



Anecdotes and Updates

Virden Centennial 1982

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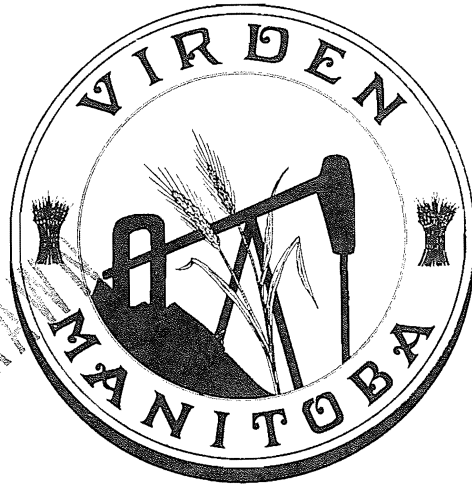
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Anecdotes and update : Virden, Manitoba, 1882-1983



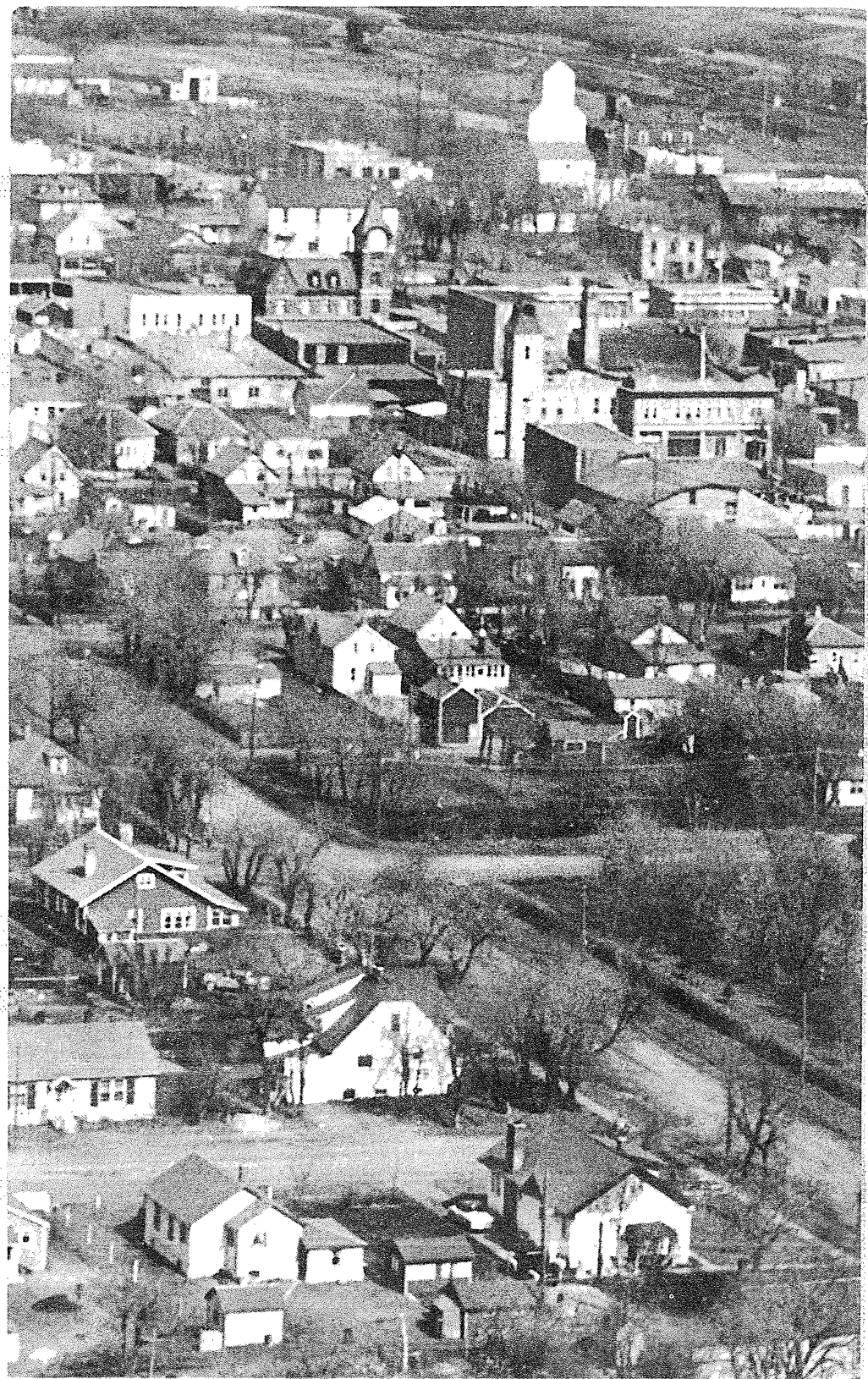
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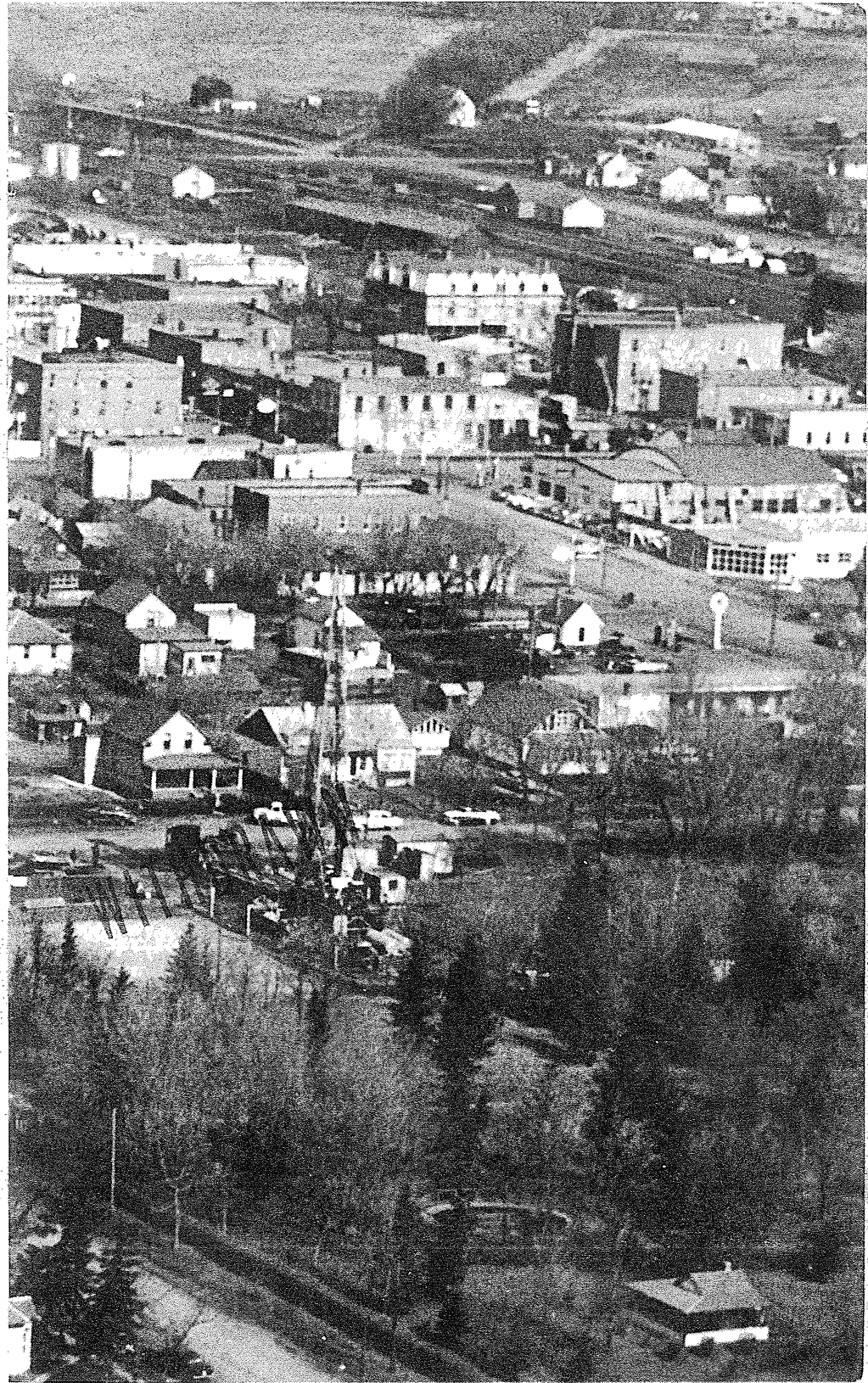
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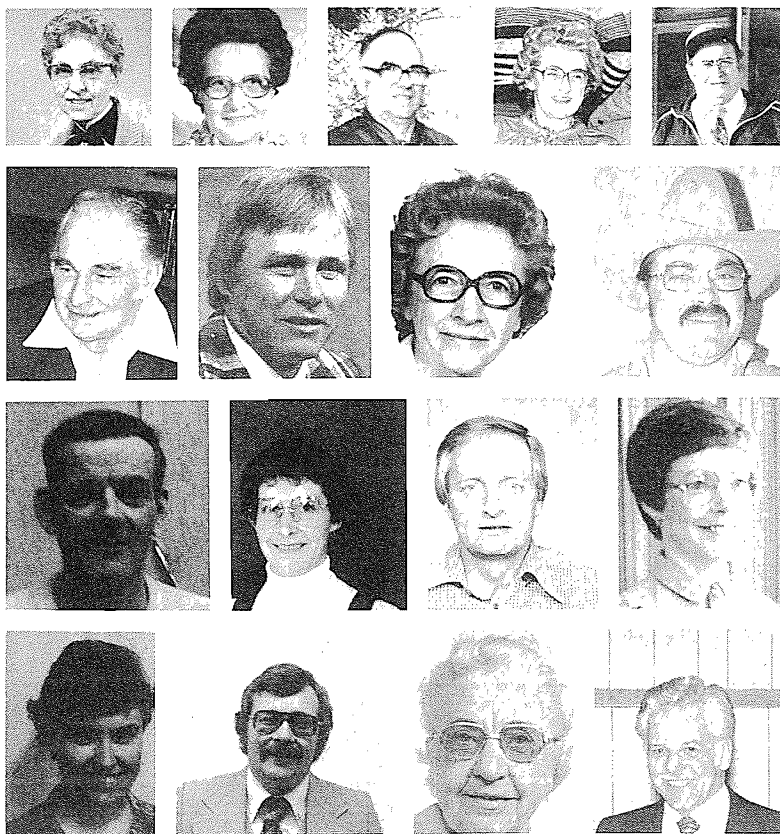


1882-1982

Virden Centennial
Souvenir

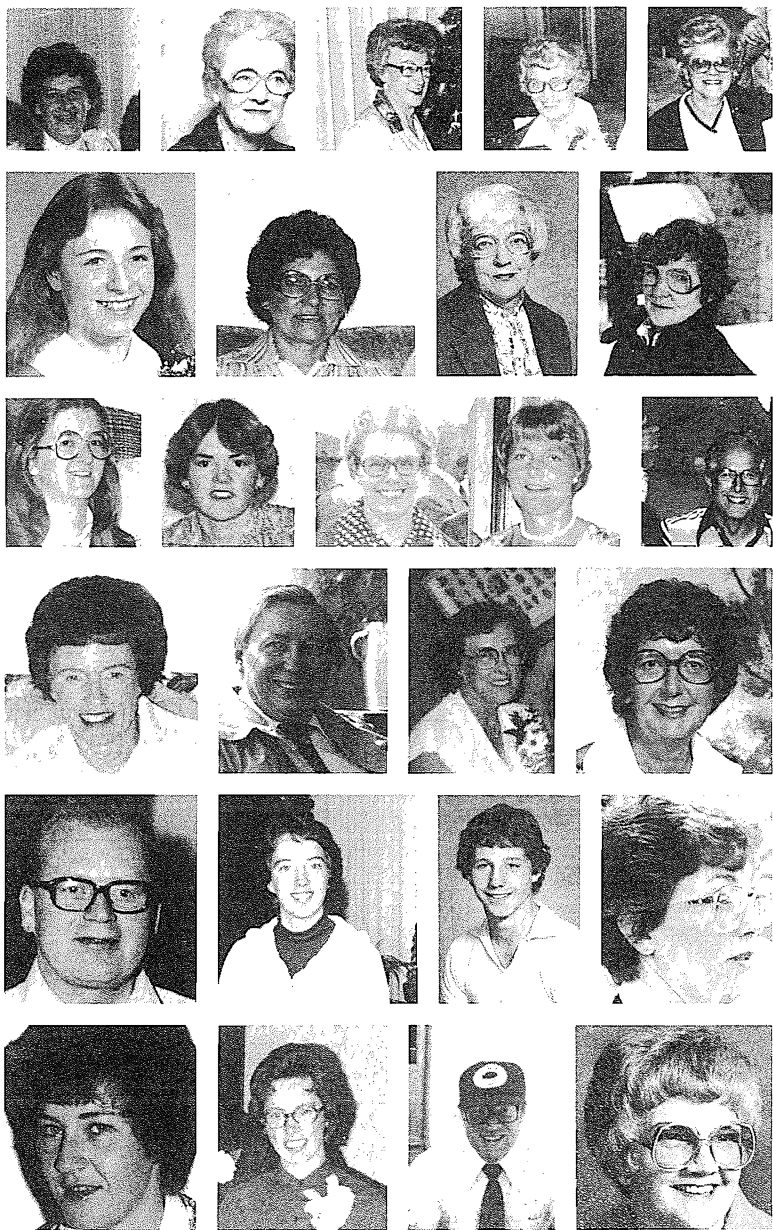






Virden Centennial 1982







Population 2913





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Acknowledgements

To all the people who helped make this book a reality, we wish to express our sincere thanks. To the citizens who willingly took time to tell their stories on tape, paper and telephone; the people who searched for and loaned us diaries, pictures and letters; the Virden Empire-Advance for the newspaper research; and especially the Mayor and Council for supporting the project.

Members of Book Committee

Gladys Carefoot — Kay Templeton — Kay McDougall

Patricia Yates — Grayce Hegion

Update Section

Arlene Collier — Mary Heaman

Typists

Gladys Carefoot — Mary Heaman — Kay Sararas

Sandra Welch — Hannah Kydd

Eleanor Seafoot — Kathryn Elliott

The faces in the collage at the front of the book represent a cross section of some of the people who helped with the book, the Auditorium restoration, and the Centennial plans.

Gladys Bray
Centennial Co-Chairperson

Foreword

This book was written in celebration of Virden's 100th anniversary. We have tried to include events and happenings not previously covered in *The Virden Story* or *The Virden Review*. The anecdotes have been written from diaries, news articles, phone calls and tapes gathered from pioneers at The Sherwood and around the town and district. There are surely many stories that do not appear and should have, and for this we apologize. Time went by too quickly and material came in too slowly.

This book is not intended to be a history although some history is included. In many cases we have depended on someone's memory. We are sure there are errors but if you have a difference of opinion please consider and appreciate the fact that we have tried to verify details wherever possible.

We hope that in the years 2007 and 2032 some of today's young people in Virden will take up the task where we have left off.

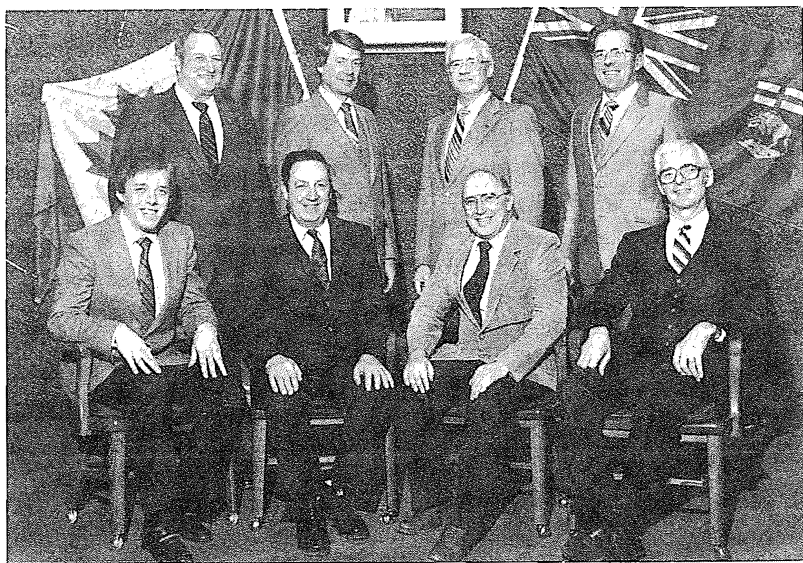
Gladys Bray, Convener
Book Committee

Message From The Mayor

The Town of Virden is very pleased to be celebrating its 100th birthday in 1982. To describe the events of the period is a monumental task; to select stories and topics of interest to all readers is also difficult. The Town of Virden is most pleased to offer congratulations to the editorial staff.

We trust this book will be a valued memento of Virden's Centennial year — 1982.

G. McKinnon
Mayor



Virden Town Council: Back, L. to R.: Glen Gardiner, Don Cameron, Jack McSorley, Bob Andrew. Front: Secretary-Treasurer Don Reid; Deputy Mayor Cecil Coleman, Mayor Glen McKinnon, Burns Chisholm.

CALENDAR FOR 1882.

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1982

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CHAPTER I

Requirements For Homesteaders

The following is information taken from Geography of the Dominion of Canada circa 1900 concerning requirements for homesteaders and conditions they might expect to find.

ENTRY

Entry may be made personally at the local land office for the district in which the land to be taken is situate, or if the homesteader desires, he may, on application to the Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, the Commissioner of Immigration, Winnipeg, or the local agent for the district in which the land is situate, receive authority for someone to make entry for him. A fee of \$10 is charged for an ordinary homestead entry.

HOMESTEAD DUTIES

Under the present law homestead duties must be performed in one of the following ways, namely:

(1) By at least six months residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year during the term of three years.

(2) If the father (or the mother, if the father is deceased) of any person who is eligible to make a homestead entry resides upon a farm in the vicinity of the land entered for by such person as a homestead, the requirements of the law as to residence prior to obtaining patent may be satisfied by such person residing with the father or mother.

(3) If the settler has his permanent residence upon farming

land owned by him in the vicinity of his homestead, the requirements of the law as to residence may be satisfied by residence upon the said land.

APPLICATION FOR PATENT

Should be made at the end of the three years, before the Local Agent, Sub-Agent, or the Homestead Inspector. Before making application for patent the settler must give six months' notice in writing to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Ottawa of his intention to do so.

INFORMATION

Newly arrived immigrants will receive at the immigration office in Winnipeg or at any Dominion lands office in Manitoba or the Northwest Territories, information as to the lands that are open for entry, and from the officers in charge, free of expense, advice and assistance in securing lands to suit them.

FREIGHT REGULATIONS

A. — Carload of settlers' effects, within the meaning of this tariff, may be made up of the following described property for the benefit of actual settlers, viz.: Livestock, any number up to but not exceeding ten (10) head, all told, viz., horses, mules, cattle, calves, sheep, hogs; household goods and personal property (second-hand); wagons or other vehicles, for personal use (second-hand), farm machinery, implements, and tools (all second-hand); lumber and shingles, which must not exceed 2,500 feet in all, or the equivalent thereof; or in lieu of, not in addition to, the lumber and shingles a portable house may be shipped; seed grain; small quantity of trees or shrubbery; small lot live poultry or pet animals; and sufficient feed for the live stock while on the journey.

B. — Less than carloads will be understood to mean only household goods (second-hand); wagons or other vehicles, for personal use (second-hand); and second-hand farm machinery, implements, and tools. Less than carload lots should be plainly addressed.

C. — Merchandise, such as groceries, provisions, hardware, etc., if new, will not be regarded as settlers' effects, and if shipped will be charged the company's regular classified tariff rates.

D. — Should the allotted number of livestock be exceeded, the additional animals will be taken at the ordinary classified rates, over and above the carload rates for the settlers' effects, but the

total charge for any one such car will not exceed the regular rate for a straight carload of livestock. (These ordinary tariff rates will be furnished by station agents on application.)

E. — Passes. — One man will be passed free in charge of livestock when forming parts of carloads, to feed, water, and care for them in transit. Agents will use the usual form of livestock contract.

F. — Top Loads. — Settlers are not permitted, under any circumstances to load any article on the top of box or stock cars; such manner of loading is dangerous, and is absolutely forbidden.

G. — Carloads will not be stopped at any point short of destination for the purpose of unloading part. The entire carload must go through to the station to which originally consigned.

H. — Carload Rates. — The rates shown in the column headed "Carloads" apply on any shipment occupying a car, and weighing 24,000 pounds (12 tons) or less. If the carloads weigh over 24,000 pounds, the additional weight will be charged for at proportionate rates. (Example: \$205 "per car" is equivalent to 85½ cents per hundred pounds, at which rate the additional weight would be charged.)

STOP-OVER PRIVILEGES

Intending settlers are given the privilege of stopping over at stations where they wish to inspect land. Application should be made to the conductor before reaching station where stop-over is required.

FUEL FOR SETTLERS

Any homesteader having no timber on his homestead may, on application to the Local Agent of Dominion Lands, get a permit to cut what he requires for building material, fencing, and fuel for use on his homestead.

ADVICE BY AN OLD SETTLER

Do not be in too great a hurry to make money for the first year or two, but make up your mind to go carefully and feel your way for a short time. A person who is unaccustomed to prairie farming, and is limited as to means, had better if possible obtain a good homestead, which he can secure upon very easy terms, and if he has not sufficient money to enable him to stock and equip it on the start, I would suggest his procuring work with a farmer, which is easily obtained at good wages. He can work in this way for six

months of each year and put in the balance of the year on his homestead. A great many people coming in here feel that they are losing time while doing the residence duties on a homestead unless they are in a position to buy horses and machinery to work continually on the land, but if they would only stop and think they would remember that at the end of the three years which they are required to put in, they have a clear title to 160 acres of land, worth at least \$1,600, or in other words, for each month they are required to reside upon the land they have accumulated a title to \$90 worth of property, which can be converted into cash at any time, if so desired.

THE HOMESEAKER'S OPPORTUNITY

Manitoba's population is largely English-speaking. As a rule, people with means, and those satisfied with existing conditions, do not move; and it follows that the settlers of Manitoba have not brought large bank accounts with them. The man who has continued his farming operations for from six to ten years, however, is in circumstances which many farmers in older countries have been unable to reach after a lifetime of toil. The labourer, likewise, is happy and contented; he is only waiting for an opportunity to get a farm of his own and become as independent as his employer. With a farm free from debt, his fields of ripening grain ready for harvest; with herds of cattle on his pasture lands, and flocks of sheep feeding on the hillside; dairy and poultry providing the household with groceries and many other comforts; schools for his children in the immediate neighborhood; churches close at hand, and such other social advantages as he desires within easy reach — what more is required for a wholesome existence? And that is the condition of the average Manitoba farmer to-day.

RAINFALL; WATER AND FUEL

Manitoba is not a country of deep snows, as may be judged from the fact that trains are rarely blocked and seldom delayed by winter storms. The annual precipitation is 21.4 inches; mean annual temperature at Winnipeg, 32.7 degrees; January, 5.2 degrees; July, 66.1 degrees.

Water and fuel are important considerations for the settler. In Manitoba, the country is everywhere at easy distances intersected by creeks and rivers, and there are many lakes, especially in the northern portion of the Province. Water can be secured almost

anywhere by sinking wells to a moderate depth. The coal fields of the west and the timbered districts of the north and east, as well as the south, will supply fuel for hundreds of years.

RAILWAYS

The main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway passes directly east and west from Winnipeg through Brandon and Moose Jaw.

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

From a social standpoint Manitoba has every advantage that could be desired. Educationally, the Province holds a proud position, with its university, colleges, and schools. The school system is one of the best, the training of teachers and their qualifications being of a high standard. The schools are free, the organization being on what is known as the National System. The Government gives large grants, practically reducing the charge on the ratepayers to a merely nominal figure. One-eighteenth of the land is set apart for school purposes.

Churches are found in all the new settlements, and missionaries of various religious denominations keep pace with settlement, and sometimes anticipate it. Some of the church edifices are among the best on the continent. The strict observance of the Sabbath is commented upon by visitors from districts where greater laxity is the rule. All the leading fraternal societies are represented, and whether it be in the hamlet of a few dozen persons or in the city with its thousands, one or more lodges may be found.

LAW AND ORDER

The laws are cast on reasonable lines, and the guardians of the peace have little difficulty in its maintenance, owing to the law-abiding character of the population and to the fact that no favouritism of any kind is permitted or indulged in.

HINTS TO NEW SETTLERS ON PLANNING A SOD STABLE

For a stable 27 feet square inside I take sods ploughed from sloughs, 12 inches wide, 4 inches thick, cut 2 feet long, and thus I make a wall 3 feet thick, making the stable 30 feet square outside, 8 feet high. I take four 6 x 6 timbers, 12 feet long, for posts, set them 9 feet for equal stalls, put on four plates for upper end of poles, set poles on the wall, making a cottage roof with a small window in top on south side at peak. Two doors in south side with a glass in for light; thus I have with brush on to keep the sods or for

sheeting with two sods thick and dirt on top it will turn nearly all the rain we have, with care to get dirt out of the well or cellar.

We have stables here ten years old and we built a stone stable last summer, but prefer keeping the horses and stock in the sod, as it is dry and warm. I used one side for a granary on starting, and I think it is the cheapest and most economical stable that can be built for a new settler. It only cost six posts, five stringers, and poles about two wagon loads, with brush and a few boards for a door.

WHO WILL SUCCEED IN WESTERN CANADA

Strong and healthy young men from eighteen to twenty-one years of age, who are prepared to accept for a time the hard work and surroundings more or less inseparable from a farm labourer's life, have no difficulty in getting employment in the spring; and the agents of the Government in Canada will assist them as far as possible in doing so, without charge, although, of course, without accepting any direct responsibility. Being without experience, they will not get much wages at the outset, but they will be able to command increased remuneration in proportion to the value of their work.

Young men, single, who come in March, April, or May, with less than \$25, looking for positions as farm labourers, will find a list of applications from farmers in all parts of the country who want hired help, at the Dominion Immigration Office, Winnipeg. It is much wiser for the newcomer to stay for the winter with a farmer, in a comfortable home, though the wages be only a few dollars a month, rather than go to the city or town expecting to get a job. There are opportunities, however, on the approach of winter, to join camp outfits that go to the bush in various parts to cut firewood or get out ties and saw logs. Experienced axemen make good wages at this work, and return in the spring to labour on farms. Any careful young man can, from the beginning, earn and save enough each year to make payment on say 160 acres of land, as payments are spread over ten years.

Besides the help required in the harvest fields there is a demand each season for strong, able-bodied men, accustomed to hard work, on railroad construction.

The wages for female help in farmers' homes would vary from \$6 to \$10 a month. The experience of many farmers' wives has been that their servant girl is most likely, before many years

pass, to get married to a neighbouring farmer and become mistress of her own home.

MARRIED MEN WITHOUT CHILDREN

It is generally easy to find a situation for a married man without children, when husband and wife are both willing to engage in work; the husband as farm labourer, the wife to assist in the housework, or in many instances, they may find work with a bachelor, when the wife takes full charge of the housekeeping.

It is not so easy to find a situation for a married man with two or more children.

YOUNG MEN WITH \$250 OR LESS

It is hardly possible for a young man with less than \$250 to start farming on his own responsibility. Better far to work for wages a year until he learns the value of things as well as the methods of farming. In all probability he would, before the end of the first year, get an opportunity to purchase a quarter section of land in a desirable situation, by making a small cash payment, and, by purchasing a few head of cattle, be prepared in two or three years to start for himself.

WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH \$500

A newcomer with \$500 could homestead 160 acres at once, and put up a house there on, as well as do the other necessary homestead improvements and then go out to the older settled districts during the other six months of the year, which would tide him over a second six months of homestead. In three years his homestead of 160 acres would be his own.

THE MAN WITH \$1,000

Any single man, or married man with or without family, can make a fair start with \$1,000 capital. He can either homestead or purchase land, making payment on the installment plan to cover a period of ten years. A small house would be required, also some outbuildings for horses, cattle, swine, and poultry. A wagon, plough, and harrows would be purchased. A couple of months might well be devoted to working out in harvest and threshing, earning some money to help him over the winter. Anyone who has from \$500 to \$1,000 cash would do well to rent the first year. Many of the farms to rent have a house and stable thereon, and the owner is often willing to supply seed, and sometimes implements, taking

a share of the crop in return; or, the newcomer can purchase everything necessary, putting in a crop of 100 to 150 acres, and after seeding have two or three weeks to look about in selecting a permanent home.

AS TO BUYING LAND

First: Never purchase without a personal inspection.

Second: The nearer you are to a railway station as a market, the more valuable the land is, and the more its value will increase in the future.

THE TIME TO EMIGRATE

Generally speaking, the best time to emigrate, for all classes, is the early spring. The agricultural labourer will then find his services in demand in the busy period that always comes during seed time; and the farmer who intends to take up land for himself will arrive at the beginning of the season's operations. The farmer may, by getting in a crop of oats or potatoes during the month of May or the first week in June, contribute greatly to the support of himself and family during the first year. Or again, if the agricultural labourer arrives in summer, about harvest time, he will find great demand and high wages for his services during the harvest months, and he will have no difficulty in getting on well from this point. The farmer, too, who desires to take up land, if he comes in the summer time, may see the crops growing, and may thus have an opportunity to choose at leisure the most advantageous location. The summer and autumn months are the best for moving about the country in search of land — or, as it is commonly called, “land hunting” — for a suitable spot on which to settle. Having selected it, he may proceed to erect his house and make preparations for the winter; and, if he means to do this, he will find it a great advantage in the spring to have been early on the spot.

WHAT TO BRING

Many of the household necessities which the emigrant possesses he might do well to bring, but still it is advisable to consider well the weight and bulk, and how far it is worth while. Articles of household furniture, crockery, stoves, or heavy articles of hardware should be left behind or sold, except in some circumstances, for special reasons, which the colonists will consider.

Mechanics and artisans, when they have been encouraged to come out, may of course bring their tools; but they must bear in

mind that there is no difficulty in buying any ordinary tools in Canada at reasonable prices.

WOMAN'S HELP NEEDED

There is an increasing demand for woman's help, and especially for servant girls. The farther west you travel the greater the scarcity, and with the demand, the compensation is increased.

FARMS A MILE SQUARE

The whole country is divided into blocks, each containing one square mile (640 acres). A block is called a section and is divided into four quarter sections. This quarter section is the unit for a single farm. In the West they do not speak of a farm as such, but of a quarter section, or half section, or a section.

Some farmers urge that a half section (320 acres) is a better size than a quarter section, in that it allows enough land for a man and his family to work, leaving a considerable portion to be summer fallowed. Many work their land year after year without summer fallowing, and find the crops satisfactory. The theory is that the frost of winter helps to preserve the soil by preventing the nitrates from being leached away.

The moment the crop is harvested the plough is turned on, so that with the earliest April warmth seeding may begin. Nowhere else does the first fortnight of spring count for so much. Farmers sow when barely an inch or two of ground is sufficiently thawed to allow the seed to be covered, and the hot sun forces on the grain with great rapidity.

CHAPTER II

Diaries and Letters

A Homesteader's Diary

This is a story of pioneers who came to the Virden district in 1882. Their experiences may well be typical of the experiences of many of the pioneers who came to the Virden area at about that time.

Two brothers sailed from Liverpool, England on May 4, 1882. After suffering seasickness on an overcrowded ship, they arrived in Quebec on May 16. The journey to Winnipeg via Montreal, Toronto, Port Huron, Chicago and St. Paul was completed by the 20th of May.

Having worked as laborers in Winnipeg and as farm help near Plum Creek (Souris) during the summer, they came to Virden on September 21, 1882, and bought and took over from two surveyors the squatters' rights to a section of land.

They hired a man with a team of oxen to haul to their newly acquired property, some provisions, and lumber and materials to build a 10' x 12' shanty. It rained before the tar paper on the roof had been properly secured so when the water began to pour in they put up their tent on the inside.

During one month, excluding visits to Virden, they saw only three men and were close enough to speak to just one. Though their shanty proved to be one of only three dwellings in the township that winter, the brothers were pleased with their choice of land because they had "good water and plenty of wood".

The two men survived the fall and winter of '82-'83 on a diet of duck, prairie chicken, rabbit, beef, potatoes, onions, soup,

oatmeal, bread, molasses, cheese, tea, dried apples and tins of preserved fruit and tomatoes. They melted snow for water to drink and wash. They wore moccasins and walked or snowshoed six miles to Virden to post and pick up mail. Sometimes they stayed at a hotel in Virden if the weather was particularly bad or if something exciting was happening like an election. They experienced a prairie fire, a blizzard, getting lost on the prairie, and learned that "everything gets frozen in this country".

In the spring of '83 when their land came on the market, they went to Brandon and "entered" for their land under The Homestead and Pre-emption Act and began their first season of farming. Gardens were planted on the two half-acre plots ploughed by the previous owners. A second house, 12' x 24', with a cellar for vegetables and a blacksmith shop in the end, was built, and also a stable. Thirty acres were ploughed with oxen and back set; stones were drawn off; oats were seeded on sod; and twenty tons of hay were taken off. Among the bluffs they found wild cherries, plums and raspberries.

On Christmas Day, 1883, a target shooting match involving ten contestants was held in the creek valley on their farm, followed by a party at their house. During the year a shanty and stable were built on a town lot which they had purchased in Virden.

During the winter of '83-'84 loads of poles from the sandhills and ash and elm logs from the Assiniboine Valley were drawn with oxen. A stop-over was made at the shanty and stable on the Virden lot and the material was later taken to the farm for fencing and building.

From the Indian squaws fishing through the ice at Oak Lake they bought, after bargaining, twenty-four fish weighing two to four pounds for fifty cents.

They arranged to have a new settler coming from England bring with him special Sheffield steel for their blacksmith shop. They purchased a second yoke of oxen, a sleigh and a pony and buckboard. In the spring they seeded twenty acres of wheat and ten of oats. During the summer they fenced sixty acres of pasture and broke ninety acres for the next year's crop. They built their first granary and harvested three hundred and twenty bushels of oats and four hundred and seventy-five of wheat.

The cyclone in 1884 destroyed their stable in Virden. It had been on Nelson Street opposite the present United Church.

In February 1885 the brothers cleaned and hauled wheat to

Virden to be sold at forty-five cents to forty-eight cents a bushel. In March the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion inspired one brother and another young man who had arrived from England to rush off to help squash the Indians and half-breeds while the other brother remained on the farm to do the seeding with the help of a neighbor. He was able later to hire a "very willing young fellow" for twelve months for five dollars per month in the summer and his board in the winter. This season he had sixty-five acres of wheat (yield 1500 bushels) as well as oats and hay. He ploughed furrows around the oat stacks and then began burning a fire guard, but the wind changed and the oat stacks were burned. He was, however, able to save his buildings and the haystacks and to buy oats for feed at fifteen cents a bushel.

The brother who had gone off to fight had been somewhat disappointed to be assigned to a mounted corps patrolling south of the main action. In a letter written using lamp soot and spirits of turpentine, he noted his surprise that the rebels had not won since he had seen such poor organization on his side.

After an interval of working on the railroad and cutting cordwood, he and his friend returned to the farm in the fall. This brother had now heard "a different drummer"; he had been riding on the open prairie; and in the spring of 1886 he and his friend went to the foothills country to start a ranch.

The brother who remained on the farm went on later to operate a successful grain elevator business. He died in 1901 as the result of burns suffered in an explosion and fire in the engine room of the elevator at Hargrave. The cornerstone of the Anglican stone church in Hargrave was laid by Lebanon Masonic Lodge No. 43 on July 9, 1902, and later the altar was presented by the lodge in memory of Worshipful Brother Edward Arbuthnot Holmes.

NOTE: The location of the farm was Section 28, Township 10, Range 27, W1st, and the brothers were Edward A. and Charles E. M. Holmes, brothers of Mrs. R. L. Carr. The story is based on a diary and the brothers' letters which were very kindly loaned by Mrs. Edward Carr (Grace). The other two dwellings in Township 10 in the winter of 1882 were those of the Jeffreys and the Moodys.

Excerpts From the Ivens Diary

Charles Ivens took a homestead and pre-emption in August, 1883 seven miles west of Virden on sec. 16, twp. 10, range 27. He



Farm Home of C. E. Ivens, Virden, Manitoba.

questioned his friend Holmes' advice as he felt the best land had been taken in '82 and his half section had been left because there was so much water on it.

By '89 the many sloughs were dry and remained that way except for a short time each spring. Occasionally heavy snow and rain filled them to overflowing, such as in 1902. "The country was just as the Lord made it then, no roads, no bridges nor fences, but lots of buffalo skeletons. Every bachelor shack was ornamented with a skull. We lived mostly on baking powder bread, Chicago bacon and syrup, except when we shot ducks and prairie chickens,"¹ Mr. Ivens said.

Born near Burnham Beaches in the County of Berks, England, he was now 23 years of age. He had served six years with the Scots Guards and bought his discharge for eleven pounds so he could come to Canada. His diaries and account books tell the story of the homesteader. His expressions may be typically British or typically pioneer!

In pursuit of qualifying for his homestead and improving his livelihood, he writes of breaking and backsetting². He had 105 acres, no roods³, 21 poles done by '85. Two roods were in garden. In the fall he was carrying hay, shocking⁴ wheat and oats and cocking⁵ oats and hay. Rainy days were spent grubbing⁶ bushes and charring⁷ posts.

The fall of '90 was wet and days were spent re-cocking hay.

Oo Vaden
Manitoba

Jan 28. 1883

Dear Charles

About the things
most usefull to bring out
to this country are ~~waders~~
underclothes as shirts
and vests and such like
flannel and woolen ~~things~~
~~are~~ these only things ~~and~~
that are any use ~~linen~~
cotton shirts or socks are
little or no use bring any
other. ~~the~~ clothes you may

have but I should not buy
any more find out
how much weight of
luggage you are allowed
to take free and when
you have packed up
your clothes fill up the
balance with tools. Bring
a breech loading gun by
all means as when you
get on your farm it
is almost a necessary
bring a bullet mould to
fit it. When you get to
Winnipeg I should advise

you to leave your luggage
with your friend there
and then look for work
and that way you would
see the country and be
earning money at the
same time if ~~as~~ you
happen at any time to
come up as far as Vinden
come and see us almost
any one will tell you
where to find us do not
be in any hurry to take
up land as there is
~~not~~ lots of it and will be
for a great many years

to comes above all do
not start from England
too soon the beginning or
middle of May is quite
soon enough ~~now~~ please
remember me to the old
Blacksmith. My brother
desires me to remember
him to you Please also
remember both of us to
your father and mother.

I remain

Yours faithfully

C. E. Holmes

Each year a day was spent moulding⁸ potatoes. A well was dug and a windlass constructed. Rolling⁹ oats and breaking are often mentioned in his diary. Oxen were used for this chore but he had horses too. In '88 he lost a lot of them with glanders¹⁰. Seed was broadcast until 1890 when he bought a drill.

Construction of buildings took much time. By 1890 three barns had been built. The first one burned in a prairie fire in September '86. It had been built of material from an old barn in Virden. Livestock was sheltered temporarily in an implement shed and a log barn shelter covered with straw. In '90 contractors were hired to build a proper barn. The carpenters, Barton and Burge, earned \$2.12 each per day and Gilles, the mason, mixed mortar himself for \$2.85 a day. Twenty-five men came to the barn raising bee on July 23. Materials fetched from Virden included lumber, rafters and 20,000 shingles.

A cellar for a house was dug in October of '84. Construction progressed the following month and by December 20 he was papering it. Records show the purchase of a quantity of brown paper and tar paper — that's papering! Christmas Day he put up a book shelf, then went to Holmes' and stayed the night. Eight homesteaders got together for Christmas!

Imagine threshing in January! They did in '85 and the yield was 538 bushels of wheat. Thirty-seven bushels were sold in Virden at 55¢ a bushel and Mr. Ivens paid his taxes. Ten years later with increased acreage broken, he harvested 1,513 bushels selling at 40¢. Threshing from a stack was common practice. In '87 he hired a wood-burning thresher from Buckingham, threshing the last days of December and into the new year until March. This time he loaded a car of wheat in Virden. By the next year he purchased a Sawyer thresher on shares with Jeffrey.

The year of '85 was really a big one in Charles' life. He bought a binder in May from Harris Son and Co., hauled it home, and Pineo set it up in July. In August he started cutting wheat and did the neighbors' crops as well. His father, another Charles, was out from England and left for home October 26. (He also visited in '90 and '91.)

That same day Charles bought a buffalo coat. On November 20 he brought chairs and a stove from Virden. Eight days later he built a table. Four days later he married Isabella Jeffrey. (He always called her 'Tib'). That year Christmas Day was spent with

the Jeffreys, a practice that was repeated in the years to come. In '88 and '89 killing pigs was part of the Christmas festivities.

We picture isolated shanties of the pioneers, but they got together to exchange implements, work, animals, tools, and to dine. Together they trekked to the sandhills for poplar, the Assiniboine for hardwood, and to Virden with grain, using horses and sleighs. Some of the hazards were sudden storms, which obliterated the trail, upset loads, broken axles or doubletrees. They went to Virden to pay the taxes, to vote, see or fetch the doctor, attend church, meetings, sports days and celebrations. Daughter Jessie started school in August, 1893 at Mrs. Madge's Boarding School for a fee of six dollars a month. She was home each weekend. By '97 Bosshill School was built nearby.

On January 21, 1893, Charles Ivens presented a paper at a Farmers' Institute meeting. His topic was "The Need of Mixed Farming". He practised what he preached as he grew a variety of crops, even rape, also vetches¹, millet, peas and, of course, oats and wheat. In '92 he added sheep to his cows and pigs. He built a dairy and an icehouse that year too. Ice was hauled in April and straw-covered. He then began to market butter. In '94 he added a smokehouse to cure meat.

The need for fences became apparent as herds wandered. Days were spent searching for them. Once he found his sheep in Elkhorn, 14 miles away. Strays were impounded. In '91 fence posts of poplar were cut, peeled and charred. Wire purchased in Virden was barbed or netting for the sheep.

C. E. Ivens went on to build a stone house. He beautified his yard, planted¹² maple seedlings and spruce trees. Fruits, berries and currants had a place too. He increased his holdings to 1,120 acres, and retired to Virden in 1926. He died in 1946 at the age of 86.

His service to the community is reported in The Virden Story, but for this story he is "one of the homesteaders".

GLOSSARY

1. Quoted in Winnipeg Tribune, 1939
2. Sods turned back over
3. British equivalent to 1/4 acre
4. Stooking
5. Gathering into bundles
6. Digging around roots to get them out
7. Burning or scorching

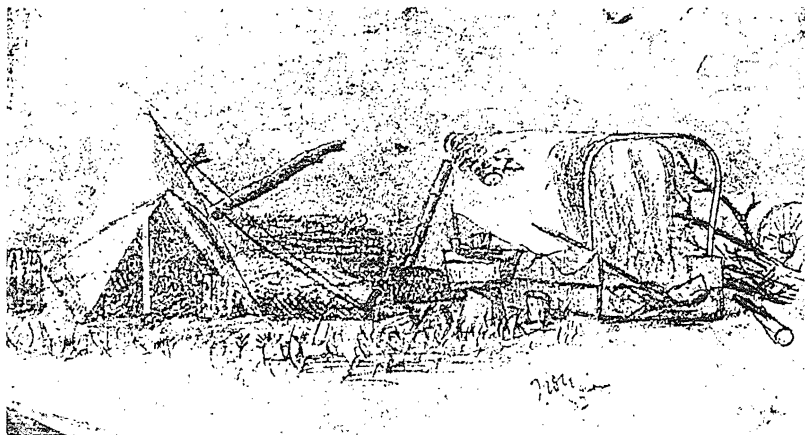
Money spent on permanent improvements

1893	Brought forward	24 32	50
May 31	1000 maple seedlings planted (Caldwell)	25	00
June 3	9 maple trees 1.35 2 rhubarb roots 2.00	3	35
1894	L & M's a/c to 1 st Oct. for creek fence etc	323.85	
1895	L & M's a/c to 15 th Oct. Wire for creek fence	91	00
1896	lumber to line NW room, paint etc	110	40
	Stone work of new house 169 perches Collins	126	75
	Lime 48.75 Painting cornice 4.00	55	75
	Plastering & building chimneys	60	50
	425 bricks 5.30 Carpenter work 140.00	145	30
	Door, windows, mouldings, lath etc Wyatt	168	50
	Lumber etc Frame & Miller	250	05
	Drawing stones, sand, digging foundation	40	00
	Boarding mechanics while building	40	00
	Storm sashs 22.00 Door, lock etc 5.05	27	05
1897	Locks, etc L & M 97% paint, mouldings etc	43	90
	Curb to well 5.70 Wire 5.05	10	75
	Painting & papering house (out & in)	40	40
	Fly screens & door 10.00 Painting barn & dairy 15.05	26	05
	Wire for N fence 22.90 Poplar cuttings 3.50	26	40
1898	L & M's 98% Wire, lumber for pig building etc	109	65
	Poplar cuttings 3.00 Spruce trees 1.00	4	00
	Pump (dairy well) 14.50 Posts 15.50	30	00
	House well 37.50	37	50
1899	Wire for fence 189 29.10 Posts 14.00	43	30
	Lumber, nails, etc for implement shed	63	05
	Pump for new house well & fittings	25	65
	Stone work for shed 40.20 Lime 24.10	64	30
	Alteration to water well (new door & pedestal)	6	00
	300 Russian hybrid cuttings, 90¢ per 100	10	00
		212.30	

Itemized Expense Account.

8. Hilling up
9. Large log brought from Virden and equipped with hardware so it could be used as a packer
10. Glandular swelling on the neck — very contagious
11. Legume valuable as fodder and soil builder
12. Bought at Caldwell's Nursery, Virden

Letters of a Pioneer



Sketched from an original letter and titled "A Prairie View".

The following are excerpts from a letter dated July 29, 1882, and written by T. W. Nichols to his parents in England. The letter was written over a period of several weeks. The homestead referred to is located in the Joslin District north of Virden. It was familiar for many years as the Levi Smith farm, and is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Len Nykoliation. The original copy of the letter is the property of Fred Nichols of Indian Head, Sask., a grandson of the writer.

The letters from home to hand today, brought up from Virden a new town north of Gopher Creek. Anyone going down brings all letters up for near neighbours.

It is surprising how the vernacular of the country grows on one. A Canadian never says "yes"; it is either "guess so" or "ya". Instead of "pass the plate", it is "send this right along". Most of our neighbours are Ontario men so we hear more of this Canadian talk than if we had gone among old country settlers.

I only got back from Birtle today (Birtle being the closest Land Titles Office). It is a hundred and two mile journey. The first time I walked it in three days. If I walk again I can cut off twenty-four miles by crossing the Assiniboine, four miles north. Like all Canadian rivers, it is treacherous, impossible at times and always dangerous on account of undercurrents.

You spoke in your letter of us having roughed it. I dare not tell you half of what we've gone through. When we left Winnipeg, I had only seven dollars, two of which I paid for railway fare to Flat Creek, bought medicine for our son, Tom who had the measles in a tent with frost not out of the ground and snow in some places six feet deep. I bought the only fresh meat we've tasted — a beast's head for thirty-five cents. We've lived on "slap jacks" (pancakes) for weeks together. Lill has gone through what has sent hundreds of strong men back to the old country, but never a word of complaint.

This is a country where any man, dissatisfied with his position at home, ought to come, if he is prepared to work. Rise at four and set with the sun, only stopping for meals. For a year or two, it is sleep, eat, work, and nothing else. During winter, (so I'm told) things are easier, but one must be cautious in a "blizzard" (wind and fine snow) for one can be lost within five yards of his fence. If he gets "turned around" (Canadian for "lost") he could die in a very few minutes.

Travelling to Birtle, we passed an Indian camp. It is a splendid sight, the men smoking, and the squaws working, carrying water, gathering wood, a papoose on the back. The very old women, like the men, sit about, smoking pipes. I will send you a pipe when I find one of unique design.

It is laughable to hear the excuses of men who have given up and are going back home:

"Been west?"

"Yes" (if English) "Ya" (if Ontario).

"Going Back?"

"Yes"

"Sick?"

"No, lost my pocketbook a few miles back."

"Where you been?"

"Moose Mountain"

"Good land?"

"No, stoney."

"Good-bye."

"So long." (if Ontario)

These men generally sell their "rig out" for as little as \$200, while in Winnipeg one costs \$500.

I enclose this note in a gopher skin which would make a good tobacco pouch.

The mosquito (commonly called muskitty) abound in billions on every uncultivated section in the North-West Territories.

Today we are having our first cooking of potatoes — not bad seeing we did not get on the land until June. Our dinner is spiced pork (bacon), potatoes, and bannock (flour and water cake), boiled rice with stewed apples, cheese and more bannock, and if anyone is still hungry, syrup and more bannock. We have weak tea instead of a pint of bitters. "Tea" as a meal is unknown here, three meals a day being sufficient; breakfast between four and five, dinner at twelve, and supper at six-thirty.

Flies and mosquitoes were terrible last night. A neighbour's horse, crazed with mosquito bites, passed at full speed, toward the "bush" (the woods.) On a bad night, the mosquitoes cover the oxen so thick, you cannot tell the colour of them.

Just got home from plowing (we do not bother with "ough" here) I get five dollars an acre plowing for others. Lill led the oxen for the first furrow as they have nothing to guide them, and it is hard to get a straight line. The "Bully" ox will push toward her, as Lill has quite spoiled him, and he will follow her anywhere. He is a splendid animal, but savage, if vexed.

We are going to move the tent near to where I am building the house. It will be more convenient, but further from our two acre garden. We hope to sell some extra potatoes, as I need another one hundred dollars for the winter's necessities. Anything I earn above that will help toward a cooking stove and a cow.

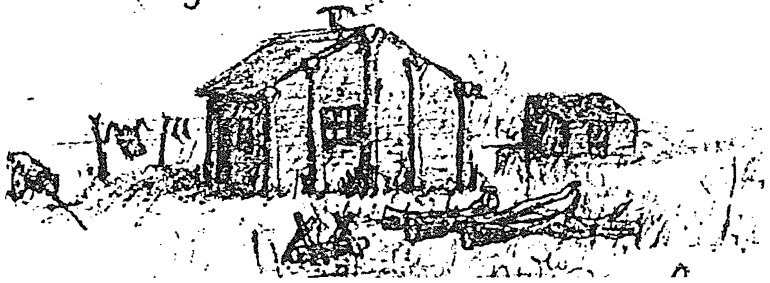
There are only two other Englishmen on this township, and they are called "Sooners". They would sooner think about it than work.

I have partly finished the house on a high knoll, overlooking thousands of prairie acres. I must plow around it to prevent getting burnt out. The way is to plow three furrows a yard apart then fire this space between the furrows. If it were not for prairie fires, this land would be forest (bush) in a very short time. I have one of the finest half sections in the country.

Supper tonight is stewed apples, rice, bannock, tea, radishes,

lettuce and onions. I don't think any one of you know what it is to enjoy a meal thoroughly. We have no chairs or table, so, like the ancient Romans, we recline. Our meal is earned, which very few of our old country meals were.

I think would not come off
the skin & the meat could
be frozen -



Nichols' original sketch of a sod house.

This is a healthy country. I have slept for nights in the open prairie with no company but mosquitoes, the oxen and probably a bear, and have got up with dew drops on my hair, and none the worse for it. Snakes are plentiful, but harmless.

I have been off work for more than a week after a fall from a horse. I sit or lie in the tent whilst Lill is busy with the frying pan. Like the noble red man, who is never guilty of working, he lets his squaw carry everything while he walks gracefully alongside her. He allows her to set up the wigwam, and sits nobly by, smoking.

Have had to stop plowing because the dryness of the sod would pull the plow to pieces so shall work on the house. Our sod house will have to do until we can afford a "frame" house — built of sawn wood. The walls are two feet thick, dusty at times but very warm.

Our address is now:

T. W. Nichols

16 12 XXVI

c/o Cook & Co.

Virden, Manitoba, Canada

We have railway and telegraph communication right up to

Viriden now. There is no system in the Post Office here, letters on the counter, newspapers on the floor.

The cattle have wandered off but will probably return this evening when the mosquitoes get troublesome. I light a smudge for them every night. It has to be built in such a way as to emit smoke only; good dry wood fire, covered with green wood and then rough sods. Often we have many strange cattle spend the night here as they can smell the smudge miles off.

I must now prepare for sealing up. We'll drop in and see you in a year or two.

Your affectionate son,
T. W. Nichols
(Practical Agriculturist)

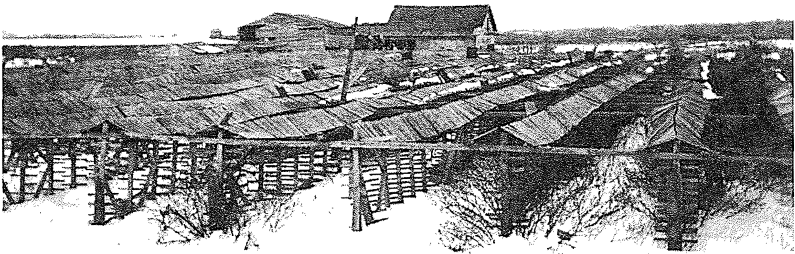
Remember when . . .

- the boiler was filled Sunday night to heat for the Monday wash?
- we melted worn out records in the oven to make fluted plant pot covers?
- you chipped up soap to melt for the week's laundry!
- shaking mats was part of everyday cleaning?
- the parlour rug was hung over the clothesline for its annual beating?
- razor straps were hung by the kitchen sink?
- hot water was dipped from the reservoir — part of the kitchen range?
- cost of a telegram was 10 words for 35¢, address and name was free?
- the party line kept you up to date?
- we drank from a dipper at the old water pail?
- girls wore beach pyjamas?
- bell bottom trousers were the style?
- you could post a letter for two cents?
- you gathered eggs and used your apron as a basket?
- we raked the school yard and planted trees on Arbor Day?
- bananas came in a whole bunch in a crate and the storekeeper cut them off with a special, curved knife for the customer?
- a boy was interested in a girl if he offered to feed her horse at noon?

CHAPTER III

Speaking of Buildings

A Pioneer Recalls The Brickyard



Drying racks at Virden Brickyard.

From what I remember, the brickyard started about 1900 and continued until 1915. It made bricks of the finest quality. Many Virden buildings were built of those bricks, such as the Fire Hall and a number of homes.

When the plant was taken over by new management there was some problem with the bricks falling apart. Probably poor management, plus the war, spelled the end of the brickyard. There was nothing the matter with the clay for the original bricks were very good.

The clay pit — quite a deep one — is now partly filled in. Horses were used to haul the clay out of the pit. There was a machine to make the mortar, but most of the work was done manually. They did twelve bricks at a time. “Viriden” was marked on each one with an iron stamp. (Harold Walker still has the original stamp). The bricks were then carted to long sheds for drying before they were burned in long kilns. Each brick had to be turned by hand. Blocks of wood were used for the firing and this had to be done just right.

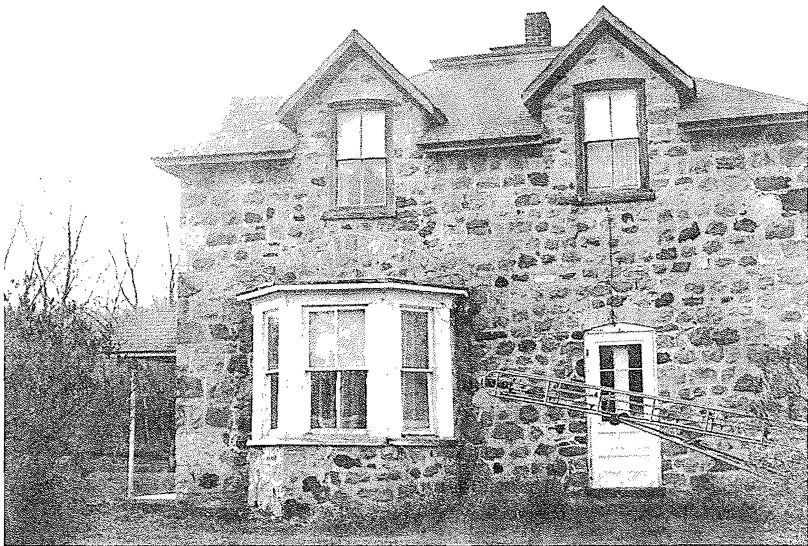
During the summer holidays, teen-age boys worked at the brickyard, starting with the eight o'clock whistle each morning, and working for probably no more than fifty cents a day.

There was an office and a house for the manager and several smaller houses for the workers, as well as barns for the horses. I remember John Davis worked there as secretary when he first arrived from England.

Most of the bricks were shipped out west. It was a thriving business for fifteen years or more.

The Elphinstone House

A link with Viriden's early history was broken in December



The Elphinstone House.

1974 when the stone house on the Clifford J. Goodridge farm one mile northeast of Virden was demolished.

The historic old house was built in 1881 for Lord Elphinstone, a Scottish nobleman who visited the Elphinstone area in 1879 and fell in love with this country. He returned the next year to start a cattle and sheep ranch north of Newdale on a thirteen-section land grant from Queen Victoria for whom he was Lord-in-Waiting. The post where he picked up his mail was renamed Elphinstone in his honor.

He also had a four-section horse ranch at Virden on which he built a manor house of fieldstone in 1881. The architecture, it was said, was inspired by Carberry Tower, the Elphinstone ancestral home at Musselburgh, near Edinburgh, Scotland.

Sidney Herbert was the second of three sons of the fifteenth Lord Elphinstone. He was educated at Marlborough, completed his education in France, Germany and Spain, and later travelled in search of sport and adventure to "lesser known parts of the world", of which Virden was one. In 1890 he returned to the Old Country after becoming heir to his father's title and estates on the death of his elder brother. Three years later he succeeded to his father's title and Scottish estates. In 1910 he married Lady Mary Bowes-Lyon, elder sister of the present Queen Mother Elizabeth. He died in 1955 after holding the title of Lord Elphinstone for sixty-two years.

W. J. Gyles, a Virden pioneer, bought the Virden property from Lord Elphinstone shortly after his return to his native Scotland. It was later owned by the Sidney Acheson family of Langley Prairie, B.C. and purchased from them by Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Goodridge in 1946.

The house had been vacant for fifteen years when the Goodridges moved from Winnipeg to make it their home but time and neglect had failed to erase the beauty and dignity of the lines of this pioneer architecture. Over the years the house was modernized, but by 1974 repairs and renovations were no longer practical and it was replaced with a new home of modern design.

Over the years, Mr. Goodridge planted more than 15,000 trees, maples, willows and fir, and 2,000 caragana bushes to further shelter and beautify the farm established more than one hundred years ago by a Scottish lord who took a liking to the new land.

Old Brick Post Office and Clock

The old brick post office building on Nelson Street West served the public well from May, 1914 until the new post office at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Raglan Street was built in 1971. The increase in the volume of business made the new building a necessity.



Old Post Office and Clock Tower now the Scott Block.

W. T. Manser Sr. was awarded the contract in May, 1913 by the Federal Department of Public Works at a contract price of \$33,900. He had built up a reputation not only for his superior workmanship, but for staying within his estimated cost. He had served five years apprenticeship in Crowborough, Sussex, England. During the last two years he recalled proudly that he was paid a small amount for his work, indicating that he had become valuable to the firm.

Stone for the building was shipped in the rough from the Garson quarries in eastern Manitoba. Local masons cut it to the required specifications. Twenty workmen were employed, all of them local with the exception of two Italians who were brought from Winnipeg for the special job of laying and polishing the terrazzo floor in true Italian style. It was claimed that it was the easiest floor to maintain. Washing it with warm water and household ammonia left it shining as if it had been waxed.

Mr. Manser kept a record of every detail of the building and this showed that 125,000 inside bricks were used. They were made by the Virden Brick Co. Ltd., no longer in existence.

The excellence of Mr. Manser's workmanship was evident when, in 1954, it was found necessary to build an extension to the rear of the building at a cost of \$75,000. The contractors at that time took measurements and levels which showed that any sinking of the building in the forty-one years since it was built was imperceptible. Efforts to budge the tough foundation were almost in vain.

When the building was first designed it was decided to put a window in the high tower. However, the late Sir James Aikens, then Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, presented the town with a clock which was placed in the tower instead. It was serviced for thirty years or more by George Gabel, town jeweller.

The clock was supplied by John Smith & Sons of Derby, England, a firm which is still in the clockmaking business. In November 1981, Tom Jeffrey, who helped with the restoration of the clock, secured a photostatic copy from them of the original bill of sale for the clock, its working parts and the freight from England to Virden. It shows that the 800-pound bell, the four five-foot dials, the glass, etc., cost a total of 159 pounds, eight shillings and three pence in 1914. The company also advised that they can still supply parts for it but "since the clock is only sixty-seven years old, it should not be worn nor require new parts".

When the old post office was sold it was renovated as an apartment block. The new owner did not think the clock would have any value in such a building, so it was taken down to be shipped to Boston to an antique dealer.

A local citizen, Arnold Geith, saw the clock works on the first floor of the building under a pile of lath and plaster. He convinced the owner that making changes to the tower would cost more than the sale of the clock would bring. It was agreed that the clock would be kept if Mr. Geith could find help to restore it at which time the owner would put it back in the tower if he were absolved of any future responsibility for its upkeep.

With the help of friends the restoration was done and by 1973 the clock was in running order again. When it was first installed in the tower, it was found that it had to be wound every five days instead of once a week because the tower was not built as high as was originally intended. With the apartment block renovations, a similar problem was encountered when a twelve-foot drop for the clock's weights was lost.

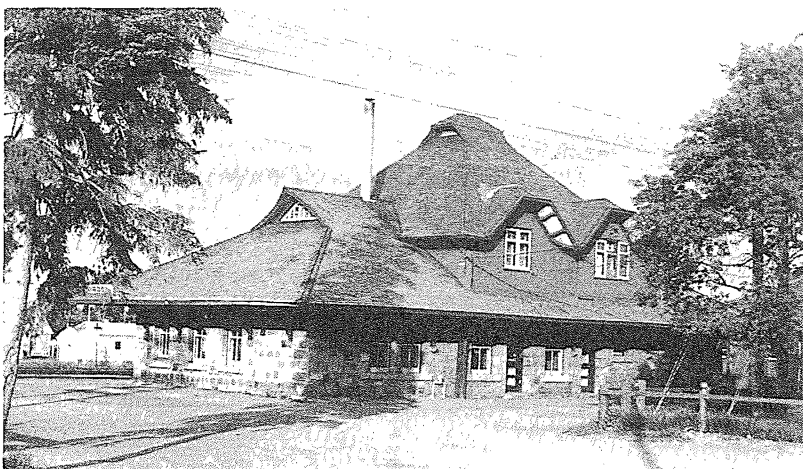
Either the clock had to be wound every day or some electrical winding device would have to be found. Frank White, local electrician, came up with all the answers. He devised a winding system out of parts from a small trenching machine, an old washing machine or dryer, and a battery charger! It works perfectly and the clock is now wound automatically every day. When the weights come down, they touch a switch, Frank White's mechanism takes over and winds the weights to the top again — a distance of eight feet. The weights touch a similar switch at the top, stopping the winding, and the process is repeated over again.

Labor for repairs and maintenance has been donated by many in the community. Any expenses incurred have been paid by the Chamber of Commerce which has taken on the project. The building owner provides the power for lighting the clock and for the winding mechanism.

The clock still marks the passage of time for the people just as it has done for 68 years. It no longer strikes the hours — not because it couldn't, but because it was felt it would be too disturbing for the tenants.

The CPR Station

As the CPR pushed westward, a box car served as a temporary station and office, moving along as the railroad was



Picture of the CPR Station built in 1906.

completed. The first site chosen for a permanent station, near the old brickyard, had to be abandoned because of the danger of flooding. It was decided to move further west but to keep well back of McIvor's Hill (between the Triangle Auto Wrecking and the Auction Mart), so that the trains would have a chance to pick up speed for the steep climb.

The first temporary structure was probably built in 1882 for there are records indicating church service was held in the station in that year. Mrs. Magdalene Castle of Vancouver tells of her grandparents arriving in Virden in 1883. By that time Sunday morning service had moved to the Bellamy Hotel. When the train was seen in the distance, someone would yell, "The train is coming". This created an instant end to the religious service as the dining room had to be hastily cleared and prepared for the train travellers.

The first permanent station was built in 1891 at a cost of \$160.00 but by 1899 required an addition at the much larger sum of \$8,882. This building was replaced by the present station which was erected in 1906.

A spacious two storey structure, the Virden station is of unique design, worthy of inclusion in the book "Early Manitoba Buildings". It is a fine representative example of early fieldstone, and a monument to the craftsmanship of the stonemasons who migrated to this province. Their skill at cutting, trimming, fitting

and pointing of the great prairie boulders is evident in the fact that the station has remained structurally sound all these years. It is still an attractive piece of architecture with its unique bellcast gable roof and bellcast dormers.

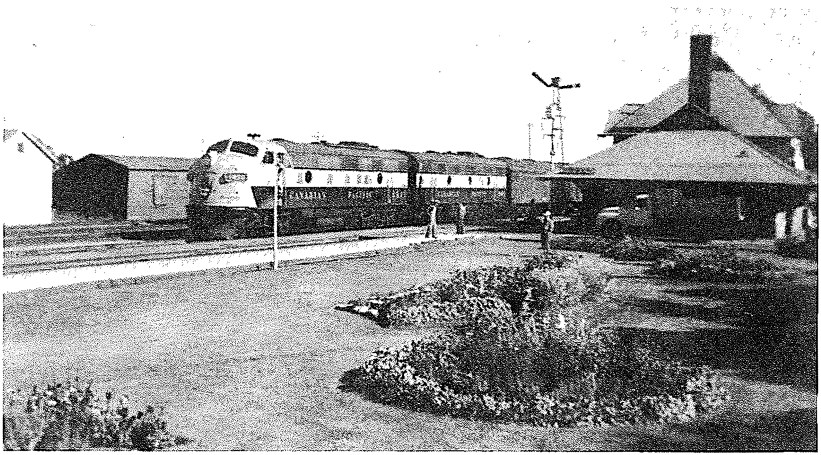
From Tom Jeffrey it was learned that the site chosen was still not far enough from McIvor's Hill to avoid problems. Trains had to be split, the engine taking half of the cars at a time. This necessitated the building of a siding, called Homestead Siding, near Pacific School. Finally the entire track had to be raised from the King Street crossing to the Creamery.

After an accident in 1890 due to poor visibility, the freight shed had to be moved back several feet to permit trains from the west to have a full view of trains standing at the station.



The CPR Gardens.

Early photographs show the Virden CPR station surrounded by a beautiful park, lush with trees, shrubs, flower beds and walkways. Pioneers remember delightful garden parties being held by one station agent's wife. It was a welcome beauty spot for passengers to enjoy as they stretched their legs awaiting the old familiar holler, "All Aboard". Horticulturist Bert Snape tended the flower beds for many years. But, as is the case with many large companies, it was use first, then beauty. Part of the gardens were sacrificed to make room for a large shed, then further space was needed for parking. By the mid fifties the flower beds were abandoned and many of the trees destroyed. Ah, progress!!



A View of the CPR Station, Passenger Train and Gardens.

During the busy railroading years this station supplied twenty-four hour service and employed an agent, assistant agent, and three telegraph operators, each one working an eight-hour 'trick'. It is noteworthy that W. S. Hooper was agent here around 1887 while his son, George S. Hooper, acted as agent from 1965 to 1967 when he retired. Father and son spanned eighty years of railroading in Virden.

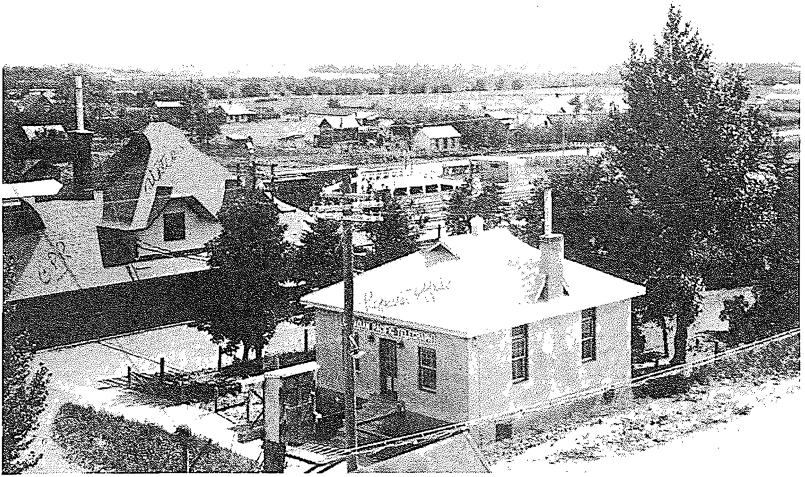
The agency closed in 1971, Bruce Treble being the last agent. Customer Service is now centred in Brandon.

It is depressing to visit the station now. It stands empty but for the occasional venturesome soul waiting (and waiting and waiting) for VIA Rail, or the odd derelict seeking a place of warmth. Dismal and silent, what a contrast to the bright, bustling centre it used to be!

C.P.R. Repeater Station Virden

The repeater office was built between the C.P.R. station and Sixth Avenue. A road went around this cream colored stucco building to accommodate traffic to the station. The office was built using hollow red brick tile laid horizontally and stuccoed. It was one of a chain built at forty-mile intervals as power booster stations to carry radio signals across Canada. It was opened in July 1929 with Harry L. McMillan as the first operator.

Harry was a lineman out of Winnipeg when he was offered this new job in Virden at a wage of \$140 per month. Other than one



The CPR Repeater Station demolished in 1969.



Telegraph Key and Sounder.

month of orientation at Medicine Hat, the only way to obtain experience in this entirely new field was on the job. Morse code was necessary, so after hours he went to the C.P.R. station to learn it.

There was no across Canada telephone system in the early years and so the existing C.P.R. phones were to be used only by the linemen and dispatchers. These dispatcher phones were used by the station agent and the telegraph operators for train orders and instructions. This pressure to learn Morse in a hurry was a constant worry. Harry's way of practising when not near a Morse key was to use his front teeth to click out the dots and dashes.

Only one man was employed for the first five years so he was always on call. So that he could be contacted quickly in times of trouble after hours, a Morse set of key and sounder was installed in his home. The "key" at the McMillan home was always on the end of the buffet. From 1929 until 1947 Harry worked seven days a week with two weeks off in the summer.

For some years a large sign on the front of the building read "Canadian Pacific Telegraph" and this misled the public. Many people went into the office trying to send telegrams which in fact were only handled at the station. A coffee break was unheard of at that time but Harry loved his cup of tea. Many a pot of tea was shared with telegraph operators, linemen and friends who dropped in for a short break and a cup of tea.

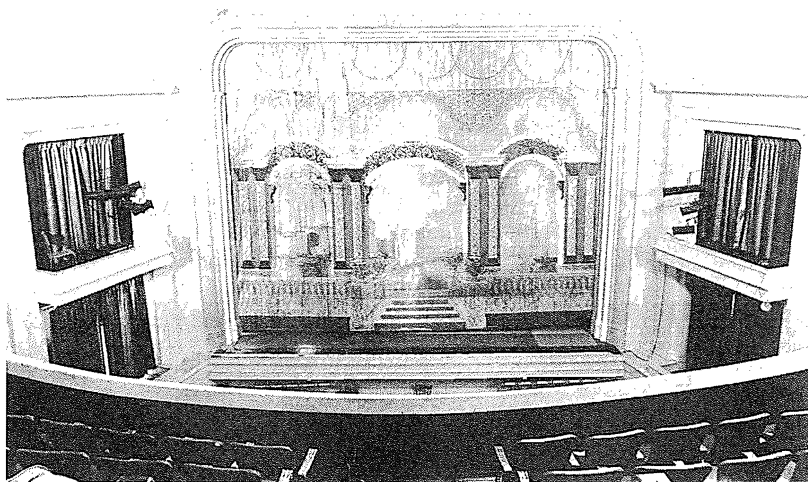
All early radio broadcasts were manually switched from east to west or from west to east transmission according to where the program originated. Precise timing of manual switching at these relay stations all across Canada was absolutely necessary for program continuity. To accomplish this exact timing, all C.P.R. clocks were checked each day with the twelve o'clock time signal. A 5,000 kilocycle tone was used to line up the broadcast carriers. They had to be lined up several times a day to avoid noise and distortion and give a clear reproduction. The two broadcasts were monitored simultaneously with one program on the loudspeaker and the other on a head set. Any interruption like static, a click or scratching was described and recorded in the "time book" with the exact time of the interruption recorded. In this way trouble on the line could be traced as to whether it was east or west of Virden by comparing notes with other relay stations. Even an unpolished "jack" used in switching broadcasts could cause problems and so these jacks were polished routinely.

Another daily routine was the recording of the information for the weather station which was in the backyard of the repeater office. An accurate record of the temperature, high and low, wind velocity, weather conditions and visibility was telegraphed each morning to the Department of Transportation in Winnipeg.

The first teletype equipment in Virden was installed in the repeater office as a service to the oil companies. Messages came in on the teletype and were phoned to the oil company involved. This continued until the oil companies had their own equipment installed.

In 1948 the telephone company won the contract for the transmission of the radio broadcasts. With the coming of the microwave system and the joining of CN and CP Telecommunications, times were changing. Harry retired in 1956, earning \$240 per month after forty-five years service with the CPR.

The office was closed in 1964 and the equipment dismantled and removed in 1969. The building was torn down in 1972.



The stage of the Auditorium Theatre as it is today, showing the hand painted curtain and the "boxes" on either side.

Photo by Craig McIntosh

Virden Auditorium

A Tribute to the Town's Pioneers

Every town and district has its monuments commemorating some important events in its history. Virden is no exception with

its fieldstone cairn marking the location of the North West Company's trading post, Fort Montagne à la Bosse, the monument in Victoria Park honoring the dead in two world wars, the Cross of Remembrance in the Legion section of the cemetery erected by First World War veterans and the Ladies' Auxiliary, and the chapel in the cemetery built in memory of the pioneers.

These monuments of stone remind us of the past. But there are other functional edifices which are testimonials in their own way to the vision and zeal of citizens of bygone years who planned so that their children could enjoy the various forms of the cultural arts.

One such in the town of Virden is the auditorium which was built on to the former fire hall seventy years ago. According to the program for the first performance, staged there on February 29 and March 1, 1912, the building was started during the summer of 1911 and completed in time for the presentation of "the Misogynist" a four-act comedy.

The driving force behind the construction of the new theatre was J. A. McLachlan, a councillor of that time in charge of fire, water, light and building, and a man keenly interested in drama. Under his management, a drama society had been formed in 1910 and plays were staged regularly each season, first in the old town hall and later in the new auditorium.

The skeptics thought that a building the size of the one proposed could not be successful and indeed the building was dubbed "Jack's Folly". It **was** an ambitious undertaking for a town which in 1911 boasted a population of only 1,500. However, W. A. Bridgett, the mayor at the time construction began, provided the necessary leadership and so the work went ahead because the other councillors too were equal to the challenge. The late W. T. Manser Sr., one of the town's best known builders, was the contractor.

The seating capacity at that time was a little over 500. This has since been reduced to approximately 475. Excellent acoustics, a stage worthy in size of a city theatre, and box seats at each wing, combined with extensive dressing rooms backstage, in the basement, all served to make this the finest theatre of its time between Winnipeg and Regina. The curtain, still in use although a trifle faded after seventy years of service, was hand painted by the Great Eastern Scene Painting Company of Toronto, the same one that supplied the scenery. Their original estimate was for \$947 for the

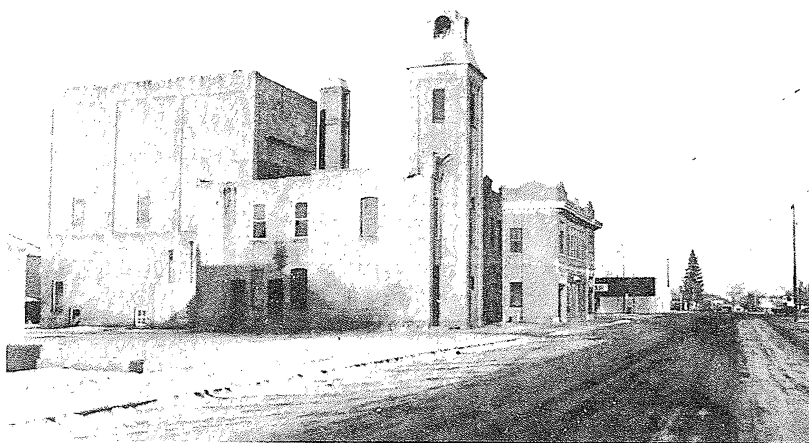
curtain and scenery and the estimate stated this price was "delivered on cars at Virden".

The Auditorium Theatre Co. leased the new theatre. Pictures were shown but good legitimate drama was also presented whenever available. The most outstanding venture in this field appears to have been the engaging of the all-English H. V. Esmond Company. Mr. Esmond himself was a playwright. The company had been playing in London and following World War I toured Canada.

Another name which stands out as a worthy contributor to the development of local productions is that of John Davis. His talents were in great demand as an actor, director and stage manager for operas, plays and variety entertainments over a long period of years. He played an integral part in providing the best in theatre. He and Mr. McLachlan and others like them, who worked so energetically in the founding of the Dramatic and Operatic Societies, would be happy to know that this 'monument' to their interest in the performing arts is still standing and is still appreciated.

A restoration committee is currently raising funds to renovate the auditorium and return it to its useful place in the community in centennial year. The work of our pioneers has served us well and, we hope, will continue to do so for years to come.

On this anniversary we salute those who laid such excellent foundations for the future.



Auditorium Centre, Bell Tower and Fire Hall.

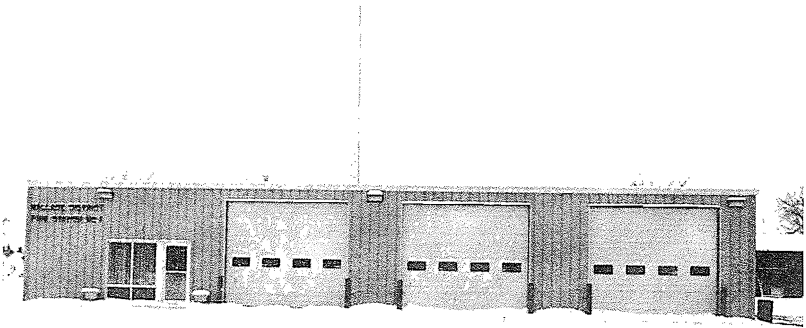
Landmark Demolished

December 16, 1981 will be sadly remembered by Virdenites as the day the Bell Tower was demolished.

The Firehall was built in 1895 with a tower to house the bell which had been previously used in the original firehall. The building was a two-storey structure of Virden brick and the tower was an engineering miracle for a little town on the prairie. The Romanesque arch window on the second floor was later bricked in with a basket weave pattern.

The bell could be heard into the country as far away as seven miles. It tolled the passing of many of the pioneers who thrilled to the sight of the tower when they first arrived in Virden.

The pride of eighty-six years is gone.



Present Fire Hall built in 1978.

Fort La Bosse School Division No. 41

Fort La Bosse School Division was established in April, 1959. In 1967 the provincial government offered ratepayers the option of accepting a new unitary system or remaining as individual elementary school districts and secondary school divisions.

Fort La Bosse ratepayers rejected the unitary plan at the time but became a unitary division on January 1, 1972 because the division was falling behind in education grants which were available to unitary divisions. Fifteen elementary school districts were included in the new division.

The division office was located in the lower level of the Credit Union building from the summer of 1971 until the fall of 1973. At



School Division Office, formerly the two-room school built in 1887.

that time the office was moved to the former Technical School on Ninth Avenue. Renovations and an addition to the former school cost \$37,500. The Division purchased the former John Deere Implement Agency building on Seventh Avenue, north of the creek, and established a garage to service its fleet of sixty school buses.

A full time school psychologist serves the students and schools throughout the Division. Efforts are being made at this time to obtain a speech therapist.

A general music program is provided in every elementary school and there is a band program for students in grades five and up throughout the Division. These programs are taught by four full time and one half-time itinerant teachers.

The total operating budget has grown from \$2,338,543 in the first year of the unitary system (1972) to \$6,166,852 in 1981.

Total enrolment in the Division's fourteen schools on December 18, 1981 was 2,120 with a staff of 136 teachers. By comparison, in 1971-72 there were 3,012 students and a staff of 149.5.

Viriden Junior High School

Viriden Junior High has continued to operate as a grade five to eight complex from its opening date, November 1, 1965, to this, Viriden's Centennial year. In the fall of 1971 an E.M.H. class at the basic skills level was added and serves a very worthwhile purpose.

The population of Virden Junior High, like that of many Manitoba schools, has experienced a decrease going from 427 in the fall of its initial year of operation to 347 in December, 1981. Present forecasts indicate a levelling off trend.

On January 1, 1972, Fort La Bosse became a unitary school division, one of the last in the province to adopt the concept. At that time, principal Fred Cole was appointed to the position of assistant superintendent of schools. Roger Hurst, a staff member since 1964, took over the reins of principal. Mr. Hurst returned to the position of classroom teacher in the fall of 1974 at which time Dennis Eirikson was awarded the principalship. Mr. Eirikson resigned December 31, 1979, to become principal of the Manitoba Correspondence Branch of the Department of Education, and was succeeded by Rick Plaisier, a native of Oak Lake teaching at Rosssburn up to the time of his appointment.

In June, 1977, Lenore School closed its doors, and its student population was absorbed into the Virden system.

In the fall of 1977, the Division purchased the C.N.R. property in front of the School between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. Princess Street which joins those avenues and runs directly in front of the school, was closed to traffic. The area was turned into a participark with a portion allocated to staff parking and school bus loading and unloading. The newly-purchased grounds serve to lessen the problems of limited playground facilities. Landscaping has been done, and the outdoor skating rink has been moved onto the site from its former Mary Montgomery School location.

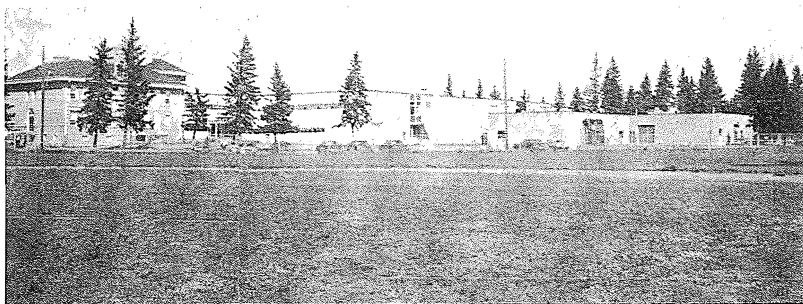
The Junior High band program continues to flourish, as each year a sizeable percentage of the school's grade five students elect to take that option. In addition to the band and general music programs, students in grade eight also have access to the home economics and industrial arts facilities of the local collegiate.

New Vocational Wing V.C.I.

Virden Collegiate added a new dimension to its educational facilities with the opening of the new vocational wing on October 21, 1981.

Included in the building project are a power mechanics shop, industrial art (woods-plastics) shop, new washrooms and renovations to the administrative area and staff room.

The project was approved in October, 1977 but construction



Virden Collegiate Complex.

did not get underway until February, 1981. The new wing was open for the beginning of the 1981-82 school year. It provides new opportunities for students to explore their skills without having to leave home for such training. It is another phase in a program that already encompasses home economics, other industrial arts and a music program.

Enrollment for the first term in the power mechanics course which is taught in the new addition was twenty-three students from Grade ten and seventeen from Grade eleven. A total of 116 students from several schools in the Division receive instruction in wood-working and plastics.

Two former trustees, D.C.M. Elliott and H. T. Hayhurst, and Board Chairman Bob Cowie assisted with the ribbon cutting ceremony at the official opening.

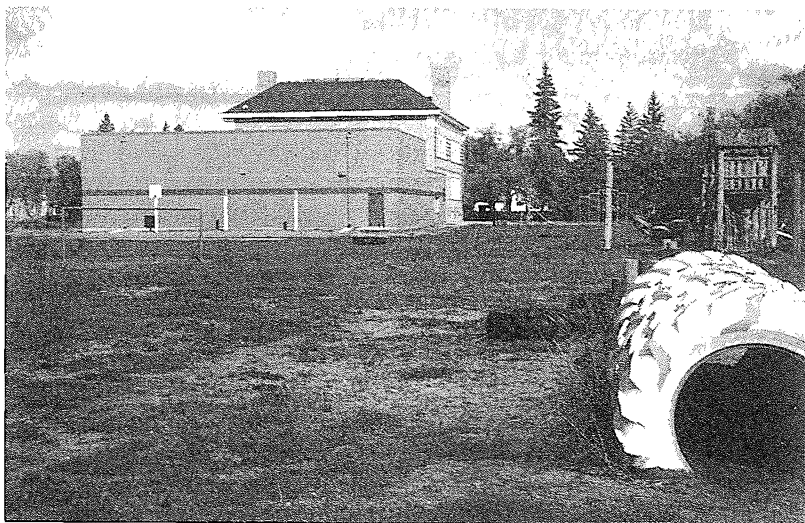
The Division has leased the former Department of National Defence land across Highway 257 adjacent to the Lions Tourist Park for ninety-nine years and it has been developed into a comprehensive sports field.

Included in the development are a regulation size football field, soccer field, softball diamonds and track and field facilities with a 400-metre track.

Mary Montgomery School

Mary Montgomery School held the official opening of its long awaited addition on June 4, 1980. Miss Myrtle Lane, former principal, and Mrs. Mary Workman Metcalfe, formerly on the teaching staff, took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

In addition to the gymnasium the new addition houses a



View of Mary Montgomery School showing the New Auditorium.



New Playground Equipment at Mary Montgomery School.

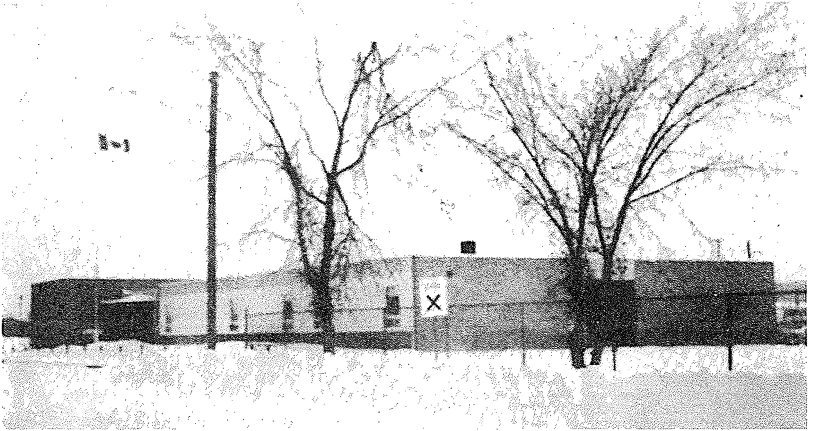
dental clinic and two rooms in the basement which were remodelled and equipped for modern kindergarten classrooms.

The playground has taken on a new look with a variety of excellent climbing apparatus and other fun things. The new outdoor facilities were financed by the Virden Optimist Club assisted by the Virden Kinsmen Club, and were built by parent volunteers.

The original school building, formerly known as Virden Public School, stands as strong as the day it was built. At present it serves 213 pupils from Kindergarten to Grade four with a staff of twelve teachers and two custodians.

Goulter School Update

Although there has been no building addition to Goulter School since 1970, a very important program came under the administration of this school in the year 1972 when Fort La Bosse became a unitary school division.



A Winter View of Goulter School, Virden.

In 1972 the Trainable Mentally Handicapped class (T.M.H.) housed in the Kinsmen School became a part of Goulter School.

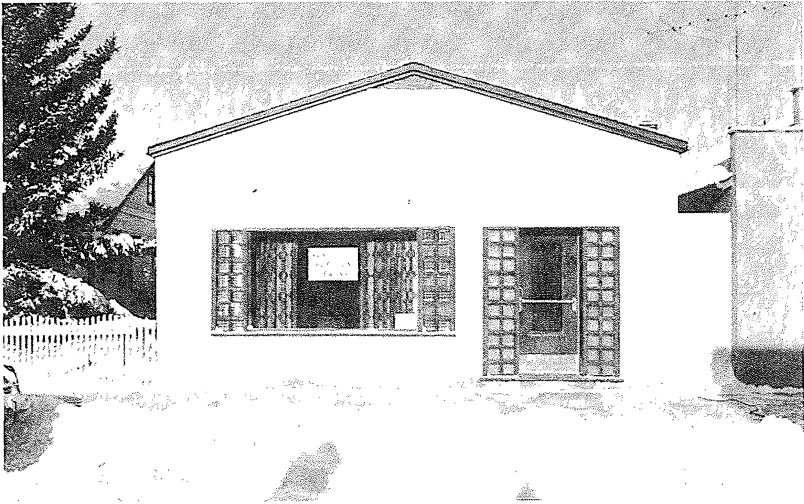
A program for mentally handicapped children was begun some twelve years before by a number of foresighted and interested citizens of the Virden Community. Mrs. Geraldine Longman was the teacher and remained on staff until June, 1972. Mrs. Glenys Eddy became the teacher of this special class that September and in 1975 Mrs. Dorothy Tasker, the present teacher, took over the instruction of the class.

In the earlier years Mr. and Mrs. George Sproule were responsible for the transportation and custodial duties at the Kinsmen School. Gradually the students have been encouraged to travel by school bus or walk where possible.

The daily program deals with teaching life skills to the students and extending their social experiences.

Through the years the Virden Community has been one of the first in the province to provide services to the mentally handicapped. Much of the success of the program at Goulter is due to the support of the people of Virden.

Volunteer Work + Grant = Drop-in Centre



New Horizon Centre, Nelson Street, formerly the Revelstoke Building.

Recreational and social activities for senior citizens of the area became a reality with the formation of Virden's New Horizon Centre in 1976.

The initial organizational meeting was held in October, 1975, and from that time forward many hours of volunteer time were spent getting the centre operable.

Promoters were concerned that the centre should encompass the surrounding communities and not merely serve the people living within the town. With this in mind, it was named Virden and Rural New Horizon Centre Inc.

The former Revelstoke building on Nelson Street in the downtown area was the obvious site choice because of location and size. The 25 x 34 foot front portion was converted into a suitable meeting place almost entirely with volunteer labor.

While the men worked with saws and hammers, insulating, carpentering and making necessary repairs and renovations, the women were not idle. They helped make the former business office into a kitchenette, painted the walls and the newly built cupboards and supplied lunches morning and afternoon to the workers.

A government grant in 1976 provided the funding to finish work on the building, install electric heat, fluorescent lighting and buy furnishings. The back portion, formerly the lumber shed, is now an attractive games room, carpeted, panelled and insulated. There are two pool tables, a combination shuffleboard and five-pin table, carpet bowl sets, checkers and cribbage tables.

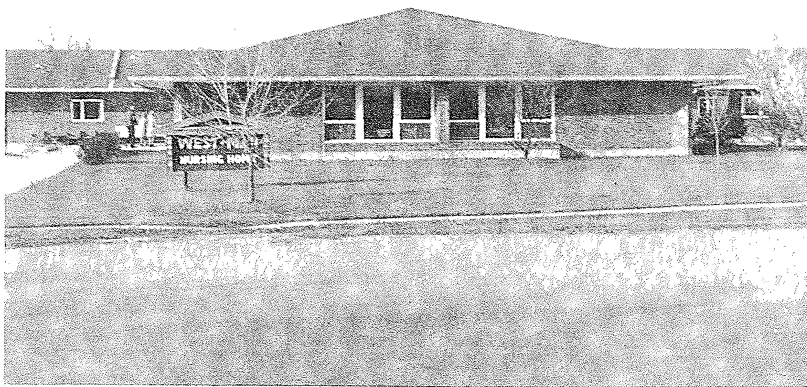
Membership stands at approximately 120. An annual membership fee is charged and this includes all the facilities, except for coffee and cookies for which there is a small extra charge. The Centre is open three afternoons a week. During the winter months cards are played on Friday evenings as well, rotating with bridge, 500, cribbage, whist and bingo.

Activities do not end at the centre. During the year bus trips are arranged and sightseeing tours planned to Winnipeg, Regina and points in between. Seniors club in the Westman area host a summer picnic each year. When Virden held it in 1980 approximately 450 seniors from the southwestern portion of the province attended. The day-long event included an impromptu concert, horseshoes, carpet bowling, bingo and dancing.

It is THEIR centre and has proved successful because town and rural seniors share in it equally.

West-Man Nursing Home

West-Man Nursing Home became a reality a decade ago when the first residents moved in October 1, 1972.



West-Man Nursing Home, Virden.

A steering committee was formed in 1969 and through the efforts of many local citizens, sod was turned for the fifty-bed facility on August 26, 1971.

Some of the original staff are still employed at the Home. It served ten towns and municipalities in the surrounding area.

Princess Lodge

Located on Princess Street, the Lodge serves as a permanent reminder of the co-operative spirit of the people of Virden. The three-storey, forty-unit apartment complex is designed to provide accommodation for the independent elderly. It includes three suites for handicapped persons, and is owned and operated by the Virden Centennial Housing Corporation Inc.



Princess Lodge, Elderly Persons Housing, opened 1981.

The original planning for this community project resulted from meetings held in June, 1978 where the Royal Canadian Legion, Virden Branch No. 8 was instrumental in promoting the need for such a building and offering to support the project financially. Advanced planning continued through the efforts of the incumbent mayor and members of the District Health Steering Committee. In order to facilitate funding, and to give formal representation to a wide range of agencies and organizations, a nonprofit corporation was formed. Known as the Virden Centennial Housing Corporation, it received its certificate of incorporation on July 20, 1979.

A survey in 1979 indicated that there was a real need for such a building, and the majority of applicants were in favor of a downtown location. An unconditional grant provided by the Virden Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion enabled land to be purchased. Additional land was provided by the province through the Manitoba Housing & Renewal Corporation.

Tenders were called in the summer of 1980 and construction started that fall. Work remained on schedule, due in part to the mild winter, and the building was handed over to the VCHC on July 31, 1981. All the suites were rented by the middle of August and the building was fully occupied by September, 1981.

The day to day operation of the building is carried out by a manager and a live-in caretaker. The residents have formed themselves into an active association to organize activities for the residents and others in the community, to obtain grants and donations for furniture, and to advise the Board of Directors as necessary.

The official opening of the Lodge will take place on May 3, 1982, and will form part of the Virden Centennial year activities.

Virden Branch of the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded

The Virden Branch of the C.A.M.R. works to improve the quality of life for those in Virden and district who live with a mental handicap.

Highlights of the work of the association in recent years include the following:

— The purchase and renovation in 1975 of the building, formerly known as the Medical Clinic, for a workshop. It is now known as the "Harris Centre". A wide variety of woodworking, flowers for weddings, and crafts are produced. Further renovations are being made in 1981-82.

— In 1981 a training program through a federal grant gave one-to-one training, work experience in the community, and recreations programs. One trainee is now working part time in the community.

— In March, 1981 the opening of a four-person home for senior residents at 230 Bennett Crescent took place. This was made possible through the Manitoba Marathon Fund, which

provided the house and an operating subsidy, and through community support.

In September, 1981 the Association provided a pre-school program in an existing program for one development delayed four year old. This program is now government supported.

In 1977 an agreement was made with Hospital District No. 10 whereby the District took over equity control of C.A.M.R. property and provides consultative and accounting services.

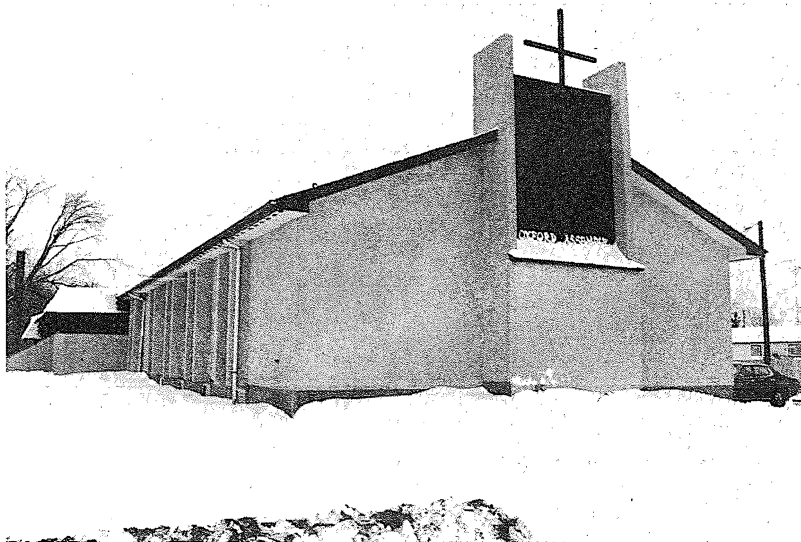
The Association continues to operate Merry Manor, a residence for twelve people. A Life Skills program was introduced in 1977.

Association presidents in recent years have been Bill McNeill, Lane Eddy, Rev. Terry Lutz and Catherine McArthur.

The generous support of the community has assisted the Association in providing its services over the years.

Oxford Assembly P.A.O.C.

The sod turning ceremony at the site of the new Virden Pentecostal Church took place September 28, 1975, following the Sunday morning service. The new \$70,000 frame structure has an upper and lower auditorium, nursery, four classrooms and other facilities.



New Pentecostal Church on Oxford Street.

The sod turning ceremony for a new addition to Oxford Assembly was held September 17, 1978. It was built at the back of the present building which was dedicated three years previously. The addition doubles the sanctuary seating capacity, increasing it to 300. It also provides a large foyer, library and office.

The present pastor is Rev. Dwight Brown. He and his wife and their three children were welcomed by the congregation in July, 1980.

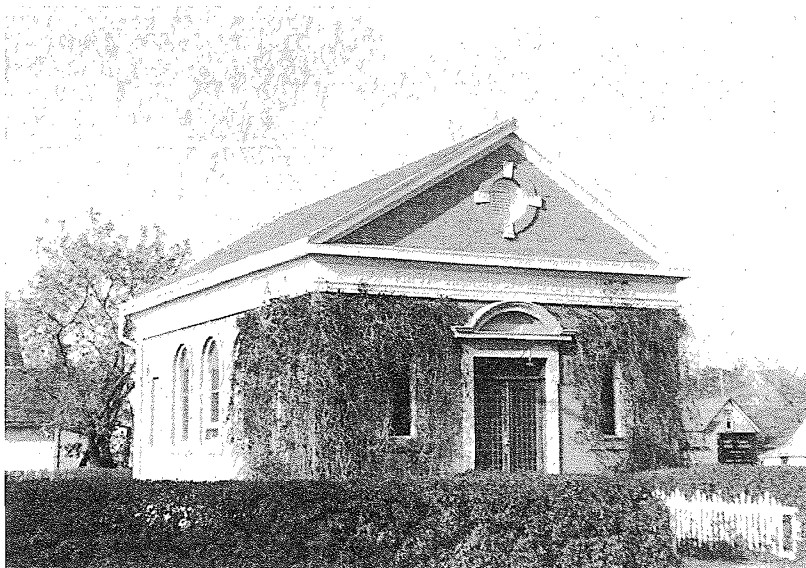
The End of An Era

The First Church of Christ Scientist at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Queen Street has been demolished bringing to an end an era in the church community.

Membership had declined in recent years due to several active members leaving the area and so the congregation was disbanded. The last service was held November 4, 1979.

Purchase of the church and lots was completed in December, 1979. Following re-sale of the property, the building was torn down in the fall of 1981 to make way for a private dwelling.

It was built in 1911 of Virden brick and with its demolition a landmark of 70 years has passed into history.



Christian Science Church which was torn down in 1981.



This modern home replaced the First Church of Christ Scientist.

Remember when . . .

- we had livery stables and the steaming piles behind them?
- the schoolroom was heated by the pot-bellied stove?
- a “biffy” sat at the end of the well-worn path?
- teams lined up at the elevators?
- you sat at double desks that had inkwells?
- our Auditorium had an organ and you went to the show early to hear it?
- part of bedroom furnishings was a washstand with a china toilet set of basin, waterjug, soap dish, chamber pot and lid?
- you attended the one room country school for grades 1-9?
- there was a stovepipe cleaning day and ash can to empty?
- dishes and staples were stored in a pantry?
- the parlour had a horsehair couch and was only used occasionally?
- a roundhouse stood by the track?
- Victoria Park had a bandstand?

CHAPTER IV

Talk About Stories



Liza in front of her tent, smoking her corn cob pipe.

Liza

Liza was a solitary Indian woman who camped on the outskirts of Virden for many years. Some old-timers believe she was a member of the Indian Encampment at Gopher Creek when the first settlers arrived. She might even have been one of the original Sioux who came over the border to escape the pursuing American Army in 1876. One report tells of Liza receiving regular cheques from the United States. Indians from the Sioux Reserves visited her and camped beside her during the summer.

The rough shelter where Liza lived was located near the

Water Treatment Plant by the CPR tracks. This area was thick bush in the early years. Sometimes she would move her tent to open ground higher up, in the summer, but retreated to the dense bush in winter. Town employees remember shovelling out a path for her when she was all but buried under the snow. Her tent was unheated except for a small fire in a battered old tin. She seemed impervious to the cold, sleeping on blankets frozen to the ground.

Liza's nondescript garb of long dark skirt, a blanket shawl, and mocassins never varied except to add extra layers of wool shawls in the winter. She spent long hours huddled in the livery stable during the dark days of winter. Liza would be in the barn when school children stabled their horses in the morning, often with Liza's help, and still there when they returned late in the day. Most children were half frightened, half fascinated by this ancient woman; some of the bolder ones taunted and teased her, but she was never known to hurt anyone.

Her regular diet consisted mostly of wild berries and wild meat. Young boys who trapped beavers and rabbits often took their animals to Liza to be skinned. She relished beaver meat especially, cooked in a tin over a meager fire. Liza was not entirely indigent since she wove mats from old rags and natural materials such as bulrushes, and peddled them, along with saskatoons, around town. Whatever money she received was soon spent, shared no doubt, with fair-weather friends. She seemed always to have a little money when she appeared at the back door of the bake shop, where she often sat on the floor and ate the bread immediately. The tradesmen were kindly in their treatment of this elderly character, and it is thought the town fathers also supplied her with food from time to time. The poor old soul was often seen rummaging through the garbage cans behind the town's cafes.

For a time, at the turn of the century, she helped a family with housework. There, it was discovered that she was capable of fine handwriting, where learned, no one knows. Liza taught one of the little boys in the family many Sioux words. Later, she often visited here, and at other homes, particularly at Christmas time for special treats like fruitcake.

Liza's favourite treat was tobacco which she smoked in an old corn cob pipe. She had a little strategy: she would beg a pipeful and then empty the entire contents of the tobacco pouch. This ploy afforded her great amusement, especially in the blacksmith shop

where men congregated. If cultivated tobacco was not available, she followed her ancestral custom of smoking dried leaves.

Liza's bathing habits were quite unique. She would stand under the overflow pipe at the water tower (sometimes clothed, sometimes not,) then dry off by standing over the huge heat register in Scales and Rothnie's General Store. Often she would creep into the Nu-Art Beauty Parlour to squat on the floor in front of the window, warming herself in the sun.

Liza remained a common sight shuffling along Virden streets with barking dogs at her heels, until the 1940's. Then she disappeared, persuaded to abandon her hand to mouth existence, probably by friends or kin at Griswold.

People who remember Liza are convinced that she lived well over one hundred years.

Well Drilling Incident Has Near Tragic Ending

During the early nineteen thirties an incident with a near tragic ending occurred at the old Virden Hospital. It involved the drilling of a water well and a well with natural gas.

Eden Weldon and George Armstrong bought an old well drill from the Manitoba Government through Robert Mooney, MLA for this area, because there was considerable difficulty in finding water in the Arawana and old Kola Districts during the twenties and thirties. I believe the price of the machine, less motor, but including some casting, sinker bars, mud pump and tools, was \$30.00. The rig was equipped with a Studebaker car or truck motor. With it, considerable well drilling was done.

Drilling for water at the old hospital was one job of particular interest. At 150 feet some strange force was struck which blew sand about 60 feet in the air, twice the height of the derrick. The drillers were curious to know the cause. They suspected it was gas, so they struck a match and indeed it **was** gas.

A fire resulted which proved so difficult to put out that the fire brigade was called. The fire engine was of a rather primitive chemical type and it has been suggested it was horse drawn. After several unsuccessful attempts to put out the blaze, it was extinguished quite simply by capping the casing with a shovel full of mud. Fortunately there were no losses in the blaze, not even the wooden derrick. Drilling continued and water was struck at a depth of 254 feet.

Finding natural gas was of considerable interest to the hospital board, and one of its members, Josiah Nichol, took an interest in promoting the drilling of a second well for gas. There was twenty pounds pressure on a steam gauge and it was decided that this warranted drilling of a gas well. This was done very close to the previous well so as not to miss the gas pocket.

After the gas well was completed and the machinery was being made ready for removal, another explosion occurred. This was because a dry well existed, near the water well, which housed the motors and pumps for the water well. An accumulation of gas had seeped around the well casing into the dry well and a spark from the electric motor is believed to have caused the explosion. A double two-inch plank cover was blown to pieces and about 40 panes of glass were broken in the hospital building.

George Armstrong had just stepped off the plank cover and was hurled backwards about the length of the drilling rig. He did not suffer any broken bones but had hair and eyebrows burned off. He was very bruised and shaken and spent the whole winter recovering.

Bones! Bones! Bones!

At Christmas, the season of giving and goodwill, memory takes one backward to the kindly butcher, Frank Finch of Virden. Mr. Finch operated his butcher shop in the Sam Jones Block, across from the Alexandra Hotel.

During the winter months, a little noticed phenomenon took place around mid-afternoon. Dogs of all description would gather in the lane at the side of the building — sleek dogs from good homes and stray dogs with no homes; large and small dogs; black, white and multicolored ones. All sat or stood nervously with watchful eyes cast upon the shop door.

Next the big event took place. Like the coming of Santa Claus at the conclusion of a Christmas concert, the shop door flew open and out sallied Mr. Finch in his crisp white apron, carrying a large wicker basket filled with bones. The distribution was conducted in an orderly and precise fashion. The canine welfare recipients understood that good conduct was a must. Mr. Finch, a strict disciplinarian, called each dog forward to receive a bone — big bones for big dogs, smaller bones for lesser dogs. When a dog recieved his gift he was sent packing, **no** seconds.

When the basket was empty, Mr. Finch turned on his heel and disappeared into his shop.

Cutting Wood in the Depression



A Backyard Woodpile was a common sight in the 1920's and '30's.

During the depression, we traded everything we could find — horses, hay from the marsh and wood from the river valley. I remember trading a load of wood for thirty pounds of honey. If anyone asked where we cut our wood, we always said “Section 37”. In truth, we cut wherever we could put an axe in, and not be seen, on the school sections, the CPR Sections, Crown Land or Road Allowances. There are only 36 sections in every township, so we were safe in saying we cut our load in Section 37’!

The Buffalo Wallow

In the muskeg, over the tracks from our buildings is a big buffalo wallow, a pit more than ten feet across. Sitting nearby is a huge, shiny, rounded stone. Apparently the buffalo rubbed their old hair off against this stone. One day I dug underneath it and discovered a great many buffalo bones. The buffalo would come to the muskeg for salt, and possibly the weak ones would be trampled. When we broke up some of this muskeg, I found a perfectly formed buffalo skull and hid it nearby, but when I

returned it had been stolen. There must be lots of bones in there, because bones won't rot in the muskeg. I still enjoy looking at that smooth stone and I think of what happened in those years long ago.

Beef Rings

Fresh meat was difficult to keep without refrigeration. Before rural electrification in 1945, farmers relied on a "Beef Ring" for their meat.

A number of farmers took turns supplying a prime beef. This was shared by all the members of the ring in portions that could be used within a week. One member was usually the butcher, and the families took turns delivering the meat to their neighbors.

Sitting Eagle

The Indians often visited our place on their way home from town and we always found them a friendly lot. Sitting Eagle, the chief from Pipestone, seemed to make this his stopping place to feed his horses and share a meal with my folks. I recall him, with his long braided hair, driving a democrat, his squaw and papooses sitting on a bag of flour. He used to trap wolves and foxes, and also sold wild berries to make a living.

Barnardo Boys

Thomas John Barnardo, born in Dublin, grew up with a strong evangelical zeal, and his ambition was to go to China as a medical missionary. To do this, he had first to train as a doctor, and for this he went to London where in 1865, during an outbreak of cholera, he worked in the terribly overcrowded slums of the East End.

In his spare time, he used to teach in a so-called "ragged school". One night he found one of his boys, Jim Jarvis by name, trying to hide in a school cupboard and was horrified on questioning him to learn that the lad had no home, no known parents, and no means of support except what he could steal, or what the church missions would sometimes hand out. Dr. Barnardo had found a more immediate need for his talents than distant, pagan China, and devoted the rest of his life to the foundation of homes for destitute children.

The proud boast of the homes was that "No destitute child was ever refused admission". Very soon the numbers of children taxed even the great Dr. Barnardo's gifts for fund-raising. He was known to have raised personally over 3½ million, and it must have

been with some relief that he and his fellow workers saw the possibility of finding new homes for the children.

It was about this time that the great waves of emigrants were going to claim land in the new countries of the empire and in particular the west was opening up in Canada. The prime need for the breaking of the sod by the early settlers was physical labour, and who better to provide it but young boys. So many schemes were entered into in good faith to bring over to Canada some of the "Barnardo Boys".

At first, just the older boys were pruned from the flocks, but then came the heart rending possibility of breaking up families of children already set adrift from their parents, and so younger brothers and sisters were sent along. It was not difficult to imagine that the workers back in London and Liverpool and other highly industrialized areas must have viewed the prospect of the freedom, the open-air life, good food and hard work as nothing short of paradise for the youngsters. They had no idea of the distances involved, the hardships of travelling by sea and land, or the terrifying prospect of an utterly strange environment.

Sometimes the dirt and squalor and sheer familiarity of their old dockside "homes" must have seemed infinitely preferable to the silence and isolation especially of the prairies. Most children were lucky and came to honest, caring families, but a few were not so fortunate and spent many nights weeping and lonely.

One such lad was Percy Starmore, long time resident of the Virden area. With a family of ten, Percy's widowed mother was obliged to put him in a home. With other Barnardo boys Percy came to Canada in 1903, and unfortunately was sent to live with a farmer who regarded him merely as cheap labour.

The twelve year old boy was expected to sleep in an unheated room, the walls of which were covered only with newspaper. Meals were often bread and water, and he was subjected to abuse. His first attempt to escape failed and he was badly beaten. This strengthened his determination and the second time, he succeeded in swimming across a creek leaving the angry farmer on the other side.

Percy found work wherever he could, with Dave Ball at Scarth, and later driving a delivery team for Eaton's in Winnipeg. He managed to save some money, for he was able to return to England for his mother's funeral in 1914. He differed from many Barnardo boys in that Percy had not lost touch with his family.

Tragedy seemed to dog his footsteps. He lost three brothers in World War I, and his first wife and infant child died of tuberculosis. Eventually he settled on a farm in the Hillside district. He married Mrs. Laing, a widow with two children, George and Jessie, and they raised two daughters, Ethel and Julia. He retired to Virden in 1956, but continued to help out on the Nugent farm. He was still driving a tractor at eighty years of age, only six years before his death in 1978. Percy Starmore was a well regarded citizen of the area.

Anecdotes

One Sunday morning, soon after we had moved to Virden, I volunteered to drive some ladies home from church. The lady in the front seat gave me directions to her house. As she was preparing to leave, I said "Do tell me your name so that I may speak to you the next time we meet." She turned to me with a look of amazement and said "My dear, I'm Myrtle's mother." With that, she went into her house, leaving ME with a look of amazement.

On that day I was probably the only person in Virden who did not know that 'Myrtle' was Myrtle Lane, a renowned primary school teacher.

During the summer of 1957, car sales were slow at Thomas Motors. Murray had a large inventory — ten new cars stored on the open lot. In August Virden was hit by a severe hailstorm. Following the storm, customers visiting the car lot declared that those cars would never sell — pitted as they were by the hail. In due course the Insurance adjuster decreed that \$120.00 would be allowed for each car. And so they were advertised. The customers visiting the lot declared that they could scarcely detect the hail damage. The ten cars were sold within a short time.

Thereafter, whenever a cloud appeared in the sky, Murray would say, "Gee, I wish it would hail."

Bill Baird was one of the last of the old "horse traders", and consequently was sometimes flush and sometimes broke. At one of the latter periods, he approached John Caw, manager of the Commerce, for a loan. When John asked him what he could offer for collateral, Bill replied he had eighteen pigs, and he was given the loan. What he didn't tell, was that the pigs had just been born that morning.

Bill Baird would tackle anything — anything, that is, but a visit to the dentist. However, there came a time when the pain of a toothache was more powerful than his terror of the dentist's chair, and he was forced to make an appointment with Dr. Stockton. "Doc" was well aware of Bill's phobia, so instead of the small sterile instruments laid out on the linen cloth, he had assembled a crowbar, a hammer, a chisel and a pair of rusty pliers. By the time Doc had explained in lurid detail what would be involved in extracting the tooth, Bill was near hysteria. There followed an horrendous time for patient and doctor. When Doc sent the bill, he included an extra ten dollars to compensate for weight loss, because he had perspired so much during the extraction. Bill paid the bill with no comment, but the next time he butchered a heifer, he carefully extracted the teeth and mailed them to Doc, C.O.D.

Louie Tolaini came to Virden from Italy as a very young man. His uncle, Eugene Dely, brought him to Thomas Motors where he went to work. Because Louie understood very little English, many jokes were played on him. One time when Louie developed a toothache, the men at the garage told him that dentists in Canada used no freezing — that the tooth would just be yanked out. Imagine Louie's consternation! When the time came for his appointment with Dr. Stockton, some of the men had to go with him to 'Doc's' office above Timms' Jewellery.

Some years ago Gene Barre traded a horse to a neighbor of his. When he came around about a week later, the neighbor said to him,

"Why didn't you tell me that horse was so balky?"

"Well," replied Gene, "the fellow I got him from didn't tell me so I thought it was a secret!"

There is a story told of Ed Hollowell, who had a shoe repair shop in Virden for many years, and a certain Presbyterian minister.

The minister had a large family and had taken several pairs of shoes to Mr. Hollowell to be repaired. He went to the shop to inquire if the shoes were ready.

"Yes," said Mr. Hollowell, "they are, and I'll bet I've mended more 'soles' this week than you have."

It is reported to be true that one of the early Methodist ministers in Virden found himself in a very peculiar circumstance.

At a Sunday service, shortly after he began his prayer, and with his head reverently bowed, and being slightly deaf, he did not hear the ring of the small hand fire bell. When the prayer ended and he looked up, he saw only one member of his congregation with him — he too was deaf.

Grandfather Fergusson landed in Virden in 1882. He was a carpenter with the C.P.R. and the steel was laid as far as Virden that year. While Grandpa was helping build the station house he met quite a number of Scotsmen who were homesteading around here, so he thought that was for him too. He went back to Scotland and got Grandma and their three boys, and took a homestead in the Pacific District.

Orangeman's Day

The Orange Lodge carries on a tradition stemming from the English Revolution of 1688, when the Roman Catholic king, James II, was driven from England. With French support, James returned to Ireland and was given an enthusiastic welcome by the Catholic population. Forces led by the new Protestant king of England, William of Orange, defeated James on July 12, 1690, at the Battle of the Boyne. This victory was henceforth celebrated by the Protestants who paraded each twelfth of July, wearing orange sashes, led by "King William" on a white horse.

Orange clubs, in the nature of fraternal societies, and intensely loyal to the crown, were formed. They spread to England and eventually to Canada.

With the emigration of many Irish to Ontario (Upper Canada) in the mid 1800's, newly formed Orange Lodges assisted the new immigrants, held religious services before churches reached the frontier areas, and generally upheld law and order. Ontario Orangemen became, for a time, very influential in politics. They made their presence felt during the Riel Rebellions and the controversy over the Manitoba School Question.

Among Manitoba's first settlers were many Orangemen from Ontario. Orange Lodges sprang up in the new districts, much of their labour directed to helping widows and orphans. The pageantry of the "great and glorious" twelfth of July parade came with them. It was simple to carry on in any rural area, since all that was needed was a man on a white horse, someone to play fife and

drums, plus a column of men, women and children wearing orange sashes.

Both Otto Perlett and Len Hepburn recall the parades held in Virden Frank Sloan, in costume, astride a white horse, represented King William, while an elderly Mr. Smith from Lenore played the flute. There was a drummer, of course, and men playing fifes, or some sort of whistle. The parade was often held in conjunction with a sports day at the fair grounds.

The Good Old Days by A Virden Pioneer

I first came to Virden in 1898, and started school in the little stone building where the School Board Office is now. My primary teacher was Miss Haw. All lady teachers were single then; when they married they quit. Times have changed slightly.

We lived in different places in town before moving to the farm. One house I recall was the big stone home on the southwest corner of town. My father planned to move the family to Hargrave where he had been breaking land, but a cyclone destroyed the first house he built. Cyclones seemed more common at the turn of the century. We were forced to stay in town a little longer while my father was finishing the new house. We lived in a granary for a time until the sturdy brick house was ready. There were still some sod buildings in the countryside at that time. We had a sod stable; it was warm but leaked during heavy rains.

While we lived in town, we, like many other people, kept our own cow in a stable behind the house. John Black would gather the cows in the morning and herd them to a pasture south of town by the creek. At night he would bring them back to the edge of town and the cows would head for home. I suppose each cow instinctively knew where it would be fed and milked.

In those early years most travel was by wagon. Later came the buckboards and buggies. Some people even used two-wheeled carts. When we went to farm picnics, the entire family would load into the wagon and suffer the rough ride to a neighbour's farm, very often the Sanford place. We had races, horseshoe pitching and often a game of baseball. Wagons were used to haul grain, of course, over roads so bad we had to send two teams, as a second team might be needed to pull the wagon of grain through a mud hole.

During the depression, when people couldn't afford to drive

their cars, they once again travelled by horse. They converted their cars into buggies, called Bennett Buggies, after R. B. Bennett the Prime Minister during the worst of the depression. With the help of the blacksmith, farmers would attach a wagon tongue to the front axle of the car.

I remember the depression only too well — drought, grasshoppers, dust and low prices. Wheat dropped to thirty-five cents a bushel. We were fortunate here to have lots of hay in the marsh for our cattle. Carloads of apples from Ontario and British Columbia were distributed in Virden. One year the grasshoppers ate everything in their path. I hung my coat on a fence post one warm day and forgot it overnight. The next day the grasshoppers had eaten it. The only thing they wouldn't eat was rhubarb!

One happy memory I have is watching Sandhill Cranes walking in the sloughs during springtime. With their long legs, it took them a fifty yard run before they could get off the ground. Some people shot them, why, I don't know because I never remember seeing them in the grain and their meat was said to be tough. I could never bring myself to shoot them.

I've seen many things come and go in my lifetime; the old brick yard, the lime kiln, and the pump works. I remember when the underground subway was built. I recall, too, being quarantined for diphtheria, and the 1919 'flu, although I didn't suffer from that because I had been innoculated overseas. I remember playing pool above the present pool hall, long before I should have, and the poker games in the back rooms. As a youngster I heard stories of rum running to the United States and of home brew being smuggled into town during prohibition years. And now we have Government Liquor Stores!

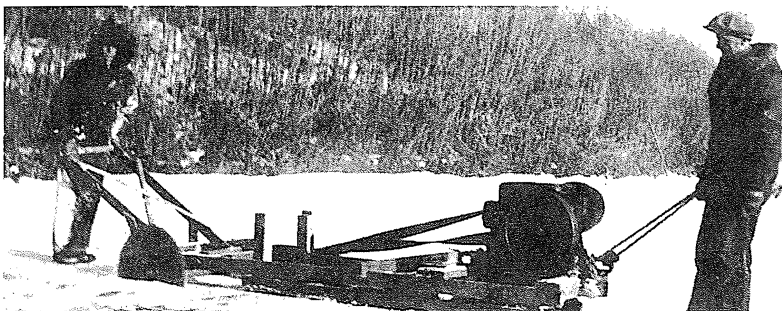
Times have changed!

The Ice Man

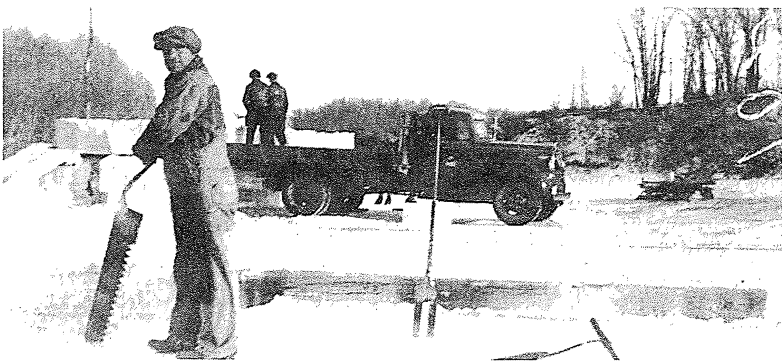
Ed Palmer was a fine, jolly man loved by all the kids in town. He was a man of many hats — he drove the school van, the delivery dray and the ice wagon.

He owned a two-storey ice house situated where the new Princess Lodge is, across from Valleyview Co-op. It took ten days each winter to cut and pull enough ice blocks from the river to supply his customers. These blocks were packed in sawdust to be used the following summer.

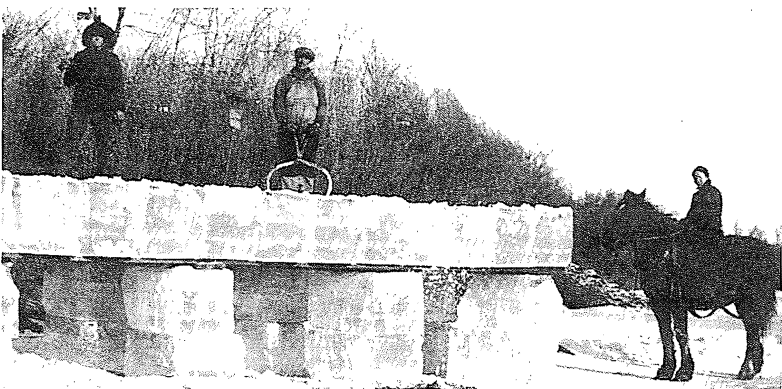
Winter Works Project — Cutting Ice At The River.



Marking The Blocks.



Final Cut.



Ready To Load.

Ed Palmer delivered ice to the cafes, hotels and homes. His last stop was the Balmoral Hotel and there he would put a weight on the horse's bit and go in for ONE beer. Ten beers later the ice would be water running down the street.

The Stunt Man



The scene of the Stunt Man's Feat.

One beautiful spring morning about June, 1920, Virden's downtown loungers and bustling business people were suddenly treated to an entertaining and exciting street show. A roaming stunt man was performing a series of stunts on the street in front of Victoria Billiard Hall, one of which was making his escape from restraining devices supplied by Chief Bolton, such as leg irons and handcuffs. Children were breathless; adults gave him some loud huzzahs. His next act was to load Ed Palmer's truck with children and, gripping the tow rope between his teeth, managed to pull the truck along!

By this time a large crowd had gathered, and several silver collections had been garnered when this mysterious stranger dramatically announced his main attraction. HE WOULD CLIMB THE OUTSIDE WALL OF THE UNION BANK BUILDING (now the Bank of Nova Scotia). The crowd breathed oh's and ah's and no's in disbelief, but, after another round of passing his hat, the stuntman was as good as his word! He actually climbed up the front of the bank building (now Lyle's Barbershop) and then continued on up to the top.

The most difficult and dangerous part of this climb was to get **around** the cornice of the building which projects itself about three feet out from the vertical wall. There were tense and hushed moments for the crowd below as our hero negotiated this obstacle and finally stood on the roof, nonchalantly doffing his hat to the applauding spectators. Released from the tension of holding their breath, they exploded into a volley of cheers and hand clapping for this human fly.

Just as the cheers began to die, a further drama began to unfold . . . The crowd beheld J. H. Chalmers, prominent local barrister in partnership with H. H. Goulter, striding forth from the bank. Without further ado, wearing his ordinary business suit and footwear (the stunt man wore moccasins), he approached the wall of the bank building and climbed nimbly up to the top of the Land Titles Office. After recovering from their momentary stunned astonishment, the crowd below was gripped by pandemonium. Many of them could no longer stand the pressure of observing and were forced to turn away. Many of the ladies showed signs of fainting dead away at the possibility of their own Mr. Chalmers crashing to the cement sidewalk below! They called out and begged and pleaded that J. H. not go any further. To the relief of all, he decided in their favor and did not attempt the top half of the ascent.

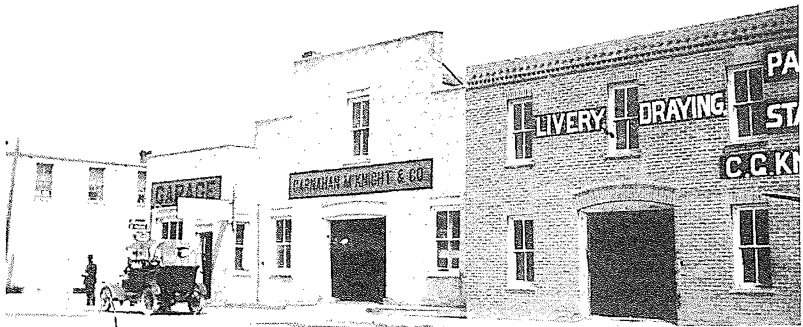
The story came out later that Mr. Chalmers had been in the bank during the first part of the excitement and had remarked to the bank manager that anyone could climb this building. The bank manager retorted, "Bet you ten dollars **you** can't do it". Whereupon the valiant lawyer promptly accepted the wager and proceeded to prove himself as good as his word.

Gossip had it that since he failed to make it all the way to the top of the building, he did not collect. Whether that is true or not, no one can say, but it proved to be an exciting and entertaining morning for the downtowners of Virden and was the main topic of conversation for many a week to follow.

This writer has since studied the building in question. After reading this true story of Virden's past, look at the building when next you are in that area. You will see that it is quite possible by means of gripping with the fingers and gaining toe-holds, for there are some twenty deep crevices spaced conveniently between the bricks. Glance across at the other bank building and you will see that this feat of daring would have been impossible. Yes, it was

possible, and the former Mayor Chalmers, who later took over the Land Titles Office, must often have looked out his window and recalled that exciting moment when he dared to take a dare!

A Prairie Business: Old Style and New



Seventh Avenue as it once looked with a livery barn.

Horses were big business at the turn of the century. Early in the 1900s there were four sales stables in Virden — namely Blakeman and Bennett, Gibson's, Megaffin's and Simpson's. The horses were brought by CPR from the east in carload lots and sold to eagerly waiting buyers in the area.

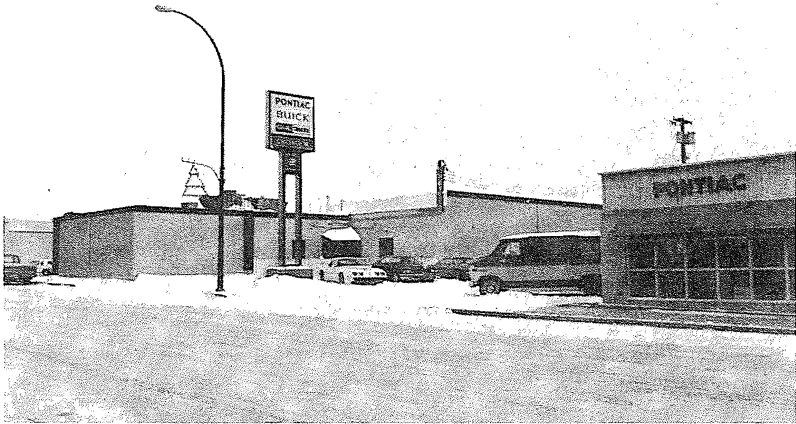
Four livery barns were in business at the same time — Bolton's (later the Palace), Cameron's, Clarke's and Norsworthy's (later Baxter's). The livery barns could "put up" your horses by the day or week and visitors arriving by train could hire a "horse and rig" for local travel. Imagine the hay needed for all those barns!

There were lots of individual horse traders in the area and many local horse trading stories, like the following, could be told:

Dunc McDonald sold his white driver to a gypsy trader who dyed it blue and sold it to another man in Virden. The buyer was really proud to be driving this fancy blue. An old fellow on the street yelled out, "You have McDonald's old driver." "No," the owner replied, "it was white; this one is blue." The old fellow laughed, "It won't be when it rains."

At the beginning of Centennial Year there are six dealers in new cars in town and as many gas station repair bays and used car lots.

Car traders and tall tales?
Of course!



Seventh Avenue today, same location, with a modern garage on the same site as old livery barn.

Saturday Shopping

When I was a youngster my father and mother went to town on Saturday afternoons to do the shopping. They took a crock of butter, made into pound prints, and sometimes a crate of eggs to trade for the groceries we would need for the coming week or longer. We had our own home grown meat and vegetables and had wheat ground at the grist mill so they only had to buy things such as spices and sugar.

The Daly tea man used to drive around the countryside with a team of mules and a wagon and sell tea door to door. It came in boxes lined with lead to keep the tea fresh and was sold in 20- and 25-pound caddies. Sometimes, I believe, it was even sold in 30-pound boxes. My father always bought 30 pounds of black tea and one pound of green tea when the Daly man came around. Coffee was rare in those days. Everyone drank tea.

An Evening Out

One winter night the chap who was looking after the Jack

O'Neils' farm while they were away, invited three of us to go and play cards with him. We hitched up the team and cutter and took off. There were no roads in winter as we know them now, and I guess we missed the O'Neil turn. We drove into what we thought was the right farm yard, went to the barn and began to unhitch the team. A young hired man who was doing the chores got scared when he heard us and ran away. There had just recently been a murder in southern Manitoba and I guess his imagination ran away with him and he thought we were up to no good. By this time we had realized we were in the wrong barn and had come a mile too far west. We were putting our horses in George Reddon's barn by mistake! We hitched up the team again, drove back to O'Neils, and played euchre until morning.

Teacher's Pet

A story is told by a lady, Ellen, who is no longer resident in Virden, about her mother, Pearl, who began school in the Hillside District about 1909 or 1910. At that time, it was a one-room school which had double desks. Two pupils sat at each desk. You always hoped to sit with your best friend, if you had one at school with you.

In this particular year a new teacher had been hired and either for family reasons or just for company in a strange community, she brought along her little sister to live with her and to start Grade I. This little girl was very fat indeed. Imagine Pearl's consternation when the new little pupil was put to share a desk with her! Such is the cruelty of children that if one of them is in any way different, either too thin or too fat, cross-eyed or hare-lipped, they are outcast until they can prove their worth to enter the favoured society of their peers.

Pearl arrived home after the first day of school and her parents were dismayed to hear that she was not thrilled and excited as they had always imagined she would be, but downcast and miserable. She announced that she was quitting school, and her parents' cajolements would not change her mind. She stubbornly stuck to her guns. Finally Father got to the bottom of the story and uncovered the shameful truth — nobody wanted to sit with the teacher's fat little sister, least of all Pearl. Father tried all the persuasions he had at his command. Understanding that the little stranger probably needed acceptance by the other children, he resorted to BRIBERY. If Ellen's mother would sit happily beside

the little stranger and be kind to her for a whole year, she could have anything for which she asked.

Greed triumphed, and the little girl agreed to go to school for the whole year and sit happily with the fat one if she could have a pink dress, a pink parasol and a pink pony (modest demands she thought under the circumstances). She stuck by her agreement and all went well. When the year was over, true to his word, her father bought her a pink dress and a pink parasol — and a white pony. One would like to believe that the two little girls became good friends, but history does not record this.

The White Pony

The white pony of the last story became a very great family friend and was hitched to a buggy to take Pearl and her two sisters to school. The three girls were experienced in handling the pony and cart. Each day they would drive to the corner one-half mile from the school. There they would meet another school family in another buggy pulled by a pony. At this point it was a ritual for the two families to race to the school.

One Saturday mother loaded up the buggy with cream and eggs and set off behind the white pony for town to market her produce. As luck would have it, she got to the corner at exactly the same time as her neighbor, Mrs. Smith who was on a similar errand, and quite naturally they stopped for a little chat. Thinking this the signal for the race to begin, both ponies set off at a spanking pace for the schoolhouse and nothing would stop them, neither the pulling on the reins or the whoas of the alarmed mamas as they tried to hold on to their hats and stop their precious produce from cascading all over the buggies and the road.

The three girls were amazed to see their mother returning to the yard in a short time, and wondered why she had not gone on into town as she had planned. Soon she was close enough for the reason to be apparent as the cream was half spilled and mother covered with raw eggs. She wondered aloud just what had gotten into that darned creature's head to head off for the schoolhouse at such a speed. They had great difficulty keeping straight faces as they hastily went to work and helped clear up the mess. They could have answered the question easily enough!

A Present From Santa

Three little girls one Christmas wanted only one present from

Santa Claus — a bright red sleigh. They were not at all fussy about books, candies, scarves or mittens, just a red sleigh. They wrote letters to Santa and dropped hints whenever it seemed that Mum or Dad was listening. They were on their best behavior and worked their hardest at their chores for weeks before the great day.

On Christmas morning, before it was really light, they rushed out of bed and down to the parlor and hastily scanned all the gifts, but the one object they were really seeking was nowhere to be seen. Hiding their disappointment as well as they could, they got on with the business of enjoying all the other goodies. No one said a word, but after breakfast their father went out with buckets of food for the pigs as he always did. As the door closed after him, the girls heard him call, "Hey kids! Kids — come here quick!" They rushed outside and looked up to where their father was pointing. On the highest point of the roof, caught up on the chimney, was a red sleigh! Dad had to climb up on a ladder, cross the shanty roof of the kitchen and on up to the peaked roof of the main part of the house and bring it down.

The girls could hardly believe their luck! They brought it out into the snow and thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the winter.

Shortages?

During World War II, most small towns lost the majority of their young men for a few years, and if a girl went to a dance, chances were she danced with another girl.

This was not the case in Virden, however. With #19 Elementary Flying Training School, part of the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, situated just north of town, there was instead a shortage of girls. A course was graduated every two weeks from the school, and each was honored with a banquet and dance. To ensure dancing partners for these graduating student pilots, formal invitations were sent to girls living in the surrounding towns and municipalities, and their transportation arranged to and from the dance. Regulations allowed only one dance a month on the base, so alternate dances were held in town.

Over 3,000 student pilots passed through this school, and with many unattached young men among the instructors and ground crew, a girl rarely sat out a dance.

Rabbit Stew

It was common to snare rabbits in the early days and rabbit stew was popular, nourishing and cheap. One Grandfather told the

story about a very haughty French lady, by all account a lady of high birth and great wealth, who lived off the finest food in the land (prepared of course by an army of servants) and wore only the finest silks, never soiling her pretty hands with any cooking or other work. Somehow or other she appeared on the prairie scene and maintained her aristocratic ways, except that none of the food was good enough for her delicate palate. Grandfather invited her to partake of their special fricassee. When she had eaten a dainty morsel or two of this local specialty she was charmed and most anxious to take the recipe back with her to her salon in Paris. The end of the story does not elaborate on what happened to her refined stomach when it learned the source and common origin of the ragoût.

Remember when . . .

- a serial ran in the local paper?
- your favorite comics were “Maggie and Jiggs” or “Little Orphan Annie”?
- reports of “The Strangler” terrorized the countryside?
- you learned to read from the “Sweet Pea Reader”?
- you listened to “The Guiding Light”, a radio soap opera?
- everyone pursued the news of the Dionne Quints?
- reading “Pilgrim’s Progress” was a Sunday pastime?
- you followed Uncle Peter or the hockey games via radio with Foster Hewitt?

CHAPTER V

Speaking of Weather and Health



Winter Wonderland Scene along Government Road Allowance.

The 1882 Blizzard

Mr. Moody, who homesteaded west of Virden, had a family of three boys, Arthur, George and Herb. Mrs. Moody had passed away and Mr. Moody was not very well off so he went to Winnipeg in the fall of '82 to dig sewers. He left the three boys to look after the two oxen and a cow. A neighbor woman was supposed to look after them if they needed anything.

A terrible blizzard came one day and the oldest boy was scared to go out to do the chores. After it grew dark he thought it wasn't too bad and he had to do the chores somehow. So off he went, but the wind immediately blew out the lantern. He was able to find the stable but a snowdrift blocked the door. He crawled up the snowbank, took some sod off the roof and lowered himself down to do the chores. When he came out it was the same thing — the wind blew out the lantern. He struck out for the house but missed it. He kept walking and walking. The two little boys in the house were too afraid to go out and look for him.

The next morning the storm abated. It happened that another settler from near by had been caught in Virden with his team of oxen. He used his better judgment and did not try to go home in the storm. When he did arrive the next day he found the Moody boy in his house. There was wood for the stove but no matches so the boy couldn't light a fire. He had had shelter but was badly frozen. The neighbor got him thawed out and took him home — three and a half miles away. That's how far he had wandered during the storm.

From that time on the boy decided there was a need for medical attention in this area. As he grew up he had a chance of an education. He became a school teacher, saved his money and studied to be a doctor. This little boy was Dr. A. W. Moody, well known in Winnipeg. He married and had a family. His daughter, Marion became the wife of Lester Pearson, a former Prime Minister of Canada.

A Winter Storm

It had been snowing for a couple of days and although the rotary plows had been working, the snow kept drifting in ridges. A local school teacher left Virden for Montgomery School about seven o'clock in the morning in pitch dark. Outfitted in mocassins, a long sheepskin coat, fur hat and sheepskin gauntlets, he wrapped a scarf around his face so that all that was exposed was his eyes.

The snow was up to his knees as soon as he stepped outdoors. Once over the CPR tracks he headed north along the old No. 1 highway. In no time his glasses froze over so that all he could do was feel his way. He kept hitting the ridges of snow left by the plow and that sent him sprawling. All the while, the snow grew thicker and he wondered if he would make it. He kept trudging along until he reached the six-mile corner, turned west over the branch line track and finally reached the school about ten o'clock.

He lit the fire in the stove and waited until two o'clock but no one showed up so he started for home along the branch line track. As he stumbled over the railway ties in the storm, he ran into some CPR workmen shoring up the snow fences. "Following orders," they said, when he asked why on earth they were out in such weather. It was a dreadful ordeal and he was not sure how he escaped falling down in exhaustion and freezing to death.

The worst of it all was that the next day one of the parents broke a trail and took his children to school. Neither teacher nor parent could figure out why they had not thought to phone one another. That was why this teacher hated to miss school, in case some child would arrive and there would be nobody there.

The Cyclone — 1900

In 1900 there was a cyclone just at harvest time. One farmer had bought a half section and built a shanty where he could stay overnight during stooking time. During the night the cyclone picked up the shanty and whirled it over the tops of trees eighteen to twenty feet high. It landed upside down in a slough just north of the original foundation. The man was knocked unconscious, pinned under the bed and stove.

After the storm passed, members of the family decided to go and see if their brother was alright. He had regained consciousness and was leaving the overturned shanty when help arrived. The men took him home and found him bruised and battered about the head. He did not feel well for days until he had a very bad nosebleed which seemed to clear his head. His lip was scarred for life.

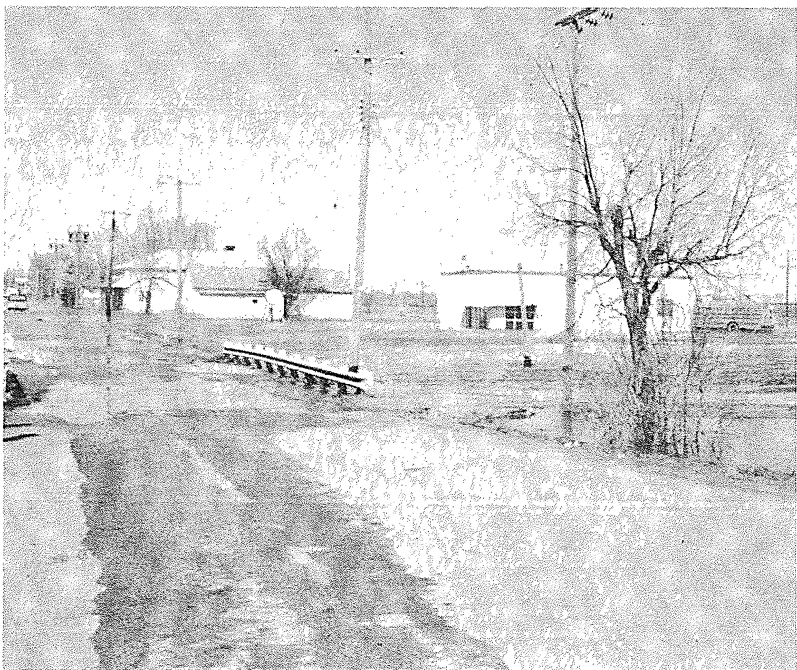
Scenes from the Spring Flood of 1976.



Virden Junior High surrounded by flood waters.



Corner of King Street and Eighth Avenue.



Seventh Avenue near the Creamery.



Sandbagging on Queen Street.

Remember when . . .

- the wash was hung on the line out of doors, no matter what the weather?
- long underwear frozen stiff danced a wooden dance in the winter wind?
- you watched storm clouds gather in the '30's and no rains came?
- window panes had a half an inch of frost on the inside?
- footwarmers and horsehide robes kept you warm on the way to school?
- you wore a sunbonnet?
- girls wore knitted snuggies (called "jazz" bloomers") and long black stockings?
- the weathervane on the barn roof told the wind direction?
- mild days were awaited to replenish the dwindling supply of hay?
- winter trails angled across the fields providing short cuts to town?

A Pioneer's Recipes For Cures of Common Ailments

For Sprains:

2 new laid eggs
¼ pint turpentine

¼ pint vinegar
Beat all together and rub well in.

For Toothache

Nervine, apply with a piece of wool
Washing soda, ground fine and taken like snuff
A pair of pincers.

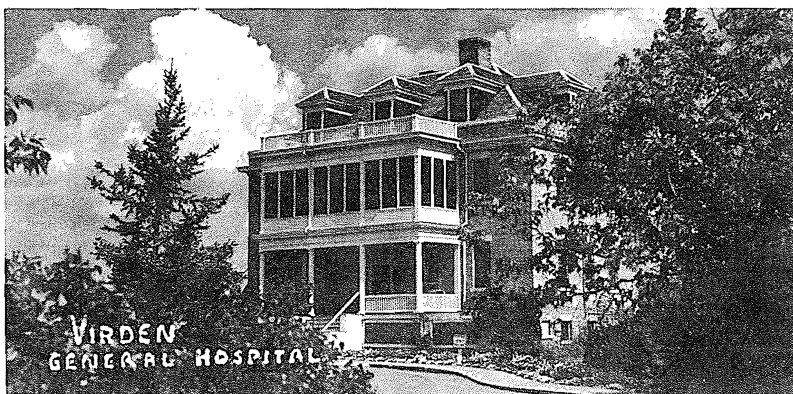
For Diarrhea

2^d Laudanum
2^d Red Lavendar Wine
2^d Essence of Peppermint
Small teaspoonful of mixture in half a wine glass of water.
Too strong for children!
Eating chestnuts also a remedy.

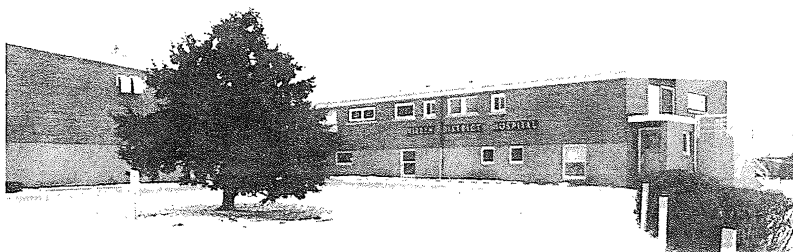
For Earache

½ oz. sweet nitre
2 or 3 drops spirit of cayenne

Mix and take like a glass of gin
N. B. Never tried it.



The present Virden District Hospital pictured below was built in 1954 to replace the old hospital, pictured above. Modern homes, known as Beaver Place, have been built on the former hospital grounds.



The Virden Ambulance Story

The story of ambulance service in Virden and area began in the late 1940's, probably 1948, when the Lionells Club purchased the first ambulance. It was presented to the Virden Hospital Board but was housed in McGuffin's Garage when not in use, and served the community well for many years. Records for that period have been lost but it is believed the cost was between \$7000 and \$9000. By comparison, the ambulance which was bought approximately two years ago cost \$22,000, and the new ambulance which went into service on December 23, 1981 cost \$27,000.

The existing ambulance organization dates back to 1963. It was operated from Marshall Motors and various lodges and service clubs raised funds to purchase the vehicles of that period. In 1975 the service was absorbed by Hospital District No. 10 and local citizens were approached to donate their time to ambulance service.

Two members of the original 1963 crews, Bruce Taylor and Jim Hay, are still members. Bruce is first aid instructor and Jim is a crew captain. Emergency care training officer is Douglas Gatey who joined in 1975. No mention of the ambulance service would be complete without a word about Sam Simpson. He was totally dedicated to its operation over a long period and for at least ten years was the principal driver.

Since 1975 the service has grown in efficiency and staff numbers through rigorous training programs. For example, it is now possible for crews to evaluate the situation at an accident scene and administer proper care to the injured. An extensive recruiting program was set up in 1980 to replace a number of volunteers who left the service due to illness or transfer. The first women trainees were added between 1976 and 1980 and now number approximately twelve.

The crews work on a strictly volunteer basis. They say their greatest reward is a thank you from someone whose life they may have saved. They often risk their own lives transporting the sick and injured on icy roads, through snowstorms and in heavy traffic.

Hospital District No. 10 presently maintains four ambulances, one each in Virden, Elkhorn, Oak Lake and Reston. At this time Virden has nine crews made up of twenty-four volunteers. Their schedule consists of five daytime and four night shifts. Round-the-clock weekend shifts are handled on a rotation basis.

Due to the present shortage of personnel, volunteers are called to give many extra hours of their time on duty.

The crews maintain their vehicle well because they realize the importance of dependable equipment. As each shift goes off duty the ambulance is checked over and made ready for the next one.

The ambulance service works efficiently because its people are a dedicated group. Unfortunately space does not permit naming all of them, and besides their contribution cannot be measured in mere words. Their friends and neighbors **know** they can be depended on in times of emergencies.

Candy Stripers

The Candy Stripers program was introduced at Virden District Hospital in 1971. The matron was instrumental in instigating the program with the assistance of auxiliary members. It provides girls fourteen years and over with an opportunity to decide whether or not they are suited for a nursing career.

During the first two years the Candy Stripers served at West-Man Nursing Home as well as at the hospital.

An Achievement Day is held annually by the auxiliary giving the nursing and medical staffs an opportunity to express their appreciation to the girls. Certificates of Merit are issued for fifty hours of volunteer service; Teen-Age Volunteer Pins for 100 hours; Guard Pins with a chain to attach to the pin signifying additional hundreds of hours of service. A trophy is presented to the most deserving Candy Striper of the year.

During the past ten years our Candy Stripers have dedicated 12,801 hours of volunteer service to the local hospital.

Remember when . . .

- castor oil was given without attractive flavors?
- a fine-toothed comb was used for “cooties”?
- you bathed on Saturday nights in the old round washtub before the stove?
- a midwife assisted with home delivery of babies?
- your tonsils were removed on the dining room table?
- you bought spices and medicines from peddlers with covered wagons?
- produce was used to pay the doctor’s bill?
- you had the itch and took baking soda baths?
- Dad yanked out your tooth with a piece of string?
- treatment for colds was mustard plasters and ginger tea?

CHAPTER VI

Talk About Travel

Landed Immigrants — Or Beached Immigrants?

Travel to Canada from England was by boat, and not very grand boats at that in the 1880's. One lady remembers the story of her grandparents arriving offshore in eastern Canada when the tide was out. The new arrivals were so anxious to reach their new land, for it had taken them a good many days to sail over, that they jumped down into the sea and waded to land. Both grandparents were short and stout and when Grandmother, not to be outdone, jumped into the water after Grandfather, her voluminous petticoats, probably the plaid balmorals she had been wont to wear in Scotland, made it difficult to move. So her husband lifted her up on to his back and carried her to where it was dry, much to her indignation because the onlookers were bent double with laughter to see such a little short fat man carrying such a little short fat lady.

The Maiden Voyage of

The SS Marquette

People who cross the Assiniboine River in 1982 will find it difficult to picture the scene more than one hundred years ago when the SS Marquette first steamed up the river in 1879 to Fort Ellice on its maiden voyage. It was one of the most important accomplished in this part of the country, since the possibility of making the trip had always been a matter of doubt due to the difficulties along the way.

Facts about the trip have been preserved in a logbook kept by A. D. Robinson, the purser at that time. It currently belongs to

Mrs. Pauline Rowan of Miniota, granddaughter of the Marquette's owner, Peter McArthur. Here are some excerpts which tell first hand what it was like on that first voyage more than a century ago:

May 10 — "The staunch and comfortable steamer Marquette left Winnipeg at two p.m. for Fort Ellice. It had on board 100 tons of freight for Portage la Prairie and way points, 2,400 tons of freight for the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Ellice and a large number of passengers."

May 12 — "Arrived at three p.m. and laid up until morning when we discharged our Portage freight. After taking on flour for Rapid City, left at six o'clock for Fort Ellice and way points."

Notes say that on May 13, the boat passed State Rock Rapids where "upon the bank was congregated a large number of Sioux Indians, who upon seeing the steamboat that came that far up the river, set up such a screeching as if well pleased with our success."

The purser related that the steamboat left the low and marshy prairie and now the land became high and rugged and was occasionally covered with spruce trees of all sizes. At one place in particular, he says, the bluffs rose to a height of about 200 feet, on top of which were several large mounds covered with pine trees. "As seen from the boat it presented a very handsome scene," he recorded.

The log for May 14 tells of the immense sandhills which stretched for miles along the river's bank.

"As we look at them from a distance of about a mile, great cracks and chasms show themselves and as the edge of the hills was approached, the whole sandhill was seen to be a network of cracks. As we looked into these fissures, from about half a mile distant, the prismatic colors were superb," Robinson wrote.

"The surface of the hills is covered with spruce trees but the tops are covered with white sand intermingled with red and yellow clay."

Late that same afternoon, the boat steamed past the Souris River "which appears a good-sized stream," and arrived at Crawford's Landing. Twelve cords of wood were taken on.

On May 15, the purser tells of arriving at the rapids "which extend for about two miles and are very swift. The current runs at no less than twenty miles an hour.

"At twelve o'clock noon we had accomplished about half a mile and then struck a rock where we laid up for about two hours

trying to pull ourselves off, having no trees with which to make a line fast."

Efforts to get the boat loose caused plenty of excitement; two men lost their footing and went overboard. One of them was rescued from a watery grave when he was grabbed by the hair and yanked aboard as the current swept him away.

The log that day ends with the casual entry that "the only serious thing that has happened so far was the fainting of Mrs. Lindsay and Mrs. Kerr (two of the passengers) when they saw the upsetting of the two men into the water."

The day following the predicament at the rapids, the boat had hardly gone a mile when one of the passengers, Mr. Lindsay, decided he would have his goods put ashore. So the effects were unloaded and the women and men of the party disembarked to take up their new life.

The final day before arriving at Fort Ellice, the purser tells of the scenery's grandeur.

"The river itself is a very crooked stream," he wrote, "lying in a valley surrounded by hills which are about two miles apart, while in other places they are not more than half a mile between, causing the stream to take a serpentine course.

"Sunday, May 18, we arrived at Fort Ellice amid loud cheering from the officers stationed at the place, and the blood-curdling yells of the Indians. We returned their salutations by blowing the whistle several minutes," Robinson continued.

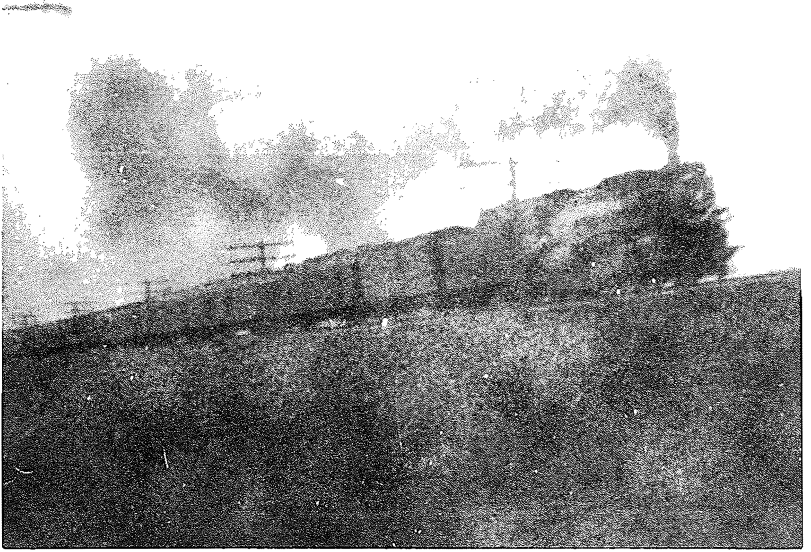
The crew was congratulated on the successful trip and "we were about to return to the boat when Col. Archibald MacDonald made his appearance bearing in his arms two sets of deer horns of which he presented one to the SS Marquette, one to Capt. Wilber and a small deer's head to the clerk."

For the return trip, forty bales of furs were received from the Hudson's Bay Company and one hundred packs from A. B. Smith, a trader who was on his way to Winnipeg from Fort McLeod.

The trip upstream had taken nine days and cost a delay of fourteen hours in navigating the rapids. The return trip was accomplished in six days, when it took only three minutes to cross the rapids.

Locomotion Before 1900

A pioneer lady remembers her wedding trip on the train from



Steam Power before the Days of Diesel.

Moosomin to Rivers where her sister lived, and where the newlyweds were to spend a few days.

The couple boarded the train at two o'clock in the afternoon and reached Brandon by nighttime. After staying there overnight in a hotel, they took a train going north which travelled only to Forrest. They had two or three hours to wait for a train which took them to Wheatlands. On reaching there, they travelled the remainder of the trip to Rivers by horse and cutter. They reached Rivers in time for supper at six o'clock — twenty-eight hours for a fifty-mile journey!

The return trip was just as lengthy. They arrived home with thirty-five cents in their pockets. This money had to be spent for shoe repairs so they had to begin their married life in a somewhat frugal manner. Apparently this did not worry them unduly since nobody around them was much better off.

Sleighs

When the early settlers came to this area, the long months of snow and ice meant greater ease in getting to town and visiting with neighbors. When the harvest season was over, frost was in the ground and fields and roads covered with snow — that was the

time for hitching the horses to sleds and beginning a round of easy travelling. Sleigh bells were an important part of the scene and early diaries tell that settlers knew who was coming to visit just by the sound of sleigh bells jingling through the frosty air. Snow was a great leveller of the rough and bumpy spots, and a graceful cutter pulled by a team of prancing "drivers", a buffalo robe for the lap, a heated rock or foot warmer for the feet, and a family had the essence of luxury in travel! Extreme cold was bearable in exchange for smooth travelling, for trips by wagon or cart on the early dirt or cordwood roads were enough to test the endurance and patience of the hardiest of pioneers. Winter was indeed the time for sleighing, visiting, farmhouse dances, courtships and prayer meetings.

For the children growing up in the early days of Virden's history, those who had their own sleds were the envy of all others. We hope that some day the Pioneer Home Museum will be the recipient of one of the small steel-runnered sleds made by the McDougall boys on their father's farm on the edge of the Assiniboine Valley. Theirs was a factory which produced wooden items such as butter prints and wondrous little sleds. (One of the McDougall butter prints is displayed in the museum kitchen.)

When did the word "sled" go out of fashion? The current mail order catalogues do not list "sleds" but in the one from 1901 there is a large variety. You could order for the sum of 20 cents a boy's sled with maple runners, nicely finished and painted, 10 by 33 inches; or a 10 by 28 was only 15 cents! And all of the sleds had names. These were The Victor, The Sport, The Racer or The Stanley. They boasted hand-holds or hand rails and large steel eye-hooks for father to thread a pulling rope. That year of 1901 the top priced sled was \$1.25 — and what better value when you consider the mileage and the pleasure and the service given by the sleds of yesteryear!

Sometime in the life of sleds and sleighs, there came on to the market a steerable sled with runners made of light flexible steel which could be steered by the wooden crossbar. This was called the Flexible Flyer and was the wonder of the coasting hill. Made in Pennsylvania in vast quantities around 1888, these were an instant hit, and one of their 1891 advertisements stated that "The saving in shoe leather and rubbers with any boy in one season will more than pay the difference between the Flyer and other sleds." With that invention it seemed that no boy would ever again have to steer his sled by sticking out his foot as a drag-rudder. We read that the

Flexible Flyer is again being manufactured in the Eastern States and comes in all sizes — even for adults. Canadian manufacturers copied that sleigh years ago and are still producing it, according to one of the latest of Timothy Eaton's mail order catalogues. It is called the Can-Am Flyer, sells at \$8.49, is 36 inches long and described as "a speedster" with flexible steel runners and made of varnished hardwood, having side rails and a tow rope. It is decorated with a bright red maple leaf (the old Flexible Flyer naturally pictures the American Eagle in its decoration.)

In this day of light shiny aluminum or contour moulded polyethylene gadgets for hill sliding in the winter months, none of them have the charm and special appeal of the little wooden sleds of long ago.

Lions Club Provides Travellers' Oasis

Our society has become a highly mobile one. We no longer "fold our tents like the Arabs and silently steal away," as the poet once said. Instead we "hitch a house on wheels" to our car and join the crowds on the highways in the rush to lakes, beaches and other recreational spots to enjoy the all-too-brief summer season.

The upswing in mobile living has been followed by a similar increase during recent decades in the number of campsites and tourist parks.

The Lions Park in Virden is a pretty traveller's oasis. Set back from the road at the south end of town, it is surrounded by beautiful trees which offer coolness and quietness from the busy tempo of the highway. Tourists frequently comment on the trees, an unusual feature for a prairie campground.

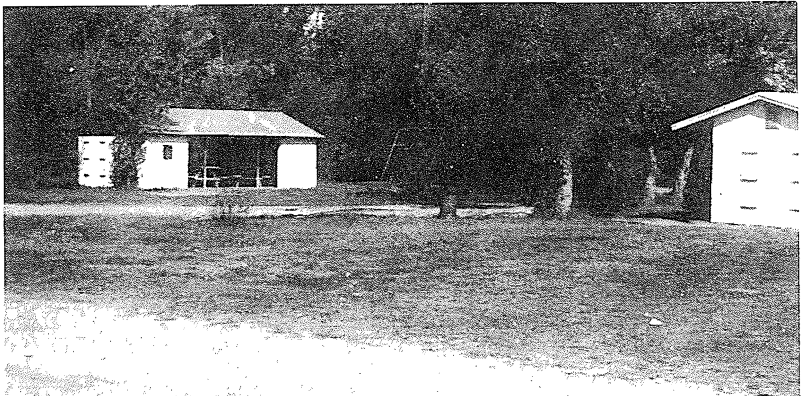
The trees are no accident. Originally the park was part of a nursery established many years ago by John Caldwell who put Virden on the map at the turn of the century as "The Little Tree Town of the West." He planted trees not only in Virden and the surrounding area, but all through south-western Manitoba.

Although the nursery business declined with his death, today's travellers are reaping the benefits of his patience in nurturing trees in Virden's sandy soil.

Plans for a park began in August, 1960, when the Lions Club started negotiating for the lease to the Rifle Range property for the purpose of establishing a picnic ground and playground area. By



Scenes in the Lions Tourist Park.



January, 1961 permission had been granted to lease part of the property. Work parties started that spring to clean up the site. Steel posts were bought; the area was fenced; electrical connections were installed; and piles of trees and debris were cleaned up.

The club allocated \$200 for tables and benches. Signs advertising the new facility were made ready. One major problem was the water supply. The well had dried up and attempts to find other wells failed. The park, however, was in use by the end of that season.

In the spring of 1962 club members pressed on with improvements. The park had been surveyed. A donation box was installed and best of all, a new well was brought in.

By 1963 washroom facilities were completed. A publicity brochure was prepared to make the spot more widely known for the next season and plans got under way to build a kitchen shelter. More picnic tables were put up at the south end of the park and it was designated a picnic area.

Today the park has space for approximately seventy trailers and tents. Twelve of these sites have power and water and twenty-two have power alone. It was estimated that between 1300 and 1500 units used the park's facilities during the 1981 summer season. There are swings and sandboxes for the children and plenty of wood for campfires.

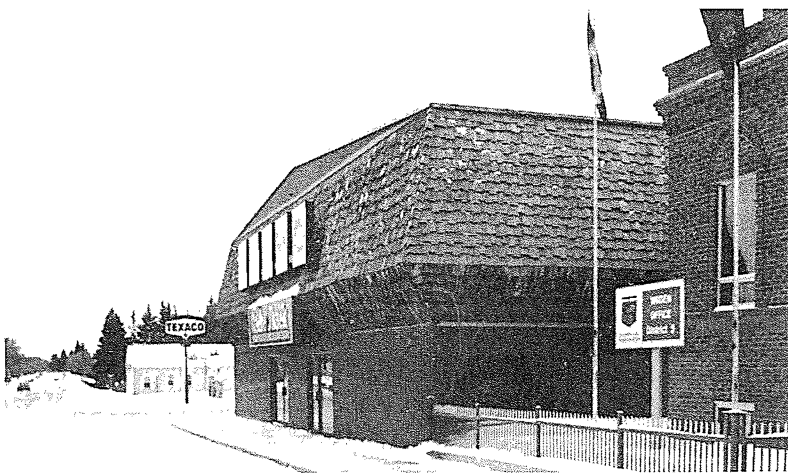
Remember when . . .

- there was a local train, and day coaches with plush seats?
- you rode in a surrey with a fringe on top?
- there were delivery horses and drays?
- a steam train took on coal and water?
- hotel rooms were \$1.50 a night?
- we had Essex cars, side curtains and rumble seats?
- you went to school in a democrat, buggy or cutter?
- cars had to be cranked to start them?
- Bennett buggies were used?
- suitcases were made of cardboard or canvas?
- sleighs overturned spilling passengers and packages into snow-banks?
- a bicycle built for two was used to go courting?
- you blew the car horn at every turn on the river hill?

CHAPTER VII



Fire levelled Megaffin's Garage on Seventh Avenue, January, 1929.



Same scene 1982 on Seventh Avenue.

Disaster Stories

Recollections of The Burning of the Balmoral Hotel

The date was January 1, 1957, in the early hours of a bitterly cold winter morning. The strains of Auld Lang Syne were still ringing in the halls around town where the New Year's Eve parties were just starting to wind down and revellers were heading home-ward or going on to private house parties to continue the whoop-de-do. The time was 2:10 a.m. Suddenly the wail of fire sirens was heard! A fire at this time and on such a devastatingly bitter night? Impossible! No, it wasn't impossible — it was true!

A fire had started in the walls of the Balmoral Hotel between the cafe and the jewellery store next door. By the time the fire engines were started and the volunteer brigade had arrived at the scene, the flames had quickly spread up the two stairways to the linoleum-covered hallways, fed by the thickly painted walls. Spectacularly colored tongues of flame were leaping out into the clear, crisp, early morning air of New Year's Day. There was little hope of dousing the raging fire as the firemen and the many partially frozen civilian volunteers were drenching each other on opposite sides of the hotel. In the sub-zero weather it took only seconds for the water-drenched fire fighters to freeze stiff — or were they stiff before the fire got started? Some of the determined water hose manipulators were seen dashing into McBain's Hardware, a few doors away, for a cup of coffee. It was observed that some parka pockets were filled with water frozen into blocks — or was that just an upside down bottle of gin? A quick warm-up with hot coffee, then it was back to the blazing building as the battle raged on until daybreak and well into New Year's.

It was fortunate that no life was lost but during the height of the blaze one could not help wondering how many bodies would be found when it was extinguished. For the next several days insurance investigators and other officials sifted through the rubble to make sure no life had been lost, and also to find the actual cause of the fire.

After serving the Virden community since 1893 when it was built, the Balmoral went down in a "Blaze of Glory" equalled

only by its colorful past. Another page of Virden's history had come to an end.

The Night The "Bal" Burned

On New Year's Eve, 1956, we were awakened by a loud pounding on the door. As it was very late we decided to ignore it, hoping that whoever was there would go away. However the pounding continued, accompanied by shouting, and became louder as our callers began banging on the side of the house with a shovel. This did get us up, if only to save the asphalt siding from damage, and on answering the door we found it was neighbors who had come to tell us that the Balmoral Hotel was on fire. At first we thought they were joking as my husband was a fireman and had not been notified, but finally our friends convinced us and the men left for the fire. Apparently they had tried to phone us for quite awhile, and getting no answer came to the house. On checking with the operator we discovered our telephone bell was out of order.

Because it was New Year's Eve, few firemen were in their homes, and the telephone operators, whose job it was to alert the firemen, were having difficulty locating them.

One carload of spectators thought the smoke from the Balmoral was getting into their car until they discovered that a cigarette had been held too close to one girl's coat cuff, causing it to smoulder.

The Archer Murder Case

The tranquility of the Virden area was shattered in January, 1978, when one police officer was killed, and two others wounded in a shoot-out at the Countryside Inn Motel.

Herbert Archer of Surrey, B.C. with his common-law wife, Dorothy, registered at the motel shortly after midnight on Monday, January 23. The credit card used for payment was that of Martin Crystal of Calgary. (Crystal was subsequently found murdered in his office). Within an hour, an RCMP car pulled into the motel checking on a stolen vehicle — the white van driven by the Archers. They were confronted by an armed Archer, and in the melee, Constable Onofrey was killed, Corporal Hornseth lost an eye, and Constable Candace Smith was seriously wounded in both hip and abdomen. Dorothy Archer was also hit in the abdomen but was able to escape with her husband in a police car.

There followed a bizarre chain of events. Obviously they had to find another car, and to this purpose they stopped at Dave Penny's farm at Routledge. Dave was taken as a hostage, the rest of the family left tied. Archer, in his excitement, drove the Penny car into the ditch, and was forced to return for the police car. He drove to Wally Graham's farm nearby, took the Graham car, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Graham tied also. Next, Archer stopped at the home of Lloyd Hatch, hoping to get medical aid for his wounded wife. Along with the Hatch car, Archer took what guns he could find. The Hatch family were tied also, but according to Mr. Hatch with no great expertise for he was able to free himself immediately.

Archer now sped on to Dr. Scherz' home in Oak Lake. He had been able to circumvent the police by avoiding No. 1 Highway and changing cars. On Dr. Scherz' advice, Dorothy Archer was taken by ambulance to Brandon. Dave Penny, Dr. and Mrs. Scherz, and the gunman remained in the doctor's residence. By now the house was surrounded by police. Archer demanded \$100,000 and safe conduct to some foreign land, in return for the lives of the hostages.

The tense situation continued for 95 hours. A nine block area was cordoned off and the house floodlit. The gunman slept only in snatches, keeping awake by popping pills. His behaviour was irrational and terrifying at times but none of the hostages was abused in any way. All three remained remarkably calm throughout the ordeal. When they were released, they showed no bitterness toward their captor but rather compassion.

The first break came with the release of Dr. Scherz late Wednesday evening. Archer may have hoped Dr. Scherz would get in touch with his wife. The gunman appeared to have trust in the doctor, and was becoming frantic to know about his wife, whom, Dr. Scherz stated was Archer's "Alpha and Omega". When the doctor left, Archer was allowed a telephone call to his lawyer, Hersh Wolch. On Wolch's counsel, Archer surrendered.

The Archers were tried the following November in one of the longest and costliest trials ever held in Manitoba. There were 52 charges against them (but no mention of the murdered Crystal, this being out of the Manitoba jurisdiction). The pair were found guilty, and are serving life imprisonment with no grant of parole for twenty-five years.

Some forty reporters and cameramen were at the scene, and the tragedy was given national news coverage. 'And to think',

said one of the witnesses, 'that this happened in pokey old Virden'. (Pokey old Virden would hope never again to witness this type of excitement).

Instant Wallpaper Paste

Fire was a great hazard in the early days on the prairie because you had to fight it alone, saving what you could from the blaze. Neighbors were very important to one another because in such an emergency it was 'one for all and all for one'.

One senior citizen relates the story of a fire on the home farm in 1926 when as a boy he was wakened by his father at three o'clock in the morning and told to get up because the house was full of smoke. The boy hurried outside in bare feet into three feet of snow which was drifted around the house. His father yelled, "Get the ladder, Henry". This was no easy task since the ladder was embedded in six inches of ice! Somehow, with the strength born of panic, the ladder came away and was put up to the window so that his mother could escape, unharmed except that her hair was scorched.

Mother and boy hitched up the horse and cutter and started off to the neighbors for help. Father stayed behind but could only watch helplessly as the house was consumed by flames. The only thing he was able to save was the brand new gramophone, a very valuable possession in those days.

At that time flour was bought in huge quantities and it was stored upstairs. As the floor collapsed, the flour fell down into the cistern providing a ton of instant wallpaper paste! There was enough paste to wallpaper every house from Virden to Timbuctoo!

Massacre at Ghost Island

My grandparents immigrated from Ontario in 1892 to a homestead on the north side of the Assiniboine valley east of Virden, Manitoba. A story often told in their district was the massacre at Ghost Island.

Ghost Island was only a couple of miles from the homestead at a bend in the river.

After Manitoba became a province in 1870, settlers began moving west. So did the railroad and so did the whisky trade.

Whisky runners slipped silently down the rivers under cover of darkness and unloaded their cache for an agent who would quickly hide it.

The local Indians were called Valley Indians and were generally kind and gentle people. They had long accepted the coming of the white people and were learning new ways. They were also aware that their own life style was changing.

The most dangerous change was among the young people. The old chiefs could no longer control them. They were frightened, hungry, sullen and rebellious.

That's what the whisky runners exploited. They knew that the young braves would pay any price for whisky and they made sure they got it, reaping huge profits in furs and game.

One chief, who saw it as the destruction of his people, decided once and for all to stop the whisky traders.

His plan was to capture a river full of the runners and kill them as a warning to all other runners.

But there is a spy in every camp and one of his braves was a scout for the runners. In the darkness of night this spy slipped out of camp and warned the traders.

On the night of the planned attack the river ran silently and empty of runners' boats. When darkness fell the Indian braves slipped silently to the river's edge not knowing that the traders had been warned. They waited to do their grisly task of murder.

At that point in the river the waters parted and swirled in a circle creating a small island. The river ran swiftly in spring but not in summer so the boats had to keep to the deep water right to the spot where the Indians were hiding.

When the boats rounded the curve the men rose out of the marshes and attacked. They never once thought that there would be any one else on the river except whisky runners. With hatchets and knives they hacked to death the people in the boats but were horrified to realize that there were children as well.

It was too late to stop the terrible slaughter so they murdered the children, too, and flung their bodies into the grasses of the island.

When the attack was over the Indians milled in panic for they knew they had made a terrible mistake and that the law of the "red coats" was swift and severe.

They fled in panic. When they told their story to the chief, he too, knew the seriousness of their deed.

When daylight came there wasn't an Indian to be seen. They

had broken camp and in the darkness had slipped away never to be seen in the valley again.

The two boatloads of white settlers had been members of one family. They were headed for Fort Montagne only five miles down the river.

It was said that never again did any Indian go to the island. They believed the ghosts of the murdered people remained there and would torture their souls forever in revenge. White settlers also left Ghost Island alone.

The moaning of the wind down the hill side and through the trees gave it an eery ghost-like sound.

As the years slipped by the ghosts, the island and the story was forgotten except by my grandmother who lived to be nearly 102 years old.

By permission of Grace Graham

This article first appeared in Western People

January, 1981

Note: Because of a change in currents, the island is no longer there.

Prairie Fire 1886

The year 1886 was a good one with fine crops. Near Reston there was a farmer who thought it would be a dreadful job the next year to get clean hay with all the dead grass that hadn't been cut. He decided it would be a good idea to clean it off.

One lovely Sunday morning about ten o'clock he set fires here and there near the sloughs. He got the fire going alright! By one o'clock in the afternoon it was by Boss Hill and six miles wide. The fire took everything from the settlers. They tried ploughing a furrow, but when the fire reached the furrow it never slowed down in any form or fashion. A good strong south-west wind kept it going all the way to the Assiniboine River. The river was very high that year, but the fire just jumped the river and went on.

At two o'clock in the morning, near Roblin, they had the fire nearly out as the south wind went down. Before the fire was quite out, the wind changed into the northwest and away it went again. By Tuesday it was put out by a big rain in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

A lot of people were cleaned out and some lives were lost. The fire went through when most of the grain was still in sheaves,

waiting to be threshed. (There were only one or two threshing machines in the country at the time.) Many farmers just moved away. It was a terrible disaster.

A Tragic Ride

An ambitious young farmer in the Pipestone district had rented another farm some distance from his homestead. As this would mean leaving his wife and new baby alone at times, it was decided to ask their neighbour's sixteen year old daughter to live with them. She could help with general chores and be company for the young mother.

The wife harnessed the pony and set off in the buggy up the valley. She was in high spirits, glad of a day's visit with her neighbour. In the evening the three travellers, wife, neighbour's daughter and the baby started for home. It had been a warm spring day, and she had stayed on into darkness, so she decided to cross the creek by a ford normally possible, rather than going further up river to the bridge. She was unaware that the water in the Pipestone had reached flood level since the warm sun had melted much of the ice upstream. No one knew for sure just how the tragedy occurred, but all three were drowned.

The horse managed to swim ashore and was found by a farmer. He set out to find the owner and discovered the buggy in the rushing water. Neighbours were alerted as quickly as possible. Eventually the three victims were found, but too late.

Life in those early days had so many harsh lessons to teach, and in the learning of them, one did not always get a second chance!

A Sad Fatality

One Saturday evening bystanders in Virden saw a horse and rig approaching at breakneck speed. It was Tom Lucas, a hired man from a farm close to town.

As he approached he shouted to the knot of people gathered that he was poisoned and probably dying. He rushed into the doctor's office! The crowd that followed awaited anxiously while three doctors tried all known remedies. Treatment was of no avail and he died.

It seems that Mr. Lucas was prone to sick headaches and dosed himself with some soda dissolved in vinegar. This time he had used some poisonous white powder. He realized his mistake

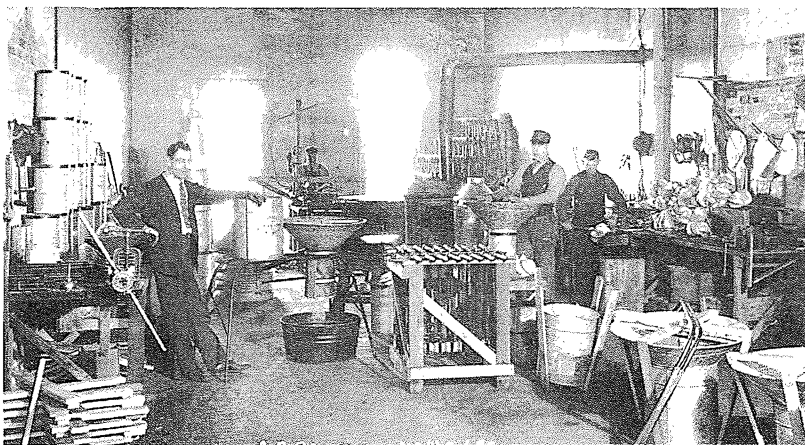
almost immediately, probably because he had cramps, so he had hitched a horse to a rig and driven furiously to town. Alas! He was too late!

According to a report in the Virden Empire-Advance, Mr. Lucas was "thirty-six years, ten months and six days old" and left behind a young wife and four young children.

Remember when . . .

- flat tires were patched by the side of the road?
- your tongue froze to the old iron pump handle?
- the trail home was lost in the blizzard?
- the old pump had to be thawed out before you could get water from it?
- clinkers were dug out with the poker before the fire would flame?
- we lost the crop in the grasshopper plague?
- the slop pail under the kitchen sink overflowed?
- gophers were snared and you could get a cent a tail?
- the cistern pump went "off the prime"?
- a letter edged in black brought notice of a death?
- you had chilblains and razor burn?
- you picked mustard and sowthistle out of the crop by hand?
- you "drowned out" gophers at recess?
- a clothesrack was used over a register to thaw and dry the frozen clothes?

CHAPTER VIII



Ernest Rockola with his invention for treating grain for smut as told in The Virden Story.

Airplane view of the Rock-Ola plant, where Engineering, Electronic Development, Manufacturing and Assembling go on under one roof.

David C. Rockola
President

Rock-Ola Manufacturing Corporation
800 North Kedzie Avenue
Chicago 51, Illinois

David Rockola, brother of Ernest, and inventor of the juke box.

Speaking About People

“Reader’s Digest” Grows From a Root in Virden

How many people picking up their subscription copy of “The Reader’s Digest” from their mailbox or popping one into purse or pocket in preparation for a journey, give any thought to the origins of this compact little book? How many realize that one of the founding publishers, Lila Acheson Bell, was born right in Virden?

Early in the 1920s Miss Bell, by now married to an American gentleman, DeWitt Wallace, conceived the idea of publishing a small book every month which would cull the essence, or ‘the cream’ as she called it, from articles on current belief and opinion and printed throughout the United States. This would give the man in the street a far broader horizon than he could hope to acquire with his long working hours and little leisure time. Radio was in its infancy and television was a dream of the future, so books, magazines and newspapers were the main source of learning. These the Wallaces condensed into roughly thirty articles each month. Scrupulous care was taken to print the source and credit the author’s name.

An inkling of the Wallace’s philosophy was found in the aphorisms scattered throughout the book — “Knowledge is not a gift, it must be sought”. “When a man stops learning, he stops living.” “Knowledge is power and a well-informed man is a strong man”.

The American public must have taken their words to heart for, after the first tentative handful of subscribers, the demand for copies grew and grew. With growing numbers the confidence of the Wallaces strengthened and the “Little Wonder” expanded in content and quality. In less than twenty years it was being translated into seventeen languages and sales realized millions of dollars.

Mrs. Wallace was grateful for the opportunity that her adopted country had offered her and she and her husband supported many charities very generously.

In 1970 Lila Acheson Wallace was awarded “The Golden Door” award, an honour reserved for citizens of foreign birth who have made distinguished contributions to American life and cul-

ture. In particular she was honoured for her enrichment of the field of publishing in the United States and in the world at large.

Viriden can be proud that a part of Mrs. Wallace's heritage was right here in this small Canadian community.

Joseph Insul

The Insul family came to this area in the early 1880's. Mr. Insul was not interested in farming but he was a most enterprising gentleman. He left to live in the United States where he invented the covering for electrical wiring, and named it "Insulation". His work was a great boon to both Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell in the development of their inventions.

Mr. Insul had married Edith Hitchins, a sister of William Hitchins who farmed at Hargrave. Mrs. Insul's nieces and nephews remember the Insuls very well. After the Insuls became wealthy, they used to return to visit in Hargrave and Viriden, as late as 1929. They appeared in a chauffeur driven limousine, but in spite of their riches, they were always eager to renew old acquaintances.

Clarence Boon — Author

Clarence Boon has now retired from farming and devotes his time to writing and distributing his books. He does his own publishing and lectures in many schools and libraries on writing



Clarence Boon, author, and his wife, Myrtle.

and publishing. This takes him all over Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and he has made many friends through his books.

Stores are now asking to handle his books so the public can have a chance to read them. Schools and universities are putting them in the libraries, using them for supplementary reading and for reference to the thirties. More young people all the time are asking him to write more about the thirties, as they cannot understand how anyone could live on fifty cents a day wages.

Clarence Boon has published nine books to date with color reproductions of paintings by local artists. "Bachelor Jim", his first book, was actually written in 1971. He was concerned whether his work would be accepted or not, but critics encouraged him to publish it and in 1973 "Bachelor Jim" became a reality in a hard cover book.

Other titles include: Patches; I Was a Step-child; Which Way to Turn Next; Love This Land; Under One Roof; A Gift to Remember; Heroes of the Prairies; Bachelor By Choice or Chance.

Pauline Gedge — Novelist

Pauline Gedge, the daughter of an Anglican minister who served the Virden parish from 1959-1962, is the author of two best selling historical novels, "Child of the Morning" and "The Eagle and the Raven". The former, published in 1976, tells the story of the first woman Pharaoh of Egypt; the latter chronicles ancient British resistance to the Roman legions. Critics consider her an expressive story-teller.

Pauline Gedge, a divorced mother of two sons, now lives on a farm near Edgerton, Alberta. Her mother and father (who has left the ministry) operate a honey farm nearby. It was a financial struggle for her when she was writing her first book on a decrepit old typewriter, but with the success of both novels, she now lives comfortably in the solitude of this rural area. She refuses to exploit her success and shuns publicity; however she sits on the town council, plays in the local band, and has a genuine sense of belonging to this community.

A. Katharine Francis Her Memoirs

It has been said that everyone talks about the weather but no one does anything about it. How often have we heard people say

they would like to write a book, but how many do anything about it?

Katharine Francis of Virden did. At age 82 she wrote and published her autobiography "From Ty Mawr To Two Bar". It tells of her birth at Ty Mawr, Wales in 1893; of her experiences at a girls' "finishing" school in Germany; and as a nursing sister in London and in France during World War I. She and her husband, C. P. M. Francis, came to Canada in 1923. They operated the Two Bar Ranch near Routledge from 1925 until Mr. Francis' death in 1966. Her book contains a number of vivid recollections of rural life on the prairies during her early years in Manitoba.

In 1971 Mrs. Francis and daughter Ruth retired to a two-acre site one-half mile east of Virden which she named Ty Mawr. It was there that Katharine wrote her story and also her second book, "Memories of Yesteryear" which was published in 1980. It contains memories of her childhood and of her first days in Canada.

She died in December, 1980 a few months after her second book was published.

Terry McLean — Artist



Virden-Born Artist, Terry McLean.

Virden artist Terry McLean is one of Western Canada's leading landscape and nature artists. He was born in Virden and has spent all his life here.

Terry's background is Scottish-Irish. His father, Sterling McLean, was born in P.E.I. and came to Manitoba in 1908 with his parents, Charles and Flora McLean, and other members of the family. Terry's mother was born in Ireland and spent her early years in Dublin before emigrating to Canada.

Artistically talented from his earliest years, Terry is basically self-taught. He owns a large library of well read books on art, history, wildlife, hunting, etc. With this back-up support, he researches carefully the subjects for his paintings. His first teacher was and is Nature and his sensitivity to the ways of wildlife and the changing seasons is very evident in his canvases.

Terry has been painting in oils since he was 21 years old. He took a giant step forward in his professional career in 1975 when he left his part time work with Chevron Standard Oil Ltd. as a fluid level tester of oil wells to devote himself full time to painting. His work now is solely commissioned and occupies him fully.

Since 1964 he has produced the covers for Sidney I. Robinson and his illustrations have appeared in several books written by local authors. He has also illustrated the covers for historical non-fiction novels published on the west coast, and a special edition of Canada West magazine.

In 1977 he published a book of reproductions of his work called "Paintings of the Canadiana West". In the foreword he said, "There is no pretext here of an art form that is intellectually beyond the comprehension of any of us. Personally I have great reservations about art that is of such complexity that only a few super-minds can grasp the meaning".

Terry's career received a further boost in 1980 when he was invited to show three paintings at the Canadian Cowboy Artist Association Show and Sale in Calgary. Of the 75 artists invited to attend, he was the only Canadian from east of the Alberta border.

He added a new dimension to his artistic career in 1981. While vacationing in the United States he became interested in a new form of sculpturing with acrylic polyform, a plasticine-type material. His feeling for nature predominates in this art form as it does in his paintings, for all his sculptures are of animals or birds.

Since there is relatively little information on this sculpturing medium art form, he has experimented with the basics. His first

works were moulded over styrofoam, but he now makes a wooden form on which to shape the polyform. It remains pliable so he is able to etch in every detail of the figure he is creating with a sharp tool. Claws, teeth and eyes are shaped from the polyform and baked before being fitted into place. The whole figure is then baked, making it almost indestructible, and ready to be painted.

Terry and his wife, Ethel, have one son, Lance who has inherited his father's talent for drawing and painting. He began working with his father as a young boy and turned out his first canvas at age 10. Now a Grade 12 student, he still draws but has sidelined painting for the present in favor of other interests. Some of his paintings are displayed in his father's studio.

Terry McLean's work reflects his love and respect for the wild things of the plains, and his feelings for his home. He summed it up when he wrote, "Though my earliest recollections are of pretty hard times and a land dried out and burnt up from the depression years, I have always had a deep love for our Manitoba home. This book ("Paintings of the Canadian West") is intended as a tribute to the pioneers who went through more than most of us can imagine to make homes for us all in a land that could deal harshly with the unlucky or the careless."

Remember when . . .

— you ate Christmas turkey served on Grandma's willowware platter?

— you had "Sunday" suits and "Sunday" boots and women wore hats to church?

— women wore high buttoned shoes and used a button hook?

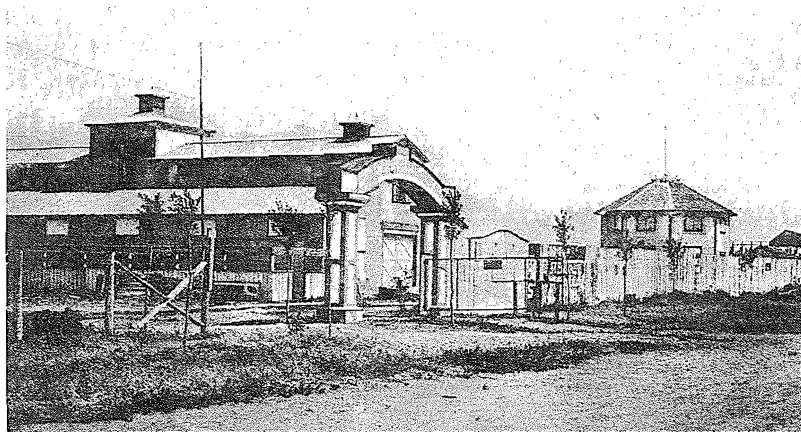
— Grandpa had a watch pocket Ben, watch fob and a gold chain?

— men wore garters, arm bands, boater hats and vests with lapels?

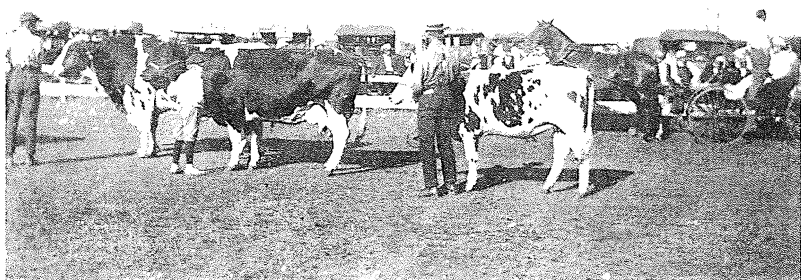
— you wore a cotton waist with garters to hold up your stockings?

— Dad laced Mother into her "stays"?

CHAPTER IX



Virden Fair provided entertainment and an opportunity for showing livestock.





FIRST AVIATION CLASS, VIRDEN, MANITOBA

AUGUST 22, 1929

W. R. GIBSON, W. A. STRAITH (Instructor), E. PENNY, L. MAXSOM, J. STACKY, Mrs. W. R. GIBSON, Dr. C. L. STRACHAN, J. BRIGHT, Jr. CANCADE

Now That's Entertainment

The One Room School Christmas Concert

Could anyone who has ever attended the old one-room pioneer school house ever forget the annual Christmas concert?

Remember when the teacher, in full rounded normal-school-trained tones made the eagerly awaited announcement? "Next week, children, we shall all push back our desks and begin practising for the Christmas concert."

This announcement, made by the current teacher, began a month or more of frenzied activity, culminating a few days before Christmas in the social event of the season — the local Christmas Concert and Christmas Tree.

The desks might just as well have been pushed back then and there for all the work that was done in the following days. Only short spelling bees or half-hearted arithmetic lessons got done. Nothing else. Excitement filled the air. Girls giggled more than ever. Boys nudged and poked and pulled chairs out from under each other in their near hysterical excitement at the release from formal studies.

A teacher could be forgiven many things, like strapping the trustee's son, or not wiping dishes at her boarding house, but a poor concert could never be forgiven.

Her reputation as a teacher depended not on how many arithmetic tables she pounded into Johnny's thick head but rather on the quality of her first concert. Many the teacher who was asked to stay a second year had a good concert to thank.

Finally the day would arrive when the desks could be pushed back and piled upon each other until they reached almost to the ceiling. The planks covered in ice and snow were brought in to warm up before the stage was built. The men noisily sawed and hammered while covertly watching the practising. They then went home to tell of their unscheduled preview of the concert.

The program was built around THE PLAY. Some recitations and some minor skits, a school song or two to give everybody a part, a Christmas carol and a drill with all the girls dressed in white cheesecloth, heads encircled with tinsel and carrying aloft lighted candles made up the concert.

The success of the program depended entirely upon the talent, or lack of it, that a teacher had to work with. It depended largely on whose mother could be depended on to make what costumes.

Every pupil had a part. The shy ones had non-speaking parts, usually holding up the letters to spell Merry Christmas.

Older girls helped the young ones with their parts. It was considered a real disgrace not to know your part after the first week of practice. Groups of pupils practised in different parts of the school. Those not practising were supposed to study. Who could study with so many interesting and unusual things going on around them?

A new hair ribbon or a new pair of suspenders made life very happy for some of the children, others had new dresses, and some had nothing new at all. Every girl had dreams of being the belle of the ball and all the boys were mad because their mothers had made them wash their necks.

Friends from the neighboring districts were expected to come, to see what a real concert was all about.

Finally after weeks of preparation, the pioneering social event of the year was upon them. On a star-filled night, with the sky as black as ink, the air so crisp and frosty it would almost snap,

the school lit up with coal oil lamps, it had finally arrived — the Christmas Concert.

— by Edna Sutherland
Published in the
Free Press Weekly

The Great Memorea

Many people residing in Virden and surrounding districts will no doubt recall vividly the visit in the early 1920's of The Great Memorea for it was indeed a memorable visit.

The Great Memorea was many things, a fortune teller, a soothsayer, a mind reader, and an entertainer deluxe. Anyone who attended any or all of his three performances in the Auditorium Theatre is not likely to have forgotten the tremendous impact generated by his exhibitions. To say that he created a tempest in our usual placid existence would be a gross understatement, for never before and never since did such turmoil rage through the confines of Virden, the "Little Tree Town on the Prairie".

The Great Memorea billed himself with such catchy phrases as "He Tells All" and he certainly proved that he could live up to that statement on his posters. He was never at a loss for words; his answers to those in his audience were spontaneous and to the point. He replied to queries with reckless abandon and his answers often involved local persons in not-so-praiseworthy endeavors which caused injured dignity and disgruntled feelings.

Some people in the audience fired questions which they hoped would confirm their suspicions — and many times they were! One maligned party took The Great Memorea to task, and the entertainer said, "I am reading your mind!" This made matters all the more disturbing to the questioner; indignation ran high. Folks in the audience grew uneasy for most of them had a family skeleton buried somewhere and this mystic stranger seemed to have the unhappy knack of stumbling on to interesting secrets.

An unsolved murder at Elkhorn was easily handled by the seer when he was questioned. He named John Krafchenko as the perpetrator of the foul deed. Since Mr. Krafchenko had suffered the supreme penalty some years earlier for a similar crime committed at the village of Plum Coulee, he was in no condition to refute the allegation. Thus The Great Memorea's statement went unchallenged.

The Great Memorea wove a fascinating yarn about a man who was carrying a large quantity of gold and was being pursued by robbers. Fearing that they would overtake him, he buried his treasure in the hay marsh south of Scarth. The robbers overtook him and murdered him, but were unable to find the buried gold. The Great Memorea stated that the treasure remained where it had been cached and went on to say that the spirit of the murdered man haunted the marsh and carried a light to frighten anyone who was searching for the treasure. This story from the visitor set off a great flurry of excitement! Many farmers in the area had seen ghostly lights flitting through the summer darkness; many also **knew** of a grassed-over excavation and there **were** stories that this was a water well or a settler's grave!

It was mid-winter and a poor time for treasure hunting because of the frozen ground and deep snow, so disinterment was postponed by an eager group of "treasure hunters". When summer arrived the possible digging spot was obscured by wet marshy grass, and gradually all enthusiasm waned. The mysterious lights were dismissed as marsh gas, disenchantment set in, and the exciting incident became a legend, only to revive again when will-o'-the-wisp flares startled folks passing the gloomy marsh.

When, after three days, The Great Memorea moved on to "tell all" in the town of Moosomin, the populace breathed a collective sigh of relief, and settled back in to the usual humdrum-of-routine existence.

Recollections of the Theatre

Before, during and following the first World War, before the advent of talking pictures and radio, and long, long before television, hi-jacking and such "amenities" of modern life, the Virden Auditorium was a world totally removed from the commonplace, humdrum existence of life on the prairies.

Within the confines of this special place we revelled in the adventures of Pearl White, the antics of Fatty Arbuckle, Lonesome Luke and the great Chaplin, and drama with Mary Pickford, Francis X. Bushman and many more silent cinema stars.

All of that from a world far away; however for tops in entertainment, there were the live theatricals presented by our own dramatic society under the direction of John Davis and others. There were travelling troupes of talented artists who trod the boards of the old Aud, like Tom Marks' variety show, the original

Dumbells (who became famous entertaining the front line troops in France), the Swiss Bellringers, the Winnipeg Kiddies, Uncle Tom's Cabin (complete with bloodhounds, and little Eva escaping across the ice floes), and Shakespearian fare presented by distinguished English casts. We shivered to 'double, double, toil and trouble', and were thrilled by other stirring scenes.

The great advantages of viewing TV in the comfort of your own living rooms, spending the evening bombarded by glowing tributes to laundry soap and disposable diapers, suffer in comparison with getting away and having a night out at the Auditorium. To have made your way through the frosty night for many blocks or miles, by "shank's mare" or by cutter, to have come in sight of the marquee with "Auditorium" spelled out in full, then to have entered the foyer ablaze with light, was to feel a mounting thrill of excitement!

The radiators hissed and murmured with good cheer; you dealt with the smiling ticket seller; you relinquished the pasteboard to the courteous attendant; then away to your seat upstairs to the balcony, or on the main floor. The theatre boxes were occupied by the more prominent citizens (referred to as the 'upper ten' by the less affluent), whom you watched, envied and secretly admired.

Paris could have its Follies, London and New York their grand opera, Virdenites cared not a fig, for here was the anticipation of the performance to come, the muffled noises of backstage preparation, the signal for the dimming of the houselights, then sudden overwhelming silence as we strained to hear the opening lines. No crackling popcorn bags or clinking drink bottles — the show was the thing!

"The Naturals"

In 1974 a group of music lovers in Virden banded together to form a choir because they enjoyed making music together. The choir was formed by Bernice McDonald, director, and Gladys Carefoot, accompanist. Weekly rehearsals began that fall and the first concert was held in November.

One of the first big decisions was choosing a name for the group. A number of suggestions were made — some slightly ridiculous such as "Forte and Holding" — and some not so ridiculous. None of them sounded just right until one member, thinking aloud, said, "Never (B) sharp; never (B) flat; always (B)

natural." "That's it, we're "The Naturals"! someone else said. And so it was that 'The Naturals' were born — and named.

Since its organization the choir has presented seven programs, the last one in November, 1979. At each concert local guest artists or talented performers from the festival have been featured. There was no concert in 1980 because of the loss of several members who moved away, and the closure of our beloved Aud. Theatre.

All proceeds from the concerts have been donated to local service clubs or other organizations to aid community projects. An extra performance of the first concert was staged for the benefit of the Senior Hockey Club, and a 'Save the Pool' concert was given in June, 1977 when the swimming pool required extensive renovations in order to be opened that summer. On three occasions The Naturals have also taken their concerts to neighboring towns where the proceeds in each case were donated to projects in those communities.

After a year's recess The Naturals are singing again. At time of writing they are making plans to help celebrate Virden's Centennial with a program of music designed to please all ages.

Dances in the Good Old Days

Dances in the winter were a popular form of entertainment for both young and old. Travelling along the tracks on a snowy night was quite an adventure. Many the time a cutter would tip over in negotiating from trail to ditch and out would go all the passengers. Even though the girls would be dressed in their best, they were always prepared for the worst during the winter months, and came to no serious harm when tipped out. Usually the accidents were occasions for gales of laughter and good humour all round. The cutter would be righted, snow brushed off as much as possible, and everyone would continue on to the hall or home where the party was in full swing.

Violins were in great demand for country dances, and at one time, for a couple of years, there were very few violinists around. One fiddler remembers a time when the telephone party lines proved useful. Some neighbors were having a "china wedding" anniversary party and had engaged a violinist from town to play for the dance. As luck would have it, this fiddler was also a keen curler and it so happened there was a bonspiel in Virden. Just as everything stops for tea in England, so everything stops for a

bonspiel in Virden. The musical rink swung through their first draw and the violinist phoned the family and said he would be somewhat late — but he would be there. Time passed, the family became anxious and phoned the rink to find out what progress was being made. Bad news for them — the musicians were still winning.

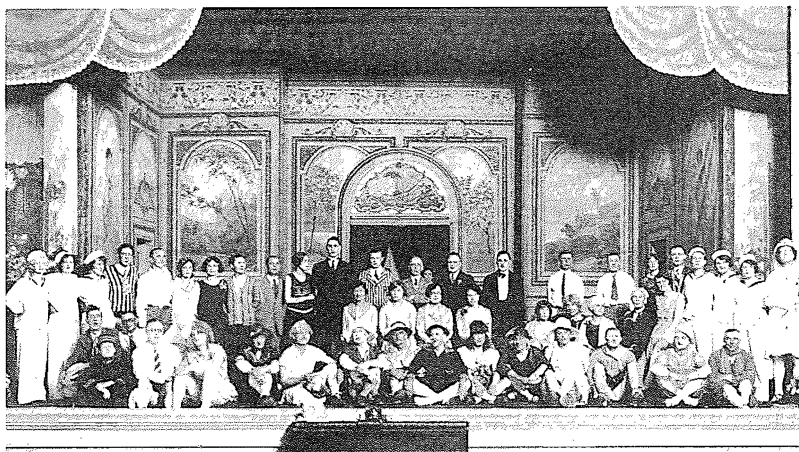
Thereafter the phone calls came thick and fast as the guests arrived for the dance and there was no fiddler in sight. Back at the rink the musicians became so involved in their game as their success continued that their friends had to make progress reports to the family by phone. One up on the first — three up on the fourth — tied on the sixth . . . the dancers rustled up a penny whistle and some spoons and got started.

Meanwhile, at the neighbour's house a young and ambitious violinist and his brother became intrigued with the rapid succession of calls on their line and were not above listening in to see what was happening! Here was the boy's opportunity! He got dressed in his best shirt, dark pants and bow tie and rosined up his instrument. The neighbours suddenly thought of their young friend across the way and remember he was keen to get into the dance business. When they phoned to ask him to play, he was as good as there! In no time at all he was on the dance floor and showing off his musical talent to a grateful audience. His small brother sneaked in behind the 'band' and joined in the celebrations.

Remember when . . .

- you danced the Charleston, Strip the Willow, the Lambeth Walk and Seven-step?
- movies were silent and you read the dialogue printed on the screen?
- windup phonographs played cylinder records?
- you listened to crystal radio sets with earphones?
- the girls sat on a bench along one wall of the dance hall, and the boys leaned on the opposite wall?
- gramophones blared from big horns?
- movies were in black and white: admission was only 15¢.
- you could play a record in a sound booth before you bought it?
- the school Christmas concert was the main social event of the year?

- the music store clerk would play the newest sheet music for you?
- box socials were the in-thing?
- bandages were made from worn out bedsheets by tearing into strips?



A local cast on stage at Auditorium Theatre, showing some of the original scenery. In foreground is the orchestra pit and the piano.

CHAPTER X

All About Sports

Baseball — As It Used To Be

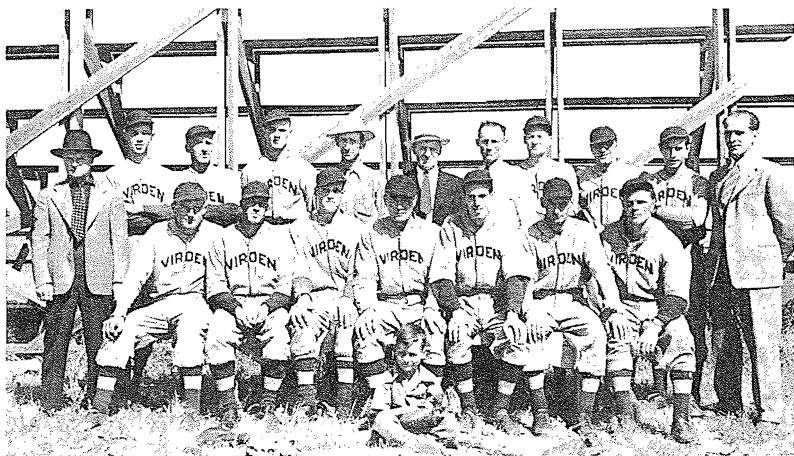
I remember that the Virden baseball team of 1902 won the provincial championship that year. There were no cars then and the men drove with teams of horses and democrats to their playoff games with other clubs. Bert Orr was a pitcher on the team and the first one ever known here to throw a curve ball. Jimmy Archer was the catcher. The next year, scouts from Chicago picked him up and he went to Chicago to play ball there. In those days a team had only one or two spare men — not like today when they may have half a dozen pitchers.

Shortly afterwards, one of the players, Jersey Crewe, bought the hotel at Hargrave. As soon as he moved there he formed a ball team. None of the boys had ever played ball before except at school so they weren't very good and the fellows in nearby towns laughed at them and christened them "Jersey's Colts". The team didn't do much for a year or two, but old Jersey wasn't beaten yet! He hired a good pitcher and that year his team won the league against teams from Elkhorn, Virden and Oak Lake.

When Jersey left Hargrave in 1910 some of the boys who had played ball for him — Wilfred McNeill, Harvey Odell, Harold Montgomery and Jimmie Stinson to name a few — took over the team. We had a good club and in 1912 or '13 won the H. D. Crowe Trophy in league play against Elkhorn, Harmsworth and Virden Collegiate.



Hargrave Baseball Team 1912-1913. Back, L. to R.: Thornton Carefoot, Harold Montgomery, James Crosby, Jim Stinson, W. McNeill. Centre: Frank Carefoot, Wilbur Clarke, Ed Down. Front: Harvey Odell, William Patterson, Steve Wilson.



Cliff Cory and his Virden Ball Club during the mid 1940's.

Minor Ball

Since the sports booster days from 1955 to 1970, baseball in Virden has continued to be well organized, providing recreation for many children. A number of teams have won league championships.

In 1975 the Virden Minor Baseball Association was formed and introduced "T" ball for beginners. This has become very popular with the boys and girls.

Minor ball teams continue to play in the Oil Dome League which has expanded to include Melita, Souris, Boissevain, Pierston, Waskada, Wawanesa, Deloraine and Hartney. In the past year 150 boys participated in minor ball.

Junior High Softball

In 1973 organization and funding of girls' softball was taken over by the Knights of Columbus. With the support of the Fort La Bosse School Division, two diamonds were levelled and prepared with backstops at Virden Junior High School. Equipment was purchased, arrangements were made for volunteer coaches and score keepers; and thirty-nine girls registered at a fee of \$1.00 each. Every year registration has increased until eighty girls were enrolled in 1980, still at the same low \$1.00 fee.

The league presently consists of six teams in scheduled play. The top teams enter semi-finals and the two finalists play off for a trophy.

This sport is a very beneficial and enjoyable experience in learning to share and play together. The Knights of Columbus are grateful to all who volunteer their help.

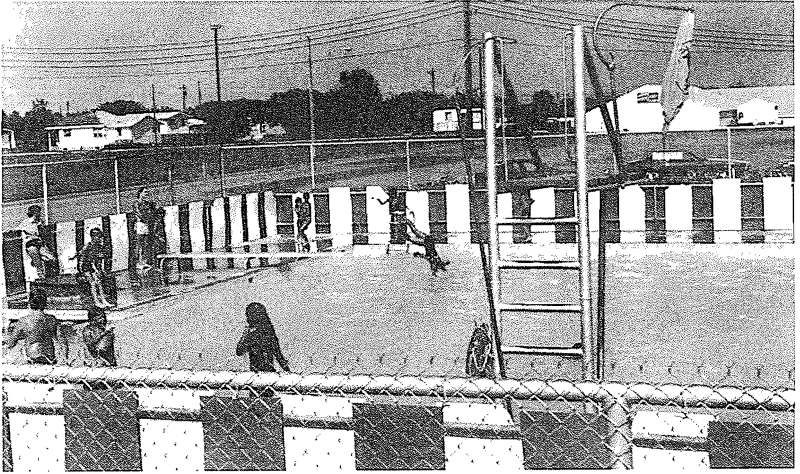
Flag Football

Flag football began in 1980. It was started to give boys ten to fourteen years of age an idea of organized football and some basics of the sport before they reach high school. The first organizers were Brent McLauchlan, Jack Forster and Dwight Pollock.

In the two years since it started, there have been four teams each year with approximately eleven players on each team. A round robin is played each Saturday and after each team has completed the round robin, there are playoffs. The Bombers were the champions the first year and the Huskies won it the second year.

Games are played at the Fair Grounds. The flags and footballs were supplied by Prairie West Recreation.

Swimming Pool



Present day scene at Virden Swimming Pool.

Virden Swimming Pool was built in 1956 adjacent to the arena. Heaters and a chlorination system, donated by Virden Kinsmen Club, were installed in 1973. Major renovations were done and a vinyl fence built around the pool in 1977.

The formation of a swim club took place in 1977 and is known as The Virden Golden Seals Swim Club. Its objective is to promote and encourage speed swimming and other swimming programs. The first swim meet was held in July, 1977 and has become an annual event.

During the 1981 season, 555 children and adults were registered for instruction.

Lawn Bowling Club

Interest in lawn bowling has increased during the past ten years if membership figures are any indication. In 1970 there were twenty-nine members, and in 1981 the club had grown to sixty-two members. The presidency has been held by only two people in more than a decade. Walter Tapp headed the club for several years up to and including 1969. Mel Heritage became president in 1970, a position he still holds.

In 1977 the club became known as the Sunshine Bowlers to obtain a grant to enlarge the club house. An enclosed patio was

built in which to serve meals and lunches and to hold meetings. Another grant in 1979 made it possible to enlarge the original building, install new cupboards and carpet the kitchen, and do some painting. A steel fence was built around the grounds in 1980 and a refrigerator was purchased in 1981.

The club hosted the Westman Senior Games in 1977 when trophies were won by four Virden players, Herb Gardiner, Hannah Kydd, Elsie Heritage and Beth Reid. Two teams attended the Welsh Bowling Tournament in Winnipeg in 1978.

Each season clubs from neighboring communities are entertained and they, in turn, host tournaments for Virden players. Virden hosted a tournament in 1981 in conjunction with the Fire-fighters' Rodeo when out of town clubs participated.

Virden Wellview Golf Club



New club house at Virden Wellview Golf Course was opened in 1980.

In the past ten years the Virden Wellview Golf Club has progressed quite rapidly. There is a nine-hole golf course with watered grass greens, tee boxes, large areas with trees planted, a new clubhouse with modern facilities and an above average, active club membership made up of ladies, men's and junior sections.

A great deal of volunteer work went into building up the greens and getting them into playing order. By 1976 they were ready for action.

A building was purchased and moved to its present site in 1980. After renovations to the exterior and interior, the ladies painted and decorated it. In the fall of 1980 Alex Adams, one of the original shareholders of Virden Golf & Country Club, and Doug Martin the 1980 president of the club, cut the ribbon to officially open the new clubhouse.

The year 1981 saw the installation of water to several tee boxes and the addition of a front overhang, deck and benches to the exterior of the clubhouse.

Over the past ten years both clubs have held several joint activities such as dances, two-ball foursomes and barbecues. There have also been several sessions of lessons for members, and the men donate time to help out with the junior program.

The men's section holds two annual golf tournaments, one in June and one in August. The senior section has one golf tournament per year and plays interlocking games with other local clubs. A weekly men's night is held with special events and prizes. There is also a playoff for the club championship and handicap event.

The ladies' section is affiliated with the CLGA and is a very active club with both a daytime and business section. Special nine-hole events are held on Tuesday of each week and 18-hole Pin Days are run every week. There is also a Ringer Board, Hospitality Board and Birdie Tree. The club has been involved in the Swing-ing Seven, a competition held in conjunction with other clubs in the Westman area. Teams have also been sent to compete in Handicap events and to play at club tournaments in the surrounding area. Spring and fall club tournaments are held, and the Club Championship and Handicap Trophy are presented at the annual Wine and Cheese Party.

Money is raised by the ladies through monthly draws and raffles. The funds are used to furnish and maintain the clubhouse.

The clubhouse has a well stocked canteen for the sale of snacks, golf club equipment and rental equipment. Green fees have remained economical, and visitors are always welcome to the use of the exceptionally fine facilities.

The Virden Figure Skating Club

After artificial ice was installed for 1968-69 season, Virden figure skaters were able to enjoy a longer skating season, beginning in October and ending in March.

There have been many highlights during the 1970's and upon reflection several come to mind: The hosting of the Manitoba Free Skate in 1975; The first Dodie Wardle Inter-Regional Competition held in 1981. Competitors receiving top awards have been:

Triple Gold Medalist Lynne Boyce;

Dance Gold Medalists Cindy Kellsey and Patti Wadham;

Two time provincial pairs champions Terry McSorley and Debbie Wooldridge;

Pre-Juvenile Provincial winner Joanne Trowell.

There have been many successful and colorful Ice Shows. All these events have been the result of hard work, sweat and "some" tears!

Since 1976 the Virden Figure Skating Club has been composed of three separate groups, The Pre-school, National Figure Skating (National Badge) and C. F. S. A. The formation of these groups has allowed us to maintain and promote a high degree of interest in our club so that we are now able to boast of having 176 skaters, September, 1981.

Hockey



Virden Pee Wee Team, 1974 Manitoba Champions. Back, L. to R.: Jay Zyllich, Manager Erle Kingdon, Steven Dryden, Gordon Stewart, Perry Elliott, Coach Henry Polk, Captain Tim Wade, Paul Langlois, Dale McLenehan, Asst. Manager, Frank Sitko, Ralph Cosgrove. Front: Todd Hellyer, Brad Forrest, Randy Kingdon, Jerry Sitko, Brad McFadzean, Jason Polk, Brian Braybrook, Kevin Wadham.

Local hockey enthusiasts really promoted the game in the 1970's. There were many minor hockey teams and the senior team was re-born in 1971 under the name "Virden Oil Kings". Virden's minor hockey teams played in the Turtle Mountain and Parkisimo Leagues and the seniors played out of the Southwest Hockey League. All ages played in the MAHA playoffs.

League titles were won numerous times in all minor hockey categories. In 1973 both the Midget A and Juvenile teams won the consolation side of the MAHA. The only Virden team to win a provincial championship in the 70's was the 1974 Pee Wee 'A' team. The Oil Kings won their division in '79-'80 but failed to go any further in playoff competition.

There were three large tournaments held here during the 70's. In the Pepsi-Cola-Wrigley tournament in 1975, Boissevain defeated the Virden squad in the final game. The City of Brandon tournament for the Pee Wee division was also held here for two years.

In 1976 the Larry Read Memorial Trophy was donated for presentation to the most valuable Pee Wee player of the year. Recipients to date have been Warren Polk, Ron Cole, Arnold Langlois, Jacy Whyte, Troy Hellyer, and Mike Rolling and Kevin Brooks, who shared the honor in 1981.

Several players from Virden and area have gone on to further their hockey careers. They are John Hewitt, Portage Terriers; Murray Good and Robert Mullett, Brandon Wheat Kings; Randy Kingdon, Brandon Travellers; Gary McLenehan, Kenora Thistles; Ralph Cosgrove, Flin Flon Bombers; and Don Larway who made it pro and played for the Houston Aeros of the W.H.A.

At the Curling Rink

Virden Curling Arena is a busy centre. Since 1970 new leagues have been organized, offering an opportunity to curl competitively or just for the fun of it.

The Seniors Mixed Club falls into the latter category. It originated in the 1972-73 season when six senior men's rinks began curling Friday afternoons. It was changed to mixed membership and has grown in popularity until the 1981-82 season shows a schedule of twenty-four rinks. There are a few spares so this league boasts a membership of one hundred. John Cruickshank was organizer and drawmaster.



Opening ceremonies of Senior Ladies' Playdowns, Virden, 1977.

Younger curlers formed a mixed league in the fall of 1981. They have fourteen rinks curling Thursday evenings.

The ladies still have two clubs. The 1980-81 season showed a membership of one hundred and one in the Afternoon Club and eighty-two in the Evening Club.

In 1975 the Ladies' Clubs began giving Life Memberships. Six ladies were presented with honorary member bars and scrolls. They were Ola Duncan, Greta Cruickshank, Gert Ambrick, Jessie Lawrence, Elsie Brown and Esther Kyte. Memberships have been presented since that time to Rena Horner, Kay McDougall, Dora Clark, Flora Brown and Bernice McDonald.

Virden Men's Club has kept active every year although down in membership from the thirty-two rinks they used to have. There is still a strong club and several competitive rinks. The format was changed in 1981-82 and teams were allowed to enter for one or two nights' curling.

Six teams entered a competitive league with cash prizes at the end of the season.

Junior curlers are fewer in membership but have some very promising young curlers. Four girls' rinks took part in the Junior Girls' Bonspiel in Winnipeg this year and made a very creditable showing. Just one boys' rink was in the playdowns this season.

All leagues hold at least one bonspiel during the year. Many organizations also hold one-day 'spiels, keeping the caretakers busy.

Opportunity to learn the game or improve ability has been offered to curlers at Virden Arena. The Don Duguid (World Champion) Curling Seminar was sponsored by Virden Afternoon Ladies in 1970. Eighty-one attended and attempted to learn the sliding delivery. Dora Clark qualified as a Curl Canada instructor so club sponsored clinics were held each fall. There are still many fine curlers with a style all their own.

Local curling clubs have hosted numerous playdowns since 1970. When the Brier (now the Tankard) was hosted in 1972 the Manitoba Curling Association was apprehensive as they doubted a rural area could properly accommodate the event. When more than 10,000 people turned out during the five-day event, they pronounced it a tremendous success.

In 1978 Legion curlers claimed Virden the smallest community ever to host their Dominion Playdowns — the twenty-second held. Participants were impressed with the curling facilities, hospitality, transportation system, and large spectator crowd.

The Manitoba Ladies' Curling Association was upset that Virden had no dividers on the ice when the Afternoon Club hosted the Senior Ladies' Provincials in 1977. They insisted that they be installed for the Lassie (now Scottie) Provincial in 1980 which was hosted by the Evening Club.

Virden has had rinks go into provincial playdowns and compete to represent the province at the Canadian Championships each year.



The Bridgett Rink — Seven-time Lassie Winners.

The Sandra Bridgett foursome of Carol Ann Trowell, Shirley Austin and Lynn Cameron have won the Lassie District seven times, and in 1978 were the runner-up team at the provincial playdowns. This rink also competed in the Molson's All-Star Curlettes League in Brandon for three years and won first place in 1978.

Remember when . . .

- marching was practised for weeks for the School Field Day?
- you spent all winter clearing and flooding the outdoor rink, but never got skating on it?
- you played hockey with a lump of coal or a road apple puck?
- ice-filled jam pails were used for curling rocks?
- horses with bells took you for a hayride?
- bathing suits had sleeves?
- you played marbles and jacks?
- skates clamped to your shoes?
- you learned to skate with bob skates?
- everyone was twirling a hula hoop?
- you played "Kick the can" and "Run, sheep run!".

CHAPTER XI

Centenarians

Following are brief histories of Virden citizens who, to the best of our knowledge, have reached their 100th year or more since the Virden Review was published in 1970. We salute these pioneers in Virden's Centennial Year.

Margaret Kerr

Any mention of citizens one hundred years and older would not be complete without the name of Mrs. Charles Kerr, the eldest of Virden's senior citizens. She will celebrate her 105th birthday on March 8, 1982. April 1982, will mark 75 years since her arrival in Virden with her husband, the late Charles Kerr.

Margaret Grant was born near Aberdeen, Scotland in 1877. She and Charles Kerr were married at Holyrood Chapel, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire on June 7, 1901 and came to Canada six years later. They made the trip on the same boat as several other Scottish people who settled in the Virden and Cromer areas.

The couple worked for Stuart Gillies and for Robert Drynan following their arrival in April, 1907. In 1910 they bought the farm on 8-11-26 in the Pacific District where they made their home until they retired and moved into Virden in 1944. When The Sherwood, Virden's senior citizens' home, opened in 1964 they were the first couple to occupy one of the four self-contained suites.

Mrs. Kerr was active in the Pacific Hospital Aid and St. Andrew's Society and was a member of St. Paul's UCW in earlier years. She grew an abundant garden and Mr. Kerr was well known as a breeder and shower of Clydesdale horses.

Mrs. Kerr became a resident of West-Man Nursing Home on

July 31, 1980. She always enjoyed singing solos, especially Scottish songs, and is still able to sing some of the old ones. Her eyesight has failed but she recognizes old friends and enjoys visits from them.

Helen Haskett

Mrs. Helen Boyter Haskett is another of Virden's centenarians who reached her 104th birthday on November 17, 1981.

Born Helen Grant at North Hilton Cookney, Scotland in 1877, she married Alexander Todd at Stonehaven, Scotland on June 13, 1898. The two children born to them were Elizabeth (Bessie) and Alex (Sandy) Todd. The latter was a long time resident of this area.

Mrs. Haskett's first husband, Alex Todd, died accidentally in 1906 from lightning while working in South Africa as a stonemason. The same year his widow, with her two small children, travelled to Canada with her brother-in-law and sister, James and Jean Brown and settled at Oak Lake. She kept house and helped out as a midwife. Later she moved to the Sanderson District southwest of Virden where she kept house for William Haskett.

In 1912 she married Robert Haskett and continued to make her home in the Sanderson District. Three children were born to them, a daughter, Mabel who resides in British Columbia, and two sons, Bobby and Jimmy, who died three weeks apart in 1918 at ages three years and eight months from infantile cholera.

Following Mr. Haskett's death in 1941, Mrs. Haskett remained in a home on the farm of her son, Alex Todd, until 1948 when she moved to Virden. She became a resident of The Sherwood in 1965 and remained there until she moved to West-Man Nursing Home in January, 1979.

She still enjoys company. Her memory is clear and she takes pleasure in visiting with friends.

Emma Jane Carleton

Mrs. Emma Jane Carleton was one of several settlers of this area who have attained or surpassed the century mark in spite of the hardships of early days. Her life story mirrors that of many pioneer women of her time.

She was born Emma Jane Glanville in Morefield, a small village near Listowell, Ontario, on October 3, 1869. At the age of twenty she married Peter Jordan, a local stonemason. Two years

later, as so many young couples with growing families did, they decided to move west and homestead where land was cheap and more plentiful. Peter arrived first in Oak Lake and was followed two months later by his wife and two children.

When she arrived Emma had only seventy-five cents in her pocket, and this was used to buy some bread and other basic necessities before moving to their first western home — a disused granary in the Assiniboine Valley.

An Indian trail ran close to their home and Emma, who had doubtless heard many tall tales about the fierceness of the prairie Indians long before she left Ontario, was frightened to death one day to see an Indian lady playing outside with her little girl. She rushed out, picked the child up and ran into the house, bolting the door after her. For some time, whenever her husband was away from home, she kept the children inside and the door locked. In due time she learned that the Indian people were not fierce but were only being friendly when they spoke to the newcomers' children.

Emma soon learned to barter goods with the Indians. She came to know from them ways to live off the land in the changing seasons, using the fruits and herbs which grew in abundance in the summer time.

In the course of his work, Peter would often spend nights away from home burning lime out of the kiln so Emma and the children were quite lonely. As their fortunes improved they moved into a log house and bought some cows and a team of horses. As well as working the small farm, they planted a huge garden to provide a year round supply of vegetables.

They soon built their first stone house, a three storey home built into the side of the hill. Emma loved to tell stories of her early life, one of which concerned the first cement floor poured in the house. It had to be redone because some pigs got in and added an interesting design before it had time to dry!

Stones had to be hauled up from the valley bottom but the older children were big enough by this time to help their father. There was always a hired man, someone who needed a home but not much pay! Mrs. Carleton remembered one such man well. He and her husband became firm friends, except that every twelfth of July they would fall out, refuse to speak to one another and Jimmy would threaten to quit. However, by the following morning they would be back to work and it would be 'business as usual'.

In 1925 Peter Jordan died and Emma was left to carry on alone. She told many tales of failed crops and dead animals. In one year fourteen horses were lost through swamp fever. Two years after her husband's death she moved to the Laggan District with the four youngest of her thirteen children. The old stone house stayed in the family. A son, Bill, bought it and remodelled it.

In 1938 this pioneer lady married James Carleton of Lenore, who lived only three years after their marriage. She then moved to Viriden and in her later years lived with each of her daughters in turn. In the spring of her 95th year she was saluted by the local newspaper as the community's Mother of the Year. She passed away peacefully in her 103rd year.

Margaret Ann Townson

Mrs. Margaret Ann Townson was born in England on August 27, 1874. She worked in a weaving mill as a girl and a teenager.

She married Thomas P. Townson in February, 1903. Mr. Townson came to Canada in 1910 and Mrs. Townson followed in 1911 with their three children. She received quite a shock when she arrived in Elkhorn and there was no one to meet her. There had been some misunderstanding as to when she would arrive. The station agent was new and did not know Mr. Townson, but finally someone came along who did know him and took her to where he was staying.

The Townsons had some difficult years. Mr. Townson was a carpenter by trade and was often out of work during the winter months. They moved from Elkhorn to Viriden and eventually to Routledge where they looked after the post office for over twenty years. After settling in Canada, two more children were born so they had five of a family, two girls and three boys.

In 1974 Mr. and Mrs. Townson celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary with an open house at West-Man Nursing Home where they resided in later years.

Mrs. Townson passed away in her 103rd year. She had a full and busy life which was spent mainly caring for her family.

Robert J. Leach

Robert James Leach was one of this area's residents who lived beyond the century mark. Elkhorn was his home for sixty years until he and his wife became residents of The Sherwood in Viriden shortly after it opened in 1964.

Mr. Leach was born at Smiths Falls, Ontario on January 1, 1875, one of a family of ten children. In 1902 he came west with two of his brothers together with their settlers' effects in a CPR boxcar. He and Mary Ellen (Ella) Davis of Brockville, Ontario were married in Winnipeg in December, 1906, after a separation of three long years.

Their first home was south of Elkhorn on 22-11-28, then they moved to what was known as the "Stone House Place", east of town. They soon moved to the NE 26-11-28 and gradually built "Glen-Buell Farm", named after Mrs. Leach's local district in Ontario. The first major improvement to the farm structure came about 1916 when they purchased a livery barn for \$600. Because it could not be moved in one piece, being over ninety feet long, a carpenter hand sawed it in half while the helpers ate dinner, and then the neighbors hitched on teams to move it the three miles. The two halves were joined again on a foundation and today, almost seventy years later, it still stands with a straight roof on the big loft.

The Leaches were mixed farmers and for many years had a fine dairy herd. This operation kept them going during the 1930's even though they sold butter for fifteen cents a pound. Poultry and vegetables were also marketed and produce entered in competition at local fairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Leach celebrated their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary in 1971 and Mrs. Leach died later the same year at age eighty-nine years. When West-Man Nursing Home opened in 1972, Mr. Leach moved in. He celebrated his 101st birthday there before passing away in May, 1976.

Charlotte Palmer

Mrs. Charlotte Palmer was born in Mitchell, Ontario on August 28, 1874. She came west to Virden as a young girl with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rowe, and their family of seven children in 1883. They homesteaded on a farm four miles south of Virden, enduring the hardships of those early days.

In 1893 Charlotte married John T. Palmer at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Palmer who operated a boarding house in Virden at that time. Charlotte and John farmed on section 2-10-26 south of Virden. They had six children all of whom attended school at Hillside.

John Palmer passed away in 1913 and his widow moved to

Viriden where she resided for the rest of her life. Her daughter, Ethel, married Robert Barclay and they took over the home farm.

Charlotte Palmer moved in to The Sherwood when it first opened in 1964. She celebrated her 99th birthday on August 28, 1973 and passed away in 1974.

Charles Ritchie

1882-1981

Charles Ritchie was born near Ellon, Aberdeenshire, Scotland on June 1, 1882. He attended school at Bog Bray and worked on farms around Ellon in his early years.

The manager of the North of Scotland Bank in Ellon was a man named Gillies. In the winter of 1907 he was looking for men to come to Canada to work on farms. His brother, Stuart Gillies, farmed north of Viriden, and he and some of his neighbors needed men for the spring season. Charlie Ritchie, along with others, was persuaded by the local banker to emigrate to Canada.

Also on this voyage were Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Kerr and Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Ritchie who eventually settled at Viriden and Cromer respectively. They sailed from Glasgow aboard the Corinthian (a converted cattle boat, according to Charlie) on March 15, 1907 and arrived in Viriden on April 5. The voyage was hampered for several days by icebergs.

His first spring in Canada, Charlie worked for William Reid on the farm one mile north of Viriden now occupied by Dr. Roy Brown. When seeding was completed on May 24, Charlie and Jimmie Mathieson (who later settled in the Sanderson District) set out for Hargrave. There they broke virgin soil on 11-11-27, the farm on which William Reid later achieved the title of Master Farmer. The two young Scotsmen with their breaking plows and good Clyde horses broke over 200 acres that summer. Mr. Reid harvested a bumper crop on this same land in 1908. The following year, Charlie went to work for Bob Drynan and remained with him until 1916.

He and Clara Ingram were married in 1916 and went to live on their own farm at Woodnorth. Mr. Ritchie took an active interest in the farm operation until he was hospitalized in 1979. Through the years he was involved in community affairs, serving as a school trustee for many years and as an elder of Woodnorth United Church. He was a member of the Orange Lodge in Viriden and Brandon.

After his hospitalization in 1979 he became a resident of West-Man Nursing Home until his death on August 14, 1981.

Mrs. Ritchie, who is 89 years old, now makes her home in Princess Lodge, Virden.

Angeline Demers

Mrs. Angeline Demers, the former Angeline Gallant, was born December 11, 1874 in Wellington near Summerside, P.E.I.

She came to Manitoba in 1902 with her family which included five brothers and one sister, and settled in Oak Lake. She worked as a waitress in the hotel dining rooms at Oak Lake and Virden. In 1907 she married John Demers and the couple farmed near Oak Lake until 1925 when they moved to a farm near Virden. Mr. Demers died in 1957.

Angeline stayed on the farm with one of her three sons until 1963 when she retired to Virden. She passed away March 17, 1975, three months after her 100th birthday.

One of her brothers, Sam Gallant, still lives in Surrey, B.C. He celebrated his 100th birthday on August 28, 1981.

Mabel Brownlie

Mrs. Mabel Brownlie is another of our senior citizens whose 100th birthday falls in the same year as Virden's Centennial.

Mabel Lambourn was born at Ipswich, England on October 11, 1882. The Lambourns, their two sons and three daughters came to the Routledge District in 1890 and homesteaded south and west of the village. They named their home "Cedarwood". Mabel, the youngest in the family, was one of the first students to attend Routledge School which opened in 1893.

In 1908 she married James R. Brownlie who had come to the Oak Lake area from Glasgow, Scotland in 1901. Their first home was in the Scarth District and later they moved to Virden where Mr. Brownlie was in the auto business with Carnahan & McKnight. After a few years they moved to the Blakeman Ranch near Routledge, then to the Oakview District. For a few years they lived at Belleview where Mr. Brownlie operated a lumber business. The couple raised a family of three sons, Ken, Bill and Ron. They retired to Virden in 1948. In 1968 they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. Mr. Brownlie died in 1972.

Mabel has always been fond of sports. She was a champion tennis player and took part in all the local tournaments of the day.

When the family moved to Routledge she had her own tennis court on the lawn in front of the Routledge store which her mother operated. She was fond of horseback riding, skating, lawn bowling and dancing, and even had a dance at The Sherwood birthday party on her 99th birthday. She liked playing cards, a pastime she enjoyed until very recently. She has been a resident of The Sherwood since 1975.

Lorne Carruthers

Lorne Carruthers was born May 5, 1883 at Cannamore, Winchester Township in Dundas County, Ontario. He was one of a family of ten.

In 1903 he came west on a harvest excursion and worked in the Hargrave district. He recalls that two feet of snow fell on September 12, stopping all harvesting for awhile. He returned to Ontario and came west again in the spring of 1906. His brother, George had also come out on the harvest excursions in 1904 and 1905, and when he returned home in 1906, Lorne used his return ticket to come back out west. Wanting to see more of the country, he continued west after a brief stop at Hargrave, riding the freight trains as far as Moose Jaw, Sask. He worked there just long enough to make a little money before going on to Swift Current where he found work in a hotel washing dishes for his bed and board plus \$1.00 a day.

Lorne's father decided it was time his son settled down so he came from Ontario that year and bought some CPR land, the west half of 27-10-27, three and one-half miles south of Hargrave. Lorne spent that winter in Ontario and returned to Manitoba in the spring of 1907 equipped with six horses, bales of hay, oats and bran to feed them, two barrels with water for them to drink, and a buggy, wagon and cutter. One end of the freight car was filled with cedar posts he had cut himself. The trip took nine days because two trains had jumped the rails and new track had to be laid. He remembers that more than forty carloads of freight cars were filled with land seekers, their horses and equipment, coming west to homestead.

After helping his uncle with the seeding, he moved to his own homestead where he broke up ninety acres that summer. He would cut scrub until ten o'clock at night, pick stones, and then burn the piles of scrub. He slept outside with his faithful little dog and his gun beside him. The wolves were plentiful and would

come very close. That fall he harvested for forty-five days using his two teams of horses, one to haul grain and the other to haul straw to the steamer. He received the princely sum of five dollars per day for himself and his four horses.

During the winter of 1909 he built a little barn on the homestead and in 1910 his brother helped him dig the basement for his house. They hauled the lumber from Hargrave where there was a lumber yard in those days. It took only five days to build the house; then it was ready for the lath and plaster job. Ralph Rolston was the carpenter and Mr. Eveleigh did the plastering.

By this time Lorne was engaged to Mary Elizabeth (Bessie) Odell, and they were married on December 28, 1910. They spent the winter in Ontario (the return rail tickets cost forty dollars each), returning to Manitoba in the spring. They farmed their homestead for thirty years, some good, some bad. They were hailed out two consecutive years on the same date, July 17, each year. In 1940 they retired and moved to Hargrave and their son, Cecil carried on the farm operations. He sold the farm in 1948.

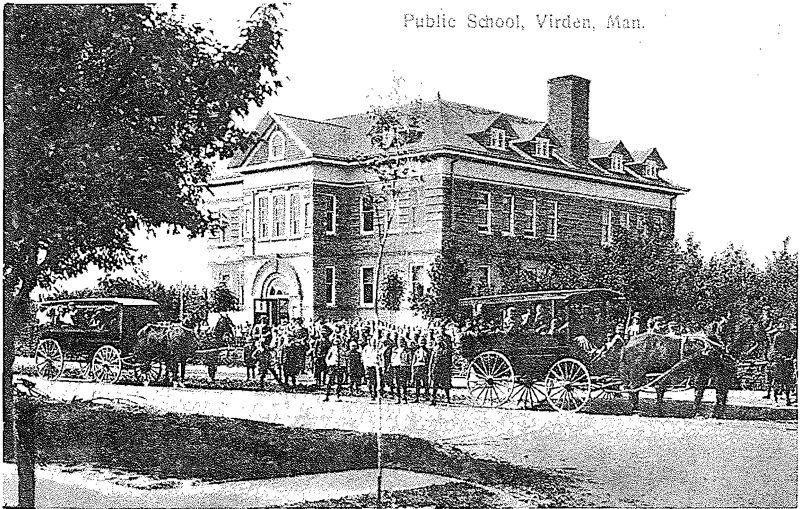
Lorne has always enjoyed music and playing the violin and mouth organ are his specialities. In earlier years he and his wife, together with others in the community, played for all the local dances. He played his violin for the first waltz at the Hargrave School Reunion in July, 1979 when he was ninety-six years old.

In the fall of 1972 the Carruthers moved to Virden where Mrs. Carruthers died in 1977. Lorne still lives alone in his own apartment. His son, Cecil and daughter, Inez Perrin both live in Virden.

Remember when . . .

- you wore felt socks and buckled overshoes?
- you walked behind the one-furrow plow?
- tractors were steamers and threshers burned wood?
- a buffalo coat and robe kept you warm?
- you used an old flat iron and its hot handle?
- lard was rendered in the oven and soap was homemade?
- you cleaned the soot-blackened chimneys of the coal oil lamps?
- wooden matches were kept in a metal dispenser on the wall?
- great piles of wood were split for winter use?
- bow ties, celluloid collars, collar buttons were part of getting dressed up?

- long hoop skirts and camisoles were worn?
- box cameras snapped pictures and binder whips snapped over the team?



Virden Public School (now Mary Montgomery School) showing how the pioneers travelled to school in horse drawn vans.

CHAPTER XII

Century Farms

Pollock Family Marks Milestone

August 4, 1981 marked another milestone in the history of settlement in this area and in the lives of the Pollock family.

It was 100 years ago on that date that Andrew Pollock arrived to take up his homestead on the SE¼ 4-11-26, northwest of the present townsite of Virden. He and his friend, John Kerr, left Glasgow, Scotland, in May, 1881, looking for adventure and farm land in the new country. On reaching Winnipeg they travelled by steamboat to Brandon, then walked west. No doubt they were directed to a general area of settlement, but they chose adjoining homesteads on land they found attractive and suitable.

The two friends lived in a tent until early November when they returned to Winnipeg to work through the winter months. In the spring of 1882 they came back to begin breaking their land. To file on this land they had to walk to Birtle, a distance of fifty miles or more.

A log shack was built that season with wood hauled from the river banks. In those days the prairies were bare of any trees for shelter. The men continued to live and work together for seven years until Andrew Pollock's marriage to Jane Patterson, a Scottish girl who had come from her native land in 1883 with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. White.

Andrew and Jane were married August 21, 1888. As their daughter-in-law, Freda Pollock tells it, "They spent their wedding night burning straw to protect their precious crop from frost

damage.” Working together to make a home and a livelihood began immediately after the ceremony was over!

In the years that followed a frame house replaced the original log shack as home for them and their family of four children. A second quarter section had been added in 1885 to the original homestead.

The Pollocks' only son, William John, took over the farm in 1919 when his parents retired and moved to Virden. He and Elfreida Jenkyns were married in 1925 and remained on the farm until 1951. “On August 4, 1926, our crop was completely hailed out,” Mrs. Pollock recalls. “Hail struck again in 1930 and 1933 — the only three times in the family’s 100 years of farming that substantial hail damage was experienced.”

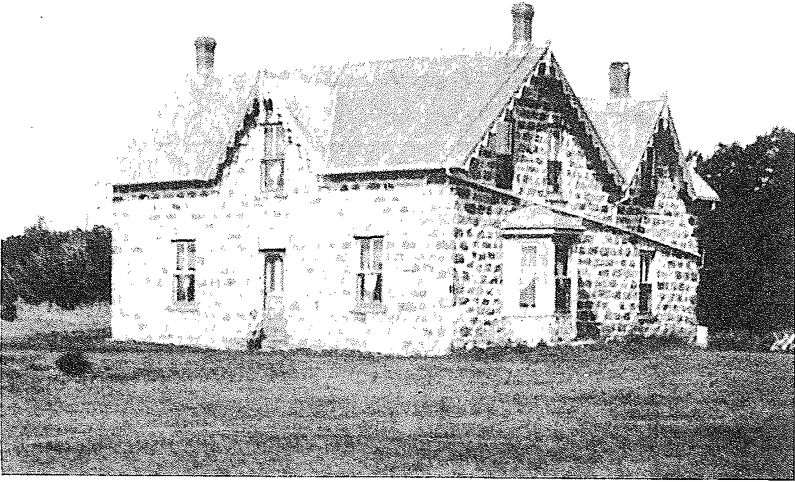
Since 1951 the Pollock farm has been operated by Andrew’s grandson, Donald. He and his wife, the former Lorraine Colli, and their teenage son, Dwight, still live on the family farm. They built a new home in the mid 1960’s to replace the first one, and have added another half section of land to the original farm.

The Pollocks have been the recipients of several awards and plaques from the Department of Agriculture and the Pacific Willing Workers to mark theirs as a century farm. The Pollock farm was in the Pacific School District which operated from 1903 until school consolidation in 1965.

The Younge Homestead Angell Farm

Joseph W. Younge was born in Rathdowny, Queen’s County, Ireland on May 27, 1852. He came to Canada in 1882 with his friend, W. J. Gyles, a fellow countryman. The two men left the railhead at Oak Lake and set out on foot to explore the land. Mr. Younge filed on the first homestead on 14-10-28 W1st, thus laying the cornerstone of what was to become the Springvale District. He called his home Springvale Farm, a name which was brought from some well-loved spot in Ireland and transplanted to Canada.

Mr. Younge and Mr. Gyles batched and homesteaded together during their first years on the prairies until their marriages to two sisters. They returned to Winnipeg the first winter, and during that time acquired their own outfits and equipment to begin breaking the land in the spring of 1883. Mr. Younge also purchased all of section 23 from the CPR at \$2.50 per acre with a rebate of



The Joseph Younge home which burned in 1927.

\$1.25 per acre for each one broken in the first three years. This was an inducement by the railroad to encourage more settlers to take up land and break up more acres as quickly as possible, and fostered traffic as the railway pushed westward.

In 1884 the two men purchased Shorthorn cattle which became the foundation for one of the finest and best known herds in the area. When they bought the foundation stock in Brandon they did not have sufficient capital to pay the freight to ship the cattle, so they organized a drive and brought them overland to Springvale. Mr. Younge managed the herd for about forty years.

Joseph and Laura Rathbone were married at Alameda, Saskatchewan in November, 1897. Laura's early childhood was spent in eastern Canada. She came west with her family who handled Daly post office, the first rural and postal service in Springvale District. A large stone house was built on the Younge farm in 1898. It was a well known landmark in the area and remained so even after fire gutted it in 1927. After the fire an addition was built to a frame house already on the property, and this served as the family home for forty years.

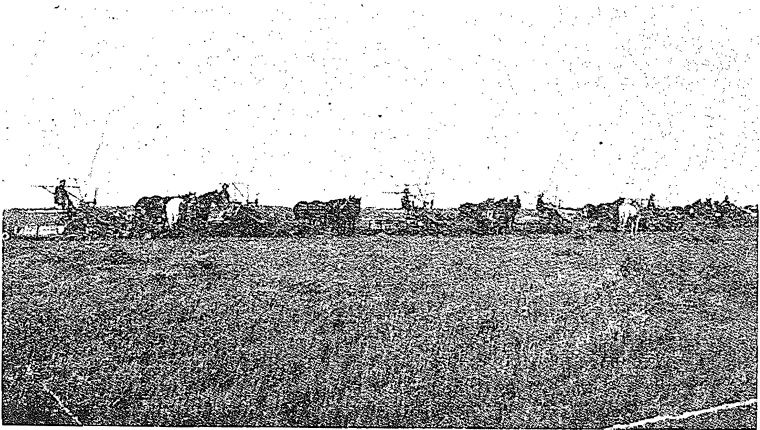
Joseph Younge always took a keen interest in community affairs. He donated the land for a school site which was named Springvale after his farm. It was to have been named Daly after the

first post office, but this name had already been chosen by another district near Rapid City.

Joseph died in 1932 and his wife, Laura, in 1934. They are buried in the churchyard cemetery at Kola Anglican Church.

A family of three boys and three girls was born to the Younges. Their son, John Mosse, remained on the home farm. His brother, George H. (Peter) also farmed in the district and still resides in Virden. John married Teresa Naylen who died in 1972. John passed away in 1978. They had two daughters, Mary and Katherine.

Their son-in-law and daughter, Donald and Katherine Angell, took over the farm in 1958, the third generation to farm this location. In 1967 the Angells built a new home to replace the one in use since 1927. They have two daughters, Darcey and Katherine, and a son, Kelly. They farm a large acreage of which the home-
stead forms the nucleus.



Harvesting scene at Wm. McDonald farm.

The McDonald Farms

The McDonalds of Laggan District are direct descendants of William McDonald who came west in 1882 and settled near Virden.

William, a forester by profession, was born in Scotland in 1831. He and his wife, Margaret McCrostie and their seven sons and two daughters came to Canada in 1873, living for a few years near Lucknow, Ontario.

In June, 1882, William and a son, John came west and settled on 36-9-27 in what is now part of Pipestone Municipality. The homestead was named Laggan Farm after the parish of Laggan in Inverness-shire, Scotland. By September, the father wrote, they had "put up a house and a stable, stacked hay for the horses and cattle, and broken over eleven acres of land". He wrote to the federal government asking "a leave of absence without losing his squatter's rights". Using a formal style probably common at that time, he signed his letter: "I am the Minister of the Interior's most humble servant".

He returned to Ontario (after requesting permission!) and brought his family back with him to Manitoba. Before leaving the west he hired men to cut and haul wood to his homestead. This work had to be done during the winter as "the ground to the bush is so wet in summer and we must provide for our fire here a year ahead all the time, owing to the wet land between us and the firewood".

William and Margaret's youngest son, William Jr. bought the north half of section 36 in 1886 from his brother John, and later purchased the south half of section 36 from his father. In 1892 wheat grown on Laggan Farm took top honors for its milling qualities at an International Millers' Convention in Glasgow, Scotland.

William Jr. farmed all of section 36 and more until the early 1930's when his eldest son, Kenneth took over the south half. Ken and his wife Helen (Wiles) had three sons, William, Blayne and Bryan. After finishing school, William farmed for a time with his father before moving to British Columbia. Kenneth farmed alone for many years and then rented his land to various neighbors. He and his second wife, Ethel still live on the farm which is presently rented to a nephew, Garnet McDonald.

When their father passed away in 1946, Duncan and Ewen (brothers of Kenneth) took over the rest of the farm including the north half of section 36. Ewen later left the farm to work for Imperial Oil. He is still with the company living at Swan Hills, Alta.

Duncan bought the farm from his mother in 1949. He rented it in 1957 and works for Chevron Standard Oil Co., but he and his wife, Bernice (Wiggins) still live there. They have two sons, Brent and Garnet, and two daughters, Karen and Janette. Their son, Garnet, a graduate of the Degree Course in Agriculture, now rents

the homestead. He is married to Lynda Gardiner of Virden and they have two children, Mark and Catherine. They returned to Virden from Calgary in 1977 and bought a farm north of Virden and rented several parcels of land including both McDonald homesteads.

The property has now been lived on and operated continuously for 100 years by the family, Garnet being the fourth generation of the McDonalds to do so.



The McDougall family — built home.

The McDougall Family

October 14, 1982, Lawrence McDougall joins others of this community in qualifying for a Century Farm. "Poplar Glen" is located four miles northeast of Virden on the southeast quarter of 36-10-26 W1st. It was filed to homestead by his grandfather, William Harkness McDougall. Future generations were to wonder and grumble at his choice, as the area was bushed and stony. Since it was not well suited to farming, numerous undertakings were tried for a livelihood.

W. H. McDougall was born in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland in 1841. He came to Canada and settled for a time at Seaforth, Ontario. A son, James Carter, was born there in 1877. In 1882 the journey to this area ended with a walk from Oak Lake — a lengthy hike for a five-year-old.

They built a two-roomed house a little south of the present home site. It was surrounded by trees. An easy water supply was provided by a spring on the land. A market garden was begun, and

the produce was carted to Virden. William also took in livestock to pasture and began a herd of his own.

James C. McDougall married in 1907. His 21-year-old wife, Lily F. Taylor, had recently come from England as a maid at the Elphinstone home. A shanty was built for the newlyweds, and Lily toiled in the garden and the fields with her husband. She also raised chickens. One day when she saw a coyote killing them, she took down a gun and shot at it. She worried all day that she might have shot one of the animals they pastured. Another project at this time was to haul stones to Virden to be used in building.

The couple began to build the present house. It was built in stages in years to come. They moved into it in 1919 when it was still under construction. James and Lily had three boys, Frederick, Lawrence and Harold, and three girls, Myrtle, Lily and Mildred.

Their grandfather died in 1922. He is remembered by the oldest members of the family as a cranky old fellow with a mustache. They carried his meals to his cottage in the woods, and were frightened by partridge taking flight.

It should be noted that the McDougalls found the Indians very helpful. Due to their experience with the climate and hardships of the prairies, they could advise them on methods and procedures. They valued their hints when illness struck.

About 1920 the McDougalls went into "keeping bees". They became known as the "Honey McDougalls" to distinguish them from other McDougalls in the area because they sold honey door to door in Virden. The older children all worked at this and the apiary expanded. By the 1930's they trucked honey to wholesale houses in Brandon. In 1938, they extracted 84,000 pounds at a selling price of four and one-half cents per pound.

In the 1930's a woodwork shop was operated under the name "McDougall Brothers". They made clotheshorses, sleighs, butter molds and rocking horses. They had contracts with Eaton's Marshall Wells, and local hardwares.

James died in 1933. The farm operated as a family endeavor until 1938, with the brothers and sisters all helping their mother. Eventually, Fred went into business in Virden and Harold became District Supervisor for Manitoba Hydro at Virden. The girls married and moved away from Virden.

Mrs. McDougall moved to Virden in 1941. In 1947 she gave up her home and spent her remaining nine years living with members of the family. She usually chose to be present when a new

baby arrived. She was used to hard work, did not like to be idle and never sat down without her knitting.

Lawrence now occupied the homestead site. In 1938 he married Kathleen Moore of Elgin, a teacher at River Valley School. They have carried on a mixed farming operation and have bought or rented nearby acreage for increased production.

After forty-four years, the McDougalls are retired and the only animal they keep is a very fat dog. The land is sown to hay and sold standing. Lawrence's hobby is making violins, and at present he is making his tenth. In winter they have a bird feeding station outside the window and by means of a sounding device they are able to listen inside to the delightful chirps.

Lawrence and Kay have three children, Lyle, Bonnie and Marvin, all of whom are married and have moved away from Virden.

The Rowand Homestead

The Rowand family of Kola, west of Virden, is another which is celebrating the 100th anniversary since the homestead was filed.

James Oliver Rowand came from Bruce County, Ontario as far as Portage la Prairie. From there he travelled to Oak Lake with his oxen and continued west to file on the south quarter of 30-10-29 in October, 1882. He and his brothers moved onto the Moose Mountains, but Oliver returned to his homestead. He was killed by a bull when his children were small, and his wife rented the farm and returned to Ontario. She came back to Manitoba when her son, Clarence Harold was only thirteen years old and the young boy took over the farming operation.

Clarence married Hazel Lund of Elkhorn who died in 1924 leaving two small children, Henry and Margaret (Twigg). His second wife, whom he married in the 1930's, was Eva Adair. They had two children, James and Mary Ellen (Roach). The elder son, Henry farmed the homestead from 1942 until his marriage in 1948 to Irene Wadham when they moved to 15-10-29. Henry's brother, Jim, owns the original homestead. The two brothers work their land together but neither one lives on the homestead quarter. The original frame house was still standing until January, 1981 when it was burned down.



Rev. Finlay C. J. McLeod who homesteaded the present Welch farm.

The McLeod Homestead Now The Welch Farm

The Welch homestead in the Assiniboine Valley has come down through the family from Rev. Finlay Cook McLeod, a great uncle of the present owners, Norman and Shirley Welch.

Rev. McLeod was born in Lewis, Scotland, and came to Canada at the age of seventeen. He studied and became an ordained Presbyterian minister and was sent west from Winslow, Quebec, as a missionary. He travelled with the CPR as the railway was being built, starting at Winnipeg. He lived in a boxcar and held services in a tent. At Virden, he held the first divine service on the wild prairie near where the town now stands. He spent the winter at Virden while the railway bridge east of town was being built, and filed a homestead claim on the Welch farm on 20-10-25.

The reverend gentleman continued west with the building of the railway as far as Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan where he left the railroad for the mountains of British Columbia to be a missionary to the Indians. He later retired and returned to Virden and his homestead in the valley. He built a house which was destroyed by

fire. He built another smaller one in the bank of a hill (as so many are doing now), and it was his home until his death. He died at Virden Presbyterian Church in 1913 at the age of 83 when he went to attend a wedding.

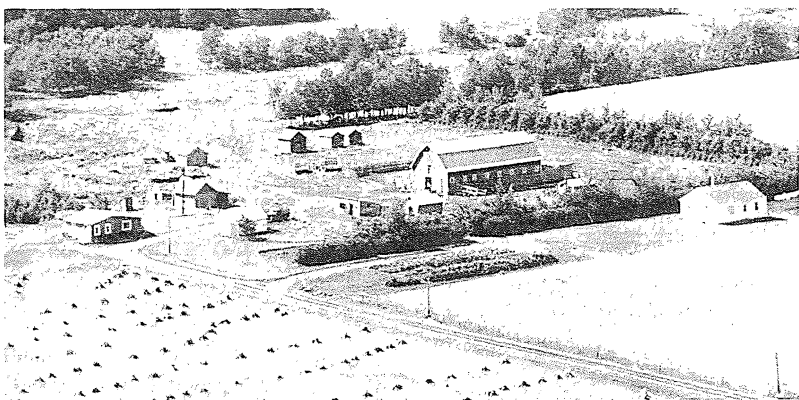
The homestead remained in the family and was taken over by Rev. McLeod's niece, Mrs. I. B. Welch, and her husband. Mrs. Welch was from Milan, Quebec, which bordered Mr. Welch's home in Vermont. The couple built a house on the homestead in 1914 and put in a crop. They returned east during the winters until they built up their farm stock.

Norman Welch, the present owner of the family farm, was the youngest of the Isaac Welch family of four boys and four girls. He bought his first quarter section of land in 1947 but continued to help his father with the family operation until his father's death in 1955 when he took over the farm. He married Shirley Ivey of the Pacific District in 1958. They have a family of three girls, Tayona, Janice and Sandra, and a boy, Jonathan.

Mrs. I. B. Welch continued to live in the family home for a number of years until she moved to Virden. Norman and Shirley built a new house in 1972 and the old home was moved four miles up the valley where it has become the home of another of the I. B. Welch family, Myrtle and her husband, Clarence Boon.

The Robinson Homestead

Lloyd and Ida Robinson operate a century farm in the Two Creeks District, northwest of Virden. It was settled by James and



Aerial view of the Robinson farm.

John Robinson, who homesteaded the SE 20-12-26 and the NE 20-12-26 respectively.

James and Christina (Pagan) Robinson were married in Dumfrieshire, Scotland, in 1845. They came to Canada from Carlisle in the early 1870's and settled first in Dundas and later in Galt, Ontario. They and their two daughters came west a year or so after their sons took up their homesteads. James died shortly after coming to Manitoba and Christina died in 1888. They are buried on the southeast quarter of the homestead.

James Jr. returned to Ontario and sold his homestead to his brother, John. A family of four, two boys and two girls, were born to John and his wife, Margaret Linton, who were married about 1885. They had a house of log and stone on the northeast quarter. Margaret died in 1897 leaving a very young family. She also is buried on the home farm. Their sons, James and Thomas, remained on the farm although Thomas was absent for a year or more during World War I.

A frame house was built in 1911 on the Southeast quarter of 20-12-26. A devastating cyclone struck the farm buildings on August 20, 1911, and the frame house, which was just newly built, was completely demolished. The barn was also destroyed. John was badly injured in the storm and as a result died shortly after. His sons, James and Thomas, salvaged what they could and built a one storey house and another barn. The barn was replaced by a new one in 1948. The house remained until 1976 when it was demolished.

James and Addie Cook were married March 24, 1920. They lived on 30-12-26 for few years, then returned to 20-12-26 where their two sons, Wes and Lloyd grew up. James died on November 27, 1939 and his wife carried on with the help of his brother, Thomas, making a home for him and her two young boys.

Lloyd worked in partnership with his Uncle Tom until the latter's death in 1964. On August 25, 1954 Lloyd married Ida Rowan of Miniota and the couple built a new home in the same yard as the original sod house. They have two children, Jim and Jill, both of whom are working in Alberta. Their farm has been increased to one and one-quarter sections of land from the original homestead.

The Peter Leask Homestead

Peter Leask was a pioneer of the Lenore area who filed on 2-11-25 in 1882. He was the eldest son of Alexander (Sandy)



The Leask homestead near Lenore.

Leask, one of a family of seven boys and three girls, and was born on October 17, 1850. His wife, the former Margaret Ferguson, was born in Ontario in the county next to where Peter lived. She was a tailor's apprentice and an excellent sewer who made men's suits as well as dresses and other clothing. She worked in Ontario at her trade for 35¢ per day.

Peter and Margaret were married in 1883 and came west by Chicago on a train that had cars of settlers' belongings. Their effects included a team of horses and a cow which chose to have a calf at Chicago enroute west. The calf had to be given to someone there or it would have been trampled in the boxcar.

On their arrival, the Leasks were able to get their belongings over the river on the ice before it broke up in the spring. Peter invented a device to help harvest turnips, but this was never patented. He was one of the first with any new machines that came out and he always had a threshing machine. He had a herd of purebred shorthorn cattle and his horses won prizes at the early fairs in Virden. Wheat, oats and barley were grown on the homestead.

The couple had five children, three girls and two boys. The two sons, John F. (Jack) and Howard farmed the land after the death of their father in 1917. Their mother went to live with her daughter, Marjorie Etsell, but when the Etsell home burned she returned to her old home. She died in 1937.

Jack married Lulu Etsell in 1929 and they raised a family of five, John, Garth, George, Edward and Dorothy, on the old homestead. Jack's son, John took over the farm following his father's death. He married Louise Murray in 1963 and they have a family of three, Karen, Jim and Gregg.

Peter had replaced the first house with a brick home in the same yard. It was torn down after John and Louise built a new home in 1967 on the same location as the original log house. They have increased the size of their farm to a section of land.

The Etsell Farm

The Etsell farm near Lenore is a Century Farm and its owners are linked to the Leask family who also qualify for the honor.

T. E. Etsell came from Ontario and homesteaded on the northeast quarter of 4-11-24. His son, Earl, married Marjorie Leask, daughter of Peter Leask who homesteaded in the same district. Earl lived on the farm and worked it until his death in 1976. In 1967 he received a certificate for seventy-five years of continuous ownership. He lived on the farm for eighty-two years and was in charge of its operation from the time of his father's death in 1914. Salt Lake is on the Etsell property and has been a favorite spot for swimming and boating over the years.

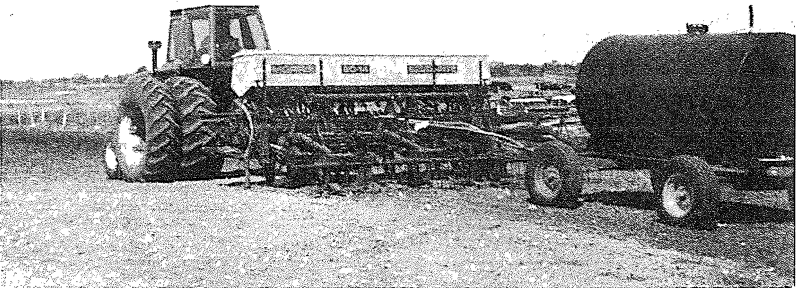
With the death of Marjorie (Leask) Etsell in October, 1981, ownership of the farm passed to the four Etsell daughters, Margaret Newton, Marjorie Jones, Jean Langugraber and Elizabeth Woods. The land is rented but remains the property of the Etsell family.

CHAPTER XIII

Then and Now Agricultural Progress



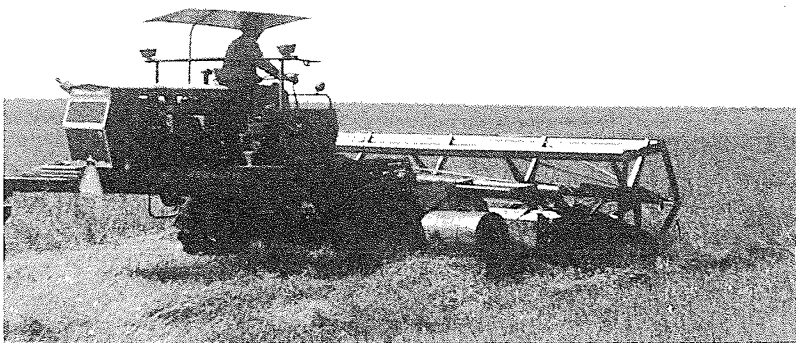
Breaking with the walking plough.



Modern farm equipment.



Binder and four-horse team.



Self propelled swather.



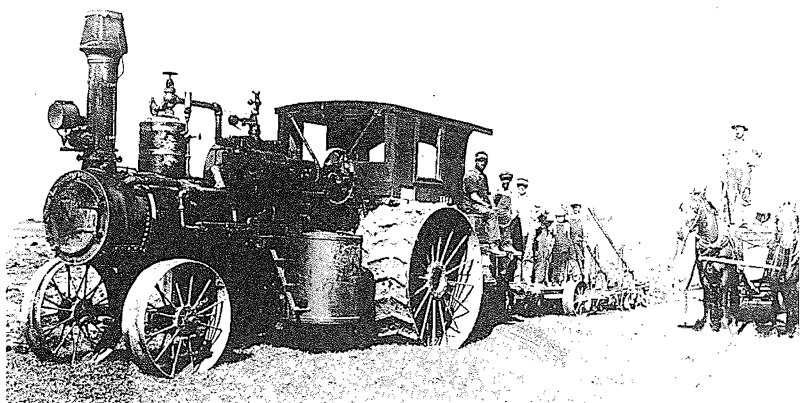
Gas engine (Hart Parr) with thresher.



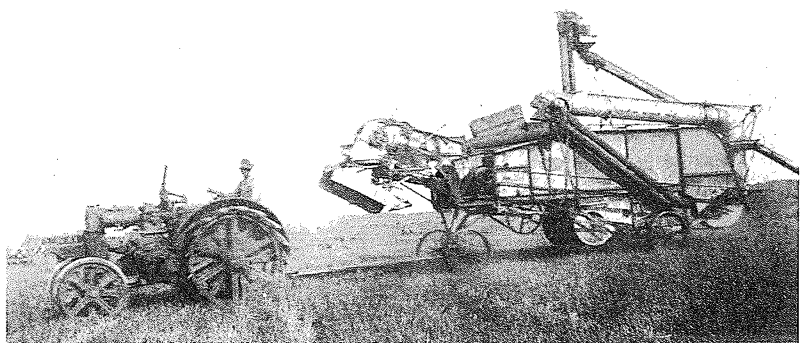
Grain in the stooks ready to thresh.



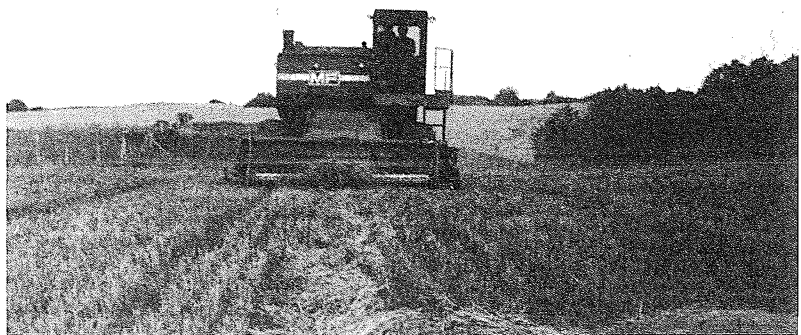
Grain in the swath ready to combine.



Steam engine and plough.



Case tractor and separator.



Modern combine.



Maples Pool Elevator being moved from its former site south of Virden to its new location on the CPR Mainline, Virden.



The new Pool elevator was built north of Virden on the CPR branch-line to service the Virden area south of the Assiniboine River after closure of the Pool elevator at Hargrave.



Bosshill Farm, circa 1885, on the creek at the northern edge of the present townsite of Virden.



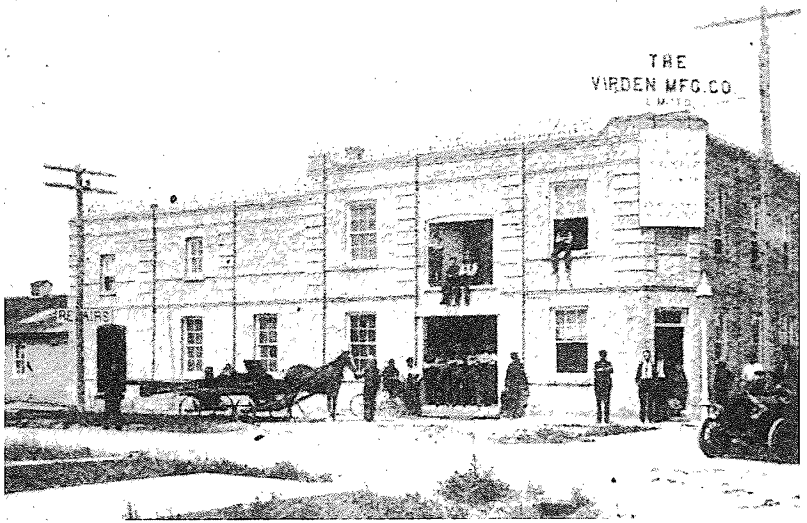
Present day scene at the Gordon Grose home.



Repairing engines behind T. B. Mitchell's machine shop on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Wellington Street.



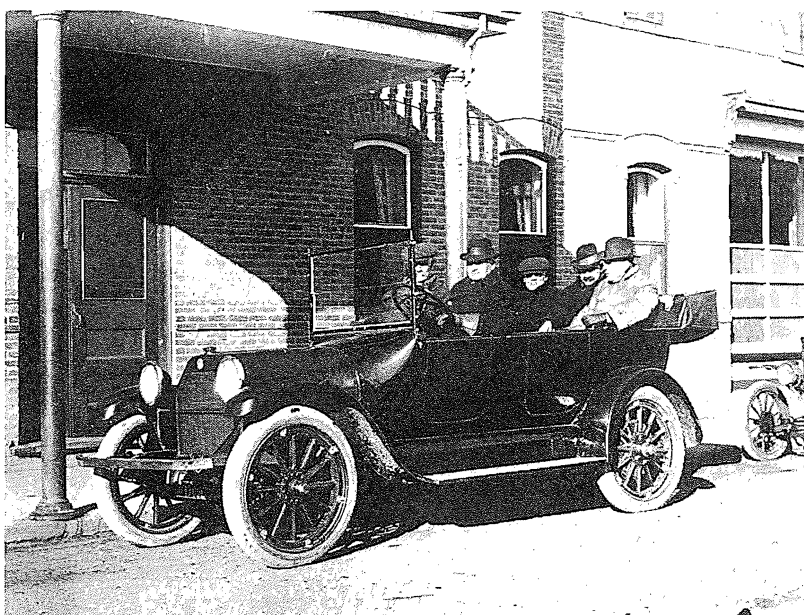
The same scene in 1982, now a parking lot beside the Central Hotel and the Bus Depot.



Virden Manufacturing Co. Ltd., corner of Seventh Avenue and Raglan Street, organized 1908, where the Whiteford Justice Measure and Williams pumps were manufactured.



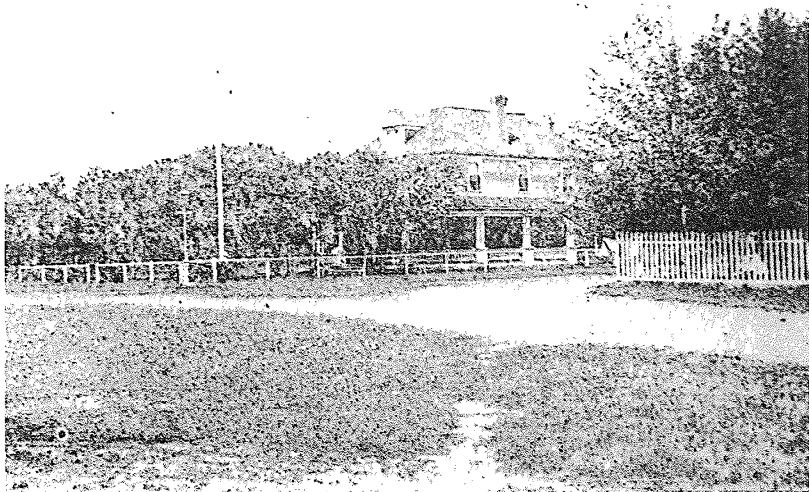
Federal Building housing the Post Office and Farm Credit Corporation offices now occupies the corner where the manufacturing company once stood.



A joy ride in 1910. Occupants are Ivens, Simpson, Bridgett, Newcombe and Coldwell.



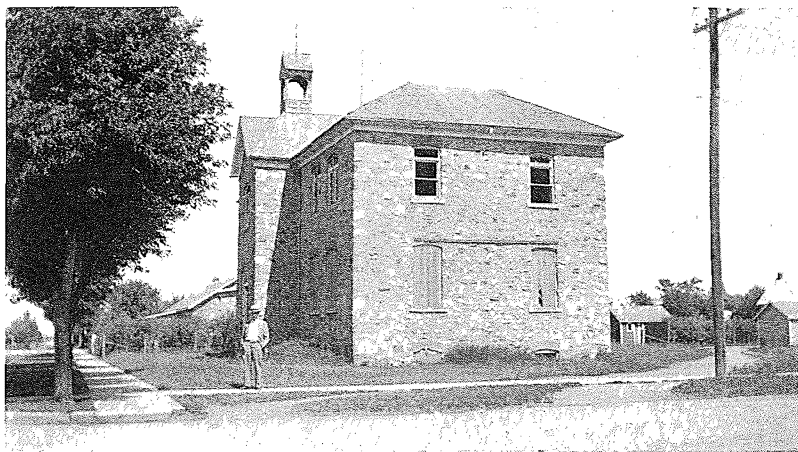
A modern joy ride in a Buick Park Avenue parked in the same location as the 1910 vehicle.



Residence of H. C. Simpson at Ninth Avenue and King Street, then on the outskirts of town.



Pictured below, the same house is now known as Merry Manor, a home for the mentally retarded.



Four-room stone school built 1892. It was later used as an immigration hall, then for storage until its demolition.



A modern home on the corner of Queen Street and Ninth Avenue on the same site as the old stone school.

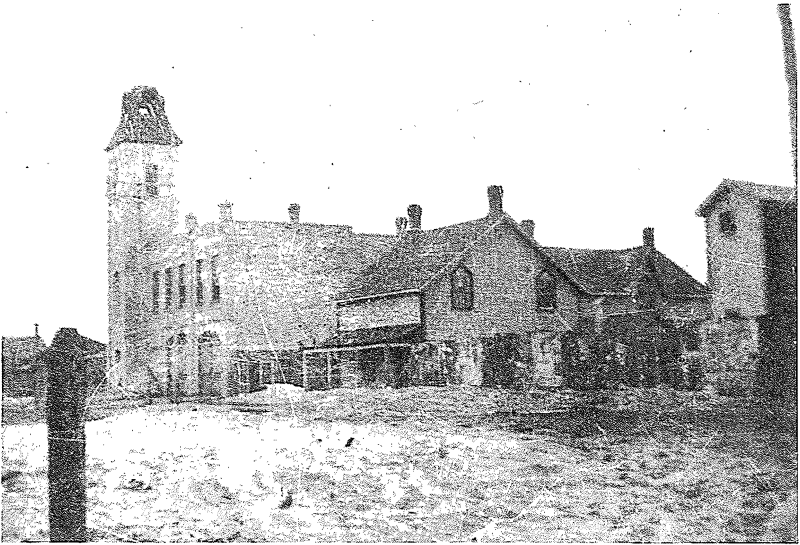
Presbyterian Church Virden, Man.



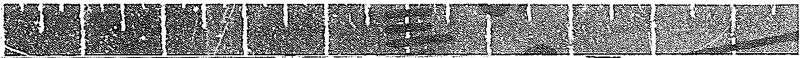
Carmel Presbyterian Church, Ninth Avenue and Wellington Street, was built in 1892.



The old church is now known as the Starlight Club. It has been used as a hall since Church Union.



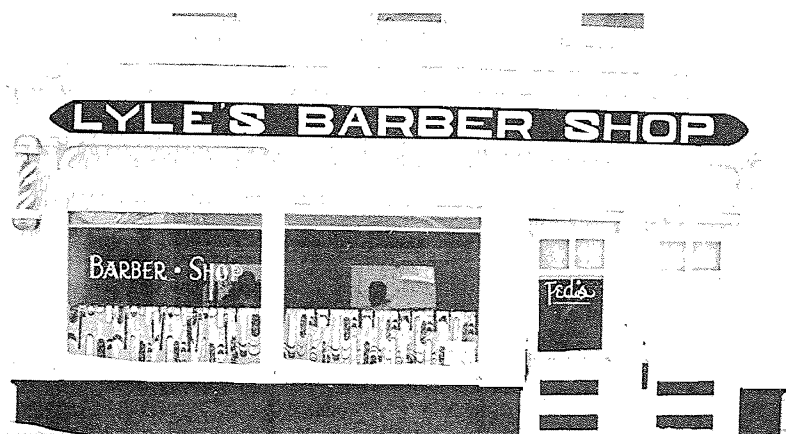
Fire Hall, boarding house and 'privies' behind the Balmoral Hotel are shown in this view of Wellington Street.



The same view in 1982 showing the Town Offices since the demolition of the Fire Hall and Bell Tower.

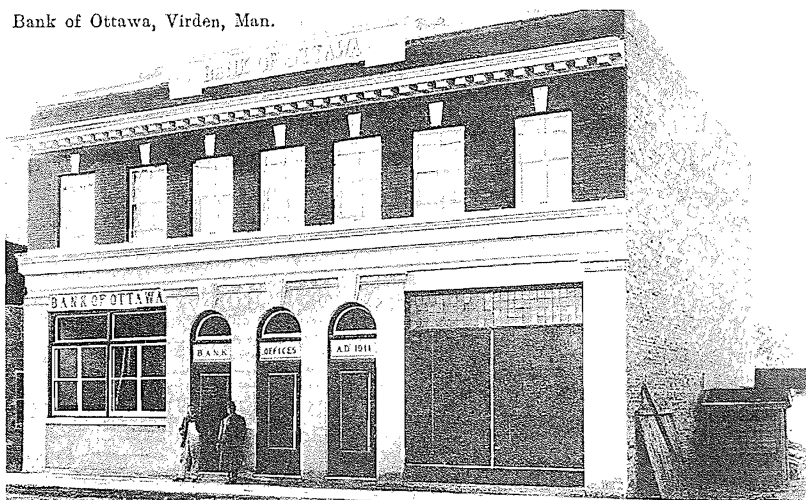


The Union Bank Building, 1888, served as Land Titles Office, and later as the Victory Club for servicemen in World War II.



The same building in 1982 is occupied by Lyle's Barbershop.

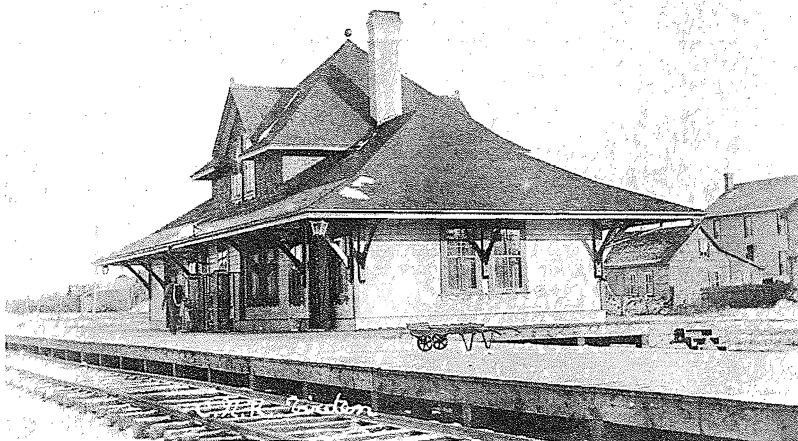
Bank of Ottawa, Virden, Man.



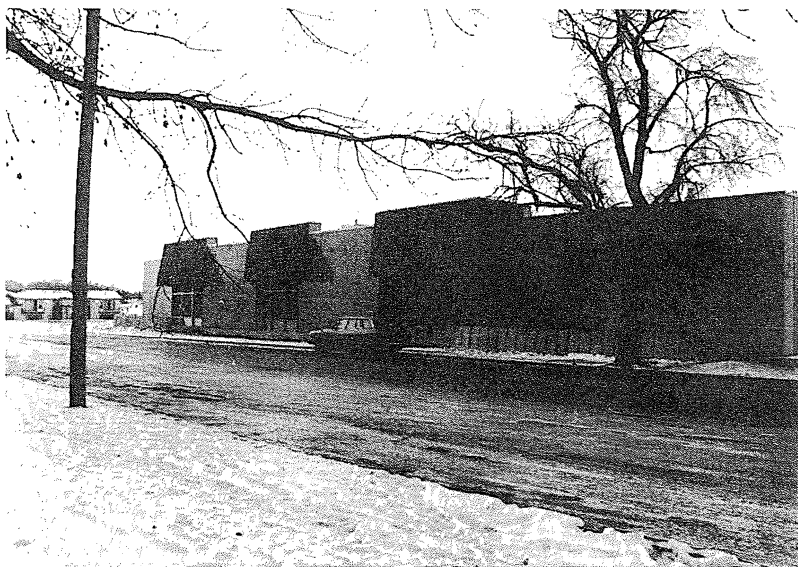
The Bank of Ottawa building on Nelson Street built in 1904 and rebuilt in 1911 after a fire.



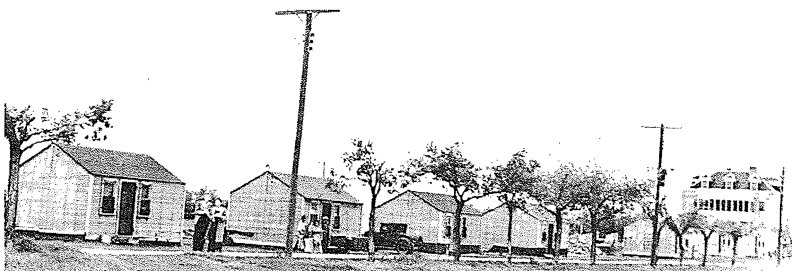
The most recent building on the Bank of Ottawa site is occupied by Viriden Footwear.



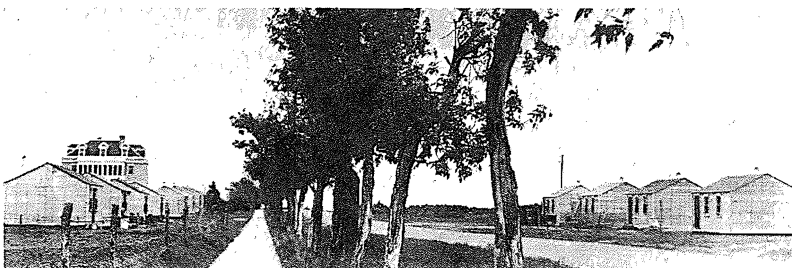
The CNR station closed in 1976 and was moved to the Bill McQuaker property in the Assiniboine Valley.



CNR property sold to Valleyview Co-op Ltd. and a modern store was built where the station once stood.



Nelson (or 'Hospital') Street showing wartime housing built when the flying school opened during World War II.



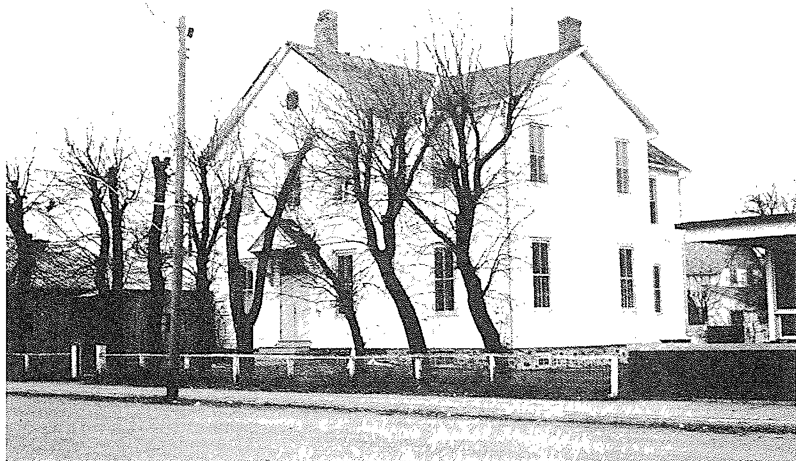
Nelson Street East in 1982 looking towards old hospital grounds where new homes have been built.



Fur fashions circa 1916. Hattie (McLean) Carefoot and Margaret (Stinson) Glass.



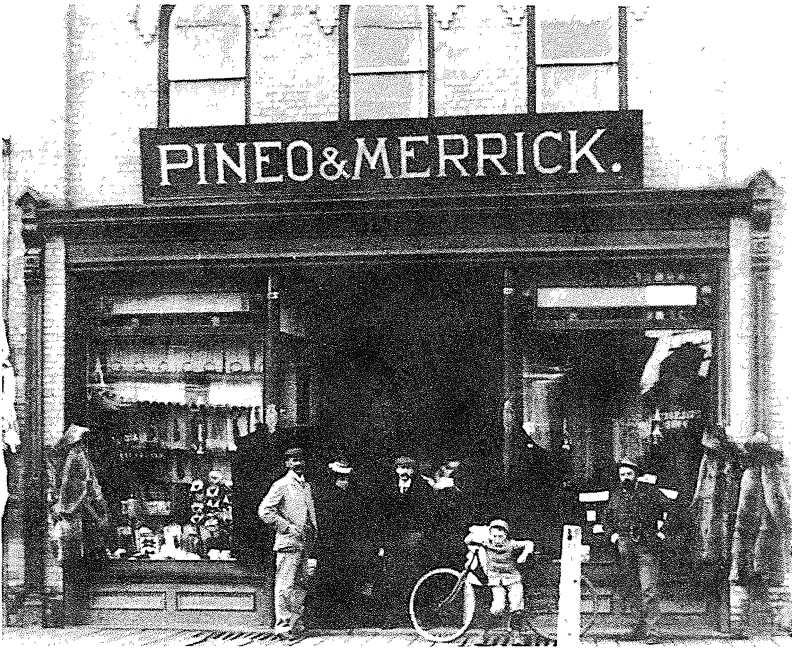
Fur fashions today modelled by Gloria (Patterson) McSorley and Joy (Treliving) Longman.



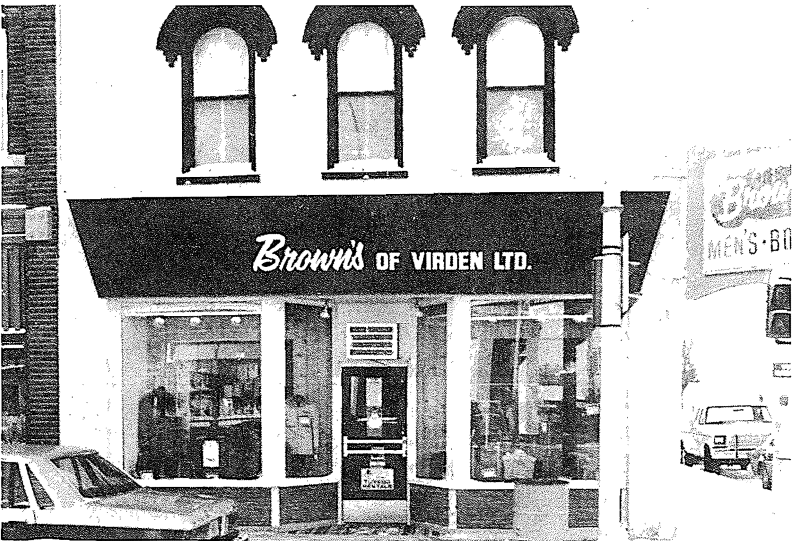
The armoury was headquarters for the 12th Manitoba Dragoons, later the 18th Armoured Car Regt., World War II. Closed in 1970.



The Post Office, Seventh Avenue and Raglan Street, built in 1971 on the site of the Armoury.



The Scarth Block corner of Seventh Avenue and Nelson Street, built 1898. Known as "The Busy Corner" it has always been the home of men's wear.



Same corner, 1982, Brown's of Virden still catering to men's wear.



View of Seventh Avenue looking north, circa 1912.



Today's view of Seventh Avenue includes traffic lights.



The Balmoral corner, Seventh Avenue and Wellington Street, taken about 1930.



Seventh Avenue looking north in 1982. Virden Television where Foodland once was. The Balmoral Hotel corner now a vacant lot.

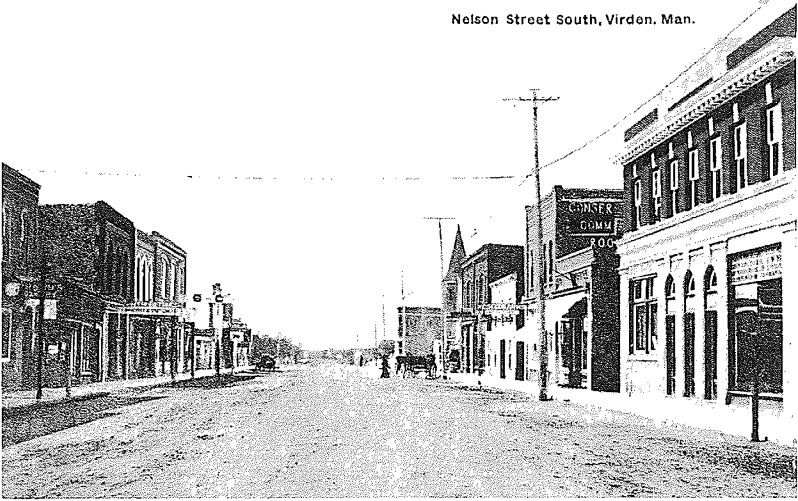


A view of Nelson street looking east about 1915, according to vintage cars.



Nelson Street in modern times, with traffic lights at the intersection.

Nelson Street South, Virden, Man.



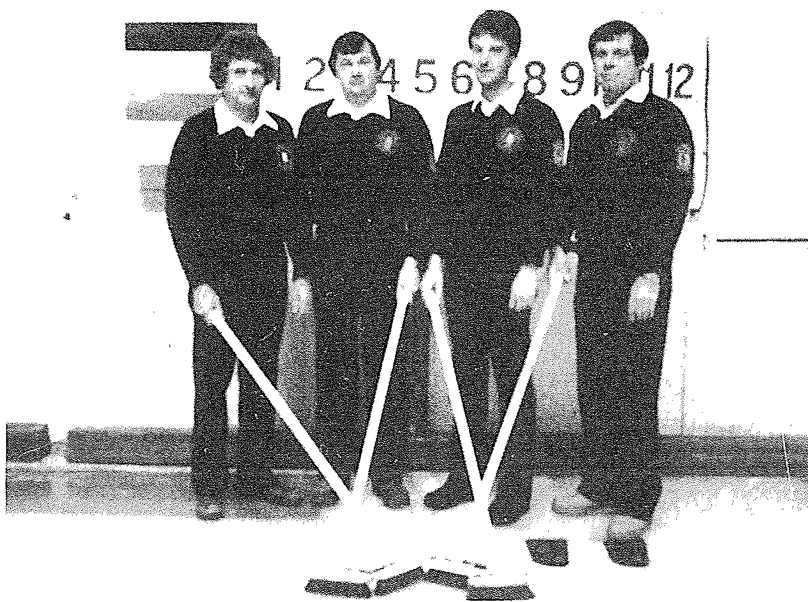
Nelson Street looking west, circa 1910, when open prairie could be seen beyond the business block and telephone poles lined the street.



A view of Nelson Street as it is today with the clock tower on the Scott Block, formerly the post office.



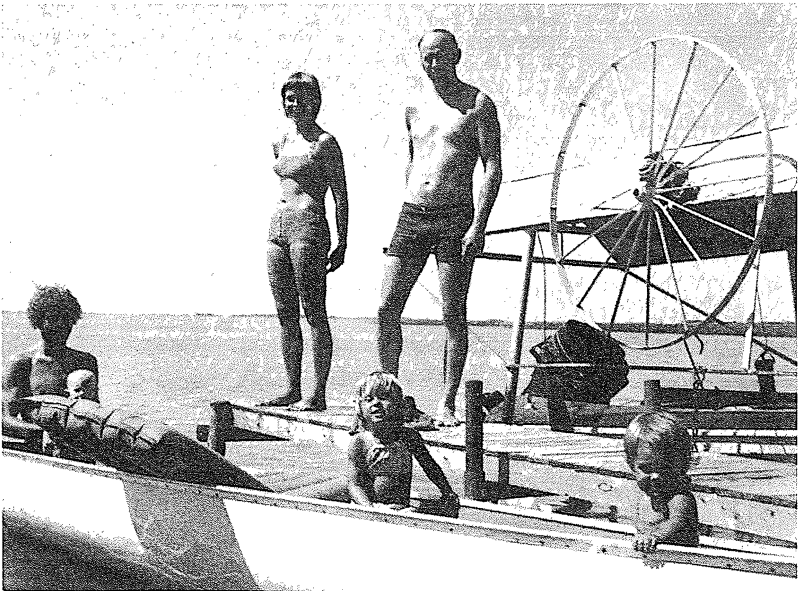
Team of oldtime curlers: Joe Bright, Art Carscadden, Ed McGuffin and Ed Newby.



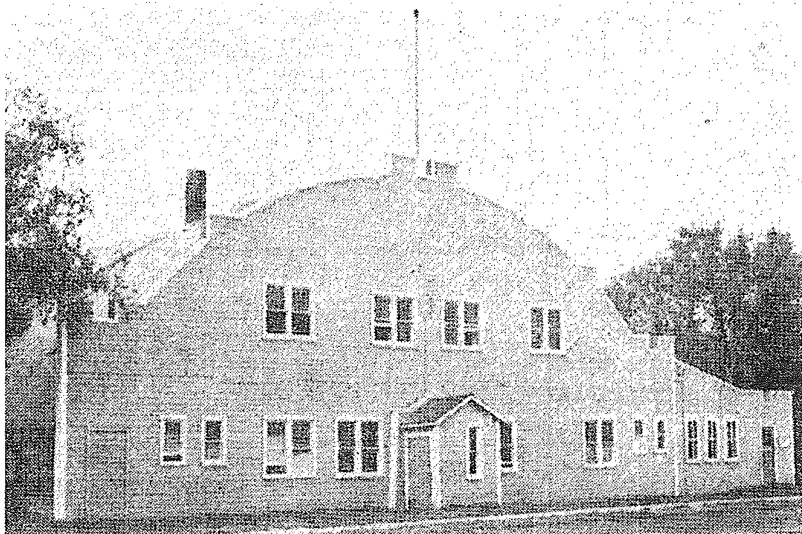
Curling foursome 1982 have won a berth in the Labatt's Tankard (Brier). Pictured are Jim Nichol, Rick Smith, Brian Fowler and skip Ted Bridgett.



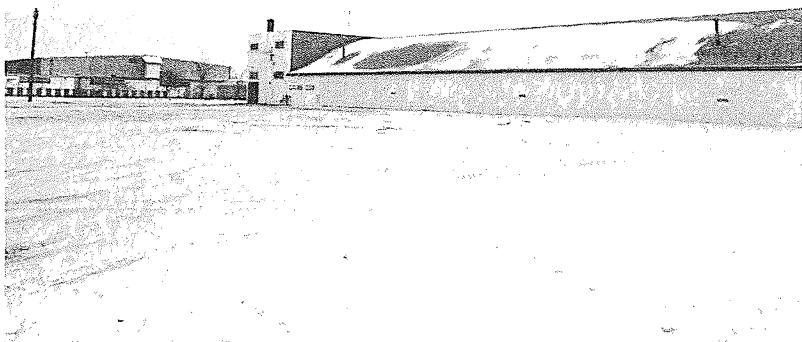
Bathers and picnickers at Oak Lake in beach fashions of earlier days.



Swimmers at Oak Lake Beach, 1982, in up-to-date swim wear.



The old curling and skating rink in Victoria Park where the 'live' band played for skating several nights a week.



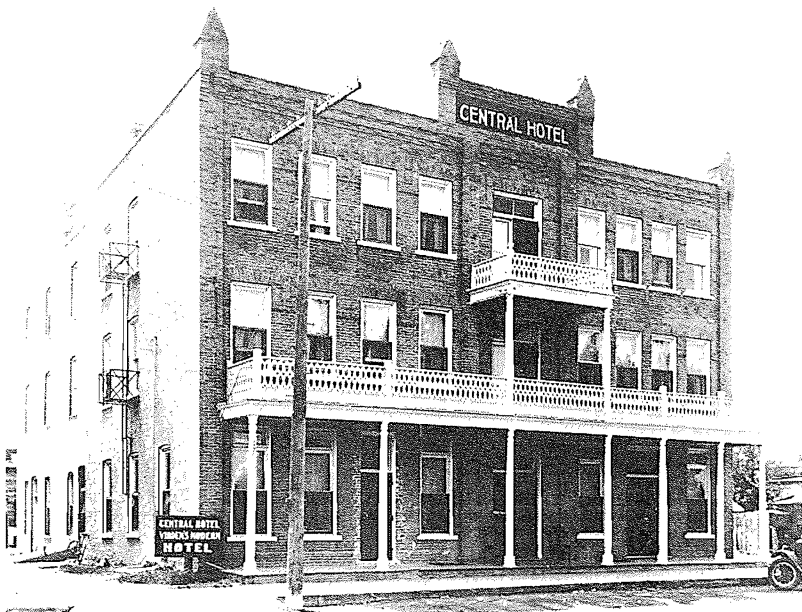
Present sports complex with curling rink in foreground and skating arena in background. Both have artificial ice and skaters now have taped music.



Taylor Lumber Co. taken in the oil boom years.



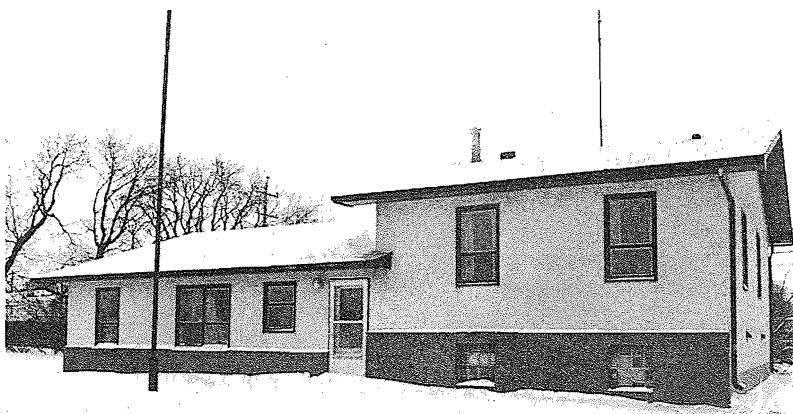
Beaver Lumber Co. built 1971 on the site of the former Taylor Lumber Co.



Central Hotel on Sixth Avenue opposite the CPR Station, taken about 1925.

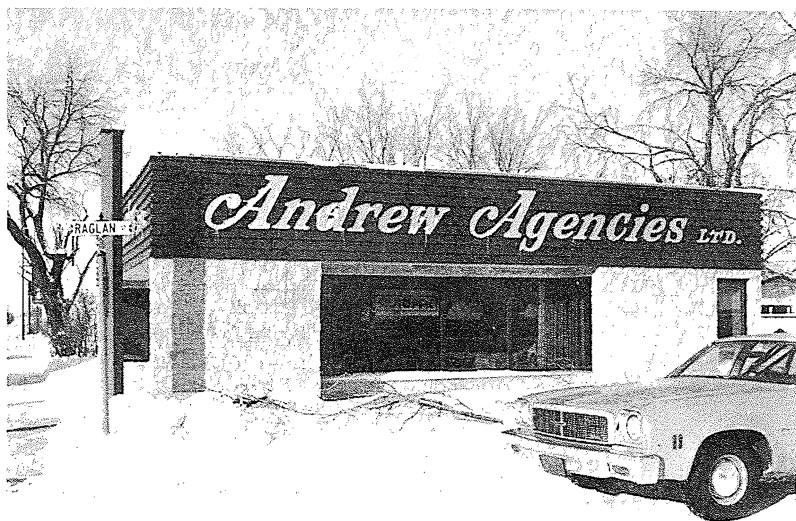


New Central Hotel built in 1967.



Pictured above is the former RCMP Barracks on Hargrave Street and Fifth Avenue. The new building, below, was opened in 1981 at the corner of King Street and Government Road.





Andrew Agencies at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Raglan Street opened in 1978 on the premises of the former blacksmith shop.



Right foreground is the Virden Credit Union Building built in 1961.



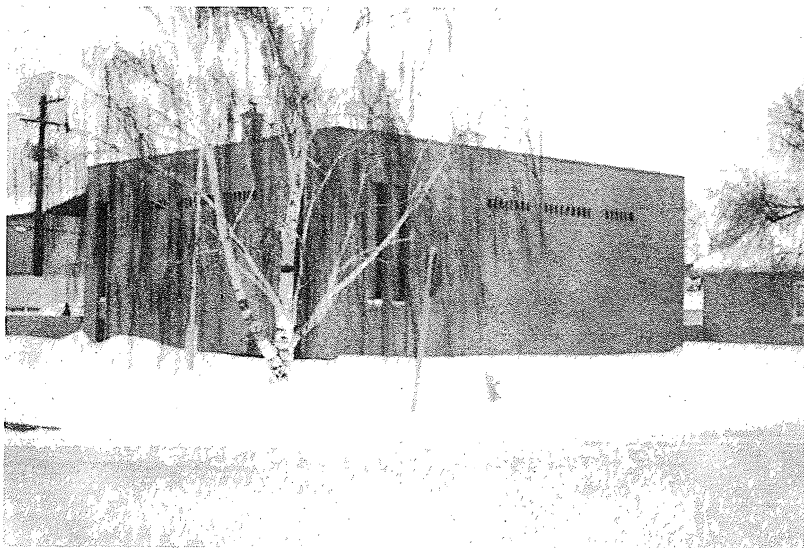
Robinson's Store and Chicken Chef are located between Sixth and Seventh Avenues on Wellington Street. Robinson's opened in October, 1975. Chicken Chef has been in business since 1981.



Revelstoke Company built this new centre on Third Avenue in 1975.



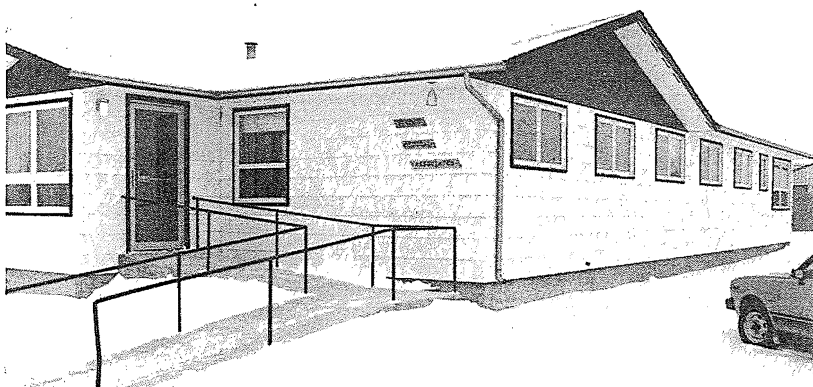
The Royal Bank opened a branch in this newly renovated building on Seventh Avenue and Princess Street in April, 1975.



The Manitoba Telephone Building, located at Wellington Street and Eighth Avenue, was opened in April, 1970 when dial telephones were installed in the area.



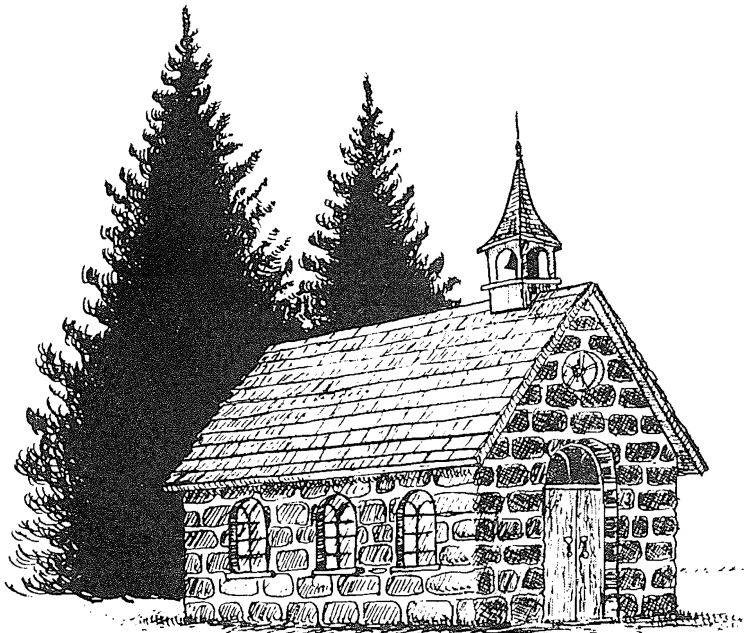
Sears Mail Order Office was built in August, 1980 on Nelson Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues.



Virden Medical Associates built this clinic adjacent to Virden District Hospital in 1975.



Miss Myrtle Lane turning the first sod for the Virden Cemetery Memorial Chapel, July 1981.



Above is an artist's sketch of the memorial chapel built in honor of the pioneers of the area. It will be faced with local fieldstone and will be dedicated during Homecoming Week in July, 1982.

Update

Manitoba Oil Industry Update: 1970 to 1982

Oil drilling in Manitoba was quite slow during the years 1970 to 1978 with only 10 to 20 holes being drilled each year. From 1978 to the end of 1981 however, with rapidly increasing crude oil prices and a royalty structure somewhat more encouraging to exploration than the other Western Provinces, drilling began to increase. With significant new oil discoveries in the Waskada area by Omega Hydrocarbons and in the Kirkella area by Saskoil and Rideau Petroleums, the number of wells drilled in Manitoba in 1981 jumped to 65.

Wells capable of production in Manitoba have gradually declined from 904 in 1970 to 812 in 1979. However the number of wells capable of production at the end of 1981 shows a sharp increase to 867 due to the increased drilling activity and the new discoveries.

Oil production in Manitoba has slowly declined during this period from 5,910,108 barrels in 1970 to 3,543,783 barrels in 1980, while the price per barrel of crude oil has increased from \$2.51 in 1970 to \$21.25 at the end of 1981. It is interesting to note that during this period of declining production, Provincial Oil Revenues have increased from \$414,500.00 in 1970 to \$3,276,000.00 in 1979.

During 1980 renewed interest in Manitoba Potash in the McAuley area by International Minerals and Chemical Corporation and in the Russell area by Amax Minerals Exploration has created considerable exploration drilling activity. This Potash drilling and much of the renewed oil drilling has been carried out by Crown Drilling Ltd., the first Manitoba owned Drilling Company incorporated in 1977 by three local Virden residents. Crown Drilling Ltd. presently operates two drilling rigs from their office in Virden.

By the close of 1981, the new Energy Policy implemented by the Federal Government has placed much of the oil exploration industry on hold. Once again the oil exploration and drilling industries in Western Canada are facing a period of extreme uncertainty.

Update 1970-1981

1970

The New Year's baby arrived January 1 at 11:41 P.M., a boy, Brian Edwin, born to Mr. and Mrs. Ed Clayton.

Brian Clayton and Rowena Kalinchuk were named to the Manitoba Centennial Foundation for the Future. These children will meet on July 15 in the year 2000 as directors of the foundation and will plan a project for the people of Manitoba which will be financed from the funds of a trust set up in 1970. For each child born in Manitoba on January 1, May 12, July 1, July 15, October 12, December 31, 1970 a sum of \$10.00 was deposited in the fund.

Prices at the local stores were: bread, 6 for \$1.00; peanut butter, 99¢ for 48 oz. tin; bacon, 99¢ a lb; margarine, 79¢ for three lbs; minced beef, 69¢ a lb; tomato juice, three 48 oz. tins for \$1.00; Kleenex, three boxes for 99¢.

Livestock prices at the Virden Auction Mart in January were: choice butcher steers \$27.00-\$28.30 per cwt; weanling pigs \$20.00-\$23.00 each; and lambs \$24.00-\$28.00 each.

Darla Forster was voted Centennial Carnival Queen.

Grand Aggregate winners at Virden Men's Bonspiel were Garth Seafoot, Dave Phillips, Gene Cory and Dave Popple of Brandon.

A Brandon rink of Molly Carey, Ev Grant, Evon Wiseman and Elva Fawcett topped the Ladies' Bonspiel.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Cook celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in February.

A timber wolf was shot just north of Virden by Tom Ames and John Newman.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Carruthers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 10.

On April 16 Virden customers received dial service when Manitoba Telephone System moved from Seventh Avenue to their new building on Eighth Avenue and Wellington Street.

Clae Mar Inn, a dining place, was officially opened.

Printing plant facilities of the Empire Publishing Co. were expanded with the addition of a new offset press.

Fire completely gutted Virden Motor Products on June 8.

Morris Studio Ltd., a photographer's shop, was officially opened in May.

Mrs. D'Alton Power unveiled a plaque on the cemetery gate which she had erected in memory of her husband. Three other gates were unveiled and dedicated at a ceremony in August.

Virten Knitwear officially opened on August 5.

Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Armstrong celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 12.

The Pioneer Home Museum was opened in August.

Bill Grant won the Men's Golf Tournament.

There were 77 teachers employed in Virten's four schools when they re-opened and 1,695 pupils were enrolled.

The voting age was lowered to 18 years.

John Granelli won the Governor-General's medal as 117 students graduated from V.C.I.

Linda McLean was presented with the Gold Cord (the highest Girl Guide Award) at a special ceremony.

John Coals directed the fall production of the Virten Dramatic Society called 'Exit the Body'.

Jean Blakeman won the Terry McLean trophy at the Virten Art Show.

An oil derrick, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Orest Repka, bearing the letters V.I.R.D.E.N. was erected near No. 1 Highway.

Mayor and Mrs. J. H. McNeill were honoured by the community prior to their departure to Winnipeg.

James Cope, who was still working six days a week at the Veterinary Office, celebrated his 90th birthday July 28.

Miss Kay Carefoot was honoured on her retirement after 45 years with the Manitoba Telephone Service. She was chief operator in Virten for 25 years.

Cheryl Chisholm performed with 'Up with People' during Manitoba's centennial year.

Mr. and Mrs. Murdo Murray celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 20.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Carruthers celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on December 28.

1971

Steve Hegion was elected mayor on January 5.

Prices in January were: flour, 20 lbs., \$1.69; tomato soup, 8-10 oz. tins \$1.00; carrots, 3lbs. for 39¢.

Virten R.C.M.P. seized a large amount of drugs (among the

largest in Canada) on January 6. Two men from the U.S.A. were arrested and later received ten-year sentences.

The first baby born in Virden Hospital was Warren Bradley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Grant, on January 10.

Lynn Marie Walton was crowned 1971 Carnival Queen by last year's queen, Darla Forster.

James Ritchie celebrated his 90th birthday on February 20.

Mr. and Mrs. William Jaffray celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary and Mr. Jaffray's 92nd birthday.

Former Virdenite, Don Sumner, was named 'Western Manitoba Sportsman of the Year' by the Brandon Sun.

Frances Williams of Oak Lake was crowned Manitoba Snow Festival Queen by Premier Ed Schreyer.

Sam Campbell celebrated his 90th birthday on March 3.

Shirley Bulloch and her rink of Gwen Berry, Betty Jean Lazenby and Wilma Rollins from Reston won the Ladies' Grand Aggregate Curling Trophy.

The most improved skaters for 1971 were: Group A, Debbie Dryden; Group B, Janet McQuaker.

Garth Strachan, Ross Frazer, Jim Stevens and Dick Fogarty of Hamiota won the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

There were 509 entries at the Virden Festival which concluded with a Trophy Concert on May 4. Violinist Kent Foreman of Rivers won a trophy for the competitor showing the most promise and Charlotte Yates received a shield for her Grade IX Bach piano solo.

Virden Dramatic Society presented 'See How They Run' directed by Patricia Yates.

Three games of international hockey were played at Virden Arena with local Bantam and Tom Thumbs playing against teams from Chicago and Lahr, Germany.

John Van Loo celebrated his 90th birthday on April 11.

Mitchell's Sales & Service opened on April 17.

Anne Friesen won the Terry McLean trophy at the Art Show.

Lorraine Scott's Junior High dancers performed on the CKOS-TV program 'Profile' at Yorkton, Sask.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Down celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 21.

Cadet Lt. Fred McNeill received the Master Cadet Award on June 3.

A total of 500 members and leaders took part in the 4H Rally on June 5.

Students of Mr. and Mrs. George Murdoch's ceramics class put on a fine show.

A total of \$6,270.00 was wagered at the race meet.

Virden Junior High presented two one-act plays 'Red Velvet Coat' and 'Six Queens of Henry 8th'.

Three Girl Guides, Ida Grose, Linda Haynes and Susan Treble, received their Gold Cords on June 22.

Virden Credit Union's \$119,000.00 office building officially opened on Saturday, June 26.

Mr. and Mrs. Les Hodgins celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 29.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest McIntosh celebrated their 50th anniversary July 11.

The C.P.R. Station closed on August 9.

E & J Decorating Centre on Seventh Avenue officially opened August 25.

Bob Thompson, former Virdenite and son of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Thompson, played in the Pan Am Games in Cali, Columbia.

The first sod was turned for West-Man Nursing Home on August 26.

Ruth George won the J. C. Cory Cup for the most points at the Horticultural Show.

The Cromer-Woodnorth area was hit on September 2 by a twister for the second time in a year with much damage to buildings and crops.

Mr. and Mrs. John Regan celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 31.

At the Silver Dollar Days, Deadra Nugent was crowned Queen by last year's Queen, Margo McCauley. Foster Carefoot won the senior section of the Fiddlers' Contest; and a Bath Tub Derby was held on the creek.

There were 77 teachers in Virden's four schools and 1,628 pupils when the term started.

The new Post Office was opened at Seventh Avenue and Raglan Street.

Chimo Building Centre, corner of Seventh Avenue and Queen Street, was opened in September.

Donald Ross Finlay received the Governor General's Medal at Virden Collegiate when 111 students graduated.

Ron Stanners raised \$486.72 for the West-Man Nursing Home by staying awake 72 hours in a wake-a-thon.

Mrs. Emma Carleton, the oldest pioneer lady of the district, celebrated her 102nd birthday on October 3.

Mrs. Ada Hodson of The Sherwood celebrated her 91st birthday on October 19.

Collene Rowan told Rebekahs and Odd Fellows about her 20-day United Nations Pilgrimage for Youth.

Mr. and Mrs. Allan Hall celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on November 1.

St. Mary's Anglican Church was ransacked on the afternoon of November 23. The Virden arena and curling rink were also ransacked the previous week.

Virden Curlers officially opened their "New Impressive Club Room".

Mr. and Mrs. William G. Sutcliffe celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 10.

The Virden Dramatic Society presented "The Rape of the Belt" on three nights in December.

1972

Tamara Lynne Schlemmer was the first baby born in Virden District Hospital. She is the third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Schlemmer.

Doug Lyons' rink of Sheldon Seafoot, Bob McIntosh and Gordon Runions took top honors in the Manitoba School Boys Provincial Bonspiel winning the Winnipeg Free Press Trophy.

Russell Harbottle shot a black Russian Siberian timber wolf on January 9 while hunting along Riding Mountain Parkland.

Prices for January were: Crisco shortening, 3 lbs. for \$1.39; Nabob coffee, 93¢ a lb.; pork chops, 69¢ a lb.; oranges, 3 dozen for \$1.00

Jim Duncan was presented with a watch and scroll making him an honorary life member of the Virden Curling Club.

Virden decided to participate in the Veterinary Service District scheme and was to receive a grant towards clinic facilities.

Colleen McGibney was crowned 1972 Carnival Queen.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Leith celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on February 7.

Manitoba Consols Playdowns were held in Virden from February 16 to 20 with O. Meleschuk, Dave Romano, J. Hanesiak and Pat Hailley of Fort Rouge winning the right to represent Manitoba at the Brier.

Virden Lions Club expanded facilities in their Tourist Park.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Callan were honored at an appreciation evening by the Virden District Association for the Mentally Retarded for the many hours they had spent at the workshop.

J. Grant McDonald, a quadriplegic and son of Mr. and Mrs. Archie McDonald, former Virdenites, graduated from The Famous Writers School of Westport, Connecticut, U.S.A.

Cathy Whitecloud was crowned Queen of the Snow Festival.

Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Bush celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 3.

Lenore's rink of Marg Johnson, Carol Wilson, Shirley Hill and Anne Alexander won the aggregate in the Virden Ladies' Bonspiel.

Harry Dodds, a resident of The Sherwood, was 93 on April 6.

V.C.I. presented three one-act plays in the Auditorium: "Michael" directed by Avis Gray; "I'm Herbert" directed by Charlotte Yates; and "A Marriage Proposal" directed by Robert Senff.

Brandon's Glen Fowler rink of Wilf Gatin, Grant and Brian Fowler tied for the Grand Aggregate with Garth Strachan, Ross Frazer, Jim Steven and Len Allen of Hamiota with the latter winning the playoff.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hayward celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 10.

The Dramatic Society had another hit with "It's Never Too Late".

Lynn Boyce and Christine Trowell won trophies for the most improved skaters at the figure skating wind-up.

Mrs. N. Reynolds celebrated her 97th birthday on April 9.

Debbie Eilers, Joan McInnis and Carol McInnis were each presented with All Round Cords at the Guide banquet.

Gladys Bray won the Terry McLean trophy at the annual Art Show.

Virden Juvenile hockey team received the trophy emblematic of winning the Juvenile Tournament.

Jocelyn Trotter of Virden and Stewart Code of Antler, Sas-

katchewan, were top winners at the 30th annual Music and Arts Festival.

Beaver Lumber Co. Ltd. opened a new building on Sixth Avenue and Raglan Street on June 1.

The Ballet and Jazz Class of Erika de Korompay presented a dance recital.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholai Lisowski celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 1.

Janice Freeman and Sandra Henderson each won a trophy at the 4-H Horse and Pony Club Achievement.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Cheaters celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 14.

A branch of the Virden-Elkhorn Regional Library officially opened in Elkhorn on June 25.

Brian Colli, who attended the United Nations Seminar in New York City earlier this year, was the Governor-General's Medal winner as 135 students graduated.

Sanderson School closed after 86 years of service.

Ebor School closed with the students going to Cromer.

Mr. and Mrs. Wes Thompson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 22.

Morris McGregor, M.L.A. for Virden, was honored for his work in legalizing Sunday horse racing by having a race named in his honor at the Assiniboia Downs raceway.

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Hedison celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 3.

St. Mary's Anglican Church celebrated the 80th anniversary of the present church building on September 10 with a special service.

Pat Whiteford was crowned Silver Dollars Days Queen at the monster dance on September 22.

The minimum wage rate was raised as of October 1 to \$1.75 an hour for persons 18 years and over.

The first residents of West-Man Nursing Home moved in on October 1.

Mrs. Agnes McGill celebrated her 94th birthday at West-Man Nursing Home on October 14.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank George won a trophy and cup for "Best Farm Home Grounds" in the Provincial and District 3 Competition.

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Dupaul celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Hall celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on November 1.

Fort La Bosse employees Mrs. Ila Colquhoun, Joe Wood, Joe Peacock and Glyn Conway were presented with plaques on their retirement.

Viriden area exhibitors, D. G. Hutchison, Robert Duncan, R. L. McDougall, James Daniels, Neil Wilson and L. M. Hatch, did well at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Stinson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 15.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Stinson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 6.

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Chacun celebrated their 65 wedding anniversary on December 28.

1973

Darcy Blaine Chrisp arrived at 6:07 A.M. on January 10 to be the first baby born in the Viriden District Hospital. He is the second child of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Chrisp.

Prices for January were: ice cream $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon for 79¢; apples, 5 lbs. for \$1.00; pork chops, 95¢ a lb.; instant coffee, 10 oz. for \$1.79.

Mrs. H. M. Kydd was honored on her retirement from the law office.

Shonda Forrest was crowned Carnival Queen on February 4.

Mr. and Mrs. T. P. Townson celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on February 19. Mr. Townson was a carpenter by trade and worked on several public buildings including the old hospital and former post office. While living in Routledge he served as postmaster for 23 years.

Barbara Routledge won the 4-H trophy for Junior Public Speaking on February 28.

Barry Cullen took top honors at the Science Fair in Brandon on March 9.

Winners at Viriden Ladies' Bonspiel were Sandra Bridgett, Carole-Anne Trowell, Betty Day and Shirley Austin.

Mr. and Mrs. Hank Lyle celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on March 30.

Roy Hayward, Bruce Sawyer, Wes Anderson and John

Critchlow won the Grand Aggregate at the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Cann celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 4.

Virden District Hospital received Full Accreditation Status.

Mrs. and Mrs. A. W. Smith celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 9.

Marie Cosens and Mary Decroliere were each presented with a trophy at the annual Figure Skating Carnival.

Stewart Code of Antler, Saskatchewan and Debbie English of Bradwardine were top winners at the Music and Arts Festival.

Eveleine King won the Terry McLean trophy at the Virden Art Show.

The Ambulance Walk-a-Thon raised over \$3,000.

Grant's I.G.A. Bakery officially opened on May 7.

Dr. Carl A. Winkler received national acclaim for outstanding work in the chemistry teaching profession.

The Virden 4-H Pony Club Musical Ride was a highlight of the Arabian Horse Show.

Linda Haynes received the Governor General's medal when 120 students graduated at V.C.I.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Eveleigh celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 16.

Mrs. Charlotte Palmer celebrated her 99th birthday on August 28.

Rev. Harold Kemp and his family were honored by St. Paul's congregation at a farewell gathering.

School started on September 4 with over 2700 students in the Fort La Bosse Division's 18 Schools.

Virden Scouts Ivan Runions, Doug Chornoboy, Doug Gatey and Gary Walker attended Camp Unity in Fort Smith, N.W.T.

Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Osmond were honored for their years of service in church and community upon their departure to St. James.

Virden Auction Mart was sold to Manitoba Pool Elevators Livestock Division.

Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Wright celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 24.

Windows worth \$600.00 were broken on Hallowe'en night at Virden Junior High School.

The town of Virden was awarded the Manitoba Motor League Trophy for Beautification of Towns, Group B, Class 4.

Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Lewis celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Winston Good celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 12.

1974

Warren Bradley Borg was the first baby born this year in Virden District Hospital on January 6 to R.C.M.P. Constable and Mrs. Brian Borg.

Prices for January were: grapes, 3 lbs. for \$1.00; apple juice, 4-48 oz. cans for \$1.00; bologna, 69¢ per lb.; ketchup, 100 oz. can for \$1.79.

Darcy Cockbill, Craig Wright, Colin Campbell and Pat Larkin were winners of the Winnipeg Tribune Curling Event.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Hutzel celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary on January 28.

Ken Eastman was chosen as an outstanding Indian Athlete.

Tammy Henderson, Ruby King and Pam Berry were trophy winners at West-Man Area Figure Skating Competitions in Shilo.

Tammy Henderson was crowned Queen of the 1974 Carnival.

Bert Nield was honored on his retirement from Nield Motors.

Debbie Wooldridge and Terry McSorley won the pairs event at the Manitoba Free Skating Championship in Dauphin.

A Flin Flon rink won the Provincial Legion Championships held in Virden in February.

Don Angell won the Alexandra Hotel trophy for the deer head competition for the third time and would keep the trophy permanently.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Parker celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 24.

Mr. and Mrs. George McWhirter celebrated their 50th anniversary on March 12.

Top winners at the Virden Ladies' Bonspiel were Dora Clark, Doreen Andrews, Ann Hay and Muriel Beamish.

Mr. and Mrs. James Third celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 29.

Bill Kent's rink of Ted Bridgett, Art Chacun and Scott Cockbill were undefeated in the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

Mr. and Mrs. John Weber celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 8.

Shannon Archer and Boyd Nave received trophies at the "Musical Make-Believe" figure skating presentation for the most improved skaters.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert E. Irvine of West-Man Nursing Home celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 15.

The official opening of Archer Enterprises was held on April 18.

Stewart Code of Antler, Saskatchewan, won five trophies at the Virden Music and Arts Festival and David Krahn of Rivers was awarded the trip to the Music Camp at the Peace Gardens.

Virden Pee Wees were Manitoba champions in their division.

Evelyn Brown and Dorothy Jeffery were trophy winners at the Art Show.

Carol McInnis was awarded the Girl Guide Canada Cord on May 7.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Down celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary on May 21.

Barry Cullen's Science Fair project placed third in the Canadian Competition.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Paton celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on June 4.

Mrs. Mary Workman of the public school staff was honored on her retirement after teaching for 29 years.

Virden High School boys won the Assiniboine Regional Fastball Tournament at Souris on June 15 with Clayton Wood voted the most valuable player.

Maureen Cappie won eight awards, including the Governor-General's Medal, when 137 students received diplomas at V.C.I.

Mrs. Margaret Townson celebrated her 100th birthday at West-Man Nursing Home on August 27.

Mr. and Mrs. Herb Gardiner celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 11.

Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Smith celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 24.

Virden Day at Assiniboia Downs on October 13 was well attended.

Mr. and Mrs. John J. Smith celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 22.

Fort La Bosse teachers received an average salary increase of 12.5% in a Board of Arbitration settlement.

Virден's newest singing group "The Naturals" presented a concert on November 14.

The Virден Veterinary Clinic on Highway 83 was officially opened on November 19.

Sherwood Equipment Ltd. on Highway No. 1 was opened on November 21.

Hargrave Pool Elevator pioneers were honored at a banquet on November 30.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bridgett were honored by the Virден Oil Kings at a hockey game on December 1 in appreciation of the contribution they have made to sports in the Virден community.

Mrs. Angeline Demers celebrated her 100th birthday on December 11 at West-Man Nursing Home.

1975

Robert Leach of West-Man Nursing Home celebrated his 100th birthday on January 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack McLenehan celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 1.

Joleene Kirstin Shay Braybrook was the first baby born in Virден District Hospital. She arrived January 5, a daughter for Mr. and Mrs. Herb Braybrook.

Mike Smolinski celebrated his 98th birthday on January 14.

Mr. and Mrs. George Forsyth celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 15.

Local men attired in ladies' apparel competed in the Carnival. "Rose Marie", representing the R.C.M.P., was crowned Queen.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Turner celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 11.

Alison Coals and Teresa Bonner were Girl Guide Canada Cord recipients.

Mrs. J. J. Henderson celebrated her 90th birthday on March 1.

Sandra Bridgett, Carole-Anne Trowell, Betty Day and Lynne Cameron were top winners of the Virден Ladies' Bonspiel.

The Lindsey Brown family were honored at a farewell banquet on March 21. Mr. Brown, area supervisor of Chevron Stand-

ard Ltd., was transferred to Edmonton, Alberta, after working in the Virden oil fields for 21 years.

A four-day storm dumped over one foot of snow on this area.

Virden Girl Guides were awarded the Bessborough Shield for a doll house complete with hand made furniture which was judged best in the Provincial Creative Craft Competition.

Mr. and Mrs. H. V. Nichol celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 25.

Mr. and Mrs. James Third celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary in March.

Grand aggregate winners at the Virden Men's Bonspiel were Garth Strachan, Ross Frazer, Jim Steven and Len Allen of Hamiota.

Mrs. Margaret Demman celebrated her 91st birthday on March 7.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Bond celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 25.

Elan Day and Jana Coutts each received a trophy when 130 skaters participated in the Ice Show.

"Come Live With Me" was the play presented by the Virden Dramatic Society.

Virden Merchants hockey team won the Atom Tournament defeating Brandon 3-2 in overtime.

Fourteen successful sessions concluded Virden's Music and Art Festival with Jacqueline Anderson receiving five trophies.

The Royal Bank of Canada on Seventh Avenue opened for business in April.

Livestock prices at the Virden Auction Mart in April were: choice butcher steers \$35-\$36.80 per cwt.; weanling pigs \$25-27 each; and veal calves \$30-\$35 each.

A large turnout of 318 people donated blood at the Blood Donors Clinic on April 24.

Ida Nield and Dorothy Heaman were winners at the Art Show.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Smolinski celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary on May 7.

W. J. Young celebrated his 90th birthday on June 1.

The 50th anniversary of the United Church of Canada was celebrated at St. Paul's on Sunday, June 8.

Walden Industries, an agricultural manufacturing firm located at the Virden Airport, was officially opened on June 17.

Wallace United Church congregation celebrated two anniversaries, the 50th of The United Church of Canada and the 75th of the building of their church, with a special service, reunion and picnic.

Revelstoke Lumber on Third Avenue opened a new building on June 12.

Betty Lowes won the Governor-General's Medal when 112 students graduated.

Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Hyndman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 5.

Mr. and Mrs. William Jordan celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on July 5.

Alan Kent received the Chief Scout Award, the highest award available to the Boy Scouts of Canada.

Denis Vodon celebrated his 90th birthday on July 6.

Richard Stoneman stopped in Virден as he rode horseback across Canada in aid of Muscular Sclerosis.

A 70-trailer caravan visited in Virден for two days enroute to the Wally Byam Rally in Brandon.

Mr. and Mrs. Spence Wallace celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 19.

Pioneer members of Maples Elevator were presented with scrolls at a picnic.

Mr. and Mrs. James Wiltshire of Swan River, formerly of Virден, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 22.

Mrs. Percy Green celebrated her 90th birthday on August 3.

Mr. and Mrs. George Stonehouse celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 30.

Mrs. T. P. Townson of West-Man Nursing Home celebrated her 101st birthday on August 27.

Doug Gatey and Alan Kent attended the 14th World Scout Jamboree in Lillehammer, Norway.

An appreciation night was held on September 23 in the Virден Legion Hall for Dr. R. S. Harris on his retirement after nearly three decades of dedicated service to the people of Virден and district. During that time he delivered 2538 babies including 25 sets of twins.

Mrs. Dora Hutchison celebrated her 90th birthday on September 13.

Mr. and Mrs. L. Markey celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 20.

Miss Annie Cooper celebrated her 93rd birthday on October 15.

A sod turning ceremony was held in September at Virden's new Pentecostal church.

Postal workers went on strike; in spite of this, the Virden Advance newspaper was being picked up at the local office.

The Dr. R. S. Harris Rehabilitation Centre on Seventh Avenue opened on October 25.

Robinson's opened a spacious bright store on Seventh Avenue and Wellington Street on October 31.

The Legion Club Room addition was officially opened on November 13.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Ambrick celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 18.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Mitchell celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 4.

Esther Kyte, Ola Duncan, Greta Cruikshank, Gert Ambrick, Elsie Brown and Jessie Lawrence received honorary memberships in the Virden Curling Club.

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Chacun celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary on December 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Carruthers celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on December 28.

1976

Christopher Noel, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Barkley, was the first baby born in Virden District Hospital this year, arriving at 3:21 A.M. on January 1.

Prices in January were: tomato juice, 48 oz. tin 69¢; pork and beans, 4-14 oz. tins for \$1.00; Tide, 10 lbs. for \$4.49; rump roast, \$1.79 per lb.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hayhurst celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 21.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Leith celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary on January 24.

The C.N.R. branch line from Scarth to Virden was closed and the station sold.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Cruickshank celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on February 18.

The Hal Tanasichuk foursome of Winnipeg won the mixed playdowns held at the Virden Curling rink. With Hal were his wife Rose, Jim Kirkness and Marj Homeniuk.

Miss Janet Campbell R.N. was honored on her retirement by the Virden Medical Associates.

Reston's Bonnie Fotheringham, Janice Caldwell, Virginia Beelaert and Elizabeth Eidse won the Virden Ladies' Bonspiel.

Virden Pee Wee hockey team won the championship at Weyburn, Sask.

Demaury's Gift Shoppe on Seventh Avenue was officially opened in April.

Jo-Anne Trowell and Sharon Braybrook were trophy winners at the Virden Figure Skating Show.

Ted Bridgett's rink of Murray Duncan, Ken Stewart and Scott Cockbill won the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wilcox celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 5.

Court of Elms, Canadian Order of Foresters, honored their 60-year members.

Debbie English and Christine Barkley were top winners at the Virden Music and Arts Festival.

Mr. and Mrs. Eden Weldon celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on May 4.

Fran Drysdale and Evelyn Brown were trophy winners at the annual Art Show.

Walden Industries, an agricultural equipment manufacturing firm, went into receivership on May 20, stating financing and mismanagement to blame. Assets were sold.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Taylor celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on July 23.

A total of 109 students graduated from V.C.I. with Maureen Winters winning the Governor-General's Medal.

Randolph's Bakery, formerly Murdoch's Bakery, was officially opened on July 16.

Mrs. C. Begg celebrated her 100th birthday on July 16.

Virden Sports Centre on Nelson Street opened in November.

New Horizons Centre, an entertainment place for Senior Citizens, opened on November 10.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Ritchie celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on December 6.

Mrs. Norman Irwin celebrated her 94th birthday on December 6.

Manufacture of round bale hauling machines by Premium

Developments Virden Limited, had begun at the former Walden Industry building at the old Virden airport.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Braybrook celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 8.

Mrs. May Maley was honored on her retirement as matron of The Sherwood.

Life memberships in the Virden Legion Ladies' Auxiliary were presented to Kate Perrin, Rosie Read, Lena Hauk, Eva Burnett, E. Salt, A. Slater, Gladys Eveleigh, Margaret Read, Anne Alexander, Florence Campbell, Florence Coates, Eva Braybrook and Lily Van Loo.

Construction in 1976 surpassed \$2 million mark.

1977

The first New Year's baby arrived at 7:45 A.M. January 1 to Mr. and Mrs. Morley McDougall, a son, Dallas Bradley.

January prices were: lettuce, 39¢ a head; eggs, 89¢ a dozen; shortening, 3 lbs. for \$1.00; bacon, \$1.19 a lb.; oranges, 12 for \$1.00; pork and beans, 3 tins for \$1.00; grapefruit, 8 for \$1.00.

Mr. and Mrs. V. F. Read celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 5.

George Gabel, former mayor and optician of Virden, passed away at age 92.

Mrs. Barbara Ann Ross, wife of the late Dr. Ross of Virden, celebrated her 96th birthday on January 23.

The Lions Club held a 20th anniversary banquet in the Legion Hall.

Mr. and Mrs. David Janzen celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on January 27.

Mrs. Hill won a piano for a Virden Empire-Advance contest in 1912 and it is still in use in the Woodnorth Hall.

The Pee Wee Tournament of Champions was held in Virden on February 5.

Ed Demare caught a 19 lb. 8 oz. Northern Pike at Oak Lake on February 7.

Joe Careme caught a 100 lb. sailfish in the Pacific Ocean at Acapula, Mexico.

Emma Pratt of Sioux Valley Indian Reserve was one of the recipients of the 1976 Good Citizenship Awards.

Girl Guides Bobbie Gibson and Kathryn Elliott were each presented with the Canada Cords on February 23 and Denise

Anderson, Ruth Elliott and Cathy McLean received the All-Round Cords.

An auto crusher, under the Derelict Auto Recovery Program, came to Virden and demolished derelict vehicles, old farm machinery and wornout household appliances.

A ram test station, a first in Manitoba Agriculture, was opened on the Archie Campbell farm in early March.

Winners of the Virden Ladies' Bonspiel were Maxine Heritage, Joyce Eilers, Louise Leask and Rene Reorda.

Mrs. Margaret Kerr celebrated her 100th birthday on March 9.

Mrs. Margaret Conquergood of The Sherwood celebrated her 90th birthday on March 19.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wedow celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 9.

The Royal Canadian Legion Virden Branch presented a cheque to the Manitoba Heart Fund for \$3,192.

Mr. and Mrs. Rene Gabrielle celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 7.

Garth Strachan's rink of Hamiota and Ted Bridgett's Virden rink tied for the aggregate in the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

Lorne Heaman has played in the Virden Men's Bonspiel for 50 years, missing only one year. His first rink 50 years ago included Ed Down, Jim Stinson and Dick Jenkyns.

The Reach For The Top team of Grant McIntosh, Brian Vargo, Sean Hennessey and Doug Chornoboy reached the finals.

Goulter School presented a Folklorama 1977 on April 13 and 14.

Virden Soil Services Ltd., new fertilizer blending plant, was officially opened on April 15.

Ardith's Ladies' Wear on Seventh Avenue opened April 16.

A prairie fire in the Community Pasture started on April 17 as a result of a broken cross arm on a hydro pole.

Top winners at the Virden Music & Arts Festival were Diane Neufeld of Kola, Debbie English of Bradwardine, Marilyn Treloar of Rivers and Connie Siemens of Kola.

Local students of the United Conservatory of Music presented a concert on April 17.

Several local farmers formed the Southwest Manitoba Simmental Association, the first in Manitoba.

Albert Cullen, Manitoba Pool Elevator agent at Hargrave for 35 years, was honored on his retirement.

Bob Brydon and Bill Ritchie, U.G.G. Grain elevator managers at Hargrave and Virden respectively, were each given a Top Ten Award from the company in recognition of outstanding sales.

Shelly Kellsey, Cindy Kellsey, Lynn Boyce, Sandy Bohonis and Lori Shelton of the Virden Figure Skating Club were invited to take part in "Maniskate" in Winnipeg on May 3 and 4.

Donald (Dan) Gillies of The Sherwood celebrated his 93rd birthday.

Alex Paton celebrated his 90th birthday on May 27.

The Virden Detachment of the R.C.M.P. had a new radar, The Speedgun IV.

The Virden Band performed in concert at Garrison High School, Garrison, N.D. on May 13.

Lila Higginbotham received the Terry McLean trophy for the best painting at the Virden Art Club show.

The new Valleyview Co-op store was officially opened on June 1.

On June 4, Virden Girl Guides and Brownies and their past and present leaders celebrated their 50th anniversary.

Arlene Wolfe of Harding 4-H Club and Shirley Jago of Reston Home Economic Club were each presented with a gold watch at the 4-H Rally in Virden.

Mr. and Mrs. N. Lisowski celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on June 9.

Ebor W.I. celebrated their 50th anniversary on June 16.

Maureen Hellman received four awards and the Governor-General's Medal at Virden Collegiate on June 29.

Demaury's, General Merchants on Seventh Avenue, officially opened on July 16.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Leech celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Kool celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 30.

Mr. and Mrs. Wes Thompson celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on July 22.

Virden Girl Guides Wanda Elliott and Bobbie Gibson attended the International Camp on the Mira River, Cape Breton Island.

Deb Henuset of Pipestone exhibited the Grand Champion steer at the 4-H Calf Club Show at Virden Fair.

Anne Murray, a Canadian singer, visited Virden August 17 in conjunction with a television advertisement for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Hartley celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 13.

About 2,530 students enrolled in this year's school term.

Trophy winners at the Manitoba Swimming Championships in Brandon were Corinne Anderson, Sheldon Fritzsch, Pam Manser, Richard Gibson, Grant Mason, Bobbie Gibson and David Mason.

Rev. Barry Saint Germain was the new United Church minister.

Wilfred Barre was ordained to the Order of Permanent Deaconate at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church.

Ivey Florists & Garden Supply on Seventh Avenue opened September 8.

During a severe thunderstorm, lightning struck the Alex Forbes residence.

Legion Ladies' Auxiliary celebrated their 50th anniversary.

An outbreak of encephalitis was confirmed.

Virden Camera Club was organized in Virden.

Four hundred delegates attended the Kinsmen Fall Council meeting in the Virden Arena.

Mr. and Mrs. Mel Hammond grew a 118 lb. pumpkin that measured 25 inches high.

Fred Bridgett received a trophy for the first person scoring a hole-in-one on the new grass green golf course.

Lena Smith grew an 18-lb. turnip in her garden.

Mr. and Mrs. Kris Jorgenson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 5.

Mr. and Mrs. W. D. McLaren celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on November 7.

The Dr. R. S. Harris Rehabilitation Centre on Seventh Avenue was officially opened on November 10.

Charlie Milne was the winner of the Old Time Fiddler's Contest held at the Scarth Community Centre.

Mrs. Helen Haskett of The Sherwood celebrated her 100th birthday on November 17.

R. E. Borland received an appreciation plaque from St. Paul's United Church for devoting 50 years of service in the choir.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Gardiner celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 10.

A snowstorm hit Virden and left 10 inches of snow in three days, December 16, 17 and 18.

1978

January prices were: oranges, 3 lbs. for 89¢; mushroom soup, 4 for \$1.00; prime rib Grade A beef, \$1.39 a lb.

The first baby born in the Virden District Hospital was 2 lb. 9 oz. Shalyn Leigh Armstrong, daughter of Lyle and Pat Armstrong.

Manitoba road signs went metric on April 1.

Marilyn (Heaman) Kinnear, formerly of Hargrave, became the first woman in Manitoba to qualify as a mechanic.

R.C.M.P. Constable Dennis Onofrey was killed on January 23. The three hostages taken during this shooting at the Countryside Inn Motel were released unharmed after several days of captivity at Dr. Scherz's home at Oak Lake.

A building on Sixth Avenue occupied by Springer Tire Service along with the Pic-a-Pop Shop and Archie-Wallace Weed Control Office was completely destroyed by fire January 25.

Mr. and Mrs. George Walker celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 8.

Denise Anderson and Cathryn McLean received their Canada Cords at a Guide banquet on February 22.

Lynne Heaman and her rink of Donna Gray, Stella Tapp and Marlene Heaman won the Virden Ladies' Bonspiel.

Jessie Simpson celebrated her 94th birthday in February.

The Virden Empire-Advance received international recognition from Stamps-Conhaim Creative Newspaper Advertising Services in California for its Christmas Edition in 1977.

Virden Men's Bonspiel aggregate winners were Sandy Ritchie, Lyn Wright, Allan Taylor and Brad Wright.

Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Cook celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on March 30.

Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Smith of The Sherwood were honored on their 65th wedding anniversary on April 8.

The 36th annual Virden Music and Arts Festival concluded with a trophy concert with Loretta Sawatsky of Oak Lake receiving the Scholarship to the Music Camp at the Peace Gardens.

The Optimist Club of Virden received its charter on May 6.

Trophy winners at the Art Club Show were Pat Yarema (Terry McLean trophy) and Velma Stewart (the Club trophy).

A large audience enjoyed the Grade Six Operetta 'Puddin' Head the First' directed by Janet Lutz.

Mary Montgomery students presented "Spring Thing 1978" on May 25.

Jim Cowan celebrated his 94th birthday on May 26.

Craig McIntosh was awarded the Chief Scout Badge at the Provincial Legislative Building in Winnipeg.

Barbara Routledge and Lynne McLauchlin were gold watch winners at the 4-H Rally.

The first wedding ever to take place at West-Man Nursing Home was performed on June 9 when Mary Ellen Williams and Robert Grieve were married.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Bulloch celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary on June 12.

Judy Ashton was honored by the Hospital Auxiliary members for her work as a Candy Striper. Judy had completed 1000 hours as a volunteer — an outstanding achievement, locally and provincially.

No. 1 Fire Hall Station was officially opened June 17.

The Royal Purple Virden Lodge celebrated the 70th anniversary since the Lodge was organized in Canada.

Kathy Braun received the highest award in Guiding, The Canada Cord.

First Look Hair Designs on Nelson Street was officially opened June 26.

Virden Sunshine Lawn Bowlers held the official opening of the enclosed patio.

Over 300 people attended the Cromer School closing picnic.

Karen Tapp won the Governor General's medal at the V.C.I. graduation.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Miles celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 28.

Manitoba Pool Elevators officially opened a new elevator on the branch line north of Virden on July 7.

Mr. and Mrs. Karl Thorkelson celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 7.

Parallel parking on most Virden streets came into effect in August.

Andrew Agencies officially opened their new building at Seventh Avenue and Raglan Street on August 1.

R.C.M.P. Musical Ride was held in Virden Arena on August 15.

The oldest twins in Manitoba, John and Bessie Gardner, celebrated their 90th birthday at the Gardner Reunion on August 6.

Mrs. Alice Ward of The Sherwood celebrated her 94th birthday on September 24.

The Firearm Amnesty Recall program, where all firearms were to be registered, started on November 1.

Virden made world history with its new Deep Shaft sewage disposal plant.

Grayce M. Hegin was the recipient of Her Majesty's Silver Jubilee Medal for her work in establishing the Virden and District Pioneer Home Museum.

Mr. and Mrs. Murray Myers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 7.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Kalinski celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 11.

Kathryn Elliot was awarded a trophy by the Optimist Club during Youth Appreciation week.

Albert Wilcox celebrated his 90th birthday on November 18.

Dr. Wilbert Russell, a native of Lenore, was honored by the American Society of Agronomy for his research in maize.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Blakeman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 12.

A ladies' hockey team had been organized in Virden.

Mary Montgomery School presented a Cornucopia of Christmas Customs at the Auditorium Theatre.

1979

The first baby of the year, born on January 2 to Mr. and Mrs. Don Gonty, was a son, Adam Donald.

January prices were: grapefruit, 7 for \$1.00; coffee, \$2.99 a lb.; rump roast, \$2.29 a lb.; Weston bread, 5 for \$1.99; 12 litre box of Tide \$5.99.

A house at 1053 Eighth Avenue, the former Scales house, was destroyed after a second fire.

Top prices for butcher steers at the Auction Mart were \$62-\$64, Top heifers brought \$60-\$62 per cwt.

The Virden midget Hockey Tournament was held in Virden

and was won by the Reston Midgets with the Virden Midgets winning the consolation side.

Nurse Helen (Campbell) Brereton, formerly of Virden, was honored at the Fairview Home in Brandon after 15 years of dedicated service.

Absenteeism at V.C.I. was about four times normal due to an influenza-like illness.

The Royal Canadian Legion held a Literary Contest in Virden with Wanda Morgan winning the senior class for poetry and going on to win the Zone. In the intermediate class Georgie Cassidy placed first in the Zone for poetry and Rhonda Paull placed first in the essay contest.

Harry Chornoboy, vice-president of Virden Red Cross, presented a cheque in the amount of \$1,440 to Cam King, Commissioner for the Red Cross of Manitoba.

Emil Hoffman received an award and a gold digital watch for 1978 Sales Leader.

Virden held a Rural Tournament of Champions on January 27 and 28. Eight Pee Wee hockey teams participated with Portage winning the trophy.

Legion President Jim Moffat presented the Jaws of Life to the Wallace District Fire Department. The cost was \$8,300.00 and it was first used on March 8 to assist in freeing a person from a vehicle involved in an accident near Griswold.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Pioneer Girls held open house on the occasion of the International Pioneer Girls' 40th anniversary. They had a short program and a film "Climb a Tall Mountain".

Whelon Stringband was presented at the Auditorium Theatre and was enjoyed by an enthusiastic audience.

Sandra Braybrook and Marie Cosens were top winners from Virden at the North Westman Regional Figure Skating competition held at Shilo.

Randy Kingdon played with the Brandon Travellers Hockey Club.

Douglas Hunter, Grade 2 student at Goulter School, won the Science Fair trophy presented by Chevron Standard of Virden. His project was investigating basic processes of air.

The Kinsmen entry of Donnie Sararas and Dwayne McSorley won the showdown at the annual carnival.

Susan Kent received the Girl Guide Canada Cord and Allison Elliott and Karen Geith received the All Round Cords.

Duncan Welch was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his many years of work with the Cub and Scout Movement.

The street lights came on for a short period of time during the total eclipse on February 26.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Pangborn celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on February 26.

Cadet Sgts. Scott Davies and Iris Demare and Cpls. David Carefoot, Kerry Prouten, Bob Hatch and Cadet Clayton Drysdale took part in the Manitoba Provincial Rifle Association Championship shoot in Winnipeg.

Al McAulay presented a trophy to the Kenaston team for winning the first Liniment League Tournament held in Virden.

Virden Bantam Blades travelled to Snow Lake to play the semi-finals of the Provincial Bantam playdowns but were eliminated.

Honor Band members from the Fort La Bosse School Division who took part in the Canada Winter Games closing ceremony in Brandon were Brent Legg, Bruce Cawston, Michelle Henuset, Robert Schonberger, Fay Young, Toni Lyons, Cathy McLean, Ruth Elliott, Michelle Lyons and Bob Schonberger. The honor Choir members were: Heather Lyons, Leonard Koop, Kim Penner, Carol Heritage, Donna Rowand and Laura Roach.

The combined senior bands of Virden and Reston, 112 students, plus five students from Elkhorn, entered senior and junior high categories in the fourth annual Optimist Club of Assiniboia Band Festival held at the Convention Centre in Winnipeg.

Raymond H. Mutcheson has been employed by Prairie West Recreation Commission as recreation director for the district.

The Manitoba Theatre Workshop presented a matinee performance to the students on March 8 of "More of a Family" and in the evening "Stories my Grandparents Told Me". This story was developed around pioneer stories of Manitoba history.

On March 12, the Kam Theatre Lab of Thunder Bay, Ontario, presented the humorous melodrama "Off the Track Again". This play developed from humorous events following a train derailment in northern Canada.

St. Mary's Anglican Church held a 'Poor Man's Dinner' as part of the church's program for Lent. The meal consisted of the same food that a poor person living in a developing country would

normally consume in a day. All funds collected at the meal went to the World Relief & Development Program.

The Atom Hockey Tournament was won by the Russell team which was presented with a trophy donated by Jim Baker.

Hospital District No. 10 had an operating surplus of \$11,396.

The Optimist Club of Virden and District held a talent show in the Auditorium Theatre on March 9. The winners were: 6-10 years, Graham Thompson, Karen Leask, Leanne Clarke; 10-16 years, Wanda and Wayne Warkentin, Lori Nolan, St. Paul's Junior Choir; 16 years and over, the Stremel Family, High Frequency and The Sherwood Men's Choir.

Howard Pawley, leader of the N.D.P., was guest speaker at a banquet in the Legion Hall at which time the association honored Mr. and Mrs. George Walker for their services to the community and their Party.

John Stuart Anderson, a skilled British solo dramatic artist, presented 'The Record of John' in the Auditorium Theatre.

The World Day of Prayer was hosted by Sacred Heart Catholic Church. The service was prepared by students in Zambia, Africa.

Mr. and Mrs. Edmar Fast, missionaries to Mexico, were guest speakers at the Evangelical Christian Church.

Bev Duncan's rink of Connie Grant, Wendy Duncan and Nelda Johnson won the Ladies' Bonspiel.

The Virden Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion hosted the District 2 convention.

Orville Erickson, Chairman of the Optimist Club of Virden, presented a \$1,500 cheque to Jim Greaves, Supervisor of Community Relations for Children's Aid.

Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Adams celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on March 18.

Five of the ten, 120-foot cement beams weighing 80,000 lbs. required for the new bridge over the Assiniboine River east of Virden arrived and could only be turned at the corner of Highways 1 and 83 with the help of a crane brought out from Winnipeg. The first truck took 45 minutes to turn.

To combat the increasing theft problem the police detachments and the Manitoba Police Commission have asked farmers to identify their possessions. This promotion effort is code named 'Operation Identification'.

"Mr. Chips" restaurant on King Street was officially opened on March 22.

Fish were dying at Oak Lake due to a shortage of oxygen.

'Year of the Child' was the theme of the Ice Show where Susan Walker and Heather Kent were trophy winners.

Virden Implements Ltd., a John Deere farm implement dealership on Highway No. 1, was officially opened on April 3.

A Toastmistress Speech Contest was hosted by the Virden Club.

Mrs. K. Brown, a member of the Legion Ladies' Auxiliary, was presented with an engraved tray in appreciation for her long and faithful service.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Suter celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on April 10.

Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Walton celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 14.

'Canadiana' was a feature of the Goulter School program.

Waterworks charges increased due to the operating costs of the new Deep Shaft Sewage Disposal System.

The Kinette Club held a social evening on April 28 in honor of the 20th anniversary of the Kinsmen Club of Virden.

June McKnight of Burlington, Ont., daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Harold Beerman, was appointed Assistant to the Vice-President of Merchandising Marketing Administration of Simpson-Sears Ltd.

Six men and six women make their home at the Virden Branch of Mentally Retarded residence on King Street.

A total of 532 people competed in the annual Festival. Heather Hanlin of Virden was awarded the Virden Association Silver tray; Trevor Hayhurst won the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Silver Tray; and Kim Manser won the Virden Credit Union Silver Tray.

Dr. Roy Brown, national President of the Canadian Association of Optometrists, was named Manitoba's 'Optometrist of the Year'.

Greg Wilson of Dryden, Ont., was biking across Canada for Cystic Fibrosis, sponsored by Kinsmen Clubs across the country. He passed through Virden about May 9.

A total of 129 bikers took part in the annual B.P.O. Elks Bike-A-Thon raising \$3,018.

Scott Davies received the Lord Strathcona ring and David

Carefoot the plaque for best all round cadet at the annual inspection of the Virden Cadet Corps.

Four cadets were honored as best cadets of the year; Nelson Deremiens, first year; Dale Edwards, second year; Scott Davies, third year; Blaine Rhodes, most improved cadet.

Walter Dinsale was re-elected for the 11th consecutive time as Progressive Conservative member of Parliament for the Brandon-Souris Constituency.

The Canada Post Office issued a new stamp commemorating Frederick Philip Grove, Canadian author and teacher who taught in Virden around 1915.

Trophy winners at the annual River Valley Pony Club Schooling Show were Cathy Wesley of Souris, Mac McQuaker of Virden and Dianne McCabe of Brandon.

The R.C.M.P. Band entertained with two concerts in the Auditorium on May 30.

The 20th annual Virden Art Club show and tea was held. Sharon Taylor of Oak Lake received the Terry McLean trophy for her painting.

Arthur William Smith celebrated his 91st birthday on June 5.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Paton celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on June 4.

Roxanne Hutcheson of Reston Record Makers and Holly Butler of Harding Beef Club each received a gold watch for outstanding 4-H achievements at the Rally held in Virden on June 9.

Due to a long, harsh winter and delayed spring many trees and shrubs were damaged.

Hargrave Class of '29 celebrated their 50th anniversary at Hargrave Community Centre and also commemorated 70 years since the school was built. Honored guests were Mrs. Tom Kerr, teacher for 1927-29 and Mrs. Bert Hitchins, teacher for 1929-34. Lorne Carruthers, age 96, played the first waltz for the dance.

Grand Champion steer at the 4-H Fat Stock Show and Sale was exhibited by Stephen George and sold for 93¢ a lb.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Lund celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on July 15. They were married December 25.

Jerry Hodgins of Reeder won the heavy horse pull at Virden Fair.

Edward Andrew Jackson of the West-Man Nursing Home celebrated his 94th birthday on August 5.

Rev. Trevor Rutley became the new minister of St. Paul's and Wallace United Churches.

Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Wardle celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 11.

Mr. Les Stewart, age 66, of Virden and his sister Mrs. Mary Lunders, age 64, of Pasco, Washington, were united for the first time.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Megaffin celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 29.

River Valley Historical Society held their first annual picnic at River Valley School on September 1.

Tayona Johnas of Virden was one of the riders of a team from Manitoba which placed third in the National Pony Club Rally at Maple Ridge, B.C.

The Lions Club Sherwood Park was officially opened on September 8.

Rev. Dennis Hansen became the pastor for the new Virden Alliance Church.

Annabelle Watt of Reston celebrated her 95th birthday.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Carruthers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 2.

Charles Cruickshank celebrated his 93rd birthday on September 15.

There were 2,258 students enrolled in Fort La Bosse Schools and 133 teachers.

Ardith's Ladies' Wear on Seventh Avenue officially opened on September 28.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Odell of Hargrave celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 29.

West-Man Nursing Home formed an auxiliary.

The Optimist Club presented Mrs. Joyce Cawston, Principal of Goulter School, with a \$1,000 cheque to be used for playground equipment.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbert Cannon celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Virden Golden Bears became the Manitoba South West Football champs by defeating Dauphin in Virden.

Mrs. Arthur Smith celebrated her 90th birthday on October 12.

The first Manitoba-owned drilling rig, designed to go to

depths of 5,000-6,000 feet and standing 98 feet, had drilled five wells, one being northwest of Virden.

As of July 31, the three facilities in Hospital District No. 10, Virden, Elkhorn and Reston Hospitals, had a combined surplus of \$33,396.

Hugh Sinclair, a former Virdenite, was one of 62 Canadians who were presented with their insignia of membership in the Order of Canada by Governor-General Edward Schreyer, Chancellor and Principal Companion of the Order, at an investiture.

The Provincial Nine-Man Football Championships were held at Virden Collegiate with the Stonewall Rams becoming the '79 Champs.

In celebration of the International Year of the Child, Goulter School presented 'Parade of World Friends'.

Cathy Gerrand, a rider from the Virden 4-H Light Horse & Pony Club, won the Junior Provincial Championships held in Brandon.

Virden Footwear store on Nelson Street and the Jean & Sporting Goods Shop were officially opened November 2.

The new bridge on Provincial Road 259 across the Assiniboine River was officially opened on November 9.

Mr. and Mrs. Wes Smith celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 5.

Mr. and Mrs. Merv Heaman celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 20.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Maxfield of Two Creeks celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on November 20.

Bev Freeman received her Pioneer Girls' Trailblazer Highest Honor Award for successfully completing all the requirements of the 13 Bridges in the Trailblazer Handbook.

Lieutenant-Governor F. L. Jobin presented Keith Wakely with the Chief Scout Award, the highest award available to a Boy Scout.

Goulter School students presented the operetta, 'Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs', on December 20.

Virden Whites won the Bantam Tournament held in Virden on December 27 and 28.

Philip, Barbara and Jeff Dix moved into the Nora Baird home while Mrs. Baird moved into the Dix home in Melbourne, Australia, in a teacher-exchange program.

1980

Robert M. B. Toews of the law firm of Buckingham & Co. was appointed Queen's Counsel.

January prices were: Tide, \$6.99; bread, 2/89¢ or 10/\$3.95; oranges, 3 lbs. for \$1.00; round steak roast, \$2.69 a lb.; pork & beans, 59¢ for a 14 oz. tin; bananas, 3 lbs. for \$1.00; grapefruit, 6 for \$1.00; potatoes, 20 lbs. for \$1.99.

The Manitoba Surface Rights Association was formed on January 10.

Alex Aitken opened a new law firm in Virden on Nelson Street.

Virden Midgets won the Midget Tournament held in Virden.

Prices at the Auction Mart for choice butcher steers were \$76-\$77.60 per cwt., and heifers \$72-\$74.

Mrs. Agnes Fleming Freeman celebrated her 91st birthday on January 27.

Sam Penny, after working for the town for 31 years, was honored by Council. He was presented with a Terry McLean painting of the horses he drove while working for the town during his earlier years.

Sheldon Cameron won first prize in the individual investigating category for Grades 1 and 2 at the Science Fair, and Doug Hunter won it for Grades 3 and 4.

Mrs. Margaret Jane Hill of The Sherwood celebrated her 90th birthday.

The Ladies' Auxiliary to the Royal Canadian Legion presented a resuscitator to the Virden Ambulance Service.

The first baby of the year arrived on January 15 to Janet and Murray Duncan, a boy, Timothy Robert.

Morris McGregor presented a \$10,000 cheque to Prairie West Recreation District to be used in employing a full time recreation director.

Gladys Carefoot won first place in the Kinsmen Canadian Heritage contest.

John Clarke received the 'Horseman of Year' award.

Lynne Boyce, senior member of the Virden Figure Skating Club, attained her gold figure test February 12. She also received gold medals in 1978 and 1979 for her gold dance and gold free skates.

The team from John Taylor Collegiate, Winnipeg, won the Kinsmen Heritage contest held at the Virden Collegiate.

Mrs. Jessie Simpson of The Sherwood celebrated her 96th birthday in February.

Alison Elliott, Shelley Webb, Sharon Webb, Karen Geith and Pauline Greig received Canada Cords, the highest award in Guiding.

Virden's 12 skaters received a trophy for winning the precision competition held in Brandon on February 16.

Morris McGregor, Virden's M.L.A., was elected Deputy Chairman of Committees of the House in the Manitoba Legislature.

Karen McKinnon's rink of Evelyn Whyte, Fern Hanson and Evelyn Sawchuk won the Ladies' Bonspiel.

Scott McGibney won first place in Grade 1 Piping competitions held in Transcona.

A new Hamadastar 700 CD was installed at the plant of the Empire Publishing Co. Ltd.

The building last occupied by Virden Farm Supplies on Seventh Avenue was moved to the Leo Langlois farm.

Brian Fowler and his rink of Ted Bridgett, Darcy Cockbill and Randy Henuset won the aggregate in the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

Jim Duncan of Virden was honored at the Association of Competitive Curlers wind-up in Brandon and was presented with the Gord McGunigal Memorial Award.

Cindy Kellsey and Patty Wadham, senior members of the Virden Figure Skating Club, attained their Gold Dance Medals.

The Howlers Broomball team won the Southwest Broomball League championship for the second year in a row.

Trevor Hayhurst was presented with a plaque in recognition of winning the Optimist Club Oratorical Contest.

The Kinettes presented a fashion show at the Auditorium Theatre. The theme was 'Rainbow of Spring Fashion'.

Mrs. Edith Ames of The Sherwood celebrated her 90th birthday on April 12.

The Town Tax rate increased 9.14 mills and the school levy increased 13.26%.

Jim Maxfield accepted a plaque on behalf of the founders of Wallace Consumers Co-op in recognition of 50 years of the Co-op movement. Robert Grieve accepted the plaque on behalf of the present members.

Dorothy Sawatsky and Brenda Cowie each received a schol-

arship to the summer camp at the International Peace Garden at the Music and Arts Festival Hi-Lites Concert.

Leanne Clarke of Virden, Donna Kroeker of Reston, Jody Longman of Virden and Trevor Hayhurst of Cromer were awarded silver trays at the Music and Arts Festival Hi-Lites Concert.

R.C.M.P. Corporal Russ Hornseth was presented with a law enforcement award for 'distinguished and dedicated service'.

Archie Campbell, Noble Grand of I.O.O.F., presented a cheque to Nora Gerrand in the amount of \$2,856.86 for the Cancer Fund.

Gerri Wichert, Verna Elk, Marla Kawchuk, Patsy Anderson and Lisette Labossiere of the T.M.H. class of Goulter School received a plaque for their project at the Western Manitoba Science Fair in Brandon.

Don Reid was appointed Secretary-treasurer at a joint meeting of Virden and Wallace Councils.

Pat Yarema received the Terry McLean trophy for the most promising artist and Fay Tapp received the Virden Art Club trophy for the best painting at the Art Show.

Brock Andrew received a cheque and certificate for winning the Royal Canadian Legion poetry competition, intermediate division, in District No. 2 and the Manitoba and North-Western Ontario Command.

Morris McGregor, M.L.A. for Virden, presented a photograph of Queen Elizabeth to Glen Young, Principal of Mary Montgomery School, during the official opening of the new addition on June 4.

Carla Taylor of Oak Lake and Les Routledge of Lenore each received a gold watch for outstanding 4-H achievements.

Glen-Allen McColl of Elkhorn won the Provincial Senior Boys' discus event at the Provincial "B" Track Meet and established a new record of 42.17 metres.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde William Bulloch of The Sherwood celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary.

Glen McKinnon, Jeff Dix and Fred Waines took part in the Manitoba Marathon run in aid of the mental retardation programs.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Frazer celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Carla Taylor won the Governor-General's Award at the V.C.I. exercises when 94 students graduated.

The Bumper-to-Bumper store on King Street was officially opened on June 26.

The Credit Union honored the following retiring members: W. D. McLaren, W. N. Lund, K. L. McAuley, R. A. Stuart and Mel Heritage during the 40th anniversary celebration on June 26.

Morris McGregor, M.L.A. for Virden, presented a \$50,000 cheque to Harold Walker, treasurer of the Virden Centennial Housing Corporation Inc. Board. It will go towards the 40-unit Elderly Persons Housing complex.

Scott Davies, a member of the Virden Legion Cadet Corps, participated in the Bisley shooting contest in England in July.

Cameron Kent of Kenton had the Grand Champion steer at the 4-H Show & Sale in Virden.

Very strong winds damaged gardens and uprooted trees on August 3.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Jones and daughter Anne arrived in Virden in August from England on a teacher-exchange program with the Ray Vance family.

Robert Toews, Q.C., was appointed to the Provincial Judges Court at Dauphin.

Mrs. Bridgett Hayward was 90 years old on August 23.

Mrs. Winnifred Smith of Salmon Arm, B.C., formerly of Virden, celebrated her 100th birthday on September 2.

The Virden Wellview Golf Club officially opened its new club house on September 14.

Frank Suter of Winnipeg, formerly of Virden and Hargrave, celebrated his 96th birthday on September 23.

Terry McLean exhibited three paintings at the first annual Canadian Cowboy Artist Association Show and Sale in Calgary.

Henry Pruden Oland celebrated his 93rd birthday on October 1.

Due to the rising demand to see the Rockies in the daytime, the passenger train now goes through Virden in the early afternoon after a decade of coming through in the early morning.

The Auditorium Theatre was officially closed on October 6.

Antler River Equipment, an implement dealership on No. 1 Highway, was officially opened on October 23.

The Kinsmen Club, Virden Legion and Virden Elks each presented a \$3,000 cheque to the West-Man Nursing Home towards the purchase of a Century Whirlpool Bath.

A fire on October 19 completely destroyed the home and contents of Agnes Heaman in the Harmsworth District.

Mr. and Mrs. Noble McGill celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Glen McKinnon became Mayor of Virden on October 22.

Lynne Boyce was named rookie of the year in Brandon and District Ladies' Fastball. She played for the Manitoba Ladies' Champs and they went on to play at the Western Canadian Senior 'B' Ladies' Fastball Championship in Nanaimo, B.C.

Virden B.P.O. Elks Lodge No. 387 members burned the mortgage on their building at a ceremony on November 1.

Gayton Labossiere of Virden was honored by being elected into the M.B.A. Honor Society at the Manitoba Baseball Association banquet.

One of the winners of the Rural Manitoba Debating Championships held in Virden Collegiate November 7 was Kevin Draper of Virden.

Erle Kingdon was named 1980 'Citizen of the Year' in recognition of the thousands of hours he had spent working with Virden young people.

The first performance of the Barbershoppers music was enjoyed in the Virden Collegiate Auditorium.

Virden Legion Cadet Corps No. 2528 received the Col. Thompson Memorial Trophy for general efficiency for top Army Cadet Corps in the Manitoba and North-Western Ontario Command.

Mrs. Mary Grey Hubley of Hargrave celebrated her 100th birthday.

After 35 years of service with the Manitoba Hydro, Area Superintendent Harold McDougall was honored at the Legion Hall on the occasion of his retirement.

Arlie Hogg of Oak Lake and her three daughters, one being Lila Higginbotham of Virden, had a joint exhibition of nearly 50 canvases under the title "A Family of Women Painters" at Portage la Prairie, Boissevain and Brandon.

Winner of the Junior Girls District No. 5 playdowns in Virden was the Hamiota rink of Heather Cochrane, Judy Lynn Allan, Kathy Kidd and Terry Mathison.

Herb Gardiner was presented with a plaque of appreciation in recognition of his 'faithful service' to the Virden Agricultural Society.

The Kinsmen Club of Virden presented a \$10,000 cheque to the Youth Training Club toward the cost of renovating the Centre.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Mitchell celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.

A fire on December 29 at Bruce's Four Seasons Ltd. caused \$35,000 damage.

1981

Carla Dee Heaman was the first baby born in the Virden District Hospital at 1:12 A.M. to Mr. and Mrs. Vince Heaman. She was also the first born in the Westman area.

January prices were: lard, 69¢ a lb.; grapefruit, 5 for 89¢; lettuce, 69¢ a head; oranges, 3 lbs. for 89¢; sockeye salmon, \$1.29 for a 7-3/4 oz. tin; tomatoes, 2 lbs. for \$1.; bread, 3 for \$1.69.

Manitoba Telethon Board of Trustees presented a \$3,000 cheque to the Virden Lions Club for the purchase of a radiant lamp and two youth beds at Virden District Hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mallett of The Sherwood celebrated their 56th wedding anniversary.

The Mert Thompsett rink of Bill McTavish, Joe Gagne and Mike Friesen from Winnipeg won the Manitoba Junior Men's Provincial Playdowns held in Virden.

Mrs. Gertie Leslie of The Sherwood celebrated her 96th birthday.

First place winners in the Mary Montgomery School Science Fair in January were: Dwayne Barkley, Cal Wilson, Jason Bayliss, Leo Hill, Karina Fairless, Warren Grant, Trish Buelow, Julie Martin, Dana Warkentin, Jeff Warkentin, Lee Hellyer, Julie Nor-ek, Ryan Draper, Lindsey McKinnon and David Kalinchuk.

Don Odell and Bill Brown received plaques in honor of their 15 years dedicated service to the Manitoba Hunter Safety Program.

The Groom Room for pets on Nelson Street was officially opened on February 3.

The Odd Fellows Hall on Nelson Street was officially opened on February 7.

William D. McLaren celebrated his 94th birthday on February 9.

Gerry and Jean Gatey received special presentations at the Father-Son, Mother-Daughter banquet for many years of service with the Scout Movement.

Kit Rowson celebrated his 93rd birthday on February 16.

Winners of the Virden Kinsmen Canadian Heritage Contest held February 28 at Virden Collegiate were John Arason, Janice Hamilton, Craig Myers and Michael Reeves from Glenboro.

Jo-Anne Trowell of Virden received the Gold Medal in the pre-juvenile events at the Dodie Wardle Youth on Ice Championships in Virden Arena.

Mrs. Bertha Sararas celebrated her 93rd birthday on March 5.

Virden Junior High hosted a Band Festival March 7.

Mrs. Margaret Kerr celebrated her 104th birthday on March 9.

Midge Horn and her rink of Mildred Bray, Olive McLenehan and Audrey Hodgins won the Virden Ladies' Bonspiel.

Kevin Draper and Craig McIntosh of Virden Collegiate won first in the Provincial Debating Championship held at Vincent Massey Collegiate on March 13. They were also rural champions at the Mosaic Massey tournament.

Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Adams celebrated their 67th wedding anniversary on March 18.

At the annual Virden Figure Skating Club wind-up on March 26 trophies were presented to Anne Jones, Jo-Anne Trowell and Pam Manser.

Murray Duncan's rink of Sandy Ritchie, Tom Naylen and Keith Forster won the Virden Men's Bonspiel.

James Beggs celebrated his 92nd birthday on April 4.

Virden District 4-H public speaking winners on April 10 were Jody Zarn of Reston, Paul Barre of Pipestone and Leah Tolton of Oak Lake.

Mrs. Mary Stuart celebrated her 90th birthday on April 12.

Extremely strong winds fanned a grass fire that completely destroyed the home of C. O. Deans east of Virden on April 16.

Mr. and Mrs. John Chzyk celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 16.

Perry Pettypiece celebrated his 90th birthday on April 22.

Mrs. Edna Alexander of The Sherwood celebrated her 90th birthday on April 24.

A grant of \$30,000 from the federal government has assisted the mentally handicapped people in the Virden area.

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce was officially

opened on April 25 following completion of its expansion and renovation project.

Top winners of the Virden Music and Arts Festival were Corleen McKinnon, Stephen Smith and Fiona Walker, all of Virden, and Dorothy Sawatsky of Oak Lake.

Lorne Carruthers celebrated his 98th birthday on May 5.

Kerry Sawyer and Graham Freeman each received a trophy for being the first two to finish in the Elks 40-mile Bike-A-Thon on May 23.

James Cowan celebrated his 97th birthday on May 26.

A fire caused \$120,000 damage on May 19 destroying a machine shed, caterpillar and a large quantity of tools at Kola.

Charlie Ritchie celebrated his 99th birthday on June 1.

The new residence for retired mentally retarded on Bennett Crescent was officially opened on June 6.

Leanne Forsyth was chosen from the Virden Music and Arts Festival to perform at the Provincial Hi-Lites Concert in Brandon on June 14.

Thieves netted \$12,500 worth of chemicals after breaking in to the Manitoba Pool Elevator at McAuley on June 10.

The Kinsmen Club completed a new playground in the Bennett Crescent area.

A 'Spring Sing' (Walt Disney's 'Bambi') was presented by the Mary Montgomery School on June 18.

Mrs. Berniece Ritchie and Mrs. Muriel Curtis were delegates from the Legion Ladies' Auxiliary to the Convention at Thunder Bay, Ont.

Mrs. Mary Dryden-Cook celebrated her 90th birthday on June 26.

The new R.C.M.P. Barracks on King Street West officially opened on June 27.

Ham radio operators were set up at the Two Creeks Community Centre for their annual field day.

Gwen Snell of Elkhorn completed the entire 26-mile course in the Manitoba Marathon at Winnipeg sponsored by the Association for the Mentally Retarded. Mayor McKinnon of Virden ran 12 miles.

Leslie Routledge was the recipient of the Governor-General's Medal at the annual graduation exercises at Virden Collegiate on June 29.

Mr. and Mrs. Les Hodgins celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 29.

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Lisowski celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary on June 9.

Ed Down of The Sherwood celebrated his 92nd birthday on June 25.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Allen celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 4.

Miss Myrtle Lane turned the sod for the new ecumenical chapel in Virden cemetery on July 20.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Taylor celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on July 25.

Sleeping sickness cases were diagnosed in area horses and residents.

Princess Lodge, Elderly Persons Housing project, had been completed and its first occupant was Wes Thompson.

Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Williams celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 1.

The V.C.I. class of '71 held a reunion in the Virden Legion on August 1.

On August 4 the Pollock family celebrated 100 years of continuous family farm ownership.

Mrs. Adam Halliday celebrated her 92nd birthday on August 5.

The Hargrave Post Office celebrated its centennial on September 1 with an open house.

Sixty two people participated in the Terry Fox Run of 10 Km raising \$4,295.

Mrs. Emily Salt celebrated her 90th birthday on September 2.

Morris McGregor, Virden M.L.A. for 19 years, announced he would not seek re-election.

Mrs. Lucy Irving celebrated her 96th birthday in September.

The Elks Purple Cross Fund celebrated their 25th year.

Mr. and Mrs. Mel Heritage celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 3.

Scarth Homemakers made a Centennial picture quilt and presented it to the Virden Centennial Committee.

Mrs. Mabel Brownlie celebrated her 99th birthday on October 11.

The vocational wing at the V.C.I. was officially opened on October 21.

A team of Percheron mares owned by Ken Brown of Lenore sold for \$23,000 at the South-Western Manitoba Draft Horse Association in Virden on October 14.

Th Royal Canadian Legion, Virden Branch No. 8, presented a \$35,000 cheque to Michael Spiers, Administrator of Hospital District No. 10 and Chairman of the Virden Centennial Housing Corporation, towards the cost of Princess Lodge.

Alex Dionne, Cecil Dunn and Tom Browning were presented with life memberships by the Royal Canadian Legion, Virden Branch No. 8, at the Remembrance Day banquet.

Mr. and Mrs. W. D. McLaren celebrated their 64th wedding on November 7.

Mrs. Helen Haskett of the West-Man Nursing Home celebrated her 104th birthday on November 17.

A fire destroyed the home of Mrs. Ruth Metcalf on November 20.

Winners at the Toronto Royal Fair from this area were Brown Bros. of Kenton, Jack and Carol Forsyth of Virden, and Doreen Lawlor of Kenton in the horse division. In the cattle division the winners were Ron Sangster of Kenton, D. G. Hutchison of Virden, Bob Duncan of Cromer, Lawrence Daniels of Kenton and Wilf Lelond and Sons of Miniota.

The hardware business, owned and operated by the Bridgett family for 84 years, was sold in November to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hillier of Grenfell, Saskatchewan. Under the new management, the business is known as Virden Home Centre Ltd.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hutchison were honored by the Virden Agricultural Society for Mr. Hutchison's great contribution to the success of the Society.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Pollock, their son Dwight, and Mr. Pollock's mother, Mrs. Freda Pollock, were presented with the Manitoba Agricultural Century Farm Award at the annual meeting of the Virden Agricultural Society.

Virden Community and School Bands presented their annual Christmas program of music in the Derrick Theatre on December 13 under the direction of Miss Barbara Galbraith.

Virden Bell Tower which was part of the former fire hall, was demolished December 16. A save the bell tower campaign and petition met with no success. The first attempt to pull down the 60-

foot structure, with the use of two big trucks loaded with bricks, was unsuccessful, as were subsequent tries. It was then decided to use two winch trucks. After several unsuccessful tries the tower crumbled.

Mrs. Alex Paton celebrated her 92nd birthday on December 26.

A Calithumpian parade was held on December 31 to usher in Virden's Centennial year.

Virden Council

1971

Mayor	Steve Hegion
Councillors	J. W. Cockbill
	E. Hoffman
	G. Galbraith
	J. H. Leckie
Secretary-Treasurer	H.M. May

1972

Mayor	Steve Hegion
Councillors	J. W. Cockbill
	E. Hoffman
	J. H. Leckie
	W. G. McKinnon
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May

1973

Mayor	Steve Hegion
Councillors	J. W. Cockbill
	J. H. Leckie
	E. Hoffman
	W. G. McKinnon
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May

P. J. Morris took over from J. H. Leckie on June 5, 1973

1974

Mayor	Steve Hegion
Councillors	J. W. Cockbill
	P. J. Morris
	E. Hoffman
	W. G. McKinnon
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May

	1975
Mayor	Steve Hegion
Councillors	J. W. Cockbill
	E. Hoffman
	W. G. McKinnon
appointed	D. Springer
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May
by election increasing Council	from 5 to 7 members.
election date	April 16, 1975
took office	May 6, 1975
	B. Archer
	C. S. Coleman
J. W. Cockbill — Deceased —	May 4, 1976
	1976
Mayor	Brian Archer
	appointed Nov. 5, 1975
Deputy Mayor	E. Hoffman
Councillors	G. McKinnon
	D. Springer
	C. S. Coleman
	Ed. Fritzsich — app. Nov. 5, 1976,
	office Nov. 18/76
	Levi Klassen — accl. Nov. 17/76,
	office Nov. 18/76
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May
	1977
Mayor	Brian Archer
Deputy Mayor	E. Hoffman
Councillors	G. McKinnon
	D. Springer
	C. S. Coleman
Ed. Fritzsich	
Levi Klassen resigned April 1,	1977
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May
	Henry Penner elected Oct. 26,
	1977 and took office Nov. 9/77.
	1978
Mayor	A. S. Case
Deputy Mayor	Glen McKinnon
Councillors	C. S. Coleman

	Ed. Fritzsch
	Alex Gabrielle
	Ken Mitchell
	Henry Penner
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May
	1979
Mayor	A. S. Case
Deputy Mayor	Glen McKinnon
Councillors	C. S. Coleman
	Ed. Fritzsch
	A. Gabrielle
	K. Mitchell
	H. Penner (resigned Sept. 1979)
	Sheila Archibald (elected Oct. 1979)
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May
	1980
Mayor	A. S. Case
Deputy Mayor	G. McKinnon
Councillors	C. S. Coleman
	Ed. Fritzsch
	Ken Mitchell
	Alex Gabrielle
	Sheila Archibald
Secretary-Treasurer	H. M. May
Replaced in June by	D. A. Reid
	1981
Mayor	W. G. McKinnon
Deputy Mayor	C. S. Coleman
Councillors	Don Cameron
	Dale Shepherd (resigned July, 1981)
	Burns Chisholm
	Glen Gardiner
	Jack McSorley
	R. J. Andrew (By-election Sept. 1981)
Secretary-Treasurer	D. A. Reid

Viriden Businesses 1982

Addison & Leyen
Alex Aitken & Co.
Alexandra Cafe
Alexandra Hotel
Allis & Chalmers Dealer
Anderson Gravel &
Excavating
Andrew Agencies
Antler River Equipment
Archer Enterprises Ltd.
Ardith's Ladies Wear
Austin's Abattoir
Bank of Nova Scotia
Beaver Lumber Co. Ltd.
Bo-Di Enterprises
Bob's Shoe Repair
Bottomley's Furniture
Brawn & Brawn Real Estate
Brown, Dr. Roy
Brown, W. J., Gunshop
Brown's of Viriden Ltd.
Bruce's Four Season's Sales
Buckingham, McNeill, Smith
& Poole, Barristers
Bumper to Bumper
Cameron's Electric
Can-Tex Drilling and
Exploration
Canadian Imperial Bank of
Commerce
Carscadden Funeral Chapels
Central Hotel
Chacun's Family Diner
Chapman Trucking Ltd.
Chevron Standard Ltd.
Chicken Chef
Chimo Building Centre
Chisholm Pontiac Buick Ltd.
Clae Mar Inn

Cook's Electric
Copperhead Oil Co. Ltd.
Cosen's Drilling Ltd.
Coulter Construction Ltd.
Coulter Tire Centre
Countryside Inn Motel
Creemee Drive-Inn
Crown Drilling Ltd.
D. B. Higginbotham Electric
Ltd.
D & N Racing Transmissions
Dav-Li Boarding Kennels
Derrick Theatre
Devo's Shell Service
Dowell of Canada Ltd.
Draper's Repair
E & J Decorating Centre
Eigler's Nursery
Empire Publishing Co. Ltd.
Farm Credit Corporation
First Look Hair Designs
Fontana's Trucking
Forbes Welding
Fowler Chevrolet Oldsmobile
Ltd.
Frank's Refrigeration &
Electric
Freeman's Meat Market
Friesen Brothers Construction
Ltd.
G & G Hi-Way Grocery
G N Transportation
Gardiner's Plumbing
Gerry's Lunch
Gertz Trucking Ltd.
Grant's IGA Foodliner
Grant's Welding and Machine
Greyhound Bus Depot
Gulf Canada Products Ltd.

H & H Oilfield Construction	Marvel Brute Steel Building
Hartley & Danita's Gulf	Inc.
Restaurant	Medical Centre
Harvatt's Hauling	Meyers Norris Penny & Co.
Harves Construction Ltd.	Mid-Town Texaco
Hayward's Trucking Ltd.	Mid-West Auction Sales
Heritage Equipment	Midwestern Redi-Mix Cement
Higginbotham's & Son Drug	Miller's Welding
Store Ltd.	Mr. Chips
Home Hardware Stores	Moe's Upholstering
Imperial Oil Ltd.	Moore Automotive Supply
Inter-City Gas Utilities	Ltd.
Interprovincial Pipelines Ltd.	Morris Hauling and Acidizing
Irene's Electrolysis	Ltd.
Ivey Florists	Morris Sales and Service
Ivey Greenhouses	Murray Heaman Fresh Water
J D's Restaurant & Pizza	Hauling
Jaff Construction Ltd.	New Scope Resources Ltd.
Janzen Construction	Nield Bros. Auto Service
K D Well Servicing Ltd.	Nor-West Esso
Kent Flour Mills Ltd.	Norcen Pipelines Ltd.
Key-Bo Engraving	Nu-Art Beauty Salon
Keystone Oilfield Ltd.	Oil Town Auto
Kilford's Greenhouse	Oil Well View Motel
Koch Oil Co. Ltd.	Patterson, O. Construction
L & J Oil Well Servicing	Ltd.
L & M Sales and Service	Per-MC Glass
Leroy & Son Masonry	Prochazka, B. Dr., Dentist
Lloyd's Welding	Radio Shack
Lyle's Barbershop	Randolph's Bakery
Macleods	Revelstoke Co. Ltd.
Manibilt Furniture &	Robert Lane Shell Oil Agent
Construction	Royal Bank
Manitoba Agriculture Credit	Roy's Babershop
Corporation	Sangster's Men's & Boys'
Manitoba Hydro	Wear
Manitoba Pool Elevators	Sears (Simpsons Sears Ltd.)
Manitoba Telephone System	Sherwood Construction
Martin, Dr. Allen C.	Sherwood Equipment
Martin's Pharmacy	Shur-Gain Service Centre

Silhouette Hairdressing
 Smith, Dave, Electric Ltd.
 Smith's Steering Service
 South Central Developments
 Ltd.
 Stedman's Store
 Stewart Chrysler Plymouth
 Ltd.
 Suddaby Construction
 Suzanne's Cuisine
 Texaco Canada Ltd.
 Timms' Jewellery Ltd.
 Tractor Supply Farm Centre
 Transx Ltd.
 Tundra Oil and Gas
 United Grain Growers
 Valleyview Co-op Ltd.
 Virden Animal Hospital
 Virden Auction Mart
 Virden Auto Body
 Virden Aviation Ltd.
 Virden Bearing and
 Automotive Ltd.
 Virden Bilt Rite Homes
 Virden Cafe
 Virden Car Wash
 Virden Cleaners
 Virden Credit Union
 Virden Drive-In Theatre
 Virden Fashion Shop
 Virden Flower Shop
 Virden Foot Wear

Virden Green Velvet Gift
 Shoppe
 Virden Hobby Shop
 Virden Implements Ltd.
 Virden Laudramat
 Virden Machine Shop Garage
 Virden Medical Associates
 Virden Motel
 Virden Plumbing Contractors
 Ltd.
 Virden Radiator Service
 Virden Sheet Metal
 Virden Soil Service
 Virden Sports Centre
 Virden Taxi
 Virden Television Ltd.
 Virden Texaco Service
 Virden Tire Service
 Virden Trans Canada Shell
 Virden Triangle Service
 Walton Trucking
 Ward Agencies
 Warkentin, Herb J., Building
 Movers
 West-Man Fixit
 Westwood Enterprises Ltd.
 White Owl Service
 Wilkinson Ken, Auctioneer
 Wolfe's Electric Ltd.
 Ye Tic Toc Shoppe & Gibson's
 Watch Repair
 Yochim's Upholstering

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