of C. now has its own offices in the Municipal Building by the kindness of the Town Council.

Life Memberships in the Chamber of Commerce have been granted to: 1940, J. W. Higginbotham; 1954, Mrs. Ida Clingan (a unique honor awarded to a woman by any branch of the Chamber of Commerce in Manitoba); 1954, H. C. H. Brayfield; 1955, C. Moore.

The foregoing is only a partial list of the many projects sponsored by this influential organization, and therefore does not demonstrate adequately the great field of interests it has covered. The place assigned on its programs to such matters as roads, highways, a boat on the Assiniboine, grain marketing, postal and train services, and grist mills has attracted to it a number of rural members who see in the organization a medium for the promotion of any community projects.

DAUGHTERS OF THE EMPIRE

The first chapter Imperial Order, Daughters of Empire was formed in Virden in 1912, under the patronage of Mrs. E. A. C. Hosmer. The provincial president, Mrs. Colin Campbell of Winnipeg, was present for

the occasion. At that time interest had been aroused in preserving the site of the old North-West Land Company trading post, Fort Montagne a la Bosse, so the new chapter chose Fort la Bosse as its name.

Mrs. F. H. Morrison was its first regent and some of the officers and members of that time were Mrs. A. E. Higginbotham, Miss Ruby Robertson, Miss Leila Higginbotham, Mrs. J. A. McLachlan, Mrs. H. D. Crowe, Mrs. F. C. Biggar, Mrs. J. V. Harrison, Mrs. W. T. B. Kennedy, Mrs. Robert Drynan, Mrs. Park, Miss Helen Miller, Mrs. Reg Morrison.

The chapter made encouragement of education its objective and several open meetings were devoted to a study of Canada. Mr. A. M. Shields, principal of the Collegiate, read a paper on Canadian Literature. At another meeting the program dealt with Canadian Composers, with renditions of some of their works by talented members of the chapter. Mrs. Biggar dealt with Canadian Artists, putting on display many copies of their works. A garden party was held at the home of Helen Miller when Rev. Dr. John McKay of Manitoba College, Winnipeg, was the speaker and presentations were made to school classes for proficiency in their work.

Mrs. G. Clingan followed Mrs. Morrison as regent. She was deputized to organize branches through the district and chapters were formed at Elkhorn, Cromer, McAuley and Birtle. Mrs. A. E. Higginbotham followed as regent and through the war years the chapter devoted itself to patriotic work. Mrs. J. Pritchard became regent. Later came one of those slumps in interest, such as had been experienced by the Women's Institute, and the chapter finally handed in its charter.

In 1953 interest revived and a new chapter was formed. It was decided to retain the former name Fort La Bosse. Mrs. Wallace, organizing secretary, was present as was also the provincial president, Mrs. Argue, who spoke on the history, aims, objects and work of the I.O.D.E.

Officers elected were: honorary president, Mrs. Ida Clingan; president, Mrs. W. J. Pollock; first vice-president, Mrs. J. H. Bratton; second vice-president, Mrs. W. A. Johnson; secretary, Mrs. G. R. Towns; treasurer, Miss Isabel Dryden; education secretary, Miss Edith Moody; echoes secretary, Mrs. A. Brown; standard bearer, Miss Mary Gardiner; councillors, Mrs. Ian Wilson and Mrs. Geo. Knowles.

A note of interest was the fact that Mr. W. A. Johnson, stationed in Virden with one of the oil companies, had been a winner of an I.O.D.E. overseas scholarship.

The Bestowal and Dedication meeting of the new Fort la Bosse Chapter was attended by representatives of the Order from Winnipeg, Brandon, Wawanesa and Kirkella. Mrs. Wallace presented the charter to the regent, Mrs. W. J. Pollock. A beautiful flag, the gift of A. E. Higginbotham in memory of his wife, was dedicated by Rev. D. B. Sparling and received by Miss Mary Gardiner.

Members of the chapter at once became active in carrying out the following objectives:

School Bursary, \$75.00; shield, Music and Arts Festival; Canadian citizenship ceremonies; contributions to the Korean fund, the Peace Garden fund and to a fund for a course in a Canadian University for doctors from India and Pakistan.

A framed picture of Queen Elizabeth II was presented to Grades I to IV in Virden Public School. Miss Edith Moody made the presentation which was received by Principal Miss M. E. Lane.

GIRL GUIDES

The original Girl Guide Company in Virden was formed soon after the First World War with Miss Adelaide Anderson as Captain and Miss Delia Sanford, her assistant. The membership consisted of about 40 enthusiastic youngsters, their uniforms consisting of middies, dark skirts, Girl Guide felt hats. Their summer outing was an experience of real camp life when they occupied tents set up in a grove, just before the entrance to the Island, Oak Lake. Here they slept on the ground and had to go to bed in comparative darkness, for if they put on a light they would almost certainly be visited by inquisitive lizards on a tour of investigation. By day the Guides performed their camp duties, went through their drill, and strove to qualify for various badges. Mrs. O. S. Ross was a camp director.

Miss Anderson's marriage and subsequent removal from Virden coincided with Miss Sanford leaving town as did most of the older Guides upon their graduation from high school. Interest dwindled until revived by Miss Margaret Carr, who with the help of Mrs. Barber and Mrs. Manning, carried on for some years.

Miss Phyllis Hales grew up with the Guides and soon took an officer's position. Now, as Mrs. Merv. Watt, she is a District Commissioner. An efficient committee sponsors the Company, helping to maintain their enthusiasm and effectiveness in badge winning. A Red Cross Home Nursing course was given by Mrs. R. Graham, R.N., with Miss E. Pattinson, Public Health Nurse, as examiner and a First Aid course was given by Miss L. Luedtke. Examiner for Fire Badges was Mr. M. R. Ames, a former chief of Virden's Fire Brigade. A Boatswain's Badge, unique in the Virden company, was presented to Judy Duncan for her work in boating and swimming at the Pilot Camp at Caddy Lake, Ontario, during the summer of 1956.

The greatest honor to be brought to the company by one of its members has been the acceptance of Judy Duncan's application for the World Centenary Camp. She will represent Manitoba with a group of girls going to Great Britain in July and August of this Anniversary year.

SCOUTS AND CUBS

In March of 1927, Rev. Mr. Tomkins, rector of St. Mary's Anglican Church, formerly of Cochrane, Ontario, organized a Boy Scout Troop in Virden.

It is officially recorded on a framed charter which may be seen in St. Mary's Parish Hall, that the Boy Scout official Troop Warrant No. 65 was granted to St. Mary's Anglican church for the First Virden Troop, with the registration date of April 8, 1927. Mr. Leonard A. Kueleman was listed on the Warrant as Scout Master but it appears that Mr. Tomkins took a very active part as Scout leader himself during his term as rector of the parish.

Listed as the original Troop Committee on the charter are the following names: Mr. John Davis, Mr. H. C. H. Brayfield, Mrs. Florence A. Coates, Mrs. Norah Henfrey, Mr. Ted Boiteau, Mr. John W. Gardiner, Mr. Richard Way, Mr. Martin Reynolds, Mr. H. Henfrey.

The original organization of this troop is listed as March 28th, 1927.

Charter No. 65 was renewed on October 31, 1933, with Scout Master R. Cockbill warranted on June 28th, 1933, and Cub Master W. R. Ashton warranted on June 28, 1933.

The Committee as of 1933 was as follows: Mr. John Davis, Mr. W. C. Neal, Mr. R. Way, Dr. J. R. Monteith, Mr. Bev Conroy.

The First Virden Scout Troop colors were presented to the Virden Troop as a gift from the First Cochrane Troop to which Mr. Tomkins had been attached before coming to Virden. The Union Jack was presented as the Mary Tomkins Memorial Flag.

Under the supervision of Mr. Tomkins the First Virden Wolf Cub Pack was organized on March 15, 1927.

The Pack was registered and its warrant No. 98 is dated June 16, 1927, listing Mr. Robert J. Coates as Cub Master and the following persons as the Pack Committee: Mr. H. Henfrey, Mr. John Davis, Mrs. Florence A. Coates, Mr. J. W. Gardiner, Mr. Richard Way, Mr. Martin Reynolds.

The Cub Pack colors were the gift of the First Cochrane Pack, Ontario, and were dedicated with the Scout flag.

Members of the Pack present at this service and on parade to St. Mary's Church that September morning were: John Davis Jr., Harry Henfrey, Cyril Neal, Harry Neal, Reg Hales, Ernie Hales, Fred Reynolds, Frank Reynolds, Norman Henfrey.

There are in Virden an adult group committee, a Ladies' Auxiliary comprised of the Cub and Scout Mothers, one Scout Troop, three Cub Packs with a total of 104 boys and 12 active leaders.

Cpl. E. Hodgson, in charge of the Virden detachment R.C.M.P. since July, 1952, has been largely responsible for keeping up the Scout and Cub groups and it has been noted with pleasure that at the beginning of May this year his promotion to the rank of Sergeant was announced.

LIONS AND LIONELLS

The Lions' Club was organized in 1938, their purpose Conservation of Sight and Concern for the Blind. During depression years a number of school children were fitted with glasses. A Delivery Table valued at \$800.00 was given to the hospital.

The club disbanded for some years but on November 2nd, 1956, it was re-organized with Geo. Stephenson as president and Ken Woods as secretary-treasurer.

The Lionells, organized in 1940, have been occupied in projects chiefly for the hospital:

1. Presentation of an ambulance.
2. Furnishings for the nursery in the old hospital.
3. Subscribed \$1200.00 toward furnishing the nursery in the new hospital and have kept up supplies.
4. Tables and chairs for children's ward.
5. Wheel chair for free use of patients.

Among those who have held office of president of this remarkably efficient organization have been Mrs. Teresa Elliott, Mrs. E. McGuffin, Mrs. Stan Bray, Mrs. Ben Orton, Mrs. Henry Roberts, Mrs. Ross Fontana, Mrs. Jos. Urich, Mrs. Chas. Forster, Mrs. Arthur Finch, Mrs. Reg. Hales, Mrs. L. Haight, Mrs. Allan Megaffin, Mrs. T. Treliving. Secretary-treasurers have been Mrs. J. Stacey, Mrs. Dave Forster, Mrs. Larry Fontana, Mrs. Wm. Lee.

OIL WIVES

A report of a recently organized club, submitted by its secretary, Mrs. D. A. Lackie, demonstrated the interest that is being taken in the community by Virden's new population of oil workers.

The Oil Wives Club of Virden was formed on November 6, 1953. Mrs. Fran McIvor organized this club and was the first president.

The members are wives of the men working in any phase of the oil industry in the Virden area, from Virden, Cromer and Elkhorn.

The girls meet once a month for a dinner and social evening, the entertainment being supplied by the girls themselves.

The dinners are catered for by the various ladies' organizations of Virden such as the Mardi Club, Legion Auxiliary, United Church and Roman Catholic Ladies.

Throughout the four years organized, the club has donated to the Boy Scouts, Cub Organization, Girl Guides, Coleman Memorial Fund, Town Playground Equipment in the Park and Virden Library.

The girls have canvassed for the Red Cross, helped with Hospital Aid Tag Day, and Blind Tag Day.

The Club held a fashion show in 1955. The proceeds, amounting to \$1,000.00, were given to the Sports Booster Club.

In this year, 1957, the members are sponsoring several attractions for the Anniversary celebration.

SPORTS BOOSTER CLUB

The Sports Booster Club was organized in 1954, its purpose being to promote good sport as a means of preventing juvenile delinquency. Dave Forster was the chief promoter. Officers for 1956 were Holly Berry, president, and Joan Flecknor, secretary. The club raises \$4,000 a year to take care of the salary of the Sports Director and to provide sporting equipment.

CHAPTER 18

LODGES

ORANGE LODGE

A report handed in by H. Dodd shows that Loyal Orange Lodge No. 1519 was the first Lodge to be instituted in Virden when it was formed in March, 1883. The first permanent quarters were on Wellington Street, the contract for the building, dated March 29th, 1888, being still preserved in the archives of the Lodge. This hall was sold to Gordon Angell April 13, 1942, and later destroyed by fire.

The L.O.L. had purchased, February 2nd, 1942, the former Presbyterian Church on Wellington Street. This was sold to the Elks Lodge in 1954.

During its tenure by the Orange Lodge several July 12th celebrations were held. On March 13th, 1935, the Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of Manitoba convened in Virden and at the same time the Ladies' Orange Benevolent Association held sessions. The town's accommodation for so many visitors was taxed to the limit, but organization was excellent, and a program of entertainment was arranged by council and local organizations. A. E. Higginbotham was mayor at this time.

In May, 1940, the Grand Lodge of Manitoba and Grand Lodge L.O.B.A. again held session in Virden, Geo. Gabel being at that time in office as mayor.

The L.O.L. and L.O.B.A. took on a ward in the old hospital, keeping it well furnished.

Mr. Dodd has appended a list of Worshipful Masters from 1883 to the present time which should be of interest to real old timers, as well as those who have been active in the Lodge of later years.

This group is to be congratulated upon having preserved records through the 74 years since its inception.

Worshipful Masters Orange Lodge No. 1519, instituted March 19th, 1883: Joshua Pickirin—1883, '84, '85, '86; W. H. Hall—1887; S. S. Colter—1888, '89, '90, '92, '93, '96, '97, 1900, '01, '02, '03; W. F. Carefoot—1891; Chris. Stinson—1894, '95; Thos. Churchill—1898, '99, 1904; Jas. Gee—1905, '06; J. R. Duke—1907, '08; Jos. Gibson, 1909; Dr. E. R. Langrill—1910; H. Small—1911, '12; D. Muldrew—1913, '14; G. Gabel—1915, '16; W. Angell—1917, 1919; F. Sloan—1918; J. W. Hewitt—1920; E. Palmer—1921; R. Kirkwood—1922; J. D. Mitchell—1923, '24, '25; P. Archibald—1926, '27; W. M. Lamont—1928, '29, '30; H. Dodd—1931; G. Clarke—1932, '33, '34; S. Colter Jr.—1935, '36, '37; C. L. Nichol—1938, '39, '40; D. A. Gray—1941, '42; W. Skinner—1943; G. Walker—1944, '45; F. J. Simpson—1946; H. R. Berry—1947, '48, '49; W. L. Waines—1950, '51; E. J. Ferguson—1952, '53; T. E. Burns—1954, '55; A. R. Anderson—1956.

A few other outstanding pioneers who served in various offices were Brothers D. A. Watson, W. R. Sargent, John Mooney, W. J. Gardiner, Robert Gardiner, J. Stinson, Thos. Willis, Geo. Carefoot, J. J. Nichol, J. W. Higginbotham, R. J. Mullins, Jos. Etsell, J. Heaman, R. R. McGuffin, John Yewdall.

It will be noticed that S. S. Colter served eleven years as Worshipful Master.

ODDFELLOWS

The following reports concerning Virden Lodge No. 13, I.O.O.F. and the Rebekahs were submitted in 1956 by Mr. P. F. McClure, who had long been an energetic worker in the Lodge. His death shortly afterwards was deeply felt by the community, including those who had known him in his business capacity, but especially by those who were his close friends and by those who had worked with him in the lodge.

Virden Lodge No. 13, I.O.O.F. was instituted on March 20th, 1888. The charter members were: W. J. May, R. E. Trumbell, Duncan McDonald, W. H. Burge, W. A. Brady, M. B. Irwin and A. G. McDougall. At this meeting 25 members were initiated by members of Moosomin Lodge. The first elected officers were: Noble Grand, W. J. May; Vice-Grand, R. E. Trumbell; Secretary, D. McDonald; Treasurer, E. Bunt. When the Lodge celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1938, four of the original members who joined at that time were able to be present. They were John Sproat, of Kipling, Sask.; A. C. Sarvis, of Kipling, Sask.; J. D. McNiven, Virden and W. M. Pineo, Virden. These Brothers have all since passed away. The Lodge now owns a business block on Nelson Street with an up-to-date Lodge room upstairs, where it meets regu-

larly every two weeks. Through all the years it has maintained a ward in the Virden Hospital and helps in many of the activities of the Virden district, so that Odd Fellowship, which had its beginnings in Virden nearly 70 years ago, is still quite active. Fifty-year jewels have been presented to W. A. Bridgett, who is still a member, and to three members now deceased, R. T. Evans, Wm. McDonald and J. H. McKnight.

The Rebekah branch of the Order, Crocus Rebekah Lodge No. 8, was instituted in April, 1909, with the following charter members: Mrs. M. H. Simpson, M. H. Simpson, J. K. McLeod, W. D. Craig, T. A. Carscadden, John Gordon, Geo. Rothnie Sr., Mrs. T. A. Carscadden, Mrs. S. S. Carscadden, Mrs. W. A. Bridgett, W. A. Bridgett, J. D. McNiven and Mrs. H. C. Simpson.

The Rebekah Lodge has worked loyally through all the community projects it has supported, of which the hospital work since 1910 has been outstanding.

Some of those who have held office recently are Mrs. K. Green, Mrs. L. Wallace, Mrs. M. Paton, Mrs. L. Reid, Mrs. Anne Alexander, Mrs. Gladys Finch, Mrs. W. Ashton, Mrs. Mary Skinner, Mrs. L. Haight, Mrs. Myrtle Hayhurst, Mrs. M. Glendinning, Mrs. I. Paul, Mrs. L. Beamish, Mrs. Thelma Mitchell, Mrs. Freda Warren, Mrs. Aileen Welch, Mrs. Lena Tapp, Mrs. E. Kenderdine, Miss N. Nolan, Mrs. N. Roddy, Mrs. Freda Pollock, Mrs. F. Coates, Miss Edna Sararas, Mrs. Mary Berry.

MASONIC

The first meeting of Masons in Virden was held September 2nd, 1888, when it was decided to form a Masonic Lodge. This was duly instituted February 1, 1889, and designated Lebanon Lodge, No. 43, Robt. Adamson being the first Master. H. H. Goulter, (Dr.) John E. Gemmill, Thos. Willis and Clarence Pineo petitioned for initiation.

H. H. Goulter was the first appointed Master and was succeeded by Rev. H. Watts, other officers being, J. D. McNiven, W. D. Wilson, Thos. Frame, Geo. Perry and S. E. Lang. In 1892, the Lodge officiated at the laying of the cornerstone of the 4-room stone school and in 1897 joined with other lodges in celebrating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The following year recorded the trek to the Yukon, with farewell gatherings for members from Virden and Oak Lake. In 1899, the Lodge participated in laying the corner stone of Breadalbane Church. In 1902 commendatory credentials were extended to Worshipful Brother

S. E. Lang, who planned to visit England and Germany after completing studies at Cornell University. Initiations that year included J. S. Bulloch, T. Mutter, R. L. Carr and R. A. Knight. The corner-stone of the Anglican church at Hargrave was laid. In 1905 an operating table was purchased for Virden Hospital.

Corner stones of the Public School, 1905, and Collegiate, 1910, were laid with Masonic rites. Worshipful Masters during these years were R. E. Trumbell, E. A. Holmes, J. F. C. Menlove, H. J. Pugh, J. W. Mitchell, C. K. Newcombe, W. Stevenson and W. W. Joslin.

Many whose names have appeared in these pages came up for initiation and in 1920 plaques were unveiled to the memory of two young members, John S. Joslin and Lorne E. Carscadden, who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the war. This Lodge included a wide area, extending to adjacent settlements.

Succeeding Worshipful Masters were M. H. Simpson, J. F. Morrison, S. S. Carscadden, Jos. Gibson, A. E. Higginbotham, John Yewdall, Adam E. Ross, C. D. Dayton and John Davis.

In 1925 a visit was received from the Northern Light Lodge of Winnipeg, apparently the only occasion on which a Winnipeg Lodge visited Virden. The deaths are recorded in 1926 of Wor. Bro. T. B. Mitchell and Wor. Bro. Jos. Gibson, both valued members of the lodge and prominent citizens of the town. In 1929, the Lodge took over and continued to maintain a ward in the Virden Hospital.

Worshipful Masters during the decade 1920 - 30 were Geo. Harris, W. R. Gibson, W. G. Brammall, G. W. Findlay, W. L. Cann, O. S. Ross, Chas. Kerr, J. H. Chalmers, A. Milne and G. R. Hill.

During the next decade 1930 - 40 the depression had an effect on the activities of the Lodge. Help was given to the dried out area. Regret was expressed at the loss in 1935 of H. H. Goulter who had been the first appointed Master and had served the order for forty-six years. The lodge moved into new quarters which had been procured by the I.O.O.F. Another pioneer member passed away in the person of J. D. McNiven who had been initiated in 1889.

Worshipful Masters during this period were D. M. Ledgerwood, C. G. Kerr, C. L. Strachan, R. J. Timms, D. J. Reid, S. L. McBain, J. J. O'Neill and W. J. Dutton.

The foregoing covers 50 years of the Lodge's activities. During the time since then it has continued to function steadily. It supports a ward in the new hospital and presents annually a scholarship to the Virden Collegiate Institute.

Worshipful Masters have been G. S. Moir, W. H. Anderson, R. N. Kyles, R. P. Campion, J. A. Caw, H. H. Allen, E. A. Winkler, W. J. Eyers, G. A. Mooney, J. H. McDonald, J. C. Anderson, A. A. Megaffin, D. A. Gray, N. A. Mooney, A. M. Paul and F. A. France.

CANADIAN ORDER OF FORESTERS

Court Virden No. 20 was organized July 1st, 1889, just ten years after the parent order was organized at Brantford, Ontario.

Charter Members were Geo. Jarrett, R. Gardiner, J. D. McNiven, B. I. Foster, A. Rothnie, Sandy Murdock.

The original charter was destroyed by fire and the minute books from 1889 - 1906 were lost. Since then the picture is complete of an active lodge.

Through the years the membership-roll brings back memories of men prominent in business and rural life who helped mould the community.

The Court has had its up and downs but the 68th Anniversary showed a strong position, with over 80 members in good standing.

This Court has donated substantially to the local hospital, Cancer Relief and other charities. Through its many years of service, it has been a source of inspiration and fellowship through its members in Liberty, Benevolence and Concord.

C.O.F. Court Hargrave No. 1242 was organized February 13, 1909, charter members being: H. Handley, Wm. Moffatt, S. Wilson, G. Dawson, R. Crosby, T. Wilson, J. Bodkin, H. Cutfield, G. Beeson, A. Johnston, L. Carruthers, W. J. Knight, A. Cook, M. Hunter, C. Stinson, A. Odell, J. J. O'Neill, H. Dixon, W. G. Brammall, J. Wilson, F. Wilson, H. Larmer, A. Kyles, M. Baker, J. Stockford.

Special mention could be made of Amos Odell who was first Ranger and then held the office of financial secretary, 1911-1930.

At present, 1957, there are 81 members, a total of 212 have joined the lodge including four generations of one or more families, and of those who have moved away, a number still continue as members.

A Junior Branch was organized in 1943, present membership 23, and a Ladies' Court was formed in 1945.

Those who have received 25-year buttons are Wm. Moffatt, J. J. O'Neill, A. Cook, R. Crosby, Wm. McLaren, Fred Carruthers, H. C. Odell, F. Kinnaid, W. Ward, W. White, T. Pearcey, and J. Braybrook, and in 1959 the first four will merit 50-year buttons.

During the two World Wars a number of the members served in the forces. Among those who did not return were F. Bawden, C. R. Carter, H. Montgomery and Wm. Simpson.

Visits have been exchanged with Courts from surrounding districts and representatives attend the Manitoba Western Assemblies held in Brandon and the annual High Court meetings which are usually held in Eastern Canada.

Assistance has been given to local church, rink and hospital and practical help given to members in time of sickness and trouble. An Insurance Branch is also maintained for members. Social events have a place and provide a means for drawing members into closer relationship. Wm. Moffatt, Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Carruthers and H. Cutfield formerly provided music for these entertainments with H. C. Odell as a capable master of ceremonies. In sports the Court sponsored a junior hockey team and a bonspiel, and so has proved itself a vital influence in all affairs of the community.

Court Harmony No. 14, Hargrave, was organized March, 1945, with 37 charter members. First President was Mrs. Stewart Clarke (nee Nan Milne). The Lodge became beneficiary in 1955 and now has 33 beneficiary members and 13 social members.

Assistance has been given to: Hargrave United Church, Hargrave Memorial Rink, Virden District Hospital, Virden Rest Room, The Cancer Fund, The March of Dimes.

Court of Elms, C.O.F., was instituted December 7, 1894, in Joslin School with Bro. John McKay of Winnipeg as installing officer and the following slate of officers: Past Chief Ranger, Bro. G. E. Blakeman; Chief Ranger, Bro. S. R. Nichol; Vice Chief Ranger, Bro. J. Morton; Financial Secretary, Bro. J. Robinson; Treasurer, Bro. W. J. Gray; Chaplain, Bro. J. Lommas; Senior Woodward, Bro. J. Sararas; Junior Woodward, Bro. J. Gardiner; Senior Beadle, Bro. J. Sararas; Junior Beadle, Bro. Nat Sararas.

M. T. Heritage, in submitting a history of the Court, remarks that the name was chosen for several qualities displayed by the elm tree, one of which being that it was hard to kill. In that respect at least the Court has lived up to its name for now, after 63 years, it is still very much alive.

The first business item disposed of was a very practical one—namely the purchase of two lamps and a gallon of coal oil. Lodge rites at once drew the members together in a common interest. Visits were exchanged with other lodges and Court of Elms also became a medium of social intercourse for the community. Picnics, oyster suppers, dances, and "At Homes" were held, members who lent their homes for these festivities being W. J. Bray, I. J. Bennett, J. M. Bennett, J. J. Nichol, W. G. Heaman and others. Bill Moffatt was regarded as a popular entertainer. In 1916 fifteen new members were initiated. In 1944, honorary memberships were conferred upon Mr. Thos. Tapp and Mr. T. D. Greig. The Court celebrated its 50th anniversary with visitors present from Brandon, Ninga, Hargrave and Elkhorn.

In 1945 M. T. Heritage was appointed District Deputy to succeed Chas. Shepherd of Elkhorn, who held the office for 25 years. In 1946 twenty new members were initiated thus winning a shield which hangs in Joslin School. Court of Elms also won a shield and a cup in competitions at a district picnic. Banquets and bonspiels had been added to the social program.

The members did not devote all their time to Lodge ritual and social doings. They gave practical help to members when in 1935 they helped H. E. Green to erect his new house; in 1944 gave P. J. Tapp assistance in building a new barn, the old one having been destroyed by fire; in 1947 sponsored a campaign to raise funds to purchase a power mower for the Bennett Cemetery and undertook the responsibility of caretaking; assisted in rebuilding the home of S. Rolle and the barn of G. Hutchinson, both of which had been destroyed by fire; in 1950 assisted in furnishing one half of a ward in the new Virden District Hospital. In all of these things the Court has exercised a great influence upon the life of the community.

ELKS

The B.P.O. Elks, Virden Lodge No. 387 was formed late in 1954, by the Grand Lodge organizer, Mr. Mike Moran. Early in 1955 they entered an agreement to purchase the building owned by the Orange Lodge and it is now known as the Elks' Hall.

The great principles of the Order are Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. Locally the Elks are promoting sport among young people. They sponsor a team in the Pony Baseball League and also a team in Hockey. In a February, 1957, issue of the Virden Empire-Advance, the Lodge publishes an appeal for help in placing eight

Hungarian refugees, with an interesting description showing them all to have had training in some trade or craft or profession.

* * *

The foregoing resume of the activities of the Lodges and the various organizations and societies shows what a wide field they have covered in regard to the advancement of the community.

Mention has been found of the existence of a St. Patrick's Society, a St. George's Society, an Old Timers' Association, the Maccabees and the Association of United Workmen but up to the time of writing, no details have been forthcoming.

CHAPTER 19

MILITARY

Viriden's patriotic and military spirit showed itself at an early date. The Riel Rebellion of 1885 brought many young men to the fore eager to step into the ranks that were being mustered in defence. At this distance in time and in view of the world-shattering wars that have occurred, the rebellion would appear to have been of very minor importance, but at that period and throughout such a large and thinly populated area, the forces commanded by the rebels could not at first be judged.

At Viriden a Home Guard was quickly formed with Captain Thos. Routledge in command, assisted by Lieutenants (Dr.) George Young and John Taylor. A telegram was sent to the minister of militia asking for 75 hand arms and ammunition. Drill under strict military rules was carried on at Boss Hill farm. Though never called upon to render service as a unit, the Home Guard continued in existence, drilling and practicing musketry and later was converted into the 6th Company of the 91st Battalion, Manitoba Light Infantry. When this Battalion was disbanded in 1892, the 6th Company was retained as the Viriden Independent Company of Infantry.

Further development is described in a short history prepared by Capt. A. K. Paton, M.C., during his stay in Viriden. This covers the period from 1893 to 1946 and includes a history of the 12th Manitoba Dragoons written by Lt.-Col. H. A. Croll, V.O., of Souris.

In 1893, the 12th Manitoba Dragoons was formed with the Viriden Company as A Squadron under Capt. T. Routledge. They were armed with swords and Winchester carbines and were uniformed with red serges with white facings, black breeches with a double white stripe

and round forage caps. The officers and men purchased their own white helmets and top-coats. Capt. E. A. C. Hosmer, who later commanded the regiment, gained the distinction at a long course at the Royal Military College, Kingston, of obtaining the highest marks that had ever been awarded there.

The regiment obtained the highest number of marks of any cavalry corps in Canada. Capt. Paton remarks that Virden has always been the Headquarters of this regiment except for part of the First War years when it was at Minnedosa. The original roster of A Squadron hangs in the Officers' Mess in the Virden Armoury. It first saw action when in

1900 a strong contingent of Dragoons served in South Africa. George Bellamy and the well-known Carter twins, Arthur and Gerald, were among those who went from Virden. In the First World War the Dragoons were strongly represented in numerous C.E.F. Battalions. A company was recruited from Virden for the 45th, and a large number joined the 79th Overseas Battalion under the command of Lt.-Col. George Clingan. They reached England in April, 1916, just when severe fighting had decimated the ranks of the fighting forces. Lacking reserves, the 79th was broken up to fill vacancies and it was said that practically every Canadian unit at the front received a contingent from this fine battalion. Col. Clingan, left without a command, transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps and served in this capacity in command of a hospital unit in England and then of one at Outroi, France, until the end of the war.

The 226th Battalion also received a number of men from Virden, part of a company having been recruited there. They went overseas late in the war but saw service at the front and were on hand for cleaning up operations. Since returning home, a number of these young men have renewed connection with the 12th Manitoba Dragoons.

In the Second World War the regiment was well represented and a number are continuing their connection with the army today.

Mechanization of the mounted forces increased their efficiency but something of the glamor of the old cavalry disappeared. The names of Hosmer, Clingan, Brayfield, Taylor, McLean, Whiteford, Sinclair are intimately connected with the progress of the 12th Manitoba Dragoons from its inception until today.

While the Second War was in progress and many young men from Virden district were serving in scattered units in Britain and on the continent, the citizens of Virden arranged for a re-union to be held at

the Maple Leaf Club, London. J. A. Caw, president of the Board of Trade, called an open meeting which resulted in a general committee being set up with: chairman, Ralph Glass; secretary-treasurer, B. E. Orton; finance, J. A. Caw, George Gabel, Mrs. Clingan, J. Neumeyer; invitations, H. L. Wardle, Mrs. J. C. Spiers, Mrs. J. R. Monteith. Major C. L. Strachan and Major C. M. McLean were to act as contact men in London.

No canvassing was required. Donations poured in from organizations and individuals. Two hundred invitations were issued. Officers of units co-operated wherever possible by arranging for the men to accept, so when the time arrived, well over one hundred were in attendance. There were family meetings: Fred Eveleigh and his son Doug; five Gallant brothers; three Daniels boys; two Schmaus brothers; Roy and Harold Heaman; George McLean and brother Ray; Nell and Jim Koester; and the two McHarrys. Olive Goodwin, with the Canadian Educational Service, met boys she had taught in the Virden Collegiate—Bob Wilson, Alf Campbell, Bruce Caw, Jim Koester, Don McLeod, Tom Dumbleton, Doug Eveleigh, Charlie McEwen, Bill Stendall, Cec. Spiers, Norman Houk, Alf McMillan, Hilton Ashton, Allison Glass, Ian Wilson. Other Collegiate students were there too—Howard McLachlan, Hugh

Sinclair, Bev Conroy, Vern Andrew, Fred Eveleigh, Pat Sanford, Max More, Frank Finch, Charlie McLean, Roy Bray, Don Whiteford, Nell Koester, Gordon Good, Harold Morton, Bill McDonald, George Ross.

A program had been arranged of eats (lavish), speeches (short). Messages were read from home, cables from Mayor Dr. H. N. Thompson, and the Lions Club, all received with applause. The Hon. Vincent Massey, at that time Canada's High Commissioner to Great Britain, dropped in to give greetings. The Winnipeg Free Press and Tribune had their London representatives on the spot. Allison Glass was taken to a radio station where he made a record, afterwards broadcast from CKX, Brandon.

One of the boys writing afterwards of the re-union said that it was the next best thing to a visit home, the one thing needed to complete the picture being the entry of Chief Jim Bolton to see that the gathering kept within the limits of law and order.

The following by M. R. Ames gives a concise record of the activities of the veterans since their organization in 1919.

"In the early months of 1919 a few returned men, perhaps half a dozen or so, met in the store of the late George Rowson and decided

that the comradeship formed during the First Great War should be continued in civilian life, and it was from this small start that we have today the present branch of the Canadian Legion with its hundreds of members.

Officers were elected and applications made for a Charter for Virden Branch of the Great War Veterans' Association. The application was approved and a Charter granted on April 18, 1919, with A. Burman as president and G. Roy Carscadden, secretary.

As more men and women returned from overseas the branch continued to grow and it soon became necessary to secure larger club room facilities. For a number of years the club room was situated in the Municipal Building but as time went on and the branch continued to expand, it was found that still larger premises would have to be acquired.

It was in the early part of the Second Great War that the old Lyric Theatre (present Legion Dance Hall) was purchased and used as a club room.

Through these years the destinies of the branch were in the capable hands of such men as the late Dr. Geo. Clingan, H. C. H. Brayfield, Alex Mitchell, the late W. L. Cann, the late C. G. Kerr, John Conroy, the late Ralph Glass, the late Stan Eley and others whose names at the present time we cannot recall. These were backed up by an executive whose members were dedicated to the aims and objects of the organization.

And here let us pay tribute to the ladies of the Women's Service League (now the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Canadian Legion) who were always ready with a helping hand.

Perhaps a few of the highlights which took place before the G.W.V.A. was turned over to the Canadian Legion would be in order here, some of which were:

The erection of a Cross of Sacrifice in Virden Cemetery.

Sponsoring a three-day fun carnival.

Sports Days.

The annual Christmas Tree and Entertainment for the Children of Veterans.

A two-day Rodeo.

Community Services on Remembrance Day, November 11, and
Decoration Day in June of each year.

And now we come to the time when Virden Branch No. 8 of the Canadian Legion was instituted and took over from the G.W.V.A. Virden is indeed fortunate in having an organization such as Virden Branch of the Canadian Legion in their midst, for although their primary object is to assist and do all possible to see that Veterans, War Widows and children of veterans get a fair deal, the officers and members have found time to support and give financial aid to many worthwhile community enterprises, as witness the following:

Donations to Virden's new District Hospital.

To Sports Booster Club.

To Virden Cemetery Improvement Association and many others.

Providing a Scholarship for Virden Collegiate Institute.

A trophy for Virden Music and Arts Festival.

Generous help with the March of Dimes.

And last but not least, the sponsoring of Virden's new Legion
Junior Band.

In addition to the above, the Branch purchased two buildings from the Airport which are presently used as club rooms for the Ladies' Auxiliary and Virden Branch No. 8.

In respect to these may we pay a warm tribute to the Veterans of the First Great War whose foresight and courage made such a splendid contribution during the dark days of the Second Great War, and since.

The current officers and members look to the future with confidence and determination not to rest on whatever laurels that may have been attained but to go forward to the end that still further improvements are necessary to make Virden and community a better place in which to live. Plans for this are being considered."

AIR FORCE

From 1885 the community was accustomed to the sight of army uniforms, but in November, 1940, Virden learned that it was to become familiar with another branch of the service. During the winter and spring No. 19 Elementary Flying Training School was organized, buildings erected and staff appointed. The school was conducted under civilian management with John Morgan of Winnipeg at the head, executive and working staff, many of whom were local residents, being employed in this class. Flying instruction was controlled by the R.C.A.F.

The school soon attained a reputation for a high degree of efficiency. Beginning in April, 1941, with 140 students the class reached its capacity of 240 by April, 1943, and remained at that figure until the following year when No. 19 E.F.T.S. was closed, its job finished.

CHAPTER 20

SPORTS AND RECREATION

SPORT AND RECREATION

Judging from data revealed in records and from reports submitted by various individuals, practically every man, woman and child living in Virden at any time during the years 1882 to 1957 can be classed either as a sports participant or a sports fan. Under these circumstances, it is impossible to give the subject of "Sports" a detailed treatment in one chapter. The simplest policy would be to say that research has failed to uncover any evidence that Virden ever had a polo team but that it had everything else, and let it go at that.

A policy such as this, however, would not meet with the approval of the enthusiasts who would not consider any history of Virden quite worth while, if no account were given of their favorite sport and no mention made of the individuals and teams that brought distinction to themselves and to their town.

In pioneer days, entertainment could not be had by the turning of a switch, so as soon as early arrivals had settled on the farms and in various positions in town, they began to look about for diversions and recreation.

A cricket Club was formed which must have flourished as it was frequently mentioned in the press of the 80's and early 90's.

Soccer (Association Football) games were being played between various groups.

A croquet lawn was the feature of the well kept grounds of many a home.

GAME

Game was and still is plentiful, such as ducks, prairie chickens and

partridges and in the horse and buggy days, groups of enthusiasts had hunting lodges at Oak Lake.

Deer roamed the valley and often strayed for miles among the farms. John Caldwell had a tame deer and it was quite at home in the town paying visits to the citizens. During the open season, the modern regulation red or white apparel of the deer hunters can be constantly seen on the streets of the town.

HORSES AND RACING

From being a necessary means of pioneer transportation, horseback riding became popular as a pastime. Owners took pride in their drivers and smart outfits were seen with gleaming harness and buggies or cutters. The press of May, 1888, makes mention of a half-mile race course east of the tracks, and the erection of a grandstand. The following year the formation of a Turf Club was discussed with a proposed membership of 200 at a fee of \$10.00 each. In 1891, the Dennis County Agricultural Society held its exhibition on the grounds of the Turf Club. Interest kept at a high level, and as many as 20 men would gather of an evening at the race-track to exercise their horses. Some of these owners were: Jos. Gibson, John Gibson, T. A. Megaffin, A. Cote, W. W. Joslin, D. W. Brown, W. A. Bridgett, A. L. Insley, Thos. McDonald, Wm. McDonald, S. S. Carscadden, Chas. Lawrence, I. J. Bennett. By 1909 a number of owners of race-horses were becoming owners of motor cars, so interest in the Turf Club dwindled.

Racing, however, has continued to be a feature of Virden summer sport. The Agricultural Society sponsors the Harness Race Meet and entries come from local owners and from owners who follow a regular circuit.

TENNIS

Tennis, adopted at an early date, was played on grass courts laid out at private homes such as the Gyles' at Boss Hill Farm, the Hosmers' at "The Maples" and C. W. Wainwright's in town. When the Tennis Club was formed, it had two grass courts in the park at the corner where the rink was later built. Then the Club moved to four shale courts at the present location. Interest was at its height in the years before the first war. Players came regularly from Oak Lake, Sandhurst and Elkhorn. Among the women players, Mrs. Jas. Brownlie, Winifred Wilson of Elkhorn, now Mrs. Clarke of Reston, Miss Steen and Mrs. Alex Cameron of Oak Lake were tops. A large number of tea members joined

and from among these, hostesses took turns serving tea each Thursday. It was always a gay and lively scene in the attractive setting of the park.

The war and adoption of golf played havoc with the tennis club which, however, was re-organized, and has carried on ever since but on a smaller scale. Two cement courts are now in use.

CARDS

At the beginning of the century a Duplicate Whist Club of older people was carried on for several winters. Euchre, Whist and Pedro were the favorite card games for progressive parties, later taken over by Bridge and still later by Contract Bridge. Cribbage had many supporters. A Checker Club was formed in 1897 with John Caldwell as president and A. Murdoch as secretary-treasurer. A tournament was arranged, admission ten cents, in which every member would play every other member, thus having practice and so being in good shape for the County Tournament.

PING - PONG

Ping-Pong had a rush of popularity during the early years of 1900. J. A. Pritchard, a young Englishman who had come out to Bonally Farm, was one of the first to introduce it into Virden. At first the game was played with parchment racquets, which were soon replaced by wooden ones with a surface of fine sandpaper which made for a quicker game with curves and spins. Many residents had regulation table tops made which could be laid on the dining table and ping-pong evenings were popular. A tournament was arranged in the town hall which included entries from Oak Lake and Elkhorn.

TOBOGGAN SLIDE

In December, 1908, F. W. Clingan asked the council for permission to erect a toboggan slide at the intersection of 10th Avenue and Wellington Street at the top of the creek bank. This was very popular with the young fry who came equipped with sleds, toboggans, tin trays or shovels but when the snow disappeared, they discarded equipment and unwisely slid down the bare boards, after which mothers joined operation mend-it and the kiddies were forced to be ignominiously de-slivered.

SUNDRY SPORTS

Gymnasium classes were held in the armoury at two or three periods but these were never developed to any extent.

A Pool Room also was an early institution. Jack Gordon operated one upstairs in the Cain Block; Harry London and Dave Golding were also proprietors of Pool Rooms. E. Forster conducted one in the upper story (later removed) on the egg-grading station, then moved to the ground floor of the Cain Block, the business being now carried on by Mr. Forster's son, Charlie, and his son, Steve, another three generation firm for Virden.

Skating was always popular, enlivened by the band once a week and by one or two carnivals during the season. Dell Irwin (Mrs. H. C. Simpson), J. D. McNiven and Lou Higginbotham (Mrs. Meek) were almost the only ones who could put on a show in fancy skating.

The first skating rink was erected where the Taylor Lumber yard is now, and had as well two sheets of ice for curling. In lieu of windows an open space was left from end to end, this being covered with five cent cotton. A press item of February, 1887, states that the rink was damaged in a storm, the canvas portion being torn into shreds. This rink was managed by Wm. Cobb for two years. A new building was erected on 8th Avenue on the Schurman property, behind the present Forster home, having also two sheets of curling ice. This rink was considered a great improvement upon the former one and served the community for a number of years until destroyed by fire, skating then being reduced to open air and a new curling rink, though covered, again had to resort to lengths of cotton instead of windows. The present rink was built in 1916 with three sheets of curling ice. There has never been proper accommodation for spectators, but that no doubt will be remedied when the next step is taken.

Through the early years cross-country snow-shoe tramps were popular on sunny afternoons or moonlit evenings, topped off with an oyster supper.

CURLING

As many have guessed from the information given concerning the rinks, the "roarin" game of Curling was taken up with an enthusiasm to match that of the character portrayed by (was it Crockett?) of the Scottish minister who during a brief period of severe frost pronounced the "Sabbath, a day lost" because the rocks were idle. The term "roarin" game has lost something of its significance as the silent signals used nowadays have made the game less vocal. A master of the art was

Ed. Palmer, whose voice calling the turns and echoing from the roof-beams could be heard two blocks away.

There is no doubt that this was one of the first sports to be organized in the settlement. Also, the players must have practiced faithfully for in 1888 Virden Curlers won out at Brandon and Carberry. There was bad weather for the Virden bonspiel in March of that year but two rinks were present from Portage and two from Carberry. In January of the following year a rink composed of Messrs. Wilcox, W. J. Kennedy, H. C. Simpson and J. A. McLachlan attended the Montreal Carnival.

Enthusiasm spread. At least one yard in every block had a strip of ice where the youngsters played, rocks being represented by wooden blocks with bent nails for handles. It was even tried in the aisles at school on stormy days but proved to be too much the "roarin" game.

The first official information furnished from the minutes of a meeting held April 27th, 1910, gives this list of officers: patron and patroness, Col. and Mrs. E. A. C. Hosmer; honorary president, H. C. Simpson, M.M.P.; president, Wm. Leverington; first and second vice-presidents, S. S. Carscadden and Walter Cameron; secretary-treasurer, J. Young Munro; chaplain, Rev. Wm. Robertson; executive, J. Spooner, J. D. McNiven, F. C. Whitehouse, D. A. Golding, John Caldwell; delegates, R. Langtry, W. F. Payne.

Note is made of the Club's payment to M. R. Schurman of \$125.00 as the Club's share of rent for the rink which was built on his property, also of a proposed interview with the Agricultural Society regarding the erection on their grounds of a building suitable for curling. Forty-seven years later that proposal is about to be fulfilled.

It is quite impossible to give a list of those who participated in the game during the more than 70 years since the first sheets of curling ice came into use. In addition to some already named, W. D. Craig, J. D. McNiven, W. A. Bridgett, Geo. Harris, Adam Ross may be classed as pioneers. Spectators have always been interested in the play and entertained as well by mannerisms of the players and the good-natured chaffing that went on. As for instance Ben McCormick bent half double, pussy-footing up the ice after his rock, brought from George Gabel the shout "Sneak up on it Ben, sneak up on it!"

The Curling Club today has 44 rinks. Bonspiels have had so many entries, that even with four additional sheets of ice laid out in the skating rink, draws on one occasion at least were continued throughout the night. The custom was later adopted of playing off some of the early games at Hargrave, Oak Lake or Reston.

In 1921, a petition signed by 50 ladies was presented to the Curling Club, asking permission to form a ladies' club. This was approved, and the Ladies' Curling Club is still active with 18 rinks. Some of those who

took an active interest in its organization were Mrs. Paton, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Tod, Mrs. A. E. Higginbotham, Mrs. Albert Carscadden.

The High School now has 12 to 15 rinks each year and in February of this year they brought home the Manitoba High School Championship. The victorious rink was composed of Henry Riendeau (skip) Jack Suter, Ken Shoemaker, Ted Bridgett.

With three such thriving groups eager for games, it can be seen that the capacity of the present rink is taxed to the utmost.

HOCKEY

It was not until the rink was built on the Schurman property on 8th Avenue that there was sufficient space provided for hockey. A club developed which by the late nineties was in a league that included Brandon. The personnel of the team that really brought hockey to the front in Virden was composed of goal, McGuffin; point and cover point, Colin Caldwell and Bert Orr; forwards, Edge Irwin, Billie Bell and Ed Higginbotham (Higgie); and rover, Lorne Colter. Games with Brandon were the highlights of the season.

The most hilarious hockey game that was ever played in Virden took place in this rink. It formed an item on the program of a carnival in aid of Virden's first hospital. One team, the "Sawbones" captained by George Clingan, M.D., looked weird in white sweaters with ghostly blue skull and crossbones while their opponents, "The Other Sawbones" under Capt. Jack Keedwell of Keedwell Bros. Butchers presented a most aggressive appearance in red sweaters decorated with a large white ox skull. The line-up showed an imposing array of prominent citizens prepared to sacrifice their dignity and even to risk their lives in the service of a popular institution. Eligible for a place on the team were the has-beens, the never-had-beens so far as skating and the game of hockey were concerned. The goal keepers, W. W. Joslin and M. H. Simpson, were chosen, not so much for their skill as for their stature and sturdiness. The referee was Lorne Colter. From the first the play was fast and furious. The Rev. Wellington Bridgman could be seen spread-eagled on the ice still frantically whacking at the puck; the dignified J. H. Agnew in a jack knife bend performing gyrations that could be the envy of a professional comic skater of today; E. J. Scales and Jack Pritchard coming in a power rush down the ice, causing the audience to gasp in dismay, a rush which could be stopped only by collision with other players or with the walls of the rink. Every play was loudly applauded. Courtesy was not wanting. The referee obligingly held up J. H. Schmidt when he faced off. At the end of the period Bill Joslin was seated on a chair and escorted to the other goal.

Fortunately for both players and audience the periods were short. Voices may have been husky but no casualties were reported as being admitted to the hospital and the rink remained intact to be destroyed some years later by fire.

With the destruction of that building, hockey was again without adequate playing quarters until the present rink was built in the park. Then the team soon arose to a peak. Some imports were brought in of whom Billy McDougall of Reston was a star. Some of the local players of that day were Fred Bridgett, Prine Lawrence, Clay Boiteau, Henry Palmer, Dorland Palmer, R. E. McGuffin, Cec. Gardner, J. B. Craig, George Sanford, Lorne Reid, and W. R. Simpson, trainer.

People came from far and near for the games. A section of bleachers was brought from the Agricultural grounds to afford some sort of seating accommodation for spectators. A special train was run to Brandon for a play-off game. Two Intermediate championships were won in 1927 and 1928. Some of the citizens who guided the team through its day of triumph were: president, Col. Fred Palmer; manager, A. R. Bain; trainer, R. W. Simpson; captain, Henry Palmer; executive, Dr. I. O. Fryer, Fred MacNicol, P. H. Hamon, Dr. C. L. Strachan, John Pritchard.

By 1930 there was a new line-up—John Higginbotham, Lawrence and Ross Fontana, Stenson Pritchard, Aubrey Lawrence, Wm. Dutton, Eddie Boiteau, Bill Manser, Lawrence Perlette, Jocky Bright. This was the first Virden hockey team to play north of the 53rd parallel when they entered the Manitoba Provincial Play-downs at The Pas.

Reading over the lists of names that have been handed in, it would appear that practically all the male population of the town during those years, when not curling, was engaged in promoting or playing hockey. Under these circumstances it is impossible to give a full roster of those who kept the games going. Much the same condition exists today, perhaps to a greater degree for there are no less than eleven hockey teams in practice.

Juveniles, 18 years and under—1 team
Clarence Braybrook, Coach

Bantams, 14 years and under—3 teams
Reds—Larry Fontana, Coach
Greens—Keith Forster, Coach
Blues—Brian Anderson, Coach

Tom Thumbs, 12 years and under—4 teams
France Construction Co., C. Fowler
Beaver Trucking, Aubrey Lawrence
Henuset Bros., Glen Muir
Donaldson's, Henry Palmer

Pee Wees, 9 years and under—3 teams
Laurie Artiss, Coach—Elks, Lionells, Al's Tire Shop

Sports Instructors — Fred de Pourcq, succeeded by Laurie Artiss. Bantam A won the championship in 1956 with Orville Fowler as manager and players: Garry Bolam, Don Berry, Clarke Story, Jim Parrott, George Trowell, Ted Taylor, Larry Hart, Ted Bridgett, Max Colter, Neil Reeves, Don Austin.

RIFLE ASSOCIATION

The original minutes of a meeting held in the office of J. H. Agnew, June 4th, 1886, record the organization of what was to be known as the County of Dennis Rifle Association. Apparently the number present was very small, mention being made only of Thos. Routledge, F. P. Bouverie, Dr. George Young and Thos. Kent. They appointed a committee composed of Jos. Younge, Geo. Lindsay, A. McKinnon, Mr. Dickson, Dr. Young, W. M. Cushing, Mr. Cameron, Thos. Frame, C. J. Thomson and Thos. Kent to procure membership. Then the next meeting was held at the Virden House, June 18th, to elect officers and make general arrangements. Membership fee was fixed at \$2.00.

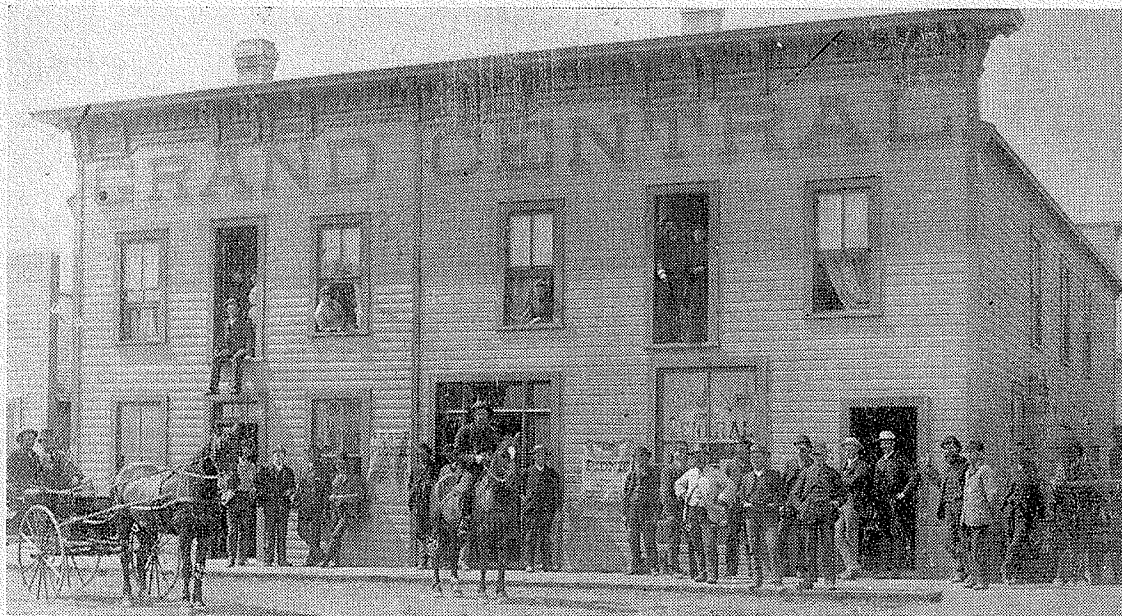
After the 12th Manitoba Dragoons was inaugurated in 1893, it must have very soon taken over this group for a special issue of the Virden Advance of June 29th, 1898, describes the fourth annual meeting of "A" Squadron Rifle Association. It speaks of the new range as being excellent. Five matches were played: Nursery, with 8 prizes; Association, with 13; Merchants, with 13; Team Match, with 3; and Ladies' Match, with 9 and then there were 7 prizes for the Grand Aggregate; \$225.00 in all.

These annual meets continued to be popular, participants coming from Moosomin, Elkhorn, Cannington, Oak Lake, Hartey, Souris, Kenton, Minnedosa and Brandon. Tom Love of Hartney was one of the best shots and one of the most regular attendants.

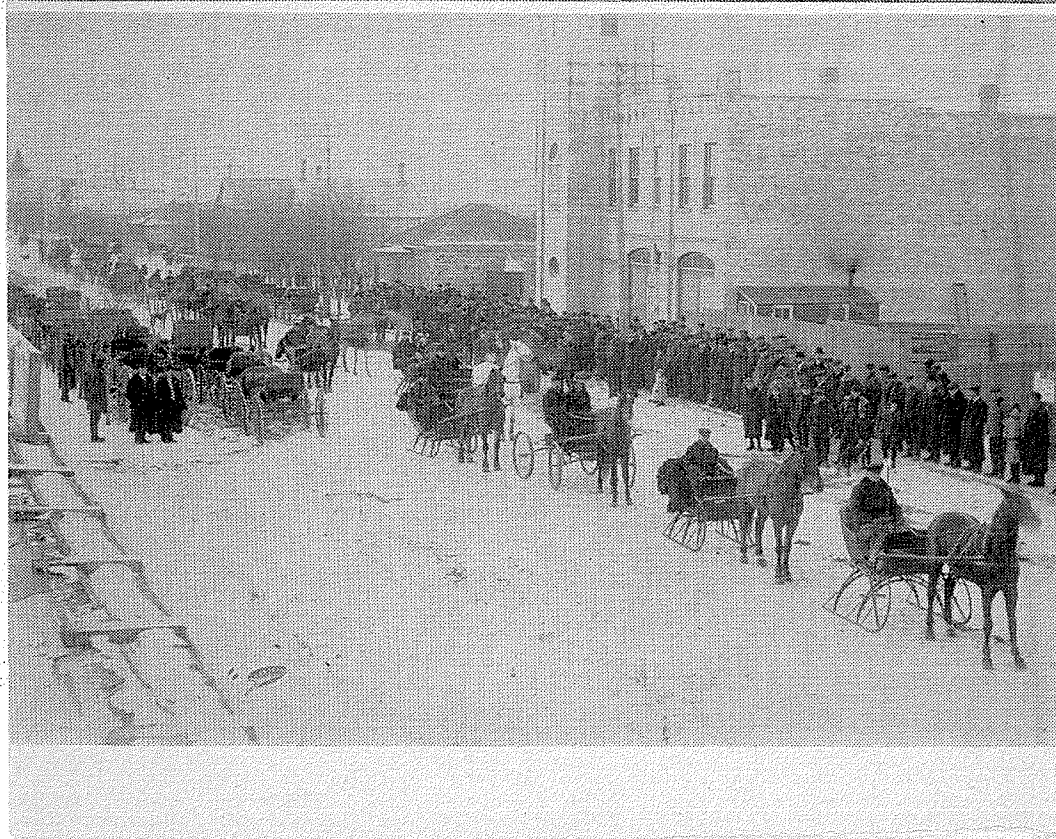
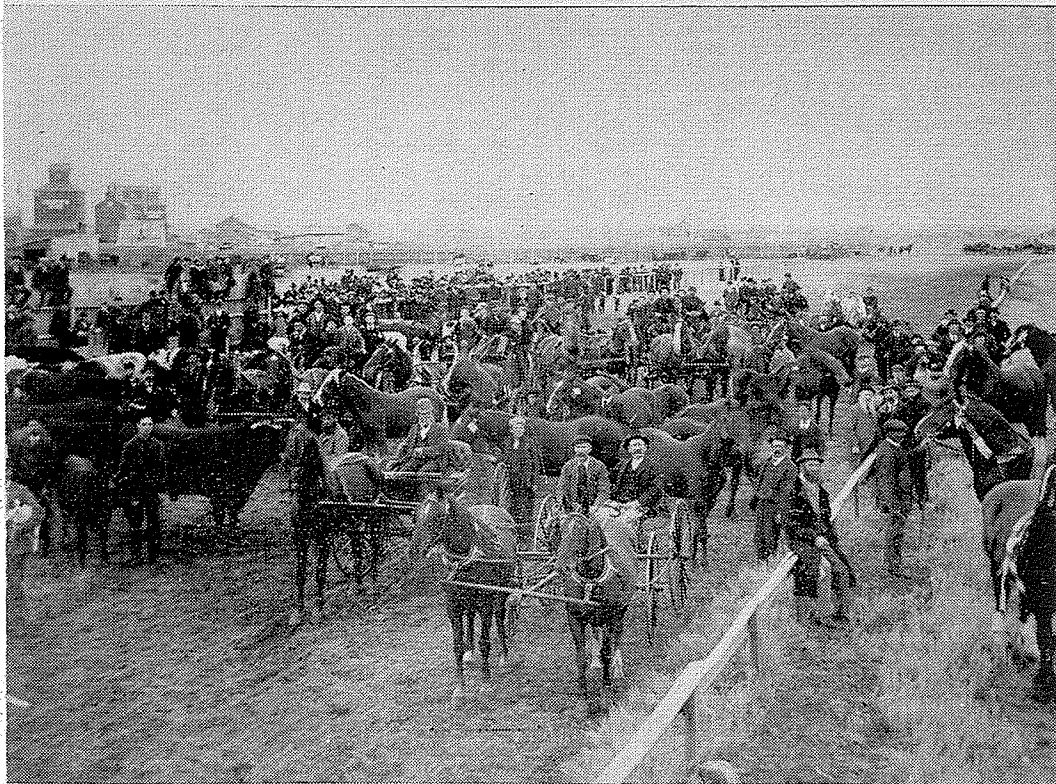
These meetings are still well attended. One held May 5th of this year welcomed representatives from Reston, Souris, Minnedosa, Neepawa, Birtle and Virden. Local winners were Cpl. W. J. Brown, and Sgt. L. A. Chapple. Lieut. W. A. Kool was in charge of classification.

The meeting was an all-day affair. After a picnic lunch, a short service was conducted in the field by the Padre, Capt. R. J. Stade, musical accompaniment being furnished by a brass trio from the Dragoons' band.

Cpl. W. J. Brown, recently promoted to the rank of sergeant, represents Canada on the Bisley team this year (1957).



VIRDEN'S GRAND CENTRAL HOTEL, about 1889. The hotel was the finest in town and was owned and operated by Sam Swanson. It was located on Sixth Avenue across from the C.P.R. station.



LACROSSE

When Lacrosse was a popular game throughout southern Manitoba, a club was formed at Virden in 1889. The life of this particular venture appears to have been brief for the game did not hold its interest with the public at large and was superseded by baseball which at that time was coming into favor.

BASEBALL

The first mention of baseball appeared in a July, 1886, issue of the Advance when it stated that the County of Dennis Baseball League had been formed. This would indicate that local teams within the county would compete. In 1889 and in 1891, items were found relating to the club being organized for the season. In 1898, an item makes reference to grand stand seating accommodation for 1,000 which would encourage racing, ball games, and attractions at the fair.

Apparently baseball went along at about the same level for some years, that is with local players and competition among local teams. Players developed and the team grew stronger. Interested citizens grew more ambitious and began to plan for wider fields of action. With such players as Jimmie Archer, Bert Orr, Jersey Crue, Ed Higginbotham, George Rothnie, Ivan and Gordon Caldwell, the Babbs—Ralph and Earl, Chas. Kerr, Chas. Stewart, Slim Langdon, Pompey Williams, the team acquired a substantial status which was maintained by others coming on—Basil Healy, Bill McDougall, Bill Early, Henry and Jeffrey Palmer, Allan Megaffin, Hugh McDonald, Wes Warren, Dorland Palmer, John Craig, Harry Allen.

One early local umpire could always be recognized even in his bulky protective covering when E. Garrison would call the play with his characteristic "Ba-ahl one." Ed Higginbotham was another who often stood behind the catcher. From the war years on into the 30's were T. A. Carscadden, W. A. Bridgett, Arnold Bain, Ed Hollowell, Bill Herrick, John Craig, Harry Allen, Geo. Gabel, P. H. Hamon, B. J. McCormick, Geo. Rothnie, E. J. Scales, Geo. Moir, Frank Tinney, Ernie Forster, W. W. Joslin, Dr. C. L. Strachan, Dr. O. S. Ross, R. J. Timms. In giving a flash back, Harry says "Up until 1927 we hired a few players to strengthen the team. That year also we decided to run a tournament, with a prize of \$1,000.00. Such clubs as Regina Balmorals (who won the money), Cando, Antler, Bottineau, Sherwood, N.D., and Oak Lake, Moosomin and Virden all entered. The venture was a great success."

"In 1928 we carried on with a balance in the bank and another tournament in July. We had Gilkerson's Giants (a colored team) who won the money, Plentywood, N.D., Minot, N.D., Oak Lake, Moosomin, Sherwood, N.D., and Virden. This tournament, also, was a huge success. We charged 75 cents for adults, children under 14 were admitted free of charge and there was no charge for automobiles. We grossed over \$4,600.00—people were jammed into the old Fair Grounds, sitting all over the field."

"We carried on in 1929 with a pro team but not with such success since Brandon had a fast team and we were not able to win a game from them all year, but a successful tournament was again held and we kept our bank book with black ink."

The team and its supporters were very proud of the American Abel Cup which had cost a great deal of money and hard work to win and retain.

In 1930 the Virden team won the tournament but drought and hard times caught up with them and brought to an end this most spectacular period of the town's baseball history.

Wallace Gibson, working through the Board of Trade, was influential in organizing another amateur team in 1932 in which Charlie Hitchins, Charlie Kerr and Shel MacNicol figured. The highlight of that season was a visit from the Major League All Stars under the management of Earl Mack, eldest son of Connie Mack of Philadelphia. A team to oppose them was chosen from different parts of North Dakota, Saskatchewan, and Western Manitoba, and included Johnny Mack, catcher, Cliff Cory, pitcher and Charlie Kerr.

During the years that followed, baseball has always been a prominent feature of summer sport. The rising generation takes to it with enthusiasm, evidenced by the Bantam team winning the Provincial Championship in 1955.

BOWLING

Both indoor and lawn-bowling have been in favor for years. C. W. Wainwright operated a bowling alley at one time. The alley on 7th Avenue was conducted under several different managements until fire destroyed the building in 1954. A Bowling Green next to the tennis courts in the park was opened some twenty years ago and has had a steady if not large patronage ever since.

GOLF

The first nine-hole course was laid out around the hospital which at that time stood in a large open space. This sufficed for a time until a horse pasture was rented on the premises of the present course. It was necessary to erect low one-strand wire fences for the protection of the sand green as the horses chose them as favorite spots on which to roll.

Then the Virden Golf and Country Club was duly incorporated with shares sold to the members. The quarter section was bought and in turn rented to the Golf Club. Patches of scrub and trees and a meandering creek, crossed twice in play, presented enough natural hazards to make the game interesting.

The Golf Club has steadily improved playing conditions. A small club-house was built conveniently placed at the entrance to the grounds

and overlooking much of the course. This building has been enlarged and the surroundings improved by the planting of trees and shrubs. For years members of the women's section of the club served refreshments but that is now handled by a concession. The interest in play keeps up, local matches are arranged and an open tournament is held in which players from many points in Western Manitoba take part. Plans for 1957 included further enlargement of the Club-house and improvements to the course.

Names of some of the early players may be recalled—Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Beveridge, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McLachlan, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Joslin, Dr. Geo. Clingan, Arthur Brownlie, Dr. and Mrs. I. O. Fryer, G. E. Clough, S. L. McBain, Mr. and Mrs. E. Boiteau, Ed Hollowell, Dr. and Mrs. J. R. Monteith, Mr. and Mrs. Allan Kent, Miss Ada Herkes.

FIGURE SKATING

A club was formed in 1948 for the sole purpose of training children of all ages in figure skating. It was sponsored for two years by the Ski Club and then mothers of the skaters took over. Training required the services of a professional instructress. Funds for this and other expenses are raised by fees and by putting on a carnival each season. The mothers have the pleasant task of making costumes. Of recent years men have been added to the sponsoring committee.

SKI CLUB

After the close of the Second World War, enthusiastic spirits promoted a Ski Club. An excellent site was procured on No. 1 Highway east of town. Coursing down the deep ravine of Gopher Creek, two runs were constructed, one for beginners. Ski tows were installed and a cabin added for dispensing refreshments. No. 1 was always kept open, so it was an easy matter for skiers to come by car from towns along the line and by chartered bus from Brandon. The place presented a busy scene on fine Sunday afternoons. Then No. 1 Highway was changed to the present Trans-Canada route and this at once brought up a serious problem of transportation.

After battling with this problem for a season, it was decided to move the run to a ravine bordering the highway leading to Sproat's bridge and Lenore, a highway which was kept open during the winter. But doing the work all over again was discouraging. Neither site nor conditions were as favorable as the former ones. A season of light snowfall, insufficient for operating, completed the discouragement and what had promised to be an important winter attraction for Virden was abandoned.

AVIATION

In the late 1920's, Dr. H. N. Thompson became the moving spirit in rousing the interest of Virden in the establishment of an airport. A site was chosen south of the town on 15-10-26. The Department of Transport offered a canvas hangar free but as funds were not available for paying of freight and installation in addition to necessary preparation of the grounds, the matter was left in abeyance.

In 1930 A. E. Penny, Jack Stacey and Dave Maxim had the grounds put in order and a big air show was held by visiting planes before a large crowd of spectators. During the hard years of the 30's finances were too difficult for progress to be made and then the war came and the establishment of No. 19 E.F.T.S.

The Virden Flying Club was organized in June, 1954. A report of its development shows that it was fortunate "in that the hangar and several other buildings of the old No. 19 E.F.T.S. were still available, as well as the grass runways."

Roy Newman was the Club's first instructor-manager and the officers were: president, John Higginbotham; vice-president, Dr. H. P. Stockton and secretary, Roy Brown. Business flourished and today about 40 planes a month visit Virden Airport.

The Club has staged three air shows, which with the co-operation of the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre at Rivers and the Winnipeg, Regina and Portage Flying Clubs, were very successful.

In 1956, the Virden Club received its Charter and was able to commence operating independently as a Flying Training School. At present the Club is under the supervision of Instructor-Manager Mack Leckie, and is comprised of 55 flying members, two of whom are women, (Mrs. J. Higginbotham and Mrs. R. Knapp-Fisher) and 20 social members.

The first oil well, of a proposed 16 well project, has been drilled successfully on the section of land on which the Airport is situated.

A weekly Pipeline Patrol for Trans-Prairie Pipeline Co. is carried on as well as recreational flying. Oil exploration executives and those of allied businesses find air travel a great boon.

* * *

Having read this seemingly long but yet inadequate resume of Virden's Sport's History; having studied the present sports set up comprising as it does a qualified instructor, an energetic Sports Booster Club and a rising generation of championship winners and then looking forward to the Recreational Centre already in course of construction; it would seem that the town might readily gain for itself a new title, namely—Virden, the Sports Centre for Western Manitoba.

CHAPTER 21

NEWSPAPERS

Some day you may visit the Provincial Library in the Legislative Building in Winnipeg. Somewhere in the basement depths are the archives in which are filed all the back copies of the Virden newspapers. These are bound in great tomes, the dimensions of a newspaper page with a year's issues in each. An obliging librarian will have one or more volumes brought up to the reading room, where opening it out on a table you can settle down for a perusal of old-time events. You may read the news and the personalized items. You may study the advertisements and the markets. If you go on from year to year you will take notice of changes in the format which will grow from four small pages, two of them printed locally, to a larger size with eight pages and so on with the increase in events and activities to be reported. This weekly recording gives a pretty complete picture of the many-sided development of the town and district.

The Virden Advance made its appearance in June, 1885, with C. J. Atkinson of Portage la Prairie as proprietor and W. H. Hall as editor. In August an editorial appeared regarding the nuisance of pigs and geese being allowed on the streets. Another editorial deplored the desecration of the Sabbath by indulging in sports or by building or carrying on farm work. A September issue mentioned that the first bicycle was seen in Virden; an October issue reported the demonstration of a steam plow at work. Hop-picking was being carried on at Elm Valley and a movement was started for the early closing of stores at 8 p.m., as in Winnipeg, Saturday evenings excepted.

Virden being the centre of a large territory there were contributions of news items from Arrow River, Beulah, Pipestone, Melita, Elkhorn, Miniota, Montgomery, Elm Valley, Oak Lake, Kola, with crop reports from Rosser to Grenfell, Sask. The visit of the Governor-General to Bouverie and Routledge was mentioned and an apology made for the lack of capitals in printing initials and Mr's.

Marriages recorded in 1887 and 1888 included Richard Langtry to Frances A. English, W. M. Pineo to Minnie Sarvis, W. J. Gyles to Lavinia Rathbone, Wm. Whiteford to Mary Adams.

"May 18th, 1887, Miss Jane Bulloch and Mr. Walter Hall, editor of the Virden Advance, were married. During the previous summer Mr.

Hall had visited at the Bulloch home every two weeks and usually walked all the way from Virden, about twenty-seven miles, unless he was lucky enough to meet some one driving in (to Reston). Mr. Hall's name goes down in local history as a most devoted admirer who undertook the long walks cheerfully."

The Hudson's Bay Railway and the Manitoba Northwestern Railway held the spotlight in the news of the time. An April, 1888, issue proudly stated that two trains, each way, express and local, were being run every day on the C.P.R. Immigrants were arriving in numbers. There were letters urging the planting of trees and Reeve Frame asked the public to preserve the bluff in the centre of the town—the forerunner of Victoria Park. Twenty-four hour time was adopted by the C.P.R. in 1886. Sidewalks and crossings were being laid down.

In 1890 an attempt was made to start a sugar-beet industry at Whitewood. Also "la grippe" was prevalent. Wm. Whiteford's straw-burner was given publicity and a note made that J. A. McLachlan had won a purse for green curlers.

A question that concerned farmers and merchants came in for much discussion. Dealers had been refusing to accept the butter shipped from Virden in wooden tubs. Very strict rules were made regarding grading and the nature of containers and A. G. McDougall was appointed as inspector. Markets were faithfully recorded each week at prices that would make the modern buyer gasp until he made an intricate calculation to determine the comparative value of money seventy years ago.

So the Advance went on recording the news of town and community for the information of its readers, and expressing its views on various questions of the day. W. H. Hall became proprietor as well as editor. On May 12, 1892, appeared the Virden Chronicle with its editor, Jas. N. McDonald, its last issue appearing June 14th, 1894.

June 27th, 1895, appeared The Virden Banner, its editor being E. H. Garrison, formerly of the Brandon Sun, but in 1898 a notice appeared of the sale of the plant by Sheriff Clement in Brandon.

On February 27th, 1896, W. H. Hall's name as editor of the Advance had been replaced by that of D. J. Benham, and when the Banner folded, the names of Benham and Garrison appeared together as managers of the Advance.

July 13th, 1905, a new weekly appeared, The Empire, published by J. A. McLachlan and C. S. McClelland. On September 20th, 1907, this paper made the announcement that it had united with the Advance, and that from October 3rd, the paper would be known as the Virden Empire-Advance under the control of Mr. J. A. McLachlan. So for fifty years the Empire-Advance has been intimately connected with all the activities of the town. Mr. McLachlan was interested in trying to learn in what way Mrs. De Witt Wallace, nee Lila Bell Acheson, co-editor of the

Readers' Digest, was connected through her family with Virden. He Readers' Digest was connected through her family with Virden. Mrs. Wallace's grandparents both lived near Virden and it was a great uncle who died and was buried on the farm, the remains later being moved to Virden Cemetery. The story of this transference was quite well known in the country some years ago.

With Mr. McLachlan's passing, two sons, J. R. and D. W., have taken over the paper, the former as editor-manager. With the growth of the town, the paper, too, has extended its scope. Ordinarily it has 12 to 16 pages of local news and advertisements, editorials and illustrations. Its special issues have all this and special articles as well. It has a wide range of news from surrounding districts sent in by appointed reporters and a splendid succession of articles by George E. Clough, Elizabeth Hay Trott, Anne Anderson and Reita Sparling. The long life of this paper and the fact that it has been run for fifty years by two generations of the same family speak well for the stability of the enterprise.

CHAPTER 22

CULTURAL CLUBS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Virden was fortunate in that its pioneer settlers were of an educated class, many of them highly educated and trained in special accomplishments. They were not only quick to organize sports for the enjoyment of participants and on-lookers but they set about forming clubs and promoting entertainments that would maintain and develop their cultural standing.

Wallace formed a Literary Society in July, 1885, of which debates were a feature. Two subjects discussed were "Intemperance causes more misery and loss of life than war", and "Which is more profitable, married or single life?" James Elder and Watson Crosby were leaders in forming and maintaining this club.

The Orpheum Club was formed, its members agreeing to contribute to some program a musical number or a paper on the life of some musician. Mr. Bouverie and Mr. Routledge were both interested in this club. In October, 1885, a Choral Society conducted by Mr. H. Shaw attracted many members. As Mrs. Wilcox stated in her memoirs, "Almost everyone who could sing attended."

In May, 1886, appeared the first mention of the Virdenia Minstrels who continued over quite a period to give their services in entertaining the community and in helping to raise funds for various objectives.

February of the following year chronicled an entertainment put on in the Town Hall sponsored by St. Mary's Anglican Church. The first part of the program featured an orchestra composed of Mrs. (Rev.) Davis, H. H. Goulter, Percy Roberts, songs by Miss Joslin, Mrs. Jas. Wilson, Mrs. Davis, Messrs. Shaw, Jas. Wilson, Irwin and Routledge and recitations by H. Kayll and W. T. B. Kennedy. Then Mr. Kayll, with assistant T. Routledge, conducted "Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks" in which, in addition to names mentioned above, characters were portrayed by Mr. and Mrs. G. N. Miller, F. P. Bouverie and J. H. Agnew. This was a hilarious farce, so wittily and cleverly done that the program

ended in a storm of applause and the entertainment was voted the best that had ever been produced in Virden.

The Winnipeg Sun complimented Virden on its Dramatic Society and Jas. Wilson on his ability as dramatic director. When he left in September for St. Paul, Virden lost a valuable leader in musical and dramatic art.

During the late 80's some interesting items concerning the band were published. In September of 1887, there were thirteen performers and instruments were bought by subscription. December saw the first public appearance of the "Virden Brass Band." In May of the following year they had been provided with new caps and were to have new uniforms. In October they had lamps attached to their caps and made a fine appearance when marching.

The Esmeralda Leap Year Club held a ball in January which was such a success that another was held in March. Then they opened the following season with one in November. The Mysotis Waltz Club was well patronized.

A series of lectures was arranged by a farmers' committee on these subjects: "Prairie Fires", "Statute Labor", "Gopher Extinction" and "Grasses for Pasture and Hay".

A Promenade Concert put on by the Presbyterians at the home of William Stephen (Sexsmith's) in August, 1885, is worth recalling. There was a gathering of 300. Refreshments were served and people moved about enjoying the opportunity of visiting with each other. When darkness fell there was a display of fireworks and a balloon ascension (without passengers) but the balloon, not having been inflated sufficiently to take off properly, ended tragically by coming down in flames which added a spice of excitement to the program. The guests then repaired to a machine shed, which had been fitted up as a concert hall, where a variety program was presented. The Orpheus Club opened with "Hail Smiling Morn", after which came recitations, charades, glees and songs. The sum of \$300.00, a goodly sum in those days, was cleared for the building fund of the church.

A banquet held by St. Andrew's Society November, 1890, is worthy of note. Eighty sat down at a table in the Central Hotel, host S. Swanson, proprietor. The first part of the program, beginning with the entry of the Haggis, borne by Messrs. Bennett and George Hall escorted by Piper Coutts, catered entirely to the physical satisfaction of the guests. The following bill of fare was offered:

Raw oysters, oyster soup, ham, cold tongue, fricassee of chicken, worcester and chili sauce, cabbage salad.

Roasts—Sirloin of beef, turkey, cranberry sauce, roast goose, apple sauce, mashed potatoes, cabbage, beets, celery, haggis.

Dessert—Plum pudding, apple pie, cranberry tart, assorted cake, oatcake, biscuits, jelly cake, assorted jellies, almonds, raisins, filberts, grapes, figs, apples, green and black tea, coffee.

At the end of this part of the program it might be supposed that the guests would be too full for utterance, but no! They then entered upon a long list of toasts and replies, interspersed with songs and recitations, familiar names among the speakers being W. T. B. Kennedy, Mr. Cushing, J. H. Proctor, Robt. Menzies, George Forke, D. McLean, M.P.P., H. C. Simpson, H. H. Goulter, J. H. Agnew, Wm. Stephen, W. H. Hall, Mayor Adamson. Singers included Willie Clarke, C. J. Thomson, H. C. Simpson, Wm. Lothian, J. H. Proctor.

The versatility of these men was as remarkable as was their endurance. It was happily recorded that the meeting closed before 3 a.m.

Local entertainments were frequent and the Town Hall apparently justified its erection. For a Methodist Sunday School program in 1890, it was crowded to the doors, the sum of \$70.00 being cleared for the school fund. Elocutionists and musicians frequently gave recitals sponsored by some local organization. Travelling dramatic companies appeared from time to time of which the Harold Nelson Co., with good plays, returned season after season as did the Verna Felton Co. later. Each of these was in its way among the best of the touring companies.

A Shakespeare Club flourished during the late nineties. Enthusiastic members were Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Lang, H. H. Goulter, Jas. Singer, Dr. Clingan, Mrs. W. J. Wilcox, Mrs. J. F. Frame, A. D. Jolliffe, P. D. Harris, C. K. Newcombe, Miss Anna Jeffrey, Miss Ida Thompson. Upon completing the reading of a play, an evening would be devoted to some other author—a Kipling evening for instance when Mr. Lang read "The Taking of Lung Tung Pen" and one of the lady members, more soulfully inclined, read "L'Envoi". Kipling was widely read by the men at that time.

On another occasion Mr. Singer read a paper on Buddhism. The effect must have been soothing for Dr. Clingan fell fast asleep but with that facility for quick awakening which doctors acquire, as soon as applause greeted the effort at its conclusion, Dr. Clingan was at once on his feet moving a vote of thanks to the speaker.

There was a camaraderie and whole-heartedness about the enjoyment of sports and entertainment in the early days that seemed to grow less as life became more regimented.

Beginning in 1920, Mrs. Clingan conducted a Liberal Women's Study Club, which, active for its party during campaigns, chose for its monthly meetings a general study of Canada. Members supplied many of the programs with three, five, ten or fifteen-minute talks on assigned topics. There were many guest speakers—J. H. Chalmers, Dr. Clingan, W. R. Beveridge, who gave an informative talk on Nova Scotia; Mrs.

Gee-Curtis spoke on "Legislation Affecting Women"; Col. C. E. Ivens, a staunch Conservative, who said "It seems strange for me to be addressing a Liberal Club," but forgot that phase of the gathering when launched on his favorite subject "Good Roads Policy of Wallace Municipality". Other speakers were Mrs. R. F. McWilliams; Mr. Brydon-Jack, C.E. in Virden for a time with the C.P.R., who spoke on the St. Lawrence Sea-way; J. E. Matthews, M.P., Brandon; Hon. J. T. Thorson; D. A. McNiven, M.P., Regina, whose subject was the Hudson's Bay Railway; Hon. D. G. McKenzie, speaking on Rural Electrification and confirming a prophecy made twenty years before when the whole project seemed like a pipe-dream. When Adult Education came in for much general discussion J. W. Dickey, speaking to the club on that subject, said "The Virden Liberal Women's Study Club has earned for itself an enviable reputation as a medium for Adult Education." This group carried on for a dozen years, some of the long-term members being Miss M. McNiven, its secretary, Mrs. L. Cranston, Mrs. A. Whiteford, Mrs. F. Sanford, Mrs. S. S. Carscadden, Mrs. R. Sumner, Mrs. J. H. Chalmers, Mrs. T. A. Megaffin.

About the same time a group of men met for informal discussion of current affairs, some of those interested being S. L. McBain, A. E. Adams, H. H. Goulter, T. H. Clements.

Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Adams have for years made a study of bird life from observation and on their motor trips go equipped with binoculars and other equipment. This can become a fascinating occupation but requires patience.

Virden always seemed to have a good deal of dramatic talent with good leadership. About 1910 the Virden Dramatic Society was formed under the management of J. A. McLachlan, Mrs. G. Clingan, president, and Will Clarke, Mrs. J. A. McLachlan, Miss Annie Ford as permanent members with other taking part in the plays which were regularly staged each season. Dave Brice of the Alexandra Hotel acted the title role in "The Private Secretary" in a truly professional manner. It was he who first brought John Davis to a rehearsal and from that time Mr. Davis' services were always in demand as director and stage manager for the plays, operas and the more ambitious variety entertainments.

The Operatic Society was formed about the same time giving their early performances in the old Town Hall where some finesse was required to assemble cast and chorus on the tiny stage for the finale. Light opera was chosen for productions such as "The Mikado", "Pirates of Penzance", "The Country Girl", "Chimes of Normandy" and talent was drawn from local groups. John Yewdall was conductor, John Davis actor and stage manager. Others taking prominent parts were Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Morrison, W. W. Joslin, T. Grieve, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McLachlan, Mrs. T. E. Armstrong, Miss Amy Craig, Miss Jean More, Mrs. J. R. Monteith, Mrs. J. Conroy, Miss Eleanor Palmer, J. V. Harrison, Miss Vi Hood, of Oak Lake sang the role of Yum-Yum in the Mikado.

The building of the Auditorium was a great boon to both the Dramatic and Operatic Societies. The Dramatic Society staged as the opening performance February 29th, 1912, "The Misogynist", the cast consisting of Mr. Will Clarke, Mr. Jack McLachlan, Mr. Ellis Handy, Mr. J. C. Bellinger, Mr. D. M. Handy, Mr. A. Burman, Mr. John Davis, Mr. Frank Weekes, Mr. Arthur Forbes, Miss Annie Ford, Mrs. Jack McLachlan, Mrs. George Clingan.

In addition to well prepared local entertainments, excellent shows were put on by visiting companies. Silent pictures were first shown on the screen in the Town Hall when audiences laughed with Bunny and Finch, were thrilled by Mary Pickford and gasped through the adventures of Pearl White in the serials. The Auditorium Theatre Co. leased the new theatre. Pictures were shown but the company also engaged good legitimate entertainment whenever available. Its most ambitious venture in this line was the engagement of the all-English H. V. Esmond Co. which had been playing in London and then toured Canada after the first war. Mr. Esmond was a playwright and the play, "The Law Divine" was one of his own productions. His wife, Eva Moore, was his leading lady. Train service was such that the company remained in Virden twenty-four hours and during that time they were entertained at the homes of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. McLachlan and Dr. and Mrs. Clingan where some of the Virden residents, especially interested in drama, had the pleasure of meeting a very charming group of English theatrical players.

When the Auditorium Theatre Company's lease expired, the management of the theatre was taken over by T. Laidman of Birtle who was succeeded by his nephew, Tom Morris. Mr. Morris later opened a Drive-In at the junction of King Street and the Trans-Canada Highway. Five years ago the Derrick Theatre on Nelson Street was built by Rene Gabrielle and conducted by him until recently. With nightly shows and Saturday matinees these three movie theatres provide the community with plenty of entertainment.

In early days dance orchestras were frequently brought from Brandon for the more formal affairs. The Oak Lake, Wright and Naylen orchestras were popular. Others in demand at various periods were Moffatt, Carruthers and Cutfield, Reynolds', Allan Frame's, Ted Jenner's, Stendall's, Virden Nite-Hawks, Cliff's.

Among those who have done much through the years to develop musical and artistic talent, choir leaders can again be mentioned. Teachers of piano have been Misses May McDougall, Mollie and Hilda Clough, Ethel Madge, Amy Hayward, Dell Morton, Rhea Forder, Mr. B. M. Robertson, Professor Fenwick. Mrs. Cameron Lidington was a violin instructor, Mrs. Darling gave vocal lessons as did Mrs. Wm. Kennedy who also taught piano and painting. Miss Hilda Clough also gave painting lessons. James Bremner was a choir leader and vocal teacher.

It can be claimed for Mrs. Kennedy that she was Virden's most

colorful personality. Capt. Wm. Kennedy, son of an early Hudson's Bay official, had been educated in England and later visited there to confer with Lady Franklin concerning an expedition she was outfitting to search for her husband, Sir John Franklin, who had been lost in Polar exploration. Capt. Kennedy had met a talented and accomplished English girl whom he married and brought to Canada in the very early days. Travelling from the international border in a Red River cart, they settled at St. Andrew's north of Winnipeg. Here a son, William (W. T. B.) and a daughter, Mary, were born. Capt. Kennedy's health was broken and times were hard so Mrs. Kennedy set up a hat shop which was patronized by the women of the Red River Settlement for miles about. After his father's death, William Jr. (W. T. B.), a law graduate, accompanied by his mother and sister, came to Virden to set up a practice. Family finances still being precarious, Mrs. Kennedy gave painting and piano lessons and lessons in voice culture. Mary, with something of her mother's talent, also gave painting lessons. She had also prepared herself for a business position and was employed in J. H. Agnew's law office until the time of his death. Mary never married. William married but had no children, so the deaths of mother, son and daughter brought to an end a unique and talented family.

The Daughters of the Kirk have been doing an excellent work in sponsoring a series of recitals by special artists. One of these, Jack Cook, a nationally known radio singer, is a Virden boy whose parents, Mrs. and Mrs. Chas. Cook, reside in the town.

The Virden Music and Arts Festival is the most extensive medium in the community today for the encouragement and development of cultural talent. It was organized in November, 1936, by Mr. John Yewdall, Miss M. McNiven being appointed secretary. The first festival was held in May, 1937, a two-day affair in St. Paul's Church. Five successive Festivals were held but during the war years the organization lapsed. Mr. C. Moore, Mr. J. R. McLachlan and Mrs. W. T. Manser set it operating again in 1948 since when it has gone steadily along. In 1950 it became a three-day proceeding. Spoken poetry, choral reading and folk dancing were added to the classes. The Auditorium Theatre was secured for music, St. Paul's was retained for spoken poetry and choral reading, while folk-dancing was held in the Legion Hall or the Parish Hall. This year the auditorium of the new Goulter School has been available.

The fifteenth annual Festival held in May, 1957, had 627 entries and 2,400 competitors taking part. A fine new piano, recently purchased by the Association, filled a needed service.

Entries came from an area with a radius of 50 miles from Virden as its centre. Twenty-six trophies are presented to winners in the different classes and sections.

In the music section there are seventeen awards: Silver Cups—The Canadian Bank of Commerce, J. R. McLachlan, C. Moore, Mr. and Mrs.

A. Hill Memorial; Trophies—Winnifred Tufts Memorial, Elkhorn Chamber of Commerce; Shields—Pipestone Chamber of Commerce, R. J. Timms Memorial, Virden Empire-Advance, Virden Chamber of Commerce, R. H. Mooney Memorial, W. R. Beveridge Memorial, Virden School Board, Virden Branch Canadian Legion, B.E.S.L., H. H. Goulter Memorial, I.O.D.E., J. A. McLachlan Memorial.

In the Folk Dancing Section there are four: Trophy—Ladies' Auxiliary, B.E.S.L; Shields—Mr. and Mrs. J. W. M. Thompson, Taylor Lumber Co. Ltd., Town of Virden.

The Spoken Poetry Section has five: Silver Cup—St. Paul's A.O.T.S.; Trophies—Rural Municipality of Wallace, Elkhorn Chamber of Commerce; Shields—Virden School Board, Mr. and Mrs. Fred McDougall.

Another award has been added this year in the form of a shield, the donor being the Chamber of Commerce, Reston.

At the annual meeting of the Virden Festival Association, just held, a decision to inaugurate a Drama and Art Festival to be held in March, 1958, was reached.

CHAPTER 23

OIL

Manitoba's oil industry has not as yet settled into a permanent pattern. There are changes from month to month. Its development, blazoned in the press at home and abroad, is not ready to be confined between the covers of a book of history. The most that can be done is to give an introduction.

By 1948, a term hitherto unfamiliar to dwellers in a farming community had found a place in the ordinary conversation of the day—the term “geophysical”. Geophysical companies were exploring the territory all about Virden, their objectives and findings very hush-hush. Land owners, in a rather bewildered manner were leasing out oil rights for ten cents, twenty-five cents, fifty cents an acre. Then drilling began and when the first well came in in the Daly district in January, 1951, the news was received with interest and enthusiasm but no hysteria. Even with the discovery of more and more successful producers, the same level-headed attitude was maintained. The arrival of Manitoba's first gusher at Roselea Farm caused a stir of excitement, especially among those who were in close proximity when the well blew in and they were liberally sprinkled with oil.

The following oil companies have been active in the Virden fields:

The California Standard Co.—Mr. Jack Trowell has been head of their operations here since the first well was drilled by California Standard on the Gardiner farm west on Maryfield road. The Manitoba Government erected a cairn on the site. Mr. Trowell has his home in Virden and his young son's name often appears in sports items.

Canadian Superior Oil Co.—Mr. Carl Copeland came to Virden with Superior's first operation in the Daly Field. He was largely responsible for the development of the production of the tight formation in this field.

Imperial Oil Co. Ltd.—Also drilled on Skinner farm and on McLean farm east of Virden.

British American Oil Co.—Mr. Ralph Atkinson came with B.A.'s first operations on the Grose farm. Mr. Atkinson is in partnership now with Mr. Steve Hegion as consultant engineers. Both men are residents of Virden with their own homes. Mr. Atkinson is a councillor of the Town of Virden. Mr. Hegion has been very active in community work and is President of the Virden Golf Club. Mr. Ted Tatham also came to Virden with B.A. Oil.

Canadian Pipe Line Co. Ltd.—This company was also largely responsible for the development of the Daly Field. Mr. Chas. Schock took up residence here and through his efforts the pipe line gathering system to Inter-Provincial developed.

Trans-Prairie Pipeline Co.—This company took over the gathering system for the Daly field and extended it to the Virden and north fields. Through Northern Development this company actually had its birth here in Virden. Mr. R. N. Knapp-Fisher has been its resident engineer and manager since its formation. Mr. Knapp-Fisher has his home in Virden and is very active in the community. Mr. Knapp-Fisher actually designed the present Pipeline.

Dome Exploration Co.—This company did much in the way of wildcatting and extended the oil fields considerably around Virden. Mr. Harry Howard, now in Estevan, was resident in Virden for a number of years.

Souris Valley Oil Co.—Has offices and warehouse in Virden. The company did considerable drilling in the surrounding oilfields. Mr. Howard Wardle is their resident manager, Mr. Walter B. Brown was their resident engineer for a few years and built his home in Virden. He has since left the company and lives in Calgary.

Shell Oil Company—More recent. Drilled some wells.

Sun Oil Company—Recent. Office and staff in Virden.

McCarty & Coleman—Has quite a development in the area. Office and warehouse. Resident engineer is Mr. Pete McNary.

Canadian Devonian, Canadian Prospects—Mr. Skye Vaughn watches operations, lives in Brandon.

Royalite McIvor—Have wells on the old McIvor farm. Mr. George McIvor lives on the farm and looks after the oil operations.

J. P. Owen, Sooner Petroleums, Banff Oil, Cleary Oils Ltd.—A few wells in area.

Ponder Oil Ltd. and Amurex—Drilled the town site. Ponder was amalgamated with Amurex Oil Co., now with 16 wells in town together with Cal. Standard and B.A. Mr. B. Bowering resides in Virden.

Northern Development, Thunderbird—Have done some drilling in early stages.

George McIvor holds a special interest for residents of this area who can remember when his grandparents, with their two sons and four daughters, lived at Roselea farm, the children coming in each day to attend school. How amazed they would have been if they could have looked out some morning to see the strange rocking horses that now inhabit the fields! Both George and his wife, Fran, have been interested in community affairs, the latter having been responsible for the organizing and much of the success of the Oil Wives Club.

The Town of Virden has sixteen producing wells. The March report showed that during that month three of these had produced the maximum allowable.

Many throughout the area have benefitted financially from oil, both from their oil rights and from general business as well. Another pleasant feature has developed, namely the friendliness of the new arrivals and their interest in and willingness to help the community affairs. Churches, sports and town undertakings have all benefited from their helpfulness.

After a resume of seventy-five years of past endeavor it can be said that the oil industry points a finger to the future of Virden, a future with broader vistas, a future with opportunities for greater progress and success than were offered in the past.

FINALE

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

It is not until the full fabric of history is spread out for inspection that it can be realized how innumerable are the threads that go to its weaving, how many the men and women who contribute their quota to the work.

For Virden there was the time of struggle on the open prairie, followed by the years of quiet progress as the Little Tree Town of the West. Then suddenly it became the sparkling, bustling Oil Capital of Manitoba.

The future of Virden is as bright as a red prairie dawn combining as it undoubtedly will the yellow of the wheat fields with the black of the oil—both gifts of the good earth.

A P P E N D I X

AN INTRODUCTION

INTERWOVEN with the fabric of *The Virden Story* are those of many smaller communities. People in many of these look to Virden as their home town or as their largest centre.

Here the stories of some of these communities are told. That every district in the Virden area is not represented is unfortunate. But in the case of some of the smaller communities, it was, apparently, impossible to find some person or group willing to undertake the project of writing the community's story.

At the first of the Appendix are three stories by pioneers . . . stories of personal experiences in the early days.

These are followed by the histories of twenty-three communities in the Virden area. Written in some cases by individuals, in others by groups, each represents a great deal of research and study. The historians are to be commended and congratulated.

PERSONAL PIONEERING EXPERIENCES

A Minister's Experiences in Virden Community in '82

From the Diary of Rev. Finlay C. J. McLeod

(The following passage was copied from the original manuscript written by Rev. Finlay C. J. McLeod, a Presbyterian minister from Milan, Quebec, who conducted the first church services held in Virden, in 1882. Mr. McLeod later filed homestead claim on the Welch farm, 20-10-25. It was submitted by Mrs. I. B. Welch).

Came up on horseback from the end of the track at Flat Creek (later known as Oak Lake) and visited the people and held services at the homes of Mr. Austin and Mr. Cobb, at about the beginning of March, 1882.

Came again about the end of April of the same year and held a service at the track-laying gang's boarding cars, south of Mr. Austin's house. Another service was held next day on the prairie at Mr. Cobb's tents near Gopher Creek. A large number of Ontario people were there, who were looking for land and stopped for dinner there. Among them were Messrs. Joslin, Montgomery, and Hoskins, and others who settled north of Virden.

I had walked down from the Boarding cars to visit the Cobb family, and found a large number of people there resting on the prairie. Mr. Joslin had a fiddle with him and he was entertaining them by fiddling for them while waiting. So he was the first musician in the settlement.

None of them knew who I was, and I knew none of them, but when there was a lull in the music, I surprised them by proposing to conduct a religious service with them, as this was the way I followed wherever I met people with time to spare. Mr. Joslin very cordially agreed, and conducted the singing.

That was the first general public service held in the settlement, as the former ones were held in private homes, when only two families and five men were in the settlement.

Mr. Cobb had the contract of building the dump of the C.P.R. where it crosses the Gopher Creek. He had a cottage-shaped canvas tent of thirty feet square, in which he boarded the men that worked for him. His wife and family with him attended the workmen. He then made it comfortable for his family to stay in it during the winter by making a wall of logs and putting the tent over it, and putting a floor in it. Also some rooms in it were made with canvas partitions. He made a stable that was partly dug into the banks of the creek.

Another man was living in a shanty nearby, homesteading the Manchester townsite for a speculating company. My horse was put in Cobb's stable, and after supper I went to Mr. Austin's house and stopped there over night. We held service at Mr. Austin's house next morning, and as arranged, Mr. Cobb sent his boy Willie with my horse to Mr. Austin's in the morning. After the horse came I went on to visit Mr. Lang and his son, who lived north of Austins in a canvas tent, also Messrs. Pollock and Kerr, who lived where they do now. I found that they were not at their place but saw sleigh tracks going towards the river, and expecting they had gone that way for wood, which they had cut in the ravine north of Mr. Sproat's gate. After conversing with them I decided to go further on and see more of the country and get a view of the River Valley. We went to the shaley point on top of the River Valley hill west from the bridge and got a good view of the Assiniboine Valley towards Routledge and north. We then turned back intending to get to Flat Creek that night, but by the time we got through the snow to Mr. Cobb's, it was so late that Mr. Cobb wouldn't let us go further lest we should get lost in the dark and he would be blamed for letting us away at that time. So I remained and had time for another worship service there. Next morning I got to Flat Creek in time to catch a train going east to Winnipeg and on the way I preached and visited in the Grand Valley and in the big bush south of Sewell and Carberry.

It was on that Sabbath also that Gopher Creek rose and came down with such a flood that Mr. Cobb's family had to escape with their lives out of their house before it sailed away down the stream with a good part of its contents. The flooring and the logs held it up till it landed on the bank further down. These floods in creeks and sloughs stopped travel on the prairie trails for some time. So that after the trains got running again, the great rush of people that got through to the end of the trail had to camp there, besides other travellers. Some came to meet the trains from as far as Edmonton with caravans and single carts. They were meeting people from the East, who were coming in by teams as well as trains. It was said that there were also over twenty surveying parties camped there with teams, waiting for the flood to subside to get ready to start for their places of labor. Most people had tents of their own, but besides that, many started boarding places, and put great city and state names over large canvas hotels. So there must have been between one and two thousand people there at one time. There were some people who had ranched and wintered with stock in the Sandhills and next week after coming up, I started out to visit them. Next day I took a course north from there to the banks of the Assini-

boine. I followed it and walked on towards Gopher Creek Settlement. I had difficulty in crossing the big ravine. There were 100 men and some families in this ravine getting wood.

I expected to turn west again when the spring opened out and construction on the prairie began, because the timber camps east would then close down and the construction work was about finished, except gravelling the trail. The great body of the workmen was to be west next summer. Therefore I expected to have my headquarters West also in the prairie country where the company had calculated to lay 500 miles of track that summer, and did lay over 400 miles from Flat Creek to near Maple Creek, west of Swift Current. Accordingly, I turned west again to Flat Creek and Gopher Creek in the latter part of April in 1882, after I had visited and preached at the timber camps and special points east, and held Gaelic service in Winnipeg. By that time people began to move for the west by hundreds, or thousands, even, both for settlement and to work on the C.P.R. as fast as trains could bring them. Construction outfits and provisions were rushed on and construction work began to move and track-laying began immediately, as the dump was done to west of Gopher Creek, which was now known as Virden. Ground had been broken much further west the summer before.

Meantime I started again on a trip west from Winnipeg. The contractors, Langden and Shepperd were giving me a pass as far as the track was laid. I stopped on the way at Sewell to visit families there, and people working in the bush south of there. By this time the spring floods had started and the railroad dump was broken through and washed away between Douglas and Grand Valley, and the Assiniboine crossing was in danger. Trains were stopped and traffic demoralized. So I started from Sewell on foot and visited with the families settled along the track. I stopped overnight with the Douglas family of Douglas, and conducted service for them there. Next day I walked and after some difficulty in crossing the flood that broke the railroad dump through, I got to the Grand Valley. I conducted the services there the next Sabbath. Met Mr. Muldrew for the first time, working with the gang that was fixing the break in the railroad. There was no settled preacher then along the C.P.R. west of Portage, but a man who came from Scotland the previous year and stopped at Brandon started services there. The following week I got to Flat Creek and arranged for services there, in the station that was fitted up with board seats. On Saturday I visited the half-breeds and Frenchmen along the Assiniboine, and stopped over night with Mr. Gamash. I walked in to the station next morning in time for services. By this time the Assiniboine flood had risen so that Mr. Gamash, who lived in the valley, gave me a boat ride over his farm, the greater part of which was under many feet of water.

On returning from the East, Virden had been started west of the brick-yard. I held services in a Boarding Tent there. As the cook and proprietor were well inclined to religious services, I started a Bible Class for the young men stopping about there. After that party moved

further west, the class was kept on by a young man from Ontario who was up plowing the section that Mr. Thomson bought next year and still lives on. The young man went to Ontario in the fall and died that winter. Another young man who was in Virden that winter carried on 'till he went west to Regina the latter part of the winter. Since Virden proper was started along in the summer of 1882, and after Mr. Meek started his store there, the Class was held in his store in the winter. Next Spring it was organized as a regular Sabbath School as more people and children had come. Mr. McLaren was appointed Superintendent, and continued in that office 'till he left Virden.

When the people began to settle at Oak Lake and Virden in 1882, Mr. Hardy, a student minister, was sent out to supply them during the summer. He stayed at Oak Lake, and in the course of time, as the Virden settlement increased, he began to come from Oak Lake and supplied the two places 'till he went to College. There was no regular supply of preaching after he left 'till the next spring. I, labouring as Missionary for the C.P.R. workers, under the Presbytery of Manitoba, had made my headquarters near Virden, while going back and forth along the railroad holding services among the railroad men and new settlements where they had no settled missionaries or other services. When I happened to be in the vicinity of Virden and Elkhorn, I held occasional services at the boarding houses where most of the people stopped that winter. Mr. Holgraph, who put up the Virden House, put benches around the sides of his general sitting room to hold services, at one dollar a service. We held service there on Sabbath, which was also the last day of the year, and after it, a midnight service was held to see the Old Year out and the New Year in. After that Mr. Holgraph gave an oyster breakfast (as it was after midnight) to all that remained at Virden House.

In the fall of 1882 the people in town and the country around joined up to build a church and subscribed several hundred dollars. Carpenters offered their services to build it that winter, but Mr. Robertson, who became superintendent then, wanted to build on the manse and church plan, and they disagreed. They did not agree the same after this and some of the leaders dropped out. In 1883 new people and new members came from the east and Scotland, and Mr. Robertson sent Mr. Dow, student Minister; so it was like starting anew. Some new managers were put in and Mr. Dow went on with the Manse and Church building. It was chiefly or directly built out of the Manse and Church fund.

After Mr. Dow, Mr. Sutherland came with his family and laboured diligently for some years between Virden and Breadalbane. The first session was formed in his time. One other missionary came for a while after him, whose name I forget. Then a move was made to call a Minister and Mr. Currie became the first pastor between Virden and Breadalbane. The history since then will be well remembered.

As I Saw Virden in the Early 1890's

By Mrs. Lila J. Tufts Burge

Why do you teach for \$15.00 a month in Ontario schools, when out west in Manitoba you can get as high as \$45 a month? This was the question asked by my cousin, Rev. A. J. Tufts of Virden—an unheard of place in my home town of Kirkton, Ontario. Accordingly, a few days later, New Year's Day, 1890, I was on the train speeding towards Virden. Normal! Adventure!

I arrived at 9.30 p.m. at the station of quite a different Virden from the thriving oil town of today. Even in 1890 though there were several stores, three school rooms, three churches, two hotels—the Central and Temperance, a book store, drug store, jewellery store, post office and, as important as the rest, a large livery barn. The only lights were coal oil lamps, and the big event of the day was the coming of the train—still a thing of wonder to the prairie people. Ten years before there were only ox carts and mule teams for freighting, and fine teams for driving.

Normal was held in a room over the store owned and operated by Mr. Benny Meek, a staunch Presbyterian. There were about eighteen of us attending Normal, mostly girls, one of whom is still in our midst, namely, Mrs. Peter McDonald. We were taught by School Inspector Lang, who had three sessions in all in that room. Inspector Lang will be remembered by many Manitobans for his text books which were used for many years in our schools.

As in all communities then and now the churches had a great influence on the town. In the Presbyterian church, as I remember it, Mr. Strang was the well-loved minister for many years. Koester Brothers, who operated the flour mill; James Bremner, choir leader; C. J. Thompson, Mr. Meek, and many others made the church a friendly meeting place for all; friends and strangers, old and young alike.

The Anglican church, with Mr. Robertson as rector, was the central meeting place for our many English settlers, and the Methodist church was supported by many fine settlers, such as Mr. Wilcox, Mr. Higginbotham, Mrs. Woolhouse, the Simpson brothers, Clarkes, Matt Irvine, etc. All services in all churches were well-attended. They were the centre of life in Virden in those early days.

The early settlers had taken up most of the land close in by the time I came in 1890. In many cases descendants of those settlers are still here, reaping benefits of the black harvest of oil instead of the golden grain of our day. At this time Lord Strathcona brought in three fine old Scotch families; the Fred and George Sanfords and the Stevens. Mr. George Burge had the contract of building for these

settlers. He also built many of the other homes in Virden and in the district south of Virden, and later on he and Mrs. Burge became my ever kind in-laws.

At the conclusion of our ten-week Normal term, I was interviewed by Mr. Dave Muldrew regarding the teaching of Hillside school, six miles south of town. I became the third teacher to teach the school where generation after generation have since been educated. One year later I married W. H. Burge, a pioneer farmer of the district. Here we lived for many years, bringing up our seven children and watching the growth of our town and community in peace and war.

Virden has changed in appearance since those long ago days, but our people here are the same fine stock as those early pioneers who left us the heritage of this fine community. As I look around and see the most unbelievable changes I can only be thankful to have lived to see it all. Virden, we old-timers salute you—happy 75th anniversary, and may God bless you all!

Reminiscences of a Montgomery District Pioneer

By Mrs. E. M. Stephenson (the former Eulalia Carefoot)

My father, the late George Carefoot came to Virden the fall of 1882 after selling his farm at Mono Mills, Albion County, Ontario. His first farm in Montgomery School District was acquired from a young man who had squatter rights on N½ section 28-11-26. He had a log house partly built, a yoke of oxen, and a wagon but was glad to release his claim and go back east.

Father spent the first winter at Fort Qu'Appelle helping my uncle, W. S. Hockley, who was instructor and interpreter on two Indian reserves. He returned in the spring to continue work on his farm. He had the house completed by the time mother, Grandma Hockley, her son, Thos. Hockley, my sister, nine weeks old, and myself, two years and three months old, arrived.

Our first trip from Virden to home was quite exciting as there were no roads and plenty of water in the ravines. The oxen would swim whenever the water became too deep and the women had to gather up their skirts to keep dry whenever the water came into the wagon.

We called on our way home at the homes of two neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. George English and their family of ten children. We were given a royal welcome there and later when we called at Montgomery's home.

The first Sunday we went to church and regularly each Sunday at the home of Mrs. Gardiner. Mr. Beynon was the student minister, his subject—"Build on the rock of salvation", his text—St. Mat., chapter 7, verses 24 and 25.

Our house, although log, was very comfortable and quite large for those days. It had a living room and kitchen combined and a double bedroom downstairs with two bedrooms upstairs. Father always provided plenty of firewood hauled from the Assiniboine Valley.

Our first cow was purchased from Mr. Robert Mooney Sr. but he had to take her back as she became frantic at the sight of a woman.

The first seeding was done by hand. The seeder was fastened to father's breast by straps crossed over his shoulder so he could sow with both hands. The seed was harrowed later and produced good crops. Mr. Andrew Pollock bought the first binder anywhere near us and father paid him to cut our first crop.

I went for a short time to Joslin School, then to Montgomery. Miss Nellie Elliott was the first teacher at Montgomery but I did not start until Miss Anne Lang was teacher. Then followed Miss Lizzie Schultz (later Mrs. Jas. Montgomery), Mr. Peters, Miss Finn and Mr. Ben Green (later Dr. Green).

Our first neighbors were: Mr. and Mrs. Geo. English, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. Gardiner and sons, John and Charles, Mr. A. Pollock, Mr. John Kerr, Sam Burkholder, Alf Dale, Uncle William Carefoot, Grandpa and Mrs. Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Bennett, Messrs. Tom, John and H. Cusack, Mr. and Mrs. Dave McRitchie, Mr. Hoskins and son, Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Blakeman Sr., Mr. Robert Mooney Sr. and family, Mr. Jas. Stinson, Mr. Joslin Sr., son, William, and daughter, Tena.

Mrs. Robt. Bennett was mother's first caller. I remember the first picnic. Mrs. McRitchie had a good sample of goldeyes (fish). She also had a nice picking of saskatoons which she had learned from the Indians were very tasty either raw or cooked.

I went to school with Mary Jane Elder, Nellie, James and Maggie of that family; Minnie, Sara, Charlotte and George Montgomery; Allen Warren and Ben Lang; Dora, Hal and George English; Maggie, Annie and Madge McKinley; Andrew, Sam and Anthony Selino; Millie, James and Robert Cusack; Hannah, Lizzie and Thos. Winters; Sadie and Maggie Cook.

STORIES OF VIRDEN AREA COMMUNITIES

History of the Blair Community

By Mrs. George Hendry

Blair Community had its beginning back in 1884 when Messrs. James and John Spiers, with their wives and families, took up homesteads.

Other early names were Blackwell, O'Beirene, Pigg, Warren, Hastings, Reid, Jordan, Guest, McDonald, McGeorge, Langton and Giradot.

Mr. William Hayward homesteaded the farm now farmed by his grandson, Roy, in 1887. Tom Pearn took up his homestead in 1888. It is interesting to note that the homesteaders of this community, as far as is known, were Canadians, most of them coming from Ontario.

The name "Blair" came from the wives of James and John Spiers, whose maiden name was "Blair".

The first school was on Mr. Pigg's farm (now Harold Hayward's.) Arthur Moody taught there in 1894. The present school was built in 1907 on Wm. Hayward's farm.

Salem Church which is built of stone still stands, though not in use. It was a Methodist Church. It was built about 1889.

The homesteaders' houses, small as they were, were mainly built of lumber. Mr. Blackwell had a log house. It still stands on Erle Pearn's farm. The homes were lit by coal oil lamps.

The sod was first turned by oxen. Horses soon followed. An average yield of ten to fifteen bushels per acre was common. 1889 was known as the dry year. Mr. Spiers cut his crop without twine, using a box to catch the loose heads. In 1900, the yield was three bushels per acre. A hail storm in 1887 left marks on the trees. Generally speaking the settlers harvested their crop, frost free.

Messrs. Spiers and Blackwell had a horse-power threshing outfit. Tom Honey was the first to use steam in this community. The grain was hauled to Virden, Oak Lake and Routledge.

The early settlers had their fun, too. Horse shoes was a popular summer sport and there were always school picnics. In winter it was cards or dancing.

Some of the settlers followed other trades. Mr. Jordan was a stone-mason. Mr. John Spiers was a veterinary and Mr. Warren was a plasterer.

Mrs. John Spiers, affectionately known as "Granny" in this community, was always a welcome guest in the homes, long after she no longer lived around Virden.

The old timers of this community living in Virden include Wm. Hayward, Tom Pearn and Mrs. Pigg.

Grateful thanks to Mr. W. Hayward and Mr. Tom Pearn for helping me gather the above information.

History of the Bosshill District

Bosshill, known to the old timers as a landmark, is situated 4½ miles due west of Virden. In the early days it was the highest point of land in this area, consequently gained its name "Boss Hill". From the top of this hill one could see into the Assiniboine Valley. The homesteaders who came to this district called it Bosshill District.

By the spring of 1896 there were enough children to necessitate the building of a school so a meeting was called on April 4th, 1896. This was the first school meeting and the trustees elected were Lorry Fraser, C. E. Ivens and Isaac Hofenbrak. From S.E.¼ 6-10-27, the homestead of W. J. McIntosh, a shanty was moved to be used as a school. It was placed on the S.W. corner of section 15-10-27, where the school stands today. Miss Clara Jean Milne was hired as the first teacher and classes were held until October 28th of that year.

The following year, 1897, the new building was built adjacent to the shanty. At this time there was an enrollment of 14 pupils. These pupils were, Katie, Elsie and Charles, children of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. H. Ivens; Jess and Edmund, children of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Ivens; Edith, Norman, Doug., and Charles, children of Mr. and Mrs. L. Fraser; Frank, Vivian and Marion, children of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Hofenbrak; William and Neil, children of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Forsyth. This school building is the one which still stands and in which classes are held each day.

The land in this district proved to be ideal for farming and new settlers continued to arrive and homestead. Some of the first settlers

in this district were: Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Ivens, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Ivens, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Forsyth, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. McIntosh, Jim Thompson, Harry Ivens, Arthur Hardey, Ken Bickford, Geo. Bradley, Ted Holmes, Harry Harper, Peter Jeffrey, Mr. and Mrs. Tomms, Mr. and Mrs. Seebly.

In the summer of 1900 church was commenced. The service was held in the school and conducted by the Rev. E. L. King, the Anglican minister from Virden. The following summer there was a student minister sent to this field.

The ladies of the district decided to form some organization soon on July 20th, 1906, a get-together meeting was held at the home of Mrs. L. Fraser. This was the organization of the Bosshill Hospital Aid. The first meeting was held August 1st, 1906, at the home of Mrs. W. P. Thomson. Officers were: president, Mrs. L. Fraser; vice-president, Mrs. W. K. McDonald; secretary-treasurer, Miss Lottie Ivens. Members present were Mesdames L. Fraser, H. Marritt, G. Menzies, W. K. McDonald, J. M. McPhail, R. H. Mooney, M. Hunter, C. E. Ivens and W. P. Thomson. The Misses were M. Jeffrey, M. Fraser, J. Ivens and K. Ivens.

During the period 1913-14 work began on a road from Virden to Maryfield. The road passes one mile north of the Bosshill school. Prior to this the road to Virden had been a trail passing through the L. Fraser farm. The road from Woodnorth to Hargrave was built in 1917.

Many of the district's young men joined the army and went to fight for King and country during the 1914-18 war. Some of those who gave their lives were: R. B. Delmage, Dan Fleck, Alex Forsyth, Charles Ivens, and Johnny Ivens. The district's young men were called upon again in 1939-1945. This time Jim Irwin was among those who paid the supreme sacrifice.

Few of the original homesteaders are represented in our district today. Neil Forsyth and family still reside on the Alex Forsyth homestead. Tom Jeffrey and his mother live on the land homesteaded by his grandfather, and Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Milne and family live on the original homestead of Jeff's grandfather, C. E. Ivens.

The first oil well of the municipality was drilled 2½ miles west of Bosshill school.

During the years since the first homesteaders arrived until this, Virden's 75th Anniversary, there have been many changes. Among them, changes to the hill itself—changes made by time and weather and man-made alterations due to road construction. To a stranger it would be only another hill but to the old timers and to people of the district it will always be "Boss Hill."

Breadalbane District

Breadalbane was named from a place in Scotland by the late James Frame, son of Thomas Frame Sr. who came with his wife and family from Pictou, Nova Scotia, arriving at Portage la Prairie where they lived two years. They settled in Breadalbane district in 1881, farming there until Mr. Frame's death in 1905.

Many settlers followed in the early 80's, namely the Gibbings, McKinnons, Leasks, Drydens, Johnsons, Irwins, Jeffersons, McLeans, Gardners, Clarks, Andersons, all becoming prosperous farmers later.

Breadalbane School was built in 1885 by the late H. Gibbings Sr. Later a frame church was built, but it was demolished by a cyclone in 1897. Later a stone church was built, services being held in the summer months.

In 1897, a severe blizzard struck the district. Two children of the late Gregor and Sarah McKinnon were lost on their way home from the school known as River Valley. As darkness fell early and there was no sign of them by four-thirty, Mr. McKinnon started walking to the school. Finding them not there, he thought they had stopped at the Johnson home where their neighbors were out searching. In the early morning Mr. T. Gibbings and Mr. B. Gibbings found the children safe, having spent the long night in their upturned cutter, sheltered from the wind. The faithful old pony was half buried but alive in the snow. The children were taken to the Johnson home and later to their own home, where Gregor and Sarah thanked God that they were alive.

The following Sunday, Breadalbane Church was filled with friends and neighbors giving thanks for what might have been a tragic incident in the neighborhood. Today, Lauchlin farms at Stoughton, Saskatchewan, and Annie (Mrs. Ready) resides in Reston.

The district today enjoys phones and electricity, and the younger generation continues to farm successfully.

Cromer

With the building of the Canadian Northern Railway in 1906, Cromer was born. Settlers had taken up homesteads in the district and when the railway came through a store was erected by W. (Billy) Williams in 1906. Mr. Williams was the first postmaster and he was succeeded by Kate Lazenby, Walter Gahan, Mr. Sutherland and the present postmaster, R. E. Scott.

In 1910, a second general store was erected by Ferguson and Herbert who also operated a lumber yard. The same year Hanson Chandler built a butcher shop, a livery barn and a home. He delivered meat in the country by team and later by car. In 1911, a two-storey building was erected by Mark Kellington. The upper storey was the Orange Hall and the ground floor was rented by Mrs. E. Walker for a boarding house. Mr. Kellington died in 1912 and later his widow operated the boarding house. She sold the building to Norman Barclay who carried on a general store. He sold to Mr. McRay who in turn sold the business to Berry Bros., the present owners.

The first church was built by the Methodists in 1911 with Rev. Mr. Ambler as the first pastor. In 1915 the Anglican Church was erected.

As early as 1908 an elevator was built in Cromer. The United Grain Growers erected an elevator in 1912 and this is now the annex to the Manitoba Pool elevator built in 1926.

In 1910 Edward Walker purchased the blacksmith shop from Mr. Gaudman and is still the blacksmith and implement dealer in Cromer.

The first school was built in 1910. It served the community for many years until in 1952 a new modern school, complete with waterworks, was opened. The first teacher was Mrs. Watson of Elkhorn.

The first baby born in Cromer was the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Ritchie in 1909. Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie moved to Cromer from Ebor that year. Mr. Ritchie conducted a draying business. He also was contractor for the first gravel roads in the district and was the first Imperial Oil dealer.

William Turner and Albert Grose, who came to the district in 1892, were the first to ship cars of wheat over the new railway in 1906, even before a loading platform was installed.

Owner of the first car, a Reo, was Thomas Turnbull about 1910.

Oldest resident of the Cromer district, born in the district, is W. J. Turner, born in 1904. He farms half a mile south of Cromer.

Oldest pioneer still living in the district is Alfred Mather who came to Cromer district in 1904 and is farming a mile east of Cromer.

Another old-timer of the community is Joseph Jopko who moved to Virden in 1955. He came to the Cromer district in 1901 as a young man of 22 years. He married in 1903. For years he delighted his friends and neighbors with his violin playing and his singing. He entertained at many an old-time gathering.

The year 1950 was an important one in the history of the Cromer district. That was the year oil became important. At first oil companies

leased land for as little at 10c an acre. That year the pumping station of Interprovincial Pipe Line, conveying crude oil from Alberta to Eastern Canada, was built on the NE ¼ 17-9-28 purchased from W. T. Cann. Five houses and a staff house for the personnel of the pumping station were erected. In 1951 oil flowed through the line for the first time and the following year an addition was built to the station. V. Guppy was the first station chief. In 1955 more building was done; the station was enlarged further and eight modern houses were erected. The station now houses seven huge pumping units and has a capacity of 200,000 barrels of oil a day. Thirteen large storage tanks have been erected to store oil from the Virden and district fields.

The first oil well declared to be a producer in the Cromer district was on the farm of Charlie Cruickshank in 1952, the fourth producing well in Manitoba. Mr. Cruickshank came from Scotland in 1902 to the Woodnorth district moving to his present farm four miles north of Cromer.

The people of the village and district of Cromer have had their ups and downs, have experienced depression and good times but always they have carried on with a spirit of co-operation and friendliness during the more than half a century since the railway came through this area.

A History of Ebor

Prepared by Ebor Women's Institute

The first homesteader of the Ebor district was Robert Sproule who came in 1888. He was followed by J. McGill in 1889 and Barwell Foote in 1892. Others were Mr. Knott, Joe Johnson, Dan McDonald, Jim Sproule, Sam Richardson, Fergus Heywood, his sons Ben and Isaac, James Burns, William Evans, John Hitchcock, William Wooldridge, Joe King, B. Hunt, J. Hogg, Alex (Sandy) Purvis, Fred Slater, J. Fraser, John Robertson, W. A. Bailey, and Mr. Simundseon.

Consolidation was formed in 1919. Thus the homesteads of D. E. McGill of 1890, J. G. Johannesson of 1892, and Henry Johnson became part of the district.

The village of Ebor originated in 1904. That fall the first store was built by Isaac Heywood. He was asked by a C.P.R. man what the town was to be called. He replied that it would be named Ebor, after an English village.

The station and section house were built the same year. The first section foreman was William Oliver.

The railroad went through in 1905. The pool room, built by Fergus Heywood, the post-office, operated by W. D. Wilson, and a blacksmith shop, built by Thomas Stickland, were added that year.

In 1906 an elevator, constructed by McCullough and Sons, started business under Archie Carr. He built the first livery barn. Reg. Knight built the lumber yard, which stood where the rink now is.

In 1907 an Orange Hall was built. It was used for many years as a school, church, and dancehall. W. D. Wilson started the Cockshutt implement business. Clyde Craig opened a John Deere implement shop.

In 1908 Wilcox and Myers started a butcher shop.

The rink was built in 1926 by volunteers. The Searle elevator opened in 1929 with Charles Hayward as buyer. The Pool followed in 1931 with Angus McDonald as agent.

The Ebor Women's Institute was organized on January 19, 1927, with thirty-seven members. Mrs. W. J. Hitchcock was president, Mrs. G. McIver vice-president and Edythe Duncan secretary.

The first school, called Sproule, started in 1906 on the Sproule homestead a mile south of Ebor. The first teacher was a Miss McIver. The first trustees were Barwell Foote, Fred Slater, and W. D. Wilson. The inspector was Mr. Newcombe. Dr. J. W. Bradley taught there in 1910.

The school was moved to the present grounds in 1912. The district was consolidated in 1919. One class was held in the Pool Room and Bowling Alley and then the Orange Hall until the present school was built in 1928. Harry Ford was then the secretary and caretaker. He was also a noted gardener. Other board members were J. King, W. H. Duncan, Robert Dodds and S. Williamson. The teachers were Miss Mitchell and Miss Conway.

A Presbyterian minister, Rev. Reeve, came to conduct services in Sproule School as early as 1910. G. A. McIver was secretary-treasurer from 1913 to 1942.

Anglican services were held in the Orange Hall for a number of years.

In 1897 John Norsworthy was the first council member. D. E. McGill served for a number of years.

Four of the earliest pioneers still living in the district are Mr. and Mrs. D. E. McGill, Mrs. Barwell Foote, and Joe King.

The Village of Elkhorn

By Mrs. F. W. Mallett

The Village of Elkhorn came into being in 1882. In this year the C.P.R. ran their line up to Elkhorn and the station was built where the loading platform now stands. Later a station was built at the present site and our first station was taken to Hargrave where it now stands.

We are told the name Elkhorn was chosen because of elk horns being discovered here when people were building. The first station agent was C. W. Burns and he married Miss I. Smith McLeod, the daughter of one of our pioneers. Their wedding was the first in Elkhorn. Fred Travis was the second agent.

In 1882 Mr. T. C. Dahl and Mr. Frank Thomas arrived in Elkhorn. They operated the first coal shed. In 1884 they both took up homesteads out west of town. Mr. Dahl walked to Moosomin to catch the stage coach but it had left so he had to walk to Birtle to register his homestead. He got a ride back on the stage coach.

Mr. Dahl wanted a cow so he went down on the work train to Brandon. He bought a cow for \$90.00, only to find the C.P.R. would not let him bring the cow back on the train. So he walked back from Brandon leading the cow. His daughter, Matilda, was the first child born in Elkhorn.

The Elkhorn Industrial School opened its doors in 1888 and was on Railroad Avenue behind the present Stadium. In 1889, it was formally opened by Archbishop Mackray. There were twelve pupils. Mr. George Rosewell subscribed \$1,000.00 and the Government gave \$12,000.00. Mr. McKenzie was the superintendent of the home and Miss Vidal was superintendent of the girls' department and also their teacher. In 1892, Mr. Archie Wilson took charge. In 1895, most of it was destroyed by fire. In 1897, the old school west of town was built. One of the outstanding pupils was Ahab Spence, who was keen on sports and is now a minister.

The first Sunday School in Elkhorn was held in the C.P.R. Station and everyone attended as it was undenominational. Mr. Buckingham (Mrs. Doctor Goodwin's father) was the first leader and superintendent. Later Sunday School was held in Broadly's Hall. Joint services continued until 1887 when the present Anglican Church was built. The beautiful stained glass window on the south side is in memory of Mrs. Thomas who died in 1893, and a beautiful glass window on the east is in memory of the ones we lost in World War I.

In 1888, the Presbyterian Church was built and the late W. G. W. Fortune, who was a student, was ordained to become the first minister. The young ladies of the church were organized under what was known

as the "Willing Workers" and they purchased the organ for the church. This same organ was taken to the Methodist Church when the Methodist and Presbyterian members united in 1925.

The Methodist Church was first held in the house now occupied by Mr. H. Switzer. The minister lived downstairs and church was held upstairs. Rev. Mr. Scarlet was not pleased with this arrangement and he started a campaign to build a church and in 1903 the present church was built. After union with the Presbyterians, the first pastor was Rev. E. Lund.

The first Roman Catholic Church was built in 1931.

The first doctor in Elkhorn was Dr. Roulson. Dr. Goodwin came in 1894. He bought out the drug store and later Mr. Mooney took over the drug store in 1899 and it is now run by his nephew, Mr. Jack Norris.

One of the pioneer families of Elkhorn was that of John McLeod. He and his daughter, Molly, started a store and restaurant in a tent in 1882. His wife and the rest of the family stayed on their homestead near Virden. They fed the men working on the track. They also had the first post office in this tent. Later they had their store and post office in the block now known as McLeod Block.

Later Molly married Mr. J. W. Thompson, who was editor of the first paper here, called the Advocate. In 1909 a new paper under Mr. C. Crosby and Mr. Shepherd was printed called the Mercury.

The grandson of this Thompson family is J. W. M. Thompson, B.A., L.L.B., who is now an M.L.A. representing Virden Constituency, and he is married to Lorraine Dutton of Virden. They have three children.

Our present post office, built in 1934, is run by a great grandson of Mr. John McLeod, namely, John Armstrong.

John Angus had the first butcher shop.

Rufus Travis had the first railway pump in town.

Dave Rowand was the first Miller.

The school was first held in the house owned by Mrs. Nelson. There were sixteen pupils and Mr. Bond was the teacher. At the present time we have eight teachers and 219 pupils.

Mr. C. R. Duxbury owned the first Model Reo Car in Elkhorn.

The price of wheat Saturday, September 28, 1895, was 48c a bushel.

Mr. Turnbull owned the first binder, a Dunrea.

Mr. Cavanagh built the first hotel on the site of the Manitoba Hotel. It was burned down.

Mr. De Waller came to Elkhorn in 1882.

Mr. Alf Watson was the first homesteader.

Mr. Chas. Bell owned the first truck.

Mr. T. Dahl had the first telephone on a farm.

The first Agricultural Fair was held in 1895 over the track in the first skating rink.

Mr. John Harry was the first milkman in Elkhorn.

Mr. and Mrs. Vaux and family came out on March 29, 1882, from England. Mr. Vaux bought his homesteading equipment in Winnipeg. A cow cost \$80.00; a yoke of oxen, \$210.00; a covered wagon, \$90.00; a tent, \$24.00; and he had one hen. A friend felt sorry for him and gave him another hen so he had one white and one brown hen. It was in the spring and they had to get off at Oak Lake. They drove to their homestead. The land had all been freshly surveyed and the quarter sections were marked off by wooden posts with the number of the section. He then had to walk to Birtle to register his land and an Indian paddled him across the Assiniboine in a canoe. The Indian Road to Winnipeg, where they sold their furs, went through on the south side of the river. The squeaking of the axles of their wagons could be heard for long distances. Mr. and Mrs. Vaux's daughter, Mrs. Jim Hartley, aged 83, gave me this information.

Mr. Geo. Cole came to Elkhorn in 1884 with his father and mother, seven sisters and one brother. When they arrived at the station, they tried to hire a man to drive them out to near Two Creeks. His dad was a carpenter and had come out to help build houses for Mr. Rankin, who was a member of parliament and who had purchased land out here, but Mr. Power was the manager at Elkhorn and he lived on a farm and that was where Mr. Cole wanted to go. However, the livery man wanted \$12.00 to drive them out. Mr. Cole had only \$4.00, so they slept on the station floor on mattresses they brought with them for two nights and then a man came in from Mr. Powers' farm and took them out. They were taken in by a man with five children and they slept in a granary.

The Indians drove right by their farm and were very friendly. They were not trustworthy, however, and stuff was frequently stolen from their houses, especially bright clothes or boots.

Mr. Geo. Allison, another farmer who came out in 1884, had to cross the Assiniboine River to get flour. It was in March and when he got to Birtle, the mill broke down. The miller had to go to Rapid City for repairs, so Mr. Allison made arrangements to haul wood for the

millar to pay for his board. He was very worried for fear the Assiniboine's ice would break up and also because he had left only a two days' supply of flour at home. There were no repairs at Rapid City, so the miller went to Portage la Prairie where he got repairs. When the miller got back to Birtle, they stayed up all night to fix the mill and twelve days later Mr. Allison was back to the Assiniboine River but the water was flowing over the ice. However, he took a pole and tried the ice and it seemed solid and he went ahead of the oxen, testing the ice and the oxen followed and safely reached the other side. He was overjoyed to see his family again. Neighbors had kept the family supplied with food and fuel while he was away.

The first Bank of Commerce was in the lower part of the Masonic Hall and managed by Mr. Saunders. He sent two men down from Moosomin several days a week to attend the bank. In 1912, the present bank was built.

The town was wired in 1929 by F. W. Mallet and his assistant, Allan Lee of Portage la Prairie, and the first house wired was that of Hugh McIntosh's mother.

The first telephone exchange was in the back of Mr. Mooney's Drug Store and Ethel Harry and Mr. Mooney operated it. There were only fifteen telephones at that time. Frank Walker who had a garage had No. 1. The new telephone office was built in 1934.

Following is a list of some of the early settlers from 1882 - 1888: Harry, Phillips, Harrison, C. Crosby, Geo. Crosby, Gilbert, Buckingham, Lipsey (1883) Middleton, Millers, J. Cavanagh, T. D. Cavanagh, Trumbell, Bailey, Tinline, Regan, Hume, Clingan, Taggart, James and Orman Jones, Williamson, Morden, Chas., Geo. and John Freeman, James and Sam Hartley, G. Bell, Robt. and Alf Watson, Travis, R. Coulson, Thos. and Wm. Dixon, Mooney, Ring, Vodden, Robt. and Jas. Rodgers.

The Stadium was built in 1937.

The Legion Hall was built in 1947.

The Municipal Building was built in 1948.

The present Park was started and landscaped by the late Mr. Hugh Drake in 1954.

The Hospital was built and opened in November, 1951.

The doctor's house was built on Cavanah North in 1956 by shares of the Elkhorn citizens.

Hargrave Settlement

"Some early history of this district and surrounding neighbors from 1880"

It was prairie everywhere, no trees, no settlers. Fires swept the prairies for miles some autumns. Gophers and badgers were very plentiful and it was an odd sight to see mounds of earth going up into the air while the badger was digging his big hole.

No railroad this side of Brandon anywhere. Many of the settlers came to Brandon and worked on the railroad there for a few months and then struck off with oxen and wagon west, knowing the railroad was going through to the west coast inside of five years. They filed their homesteads where they thought the land was suitable for homes.

William McLelland and family of four and John Clarkson and son, Jack, from England, settled to the north and west a few miles. The latter's family of seven followed in 1881. Mr. Clarkson understood music very well and played the organ. Sarah, who became Mrs. J. Heaman, was three years old at the time. The first church services were held in the spring of 1883, in the McLelland home three miles north of Hargrave and continued till the new school was built in 1887. His daughter, Mrs. Larmer, was one of the early teachers. Mrs. Rodgers married an Irish settler and they made their home where Cecil and family now reside.

William and Tom Hitchins, doctor's sons from Braille, England, came in 1882 to the farm where Harold Heaman now resides. William moved the following year to the farm on which his son, Bert, now lives. William loved fine horses. Two incidents occurred in his early batching days. He made biscuits, sat down to eat his meal, threw one to the cat who refused to eat it. He made the immediate discovery he had used strychnine instead of baking powder. He jumped on his horse and rode to his brother's, getting medical relief and survived the distressing sickness. He was working in the field and looking towards the house, saw a man leaving the house. He thought of his earnings kept in a trunk and thought he had better investigate. Sure enough, all was gone and man and money never were located. William married the second school teacher, Annie Campbell, in 1888. She died within a few months. He later married an English girl in the later 90's while on a trip to his family in England. They raised a family of five.

William Patterson and Jas. White with their wives, who were Witherspoon sisters from Carberry and all from Scotland, moved in in 1883, north-west three miles. Their houses were made of log walls and sod roofs, the logs being brought from the Assiniboine river hills. They had no families and Jim lived on the same farm till he died. He was over ninety. They were well-known for their steam engine and threshing separator, cutting bands, bucking straw to the engine for fuel, low bagger where grain poured into grain sacks and then piled into the wagons. For some years the sheaves were made into nice stacks and then

threshed; later that changed to stook threshing. For a few years the grain was taken to Oak Lake and then to Virden when the railway came through. Some of the settlers paid their expenses by catching gophers on the way and getting the bounty of nineteen cents a tail.

Andy and Nat McAlonen from Ireland came here in 1883 and homesteaded on Section 16. Miss Minnie McCullum arrived from Ireland in 1885 to stay with Sam McAlonen, cousin of Andy, who with a large family of boys and girls was farming where Earle Stinson now lives. Miss McCullum and Andy were married at Moosomin and started their pioneer days in a little log and sod shanty.

Johnathon Wilson and family from England filed their homestead on Section 16 in 1883. Nat McAlonen remained a bachelor all the years he lived in Canada and was a violinist for many dances and social evenings. Andy raised a family of five.

Watson Crosby, a school teacher from P.E.I., homesteaded a mile north of the village about these same years, brother Jim coming out about eight years later. They batched till the father, Mother Louise and Russ arrived in 1896. Watson ran for M.P. in 1895 for a party known as "Party of Industry". He won the election by a big majority as he was a very popular person with the settlers and ever ready to help them with any advice he was able to give. He never married and died not long after the election.

Edward Holmes and brother, Charles, from England, also a brother-in-law, R. L. Carr, were 1883 settlers along the north side of Boss Hill Creek.

Sam Moffatt, his wife and four boys and one girl from Ireland, homesteaded a mile and a half west of Hargrave in 1886. Sam was a typical witty Irishman with long whiskers and moustache. His oldest son, Bill, was ever popular with his stump speeches and the violin. Jim and Herb called the changes of the dance quadrilles which were so popular in early days. Maggie was born in 1889. One incident can be remembered of Sam's big ox taking a notion to get on the railroad a mile and a half west of the village in front of a heavy, fast-moving train going east. The impact put the engine off the rails and tore up the ties for half a mile, but did not overturn the engine before it came to a stop. The fireman jumped and later died of injuries. A hundred and twenty-five men were on the scene the next morning repairing the track.

Another early settler was Jas. Rose from England, who looked after supplies in the North-West Rebellion at Regina in 1885, then homesteaded a half mile south of Hargrave. He married Miss Grobb of Portage la Prairie. They had no family. He was secretary-treasurer of the school for many years. He was a beautiful writer with a very hearty laugh and lots of volume to his voice when he and his oxen disagreed.

John White, a bachelor and a brother of Jim White, lived three miles north; John Burns, Robert Rodgers, Dave Campbell, Alex Johnston, to the west and north. Dan Carmichael, George Carefoot, the Ivey and John Cusack families and the Sandy Ferguson family from Scotland in 1883 were to the east of the village.

The school was the centre of activities and church services. The railroad had gone through in 1883 and many settlers moved in. J. J. Caulfield tore down the Central Hotel in Brandon and moving the material to this railroad siding built a store in 1890 and a big warehouse divided into four bins, holding about 10,000 bushels of grain. Robin Hood was the first storekeeper and William Simpson helped in the grain business. Johnathan Wilson moved in and built a boarding house and livery barn. George Halliday built a second store soon. Hugh Heighs was the first blacksmith. A box car served as a station for a few years. Two tall grain elevators were built in the later 90's. Ted Holmes ran one. He lost his life through a fire in the engine room in January, 1901. The school was moved from the foot of Moffatt's garden to the village in August, 1900.

Auros Odell moved his family from the "Smith Settlement" early in 1893 to the to the farm where his son, Jim, now lives.

Student ministers carried on Presbyterian and some Methodist services in the school for a number of years. An organ was purchased in the early 90's, and Mrs. Odell was organist, Auros, leader of the singing.

All stove wood had to be brought from the Assiniboine River until so much land was broken up that fires could not sweep as they had done and the bluffs began to grow. Many were the hardships endured. There was no hospital closer than Brandon and doctors and nurses were very scarce. Mrs. Auros Odell will ever be remembered for her hours spent with the sick of the early days of this district. Does anyone remember the bitter Turkey Rhubarb of pioneer days?

Hillside District

By Mrs. R. T. Kenderdine

Hillside School was opened in 1890 with twelve pupils from the families of William Roddy, G. Bagley, S. Sparrow. The first teacher was Miss Eliza Tufts, later Mrs. William Burge, who is still living at Codette, Saskatchewan. She attended a Teachers' Convention in Virden May 5, 1893.

Hillside School was named from the Power farm, as the land slopes from the buildings to the highway.

Mr. A. P. Power was secretary-treasurer of Pipestone Municipality from 1890 to 1919. His office was at his farm for many years, but was later transferred to Reston where he and Mrs. Power moved.

John Crump homesteaded in the Hillside District in 1884. Mr. Fred Crump of Lenore is a son, several members of the Crump family still reside around Virden.

The Dave Muldrew family were among the early settlers; Alf is teaching in Winnipeg, and Ed and Walter are living in Virden.

John Karn Sr. homesteaded in 1891 and a son, John, resides in Virden. An aunt, Mrs. Jack Palmer, is living in Winnipeg, her maiden name having been Rowe. Her parents lived in Woodworth Municipality, but the children attended Hillside School.

Nelson Roddy, the only surviving member of the family of William Roddy, is living in Winnipeg. Mrs. Cecil Perlette of Virden is a niece.

George Cook, another early settler, lived about five miles south of Virden.

The Park family homesteaded in what is now Laggan District in 1884. Eliza May Park married Charles R. Cook in 1892 and lived in the Scarth and Hillside districts for many years. Mrs. Cook is living in Virden, also several members of the family.

The Wardman family bought land in the community about the beginning of the century. Miss Ila Wardman lives in Virden. Doug. Wardman, Mrs. Warren Gordon of Cromer, and Jack Wardman of Bienfait, Sask., are descendants.

The Goulding family bought considerable land in the Scarth and Hillside districts, but remained for only a few years.

Nelson Daniels bought the farm where his son, Wesley, still lives. Mrs. Fred Hayhurst of Virden is a daughter.

Kenneth Cappie arrived in 1906 from Scotland, and worked for William Porteous for a time, then settled on the farm presently occupied by his son, Robert.

Joslin District

By Mr. and Mrs. M. Heritage

Back in the winter of 1881-82 many of the Ontario families were reading of the coming of the railroad to Western Canada, thus opening up a vast territory on the prairies for farming. With the spirit of adventure flowing in their veins, many of the younger men decided to explore the possibilities of this vast unknown. Leaving their homes, they came by railroad to the end of the steel which was then west of Brandon but had not reached Virden and thence they made their way on foot or by oxen and cart until they reached the district north of Virden, now known as Joslin. Here land was available by homesteading 160 acres or buying from the C.P.R. which owned every other section. Some stayed for the winter building sod shacks, while others returned to their homes in the East or found work at Brandon.

During the following seven or eight years most of the better available land in the district had been taken up. Log houses and stables succeeded the tents and sod shacks. Logs had to be hauled from the river valley, 2 to 3 miles away, as there were no trees on the open prairie at that time. By 1887 a thriving settlement had been set up and the pioneers were feeling the need of a school to educate their children. The first school building, built of stone, was erected and named after one of the pioneers, Mr. Joslin. At this time a north row of sections belonging to the Montgomery District was transferred to Joslin.

These were a God-fearing people and church meetings were held in some of the homes. Two denominations were represented, Methodist and Presbyterian, and met respectively in the Isaac Bennett Sr. and Green homes. They were later to attend their respective churches when built in the Montgomery district. As years went by the two congregations were united and the Joslin people have been staunch supporters of their Wallace United Church.

The pioneers, early recognizing the need of a fraternal society, met and instituted Court of Elms, C.O.F., on December 7, 1894, in Joslin School. The first Chief Ranger was an early pioneer, Mr. S. R. Nichol. This organization has continued throughout the years to the present time.

Progress in breaking the sod and bringing it under cultivation was slow, most of it being done with yokes of oxen and long-handled breaking plows. One such yolk, owned by W. J. Bray, had a very bad habit. In the heat of the summer, and without warning, the oxen would throw their tails in the air and head for the nearest slough, with the heel flies at their heels. There they would stand, unmindful of the job on hand and no coaxing would make them come out until the threat of these flies would pass for the day. Sowing of the grain was first done by broadcasting by hand. Reaping was done by a "reaping

machine" and bound by hand. The binders were soon to make their appearance and they bound the sheaves with binder twine. The sheaves were stooked, and after curing for a few days were stacked in large round stacks, there to await the thresher.

In spite of the untold hardships, together with frost and hail, considerable grain was being produced. In the fall the shrill "toot" of the steam thresher could be heard. The women knew something of this, too, when 20 to 24 men trooped in for their meals. All of this grain had to be teamed to Virden, 10 to 12 miles, mostly done during the winter months. It is no wonder there was joy in the district when in 1908 two railroad surveys were begun from Virden: the C.N.R. to come in from the south and run north-westerly one quarter mile east of the school; the C.P.R. was surveyed where the line is at the present time. One man, Mr. A. W. Heritage, was not so overjoyed as the C.N.R. survey went plumb through the middle of a ten-acre field he had just finished laboriously breaking with a team of horses and had not even had a crop off it. However, after delaying a year, the C.P.R. commenced their line and many fine crops were taken from this field since.

As the railroad came in so was an elevator erected on the farm of Mr. George Moir and that fall Joslin farmers could deliver their grain almost at home. The next year a blacksmith shop and house was built by Mr. Carl Winkler and the station became known as Harmsworth. Soon a Post Office was added to the Winkler house and Harmsworth became the hub centre of Joslin district.

About this time tall poles were being set up along the roadways and strung with wires, which when connected with a box on the wall enabled neighbor to talk with neighbor. Though not recognized at the time, the telephone no doubt was the beginning of what proved in later years to be an electrical age enabling sound and pictures to be transmitted without even wires.

In 1911 one of the former old-timers who had moved to the United States, Mr. T. E. Bennett, came back to take over his farm again. When he arrived he brought along, besides household effects, two white mules and the first automobile to be owned in the district. This machine was a single cylinder Oldsmobile with solid tires, chain drive, carbide lights, rubber bulb for a horn and steered by a steering rod without even a wheel on the end of it. It was as much of a sensation then as the newest Oldsmobile is today. The mules were used for many years and died in service on the farm.

One of the more important buildings in the district in the early times was built by a Mr. Nimms, about one mile south-east of the Joslin School. This house was on the main trail from Crandall, Arrow River to Virden and was used as a stopping place for many who made this trip. A "cupola" was built on top of the house and every night a lantern was placed in it as a beacon to guide any who might be on the trail. The daughter of one of the pioneers, Mabel Turnbull, now

Mrs. Adam Halliday, can still remember her father taking the lantern up to be placed in the cupola.

Another important event in the history of the community was the setting aside of one acre of land on the farm of Mr. Isaac Bennett Sr. for a cemetery. He was the first to be buried there in 1900 and it was given the name "Bennett Cemetery" after him. Since then many of the pioneers have been laid to rest there. The caretaking of this Cemetery has been under the supervision of Court of Elms C.O.F. in recent years and it has become recognized as one of the better kept cemeteries.

In 1912 the powers that be decided it was necessary for Joslin to have a new up-to-date school and during holiday time the old stone building was demolished and the present one took its place. Whether education was improved or not was questionable but many a cold morning was spent, sometimes with overcoats on due to "an up-to-date" heating system.

In 1914 World War I was declared and as a result farming was carried on often under very difficult conditions owing to a shortage of labor. The later years of the War, and several following, were years of comparative prosperity and it was during these years that cars came into general use in the district. Farming was changing from the "walking era" into one of riding the implements and from 3 to 4 horse outfits to 4 to 6 horse outfits. The Steam age had almost disappeared and the age of internal combustion had taken over. Most of these engines were of the large clumsy type and used for threshing only, although one was used by Mr. T. D. Greig to pull seven ploughs on his farm. These in turn gave way to the smaller lighter tractor to pull two or three ploughs. Most farms still used one team of horses along with the tractor.

An important development of the early 20's was the coming of radio bringing music and song into the homes of many. The first radio was a "home-made" hodge-podge of wires, tubes, batteries and condensers using head phones and the first station received was W.L.S. Chicago. The builder of this set was Mel. Heritage. Soon up-to-date manufactured sets replaced the crude early sets and were in every home.

This age of prosperity continued until 1929 when the "Great Depression" was born reaching its climax about 1931. On top of the depression came the dry years and the rust years. During 1931-32 the price of wheat dropped to 24c, barley 7 to 8c, hogs \$2.00 per 100 lbs., cattle 2 to 3c a lb. Cream, an important sideline to almost all, brought 14c a lb. butterfat.

During the later 30's and early 40's tractors and tractor machinery took over and with the advent of the first combines in 1945, farming in the Joslin district was fast becoming mechanized. Throughout all the years livestock was a very important part of the economy and many cattle and hogs were raised and fed for market and a few milk cows were on every farm.

In 1937 the Joslin people celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the founding of their School District. This was held in July at the pioneer "Green farm" now owned by Mr. Wes Heaman when many of the older pupils as well as former teachers together with many old-timers gathered to make this an outstanding success. Here a cane was presented to Mr. Robert Cusack, the oldest pupil and still resident in the district.

Again in 1939 our country was plunged into war and as was the case of the first World War it ushered in a period of prosperity for the farmers. Owing to a scarcity of labor all the farms were forced into complete mechanization.

April of 1948 a survey was made for electrification of the district and in late November the current was turned on thereby revolutionizing farming, supplying light and power and enabling the farmer's wife to enjoy many of the so-called luxuries of the city. This the district took full advantage of.

As is the case in almost any district Joslin had its share of tragedy. During the fall of 1944 the community was shocked to hear of the accidental drowning of little Donna Greig in their nearby dug-out. And again during harvest of 1945 the whole district was stunned when Mr. Frank Paul was accidentally killed by a C.P.R. train while crossing the track with a wagon load of wheat.

The district did not escape without casualties during World War I. Among those enlisting were Miss Tilley Green, as a nurse (daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Green) and Jas. Foster (son of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Foster) both of whom paid the supreme sacrifice. Again in World War II some answered the call of the Country and enlisted for service and in due time returned safely home.

In the early 50's a new road was graded, coming from the south and going three miles north of the school. As a result of this many of the Joslin people were able to have a winter road to Virden, although not always clear.

Up to this time there had been no oil drilling activity in the district but in 1955 oil was discovered on the Bennett place homesteaded by R. J. Bennett 75 years ago and now occupied by A. R. Milne. Drilling has been going on ever since and there are now 29 producing wells, many of them 2,000 barrels a month.

The fall of 1955 saw the first television sets installed and by this year, 1957, they are quite commonplace.

While the Joslin district has made many outstanding contributions to the professions, it is felt that the success of the farmers in their own right has also been worthy of note. Mr. D. A. Campbell, to cite one for

instance, has been a consistent winner at the Royal Fair, Brandon Fair and local fairs with his sheep. In his honor the Joslin people gathered and presented him with a gift in recognition of his contribution to their community.

In politics the community was about evenly divided, Grit and Tory, with Mr. Levi Buker always ready to expound on principles of the Conservative party.

Sports—baseball, curling and horse-shoe were all part of the community life.

It is rightly felt by those in the district that much is owed to the indomitable courage and keen foresight of those hardy pioneers who in the early 80's took the initial step in the development of this community. Little did they realize that the then rolling prairie, covered with long grass and wolf willow, would in the next 75 years become a community of prosperous farms and nodding oil pumps, lit by electricity, worked by gasoline power and entertained by radio and television. They left us an even greater legacy than these material things: quality of character and the creed of life that characterized and enriched their lives and consequently ours.

"Theirs were the days of beginnings

Ours the days of carrying on."

Laggan District

Settlement took place along Gopher Creek in 1882, the district being known as Daybreak, now known as Laggan.

The early settlers formed the School District of Daybreak and erected their school house in March, 1885, No. 376, situated on the N.E. corner of 22-9-27. School did not operate until the fall term of 1886, enrollment being ten boys and eight girls and the school operated for 81 days. The grant for the period was \$40.50. The teacher was Mr. William Edgar Pye, holder of a second class "B" certificate. Lands of Daybreak School District were lost in 1910 when the school district of Woodnorth was formed. In 1916, Daybreak School was destroyed by fire and classes were carried on in Daybreak Church for the following six years. Eleven sections of Daybreak School District were lost to Woodnorth Consolidated School District by 1918 and the remainder of the lands were added to the newly formed school district of Laggan No. 1935 which was opened in 1922.

Church services in this district prior to the building of the first

school (Daybreak) were held in the home of Mr. Robert Nowes. In 1900, money was raised by subscription to build Daybreak St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church which was erected on the S.W. corner of 31-9-26 in 1901. Contractor for the building of the church was Mr. Geo. Marshall. It is interesting to note that the material for the building was approximately \$450 and the contractor's charge was \$200. Minister at the time of opening was Mr. Kemlo.

Services are still being held in this church during the summer months, and it forms a part of the Springvale Mission field. It is known now as Daybreak St. Andrew's United Church of Canada.

Maples Elevator and Community

In 1928 a Manitoba Pool Elevator was built at Maples Siding on the C.N.R. three miles south of Virden. To date, 30,000 cars of grain have gone through the elevator and over the siding. Although the elevator board went through difficult times, they now have the elevator clear of debt and have recently built a modern home for the elevator man and his family to live in. As a close shipping point, the elevator has been a wonderful asset to the community. Also members have benefited by approximately \$51,000 paid to them in dividends.

Due to the fact of the Siding being named "Maples" the community automatically went under the same name. In 1939 the Maples Patriotic Society was formed by the ladies of the community whose work made possible a great many comforts for our soldiers overseas. In 1945, the patriotic work was no longer needed so the society disbanded and a new society was organized under the name of "Maples Young Peoples Society." This society is very active and is a great asset to the community.

Oil has added prosperity in the district and since it is God's own gift, we hope it will be used as such.

Mayville District

By Gordon McLaren

The writer is a pioneer of the Mayville district. My parents came to that district from the East in the spring of 1887, and moved to our present farm in October, 1889. I believe I am the oldest living pioneer of that district actually farming in Manitoba.

I can give the names of most of the pioneer families living in Mayville when our folks arrived there. The following came from the Muskoka and Perry Sound districts of Ontario: Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Giles; Josiah, Peter and Nelson Pickering; Mr. and Mrs. McIntosh and their sons Dan, Duncan, William, Peter and John; the Wrights, William and his wife, John G. and Henry; the McLarens—three families, Henry, William and Forbes; Mr. and Mrs. Cotton. Then there was John Shultz and family, Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Croft, the Clayton and Coulson families and Mr. B. Mullins. Children from all these families attended Mayville School in 1887-1889 when Mr. John Peters was teacher. The district was thickly settled. I believe the McIntosh brothers are the only residents in the district today of the first pioneer families.

The pioneers suffered great hardships. There was drought, summer frosts, lack of water on many farms, prairie fires, severe winters, gophers, besides low prices for everything the settlers sold and high prices for everything they had to buy. Either the 1887 or 1888 crop was badly frozen and the 1889 crop was a total failure from drought and gophers. Between 1889 and 1894 many families left the district.

Here is one incident of those pioneer days. In February, 1888, the worst blizzard ever known swept Manitoba. My uncle Henry and my father went that morning to the sand hills for a load of wood. The blizzard came up suddenly in the early afternoon. Our men left the sandhills about dusk. When half way home they left their load, and mounting the horses tried to reach Henry's. Just when they feared they were hopelessly lost, they saw a light. Aunt had placed a lamp in the window. They saw it and were safe. There were a good many men frozen to death in Manitoba and North Dakota.

One fall a prairie fire swept up from the south and ran through the district. It caused severe loss to the pioneers. I have personal knowledge that the following men and women who attended old Mayville School in the pioneer days are still alive.

There is Dr. George Giles and Mr. D. Giles at Vancouver; Mr. George Pickering and his sister, Eliza (Mrs. Thos. Huston), also at Vancouver; of the McLaren families there are Mrs. W. H. Kenner (Annie), Mrs. Enoch Van Dine (Mina), and Mrs. W. S. Sproat (Olive); Messrs. Gordon, Ernie, and Harry McLaren. There is William McLaren and in our own family, Mrs. Wm. Forsyth (Daisy). I believe Mr. John Peters is still alive.

The boys and girls raised in the Mayville District were in their turn pioneers in British Columbia, South-Western Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Mayville District

By Mrs. R. T. Kenderdine

Mayville School was built in 1885 and opened for school in the Spring of 1886. In the year 1884, school was held in the home of Thomas Croft, now owned by Jack Leech. The first teacher was John Acheson. The second teacher was J. W. Peters who rode to school on horse back from Elm Valley. He now resides in Rapid City. The school was moved to the present site in 1896. John Reid, the contractor, was an uncle of the present Mayor of Virden.

Daniel McIntosh came in the year 1882, before the land was surveyed, and when the survey was made he found his house was on the road allowance. Mr. Jack McIntosh, who lives in Virden, is a son of Daniel. D. J. McIntosh, Mrs. Connie Smith and daughter make five generations of this family.

John McIntosh came in 1883, and homesteaded south of Woodnorth. Some years later he bought the farm where his son, Ernie, still resides. Edson, the oldest son, was born in Virden in 1894 and lives in Virden at present.

The first wedding in the district was that of Duncan McIntosh and Miss Mary Wright in 1885. They were married by Rev. Mr. Acheson, Methodist minister, in the home of Daniel McIntosh, a brother of Duncan and John.

The first municipal council of Pipestone Municipality was organized in 1883. The first council meeting was held at the home of Wm. Croft in the Mayville district on January 8, 1884. This same day the first regular mail arrived from Virden to what was then Manda Post Office. For about one year it was in the home of Jack Cain, and was later moved to the Bonniman home, now owned by John Gonty Jr.

The Giles family arrived in the Spring of 1884, and homesteaded in the Mayville district. D. M. Giles, a son, later lived in the Hillside-Scarth community, where he took an active interest in all community enterprises. He served as councillor for many years. When the Giles family arrived in Virden, April 15, 1884, there was no station, only one shanty, the rest was all tents. In this shanty was the only place you could buy a meal. The proprietors were Tom Chitty, an Englishman, and Sam Swanson, a Swede. They later built the Central Hotel. Travelling south from the town when they came to Gopher Creek it was flowing full. They had to tie their wagon boxes down to prevent them floating away. Mr. and Mrs. Giles now live in White Rock, B.C.

Montgomery District

By Mrs. George Moir

The School District of Montgomery No. 357 was formed on January 5th, 1885. The only information available at this time states that for the term ending June, 1885, the school operated 122 days, with an enrollment of 42 pupils, 21 boys and 21 girls. The teacher for that term was Miss Maggie Jones who continued teaching here till December, 1886. It is interesting to note the district received a grant of \$50.00 for this first term from the Department of Education. This schoolhouse was built on the farm of Mr. William Montgomery, and was used till 1912. In that year it was replaced by the present brick building.

In the early days the schoolhouse was the centre for social activities as well as the education of the younger members of the community. An interesting item gleaned from early records states that The Royal Templars were granted the privilege of using the schoolroom for the grand sum of ten cents each meeting.

Church services were held in the school alternate Sundays by the Methodist and Presbyterian adherents. Both congregations were served by their respective ministers from Virden. In 1900 the Presbyterians erected "the little stone kirk", to be known as Knox Church, on the north-east corner of George Moir's farm. Their minister at that time was Rev. Peter Strang of Virden. Three years later the Methodists erected Zion Church on the south-east corner of the J. H. Clarke farm, one mile south of Knox. Rev. F. Locke, also of Virden, was their first minister. On July 1st, 1922, permission having been received from Conference and Presbytery, the Methodists united with the Presbyterian congregation at Knox. At this time the congregation elected to re-name their House of Worship, to be known as Wallace United Church. The first minister of the united congregation was Rev. J. Johnston.

Due to the untiring efforts of Mr. J. J. Nichol a community rink was built in 1925 on Mr. Nichol's farm, where the "roaring game" became the main pastime during the winter months for both men and women of this and adjoining districts.

As in all parts of our favored Dominion, this district has seen good times and bad, bumper crops and failure from drought and hail. In the last three years we have been fortunate, being in the centre of the oil production in Wallace Municipality. In a recent report there were approximately 135 producing wells listed. It is safe to say 75% of the community has profited in some way from this new development.

We have had to say good-bye to many of our neighbors, sons and daughters through the years, some looking for greener fields, many passing on to their reward. Many names appearing in the 1880's have disappeared from later records. A few of these familiar names who were mentioned frequently were Montgomery, Gardiner, Tapp, Whiteford, Carefoot, Stinson, Elder, English and Carscadden, some of whose sons and grandsons are still carrying on. Fortunate indeed are we to have been left such a goodly heritage.

Early History of Oak Lake and District

By Nelson Banister

Through the courtesy of Mr. Nelson Banister (now deceased), one of the pioneer residents of this district, who spent considerable time and effort in procuring authentic information in connection with the following article, we are able herewith to furnish readers with an interesting account of the early history of Oak Lake and adjacent districts .

It may be interesting to readers to learn facts about the early history of Oak Lake. It was late in October, 1881, when the Canadian Pacific Railway, which later developed into the world's greatest system, laid the steel into Flat Creek, 167 miles west of Winnipeg, and made it the first temporary divisional point west of that city.

Railway construction material was drawn and piled up in the huge railway yards where three miles of side track had been laid for the purpose of storing material to be used the following summer. Langdon and Sheppard, who had the construction contracts, built large temporary store houses for their supplies. They also wintered 150 mules in a sheltered spot in the sandhills just south of what is now the golf course.

Louis Lemieux, engineer, (who homesteaded the quarter section later owned by Duncan Stewart) with conductor Nibblock ran the first regular passenger train from Winnipeg. Mr. Pancer, roadmaster, Mr. Jas. Gillespie, station master, Mr. Mackem, telegraph operator; Isaac McPhee was the first section boss.

Parker & Dickson opened up the first general store in a large tent and also did a big business fur trading with the Indians. Later McKinnon and McDonald ran a grocery business. Mr. Stone had a bakery and boarding place. Two men known as Tom and Jerry, opened up a place where you could obtain drinks, other than water, and were reported to be the originators of a very popular beverage, afterwards known all over Canada as "Tom and Jerry" and supposed to be the indirect cause of a serious strike which happened amongst the men in the railway yards. As two men, having imbibed too freely in the said "Tom and Jerry", caused trouble and got fired, the rest of the men resented this, so went on strike, which made it necessary to call in the Mounted Police who acted in a pacific manner, for after having had a few shots fired over their heads, the strikers drew in their horns and went quietly back to work. One good lady who got to know about Tom and Jerry's illicit business determined to put a stop to it. After exhausting every effort to induce some one to bring these men to book, she dressed herself in a man's clothing, purchased a bottle of whiskey and promptly had them up before Major Walsh when they were severely dealt with, having to cough up a \$50.00 fine. However this did not deter them from carrying on business as usual.

If you were expecting any letters you asked "Acting" Post Master George Miller. He would promptly refer you to a bunch of mail dumped on a corner of the counter and tell you to hunt for yourself.

The only frame buildings in the town were the station house, section house and round house. Although it was estimated there were 1500 souls in the town the summer of 1882, everyone lived under canvas. Tents were set up wherever a dry spot could be found. Indeed this was not easy as the country was the wettest I have ever seen it. In Dickson's store the water came up to one's knees if one stepped off the planking laid on trestles around the counters. Where the Fair Grounds are was a perfect lake with 5 or 6 feet of water. As soon as it was possible the C.P.R. moved the station 1100 feet east to where it now stands.

Through the untiring efforts of the late Robert Lang the Town's name was changed from Flat Creek to Oak Lake. It would require the pen of Ralph Connor to adequately describe Mr. Lang. He was a man of splendid physique, stood 6 ft. 3 in. and was well proportioned. He spoke with that perfect Scotch burr which is always so pleasant to the ear. A kinder hearted man it would be impossible to find and together with Mrs. Lang they practically kept open house and no wayfarer was ever turned away hungry from their hospitable door.

Mr. Robert Sutherland, who moved in from Portage La Prairie with a large family in 1882, also deserves special mention. Born in Manitoba, he was familiar with all the problems of pioneer life and always ready to tender good sound advice when asked. A public spirited man, who together with his sons John and Robert was very active in forming the Municipality of Sifton, Robert Senior sat on the first council. Mr. E. Dickson was the first Reeve, but soon retired and became Secretary-Treasurer which position he held for a number of years. Mr. Sutherland then became Reeve and served for a lengthy period with his son, John, acting as Councillor. They were also active in building the first Presbyterian Church in town, also the first school in the Municipality known as Hillsdale School, of which Miss E. Whitey, afterwards Mrs. J. S. Hitchcock, was the first school teacher.

In speaking of the early settlers around Oak Lake special mention must be made of Mrs. E. Cairns, one of the bravest of our pioneer women, who, with her young family and aged father, came up from Winnipeg in a steamboat on the Assiniboine River. They were put off on the bank at the foot of the hill with their supplies, which included lumber for their shanty and a yoke of oxen. With no houses or settlers in sight, it must have needed a courageous heart to think of attempting to make a home under such circumstances but how well Mrs. Cairns succeeded is known to all in the neighborhood.

The space will not permit me to go into further detail, although there are a number of men worthy of mention. I will confine the rest of my remarks to telling of the settlers who came here in 1881-1882 within a radius of nine miles.

In 1879 a few half breeds and French Canadians settled in the district. As the country was not surveyed at that time, they squatted along the river banks. In this they showed wisdom. They knew they would be assured of plenty of wood and water. From former experience they knew that the country was subject to periods of drought so took pre-

cautions to guard themselves against this. Beginning along the river east of Town we find Mr. Kennedy who later established a ferry to cross over the river. Next came Mr. Jas. Whiteford and Mr. Gladieu. These two men seemed well fixed as they had large bands of horses and cattle which roamed over the prairie at will. Others were: John Levis, La-Fontaine, Maxine and Frank Marion, J. Dacotah, Desjardien and Mr. Gamache.

On Oak Lake Island were Amabie and Roger Marion. In 1881 the following settlers homesteaded in the district. (This was before the railway came in): J. McNal; Donald Cameron and his son, Angus; James Coulter; D. W. Banister; Alf Cook; Derwin Baker, who enjoyed the honor of bringing the first bride to the settlement; Dan and Jack McLaren; Ed and Jim Dickson; W. Lafournaise; Peter McArthur; Neil and Archie McNabb; the latter afterwards moved to Saskatchewan and became Minister of Agriculture.

The spring of 1882 opened up about the 10th of April which brought joy and hope to many brave hearts as the winter had been extremely cold and snow very deep. Thousands of settlers poured in. A daily passenger train running from Winnipeg would be loaded down to the limit, besides three or four freight trains bringing in settlers' effects. Flat Creek was sure a busy town. Being the end of the track everyone had to unload and trek out to search for a spot suitable for their future home. Many amusing stories could be told but space forbids this.

The following settlers, some of whom will be recognized as still with us, came to this neighborhood at this time: LANSDOWNE—J. Home, J. Hatch, R. Forward, A. and J. Marcotte, N. Robinson; SANDHURST—R. Lang, H. Foot, Mr. Knight; HARVEY—D. McCallum, J. Carpenter, J. Hummel, N. Felteau, L. Vellot, Mr. Hubert, J. Cochrane, A. J. Todd, B. Little, J. Bell, Mrs. E. Cairns; ST. DAVID'S—J. Goodwin, A. Goodwin, E. P. Williams, D. Williams, W. Miller, D. McBeth, Jas. Spiers, J. Spiers, Doug McDonald, Duncan McDonald, Thos. Haney, Wm. Smith.

Penrith - Early Post Office

By Mrs. E. Gibbs

One of the early post offices in Manitoba was a log house, long since replaced, known as the Penrith post office.

The late John McKinnon, urged by the lure of the west, in 1882 set out from Walkerton, Ontario. He worked his way as far as Virden before the Canadian Pacific Railway was laid.

Surveying was in progress, and he found the land northeast of the Assiniboine already surveyed. He took as a homestead a portion of land 20 miles northeast of Virden, and built a log house sufficiently large to

accommodate his family of three daughters and two sons, whom he sent for in the spring of 1883.

Arriving at Port Arthur, by boat, the family travelled in the first passenger coach to be attached to a freight train in the west.

The trip from Port Arthur to Virden took three days. The train was heated by a wood stove for which great piles of cordwood lay at intervals, piled near the track, handy for the train crew to refuel. Water was procured from nearby ponds and sloughs, carried pail by pail. Sufficient lunch was packed to do the entire trip.

Arriving at Virden June 3, they found it to contain a few shanties, a store owned and operated by H. Downs, and a post office with a Mr. Scarth postmaster.

There were two boarding houses one operated by Richard Bellamy, and the other in the process of being built by John Mooney. They stayed at the latter, sleeping on the floor, using their own blankets for pillows.

The 20 mile trip to the homestead was taken in an ox-cart over open country, and it took 12 hours.

Arriving at the log house which boasted a sod roof and a board floor, they found it contained furniture made from poplar poles. When groceries were required, the man walked to Virden, and returned carrying the provisions on his back. These trips were few and far between.

In 1885 the Riel Rebellion broke out, and a great many Indians passed their place en route from Beulah to Griswold. None of them ever gave the slightest trouble.

By 1885, with neighbors coming to the district homesteads, a post office was needed, and the McKinnon farm was selected as the logical location since it was on the direct route from Virden to Beulah.

The name Penrith was given to the post office, to which mail was brought once a week from Virden. It was the event of the week to be on hand when the mail carrier arrived with latest news of the outside world.

Arrangements soon were made to hold church service every second Sunday at Penrith. These services were well attended by people from miles around. A student minister of the Presbyterian denomination preached.

As with many buildings of pioneer days, its identity with the past was soon forgotten. But for Winston Good, who lives on the adjoining farm to the one-time Penrith, it holds many fond memories. It belonged to his grandfather, and his mother was postmistress for 15 years.

Members of the 3rd, 4th and 5th generations of this McKinnon family still reside in the district of Ravine, north-west of Lenore.

Pipestone

By a Pioneer's Son

The citizens of Virden District are to be congratulated on their effort and tireless planning in order to mark the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the founding of their Town and surrounding district. Pipestone is glad to be included in this historic event, and appreciates the privilege of making a small contribution in honoring our pioneers.

Pipestone, of course, took its name from the Pipestone River, and it was on the banks of this river, in May, 1881, that the first settlers—Dan McKinnon, A. McLean and the Lothian Brothers—arrived and pitched their tents, almost due north of where the Town of Pipestone is now situated. Three years later the first bridge was built at this point, and for many years was known as McKinnon's Bridge. On June 1st of the same year, the first sod was turned and the first seed sown by hand, seven acres of barley. This honor fell to William Lothian, who at the time was working for Dan McKinnon. On April 10th, 1883, the first load of wheat was marketed, being sold to John Mooney for seed by James Lothian. On December 26th of the same year, John McKinnon was elected the first Reeve of Pipestone Municipality, and in November, 1886, Dan McLean was elected the first Member of Parliament for Virden Constituency.

The history of the early days of this settlement is very well told by Mrs. T. A. Bulloch (nee Ellen Guthrie), herself a daughter of well-known pioneers. Those interested would be well advised to avail themselves of this fine tribute to our early settlers entitled, "Pioneers of Pipestone". The story is one of hardships and disappointments but also of well earned reward. The establishing of organizations for the betterment of the community, socially, educationally and spiritually, and always with the wonderful spirit which, through the years, laid the foundation of a community of which, we their descendents, are today so justly proud, is told in the book.

The year 1892 marked the advent of the railroad, and the beginning of the Towns of Pipestone and Reston. This naturally divided the old community, but the friendships, formed in those years of strain and stress, lasted down through the years. This meant, too, the end of the long trips to Virden which up till this time had been the nearest market town.

It is a far cry from the little log homes dotting the bald prairie, the ox-teams and the Red River carts, to the fine modern homes of today, nestling in their lovely shelter bluffs, so wisely planted by those early settlers—these homes equipped with all the latest electrical gadgets, and the farms operated with all the modern machinery, and including the latest model of automobile. While we rejoice that such conditions prevail, let us never forget those brave men and women, who pioneered our western prairies, those wonderful mothers, who gave birth to their children, very often without any medical attention, and with only the help of some kindly neighbor women; the men travelling long weary

miles, with their ox-teams, to market their produce, and purchase their supplies; always with that indomitable spirit, and an ever abiding faith in an all-loving Providence; when all were neighbors, in that real sense, as exemplified in the parable of The Good Samaritan.

So on this, the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of Virden and surrounding district, we salute you, our PIONEERS OF PIPESTONE.

Reston

The first people to be settled in this part of Manitoba were the band of Sioux Indians who fled from the States after the Custer Massacre in 1876. They camped along the Pipestone River for about two years and were finally settled permanently on the Reserve along the River, north of the town of Pipestone. Along the river valley the buffalo skeletons were scattered thickly and deeply trodden paths ran to the river banks where the buffalo had gone to drink.

The first white man to arrive came in 1881 and from that time on there was a steady growth in population.

Many of the first to come were from Ontario, with Scotland and England well represented and these first settlers were a grand lot of people, brave, honorable and most hospitable.

During the Riel Rebellion of 1885, some anxiety was felt in case the Indians on the Reserve would join in with those on the warpath further west but the Chief, John Wakpa, who was friendly toward the white men, used his influence to keep them quiet and no trouble occurred.

On June 1, 1881, the first sod was turned in the district by William Lothian. A little later Mr. Lothian sowed by hand seven acres of barley, the initial cultivated field and crop in the district.

In those early days, all the country as far west as Sinclair, Ewart and east of Pipestone was then called the Pipestone settlement. North and south for miles was also included and Virden was the shopping centre for all. The wheat was all drawn there to be marketed and supplies of all sorts purchased. This situation continued until 1892 when the Souris, Arcola railway came through.

This was a great boon to the farmers as the hauling of wheat so far to market was a heavy burden on them.

When the railway was built and town sites were established at Pipestone and Reston, it caused quite a division in the district as naturally people went to the nearest market.

The first school to be built was the one now known as Lanark but the original name had been Reston. This school was built in 1887 and for years was the Community Centre for the whole district. Church services were held there on Sunday, concerts and any other meetings held through

the week and all this filled a great need at the time as well as being the educational centre of such a large district. At one time, nearly fifty pupils were on the roll.

With the arrival of the railway and when town sites were surveyed, the C.P.R. asked to name this town Reston. After some discussion it was decided to allow the town to have the name and to rename the school Lanark.

The first C.P.R. station was built at the south end of Main Street. Some years later an accident occurred. The engine of an incoming train left the track and plowed into the side of the station, wrecking it badly. The company decided they needed more space for yards than was available where the first station had been built, so they erected the new one farther east at the spot where it now stands.

The first building to go up was a small one erected by the late Wm. Brisby, near the corner where the Massey-Harris building now stands, to be used as an office for the lumber yard he planned to establish.

During the spring of 1893, Mr. W. J. Wilcox, a pioneer merchant of Virden, established a branch store in Reston with the late G. S. Munro in charge. In later years Mr. Munro bought out the business and built the store where the business is still carried on.

A post office had been set up in what is now called the Lanark District but when the town was started, it was moved in and the late Mr. H. McDougall from Virden was appointed postmaster.

The Reston Recorder has been an important adjunct in the development of the Town and District, helping to create community interest under the editorship of the late Frank Manning and still carried on by his son and daughter.

The town has prospered through the years and has much to be proud of in spite of the fact that several bad fires were experienced. The hospital has been a great asset to the district, a beautiful little park lies on the east side of town, an excellent Creamery has been established, the Campbell Seed House carries on a large business and a very fine community rink was built. After the last war a memorial theatre and hall was built to honor the memory of the men who had given their lives for their community.

River Valley District

By Mrs. J. M. Sproat

Nestled against the east hill of the Assiniboine River, one mile north and five miles east of Virden, is River Valley School, built in 1896, with stone walls two feet thick.

When William Sproat came from Ontario in 1881, the railroad ended at Oak Lake. He walked from there to Regina and back, looking for a homestead and finally settled on the top of the river hill overlooking the beautiful valley, bringing his family in 1882.

Mrs. K. T. Horn, eldest daughter of the late Henry Turner, states that when she was four years old in 1882 their family came from Ontario to the River Valley District and were driven from Virden behind a team of oxen to the river crossing by an uncle of the late Robert Mooney. They crossed on the ferry and walked to their homestead on the east hill, to live in a tent for months.

As the pioneer settlers came in, their children had to attend school either at Breadalbane or Virden, and it was not until 1896 that the school district was organized and because of its location, named River Valley. Those men responsible were William Sproat, James Gee, Henry Turner, Joseph Campbell, John Fraser, John Leask, Samuel Dodds, John and Joseph Johnston, Robert McBeth, John Irwin, Gregor McKinnon.

School began in 1896 with thirty-three pupils enrolled; the teacher, Mr. Brokenshire, then minister at Breadalbane Church. (He gave the wages he earned to the church). He was followed in succession by Miss Sarah Good, Isabella Hall, Bella Haig, Jennie Drummond (now Mrs. Robert Dodds of Virden), Jennie Jefferson, Nellie McGregor (now Mrs. Frank Carscadden) and many more through the years.

That first winter, Willie Sproat walked to school to light the fire and sweep the floor for ten cents a day. It was a long winter with much snow and bad blizzards. During one of the worst blizzards the McKinnon children were lost for most of the night and all the neighbors were out with lanterns looking for them. By this time, there was a bridge across the river and a road over which some beautiful driving teams travelled and hundreds of fine heavier teams hauled grain all winter long.

Favorite pastime for school pupils was to "hook on" their sleds for a ride—one of the joys of going to a school "by the side of the road."

The people of this district had floods to deal with, terrible ones (and still have) when crossings had to be made in small boats. During one flood, Mrs. McDougall and "Doc" Keffer were drowned, not far from the school.

Some of the residents took part in log drives, the logs coming down from the north, followed by a flat bottomed boat—some drives stopping here, some going on to Brandon.

The pioneer women did their share in the building of the district. Women like the late Mrs. James Gee and many others worked hard for the Women's Institute and later for River Valley Hospital Auxiliary.

In the earlier years, church services were held in the school. Mr. Samuel Dodds was superintendent of the first Sunday School, followed by Robert McBeth with Nellie Sproat as Secretary-Treasurer.

River Valley School became a landmark, as it still is. Also it became a social centre which was active until three years ago when the school closed. There is something sad about the closing of a country school—the passing of something fine. There was a noteworthy feeling of friendliness at socials, dances, picnics and parties in River Valley all through the years and there was a deep regret in the district when the school had to be closed.

The "old stone school" is being kept in repair today, partly as a gesture of respect for the pioneers, also because it had become an historical landmark.

Of all the pioneer landowners, only one descendant, John Sproat, remains in the district, and he, together with Walter Pearn and Norman Welch, form the present school board, with Roy Pearn, Secretary-Treasurer. Mrs. Alec Penny, school van operator, takes our pupils, three in number, once again to Virden School.

Scarth District

By Mrs. R. T. Kenderdine

The year 1882 saw the arrival of a great many settlers through what is now known as Scarth district. Among the first was John A. Wright, commonly known as "Dutch" with his sons, Ed and Charlie, and daughter Cecelia, who later married Scott Ellsworth of Pipestone. Ed is still living in Virden, Charlie passed on two years ago. His son, J. E. Wright, still farms the homestead of his grandfather.

The first Presbyterian church service was held in the summer of 1902 in the stone granary still in use on this farm; in the winter the service was held in the present house. Special services were taken by Rev. Peter Strang of Virden. Jim Wright farms across the road from his father, and his family is the fifth generation to be living near the original homestead.

John Buck homesteaded the same year. He had gone to Texas, from England in 1880, and came to Portage la Prairie in 1881. In 1882 he rode a construction train to Oak Lake; from there he walked to Routledge and was accompanied by A. P. Power, Charlie Brown and Mr. Hill. They all filed homesteads.

The following year Mrs. Buck and daughter, Ethel, came out from England. Ethel was kept tethered for fear of losing her in the tall grass.

An entry in Mr. Buck's diary of January 4, 1886, states: "Took 75 bushels of oats to Virden with oxen, sold to Kennedy for 18c bushel.

"January 5th—Bown, Redfern and myself went to poll at Fennel's, voted for McLean and McDonald.

"January 14th—Stood Godfather for John Alfred Redfern.

"April 22nd—Bought a six weeks old pig from Burge for one dollar.

"1890—July 28th—Bought a Brantford binder.

"December 4th—Took 38 bushels wheat to Virden. Received \$14.25."

There were no schools at this time and Ethel attended a convent in Brandon for a few months, then attended a private school in Virden run by Mrs. Madge from 1895 to 1902. In 1903 Wilbur Wiles and Ethel Buck were married in Virden by Rev. Robertson, Anglican minister. One member of the Wiles family still lives in the community—Mrs. Ken McDonald of the Laggan district. Mr. and Mrs. Wiles and son, Hart, moved to B.C. in 1932.

Scarth School District was organized in 1910. The first school board was John Buck, chairman, C. A. Wright, J. E. Wright Sr., and W. H. Toomer, secretary-treasurer. The first teacher, Miss Lottie Gibson, is now living retired in Victoria, B.C. There were thirteen pupils from the families of John S. Harris, Chas. Nairne, Wilbur Wiles, C. A. Wright, John Dickie and Wm. Linklater.

Mr. Reg Nairne, the present C.N.R. Section foreman, is a son of Chas. Nairne.

School was held the first several months in a vacant house in Scarth until the school was completed. Mr. W. T. Manser was the contractor.

The railway came in from the South in 1905 and the siding was called Buckston. In 1907 when the railroad was completed from the east, it crossed through the farm of Wm. Scarth, and the name of the siding was changed to Scarth. Scarth Post Office was established in 1908, the first post master being Mr. John Shoemaker.

Mr. Ed Snelson homesteaded east of Scarth in 1883, and lived there until he retired to live in Virden with his son, Bert, and daughter, May.

In 1886, Jim Fry came from England, and lived in the district a few years. His niece, Elizabeth, came to make her home with him in 1887, and married Ed Snelson at the residence of Mr. John Horsman, Oak Lake, on the 26th day of August, 1888, by the Rev. Charles Quinney of St. Alban's Anglican Church, Oak Lake. The Fry family later moved to Saskatchewan and the town of Frys was named for them.

Walter Snelson is living on his father's homestead; another son, Arthur, lives on what was originally C.P.R. land and owned by T. P. H. Ramsey. Mr. Ramsey lived there for several years, later moving to Virden. Ramsey and Caulfield built the Balmoral Hotel in the year 1893.

Springvale District

The story of the Springvale District begins back in 1882 when the first settlers, J. W. Younge and W. J. Gyles, arrived travelling by railroad as far as Flat Creek, now Oak Lake.

The following year the land in the district was surveyed and homesteaders began to arrive. The land was bought from the C.P.R. at \$2.50 an acre. A homesteader received \$1.25 an acre for every acre broken. The prairie land was broken by plows pulled by oxen. When the homesteaders arrived they found the district to be open prairie with no bluffs of any size. Wood had to be hauled in from Moose Mountain.

Among the early settlers were: 1882, Younge and Gyles; 1883, Penrose; 1884, Lawrence; 1885, Matur; 1886, Simpson; 1887, Wardle; 1889, J. Wardle; 1889, Bradleys; 1889, Peters; 1892, Williams; 1897, Hasketts. Other early homesteaders included these families: Reid, W. Gyles, Cameron, McKenzie, R. L. Carr, Connolly, Sharratt, Reichert, Bishop, Flood, Gray, Carter, Jackson, Home, Barton, Wilson and Garlick. Oldest living pioneers are Mrs. W. Williams, 87, and Art Williams, 79. Others still living are Mrs. B. Haskett, Mrs. T. Haskett and Mrs. Penrose.

Oxen were used in the district as late as 1910.

The first white baby, a girl, born in this area of Western Manitoba was Nellie Gyles. She was born on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ 14-10-28, the quarter section on which Springvale School is now located.

Prior to 1902 children from this district attended Daybreak School at first. Later some went to Boss Hill School. First school in the district was held in the home of W. McKenzie for three months with Miss Groutage as the first teacher. For the three-month term she received a salary of \$80.

In 1902 a meeting was held at Mr. McKenzie's home to form a school district. The following year Daly School was built on Sec. 14-10-28 with J. W. Younge as the first secretary-treasurer of the School District. Later the name was changed to Springvale School District.

The first three teachers were Miss Groutage, Miss Baker and Mr. Parker. Miss Annie Mooney, sister of the late R. H. Mooney for many years Virden's M.L.A., taught in Springvale School in 1905 with a salary of \$30 a month.

As far as is known the first post office was in the Rathbone home on SW $\frac{1}{4}$ 10-10-28. Mr. McKenzie had the post office at his home on NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 12-10-28 from 1898 for over thirty years. He brought the mail from Virden every Friday. During the years he missed only once, due to a severe blizzard.

In the early 1890's Methodist church services were held at the Rathbone home. Later Presbyterian services were held in the McKenzie home.

From 1903 until the present, church services have been held in

Springvale School. Among the early Sunday School teachers were Mr. McFadden, Mrs. McPhail. After 1907 Mr. Simpson was superintendent of the Sunday School most of the time until 1924. Another who served in this capacity was Bert Drain. Choirs were conducted by Mrs. Millburn and Mr. Drain.

Important events in the district during the first ten years of this century were: 1900—a great hurricane; 1902—Mr. W. Wardle brought in the first complete steam engine and thresher outfit; 1903—a two-foot snow storm buried stooks on September 16; 1907—Wallace telephones were first installed; 1908—the first car arrived in the district, a Buick, owned by Art Williams.

In the early days roads were built through the Statute of Labor for taxes. A man and a team would give four days' work a summer to build and maintain roads.

The district was represented in the Boer War by the Carter twins. Men from Springvale who served in World War I were John Bailey,

Fred Bailey (killed), Gordon Simpson, Jared R. Storey, Walter Knisely, William Coxfield (killed), Norman Williams, Howard Wardle, James Anderson, Harry Chapman, Gordon Wardle, Sidney Storey, J. Hamil, Robert Knotman (killed), Hugh Cheaters, Percy Reichert, Frank Lovegrove. Of these three made the supreme sacrifice and seven were wounded. In World War II these served: Frank Lovegrove, William Gardiner, Robert Mitchell, Reginald Doidge, Leonard Haskett, and Maurice Lovegrove.

In the pioneer days wheat growing, cattle raising and horse breeding were the mainstays of the homesteaders. Grain hauling in the days of loading cars by hand was made a community effort. Breeders of show horses in the early years were B. and T. Haskett, the Wardles and the Williams.

In 1912 the first gas tractor was used in the district. Crops in 1915 were bumper ones but in 1916 a rust epidemic was so severe that it ended the growing of Red Fife Wheat in the district and indeed in the west. 1922 was marked by a grasshopper plague and in 1932 wheat prices hit rock bottom.

Community societies have flourished in the district since World War I. In 1911 a literary society was organized with Mrs. Millburn the chief promoter. A ladies aid was formed in 1912. During the first war a Girls Victory club was active. After the war the United Farmers of Manitoba had a branch in the district. Within the U.F.M. the Springvale Debating Society gained the provincial championship one year. When the U.F.M. disbanded the Springvale Community Club was established. At the beginning of World War II the ladies were active in the Red Cross and later they organized the Springvale Women's Institute.

Springvale district has the honor of being the home of Manitoba's first producing oil well in the Daly Oil Field. A monument has been erected to commemorate this historical event. As a result of oil devel-

opment the first all-weather road from Virden through Springvale District and so on to the Saskatchewan border was completed in 1954.

Through the years Springvale District people have shown unusual willingness to co-operate and to adjust differences for the common good. It is this spirit, the spirit of true pioneers, which has made Springvale the modern farming community it is today.

St. David's and its Neighbors

By Myrtle Johnston

In 1882, Mrs. E. Cairns, with her aged father, Mr. Bell, and her young family came up the Assiniboine in a steamboat from Winnipeg. They were put off on the bank of the river with their supplies and effects which included a team of oxen and enough lumber for a shanty. Ryerson School is situated on the homestead of this pioneer.

Mr. Peter Merrick came west in 1878, and because the C.P.R.'s original plan was to construct their line through Shoal Lake, he settled in that area. In 1880 he came to the river nine miles east of where Brandon is now, and there met a party of surveyors who were choosing a townsite. Because of their inability to make a deal with the owner of the property there, the party moved on to where the city of Brandon is now located. Mr. Merrick, the only one in the party who could swim, swam across the Assiniboine and carried a message to a C.P.R. party who was constructing a telegraph line. Mr. Merrick worked with this party of surveyors when they surveyed the town of Brandon. His son, George, lives on his homestead in the Harvey district.

Mrs. John Spiers came as a bride in an ox cart to make her home in the district which bears her maiden name—Blair. Her husband was the veterinary surgeon for the settlement.

Many of the first settlers were young men who worked on the C.P.R. as the line threaded its way across the prairie. In 1875, John and Alex Goodwin were members of the gang which built the railroad from Emerson to Winnipeg. That was the year the grasshoppers were so bad. One hot day they took off their shirts and jackets and hung them on a fence. When they returned there was just a pile of buttons and a watch. Later, after working on a surveying gang in Saskatchewan, they returned to Brandon. There they met some men who had been homesteading 34-10-24 and were leaving. They took up that homestead. In 1882 Alex Goodwin brought his wife and two small sons, Harvey and David, from Arnprior, Ontario. They travelled by ox cart from Brandon. They had lumber to build their shanty, but they found there was enough for only three sides. Blankets were hung on the fourth side until they were able to make the trip to Brandon to get more lumber.

Duncan McKinnon, 2-11-24, Gregor McKinnon, 24-10-25, and John Hagyard, 2-11-24, came in 1881 when the railroad reached Griswold.

They walked from there to Birtle to file their homesteads and walked back again. Enoch Williams came in 1881. He operated a ferry across the Assiniboine near the site of Williams' bridge.

The first Oak Lake station master, James Gillespie, arrived with his family on July 16, 1882. His son, W. R. Gillespie of Vancouver, writes "Flat Creek, Oak Lake now, was then the end of the track. They had a turning table for the engine and the yards were full of ties and rails. By the end of 1883, the yards were all cleared out and the material shipped further west."

With the railroad came an influx of settlers. Three McDonald brothers Jack, Dugald and Duncan, six Johnston brothers, George, William, Jack, Joe, Tom and Andrew, were among those making their homes north of the river. Jim Spiers and Wm. Shaw in Blair; Jack, Andy, Alex and George Shaw, Bob and Dan McBeth, George, Bill and Jim Dryden and the Gardiners in Hagyard; Robert Tomlinson on the edge of Verity and Ryerson on 6-11-23; J. Cochrane, A. J. Todd, J. Carpentier, R. K. Smith, B. Little, D. McCallum, W. Miller in Ryerson were among the first settlers.

T. R. Todd, Andrew Jackson and Tom Etsell came together to the Shiloh district in 1882. Andrew Jackson took up a homestead in St. David's, 31-10-24. In 1883, Mr. Etsell homesteaded the farm in Hagyard now occupied by his son, Earl. He had built a house and on a fall day in 1883 went to Oak Lake to meet his wife and baby son, Henry, who were coming from Ontario. On their return they found that a prairie fire had swept over the area and everything was burned. They worked that winter for a farmer at Arrow River returning to their homestead in the spring, the proud owners of a team of horses, the first in the settlement. Their daughter, Mary Ellen (Mrs. E. Gray), born May 24, 1884, was the first white baby born in the community. Mrs. Etsell was with her neighbor, Mrs. Alex Goodwin, when her daughter Millie (Mrs. A. Phillips) was born October 8, 1884. Many times Mrs. Etsell acted as nurse in time of need in those early days. Earl Tomlinson was one of the first babies born in the settlement. Early in the history of the settlement Hiram Guest and Dr. Guest took up farming in the Blair district on the Ross Finley farm. Dr. Guest who served as physician to the pioneers, later moved to Virden and continued to carry on his practice.

Dr. Harvey lived with his family, Albert, Thomas, John and Celia, in the Harvey district and was the physician in that community.

Young and old enjoyed themselves at the dances held in the homes—"a little wee house and a big dance" is the way one old timer expressed it. Salt Lake was a widely known picnic centre; baseball was popular.

Woodworth Municipality was organized in 1883 with W. J. Helliwell as reeve and T. R. Todd as clerk. It was divided into six wards in 1884.

Oxen were generally used at first. W. Fawkes, superintendent of Hagyard Sunday School, used to ride one ox to Sunday School and the other walked beside him as the animals refused to be separated.

The Leitch brothers built a flour mill in Oak Lake in the eighties and farmers for many miles around brought their grain there, returning home with a grist. The mill was closed in 1921.

All grain was bagged when delivery was made. Most of the grain was stacked and threshed from the stack. Mr. Findlay in the Ryerson district had a horse power outfit in 1884. The Johnston brothers in the Breadalbane district also had a horse power threshing machine. George Michie, 12-11-24, had the first steamer outfit in 1884. In the same year Tom Haney, Dugald McDonald and Duncan McDonald purchased a steamer outfit. It was brought across the river on the first ferry at Kennedy's which started operation in 1883. The bridge across the Assiniboine at Charlie Williams' was built in 1886.

In 1884 Sunday School was held at the home of William Smith (Doug Smith's great grandfather) the farm presently owned by Sid Withers. Sunday School was held at the home of Mrs. E. Cairns.

After Hagyard School was opened in 1886, Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists held Sunday School in the building. The service would be in charge of the Baptists one Sunday, the Presbyterians the next and the Methodists the next, the entire community going to each service.

Ryerson School was opened in 1887 and similar services were then conducted there. Ryerson Church was built in 1901. St. David's Church, opened in 1892, was named in honor of Rev. David Hodges, the first minister and David Goodwin on whose land the church is located.

The first cars in the community were owned by John McDonald and Andrew Johnston who went to Winnipeg in the spring of 1911 and each purchased a Reo car. They were two days making the trip home, spending the night at Carberry. On several occasions they were obliged to get horses from farmers to pull them through mud holes.

The telephone came to the district in 1908, the hydro in 1947.

On this memorable 75th anniversary, the children and grandchildren of the pioneers join hands with many newcomers to uphold the tradition of the past and build a future worthy of their heritage.

Note: The late Andrew Jackson kept a diary and much of this information was obtained from him when I wrote a note on St. David's eight years ago.

The Two Creeks District

By James Morton

I think that there is no doubt that the name of Two Creeks was the designation of one of the stopping places of the old Hudson's Bay caravans or freighting trains that used to travel along the Red River trail

from Winnipeg to Fort Ellice and thence northward. Most of these places were designated as "Creeks" because of the water supply. There was a Flat Creek, now Oak Lake, Gopher Creek, now Virden, and thence to our own Two Creeks which still retains the name. These trips took in from sixteen to twenty miles a day or little more. At Fort Ellice the Assiniboine River was crossed by ferry, and from that point the covered carts distributed their goods among the Hudson's Bay trading posts to the north.

In the Two Creeks district there was no settlement before 1882, the year in which, as a boy, I came with my father, brother and sister. It was midsummer when we arrived there. At that time there was not a house to be seen, and we all lived in tents 'till the fall, when log and sod houses were built. So far as I can remember the first settlers were a group of Scots headed by J. H. Proctor, an Edinburgh dentist. He was one of the few who had some capital and he brought out three Edinburgh men with him. These were John Innes, James Cummings and Robert Allan. Evidently they met with other Scots on the boat, and between them they decided to go land hunting together.

I suppose that Mr. Proctor found wagon and horses, and they must have set out in early spring, since I heard Jimmy Cummings tell how they had been caught in a snow storm. The name of Two Creeks was due to the fact that two large creeks with deep ravines and wooded sides were there close near their source, and never very far apart till both reached the Assiniboine River. I heard Mr. Proctor says afterwards that when they reached the "first creek," as it was called, he noted the fine clear stream and wooded banks and said, "This looks like the promised land."

Evidently his companions agreed with him since they all took up homesteads, mostly along the first creek. Besides Mr. Proctor, James Gray, Archie Laidlaw and John Caldwell took up their allotments there, while Thomas Kerr kept near them and close to the Assiniboine. Their line along the east side of the first creek was broken only by one Irish family of some distinction. It was that of Major-General Piggott, who bought an entire section and settled there with his wife, two daughters and three sons. I think that General Piggott built the first frame house in the district and it stands there to this day. Mr. Proctor, whose land lay alongside the Piggotts', must have followed soon, because he had quite a capacious frame house by the following spring. There were a few other Scotch settlers in between the first and second creeks such as Stuarts, Struthers, Aucotts and Lindsays.

But while these people were busy with their oxen, the main centre of attraction and point of interest was being developed a mile or so east of the first creek. This was the Assiniboine Farm, another name for the Rankin Colonization Estate. How this came into being requires some notice.

The Hon. James Rankin (later Sir James) was a wealthy Hereford land owner who became chairman of the Emigration Committee of the British House of Commons. When the C.P.R. was opening up Western Canada, he saw an opportunity for placing some of the surplus farm

laborers of England in a new field. He proposed to the government that they embark on a large colonization scheme by assisting families to emigrate and afterwards provide them with means to start farming in the new land on condition that they make repayment from a share of the proceeds of the crop each year. This the government declined to do, so Mr. Rankin resolved that he would undertake it himself on a smaller scale.

To manage the enterprise he sent out H. M. Power who had been manager of a tea plantation in Ceylon. Incidentally, Mr. Rankin's subsequent financial losses seemed to trouble him but little. Only once did he go out in person to examine his farms, and that was five years or more after his enterprise started and when it was showing unavoidable evidence of failure.

Mr. Power arrived in Winnipeg in the early spring of 1882. There he met and engaged Cowley Webster to assist in searching for and choosing the needed land. Mr. Webster was well qualified for the job since he had worked the previous year on a government survey and understood thoroughly the layout of sections and townships. With wagon and team they set out for the west, and finally selected five and a half sections in the Two Creeks district. The land lay between the creeks already mentioned and the Assiniboine River. No doubt the choice was influenced by streams with plentiful water and the wooded banks of the Assiniboine Valley with a bountiful supply of wood for fuel and building.

The first year's operations started on a modest scale. My father and Bill Durose, who had come out with us, met Mr. Power in Bruce's Employment Agency in Winnipeg, and engaged to go out to the Two Creeks farm. My brother Will and a younger sister accompanied my father. As the C.P.R. was still under construction we rode in a box car to Brandon, and from thence on a flat car to Gopher Creek, site of the future Virden. It was then but a handful of pioneers. There Cowley Webster met us with team and wagon, and drove us out to Two Creeks. It was midsummer, but still not a house was to be seen for miles around, while we were encamped in three tents on the edge of the smaller creeks. We occupied one tent, Mr. Webster, Durose and a man named Ashford had another and a third was reserved for Mr. Power who was expected to arrive shortly. There was a tin cook stove and a big wooden box to hold provisions. We lived chiefly on bread, bannocks, pork and beans, with tea and other needed groceries.

For that first year's operation three teams of oxen and one of horses were employed to break the prairie turf. The first land selected was on section seven on the edge of the Assiniboine Valley. There was nothing to do but to break up and backset that season in preparation for the seed to be sown in the following spring for use in the wider scheme. For the winter Webster and Durose lived in a frame shanty to look after the stock shelter in a log stable on the edge of a creek with a good spring. They had also to get out wood for themselves and for the following year. We spent the winter in a small frame house that Mr. Webster had built on his nearby homestead.

It was in 1883 that real activity on the Rankin Colonization plan began. Mr. Power went down to Missouri to purchase some forty mules for land breaking, and also a few horses were obtained in Winnipeg. To house them, a big barn was built on section 1-13-27. The first was blown down in a storm, but a second and more substantial one was soon erected. A gang of carpenters under a contractor named McAllister came in from Winnipeg. Besides the barn and central buildings, they had to build a frame house and barn every half section in preparation for the expected colonists from England. In reality I can recall only two families who came and settled on the land. Most of those sent out by Mr. Rankin stayed in Winnipeg under the lure of the much higher wages they could earn than in the old land. The two families who settled were the Reeves and Crumps. Another family, the Harrises, came but while the husband worked on the main farm for some four years, he would not take up land and finally the family returned to Winnipeg. The upshot was that afterwards Mr. Power had to sell or rent the land as best he could.

To return to 1883, some twenty to thirty men were employed in breaking up more land, and some neighboring settlers were employed with their own teams. Though the scheme was a financial failure for Mr. Rankin, it was a godsend to many of us. Cowley Webster continued as foreman of operations for a year or two when he left to devote his attention to his own homestead and my father was chosen to take his place. The Rankin place seemed to be the only one in the district where there was any money to spend, and not only our people, but a number of others, were started on their homesteads by money earned there.

In addition to the Two Creeks land, Mr. Power also bought five sections south of Whitewood. Subsequently a gang of men with around sixteen mules were sent there to break up the land, but one night, while the men were sleeping in their tents, some nine or ten of the mules were stolen by cutting them loose from the wagon wheels where they had been fastened. American cowboys were reported as driving them down towards the border and none were recovered.

In addition to the land at Two Creeks and Whitewood, there was another section at Moosomin, bringing the Rankin Estate up to well over 7,000 acres. But the whole project went from disaster to disaster. In the early years frosts were frequent and the price of wheat was low, and all culminated in the disastrous drought of 1889, the worst ever known in the country. Eventually all the land was either sold or leased. A new generation of farmers came in and individual applications prospered where corporation management had failed. As so often happens, the next generation profited by the failures of the first. But at least the enterprise had converted the untrodden wilderness into some of the prosperous farms which adorn that countryside today.

Mr. J. Morton of Victoria, B.C., wrote the early history of Two Creeks, Mr. William Maxfield adds this to complete the story:

The first Post Office was established in 1890 with Mrs. Thos. Cripps as postmistress at the salary of \$10 a year. This was in the present

residence of Cecil Clegg. After ten years of excellent service Mr. William Morton took the post office in his home until the C.P.R. branch line was laid in 1913 after which date the mail has been received as it is today at the small village of Two Creeks.

The first school in this area was built in 1888 on the property of Mr. Wendel Sararas S.E. 33-12-26 and was named Ross after a little town in Herefordshire, England, where many pioneer families had come from. Allan Laing of Virden was the first teacher. Several years later it was found necessary to move the school a mile west and then in January, 1916, the present consolidated school was opened and is still in use. The first teachers were Mr. Stewart and Miss Miners. The same year that the school was built, 1915, the Ogilvie Milling Co. built an elevator at this point. John Hawes was the first buyer. Descendents from many of the pioneers continue to carry on mixed farming in this area: Reeves, Mortons, Websters, Nichols, and Maxfields are still familiar names, some on the original homesteads.

—Recorded by Mrs. C. H. Webster.

Woodnorth

By Wilf Forsyth

In the early Eighteen Eighties, settlers roamed through the South-west corner corner of Manitoba in search of homesteads. The district of Woodnorth which is situated in the Rural Municipality of Pipestone, mid-way between the towns of Hargrave and Reston, came under the scrutiny of these hardy pioneers, and the first settler in the immediate vicinity of the townsite was Mr. James Brickley who settled in 1882, about two miles northwest of the village. This land has remained in the possession of the Brickley's ever since, a son of the above, Mr. David Brickley, still residing on the property.

The first post master was a farmer by the name of Mr. Cotton who farmed about a mile north-east of the village. The mail came via Virden and was delivered by horseback, buckboard and cutter as the seasons and conditions of the trails dictated. We learn that Mr. Robert Mooney, long time MLA for Virden Provincial constituency, was the first mail carrier, the mail delivery contract being held by Mr. Alex Mooney, father of the above. Mr. Wm. Hill took over the Post Office from Mr. Cotton around the year 1900, and carried on this service in the same place, until the coming of the railroad. Mr. Bert Hart took over these duties in his newly established store in the village which adopted the name "Woodnorth" as the old post office had been named years before.

The village as we now know it, came into being with the construction of the Canadian Northern Railway line from Winnipeg to Regina, now

operated by the Canadian National. The line was built in the later part of the first decade of the present century.

The land for the townsite was purchased by the Northern Land Company from Mr. Donald Cameron, a Scottish settler who in turn had purchased the land from Harvey Simpson, a prominent figure in the early Virden development.

The village itself got its start through the efforts of Bert Hart, pioneer store keeper, who opened the General Store in 1909, making his first sales out of the box car in which his opening stock in trade had been shipped, the store building being not quite ready for occupation.

The Woodnorth School District, known as the Woodnorth Protestant School District, was formed in 1910. The first classes with Miss May Haw of Virden as teacher, were held in the coal shed of the British America Elevator Company. The School District became consolidated in 1918 with three rooms and high school facilities.

On the 24th of July, 1910, a Methodist Church was opened, with the first service conducted by the Rev. Maunders of Pipestone. This church, now, of course, United Church of Canada, still provides a vital service to the community, and has been well supported over the years.

No account of Woodnorth would be complete without mention of Mr. J. P. Richardson who took over Bert Hart's business in 1915, and was probably the best known resident of the community. He was widely known, highly respected and did much to see the community over many of the rough spots during the years.

To name some of the early figures in the district we offer a few firsts: first elevator agent, Clark Thompson; first lumber merchant, Reg Knight of Virden; first car of wheat shipped, Mr. Albert Shoemaker; first barber, Harcourt Berry, now of Reston; first butcher, Ed Bryant; first station agent, Joe Stanton, followed by Bob Leslie who will be well remembered by the baseball fans of that era. Mr. Frank Millburn was the first hardware merchant, opening up in 1913; Mr. Milburn who was a son of one of the early pioneers made a large contribution to the community, being very active in all worthy efforts, and very enthusiastic in sports, particularly baseball and curling.

Mrs. S. E. Leech, now living with her daughter at Muir, Manitoba, gave leadership in the community, and was active in farm organizations of the formative period of the district.

Today Woodnorth district is a well balanced agricultural unit, prosperous and well supported by a good mixed farming economy with good grain and stock farmers helping to meet present day demands for grain and other products vital to the welfare of the community.

The Lost Colony of Gopher Creek

By Col. C. G. Porter

That "Lost Colony of Gopher Creek!" How many Manitobans remember the romance and tragic circumstances surrounding the venture? Yet this kindly effort to establish a model farm community on the bald prairie predated by nearly twenty years the historic Barr colony of ghastly memory in Saskatchewan where men and women and children endured unbelievable hardships and made good too.

Virden is one of the most prosperous sections of the west today yet, in the memory of many of us we first knew it as "Gopher Creek" a whistling station on the pioneer transcontinental railway. At that time—1881—the end of steel was at Flat Creek, now known as Oak Lake, some 35 miles west of Brandon. Between 1882-3 the builders reached Gopher Creek, the site of the first model farm colony-to-be in the history of the west, as far as my information goes.

It was the brain child of a great man, dreamer, a worker and a genius who had a way of making his dreams come true. With that humble community were associated names that became a part of the history of the prairies, yes, almost of the continent and even more remote—Stevens, Sanfords, Bennetts—personalities with which to conjure when the impossible was to be accomplished.

The Gopher Creek colony is today but a memory—not unpleasant either, because it is a symbol of a terrific struggle to make a stretch of land productive that was naturally not fitted for agriculture, just another milestone in the country's development.

But how circumstances leading up to the venture grip the imagination! A poor Scottish immigrant reached the promised land and prospering amid hardships, vowed some day to give to his relations and friends in Aberdeenshire a chance in Canada. And then came the railway age and this immigrant boy became Sir George Stephens. The way had been rough and long but not sufficiently so to efface from his memory the struggles of his childhood friends in Scotland.

It was then, with the steel reaching out from the Red River Valley, that the empire builder concluded the time had come to make that part of his dream come true. He brought his brother William over with instructions to "get on the plains and find a suitable place for a model colony where buildings would be erected and everything possible done to give their old friends a start on a substantial scale in the 'promised' land."

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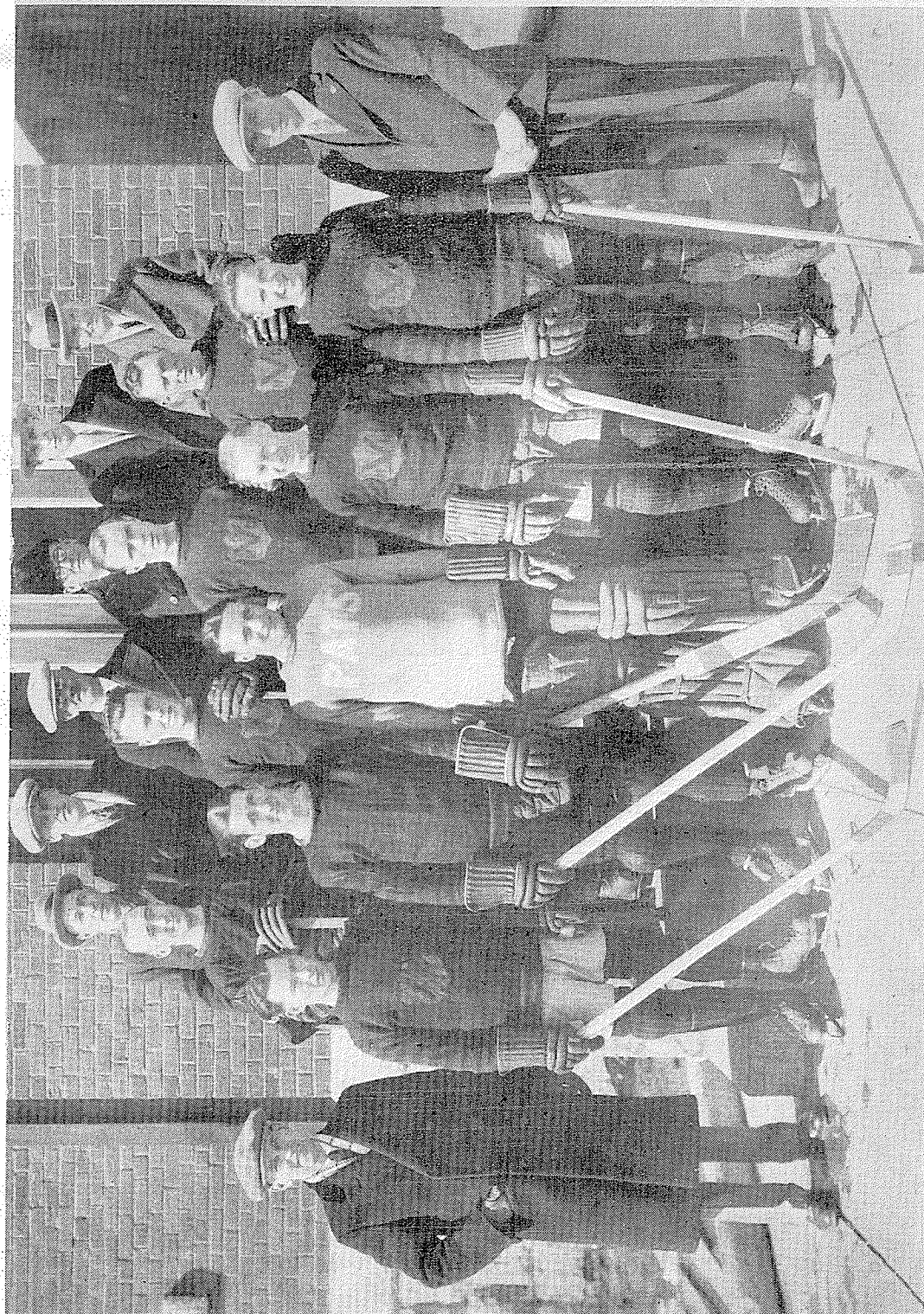
William Stephens knew his Scotland but what he did NOT know was that on the western prairies things are not always what they appear on the surface, that there are mirages besides those of atmospheric illusions and equally deceptive. There was plenty of homestead land around Gopher Creek section in those days and the C.P.R. owned many

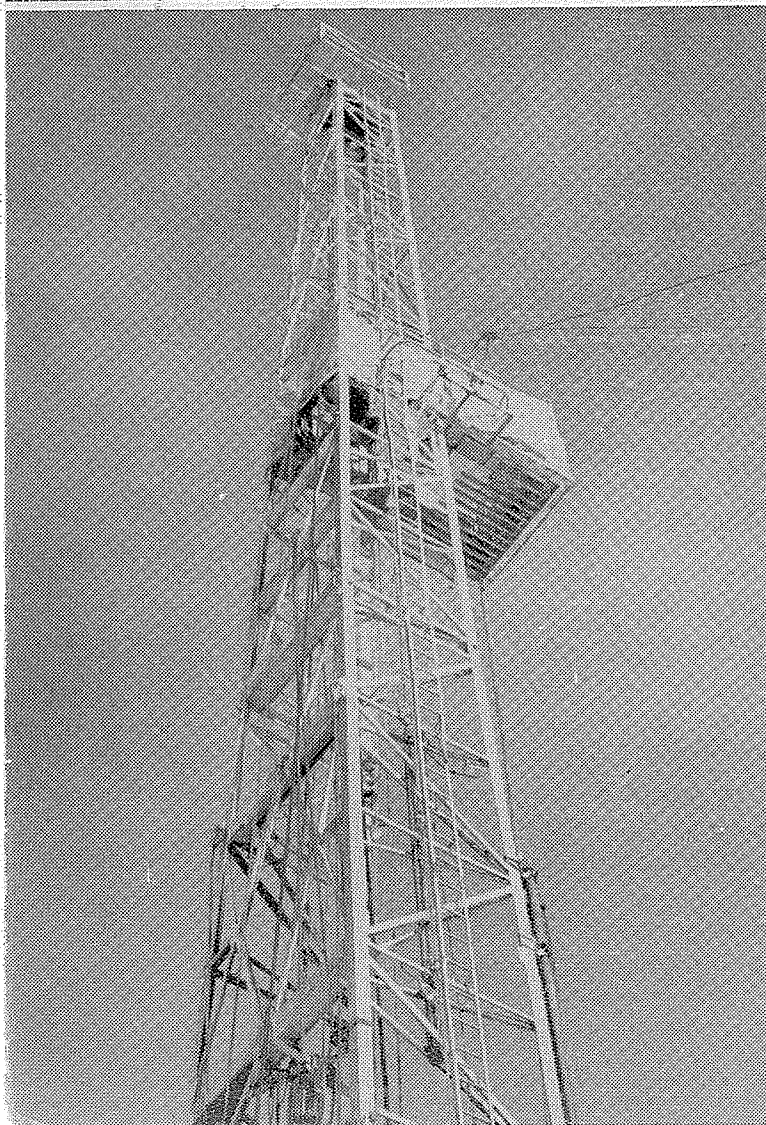
acres. The limpid stream of that name was lined with oak and poplar and in every direction were rolling park lands to delight the eye of the agriculturist, and, best of all, every depression was filled with water. Apparently there could be no question about ample moisture but there was little or no record of past years as a guide.

There was a mistake—a natural one—that William Stephens made when he selected Gopher Creek as the site of the ambitious project the transportation head had decided to promote. The sandy land in the farming country with which Stephens was familiar would have been ideal because of constant moisture. But, by 1889 all the "draws" and hollows adjacent to Gopher Creek had completely dried up. Only twice since then have all these sloughs been filled with water as that spring when the choice was made and the epic experiment on the plains began.

Certainly it was no fault of the splendid people located through Sir George Stephens' generosity and enterprise that the homeric effort failed. They came chiefly from Scotland and Ontario, a sturdy, God-fearing people, used to hard work and well versed in agricultural science as far as it went 60 years ago. They fitted well into the mosaic of the plains, were popular and enterprising. William Stephens, the founder and manager, left the country in 1886 and another William Stephens, a cousin, took his place. For many years this member of the family was president of the Virden Agricultural society, an institution that survives to this day as a notable contributor to agrarian interests.

The fine buildings Sir George caused to be constructed and the splendid cattle and implements he supplied made the colony distinctly the most progressive agricultural centre west of Toronto. Under more favorable conditions climatically the colony would have survived, for those who gradually left for more desirable land prospered. The break-up was gradual, but sure.



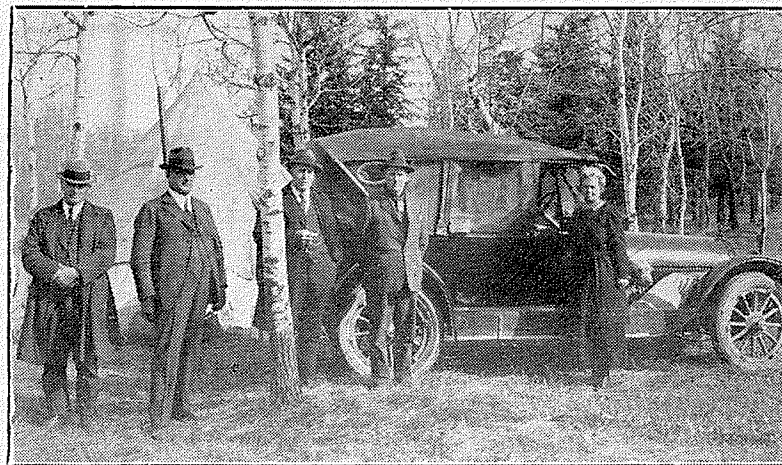
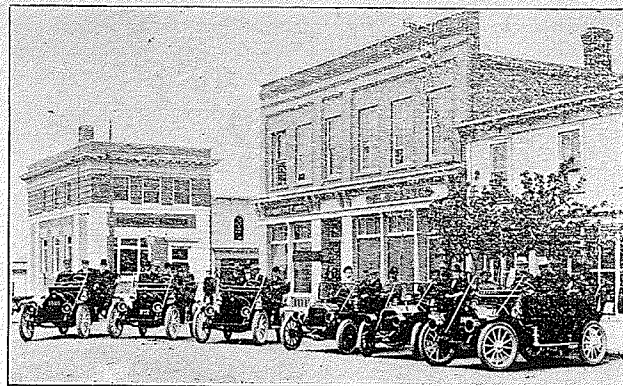


WHEAT AND OIL

These pictures are symbolic of the two major industries of the Virden area—agriculture and oil.

Virden and the district it serves was founded upon the products of the land—the wheat and other grains, the livestock, the dairy products. Two industries, Virden Creamery and the B. P. Kent Flour Mills Ltd. are based upon these products.

Since 1951 oil has become a second major industry for Virden is "The Oil Capital of Manitoba" with many hundreds of producing oil wells in the area and 16 within the limits of the town itself.



ABOVE:

The cars of the community are here lined up on Seventh Avenue ready for a daring cross-country run. The year was about 1910.

First tourists in Virden's tourist camp in Victoria Park are welcomed by Mayor Dr. H. N. Thompson (centre).

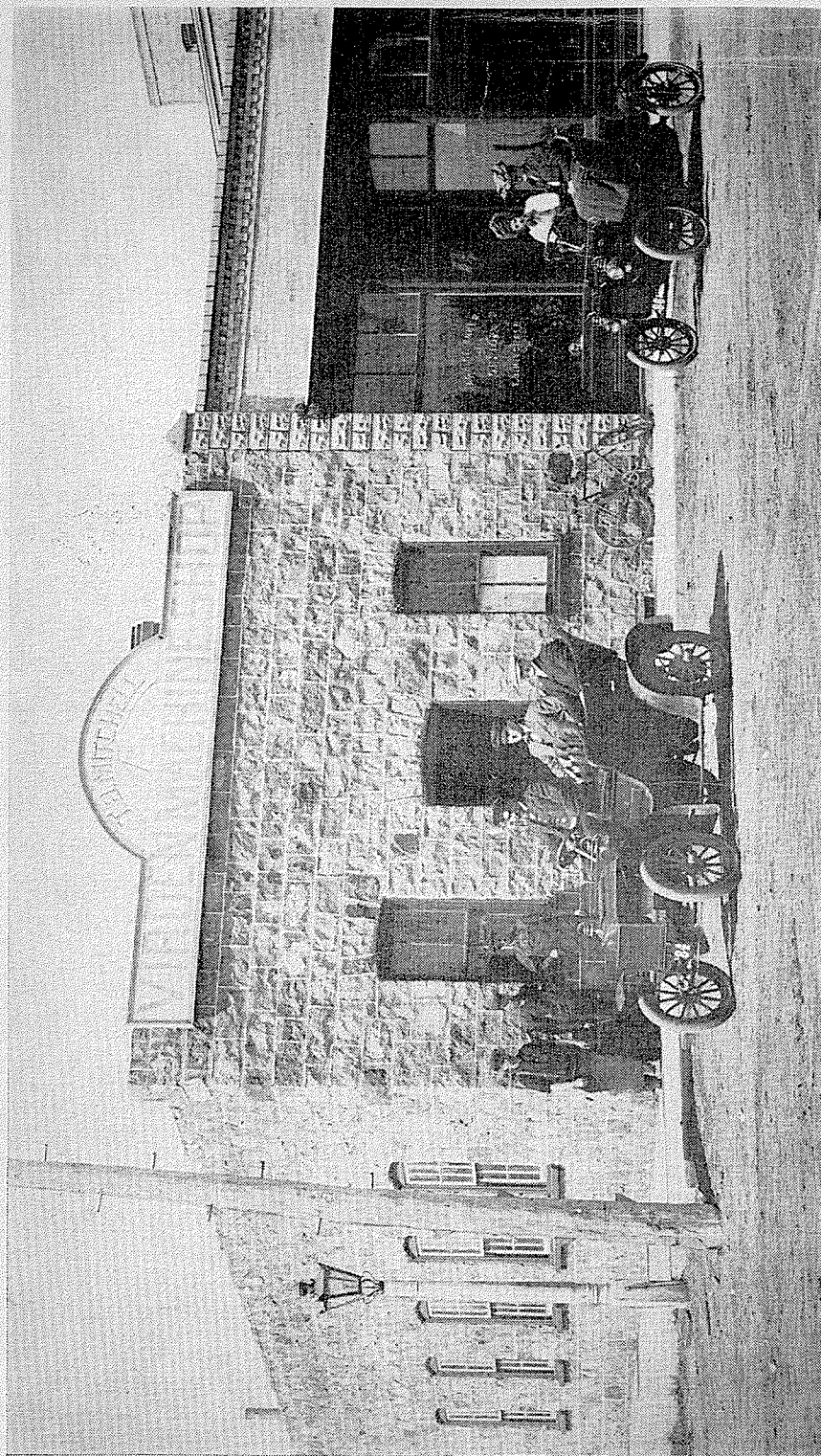
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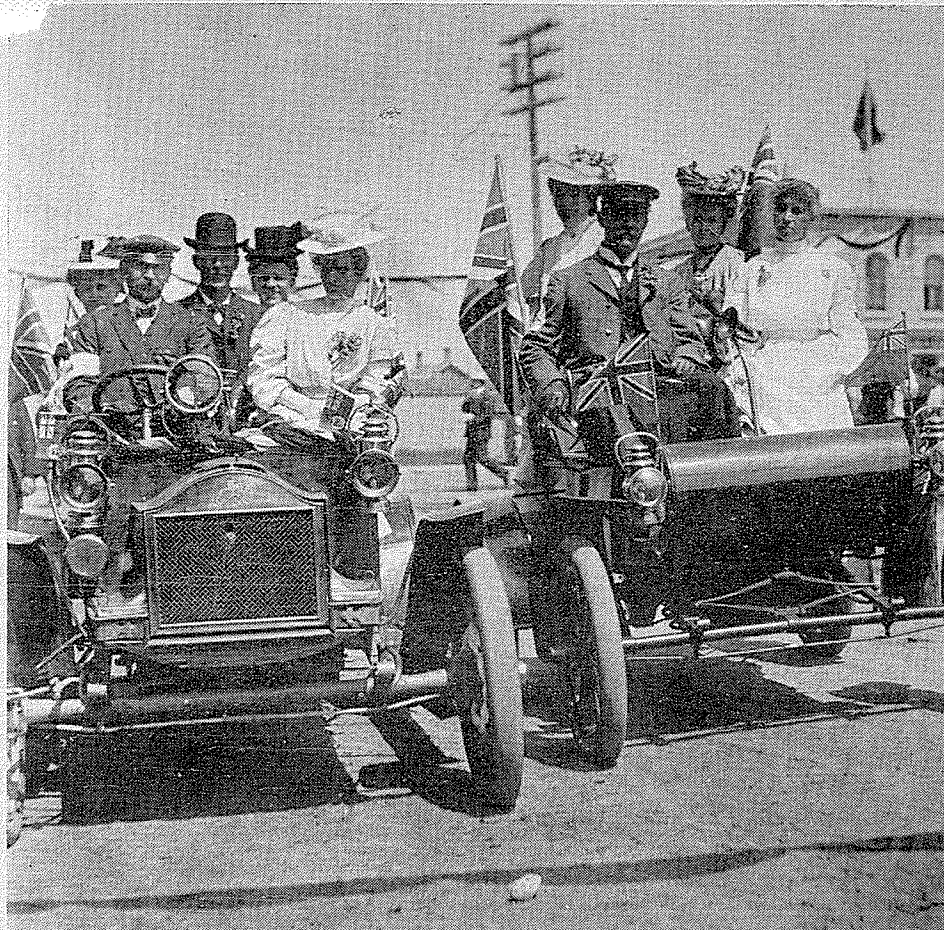
Brand new 1916 Model T Fords are lined up on Seventh Avenue before a group of admiring men.





FACETS OF EARLY DAY LIFE—Top: Lawn tennis in Victoria Park about 1910. Centre: The 12th Manitoba Dragoons at Camp Sewell. Bottom: One of Virden's classy baseball teams of the early days. Fifth from the left is Ed Higginbotham. Readers may recognize other team members.





MOTORING IN 1906

ABOVE—The car at the right was Virden's first automobile owned by H. H. Goulter. In the back seat are Mrs. J. Merrick and Mrs. J. W. Higginbotham; in the front are H. H. Goulter and Mrs. Goulter.

LEFT—Virden Machine Shop owned by T. B. Mitchell was in 1906 the first garage in Virden and also the only garage between Brandon and Regina. At the wheel of the one-cylinder speed-waggon in the centre is T. B. Mitchell. His passengers are Harry Crowe and Jack Pritchard. The adventurous ladies in the second car are Miss Ford, at the wheel, and Miss Trotter. The license plates are numbered 84 and 86 which indicated that there were at least that many autos in Manitoba in 1906.

