

# **FURROWS IN THE VALLEY**

**A CENTENNIAL PROJECT OF THE  
RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS**

**1880-1980**

**A HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND ITS PEOPLE**



**Compiled by  
The History Book Committee**

**Edited by  
Lenore Eidse**

PUBLISHED BY INTER-COLLEGIATE PRESS, 1980

# **Credits and Acknowledgements**

**Doug Penner and Scratching River Post Photo**

**Carillon News Photos**

**Red River Valley Echo**

**The Journal by Derksen Printers**

**Manitoba Archives**

**Public Archives of Canada**

**Maps from The Historical Atlas of Manitoba**

**The Family Album of Hazel Lewis Gregory Anderson**

**Our thanks to all for making this publication possible.**





MESSAGE OF THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF MANITOBA  
TO THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS

---

"HAPPY CENTENNIAL YEAR 1980!"

I CONSIDER IT AN HONOUR TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO  
CONTRIBUTE A MESSAGE IN YOUR HISTORY BOOK, "FURROWS  
IN THE VALLEY".

I REMEMBER MORRIS AS A BOY, MOSTLY AS BEING A  
POINT HALF WAY BETWEEN WINNIPEG AND EMERSON. AS I  
GREW UP I BEGAN TO APPRECIATE MORRIS AND ITS PEOPLE  
AND I HAVE ENJOYED SEVERAL VISITS TO YOUR MUNICIPALITY  
SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE IN MARCH 1976. I HAVE COME TO  
KNOW THE CHARACTER OF YOUR PEOPLE WHO HAVE STOOD UP SO  
WELL THROUGH THE MANY FLOODS IN YOUR MUNICIPALIT " ' T  
I CONGRATULATE ALL OF YOU ON YOUR SPIRIT.

I CONGRATULATE YOUR MUNICIPALITY AND THE TOWN OF  
MORRIS ON THE MORRIS STAMPEDE. IT HAS FOCUSED THE  
ATTENTION OF CANADA IN YOUR AREA.

MAY YOU ENJOY ANOTHER 100 YEAR WITHOUT FLOODING!

F. L. JOBIN  
Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba

January 31st, 1980.



MANITOBA

## OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

WINNIPEG  
R3C 0V8



The Rural Municipality of Morris has a unique place in the history of Manitoba.

The region was on the early water highway to the United States, our first export route. And the river has been an integral part of the community ever since -- providing a fertile valley for farming, and becoming a threatening monster in time of flood.

Many people in Manitoba take satisfaction from the accomplishments of the district: the large and varied agricultural output, the active manufacturing, and the joint effort of the rural municipality and town in community enterprises that can grow into such large-scale events as the "Big M".

In this centennial book covering the colorful history of the Rural Municipality of Morris and of the families who truly made it a community, we see a strength of character and a strength of purpose. And we take pride in calling them Manitobans.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Sterling Lyon".

Sterling Lyon



MINISTER OF CONSUMER, CORPORATE AND INTERNAL SERVICES

WINNPEG  
R3C 0V8



Please accept sincere congratulations on the publication of "Furrows in the Valley" in commemoration of the centennial year of the Rural Municipality of Morris.

A centennial is a time of celebration and thanksgiving, a useful point from which to look back on the road we have travelled, as well as to look ahead to future prospects.

The Municipality has a lot for which to be thankful. It can be grateful for the solid foundations built by the pioneers through hard work and unswerving dedication to values and the achievement of goals, often under adverse conditions. It can be grateful for its geographical setting in the heart of rich grainland. It can be grateful for its growth and development in a number of fields, including industry, and as the address for one of the nation's liveliest attractions -- the Big M Stampede and Agricultural Exhibition.

But most of all, it can be grateful for its greatest resource -- its friendly, dynamic, vigorous and spirited people, looking forward to continued growth and achievements that will add richness and zest to the heritage bequeathed to them by the pioneers.

It is my hope that those who read in "Furrows in the Valley" the accounts of the pioneer families who made the Municipality what it is today, will derive extra motivation to keep that heritage alive.

In so doing, they will ensure that the next hundred years are as rich and full as the previous ten decades.

Sincerely,



Warner Jorgenson.



**REEVE - ALVIN REMPEL**

The one hundred years of history in the Municipality of Morris has seen much progress, but not without hardships. From a few homesteads located along the Scratching River to the large farm sites of today, where there once was nothing but wild hay fields, sloughs and prairie, there now is some of the most productive crop land in the Red River Valley. The oxen which pulled the first simple plows are now replaced by big 300 horsepower four wheel drive tractors. From a few bushels of grain grown then to the millions of bushels now shipped to Thunder Bay or trucked to Minneapolis, U.S.A., from wagon trails to roads and paved highways (No. 75, 23, 3 and 205), from roadside ditches to large dyked channels emptying into the Morris and Red Rivers the contrast can be seen everywhere.

The seventies seem to have changed farming practises most. Various special crops and the use of large amounts of fertilizer have become common practise. During the early seventies, the economy was in a slump and some farmers faced bankruptcies, however, during 1974-75, a drastic change in grain prices, coupled with inflation, moved the economy into high gear. By the late seventies, it appeared impossible to slow down.

As reeve from October, 1975 to 1980, the centennial year, the office has been a challenging one with some frustration and difficulties. My aims were to work for the total municipality's needs. The upkeep of our drainage system and bridges need a long range program, as well as gravel roads, and the future needs of such roads. The total Osborne Basin drainage system and rechanneling of water to the Red River by a shorter route needs attention.



*LABOUR - OMNIA - VINCITE*  
*"Work conquers all things".*

The establishing of Community Centre Districts so that each area would levy for their specific needs eliminated much of the subsidizing by other areas and vice versa. Establishing a reserve fund for our three fire departments has helped to continuously upgrade them and keep up with trends and needs of the communities.

The problem of planning a Municipal policy for residential and commercial land use has been, to say the least, most frustrating. The council was looked at as being fully responsible, but did not have the final authority because of the Municipal Planning Act of 1976. The provincial authority and the 1979 flood did not improve the situation.

The railway line from Morris to Hartney was to be abandoned by 1982, but with the formation of the Rail Line Retention Committee by the municipalities and towns affected, the government changed its decision. The line is to be upgraded and kept at least until the year 2000.

The Garrison Diversion has caused much controversy and will likely result in a long struggle before everyone is satisfied. The effects it will have on the future water quality and productivity of land is hard to determine at this time.

The most strenuous times were during the 1976 army worm infestation, the tornado disaster in Aubigny, in 1977, and the flood of 1979, which affected many people and caused much hardship. The tornado and flood resulted in much rebuilding and relocating. The face lifting that has occurred in the flood plains with the help of government funds, will help to better cope with severe weather elements in the future.

This historical publication, which was a large undertaking, was initiated to record events of the past, that residents of the municipality could read, to appreciate their heritage, and cherish the efforts of the pioneers who were the builders of the Rural Municipality of Morris.

The efforts and hard work by our many pioneers will not be forgotten by us and future generations. The future years will continue to be a challenge because our needs and our demands will continue to grow beyond our imaginations.

## FURROWS IN THE VALLEY PRESENTED BY



*ABOVE: The Council of the R.M. of Morris, 1980. Dan Thiessen, Anton Fast, Alvin Rempel, Reeve; Win. F. Reckseidler, Gilbert Cretton, George St. Hilaire, Norman Wiens.*

*BELOW. The History Book Committee, each representing a ward in the Municipality. STANDING, Left to Right: Dick B. Eidse, Jean Cretton, Robert Ritz, John F. Warkentin. SITTING: Barbara Shewchuk, Lenore Eidse, Coordinator; Alice St. Onge.*



# PREFACE

The concept of compiling a history book for the RM of Morris began in 1974, when Reeve Earl and council members decided to pursue the idea as a centennial project for 1980. Research in the municipality was done by Dorothy Dixon for about two years, when failing health caused her to abandon the work.

The present council, under the leadership of Reeve Rempel, put the wheels into motion in September, 1978, by contacting a publisher, and appointing a history book committee. A representative was chosen from each ward in the municipality to do research in their respective areas, with Lenore Eidse as co-ordinator and editor.

By means of advertising, families were encouraged to send in their stories and pictures. The tremendous response indicated a high level of interest, and added many more pages to the book than was anticipated.

This publication is the work of many people. Though it is not standard format to insert authors' names with each submission of work, we have elected to do so to give the author recognition, and the reader knowledge of the source. Community stories were written by Committee Book members with the exception of *The Mennonites - A People*, which is the work of Peter J.B. Reimer. All other chapters were written by Lenore Eidse, unless otherwise indicated. Hundreds of others have assisted by providing information and photographs, as well as the long suffering families whose members were involved in the project. Countless hours were spent on the layout, again by committee members, Cora Doerksen, and Rose Cornelsen. The office staff, Alice Loving, and Michael Yakielashek spent extra hours assisting.

There are bound to be errors of omissions, as with any publication, but we have endeavoured to provide a cross section of information on every topic as factual as possible.

The flood of 1979 was an impediment to progress, and committee members worked hard to achieve the goal of having the book published in 1980, the Centennial year.

We believe that you will find countless hours of happy reading, and that "Furrows in the Valley" will become a treasured possession for generations to come.

Lenore Eidse, Editor

LENORE EIDSE, EDITOR

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# DEDICATION

The rural municipality of Morris has a rich and colorful history. It is situated approximately 26 miles from the international Boundary, with the historic Red and Scratching Rivers winding through it, on location of a trading stop for steamboat and stagelines. This municipality nurtured five rural communities, including a Mennonite village, and a French Canadian community - a small representation of our country, the melting pot of nations.

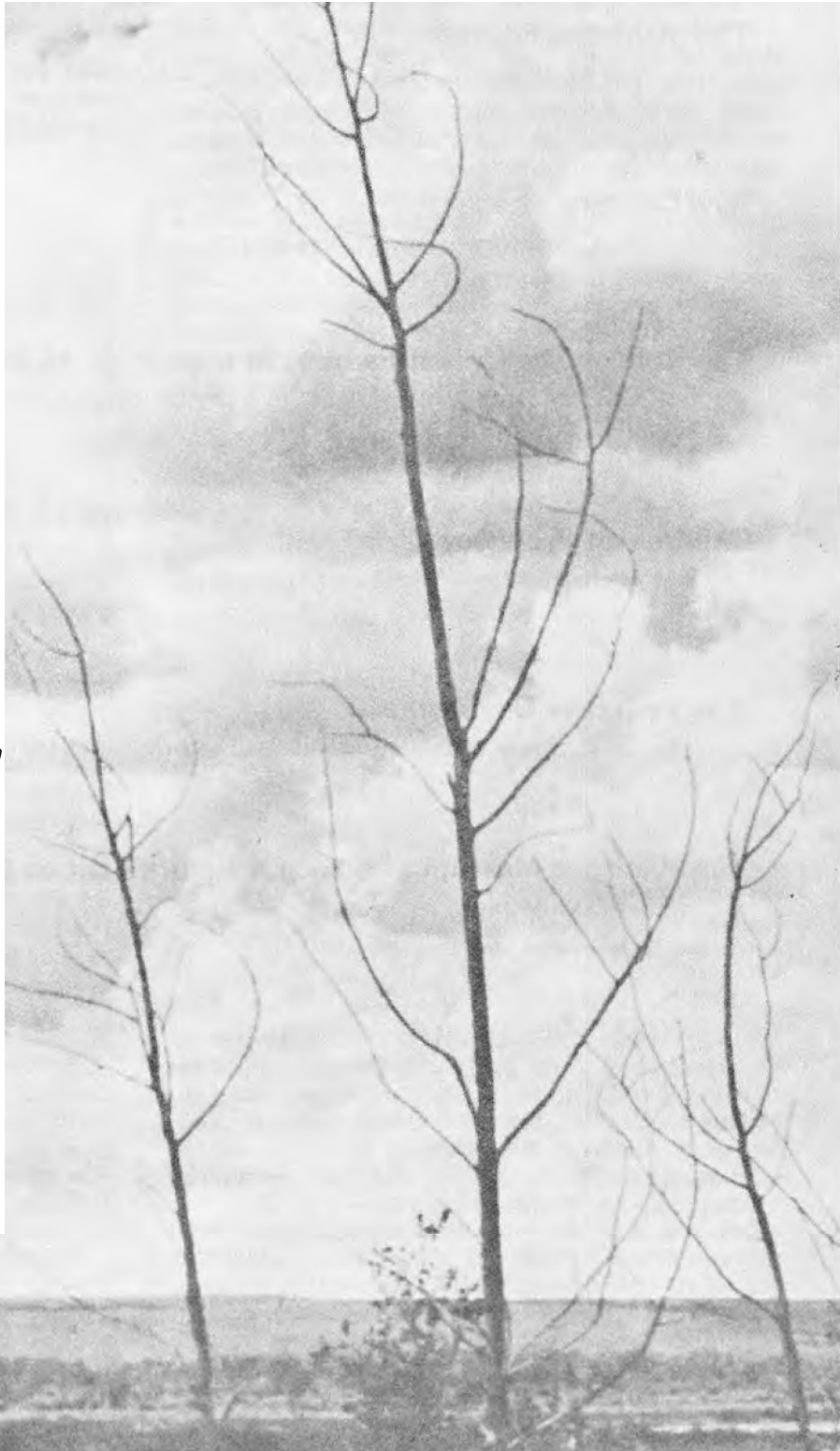
The people were the wealth of this land. They came - they saw - they conquered! Dreaming of a better opportunity, they left behind the comforts of civilization, the security of communities, the companionship of family and friends, to trod into the unknown. They challenged nature against overwhelming odds. This book, "Furrows in the Valley", shows how the pioneers carved their futures from the soil of the Red River Valley. The benefits are ours to enjoy today. We dedicate this book to "The Pioneers".



# THE BEGINNING

## TO THE PRAIRIE PIONEERS C.R. Forrester

*You have seen a thousand wonders,  
That our eyes have never seen,  
Seen the vast and virgin prairies,  
In their undulating green.  
Seen the flight of light and shadow,  
Over miles of prairie sod,  
Seen the regal prairie lilies,  
Planted by the hand of God.  
You have heard the prairie chickens,  
Booming at the break of day,  
Seen them dancing in the dawning  
At their mating time in May.  
You have seen where native berries  
Stained the grasses richly red,  
Then have kneeled you down and picked them  
Where the buffalo had fed.  
You have seen the prairies broken  
By the lowly ox and share,  
Knew the loneliness of winter,  
Felt the strain of summer care.  
You have seen the wheels of progress  
Moving onward in their train,  
From the reaper to the combine,  
From the ox cart to the plane.  
You have found in sports your pleasure,  
You delight in common things,  
On the prairie ponds of winter,  
Skating gave your being wings.  
Still, you knew the pangs of sorrow,  
Suffered many a nameless fear,  
Yet you faced each one with courage,  
Smiled away the lingering tear.  
You have gaily laughed and laboured  
With your loved ones at your side,  
Through the years of prairie living,  
To the fall of eventide.*



*From the Red River Valley Historian.*

## THE BEGINNING

The virgin prairies teemed with life. Prairie chickens and partridges made their homes in the long grass, wild geese and ducks nested along the banks of coulees and rivers, deer grazed undisturbed at the edge of the timber belt, and buffalo broke the first trail along the bank of the Red River, long before it even received its name.

Indian tribes roamed, hunted, fished and camped along the riverbank, and nature supplied their simple needs. They were happy and contented in those early days before the white man came to their happy hunting grounds. But come the white man did, to this beautiful land, and destroyed the stillness and peace of centuries.

Here was a land to settle, business to be developed, profits to be made, and for this the white man came. First efforts at business were the location of small trading posts along this river Gratias, that teemed with life, and Indians brought their fur pelts in their birch bark canoes. Curiosity in the white man's goods, especially tobacco, liquor and other commodities, brought the Indian to the trading post. In many instances, Indians were taken advantage of, and given a meagre sum for their goods.



*Illustration from "Where the Buffalo Roamed" by Miss E.L. Marsh. A fur brigade. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

By 1801, there were two such fur trading stations on the Gratias River at the Settlement. One was owned by the North West Company, which later amalgamated with the Hudson Bay Co., and was operated by a man called Desmarais. The other was owned by the XY Company and was operated by J. Dulford, who later met an unfortunate end - he was shot by Indians.

This area had known many trappers, hunters and transients. Much to the dismay of the male sex, and to the glory of the opposite sex, the first white person recorded in Morris was a Scotswoman. This intrepid lady, never a settler, followed the calling of hunter and trapper. All her appearances were in male garments. Other trappers followed her into the district. Upon discovering that their fellow trapper was a woman, the men promptly collected passage money and shipped the early pioneer back to Scotland.

The first white woman to settle near here was Anne Gaboury, of French origin, from whom Louis Riel was directly descended.

Two rivers flowed from the higher land farther west, and mingled their waters with the Red. Where present day maps show only one river (the Morris) all the early maps show two, the Boyne (Riviere aux Islettes de Bois) and the Morris (Gratias). The draining of the Boyne marsh made the river into one.

Two settlements grew where these rivers joined the Red. Far to the North, the twin spires of the "Roman Mission" (Ste. Agathe) rose against the morning sky, and ox teams followed the buffalo trail along the river banks.



*The rivers were highways, the source of water and food, thus the settlements were established along the rivers.*

The small settlement known as "Scratching River" was bustling with activity. A permanent village grew. The earliest records are from the Palliser expedition, in 1865. It was reported that this small settlement had a post office in that year.

There is some conjecture about the origin of the name "Scratching River". One - that it was because of the swarms of mosquitoes that bred in its shallow waters, another that it was due to what was known as "Prairie Itch". Perhaps it was because of the abundance of thorn thickets that grew along the river bank.

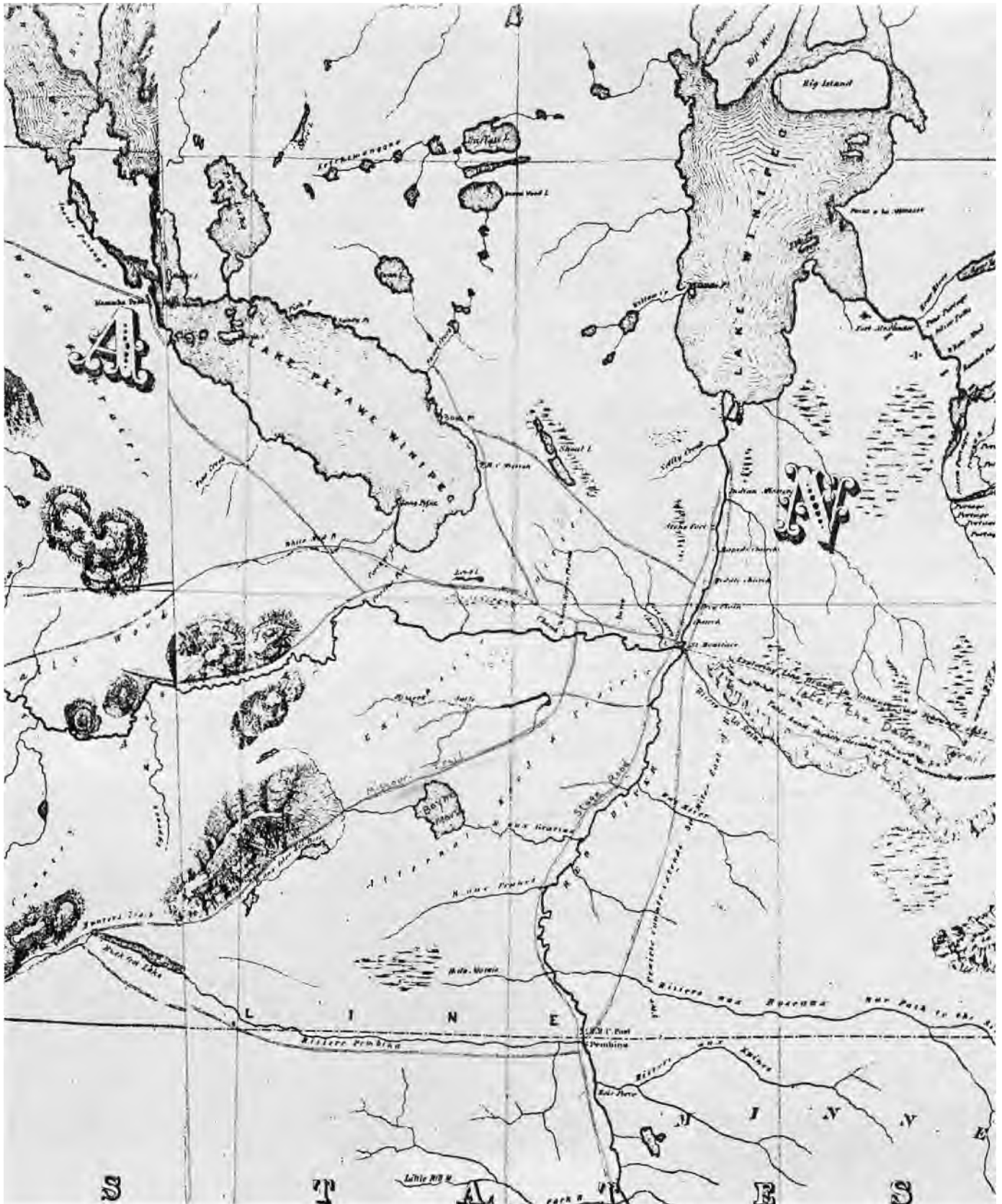
Here was a perfect place for a settlement. Two rivers met, and the timber belt extended for several miles on either side of these rivers. Oak, ash and poplar lined the banks, undisturbed, flanked by miles of lush grass, which was dotted with prairie flowers. Wild fruit was in abundance, wild strawberries growing on the prairies, and cherries, plums, saskatoons near the river.

Proximity to the Red River has always been a mixed blessing and a curse. Several times during the past hundred years, devastating floods have hit this district hard. Water, either too much or too little of it, has always been a drawback to the development of this municipality.

About 1869, settlers started arriving overland from the east, travelling over the Dawson route that had been opened up, after the first Riel rebellion had been crushed.

# MAP OF MANITOBA - 1858 SHOWING RIVERS AND SETTLEMENTS

Courtesy Manitoba Archives



## Many Changes



*The Canadian Customs House at North Pembina in 1872. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

Many settlers came upriver by barge from the South, and as the Stage Road became more widely used, Red River Carts passed by in regular caravans, heading north and south on the trail.

Approximately 28 miles to the south lay the International Boundary and Fort Pembina; 3 miles to the east of the settlement, the first principal Meridian runs north and south. To the north lay the settlement of Fort Garry. The population of this "postage stamp" province in 1870 was 25,000.

In the 1870's, the Scratching River Settlement was a busy stage stop between Fort Garry and the Forks. (another was at Union Point.) Klyn's Tavern, situated in the settlement, was sold to William Gallie in 1874, who made some improvements, and renamed this road house, Riverview. It was located on the bank of the Red River to the south of what is now Boyne Avenue, and included a store and post office.

The first Morris based stage coach took its maiden voyage in 1872, driven by a Mr. Turner. It was by this means that mail was transported, as well as passengers.

In the time span from 1872 - 1882, many changes took place. A hand fired brick kiln was operating at Russell's brick yard, which was on the river bank on a spot between the location of the two railroads. A small school was built in 1876, of local brick, just south of the bridge on the west bank. Four churches were established, all with resident ministers, two doctors practised here, a bakery had been set up, a grist mill, a blacksmith's shop and three general stores were doing business, as well as three hotels and a liquor store.

A bridge had been built over Scratching River - a wooden bridge built with local lumber; it was painted red. All supplies were brought in by ox team or river barge, but many things were scarce and hard to get, such as coal oil.



*A freighter's camp on the trail - the means by which supplies were brought to the settlements. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

In May, 1880, the Morris Herald came out, the first newspaper published in Manitoba, west of the Red River. The editor, James B. Hooper, did all typesetting by hand, and published from the home of Dr. McTavish.



## Department of Agriculture & Immigration Province of Manitoba

Greatest wheat producing country in the world.  
Unrivalled possibilities in mixed farming.  
Millions of acres of choice, land still available.  
fine hincired thousand industrious settlers can establish comfortable homes at Once.  
Us'equalled opportunities for inve,sters, manufacturers and immigiuite or all clas,,l..s.  
Provincial Government land can be purchased at \$3 to \$6..per acre.  
Improved farms at from to \$50 per acre.

1111' Far information regarding hamestends, apply at the Dominion Land Office, mluntp, eg, For prnchase of Provincial Lands apply nt the Provincial Land Office, in the Parliament Buildings, Winnipeg.  
Por situations as farm laborers apply to,

J. J. GOLDEN,  
Provincial Information Bureau,  
617 Main St., Winnipeg.

a'



*The Presbyterian Church on Boyne Ave., built in 1882.*

# MORRIS



# TIERALD

MorTrrifave7rckyvd.

FORMED COMPANY 1% IT II CAPITAL  
OF \$25,600

On account of rpeent tests of rich clay obtained from the property of I11r. J. Wilton and others in the north end of he town, and the pleasing reportt received from the testa, a company of local gentlemen has boon formed to establish and operate bn up-to.date brick yard. We understand a plant with a calm- y of producing 40,000 bricks &tly has been secured and will be .here in a few days. Work in the '3rickyard will be commenced immediately. Mr. Windsor, an expert from Winnipeg, is in town, and will supervise the preliminary worl . The plant will be installed oil' property on west side of C. P. R. track north of the town.

## e 11Wliarness Shop

A full line of hand made Double and Single Ilarness always kept on hand,

**Trunks, Valises, Whips, Curry-CombS, Brushes,** and all lines usually carried in a FirSt Class Harness Shop,  
Repairing Neatly and Cheaply done,

For the balance of the season my stock of Robes, Blankets and Bells will be sold at a Small margin over cost. Now is the time to supply your wants in those lines.

## 11 #1. URE,

## Prop'r

DR. R. F. McTAVISH

—CONSUL 77 0 X

Dise ase s Of Women A Speciality.

MORRIS -- — MANITOBA

## CHOLERA INFANTUM

Cholera infantum is one of the fatal ailments of childhood. It is a trouble that comes on suddenly, especially' during the summer months, and unless prompt action is taken the little one may soon be beyond aid. Baby's Own Tablets are an ideal medicine in warding off this trouble. They regulate the bowels and sweeten the stomach and thus prevent all the dreaded slimmer complaint. Concerning them Mrs. Fred Rose, of South Bay, Ont., says: "I feel Baby's Own Tablets saved Or life of our baby when she had el-foie-ea infantum and I would not be without them." The Tablets arc sold by medicine dealers or by 'nail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

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Sirlion Roasts, Round and Porter House Steaks.

WE Pay Highest Market Prices

For good Beef en ttle.

**Corner of Boyne Ave. and Main St.**

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KZ. 1b., C. NI.

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MORRIS. MANITOBA,

CORSETRY

Mrs. ALEX TODD

Spirella Corsetiere

Orders promptly attended to

## ALEXANDER MORRIS - 1826-1889

The county of Morris was named in honour of Alexander Morris, the first chief Justice in the Court of Queen's Bench in the new Province of Manitoba. He soon thereafter became the second Lieutenant-Governor of the new province. (1872-76)

On the national scene, Alexander Morris was far more distinguished than on the provincial level. He was the first graduate in Arts at McGill University. By his speeches, and his pamphlet "Nova Britannia" (1858), he lent strong support to the Confederation movement, and entering the Legislative Assembly as a Conservative (1861), he played a part in effecting the coalition of 1864, which paved the way to Confederation. In 1869, he entered MacDonald's cabinet as Minister of Inland Revenue, and he advocated measures to make the metric system legal in Canada.

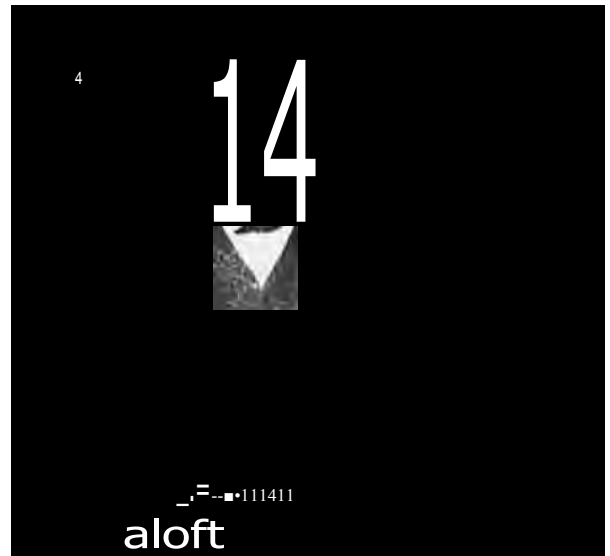
In August, 1872, when Morris became Chief Justice in the tiny new province of Manitoba, the judicial system was extremely confused. But Morris ruled the Court firmly, and eventually "conquered and mastered the respect of the whole Bar, at the same time gaining the esteem of the general public". His judicial career was short. In November, when an offer of the governorship was made to him, he immediately accepted.

The task facing Morris in his new position was far from a simple one, the social and political condition of Manitoba in 1872 presented many problems. Racial and religious questions threatened violence at any time, the Metis resistance and the execution of Scott were still live issues, frequent threats were made to arrest Riel and Lepine. Unpopular public figures were beaten in the streets, and the motley police force was largely drawn from that class of "roughs", many of them homeless and jobless, whose very presence could turn any event into a riot.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba exercised considerable influence. The province was so isolated that Morris was frequently called upon to recommend measures for the settlement of the half-breeds' and old settlers' land claims. In such cases, Morris usually took the side of the old settlers, trying to cut away confusion caused by incompetence and incomprehension of other Dominion officials. His spirit of fairness to the original settlers and his non-partisanship won him the respect of every significant segment of the population.

As lieutenant-governor of Manitoba, Morris was ex-officio also lieutenant-governor of the unorganized territories north-east and north-west of this province. His aim was to aid in the great work of colonizing the (Northwest) territories. His governorship may be said to mark the beginnings of the movement for self-government in the territories.

Morris' Indian treaties provided an important element of his career in the North-West. He had urged in 1869, that a "wise and kind policy" be adopted towards the Indians, and it became his unsolicited task to implement that ideal. Morris was sent in 1873 to negotiate a treaty with the Ojibway of Rainy Lake and its vicinity. This resulted in the Northwest Angle treaty, which was the first of four negotiated by Morris. His ambition was to



*Alexander Morris, Lieut.-Governor of Manitoba, 1872.*

induce the Indians to become, "by adoption of agricultural and pastoral pursuits, a self-supporting community." Excellent results were achieved in persuading the Indians of a vast region to accept the policy of the Dominion government.



*Alexander Morris was a benefactor to the Indians of Manitoba.*

While Morris was undecided to settle in Manitoba (his family was in Montreal) and sometimes wrote of it as "an exile", these were his most rewarding and productive years. His health improved greatly in the new climate, though his work was arduous. He retired from his office as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba in 1877.

He decided to run as a candidate in the Dominion election in 1878, for the county of Selkirk. The opposition branded Morris as an "outsider", and exploited his many weaknesses. Morris himself no gifted orator, was not polished in the art of politics, and was soundly defeated. This election ended Morris' career as a Western politician.

In the sixty-three years of his life, he attained distinction in his profession, law, and occupied many of the responsible posts open to men of wealth and education in his time. Energetically, he sought influence, recognition, and honors, yet poor health, and the indifference of his contemporaries, relegated him at an early age, to obscurity in the political firmament in Canada.



# 1880 - THE FOUNDING OF THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS

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Clerk of the Municipality  
of Morris.

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(Original fly leaf of the minute book at the first council of the R.M. of Morris).

During this time, there was an influx of settlers into the district, two Mennonite villages to the north-west, a settlement of about 100 people at the junction of the Morris and Red, and more arriving daily. These people felt a need for a local government.

The county of Morris was formed in 1880, (according to the Statutes of Manitoba 1880) and "comprised all territory between the County of Manchester and the county of Provencher, and between the line between Range 2 and 3 West to the Lake of the Woods".

The inaugural meeting of the municipality was held on May 3, 1880, where the following persons were elected to serve on the council. Jean E. Peter as warden (Reeve), Felix Gentes, George Belerance, George Iiirney, John Earl, Amable Gaudry, Joseph Pelessier, and George B. Elliott as clerk. The territory was divided into three wards, with two councillors representing each ward. The first meeting of the rural municipality of Morris was held

on May 11.

Business under discussion at that first meeting was the passing of a by-law respecting herding of animals, to regulate meetings and general conduct of business, for the raising of municipal revenue by taxation upon persons and property, and for the regulation of dykes and ditches.

If the concept "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" is true, it was even more so at that time. Council was under constant barrage from settlers to build bridges, roads and ditches, which were an obvious necessity as more and more homesteaders moved in and began breaking the prairie sod and settling homesteads. At one meeting alone, there were five requests for bridges. Twelve competent roadmasters were appointed on August 25, 1889, who were to oversee bridges and roads.

As herd laws were established, pounds were located in the most convenient places in each ward, with an ap-



*Pounds were established to prevent animals from running at large.*

pointed pound keeper responsible for the regulation of same. The pound was at least one acre of fenced property, to prevent the escape of impounded animals. Since the poundkeeper did not receive remuneration from the municipality, the pound was maintained by fees and fines imposed upon persons whose animals were at large. The poundkeepers were required to take good care of the animals in their charge, and to see to it that the animals did not in any way depreciate in value while in their care. This system did provide some order, and protection of people and property from animals at large.

### Assessments

In 1881, the council undertook the immense task of completing assessment rolls to record the number and location of each person on each lot for purposes of taxation. It was an immense task due to the fact that large tracts of land were bought up by various investment and land companies, who in turn sold parcels to individuals.

Land was disposed of in many ways during the settlement of the west - through homesteads, pre-emptions, sales of government lands to individuals and land companies, sale of Hudsons Bay Company lands, reserves for colonies, grants to railroad companies. The CPR received 25 million acres of land and \$25 million as a result of its agreement with the government of Canada. These 25 million acres were stipulated the odd numbered sections suitable for settlement within 25 miles of the railroad. Many of these lands were sold to the Canada North West Land Company (a subsidiary of CPR).



*Douglass Land Co., one of the six situated in Morris, across from Kastner house.*

There were, at one time, six branches of land companies established in the Town of Morris, many of these originated in the east (Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Co.) some south of the border (Manitoba-Illinois Land Co.). Therefore, it was common that the landowners did not even reside in the district at all, and the problem of obtaining addresses of these absentee owners in order to collect tax money, was time consuming. These problems were compounded by the fact that even though the lands were sold, if they were not yet patented, the municipality could not collect tax money for same. These conditions persisted for years before they were finally resolved.

Other problems reared their heads. Colonel Westover, manager of Lowe Farm, objected to the taxes assessed for 1880. The Colonel thought the taxes were too high, as a considerable amount of their land was low and wet. A council member upon inspection, discovered the land under water! The principal objection though, was the fact that since only a small portion of the land in the municipality was assessed that year, it was not fair to make the few pay taxes for the many!

The council did show a considerable amount of ability, as they were able to operate from May to November without financial aid. Then it was resolved "that in view of the existing financial obligations resting upon the municipality, and the fact that it would be March before tax money was collected, council empowered the warden to raise the sum of \$2,000.00 for the best terms he could secure to meet the present need".

Many times farmers came to council with letters of request to have their taxes reduced or cancelled due to ill fortune. Among the requests were the case of a woman who was recently widowed, who had been unable to work the land efficiently, cases of illness, disease of horses, prairie fires, adverse weather conditions, such as

*Phum. London Nov 19th 1900  
E. H. & Family By Sec. Treas.  
Morris*

*Dear Sir*

*I must let you know that all my crops has destroyed by hail this year and would like to have the taxes diminished as I did not take in anything from my farms this year therefore it is very hard for me to pay even a small sum. Kindly let me know what can be done in this case and oblige*

*Yours truly  
A. Tulebaum*



drought, hail or flooding. Council members did indeed "have a heart" as many such requests were granted.

Provincial aid was forthcoming too at times. A cheque for \$100.00 was received from the Dept. of Agriculture in 1887 to assist those farmers who suffered losses from prairie fires. This was mainly to compensate for haystacks which were burned.

Taxation - 1882

An estimated \$14,000.00 was required to meet the expenses of the current year. "Whereas total assessment, according to the last Revised Assessment Roll, is \$1,621,647; whereas the sum of \$5,500.00 is due the Rural Municipality, council authorizes the treasurer to levy a rate of 2 mills on the dollar of all taxable property. He is also authorized to levy various rates of taxation as requested by boards of school trustees for school purposes. Council shall advertise in the Morris Herald that all taxes are due by residents of the municipality." If not paid within 30 days after first publication, said taxes were collected by seizure and sale of chattels. The tax collector was required to call at least once at the house of every resident ratepayer, and leave a tax notice with amount of taxes due, demanding payment of same.

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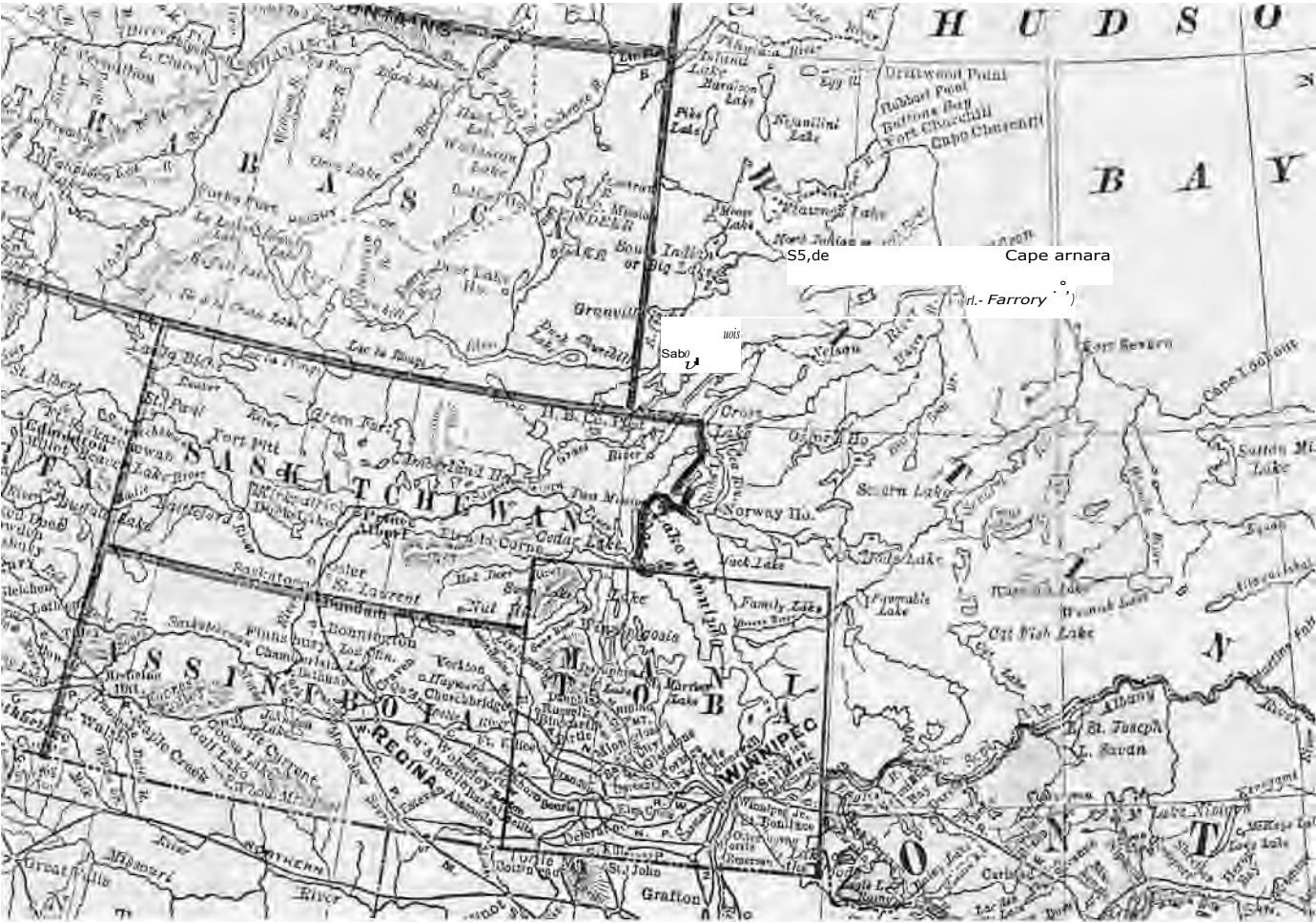
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Manitoba, the postage stamp province; in 1870, the population was 25,000. The boundaries were changed in 1905.

# MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES

1877

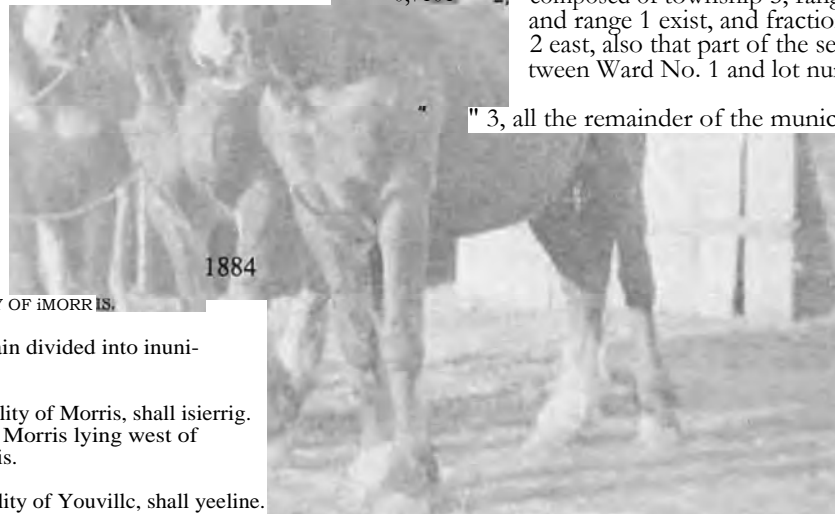
## THE MUNICIPAL ACT

The Norquay Government in 1880 passed a Municipal Act requiring councillors and wardens to be elected to office. To be eligible for warden, a person had to own property valued at \$400.00, and must have resided in the area for one year. (In 1884, warden was changed to Reeve.)

Municipal councils were responsible for buildings and maintaining roads, and bridges, establishing school districts, the arbitrating of disputes over their boundaries, weed control, stray animals, health inspection, care of the indigent, and the levying of municipal and school taxes.

1884

(7.) The County of Morris shall comprise townships 4, 5 and 6, ranges 1 and 2, west; and ranges 1 and 2 east, whole or fractional, with that portion of the settlement belt in the parish of Ste. Agathe, including lots Nos. 299 to 527 on the west side, and lots Nos. 242' to 530 on the east side of the Red River, inclusive, including the Town of Morris.



MUNICIPALITIES OF THE COUNTY OF MORRIS.

22. The County of Morris shall remain divided into municipalities as follows

(No. 1.) To be known as the Municipality of Morris, shall comprise that portion of the County of Morris lying west of the Red River, except the Town of Morris.

(No. 2.) To be known as the Municipality of Youville, shall comprise that portion of the County of Morris lying east of the Red River.

(No. 3.) The Town of Morris as incorporated.

Town of

1890. "BOUNDARIES OF MUNICIPALITIES. CAP. 55.

MORRIS.

2S The rural municipality of Morris, shall comprise townships 4, 5 and 6, ranges 1 and 2 west, and range 1 east, and townships 5 and 6, range 2 east, whole or fractional; with that portion of the Settlement belt in the Parish of Ste. Agathe, including lots Nos. 299 to 527 on the west side and lots 338 to 528 on the east side of the Red River inclusive, except the Town of Morris.

11 The letters patent incorporating a municipality shall specify the name, limits, extent, and nature of the municipality; the day on which the council shall first meet; a presiding officer for the first meeting of the council; and such other provisions as may be necessary for the establishment of such municipality; and the Provincial Secretary shall give notice in the *Gazette* and in a local newspaper that letters patent have been granted.

1880

CLXI. No. 11, or Morris, shall comprise townships 4, 5 and 6, in ranges 1 and 2 west, and range 1 east, and that part of township 6, range 2 east, and that part of the settlement belt, between and including lot 239 to the municipality of Cartier on the west side of Red River, and shall be divided into three insils, each of which shall elect two councillors, as follows

Ward No. 1, composed of township 4, ranges 1 and 2 west, and range 1 east, and that portion of the settlement belt between the southern boundary of the municipality and the aquic base line produced, to the Red. River. • •

"0,7101 " 2, composed of township 5, ranges 1 and 2 west, and range 1 east, and fractional part of range 2 east, also that part of the settlement belt between Ward No. 1 and lot number 433.

" 3, all the remainder of the municipality.

## THE HOMESTEAD ACT

The Dominion Land Act of 1872, set up conditions of homesteading. A person had to be head of a family, or if single over 21 years of age, a British subject by birth or naturalization, must register the claim in a land office, and pay a \$10.00 fee. He was required to live on the homestead six months of the year for 5 years, clear a specified amount of acres, own a specified number of cattle, build a cabin not smaller than 16 x 18 feet. Land could be any size up to 160 acres, which gave him the right to buy that land after he gained title to his homestead. The government also allowed settlers to take a 20 acre wood lot, if they had no wood on their land.



## A TOWN IS BORN

With the advent of the coming of the railroad, excitement and promise rang in the air. The pioneers knew that this would mean transportation for produce, the influx of settlers and a better means of communication for themselves. Every settlement was vying for the railroad, assured that progress and growth would follow. It was with great dismay that the people learned the railroad bed would bypass Morris, by six miles as the grade was being built west of the settlement. The leaders of the community put their heads together and decided they must woo the railroad through the Scratching River village at any cost. A bonus of \$100,000 was offered for the railway to locate here. It was discovered that the Statutes of Manitoba allowed a municipality to give aid for the purpose of establishing a railroad, under a by-law, but when added to the existing debt, it should not exceed 25c per acre of land in the municipality. So the municipality could only offer a \$45,000 bonus.

The citizens of Scratching River decided withdrawal from the rural municipality and incorporation as a town was the only solution to the obstacles it encountered, in getting diversion of the railway service to where the town of Morris now is.

In 1882, the provincial legislature was petitioned for the incorporation of Scratching River as a town. There appears to have been a great deal of controversy at the time, on the merits of the village becoming incorporated, but it was granted, and the village became the town of Morris.

The actual date of incorporation was January 9, 1883, with the acreage listed as 6,100, and assessments of \$26,100. In 1906, 4,000 acres were removed from the town's jurisdiction, and incorporated into the municipality. Present town boundaries include 2,035 acres of property.

This new town had 549 ratepayers in 1883 and property assessments were:

Town lots in Morris on Main Street (south of Scratching River) \$60.00 each

*RIGHT All Saints English Church, Rev. R.F. Cox.*



*LEFT: Fire Hall, Morris.*

*RIGHT: Presbyterian Church, Rev. Geo. Bennett, Pastor.*



*The CPR Station in Morris about 1883, when Milner was the agent. The railroad was the topic of much controversy and the cause of financial difficulty for the town and municipality for a number of years.*



*Morris in 1897, from the Kastner House. The road is the present No. 23 Highway, Presbyterian church is at the far right.*

Town lots on Boyne Avenue \$50.00 each  
 On Main Street north of Scratching River \$25.00 each  
 Red River Lots \$3.00 per acre  
 Township east of the Meridian \$3.00 an acre  
 Remainder of property \$2.00 an acre.

The first meeting of the Morris town council was held on March 1, 1883, with George A. Glines as mayor, and Ben Shorts as secretary-treasurer. The proceedings of that and subsequent meetings appear to have been characterized with activity, enterprise, courage, determination and an overly generous vision of expenditure that would tend to make the town a metropolis. But the lavish spending brought an early bust. From 1885-1894, no council meetings were held, as the infant town's life was constricted by the heavy debt load.

In 1893, the Manitoba Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, was petitioned to appoint an investigation on the town's financial affairs. A new town council, organized in January 1894, proposed a drastic economy

to pull the town out of its debts. And they were successful. Alpine Chisholm, a member of the town council, elected mayor in 1896, was the driving force that succeeded in extricating the town from its debts. In 1902, citizens of the town assembled in the hall over Marshall Lawrie's store to pay tribute to Mr. Chisholm's efforts, and presented him with an engraved gold watch for his efforts.

#### 1885 STATISTICS

*Population:* 46 married males, 48 married females, 95 single males, 68 single females, 257 total.

*Religions:* (x) major -- Presbyterian (x), Methodist (x), Anglican (x), Catholic, Lutheran.

*Births Deaths:* 7 births registered, 6 deaths registered.

*Ages:* Average age of householder - 37 years old, oldest resident, John Stewart - 55 years.

*Livestock:* 11 oxen, 34 cows, 28 young cattle, 40 horses, 47 hogs.



*A Dominion Day celebration in Morris, complete with parade and events on Morris Main Street. The town grew from its first beginnings as a fur trading post and stage stop, to that of a bustling community with a population of 1,818. The town is trading centre for a prosperous grain growing area, and has now expanded to include many industries.*

# BRIDGING THE WATERS

Since the settlements were located along the river initially, due to the fact that this was the only means of transportation, there was a constant need for a way to cross the river. The ferry boat seemed to be the best solution economically. The location of these were debatable, ferries were frequently re-located, not only to suit the demands of the travellers, but also due to the approaches or conditions of the river bank.

In 1881, two ferries were purchased at Emerson for the sum of \$600.00, one was to be placed at St. Jean Baptiste, and another at Morris. Later, there would be two more ferries, located at Silver Plains and Union Point. Ferryman were hired to operate and keep the ferry boat in good repair, as well as removing it from the water in fall to protect it from the ice, and rising waters in the spring.

The ferryman's life was not an easy one, as he was required to be on duty from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sometimes he even slept on the ferry! Accidents occurred at times, and municipal councils paid damages. One farmer, who had lost a wagon load of wheat (40 bushels) received payment for same!

Was everyone satisfied with the location of the ferry boats? Evidently not. A petition was presented by one group of ratepayers requesting the ferry to be moved upriver, and a petition from another group requesting it to remain where it was! There was a bit of persuasion in the case of the latter, since the petition was accompanied with a sum of \$25.00 from some Morris residents who sincerely desired the ferry remain, and a promise of another \$25.00 if this should be accomplished! The decision? For that year at least, the ferry would remain.



*The old ferry across the Red River at Morris.*

There were several ferries on the Red River between Emerson and Winnipeg. They were located in Letellier, St. Jean, Aubigny, Union Point, Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe and St. Norbert. The last of these to operate was in St. Adolphe.

## OPERATION OF THE FERRIES

Iron bars attached to the ferry, held pulleys that the cable ran on. To operate the ferry, cable was stretched across the river, and tied to a large tree trunk on one shore, and to a winch on the other shore.

The ferry of the 1880's was propelled across the river by men pulling the cable with their hands. This required a lot of 'elbow grease', especially **if** there was a head wind to overcome.

Later, the ferry was moved by means of a crank that would wind the cable around a drum and so make the ferry move forward. By turning the crank in the opposite direction, the ferry would move back to the other shore.



*The ferry at Aubigny, at one time, the only way to cross the river.*

The ferry was mechanized, when ingeniously, some handyman found that a stationary gasoline engine and a car transmission would propel the ferry along the cable and across the river, thus easing the ferry man's job. Due to the force exerted by the motor, the size of the ferry was enlarged, so that more vehicles could ride across on one trip. Traffic was increasing all the time, so the ferry was busy day and night.

In the middle 1940's, electricity replaced the gasoline motor and at this time, two ferry men were hired so that they worked in shifts.

The greatest inconvenience was in the spring and fall. By November, the ice started to freeze on the river so the ferry could not easily reach the pier on either shore. By means of ice bars and ice saws, the ferry operator could break the ice and keep the channel open, but there came a time when the ice was too thick and the ferry was stuck. For a few days, or sometimes, a few weeks, no one would attempt to cross until the ice became thick and strong enough to form a road for the whole winter. By February, the ice all around the ferry was cut, and it was raised on the shore so as not to be damaged when the spring breakup came.



## Bridges



*The removal of the ferry from the water for winter was an annual chore.*

Spring time was the time of greatest hardship and danger for all those who needed to cross the river. The ice was slowly melting and weakening so that it would no longer carry the weight of loads or even persons on foot. Every spring, someone would risk his life to take some important item, such as mail bags, across. In the Aubigny area on Sundays, people on the west side would walk on long slippery boards 8 or 10 inches wide, to attend mass in town.

In Morris, Cyril Peck recalls daring individuals who would venture across the ice to attend a Saturday night dance in town, or to go courting. There may have been many a frigid ducking, but no drowning ever occurred due to these escapades.

After six to eight weeks, the ice would break up and start drifting down the river. This was a dangerous time, because row boats were used to cross and large ice floes were encountered, which could easily upset the boat or even crush it.

When all the ice was gone, the ferry was put afloat once more, depending on the water level. If the water was too high, the cable running across the river would not reach, but when everything got back to normal, the ferry would resume operation for another season. The ferry became a place for socializing, chatting, gossiping, speculating, joking, etc., so that the ferry man had no time to get bored. Tired, yes, often, but never bored.



*The new ferry at Aubigny in 1945, now motorized, and provided a shelter for the ferryman.*

Bridges were needed over coulees, ditches, rivers and streams. There were at least eight bridges constructed by the spring of 1882, six of which were on the main highway on the west bank of the Red River. These were all washed out as a result of raging spring waters. To the newly formed municipality struggling to establish itself, it was a disaster. An appeal was made for provincial assistance, but the immediate solution was in the hands of the roadmasters. They cleaned up the debris, and salvaged timbers for reuse. With weather hindering reconstruction, the settlers were at a great disadvantage for the remainder of the year.

Sometimes there were miscalculations. In 1881, Joseph Bertrand, one of the bridge contractors, insisted he needed \$100.00 more than promised for his bridge contract. When he started building the bridge over Stewarts Coulee on Second Base Line, he discovered they would have to build 60 feet longer than estimated. Thereafter, the services of an engineer were obtained to inspect a site before a bridge was built.



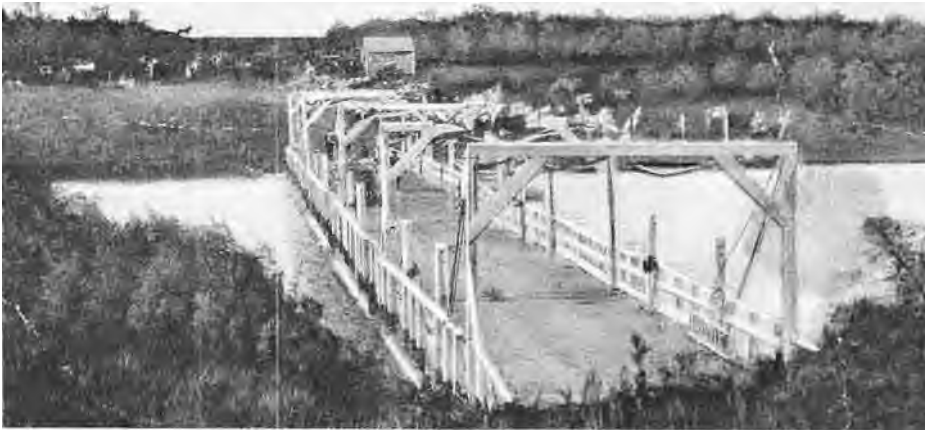
*One of the early bridges over the Lewis Coulee in Pleasant Valley.*

Robert Coates, another contractor, reported he could not build the bridge on the south branch of the Morris River because of high water. This was not due to a flood, however, the residents had dammed up the river to keep the water for their cattle.

Misfortunes: John McTavish was paid \$27.00 damages for his cow, who broke her leg on McTavish bridge. The cow was assessed at \$25.00 plus the loss of 30 pounds of milk per day from time of accident till payment.

A bridge over the Red River at Morris was an urgent need, and delegates travelled to Drayton, North Dakota to inspect their pontoon bridge. James Clubb was delegated to negotiate such construction with the provincial government.

A pontoon bridge was considered the best solution to the high waters experienced every spring on the Red River. Extra sections of bridge could be added as the water rose, with the pontoons resting on the water. It was built in 1906, by J.C. Badger, with great fanfare, as the first bridge of this kind in Manitoba, over the Red River in this municipality.



The new Red River bridge. declared formally opened on June 1, 1921, by Hon. C.D. McPherson, Minister of Public Works. Reeve Churchill of Morris, Reeve Beaubien of Montcalm, and Mayor Code of Morris. A basket picnic was held on the Court house grounds, with a band, cadets, and numerous school children in attendance. Photo courtesy, Jim Stanley.

Upkeep for the pontoon bridge was shared between the municipality and the town. One year after construction, over \$800.00 was spent on repairs, and this trend continued. By 1913, citizens were determined to have a steel bridge erected, but costs were prohibitive. When it was learned the steel bridge at Emerson was being torn down, a request was made to have it re-erected here at Morris!

After much planning and discussion with provincial and federal authorities, construction of a steel traffic bridge was begun, in 1919, and opened to the public on June 1, 1921. It cost the municipality \$28,377.00. It was a gala affair. Bridging the Red River was no small feat. A parade of dignitaries officiated at the ribbon cutting ceremonies, amid the numerous interested spectators. Reeve George Churchill, councillors, visiting dignitaries, and contractors, gathered at a reception in the court house to honor the occasion.

## Pontoon Bridg iff

The pontoon bridge is again in the limelight. When th6 waters of the Red receded, • the sections of the pontoon adjacent to the shore. became tipped up in such a position as to fill with water. Each section carried down the next one to it. so that 'ow all sections of the bridge are under water except one A. gang of men are at work on it. iii an attempt to run it as a ferry; The other sections, submerged to the flooring: axe moored here and there to the bank. All day Tues- day two pumps and men with pails worked in a determined. but fruit- less effort to get ahead of the wafer that came iu faster than it could be pumped out. Mayor Wilton went to Winnipeg on Wednesday for a larger pump. The whole trouble has apparently been caused itv tin- neglect of the authorities to have the bridge kept floating at the 14hores.

*The pontoon bridge (left corner) erected in 1906, was the solution to high water in spring, as sections could be added to lengthen it. It was not without problems though, and high upkeep encouraged residents to campaign for a permanent bridge. A sign across the bridge read, "Do not cross this bridge faster than a walk".*



IL

Bridge over the Red River under construction in 1919.





*Municipal bridges were a great necessity, to cross the Morris River that winds through the municipality, and to traverse the drainage ditches. This bridge at Rosenhoff was built by Jacob Penner (bridge foreman) under contract for \$550.00 in 1936. Pile driving was done manually, and the dirt work done by spade - no backhoes then.*

While this bridge was a link to the landowners on the east side of the Red River, there still remained the task of bridging the Morris River on Lord Selkirk Highway at Morris. Just two years later, in 1923, this was accomplished, with an expenditure of \$7,600.00 for piles and \$24,000 for concrete, the municipality's share.

Both these bridges were replaced in the ensuing years, as the raising of roads, and the height of flood waters, increased the need for higher bridges.



*ABOVE: The first concrete bridge over the Morris River built in 1921.*

*LEFT: The flood waters of 1948, covering the Morris bridge. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

*LEFT CORNER: Emil Gorchitza on the bridge with his new Chevrolet near their farmstead in 1935.*

*BELOW: The municipal bridge crew at work installing culverts in 1963.*



## AUBIGNY BRIDGE - A TRIUMPH

On May 13, 1966, the Rural Municipality of Morris paid out almost \$105,000.00 cash, as their part of the costs of the newly constructed bridge at Aubigny. Total costs for the bridge were over \$500,000.

Bruce McKenzie, then Reeve of the municipality, said this was a first for a Manitoba municipality.

"When we went to the Minister of Public Works, George Johnson, in 1962, and told him that we had the money ready, he was very surprised."

The municipality started setting aside funds in 1958 for the bridge, and considering interest earned on the fund, actual cost to ratepayers was under \$50,000.

This new bridge replaced the ferry, which operated on the river there for many years. With cost of upkeep for the ferry annually at \$6,000, the bridge becomes a valuable asset.

Agitation for the bridge first began in 1952; the first official meeting held in the new Normandin Hall. After 3 young people drowned when their car crashed through the guard when they drove onto the ferry, pressure for a bridge was stepped up.

On September 24, 1966, Hon. Harry Enns, Minister of Agriculture, snipped the ribbon and declared the bridge officially open. Acting Reeve, C.J. Neufeld, and Ed Saurette, councillor for this ward, represented the municipality.

A reception was held for guests and municipal dignitaries following the official opening with a dance culminating the evening commemorating the historic occasion.

*The bridge gang for the R.M. of Morris on the job in 1979. LEFT TO RIGHT: Willie Penner, Jake Penner, Harry Penner, Peter Wiebe, Ken Brown.*



*Official opening of the Aubigny bridge on Sept, 24, 1966, by the Honorable Harry Enns, acting Reeve, C.J. Neufeld, and Ed Saurette, Councillor.*



*A 28 man crew from the R.M. of Morris cutting and clearing brush from the banks of the Morris River between Morris and Rosenort. The work was carried out under the provincial government's winter works program in 1967.*

# **DRAINING \ THE PRAIRIE MARSHES**



*From the Family Album of Hazel Lewis Gregory Anderson.*

## DRAINING THE PRAIRIE MARSHES

"The basic industry of man is agriculture and the greatest economic service we can render to the Empire, is to increase the production of foodstuffs. Next to the soil itself, the most essential requirement for successful farming is the proper control of surface water. In thorough and systematic drainage, lies the only hope of ensuring good crops from year to year" quoted by G.B. McColl from "Drainage in the Red River Valley in Manitoba".

Drains that were constructed have been the means of reclaiming large areas of swamp land which were converted into productive farms, and to change inaccessible and underdeveloped sections of the country into revenue producing municipalities.

Settlement began along the Red, the Salle, and Morris Rivers, and later along the lower reaches. As time went on, settlement spread from either side, as it became known that the soil of the low prairies was very highly productive, there developed a drainage system to bring this rich land under cultivation.

The first drainage project undertaken by the provincial government during 1880-1887, was the drainage of the prairie marshes, one of which was the Boyne Marsh.

Draining of the Boyne Marsh was undertaken at a cost of \$49,000.00 for the purpose of lowering water levels and increasing areas for cultivation, and hay.

The provincial government had large expenditures for reclaiming and improving the land. At this time, the even numbered sections were still owned by the Dominion government, and efforts were being made to obtain them.

Municipalities were all divided into drainage districts, portions of this municipality were in Drainage District No. 2, No. 6 and No. 12. In 1898, when tenders were received for work to be done in this area, many letters of protest were received over the proposed drainage, but since no petition was received, work commenced.

Settlers crowding into Manitoba in the 1880's and 1890's avoided drainage districts No. 2 and No. 12, because in spring, they saw a "sea of water" that stretched for miles. Comments were "no homesteader with any common sense ever tried to farm in the middle of a lake". These lands formed a natural reservoir or storage basin for all the high land.

During drier spells, people came and settled, oblivious of the water problems, later moving further west to escape the floods of the Red River Valley. Thousands of acres of land were bought for \$2.00 to \$4.00 an acre at this time.

A letter in 1882, from the Registry Office, County of Morris, John A. Walker registrar, states "Drainage work done east of the South Branch of Scratching River at the Lower Mennonite Village, in 1880-81, was completed, with the drain 1 1/2 feet wide at the bottom. Upon inspection, it was noted that the first 250 feet of the drain had caved in". This was the Tobacco Creek Drain, built by Messrs. Carman and Monroe at 17 1/2¢ per cubic yard.

Water came from all directions. In 1883, from the Annual report of Public Works Minister: "The bridge



*Scenes such as this were common, as spring thaw, and water from the west came across the land. It was many years before these problems were corrected.*

over the Morris River near its junction with the Red River at Morris has been completely carried away. The flood rose about 12 feet above the flooring and lifted it bodily away. At the time of greatest flood, the water had been nearly 30 feet higher than at any time that levels were taken, which was on the 3rd day of August, 1883, when the river was 100 feet wide and greatest depth 9 feet."

Four smaller bridges were built by Statute Labor, and 882 yards of ditching was done on the north side of the Second Base Line (now No. 23).

In 1895, the Land Drainage Act was passed, and in 1898, the Chief Engineer of the Dept. of Public Works made a report urging the desirability of the drainage of the area as being of public interest, and giving as his opinion that the land, when drained, would be trebled in value.

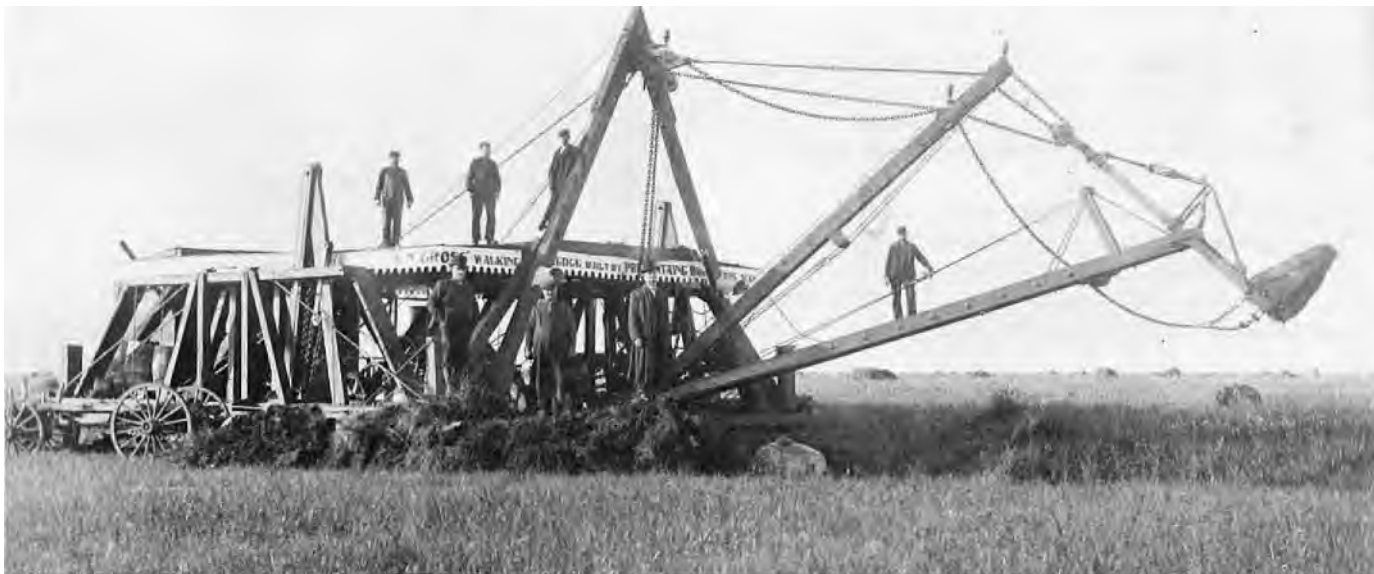
Construction began soon after. The plan was to prevent flooding by carrying the waters of the Boyne River and Tobacco Creek through to the Morris River by artificial channels, and numerous ditches. The costs of such construction was charged to the lands in each drainage district.

Considerable flooding in 1912 had the people up in arms. There was a great concern that the drainage that had been designed to alleviate problems, only made them worse. Now, lands were flooding that had never flooded before.

In May, 1916, other municipalities turned their surplus water onto the Morris Municipality.

John Wilton had been appointed drainage commissioner for the Rural Municipality of Morris and he called a meeting of the ex-Reeves to review the drainage problem. John Wilton, James Clubb, Henry Snarr, Dr. Molloy and A.E. Code made several decisions. They would request government assistance for financing drainage, employ a competent surveyor for advice, and hold a ratepayers meeting.

Speakers at this mass meeting were H.A. Bowman, Minister of Public Works, G. McColl, land surveyor,



*This walking dredge was the first one built in Manitoba by Prefontaine Bros. of St. Pierre in the early 1900's. It had legs that walked on each side of the ditch, and was powered by a stationary gas engine. It was used extensively on the east side of the Red River to construct ditches.*

J.T. Huggard, solicitor for the Rural Municipality of Morris, and John Wilton.

Ratepayers were urged to co-operate with council to make a strong case for compensation from the government for damages caused, and for maintenance of bridges and ditches in the future. It was agreed that a survey was necessary, but would cost about \$4500.00.

H.A. Bowman, chief engineer, remarked: "The drainage solution as we all know, has become more serious. Agricultural activity has increased to such an extent that demands for an efficient drainage system has been imperative. Repairs to old drains are also necessary, as total neglect has allowed them to deteriorate until many have only 40% of original efficiency.

The assessment of lands in the Drainage District has worked a severe hardship on many of the municipalities, that even by striking the highest rate allowed by the Municipal Act, they cannot raise sufficient money to meet the demands for ward improvement, letting alone the maintenance to drainage canals and ditches.

All this work means money, but where shall it come from? The people object to more money being raised unless they are assured they will be relieved of the water in a satisfactory manner."

The municipalities themselves could not resolve the problem because they did not have the funds, secondly, many drains involved work in two municipalities. The solution? "*Petition to have the work done under The Drainage Act.*" This would give government power to act, funds could be provided, and work completed. To this end, petition forms were prepared and circulated, representing the Red River Valley Drainage Improvement Association.

Representatives from the municipalities of Morris, Dufferin, MacDonald, Montcalm, Rhineland, Roland and Thompson, who had met for discussion of local water problems, and protested against any further



*Ditching machine at work on the Bell Drain. Photo courtesy Walter Anderson.*

drainage being done until the Drainage Commission had made its report. The hopes expressed were "for a successful end to give the expected relief to the patient and long suffering farmer who has been trying each year to carry on seeding operations in a mixture of water and Red River clay."

Dominion land surveyors, Gilbert B. and Samuel Ebenezer McColl, were contracted to make a topographical survey of the entire municipality, including drawing up plans, placing bench monuments, and other work specified. This was to ascertain the losses and damages ratepayers incur as a result of draining land from outside the municipal boundaries, for the purpose of making out a case against the government and adjoining municipalities for compensation, and to suggest remedies to prevent the enormous loss which occurs annually here.



The concerns of the Morris municipality regarding the proposed drainage were as follows:

1. *Why are we expected to take care of channels carrying foreign water that do not provide any local drainage.*
2. *We could handle our local drainage if the municipalities to the west would not turn their water on us.*
3. *We do not have any benefits from these drains.*
4. *The land was dry before drains were constructed.*
5. *The fixed assessments are a hardship.*
6. *We want east-west drains, but fear that other municipalities will use them as an outlet for their surplus water.*
7. *Original design of drain was not properly calculated, constructed or located.*
8. *We want entire relief from cost and upkeep of channels required to carry surplus water from the high land to the west to the Red River to the east.*
9. *Therefore, alterations in the Drainage Act are necessary.*

The Drainage Commission held the view that where drains or road improvements on the higher land was turning water down, and overtaking to over flooding the capacity of the channels in the drainage district, the higher lands should pay. The ratio had yet to be decided upon and calculated fairly.

Land assessments for 1905 were: good land outside drainage district - \$6 an acre, good land in drainage district, \$5 an acre, all other lands \$4 an acre.

One factor of drainage and its difficulties are peculiar to this region -- streams which originate in the mountains and hills lying to the west, do not have continuous channels leading their water from the foothills across the level prairies to the river channels, but discharge them upon the more level plains lying between the foothills and the rivers. In their unimproved condition, the lands which receive this drainage were swampy. The larger and more important part of the drainage work has been the construction of ditches which will intercept the water from the hill streams and lead it to the river outlet. When



*The Kronsgard ditch being dug in 1927; Diedrich Dyck was the operator.*

this was successfully done, the flat prairies which were formerly swamps, were relieved of all water except that which falls directly on them.

To provide for snow melting floods, the desire was to provide a floodway channel between levees or dykes, to gather the water and carry it over the surface to the outlet, thus confining it, and preventing it from overflowing the land. This plan, the double dyke system, was first proposed by E.A. August of Homewood in 1917. (By 1918, more than 472 miles of drain had been completed in drainage district No. 2.)

The original plan called for two main channels, the Norquay to connect the Boyne and Morris, and Tobacco Creek to Morris. The 4N was another. Around 1920, all three were double dyked. That is a second dyke was constructed 300 feet from the original channel to confine flood waters within.

When the work began, in this municipality, a resolution passed by the Rural Municipality of Morris halted the project for 5 years. "Whereas said drains will cause serious damage to lands in said municipality it was resolved that the council of the Rural Municipality of Morris protest against the construction of said drains until such a time as a suitable intercepting channel has been provided to carry the water so diverted to the Morris River, without damage to the lands in this municipality."

One of the most important contributions to understanding local water problems and assisted in the solution of it, was the survey done by McColl and McColl in 1916.



*LEFT: The floating steam dredge that dug the Tobacco Creek drain in 1903.*

*BELOW: The first bridge over the Shannon spillway in 1905.*



# McCOLL'S SURVEY REPORT ON DRAINAGE IN THE RM OF MORRIS - 1917

The province of Manitoba contains within its boundaries, the outlet system of a vast watershed, stretching from the Rocky Mountains to Hudson Bay. Lake Winnipeg - 713 feet above sea level - acts as a collecting basin for the runoff from the great agricultural areas of this watershed (including all the arable land in Manitoba) and so we may regard this lake as the ultimate outlet for agricultural drainage in the province. A ridge crosses the province running north-west and south-east. West of this ridge, the land continues at a higher elevation falls off from about 1000 feet above sea level down to the level of Lake Winnipeg.

The Red River, like Lake Winnipeg, lies in a trough, the land sloping toward it from both east and west, and the river through its tributaries forms the natural outlet of the major portion of Manitoba's arable land.



The precipitation in Manitoba is not great, ranging from 15 to 20 inches a year, and there is barely sufficient for the needs of the crops. The land here is never seriously damaged by water that falls on it, but entirely by that which flows over or accumulates on it from adjoining lands. On an acreage of the total rainfall, 9 inches falls during the growing season, 5 inches after harvest, which forms a reserve supply for the next season, and 7 inches during the months when the ground is frozen. This last must largely run off the surface or evaporate as it cannot sink in to any extent.

Two tributary streams, the Salle and Morris Rivers, form the main outlets for drainage. The watershed comprises slightly over 2 million acres, and of this the Morris river has to take care of some 900,000 acres of land. Several streams which rise in the Pembina Mountains, lose themselves on reaching the more level land, and spread out over the country to form large marshy tracts. (One, the Boyne Marsh, extended across several townships.) In addition to the spring freshets from the slopes of the Pembina Mountains, occasional floods from the Assiniboine inundated large areas, the water flowing a southwesterly course overland to the Red River.

In Manitoba, the spring floods occur at a season, which is a critical one for the farmer. A little delay in spring seeding may make the difference between a good crop and a failure. Drainage to be effective, must relieve the land quickly of its surplus water. Even in a dry season, it does not pay to have water lie on the surface. It is noticeable in a field of grain that where spots have remained wet until the water sinks in or evaporates, that grain does not germinate readily, and weeds get the upper hand, resulting in a poor yield.

Among the special considerations which affect the district under consideration two are outstanding: -

1. The drains at the time they are required to give the most service are full of packed snow and ice, which retards the flow.
2. The district depends almost entirely on surface water for domestic and farm purpose; the underground supply being saline and unsuitable even for stock. Consequently, all watercourses, both natural and artificial, are dammed at intervals to hold the water. This not only checks the flow, but through sedimentation, permanently decreases the capacity. The most satisfactory solution of this problem would be to excavate suitable reservoirs, the subsoil being an impervious clay, which readily holds water. This could be done economically on a large scale with proper machinery and would be a great boon to the district.

Beyond question, all the land in this watershed now lying idle or being farmed to little or no profit, can be



ABOVE: There was no drainage, water just came across the land as seen here at Yankee Brown's in 1916.



RIGHT: Bench monuments (cast iron protected by a concrete ring) were placed during McCall's survey in 1917.

easily brought into a high state of production. Co-operation is essential. There should be a revision of the drainage laws of the province to make them more in keeping with the principles of equity and justice, and at the same time more suitable to the present needs of development.

One of the methods used in making comprehensive level survey: were bench monuments (cast iron protected by concrete ring) placed every two miles each way throughout the area covered. Plans were made at each township, and all elevations recorded. The total cost of the survey was less than two cents per acre.

McColl's conclusion was that "swamp lands were originally the property of the province. Lands were not saleable until reclaimed. The provincial government should have met reclamation costs themselves. Provincial swamp lands were drained at the expense of the drainage district in which they were included."



Surveyors at work north of Lowe Farm prior to 1920.

By 1932, the sum of \$2,800,000 was spent in drainage district No. 2, of which Morris Municipality owed almost \$440,000 to the provincial government. The hard times of the thirties, when few could pay taxes, and municipalities



John Penner at Lowe Farm, the first bridge foreman for the R.M. of Morris, dyking during a flood in the early 1900's.

were in dire circumstances financially, a considerable amount of this debt was assumed by the Manitoba government.

In the Kane-Lowe Farm area, the Shannon Creek was the centre of attention. The Shannon was one of the first drainage ditches that was dug by means of a floating dredge in 1904. Waters from the Shannon Creek originating in the Pembina Hills are channelled east by the Shannon spillway, which in turn, empties into the Morris River by way of the Moyer (Lewis) Coulee.

As drainage was improved to the west, the Shannon was required to carry more water. A rapid thaw, and the water came from the hills so rapidly that Lowe Farm area residents could have a flood overnight, only to awaken to a sea of water. Heavy summer rains created the same effect.

When Died Heppner served on council of the Rural Municipality, he was determined to find a solution to this



problem. Ring dykes were constructed around farm yards with draglines, the result being a form of protection, but the people were still cut off by water. The water caused considerable damage, often washing out roads and



**J.P. Bergen**, using his John Deere tractor to navigate the waters around their farm home during one of the many spring floods.

bridges in the process. The local residents put up with this for years.

In 1960, a decision was made to reconstruct the Shannon, and \$3 / 4 million was spent on building this "big ditch", but it didn't work. In 1962, there was another flood, and in 1964, it was water, water, as far as the eye could see.

Reeve Bruce MacKenzie and Councillor Cornie Neufeld went back to the provincial planners, insisting there had to be a solution. Meetings were held in Lowe Farm to discuss the problem. Conclusions were: council wanted the Shannon widened by another 100 feet. It was agreed upon, and reconstruction began. In the final analysis, the Shannon cost \$1 1 / 4 million, but now functions well, carrying the water from the hills to the river.

The same techniques were used a few years later on the Tobacco Creek Drain and the 4N in the late sixties, to prevent the flooding of 225 square miles of rich farm land.



*Rising waters in the Shannon floodway have in years past caused much concern. Here Reeve Bruce MacKenzie (pointing) then secretary, Dave Harder (extreme left) and Councillors, C.J. Neufeld and Wm. Recksiedler, inspecting the damages along the route. In this scene, the Shannon is already over its banks, and the roadway is being washed away. In the final analysis, the Shannon cost \$1 1/4 million, **but now** functions well. Photo courtesy the Journal.*

Loss by flood damage in the area along the Red River south of Winnipeg published in 1946 were reductions in farm income due to inadequate drainage:

1943 - \$3,150,000  
1944 - \$10,900,000  
1945 - \$5,200,000

The loss of \$19,250,000 on 780,000 acres of land - important to treasuries.

In 1968, the Rural Municipality of Morris set a precedent which other areas soon began to follow, when they put a drainage case before the municipal courts. The ruling received at that time set forth that an upstream municipality must share the responsibility of drainage work done by a downstream municipality.

Undoubtedly, Manitoba has made more effort to find a satisfactory system for water control than most other

provinces. It has the most highly organized and sophisticated drainage program in Canada. Between 1955-65, the province spent \$18 million on drainage, and now has 7,600 miles of organized drains.

Morris municipal council spends \$160,000 a year on drainage maintenance, not including the main waterways, which the province now takes over. The municipality is 18 miles by 24 miles, has over 400 miles of drains, and a bridge at least every mile. Assessment comes to \$15 million. Land values have gone from \$5.00 an acre to \$700.00 an acre, and studies done in the past indicate that income per acre from drained land in the Red River Valley is about 50% higher than from un-drained crop land. Adequate drainage has been an important factor in contributing to the revenues produced on farm lands in this municipality.

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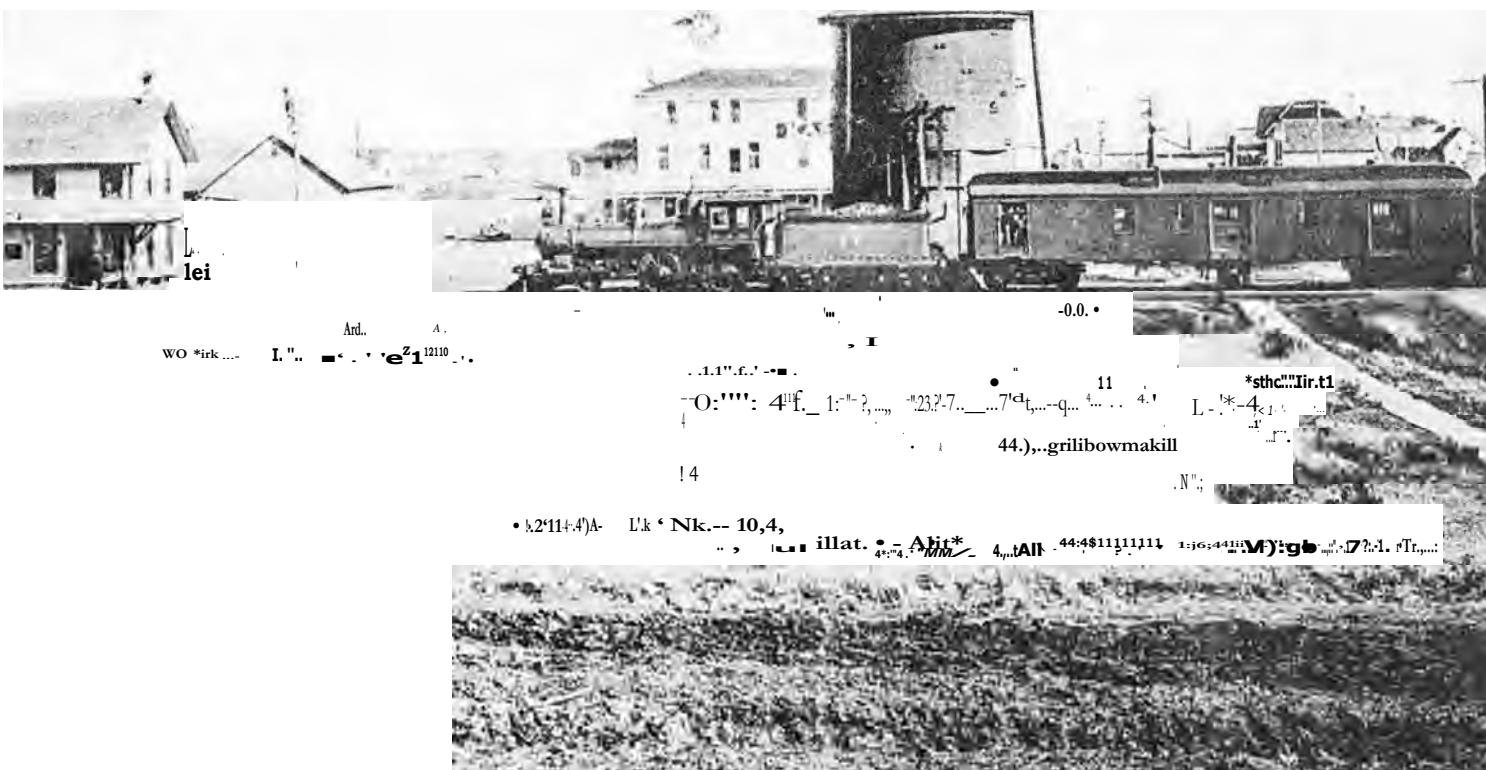
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# COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION

TRAIN TAKING WATER AT MORRIS, MAN.



The Brandon train taking water at Morris, Man. in 1906. Kastner House in background. Photo courtesy of Mel Anderson.

# COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORTATION

Connections between places are always important in a commercial economy. Manitoba has been connected with distant parts of the world since the 1670's when pelts obtained from beavers killed in the interior were first shipped to European markets. In fact, there is evidence that even before this, Indians from what is now Manitoba traded, either directly or through other Indians, with tribes as far south as present-day South Dakota.

The first widely used transportation routes were the waterways. Within Southern Manitoba, the Assiniboine and Red Rivers were important access routes.

Freeze up, of course, brought river travel to a halt in winter. Therefore, an easier means of communications was sought in the overland trails.

In the 1840s, the Hudson's Bay Company successfully brought supplies into the interior via the Mississippi river and then overland by Red river cart from St. Paul. This route was free of such obstacles as rocky country and muskeg, although its heavy clays and sloughs could turn travelling into weary drudgery, and even make the trails impassable in certain seasons. Few improvements were made on the trails; men with an eye for country simply chose the highest, driest ground, and the easiest places to ford streams. Three main tracks came into use, two east of the Red and one west. The use of the high-wheeled Red River carts, first built in the early 1800s, made this upper Red river area a "grand portage" from the Mississippi to Lake Winnipeg.



*Sketch of a Red River oxcart.*

These Red River carts were high wheeled, all wood, tied together with fresh rawhide, which when dried, was almost like an iron band. No iron was used in construction. A pony was hitched between the shafts of each cart. Since the axles of these carts were never greased, because grease softened the wood, they all ran dry, and each wheel played a different tune that could be heard for miles. It was known as the "cart wheel band".

## Stagecoach Days

"The snow covered timber, how beautiful it appeared in the bright moonlight, with now and then a tall oak,

snow-capped, standing sentry-like to tell us of the past and point out the future of this lovely, fertile and fast becoming populated valley of the Red River of the North."

These words were written in November of 1878 by a passenger on the stagecoach line along the Red River as he observed a passing scene, crouched under the blankets on a night ride with five other passengers, the mercury - 30 F.

The Minnesota Stage Company opened the stage line from Fargo to Fort Garry in September 1871. The trail followed the Red River, and in 1871 became known as the Great Highway. Stops spaced approximately 15 miles apart, within the Municipality, there were two stage stops, one located at Morris (Scratching River), and one at Union Point. The service was well organized so the schedule might be dependably maintained.

The station tenders saw to it that the outgoing teams were harnessed and ready to hook on with as little delay as possible. Ten to fifteen minutes was the time usually allowed at a station for changing teams. The stagedriver would begin to whoop and holler for attention some distance away, so that when he pulled up, the teams were ready to be hitched on. Arrangements were made for meals for passengers and for overnight stops at some stations. Menus of bacon or side pork, corn bread, dried apples or peaches, beans and coffee were furnished at 50 cents to \$1 per meal.

In 1874, Klyn's tavern at Scratching River, was a necessary, but by no means favorite stopping place for settlers and land seekers enroute. It was purchased by W. Gallie, whose advertisement in the Free Press stated that he had accommodation for 30 guests and 20 horses; and that the bill of fare would no longer be just boiled potatoes and tea, but the best the country afforded. Mr. Gallie also noted that he had purchased knives, forks and plates sufficient for all and to spare!

In the Stage house itself, buffalo robes were often hung on the walls to keep out the blowing snow in winter, which seemed to press through the chinks of the logs. It is said that Indian women were often the cooks in the stagehouses north of the International border; their food was never well accepted, and the tea undrinkable.

Exciting tales were told oft times when the stage was trapped by snowstorms and blizzards, and the occupants just "sat it out". On such occasions, the passengers were told to "get into a comfortable spot, keep well covered, and stay quiet". Coaches were equipped with sled runners for the winter.

In the days before drainage ditches, the marshes were a breeding spot for mosquitoes and gnats; and stage horses as well as the passengers and messengers, were driven half crazy by the insects. At times the horses panicked from the agony of the bites and ran wildly, with the stage driver barely able to restrain them. At stopping points, smudges were kept smoldering For the benefit of these.



*THE STAGE: A stagecoach such as this was used on the trek from the Forks to Fort Garry in the 1870's, carrying passengers and mail. There were two stage houses located in this municipality, one at Scratching River, and one at Union Point. Photo courtesy of Manitoba Archives.*

The stagecoach itself was built on more or less square lines, and having a canvas top, with the doors and sides provided with curtains of the same material. The coach commonly used along the Red River was called the "mud wagon". It was light and easily maintained. During the early spring, it was unsuitable because of its narrow wheels, and an ordinary broad wheeled wagon was used, much to the chagrin and discomfort of the passengers. It was ordinarily drawn by four horses, although six were used over the rough or hilly sections.

The driver sat atop holding the lines, his feet braced against the board below, and in front of the boot, an enclosed leather compartment which held an amazing quantity of mail bags, express baggage, passengers' luggage, and even an occasional stowaway.

At times a guard sat by the driver's side, and occasionally the express messenger. The express money box was sometimes kept under the driver's feet, at other times was bolted to the floor inside the coach. Some mail, light baggage and express was carried on top, held in place by an iron roof rail and ropes. Sometimes a passenger was allowed to ride on top at their own risk, hanging on as best they could.

Care of the horses came before that of the passengers. Horses were expensive, and difficult to replace. Being "sloughed in" was a common experience of stagecoaches in the area, and frequently it was necessary to unload the baggage and passengers, whereupon the passengers **were** expected to push or help pry the vehicle from the boggy location.

This mode of travel was the opportunity of the age, and was used by all. Catholic Bishop Thomas L. Grace, on a visit to his diocese in August 1861, recorded in his diary, "It is a succession of swamps, corduroy bridges, holes, and stumps. To the jolting, moving and plunging of the coach, was added the annoyance of mosquitoes." Later, Lieutenant Governor William McDougall stopped in Scratching River on his way to Fort Garry, but was turned back at St. Norbert, by Louis Riel.

The run from St. Paul to Fort Garry, took three days, and the coaches were often put to severe strain, carrying as much as two tons over rough and uncertain trails at a gait of 6 to 10 miles per hour. Much time, effort and money was devoted to providing oats and hay at the stage stations for the animals.

The first Morris based coach made its maiden voyage in 1872, driven by Mr. Turner. Billy Shewman was a driver for the mail stage, and this rousty Irishman was known for making his trips in record time!

The arrival of the Red River Stage Coach at its destination, was an event to the people at the end of the line as well as to the passengers. The Stage would cover the last few miles of the trip in grand style, and pulled into the headquarters station with a flourish. Those in the coach would dismount, not infrequently with a prayer of thanksgiving on their lips, for a trip in a stagecoach lasting several days, was an ordeal that took courage and perseverance.



*Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

# STEAMBOATS ON THE RED

The Anson Northrup was the first steamboat to ply the Red River in 1859, and was great cause for rejoicing among the settlers. The Indians were not so appreciative. They contended that the steamboats had frightened the game out of the valley, and thus deprived them of food. They also said the boats killed the fish, and the whistles on the boats disturbed the spirits of their dead. Talk was not enough for the Indians. A band of them swarmed a steamboat at what is now Pembina, and demanded a ransom of \$40,000. The captain, a quick thinking man, gave the Indians \$300 worth of goods, which satisfied them for the moment. In order to prevent such recurrences, troops were stationed along the Red at central points.

During the hey day of Red River transportation, several steamboats raced to and fro, carrying large amounts of goods and people. The "Northwest", the largest steamboat ever launched on the Red, was over 200 feet long. One steamboat the "Pluck", was listed as carrying "three carloads of threshing machines, 2 1/2 carloads of wagons, a carload each of portable engines, salt, plows, two carloads of pork, and five carloads of miscellaneous freight".



*"The Pluck", built in 1878, one of the steamboats on the Red River extensively used to haul freight - here pictured in Fargo North Dakota. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

Much of the area along the Red River was settled by large numbers of immigrants who travelled on the river by steamboats. This easy means of transportation encouraged many of the settlers to make the trip. On one such trip, seven children were born to Mennonite passengers aboard the steamboat, "Cheyenne". The "International" was known as holding the speed record between Fargo and Winnipeg. She made the trip in five days and 18 hours, a distance of some 550 river miles. This is the same boat on which Mennonite settlers came, on their last leg of their journey from Russia to settle in the Reserves in Manitoba.

George Moody, of Morris, was employed as a fireman on one of those steamboats that navigated between



*The Gaspian, one of the steamboats on the Red River that brought Mennonites to the settlement in 1875.*

Winnipeg and Moorhead. On this run he got to know the Scratching River settlement, and after two summers on the river, decided to settle there as a farmer. Another pioneer recalls the huge piles of wood on the ferry landings, where the boat would stop to take on fuel.

The Red River was shallow and narrow, but often dangerous. High waters in spring made navigation difficult. In dry years, water levels were so low that they could be critical. One riverboat captain it is said, suggested the towns all pray for rain, and asked the residents to spit in the river every day to help raise the water level! When the ferries were built, the large boats had to wait until the ferryman lowered the cable to the bottom of the river before they could pass through. Considering that there were ferries located at Letellier, St. Jean, Morris, Aubigny, Union Point, Ste. Agathe, St. Adolph and St. Norbert, this was a necessary but tedious delay.

The steamboats themselves were responsible for their own demise. In mid October, 1878, the S.S. Selkirk delivered the first locomotive the Countess of Dufferin, to the Northwest, and a new age was begun.

## The Dawson Trail

When Rupert's Land was transferred to Canada it became essential to establish improved communications with the newly acquired territory. The Hudson Bay route was a hopelessly out-of-the-way route to the Red River area, and the St. Paul route went deeply through American territory. The only alternative was to improve the ancient route from Lake Superior, which was studied by S.J. Dawson as early as 1857-1858. He had recommended that a route using partly wagon and partly water transportation be adopted. First used by immigrants in 1871, the approximately 540-mile long route proved to be a very tedious means of travelling to Red River Settlement. It was not favoured by immigrants, especially since, after 1871, the interior of Manitoba could be reached by a combination of the Northern Pacific Railway and steamboat. The Dawson Route from Lake Superior, however, was a national road. When it became clear, by 1876, that the railroad would supersede this wearisome route, work on the Dawson Route as a main thoroughfare was suspended.

# THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD



*The Countess of Dufferin, the first railway engine used in Manitoba, being delivered by the S.S. Selkirk in 1878.*

The first railroad was the line to the United States completed in December of 1878, connecting St. Paul and St. Boniface. This was the main entrance to the Province until the transcontinental "bridge railroad" connecting Winnipeg, Port Arthur and Montreal began operations in 1886. This railroad was part of a great national project to link the east and west coasts of the country. The strategy of selecting its route across south central Manitoba was governed by the location of Lake Winnipeg, and the prior existence of the city of Winnipeg.

In the 1880s, branch lines, trending roughly east-west, were built both to the north and the south of the main CPR line. Track-laying was continued steadily in following years. By 1900 Manitoba had a good system of lines, with few farmers farther than 10 miles from a railroad delivery point. Then the period of over-building began. Unnecessary transcontinental lines were laid across the Province, and loop lines were built by new railroad companies trying to get a share of the grain trade.

The development of the prairies as a grain and stock-raising area would have been impossible without the railroad. Goods could be moved to market and people could travel with reasonable ease from one town to another in hours instead of days. And the accompanying telegraph service made for rapid communication between towns.

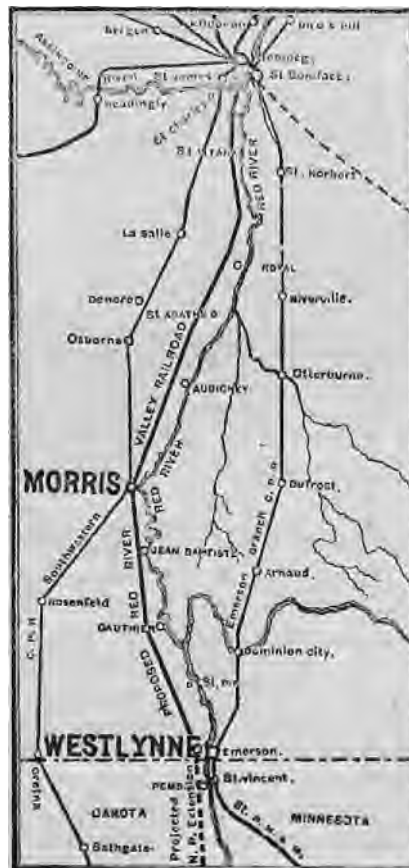
In 1882, the Canadian Pacific Railway was completing its line from Rosenfeld to Winnipeg; the railroad grade was under construction and if completed, would have bypassed the Scratching River Settlement approximately six miles west -- at the point then known as the North Star elevator, now known as Smiths Spur. (Remains of the old railroad grade can still be seen today.) To abandon the projected route and give Scratching River and the settlers along the Red River railway communications, the C.P.R. had to receive compensation of \$100,000.

The residents of Scratching River were bent on having progress, but the Statute of the times prevented a larger bonus than \$50,000 to be given for obtaining any one enterprise by any one municipality. There is a great deal

of controversy as to the reason of the incorporation of the Town of Morris exactly at this time, but by popular belief - it was the project of the coming railroad that excited people, and the concept of progress and prosperity, therefore the citizens of Scratching River decided to withdraw from the Municipality and incorporate as a town. This would enable both the town and the municipality to share the CPR bonus to the tune of \$100,000.

Therefore on January 16, 1883, Municipal Council was informed that an Act of Incorporation had been applied for, incorporating 6,100 acres of land into a town (later the acreage was reduced to 2,035) under the provisions of the "Town Incorporations Act" of Manitoba. The town was to be called the "Town of Morris", after the Lieut. Governor Alexander Morris; and listed a population of about 200 persons.

Eighty-three ratepayers appeared at Council and requested that a by-law be passed and submitted to the people, granting a \$54,000 bonus to the CPR to place a station within the limits of the Town of Morris. Shortly after, a referendum was held in the Municipality, with 227 ratepayers FOR, and 78 against, and the Bonus Bylaw was issued. So it was, the CPR constructed their Pembina Mountain and Southwestern Branch for passenger and freight service.



*Map of the proposed Red River Valley railroad. This map also shows the CPR line, that was never intended to come through the Town of Morris, but bypass it six miles to the west. The Town and the municipality had promised a **bonus of \$100,000.00** to the railway to change their route, and built a station in Morris. Photo courtesy Menonite Heritage Centre.*





Early construction of the CPR on the prairies in 1882. Here showing the section gang laying track. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.

The Bonus By-Law reads, "Whereas it is desirable that a line of railway running southerly from the city of Winnipeg through the municipality of Morris, in the county of Provencher and from thence to the boundary line of the U.S. for the purpose of developing resources of the fertile lands along the line, and for the encouragement of trade in the Municipality. The rural municipality of Morris will lend its aid by way of a bonus in the amount of \$45,000, payable in annual installments of principal within 20 years from the date of final passing of bylaw. In consideration, the railway agrees to build and construct such a line so as to admit the running of freight and passenger trains, and the same to be completed on or before the 15th day of July, 1883."



A CPR locomotive in the 1880's. Photo courtesy Man. Archives.

These lavish promises were the downfall of the little town with the big plans. In addition to the CPR Bonus of \$45,000, the town council was offering large sums of money for industry to establish here. Among them were a flax paper mill, a flour and oatmeal mill, an elevator, and a promised bonus of \$5,000 in aid of building a dam to provide water supply for the industries. In view of the fact that the town only had 549 ratepayers, the tax burden was too heavy. The following year (1884), the town was already expressing to the CPR, its inability to pay even the interest on the debentures, was asking that consideration be given to the town, and requested

measures to relieve its indebtedness. In a final gesture, the town offered the CPR lands, in lieu of the bonus payment, but this too was refused. Finally, the town burdened by a heavy debt load, ceased to function; for a period of nine years, there are no records of administration, or council meetings. Among the problems, was the fact that the town boundaries had changed, with more lands being allotted to the municipality, therefore leaving the town with a population of 357; upon which the tax burden imposed was an impossibility. The residents, still determined to carry on, proceeded in forming a new council in 1894, to negotiate for a settlement. The debt by this time had increased to \$200,000 and settlement was made for approximately 10% of that amount. In January of 1902, residents assembled in the hall above Lawrie's store to present a gold watch to Alpine Chisolm (then mayor) for his services rendered in extricating the people from the problems of that era, caused in part by the coming of the railroad.

Within a year, rumblings were heard in the Municipality as well. The ratepayers felt the tax burden was too heavy, and appeared at Council meetings with a petition, asking that Council consider having the CPR By-law quashed on grounds of illegality. The wheels were set in motion, legal advice was obtained, and from then on, this was the hottest issue that Municipal Council dealt with until 1894. Notes from Council records indicate the efforts put forth.

1885 "Citizens present petition to Council asking them to use every means in their power to relieve the taxpayers from the burden imposed by the CPR By-law." Council replies: "we have done everything in our power to have the By-law reconsidered by the Local Government (Provincial), and have brought it before the courts."

1888 Local house representative took firm stand to try and get the Municipality relieved of the heavy and unjust debt placed on them by the legalization of By-law No. 5 (Bonus bylaw), and council pressed the necessity of having the government relieve them as soon as possible."

Dec. 1888 Solicitors Perdue and Robinson took proceedings against the Municipality to compel payment of overdue interest on \$45,000 debentures.

1889 July "Council planning to send Reeve J.S. Campbell and lawyer to Toronto to settle with London and Canadian Loan Agency, who hold the \$45,000 debentures."

1891 Appeal made to the Supreme Court -- also seeking legislature to repeal the act affecting Bylaw No. 5.

1894 Feb. Council meets at City Hall Winnipeg, with London and Canadian Loan Agency, and



promises to pay the \$45,000, with the issue of new debentures of \$500 per year for 24 consecutive years. The balance to be paid at the end of 25 years with interest at 4 1 / 2 %. Municipality received aid of \$15,000 from the Local Government in addition as a cash payment, of which \$10,000 was a grant, and \$5,000 a three year loan without interest.

After 11 years of fighting, the battle was over, and the debt had to be paid.

The construction of the present CNR rail line from Morris to Winnipeg, remains an exciting and engrossing one for, at one time or another, it has been owned by five different railway companies.

The track was originally built by the Red River Valley Railway. The scheme for the line, first brought up before the Manitoba parliament in 1887, received its enthusiastic support.

But the federal government at Ottawa was against such an enterprise. The provincial government, nevertheless, determined upon building the line in defiance of the ruling laid down by the Dominion Government, Manitobans heartily endorsed this decision.

The Manitoba government pushed aside a number of federal governments vetoes aimed at preventing the lines construction. On July 2, 1887, the first sod of the Red River Valley Railway was turned by the Hon. John Norquay, in the presence of an immense crowd which had assembled to witness this important ceremony.

Building operations started 11 days later, the intention being to realize construction of the line by the first day in September.

The atmosphere was a little uneasy, however, and reports were current that the Imperial troops has been summoned to enforce the Dominion government's decision. The situation became still further involved when the minister of justice took action regarding the use of Dominion lands for construction of the railway, without permission being granted by the government.

Although thus balked in their endeavour to build the line, the Manitoba government entered into an agreement with a contractor to complete the work by June 1, 1888, unless prevented from so doing, through legal process or military force.

In that year the Red River Valley Railway had reached

the stage when construction trains were running, and work was progressing in connection with ballasting, fencing, and provision of stations and water tanks.

But in July, 1888, came the proposal to organize the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway, which included a plan to link Morris to Brandon within one year from November 1.

So the Red River Valley line changed hands for the first time, and was taken over by the Northern Pacific.

In 1901 it changed hands again, this time being acquired by the Canadian Northern Railway, after the Northern Pacific had been beset with financial difficulties.

However, the Canadian Northern itself later experienced severe financial difficulties, and the Morris line was taken over by the Dominion government in 1918 and brought under the control of the Canadian Government Railways.

Then in 1923, it was amalgamated with the many other thousands of miles of track from other railways which had been taken over by the governments, to form the great Canadian National Railways system, and became part of an intricate 33,000 mile network spanning the Dominion from coast to coast.



*CNR wreck on July 12, 1912 near Brunkild.*



*The CPR freight train rolling across the prairies, one of the last powered by steam. Photo courtesy of George Goossen.*

# HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

The solution to the problem of connecting Manitoba grain farms with outside markets had to await the railroad. Similarly, the solution to the problem of facilitating the movement of individual Manitobans within the Province had to await the automobile and the improved road. The first car was introduced into the Province in 1902; by 1911 there were 2,436 cars in Manitoba. In the horse and buggy era building and improving roads was a municipal concern, with much of the road work done by statute labour. The road allowances were wide; if a mud hole developed, a way could be usually found around it for the buggy or wagon, so road conditions were not considered a problem. More attention was focussed on bridges, because the building of bridges could not normally be avoided. The automobile, however, demanded a different standard of road building, but this was a long time coming.

Rough prairie trails were in evidence all over the municipality in the early 1880's, but as the district became more settled, the need for better roads increased. The most common and urgent request of the settlers from the municipal council, were for drainage and roads.

labour, he could elect to commute for the same at the rate of \$1.00 per day, with monies paid to the roadmaster for the improvement of bridges and roads. This money was referred to as "commutation money".

Roadmasters had the power to require teams or carts, wagons or plows, horses or oxen, and men to manage them, from any person within the district.

In the event of an emergency, the roadmaster had the authority to call out any person in his district to repair bridges or remove obstructions caused by washouts, etc. This applied to any local or public road, not including the "Great Highway".

In 1871, the new provincial government passed an act proclaiming that the roads running north and south along the rivers would be known as the "Great Highways". Locally, this road, which was a link between north and south, was referred to as the "Stage Road". It was along this road that grain was hauled from the settlements to Winnipeg. Trying to make roads from prairie trails called for some engineering know-how. From council records in 1889, we find recorded, "Ditches along the roads shall be six inches deep!" - but it was a beginning. More requests



*Crew of the road building gang in 1910. It took 18 horses to pull this elevating grader. Billy Shewman worked on one of these gangs.*

This part of the Red River Valley is well known for its "Red River gumbo", which is the soil from the bottom of Lake Agassiz. Because the soil is of such fine particles, it has poor internal drainage, causing it to stick together. Road building was difficult, after a rain, the trails would get so mired down in this slimy muck, that even walking was difficult.

One of the first acts of council (in 1880), was to appoint twelve Roadmasters to oversee construction of roads and bridges. It was the Roadmaster's duty to assess a road tax on all owners or occupiers of real estate. The act reads, "Every male inhabitant being above twenty-one years, and under the age of sixty; excepting clergymen, school teachers, idiots, lunatics, and such others exempt by law" were assessed one day of labour on every parcel of land owned - depending on the assessed value.

Road tax was payable in labour, which was called "statute labour". If the individual could not appear for

poured in for bridges and roads; and farmers often did road work themselves to pay the taxes on their land.

Wm. Shewman contracted to build many of the roads in the municipality, the first being in 1900, for which he furnished teams for two graders for \$52.00 per day. A considerable amount of road work was done that year by Mr. Shewman's teams, since his remuneration was \$4,628.00. Tom Tinkler and W.P. Falordeau operated the graders.

1905 saw the beginning of constructing the mile roads; a grader was purchased, and \$6,000.00 spent grading these roads that were badly needed due to increased mobility.

In 1913, the Morris Automobile Club, represented by O. Gilman, Dr. Ross and J.P. Molloy, offered to take council members on a trip over the Stage Road, and the road to Lowe Farm, to show them what work was required. This resulted in the Stage Road being rebuilt!

The increase in automobiles caused a demand for more



*Farmers with their teams using slush scrapers, often were required to do the road building. This gang is digging a pond at the C.A. Recksiedler farm.*

roads, and the people felt that the license money from these vehicles should be turned over to council for road maintenance. *Everybody* was demanding better roads. In a wet year, travel was difficult through the gumbo of the municipality, and misfortunes often occurred. To site



*This old Ford travelling roads in the municipality in 1916. Photo courtesy of Ida Hoffman.*

one instance: Council notes, February 23, 1912 - "Mr. Lee Bowles was paid the sum of \$50.00 owing to the fact that he had the misfortune of losing a horse in a mud hole in the road, and other misfortunes to himself!"

There was much talk and planning as to what measures could be taken to build an all weather road in this municipality. When the Rural Municipality of Morris became a member of the Good Roads Association in 1914, provincial funds became available to build and improve roads, particularly those that were links with other roads and municipalities. The first roads improved under the Good Roads Act were: From Town of Morris limit south on Pembina Highway two miles, to boundary of Municipality. From town limits on Base Line (No. 23) 10 miles towards Lowe Farm, and six miles in the vicinity of Sperling.

There was some talk about putting "broken stone" on the roads as early as 1914, as indicated in a letter from Manitoba Quarries, but there was much opposition to



*James Smith with his telephone truck, being towed by horses on the road to Lowe Farm near the North Star Elevator in 1917.*

this in early years. Councillors could not see the reasoning of it; they were certain the stone would all just sink out of sight in the mire of this municipality.

A resolution was brought by a delegation (Reeve Lewis and Councillor Stoney) to the Good Roads Association, asking that the Great Highway be made into a permanent road to be built and maintained by the province. And on June 29, 1919, this road, which linked Winnipeg with New Orleans, was opened and called the Jefferson Highway. Two years later, when it was extended to Selkirk, it was named the Lord Selkirk Highway. These two men, Stoney and Lewis, were instrumental in promoting the major road work done on this highway the following year.

This road, which was a major route through the municipality, has a history quite unique. Of the many names it has been known as, the very first was the "Chisum Trail", so called by the trail herders who ran their cattle drives from Texas to the north, in the early 1860's. This road, that linked Scratching River with the Army post at Fort Pembina, became the route the stage coaches used on their trek from the Forks to Fort Garry, hence locally, this road was known as the Stage Road. Officially, it was called the Jefferson Highway, and later the Lord Selkirk Highway. The first road number given it, was the No. 14, but before the highway was rebuilt and paved in 1948, it was numbered the No. 75, presumably to link it with the highway to the south of the same number.

The first major expenditure for the construction of roads was made in 1920, when it was assessed that \$110,000 was required for this purpose. A referendum was held, with 103 in favor, and 78 against, indicating that not all ratepayers were willing to pay for these improvements.

This project included the building of 52 miles of road. Seventeen miles of the Lord Selkirk Highway was to be made into a permanent road which included gravelling, the building of three bridges and numerous farm crossings. Three miles of road north of Sperling was constructed, to connect it with the MacDonald road and the Dufferin Road, and included a cement bridge. Costs were shared with the Dominion and Provincial government, with the municipality assuming 20% share.

The elevating grader was used to build most of the roads in the Municipality. It was the quickest method of building roads and providing drainage, but not necessarily the best for drainage, as the grader followed the contour of the land. Mounted on the elevating grader, was a huge disc, about 2 - 3 feet in diameter. As the machine moved forward, the disc cut off the soil and threw it onto a 4-ft. rubber conveyor belt, which carried

it to the top of the grade. Thus a ditch and road, were made at the same time. Later, the top of the grade was levelled by grading or dragging. This often was done by farmers with their teams. At first horse power was used - it took 18 horses to pull an elevating grader, but later the graders were pulled by Caterpillar tractors.

Improvements continued. The very first indication of gravel on municipal roads was in October, 1934, when Councillor Swain was asked to secure two carloads of gravel to be spread on the ferry road hill at Aubigny, on both sides.

In 1938, the road to Lowe Farm was built by horse and slush scrapers as a relief project, to provide the farmers with much needed employment. Other such projects were planned, but had to be abandoned, due to a lack of funds in the municipality.

Former Councillor and Reeve, Cornie Neufeld, recalls what conditions were like: "There were very few roads in



ABOVE: An elevating grader owned by Clements, road building contractor.

BELOW: Billy Shewman's road construction outfit in 1912. Mr. Shewman had a large barn for his 100 horses in Morris, near the curling rink.



The municipal Cat and elevating grader building roads. Isaac P. Klassen at left.

the rural municipality prior to the fifties - the depression and the war were setbacks in progress. The municipality owned one D7 Caterpillar tractor and elevating grader for a long time, later another, a D8 was purchased, and these two machines ran steadily, putting in grades, which helped to give local farmers some drainage.

We called 1950 the "golden era", flood money was unlimited. The following year, the municipality bought





*LEFT: C.E. Anderson loading gravel with Anderson Bros. dragline in 1929.*

*RIGHT: John Giesbrecht and Pete Klassen on Municipal Cut.*



*Members of Municipal councils observing a demonstration of equipment in 1949 at Paul Katninsky's farm. They purchased three graders. On photo are B. W. Thiessen Reeve of Morris R.M., and C.J. Neufeld standing on grader at rear.*

another D8 and elevating grader to rebuild roads and repair grades that had been washed out by the flood. In that one year, 70 miles of road was rebuilt with those two outfits. These machines were kept going for the next 4 - 5 years, until we had completed building our municipal roads.

From that point on, we bought scrapers for our tractors for maintenance and sold the elevating graders as we had no more use for them. With a good network of roads built up right through the municipality, we were in a position to begin our gravelling program."

The municipality, prior to 1957, had to truck gravel about 30 miles from outside the district, and it was a very costly operation. The lease of a gravel pit just outside of Morris to the east, from Ulrich St. Godard was a bonanza for the municipality. Having access to cheap gravel, resulted in the most major improvement of municipal roads.

Initially, farmers were responsible for a portion of the costs, when the gravelling program began. The persons



*Jake Rempel on crusher, and Ben Klassen's truck being loaded in the Municipal gravel pit 6 miles east of Morris in 1965.*



**John F. Warkentin**, grader operator, for the R.M. of Morris for many years, helping to maintain the roads.

who benefitted from a certain road would approach council regarding the gravelling of same. With a promise to share the costs, the program would be undertaken. From that point on, the gravelling of that road was municipal responsibility.

The policy of the municipality presently, is to gravel all roads to residences, so that each resident has access routes to the main roads and highways that travelled. Approximately 20,000 yards of gravel are spread each year by the municipality. This means that about 90 yards of gravel are spread on each road with 300 yards being spread in the first application on roads that have not been gravelled before. The gravelling of new roads is limited to six miles per year.

In the winter months, snow removal and the maintaining of roads to give all residents access to goods and services, is the primary aim of the municipality. In the early 1950's, only the main roads were cleared of snow.



*Henry Hildebrand plowing snow for the municipality.*

Due to the underpowered road graders, the R.M. fitted a D6 and D7 Cat with a 15 foot wing. The Cat with the wing would push the snow further off the road. This was still in use until 1965. Today, the RM boasts four modern snow plows, and with an average snow fall, they can clear most of the roads in two days.

Patrol operator Henry Hildebrand, has experienced a lot of things in his 33 years employed with the RM of Morris. In the winter of 1947, all the roads were blocked with heavy snow, and Henry was called out to assist in bringing a sick lady to the hospital. In order to lessen the time, councillor Matt Stevenson suggested a short cut



*Divers were required to attach cables to the snowplow and pull it from the Red River.*

*When Henry Hildebrand had to cross the Red River (1947) due to an emergency, the Austin Western snowplow broke through the ice and sank. Here it is seen being removed from the water.*



across the river. The ice broke, and the Austin Western snow plow sunk to the bottom of the river. At the last moment, Henry managed to jump clear. Divers were needed to extricate the implement from the icy waters of the Red River.

There have been times that these "unsung heroes of the road", have been called upon to assist in acts of mercy. Patrol operator Hildebrand responded to a call from Aubigny, when it became necessary to rush an ailing elderly man to the hospital, and all roads were blocked, with a raging storm outside. Due to the depth of the snow, it took between two and three hours to get to the hospital, and unfortunately, the man passed away during that time, in the car following the snowplow.

The winter of 1955-56, brought a record snowfall of 100 inches of that fluffy white stuff. There seemed to be no end to the snow. On some roads, the snow was piled so high along the roadsides, it was likened to driving in a tunnel. Trains were derailed, and traffic moved slowly that winter. But records are made to be broken. The





*The No. 23 highway west of Lowe Farm in the winter of 1956.*

winter of 1966, 103 inches of snow fell, and with it a raft of new experiences.

Bill Schellenberg, councillor at the time, was responsible for roads, and he recalls, "That was quite a winter. We were on the phone 24 hours a day, receiving irate calls from ratepayers who were out of feed, water, coal, and the roads were blocked." An urgent call came in the middle of the night from a farmer in the Riverside area, whose wife was in labour, and they needed the snowplow.

In the meantime, the farmer went to Tony Fast at Riverside Service, to see if he had a tractor that could pull his vehicle through the drifts. They made it through several, but about 1/2 mile past Trump, they got stuck. The baby was not going to be delayed any longer. It was delivered by present councillor Fast, in the cab of the one ton truck, while the father paced the snowdrifts. The tractor was able to tow the truck out, and they proceeded to town, just as they were met by Councillor Schellenberg and the snowplow. Mother and baby were fine.

Blizzards, so common to the prairies, have caught many an unwary motorist, and left them stranded at the roadside until help arrived. On more than one occasion, snow plow operators are the rescuers who discover occupants in a so called abandoned car.

The responsibility for building and maintaining all the roads was municipal, except the market roads, which were thoroughfares from point A to point B - connecting to a major road, a village, or another municipality. These



*Wm. F. Recksiedler and Bill Schellenberg giving last minute instructions to Henry Hildebrand, patrol operator, on the Sewell road in 1956.*

were maintained by the provincial government either 100%, or on a cost sharing basis.

The provincial road system as we know it today, was established in 1965, and all roads maintained by the province were numbered at that time. From time to time, the care and maintenance of other roads are assumed by the Provincial Government.

### *Milestones of progress*

- 1880 - The appointment of Roadmasters who began building of roads.
- 1897 - Ordered first steel scraper.
- 1900 - Wm. Shewman begins road construction in Rural Municipality.
- 1904 - Purchase of 1 dozen slush scrapers at a cost of \$97.00.
- 1905 - The beginning of constructing the mile roads.
- 1914 - Rural Municipality of Morris becomes member of Good Roads Association.
- 1919 - Stage Road becomes Jefferson Highway (Provincial Road).
- 1921 - Jefferson Highway renamed Lord Selkirk Highway No. 14.
- 1921 - Boyne Road becomes provincial road.
- 1934 - First gravel spread on ferry hill at Aubigny.
- 1937 - \$200.00 spent gravelling Aubigny Road to Sperling.
- 1938 - Road to Lowe Farm built as relief project. Certificate of merit from Good Roads. Gravel Trump road for first time.
- 1940 - Rural Municipality wins shield for best earth roads in province.
- 1943 - Received six carloads of gravel for Ward 6 on June 18.
- 1947 - First gravel on Morris - Dufrost road.
- 1948 - Morris - Minto road taken over by province. Highway No. 75 rebuilt, concrete poured up to Morris.
- 1950 - Union Point ferry discontinued, gravel spread on St. Mary's Road.
- 1951 - Gravel Aubigny - Rosenort road.
- 1952 - Government takes over Morris - Dufrost road. Gravelling Sewell road.
- 1954 - St. Mary's Road taken over by province.
- 1957 - 12,700 yards of gravel for Rural Municipality of Morris market roads. Rural Municipality leases gravel pit from Ulrich St. Godard.
- 1958 - Regrade and hard surface No. 23 to Lowe Farm.
- 1961 - \$17,800.00 to be used gravelling Rural Municipality roads.
- 1964 - Rural Municipality wins Provincial Cup for best roads in province.
- 1969 - Flood damage to roads estimated at \$7,000.00. Extensive gravelling program, extra gravel from Grunthal.
- 1971 - Cameron Trophy for Best one mile stretch of road.
- 1973 - Honorable mention at Good Roads banquet.
- 1974 - Rural Municipality wins Provincial Cup.
- 1976 - Good Roads award showing most improvement in municipal roads.

## RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS AWARD WINNERS IN GOOD ROADS COMPETITION

The rural municipality of Morris has been the recipient of many awards, which are sponsored by the Good Roads Association. This municipality, which has been a member of this association since 1914, has won its share.

A certificate of merit was awarded in 1938, and in 1940, to the Rural Municipality of Morris for the best maintained earth roads in the province.

The highest award, the Provincial Cup, is awarded to the Municipality having the best maintained one hundred miles or more of gravelled roads in the province. This distinguished award was received twice, in 1964 by Reeve Bruce MacKenzie, and again in 1974, by Reeve Harold Earl.

The Cameron Trophy, awarded in 1971, was in recognition of the best one mile stretch of road built in 1970 under given specifications, and accepted by Reeve Charles Anderson.

In 1973, a certificate of honorable mention was received for the standard of one continuous mile of road.

Reeve Alvin Rempel accepted the Percy Beachell Memorial Trophy for the municipality, showing the most improvement in municipal roads, old or new, over 100 miles.

The awards have recognized the expertise and hard work by the road maintenance crew over the years, and the awareness of the municipality of the importance of good roads.

In the Home Grounds Competition, many homes in the municipality have been entered. Ed L. Friesens were entered and won the Frank Lawson and Sons Trophy for the Best Home Grounds in 1969.



*Charles Anderson, Reeve, receiving the Cameron Trophy from the Manitoba Good Roads Association. The award was received in recognition of the best one mile stretch of road built in 1970 under given specifications.*



*The equipment and men who were employed kv the Municipality in 1954. BACK ROW, Left to Right: D. Reid, B. Bell, J. Kehler, Ed Heinricks, H. Peters, J. Penner, D. Penner, L. Kornelson. FRONT ROW: D. Heinrichs, W. Friesen, J. Penner, Bridge Foreman; E. Rempel, H. Peters, W. Penner, D. Isaac, H. Hildebrand, J. Warkentin.*





*Harold Earl, Reeve, accepting the Provincial Cup at the Good Roads Assoc. banquet in 1974 for the best maintained roads in the province.*



*The Good Roads Association presented the Provincial Cup to the R.M. of Morris on two occasions, in 1964 and 1974. Dave Harder, Sec. Treas.; and Alice Loving, Assistant; are trying to decide who gets to polish the cup.*



*The boys employed by the R.M. of Morris in 1961.*

246

# MANITOBA GOVERNMENT TELEPHONES

OFFICIAL  
DIRECTORY

NUMBER  
34



MARCH  
1919

## Provincial Exchanges

INCLUDING

BRANDON

AND

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

Read Rules and Regulations on Pages 2 and 3

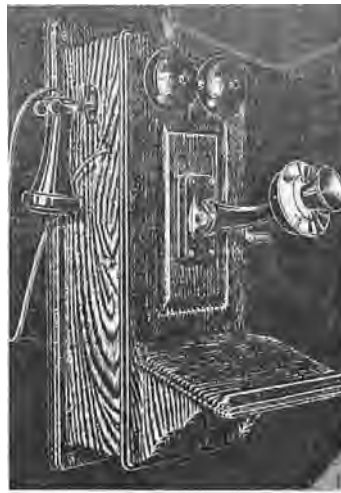
Copyright, Canada, 1919, Manitoba Government Telephones

**DESTROY ALL OLD DIRECTORIES**

# THE TELEPHONE

The telephone made a great change in rural living in this country. Its impact has been overlooked in the attention paid to the internal combustion engine, and the revolutionary changes it produced in farm size, settlement facilities and in the labour force required on the farm. The telephone had its effect on less easily measured yet perhaps no less important facets of life, such as human attitudes to living on the prairies. The telephone quickly did away with much of the desperate feeling of loneliness and helplessness that could so easily develop on the isolated farms. It also eliminated the potentially dangerous winter trips to town to enquire about supplies.

In 1877, the year after Alexander Graham Bell's unique instrument transmitted an intelligible sentence, Manitoba's first telephones were installed in Winnipeg by Horace McDougall, an electrician and telegraphic operator. At the time, McDougall was Manager of the Northwest Telegraph Company in Winnipeg and had obtained the right to install or make use of the Bell patented phone.



*RIGHT: James Smith, telephone districtman, repairing poles in 1927, which were broken in a sleet storm. Photo taken near railroad enroute. Lowe Farm.*



*The telephone construction gang putting in lines in 1910. Note the roll of wire on the wagon. Photo courtesy Jim Stanley.*

The first telephone was used in Winnipeg in 1878, and the first long distance line, from Winnipeg to Selkirk, was in operation in 1887. In 1906 only the main centres of Manitoba were connected by telephone, as is shown in the *Atlas of Canada* published that year. Farmers, especially, did not get telephone service immediately, and in 1907 the Union of Manitoba Municipalities was still complaining that there were no rural lines. But matters improved after the Manitoba government took over the system in 1908. By the mid-1920s if an individual farmer did not have a telephone, his neighbour probably did, so that in time of need the outside world could be quickly reached.

A private telephone service was initiated in many parts of the municipality at the turn of the century, and worked on a multi-party basis. Although crude, it served its purpose, and all telephone users had their own private ring. This private line became extinct when the Bell Telephones came into town.



*LEFT: The first telephone office was located in Lawrie Bros. warehouse, in 1914.*

*BELOW.. Manitoba Government Telephones in 1948.*

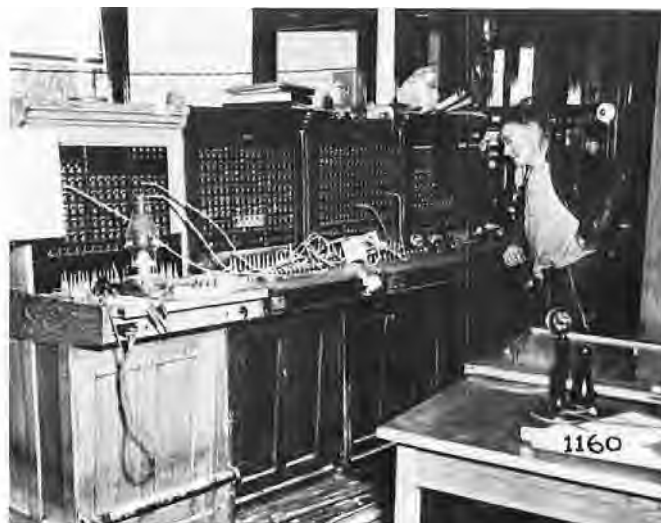


*Telephone repair man on the way to Lowe Farm with his repair truck, which had gas lights, and a mileage recorder on the wheel.*





*James Smith in telephone office rack room working on phantom coils, a method used to have three conversations on four wires. Taken in the 30's.*



*James Smith, districtman, surveying the damages of flood waters in 1950.*

In 1902 the Bell Telephone Company installed a switchboard in the post office, and day service was provided to some 20 customers. One of the first operators was Margaret Ross, with only one operator being employed at that time.

A business phone in those days cost \$36 per year, and a country subscriber had to sign up for three years to get a phone installed. A long distance line connecting Morris with Dominion City and Emerson was put through in 1904. In fact during the years 1904-05, five lines were put in, and Morris was started on the way to becoming an important telephone centre.

In 1908 when the government took over, the name was changed to the Manitoba Government Telephones. Then

a chief operator was employed, along with an assistant and a night operator, giving continuous service. In 1922 when the new office was opened, the name was again changed to the "Manitoba Telephone System".

The telephone centre in Morris grew to the point where there were eleven operators as well as a casual operator. Chief operator for many years was Miss O.M. Stanley (Pat). The Morris telephone exchange was converted from a magneto type office to a common battery office in 1951, and became increasingly important as a toll centre.

On January 12, 1968, was the beginning of a new era in telephone communications, when the Manitoba Telephone System opened a new two story dial exchange. The community at this time had some 1,200 local and rural telephones, which were previously on a manual basis. Because Morris is situated at the junction of the Red and Morris Rivers, flooding in the community is quite common. The new 45 by 55 foot building was specially designed to meet the flood threat. The automatic equipment and the associated power room are located on the second floor to safeguard vital telephone links, should the rivers flood their banks.

Manitoba Telephone constructed a microwave tower five miles west of Morris in 1968, as a part of a 700 mile microwave network stretching across the three prairie provinces. The tower is one of eight in Manitoba, and provided increased capacity and diversity of communications for telephone customers.

In order to provide better maintenance and service, telephone cable was laid underground. Trenching machines and other earth moving equipment were engaged in digging the trenches. This revolutionary new underground transmission system was begun in 1964, and continued up until the present date.

The new dial service places its users in almost instant contact with neighbors across the street or around the globe, and plays an important role in the economic and social development of this area. The telephone itself was the end of isolation to the rural folk, and was the beginning of instant communications.



*Number please! Eight of the fourteen operators that ran the Morris exchange. LEFT HAND ROW: Lorraine Stieben, Miriam Sadler, Gladys Manchulenko, Fay Reid, Chief Operator. RIGHT HAND ROW: Dolores Wallis, Myrtle Dreger, Etta Wiebe, Gayle Fraser. These girls said "Operator" about 4000 times a day - but all this was changed with the dial system.*

## WIND POWER

Wind machines were a common sight on farms until the expansion of the electrical grid after the end of the Second World War. These machines were generally multi-vaned windmills, which were constructed as part of a 40 or 50 foot tower. They were put in use all over North America, in the first half of the century and at one time, prairie farms had thousands of machines in use.



*The wind charger on the Dickson farm.*

They served many purposes and were particularly effective in agriculture. Many pumped water for livestock, some kept irrigation canals flowing, others ground grain and powered other farm operations using a direct-drive mechanism between the wind collector and the work area at the bottom of the tower.

However, these machines also had drawbacks, which led to their eventual disuse. Today, research is centred on overcoming these drawbacks so wind machines will become reliable sources of energy.

For instance, when wind is light, wind machines are ineffective, and even in windy weather, there is a problem, since wind speed is unpredictable and power output isn't consistent.

The answer to these problems wasn't hard to find. Manufacturers adapted the machines for more sophisticated use by gathering the power from the wind and storing it in a battery system for less immediate use. Before the days of widespread electricity, these wind generators were often a farmstead's major source of power and in high wind areas, they were even able to power irons, refrigerators and radios. But batteries were expensive and required a lot of space.

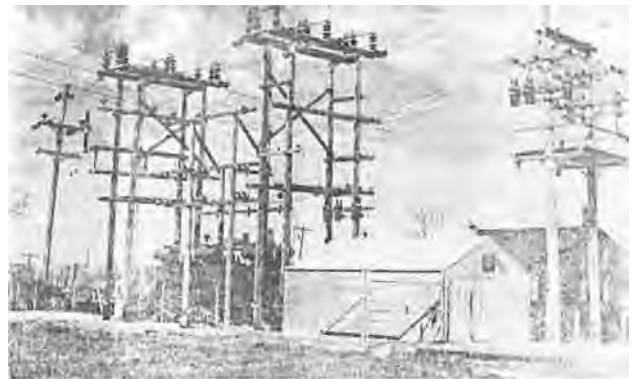
## HYDRO TO MORRIS IN 1935

Back in 1935, the Manitoba Power Commission undertook what was considered at that time, a pretty large construction program. In that year, some 150 miles of transmission lines were erected to extend the system to include sixteen towns and villages, among them Altona, Gretna, Horndean, Letellier, Plum Coulee, Rosenfeld, St. Jean and Morris.

When you consider that at the height of its rural electrification program, the Commission was erecting almost 5,000 miles of transmission lines every year, a mere 150 miles may not seem like very much. But coming in the midst of the depression as it did, the 1935 program served as a welcome relief measure in providing work for many Manitobans.

During this period, it was proven that the Commission's policy of selling power in bulk to municipalities for re-sale to individual customers was not practical in Manitoba. Therefore, in 1931, all bulk contracts with the municipalities were cancelled and the Commission assumed responsibility for delivery direct to individual customers. This enabled the Commission to operate the network as a single unit and also gave the utility control over rates which made possible the adoption of a policy of rate standardization. And so if 1935 was considered an outstanding year in the history of those towns that received hydro power for the first time, due to this change in policy, this period was also an important milestone in the Commission's history.

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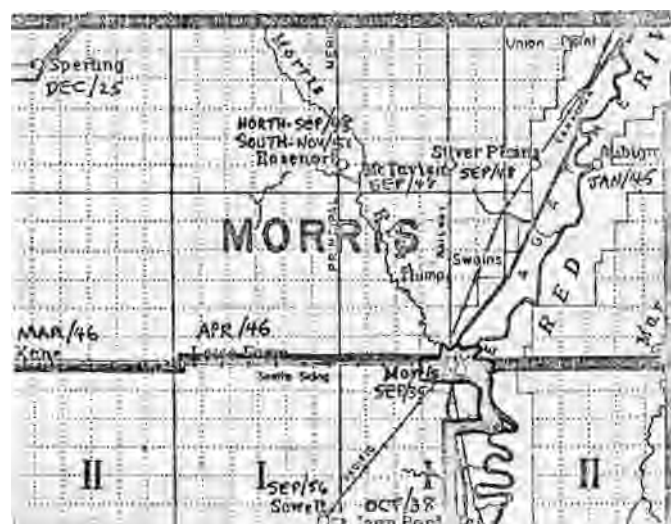
*Manitoba Power Commission Terminal at Morris.*

The town of Morris, itself, had enjoyed the benefits of electric power even before 1935, since for a number of years a small local plant supplied electricity. With the coming of Hydro, customers were assured of an adequate supply of dependable electric power by a 33,000 volt transmission line from the Elm Creek terminal through Carman, Morden to Altona. From there, power was transmitted at 4,600 volts to the entire district, including Morris. Shortly after this, a 33,000 volt line was erected east of the Red River from the St. Norbert terminal

through Niverville to Dominion City to provide an alternative source of supply in times of emergency. Due to the increased demand for electric power, the following year, the original 4,600 volt line from the Altona sub-station was converted to 33,000 volt operation.

But the widespread acceptance of electricity and of electrical appliances, coupled with the Commission's farm electrification program has continued to create a demand for electricity with each passing year.

Alternative sources of supply coupled with the Commission's extensive use of the two-way radio assures power users in this section of the province of the best electrical service possible. As the electrical load grows, the Commission will continue to enlarge and modernize its system to accommodate the ever increasing demand for electricity.



Map showing the dates hydro was introduced in the R.M. of Morris.

Many farms in the vicinity of Morris had electrical service in 1946 - the year after the province's farm electrification program was begun. Farmers to the south of Morris received power that year, while those north of the town were added to the rural system of the Manitoba Power Commission the following year. By 1951, only six years after the successful test area project, service was available to all farms in the Red River Valley lying to the west of the Red River.

The fact that Manitoba is not a densely populated area, only one and one-third farms to the mile, make the Commission's electrification program all the more impressive. As far as the Commission is aware, nowhere else in the world has area-coverage rural electrification been attempted in an area as sparsely settled as Manitoba, without a financial contribution from the farmer. Yet, in Manitoba, electricity was taken right to the farm-yard pole without any cost to the farmer other than wiring his own buildings and purchasing his own appliances.

Construction under the farm program began on an experimental basis in 1945, when transmission lines were constructed to serve 674 farms in seven test areas. Southeastern Manitoba was selected as the location for one of these test areas and electrification began in the Roland district. The success of the test proved conclusively that farm electrification was feasible and led the Commission to plan construction to proceed at the rate of 5,000 farms annually. Unfortunately, the post-war shortage of line materials and trained men restricted construction to 1500 farms in 1946 and to 3600 in 1947.

Finally, in 1948, the annual goal of 5000 farms was achieved. The program proceeded at this rate until its completion in 1956.



Pre-hydro days produced ingenuity. No wash day blues for mother! This method was better than the washboard.

# MEDICAL CARE

This century of medical history spans the most marvelous advance in medicine, from the primitive, to the modern science and technology of our day.

In the early decades, doctors were rarely consulted. At the beginning of the twentieth century, doctors were prepared to go to homes where there was a need of medical assistance, but were only called when needs were desperate.

By 1880, good medical care was available, predominantly in the cities, or other large communities. The rural area had few doctors, and people relied upon their own cures that were usually passed down from generation to generation.

In the very early days of settlement, in the municipality, the scourge of smallpox was greatly feared. Few survived this disease, and it was highly contagious.

The local board of health received a report of smallpox in 1881, rampant across the line in Pembina County, Dakota. The warden (reeve) after travelling to Winnipeg and conversing with government officials, as well as in Emerson and Rhineland, expressed his concern over the prevention of an epidemic here. A medical officer was dispatched by horse and buggy as far as St. Joe along the Boundary Line, and a guard was placed at Smugglers Point on the Manitoba frontier to preserve the quarantine.

By 1884, a proclamation was issued that school children could not attend school unless they were able to produce a vaccination certificate for smallpox. These efforts in years past have brought this generation the results -- in 1979, the World Health Organization announced that smallpox had been eradicated.

One of the first doctors in this area was Dr. Robert F. McTavish. He was one of the four McTavish brothers who settled north-west of Morris on homesteads there. It has been reported that Dr. McTavish delivered his first baby at the age of eighteen, which raises some question as to when he received his medical training.

The McTavish's lived in a house on Main Street from which the doctor practised medicine. The good doctor also served as mayor of the town of Morris in 1885, during the famous "railroad controversy" years. It appears he spent more time doctoring than mayoring, as when he left office, there was some delight expressed amongst his colleagues.



Dr. McTavish



Dr. Ross



The residence of Dr. J.P. Molloy M.P., Morris, Manitoba, that was converted to a hospital to the 1940's.

Just as the First World War was ending, another killer passed through the country -- the flu. Symptoms of the flu were a raging fever and the inability to take nourishment, which caused weakness in the body. Though it killed only a small portion of those who contracted it, hardly anyone escaped the virus of that winter. There was no known cure, the malady was just allowed to run its course. In this area, it is estimated that about 20 persons died in this epidemic. One husband lost his young wife and three other members of the family in 10 days. The bodies were kept for one month before they were buried, since all other family members were too sick to hold a funeral.

Dr. R.L. Ross was well known throughout the district. He first became medical officer here in 1909, succeeding Dr. McTavish.

The first hospital was established by Dr. Arkin in a home on Charles Street, in Morris in 1936. It operated on a shoestring budget, but provided needed medical care for local residents. These facilities were not adequate, and in the 1940's the Molloy home, a large two storey dwelling, was remodelled to serve as a hospital, served by Dr. J.S. Holowin.

A district nurse was hired in the early 1900's and supplied with a horse and buggy to accomplish her duties in the district. Not long after, complaints were received from her that the pony was just too slow. Nurse McIntyre wanted a car! In 1928, a Chev. coupe roadster was purchased (for \$875.00) from the J.H. Garage, for her use. Apparently this nurse also served other municipalities, as she was ordered not to drive this car in those municipalities from whom no remuneration was received! In the hard times of the depression, the public health nurse was let go, as they couldn't afford her services.

Infantile paralysis was evident in this area in 1936, and residents were asked to call the doctor at the expense of the municipality, in case of symptoms such as upset





The nurses on the steps of the Morris Hospital in 1949. LEFT TO RIGHT: Agatha Thiessen, May Rolle, Mary Elias.

stomach, headache, fever, rapid pulse, stiffness in neck and back. Exactly twenty years later, the Salk polio vaccine was being administered widely with great success.

Mass typhoid inoculations were introduced in 1948 and again in 1950, due to a fear of outbreak from contaminated waters, and was one of the requirements before residents could return to their homes in the flood area.

At this time, a new 20 bed hospital was built in Morris, complete with Laboratory, X-Ray, and emergency and emergency treatment facilities. It was completed just in time to be inundated by the flood waters of 1950.

In 1959, a south wing addition made this a 50 bed hospital, complete with new doctors' offices, and later a nurses' residence. Ambulance service was introduced in 1966, spearheaded by the Lions Club.

Doctors who served the needs of the Morris municipality were: Dr. Colert, Dr. J.S. Halowin, J.C. Elias, Dr. Lehr, George Friesen, J.H. Boucher, Henry Dirks, Dr. Bernier, L. Boutin, Gordon Griggs, J.I. Regehr, Gilbert Welch, P.A. Sukhbir, Ed Buhr, M.H. Walker, H. Chan, B. Power, F.J. Taylor and R.C. Manness.

Medical care is provided for area residents who have access to this hospital and its facilities, and the ambulance service connects them with the specialized services and equipment of the Winnipeg hospitals.

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The Morris General Hospital built just in time to be deluged with waters from the Red River in 1950. It became flood headquarters for a time. Here, cleanup operations are underway.

## HERBS AND THINGS

by Elizabeth Rempel

Unfortunately, the pioneers in midwifery and healing kept no records and no written details of home-made remedies. Many relied on medical books and patent medicines available at that time. One of these books, still in use, is *Deutsche Ausgabe von Dr. Chase's Recept-Buch and Haus-Arzt, oder Praktische Lehren fur das Volk*, by A.W. Chase, M.D., published by the R.C. Barnum Co., Cleveland, Ohio, 1913: Copyright, 1884. The older residents remember some of the following medicines and remedies:

1. General remedies for a condition of feeling unwell - Essence of peppermint, wintergreen extract, "Russisches Schagwassen" (also used externally), flax seed, vinegar, sulphur, brandy, Wakins and Rawleigh's liniment, Alpenkrauter, "ammonia, "electric" oil, castor oil, olive oil, baking soda, tea made from shrub called "Ola Maun" (Old Man);
2. For colds, sore throat, coughs, congested chest conditions: onion poultice, mustard plaster, camphor



Morris General Hospital in 1963, a modern 50 bed hospital, to serve the surrounding community.

ointment, salt in a hot foot bath, camomile tea, camomile steam directed into a sore throat by a paper cone held over the boiling tea, a strip of hog rind tied around the neck with a cloth, cod-liver oil, ginger taken internally and used in a hot foot bath, and goose grease.

3. For cuts and burns, and infection: strong black tea for burns, poultice made of sour cream and chewed bread, coal oil and kerosene, carbol ointment, zinc salve, and tar (animals only), gun grease for first aid in shops.

4. More specific remedies: toothache - Kerosene, turpentine or "Crotonoi", parsley tea applied in damp cloth externally for bladder problems, mud packs for bee stings, iodine for goiter, vinegar for insect bites, petroleum jelly or vaseline for chapped skin, dirty sheep's wool with sour cream for boils and carbuncles.

Mrs. Eidse' imported fever pills for children.

Borax dissolved in water for infections in the eyes and mouth, bee's wax for tender chapped skin, "white"



11tal:14ER Fletcher's Castoria is especially prepared to relieve Infants in arms and Children all ages of Constipation, Flatulency, Wind Colic and Diarrhea; allaying

Feverishness arising -therefrom, and, by regulating the Stomach and :Bowels, aids the assimilation of Food; giving natural sleep.

To avoid imitations, always look for the signature of lla,d4/7244,14 Absolutely Harmless - No- Opates. Physicians cveriwhe rconuucuti it.

*Taken from 1925 Morris Herald.*

linament and opedeldoc for aching joints and muscles, bran bath for babies' skin problems.

Dr. Chase's liver pills. Bear fat for rheumatism.

5. "Blood-letting" for a variety of ills.

As related by Lily Enns: "Great Grandmother Brandt (Justina Rosche) had some considerable medical knowledge. She brought from Russia, a blood letting apparatus and a plant which she called "Zippelfieg", used for medicinal purposes. The inside of its cactus-like leaves, which resembles raw egg white, was applied for infections and on burns. Offshoots of this plant are still (very much) alive in our family. (I remember one winter, when after the long cold season, many of mother's plants came to grief. Thinking the zippelfieg was completely dead, she placed the pot outside in spring with the intention of using it a little later for another plant. Unwittingly, she had set it under the drain pipe, and to and

behold, if that stubborn plant didn't send out new shoots! We gained a new respect for that all but indestructible plant.)

The blood letting, or cupping as it was known, was duly passed down to our mother. I often stood, fascinated, and at the same time repelled by the procedure. First, the patient's arm or back was thoroughly cleansed with rubbing alcohol. Next the little metal box was applied. When released, a spring sent several blades just into the skin. Working quickly, mother lit a folded strip of newspaper, inserted it deftly into one of the little glass cups, discarded the sometimes still flaming missile and then quickly applied the cup to the wound. The vacuum thus created caused the blood to be sucked into the cup. If memory serves me correctly, people paid 5C a cup for this treatment."

The following incidents reflect on the positive and negative aspects of home treatment:

A child stepped on several white-hot iron rods just removed from the blacksmith's forge. Her aunt soaked the injured foot in kerosene, the pain soon disappeared and no blisters formed.

A woman of forty, after a medical examination was diagnosed as incurable by doctors. Determined to live, she experimented with teas made from various herbs and weeds she collected in the pasture. She recovered and lived another forty years.

Another "cure" attempted, did not respond favorably. The treatment consisted of turpentine taken internally. The "patient" lost her voice and communicated in whispers for the rest of her life.

For the treatment of sore backs, sprains, strains, and broken bones, there were men and women who were born with a gift of healing in their hands. Some cultivated this gift and provided relief from pain for many. These include Mr. von Niessen, Mr. Henry Wiebe of Morris, and Mrs. Sadie (George P.) Goossen, Mrs. Annie (Frank L.) Kroeker, and Mr. Peter J.L. Friesen.

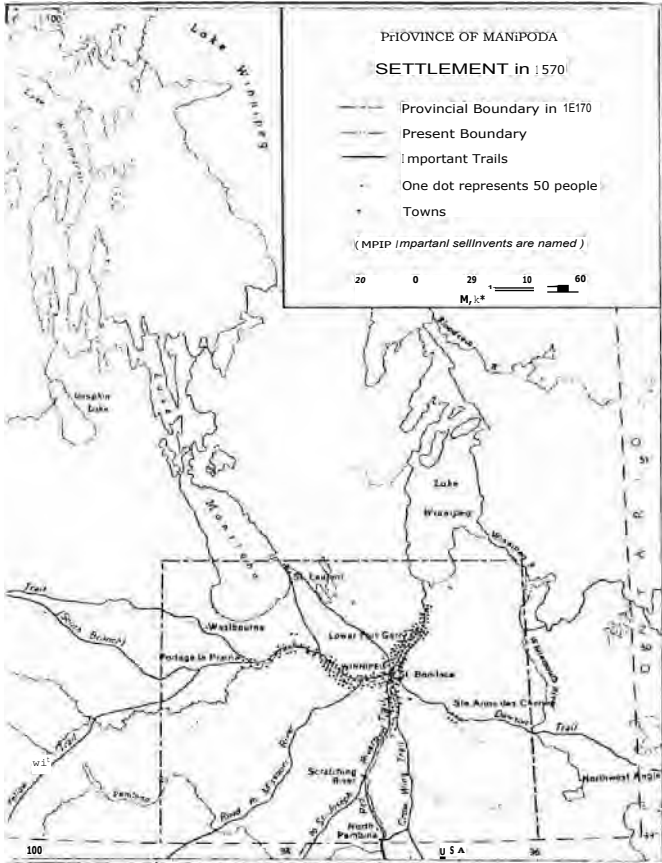
The greatest demands for medical skills were required of the midwives. These women, married, with families of their own, gave sacrificially of their time and experience. Doctors rarely attended women in childbirth until about 1937-38. Babies were born in the home and a familiar, dependable female figure was most desirable as an attendant. Since telephones were non-existent, the midwife's satchel was always packed, ready for her to leave at a moment's notice. Using horses and seasonal conveyances, people would come for her at any hour of the day or night. When an anticipated birth was imminent, there would always be a horse fully hitched to the buggy, and at first notice, the husband would take his wife to her destination. One particular night in early spring, a call came from the home of Russian immigrants living on a farm north-west of McTavish. Through mud and water, sitting on a manure sled, the midwife, Mrs. Warkentin, was "rushed" to the home, to find the baby had arrived before she did.

Mrs. Helena Eidse (1861-1938) was the giant in her field. She delivered hundreds of babies (no records can establish the exact number), the last one on August 23, 1938. She never lost a baby and only one mother died in childbirth in 1910.

# THE SETTLEMENT AND POPULATION OF THE MORRIS MUNICIPALITY FROM 1880-1970

by Cheryl (Bobrowski) Martens

The Municipality of Morris is situated in the centre of the Red River Valley, directly between the city of Winnipeg and the U.S. border. The area is drained by two rivers, the Morris and the Red, and the land is extremely fertile. For the early settlers the territory was thus very attractive. By the 1870's people had begun to move in.



Questions about who the people were, why they came and where they settled quite naturally arise, and are aptly recorded in the portions of this book dedicated to family stories.

To form a picture of the very early years, it is necessary to look at the provincial situation. Manitoba had just joined Confederation in 1870 and it was desired that the land be settled and thus established as a sure part of Canada. These were boom years; both land and settlers were plentiful. In 1877 the County Municipality Act was passed dividing the land by range and township, and in 1880 Morris was incorporated as a Municipality. It is here that this history begins.

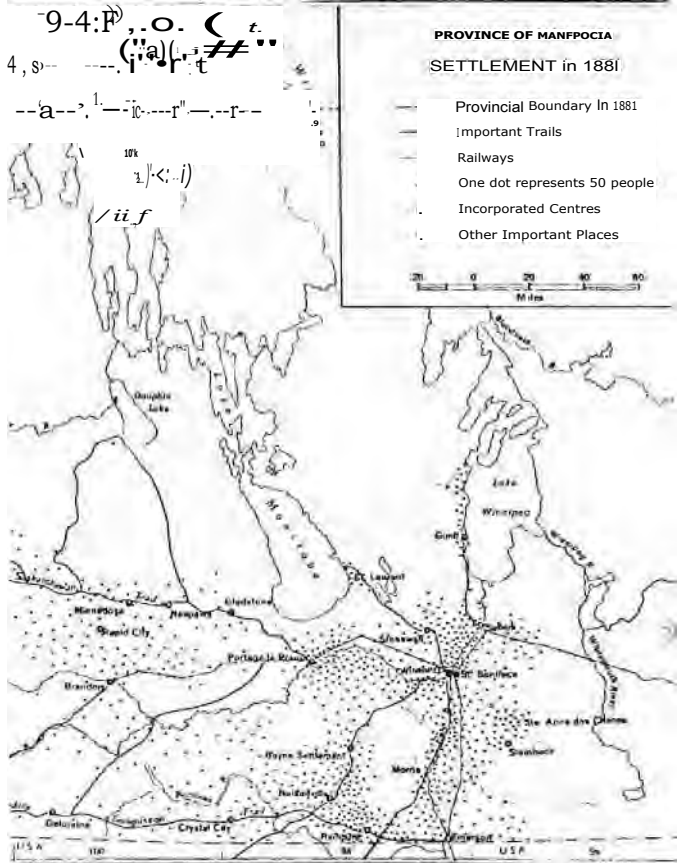
## PERIOD UP TO 1881

The total population of the R.M. of Morris at this time was 2,526. Most were immigrants, less than 115 were

born in the province. This number is quite high, particularly when compared with the following decade. The reason for this was the size of the Municipality. The statute of 1880 states:

*The County of Morris shall comprise all territory between the County of Manchester and the county of Provencher, and between the line between range 2 and 3 west to the Lake of the Woods.*

By taking in more territory and including the town of Morris the population necessarily appeared quite large. It took in additional area along the Red River and thereby included more of the river lots which were owned primarily by the French.



## 1881-1891 PERIOD

At this time, the population shows a somewhat deceptive decline in terms of absolute numbers. This change does not indicate a decrease in the population, but rather a redrawing of the Municipal boundaries. In 1890 the Municipality was confined to the boundary it now has.

Even with these confined borders, the French still made up a considerable part of the population numbering 201 out of a total of 739 people. This group still occupied the river lots along the Red, and were concentrated most densely around the village of Aubigny.

The central northern and central western parts of the Municipality were settled primarily by Mennonites. The area around Rosenort-Rosenhoff was homesteaded by those coming directly from Russia. They settled the first village in the municipality.

The second group of Mennonite settlers were concentrated around the Lowe Farm area. Unlike the immigrant Mennonites, this group was the result of an overflow from the Mennonite East and West Reserves which had become saturated.

Positive influences were exerted to encourage immigrants to come to Canada, by the British and Canadian governments. Manitoba, though it had joined Confederation in 1870, was still considered somewhat insecure in that excessive American immigration into the area could rekindle U.S. desires for annexation. The existence of forty thousand potential immigrants, most of whom were materially prosperous due to their excellent farming techniques, encouraged the Canadian government to make immigration appealing.



*Settlers arrived in the Morris municipality by various means. Here, they are travelling across country with their household effects. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

The English were a mixture of people, coming primarily from Ontario, but also from the British Isles. They, the Americans, and the remaining undistinguished group dispersed throughout the Municipality establishing many small towns. One such example is the Sperling area, which was first homesteaded in 1881.



*The river was the source of water for residents, since all well water was brackish. Here, Andrew Hakanson drawing water from the Red River at Union Point in 1910.*

Since all wells on the west side of the Red River in the Municipality produce only extremely salty water, few settlers, including those brought in from the U.S. by the Colonization Co., could be convinced to stay.

The lands along the rivers were taken up first for this reason. By the early 1880's most of the river lots along the Red were occupied near the town of Morris. To the north the district of Union Point sprang up, containing perhaps a few more Americans than other areas. Growth along the Morris River also continued and the Pleasant Valley area became settled.

As the most desirable areas thus became filled, the swell resulted in the formation of the Broadview, Sewell, Flowery Bank, McTavish, and Silver Plains districts just beyond the rivers. By the 1890's, there was settlement in all of these areas.

### MOST RAPID GROWTH - 1891-1901

The census of 1901 shows an increase of 205 over the 1891 record, the largest increase that the Municipality ever experienced.

A look at the age composition suggests that much of the population was a result of natural increase. In 1891 sixty-five per cent of the population were children. No doubt many of these married within the community (particularly amongst the tightly knit Mennonite groups who made up approx. 2/3's of the population), and set up new homesteads nearby.



*Mennonite families made up 2/3 of the population during this period.*

Social and economic development was also very rapid within the community. The Municipal Council notes record the constant opening of new schools, like Flowery Bank, Provencher, Armour, Rosenort, Rosenhoff, Union Point, White Haven, Lea Bank, Broadview and St. Elizabeth. As well, the Rosenhoff and Lowe Farm schools were increased in size. Much work was also done in building roads and bridges. The railroads also had stretched to cover much of the Municipality. The Canadian Northern went through the Sperling district in 1901 while the Canadian Pacific had reached the Osborne area in 1881 and had been planned to head westward from the town of Morris in 1889. Thus, in all aspects, the Municipality was expanding and bustling.

## 1901-1911 - THE GREAT BOOM

On a provincial scale, the decade preceding the census of 1911 was known as part of the Great Boom. In Morris this boom was apparent in some of the English speaking areas. For example, both the Lowe Farm and Sperling districts report the coming of several families from the United States, particularly from Illinois, encouraged, no doubt, by one of the six land companies established in the town of Morris.

For the remainder of the Municipality, however, the period seems more directed to consolidation. The schools

considerably, as evident in the fact that nearly 2,000 of this faith were enumerated in 1921.

This period also marked the beginning of the depression. Immediately after the first World War the province had endured a silent depression which had forced wheat and livestock prices to rock bottom (particularly in 1922). Politically, the period brought in the Bracken government; Bracken having been the leader of the agricultural movement, i.e. the United Farmers of Manitoba. W.L. Morton records that this period marked the end of agricultural settlement of the earlier kind as many farmers were starved out and their mortgages were



*Illinois - Manitoba Land Co. bringing buyers to see the land at harvest time. Many Americans were enticed to buy land, but failed when their heavy steam plows bogged down in the Red River gumbo. Photo courtesy Mel Anderson.*

which numbered around twenty early in the decade, increased only by five. Bridges and roads were increased and existing ones were improved. Ditches were also improved to assist in the problems created by flooding. Also, in 1903 Bell Telephone was granted rights to install telephones throughout the Municipality. The small villages also developed somewhat, many building sidewalks, putting up elevators, or setting up lumber yards.

There were changes in the Mennonite community. The village structure of Rosenort and Rosenhoff began to break apart as a few farmers insisted on moving to their own homesteads; land to which they were legally entitled. Those who still favoured the village arrangement found there were now no nearby places to set up villages. Consequently some families moved to the U.S. with its favourable climate, while others left for Saskatchewan and Alberta where the land was still cheap. The population shows an increase from 408 in 1901 to 483 in 1911.

## 1911-1921

In this period the population again grew considerably, jumping nearly 60%. This census was taken soon after World War I and in a place where a large number of people were pacifists, there were definite implications for population. The Mennonite people were exempt from conscription and thus their numbers were permitted to increase. Those who enlisted were from the English and French speaking areas. The Mennonite population grew

foreclosed. For the farmers, the situation called for increased diversification in farming, and binding together to form a collective voice in the sale of goods.

Two more features, directly related to the Great Depression may also have influenced this slow increase. One was the fact that immigration virtually ceased during these years. Secondly there was the loss of much of the male population.

As times were hard, it seems very possible that many young men were forced to look elsewhere, particularly the city, for work. At this time, the farm population was 82.8% of the total, and the number of farms and the percentage of people living on farms is greater than at any other period suggesting that a saturation point had been reached, and the surplus was being forced to leave. This migration out proved to be the beginning of a trend.

The highest population ever to be reached in the Municipality, was at this time. It represents a kind of culmination of growth, and may be seen as the beginning of a decline.

Of the total 5,095 people, only 3,768 are now living on farms. Thus over a quarter (26.04%) of the population has congregated in small towns such as Lowe Farm, Rosenort, Sperling and Aubigny.

It is the growth of towns, that is perhaps responsible for any increase in population. The farmland was saturated; it simply could not support any more farmers at a desirable income level, however, as towns developed this concentrated population meant that the total area could hold more people.

The population increased in spite of the international

crisis of World War II. As in the first World War, the majority of the population (the Mennonites) was exempt from conscription. However for those who were not, going to war was an extremely viable alternative. A retired farmer from around the Silver Plains area was reminded of a time near the beginning of the war when he and a friend went to the city to look for work, only to be refused by each employer with the suggestion that he try the army. With this and other kinds of persuasion many did in fact join the forces.

The children of the baby boom of the early part of the century had now reached adulthood. The population thus reaches its climax in these years.

At this time, particularly in the Rosenort area, there was a change in church policy. Many of the more conservative people had become disillusioned with Canada since they had been forced into "alternative service" during the second World War. In 1948 this group, forming about one quarter of the population, chose to leave for Mexico. Those remaining bought up the land that they left, and a trend towards larger farms began.

#### 1951-1971 - A STEADY DECLINE

The population decrease is fairly steady over these years. A missionary zeal was to develop amongst the Mennonites, which lead to a desire to reach out to other communities. Thus in the fifties and sixties more people were to move, often in groups of five or six families. There was consequently more land to buy and farms again grew in size.

This trend to larger farms was present everywhere in the municipality. In 1941, 56% of the farmers had holdings of over 240 acres, in 1951 this was increased to 65% and in 1961, 70% of the people had farms larger than this. There was simultaneously a decrease in the number of farms, and an increase in the acreage of each farm.

A look at the following chart will show that the decrease was not due to an influx into the towns. The population of the Municipality was simply decreasing.

#### Population Changes in Towns in the Municipality from Census Records

Towns	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976
Aubigny	141	117	121	92	
Lowe Farm	385	310	342	287	286
Rosenhoff			84		66
Rosenort	72	110	197	155	108
Sperling	187	172	133	117	128

- no record available

The decline of the small towns is related to a number of things. When they were first established they represented the core of a particular area, often maintaining a railway, an elevator, and perhaps a store and post office. Roads in the area were usually poor and travel was slow and difficult, so people needed these nearby communities.

#### NUMBER OF FARMS IN MUNICIPALITY



In time, these roads became improved, and with the increase in automobiles, travel became faster and more efficient. It became easier to go to larger centres where choice in purchasing items was greater and the cost was lower. The population of the town of Morris progressively increased as the Municipality decreased.

Thus, it was this larger centre which was becoming the nucleus. This was compounded by the closing down of some of the railway stations by the C.P.R. and the C.N.R., and the decision to consolidate schools. Municipal Records of the late fifties and sixties are dominated by these events. This was related to mechanization since it became simpler to bus children to the larger centres, and with the decrease in the number of children it was impractical to maintain small schools.

Mechanization also had a substantial impact on farming. As machines became larger and more powerful there was less need for man power and greater ability to tackle larger plots of land. This displaced the young men who might have worked the land, and since the Municipality offered no alternative employment, many were forced to leave.

Thus, the trend over the years has been for the young to leave the municipality in search of occupation elsewhere. And, for the elderly, there has been a move to the towns, particularly Morris, where in the past decade three senior citizens homes have been built. This, in addition to a decrease in the birth rate, has produced a gradually declining population count for the Morris Municipality in the past thirty years.

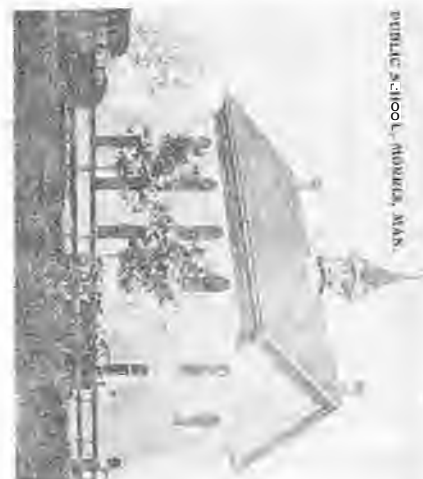
#### Population in R.M. of Morris

from Census Records

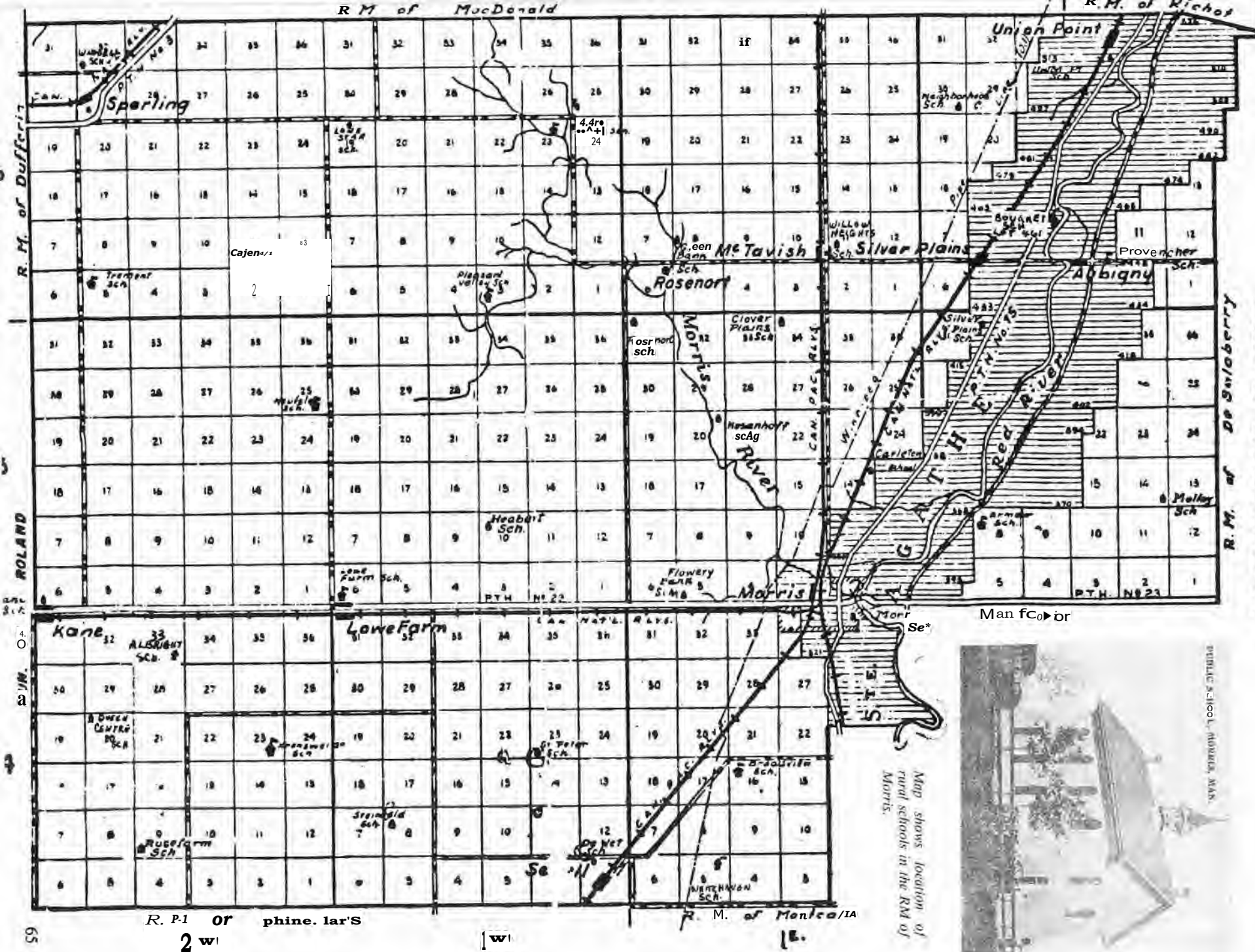
1881 - 2,526  
 1891 - 739  
 1901 - 2,256  
 1911 - 2,791  
 1921 - 4,441  
 1931 - 4,509  
 1941 - 5,095  
 1951 - 4,458  
 1961 - 3,985  
 1971 - 3,275



PUBLIC SCHOOL, MORRIS, MASS.



Map shows location of rural schools in the RM of Morris.





## EDUCATION First Schools

Education was a primary concern of the settlers. Early records show that the first school in the municipality was built in 1876 by W. Gallie. He agreed to build the school, on Main Street, south of the Morris River, and wait one year to be paid for same. The building was a small one room structure, constructed of the yellow brick from Russell's brickyard in Morris. This building was short lived, as in 1880, money was borrowed for a new school.

An issue of the Morris Herald of 1882 described this new school as "an unusually handsome and spacious building with ample accommodation for the requirements of education." Since it was situated in the heart of town, this two storey building (30 x 50 ft.) was also used as a local meeting place. This brick structure was fitted with handsome desks. There was some difficulty raising enough money to keep the schools open, but by 1890, government grants were available. Whitehaven No. 89 is one of the first rural schools mentioned, in 1882, it was located on Sec. 5-4-1E.

Most likely, the Mennonites operated one of the first schools in the district. When they arrived in Scratching River settlement in 1874, federal authorities granted them the right to govern their own schools, yet the B.N.A. Act of 1867 stated this was a provincial responsibility. This created some problems in the operation of the Mennonite schools. Local officials received a letter from Abraham Klassen, secretary of the Rosenhoff School Division, in 1886, requesting that a district tax levied for Rosenhoff School Division be removed, as they did not want to raise any tax for their school at all! The fear was, that by accepting tax money, they would also be accepting government control.

### EDUCATION IN RURAL MANITOBA

In 1871, a year after the province of Manitoba was formed, an education act had introduced a system of public education with central and local authorities. This was a dual system of denominational public schools - Protestant and Catholic. Local taxes levied on Catholic landowners were paid to Catholic schools, the same was applied to Protestant schools. In 1884, school taxes were to be collected in the school districts of Carlton, Rosenort, Union Point, Rosenhoff and Silver Plains.

In this dual system of education, the provincial board selected textbooks for secular subjects, Roman Catholic and Protestant board members looked after control, management and discipline of schools, regulations for examining, grading and licensing teachers, and purchase of books relative to religion and morals.

In the early years, all school costs were borne by the homesteaders who contributed to school building construction and upkeep, also paying the teacher's salary. This system eventually broke down, as those with large families often could not pay their share of the costs. Crop failure in a school district could also mean that the teacher would receive a cut in salary!

In 1890, a non-sectarian system replaced the denominational system, with the right of minority groups to retain "private schools" at their own expense. The "district" schools would receive a grant of 65 cents per day per teacher. This arrangement was so vigorously opposed by religious groups, with the result that in 1896, the Legislature approved a compromise - whereby religious instruction was to be permitted at specific times during the school day.

In schools where ten or more pupils spoke a language other than English, instruction was to be permitted on a bilingual system. This meant that ethnic groups could have their children taught in the "mother tongue", provided English was taught also. Consequently, for a number of years, several of the rural districts (particularly in the Lowe Farm and Rosenort areas) operated as German-English schools, where one-fourth to one-half of the instruction was conducted in German, English instruction, beginning in the first, second or third year. The same was true in the Aubigny districts, with their mother tongue - French. This policy was in effect for over 20 years, until the war caused new problems to rear their heads.

Canada was at war with Germany, and there arose a great concern over the number of public schools in the province that were teaching German. As a result, a new Act passed in 1916, required that children should be taught in the English language *only*. So intense were the emotions at this time, that one school inspector known in the area, changed his name from Weidenhammer to Willows.

When the act became law, there was a great furor in district schools, as this decision affected the Catholic schools as well. School inspectors were the dread of these schools. Sometimes teachers were forewarned, and other times, the very appearance of this gentleman was the signal of the school class to hide all French or German books, and refrain from using any language except English. These conditions persisted for many years.

The curriculum and teaching conditions were primitive. Anna Peters, teacher in St. Peters School District in 1919, recalls:

"I came to this school equipped with a Grade X certificate, no teacher's training, except the list my father gave me. I'll never forget:

1. Don't forget every child has his or her own personality.
2. Always try to see the other's point of view.
3. A teacher that teaches for money is no teacher.

What did I teach? Mostly reading, writing and arithmetic.

Physical training - yes, we walked to school 1 1/2 miles; some walked 2 1/2 miles.

Geography - We learned the names of countries and their capitals, but not very much about the people and their way of life.

Science - Nature study, we lived so close to the things that grow, and the creatures that surrounded us. We had no text on this.

Salary - I received \$50.00 a month the first 3 months, and \$65.00 a month after Christmas.

One thing I do remember - in those schools the teacher learned more than the pupils did!"

The Anglo-Saxons and their school children made forward strides at this time. They could see no conflict between church and state. Government regulations, grants and advice were welcomed. Their schools obtained well qualified teachers, well balanced curriculum and texts, which resulted in many of their students continuing to complete high school.

Poor attendance in rural schools was a chief worry of teachers and officials. Attendance was poorest in the spring when roads were muddy, and farmers needed help at home. Many parents thought farm chores were more important than book learning. A teacher in the Heabert School Division, a Mr. Armstrong, had his employment terminated, as he reported parents to the authorities, for not sending their children to school. This in spite of the fact that he was a good teacher, as one pupil said, "we learned more from him in six months than we would have from another in two years."

Extreme weather conditions in winter, the fact that many parents could not afford proper winter clothing and that rural school distances were great, all contributed to the attendance problem, which was at times only 50% of enrollment. All these factors led up to the enforcement of the School Attendance Act in 1919, when the compulsory age for school attendance was raised to sixteen. Even then, this age was not strictly adhered to by many. In 1924, there were 936 children in 27 schools in the Municipality.



*School at Lowe Farm built in 1911*

Although residents were clinging to their old school systems as much as possible, provincial officials recognized that the standard of education was suffering in some areas. It was well known that local boards hired the teacher of their choice, a local farmer or a high school student, the main qualification being a good knowledge of the mother tongue.

Initially, grants were designed by the central authorities to enforce the adoption of essential practises and to encourage localities to improve their schools. They were almost always dependent upon the hiring of a certified teacher.

School terms varied considerably, anywhere from six to twelve months, as specified by the local school board. Sometimes it was decided that the school children should have a three week summer vacation, but finally, the settlement was for the present two month summer vacation period.

During the Depression, many schools had to close, due to a lack of funds. All expenses elsewhere were cut to a bare minimum, with the teachers receiving a substantial cut in salary. Still, those teachers performed their tasks ably and willingly, thankful that they at least had a job.

Consolidation of small rural schools was greatly encouraged by the Department of Education in an attempt to standardize education in the province. Many one room country schools offered no high school education, denying students equal opportunity for education. By the 1950's, a number of smaller schools began to merge.

Thirty-one schools were operating in the Rural Municipality of Morris by 1915. The names of all schools where children attended are recorded below. A complete story on each is given elsewhere in this book.

Albright	Neighbourhood
Armour	Neufeld
Bourret	Pleasant Valley
Broadview	Provencher
Cannon	Queen Centre
Carleton	Rosefat m
Clover Plains	Rosenhof f
DeWet	Rosenort
Flowery Bank	Silver Plains
Greenbank	Sperling
Heabert	St. Martins
Kane	St. Peters
Kronsweide	Steinfeld
Lea Bank	Tremont
Lowe Farm	Union Point
Lone Star	Waddell
Louisa	Whitehaven
McTavish	Willow Heights
Molloy	



*Heabert School, one of the many rural schools in the municipality.*

Better roads, an increase in transportation, a difficulty in obtaining teachers for small "out of the way" schools, the disappearance of small communities, resulted in a change in the school population, and made funding difficult. Many small school districts consolidated with others, in an effort to "stay afloat", with the people still much in favour of retaining the discipline, teaching methods and local control over their students. Times change, methods change, and so did the school system.

## Unitary School Issue

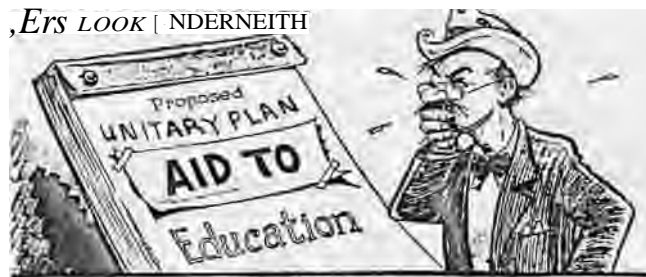
In order to give direction to the changing educational scene, the provincial government proposed the formation of unitary school divisions, which would supposedly give educational leadership, equalized costs, special services and more effective and consistent planning of educational programs. It was the referendum for this proposed system which created much controversy during the first months of 1967.

Looking back to March 10, 1967, feelings were running high, people were calling meetings, and an organized group in southern Manitoba was actively campaigning against the referendum. When the vote was completed, our area had rejected the proposal. Among the reasons most frequently mentioned were the fear of losing our local autonomy, long hours on buses for small children, and general opposition to unpopular government decisions such as the new sales tax and provincial daylight saving time. Another possible answer was voter turn-out. Of 3476 eligible voters, only 1662 or about 48 % voted, even though interest appeared to be very high.

"A chance to ensure that our children will have equal opportunity to receive the best education we can provide - 100% of school construction cost through the Foundation Program - a reduction in the mill rate from 13.1 to 10.9 mills on balanced assessments - a savings of over 5 mills based on up-to-date budgets." These were the type of published statements by politicians and school officials as April 14, 1969 drew near. So important was the issue that the Manitoba Legislature recessed for one week so that M.L.A.'s could campaign for a successful vote on the initial referendum.

Perhaps no campaigning would have been necessary to carry the second referendum. After all, one could see the benefits enjoyed by unitary divisions. Since the March 10, 1967 referendum when Morris-MacDonald turned down the proposal, it was obvious that the eight areas

*Ers LOOK | NDERNEITH*



*One of the ads sponsored by groups opposing the Unitary School system in 1967.*

still not unitary could not afford to remain multi-district. In Morris-MacDonald, the Board of Trustees issued an official statement outlining the advantages of the Unitary Division. Their plea to the voters was "Vote for the Proposal".

The advantages for accepting the Unitary Division were becoming quite obvious. After all, when the question of writing off a debenture debit of \$775,810.00 (principal and interest on the five high schools) entered into the picture, the benefits began to loom pretty large. Other cost benefits such as more efficient use of teaching staff, proposed mill rate decreases of over five mills, better purchasing power, and numerous other financial advantages had become evident. Other advantages such as better co-ordination of programs from Grades 1 - 12, the prospect of a superintendent as head of the school system, special health services, guidance programs, technical training, and comprehensive libraries, were very convincing arguments in favour of the new system.

With the successful referendum of April 14, 1969, these changes began to take place. The small schools began to close their doors and larger schools took in the shifting student population. The end result being 1-one room school at Peace Valley Hutterite Colony, 2 two-room schools at Domain and Springstein, 1 three room school at Oak Bluff, and multi-room schools at Lowe Farm, Morris, Rosenort, Sanford and Starbuck.

It is difficult to say how much better the Unitary Division really is, after all, measuring educational value is too abstract, and society changes so drastically with each new decade. There are those who say that the smaller schools created more understanding and community spirit. Then there are those who point to benefits like diversity of programs and equality of opportunity in the larger schools. No doubt, as history runs its course, new ideas and systems in the future will cause us again to look back with sentiment, wondering why the change, and will it be for the ultimate good of our students. No doubt the educational system will continue to play its part in providing leaders for the communities, and our country.



# REEVES OF THE R.M. OF MORRIS

1880 - Jean E. Peter  
1881 - J.E. Geber  
1882 - John A. Walker  
1883 - Wm. A. Russell  
1884-1892 - John S. Campbell  
1893 - Henry Snarr  
1893 - Ed Porter  
1894-1898 - Henry Snarr  
1899-1900 - W.R. Ritchie  
1901-1904 - Henry Snarr  
1905-1907 - John Wilton  
1908-1910 - Robert Taylor  
1911-1913 - James Clubb  
1914 - Fred S. Last  
1915 - Wm. Stevenson  
1919 - T. J. Lewis  
1920-1922 - George Churchill  
1923-1935 - C.L. Stoney  
1936-1937 - George Churchill  
1938-1949 - Diedrich Heppener  
1950-1951 - B.W. Thiessen  
1952-1954 - Bruce MacKenzie  
1955-1957 - C. J. Neufeld  
1958-1966 - Bruce MacKenzie  
1967-1971 - Charles Anderson  
1972-1975 - Harold Earl  
**1976. 1980** Alvin Rempel

## JOHN S. CAMPBELL

John S. Campbell was a well known and liked farmer in the Silver Plains district. He was instrumental in the forming of the Silver Plains school district and served as chairman of the board in 1881. He built the first brick house in the district.

In his nine years as Reeve, he saw the event of the century, the coming of the railroad, which was surrounded by problems, debt, and controversy. In pursuit of a solution for the debt incurred due to the bonus paid the railway, John Campbell travelled to Toronto, Ontario on behalf of the municipality. His activity in municipal affairs included the building of roads, bridges and ferries, the forming of school districts, and the construction of an elevator at Silver Plains. During his term (1890), municipal boundaries were changed to the present boundary line.



**HENRY SNARR**

Henry Snarr was an active and diligent farmer, specializing in top quality seed grain. He captured outstanding awards on his exhibits of seed grains at Chicago, Kansas City and Winnipeg seed fairs. He received a gold watch suitably engraved, for the Sweepstakes prize at the Chicago fair, for Timothy seed.

Mr. Snarr was keenly interested in all community and municipal affairs, having spent 13 years on the rural council, 10 years as Reeve, also serving as Justice of the Peace. He helped organize the Carleton school district, and was a board member for many years.

This tribute was paid Mr. Snarr by his colleagues upon retirement from office, "In the ten years he has been Reeve, the debts of the municipality have been placed in satisfactory condition, the municipality settled, roads built and graded, schools erected, and the whole municipality has been changed from a practical state of being inhabited, to that of a well settled municipality, having one of the best railway services in Canada."

Mr. Snarr's reply indicated that there had been many cares for him. Debts had been reorganized, taxes on unpatented lands entirely changed, legislation affecting drainage had been passed, which much favored the municipality, enabling all to be assessed and pay taxes alike.

It is known that Henry Snarr's genuine hospitality and friendliness were a great asset to him in the execution of his duties.

## EDWARD PORTER - REEVE

Edward Porter came to Manitoba by river boat in 1877, and farmed along the Red River on lots 399 and 401, next to Harry and John Earl. He bought his first farm from the McLean Land Company in Winnipeg, and farmed this land with the help of his nephew, Bob Porter. His only son, Albert, was killed at Trenton, during the war. Daughter, Jean, is Mrs. Perce J. Mitchell of Summerland, B.C.

Edward Porter served a half year term as Reeve in the municipality, when the election for Reeve was contested. He was appointed to serve that portion of the term until another election was held.

## ELECTION OF 1892 CONTESTED

An election for Reeve which took place on December 20, 1892, saw John S. Campbell, former reeve, and Henry Snarr as candidates. Snarr won the election by just one vote, and took oath of office in January, 1893, to assume his duties.

Due to the narrow margin sustained by Snarr, a number of people set out to contest the election and have John Campbell declared elected. A petition was drawn up to that effect (John Campbell himself was not among the petitioners) which resulted in a hearing in County Court in Morris.

The case was presented before L.A. Prudhomme, County Court judge, on April 26, 1893. Two Mennonite people, Justina Warkentin, and Gerhard Seamans, upon questioning before the court, volunteered the information that they had voted for Snarr, when it was proven that they were ineligible to vote because they were born in Russia and not yet "naturalized citizens", their votes were struck from the record. This gave Campbell a majority of one vote.

Defense attorney for Snarr, produced an individual (which records indicated) who had voted twice for the Reeveship. This individual, John Moore, admitted having voted for Campbell. Further information revealed that he had presented himself to vote a third time at the polls. The judge ordered Moore's two votes to be discounted, as he was guilty of corrupt practices, and declared that for next year, Moore was ineligible either as a candidate, or as an elector. Snarr again had a majority of one.

Henry Snarr, who was born in Germany, had been naturalized 8 years previously in Morris, but because he could not produce any papers to that effect, he was still considered an "alien". Judge Prudhomme ruled that since Henry Snarr was not a British subject, he did not qualify as a candidate as Reeve for the election.

Council records from May - August, 1893, show that a member of council was acting Reeve until August, when Edward Porter was appointed Reeve until the elections in December.

Records do not show what happened next, but as Henry Snarr was elected Reeve in December, 1893, the assumption is made that the problems were resolved.

## W.R. RITCHIE

W.R. Ritchie was Reeve for two years from 1899-1900. New school districts were formed, steel graders purchased, to implement road construction in the district. A survey was made between the area of Horshoe Lake and the Morris ferry for the purpose of making a road. Shewman was hired to do road construction with his teams of horses, as many new miles of road were constructed.



**JOHN WILTON**

There is scarcely a municipal office in the Morris district in which Mr. Wilton had not served. He was for three years Reeve of the municipality (1899-1904), four years as councillor, two years as alderman for the town of Morris, postmaster and mayor of the Town of Morris.

John Wilton was instrumental in having the pontoon bridge constructed over the Red River at Morris, and in instigating a reviewal of drainage policies in this municipality.

When he first came to the Broadview district, he was a carriage maker by trade. He was known as being "unwaveringly honest, straight forward, and public spirited".



**ROBERT TAYLOR**

Robert Taylor came to the Morris district as a young man and bought a quarter section of land. During the years he lived here, he steadily added to his holdings, owning more land upon which he made substantial improvements. His prosperity steadily increased, and he became one of the leading farmers in the district.

He was Reeve of the municipality for three years, four years as a councillor, secretary-treasurer of the school board, and township trustee. His major accomplishment was the construction of the County Court House in 1909, and he saw the number of rural schools increase to twenty-five. He brought to the discharge of his official duties, the same high integrity and sincerity of purpose which marked the activities of his business career.



**JAMES CLUBB**

James Clubb purchased land adjacent to his brother George in the Broadview area in the late 1890's, here building a home for his family. He was a farmer who was interested and involved in community affairs.

He served as councillor for the Rural Municipality of Morris for five years, four years as Reeve (1911-13), and was school trustee for the Broadview school. Being active in farm organizations, he was frequently a delegate to conventions in both eastern and western Canada. During his term in office, high waters in 1912 meant the implementation of improved drainage policies, and a new steel bridge over the Red River. The latter involved a trip to Ottawa to interview federal authorities for the purpose of obtaining assistance for a bridge, which was not accomplished until 1920.

The number of schools by this time had increased to thirty-one, a by-law requiring the licensing of all dogs in the municipality, brought a delegation of 59 people to a council meeting, road repairs were constantly required and ditches reconstructed. All this in the name of progress!



**FRED LAST**

Fred Last was a progressive farmer in the Leabank School district. Primarily a grain farmer, he took a great pride in his teams of horses. He was involved in community activities, was secretary-treasurer of the Leabank school district for many years, served two years as councillor, and Reeve in 1914.

This was the first year of the "Great War"; married men were enlisting and the municipality was to be responsible for sustaining their wives and families. There was a lot of involvement with the Red Cross at this time, a telephone line was being installed to Lowe Farm, and the Rural Municipality became a member of the Good Roads Association.



**WILLIAM STEVENSON**

William Stevenson was a pioneer of the Silver Plains district, a farmer and an avid horseman. He bred and trained race horses, one the locally famous running horse, "Stella McGumb", won most major races in southern Manitoba at the time. Hunting and curling were also his fancies. He owned the John Deere farm equipment agency in Morris and several farms in the Silver Plains district.

William Stevenson was trustee for the Morris and Carleton schools, secretary for the United Church, president of the Agricultural Society, as well as serving on the Municipal Council, 6 years as a councillor and four years as Reeve.

In his term as Reeve, provision was made for resident farmers to obtain loans for seed grain, due to difficult times. The number of schools in the municipality had increased to 31, drainage problems were in the forefront, which resulted in the first complete survey of the Morris municipality. This term saw the end of the "Great War" and the provision of loans for returning soldiers to obtain land.



**T.J. LEWIS**

Tom Lewis farmed on his father's homestead northwest of Morris. His wife died after only 8 years of marriage, leaving Tom to raise four young sons (all of whom served in the Second World War).

Tom was very active in community affairs; he was first President of the local Pool Elevators Association, school trustee, active in the Agricultural Society, Game and Fish Association, in local and provincial politics, and was well known provincially for his race horses.

In his five years as councillor, and Reeve in 1919, there were thousands of requests for roads and road improvements. Reeve Lewis and Councillor Stoney were responsible for the establishment of Jefferson Highway as a permanent road, as petitioned to the Good Roads Association. New ferries were built at Union Point and Aubigny - the first steel ferry with power mechanism. The Taxation Relief Act provided a tax refund for soldiers while they were in the army, and the municipality protested the construction of any further drains until further outlet could be found to the Morris River.



**GEORGE  
CHURCHILL**

George Churchill came to the Broadview district in 1900 to farm, and remained there for 55 years. He took an active part in community affairs, as secretary-treasurer of the Broadview School District for many years, serving the municipal council for 6 years as councillor, and twice as Reeve (1920-22 and 1936-37).

George Churchill was a member of the council who worked hard to establish a good drainage system in this municipality. The first steel bridge was erected over the Red River and the Jefferson Highway built into a permanent road.

In his second term, the first small hospital was opened in the town of Morris, many persons on relief were given employment with the municipality, and the graveling of the Morris-Kane road was completed. At the end of the year, it was announced there would be no more relief, as there had been a bountiful harvest.



**C.L. STONEY**

C.L. Stoney came to the Morris area in 1912, settling on a river lot north of Morris, where he farmed.

He served on the Morris school board for 20 years, spent 17 years on the municipal council, 4 years as councillor and 13 years as Reeve. He also served for 2 years as president of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities. Mr. Stoney had a fair and tolerant attitude, was business-like in all his methods, and was known as a great humanitarian.

In 1923, a bridge was built over the Morris River on Lord Selkirk Highway, and many other smaller bridges. Drainage and the problem it incurred was a major concern, resulting in numerous meetings with government officials and the Red River Valley Drainage Association. Hydro electric power was brought to

Sperling, lands for a cemetery laid aside, many acres of land flooded due to water being channelled here from municipalities to the west.

Relief projects were initiated, in the midst of the depression. Land owners could not afford to pay taxes, and the municipality had to cut back in every way - funding schools decreased, some closed, and finally all work projects ceased. Feed and seed was provided for farmers, grasshopper poison distributed, and 400 acres of municipal land was sold. There were times that demanded stamina, fortitude, wise economic policies and good planning, which Reeve Stoney and the councillors provided.



**DIEDRICH  
HEPPNER**

Mr. Heppner served many years on the local school board, was trustee of the Berghaler Mennonite church, an advisor for the Waisenamt (financial institution) and as a Notary Public he had a good knowledge of the law.

Diedrich Heppner served as municipal councillor for eight years and Reeve for 12 (1938-49) during which time he saw many changes. A major one being the transition from contracting all construction work in the municipality, to the purchasing of equipment and hiring a staff to operate it.

A wave of sleeping sickness spelled the destruction of many horses, the digging of ponds as a farm water source was begun, and the Rural Municipality won an award for the best earth roads in the province. More roads were gravelled, each ward was surveyed for the purpose of electrification of farms in the municipality.

Heavy rains taxed the drainage system beyond its limits and Reeve Heppner was actively engaged in seeking a solution to drainage problems, particularly the Shannon Creek Drain. The flood of 1948 was just a prelude of what was to come in 1950. When the flood waters rose drastically in 1950, Diedrich Heppner went into action and provided a place for flood refugees in the Lowe Farm district, livestock was removed by barge, farmers who refused to evacuate their homes were brought supplies, and he assisted in setting up Red Cross centre. Later, Mr. Heppner managed the Red River flood office in Morris, to assist in the rebuilding program in the flood stricken area.





**B.W. THIESSEN**

Bernard Thiessen, farmer, of the Lowe Farm district, was a meticulous person, with an inventive mind. He provided electric power to his farm home (pre-hydro era) by building a wind charger, and wiring his own buildings.

Mr. Thiessen was active in public life and community affairs. He was president of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op, the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce, director of the Altona and Morris hospitals, school trustee for 17 years, an agent for Wawanesa Insurance Co., and director of the Lowe Farm Credit Union Society. He spent eighteen years on municipal council, 16 years as councillor and Reeve for 1950-51.

He served as councillor during three different periods of time. His term as Reeve came at the time of the 1950 flood, when there was chaos and destruction through most of the municipality. Many bridges were washed out or needed repairs, and most of the roads had to be rebuilt. Discussions of compensation for the municipality and residents with federal and provincial authorities was time consuming. Department of Public Works estimated damages to market roads and bridges alone at \$98,300.00. Flood aid from the provincial government for repairs totalled \$130,900 for this municipality.



**BRUCE  
MacKENZIE**

Bruce MacKenzie was a farmer in the Silver Plains district who was a gifted orator that could keep an audience spellbound. He was selected to represent the farm population of the flood stricken Red River Valley on a cross-Canada tour to help raise funds for the flood refugees, which included speaking to a crowd of 15,000 at

Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto. (It is estimated the radio audience of that night was 20 million people.)

Nation-wide attention was focused on Bruce MacKenzie and Morris, Manitoba, when he publicly confronted the Minister of Trade and Commerce, and deputy Prime Minister C.D. Howe, at a meeting in the school auditorium in Morris, criticizing the performance of this government in power.

Bruce was a spokesman for the farmer. Problems with drainage that plagued the farmer in this municipality were undertaken with engineers, surveyors, federal and provincial authorities. His zest persistence and determination were factors that contributed to the success of a project he undertook - one of which was the idea of promoting a Stampede here in Morris. He was rodeo chairman and general manager of the Big "M" Stampede for years.

A municipal shed was constructed in 1952, measures were taken to prevent flooding along the Tobacco Creek Watershed, P.F.R.A. was contacted for the purpose of constructing stock watering dams on the Morris River, highway No. 23 to Lowe Farm was hard surfaced, road equipment updated, and hospital facilities in Morris were expanded. Arbitration began for the purpose of disbanding small schools and enlarging the school district. Flooding along the Shannon was a major concern of the sixties, and the loss of three lives at the Aubigny ferry created public opinion in favour of constructing a bridge. A reserve fund established in 1965 for this purpose enabled the municipality to pay cash for their portion of the cost of construction.

Another major flood in 1966 saw the implementation of flood protection measures such as dykes and pads for farms, a permanent dyke for the village of Rosenort, and the raising of a number of roads to permit speedy evacuation. Water Control was besieged by application for better drains. On September 24, 1966, the official opening ceremonies were held for the Aubigny bridge.



**C.J. NEUFELD  
REEVE**

In my years on council, we had good co-operation amongst the Councillors and Reeve, each one seeking to do his best for his constituents.

What I consider to be our biggest achievement, was the obtaining of a gravel pit on St. Godard's property east of town. Up until then, the municipality had hardly a shovel full of gravel; and the acquisition of a pit nearby, gave us access to cheap gravel. By 1966, we had built up the gravel program so every family in the municipality had access to a gravel road. The results showed too, since the

RM won the provincial cup for the most improved roads in the province.

Another momentous task that we undertook, was the beginning of rebuilding the drainage system in the RM., and today we have many more acres of productive farmland, and an absence of flooding from those waterways. Many untold hours of planning and working went into these projects, and the results that we see today, show that they made a great improvement in our municipality, and are a benefit to everyone.



**CHARLES  
ANDERSON**

Charles Anderson was reeve of the municipality for five years, beginning January, 1967. Very heavy rains in the summer of 1966 had demonstrated the inadequacy, and need for improved maintenance of much of the drainage system in the municipality, and the correction of this was high on Reeve Anderson's list of priorities. Indeed, substantial renovation was carried out on the Moyer, 110, Lewis, Tobacco Creek Extension, Brown, Boundary and other drains, and these works, together with the continuing program of the provincial government on the 4N and Tobacco Creek drains brought substantial improvement to drainage within the Municipality. Reeve Anderson was also instrumental in seeking and successfully obtaining a Municipal Board ruling that upstream municipalities must share the cost of construction and maintenance of drains and bridges that carry their waters through downstream municipalities, to the benefit of the ratepayers of Morris Municipality.

One of the highlights of Reeve Anderson's term of office was the construction of the new municipal office building, replacing the former "Court House" which had stood on the same site for many years. The new building, designed by architect Hans Peter Langes, was constructed in 1967, Canada's Centennial year, and officially opened on January 25, 1968 by Premier Walter Weir. It provided office space for the R.M. of Morris, the Town of Morris, the Morris-Macdonald School Division, and the Manitoba Department of Agriculture.

Also in 1968, the Municipality adopted a municipal planning by-law that provided for the zoning of the municipality for residential, commercial and agricultural purposes as well as a building permit system to provide

for orderly development in the best interests of all residents.

Ward boundaries were revised in 1971 to conform to new population distribution requirements in the Municipal Act. Also, about this time there was a departure from the traditional practice of rigid adherence to ward appropriations in favour of a policy of carrying out works wherever they were most needed. This was, in the opinion of Reeve Anderson, an important step toward the assumption by all councillors of an interest in and a feeling of responsibility for the welfare of the whole municipality rather than the individual's own ward only.

The time spent in municipal work was, according to Charles Anderson, interesting and rewarding. "If there were some solid accomplishments during those years", Mr. Anderson has said, "this was in large measure due to the good esprit de corps that existed among council and staff. All worked in common purpose for the public welfare."



**HAROLD EARL**

As a former Reeve of the R.M. of Morris, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to record a few comments concerning my term in office (1972-75).

Firstly, it is gratifying to see this book becoming a reality as the idea was first thought of in 1974 and Mrs. Dorothy Dixon was engaged to begin gathering information for some sort of history for the Rural Municipality's Centennial year. Unfortunately, due to health reasons, she was unable to continue, but I'm sure the many hours she spent were invaluable to those that took over the job. I wish to thank her personally at this time for the work she did.

The nine years, five as Councillor for Ward II and four as Reeve, were a very interesting part of my life, and I'll never be sorry I had the opportunity to serve the people of the area. It is a position that is certainly filled with many problems and frustrations, but also has its rewarding moments, which makes the sacrifice that one has to make, both financially and in family life, become a little less important.

Drainage has always been one of the major concerns of the Rural Municipality and probably will always be, but, due to some lack of foresight, in a much different way. As the areas developed, the demand for agricultural land grew, so drainage was provided, not only in the Rural Municipality of Morris, but in the whole of the Red River watershed, which drains south-eastern Saskatchewan, northern portions of North Dakota and Minnesota, and all of southern Manitoba. Little thought was given to the eventual problems that might be created along the major rivers and their tributaries in all of southern Manitoba and the U.S.A. Now, the problems have shifted to a great extent to these areas, which necessitates dikes, pads, etc. for protection from spring flooding on a much greater frequency than in the past generation. However, it now appears this problem is being recognized, and hopefully it is not too late to return the area to a good place to live as well as farm.

In closing, I wish to commend the present committee, and in particular Mrs. Lenore Eidse, for the tremendous amount of work they have done in preparing this book. I'm sure it will be a treasured possession of many people who have lived or are still living in or around the Rural Municipality of Morris.

## COUNCILS AT WORK



*Secretary-Treasurer Alice Loving reading the minutes at a Council meeting.*

*BELOW: R.M. Council in 1974. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Tony Fast, Marcel Caron, Ben Wiebe, Gilbert Cretton, Alvin Rempel. FRONT ROW: Dave Harder, Secretary-Treasurer; Reeve Harold Earl, William Recksiedler.*

*RIGHT: A Council meeting in 1909 with Reeve Robert Taylor presiding. Identified members of council are: Dan Ure, James Clubb, Bill Stevenson, Tom Elliot, Bob Turner. NEWS CLIPPING: Councillor John H. Enns left the R.M. of Morris for greener pastures - Texas!*



## Off to Texas

Mr. John H. Elms left this week for his new home in Texas where two years ago, purchased some 21 acres of land on the Itoumande river, at Wotan acre. In the interval he has had the land partly cleared, and fruit trees planted. Mr. Elms had a big auction sale of his farm stock and implements prior to leaving. He left for Texas, with his large family, by air. The party left driving two buses and a motor truck; the cars were heavily laden with household goods. Mr. Enns will take some two or three weeks to make the trip. At the last council meeting of the Rural Municipality of Morris, Mr. Elms resigned his position as Councillor a position he has held for several years.



# **COUNCILLORS FOR THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF MORRIS 1880-1980**

Felix Gentes	1880	George Churchill	1911-1916
George Belerance	1880	Fred I. Last	1912-1913
George Birney	1880	Peter F. Penner	1912-1913, 1915
John Earl	1880-1896	T.J. Lewis	1914-1918
Amable Landry	1880-1882	Dan Campbell	1914-1915
Joseph Pelessier	1880-1881	J.H. Dyck	1914
Thomas Tennant	1881	Jake Tjaden	1914-1919
Davies	1881	J.H. Enns	1916-1920
Wm. Russell	1881	J. W. Wiens	1916-1919
C. Orton	1881	W.R. Clubb	1917-1920
Albert Albright	1882	C.L. Stoney	1919-1922
John Moore	1882	Diedrich Heppner	1920-1925, 1828-1929
C.A. Skiffington	1882	R. Rance	1920-1925, 1933
Wm. Turner	1882-1885	W.T. Irvine	1921-1930
D.M. Ure	1882-1883	W. Enns	1921
G.W. Guy	1883	E. Jenkins	1922-1929
T.G. Gow	1883	P.H. Covernton	1923-1926
Robert Meiklejohn	1883	M. Stevenson	1923-1924
John Kelley	1883-1884	J.A. Earl	1925-1928
George Clubb	1884-1888	J.P. Loewen	1926-1927
George Finnie	1884	Dr. J.A. Martin	1926-1927
Henry Snarr	1884-1886	Henry Hebert	1927-1932
C. Hebert	1884	Amos Ribordy	1928-1933
James Grey	1885-1887	Ed Snarr	1929-1942
James Lewis	1885-1892	Braun	1930-1931
George Jenkins	1885	Howard Clubb	1931-1938
Thomas S. Palliser	1886-1889	B.W. Thiessen	1932-1937
George Pichett	1886-1888	Walter Swain	1933-1934
James Swain	1887-1888	Fred Gehring	1934-1937
James Lawrie	1888, 1893-1895	J.M. McDonald	1935-1947
J. Brown	1888-1889	C.A. Spalding	1938-1943
W.R. Ritchie	1889-1897, 1902	C. J. Griffiths	1938-1945
W.G. Mulvey	1889-1890, 1898-1900	C.R. Irvine	1939-1940
Jovete Grattan	1889-1893	R.S. Davidson	1941-1951
A. Stewart	1890	Harry Anderson	1943-1948
John Moffat	1890, 1897-1898	Maurice Ribordy	1946-1947
Alex Jackson	1891	C.J. Neufeld	1948-1954
Dan McMillan	1892-1898	Amedee Collette	1948-1950
J.T. McTavish	1894-1896	Bruce MacKenzie	1949-1950
Wm. Meiklejohn	1896-1897	Leslie Stevenson	1951-1954
John Wilton	1899-1903	Edmund Saurette	1951-1968
J.D. Turner	1899	Wm. Recksiedler	1952-
A.G. Swain	1899-1901	Otto Bunkowsky	1952-1965
Wm. J. Moore	1900-1901	Wm. Schellenberg	1955-1966
Jacob Heppner	1901-1902	H.B. Giesbrecht	1955-1956
Wm. Elliot	1902	Geo. P. Goossen	1966-1973
P.K. Rempel	1902-1911	Harold Earl	1967-1971
A.L. Smith	1902-1904	Bernhard Klassen	1967-1973
O.H. Gilman	1903	Gilbert Cretton	1968-
Jacob Gorchitza	1903	Marcel Caron	1969-1978
Robert Turner	1904-1922	A.K. Fast	1972-
W. Turner	1904	Ben Wiebe	1974-1977
Robert Taylor	1904-1907	Alvin Rempel	1974-1975
James Clubb	1905-1910	Jack Wiens	1976-1977
Thomas Elliot	1905-1911	Dan Thiessen	1977-
T.A. Brown	1905-1908	Roy Kornelson	1977-1979
Wm. Stevenson	1908-1913	George St. Hilaire	1978-
Dan McLean	1909-1913	Norman Wiens	1979-

## COUNCILLORS FOR RM OF MORRIS 1880-1916



*John Earl*



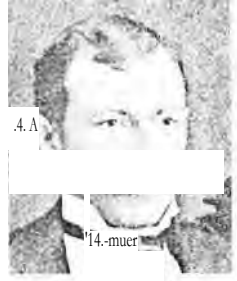
*C.A. Skiffington*



*D.M. Üre*



*Robert Meiklejohn*



*George Clubb*



*Henry Snarr*



*James Lewis*



*Alex Jackson*



*Wm. Meiklejohn*



*John Wilton*



*Jacob Heppner*



*Wm. Elliot*



*P.K. Rempel*



*O.H. Gilman*



*Jacob Gorchitza*



*Robert Taylor*



*James Clubb*



*Thomas Elliot*



*T.A. Brown*



*Wm. Stevenson*



*George Churchill*



*Peter F. Penner*



*T.J. Lewis*



*Donald Campbell*



*Jacob W. Wiens*

## COUNCILLORS 1917-1951



*W.R. Clubb*



*C.L. Stoney*



*Diedrich Heppner*



*James R. Rance*



*P.H. Covernton*



*Matt Stevenson*



*J.A. Earl*



*Dr. J.A. Martin*



*Henry Hebert*



*Ed Snarr*



*Emile Ribordy*



*Howard Clubb*



*B. W. Thiessen*



*Fred Gehring*



*J.M. McDonald*



*C.A. Spalding*



*C.R. Irvine*



*1160<sup>14</sup> K-  
R.S. Davidson*



*Harry Anderson*



*Maurice Ribordy*



*C.J. Neufeld*



*Amedee Collette*



*Bruce MacKenzie*



*Leslie Stevenson*



*Ed Saurette*



## COUNCILLORS 1952-1980



*Wm. F. Recksiedler*



*Otto Bunkowsky*



*Bill Schellenberg*



*Henry Giesbrecht*



*George Goossen*



*Harold Earl*



*Bernard Klassen*



*Gilbert Cretton*



*Marcel Caron*



*A.K. Fast*



*Benjamin Wiebe*



*Alvin Rempel*



*Jack Wiens*



*Dan Thiessen*



*Roy Kornelsen*



*Norman Wiens*



*George St. Hilaire*

### WM. F. RECKSIDLER LONGEST IN OFFICE

Mr. Recksiedler has been in the council for over 27 years and has seen many changes.

When he first became councillor in 1952 there were virtually no gravel roads except Highway 23 and Detour Road which runs parallel to Highway 75. At that time it was hard to imagine that eventually almost every rural resident would have access to a gravel road.

The horse roads which had been built by horse drawn scraper and graders were rebuilt with 2 elevator graders owned by the R.M. of Morris.

In the early 1950's, only the main roads were cleaned of snow. Because of the underpowered road graders, the R.M. fitted a D6 and D7 Cat and angle dozer with a 15 foot wing. The Cat with the wing would push the snow further off the road. This was still in used till approximately 1965. Today the R.M. boasts four modern snow-plows and with an average snow fall they can clear most of the roads in two days.

Most of the main drainage ditches were made with a dragline that at one time was operated on a 24 hour basis. The last R.M. dragline was sold in 1971.

Mr. Recksiedler recalls that when he first got into council, taxes of R.M. of Morris were approximately \$60.00 per quarter section. Due to school taxes, much improved roads, drainage maintenance and general inflation taxes now are approximately \$600.00 per quarter section. However, it should be remembered that at one time the R.M. had drags which the farmers would use to maintain the roads in their own area.

One of main concerns of R.M. of Morris over the years has been the flooding of agricultural land in spring and summer and Mr. Recksiedler recalls many meetings and much time devoted to this problem. This has gradually

resulted in construction of many field dikes and bigger ditches to handle the run off water.

Of the many projects undertaken by the R.M. of Morris, Mr. Recksiedler feels a great satisfaction in the building of the Aubigny Bridge. When Reeve MacKenzie and councillors approached the Government to build this bridge across the Red River, the Government said the bridge would cost approximately \$500,000.00 and if the R.M. could put up approximately \$100,000.00, the bridge would be built. Much to the surprise of the Government, the Reeve and councillors said they had the money as for years they budgeted toward this project. The Government was amazed because there were very few R. M.'s that had the foresight to budget for this type of expenditure. And so it was in 1966 this bridge across the Red River was completed.

Other major projects were the construction of the municipal office and municipal shed.

In the many years being a councillor, Mr. Recksiedler realizes there have been many dedicated reeves and councillors serving on the R.M. of Morris, but also, gives much credit to the loyal and hardworking employees of the R.M.

## Secretary-Treasurers - A Problem

The first few years, the role of clerk (secretary) and treasurer were separate. In 1880, C.B. Dery was appointed as treasurer. The fact that Dery had been unable to secure a bond should have been sufficient warning, however, he was retained in spite of this.

Early in 1881, it was brought to the attention of council that Dery had withdrawn a sum of money from the municipal council account at the bank without their authority. Other complaints were received, causing some doubt as to his reliability as a treasurer. In an attempt to resolve the issue, council requested a complete audit of the books. To their great dismay, it was discovered after a meeting with the auditor and treasurer, that there were *no* records of finances. The auditors reported that they could not audit the books, because there were no books!

Dery submitted his resignation and promptly left the territory! Ads were placed in the "Nor'West Farmer" in an attempt to locate Dery and have him brought to trial in an effort to recover the sum of \$708.20. It was a period of three years before the issue was finally settled.

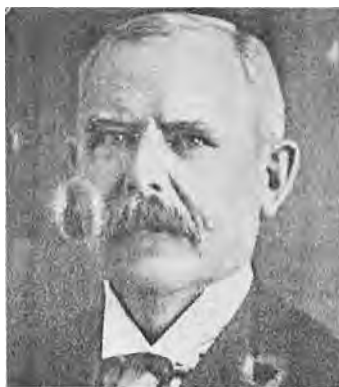
James B. Hooper, the second treasurer, was compelled to secure a bond for \$5,000.00 before he was accepted for the position. Hooper was also editor and publisher of the "Morris Herald" printed locally.

Mr. Hooper served as treasurer for 2 years, whereupon he was succeeded by D.M. Ure. One year later, Hooper approached Ure and presented him with a sum of \$111.94, which he claimed he owed the municipality. It was "conscience money". Hooper admitted to Ure that during his term as treasurer, he had collected \$600.00 in tax money for which he had given no account. The solicitor for the municipality proceeded with action to recover the money. In a short time, Hooper provided a joint note signed by himself and his brothers for the sum of \$498.66, to finalize the settlement of the debt.

With the flavor of distrust in their mouths, it is little wonder that council chose to abruptly dismiss their third clerk-treasurer, D.M. Ure (in 1893), even after he had been in their employ for nine years. The auditors had noticed a discrepancy in the books and although Ure was able to provide an explanation, he was "let go".

That was not the end of problems with the office staff. A.A. Ballard, who took the position of secretary-treasurer in 1903, resigned after 1 1/2 years, when a shortage of funds was noted in the books. The Guarantee Co., with whom Ballard was bonded, was notified, and assured a solution to the problem. There was some disagreement on the sum owing, but after two years, Ballard submitted a cheque for \$625.45, and the matter was settled.

It took awhile for the memory to heal as far as Daniel Ure was concerned, but at this time, when the office became vacant, Daniel Ure applied. It was a tribute to his honesty and integrity that he was rehired in 1905. Ten years later, upon his retirement, he was commended for his "faithful service" to the community.



*Daniel M. Ure, secretary-treasurer for the Municipality for 18 years. He also served as councillor at one time, as school trustee, secretary for the town and postmaster in Morris.*



*H.R. Whitworth, secretary-treasurer for the R.M. of Morris for 9 years.*



*A.A. Ballard, secretary-treasurer for just 1 1/2 years, when a shortage of funds was discovered.*

## SECRETARY-TREASURERS

Secretary - G.B. Elliot	1880
Treasurer - C.B. Dery	1880-1881
Secretary - R.J. Bell	1881

### *Secretary - Treasurers*

James Hooper	1882-1884
Dan Ure	1885-1893
H.R. Whitworth	1893-1902
A.A. Ballard	1903-1904
D.M. Ure	1905-1915
W.N. Stevenson	1915-1944
Bella Jerome	1944-1945
James Pottinger	1945-1952
Dave Harder	1952-1975
Alice Loving	1976-



*W.N. Stevenson, served the municipality as secretary treasurer, for 19 years.*



*James Pottinger, secretary-treasurer from 1945-52.*



*Dave Harder, secretary-treasurer for the Morris municipality for 23 years.*

W.N. Stevenson held the office of secretary-treasurer for a record of twenty-nine years, from 1915 - 1944. He saw many changes in the municipality during those formative years, which included the difficulties of the depression. He died suddenly of a heart attack on November 6, 1944, while in office.

Bella Jerome, who had been his office assistant for four years filled the office of secretary-treasurer for the period of approximately one year, until the hiring of James Pottinger.

James Pottinger was secretary-treasurer for a period of seven years, followed by Dave Harder of Altona. Mr. Harder, who served as secretary-treasurer for 23 years, was honored at a banquet upon his retirement from office.

Alice Loving was hired as assistant secretary-treasurer in 1952, and when Mr. Harder retired in 1975, she assumed the office of secretary-treasurer.

Persons who worked as clerks or assistants in the office were: Hazel Stevenson, Bella Jerome, Ivy Stevenson, Andrew Swain, Joyce Thompson, Alice Loving, and since 1975, Michael Yakielashek.



*Alice Loving, employed with the municipality for 28 years, secretary-treasurer since 1976.*

## DAMS CONSTRUCTED ON MORRIS RIVER IN 1960



*In 1954, the residents of the municipality made a request for a series of dams on the Morris River. The purpose of these dams was to provide stock watering (and the filling of farm ponds from the river) ecological, and recreational purposes. In 1960, the construction of three dams was accomplished, one at Rosenort, one south of Riverside, and another a few miles west of Morris. ABOVE: We see workmen pouring the west slab of Dam No. 1, on August 22, 1960. BELOW: Oct. 12, 1960, the same dam completed and functioning well. PFRA photo.*





# AGRICULTURE



*Harvest Time in Silver Plains - 1936.*

Agriculture is the business of growing and marketing plants and animals for man's use. It is the basic industry of man, on which he depends more than any other. It is the only true creative industry, for it alone actually produces new raw materials. Civilization was founded on agriculture, and it was the lure of good farm lands that drew settlers to this area.

As early as 1890, ads depicting the Morris Municipality were placed in the Manitoba Colonist in the interest of wooing farmers to settle here. The Morris Herald in 1908, advertises that there are yet 25 million acres unoccupied, to be homesteaded or purchased.

# MANITOBA I

This Province has 41,169,089 acres of land, (if 19,900 acres of water surface to draw water from in, 'Agricultural purposes; we always have sufficient moisture to insure a crop.

There is yet 25,000,000 acres unoccupied to be homesteaded or purchased.

The population in 1907 was 255,211: it is 1,100,000 now: round 1: million, 100,000 or nearly double in seven years, 1911-1907. In 1907 it had a population of 422,400; has now 1,100,000 or has more than doubled its population in seven years.

The transportation facilities are almost perfect, there being 39,560 miles of railway in the Province, all radiating from Winnipeg. Three transcontinental trains leave Winnipeg daily: it is only a matter of a few months when there will be five, those to be added being the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern.

These are indications of the Province's progress in all directions, and is the place to cast in your lot, as no other country can show the same increase in the same time.

## TO VISITORS

Do not pass Winnipeg without seeing Government and railway lands for sale, and obtaining full information as to homesteads and opportunities for investment.

R. P. ROBLIN

Premier and Minister of Agriculture and Immigration

For special information apply to

Jos. n BURKE

JAMES HARTNEY

175 Logan Ave., Winnipeg 77 York street, Toronto, Ontario

ft. O-\*\*\*e eeeeeee ee."A\*~:\*. ' V

Newspaper ad

Many of the settlers who came were progressive farmers in their own countries, and brought with them the expertise with which to settle the land. Some of the Mennonite settlers brought with them from Russia seed grain, and simple tools. Purchases of oxen, plows or other implements were made in Minneapolis, Fargo or Grand Forks, if the settlers arrived from the south, and freighted down river. By the same means, the Mennonite settlers obtained the necessary goods upon their arrival in Winnipeg in 1874. It is reported by the Winnipeg paper "The Manitoban", that \$50,000 was spent on that one

excursion, causing much excitement amongst the merchants there.

Oxen were used mainly to break the land. They were preferred to horses because they were stronger, and much cheaper. They could withstand cold better, and were able to forage for themselves. They were also very stubborn and slow. One pioneer recalls that his oxen always seemed to know when it was six o'clock - they would head home from the field in the determined direction of the barn, and there was no stopping them. As soon as settlers had an acreage under cultivation, they switched to horses.

Farm prosperity depends on the sale of produce. Initially, the farmers grew only enough for themselves and their livestock, on their small acreages, but as more land was broken and more grain produced, a means of transportation was needed to get the goods to market. The first record of grain being shipped south through the Morris area was in 1851, when barley was sent down river. In 1876, a shipment of wheat from the Scratching River area went south on the river on the first leg of its journey to Toronto.

It is no wonder the coming of the railroad created such excitement and promise, and it did play an important role in the progress of agriculture in all parts of Canada. Hundreds of farm workers from Ontario were transported west on "harvest train" excursions in the early 1900's. They needed the jobs and the east eagerly awaited the produce of the rich western provinces that were just opening up.



Trains puffed across the countryside carrying settlers to Manitoba.

The railroad was the means by which many settlers arrived in the district. Box cars full of household effects, livestock and implements arrived here accompanied by pioneers. Here follows the story of one Wicklef Cleo Dailey, and his journey from Agency, Iowa, to McTavish, Manitoba in 1920.

My boxcar was made into a home for myself, a barn for the horses, a coop for the chickens and ducks, a corral for the sheep, a grain bin for feed for the animals, two bushel baskets of lunch for me, and a moving van for our furniture and farm machinery. How we managed to get all these things into one boxcar is beyond me now!

After bidding everyone farewell, my journey began on a beautiful sunny afternoon. The next day went along



smoothly, until 9:00 that night, when the train derailed fourteen cars. I awoke with a jolt when Maude (one of the horses) landed in my bed with me. Shortly after, the train officials came back and helped me get my animals calmed and my car back in order.

We finally started rolling again at 11:00 a.m. the next day. Everything was going fine when my animals and I returned for the evening. At midnight, I awoke to the smell of smoke; the left front wheel had caught fire. After a frantic search, I found my nails and hatchet, thus adding four more steps to my too short ladder, until I finally managed to climb to the roof of my boxcar. Lo and behold, I discovered I was the middle boxcar in a string of eighty cars travelling at a speed of 60 miles per hour. I decided my best bet would be to go to the caboose for help; and with the cold bitter wind at my back, I made it.

The conductor got the train stopped by signalling the engineer with a lantern. After putting the fire out and making temporary repairs, we resumed our journey at a much slower speed of 30 miles per hour, with only one more flare-up of fire.

When we reached Minneapolis, my box car was unhitched from the train and completely repaired. Two days after the fire, I was hitched to another train, carrying only immigrants, and my journey north resumed. When we neared St. Cloud, Minnesota, a pair of wheels went bad, giving me and my animals a very bumpy ride. I was again unhitched for repairs. After my journey resumed, I had trouble again at Warren, Minnesota, when another set of wheels on my boxcar were wrecked. Another repair job!

From that point on, my journey went well. I entered the country via the Sioux and CPR lines, on into Winnipeg by way of the east side of the Red River. I ate my dinner at the Royal Alexandra Hotel, and spent the night in Winnipeg.

The next afternoon, I left Winnipeg by CPR, heading south to McTavish, where I was warmly met by my new neighbours, who soon became my long lasting friends.

We moved a few necessary articles, including my two bushel baskets of lunch and two kerosene heaters from the boxcar to our new home, and the intention of moving the rest the next day. We took the heaters and lunch to

the house and set the heaters up to get the house warmed up, while I spent the night at a friend's house.

The next morning, we went to the boxcar to feed the animals and get some more things to take back to our home. When we got there, we found a disaster - the heaters had overheated and caused a fire in the living room. By some miracle, it had smothered itself and damaged only that room.

If that wasn't bad enough, while cleaning up from the fire, a snow storm set in and we were snowed in. We went to bed that night and woke up later on to find ourselves quite cold. I jumped out of bed and landed in a foot of snow in my bare feet! The back door had blown open and snow had blown in, filling up half the kitchen.

The snow storms lasted for three days and two nights. Luckily, our animals survived, but were very hungry after three days without feed.

## Cbc Emigrant-1 M

# FARM LANDS

IN THE

# noi River Valloy!

epirh TA the real Vertile Belt of the Northwest,

For Sale at \$2.50 to :35 an Acre,  
(108 to .21), on easy terms to actual settlers, or a liberal  
discount for all Cash.

## Special advantages, ac

ty of wood and water ; hear neighbours, schools and churches ; suitable for mixed farming and stock raising ; situated, lo well settled districts, within 35 miles of Win. nipeg or the commercial metropolis of the Worth we : t, arid the bust market, with seven lines of railw..y running into it already,

80,000 acres t<sup>0</sup> choose from, in parcels  
of CO. NW, 240, 3\*M and  
4110 :eres.

CM double their money in a few  
years and do good to others  
at the same time by taking blocks or lire to twenty thou-  
sand acres of it and putting settlers upon it.

Also City Property, Mineral Lands, Tiniker Limits and  
Stone Quarries for sale. Money invested in mortgages,  
stocks, bonds, and other securities, yielding n to

rtil Correspondence solicited.

## A. McCHARLES,

Land and Money Broker,

601 Main St., Winnipeg, Man.



Settlers removing goods from railway baggage car in the 1880's. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.

Homestead maps of the area show that much of the land was open prairie, with other portions termed as very fine open prairie, good hay marsh, hay land, undulating prairie, dotted with an occasional willow clump or poplar grove. These willow clumps were the cause of bruised bodies on many occasions, as some of the lads got a rough ride over the handles of the walking plow.

# TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS

Farm tools and implements were primitive at first. Though iron plows came into use in the early 1800's, wooden ones were still in evidence in the 1880's. The fact that they were lighter and easier to transport, and could be made by a good carpenter, were points in their favour.

Oxen pulled the wooden beam plow that was used. After the land was broken, they were replaced by horses, and a steel two furrow plow on which the operator could ride.

From broadcasting grain by hand, the farmer changed to the shoe drill sower, which was drawn by oxen or horses. These were soon followed by the single disc drill, the double disc drill and the disker. A great advancement was the steam engine, which could pull a 12 furrow plow.



*Cutting grain in the 1800's, as demonstrated here. Photo courtesy Mennonite Heritage Centre.*

Mr. Rose, who established a vast acreage seven miles south west of Lowe Farm, experimented with a unique method of plowing that required two steam engines firmly anchored to the ground, one at each end of the plow. The plow was drawn back and forth between the engines by means of a cable and winches. After plowing each set of furrows, the engines were moved forward, the appropriate distance by horses, and then re-anchored for the next round. The plow was in two parts, with a set of bottoms for each. When going in one direction, one set of bottoms was engaged, when going in the reverse direction, the set was lifted out and the other came into action. This made it unnecessary to turn the plow around at each end.

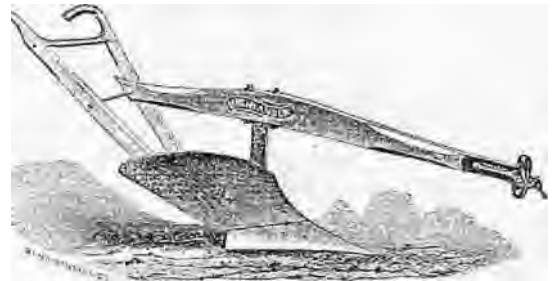
Even more unique and original were the methods used on the farm of John Lowe, founder of Lowe Farm. For years, Lowe's farms were managed by William Stevenson, who had an inventive mind, and was mechanically inclined. Not finding the kind of power equipment he needed, Mr. Stevenson built his own.

Using wheels having five foot rims and an 80 horse power steam boiler, he built a long unwieldy-looking steam tractor that could draw 16 bottoms and could

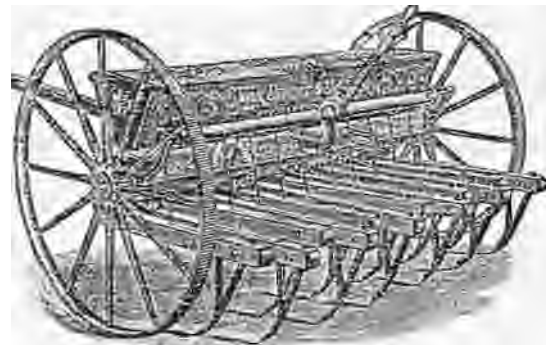
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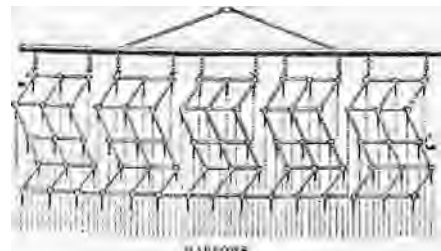
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HABOWE

traverse the wet low-lying land without sinking too far below the surface. He constructed an attachment that cut the prairie grass ahead of the steam engine in order that it might be used as fuel for the engine as the land was being broken.

In order to expedite harvesting, a threshing machine was placed on a platform built on to the side of his tractor. As this contraption was moved down the field, men pitched sheaves onto a platform near the cylinder. Here they were cut and fed by two men, into the machine. The grain was bagged on the moving machine and placed

## HAYMAKING

by Charles S. Stevenson

Hay making on the prairies was a busy time each summer in the early years. At first it could be made on any vacant land near home, but as time went by, vacant land nearby became scarce, and the farmers had to go back north-west eight or ten miles to the area they referred to as the "Boyne Swamp". This area today, is all under cultivation and its boundaries can be roughly defined by drawing a line on a map which will join together the villages of McTavish, Osborne, Brunkild and Sperling. At that time, there were no roads nor any drainage ditches, the sun used to rise and set in a sea of grass. After the hay was stacked, fireguards were ploughed to protect the stacks from the huge prairie fires which swept over the area nearly every fall. One of these fires raced through the tall dry grass on a 20 mile front, and the entire country was lit up almost as bright as day. When the hay makers came home on weekends, they hauled loads of hay home with them; the stacks were hauled as needed in the fall or winter months.



*Chester Crouch's steam engine, an Undermounted Avery, doing fall plowing on the gumbo plains around Lowe Farm about 1910. Note the water barrels at rear. Photo courtesy Dan Blatz.*



*Wilbur Bros. custom plowing west of Morris, near the Lightfoot farm in 1909.*

in a chute, which opened at intervals to let a number of bags slide to the ground. From here, they were picked up and hauled away by an old-fashioned wagon having two beams running lengthwise, and no floor. Thus, there is some justification to the claims that Lowe Farm was the first in the district to use a combine.

A large amount of hay was made in the early years, as the fringes of the marshy areas produced a large volume of hay.



*Baling straw with horses somewhere around 1915-20. Photo courtesy Ida Hoffman.*

Prairie fires were the dread of the early settlers. As soon as a homestead was established, a fire guard was plowed around the buildings. These fires were also the reason there were so few trees on the prairies. Seedlings never had a chance to become established.

The coming of the train across the land was another cause of prairie fires. Streams of sparks emanated from the iron monsters, and at harvest time when crops were tinder dry, it was disastrous. When such a field was set ablaze fanned by a wind, with few ditches to stop it, it burned for miles. The devastation wrought to crops and homesteads required courage and persistence to carry on.

In times when there were crop failures and small cash flow, farmers needed assistance. The municipality loaned money for seed grain to resident farmers, which was payable in fall after the crop was in. This practice continued for a number of years, until it was announced in 1920, that banks were prepared to loan money for that purpose, and the municipality was no longer required to do so.

# HARVEST TIME

by Charles S. Stevenson



*LEFT: Reapers and self tying binders were introduced. Here 5 teams of horses and reapers at work harvesting.*

Reapers were used and self-tying binders were introduced, although considerable doubt was expressed about the first binders, as they were considered to be too complicated for the average person to operate! The stooks always looked most symmetrical and they stood up well, even though harvest might be delayed for weeks by bad weather. Stooking has now become a lost art.

The sheaf stacks were built with skill, to keep the sides of the stacks from slipping out. A lot of oats would be cut with the binder while it was still green, and this was used instead of hay. We can still vividly recall seeing eight or ten stacks lined up in a row and all as alike as peas in a pod. Sweet clover was stacked in this manner in later years and it was the easiest of all sheaves to stack, as the stems of the plant were so rough and leafy they stayed put in the stacks and never slid out as grain sheaves were so wont to do.

Stook threshing was not practised until later years; grain was still being stacked in 1900.



*A rest at harvest time in Union Point - early 1900's. LEFT TO RIGHT: Hugh Breyfogle, O.H. Breyfogle, and Andrew Hakonson,*



*BELOW: One happy farmer inspecting his grain crop. Photo courtesy Susan Lewis.*

Threshing in those years was a real community affair, as there were only one or two outfits to do the job for the whole district. The earliest separators were powered by horses; several teams were hitched to long sweeps and walked round and round in circles. At one point, they had to step over the "tumbling shaft", which transmitted the power to the separators. The teamster in charge of the teams stood on a small platform mounted in the center part of the sweeps, and, in order to keep from becoming



*A sheaf loader busy on the Snarr Bros. farm in 1936.*



*A threshing scene in the 1920's. In order to prevent fire, a 150 ft. belt was used to keep the engine back a good distance from the straw pile. A threshing gang such as this, employed 15 to 20 men. Photo courtesy P.T. Wiens.*

dizzy, he kept turned in the opposite direction from that in which the horses walked.

The first steam engines were of the stationary type and had to be pulled from place to place with horses. It must have been quite a ticklish job to get these set in place properly so that the belt to the separator would stay on. Traction steamers came into use quite early and besides being used for threshing, they were used to haul the huge breaking plows in the rough prairie sod.

The early separators had to be hand fed. The pitchers on the stack tossed the sheaves to the handcutters, who in turn passed them along to the feeders. The straw passed through the machine, rode up the straw carrier and fell into a heap below. If it was to be used later, it was built into a stack; if it was not to be kept, it was hauled away with a "bucking pole". This apparatus was simply a long, heavy log or timber with a short piece of chain fastened to either end. A horse was hitched to each chain and when sufficient straw had gathered for a load, the bucking pole pulled the load away from the outfit to a field where it was burned. The fire provided some illumination when the outfit worked late at night.

The grain was bagged as it came from the machine and

it was a real man's job to handle two bushel sacks of wheat. Granaries were often two storeys high and when space was short, the grain had to be carried up a flight of stairs.

Threshing crews of from fifteen to twenty men were required to operate the cumbersome outfits of the day and the womenfolk had to cook mountains of food in order to satisfy the hearty appetites whetted by long hours of hard work in the outdoors. The steam engine alone required three men to keep it going - the engineer, fireman and water man.

Most of the engines were fired with straw and the fireman's job, while not requiring too much exertion, nevertheless required more hours of work than any other on the gang. He had to get up about four o'clock in the morning in order to have steam up in time for the crew to begin operations about seven. It took a long time to get that first ten to fifteen pounds of steam up, but once this was accomplished, he could turn on the "blower" in the smokestack to increase the draft and from then on the pressure rose rapidly to the 150 pounds or thereabouts, which was operating level. As soon as sufficient steam was raised, the fireman blew a long blast on the whistle to

*Lorne Davison's threshing outfit operating near Sperling.*



inform the crew that he was ready for business. A long, single blast about dusk signalled the end of the day and the weary men and horses wended their way home to supper and a well-earned sleep.

The waterman had a fairly easy job. One wagon and tank was left beside the engine, while he drove to the nearest water supply to fill the second tank. A double action pump with a long handle was bolted to the top of the tank used for hauling and operating this pump constituted the hardest part of the waterman's day. In his spare time around the outfit, the waterman hauled straw for the fireman. This was an easy task; he simply drove an empty rack under the straw blower and hauled it back to the engine when a load had been filled.

Fire was always a real danger with steam outfits. Usually a 150 foot belt was used in order to keep the engine back a good distance from the separator and straw pile. Spark breakers were used to diminish the risk, but firemen disliked them because they cut down on the draft and made keeping up steam more difficult. The sparks didn't show up in the daytime, but at night, the steady stream of them ascending from the smokestack were fascinating for a boy to watch. The horses used on the sheaf racks always had plenty of spark burns in their hair on their backs.

The worst session of steam threshing came in 1912. Beginning early in the summer, heavy rains every few days turned the fields into quagmires and many hundreds of acres were never even cut, let alone threshed. After freezeup, an attempt was made to thresh what grain had been stooked, but this proved to be a cold and arduous task. Many of the stooks have been standing in water when freezeup came and these had to be cut off at the ice level with sharp shovels before they could be loaded onto the racks. All grain threshed was tough and usually a good deal of snow and ice was mixed with it. Keeping steam up with damp straw was most difficult.

In mid-January, 1913, the weather got so bad that the crew decided to stop operations and finish up the job in the spring. This was done and the quality of the grain was much better than that which was threshed in the winter, but a good deal was lost to the hordes of mice which had infested the stooks all through the winter.

In most of the really early years, there could not have been much enthusiasm in regard to expected yields, because the grain was almost always frozen before it was ripe. Even though wheat may be close to being ripe when frost strikes, it suffers marked deterioration in quality. Flour can be made from frozen wheat, but bread made from it was inclined to be on the heavy side and was as black as a boot. Red Fife wheat was grown almost exclusively and it took much longer to mature than do our modern varieties. Because of its slowness in ripening, it was almost certain to be frozen and there was great rejoicing amongst the farmers when Marquis wheat was introduced. This variety matured much earlier, produced heavily and grew on much shorter straw -- all important features in a good wheat. Marquis was king among wheat varieties until stem rust struck heavily in 1916. After that, newer rust-resistant varieties had to be developed, and Marquis disappeared entirely from the picture in the Red River Valley during the 1930's.

## WEED CONTROL INITIATED

Weed control, initiated in the 1880's, promoted the prevention of spreading Canada Thistle, Wild Mustard and wild oats, by 1887, French or Stinkweed was added to the list to be destroyed. This was a serious issue. In one instance, it almost started a feud between neighbours. One farmer reported he had caught his neighbour maliciously throwing mustard plants on his property and wanted something done about it!

Each spring, mustard picking gangs were organized on the farm. Up and down those long half-mile fields they walked, watching for the bright yellow flowers of the mustard plants. When one was found, it was picked and when a bundle was accumulated, it was carried to the end of the field. Fifteen or twenty miles were walked in one day -- no wonder they rejoiced over the coming of 2-4-D.



*No weeds in this field of oats. Were these children part of a mustard picking gang? Taken in 1916 - photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*



*The modern method of eradicating weeds, taken at J.H. Thiessen's farm in 1947.*



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Winn\*. City haopwrhaa.

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*Map - courtesy - Manitoba Archives,*



Ralph Lewis with his Hart Paar tractor moving out to the fields, towing a plow, fuel tank for tractor, service wagon and discs. The farmstead and open prairie are in the background.

As the sod was broken, grasshoppers swarmed onto the land upon which tender green shoots of grain were emerging, and total crop acreages were demolished by these chewing insects. Many such years are recorded.

In the early 1930's, Tina Rempel recalls: "Huge armies of grasshoppers would migrate in big swarms like a cloud, creating a shadow when passing the sun. It was very dry. Mother and we younger children saved some of the garden by chasing the grasshoppers out by walking back and forth along the rows waving rags, thereby not allowing them to sit long enough to chew the vegetation.

One day, we watched a colony or swarm of grasshoppers migrating across the parched soil in the yard, and they marched like a regiment of soldiers. The men attached a trough to the binder and filled it with old oil, and as they cut the grain, the grasshoppers would fly up and land in the oil. When it was full, they would empty the container and repeat the process, thus preventing them from laying eggs."

"In those terrible grasshopper years, the municipality of Morris supplied poison that was mixed with sawdust. We farmers constructed little machines with a hopper on it and a propeller that was turned by hand, and we poisoned the grasshoppers. We had horses on the wagon and drove along the fields, going from one end to the other.

One good thing, those pests made a good job of killing weeds those years, especially Sowthistle. Some land was so terribly infested with sowthistle that we mowed it down with mowers. The Yankees, who owned a lot of land north of Lowe Farm, were not resident farmers, and their land was so infested, the municipality hired some of us farmers to mow them down at the land-owners expense. Some owners just gave up, due to taxes and other costs, and the municipality became the owner of these farms, reselling them to the farmers for a reasonable price.

We had no Sowthistle for years after the grasshoppers, as they made a clean sweep, even eating the roots. So we called this "Hardship". (from Peter G. Harder)

New farm lands were opened, and good roads and modern vehicles made farming a profitable enterprise. In recent years, scientific study has made farm land more productive. Soils have been studied and methods of increasing the productivity developed.

The soils in the municipality are predominantly Red River and Osborne clay with a small portion of Sperling Associate. These soils tend to become water logged, and are susceptible to flooding because of a fine texture that results in poor internal drainage. If surface drainage is provided, these soils are moderately to highly productive. Therefore, the provision of a good drainage system was of highest priority in this district.

The over abundance of rain was of the worst problems in early years. The water sometimes lay on the land for months, causing it to become water logged, and very hard. When summer rains came, the land could not absorb the moisture, and low lying areas were drowned out. Some farmers lost half their crops in this way.

The periods of the two wars are remembered as boom periods of this area. High prices paid during the first World War proved sufficient stimulus to the farmers to cause them to break up many low lying fields that had so far been considered marginal land, and sow them to flax.

Large scale farmers came in from the States and broke up whole quarters at a time, often completely paying for them with the first flax crop. However, as the times deteriorated and they realized that the days of "easy money" was over, they abandoned the newly broken lands and returned to the States. Later in the depression years, much of this land and even some of the older established farms were sold for a few dollars a piece at tax sales.

## SOIL MAP LEGEND

### FINE TEXTURED SEDIMENTS

#### S. LACUSTRINE FINE CLAY (RED RIVER ASSOCIATION)

Phyro-Pkyooltdrornorph,c

Hydrnorsph,,c

Re

Or

Red River Clay  
(Well to Intermediately drained associates)

Osborne Clay  
(Poorly drained associates)

### MEDIUN

#### B. DEEP SOILS OF STREAM OUTWASH AND LEVEE DEPOSITS

Pkylo-Phyto..S, dromorph tc

7.4  
j

Sperling  
Mixed Loams

### KEY TO SYMBOLS

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Transition

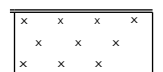
Wooded member



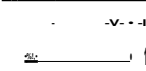
Well va.ned



Meadow



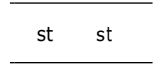
Salin•zez



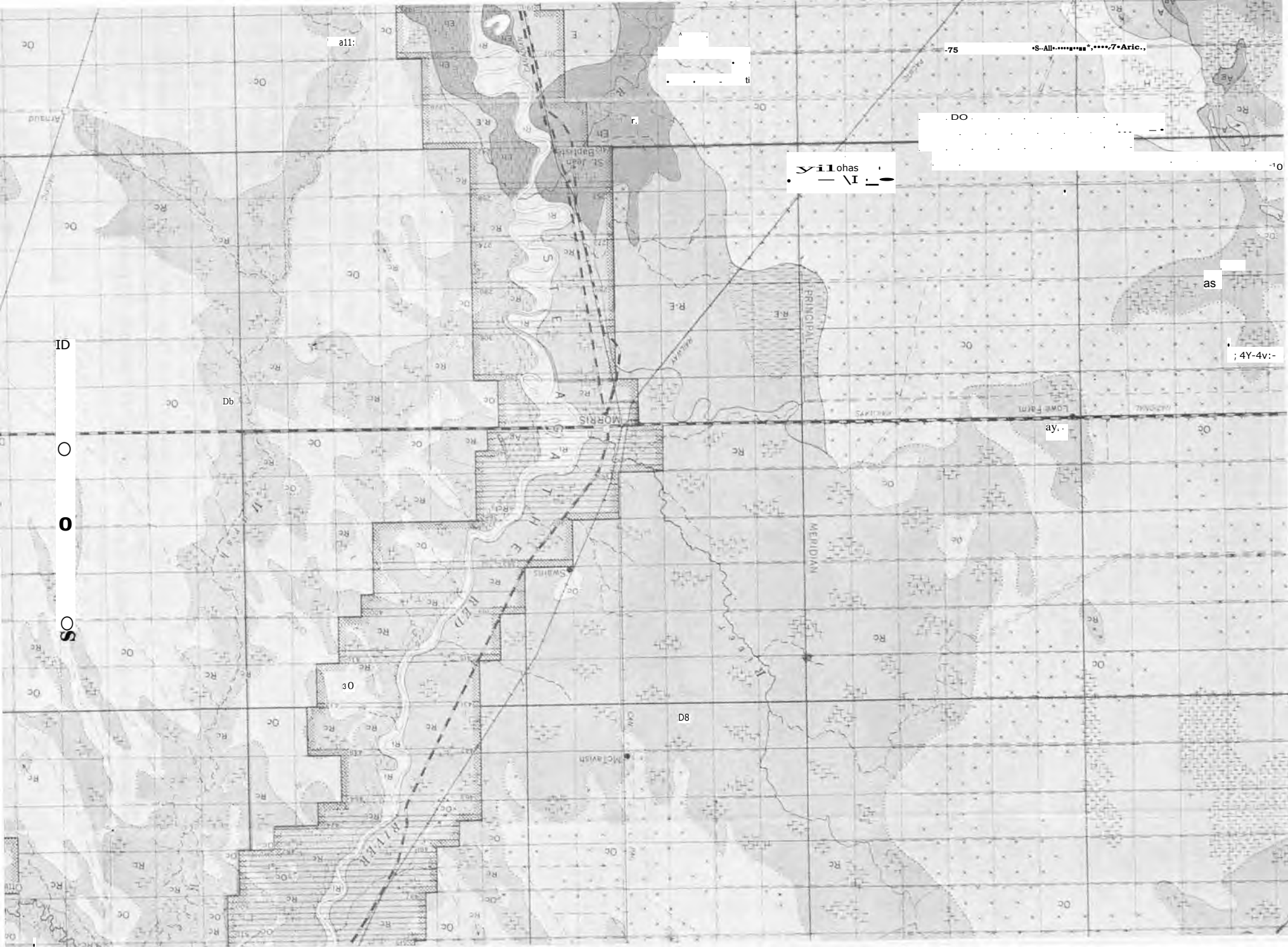
Marsn and peaty meadow



Spruce swamp



Stony and very stony areas



## THE DIRTY THIRTIES...DEPRESSION

Those were the days when the bottom fell out of the Economy. What a vicious cycle! For the young people of to-day it is hard to visualize the long snakelike line of box-cars, up to one hundred and five, hooked to a smoke-belching steam locomotive, moving slowly out of a siding and clanked its way North, South, East or West with the top of almost every car carrying from two to six young men, wearing "slept-in" clothes, faces lean and hungry, scanning every passer-by who had at least a team of horses and a carriage to call his own. What future lay ahead of them? The soup line or worse? Bumming their way, hopelessly looking for jobs. Why this hopeless situation?

After the first world war (1918-app. 1925) money was plentiful, but inflation had already set in because the cost of living was sky rocketing. The labourer felt the "squeeze" first and demanded higher wages which consequently sent the cost of living soaring, and so the dizzy merry-go-round was set into motion. Financiers admonished the public to "tighten belts". Soon labour had priced itself out of the market, sales fell off, people did not have the money to buy. Farmers could not afford to pay their taxes because they got much less for their grain and cattle than it cost them to produce them. So thousands went bankrupt, their land was sold for tax arrears. They themselves were ready for the Soup Line. We remember farmers who owned several thousand acres and had one half of it rented out. These farmers almost invariably were the heaviest losers. Yet farmers were much better off than the city dwellers because they could always live off what they produced and they did not have to produce more than they could themselves use. In those days many big and little businesses went bankrupt. Over 40 were counted in a small area. Many of these heavy losers became despondent and committed suicide. The exodus from the cities was heavy. They came to the farms and begged for a job, without pay, just so they could fill their stomachs and have a place to sleep.

Farmers received little for their grain when they brought it to the elevators. The following prices are examples of what the farmers got in the year, 1932. These prices are from an official list that was paid at country elevators.

## Official List Prices

Paid country elevators under price list No. 115 dated December 16, 1932, for points with freight rate to Fort William of 15c per 100 pounds.

## SPRING WHEAT

No. 1 HARD	231/2¢
No. 1 NORTHERN	23 1/2
No. 2 NORTHERN	20 1/2
No. 3 NORTHERN	18 1/1
No. 4	17
No. 5	15
No. 6	11
FEED	7

AMBER DURUM

1 C.W.	24 1/2C
2 C.W.	20 1/2
3 C.W.	16 1/2
4 C.W.	15 1/2
5 C.W.	14 1/2
6 C.W.	12 1/2

## OATS

2 C.W.	9 1/2C
3 C.W.	61/2
EX. 1 FEED	61/2
1 FEED	51/2
2 FEED	41/2
3 FEED	21/2

## RYE

2C.W.	15C
3 C.W.	12
4C.W,	10
ERGOTY	10

## FLAX

1 C.W.	50c
2 C.W.	46
3 C.W.	32
4 C.W.	32

## BARLEY

3 C.W.	14C
4C.W.	11 1/2
5 C.W.	9 1/2
6 C.W.	8 1/2
3 x C.W. 6 ROW	17
3 x C.W. 2 ROW	17



LEFT: Cartoon  
- 1921 -  
Manitoba Ar-  
chives.

*RIGHT: Silver Plains Pool Elevator built in 1927.*



SILVER PLAINS  
CD-OPERATIVE ELEVATOR  
ASSOCIATION  
POOL Me 3  
'SERVICE AT COST'



*Separating the farmer from his profits.*



## GRAIN HANDLING

The handling of grain required a lot of manual labour. Wheat was always bagged and hauled via the Stage Road to Winnipeg, or to the river bank where it was shipped by barge, or other passing boats. After the threshing season, the farmers built grain bins, and horse drawn wagons and sleighs were used to haul the grain in to storage. All grain was moved by man and shovel before the grain auger came into being.



*Henry Snarr and neighbour loading wheat at Swain's spur in 1911.*



*Hauling grain to Sperling elevator. This wagon may still be seen at the Glen Brown farm.*

Once the railway was built, the grain was loaded directly into boxcars. By this time, elevators were being built and an agent bought grain for a company which distributed it to flour mills and exporters.

One of the main concerns of the farmer has been the marketing of his produce. In 1887, a market known as the grain exchange was formed, and by 1899, there were five elevators in this area. This did not solve the problems



*Morris Flour Mill, owned by Friesen and Wiebe in the '40's, was later destroyed by fire.*



*Seed cleaning plant in operation on the Kastner farm.*



*Weigh scale being used at the E.P. Lewis farm.*

for the farmer, as at times, grain moved slowly and had to be stored on the farm, necessitating the erection of bigger and better grain bins for storage.

# ELEVATORS

The elevator plays an important role in getting the farm produce from the farm gate to the final consumer; they perform the following services: Buying grain from the farmer subject to grade and dockage, stores and cleans grain, provides miscellaneous and merchandising services, as well as making cash advances. From there, the railroad is responsible for moving the grain from the elevators to the terminals at the Lakehead and Churchill for export.

The Canadian Wheat Board, which was formed by an Act of Parliament in 1935, is now the sole marketing agency of wheat, oats and barley in Western Canada.



*There was more than one way to get the goods to market. Here C.E. Anderson hauling with a 2 wheel trailer pulled by his Model T. Ford.*



*Farmers could load box cars themselves, hence all the augers leaning into the railroad box cars, here at Sperling elevator. Photo courtesy G. Croton.*



*Box cars waiting to be loaded at the Morris Pool Elevator.*

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*Farmers lining up to deliver grain early in the spring when yet another flood threat approaches. Photo taken in 1966 by Derksen Printers.*





*Paterson's grain elevator in Morris.*



Manitoba Pool Elevator at Smith's Spur, 1980. This elevator was built by North Star Grain Co. in 1943. It was purchased by the Pool in 1948 from Reliance Grain, which had bought it from North Star. The first Board of the Co-operative elevator at Smith's Spur consisted of Joe Anderson (Sr.), C.F. Kroeker, Leo Kuntz, William H. Dickson and Dave Schroeder, with Jacob J. Janzen as secretary. The minutes of the Board's first meeting are in the Archives at Brandon. Smith Elevator handled 14,033 bushels in 1948. During the last half of the 1970's, the elevator was handling an average of 344,000 bushels per year and cleaning 45,000 to 60,000 bushels of seed grain per year.



C.E. Anderson owned an elevator on this site prior to 1918. This accident occurred when the train hit a snow drift on the track. Accidents happened to elevators in those days, too. One day, as Mr. Anderson drove toward the elevator from Lowe Farm, he noticed from some distance away that it looked strange. Drawing closer, he found that the elevator had slipped off its foundation and onto the tracks! Fortunately, there was no train bearing down on it at the time, and it was set safely back on a solid foundation.

## 'Twas the Night Before Quota

by Harold Bell

*'Twas the night before Quota, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.  
Ma had undressed and put up her hair,  
Quota or no quota, she didn't care.*

*With Pa it was different, you could easily see;  
He was nervous and twitchy as a sycamore tree.  
He had his truck loaded with the fruits of his toil,  
Tested his tires and filled her with oil;  
Drove out in the lane, right up to the gate  
And uneasily left her for the long night wait.*

*He had seen most of his neighbors Saturday night in the store;  
They all acted the same - as though they were sore.  
He had seen the grain buyer this morning at church,  
Serene and happy as a bird on a perch.  
His face portrayed nothing but contentment and bliss;  
How could anyone look like that at a time like this?*

*And so it was bedtime - it was time for the test;  
Dare he lie down and try for some rest?  
The alarm was set for half past four  
But - Pa was suspicious of it anymore.*

*He made his decision, and with a nod of his head  
Took off his clothes and crept into bed.*

*He lay on his side, with his face to the wall,  
But his mind kept humming, "Get ahead of them all."  
He thought, with pride of his college son, Hank,  
And the pile of bonds he had in the bank.  
He thought of his prize bull, content in its stall;  
But his mind kept humming, "Get ahead of them all."*

*He thought of Ma, in her girlhood days;  
Her rosy cheeks and her winning ways;  
The boyfriends she had - George, Simon and Saul;  
But his mind kept humming, "Get ahead of them all."*

*At last Pa's arms started to jerk,  
And the muscles of his face began to work;  
He dreamed that Ma had turned into a beautiful goose;  
The bull is in the barn - dreamed he had broke loose.*

*The alarm went off with an awful shatter,  
And Pa leapt to the floor with a bone-grinding clatter.  
Tried to enter his pants with them upside down  
And danced round the floor like an old circus clown;  
Grabbed his cap and his coat - no time to eat;  
Lunged out the door and ran for his wheat.*

*The truck did well with her huge load,  
And Pa was seen flying down the hard road;  
He entered the town - it was worse than he reckoned.  
In that gosh-awful line Pa stood fifty-second.*

*At long last it came Pa's turn to weigh.  
The buyer just stood there - dusty and grey;  
His face was creased in a guilty grin  
As though he'd committed a satanical sin.  
"Pa", said the buyer, "You'll have to go some other place;  
You see, sir, you see sir, I have no more space."*

# FARM PROGRESS

The discovery of oil, and the combustion engine revolutionized farming, and agricultural methods were modernized. The one cylinder tractors with large steel wheels were replaced by the rubber tired tractors.

By the mid twenties, horses were definitely on the wane, while cars, trucks and tractors were on the increase. During the depression, lack of fuel and the fact that mechanization suffered a setback, horses became popular again, because they relied on home grown feed, and did not require cash to operate. After times improved, (around 1935) mechanization continued, with bigger and better tractors, cars, trucks and combines, replacing the worn out pre-depression models.

Mixed farming was the description that fit most farms in early years. Every farmer had a few cows, pigs, chickens, ducks, and a large garden to supply their own meat, butter, eggs and other produce. This also helped provide "pin money" for the farm wife. An egg cheque or a cream cheque was often the means by which a few extras were obtained for the family.



*Many a young lass had to milk cows before breakfast. Pictured here is now Mrs. Henry F. Friesen.*

Cheese factories played a great role in providing farmers with an agriculture staple. Cheese factories were located in several places in the municipality. A site for a cheese factory near Aubigny was granted to Benjamin Ladenceur in 1907, at the bend of the river. Along the Stage Road near Silver Plains at the turn of the century, there were acres of hay land. A community pasture was opened and farmers from near and far brought cattle and sold the milk to the cheese factory nearby.

Another cheese factory was located in the Mennonite village. Though it is believed there were others, little is known of them and the years they operated. The 1950 flood spelled the end of the last cheese factory located near Riverside. Farmers dispensed of their herds due to rising flood waters and did not replenish them.

The shortage and high prices of dependable labour, plus the technical skills required to run such an operation, has made mixed farming impractical. The trend towards specialization means the farmer chooses his favored line of operation, and goes into it on a grand scale, so highly mechanized, it requires little hired help.



*Louis Palud Sr. on a potato digger prior to 1920. As we can see, there was a bountiful crop. Potatoes were picked up and bagged by hand.*

Huge silos today are the mark of the modern beef lot. Large scale hog production and poultry enterprises are also operating in the Morris Municipality.

Primarily, this area was known as good wheat land. Rich soils have produced abundant yields for many farmers. The production of cereal crops and flax still claims the major proportion of seeded acreage. More recently, the acreage of special crops has been increased. Rapeseed, sunflowers, field peas, sugar beets, buckwheat, corn, field beans, mustard and canary grass seed, have produced profits for the grower.

Due to the efficiency of the modern farm, the farm population has declined, but the size of the average farm has increased. Improved methods are constantly increasing the amount of agricultural produce which one man can raise in a year and improved transportation has brought the rich farm regions within the reach of the market place of the world.



*Seeding operations at W.A. Harder's at Lowe Farm, 1979.*



*The Hart Parr tractor in 1909 was very popular with farmers.*



*Model L Case owned by operator P.J. Loewen of Rosenort.*



*ABOVE: Lawrence Dyck driving the combine and Harold watching the truck, during harvesting operations on the Anton Dyck farm at Myrtle in 1958.*



*Grain storage on the farm, a necessity (W.A. Harder).*

*Butch Harder swathing barley at Lowe Farm - August, 1979.*



*LEFT: Sturgeon Creek Colony combining rapeseed for Harder Bros. on Harris Farms at Headingley in 1979.*

## AGRICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVES

A new movement in connection with agricultural extension work was undertaken in 1915, when first attempts were made to establish agriculture representatives in Manitoba.

Morris established a small office and the first ag.-rep. was W.T.G. Wiener. It is not known how long he stayed, but he was appointed Cerealist with Manitoba Agricultural College in 1916. The war had an effect on this segment of population as well, as after enlistment, only four agriculture representatives remained in the province. Little progress was made in this area until after the war.

The agricultural representative service, was re-established under N.C. MacKay, and developed from 1930 onward, as a service provided by the Ministry of Agriculture.

In the farm and rural programs sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, the ag.-reps. formed the front line of action and became the educational arm of the Ministry, passing on technical and research findings to farm operators, conducting training programs for farm youth, and giving leadership in farm and community affairs. Also, experience gained through close contact with farm and district problems enabled the ag.-rep. to bring the current needs to the attention of the Ministry. Consequently, Manitoba owes honor and respect to these men and women for services rendered and for the contribution they make to provincial agriculture.

### MORRIS AGRICULTURE REPRESENTATIVES

Clifford G. Harrison	1978-
Gary Sloik	1975-1977
G. Resby Coutts	1971-1974
W.G. Steeds	1968-1971
Emmanuel Van De Velde	1965-1968
Walter Van Wynseberghe	1956-1965
D. S. Stevenson	1951-1956
C. J. Campbell	1941-1951
F. W. Hamilton	1939-1941
W.T.G. Wiener	1915-1916

#### *Fred W. Hamilton*

Fred W. Hamilton was the first Agricultural Representative sent to Morris after the long gap since Mr. Wiener.

Mr. Hamilton served in Morris between 1939 and 1941. He was the sole instructor at the Agricultural School, a diploma credit course held in Morris for young men interested in farming, held in November and December, 1939. Attending the course were 25 or 30 young men from as far away as Emerson and Ridgeville.



*Fred Hamilton*

Mr. Hamilton got the 4-H clubs started in the area, as well as Seed Clubs. He is remembered as an immensely likeable man who was very interested in young people. One Morris area farmer described him as a very active Ag. Rep.

There were many cattle herds in the area at the time, and Mr. Hamilton began advising dairymen in the then-new process of Artificial Insemination.

Originally from the Baldur area, Fred Hamilton courted Alice Stevenson during his period as Morris Ag. Rep., and returned after World War II to marry her. Mr. Hamilton's later positions included work with the Biomass Energy Institute in Winnipeg, which is developing innovations in renewable resources. Mr. Hamilton suffered a stroke in 1979.



*Charles J. Campbell*

Charles J. Campbell served as Agricultural Representative from 1941 to 1951. Originally from the Reston area, he took over the Ag. Rep. position in a time of upheaval and change. The first demonstrations of chemical weed control in Manitoba were done in his area (the Rural Municipalities of Morris, Montcalm, Macdonald, Ritchot and Franklin). Demonstration plots of various types of grain drew interested observers from neighboring American communities as well as local farmers. Mr. Campbell was active in several 4-H groups, especially the Beef Calf clubs. He led Seed clubs in Morris, Lowe Farm, and St. Jean, and for several months taught at an Agricultural School in Altona. In retrospect, he says that his biggest work was in weed control.

Mr. Campbell married Patricia Beaubien, daughter of Senator Beaubien of St. Jean. They had two children, Heather and Neil. Mr. Campbell enjoyed curling and hunting ducks and geese east of Morris.

After leaving Morris in 1951, he worked as an Ag. Rep. briefly in Souris, then moved to Hallock, Minnesota, where he served as a County Agent from 1951 to 1959. He went into banking and later retired in Hallock.

Doug Stevenson was Agricultural Representative from 1951 to 1956 in Morris. Doug was well known in the district, and was involved in community affairs. It was still a mixed farming area, and in the absence of a veterinarian, Doug would be called on to diagnose an animal's illness, or death. Many times he had to dissect a chicken on his desk. With the opening of the Pathology laboratory at the University of Manitoba, livestock producers were encouraged to use this new facility, where staff had special training in disease diagnosis.

At the time of his retirement from the Department of Agriculture, Doug was Swine Specialist.



*Walter Van Wynsberghe*

Walter Van Wynsberghe was Ag. Rep. from 1956 to 1965, working extensively with beef and hog producers. It was during his time that the Morris Horticultural Society was formed, as well as the Morris Montcalm Weed Control District.

Walter is presently a Credit Agent with the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, working in Winnipeg.



*Emmanuel Van de Velde*

Emmanuel Van de Velde was appointed Agricultural Representative at Morris in 1965 following his graduation from the University of Manitoba. Manny, as he was known to his friends, promoted the keeping of good farm records, and organized a number of farm Business Groups in the Morris Ag. Rep. area. He was especially interested in working with youth groups, and had many 4-H clubs in the area. He maintained an active interest in community life in his whole area, from Emerson in the south, to Domain in the north. In Morris, he was instrumental in the establishment of a Toastmasters Club, being a firm believer in the importance of being able to express oneself in public. In 196 he returned to his hometown, Mariapolis, where he is presently farming.

Bill Steeds joined the Manitoba Department of Agriculture in 1966, as Ag. Rep. at Beausejour, transferring to Morris in 1967. Having majored in Animal Science at the University of Manitoba, he maintained his keen interest in livestock production, and was instrumental in the formation of several Hog Producers' Associations in his area. He was active in 4-H work, and being young and single, was popular with the senior 4-H members. Bill's term in Morris saw the beginning of school consolidation, and with it, the start of dwindling numbers of 4-H clubs. However, smaller clubs joined together to form larger, stronger clubs. Bill organized a very active 4-H Junior Leaders' Association in the Morris Ag. Rep. area. He was also secretary of the Morris Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Toastmasters Club.

Bill left the Manitoba Department of Agriculture in 1971, on a round the world tour which lasted almost two years.

After graduating from the University of Manitoba with a Masters degree in animal nutrition, he was appointed Provincial Livestock Nutritionist with the Provincial Feed Testing Laboratory.



*LEFT:  
G. Resby Coutts*



*RIGHT:  
Bill Steeds*

Resby Coutts was born and raised in Elva, Manitoba, worked for the Manitoba Department of Agriculture as summer assistant in 1970 in Roblin. After graduating from the University of Manitoba in 1971, he joined the Department as Agricultural Representative at Morris. In 1974 he left the Department, to teach a Vocational Agriculture course for the Morris-Macdonald School Division in Morris. In 1975, he rejoined the Department of Agriculture, producing radio and television shows for the Communications Branch. In 1979, he left the provincial government and Morris, and now resides with his family in Brandon, working for CKLQ Radio.

Resby was best known as an avid curler in winter, and fastball player in summer.

Garry Sloik joined the Department of Agriculture in 1975, as Agricultural Representative at Morris. He graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1970, and worked for Carnation Foods Company for four and a half years.

Garry was knowledgeable in all facets of agriculture, and assisted many young farmers in expanding their operations.



*Garry Sloik*

Garry was a keen gardener, and was known for having one of the best looking lawns in town.

In 1978, he returned to his hometown of Portage la Prairie, as Manager of Field Operations for McCain Foods.



*Clifford Harrison*

In 1978, when Cliff Harrison transferred to Morris, he brought with him a broad experience in various crops, having worked as summer assistant for three years in Melita, Carberry and Altona, and seven years as Ag. Rep. at Carman.

Born and raised in the Osborne area, he was a 4-H member for ten years, graduating from the University of Manitoba in 1971. His special interest was in Field Crop Production, in particular special crops, and at this time, is planning demonstration plots of some of the newer special crops.

He has been instrumental in a renewed interest in the Field Crops project in 4-H, and also helped in organizing the first Provincial 4-1-1 Sugar Beet Achievement held in Morris in November, 1979.

He and his family reside and farm in the Osborne area.

## HOME ECONOMISTS

The Home Economics extension activities of the Manitoba Agricultural College, and the Ministry of Agriculture, were associated closely with the organization and development of home economics societies and Women's Institutes.

Local household science associations were organized by the end of 1910, at 17 points in Manitoba, and Morris was one of them. Three existing women's organizations joined the movement, including the locally instigated, "Women's Institute" at Morris, which was also organized in 1910.

Beginning in 1914, home economics extension was financed from a grant to the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. A number of specialists in dressmaking, millinery, home nursing, canning, cookery, etc. were engaged. But when grants were withdrawn in 1923, due to serious cutbacks, this service suffered a temporary setback. All of this type of extension service was carried out locally by the Women's Institute. Mrs. A. Chisolm of Morris served as the Provincial President of the Home Economics Society in 1911.

The Home Economists serving in this district office, covering the Morris, St. Pierre, and Vita Ag. Rep. areas were:

Lula McLeod	1954- 1965? - now at Dauphin
Judy Gaudin	1966-1967 - now in Curacao
Judi	1967-1969 - now living in
Frederickson	Arborg
Yvonne	1969-1972 - now living in
Archambault	St. Pierre area
Doreen Salmon	1972-1973 - now living in
	Gladstone
Donna Martin	1973-1973 - now at Dauphin



*Andre Marion, Weed Supervisor*

The Morris-Montcalm Weed Control District was organized in April, 1960, joining together the municipalities of Morris and Montcalm, and the Towns of Emerson and Morris into one unit for the purpose of controlling weeds, operating under the Weed Control District Policy established by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. The Weed Control District operated under a Board of Directors, appointed by the member municipalities and towns. The first weed supervisor appointed was Romeo Marion, of St. Jean, with his office in Morris. In April 1961, Romeo Marion resigned, and Andre Marion was appointed Weed Supervisor, a position he retains today.



# MORRIS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

by Chas. Covernion



*Fair Day in Morris on July 12, 1897. The parade route is on Boyne Ave. West. Photo courtesy Olive Skinner.*

The people of the municipality wanted an organization that would bring them together on a mutual basis, whereby they could express their concerns for agriculture and exhibit the fruits of their labours. Hence, at a meeting held in the County Court House at Morris on June 29, 1895, it was decided on a motion by the late Dr. McTavish, seconded by H.R. Whitworth, that "An Agricultural Society for the Electoral District of Youville (east of the River) and the old municipality be formed, and a petition be forwarded to the Provincial Government to that effect." Ninety-two people signed the petition and paid a dollar for membership. The Society was begun.

Mr. George Clubb was elected president, Wm. Meiklejohn, first vice-president, S.J. Collum, second vice-president, G.F. Birney, Secretary-treasurer and James Swain, J. Lewis, Mr. Toews, T. Mulvey, J.L. Lawrie, R.A. Lawrie, Henry Snarr were directors.

The early fairs were all fall fairs, and were held in town on the site where Power-Matic Industries is now located. Home economics were displayed in the Orange Hall and a charge of five cents was made to view the displays.

The first fair was held on October 10, 1895. The participation of the local people was encouraging, as one hundred and nine exhibitors displayed 669 entries in 21 classes, and a total of \$416.00 was paid in prize money. Many livestock classes were similar to those of today. In addition, ducks, geese, pigeons, chickens, turkeys and pigs were judged. There were grain exhibits, sewing and knitting, butter, preserves, etc. a category for almost every individual. This first fair resulted in a net profit of \$205.11.

In the early years, judges were selected locally, and this was naturally a difficult task, as a judge was needed for each of the 21 classes. Under the present system, judges are selected from a list sent out by the extension service.

In 1899, special awards were given to the two exhibitors winning the most prize money at the fair. This

was a plow, donated by Moline Plow Co. and a cultivator, donated by Massey-Harris Co.

The first protest was lodged in 1900, when a lady exhibited fancy work which had not been done by herself or her family! In 1903, the fair date was changed to July and since that time, has been held somewhere between June 15 and July 15. Application for title to the property owned by the Society was made.

Various public information meetings were held from time to time. An address was given in 1903, on how to judge a horse's age by appearance and condition of his teeth. Concerts were sponsored, which appeared to be comprised of local musical talent. These were usually followed by a lecture on some aspect of agriculture. One particular concert, held on January 30, 1905, lists "Gramophone Selections" as an item on the program, and over 200 people attended this meeting! The Society took affairs of agriculture and the community very seriously in those days.

In 1906, discussions regarding the possibility of constructing a race track on the grounds were held. Many farmers donated a day with team and scraper to get construction started.

When the fair was organized in 1895, it was given the name Morris Agricultural Society No. 2, because prior to that date, Morris had worked with St. Jean under the name of Morris Fair. St. Jean wished to retain the name, so they worked as Morris Agricultural Society No. 1. As can be expected, this caused considerable confusion, so in 1911, a resolution was passed requesting the St. Jean Society to change their name. The Morris Agricultural Society name was retained by Morris.

Plowing matches were a popular event, sponsored by the Society in 1914 and 1915. The first match was held on the farm of G.M. Cassens on June 13, 1914, with 15 competitors.

F.L. Moody served the longest term in office as president from 1919 - 1932.

The fair became a three day event in 1921. It was in this year that the Society offered a \$1,000.00 grant, and property for a rink, if same were erected on the fair grounds. This has been a contentious point from time to time throughout the years, but needless to say, has not come to pass.

In an attempt to bring items of varied interest, the travelling show, Chautauqua, was held in conjunction with the fair, and horse races were accommodated a few years later.



*Alpin Chisholm, an early fair director, taken in 1946.*

Finances are usually among the top priorities, and in the interest of holding a bigger and better Sports Day and Fair, in 1930, 50 people from the area and town promised to donate \$40.00 each. A bond of \$2,000.00 was guaranteed, with \$10.00 in cash being taken at the time of the signing of the agreement. The Society joined the Canadian Trotting Association; the Crawford Francis Midway was contracted, also professional sound men with speaker systems were hired. The Board was busy that year with meetings, as much planning was required prior to the fair. The big event took place July 3, 4th and 5th, was an outstanding success, with gross receipts more than three times that of the previous year's. However, expenses were high, and the bond members were each assessed another \$5.00 in addition to the original \$10.00 to cover expenses!

Unfortunately, hard times came along. The Society was asked to put a representative on the Unemployment Relief Scheme in 1931. The following year, the fair was cancelled, and no further meetings were held until 1937. After a recess of five years, the Society became active again in 1938, with Ed Snarr as president.

Wm. Stevenson became president in the years 1939 to 1941, and all attempts were made to have a bigger and better show. The E.J. Casey Shows were contracted and the Fair Boards share of the take for two days was \$75.00. The fair was advertised on radio CKY and bumper stickers were used for the first time that year, the beginning of mass advertising.

Individual efforts were always made to improve the grounds. The evergreen trees on the west side were planted in 1940 by the late James Stevenson, a great improvement to this treeless site.



*The big Fair Day in 1941, when the Midway was contracted. Photo courtesy Helen Schellenberg.*

A seed and poultry show was held once more, taking place in the old Hi-Way Hall. These were the war years and in 1943, another problem arose. Due to gasoline rationing, the midway had difficulty getting around the country. Eventually, it provided two rides, which were sent out by transfer, much to the delight of the youngsters.

Ingenuity knows no limits. A registered Hereford bull which was bought from C.L. Stoney, was raffled off in 1944, with the proceeds going towards the building of a new grandstand.

It was under C.C. Dixon's leadership that the society's first board of managers was established in the spring of 1947. The fair progressed rapidly, with everyone hopeful of Morris obtaining a "B" Class charter. In 1945, Morris had the largest holstein entry in the province.



*Heifer calves being judged at a fair in the early 1940's - L. Breyfogle photo.*

Disaster in the form of the 1950 flood, set the Society back. No fair was held that year because of considerable damage to facilities. In 1951, Bruce McKenzie became chairman, and the Society received \$3,000.00 in compensation for flood damages. It was decided to use this money to build a grandstand capable of seating 1500 people.

In a move to create more action, fun and participation from fair goers, chariot races were introduced in 1952,



*Bruce MacKenzie, chairman, speaking to part of the 6,000 crowd gathered for the fair event in 1946.*



*Some of the many fine 4 horse teams that won ribbons in the Fair - 1946.*



*George Anderson coming down the home stretch of the race track when auto races were held at the fair.*

and old car races in 1957. Spectators loved the whine of the engines, the dust and the spectacular near misses, but the races were discontinued in 1962, as a result of an accident that year.

During the sixties, good fairs were held, however, the Society was "losing ground" to larger fairs, such as Carman and Portage la Prairie. In 1963, the idea of a



*The Morris band, comprised of local talent, was favoured entertainment in this area. Here, they prepare to serenade the crowds at the 1946 fair.*



*Prize winning Livestock entries at the Morris fair in 1947.*

rodeo being held in conjunction with the fair was discussed. Lyman Sadler had moved to town and had some experience with the rodeo in Swan River. He felt that the chances of promoting an event such as this in Morris were good. Morris had a large population to the north and south. After the 1963 fair (which barely broke even) it was felt that a drastic change had to be made, or quit altogether. A meeting, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, was well attended by the local people, as well as representatives from surrounding towns and municipalities, and it was decided at the annual meeting, that the possibility of holding a rodeo was to be investigated.

On a fact finding mission, Bruce McKenzie from Morris, and Arthur Vermette, from St. Jean, attended the Cowboys' Protective Association meeting in Calgary, and came back with a favourable report. At a public meeting held on December 11, 1963, it was decided to go ahead.

Much hub-ub ensued. A new image was needed and a contest was held to select a more symbolic name to represent the area. As a result, the rodeo became known as the "Big M" - the Manitoba Stampede and Exhibition, and the sponsoring Society became known as the Valley Agricultural Society.

Cliff Claggett, a promotor, who was instrumental in getting the North-West Round Up started at Swan River, was contacted. This proved to be a wise decision. Cliff came to Morris accompanied by Rodeo producer, Harry

# A STAMPEDE IS BORN!

Vold, to attend a meeting. After checking over the grounds and facilities, they made several valid recommendations, and agreed that if the society would provide the necessary facilities, they would guarantee us a show. The Stampede was born!

In 1963, Bruce MacKenzie was elected Rodeo Chairman and Lyman Sadler, Rodeo Secretary, with the chairman having the authority to select his own committee as he saw fit. The surrounding towns and municipalities appointed a representative to the Board of Managers, with this practice being continued for several years.

Planning started immediately, with a mere \$200.00 in the bank, and only 22 acres of property. The existing facilities were entirely inadequate. It would be a mammoth undertaking. Could it be done in such a short time?

The finance committee decided that in order to succeed, the support of everyone would be needed. People were approached with the idea of loaning the society \$100.00 each, with no guarantee of repayment. As a result, 108 individuals, companies and organizations, "came through" and by the end of March, the Society had \$10,800.00 to work with. With the promise of another \$25,000.00 from the Bank, the Stampede was on its way!

Negotiations for additional property were already under way and improvements begun. Construction of a new track was started, with local municipalities and contractors supplying the necessary equipment. A contractor was hired to construct the grandstand. Despite delays in timber shipments due to floods in Oregon, the stand was completed only minutes before the first spectators started filing in!



The crowds at the Big M Stampede, a realization of the vision of the Valley Agriculture Society. Attendance has tripled since that first event, when 27,000 people attended.

The grounds were a beehive of activity, as dozens of volunteers saw to the building of the chutes, fences, and other construction jobs (such as stabling the wagon horses at the skating rink). Everyone was kept busy arranging for such unfamiliar things as parades, advertising, pancake breakfasts and street dancing. A new crisis arose before every meeting, but somehow they were dealt with and handled satisfactorily. With only minutes to spare, everything was finally ready for the first big show. Even today, there is great excitement as the show starts to move in, but it can't begin to compare with the



The first Stampede board in 1964. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Bill Irvine, President of the Agriculture Society, Nick Shrader, Harold Earl, Comie Neufeld, Howie Larkey of Labatts and Lynam Sadler. FRONT ROW: Charlie Covernton, Bud Danylchuk, John Wie be, **Bruce MacKenzie**.

thrill that was felt as the wagons, cowboys, rodeo stock and midway started to roll in that first year.

27,000 people attended the first show, and revenue from gate and grandstand totalled \$54,629.00. Agricultural entries were up and things were looking good for the future.

In 1965, an additional seven rows were added to the grandstand as well as the roof. Two years later, three new barns, capable of housing 600 head of stock, were constructed. These expansions were a must, to accommodate our increased crowds as well as our greater rodeo and livestock entries. Even so, receipts at the gates were not enough to keep pace with such a heavy capital expansion and in 1968 the Society found itself in considerable debt.

Lyman Sadler became president in 1968 and Bruce MacKenzie was hired as General Manager. Long term credit was sought, but it wasn't until the fall of 1968, that, after court action and a garnishee of our bank account, that the bank finally agreed to loan the Society enough money to consolidate all their debts. This gave the Society a fresh start and since that time, they have never looked back.

Bill Schellenberg became president in July of 1968; that was the year the first five day rodeo was held. The first two nights were slated for harness racing and the last three for wagon racing. The harness racing proved to be a disaster. In 1969, the harness men refused to run on the track due to its wet condition. They were ordered off the grounds and the wagon men put on a good show that night. As a result, wagon races have been the format of our evening show ever since.



*The wagon races begin, as dirt flies and drivers urge their teams forward. This thrilling event is held every evening during Stampede days.*

Crockett Writers, were the first professional P.R. Consultants hired. It was due to their suggestion that the Stampede adopt the Red Hat as their symbol.

Jack Hamblin, the present general manager, was hired in 1969. By this time, the Agricultural Fair was becoming one of the largest in the province. After lengthy correspondence with the Federal Department of Agriculture, auditing of prize moneys paid out, and after

## MANY HOURS ARE SPENT CARING FOR LIVESTOCK



## AND JUDGING THE ANIMALS ON SHOW



## - PRESENTING TROPHIES -





the needs of the Society was assessed, the much sought after "B" Class Charter was finally granted.

In 1970, the dates were moved up to make Sunday the last day of the show. The first blacktop was laid that year and the campground was started. In 1971, more blacktop was laid and a 40 foot by 120 foot steel building was built to house the home economics and 4-H displays. Various improvements were made through these years, new washrooms were built, and another steel building constructed to house commercial displays. Steel bleachers were purchased from Bison Dragways in 1977 and moved to the fairgrounds.

Crowds, contestants, and livestock entries were setting new records each year. In 1978, the gate and grandstand receipts were \$188,000.00 - a whopping increase from that first year in 1964.

The Manitoba Stampede owes its success in part to the good advice and contacts it received from Cliff Claggett and Harry Vold at its inception. These contacts have been retained over the years with Void Rodeo and Wagner Shows, as well as announcer, Bob Chambers, all still with the show today.

Without the foresight of the first Rodeo Chairman and General Manager, Bruce MacKenzie, with his determination never to quit until a job was well done, the Stampede would never have become a reality. His task, however, would have been insurmountable without the support of the excellent Board and Committee members, the surrounding municipalities and towns, and the thousands of volunteer hours which the people from up and down the valley gave. With this kind of foundation and spirit, the Manitoba Stampede and Exhibition will undoubtedly continue to grow and prosper.

#### *PRESIDENTS OF THE MORRIS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY*

George Clubb	J.M. Lawrie
S.J. Holland	J. Churchill
J. Wilton	A.A. Cox
W.R. Clubb	F.L. Moody
Ed Snarr	Wm. Stevenson
W.J. Stevenson	T. J.H. Lewis
Bruce MacKenzie	C.C. Dixon
C.G. Covernton	W.H. Dickson
E.K. Reid	W.R. Irvine
Lyman Sadler	Bill Schellenberg
Alex Godkin	Don Johnson
Wayne Irvine	

## PARADE HIGHLIGHTS



*The Big "M" Stampede float, travelling down Main Street. The parade is the kick off for the Stampede, held the morning of the first day.*



*The old medicine wagon, advertising Sam's wonder tonic (Morris Drug Store) in the Stampede parade.*



*Councillors of the R.M. of Morris served pancake breakfasts to the Drum and Bugle Corps from Chicoutimi, Quebec.*



*Dr. Griggs of Morris, dressed as the "Country doctor", entered the parade with Ernie Zinn's horse.*





One of the first floats the R.M. of Morris built, with Alice Loving, Mrs. Mulko, Susan, and daughter, Eunice Hildebrand, 1965.



This 1978 float for the R.M. of Morris, featured a model of a working steam engine complete with whistle, built by P. W. Siemens.



1967, the Centennial float.



Father and son, both winners of the trophy rifles for the Ben Hur "suicide" chariot races. Bob and Elgin Bell of Morris.



Wheels of progress. This float was designed and built by Councillor George Goossen and his wife, Sadie, with some assistance from others.



1970 R.M. float, pulled by Wm. Recksiedler in the parade.

R.M. of Morris float with secretary-treasurer, **Dave Harder**, holding the moneybags. **Alice Loving** at counter, and **Andre Marion**, "Bonnie and Clyde".



LEFT: Calves resting contentedly unaware of their role in this show. ABOVE: Calf roping, a sport only a strong, agile cowboy can master.



*Brahma bull riding - one of the most dangerous events of the rodeo. The rodeo clowns save the downed bull riders from injury by tantalizing the bull with their antics.*



-AM



*UPPER LEFT: Both driver and horses don colorful regalia to bring memories of Roman days in the suicide Ben Hur chariot races.*

*LEFT. Is it all easy money? This scene will tell you - "Heck no ma, I do it just for fun!"*

*ABOVE: Councillor Gilbert Cretton presents a cowboy an award on behalf of the R.M. of Morris.*

## 4-H CLUBS

*from Canadian Council on 4-H Clubs*

The story of the development of 441 clubs in Canada, known originally as Boys' and Girls' Clubs, is in itself a unique drama of success, achievement, and unrelenting growth akin only to the growth and evolution of Canadian agriculture.

The drama began in Manitoba in the year of 1913 with the formation of eight Boys' and Girls' Clubs, the first of which was organized at Roland, Manitoba. According to the Manitoba Department of Agriculture report for the year 1913, "Each club held a most successful fair where the chickens, potatoes and corn produced by members, were exhibited. At present, there are 472 very enthusiastic club members, and it is certain that they have gained much practical agricultural knowledge from their summer club work".

"The primary aim and basic reason for the rapid growth of the 4-H movement is to provide practical training for young people so that they may lead useful, satisfying lives and be better prepared to take their places as citizens of tomorrow."

This aim is clearly defined in the symbolic four 'H's, as they are embodied into the 4-H pledge. 'Head, Heart, Hands and Health'. These familiar four 'H's symbolize an educational movement for organized groups of young people, principally in rural areas.

Provincially, 4-H work is a responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, with programs being supervised locally by district extension representatives.

4-H Clubs hold an average of eight or more meetings a year. All meetings are conducted according to parliamentary procedure. The members elect their own officers and help to organize each year's program of activities. They also learn to express themselves in public and to work together on club and community projects.

Local leaders enlist members and provide project instruction, offer guidance and encouragement to the member, as they take part in the various phases of the club program. Most leaders are former 4-H members themselves, and their work is voluntary.

Members are required to undertake one or more projects during each year of enrolment. In each project the members are expected to keep accurate records and to display their project material at the club achievement day. All projects are of a practical nature with the emphasis placed on "learning to do by doing".

Aside from the member's project and the regular meetings, a wide variety of activities at the county, district and provincial levels have been designed to add interest to local club programs. Competitions in judging, demonstrations, and showmanship are popular with members. Inter-club events and educational tours to farms, agricultural institutions and industrial centers are also included.

A variety of incentives and awards are offered to members, with an award trip to the National 4-H Club Conference being a coveted prize. This is held annually in Toronto and Ottawa, during the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. The occasion provides opportunities to exchange ideas with fellow club members from all parts



*ABOVE: Sewell-Broadview 4-H Seed Club parade float - 1958.*



*LEFT: John Friesen, 4-H Leader, with the 4-H Beef calves and club members at the Morris Stampede in 1967.*



*The Red River Valley Beef Club in the 4-H parade, 1964.*

of the continent and to broaden their knowledge through trips to places of agricultural, industrial and civic interest.

The many projects are practical, varied and interesting, offering an area of achievement to most every individual. These include clothing, food projects, crafts, home design, home nursing, home away from home - designed to assist a person who is moving away from home to another area or city, power toboggan, electrical, mechanics, woodworking, the Indian way of life, photography, outdoor living, including survival,



livestock, projects such as beef, dairy, swine, light horse and pony, dog care and training, agronomy projects which include field crops, horticulture and self determined projects. The boys and girls are assisted by their leaders, to gain expertise and to finish their project for achievement day, when all projects are judged.

A large 4-H rally was held for a number of years in conjunction with the "Big M Stampede", with 4-H'ers beginning their day with a full fledged parade of all the participating clubs, and dispersing at the Stampede grounds, where the many events and displays were judged. It was the culmination of their year of work.

Some of the local clubs had very interesting names, such as the Kronsweide Happy Hoers, Silver Thimbles, Morris Mending Maidens, Pleasant Valley Busy Beavers, Kane Nimble Fingers and Sewing Seniorties. Unfortunately with the advent of the larger school division, and the availability of many and varied extra-curricular activities, membership in the 4-H clubs began to drop off in this area. In the past, each small school district had several 4-H clubs, but as of 1978, Morris area claimed only two 4-H clubs with a total enrolment of 94.

The 4-H emblem is a green four leaf clover with a letter "H" inscribed on each leaf and the word Canada forming the base. The 4-H's symbolize the ideals and objectives through the Pledge:

"I pledge- My Head to clearer thinking,  
My Heart to greater loyalty,  
My Hands to larger service,  
My Health to better living,  
for my club, my community and  
my country."



*The 4-H clubs on parade in front of the Princess Theatre on Morris Main Street, during the Fair in 1958.*

## MORRIS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

One Friday, near the end of January, 1959, two local ladies, Mrs. Ed Manikel and Mrs. Stan Churchill, phoned Mr. Walter Van Wynsberghe (the Agricultural Representative in Morris) inquiring about requirements for starting a Horticultural Society in Morris. They were informed that they must find at least 30 people willing to join such a society. The call was at 10:00 a.m. and by 3:00 p.m. they had well over 50 potential members.

On February 2, 1950, an organizational meeting was held in the old Morris Court House. It was a very stormy afternoon and only 34 were able to attend. However, Mr. Fred Weir, Provincial Horticulturist and Secretary of the Manitoba Horticultural Association, (the parent organization) was present and the Red River Horticultural Society was formed. The records show the following slate of officers were elected that day: Mrs. Ed Manikel, President; Mrs. Stan Churchill, Vice-President; Miss Ida Hoffman, Secretary-Treasurer; Mrs. Cliff Mitchell, Mrs. Henry Peters, Mrs. Ovila Sabourin, Mrs. Ed Jorgenson, Mr. Leslie Stevenson, Mrs. P.K. Dueck, Mr. Jake B. Wiens, Directors.

The Charter was received April 10, 1959. By the end of May, there were over 70 paid up members. The largest membership was in 1967, when we signed up 100 members for Canada's Centennial year.

May 16, 1959 was the date of the first Plant Sale held in Sommer's Garage. This has continued as an annual event and many homes in the district have been beautified from the nursery stock, perennials and fruit trees purchased at the sales.

The first annual Garden Show was held August 8, 1959, in the Morris Elementary School, East Unit. This proved to be a big undertaking as very few (if any) of the directors had experience staging such a show. Despite misgivings, the show was a success and streams of visitors viewed the 358 entries and enjoyed a cup of tea in the floral setting.

In addition to the above events, the Society has always sponsored a slide competition on horticultural subjects



*First prize for gladiolus won by Mark Elliot at the Garden Show in 1978.*

and for about 15 years a Home Grounds Competition. We have had successful contestants in the Provincial Competition in both these events.

Two members, Mr. Bronson Stevenson and Mr. Charles Stevenson have been honored with Life Memberships in the Manitoba Horticultural Association for their contribution to Horticulture in Manitoba.

As well as supplying valuable information to members and guests through lectures and work shops, the society has taken responsibility for foundation planting at the Morris Hospital and the Morris Manor as well as assisting at the Red River Valley Lodge, the swimming pool, schools and public buildings in the area. Individual homeowners have received help with landscaping. Books and vases have been donated to the library and the hospital, and donations made to various Provincial Horticultural Projects such as the Peace Garden, burseries, memorials, etc.

The Garden Shows in August have continued to be the biggest event of the year for the Society. For some years the Morris Art Group has displayed work at the Shows for added interest and enjoyment. The quality of the exhibits has improved over the years and the directors have been pleased to note a greater number of entries in the children's section since Junior Gardeners have been encouraged with donations of seeds for their gardens and visits from directors.

In 1977, the name of the organization was changed to the Morris Horticultural Society.

The Society feels that it has had some small share in beautifying our community.

## THE STORY OF THE MORRIS WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

*submitted by Kathleen Hamblin*

The first Women's Institute movement in the world had its small beginning in Stoney Creek, Ontario. Adelaide Hoodless, the founder, saw the need for better homes, schools, methods of sanitation and more instruction in the care and training of children and also out of a great need in the women themselves for a means of self expression. This organization recognizes neither creed nor colour, thus its growth spread rapidly across our fair land and indeed around the world until today in Manitoba they are numbered over 2000, across Canada 51,000 and in seventy-four countries with a membership of over eight million.

The Morris Women's Institute is proud of the fact that they hold Charter No. 1 as being the first Institute organized in Manitoba. For this they are indebted to the boundless energy, enthusiasm and loyalty of the late Mrs. Finley McKenzie, who became enthused over the Institute movement on a visit to Ontario in 1910 along with Mrs. Fred Peck's sister, Mrs. Graham, who sought to interest the women of Morris in the movement. Mrs. Peck worked enthusiastically along with Mrs. Graham by driving with horse and buggy through the country for an organizational meeting. The first two women who signified their willingness to become members were Mrs. T. Irvine and Mrs. George Churchill.



*Mrs. Fred Swain, Mrs. Fred Peck, Mrs. Edward Graham organize for the Women's Institute - Mrs. Fred Davis visiting Morris in 1910.*

Over forty women attended the first meeting on Aug. 13, 1910, and thirty-seven joined, at a fee of twenty-five cents a year. The organization was primarily made up of rural women, so the officers elected were President Mrs. Jas Lewis, First Vice Mrs. McKenzie, Second Vice Mrs. George Clubb, Secretary-Treasurer Mrs. Chisholm, Directors Mrs. J. Wilton, Mrs. J. Clubb, Mrs. J. Earl, Mrs. H.J. McTavish, Mrs. Robert Taylor, Mrs. E. Gilmore and Miss Gertrude Kastner. These officers elected at this meeting held office until January 1912.

The work of the Institute set the pattern that has been followed through the many years it has been in existence. The first project was to send a box containing butter, eggs, cakes, cookies, honey and dressed chickens to the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg, in time for Thanksgiving. A letter of thanks and an invitation for the organization to visit the hospital was their first tour. The boxes of goodies found their way to the Children's Hospital for many years.



*Mrs. James Lewis of Morris, first president of the Women's Institute.*

Among the subjects discussed and papers presented the first few years included care and storing of vegetables for winter use; making the home beautiful; a talk on the white plague, known to us as tuberculosis; paper on the ideal wife; a talk by Mrs. Campbell on her trip to the coronation of King Edward VII. Mrs. Nellie McClung gave a lecture on one of her books. Miss Juniper, from the Extension Service, gave a short course on millinery,



"How to Build a Hat" which could be done for one dollar and seventy cents. As hats are now becoming "vogue" once again, maybe this course should be repeated, but the cost would I am sure be quite different. At this time the write up in the Morris Herald had this to say about the Institute women, "Morris is destined to reach fame through the efforts of her women rather than through any accomplishments of her men".

By March 1911, there were seventeen Institutes organized in Manitoba and Morris had a membership of seventy. One of the first priorities of the Morris Institute was to send a resolution to Premier, Hon. R.P. Roblin asking the co-operation of the Government for the newly organized societies. This matter was given consideration and Mrs. Chisholm of Morris was elected the First Provincial President.

The motto "For Home and Country" has always been the theme for work being done in the community and home. One of the first projects was the need for a restroom in Morris followed by clothing being sent to the Children's Shelter in Winnipeg and then in the year 1914 the women turned all attention to war work. Two hundred and thirty-five pair of wool socks were knit, bales of clothing sent to Belgium, boxes packed and sent to the boys overseas for Christmas and a public auction was held realizing a sum of one thousand dollars in one afternoon which was a goodly sum in those days. Teas, bazaars, concerts and a collection of one dollar per family per month was asked for and collected by the ladies as a means to support the purchasing of wool and materials for sewing and knitting and also to send a steady flow of fifty gift packages per month to the fighting men overseas. After the First World War, the women erected a Cenotaph in memory of the fallen which stands today in the grounds of the Municipal Building. To this day they never fail to commemorate Remembrance Day or to remember their loved ones who fell in both wars with a wreath being placed on the Cenotaph on Decoration Day.

Some of the other worthwhile projects in the early years was a supervised playground, operation of a library, procuring of a District Nurse, instrumental in the plantings of the Court House grounds and the care of the cemetery which was redeemed from "a neglected jungle of growth and made into a garden". Perennials, shrubs and trees were planted, and the care and upkeep continued till 1967 when the maintenance was turned over to the town. Women such as Mrs. Todd, Mrs. McKenzie, Mrs. Wilton, Mrs. W. Stevenson, Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Muirhead, Mrs. J. Smith and Mrs. T.M. Stanley served at least 35 consecutive years on this committee.

Another project of long lasting, was the help given to the blind of Manitoba. At first help was in the form of buying their brooms and clothing along with the collection of funds from town and country at first from door to door, then later through the mail system. The Cancer Institute was not forgotten too as collections were made for many years. At present they still collect for the March of Dimes now called the Ability Fund.

The Institute has always been supportive of the youth groups in our community as help being given to 4H, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Cubs and Brownies along with the



*Mrs. Hattie Murray of Morris, Edith Poole, provincial president, and Dave Burke of Morris unveiling a plaque placed on the front of the municipal office in Morris as a tribute to the first Women's Institute organization in Manitoba, in 1910.*

donation of five hundred dollars to the Hockey Club for artificial ice.

In 1968 a letter expressing the Institute's concern regarding the urgent need for a Personal Care Home in Morris was sent to the Hospital District Administrator followed by letters to organizations in surrounding towns and municipalities. The W.I. circulated questionnaires to area residents, attended meetings and submitted names of those in need of such a facility to local and government authorities. By September 1970, after much work, plans had been approved and the W.I. assisted further by donating five hundred dollars to aid the Hospital District in purchasing land on which to build the home. The forty bed Red River Lodge opened in 1974 and is housing some of our devoted long time members. In the year 1978 W.I. again gave assistance in the form of a cheque for five hundred dollars to purchase a wheelchair van for their use.

W.I. has not overlooked the original purpose to help women to be better informed and to take a more active role in community and world affairs. This group has sponsored a variety of courses the past few years which have to be open to the public: the Defensive Driving course, furniture upholstery, creative cooking, sew and save, stretch and sew, hair car, interior design, St. John's Ambulance, quilting, photography, wills and estate planning and weaving. Programs presented at the meetings dealt with changes in Family Law, nutrition in the schools, keeping fit, money management, citizenship and responsibility, crime in our community, physical and mental stress, farm safety and many more.

As a member of the Provincial organization they have representation on the Manitoba Safety Council, Farm Bureau, Canadian Consumers Association, Farm

Vacations, Agriculture Hall of Fame, Faculty of Agriculture, Rural Leadership Development, Provincial Council of Women and Peace Gardens which they support annually for their picnic nook.

One of the special occasions was the celebration of their 60th Anniversary. Birthday celebrations included hosting the Red River Valley Convention. Mrs. Sam Murray, a charter member of the Morris Women's Institute, cut the cake. Mrs. Olive Skinner gave a brief history and all members were presented with the Manitoba Women's Institute pin.

A year later on July 8, 1971 the Manitoba Historical Society placed a bronze plaque commemorating the site of the first Women's Institute in Manitoba on the Municipal Building. This plaque replaced the 50th year one which had been on the former court house site, birthplace of our Institute. Mrs. Sam Murray and Mrs. Poole, the Provincial President, unveiled the plaque as members and friends watched with pride.

In 1972 Morris Women's Institute was pleased to have Mrs. Kathleen Hamblin as the first district president. She has been the Representative for seven years in the Red River Valley District and served a three year term as President. During this time she sat on the Provincial Board for three years, 1972-75. In 1976 she was elected to President Elect of Manitoba Women's Institute and in 1978 to Provincial President for a term of two years. Morris Women's Institute will be celebrating seventy years of service during her term and they are pleased to have Mrs. Hamblin as their second Provincial President.

The Morris Women's Institute have always been most supportive in sending their members to Leadership School, Mini Schools which are a one day workshop along with Regional and Provincial Conventions. Mrs. J.G. Lewis and Mrs. Tom Hamblin were sent to the Federated Convention held in Guelph in 1967, Mrs. Ralph Lewis to A.C.W.W., the World Conference, in

Lansing, Michigan and Mrs. Tom Hamblin to the World Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1977.

In 1974, Mrs. Kathleen Jorgenson, granddaughter of our first President, took the office of President of our local. Her mother, Mrs. J.G. Lewis, still is a very active member of our organization.

On the eve of their 70th birthday, the W.I. looks back on a record of achievements in this community for which they are justly proud. No other organization in Morris or other community that can boast of continued service to all regardless of colour, creed or language, where the doors are open to welcome members who believe that home and community are important factors in good citizenship.

The Morris Women's Institute can now boast the third largest membership in Manitoba. All this achievement would not be possible without mentioning some of the names who after years of service remain in the "roll call": Elizabeth Havers, who over the years has been keenly interested in our culture; Lillian Lewis, an innovative artist with pen and needle; Olive Skinner, who celebrated her 90th birthday and is still active and enthusiastic; Ruth Smith, a dedicated member who presented many Remembrance Day programs and recorded happenings through the year; Margaret Third, who willingly plans teas and sends out cards; Mrs. Fred Hamblin, representative for nine years on the District and who's granddaughter, Mrs. Patricia Evanson, the present President, is another third generation taking an active part in Morris W.I. and Mrs. Florence Bell, who has devoted countless hours in support for the Pioneer Partners' Booth at the Big M Stampede which is the W.I.'s main financial support.

"To all loyal members and tireless workers, we salute you and to our community for which we are so very proud, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve."



*After the first World War, the Women's Institute began to raise funds for a soldiers' memorial. Here we see a large gathering of people to witness the unveiling of the newly erected cenotaph. (1930)*

# HARVEST IN WINTER

by John Schroeder



*The Red River bridge in Morris, showing ice cutting operations at far left in 1939.*

To most of us, the word harvest brings to mind an operation going on in the summer heat, such as the threshing of grain. The harvest that comes to mind very vividly was done during the winter. In fact, as soon as the temperature dropped well below freezing, so that the ice on the sloughs, ponds and even the flowing rivers had a good layer of ice, brave men would venture out on to the ice. They would stake out their "claims", so as to get the best location. The spot that they were all vying for on the Red River, was the one nearest to the road that came down the hill. This same road went right by our place and then proceeded down one hill, levelled off for a short distance and then the last hill, which was the steepest, took you right on to the ice of the Red River. This is where the ice-harvest took place for many winters.

This business of harvesting ice was probably started because of necessity. Though the Red River Valley has some of the richest farm land in Canada, its palatable water supply is poor, due to alkali in the underground streams. Because of these conditions, almost everyone who wanted good drinking water in those days had to store up a supply of ice blocks. In winter, it was simply piled at a convenient place on the yard but for summer use it was necessary to build ice-houses where this frozen commodity would be readily available when the temperature soared. To keep this ice throughout the summer months, it was packed with a thick layer of sawdust around the sides and the top. When it got to be about 90 degrees Fahrenheit, it was a pleasure to get a suitable piece of ice and enjoy a nice cold drink. It was well worth the work of putting it up when the temperatures were at the other extreme.

When the claims had been staked out and fenced in to keep the roaming cattle out and also warn people of the dangers of open ice, then the actual ice-harvest began. In all, there were usually about four or five parties in this business. Even before the ice was strong enough to carry the teams of dray-sleighs, they would begin cutting the ice. They simply cut near the edge of the river banks and

from there they were loaded on to the drays. As the temperature dropped and the ice became thick and strong enough, they would cut closer to the middle of the river or wherever the best ice was to be had. Even the ice-harvesters depended on the weather. But instead of hot dry weather, they were looking for cold, dry weather. If the weather turned mild and wet snow fell and then froze, it would make for poor ice to harvest. Instead of clear ice blocks, slushy snow froze on top and had to be removed, which meant a lot of extra work.



*Otto Boggs hauling blocks of ice from the water with ice tongs in 1941. This was back breaking labour, and done under extreme winter weather conditions.*

As the temperature dropped and the ice became thicker, the harvesters became busier. The preferred thickness was about two feet. That way you got your money's worth. Soon things were humming down on the river. Dray men from town and farmers from near and far came to buy ice. The dray men had their customers in town to supply which were mostly householders. These dray men were in a class of their own. Some of the characteristics of these men, their teams of horses and

*Harry Shewman with his team on the ice haul.*

drays (flat-decked sleighs in winter) intrigued me. At that time, I was a schoolboy who hitched a ride with them whenever they let me. They very conveniently drove by our place. For a time, our town had enough work for about eight of them. Each with his own customers, draying such things as ice, coal, wood, feed, lumber and in the summer it was water, garbage and plowing gardens.

The man that had the biggest ice outfit was a father, Fred Boggs with his three sons, Ed, Chris and Otto. They would cut hundreds of blocks a day for a small sum of under five cents per block. In fact, business became so good that they built a power saw - an old car motor mounted on runners driving a big circular saw, pulled by



*Gottfried Boggs and Ewald Dreger cutting ice with a saw built from an old car motor. (1943)*

one man at the correct speed and in a straight line. Next, they made a portable elevator with the one end deep enough in the water to catch the blocks as they floated toward it. Then the blocks were pulled along this chain driven elevator on to a platform being the height of the drays and trucks which were quite numerous by this time. This saved a lot of back-breaking work.

When these men came down to the river for a load of ice, they wanted to load as quickly as possible. So the ice-harvesters had to hustle. Theirs was a life of hard work, - long hours, poor working conditions, small pay, no fringe benefits and no coffee breaks. Most didn't even have a shack to go into to get out of the winter's cold. They would be out on the river in sub zero temperatures cutting ice with a five foot hand-saw, ice that sometimes measured more than two feet thick. Their boots and



*Ed Boggs spearing another ice block to direct it onto the automatic loader. Ernie Zinn on wagon, is removing and stacking the ice blocks as they reach the deck.*

pants would be coated with ice up to the knees. They walked to and from work, some as far as two miles away. Occasionally it happened that they slipped and fell into the ice water or their tools would fall in. These were the conditions these men had for harvesting ice. And yet they always returned the following winter.

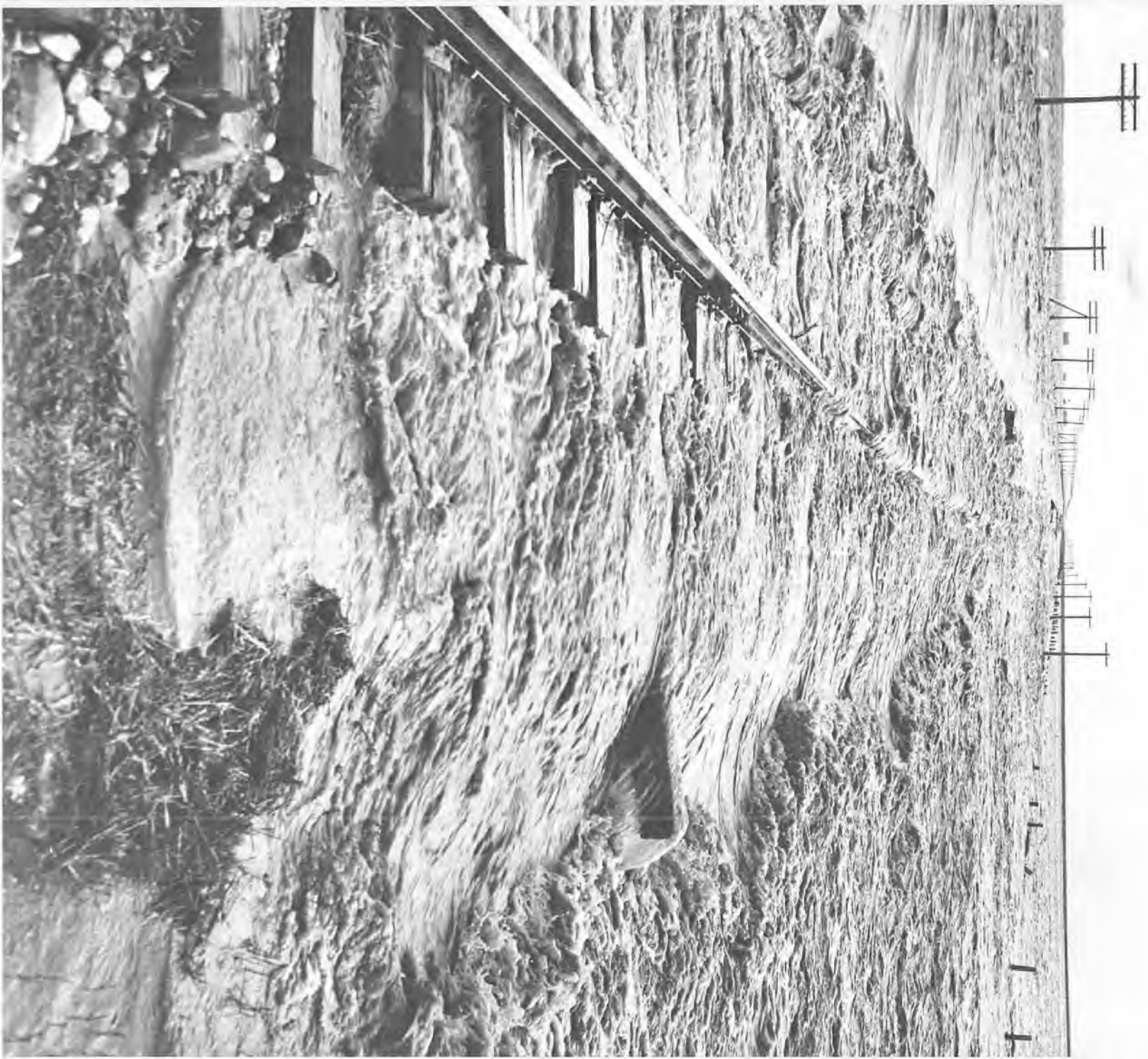
This method of ice-harvesting took place for quite a few years. Just when things got to be a little easier for them, a number of changes came about. The 1950 flood came along. The town suffered and so did the people. However, the town soon progressed after this setback and installed a water filtration plant and put in water and sewer lines. Thus the ice-harvesting dwindled down to nothing and it became a thing of the past.

No longer did I hear the ice-harvesters coming up the hill at the end of the day, talking about their day's activities, their frozen pant legs rubbing together, snow crunching under their heavy boots as they walked home in the crisp cold winter evening content that they had finished another day's work of ice-harvesting.



*Snarr's ice outfit on the Red River in the 1950's. One man is clearing snow, while the other is preparing to use the saw. Horse and wagon await another load. Ice harvesting was discontinued soon after this time.*

# FLOODS IN THE VALLEY





# THE FLOOD OF 1897

by Molly McFadden



*The flood of 1897 on Morris Main Street. Seen here is Lawrie Bros. Store, Morris Drug Hall and Rodman's Blacksmith shop. It was water, water, as far as the eye could see.*

The flood of 1897 came so suddenly, accompanied by a storm, that it caused much misery. On Saturday night April 17, 1897, a storm broke, lashing the river into foam with waves four feet high. Warehouses, bridges and old landmarks were smashed with some loss of life and plenty of discomfort and inconvenience.

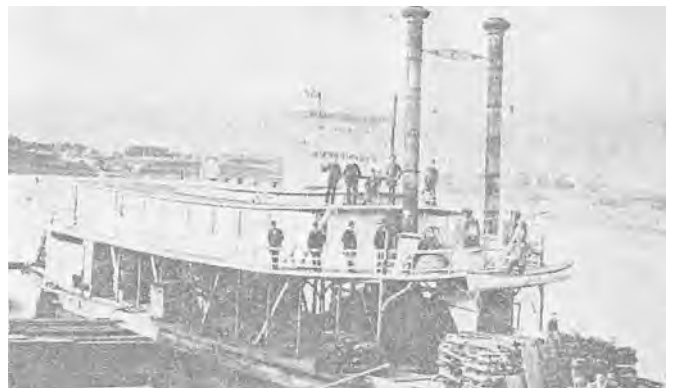
It was feared that supplies would run short for the people along the river, and a steamboat was sent out with supplies. Barbed wire fences interfered with navigation across country, although the ship's captain said he could take the vessel anywhere there was two feet of water. The steamer could have cut off long bends in the river if it were not so dangerous, as the area was one vast sea.

The water dashed over the bow, and in a few minutes, the entire steamboat was covered in ice. All on board who were not working, huddled around the stove and boilers wrapped in blankets.

The water was still rising, and progress was slow against the heavy current running. As the steamboat swung around a bend about a mile north of Morris, the vista that opened the eyes of all aboard was bewildering. It looked like a large lake over which the waves rose and fell, with Morris sitting in the center of it. All the familiar roads leading into Morris were out of sight. Only the treetops indicated the river banks. The traffic bridge had floated downstream with just her upper frame showing.

"It came down like a thief in the night", said Matthew Lawrie. "We saw what appeared to be a cloud on the southern horizon. Then rivulets flowed across the fields, and to our astonishment, before ten hours had passed, we were in the midst of a lake. Farm machinery was damaged, and some of it carried off."

Three bags of mail were taken on at Morris. After leaving here, farm animals were seen standing on little elevations of ground for a distance of ten miles, and they were rescued on the trip back. The ship's captain said that regulations allowed him to carry 150 passengers, but in case of emergency, he would be allowed to carry 500. But these high flood waters were short lived, the next day they discovered that the water had fallen ten inches. The steamer's mission was accomplished, on May 3, she was able to go back to her routine job of hauling wood from Selkirk to Winnipeg.



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*The steamboat, the Marquette, which plied the Red River in 1881 is one which brought supplies to flooded settlements.*



## FLOODS IN THE VALLEY

by D.B. Eidse

During the spring breakup of 1923, word was received that a huge flash flood originating in the Pembina Hills was heading due east, with a front of about 3 to 4 miles wide, from the Bell Drain right across the Railroad line at Lowe Farm. The Bell Drain meets the Morris River near the south end of the Village of Rosenhoff. The initial wave of water, 2 to 4 feet in depth, had already struck the Morris River, causing it to rise from a few feet to about 30 feet in a few minutes. A cascade of jumping water was pouring down the west bank of the Morris River as far south as the eye could see. This torrent made the ice pop up from the bottom of the river and head for Morris to the near empty Red. In short order, this racing ice mass destroyed the bridge near the former Mulvey Farm (now Abe Unrau's place), took a number of spans out of the CPR bridge, also a number of spans out of the CNR bridge and totally destroyed the road bridge of what is now highway No. 75 just north of Morris.

During the next 25 years, smaller flash floods followed that; some affected the area south of Lowe Farm, the town of Morris and causing the Little Morris to overflow west of Rosenort. In trying to solve this problem, a Provincial Drainage Department was created, which constructed a fair sized drain along almost every mile line, some of which eventually were extended up to Roland and beyond. Later, some of these drains were converted into huge double dikes capable of pouring enough water into the Morris River system to fill it up from Brunkild to Morris in a few days. A similar drainage programme shaped up along the Red River, both in Manitoba and south of the U.S. border.

Come spring of 1948, and all the new drains south of the U.S. border started pouring water into the Red River. By April 28, 1948, the Red crested in Morris well above the 1897 high mark; covering thousands of acres with water, isolating hundreds of farmers from all communication except by boat.

The summer and fall of 1949 were hot and dry, but in October, we got heavy rains in a large part of the valley and freeze up caught the fields soaked and ditches full of water. Here, the snowfall was slightly above average, but west of here and south of the border, there was a lot. With the writing on the wall now, the question was simply "when". We did not have to wait very long.

We had no real thaw in this part of the valley until after April 15, but water was piling up in the Pembina escarpment. South of the U.S. border, every ditch and tributary river was pouring water into the Red, which was still winter frozen north of our Rural Municipality. A mild spell between April 18 and 30 triggered a series of huge flash floods from the escarpment. The first one to hit the Red, roughly followed the Pembina, giving Gretna, Halbstadt, and Emerson a good ducking.

About 15 miles north of the U.S. border, Dead Horse Creek flooded Morden, Winkler, Plum Coulee, Horn-dean, Rosenfield and St. Jean areas. A few days later, Tobacco Creek hit the Little Morris, which flooded the area west of Rosenort, and the Boyne flooded Brunkild, which in turn caused the south-east flowing Morris River



*The Morris district has suffered from flooding many years. Here, Fred Wait, Robert Bell, Joe Laroque, and Al Porter cross the Morris River in 1923.*



*1948 - Spring breakup. There was no water here at 6 a.m. This photo was taken at noon, with Ernie Zinn on his milk wagon.*



*As the waters rose in 1950, boats were needed. Here John Goossen, of McTavish, and Pete Toews of Steinbach, haul another boat to Rosenort. Derksen Printers Photo.*



*The trains were the last link into flooded communities, as the rail bed was higher than the highways. (1950)*

to collide with the water from the south.

The week of May 1 to 6 was something to remember. The water was rising by the hour, cold wind driven rains and snow hampered evacuation and rescue work, and appeals for help never stopped. During the first part of the week, the trains were still going and took out a lot of refugees, some west, but most to Winnipeg, from where they were distributed throughout Manitoba and beyond. Quite a bit of livestock was shipped by train too, some ending up in St. Boniface and the rest being distributed to other parts of Manitoba, to be returned after the flood. By weekend, the railroads were flooded too, so boats became the only means of travel in the flood area, except for trucks with tractors hitched to them, on so called roads, because of the mud.

By now, the flood area was a huge lake 70 miles long, about 8 miles wide at Morris, 12 miles wide at Rosenort and much wider farther north. The depth varied with the geodetic elevations, but one foot to six feet was common anywhere, and closer to the rivers ten feet and more was not uncommon. The west side extended to Smith Spur elevator, and after the Town of Morris had been evacuated, Red Cross set up headquarters in the upstairs of the Co-op Consumers Hall in Lowe Farm on May 6, 1950. Under the direction of our former Reeve, Mr. Diedrich Heppner, Red Cross provided a very essential and appreciated service to all the refugees that were taken out of the flood area to Lowe Farm. It also served flood workers who remained behind to look after the livestock, seed and other property that was being saved on barn lofts and second floors in homes. Most of the refugees from Riverside, Rosenort and Pleasant Valley arrived at



*When this picture was taken on April 24, 1950, all the gravel visible in the open cars at left was being dumped along the railway right-of-way to try and save it from being washed out. All the work was in vain, for three days later, the tracks gave way. Derksen Printers Photo.*

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# Red River Flooded Area -- 1950



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## RESCUE OPERATIONS



*The Mounties stopped by farm homes in their patrol boat, where the people "sat out" the flood in attics and barn lofts. Here, at the Chas. Snarr home in 1950.*



*The Dept. of Agriculture provided the area with a large and sturdy outboard motor for the purpose of evacuating livestock. Derksen Printers photo.*

Lowe Farm on May 7, a nice sunny day. After a good meal at the Red Cross Centre, a visit with old friends in the same plight, and a promise of shelter for the nights to come, things started to look up again.

The week of May 8 to 13 was a difficult one for the flood workers that remained behind. There was a lot of livestock left in the area that needed to be raised into barn lofts or swum out to the shore and hauled to Carman by truck. We got more snow, rain and wind and quite a bit of livestock was lost due to drowning in barns and also during rescue operations. Most of our wind was from the north, but on May 13, we got a south-east storm, which whipped up large waves and literally smashed many lighter buildings to pieces. Just before dark, a heavy squall from the north-west hit us, causing the storm to shift and within minutes, continued the destruction from the opposite direction. Due to the storm, there were nine of us stranded in our flooded house, and some more stayed at the neighbours about half a mile from here. We had four boats tied to the north side of the house for wave protection. With the sudden change of wind direction our boats were thrown against each other and against the house, so something had to be done quickly. In fear, and with a lot of effort, we eventually got all four motors and two boats into the house, and the other two boats sheltered behind the house. Next morning both outside boats had broken loose and were gone. Later, we found one floating close to the Meridian line and the other washed up on a pond hill two miles south of Silver Plains.

At the time we could not understand where all the water came from but later, learned that a cloudburst in North Dakota, a dam and gates washout on Lower Red Lake in Minnesota, plus rain and snow all over the valley was the cause of our troubles. For this area, the sudden storm shift was the first break in the continuous rise for nearly a month, and it later proved to have been the crest. After the storm, larger boats were built and the Manitoba Dept. of Agriculture provided this area with a barge and a sturdy Army type outboard motor. By adding one or more of our own motors, it was used to evacuate anything from chickens to cows and farm machinery



*Farmers trading their cattle along roadways, and wondering how **much higher** the water would rise (1950). Photo courtesy Derksen Printers.*

including cars, half tons and tractors. Exactly two weeks after it came in, the water left the main floor of our house on May 22, and we started to clean up by throwing five gallon pails of water against the walls and floor and sweeping the mud out through the open doors. By May 30, we were busy taking people to their homes in the morning for cleanup operations, and back to the "landing" on the Meridian line, four miles north of highway 23, in the evening. The water dropped rapidly now, and we soon scraped mud with the motors, so we started using the Morris River and the Bell drain as our main highways in the area. After June 3, some people started returning to stay and a massive clean up and reconstruction program was launched by the Manitoba Government. They appointed directors and the new Red River Valley Flood Board assessed the damages, issued requisitions, which then could be used to hire labour and get materials, initially for temporary, later for permanent repairs. The reconstruction program lasted for about a year, and generally speaking, was quite fair and equitable, but some families got advantages and some suffered severe losses, because their type of business did not fit the right category for compensation.

By June 21, some of the higher fields were dry enough to work, so we had to decide between very late seeding or fallowing. Since most of us had lost our seed and used up our credit union or bank credits, we approached our municipal council for advice and help. They made low interest loans available for seed and tractor fuels, through the bank, and some farmers took the chance and seeded. The fall was nearly frost free until our crop was ripe and the Canadian Wheat Board co-operated and accepted most of our damp grain for drying, so we ended up with an average crop in spite of all the odds against us.

To our knowledge, there were two 1950 flood-related deaths in Manitoba, but considering all the chances that were taken every day, with deep water, high winds and waves, collapsed buildings, high power lines, cistern and basement covers floated away, etc., etc., we could only thank the Lord God for sparing the lives of all the residents of our rural municipality.



Telephone linemen adding extensions on to the poles to raise the lines (1950).



May 15, 1950, Farmers loading livestock to remove them from the flood stricken area. Many sold and did not replace their animals after the flood.



Emergency situations produce ingenuity - this Morris garage placed these two vehicles on hoists to escape flood waters. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.



**LITTLE MISS MORRIS FLOOD OF 1950.** This seven and a half pound baby (Lorraine Joyce Cornelsen) narrowly missed being born in a wave swept boat enroute to Morris Hospital on May 2, 1950. Parents, John and Susan Cornelsen arrived at the Morris General Hospital after a hectic 10 mile, 3 car, two boat trip from the Cornelsens' Rosenort home, having to break ice with oars, amid a snow and sleet storm.



## THE FLOOD OF 1950



*This photo became the symbol of the 1950 flood. Mrs. Margaret Hildebrand, cradles her 14 month old baby, Gladys, with her four year old daughter, Joan, at her side. Mrs. Hildebrand, like many others, lost her home and all her possessions in the flood. They were rescued from their flooded home by RCMP patrol boat. Derksen Printers photo.*



*Abram K. Loewen farm home, 3/4 miles east of Riverside. The 4 1/2 foot picket fence indicates the depth of water.*

As with many residents of the Red River Valley, the Stevenson families experienced the tragedies of the 1950 flood.

The homes of Roy, Leslie, Charles and Bronson, were all situated on the banks of a coulee which empties into the Red River some two miles north of Morris.

In early April, it was apparent that the Red River Valley would be flooded, but no one expected to see the whole farm covered with six to seven feet of water, or to see a lake some twenty miles across. The spring thaw and break-up had not come to the area and from across the border came reports of severe flooding. Predictions were that the water would be as high as 1948. Garages and workshop would have to be cleared, with tools, lumber, etc. put into attics or barn lofts.

At the house, the basement would have to be emptied of washing machines, jars of canned fruit, etc. There had been a good crop of potatoes the fall before and they would have to be bagged and brought up as well. Enough wood would have to be stored upstairs. An extra beef was butchered and "safely" stored in the Locker Plant in town.

### RECORDS KEPT BY LESLIE STEVENSON

Tuesday, April 25 - water from Red River has backed up in coulee and is flowing north instead of south. Snowing with heavy north wind. Brought in our old kitchen range. The furnace will soon be flooded, as water is seeping into basement.

Thursday, April 27 - Clearing and warmer. About 8 inches of snow in the blizzard of last two days. Red Cross has "spotted" a box car at Trump siding for our livestock. Have been getting it ready for cattle and hauling feed up there. Built raised platforms in barn for the pigs. Water at Pembina, North Dakota, at all time high.



*A box car was spotted at Trump siding for Stevenson's livestock. Here, the men are feeding the animals that are housed within. High waves often made this trip by boat extremely dangerous.*



*Deep water, and the force of the wind and waves, swept many buildings from their moorings, and down river. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*



Saturday, April 29 - Moved nine head of cattle (some milk cows) and two horses to box car this morning. Leslie and sons raised granaries and moving up seed wheat. Water rising 1 inch per hour.

Sunday, April 30 - Water getting close to Charlie's house. Moved as much furniture as possible up into their attic. They will stay with us for the time being. Water all around our house now. Had to let water into basement and cistern to relieve pressure on walls. Filled containers with drinking water. Electrical circuits run through basement so had to turn off power. Will have to depend on kitchen range for heat and cooking, also kerosene lamps for light. Raised our piano up on gas drums in the front room tonight. Have taken off all inside doors in the house and stored them upstairs. Radio reports only places in Morris that are not flooded are hospital, school and hotel.



*Fishing boats from Lake Winnipeg, operated by fishermen, brought RCMP officers to fight the flood. These boats were also used to evacuate people to higher ground. Photo courtesy Jim Stanley.*



*Leslie Stevenson's garage, where Jim, Leslie, Charlie and Bronson lived in the upstairs for over a month.*

Monday, May 1 - Water on Charlie's floor this morning. Hoped to get women and children off on train from Trump — no CP from Morris -- last train on Saturday. Our boat not large enough to take them to McTavish.

Water started to come up through the hardwood flooring in the dining room, while we were eating supper tonight. Les was over at Roy's tonight with boat. Found Roy stranded up a tree. He was crossing the coulee on the pony, got into difficulty and was thrown into the ice water, but managed to get to the tree. Fortunately, he was found in time and suffered no ill effects.

Tuesday, May 2 - 3-4 inches of water on floor this morning. Living upstairs. Boat only mode of travel now. Water coming over CP tracks from the west. Charlie and I raised the pigs in the barn again as high as possible now. Windy and snowing.

Thursday, May 4 - Water still rising. Can still walk on floor with rubber boots. The linoleum feels buckled underfoot. Boarding up doors, windows of all buildings. Water over C.N. tracks - no train today. Snow and rain.

Friday, May 5 - Still windy with snow and rain. Water is in firebox of kitchen stove this morning. No heat. Situation pretty grim. Five adults and four children crowded upstairs, all the furniture and everything else we could move up. Finally able to contact the Red Cross in Morris, on the phone. They sent out two boats, owned and operated by Lake Winnipeg fishermen, accompanied by Ernie Zinn and Tom Coates, of Morris, as guides. Annie, her mother, Mrs. Forsyth, our two boys, 7 and 2 years, Charlie's family, Lillian and two children (2 and 3 years), also our Uncle William Stevenson were all evacuated to railroad coaches at the CN station in Morris. (Boats tied up at our back door, then went directly to the station platform in Morris - with only a portage over the railroad tracks.)

We have no idea when we will see them again!

They stayed in a coach until Sunday, when an Army Duck took all west to Lowe Farm and by truck to Winkler. From there, they made their own way to friends.

Saturday, May 6 - Have ladder fastened in place to our upstairs window. Will use this as our entrance now. Les, Margaret and family moved out of their house to the upper floor of their garage. They had been trying to keep the water pumped out of house. Impossible!

Monday, May 8 - Windy and forecast for more rain. Leslie's family evacuated by police boat. Charlie and I will move over to stay with Les and Kim (his eldest son) for the time being at least. I will do the cooking on a hot plate and on top of air-tight heater. Diet will consist of sour cream pancakes, eggs and potatoes.

Had to move our pigs again from the platform into the barn loft as they were standing in several inches of water. Before we could complete a plank runway, the pigs were trying to climb on it and into the loft.

After the families were safely evacuated, the tension eased somewhat. Nevertheless, a constant patrol had to be kept on all buildings. Doors and windows that had been boarded up were constantly being loosened by the water's action. One morning, while we were attending the

livestock in our barn loft, we noticed the barn door, which had been securely spiked in place, was missing. Locating it and getting it back in place, in four feet of water, was no easy task. Everything was done by boat, often in very rough water. For about three weeks, when the water was at its highest level, everything that would float was going by. Parts of old buildings, hydro and phone poles had to be moved away from around buildings here to prevent damage. Oil drums and even large oil tanks had to be watched. Dead animals, including pigs and even a large cow, had to be towed away so they would not float into our trees and be left there. More feed had to be boated from the barn loft to the box car at Trump. The hay was not baled then, so had to be twisted into ropes and tied into bundles in order to move it in the small boats. Life had a little more routine now.



*Charlie and Leslie Stevenson hauling hay to the cattle in the box car at Trump Siding.*

Water continued to rise. We now had four feet of water on ground floor of our house. The piano was flooded. About May 20, the water reached its maximum height. It stayed stationary for several days and then began to drop an inch or so a day. We went to Morris for our booster shots for typhoid. While there, I was able to phone Annie at her sister's in Teulon. There is no hope of getting them home for some time yet.

Monday, May 29 - Water is low enough in Les' house to start cleanup. Several inches of slime on everything. We are flushing out house with pumps and shovels.

Tuesday, May 30 - Only a few inches of water on our floor now, so we are cleaning out. Two men shovelled water in the front door, while two others stirred it around with brooms and shovelled it out the back door. The house smells like a dungeon. The hardwood floors are buckled beyond repair. The paint is peeling off the plastered walls. The potatoes we had moved three times have rotted and had to be shovelled out. What a smell!

Thursday, June 1 - Started the cleanup in Charlie's house. We are having trouble getting sufficient feed up to the stock in the box car due to shallow water and high winds.

Friday, June 2 - Leslie's family arrived home today, coming by Ste. Elizabeth and across river by boat. Charlie and I moved back to our upstairs. We can use the kitchen range again, so have heat.

Sunday, June 4 - The first land showing grass is a sickly yellow color, where it has been growing under water. Let cattle out of box car this afternoon; the first time they have been out since April 29.

Charlie went to town to phone our families in Winnipeg, to see if they can get back home. (Boated to CN tracks, then walked in on railroad.)

The houses are reasonably clean and have been disinfected. All hardwood floors have been removed and shiplap sub-floors scrubbed. We went through the tree nursery today and found all young spruce under two feet in height are dead, about three acres of them - 7 to 8 years growth are a total loss.

There is three to four inches of slime everywhere. We have been working on cars and trucks - cleaning them and trying to get them started, a difficult task after the engines have been completely submerged in water for four weeks. Have pumped out basement and cisterns to try to get them clean and disinfected. Have all windows and doors opened up to try to get aired and dried out, all are badly warped.

Thursday, June 8 - Our families returned today. They had to go to the Legislative Buildings to obtain a special permit for friends' cars before they were allowed into the flood zone. They were then allowed to come out on Highway 75 (only one lane passable in places), then had to walk part way over the washed out roads, part way to pick up truck and by boat. They were loaded down with boxes of groceries (including a small piece of fresh meat) and two five gallon containers of drinking water. We were all together again - we had survived the 1950 flood!



*Outbuildings upset, logs and straw lodged high in the trees - the cleanup campaign began. This view could be seen from the window of the Charles Snarr home in 1950.*

# THE AFTER MATH - 1950



*R.M. of Morris suffered flood losses estimated at \$5 million in 1950. Plans here are for rehabilitation of the municipality, of which about half was flooded. Members of the Morris Municipal council, along with representatives from the Ontario and Manitoba departments of health and agriculture are: SEATED, Left to Right: D. Stoke, Ontario Dept. of Health; G.E. Mitchell, Manitoba Dept. of Health; C.J. Neufeld, M.L. Ribordy, B. W. Thiessen, R. Davidson, A. Collette, M.J. Stevenson, and J.L. Pottinger, all members of the Morris Municipal Council. STANDING: Ray Loving, Morris garage man; C. Campbell, and W.F. Noyes, agricultural representatives.*



*Morris Main Street during the 1950 flood, the Court House is at the far left. - Derksen Printers photo.*

## "THANK YOU CANADA" TOUR



James Smith, telephone districtman, surveying the damages done by flood waters to the equipment at the Morris Telephone Office. Courtesy manitoba Archives.



Ted Burch and Bruce MacKenzie, the two men chosen to help raise funds for the flood refugees, being greeted by an official. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.



Highways Dept. inspects the damages created by the erosive effects of wind and waves on this paved highway. Courtesy Manitoba Archives.



Sightseers pour into Morris on a Sunday afternoon, to survey the damages wrought by the 1950 flood.

The Morris area -- a hard hit part of the valley during the 1950 flood, with the hardest hit town as its center, was a logical place to find a farmer to represent rural flooding areas. Manitoba's Thank you Canada Tour was underway, sponsored by the Free Press and (then) Trans Canada Airlines, it was backed by the National Flood Relief Fund.

The farmer chosen to represent rural folk on the tour was Bruce MacKenzie, a 40 year old councillor for the RM of Morris. The other man chosen to represent the city of Winnipeg, was Ted Burch, a World War II veteran. Bruce MacKenzie left home in a row boat to Snarrs corner, while a light plane landed on an island of dry highway bang in the middle of Lake Morris. The Morris farmer and the Winnipeg veteran met on this stretch of Highway No. 75, and the "Thank you Canada Tour" was born.

Together, they were assigned the task of telling the story of the devastating Red River Flood; and to give a personal thank-you to all who gave to the Relief Fund. Seven major cities assured contributions, and press conferences, radio broadcasts, and personal appearances were made in Montreal, Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver.

The Manitoba Flood Relief Fund estimated that it needed \$10 million to restore the area to what it was. The Thank you Canada Tour was expected to draw financial aid from across Canada that they otherwise would not have received. "With help from the outside, and our own labours," Mr. MacKenzie stressed, "I believe we can rebuild the Red River Valley better than it ever was before. But we must co-operate with those administering the aid to the fullest extent." Bruce maintained that the '50 Flood hit the farmer hard, but he also insisted that the floods in the valley are worth fighting, because the rich fertile land they cover is worth living on.



*Bruce MacKenzie boards the plane that landed on a dry strip of highway No. 75, on the first leg of his journey on the "Thank you Canada" tour.*

Top effort in the minds of the spokesmen, came from the city of Hamilton, who expected to raise \$100,000 by raffling off a lot, completely furnished new house, with a new car in the garage. Nearby Brantford raised almost \$1 per capita, or \$20,000 and was still going strong. In Calgary, Mayor D. McKay declared, "Tell the people in the Red River Valley that we've raised \$108,000 for them, and we're not through by a long shot!" The story was the same everywhere they went.

The two "flood ambassadors" visited major Canadian cities for eight days, telling the story of the flood in simple, human terms, and expressing the warm gratitude of all Manitoba Victims for the nation wide relief drive. They were present on stage with a galaxy of stars at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, on May 27, to a capacity crowd of almost 15,000 who had come to hear the benefit concert, and give to the flood relief. Over \$25,000 was raised that night. It included such greats as George Formby, Fred Waring and his orchestra, Gisele MacKenzie, and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. The star spangled show was broadcast over Canadian and U.S. radio networks, involving 729 stations. All radio listeners were urged to give to the Flood Relief Fund.

In summing up, the Thank you Canada travellers believed that out of every national disaster came something good---in this instance, tangible proof of the unity between provinces, and the love of people across the country for each other.



*A capacity crowd of 15,000 came to hear a benefit concert for the stricken residents of the Red River Valley, where over \$25,000.00 was raised. Bruce MacKenzie (in circle) standing on the platform at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto.*



# 1966 FLOOD: A LESSON IN CO-OPERATION



*The provincial government kept in close contact with the communities in 1966. Here John Wiebe of Morris, M.P. Warner Jorgenson, Premier Duff Roblin and Alex Godkin, Mayor of Morris, discuss the rising water levels. Photo courtesy of the Journal.*

Ever since the 1950 flood, there has been no shortage of flood forecasters, warning that another flood is imminent, depending on weather conditions, of course. Between 1950 and 1965, there were two close calls, and only a break in the weather at the right time prevented a major flood. During the winter of 1965-66, well over one hundred inches of snow fell in a large part of the valley and the escarpments on both sides.

On March 31, 1966, the Premier of Manitoba, Duff Roblin, called a flood meeting in Morris, where **he and**

his Ministers personally informed the public of what to expect and what measures to take. The towns of Morris, St. Jean and Emerson began moving earth, hastily constructed temporary ring dykes, which resisted the pounding flood water, and protected the towns from destruction.

At Rosenort and Riverside, a good supply of sand was trucked in and with the help of MDS volunteers and local help, a lot of sandbags were filled. It was soon learned that a piece of stovepipe fills sandbags much faster than a shovel, and is easier on the back as well.

By April 12th, the water north of Rosenort was nearing the 1950 flood mark, hence sandbagging and livestock evacuation shifted into high gear. The operation in this area was directed and co-ordinated by M.D.S. from Rosenort, but the main flood office, under the direction of the E.M.O. was located upstairs in the old Municipal building in Morris. It was during this flood that Emergency Measures Organization (E.M.O.) and Mennonite Disaster Service (M.D.S.) became acquainted with the services and operations of each other.

Generally speaking, the '66 flood levels remained about two feet below '50 flood levels, but on April 15th, the level in Rosenort was well above the 1950 crest because they were flooded from the west and north and not from the south as in 1950. Due to the good management of E.M.O., the willing hands of M.D.S. and more favourable weather during the time of cresting, the damages in this area were lower than in the 1950 flood.

Besides M.D.S. and local help, a contingent of Canadian Army engineers provided appreciated and valuable services to this community. On Easter Monday, 1966, due to their efforts, the Morris dyke, which started



*Students, farmers, and villagers joined forces sandbagging in Rosenort. Photo courtesy Red River Valley Echo.*





*Canadian Army trucks lined the streets of Morris to assist in evacuating operations. Soldiers remained in the town to patrol the hastily constructed dykes.*

shifting due to the high waves and nearly 20 feet of water pushing at it at the lowest place, was saved. Bulldozers were braced against the base of the dyke on the dry side, and a hurriedly built boom of hydro poles on the wet side, plus added weight to the top of the sandbags - and the dyke held.

From 1967 to 1978, there was some flooding and some close calls from big ones, so flood protection has become a permanent way of life. A number of permanent ring

dykes were built around towns, villages and some farms during this period. Some people preferred to place their buildings on especially constructed earth mounds called "pads", which are more costly to construct, but proved their value during the big flood of 1979.

### AN INDIAN'S STORY

A friend at Birch River mentioned the 1979 Red River flood to an elderly Indian, who said, "yes, now the white man is getting it, too". Upon questioning, he related as follows - "When my grandfather was a young man, a band of our people settled along the Scratching River, but were troubled with floods so often, that they left and settled on the Pembina escarpment. About ten years later, they learned that two new villages with permanent buildings had sprung up along the Scratching River. They thought these white men were crazy, and would soon be flooded out. They waited and waited, but nothing serious happened during my grandfather's lifetime. Finally, after seventy-five years, the floods have started to come again, and now the white man is getting it too."

What about the future in the flood plains of the Red River Valley? Through experience, it has been learned that floods like other natural disasters can, and will strike from time to time, but the effects can be controlled up to a point, thereby lessening the damages. It is doubtful there will ever be a day when one grandiose and complete solution to the flooding problem will be found, but with proper planning and foresight, it is possible to take measures to prevent damage from flooding.

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*The Red River bridge at Morris during the 1966 flood, which has since been replaced by a higher concrete bridge.*



*This is the R.M. of Morris bridge crew which worked around the clock for several days to save various farm buildings in the municipality from flooding. LEFT TO RIGHT: Willie Penner, Foreman; Vernon Braun, Jake Kehler, Harry Penner, Jake Penner. In this photo, they have just completed dyking a roadway on the Tobacco Creek floodway to save a nearby farmer from getting 7 feet of water around his buildings. The R.M. of Morris has 450 lineal miles of drain and a bridge or culvert on every mile, so the crew is a very busy one.*



*Barges such as this were used to transport livestock from floodstricken areas.*

### **PASSENGERS ESCAPE AFTER BOAT SINKS**

The ferry service in Rosentort which was operated for three weeks during the flood, proved to be not just a blessing but almost caused a very serious accident. Mr. C. F. Dueck And Mr. Jonas Dail were sailing on the river to evacuate Mr. DUEOKS' chickens when the 2 ruoi3Or barge they were using sank in the middle of the river. Mr.,. Jonas Doll managed to get hold of a life saver while Mr. Dueck grabbed some crates and drifted downstream till they were picked up. Luckily nobody was seriously hurt, but it proved to be an experience neither of them will ever forget.



*ABOVE: Dykes were hastily constructed and reenforced with sandbags to protect the community. Here, the water has receded, leaving debris and boats docked on dry land,*

*RIGHT: The waters of the Red River have returned to their banks leaving behind a crust of silt.*



# DEVASTATION - 1979

- a Rosenort resident recalls the Flood  
by Rose Cornelsen

The winter of 1978-79 was one the residents in the valley will long remember. Schools were closed down on an average of one day every week due to blizzards. Temperatures dropped below  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$  and stayed there for nearly three months. There was no let-up in the severe cold till the middle of April. When spring finally did arrive with a bang, residents should have heaved a big sigh of relief, but that was not to be our lot.

Rumours of major flooding began to circulate in March and became a reality when the waters began to creep up from the south as well as the west. By the third week in April, southern Manitoba was experiencing flash floods in various towns and we knew those waters were heading our way. Depths of flooding surpassing the 1950 flood became a distinct possibility.

Rosenort happens to be in a strategic location regarding spring runoffs. Water from the Pembina Hills to the west drain east into the Red River, while in North Dakota the waters push north along the Red toward Lake Winnipeg. The Morris River, with its tributaries, runs south through Rosenort draining into the Red at the Town of Morris. When all these thaws happen simultaneously, the Morris River backs up and overflows its banks.

Actual flood warnings to valley residents were first issued in March, but not taken seriously till the third week in April, when the weather suddenly turned warm, causing local rivers to rise quickly and many flash floods, caused emergency grain hauling, emptying basements, moving livestock. The moving of livestock was done by barge - to neighbouring barns.

On April 27, the premier of Manitoba, Sterling Lyon, broadcast a special message for all residents of the Red River Valley - *Evacuate!* Many basements of homes along the rivers and low-lying areas were already flooding, but families were hesitant to leave, and many ignored the request until they realized this actually was a major disaster.

Motels in Winnipeg offered free lodging, and many friends in nearby communities opened their homes to evacuees. Only those people who were essential to



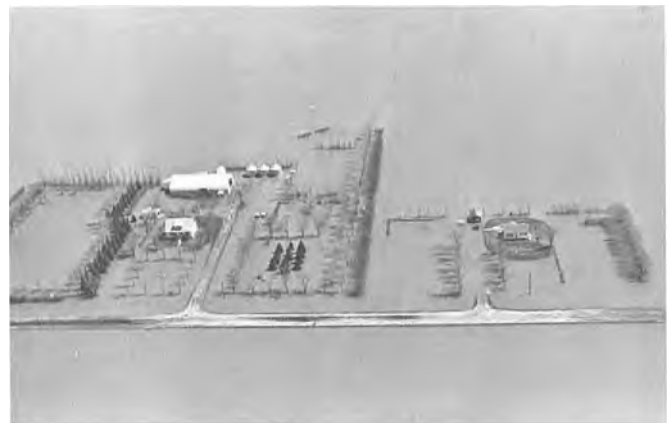
Main roads and many acres of farm land were flooded for weeks. Church of God in Christ in background.



Moving grain in 1979 flood on the Art Cornelsen farm.



John L. Rempel and Cam Cornelsen on driveway of elementary school looking west, with flooded Eventide Home in background.



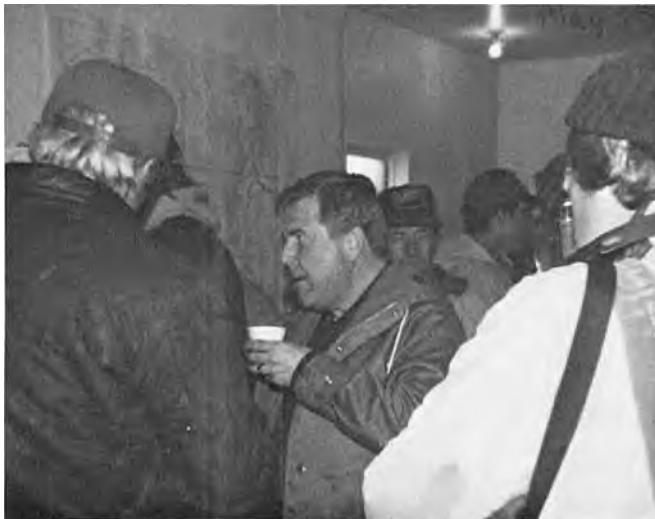
P.S. Friesen farm in 1979 flood.



*The Rosenort flood headquarters were in the fire hall. Here Garry Friesen, Alvin Rempel and Stan Plett look after calls.*



*Familiar scene at meal time in firehall for over a month.*



*Premier Lyon chats with Rosenort residents during an inspection tour of flooded area.*

maintain the emergency functions of the community were allowed to stay, such as the M.D.S. co-ordinators, businessmen within the dyke, farmers with livestock, sand-baggers and other helpers. Outside the dyke, the Eventide Home for the Aged was evacuated and ten days later, its basement flooded. Schools closed down for a total of four weeks. The elementary school remained high and dry while the collegiate flooded and needed major repairs.

The residents of Rosenort and Riverside felt deep gratitude to the hundreds of people that flowed into their communities to help. Because of the excellent organization and co-ordination of the R.M. of Morris and the M.D.S. in Manitoba, the Red Cross was able to focus its attention on other towns. The EMO was constantly on the alert and if the permanent ring dyke around Rosenort were to break, an evacuation plan for the remaining essential people in the village was printed in pamphlets and handed to each citizen.

MDS set up headquarters in the firehall, to which all volunteers had to report for work. Telephone and C.B. communications to this office was in operation at all times. Food and coffee was also served twenty-four hours of the day, with three complete meals daily, often brought in from other communities, but usually served by local ladies.

A ring dyke, built after the '66 flood, which protects the 450 residents of the village of Rosenort, proved to be very effective. Throughout the duration of the high waters, it was raised two feet with sandbags, in the event the water should come higher.

It was estimated that in one week alone, 3,500 volunteers aided Rosenort residents. A reported 1200 volunteers who showed up Sundays, came from within a 200 mile radius of Rosenort. Approximately a million sandbags were used in and around Rosenort.

Government officials of all ranks came to inspect the situation - Sterling Lyon our premier, Warner Jorgenson, MLA, and various others visited Rosenort, while the then prime minister Trudeau, and the soon to be elected prime



*Men, women, boys and girls, all pitched in to fight the flood. Here Elly Rempel and Norma Koop fill sandbags using a stove pipe.*

minister Joe Clark, and the Governor-General Ed Schreyer, surveyed the area by helicopter.

The flood gained wide coverage by the news media. T.V. crews were in Rosenort daily hoping to pick up some interesting stories, while many flooded Rosenort farms appeared on the front page of the Winnipeg daily papers as well as the rural weeklies.

Rosenort was fortunate to have a good hard surfaced road, No. 205 east, connecting with the No. 75 highway, which remained open throughout the flood. Just 314 mile west of the village, the water washed out a portion of this busy thoroughfare. Most local roads were flooded and many bridges washed out. The village service road had several feet of water on it all the way from Rosenort south to Morris.

Riverside was harder hit than Rosenort because the water piled up here when the Morris River from the north flowed south and the Red River to the south did not recede fast enough and at times even backed up.

At the crest of the flood, the valley looked like a newly formed lake, spreading over half a million acres; in places reaching a width of 25 miles. Only those taking a boat across this lake and passing over section after section of what normally was good farm land, can know the eerie feeling of loneliness that comes from abandoned homes with water lapping up against the windows; the hopelessness of entering your own home after tying your boat to the front porch, sloshing through the mud on the kitchen floor only to eye muddy black water in your basement. With women and children evacuated, the menfolk were left with the lonely job of guarding their homes against the water as well as possible looting. Tensions were often released by going out and assisting other people who were in greater need than yourself.

Everyone listened closely to each news bulletin on the radio, and every day the question was - when will the river crest? Adverse weather delayed the crest and the date was pushed up several times, much to the apprehension of the people, but finally on May 5, the river crested in Morris, and the water level began to drop.



*Waters rose to the top of this dyke around Art Cornelsert's farm house but the water was kept out as more sandbags were added to raise and reenforce it.*



*The ring dyke around the village of Rosenort was very effective in keeping the water out. The PTH No. 205 was kept open to the No. 75 Highway throughout the flood.*



*The John L. Rempel home situated on the banks of the Morris River at Rosenort had about 10 inches of water on the main floor.*



*Alvin Rempel raising the sandbag dyke around his home.*



After three weeks, the waters dropped slowly, having reached 1950 flood levels, slightly higher in Riverside. Those families who could return to dry homes were greatly relieved, but those whose homes had flooded needed assistance, physically, mentally, and spiritually. It took courage to face the wearying task of picking up the pieces. There were the devastated yards and roads, covered with debris, splintered grain bins smelling of soaked mouldy grain. Inside the homes, basements had to be pumped and cleaned, the warped floors, walls, hardly noticeable behind the silt and mud, had to be washed or torn out and rebuilt.

Government flood inspectors decided which homes had to be rebuilt, raised or destroyed. Financial assistance came from the government to those with actual losses. In the Rosenort-Riverside communities alone, about fifty new basements were erected and houses raised after the flood.

Throughout the flood time, communications were held a priority. The phones were the first to break down and as the water rose and roads disappeared, travel was reduced to manoeuvring tractors where the road was supposed to be. Boats and barges were used, although even these were treacherous when the waves were high. When one boat capsized, a man stood chest deep in icy waters for several hours before help came to rescue him.

Most of the farmers could be reached by C.B. radio, an invaluable means of communication during this time of disaster.

Flood headquarters kept track of all persons staying in their homes, and they were asked to report when they came in or left Rosenort each day. Such safety checks caused several panic situations, when people were found missing.

Two young brothers decided to go on a canoe ride without informing anyone where they were going. Several hours of anxiety passed before they were located safe in a neighbour's house, half a mile from home, where they took refuge when they realized they couldn't handle the waves in their canoe.

Another young man signed out one morning to take a boat home four miles across country. Later that evening, when the list of names was checked, they discovered that he had not returned. With the waves rather high that day, a capsize was a real possibility. Failing any contact, volunteers took another boat, whereby they found him fast asleep in his home. As the wind increased, he had not dared to venture out into the wave whipped water alone.

Grain had to be hauled from flooded yards, where farmers hitched 4 wheel drive tractors in front of loaded trucks, and pulled them through water up to four feet deep. The elevators were soon filled up and railway cars were not available. Only a small percentage of the quota of railway cars throughout the winter had been supplied, so farmers had much more grain on the farms than usual. Local trucks began moving grain from elevator to elevator. Civil servants were alerted and tried to stop this operation, even threatening to throw one trucker in jail! An appeal went to the government, and officials came to soothe the ruffled feathers of the civil servants. Grain could be stored this way temporarily in an emergency situation.

How has the flood affected the future of Riverside and Rosenort? No one can know for certain, but the determination of the residents has outweighed the temporary hopelessness. Many a farmer was tempted to sell out and move to higher grounds, and some did, however, after seeding late under difficult conditions, bumper crops were realized the same fall. Harvest was late and some combines were still operating in December, but the farmers never gave up. Business continued throughout the year. New streets were developed, as many people moved inside the dyke area. The adverse conditions of the flood seems to have added to the determination of the residents to keep on working together towards a bright future.



*Hundreds of people flocked to Rosenort to assist in flood fighting. Here, sandbags are filled and loaded on a truck.*



*Barges such as these were used to haul livestock, feed and sandbags.*



*Shovelling mud off the floor after the flood receded are John Rempel and daughter Pam.*





*Sigh which expresses the feeling of all the people in the valley.*



*Many persons were forced to leave their homes and were funneled through refugee centres such as this one in Steinbach.*



*ABOVE: Transporting sandbags to outlying farms by boat was a tedious and often hazardous job.*

*UPPER RIGHT: Valley 66 Drive Inn on highway 75 during 1979 flood.*

*RIGHT: Dipping water to flush toilets in order to conserve drinking water during flood time.*



*Helicopters carrying reporters, government officials and flood forecaster arrive in Morris.*



*Sterling Lyon, premier of Manitoba, appears grim as he surveys damages wrought by high waters in the flood stricken communities.*



## FLOOD CONTROL

There are many flood control measures being bantered about, and some of them are workable solutions, such as building diversions, and constructing reservoirs upstream. The most prohibitive factor in these becoming a reality, are the extremely high costs that would be incurred. Coming a close second is the red tape involved. Obtaining the necessary permission or agreement of all levels of government in both Canada and the United States could be an impossibility, or at the very least, take a long time.

Residents in the flood plains of the municipality need protection now. Since nothing can be done to prevent the water from rising, measures must be taken to prevent losses. The local and provincial governments insist that the best solution is moving, raising or dyking buildings on flood prone property.

Some residents who lived in a particularly low area, decided to relocate, in most instances into a community protected by a ring dyke. The frequent recurrence of high waters, and the displacement from homes during flood time, and the damage to property involved were influencing factors.

During the 1979 flood, 1200 places were inundated by high waters. Of these, 860 applications were received by the Flood Board for moving, raising or dyking of buildings, to a level 3 feet above the 1979 water level. As of December, 1979, two thirds of the work was completed. By 1980, of the residents in the Rosenort area, 95% will have flood protection.

Total costs of raising, moving and dyking are estimated at \$10 million with the province's share at \$4 1/2 million. This is considered money well spent, as protection is immediate and permanent.

Actions are underway for the raising of roads which will give people access to their homes and communities during a flood. In Morris, the raising of the No. 75 at the Morris bridge is proposed, as well as raising highway No. 23 east. The importance of this was felt during the 1979 flood, when the No. 205 was the lifeline of the Rosenort community. Proposals for raising other roads in the municipality that would be evacuation routes, is under consideration.

The officials and residents of this municipality are undertaking measures to ensure that flooding in the future will result in a minimum of property damage and disruption.



*High water in this district has brought officials to this community on many occasions. Warner Jorgenson, MLA, Ed Schreyer, premier of Manitoba, Jack Murray, mayor of Morris with daughter, Jackie, Wm. Recksiedler, councillor and Harold Earl, reeve of the R.M.*

## EMERGENCY MEASURES ORGANIZATION

Charles Anderson, former Reeve, and Gilbert Cretton, deputy Reeve, are two members of the municipal council who have attended courses sponsored by Emergency Measures Organization.

The course provided by the Canadian Emergency Measures College, located at Arnprior, Ontario, is a week long session. The aim is to enable officials of government and the private sector to make plans and preparations for war, emergencies, or in times of civil disaster, and to carry these operations out.

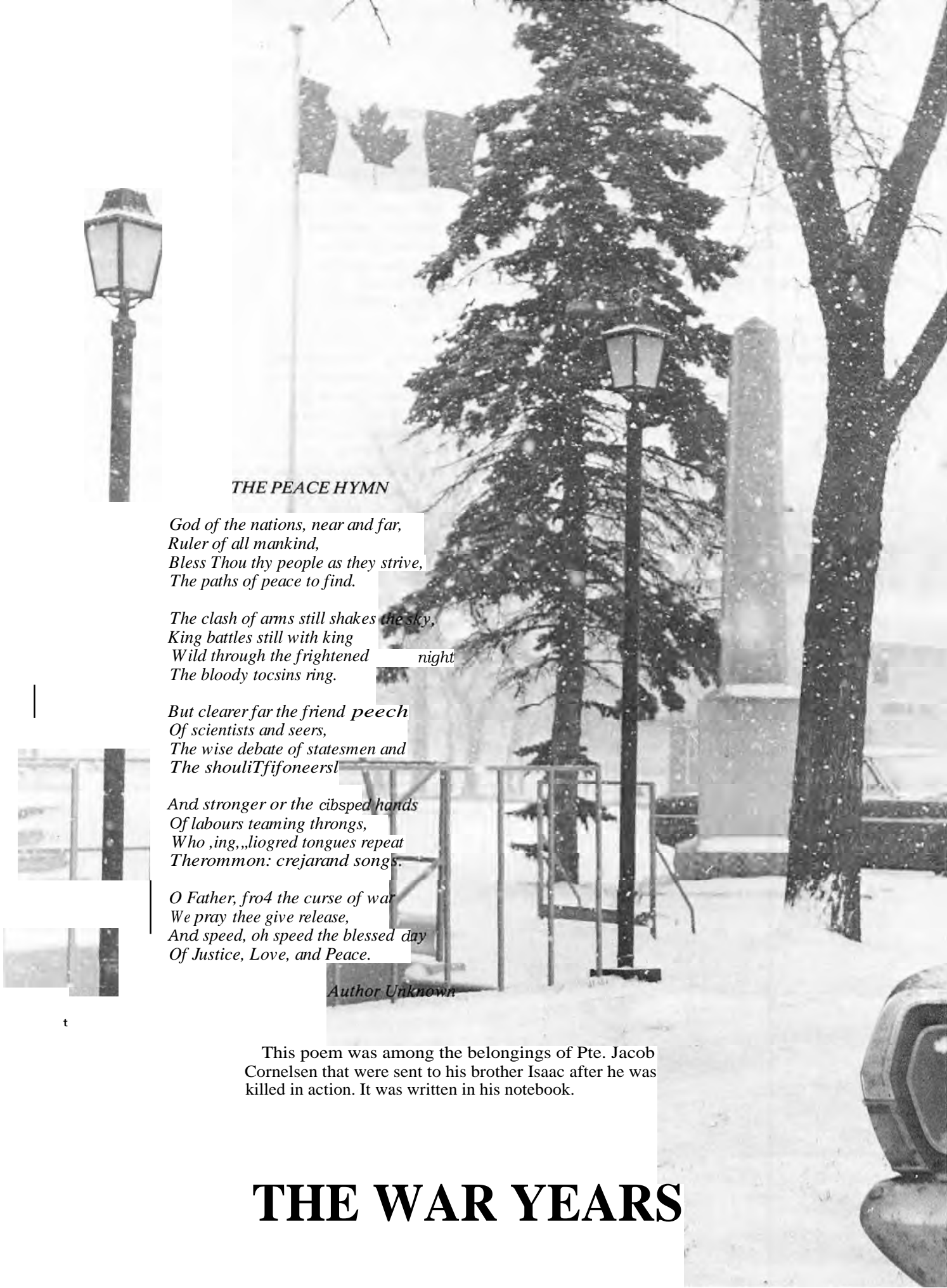
In the case of war, the federal government becomes involved immediately, and then the provincial and municipal levels. The opposite occurs in a civil disaster, with the municipal government bearing the initial responsibility.

Trans Canada Emergency Communications Centre at Smith Falls, Ontario, headquarters for the emergency communication system across the nation was also visited. The centre is hooked up to every major city and is a self-contained unit with its own emergency power plant, ready for any disaster.

Residents of the municipality are familiar with the services of EMO, with their involvement during the major floods in this area, and the tornado in Aubigny in 1978.



*ABOVE AND LEFT: Sights such as this were common as Frank Dueck moved homes to higher grounds for flood protection.*



### THE PEACE HYMN

*God of the nations, near and far,  
Ruler of all mankind,  
Bless Thou thy people as they strive,  
The paths of peace to find.*

*The clash of arms still shakes the sky,  
King battles still with king  
Wild through the frightened night  
The bloody tocsins ring.*

*But clearer far the friend speech  
Of scientists and seers,  
The wise debate of statesmen and  
The shoulitfifoneersl*

*And stronger or the cibsped hands  
Of labours teaming throngs,  
Who ,ing,,liogred tongues repeat  
Therommon: crejarand songs.*

*O Father, fro4 the curse of war  
We pray thee give release,  
And speed, oh speed the blessed day  
Of Justice, Love, and Peace.*

*Author Unknown*

This poem was among the belongings of Pte. Jacob Cornelsen that were sent to his brother Isaac after he was killed in action. It was written in his notebook.

## THE WAR YEARS

## WAR YEARS

The First World War, or what was originally called the Great War, began in 1914, and lasted four devastating years until November, 1918, costing millions of lives and billions of dollars.

On August 4, 1914, when Britain declared war on Germany because of Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium, Canada was automatically involved. The following day, August 5, Ottawa issued orders for mobilization of an army division, and young men all across Canada left their homes, families and jobs, to go to war.

World War 1 was a "Trench War". All the way from the English Channel to Switzerland stretched a line of allied trenches facing across "no man's land", a parallel of German trenches. These deep trenches were often half filled with mud and water.

Unlike the mechanization of wars to follow, the winning of this war depended on the strength of men -- hundreds of thousands of them. In the memory of these men is the ceaseless, endless marching. They didn't get any rides in this war, they walked for miles on end, at times in knee deep mud, from one location to another. Clothes often soaked, seldom a hot meal, shells breaking overhead blasting the eardrums, sleeping in cat naps, becoming immune to the sight of buddies dying at their sides, and the moans of the wounded.

At home, the families were dependent entirely upon newspapers for news of the war. No radios, television, and few telephones. But there was much jubilation overseas, and at home, when at 11:00 a.m. on November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed, and the roar of guns ceased. A deafening cheer arose amongst the ranks, church bells rang, every whistle blew - on ships, trains and factories. The "war to end all wars" was over. And suddenly, spontaneously, the world was silent. Dead silent, for five minutes, and heads bowed. Even today, on that day, people pause and remember.



*A Canadian battalion going over the top, October 1916. Photo Public Archives of Canada,*

## World War II

But the Great War did not end all wars, for just twenty-one years later, the world was again at war.

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and when German U Boats sunk a British liner "Athena", Britain went to war. The Canadian Parliament under McKenzie King, met to discuss the situation, and on Sunday, September 10, 1939, Canada made her own declaration of war for the first time.

In one month of recruiting, Canada's forces grew to 70,000 men, and would peak to 740,000 in 1944. By that time, 37,000 women were in uniform as well.

On May 10, 1940, Winston Churchill became Prime Minister of Britain, and in June, he warned his people that the "Battle of Britain" was about to begin. By mid July, the Luftwaffe was hammering Britain. The blitz of London began in August and continued throughout that year. By mid January, 1941, over 23,000 had been killed in England from German air attacks. December 7, 1941, was the fateful day Japan attacked Pearl Harbour, and the United States joined the war.



In Canada, these were troubled times. In May, 1942, the "Battle of the St. Lawrence" began, when a British steamer was sunk in the Gulf. This continued until October of that year, costing 700 lives and 23 ships. Early in June, the Japanese landed in the Alaskan Islands, and on the 20th of that month, a point on Vancouver Island was shelled by a Japanese submarine. Fear of invasion by Japan spread on the west coast.

Canadians continued to fight in the thick of the war, and suffered heavy losses in the raid on Dieppe, and in other battles.

By January, 1945, German armies were in full retreat on the 500 mile eastern front. The war raged on in Europe and the Pacific. On April 28, Mussolini was captured and executed, and two days later, Hitler committed suicide. On May 4, German forces surren-



*LEFT: Tanks of the 4th Canadian Army Division before they crossed the Rhine.*

*ABOVE: Men holding an armour piercing shell. Tiger tank tracks were welded on the side of the tank to protect it from bazooka fire. fake Wiebe of Morris, crew commander, sealed on top of tank.*

dered and the Canadians ceased fire. On May 8, in Feims, France, the surrender was signed - and VE day brought celebrations around the world.

The battle in the Pacific was still raging, until August 14, 1945, Japan surrendered. It had cost them dearly. The United States had dropped two atomic bombs on Hiroshima, Japan. The war was over.

In the short period of six years, science had turned its energies to purposes of death. Before the war was over, man possessed the power to destroy all life on earth. From the many wartime experiments came a host of instruments and techniques that were to transform our lives: radar, the jet engine, atomic power.

The Second World War destroyed more life and property than any other war in history. At least 17 million men died on battlefields, and an equal number of civilians were killed. Billions of dollars were poured into war torn Europe and Asia to repair the scars of war. The war had cost Canada almost \$19 billion, but at the same time, she had become one of the three top leading nations of the world.

Thousands of veterans returned from Europe, and were welcomed home warmly, some bringing war brides from Europe. But 42,000 fighting men would not be returning to Canadian soil. They paid the ultimate sacrifice, and rest in the soil of lands across the sea.



*A cemetery in Bergenopzoom, Holland, where Canadian boys are buried.*

## WAR EXPERIENCES

*by Bob Bell*



*Leslie Irvine, Bob Minaker, Bob Bell, Bill Thompson and Lloyd Shewman in England.*

My first real experience of Army life was when we were going overseas. The ship ahead of us had been hit and as we came along a few days later, we could see some of the wreckage still floating on the sea. When we got to Coalfield barracks near Aldershot, we could hear bombers coming over. The search lights came on, the sirens blew, and then the bombs started dropping. London really lit up with the fires that were started. My buddies and I were there on a 48 hour pass, and were fortunate enough to find cover. When the raid was over and we saw the number of people that did not reach cover; it was a sight that we did not care to remember.

We were sent to the Isle of White to prepare for the Dieppe raid. We were landed on boats ready for Dieppe, where we had to stay for two days, as things did not work according to plans. We then returned to the mainland for two months before we landed on the shores of Dieppe. Some of our Morris boys were among so many that were taken prisoner of War.

I feel very fortunate to have arrived home without being wounded, when I have had the experience of being shot at, and seeing so many of my closest buddies being shot down beside me.



## AIR GUNNER RECALLS WARTIME BAIL-OUT

by P.D. McMinn, November 6 from Carillon News

The story that I'm about to tell here, I have been trying to get for the past 15 years from my nephew ex-Pilot Officer John W. Dales of Sperling, Manitoba. As a tail gunner on a Sterling bomber attached to an R.A.F. squadron, partly blinded by glass splinters in his eyes, his face bleeding profusely, with his flying suit starting to burn and his regular escape hatch cut off by flames, fought his way out through the emergency hatch in the tail of the bomber, falling in flames from 10,000 feet on the outskirts of Berlin.



*Pilot officer John Dales of the Royal Air Force in 1943, who was a POW in Germany.*

"We left England with a crew of seven in our Sterling bomber on the evening of August 31, 1943 target factories on northern outskirts of Berlin, carrying a five ton load of magnesium and incendiary bombs, a flying mission of ten hours. Over the English channel and France we experienced trouble with the bombers' inter-communication system. This was repaired by the radio operator. We arrived on the target without further trouble.

After unloading our bombs over target we altered course for base. Two minutes later we were "box flaked" which literally ripped the bomber to shreds, releasing over a thousand gallons of high octane fuel which immediately burst into flames, engulfing the whole front of the bomber. After this action the tail gunner position had no further communication with the other members of the crew.

About the same time a huge piece of shrapnel smashed the prismatic sight in my turret spraying the glass crystals into my face and eyes. The heat was getting intense. Realizing my aircraft was in serious difficulties, and falling rapidly, I opened the door of my turret to face a scorching wall of flame which set my flying suit on fire. Realizing I had to bail out and I was unable to use the normal bailing out door on account of the flames, I had to use the emergency door which was not large enough to accommodate myself and parachute at the same time. Knowing this I threw my chute out first and started to squeeze out after it.

Just as I thought I was free of the aircraft, I discovered one of my flying boots had hooked in an ammunition belt, in order to free this I had to pull myself up to the hatch door and release the boot, when letting go I then found in the confusion I had not ejected my helmet and

the wires caught me under the chin. I finally got it off and I was at last free of the plane.

Then, in great haste, I went after my parachute which was dangling at the end of 12 feet of webbing. Reeling in the webbing as fast as I could, I managed to locate my chest pack and pull the rip cord. Seconds after the chute opened, I hit the muskeg in which I soon sank to my waist. On moving, I discovered that I only went in deeper so I immediately took off my parachute harness and worked it and my parachute under me. I then rested for awhile trying to figure how to get out as it did not seem far to solid ground.

I thought of rolling which proved to be a good idea and I soon made it to solid ground which I discovered to be hayland. I soon found a small haystack under which I crawled and either went to sleep or passed out. I awoke to find that my face and eyes were filled with dry blood and full of glass splinters.

Thinking there might still be some chance of using my escape aids, I decided I would wait until daylight to size up the lay of the country.

Resting and watching throughout the day, I planned to walk during the night, but by the time night arrived I was experiencing severe pain in my eyes. Despite this I tried to continue my escape holing up the daytime and walking at night for four nights, going by the sounds of the city of Berlin. At the end of the fourth night I decided to give myself up as a prisoner.

Due to lack of sight and terrific pain in my eyes, I was unable to read my maps and could only see dimly. I found myself close to a large high power line, proceeding in the direction of this power line in broad daylight I was soon picked up by a civilian guard and delivered into the hands of the Luftwaffe. They in turn transported me to Stalag Luft and Air Force interrogation centre. After being there a number of days without treatment I was sent to Marienheim Grey Sisters Convent where there was a British medical team treating about 350 blinded Army, Navy and Air Force prisoners. This Marienheim was at the town of Bad-Sulza.

Within half an hour of entering hospital I was on the operating table where Doctor Major Charters and Captain Harris took the glass splinters from my eyes and face. My eyes were then bandaged for three weeks. On the removal of the bandages I was overjoyed to find that I still had some eyesight left.

At the end of three months under treatment I was sent to Stalag Luft 6. About seven weeks later one of my fellow airmen from my home town of Sperling appeared in the same compound that I was in.

The following 17 112 months was spent in various prison camps throughout Germany. Then we went on march in columns at the head of the retreating German troops for six weeks without rations, other than dandelions and grass, roots and anything else that we could find. We had no rations issued at all to us on this march. In all fairness our guards had very little more than we had.

On this march we were strafed by both enemy and Allied aircraft leaving some of our number behind. We were set free by the British 51st division Highlanders at Kleinzeratin. We were then transported to Lunenburg, a



distance of 75 kilometers by all manner of vehicles which were confiscated from the enemy. At Lunenberg there was a great area for sorting out the ex-prisoners of war into their various groups. We were then taken by transport truck to Rhiner Airport and flown by squadrons of Lancaster bombers to England to our various units for medical and food which I so badly needed. I was a lean 185 pounds when taken prisoner and I weighed in on my return to England at 120 lbs."

Upon his return to England John learned that only two other members of his crew escaped. Four had burned to death.

Today John with his charming wife, Joyce, and two children, Judy and Clive, live in Sperling.

He is glad to be alive and have enough eyesight left to carry on. He is grateful to that unseen Hand that guided his parachute over that small muskeg in Germany where it opened only seconds before he landed.

## **I REMEMBER A War Bride's Story**

*by Pat Jorgenson*

I remember when they told us that we were at war with Germany; I was still in school and it didn't mean very much to me at the time. War was a vague episode that I'd heard my parents speak of occasionally.

I remember a few days later, walking along a street on the way to visit my Aunt May, about three miles from where I lived. It must have been a Saturday as I wasn't attending classes. Suddenly sirens wailed, it was the first time I'd heard them, and air raid wardens materialized from somewhere, obviously they had been trained for this eventuality. "Where did I live, and where was I going?" As I was past the half-way point, I was allowed to continue to my aunt's house - I never made it. The sky immediately became full of noise and planes. I hid behind a stone fence in a school yard and watched my first aerial 'dog fight'. I saw a Spitfire, after being shot down by a Messerschmit, crash into a block of flats a short distance down the road - I can still see the blackened wall of that building after the plane burned out. Whenever I think of the war even now I remember that gallant little Spitfire.

I remember another occasion vividly. A few years later, I was on my way back to work after lunch one day - no warning sirens this time; and a Stukka dive bomber came hurtling over the skyline. He was flying very low. Apparently he had been winged and was limping to his home base after he'd dumped his bomb load north of us, then decided to give us the benefit of his machine gun talent. I heard the noise and once again ran for cover. They call it dumb luck over here, be that as it may; but when I heard the air raid wardens calling all clear, I looked around, and six inches from my toes were the pockmarks of the machine gun bullets. I was unaware that I had been sheltering in the doorway of a tailor shop with plate glass on all sides - some protection! The pilot of that aircraft guided that plane between two rows of boulevard trees, right down the middle of the road, and crashed into the English Channel. I've often wondered if he survived and was rescued. I'll always remember his skill with the machine gun - he missed me.

I also remember growing up very quickly, there didn't seem to be any in between time. After leaving school, not being old enough to join the W.A.A.F., I went to work for a company named R.F.D. (to this day I don't know what those initials represented.) They manufactured life jackets, lifeboats, barrage and meteorological balloons. I enjoyed the work, the remuneration wasn't bad, and we had plenty of overtime, which was voluntary at time and a half. The plant was situated alongside a railway station which was regularly 'shot up' by one five o'clock Freddie or another. They never did learn that we didn't start loading the orders until after six p.m. - overtime.

And I remember the days when the P.O.W. trains were shunting their cargo of German prisoners of war to the internment camps west of us. We'd open the windows and wave to them, they would always smile and wave back. I remember thinking that they all appeared relaxed and probably relieved that for them the duration of war was over and I remember wondering why it had to happen in the first place.

Of course I remember so well the evening I met my husband. It was in the summer of 1942, at a service club dance. For awhile we were just acquaintances who enjoyed dancing together, and as I had a 10:00 curfew, I would leave the dance early in order to catch the last bus home. During one of our conversations we discovered that he was billeted in a house two blocks from where I lived. From then, until he was sent to the Italian front, he 'walked me home' - I always managed to miss the last bus. He returned from the Italian and European fronts shortly after V.E. day, May 5, 1945. It had been rough but he was in good health and hadn't been wounded. I remember how happy I was to see him again, and that I was the first person he visited when he had leave.

We were married on September 16, that year, during what was supposed to be his embarkation leave. The war was over and I still question whether or not I am a so-called 'war bride'. My husband returned to Canada in November, 1945, and a year later, with an infant daughter, I was on my way to join him.



*Warner and Pat Jorgenson on their wedding day Sept. 16, 1945 in Brighton, England.*

I remember that ocean voyage to Canada. I have never been a good sailor, (except now, on fishing trips). I was quartered (and that's an understatement), below the water line with other wives, babies and assorted older children. I can still picture that tiny cubicle furnished with temporary hotplates for our use. We mothers all had our National Dried Milk formula to prepare for the babies as we were advised not to nurse the infants en route. There wasn't any fighting for those hot plates regardless of the crying babies, cranky toddlers, and seasick mothers. We were trained 'queueing up' stock and we waited our turn. While I waited, I remember watching the cockroaches crawling up the stainless steel walls and marvelling at their ability to do so when the ship was rolling so badly that I couldn't keep both of my feet on the deck at one time.

After 5 1 / 2 years of wartime rationing, and if we were lucky, one orange and/or banana per person per month, that first breakfast at sea could have been paradise. Gleaming white tablecloths, beautiful silverware, white bread (I don't know what brand of flour we utilized in England during the rationing period, but the bread was always a grubby grey), pounds of 'real' butter, mounds of fresh fruit, bacon, eggs, ham, jam and hot rolls in profusion. I never did get to eat that first meal. The ship lurched in one direction, and before it rolled back I had clutched my baby, my stomach and I staggered back to my bunk. There I remained for the entire voyage! Fortunately there was a hardy soul in the next bunk to mine. She had a toddler in tow, but took over the care of my baby also when I was indisposed - which was 90 % of those eight days at sea. After disembarkation in Halifax, and clearing customs, we boarded our trains for various parts of Canada. I do not remember too much of that journey either. I was still in the throes of motion sickness, the train was cold and the further west we travelled the colder it got. To top the misery off, my daughter contracted bronchitis and there was no medical assistance on board the train. However, I don't ever recall wishing that I had stayed in England, my husband was in Manitoba, and the baby and I were 'going home'.

During that tedious train journey, when the baby was sleeping, I remember watching the Canadian panorama, so different from the English countryside. Halifax was damp and foggy, (I was used to this), and we stopped in Truro for something and we were allowed to stretch our legs. The weather was warm and sunny here. Then came Montreal, it was pouring with rain, cold and we couldn't leave the train. The province of Ontario was not what I'd read about in geography books in school. It was hundreds of miles of pine trees and telephone poles. We didn't see one city during the trip until we reached Winnipeg. I remember being a little apprehensive as England was, and probably still is, one big city.

I remember my first cup of coffee. It was served with the first full meal I ate in Canada on the last morning on the train. We didn't drink coffee at our house, it was always tea. The results of my efforts at coffee brewing were usually greeted with uninhibited laughter by some of our Canadian friends. I still don't make very good coffee.

The baby and I were met at the station in Winnipeg by my husband and his beautiful sister. My husband looked about the same as I remembered, even wearing 'civvies'. As the baby was very sick by this time, we spent two weeks with my sister-in-law, Vera, her husband, Bill, and family in Winnipeg. It's partly due to them that I learned to love Canada, though I'm sure I would have done so anyway, for this was my husband's country, and to come here to live was my choice. I have never had a moment's regret over leaving England.

## WAR YEARS AT HOME

Families were kept informed by the radio and listened intently to the broadcasts about the course of the war. As men left the farms and women enlisted, manpower was in short supply. Women had to fill jobs that men vacated. Work in factories, bus drivers, anywhere they were needed.

Iron and steel were in short supply, as well as rubber and silk. Scrap drives cleared the countryside - as people donated any usable thing for the war effort. Gasoline for cars was rationed, as well as other commodities such as tea, coffee, sugar, jam, preserves, butter and meat. In 1942, everyone was issued ration books. Canned goods disappeared from store shelves.

At home, the war years were not happy times. Everyone had a relative who was in the armed services. There was tension and hard times everywhere and food was rationed. Mrs. Fred Coates recalls the many women who did knitting for the Red Cross - making useful things for the boys overseas - mitts, socks, vests, scarves. Many parcels were sent overseas.

Many people came to Mr. Fred Coates to have the lids of food containers soldered shut, to keep it fresh until it arrived at its destination. "We got jam pails, put a layer of butter in bottom, and on top of that, whole raw eggs, and another layer of butter. Cooked pork chops were placed on top of that and sealed off with another layer of butter. The lid was soldered shut. Since there was no air inside, the contents remained good. About a month later, we'd get a letter from the boys, what a feast they had had! Fresh fried eggs in butter and delicious pork chops."

Other items sent to the boys were pure chocolate bars (with no nuts) and soap to wash hands and clothes.

Locally, many people worked to present concerts to raise money for the Red Cross, and for milk for Britain. Notably, Mrs. H. Havers was involved in these efforts.

No one objected to the shortage of some goods or the rationing of food; they felt it was their part in helping the war effort.



## THE C.O.'S STORY

On Sept. 10, 1939, Canada declared war on Germany. In June 1941, the government announced that Alternative Service would be provided. This was a new phenomenon in Canadian History during World War II. It was a form of national service which the Canadian government required of Conscientious Objectors in lieu of military training or service. The provision of such a service when "total war" was the policy, constitutes a striking symbol of freedom of religion in a democracy. The Canadian government respected the C.O.'s objections to war, and made provision for exemption by order-in-council in 1873. "Any person bearing a certificate declaring his doctrine of religion is adverse to bearing arms, and refuses military service, shall be exempt."

Of the 18,000 Mennonites who left Russia between 1874-1880, about 8,000 came to the new province of Manitoba. Manitoba had the highest number of C.O.'s in the country, over 3,000 in World War II. During the First World War, C.O. work was voluntarily without pay, some even paid their own expenses.

Who were the C.O.'s? Some came from the United Church of Canada, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Nazarenes, Church of God in Christ, Christian Science, Plymouth Brethren, Friends, Methodists, but the majority were Mennonites. This was an unpopular cause at a crucial time in Canadian History, but it is known, that the C.O.'s made an important contribution to the Canadian economy.

What kind of work were the C.O.'s required to do? Vast reforestation projects were undertaken, and millions of cedar, fir, and hemlock were planted in the forests of British Columbia. Some served in the Medical Corps, as hospital orderlies or stretcher bearers, many



*Q 2 Camp in Campbell River, B.C. in 1943, where C.O. workers were involved in reforestation projects. Photo courtesy C.B. Dueck.*

went overseas. They were engaged in fighting forest fires, in the logging industry, tree nursery work, fuel wood cutting, unloading and loading grain at the Lakehead, and in some instances, as emergency farm workers, for the production of food.

In the main, they were farmer's sons, used to hard work, and did their jobs well. The average C.O. was entirely sincere in his desire to do anything short of actual combat duties to be of service to country in wartime. Of the C.O.'s wages, he could keep 50 cents a day for himself. A married man received an additional \$5-\$10 a month allowance, with \$5 for each additional child. They were paid the going rate for their jobs, but the employers were required to divert the rest of their earnings to the Red Cross; and this money came at a great time of need. The total amount paid to the Red Cross in Manitoba alone from C.O.'s to the end of 1945, was over \$650,000.

In the Rosenort district alone, there were 82 young men who served as C.O.'s primarily from the Mennonite Church.

## MY WARTIME EXPERIENCE WITH ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

*by C.B. Dueck*

I was amongst a number of Rosenort draftees, serving in alternative service as Conscientious Objectors, (in 1943) who were ordered to various jobs across Canada. I served for five years, 15 months, including forestry service in the B.C. forests, and 6 months in Siebe, Alberta, clearing bush and falling snags for a mining company, also working on a dairy farm in St. Norbert.

There was a fear during the war, that the enemy would burn out our great natural resources by sending balloon carried fire bombs. In June, some 60 draftees began taking rough army parachute training to enable them to get to a fire faster. They planned to attack the fire from the air. We put out many forest fires, none started by the enemy, but rather by careless Canadian citizens.

While we were on standby from fire fighting, we did numerous other jobs, one of which was to help replant the forests that had been cut by loggers. Some areas were burned as soon as the loggers were through. This



*Tree planting done by C.O.'s in B.C. forests, after snag falling. A C.B. Dueck photo.*

stimulated the germination of the pine seeds by cracking the hulls of the seeds and causing the beginning of a new forest. It was decided to implement an extensive tree planting program and we worked for the nursery, though it was a new experience for us.

The seedlings came from Green Timbers Nursery, and in six weeks we lifted, packed and shipped 17 million seedlings.

Snag-falling was another standby job. A snag was a charred tree that was left standing when the loggers left the area and was considered a fire hazard, therefore, they had to be felled. In a five month period, we felled 34,922 snags.

We lived in a camp often in prefabricated buildings that could be easily taken down and moved from place to place. We worked hard, but still it was lonely so far away from home. We got two weeks leave, but sometimes could not afford the fare for a train trip home; instead, we would travel from Campbell River, to Vancouver by boat.

## **MORRIS BRANCH ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION 1934 - 1979**

The Royal Canadian Legion is a group of Ex-Service men and women banded together through the nation, whose purpose it is to constitute an association of those who have served in the reigning sovereigns Navy, Army and Airforce or any auxiliary force or service. They stand for loyalty to the Sovereign and to Canada - and their goal is to ever strive for peace, good will and friendship among all nations. The Legion stands for strong and united comradeship among those who served, so that their welfare and the welfare of their dependants may always be safeguarded.

It was with this in mind that the Great War Veterans of Morris and District met in the County Court Hall on Dec. 14, 1933 and decided to form a Branch of the Canadian Legion. The following were in attendance, and became Charter Members of Morris Branch No. 111 and the Branch was constituted on January 1, 1934. T.K. Bestwick, John (Shorty) Burke, P.H. Covernton, A. Coventry, H.J. Daniels, H. Davies, W.J. Hamblin, O.T. Johnson, P. LaBelle, G. Longmuir, G. MacDonald, S.B. Murray, J. Pearson, G. Pelissier, Dr. A. Roy, J.B. Scutter, L.A. Slater, R. Third, G. Walter, A. Wilcox and S.S. Wilton.

The Womens Institute deserve much of the credit for the formation of the Legion - having sponsored Soldiers Suppers, conducted Memorial Services and in time erected the Cenotaph on Main Street. The W.I. played a very prominent part in the affairs of Service men and women during and after both wars. The Legion is indebted to them for their thoughtfulness and never tiring efforts to comfort the sick and distressed, and assist the needy in time of want.

1939 saw Canada enter the Second Great War and young people of the district took up arms to defend that which we all believe to be right, and in February 1940, W.W. 2 boys were initiated into the Legion.



*Morris Legion, holding Decoration Day services at the cenotaph.*

The Legion Auxiliary was formed, on October 6, 1945 and they held their first meeting on November 30th of the same year.

December 5, 1949 the Branch decided to work with the Auxiliary to furnish a ward in the new Morris Hospital and by 1951, the funds were raised. A request to sponsor the Boy Scouts was heard, and the Branch decided to go ahead with this worthwhile project.

In November 1950 a committee was set up to pursue the building of a Hall. In February of 1951, the Masonic Hall located on Main Street was purchased for \$125.00, and a committee was formed to implement the moving of it. Each Legion member contributed \$20.00, or 20 hours labor, and the project was completed.

The first recorded meeting held in the new hall was on January 23, 1952, and at this meeting the Ladies Auxiliary were granted permission to erect a kitchen in the north west corner of the building.

April 1952 The Boy Scouts were given permission to use the Hall free of charge.

June 1952 A piano was purchased for \$175.00.

Dec. 1952 A caretaker was hired for \$2.00 per meeting.

Aug. 1953 Used hardwood flooring was purchased. The Auxiliary asked permission to paint before the floor was laid.

Nov. 1954 A typical year in the history of the Legion, short of funds - requested that the Auxiliary assist in Mortgage payments.

The Branch decided that if it were to continue to flourish, an initiation team should be formed so the new members could be properly brought into the Branch by local members rather than having to go to outside Branches to initiate the comrades. The team was formed and was indeed recognised as one of the finest initiation teams in the Province. The team, though not as active, is still a very important part of the Branch today.

In Sept. 1960 a committee was formed to proceed with an addition to the Legion Hall, and \$8,000.00 was borrowed for this purpose. The ever faithful hard

working Auxiliary were asked to meet the first mortgage payment in April of 1961, and that started a year of activities to raise money for the building. Bingo, raffles and socials were the order of the year. These ventures were successful, and in January 1962 the Branch finished the upstairs as well. In addition, 100 chairs were purchased and many projects completed and when a special meeting was called Jan. 10, 1964, the Branch was debt free.

In February 1972 another enlargement of the Hall was underway, and after many trials and tribulations it was finally completed and ready for Grand Opening which was held on Saturday, June 10th, 1972.

The work of the Branch and the untiring efforts of the Auxiliary made it possible to pay off the latest addition by February 1976. Much credit goes to the Ladies who never seem to run out of energy and drive to get things done, their efforts have truly been fantastic. Many smaller projects have been undertaken since and one large one - airconditioning the hall, at a cost of \$10,000. The next two years were spent in looking after general maintenance and raising funds to retire the mortgage. This was realized, and at a Social evening on April 7th, 1978, the Morris Branch once again were able, with the aid of the Auxiliary, to set a match to the mortgage and realize a clear title to the building.

The Morris Branch No. 111 of the Legion shows what can be accomplished by a small group of men and women, who were dedicated to the principles and aims of the Legion, and how the Legion worked for the betterment of the community.



*V.J. Day celebrations on Morris Main Street in 1945. There were bands, a parade, dignitaries, and much jubilation.*



*Morris Cadets on Decoration Day, 1946.*

## THE LADIES HELP "FURNISH THE TOOLS"

*by Hattie May Murray (April, 1941)*

Away out where the West begins, nestling on the banks of the historic Red River, lies the little town of Morris, Manitoba. Our main street follows the old Indian trail, and many are the arrow heads, Indian axes and hammers dug up in our fields.

Ours is a district which has never known a complete crop failure. Attracted doubtless by the fertility of our soil, there has come to this district a great variety of nationalities.

Our little town of about 800 boasts no less than six churches. So we certainly don't interfere with each other's religious views. We seem as far apart as the poles, and yet when anything is started, appertaining to Canada's war effort, we are as one.

Last summer, we heard of a detachment of soldiers coming through from Camp Shilo so we decided to treat them to pie. We asked for 40 pies. The response was staggering. One man in our district who had narrowly escaped with his life from Russia, was asked to contribute one pie and sent five, willing to send even more.

One young soldier said he had always been partial to pie, but after the first five or six pieces, he'd had his fill!

In January, we decided to make a few quilts for civilian relief overseas. In less than a month, 27 quilts had been completed and there are still many more in the making. The response to this appeal was simply marvellous. One elderly German woman who couldn't make a quilt block gave a lovely crocheted doily which sold for enough to buy a quilt lining.

The Mennonite Ladies' Aid, many of whose members are refugees from Russia, held a tea and sale of work for the Red Cross as did also the German Evangelical Church.

We then decided to send vegetable seeds to Britain. The time was very short, as we were late in getting this enterprise underway. We had all the ministers in the churches announce the project and by the first of April we were able to send off a parcel of seeds weighing 20 pounds and valued at approximately \$25.00.

One day, our Women's Institute asked for a square of white flannelette as a roll call project. Many members brought not only one, but several squares. We were able to turn over to the Red Cross four dozen napkins (diapers) for their layettes.

Then the Legion decided to gather salvage material. In less than two months, two tons of papers, rags and bottles had been collected for Canada's war effort.

Over \$100.00 was given by the community to send Christmas boxes to the Morris boys on active service. One member of the Rebekah Lodge gave a sack of potatoes to be raffled, then helped sell tickets on them to the value of \$12.00 to buy smokes for the boys overseas.

Our W.I. has sponsored the quilt and garden seed projects, besides sending \$65.00 to the bomber fund and \$40.00 to the Lord Mayor's fund.

We do not tell this in any spirit of boastfulness. We are but typical of hundreds of other little towns throughout the length and breadth of our Dominion grateful for the opportunity to help "Furnish the tools to finish the job".



# FOR KING & Country

**RESIDENTS OF THE RM OF MORRIS  
WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED FOR ACTIVE SERVICE  
WITH CANADA'S FIGHTING FORCES**

## KILLED IN ACTION - WORLD WAR I

BARTLETTE, Frank  
BARTLETTE, Raymond  
BLASESKY, Michael  
BOND, Louis  
BROWN, Edwin  
BUCHANAN, John  
BURNETT, H.A.  
CAMPBELL, D.  
CORNELSON, C.  
CORNELSON, Jacob  
DAVIDGE, Robert  
DAVIDSON, Noah  
DICKSON, John  
ELLIOT, George  
FOOTE, Fred  
FORBES, Adolphe  
GILES, Henry  
GILES, Amos  
HAINING, William  
HAY, Thomas  
HOBBS, Morley  
KINNEAR, Geo.  
MacLEAN, F.D.  
MANARY, W.  
MARSHALL, Smith  
McNAIR, Earl

MELLIS, Geo.  
MERRIMAN, M.  
MOLLOY, William  
MORRISON, Ernest  
NOBLE, J.  
PECK, Fred  
PETERSON, George  
PHILLIPS, Alex  
ROCHE, Donald  
SCAMMELL, Albert  
SEABORNE, E.A.  
SHEPPARD, William  
SICKNER, Ronald  
SMITH, Wilmot  
STARR, Fred  
TAYLOR, Fred  
THOMPSON, H.N.  
WILSON, Jas.

## SPERLING HONOR ROLL - KILLED IN ACTION SPERLING 1914-18

BUCHANAN, John  
BURNETT, H.A.  
CAMPBELL, D.  
DAVIDSON, Noah  
FOOTE, Fred  
HOBBS, Morley  
KINNIAS, Geo  
MANARY, W.  
MARSHALL, Smith  
MELLIS, Geo  
MORRISON, Ernest  
MacLEAN, F.D.  
SMITH, Wilmot  
WILSON, Jas.

## KILLED IN ACTION - WORLD WAR II

ANDERSON, Peter  
ANDERSON, Murray  
BORSHEIM, Arthur  
BOWER, Richard  
BRAUN, Bernhard  
BUSS, Herman  
CHAPMAN, James  
COATES, Roy  
COX, Harry  
ENNS, Benjamin  
GARONSKY, Alex  
GROENING, Abram  
HATTON, Arthur  
HAYWARD, William  
HEIDE, Henry  
JONES, Richard  
LANGTON, Wentworth  
LAWRIE, Keith  
LEONARD, John  
MacLEAN, Harold  
McBRIDE, William  
MINAKER, Ronald  
MITCHELL, Earl  
PORTER, Albert

QUASSO, Louis  
RECKSIEDLER, Paul  
ROY, Paul

## "SPERLING HONOR ROLL 1939-1945"

BORSHEIM, Arthur  
LEONARD, John  
MacLEAN, Harold  
McBRIDE, William



# RM OF MORRIS HONOR ROLL

## 1914-1918 VETERANS

• indicates wounded  
\*\* indicates decorated

AINSLEY, George  
BADGER, John C.  
BADGER, William  
BARTLETTE, Edward  
BESTWICK, Thomas  
BELL, Fairbairn  
BOUCHARD, Joseph  
BROWN, Fred  
BROWN, Leslie \*  
BREDIN, Harry  
BURKE, John  
COATES, George  
COLEMAN, Ralph \*  
CHURCHILL, Chester  
COVERNTON, Percy  
COVERNTON, Richard  
CORBET, William  
CORDERIRE, Romeo  
COX, Klyne •  
COX, Lionel  
COXWORTH, Victor  
DAVIDSON, Robert  
DALKE, William  
DECHENE, Joseph  
DONALD, William  
DRAGER, Ernest  
ELLIOT, Robert  
ELEMENT, Charles  
FORBES, Peter  
GRAHAM, Edward\*  
HAY, Frank "  
HAY, Harold  
HALL, Joseph  
HAMBLIN, Walter"  
HOLLAND, James  
KENNEDY, Mark"  
KNIGHT, Ruben'  
LAWRIE, Allan'  
LE MAINE, Louis'  
LE MAINE, Fred'  
LATHAN, Capt.  
LIGHTFOOT, William'  
LIVESLEY, Roy \*  
MAYHEW, Joseph\*  
MAYHEW, Raymond •  
MARIS, Frank  
MARSH, George  
MARSDEN, Fred  
MATTE, D.  
McLEAN, Albert'  
MATTE, O. \*  
McMURRAY, John'  
McLACHLAN, Alex  
MELDRUM, Ewart  
MILLER, William  
MITCHELL, Herbert  
MOFFAT, Sidney'  
MOORE, Albert  
MURRAY, S.B.  
NEIGHBOR, Frank'  
OGILVIE, Roy  
OLLENBERG, Henry'  
OWENS, Thomas'  
PEEBLES, Carl\*  
PICARD, Charles

RENTZ, Charles  
PHILLIPS, Robert "  
QUEAU, Hervie  
RICARD, Joseph •  
ROCHE, John  
ROSS, John  
ROSS, Alex •  
RUSH, Otto\*  
SCUTTER, James B.  
SCHLIER, Adolphe  
SCHLIER, Albert  
SEARS, Sidney  
SHEPPARD, Norman \*  
SHEPPARD, Bedford •  
SHEWMAN, Harry  
SPIERS, Thomas  
SICKNER, Willard  
SNARR, John  
STANLEY, Edward  
SUTHERLAND, Joseph\*  
TAYLOR, Ernest •  
THOMPSON, Roy  
TODD, J.J. •  
TODD, Richard\*  
TURNER, William  
URE, Daniel H.  
WATTS, Edward  
WHITEHEAD, John  
WILCOX, J. •  
WILSON, S. •  
WILTON, Sterling •  
WILTON, John R. \*  
ZINN, Albert

*Lo we Farm*  
DYCK, Abram S.  
KARLENZIG, Albert A.  
KARLENZIG, Karl

## "SPERLING HONOR ROLL 1914-1918"

AFFLECK, R.  
ANDERSON, J.C.  
ANDERSON, Wm.  
ANDERSON, W.  
AUSTRICK, W.  
  
BAKER, H.  
BOND, James  
BILLINGS, Earl  
BUCHANAN, James  
BUCHANAN, P.  
BURNETT, R.W.  
  
CHAMBERS, F.  
COLPITTS, D.  
COLPITTS, M.  
COPELAND, Eli  
CURDT, C.O.  
  
DAVIDSON, Geo.  
DOBSON, Wm.

FOSTER, Harry  
FREEMAN, Chas.

GARDINER, J.L.  
GATES, Jos.  
GILLIS, Wm.  
GRANES, C.  
GREER, Chas.  
GROVER, John

HAGEN, Peter

KILPATRICK  
N/ S.S.E.

LAKE, Elmer  
LATHAM, M.  
LESTER, R.H.

MANN, Henry  
MARSTON, J.  
MEARS, E.  
MEARS, Wm.  
MELLIS, Robert  
MITCHELL, Wm.  
McELROY, Ed.  
McMAHON, H.  
McNEIL, D.A.  
McTAGGART, R.

NEWETT, Albert  
NEWETT, Harold  
NICHOL, H.M.

O'BOYLE, Frank

PARKER, Lorne

RICHARDSON, S.  
ROSEVEARE, J.T.

SCOTT, Martin  
SHEARS, Fred  
SNIDER, R.E.  
SQUIRES, Wm.  
STAPLES, M.D.  
STEEVES, J.A.  
SWANSTON, J.F.

TAITE, John D.  
THORNTON, C.G.  
THORNE, Thos.  
TUMMON, S.

VERGE, Howard  
VERGE, Morton

WADDELL, A.M.  
WADDELL, E.  
WADDELL, J.A.  
WADDELL, J.T.  
WADDELL, W.O.  
WILL, John  
WILSON, A.O.

## MORRIS AND DISTRICT SERVICE HONOR ROLL

ANDERSON, Bill  
ANDERSON, Glen  
ANDERSON, Alan  
ANDERSON, Orville  
ANDERSON, Francis  
ABBOTT, Robert  
BARTLETTE, Edgar  
BARTLETTE, Joseph  
BARTLETTE, Leo  
BARTLETTE, Roger  
BELL, Robert  
BROWN, Paul  
BOYD, D.M.  
BERTIE, John  
BANNATYNE, David  
BLOOMFIELD, Bert  
BOGGS, Christopher  
BREYFOGLE, Warren  
BURDYNY, John  
BURDYNY, Stephen  
BADGER, William  
BEGLEY, William  
BITTNER, William  
BOWER, Cleon  
BOGGS, Otto  
BROWN, Jack  
COATES, Clifford  
COATES, Frank  
COATES, Homer  
COATES, Howard  
COATES, Roy  
COATES, Russell  
COATES, Thomas  
COFFMAN, Dean  
COMBAT, L.  
COMBAT, Peter  
COUTTS, Richard  
COX, James  
CHURCHILL, Lorne  
CARPENTER, Thomas  
CLUBB, Garth  
DAVIES, John  
DAVIES, Douglas  
DAVIES, Ernest  
DAVIES, Jackie  
DALKE, Edward  
DALKE, William  
DALKE, Benjamin  
DIXON, Charles  
DAUDRICH, Samuel  
DERKSEN, John  
DERKSEN, Jacob  
DERKSEN, Abraham  
DYCK, John  
EARL, Harold  
ESAU, Henry  
ELLIOT, Norman  
ENNS, David  
ENNS, Arthur  
FRASER, Gordon  
FRASER, W.R.  
FREDERICK, Charles  
FRIESEN, George  
FREDERICK, Laurence  
FUNK, David  
GEISE, Albert  
GRATTON, Noel

HAMBLIN, Jack  
HAYWARD, William  
HERRING, Fred  
HERRING, Herman  
HAY, Frank  
HATTON, Edward  
HUFF, Arnold  
HUFF, Walter  
HAMILTON, Fred  
HOUSTON, William  
HOPKINS, James  
HAINING, William  
HUFF, Albert  
HUNT, Clarence  
HUBBLE, Alister  
IRVINE, James  
IRVINE, Leslie  
ITO, Uke  
JORGENSEN, Gordon  
JORGENSEN, Maurice  
JORGENSEN, Warner  
JORGENSEN, Leonard  
JORGENSEN, Robert  
JORGENSEN, John  
JONES, Edward  
JONES, Kenneth  
JONES, Richard  
JASTER, Fred  
KASTNER, Eric  
KASTNER, Alan  
KLASSEN, Ted  
KRAN, Emil  
LANDRY, Alfred  
LANGTON, Wentworth  
LEMPKY, Lloyd  
LEWIS, James  
LEWIS, Gerald  
LEWIS, Clark  
LEWIS, Owen  
LEWONCHUCK, Michael  
MANSON, J.C.  
MARTIN, Lawrence  
MINAKER, Ronald  
McMAHON, J.M.  
McMAHON, Gerald  
McMURRAY, John  
MUENCH, Paul  
MITCHELL, Earl  
McDONALD, George  
McCALLUM, W.A.  
MEUNCH, William  
MILLER, Hugo  
MUIRHEAD, William  
NORRIS, Howard  
NORRIS, Lyal  
NORRIS, Claude  
NEUFELD, Frank  
NEUFELD, George  
NORRIS, Albert  
NORRIS, Harold  
NORRIS, Lloyd  
NORRIS, Alan  
PENNER, Wilbert  
PLATT, Charles  
PITTMAN, Edward  
PITTMAN, Robert  
PORTER, Leslie

# HONOR ROLL

## "SPERLING LOWE FARM 1939-1945" WORLD WAR II

QUASSO, Louis  
RAPSKE, Robert  
RENTZ, Waldemar  
REMPEL, Elmer  
REMPEL, Harry  
REMPEL, John  
RITZ, John  
ROY, Paul  
ROY, Richard  
ROSS, Bryon  
SOCHOWSKI, Alex  
SAWATSKY, Ted  
SAWATSKY, William  
SAWATSKY, Richard  
SAWATSKY, Wilfrid  
SCHWARK, Allan  
SCHMALL, Wm.  
SNARR, Leslie  
SNARR, Melvin  
SMITH, George  
SKOGLUND, Ronald  
SHEWMAN, Lloyd  
SCHMALL, Alex  
SCHNIDER, Rudolph  
SMITH, Charles  
SMITH, Buchan  
SHEPPARD, Norman  
SHEPPARD, Bedford  
SKINNER, Frederick  
SKINNER, Donald  
SKINNER, Harrison  
SKINNER, Robert  
SNARR, Milton  
SOMMER, Elmer  
STEVENSON, Earl  
STEVENSON, Arthur  
STEVENSON, Charles  
STEDIUK, William  
SWAIN, Frank  
SYRE, Tom  
TAYLOR, Alvin  
THOMSON, William  
THOMSON, James  
THOMSON, Murray  
THOMPSON, Percy  
TONN, Paul  
THIRD, Ralph  
THIRD, Delmar  
TESKE, Edward  
TURNER, William  
VICKERS, Robert  
VICKERS, Christopher  
WAIT, Cecil  
WEIDEMANN, Alex  
WALTERS, Alfred  
WIEBE, Harry  
WIEBE, Abram

C. W.A.C.

CHURCHILL, Erma  
SCUTTER, Nancy  
ZELINUK, Jean  
ZELINUK, Nettie  
VICKERS, Ellen -  
R.C.A.F.  
EARL, Marguerite  
HAINES, Ethel

ANDERSEN, Sirie  
ANDERSON, Ross  
BARRY, Graydon  
BAUSMAN, Roy  
BELL, Ralph  
BORSHEIM, Earl  
BORSHEIM, Glenn  
BORSHEIM, Louis  
CATES, Ray  
COLPITTS, Stanley  
DALES, John  
DALES, Mary  
DAVISON, Melvin  
DUVENAUD, Louis  
GEORGE, William  
GESWEIN, Martha  
GRIFFITHS, Kenneth  
GORGES, William  
HAND, Arthur  
HAYWARD, Kenneth  
HOMICK, Michael  
KELLER, Raoul  
KILLEEN, John  
KIRK, Cameron  
KROEKER, Aaron  
KYLE, Albert  
KYLE, William  
LAFERRIERE, Ulysses  
MacLEAN, Audrey  
MacLEAN, Cameron  
MacLEAN, Clifford  
MacLEAN, Donald  
MacLEAN, Douglas  
MELDRUM, James  
MOGK, Ralph  
MITCHELL, Ray  
PARKER, Francis  
PAULS, Cornelius  
PECKOVER, Lawrence  
PECKOVER, Murray  
REDEKOFF, Menno  
RIBORDY, Francis  
ROSE, Ernest  
ROSEVEARE, George  
ROSEV KRE, John  
SANDU AK, John  
SANDULAK, Peter  
SESSIONS, Frederick  
SESSIONS, Wilfred  
SMITH, Dean  
SOUTAR, James  
SWAIN, Richard  
WADDELL, Chester  
WADDELL, Donald  
WADDELL, Kenneth  
WADDELL, Robert  
WADDELL, Victor  
WEBSTER, Roy  
WELSH, Alvin  
WALSH, Grant  
WILSON, Alvin  
WILSON, Stanley  
YOUNG, Clayton  
YOUNG, Hugh  
YOUNG, Stewart

• indicates wounded

ANDERSON, Francis  
BLATZ, Abram  
BRAUN, Bernhardt (Ben)  
BRAUN, Edward  
BRAUN, Harry  
BRAUN, Henry  
BRAUN, John  
BROWN, David  
DERKSEN, Abram  
DOERKSEN, Jacob  
Davenport  
DYCK, Andrew  
DYCK, Abe  
DYCK, Dorothy  
DYCK, Henry  
DYCK, Jake  
DYCK, John  
ENNS, George  
FALK, Erdman  
FUNK, Billie  
FUNK, Erdman  
FUNK, John  
FUNK, Pete  
GIESBRECHT, Benjamin  
GIESBRECHT, Cornelius  
GIESBRECHT, Frank  
GIESBRECHT, Henry  
GINTER, Peter  
GROENING, Ellen  
KLASSEN, Henry  
KLASSEN, Isaac  
KLASSEN, John  
KROEKER, Abram  
KROEKER, Ben  
LOEPPKY, David  
LOEPPKY, Jacob  
MARTENS, Frank  
MARTENS, John  
MARTENS, Peter  
NIKKEL, George  
PENNER, David  
PENNER, Diedrich  
PENNER, Henry  
PETERS, Abram  
PETERS, Fred  
PETERS, Henry  
PETERS, Lily  
PETERS, Susie  
REIMER, Ernest  
REMPEL, Abram  
ROSNER, Abram  
ROSNER, Bernhardt  
THIESSEN, Cornelius  
THIESSEN, David  
TRINDER, Eric Thomas  
WADE, Allan  
WADE, Neil  
WIEBE, Ed  
WIEBE, George  
WIEBE, Jake  
WIEBE, Peter  
WIENS, Peter  
WHITE, Tom



ABOVE TOP: Georges Saurette was serving in the 25th Field Ambulance Corps which landed in Kiska in the Aleutian Islands in August 1943. Here they are digging holes for their tents.

ABOVE LEFT: The first CWT of sugar after rationing. Les Snarr photo.

RIGHT: "Our corner of the but at noon".

BELOW: District Commander Jake Wiebe of Morris, officiating at Decoration Day services which are held in June to honor the war dead.



# MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS



ABOVE: The once majestic Court House, erected in 1909, the day before demolition started, May 2, 1967.  
BELOW: The new municipal building the day of the official opening Jan. 25, 1968.

## COUNTY COURT HOUSE

Council meetings were held in a number of places, among those were: in the Bay Horse Hotel in Two Little Point, P. Parenteau's Hotel in St. Jean, Cablentz & Co., Commercial Hotel in Morris, Windsor Hotel, in West Lynne, the Orange Hall and in various school houses.

There was a dire need of a building which would house offices for the town and municipality (it was also shared by Montcalm Municipality) and for the storage of records. Though the topic was discussed for many years, it wasn't until 1908 that one acre of land was purchased on Main Street for \$350.00, for the purpose of erecting a building.

In 1909, construction began and an impressive looking stone, 2 storey building was erected, that housed offices on the main floor. A jail cell in the basement held visitors until they could be transferred elsewhere. The second storey was a high ceilinged room with hardwood floors, that was used for community affairs such as band concerts, dances, club meetings, as well as its regular use by the County Court for judicial purposes.

Wide tyndallstone steps and a huge silver dome atop that resembled a divers helmet, immaculately kept grounds that were surrounded by a short iron fence, made this building a memorable landmark.

In 1930, the Womens Institute collected funds to establish a memorial for the war dead in the Morris district, and the cenotaph was erected. Decoration Day services are held on this location annually to commemorate the fallen who gave their lives for their country.

The last meeting was held in the Court House on April 14, 1967, and demolition began May 2, to clear the site



*This building was the centre of activity for the rural municipality of Morris for 58 years. The site of band concerts, picnics, county court, all local government affairs; it managed to weather two major floods. Pictured here in 1950. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

for the erection of a new building. Temporarily, offices were located in the old post office building.

Items found in the cornerstone of the old building included a copy of:

1. The Morris Herald, dated 1909,
2. Manitoba Free Press issue of August 9, 1909,
3. Winnipeg Telegram 1909,



D. M. URE  
LOAN AND INSURANCE AGENT  
LIFE FIRE AIR MARINE INSURANCE

MOKRIS. PIAN. (71) { / ..... 1909

May Peace, Prosperity and  
long life with a happy eternity-  
attend all who have anything  
to do with this building

D. M. URE

ABOVE: Copy of secretary-treasurer greetings in 1909, placed in the cornerstone.

TOP RIGHT: "Don't drop it" moving day in May.

AT RIGHT: Old council chambers being emptied ... the battle-scarred council table at far left.

4. The Toronto Sentinel - Aug. 5, 1909,
5. Manitoba Gazette, 1909.

Also, an auditor's report, 1897 fifty-cent piece, credit note from Chisolm and MacKenzie, a record of the first council meeting in 1882, and a message from the secretary-treasurer, D.M. Ure, "May Peace, Prosperity, and long life with a happy eternity, attend all who have anything to do with this building".



Last council meeting in the old building - April 14, 1967. FROM LEFT: Edmond Saurette, Maurice Ribordy, Ben Klassen, Reeve Charles Anderson, Secretary-treasurer; Dave Harder, George Goossen, Harold Earl, Wm. F. Recksiedler.





*Going, going, - gone. The last of the building being dismantled to make way for the new.*

## NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING

The new building constructed by architect, Hans Peter Langes, was completed by January, 1968, at a cost of \$100,000. Due to good weather, construction was completed ahead of schedule, and the first meeting was held in the Council Chambers, January 2.

Premier Walter Weir cut the ribbon, opening the administration building of the Rural Municipality of Morris, on January 25, with a crowd in attendance.

Guest speakers included Reeve Anderson, Harry Shewman, MLA, Thelma Forbes, Minister of Municipal Affairs.

At a reception following, former Reeves and councillors were honored at a special banquet in the Legion Hall.

The modern 40 x 80 foot brick structure also leases office space to the Morris MacDonald School Division, Morris-Montcalm Weed Control and Department of Agriculture.

## OPENING DAY - JANUARY 25



*Walter Weir, premier of Manitoba, opens the door of the municipal building for the first time.*



*Reeve Charles Anderson accepts the key to the building from architect Hanes Peter Ganges.*



*Former councillors and Reeves attended the opening celebrations. Here LEFT TO RIGHT: Fred Gehring, C.R. Irvine, Leslie Stevenson, Matt Stevenson, Harry Anderson, T.J. Lewis, Henry Snarr.*





*Dave Harder, Secretary-Treasurer, and Alice Loving, Assistant, in their new office.*



*Reeve Charles Anderson sealing a time capsule containing a collection of items for opening in 2070, for Manitoba's second century. Looking on are Harold Earl and Alice Loving.*



*The office building of the Rural Municipality of Morris, built in 1968, at a cost of \$100,000.00*

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING SCHEME

The Municipal Planning Commission was a two fold purpose, a joint effort of town and municipality, appointed in 1968, to investigate the problems of planning in the area, and provide some alternate solutions. Originally, it was a 12 man committee. Representing the municipality were: Jacob W. Brandt, Levi Brandt, Dick B. Eidse, Tony Fast, Wm. Recksiedler, and Gilbert Cretton, with Jerry Lewis as chairman.

This commission came about as a result of problems that plagued municipal councils for years. Individuals were at that time permitted to build any type of structure anywhere they desired, frequently without thought that problems could arise from these decisions. In one case, new schools were being built alongside residences and large barns - it became evident that a planning scheme was needed.

Many of the problems surfaced in the small communities of the municipality. With progress, came a need for more and wider streets and sidewalks. In some instances, structures jut out from the property line, making the building of sidewalks impossible, grain bins were erected so close to a road that they created snow problems in winter. Dwellings erected far from main roads or other neighbours, resulted in a frequent request for gravel and the services of road equipment; large barns were operating in the centre of a residential area, or too near a town, and complaints resulted.

The Municipal Planning Scheme was put into effect on January 1, 1973. At the same time, there was a split with the town and each were responsible for their own planning. Portions of the municipality had been zoned commercial, residential and rural (for agriculture purposes) and many hours were spent dealing with zoning variations to allow residential development, small yard sites and subdivision.

One of the requirements, is the application of a building permit before any structure is erected. The Planning Commission reasons that this measure would assist them to inform individuals of any regulations that may affect them both in the future.

The aims of planning are to encourage the building of dwellings in the residential area, which would enable the municipality to provide more and better services to the residents, that could not be accomplished if the same number of homes were scattered over a large radius. Another aim is the protection of farm lands from outside residential development and prevent barns from encroaching villages.

The importance of good planning has become vital on the flood plains. The flood of 1979 revealed the weaknesses of the past, and the necessity of even more stringent measures, to ensure the safety of residents in the event of high waters.

The expression of the public sector has been for less intervention or "meddling" in the affairs and rights of private individuals, but through co-operation and mutual understanding, the municipal planning commission may effectively strive for progress.



Office staff, past and present. At Left, Alice Loving and Dave Harder, Secretary-Treasurer, in 1956.  
ABOVE: Michael Yakielashek and Alice Loving, Secretary-Treasurer.



Henry and Susan Hildebrand, recipients of a long service award from the municipality.



Dave Harder and Alice Loving, both employed by the R.M. of Morris for over 20 years, at the retirement banquet held for Mr. Harder in 1976.

## STAFF AWARDS

Employees of the Rural Municipality of Morris, who have given 20 years of service and longer are:

Peter H. Klassen	
Jacob H. Kehler	
*Willie Penner	28 years
*Henry Hildebrand	33 years
*Alice Loving	28 years
W.N. Stevenson	29 years
*Dave Harder	23 years

In recent years, presentation of a gold watch is made in recognition of 25 years of service as indicated \*.

For councillors, a plaque is presented upon completion of term in office. Special recognition was given to Maurice Ribordy, who served as councillor for 21 years. Wm. Recksiedler was presented a gold watch at a Christmas banquet in recognition of 25 years in office in December, 1977.



Reeves under which Mr. Harder served. LEFT TO RIGHT: Harold Earl, C. f. Neufeld, Bruce MacKenzie, Dave Harder, Alvin Rempet, Charles Anderson.

# MUNICIPAL EVENTS



Alvin Rempel, at left, presents Dave and Mrs. Harder with a walnut plaque and an \$800.00 "honorarium", commemorating 23 years of service with the municipality as Secretary-Treasurer. A banquet honoring the Harders was held in Morris Legion Hall on January 30, 1976, with many present and former councillors in attendance, paying tribute to Mr. Harder upon his retirement.



"Look what Santa Claus brought!" Christmas in the office 1969.



December, 1974, councillors for the R.M. of Morris toured the Caterpillar Company plant in Peoria, Illinois. They were accompanied by Jim Thurston, a representative of Powell Equipment in Winnipeg, aboard the Company's executive jet. In this picture at the Company's administration building are: BACK ROW, from Left: Ben Wiebe, Jim Thurston, Alvin Rempel, Gilbert Cretton, Deputy Reeve. FRONT ROW: Marcel Caron, Wm. Recksiedler, Harold Earl, Reeve; Anton Fast.



Council's Christmas supper at the Goossen home in 1968. LEFT TO RIGHT: Charles Anderson, Reeve; Gilbert Cretton, Ben Klassen, Wm. Recksiedler. FRONT ROW: George Goossen, Dave Harder, Marcel Caron.



RIGHT: Hydro offered a trip to Gillam in 1978, enjoyed by town and municipal officials. STANDING: Tony Fast, Cliff Mitchell, Bruce Gregory, Barrie Clubb, Bill Fitchett, Robert Rempel. SEATED: Alice Loving, Stan Braun, Wm. Recksiedler.

# EQUIPMENT PAST AND PRESENT



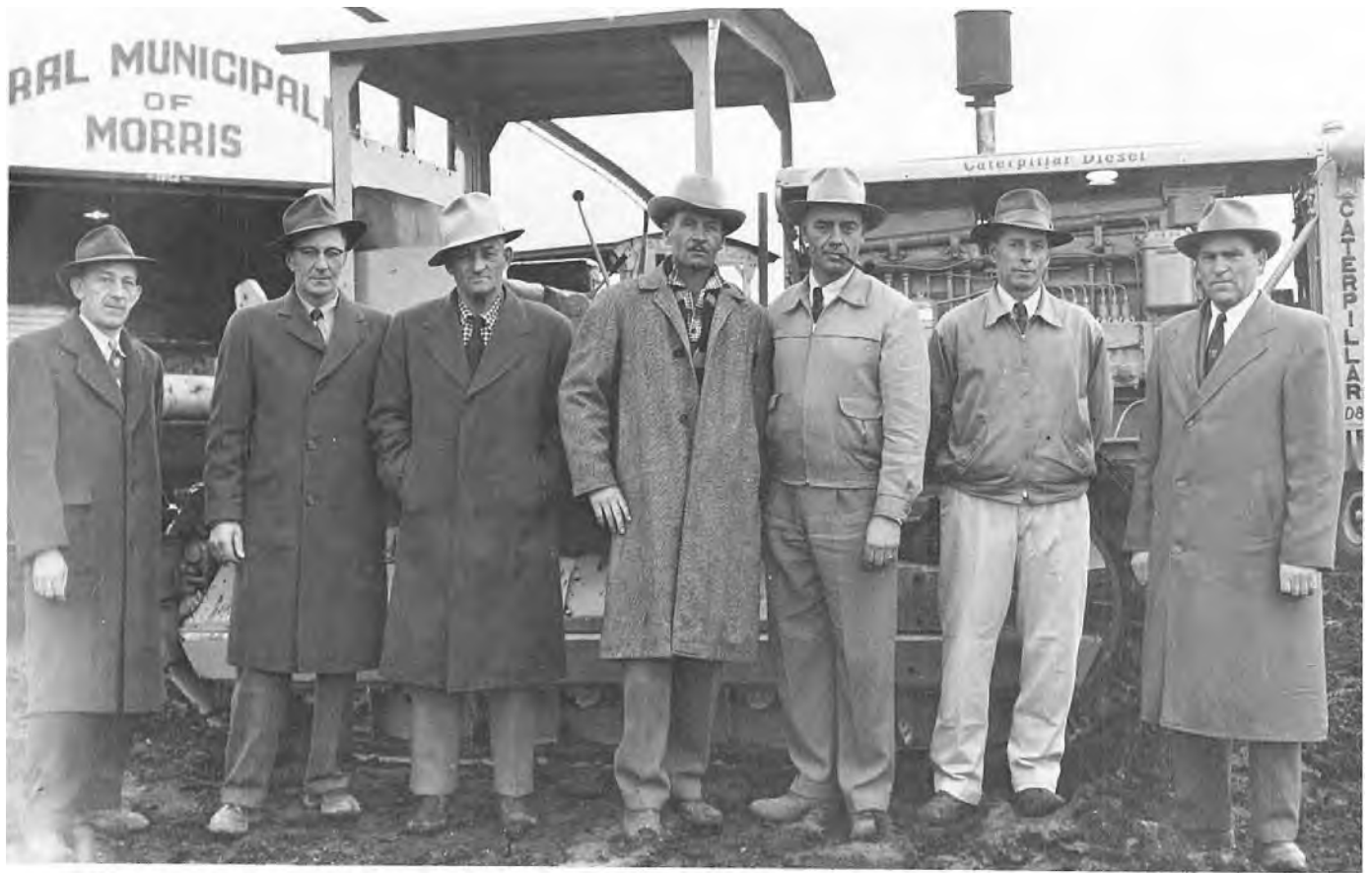
*The equipment of the municipality of Morris in 1954, in front of the municipal shed.*



*The winds may blow - and the snows may fall, but the R.M. of Morris is ready for all! Equipment - 1980. Photo courtesy Scratching River Post.*



*Councillors and Reeves of the R.M. of Morris in 1958, LEFT TO RIGHT: Maurice Ribordy, B. W. Thiessen, C.J. Neufeld, Bruce MacKenzie, Otto Bunkowsky, Bill Schellenberg, Dave Harder, Win. Recksiedler.*



*Members of the municipal council, 1954, when felt hats were "in". LEFT TO RIGHT. Dave Harder, Secretary-Treasurer; Ed Saurette, Otto Bunkowsky, Bruce MacKenzie, C.J. Neufeld, Leslie Stevenson, Wm. Recksiedler.*



*And these are the boys that make it all go! Operators for the patrol, tractors, cats, backhoe, and the bridge crew, as of 1980. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Peter Wiebe, Willie Penner, Jake H. Klassen, Jake L. Rempel, Gary Dyck, Leo Chartier, Peter H. Klassen, Harry Penner. FRONT ROW: Jacob H. Kehler, Abram H. Harder, Henry Hildebrand, Jake F. Klassen, Tony Rose.*





*The "gang" in 1954. FRONT ROW, Left to Right: Dave Harder, Otto Bunkowsky, C.J. Neufeld, Bruce MacKenzie, Ed Saurette, Leslie Stevenson, Willie Recksiedler. SECOND ROW: Henry Doell, Henry Buhr, William Friesen, Henry Hildebrand, Jacob Penner, Isaac Klassen, John Giesbrecht and Peter Kroeker. BACK ROW: Willie Penner, Henry Ginter, Peter Klassen, Elmer Rempel, Henry Peters.*

## FLASHES FROM MUNICIPAL BONSPIELS



*The Champs! Trophy winners in one of the first municipal bonspiels, held in the 1950's. "Sweeping" into victory were, LEFT TO RIGHT: Comie Neufeld, **Willie** Recksiedler, Dave Harder, Ed Saurette.*





*His name is Swain, he knows the game,  
You see what he has won?!!*



*When Sperling's honour is at stake, these guys know what to do,  
They threw those rocks, and swept that ice ... they got that trophy,  
too!*



*This cup is not silver, but it's better than you think,  
These four won a prize, from which they can drink!*



*These lassies come to curl, to cheer; if may be either one;  
One thing is sure, as we can see, they sure are having fun!*

## MUNICIPAL BONSPIEL

In an effort to encourage social events in the municipality, and promote curling, the Rural Municipality of Morris began in 1954 to feature a municipal trophy for curling.

Each curling club in the municipality could challenge the trophy every two weeks. Curlers from Sewell, Lowe Farm, Sperling, Rosenort and Aubigny, participated, and the trophy travelled with the winners all over the municipality.

Two years later, it was decided to make this a one day annual event. A minimum of 16 rinks are accepted, with two or three rinks from each ward. Prizes for the two events are donated by the machinery companies from whom the Rural Municipality purchases,

The large trophy is kept by the winning rink for one year, and returned for the next bonspiel. All winners' names are engraved on the trophy.

From the time the first rock is thrown at 9 a.m., till the last draw at 7 p.m., there is action. The ladies contribute to the event by preparing mounds of food for the hungry curlers at noon, and for supper, frequently using the Morris Legion Hall.

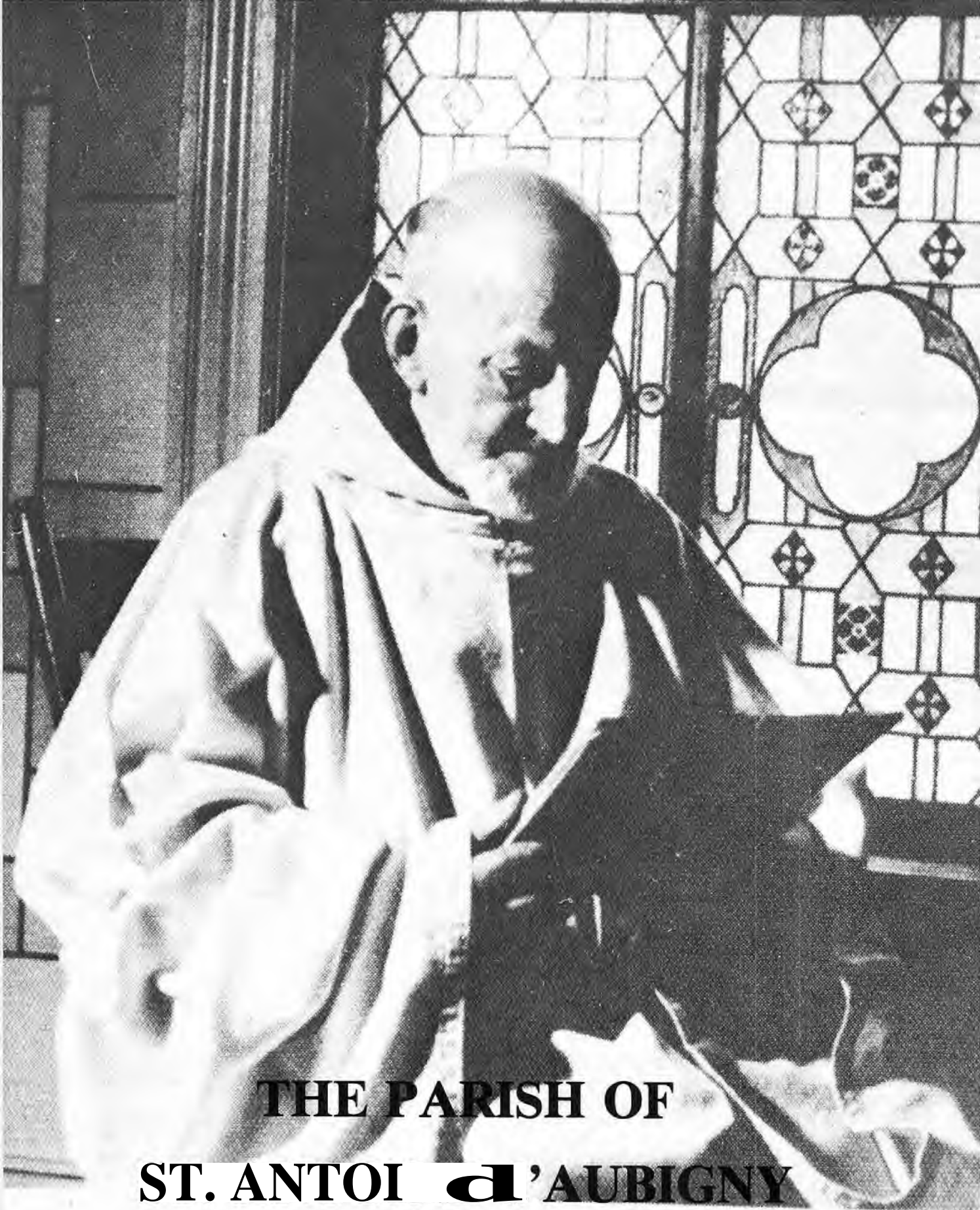
Entertainment headquarters is the "Crowbar Lounge", located in the Municipal shed. Word has it, that most of the action happens there,

After the last game, when winners are announced, trophies presented, and the participants rest their weary bones, they "shoot the breeze", and anticipate how well they'll do next year.

# PIONEER CEMETERY



*These graves located on the site of the former Presbyterian church south of Morris along highway No. 75. They were marked by a granite rock to preserve the resting place of these pioneers, on the former Moody farm. Photo by Barbara Shewchuk,*



**THE PARISH OF  
ST. ANTOIN d'AUBIGNY**

**1903-1980**

## AUBIGNY

Aubigny is a small village nestled on the east side of the Red River, along St. Mary's Road, that has a historical record that goes back over 100 years.

Before the name of Aubigny was chosen, it was known as 'La Grande Point de la Saline', which translated would mean 'The large point of salt marsh'.



*Count Antoine d'Aubigny, a French nobleman. After he came to Canada, he decided to become a Trappist monk. The parish of St. Antoine d'Aubigny was just one of the number that were founded with his wealth.*

Aubigny was so named in 1903, after the Count Antoine d'Aubigny, a rich Frenchman who became a Trappist monk, left his money to establish a mission in Manitoba.

The first settlers who arrived in 1877 from New Hampshire, U.S.A. were the Chartier and Hebert families. They travelled down the Red River on boats, bringing along with them wood, for building their houses. They took possession of River Lots 447 and 441, respectively. Their descendants are still living on Lot 447, 100 years later. The oldest child arriving with these two families was Marguerite Hebert. Later, she married Prosper Berthelette, who was a native of this area. She lived in Aubigny all her life, and raised a large family.

Before the arrival of these settlers, this area was inhabited by some Metis families, the Berthelette, Lariviere, Desmarais, Laplante and Boudrault, who had taken possession of some lots as 'squatters', meaning that they had no official rights to their land. Many of these families had to find other homes when the government sold their lands to the newcomers.

During the 1880's, families by the names of Decelles, Robert, Pelland, Millette, Roy, Mousseau, Clyne, Laferriere, St. Jacques, St. Onge, Bessette, Verrier, L'Heureux, Perreault, Clament, Fisette, Bouchard, Girouard, Ouimet, arrived from Eastern Canada. These families belonged to the Parish of Ste. Agathe, and often walked to church there on Sunday, to attend mass.

The first post office in Aubigny was opened in 1885, with Henri Mousseau acting as postman. He carried the bag of mail on his shoulders from the railroad to Aubigny once a week. In 1900, the west side of the Red River got its post office and became known as Silver Plains. This post office was closed on June 24, 1970.

River lot 448, where the church, rectory hall, credit union and some 12 homes stand, had been donated by Jos Perreault.



*Aubigny's first church from 1903-1932 and the first rectory from 1903-1931.*

### "The Parish and Its Priests"



*Father Mathias Desrosiers, who was the founding priest of the R.C. parish of Aubigny in 1903. When he left Aubigny in 1919, he went to St. Jean Baptiste.*

The parish of St. Antoine d'Aubigny, was founded in 1903 and given the name of a rich Frenchman, the Count Antoine d'Aubigny. He became a Trappist monk at St. Norbert, and had left money to help open a mission in Manitoba.

The first priest to reside in Aubigny was Father Mathias Desrosiers. He spent the winter of 1903-1904 at the home of Alfred Chartier, celebrating mass in their home. In the spring of 1904, a church and rectory were built on the same lot as the present church, but slightly to the east. This first church was later used as a parish hall, while the rectory served as a convent from 1932 until 1967. This is now the Liddles' residence.

When Father Desrosiers took the census of his parish in 1903, he counted 32 families made up of 255 persons. He encouraged farming and owned the first steam engine and plow in the area.

Father J.A. Beaudry spent 26 years in the Aubigny parish. From 1919 till 1927, 1928 to 1945 and again in 1948 until 1950. On one of his absences (1927-1928), Father Beaudry announced that he was going down east (probably Quebec) to encourage families to settle in the Aubigny area.



*Father J.A. Beaudry, was parish priest in Aubigny for 26 years. He arrived in Aubigny in 1919.*

During 1927-1928, Father Normandeau took charge of the parish. He was an outdoor lover and a great sportsman. Under his leadership, the whole community got interested in horse racing and dog races on the Red River during the winter.

A period of construction began during the years 1928 until 1945, when Father Beaudry returned. The old rectory was given to the Sisters for use as a convent, with a new rectory being built in 1931, followed by a new church, in 1932.



*The Aubigny Roman catholic Church and the rectory were both built in 1932 and destroyed by the tornado on June 19, 1978.*

When Father Beaudry left for a much needed rest (1945-1948), he was replaced by Father Gauvin and later by Father Garant. During 1948-1950, Father Beaudry returned to Aubigny to put the finishing touches to his

beloved church, and remained to see it being consecrated in a beautiful ceremony.

That year, the Red River started rising till it covered almost every acre of the parish. People had to be evacuated to higher ground. Father Beaudry was in ill health and could not do all he would have liked for his parishioners. Life finally returned to normal. It was soon after this period of stress that Father Francois Normandin became pastor of the parish (1950-1956). He arrived with great plans for improvement. He convinced the people that a big hall should be built, which changed the outlook of the small village. In his honor, the building was named Normandin Hall.



*Normandin Hall being built in Aubigny in 1951.*



*The Way of the Cross is being installed in the R.C. church at Aubigny in 1954, Bishop Maurice Baudoux is officiating, accompanied by Father Normandin. Facing is Maurice Kenny, now of Ottawa.*

Father Normandin worked hard to beautify the environment of the church, rectory, hall and cemetery, by planting lawns and buildings sidewalks.

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the parish was held in 1953. Father Nor-



mandin made it a day to remember. Mass was celebrated by Bishop Baudoux, who was accompanied by many priests. A new Station of the Cross was installed in the church. The Morris band paraded in the Village, then entering the hall where a banquet was being served. Many honored guests were present, including religious dignitaries, the reeve of the Municipality, the councillors, members of parliament and numerous visitors. Music was played, and songs were sung, including a ballad rendered by a girls' chorus from Bourret School.

On its fiftieth anniversary, the parish of Aubigny counted 60 families, an increase of only 28 since its foundation in 1903.

Father Bouvet arrived in 1956, but not enjoying good health, he was replaced two years later by Father Robert Nadeau.

This young priest, full of enthusiasm and with a generous heart, became popular among young and old. He spent most of his time with the school children, introducing them to the Boy Scouts movement. Father Nadeau encouraged the founding of the credit union in 1961. When he left in 1965, Father Jean Louis Caron became pastor. He was especially noted for his marvellous singing voice and his great talent as a musician. He did much to promote religious choirs, not only in Aubigny, but also in the surrounding parishes.

When Father Caron left Aubigny in 1968 to further his musical studies, he was succeeded by Father Paul Deschenes. He undertook the task of renovating the interior of Normandin Hall. Father Paul Emile Boisjoli became the priest in Aubigny in the fall of 1970. He met with a serious car accident shortly after his arrival and was an invalid for six months. He stayed on for five years, making many friends. They were sad to see him leave for Holland, Manitoba.



*Finishing touches to the reconstruction of the church after the tornado.*



*God's house fully restored in Jan. 1979.*

Father Lionel Thibault thought he would spend very quiet years in the small parish of Aubigny, but found himself right in the midst of reconstruction project after the worst disaster ever, the tornado of June 19, 1978. In December, 1978, the parish of St. Antoine d'Aubigny marked its 75th anniversary. At that time, 56 Catholic families worshipped here, a slight decrease in the past 25 years.

↓



*A new building was moved in the fall of 1978 to replace the damaged rectory.*

The Army of Mary, a spiritual movement, was founded firstly in the east on August 28, 1971 at the sanctuary of Our Lady of Lac Etchemin, in the county of Dorchester, Quebec.

From the Eastern Province, centers of spiritual animation spread rapidly. Providentially, we heard the call from our Heavenly Mother and thus, during the month of May, 1974, the "Army of Mary" was founded in the parish of Aubigny, Manitoba. Father Boisjoli, the parish pastor at that time, knowing the spiritual benefits of such a movement, encouraged the commitment to this movement.

Everyone who enrolls in the Army of Mary must be totally convinced of his need to wage war upon his



passions by an interior reform and to live in close union with Jesus.

He who consecrates himself to this movement must develop a spirit of constant prayer, attend Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion as often as possible, life by Faith, Hope and Charity into Him by the Holy Spirit and observe the 10 Commandments, etc.

Persons are encouraged to take 15 minutes at least, each day for spiritual reading; mainly the Bible and recite the beads daily.

In conclusion, the spirit of the program of the Army of Mary is "To render Mary present here on earth by a life of sanctity ever closer to her own, to hasten the reign of Her Immaculate Heart and the Advent of Her Divine Son."

.00+0°-



*This building, constructed by Théodule Marcoux in 1930, served as store, Post Office, and residence. Last owner was Norbert Deurbrouck, when the building was destroyed by fire.*

## "Stores"

The early settlers learned to get along with what they produced at home, but nevertheless, country stores helped to make life somewhat more bearable.

The first store in Aubigny belonged to a Mr. Desjardin and was situated just north of Marcel Caron's house. The next one belonged to Jos Perreault, who also had the post office. In the following years, other storekeepers were: Elie St. Jacques, Jos Pelland, Theodule Marcoux (1920-1944), George Lavack, Antonio Malo, Michel Clemont, Albert Hebert, Armand Mousseau, L.J. Robert, Henry Ouimet, George Alarie, Adrien Bessette, Alfred Saurette, P. Garipey, Andy Champagne, Gaspard Berard, Ovide Robert, Norbert Derbrouck, Lelan Hayes and the present storekeeper and postmaster, Phil Bouchard (since March, 1967).

For many years, there were two, sometimes three stores in the village of Aubigny, but in the last few years, there is only one, and that was almost completely destroyed by the tornado of June 19, 1978. (It has been completely repaired and remodelled since.)



*Aubigny village in the early '30's. Showing two stores, a blacksmith shop, at far right, Alfred Saurette's residence. Rectory in the foreground.*

## "Bourret School"

The parents, assisted by Father Bourret, who was in charge of the parish of Ste. Agathe, opened a school on River Lot 461, in 1891, giving it the name of Bourret School. It also served as a chapel, where Father Bourret came to celebrate mass.

In those years, Manitoba had a school system comprising both of Catholic and Protestant schools. Bourret was the Catholic school for the area, while Union Point was the Protestant school. This is the reason the Grattons and Ouimets of Union Point came to the Bourret School.

During the first years, there was a room for the teacher upstairs above the classroom. It is believed that this school building was moved across the coulee which runs through the St. Onge farm. This school was remodelled and enlarged a couple of times, but it was always only a one-room elementary school with as many as 40 pupils. It was heated by a large wood stove standing in the middle



*This Bourret School. Teachers 1900-1957 were: Mrs. Abrin, Miss Gilbert, Miss Marcoile, Marie Louise Boileau, Blanche Boileau, Solange Desautels, Leonie Danduram, Pierre Frossait, Blanche Charbonneau, Paul Sicotte, Mary Neil, Leonie Guyot, Augustine Simon, Yvonne Desaulniers, Blanche Kenny, Marcelle Lemaire, Alicia Dupuis, Georgette Lavack, Simone Carriere, Armande Grafton, Marie Damphouse, Cecile Gagne, Angeline Kerbrat, Isabelle Desrochers, Eveline Dufault, LiHaile Landry.*



*Community picnic at the end of the school year at Bourret School in the early 1900's. Father Desrosiers in centre.*

of the floor, so that some pupils would roast, while others froze, depending on where your bench stood.

During the first half of the century, every summer there would be picnics, to which all the community - young and old - would be invited. In winter time, there was a skating rink on the river, downhill from the school and that was the centre of activity. There was also a well iced hill for toboggan sliding. The youngsters and teenagers didn't mind the long walk up the hill, as they anticipated the fun of crowing into the sleds and sliding down again. At times, there were spills and crashes, as the path the slide had to wind its way through and around tree stumps! There were also sore bottoms and worn out pants for the mothers to repair.

The young men organized a hockey club that made quite a reputation for itself among the surrounding villages.

In the late 1920's there was horse racing on the ice of the Red River near Bourret School, implemented by Father Normandeau. He had a fine race horse, which he liked to test against the horses of some of his parishioners. While the men raced their horses, the young boys raced their dogs, hitched to sleds or toboggans. People found ways to amuse themselves, in spite of the lack of money.



*Young boys raced their dogs on the Red River opposite Bourret School in 1927.*

Thus, Bourret School played an important part in the life of the community until 1957, when consolidation forced the closing of so many country schools.

When the district was dissolved, some of the pupils went to school in the Village of Aubigny, while others went to Ste. Agathe School.



*Aubigny in 1910 showing Provencher School **in right** foreground, Octave Roy's residence, left foreground, Gustave Bouchard's home in centre, background present home of Leo Slock.*

## Provencher School

Around 1900, the Provencher School District was formed on the east side of the Red River.

The first location of the school was on the spot where Normandin Hall now stands. At one time, the house which is now the Clae's residence, served as a school for the children. Later on, a two room building was erected on the east side of St. Mary's Road, where the home of



*St. Patrick's Day celebration at Provencher School in 1929. Teacher, Leonie Guyot at left, back row.*

Jos. H. Ritchot now stands. In 1939, a new and bigger school was built on the west side of St. Mary's road, right next to the convent.



*Digging of the basement for last Provencher School in 1939.*



*ABOVE: Provencher School in Aubigny.*

*FAR RIGHT Upon the closure of the school, the pupils and some parents were treated to a ride in a DC9 over the community.*



*Sister Berthe St. Joseph and her class of 63-64.*

A great many lay teachers have taught in the old Provencher Schools, but in 1932, three Sisters of the Cross arrived to take over the school. They were Sister Adile, Sister Marie St. Aubin and Sister Berthe St. Jean. The sisters were given the former rectory, which served as a convent. Soon others came to join them or to replace the ones who had to leave for other work. Besides teaching school, they had a few boarders, they taught music, visited and nursed the sick, cleaned the church sanctuary, directed the church choir, prepared concerts for Christmas, Mothers' Day, or other special occasions.



*Church choir in Aubigny in 1940. Sister Claire Bernadette is leading the choir.*

It was a Sister of the Cross, Sister Eugene St. Jean, who painted the mural that is still being admired by visitors entering Normandin Hall. It is a work of art, that will remain as a token of the presence of the Sisters in Aubigny.



In 1968, the people got the sad news that the Sisters would be leaving Aubigny, after 36 years of sharing happy and tragic moments, not only with their pupils, but with every family in the parish.

To express their devotion to the Sisters, in July, 1968, a celebration was organized by the ladies of L.F.C. to which all the sisters who had ever worked in Aubigny were invited. The hall was overflowing with people, wanting to express their gratitude to their beloved Sisters.

The following September, Provencher School did not open its doors, and the pupils had to be bussed to other places.



A new ferry arrives at the Aubigny crossing in 1945.

### "Ferry and Bridge"

Since the days of the first settlers, the Red River presented an obstacle to the communication between the people on the east side and those on the west bank. A ferry was first installed between river lots 456 and 457.

Notes taken from the books of the R.M. of Morris, reveal that in 1884, a request was made for a ferry three miles south of Union Point. This first ferry, which was known as Mousseau's ferry, was moved in 1891, one mile south, opposite the Chartier land. That year, the operator was Hyacinthe Mousseau. He received a salary of \$20.00 a month to operate the ferry from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. A list of fees for the use of the ferry was set as follows:

foot passengers	
team and wagon	20¢
horse and buggy	15¢
cattle	5¢ a head



Aubigny ferry being removed from the water of the Red River for the winter.

In 1920, Manitoba Bridge and Iron Works sold a steel ferry with power mechanism to the R.M. of Morris for \$4,651.00, but it is not indicated whether this was for Aubigny or Union Point.

Over the years, there have been many ferry operators. Some of those for Aubigny were: Henri Mousseau, George, Adrien and Leon Bouchard, Romain, Auguste and J. Paul Berthelette, Joseph Touchette, Ulysse St. Jacques, Adelard Hebert, Jos H. Ritchot, Marius Robert, Theo Berard, Jos and Leo Chartier.

According to municipal records, in 1914, ferry men were paid \$40.00 a month. In 1924, they received \$60.00 a month for their arduous task. In 1930, when John (Baptiste) Berthelette died, he had been ferry man at Union Point for 20 years. Other ferry men in Union Point were Alphonse Berthelette and Charles Perreault.



In 1948, the maintainer sank through the ice. A tripod winch was used to pull it out.

In 1944, Sherbrook Motors replaced the ferry in Aubigny. That same year, a mishap occurred, when two gravel trucks fell off the ferry at Aubigny. In 1948, when the maintainer went through the ice, divers were sent down with chains to attach to the machine so it could be hauled out.

In 1962, after three teenagers were drowned, the municipality asked the province for a bridge. On May 8, 1964, construction on Aubigny bridge commenced. The last ferry operators were Leo and Jos Chartier.



Crossing the Red River at Aubigny in September, 1962.



*A ferry slowly sinking in 1963.*

### **"On Ferry Longest"**

Ulysse St. Jacques stands out among the names of the ferry operators because he ran the ferry for the longest period of time. From March, till freeze up, he was on duty, eating and sleeping there. Prior to his death in 1965, he often spoke of the time the ferry sank in 1944. Two heavily laden gravel trucks pulled on the ferry, behind a family car, proved to be too heavy, so that when the car drove off, the ferry capsized. Fortunately, no one was drowned.

During the months that followed, all crossing had to be done by row boat. This included not only passengers, but often a cargo of egg crates or cream cans, and was strenuous work for the ferry operator.

Another unhappy incident was the drowning of a few teams of horses, but the greatest tragedy was the drowning of three young people on June 15, 1957, when the brakes on their car failed, sending the car and its occupants through the guard chain and into 20 feet of water.



*The last ferry being moved away to Cypress River, thus bringing the ferry era to an end in 1965.*

### **"New Bridge Replaces Ferry"**

It was in September, 1966, that the improvement for which everyone had been waiting years for, finally took place. It was the cutting of the ribbon across the bridge spanning the Red River at Aubigny. This was an occasion of great rejoicing, marked with a banquet and a social evening in Normandin Hall.



*Official opening of the Aubigny bridge in September, 1966.*

The construction of this bridge became a milestone in the minds of many people. Events are still referred to as being 'before the bridge' or 'after the bridge'. But the last ferry was not laid to rest, it was sold to the R.M. of South Cypress. Thus, an end came to the 'era of the ferry', something that the old timers will remember forever, but that the young generation may never fully understand. With the building of the bridge, the water barrier that had always existed between the east and the west of the parish had at last been conquered.



*The water barrier between east and west conquered.*

### **"1950 Flood"**

In the spring of 1950, the life of the community was disrupted by the greatest flood in living memory. The centre of the village remained dry, but most farm buildings and farm lands were inundated. All roads leading to Aubigny were underwater, so that the people who had taken refuge there had to be removed by army boats, then transferred to trucks and finally evacuated by train.

The Red Cross found shelter for those who weren't taken in by relatives who lived away from the Red River Valley. Several families were taken to Dauphin and settled in cottages near the beach. A few men stayed



*Red Cross boat  
evacuating families  
from Aubigny in 1950  
flood.*

behind, attempting to save their livestock. It was strenuous work, plus the discomfort of being cold and wet most of the time.

In May, the weather receded and the families returned to clean up or rebuild. Some land was soaked for so long that those fields were not seeded. This meant no crops - therefore, no income and no money to repair the buildings that had been ruined.

## **TORNADO**

### **12 MINUTES OF DISASTER**



*The powerful force of nature at hand. This tornado struck Aubigny on June 19, 1978 leaving behind mass destruction. This photo taken by Doug Penner, Editor and Publisher of Scratching River Post, won a newspaper award in 1979.*



*The Credit Union, left, the Deurbrouck's home, right, after tornado.*



June 19, 1979 began as an ordinary day, with people carrying on their normal activities. No one noticed the darkening of the sky towards the south, around 5 o'clock. Those who did thought they would have a downpour and strong winds, as it was very hot. Towards 5:15 p.m., those who were in open fields became concerned about this strange looking funnel shaped cloud. Some rushed towards their homes or families. A few gathered their families in a car and decided to ride away from this menace. Others ran for their cameras to take a picture of this dreadful cloud before it came too near. There were some who felt that there was something in the air even before seeing the funnel cloud. Everything became so quiet. Not a rustle of leaves or grass, no chirping of insects or birds, no animal moving. It was an absolute calm in the gathering darkness. Clocks stopped at 5:25 when electric wires snapped.

About 12 minutes later, people started getting up and wondering what had hit them, and looking to see if they were all alive. Some had taken shelter in their basements. Others were caught off guard and just threw themselves to the floor or were thrown against the walls, when the windows were smashed.



*The inside of Leon Palud's home.*



*The church steeple ripped off.*

About three-quarters of the buildings in Aubigny village, including the church, post office, credit union, were damaged or destroyed. Some houses were flattened, several lost all or part of their roofs or were moved off their foundations. In others, entire walls were ripped away. Some buildings were torn and battered by flying debris. The church steeple and bell tower were down. An



*The pottery Ideal Electric.*

empty school bus was picked up and thrown about 200 feet, landing on its roof. Most cars and trucks had windows, top and hoods smashed.

Nineteen persons were treated in Morris hospital but none seriously hurt. The homeless families moved in with friends and neighbours.

By 8:00 that same evening, help was being organized. Hydro and telephone crews were repairing uprooted poles and downed lines. The Mennonite Disaster Service was in the town assessing the damage. The next morning, about 250 persons arrived, some with trucks and front end loaders. The debris was removed and the houses with the least damage were repaired immediately, so that families could move back in. The R.C.M.P. had to put up road blocks to prevent sightseers from interfering with the work.



*The Maurice Vermette family salvaged some of their possessions.*

The only major building in town that was not seriously damaged was Normandin Hall, thus it became the headquarters for organizing work crews and for the distribution of meals and clothing. People from all the surrounding parishes were most generous and helpful. The Ligue des Femmes Catholiques and the Mennonite ladies worked hand in hand for three weeks, bringing ready cooked meals for all workers as well as those families whose homes were being repaired.

Premier Lyon came by helicopter to survey the damage in town, however, no help came from either federal or provincial sources. Most of the buildings had some type of insurance, which covered a good part of the damage, and donations came from E.M.O. and many other companies as well as individual benefactors.

The Aubigny Disaster Fund was organized and from donations received, the Fund distributed about \$8,400.00 to the stricken families.

Reparing the church was the most expensive undertaking, which is not completed as yet. The insurance covered part of the damage, and donations came from the neighbouring predominantly Catholic parishes, so that the parish of Aubigny won't be left with a very great deficit.



*The George St. Hilaire new machine shed after being hit by the tornado.*

The tornado which followed an irregular north-east path, crossed the Red River near the George St. Hilaire and Fred Landry farms. It did much damage to barns, granaries, shelter belts, flattened a machine shed and removed shingles on the houses. Then it came to St. Mary's Road and seemed to follow the road, ripping away at the buildings on both sides of the road, starting with Palud Farm, the homes of Edna Palud, Louis Palud, Gabe Roy, Leon Palud, Adelard Ouimet, Marcel Caron, George and Mike Allan, Aug. Berthelette, Joe Desjarlais, John Liddle, Jos. H. Ritchot, Maurice Vermette, The Roman Catholic Church, the Rectory, Phil's General Store, Stan Robert, Norbert Derbrouck, Guy Chartier, Phil Bouchard, Ernie Thomasson, Tom Dodd, the Credit Union and Emile Pelland. It then kept on in an erratic north-easterly direction, doing damage here and there as far as Ste. Anne.



*The twisting cloud as seen from a distance.*

In spite of this terrible upheaval, life went on. People may be better Christians because of what they lived through. According to the words spoken by the priest, Father Lionel Thibault, "God talked to us through the tornado. He gave us a message." Even though the church was severely damaged, many sacred objects were left untouched. The tabernacle was not disturbed, most of the statues remained standing, even a rosary in a statue's hand remained intact.

It took more than seven months before the church could be opened again for services. Meanwhile the religious ceremonies had to be performed in Normandin Hall. On February 7, 1979, the official re-opening of the renewed church was celebrated by a high mass by Bishop Antoine Hacault, accompanied by five priests who concelebrated with him. The theme for this ceremony was one of thanks: to the Lord who taketh away, then giveth back ten fold; to the people of the surrounding towns who rushed in to help the victims; to different organizations such as the Mennonite Disaster Service, the Ligue des Femmes Catholiques, Lions Club, EMO, and to all the good people who sent in donations or helped by praying to the Lord on behalf of those stricken ones.

After mass, a meal was served in Normandin Hall by the ladies of the L.F.C. to conclude the celebration of thanks.



*The blackening menace is approaching.*

## AUBIGNY INDUSTRIES

Farming has been a way of life for most people of this region since the early settlers broke the prairie sod, but some related industries developed, besides farming.

In the early 1900's, there was a cheese factory owned by Ben Ladouceur on the site of Claes' residence. Whether it was the same cheese factory or not is unknown, but later, there was a cheese factory about two miles south of the Aubigny-Silver Plains road, not far from the C.N.R. track.

A butchering plant, owned by the Laferriere brothers, operated first by Wilfrid Laferriere on the west side of the Red River, then by Donia Laferriere, east of the Red River, about a quarter mile from the ferry.

A beef feedlot emerged, started by Father M. Desrosiers, and a Mr. Trembley, where they kept some 150 steers just east of the Red River, near the ferry road.

The needs of the farmers called for blacksmiths. It seems that the same Jos. Perreault who later became store keeper and postmaster, had a small blacksmith shop not far from where the church now stands. Later, during the 1920's Ildege Miron set up a blacksmith shop, which had been moved from the Miron's farm to the village of Aubigny just about where the Caisse Populaire now stands. About 1930, this same blacksmith shop was rented to Philias Godard, who later built his own shop and did blacksmith work as well as carpentry until he retired (in about 1965). This trade has disappeared completely in Aubigny. Most modern farmers have their own welders to do odd repair jobs while the really complicated work is done by experts in machine shops in bigger towns.

When all travelling was done with horses, there was a need for livery stables and boarding houses. In Aubigny, it was Mr. and Mrs. Octave Roy Sr. who looked after travellers. Mrs. Rose Alma Roy, who was still quite young when she became a widow, took in boarders, such as the school teachers and the bank employees for a few years (1920-22).



*Aubigny's first transfer owned by Alfred and George Saurette loaded with 72 inch culverts for road 246 north of Aubigny in 1940.*

There was a branch of the Bank of Hochelaga in the store until it burned in 1922. This bank was operated by Miss Berthilde Robert, who was the head of the Ste. Agathe branch. She came to Aubigny to train personnel, one of these being Cecile St. Jacques.



*Marcel Caron started his business in a rented garage in Aubigny in 1944.*



*Marcel Caron built a new garage in 1954.*

With the dawning of the age of motor vehicles, came the need for garages. The first garage in Aubigny was that of Jos. Asselin on the spot where Normandin Hall now stands. Marcel Caron had a garage from 1944 till 1973 - he had to close on account of his health, but the building is still standing, just north of the store. In 1975, Hans Schnurrer opened a garage under the name of Hand M Auto, in the farm yard of his father-in-law, about a mile north of the Aubigny Bridge road.

### Ideal Electric

Another industry that started in Aubigny is Ideal Electric, which manufactures lamps. It was established by David Gruber in the former Provencher School in December, 1968.



*Florent Chartier is casting in the basement of Ideal Electric lamp factory.*



*Simone Caron sanding and patching rough edges, holes, etc.*



*Betty Landry and Mary Jane Guillou putting up lanterns.*



*Denise Robert in paint room sanding ginger jars before putting on finishing coats of paint.*



*Connie Bouchard, Julie Vermette and Arlene Baldwin putting up lamp fixtures.*



*Marlette Chartier setting freshly painted lamps on the floor.*

They manufacture lamps from plaster, (which is called Hydrocal) some from glass, metal and wood.

Their products are sold mainly in Western Canada, but some are also being sent East. They are sold to Retail and department stores and private concerns, Canada-wide.

It provides work for about 12 ladies and a couple of men. At present, the owner is thinking of expanding, so the future looks quite promising.

## CAISSE POPULAIRE

An important business function in the community is the Caisse Populaire that was founded in April, 1961. It has greatly contributed to the financial welfare of the area.

Rev. R. Nadeau, who was the priest in Aubigny, did all he could to encourage this organization. For the first two years, it operated out of the rectory, where it had its office. Then in 1963, the success warranted the building of an office. This building was all but destroyed by the tornado of June 19, 1978, but it has been completely repaired and modernized.

The first manager was Mrs. Eva Guillou, who donated her services for the first few years to help the business get rolling. She was replaced in February, 1975, by Mrs. Suzanne Richard.

The presidents of the Caisse Populaire during its 18 years history have been first, James Ritchot (1961-63), then Adrian Pelland (1963-69), Rene Vermette (1969-74), Jules Sorin (1974-75) and Leon Palud (1975-79). Rene Vermette is presently president.

Assets in December 1961, were \$69,562.01 and 17 years later, December, 1978, were \$770,586.60. A sure indication of growth and support of the surrounding community, which it serves.



## Western Gypsum Mine

Up until the summer of 1962, nobody knew that there was anything except mud beneath the rich black soil of the Red River Valley. That summer, a group of engineers, hired by Western Gypsum Ltd., began sinking diamond drill shafts along the valley. Just across the river from Aubigny, close to Silver Plains, they located a fabulous deposit of gypsum rock at a level just 150 feet below the surface.

It took until 1964 to get the mine constructed (on Florent Chartier's land) and into operation. At its peak, the mine produced 120,000 tons a year of crushed gypsum for industry all over Western Canada.

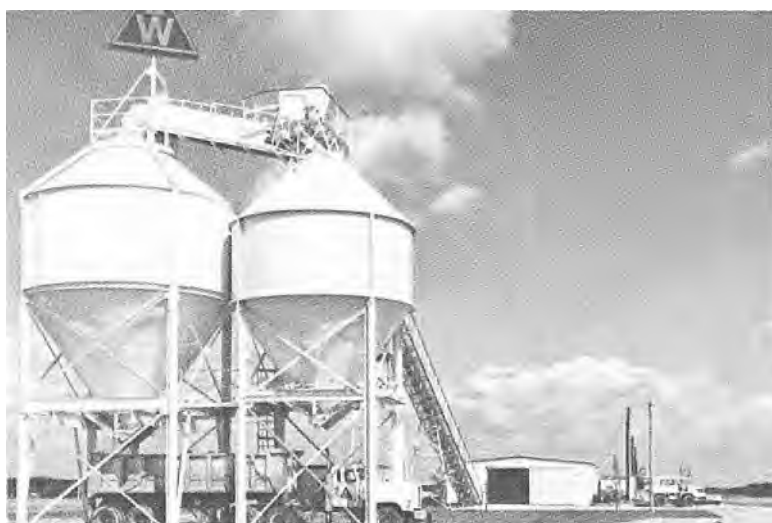
Located just eight miles north of Morris, the mine produced gypsum for the manufacture of hundreds of

thousands of square feet of wallboard, stucco, plaster, commercial fertilizer, and as an additive to dry cement.

Gypsum was in growing demand as a base for roads, particularly in wet weather. Since gypsum is unaffected by weather, it packs down hard as concrete. Many municipalities and towns were using it to help in building streets and roads.

Unsuspected by the passing motorist, the Silver Plains mine encompassed a gigantic network of underground caverns, hollowed out of the pinkish coloured gypsum rock far beneath the surface. Since gypsum rock is of fairly hard quality, there was little danger of a cave in, and no "shoring" was needed as is used in gold or coal mines.

With the help of three pieces of equipment, twelve men did all the work at that mine, providing employment for the surrounding area. After the rock was blasted off the



*On August 9, 1965, Manitoba Premier Duff Roblin officially opened Silver Plains Gypsum mine which had been developed and brought into production by Western Gypsum. Among those attending the official opening ceremonies were R.S. Jukes, Chairman of BPB Industries, Manitoba mines Minister, Sterling Lyon, and Industry Minister, Gurney Evans.*



*This photo taken from the mine building shows the homes of Leo and Florent Chartier as well as the Chartier ancestral home. In the background is the A ubigny R.C. Church.*

rock face, it was unloaded onto a shuttle car, transported to the crusher, and conveyed into large overhead hoppers. These hoppers were the only part of the mining operation seen on the surface, located just off the No. 75 highway. Large dump trucks filled their boxes at the hoppers and delivered the crushed gypsum to plants all over the country.

Temperature underground remained a static 43 degrees year round, and was an almost ideal temperature for the men working in the mine.

It was felt that the supply of gypsum underground would keep the mine operating for the next 30 - 40 years, but this was not the case. In 1975, water began to seep into the mine. For several months it was controlled, but on one occasion, there was a rapid rise of water, flooding the shafts and passages, causing danger to the miners, and necessitating the removal of all equipment. The mine closed on June 16, 1975, the end of an industry that harvested the riches beneath the soil of the Red River Valley.



*Water flooding the shafts.*



## ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS

The Ligue des Femmes Catholiques started in 1964, replacing the only other ladies' movement, the Association of the Dames de Ste. Anne. Since its foundation, the L.F.C. has always worked for the welfare of the parish, whether it be spiritually, socially or financially.



*Aubigny ladies belonging to the League des Femmes Catholique. Included in these pictures are: Mariette Chartier, Emma Vermette, Isabelle Chartier, Marguerite Sorin, Adele Vermette, Rose Marie*

Some of its main undertakings through its 15 years history, have been the holding of a booth at the Morris Stampede, organizing a committee for centennial year (1970), holding a 10 mile ladies walkathon, preparing banquets for the credit union's 10th anniversary and for Bishop Raymond Roy's consecration, celebrating its own 10th anniversary and organizing several bazaars, card parties and concerts, etc.



*The L.F.C.'s snack bar at the Morris rodeo in 1964.*

The presidents from 1964 to 1979 have been Mrs. Isabelle Ritchot, Mrs. Denise Robert, Mrs. Anne Marie Palud, Mrs. Rose Saurette, Mrs. Alice St. Onge, and Mrs. Adele Vermette.

Throughout the years, there have been several sports clubs known as the Aubigny Sports Club, Le Club Sportif des Jeunes, Curling Club, Hockey Club, Skidoo Club, etc. Some of these are rather at a dormant stage, while others are still active. The most famous of these clubs was certainly the Aubigny Aces Hockey team, who won the Red River Valley League Trophy for the 1966-67



*Palud, Doris Chartier, Rita St. Hilaire, Germaine Ritchot, Adrienne Roy, Anne Marie Palud, Lucille Chartier, Emerance Chartier, Lucille Clement, Alice St. Onge, Isabelle Ritchot, Simone Chartier, Lucie St. Laurent, Berthe Palud is the present president since 1979.*

season. For several years they kept on making headlines with their scoring feats.



*The Aubigny Aces retained the Molloy cup in 1966-67.*

Following are excerpts taken from the Carillon News during the winter of 1971. It concerns the team's most



*The highest scorers of the Red River Valley League were Denis Chartier, Ron Saurette. The gooier was Arthur Bremault in 1969-70.*

famous scorer, Claude Saurette: "Currently leading the Red River Valley Hockey League in scoring, the six foot two inch, 230 pounds captain of the Aubigny team established a record. He scored goals in 13 consecutive regular season games. During the 13 goal feat, Claude scored 29 goals and 17 assists. He was edged by teammate, Denis Chartier, with 20 goals and 25 assists for the 1969-70 season."

There are some committees that are closely linked with the church. One is the Parish committee, made up of from 8 - 10 persons, who are working closely with the priest in deciding parish construction, repairs or maintenance. This committee, which has been very active following the tornado of June 19, 1978, was started by Father Paul Emile Boisjoli, when he was a priest in Aubigny. He also started a group known as the Knights of the Altar, which was for the young boys who served around the altar during mass.

For several years, the Knights of Columbus were quite active but the past few years, they seem to be at a standstill.

Recently, a religious association known as the Army of Mary is recruiting members so as to join in prayer meetings. The leader is Mrs. Emma Vermette.

There is a group known as the Church Choir, who does great work in making religious ceremonies beautiful.



*Sister Berthe's pupils won a trophy at the 4-H amateur show in Morris in 1963.*



*Isabelle Ritchot's accordion students, The Red River Roses in 1965.*

Ever since the school closed, a real damper has been put on organizations among the young. The pupils join whatever activities are going on in their respective schools and little is being done locally.



*The Red River Accordionists in 1979.*

## AUBIGNY WINTER SPORTS

Just down the river from Bourret School, fun and excitement took place every Sunday afternoon, in the form of horse races, initiated in 1927, by Father Normandeau.

Father Normandeau was a great sportsman in spite of the fact of being lame in one leg, and he was determined to create some pleasure and challenge for his parishioners.

Four tracks were prepared on the ice of the Red River, by removing snow with a scraper pulled by horses. All the local people were involved in one way or another.

Particular interest was generated by Theodule Marcoux, storekeeper, Eddie Jerome, Morris barber, and Josephat Marion, a farmer east of Aubigny, who in addition to Father Normandeau, each had a pacer. A pacer is a horse that moves both legs on the same side of the body at the same time. Sometimes hobbles (a leg harness) were worn by a pacer to keep him on his gait. These horses, each pulling a cutter, were the "drawing cards" for these races.



*Community festivities on the ice of the Red River near Bourret School in March, 1927.*

The writer of this story recalls the excitement created by all the activity. The priest's horse was very high strung. One time, he couldn't be controlled, and ran wildly into the willows growing on the bank of the river. From that point on, Father Normandeau refused to race the horse and Denis Kenny was elected to handle him.

Finally, the horse had to be gotten rid of as he was too dangerous.

The fast moving pacers were not the only horses racing though. There were other categories of races, including work horses belonging to the surrounding farmers. One outstanding horse was a big black mare belonging to Stanislas Robert. Stan was well known to have well



*Young boys took part in the races with their dog sleds.*

groomed horses, beautiful harnesses, bells and decorations. There were races of the slower work horses called "les Piquoilles" (poky) and the younger generation got into the act by racing their dogs, harnessed to sleds. Teenagers on skates would follow behind, trying to catch up with the races.



*The spectators consisted of entire families cheering for the winners.*

Entire families well bundled up were the spectators who came in their sleighs and cutters to view the events taking place on the Red River. It was a time of socializing much sought after during the long cold winter months experienced in the rural areas of Manitoba.



*The Aubigny-Silver Plains hockey team in 1935. LEFT TO RIGHT: Jos. H. Ritchot, Morley Stevenson, Henri St. Onge, Farmer Robert, Sylvain Robert, Pierre Pelland, Adrien Ouimet, Albert Pelland, Michel Ouimet.*



*Ice carnival in Aubigny in 1953. THE COSTUME WINNERS: Linda Saurette, Gerald St. Hilaire, Paul Saurette.*



*Aubigny Aces Hockey Club, early 60's. Bill Bell was manager.*



*Modern winter sport. Aubigny ski-doo club, 1978.*



*Mrs. Juliette Robert dressed in a centennial costume in Dec. 1967.*



*Leo  
and  
Mariette  
Chartier.  
Lucille  
and  
Arthur  
Clement.*



*Jeannine and Louis Saurette.*



*Father Jean Louis Caron.*

The Centennial of the Province of Manitoba in 1970 was observed in a grand manner in Aubigny.

It was the Ligue des Femmes Catholiques with its president, Mrs. Rose Saurette, who were responsible for calling a general meeting in Normandin Hall on January 30, 1970, for the purpose of organizing a Centennial Committee.

The result of the meeting was that a committee was formed to promote Centennial celebrations with Denise Robert as President, Marcel Caron, 1st Vice President, Madelene Liddle, 2nd Vice President, Alice St. Onge, secretary, Betty Landry, treasurer, and Eveline Ritchot as counsellor.

It was also decided that the bilingual motto of this Centennial Committee be "Happy Birthday Manitoba, Bonne Fete Manitoba" and that it be put up in big golden letters in the hall.

A \$100.00 grant was obtained from the R.M. of Morris to help get things rolling.

This Centennial Committee was very active and kept minutes of every decision taken or details of every activity organized. Celebrations began with a cross-country snowmobile race on March 8. During the afternoon, sleigh rides were given to the children. Hot dogs, sandwiches, and coffee were served. In the evening, there was a card party in the hall. The action was all recorded by a reporter from the Morris-Emerson Journal, who was on hand to take pictures.

On June 6, a Centennial Dance was held, which featured the crowning of Aubigny Centennial Queen and the judging of the beard contest as well as the judging of the best home made centennial dress.

The winner of the Queen contest was Betty Guillou, with Diane Sabourin as first princess and Diane Saurette as second princess.

The winners of the beard contest were Ovide Robert, first prize, and Rene Vermette, second. For the best home made centennial dress, first prize went to Mrs. Simone Levesque and second to Mrs. Anita Bisson.

Proceeds from that evening were allocated to a chosen centennial project, which was placing 18 star-shaped street lights which are still operating in 1979.

On June 28 a Centennial Tea was held to honor all pioneers of 75 years or over, and Pioneer Pins were presented to 32 pioneers of the district.

On August 30, a picnic was held for all children 12 or under, and on October 9, a Teen dance and on November 14, a Hard-Times dance was sponsored.

A souvenir of a baby cup was sent to all babies born in 1970.

The Committee wanted to be certain that no age group had been forgotten. The proceeds from all these events were used to buy stacking chairs for the hall.

As a last gesture at the end of the Centennial year, 45 Centennial Recognition medallions were mailed along with Thank you cards to the persons who contributed to the success of this year, 1970.

# "LA TEMPS DES FÊTES" FRENCH-CANADIAN CHRISTMAS SEASON

by Alice St. Onge

For the hard working French people, who didn't know the meaning of a vacation, there were two weeks of the year that were eagerly anticipated, as they brought fun, festivity and socializing with relatives and friends. This two week period, known as "Le Temps des Fêtes", extended from Christmas Eve to January 6, which was Epiphany or "The Feast of the Magi". This custom was prominent among the French people in Quebec, and was carried on in the succeeding generations who arrived from there.

The four weeks preceding Christmas was a period of fasting, known as Advent. Christians were encouraged to remember the Virgin Mary and join her in the anticipation of the coming of her Divine Son. Therefore, parents would teach their children to make little sacrifices, which was mostly keeping away from sweets.

Along with forming moral discipline of the soul, this also gave a mother the chance of hoarding piles of cookies, pies and doughnuts, in anticipation of the coming celebrations.

At the same time, butchering was done, so with a plentiful supply of fresh meat and rendered lard, the mother would make a great many "tourtières" (meat pies), "boulettes" (meat balls), "tartes à la ferluches" (kind of mincemeat). These delicacies would be frozen and packed away in well sealed boxes or pails until required.

As Christmas approached, the first event of the season was Midnight Mass. On that occasion, the whole family (excepting if there was a small baby) would have their warmest and newest clothing laid out in anticipation of the long sleigh ride under the stars to get to church. They wanted to arrive early enough to be settled in their respective pews, listening in awe to the opening hymn "Minuit Chrétiens", while watching the procession of the priest, altar boys, and a specially honored person selected to carry the statue of the Infant Jesus to the Manger.



Stephan Palud beside the manger on Christmas Day, 1967, in the Aubigny R.C. Church.

All eyes were focused on this spot. From year to year, efforts were made to have the manger scene just a little different than the previous one. The setting would represent a cave in a mountain side with real evergreen trees shedding their needles. There was a stable made of twigs or small branches, over which hung a star. Inside the stable were the statues of the Virgin Mary, Joseph, and ox and donkey and the shepherds and their sheep. The empty crib was awaiting the peal of the midnight bell, to be filled by the baby Jesus.

Before the coming of electricity, the front of the church was well lighted with lamps and candles, causing the rest to be rather dim, thereby increasing the feeling of awe and reverence.

Following this procession, the priest would go to the altar, to start the celebration of a high mass. When the moment of communion came, everyone would go forward to receive the Holy Host, except the little ones, who were not of age. They would stare enviously at their older brothers and sisters, who could receive the body of Christ, which the priest reverently deposited on the tongue of each communicant.

This high mass was immediately followed by another mass called "Messe d'Aurore", during which the most beautiful music this side of heaven could be heard. The choir had been practicing for weeks, such songs as "Il est né", the "Nouvelle Agreable", "Ca Bergers", "Dans Cet Etable", "Les Anges dans nos Campagnes", etc, etc.

The clock was nearing 2:00 a.m. Many a young head had been nodding in spite of excitement. They had to be awakened and wrapped up in large scarves and shawls, while father went to harness the horses, which had been stabled in the large barn belonging to the parish, or at a nearby friend.

The ride back home was bitterly cold, but what a delight to enter the warm house to the aroma of the delicious food that had been prepared for the "Réveillon". (a very special lunch)

In the families where there were older married children, everyone would gather at the parents' home for this famous meal, as this was the time to sample the famous "tourtières", "boulettes", "tartes à la ferluche", etc. that had been taken out of their hiding place.

There was no mention of Christmas presents and Christmas trees were a rarity also. There could be some hand made decorations, but these were not a really important part of Christmas.



Christmas Eve celebration as the George St. Hilaire family are eating "Réveillon."



This "Reveillon" would last till morning, as the eating was accompanied by singing, story telling, sometimes dancing, if some member of the family happened to have musical talent and possess an instrument.

Then the time came when everyone went to their respective homes, changed into work clothes and ambled off to the barn to do the chores.

The rest of Christmas day was much more quiet, as many heads ached and needed a rest.

The week between Christmas and New Years was more or less normal, with time being taken to call on neighbours, or receiving visitors. The day that everyone was looking forward to, the Red Letter day, was "Le Jour de l'An." (New Years Day)

Upon awakening, children searched for the gifts that they had been wishing for. This naturally depended on the financial state of affairs. The stockings would be hanging near the chimney, on a bed post or on the stair railing.

Candies, an orange or apple, were the treasures found within. Articles of clothing (mostly hand knitted) were very acceptable gifts.

A lucky few would receive toys. Some little girl might awaken to the joy of finding a doll by her side; if a boy, it could be a colorful toy soldier or a winding toy.

Upon coming downstairs to the kitchen, the children were reminded by the mother that they should ask their father for his blessing. This was called "La Benediction Paternelle". Each child kneeling in front of his father would ask to be blessed. The father would lay his hands on his child's head and utter the words, "I bless you my son (or daughter) as I ask God to bless you."

The older children who were away from home, would hurry to the parents' home so as not to miss the paternal blessing. There was no age limit for this. At times, a grey haired man or woman could be seen kneeling in front of a fragile trembling grandfather, who would lay his hand in blessing on his child's head.

Everyone would then kiss one another and say "Bonne Heureuse Armee" (Happy New Year) adding some phrase as "Le Paradis a la fin de tes jours". (Paradise at the end of your days.)



*Families taking part in a family reunion. 1946 - New Year's Day.*

The family would hop into the sleighs or cutters and head towards the church in time for high mass, same as on Sundays. Everyone attended, except the cook, who remained in the kitchen preparing a delicious dinner for the whole family, including children, grandchildren, in-laws, uncles and aunts. Everyone was welcome. In large families, this could easily total 30 to 40 persons, and with several sittings, the meal stretched into the late afternoon.

People always managed to have something to clink glasses with ("trinquer") even if it was homemade.



*The Jean Marie Ritchot family greeting in the New Year 1979.*

Soon after dinner, people start dropping in. This was an exceptionally good opportunity for young bachelors to kiss the neighbours' pretty daughters. It was unthinkable to meet a lady on New Years Day and not say "Bonne Heureuse Armee" with a hand shake, accompanied by at least two smacking kisses, and this tradition included every female member of the family.



*Young men celebrating New Year's Day by riding in a cutter from house to house.*

After this ritual was accomplished, and clinking of a glass or two, the visitors would proceed down the road to the jingle of sleigh bells, on to the next neighbour. The high spirited boys of the family would often jump into the sled, hitchhiking with their friends to the next house. If the neighbours were too close together, and the glass touched too often, the horses had to use their own intuition to keep on the beaten tracks, or else upset in the snow!



Hopefully, by now, someone in the crowded sled had sense enough to head back toward home. Sometimes, if they were invited to stay for an evening of dancing, the visit could go on till the wee hours of the morning.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this story, "Les Temps des Fêtes" lasted until January 6, therefore, the remaining days would still be quite busy with visiting relatives and friends, playing cards, singing, and sometimes dancing.

The last big celebration came on the "Feast of the Magi", January 6. A bountiful meal was prepared for the guests, with the all-important item on the menu being the Cake of the King. A bean had been hidden in this cake. When it was cut into slices and passed around, everyone would taste of it, with the lucky person finding the bean crowned King, (or Queen) for the evening.

When the festivities were over, it was time to return to normal every day life, with all its hard work, keeping in mind the fond memories of these last few weeks.

Today, these customs have almost disappeared. On New Years Day, it is still the French fashion to greet everyone with a kiss; we still enjoy the beauty of midnight mass followed by the "Reveillon" lunch, but most of our time and energy is spent on exchanging very expensive gifts. The spirit of giving is evident, but these expensive gifts do not produce as much joy as a simple stocking stuffed with a few fruits and candies did in the pioneer homes.

## FAMOUS CITIZENS - PARISH OF AUBIGNY

Throughout the seventy-five years (1903-1978) history of the Roman Catholic parish of Aubigny it has given several of its citizens to the service of the Church.

About a dozen young people have become sisters or brothers in a number of different congregations.

There have been four young men ordained to the priesthood. They are David Roy, Raymond Roy, Ovide Robert and Rene Touchette.



David and Raymond Roy are the sons of Charles and Zépherina Roy (Milette).

David Roy was ordained in 1945. He passed away suddenly at age 58 while he was a priest in St. Agathe, in February, 1977. He was a prominent member of the Manitoba Historical Society. Among other work, he made a research on the origin of all the French Canadian families who came to the Red River Valley since the days of Bishop Provencher.



In 1945, Raymond Roy was ordained in the Aubigny R.C. Church.

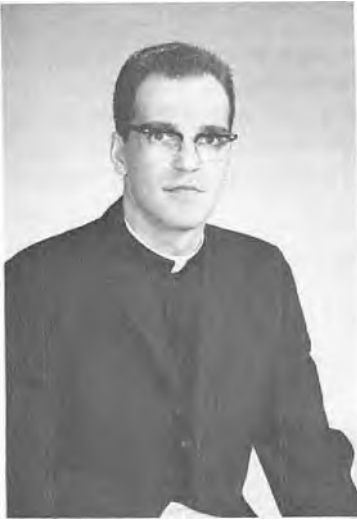
Raymond Roy, a brother to David, was ordained priest in 1947. After serving in several Manitoba parishes, he was consecrated Bishop of St. Paul, Alberta, in 1972.

David and Raymond are sons of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Roy.

Ovide Robert became a Capucin monk and chose the name of Father Bernard. He went to Belgium to complete his studies. He was ordained on August 6, 1950. He returned to Canada and since has served in several parishes in Manitoba and Ontario. At present he is at Tilsbury, Ontario.



Ovide Robert, son of Ovide Robert (deceased) and Mrs. Juliette Robert.



*Renè Touchette was born in Aubigny and ordained in his native parish in 1968.*

*Rene Touchette* was ordained priest in Aubigny by Bishop Baudoux in 1966. He is the nephew of Rev. David and Bishop Raymond Roy. His parents, both deceased, were Joseph and Celestine Touchette. He is now working in the R.C. parish of Somerset.

Another citizen of Aubigny who made a name for himself is *Doctor Telesphore Robert* who became one of the best known doctors in the city of Quebec. He is a brother to Father Bernard Robert and son of Mrs. Juliette Robert (who was 91 years old in March, 1979).

There is also a boy from Aubigny working as a missionary in Africa. He is Brother Paul Sorin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jean Sorin.

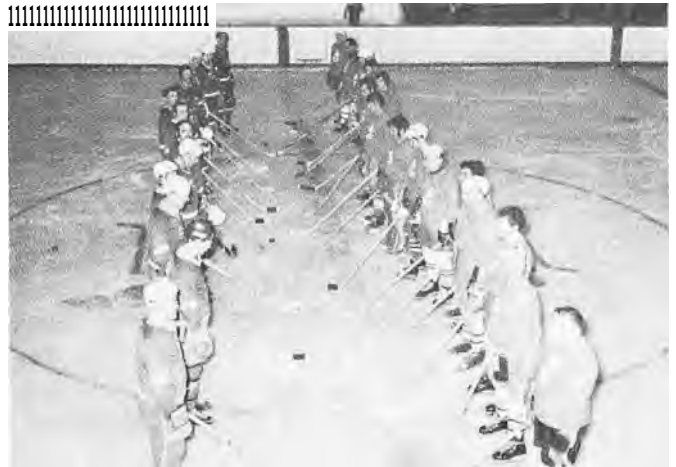


*A church cleaning bee in Aubigny, 1927. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ritchot, Mrs. Paul Berthelette, Mrs. Girouard, Miss Normandeau, Eliana Ritchot, Marie Louise Hebert, Alice Robert.*

## LOCAL TRADGEDY



*Ronald Saurette, 29 years old, husband of Yvette Saurette (nee Vermetre) dies in plane crash.*



MIS S

*Ste. Agathe and St. Pierre, teams line up for one minute of silence in respect of Ron Saurette who died in a plane crash, February 27, 1974.*



*Ronald Saurette*

## PARISH OF AUBIGNY

Notes: taken from parish books written by Rev. Desrosiers when he first visited the mission in 1903: He found 32 families, 125 communicants and 130 non communicants. 2 schools: one near the church, east of the Red River, the other about 2 miles from the church, situated west of the river. These two schools had 60 pupils.

In July, Bishop Adelard Langevin, archbishop of St. Boniface, visited the parish for the first time and confirmed 29 children.

In July, 1907, on the feast of Ste. Anne, we instituted the association of the "Dames de Ste.-Anne". The first statue of Ste. Anne given to the parish was a gift from Mrs. Sevoine (Celevane) Robert. The first statue of the Blessed Virgin was donated in 1908 by Miss Rose Alma Laferriere.

In October, 1911, there was the canonic dedication of the parish to receive as patron St. Antoine of Padoue.

In 1913 or 1914, due to the generosity of Rev. Rocan of Ste. Agathe, the church now possessed a decent altar.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of this narrative, I have tried to give the names of the families living in this district a hundred years ago. I am certain to have omitted some, though most unwillingly.

However, I will try to redeem myself by mentioning the names of the families who make up the Roman Catholic parish of St. Antoine d'Aubigny in 1979.

Starting at the southern extremity and following St. Mary's Road going north:

Rene Vermette	George Saurette
Francois Palud	Claude Saurette
Louis Guillou	Yves Guillou
George St. Hilaire	Fred Landry
Albenie Robert	Edna Palud
Louis Palud	Emilien Chartier
Gabriel Roy	Leon Palud
Marcel Caron	Maurice Vermette
August Berthelette	Jos. Hector Ritchot
Alfred Ouimet	Stanislas Robert
Edouard Robert	Ovide Robert
Louis Ouimet	Andrew Blatta
Jules Sorin	Yves Sorin

From the eastern limits to the Red River:

Marcel Vermette	Claude Vermette
Roland Vermette	Noel Roy
Roger Saurette	Claude Robert
Louis Saurette	Arthur Clement
Guy Chartier	Norbert Derbrouck
Phil Bouchard	Jim Ritchot
Lucie St. Laurent	Roger Richard
Jos. Chartier	

On the west side of the Red River from north to south:

Albert Nolette	Kenneth Robert
Rene Robert	Elie Robert
Mrs. Adelard Robert	Adrien Pelland
Odias Robert	Gabriel Ritchot
David Ritchot	Henri St. Onge
Robert Chartier	Leonard Chartier
Leo Chartier	Florent Chartier
Jean Marie Ritchot	

At Silver Plains - Mrs. Rose Pelland

Now, for the families that live in the district of Aubigny but do not belong to the Roman Catholic Parish.

George and Mike Allen	John Blatta
Rudolph Braun	Richard Capel
R. Claes	Tom Dodd
G.W. Enns	R.H. Kier
D. Koheleppel	John Kostal
J.C. Liddle	John McKenzie
Ron Piper	Leo Slock
E.R. Stewart	Ernie Thomasson
The Wilsons	



*Hauling water for the livestock by breaking a hole in the Red River ice.*



*Marcel Caron had this garage moved from Ste. Agathe, 1949.*



*Going for a sleigh ride around Aubigny.*

## JANVIER HEBERT SR.

In the year 1877 a few families came to settle where the Town of Aubigny now is. Amongst them was Janvier Hebert, with his wife, Adele Geffrion. They brought with them a family of nine.

Adele married Hercules Decellas, later settled in St. Lazare.

Arzelie married Joseph Gaudreau, settled in Ste. Anne.

Pierre married Ecclesse Girouard and spent all their lives in Aubigny.

Louis married Julia Mousseau and spent all their lives in Aubigny.

Marguerite married Edouard Berthelette and settled in Aubigny.

Rose Anna married Charles Mousseau and died after a few years of marriage.

Zephyrine became a grey nun.

Joseph, the youngest son, married Marie Louise Pelland, January 22, 1889. He settled on his parents' farm and raised a family of fourteen. They spent all their lives there and passed the farm on to their youngest son, Janvier Jr.



*Joseph and Marie Louise Hebert, youngest son of pioneer, Janvier Hebert.*

## JOSEPH HEBERT

The fourteen children born to Joseph Hebert and Marie Louise Pelland were:

Alma (Mrs. Pierre Bouchard) who lived in Vassar. Their son, Phil, has been the storekeeper in Aubigny since 1967.

David married Yvonne Durand. They lived in Aubigny for a while, then moved to Montreal.

Cleophas went to Quebec.

Celina married John Ouimet and settled on a farm in Union Point; later they retired and moved to the Village of Aubigny.

Rose Anna married Cyrille Courcelles and lived in St. Pierre.

Agnes married Henry Ouimet; they lived on a farm in Union Point and later had a store in Aubigny.

Therese married Pierre Hebert Jr. and lived on the paternal farm in Aubigny. After Therese's death, Pierre remarried and moved to Haywood.

Cecile became Mrs. Albert Gaudreau of St. Boniface.

Dorothee, Mrs. Adelard St. Hilaire, settled in St. Pierre. Among their large family too are well known in the area. Albert who is the Reeve of Montcalm Municipality and George, who is the councillor of Ward 4 in the Rural Municipality of Morris.

Catherine married Jos Ayotte from St. Jean and lives in St. Boniface.

Janvier took over his father's farm and lived here until a few years ago. He is married to Maria Bourgouin and now resides in Winnipeg.

Anastasie married Clovis Joyal of Ste. Agathe, however, she died at the age of 19.

Marie Louise first married Rene Wery of Ste. Agathe and had 7 children. When she became a widow she remarried Walter Hebert of Pinewood.

Agathe, who was the youngest, was the first wife of Jos Ayotte, and died when her first child was born.

## THE CHARTIER FAMILY "Oldest Family Farm"

*submitted by Leo*

In 1877, Flavien Chartier left Nashua, New Hampshire where he had been employed in an "axe factory". Accompanied by his wife Zoe, a son Alfred and a daughter Zoe, he eventually boarded a boat headed for Manitoba, in search of a "promising land" where he could raise a family.

Originally from Quebec, it was most appropriate that the family travel as far as St. Boniface, which they reached in May.

Under the instigation of Reverend Fillion, Flavien left his family in St. Boniface and walked back south along the west coast of the Red River, until he reached a spot ten miles south of Ste. Agathe. This he decided was the future site of his home and with the determination and

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*Mr. and Mrs. Noel Chartier in 1921, in front of the house that Flavien Chartier built in 1877.*

courage that only pioneers can appreciate, he cleared a piece of land and built a log cabin on the river lot known as 447.

In October of that year, he walked back to St. Boniface where he became the proud owner of a cart and a pair of oxen. Needless to say that it took but little time to pack his wife and children in that "new wonder – and all headed south to what was to be "home" to the Chartiers for over a century.

Flavien and his wife had more children but only four were left after the untimely deaths of several infants and of six year old Severe, who drowned in the Red River.

The surviving four were: Zoe: she became a member of the Grey Nun Missionary Sisters. She spent most of her life in the north, bringing the word of God as far as Aklavik. She died in St. Boniface in the early 30's.

Alfred: He married Octavile Laferrière in 1901 and they became parents of 16 children, 10 of whom are still living. Alfred died in November of 1947, and his wife Octavie in November of 1952. The surviving sons are Leonard and Florent, both of Aubigny, Honore of St. Norbert and Leopold of Ste. Agathe. Irene, the oldest of the five boys died in October 1974 at the age of 66.

Among the living daughters we find the names of Olive (Mrs. Grenier of St. Labre), Celeste (Mrs. St. Germain), Marie-Ange (Mrs. Coombes), Lucille (Mrs. Roy), Elise and Sister Alfred Antoine (Irene) all of St. Boniface.

Noel: He married Zephirine Hebert in 1915 and were blessed with eleven children, 8 of whom are alive today. Noel died in February of 1955, predeceasing his wife by 10 years and 9 months. Left to mourn the passing of their parents are Pierre of Edmonton, Adelard of Sudbury, Louis and Laurent of Winnipeg, Emilien, Joseph, Leo and Therese (Mrs. Rene Robert) all of Aubigny. Orise (Mrs. Richard) died in 1976.



*Noel Chortler, and his children, Pierre, Emilien, Leo and Therese admiring their father's new John Deere.*

Marie Anne: She married Narcisse Girouard. Out of that union sixteen sons and daughters were born, 10 of whom are still living. They are: Clarinda (Mrs. P.A. Robert) of Aubigny, Celina (Mrs. N. Bernier) and Adolphe, both of St. Boniface, Albertine (Mrs. Fauche) and Alfred of St. Norbert, Alice (Mrs. Evans) of Calgary, Anna (Mrs. Irvin) of Winnipeg, Adrien of Somerset, Antonia (Mrs. Boyko) of Toronto and Gertrude (Mrs. Lukacin) of Dryden. Three sons died in the 70's to join their father who had died in 1929 and their mother in 1966. They are: Albert who died in 1972, Alphonse in 1976 and Arthur in 1977.

Our of the 28 surviving grandchildren, seven are still residing in Aubigny. In 1970, two of them, Leo and Florent, were honoured by the Manitoba Centennial Corporation when both were awarded distinction for lands judged to be the oldest farms continuously owned and operated by members of the same family. This was presented to them by Lieutenant Governor McKeag.

Lot 447 held still another surprise when in 1965 a gypsum mine was officially opened on its southern half. Honourable Duff Roblin conducted the official opening. The mineral from this mine was trucked to Winnipeg, and shipped by rail to western points until gushing underground water forced its closure in 1975.

On October 16, 1977, the Chartiers celebrated the 100th anniversary of the arrival of their ancestors on the same plot of land that four generations of Chartiers have called home.



*Mass was celebrated on the steps of the old Chortler log house on October 16, 1977, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of their ancestors.*

Mass was celebrated on the steps of the old Chartier log house which has all the beginnings of a museum.

After a "get together picnic supper" in the Aubigny hall, slides were shown depicting numerous interesting facts of that pioneer family. From conversations with friends, relatives and neighbours we learned that Flavien, (1842-1902) was a devout Catholic who transmitted his religious beliefs to his children. When Father Desrosiers arrived in Aubigny in 1903, he was warmly received by the Chartier family and spent that winter in Alfred's small dwelling, celebrating mass there every day.

Then who doesn't remember the ferry that may well have been called the "Chartier ferry", because with a Chartier family on either side, many were the times when they were called upon to help a traveller up the ferry road, especially after a heavy snowstorm or a heavy rain. The road up and down the river was only a dirt road at that time with the type of soil prevalent in the Red River Valley, it is small wonder that a team of horses had to be used quite often.

Along with other names such as St. Jacques, Bouchard, Robert, Berard, Ritchot, Berthelette, Mousseau, etc., it is only fitting to find the names of Leo and Joseph Chartier who like the others mentioned above, were ferry operators at one time or other. In fact, these two were the operators who drove the ferry across the Red River on its last trip in 1965, when it yielded its usefulness to its "awe - inspiring" opponent - the Aubigny Bridge!!

Then too, there was what might be called "The Trading Post" - the place where Leonard is now living. It was there that farmers within a three to four mile radius

would bring their cream and eggs to be picked up and delivered in Winnipeg by the transfer truck.

Who doesn't recall the names of Bourbonniere, York, Klassen, Thiessen, etc.? These were some of the drivers who would pick up the dairy goods and bring back the cheques, leaving them in the Chartier house or in the cream cans.

Times have changed and with it the ferry, the trading post and the mine have disappeared, but the Chartier clan lives on. To quote Father Thibault at the Chartier's 100th anniversary during which occasion a flame had been kept burning all evening - "Just as this flame kept burning without dying so will the Chartier race perpetuate - it is a flame that is not apt to die out in the near future."



*Leo Chartier, ferry operator, with his 3 year old son, Gilles, in 1963.*



## **HYACINTHE MOUSSEAU**

*by Charles A. Mousseau*

In 1880, Hyacinthe Mousseau and his family arrived in Aubigny, Manitoba from Berthier, P. Quebec. His wife, Adeline Dandeneau, had passed away before coming west. He arrived with his two sons, Henri and Charles; and three daughters, Julia (married to Louis Hebert), Octavie (married to Elie St. Jacques), Rose (married to Louis Laferriere). They settled on river lot 451. He operated the first Aubigny Ferry for several years. During his retirement, he returned to Berthier, Quebec, but his children remained here.

His eldest son, Henri, who never married, purchased two river lots (450 and 452) on the east side of the river. He was the first mailman to serve the community. He would deliver the mail on foot from Aubigny to Silver Plains - a distance of over two miles. In 1928, Henri took a homestead in Abitibi, P. Quebec, where he died at the age of 95.



*Charles Mousseau in 1930's **one of** Aubigny's pioneers,*

Charles married Rosanna Hebert, 1888, in the parish of Ste. Agathe. Father Samoisette celebrated mass for them. His wife died a few years later.

In 1898, Charles remarried. His wife, Elzire Clement, was the daughter of Noe Clement and Mathilde Gagnon. They had 12 children - Ernestine (deceased), Ovide, Ida (deceased), Charles-Auguste, Armand, Gustave, Esdras, Ernestine, Joseph, Maurice, Annette and Gerard.

By 1910, Charles owned a herd of 80 head of cattle, consisting mostly of milk cows. The barn was about 120 feet long, with a roof made of poles and straw. The herd was getting larger every year, so Charles had to expand, using the school section (10-6-2) for extra pasture for his cattle. He sold the milk to the Cheese Factory, which was situated between the ferry and the town of Aubigny. After the factory closed, Charles decided to sell most of his herd, keeping only those necessary for family use. He invested this money in a well digging machine, which he bought in the United States. He started his well digging business in the surrounding municipalities. Since the time consumed and the cost of digging ponds was very high, it was a lot cheaper for the farmers to use his boring machine and use water from the new well.



*Mousseau's well digger; this machine provided a steady income for the family.*

With the help of relatives and friends, Charles built a new home. The house was built of 2 x 4's on the flat, with tar in between, and a cedar siding outside. In 1913, he bought a partial piece of land from Father Derosier - the parish priest. He had his house moved on this lot, and it's still being used as a home today.

In 1928, Ovide and Charles Auguste, his two eldest sons, started a honey business. It proved to be profitable. They increased to 250 hives and in 1933, the honey harvest blossomed. The honey hives yielded a record 300 pound average per hive. One box car load was sold at 5c a lb. and shipped to the Manitoba Honey Co-Op. This business was dissolved in 1938.

In 1940, Charles-August married Yvonne Robert. Working as a laborer, he managed to save enough money to put a down payment on 240 acres of land (13-6-2). In 1944, he bought a heavy truck, and signed a contract with the Manitoba Pool Elevator to empty the annexes. This contract lasted for many years. During the winter months, he worked in Winnipeg as a house contractor, and his wife as a sewing operator. In 1955, they were blessed with a son, Raymond. In 1963, they sold the farm and moved to St. Boniface. Their son married Marcelle





*The Charles Mousseau family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Armand, Joseph, Gerard, Maurice, Charles, Auguste, Ovide, Gustave, Esdras, SITTING: Ernestine (Mrs. Henri Pelletier), Mother, Elzire Mousseau, Annette (Mrs. T. Roy), Ida (Mrs. J. Paul Berthelette).*

Lavallee of St. Jean in 1974. They have a daughter, Nathalie and a son, Raymond, Jr. They live in St. Boniface.

Ovide (1901) married Alice Johnson of St. Boniface. They had 4 children. He lived in Aubigny for a while, selling used cars and trucks as a sideline. Later, the family moved to Vancouver.

Ida (1903-1972) married Paul Berthelette of Aubigny in 1920. Born to them - 6 sons and 8 daughters. He farmed in the R.M. of Morris on river lot 412.

In 1935, Armand (1906) left with his brother, Maurice, to work at the saw mills, 60 miles east to Marchand, Manitoba. They procured the logs and lumber that was to be used for the badly needed barn, which they built in 1936. In 1937, he married Bernadette Hebert. They had no children. He bought the general store in Aubigny, along with the Imperial Oil agency. In 1942, he sold the store and started farming on section 11-6-2, later moving to St. Boniface.

Gustave (1908) was living at home with his folks and had the responsibility of looking after the animals and the well digging machine. In 1970, he married Camillia Henrie and moved to Winnipeg, where he worked as a plumber.

Esdras, better known as Fatty, was born in 1910. In 1935, he started a butcher shop with his brother, Joseph. Having sold his share to his brother, he got a contract to haul gravel and cinder for the landing of the ferry and Aubigny roads. During winter months, he hauled wood for the paper mill in Pine Falls. He also hauled grain and sugar beets in the municipality of Morris. He married Gabrielle Fegros of St. Boniface in 1941. They had 3 boys and 2 girls. His wife died in 1977.

Ernestine (1912) remained home to care for her ailing parents. She took over all the household duties, including baking bread in the huge outside clay-brick oven. Many delicious pots of pork and beans were baked in its intense heat. In 1945, she married Henri Pelletier of La Broquerie. From this marriage, three children were born.

Henri now works as a truck driver and mechanic in St. Boniface.

Joseph (1914) started working as a butcher in 1935. He bought an old van and started selling meat in the Morris Municipality. In 1939, he married Anna Hamelin of St. Eustache. That same year, he bought 160 acres of land in the Fort Alexander Municipality. He also held a job at the Cordite plant in Transcona. Finally, he had to choose between being a farmer and a laborer. He decided to stay at Cordite; his wages being 30c an hour. His family consists of 2 girls and 1 boy. They all reside in St. Boniface.

Maurice (1916) married May Wilcotte from St. Georges in 1940. They had 3 daughters. In 1942, he started operating the ferry in Union Point. He kept at this for a few years. In 1945, he was called to join the army. Upon his return, he moved to Pine Falls, where he worked as a mechanic. After his home burned down in 1948, he moved to Vancouver.

Annette (1919) married Theodore Roy of St. Jean in 1946. They had 1 son. Her husband has been working for CNR for the last 25 years. They reside in St. Boniface.

Gerard (1922) worked for 10 years as a station operator, then moved up to dispatcher for the CNR. He married Mary Pattulo of Winnipeg in 1951. They have 3 sons. As a hobby, he took up horticulture.

## JOSEPH PERREAULT

In 1881, Joseph Perreault at the age of seventeen, left his family in Montreal and adventured west. He spent his first winter in St. Boniface, working at a saw mill.

The following spring, he took a homestead in North Dakota and there married Rosalie Klyne. They had six children - one daughter, Exilda; and five sons, Hormidas, Georges, Celestin, Wilfrid and Noel.

In the year 1900, Mr. Perreault bought two and one-half river lots in Aubigny and built a house. Today, part of the village stands on his location.

The following spring, when his youngest son was only a few months old, Joseph Perreault decided to move his family to Aubigny. By this time, he had acquired an impressive amount of machinery and livestock. The move from North Dakota was made across land by wagon to Morris, with the help of some neighbours. When the road became impassable, everything was loaded into box cars and the family took the train to Silver Plains. The animals swam across the Red River. That same year, Mr. Perreault planted his first crop.

This ambitious young farmer also started a grocery store and had the post office, to which he gave the name of Aubigny.

When the time came to erect a church, rectory and school, he donated the land on which they were built.

Mr. Perreault's wife died a few years later, and the daughter took charge of the home and five younger brothers, until he remarried. His second wife was Marianne Pelland, and together they started raising his second family.

His daughter, Exilda, married Fred Berthelette, who was section foreman in Silver Plains.

Georges, who married Rosalie Berthelette, had one son, Freddie, who now resides in St. Vital.

Celestin married Julia Berthelette. They had two sons, Euclid and Reginald, and three daughters, SoLange, Marie-Ange and Eleana. Eleana died of a ruptured appendix at the age of eight.

Hormidas married Proxede Berthelette and had four sons - Adelard, Jos, Harvey and Raymond; six daughters - Yvonne, Olive, Irene, Therese, Dora and Mariana.

Wilfred married Rosa St. Jacques and had two sons - Gerald and Ronald; and one daughter - Florence.

The youngest son, Noel, never married and the family hasn't heard from him for about thirty-five years.

In the year 1919, Mr. Perreault sold some of his land to Mr. Gustave Bouchard. The store was bought by Mr. Jos Pelland, and the remainder of his land was bought by the parish priest, who resold it to Mr. Vital Rivet. Joseph Perreault then resettled in St. Laurent, Manitoba, with his second family. By then, this included three sons - Romauld, Ambroise and Ubold; and three daughters - Aurise, Mariana and Antoinette.

Mr. Perreault, who died on February 4, 1953, at the age of 89, is buried in St. Laurent.

## MICHEL LAFERRIERE

*by Bert he Paluid*

Through the clergy, pioneers were brought from Eastern Canada to establish the west. Michel Laferriere was one of those adventurers. With his wife, Louise Dedemere, and family, he came to settle in Aubigny around 1882. They had 13 children, Philippe, Wilfrid, Arthur, Culbert, Etienna, Rose Alba, Marianne, Octavie, Viateur, Denia, Dina, Emerithe, Stanislas.

River lot 453 and additional mixed farming helped him to provide for his large family. He also operated the Aubigny Ferry for two years. On the family farm, Arthur was in charge of the registered Percheron stallions. He raised the colts and sold them to neighbouring farmers, who needed them as work horses. The culture of hay was also included in this business.



*Michel Laferriere centre, in front of his log house, with Louis Laferriere left, and a cousin on the right.*

Philippe, Viateur and Denia were the only sons of Michel to farm in the Morris Municipality for many years.



*Viateur Laferriere as a young man.*

The eldest, Philippe, married Clementine Clement of St. Jean and raised 3 children - Marie-Louise, Helene and Omer - on River Lot 459. Mrs. and Mrs. Philippe Laferriere died in the late 30's, only two weeks apart.

Viateur married Elizabeth Gauthier in 1915, and started farming on his own. From this marriage, ten children were born - Ursulle, Louisa, Aline, Rita, Jeannette, Gerard, Bernadette, Joseph, Pauline and Michel. Later, the family moved to St. Norbert.

Denia, bachelor, made his living by buying animals on the hoof, butchering them, then selling the meat in the district. During his retirement, he moved to St. Boniface.

Wilfrid had the Imperial Oil Agency at Silver Plains, along with the ownership of a General Store, better known in the community as the "Small Hudson Bay Store".



*Michel Laferriere at right with his sheep. His sons are at centre with the horses. Arthur was in charge of the registered Percheron stallions, and they sold the colts to neighbouring farmers. Son, Wilfred's, home is at left.*

## SEVOINE ROBERT (1852-1950)

Sevoine, better known as Celevenne, was born May 5, 1852, in Berthier, Province of Quebec.

Celevenne met and married Melanise Lafond in Quebec. In 1880, the great westward trek was made by this young couple and their three youngsters, the oldest being five years old.

After Celevenne has walked and walked and looked around for a suitable site to settle, he decided on a wooded lot some miles south of the village of Ste. Agathe. There, he built a log cabin for his family, and he

turned a small area of sod in a clearing in the bush, in readiness to seed his first crop. History says that his first crop was a whopper of one (1) bushel, which he kept preciously in the house for the next seeding season.

In Quebec, Celevenne was a lumberjack and logger, so the farming business must have been a challenge. The west offered him and his sons the opportunity to be their own bosses; the work was tedious, but freedom was worth it.



*The original house built by Cdevenne Robert, which today houses the fourth generation. STANDING AT REAR: Fortuna, and wife Blanche. SEATED: Mr. and Mrs. Celevenne Robert with Stanislas, children at right, Berthilde, Artémise, Ovide and Frédéric.*

Once the house was built, an income was needed, so Celevenne went to work on the railroad at night, and during the day, he'd clear more land with his horses. The hours of sleep must have been just the bare minimum needed. With hard work by all members of the family. Celevenne bought and cleared more land, which became part of the rich Red River Valley agricultural land.

After years of hard work, Celevenne and Melanise moved to the village of Ste. Agathe, with the younger children.

The older ones were now newlyweds and were taking over the old homestead.

Celevenne and Melanise had thirteen children, named below, but not in order of their age: Emile (married Josephine Kenny), Albani (a batchelor), Joseph (died at 18 months), Joseph (married Clothilde Martineau), Ovide (married Juliette Campeau), Frederic (married Nathalie Robillard), Fortunat (married Blanche Clement), Stanislas (married Gabrielle Durand), Bernadette (married Alderic St. Onge), Marie (married Joseph Fisette), Amanda (married Albini Proulx), Berthilde (married Gustave Scoupe), Artemise (married Signor Beaudoin).

As of 1979, Berthilde, Artemise and Stanislas are still living, as well as hundreds of descendants of the hard working and courageous couple, Celevenne and Melanise, to keep the name "Robert" alive.

## EMILE ROBERT

Emile was born in 1875 at Berthier, Quebec and came to Aubigny with his parents at the age of five years. Emile and Josephine Kenny were married in 1899. From this marriage, ten children were born, 4 of whom died in infancy. *Marie* - Mrs. Arnedee Alarie, had 11 children - 2 died. *Elisabeth* - Mrs. Lucien Champagne had two children. *Addlard* - married Valeda Remillard had 3 children - one died in infancy. *Emilienne* - Mrs. Norman Reimer. *Odias* - married Helene Guyot, had 3 children. *Germaine* - Mrs. Gerard Prenovault, 1 child. From this family at this date (1979) only two are living - Odias and Germaine.

The 2 boys, Adelard and Odias, took over the family farm in 1936, when their father, Emile, died at the age of 61. Elie, (the 4th generation) son of Adelard, is the owner of that farm which at one time belonged to Celevenne Robert. Mrs. Adelard Robert is still living in Celevenne's house.

Denis, son of Odias, is renting the land from his father, Odias, with one thing in mind; that he will be the owner of the family farm in the near future. He will be the 4th generation on this farm, because at one time a part of this land belonged to Celevenne, great-grandfather.

Three generations have lived in Emile's house. It has been remodeled, but one part of the house underneath the finish, is still the log house that Emile and Josephine had moved in after their wedding in 1899.



*Pictured here are a group of Aubigny men, in 1904, who had just returned from the bush camp where they had cut wood for fuel. Included are: Father Desrosiers, Emile Robert, Alex Lariviere, Noé Clement.*

## JOSEPH ROBERT

*by Mrs. Claude Robert*

Joseph Robert, son of Sevoine (Celevenne) Robert (1852-1940) and Melanise Lafond, was born in 1887. Jos attended Ecole Bouret for about 5 years. This education was considered acceptable, so he went to work with his father and older brothers, clearing the land on the family farm. They owned about a dozen horses and used these to clear the swampish terrain.

At the age of fourteen, Jos started suffering from migraine headaches, and was painfully aware of them till

he passed away. Joseph experienced the anguish of separation by the death of two brothers; one who died of a sunstroke at the tender age of 14, and the other, who died of lye poisoning at the innocent age of 4.

At 24, Jos married Clothilde Martineau, from St. Joseph Parish, North Dakota, in 1911. After two years of living with his parents, Joseph and his wife settled in Silver Plains. They had 7 children - Florent (1911), Laurent (1912-1913), Florentine (1914), Yvonne (1915), Lionel (1917), Noel (1918). Their 20 horses were sufficient for them to work their farmland. Cattle, chickens, hogs and rabbits were a daily part of their lives. With mixed farming, they were able to lead a good life and raise their family.

Being of strong faith, every Sunday they travelled to church. In winter time, they huddled in a bobsleigh and made their way over snowbound fields and ice solid rivers to attend Mass in the Roman Catholic Church of Aubigny. An express was used in the summertime.

One late spring morning, Joe left to help Ovide (his brother) to work on the wood pile. On the way back home, the one horse express fell through the ice in the middle of the river. Screaming prayers and with the strength of the horse, they were able to get out.

One Easter Sunday, the family made their way over the thawing river. Their fear of going through the ice was actually realized, when one of the supporting planks broke. Mrs. Robert fell into 6 feet of paralyzingly cold ice water. Nerve Fissette, a non swimmer, threw himself in the water to try to save her. Again, praises of gratitude rose to the Lord, as the rescue was successful.

In 1943, they moved to the town of Aubigny to live there permanently. Their new home had been the very first school to be built in Aubigny, Ecole Provencher. It is still used as a home today.

Jos also served as a school trustee and was one of many who worked on the construction of the church that stands in Aubigny today. He was very skilled at any work that required precision. During his retirement, they moved to St. Boniface to reside beside their daughter, Yvonne. He died in Tache Hospital in 1975.



*Joseph St. Hilaire, presenting an honorary citizenship of St. Boniface to Clothilde and Joseph Robert, on the event of their Diamond Jubilee (60th Anniversary) in 1974. The Roberts also received special blessing from His Holiness, the Pope Paul VI.*

Jos' eldest son, Florent, married Augustine Levesque and took over part of his father's land. From this marriage, nine children were born - Raymond, Gilles (deceased), Laurence, Lorene, Kenneth, Donald, Jeanot, Carol and Guy.

Claude Robert was the only other son of Jos and Clothilde who farmed in the Morris Municipality. He married Simone Menard of St. Eustache, in 1938. Their family consisted of 3 boys and 2 girls - Gilbert, Rheal, Roland, Claudette and Mona.

Jos' daughter, Yvonne, married Charles Auguste Mousseau, 1940, and they farmed Section 13-6-2. In 1955, they were blessed with the arrival of their son, Raymond. In 1963, the Mousseau's sold their land and moved to St. Boniface.

Mr. and Mrs. Jos Robert's youngest son, Noel, and his wife, Doris Perreault, resided in Aubigny for nearly 10 years, with their daughter, Joyce. It was families like Jos Robert's that helped mold and build the community for what it is today.

## OVIDE ROBERT

Ovide was the son of Melanie Lafond and Celevaine Robert. On February 11, 1907, he married Juliette Campeau (of the village of St. Norbert) and took possession of a quarter section, half a mile south of Aubigny. His oldest living son Albini still resides there. Ovide and Juliette were blessed with nine children, before he was accidentally killed in an automobile accident on September 14, 1924, at the age of 39.

Noel - born 1908, died 1909; Albini - born 1909, married Clarinda Girouard of St. Norbert. Is still living on the homestead acquired in 1907; Alice - born 1911, married to the late Henri Gousseau, settled in La Salle; Denise - born 1914, married Ovide Vermette, now resided in St. Boniface; Louis-Joseph - born 1916, married Lucia Goffart of La Salle, semi-retired in St. Adolphe; Marius - born 1918, married Lorraine Hebert of Aubigny, presently residing in St. Vital; Dr. Telesphore - born 1920, married Raymonde Langlois, practices medicine in St. Jean, P. Quebec; Marie Ange - born 1922, married to Eddie Bremmer, was killed in a truck automobile accident in March of 1973, while a resident of Williams Lake, B.C.; Reverend Bernard - born 1923; a Capucin Father and Pastor of the Parish of St. Francis Xavier in Tullsbury, Ontario.



*Sister Claudette Robert, who became a Sister of St. Joseph in August 1975. She is a daughter of Louis J. Robert, and great-granddaughter of pioneers, Sivoine and Melanie Robert.*

Mrs. Juliette Robert remained on the original farm till 1971, when she was hospitalized. She will celebrate her 91st golden year on March 25, 1979, at the Foyer St. Boniface on Archibald Street.

## STANISLAS ROBERT (1902-)

The youngest child of Celevenne and Melanise, married Gabrielle Durand in March, 1924.

His farm was on the east side of the Red River, one mile north of Aubigny. There was a lot of clearing to be done on this farm, and for this work he had a team of horses and a team of mules. One of these mule used to get tired or fed up every day around 4:00 p.m. (did it belong to the Union?) and she'd just lay down, harness and all and wouldn't budge for love or money. Stanislas bought an old \$10.00 horse to take the mule's place to finish the day's work. But by the next morning, the old mule would be standing by the barn door, ready to start another working day.

The cow herd was started when a good looking red cow was bought for \$20.00. Her milk production was only a gallon per day, but her future calves became the milk producers in later years.



*Brothers Joseph and Stan Robert were avid horsemen, and participated in the races on the Red River at Aubigny in the 1920's.*

The poultry business was started when his sister, Bernadette, gave them a dozen or so hens. Eggs were collected to eat, but most important, were gathered for hatching in the spring. A piglet was given by his brother, Emile, and it is said this young sow was the beginning of the hog population on Stan's farm.

After seven children were born and raised in a little old uncomfortable house, they built a big new one which is presently occupied by the youngest son, Edouard, and his family.

Stanislas was not only a farmer, he also dabbled in the buying, selling and delivering of horses and cattle. He owned a sawmill for one reason, moved a few houses but the biggest job was the threshing roundup. This meant the hiring of men to help out with the work, all of whom are fed three meals and lunch every day. Gabrielle had her work cut out in those days when there was no electricity to lessen her load. Stan also had the job of grading the municipal roads for many years.

To make ends meet in those depression years, Gabrielle raised sheep, turkeys, chickens, milked the cows, fed the hogs, to do her share of the work load, while Stanislas did the farm work.

By hard work and economy, they bought more land in anticipation that their sons would be farmers one day. Life was a lot of hard, back-breaking work with no commodities in those bygone years.

From this union, ten children were born: Therese (Mrs. Achille Delorme), Ovide (married Denise Tellier), Gabriel (married Lucille Gervais), Simone (Mrs. Adelard Ouimet), Jeanne d'Arc (Mrs. Paul St. Onge), Rita (Mrs. John Combet), Francois (Doris Keir), Edouard (married Eileen Baldwin), Aurore (Mrs. Lucien Ayotte), Berthe (Mrs. Herman Wiebe Jr.)

Now Stanislas and Gabrielle have retired to the town of Aubigny to enjoy a well earned rest. May God bless them and all their descendants.

## PELLAND FAMILY

*by Anita Pelland*

### "Nest in the Plains"

My husband Adrien's grandfather was Eugene. He was one of the first pioneers to settle in this community. His family consisted of three sons and six daughters. The farm was transferred to son, Theodore, who married Albina Bouchard, whose parents had come from the vicinity of St. Hyacinthe, P. Quebec. The Pellands were also from Eastern extraction, namely from Berthier, P. Quebec. They raised eleven boys and one girl.

As everyone else, they relied mostly on their products for their subsistence. Being a musical family, they organized their life style for much revelling. The neighbours would gather for frequent parties at the house, for enjoyable evenings.

Eventually, some flew the coop, to have their own families, mostly in Winnipeg. Paul, being more of an adventurous nature, went to the States. During the war, three sons were enrolled in military service. One brother died at the tender age of 20.



*Seven of the eleven sons of Theodore Pelland and their wives. Rita, Mrs. Marcel L'Heureux, was the only daughter.*

In 1945, Theodore, the father, passed away. Mrs. Pelland was left with three sons at home. In 1956, a highway accident claimed the life of Adolphe. In 1950, the house was extensively damaged by flood, and it was necessary to build a new one. The members of the family, being skilled carpenters, were able to effect its construction.

In the year 1960, I became part of the family, by marrying the youngest son, Adrien, son of Theodore. After we had our two sons, my mother-in-law retired in the Town of Aubigny with her son, Emile. Three of her married sons had predeceased her. It was in 1966 at the age of 84, that this great woman went to reap the rewards of life of arduous toil.

Now bear with me, for a bit of sentimentality. Considering the state of ill-health of my husband, we managed quite satisfactorily. To supplement our income, I did some substitute teaching. This permitted us to remodel our home and we enjoy its comfort. Dairy farming is a demanding industry, but my husband became whole heartedly involved in it. For a diversion, I took some very pleasant trips, which broadened my horizons, and hopefully those of my family and friends, with whom I try to share my travelling experiences.

Six years ago we were blessed with the birth of our daughter Ginette. It was the fulfillment of a long cherished dream, and the joy she brought us was overwhelming.



*Adrien and Anita Pelland with their children, Norbert, Michel, Ginette, enjoying a day at the Big "M" Stampede.*

Today we are better equipped to do our field work. The boys having been trained to do farm chores, are gainfully employed, and many jobs are offered them. Our second son, Michel, is sport orientated. He received trophies for his exploits in hockey, and he excels in curling as well. Norbert, the eldest, has captured first prizes for this sport, also.

Much has happened since I lived here. The building of the bridge was surely the greatest improvement. The church has been most attractively renovated after having been damaged by the recent tornado. The renewed image of our town has brought our spirits up and given us a sense of dignity. The kind of help supplied in rebuilding the community was appreciated by the parishioners, because they also have practiced a spirit of service when it was required.

May our dear children enjoy the meaningful life and well being we have been striving to provide for them.

## CLEMENT

*by Leo and Arthur Clement*

In 1890, Joseph Xavier Clement, his wife, Melina, (nee Campeau) and their two sons, Eddie (2) and Michel (1 month) left "La Conception", a small village in the "Laurentides", to seek their fortune on the shores of the Red River. They first settled in the Silver Plains District on lot 455, across the Red River from Xavier's uncle, Noe Clement.

Later Xavier Clement, with his family, moved onto his own property (River Lot 479) which was allotted him as a new settler.



*Standing on Hart Parr tractor in 1916, are Onesime Arzelie, and Mathias (Patch) Clement. By the buggy is a Mr. Champagne.*

Six children were born to Xavier and Melina in Manitoba - Onésime (Pete) born January 2, 1892; Arzolie, born August 23, 1895 and died in 1963, followed by Leopold (Bijou) born July 4 and died in 1970. Then came Agathe, Edmond and Mathias.

Having come from timber and bush country in Quebec, Xavier found it profitable to put the horses and equipment, used for farming in summer, to work in his lumber camp in the Marchand District in winter. For many years, from the "Clement Siding", firewood and fence posts found their way to suppliers in St. Boniface and Winnipeg. The Agricultural College, now part of the University of Manitoba, purchased fence posts from Xavier Clement, to fence its property.

As the years passed, Eddie, the eldest left for Quebec, where he married Simone Bailey, later returning to Manitoba with his family. He died in Winnipeg in 1972.

In 1923, Michel (known for baseball fans as Mike) married Helene Berard of St. Pierre, a school teacher at the town school of Aubigny. After their marriage, they resided in the U.S.A. and St. Pierre, before returning to Aubigny in 1932, where they built a general store. They sold their store to Albert Hebert and moved away. Michel died in St. Boniface in 1955.

Agathe married Alfred Garipey Jr. and moved to St. Jean Baptiste. She now resides in St. Boniface.

Leopold, (Bijou) known along the Red River as the great baseball catcher, moved away to pursue his baseball career. He died in St. Boniface in 1970.

Edmond moved to Montreal, where he married Marie-





*Mother, Mrs. Xavier Clement and two daughters, Agathe and Arzelie, beside their new car.*

Jeanne Hamel.

Mathias, the first boy to be christened in the church of Saint Antoine d'Aubigny by Father Mathias Desrosiers, married Marie-Martha Bourassa, of Ste. Agathe, where they made their home.

The only son of Xavier that stayed and farmed the homestead (lot 479) is Onesime (Pete). In 1919, he married Rosa Lacerte of Ste. Anne, who taught school at Aubigny. Three children were born to them, Arthur, Leo and Carmel. Rose died in 1926. Arzelie, Onesime's sister, gave up her teaching career to look after her brother's children. After Xavier's death in 1928, his wife, Melina, also took up residence with her son Onesime, until he remarried. Melina, Arzelie and Carmel then moved to the Village of Aubigny. After Melina's death in 1942, Arzelie and Carmel moved to Marchand, to take up the position of postmistress. Arzelie died in St. Boniface in 1963.



*The Xavier Clement family in 1928. Included in photo are the Prosper L'Heureux and son, Marcel, and Albert Hebert. The two boys in front wearing white are Arthur and Leo Clement, sons of Onesime Clement.*

In 1933, Onesime married Isabelle St. Onge, daughter of one of Silver Plains pioneers. Six children were born of this marriage. Onesime farmed in the district until his retirement in 1971. His two eldest sons also farmed in Aubigny. Leo, after his marriage to Alice Pelletier of La Broquerie, farmed for two more years in Aubigny where his daughter, Patricia, was born. Having bought a general store, in Marchand, Leo and family moved there in 1950.

The one to continue the family tradition in the area, was Arthur. He and his father, Onesime, (Pete) worked on the family farm until Arthur's entry into the Armed Forces in 1941. Arthur served in Canada, England and continental Europe, until the end of the Second World War, and for several months in the occupational forces after the war, until February, 1946.

On his return to Canada, Arthur worked in Winnipeg for the next three years, where he married Lucille Nault of St. Pierre. In January of 1947, after a few months, they moved to St. Boniface, where they lived for 2 years. During this time, first their son, Raymond, was born.

In the spring of 1949, Arthur's life dream of owning his own land was realized with the purchase of 240 acres of land of section 11-6-2 East, near Aubigny, only one-half mile from the land owned by his father, Onesime (Pete).

Arthur, Lucille and Raymond moved to the Parish of Aubigny on rented land, until they had completed the building of a home on their own land. In 1952, they along with now born, Gisele, Denis and Luc, moved into their new home, which is their present home.

The Clement family, over the next years, was blessed with seven more children, totalling eleven - six boys and five girls. Their family is: Raymond, the first born, Gisele, now Mrs. Larry Isford, of Winnipeg, Denis, now married to Lorraine Marion of St. Jean, Luc, Claude, Suzanne, Rosa, Roger, Daniel, Micheline and Ginette.

The Clement family has grown further with the arrival of 3 grandchildren.

Arthur and Lucille Clement have been quite fortunate over the years, and the Clement family has continued to grow and prosper with the vitality, energy and love for life with which it had begun.

## JACOB VERRIER

*by Lucie St. Laurent*

Jacob Verrier (1867-1945) from St. Guillaume, P. Quebec, and Parmelia Pelland (1874-1915) from Berthier, P. Quebec, were married in April 1893. They were blessed with seventeen children - Adolphe (1894) died at the age of 7 months; Alphonse (1895-1971), Wilbrod (1896-1972), Isidore (1897-1898), Celina (1898), Agathe (1900), Philomene (1901-1968), Lucie (1902), Antoine (1904), Claire (1905), Adele (1907-1912), Jeane (1908), Augustin (1909- died at birth), Marie-Ange (1910), Gerard (1912), Jacob (1913-1972) and Parmelia (1915), lived for only 4 days.

Jacob (Jr.) married Jeanne Lourin, and from this marriage, ten children were born - Jean-Paul, Adelard, Rene, Jeanne, Jeanine, Lorette, Marie-Ange, Henri, Marcel and Adele.

Jacob (Jr.) farmed the land in Aubigny for many years. He died of a heart attack at the age of 59.

Lucie, daughter of Jacob Verrier Sr., married Thelesphore Savignac in 1929. They had five children - Parmilia, Marcel, Therese, Irene, Marguerite (deceased). She was widowed in 1951 and married Joseph Philippe St. Laurent in 1961. Mrs. Lucie St. Laurent still resides in Aubigny.

## THE PELLAND AND ROY FAMILY

by Gabriel Roy

### PELLAND

In 1889, Joseph Alexis Pelland, his wife, Jesse Poulet, and their five children, Marie, Anne, Marie Alma, Exilia, Elizabeth and Joseph Alexis Jr. left St. Hyacinthe, Province of Quebec, to settle on the east bank of the Red River.

Joseph came to Manitoba the year before leaving Quebec to find a place for his family to settle. He then returned to teaching, as both Joseph and Jesse were school teachers.

When they arrived in Aubigny, they settled on part of River Lot 466. They cleared this land with oxen, a walking plow and grub hoe. Jess would drive the ox team on the walking plow. Occasionally, the oxen would run into the river to escape the torture of hordes of mosquitoes.

Life, in many ways, was very hard for these early pioneers and their families. The closest church was in Ste. Agathe, and being devout Roman Catholics, they would walk to Mass on Sunday. After the Bourret School was built, Mass was held there.

Jesse spun her own wool and wove her own linen. Some of her linen was in the family's possession until recently.

Having built their buildings close to the river bank, they were often threatened by spring flooding and would have to move their possessions and animals to higher ground at the end of the river lot. Upon returning to their home after high waters, they would find dead fish and debris in it. Eventually, they moved their buildings to higher ground, where they remained until the property passed out of the family's ownership.

The children were awakened at daybreak in the summertime, in order to pick the plentiful wild fruits. This was taken to Morris with a team of oxen to be sold. Another means of providing food for the table, was fishing, as large sturgeon were caught in the river.

Jesse voluntarily taught some of the children in Aubigny, among them the children of Noah Clement.

Joseph Alexis passed away in 1911, followed by Jesse in 1916.



*Jean Marie Paha left, and Jos. Alexis Pelland Jr., a bachelor, who never cut his hair.*

As the family grew up, they married and moved away. All except Joseph Jr. and Marie Alma. Maria Ann married Joseph Perrault, who opened the first store in Aubigny. When this was sold they moved to St. Laurent, where they raised their family. Exilia was married to George Breault, who after farming in Aubigny, moved to Winnipeg. Elizabeth was married to Isaac Graveline, who also farmed in Aubigny, later moving to Deer Horn.

Joseph Alexis Jr. stayed on the parents' farm. He farmed until he retired into Aubigny. He sold the Pelland farm to the Ovide Robert family, who are the present owners. After becoming infirm, he lived at Repos Jolys in St. Pierre, until his death in 1977. He was 91 years old at his death. Joseph was never married.



*The home of Octave Roy Sr., taken from the church steeple in 1939. The livery barn was located south of the house.*

### OCTAVE ROY

Marie Alma married Octave Roy in 1904. They were the first couple to be married in St. Antoine Parish. They had four children, one of whom (Gabriel) is still living in Aubigny today.

Octave was employed by the railroad at Silver Plains, where Gabriel was born. He built a house and livery barn in Aubigny, which became the stopping place for the people travelling by horse and buggy. The teacher and banker also boarded here.

### PELLAND, ROY - LIVERY BARN

Octave Roy Sr. had a good team of horses which he used to pick up people at the station at Silver Plains, and take them wherever they wanted to go. This happened mostly at election time. His son, Gabriel, remembers Albert Prefontaine, M.L.A. coming in and travelling around, making speeches for election meetings. On these occasions, he would board at the Roys.

On the red barn near St. Mary's Road, and almost opposite the church, the words 'Livery Barn' were painted in large white letters.

Gabe was only six when his father died, and he was the oldest son. He remembers driving those horses until his mother sold them.

Gabriel still remembers how, as a child, he enjoyed the smoked sausage the Mennonites would offer him from their lunches. They would eat while resting their horses before continuing their travels.

Octave Sr. worked toward having an artesian well drilled in the vicinity of where Hector Ritchot's home is located today. Unfortunately, the water was too saline to be usable. He also encouraged the development of better roads in the community.

They had four children - Esther (Mrs. Maurice Massinon) Gabriel, Antonia (Mrs. Denis DeRoo) and Octave Jr.

Octave Roy passed away in 1912, leaving a young family behind. The family suffered many hardships, as there was no aid to widows and their families then. Esther, who died in 1978, was married to Maurice Massinon and lived in Aubigny, before moving to Haywood.

Antonia was married to Denis DeRoo and is living in Unity, Saskatchewan.

Octave, who married Georgette Beauchemin, farmed in Aubigny until he retired to St. Pierre.

Gabriel is married to Ella Stock and farmed in Aubigny, where he still lives today.

Marie Alma has eleven grandchildren, plus a number of great-grandchildren. She passed away in 1949. Upon looking back at my ancestors, I admire their faith, strength and courage in meeting all adversities. I only hope God grant future generations the same blessings.

## **FISETTE**

Stanislas Fisette was born on November 11, 1878. At the age of 20, he left Massachusettes, U.S.A. and came to Aubigny, Manitoba. He married Theodora Beaudoin in Ste Agathe, on April 19, 1899. His wife, Theodora Beaudoin, was born on July 9, 1884 at St. Henri de Mastouche, Quebec.

At first, the young couple lived along the east bank of the Red River on lots 484 and 486, about 2 miles north of Augibny. This land later was bought by the McDonald family. At this time, there were two Fisette brothers living on those river lots. The younger brother was Joseph, who was born in the U.S.A. in 1880 and was married to Marie Robert, a daughter of pioneers, Sevoine and Melanise Robert. They had seven children. They did not live many years in Aubigny. They moved to St. Boniface and later to Saskatchewan.

Some ten years later, Stanislas Fisette and his family moved west of the Red River on lots 463 or 465, having purchased the farm from Mr. Laplante, and being neighbours to the St. Onge to the south and Emile Robert to the north.

There were 10 children in this family: Maris, Herve, Leontine, Jos, Mathias, Therese, Pierre, Edward, Marguerite and Theodora. Today there are only 5 still living. They are Herve of St. Boniface, Mathias of St. George, Edward of La Broquerie, Leontine (Mrs. Felix Pelletier) of St. Boniface, and Theodora (Mrs. Stan Bisson) of Ste. Anne.

During the years, the Fisette family lived on lots 463-465, they suffered two great tragedies. Their house was burned to the ground, and later a son, Pierre, died from burns he received while handling gasoline for a tractor.

In 1929, they sold their farm to Charles Ed Ritchot and moved to La Broquerie. The only testimony left of the passage of the Fisette family in Aubigny is a monument in the church grave yard marking the grave of Pierre Fisette, who died at the age of 15.

## **L'HEREUX FAMILY OF A UBIGNY**

The father, Arthur L'Heureux, was born on March 16, 1850 at St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. The mother, Octavie Fisette, was born on August 20, 1863, at Montreal, Quebec.

They were married at St. Mary's in Winnipeg on November 13, 1881. They had a family of 14 children - 11 girls and 3 boys - whom they raised on a farm about 2 miles north of Aubigny.

The oldest son, Albert, born in 1883, remained a bachelor and died in 1961. The four oldest daughters elected for religious life: Albertine (Sister Marie Marcellin), Anna (Sister Marie Desire) and Alberta (Sister Marie Agathe-Ange) all became sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

Maria (Sister Maria L'Heureux) entered in the Grey Nuns' order.

The second son, Prosper, born November 18, 1891, married Yvonne Dumontier, July 22, 1919. Claire married Alpha Chouinard. Ozanna married Frank Kerbrat. Christina married William Henderson. Adolphe died in infancy. Agathe married Antoine Boivin. Emma married Louis Jacob. Antoinette married John Fraser. Marie-Rose married Joseph Marcoux.

Arthur L'Heureux died on November 11, 1932; his wife, Octavie, died on September 13, 1949. A few years after their death, part of their farm was sold to J. Max McDonald, while their son, Prosper kept on farming on Lot 480, until his death on March 22, 1974. On that farm, Prosper and his wife, Yvonne Dumontier, lived all their married life, there raising their two children, Marcel, born in 1920 and Lucille, born in 1935.

On August 11, 1945, Marcel married Rita Pelland of Aubigny. They lived a short while alongside the parents on Lot 480; then they moved to St. Norbert. They have 6 children - Paul, Diane, Irene, Anita. Rose-Marie and Richard.

Lucille married Joseph Chartier on January 7, 1955, in Aubigny. Joseph Chartier is a grandson of the first settler, Flavien Chartier. Lucille and Joseph built themselves a house in the village of Aubigny. They are among the lucky ones who narrowly escaped the tornado of June 19, 1978. They have six children - Lise (Mrs. Henri Verrier), Rita, Roger, Gerald, Donat and Irene.

Mrs. Yvonne, L'Hereux sold their farm after her husband's death and she retired to the village of St. Jean Baptiste, where she is still enjoying good health.

## JACQUES SORIN

by Laurette Sorin

Jacques Sorin of Cordernais, France, was married to Florence Touze at St. Etienne de Montluc on April 29, 1874. They settled down at Cordemais where they started to raise their family. They had eleven children, all but three of them came to Canada.

In 1894, their oldest son, also named Jacques, came to Canada, more precisely to St. Boniface. He started out on foot for St. Norbert where he had found work with a Mr. Champagne. Mr. Alex Jackson from Aubigny who was passing by with a team of horses and a wagon, stopped to give him a ride. Unfortunately, Jacques Sorin fell asleep in the wagon and missed St. Norbert. Mr. Alex Jackson, not knowing what else to do, took him to his farm in Augibny. Having no knowledge whatsoever of the English language, Jacques Sorin stayed and worked with the Jacksons for two and a half years, not knowing where he was. One day Alex Jackson sent Jacques to cut wood for one of his friends on the west side of the river, Jacques' curiosity was aroused by a stranger's voice nearby. To Jacques' amazement, this fellow spoke French to him. He was a Mr. Toupin, and it is only then that Jacques discovered that the French town of Ste. Agathe stood just a few miles north. Jacques then left for Ste. Agathe where he found work. On July 25, 1898, Jacques Sorin was married to Marie Louise Pellard who also came from France. They settled down in Ste. Agathe and they raised a family of three children.

In 1898, Francois Sorin, second son of the family, also came from Cordemais, France to Canada. He came directly to Ste. Agathe where he was married to Malvine Vanasse on December 14, 1920. Francois and Malvina had three children.

In 1900, Marie Sarin, a third member of the family, arrived in Ste. Agathe. On July 30, 1906, she was married to Jean Leray and moved to Saskatchewan.

It was in 1902 that the father and mother, Jacques and Florence Sorin arrived to Ste. Agathe with the other five children, Jules, Jeanne, Josephine, Emilie and Jean. (We might note here that Florence Touze was first cousin to the French writer Chateaubriand.)

Jules moved to Regina where he lived all his life. Jeanne married Ernest Painchaud in 1909 and moved to Saskatchewan. Josephine died in Ste. Agathe in 1903 at the age of 14. Emilie married Joseph Dandonneau on May 25, 1915.



*Marie-Therese and Jean Sorin in 1930, with their children, Lucille, Jules, Emile and Florence.*

Jean Sorin, the youngest member of the family, was six years old when his parents arrived in Canada. He lived in Ste. Agathe until he got married. On Feb. 21, 1925, Jean married Marie Therese Baudry who had also come from France with her parents in 1902.

The same year, Jean bought the Red River Lots 502 - 504 from Mrs. Jim Jackson who was selling the land because she had just lost her husband. Jim was the son of Alex Jackson. The Sorin family had now settled down in Aubigny for good. Jean and Marie Therese raised a family of eight children, Florence, Lucille, Emile, Jules, Yves, Paul, Cecile and Joseph. Jean Sorin was an active member of his parish. His interest in others, his courage and his cheerfulness in the face of great difficulties of his time have been an inspiration to all who knew him.



*Farm of Jean Sorin, taken in the 1950's.*

Florence, the oldest, married Leopold Chartier on April 29, 1950. Leopold was the son of Alfred Chartier, a pioneer family of Aubigny. Florence and Leopold lived in Aubigny for two years, and then moved to Ste. Agathe where they are farming and raising their family of twelve children.

Lucille joined the congregation of the Sisters of the Cross in 1945.

Emile married Rose-Marie Dube in August 1956, and is now farming in Ste. Agathe. They have a lovely family of ten children.

Jules who married Laurette Nadeau in October 1962, bought his father's land, Red River Lots 502-504, which he still owns and operates. They have five children.

Yves married Marguerite Moreau in January 1965, and is also farming in Ste. Agathe on Red River Lots 522-524. They have two children.

Paul joined the congregation of the White Fathers and has been in Africa since 1962.

Cecile married August Flegel in June 1963. They are farming in Killaly, Saskatchewan and have a family of eight children.

Joseph, youngest member of the family is now making his living in St. Claude, Man. He was married to Viviane Plamondon in Nov. 1961 and has three children.

This is the life story of Jean Sorin, his ancestors and his descendants. He came from a long line of hard working peasants of France. He was never afraid of a hard day's work and no obstacle was ever too great for him to surmount. He passed away in June 1978, but his name rests forever in the archives of Aubigny.

## THE EBERT OR HEBERT FAMILY

The Ebert family arrived in Manitoba in 1905 from Oakwood, North Dakota, coming originally from Chatham, Ontario. They were of English-Norwegian descent, and went by the name of Ebert, which was changed to Hebert when they came to Manitoba.

This family, when they arrived at Aubigny, consisted of grandfather Abe, age 73, Ubert and his wife (nee Annie Peterson) and their six children, Henry, Rose, Eva, Kathleen, Albert and Eddy.



*John Ebert, his wife, who came to Canada in 1900. Here with a niece and nephew.*

Ubert's brother, John, had arrived five years earlier in 1900 and settled on a farm 3 miles east of Aubigny, now owned by Roger Saurette. When Ubert and his family arrived, they bought a farm half a mile north from John's place.

Ubert lost both his father, Abe, and his wife, Annie, within a year, in 1910. All the children were still at home.



*The four generations of Ubert Hebert, daughter, Rosa, granddaughter, Alice Shiels and great-granddaughter.*

On November 25, 1913, there was a double wedding in the family. The oldest son, Henry, married Mary Quimet of Ste. Agathe, while daughter, Eva, married Alfred Quimet. I understand that this was a great event, which was long remembered by all their friends. On that occasion, the music was provided by the St. Onge brothers, Hector and Ernest, who were famous violin players throughout the Red River Valley.



*Henry Ebert, his wife, Mary, Mary's mother, grandma Quimet, Aunt Caroline and son, Laurence.*

Henry and his wife, Mary, had three children - Lawrence, who married Carmella Berard and took over his father's farm after his early death in 1937, lived there for a number of years, then moved to St. Adolphe. They had 5 children. Alice, who married Alceric Clement of Morris and had one son, Gerry. The youngest, Helene, married Denis Clement of Morris and had 4 daughters - Marguerite, Diane, Monique and Suzanne.

Ubert's oldest daughter, Rose, married J.W. Roberts in 1915 and lived in Saskatchewan. She had six children, who are scattered in Saskatchewan, B.C. and Oregon.

Eva married Alfred Ouimet. They never had any children, but are very happy surrounded by numerous nephews and nieces to the second and third generation. They are young at heart and still enjoy a good game of cards. They celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on November 25th, 1978. Alfred is 93 years old and Eva is 83.

Kathleen married Max McDonald and lived on a farm 2 miles north of Aubigny. They didn't have any children but were very devoted to their nephews and nieces. Max was councillor for Ward 4 in the Rural Municipality of Morris from 1935-47.

Albert served in the American Army during the first World War. He married the former Bernadette Vanier of Montreal. They had one son, Leo, who is now in Winnipeg. They lived a number of years on a farm east of Marais River, then bought a store in Aubigny, where they lived until Albert was stricken with cancer and passed away at age 37.



*Eddie and Alice Ebert, and Eva and Fred Quimet in 1971.*

The youngest son, Eddy, married Alice Belerive of St. Elizabeth. They took over the family farm and kept his father, Ubert, with them until his death, in 1958 at the ripe old age of 97. Eddy and Alice had 10 children, 8 are still living. Two daughters passed away, Lucille, who was married to Benoit (Pete) Saurette and Doris who was married to Jean L. Ouimet. Of the others, Marcel Raymond Aurele, Rene, Lorraine, Jeanne and Denis are living in Manitoba. Annette is living in California. Eddy and Alice, who will celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary in June, 1979. They are now living in Manoir Joly, St. Pierre.

When Ubert Ebert moved his family from North Dakota, he was looking for cheaper and better land than what he could get down there, as the land around Oakwood, N.D. was quite alkaline. The land they bought east of Aubigny was mostly in bush at the time, so they had to work very hard to clear it, but it paid off.

In spite of having been deprived of their mother while relatively young, they were a happy and joyful family. They enjoyed dancing and had many house parties. They were and still are great card players, and passed that on to their children.

## RITCHOT - AUBIGNY

*written by Mrs. James (Germaine) Ritchot*

Mr. Charles Edouard Ritchot who was born in l'Assomption, Quebec in 1886 came to St. Norbert, Man. with his family when he was very young.

He lived in St. Norbert until 1912 when he moved to Silver Plains with his young family.

He had bought River lots 443 and 451 but settled on 443. Later in 1929 he bought River Lots 463 and 465 and 467 which he divided amongst his sons later.

His wife Domithilde Kenny was born in St. Norbert in 1887.



*The Chas. Ed Ritchot family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Jean Marie, Gabriel, Therese, Jos. Hector, Mrs. Ritchot, Jean Louis, Mr. Ritchot, James, Remi. FRONT ROW: Alice, Eva, Jeanne, Eleane, Isabelle.*

They raised 12 children: Jeanne (Mrs. Adolphe St. Onge, Ste Agathe); Elianne (Mrs. J.B. Pelland, St. Norbert); James (married Germaine Beaudry); Jean-

Louis (single) of St. Pierre; Jos-Hector (married Bernice Le Texier); Eva (Mrs. E. Gagnon) of St. Pierre; Alice (Mrs. R. St. Onge) of St. Boniface; Isabelle (Mrs. Leonard Chartier); Gabriel (married Irene Vermette); Remi (married Jeannine Le Gourrierec) of La Salle; Therese (Mrs. S. Desrosiers) of St. Anne; and Jean-Marie (married Isabelle Desrochers).

They lived in a small frame house 20 x 24 for many years. It was only in 1926 that a new house was built, the old one being used as a kitchen. This house was heated with a wood furnace plus a kitchen stove.

The water for the house was hauled from the river in barrels on a stone boat. They also used rain water. In winter the men cut big blocks of ice from the river and every day the barrel in the kitchen had to be refilled. Later they had a cistern and a hand pump.



*Mrs. James Ritchot in her kitchen, showing wood stove, water barrel, wood box, wash basin, etc.*

Each fall they would kill a beef and a 400 lb. pig. Mrs. Ritchot would make blood sausage, farmers' sausage, head cheese, and would can some meat. The fat pork was salted in a big wooden barrel in the basement and the rest of the meat was cut and frozen and kept in a shed until needed.



*Jean Marie's dogs trained to give rides.*

For amusement the boys trained their dogs to pull sleds, races, etc. The banks of the Red River made grand toboggan slides and the river-huge skating rinks. Everybody joined in the fun. All the families were large and nobody worked in the city at the time. They had lots of time for fun once the chores were done. The older ones had dog and horse races on the river, hockey teams and





ABOVE: Seeding time at Ritchots.  
TO RIGHT: Breaking land.



baseball teams. They also had house-parties where there was a lot of singing. Mr. Ritchot was known to be the life of a party. He was also known to be the man with the patch on his eye.

The children went to Bourret School which was on Mr. Hector St. Onge's property along the river 1 1/2 miles away. In Summer they walked to school but in winter were driven in a sleigh. The school was a one room school with all the grades up to grade 8.

The eldest daughter was sent to school in St. Norbert where she live with the grandparents.

When there was work to do on the farm the older boys were kept home from school to help.

They used horses to work in the fields.

Mr. Ch. Ritchot got his first tractor, a 10-20 Titan in 1920. The land from the river almost to what is now highway 75, was partially covered with trees. This was fenced in and used as a cow and sheep pasture. The wool from the sheep was used to knit mittens and socks, and some were sold in Winnipeg.

Mrs. Ritchot made a batch of soap each year.

Every year Mr. Ritchot and the neighbors went to Steinbach with their load of wheat to be made into flour, bran, and shorts. This was an occasion to show off who had the better team of horses!

Their doctor was Doctor Ross of Morris, and later Dr. Roy of Ste. Agathe.

Mr. Ritchot had his first car, a Case in 1916, which he had traded for 3 horses, a democrat and 5900.00 in cash.

When Mr. Ch. Ritchot moved to Silver Plains in 1912 his brother Eugene also came. He bought River Lots 427 and 429. He owned a thrashing outfit run by a steam engine and he thrashed For all the surrounding farmers. He had a caboose to lodge the 15 or more men who worked for him but the farmers' wives had to feed these men when it was their turn to get the threshing crew. If it rained they stayed on, they had to be fed just the same.

Rem! farmed on lot 451 from 1948 to 1951 when he sold out to a brother-in-law Leonard Chartier to become an elevator operator in Silver Plains, Letellier, Rowatt and Qu'Appelle, Sask., and finally in La Salle, Man.

Mrs. Ritchot died in July 1953 and her husband in November of the same year.

Of all Ch. Ritchot's children, five are still living in Aubigny or Silver Plains. James farmed on the most

northerly seven chains lot 463 and 112 of 465 for 45 years until 1974 when his son David took over the farm and he retired to Aubigny. David has 2 daughters and 5 sons. So the farm should continue to be in the Ritchot's hands for a few more years. Gabriel had 1 / 2 of lot 465 and lot 467. Gabriel sold his farm to Kenneth Robert in 1972 keeping only the part east of the highway. He lives next to David, Jos-Hector better known as Marcotte lives in Aubigny. Both Gabriel and Marcotte have been school bus drivers since our schools closed and our children transferred to Ste. Agathe and St. Jean Baptiste. Isabelle lived near the



James Ritchot in buggy in front of his father's house.

ferry for many years (we now have a bridge since 1965). Jean Marie, the youngest took over his father's farm RL 443 and has since bought RL 431 (from a pioneer's son, Arnold Coates) RL 441 (from a pioneer's son, Janvier Hebert), 112 RL 439.

Jean-Louis a retired farmer from St. Pierre often came to help his younger brother on the family farm - that's how he happened to be there when the tornado (in June 1978) struck, and again on October 4 when he passed away suddenly, with those he loved. He is laid to rest in Aubigny Cemetery.

DENIS L. KENNY

Mr. Denis Kenny, whose father John Kenny emigrated to Canada from Dublin, Ireland, arrived in Aubigny as a young man looking for work around 1913.



*Mr. and Mrs. Denis Kenny and their children in 1944.*

He first lived with his sister Mrs. Charles Ritchot, then married a local girl, Eva St. Jacques on November 9, 1915.

They lived in a small five room house and raised six healthy children: Maurice and Jeannette now living in Ottawa, Blanche, Louis and Gertrude living in St. Norbert, and Denise in St. Boniface. All were born in the home, five of them delivered with the help of Eva's mother. One born prematurely at seven months, was kept alive in the old fashioned oven for the first few weeks after being delivered by Dr. Ross of Morris.

Being a part time carpenter Denis worked for others and often did farm work, especially in the 30's. He had two horses and often worked for the municipality, building roads and scrapers and repairing local bridges, and later acted as a foreman. Having had only a grade eight education, he ably served as a school trustee and secretary for many years and was always interested in his children's education.



*The Denis Kenny family in 1954. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Maurice, Gertrude, Jeannette, Blanche, Denise, Louis. FRONT ROW: Mr. and Mrs. Kenny.*

Eva was a small hard working woman. Taking care of a big garden and with few commodities, she fed her family well. When her husband was away at work, she

would milk the cow, feed the two pigs and the steer needed to feed the family.

She even sewed hand me downs to clothe the children and also found time to do the same for others in her family. She was a kind woman and even when older, she served as midwife to help a young women deliver her baby. The husband had gone in a bad winter storm with his horses and a sleigh to get the doctor from Morris, which was ten miles away.

Denis and Eva retired to St. Boniface in 1954, to be with their children. She died in 1972. He is living in St. Norbert Lodge and celebrated his 90th birthday on February 2, 1979.

## **GUSTAVE BOUCHARD**

*submitted by Berthe Palud*

Acquainted with the difficulties of raising a large family on Quebec small farms, it was on a cold spring day of March 5, 1905 that Gustave Bouchard and his wife Rose Delima Roy (1873-1959) and four of their children arrived in Manitoba to first settle in Ste. Agathe.

Around 1910, Mr. Bouchard bought some land in Aubigny, one year later buying river lot no. 448 and living there until his retirement. This land was covered with willows, and it required the strength of an ox team to uproot most of them. 160 acres of land were worked with a single horse powered one-bottom plough, and it was slow.

During the first summer the family was housed in a large granary. They raised nine children, two of whom died in early teens and another two children in infancy. The eldest, Yvonne, who was born in 1900 at St. Arsene, P.Q., married Edmour Fontaine of Ste. Agathe and died in 1975. Their second daughter, Alma, was born in St. Onesime, P.Q. in 1901, married to Camille Massinon of Sperling, and died in Langley, B.C. Irene was born in St. Onesime, 1902 and died of a ruptured appendix in St. Boniface Hospital in 1916. Their fourth daughter, Edna, was born in late 1904 in St. Onesime, P.Q. and married Jean-Marie Palud their fifth child, Alice, was the first to be born in Aubigny in 1908. She married Francois Palud in 1926. She is now widowed and lives in St. Boniface. Their son Daniel was born in Ste. Agathe in 1908. He went to work in the United States and eventually married Beatrice Landry. He now lives in Beaumont, Calif.



*Mr. Gustave Bouchard at 81 years of age, taken in 1957.*

Samuel who was born in 1914, married Marie-Ange Lafontaine. Later, he died in a tragic farm accident in his brooder in Aubigny in 1942. The Bouchards had two other sons after Samuel; Edouard and Louis Edouard ... both of whom died in infancy.

Mr. Gustave Bouchard served for many years of his life as a church and school trustee. He also raised his two grand-children, Raymond and Jeanine Bouchard after Samuel's death.

## MARCOUX FAMILY

According to a study on the origin of family names made by Mgr. Tanquay, the name Marcoux is of Saxon origin and was written "Marcoulf" from the words "Mark" (limits) and "Olf" (wolf) - that is, - limits of the wolf".

Be that as it may, the first Marcoux who arrived in Canada came from Saint-Julien Tonerre, in France. This is where he was baptized in 1631, given the name Pierre, son of Claude Marcoux and Marie Juneau. He was married in Quebec on January 8, 1662 to Marthe de Rainville.

He was the ancestor of all the Marcoux' who lived in Canada for a whole century. Later, about 1795, there arrived other families of the same name, which we do not consider to be related to our family.

In 1979, three hundred and seventeen years after the arrival of the ancestor to Canada, there are now eleven generations of Marcoux living in this country.

The first to come to Manitoba was Narcisse. He came in 1880, as a worker, helping to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. He must have found the western plains much to his liking, because when he went back to his home at Ste. Marie de Beauce, Province of Quebec, he returned 4 years later to Manitoba, with his wife, Anastasie Normand, and their family of six sons, the youngest of which was Theodule, our father.

When they arrived, they lived briefly in St. Boniface in 1884-85 and in Baie St. Paul (St. Eustach) 1885-92, when they finally settled on a farm in Lorette, where their descendants to the fifth generation are living today.

Three of the sons, Gustave, Leon and Alphonse, settled on farms around Lorette. The second oldest, Pierre, immigrated to North Dakota, where he married and raised his family. Maurice and Theodule took up farming in Richer, then known as Thibeauville. It is there that he married Emma Fontaine, daughter of Hormisdas Fontaine and Anastasie Beaudry, on January 27, 1913. Their two daughters, Eva and Alice, were born on that farm.

They left the farm in 1917 and bought a store in Richer, where they stayed until 1920, then moving to Aubigny, where they bought Jos Pelland's store. Here, they also had the post office and an office for the Bank of Hochelaga that had opened a branch in Aubigny.

On January 1, 1922, their newly acquired home and business place burned to the ground. Luckily, the family was absent, spending the greatly celebrated "Jour de l'An" with Mrs. Marcoux' family, the Hormisdas Fontaines in St. Pierre.



*Combined store and residence of Theodule Marcoux built in 1930 - at right, Mr. and Mrs. Marcoux in 1940.*

The same year, they started over again in a converted granary for the store, and added a lean to for a residence.

In 1930, a larger store, post office and private dwelling was constructed on the corner of St. Mary's Road and P.R. 205.

These years required hard work and thriftiness so as to succeed in their undertakings. Mr. Theodule Marcoux was postman for 24 years, taking mail bags to the station at Silver Plains and back to Aubigny. Whether there was rain or hail, blizzard, frigid weather or ice break up on the Red River - nothing stopped the Royal Mail in those day. His most faithful companion in this chore was his good horse "Mousse", who would travel this familiar road without a word of command from his master. In



*Faithful horse, Mousse.*

raging blizzards, where nothing was visible, Mr. Marcoux had to entrust his life to his horse's sense of directions, and sure enough, "Mousse" would bring him home safely.

Besides his work as postman, Theodule Marcoux travelled to Winnipeg a couple of days a week in the summer time to truck the farmers' produce, such as crates of eggs, cans of cream, or some livestock being sent to the stock yard. Then he proceeded to the wholesale stores, where he picked up his order of groceries to bring home on his return trip.

During this time, Mrs. Marcoux was very busy serving customers in the store, sorting and distributing the mail at the post office, meanwhile keeping an eye on her household. For several years, she boarded the school teachers at their place. Besides this, she was always very



*Mr. Theodule Marcoux, postman and Mr. I. Villeneuve, a visiting agronomist from Winnipeg.*

active in community organizations and involved in all church activities.

The passing years and poor health forced them into retirement. In 1944, they sold their store to George Alarie and built themselves a small house on the corner of their lot. Meanwhile their two daughters married and settled down to raise families of their own on farms near Aubigny.

The oldest daughter, Eva, married Louis Guillou in 1939. They had four children. Paul married Lorene Robert. Gerald married Gaetane Joyal. Laurette married Norman Kroeker. Diane is not married as of 1979.

They had 9 grandchildren. The second daughter, Alice, married Henri St. Onge. They had three children. Annette married Hans Schnurrer. Lorraine married Gordon McAndrew. Marc is not married as of 1979. They have 4 grandchildren.

In July, 1965, on account of deteriorating health, Mr. and Mrs. Theodule Marcoux had to sell their little house in the village of Aubigny to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Ouimet. They became residents of Villa Youville in Ste. Anne. In October of the same year, Mr. Marcoux had to be ad-



*Mr. and Mrs. Theodule Marcoux, after their retirement.*

mitted in St. Amant Hospital in St. Vital, where he passed away on December 21, 1965, at the age of 89.

Mrs. Emma Marcoux retired to live at the Manoir Jolys in St. Pierre. As her eyesight and health were very poor, she moved to Residence Ste. Therese in Otterburne,

where she spent the last years of her life. She passed away in St. Boniface Hospital on July 25, 1975 at 88 years of age.

Theodule and Emma Marcoux rest side by side in the cemetery behind the Roman Catholic Church in Aubigny, another generation of pioneers.

## PALUD

*submitted by Berthe Palud*

Tales of fortune and opportunity encouraged many immigrants to come and settle in Canada. Louis Marie Palud was one that heard and believed in the "Canadian Promise". He and his wife, Marie Anne Saillou (married in 1895) arrived from Brittany, France, in the spring of 1906. They had four children with them.



*Mr. and Mrs. Louis Marie Palud on their Diamond Jubilee.*

They first settled in St. Laurent, Manitoba, where three more children were born. On October 12, 1919, they moved to Aubigny, Manitoba, where they lived permanently. Their homecoming was marked by a heavy snowfall of six inches, which lasted till spring.

Their oldest daughter, Jeanne (born in 1896, Plosevede) married Francois Guillou in 1912 and died in 1972. Jean-Marie (1898-1962) married Edna Bouchard in 1925. Francois, also born in Plosevede, France (1900-1944) married Alice Bouchard. He died after a lengthy illness, suffering from multiple sclerosis. Louise (1904) married Francois Legal of Aubigny in 1924. Today, they live in St. Adolphe. Francois L., born in 1908, St. Laurent, Manitoba, married Anne-Marie Olivier from St. Boniface in 1938. They still reside in Aubigny, on River Lot 422. Yves was born in 1909 and died at 17 of a ruptured appendix. Their last daughter, Melanie, married Joseph Combote of Aubigny, in 1937. They now reside in St. Laurent, Manitoba.

Louise Marie Palud worked willingly as a school and church trustee for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Palud celebrated their Golden Anniversary on February 5, 1945. They were blessed with 13 more years of married life, during which they also celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in 1955, which was marked by a church celebration and a special banquet where family and friends all gathered for the festivities.

During his farming years, Mr. Palud experienced all kinds of hardships, ranging from hail to grasshoppers,



*In the stooks - Yves, Francois, Jeanne, and Louis Pallid in 1922.*

from drought to floods. During the flood of 1950, their family, along with their neighbours, were evacuated to Dauphin for the duration of one month. From boat, to jeep, to train, they managed successfully to live through and accept this ordeal.

Two of their sons, Jean-Marie and Francois L., took up agriculture in Aubigny. The oldest, Jean-Marie, had 9 children - Yves (still-born), Yves-Jean, Leon, Rose, Henriette, Robert, Monique, Claudette and Louis.

Two of Jean-Marie's sons farm in Aubigny, Leon and Loui. Leon and Rose-Marie (Foucher) Palud have four children - Michel, Suzanne, Stephane and Christian.



*BACK ROW: Jean-Marie Palud, Edna (Bouchard) Palud. SEATED: Louis-Marie and Marie-Anne (Saillou), Rose-Delima (Roy) Bouchard, Gustave Bouchard.*

Louis and Berthe (Lavalee) Palud have four sons - Marc, Daniel, Paul and Jean-Marie (deceased).

Francois L. Palud was the only other son of Louis Marie Palud to reside in Aubigny all his life. Along with his wife, Anne-Marie, they raised six children - Therese, Evelynne, Marcel, Pierre, Helene and Gisele.

Louis Marie Palud had found that the "Canadian Promise" was real.



*Edna Palud and son, Louis.*

## MY GRANDFATHER "Francois-Marie Guillou"

*by Lisa Guillou*

Many pioneers from Europe came to settle in Canada. Once in Canada they separated and went each their own way to discover this new land in which they came to. One of these pioneers was my grandfather "Francois GullJou". He came from France as an adventurer.

He was born July 11, 1882, in a small village called Cleder in Finister, France. He then worked in Paris and completed his seven years of compulsory military service. In 1908, he came to Canada and settled in a small village called St. Laurent. It was here he wed his wife "Jeanne Palud", also originally from France. They were married November 20, 1912.

In 1914, a first son was born, whom they named Louis. A couple of months later, grandpa Francois Guillou volunteered to go in combat during the first *World War*. There he was promoted to Sargeant in L'Arnee Franeaise. He stood strongly for his own countries, France and Canada *and* for freedom. As you all know World War I lasted from 1914 to 1918, but because he was wounded in Chamblay in an incident which nearly took his life, he returned in 1917. It was his faith in God that saw him through this crucial time. Upon his arrival here in Winnipeg, he was welcomed by his wife, son, and his in-laws. He was decorated with three major medals.

1. *Medaille Colonial*
2. *Croix de Valeur Militaire*
3. *Medaille de Combattan*

The second medal, the Military Cross, was awarded for bravery at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy.



*Mr. and Mrs. Francois Guillou, shortly after his arrival from World War I.*

Then, in 1918, a first daughter, Marie, was born. They stayed in St. Laurent till 1919, then moved to greener pastures south of Aubigny. Here, he broke 700 acres of land, which he cultivated, besides raising cattle together with his father-in-law Louis Palud.

The house I now live in was built by my Grandpa Guillou, and my great-grandma Palud by 1920; it's



FIRST ROW, Left to Right: Yves, Mr. Francois Guillou Sr., Mrs. Jeanne Guillou, Marie. SECOND ROW: Rosalie, Francois Jr., Louis, Yvonne (1942),

located on River Lot 432. At that time, both families shared the home. Then Francois, my grandfather's second son was born. Two daughters, Rosalie and Yvonne, followed, and then came my father, Ives.

Grandpa was a very good gardener, and with him, everything had to be perfect. He was also a dynamic conversationalist.

Grandpa worked as a farmer till he sold his farm to his three sons. Then he retired in the village of Aubigny, leaving his sons work the land *he* had worked so hard to get.

The saddest day in our lives was December 12, 1971, when grandfather's life ended.

Grandfather belongs in history by being a pioneer, a war veteran, a good husband, a great father, and of course a terrific grandfather. He will always remain in a special part of my heart.

## "The Years Spent Together"

Throughout their years together, raising their children, they had to draw from every resource available to survive. Among many of the difficulties in which they had to overcome was, adapting to the different regions and the



Mr. and Mrs. Francois Guillou on their Golden Wedding anniversary in 1962.

different weather of the regions, the war, the Spanish Flu which nearly took their daughter, Marie's life, and of course the depression and the flood.

But along with the hardships came the good times. Such as the celebration of their 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary, in 1962 where all the family was present.

Another time of rejoicing was at the birth of their 23 grandchildren and even happier times at the birth of their 30 great-grandchildren, who brought them joy throughout their golden years along with many other countless events.

They were both buried in St. Anthony's Church Cemetery in Aubigny. Their epitaph:

*"They stood tall amid  
This special breed of men,  
Resourceful farmers,  
Hard workers, all of them."*



Jeanne (Palud) Guillou wearing ancestral costume of Brittany on her first trip back home in 1973.

## MY GRANDMOTHER "Jeanne Palud Guillou"

*by Lisa Guillou and Yvette Bruneau*

As the saying goes - "Behind every great man stands a great woman". This woman, my grandmother, was born May 30, 1896, in Plousevede, Finistere, France. In the following years, while living on a farm, clad in wooden shoes, she grew up as any ordinary French child till her family, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Palud, decided in 1906, to move to Canada, to settle in St. Laurent. Upon her arrival, she boarded in the convent of Fransicaine Sisters, where she received her education.

Already speaking French and Breton (Celtic tongue) she was taught the English language. Having three languages was an advantage to her, because it allowed her to play an important role in the farm business (cattle and grain industry.)

Even after marriage, being the eldest of her family, she remained close to her maternal family, along with her immediate family, which consisted of six children, her husband, her mother and father. Along with this, she took care of her crippled brother for awhile.

After retiring in the Village of Aubigny, she continued to keep busy by knitting and gardening. Throughout the



town she was renowned for her traditional Friday dish of crepes Suzette, or le fars Breton (an oven pancake), and for her warm hospitality.

Of deep religious beliefs, she attended daily mass and had a strong devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was an active member in many organizations, such as

1. Dames de Saint - Anne (Ladies of St. Anne)
2. L.F.C. (Women's Catholic League)
3. LeClub d'Age d'Or (The Golden Age Club)

till the very last weeks of her life.

Being much older and more mature than in 1971, when Grandfather died, did not prevent the feeling of sadness and loneliness that came over me the day of May 26, 1976, when the dearest person to me, was gone forever.

## **SONS OF FRANCOIS-MARIE GUILLOU**

*by Eva Guillou*

### **"Louis Guillou"**

The oldest son, Louis, still lives on River Lot 428, where he built his home. He married a local girl, Eva Marcoux, in 1939. Louis farmed until 1961 and has been employed by Manitoba Crop Insurance Co. for the last 18 years, as adjustor, then agent and later as adjustor trainer. He was very active in the community as director of the credit union and Pool Elevators, also school and church trustee for many years.

On the other hand, Eva was the first manager of the Aubigny Credit Union and kept the job for 14 years.

This couple had two sons and two daughters: Paul, Gerald, Laurette and Diane. Paul married Lorene Robert, from Silver Plains, and they now have two daughters of their own and reside in Southdale, Winnipeg.

Gerald is married to Gaetane Joyal from Ste. Agathe; they make their home in Windsor Park. They have one son and three daughters, two of which are twins.

Laurette, the oldest girl, married Norman Kroeker from Rosenort; they now live in Maple Ridge, British Columbia. Their family consists of a daughter and two sons.

Diana also resides in Maple Ridge, British Columbia, is single, and works as a secretary in a Real Estate Co.

### **"Francois Guillou Jr"**

*Lisa Guillou*

The second son, Frank Jr., married Marie Ange Perreault, whose grandfather, Jos Perrault at one time owned River Lot 428, where the Village of Aubigny is situated. Marie Ange is a school teacher.

Frank spent some time in the army and later farmed a few years. He is now permanently employed with the Canadian Pacific Railway and has his home on Kingston Row, St. Vital. Frank and Marie Ange have a son and two daughters. Roland and Jeannette live in Calgary and Doris married Glenn Beghin and made their home in Fort Garry, a suburb of Winnipeg. They have two daughters.

## **"Daughters of Francois-Marie Guillou"**

*written by Rosalie Saurette*

Marie, born in 1918, lived at home till her wedding day, helping her parents raise their family. In 1949, she married Wilfred Houle, native of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. Presently, they are the owners of the Holiday Motel in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. They have three sons, Roger, Arthur, and Albert.

Rosalie, a second daughter, born in 1922, married Georges Saurette. Both from Aubigny, they decided to make their new home in Aubigny also. Before they took residence on their new land Rosalie stayed at home with her parents while her husband was at war. They have raised seven children.

The youngest daughter, Yvonne, was born in 1924. She taught school for a number of years. In 1943, Yvonne married Aurele Lussier, from Ste. Elizabeth, Manitoba. She now resides in Minneapolis, U.S.A. where she works as an agent for a Real Estate Co. She has three daughters, Cheryl, (Mrs. K. White); Jacqueline, (Mrs. W. Burgers), Janelle, and one son, Marc.

### **"Yves Guillou"**

*Lisa Guillou*

Yves, the youngest son, of Francois Guillou and Jeanne Palud, married Marie-Jeanne Kerbrat of St. Laurent in 1950. They lived with Mr. and Mrs. Francois Guillou in the ancestral home for the following four years. Within those four years, Yves rented the land from his father. Age didn't seem to be a problem for Francois because during those four years he helped his son to work the land. In 1954, Francois Guillou retired. He then sold the land to his three sons and moved to the town of Aubigny. Yves, being the youngest son, had 147 acres along with the homestead. Then in 1964 Francois, the second son, sold his land to his two brothers, Louis and Yves. Thus making a total for Yves of 214 acres. Between farming Yves worked on construction from 1958 to 1970. It was in 1960 that he was promoted to foreman for the construction company of Ramsay and Bird.

As they didn't have any children of their own, Yves and Marie-Jeanne were asked to care for their nephew Lionel Saurette. He stayed for a period of about four years. Then in 1954, they were again asked to care and look after another nephew Thomas Troche. He completed his grades seven, eight and nine here in Aubigny. Then he went to college in Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. It was in 1955, when Yves and Marie-Jeanne decided to adopt a chosen daughter, named Betty. Now married to Stefan Belyk, Betty has three sons of her own and is living in Anola.

In 1963, Yves and Marie-Jeanne decided again to adopt another chosen daughter, named Lisa. Now taking her 10th grade at St. Jean Collegiate, Lisa is the youngest of the grandchildren.

In 1970, while still working the land, Yves began working as security guard for the city of Winnipeg till 1976. It was in 1976 that Yves, along with his immediate family, decided to sell the farm. He kept the five acres and the ancestral home which he has modernized throughout the years.

The following year, in 1977, Yves bought a cottage at Laurentia Beach situated in St. Laurent, the small village where Mr. and Mrs. Francois Guillou had first settled once they arrived in Canada. This cottage is used as a summer house and the family spend most of the summer there along with every weekend beginning in April till the middle of November.

Since the retirement of Mr. and Mrs. Francois Guillou till the passing away of Mrs. Francois Guillou in 1976, Yves along with his immediate family gladly cared for his parents.

## ABOUT THE BRITONS

by Rosalie Saurette

The fall of 1919, saw the Britons arrive in Silver Plains by train. They had brought a considerable herd of cows and horses by freight cars. They were led to the ferry, where not one single head wanted to embark. When one was finally lured, all others wildly followed. The load was so heavy, the ferry almost submerged.

It was October 13. The next morning, the ground was covered with snow and it stayed. They witnessed one of the longest winters that ever hit the prairies. They had also brought tons of hay in freight cars. Due to unforeseen circumstances, they gradually had to sell most of the herd, at a great loss. "Sometimes they would lose; sometimes they would gain". The creed and lament of the farmer!

Besides the cold season, they also met a new challenge; to be accepted by the community. Some were skeptical. Peculiar people with a different background and such a strange language! (Briton) The priest, Father J.A. Beaudry, took a genuine liking to this new breed or minority and soon the parishioners followed his example.

Our neighbours, an English family, the Coates, offered acceptance and gave help to initiate and settle the newcomers immediately. From this charitable gesture grew a close friendship that still exists today between the two families.

## "Vivid Memories of My Childhood"

Grasshoppers rising in whirring millions. They stripped away every blade of living green and crops for miles around, leaving only the thistles to thrive. The misery was so great, I remember Father J.A. Beaudry pilgimming through the fields with some parishioners. Anxious eyes, scanning the skies, they conjured Providence to intervene in this calamity.

## "During the Depression"

Beggars, 'hobos of the west', we children called them, were fed hearty meals and given provisions to see them on their way. Sometimes they asked shelter for the night, if too weary to travel on. This scene was a common occurrence in our home. We thought they were hungry visitors. We were so young, we didn't realize the drama that was unfolding all around. We had the prairies to

roam, plenty to eat, a good school to attend, our maternal and immediate parents who loved us. What more could we aspire for in an impoverished world!

## BRITTANY

by Rosalie Saurette

Where is Brittany? A province northwest of France, nestled near the English Channel.

Who are the Britons? Descendants of a sector of the Celtic nation.

## WHAT DID OUR PARENTS BRING US FROM BRITTANY?

*They brought their language, so rich with lyrics,  
Their hearty recipes, bequeathed by Celts,  
Their coffee spiced with chicory  
Their crepes laced to delicacy,  
They brought some pottery, a trinket or two,  
A trunk full of heirlooms, for me and for you.  
A taste for apple-cider, a set of dominoes,  
Some mellowed wine, to stir hearts aglow,  
They brought their home-spun remedies,  
Hot poultices for aches, tisanes for maladies,  
"A dash of ginger, a teaspoon of whiskey,  
A bowl of warm milk, and a heapful of honey."  
They brought their skills, crocheting and knitting,  
Their love of the soil, their desire of learning.  
They brought their myths, their legendary tales  
"of sorcery, of druids, and mystic wails.  
Of a sea in rage, tearing down all sails"  
Of their knowledge in reaping, both grain and bales,  
Their stubbornness, set to construct until the end.  
With spirit so strong, no power could bend,  
And encircled around, all the luggage they brought,  
Was their faith so deep, no misfortune could wrought.*

by Rosalie Saurette



The rectory in Aubigny, now the T.C. Liddle residence, as it looked in 1904. At the back of the house was a kitchen lean-to with housekeeper's room upstairs. This lean-to has been removed. It is the oldest house in the village.

## THE THOMAS COULTON LIDDLES OF AUBIGNY

We are comparatively newcomers to this area, having moved to Aubigny in 1969. Most of our lives we lived in Winnipeg, where we were born, also our four children.

Having always wanted to lived in a more rural setting, we were pleased to learn the old convent here was for sale. We felt it was the realization of our dreams. Over the years, we have never regretted our decision.

This home of ours is unique in this area, having been in earlier days, the focus of much of the life of the community. Built in 1904 by Father M. Desrossiers, it is the oldest home in the village.



*The Liddle residence as it looks today. The Liddles removed the red asbestos brick, painted the house gray, and added white shutters and some of the trim.*

Until 1903, Aubigny was a mission. The priest of Ste. Agathe coming to hold mass in the school house. Father Beaudry had the present church built in 1930. In 1932, he had a home built for himself, giving over the convent to the Sisters of the Cross, who took over the teaching of the local children. In 1965, because of school amalgamation, the school was closed and the Sisters left Aubigny. With them went much of the social life of the area, I have been told. They must indeed have loving memories of their associations here, as several have returned to visit their former home since we have lived here. They seem pleased that we have put considerable effort into restoring and maintaining this historic old home, which is such a link with the past.

### MY GRANDFATHER: ALFRED SAURETTE

*by Simone Saurette*

A tiny snowflake, lost in the storm is still a gem in its formation, as is this bit of history. I will humbly attempt to add to this volume, a chapter, lost in a century of achievements. This story is true and free of pretense, like my grandfather, the man.

Born in 1881, in L'en Guardian, Quebec, Alfred Saurette, was the seventh child to a family of 15. At an



*Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Saurette with baby, Georges, in 1915.*

early age he was already deepening the 'furrows in the valley'. His first piece of land was bought in St. Joseph, Man. He later shared his homestead with his bride, Marie Louise Lambert from St. Jean Baptiste, Man. in 1909. Two short years after, Grandfather suddenly became a widower and only parent to a month old son, Rene. With the child's best interests at heart, he chose his oldest brother, Joseph, and wife, May, to become the child's guardians.

He remarried in 1914, to Anna Houle, originally from Dunseith, North Dakota. Around the year of 1917, he returned to Letellier to farm, 'Aux Deux Petites Pointes'. This piece of land was nestled on the west shores of the Red River, and here Grandfather was involved in mixed farming.

By 1923, he was the proud father of seven children. Unfortunately, towards the end of that year his infant son, Isidor, died of a pneumonia. In 1934, when the depression haunted the world he was forced to sell his land and move.



*Children of Alfred Saurette and Anna (Houle) Saurette. BACK ROW: Blanche, Jacques, Ernestine. FRONT ROW: Diana, Georges, Marie Ange.*

Grandfather arrived in Aubigny the fall of 1934, with his wife and his teenaged family, to reside on Lot 448. The parishioners of Aubigny wondered, "Who is this broad-shouldered, quiet, impressionable man?" Their question was soon answered. He was said to be a man who had already established a good name or reputation for himself in the southern part of the Red River Valley, by contributing largely to agriculture, since he was the owner and operator of a steam-engine and threshing machine. He could be seen every fall with his fully equipped crew, harvesting the crops all along the Red River Valley.



*Somewhere along the Red River Valley, with steam engine outfit and threshing crew of Alfred Saurette in 1925.*

Another question the people asked was, "Why move to Aubigny?" Grandfather's reason was that Aubigny, a quiet little village, was still part of the Red River Valley. He also wanted to pursue a new enterprise in his life which was of a slower pace because he knew his health was failing.

Grandfather tried his traits in the mercantile business. Due to unfortunate circumstances he was unable to maintain his business.

His stay in Aubigny was short-lived. In the fall of 1950, relatives and friends of the community mourned his sudden death. He had succumbed while harvesting his garden. "As he has sewn, so shall he reap."

By then, five of his children had left in search of employment, wherever available. Eventually, they came to reside in the following places: Mrs. William Pelerine (Diane), is now in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Marie-Ange Saurette remained single and lived in Toronto with her widowed sister, Mrs. Robert Blouin (Ernestine). Jacques and his wife Ida (Barnabe) reside in Airdrie, Alberta. Mrs. Jean-Charles Fontain (Blanche), dwells on a farm in Ste. Agathe, Manitoba. His oldest son, Georges, my father, was the only one to remain in Aubigny.

Mrs. Anna Saurette, my grandmother, left Aubigny when she remarried Mr. Hercule Leclair in 1954. They moved to St. Boniface. After my step-grandfather's death, my grandmother spent the last of her happy years in the manor in St. Jean Baptiste. At the age of 87, Grandmother sadly passed away in Morris Hospital.

By 1979, 33 grandchildren, 42 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-granddaughters are proudly branching out as the 8th, 9th, and 10th generations on the Saurette's family tree in Canada. All ancestors of their first forefather Jacques who had arrived at Fort Chamblay, Quebec in the early 1700's from Le Mans, France.



*Dr. Boucher, presenting a centennial award to pioneer Anna Leclair (nee Houle). Mrs. Alfred Saurette (nee Anna Houle) was born in 1884, in St. Zephrein, Quebec. With her family, she pioneered on a farm in the Turtle Mountain District of Dunseith, North Dakota. Anna was by circumstances required to care for her brothers and sisters, before raising her own family in Manitoba, where she moved when she married.*

## GEORGES SAURETTE

In the village of St. Joseph in 1915, a child was born to Alfred and Anna Saurette, named Georges Edward Saurette. Georges grew up farming with his father in Letellier, when his parents decided to move to Aubigny, he followed along with them.

As soon as Georges arrived in Aubigny, he went into partnership with his father in the trucking business, 'Aubigny Transfer'. Later on he went into another partnership, only this time with his wife. He married Rosalie Guillou from Aubigny in 1942. Shortly after they were married, Georges was called to serve in the Army. During this world war, he was stationed on the Aleution Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Upon his return, Georges bought River Lot 420, situated two miles south of Aubigny, where he resides to this day. It is here he also raised his family, of seven children, and to ensure his family was kept healthy and warm, he had to work hard.



*Motor grader at rest in yard of its operator, Georges Saurette.*

Georges kept himself occupied with mixed grain farming, in addition, he was also a part-time machine operator on the construction of roads. When he decided to expand his grain farming, he went out and bought a quarter section which is section 25-5-2.

Georges was not only devoted to his work and family, but also to his community. He was elected as trustee for the school board, he was involved in the local Manitoba Pool Elevator as chairman, for 15 years, and also served on the Manitoba Pool Elevator S.D. (sub-district) Council 204, from 1968-1978.

He encouraged sports such as hockey and curling, helping to establish the 'Red River Valley Hockey League'.

This man had just as many hardships as his neighbors with good old Mother Nature, having been through the rugged winter storms of Manitoba, which contributed to the floods in spring. Georges, has had to evacuate three times due to the swelling of the Red River. Once in 1950, again in 1966, and finally in 1979.



*The Saurette home during the 1979 flood.*

Georges had to go through seeing his children leave home one by one. The oldest girl, Yvette, left home to marry Real Bruneau in 1962. They now reside in St. Pierre-Jolys, Man., and have six children.

His next born, Johnny (Jean), lives in Winnipeg with his bride, Linda (Genereux), from Sioux Lookout, Ontario. He's the only one who has taken up farming on his father's land. Three more sons came along: Maurice, now united with Jacqueline Berard, from Ste. Elizabeth, Manitoba. They reside at Windsor Park, with their son. Lionel joined Nicole Catellier in marriage. She is from Dufrost, Manitoba. Their present home is in St. Boniface, Manitoba. They have one son. The youngest



*George and Rosalie Saurette, with their family in 1973. BACK ROW: Maurice, Jean and Paul. Simone, Linda (Mrs. R. Richards), Lionel, and Yvette (Mrs. R. Bruneau).*

son, Paul, married Suzanne Lambert from St. Boniface, where they live presently, with two sons. His second daughter, Linda, resides in Calgary, Alberta, with her husband, Ross Richards. They have two daughters. His youngest daughter, Simone, lives in Winnipeg.

Georges and his wife, were raised in the Roman Catholic faith, by parents of deep religious convictions.

May their children conserve, and find the same strength in their faith their parents draw from throughout their life. Wherever goals might lead them, may they find as much happiness as their parents found in their haven: 'the furrowed valley'.

As horizons broaden into the morning of this second century, the family unites to render grace to Providence. They pay tribute to their forefathers and to this elite; the pioneers. They marvel at the magnitude of their accomplishments. It is colossal! Let us carry on their Christian idealism, by always 'exemplifying a dedication towards a better life'.

## CHARLES ROY

*by Noel Roy*

Theophile Roy literally worked his way westward. He came working for the CPR, laying railway tracks! One of his co-workers was Bob Turner, who later became councillor of Ward 4 in the Morris Municipality.

In 1882, the crew reached Whitemouth. It was with awe that Theophile contemplated the rich agricultural land. Red clover carpetted the ground. He bought a homestead there, filled with his own ideas of "The Canadian Dream".

He had his wife, Pamela Dit-Cassitta and 3 children come and join him. They came from St. Valier, P.O. through the Chicago route, up into Manitoba by the Carey-Dufrost line, which had been open for only 3 years. From Whitemouth, they moved to Birds Hill, then to Winnipeg. By then their family consisted of eight children - Joseph, Charles, Laura, Alphonse, Marie-Jeanne, Anna, Jean and Hubert. During the family's stay in Birds Hill, Charles and his brother, Joseph, worked mostly loading sand cars by shovel or wheelbarrow. Charlie and one of his co-workers "Gros Jourdain" were the only two that achieved 5 1 / 2 carloads of sand each in one day's work.

His son, Charles (1878-1967) married Zephirina Milette (1883-1966) in 1902. Their six oldest children, Celestine, Charles-Edouard, Hormidas, Arthur, Alexandre and Albert, were born in Winnipeg, before they homesteaded in Fisher Branch. On December 30, 1912, Noel was born, having only his father to assist his mother. Louis, Marie-Therese, David, Raymond, Gertrude, Pascal and Joachin, were all born in a log cabin heated by one box-stove.

Charlie moved his family to Aubigny (1-6-2 East) in April of 1928. Upon their arrival, the world was depressed with the "dirty thirties". The agricultural segment was plagued with problems - everything from grasshoppers, drought, floods, hail, to excessive rain fall. The world commerce of the 30's aggravated the situation and made it almost impossible for the farmers to live.

During the Depression years, many "Canadian Dreams" were shattered.

Charlie's eldest daughter, Celestine, married Joseph Touchette, who farmed in Aubigny for many years.

Charlie's sixth son, Noel, married Adrienne Bouchard in 1954. From this marriage, 5 children were born - Norman, Raymond (deceased), Nicole, Jean-Paul and Bernard. Noel and his family still reside on the family farm.



*Family picture of Charles and Zepherina Roy in 1947, taken at the ordination of their son, Rev. Father, Raymond Roy, now Bishop in St. Paul, Alberta. BACK ROW: Albert, Hortnidas, Alexandre, Pascal. MIDDLE ROW: Arthur, Marie-Therese, Celestine, Louis, Gertrude, Noel. FRONT ROW: Rev. Father Raymond, Zepherina Roy, Charles Roy, Rev. Father David Roy.*

Charlie Roy was first a lumberjack, then turned to a carpenter's career until he took on farming. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Roy were blessed with many years of marriage. They celebrated their Diamond Jubilee in 1962, and had the joy of having all their children with them. Being of sound faith and impregnated with fundamental principles, they supported their congregation faithfully; their morals and sense of justice reflected upon their family. Two of their sons, David (1918-1976) and Raymond, were ordained Catholic priests in 1945 and 1947 respectively. It was families like these that helped build the strong foundation for the generation to come - ours.

## **JOSEPH AND CELESTINE TOUCHETTE FAMILY**

Son of Joseph Touchette and Domithilde Deschambault, Joseph Wilfrid *Touchette* was born in St. Jean Baptiste of Manitoba on September 28, 1897. His parents had come to Manitoba from Ste. Scolastique, Quebec in 1890-1891 by way of Lake Superior. Having lost his father before birth, Joseph Wilfrid was given his father's name. He was brought up on the farm until the age of 12 at which time the Estate Farm had to be

distributed. With a grade two education only, the young Joseph had to earn his life on his own. Called in the army during 1914-1918 War, he proved to be quite ingenious. During his 20's, he worked for Henry Ford in Detroit for a year or two. Back in Manitoba with his earnings he was getting ready for a more permanent occupation when he met Celestine Roy then working at St. Boniface Hospital.

Born on February 11, 1903, Celestine was the eldest daughter of Charles Roy and Zepherina Milette of Fisher Branch. They too had come to Manitoba from Quebec with their respective families. Fortunate to have her grandparents in St. Boniface, Celestine stayed with them while she took up her grade six at the Academie St. Joseph. Later on she worked as receptionist at St. Boniface Hospital when she met Joseph. They got married at the St. Boniface Cathedral on November 24, 1926.

On the evening of their wedding, the newlyweds travelled to St. Jean Baptiste for a joint wedding evening with his brother Matthias who married Josephine Fortier at St. Pie of Letellier on the same day. For their honeymoon, Joseph and Celestine journeyed to Aubigny to their newly rented farm 1 1/2 miles east and 112 mile north of Aubigny. Commodities of life were precarious and the water often froze in the wash basin by the winter mornings. The first years were conditioned by the general depression of the 1930's. The only prosperity in the house was a new family member every year! For the first 15 years they only managed to rent farms in the area.

In 1941, they finally organized their own homestead 1 1/2 mile east and 112 mile south of Aubigny. They built in the same year a two-storey house (24' x 28'), a barn, bought their first new AR John Deere and made payment on the purchased land (240 acres.) Having lost three children in early childhood, the oldest surviving was a girl, followed by 10 boys, and the arrival of another girl completed the family. As in those days, all were born at home except the last six in St. Boniface Hospital.

During the first 20 years on the farm, the daily menu had to come from one's own production: beef, pork, poultry and vegetables from the farm garden. Imported fruits were a treat such as an apple or an orange on Christmas day. Milk and cream were kept in a well or in an ice shed. Vegetables and meat were all canned and stored in the basement. Sometimes a salesman in buggy would stop by to sell brooms, brushes and cough syrup or cod liver oil. Frozen fish during Lent would bring variety to the daily menu until Spring.

Travelling was also different. The MT Ford or old Chevy was parked on blocks during winter and the horses were the only means to go to town or to school every day. Once or twice a year a trip to Winnipeg to purchase clothes was remembered. My parents would leave early one day by car and come back late the next day. In 1953, the two youngest children remember travelling to school by car daily on a shared basis with the neighbour.

Hydro reached the farm in 1947 and was kept to a minimum: one yard light, two bulbs in the barn, and in the house, one bulb in the kitchen, one in the living room and one for the whole upstairs. A fridge and stove were only bought in 1950. Even though resources were restricted, every child was offered the opportunity of a



High School or even University education at the cost of boarding away from the home.

Religious values and beliefs were held sacred and always highly respected in the house. Severe and exceptional conditions only would excuse one from Sunday or Feast day Services. Every member of the family shared the work to be done. A sense of closeness still rallies everyone to many happy memories.

On November 25, 1951, children, brothers and sisters gathered with the community of Aubigny on Sunday to underline the 25th anniversary of Joseph and Celestine. A casual family celebration followed at their residence to which even joined Matthias and Josephine who also marked their 25th anniversary. Both couples were back together again as 25 years before.

In 1957, during the summer, the family house was moved to the village of Aubigny, straight across the street from the church. They were preparing for retirement after a well filled life. On August 26, 1961, after a lengthy illness, Joseph passed away at home. Their retirement together had not lasted very long. In 1967, Celestine retired to her new house in St. Adolphe, where three sons were already established. This lasted only four years. During the last two, her days were spent between home and the hospital. Cancer led her to go peacefully on April 12, 1972 in St. Vital Hospital.

Today most of the children are in Manitoba and in a whole spectrum of professions and occupations. All are married except one in the priesthood.

Here is a family picture taken at home on Christmas of 1960. In parentheses is given each one's occupation and residence in 1979.



*FRONT ROW, From Left to Right: Solange (housewife/Transcona), Joseph (deceased), Celestine (deceased) and Lucille (housewife/Transcona). BACK ROW: Rene (priest /Somerset), Gerard (accountant/Detroit), Denis (electronic technician/St. Jean Baptiste), Donal (electrician/St. Jean Baptiste), Leon (machine operator/St. Vital), Louis (teacher/Winnipeg), Emile (electronic technician/St. Adolphe), Andre (pilot/St. Malo), Maurice (farmer/St. Adolphe) and Claude (businessman/Toronto).*

## THELESPHORE SAVIGNAC

*by Lucie St. Laurent*

Thelesphore Savignac was born in 1905 in St. Thomas de Joliette, P.Q., in August 1921, the son of Omer Savignac and Celia Coutu. He met Lucie Verrier and after two weeks of courtship, they married in the



*Wedding of Lucie Verrier and Telesphore Savignac in 1929.*

Aubigny Roman Catholic Church in 1929. They had five children - Parmelia (1930), Marcel (1932), Therese (1937), Irene (1940) and Marguerite (1945-1970). He worked for the Robert families as a hired hand and his Large sturdy frame was an asset to him in the kind of work he did. Being illiterate, he had to work with his hands and his brute strength. From baking bread to grave digging and ice hauling, he did numerous hard and odd jobs for many Aubigny residents. He also worked as handyman for the nuns of Aubigny for many years. He died a humble man in 1951 at the age of 46. His wife, Lucie, still lives in Aubigny on their original lot bought from Mgr. Beaudry.

## MARCEL CARON

The Caron family lived in Monthmarthe, Saskatchewan, until 1942, when they moved to St. Jean, Quebec.

Marcel was born in Montmarthe in 1921. He was only 15 years old when he decided to leave home and come to Manitoba, looking for work. He began by working for some farmers in the Union Point District, mainly at John Ouimet's. This is where he met his future wife.

Marcel Caron and Simone Ouimet were married in Ste. Agathe on June 26, 1943. At first, they lived in Winnipeg, where Marcel worked at McDonald Aircraft, till March, 1944, when they moved to Aubigny, to open the only garage in town. This was a building rented from Mr. Fred Saurette.



*Marcel Caron's fleet of trucks he used for the trucking business in 1958.*

In 1949, he bought a lot from Hilaire Ouimet on St. Mary's Road, near the store, and onto this he moved a garage that he purchased in Ste. Agathe. That building burned down in August, 1954.

Meanwhile, Marcel and Simone had bought a small brick siding house from Mr. L. Levesque in Ste. Agathe and they had it moved to Aubigny. They raised a family of four daughters in this little house, until 1959, when they built a beautiful new home on the same spot.

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*In 1959, Marcel and Simone Caron built a new house.*

After the fire had destroyed the garage, Marcel did not give up. He had a new garage rebuilt and bought several trucks, as he was in the trucking business for 10 years. He also tried his hand at farming on land he rented from 1960 to 1975.



*Some of Marcel Caron's farm equipment, 1975.*

In 1973, he closed his garage due to his health, and in 1975, he also retired from farming.

Marcel and Simone lived through the terror of the tornado of June 19, 1978. Their house was badly damaged, having all the windows broken and part of the roof torn off. The inside walls were badly marred by flying debris, and some furniture broken or damaged. Their car garage was blown off as well as their camper trailer.

The four Caron girls are now married and have families of their own. Yvette married Sandy Wallace in April, 1971 and has two sons, Kelly and Scott. Beatrice married Rheel Lemoine, in September, 1971 and has a son, Martin; and a daughter, Nicole.

Suzanne married Roger Richard in August, 1972, and has two children, Denis and Jocelyne. Aline married Bill Condon in May, 1975.

Besides his business, Marcel was always interested in community activities. He was on the board of the Credit Union for 10 years, and was active in all sports organizations. He served as councillor for the Rural Municipality of Morris from January, 1969 to May, 1978.

Even after he retired, he could not remain idle, so he took a part time job selling parts and cars for Brodeur Frere of St. Adolphe.

## GASPARD BERARD

Gaspard Berard, who was born in 1877, came to Manitoba with his wife, Clairinda (Gariepy). Clairinda was also born in 1877, in Calumet, Michigan. When they arrived in the district, they moved to Ste. Elizabeth, just five miles from Morris, where they spent all their lives. From this marriage, 10 children were born: Exmiria, Zelia, Yvonna, Rosario, Imelda, Gaspard Jr., Delia, Marie, Ida and Rene. Only Imelda is still living.

Gaspard Jr. (1900-1973) married Herminie Bertrand (1901) in 1921. Their first home was between Ste. Elizabeth and Morris. They had 16 children: Aime, Evelyne (deceased), Camilla, Aurore, Ferdinand, Germaine, Diana, Flora, Gerald, Alma, Antoine and Joseph (twins, deceased), Irene, Aline, Agnes and Laurent.

For many years, Mr. Berard farmed in the Morris area, moving to Aubigny in 1958. There they operated a general store, and served as postmaster. After they sold the store, they bought a house, moved it to Aubigny, where they lived for the next eight years.

## DEURBROUCK

In November, 1963, Alma, married Norbert Deurbrouck, from Bruxelles, Manitoba. They had five children: Lise, Albert, Leo, Gilbert and Doris. The following year, they took over the General Store.

In February, 1971, the store went up in flames. Mrs. Gaspard Berard moved to the Ste. Agathe Manor and her son-in-law bought her home. This home was destroyed by the tornado winds in 1978, and the Deurbrouck family had to build a new one.

Norbert is employed as an orderly in a Winnipeg Hospital, commuting to work.

Norbert's hobby is taxidermy. He has numerous specimens on display, to show his handiwork.



*Norbert Deurbrouck taxidermist, in Aubigny, with a sample of his work.*

## ST. HILAIRE

George St. Hilaire is the great grandson of Janvier Hebert, who, along with Flavien Chartier, was one of the first two white settlers of Aubigny. Mr. Hebert came from Nasha, New Hampshire and claimed his homestead in 1877, known now as River Lot 441.

Janvier Hebert raised a family of nine, one of whom was named Joseph, who married Marie Louise Pelland. He took over his parent's farm and raised a family of fourteen. Dorothee was their ninth child, born in 1903; she married Adelard St. Hilaire, of St. Pierre, in 1923.



*The home of George St. Hilaire, when he returned to Aubigny in 1951.*

George, their second son, came back to Aubigny in 1951, and bought River Lot 436. The next year he married Rita Dumesnil and the raised a family of their own; five sons and three daughters - Gerald, Michel (married Christine Stieben), Edith (Mrs. Noel Chartier), Luc, Bernard, Normand and Elaine.

Besides farming, George was employed for three years by Western Gypsum Mining in Silver Plains. He also worked on various construction as bridges, high rises and many other projects.

In 1967, George extended his acreage by purchasing his neighbour, Alphonse Hebert's, farm. (River Lot 434).

Through these years, he built a lovely farm site with all modern conveniences; a far cry from the yard he had moved to when he had first started on his own. He ex-



*The farmstead of George St. Hilaire on River Lot 436, taken in 1977.*

panded his enterprise as a hog producer and mixed grain farmer.

The St. Hilaire's were not spared on June 19, 1978; the tornado hit their farm and completely demolished a new machine shed and tore parts of the house and barn roofs, plus damaging the combine, swather and other farm machinery.

George always has been an active member in the community, as director of the local Credit Union, church and school trustee,

In 1978, he was elected councillor by a by-election for Ward IV of Morris Rural Municipality.

His wife, Rita, has not been inactive. Besides raising their family and giving occasional help for outside work, as most farmer's wives do, she was always more than ready to assist either a neighbor or a friend in need.

Besides being in the Church choir for the last three years, she has been president of church trustees. Since the tornado, this task has not been easy, as the rectory had to be replaced and the church needed major repairs.

## JOHN KOSTAL FAMILY

In April, 1964, John and Carolyn Kostal took up residence in the Rural Municipality of Morris on River Lot 484, after purchasing the E.A. McDonald farm. They had moved from north of Darlingford, Manitoba, where they were farming previously. John had lived there since he was five years old. His wife joined him there after they were married in February, 1963.

Two months after moving here, their first son, Gregory, was born. Since then, another son, Grant, and daughter, Cynthia, have been added to the family.

In July, 1975, after purchasing the D. Levesque farm, they re-established their farm yard to River Lot 470, where their family presently reside.

Besides farming, John has worked as a welder in winter. Now, he is instructor for short courses in agriculture and farm management. Carolyn nurses on casual and part-time basis, mostly in Morris. In their spare time, the whole family enjoys a variety in both summer and winter sports including swimming, boating, water skiing, curling, hockey and baseball, etc.



*John Kostal presenting curling trophy to Marcel Caron, and Henri Robert at left. At right, Carolyn Kostal and Adele Vermette.*

## THE SLOCK FAMILY

*by Elk Roy*

Adolphe Stock and his wife, Paulina, came to Aubigny in 1944. They had five children, three of whom were still living at home at the time.

Adolphe and Paulina were born in the Soviet Union. Adolphe immigrated to Canada in 1912. He worked in lumbering camps in the winter and as a farm labourer in the summer. He also served in the army in 1914 for some time.

Paulina did not come to Canada until 1921, due to the outbreak of World War I. During this time, she was in the battle zone until being taken to a refugee camp in Germany. In Germany, she found employment, which enabled her to support her three young children and aged mother. eventually, the family was reunited through the Red Cross and Adolphe arranged for her immigration to Canada.

Upon coming to Canada, they settled on a homestead north of Sprague. After several years, this was sold and the "Klevin Farm" rented. Adolphe worked on the railway in the summer time and cut wood in winter. They farmed here until 1928, when they moved to Snowflake. Once more, life became hard for Adolphe and Paulina, due to the dirty thirties. When times improved, they decided to move closer to a large City. They purchased what was then known as the "Teske Farm" in Aubigny in 1944.

Adolphe lived there until he passed away in 1959. The farm was taken over by son, Leopold, and Paulina lived there until she became infirm. She now lives in the Red River Valley Lodge in Morris at the age of ninety-one.

The two oldest children, Blonde and Rheinhold, are both retired.

Leopold has now sold the farm to Mr. Friesen of Fort Garry. Ella married Gabriel Roy and resides in Aubigny. Fredrick makes his home in Guelph, Ontario. Rheinhold's two sons, Ronald and Daniel, were raised by Adolphe and Paulina after their mother became ill. They both live and work in Winnipeg.

Upon looking back at my parents, I feel they were blessed with great determination to succeed in the face of tremendous odds. I also regret they had little opportunity to enjoy the rewards of their labour.

## THE SAURETTE FAMILY

### "Half a Century in the R.M. of Morris"

*submitted by Pauline Saurette*

In the early 1870's Amedee Saurette and his wife Arzelie Marcil left St. Jean Baptiste, P.Q. to settle in Manitoba. They picked Letellier, in the Red River Valley, as a place for their homestead. They raised a large family of five boys and seven girls: Marie-Louise, Delima, Paul, Pierre, Blanche, Alfred, Louis, Regina, Rose-Alma, Olivine, Annie and Felix.

Paul bought land in Aubigny in the early 1930's, though he did not settle there.

Louis' oldest son, Edmond, was the first Saurette pioneer in the R.M. of Morris. In September, 1934 he

came from Letellier with his wife, Cecile Charbonneau, and his two children, Jeannine and Yolande, to take possession of the R.L. 424, in Aubigny.

As we all know, the 1930's were years of depression and hardships. The Saurettes were no exception; so they were selling eggs at 8C a dozen, butter at 10C to 15¢ a pound, a cow at \$5.00, etc. Sewing was the lot of most housewives.

In spite of such conditions, Edmond was the first one in town to buy a 'Massey Harris' combine in 1935. What a joy! (see photo.) The following year, a gas-motor washing machine was purchased. Finally in 1948, the farms were wired for electricity and shortly after telephones were installed.



*Ed Saurette's first combine, a Massey Harris, taken in 1935.*

Whenever snowstorms prevented the use of cars, cutters or covered sleighs were vehicles for going to church, to school, or to the store. In fact, people could find time to visit one another.



*Mr. and Mrs. Ed Saurette in the 30's, going for a visit with their horse drawn caboose.*

In 1936, Paul's brother, Alfred and his wife, came to settle in the village of Aubigny. They raised a large family, but only one son, Georges, married to Rose Guillou, settled on a farm there. They, in turn, had a large family, but no children stayed around to farm.

Benoit came to Aubigny in 1941 to join his brother Edmond. He bought some land on the eastern part of the village. A few years later he married Lucille Hebert and raised six children. The five oldest, Claudette, Elaine,

Doris, Gerry and Diane, left Aubigny. The youngest son, Roger, stayed on a farm after his father's death in 1970.

As the years passed, more children were added to Edmond's family: Irene, Louis, Denise, Pauline, Ronald and Claude.

Mr. Edmond Saurette was entirely dedicated to his parish. He acted as Church Trustee and also as a School District Trustee for many years.

In 1950, he became councillor of Ward four for the R.M. of Morris until his death in 1968. During those years, one of his main projects was to achieve the building of a bridge to replace the ferry. He had the pleasure of seeing it to completion.

Louis, Edmond's oldest son, got married to Jeannine Lemoine in 1957. He bought a farm about 1 1/2 miles east of Aubigny, where he is now a prosperous farmer. Louis and Jeannine are proud of their three sons, Robert, Guy and Rene.

The next son, Ronald, married to Yvette Vermette in 1965, had two daughters, Mona and Suzanne. He also settled on the farm north of Aubigny. After her husband's accidental death in 1974, she sold part of the farm and went to the city.

The youngest son, Claude, took over the family farm with great pride, after his marriage to Raymonde Grattan in 1969. They have two lovely children, Jean-Paul and Joanne.

Let us hope that the third and fourth generations will continue adding meaningful and interesting events to our history. May God cherish, protect and bless this wonderful family of ours.

## ALFRED LANDRY AND FAMILY AUBIGNY

I moved to the Aubigny district in 1952; purchasing River Lot 438 from Mr. Camille Massinon, previously owned by Mr. David Hiebert. I also purchased the N.W. 1/4 of W. 1/2 1-6-2 East and the N.E. 1/4 of E. 1/2 2-6-2 East from Mr. A. Gauthier. Prior to this, I farmed in Ste. Elizabeth for several years.

My parents were Mr. and Mrs. Frank Landry, from Morris, my mother being the former Esmaria Labelle from St. Jean.



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*The Alfred Landry farm during the 1966 flood.*

In 1953, I married Elizabeth (Betty) Water from Dominion City. We had four children: Gisele, our oldest, now Mrs. Randy Hunt; Janice, now Mrs. Louis Ouimet; Alfred Jr. married to Wanda Giesbrecht, and our youngest, Douglas, still living at home at the time of this writing. Janice and Louis have one child, Jason Lewis.

We have one foster child, Albert Richard, son of Mrs. Orise Richard (Chartier). He came to live with when he was eleven years old. Albert married Lucille Colliou from St. Laurent. They now have four children: Claudette, Michelle, Marc and Rachelle-Elizabeth.

In the first week of April, 1966, we had a severe flood; the water rose to a depth of 7 feet on our farm yard. Livestock, machinery and all our household furniture had to be moved out. We moved back to the farm on June 3 of that year.



*Destruction of Landry barn from the tornado on June, 19, 1978.*

On June 19, 1978, our district was hit by a tornado that took almost all our farm buildings.

## PHILIPPE VERMETTE

In 1936, Philippe Vermette, a farmer from just south of Morris, bought a section of land 2 1/2 miles west and one mile south of Aubigny from a Mr. William Baldwin. This was with the intention of establishing his two sons, Clovis and Ovide, on the land. Both young men were in their early twenties.

They arrived in the spring of 1937 and first boarded in the home of a neighbour, Mr. Charles Roy, while they set about the task of seeding the cleared land. That summer they also finished clearing the land of bush and some oak. The following winter, Ovide boarded in the home of Alphonse Hebert, while doing that farmer's chores. That next summer of 1938, with the help of Ormidas Roy, he built himself a house and barn to shelter a few horses and cattle.

In October of 1938, Ovide married a local girl, Denise Robert. They had one son and four daughters.

In September 1965, the eldest daughter, Yvette, married Ronald Saurette. They set up their home a few miles north of Aubigny on a farm and had two



*Mr. and Mrs. Ovide Vermette and their son, Claude, in 1944. Grandfather, Philippe Vermette is standing in the background.*

daughters. Unfortunately on February 27, 1974, while returning from St. Andrews Air Base, where he had just received his pilots' license, Ronald was caught in a snow storm and had a fatal accident. Yvette sold part of the farm and moved to St. Vital.

In October 1965, the only son, Claude, married Adile Nadeau from St. Boniface and took over the family farm. They now have 3 daughters and the farm is strictly agricultural. Upon Claude's marriage, his parents built a new home in Aubigny. This was later sold to a Mr. Garry Bell, when they moved to St. Boniface.

The other children include Lise, married to Gilbert Ruest. They live on a farm in the St. Pierre district. Pauline is married to Brunel Loisel of Letellier; they live in Southdale; and Yvonne makes her home in St. Boniface.

## MAURICE VERMETTE FAMILY

Our grandfather, Alberic Vermette, came from St. Hermas, Quebec at the age of 9 in 1885, with his parents, five brothers and three sisters; settling in Manitoba. Alberic married Malvina Campeau, who also had come from Quebec as a young girl. They raised a family of 13 children and worked the land the hard way.

Jean, the eleventh of the family married Angima Clement, daughter of Adrien Clement, and Marie Lour Guenette, of St. Jean Baptiste. They had 6 children - 4 boys and 2 girls.

The oldest of the family of Jean and Angema, was Maurice, born in May, 1939. The family was raised on the farm, where they went to a small country school, not far from their home.

In order to improve his education, Maurice spent 2 years at College St. Joseph, at Otterburne. The religious training at the college was memorable. After completing grade eleven, he left school to seek work in the city. In 1959, he decided to join the Canadian Army and spent six months in training in Edmonton, Alberta.

On August 19, 1961, Maurice married Emma Courcelles, who was originally from a Ste. Agathe farm. She is

the youngest of a family of six of Levis Courcelles and Marie Anne Sabourin. Camille, the oldest, Lucille (Sister of the Cross), Louise (Oblate Sister) and two others who died young.

After Maurice and Emma were married, they resided for 2 1/2 years in Victoria, B.C. where Maurice was stationed with the Army. At the end of his 3 year term, Maurice decided to come back to the farm where his father helped him to settle.

Since 1964, the family has resided in Aubigny, and have raised six children, namely: 5 girls - Madeleine, Pierrette, Helene, Jacqueline, Angele and one boy, Normand.

The tornado of June 19, 1978 was a memorable event for all the family. It destroyed our house, but no one was hurt, thanks to the protection of God and of our beloved Mother, Mary.

## BERTHELETTE'S AT AUBIGNY

Joseph Berthelette was one of the first settlers to come to Aubigny. The land was all bush, and had to be cleared. Berthelette's farm was right at the south end of the present site of the village. Joseph married Francoise Caron, and they had 6 boys and 2 girls. They were Joseph, Charles, Edouard, Jean-Baptiste, Paul, and Alexandre. The girls were Marie and Julienne.

Joseph married Philomine Boudreau.

Charles married Marie La Plante.

Paul married Rose-Emma Martineau.

Edouard married Marguerite Hebert.

Alexandre married Malvina Vandal.

Jean-Baptiste married Marguerite Dubois.

Marie married Antoine Boudreau.

Julienne married Alderid Galipeau.

Their son Paul remained on the farm until his death.

Edouard was nicknamed Prosper. He settled on a farm further south on St. Mary's Rd., just a mile from the



*Alexandre Berthelette and his wife Malvina Vandal. He was the son of Joseph Berthelette living in Aubigny most of his life.*





*Roger Berthelette, oldest son of Alexandre, holding his son, Norman, Arthur Robert, son-in-law, and Wilfred in 1937.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Prosper (Edouard) Berthelette and part of their family. The four sons are LEFT TO RIGHT: Lovil, Edmond, Marcien, Honorius. The five daughters LEFT TO RIGHT: Angele, Anna, Julia, Rosalie, Zephirine. Mrs. Berthelette (nee Marguerite Hebert) daughter of pioneer Joseph Hebert. In 1877, at age 12, she was the oldest child to arrive at the spot which is now a part of the Parish of Aubigny.*

village. His family consisted of 14 children, 7 boys and 7 girls.

*Edouard* his son, married Ella Williamson. Their children were: Georges, Raymond, Jimmy, Bertha, Helen and Elizabeth.

*Honorius* married Alice Carriere. They had no children.

*Raymond* died at a very young age in the First World War.

*Marcien* married Agnes Bethellette. They had no children, but raised two, Raymond and Angeline Bethellette. Marcien was in the First World War and although his ship was torpedoed off the coast of England, he survived.

*Edmond* married Yvonne Laferriere. Their children's names were (boys) Hilaire, Denis, Fernand, Hubert, (girls) Therek, Lorenza, Micheline, Lorraine and Eleana. He lived in Aubigny all his life.

*Lovil* married Louise Leclair and had two boys, Armand and David, and one daughter Pauline. Lovil lives in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

*Pierre* died in infancy.

*Marguerite* died at sixteen.

*Anna* married Onezime Guenette.

*Rose de Lima* married August Schindler.

*Rosalie* married Georges Perreault.

*Julia* married Celestin Perreault.

*Zepherine* married Theodore Berard.

*Angele* married Pete Stirling.

Still living in 1979 were Honorius and Lovil, Rosalie, Julia and Angele.

## THE ST. ONGE FAMILY



*Mr. and Mrs. Joseph St. Onge, son, Hector, and his wife, Angelina Campeau, son Hormisdas. FRONT ROW: Grandson, Henri, daughter, Fidelia, granddaughter, Laurence.*

In 1885, Joseph St. Onge and his wife, Julie Brodeur and their eight children Hormisdas, Alderic, Cordelie, Exilia, Fidelia, Hector, Ernest and Rebecca left St. Hiacinthe, Province of Quebec to settle in Manitoba along the shores of the Red River.

When they arrived they went to some cousins of Mrs. St. Onge, the Brodeurs of Union Point on River Lot 522. The first year they lived there; then they moved on to R.L. 461 in the Silver Plains district where their descendants still live in 1979.

This was a part of the Roman Catholic Parish of Ste. Agathe. Being a very religious family, they would not willingly miss Sunday mass. If the non-existent roads made it impossible for horses to take them to church, they would walk the nine miles to Ste. Agathe on the track of the CNR early in the morning and be back home around 2 p.m.!

The parents of the region became anxious to provide some education for their children and a place had to be found for building a school. Jos. St. Onge offered an acre of his land about 100 feet from his home on the west shore of the Red River. Bourret School was built there in 1891. It was given the name Bourret in honor of the Ste. Agathe priest, Father Bourret, who approached the Department of Education to have this school district formed.

Since the school was only about 100 feet from the house, the teachers were usually boarding with the St. Onge family.

As the years passed, the children grew up and each went his or her own way. The oldest son Hormisdas married Octavie Brin and had his own farm and home on R.L. 455. After his wife's death, he rented his farm and moved away.

The second son Alderic married Bernadette Robert. For a few years they lived on the family farm where their first children were born, then they moved to the village of Ste. Agathe.

The oldest daughter, Cordelie, married Adonias Alarie while the second daughter Exelia married Joseph Lemoine. Both sisters and their husbands lived on farms north of Ste. Agathe and raised large families.

Then there was Fidelia who never married and moved to the village of Ste. Agathe with her parents when they retired in 1916.



*Mr. and Mrs. Hector St. Onge  
on their wedding day, Jan. 9,  
1912.*

The next son Hector married Angelina Campeau in 1912 and kept the paternal home while the next in line, Ernest, married Gracia Delorme and raised his family on the adjacent river lot, 463.

The youngest daughter Rebecca married Pierre Lemoine of Ste. Agathe. Several years later after her husband's death, she married Theobald Joyal.

The youngest of the family was Auguste, the only one born in Manitoba. He died by drowning at a young age when he was attending a boarding school of the Fathers of Chavanne in St. Adolphe.



*The brothers, Hector and Ernest St. Onge and their first tractor, a  
Mogul kerosene tractor.*

The two river lots, 461 and 463 was the home of two St. Onge families until 1949. In the early 1920's, the two brothers Hector and Ernest, owned a Mogul kerosene tractor and a New Racine threshing machine which was their pride and joy. Prior to that, a company had been formed by some eight or ten of the neighbors who owned a steam engine and thresher that would travel to each farm to thresh the crops.



*Threshing time on the St. Onge farm.*

In spite of all their work, there were times for pleasure and music in the St. Onge households.

The ancestor, Joseph St. Onge was a left-handed fiddler. His two sons, Hector and Ernest, had their

father's love of the violin and became well-known as fiddlers for the whole district whenever it was the time for rejoicing at weddings or other occasions.

The third generation, Henri, Gabriel, Paul and Gerard, followed in their father's footsteps and spent many evenings making beautiful music for the enjoyment of more and more people.

Ernest and Gracia St. Onge raised ten children on R.L. 463 but when the children were all grown up and away from home, their land was sold to Hector's son, Henri.

Hector and Angelina had only two sons, Henri and Roger.



*On the wedding day of Roger St. Onge and Alice Ritchot. The groom's parents are left of the groom. The bride's parents are right of the bride. Extreme right are Ernest St. Onge, Father J.A. Beaudry and Adonias Alarie.*

Roger married Alice Ritchot in 1941. They lived in Aubigny for a few years but when Roger returned from the army in 1945, they moved to St. Vital where they raised a family of thirteen children.

Henri took over the family farm, R.L. 461, after his marriage to Alice Marcoux in 1943. Then in 1949, he bought his uncle Ernest's place, R.L. 463. Henri and



*Angelina St. Onge on her 92nd birthday, March, 1979, with son, Henri, and two grandsons, Marc and Leon.*

Alice had three children. The two oldest, Annette and Lorraine, married and left Aubigny. The youngest, Marc, is planning to take over from his father who is now semi-retired.

Henri and Alice have always taken a keen interest in their community and have been active in numerous organizations.

Between the two of them, they served for 21 years in the different executive committees of the Aubigny Caisse Populaire. (credit union)

Henri was director for the Silver Plains Pool Elevator for 26 years. He has been secretary of Bourret. School for 14 years, as well as church trustee and member of the church choir.

Since he couldn't stand being idle during the winter months, he has a grain cleaning mill as a sideline.

Alice taught school for a total of 16 years. She was secretary of the Dame de Ste. Anne, when it was replaced by the Ligue des Femmes Catholiques. Then she joined that society, serving as either president or vice-president for 11 years.

In 1970, she was secretary, and very active in the Aubigny Centennial Committee. When the tornado hit Aubigny on June 18, 1978, she became a member of the Tornado Committee. For the last ten years, Alice has been the Aubigny correspondent for The Carillon, as well as correspondent for the French newspaper, La Liberte.

As she has always been interested in history and enjoyed learning about the former generation, she was happy to become a member of the History Book Committee, "Furrows in the Valley".

For the past 92 years, there have been four generations of St. Onge on this farm on the west shore of the Red River. What does the future hold in store for our family? May God bestow his blessings on the coming generations as he has in the past and may they be true Christians and proud Canadians as their ancestors before them.



*The St. Onge farm at the height of the 1979 flood, showing the grain cleaning plant.*



## UNION POINT

*(with excerpts by Dwight Swenson)*

Before the turn of the century, Union Point was a hub of activity, a meeting place. When the steamboats came down the Red, the landing at Union Point was a place where settlers arrived, disembarked and travelled to their homesteads. It was an ideal docking place because there was a large sandbar in the river there.

In those years, it is believed that Union Point derived its name from the fact that it was a central post office in Manitoba, and from there the mail continued on its route - east, west, north and south. From here, in the easterly direction, the mail went to Rat Portage (Kenora). Since there were no bridges at that time, the Red River was forded, with the mail wagon, just a mile north of Union Point, and many harrowing experiences were told of these occurrences. Many years later, evidence of the deep ruts made by the Red River carts and mail stages in and out of Union Point in all directions, could still be seen 30 years later!



*A reunion at Union Point church - fond memories of the past.*



*Stagecoaches made daily stops at the inn in Union Point in the 1880's.*

In the 1880's, Daniel Lowe had a hotel and stable at Union Point. In front of the tavern there was an oak post, one foot square, that they hung a lantern on, to guide the stage coaches in. That post is still standing, on the east side of the highway, where the river winds close to the road.

Dwight Swenson recalls one of the little Lowe girls found a purse on the coulee hill with \$800.00 in it. One of the customers claimed it and obligingly gave her a 50 reward! Just one of the happenings at a busy hotel.

Union Point, the half-way mark to the city, was an important stop for weary travellers. Here, they could refresh themselves in a hotel, and the horses could be fed and lodged. The Mennonite settlers often came through in wagon trains laden with farm produce and grain to be taken to Winnipeg, via the Stage Road, which ran through Union Point. This hotel burned later and all traces of it are gone.

There was at one time, a cheese factory there, at the coulee where Sandy Dodd's used to live. With the ferry as access to the other side of the river, a grain elevator, a store with a post office, a hall and United Church, this was the centre for local residents, too. Here, a water tank was located at the station, for the steam engines on the railroad. The water was pumped from the river by a windmill, and cared for by John Lowe. Later a gas engine

was installed for this purpose and Jack Bartlette was the familiar figure who operated it for many years.

On one occasion about 1918, the section men at Union Point left the switch open to the side track, and the Great Northern passenger train from the south came rushing in on the side track. Mr. Jackson was in a box car at the platform shovelling wheat, and when he heard the train coming, he jumped! His feet hit the platform about the same time the engine hit the boxcar. There was a double header on that time, one engine went off the track, and one fireman was killed.

There used to be a few "Barnardo Boys" around the country. They were English orphans that were taken in hand by a Dr. Barnardo. The boys were sent to Canada and other places, to work on farms and at other jobs. The boys didn't get much money, but they usually had a good home, and sometimes they were adopted. In a few years, it was usually forgotten that they were "Barnard° Boys".

There were also a few "remittance men" who were the black sheep of the wealthy or titled English families. They were sent to Canada or perhaps Australia, and paid a good allowance to stay away from home. They were not all English! These remittance men were usually the first ones to enlist in a war.

During the first World War, Lionel Cox was one of the first to enlist. He said he did enough walking on the farm, so he signed up with the Lord Strathcona Horse, and was wounded in the last cavalry charge that was ever staged.

Klyne Cox was also wounded in the first war, and was in the Veterans Guards in the Second War.

Albert and Rudolph Peloquin and Walter Swenson got to France in the first war. Walter caught pneumonia and arrived home in a hospital ship.

Harry Cox, Richard Bower, Murray Anderson, were all fliers killed in action. Edgar Bartlette lost a leg and Percy Thompson was at Hong Kong, a prisoner until the end of the war, in 1945.



## REGETNIG DIES IN BLIZZARD



to<sup>TF</sup>\*

*Pete Regetnig, who perished in a blizzard at Union Point in 1932.*

Tragedy affected all. People were saddened when Pete Regetnig became lost in a sudden blizzard on February 11, 1932, and perished in the storm. Pete and his hired man had gone down to the river at Silver Plains early in the morning to get two loads of ice. The storm came up so suddenly that they didn't even load up, but left the river. The hired man went to Jack Elliot's to weather the storm, but Pete thought he had to get home. He never made it. John Manchulenko, the section foreman, found him the next morning, standing between the team with an arm over each horse, but his life was gone.

## KRAFCHENKO CONVICTED OF MURDER

The district had its degree of notoriety. A local man, Jack Krafchenko, was arrested for the murder of the Plum Coulee bank manager in December, 1913. He was tried and found guilty. There was some doubt as to his guilt, not only from his step-mother, but his lawyer as well. It seems his lawyer (Percy Hagel) smuggled a rope and pistol into the Winnipeg Police Station, and Krafchenko made good his escape. There was a reward out for his arrest, and much rumor locally about his whereabouts. Vigilante teams of about 10 - 15 local persons set out farming the area, in hopes of catching Jack, and the reward money. To no avail. He was recaptured in Winnipeg and hanged on July 9, 1914.



*Jack Krafchenko, a Union Point resident, who was convicted of murder. He escaped jail with the help of his lawyer; recaptured and hung on July 9, 1914.*

Baseball was a popular sport here. All six of the Turner boys played baseball in the early days; Fred Ouimet and the Monet boys from Ste. Agathe played with them. They had to travel by horse and buggy, playing at the Morris Fair, and even as far as Emerson. Jim Turner, their manager, wouldn't allow them to eat before a game. Their baseball pants only went to the knees, but were well padded at the hips for sliding! In 1922, the first Intermediate Baseball League was held, comprising the towns along the river. That year, Morris won the senior championship of Manitoba, and St. Jean won the Provincial Intermediate championship.

"In the thirties, we didn't have much money, but that didn't stop us from having fun", says Dwight Swenson. The people around the Neighborhood School district got together just about every Friday or Saturday night for a party, either at the Thompsons, Reslers, Regetnigs, Neetz' and later at the Downeys. "There wasn't any liquor at the parties, except when some of the ladies made dandelion wine -- it had plenty of kick to it."

Today, the original families are almost all gone from Union Point. The only reminder on the site of days gone by at Union Point, is the little picturesque church. Its headstones bear the names of those who pioneered, they now rest, and leave the future to the generation of the present.



*Baseball was a favourite sport at Union Point. Here are: Billie Bower, Lawrence Breyfogle, Earl Taylor, Walter Swenson, and Dwight Swenson in 1922.*

## THE UNION POINT CHURCH

*by Mrs. Lionel Cox*

The first settlers came to Union Point from Ontario in 1868; although it was 1885 before the first church was established.

The land for the church and cemetery was donated by David Lowe, this being a part of his farm. Later this property was owned by Wm. Bower and now Richard Bowles. The first church building was erected by the residents who felt a great need for it. In those days a debt of \$500.00 was mammoth, and they found this lumber bill hard to pay off. Hence Andrew Dryden, a settler, wrote to Lord Strathcona (Donald Smith) who was a large property owner around Winnipeg, asking for a donation. He obliged, and the money was received with great appreciation.



Dr. George Bryce and Prof. Andrew Baird of the Manitoba College did much of the building of this little Presbyterian church and settlement in the early days. The church was a wooden structure which seated 80 people. Some time later an addition was built to accommodate Sunday School classes; and for the storing of firewood, etc.

For years this little church which has been a landmark on the prairie, was the only Protestant church on highway No. 75. The social life of the district centered around this church, with horses, buggies, wagons and sleighs being parked on the yard as activities that were the mainstay of life carried on.



*Union Point United Church built in 1919, a landmark on the prairie. The Orange Hall at left, was destroyed by fire.*

Services were conducted by students in Theology who came out by train from the Manitoba College. The first ordained minister to come to Union Point arrived in 1897. This man, Rev. J.S. Muldred of Morris, also preached on the circuit including Glenlea, Niverville, Otterburne and McDonald (later Avonlea) on his rounds. The first resident minister was Rev. Cunningham Moore, for whom a manse was built beside the church in 1901. The Moores stayed until 1905, when they were replaced by Rev. Alexander Riddell of Manchester, England. He was followed by Rev. Carefoot and George Dyker (1910).

About this time many settlers retired, and others went West to larger farming districts, and the congregation decreased. Later the population picked up again with new families coming into the district. After it became difficult to get a preacher, the students again served on the circuit.



*Sunday School group at Union Point in 1931-32.*

Disaster struck in 1939 when a fire destroyed the church, and demolishing all church records and cemetery plans. But the people were undaunted, the following year they plunged in and started on a new church building. This landmark was always a source of pride to the residents, and we owe a debt of gratitude to Lawrence Breyfogle who has taken care of the church and cemetery grounds for many years.

Many former residents feel this place should be preserved as a monument to the pioneers who built the first church and are buried in the cemetery. The past is precious.

## MEMORIES OF UNION POINT SCHOOL

*by Dwight Swenson*

Union Point School District was formed in 1883, making it one of the first schools in the Rural Municipality.

The school was built by the Turner brothers who were local farmers and carpenters. It was located on River Lot 513, and the Union Point ferry on the Red River was about a quarter of a mile from the school.

My parents arrived in the district in 1905, and how different conditions were then. No drinking water was supplied at school at first; we usually went without a drink from morning until we walked two miles home in the evening. Later on, there was a pail standing there, and when it was empty, the teacher would send someone down to the river to fill it with water.

I went to school for nine years, and during that time, we had at least a dozen teachers. It must have been a hard



*Union Point School District formed in 1883.*

job, with grades from one, and sometimes up to eleven, and from 30 - 40 pupils. One of the very first teachers was Harry Grills; he stayed for quite a few years, but then left to take the position of clerk in the MacDonald municipality. There were at least three local girls who taught there; they were - Janet Turner, Eva Fraser, and Etta Jenkins.

We kids did just about everything kids usually did, such as playing ball in the summer, football and skating, fox and goose in winter. A favourite pastime of the boys was drowning out gophers. When someone saw a gopher go down a hole, somebody would take the pail and go on the dead run down to the river to get the water to drown it out. It usually took two pails of water to make the gopher come out.

Like all kids, we liked to play tricks on the teacher. Sulphur matches were used at that time, and when one was lit, it could be smelled all over the room. Some kids used to stand a few of them on top of the stove, and that was enough to drive everybody out. They had to watch out that the teacher didn't see who did it, as the teachers weren't backward about using that dry willow pointer on the kids hands.

The boys wore knee pants and long stockings till they were about thirteen or fourteen years old. Some had straight pants and others had knickerbockers which had elastic at the knees and were baggy. The girls wore home made sunbonnets in the summertime, and in winter carried muffs to put their hands in.

In class, the kids up to grade 3 didn't use anything but slates, maybe there was a shortage of paper. When we went to picnics, we didn't have much more money than we won at the races. There was a package of pink popcorn called "Long Tom" and it was about 8 inches long and had a prize in it, all for 1C! A large plug of licorice was the same price.

I remember the last steam boat that went down the Red River. We had read about its coming in the paper. My brother, Walter, stayed home from school to watch it go by, but I went to school. As soon as the steam boat whistled for the ferry, the teacher told the kids they could go down to the river. The steam boat had to wait quite a while for the man to tie up the ferry, to let the cables down to the bottom of the river, so we had a good look at it. Walter at home, just saw it go by at full speed!

Families who lived in the district then were: Frasers, Smiths, McMillans, Crawford, Crumbs, Balchelders, Mildenhalls, Jacksons, Eckles, Youngs, McDonalds, Balteys, Reids, Bowles, Atkins and Whittings.

Some of the trustees were: John Fraser, Alex Jackson, James Cox, Otto Swenson, Ed Jenkins, Pete Anderson, Bill Parker, Billie Bower, Lionel Cox, Mr. Sorin, Walter Swenson, Albert Atkin, Charlie Whiting, Paul Lemoine, J.L. Ouimet, Lawrence Breyfogle, Milton Famulener, and Hilaire Grattan. After the holidays in 1960, Union Point School was closed.

## MEMORIES OF UNION POINT

*Dwight Swenson*

Since many of the families that used to live at Union Point are no longer around; I would like to tell you something about them.

### THE COX FAMILY

The Cox family, who were from Goderich, Ontario, moved by covered wagon to Oaks S.D. about 1860. Years

later, the sons moved to Grandin, N.D., where they took up "Tree Claims" which were similar to our Canadian Homesteads, as a settler had to plant a tree shelter belt, before gaining title to the land.

James Cox took up a "tree claim" on a farm 1 1 / 2 miles southwest of Grandin, and farmed there for many years. He came to Union Point, Manitoba, in 1898 and bought the N. 1 / 2 32-6-2 East. He broke up the land and built buildings. For a couple of years, he farmed both there and at Grandin, driving the horses home to Grandin for winters, but in 1900, he moved the family to "Prairie Farm" at Union Point. He also bought River Lot 535 and broke up that land as well. He built a home on the river lot in 1915 and moved there; farming both farms.

James and Martha Cox had three sons. Alvin, who attended Manitoba Agriculture College, graduated with his B.S.A., later retiring to Kelowna, B.C., where he died in 1972.



*Mr. and Mrs. James Cox of Union Point, who settled on 32-6-1-E.*

The James Cox's farmed on the prairie, but also had a river lot (No. 535) right next to where we lived. Their son Lionel enlisted in the "Strathcona Horse", and was in the last cavalry charge ever made. Their orders were to go as far as they could, then shoot their horse, lay behind it, and fire over the horse. Lionel said he joined the Cavalry because he had done all the walking he ever wanted to do behind the harrows on the farm! He was wounded, but didn't get home until the war was over in 1919. Klyne Cox was wounded in the Service in the first war, and was a Veterans guard in the second war. Their brother Alvin's eyes were too bad to get in the army.

Lionel had a long cast iron stove with a big door on the end. He would get a fire going, and put a railroad tie in as far as it would go, and when that part was burnt he would push it in a little further. He had to have a box propped up under the other end of the tie.

I remember one day when Lionel and I were working our fields. Lionel had a Waterloo Boy tractor, and he was plowing on the west side of the tracks, and I was plowing

on the next lot on the east side, so he came over to talk. Boy, was he ever mad at that tractor! He said it had only one good point, and that is that it always started good. While we were talking, the tractor died. We talked a little more and he went back to start it up, and I made two rounds on a half mile field with the horses, before he got it started again!!!

When his father died in 1928, Lionel and his wife, Elizabeth, took over the farm and lived there until they retired to Carman in 1967. Lionel died in 1974. Their son, Jack, lives in Winnipeg and daughter, Mary, (Mrs. Barrie McGill) lives at Homewood.

The youngest son, Klyne, also joined the army. He married an English girl, Cissie Higginson. They farmed the old place at Union Point before retiring to Winnipeg. They had five children: Harry, Jim, Retta, Dorothea and Marjorie. Their two sons both served in the the air force in the Second War. Jim came safely home, but Harry was killed in a plane crash.

Two other brothers of James Cox bought farms in Manitoba. Tom Cox had a farm south of Osborne, and Albert bought the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Elliott. The farm was located just west of the Morris C.N.R. station. Albert and his wife, Alma, farmed at Morris until after the 1950 flood, when their buildings 'went down the river'. They retired to Winnipeg. Their only son, Willard, died in Winnipeg, in 1967.

## LOWES

*by Dwight Swensen*

One of the earliest families to settle in Union Point was the Lowe family. At the river, by their place, there was a long, flat sandy and stony beach, and the river steam-boats going both north and south used to stop and tie up for the night. The place became known as Union Point; this is one version of how Union Point got its name.

Daniel Lowe, Dave's father, had a stopping place or inn, including a big barn, for the travellers' and stagecoach horses to spent the night in.

On one occasion, a team and wagon stopped about a quarter of a mile from the inn and the man parked the wagon there. When he was asked why he left his team so far away, he said it contained a load of dynamite!

Lowe moved to Winnipeg about 1907, but John used to get off the early train at Osborne, walk five miles to our place for dinner and then walk to Union Point and



*John Lowe, grandson of Daniel Lowe, owner of Union Point Hotel. Daniel Lowe was the first person buried in the Union Point cemetery.*

take the train back to Winnipeg! I guess he didn't mind walking.

Lowe had a toboggan slide down the river hill at their place. They were a very musical family. Their son, Dave, played the violin, John played the piano, and the girls played banjo, etc. John played the organ in church for many years. They shared their talents too, as my sister, Lela, took piano lessons from Ada Lowe.

When the railroad went through in 1877, Dave Lowe gave them the land on condition that they would put a station here. That same year, the first railway engine, "The Countess of Dufferin", was taken on a flat boat from Moorhead to Winnipeg.

Near the station, there was a big sign that read something like this: 'D.M. McLean Land Company, Black Soil 10 Feet Deep!' McLean's scheme was to get the land broken, sow flax on it, and sell it for "improved land". What frequently happened, though, was this; the municipality would have to hire someone like Geo. Crumb to mow the weeds and burn them on that "improved land".

## The Ferry at Union Point

In 1898, a ferry was installed at Union Point as well. Nine years later, a new ferry was bought for Union Point at a cost of \$623.00, the old one having fallen into a state of disrepair.



*Hilare Ouimet's car crossing the river on the Union Point ferry in the 1930's.*

In 1950, Union Point ferry was discontinued, when St. Mary's Road was gravelled and progress moved on.

## GEORGE CRUMB

George Crumb was born in Nebraska and came to Canada as a very young man. He was a teamster for the Canadian army in the Riel rebellion. I remember him speaking of such places as Cut Knife Creek and Batoche. He said early one morning, just as he was about to hitch his horses up to the wagon, an Indian came at him with a knife, and George grabbed up the neck yoke and knocked him down with it.

Crumbs had two boys - Allie and Ernie. They lived right north of Union Point post office for a number of years and had lived near Arnaud. They had quite a few horses, but did not farm here. They mowed weeds for the municipality on vacant land quite a bit, and worked with their horses for farmers. They also worked on threshing machines in the fall. When they left Union Point, they moved to Monominto, over east of Winnipeg. The boys had a trucking business from Monominto to Winnipeg.

Jim Campbell, who used to be a ferryman at Union Point, lived with Crumbs, both here and after they moved away.

## ERASERS

Mr. and Mrs. John Fraser were quite early settlers. Their one daughter, Eva, was born on the farm about a mile and a half south of Union Point in 1889. She taught at Union Point School. The family moved to Winnipeg in 1911, the year the telephone line was put in. Eva was a very good piano player and played the organ in church for a few years.

Frasers had a surrey, which is a buggy with a flat top with a fringe with little tassels all around the top. They had a Barnardo boy going to school and working for them. He was later killed in the first war. His name was Charlie Margarets. Soon after they moved to Winnipeg, Eva met and married Roy Parkhurst. They had two girls and two boys. Roy got sleeping sickness and died. A few years later, Eva married a man named Mitchell, who had been a blacksmith in Winnipeg. He predeceased her. Eva died about 1965.

Clements were on that place after the Frasers. Fred Babiak and his son, Bill, farmed there until Mr. Babiak died. Then Bill and his wife, Ann, got a place on the prairie and farmed there till they retired to Morris.

## McMILLANS

McMillans were quite early settlers; that is before 1900. Their place was about a mile and three-quarters south of Union Point School. They had two girls, Katherine and Laura and an older brother, Duncan Dan, who was called D.D. McMillan. They went out west and took homesteads.

After McMillans went away, some people named Smith moved there a few years. They had one boy named Hector, and a girl named Vera. Mrs. Smith was a sister of D.M. MacLean of D.M. MacLean Land Co.

The next people on that farm were the Bears from Indiana. They had one girl named Jessie. All the kids liked Jessie Bear. She taught us a game that we played off and on as long as we went to school, so she was never forgotten. Bears were there just one year.

Nolettes settled on that place in 1911. Nine Nolette kids went to school at Union Point altogether. Albert Nolette, the youngest one still farms the place.

## GEORGE TIMLICKS

George Timlick's family came from Ontario in the 1800's before the 1885 uprising. Others of the Timlick

family settled around Arnaud and Dominion City but George Timlick settled at Union Point.

Mrs. George Timlick's maiden name was Radford. She had some brothers and one of them did hauling with teams and wagons. One of his drivers was a Metis and when they were going out west and needed meat, this man would crawl up close to a buffalo herd and shoot a nice young buffalo with a bow and arrow, so as not to stampede the herd like a gun shot would.

George Timlicks had four girls. The oldest was Ida, who married Percy Rich, who was on the grain exchange and also was an amateur minister. Percy has passed on now, but Ida is the only one of the girls still living in 1979. They retired to B.C.

The Timlick farm was run for a few years by Alex Hitsman, who married Cora, the youngest of the girls. Cora died in 1921 and Alex went back to the States where he came from.

## PETE ANDERSON

The farm was run for many years by Pete Anderson, who was married to Lena Timlick. Pete Anderson's first wife, Lena, passed away in 1958 and he married a second time - April 4, 1962. Pete passed away in 1977. Pete was a man who looked after everything around Union Point such as the church business, the hall, the school, cemetery, etc.

## TIMLICK

Pete and Lena had four boys. John, the youngest boy, died quite young. Murry was an aviator in the war and one of the ones that never came back. The other two, Bill and Alan, were in service too. Bill is married and lives in Winnipeg. Alan still farms the place, and has about the neatest yard of anybody around, even if he is batching.



*Maggie Famulener, wife of John, long time residents of Union Point.*

## BATCHELDER

I think it was about 1908 when Arthur Batchelder and his sister, Etta, came from Quebec and moved to a farm on the east side of the river, just south of Union Point ferry. Some MacMillans had been on the farm before that.

A little later, his father, his brother, George, George's wife, and their two boys, Freddie and Walter, and a little girl came. The little girl ate Paris Green when they were spraying potatoes, and died. The Batchelders had a big tractor and did a lot of bush breaking. George and family

moved back east again and Arthur got the land on the prairie, where Art Thompsons lived later, and where George Thompson lives now.

Arthur got married about 1916, but they soon parted and his wife died. He soon got married again, and had several children. After a few years they went to Quebec. Arthur Batchelder was the first one I ever saw hauling grain to the box cars with a truck. It was a Model T Ford.



*Ignace Dumesnil and Willie Peloquin, breaking land in 1912, east of the Red River, on the farm of Arthur Batchelder at Union Point.*

The next ones on that farm east of the river and south of the ferry, were the Herrs, consisting of Ed Herr and his wife and their little girl about four years old. Herrs were from Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Herr's sister, Flo, also lived with them. Mrs. Herr and Flo were triplets. The other triplet didn't come to Manitoba. Flo and the other triplet were so much alike, that they had gone on dates with the other girl's boyfriend without him knowing the difference!

They came to Union Point in 1919 and went away in 1921. Ed Herr went on one of those excursion trips to Texas and bought 70 acres of land at \$300.00 an acre. It seemed like a millionaire's business at that time. I don't know how he came out financially.

The next ones on that place were Atkins and Whiting - 1921. Albert Atkins and Chas. Whiting were from England, just across the Humber River from where Arthur Thompson lived, but didn't know each other there. They came to Union Point from Wakada, Manitoba. They were both bachelors when they came here. Albert Atkins' sister lived with them. They were kind of seed specialists, and grew mostly certified and registered seed.

Atkins met a woman who worked at a seed company in Brandon, and they got married and lived on that farm. Charlie Whiting married Miss Atkins and they lived in another house a little south of the other place. The Atkins' had two daughters.

Albert Atkins died in 1958 and was buried in Brandon. Mrs. Atkins had a new house built for her on the farm and lived there a few years until she moved to the Okanagan Valley in B.C. She died there.

Charlie Whiting had a married couple (the Klassens) working for him on the farm. Finally, they decided to quit farming and the Klassens went to Halbstadt, Manitoba, where they came from. Charlie went along with them and is still living there in 1979.

## BOWLES

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Bowles came from Illinois, around 1905 or 1906. They lived about three miles straight west of Union Point School and about the same distance from Osborne. They had four children - Lois, Herbert, Floyd and Hester. The girls had red hair and the boys dark hair. Lois used to ride to school on a grey horse they called Denmark. They had bought him from a Danish farmer.

Lee Bowles was quite a sport. He used to pitch for some baseball teams around here. He was also a fancy skater and played the guitar and sang.

Early one spring, when they were having their first ball practice, he slid to base and broke a leg. There he was, laid up right in seeding time, so the neighbours from Osborne, Silver Plains, Shanawan and Union Point got together and put his whole crop in, in one day! Mr. Bowles would never take a drink, even if his pals did.

The Bowles family moved to Chicago in 1923. Being a good carpenter, he easily got a job, but one day, as he was going to work, he dropped dead on the street car.

## HAKANSON

Andrew and Ida Hakanson originally came from Sweden, separately. They both worked for Mr. Oscar Breyfogle in Chicago, where they met and got married. Mr. Breyfogle was in the market garden business.

In 1910, they came to Union Point and ran a farm for Mr. Breyfogle. It was a river lot with a big coulee running through it, just south of where the Union Post office was then. Then they got a half section on the prairie and farmed there till they retired to a house east of 75 highway close to Union Point post office, at the spot where Lowes stopping place used to be.

They celebrated their golden anniversary March 30, 1958. Andrew passed away in 1960 and Mrs. Hakanson lived there alone till she passed away in 1967. Lawrence Breyfogle helped her a lot and looked after her when she was living alone.



*Andrew and Ida Hakanson, who came to Union Point in 1910, from Chicago.*

## FRED BABIAK

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Babiak came from Poland in 1902, settling near Garland, Manitoba, with a number of other immigrants from their native land.

Life here on the homestead was rugged, with the family being 17 miles from the nearest school and store. The need for a school far outweighed the need of a store, as money was a scarce commodity in that area. Their children, Mary, William, Nettie, and Frances, were growing up and needed an education. The parents tried without success, to board the eldest two with friends in town. Thus, the Babiaks decided to bid farewell to Garland, heading for Winnipeg. Here, Mrs. Babiak hoped to get work and the children would have educational opportunities. City life did not appeal to Mr. Babiak. He was successful in securing work with a contractor and was soon put in charge of a cement gang.

However, that was a disappointing occupation for a man with his inherent love of land, which was so characteristic of many people from Europe. The Babiak family had owned their own farm in Poland for generations and when Frederick Babiak came to Canada, his elder brother continued to operate the family farm in Poland. It was Mr. Babiak's ambition to own a prosperous farm in Manitoba and he never swerved from that objective.

In 1916, the family moved to Morris, where opportunities for farming were available and school facilities were good. Mr. Babiak disposed of his Garland farm and purchased Dr. McTavish's comfortable home, just east of Main Street, at the south end of town.

The Babiak's home was next to that of Dr. and Mrs. Skinner, and Bill often went with the doctor on his rounds. He had visions of becoming a vet. Once, while holding an animal while Dr. Skinner operated, Bill fainted, so that ended his career. Bill went to school in Morris, later helping his Dad on the farm.

Music was an essential part of Mr. Babiak's life. He had a fine voice and one of his great joys was an Edison Victrola and a collection of good records, including several by Caruso. The Morris home was the scene of many happy gatherings and impromptu sing-songs.

Mr. Babiak worked for W.R. Clubb and W. Fraser, then operating the Stevenson farm at Silver Plains.



Bill Babiak with horses at the Ste. Agathe fair in the 1920's.

In 1920, the Babiaks rented the R.T.C. Collins farm at Silver Plains. Six years later, he rented and subsequently purchased the Fraser farm at Union Point, with a beautiful frontage on the Red River. He thus realized his long-standing ambition of owning one of the finest pieces of farm land in Manitoba.

By 1940, farming had changed from horse to tractor power, but to his dying day, Mr. Babiak never really considered tractors to be a fitting substitute for the magnificent Belgian horses that they raised on the farm.

He and his son, William, continued in active operation of the farm for more than twenty years, until we retired in his seventieth year.



Fred Babiak family celebrating the parents' 50th anniversary. LEFT TO RIGHT: Anne and Bill Babiak, Nellie and Don Cox, Mrs. D.D. Boychuk (Mary), Johnny Boychuk, Frances and Gail Wells.

Nettie attended school in Morris, Silver Plains, St. Jean, and St. Joseph Academy. She graduated from Normal School to become a teacher, later marrying Don Cox. Frances graduated as a nurse from Misericordia Hospital, later marrying Gail Wells in Ohio. Mary became Mrs. D.D. Boychuk. Bill married Anne Davis, a teacher.

In 1947, the Babiak's retired to Winnipeg to enjoy old friends, new neighbours, and their family. On November 17, 1955, Mrs. Babiak went to her rest and was followed two months later by her husband.

Their philosophy of life is adequately epitomized by the poet, Edward Markham, who said:

*"There is a destiny that makes us brothers  
None goes his way alone:  
All that we sent into the lives of others  
Comes back into our own."*

## THE BOWERS (1913-1962)

Wm. E. (Billy) and his wife, Viola, with their 2 year old son, Richard, arrived from Indiana, U.S.A. in April, 1913. They decided to spend two years on the farm (River lots 515-517-519) that Billy's father bought on speculation, hoping to sell at a profit.

John, Maggie and 12 year old Milton Famulener, who had been renting the farm, together with the Bowers,



spent a month in the old farm house until the Famuleners moved to another farm. A firm and lasting friendship was permanently established.

Mr. Bower Sr. had extensive renovations done to the house and various out buildings. When digging the cellar, an Indian skeleton was found, together with his bow and arrows, etc. They decided to cover him and left him intact in his resting place. The barn, which was far from new in 1913, was the first wooden barn ever built between Emerson and Winnipeg, the lumber being brought from the U.S. on a flat bottomed steam boat. Mr. Lowe, the original owner, said the house was on the highest spot between U.S. Border and Winnipeg. The barn was probably the only one directly between the house and the road - much to my mother's consternation. We, Elwyn and Beth, tore it town in the late '50's.

Before their two years were up, Bill and Ola decided to stay in Canada. They sold her farm in Indiana and bought the one in Union Point. Some time in the 1920's, they bought a quarter-section at the end of the river lots, which they, in turn, sold to Milton Famulener in the late '50's.

aff



*Winter on the Bower farm at Union Point.*

In April, 1915, Eliabeth (Beth) was born. In March, 1919, Cleon arrived. Two years prior to Clean's birth, Mary Lapalisse came to work for Ola, and remained a part of the family for 14 years. She was like a second mother to the kids.

Billy was a baseball nut, and soon found there was a ball team in Union Point. Then, it was made up entirely of French men, but language was no deterrent. He played with the Union Point and Ste. Agathe team for years. He loved the game and enjoyed a few years of being on the same team as his two sons, retiring from baseball around the age of 50!

Viola, who had been raised a strict Baptist, found her enjoyment in the little Methodist Church across the road. In 1925, when it became United, they had their children baptized there and joined the church. When Leila Swenson, who became her very good friend, (they were the same age to the day) got married and left Union Point, Viola took over the organ playing at church and faithfully continued for 37 years.

Billy and Viola were both active in the community. The children received their education in the Union Point School, with Richard and Beth going on to Ste. Agathe

for their grades X and XI. A very happy life was spent there until 1939, when the war broke up the family.

Beth, who had married Elwyn McManus from Sanford, left for Gary, Indiana in March, 1940. Taking along Shirley (4) and Patricia (3), she went to John Elwyn, who was working for a bu , company.

Cleon joined the R.C.A.F. and left home in April, 1940, leaving for England in June, where he spent 4 112 years. He married Doreen Jones of Devon, and they returned to Union Point establishing a home across the road from the farm house. A daughter Betty, was born in 1946; that same year they left for Winnipeg, where he started working for Otis elevator.



*Richard and Cleon Bower at Christmas, 1939. Note the absence of snow!*

Richard stayed on the farm until he joined the R.C.A.F. in spring of 1941. He trained as a pilot and received his wings and his commission as a Pilot Officer. He went overseas to England, being attached to the Royal Air Force. He and his crew flew a bomber to North Africa, where he was killed on November 23, 1942. He is buried in the British Military Cemetery in Suez.

At her parents' request, Beth, Elwyn and their children, returned to Union Point in 1943. The first owner of the farm, Mr. Lowe, had given 13 acres of river lot 515 to his daughter, when she married Harry Grills. He had taught school at Union Point School some time around 1900. They built a 4 room cottage on the property. In 1944, William and Viola bought this holding and renovated the cottage, living there until they sold the farm.



*Elwyn, Beth and Shirley, travelling from the house to barn during the 1950 flood.*

The flood of 1950 left the farm site and its buildings high and dry, proving Mr. Lowe's statement quite true. The pig shed half way down the river bank and a bin with 800 bushels of wheat, were the only losses.

The first several years in Canada, Dad raised potatoes in the field back of the house, shipping them by carload to the States. No grading or sorting in those years! He had a potato planter that was pulled by 2 horses, and a potato digger usually pulled by 4 big mules.

The year 1 was born, Mom put me in the black baby buggy and walked back to the potato field to watch them dig potatoes. Dad got off the digger to talk to her. The mules took one look at that black monstrosity and took off for the bush, terrified. The digger was up in the air most of the time taking one gouge out of the ground every so often. It took Dad the rest of the day to round up the mules and put the digger together. They never did find all of the harness.

The potato planter must have been the only in our neck of the woods. Every year, in planting time, Mom had to keep a record of who had it, and who could have it next. People as far away as Avonlea and Silver Plains borrowed it. A lot of days, someone used it in the morning and someone else had it in the afternoon. There were gunny sacks on frames to put the potatoes in, and they automatically fed down to discs that covered them. Invariably, the bags were rotted or worn out by the time Swensons got it, and the planter always came back with new bags on it from there. Dwight's fine handwork, no doubt!



*Billy Bower on the wagon with the two black mares that ran away.*

The last runaway we had was in the 1950's. Dad and Elwyn were seeding wheat. They had a wagon load with the little black mares hitched to it. They didn't notice the train coming, but the mares did. They lit out for home at a might fast clip. Dad's '53 Ford, and Elwyn's '49 Ford, were sitting near the house with a space about a width of a car between. I watched, breathless, as those horses took that wagon between the two vehicles without touching them! They snorted down the hill toward the bush, dividing on each side of the big oak just outside the bush. The tongue of the wagon hit the oak, but the horses went on. I guess there's still harness hanging in various places in that bush! The horses ran down to the river, had a drink, and returned to the barn to be put in, as though nothing had happened. I went and picked up a pretty mad father, while Elwyn used up what they had in the drill!

Shirley McManus finished Grade XI and took a secretarial course in Winnipeg. She and Boys Marks from Niverville were married in the Union Point Church on August 16, 1952. They moved to Ames. They had 2 daughters, Kimberley and Kathy.

Patricia McManus finished Grade XII in 1953, working at Great West Life until she entered nursing school. She graduated from Winnipeg General Hospital in 1958. Patricia married Walter Cross in 1959. They now reside in St. Louis, Missouri, and have a boy, Richard, and 3 girls, Colleen, Shelley and Darryn.

In the spring of 1962, the farm was sold to Richard Bowles.

Elwyn had been in poor health for a few years, and he and Beth moved to Winnipeg in April of 1962. Elwyn died suddenly on June 8th that same year.

William and Viola moved to Morris, where they lived until her death in 1970. William passed away 2 years later.



*The Union Point ladies sewing circle in the early 1940's. LEFT TO RIGHT. Wanda Breyfogle, Merle Famulener, Liz Cox, Jessie Coates, Beth McManus, Helen Manson, Viola Bower, Nelia Cox, Ida Hakanson, Beatrice Reede.*

## THE BREYFOGLE FAMILY

*by Donna H. Breyfogle*

The Breyfogle family settled permanently in the Union Point area in 1928, but their ties with the district go back some time before this date. Originally, it was my great-grandfather, Oscar Hugh Breyfogle, who intended to move to Southern Manitoba. By 1909 he had purchased various pieces of land in the area, including river lots 497, 499 and 505, the west quarter of section 28-6-2 East, and a half section south of Sperling, Manitoba. Circumstances, which included his father's death and his own growing family responsibilities - he eventually had a family of eight, prevented Oscar Hugh from moving to Canada; but younger members of the family shared his interest in this country. Two of his sons came north to spend their holidays in the area, and in 1918 my grandfather, Lawrence Breyfogle arrived with his young wife, Wanda.

My grandfather Lawrence, was born in Indiana, but lived most of his life in the Chicago, area. My grandmother was born in Ohio and later moved to Chicago. In Chicago, the Breyfogle family had been involved in market gardening - selling bedding plants and vegetables,



*Lawrence Breyfogle and his mule team at Union Point in 1918.*

notably asparagus which is still a family favorite. The type of farming experience this provided for my grandfather was very different however, from what he was to need in Manitoba, and Grandpa was to pick up most of his farming knowledge through experience once he arrived here.

The unfamiliar cold of the Canadian winter also presented a challenge, and both my grandparents recall how bitterly cold it was when they first arrived by train in Union Point. Grandpa also remembers the difficulties - the snow, wind and cold posed when a neighbour tried, during a storm, to get a midwife to the farmhouse where my grandmother was about to have a baby. A great variety of means of transportation had to be used to get the midwife safely to her destination.

Their first year in the area, my grandparents hired themselves out to work for another farmer. Later they rented a farmsite of their own. In 1924 they returned to the United States, but moved back to Manitoba four years later when they were emotionally more mature and more secure financially. At this time, they purchased a half section of their own, the south half of Section 32-6-2 East. They began as grain farmers, but economic conditions forced them to change to dairying in the 1930's. Starting out with three cows and two heifers, they later purchased a registered bull, and gradually built up a herd which eventually numbered 65 head.



*Lawrence and Wanda Breyfogle in 1917.*

Grandpa developed a respected reputation as a dairyman. In 1939, less than ten years from his start in the business, one of his cows was named the third highest in her class in Canada, both for production of milk and for butterfat. My grandparents have always been concerned about efficiency, and realizing the benefits of mechanization, bought one of the first gas threshing outfits in the district in 1929. Milking machines, powered by gas engines, were used on the farm before hydro was brought into the area. A bulk storage tank, designed to improve the grade of milk, was installed in the early 1950's. Grandpa claims the installation didn't particularly help them in that area, however, since their milk was always Grade A! My grandfather was also fundamental in starting artificial breeding in Manitoba in the early 1930's.

Despite the increasing use of machines on the farm many things still required a personal touch. That included much time spent brushing and currying the cows, and generally getting to know the animals. Even I can remember as a young child grooming the cows before the Morris Fair and braiding their tails.

As children we were always amazed by the copious records my grandfather kept about each cow in the herd. These records included detailed sketches and descriptions of the identifying markings on the holsteins, and this has enabled one of the grandchildren to present my grandparents with a very special gift - two ceramic holsteins hand painted with the markings of two of the favorites in the herd. Dairying became a part of the lives of all the Breyfogles, and strange as it will sound to those unfamiliar with the dairy business, one of the greatest compliments that could be paid to one of the Breyfogle ladies or to female friends of the family, was to have one of the cows named after them.



*Rivina Koba Alcartia shown at Brandon Summer Fair in 1938. Bred and shown by Helen Breyfogle.*

Although always busy with the farm, all members of the family became involved in community activities. Everyone was busy with the calf and poultry clubs, as Grandpa was club leader in Union Point. During the war the Union Point poultry club qualified to represent Manitoba in the Dominion competitions. The trip never materialized, however, since the Armed Forces took over the use of the fair buildings in Toronto that year. Grandpa served as secretary of the local school board. He was director of the Holstein Friesian Association for a number of years, and was also active on the Agricultural Advisory Board for the provincial government.

The family was also involved in the operation of the Morris Creamery for a number of years. The business

was taken over in 1947, but the building was destroyed by flooding in 1950. It was thought to be more profitable to locate near the highway and the new building was constructed on the main street of Morris. A novelty and boon for business was the soft ice-cream machine which was installed in the new building. The machines were still relatively new at this time, and people enthusiastically travelled to the creamery for the delicious treat. This business was sold several years ago.



*Lawrence Breyfogle with the grand champion, "Mercedes Gift", grand champion at Portage Fair in 1942, she ranked third highest in her class in Canada.*

As the child, it seemed to me that my grandfather's most interest and exotic adventure was certainly his trip to China in 1947. He was in charge of a shipment of nearly 500 cattle and 100 hogs that were sent to China by sea. The program was sponsored by a committee of the United Nations. As children, what was far more interesting than the factual details of the trip were the "treasures" Grandpa had brought back, and which could be found displayed in my grandparents' home or tucked away in the attic awaiting discovery on rainy days. These included Chinese costumes, delicately carved ornaments, boxes and lamps.

My grandparents retired some fifteen years ago but still live on the farm, in the house they have occupied for over forty years. The house and farm buildings were constructed in 1938 with the assistance of my great-grandfather, Oscar Hugh Breyfogle. The farm has since been sold out of our family. Since their retirement, my grandparents have travelled extensively in the United States, where my grandfather pursues one of his hobbies - geneology. Much of the rest of his time is spent gardening and caring for the yard. He also helps maintain the Union Point church and cemetery grounds.



*Dorothy, Mrs. Breyfogle and Helen in 1942.*

My grandparents' family included four children - Helen, Warren, Ed and Dorothy. Helen (Mrs. Bill Schellenberg) lives in Morris where she is a housewife and actively pursues a number of hobbies including gardening and knitting. Warren lives in Winnipeg with his wife Joyce, where he is employed by Gulf Canada Ltd. Ed and his wife Ruth live in Ste. Agathe. Ed is employed by the Federal Department of Agriculture. Dorothy died in 1946 at the age of 23. She had been married to Harold Earl for a year and a half. In addition, there are twelve grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

All the family share many, many fond memories of the family farm - weiner roasts, hayrides, playing "cowboys" in the barn, yearly summer visits from my great-grandfather "O.H." Many of our adventures came about with some prompting from my grandfather. He was always anxious to set us some task that would provide a practical learning experience. My aunt remembers being sent out "boyscouting" one winter. The practical purpose of the expedition was to haul water, but the outing provided an opportunity to practice starting a fire and roasting potatoes. More practice was obviously needed, because my aunt recalls eating potatoes that were burnt on one side and frozen on the other! She and my father also enthusiastically describe the homemade ice-cream made for birthdays and special occasions.

An increasing number of people today lack the rural heritage that has been so much a part of my family. The experience of being a part of a family farm has left its mark upon all members of the family. Now seems to be a fitting time to say a thank-you to my grandparents for the good times we all remember. And they in turn, remember gratefully and with thanks, the help and support they received from family, and some individuals of special note who worked for them and with them.

*"All hearts grow warmer  
in the presence of one who  
gave freely for the love of giving  
a giving that deepens and grows  
ever unfolding new sweetness  
as the blossoming of a rose."*

## THE GRATTON FAMILY

*by Hilaire Gratton*

My grandfather, Jovite Gratton, came alone to Union Point in 1878 from Ste. Therese de Blainville, Quebec. On his arrival, he purchased some land, and built a house for the coming of his family. The next summer (1879) his wife, Philomene Sauriole, and his children joined him. They resided on River Lot 507, and it was there he raised his 4 sons and 6 daughters.

All the land was in bush and prairie, and to make the best use of the land, Jovite acquired some cows. Homesteading was a family affair, so he decided to build a cheese factory to process his own, and the milk from the neighbor's cows. His daughters worked in the cheese factory, and his sons helped him break the land with teams of horses and walking plows until the land was all under cultivation. The cheese factory was a real at-

traction, farmers as far as Letellier would come to graze their herds in the summer, so they could be nearer the factory. Livestock grazed on the prairie in summer, and the farmers put up hay for the winter.



*Ferdinand Gratton harvested hemp in 1923. The hemp was cut, put in stooks, and let stand for one year, when it was sold for making rope. The crop was outlawed when it was discovered it was also a drug.*

Jovite was also one of the earliest settlers of his area to serve on Municipal Council, from the years 1889-1893. He opened a store and Post Office in Union Point, which he operated until he became ill in 1918. His wife Philomene had predeceased him in 1910; he passed away on January 2, 1919.

Three of Jovite's sons settled at Union Point; Fortunat, Ferdinand and Arthur, who later sold his share and bought land north of Ste. Agathe.

Ferdinand Gratton settled on River Lot 507, his father's original homestead, marrying Marie-Louise Gagne in 1907. Born to them were 4 daughters and 3 sons; the eldest son died at the age of seven, all the others are still living.

The house they resided in was the small log house Jovite had built around 1890. In 1925, the house was moved from Lot 507 to Lot 513 to be closer to Highway 75.



*In 1925, Ferdinand Gratton moved this house closer to Highway 75, with the cooperation of neighbours and 32 horses. The front entrance opened to their small store and the post office.*

The Gratton place was indeed the center of activity in Union Point, as in 1924 the store and Post Office were reopened, with Marie-Louise becoming the postmistress. She remained at this position for over 20 years, until her death in 1945. More business was added, when a British-American filling station was opened in 1926, to serve the public.

Ferdinand was well known, as he did custom threshing throughout the district with his steam, and later his gas engines. He retired from farming in 1949, and passed away nine years later.

After his retirement, his son Hilaire took over the store and post office, with the help of his sisters Angeline and Hortense. Angeline served as postmistress from the time of her mother's death, until 1953. Needs change, population shifts, and as a result the store, post office and filling station that had served the public for so many years was finally closed in 1953. That same year, Hilaire married Arcelie Aquin; together they raised 5 sons, and two daughters. The family still resides on Lot 513 ... the fourth generation of Grattons at Union Point.

On May 6, 1979, three months after the writing of this article, Mr. Hilaire Gratton died suddenly at the age of 62 at his residence.

## THE JACKSON FAMILY AT UNION POINT

Alexander Jackson was born in Perth, Ontario on March 16, 1854. He came west in 1877 and worked on the construction of the CPR from east Selkirk to the Winnipeg River. On the completion of this work, he followed up the laying of the steel, west to the Rocky Mountains and was one of the oldest railway construction men in the Canadian West. He went back in 1888 and on July 16 of that year, married Alice McVeitty at Richmond, Ontario. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson returned to Union Point, where they engaged in farming. Their family started arriving in late 1889. Their children were: Elizabeth Isabel, December 21, 1889 - January 3, 1976; James Wellington, October 13, 1892 - 1929; George Alexander, September 2, 1894 - January 2, 1979; Harriet Myrtle, July 23, 1896 - March 27, 1978; Mary Eleanor, June 17, 1898; Mabel Alice, December 3, 1902 - February 24, 1911.



*Mrs. Jackson and Ida Hakanson. Taken on Jackson's hill on the east side of the Red River around 1910.*

The Jacksons celebrated the first Golden Wedding on record at Union Point on July 16, 1938, with a reception at the family farm home, which incidentally is still standing. Should anyone be interested in the original home they had in 1888, it can still be seen on the farm of Andrew Blatta. Their eight grandchildren are still living - five in Winnipeg, and three in Toronto and suburbs.

As a point of interest, the name Alexander will be carried on through the son and grandsons and great grandsons, to wit: George Alexander Jackson, Roger Alexander Jackson, John Alexander Cook and Ian Alexander Cook.



*Mr. and Mrs. Alex Jackson, pioneers at Union Point.*

## **ALFRED AND BRIDGET OUMET**

*by Marie Oumet*

Rumours that good farm land in the Red River Valley in Manitoba were available to anybody that was willing to work hard, reached Alfred Oumet in Ste. Rose, Quebec in 1878. The spirit of adventure that had brought his ancestor Jean Oumet from France in 1660 to establish himself on a farm in the Ile d'Orleans, was growing in him. Engaged to a pretty Irish girl by the name of Bridget Manning, he told her of his dream of going to Manitoba. He would claim some land, build a house and come back for her.

True to his word, he was back in Quebec in September 1879, and in the church of St. Martin, Quebec, Alfred and Bridget Manning were married. They then took the train that eventually brought them to Carey, and from there by ox-cart to the bride's new home, a 12 x 14 two storey log house on River lot 503 in the parish of Ste. Agathe.

Bridget had been so shaken up in the ox cart, that the following Sunday she decided to walk to church five miles away from Ste. Agathe, rather than ride in the ox cart again. But after that ten mile walk she admitted the ox cart wasn't so bad after all.

Bridget was kept busy bringing up her eight children born between 1880 and 1891. They were Caroline, Aug. 15, 1880; Emma, Aug. 31, 1881; Annie, Dec. 12, 1882; Edmond, March 1884; Alfred, June 6, 1885; John, Jan.

16, 1888; Mary, September 10, 1889; and Henry Oct. 9, 1891.

The children attended school at Bourret School. Sunday Mass was a very important part of their lives, their strong religious convictions were a great help in times of troubles and sickness. Sunday was important in a social way too, because after mass they would meet their friends and exchange news. For the women especially, it was almost their only outing.



*Alfred and Bridget Oumet, who came to Manitoba in 1879.*

Alfred cleared his land, and began to grow his crops. His crops were mainly wheat, barley and oats. He didn't own a threshing machine, but his neighbors Mr. Gratton and Eugene Ritchot travelled from farm to farm doing custom threshing. The grain was stacked in two rows, and when the threshing machine was available, it was placed between the stacks and fed from both sides. In 1909 Alfred applied for an official grant of his lot 503. A copy of this first title reads as follows.

"And Whereas Alfred Oumet, of the Parish of Ste. Agathe, in the Province of Manitoba, in Our Dominion of Canada, Farmer, has applied for a grant of the said lands and his claim to such grant having been duly investigated by Us he has been found duly entitled thereto.

Now Know Ye that by these presents We do not grant convey and assure unto the said Alfred Oumet, his heirs and assigns forever all that Parcel or Tract of Land, being composed of Lot numbered Five hundred and three, etc., etc."

In 1912, Alfred decided that having four sons, he needed more land. He bought Lot 501 from his neighbor Mr. Esdras Toupin. When his son John married Celina Hebert on Jan. 7, 1913, they moved into the house on lot 501.

Alfred Junior married Eveline Hebert on Nov. 25, 1913 and brought his bride to family home on Lot 503.

Emond married Rose Anna St. Jean, and moved to St. Norbert.

Henry married Agnes Hebert on Nov. 23, 1915 and settled on the south half of Lots 501.

On August 16, 1915, Alfred Oumet passed away and was buried in the Ste. Agathe cemetery. Bridget died March 23, 1937, and was buried beside her husband and her daughter Caroline who had died in 1928. Daughter in law Celina remembers Alfred as a kind and generous





*A family reunion in 1955, with seven of the eight children of Alfred and Bridget Ouimet. LEFT TO RIGHT: Henry, Edmond, Annie, Mary, Emma, John, Fred.*

man, and Bridget as a joyous person always ready to tease. She had left her home in Quebec and in this new land had found happiness and contentment with her husband, children and grandchildren.



*The first log house was built by Ouimet in 1879, the addition (higher part) was built about 1895.*

## **ALFRED OUIMET AND EVA OUIMET**

*Marie Ouimet*

Alfred Ouimet married Eveline Hebert daughter of Hubert Hebert of Aubigny on November 25, 1913. It was a double wedding as Mary Ouimet and Henry Hebert, Eveline's brother were also married. The marriage ceremony took place in the Ste. Agathe Church on a beautiful sunny day. As their was no snow, the wedding party went to church in buggies.

For many years they shared their home with his mother Bridget, and sisters Caroline, Emma and Annie. Although they had not children of their own, they were always willing to take in nieces or nephews to help out when relatives were sick.

Eva was and is a very good cook. Her nephews remember looking forward to the annual New Years dinner, a tradition that lasted almost thirty years. Her apple pies are something to dream about. She can still at eighty-two, serve a meal fit for a king in no time at all.



*Fred and Eva Ouimet. Fred was the son of Alfred Sr. a pioneer of Union Point.*

Fred wasn't a big farmer, but he believed in doing things as early as possible. He liked to be first in the field in the spring. He believed in having lots of straw for his animals and big piles of wood to heat the house. He farmed the north half of lot 503 until 1939 when he rented his land to his brother John.

Fred was always interested in sports. He went to all the picnics. From what we've heard he was a pretty good ball player in his day. He was also very good at training young ball players. His nephews remember his ability to bat high fly balls and liners. He liked hockey too, but a puck in the eye ended his career early. Card playing was another of his favorite past times. Even now a visit to Fred and Eva often means an evening of playing cards.

After 1949, Fred rented his land to his nephew Jean Leon Ouimet son of John and Celina Ouimet. When in 1959 he decided to sell him the land he moved to Aubigny.

For a few years they lived with Max McDonald, helping to make his life easier after the untimely death of his wife Kathleen, Eva's sister. They also lived with his brother Henry, helping with the store.

In 1965 they bought a house in Aubigny where they have resided since. On June 19, 1978 Fred and Eva's house was hit by the tornado that almost wiped out the little village of Aubigny. Though their house suffered some damage, they were lucky compared to their next door neighbor whose house was completely destroyed.

On November 25, 1978 Fred and Eva celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. A mass was celebrated by Father Lionel Thibault and a dinner was served for a few relatives and close friends. With a twinkle in his eye Fred told us that his doctor had told him that he was good for another five years.

Having survived a tornado at the age of 93, we are hoping that Fred will live to see a hundred. After all there is only six and a half years to go.

## JOHN AND CELINA OUIMET

*Marie (J)linnet*

John Ouimet married Celina Hebert daughter of Joseph Hebert of Aubigny on January 7, 1913. They raised a family of ten, five boys and five girls, on their farm Lot 501.

Celina had been used to hard work from an early age and at eighteen was an accomplished homemaker. She was also a good seamstress, and was soon asked to make new dresses for mother in law Bridget, and her daughters. When asked if she had a sewing machine she said yes, but added that good dresses were sewn by hand in those days.

She was also a good gardener, producing vegetables to feed her family. Fancy Goods from the store were unheard of, but milk, homemade butter, meat and eggs were available. The chicken stopped laying eggs with the cold weather, but Celina had found that wrapped in newspaper, the eggs would keep fresh for a longer period.

Celina baked her own bread, pies and cakes. In the fall, John loaded a wagon full of wheat and travelled to Steinbach to get it made into flour. It was a two day trip with the horses, one day to go and one to come back. He would bring home a year's supply of flour.

Another of John's winter chores was the making of ice. Blocks of ice were cut on the river and brought to the house to serve as water supply. Some blocks were stored in a shed and covered with saw dust, so as to have a cool place to keep food and dairy products in summer.

The Children went to school at Union Point and then to high school in Ste. Agathe. Religious instruction for first Communion and Confirmation were at Ste. Agathe or Aubigny, but Celina had prepared them so well at home, that there was very little for their new teacher to do. It was mainly a question of finding out what they knew.



*John and Celina Ouimet, parents of 10 children, farmers at Union Point.*

As the children grew up, John and Celina had a little bit of leisure in the winter months. So they would hitch the horse to the cutter, place heated stones at their feet, bundle up with fur robes and go on a round of visits to

relatives and friends in the St. Pierre District. Visits were exchanged between neighbors also. Card playing was a favourite past time in those days.

John was busy on the farm. In the early years of his marriage the two lots 503 and 501 were worked as a unit. After their father's death, the farm was divided between the four brothers. The north half of 503 to Alfred, the south half to Edmond, the north half of 501 to John and the south half to Henry. Later Edmond sold his half lot to John and Henry who worked in partnership. In 1920 John and Henry invested in a wooden threshing machine. In their turn, they did custom threshing for Theodore Pelland, Joseph Hebert and Henry Hebert. In 1940 John bought Henry's share of the south half of lot 503. Nine years later, John sold his farm to his son Jean Leon, and moved to Aubigny.

Though retired, John was still very interested in farm work. For many years he kept a cow and a few pigs. Almost daily he travelled back to the farm to give his son a very appreciated helping hand. He died August II, 1969. His wife Celina lived on in Aubigny until 1976 when she moved to the Ste. Agathe Chalet.

## HENRY AND AGNES OUIMET

*Marie Ouimet*

Henry Ouimet married Agnes Hebert, daughter of Joseph Hebert of Aubigny, on November 23, 1915 in the Aubigny Parish Church.

They settled on the south half of lot 501, where they raised six children, two boys and four girls. His maiden sister Emma, lived with them for many years helping with the children as their mother was in poor health.

Henry worked his farm in partnership with his brother John, until 1940 when he sold him his share of the south half of lot 503. He then bought lot 483 from a Mr. Beauregard.



*Henry and Agnes Ouimet on their wedding day in the Aubigny parish in 1915.*

When Henry decided to quit farming in 1944, he sold the south half of lot 501 to Adrien Ouimet oldest son of John and Celina Ouimet and his lot 483 to his son Jean.

He bought a store in Aubigny and for the first few years operated it with the help of his son Hilaire. Then in 1950, his daughter Emerance and her husband Emilien Chartier moved in with him to help at the store.

Henry's wife Agnes died September 3, 1955 after many years of illness.

Henry sold the store in 1963 and went to live with daughter Angeline, Mrs. Paul Lemoine on their farm, River lot 509, until his death on November 18, 1972.

## JOHN LEON AND DORIS OUIMET

*Marie °Miner*

Jean Leon Ouimet, son of John and Celina Ouimet, bought his father's farm consisting of the south half of lot 503, and the north half of lot 501, in 1949. Because of his father's ill health, Jean Leon had had to leave school at 14 years old, to work on the farm. Now at 24 he became the owner. He married Doris Hebert, daughter of Eddy and Alice Hebert of Aubigny on May 28, 1949.

The spring of 1950 saw Jean Leon shipping his horses, cows and pigs to market to save them from the rising waters of the Red River. Grain stored on lower ground was moved to higher spots in the hope of saving it. Then as the water kept coming up, he left with his wife and two month old daughter Rita to reach the home of Benoit Saurette three miles east of Aubigny. They stayed there until the water started to come down again. They returned to their farm to start over again. With the money he received from thirteen head of cattle, two sows and three horses sent to market, all he could buy was 3 cows and a team of horses. As it was late by the time the ground had dried up, a very few acres were sown that year. The following year the crops were poor as well, but after that thing seemed to get back to normal.

Jean Leon and Doris had eight children born between 1950 and 1965, three girls and five boys. The older children started school in Union Point and when the school closed in 1959, they went to Ste. Agathe.

In 1959 Jean Leon bought the north half of lot 503 from his uncle Fred Ouimet, and became the proud owner of the farm on which his grandfather Alfred Ouimet had laid a claim in 1878.

In 1964 Jean Leon remodelled his house, adding a section 14 x 30, thus doubling the size of the original house.

In October 1969, Doris passed away at the age of thirty seven after a brief illness. Grandmother Celina Ouimet came to the rescue, and for two years kept house for her son and grandchildren, going home weekends to rest while the girls took over the running of the house.

In November 1971, Jean Leon married Marie Peloquin daughter of Albert and Emilienne Peloquin of Ste. Agathe.

In 1976 Jean Leon built himself a new house on lot 503 and nearer the highway. He sold the north half of lot 501 and his former house to his son Denis, married to Claudette Robert daughter of Claude and Simone Robert of Aubigny. They are the proud parents of five year old Lynne and two year old Alain.

The beginning of the second century of Ouimets in Manitoba in the Municipality of Morris, starts with the families: Jean Leon and Marie Ouimet owning Lot 503. Denis and Claudette Ouimet owning the north half of lot 501. Adrien and Helen Ouimet owning the south half of lot 501.

It is one of Jean Leon's dreams that there will be Ouimets farming on lots 503 and 501 when the second century comes to an end as well.

## A.J. McDONALD

Mr. and Mrs. A.J. McDonald and their four sons, Max, John, Lou and Ted, moved to the Union Point area in the Spring of 1914, from Forget, Saskatchewan. Livestock, Machinery and household effects were shipped via rail to Otterburne, which was seven miles from the farm. The family settled on River Lot 484, midway between Union Point and Aubigny. The farm also included River Lots 486, 478 and the "240", which was 3 miles south and east of the home place.

The walls of the house were made of a type of plaster, strengthened with willow stems. The exterior was wood siding and the interior was boarded. The house consisted of a living room, kitchen, bedroom downstairs, and another bedroom above the living room. The living room had four doors, each painted a different colour! Two years later, a large addition was built. The lumber, purchased during war-time, was expensive and green, and was hauled from Union Point siding, across the river ice, by team and sleigh, in the early spring, just before "break-up".

On the home property, there were also a large barn and granary, the framework of which were hardwood. A previous owner had installed pipes leading from the river to a cistern in the hay loft, but this had deteriorated to a point where it was not practical to use. The foundations of the barn and granary were large stones.

After the light soil in Saskatchewan, the McDonalds found, through experience, that the Red River gumbo required more horse-power and heavier equipment.

Threshing time was an exciting and busy season. In early years, "Billy" Kerr, who did custom threshing, came with his steam-powered threshing machine. He recruited his men for the outfit mainly from the Sarto area, and some from the Employment Agency in Winnipeg. In all, there were about twenty men. If it rained, the men stayed on. Large quantities of food were consumed, which necessitated butchering a calf or a hog every second day!



*Max McDonald, son of A.J. McDonald, was a municipal councillor for 13 years, during the thirties and forties.*

Max and Ted farmed jointly with their father until Mr. McDonald retired. At that time, Max purchased the adjoining farm, river lot 482, and the brothers farmed on their own. Mac McDonald was a member of the Morris Municipal Council for thirteen years, during the thirties and forties.

In winter, the men were not idle. There were always chores to do, wood sawing, putting up ice, water hauling, harness repairs, and snow to shovel. Straw and hay had to be hauled from the fields, and the grain to the railway. The grain was taken to Union Point siding, where it was loaded with scoop shovels into box cars.

Ted attended Union Point school with his neighbour, Carl Young, and Carl's sisters, Marie and Esta. The families took turns driving the children, once winter had settled in.

The McDonalds were blessed with good neighbours, the L'Hereux' Jacksons, Youngs, and later Blattas, the Browns and many others.

For entertainment in winter, they piled into sleighs and covered with robes, they travelled miles to a house party, or a dance at Union Point. Neighbours dropped in to visit or to play cards. In summer friends from Winnipeg came to Union Point by train, to visit a few days on the farm.



*Eugene Lapalisse plowing on Swenson's farm about 1906.*

## SWENSONS AT UNION POINT

*by Dwight Swenson*

My father, Otto Swenson, came from Sweden in 1888 at the age of 23 years. He settled at Wolverton, Minnesota, as his sister and brother-in-law had settled there before that. His father had been a sailor for many years, in the time of sailing ships.

Everybody there was used to working in the bush, and when Dad and his brother, August, were quite small, they learned to chop both with one axe. They tried it years later, when they were grownup, but it didn't work!

My mother came from Vermont, her folks were United Empire Loyalists, who had moved there. Her family name was Peet - English and Irish. She had a daughter named Lela, by a former marriage, when she met Dad. They were married in Minnesota, near Wolverton.

They farmed in Minnesota for a few years, but didn't have enough land, so when Dad got the chance to trade



*The Swenson family at Union Point in 1912. Alice (mother), and Lela at back. Walter, Dwight, and Otto (father) front.*

one acre in Minnesota for two acres in Manitoba, he did it.

We landed in Manitoba on April 1, 1905, when my brother, Walter was six years old, and I was five. We stayed at the Lowe's place a few days, while Dad and his man got our box cars unloaded, and the place ready.



*Walter and Dwight Swenson chopping wood about 1912.*

The first few years we lived in Union Point there were log drives down the river. The river would be full of logs and behind it there would be a house boat and men in row boats, to push the logs off that stuck on the river bank.

I recall rats first showed up here in 1909.

There weren't any trees on the prairie until the railroad went through, as the prairie fires kept the trees from growing.

There is a four acre bush on our land that had flax on it in 1910, and now the poplars there are 10 inches thick. 1912 was a wet year, and a lot of trees got started then. First, it was willows, and the poplars sprang up a few years later.

In the early days, there wasn't much drainage, so when haymakers needed water for their horses, they dug a hole

in a low spot about 4 by 2 and two feet deep, and it would soon fill with water.

We used to drive to Winnipeg with a team and democrat once in awhile, and there were streets in



*Otto Swenson preparing to go to the field, about 1935.*

Winnipeg made with wooden blocks set on end - were they ever rough!

What ideas little kids have - one time Mr. Wye came from Morris to our place. Walter and I were home alone. He gave us a summons for Dad to serve in the jury. We were sure Dad was going to have to go to jail, so we hid the papers. Luckily we hid them in the writing desk, so Dad happened to find them in time to serve on the jury in Winnipeg.

In the fall of 1934, we bought a used Model T truck. I stopped along the street in Winnipeg, and a man from Lowe Farm stopped me and asked if that was my truck. When I said yes, he asked if we bought it from a dealer in Morris, and what we paid for it. I said \$100.00. He had sold it to the Morris dealer for \$15.00.



*Mr. and Mrs. Swenson in their Model Tin 1917.*

A neighbour, Klyne Cox, went with me to an auction sale at Brunkild with this truck. Klyne bought a nice looking red cow for \$14.00. Then they led up a kind of thin Holstein and she just had \$8.00 bid on her, so I said \$9.00 and the auctioneer said "Sold!" I tried to sell her for \$10.00, but nobody would pay that much, so I was



*"The Queen", a cow purchased for \$9.00, produced twin calves three times in a row, and her twin heifer calves also gave birth to twins. Pictured here with her yearling calves and newborn calves.*

stuck with her. We fixed up some kind of sides on the Model T and got the cows home without tipping everything over. We called her "The Queen".

Queen had a single calf that winter, but the next time she came in, she had twin heifers. The next time she came in she had twins too, and the next time again. Then the first heifers also had twins, so there were six calves in the barn from those three cows. A couple of years after that, we sold "The Queen" for \$106.00.

In conclusion, I will tell what happened to the family. My father, Otto Swenson, died of cancer, March 28, 1945, in his eightieth year.

My mother, Alice, died of heart trouble September 25, 1929. Our sister, Lela, Mrs. Rob Dibley, died January 23, 1968. My brother, Walter Swenson, died November 14, 1972. Our housekeeper, Margaret Kornelsen, who had been with us since 1928, died January 24, 1974.

They are all buried at Union Point, except our sister, who is buried at Wolverton, Minnesota.



*Billie Bower throwing the first ball at Ste. Agathe (1971), Jack Murta was the batter. Dwight Swenson was catcher.*



## GEORGE VALENTINE JENKINS AND FAMILY

*W. S. Parker*

George Valentine Jenkins and family, coming from Napanee, Ontario, arrived in 1876 via the Red River from the south and docked at Lowes Landing. Lowes Landing is the sand bar on the river now owned by Hon. R.S. Bowles. The children, in order of age were: Etta, Roberta, Emma, Bruce, Elizabeth, Edmund and Effie.

The family settled on two river lots north of Lowes Landing - now surveyed as lots 521 and 523. The family settled on two river lots north of Lowes Landing - now surveyed as lots 521 and 523. Later son Edmund acquired lots north of his father - these were lots 525 and 527.

George Valentine kept good stock and was especially proud of his Morgan carriage horses. He boasted that these would take him to Winnipeg in a very short time. He violently objected to having the C.N. build a railroad through his lots so close to the road or trail. Finally after the line was put down, three railroad men loaded him by force onto a jigger and took him for a ride to Silver Plains to try to convince him what rail traffic would really be like.

Edmund Jenkins married Eliza C. Dryden on 1898. Eliza was a sister of Andrew and Robert Dryden who had settled a few lots to the north of the Jenkins' holdings. Eliza had come west to help her brother Robert raise his three children since his wife had passed away. The three children were Mary, Steele and Roy Dryden. Eliza's sister Helen also came west to help her brother and later when Robert remarried, they both returned to their home in Galt, Ontario. Eliza and Edmund Jenkins were married in Union Point on Dec. 21, 1898.

Edmund and Eliza's children were Erma, Etta and Helen who died at the of 2 yrs. 7 mos. of diphtheria.

Edmund Jenkins served for many years on the Morris Municipal Council, the Union Point school board, Orange Lodge, Masonic Lodge and the Church Board. Eliza was a Life member of the W.M.S.

Eliza and Edmund retired to Winnipeg in 1936.

Eliza died in 1941 and Edmund in 1954, with both being interred in Chapel Lawn Memorial Gardens, Winnipeg.

Erma Jenkins married William J. Parker of Sanford, Man., on July 14, 1923 in her home at Union Point. They farmed at Sanford until 1936 when Bill and Erma took over the Jenkins farm - River Lots 521-3-5-7 and N.E. 1/4 33-6-2E. Erma and Bill had two sons: Lorne Edmund (1927) and Brian John Wesley (1931).

## W.J. PARKER

In 1940 Bill Parker was elected President of Manitoba Pool Elevators. He commuted to Winnipeg until 1942 when World War II and gas rationing forced a move to Winnipeg, but continued to manage the farm. W.I. "Bill" Parker remained as President of Manitoba Pool Elevators until 1969 when he retired. In addition to holding the office of President over the years Bill was active in many other agricultural organizations and on their boards. Following his death in 1971 he was inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame in Toronto and in 1978 into the newly opened Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame at Austin, Manitoba. These honors were in recognition of his contribution to the agricultural sector.

W.J. Parker was buried in Chapel Lawn Cemetery, Wpg., on Dec. 31, 1971. Erma Parker now lives in a suite in Winnipeg.

On Aug. 6, 1949 Lorne Edmund married Gwen Wilson from Deloraine, Manitoba. They spent that winter in St. Paul, Minn. where Lorne completed his Master's Degree in Economics and returned to the Union Point farm in 1950 just in time to experience the "Big Flood". Many memorable experiences can now be recalled including one trip to Winnipeg at the peak of the flood when "cabin fever" struck. The jeep and boat went to St. Norbert, the boat was launched and they went west to La Salle where they beached, and were met by friends from Wpg. After a day in the city the return trip was made. Lorne purchased the farm from his father in 1957.

Lorne and Gwen have four children: Sharon Lorraine, Mrs. Philip Wyatt; Denise Mary, Mrs. Keith Fraser; William Scott who married Denise Ledoyen, and Joanne Gwendolyn, who is presently enrolled in the Faculty of Nursing, U of M.

Lorne is very active in agricultural organizations including member of the Wheat Board Advisory Committee since 1974. Gwen has acted as Provincial Secretary of the Manitoba Women's Institute since 1966.

Brian John Wesley married Mary Anne Stevenson from Morris, Manitoba in 1955 and they established their home at Sanford, Manitoba on the farm where Brian's father was born.

Ann and Brian had three children: Linda Karen, Michael Brian, who was accidentally killed in 1978 at the age of 18; and Laurel.

Brian and Anne have a large hog enterprise as well as a farm supply business in addition to their farming enterprise.

## PETE REIMERS

Their daughter Mary (my mother) married Pete Reimer on Oct 12, 1941. In the spring of 1948, they moved to the W.J. Parker farm at Union Point, working for them until they moved to Manitou in April 1950. When they moved to the Parker Farm, they already had a daughter named Kathleen Doreen, born Aug. 21, 1942. While living at Union Point they had a son named Daved Allan born in Morris Hospital on Aug. 21, 1948.



I can remember the Parker sons, Lorne and Brian, who were grown up at the time. I always tagged along behind them everywhere they went. An amusing incident happened because of this. My mother had warned me not to bother the boys, but I sneaked out and was busy talking to them again when my mother caught me. Fearing punishment, I hid upstairs under my bed while my parents finished the chores. Then they started looking for me. They came upstairs, but never thought to look under my bed. Soon they were worried enough to get the Parker family searching plus some neighbours, while I was watching the whole scene from an upstairs window and silently laughing to myself. The Red River was very close and they were starting to look over there. My mother was expecting my brother shortly, and came inside to rest. While inside, she heard my creeping down the stairs, since my conscience had finally won out! Surprisingly enough, I didn't even get the spanking I deserved, but I remember being scolded by Dad and really hugged by Mom!

I started school at Union Point where the teacher was Joan Kastner. I think there were 13 children attending at the time. I started Grade 2 when we moved to Manitou in 1950 where I finished my grade. We also just missed the big flood.

The Pete Reimers lived in Manitou and Snowflake before settling in Portage la Prairie. They had two more children in the family.

I (Doreen) married Abe Wiebe in MacGregor, Man. in 1961, we are now living in the village of Bagot, Man. with our two children.



*Reapers repast. Enjoying a lunch break in the shade of the combine are Sharon Brandt, Margaret Kornelsen and Walter Swenson, 1954.*

## MEMORIES OF SILVER PLAINS

*by Charles S. Stevenson from the book "Early Stevenson History"*

### HENRY SNARR

Henry Snarr earned the reputation of being one of the most efficient and progressive farmers in the district. His buildings were kept in excellent repair, his stock always looked sleek and well fed, and his crops yielded well. He was known for his genuine hospitality and friendliness.

### CHELCHESTER SKIFFINGTON

Chelchester Skiffington was an old country Englishman, known as a "remittance man". He was far more interested in the good hunting, than in growing crops.

### JOHN S. CAMPBELL

John S. Campbell was a distinguished looking gentleman; a man of means who took a keen interest in community affairs. He hated to see anything wasted, and believed in using an article until it was completely worn out.

### FIRST CARLOAD OF WHEAT

The elder John McMurray had the distinction of being the first farmer in the Silver Plains district to ship out a whole carload of wheat.

### PITTMANS

The Pittmans were a pioneer family. Their son Charlie loved hunting. Charlie began his hunting career at an early age; his old muzzle loader was longer than himself when he shot his first ducks along the coulee. He was attired in pants made of grain sacks, was red haired, thickly freckled...a second Huckleberry Finn who was most adept at keeping ducks on the table, and himself out of school!

### FRED SIMPSON

Fred Simpson was one of the better horsemen in the district. He owned a beautiful little running mare called "Pond Lily" who won many a race in the various meets across the country. The children were Irvin, Minty, Gertie and Florence; they lived on a pretty site overlooking the river, but it flooded each time the water got high. It was known as the Proctor Farm.

### THE STONEYS

There were four children in the Stoney family, Edwin, Harold, Grace and Ellen. They drove a little Shetland pony "Major" to school in the summertime. They had a cart to fit him, and the two boys could manage this fine, but the girls had difficulty. Major had a mind of his own, and loved dandelions; so when he spotted a good bunch, he just turned off the road and ate them! When he was satisfied, he came back on the road and they continued on their way.

## LARIVIERE

A real favorite in the community, especially with the younger folks, was an ancient half breed named Joe Lariviere. He lived on the river just north of Silver Plains, and from his Indian ancestors, inherited an intense love of hunting, and a fondness for fun, especially dancing. He had an old battered fiddle with which he supplied music for the local dances. At John S. Campbell's place one night, his hobnailed boots wore a hole right through the floor, as he kept time to the music! He accompanied the threshing crew on its rounds each fall, and thought it great fun to pitch sheaves all day, and fiddle all night. He taught the young lads a good deal about hunting ducks and geese. The old fellow was the only one we knew who could crawl up within shooting range in daylight, on a flock of Canada geese.

## TED BEST

Ted Best was known as the Silver Plains Strongman, a real tough character. One day he was riding one of the horses that hadn't been too well broken. It ran away on him, and headed for the barn with Ted hanging on for dear life. As he neared the barn door, Ted saw there wasn't going to be room for him *and* the horse, as the door was rather low, so just as he was about to be scraped off, he leaned back and stuck both feet in the air! He got a real jolt when he landed, but Ted was made of real tough stuff, and wasn't the much worse for wear.

Tramps were common visitors to homes in the settlement, and there were some real characters among them. A few were honest sincere fellows who were simply down on their luck, but a good percentage of them were ne'er do wells who never did a speck of work.

Almost every summer, a caravan of gypsies drove their covered wagon along the CPR road, just 1/4 mile west of our home. For some reason or other, we youngsters were very much afraid of them, and always watched the procession apprehensively from a safe distance. What these people did for a living we never knew, I never knew them to ask for food, or want to take on any work.

One year, when Bronson and I were young boys, our municipality paid a bounty on crow's eggs and feet. We took a horse and buggy and drove down to the bush along the river. I don't know how many trees we climbed that afternoon, but we made seventy cents on the project, and were a tired pair of boys when we got back home. I remember Dad being much amused by Bronson telling him that some of the trees we climbed were over a hundred feet high!

## PINNATED GROUSE ABOUND

Pinnated and sharp-tailed grouse populated the country in great numbers in those early years, although the pinnated was not here until after 1890. They gradually worked their way northward from their native homelands in the central United States. They were very common here until the years of the First World War. At this time, most of their good nesting habitat was broken

up to allow the land to be seeded to flax, as this commodity was in short supply, and prices rocketed to over \$7.00 a bushel. Thousands of acres of the old "Boyne Swamp" went under the plough, and the pinnated grouse' doom was sealed.

We had a few foxes and coyotes around in early years, and occasionally, the skin of one of these would help out the family budget. Each spring at break up time, we boys got busy trapping muskrats. In early years, we were lucky if we got 25¢ a hide, but in World War I years, the bounty went up to three and four dollars apiece, and we made over forty dollars one spring! In summer, we waged continual war on gophers, first snaring them. When we were old enough, we bought a brand new Hamilton .22 rifle from Eatons for \$2.75, and from then on, our hunts were carried out with it.

In 1894, a titled but impecunious Englishman named Lord Hill was forced to leave his fine old shotgun with the hotelkeeper in Morris to pay a bill. The owner was on his way back to England. Mr. Pine, the hotelkeeper, already had a gun of his own, so he decided to raffle off the English one. The method used to decide the winner was for each ticket holder to throw dice, the highest total would win the gun. The town harness maker, Daniel Ure, was the winner. Dad asked him what he would take for his chance, and was told the price was five dollars. Dad scraped up the amount and lo! he won the gun! It was a beautifully constructed weapon and he used and treasured it as long as he lived. The gun was left to me and I used it until 1949, when a competent gunsmith informed me it wasn't safe for modern high-pressure loads, so had to put it away.



*The Silver Plains railroad station in the early 1900's.*

After the section hands burned off the railway right-of-way each fall, the boys of our family got busy gathering coal for Grandfather's forge. Lumps would fall from the tenders of the locomotives, and this made fairly good fuel to heat iron for forging or welding. The smallest boy

drove the horse and buggy, while the other lads looked for coal. We carried it along in old pails until it got too heavy, then it was emptied into sacks, which we carried in the buggy. We must have picked up several hundred pounds one day, as the buggy springs were touching when we delivered the load to Grandfather. He always paid us for our work.

We looked forward to the day each fall when the winter supply of apples would be unloaded in Morris. The local Grain Growers Association took orders early in the summer and a carload would be shipped from Ontario in October. They were packed in wooden barrels, 140 pounds to a barrel - all varieties. What a glorious aroma in that box car when it was opened! Our family would get six to eight barrels to store in the cellar and

Dad knew from experience which ones to eat first. The Russet apples could be kept until May if desired.

In the winter of 1926, our family went together for a Christmas present, and gave Dad the money for a Horticultural Short Course being sponsored by the Agricultural College (now University of Manitoba). Dad thoroughly enjoyed his two week stint at this and showed so much enthusiasm for, and knowledge of tree growing, that several persons taking the course insisted he should make it a business instead of merely a hobby. This was the turning point, and it was then that he made the decision which has greatly affected our lives. That spring, we planted the first large seed beds of evergreens, and thus began the business that fifty-four years later, is still operating and expanding.



### **STEVENSONS EVERGREEN NURSERY IN 1965**

Stevensons Evergreen Nursery is located some five miles north of Morris, an oasis on the prairie where a coulee winds through the property. This is a family owned and operated enterprise, which grows from seed all types of trees and shrubs, but specializes in evergreens. At present, there are approximately fifteen acres in the nursery.

Here, there are over fifty varieties of evergreen along from many countries of the northern hemisphere - Siberia in particular. The nursery stock is set out in blocks in various stages of growth, and the seedbeds with the one to three year old seedlings.

Matthew James Stevenson, grandfather of the present owners, Neil and Del Stevenson, had been keenly interested in horticulture all his life. It was when he attended a Horticultural short course at the Agricultural College (now the University of Manitoba) in Winnipeg,

in February, 1926, that he was convinced by those that attended that he should be in the nursery business. The idea was warmly welcomed by his two younger sons, Charles and Bronson, who decided to enter this new venture in partnership with their Dad and make it their life work.

Evergreen seed of the better known varieties was ordered, and in May of that year, the first seedbeds were planted. The growing of evergreens from seed is a long slow task. It takes four to six years to produce some of the varieties to a foot in height. The seedlings remain in the beds for three or four years, then are planted into nursery rows. This meant few trees were ready for sales until the 1930's.

Business was slow at first, the country was into the Depression, also it was thought by many people that evergreens would not grow on the prairies. The first trees



*Bronson and Charles Stevenson moving a large evergreen in the nursery in 1945.*

were peddled from door to door on a four wheel trailer, pulled by a 1926 Chevrolet. The trees were usually planted and guaranteed to grow. It took only a few years to demonstrate that evergreens could be successfully grown on the prairies, so this was no longer necessary. Nineteen seventy-eight will be the fifty-second year of operation. The third generation, the two elder sons of Bronson Stevenson, Del and Neil, now own and operate the business.



*Bronson Stevenson moving a tree the modern way - with a front end loader.*

## THE SILVER PLAINS CHURCH

*by Anne Snarr, Grace McKenzie and Bronson Stevenson*

The Presbyterian residents of the Silver Plains District organized and built the Silver Plains Church. No records are available, but it has been ascertained that the church was built between 1895-1900. This building was located on the southeast corner of Section 26-5-1 East. This church was used by the Presbyterian congregation until the union of the Presbyterians and the Methodists, which took place June 4, 1916. Prior to the construction of the church, the Presbyterian services were held in the Carleton School while the Methodists held their services in the Silver Plains School. The Union Church vote took



*One of the last services held in the Silver Plains United church in early 1940's.*

place on June 4, 1916. Out of 35 votes only two opposed the union. In Morris the same day, 230 voted for the union and 5 were against it.

Reverend Callow and Reverend Archibald, the last ministers to serve the district, preached their farewell sermons on June 5, 1916. On July 9, Reverend Johns, of the Union Church, preached his first sermon. Other ministers to follow, up until the time of the closing of the church, were: Reverend T.A. Munroe, Reverend L.L. Meech, Reverend D. B. Sparliff.

On July 23, 1916, Sunday School started in the Union Church with the teachers as follows: Betty Snarr, First Class; Mrs. George Stevenson, Second Class; Mary Elliot (Mrs. Matt Stevenson), Third Class; Mr. Marsh, Bible Class.

This fine old church building served as a community centre for many years. The highlight of the winter months was the annual Christmas concert put on by the combined efforts of the Silver Plains and Carleton Schools. Elizabeth Snarr, affectionately called Aunt Betty by all who knew her, supplied the music for these concerts as well as being church organist for many years. Other winter social functions in church included pie and box socials, meetings of the Literary Society with many a lively debate, short skits and musical numbers.



*Grandmothers honored at Silver Plains in 1934. STANDING: Mrs. Robert Taylor, Mrs. W. Reid. SEATED: Mrs. Jim Lewis, Mrs. John Earl, Mrs. D.S. Day, Mrs. Charlie Anderson.*



## SILVER PLAINS .RESIDENT'S REOPEN CHURCH BUILDING

MMTIS, July 17. Silver Plains, seven mile's north of here, a little community of 25 families, reopened their church (United) Sunday afternoon after having been closed. The community has felt the need of Sunday school, and through the efforts of two or three families, money was raised for, renovating the building outside and painting inside. Despite the heat of Sunday, there was, an attendance of 68—21 children' with their parents—a very enthusiastic band. H. W. Sanders, Morris, is the superintendent and adult class teacher.

The month of June was the time for the strawberry festival and the yearly picnic. The strawberry festivals were held at the church while the picnics took place at the homes of Henry Snarr, Matthew Stevenson or Edwin Snarr. Young and old looked forward to these outings. The younger members enjoyed games and races while the older folk played horseshoes and baseball. The central attraction of this day was the refreshment booth where friends and neighbours reminisced and discussed the topics of the day. The booth was operated by a group appointed by the Sunday School. Each family donated a freezer of homemade ice-cream. In the late afternoon a long line of white tablecloths was spread on the grass, where a sumptuous supper consisting of sandwiches, salads, cakes, tarts, and pies was laid out. Unforgettable are the huge crocks of lemonade with the sparkling ice and lemon rings floating on the top. The activities of the day usually ended with a baseball game between the local team and a neighbouring district.

The last services that were held in the old church were in the early 1940's. The building stood idle until the fall of 1949, when it was decided to dismantle it so that the material could be used in a new manse which was built beside the United Church in Morris.

And so after a half century, this fine old building which had been the centre of inspiration of fellowship in the community is no more. It has left a blank not only in the landscape but also in the hearts of the few remaining ones who enjoyed a quiet hour there.

## THE SILVER PLAINS COMMUNITY CLUB

by Barbara Stevenson

In early times, Mrs. Chas. Snarr attended meetings of "The Missionary Society", held in the homes of the district. We pay tribute to these intrepid pioneer women.

In 1936, women of Silver Plains and Carleton met in the Silver Plains country church to organize a group of



*Silver Plains ladies stuck in the mud in Nov. 1916, while out collecting for the Bible Society. Mrs. Chas Snarr at the wheel, Mrs. Geo. Stevenson pushing. Betty Snarr was the photographer.*

"United Workers" to help meet the needs of the community and country. Thus was formed the Silver Plains Community Club, which for 30 years gave of its time and talents to enrich the life of the community and to give help where needed.

1963 officers: Mrs. J. Earl, President; Mrs. M.J. Stevenson, Vice-President; Pearl Dailey, Secretary; Mrs. L. Taylor, Treasurer; Marguerite Earl and Jesssie Stevenson, Reporters. Fees - 50(r. Lunch - 10(1. Each meeting opened with a scripture reading and prayer.

**Money:** How did we get it? Dues, gifts, tea money, bazaars (usually held in conjunction with some other club event) strawberry socials, (held at the church or at a farm home), selling lunch at farm sales, picnics, barn dances, school dances, box socials, etc. etc. and quilts, quilts, quilts.

During the years, we made more than a quilt a month. Members donated tops of different designs. Eatons and the Bay were generous in donating drapery remnants for quilts, cushions, etc.



*Silver Plains ladies, Mary Elliot, Gertie Taylor, Jessie Pittman, Eliza Moffat, Mary Ann Elliot, Mable Earl.*

"1938, Strawberry Social - four crates strawberries, 30 lb. sugar, cream, donated by Mrs. Chas. Snarr."

How did we spend the money? We find recorded: Contributions to Morris W.I., a pew in the Morris United Church, contributions to various churches, boxes of food and supplies overseas during war time, contributions toward repairing and rebuilding damaged churches overseas (wartime) cemetery fund, flowers, gifts and cards to the sick and bereaved, Red Cross (money, blankets, quilts, clothing, T.B. fund, Children's Aid, Institute for the Blind, Cancer, Heart Foundation, Memorial Rink, organ fund of Morris United Church, Morris Hospital, quilts to burned out families, and other charities too numerous to mention.

A tea and bazaar, with entertainment, held in the Morris Courthouse, 1947:

Tea	\$18.81	Expenses:	
Dues and tea	2.90	Courthouse	\$3.00
Quilt	26.91	Other ex.	25.00
Produce	25.02	TOTAL	\$28.00
Goods	84.35		
TOTAL	\$157.99		

It would be impossible to name all the people who gave dedication and help to this club. As some families moved away, others came to the district.

However, after reading these thirty year records, I am compelled to mention a few names - Mrs. Chas. Snarr, who seemed to feel that the district of Silver Plains and Carleton was her district and her responsibility, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Snarr, who graciously offered their beautiful river grounds for many picnics, Mr. and Mrs. J. Earl, Mr. and Mrs. Matt Stevenson, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Stevenson, where we were free to gather for an ice cream and strawberry social, quilting, etc.

During her later years, Mrs. Robert Taylor enjoyed a birthday party given each year in her honour by the club. These happy afternoons were held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Snarr.

We remember the homes where we enjoyed hospitality and friendship. We remember bridal showers given to our daughter and school teachers. We remember how the social life of the community centred around the two schools and the country church.

Good-bye dear Community Club. You are a precious memory.



*Quilting bee at the home of Mrs. Chas Snarr in 1964, in Silver Plains.*

## "Silver Plains"

At Silver Plains, there was a store near the C.N.R. track. During the early 1900's, Mr. Fallardeau had a store west of the track; he was also the elevator agent. Around 1920, Jos Pelland sold his store in Aubigny to Theodule Marcoux, and built a new store and house at Silver Plains. After his death, his daughter, Maria, and son Adelard, continued with the store, which also contained the post office. In 1970, both the store and post office, were closed.

During the 1920's and 1930's, there was a small store, belonging to Wilfrid Laferriere, located along Highway 75, at the Silver Plains road, which also served as a bus station. It was known locally as 'The Little Hudson Bay'.



*The Pelland store at Silver Plains in 1940. It was built in 1919 by Jos. Pelland and demolished in 1969. The children in front of the store are Adelard and Rose Pelland's.*





*The Silver Plains station with Pool elevator in background. Johnny Pelland is on the railroad track.*

## THE SILVER PLAINS SCHOOL NO. 123

*submitted by Joy Snarr*

At a meeting of the ratepayers of Silver Plains, in the year 1881, it was decided that a school house should be built on a site of land owned by Mr. John Kelly. (See photo for minutes of that first meeting.) In August 1881, permission was granted by the Lieutenant Governor for the borrowing of \$600.00, and tenders for the erection of the school advertised for in the Morris Herald. In September, 1882, the tender of Thomas Coleman was accepted and he agreed to build the school for the sum of \$800.00.

By January, 1883, the building was erected and the teacher, Mr. S.A. Sutherland engaged at a salary of \$45.00 per month.

A page from the account book listing the expenditures for 1883 reads as follows:

Feb. 12	James Swain for wood	3.75
	James Kelly for broom,	
	pail, chalk and tins	.82
	Postage	.03
Mar. 23	Paid A. Earl for 1 112	
	cords of wood	9.00
April 2	One pane glass	.25
	blackening	.25
	chalk	.25
	broom	.25
May 30	Stephen Burwash for	
	3 1 / 2 cords wood	10.50
July 23	Paid teacher on salary	161.66
May 19	Paid Daziel for painting	60.00

An excerpt from the minutes of the trustee's meeting Feb. 1, 1886. "It was moved and carried that R.K. Taylor be paid \$1.00 for putting on strap hinges from storm door of school house, repairing blackboard and repairing privies in general ... motion carried."

Several teachers are mentioned in the minutes from 1887-1892, but none of them remained at the school very long. One of the teachers during that time, appealed to the school board for an increase in salary; he was



*The second school built at Silver Plains in 1905. The old school was sold and taken across the river to Aubigny, and a new one erected on new site.*



*Silver Plains Church.*

receiving \$38.00 per month. The board decided to increase to the \$43.00 as the teacher had to pay \$4.00 per week for board and washing. Alexander Todd, who later became a merchant in Morris, was hired in 1892. In Jan. 1895, Miss Mary Anne Blackwell was engaged as a teacher. Miss Blackwell later married M. James Stevenson, the founder of Stevenson's Evergreen Nursery, and made her home in the district.

In 1905, the old school building was sold and taken across the river to Aubigny, where, according to old timers, it was converted into a boarding house. The new building was put up on a new site - then the property of John S. Campbell, and today the farm owned by Earvey Friesen. The contract was let to the late John Badger, who then lived in Morris.

The attendance was usually between twenty and twenty-five pupils. There were more children in the winter months when the older students were not needed at home. The following is a list of the pupils names as recorded in the register for Jan. 1907: Ferd Gluck, Gust Gluck, David Zettergren, John Moffatt, Iva Falardeau, Annie Stevenson, John Haining, Leslie Love, Arnold Stevenson, Inez Falardeau, Gladys Kerr, George Coates, Fred Coates, Ruth Lowe, Charles Zettergren, Gust Zettergren, Edith Oliver, Ada Falardeau, Earl Falardeau, Joe Falardeau, Robert Elliot, Frank Whitehead.

About this time Willow Heights School consolidated with Silver Plains. Mr. Marsh drove the school van bringing the children from Willow Heights with him. This accounted for the large attendance.

In 1910, four of the school girls scrubbed and cleaned the school for the sum of \$4.00, which was used to build a good swing. This item was enjoyed by the children for many years.

One Arbor Day, Mr. Marsh hit on a new idea of interest for the pupils. He spaded up a good sized square of ground in the S.W. corner of the school yard. This he divided into 4' square sections; one for each pupil. The children were allowed to plant whatever they pleased in their plots ... and what variations there were! Arnie

Stevenson had a unique idea. He planted a nice cottonwood sapling squarely in the center of his plot. When the teacher questioned him about this later, Arnie reminded him that the teacher had said they could plant whatever they chose and this was his choice. The tree grew to quite a size. It was there long after Arnie had passed away and the school moved to a new site. The tree stood staunchly until it was burned around 1956.

A fine bell was installed in the bellfry above the front door. The pupils loved to hear it toll - especially on a frosty morning.



*Silver Plains school class in 1935. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Hilda Coates, Ealliene Elliot, Muriel Snarr, Harold Earl, Roy Coates, Delmer Earl. SECOND ROW: Melvin Snarr, Bessie Coates, Wm. Lyons. THIRD ROW: Russell Coates, Mary Manchulenko, Willis Day, Grace Stevenson, Mike Manchulenko, Teacher; Leta Lightfoot, Photographer.*

In 1939, the school was moved to the farm of the late John Manchelenko, onto the southwest corner of River Lot 427. The moving job was done by Harvey Stevenson, and the school was placed on a cement basement and footing previously prepared.

In the spring of 1941, the necessary number of elm trees needed to surround the school yard were donated by the late William Stevenson, and 29 spruce together with 2 Chinese elms were purchased from the Evergreen Nursery and planted around the school by the nursery men. In addition to this, 900 caragana and lilacs were also set out.



*The class of 1963, at the school picnic in June. BACK ROW: Ronnie Goossen, Susan Pelland, Kathy Goossen, Lorraine Rempel. Juliet Pelland, Denton Rempel, Jack Falk, Mrs. Leslie Snarr, Teacher. MIDDLE ROW: Gary Goossen, Joanne Goossen, Doris Rempel, Margaret Rempel, Denise Goossen. FRONT ROW: Arletha Goossen, Donnie Elliot, Violet Falk.*

Some of the trees still remain, but many of them died in the 1950 flood. When the school was renovated following the flood, the old bell tower - for so many years a land mark "on the plains" was demolished because the cost of repairing same was high, and the tower now served no useful purpose.

The school was closed in 1966 and the children attended Carleton School until it consolidated with Morris in 1968.

Several teachers of the school still reside in this area. Some of them are: Mrs. Roy Stevenson (MacKenzie), Mrs. Lauren Elliot, (Lightfoot), Mrs. James Ritchot, Mrs. Charles Covernton and Mrs. Leslie Snarr.

We cannot close the chapter on the Silver Plains School history until we mention a few of the trustees and the secretaries, who gave so freely of their time. James Swain, John Kelly, R.K. Taylor, D.M. Ure, John S. Campbell, Robert Coates, John McMurray, John Corker, M. Stevenson, John Whitehead, Henry Earl, Thos. Elliot, Wm. Elliot, Wm. Reid, Chas. Pittman, A.C. Taylor, W.N. Stevenson, F. Whitehead, John A. Earl, E.H. Snarr, M.J. Stevenson, Alex Dodds, E.K. Reid, Pearl Day, C. Dixon, Leta B. Elliot, Jessie M. Coates, L. Elliot, H. Goossen, E. Goossen.

The school house is now gone but many memories will linger on in the hearts of those that were connected with S.D. No. 123.



*Robert Coates, who came to the Morris district in 1879, from Ontario. They homesteaded near Silver Plains.*

## ROBERT COATES FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Coates came from Listowell, Ontario, in 1879 by rail to Emerson, and on to Morris on the river barge, the "Aqua". Their children, William, John and Mary, accompanied them.

They homesteaded on a river lot north of Morris, near Silver Plains, and began farming. The first grain they raised was shipped out by river boat.

Their family grew to include Henry, George, Albert, Frances, Frederick and Arnold. These were hard times. Many extra jobs were sought after in order to eke out a living. Robert cut and split wood, which was piled at the landing, for the river boats to take on as fuel. When the boys were old enough, they helped their Dad build bridges in the R.M. of Morris, particularly in the Rosenort area. The men boarded in the village, while they were building, and had high words of praise for the hospitality and good cooking of the Mennonite ladies.

In very early years on the farm, they had a big steam engine for which the boys constantly had to carry water. This steam engine pulled seven plows on long chains, across the land. Acreages were small then, and most farmers had livestock as well.

Mrs. Coates (Mary) was long remembered in Morris as a driver of high stepping horses, when she drove to town to do the weekly shopping. Mrs. Coates held the title "Champion Butter Maker of Manitoba". She heard of the butter making contest which was sponsored by the DeLaval cream separator company, and went to great



*Mary Coates with the trophy she won at a fair in Toronto, for first prize for her homemade butter.*

lengths to achieve her prize winning butter. She and her son, Fred, got up at four a.m. (before any insects were around) and washed all the cows' udders, using scrupulously clean hands for the job. The skim milk was fed to the calves, and when the cream was just the right age and temperature, she would churn it. Mrs. Coates claimed there was a special technique of "spanking" the butter, so as to remove all the water without breaking the butter cubicles - which makes it greasy. Finally, her championship butter was examined and displayed in Toronto, and after a year in cold storage in a crock -- it still maintained all its prize winning qualities. She was declared the Champ, being awarded a silver cup, and a \$50.00 cash prize. Thereafter, she and her family were barred from entering any such competition again!

Mrs. Coates took frequent trips to Winnipeg in her horse and buggy to deliver farm produce to her customers. The Coates' farmed until Mr. Coates' death in 1928, and the farm was purchased by his son, Arnold. Mrs. Coates was bedridden and moved to town with her children, until her death in 1942.

Son, John, married Christine Turner, and they farmed for a time on the Molloy farm, east of the Red River. They moved to town, and John continued to work at building bridges. They had ten children. One son, George, died in infancy, and a daughter, Ethel, while in her teens, fell during skating, an injury that resulted in her early death. Their oldest son, Walter, was well known in town, having a dray business. He married Lottie Carpenter. They had two sons, and left Morris in 1966. Charlie fell in love with an American girl and he and his wife moved to Racine, Wisconsin. Daughter, Mary, became Mrs. B. Sheppard, of Winnipeg. Margaret

married Art Carpenter and moved to Ste. Elizabeth. Ed married Nora Carpenter, now of Beausejour. Frank married Martha Dalke. Their three sons, Lawrence, Leslie and Gordon, still reside in the Morris District. Daughters, Shirley and Alice, both live in Ontario. Hazel is Mrs. Joe Eichinger of Winnipeg. Myrtle married a farmer, John (Adolph) Dreger, of Morris. Tom married Jean Coutts, a teacher. He worked at the Morris Hospital until his death in 1974. They have a daughter, Maureen (Mrs. Wayne Newman), sons, Kevin, Blaine, Daryl, and Trevor, all of Winnipeg, and daughter, Roxanne, of Morris.

Robert Coates' son, William, was a blacksmith. He and his wife, Sarah, reside in B.C. They have one daughter, Victoria.

Mary, the eldest daughter, became Mrs. Arthur Bell; when her husband died, she married Albert Zinn. They had four children. Their son, Ernie, is well known in the Morris area for his love of horses. Ernie married Adeline Carpenter. They had two sons, Linden, Rodney deceased, a daughter, Beverly, now Mrs. Gary Lewis.

Son, Henry, was in the well drilling business, which he did all over the province. He married Lydia Last. While they were living north of Winnipeg, a cyclone (1920) destroyed their new home, killing their only daughter, Emily, and resulting in the loss of Henry's leg. He had a difficult time making a living after this accident.

They moved back to Morris and made attempts at farming. They lost their oldest son, Roy, overseas. Two days after peace was proclaimed, he was run over by a German tank. Henry's wife, Lydia, died at the early age of 38, leaving a young family.. Mrs. Fred Coates helped raise the children after they lost their mother. Henry moved to Winnipeg, where he operated a restaurant until his death.

George Coates married Gertrude Teske. He served in the First World War. After a few years in Morris, they moved to Racine, Wisconsin. They had three children. *Albert Coates* didn't stay around Morris very long. He moved to Winnipeg where he became involved in a manufacturing business. He and his wife, Alva, have three daughters.

*Fred Coates* married Christine Adolph - they farmed for a short time and Fred did custom work, pressing hay. They moved into town, and after working for Mr. Toews in the plumbing and heating business, purchased it in 1930. Their four sons all served in the Armed Forces during the war - Howard, Dick, Clifford and Harold. Daughters are Lillian (Mrs. Leo Lachance) of Winnipeg, Evelyn (Mrs. Bob Maddison) of Terrace, B.C. and Shelegh (Mrs. Dennis Golling) of Sycomoose, B.C.

*Arnold Coates* and his wife, Jessie, farmed the parents' original farmstead until their retirement, when they moved into town. They had no family.

## JOHN K. REID

John K. Reid left Aberdeenshire, Scotland in April, 1857 and married a year later, Jane Neilson, of Scarboro, Ontario. They raised a family of five sons and four daughters. (Alex, John, William, Robert, James, Annie,



*Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Reid in 1899. They came from Scotland in 1857 and came to Manitoba in 1890.*

Jenny (Mrs. Ed Porter), Harriet (Mrs. Wm. Stevenson), and Mary.

The Reids moved to Manitoba around 1890, settling south of McTavish. Alex and William started up a blacksmith shop in Morris, a trade much in demand at that time. Alex Reid built and lived in the house known to many as the Marshall Stanley home, until they moved to Kelowna, B.C. in 1904.

William Reid was married to Mary Smith of Lachute, Quebec. They settled in the Silver Plains community;



*Mr. and Mrs. Keith Reid, now of Morris.*

their family were - one son, E. Keith, and one daughter, Beatrice, who married Frank Whitehead. The family was interested in community affairs, and William Reid helped to build the Silver Plains church. He passed away at an early age. When Keith took over the farm, he was married to Ellen Stoney. They bought and lived on the former John S. Campbell farm, until they retired to Morris in 1967, where Keith became known to many as "Mr. Fixit".



*The Bercier family, LEFT TO RIGHT: Karen, Velma, Keith. FRONT ROW: Gerald, Mary Ellen.*



*David and Fay Reid family in 1979. CHILDREN: Mitch, Suzanne, Jason, Jennie.*

Their daughter is Velma (Mrs. G. Bercier of Duncan, B.C.). They have three children.

Son, David, farmed for a time, then got into the trucking business. In 1959, he married Faye Lewis of Roland. They have four children and reside in Morris.



*The Stoney farm house on RL 397.*

## CASSIUS L. STONEY

Cassius L. Stoney was born in Clinton, Wisconsin, in 1872, and came to Manitoba in the spring of 1912, renting a farm fronting the Red River (River Lot 397) in the Rural Municipality of Morris. In the fall, he bought the place, and made that his home.

He was married to Nellie Shepard, in Wisconsin, in 1897. They had two sons, Edwin and Harold, and two daughters, Grace, Mrs. Earl Mitchell, and Ellen, Mrs. Keith Reid of Morris.

Mr. Stoney was a quiet nature; that one might not suspect the outstanding life in community service that he lived. He served on the school board in Clinton, Wisconsin for ten years. Upon moving to the Morris municipality, he served on the school board in Morris for twenty years, and on the municipal council for eighteen years; six years as a councillor and thirteen years as Reeve. He served for two years as president of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities. For about twenty years, he was a member of the session of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and later of the United Church of Canada,



*Cassius L. Stoney in 1921, who came from Wisconsin to farm in Morris area in 1912.*

when the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists united in 1925, to form the United Church. He was President of the Morris Agricultural Society and trustee of the Carleton School Board for 20 years.

During the time Mr. Stoney farmed, he worked 420 acres of land. His son, Edwin, and his wife, Nellie, passed away in the 1930's, after which time he remarried. He left the farm in 1942, and made his home in Southern California until his death in 1959. Son, Harold, resides in Clinton, Wisconsin, daughter Grace Mitchell in Winnipeg, and Ellen, Mrs. Keith Reid, in Morris.



*Ducks bagged in the wet fields N. W. of McTavish. LEFT TO RIGHT: Charles Stevenson, Harold Earl and Lyle Downes of Winnipeg.*



*Henry Snarr, Hebert Wilbur and Tom Lewis, loading a car with wheat at Swains Spur in 1911.*



*The Drought family, the first settlers on the river lots now owned by the Hamblin Bros. north of Morris. Thomas Drought, seated at left of picture.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Donald Campbell, early pioneers; he served as councillor for the municipality - 1914-18.*

## THOMPSONS

Ambrose Carr Thompson was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1888. He lived across the Humber River from Albert Atkin and Charlie Whiting, but didn't know them there. He didn't like the name, Ambrose, so he had it changed to Arthur, so he still had the same initials.

He came to Canada in 1905, at the age of 17. I don't know where he was all of the time up to 1912, but he spent some time in Toronto. Art had a cousin in Toronto, who was a policeman. One time this policeman took off his old hat and walked out of the store with a brand new hat on. Art was afraid to go into stores with him after that!

He was working for Ed Jenkins in 1912, together with Percy Moyes. In 1915, he worked for Billie Bower, and



*50th wedding anniversary of Art and Agnes Thompson in 1965. LEFT TO RIGHT: Jean (Manchulenko), Alfred, Laura (Ressler), Percy, Shirley (Blue), Ed, Frances (Dreger), Albert, Ethel (Dyck), George, Alice (Kroeker) and Jack.*

Agnes Darling, (whose father was section foreman at Domain and at LaSalle) also was working at Bower's. Being with Aggie, it seems he thought to himself, "I'll make that girl *my* darling", so in June of 1915, they got married.

In 1916, they worked a farm at Domain for Mr. C.A. Haverstick. They next spent a year at Elm Creek and then returned to the Haverstick farm. In 1921, they rented Section 19-7-2 East, where Albert Johnsons now live. In 1928, they moved to a farm owned by Mr. William Taylor, about two and a half miles west of Union Point school. In the winter of 1933-34, they baled straw and hauled it by team and hayrack to the highway by Union Point School, where it was taken by truck to Winnipeg.

While they were living there, the house burned, with all of their possessions in it. After the fire, they moved a mile west to N.E. 114 30-2-2 East, across the road from where the Meetz family was living then, and the Rhymer boys are now living. While there, George married the girl across the road. George and Ruth Meetz were married May 9, 1942.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Thompson had sixteen children, twelve of whom grew up.

In 1956, Art and Aggie moved to Winnipeg and operated a rooming house. Part of the time, Art was a night watchman.

They celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary June 11, 1965; all the family was there. There was a square dance with four of their boys and four of their girls in it. In that same year, October 18, 1965, Art passed away.

Their children are: George, Ethel (Mrs. Mike Manchulenko), Alice (Mrs. Ed Kroeker), Edward, Jack, Albert, and Shirley Blue.

Percy lives in Vancouver, Alice in Edmonton, and Jack in Vancouver, and all the rest are in Manitoba.

From the union of Art and Agnes Thompson, besides 12 children, there are 42 grandchildren and 42 great-grandchildren as of February 1, 1979. Agnes Thompson passed away in 1979.

### **George Thompson**

George and Ruth moved onto the place and took over the farm when Mr. and Mrs. Thompson moved to

Winnipeg. George's son, Murray, is on the old Matt Stevenson place. They farm a lot of land together.

George and Ruth have six children. They are Marlene, Murray, Joan, Audrey, Vernon, and their youngest girl, Lorelee Anne, who died of leukemia on December 29, 1971, at the age of 7 years.

George's brother, Alfred, farms two miles south of the home place.

Their family is all away from home now, so George and Ruth moved to Morris in the fall of 1978.



*George and Ruth Thompson on their 25th wedding anniversary in 1967. LEFT TO RIGHT: Murray, Marlene, Vernon, Ruth and George, Audrey, Joan and Lorelee, front.*

### **Alfred Thompson**

Alfred began farming on his own in 1948, and married Ida Wonnick of Steinbach, in 1951. They farmed on S. 112 19-6-2 East, where they still live. They have four children; Ken, Brian, Diane of Winnipeg, and David at home.



## THE DODDS

Alexander Dodds was born on October 4, 1875 at Seaforth, Ontario. He came to Manitoba in 1896, to work for his Uncle William Elliott, till 1910, when he purchased a half-section farm two miles south of Silver Plains.

Alex Dodds married Frances Elizabeth Coates, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Coates, on April 6, 1910. They lived on the farm till 1940, when they retired to Morris. They had twelve daughters and one son. Their children all received their educations at the Silver Plains School, which was one mile north and one mile west of the homestead.

Elizabeth married A. Rosenthal, having four daughters and one son. Margaret married P. Loewen, having four sons and one daughter. Agnes married A. Sessions, having two sons. Mildred, 1917-1938. Bessie married H. Erb, having one daughter. Seven children died in infancy.

Alex worked for Fred Moody on the farm after moving to Morris for several years. He was a school trustee for many years, while still on the farm at Silver Plains.

There are two daughters still living - Margaret of Portage la Prairie, and Agnes of Sperling.

## BEGGS

My maternal grandparents, John and Lavina (Burwash) Beggs, came to Morris in 1878, or 1879 and farmed along the Red River. They came from a little village called Point Fortune in Ontario. I recall my grandmother telling about putting bags of seed grain up on the ceiling joists of their house to keep it dry. Following the flooding in the spring of 1882, they left Morris via river barge to Winnipeg; then by rail to Moosomin, Saskatchewan, which was the end of the railroad at the time. From there, they journeyed by ox team and wagon to a homestead near Arcola, Saskatchewan.

My uncle and my mother were born at Morris.

Edmund John Beggs was born September 16, 1879 and Margaret Emma Louise Beggs was born July 13, 1881.

Prior to my grandparent's arrival at Morris, somewhere along the train route thru U.S.A. from Ontario, there was a train wreck and explosion in which they lost all their possessions, including wedding gifts, their clothes, many handmade quilts, feather comforters and a new sewing machine. Some articles were recovered but were so badly oil soaked they were of no use. A real loss and a heart-breaking experience for a new bride.

## ROBERT MEIKLEJOHN Councillor - 1883

Robert Meiklejohn arrived in the Morris Municipality with his three brothers from Campbellford, Ontario. His brothers, William, Peter and Dr. Henry Meiklejohn, all settled here as well.

Robert, who served as a councillor for the municipality in 1883, was a blacksmith by trade, an ability that was much in demand in those days. He was his wife and two

## 7-,:awzra itArcti !N MANITOBA CHRISTMAS DAY

Those people who enjoyed the recent mild spell and who remembered the even milder Christmas of 1928 would read the Winnipeg Free Press report of Jan. 9, 1978.

"The winter of 1977-78 was Manitoba's famous open winter - a dry, 7-14 degree summer 50 miles that pansies were picked in outdoor gardens in Winnipeg on New Year's day. A Christmas Day plowing match was held at the farm of David Adams and the ground was soft, the day misty and good plowing was done. The three winners were William Meiklejohn, David Timlick and James Regg.

adopted daughters; Lilly and Mary. He was a heavy set man, being over 6 feet tall and weighing about 230 lb. His size was enhanced by his good nature, and he was loved and respected everywhere he went.

He was a dog lover. His nephew, Thomas, recalls, "Uncle Rob came up to Saskatchewan to visit us, and he always brought his wolfhounds with him. They took the dogs and team with sleigh and chased coyotes. I remember they caught quite a few.

Robert Meiklejohn was a Mason with his 33rd degree. When he left Morris, he moved to Langdon, North Dakota, where he continued his blacksmith trade.



*Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Meiklejohn, one of the Meiklejohn brothers who settled in the Morris area.*

## HISTORY OF ROBERT BELL

Bob was born June 27th, 1903 on his Grandfather's farm (R. Bell's), west of Morris. His sister Mary was born October 8, 1906. Bob's Father was killed when he got kicked by a horse in 1907. The family then moved in with Robert Coates and his family, at Silver Plains, until Bob's mother married Albert Zinn in 1909.

Bob moved around and lived with many relatives. He started to work at a very young age, having worked on a farm for John Haining and Bill Stevenson. He worked for Fred Wait, digging ponds for different farmers in the Rosenort District, for that was the only water supplies available at the time. In winter, he hauled ice from the Red River and filled as many as 40 to 50 box cars of ice, shipping it to the surrounding areas, not forgetting the ice houses in Morris. Having his own horses and mules at this time, he started farming at Osborne. During the



*Fred Waite, Morris drayman, in 1943.*

winter months he shipped his horses to Red Lake, where he hauled supplies to open up the first road ever to be built for the Gold Rush at the time.

Bob married Florence Wait in 1929. They farmed at Osborne, where they had their two boys, Bill and Arthur. They then moved to a farm at Kane where their daughter Lorraine was born. They lived there for two years, and that was the year that the grasshoppers were so very bad, and left them without any crop. They then moved to Morris, and Bob took the horses to Kenora, and worked on the first road to be built between Kenora and Fort Frances. Their second daughter, Dorothy was born in Morris. Bob was still working in Kenora, so he decided to move his family to Kenora as well, so he could spend more time with them. This only lasted one year for his work took him too far away from home, therefore they moved back to Morris, where their son, Elgin was born.

In 1939, the road was completed, and there was no other work in sight, so he sold his horses, and joined the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders of Canada, serving overseas until his discharge in 1945.



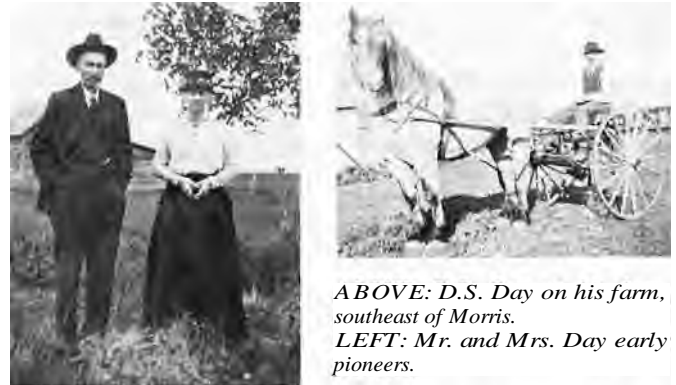
*Bob Bell in the Ben Hur Chariot race at the Big "M".*

Bob took great pride in showing his dray teams in the local fairs at Morris, St. Jean, Dominion City and Emerson. Their son, Arthur, enjoyed competing against him in the show ring. Dorothy was also a horse lover, and received many prizes showing her horse (Robin), who belonged to Shirley Clubb. Lorraine enjoyed teaching Sunday School, and C.G.I.T. groups. Lorraine and Dorothy both took up figure skating and taught classes in Morris.

In 1959, they had the misfortune of losing their son,

Arthur, while fighting forest fires at Alexia Creek, British Columbia.

In 1952, was Bob's first experience in driving a chariot team at a local fair. Then he sold his horses and started to work for the Town of Morris, as their town supervisor. Being a horseman at heart, he couldn't stand the thought of Morris having a Stampede and him having no horses, so he fixed that by going out and buying some. With the help of his two sons, Bill and Elgin, they competed in chariot, Ben Hur, and Chuckwagon racing. Now that Bob has retired, Elgin is carrying on in his place. Bob and Florence have 16 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren, and they celebrated their 50th anniversary, on that memorable day of January 27, 1979.



*ABOVE: D.S. Day on his farm, southeast of Morris.  
LEFT: Mr. and Mrs. Day early pioneers.*

## MR. AND MRS. D.S. DAY AND FAMILY

David Saxton Day was wed to Deborah Taylor on January 1, 1881, in Brighton, Ontario, where they spent their early married life engaged in farming. From this marriage, they were blessed with four children - Stephen Theodore, born 1881; Olla Ogella, born 1883; Eva Lean born 1886; and Clarence Roy, 1887. Their oldest daughter, Olla, lived only a few months and died on November 16, 1883.

Mr. and Mrs. Day had a yearning, like all other Easterners, to come west and farm. This dream was made possible through a land dealer by the name of Mr. Proctor, who had ventured out west and purchased land in the Morris area. One of these farms was located on land later owned by William Stevenson, and was rented to Mr. D.S. Day. Thus, the Days moved west in the spring of 1905 and made their home in this area. D.S. Day was farming in the East so he loaded machinery, horses, lumber, seed grain and all their household furniture into two boxcars to be shipped west.

Theodore had married Maude Scriver in 1904, and had a dray business in Brighton, but he and his wife decided to join the parents and rest of the family and journey out west.

Saxton Day was always a lover of horses, so during the early summer months, he spent several weeks travelling with his male breeding horse (stallion). He often found lodging with his good friend, Bob Russell.

As Clarence grew older, he also was interested in farming, so Mr. Day, with the help of his two sons, was able to purchase the former Adam Whitehead farm (S.E.

6-6-2 E.) in 1916, and River Lot 439. They moved onto this farm and spent the remainder of their lives there.

Lena was not fond of farm life, so after working a couple of years in Winnipeg, she returned to Toronto and later married Fred Armstrong, a stock broker. She spent her married life in the east until her death in May, 1970.

In February, 1916, Clarence returned to Brighton and married Alice Pearl Rawley, whom he knew in his school days. Clarence and Pearl made their home with Mr. and Mrs. D.S. Day. One son, Willis, was born to them. Willis received his education in Silver Plains School, then after working a few years, he went down to Milton, Ontario, where he worked for his Uncle Fred Armstrong, who owned and operated a large ice plant and arena. Here he married Alice Anne Tight. Three children - Judith Darla, David Richard and Douglas Wayne - were born to them.

In fall of 1916, Theodore and Maude went back East to work on an uncle's farm at Smithfield; at this time son, Jack, was born. In five years, they returned to Silver Plains and bought river lots 435 and 437, just across from the D.S. Day farm.



*Clarence and Theodore Day, with unknown visitor and Ethel Hedley, Silver Plains school teacher.*

In June, 1944, Jack married Elaine Tench and he farmed with his father until Theodore's death in April 1956. His wife, Maude, predeceased him in 1954. A daughter, Judith, completed Jack and Elaine's family. Jack and Elaine farmed until 1958, when they sold the farm and left to make their home in Bloomington, California. Judy is married and lives in Salem, Oregon.

Mr. D.S. Day died in October, 1947, and his wife, Deborah, in November, 1949.

Pearl and Clarence farmed the home place until the flood of 1950. They returned after the flood and lived in the house until September, when they had their sale. A farewell party in their honor was held in Silver Plains School, when many friends gathered to bid them 'goodbye' before they left to make their home in Milton, Ontario. Here, they managed the Milton Inn for one year. After one year, sister, Lena Armstrong, sold the Inn, so Clarence and Pearl moved to their old home town of Brighton and bought a home. Here, they enjoyed life until Clarence's death in November, 1967. Pearl had the misfortune to fall and break her hip last November, 1978, and is still a patient of Brighton Hospital.

## RESLER FAMILY

*submitted by Betty Resler*

Louis Manuel Resler was born in 1883, came to Canada in 1904 from the lower part of Russia, the Ukraine. He settled in the municipality of Morris along the Morris River, located somewhere between Rosenort and the Brunkild-Sperling area. He was a carpenter and built barns and houses, and also did finishing work. He built the large barn for Matt Stevenson, which is still standing near Silver Plains.

Louis married Annette Henzel from Morris in 1909. They moved to McTavish, where he mixed farmed one and one-half sections, some owned and some rented land. This was all done by horses. Later he sold this farm and bought another farm near Silver Plains, where he farmed 314 section with horses and one small tractor. He also had a baler and did custom baling for others.



*Louis Manuel Resler with children, Tillie, Louis, Albert, and Minnie, in 1958.*

Louis and Annette had six children. The oldest boy, Carl passed away from pneumonia, when he was one year old. Their next child was a still born baby boy. The other children were: Lilly Resler, born May 25, 1912; Minnie Resler, born June 10, 1915; Tillie Resler, born February 15, 1920; Louis Albert Resler, born March 15, 1921.

Annette died at home at the age of 36, in April 8, 1928, from pneumonia. She is buried at Rosenort. Louis was very broken up about the death of his young wife, and he never remarried.

In 1940, Louis Manuel moved east to Toronto. He continued carpentry work and bought a big farm near Sunderland, Ontario, farming with his son-in-law, Joe Kriener.

Later, they sold this farm and bought a smaller farm in the area. Louis Manuel was active until the day he died, on February 23, 1962, at the age of 79, from a heart attack. He is buried in Ontario.

### "Lilly Resler - Peter Letkeman"

Lilly Resler married Peter Letkeman in 1936, Peter was a shoemaker for 11 years and joined the army for 2 years. In 1948, Peter and Lilly began farming east of Morris, in the De Salaberry District. Peter died on June

27, 1971. His wife, Lilly, continued their mixed farming operation in partnership with her son, Hartley. Lilly and Peter Letkeman had five children: Gladys (Ambrusher) born February 14, 1938, who is now residing in Regina, with their 2 children; Adeline (Hubilyt) born September 13, 1940, who is now living in British Columbia, she has one daughter; Lorraine (Wilson), born August 18, 1943, who now resides in Winnipeg, she has two children; Violet (Butts) born April 24, 1945, now living in Winnipeg, she has one son; Hartley Peter, born November 1, 1947, now residing in the De Salaberry District, he has two children.

### **Minnie Resler - Joe Kriener**

Minnie Resler married Joe Kriener in 1938 and they moved to Toronto, where they raised chickens for a living. Joe was also a butcher by trade. They had no children and are now residing at Cannington, Ontario.

### **Tillie Resler - Maurice Ambrose**

Tillie Resler married Maurice Ambrose, from Winnipeg. They also moved east to Toronto. Tillie died at the age of 42, in 1962, from a brain hemorrhage. Her husband died in 1976. They had no children.

### **Louis Albert Resler**

Louis Albert Resler married Laura Irene Thompson, of Union Point, in October 31, 1942. They mixed farmed near Silver Plains until 1948. Then they moved to the town of Morris, where Louis was a sheet metal worker. Later Louis worked at the Morris Dairy, delivering.



*Louis and Laura Resler.*

In 1959, Louis and Laura moved to Winnipeg, where Louis was employed at a number of places - Standard Dairy, Atomic Heating and then at CNR, where Louis is presently employed as a sheet metal worker. Presently, they are living in an apartment in Transcona, which is near Louis' place of employment.

Louis and Laura had three children, all born in Morris: Richard Louis Resler, born in 1943; Donald Allan Resler, born in 1949; Kelvin Dale Resler, born in 1955.



*The park line setting of the Richard Resler farm.*

### **RICHARD RESLER**

*Richard Louis Resler* attended school in Morris up until Grade 8, when the family moved to Winnipeg. He continued school in Winnipeg. Richard had a number of jobs, including working for J.M.R. Silk Screen painting, Northern Paint, CNR, Canada Messenger, and then up at Hecla Island, he weighed gravel trucks for Paul Braun Construction. In his teen years, Richard enjoyed water skiing, table tennis, and other sports.

Richard married Betty Braun of Fort Whyte, in 1967, Canada's Centennial. They lived 1 112 miles from Fort Whyte during the first four years of marriage. Betty continued studies for an elementary school teacher. She taught grade one for two years at Dufferin School in Winnipeg. After this, Richard and Betty started planning a family and were very excited upon the arrival of their first daughter, Kimberly Ann, born December 19, 1971.

It was this year, 1971, that Richard's dream came true, when he began farming and moved into a farm house beautifully located on the Red River. Richard began grain farming and also a cow-calf operation, with a 30 head of cattle. They had chickens, two horses and various numbers of cats and dogs. In 1974, Richard sold the cattle and began straight grain farming, which he is doing at the present.

Richard and Betty have been blessed with two more children: Todd Richard, born on July 12, 1973; and Mark Louis, born on May 12, 1978. An interesting fact was that Richard and his two sons were all born on the 12th day of the month.

The year 1974 also marked an event which proved to be the most important one in the lives of Richard and Betty Resler. It was that year they learned of the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted Him as their personal Saviour, realizing Jesus is alive - today and forever. Exciting changes took place in their lives as they experienced real joy of living. At present, Richard and Betty are involved in Home Bible studies and Betty is involved with Christian Women's Club.

Looking back, Richard and Betty are forever thankful to the Lord God for drawing them to Him and thank Him for the many blessings He has given them!



Wedding of Richard and Betty Ressler in 1967.



Kelvin and Karen Ressler, wed in 1976.

## KELVIN DALE RESLER

*Kelvin Dale Resler* married Karen Wolfe from Winnipeg, on April 24, 1976. Kelvin was athletically minded in his school years and enjoyed sports. Kelvin has been outstanding in Judo and travels to many parts of the country for Judo tournaments. He now has his First Degree Black Belt and has won many trophies.

## DONALD RESLER

*Donald Resler*, second son of Laura and Louis, married Jeanette Leclerc from Beausejour, on July 18, 1970. They are now residing at St. Adolphe. Donald is employed at CNR. They have one child, Keith Allan, who was born on May 27, 1977.

## THE FAMILY OF MR. AND MRS. PETER KASTNER

*submitted by Marguerite {Clubby Sloan}*

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kastner moved with their young family to Western Canada in 1893 and settled in the Morris District. Although they travelled from Kastnerville, near Stratford, Ontario, Wilhelmina Kastner's journey to her pioneer home at Morris began in Bavaria, where she was born in 1848.



*Peter Kastner family in 1902 at Oakwood Farm. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Otto, Caroline, Elsie, Jake. SECOND ROW: Leonie, Anna, Mrs. Kastner, Peter Kastner, Minnie, Kate. FRONT ROW: Peter, Gertrude, Olive, John.*

Their first home was a farm west of Morris. In 1895 they moved into Morris, where Mr. Kastner operated a hotel just east of the C.N.R. station and which was known as the "Kastner House". Later it was renamed "The Cecil" and has long since been demolished.

In 1906 the hotel was sold and the farm known as "Oakwood Farm", just a mile north of the town of Morris on the banks of the Red River, became the permanent home of the Kastner Family. There were thirteen children, ten daughters and three sons in the family, the youngest of whom, Mrs. Olive Skinner, still resides in Morris.

Peter Kastner died in April, 1919 and his wife, Wilhelmina Kastner died in April, 1947 in her 99th year. At the time of her passing there were 32 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren. The number of great-grandchildren has since exceeded 70 and thus the Kastner family members are far and wide in Canada and the United States.

Oakwood Farm was owned and operated for many years after the death of his parents, by one son, John Kastner, while he and his sister, Mrs. Anna Muldner and her son Randolph Muldner resided there. The farm is still owned by descendants of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kastner and remains a beloved center of family life with ever-present memories of their forebears.



*John Kastner at reins, Minnie Shnellor, Mrs. P. Kastner and Mrs. Muldner.*



*The Henry Snarr family in 1914. LEFT TO RIGHT: Edwin, Charles, John. SEATED: Mr. and Mrs. Snarr, Elizabeth.*

## HENRY SNARR - MASTER FARMER

Henry Snarr was born in Germany on April 9, 1852. He came to Ontario in 1866. Eight years later, in 1874, he journeyed west to Emerson. From this point of entry, he came north to Morris via flat-bottom boat on the Red River and settled on R.L. 385, now the residence of his son, John. A few years later Mr. Snarr returned to Tavistock, Ontario and married Lydia Daum.

Five children were born to this pioneer couple. The eldest, a daughter, Matilda, died in early childhood. The second child, Elizabeth, remained at home with the family until 1933, at which time she took up residence in the town of Morris. Aunt Betty as she was known to her friends, took a keen interest in all church and community affairs. She served as organist for many years in the Silver Plains Presbyterian Church, and later served in the same capacity when it became the United Church. She was a long term trustee on the Carleton School Board. She will long be remembered as one of who gave unstintingly of her time and energy to any worthwhile cause. After a long and painful illness, Betty passed away on November 12, 1953. The three younger children, all sons, still reside in this area. Edwin farmed in the Silver Plains district on R.L. 417-425, formerly owned by the pioneers John Kelly and John McMurray, until he retired to Morris in 1971. John resides on the original homestead, R.L. 379-385 in the Carleton School District. The youngest son Charles farms the R.L. 385-389, also in the Carleton District.

Until his death in 1925, Henry Snarr was an active and diligent farmer, specializing in top quality seed grain. At

times the farm resembled a small experimental station. On several occasions he captured outstanding awards for his exhibits of seed grains at the Chicago, Kansas City and Winnipeg Seed Fairs. He won the sweepstakes' prize at the Chicago fair for his timothy seed. The special award was a gold watch, suitably engraved.

Besides being a master farmer, Mr. Snarr was keenly interested in all community and municipal affairs. He served on the rural council for thirteen years; ten years in the capacity of reeve. He also helped organize the Carleton School District and in the building of the original school in 1884. He served on the school board for many years.

Mrs. Snarr carried her full responsibility. Her home was always open to neighbours and relatives alike. In the early days, when Mr. Snarr was Reeve of the Municipality and when he served on the school board, the meetings were frequently held in the Snarr home.

As well as rearing her own family, Mrs. Snarr raised two motherless nephews, John and Robert Becker. They spent their school days at the Carleton School and are still remembered by many in the district. They later made their homes in the U.S.A. Mrs. Snarr passed away in 1925, just three months after her husband's death.

She will long be remembered by those privileged to have known her, for her kindly disposition and her ready wit.

## ED SNARR

*Edwin Henry Snarr*, born in 1889, the son of Henry Snarr, was raised on the farm with his two brothers and sisters. They had a mixed farm and as many other farmers, sold their milk to a cheese factory nearby.

Farm boys had to work at an early age, and Ed was no exception. He was driving a four horse team at the age of 10! He has been interested in horses ever since.

In 1897, Ed remembers events of the flooding that year. A large double decker steam boat navigated down the Red River to Emerson during high water, with



*Ed Snarr*



supplies. Being eight years old at the time, Ed regarded it with awe, "It was the biggest boat I've ever seen!"

In 1906, the new Agricultural College near Headingley was opened. The following year, Ed enrolled, along with two other Morris boys, Tom Lewis and Wes Moody. He graduated in 1909, and settled down to farming.

Ed's father started him out farming just two miles away on the Kelly lots, when he became 21. His two brothers, Charles and John, farmed nearby.

In 1915, Ed contracted typhoid fever, after he and two workers, after an exceptionally hot day, drank pond water. All three contracted the disease, but Ed recovered, under the good care of Dr. Ross.

That fall, Ed married Donna Wetzel, of Langdon, North Dakota. They were married only four years, when he lost her during the terrible flu epidemic that swept the area. Ed had to manage with the job of raising their young daughter, Ruth (who is now Mrs. Emil Smith, of Winnipeg).

Breaking the land was done with oxen. The oxen were very strong animals, able to pull most any tree down. The man working with the oxen would chop away at the tree roots to help along as the animals pulled. The other farming operations were all done with horses.

In 1922, Ed married Violet Jewell, of the Marais (south of Letellier); she had been widowed during the flu epidemic also. She had one son, Alfred. Violet became well known in the district, working as an obstetric nurse, assisting Dr. Ross.

In addition to grain farming, the Snarrs kept 25-30 head of cattle, pigs, chickens and about 18 horses. Many of Ed's horses were show animals. The Snarrs were the owners of a Red Poll bull that took the sweepstakes at Portage and Carman Fairs in 1947. They also milked eight to ten cows, all by hand, shipping the cream.

The Snarr farm was on a beautiful location on the Red River, a favourite picnic site. In winter, the river was their skating rink. Ed used to skate six miles over to his dad's place at least once a winter! The river has also been a source of problems, in the springtime. During the 1950 flood, there was 5 112 feet of water in the house; as a result, a new home was built, raising it above flood level. Evacuation of livestock was a problem, too. Finally, after the 1966 flood, the livestock was sold and not replaced.

Ed Snarr was fundamental in founding and president of the Stallion Club, an ardent supporter of the "Big M" Stampede. He was director of the Silver Plains Pool elevator for 25 years, served as trustee on the local school board, and as councillor in Ward 2 of the Morris Municipality for 14 years.

The Ed Snarrs retired from active farming in 1972, living in Morris with their daughter, Muriel. Ed celebrated his 90th birthday on February 8, 1979.

Daughter, Muriel, was a first class farm hand. During the farming years, she milked cows, fed pigs, and did whatever else needed to be done. During the 1950 flood, Muriel took the cattle out on the last train to Selkirk, where she looked after them on a farm there. Muriel has been a charter member of the Eastern Star for 27 years, and is well known for her lovely baking and decorated cakes.

Daughter, Irene, is married to Frank Kuzemski of Edmonton, they have two daughters, Milton Snarr is married, employed with Brooks Equipment of Winnipeg; they have 2 children, Cheryl and Dennis. Melvin Snarr lives in Morris, and is employed with Coldstream in Winnipeg.



*The original Snarr home until it was destroyed by fire in 1942.*

## JOHN V. SNARR FAMILY

John V. Snarr was born in 1891, the second son of Henry and Lydia Snarr. He lives on the farm which his pioneer parents settled. John went to Carleton School and all his life he has been keenly interested in sports. He played community hockey and was a pitcher on the local baseball team. He also took part in Morris curling.

A favourite game in the neighbourhood was a throwing contest. John was always the champion as many a stone or shell landed across the Red River from a strong left arm.

He has always been a mixed farmer and in his younger days, took great pride in his cattle and horses.

In 1932, he married Helen Dyck of Herbert, Saskatchewan. They have two sons, Allan and Jack.

Allan, the eldest son, was born on November 6, 1937. He attended Carleton School and Morris Collegiate, where he graduated in 1955. He then took up farming with his father. He curled for many years with a rink that won most of the local bonspiels and represented the Morris Zone several times in Consols Playdowns.

In 1967, he married Muriel Wray, a nurse at the Morris Hospital. They have three children; Nancy-Jean age 10, Susan, age 8, and John Allan, age 5.

Jack Walter, the second son, was born on March 23, 1941. He also attended Carleton School and Morris Collegiate Institute. After graduating from high school, he went on to study Medicine at the University of Manitoba and the University of Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he received his M.D., B.Sc. (Med.) and FRCP (c) degrees.

In 1968, Jack married Carol Anne Ruppel, a nurse at the Winnipeg General Hospital. They have two children - Timothy John age 7 and Jody Lynne, age 5. Jack is now a specialist in Diagnostic Radiology and presently resides in Topeka, Kansas, U.S.A.

The grandchildren of John and Helen are the fourth generation of Snarrs to live on the same farm.

In 1942, John and Helen lost all their possessions, when the family home burned to the ground. A new house was built on the same site, where they continue to reside up to the present time.

In 1970, the Snarr farm, River Lots 379-385 was designated a Centennial Farm by the Manitoba Centennial Corporation, for having been farmed by the same family since 1874.



*John Snarr family having lunch back at the old barn built in 1901. Betty, John and Helen with Leslie, Ruth and Mildred.*

## THE CHARLES F. SNARR FAMILY

*submitted by Chas. F. Snarr*

Charles Frederick Snarr was born in 1894, the youngest son of Henry and Lydia Snarr. He resides on River Lot 385 - the River Lot on which he was born. He attended Carleton School. During Miss Blake's term as teacher he won many awards for map drawing at the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition. Some of these maps he still has in his possession.

A keen naturalist, Charles has always taken great pleasure in assisting in the conservation of birds and other wildlife.

In 1914, Charles and brother, John, took over farming operations from their father under the heading of Snarr Bros.



*Farm truck of Charles Snarr still in running order, 1979.*



Charles served for many years as trustee on the Carleton School Board. At present he is actively engaged in farming with his son, Les.

In 1921, after completing the building of a fine new home, he married Anne Stevenson, daughter of James Stevenson, founder of Stevenson's Evergreen Nursery. On the morning of October 18, 1921, Anne's brother, Roy, took them to Silver Plains Station where they boarded the Great Northern train for Winnipeg. They were married that morning by the Rev. J.R. Johns, who was a former Morris United Church minister. They returned home that evening and were met at the Plains by her Dad and Roy. Anne prepared her first supper in her new home and had as guests her Dad, brother, Roy, and Charles' sister, Betty.

For over 50 years this fine old home was the centre of many happy community gatherings including bridal showers, birthday parties, and reunions, etc. It was the scene of Charles' and Anne's 40th and 50th wedding anniversaries.

Anne attended Silver Plains School for five years and then transferred to Carleton in 1912; the year that Carleton was moved to its last site. Anne's ambition was to continue her education and become a teacher like her mother. After passing her grade eight examinations, however, her school days came to an abrupt end, as her parents needed her help for the coming year. Sad circumstances entered into her dreams to become a teacher. Her mother passed away suddenly the following March, so from that time, until the time she was married, Anne kept house alone and did all she could for her Dad and six younger brothers and sisters.



*The Charles Snarr family at their 50th wedding anniversary.*

Anne, like her husband, spent several years on the Carleton School Board and was a trustee at the time that the new school was built. After Betty moved to Morris, Anne served as organist in the Silver Plains Church.

Three children were born to this couple. The eldest, a son, Leslie, now operates the farm. In 1959, he married Joybelle Rowan, of St. James. They have two children, Gordon and Kimberley, who are presently attending school in Morris.

Mildred, the elder daughter, became a school teacher and taught in Western Manitoba. While teaching in Manitou, she met and married Andrew Adams. They reside on their farm just southwest of Manitou. Two children were born to this couple. Glenn and Jacque are both attending school in Manitou. Mildred is presently the secretary-treasurer of the Manitou Horticultural Society; a position that she has held for many years.

The second daughter, Marion also became a teacher. Her first school was Broadview, south of Morris. Later she taught in the Morden and Darlingford Districts. She married a farmer, Gerald Coleman, of the New Haven District north of Manitou. In her earlier years, Marion was active in the Morris United Church Junior Choir. After her marriage, she became a diligent member of the Manitou Agricultural and Horticultural Societies. Marion was always willing to help with community projects and delighted all with her musical ability. The girls were married in 1962, at a double wedding ceremony, held in the 'New' United Church in Morris. Rev. John MacLeod officiated. After a long and painful illness, Marion passed away on June 14, 1974.



*The Charles Snarr home during the 1950 flood. Charles and Anne standing on the balcony, daughter, Marion, sitting on the roof. The family did not evacuate during the flood.*

It was with deep regret in 1974, that Charles and Anne decided to give up the old home site. The repeated flooding in the spring and the constant threat of more damage helped them to make this decision. The house was sold and moved across the river to a site near St. Agathe. It is now occupied and enjoyed by the Emile Sorin family. Again it stands defiantly with its back to the old Red River.

During the summer of 1974, Charles and Anne had a smaller home built in the shelter of Leslie's trees. This house is well above the 1950 flood level. Here, they now enjoy the closer companionship of their grandchildren.

## THE LESLIE C. SNARR FAMILY

*submitted by Joy Snarr (Mrs.) Leslie Snarr*

Leslie Charles Snarr, son of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. F. Snarr, attended Carleton School. When he was only 14, he spent the winter at Piney with his Uncle Charlie Stevenson. There they cut cord wood and though he was only a young lad, Les was proud of his cut - 53 cords.



*That's quite a cut! Les Snarr and the pile of wood at Piney, he cut at the age of 14.*

After a short stint in the army, Les began farming with his dad. During later years they have doubled their farming operation.

For several winters in the mid 1950's, Les and his friend, Ed Boggs, cut ice and packed ice houses at various resorts in the Whiteshell. Later, during the early 1960's, Les cut ice on the Red River near his home.



tri

*Les Snarr cutting ice on the Red River during the early sixties.*

In July, 1959, Les married Joy Rowan, who lived in St. James. They moved into their new home and felt very lucky to have as a background for their house, an evergreen shelter, planted years earlier by Les' dad and both grandpas.

However, they did not remain in this spot long. The flood of 1966, did much damage to their home, and so they decided to move to higher ground on the same river lot. They at once set to work to establish shelter belts and today it is a well landscaped and sheltered home.

Joy is a graduate of St. James Collegiate and the Provincial Normal School. At the age of 16, she became a Red Cross Swimming Instructor, and taught swimming during the summers at Caddy Lake Girl Guide Camp, Colert Beach, Fort Garry and a few years later at the old Morris Swimming Pool. After her marriage to Les, Joy

became the Silver Plains School marm and today she is a substitute teacher in the Morris area.

Their marriage has been blessed with two children: Gordon Leslie, born in 1965, and Kimberley Anne, born in 1967. Both children are presently attending school in Morris. Gordon and his little John Deere tractor are a common sight in all the shelter belts around the farm. He enjoys farming with his dad and grandpa and often the three generations may be seen operating in the same field. Kim's real love is horseback riding. She, too, is a willing helper with every phase of farming and spends many a happy hour with her cats, dog and pony.

Gordon and Kimberley are the fourth generation to live and work on these river lots. It is over 105 years since their great-grandfather, Henry Snarr, came to settle on this farm. It is the hope of this family that future generations will enjoy this land as much as their forefathers.

## THE SWAINS

There have been Swains in the Municipality of Morris since 1877 when Mr. and Mrs. James Swain came from England and settled in the Carleton District. James Swain farmed where Charles Snarr lives today.

They had three children when they left England; Annie Jane, Alfred George and William Albert. Walter James was born in Bedford, Que., six weeks later they landed. They lived in Bedford for three years before coming to Manitoba.

In 1878 James Swain sowed his first crop of wheat. It was sown by broadcasting it on the field, and was cut with a cradle, and threshed with a flail. Since there were no weeds in those days, it finally made its way to the markets in Liverpool as No. 1 hard wheat.

They had five more children after they came to Manitoba. Frank Stephen died of typhoid fever when he was a young man. Next came Archie Thomas, then Wesley who died in infancy. Then there were Florence and Lucy Elizabeth.

Alfred (Fred), William (Billy) and Walter farmed across the river from their parents, in the Armour District. Later Fred and Billy sold their farms and moved to Morris. By this time, they both had families. Fred had a son Kenneth and two daughters Myrtle and Evelyn. Billy had been married and lost his first wife when their son Frank was born. He later remarried and had a daughter Elizabeth. Walter also had a family. He married Sarah Irvine from Letellier. They had two sons, Andrew and Frank and a daughter Carolyn.

Fred and Billy went into the garage business and it was known as The Swain's Garage. They had the Ford Agency and besides Ford cars they sold Ford farm equipment, including the Fordson tractor. In later years Billy had to retire due to ill health. Fred moved with his family to Haney, B.C.

Walter continued farming. His wife's brother Thomas Irvine, farmed with him. Walter was a member of the municipal council in 1933 and 34, he also served on the school board for years.



*Walter and Sarah Swain on their wedding day.*

Archie moved out west. He lived for years in Central Butte, Sask., where he ran a hardware store and was the town undertaker. He then moved to Burnaby, B.C. where he ran an undertaking establishment. He and his wife had four children. His widow is the last of that generation to bear the name of Swain.

## mg Production On Virgin Sod

John Macoun, a Canadian write, who personally investigated the northwest in the late 1870's, found Manitoba a very productive place. In his book, *Manitoba and the Great Northwest*, he painted a glowing picture of the agricultural possibilities.

W. H. J. Swain, Morris: "800 to 1,000 hushhels of turnips and 60 bushels of beans per acre."

S. C. Higginson. Oakland: cab. bages, 17 1/2 pounds each.

Allan Bell, Portage; cabbages 45 inches around, turnips weighing 25 pounds.

Robert E. Mitchell, Cook's Creek: squash, in the ground six weeks, five feet six inches around the centre.



*Andrew Swain*

Florence taught school. During her years of teaching, she met Richard Storey. They were married and farmed near Minnedosa. They had two children.

Lucy also taught school. She was known as Betty to her many friends in Winnipeg. During her years at the Laura Secord School more than one prominent person began their education with her as she taught grade one.

When Lucy retired she married Thomas Irvine and they lived in Morris.

When Walter Swain became unable to cope with his farm, his son Andrew and his wife moved in with him.

Due to an accident in 1945, Andrew had to retire from farming. He moved to Morris and became Town and Municipal Clerk during the years of the floods. They now reside in Boissevain, Man.

Frank and his wife then moved in to the old home. After years of illness, Walter died in 1961.

Frank retired in 1971 and his son Robert (Bob) and wife Linda (Nickle) now farm the old home place. They have one daughter, Cindy.

## BRUCE MacKENZIE'S FAMILY

*submitted by Grace MacKenzie*

Bruce MacKenzie (December 12, 1978) was born at Neelin, Manitoba, moved to Morris in 1938 and purchased River Lots 365 and 367 in the Carleton District. On December 28, 1938 he married Jim Stevenson's youngest daughter Grace (May 31, 1911) and they moved into their home which had been built by a Mr. Maley in 1880. It is the oldest house in the community. The frame of this house was sawed in the sawmill at Morris and is still in good condition. The house has been completely renovated and moved a short distance to its present site after the 1950 flood. This house has been the scene of many family gatherings and social events.

The MacKenzies had three children. The first, Donald James (July 25, 1940) married Diana Moomaw of Dalhart, Texas in 1970. Their children are Vivian and Duncan. At the time of writing Duncan is the only male grandchild to carry on the MacKenzie name. The second child, Douglas Bruce (July 11, 1941 - July 12, 1941) died in infancy. Patricia Anne (April 20, 1943) married David Goodwin of Dalhart, Texas in 1969 and moved to Ukiah, California in 1970. They have one daughter Ruth Anne. Patricia is employed as secretary for the Pacific Gas and Electric Company.



*The MacKenzie residence.*

Farming and the building up of their home took much of their time but Bruce and Grace were always active members of the community. Bruce began managing and coaching hockey teams in the 1940's. The original 'Red River Farmers' team was organized by Bruce and neighbour Jack Browne in 1954. The boys first practiced on a lighted outdoor rink on the MacKenzie farm, later the men managed all ages of hockey teams in the Morris Arena for some time. Much of the bookkeeping, ticket selling and caring for the uniforms was done by Grace.

Because of Bruce's oratorical ability he was chosen in 1950 to represent the farmers of the flooded Red River region in a cross-Canada fund-raising tour sponsored by the Free Press for the flood victims. Many thousands of dollars were raised through this effort.

Bruce was elected councillor for the R.M. of Morris in 1948, serving in that capacity for two years, followed by 13 intermittent years as reeve.

Grace, who had taught in the Armour District and at Margaret and Emerson prior to her marriage, resumed her teaching career in the Carleton District in 1950.



*LEFT: Bruce MacKenzie as a Roman driver at the first Stampede in 1964.*

*RIGHT: Bruce MacKenzie pronounced winner of the Smiths Bros. Cough Drops prize (\$50.00) for the beard most resembling their trade mark, in conjunction with the Barrel Derby in 1950. Here, CJOB's Dudley Patterson presents award.*

During her nine years as teacher the community enjoyed good old fashioned Christmas concerts, including adult plays. These evenings were often rounded out with games and dancing. She joined the Morris primary staff in 1965 and retired in 1974.

Bruce was a leader. He was an active member of the Morris Liberal Party, serving as president at the local level for some time. In 1957, Morris became a national point of interest by his outspoken confrontation with Canada's Trade Minister, C.D. Howe. The MacKenzie's were members of the Morris Agricultural Society with Bruce becoming president and Grace acting as a director in the Junior section. In 1964, Bruce became interested in an outdoor rodeo and stampede and was instrumental in arousing the community's interest sufficiently to have the Manitoba Stampede and Exhibition organized. He acted as General Manager of the show until 1969.

In the mid 60's, Bruce and son Donald, began custom harvesting in the United States, leaving home in May with their seven outfits to combine from Texas back to the Canadian border, returning to Texas in the fall for the maize crop. During these years Grace spent her summer vacations with them, part time cooking for their crew of 14 men.

After Bruce's passing in 1978 Donald, who had farmed with his father for many years, took over the home place, where he, his family and Grace presently live.

## ELL PORTER

Edward Porter was born at St. Mary's, Ontario on Dec. 17, 1884, son of Thomas and Jane (Lancaster) Porter, who came to Canada from Westmoreland County in Northwest part of England in the 1830's. He received his education in St. Mary's, Ontario, and as a young man, went to work in the Pennsylvania oil fields. Later on he spent some time in St. Paul, Minnesota, but eventually came to Canada by boat by way of the Mississippi and Red Rivers, before the railroad was built.



*Ed Porter, farmer, who served as Reeve for the R.M. of Morris.*

Ed Porter bought his first farm from the McLean Land Co., who had placed Tom Andrews there as tenant, the property known as River lots 399 and 401, north of Morris. This farm was later known as the Stoney farm.

He married Jennie Reid on August 4, 1896 at Morris, and farmed until 1903, when with their son, Albert, they moved into Morris. Their daughter Jean was born the following year.

Mr. Porter later bought land west of Morris, and he farmed it together with his nephew Robert Porter, who had come west from Stratford, Ontario. They farmed together until Ed's death on Sept. 23, 1923. Mrs. Porter passed away in 1946.

Their son, Albert, was killed at Trenton during the war, and daughter, Jean, married Perce J. Mitchel, they reside in Summerland, B.C.

## THE C.C. DIXON STORY

Charles Clifton Dixon was born in Selby, Yorkshire on December 23, 1907. He spent his youth in the English midlands where his father ran a seed mill. At the age of seventeen he emigrated to Canada. He began a university career in the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. After a year funds ran low, so "Dixie" left university and took a job with the Bank of Montreal. The bank sent him to branches in Hartney, The Pas, and Winnipeg. While working in Winnipeg he met Dorothy Stevenson, only daughter of William and Harriet Stevenson. They were married on April 7, 1934 in



*C.C. Dixon just before going overseas in 1941.*

Morris and moved to Dorothy's family farm six miles north of the town of Morris. What was originally intended as a temporary step became permanent when "Dixie" discovered how much he enjoyed farming.

In 1939 when war broke out, C.C. Dixon volunteered for military service and joined the 15th field regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery. He trained in Sussex, New Brunswick and went overseas in 1941. During the war he was stationed in England, became a sargeant major, and participated in the D Day landing in Normandy. He saw action in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. He was wounded in 1945 and sent back to England. From there he returned to Canada and home in September 1945.



*C.C. Dixon and family, Dorothy, Michael and Charles in uniform at Christmas before leaving for training in Sussex, New Brunswick.*

Once back in the Morris district, C.C. Dixon led a very active life. Naturally he was busy farming, and took a great interest in Aberdeen Angus cattle, buying his first two in 1945. He also took part in a host of community activities: he was President of the Morris Agricultural Society, leader of the 4-H Club, Master of the Masonic Lodge, President of the Morris Curling Club, and a



member of the Legion. He was in Morris for the great floods, the 1948 and the 1950; his mother came for a visit all the way from England just in time for the first of the two!

A year before his death, C.C. Dixon became Managing Director of the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture. He died suddenly in June, 1958 at the age of 51.

The couple had three children: Michael (1935), Charles (1937) and Harriet (1947).

From 1945 to 1954, the Dixon family farmed River Lots 407-415 (the Proctor farm). In June of 1958, the sudden death of Mr. Dixon resulted in Mrs. Dixon and daughter, Harriet, moving to Morris. Michael, who married Dorothy Baker in 1953, farmed the land from 1954 to 1977, raising three children; Nancy, Mona and Jeffrey. In 1977 he moved to Swan River as Indian Agricultural agent.

Charles C. Jr. graduated from the University of Manitoba with a B.Sc. in agriculture in 1959. In 1961 he married Eileen Hoffman and worked as district Agrologist at St. Pierre, Carman and Shoal Lake. They have two children: Ian and Michele. In 1964, they moved to Missoula, Montana, U.S.A., where Chuck completed his M. Sc. degree in Wildlife Management. Since 1965, he has worked as a wildlife manager with the Province of Manitoba, residing at 262 Baltimore Road, Winnipeg.

Harriet completed her B.A. at the United College in 1967 and took post-graduate training at the University of Alberta. Since then, she taught high school at Selkirk and in 1971 married Gordon Carnegie. They have one son, Nathaniel, and reside in Winnipeg, where Gordon is a lawyer. Harriet is currently in charge of correspondence courses for the University of Manitoba.

## MICK DIXON

Michael Dixon (Mick) was the second Dixon to farm beside the mighty Red River. Mick was the eldest son of "Dixie" and "Dorrie" and although he seemed to destined to farm, he wasn't properly initiated into the operation until the flood of 1950, at which time, he tended cattle on both high and low lands, and puttered around Lake Morris in a small wooden boat, powered with a 5 horse power motor. His sea faring ancestors would have, doubtless, applauded, as he and his father "shot the rapids" on the 75 highway in their high powerd machine.

All but four of the original herd were sold during this flood, but there was no excuse for a lazy summer, as all the fences needed repair, the farm buildings were moved to a higher ridge, farther north, and almost the entire 600 acres was summer fallowed that year - with a John Deere D (with steel wheels).

Although Mick ended his high school education the following year, to join the farming operation, along with his father and semi-retired grandfather, he later attended the Agriculture Diploma course and graduated in 1955.

Hogs, as well as cattle were part of the operation for several years, supplementing the grain production. Mick spent a good portion of his time with a wheelbarrow and a scoop shovel. Needless to say, he claimed to have

purchased a diamond ring from the proceeds of his labours. In 1926, he married Dorothy Baker, also a resident of the Red River Valley.

After "Dixie's" death, in 1958, Mick carried on the family farm, increasing the Angus herd until the flood of 1966, when once again, the entire herd was sold.

During some of the lean years of the late sixties, when grain sales were low, hogs again became part of the operation, and the old wheelbarrow was replaced - with a new one.

It was around this time that grain was left in piles on the field and Mick and Dorothy constructed a sign "*Okay Pierre, we threshed it; now you sell it*", and placed it beside one of their own grain piles near highway 75. It was done as a 'bit of fun' for the neighbours and passers-by, but somehow made its way into both the local and one city newspaper.

As recreation, Mick enjoyed a few days each summer with the Agricultural Society and also *many* days each fall, hunting ducks, geese, deer or whatever. Mick and Dorothy raised three children in the Red River Valley: Nancy (Mrs. Gordon Landry), Mona and Jeff. They all learned to love and appreciate the good things of country living and also to observe nature's temperament and its effect on farming.

Living so close to the river, it was inevitable, no doubt, that on two occasions, raccoons became a part of the family, and another year, a red fox. These animals were allowed to wander at will, but always managed to come home at mealtime. It was discovered that a well fed raccoon doesn't bother the corn.

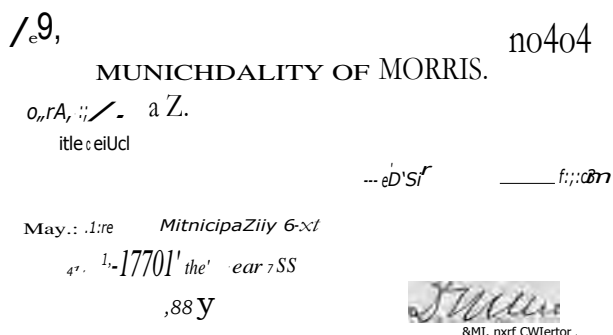
In 1977, Mick, like Henry Thoreau, heard the sound of a "different drummer" and took a leave of absence from the family farm and headed for Swan River to work with Manitoba Indian Agriculture.

## THE JAMES LEWIS FAMILY

One of the earliest pioneer families in the Morris District was the "James Lewis" family.

James Nettleton Lewis was born near Porta Dacon, County Armagh, Ireland, in February 1839, the son of James Lewis and Mary Nettleton. In 1849, with their family of five children, they emigrated to Canada, and settled near Mona Mills, Ontario, where James grew up and pursued his trade as a cabinet maker.

„James Lewis tax receipt, Nov. 15, 1889.





*Threshing scene on the James Lewis farm, 1908. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis are in the buggy.*

In 1874, at the age of 35, James decided to "go west". He embarked at Collingwood on the "Chicoca" and landed at Duluth. The journey from Duluth to Moorhead was made by rail, and from that point, the trip was made on a flat bottom stern wheeler, the "Dacota" to the thriving young city of Winnipeg. Here James followed his trade for the next four years and boarded at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Moody.

The Moody family, originally from southern Ireland, emigrated to Canada in the early 1840's, settling in Mitchell, Perth County, Ontario, where Emily Melissa, the youngest of twelve children, were born, in October, 1854. When Emily was 19, she came with her parents, sister Kate, and three brothers, their household goods, teams and wagons, by boat to Prince Arthur Landing (later Port Arthur) From there they continued their journey by team and wagon over the arduous "Dawson Trail" arriving in Winnipeg late June, 1874.

On December 3, 1878, at the home of her brother, George, located south of the Town of Morris, Emily Moody and James Lewis were united in marriage by the Rev. J.B. Hames, the Methodist minister. This was the first marriage to be performed in the Morris District. Their first home was located just north of the Morris River on the West side. They resided there for two years and their first child, Margaret Alexandria, was born.

In the spring of 1880, having decided to farm, they moved to a small house they had built on a homestead site northwest of Morris. Their eldest son, Joseph George, was born here. Having the opportunity to purchase river lots 369 and 371, the Lewis' moved "back off" the prairie in 1882 and lived in a granary until the "new" house was built. The lumber was hauled the previous winter by team and sleigh from Emerson. The new house was located well back from the river in a knoll. The original intention had been to build closer to the river, but the flood that spring changed the building

plans. This time the move was permanent, and in due course three other children, Thomas, Robert and Emily were born. Here also, grief struck the family. "Lexy", the eldest child, was stricken with the dreaded scourge of the times, diphtheria, and after a brief illness, died.

There were times of excitement and happiness, however, especially for the children, who seldom recognized danger when they encountered it. The Lewis boys recall the log drives staged every summer in the early days. The logs were cut in the southeast country, floated down the Roseau River into the Red River, and down the Red to the Sprague mills in Winnipeg, where they were manufactured into lumber. These drives usually lasted two weeks and were a source of great delight to the Lewis boys, and other small fry living along the rivers. The boys swam and rode the logs, staging miniature drives of their own, often at their peril.

The drive was climaxed by the appearance of a houseboat, managed by loggers and a horse. They cleared the river banks of any logs that had become lodged on the way. The horse was used to help free the most difficult logs. (Today the horse might be called a beachcomber). These drives were discontinued during the mid 1890's.

Upon reaching school age, the Lewis children attended Carleton and Armour Schools. Mr. Lewis, a Presbyterian, became a Methodist after his marriage, and the family worshipped in the Methodist Church in Morris, but that did not deter James from helping to build the Presbyterian Church at Silver Plains. He was always interested in community affairs; helped form the Carleton School Division, acting as secretary-treasurer for a number of years. He also served on the municipal council, the Agriculture Society, and was a staunch Orangeman.

Mrs. Lewis also took an active interest in her church, the Agriculture Society and held the distinction of being the first president of the first Women's Institute formed



*The James Lewis family. BACK ROW: Thomas H., Emily and Joseph G. FRONT ROW: James and Emily (Moody), Lewis with Robert H.*

in Western Canada.

More land was purchased as the boys grew up. The "Billy Fisher" farm west of Morris was acquired and in 1909 Joe went farming on his own. Three river lots directly north and a quarter section immediately west were added to the original river lots. The land was worked by horses until 1912, when a small tractor was purchased, and from that date, the farm was gradually mechanized. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis retired to live in Morris in 1921, leaving the farming to sons, Tom and Bob. Mr. Lewis died in May, 1923 and Mrs. Lewis, May, 1939, but

the descendants of this pioneer couple live on in the district.

Tom married Vera Palmer of Treherne, in 1917. Vera died in 1925, leaving Tom to bring up four little boys; Jim, Clark, Jerry and Owen. During World War II, the boys served in the armed forces, Jim and Clark, air Force, Jerry and Owen, in the army. Owen died in 1960 and left his wife, Lorna (nee Walker) with Pat, Tim and Barry to carry on the family name. Jerry, married to Betty Lou Ginn of Dominion City, died in June, 1973. There are three children from this union - Kim, Brock



*FAR LEFT: James P., Jerry and Clark Lewis. LEFT: Owen Lewis, all sons of Tom and Vera (Palmer) Lewis, served in the Army or Airforce during World War II. Owen was photographed in Winnipeg; the other three in London, England.*

and Lori. Jim and Clark, unmarried, reside in Winnipeg.

During his lifetime, Tom Lewis was always very active in community affairs; served as reeve of the municipality of Morris, helped organize and was the first President of the local Pool Elevator Association. He also acted as trustee on the school board, was very active in the Agriculture Society, the Game and Fish Association, in local and provincial politics and was well known provincially for his race horses. In 1949; he married Miss Bertha Wood of Melita. He died in March, 1971.

Emily Lewis married Charles Kastner, a local boy, in 1912. They farmed northwest of Morris until their retirement to town in 1943. Charles died in 1955 and Emily in 1962. They had four children, Louis, Eric and Mary (Mrs. A. Weedeman) of Winnipeg, and Allan of St. Bruno, Quebec. During the 1939-1945 war, Eric served overseas with the Canadian Army and Allan in the navy. There are nine grandchildren.

Robert married Alberta Jenkins of Winnipeg, in 1929. Their daughter, Margaret, her husband, Ross Wilson, two sons and a daughter, live near Nesbitt, Manitoba. "Bob" always interested in the community, acted as secretary-treasurer of Carleton School Division, and served a term of office councillor for the town of Morris. He died in 1967.

At the time of writing, Mrs. Joe Lewis, Mrs. Tom Lewis and Mrs. Robert Lewis live in Morris and District.



*James Lewis and Emily Moody were the first couple to be married in the Morris district, on December 3, 1878. Ten years later they were photographed, above, with their children Bob, Joe, baby Emily, and Tom. BELOW: Robert, Emily (Mrs. C.L. Kastner) and Tom Lewis in their later years. Emily died in 1962, Robert in 1967, and Tom in 1971.*



## DUDGEON FAMILY OF MORRIS MUNICIPALITY 1919-1949

*submitted by Marguerete F. Dudgeon*

Manford Dudgeon (1872-1943) of Irish-English descent, was born in Knox County, Ohio, and migrated with his parents about 1888 to Southeastern Iowa and farmed until the death of his first wife; Bertha, in 1916. He sold his Iowa farm in 1918 and started by train for Grand Forks to look for land in the Red River Valley. It was storming, so he stayed on the train until he reached Morris, where he heard the Abbott Taylor farm, the North 114 of Section 25-5-1 East was for sale. Manford bought it.

In the spring he loaded an immigrant car with stock, machinery, grain and household furnishings and rode with it to Swains' siding on the C.N. line. His new bride, Ethel Davis Dudgeon (1893-1967) and son Carl, age 17, came by train a few days later. The Abbott Taylor family was stricken with flu, so the two families lived together for a few weeks until the Taylors were able to move to Graysville, Manitoba. They remained good friends.

Manford farmed with horses for a few years, then bought a Titan tractor and International Threshing machine to thresh his own crops after 1920. Carl worked with him and also for a neighbor, Art Mitchell, before going to Chicago in 1921. Besides grain, Manford raised chickens, hogs, milk cows and raised bees. He had



*Manford and Ethel (Davis) Dudgeon in 1916.*



*The Dudgeon farmstead in 1955. Carl Dudgeon planted 25,000 trees and shrubs as windbreaks between 1933 and 1940.*



*Carl Dudgeon*

brought ears of corn from Iowa which he fed his Canadian horses and so startled them that they broke their halters!

Both the Dudgeons enjoyed community life in Silver Plains. Ethel took part in concerts and they attended Friday night school dances and services in the Silver Plains Church. They held parties in their large home built by Abbott Taylor, and Manford became a Canadian citizen in 1928.

One Sunday in May 1928, while visiting in Winnipeg, the Dudgeon's home caught fire from a brooder left with small chickens. It was a dry, windy day, and the entire community gathered to fight the fire. The garage and workshop as the house and all possessions were burned, but thanks to the efforts of good neighbors and many burned hands, the new barn built in 1927, was saved.

Carl had come back to help build the barn, and in 1930 returned again to stay. That fall they bought 75 head of sheep, Carl with Ethel's brother, Maurice David, guided the sheep to the farm along the dirt roads, taking three days to walk from Carman. In 1931 they sheared 750 pounds of wool from them and sold it for one cent a pound. Carl raised sheep for a few years.

After building a new barn on the Dailey place in 1932, conditions deemed the return of Ethel and Manford to Iowa, with Carl remaining to run the Morris farm. A farewell party was held for them in Silver Plains Church.

The church closed after Dr. Munroe left, and there was a movement to re-open it. In 1936 a local bee-man H.W. Sanders offered to conduct the service, Sunday school teachers volunteered for the children's classes. With Laurence Taylor, Percy Elliott, Ed Snarr and Carl Dudgeon as trustees, the outside of the building was painted and again there was activity in the Silver Plains Church.

While living on the farm, Carl renovated the house, dug a new pond and piped water into the barn during 1933 and 1934. He also bought a 114 Section from the Reids, moving the buildings to his home place for a poultry house, providing for 1,200 laying hens. His hired man, Walter Roland assisted with the chores, field work and the hens. He also helped to plant 25,000 trees as shelter belt, both ornamental landscaping and an or-

chard. Carl continued to keep bees and sell honey.

An ice well kept milk and other perishable foods cool. Ice cut during the winter from the pond was packed in sawdust for summer drinking water, and ties gathered along the railroad were used for fire wood for the furnace and kitchen stove. A 60 foot tower was erected for a 32 volt windcharger, to provide lights for all the farm buildings. Clothing could be ironed only if the wind blew hard enough!

By World War II, Carl was farming 800 acres of land in the Silver Plains area. He built a tenant house and had full time workers, as well as employing displaced Japanese persons to help with seeding and harvest. A neighbor work party consisting of Charlie and Bronson Stevenson, Laurence Taylor and Harold Earl, gathered to pour an underground cistern in 1944. Filled with ice and rain water, it provided water for domestic use and for a pressure system installed in the house with a modern bathroom, in anticipation of rural electrification which took place in 1947.

Carl and Marguerite Earl were married in November 1946, and in 1948 they discontinued farming. Auctioned by Harry Shewman, all of the farm equipment was sold. Their son, Mervyn Noel Dudgeon was born March 9, 1949, and in October of that year, the Isaac Hildebrandt family took over the farm and the Dudgeon's left for a new home in California.

## **THE EARL FAMILY PIONEER YEARS**

*submitted by Marguerite F. Dudgeon*

John Earl (1845-1923) was the first of his family to come to Morris Municipality, arriving in June, 1877. Born in Cavan County, Ontario, the second son in a family of twelve children born to George Earl (1812-1890) from County Wexford, Ireland and Ann Staples (1818-1898) from County Wicklow, Ireland, John age 32, had sold his 50 acre farm near Coboconk, Ontario and crossed Minnesota to Fisher's landing on the Red River. He got passage on a paddle-wheel steamer and landed in a very muddy city of Winnipeg. There he purchased a



*The Earls, LEFT TO RIGHT: Mrs. George Earl, Frances, Mabel, John Earl, Herbert, Ellan, John A. and Mrs. John Earl.*

wagon and a team of oxen, and struck off south and west where he heard the best land was available.

He located first near Carman, and then started for Emerson to register his claim. After crossing the Boyne swamp, deep in mud and mosquitoes, he decided instead to claim land near the village of Scratching River. Four miles north he ploughed a furrow across river lots 399, 401, 403 and 405, claiming two lots for himself and one each for his father and brother.

George and Ann Earl arrived in 1878 with their adult children, Harry, Allan and Margaret. John had broken land, cut hay for the oxen, living in a tent while cutting logs for their home. In the spring he scattered his seed grain by hand and harrowed it to keep the wild white geese from devouring it all. With satisfaction, he watched his first crop mature, calling his farm "Silver Plains".



*John and Rebecca Earl in 1884.*

*John Arthur and Olive Tolton Earl on the wedding day, 1916.*

John's future wife, Rebecca Humphreys 1852-1934) with her mother Phoebe, and sister Frances (later the grandmother of Mrs. Charles Stevenson of Morris) steamed by the site of the Earl home in 1878. Rebecca, born in Louisiana where her parents first lived after sailing from County Cavan Ireland, migrated with them to Ontario where her brothers John and Robert, and Frances were born. Her father James, a school teacher, had been on the same boat into Manitoba as John Earl. They were to join the family with an aunt, Mrs. Argue in

Winnipeg. There John and Rebecca were married by Rev. Thomas Argue, in June 1884.

Five children Ella, Frances, John Arthur, Herbert and Mabel were born to Rebecca and John in the log cabin he built among the trees. All of the Earl family were active in the community that adopted the name of Silver Plains. John was a member of the first Council of the Municipality. In the minute book of 1883 there is a petition from A. (Allan) Earl and 14 other rate-payers "praying that a bridge be built over McMurray's coulee". It was granted. In her hook, "The Swains of Scratching River", Mrs. Irvine tells of a party given at their house to welcome the Snarrs. When a fight broke out between two young men, it was George Earl and sons Harry and John who separated the fighting men. When their children attended Carleton School, John was a trustee.

Margaret Earl married Dan Clemis and with their two daughters, Ann and Cecilia, lived just across the river from the Earls. Dan Clemis had the first traction threshing engine in the district. They lived in their log house and farmed with oxen until Dan's death in 1916. He and Margaret are buried in the pioneer cemetery south of Morris. Their daughter moved west after her parents died.

George and Ann Earl lived in their log cabin until it was struck by lightening. They then lived with his brother Harry in a new farmhouse. George lived until 1890, and Ann until 1898. They are also buried in the pioneer cemetery. Still marked by a stone in the same cemetery is the grave of Frances Earl, John and Rebecca's daughter who died at age 16.

Four children grew to maturity in the frame house that John later built on the banks of the Red River. Ella (1885-1939) married Rev. F.M. Brasier in 1910, who was the Anglican minister in Morris. They later became U.S. citizens. Mabel (1890-1962) married Burgess Moyer, a farmer of Morris in 1908. They moved to Ontario with their three children about 1920. John A. (1887-1964) married Olive Tolton on March 9, 1916. They made their home in Silver Plains, Herbert (1888-1952) remained unmarried as did his uncles Allan and Harry. They both moved away.



*"Saints Rest", the Earl family home, taken 1950.*



The frame house that was the Earl home, which was flooded by the Red River in 1897, 1916 and 1948, was finally destroyed by the river in 1950. John and Rebecca moved to Morris in 1916 with son Herb, and bought the house which is now the Morris Florist Shop. The Pat-tersons and Pittmans were their next door neighbors, along with the Monroe family later across the highway in the United Church Manse. John died in 1923, another year of high water. The bridge across the Morris river swept away, and John's body had to be rowed across the river to be laid to rest. Rebecca and Herb kept their home in Morris until 1934, when Rebecca went home to Texas with daughter Ella Brasier, and died there. Herb went to his sister Mabel Moyer, in Ontario. He is buried in the same cemetery in Vineland.

## JOHN A. AND OLIVE EARL FAMILY HISTORY

*submitted by Marguerite F. Dudgeon*

John Arthur Earl, (1887-1964) and, Olive Tolton (1897-1969) who came to Manitoba at age six months with her family from Hillsburg, Ontario, were married March 9, 1916 at the Tolton home in the Otterburne District by the Silver Plains minister, Rev. Archibald. They drove by team to Silver Plains to take the train for a wedding trip to Holland, Manitoba, then started housekeeping in the two storey "A" frame house on their farm. This was located on the south 1/2 of Section 25-5-1 East, obtained from Wm. Reid and named "Saints Rest" by brother-in-law Rev. Fred Brasier.

They hauled water from the river for their stock until 1918 when a pond was dug. Household water problems eased in 1921 when a kitchen was added, with a pump to the cistern built beneath. Filled with ice cut from the Red River in winter, plus the drain of summer rains from the roof, a supply of water was assured. They milked cows, churned their butter and baked bread with the years supply of flour unloaded at Swain's siding. Olive raised chickens, they butchered their beef and pork. Eggs were sold, and groceries purchased on weekly trips to Morris. They purchased a Ford car in 1917.



*Road into Saints Rest in 1918, with Miss Wheeler, Carleton school teacher.*



*Delmar Earl in the Reserve Forces  
- World War H. RCAF, 1943,*



*Harold Earl, flight engineer,  
- World War H. RCAF, 1943,*

Dr. Ross, five miles south of Morris, assisted in the births of the four children upstairs at "Saints Rest". Marguerite, 1917, Delmer, 1918, Harold, 1921 and Lois in 1926. These children attended both Carleton and Silver Plains one room country schools. Jack Earl was a trustee of Silver Plains School and a councillor of Morris Municipality from 1925 to 1928.

Social gatherings including the Literary Society, ice-cream (homemade), socials and fowl suppers, as well as Sunday afternoon service by Dr. T.A. Munroe, made up community life at Silver Plains church. Dances were held in the schools several Friday nights in winter. Carleton, Silver Plains and Willow Heights were within driving distance by team, and early arrivals might get their horses into the school barn.

The annual Christmas concert with children of the community practising at the church, took weeks of preparation. On the exciting final night, a huge tree given by the James Stevensons, graced the stage where every pupil from Silver Plains and Carleton filed in to the strains of "Marching Through Georgia" played by Elizabeth Snarr at the organ. The church was warm from two wood-burning heaters, and lighted with gasoline lights hung from the high cedar ceiling. The blanketed teams patiently waiting outside, took the family home after the final item, a visit from Santa Claus.

Delmer developed diabetes at age eight, and Dr. Ross made the prognosis report of six months to live, within his hearing. Young Dr. Edward Ross, then an intern on diabetic service at St. Boniface Hospital learned of the young patient and persuaded his father to try newly discovered insulin. Olive and Jack gave the twice daily hypodermic injections and Delmer learned to live with his restricted diet. Gertrude Smith, teacher at Carleton, heated his noon meal of vegetables and meat on school days. Sandwiches, the common fare of the lunch pail, was prohibited for him. One winter he lapsed into coma, and Dr. Klassen of Morris spent hours with him, administering insulin and orange juice until the proper balance of sugar restored him to consciousness and health.

Bad times came with crop failures due to rust, hail and grasshoppers. Prices were poor, eggs sold for eight cents

a dozen, a five gallon can of cream, sent into Winnipeg by transfer returned a check for \$2.50, just enough to buy a week's supply of insulin. Olive worked harder, gardening, canning wild fruit, raising baby chicks by oil heated incubators and brooders, and making all the children's clothing from bathing suits to overcoats. Jack raised bees, extracted the honey and sold it from the home. He also planted trees, including fruit trees and shrubs.

Near Christmas the flock of turkeys Olive raised were butchered, and dressed for market. Hoping they would grade No. 1, they were carefully picked, feet washed and heads wrapped in brown paper and gently packed in the Ford. If there was room, a child or two might be wedged in around the turkeys and it was off to Eaton's store in Winnipeg to sell the birds. What a thrill it was, to see the wonders of toyland, have a meal in a restaurant, and shop for needed items for winter.

Delmer and Harold sold Christmas cards one winter to buy a pair of skis. By carrying pails of water from the pond to the roof of the barn, they built a slide; then on skis or toboggan, many Saturday afternoons and moonlight evenings, between chores and homework, were spent sliding down the barn and across the yard. No one was ever hurt, and the damage was only to the barn which was old and tired anyway. The pond served as skating rink and swimming hole.

In the early 1920's, Chautauqua's were an event of the summer. Morris Fair was eagerly attended; the boys raced the pony which Lois rode to school; Olive won prized on items from biscuits to beeswax. Telephones and the party line kept the community in touch; the Earl family got their first radio in 1924, and headphones were shared to hear the king's message. Farm equipment started replacing horses, and in 1937 their first tractor was purchased. Often the pony had to be ridden into town for machinery repairs.

A favorite winter evening diversion for Jack and Olive were card games with the neighbors. No baby sitting then! All the family, dressed in their best and covered by robes in the sleigh, bells jingling from the harness, drove across the fields to the Taylors, Percy Elliots, Dailey's, Reids, Whiteheads, Dudgeons, Roy Stevensons and others. Many hands of 500 were enjoyed, a midnight lunch served and then a frosty ride home under the winter stars.



**ABOVE:** Marguerite Earl, U.S. Army nurse, 1943.

**RIGHT:** Lois and Kenneth Goldsmith, married in 1946.



Marguerite attended the one room high school taught by O.B. Cossett in Morris. She became an R.N., and after serving in the Pacific with the U.S. Army during the war. After Marguerite came home, for a few months before marriage she was Matron of the ten bed Morris Hospital converted from the Molloy home. In 1946 she and Carl Dudgeon of the farm adjoining Saint's Rest, were married.

Delmer went to Ontario and became an armor sergeant in the Dragoons reserves training troops for overseas duty. He and Joy Nelson of Toronto were married in 1955, becoming U.S. citizens. They are now raising four teenagers in Fresno, California.

Harold joined the Air Force and became a Flight Engineer. With a bomber reconnaissance squadron that patrolled the Atlantic and escorted convoys, he was taking pilots training when the war ended. He and Dorothy Breyfogle had been married during the war and they came back to the farm. Dorothy, ill with ulcerative colitis, died in January, 1946.

Lois, assisted by Carleton School teacher Lillian Glass, took part of her high school by correspondence and completed it at the convent at Ste. Agathe. She helped Jack and Olive on the farm, driving the tractor and other farm machinery during the war years. She also earned her teachers certificate, and taught one year at Flowery Bank before attending Normal School in Winnipeg. She and Kenneth Goldsmith of Morden were married at the farm home, now surrounded by trees, on September 7, 1946.

Harold stayed on the farm putting in electricity in 1947. He and Verna Calder were married September 24, 1949 at her family home in Letellier. In 1952, a compact bungalow was moved onto the farm for Olive and Jack. Harold and Verna took over the old farm home, and another generation was added to the life of Saint's Rest.

## **HAROLD AND VERNA EARL END OF AN ERA**

*submitted by Donna Brcincluil and Gordon Earl*

In September 1949, Harold married Verna Calder of Letellier. In the spring of 1950, as did all the residents of the area, they endured the raging waters of the infamous '50 flood. Flood waters arrived May 15th, and soon Olive was trying to sweep the water out of the house. Lois's husband, Ken, arrived May 20th to take John, Olive and Verna to dry land at their farm north of Morden, as the water was already covering the main floor of the house. Harold, C.C. Dixon, son Michael, and Isaac Hildebrandt lived on the second floor of the house and kept the livestock fed with bales of hay dropped by plane. The cattle and horses were kept on the pond bank, the only high ground around. The family came back on the 13th of June to start the clean-up. Only 30 acres could be seeded that year on Saint's Rest.

In August of 1952, Donna was born to Harold and Verna. A second child, Gordon, was born in January 1954.

In 1958, John and Olive retired from farming and moved to a small house in Morris. John died in February 1964. Olive lived in the little house until four months

before her death, June 1969. Both are buried in Pineview Cemetery in Winnipeg.

Community involvement was always central in Harold and Verna's lives. They were actively involved in many things. These included the local grain elevator board, church groups, Game and Fish, Legion and the Agricultural Society. In 1960 Harold bought a large cement mixer, and poured many of the ford crossings in the municipality as well as many private jobs. Then in 1967 Harold was elected as a councillor of the R.M. of Morris for 5 years (2 1/2 terms), and following this served as Reeve for another four years (2 terms). In 1975 Harold and Verna presented the R.M. of Morris with a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II to be hung in the newly constructed Council Chambers. The portrait was in honour of Harold's father who was a councillor, and his grandfather who was a founding member of the R.M. of Morris council.



*Harold and Verna Earl presenting painting of Queen Elizabeth II hanging in the Council Chambers in R.M. of Morris.*

Donna and Gordon attended Carleton School for their elementary schooling and took their high school in Morris.

Most of their community activities were centered around the town of Morris, for this was the place where they offered the facilities such as choir, 4-H and CGIT for Donna, and hockey, curling and Boy Scouts for Gordon. Donna continued her education at the St. Boniface Hospital where she graduated and received her R.N. Gordon attended the University of Manitoba and graduated with a degree in agriculture. In 1975 Donna married Ron Bremaud of Ste. Agathe and moved to Winnipeg. Gordon married Grace Friesen of Morris in 1977, they now live in Brandon. In the fall of 1976, Harold and Verna sold the farm and moved to Morris the following year. There they built their first new house - thus ending exactly 100 years of farming for the Earls, in the Municipality of Morris.

## **MATTHEW STEVENSON**

*submitted by F.B. Stevenson*

The Stevenson pioneers Matthew and his wife Sarah Bennie, left Glasgow Scotland in 1843, arriving in Canada

after a rough five week voyage by sailing ship. They were shipwrecked on Seven Islands in the St. Lawrence River, losing most of their possessions. They were rescued two weeks later, and then journeyed to Ramsy, Ontario. In 1884 they moved to Roche Fendu and established themselves on a homestead near Beachburg, Ontario.

Matthew was a weaver in Glasgow. He had three brothers; one of them, a soldier, guarded Napoleon Bonaparte on the Island of Ste. Helena.

Matthew and Grace's children were Matthew, George, John and Agnes. Matthew (1845-1926) a blacksmith by trade married Sarah Bronson, (1846-1905), a cook on an Ottawa freighter boat plying the Ottawa River. Their children were Matthew James, William, Alice, Annie, George and Walter born near Beachburg, Ontario.

In 1982 Matthew came to Morris to look for a future home. He found that prairie land sold five dollars an acre while river lots commanded a price of seven. Not knowing what expenses he might incur in this new country he felt he must take the prairie land, and bought a half section of 36-5-1 East.

In the spring of 1883 this family, accompanied by Matthew's Uncle James Stevenson, emigrated to Manitoba, bringing with them two horses, three cows, some chickens, a dog, their household effects, and a handmade set of harrows and wagon. They travelled to Emerson by rail coming via Chicago.

Mrs. Stevenson and small children came on to Morris by stagecoach. Matthew and sons James (11) and William (10) came with the team and wagon loaded with their belongings and driving the three cows ahead.

They stayed a short time in Morris with Matthew's brother George who operated a store and sawmill. Rising spring water on the Scratching River (Morris) forced a hasty departure to their log shanty in the Silver Plains district, some six miles north of Morris. This was the family home until 1895 when a frame house was built and used until their retirement to Morris in 1920.

Breaking the virgin sod with oxen was a big undertaking, the oxen's feet were red with the juice of wild strawberries. The grain in the spring was broadcast by hand, often when the frost was barely out of the ground. These crops were harvested first with reapers and later with binders. The sheaves were stacked until a machine could come and thresh them. The first threshing machines were driven by horse power.

During the first winter Matthew hauled oak timbers from the Morris sawmill to Winnipeg that were used in the building of the City Hall.

Sarah was a slight woman who carried a full load of responsibilities. Besides her family to care for, she made a journey to Red River each year to gather hops for breadmaking and made lye from wood ashes for the making of soap. The butter and wild strawberry jam she made were taken to Stone's Grocery in Winnipeg. With the money she received she bought the family's needs. This trip took three days. Her comfort on these trips was greatly increased by the purchase of a spring seat for the wagon. Matthew served as a trustee and church elder for many years. His sterling character and strong leadership qualities made him a tower of strength in the community.



*Threshing outfit owned by George Stevenson, a brother of Matthew, in 1918, on his farm.*

## MATTHEW JAMES STEVENSON

*submitted by F.B. Stevenson*

Matthew James (Jim) Stevenson born in Beachburg, Ontario (April 10, 1872) eldest son of Matthew and Sarah (Bronson) Stevenson, emigrated to the Morris district with his parents in 1883. Their home was six miles north of Morris, section 36-5-1 East.

Jim's love of trees was evident at an early age. As a youth he brought small trees from the Red River and planted many around his parents' home.

In 1894 Jim acquired a half-section of land four miles north of Morris, Section 23-5-1 East. On December 23, 1896 he married Mary Ann Blackwell of Holmfield, Man., who was teaching at Silver Plains School prior to their marriage. They took up residence in a two room shanty on the bank of a coulee which flowed through the farm. There despite discouraging remarks of some neighbours, they set to work to prove that given proper care trees could be grown on the bare prairies.



*Jim Stevenson, pioneer, and founder of Stevensons Evergreen Nursery.*

The first trees planted were hauled fifty miles by a team and sleigh, these being chopped out of a frozen swamp and brought home atop a load of firewood. Spring after spring Jim travelled back to the "bush", a three day trip



*James and son, Leslie, planting the first elms on the home site in 1921.*

was his faithful bays, Maud and Nell, for a load of young trees, mostly white spruce, some tamarac and balsam. Many of these trees still stand north of Bronson's house.

Ten children were born to this couple. Arnold, the eldest died in 1913. Next were twins Annie and William. William died in infancy. Anne, now Mrs. Chas. Snarr still resides in the Carleton District. The next two sons, Roy and Leslie settled on adjacent farms. Roy followed his father's good example and married a Silver Plains teacher, Barbara MacKenzie (Neelin), while Leslie chose, as a helpmate, a Carleton teacher Margaret Hopkins (St. Elizabeth). Charles and Bronson with their father founded Stevensons' Evergreen Nursery in 1926. Charles also married a Carleton teacher, Lillian Glass (Winnipeg). Bronson won the hand of an Eriksdale farmer's daughter, Ann Forsyth. Mabel a nurse married a farmer, Merton Irvine from near Emerson. Grace like her mother, became a school teacher and married Bruce MacKenzie (Neelin), also settling in the Carleton District. Wilhemine died in infancy.

Heartbreaking times came to Jim and the family with the passing of Arnold in 1913, followed by the death of his ever loving wife and helpmate in 1915, leaving him alone with seven children to raise. Without the help of Anne, his eldest daughter of fifteen, the task of raising his family alone would have been next to impossible.

Adding to this misfortune, the barn, fourteen horses and much farm equipment were destroyed by fire in 1914.

This was enough to break the spirit of any man but Jim had a stout heart and though overburdened with grief and worry, he succeeded in rearing his family while at the same time accomplishing life's ambition, which stands as a testimony of a job well done. When one views the many farm homes throughout the Western Prairies, sheltered and beautified by trees grown in the nursery, it is to realize the foresight and untiring efforts of a stalwart pioneer whose chief ambition in life was to leave this world more beautiful than he found it.

Jim passed away January 26, 1943, but will long be remembered as a pioneer tree planter of the Red River Valley.



*James Stevenson, splitting wood about 1924.*

## GEORGE ARNOLD STEVENSON

George Arnold, the third son of Matthew Stevenson and Sarah Bronson, married Ellen May Gorby, whose father, John Gorby, farmed near McTavish. George took over the family farm in 1905, shortly after the death of his mother, the former Sarah Bronson. From this union, one son and three daughters were born.

The eldest was Hazel May, born in 1906, who married Robert Bryan, son of Dr. R.L. Ross, for many years the well respected physician of the Morris district. Hazel and Bryan have one daughter, Valerie. They are presently residing in Victoria, British Columbia, while their daughter, Valerie, is married and living in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The second child, Harvey, farmed with his father from 1932-1952, at which time he moved to Victoria, B.C., having married Agnes Forrest of Letellier, in 1936. They have six sons to carry on the family name; Wayne, Bryce, Dennis, Murray, Jack and Lance.

Ivey Mary, born in 1912, married Allister Charles Hubble of Gladstone. A daughter, Mary Alice, was born in 1944, who is at the present time living in Toronto, Ontario. Allister died in 1976 and Ivey still resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Alice Elizabeth, born in 1915, married Frederick William Hamilton of Baldur, Manitoba. Two daughters, Mary Ellen and Catherine Alice, were born in 1947 and 1949, respectively. Alice died in May, 1969, while in the Caribbean. Frederick Hamilton and family still reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. and Mrs. George Stevenson moved from the farm at Silver Plains, to Morris in 1920, and continued to operate the farm from there. He took an active interest in the community and served on the town council and the local school board, while his wife was active in the church and other community activities. She was the long time secretary of the local Women's Institute. Mr. Stevenson was a patient in the Princess Elizabeth Hospital in Winnipeg for 8 years, passing away in January, 1959. He was preceded by his wife in December, 1957.

## ROY STEVENSON

Roy Stevenson was the son of Matthew James Stevenson and Mary Anne Blackwell Stevenson, who had been a teacher of the Silver Plains School. She was from Holmfield, Manitoba.

Roy, born in 1902, lived his life on Section 23-5-East, Carlton district, where he successfully farmed until his retirement in 1967. (Deceased in 1976.)

Barbara MacKenzie, Belmont, Manitoba became the teacher of the Silver Plains School in 1923. Barbara and Roy were married in 1931 and thereafter she helped Roy fulfill his dreams. She also was for some time a director of the Morris Agricultural Fair, later the Big M Stampede, a Trustee of Carleton School, a member of Sheba Chapter O.E.S. and an amateur artist, belonging to the Morris Art Club, and a member of the Silver Plains Community Club. Roy was a director of the Silver Plains Co-Operative Elevator Association, crop adjuster for P.F.A.A., later the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation. He belonged to the Masonic King Solomon Lodge, Sheba Chapter, Order of the Eastern Star, the Morris Big M Stampede and the Morris United Church. He was an ardent curler. At the age of fifty, he achieved his life long ambition of obtaining his wings and for twenty years, he enjoyed his association with the



*Prize winning farm site of Roy Stevenson.*

Manitoba Flying Farmers. The farm site was a winner in the local Home Grounds competition.

Two daughters were born to this family: Mary Anne in 1934 and Janet Shirley May in 1936.

Anne graduated from the Teachers' College, Winnipeg, and later obtained her Bachelor of Arts by attending evening classes at the University of Manitoba. She taught school at Domain and Sanford.

Anne and Brian Parker were married in 1955 and farm what was the W.J. Parker farm at Sanford. The children;

Linda, attending the University of Manitoba School of Music; Michael, enrolled in the degree course in Agriculture, University of Manitoba (died in an accident, October, 1978) and Laurel, attending Sanford Collegiate. Janet, also a teacher, taught Ager School in Rosebank and Calf Mountain at Darlingford.

Janet and Gary Bartleman were married in 1957 and farm what is the family farm of 98 years standing, seven miles north of Morden. Their children; Robert, attending the University of Winnipeg (Arts) and Patricia, a graduate of the Morden Collegiate.

The Stevenson farm was sold to John Thiessen of Rosenort and the building site to Mr. and Mrs. Gary Loewen, of Morris.

Barbara bought a home in Morris and at present, 1979, is enjoying her retirement there.

## WALTER NATHAN STEVENSON

*submitted by F.B. Stevenson*

Walter N. Stevenson 1882-1944 came to the Morris area in 1883 with his parents Matthew and Sarah. They took up residence in the Silver Plains district on Section 36-5-1 East. Walter attended the Silver Plains school under the able teaching of Alexander Todd and from all stories he was a lively pupil. After school he worked for sometime with the Merchants Bank of Canada in Morris and then moved to the farm making his home on Section 35-4-1 East. He married Catherine Bessie McMillian in 1909. Walter farmed until 1915 when an accident occurred that necessitated the removal of part of one foot. At this time they moved to Morris and Walter was hired as Secretary-Treasurer of the Morris Municipality. This position he held until his death in 1944.

Walter took a keen interest in all town and municipal life. He and his friend Steve Patterson initiated many beneficial projects under the management of A.E. Code and R.L. Ross. After a lengthy illness Bessie died in 1926. In 1929 Walter married Charlotte Clark and continued to live in Morris until his sudden death on November 5, 1944.

## THE CHARLES STEVENSON FAMILY

*submitted by Lillian Stevenson*

Charles Sheppard Stevenson, 1906-1968, son of Matthew James and Mary Ann Stevenson, was born on the farm north of Morris, 23-5-1 East. He attended Carleton School, Morris High and Manitou Normal School. Three years of teaching followed at Rackham, Man. and Molloy S.D. east of Morris. A love of working outdoors prompted him to leave teaching and join his father and brother Bronson in the formation of Stevensons' Evergreen Nursery in 1926.

Charlie served as Secretary-Treasurer of Carleton S.D. for 32 1/2 years, from 1932 to 1968, with the exception of 3 1/2 years spent with the R.C.A.F., so it was his duty to deal with the school-marms who were hired from time to time. Eventually he found the right one and he and Lillian Glass of Winnipeg, who taught at Carleton S.D. from Sept. 1940 to June 1942, were married in 1944.



*Charlie and Lillian Stevenson family in 1965. Marilyn, Barrie, Bill and Carl.*

After his discharge from the R.C.A.F. in 1946 they set up housekeeping at the site of Stevenson's Nursery. Their family includes Marilyn (m. Larry Vanbeselaere who farms at Waskada, son Ferris, daughter Felicia), Barrie (m. Cathy Johnson of Morris, son Scott), William C. (m. Peggy Stieben of Ste. Elizabeth, son Michael, daughter Michelle) and Carl. At time of writing Barrie operates Custom Auto, his auto wrecking and repair business at the site of the former Trump Oil Co., Bill is in California, and Carl works for Morris Auto Supply Co.

Homemaking on a farm, before rural electrification in 1948, was not the struggle it had been in pioneer times, but it was still time-consuming. Coal or wood fires for heating and cooking had to be stoked, ashes carried out daily, water pumped from the cistern, then heated on the stove for the family wash which was done either by hand or with a gasoline powered machine (noisy things!), coal oil or gasoline lamps cleaned and filled daily, cream separator turned by hand and washed twice a day. Fuel for the Stevenson homes was, for many years, cordwood cut in the winters at Piney, Man. This had to be sawed into proper lengths, split, piled and carried in when needed. Ice was cut out of the Red River in blocks, packed in sawdust and then used for drinking water and cooling purposes in the summer. (Nothing more refreshing than a drink of ice water on a hot summer's day!)

One of this family's greatest challenges was recovering from the effects of the 1950 Red River Flood which caused severe damage to their home and to the Nursery stock which was their livelihood. Coping with the flood itself when Charlie, brothers Leslie and Bronson and nephew Jim lived for a month on the upper flood of Leslie Stevenson's double garage along with a flock of young chickens, brought forth many an almost unbelievable tale.

Lillian Stevenson was an active member of Silver Plains Community Club and a leader in the Morris 4H Garden Club for 5 years. She and Charlie enjoyed their charter membership in the Red River Horticulture Society, both serving terms as president. For many years they curled with the Morris Farmers' Curling Club. After



Charlie's passing Lillian worked as teacher-aide in Morris Elementary School from 1971 to 1976.

Charlie's interest in natural history, trees, shrubs, flowers and wildlife made him dedicated to the conservation of Canada's natural resources. He was a charter member of the Morris Game and Fish Association, and one of the first officers of Wild Gobblers Unlimited. During his term of office as president of the Manitoba Wildlife Federation he was present at the formation of the Canadian Wildlife Federation at Montreal in 1961. The booming of the Pinnated Grouse on a sunny April morning was one of Charlie's most cherished boyhood memories. It was a source of great regret to him that the present generation does not have the pleasure and privilege of hearing this sound.



*Matt J. and Mary Stevenson on their 50th wedding anniversary.*

## MATTHEW JOHN STEVENSON

In 1916, daughter Mary Ann married Matthew John Stevenson. Matt was born in Renfrew County, Ontario and came west in 1909 on a \$10.00 harvest excursion ticket to his Uncle Matthew's farm in the Carlton District. Matt and Mary lived in Winnipeg until 1919 when they returned to help on the farm following her brother Rob's death during the flu epidemic. They raised a family of four children, Morley, Jessie, Grace and Laura.

Matt and Mary took an active interest in their community and despite the lack of labour-saving devices we now consider necessities, found time to enjoy an interesting social life centering around church, school and community club. The picnics, concerts, fowl suppers, card parties and dances were all catered to, of course, by the women of the district.

Along with Ed Snarr, Matt canvassed the District for necessary wheat acres to build the Pool Elevator and saw its beginning in 1928, serving as secretary for twenty years and as a director, sixteen more. He also worked towards the installation of Hydro in the district in 1947. Matt served the Silver Plains School Board for 28 years, was a municipal councillor for 22 years, an honorary life member of the Manitoba Agricultural Society, served on the Morris Hospital Board and was a member of the Masonic Lodge for 52 years.

Their son Morley married Helen Minaker of Morris and lived and worked on the farm with his parents. They too, were Masonic members and took a keen interest in community activities, especially enjoying curling with the Farmers League. They had one son Robert John "Lynne" who with his wife Sandra (Allan) and three daughters, resides in Aldergrove, B.C.

Jessie married F.E. (Bill) Whitewell and has two children, Douglas and Dale (Wilkins) and five grandchildren, who is married to Ken Somerville and has two children, Barbara (Gawthrop) and Robert.

Following Morley's death in 1966, at age 48, Man and Mary Ann moved to Winnipeg where they lived on Beaverbrook Street with daughter Grace. Matt died in 1974 at 88 years of age and Mary, two months later at 86.

The farm at Silver Plains is now owned and operated by Murray and Myrna Thompson.



*John Gorby Sr. and his two sons, Eric and John Jr. Mr. Gorby was an excellent photographer. The picture of the old Rosenort windmill, found elsewhere in this book, is an example of his art.*

## WILLIAM N. STEVENSON

*William N. Stevenson*, born November 14, 1873 - Beachburg, Ontario.

William Stevenson arrived in Morris, Manitoba, April 10, 1883, in company with his father and younger brother, James. They drove a horse-drawn wagon and their cattle, from Emerson to a farm six miles north of Morris.

William attended Silver Plains School (named for the abundant sage and wolf willow) for a short time and was taught by an old time resident of Morris, Alex Todd. William worked on the home farm during the summers of

his youth and spent the winters cutting and hauling wood from the Marchand area some 40 miles east. By this time all unowned woodlots along the Red River were cut over, and there was no wood available any closer. Buying wood was out of the question due to lack of money. Farm produce, such as wheat, butter, eggs, beef and pork, were hauled to Winnipeg by team and wagon, to sell. Money gained was used to buy winter supplies such as flour, salt and sugar. Trips to Winnipeg by horse were a three day trek with overnight stops both ways at St. Norbert. The St. Norbert stopping house, prior to its recent removal was one of the oldest log houses in the Province.

In 1898, William bought land 5 miles north of Morris, the S. 112 of 26-5-1 East. This land was adjacent to property newly acquired by his brother, Jim. Acquisition was made possible by a \$35.00 loan from a bank in Morris. In addition, he had 4 horses, a hand saw and little else.

His father's sister, Aunt Agnes, kept house for him part of the time, but other times he batched with bread and pie provided by his mother. The original house still stands on the former farm of the late Roy Stevenson, and is used for storage purposes. This structure was the birth place of William and Harriet Stevenson's only child, a daughter, Dorothy.



*Wm. and Harriet Stevenson.*

In 1903, William had married Harriet Reid, a neighbour girl, who came from Ontario in 1894. Their daughter, Dorothy, was born May 31, 1907. In 1910, William purchased an additional two half sections, the Brown and Stanley farms, and the family moved their residence one mile south, where they lived until the fall of 1916, when they moved to Morris. The farm was rented to a Dutch family, the Van Boeyens, for one year, and to German immigrants, the Schmidtkes, for three years.

William had become active in community affairs, serving as councillor and reeve of the Rural Municipality of Morris and joining the Masonic Lodge in 1912, in which he was an active member for the rest of his life. It was during this period that he developed a fondness for horses and horse trading. As a "bronco-buster" he had few equals, and it was his proud boast that he could hitch, ride and drive any horse. He bred fine horses, owning two purebred stallions - Breton's Bairn (a Clyde) and Jolly Boy (a Percheron). A neighbour, Saxon Day, travelled these stallions around the district. William also raised and trained racehorses and from an insignificant

chestnut mare, "Trixie", he reared the locally famous running horse, "Stella McGumb". This mare won most major races in southern Manitoba for many years.

William had many hobbies, among them duck hunting. He was also an avid curler, driving, or if need be, walking a six mile round trip from the "Stanley" farm to curl in Morris. Unlike modern curlers, he had his own private rocks. In the period 1918-1922, he became an active trustee on the Carleton and Morris school boards.

Perfect weather during the 1915 crop season allowed "Bill" Stevenson to grow and ship 17 carloads of hard red spring wheat. This was his largest crop. That fall he bought River Lots 407-409-411-413 and 415, known as the "Proctor" farm. This farm remains in the immediate family and until November, 1977, was occupied by a grandson, Michael Dixon.

In 1917, with finances plentiful, Mr. Stevenson purchased the John Deere farm equipment agency in Morris, with sidelines in DeLaval cream separators, Heintzman Pianos, Dodge cars and Cockshutt binders. He became very active in town affairs, as president of the curling club and also the Agricultural Society. His interest in the Agricultural Society (1937) resulted in re-establishing the "fair" and improving the grounds through extensive tree planting (elm and spruce) and building. He also served as secretary to the United Church minister, Doug Sparling, both at the Silver Plains and Morris churches.

William Stevenson dealt in farms, owning several since the "Proctor" acquisition. One, known as the "Drought" farm was later sold to a brother, George, and is now owned by Hamblin Brothers.

Bill brought the first Fordson tractor into the district to farm this land. The operator was a local character named Torn "Bloody Tom" Andrews, who ran the tractor all day continuously, as he did not know how to start it! Mr. Stevenson also began raising mules, using 27 of them in his farming operations. The herd sire or "Jack" was bought from Carl Roberts' father from Domain, Manitoba. A Ford Model T was included in the acquisition.

In 1920 a land deal with brother Jim, saw the sale of the "Stanley" farm and purchase of a half section at McTavish. The Stevenson family now lived in town during winter, but lived on one of the farms in the summer. Bill's wife, Harriet, was one of the finest cooks in the country. Daughter, Dorothy, completed high school in 1923 and with her pal, Marion Ross, attended Wesley College, graduating with a B.A. in 1928. During her university years, she played championship girls' hockey.

1927 was the start of two extremely wet years, which were disastrous to farming, and also the start of the Great Depression. Money was scarce, times hard, and Mr. Stevenson needed all his business skills to stay afloat. In addition to his active farms, he had shares in other farm lands east of the Red River, with partners, L.E. Hodgins and a brother, Walter, the Municipal Secretary. From 1928 to 1930, Bill Stevenson bought and lived at 45 Evanson Street, Winnipeg. In 1930, the family returned to the "Proctor" farm, where they weathered the remaining years of the depression. In 1934, he bought the first combine in the district, a "Holt", using it for



*Bill Stevenson, 1935, enjoying a cut of water-melon.*

custom work as well as at home. Sixteen years later, it was replaced by a self-propelled Massey-Harris and the veteran machine sold to Harry Anderson, in whose yard it still remains. These were building years for Mr. Stevenson, who erected a house, machine shed, granary and a shop-garage and a new 70 foot barn in 1943. All were badly flooded in 1948 and ruinously again in 1950, when the yard site was moved half mile north. The house was so badly damaged, it had to be torn down as flood waters fourteen feet deep had brought 3 feet of water to the second storey.

In 1948, Mr. Stevenson bought a 314 section at Dominion City and section 18, north of Silver Plains. Section 18 was subsequently sold to Harry Bobrowski and the Goossen brothers.

After the 1950 flood, the family of his daughter, Dorothy, and son-in-law, C.C. Dixon, resided in town with Mr. Stevenson during re-construction of living accommodations on the "Proctor" farm.

Harriet Stevenson's health was failing and after several strokes, she passed away in May of 1953, at the age of 85. Mr. Stevenson's health failed and on August 16, 1954, he too died.

## THE LESLIE STEVENSON FAMILY HISTORY

Leslie Stevenson, born 1904, married Margaret Hopkins of Ste. Elizabeth, school teacher at Carleton School, on October 2, 1926. They lived with Leslie's family for the next five years. In 1931, they built a house in a grain field on 23-5-1 East, five miles north of Morris. The first evergreens were planted in October, 1931 and quite a number of evergreens and various deciduous trees have been planted since.

They made their first auto trip - farther then Winnipeg - in 1929, Accompanied by their two children and

Margaret's sister, they went to Angusville, near Russell, Manitoba, in a Model T Ford car to visit a college friend of Leslie's - Bob Pritchard and family. It took two days to go. That was their introduction to travelling. In the years that followed they made many trips, including yearly summer ones to the family cottage near Kenora, Ontario. Their first long one (with son Norman) - south to Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico, then went to their daughter Trudy's home in Los Angeles, was most enlightening. After seeing so much southern wasteland, they appreciated Manitoba's seasons.

1948 was a momentous year. On September 3, electric power was turned on. What a difference that made! There were no more dirty lamp chimnies to clean every day or lamps to fill with oil; no more running up and down to the basement with, or for milk, cream, butter, or other perishables; no more noisy washing machines, or lanterns in the barn!



*Leslie Stevenson, returning home to mud, moss and devastation after 1950 flood.*

The 1950 flood covered the entire farm with approximately four feet of water. There was twenty-five inches on the house floor. Leslie, son Jim and brothers Charlie and Bronson lived in the upstairs of the garage for a month - on rather short rations toward the end of that month, although they were luckier than some, having eggs and milk every day as the hens were in the barn loft and the cows in a boxcar on the C.P.R. track at Trump siding. There were only ten acres seeded on the farm that spring, from which three hundred bushels of very light oats were harvested. The garden vegetables which were planted late in June did not amount to much. Everyone was very thankful that no one drowned or became seriously ill during the six weeks the flood lasted. Leslie and Norman spent most of the rest of the summer combining for others in the Cypress River area.

Leslie was active in community affairs. He belonged to the Wildlife Federation (formerly Game and Fish Association) from the time it was organized in Morris. He was secretary-treasurer for a number of years and a Provincial Vice-President for a term. He was also active in the Wild Turkeys project. He served a couple of terms on the Municipal Council; a term as President of the Horticultural Society; served on the United Church Board; and worked on the horse committee of the Valley Agricultural Society. He was a member of the Manitoba Pool Elevators during the years he was actively farming.



*Leslie Stevenson standing beside a prize specimen of Colorado blue spruce.*

Leslie and Margaret celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1976 at their daughter and son-in-law's (Joyce and John) in St. Norbert. It was a beautiful, warm, sunny October day. Many relatives came to call and stayed to visit a while.

They have six children. *Jim* and wife Jane live on their farm by the Red River near Morris. They have five children: David (and wife Sharon), Penny, Glen, Ken and Ron. *Gertrude* (Trudy) and husband Dick Macias live in California and have two sons, Rick (and wife Marci) and Dean. Gertrude is a registered nurse and Dick is the Corning, California hospital administrator. *Norman* and wife, Lore have five children; Sylvia, (husband Keith, sons Jason and Leonard), Ed, Kathy, Jonny, Tracey. Norman drives a semi-trailer truck for Reimer's, Winnipeg. Lore also works. Elaine and husband Dick Callahan live in Toronto. They have two children, Sean and Maureen. Elaine is a lab technician with the Ontario Government and Dick is in advertising with the Admiral Company. *Joyce* and husband John Elias have two daughters, Joan and Alison. Joyce is an interior designer and John is an industrial hygienist with the Manitoba Government. *Walter* (Bill) is assistant to the Treasurer of the University of Manitoba.

Leslie passed away in February, 1977. Margaret still lives in the family home as of February 1979.

## **WILLIAM MORLEY STEVENSON**

Morley Stevenson was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba on September 6, 1917. His parents were Matthew and Mary-Ann Stevenson (nee Elliot). He lived and farmed all his adult life in the Silver Plains district. He was married to Helen Elizabeth Minaker of Morris, Manitoba. They had one son, Doctor Robert John Lynne Stevenson, of Surrey, B.C.

His early education was received at Silver Plains and his high school at Morris, Manitoba.

He was a member of the Morris United Church.

Morley will be remembered by his friends as a willing and ardent participant in all community endeavours; being past-president of the Farmers' Curling Club, member of the Aubigny Hockey and Baseball clubs. One of the first interested men to organize and work, for the

Riverview Golf and Country Club; a member of the Morris Game and Fish Association, also an active member of King Solomon Lodge No. 8 G.R.M., A.F. and A.M., and Sheba Chapter No. 51 Order of the Eastern Star (O.E.S.) and a chartered member of the Morris Lions Club.

After a lengthy illness, Morley was laid to rest on January 7, 1966.



*Digging a basement in 1933 with horse power. M.J. Stevenson in foreground, with Bronson, Charles and Leslie on scrapers.*

## **FRANK BRONSON STEVENSON**

Frank Bronson Stevenson the youngest son of Mathew James Stevenson and Mary Ann Stevenson (nee Blackwell) was married to Ann Forsyth of Eriksdale, Manitoba on January 4, 1940.

They reside on the original family farm (N.W. 23-5-5-1E) which was purchased by his father in 1884.

Their family grew up here, attended the rural school (Carleton No. 36) and later high school in Morris. The two elder sons Delmer and Neil still live on the farm and now own and operate Stevenson's Evergreen Nursery. Delmer is married to Barbara MacLeod of Bisset, Manitoba. They have two young sons Loren James five years old and Kevin Lee three years. Lyle and Alan live in Winnipeg. Lyle was married to Donna Lyne Depauw of



*Bronson Stevenson and Ann Forsyth were married on January 4, 1940.*



*A christening! Bruce and Grace MacKenzie with son Donald, and Bronson and Ann Stevenson with son Delmer. Taken at the Morris United Church, August, 1943.*



*The Bronson Stevenson family in June, 1974 on the occasion of daughter Betty's wedding to Bill Jennings of Winnipeg. From left, Bronson, Annie, Betty, Bill, Barbara, Del holding Loren, Lyle, Alan and Neil. The Jennings had a second child in December, 1979.*

Morris in 1977. Betty, the only daughter, married Bill Jennings in 1974. They live in Winnipeg and have one son, Steven Douglas, two years old.

Bronson chose the nursery business as his life's occupation in 1926 when his father and brother Charles founded the Stevenson's Evergreen Nursery.

Bronson recalls in his late teens of spending many days in the field driving a six horse team. In the spring in seeding time it took about four or five weeks of harrowing with six horses abreast on an eight section harrow. The fields were usually harrowed once prior to seeding and once or twice when seeded. Forty acres was a big days work. After harvest was fall plowing time. This was done with two three horse teams in tandem, pulling a gang plow with two fourteen inch mouldboard plows. In fine weather this was a real pleasure. There was always some rivalry among the plowmen to see who could make the straightest furrows and make the neatest job of plowing. A good plowman must be a good teamster and know his horses individually as no two horses drove alike. He must also know his plow and what adjustments to make in the varying soil conditions.

At the annual convention of the Manitoba Horticultural Society in 1970, Bronson was awarded an Honorary Life Membership in recognition of his work in Horticulture in Manitoba. In 1976 he was honored with a Life Membership in the Manitoba Nursery and Landscape Association on the fiftieth anniversary of the Stevensons' Evergreen Nursery.

Bronson, like his father, has always been keenly interested in obtaining and testing new varieties of trees and plants in his arboretum and has introduced a number of varieties into the trade. These plants are from many parts of the Northern Hemisphere. He has served as an elder of the Morris United Church, as a trustee of Carleton, is a charter member of the Red River Horticultural Society, the Morris Wildlife, and the Manitoba Nursery and Landscape Associations.

He was a leader of the 1st Morris Boy Scout Troop for nine years and enjoyed all their activities, particularly their camping and nature endeavors. The most rewarding achievement came in 1964 when the Honorable Eric Willis, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, awarded Queen Scout badges to thirteen Morris Scouts in a ceremony at the Legislative Buildings. This was a provincial record at that time for one Boy Scout troop.

Bronson's greatest hobby is photography. He now has a library of over eight thousand slides of travel, birds, animals, flowers and plants which he has been able to share with others in the form of slide presentations. He has many prize winning slides in the annual provincial competition sponsored by the Manitoba Horticultural Association. A number of his pictures have appeared as cover photos on the 'Family Herald', the 'Western Producer' and the 'Country Guide'.



*The home of Bronson and Ann Stevenson, exhibiting the beautiful trees on their farmstead. They, and the excellent photography which portrays them, are the result of the expertise of Bronson Stevenson.*



## THE TAYLOR FAMILY HISTORY



*Richard Kemp Taylor married Melissa Submit Wait in New Hawkesbury, Ontario in 1862. The family moved from Napanee, Ontario, to Winnipeg in 1878, and to Silver Plains in 1885. The family was photographed, above, in Winnipeg, about the time they moved to Silver Plains. Fanny Abigail, centre, was born in 1863 and married Chester Clarke in 1893. Robert, next to Fanny, was born in 1865 and lived most of his life in Morris Municipality. Next to him, William Rufus, born in 1867, married Margaret Jane Holmes in 1893, and died in 1938. Melissa, far right, was born in 1869 and married John Kerr in 1899. She died in 1926. Levina (Vina), second from left, was born in 1871 and married George Allward in 1893. She died 1943. Far left, Ida, born in 1872, married Robert Reid in 1903, Richard Edgar (Ed), front left, was born in 1875, married Isabella McLaughlin in 1905, and died in 1936. Abbott Carman front right, was born in 1876 and married Ethel Hedley in 1911. They farmed in Morris Municipality until 1919. Elizabeth Gertrude, born in 1880, married Hardy McLeod of Winnipeg and lived there until her death in 1970.*



*Richard and Melissa Taylor in their old age. Richard was a Methodist lay preacher. He was authorized to conduct funerals, but not weddings, to the great disappointment of couples who walked all the way from Emerson to be married. Before homesteading in the Silver Plains area, the Taylors lived around Winnipeg. Taylor's youngest son, Abbott, remembered herding the family cows where the Legislative Building now stands. Richard continued farming even after he was going blind and Abbott had moved away to his own farm. In 1918, the Taylors moved to the West Coast, returning to Manitoba to live with Abbott, who had moved to Graysville by that time. Richard and Melissa died in 1926, within a month of each other. He was 91 or 92; she was 83.*



*Robert Taylor and his second wife, Isabella (Belle) Dickson.*





*LEFT: The Robert Taylor family around 1914. STANDING: Bill, Ethel, Robert, Isabella with baby Laurence, and Grace. IN FRONT: Elizabeth, Ernest.*

*RIGHT: Robert and Isabella Taylor in later years.*



*BELOW, RIGHT: Abbott Taylor, youngest son of Richard Taylor, spent his youth in the Silver Plains area, and established his own farm at 25-5-1 East. He and his wife, Ethel Hedley, had their first four children there: Olive (Mrs. Ralph Lewis, and later Mrs. Arthur Enns), Mary (Mrs. Cecil Dracass), Franklin, and Hedley. They sold the farm to the Manford Dudgeons in 1918, and moved to the Graysville area, where three more daughters were born. Abbott, Ethel, and Frank died in 1953.*



*BELOW: A gathering of the Abbott Taylor family, about 1948. REAR: Abbott, Ethel, Mel and Ethel (Taylor) Dracass, Franklin, Clayton and Esther (Taylor) Metcalfe. KNEELING: Hedley and Joyce Taylor, Ralph and Olive (Taylor) Lewis, Cecil and Mary (Taylor) Dracass. FRONT: Emma Taylor with Gary and Donald Lewis.*

Robert Taylor homesteaded on the N.E. 24-5-1 East in the Carleton District, north of Morris, Manitoba. He married Cecilia Carter in 1887. They had six children; Ethel May, Robert Frank, William Richard, Gertrude Elizabeth, Frances Grace and Ernest Mathew. His wife Cecilia and son Robert Frank both died in 1899, leaving Robert Taylor to raise his small family and work the farm.

In 1909, he married Isabella Dickson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Dickson of Morris. They had one son, Laurence Armour. In 1918, Robert and his wife and small son, moved to the town of Morris, while his older son, William continued on the family farm and the farm of his grandparents. In 1926, Robert Taylor returned to his own farm, and in 1927 William R. with his wife and small daughter, Betty, moved to the city of Winnipeg. Robert resumed farming with the help of his youngest son, who at the age of fourteen assumed the career of his parents.

Robert Taylor's first family had by now, taken on their own lives and settled with their families in other areas. Ethel married William French, of Stratsburg, Sask. William R. married Genevieve Collins, of Montivideo, Minn., U.S.A., farming for some years on the home farms and moving to Winnipeg, to work in the provincial government. Elizabeth married Hugh McIntyre, lived in Winnipeg, later making their home in B.C. and working in the newsprint world. Grace married Ewart Tolton of Otterbourne, where they farmed successfully for many years. Ernest enlisted below the regulation age, in the first World War, experienced the perils of war being wounded in combat, returned home; later seeking his fortune and adventures in Barkville, B.C.

Robert Taylor was an active member of the community, being one of the first trustees of the Carleton school board, and serving on this board for over 25 years. He was councillor for the Morris Municipality, and later became Reeve, a position he held for many years. During his term of office the first Municipal Court house was built in Morris, with Robert Taylor laying the corner stone, with his name inscribed. This same stone was later relaid in the newer building now on the site of the original building.

Robert Taylor died in 1946, a respected member of the community, a past master of Masonry, leaving his interests in the farming life and community to be carried on by his family.



*William (Bill) Taylor, oldest son of Robert and Cecilia (Carter) Taylor, farmed the home farm until 1927, when he and his wife Genevieve (Collins) and daughter Betty (later Mrs. Harry Longstaff of Vancouver) moved to Winnipeg.*



## BRIAN AND SANDRA KLASSEN

As the years passed, Laurence, the youngest son of the second marriage of Robert Taylor, continued farming while changes in farming from horses, faded out to the increasing number of mechanized farming methods. Laurence married Ariel Jean Anderson, of Winnipeg, in 1936. They raised a family of five children; Robert John, Frances Doreen, Brian Neal, George Ross, Laurence Clark.

The Laurence Taylor family grew up on the farm enjoying the heritage of the land, knew a good life of living with the country school house era, and its many social times, with it all the memories are varied and happy ones, in spite of the constant struggle to work with nature for the rewards of the fruits of the land. But eventually, even this family unit set out on their own too.

Robert John settled in Ontario, in the town of Dryden. He married Shirley Parkinson and is presently employed as manager of a large Husky Service Unit. Frances Doreen married Allan Huebner of Morris, they have two children, Kimberley and Daryl. Brian Neal found a career in the banking business, with the Bank of Montreal. He married Shirley Rochelle of Carberry, Man. They have two sons, Dale and Kevin and at the present; residents of Thompson, Man. George Ross, joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Force, in 1966, he married Valerie Sprout, of Regina, Sask. They have two sons, Mark and Kirk, they are presently stationed in Ituna, Sask. Laurence Clarke farmed for several years before going into the banking business and is now with the Bank of Montreal. He married Marcia Janz, of Souris, Manitoba. They are presently residents of Belmont, Man.

Laurence and Ariel continued to farm but in 1959, Laurence combined his interest in farming with the new government crop insurance program. In 1969 he leased the farm and took a move to Portage la Prairie, to serve as the agent for Crop Insurance. He retired from the Insurance business staying in Portage la Prairie.

The family farm was sold in 1975, but it is forever tied to the Taylor heritage, memories of happiness and sad times intermingled with friends and neighbors, part of the woven cloth of their lives. Not much can be said in a brief outline of families, but many will know the stories of the struggle and survival against the odds of nature and the determination that comes with working, for generations on the land.



*Isabella Taylor (centre left), Laurence and Ariel (Anderson) Taylor, with children, Bob and Frances, right. The Taylors were playing host to visiting niece, Betty Taylor, (who took the photo), her friend (behind Ariel) and two R.A.F. Trainees (far left) during World War II.*

In December of 1947, Peter D. and Tina Klassen received a belated Christmas gift - a son, they named Brian. He is their second child in a family of five. Born and raised in Halbstadt area, Brian took his schooling in Strassburg School and the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. As with most farmer's sons, Brian did his share of chores and has the hands to show for the cow milking he did in his farm days. When the family moved to Kleefeld, Manitoba, Brian went to find work in Winnipeg. He worked at various jobs from assembly line machine work to driving gravel trucks. During his gravel trucking days, he recalls that he and the other truckers working for the same fellow were living in a trailer far from home awaiting their paychecks.

When a friend of his from Homewood had his car repaired at Keck's body shop in Morris, Brian picked up the friend and at the same time, picked up a job in the body shop. He had practiced some body work on his own vehicles, which was his only experience, but this proved to be his line of work.

Later, in 1969, Brian and Barrie Stevenson opened Custom Auto in the old Trump Oil building, and in 1970, Brian opened his own shop in Altona, in a rented building which also housed a Gulf Station. During this time, Brian met Sandra Schellenberg, a legal secretary, (born in 1951 to Bill and Helen Schellenberg) and in 1971, they were married. They lived in Altona till their body shop (Altona Auto Body) burned in an accidental fire. Two men were injured in the fire and six vehicles lost, including two of their own (1956 Chevys) which Brian was in the process of restoring. They found themselves back at "home" in Morris in their first purchased home on Railroad East and back at their old jobs - Brian at Keck's and Sandra at the law offices of Braun and Schmidt. Brian wanted more time to spend at home on his own vehicles, so in 1973, he took a job at Southwood Chevrolet in Winnipeg, working three twelve hour days a week in the body shop there, with four days off to spend as he liked. This gave both of them more time together and time to landscape the yard together.



*Sandy Klassen at work typing the manuscript for Furrows of the Valley.*

Cars and any other motorized vehicles have been in Brian's blood since childhood, when he built go-carts, and motorized his bicycles with washing machine or auger motors. He must have caused his parents some concern at finding the motors missing from their machinery at times.

Both Brian and Sandra had lived on the farm in their younger days (Brian at Halbstadt and Sandra at Rosenhoff) and they yearned to be back in the country. When the Taylor farm (NE 24-5-1 E) came up for sale in 1977, they bought the 6 1/2 acre yard and with the generous help of many friends, gave the old house a face lift. Many good times were had while doing this job and they won't forget too quickly their friends' generosity.

A large house in the country needs children to fill it. In July of 1978, a daughter, Carey Leanne, was born - the eleventh grandchild for the Schellenbergs and the fifth for the Klassens.

A large yard in the country needs something to fill it. Most people would think of animals - Brian collects antique and other collectible automobiles toward his retirement. His latest project is a 1920 "490" Chevrolet,

purchased by his father. Brian is doing the body work and, as the old car bodies were held together mostly by wood, the oak woodwork also had to be reproduced and replaced, which was a challenge.

1979, of course, brought its flood to our front door. Brian and his brother-in-law, Bruce Schellenberg, stayed in the house while surrounded by four feet of water, keeping watch of the sandbag dyke and keeping trees from ramming buildings as the trees floated through the yard. Sandra and Carey moved to Winnipeg and stayed at the Klassen's till cleanup time arrived. When the waters receded, they had the job of cleaning up the yard for the second time in two years. (1978 tornado passed near enough to cause wind damage to the trees and scatter debris about the yard.)

1980 promises to bring another child to their home and life will go on as usual. Brian has started working for Holiday Chevrolet in Winnipeg, after nearly two years of being on his own, and Sandra has returned to the law office part-time, having been absent since May of 1978. She has also had the pleasure of typing the draft of this book.

## CARLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 36 1883-1968

*submitted by F.B. Stevenson*



REAR: Betty Snarr, Win, Hayward, Archie Swain, Frances Earl, Tom Lewis, Em Lewis, Bob Lewis, Flossie Swain, Ella Earl, Frank Swain. KNEELING: Ertma Preikschat, Jack Earl, Chas Pickard. SITTING: Ed Snarr, Herb Earl, Mabel Earl, Ernie Taylor, John Snarr, Lucy Swain, Billy Taylor, Ethel Taylor.



*LEFT: Carleton School No. 36, in 1914. RIGHT: Pupils in 1941. BELOW, LEFT: The new Carleton School built in 1951 and still in use in the Town of Morris. BELOW, RIGHT: Pupils in 1954. STANDING: Joyce Stevenson, Donald MacKenzie, George Taylor, Brian Taylor, Barbara Schmidt, Jack Snarr, Bill Stevenson, Grace MacKenzie, Teacher; Patricia MacKenzie, Delmer Stevenson, Clark Taylor. SITTING: Evelyn Hildebrand, Neil Stevenson, Harriet Dixon, Barrie Stevenson, Marilyn Stevenson.*



Almost a century ago, the need for the three R's prompted the early settlers in the Morris area to take a hard look at the educational needs of their children.

In 1883, a school board was elected, consisting of James Swain, Henry Snarr, James Lewis, and John Earl Sr., all pioneers of the Carleton District. Following these are many others of notable mention, for many years of continuous service - James Stevenson was on the board for 23 years, Robert Taylor for 23 years, and William Hayward. In 1920, Miss Elizabeth Snarr was chairman and served for 13 years on the school board. Mr. C.L. Stoney served on the school board 18 years. From 1920 until 1930, other members included Charles Snarr, Harold Stoney, Leslie and Bronson Stevenson. Charles Stevenson served as secretary-treasurer for over 25 years in the later years.

The original site chosen for Carleton was on the south 1/2 of section 24-5-1 E. It was later moved east to near the Red River onto River Lot No. 383, now owned by John Snarr. In 1912, it was again moved, this time two miles west onto N.E. 114 section 14-5-1E. where it remained until it officially closed in 1968. The first teachers were Mr. Harrison, Miss Johnson, Miss Blake - during Miss Blake's term the school won an award for the neatest collection of scribbles of any ungraded school in the Province of Manitoba. This framed award was exhibited at the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition in 1906.

In the early history of Carleton School it was noted Edwin Snarr was the pupil who lit the school fire early each morning. He was paid 10¢ a day for this service. Inflation was slow coming as the price remained 10¢ a morning until the last few years that the old school was used.



The first teachers after the last move of the old school were Miss Vera Palmer (Mrs. Tom Lewis), followed by Olive Kastner (Mrs. Skinner). Some who followed were Miss Evelyn Churchill, Mrs. Leslie Stevenson (nee Hopkins), Mrs. James Stanley (nee Smith), Mrs. J. Johnson (nee Dowler), Mrs. Chas. Stevenson (nee Glass), Mrs. Wm. Dickson (nee Loewen), Margaret Fitzpatrick (nee Irvine), Doris Reynolds (nee Fitzpatrick) and Grace MacKenzie (nee Stevenson).

A community meeting was held prior to 1951, for the purpose of planning the building of a new school. A building committee was appointed to further this plan. Bronson Stevenson was appointed building supervisor, along with the trustees - Mrs. Chas. Snarr, Mrs. Roy Stevenson and Lawrence Taylor, Chas. Stevenson was secretary-treasurer.

An official opening was held November 16, 1951, at which time the Minister of Education, when cutting the ribbon stated "this new Carleton School is the most modern up-to-date one-roomed school in Manitoba".

Mrs. Bruce MacKenzie was the teacher in the new school. She taught nine years in the Carleton Schools altogether. The new school was used extensively as a community centre for Christmas concerts, games and fish meetings, showing of educational films, as a polling booth for elections, and various other social gatherings.

The school remained active until 1968, when through the organization of the larger school divisions by the Department of Education, the smaller school districts were absorbed. Since then the children have been bussed to Morris. The Carleton School building was moved to Morris and is used as a classroom there.



## NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

*by Ruth Thompson*

This school district had its beginnings in the spring of 1937, when a new building was erected. That fall, 21 pupils trudged off to the little schoolhouse on section 30-6-2E. The year before, these children were in need of a school closer to them, and since Union Point was already crowded, school classes were held in the Albert Neetz home on 31-6-1E, with about 20 children attending.



*School picnic at Neighbourhood School, 1945-46.*

The families whose children attended this school were: Froeses, Huffs, Taylors, Downeys, Thompsons, Neetxs, later Rhymers, Bredins, Peeles, and Burstahlers. Early trustees were Gus Huff, Earl Taylor, Noble Downey, Mr. Froese, Ambrose Thompsons, and Albert Neetz.

Among the teachers who taught here were: Grace Cochrane (Bobrowski), Eleanor Linklater (Sommer), Edith McKenzie, Ed Kroeker, Ida Hoffman, Bertha Wiens, Erica Janzen, Kay Harkins, Miss Downey, Millie Ginn, Norma Benson, and Rita Blakely.

Many happy years of reading, writing and 'rithmetic were spent there, until the school closed its doors in 1952, and the pupils were bussed to Osborne. The official closing of the school district came in 1966, when Neighborhood School became just fond memories to those whose feet had beat a path down the dusty road to that little schoolhouse.



*Huff, Froese, Thompson and Taylor children at Neighbourhood School, 1939-40.*

## EAST OF THE RED RIVER

### ARMOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 159

*submitted by Jack Browne*

Armour School was built in 1884. In 1905, it was moved from its original site on River Lot 358 on the bank of the Red River to the northwest corner of section 8-5-2 E. (C. Covernton farm) on the west side of St. Mary's Road. It was the typical one-roomed school, with classes averaging from 4 to 20 students. This small wood frame building (20 x 30) contained grades up to eight, or sometimes even ten, if there was an ambitious, industrious student who wanted to advance himself.



*First Armour School built in 1884.*

In 1952, a new school was built, and the old one was sold and moved away. It was used for a granary for a few years then torn down. In 1966, the Armour School District was incorporated into the Morris School Division, at which time the school was sold. The building is now a store in Aubigny, and was one of the many places damaged by the tornado in 1978.



*New Armour School of 1952.*

Some of the first trustees were Robert Turner, Walter Swain, George Moore, John A. McNair, Percy Covernton, and Ben Hoyland.



A number of the teachers were local girls, or some that married local boys and remained, they were: Olive Kastner (Skinner), Lucy Swain, Hattie Churchill (Murray), Daisy Churchill, Andrew Swain, Edith Covernton, Effie Dowler (Johnson), Sopie Cutforth (Pittman), Grace Stevenson (McKenzie), Ethel Reid (Forrest), Madeline Davies (Conernton), Kay Knowles (Hamblin), Pat Johnson (Hamblin), Edna Brown (Dreger), Rita Schmidt (Covernton), Ina Mazinke (Swain).

## MOLLOY SCHOOL

*submitted by Jack Loepp*

The Molloy School, which served the people in the southeastern part of the municipality, was located on Section 14-5-2E. The school district was opened the year before the school was built in 1918. Twenty-five children



*Molloy Class of 1926 with teacher, Charlie Stevenson.*

were enrolled in that first class. The school was aptly named after Senator Molloy, who farmed in the area.

Some of the teachers were: Charles Stevenson, Gertrude Stanley, Miss Zilkie, Yvonne Desaulnier,



*Molloy School No. 1849.*

Denise Gratton, Mrs. F. Berard, Helen O'Neil, Miss Labossiere and Lillian St. Jacques (Landry). Jacob Suderman was first a pupil, and later returned to the dis+ 6ct as teacher.

F tmilies who lived in the district and whose children were taught there: Adolph, Samson, Miller (Americans),



*Molloy Class of 1941 or 42.*

Teske, Schmall, Roland, Stayman, Glucks, Dalke, Smith, Sarrasin, Lussier, Rivard, Pittman, Combott, Wiesner, Stewice and Lohr. In 1926, after the Mennonites moved into the district, the family names enrolled were Suderman, Fernsel, Zozman, Loepp, and Brauns. Some trustees were: Bill Churchill, Sam Cooke, G. Lohr, John Rivard, Adelard Rivard, Jacob Loepp Sr., Ed Lohr, G. Stewice and Donat Gratton. Abe Loepp served as secretary-treasurer for many years.

The school closed its doors in 1945, then operated as a closed school district for a number of years, thus another school district was paid to accept the pupils. In 1948, the school building was sold to the Crystal Springs Colony, and removed from its location. In 1958, Molloy School consolidated with the Morris School District.

## COVERNTON FAMILY

No one can recall exactly why the Covernton's first came to the Morris area, however, Percy Heath Covernton, who was born in Knighton, Wales, Dec. 5, 1869, came to Canada in 1887. His father, Charles James, had come to Canada in June of 1836, at the age of three, taking his education at Upper Canada College. The family returned to England in 1853.

Percy Heath settled in the Wolsley area of Saskatchewan, where he operated a Massey Harris machinery business. On May 26, 1896, he married Marvinna Parker and they lived at Wolsley until 1910.



*1951 photo of Covernton farm.*

They then moved to Morris to the site of the present Covernton farm, east of the river. (River Lots 354 and



356, also the W. 1 / 2 of 8-5-2 East) The two river lots had been patented in 1889 and 1886, respectively, by John Dobbin and Euphemia Smith.

Grandfather came early in the year with 2 box cars of machinery and furniture, with the family arriving several



*P.H. Covernton and daughter, Connie in 1928.*

months later. They lived on in Morris briefly, while waiting for their new home on the farm to be completed; moving into it on October of that year. There were five children in the family, four of them were born at Wolsley and the youngest at the farm home in Morris.

Charles Geoffrey (1867-1954) married Elizabeth Forrest in 1935. They had two sons, Charles and Alan.

Richard Heath (1899-1972) married Beatrice Bincham in 1927. She died 16 years later. They had one daughter, Betty. Richard married Lydia Dawes, who had a son, Colin; together they had one son, Robert Heath.

Edith Jane Vene was born in 1901. She married Andrew Barkley in 1929, and they have been residing on their farm at Morden ever since. They had three children - Eileen, Margaret Rose, and Andrew (Bud).

Frances Madeline was born in 1909. She married Charles Davies in 1932. When he died eight years later, they had had two sons, Ray and Charles. In 1953, she married Fred Davidson, and moved to Oshawa, Ontario.

Constance Gwendolyn was born in 1920. She married Eric Spero in 1942; they now reside in Winnipeg. Their two sons are John and Robert.

As most of the farm was unbroken, this kept the family busy for many a year. One of the worst problems in those days was crossing the river to get to town. My father, Geoff, tells of using a plank to cross the ice flows at spring breakup, in order to get to a Saturday night dance in town.

Grandfather took an active interest in the community. He was a trustee and secretary of Armour School Division from 1912-1916 and also was a councillor in the Rural Municipality of Morris from 1923-1926. On November 13, 1916, he enlisted in the Canadian Engineers at Winnipeg at the ripe old age of 46. He was discharged three years later, having served in Britain and France.

Richard Heath, better known as "Mick" enlisted on January 25, 1916 at Wolsley, Saskatchewan. Perhaps Grandfather went overseas to keep an eye on him, as he was only 16. After the war, some land was purchased in



*Mrs. Marvinna (Parker) Covernton with daughters, Connie and Edith.*

the Brunkild area; I am uncertain as to the acreage or location. This land was sold several years later and Uncle Mick found employment in Winnipeg. He was an Inspector with the Board of Grain Commissioners for many years and eventually retired there.

In 1933, my father, Charles Geoffrey, purchased River lots 358 and 360. These lots had been patented by George Frederick Gow in 1892 and he sold them to Robert Turner, shortly thereafter. This property remained in the Turner family, was purchased by H. Audet, and resold to



*BACK: Geoff and Richard (Mick) Covernton, foreground - Madeline Covernton.*

my father. After father and mother were married in 1935, they lived in the Turner house, as it was called, until after grandfather's death in 1941. They then moved onto the home farm and continued farming there until father's death.

Father was actively involved in community affairs, namely secretary of Armour School Division from 1935 until shortly before his death in 1954. He served as president of the Morris Agriculture Society for several years, as well as being president of the Farmers' Curling Club, Morris Home and School Assoc. and the local Manitoba Pool Elevators Assoc. He was also on the Board of the local hospital during the planning and building of same.

One of my earliest memories of life on the farm with my brother, Alan, was the fantastic toboggan slides my father and Jack Browne used to build on the river banks every winter. These were carefully shaped and iced down with water hauled from the river. Our slides became the envy of the townfolk, and they used to come out often for an afternoon or evening of sliding.

Perhaps the most vivid memory I have of the farm in my younger years, was the flood of 1950. As our home

was fortunate enough to be above flood level, numerous friends, neighbours and relatives moved in with us as they became flooded out, until at one time, we were a family



*Flood refugees in 1950, who stayed at the Covernton farm.*

of 25. This involved eating in shifts, etc. Mattresses were spread out in the dining and living rooms, with wall to wall bodies at bedtime. It was an experience no one could forget!

After father's death in 1954, Alan and I continued farming the land for mother. Except for a three year period, while employed with the Bank of Montreal, (1957-59) I have farmed there since. Alan has lived in Winnipeg for several years and is employed with Motorways as a diesel mechanic. The farm has been in the family for three generations.

Since I have one son and Alan has three, hopefully it will remain so in years to come.



*Geoff and Betty Covernton with their sons, Charles and Alan.*

## GEORGE BROWNE

George B. Browne was born at Alberttonford, Devonshire, England in 1879. He immigrated to Winnipeg in 1903 and found employment as a carpenter with the CNR, returning to England in 1906 to marry Winnifred E. Archer (born 1877) of Birmingham, Warwickshire, England. In 1907, they returned to Winnipeg, living there for 8 years, as Mr. Browne worked for the CNR.

They had a family of five - George (1908), Bert (1910), Nora (1913) all three of whom died in infancy. Daughter



*Mr. and Mrs. G.B. Browne on their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1957.*

Kathleen was born in 1915 and Jack in 1911.

In 1915, they moved to a 240 acre farm east of the Red River and 1 1/2 miles north of Morris, bought from W. Madill of Winnipeg. At the time, it was occupied by his brother, A. Madill, in the Armour School District.

About thirty acres had been cleared and plowed the year before. The plowing was done by a steam engine run by Geo Moore. The next 20 acres was broken with an Avery gas tractor, run by Mr. Desrocher of Aubigny; the remainder by various tractors. There was very little land broken near the river at that time. Most of the land was covered by brush and large oak trees, and before the appearance of the bulldozer, was cleared by hand and horses, before plowing. After plowing, the stumps were picked by hand, loaded on wagons, hauled to piles and burned. The land was then disced and leveled by horse power, ready for seeding the following spring. Usually to wheat - it yielded good.



*June 10, 1952. W. Swain (right) and G.B. Browne (left) breaking land.*

Some of the neighbours in 1915 and 20's along the east side of the Red River, were the Turners; Coverntons; Pecks; Landrys; Havers; Rolands; Swains; Hoylands; Loches; Frasers; Lanagans; Klymchuks; Miron; Wrays; and Petes. To the east of us the Moffats; Churchills; Lohrs; Schweitzes; Moodys; Irvines; Haywards; Willoxes; and Donalds.

Mrs. Browne lived on the farm until her death in 1959, with Mr. Browne remaining there until his death in 1968.

Their daughter, Kathleen, married Jack Davies in 1938. They lived in Winnipeg and Morris, raising a family of five; Fred, Robert, Elaine, Lorraine and James. When her husband passed away in 1968, she moved back to Morris, where she now lives. Jack Browne still lives on the farm as of 1979.

## FRED PECK

Fred Leanard and Lottie Peck came with their four children to Morris in 1901 from Winnipeg, where Mr. Peck had been employed with the C.P.R. Mrs. Peck's brothers as early settlers had guarded bridges while the Riel Rebellion threatened Winnipeg.

They were born at Goderich and Port Elgin Ontario; their parents coming from Hartford Connecticut and Pennsylvania. The Pecks had eight children; a son Frederick lost his life in the First World War in France. The living family members are Constance Nicholson of Morris, and Cyril Campbell Peck of Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas.



*Cyril C. Peck with father, Frederick F.D. Peck age 20. Killed in action in France in World War I.*

When they arrived in Morris, the family purchased the Conway Block where the Royal Bank is now located. This business was known as Pecks Meat Market and Shipping. Carloads of livestock were shipped to the Winnipeg Stock Yards daily, with the railroad being the only means of transportation for years. In 1905 they built a home in Morris which is still in use.

Being active in public affairs, Mrs. Peck was the church organist for 15 years, for the Methodist, (now United) Church; as well as playing the piano for many concerts. She had the honor of promoting the Womens Institute of Canada by organizing the ladies of Morris, and having her sister, Mrs. Edward Graham, head of the W.I. in Ontario, come to Morris to help establish the first Womens Institute in Manitoba.

In 1912, they purchased 500 acres of land east of Morris. In 1917, 200 acres was sold to Wm. Donald and



*Mrs. Fred (Kate) Davis, Mrs. Ed (Tillie) Graham, Mrs. Fred (Lottie) Peck and Mrs. Fred (Edna) Swain - Four sisters. Tillie Graham, and Mrs. Peck helped promote and organize the W.I. in Morris.*

the Moody Bros. A home and farmstead was built at the Red River by the ferry road, and it was almost 40 years before the first flood came. 1948 was the first one, but the big one was the 1950 flood that did plenty of property damage. As a result of this, today most buildings in the Morris Municipality are placed on higher ground. There was a ferry over the Red River in 1878, a pontoon bridge from 1908-1920, when a steel bridge spanned the Red River without a centre brace structure. This was in constant use until 1967, when a beautiful new bridge was built to replace it. When the ferry road was built, farmers would tie their horses at the homestead, use a boat or walk across on the ice before spring breakup, to shop in Morris. There were some buildings at the ferry road and St. Mary's road which was called "Peck's corner", some of it is now owned by the Schroeder's in the greenhouse business. The farm is still home to Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Peck in the summer, with the land being transferred to a nephew Frederick Nicholson, an engineer for the City of Winnipeg. The Bergstresser Feedlot Company is operating the farm.



*Steel bridge at Morris in 1921. Cyril Peck waving. - "Peck's Corner".*

## WALDEMAR BERGSTRESSER FAMILY HISTORY

I was born in Russia and came to Canada in the year 1928 by ship, arriving at my cousin Robert Bergstresser's on May 8. He was living on a farm in the Frobisher District of Saskatchewan. My brother Erwin came to Canada a year later, leaving our Mother, two brothers and three sisters in Russia. I worked for a farmer the first two years, and one year for my cousin.

In 1931, I decided to rent land on my own near Hirsch, Saskatchewan. We farmed here until 1937, during the depression years, or the 'dirty thirties' as they were called. With hardly any rain, dust storms were common, thus being unable to make a living, we decided to move to Morris, Manitoba, where my cousin and brother had moved a few years earlier.

On June 18, 1937, we loaded a truck and trailer with most of our personal belongings, making a shelter on the truck for our little family of four children. We also took with us two cows, calf, two pigs and about 100 young chickens. We left Hirsch, having some 350 miles to travel mostly on grade roads. Travel was slow, when we reached Melita just before dark we were told not to travel further as an electrical storm was coming. We drove into a livery yard with a barn. We just found shelter in the barn with our family and were nicely settled, when the rain poured down heavily, right through the roof and floor. We grabbed bedding, kids, and all, heading back into the truck, where we stayed until morning. This was the first real rain we had seen in six years, and it was a welcome sight.

The next morning it was still drizzling when we started to drive again. It took us several hours to reach Pipestone on gravel road, or No. 2 Highway. Checking our load after the rain we found almost half our chickens drowned, and disposed of them on the way. It was after midnight when we passed through Winnipeg, arriving at a farm four miles west of Morris in the early morning hours. After unloading our animals and all, we still managed to get a few hours sleep. We thought this trip would only take one day, but it stretched into days because of roads and weather.

The Paschke brothers were renters of the farm to which we came, now owned by the Alvin Wiess Family. The first two years my brother and I were trucking, hauling grain during harvest, and also hauling gravel.

In the fall of 1939 we built our own home in Morris on Toronto Street West. We had volunteer labour which was a great help in the time of need. The next three years I became a Rawleigh dealer in Dominion City District, and one year in Morris. I was also mailman for one year, delivering mail on a Rural Route.

In 1943 my brother and I started farming six miles west of Morris on the 'Anderson Farm'. The second year, after one day of harvesting, heavy rains that lasted three days and nights, left our crop in the field. Many other farmers had the same loss. We were hoping to thresh after freeze-up, but snow came early, and the wild ducks and mice finished the threshing. My brother Erwin stayed on this farm, and I rented land east of Morris until 1951 when the land was sold to a Hutterite Colony.



*Shewman Farm - 1957 - Bought in 1956 by Waldemar Bergstresser and now owned by son, Edmund.*

We sold our home on Toronto Street in 1950 after the flood. In 1952, Dan Walters and I bought the old High School in Morris and remodelled it and built a four suite apartment. We were also managing a store in Morris at this time, but our children not being interested in store work we again turned to farming.

I returned to Saskatchewan, renting my father-in-law's farm for the years 1953 and 1954. In 1955 I bought a farm five miles northeast of Morris and a year later I bought the 'Shewman Farm' close to the Red River. This land was mostly in bush, and my son Eddie and I cleared 200 acres in the 1960's. We began a dairy operation in 1957 and continued with this for the years when I sold the farm to my son Eddie and retired to Morris.

In 1969, I built a store on Main Street, but after two and a half years decided it wasn't the kind of work I enjoyed so sold the business. In 1973, I built a new home on Railroad Street East where we now reside. Partly retired but helping on the farm during the summer months. Once a farmer, always a farmer.



*The Waldemar Bergstresser family. BACK ROW: Eddie, Margaret, Leo. FRONT ROW: Melvin, Selma, Waldemar, Doris.*

Our family of three boys and two girls are all on their own working or in business. The oldest son Melvin married Doreen Paschke, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Paschke. They live in Winnipeg with their four children.

Our second son Leo is married to Norma Lautamus daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Lautamus formerly from Georgetown, Ontario. Leo and his family reside in the Morris area and he is in the trucking business. They

have three children, two daughters and a son. Lynn at present in Bible School, Howard taking his Grade 12 in Morris and Colleen in Grade three.

Our third son Edmond married Cynthia Gray from England, they have five children, three daughters, Alison, Rachel and Sharon, and two sons, Dean and Mark. They are all at home and going to school in Morris. They operate a feedlot on the former 'Shewman Farm.'

Our oldest daughter Margaret married to John Braun of St. Elizabeth son of Mr. and Mrs. George Braun. Margaret and Johnny live in Transcona, East Winnipeg. They have three daughters and one son.

Our youngest daughter Doris, born in Manitoba, married Louie Vann of Lobo, Montana, where they have a small farm. They have one son and two daughters.



*She wan Farm - 1978 now owned by Ed Bergstresser,*

## **EDMUND BERGSTRESSER FAMILY HISTORY**

Born in Hirsch, Saskatchewan, in 1936, my parents Waldemar and Selma, brought me to Morris in 1937. I took my schooling in Morris and my Dad and I worked together until I bought the 'Shewman Farm' from him when he retired in 1967.

In 1960, I married Cynthia Gray, from England. We



*The Ed Bergstresser family. BACK ROW, Left to Right; Rachel, Dean, Alison. FRONT ROW.. Mark, Ed, Cynthia, Sharon.*

have five children, all presently at home. Alison, Dean, Rachel, Mark and Sharon.

My dad and I had been in the dairy business for 10 years and when he retired in 1967, my wife and I continued with the dairy until 1972 when we sold it.



*The Bergstresser Dairy barn as it stands today, now used for raising beef calves.*

I have always enjoyed working with cattle, and I decided to construct a feedlot for beef cattle, this I did in 1974. The feedlot at its construction included two Harvestore Silos, one for high moisture grain, the second for haylage. That same fall I added another silo, and in 1975 a fourth silo was constructed. The feedlot is able to finish 800 head of cattle a year, and we operate this as a family farm without hiring outside help.

## **MERTON SAMUEL IRVINE**

In the spring of 1923, Merton S. Irvine acquired 240 acres of land in the Morris area from his father, Samuel M. Irvine, of the Morris District, near Emerson. This piece of land was situated on Section 10-5-2 East, four miles east and one mile north of Morris.

Merton began his farming career when he was twenty years of age. Each spring he made a one day journey from his parents' home, with six horses and wagon loaded with supplies, to his farm. After farming for the summer months, and fall work completed, he returned to spend the winter with his parents.

There were few buildings on this property; a shack that was his summer home, a large granary, and summer barn for his horses. Without his trusty Ford coupe, life would have been quite lonely those first few years. He purchased his first tractor in 1937 - a John Deere - making farming much more enjoyable.

On June 10, 1937, Merton married Mabel Blanche Stevenson, a Grace Hospital School of Nursing Graduate. She was the daughter of Matthew James Stevenson, on whose land the Stevenson's Evergreen Nursery is located.

In 1938, they built a nice four roomed cottage on their property, adding much to their comfort.

Their son, Sheldon Merton was born June 1, 1940, and their second son, Bruce David was born on July 2, 1942.

In the spring of 1943, they sold this farm to Henry Dauderich, of Morris, and moved back to the Marais District, buying part of the Prairie Queen homestead from his father, and the remainder in 1945, when his parents and sister retired to B.C. Merton and Mabel remained on this farm until 1972 when they moved to Emerson and still reside there at time of writing.

## THE McLACHLAN'S

by Christine M. Nichols

Charles McLachlan was born at Campbeltown, Scotland on September 28, 1872 and journeyed to Canada in 1891. Mrs. McLachlan (Christina Wilson) was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1877 and came to Canada in 1892. They were married in Montreal and lived for a time in the Mount Royal area before coming to Manitoba in 1902, settling first at Bird's Hill and coming to the Morris area in 1907, where they carried on farming, later in the fall of 1908, they purchased a farm near St. Elizabeth where they resided until they retired to make their home in Fort Garry in 1949. They had five children, Alex who married Edith F. Gorham of Bird's Hill, they had a family of three; James Edward who married Mary Finn of Gladstone, they had a family of three; Margaret; Christine who married Dewitt C. Nichols of Arnaud, they had a family of four; and Florence who married Bruce E. Dundas of St. Jean, and they had a family of five.



*Mr. and Mrs. Charles McLachlan. They celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary with many friends from Morris and surrounding towns.*

Mr. and Mrs. McLachlan were good community workers and were members of Morris United Church. Mr. McLachlan was keenly interested in plowing matches and on one occasion shipped his plow and team of horses to Brandon to enter in the Brandon Plowing Match. He also took part in plowing matches at Bird's Hill, Letellier, and surrounding towns which annually held the long awaited affair. His silver cups testified to his prowess in plowing a straight furrow, and other points the judges were interested in. He was also an ardent curler in the Morris Curling Rink and he and Jim drove the ten miles in the cutter regularly to participate, and how they loved curling.

Mr. McLachlan was an enthusiastic farmer, back to the days of the old steam engine and separator with eight or nine men (pitchers and teamsters) picking up the sheaves from the stooks scattered throughout the field and hauling them into the separator. Those were the days when a wet spell arrived, the women of the house would be preparing meals three times a day for ten to twelve men on a wood stove until the fields dried up again. And oh, the pies that were baked, and the huge lunches taken

to the fields when they were busy threshing. A large tank wagon of water always stood near the steam engine and the engineer (my Dad) would be out at 5 a.m. to get sufficient steam up to operate the separator when the men arrived in the field around 7:00 a.m.

But they were happy days. Everyone had time to visit with their neighbors and what good neighbors they were. The first school in the area, Jerome No. 1506, was built in 1909 through the efforts of Mr. Maurice Duprey, later M.L.A., my Dad and Mr. A.J. Fanset - three enterprising men who realized the advantages of a good education for their children.

Our first teacher was Miss Quinn from Prince Edward Island and as there was about an equal number of French and English - we had a bilingual school - in 1909, mind you! We had French readers and were making marvellous strides in mastering two languages, when our next teacher arrived, who unfortunately was not conversant in French.

School days then were a far cry from the present. We hauled our drinking water from the coulee, sometimes having to "strain" it, - no one worried about germs, did they exist then? I remember this little one roomed school with its pot-bellied stove (wood burning or coal) that had to be lit each morning by one of the older boys to be even partially warm for school to start at 9:00 a.m., which continued until 4:00 p.m. Recall Jim McLachlan, my older brother, being one of the boys who walked one and a half miles, even on the coldest mornings, to arrive at least an hour ahead of the other pupils to get heat circulating as the fire always went out shortly after four. For this they received fifteen cents a morning. Even then, quite often the desks were pulled up around the stove for comfort. Then the lovely spring days would arrive, the two old oak trees by the school steps would bud anew, vying with the sometimes tattered Union Jack fluttering in the prairie wind. Personally, I am happy I had the pleasure and privilege of attending a one room country school, from Grade IX on I attended Morris High School and later graduated from St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg. In later years (many years later), I went back teaching when my family were grown up (three were married) for fifteen consecutive years. I taught for four years in the Morris area.

Mother, Dad and Margaret retired from farming in 1949 and purchased a home in Fort Garry. Mother, after a lengthy illness, passed away on March 29, 1958 and Dad passed away suddenly afterwards on May 1, 1958, Alex passed away October 16, 1959, Jim on December 23, 1954, Margaret on April 26, 1974 and Florence on March 7, 1973. All, with the exception of Alex, lie in the Morris Cemetery, so also does my husband Dewitt C. Nichols, who passed away May 5, 1970. They leave wonderful memories of a fine homelife and close family ties.

## JOHN AND BETTY FRIESEN FAMILY

John and Betty Friesen, both of Mennonite background, were married on September 21, 1946 in the old St. Andrews Church on Elgin Street, in Winnipeg.

John was raised 2 112 miles south of their present farm, the son of Isaak and Marie (Mirau) Friesen. Betty





*John and Betty (Braun) Friesen on their wedding day - Sept. 21/1946.*

is the daughter of John and Helena (Froese) Braun of Winkler, formerly of Greta.

At the time of their marriage, John was renting the 400 acre farm they bought. in 1949, on the shores of the Marsh River (1-5-2 East) in Morris Municipality. The farm is set in a beautiful landscape, a delight to a growing family. Winter time, there is skating and ski-dooing; springtime brings muskrat trapping and boating; summer brings fishing; and fall hunting.



*Farm site of John and Betty Friesen.*

The early residents of this farm in the 1920's were Jake Adolf's, Locht's, Gluck's and just 10 years prior to the Friesens' arrival, were the Henry Warkentins.

John loves to work with people. He was 4H leader for 20 years. In the 40's and 50's, he was 4H Seed Club leader and in the 60's, a 4H Beef Club leader. John was active in sports all these years. He was manager of the Ste. Elizabeth Men's Club and Hockey Club, the coach of the Ste. Elizabeth Women's Club and in 1978, coached the Morris Sr. baseball club.



*Ste. Elizabeth Baseball team. Well known for championship on the east side of Morris. John Friesen, 3rd from left, standing.*

In 1969, the Ste. Elizabeth team won the Red River Valley Hockey League Trophy. During the 1940's and 50's, Ste. Elizabeth baseball team captured the Menonite Church league trophy for 5 years.

In 1947-48, John's brother, Peter, taught school at the Molloy School District, the year it was closed. John served as trustee in the Molloy School District until it liquidated.

The oldest daughter attended Ste. Elizabeth School the first seven years. Oft times, winter transportation was a stone boat or sleigh.

In 1961, the Molloy School District was transferred to Morris School District and the eldest 3 children travelled to Morris, taking turns with their neighbours the Steibens.

However, in 1963, the Morris School Division tendered this route and John and Betty purchased a Travelall Van, which they drove until 1969. In 1970, a bus replaced the van, and all the school children from the east side of Morris travel on it, being driven by John, and Betty as a spare driver. The children born to Betty and John are: Linda, 1948; Suzanne, 1952; Randy John, 1953; Barbara Ann, 1957; Jeffrey David, 1963; Allyson, 1970.

Linda went to Success College, while Suzanne, Randy, Barbara Ann attended University, specializing in Social Work. All 4 children are actively involved with people, either in Bible Studies or Social Work. The youngest two are still at home.



*The John and Betty Friesen family. LEFT TO RIGHT Linda and Werner Pauls, Suzanne and Stephen Sirkko, Lorraine and Randy Friesen, Barbara, Jeffrey, Betty and John Friesen. FRONT ROW: Allyson Friesen and grandsons Ricky and Chris.*

Both John and Betty have been active in church and community life. They have been directors for the Manitoba Stampede, participating in curling with the Farmers, and also in town. Betty was reporter for the Carillon News for 10 years, writing the Centennial History of Ste. Elizabeth. She is also on the executive for the Christian Women's Club, involved in Bible Studies, as well as driver instructor for the Morris High School, for the past six years.

During these years, the Friesens were involved in mixed farming - both grain and beef. For a time, they rented part of the W. Buss land in the Morris Municipality. In 1970, they bought a half section in the Montcalm District, later buying land in the De Salaberry District, thus adding to the 400 acre farm they bought in 1949.

Their son, Randy, and daughter-in-law, Loraine, purchased some land east of their farm, also in Morris Municipality, beginning a new generation of Friesens on the land.

## CORNELIUS LOEPP FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Loepp came from Southern Russia in 1926, after suffering persecution during the Russian Revolution. They were wealthy farmers in the old country, and have their lands confiscated. Cornelius was not only a farmer, but an auctioneer as well. Rather than face the suffering that was ahead in Russia, the Loepp's decided to leave for Canada. They realized just



*The Loepp family shortly after they arrived in Canada - 1927.*

enough money for passage for themselves and their children, and considered themselves fortunate to be able to do that. We admire the courage of one at the age of 68, decides to start new life anew in a strange land.



*Grandfather C. Loepp Sr. in 1930.*

The Loepp family spent the first winter in LaSalle with friends, in spring they arrived at the site of their farm in the Molloy School District on Section 13-5-2 East. Their children accompanied them. At this time, their sons were married; Jacob was 29, Cornelius 27, and Abraham 25. Daughter Mary remained single, and lived at home with the folks. The family were members of the Lichtenau Mennonite Church; in fact when grandmother was buried in 1930, hers was the first grave in the church cemetery.

The sons all farmed together for a number of years, until Jacob, his wife and family moved on the land of a neighboring farm just 1 1/2 miles away.

Their son Jacob, his wife Kate, and their two sons Walter and Cornelius moved to Winnipeg in 1941, Jacob passed away in 1974; his wife presently resides in the Lions Manor in Winnipeg.

Abraham and his family left the farm with his family in the fall of 1951; where he owned and operated a Real



*Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. C. Loepp Jr. Apr. 1928 on their farm.*



*Wedding day of Mr. and Mrs. C. Loepp Jr. in 1928. Shown are the guests and their vehicles on the farmyard.*

Estate business until his death in 1963. He is survived by his wife Margaret, and sons Cornelius, Peter, Rudy, and daughter Margaret, all of whom reside in Winnipeg.

The Cornelius Loepp's farmed in the Molloy School District until the fall of 1955, when they moved to Winnipeg. Cornelius passed away in 1973, his wife resides in the Arlington House in Winnipeg.

Their sons Cornelius and George and families, reside in Winnipeg, where they are employed. Cornelius with Westinghouse, and George with Air Canada. Their daughter Mary, is Mrs. Harvey Lee of Edmonton.

Son Jack still operates the same farm today. His wife is the former Margaret Friesen of Arnaud. They have three daughters; Margaret Christine, enrolled in the School of Medicine at the University of Manitoba; Marlene Erica, a registered Nurse of Winnipeg; and Ingrid Dianne, attending school at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna.

## THE LUSSIER FAMILY

*by Christine Nichols*

Emilien L. Lussier was born in St. Leon, Manitoba, January 7, 1922. His father, Edmond Lussier, born November 3, 1894, married Delphine Rivard. Emilien, who had five brothers and one sister, resided originally in St. Pierre. Mr. Edmond Lussier served in the First World War, 1914-1918.

Mrs. E.L. Lussier (Jeanette Bessette) was born in Aubigny, August 9, 1924. Her father, Telesphore Bessette (born 1895) married Anne Saurette (born 1890). They originally made their home in Letellier, Jeanette's mother passed away in 1948 and her father passed away in 1970.

When Emilien was approximately five, his parents moved to the Morris Municipality. (Section 12-5-2 East, which they had purchased from Mr. Smith). They resided there until 1950, when they purchased land in De Salaberry Municipality, where he and his son, Gerald, now operate 1,400 acres.

Mr. and Mrs. Emilien Lussier were married on November 16, 1943, at Letellier Roman Catholic Church by Father Laurin. Interestingly enough, Father Laurin also performed the wedding service of Mr. and Mrs. Edmond Lussier, Emilien's parents. They had a family of three; Paulette (born 1945), Lorraine (born 1947); and Gerald (born 1948).

Paulette attended Empress School, later graduating from St. Jean Convent, after which she was employed as a secretary in the Co-Op Fire and Casualty Co., Winnipeg. She married Cecil A. Chase, a Master Corporal in the Canadian Armed Forces. They have two children; Wendy Lynn (1969) and Darryl Lee (1972) born in Kingston, Ontario.

Lorraine attended Empress School, graduated from St. Jean Convent with her Grade XII, specializing in typing and shorthand. She was employed by the Manitoba Text Book Bureau in Winnipeg, until she moved to Vancouver where she married Otto Krauter. She still resides there.

Gerald attended Empress School and Arnaud High School, then went into farming with his dad. He married Elaine Lindsay of Ridgville in 1974. They have two lovely children; Michelle Leanne (1976) and Dennis Shawn (1979). When Emilien lived at his dad's home, he recalls tobogganning and sliding on iced hills, and swimming in summer in the Marsh River. He attended Molloy School with his first teacher being Miss Cameron; the same school that his mother attended many years previously. The Molloy School was so named to honor Senator J.P. Molloy, who made his home with his family in Morris for many years. Other families in attendance at Molloy School at this time were the Rivards, Dolkes, Loepps, Saracens, Combots, Lohrs and Churchills. Four of the Combat boys served in the Second World War (1939-1945).

During the 30's, they experienced grasshopper plagues, drought, and a few bumper crops with extremely low prices. Cream and eggs were picked up by team and cutter during the winter and brought to Morris as a central unit. They cut ice on the Red River, hauling it seven miles with horses and sleigh, to have good drinking

water. Emilien recalls harrowing with six Diamond Harrows, pulled by four horses and walking up and down the fields all day long, completing 40 acres as a day's work.

In 1937, a grasshopper plague was experienced and Emilien was among those who went out with horse and buggy to scatter poisoned sawdust to control the pests. However, that year, what a wonderful crop of Durum wheat, averaging 40 bushels to the acres, and no fertilizer!! During the winter, he and his five brothers and sister drove in a sleigh with a team to Molloy School, a distance of two miles, in all kinds of weather. In case of a blizzard, the children just let the horses lead them home; they never missed having a safe trip.

When Emilien and Jeanette moved to Arnaud, they lived in a huge three storey all brick house, built by Ross Houston of Arnaud, later Dominion City. Now, they have a lovely modern home; and Gerald and Elaine's new home is also nearby. Emilien at present, is councillor of Ward Two in the De Salaberry municipality.

Jeanette, in relation to the many years she spent on the farm with her husband, did a great deal of outdoor work to make the men's tasks easier. She always had a splendid garden and her flowers, shrubs and artistic additions to the lawn make it a thing of beauty.

Mr. and Mrs. E.L. Lussier are now the proud grandparents of four grandchildren.

## RAYMOND E. LOVING FAMILY

Over the years, Raymond Loving and his daughter Alice, had a lot to do with the Municipality of Morris.

Mr. Loving was born in Nebraska in 1895. Took most of his schooling in the state of Oklahoma. He came to the Morris area in 1915 as an engineer for the Rohrer and



*Pulling 5 binders behind Altman Taylor tractor on Rohrer and Sheppard Ranch, 1915.*

Sheppard Ranch which farmed 6 sections of land using large gas tractors for all field work.

In 1919 he was employed by the H.L. Emmert Land Agency as an engineer and farm supervisor. It was one of the largest farm real estate firms in Manitoba, as it owned land in the districts of Arnaud, St. Elizabeth, Morris, Union Point, St. Agathe, Glenlea, Oak Bluff, Starbuck, Fannystelle and Selkirk, in the Municipality of Morris it



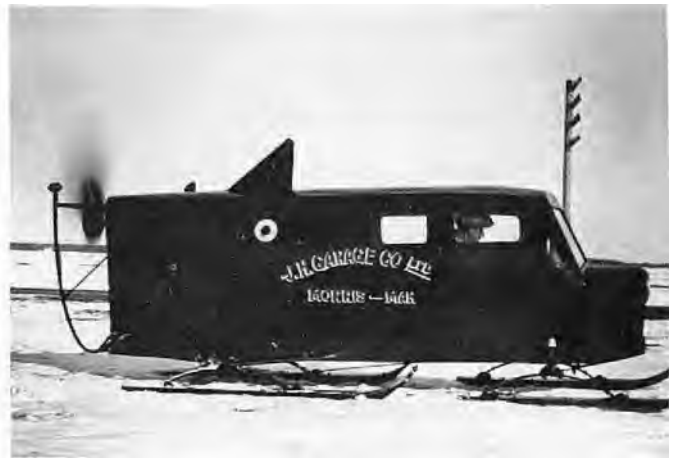
*Ray Loving and engineer W. Kelly with Auliman - Taylor tractor, 1916.  
NOTE: Gas head lamps and drive wheels 3 ft wide and 8 ft high.*

owned several farms east of the Red River, two farms north of Morris, a couple of farms at Union Point and five sections of land in the Sperling district, (which was farmed by Lohr and Kane in the early days using caterpillar tractors for all field work).

In 1922, due to ill health, Mr. Emmert decided to give **all** his land in Manitoba to the Cornell College in Iowa as a Trust Fund. The business was then called the H.L. Emmert Foundation. The Cornell College was governed by a board of professional men that knew very little about the real estate business, so in 1925 to realize money from this large gift, (it amounted to a few million dollars), they formed a Trust Co., in Winnipeg and sold most of the land to Mennonites from Russia on a no down payment basis. This included all the Emmert land in the Municipality of Morris east of the Red River. This was a very large undertaking as houses and barns had to be built, horses, cattle, hogs, chickens and machinery had to be purchased for these people so they would be self supporting and eventually pay off the land. Mr. Loving played a large part in all this work and in helping the people get settled.

In 1926 he formed a partnership with Henry Fontaine and purchased the garage assets of the Anderson Bros., who were operating a garage on Main street, in Morris, in a building owned by the Avery Machine Co. When the depression came in 1929, Mr. Loving quit the Emmert Foundation so he could devote more time to the garage business, although he continued to supervise the farms owned by non-resident owners. In 1932 he purchased the garage building from the Avery Machine Co., and reorganized the garage business under the trade name of the J.H. Garage Co., Ltd. In 1942 he acquired the Massey Harris Machine Agency, for the district, which increased the farm business.

In the late nineteen twenties and early nineteen thirties he built two snow sleds. One had runners in front and caterpillar tracks behind and the other was an aero sled with four runners and an aeroplane engine to drive a four blade propeller, (all the machine work on these two sleds was done by the Walt Hamblin Machine Shop). Both machines were used commercially to transport Telephone men, Doctors, Veterinaries, R.C.M.P. Officers and



*Aero Sled with 200 H.P. aeroplane engine, built by Ray Loving at the J.H. Garage in late '20's used commercially to transport doctors, telephone men and RCMP to rural areas.*

others wanting transportation to rural areas during the winter months.

He took an interest in the affairs of the district and was one of a group that supported the Town of Morris signing a contract with the Manitoba Hydro to bring electrical power to the district. A vote was taken and the project was defeated but the Hydro came to the district, on its own, a few years later.

He liked hunting and fishing. Curled for a number of years. Helped transport Hockey and Baseball teams from town to town. Helped form a golf club that played on what is now the Stampede grounds. One year, while farming one of the farms east of the Red River with horses, entered two and four horse draft teams in the Agricultural Fair and won first prize in both classes. Helped in sport events for the Agricultural Society to keep it going during the 1929-1933 depression. Audited the books for the Society for several years and for the first years when it started the Stampede. He is now a life member of the Society.

During the second world war he helped form an Air Cadet Squadron, of young men from all over the district, and was its commander. Some of these young men came from as far away as Union Point and Domain.

In 1946 he rebuilt the J.H. Garage Co., building, putting on a whole new front and raised the roof four feet so that when completed, the building looked very much as it does today.

He was of considerable help during the 1948 and 1950 floods as he was one of the few that had boats and motors to help evacuate people and live stock.

In 1952, feeling he was leading a strenuous life, sold the garage business to H. Miller of Morris.

In the years that followed, he continued to supervise some farms. Kept books for several business firms. Was Secretary of the Morris Consolidated School District and for years audited the books of dozens of Rural School Districts in the Municipalities of Morris, DeSalaberry and Franklin.

He was Civil Defence Director for the Town of Morris and for the Municipalities of Morris and Montcalm from 1955 to 1967. Helped during the 1966 flood under the

Government Director Bob Wallace. After the flood was over, was one of the main supporters for permanent dykes for the towns of Morris, Rosenort and St. Jean and for high pads for farm buildings in the flooded areas.

He has a Fifty Year Masonic Jewel. He is a Shriner and for the past thirty years, with other district Shriners, has supplied tickets for school children so that about 35 to 50 of them could attend the Shrine Circus each year.

In 1927 he married Reta Erb, the only daughter of Roy R. Erb of Winnipeg. Reta Loving was born in Winnipeg. Went to school in the Arnaud district and in Winnipeg. Went to Winnipeg with her parents when they moved there in 1924 and was employed by the T. Eaton Co., when she married. When she came to Morris to live, she helped in Church and Community affairs. They have one daughter, "Alice". She took her schooling in Morris and when she graduated from high school, kept books for her



*Mr. and Mrs. Ray Loving of Morris, and their daughter Alice, who has been employed by the RM of Morris for 27 years.*

father in the garage. During this time she took time off to take a higher accounting course in Winnipeg. She kept the books for Mr. Miller the first year after he bought the garage and in 1953 went to work for the Municipality of Morris as Assistant Secretary Treasurer. She was also secretary for the Committee that governed the Morris Manor the first five years of its operation. She is now Secretary Treasurer of the Municipality of Morris and in 1978 received a gold watch from the Municipality in appreciation of her years of service.

The Loving family still reside at 138 Main street in Morris.

## McTAVISH



*Marsh's Store at McTavish in 1909 or 1910.*

The four McTavish brothers arrived here from Ontario in the 1880's. Robert, Ed, John and James were community minded. Jim homesteaded the farm occupied by Jacob K.B. Loewen. His was the influence that organized the passing of a petition for the railway to build a station at McTavish, and he served on the Municipal Council for two and one-half years.

Dr. Robert F. McTavish was well known, having his office in the former R.S. Paterson residence in Morris. He specialized in women's diseases, and it's said he delivered his first baby at the age of 18.



*McTavish siding.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Elliot - early pioneers.*



*Mrs. Rosalie McTavish, wife of Ed McTavish at age 95. Last surviving member of the McTavish family. She lives in Calgary with her daughter.*

In 1882, the Thomas Elliots were one of the many couples who headed west with the idea of homesteading. The land had a lot of willows on it, grassy marshes and several buffalo wallows. They are still evident on the land farmed by Norman and Melvin.

Jim Stevenson, in 1883, took a parcel of land south of McTavish at the present Stevenson Nurseries.

The Robert Marsh's built McTavish's first store and post office, on the site that later was the P.T. Wiens residence. Mrs. Marsh operated the store for a number of years, and boarded her brother, Jack Gorby, at their home. Jack went into business for himself, selling oil and International machinery. When the Marsh's retired, Jack Gorby and his wife took over the store.





*Mr. John Gorby Sr., who resided with his daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Robert C. Marsh, of McTavish. Grandpa Gorby served as mailman for many years.*

Fred Huebner, the Ogilvie elevator agent, rented the place when the Gorby's left. The store was discontinued, but they kept the post office.

When Peter Wiens bought the Gorby buildings in 1936, Fred Huebners moved across the road, taking the post office with them.

About 1920, Beaver Lumber in Morris built a branch in McTavish at the present Peter Isaac residence. A huge building, 75 by 80 feet long was built, and 13 carloads of lumber were hauled in to stock it.



*LEFT TO RIGHT: Hank Wiens and Bill Campbell. CPR station agent in 1939.*

Bob Levesque was the first lumber yard manager, to be followed by Mr. Audette. Ten or fifteen years later, this service was discontinued altogether.



*P.T. Wiens, with his store and gas station at McTavish.*

Some time later, Peter Brandt and Pete Bergen operated an Imperial Garage in the abandoned building. Still later, a portion of it was remodelled for a dwelling for John Warkentins, who also opened a small store of staple goods. They also operated a gas pump for Imperial Oil, and later for Trump Oil also. As the business dwindled, the Warkentins moved. During the war years, Mrs. Dick Isaac kept a store in the basement of their home.

Peter Wiens operated his store and gas station until 1961, and they moved away the following year. When Huebners left in 1953, Peter Wiens took over the post office until Mrs. C.K. Loewen took this service into her home. When they left for B.C., the Peter Isaacs became the last postmasters in 1963, until the service was discontinued in 1970.



*Shortage of fuel forced this plane down near McTavish during World War II.*

## **McTAVISH POOL ELEVATOR ASSOCIATION**

*by Herbert W. Poersch*

During the hard years of the dirty thirties, the farmers in the areas of McTavish, Osborne and Rosenort, were dissatisfied with the price and grades they were receiving for their grain at the Ogilvie Flour Mill Elevator at McTavish and the Western Canada Flour Mill at Osborne, so some of the farmers got together. They thought they should build an elevator that was owned and managed by the farmers themselves.



*Elevator agent, Dave Enns, and his family on holidays in 1926.*

A couple of farmers from the district drove around with a petition, to get the farmers' signatures. Isaac H. Cornelson from the Rosenort area, and Carl Steinke of the Lea Bank area had no problem to get the farmers to sign the petition. This petition was taken into Winnipeg to "Manitoba Pool Elevators" and was accepted. As a result, a new 35,000 bushel elevator was built in 1937 at the present site.

NO. 7 **CERTIFICATE**  
 OF THE **McTAVISH CO-OPERATIVE ELEVATOR ASSOCIATION LIMITED**  
(INCORPORATED IN THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA)  
 I, **MR. Alex D. Miller**, do hereby certify that  
 he is a member of, and the owner of **ONE (1)** FULLY PAID SHARE IN THE  
 Association.  
 Witness my hand and seal this **10th** day of **April**, 1942.  
 THE CORPORATE SEAL OF THE SAID ASSOCIATION IS HEREUNTO AFFIXED.  
 DULY ATTESTED BY THE HANDS OF THE PROPER OFFICERS IN THAT BEHALF.

*[Signature of Alex D. Miller]*

The first grain buyer was Alex D. Miller and when the elevator was completed and operating, business was really booming! The first few years, the elevator operated 24 hours a day during harvest, with the grain buyer and three helpers taking in grain during the daytime and loading box cars at night. The elevator's power was a one cylinder diesel motor, mounted in the office. The first officers of the McTavish Board in 1937 were: Arthur Enns, President; Jacob H. Friesen, Vice-President; Henry Goossen, Secretary; Peter F. Brandt, Emil Gorchitza, Isaac H. Cornelson, David R. Friesen, Directors.

The first house for the grain buyer was built by Arthur Enns in 1938, and was sold to John J. Penner of Osborne in 1964. It was moved to the Penner farm and was replaced by the present dwelling built by Loewen Lumber of Rosenort in 1964.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Ogilvie Flour Mill Elevator, McTavish Pool Elevator and three annexes in 1942.

During the war years, (1940 to 1943) three balloon annexes were built to store the grain. These were later sold and replaced by an Overgard annex in 1954, and a Crib annex in 1965. A fertilizer shed was built in 1970 to store bagged fertilizer, chemicals and twine, and in 1976, another fertilizer shed was built for the storage of bulk fertilizer.

The McTavish Pool Association has had five elevator managers since it got started in 1937. Alex D. Miller, Lenard Ashworth, Clifford Pattie, Tony Bouchard and Edward Klassen, who has been the manager for the past 20 years. Ed has received 12 awards for "Best Kept Premises" during his time. The assistant manager is Peter Isaac.

There were a lot of good directors on the local board, such as - Peter Gebauer, Peter F. Loewen, Dick B. Eidse, John Gorchitza, Otto Bunkowsky, Otto W. Froese, John M. Poersch, Albert Kreitzer, Jacob F. Goossen, Norman J. Elliott, John J. Penner, Phillip Miller, Richard Poersch, Donald Gorchitza, John F. Friesen, Art Cornelson. The present officers of the board are: Brian S. Watt, President; Peter K. Friesen, Vice-President; Herbert W. Poersch, Secretary; Jake W. Brandt, Ed Cornelson, Directors. Two of the past directors received a gold wrist watch for over 25 years of service - John M. Poersch and Otto W. Froese. To date \$335,000 has been paid to the farmer in dividends. In 1978, McTavish Pool elevator handled 850,000 bushels of grain.

The board of directors would like to thank all the farmers in the past and the ones to come, for their support in making McTavish Pool Association a success. They hope the farmers will continue to patronize their elevator, to avoid the possibility of the big grain companies swallowing up the Local Association, which were built by and for the farmer.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF WILLOW HEIGHTS S.D. NO. 1029

*submitted by Norman Wiens*

It is unlikely that any of the settlers present at the first meeting for the Willow Heights School District in September of 1899, envisioned the beginning of an educational program in the district that was to span sixty-seven years, and prepare generations of students for many and varied occupations and professions.



Because the records do not provide detailed information concerning those early days, one might assume that the initial classes were held in either a home or business premises. A copy of the register for the second

half of 1899 indicated that there were eight students. On December 20, 1899 plans for the construction of a school house were apparently finalized, as recorded in the minutes of a meeting of that day was a motion to sell ten debentures of \$70.00 each, bearing interest at 6%. The building site, as recorded in the minutes, was the N.E. corner of 11-6-1 East. This is one mile north and one mile east of McTavish. Unless there was a move to a location 112 mile west at a later date, this location is likely recorded incorrectly.

Some interesting motions and items as they are recorded in the minutes of S.D. No. 1029 are:

*January 4, 1905* Moved and seconded that we pay the teacher \$35.00 per month, and if she gives perfect satisfaction \$40.00 per month for the last six months. **carried**

*February 14, 1907* Moved and seconded that we pay non-residence fee of \$69.85 to Silver Plains. **carried**

*July 9, 1951* Special Meeting. Vote to change name from Willow Heights to McTavish. **carried 100%**

*October 22, 1951* The Board agrees to have a school opening on the 10th November at 2:00 p.m. The ladies supposed to bring some pies, cakes, cookies, sandwiches, etc., coffee.

*August 10, 1966* Tender sale of property and transportation to Greenbank discussed.

#### **FIRST SCHOOL BOARD:**

David Moffat, chairman

J.A. Smith, secretary

D. Campbell, auditor

J.A. Smith, trustee

John Moffat, trustee

David Moffat, trustee

Teacher for the Fall 1899, Maude A. Moore. Salary \$420.00 /annum lowest salary per annum appeared to be \$350.00.

#### **LAST SCHOOL BOARD:**

Frank R. Barkman, chairman

Ed Klassen, secretary

**Ben** Isaac, trustee

Norman Elliot, trustee

Teacher for 1965-66 Arnold Hildebrand. Salary \$3,000.00! annum. Enrollment 20 pupils.

#### **FIRST REGISTER DATED 1899..**

Eliza Moffat 9 yrs.

Allie Moffat 7 yrs.

Sidney Moffat 5 yrs.

Nicholas Reid 9 yrs.

Rebecca Reid 7 yrs.

Bertie Reid 5 yrs.

Stanley Moffat 4 yrs.

Alice Scott 12 yrs.

It would appear from the first register that the Reids and Moffats were founding fathers in more ways than one!

Going back to the days when Willow Heights was located one mile north and approximately one-half mile east of McTavish, there were several fairly large areas of willows covering about ten acres of land. No doubt this area of unbroken prairie was influential in naming the district. It was also influential in the education of the students, because the small pond and the seclusion of the willows often became the setting for an extended leave of absence when the pressures of classroom studies became too demanding. Such excursions were not necessarily always under the supervision of the teacher. In most cases the pedagogical philosophy was very much in line with Tom Sawyer's. We thought it was individualized instruction at its best, even though that phrase hadn't made its mark on education at that time.

As a young boy I well remember the one and one-half mile walk during the summer or the winter ride in an open horse-drawn sleigh. The bitter cold often forced to run along behind the sleigh in order to keep our limbs mobile. Our moccasined feet were effectively warmed on such occasions by grabbing the back of the sleigh and sliding along in the snow until one discomfort made us forget another.

Among the most vivid memories are the times during the winter when the classroom was so cold that one's breath was immediately transformed to clouds of mist. Teacher and students would try to make the best of the **situation and classes would go on** even with everybody bundled up in parkas or heavy coats. The highlight of such situations would be to watch for an opportunity, then quickly raise your hand and have the teacher approve your turn to warm up behind the metal shield around the Booker stove at the back of the room. Not only did this area provide warmth, but as was the case with the willows, it provided a temporary reprieve from the lesson on those cold mornings. Many new skills were learned and many experiences were conducted in what we considered "ideal" surroundings.



*Willow Heights school class in 1942,*

At noon we would pry open our syrup pails and gather around the stove to eat our pork and bean or balogna sandwiches, a piece of cake, and, if we were lucky, an apple or an orange. On those days when the ice in the "cooler" melted sufficiently we were even afforded the

luxury of a drink. After lunch we made the best of what little equipment was available. Depending on the season, it was either a soccer ball or a softball and a bat.

I well remember the year that an ambitious young teacher decided that Friday afternoons would be taken up with sewing classes for the girls and woodworking for the boys. It was amusing to watch the older boys, possibly in an attempt to be really efficient in mass production but more likely to get themselves into trouble, place their work squarely on the desk and then saw feverishly, in an effort to create several identical wooden figures. No doubt the idea was not original, as evident from the numerous cuts that jigsaws had made in desk tops prior to our apprenticeship.



*Willow Height's school picnic in 1940 on Snarr's farm.*

After the 1950 flood, plans were made to build a new school. It appears from the minutes of numerous public meetings, that considerable controversy over the exact site was finally settled by arbitration, and the new building as well as the change of name to McTavish S.D. was realized. For the majority of the students this meant that the school would be only a fraction of a mile from their homes. Other benefits were the up to date facilities and much more room. Compared to the days when my older brothers received \$5.00 per month for starting the fire an hour before class time, this new facility seemed to be a dream come true. At that time nobody thought that only fifteen years later the school would be history. It was June 1966 when the doors permanently closed and S.D. No. 1029, like other room schools in the area, became part of the Greenbank School in Rosenort. This was the beginning of larger, consolidated districts that were eventually to become part of the Morris-Macdonald School Division as we know it today.

07



*Willow Heights School around 1914.*

## **WICKLEF CLEO DAILEY** **"My Journey from Iowa to McTavish"**

Wicklef Cleo Dailey was born on the family farm in Bladensburg, Iowa, in 1894. After his marriage to Mabel May Davis in 1916, they welcomed the arrival of a son, Earl, and a daughter, Pearl. In April, 1919, my wife, my son and our new daughter and I moved to another farm also located near Bladensburg, Iowa. We remained there until March 2, 1920, when I billed out of Agency, Iowa in a boxcar for Canada, to establish residency on our one-half section farm near McTavish, Manitoba, Canada.

On March 24, 1920, my wife, son and daughter joined me in our new home, on the S.W. 114 13-6-1 East, the original Dan Campbell farm. They arrived by passenger train in Morris, Manitoba, after a trip which lasted approximately two days and one night.

On June 7, 1942, our daughter, Pearl, married Olan Isaac Leazer, a native of Iowa, and moved to Iowa, where they have lived since. They have two children.

Two years later, our son, Earl, married Audrey Ellen Meakin, on July 22, 1944, remaining in Canada to live. They have three children: Marion Louise Meggison (nee Dailey), David Ross Dailey, and Robert Darrell Dailey.

Earl and Audrey's livelihood was farming, until they sold their farm in 1964.

After our children were married and gone, we moved to a farm near Portage la Prairie, Manitoba in March, 1946.

Our family has gone through many experiences, both good and bad, but we have managed to survive in such a way as to continue the Dailey name.



**DANIEL  
MacKENZIE URE**

Daniel MacKenzie Ure - secretary-treasurer, clerk and councillor for the rural municipality of Morris, was also closely connected with the business interests of this area. He was essentially a self-made man, for at the early age of 13, he was earning his own livelihood and was independent of outside help since that time. He was born in Eldon township, Victoria County, Ontario, on November 25, 1853, the son of James and Isabella Ure. His grandparents were natives of Scotland.

Daniel M. Ure remained at home until he was thirteen, and then began harness-making, in which trade he was engaged for about thirty-five years. On May 10, 1878, he came to Manitoba and worked at his trade for one year, after which time he took up a homestead claim on Silver Plains and farmed there five years, gradually becoming well known and prominent. He was councillor in 1882-83 and secretary-treasurer of the municipality from January, 1884, to February 1893. In 1889, he moved to Morris and established himself in the harness making business. Gradually, his ability drew him into prominence. In 1904, he was appointed secretary-treasurer of the rural municipality, and served in that position until 1914.

Mr. Ure was married on April 21, 1882, to Miss Annie Anger, and they had 13 children, four of whom died in infancy.

Mr. Ure was a member of the Masonic order, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Orangemen, the Sons of Scotland, and the Canadian Order of Foresters. Besides his duties as secretary-treasurer, he was an effective and capable police magistrate.



*Willis Day, and Dwayne Elliot with pet calf in 1930.*



*Whitehead's machine shed after the fire in 1926.*



*Don Elliot entering his welsh pony in the Big M Stampede in 1967.*



*Frank Whitehead farming with his team of horses.*



*Leta Lightfoot, Beatrice Whitehead and son, Bill, in 1932.*

## THE PETER T. WIENS FAMILY HISTORY

It was early summer in 1919 when Peter T. Wiens decided to venture out on his own. His parents' small farm, situated just a short distance southwest of the present village of Kleefield soon became only fond memories.

There was a good possibility that carpenters were needed in the Rosenort-Rosenhoff area, so Peter Wiens gathered up his belongings, namely a saw, a carpenter's square, and a hammer, got on his bicycle and headed west.

At the Red River a row boat was used to make the crossing, as was the custom when the traffic did not warrant the use of the ferry. Upon arriving at his destination good fortune awaited him. Mr. P.U. Brandt, a local entrepreneur, hired him and several seasons of work were soon history.

On October 6, 1922 he married Margaret Brandt, daughter of H.F. Brandt, and the newly wed couple set up residence in the Brandt household for the next six months. In the spring of 1923 they moved to a home of their own. After several more moves they settled in the Steinbach area, later returning to the R.M. of Morris and purchasing a house in McTavish in 1937, (see photo).



*Wiens' home in 1937 at McTavish before renovation.*



*P.T. Wiens, postmaster, at his store in McTavish. Post Office sign above door.*

Mr. Wiens was a person who had a wide range of interest and consequently was involved in numerous ventures and occupations. He worked as a gravel checker and weed inspector for the R.M. of Morris for several years. Among the most significant ventures, were his small general store, the Shell dealership, and postmaster at McTavish. The oldest daughter, Margaret, was in charge of the store and post office for a number of years.

The children received their formal education in the Willow Heights and later the McTavish Schools. A half hour walk was usually their means of getting to and from school except when bad weather forced one of the parents in the neighbourhood to drive the children to school.

The family from oldest to youngest are: Frank Wiens well known throughout Manitoba as a Manitoba Pool Elevator construction and maintenance supervisor, now a contractor in Victoria, B.C.; Henry Wiens an employee of City Hydro in Winnipeg; Margaret Boss of Winnipeg; Bertha McNutt of St. Albert, Alberta; Bernice Sawatsky of Langley, B.C.; Norman Wiens of Rosenort; Jessie Friesen of Abbotsford, B.C.; Leonard Wiens a Metro for the City of Winnipeg.



*Wiens family with Mr. and Mrs. Locky.*

The only member of the Peter Wiens family still residing in the R.M. of Morris is Norman Wiens. He is employed by the Morris-Macdonald School Division as Co-ordinator of Special Education. Prior to this he was the principal of the Rosenort Schools. He is married to Charlotte, daughter of Rev. P.J.B. Reimer (see Reimer family history). Their children David, Paul, and Judy are all attending the Rosenort Elementary School.

During my childhood I remember how we would lie awake under heavy wool blankets on cold winter mornings and wait for father to get a blazing fire going. Everyone would grab his own pile of clothes from the floor, rush to the warmth of the stove and get dressed. It was times like this that made me wonder why I was one of the youngest of a family of nine. Another time when this was a liability, in my opinion, was a particular assignment in school. As a beginner I was asked to cut figures out of the Eaton's catalogue and paste them on a poster to represent my family. Even though my talent with figures was usually considered above average, when the teacher suggested that my project would likely use up the



whole catalogue, my concept of numbers took a considerable battering.

During the boom period of 1948-49 highway traffic was routed past our home due to the construction of the 75 highway. It was during that time that I was able to start my first bank account with tips from friendly American tourists and from the sale of hub caps that we frequently found along the dusty gravel road.



*Norman Wiens receiving a haircut. LEFT TO RIGHT.. Jessie, Bert, Hank, and Leonard Wiens.*

We were always proud of our older brothers because they lived in Winnipeg and came home on weekends with gifts for us. The highlight for me would be to take over the controls of the motorcycle with big brother on the seat behind me. Unlike driving a car, you didn't have to crane your neck in order to see where you were going.

Mother always breathed a sigh of relief when Sunday evening came and our heroes were on their way back to the city. Not that she was glad to see them go, but rather that everybody was still relatively unscathed. Likely the effectiveness of her prayers on such weekends gave her the courage to face the inevitable repeat performance.

Other reasons for the pride in our older brothers were the stories related to use by friends of theirs. We always enjoyed hearing how the neighborhood was entertained by their antics. The "Billy Goat story" was pretty typical.

Apparently a rope was strung across the pen with a bright red bag dangling from it. With practise, the boys would get the goat to make mighty charges, only to have the bag disappear at precisely the right moment. As the battleground subtly shifted from the middle of the pen toward the barn, all concerned, except the goat, began to realize the objective of this game. Siding was cheap in those days and goats were very durable.

The southeast corner of the junction of P.R. 205 and P.R. 330 is no longer the scene of constant activity. The chokecherry and the crabapple trees are gone. They resisted our numerous crude attempts to graft new and unorthodox hybrids only to succumb to the bulldozer that leveled the property after the house was moved. The weatherbeaten, old barn still stands as the only reminder that this site once was our home.

Mr. Peter T. Wiens is now 81 years old and lives in Steinbach. He remains actively involved in numerous activities on the family's farm near Steinbach. His many ties with friends and relatives in this area result in frequent visits that refresh pleasant memories from the past.

## WHITEHEAD

*submitted by MaryAnne Whitehead*

The subjects of this brief history are of Scottish parentage, they having left Scotland and crossing the Atlantic Ocean in the early summer of 1842. They arrived in New York after a comparatively quick passage of thirty days in a sailing vessel. From New York they crossed into Canada and proceeded to a district today called "Avonbank" in an area between Stratford and St. Mary's, Ontario, to settle.

John Whitehead, son of Adam Whitehead and Margaret Ritchie, was born near the English border, in Scotland in 1828. Elizabeth Oliver, daughter of Adam Oliver and Marian Elliot was in 1844 in Ontario.

On March 11, 1870, John Whitehead age 42 years, married Elizabeth Oliver age 26. They farmed on Lot 19, Concession 8, Downey Township in Ontario. Seven children Adam, Elliot, Jack, Jim, Henry, Maimie and Maggie were born there. In the Avonbank church cemetery there is a small tombstone with the inscription on it which reads "In loving memory of the children of John and Elizabeth Whitehead. We could not determine how many children are buried there.

In 1889 or thereabouts John and Elizabeth left Ontario and headed west. By research we believe they came west through Minnesota and up the Red River by boat. They left two young sons, Jack and Elliot behind in the care of Elizabeth's sister Jean (Oliver) and Neil Stevenson. John and Elizabeth with their five young children, Adam, Maggie, Maimie, Jim and Henry, homesteaded the S.E. 114 of Section 1-6-1 East in the R.M. of Morris. They built a low eaved house of rough lumber, which by our standards would be considered small. The windows being few and very small. On Jan. 8, 1891, a son Frank was born to the Whiteheads. He remained on the homestead farm all his life.



*Whitehead's cottage on the farm.*

The eldest son Adam married Maggie McLarty and settled on a farm now owned by Harold Goossen. They had no children. Sometime after 1906 they immigrated to the States and settled in California.

Jack, married in Ontario and after the death of his wife, came west and settled in Tugaske, Sask. Elliot followed his brother, and settled in Tugaske area as well. He never married.

Jim married Sarah Clements, from Scotland. They had four children Andy, Frank, Bob and Betty. The family resided on the Havers farm and Norman Elliot farm for some time before leaving this area for the Otterbourne District. Sarah died in 1939 and Jim in 1949, leaving a young family behind. Andy and Betty are in Manitoba with their families, Frank in B.C., and Bob in Ontario.

Henry, a telegraph line man immigrated to the States in 1906 as a young man, settling in Minnesota. In 1916, he married Minnie Rye of Fordsville, North Dakota. Minnie died in 1918, no children on this union. In 1920 he married Mary Etta Fisher Gaslin at Foreston, Minnesota. They had 3 children, John, Ella Mae and Frances Marian, all still living in North Dakota. Henry Whitehead took up farming and after living in Conway, Fordsville, he took up farming at Inkster, North Dakota. He moved to Larimore, N.D. in 1946. Mary died in March 1957. In 1959 he married Marie Krause. Henry passed away in 1967.

Mamie married A.J. Hughes and settled in Kelowna, B.C. It seems ties were broken and no information could be found.

Maggie married Alexander (Sandy) McLarty in 1903 at Silver Plains. They resided on what is now known as the Manchelanko farm. A son Willie was born here in 1904. They immigrated to Minnesota in 1906 and had 2 more children, Donald, born 1907, died 1976 and Mildred, born 1910, still living in Port Ritchy, Florida with her husband Don Yerxa. Little Willie died in 1908.

When Frank was just a young lad, his parents acted as "foster parents" to five young nieces of his mother's for several years. Marian, Elizabeth, Grace, Hazel and Ruth Oliver, daughters of Elizabeth's brother, James Elliott Oliver and Ella Mae Cox, came to live with the Whiteheads, after the death of their father, in Carnduff, Sask. in 1905. After several months with the Whiteheads, Grace went to live with her cousin Maggie Whitehead McLarty on the Manchelanko farm. She was treated as a daughter and immigrated to Minnesota with the McLartys. Grace Oliver Scheelee is now living in retirement in Mora, Minn.

Hazel, after several months with Whiteheads went to live with a J. Elliott family at Neepawa. She married Elmer C. Baily and lives in B.C.

Ruth lived with her cousin Adam Whitehead and his wife Maggie before going to live with John and Agnes Oliver in Palmerston, Ont. She married a Harold J. Cudmore and lives in Welland, Ont.

Marian and Edith lived with their Uncle John and Aunt Elizabeth for several years. They both attended Silver Plains School and after completing her education, Edith had a job in the T. Eaton store office until the 1920's. She left Manitoba and went to Minneapolis, where she resides today. Marian, after finishing her schooling took nurses training at the St. Boniface Hospital. She spent 10 years at Norway House, and then spent many years at the Six Nations Indian Reserve at Brampton, Ont. until her retirement. She passed away in 1962.

The Whitehead children all attended the first Silver Plains School which was situated on property south of the coulee on what is referred to Dixon's Corner today.

Frank was the only Whitehead child to attend the 2nd Silver Plains School which was built in or about 1906, on the John S. Campbell property, later owned by Wm. Reid. This school was later moved to the Manchelanko property in 1938 and finally closed in 1967.

John Whitehead passed away in 1915 and is buried in the Morris cemetery.

In 1917 young Frank built a four room cottage for his mother. The windows being large, and with 9 ft. ceilings. The walls and ceilings are lathe and plaster, quite a contrast to the homestead home.

Uncle Keith Reid can remember Elizabeth Whiteheads funeral which was held in the family home. The hearse being quite ornate and pulled up a team of black horses. Elizabeth passed away about 1923.

A wood machine shed burnt to the ground in 1926 losing all possessions including a car.



*Frank Whitehead, a horse lover, used them for farming.*

Being a lover of horses, Frank always had horses around his farm. The last horse was sold in 1957.

On Nov. 10, 1927, Frank married Beatrice Evelyn Reid, daughter of William and Eleanor Reid of the Silver Plains District. Still farming with horses Frank had a Hart Par tractor to power the threshing machine. In 1937, he bought his first tractor, a John Deere with steel wheels with lugs. As times changes the tractor was used more than horses. The heating fuel for the house was wood cut and hauled from the Grunthal area. Depending on whether wood had to be cut, this was a three to five day ordeal. A stopover was necessitated at the Boater home in the Carey District where food and shelter were provided. Water was hauled from the Red River for livestock.

Frank and Beatrice Whitehead "boarded" several teachers at their home among them Leta Lightfoot Elliott, a neighbor today.

Frank and Beatrice had four children, William Edward, Harold Nelson, Beverly Maxine and Joyce Winona.

With the family getting older, Frank had an upstairs addition built on the cottage in 1947. This house is still being occupied by his son, Nelson. In 1947, Hydro came to the district, light by turning a switch. The end of an era, cleaning lamp chimneys!



*Frank and Beatrice Whitehead.*

Never travelling far from home, the social life consisted of card parties, at each other homes, strawberry socials and square dances at the school with friends and neighbors, the Earls, Elliotts, Reids and Stevensons, Snarrs, Days and others.

Beatrice Whitehead was educated at Silver Plains and Morris after which she took a Business Course in Winnipeg. She was active in the United Church and the Silver Plains Community Club. She passed away Dec. 4, 1953 at 49 years of age.

Mr. Whitehead attended both the first and second Silver Plains School. He was a school trustee and director of the Pool elevators at various times.

William (Bill) married Gladys Elliott, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Percy Elliott, McTavish, on July 8, 1953. They have 2 children, Gary and Marlene, both residing with their parents in Windsor Park. Bill and Gladys lived on the Carl Dudgeon farm in 1956 and 1957. Bill and Nelson rented the land for 2 years. In 1953 they bought 114 section of the Daley farm, which they farmed in partnership till 1972 when it was sold. Bill has been employed with the Winnipeg Transit for 25 years.

Nelson married Mary Anne Banman on Jan. 19, 1957. Living in Winnipeg till May 1965, they moved to the family farm with their 2 young daughters Wanda Mae and Mona Joy. Nelson's father resided with the young family till 1969 when he took up residence in the Fred Douglas lodge in Winnipeg till his death on Nov. 22, 1972, at 81 years of age.

Wanda was the third generation of Whiteheads to attend the one room Silver Plains School. She also attended school at Carleton, and Morris, graduating from school in Winnipeg in 1977. On Sept. 16, 1978, Wanda was married to Bruce Schellenberg.

Mona attended school at Morris and is at present attending high school in Winnipeg. She resides with her parents.

Beverley married Peter Banman on May 23, 1964. They have 2 sons, John and David. Peter and Bev reside in Transcona.

Joyce married Walter Pempel on Sept. 8, 1962. They have 1 son, Robert, and 2 daughters, Laura and Lisa. They reside in Coquitlam, B.C.

The first traceable deed to the land, S.E. 114 of Section 1-6-1 East is dated 1892, in the name of Frank Whitehead.

Even though we haven't made the 100 year mark, four generations of Whiteheads have already lived on this homestead.

## WM. ELLIOT

*submitted by Laura M. Somerville*

William Elliot (1852-1922) was born in Downey, Ontario and in 1884 married Mary Dodds (1853-1932) in McKillop, Ontario. Mary's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dodds had left Roxboro shire, Scotland, a day after their marriage in 1943, and arrived in Canada fourteen weeks later, settling in the Seaforth area of Ontario. William and Mary Elliot came west soon after their marriage, and lived for a while with his brother Thomas who had preceded him by two years. They soon built shanty on their own property at Section 7-6-2 East in the Municipality of Morris. In 1898 a new home was built which was renovated and enlarged in 1940.



*Home built by Wm. Elliot in 1898.*

Through many years, those who became stuck on the mud road, caught in a snowstorm or arrived by train to find no one to meet them, were soon directed to the farm 114 of a mile west of the Silver Plains station where they were assured a warm welcome, and if required a bed and meals, until the situation was righted.

The William Elliots had three children, William, who died at the age of fourteen in 1899, Mary Ann (1888-1975) and Robert (1890-1919).

The family were early members of the Silver Plains United Church where William served as secretary-treasurer for a time. He was also a member of the school board and a councillor with the R.M. of Morris.



*Steam engine used on the Wm. Elliot farm.*



*LEFT: Emma Carter Elliot, in 1889, wife of Thomas Elliot, who died at the age of 25.*

*ABOVE: Wm. Thomas, and Elizabeth, children of Thomas and Emma Elliot.*

## WM. THOMAS ELLIOT FAMILY

*submitted by Mrs. Roy Rodgers*

Thomas Elliot Sr. was born in St. Mary's, Ontario on August 10, 1854. After his wedding to Emma Carter of England, the couple moved West in 1882 and settled on a homestead about halfway between McTavish and Silver Plains on 12-6-1E. A daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was born on September 18, 1885, and a son, William Thomas on March 10, 1887. His wife Emma died in 1888 at the age of 25 years. Emma's sister Cecelia (Mrs. Robert Taylor of Silver Plains district) died 10 years later, at age 30. Both were buried in a cemetery just south of Morris.

Thomas Sr. remarried in 1889, to Catherine Good of St. Catherine, Ontario and they had six sons and one daughter. John, Percy, Herbert and Edward farmed nearby. George was killed overseas. Alice married and lived in Florida, Robert became a barber and is still living in Chicago.

Elizabeth married Donald Campbell in 1904, and lived a mile north until 1919. They sold, returning to Collingwood, Ontario. In 1925, they moved back to the

Prairies and lived in Carman. Mr. Campbell died in 1949 and Mrs. Campbell on April 6, 1958.

Thomas Jr. went to live and work with his Uncle William at Silver Plains at 18 years of age. In 1914, he acquired the farm owned by Billy Moore, N.E. 1-6-1E, N.W. 6-6-2E. He had married Anna Margaret Schultze who came to Canada with a sister and brother-in-law, Bertha and Peter Johnson in 1909. Anna was born in Prophetstown, Illinois on May 2, 1887. A sister, Roetta, came a year later and married John Elliot. They settled a half mile east of the 'Home Place'. The Johnsons returned to the U.S.A. in 1917. Two of their daughters, Ida and Dora attended Willow Heights School.

Tom and Anna had four children. Bernadine Lallora was born September 19, 1912; Lauren Elvin, June 19, 1914; Ealliene Emma, September 22, 1920; and Dwayne Frederick, June 9, 1927, completed the family. Lauren married Leta Lightfoot of Morris and they have one son, Donald. Lauren farms the original Elliot land at Silver Plains. Bernadine married Roy Rodgers, farming at Domain and they have two daughters, Rae and Ronna, and one son, Roydon. Ealliene married Robert Graydon of Arnaud and they have three sons, Tom, Allan and Rob. The Graydons moved to a different farm at Basswood in 1967. Dwayne works in construction, he, his wife, Elsie, (Fidler of Selkirk), and son, Larry, live in Winnipeg.

Of the many problems our early prairie settlers faced, getting water for animals and home use was a major one. There were a few flowing wells in earlier years but the water was so salty it was used only for the stock. Ponds were eventually dug, but in dry years water had to be hauled from the Red River. In winter, ice was cut, hauled home and packed in sawdust to be used for drinking and to keep provisions cool in summer. Many people packed ice in covered wells.

Milk was hung in tall creamer cans until the cream came to the top. The milk was run off from the cans by using a tap in the bottom. Butter was made in a barrel churn, turned either by hand or foot pedal. It was packed in crocks or made into pound prints to sell or exchange for sugar, salt, yeast and other staples.



*Thomas Elliot Sr. family of McTavish. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Herbert, George, Alice, Percy, John. MIDDLE ROW: Thomas Elliot, Elizabeth, Mrs. Elliot. FRONT ROW: Robert, Edward.*



*Tom Elliot of Silver Plains plowing with seven horses.*

Harvesting was always a busy and exciting time of the year. Until the late 1920's, threshing was done by a big Steam Engine and Separator that the two Sr. Elliot Bros. had purchased as a family project. Everyone had his own special job in the operation. Tom Elliot, Jr. was one of a few who could operate the Steam Engine. After har-



*The Thomas Elliot family at Christmas, 1963.*

vesting all the family farms, many neighbors benefitted until they could buy smaller outfits run with gas tractors. One year they finished the day before Christmas. With 16 or more men to feed four times a day the women found their days to be long as well.

There was time for pleasure and visiting. Church picnics and fowl suppers were annual events, Box socials, concerts, skating and dances in homes were popular in winter. A young man would think nothing of walking to Union Point to play footfall after a day's work.

Tom and Anne lived and worked on their farm until his death on July 24th, 1965 at the age of 78 years. Mrs. Elliot spent her last ten years as a resident of 'Morris Manor', she died May 31, 1976. They shared their home with friends and were very proud of their family. The grandchildren delighted in listening to them share their memories of life on the prairies.



*Mr. and Mrs. Lauren Elliot, with Donald and June, 1977.*

## MR. AND MRS. LAUREN ELLIOT

In October, 1942, Lauren E. Elliot was wed to Leta B. Lightfoot, making their home on the farm Section 1-6-1 East so Lauren could help with the farm operations.

During the fall of 1946, we moved our house onto 6-6-2 East and rebuilt it on a cement foundation. We were happy to have the hydro come through this area in 1948,

but this was also a sad year for us. I was stricken with polio in August and was confined to King George Hospital during harvesting and fall work.

Lauren was employed as assistant at Silver Plains Pool elevator while "Bun" Levins was the agent.

Like all other members of the community, we were forced to leave our home and possessions during the 1950 flood. Lauren spent several days working along the river and coulees assisting neighbours to get out livestock and furniture, only to come home one Sunday and find we must move immediately. After a few preparations, we made our way to Silver Plains at midnight in a wagon with a sow and litter of young pigs. The next day, we journeyed to R. Rodgers, at Domain, then on to Roland, where we stayed with our friends, "The McCallums".

During the 1966 flood, we again moved our livestock to the lightfoot farm at Crystal City, but we were able to live in our home.

In 1950, the Farmers' curling club became active and Lauren curled with Morley Stevenson. In 1951, Morley's rink with his wife, Helen, Lauren and I, was the first one to win the F.C.C. aggregate cup.



*Morley Stevenson's rink, the first to capture the F.C.C. aggregate cup in 1951.*

Lauren has always been fond of horses and so was our son, Donald, who looked after ponies belonging to Harry Shewman. Lauren bought one of these, a black and white welsh, for Donald and he was successful in winning the first prize trophy for two years in the Big "M" Stampade parade. He also won many ribbons in open competition, and in the 4-H light horse club. Donald was a member of cubs, scouts, and the rifle club.

We were both interested in the progress of the community. I was secretary-treasurer of the Silver Plains School District, an active member of the Silver Plains community club and the Progress Rebekah Lodge No. 48. Lauren was on the board of directors for the Silver Plains pool elevator and a trustee of our local school board. We are all members of the Morris United Church.

Donald attended Red River College, graduating as a qualified auto body mechanic and is now employed at Shannon Ford, Winnipeg. In June, 1977, Donald married June Edwards, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. Edwards of Otterburne. They reside in the Otterburne area. We still live in our home on the farm.

## MR. AND MRS. JOHN HENRY ELLIOT

A farmer all his life, John Henry Elliot was born on June 2, 1890. He worked with his father on the home farm Section 12-6-2 East, until 1917, when he took over the S.E. 114 12-6-1 East as his own farm. This land is now owned by Lloyd Rhymer.

On June 26, 1912, he married Roetta Schultz of Prophetstown, Illinois. From this union, a son Kenneth Edwin, and a daughter, Marjorie Mary, were born. Kenneth E. was wed to Elizabeth Curtis of Winnipeg, in May, 1935. Marjorie M. was married to Earle K. Downey in January, 1940, and they were blessed with two children, Diane and Wesley.



*John and Roetta (Schulz) Elliot, on their wedding day in 1912.*

In the early years, dad farmed with horses, his only equipment being a plow, drill and harrows. Harvesting was a family effort, using a steam engine, (Sawyer Massey) separator and sheaf loader. The precious cargo of grain was hauled to the elevator or the granary by horse and wagon. Later years, he did some custom threshing with his tractor.

Besides growing good crops, he was interested in raising cattle, pigs, chickens, turkeys for Swifts or Burns Company in Winnipeg, with some for home use. Dad enjoyed growing strawberries, raspberries, and other small fruits. Friends and strangers alike delighted in our strawberry shortcake or servings of strawberries and cream. For many years, during the summer, mother made a Sunday afternoon treat of strawberry ice-cream.

Dad was a good provider for his family; we always had our own meat - beef, pork and chicken. Mother canned chicken, beef, put fried pork chops down in crocks, made butter, lard and homemade sausages. She enjoyed baking bread, buns, pies, cakes and cookies by the crock full. They also cured their own hams and bacon. Mother made her own soap, did the sewing, was very fond of embroidering and crocheting and also made many quilts. She was never idle. For relaxation, Dad enjoyed hunting and fishing.



*Threshing on John H. Elliot farm with the Sawyer-Massey steam engine.*

The farm water supply had many sources and uses. We had both a pound and cistern. Pond water was used for watering the stock, as well as for washing, cleaning and bathing; the ice water was used for drinking and cooking. Every winter, ice was cut from the Red River and hauled home with a team and sleigh, to be stored in the large ice house. After the ice house was filled, it was packed with sawdust to preserve it from melting.

Betty and Kenneth lived on the home farm in their own home, while he was assistant helper to Jack Agar of the Silver Plains Pool Elevator. After six years, he was transferred to Brunkild as agent, later serving at Cypress River and Cartwright. He retired from the services of the Pool Elevators in 1978. Their only son, Allan, his wife, Merilyn and family, live in Nanaimo, B.C.

After many years of hard work, Dad sold the farm in 1962 to the late John Rhymer, continuing to live in the farmhouse. They grew their vegetables and looked after a smaller fruit garden until Dad's health began to fail him. He passed away on August 31, 1965, and mother on August 10, 1972. They were both laid to rest in the Morris cemetery.

## PERCY AND MARGARET ELLIOT

Percy was the son of Katherine and Thomas Elliot. his parents had come from Ontario and settled in the Silver Plains District.

Percy was born June 16, 1892, living his early youth on a farm at Silver Plains and attending the local school. He took a station agent course, but employment was hard to find. On October 16, 1919, he married Margaret Gorchitza, daughter of Caroline and Jacob Gorchitza. Her parents had immigrated from Poland to the Lea Bank District, where Margaret was born and raised.

Upon their marriage, Percy and Margaret moved to a farm at McTavish. He became an Elder in the United Church; she an honorary life member of the S.W.L. in Morris. Many years trustee of the local school. They celebrated their 50th Anniversary quietly with their family at the Windsora Motel in 1969. Percy died June 18, 1970, following a short illness. Margaret now resides in the Red River Valley Lodge, still taking an interest in local events.

Elliot's had 3 children - Norman, Gladys and Melvin. They all attended the Willow Heights School.

Norman began farming at an early age, but did other things as well. He worked in a pulp and paper camp on Lake of the Woods in the winter of 1947. He was also





*Percy and Margaret Elliot with family - Norman, Gladys and Melvin in 1946.*

employed at garage stations in Morris, and at Flyer Industries as an interior finisher of transit buses. Norman served in the Second World War, and when he began to farm, rented his uncle's land. Today Norman farms on 23-6-1 East, and 13-6-1 East. He married Miss Rita Lavallee, daughter of Alex and Tillie Lavallee, of Headingly, Manitoba. She has continued her profession as a school teacher. They have 3 daughters - Noreen, Mrs. Jacques LeBlanc, of Pinawa, is a school teacher. Melody is a school teacher and stenographer in Calgary, Alberta. Lori, Mrs. Brian Thompson, is employed with the Bank of Montreal in Winnipeg.

Gladys, Mrs. William Whitehead, resides in Windsor Park, St. Boniface, Manitoba. They have two children, Gary and Marlene, both living in St. Boniface.

Melvin, who now resides on the home farm, started farming with Norman, renting land from Carl Dudgeon. He farmed all his life, buying the home farm in 1971. In 1950, he married Miss May Rolle, daughter of Elizabeth and Samuel Rolle, of Virden, Manitoba. Her father was a soldier in the 1st and second wars - well known farmer and horseshoe player in the Virden District.

May had previously joined the Morris Hospital staff in 1945; the old hospital was then on Boyne Avenue. She remembers a trip made with the local doctor and many considerate Lowe Farm curlers on almost impassible roads, to attend the birth of a bouncing baby at a farm house west of Lowe Farm, Manitoba. May helped establish hospital rooms in the local hotel, during the 1948 flood. In 1950, the present hospital was opened early, due to another flood. Unfortunately, tireless hours of work by the men from local and surrounding districts was not enough; the hospital dykes gave way and the patients quickly evacuated by Army Ducks to the C.N. Station. Many local nurses assisted. The train, following a flat car over the wide, rushing Morris River, proceeded to Winnipeg. The patients were established in the Winnipeg Pavillion. Following their marriage in August, 1950, May has continued her profession, commuting from their farm. She is also Vice-President of the Horticultural Society, and a yearly worker with the Stampede activities. Melvin is an ardent curler.

They have one son, Mark, who obtained his education in Rosenort and Morris Collegiates, and the University of Manitoba, obtaining the M.C. McKay bursary in agriculture. Mark was a member of the 4-H for 8 years and later worked as a director of the Horticultural Society. He is presently employed as Interior Foliage Landscaper of Southern Tropic Plants at St. Germain, Manitoba.



*Christmas celebrations of the Percy Elliot family.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Percy Elliot at golden wedding celebration in 1969.*



*Mel and May Elliot on their Silver Wedding Anniversary.*



*Philippe Vermette with wife, Berthe, daughter, Alice, son, Andre, and baby, Clovis in 1912.*

### **VERMETTE SETTLERS (1888-1979)**

The Vermette family, who came from France, lived in the province of Quebec since the 1660's.

In 1888, one of them, Joseph Vermette, decided to move with his wife, Sophie Verdon, and family of 8 to the Red River Valley, near Morris. They settled on River Lot 303, two miles south of Morris, west of the river. The price of land at the time varied between \$2.00 and \$10.00 per acre.

Like all early settlers, this family had to go through many hardships. They started by building themselves a log house to dwell in, then the other needed buildings. They had a few cattle to furnish the family with the meat, milk, and cream. The Red River was their only source of water. Slowly they cleared some land. With the horses, they worked it, then seeded the wheat they would sell for a living.

As Joseph's family grew older, they married and moved away. Wilfrid settled one mile south of St. Jean Baptiste. Henri settled east of the Red River. Alberic bought a river lot three miles south of Morris. Menesipe bought lot 305, next to his father, while Philippe, the youngest, stayed on river lot 303 with his parents. The

girls were Pamela (Mrs. Conrad Touchette), Victoria (Mrs. Henri Cyr), and Maria (Mrs. Doria Pelletier).

In 1907, when Joseph died at the age of 57, Philippe, who had married Berthe Touchette the previous year, took over the farm. Living next to the Red River which flooded quite often, caused many inconveniences. In 1913, Menesipe died, therefore, Philippe bought his river lot, 305. In 1917, on that lot, a little further from the river where there was higher ground, Philippe decided to build a new house and move his family away from the spring floods. This house, though remodelled, is still lived in today. In the same year, he also built a big barn.

On this homestead, Philippe had a family of 14. When Andre married Odile Levesque in 1935, he bought river lots 317-319 just one mile south of Morris.

In 1938, Clovis and Ovide left the family to settle on a section of land east of Aubigny. Clovis married Therese Rioux in May, 1939, while Ovide married Denise Robert in October, 1939. Lucien married Agnes Audette in 1943 and moved to the Carey district. Roland died at 16 years of age in a tractor accident on the family farm. Gerard (1st) died when only 4 years old, from pneumonia. Armand married Emilienne Audette in 1950, then settled in Ste. Elizabeth. Gerard, (2nd) the youngest, stayed with his parents on the farm, where he is now the owner. The girls, Alice (Mrs. Aime Beaudette) lived in St. Jean Baptiste; Yvonne and Anges (Sisters of the Holy Names); Annette (Mrs. Victor Marion); Fernande (Oblate Sister) are all in Winnipeg. Irene (Mrs. Gabriel Ritchot) lived in Silver Plains on river lot 465.

In 1958, Philippe retired to the Town of Morris, where he lived till his death in 1965, at the age of 83. His wife passed away in 1972 at the age of 82.



*The Gerard Vermette family. BACK ROW: Gerard Vermette, Julie and Nicole. SEATED: Cecile (St. Hilaire) Vermette and son, Denis.*

In 1958, Gerard married Cecile St. Hilaire and took over this homestead, where they still farm and live with their family of three; Nicole, Julie and Denis.

We hope that this homestead will stay in the family for at least another three generations, since this is a pleasant district to live in.

# **THE MENNONITES - A PEOPLE**



## THE MENNONITES - A PEOPLE

by Peter J. B. Reimer

The ancestors of the Manitoba Mennonites are mostly of Dutch-Frisian-Flemish origin. During the early part of the 16th Century, they were so seriously persecuted for leaving the state church and establishing a church of believers with adult baptism, that they fled to wherever they found refuge and tolerance for their existence.

After clinging to their native tongue, Dutch, for two centuries, they finally dropped it and adopted German, around the middle of the 18th century. They now had the Low German for their daily vernacular, and the standard German for their writings and worship. The Low German is spoken to the present day by 100,000 descendants in many countries.

In 1788, many of the Danzig area Mennonites moved to the Ukraine, settling vacant land with hard work and determination, being invited by the Tsarina of Russia, Catherine II. The Mennonites had a reputation of being God fearing, hard working and good farmers. They also believed in non-resistance and the Tsarina promised special concessions - exemptions from military service and religious freedom.

The Mennonite colonies were regarded as the most prosperous rural agricultural communities in the entire country. Though they lived separate lives, divided from the rest of the land, their numbers grew and their influence increased. Less than a century after the promise was made, the Czarist government withdrew their main privilege of being exempt from military service.

The word spread rapidly, and the Mennonites became alarmed, that their sons and grandsons would be called to take up arms, and they decided to leave Russia. When the Russian government saw that most of the Mennonites were preparing to leave, they compromised and offered alternate service.

However, one-third of the Mennonites were determined to go to America anyway. The majority went to the United States. Canada had hoped to get about 40,000 of these desirable farming people to settle in Southern Manitoba, with hard working loyal subjects for Her Majesty's government. Only about 7000 of these Mennonites arrived from 1874-78.

The Canadian government sent the German speaking Wilhelm Hespeler to Russia to invite them to come to Canada. The church appointed Cornelius Toews, a brother of the bishop, and David Klassen, as delegates to come to Canada and inspect the land. Accompanied by many tears and prayers, these two men left their homes on April 14, 1873, on a long journey to America, particularly Manitoba.

They travelled at Canadian government expense, although the church had provided them with a considerable amount of Russian money for the journey. After an absence of almost 4 months, they returned with a written document from the Ottawa government of promises and privileges for the Mennonites, who would come to Manitoba as immigrants. These promises caused great excitement among them. The main points were:

1. A reservation of eight townships east of the Red River for exclusive settlement of the Mennonites.
2. Each male member 18 years or older could get a free 160 acres of the land with the option of buying the other remaining 480 acres of the section for \$1.00 an acre.
3. Complete freedom from military service.
4. Complete control of their own schools (later the Dominion government added the words: according to law, which meant provincial law, as it came to light in 1919).
5. The Canadian government would pay \$30.00 for each adult, \$15.00 for each young child and \$3.00 for each infant, towards their travelling expenses.

The reserved eight townships were mostly bushland, swampy and stony. David Klassen was impressed with the land he had seen west of the Red River, which was open prairie ready for the plow.

### THE JOURNEY TO CANADA

The reports of David Klassen and Cornelius Toews, his colleague, caused great excitement in the villages of their people, and preparations for emigration were immediately started. The first group of 65 families, 327 persons started out with the leadership of the two delegates, from the Boroshenko settlement in June, 1874. They



*LEFT: Wilhelm Hespeler, liaison for the Canadian government With the Mennonite immigrants.*

*RIGHT: As the emigrants left their homeland by rail, they crossed the Russian border, as the one pictured here. Photo courtesy Louise Bartlette.*



would emigrate in a number of groups within two years to cope with the disposal of their properties.

The group reached their nearest seaport, Nikopol, where they boarded a boat, which was to take them to the large seaport, Odessa. Since there was a fund to assist the poorer members of the group, they elected Heinrich Ratzlaff as the treasurer. He had to cope with the different currencies, as they passed through the European countries. The railway took them from Odessa via Berlin to Hamburg, the large seaport on the North Sea. Here another smaller group joined them to cross the Atlantic Ocean. From Hamburg, the ship took them to Hull, England, where they disembarked to go by train across England to Liverpool.

Before they could board the "Austria", there was a health check and the John Klassens were turned back because of scarlet fever, which caused considerable heartache. The Austria set sail on a Tuesday morning to cross the Atlantic Ocean to Canada. Very soon, a moderate wind became stronger, and by evening, the waves began to rock the boat pretty badly. The storm got

The next day, a Saturday, was cleaning day and following that was a Sunday, so the group organized a religious service. They were very thankful for having survived, and the captain enjoyed their singing. However, when it got foggy, they had to quit their singing, so the foghorns could be heard. The long ocean journey lasted for seven days. Nothing but water. Arriving at Halifax, a cannon shot was fired as a greeting.

They were transferred to a train, which took them to Toronto, Ontario, and then to Collingwood, the Great Lakes Harbour. A boat waited for them, which made the journey through the Great Lakes to Duluth. They boarded another train, which took them to Moorhead, a Red River port. Now, they were getting closer to their destination, and they were on their own for provisions.

At Toronto, some Ontario Mennonites had offered them ham, beans and dried apples for food. However, David Klassen had declined the food, advising that they should keep that for the other groups, which would come later, and which would need the help more, being poorer. This was quite true, because Klassen's group had more cash with them than any of the others following. The 65 families had \$68,000 cash with them, which amounted to more than \$1,000.00 per family on the average.

They contacted a baker at Moorhead for bread. He did not have enough on hand but promised to meet them four hours later, at a certain place down the Red River, to deliver. They boarded the "International" and proceeded slowly to the designated place, where the baker waited for them with all the bread. It was a three day journey down the river, before they arrived at Winnipeg, the capital city of Manitoba. At that time it had just a few thousand population. It had been a slow tedious journey along the winding river. In some places the water was so shallow, that the boat had to be pulled with a cable and pulleys.

They went to Winnipeg to do some shopping, but before they were allowed to land and make their purchases, William Hespeler, the government representative, met with the two delegates, Toews and Klassen, to discuss the choice of the area for settlement. Some serious differences arose about this. The government of Ottawa



Passport of H.D. Warkentin, when he came to Canada at the age of 6. Dated, August 22, 1875.

even worse the next two days and almost everybody, men, women and children, became seasick. The fourth day, the storm calmed down and people got better again.



The shopping centre of the 1890's - Market and Main St., Winnipeg.





*The Hudson's Bay Company steamer the "International", at Fort Garry in 1874 with the first group of Mennonite settlers from Russia. It was estimated the Mennonites spent \$50,000. in Winnipeg in the summer of 1874. After having carried these supplies on board the International, they steamed back upstream along the Red to the mouth of the Rat River, where they disembarked.*

had only reserved eight townsites east of the Red River. Cornelius Toews was satisfied to go to this reservation, but David Klassen was not. He was determined to go west to the prairie, even if it was a little further away from the city. 47 families stayed in the Toews group, and 18 were in the Klassen group.

When the "International" turned upstream to the landing place at the point where the Rat River empties into the Red, it was the last day of July, very hot, and the air filled with mosquitoes. These insects were a new experience for the immigrants. After disembarking, some Red River carts took the baggage, the women and small children, while others walked to the shelter erected by the government four or five miles away. While the women and children waited at the Immigration Hall, where rain and mosquitoes entered freely, the men went out to look for suitable sites for villages. This group of over 300 Mennonites arrived at this place July 31, 1874; the whole journey had lasted two months.

#### SETTLEMENT ON THE SCRATCHING RIVER

David Klassen took his group, and they set out for their new home along the banks of the Scratching River. They arrived on August 14, to discover that no preparations had been made for them. It must have required considerable courage to move thirty or forty miles away from the main group into an entire wilderness, but here they established the villages of Rosenhoff and Rosenort.

Fall was here, and winter approaching; there was the task of putting up sufficient shelter for the families, and the few cows and oxen that had been purchased. The cruel Manitoba winter would soon be upon them, but

they were a brave people, their stout hearts full of trust and hope in God, who had, they believed, led them into this wilderness to establish new homes.

For their homes, they dug square holes up to four feet deep on the river bank, with the opening facing the river. The walls above that were three feet high, covered with rafters with loose earth piled on it. The entrance was closed with a canvas. The floor space would be just large enough for the family of eight or ten children to sleep side by side, and leave enough space at one end for the cow or ox if they had one.

There is a record that the first child born in the settlement on January 6, 1875, was born in such a shelter, to the Peter H. Duecks. The little baby became the well known Johann F. Dueck, the father of the present Mrs. I. H. Cornelson (Justina).

David Klassen and some other families decided to move to Winnipeg for the winter, and attempt surveying and house building in the spring.

The first winter was very hard on them. Their potatoes, they had bought for food, froze. Some of the cows lost their tails and ears from the frost in the shelter. Springtime was much later than they were used to in the old country. When reports came about the warmer climate south, several of the families that had settled, and a larger number of newcomers from Russia decided to go south, some to Kansas and Nebraska, where relatives and friends had settled. However, enough newcomers came from Russia in 1875 to make it 29 families in the two villages.

One of the difficulties of the settlers was the water problem. Wells yielded only salt water. The river water was always brownish and only somewhat clear if they poured it into basins and let it set for awhile. The rain



water caught from the roof of the house with wooden shingles into wooden barrels was also brownish. They had to get used to this kind of water. They soon learned to dig holes, build a little shed over the hole and then fill the hole with blocks of ice from the river in wintertime. This served as a refrigerator, lasting almost all summer.

Fuel was scarce. The closest woods were at least 8 or ten miles away. The trees were cut, sawed into short pieces and split in the wintertime, then piled in rows to dry in summer. For making coffee in summertime, the women would simply gather some sticks along the river bank, to light a quick fire for heating the water. Manure chips picked up in the summer, were another source of fuel.

Within a few years from the summer of 1874, a group of 30 to 40 families established themselves in two villages. Rosenhoff was about 5 miles north of the town of Morris. This village was a little over a mile long along the east bank of the river. The strips or parcels of land were four miles long in an easterly direction from the Meridian Line. Three of these strips were 660 feet wide and eleven of them were only 330 feet wide. About a mile further north the village of Rosenort started. The strips here were all 330 feet wide, and nearly 2 miles long. Listing the pioneer families who became fairly well established together with the young couples who got married during the first few years of the settlement we have the following:

<i>Rosenhoff</i>	<i>Rosenort</i>	
Gerhard Harms	Jakob T. Enns	Johann T. Enns, minister
Cornelius Eidse	Martin Warkentin	Heinrich T. Enns
Jakob M. Kroeker	Johann T. Friesen	Jakob Harms
Gerhard Siemens	Peter Fl. Dueck	Cornelius Friesen
Johann K. Friesen	Johann von Niessen	Gerhard Goossen
Heinrich L. Friesen	Jakob Toews	Peter Goossen
David Klassen Sr.	Isaak Loewen	Johann P. Friesen
Abraham B. Klassen	Mrs. Martin Rempel	
David B. Klassen	Martin K. Rempel	Gerhard Thiessen
Jakob B. Klassen	Peter M. Kroeker, minister	David Thiessen
Johann Loewen	Klaas Brandt	
Heinrich Warkentin	Franz Froese	
Abraham Eidse Jr.	Cornelius Cornelsen	
Abraham Eidse Sr.	Abraham Friesen	
Gerhard Warkentin	David Hiebert	

This list is possibly not fully correct, because of many changes during those early years which are very hard to establish. A man like Heinrich W. Brandt moved in from

the East Reserve in 1891 and others came later too. Although the male adults all took out homesteads, they often did not even know which quarter section their homestead was, because they preferred to settle in the rural type of village, to preserve their way of life. They were very much a separate people because they felt that becoming involved with the outside world could rob them of their precious Christianity.

Implements were of a primitive type and the oxen were few, so that at best only a few acres were seeded the first

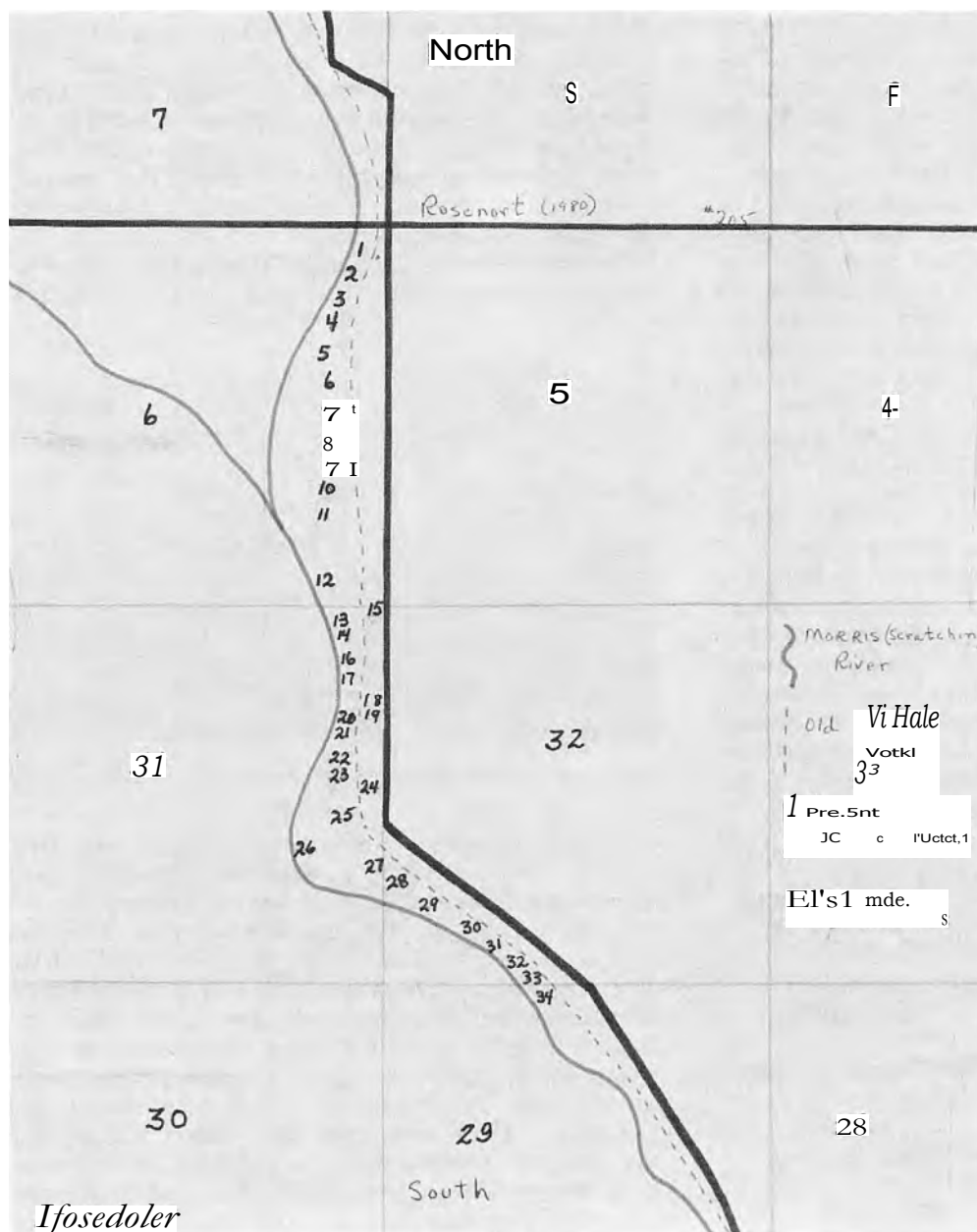


*Oxen and a wooden beam plow were first used by the early settlers.*

few years. To make it worse, the grasshoppers were very bad the first two years, so that very little grain was harvested in those meagre years, and yet they thrived.

In the summer of 1876, less than two years after the first settlers came, J.W. Down, a government official from Ottawa, came to take a good look at the different Mennonite settlements in Manitoba. In his report of August 2, 1876, to the Canadian Government, he was tremendously impressed with the progress they had made in less than two summers. He reported about the Scratching River settlement that "they live in two villages, each family living in a well built and in some cases even very large, frame house. They had large herds of cattle, oxen and horses, which meant the common pasture for the village. They had seven hundred acres of wheat, oats, barley and potatoes. This was about 24 acres for each family. Then they had at the time of his visit already broken 225 more acres of land for the next spring and were breaking still more. Each family had a very fine clean garden of all kinds of vegetables". He did not mention any orchards, but they were planted a little later. And, of course, each family would have its own flock of chickens and a number of pigs. These settlers were almost completely self sufficient. This was their separate culture and way of life. The larger the family, the larger and more varied the farm. The official also noticed many mowers, reapers, hay rakes and threshing machines. He claimed that he had never in any country seen better fields of grain. Nothing else compared to the industry of these settlers; they were a hive of busy bees and a credit to any country.

The European style of village life disintegrated around 1900, when individual farmers sold their "strip farms" and took possession of registered homesteads. This



1. Peter Goossen
2. Gerhard Goossen
3. Cornelius Cornelsen
4. Klass Friesen and Cornelius Friesen
5. Isaac Harms
6. Klaus Brandt
7. Johann Klassen
8. John Enns
9. David Hiebert
10. Frank Froese
11. Peter M. Kroeker
12. Jacob T. Friesen
13. Gerhard Harms and Jacob Harms
14. Martin Rempel
15. Comic Rempel
16. Peter Rempel
17. Wit we Rempel, John Rempel
18. Mill (Also John Peters)
19. Peter Toews
20. Jacob Toews
21. Isaac Friesen
22. Isaac Loewen
23. Heinrich Dueck
24. Peter H. Dueck
25. John P. Friesen
26. Von Niessen, Janzens, Peters
27. John Friesen, Songleader
28. Martin Warkentin
29. Henry W. Brandt, (store)
30. George Rempel
31. Jacob Enns, Henry Enns
32. Jacob Rempel
33. Heinrich Warkentin
34. Henry Thiessen

disrupted the village plan, but the Canadian way of life had begun.

When World War I came in 1914, the Mennonites all over Canada felt uneasy, and the Rosenort people were certainly no exception. They felt the pressure in a special way, from their neighbours, who were fighting and they, the Mennonites, were staying home. What made it even worse, they were regarded as Germans because they used that language, and the fight was against Germany. They had never been political-minded nor had any connections with Germany. Would their exemption from military service hold, when the draft was introduced in 1917? Yes, it did. The federal government kept its promise. However, there was still pressure on their German language, and the result was much more far reaching than anybody dared to think at the time. This was particularly volatile where the school situation was

concerned. Otherwise, they regarded their nationality as Dutch, the origin of the ancestors.

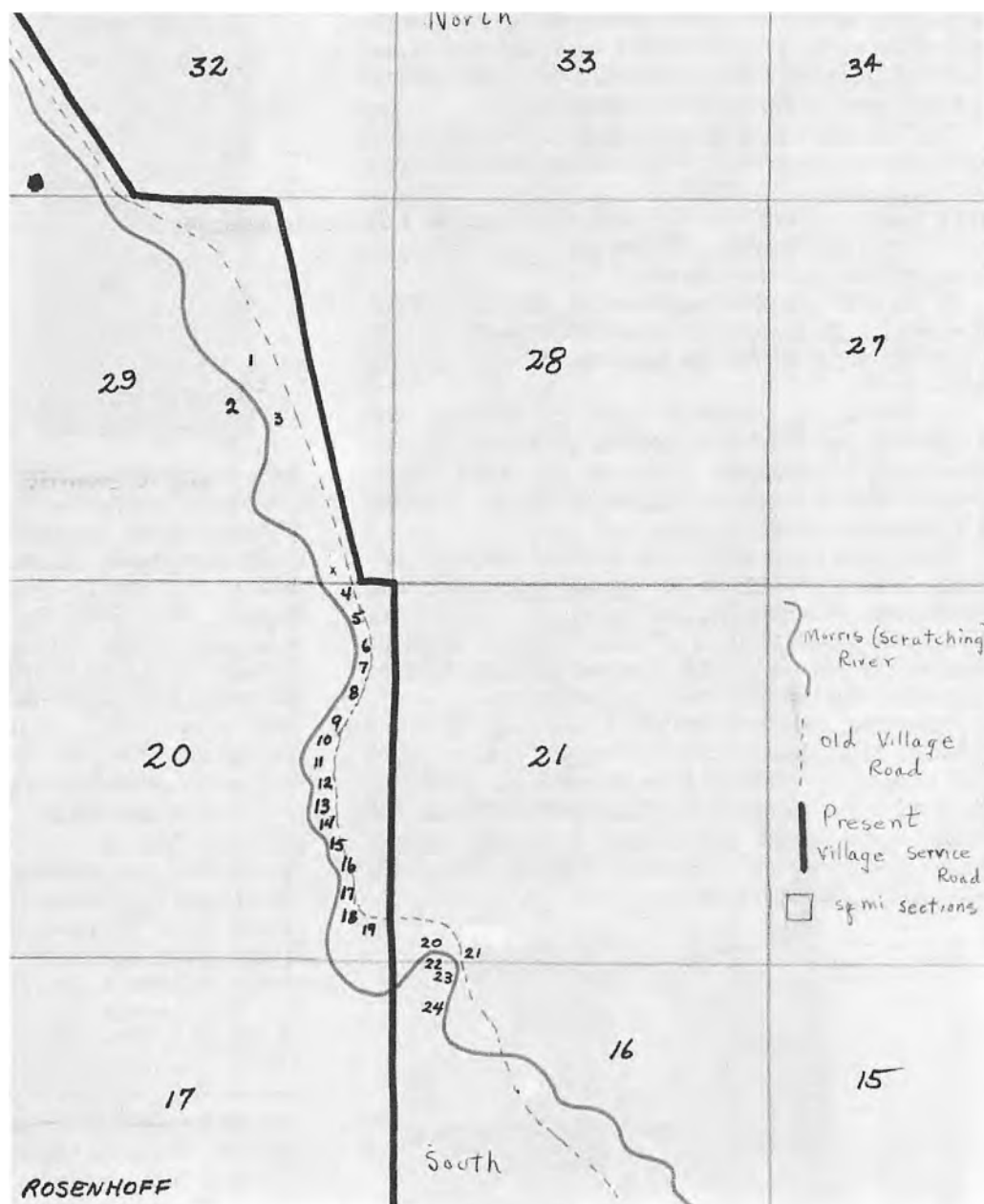
## ROSENHOFF ROSENORT THE PLACE OF ROSES

by Dick B. Eidse

When the Mennonites decided they wanted to move to America, they sent delegates ahead to "look over the land". One of these delegates, David Klassen, was interested in the land along the Scratching River, and when he returned to Russia, he told his friends and relatives about the good farm land, and the abundance of wild roses he had seen growing there,

While visiting Canada, David Klassen made a deal with the land agent, to erect a large building south of the present Lorne Loewen home, so there would be tem-

1. John R. Dueck
2. David Thiessen
3. Peter Isaac and David
4. Abram Eidse Jr.
5. Gerhardt Warkentin
6. Abraham Eidse (widower)  
also Heinrich Eidse
7. Heinrich Warkentin
8. Johann Loewen
9. P. Loewen
10. Abraham Loewen
11. Abraham Klassen
12. Jacob Klassen
13. David Klassen Jr.
14. David Klassen Sr.
15. Heinrich Friesen
16. Johan K. Friesen
17. Gerhardt Siemens
18. John Loewen
19. Jacob M. Kroeker
20. David Thiessen (store)
21. Jacob Kroeker Jr.
22. Cornelius Eidse
23. Peter Hiebert
24. David Friesen



porary shelter for families when they arrived. They were greeted with disappointment, when they discovered on their arrival, that this promise was not kept.

Since no surveying had been done, and no buildings erected, many families decided to settle in Winnipeg for the winter months. The menfolk only, came to help establish those families who decided to brave the winter.

David Klassen's family while in Winnipeg, discovered there was a demand for milk, so to help with a badly needed income, they bought some cows. The youngsters who delivered the milk had an extra benefit, that of learning the English language. One of these was 11 year old Helena, (later Mrs. A.E. Eidse) who later became a nurse and midwife; her knowledge of English made her a valuable interpreter at times for Dr. McTavish.

In spring of 1875, the pioneers moved to the Scratching River settlement, settling in two villages, Rosenhoff, and Rosenort. They were about 5 miles and eight miles

northwest of Morris. The family names recorded in the "Brandbuch" (fire insurance records) consisted of the following: Brandt, Cornelsen, Dueck, Eidse, Enns, Friesen, Froese, Harms, Klassen, Kroeker, Loewen, Rempel, Siemens, Thiessen, Toews, and Warkentin. There were also some single people who left no descendants in the area.

The village of Rosenhoff as originally settled, consisted of "cougels" lots 4 miles long and 330 feet wide. The west end was the Meridian Line, and the east end is where the CPR tracks are now located. The farm yards were situated in somewhat of an even row between the river and the village road (now called Riverside Drive). The settlers that had less productive lots got "schodroden" (compensating lots) north of the village, which were used by all villagers to pasture their cattle. Thus the owners of the schodroden received revenue from pasture fees. Herding cattle on these lots was often done by new

immigrant families, as it provided a source of income, and also a place to live, because a house was located just north of the village for this purpose. The Rosenort village plan was similar, but not exactly the same.

Building plans were brought along from Russia, and hence the same house-barn combinations were built in the European style. The settlers bought as much lumber as their finances permitted, and then they used the sods which they had plowed off their new fields. All roofs were thatched with bullrushes.

A big brick fireplace was used for heating, baking, cooking for the family. Straw and livestock dung bricks especially prepared for this purpose, served as heating fuel.

In Russia, the material used for clothing was homespun, but in Manitoba, good cloth could be purchased for a reasonable price, so the ladies bought "store" cloth to make clothing for the family. The wool for knitting was often homespun.

The settlers relied quite a bit on their vegetable gardens. Wild strawberries thrived on their land, and saskatoons, wild cherries, and plums grew close to the Red River. Wild game in abundant supply, could be procured for the table; such as prairie chickens, rabbits, wild ducks and fish from the Scratching River.

Recreation, or entertainment as such, was generally frowned upon. However, many enjoyed fishing. Older folk were often experts at table games such as checkers, but the favorite pastime was visiting back and forth. The young people skated, played football, or other running games. Long horseback rides to see what was "beyond", was popular, and later bicycles.



*Pete, Jake K. and Henry F. Friesen on horse, by the bridge at Ralph Lewis'.*

One real hardship, was the complete lack of medical aid and quarantine laws. Some years after settlement, a diphtheria outbreak destroyed most of the young children in the area; with some families losing as many as three, within a few days. Another scourge was typhoid fever, which was a common occurrence while the pioneers used drinking water from the river. The church saw a real need here, and appointed some of their lady members to train as nurses, bone setters, and midwives.

As midwives, Mrs. John P. Friesen, and Mrs. Klaas Brandt (nee Margaret Friesen) were the pioneers, followed by Mrs. Henry D. Warkentin (nee Maria Friesen, daughter of Mrs. John P. Friesen and niece of



*AT LEFT: Mrs. Abram E. Eidse, midwife, bonesetter and undertaker. ABOVE: Mrs. Justina Rosche, midwife in the 1930's and 40's.*

Mrs. Helena Eidse), Mrs. Henry Brandt (nee Elizabeth Warkentin, sister-in-law of Mrs. Maria Warkentin), Mrs. William Rosche, Sr. (trained in Germany), Mrs. Abram Eidse (nee Helena Klassen), Mrs. William Rosche, Jr. (nee Justina Brandt - granddaughter of Mrs. Margaret Brandt), Mrs. John P. Friesen (1850-1934), a contemporary of Mrs. Margaret Brandt, was a practicing midwife for at least 30 years, up to about the year 1920. Seasonally, she would be in great demand, sometimes being away from home for a week, seven days in succession. She trained her daughter, Mrs. Maria Warkentin and her daughter's sister-in-law, Mrs. Elizabeth Brandt.

Mrs. Margaret Brandt (1838-1933) practised her skills for about fifty years. It is related that her son Henry, born in 1876, was one very hungry baby when his mother was delayed by complications in a maternity case.

Mrs. Maria Warkentin (1870-1923), and her aunt Mrs. Helena Eidse, shared the duties of their profession and agreed each one to practise in her own territory. Thus, Mrs. Eidse would be on call in Rosenhoff and Mrs. Warkentin in Rosenort.

Mrs. Warkentin received about three dollars per delivery and she delivered about one hundred babies. She was also called upon in cases of blood poisoning, diarrhea, children's ailments and accidents. Her satchel contained home remedies and patent medicines in the "Mrs. Sommers" line. She depended upon medical books and her practical experiences to serve her community.

One young man, Henry Warkentin, lost his life in a blizzard in the winter of 1876, when temperatures fell to -49F. He was found about a mile south of Rosenhoff, the victim of the vicious winds and cold. His horses managed to survive the ordeal.

Whatever local government was needed by the early settlers, that did not come under the authority of the Brotherhood assembly of the church, was handled by the village council. Each village had a committee of three elected members headed by the Schultze, and their responsibilities were similar to what our Municipal Council faces today. In 1876, when the Mennonite settlers erected the first bridge across the Scratching River, it was likely initiated by the Village Council.

Agricultural development was quite rapid. The soil was rich, and the settlers thrifty and hard working. The land was almost free from stones, but the good Red River clay

had produced lots of wild roses, and sturdy willow clumps. While breaking the new land, some of the lads got a rough ride over the handles of their walking plow when it hit a willow stump. Fortunately, none of these misadventures proved fatal, just produced bruised bodies and hurt spirits.

Before the CPR came through, all travel to Winnipeg was either by oxen or horses. A return business trip by ox team took about a week, and by horse about three days. On one of these market trips the settlers came across a gun battle near Union Point, between the police and some horse thieves. After the smoke cleared, the police conscripted the best team of horses, and took the wounded prisoners to Winnipeg. The team was later returned to the unhappy owner, who did not agree with his horses being used for those purposes. However, he was compensated for his time and trouble.



*Scenes such as this were common, as many families left the village and moved to Mexico in 1949.*

Colonization has played an important role in the life of the area from the beginning. Just after the turn of the century, quite a number of families took up homesteads in Sask. and Alberta. Another major property change took place in the late 1940's, when nearly one quarter of the residents left for Mexico, and established a settlement there. During the last 20 years, the colonization program has been in company with other Mennonites. A number of settlements have been established in other parts of



*P.C. Loewen family enroute to Mexico, stopping here at the P.B. Bartels in Meade, Kansas.*

Manitoba, including the Interlake area and on the Man.-Sask. border.

Today, the village of Rosenhoff as it was formerly known, is more or less dispensed. A population map would show that the farmstead along the Morris River, and the former village site still are the favorite building sites, some now inhabited by newcomers, but mostly the

offspring of the first settlers. The name Rosenhoff no longer exists to depict the area, as the name of the garage and store has been adapted as well to the community, since the closing of the schools due to consolidation. Riverside is now, Rosenhoff was then; but many still remember.

## THE CHURCH (KLEINEGEMEINDE)

It was in 1812 that Mennonites withdrew from communion of the Mennonite Church and organized themselves into a compact group or congregation. They were nicknamed *Kleine Gemeinde* (Small Church) because they were actually only a small minority of the whole Mennonite Church of the Molotschna. By authority of the civil government, they were finally recognized as a separate Mennonite Church in 1843, and then adopted the name they had been called. The majority of the church moved to the new settlement of Borsenko, not far from the city of Nikopol.

In the year 1871, the Molotschna Municipal authorities had requested the minister Abraham Klassen repeatedly to serve on the jury. Klassen, of course, refused, and finally wrote a letter of explanation to Peter Schmidt, the Justice of the Peace, because he was threatened with a heavy fine if he would not serve. He finally won his case. The Small Church would have nothing to do with any kind of worldly office. The next year they had an even more severe test of their faith in regards to participation outside the organization of the church. Higher government authorities requested them at their new settlement of Borsenko to establish their own municipal government. The ministry of both churches drew up a petition, in which they explained their position in some detail. They had a meeting at Blumenhof with some officials and a government conciliator. The latter declared in their favour, and they were not obligated to organize their own civil local government, although they would gladly pay their taxes as loyal subjects of the czar and obey all laws to the best of their abilities.

Then came an external danger which threatened to bring about the biggest change ever. The Mennonites all over the Ukraine were getting excited and alarmed about the intentions of the Russian Government in regards to military service and a bigger Russian influence over their schools. These were two very fundamental threats against Mennonite Christian doctrine. Several Mennonite deputations to St. Petersburg returned with very vague answers. When emigration fever began to mount, the Canadian Government sent the German speaking Wilhelm Hespeler to Russia to invite them to come to Canada, particularly southern Manitoba, which had become the first western province in 1870, and was in very great need of good agricultural settlers.

Emigration to Canada became a reality. When the settlers moved in, they held their worship services alternating in different homes each Sunday. Then the services were held in the schools, as it was convenient to use the school benches for pews. Worship service was alternated in the two villages, because they were only one congregation. There was only one leader or bishop, who



*School and church services were conducted in this building, the former Frank Froese home. Note the absence of paint, as this was considered a show of pride.*

would be invited to baptise the converts every springtime and officiate at communion. Peter M. Kroeker and Johann T. Enns were the ministers in this settlement, and in 1878, Jakob M. Kroeker was also elected.

Economically the settlement began to prosper. Farm machinery began to improve and horses replaced the slow oxen. The soil was good for wheat growing and some was exported from the community to raise cash. Then came a very serious church crisis, which caused a great deal of grief.

Bishop Peter Toews was a well liked religious church leader and felt that the whole Small Church needed a spiritual revival. He invited Johannes Holdeman from the States to come and hold evangelistic meetings in the Small Church in the winter of 1881-1882.

The result was that between one-third and one-half of the total membership of the Small Church (41 members) broke away to form a new church, which became the Church of God in Jesus Christ (Mennonite), often referred to as the Holdeman Church.

This put much responsibility upon the Kroeker brothers at the Rosenort-Rosenhoff Church. They contacted Bishop A.L. Friesen of Nebraska. He came, and ministerial elections were held, with school teacher Johann K. Friesen elected as minister, and Abraham Eidse as deacon. A year later, Jakob M. Kroeker was elected as Bishop over the Small Church in Manitoba.



*Rev. and Mrs. Johann K. Friesen. Mr. Friesen was the minister in the Kleinegemeinde Church.*

To some extent, even social life was disrupted in the villages by the division in the church.

The whole ministry of the congregations of the Small Church in 1901 were quite determined to stick fully to the old traditions of doctrine. Any and all new material inventions like window curtains, bicycles, or brass on harness, or whatever, was regarded as unscriptural and a show of pride, which was the opposite of humility and to be discouraged at all cost. This attempt to preserve simplicity and the application of rather harsh discipline kept the church membership from growing very fast, although families usually were large. In 1904 the church membership at Rosenort-Rosenhof was only 114, which was probably just a few more than it had been in 1881, just before the big division.

In 1920, the congregation built their first church about two miles south of the present Rosenorth village. In 1949, a new church was built nearby.

Another big struggle was against the automobile. This convenient horseless buggy looked like a very dangerous object Satan was using to break down our Christian humility and spiritual well-being. Brethren who bought one were asked to sell it again, and were deprived of communion until it was sold. However, resistance to the car broke down in the East Reserve, and consequently weakened at Rosenort, too. At first only touring cars were favoured, but in time that changed, too. Considerably later, even in the 1940's, the installation of hydro electric power became quite an issue. Tractors were accepted a little more readily, because they were simply a good assistance in better and bigger farming.

In 1914, Bernhard R. Dueck was called to the ministry. Jakob B. Kroeker, a son of the minister Peter M. Kroeker, was elected to the ministry in 1921 and two years later he was elected a bishop. Brother Franz B.



Car

*In 1920, the congregation built their first church across the road from the present site. In 1949, the building was sold and moved.*

Kroeker was elected in 1930, as well as Jacob R. Klassen, grandson of delegate David Klassen.

The Small Church was always very cautious when it came to introducing something new. The first Sunday School session in this congregation was held on June 10, 1935. They still warned against the use of musical instruments in the homes, artistic singing, higher education, ball games, all photography, life insurance, uncovered women's heads in church, mixed bathing, avoidance of communion, frivolous behavior at brotherhood meetings, and so on. In addition to this,



great caution was still to be exercised in inviting ministers of other churches.

When World War II broke out against Nazi Germany in September, 1939, it had far-reaching consequences for the people of the Rosenort-Rosenhof Church. Naturally, it lowered the interest of the young people and also many older ones in the German language. When compulsory military service was brought in again, the Mennonites could not possibly just stay home, so they accepted



*Manitoba C.O.'s who fought fires in the B.C. forests during the war. Photo courtesy of C.B. Dueck.*

Alternate Service. The youths of draft age were sent to a forestry camp to work for the government, although many also had the doubtful privilege of working for some big farmer, usually non-Mennonite. They could keep only a small part of their earnings for pocket money. The bulk of their earnings went for the Red Cross. For most youths the camp experience was beneficial. They came into contact with other youths with the same convictions from other Peace churches, which helped to enrich them spiritually.

The whole Small Church faithfully supported the Relief Organization of the Mennonite Churches during and after the war, and also joined the Mennonite Central Committee of Manitoba and of Canada as it was organized. They became particularly interested in the Mennonite Disaster Service, which is a branch of the M.C.C.

All this involvement in Alternative Service during the war, and with missions and other changes in the practices of the Small Church, and particularly the dangers of ever further involvement with the outside world, produced a growing uneasiness and restlessness among the ranks of the more conservative-minded of the Small Church. The result was that about 32 families decided to leave for Mexico in 1948. Many families were divided, and it was a sad event seeing them depart from our midst.

In September, 1952, the ministry of the whole Small Church decided, after years of discussion, to give the Church the name "Evangelical Mennonite Church". (Kleinegemeinde.) Peter L. Friesen had been elected minister in 1951, and Bishop in 1955. Frank P. Kroeker was elected in 1957, and Melvin Dueck in 1958.

Many people have also gone to Latin America and other parts of the world as missionaries. Some of the earlier ones were; Cornie B. Loewen, John Kornelsen, Dora Friesen, Edward Friesen, Alfred Friesen, Ben Eidse, Jake Kroeker, Justina Brandt, Martha Bartel, Frank Braun and Frank P. Kroeker.

Dave Harms was elected a minister in 1960, and Nick Friesen in 1961. In 1974, Bishop Peter L. Friesen retired, and the minister Johnny Loewen was elected to the ministry.



*This church was built in 1949, just between the two villages. It was destroyed by fire.*

## ROSENORT EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CHURCH

The first church in the village was built near the present site between the location of both Mennonite villages, in 1920. A larger church was erected just across the road, in 1949. As the families grew, expansion was found necessary.

On August 9, 1973, during the early morning hours, this church, which had just been newly remodelled, despite the efforts of all, burned to the ground. A building committee was formed immediately, and construction begun. With the assistance of much voluntary labour, the church was finished, at a cost of \$200,000.

When P.L. Friesen, pastor, retired, Johnny Loewen was elected to serve the congregation, and is presently pastor. Today, the congregation numbers about 300.



*Exactly one year after the fire in August, 1974, the congregation held the first church service in this building.*

## PLEASANT VALLEY EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CHURCH

In the year 1962, the Rosenort congregation began to plan an enlargement of the church that had been built in 1949. After considerable discussion and planning, the brotherhood decided it would be more advantageous to form a new congregation, further west. This would fulfill a twofold purpose: it would reduce membership in the Rosenort congregation, and secondly, it would accommodate the families living in the Pleasant Valley school

district. A church building was purchased and moved to the Pleasant Valley school site, and the charter members became an indigenous group. This new congregation was now located about 5 miles northwest of the "Home Church". Dave F. Eidse, who was a minister at the Rosenort congregation, was elected as pastor. A little later, Frank K. Friesen was elected, he is the present pastor. This church has over 80 members.



*Pleasant Valley E.M.C. Church.*

## THE MORRIS FELLOWSHIP CHAPEL

In the 1950's, a few families of the Rosenort church had moved into the town of Morris, and by 1959, the Church decided to establish a mission there. A small building near the hospital was used for this purpose. For several years it was served by various ministers. The missionary Cornie Loewen, who had returned from Mexico, was asked to help organize the group into a congregation, and become its pastor. A number of families from the rural area joined there as well. They built a new church in 1967, and now have a membership of about 115.



*Morris Fellowship Chapel.*

## ROSENORT FELLOWSHIP CHAPEL

In 1967, plans were **made** to establish a mission church in the village of Rosenort. The persons on the first board who worked hard to bring this about were; Art Cornelsen, Syd Reimer, Jacob W. Brandt, Jacob D.



*Rosenort Fellowship Chapel, the former Greenbank school.*

Rempel, **P.J.L.** Friesen and others. Rev. Melvin Dueck was voted unanimously as leader, and P.J.B. Reimer as assisting minister.

The new Fellowship was fortunate to acquire the almost new two-roomed Greenbank School for the price of \$10,000. In 1974, a new bungalow was added to provide more room for Sunday School, as attendance increased. **In** 1975, Rev. Fred Friesen was elected pastor, and the following year, construction was started on a new building centrally located in Rosenort. The new church built at a cost of \$250,000, was dedicated in 1976, and continues to grow, with present membership at 135.



*The new Rosenort Fellowship Chapel constructed in 1976.*

## THE HOLDEMAN MENNONITES

Our **church building** is located four miles west along highway No. 23, and six and one-half miles north of Morris on section 1, township 6 and range 1, west.

This congregation of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, was organized in March, 1882. Two evangelists from the United States, namely: John Holdeman and Markus Seiler, were instrumental in forming this congregation after the following procedure:

Peter Toews, a bishop of the Kleine Gemeinde church at Gruenfeld (now Kleefeld), Manitoba heard of and was impressed with John Holdeman's teachings in Kansas, and decided to go there for an investigation. During this visit, after getting acquainted with the Church and with Brother Holdeman, he invited Brother Holdeman to come to Manitoba.

In 1881, Brother John Holdeman and Markus Seiler came to Manitoba to conduct evangelistic meetings in the villages. These meetings were conducted in private homes.

The deceased Brother John T. Enns, who had been a minister in the Kleine Gemeinde church, was among the first to leave his former church and accept Brother Holdeman's teachings. Many others were convicted and convinced that they needed to be instructed in the way of God more perfectly. A number of the younger people were quite easily convinced, but it took more time for many of the parents and older ones. Parents began to pray audible prayers, which till then had not been customary with them. We now had a total of 41 members, following the baptismal services in 1882.

In the course of time, quite a few of the brotherhood, including some ministers moved away to different localities. As a result, labourers were few and when the church saw the need, they had a ballot vote and elected Gerhard Goossen for the ministry. He was ordained by Wilhelm Giesbrecht of Steinbach in 1906. Minister John T. Enns passed away suddenly on September 4, 1917, at the age of 66 years, leaving Minister Gerhard Goossen and Deacon Jacob Enns to minister to the flock.

There was a time when we had only 23 members. In those days, we were not accustomed to having regular revival meetings as we now have them. The parents became deeply concerned about their children as it was time that they should be converted. So they called Minister Hiram Mininger in the year 1916, to help with evangelistic meetings. Brother Mininger had a wonderful way of convincing the youth of their sinful ways. Many were converted. Nineteen souls were added to the Church through baptism. In the years following, the Church gradually increased in number. In 1919, after having conducted worship services, first in the homes, and later alternately in the Rosenhoff and Rosenort schools, the brotherhood decided to erect their first worship building on a plot of ground acquired from the deceased Brother and Deacon, Jacob Enns.

In 1924, the brotherhood elected Gerhard F. Goossen and John D. Penner for the ministry. They were ordained by Minister F.C. Fricke. In 1931, Ed D. Penner was elected and ordained as a deacon. On June 22, 1937, Minister Gerhard Goossen, Sr., died at the age of 78 years.

Sin was reproved and punished, vows were renewed, and sinners repented with the result that 36 souls found peace with God and man and were baptized into the fold.

On August 1, 1942, the aged deacon, Brother Jacob Enns, passed away, at the age of 86 years. On February 3, 1942, John P. Isaac was elected and ordained as deacon. On December 1, 1943, John P. Isaac and Walter Goossen were elected as ministers and ordained. On the same date, Henry Goossen was elected and ordained as deacon.

The congregation grew to a point where the house of worship was inadequate, so a new building was erected on the same site in 1949, which serves us to the present time.

The community, which included nearly the whole brotherhood, went through a major disaster in the spring of 1950, when, due to heavy snow, rains, and ice jams,



*The Church of God in Christ at Rosenort.*

the Red River flooded, causing the Morris River to flood also. The community and brotherhood was almost completely evacuated, some to our neighbouring congregations east of the Red River and others southwest to Lowe Farm. Living among kind neighbours and under a good government as we do, much help was given us both financially and in labour.

On December 13, 1954, George L. Penner and Ben P. Goossen were elected and ordained as deacons.

In the spring of 1962, Minister Walter Goossen and Deacon George L. Penner, with their families moved to Grandview, Manitoba, where a new congregation was started.

Alva Froese was ordained to the ministry on March 17, 1963. After serving us faithfully till 1968, he and his family moved to Roblin, Manitoba.

Due to a need to replace those of the ministerial staff who had moved away and also seeing the need of more labourers to overlap with our older staff, another election resulted in Jake E. Bartel for the ministry. He was ordained December 7, 1964. Elmer Penner was ordained as minister on December 11, 1968. Earvey Friesen was elected to the deaconry and was ordained on November 25, 1969.

Our congregation is located in a farming district and most of our members make this their occupation. We are, at present, 185 members residing in 62 homes.

In 1940, weekly Bible study meetings were organized which have been conducted during the winter months since. We have our weekly Sunday schools and our Christian Endeavour program every month. The sisters have their sewing meetings during the winter months.

We feel grateful to our loving God for His tender mercies and care over us and our prayer is that He will continue to bless us, so that we can all grow in grace and humbly walk in His ways.

## EVENTIDE HOME

*by P.J.B. Reimer*

At the Rosenort Klein Gemeinde Church, a committee was appointed at a brotherhood meeting December 31, 1958, which was to make local investigations in regards to building a home for the aged. The results were quite satisfactory, because the aim of 510,000 in cash and pledges had been reached. The Rosenort share of the old



*Eventide Home built in 1960, which houses 25 residents from the area.*

Invalid's Home in Steinbach, which had been sold, amounted to \$4,000.00, which they received.

At the next meeting, on February 8, 1959, a board was elected. The members were: H.R. Friesen, President; P.U. Brandt, Vice-President; H.H. Brandt, Secretary-Treasurer; John L. Loewen, Jacob P.D. Reimer, John B. Loewen, I.H. Cornelsen, and John F. Friesen. At the same meeting a Building Committee was elected: J.W. Siemens, Chairman; F.R. Barkman, Vice-Chairman; F.K. Kroeker, P. U. Brandt, and P.F. Warkentin. The Provincial Government promised a grant of one third of the cost, and the building project was set in motion.

In the beginning, a small home for only 15 patients was planned, but this was finally expanded to 25 patients as a greater need was anticipated. There was considerable voluntary labor and the cash contributions came in well also. The total building costs came to about \$87,000.00, and the Provincial Government covered one third of this with a grant.

The Board chose the name Eventide Home and hired a staff to open the doors on July 19, 1960. The deacon H.R. Friesen was the first administrator, and he and his wife Mary were also the houseparents. He continued in his office up to June, 1972, when Jake Dueck replaced him.

Miss Annie Kroeker and Miss Susie Friesen shared the nurses' work during the first year of operation. Then Susie Friesen took charge as matron and stayed in this job up to April, 1973, when she was replaced by Miss Borne. As a whole, the turnover of staff including part time was about as high as the total of registered patients. In the first 10 years each total came to about one hundred. As a rule they all gave very devoted service for these handicapped elderly people.

An official opening and dedication service was held Sept. 25, 1960, at the Rosenort Church followed by a brief ceremony at the Home. The ministers Frank D. Reimer, Landmark, and Peter J.B. Reimer, teacher at the Grunthal Collegiate at that time, were invited to take part in the service.

When H.P. Friesen was appointed the administrator of the Home, I.H. Cornelsen replaced him as chairman of the Board and served in this capacity for a number of years. His successor was Jacob W. Brandt, who also served for a number of years, until he was replaced by the present chairman, P.H. Dueck. When the Rosenort E.M.C. eventually divided into four congregations, they all shared in the administration of the home with representation on the Eventide Board. Since June, 1974,

the Home has its third administrator in the person of Garry Enns.

The patients are not only well served with physical care in every possible way but also in a spiritual way. The ministers of the area conduct a service every Sunday morning in either English but mostly Low German. Since nearly all the patients are German speaking, the minister, Peter J.B. Reimer conducts a German service every Thursday night. The song leader Jac. K. Friesen assists with the singing of some of the old German hymns. The patients, whether Mennonite, Baptist, Lutheran, Catholic or other churches apparently appreciate these services very much. Then there are often groups of young people, who come to sing or render some special programmes on many occasions.

Much enjoyment was added for these elderly people, when a good stereo player and radio was placed into the living room. An effort is also made to introduce some crafts and interesting pastimes for all those who are interested. It is natural that all these efforts are more or less on a somewhat limited scope because of the smallness of the Home. Although the Home was somewhat enlarged in 1969-1970, it still does not provide room for more than about 25 patients. If this size could be at least doubled it might help to solve some of these problems.

In the years 1966 and 1974, the Rosenort community experienced, what we call minor spring floods. Although the Home was sandbagged by voluntary labour, it was considered more advisable to evacuate the patients. The spring of 1979, major flooding occurred, indicating a great need of protection of a good dyke, which is under consideration.

Financially the church subsidized the Home certain amounts per patient day for several years. Then the Provincial Government undertook more financial assistance, and today it is well taken care of. The community appreciates this wonderful assistance they are receiving for the elderly people from the government, and shows appreciation by making contributions with visitations and other possible ways. May God bless the Eventide Home.

## **THE ORIGIN OF FIRE AND PROPERTY INSURANCE**

*by Dick B. Eidse and P. U. Brandt*

Fire and property insurance, along with local and regional self government were well established institutions among the Mennonites of South Russia. However, the settlers to the new land were relatively poor, having left all behind. Thus the churches accepted the responsibility of providing assistance when disaster struck. The labor for rebuilding was willingly provided by church members, however the money for materials was sometimes hard to come by, and frequently assistance was required from other churches.

It was decided that something more permanent was needed, and the leaders of the various churches got together and organized "Die Mennonitsche Brandtordnung". Local representatives were appointed, and under the guidance of the Regional Manager, the Brandtschultze (local agents) assessed and registered each

property in the Brandtbuch (Insurance Record Book). With this information, the yearly rate was established and announced in all the churches.

The collection of the insurance fees was often done together with the annual church fees. Since a party could not collect benefits if his insurance fee was not paid, that often took precedence over the church fees. No policies were issued, the only proof of coverage was the receipt issued upon payment each year.

As the size of risk increased, the need of re-insurance was recognized, which resulted in a master agreement with similar Mennonite organizations in Sask., Alberta, and the U.S.A., who evened out with each other three times a year.

By the late 1930's, these organizations were asked to incorporate, and three separate organizations received a charter, namely: Canadian Mennonite Insurance Co., Manitoba Mennonite Insurance, and Red River Valley Mutual Insurance. When Red River Valley Mutual incorporated, four large Mennonite Conferences - Sommerfelder, **Bergthaler, Rudnerweider, and Kleinedemeinde** (now EMC), each appointed members to the provisional Board of Directors. With these appointments, the churches finally withdrew from direct participation in the insurance operations.

## ROSENORT FIRE DEPT.

When a farmhouse fire claimed the lives of two of the children of the Corny L. Loewen family in Rosenort, the people in the community realized how helpless they were without any fire fighting equipment. In 1962, the two local churches, the Church of God in Christ, and the Evangelical Mennonite Church, organized a committee to investigate the possibility of setting up their own fire department.

Contributions for the purchase of a fire engine quickly came in, and within a year, \$2,000 was in the fund. The RM of Morris promised to pay for the rest by spreading the cost over a three year period in taxes. Syd Reimer was appointed fire chief by the Council of the RM of Morris, with 14 men on the brigade. The best of equipment was purchased, complete with rubber hats, coats, and boots. An old fire truck was acquired and rebuilt to hold a 600 gal. water tank. A portable pump, in addition to the one attached to the truck, was built by local volunteers. It is towed behind the fire engine and is used to pump water from cisterns or dugouts.

By taking advantage of the winter works program, the Rosenort residents were also able to build a fire hall (1962). This building not only houses the fire engine and other equipment, but also has become an important focal point in the area as flood headquarters in those seasons when flooding occurs.

Although fires do not occur frequently, the brigade has been called out many times, and the community has greatly appreciated the volunteer services of these **men**. The department is organized so that they work in co-operation with the Morris and St. Jean fire depts., providing effective fire fighting services for the residents of the municipality.



*Rosenort Fire Dept. in 1979.*

Outstanding for his persistence to the cause is Frank Plett, present fire chief, who has been with the fire brigade from the beginning. Presently on the fire brigade are: Garry Friesen Asst. fire chief, Stan Plett, Benjamin Plett, Oliver Plett, Frank Friesen, Delton Derksen, Robert Goossen, Charles Goossen, Mark Thiessen, Henry Thiessen, and Melvin Remple.

The biggest fire they have been called to fight, was when the E.M.C. Church was destroyed; another was the fire at the old hotel in Morris. The gratifying work, is in the ones they save, among those were Ed Penner's barn, a large chicken barn north of Rosenort, and Wes Eidse's barn. Fire chief Plett says, "We win more than we lose".

Without a doubt, the residents of the Rosenort district feel some measure of security, knowing the fire department is close at hand, and available at a moments notice, to provide them with an effective emergency service.

## MAIL SERVICE

*from the Morris-Emerson Journal*

In the day when travel was limited and slow, many folk relied on the mail to do their business and derived the pleasure of visits on paper.



*Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Harms - first mail carrier in 1910.*



*Marie, daughter of Isaac Harms, carrying the mailbag to the buggy to be transported to the train station. At first the mailbag was hooked on a hoop held high, and snatched while the train was in motion.*

Before the train station came into being, the mail was dropped off two miles south of McTavish at "Swains Spur", while the train was still in motion. Mr. Isaac Harms was the first mailman. The baggage man on the train waited in readiness. Mr. Harms, was required to hook his mailbag on a hoop and hold it high. It was snatched with the train still in motion. The pick up and delivery was made in the same method until the people circulated a petition to request a daily stop which was granted. Mr. Harms picked up the mail and delivered it to the Brandt store for about twenty years. His daughter, Marie, Mrs. A.R. Klassen, was his "right hand man", often driving the horse and buggy herself at the age of sixteen. Her father took ill and died in 1916 and Marie found the farm chores and the other responsibilities too demanding so she discontinued the mail delivery that winter.

The mail service was taken over by various different men, one of them being Mr. H.D. Warkentin, before the train discontinued the mail haul.

Eventually there were 3 post offices in this area, one in the J.W. Dueck store in Rosenhoff, one in the Enns store at McTavish, and one at McTavish. P.F. Brandt circulated another petition requesting mailboxes for the rural residents and the mail route, as we know it, was born. On either horse or bombardier, Mr. Bestwick brought the mail through. Other mail carriers on the route were, H.F. Warkentin, H. K. Dueck, Bergstresser, Fred Edinger, C. Frederick, and P.H. Dueck.

When the Rosenort Co-op Store was established, the post office was moved into that building where Mr. A.D. Plett became the post master. On April 1, 1943, Mr. F.F. Toews took over the post office and served in this capacity till they moved into the new building in March, 1967. The following year Mr. Toews was awarded a certificate from the Postmaster General in an appreciation for faithful service rendered for the Post Office Dept. for 25 years. After Mr. Toews' retirement, Jac. Duerksen took over and is presently the Rosenort postmaster.



*Thomas K. Bestwick (1930) probably the first mail carrier for the rural area, was a former police officer for the Town of Morris. When he retired, he hauled the mail. Someone built this all weather vehicle which had skis on the front, and track on the rear wheels. It was made to follow a sleigh track.*



*The modern post office building in Rosenort - built in 1967 also housing Braun's Insurance Agency managed by Syd Reimer.*

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture was the settlers main source of livelihood and each farmer usually planted small plots of potatoes, oats, wheat and barley. They also owned some livestock like beef, chickens and hogs. Oxen, horses and man-power were their source of energy, using simple tools and machinery to aid them in the difficult task of working the soil.

Seeding and harvest time was a family and community affair with everyone, young and old alike, pitching in.

The first steam powered threshing machine in Rosenort was jointly owned by a group of local farmers, P.D.

*P.K. Loewen and Willie Loewen plowing on their farm at McTavish.*







*The Loewen Bros. harvesting gang in 1908. Peter, Abram, Cornelius and John, owned a steam engine and threshing machine together.*

Loewen, J.R. Dueck, and A.E. Eidse in 1910, with David Kroeker as engineer and John K. Friesen (also a preacher and teacher), as threshing operator. They also had large crews of men assisting them. Harvesting consisted of cutting and binding the grain into sheaves, with the women-folk stooking the sheaves. During threshing, the



*Cutting team with binders - note sheaves on the side. Photo courtesy of Donald Lewis.*

men picked up the sheaves on hayracks, took them to the threshing machine and pitched them in. The grain was threshed into bags and placed on wagons and hauled home and stored in granaries, while the straw also was saved up as bedding for livestock. This extremely hot, tiring job would go on day after day till the community's crops were all in. It was this camaraderie that kept spirits high and the ambition to keep going.



*No grain augers in these days, just back breaking labour in 1938. Photo courtesy Peter G. Dueck.*



*\*a.*

*Plowing on the P.K. Goossen farm.*



*ABOVE: Ready to go, hauling grain, in fall of 1918. LEFT: Four brothers on the PPK, Goossem farm, ready to go haying in the 1920's.*



*Sheaf loader on Karl Poersch's farm - used to cut the grain as well as load the sheaves.*



*LEFT: The well groomed horses of Jac W. Rempels in the 1920's. BELOW: Henry, feeding the geese, a daily chore.*



**At the turn of the century most of the wheat grown was ground into flour at a local mill. Livestock also required grain and most of the grain was used up in this way, but with crops improving, a surplus was soon gathered, and a market was needed to sell the grain. It was a boon to the local farmers when Ogilvie erected the first elevator in McTavish in the early 1900's.**

Despite the many hardships, agriculture thrived. The soil was rich and the people industrious. More land was continually obtained and broken up as farming methods improved and better equipment became available. Around 1908 land was divided into quarters and square mile sections with road allowances around each section. Good roads with proper drainage ditches were developed gradually, taking into account the large watershed which drains into the Morris River.

Flooding was a common occurrence in spring, grasshoppers and mosquitoes a plague throughout summer. With land to be worked on the west side of the

river in spring when the water was high, and the homemade bridges so low they were covered with water, farmers would have to swim their horses across the river and follow in a boat with the equipment. The drought conditions and low grain market prices of the 1930's were a severe setback for farmers. In 1944 harvesting could not be completed because of the constant rain that fall. A similar situation occurred in 1968 when beautiful crops seemed impossible to harvest because of the soggy, muddy fields, but the resourceful farmers found that by applying special "rice tires" on their combines they were able to drive through the mud and harvest most of the crops.

## THE WIND POWERED FLOUR MILL

by J.H. Friesen and John Warkentin

One of the fine old historic windmills of the west -- some claim it was the first windmill south west of Winnipeg -- was that of Abram Friesen of Steinbach built in 1877. This structure towered 60 feet into the air, was 30 feet wide at the bottom, and 20 foot diameter on top. The winds spread 46 feet from tip to tip, and were five feet wide. Those who helped build this windmill, were nearly all trained in their art in Russia, and there is something of Russian massiveness in the two foot square oak timber which was the main drive shaft of the mill.



*This windmill was constructed at Steinbach in 1877, but was dismantled due to lack of wind in the hush. It was moved to Rosenort in 1879. Photo taken by John Corby in 1918.*

The builders included Abram Friesen, P.K. Barkman of Steinbach; John Toews of Gruenfeld, and Klass Reimer of Steinbach. The mill cost \$2,000 to build, and when it was wrecked after 42 years of service, some of its timbers were still sound.

At that time, most of the flour had to be "gristed" in Winnipeg. The railroad had not yet arrived on the prairies, but there were custom grist mills in Winnipeg. These mills had very little competition, and the farmers who were already settled on the prairies, lost valuable time bringing their "grists" to Winnipeg for milling. Thus a mill usually caused great rejoicing amongst the women folk who were responsible for the bread baking; and for the men who needed feed ground for their livestock.

Mill building was no easy task in those pre-railroad days, but the pioneers were not afraid of hard work. The cross braces and other lighter timbers were cut by means of a small sawmill powered by ox-power. The shingles and heavy oak timbers necessary for shafts, and the steel shafting, bearings and grindstones had to be hauled from Winnipeg by ox or horse team.

Despite almost impossible odds, construction continued. The cap of the mill which had to turn so as to face the wings into the wind, rested on steel rollers, and was turned by means of a hand crank. The grain hoppers were on the fourth floor, and bags of grain were pulled up by a long rope which was wound on the roller by mill power.

By January 1878, the mill was turning out white flour. Steinbach, being in the bush country, did not find the wind a very reliable power source, as the trees checked the wind. Mr. Friesen bought a steam engine as an auxiliary source. For whatever reasons, the following year (1879), the windmill was sold for \$1,500 and moved to Rosenort, nine miles northwest of Morris.

The buyers, Jacob Toews, Isaac Loeman and Franz Froese, had the mill moved by P.K. Barkman and Isaac R. Loeman. The mill was dismantled, and prepared for moving. This was no mean task, as there were no bridges or ferries. Some parts were floated across the river, others boated, and the rest had to wait for winter, when they could cross the ice.

At Rosenort there were few trees, and the mill could grind 100 bushels an hour for feed and 30 bushels an hour for flour.

The owners did custom grinding at Rosenort till 1890 when they sold said mill to Peter Toews, a one party owner. Mr. Toews had the help of his eldest daughter, Anna, (Mrs. Wm. G. Rempel) who still remembers those days very well. In 1904, Peter Toews sold the mill to Gerhard Rempel, who owned and operated it till his death. Mrs. Rempel remarried, and her husband, Mr. Isaac H. Friesen, although being the new owner, didn't use it as much as in previous years, as it got to be a trifle shaky. It was finally sold to C.K. Eidse and Jac H. Friesen, brothers-in-law of the family, for \$100.00.

From here on, the mill was torn down and sold for scrap and antiques. Some of the lumber and stairs were still so sound, Jac H. Friesen built a new house for his family near McTavish, using mostly mill lumber.

Mr. A.D. Dueck bought the land of the mill site, plus some other buildings, all of which were reduced to scrap lumber. The present owners of the lot are the John F. Warkentins, a committee member of this centennial book.



*Farmers brought grain to the windmill to be gristed.*

## ROSEN HOFF DAIRY

by John Reimer

The Rosenhoff Dairy was constructed in the spring of 1940, for the sole purpose of manufacturing cheese. It was a co-operative association, with Jacob D. Friesen as chairman, George Kornelsen as secretary, and directors, Jacob Goossen, George Bartel, and Henry D. Friesen. John Reimer was hired as manager and cheese maker.

Doors were opened for business on June 14, 1940. Employees were Ben L. Friesen, Dick Zacharias, Tony Siemens, Johnny Kornelsen, Henry Dueck, Milton Reimer, and Pete Klassen.



*Ben Friesen and John Reimer; Cheesemaker and manager of Rosenhoff Dairy in 1940.*

Cheese was made with whole fresh milk that was run into long vats (5 ft. x 16 ft. x 3 ft. deep) where it was sterilized. A mother culture (powder form) was added to a starter batch and it was allowed to coagulate. This was mixed into a vat which contained about 7000 pounds of milk. Rennet was added. With a controlled heat and continuously turning the vats, the cheese thickened.

After draining the whey, the cheese in the vats were cut into finger sized chips, salted, and poured into round forms. Some cheeses weighed 30 pounds, and some 90 pounds. During the war, no color was added, and only 90 pound cheeses were produced. Approximately 2,000,000 pounds of cheese was produced in this factory.

The cheese factory operated until May 5, 1950, when 4 feet of flood water flowed into the building. The cheese was all shipped to wholesalers, the equipment brought into operation, but the business did not reopen.

Farmers had shipped their livestock due to the flood, and there were not enough cows to produce the required amount of milk, so the board of directors liquidated the business.

Many of the Rosenort-Rosenhoff milk shippers had moved to Mexico in 1948, which also caused a decline in milk production, as these families owned a large percentage of shares in the business.

These same families built a cheese factory in Mexico, in 1950, and came by truck to pick up most of the equipment for cheesemaking. It is still in operation at present.

## THE ICE AGE

by P.R. Dueck

Even though river water was considered quite bad for use in the house because of the many cattle corrals on the riverbanks, it was better than pond water. Although river water never looked too good, much to our surprise, the ice from it was clear, and good for drinking.

We could not use ice from our own pond because it was usually snow bound, we needed the water for the cattle, and no implements or tools except the axe.

Along the Morris River, ice was cut and sold by different men, and this mostly at Rosenhoff, because at Rosenort the river was usually too shallow.



*This saw was built by Dick Eidse and was extensively used to cut ice on the river in the 1940's.*

To cut the ice, a sawmill blade was bought and fitted to a mandrel, with an 8 to 18 H.P. gas motor powering it. In order to pull the outfit along the ice, the operator had special ice cleats under his shoes. The noise was similar to that of a sawmill cutting lumber. The first outfit on the ice was probably Dick B. Eidse, later H.R. Brandt, and others. It was essential for the seller and the buyer to locate a place on the river with the best ice, but also with a drive that was not too steep upward.

The open water left after cutting ice, was quite dangerous, as people often went skating on the river in



*Lilly  
Ernie  
and  
Jack  
Rosche,  
with  
Abe  
Thiessen,  
getting  
ice  
blocks  
from  
the  
river -  
1941.*

## TRUMP OIL REFINERY



*Farmers hauling ice from Red River at Morris in the 1930's. Photo courtesy Mel Anderson.*

the evening, so it was required to stake out the plot well for the night.

Many a load was hauled each winter by horse team, later by tractor and 1 ton trucks. Ice was often hauled by Rosenorters all the way from the Red River at Morris, a distance of at least 11 miles.

Some loads of ice would be piled up on the north side of the house, and thus the ice supply would last well into spring. Most homes had, by then, cisterns built under the floor, which were filled with ice, causing the floors to remain quite cold. After some weeks, we could hear the ice making noises while melting was in progress - it would crackle, turn, drop, splash and rumble.

On laundry days, or the day before, ice had to be thawed, and kettles, pots and tubs, would be filled to capacity. Often large bugs that had frozen into the ice, had to be removed. Many times, a large rectangular metal container for thawing ice was kept near the cook stove in the kitchen and water removed by dipper.

After the 1950 flood, the hauling of water by truck became a common practice. After Morris put up a purifying plant, water was hauled from there. Some considered there was too much chloride in it for drinking and hauled from Fort Garry; the cost at that time was about 1¢ a gallon. Now, with almost every farm home having running water and flushing toilets, hauling water has become an important business.



*Mechanic and garage at Trump Oil Co. in 1938. Photo courtesy H.B. Dueck.*

With the advent of the newly developed farm tractor, came the demand for gasoline, kerosene, lubricating oil and greases.

As early as 1915, enterprising individuals ordered rail tank cars of petroleum products for sale to farmers, first under the name United Farmers of Manitoba, later Rosenort Farmers Association. This business flourished, so storage tanks were erected at Trump Siding, three miles north of Morris. A warehouse was added with a full time manager, Cornelius D. Loewen, and his assistant, Peter K. Dueck.



*Trump Oil Company formed in the 1930's as a result of the success of the Rosenort Farmers' Association.*

After a decade of successful operation, the members voted in favor of forming a "Limited Stock Company" to handle the petroleum business, with the prospect of operating its own refinery and lubricating oil blending plant. The new business, suitably named "Trump Oil Company Limited", purchased all the tanks, equipment, goods, buildings, etc. from the R.F.A. in the early 1930's.

The new board of directors, under the leadership of D.K. Eidse, hired a young refinery engineer, Mr. Rokish Horvath, to design and draw up plans for a low cost refinery, as money was scarce during these depression years. Mr. Horvath came up with two sets of plans, one for a low cost "skimming plant", good for refining sweet crudes only, and the other a costlier and more corn-



*The gang at Trump Oil, 1935. LEFT TO RIGHT: H.R. Friesen, George Dueck, P. W. Siemens, Mr. Horvath, Supervisor; Ned Schwarz, Jacob Dueck, John Schellenberger.*





*The cafe at Trump Oil in 1935, operated by Henry B. Dueck.*

plicated "Cracking plant", designed to handle both sweet and sour crudes. The first plans were accepted for economic reasons, and the refinery became a reality. It started operating in the spring of 1934.

It would have been wiser to build the "cracking plant" which could handle Canadian crudes, but this chosen operation only handled imported Oklahoma or Texas crudes with a high sulphur content ("sour"). However, the company made good progress and developed sound business outlets throughout southern and central Manitoba, with the result that the larger oil companies lowered their prices, offered rent free storage tanks, inaugurated free delivery service, and made other concessions in order to stay in business in the Trump area.

On July 23, 1935, disaster struck. The day's events are recalled by Henry R. Friesen, an employee. A truckload of "casing head" (the stuff that makes white naptha into gasoline) ignited on contact with warm air. "The supervisor, Mr. Horvath, told me to go to the loading platform to help start a stalled truck. At the same moment, I looked under the hood, there was a thundering explosion. Two more explosions burst, forcing fierce smoke and flames into the air. Windows and doors blew open from the blast. The supervisor dashed out of a door with flames on his back and he plunged into a ditch of salt water. The truck driver, Jake Friesen, appeared as a running statue of fire; he ran 30 feet towards a wheat field and fell. I managed to quench the fire with green wheat. This severely burned man was rushed to the hospital, and then to Winnipeg, where he died eight



*An explosion caused this fire at Trump Oil Company on July 23, 1935, and two men lost their lives.*

hours later. A month later, Mr. Horvath died. A number of other employees were injured as well."

The whole refinery section burned to the ground. The retail station, wholesale loading facilities, and nearly all storage tanks were saved by the cool headed action of the employees. The board had to decide whether to close down or rebuild. Many wanted to build the "cracking plant" now, but a large number of shareholders disagreed - many did not want to rebuild at all. The final decision was to rebuild the "skimming plant" once more.

Things did not seem to go as well as before the fire, but business at Trump Oil continued until the early 1940's. The final blow was dealt by the Second World War. Oil control regulations required all Canadian refineries to use a certain percentage of Canadian crude to conserve the badly needed dollars. This law put all "sweet crude" refineries in Canada out of business in one stroke.

Trump now had the choice of closing down or becoming an agent for one of the big companies. This was tried, but not too successfully. The shareholders voted to sell to a U.S. firm on credit and operated until this firm ran out of funds. The whole plant was finally sold for a meagre price under the auction hammer to the highest bidder, bringing the end of the "oil era" in the municipality.

## FRIESEN'S SEED SERVICE

Friesen's Seed was started as a new venture by brothers, Jake, Frank, and Benny Friesen in 1957. Two years ago, when Frank became pastor of the Pleasant Valley Church, he sold his share of the business to his brothers.

It is situated 1 mile and 2 miles south of Rosenort on the late Peter W. Friesen's farm.



*Johnny Dueck and Johnny Miller hauling seed from Friesen's Seed Service to the U.S.A. in 1958.*

Friesen's Seed was started due to the encouragement they received from their father. Furthermore, there was a need for a seed cleaning plant in the district, where farmers who did not have their own facilities could have their seed cleaned. The business is operated by the owners and 2 hired employees, who deal in Registered, Certified, and Commercial seeds such as wheat, oats, barley, peas, flax seed and legumes. In the first year of operation most





*A customer unloading grain to be cleaned for seed at Friesen Seed Service.*

of the seed was exported to the U.S.A. As the business grew, seed was also shipped to Ontario, Sask., and Alberta, and in addition to this, some grass seed was shipped overseas. The main bulk of the business, though, is to farmers who live within a radius of approximately 50 miles.

As the volume of the business increased, more storage facilities were required, so new overhead steel tanks were installed. A scale big enough to weigh any farm truck was purchased. Another future improvement will be to install a gravity mill to augment the capacity of the five cleaners that now are in operation. This type of business blends very well with the farm operation as most of the seed grain is cleaned during the winter months and early spring, during farm slack times.

## ROYAL MANITOBA WINTER FAIR SEER SHOW



*Benny Friesen receiving an award as seed wheat champion of Manitoba in 1977, for his Neepawa wheat.*

## MERIDIAN INDUSTRIES LTD.

In 1965, a young farmer and father, Elmer Friesen, saw that he would have to find a way to feed his growing family. Having made plans for building a hog barn, he realized his need for a feed tank, and approached Universal Machines to build him one. Mr. Doerksen was too busy to fill the order, but encouraged Elmer to build one for himself. Thus he bought the steel from Universal Machines to build his own feed tank. A few surrounding

farmers liked what they saw and placed orders. So the snowball started rolling.

What the farmers saw and liked about the Friesen bin mainly, was the fact that it is self cleaning, doing away with one of the back breaking jobs of farming-shovelling grain. Another feature that the Friesens improved on, was the frame that the tank sits on. Previous built bins had legs, while the Friesen bin sits on the sturdily built frame that can carry the heavy weight of fertilizer.

In 1967, brother Ron became a partner in the business, then known as Friesen Manufacturing. The first site of the business, was on their father's yard; Henry F. Friesen; and the building indeed a humble place - the barn. The work force consisted of the three brothers.

All the steel required for the business, was picked up with a 3/4 ton truck, and later a gravel truck owned by one of the brothers. A highlight during these years was a visit by Premier Weir.

As the business increased, Ron and Elmer saw the need of a new building, and put up a plant on Elmer's yard in 1969. Sales climbed, thus employees increased to six, and plans were made to enlarge the size of the plant. This was done in 1976 - and what an improvement! Last count of employees amounted to fifteen.



*Friesen bins constructed by Meridian Industries, have gained popularity amongst the farmers.*

The product has improved too. Now tanks bought to store fertilizer are sprayed with a protective epoxy coating to prevent corrosion, while the outside is painted with a gleaming white enamel finish. To date, the Friesen hopper bottom bins are the only ones manufactured that are approved by the Man. Dept. of Agriculture for seed growers, as there are no edges to hold stray seeds within. With steadily increasing demands, farmers must place their orders for bins three months in advance.

Presently, all the steel is delivered by semi trucks; quite a change from former days. The steel is now cut and rolled here, instead of in Winnipeg. They own twelve trailers which the farmers use to haul their newly manufactured tanks home. Tank-dotted farms all over Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the United States, tell the story.

Friesen Manufacturing was changed to Meridian Industries Ltd. due to the many Friesen businesses in the immediate area. The new name being appropriate due to the location of the business on the meridian line. The brothers realize that it was not luck that was on their side, but God who gave the increase.



*Cornelsen repair shop first began in this building on J.D. Cornelsen's yard in 1974.*

## CORNELSEN REPAIR SHOP

Cornelsen Repair Shop came into existence in 1974, as the owner John Cornelsen has always been interested in machine shop work. He worked for a number of years for Pritchard Engineering and Flyer Industries as a welder. Commuting back and forth to Winnipeg is tiring, so John decided to take up the same kind of work at home in his farm shop, adapting himself to the agricultural needs of the community.

Establishing and equipping a machine shop can be quite an expense, so to ease that cost, John built some of his own equipment. Together with his son Stan, he built a fifty ton press which is among the largest in the district. A special feature of this press being that the cylinder can be rolled from side to side in almost the five foot width of the press. This is important to accommodate some of the difficult jobs. Another important piece of equipment, is the horizontal drilling machine which is used when working on truck frames.

The Cornelsen Repair Shop features machining, press work, portable welding services, shortening and extending truck frames as well as tag axle installations. With an ever increasing amount of business, John may have to consider expansion. He believes that the free enterprise system as it has existed to the present has enabled country machine shops to operate effectively, and hopes that the future will continue to be bright.



*This new building was constructed after the 1979 flood; features machining, portable welding services and tag axle installation.*

## RIVERSIDE SERVICE

The type of business a person operates usually reflects his interests. Tony Fast was interested in mechanics since he was ten years old. In 1962, Tony Fast bought the garage from C.K. Eidse, Johnny Eidse and John J. Dueck, who started the business in 1950. Mr. Fast remodeled the building and named it Riverside Service. It was formerly called Riverside Motors.



*Tony Fast, owner of Riverside Service, majors in farm repairs.*

Due to the fact that Riverside and Rosenort are farming communities, most of Mr. Fast's business centers around repairing farm machinery and welding. These things include cars, trucks, combines, tractors, plows, swathers, etc.

Mr. Fast himself does the work at the garage. He stated that equipment has improved greatly since he became interested in this type of work.



*The truck used to haul groceries in 1928, for the John W. Dueck store. Photo courtesy P.K. Duecks.*

# MEMOIRS OF RIVERSIDE

by Henry B. Dueck



*A busy Saturday morning at the Rosenort Co-Op No. 2 Trading Post in 1939.*

After a few years of operation in Rosenort, trade in the Co-op store was getting so brisk and steady, that the community as a whole felt that a second outlet would serve the somewhat large community more efficiently. It seemed the most convenient and proper location would be a site some three miles downstream on the banks of the Morris River (from Rosenort).

In the midst of a small early settlement from the 19th century, stood a vacant Trading Post built during the first World War. The Post had not survived the constant pressure of the early 20's depression years and had closed down. It was decided to tidy up the old vacant Post and open up for business. This newly opened second outlet would operate under the name *Rosenort Co-op No. 2*,

Phil Isaac, working in Rosenort Co-op No. 1 was hired to operate and manage the newly opened second outlet.

By early spring of 1939, it was necessary to hire two full-time personnel. Since I, H.B. Dueck, had operated the Cook Shack at the Trump Oil Refinery, also in the district, during the summer of 1938, I was available and they hired me full-time.

Starting wages in those days were \$25.00 a month. That is what we agreed upon and we were all happy.



*Customers service and account centre in the Co-Op General Store taken in 1941.*



*Jac J. Dueck's 1928 Pontiac rumble seat with daughter, Maureen, on running board. Taken in February, 1940.*

We operated as a complete general store, selling groceries, dry goods, meat, flour, gas, lub. oil in small and drum-size lots, and later pesticides and also fertilizer in carload orders. Several years we bought apples in carload lots as well as Robinhood flour by the carload. The R.F.A. had by this time handed over the flour department to the Rosenort Co-op stores No. 1 and No. 2. For about 15 winters we brought in fresh frozen fish in 100 lb. bags (2,000 lb. a season) from Winnipegosis. We were continually running short on space. So we first added a larger warehouse, followed by a flour shed and



*Henry B. Dueck, Co-Op Manager in 1943. Fresh city bread was delivered once a week to the store.*

somewhat later an oil shed. The Post Office installed a central group of mail boxes later on at Riverside.

Around 1945, we changed our business name from Rosenort Co-op No. 2 to Riverside Co-op, R.R. No. 1, Morris as we had too many mix-ups and errors in shipping and wholesale accounts as well as errors in cheques and deposits. We asked our shareholders to submit suitable names for our store. Among the various names submitted, I suggested, and we got almost unanimous support on 'Riverside Co-op'.

Around 1946, we started an egg grading station. The candling lamp drew its power from a rechargeable six volt battery. Our store was lighted by a few gas lamps.

In fall of 1948, quite a change came to the district. Manitoba Hydro strung out their power lines throughout

the rural areas which brought about many, many changes to our whole community. However, all this joy and excitement and progress was soon to be interrupted by the devastating 1950 flood. Riverside and Rosenort were not excluded. Everyone became acutely aware of the powerful destruction of the relentless pressure of the ever increasing waves of the wide area of flooding. Nobody was prepared for a flood of this magnitude. After a long cold winter and a record high snow fall, spring came unusually late. The Red and Morris Rivers were still frozen when waters from the States started flowing in. We got cloudy rainy weather with strong cold winds for a whole month. All little creeks, road allowances, and fields filled up. It continued to rise, coming onto the front yards, up to the buildings, filling the basements. Our vegetable supplies were gone, drinking water in the cisterns polluted, furnaces stopped operating, oil tanks in the basement and outside capsized, oil seeping throughout the house.

As long as I could walk to the store in my hip boots I moved all goods to higher shelves. Some people still came in for supplies. Farmers with livestock would have liked to take home some feed, that is, at the beginning of the flood. But almost nobody had a boat of any kind. We received six pair of hip boots from the Red Cross but they were gone instantly and we could get no more.

For lack of a motor boat, I soon could no longer get to the store to move things any higher. Besides, the top shelves, loaded too heavy already, gradually gave way under the strain and toppled into the water. In the warehouse, sugar, flour and other supplies simply oozed up in the cold dirty waters. We had two feet of water in the store and about one foot of the floor of the house when our families were evacuated by the R.C.M.P. with a Red Cross boat to Lowe Farm.



*Riverside  
Co-Op  
during  
the  
1950  
flood.*

A few larger boats and two barges were brought in to do rescue operations such as livestock, chicken and hogs. I came in with them, from Lowe Farm, to raise up goods to higher levels at our house and store.

At the height of the flood we had three feet of water in the house and four and a half feet in the store. It was June before the waters receded far enough for us to come back and start cleaning up.

The whole store with all its contents was a sorry sight. Doors and windows were all broken and mud and silt was about a foot deep. Freezers and fridges were overturned

with rotten meat and eggs still inside. The mud had to be shovelled out and amongst all that stinking stuff were pails of jam, syrup, rolled oats, flour, overalls, jackets, gloves, thread, bias tap, yard good, light bulbs, hooks, tools, cups and saucers, new car batteries and at least 1,000 more items. Typewriter, adding machine, and scales had fallen off shelves. Indeed, a sight for sore eyes! And work without end! The loss of merchandise was placed at \$8,000.00. We were reimbursed by the government for \$4,000.00. The rest was our own loss.

Gradually we got the old store cleaned up and new stock on our shelves. In fall and winter we renovated a bit more. We did not need to stock any feed anymore since there was very little poultry and livestock left in the district. This was also the end of our egg grading station. But demand was heavy for fridges, freezers, ranges, furniture, hardware, electrical appliances, etc.

After a few more years, having recovered from the flood and all that goes with it, we started to think of building a new store as this old Trading Post was getting too small, too old and out of place. We started planning what and where to build. After a number of board and membership meetings, we reached a fairly good agreement on the place of the new store (its present site) and we now call it *Riverside*.

The contract to build the new 40 x 60 building to be constructed of cinderblocks unto a concrete full basement was given to Dick's Construction (1959.) As soon as the new place of business was finished we moved all inventory from the old place into the new. Now we had plenty of room and everybody was happy for the bright future ahead.

As we look back through the years to when the business was started, the heavy depression followed by floods, recuperating, building the new place of business and moving and settling in, we feel it has well been worth it all. We are now enjoying a well founded, well balanced, steady business.

*"The past we know and see  
In the future we hope and trust."*



*An auction sale was held at Nick Brandt's in the 1920's.*

## VILLAGE LIFE

by Arthur Enns



*Mr. and Mrs. John F. Dueck out for a Sunday drive.*

Village life had other advantages in pioneer days. In case of accidents, sickness or fire, the neighbors were nearby. There was a shortage of tools and implements, even horses and oxen, the borrowing and lending was a part of daily life. The land was surveyed into lots one eighth of a mile wide and extending a mile both east and west of the river. The farmyards were set on the east hank. Lumber was scarce, it had to be hauled from Winnipeg. There were poplar groves on the prairie, but logs thick enough for walls had to come from the Red River.



*Ox drawn carts such as this were not unusual at the turn of the century in the Rosenort area.*

The first dwelling was a sod shack with the roof made of poplar poles and thatched with swamp grass. In a year or two a sawmill was set up near Morris, and more



*A typical early log house in the West Reserve.*



*Hog slaughtering bee. LEFT TO RIGHT: J.H. Friesen, Jac Dueck, P.F. Warkentin, P.T. Wiens.*

permanent buildings were erected. The buildings looked strange in Canada, for the house and barn were one unit, a type still seen in some European countries. The house and barn were divided by a storage area for grain, tools, etc. In the center of the house was a stove made of bricks and sheet iron, which was used for cooking, baking and heating. In the attic, an enlarged section of the chimney served as a smoke house for curing meat and fish. Before the drainage ditches were dug, the river flowed all summer, and a lot of fish were caught.



*Brick ovens were used by most Mennonite families in the early years. Photo courtesy Mennonite Heritage Centre.*

During the first years, only a small part of the farms were under cultivation, for the seeding was done by hand. The grain was cut by scythe and threshed with a flail, and

all this used up a lot of manpower. Labour-saving machinery came along - the seed-drill, the reaper, the horse-powered threshing machine, and a man could farm more acres.

The villagers found that they spent a lot of time travelling to the fields, especially having to detour over the bridge. In seeding time the bridges were under water, so the seed and implements had to be ferried across by row-boat, while the horses swam across. It became uneconomical to farm the long river lots, so some of the farmers sold their lot to a neighbor, and moved onto the usual square quarter, thus gradually the village disappeared.



*A.D. Plett was the first manager of Rosenort Co-Op in 1932. Here Mrs. Plett and children visit outside the store with Abe Loewen of Kansas.*

## THE BEGINNING OF THE CO-OPS

*P. U. Brandt*

The history of the Co-Op Store in Rosenort and the one at Riverside is a story of progress which began over fifty years ago.

In 1926, a group of farmers in the community got together to form a co-operative organization which they named the Rosenort Farmers' Association. Prior to this number of farmers were members of the United Farmers of Manitoba, but this did not seem to be satisfactory for



*Selling watermelons off the truck at the Rosenort Co-Op Store in the early 50's.*

the majority, and so, the farmers looked for other ways. In 1924, David K. Eidse and P.U. Brandt agreed to bring in gasoline and kerosene by tank car and sell directly to farmers at the site. The first two cars sold at: gasoline - 13¢ per gallon, and kerosene - 1¢ per gallon. Enarco lubricating oil in drums of half drums sold at 67¢ per gallon. There was wide-spread interest in this enterprise and a lot of customers came from surrounding areas up to an approximate radius of 30 miles.

At the first meeting of the R.F.A. in 1926, 43 members enrolled. Some of those elected to the first board were: Jac. H. Friesen, secretary-treasurer; Peter F. Loewen, Vice-President; and P.U. Brandt, President, in which capacity he served for seven years. Carload lots of such products as slabs, fence posts, coal, cement, sawdust, twine, gravel, flour, apples, fish, cereal, such as: rolled oats, wheatlets, were shipped in. In 1926 Trump Oil Co. was formed so petroleum products were no longer handled.

The R.F.A. was a real benefit for the farmers as products could be bought for wholesale prices, and due to low overhead, could be sold for very reasonable prices. During the depression years when times were very difficult this was especially appreciated. This organization,



*LEFT. Phil Isaac and Abram Piet!, Co-Op managers for store No. 1 and No. 2 in the 1930's. ABOVE: Rosenort Co-Op during the flood of 1948, with Abe L. Loewen on horseback.*



which served the community for over 30 years, had 212 members in 1956.

It was through the R.F.A. that the first Co-op store was started in Rosenort in 1932, when a building was constructed (approximately 24' by 32') with living quarters upstairs. This store opened its doors for business on August 1, 1932, with \$2,700.00 worth of stock. Mr. A.D. Plett was the first manager, and his wife Martha, served as assistant clerk. Together they were paid \$55.00 a month. Serving on the board at this time were: William G. Rempel, President; Abram W. Penner, Vice-President; Jac. F. Goossen, Secretary; David R. Friesen, Henry Goossen, Peter H. Enns, Peter J. Loewen and Peter F. Loewen.

## STORE NO. 2



*A Great West saddlery sample trailer at Rosenort Co-Op Store No. 2 trading post in June of 1940.*

Three years later the former John W. Dueck Store was rented for \$7.00 per month, and a second Co-op store, this one in Rosenhoff, was opened on April 1, 1935. These two stores ran under the names of Rosenort No. 1 and Rosenort No. 2 stores. In this second store Philip Isaac served as manager, followed by Ben D. Friesen and in 1943 by Henry B. Dueck who had been employed by the store, as clerk, since 1939. He remained manager until the end of 1970, having worked in the store about 32 years. Since then Alvin Dueck has served as manager.

The stores started to operate under separate boards in 1946, with Henry H. Brandt, President; and George I. Bartel, Vice-President of the board of store No. 2, which now changed its name to Riverside. P.U. Brandt served as President; W.G. Rempel, Vice-President; and Jac. F. Goossen, Secretary; at the Rosenort store at this time.

After 10 years Abram D. Plett left, and John L. Harder served as manager from 1943 to the beginning of 1946. J. Loewen was then hired for a little over a year, when John Harder was rehired for three years, followed by John D. Reimer, who also stayed for a bit over a year. When he left, Frank F. Toews was manager for three years, after which Alva Froese managed the store for one and a half years. Mr. Harder then returned and served another four years, from 1956 to 1960. Then the board hired Jac. Duerksen in August of 1961.

Both stores suffered considerable loss during the 1950 flood, not only through damages from the flood but also because of goods taken from the store by people badly in need of them, such as, rubber boots, clothing and even canned goods. When, 16 years later, the community again experienced a flood, the situation was quite different because then sand bags for diking were available and the community as a whole was better able to cope with the situation. Both stores were barely able to keep the water out of their basements in the 1966 flood. The Rosenort store basement was used as a dining hall for flood workers and more than 200 people had dinner there in one day, with over \$1,000.00 worth of food used in all.

Financially the stores had struggles, but taken as a whole, there was growth and increase in stock, which meant more room was needed. Rosenort store added a warehouse in 1946 and another addition 20' by 28' at the west end in 1957. The Rosenort store housed the Post Office from the beginning until 1966 when it was moved across the street. Frank F. Toews operated the Post Office in the store for 24 years.

Both stores had egg candling stations for sometime, and in the earlier years they each had an ice house for refrigeration purposes.

In 1959, the new Riverside store, a structure 40' by 60', was built by Dick Zacharias. This was a big improvement, and much more attractive to the customers and to the staff as well.

Two years later, after considerable discussion and inquiries by the Rosenort Co-op board, consisting of: Menno Penner, President; John F. Friesen, Vice-President; Henry Froese, Secretary; Menno Reimer, Willie T. Rempel, Frank Siemens, Johnny Dueck, and Peter J.L. Friesen, they started on plans for a new store building. Dick Zacharias was hired to do the basement, and Quality Builders constructed the building which was



60' by 80'. They began building on August 10, and by October 21, 1961, the new store was ready for business. Alva Froese was the first manager in this store and he stayed for almost two years. In June of 1963, Anton Kehler was hired as manager and he stayed for seven years, followed by Menno Reimer for almost four years. Gordon Dyck became manager till the fall of 1976, when the present manager Dale Banman was hired.

The stores have seen much improvement in the wide variety of stock available, and also very pleasant shopping conditions, with air-conditioning, adequate lighting and refrigeration, indoor washroom facilities for the staff, etc. They have also seen an increase in membership. They started in 1932, with 83 share-holders and presently Rosenort has about 555 members and Riverside about 200.

What the future holds for the Co-Op stores will to a large extent be determined by the community.

## THE VILLAGE GROWS

by P.J.B. Reimer

When the Mennonite settlers came to the banks of the Scratching River in 1874, they never dreamed that they would establish a business town. According to European custom, these farmers felt that they had to live fairly close together for a better social life. However, according to Canadian custom, they took up homesteads, and moved onto their own farms, breaking up the village. In little more than a generation, the village of Rosenort had ceased to exist. Then it happened.



*House being moved for P.A. Kroeker from John W. Siemens in 1938. Four tractors were needed for the job. At left is the Co-op Store, Thiessen's Tinshop and H.A. Dueck's gas station. The B.A. sign indicates where Nick Brandt's garage stood.*

In 1932, the Rosenort Farmers Association established a co-operative general store on a road leading west to Sperling, and east to the railway station at McTavish and Silver Plains. This spot was slightly north of the former village, and was the birth of the modern town of Rosenort; a product of the hard times and depression.

In the early 1930's, Henry A. Dueck, established a service station on the east-west road which is now P.R. No. 205, a connecting link with the Sperling and Brunkild area as well as Morris.



*This was the first garage in Rosenort built by Nick Brandt. It was purchased by Jake Loewen and renamed Rosenort Garage.*

Nick Brandt built a garage in 1936. Jake Loewen bought it and renamed it Rosenort Garage. The next owner was John Thiessen and the business became Thiessen Motors.

In 1940, the credit union was organized and one year later, C.I. Loewen of Steinbach established Loewen Lumber, although a small lumber business had been carried on at the old village site by Jacob Rempel.



*Richard and Dennis Martens ready to pump gas at Marten Motors in Rosenort in 1949.*

In 1943, two more businesses were established, Martin Motors and Plett Industries. Abe Goossen built a machine shop in 1947, and a year later Johnny Dueck began a successful cartage business. Levi Brandt began selling Imperial Oil products in 1952 and has become well established, together with his brother, Paul.

Jacob Goossen built the Midland Manufacturing plant which produced custom work on different kinds of machines, like conveyors, hoists, etc. A plumbing business was started by Frank Klassen in 1959, the same year Louise Giesbrecht opened the coffee shop. Also, Pete Siemens established his feed mill, and a little later the Valley Farm Equipment Business. The latter business enterprise was on the west side of the Morris River. The



*The interior of Abe's Groceteria operated by Abe and Elma Friesen in the late 40's.*



*Main Street in Rosenort in 1950, including Marten Motors, Abe's Groceteria, Credit Union, Tony Siemens' store, Abe's Machine and Electric.*

restaurant business was expanded when the writer of this article built the Rosenort Grill and Grocery in 1961.

Several more businesses were established in the 1960's; the Lite Rite Electric by Victor Warkentin, B.A. Petroleum by Roy Kornelsen, Dick Zacharias has established a large ready-mix concrete plant one-half mile south of the village. H.B. Rempel has a modern insurance agency, which also houses the post office.

G.B. Kornelsen had the insurance business prior to this. The transfer business was carried on by people like P.T. Kroeker and John F. Warkentin, Ruben Reimer, Jake Loewen, Alvin Korlensen, Ben Klassen and now Ben Reimer. For Rosenort, the hauling of water with 1,000 gallon tanks from Morris and Winnipeg is a lucrative business.

A printing shop was opened, more farm related business, such as fertilizer and seed businesses - until the picture is as we see it today.

## TELEPHONES

It is believed that the first phones were possibly put in around the turn of the century when a crude private system was worked out by local men. Everybody in the local area was on the same line but had his own ring. No central operator was needed and you can imagine, private conversations were not held on a party line of this nature.

One community phone was connected to the telephone system in Morris so that urgent long distance calls were made that way.

When Manitoba Telephone System took over in 1922 most residents subscribed and were on a party line as well (still are), but with more lines and fewer people per line. The way the system worked in those days, you could call your neighbor on the same line by simply turning the crank on the phone the number of rings he would answer to. There were times we were shocked to hear seven long rings. This was a "general" ring and everybody on the line was obligated to answer. This usually meant somebody wanted to announce an emergency situation and needed help. The neighbors always responded quickly and pitched in.

M.T.S. kept improving their service till on January 12, 1967 a new era was begun in telephone communications when Direct Distance Dialing came into effect. In 1979, the residents of the village received private telephone lines for the first time - another mark in history!

## LOEWEN LUMBER

Since Rosenort was open prairie land with few trees, lumber always had to be shipped in. As far back as 1912, Henry Brandt went to pick up lumber from a train, with horses and wagons, at a siding south of MacTavish. He would store it on his farm on the west banks of the river in Rosenort, and sell it from there. Approximately in 1919, Mr. Brandt's son-in-law, Jac T. Rempel, took over



*P. U. Brandt's construction crew in 1920, building a barn at Frank Kroeker's.*

the lumber business on his farm, one mile south of Rosenort. When Mr. Rempel met with a fatal accident involving runaway horses in 1930, the business stayed in the family, but was administrated by P.U. Brandt, for the next ten years. Son, Pete B. Rempel, bought the business from the family in 1940, ran it for a year, and sold it to C.T. Loewen and Sons of Steinbach in 1941.

Loewen Lumber, as it is named now, was moved to the location adjacent to the Rosenort Co-Op with Ed Loewen as its first manager. After one year, Dave Loewen took over management and stayed on until 1949; he was then



*The Abe L. Loewen, a fine example of the quality custom homes built by Loewen Lumber.*

followed by Cornie Loewen as manager, for the next six years, till 1955. Syd Reimer was manager from 1955 till 1965. Peter Wiebe managed the business from 1965 till 1969, when he left to begin his own construction company in Winnipeg. The present manager, Frank Friesen, will have completed ten years service on January 1, 1980.



*One of the sheds built by Loewen lumber at the Abe B. Eidse farm.*

The dozens of beautiful, modern homes in and around the community of Rosenort, are a standing tribute to the Loewen Lumber Co. The lumber and building firm has built approximately eight complete homes, costing an average of \$50,000.00 each, and approximately 20 Quanser machine sheds, costing around \$15,000.00 each. The firm has built homes and sheds up to a radius of 30 miles from Rosenort.

The business has improved considerably in the past years. Due to increased business, they have expanded the premises by building a new store which handles materials such as carpeting, lumber, paints, wallpaper and fixtures, just to name a few. They also have invested in a new forklift, which makes it easier to handle lumber. Presently, they have four employees; Frank Friesen, Manager; Jim Heinrichs, Sales Manager; Glenn Friesen, in charge of lumber; and Sheila Loewen, Secretary. The Loewen Lumber Co. has a smaller staff than in the past, due to modernized equipment.

## ROSENORT MOTORS

The business known as Rosenort Motors was first built in 1936 by Nick Brandt, who called it National Motors. In 1937, it was purchased by Jake Loewen and was renamed Rosenort Garage. After the second world war, Mr. Loewen again changed the name, this time to Loewen Motors. John Thiessen, the present owner, purchased the business in 1957, changing it to Thiessen Motors, after working for Mr. Loewen for 10 years. Rosenort Motors will be experiencing management-ownership change, with Mr. Mark Thiessen, Mr. Thiessen's only son, officially coming into the business as vice-president. His father, Mr. John Thiessen, the founder of Rosenort Motors, will maintain his interest as President of the Company. On February 1, 1979, Rosenort Motors became known as Rosenort Motors 1979, Ltd.

As a young boy, Mr. Thiessen was interested in mechanics and thus decided to go into this line of business. He finds satisfaction in being able to work toward a goal and to gain the customer's confidence, so he will return. They cater to the general farm area; a good percentage of customers come from a large radius.



*Thiessen Motors founded by John Thiessen in 1957, purchased from Jake Loewen.*

Rosenort Motors has a total of seven employees: Mery Siemens, Jack Loewen, Delbert Fast and Irvin Rempel, Mechanics; Ernie Loewen, Parts Manager; Mark Thiessen, Sales Manager; Cindy Fast, Secretary.

Attributing his steady business increases to advertising, keeping his equipment in good condition and providing good service, Mr. Thiessen has won several trips to such places as Phoenix, Arizona, Nassau, the Bahamas and Hawaii.

Rosenort Motors originally started as a J.I. Case farm equipment dealership, in the early 1960's added a General Motors and Versatile dealership to the business. Today, Rosenort Motors carries a wide variety of products.

Construction of new premises for Rosenort Motors is now well under way. The new building is being built on the Rosenort Motors machinery lot, across the road from the present premises about 500 feet west. The new



*Rosenort Motors, 1979, a modern new building for a growing business.*

building is 60' x 100' in dimension and when completed, will provide Rosenort Motors 1979 Ltd. with about 2000 additional square feet. The building is designed to accommodate an extension at a later date.

The new building is using all steel construction, except for a wood and brick finish on the front; which will also feature a 30 foot showroom. The showroom is designed for the display of three vehicles.

The service area will consist of nine service bays for gas and diesel vehicles and tractors. The new building, which will also provide additional space for the stocking of parts, is expected to be in operation by September, thus beginning a new era of service for Rosenort Motors, 1979.

## ROSENORT CREDIT UNION

Rosenort Credit Union has grown from an initial membership of 15 to 1656 in the space of thirty-eight years, according to reports from September, 1978. The growth is fantastic also, financially.

The Credit Union was formed in 1940, when 15 shareholders each bought a \$5.00 share with \$1.00 down and the balance of the \$5.00 to be paid at a minimum rate of 50¢ a month. The maximum loan was \$15.00. Today the credit union is able to consider loans of up to \$700,000.00.

The credit union was first located in the present Riverside Co-op building, which was then known as Rosenort Co-operative No. 2. The first manager was Phillip Isaac. The next location was at the present site of the Rosenort Fire Hall, but in a building that had previously been the old Rosenort Co-op No. 1 egg station. In 1965, a new building was built on the present location.

The Rosenort Credit Union may well be "a leader in the area of total assets", when compared to credit unions operating out of similar areas. The growth is contributed to the fact that Rosenort is a very aggressive business

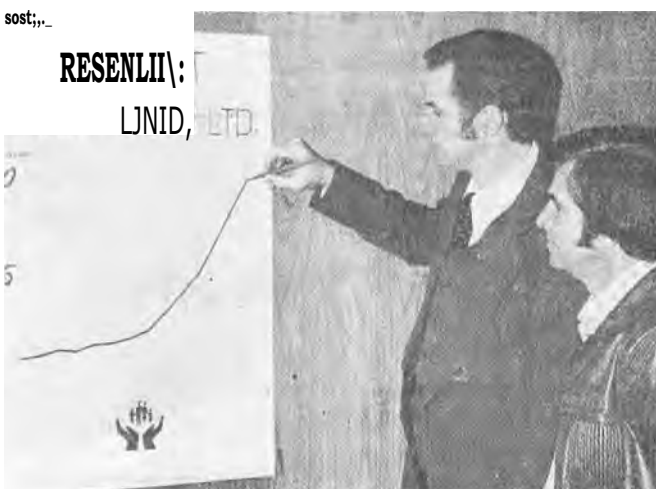


*Credit Union manager, H. W. Friesen, and President, Syd Reimer, discussing business in 1957.*

community and supported by the whole community. This allows the credit union to offer good competitive interest rates on loans and savings; according to present manager, Garry Friesen.

Managers of the credit union over the years include Phil Isaac, Dick Eidse, H.W. Friesen, Dave R. Loewen, Jacob F. Dueck, Tina Brandt, H.W. Friesen, and D.K. Friesen, respectively.

The first credit union was located in the manager's home. Today, it is a modern roomy red brick building with all the modern services of any credit union. There is brown panelling on the walls, an attractive counter, two modern offices, a well built enclosed vault, washroom facilities and a board room. These are some of the conveniences of the newest building. This building was a result of the 1964 annual meeting, when the members, after hearing a report of the situation, where the small building was the target of break ins to the extent that the insurance company was reluctant to keep insuring, even at higher premiums. Rather than risk inadequate protection, it was decided to build. The contract was awarded to Ens Construction of Morden.



*Credit Union Manager, Garry Friesen, and President, Frank Plett, completing the graph showing the Credit Union's progress during the past 40 years.*

Rosenort came third in the Southern Manitoba competition for the largest increase in volume, with a total turnover in 1967 of almost 19 million dollars, and adding 111 new members. In 1978, another milestone was reached, when the Rosenort Credit Union surpassed the \$10 million mark in assets. The substantial and consistent growth since its inception has proven the importance of a credit union in relation to business.

## SIEMENS PLUMBING AND HEATING LTD.

The origin of Siemens Plumbing and Heating Ltd. goes back half a century. It was started by Mr. Peter W. Siemens, the grandfather of the present owners. At that time, Mr. Siemens made a jack to push pipes. (This jack is still in operation on the odd occasion).

Peter Siemens, together with his brother, George, took jobs, pushing pipes from ponds to barns for farm use. Twenty-two foot trenches were dug, six to seven feet deep, by spade, in which the pipes were pushed.

His oldest son, Frank, seemed to have inherited an interest in installing pipes. He operated the jack on his own at the age of sixteen, while his father was employed elsewhere. During these early years, trenches were made with horse and scraper, and later by tractor and scraper.

In the early 1960's, Frank Siemens owned the business together with Henry K. Dueck. It was during this time that the first backhoe appeared and plumbing was put into buildings - a real boost for the business.

Mr. Frank Siemens was the sole owner of the business some years later and named it Siemens Construction. After his death in September, 1966, it was passed on to his wife, Elsie Siemens. Three years later, Les Siemens, son of the deceased Frank Siemens, bought Rosenort Plumbing and Heating and joined his mother in partnership for six years.

Having a real knack in plumbing, Les took over ownership of the business by 1975. Meanwhile, it kept on growing and a shop was built on the owner's property.

Randall, a younger brother to Les, who had worked for the business a number of years, decided to go into partnership with Les in 1978. It was then that the name Siemens Construction was changed to Siemens Plumbing and Heating Ltd., and heating was added to the business.

The business is appropriately named; as it has changed hands through the years, but never from the hands of the Siemens family.

## ABE'S MACHINE AND ELECTRIC

Due to the fact that there were no other electric repair shops in the Rosenort area, Mr. Goossen decided to take a step in that direction and start this type of business, since that was his interest.

Abe Goossen, the present owner, started his work in 1947. The business is at its second location. Its original location was situated approximately 200 yards west of the Rosenort Co-Op. After the 1966 flood, a new location



*Rosenort Egg Grading Station with Abe's Machine Shop in the background, being ravaged by the 1950 flood.*

had to be chosen because of the construction of the dike. Its new location is presently behind the Rosenort Fire Hall. They are operating in the original building, with a new expansion added on the north side, making it almost twice the size.

Mr. Goossen started out with himself as his only employee, but now has his two sons, Charles and Gordon, working for him. Their service consists of farm machining, electric motor, and appliance repair. Welding is also a very important part of his business. Since Mr. Goossen wants to satisfy his customers, he services what he sells; that being wiring and welding supplies, electrical appliances and electric motors.

As the years have gone by and his business has expanded, Mr. Goossen has found the need to purchase more equipment to fulfill the demand of customers. He bought a milling machine and a second welder, and finds a great deal of use for his lathe and the hydraulic press.

Mr. Goossen gained several skills as he progressed in the business, having mastered motor rewinding, welding skills and machining.

Customers come from different towns and villages from around Rosenort, such as St. Jean, Ste. Agathe, Brunkild and Starbuck. At times, Abe finds he has more business than he can handle. In this area, people say: "If no one else can fix it, well maybe Abe Goossen can", and he usually does. The result? Happy customers who come back again and again.

## BRANDT'S ESSO SERVICE

Levi Brandt, a local farm boy, decided his main ambition was to become involved in the business world. In 1949, this opportunity presented itself, and he went into the farm fuel business.

All the fuel was hauled from Morris in barrels with a one ton truck for a number of years. There was an odd farmer who had an overhead storage tank, and this was filled with a hand pump. Later, a tank truck with meters was purchased, making quite an improvement in the work involved. The past few years, a trailer was pur-





*Brandt's Esso Service founded by Levi Brandt in 1949.*

chased, and all fuel was hauled to Rosenort from the Refinery in Winnipeg.

In 1966, fertilizer was a relatively new product in this area, and was added as a sideline. The fertilizer business increased to the point where the service station and bulk fuel business was sold in 1979. A new company, known as Rosenort Agro Ltd., basically a fertilizer and farm chemical dealership, was formed in 1979. It employs three full-time and three part-time employees. President and general manager, is Levi Brandt.



*Rosenhoff South school being moved to the north school in the 1960's. Frank Dueck in foreground.*

## **FRANK DUECK AND SON BUILDING MOVERS AND CONSTRUCTION**

In 1950, flood waters hit southern Manitoba destroying the homes and buildings of many people. Realizing the potential of a moving business started at this time, coupled with his genuine concern and interest for others, motivated Mr. Frank Dueck to begin a moving business which is located in the Riverside-Rosenort area.

The business began slowly with the use of two large trucks and the family car. Gradually the business grew, adding new and more advanced equipment including a

Big Mack, International, winch, moving, and 3/4 ton trucks. At the present time, nine trucks are used for business purposes. This increase in trucks prompted an increase in employees to a general number of seven. The basic requirements of these employees is that they are able and licensed to drive large trucks.

Improvements include: hydraulic jacks and power bunks, which replaced the inferior jacks used before, from single-axle to tandem trucks, which increased the wheel base area. This makes it possible to travel over softer ground with greater ease. Wooden beams (timbers) were replaced by steel beams because of their solidity, keeping houses in better shape. In order to reduce costs, diesel trucks replaced gas guzzlers. Probably one of the most important innovations, is better communication achieved by installing a radio communication system, connecting trucks to each other and to home base.



*Dueck the movers, moving a barn. The barn had to be raised in order to clear the posts on the bridge.*

The moving business has increased over the last ten years, due to the increasing number of ready built yards. The majority of customers require services in Southern Manitoba, although occasionally Duecks are called upon to extend into Northern Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Many unique and interesting experiences are encountered. One of these included moving a house from a ready built yard, 40 miles, by land, to Cape Inlet Bay. From there, it was transported onto a specially designed raft and floated 40 miles along a river.

An unforgettable experience involved moving an elevator, coupled with its many difficulties. A rather unique problem was the fact that the elevator could not be mounted on wheels, but had to be skidded. Since it was during the winter months, they had the additional problem of keeping the skids constantly moving, since they would freeze solid if they stayed stable for any length of time. Since the elevator was too high to pass under any electrical wires, the wires had to be passed under the elevator. The elevator also had to be moved across the highway without damaging the pavement. To accomplish this, tires were laid across the highway, and soaped plywood (to make it slippery) was placed on top of the tires. Then the elevator was slid across the highway over this prepared apparatus. Frank Dueck has proved that most problems can be solved in the moving business, and it makes for interesting work.

## WESTFIELD INDUSTRIES

The origin of one of the most successful industries in this area, may be attributed to the inventive genius of a quiet unassuming man, Abram D. Plett, but the success of the enterprise is the result of the efforts of his four sons.

Since 1951, Abram Plett manufactured grain augers, camping trailers, land packers and harrows under the name of Plett Industries. In 1965, he retired and sold the business to his sons, Frank, Stan, Benjamin, and Oliver, who renamed it "Westfield Industries". After a major flood in 1966, the Plett Brothers saw the importance of relocating from their shop on the banks of the Morris River to property just east of Rosenort, on the No. 205.

The manufacturing complex is a large modern brick building, which contains manufacturing, office and warehouse facilities, constructed in 1968. There have been further expansions, in 1974, 1978 and the present one (1980), which is enlarging office facilities, until to date, there is 45,000 square feet under roof.

The phenomenal growth of Westfield Industries may be due to the fact that all efforts of the firm were geared to manufacture harrows and grain augers in a variety of sizes, capacities and specifications. The result was that these items could be mass produced at substantially lower prices than offered by other manufacturers. The plan showed obvious success, as there was a 500% volume increase in the first four years of operation.

The company owns five tractor-trailer units, which haul the finished product to dealers across Canada and the U.S. and on return trips, transport the raw materials, such as milled lengths of steel needed in manufacturing. Since market demands are constantly increasing, the product is sold as fast as it can be produced.

There is no real slack period for the company which employs 80 persons, since in the winter months they build a stockpile to meet summer demands. All the implements are treated and painted in the plant, and carry a parts and service warranty.

## "WESTFIELD INOUE' IES LTD.

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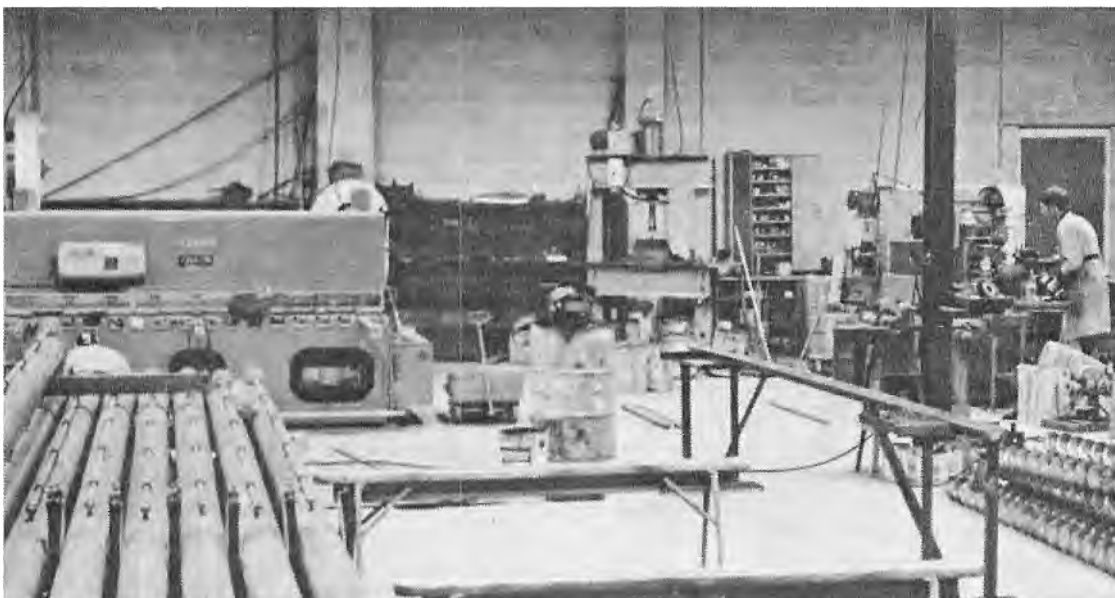


*The Plett brothers. LEFT TO RIGHT: Oliver, Stanley, Benjamin, and Frank of Westfield Industries Ltd. of Rosenort, have built their industry by having quality products, good promotion and hard work.*

Sales for the Westfield Haro-King, which was designed to tow behind a grain drill, planter or seeder, are decreasing, with all efforts now geared to the manufacture of grain augers. The augers in the Westfield line have been designed, engineered and built to move grain with a minimum of power and give maximum performance.

The four brothers fulfill the many roles required of such an industry. Frank is president and general manager; Benjamin is vice-president, office and production manager; Stan is secretary-treasurer, sales manager and shop supervisor; Oliver is assistant vice-president, responsible for traffic and shipping. All reside in the village of Rosenort and are active in the community.

To what do they attribute their success? "Mostly hard work, perseverance, and a good product", says President Frank. With sales volumes of \$4.2 million in 1978, and in excess of \$6 million in 1979, indications are the product has gained a favorable reputation with the farmers, as well as making an impact upon the economy of the municipality, by providing employment.



*An interior view of Westfield Industries in Rosenort reveals a humming manufacturing plant. Photo courtesy Derksen Printers.*



*Louise Olson, of Rosenort Grill and Grocery, serving coffee to P.L. Kroeker, in Rosenort's only restaurant. As of 1979, Louise no longer operates this facility.*

## ROSENORT GRILL AND GROCERY

In 1959, Louise Olson first began her restaurant in a small car shed. The first little building she used only one year, before a new one was built. In 1961, a new building was erected and modern equipment installed.

When Louise moved to Rosenort, she needed to support herself and her three children. She decided as there was no cafe in Rosenort, that she would start one, and found that if she hired one person to help run it, she could still take care of the children.

As the children grew up, they helped with the grill. At this time, she also sold groceries, but gave that part up; when the new Co-Op was built. It has worked out well, although Louise knows she should expand the eating area, and intends to do so shortly.

Many things are discovered over a cup of coffee and quite a few business transactions are made at her cafe. Of all the years that she has had her restaurant, Louise has enjoyed her work.

## RIVERSIDE ECONOMY SHOP

For the convenience of the Rosenort Community in 1971, Mrs. Elma Friesen decided to become a branch of the Pete L. Friesen Riverside Economy Shop.

Mrs. Friesen's great interest in various types of fabrics and sewing supplies, influenced her decision to start this type of business. To simplify her sales, she purchased a fabric weighing scale and a cash register.

It was a great convenience, having the shop situated right in her own residence, which is located approximately 3 / 4 mile south of Rosenort.

Mr. Friesen finds that she is capable of operating the business on her own, therefore, she has no employees.

Elma Friesen has enlarged her variety in both fabrics and notions, and as a result, has found that her business and sales got bigger every year, as a result, she decided to expand the shop area by making use of the entire basement.

On certain days, says Mrs. Friesen, she finds business to be slack, but on other days, there is a constant flow of customers in and out of the shop.

## MIDLAND

In Rosenort, approximately ten or twelve years ago, an individual, Mr. Harry Isaac decided to start a customer repair shop. Gradually this shop developed into a manufacturing centre supporting thirty employees. Its produce includes grain boxes, gravel boxes, and pup-trailer units. Additional options include extensions, checker plate floors, beat gates, tarp hoops, etc. The majority of their customers are located in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

More sophisticated machinery, such as semi-automatic welders and overhead trains, have improved business operations. The basic requirements for workers at Midland is the ability to weld, handle and cut steel, work with large machinery, and be willing to perform general labor.

Mr. Ervin Friesen, present owner, decided to enter the manufacturing business because this type of work interested him and he was presented with the opportunity. Previous to this job, he was employed in a trucking business. The next time you see a big truck, take a glance, it may likely be sporting a *Midland* box.

## VALLEY ENTERPRISES, ROSENORT LTD.

In 1959, two brothers, Edwin and Wilbert Dueck, decided to supplement their farm income by building laminated arch rafters for barns, machine sheds, greenhouses, etc. The first set of rafters was designed for Edwin's barn and were built, operating out of their father's barn.

After the first set of rafters was erected, the local Loewen Lumber negotiated with them to supply their Rosenort yard with rafters. The next set that the brothers built was for Johnny Dueck's machine shed. After that



*The first rafters were constructed for Edwin's barn, in the loft of his father's barn in 1961.*



*The first rafters built by Dueck's Laminated Rafters were built by Edwin and Wilbert Dueck for Edwin's machine shed.*

building was up, it did a lot of advertising, and a new era of farm storage buildings seemed to develop. Other dealers showed interest and also started purchasing.

In 1960, Wilbert married and started his own premises. This prompted Duecks to move the "rafter chicken barn" to Wilbert's yard, where they operated for 3 years. Then a decision was made to build a permanent building. Since an all weather road was also necessary, they moved to Edwin's place.

In 1963, already under the name of Dueck's Laminated Rafters, a 40 x 70 arch building was constructed. A new method of assembling was also finalized by buying an automatic air nailer and a gang saw. From then on, 4" to 12" boards were purchased and ripped in their shop.

In 1967, they changed over to bolt pressure on their laminations, doing away with all nailing. They designed a new jig with the assistance of Midland Mfg. Rosenort, owned by Harry Isaac. Also included in the changes, were the interlocking joints. This improved the strength and appearance of the rafter. A radial arm saw was designed with a planner head and knives, operated hydraulically.

In 1968, a warehouse, 40 x 60, was added to the main shop. With these improvements, production increased, which in turn called for new dealers.

In 1972, an opportunity to buy lumber and supplies direct through brokers distributors and direct mill, was offered to them. This, with the fact of interest in expanding to a complete retailing lumber supplier, made it apparent that a branch yard would be needed. They formed a retail yard, naming it Valley Enterprises, which was incorporated in 1978.

Crews were hired for their building erection requirements. During peak season, 3 men are employed with a retail yard, 5 or 6 men in the rafter plant, and 3 crews put up sheds.

Dueck's Laminated Rafters deliver in a 200 mile radius to dealers' yards and job sites. Valley Enterprises, Rosenort Ltd. also have an offer of delivering "package deals" to any part of Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan.

In 1976, a new warehouse, 56 x 100, was built, half of it for farm machinery, the rest for plywood, insulation and windows. New improvements are realized annually.

Wherever you look, there is that orange reflectin of the same colored jigs they invested in for \$100.00, twenty years ago.

## THE ROSENORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*by P.J.B. Reimer*

As the new business part of the village of Rosenort slowly developed in the late 1950's, some of the business people felt the need of an organization for the community like a Chamber of Commerce. The roads, bridges, street lights and some other facilities, were very backward and neglected. However, business developed.

The Chamber of Commerce was organized, headed by people like Syd Reimer, manager of the lumberyard, and a little later, Peter Wiebe. It was supported by the manager of the Co-op Store and the Credit Union, as well as some others.

A hard surface road to No. 75 and a good high bridge over the Morris River, was needed so very much in times of a flood, and two very necessary things for the developing industrial village.

The Chamber of Commerce had many other things to promote for the village. After half a dozen local small school districts had consolidated, there was the building of a new larger school, which was accomplished under the Roblin Government. With the election of Dave L. Friesen as president of the Chamber, much more was accomplished and worked on, with the help of people like, Dick Zacharias, Frank Friesen, Frank Plett, Stan Plett, Irvine Kroeker, Alvin Rempel, Garry Friesen.

The community was pleased that the postal service was improved when Rosenort officially became an unincorporated village in 1977. Its boundary was even more extensive than the ring dike that was built after the 1966 flood. Although a group of people started its own private school three years ago, the enrolment of our public school has increased to over 300, all within the boundaries of the village.

Today there are more than 20 prosperous business people who support the Chamber, and the population is growing, particularly within the ring dike. New business enterprises have been started and new residential streets opened. The Chamber is also working hard on things like natural gas, a water plant and sewage. The telephone system has been improved with a cable for private lines. Hopefully, the Executive of the Chamber will have to report much more success yet at the banquet of the next annual meeting, in 1980, after 106 years of the founding of this village as a farming community.



*The village of Rosenort during the 1948 flood.*



*Rosenort Concrete, founded by Dick Zacharias, showing their fleet of cement trucks at the plant.*

## ROSENORT CONCRETE

When Dick Zacharias went into his own construction contracting in 1956, he could not have dreamed how it would mushroom into the business it is today. While constructing basements and doing general masonry work, he realized the great demand for ready-mix concrete. In 1965, he purchased a plot of land half a mile south of Rosenort village and set up a plant.

Business thrived and trucks of mixing concrete were seen coming and going constantly. Crews of men were sent out to various construction jobs, including curbing streets in nearby towns.

Curbing streets was a backbreaking job and a crew of 6 men could do a maximum of 220 feet per day. When the town of Carman expected to have an average of 1000 feet finished per day, the Rosenort Concrete decided to invest in a curb machine. A purchase was made in 1973, a machine on rubber tires, the first of its kind, and still the only one in southern Manitoba. With this machine, they can complete 3000 feet of curb daily with a crew of four men.

In 1975, business was still growing and another plant was built in Niverville, employing six people and operating four trucks. This plant, however, was sold to Wm. Dyck & Sons in 1979.

Rosenort Concrete employs twenty people in the summer, its peak work season, operating five cement trucks, one tandem and two trailer gravel trucks and two curb machines. The curbing business takes their crews as far east as Rainy River, in Ontario, west to Tisdale,

Saskatchewan, north to The Pas and all over Southern Manitoba.

As Dick's sons grew up, they all became partners in the family business - Richard joining in 1968, Lloyd in 1977 and Calvin in 1978. This year, 1979, Dick decided to let the boys take over the entire business and retired.

A generous amount of ambition, hard work and co-operation has made Rosenort Concrete a good example of what a family business can become.



*This curbing machine can produce 3000 feet of curb daily, with a crew of 4 men.*

## LARK PRINTING

In 1968, two men, Victor Goossen and Lloyd Goossen, saw a need for the service of a printer in the area, and set up shop in the former Clover Plains School. Business was slow at first, but as it caught on, a larger premises was needed, resulting in the leasing of the former egg grading station from the Rosenort Co-Op.

Their printing business was mainly oriented to supplying the needs of the Church of God in Christ Conference, although eventually it grew, extending into other fields, including many commercial accounts. In 1970, Johnny Dueck was taken in as a partner, and Lloyd left the business a few years later.

In 1978, a new building was erected on Victor Goossen's property, one mile east of Rosenort, with the decision being made to operate primarily for the needs of the church conference. Today, four people are employed full time, and between 10 and 12 persons on occasional peak periods, producing 20,000 Sunday School manuals per quarter, 5-6 million tracts a year, plus other books. The commercial printing accounts, which at this point comprised about one-third of the business, were taken over by Country Graphics.

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Do art and business go together? Well, apparently some businessmen in Rosenort seem to think so - Ron Kroeker, his brother, Peter, and Ernie Loewen, who started Country Graphics and Printing Ltd., a printing and designing firm, in 1978.

There was a demand in the area for commercial printing, supplying the needs of the various businesses, when Lark Printing ceased that portion of its operation. Thus, Country Graphics was provided with numerous commercial accounts, which were a valuable asset to a new business. Loans from Rosenort Credit Union Ltd. and a Dree grant, plus shares from the owners, combined to start the business financially.

The name was picked by Ron, as well as the logo, a rooster. Why the rooster? The rooster symbolizes a new start, a fresh idea. As their brochure says: "Wake up to something new!"

The men started the business for several reasons. Ron was involved in design and art work for several years in Winnipeg. Peter has training in Industrial Arts, which can be applied to the business, plus a hankering to try something new, Ernie liked the idea of being involved in his own business; and the venture provided a challenge.

The firm is unique in that they have a professional design department, something which most small printing firms do not have. The staff, which includes a designer - artist, a production artist, a printer and a receptionist, feels that it can give specialized attention to the art



*Country Graphics is a modern printing plant in Rosenort, which opened in 1978. The business originally was founded by Victor Goossen in 1968.*

design, thus producing an exceptional product, rather than an ordinary one. Country Graphics feel that good design is important in advertising, to promote a better business image, which in turn, creates profits for the owner.

Since the company is new, most of the equipment is also new. A linocomp 1 typesetter, capable of setting type in ten different sizes, a Kenro Pacesetter Camera, used to photograph artwork and copy, plus a host of other machines, serve to create the finished product.

The firm designs and prints almost everything any business might need, from business cards, posters, advertising materials, pamphlets, price lists, logo designs, silk screen designing, cartoons, wedding invitations, and office supplies. The trade area includes Southern Manitoba and Winnipeg.

The support and response to the business has been astounding, indicating that Country Graphics is filling a need in the community, and ensuring that it will be in business for some time to come.

## JERRY'S GULF

In 1944, in the village of Rosenort, Jake Loewen started the business presently known as Jerry's Gulf. It was established to supply the farmers with oil and all types of petroleum products.

Jerry sells petroleum products like gas, diesel, solvent, oil, tires, batteries and other miscellaneous goods essential for cars, trucks and farm machinery.

The first gas pumps were hand pumps, but they are now electric. Manual tire machines gave way to electric and air, from drums to tank trucks. Jerry has a fuel oil delivery truck and a half ton, and stated that in order to run a business, you must know how to do some maths, enjoy meeting the public, be honest, know how to fix tires and know what type of oil goes into different vehicles. The business employs from 1-4 people.

Jerry went into this business because he likes sales and meeting people, being independent and wanted financial security for his family.



## RIVERBEND FEED MILL LTD.

Riverbend Feed Mill Ltd., Rosenort, Man., came into existence in 1974, when Landmark Feed Mill Ltd. of Landmark purchased the non-operating but fully modern feedmill facilities in Rosenort. The Landmark Feed Mill people had long been aware of the lack of a modern full feed mill in the area along the west side of the Red River. Finally, to help service their expanding clientele, which included many producers from the Rosenort area, they purchased the Rosenort facilities and opened it for business in July, 1974.

From 1974 until the present, the mill at Rosenort has undergone an almost constant renovation and expansion program. Today, it ranks as one of the most productive and efficient rural feed mills in Manitoba. The twelve full time employees operate Riverbend Feed Mill proudly under red and white color scheme on their plant and trucks, with a philosophy that stresses quality and service. The poultry and livestock producers in the immediate area and also from many surrounding districts, have responded by supporting this business resoundingly, so that Riverbend Feed Mill now services producers from nearby to as far as 80 miles away.

The feed mill has two Western Star trucks. One of them has a total tonnage of 11 tons and the other, 21 tons. The mill produces chicken feed, hog feed, broiler feed and canary seed. The volume produced in one day is 120 tons in 20 hours, with the storage capacity of the entire bins being 34,017.93 bushels.



AZ.tt,lr.

*Riverbend Feed Mill during the flood of 1979. Attempts at building a dyke faded as the flood waters rose beyond the expected levels.*

They built a dike around the mill to prevent flooding in 1979, but the water came in and filled the basement. A lot of valuable equipment was removed. The front office was put up on blocks above the water. But the flood did not stop them; today at Riverbend Feed Mill, it's business as usual.

## GROMOR AGRI PRODUCTS

*by Blake Friesen*

In the years 1975-76, farmers began to realize a need for extra fertilizer application on farm lands to boost

crop yield. They began to apply fertilizer more freely than before, finding a good fertilizer helped substantially in overall crop yield, boosting it from 20% to 60% in total yields, depending upon the amount of fertilizer applied.

Cominco Ltd. found it needed a dealer for fertilizer in the Rosenort-McTavish area, where there was a good demand for fertilizer. Ed Friesen and Harry Friesen were approached and were genuinely interested in what they had to offer. They agreed to start a partnership and form a fertilizer business in the region.

In 1976, the business "Gromor Agri Products" was started with Ed L. Friesen and Garry Friesen as owners and operators.

The fertilizer plant with location in McTavish on the C.N. line, was a storage and blending plant, where the product was transferred via rail, or semi trailer truck into the plant. The fertilizer is then stored until the farmer requires it. Then it is blended to the farmer's individual needs, weighed by scale, and transferred to the farmer's field for application.

The plant, which can store 400 tons bulk fertilizer and 250 tons of bagged fertilizer, carries nitrogen urea, phosphate, and potash. It also has blending facilities, which can blend the fertilizer to exact and precise soil test requirements.

At present, Gromor has spreader rentals, for farmer self-application and application by "field Jimmy" a big floater type applicator, which applies up to 100 acres an hour.

Farmers most liked this fertilizer for its dust-free qualities and good application characteristics. The success of this fertilizer is contributed to the fact that it has urea as a fertilizer material, instead of the highly corrosive ammonium nitrate. Urea is an organic compound synthesized from organic components, and is prevalent in nature, since it is the principal end-product of the metabolism of protein substances. At present, it is the most dominant solid nitrogen fertilizer in world agriculture.

Plans for expansion in future years are underway, with a new office, greater storage facilities, more efficient handling capacity and custom spreading. Gromor Agri Products feels it will be able to compete in the field of fertilizer with a superior product, while still staying highly competitive in price. They will strive to serve the farmer in the future years and maintain their motto "Service from the word "Grow"!

## REMPEL SERVICE

Rempel Service was started in April of 1973 by Melvin Rempel, in the building that was formerly Valley Farm Equipment. He began with Polaris snowmobile sales and general repairs of all makes of cars, trucks and farm equipment. A year later, the line of Simplicity lawn and garden equipment was added, plus Briggs and Stratton small engine sales and service.

In the beginning of 1977, Rempel Service started selling Chrysler/ Dodge cars and trucks, and the repair facilities were expanded by another 2500 square feet. Over



*Melvin Rempel, owner of Rempel Service, they sell and service cars and trucks and small engines.*

\$15,000.00 worth of equipment was purchased for better servicing of vehicles. By 1978, the sales and service of Kohler small engines was begun and the Polaris snowmobile business was sold.

In 1979, Rempel's Service was incorporated, with Melvin Rempel as president and Irene Rempel as vice-president. In 1979, a huge dyke was built around Rempel Service and Riverbend Feed Mill Ltd., a neighbouring business, hopefully to keep flood waters out completely, but it did not succeed. Rempel Service Ltd. employs four persons - the general manager and president, a secretary, and two mechanics.

## ROSENORT FARM SUPPLY

Many Rosenort businessmen seem to have a political as well as a business sense. Mr. Alvin Rempel is one of these men. Besides being Reeve of the Morris Municipality, he still finds time to run a business in Rosenort.



*Rosenort Farm Supply, formerly Martin Motors, is the Massey Ferguson dealer in the district.*

In 1973, Alvin, along with a young businessman, Irvin Kroeker, bought a garage formerly owned by Marten Motors. They set up a Massey Ferguson dealership and called it Rosenort Farm Supply. The doors opened for business on March 15, 1973. All lines of Massey Ferguson equipment are sold, from chainsaws to large four wheel drive tractors, as well as a line of Allied farm equipment. Farm equipment repairs are done, with Henry Thiessen, an experienced mechanic, in charge of repair. The business employs four people, including the owner, Alvin is sales manager, Dave Stoesz, parts manager, Mrs. Rhonda Friesen is part time bookkeeper, and Henry Thiessen is the mechanic.



## Lawhik's,

*Imperial Oil bulk station operated by Irvin Kroeker in partnership with Alvin Rempel (1979).*

The owners, who went into business to provide a service to the farming community say the interesting aspects of owning a business is the challenge of establishing the business, and the satisfaction of sales. When the business started in 1973, it had a business volume of \$260,000.00 and by 1979, it had increased to \$1,200,000.00.

In 1978, the business became Rosenort Farm Supply Ltd., when Henry Thiessen joined the other two owners to become a part of this successful business enterprise.



*Valley Leisure, Honda and Ski-doo dealership in Rosenort.*

## VALLEY LEISURE

Every spring, besides the sounds of nature, you hear the roar of motorcycles in Rosenort. Could this be the reason Gerald Hiebert established a Honda dealership - Valley Leisure - in Rosenort? Gerald, like every young boy, has liked motorcycles, for a long time. He owned his first bike when he was fifteen and has had one ever since.

VALLEY LEISURE LTD.:  
**'HON**



*Valley Leisure, 1979, founded by Gerald Hiebert.*

He worked at a Honda dealer in Winnipeg for several years, commuting to Winnipeg and back to Rosenort every day. Gerald decided to start a Honda dealership in Rosenort and opened on March 1, 1979, in the Rosenort Farm Supply building.

This type of business requires mechanical ability as well as salesmanship. Come winter, Valley Leisure includes Skidoo snowmobiles for the snow enthusiasts.

## QUALITY BUILDERS



*Richard and Cal Kroeker of Quality Builders, putting the finishing touches on F.L. Kroeker's home.*



*The shop of Quality Builders, who specialize in home building. The business was founded by Frank Kroeker and now his sons.*

## WR ENTERPRISES

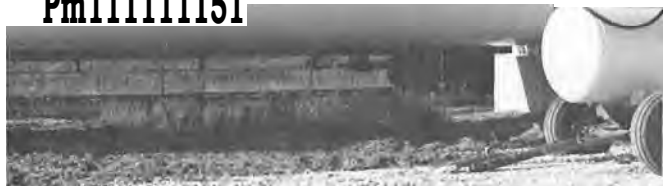


*The Imperial Oil anhydrous ammonia plant at Silver Plains, operated by W.R. Enterprises of Rosenort. One of the owners, Norman Wiens, pictured here, preparing to unload the car into the tank on the spur, which contains 80 tons of liquid gas.*

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*Alvin Rempel, co-owner of W.R. filling a nurse tank for a customer. These tanks are pulled behind cultivators, as the anhydrous ammonia is incorporated into the soil to provide nutrients for the crop in spring.*

# TRANSFER



*With no railroad coming through Rosenort, the transfer business thrived in Rosenort. Here we see John Warkentin standing in front of his truck with his driver, Pete Kroeker seated.*



*Ben Reimer, owner of Rosenort Transfer in a tornado stricken area.*



*Art Loewen, left, with his transfer truck in 1951. Previous owners were David Friesen, P.T. Kroeker, and A.K. Loewen. They sold to John Warkentin and John U. Kornelsen, who operated individually as Rosenort Transfer and Riverside Transfer, during the 1940's and sold out after the 1950 flood. Rueben Reimer and Jake Klassen have also owned the business after Art Loewen.*



*Rosenort Transfer, now owned by Ben Reimer, operating with two 3 ton trucks and a half ton pickup.*



*Brad Reimer, full time driver for Rosenort transfer.*



*Jerry Friesen, owner of Gulf Oils in Rosenort. Jerry purchased the business in 1976 from his dad, H.R. Friesen.*

# COUNTRY SCENES



*Pete F. Loewen, and Henry Goossen on running board, about 1919.*



*Sunday afternoon drive in a new Chevy, 1919.*



*Sawing wood, about 1915 at Rosenort.*



*Very good harvest in 1926 near McTavish. P.J. Loesven's threshing outfit.*



*UPPER LEFT: Modern Rosenort youth of the 1920's. LEFT TO RIGHT: Henry Rempel, John Kehler, Peter Kehler, John Retnpel, Peter L. Kroeker, Peter F. Dueck.*

*ABOVE: Infamous Ken Leishman, Manitoba's legendary flying bandit, who disappeared into the Ontario bushland in 1979 on a mercy flight. He is shown here in his earlier years, selling pots and pans in the Rosenort area.*

*LEFT: Ro.senhoff baseball team, 1920. STANDING: Jac D. Friesen, Dave K. Dueck, Peter K. Dueck, Henry A. Dueck, Abram J. Dueck, Hefty J. Dueck, Peter J. Dueck, John K. Loewen, Jac B. Dueck. SEATED: John Schellenberg, John K. Dueck, Abe Penner, Henry H. Brandt, John Harms, Dave J. Dueck.*

## UNINCORPORATED VILLAGE DISTRICT OF ROSENORT

The residents of the village of Rosenort have for some time been contemplating the possibility of local control and local participation in civic affairs. A petition presented to that effect resulted in the formation of the unincorporated village district of Rosenort.

On the evening of May 9, 1977, a public meeting was held in the Rosenort Collegiate auditorium, to finalize the formation of the unincorporated village. When the meeting was adjourned, the assembly from the proposed area had elected a committee of Frank Friesen, Franklin Plett, and Norman Wiens to carry out the business of the U.V.D. The proposed area consisted of approximately 567 acres and included the dyked area of the village, as well as a narrow strip of land extending along each road leading from Rosenort. (see map)



*Norman Wiens, Frank Plett, Frank Friesen, U.V.D. Committee.*

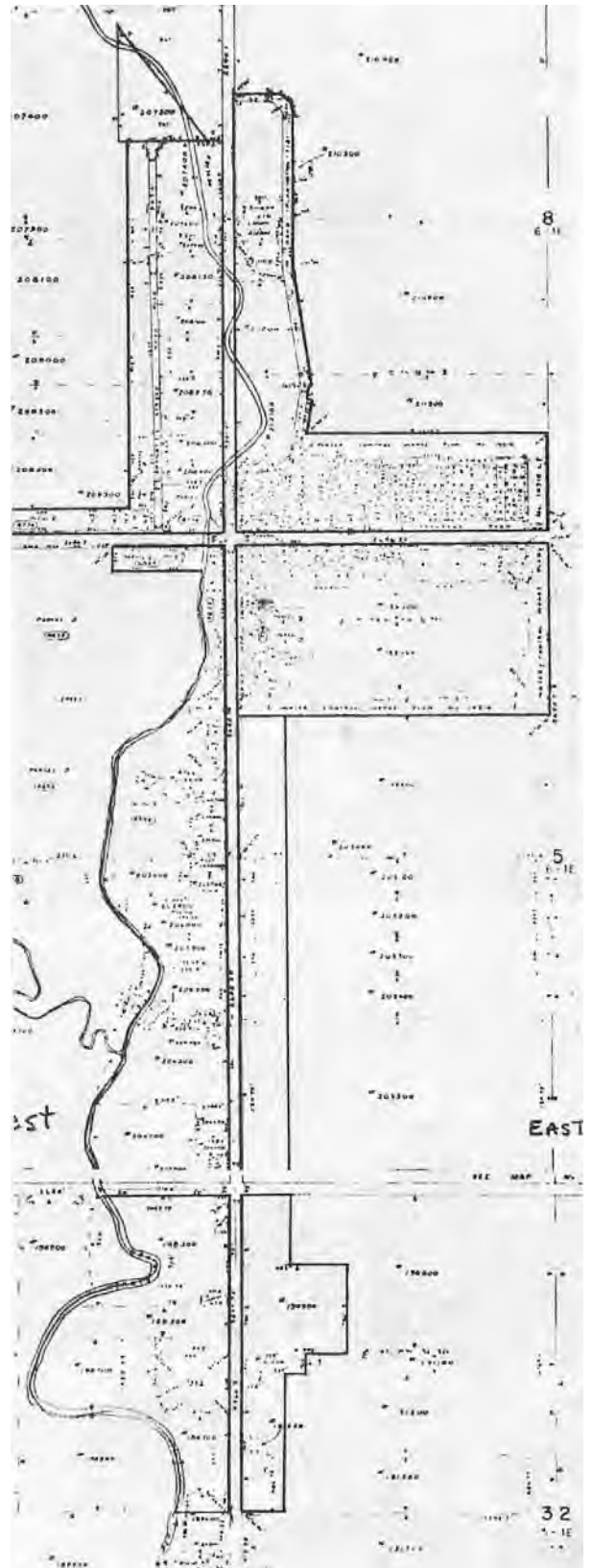
On May 17, 1977, the newly elected committee met to take care of its first items of business. At that meeting, Frank Friesen was appointed chairman, Franklin Plett was appointed vice-chairman, and Norman Wiens was appointed secretary-treasurer. The first budget was prepared for municipal council's approval. This budget was based on an assessment of 727,900 and a mill rate of 20 giving an initial budget of \$14,558.00. Taxes are collected only for those things the committee has control over and only in the district designated as the U.V.D. Services provided for in other areas of the municipality cannot be taxed in the U.V.D., if the committee is empowered to take care of them.

The major duties of the committee are to maintain and construct roads, drains, provide street lighting, snow removal, and weed control. Some duties remain under the jurisdiction of the rural municipality either by choice or as spelled out in the Municipal Act.

All members of the U.V.D. of Rosenort have specified terms of office as outlined in the Municipal Act. When these offices expire in October of 1980, elections must be held to fill the positions on the committee. The appointment to the various offices of the committee must be done by resolution. Although at this time, the committee has not been in office for a complete term, the resulting local autonomy has resulted in numerous benefits.

Future planning includes water and sewer services, garbage collection and improved street lighting.

## MAP OF U.V.D. OF ROSENORT



*The total area with the U.V.D. of Rosenort is 567 acres, a distance of 2 miles from north to south. The earlier village settlement was on the most southerly part of the map on the riverbank. Lack of a palatable water supply underground, necessitated this early settlement. Today, this trend is discouraged, as high waters in spring create problems for homeowners. After construction of the roads, homes were built nearer the roadway.*





*Aerial view of Rosenort during 1979 flood. Note the protection provided by the dyke.*

## ROSENORT DYKE

After the flood of 1966, it was obvious the village of Rosenort needed a dyke. The ring dykes protecting the communities along the Red River held back the raging flood waters in spite of the weather.

C.J. Neufeld was awarded the contract, and the heavy equipment began moving dirt on July 6, 1967.

The dyke was built on the east bank of the Morris River, starting one mile north of Rosenort, going two miles south of the village, then one mile east, and a mile north again. Total length of the dyke is eight miles. The only major construction was along the river, as existing roads were raised to become part of the dyking system. At some points in the immediate vicinity of the village, the height of the dyke is 12 feet.

A number of buildings had to be moved to accommodate the dyke. Six machines, which included five crawlers and

scrapers, a patrol, grader, and front end loader, moved 225,000 yards in earth to complete the project. One-third of the work was done in five days, and then the rains came. Wet weather throughout the summer, caused a delay of completion until the spring of 1968. The dyke has proved its worth, in high waters of several spring runoffs, and the major flood of 1979.



*Scenes like this were common in Rosenort, before the construction of the dyke.*



*Bridge under construction at Rosenort on the No. 205, in winter of 1969.*



*This high, concrete bridge, completed in 1970, gave Rosenort residents access to the community during high waters.*

# EDUCATION

The children had to learn the three R's, and they would get that instruction at first in a private residence. It was required that they be able to read the Bible and the Catechism, and understand the German language which was used by the minister in church. As soon as possible, a small schoolhouse was built in each village, which was also used for Sunday morning worship and necessary village meetings.

In the year 1878 the Manitoba Government offered their usual grant of up to \$100.00 annually to the Mennonite Church Schools if they would permit the government to register them as public school districts. They would be quite free to go on teaching the Bible, Catechism, and other subjects in the German language as before, and have full control over that teaching. The Small Church accepted this in all their 7 schools. Rosenort and Rosenhof were two of them. Nearly all the other Mennonite schools did not.

Some of the early teachers were:

Abraham Klassen	Abraham Enns
Rev. Johann K. Friesen	David Enns
David B. Klassen	Henry Froese
Maria Friesen	William Fast
David Hiebert	Peter W. Warkentin
teacher)	(first district school teacher)
Peter Toews	Mr. Neufeld
Johann W. Dueck	
Johann R. Dueck	
Abram Friesen	
Heinrich Enns, Sr.	

Each school usually had a public closing programme and Teachers' Conferences for educational advancement.

This arrangement with the government went on with the grant system for almost thirty years. Government school inspectors usually reported good progress by the



*The Rosenort private school No. 60, taken by Henry Froese in 1907.*

pupils in these schools. Then came the bombshell. In 1906 the government passed a regulation, that all Public Schools had to fly the Union Jack to qualify for the grant. This caused a great stir and was interpreted as a real sign of militarization by the government. The schools were promptly pulled out of government control and re-established as church schools, although in the instruction it made no difference.

In the year 1914 some families, particularly from the Holdeman people, re-established the Rosenort Public School. Their primary aim, apparently, was to teach more English. They engaged Peter T. Kroeker the first year as their teacher. He had also been a teacher for some years in the church school at Rosenhoff. The Small Church did not agree and organized its own church school, which functioned up to the 1920's. Teachers during these years were G.B. Kornelsen and Jacob H. Friesen.



*Rosenhoff private school class, taken in 1906-07.*



*P.J. Loewen and G.B. Kornelsen in 1898. G.B. Kornelsen was one of the teachers in the private school.*

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*P.J. Loewen's script, learned in school, at the age of 12.*

#### DEVELOPMENT AND BEGINNINGS OF CHANGE

The Manitoba Government passed the Compulsory Public School Act, and that brought about, though only eventually, the great change in Mennonite thinking, as they became involved with the outside world. The Public School Act was accepted because the Mennonites were reluctant to leave this most prosperous country which was now home. They had become patriotic enough to grow food for the allies for a good price, and they even consented to buy war bonds, which was a good investment with a high rate of interest.

With the coming of the compulsory Public School system in the community, around 1920, there was much excitement and fear of its consequences. It probably caused a stronger feeling of unity. For the first time the congregation now agreed on the building of one church in the centre of the community, near the present site of the new large Rosenort Church.

It was very difficult at first to find Mennonite teachers who were qualified. However, the Department of Education was very lenient in granting permits to Church School teachers, who had a command of the English language. Later in the twenties and thirties, well-qualified teachers of the newer Mennonite immigrants from the Ukraine became available. As a whole, the Rosenort community was very fortunate to get good teachers.

The Small Church had always strenuously opposed higher education for their young people, and now they did not have their own qualified teachers. Although these

immigrant teachers usually laboured under the handicap of a German accent in their newly-acquired English, they were highly trained and very devoted Christian Mennonite pedagogues. They were the ideal teachers for our young generation to bridge them over from a German culture into an English-speaking Canadian generation. They did very much to save the Small Church from later disintegration. (The writer feels that he played a part in this, particularly in the East Reserve, although he is of Canadian Mennonite parentage. He got special permission from the bishop of the Small Church Steinbach as early as 1919 to go to high school to become a qualified teacher.)

Although these teachers made the best of their time, the Public School Act allowed only the last half hour of the school day for religious teaching, and although the teachers usually added another half hour to the day, this was felt to be still inadequate in a classroom with eight grades and sometimes up to fifty pupils. The teachers still managed under these circumstances to teach the youngsters, who only spoke Low German at home, to speak a fairly fluent German, read it well, and become familiar with Bible stories, catechism, and church hymns. This was the goal of the church and the families, and was accomplished to their satisfaction.

#### ROSEN HOFF SCHOOL

In 1889, a brand new church school was built about 40 to 50 rods south of the H.K. Dueck place. Some of the early teachers were: David Klassen, Jr., H.E. Enns, Peter Toews, Henry L. Friesen, John K. Friesen, John W. Dueck and John R. Dueck.

The ministers and deacons of the church also served as school board. Education was provided for all pupils between the ages of 7 to 14 for boys, 7 to 13 for girls. The cost of education was assessed on a per acre basis, and if attendance was irregular without good cause, the school board investigated and reprimanded the parent if necessary.

When the government heard about the new schools on the Scratching River, they sent out the inspector to in-

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*P.J. Loewen's script.*

investigate, and were so impressed with these private schools that they granted them government status and assigned No. 60 to Rosenort and No. 61 to Rosenhoff. Due to favorable reports, the school was allowed to operate as a private school for 36 years. The only difference between the public and private school was the use of language. In the private school, it was 213 German and 1/3 English. Later this was reversed.

The changeover to a district school came in 1926, and Peter K. Dueck, the teacher from the private school, was hired as the public school teacher. There were about 60 students in about 7 grades to teach, so the older students took turns assisting with the younger classes.

The district wanted to build a new school just south of the cemetery (near P.J.K. Loewens) but to their disappointment, two separate schools were built, known as Rosenhoff North and Rosenhoff South schools.

The first teacher in the Rosenhoff South School was Mr. Abram J. Suderman, who continued in that position almost till the time of his death in the fall of 1933. His was an interesting and forceful personality, and a family man whose children sat in his classes. The North School had Miss Margaret Rempel to begin with, then Mr. Frank Willems, who was followed by Mr. Peter Wiebe, each for a one-year term. Mr. Cornelius L. Toews served for several years and was much loved by his students. Mr. Sebastian Rieger (later owner of Rieger Clothing in Steinbach) helped out at the south end briefly, before being engaged to teach at the North School, where he



*George P. Goossen, teacher.*



*P.K. Dueck, teacher.*

remained til 1941 or 42. Part of this time, he batched in company with the Clover Plains teacher, Mr. Ernest Reimer, who daily walked several miles to his job and back.

Mr. George P. Goossen began teaching in Rosenhoff South in 1933 and continued till 1953. He exercised discipline and usually got good co-operation from the students. His manual training classes in woodwork were very productive and Mrs. Goossen taught the girls to sew and knit, for which she received a small remuneration. Music was another specialty with Mr. Goossen, and his students sang excellent harmony. Every year during advent, a large slice of the time went into preparations for a good Christmas program.



*Rosenhoff North School, 1949 approx.*

The Inspector's report for 1939 states that there were 44 students in the North School and 25 in the South in Grades I to VIII. "The spirit among the students" was given as "very satisfactory".

Mr. Jacob H. Janzen was hired to teach at the North School in 1942. His children, however, had to attend the South School because of the already crowded conditions in the North. Separate picnics were held in 1943 because communicable diseases were rampant. An interesting item from the 1943 and '44 board minutes reveals that 40 blocks of ice were allotted to each school, with an added stipulation in '44 being that Mr. Janzen was supposed to clean the cistern!

A new two room school building was ready for the start of the '45 to '46 season at the north end, and the Neufeld sisters, Elinor and Cornelia, were the first teachers there. They were followed in 1948 by Mr. Peter J. Rempel and his daughter Elfrieda. Mr. Rempel was instrumental in getting a German language course operative, not only in his own school, but in other area schools as well. Following the 1950 flood, both he and Mr. Goossen were asked to work at repairing their damaged homes in their spare time, for which they were paid the fair wage of 50 to 75 cents an hour. Mrs. Rempel and Elfrieda each put in well over a hundred hours at this task also. Elfrieda's teaching duties here terminated in 1953, and she was followed by a Miss Elaine Rempel for a two year period. Mr. Rempel, however, continued as



*Rosenhoff South School class in 1939, with teacher, George Goossen.*

principal till 1964. A new teacherage had been built at the north end in 1951, and there was talk of a split into two separate districts. Instead, greater integration came about, albeit somewhat later.

Miss Martha Dyck taught at the South School from 1953-55 and she enjoyed singing. Mr. Frank Sawatsky, a family man whose children also attended his school, taught from 1955-62. Woodworking again became a popular subject. In 1956, Henry K. Dueck was hired as secretary-treasurer and Miss Nettie Cornelsen as junior teacher at the North School, where she taught till 1961.

Miss Nettie Brandt taught for two years at the North School and two at the South School. Mr. Allan Dueck was South School teacher from 1962 to 1964 and then was shifted to the north end where he also served for two



*Rosenhoff South School in 1947.*

years. The schools were already integrated in 1962, with Mr. Dueck having 33 students in grades 6 to 8, Mr. Rempel teaching 26 students in grades 3 to 5, and Miss Brandt taking the 19 youngsters in grades 1 and 2.

In 1965, the South School site and teacherage were sold to Johnny Loewen, who later sold it to Abe Bartel. The school itself was moved to the north end, where it was attached to the existing structure to form a three room school. This was a short-lived arrangement however, for consolidation came about in 1968 and the building was sold to Jake Cornelson, who moved it to his farm for use as a hog barn!

Teachers serving at the three room school included Miss Brandt, Mr. Dueck, Mr. Johnny Loewen, Mr. Abe Wiebe, Miss Charlotte Penner, Miss Vera Bueckert and Mr. Lorne Kornelson, who purchased the teacherage.

The school board's minutes in 1962 reveal that some trouble was encountered, but solved by the use of the strap. An earlier entry reads: "Chewing gum policy was discussed and all (trustees) agreed the school was no place to practice this profession!" Another interesting item says: "A salesman came to advertise the encyclopedia Canadiana. After a lengthy siege, the meeting disintegrated!"

While compiling this history, I have been continually impressed by the degree of dedication and fairness evidenced by the different teachers and no less by the trustees. Truly our school district has been greatly privileged!



*Rosenort S.D. No. 60 class of 1921.*

## ROSENORT SCHOOL

*by Mrs. Mary Friesen*

The Rosenort School, which was located a quarter of a mile north of the present Rosenort School, started out as a one-room school. In 1916, the teachers' salary was \$580.00, but until 1967, the teachers never had any set schedule for the amount of salary they would receive. Each year the trustees made a new agreement with the teacher. Sometimes the salary was raised and sometimes it was lowered. Although the Rosenort School facilities were more limited than they are at present, students had opportunity to put their talents to work.

One of the teachers' responsibilities was to keep the school clean. Usually the pupils were designated to do the sweeping and clean the blackboards. The teacher was required to pay the students for their services. In the minutes of the board meeting held February 11, 1935, the trustees decided 'to have the teacher put new rope in the swings and that the teacher may buy the necessary science apparatus'. Sometimes he was also asked to do repairs in the teacherage where he was living.

From 1914 until 1933, the Rosenort School; was only a one-room school. By 1933, the Board was considering this concept inadequate as the pupils were getting up to 60 which was too many for one teacher. It was discussed whether to make the old school a two-room, or build a separate house. "Moved by P. Goosen and seconded by Jac K. Dueck to build a new house about two miles east of the old school. Carried." The original school became



*The Rosenort school and teacherage in the 40's.*



Rosenort S.D. 1926-27.

known as Rosenort West and the new building was named Rosenort East. In 1939, the Rosenort East School changed its name to Clover Plains; the Rosenort West school became the Rosenort School. Eight years later, the two schools amalgamated. The Rosenort School was sold by public auction April 5, 1947. Then a new two-room school was built one mile west of the original site. By 1957, another classroom was added to the school. Ten years later, 1967, a new school was built and it became a consolidated school.

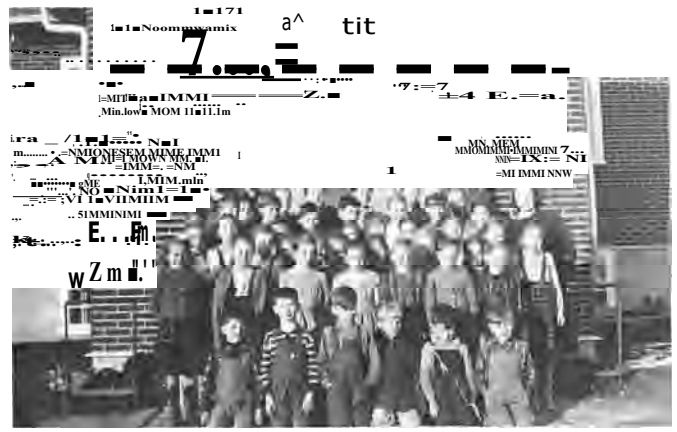
In 1929, the school was able to purchase 50 notebooks for \$1.00 and six dozen pencils for \$1.80. It appears that education after the eighth grade was more difficult to obtain. In 1933, this decision is recorded in the minutes of a September board meeting, "Agreed not to accept pupils over 14 years if the room is too limited and to pay for extra books."

In the minutes of 1931, comes this excerpt: "To build new petitions in barn and also to repair the fence on the north end, and build steps to cross the fence. Carried. It was agreed by J. P. Siemens to do this work for \$1.00." Another motion in connection with this is found in the minutes of 1933: "To put planks in one horse stall in the barn. Mr. J.G. Rempel offered to do the work free of charge."

An item that appears in the minutes of 1953 could prove beneficial to all concerned: "That the board instruct the teacher to teach the pupils to be thrifty in respect to toilet paper, scribblers, etc. Also that parents of pupils instruct their children to be thrifty and not to be careless in regard to the above mentioned school supplies. Carried." Another item that students would probably relish is a note found in the minutes of 1934: "Extend the Easter holidays one week if the roads should be bad."

A unique situation is recorded in the minutes of 1937: "Moved that Mr. Petkau can stay in the dwelling, providing he removed all the old cars and washing machines from the yard, and takes care of building the fire in the morning."

In the earlier years of the Rosenort School, substitute teaching was a matter which had not been previously considered and therefore caused a slight problem. The minutes of 1951 have this situation recorded: "During the sickness of Mr. Schellenberg, Miss Eva Warkentine was engaged by the board to teach in the senior



Rosenort S.D. No. 60, about 1952.

classroom. But since there were no provisions made by the board for the remuneration of the work, the matter was discussed and it was moved by J.G. Rempel, seconded by J.D. Penner to pay Miss Warkentine out of the general funds, and be careful in the future, about making expenses without the consent of the taxpayers. Carried."

The 1950 flood, during the month of May and also part of June, caused another problem: "Whereas the caragana plants which we received from the 'Nursery' at Indian Head, Sask. were moulded due to flood conditions, it was agreed that the secretary notify them, and also ask them to duplicate shipment next spring."

The first date for a parent and teacher day is mentioned in the board minutes of February 21, 1961: "Parent and teacher day is discussed and decided to have it on March 9, in the evening. Carried."

The Christmas concert was one of the highlights of the highlights of the school year. Each child was asked to memorize several parts for this special event. The students were happy to receive a present from the teacher and also a bag of special treats prepared by the school board. The grand finale of the year was a picnic with races and also lots of free ice-cream cones.

Frequently the Board must have had lengthy discussions. An example of this is found in the minutes of October 25, 1966. The meeting began at 8:00 p.m. Although the minutes are brief, the secretary has recorded this statement: "Meeting adjourns October 26, 12:02 a.m. with a 'Good Morning'."

People, who have attended the Rosenort School in earlier years, may have many nostalgic memories tucked into the recesses of their minds and yet time changes things. Education at the present time is certainly very different than it was in earlier years. However, each has its advantages and disadvantages.

## GREENBANK SCHOOL DISTRICT

NO. 2124

by J. W. Brandt

The Greenbank School District was formed in 1924. The school was built with half the lot on the N.W. corner of the S.W. of section 8-6-1E., and the other half on the





*First Greenbank School, 1925, with three of George Neufeld's (teacher) daughters, Connie, Nellie and Ellie.*

N.W. quarter of section 8-8-1E.

The budget called for teacher grant of 75¢ per teacher day. It looked like this on paper-wages, 150.00; General tax, 720.00; Special costs, \$1030; For the year, \$1900.00.

Our first teacher was Miss Margaret Toews and she had some 32 pupils. At a meeting to plan the year ahead, on July 2, 1925, the ratepayers were called, and William Rempel was chairman. George G. Goossen and Jacob H. Friesen were also on the board. J.H. Friesen was Secretary and was paid 25.00 per year. A few things discussed were the flagpole (we wonder if there was some difficulty with their convictions?) yard fencing, painting the school, and the hiring of a teacher. They agreed to hire Aaron Wiebe at a salary of \$90.00 a month.

On April 20, 1926 a ratepayers meeting was again called and Aaron L. Toews hired for the second term of 1928, also for 1929-1930. The same spring a concern arose to build a barn, and at a meeting in May it was decided to build a barn 16 x 18 x 10 at the wage of 20¢ an hour.

In 1927 we sent our first delegate to the Manitoba Teachers Convention. Jacob H. Friesen was appointed and given \$8.00 to cover his expenses.



*A school outing for Greenbank School in 1933. Photo courtesy J. Rempel.*

Progress was being made! In June, 1930, it was decided that a leanto, the teacherage, (12 x 18) and the school was to receive a coat of paint. The notes are brief and one wonders if this was the first coat so far. The wages were 30¢ an hour.

George P. Neufeld was re-engaged for teaching for the year 30-31. His pay was up to \$950.00 for the year. In the next years we see an increase in the teachers wages and it is not surprising, because we remember how this particular teacher became very much an approved member of the community and was to initiate the singing that was now becoming such a popular trait in the area, especially the harmony singing. He was a tall impressive man and much respected, also because of his impeccable high German, which also coloured the choice of the songs he taught. He took on teaching a young peoples' choir as time went on, and this was done in the evenings in his own time. The choir in the schools preceded the church choirs, and these were the social events for the young and older teens. There was a bonus paid to the teacher in 1933, and the board had to decide to borrow money to do this. His pay was raised to \$60.00 per month in 1934-1935.

There was an extra \$10.00 allowed in the budget to add books to the library. There was great delight when the new books would arrive, and there was always a feeling of festivity, almost like Christmas.

By the year of 1944, the teacher was beginning to feel a part of it. At least he was hired to paint the building and to keep up voluntary yard work. He received a 50¢ an hour wage for painting.

The budget for the 1945 term looked a little different from the first original one. It went like this ...

Salary ... teachers	1350.00
Building site	100.00
Caretaking and clean	25.00
Repairs	40.00
Stationary supplies	90.00
Library	10.00
Fuel	60.00
Sundry	25.00
	1700.00

Income in the 1945 budget Teachers Grant	200.00
General tax	450.00
Special tax	1050.00

Nothing much changed until about 1949 when the minutes show that Mr. Neufeld had remained for 18 years. From the start to his completion at Greenbank he must have seen tremendous strides forward in the community. At time of writing he is no longer around to comment. He left his sincerity and the dignity of respected influence on many students who matured in his teachings.

Rev. Peter J.B. Reimer came from Steinbach to teach 49-50. Elizabeth Remple had been teaching since March 1949. A full basement was built under the school.

The school inspector had advised to arrange for more room, and so a two room school emerged. Agnes Pauls was hired to teach the younger grades 1-4, and Jake



*The former Greenbank School built after the 1950 flood, now the Prairie View (private school).*

Suderman to teach the 5-8 grades.

Another local girl was hired to teach the lower grades in 1955, Annie Cornelson. The salary now was \$2,300.00. Peter F. Warkentin now was trustee after Jacob W. Brandt's three year term. In 1957, Brandt was elected as trustee and chairman.

At a ratepayers meeting in January 1957, a third room was arranged for high school grades 9-10-11. The first high school teacher was John Froese hired for 1957-1958; and enrolment for the three rooms was 76 pupils. In 1959, the School Division took over the high school, they rented two rooms in the basement, and placed a bungalow close to the school for the third room. Teachers were: John Froese, Nick Poetker, and Bill Schroeder. A new teacherage, a three bedroom bungalow was purchased at this time. In 1961, the high school was moved to the new Collegiate.

When J.H. Friesen resigned as trustee and secretary, he had served the school for 28 years.

Some of the other teachers at Greenbank were: John Brown, Selma Peters, Elm Brandt, John Loewen, Sara Hiebert, Nettie Cornelsen, Helen Loewen, and Sara Loewen.

In May, 1966, Greenbank consolidated with Clover Plains, McTavish, Leabarik, and Pleasant Valley.



*The first high school class at Greenbank, taken in 1958.*



*First Graduating class at Greenbank High School, 1958. LEFT TO RIGHT: Lorne Loewen, Roseline Warkentin, Bertha Rempel, John Froese, Teacher; Linda Loewen, Betty Brandt, Margaret Warkentin, Art Cornelsen.*

## CLOVER PLAINS

1933-1966

by P. U. Brandt



*Clover Plains school class in 1938.*

In 1933, when the private church schools were changing over to public schools, the Rosenort School, being filled to capacity, was also divided into two schools. This school was situated one mile south of Rosenort and it became the Rosenort West School. The new school which was built two miles east of this school became known as the Rosenort East School. The two continued to operate under the same school board, with the trustees at that time being Frank B. Kroeker, Edward Penner and Peter U. Brandt. In July 1939, the new school was organized and started operating as the Clover Plains School.

The new building was 18 feet by 24 feet with an entrance 12 feet by 12 feet that held the coal stove which was the heating system for the school. There was no teacherage the first few years so Mr. Brandt would start the fire in the stove every morning, as he was the trustee living closest to the school.

The first teacher Ernest Reimer, walked the three miles to school every day when boarding with some teacher friends at the Rosenhoff North School. The next year he moved in with the George Kornelsons which was only about half a mile walk.

The eight families that had children attending school when it opened were G.W. Siemens, Jac. K. Duecks, G.B. Kornelsons, P.U. Brandts, A.C. Toews, John B. Kornelsons, Jac. P. Goossens and Frank P. Goossens.

The teachers' salary at that time was \$400.00 a year. Since there was no janitor, the students were required to clean the school. The teacher paid these students 25 cents a week for their services.

In 1935, when the teacher married, the first small two-roomed teacherage was built. The municipal grant they received for this was \$200.00, the labor was voluntary, so all the district had to pay for this new building was \$30.00. Then in 1948, the school was remodelled including indoor washrooms. At this time the teachers' salary had gone up to \$1,800.00 a year 'plus \$65.00 for fuel on dwelling, also ice and water for teacherage.' The teacher then paid two children \$6.00 a month for 'janitor work'.

The teachers in the Clover Plains School through the years have been Ernest Reimer, Jac. Peters, Henry Funk, Bill Born, Abe Penner, Susie Peters, Katie Martens, Edward Enns, Ben Dueck, Laura Plett, Rita Klassen, Dave Friesen, Bill Schroeder, Walter Dueck and Elmer Warkentine.

When the school closed in June, 1966, the children were taken to Greenbank School for two years till the present consolidated school opened in the fall of 1968.

During the 33 years, the school was being used, Peter Brandt served as trustee for 25 years, and was chairman 24 of these years. George Kornelson was secretary for approximately 25 years, for which he received \$15.00 - \$20.00 a year.

When the school first began, the enrolment was as high as 43 including grades one to eight. Since this was one of the smaller schools in the area, the enrolment by 1952 was only 14. This also gave us some advantages over the bigger schools, such as; the day of the school picnic there would be free ice cream all day, or on arbor day the children would rake and clean up the whole school yard

which would usually end with a wiener roast lasting quite late into the evening.

Another thing I remember very vividly is when we first started using paper cups. Since this was considered quite a luxury, each student was required to use his cup a whole week regardless of its condition. The water supply was a stone cooler which held about 112 pails of water. Two pupils would take it downstairs to the cistern to fill it and then bring it back up again.

After the school closed it was used as a printery for a few years and when it was moved a family from British Honduras lived in it for awhile.

Then in 1977, the school building was sold and moved to Sanford. When Murray Brandt, grandson to Peter Brandt, married in 1978, he purchased the lot, where he and his wife are presently making their home.

Some interesting minutes:

"Oct. 25, 1939

Teachers salary was agreed at \$800.00 per annum and two cords fire wood for teachers dwelling.

Agreed to buy poppies for national poppy day and sell at each.

July 20, 1940

To buy five gallons ice cream, strawberry flavor, from Palm Dairies for school picnic, G. Kornelson to do same.

January 14, 1943

The general wish is to have a little more discipline in the school and on the road, and to inform the teacher accordingly.

Re library books for upper grades, it was agreed for \$5.00 worth, the teacher to choose titles.

December 4, 1945

It was agreed to buy paper cups, 3 dozen, and map of Canada.

January 14, 1954

Agreed that I.L. Loewen assist with wood-working class every Friday, \$10.00 allowed to buy material.

Re Valentine and Halloween parties, meeting opposed the same."

## FLOWERY BANK SCHOOL

*by Rebecca Anderson*

The School District of Flowery Bank, No. 837, was formed and the first school built in 1895 on the west bank of the Morris River two miles north of Morris. It was moved to a situation just south of the "Bell" ditch bank, three miles west and two miles north of Morris on that great expanse of flat prairie of the Red River Valley, where it remained until the mid-thirties when it was again moved to a point five miles west and three-and-a-half miles north of Morris. The old building was replaced by a new school in 1958 and operated for seven years at that site, until the school was consolidated with Morris in 1965. The old school building is now located on the Walter Anderson farm; the new building was moved to Rosenfeld.

Mrs. Joseph (Lillian) Lewis recalls seeing the original site of the school many years ago and that flowers such as poppies and Sweet William still bloomed there. One wonders whether wild roses, cowslips, bluebells,



*Clover Plains class in 1946.*



*Taken at picnic of Flowery Bank in June, 1916.*

anemone, etc. may also have grown in abundance on that "Flowery Bank" as they have in so many prairie areas.

One of the early school registers recorded the names Meiklejohn, Lawrie, and Clubb (William, who became Minister of Public Works in the Bracken cabinet, evidently attended there before the opening of Broadview School).

In 1915, when the school was on its second site, the teacher was E.J. Wry and the board consisted of Secretary-Treasurer W.R. Lawrie, W. Davidson and E. Gruenke. Names on the roll were Doern, Eidse, Davidson, Gruenke, Lawrie, Schwark and Schweitz.

The school operated under an Official Trustee of the Department of Education for many years. In later years, the local board was restored.

As the pupils lived some distance from the school, they travelled by cutter or sleigh in the Winter and by buggy or cart in the Summer. Some came on horseback or on foot. Thrilling incidents occurred when the young teamsters raced to be the first into the school yard, or even more so, to be the first out! The Lawrie's Welsh pony, "Dickie", high spirited and fast, was famous as a racer, and Metzner's "Queenie-Mack", originally a race horse, was well known for her speed and reliability. Several years later, Bill Schellenberg drove Dickie again, but this time from the J.K. Dueck farm in the N.W. part of the district. He lived to be quite an age and was still high spirited.

One teacher who taught first at the Bell Ditch site and later at the third and last old school location was Johannah Reimer of Lowe Farm. One remembers 1930-31 as the first year Grade IX was taught in several country schools. Miss Reimer did an excellent job in this regard, instilling elementary Algebra in a manner which made it much easier in succeeding grades. The music appreciation classes also made a lasting impression, and the singing sessions were always enjoyable.

With a total 14 pupils, everyone had to get involved, and this was the case at F.B. "Work Your Way In" was popular in summer and football in winter. Opal (Metzner) Jaster recalled the incident of the football that "got away" one winter day, was chased on horseback, but not recovered till Spring, some three or more miles to the north-west. Square dancing to the music of a mouth organ in a nearby vacant house also gave a bit of variety to winter pastimes. One big event of the year, besides the Christmas concert, was the joint picnic in Morris Park with the pupils of Carleton and Broadview Schools. F.B.'s Relay team trained as though for the Olympics and

made a good showing! The great Depression was underway, but these young people, at least, didn't seem to be depressed.

Some of the teachers during the 1920's were -- Forke, M. Molloy, Friedman (who had a unique system for teaching rapid calculation), Garvie, A. Jenkins (Mrs. R. Lewis of Morris), M. Irvine (Mrs. E. Kirkpatrick, Greenridge).

Family names on the school register during the '20's and '30's included Buss, Dickson, Dueck, Eidse, Gruenke, Harms, Heinrichs, Kastner, Knutsons, Kuntz, Lawrie, Metill, Neets, Schellenberg. After the final



*Flowery Bank pupils - 1928 to 30. BACK ROW: Bernice Metzner, Bernard Buss, Amy Lawrie, Laurence Gruenke, Bill Schellenberg. FRONT ROW: Mabel Metzner, Elsie Buss, Gladys Lawrie, Jean Lawrie.*

move, Cornelsen, Friesen, Loewen and Penner families attended, as well as Dickson and Dueck. The names Moyer and Hantzburger appeared prior to the 1920's.

Teachers at the third location whose names are recalled are: J. Reimer, A. McCarthy, A. Klassen, Miss Neufeld, S. Lewis, E. Hean, R. Dickson, M. Dickson, M. Poersch.

Teachers in the new school: Mrs. Apostle, J. Hnatiuk - Bell or Ball. (Memories are vague here, as in case of the last name. It seems there should be more than three, but can't find anyone who remembers!)

The need for a school in the southern part of the Flowery Bank district resulted in the holding of classes in a room in the Paschke home, following which a building was erected three miles west of Morris on the north side of the Highway in 1940. The first teacher was Miss Larsen. Others included A. Anderson, M. Poersch, G. Martens, B. Paschke (who had also been a student there), D. Masse and N. Ward.

Families in the neighbourhood were Albrecht, Anderson, Davidson, Dreger, Edel, Heinrichs, Lewis, Martens, Peel and Wiebe.

Probably one of the last school barns was built in this district, by volunteer labour.

The school operated for about ten years, after which students were transported to Morris. The building is now located on the Morris Stampede grounds.

## CONSOLIDATION IN ROSENORT DISTRICT

With the initial unsuccessful referendum for a unitary division only seven months old, plans were being made by seven school districts in the Rosenort area to create a consolidated school district. These districts were, Rosenhoff, Rosenort, Greenbank, McTavish, Clover Plains, Flowery Bank and Pleasant Valley. Menno Penner, the newly elected chairman of the Rosenort Consolidated School Board, along with several other local residents, spearheaded the move to co-ordinate government and Department of Education plans to clear the way for a new school just south of Rosenort.

Community sentiments expressed during consolidation proceedings, as well as for the referendum obtaining approval to spend \$400,000 to build the proposed school, indicated that local control of the school system was still a major issue. Such questions as, "We prefer carrying out the process of consolidation ourselves," and "The Province-wide referendum was not acceptable to most people in this area because we were not sure if we would get a new school, or where it would be", showed that local autonomy was not about to be relinquished.

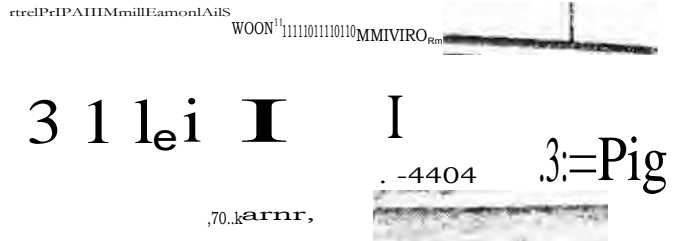
After the successful October 16, 1967 referendum, the proposed construction was carried out by Fonger Construction Company of Winnipeg. Norman Reimer, the architect, had planned one of the most modern schools in the province. At that time, only two other similar schools, designed for the open area concept, were being built in Manitoba. So new was the concept, that for several years, teachers and other educators from all parts of the province and the northern United States visited the Rosenort Elementary School to investigate their new educational system.

It was September, 1978, when the 296 students registered for classes in Rosenort first entered this new era of education. They began to realize the benefits that



*Rosenort Grade six class in 1979-80. Teacher, Alvin Kornelsen.*

the latest in modern facilities and teaching techniques had to offer. The community can look back with pride at the foresight and dedication of its citizens in helping to provide so important and integral a step into the future for its youth.



*Rosenort Collegiate built in 1962, across the road from the Elementary School. (Picture from Bk 3 - Rosenort, a Mennonite Community).*



*Rosenort Consolidated School built in 1968.*

# SPORTS AND RECREATION

## ROSENORT COMMUNITY CENTRE

*by Rose Cornelien*

Since the winters take up a large part of life here, the young people have always sought and found ways to enjoy the long evenings in active sports. Many years before the community centre came into being, skating rinks were constructed in back yards onto which the kids swarmed by the dozen for pleasure skating or hockey.

Some really good competitive hockey teams were formed in the community this way, the outstanding one being the Regals, of which Johnny Eidse was the coach.



*Johnny Friesen, John Eidse, Dave Friesen, in early 1940's on ice at Bill Schellenberg's farm.*



*Rosenhoff Pats (1935). LEFT TO RIGHT: Carl Rabe, Abe L. Friesen, Ben Dueck, Bill Schellenberg, Frank Siemens, John Rempel, Dick Eidse, John L. Loewen, Tom Eidse, Hank Rabe.*

In 1967, concerned parents decided that a community recreation centre was a necessity in Rosenort, and a local meeting was called. A committee was formed, consisting of Dick Zacharias, Lawrence Zacharias, Peter Wiebe, Stan Plett, Ron Hoepfner, Ed Klassen, Frank Dueck and Peter Eidse. An open air rink with a heated shelter and changing rooms was built on the site purchased from Dick Zacharias for a total cost of \$12,000.00.

The construction and maintenance was entirely financed by donations, raffles, auctions, and many hours of voluntary labour. After operating this way for a number of years, the committee investigated the possibility of receiving financial help from the Rural Municipality. Dick Zacharias and Art Cornelien petitioned the land owners and obtained sufficient support, based on the assets of the local area. Five years later, assistance came in the form of grants, and in 1979, special taxes were levied for the first time for recreational facilities in Rosenort.

In 1978, the municipality appointed a Recreational District Committee, namely, Harry Koop, Irvin Kroeker, Pete K. Friesen and George Eidse. This committee is responsible to make up a budget and allocate the money for maintenance on the rink, community tennis court and the local centennial park.

At present, the rink is used mainly for pleasure skating, minor hockey practices and school skating parties.



*Rosenhoff hockey team in early 1940's. LEFT TO RIGHT: Dave K. Friesen, John Eidse, Pete D. Siemens, Bill Friesen, John L. Friesen, Abe F. Eidse, Dave L. Friesen, Henry K. Dueck, Abe B. Eidse, Dave Eidse, Frank Eidse.*



*Greenbank High School class, 1958, pleasure skating on the school rink on the Jac D. Rempel farm.*





*Rosenort Regals 1967-68. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Elmer Dueck, Peter Eidse, Larry Friesen, Lorne Kornelsen, Irwin Dueck, Elmer Friesen, Bryan Eidse, Waldo Brandt, Arnie Hildebrand. FRONT ROW: Stan Dueck, Stan Plett, Garry Thiessen, Lawrence Zacharias, John Eidse, Oliver Plett.*

## ROSENORT REGALS

Hockey played an important part in winter sports for a long time. It was inevitable that in the fall of 1967, the better players of the two villages, Rosenort and Riverside, merged and organized into one team. This team, the Rosenort Regals, had Stan Plett as their manager and John Eidse as their coach.

Before organizing, the boys had been playing for various different teams in the Red River Valley League, but now they were ready to enter their own team in the league.

The Regals were tremendously successful and went on to win three trophies that first season. They won the league championship trophy, the league play-off trophy, and the Molloy play-off trophy, when they defeated Aubigny 7-6 in overtime.



*Lawrence Zacharias receiving trophy for the Regals from Bruce MacKenzie.*



*Bryan Eidse with his best defenceman trophy of the Red River Valley League.*

To show the team how proud they were of their success, the Rosenort Chamber of Commerce held a banquet honoring the Rosenort Regal Hockey Club.

The following year, the Regals lost to Aubigny in the play-offs, but Bryan Eidse won the best defenceman trophy of the Red River Valley League.



*John Eidse, Coach, and Stan Plett, Manager, of the Rosenort Regals Hockey club, proudly display the two trophies the team won in their first year of play.*

Hockey in Rosenort came to a near standsill until 1974. Gary Friesen initiated a revival of the Regals and together with others, organized what is called "linament hockey", meaning no body checking and no slap shots. The past three years this team has belonged to the MacDonald League, with such teams as Sanford, Starbuck, Oak Bluff, Ste. Agathe, LaSalle, Glenlea and Vermette.

The Regals have been an active team, with a 21 game schedule from December through February. In their first four years, they had playing coaches, but the last two years they were coached by Elmer Friesen and George Eidse.

The players now are:

Stan Friesen	Lloyd Friesen
Mary Eidse	Lorne Kornelsen
Lloyd Zacharias	Kerry Eidse
Elmer Dueck	Bob Loewen
Brad Kornelsen	Clarence Dueck
Larry Eidse	Lloyd Kornelsen
Larry Kornelsen	Tim Loewen
Rick Friesen	

A large number of Rosenort boys 13 years and younger, have been training for several years now. The future of hockey in this community looks bright. It is hoped that a closed in arena may become a reality for Rosenort soon, a tremendous need for a strong future Regal team to emerge again.



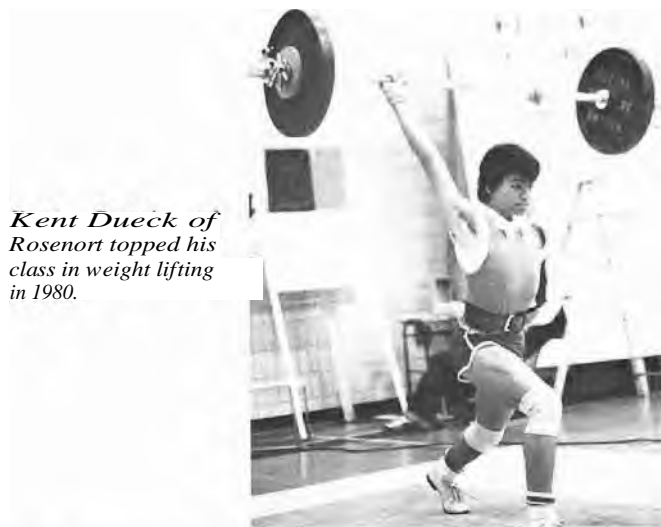
*Rosenort Junior High boys, 1979-80, capturing the Volleyball trophy in their league. Coach is Mike Siemens. The Rosenort Collegiate volleyball teams, both boys and girls, have scored high in league wins as well as provincial play-offs.*



*Weight lifting, Chuck Friesen, clean and jerks - 242 pounds in the Canada Winter Games held in Brandon, February of 1979.*



*Louis Friesen - clean and jerk - 281 lb. in the Manitoba Open Weight lifting Championship held in Jan. of 1979 at the Rosenort Elementary School.*



*Kent Dueck of Rosenort topped his class in weight lifting in 1980.*



*The Rosenort Roadrunners Girls' Basketball team won the Consolation Event trophy at the Provincial Tournament in Brandon in March, 1979. Coach, Bob Fisher.*



*Kerry Eidse, displaying his forehand top spin drive that won him a gold medal at the Manitoba Winter Gaines in 1978.*

## THE EIDSE' TABLE TENNIS FAMILY

This family's interest in table tennis began to develop beyond local talent level when Kerry and Rob Eidse and Lon Friesen entered a city tournament.

At this first tournament, Kerry and Lon won the doubles match in the novice class, but were amazed at how tennis was played at the top level.

Kerry and Rob competed, and won a place in the Pembina Valley team, in preparation for the Winter Games in Winnipeg in 1974. They played very well for a rural team, but didn't capture any medals this time.



*The Eidse family of Rosenort, successful at the Manitoba Winter Games. LEFT TO RIGHT: Robert, Matilda, Kerry, June, Joanne.*

The boys' enthusiasm for tennis spread to other family members. Kerry's wife, Jo, also began to join in the table tennis game. In the spring of 1977, six members of the Eidse family entered the Pembina Valley tournament at Morden. Son, Kerry, daughters, June and Sylvia, all came away with trophies.

In December, local play-offs were held at the Rosenort school, with the winners going to the Pembina Valley play-offs in Carman in February. Kerry Eidse, Rex Williams, and Ed Neufeld made up the men's teams, and June, Jo and Matilda Eidse, the women's team. In Carman, June won second place and Matilda, third. All three local men made it to the Pembina Valley team.

Husband, Abe, did not participate in these tournaments due to eye surgery at the time, but he managed to get out of the hospital for the celebration banquet the following night.

Meanwhile, daughter, Sylvia, and husband, Larry Dyck of Portage had won positions in the Central Plains team.

Expectantly, the whole family travelled to Dauphin in March, 1978, for the Manitoba Winter Games. Rob was an official umpire as well as team coach, and his wife, Jo, acted as coach for the women's team.

June Eidse and the top player, Sharon Muz, of Winkler, did so well, the team won the gold medal. The men's team took second position. On the third day, when singles events were played, the very last match proved Kerry Eidse to be the winner of the gold medal. It was an exciting time for the Eidse family.

June was chosen to play on the women's team for the Canada Winter Games held in Brandon in February, 1979. Though only fifteen years of age, she played her part well, and their team attained a standing of sixth out of twelve competitors.

In March, June, accompanied by brother, Kerry, flew to Vancouver for the Western Championships as a member of the Manitoba team. Two months later, to the same location for the Nationals. This summer, June spent a week at a table tennis training camp at Kenosee Lake in Saskatchewan. In addition, she is also a member of the student council, plays on the school volley ball team, and maintains a busy schedule.

The Eidses say that the excitement of tournaments and the winning of trophies may come to an end, but the enthusiasm for this family will remain - for the table tennis game.

## ROSENORT FLYING CLUB

The flying enthusiasts of the Rosenort area took the first steps towards the establishment of a Rosenort Flying Club at a meeting on August 28, 1978.

A priority with the club is the purchase of aircraft for the use of members and for rentals, but they are also organizing fly-ins, presenting films and promoting aviation in general.

The flying club has developed a new airstrip which is located half a mile south-east of Rosenort. The land for the new airstrip which is leased, has a north-south, east-west runway. Runway lighting, which will be installed in the spring of 1980, will complete the airstrip. Considerable space is available for hangars.

Flying club executive consists of Norman Wiens, President, Mark Thiessen, Vice-President, Syd Reimer, Secretary.

A second group consisting of 10 shareholders has formed Rosenort Aviation Incorporated, with Gary Friesen as president. The group has purchased three aircraft - a Piper "140", a Piper "160", and an Er Coupe. These aircraft are available to the shareholders for pleasure flying and training.



*Norman and Frank Wiens preparing to fly the Er Coupe at the Rosenort Flying Club.*

## THE HENRY L. FRIESEN FAMILY

When Henry L. Friesen of the Molotshna, South Russia, was 21, he decided it was time to ask Mr. and Mrs. David Klassen for the hand of their daughter in marriage. The fact that Anna was barely seventeen did not deter him in the least. When his parents-in-law, along with most of their children and many other Mennonites made the long exodus to Canada in 1874, Henry and his young bride were also in the group. They settled in close proximity to their parents' homestead at Rosenhof and began their life's work of farming and raising their family.

Henry, the oldest son, was born in 1875, and he grew up to become the head of a large family himself. They moved to Kansas, in 1916, and from there to Mexico, where many of his descendants still live.

There was a son, David, (named after Grandpa) who has quite a few descendants remaining in the Rosenort-Riverside area, notably, H.R. Friesen, Sr., two of his children and their families; two daughters of Rev. John R. Friesen and their families; and the two minister sons of David R. Friesen, Edward and Alfred K. Friesen.

The first girl, Agentha, was named after Grandma Klassen, and she too, has left our district richer, though she and her husband, Abram R. Dueck, were never well-to-do. The Jacob A. Dueck and P.W. Brandt families are her descendants, who still live here.

The third boy, was named Jacob after Grandpa Friesen. Jacob built a roomy house and barn on the banks of the Morris River, across from where P.L. Friesens now live. His many descendants have gone to Belize, and many parts of Canada. The only grandson still living here is Frank Friesen, the manager of Loewen Lumber Co. in Rosenort.

Another daughter was born in 1882, and she was named after her mother. Little Anna grew up to become Mrs. Bernard R. Dueck, the mother of nineteen children, three of whom died at an early age. Many of her descendants live in Belize and Mexico. One son, Corny B. Dueck, lives within half a mile of the now vacant parental farmyard and half a dozen grandsons are farming on a large scale in this district. They include Jake L. Dueck, and the Siemens boys, Pete, Clarence, Jack, Henry and Ernie.

Abram was born next, and a large group of his descendants still live along the meridian line, south-west of Rosenort. They include John, Abram, Henry and Elizabeth (Mrs. D.K. Dueck). Jacob has recently moved into the village and his sons own and operate Elco Welding in Rosenort. Henry's sons own and operate Friesen's Meridian Industries.

The youngest boy, Cornelius, farmed just north of his parental home. He was married three times and also made the move to Mexico and Belize. He has one son remaining in our area, namely, Frank C.L. Friesen.

Last of all came little Maria, who married Henry R. Dueck. Three of her children remain in the area, namely, Peter H., Levi and Lena.

Mrs. H.L. Friesen became one of the first, if not the first "Brandaltester", fire insurance manager for the colony.



*C.K. Friesen at the age of 17 years, son of Henry L. Friesen.*

As their fair-sized family grew up, the Friesens also became more prosperous and acquired a chunk of land south-east of Rosenhof. Here they chose the highest location on Section 15 as their homestead. They built a fair-sized house and barn around the year 1901. The barn later received the addition of a haymow and is still in fairly good condition today, as it houses grandson, Levi Dueck's, sow herd. The house was partly dismantled in 1962 by Mr. John D. Harms, who also moved some sections of it onto his yard, one mile north, where he used them for storage purposes.



*The H.R. Dueck farm in the early 1940's. The house and barn are exactly as built by Grandpa H.L. Friesen in 1901, except for the haymow, a later addition.*

When Grandma Friesen died in 1891, Grandpa married the widowed Mrs. Peter Toews of Steinbach. She too, had a large family and no doubt there were some abrasions ensuing. When Grandpa Friesen passed away in 1910, his second wife moved back to Steinbach with her family and the farm passed over to his youngest daughter and her husband, Henry R. Dueck, who lived there till their deaths in 1931 and 1957, respectively. It is now owned by their youngest son, Levi, the writer of this article.

## DAVID K. FRIESEN FAMILY

*by Mary Friesen*

David K. Friesen was born to Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Friesen, (nee Anna Klassen, daughter of David Klassen - delegate to Canada, 1873) May 30, 1876, near Morris on N.W. 114 15-5-1 East, where he spent his youth.

On January 25, 1897, he married Elizabeth Reimer of Steinbach. They settled down two miles north of the town of Morris, later the site of the Carleton School.

One dark night, when David was hurrying home late, from helping his neighbour thresh, he realized he was helping being followed by a pack of coyotes. In his hurry, he stumbled over a stook and fell. There he was, surrounded by coyotes. Although he was very frightened, he jumped and they left. This story was often related to the children by their mother.

After a few years, they moved to Kleefeld. At the age of 30, David passed away, leaving a young widow with five small children - John, Elizabeth, Agnes, David and Henry. Agnes remained single, and spent many years in the Morris area, doing housework in different homes. David also came back to Morris area, married Katherine Kroeker, settling down in Rosenort. He died at the age of 34. Henry, who was only a year old when his father died, went to work at the age of eleven to earn his keep.

## HENRY R. FRIESEN

In 1921, at the age of 16, Henry Friesen came to Morris area, where most of his uncles and aunts lived. He found employment at Uncle J.K.L. Friesen; P.D. Loewens and the D.K. Eidse'. In 1927, he married Mary L. Loewen, and they purchased a small house, moving it north of their parents, P.J. Loewens. They tried to make their living by renting land, but as the depression years came, they realized this was not possible. Records showed that \$100.00 had supplied the needs of the family, including 3 children, for one year.

Henry began working for Trump Oil Ltd., during the construction of the refinery. Most of the time, he walked 5 miles to and from work until they moved their house to a sit near Trump. His starting wage was 25(1: for 2 hours. At that time, coke sold for 3c a bottle, gas for 25c a gallon. Later, when the refinery started operating, Henry was employed as the still operator, for which he received \$45.00 a month. He was there in 1933, when they had a disastrous fire, which took the lives of two men.

Farming was favoured in those days, so just as the depression was letting up, Henry and Mary acquired some land southwest of McTavish. For the second time, they put their house on skids, hired four tractors, and moved it to its new destination.

The Friesens now operated a mixed farm, hatching and brooding chicks for a laying flock, and also having other livestock. At this time, Henry also became manager for Rosenort Farm Association (RFA), supplying the community with coal, wood, flour, oatmeal, and on one occasion, even a box car load of apples.

In 1948, they purchased a larger farm on Pt. W. 1/2 26-5-1 East. That same year, they were elected into the service of the deacon ministry, in which they were faithful for 30 years. They were ambitious workers, and enjoyed serving others. They often opened their homes to foster children and as a result of this, they adopted one as their own son.

In 1960, they took over management of the newly built Eventide Home. They worked hard to make Eventide a success, and spent many hours planting and landscaping the grounds.

A few years later, they sold part of their farm, including their farm home, purchasing a lot next to the

Eventide Home. This proved very convenient, as they were always on call. After 12 years, they retired. Now, having the time to do the things they had always enjoyed, they planted and transplanted, creating a park-like setting for their home.

In 1978, they went through the tragedy of losing a grandson in a car accident. He left a vacancy in the whole family. Two daughters, Linda (Mrs. Leonard Dueck with family of 6) and Betty (Mrs. Delmer Kornelsen also with family of 6) reside in the Interlake area. Son, Murray, (adopted) is living in B.C. Annie (Mrs. P.K. Friesen and 3 sons) and Edwin and wife, Mary, and family of 2, live in Morris area.

## EDWIN FRIESEN

In 1954, Edwin Friesen purchased 40 acres of land on S.W. 32-5-1 East, from his grandfather, P.J. Loewen. Five years later, he married Mary (nee Dueck) Friesen. They selected the highest spot on the 40 acres to build their home, having in mind the spring floods along the Morris River, and began planting a shelter belt to protect them from the sweeping winds that roar across the flat country. Adding more trees and evergreen seedlings next spring, they visualized the lush evergreen shelter they would become. Unfortunately, the next few winters, there was almost no snow, and all that was left was brown little stems. By planting and replanting and overcoming the constant battle with weeds, the trees were finally on their way.



*The Ed L. Friesen farmstead.*

Ed and Mary both loved plants and trees, also enjoying landscaping, and each spring added more to their yard. On two occasions, the home grounds were selected by the Morris Horticulture Society and entered in the Best Farm Home Ground Competition, where they won the Anderson Rose Bowl trophy.

In 1961, a son, Ellery Blake, was born and daughter, Tamara Lynn, in 1965. Both Ed and Mary served in church and community affairs. Ed served on the Rosenort Credit Union board and committee for 16 years, five of those years as president.

In 1963, after having tried several trades, including plumbing and carpentry, Ed decided to go into farming. On 40 acres, you can't be a grain farmer, so Ed decided to go into poultry. He obtained a contract with laying

flock owners to raise pullets for them, starting a day old chick until twenty weeks old, and built two barns. Ed is the type of person who is not afraid of trying new things, and once he tried something, he didn't give up until it worked. Cages were being made to house a day old chick until fully grown. He was one of the first to try them, and by doing so, considerably increased the capacity. The heated pipes running on top of the cages were much safer than brooders. The day when all was ready, and cage by cage was filled with fluffy yellow chicks, but something was terribly wrong. Looking down on the cold floor, there were chicks everywhere! The wires were too far apart. Experience is the best teacher, and eventually, by trying different things, it did work. After some years, a laying operation was bought, and they supplied it with their own pullets.



*The Ed Friesen family on their award winning grounds.*

As a teenager, Ed spent a lot of time taking care of his father's flock of chickens. One day he asked his father, "Can't you think of a better way to make a living?" Little did he realize that some day, he would own Manitoba's largest poultry operation, incorporated as Sunnydale Farms Ltd.

## **DAVE R. FRIESEN**

My mother, Katherine, married David K. Friesen (brother to deacon, Henry R. Friesen Sr.) in 1927. They built up the farm now occupied by the Jack Loewens. Father was a man full of life. He was known to be able to drive his car where others couldn't. Father died of cancer in 1938 at the age of 34, leaving a family of six - Erna, now of Kola; Helen (Mrs. Frank E. Plett, Landmark); Edward, Riverside; Bertha (died of cancer at age 24 in 1960); Fred, Rosenort; and Hilda (Mrs. Bernie Brandt of Kola).

After seven years of widowhood, mother remarried to Peter B. Dueck, and we received four younger brothers, Norman of Edmonton, Bert of Fisher Branch, Bernie of St. Paul, Alberta, and Allan of Fisher Branch. My folks sold the old homestead to the Jack Loewens in 1965 and moved to the Fisher Branch area.

I married Doris, daughter of Peter W. Brandts, in 1960, and today, we have a nice family of four - Kathleen, Patricia, David and James. God called us to a missionary vocation, so after completing our high school and bible school, we went to Mexico for a year and a half. From there, we set out to Nicaragua, Central America, for pioneer missionary work in 1966. One experience we will never forget, was awakening one night to the devastating earthquake in 1972. Some 10,000 people died that night, in Managua, but our house was only slightly damaged.

In 1975, we had to return home due to illness, and have since been involved as pastor of the Rosenort Fellowship Chapel. In 1978, we bought the Henry D. Brandt homestead in Rosenort. As we look back, we pay tribute to our forefathers who have given us a rich heritage, and to God for his faithfulness.

## **JOHN T. FRIESENS**

Mr. and Mrs. John T. Friesen (grandparents of Abram F. Friesen) with their two children and a group of others left Russia in May 1874 coming to Canada. They spent approximately six weeks on the ocean and arrived in Winnipeg towards the end of July. They spent a few days in Winnipeg and during that time they bought oxen, a wagon, some smaller equipment and food. It took them several days journeying to their settlement because there were no roads. Finally August 3rd they arrived at their destination at the Village of Rosenort near the Scratching River.

Since there were no buildings on their settlement, they set up their tents for shelter. Immediately they began building their shelters for the winter. Their first dwelling place was a Semlin, which was a hole dug a foot deep into the ground, with walls consisting of sod, and a thatched grass roof. Although this was not very comfortable, it was the best shelter available for the first winter. The following year they built a one and a half storey house of wood. (24' x 35').



*Home of John T. Friesens, built in 1880's, later occupied by daughter, Elizabeth (A.R. Friesens).*

Mr. and Mrs. Friesen lived in the Village of Rosenort for twenty-eight years before deciding to move to the farm. Moving their house was no easy task. They hitched



32 horses in front of several sleighs, and started moving the house across the river March 10, 1902. It seemed the house was moving too quickly going down the river bank, therefore they put chains on the sleigh runners in order to reduce the speed. Everything worked out well. After spending a few years on the farm, Mr. Friesen passed away in January, 1909, and his wife died just months later that same year.

Mother, (daughter of John T. Friesens), was united in marriage with Abram K. Friesen on March 29, 1910. After they were married they moved into Father's (Abram's) house, as he had been a bachelor for some years, his house being located three miles east of Rosenhoff. In September 1910 they moved to the farm which was Mother's homestead, and purchased it at that time.

Father passed away January 14, 1919 and Mother was left with six children, John, Abram, Elizabeth, Henry, Jacob and Peter. During the flood of 1950 Mother's house was badly damaged, as a result, it was torn down. Mother lived with some of her children for a while, and later moving into the Eventide Home at Rosenort, where she passed away October 10, 1968.

## ABRAM F. FRIESENS

Her son Abram was born on February 23, 1912, and was united in marriage June 18, 1939 to Elizabeth Siemens. Their marriage was blessed with three children Levi, Hilda, and Abe. They established their home on Section 36-5-1 West. Abram enjoyed working on the farm, and also took an interest in building with steel. He started working on wagon boxes in 1935, and also manufactured different pieces of equipment before that time. When his sons were old enough, they went into business with their father. This business is now known as A.F. Friesen and Sons Manufacturing. They build grain and gravel truck boxes, and also do custom welding and repair work.

The Abram F. Friesen family has added a few new members to their family within the last few years. Abe was married to Mary Friesen on July 24, 1976. On September 14, 1977 they were blessed with a lovely daughter, Dawn Michelle. Levi was united in marriage to Judy Friesen on June 18, 1977. Hilda is still faithfully teaching school.

## HENRY AND AGNES FRIESEN

On June 27, 1937, Henry F. Friesen and Agnes Dueck were united in marriage. After a garden reception, the young couple set out to begin their new home.

The first few months were spent at Henry's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth K. Friesen. (His father, Abram K. Friesen died when Henry was only four years old). After a few months of marriage, Henry built their house, which still is part of their dwelling. To start a farm and raise a family took a lot of hard work. Besides farming, Henry did custom combining, cultivating row-crops such as corn, sunflowers and beans, and dug basements.



*Henry F. Friesen family in 1959. BACK ROW: Elmer, Mary, Ron, Alvin. FRONT ROW: Dolores, Mrs. Friesen, baby Garry, Adella, Richard, Mr. Friesen.*

Agnes was busy sewing and cooking for their family of eight. Her love for cooking is still very obvious in that she faithfully has her whole family of 27 members over monthly for Sunday dinner and Faspa.

Henry has been actively engaged in the affairs of the church and community. He has served on the board of directors for Rosenort Farmers' Association, Rosenort Credit Union, Riverside Co-op, M.D.S. Manitoba Pool Elevators, and Morris Eventide Home. He was also in charge of keeping some local roads in driving conditions before the Municipality took up the responsibilities.

The 1950 flood caused the Friesens to experience many hardships. As the flood waters moved in, they were forced to leave their farm for a month, and moved in with a family in Winkler. The flood meant the loss of their dairy due to the closing of the cheese factory. It also meant the rebuilding of their house.

At present, Henry is still actively farming and Agnes gardening and housekeeping. Their eight children have left home and are involved in their own occupations.

The oldest daughter, Mary is married to Eddie L. Friesen, a poultry farmer at Morris. They have two children, Blake and Tammy.

Alvin, married to Frieda Hildebrand, lives in Rosenort and is farming and trucking. They have one daughter, Twyla.

Elmer, married to Betty Anne Loewen, is co-owner of Meridian Industries and also farms. They have three children, Corinne, Byron and Shelly.

Ron, married to Sharon Loewen, is co-owner of Meridian Industries, and also farms. They have three children, Garth, Angela, and Elaine.

Dolores, married to Lorne Reimer, resides in Cavalier, North Dakota, where Lorne is setting up a business. They have one daughter, Tawnya.

Adella, who enjoys travelling, is a secretary in Winnipeg.

Richard, married to Bernice Braun, is employed at Meridian Industries. They have one son, Henry Richard.

Garry, engaged to Marge Kroeker, is presently attending W.B.C. and is employed by Meridian Industries. An August Wedding is planned.



*Rev. and Mrs. P. W. Friesen in 1921.*

**REV. PETER W. FRIESEN  
FARMER AND MINISTER  
1894-1959 (ROSENORT)**

Peter was the youngest member in a family of eight children. By the time he was sixteen years of age, he had lost both his parents, at which time he went to live with his sister, Mary, Mrs. Jacob R. Klassen. Mr. Jacob Klassen's youngest sister, Elizabeth, frequently visited that home as well when Peter was in his late teens and early twenties, and a budding romance between Peter and Elizabeth culminated in marriage in 1918.

Peter was well established in farming by this time, having broken 80 acres of virgin prairie soil one mile west and two miles south of the present town of Rosenort. That farm yard was home to our parents throughout their married life. Subsequently Benny Friesen, the youngest of the five sons, developed the farmsite further, adding a seed plant, labelled Friesen Seed Service, in cooperation with his brothers. Since 1957, the seed plant has become a thriving enterprise, specializing in registered cereal grains.



*P. W. Friesen farmstead.*

Peter W. Friesen farmed in close harmony with his older brother, Henry T. Friesen. In fact, the two farmyards could have been mistaken for one yard. Still it



*The Peter W. Friesen family in 1978. FRONT ROW: Clara, Nettie, Frank, Mrs. P. W. Friesen, Margaret Dueck. LEFT TO RIGHT: Jake and Florence Friesen, Ken and Esther Loewen, Benny and Annie Friesen, Pete and Annie Friesen, Henry and Anne Friesen, Jake and Elizabeth Rempel, Harold and Mary Whitson.*

was important to us children that our property ran "up to that big poplar tree". We almost had our own version of a small Hutterite colony, what with the P.W. Friesen family numbering ten children, and the H.T. Friesen consisting of seven children, except that the latter family was at least 15 years older than ours. There was much sharing and borrowing and common ownership between the two farms. Add to that scene an older unmarried brother to Peter W. and Henry T. who lived mostly with the older family. This brother was Jacob, known as "schumme Joakop", who due to illness lost his hearing at age two and never learned to talk, but constantly muttered sounds imitating language. The fact that he had not been sent to a school for the deaf was one of our father's great regrets. For hours on winter evenings Jacob would sit and attempt to make conversation to his brothers, nephews, and nieces, with gestures and guttural mutterings in his desperate attempts at conversation by the hour. He lived to be 81, and in his own way left a mark on nieces and nephews that we will not easily forget.

Our father took an active part in the work of the Rosenort Kleingemeinde Church, where he was elected to be a deacon when he was in his early thirties. Later he was elected to be a minister. We thought of our father as being more of a personal worker than a preacher. He was instrumental in organizing the Sunday School and served as superintendent for many years. It was the responsibility of leadership that was required of him that often led him to comment on the regrets on his limited education. Father passed away in January, 1959, at the age of 63.

Today, twenty years later, Mother still enjoys good health and independent living in her own house, while the ten children are engaged as follows: Margaret, married a farmer, Jacob A. Dueck who passed away in 1968. Jake P. Friesen married Florence Kornelsen, is a farmer, owns a share in the seed plant. Frank K. Friesen married Nettie Harms, a minister and a farmer. Pete K. Friesen married

Annie Friesen, is a farmer and a trucker. Henry K. Friesen married Anne Derksen of St. Catherines, is a school counsellor and high school teacher in Steinbach. Mary, married to Harold Whitson of Prince Albert, Sask., is an R.N. Benny married Annie Siemens; farmer, he owns a share in the seed plant, is a minister. Elizabeth, married Jake Rempel of Elm Creek; is an R.N. Esther, married Ken Loewen, a farmer. Clara, is a private secretary in Winnipeg.

## H.W. FRIESEN FAMILY STORY

Our grandfather, Rev. John K. Friesen, was born in Russia in 1857, and lost both of his parents, while still young. He was adopted by his grandparents, David Klassens, and when the migration to North America got underway in 1874, he came along. At the age of 19, he married Justina Warkentin and became the village school teacher.

At age 21, he became minister of the Kleingemeinde at Rosenhoff, in which capacity he served for 50 years. Besides his ministerial and teaching responsibilities, he eventually got into farming, after which he quit teaching. They raised a family of five daughters and one son. The son was our father, Henry W. Friesen, who became an implement dealer at the age of 18!



*Implement business shop of H. W. Friesen in 1942.*

At the age of 21, Dad married our mother, Helena G. Rempel. To them were born 7 sons and 6 daughters, after which 3 died while still young.

Father eventually took up farming. Since he was not a born farmer, he got more involved in the implement business again, and in 1938, he won the Canadian Championship as top salesman for Minneapolis-Moline and received a free trip to the States, together with his son, John. Although he had bought a car earlier, in 1930, he bought the first brand new Plymouth that came out.

Before hydro came in, Father set up a plant with batteries, and after that, a wind charger took its place. He worked hard to get hydro established in this community and succeeded in 1948.

Father served in various capacities such as the local telephone system, road boss for the Rural Municipality of Morris, manager of the Rosenort Credit Union and more. In 1936, he had the mishap of losing his right hand in a combine accident. He was not able to help himself at first, and he found this very hard to adjust to.



*H. W. Friesen residence during 1950 flood.*

Our homestead was one where many meals were prepared, the main dish being "schinkefleisch" and sausages. Up to nine hogs were butchered in one winter for food consumption. Mother used to do her own bread baking, a lot of it in a brick oven, which was in a separate little building called the "smoke house". It took at least one hour to heat the bricks, which was done by burning flax straw in the oven. Then the ashes were scraped out and it was time to put the bread in! Many people have enjoyed the good meals cooked by our mother.

In 1958, mother had major surgery (cancer) from which she recuperated slowly. Six years later, she died suddenly of a heart attack.

In 1965, father married Elizabeth Loewen, and in 1969, after a trip to Mexico and Belize, he became seriously ill. He died from cancer only 2 112 days after he came from his trip.

The children:

Helen married Peter R. Reimer; they moved to Belize, where she passed away after a few years.

Susie married Jake Letkeman; their four surviving children were twin boys, Jake and Bill, and daughters, Esther and Helen. The Letkemans farmed in this area all their lives. Daughter, Helen, Mrs. Dave Martens, resides in Morris, Jake and family in Calgary, and Bill and family in Winnipeg. Daughter, Esther, died of a sudden illness; both parents died within 10 years of her death.

William, John, Justina and Dave, together with their families, moved to Mexico. All later moved to Belize, except William. John later moved back to Manitoba and settled in the Interlake area, with his family.



*H. W. Friesen and son, John, on trip to U.S.A. won as top salesman for Minneapolis Moline.*

## **Peter R. Friesen**

Pete married Dora Giesbrecht, and they had a family of nine. A tragedy occurred in 1962, when Peter, while working in the field, was pinned under the tractor, killing him instantly. This left his wife with a large family, still young in years. The boys took over the farming operations, and today, son, Ed, and wife, Laura, live on the family farm, and Mrs. Friesen lives in Rosenort. Their children are: Gladys, Mrs. Bill Siemens of Beausejour; Ed who married Laura Friesen, farming in the Rural Municipality of Morris; Art, who married Gladys Loewen, at Rosenort; Henry, who married Erna Kroeker, at Beausejour; Susan, Mrs. Dave Stoesz, of Rosenort; Florence, Mrs. Pete Loewen of Rosenort; Helen, Mrs. Jerry Siemens, of Sanford; Dorothy, Mrs. Irvin Kroeker, of Virden; and Jessie, Mrs. Gerald Rempel, of Swan River.

## **Henry R. Friesen**

Henry, the only remaining son in the Rural Municipality of Morris, was a parts salesman for a number of years, later becoming the Gulf dealer. At present he is with Midland Manufacturing, trucking steel and also has a school bus route. His wife was Elma K. Dueck, and they have a family of six. Lorne married Floret Gregoire, they live in Calgary; Betty, Mrs. Andy Klassen of Alberta; Irene, Mrs. Glen Siemens, a contractor of Rosenort; Jerry, married Nancy Kehler, operates Jerry's Gulf Service in Rosenort; and Karen, a bookkeeper; Allan a contractor, both at home, in Rosenort.

Elizabeth works as an accountant at the Rosenort Credit Union and Tina is employed as secretary at the Rosenort Co-Op Store. They both make their home in Rosenort.

## **THE DAVID K. FRIESEN FAMILY**

*by P.J.B. Reimer*

David K. Friesen was born to his parents Bishop Johann Friesen and Elizabeth Klassen, January 18, 1861, at Neukirch, Molotschna, Ukraine. He had an older brother Johann and two younger sisters, Aganetha and Maria. Six years later the family moved to the new settlement Borosenko, and established themselves at the village, Rosenfeld. This was the new settlement of the Kleine Gemeinde in the Ukraine.

It was in the month of February, 1871, when the Johann Friesens had a tragic accident. Their sleigh upset, David's mother, being pregnant, was critically injured and died some weeks later. The father developed dropsy and died a little over a year later. David was now an orphan at the age of eleven.

Two years later, in 1874, the grandparents David Klassens, took David, his brother Johann and his two sisters along, with some other families, to Manitoba, where they settled on the banks of the Scratching River, establishing the village of Rosenhoff, about five miles northwest of the town of Morris.

David grew up, joined the church, and married Anna Friesen from Winkler, in the year 1883. He was a young man of 22, but she was over 10 years older, being born August 28, 1850. At first they settled at the south end of the village of Rosenhof, but later they built up a new set of buildings, later occupied by his son, David F. Friesen, and at the present time the home of his youngest grandson, David L. Friesen, although in new, modern buildings.

The David K. Friesens had three children, Aganetha who was born April 24, 1884, died single, April 22, 1955. Anna was born July 21, 1885. Unfortunately she developed Infantile Paralysis at an early age and became practically helpless. Her mother took loving care of her up to her death, January 4, 1908, reaching only the age of 22 years. As her mother had heart trouble she often worried whether she would outlive her helpless daughter as she had to take care of her. She did by over four years.

The youngest child was born December 19, 1890. This was David F. Friesen. He grew up, joined the church and got married with a local girl, Anna K. Loewen, February 19, 1911. She was the daughter of the pioneer, Abram D. Loewen, and was born October 18, 1891. The young couple stayed with David's parents, to farm together.

Only about one and a half years later, David's mother died suddenly. It was September 10, 1912, in the morning. David K. Friesen came into the house for breakfast from doing the chores. There was nothing on the table. He went into the bedroom and found his dear wife, dead. What a shock. He had learned to know her as a maid, working in the community, and she had always been such a loving wife and mother. Now she was gone at the age of only 62. He had been a strong man, and had farmed his own quarter section and some more rented land quite successfully. As an orphan boy, he had started with nothing, but God was gracious to him.

After the death of his wife, David K. Friesen soon retired, had his own house built on the site, which cost him the big sum of \$600.00 at the time, and left the farm pretty much to his only son, David F. Friesen. He loved good horses, and took the occasional drive to the town of Morris, among other things, taking his grandsons along for a cone of ice cream, which cost the big amount of five cents at the time. At the age of only 67 he passed away July 13, 1928. His oldest daughter Aganetha continued to stay with the David F. Friesens, her brother, until she died April 22, 1955.

Young David F. Friesen became a very successful farmer, increasing the size of his farm by buying and renting more land as time went on. However, he had a very strict policy about buying land or equipment for larger operations. He only bought for cash. This involved a minimum of risk and safe expansion. He was much interested in mechanization of the farm operations, buying some of the early tractors like the Titan, the Fordson, the Hartpar, Oliver, etc. as well as a sheaf loader, complete threshing outfit and other implements. He finally farmed almost one and a half sections of land. Being a very successful farmer, he, unfortunately, also became involved in the partnership of purchasing and operating a flour mill in Altona, which caused him considerable worry and finally some financial

losses. Of course, there was one benefit in the family about this, when their oldest son, Peter L. Friesen, had the opportunity of managing the milling operation, which gave him considerable experience in the business world and bookkeeping.

David F. Friesen was also very much interested in the affairs of the community. Among other things he served on various boards, particularly the local school board for many years. He believed in giving young people a good Christian, elementary education, to learn to do things well in this life, although the church did not favour higher education at the time.

The Friesens had five sons, who all grew up, got married, and had their own families. Friesen died at the early age of 69, like most of the other pioneers. He passed away April 20, 1960, leaving his wife, who finally reached the old age of nearly 84 years. She spent her last several years in the Eventide Home, where she got very good care. She passed away in the Morris Hospital, August 21, 1975.

The five sons who lived to grow up were, Peter, Frank, Abram, John and Dave. They also took into their home an eight year old girl, Elsie Schellenberg, until she too got married.

Peter L. Friesen was born March 1, 1912. He married Lena R. Dueck from Kleefeld, June 5, 1938. He became a farmer but was also interested in business. Gaining some business experience from his father's flour mill enterprise, he later in his life established the Riverside Economy Shop at Morris. However, he was also deeply interested in the affairs of the church. He was called to the ministry in the year 1951. Then he was elected leading pastor by the Rosenort E.M.C. in 1955, and served in this capacity up to 1974, when he retired from that position. He also served the Evangelical Mennonite Conference as Moderator for a number of years. After nine years of marriage his first wife died, leaving him with 3 children, Dorothy, Myrna and Alvera. About a year later, July 4, 1948, he married Gertrude K. Dueck, his first wife's cousin. They had 5 more children, Diana, Wesley, Donelda, Stanley and Valerie. Peter L. Friesen has been deeply interested in giving his children a higher education. All their children have a minimum education of Grade XII. Myrna, Alvera, Diana and Wesley have University degrees, the 3 girls being teachers at various places. Religion and missions is of great importance in this higher education of the whole family. Dorothy married Menno Kroeker, who was called to the ministry of the Rosenort Church and serves as assistant pastor at the present time. They have three young children, Donnell, David and Leanne. Wesley is also married.

Frank L. Friesen married Tina Zacharias, July 30, 1939. He was a grain farmer but has now retired. Frank is also gifted as a bone setter or chiropractor. They have 6 children, all grown up, Carolina, Raymond, David, Merlin, Phyllis and Howard, the older three are married, and have a child each. Carolina married Corn. Janzen, a garageman. Raymond married Deloli. He is a welder. David married Irma Rempel. He is a house trailer salesman. Phyllis married West Geddert, a carpenter.

Abram L. Friesen was also a farmer, then became a plumber in Morris. He married Sarah U. Dueck, June 9,

1962. They had one son, Ronald. Abram died at the early age of 52, August 22, 1968. His wife remarried a Mr. Friesen some years later.

John L. Friesen married Tina Letkeman, July 18, 1943. John is still farming near Riverside, and is also a carpenter. They have four children, all grown up, and married. They are Allan, Kenneth, Gary and Karen. Allan married Annie D. Loewen. They live in Kleefeld and have several children. Kenneth married Elaine Heinrichs. They also have several children. Gary married Janice Snyder, and Karen is Mrs. Rick Landry.

Dave L. Friesen, the youngest of the family, married Betty Friesen from Kleefeld, June 20, 1948. They had two sons, Lesley and Eldon. Then Betty died and Dave married a local girl, Elizabeth R. Loewen, January 3, 1954. They had 2 more sons, John and Donnie. Lesley is married to Aline Champagne. David L. Friesen is a farmer, but cannot stay away from business either. He is the one of the Friesen family, who continues to live on his grandfather's farm, although it is a new set of buildings. David is also a song director and choir leader.

In one century, from David, the poor orphan boy, have come many prosperous farmers, teachers, missionaries and business people, as well as ministers.

## MR. JACOB H. FRIESEN

Mr. Friesen was born March 11, 1894, one mile south of the Village of Rosenort. For the first eighteen years of his life, he lived in a log cabin, where a brick oven was used for baking as well as heating.

He received his formal education in a private school. He only completed Grade 5; later at the age of 18, he returned to school to take Grade 8 at the Mennonite Collegiate in Gretna. The Department of Education, recognizing his ability, invited him to take a two month teacher training course in Winnipeg, after which they would assign him the Rosenort public school. Due to lack of funds, this didn't materialize.

In 1916, Mr. Friesen did become a teacher, in the Rosenhoff private school, where he was well liked. The following year, in March, he married Margaret, the oldest daughter of Cornelius D. Loewens. He worked for his father-in-law during the summer months, and taught during the winter, with his teaching salary varying from \$40.00 to \$60.00 per month.

Mr. Friesen was one of the first car owners at Rosenort. He bought his first vehicle, a Ford, in 1915.



*J.H. Friesen in his early model car.*

In April, 1920, the Friesens moved to a farm 314 mile west of McTavish, where they owned two quarters of land. They also were active in mixed farming, owning five horses, which were used for field work and for transportation. The three mile ride to the Greenbank School and the five mile ride to church were all taken in the daily stride. Regularity was the order of the day.

The Friesens had 12 children - 6 girls and 6 boys. But tragedy struck pioneer families frequently, and though hardship was an accepted way of life, it did not make the sorrow easier to bear. Two year old twin girls, as well as a baby boy died from diarrhea within five days of each other. Mr. Friesen's mother, who was a regular family member for 16 years, died in 1960. Soon after, their son, Abe, died in an automobile accident during the blizzard on December 28th, at the age of 36, leaving a young widow with four children.

Other hardships they encountered were sickness, fire and flood. In 1934, two horses disappeared, never to be seen again. 1937 was another unforgettable year. Mr. Friesen was hospitalized for 39 days with a ruptured appendix. After his hospitalization, a field of wheat and the family car were destroyed by fire. During the great flood of 1950, the Friesens were forced to leave their farm and dwell in Altona for a one month period.

Mr. Friesen was active in community affairs for many years. He served as Secretary-Treasurer of the Greenbank school for 34 years and as a fire insurance agent for the Red River Valley Insurance Co. for 30 years. He also served on the Manitoa Pool Board, the Trump Oil Board and was involved in the Rosenort Farmer's Association. Later, he became an accountant for the Rosenort Co-Op and any individuals needing assistance on income tax papers also came to him. He was also active in church affairs, teaching Sunday School for 20 years.

In 1963, the Friesens sold their farm and moved into a modern bungalow in Rosenort. His sons went into farming and the carpentry trade. One son, Pete, still farms in the Rosenort area. Mr. Friesen suffered a stroke in 1970 and was hospitalized. He resided in the Resthaven Home in Steinbach until his death in 1973. Presently, Mrs. Friesen is living in Winnipeg with two of her daughters who are employed there.



*J.H. Friesen in foreground with sons. LEFT TO RIGHT: Frank, Peter, Corny, Abe.*

Cornie, the eldest son, married Kathy Friesen, and they had 10 children. Cornie was occupied with farming in the

Rosenort area the first twenty-one years. They moved to Roseisle in 1963 and Cornie did carpentry as well as farming. Cornie's wife died in May, 1977.

Pete married Evelyn Cornelsen and they have 4 children. Pete, the only son still living in Rosenort, is a farmer and also a carpenter.

Mary married Nick Eidse of Rosenhoff. They have 8 children. The Eidses are farmers in the Pleasant Valley area.

Frank, who married Eva Kroeker, has 5 children. Frank started farming at McTavish, moving to Roseisle in 1963. In 1968, they moved to Steinbach, where he worked in the Bethesda Hospital as an Orderly. At present, he is employed at Reimer Overhead Doors, in Steinbach.

Abe married Elma Kroeker, and they had 4 children. Abe was a carpenter. One blizzardy winter morning, as he was on his way to work, his car developed trouble, so he went to investigate. Due to poor visibility, he was struck by a truck and died soon after. (Dec. 28, 1961) Elma was left with a small baby only a few days old. As her family grew up, Emily married Leroy Barkman and they have 2 daughters. Her three sons all have become carpenters, though one is in secondary school at present. Elma has a fabric shop and is busy at that.

Betty is employed at Marshall Wells in the cafeteria in Winnipeg and Helen as a nurse in a doctor's office; both living with Mom. Agnes is in mission work at Strathclair, for the Canadian Sunday School Mission.

## PETE FRIESEN FAMILY

Pete, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob H. Friesen, was born on a farm at McTavish in 1920. he grew up there and received his education at the Greenbank School in Rosenort. They had to travel three miles to and from school.

Pete, always optimistic and energetic, was interested in farming and bought his own land as a young man. He also enjoyed trucking and bought his first truck in 1950, which he took to Kenora, Ontario and hauled pulp for a number of years. Pete loved carpentry and that is how he came to work at Mr. and Mrs. Isaac H. Cornelsen's, his future parents-in-law. Pete and Evelyn were married in July, 1955, in the Rosenort Evangelical Mennonite Church, where they also helped along in various activities of the church. Three sons and one daughter were born to them. They moved to their own farm in 1956. Pete went into the hog business and his sons helped him in this as well as in the field work.

Harold James, born in 1956, is married to Sandra Fehr from Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and has one son Steven James, born in May, 1978. Harold is a Job Supervisor for A.K. Penner and Sons Construction of Blumenort, Manitoba. Gary Dale, born in 1957, is married to Darlene Froese also from Swift Current, Saskatchewan, and has one daughter Alicia Dawn, born in March, 1979. Raymond, who was born in 1960 is now engaged to Rebecca Thiessen. All three sons are carpenters. Eleanor Joy, born in 1965, is at home and is attending the Rosenort Junior High school.



Pete has been involved in community affairs, such as Secretary-Treasurer of Greenbank School and also of the Rosenort Co-op. He also served in the Credit Committee of the Rosenort Credit Union.



*Mr. and Mrs.  
P.W.X. Friesen in  
1922.*

## **P.W.X. FRIESEN AND FAMILY**

*by Mrs. Kathy Friesen*

Peter's father, Klaas Friesen, was born in Lichtfelde, S. Russia, on August 19, 1858. As a teenager, Klaas, together with his parents, Cornelius Friesens, left the Mennonite settlement Moloschna in south Russia and emigrated to Canada in 1874. They settled in Rosenort, Manitoba, near Morris: On November 28, 1880, Klaas married Anna Warkentin. While living in the Rosenort community, Klaas and Anna Friesen had a family of 10 children born to them. Two of these died in infancy. Peter, the second youngest, was born on May 17, 1898.

With much courage and a spirit of adventure, the Klaas Friesen family went homesteading in 1905 at Beaver Flats, Saskatchewan. At this time, Peter was a small lad of seven years. Being too young to take a homestead, he did not get as deeply rooted in that area as his older brother's did.

As a young adult, Peter returned to Manitoba, to work on a farm, helping his aunt, Mrs. Siemens. He noticed a shy young maiden in this household. Maria also took notice of this friendly, outgoing young man, and in the course of time, they were married.

At the close of the Sunday morning worship service on September 17, 1922, the minister pronounced the blessing upon these two, who promised to share their future lives together.

For the first year, Peter and Maria lived with her parents, the David Kroekers, in Rosenort. With \$100.00 cash and a tractor, Peter started farming and eventually began to farm his father-in-law's land.

Nick was born before their first anniversary, and within another two years, David arrived. The third baby was a girl called Dora.

At the age of three and a half years, David suffered an accident while jumping off a chair and hurt his leg. It became apparent that this was no minor injury. Father spent much money and time travelling, seeking medical help for David's condition. No successful remedy was

found, and so he has had to limp all through his life.

Father began to miss the family in Saskatchewan and because money was scarce, they decided to sell a cow and make the trip to visit relatives. Eventually, they also moved to Beaver Flats, Saskatchewan, where both Theodore and Harvey were born. These were three lonely years for mother.

Klass Friesen died on March 17, 1932. Grandmother had died some nine years earlier.

Even though he often referred to the Manitoba mud and mosquitoes, father moved his family back to the Rosenhoff area during the time of the depression. The economy was in such a poor state that when Betty was born in December, mother explained to the children that this was their Christmas present.

A one roomed house had to accommodate mother and dad, and the six children. When the beds were made ready for the night, there was hardly any floor space left. Mother used to churn butter and sell at the local store and in turn, buying lard for the family to use at home. This brought in some cash - a profit of 1(Z per pound!

Fortunately, the Red River Valley soil produced good garden crops, so there were always potatoes to cat.

With time and some financial aid, the family was able to construct a four roomed frame bungalow. Elsie had come on the scene one hot July day, and the new house offered more breathing and living space.

A few years later, spring came around, and Annie was born, and seventeen months later, came Katherine.

After four consecutive girl babies, Peter was warmly welcomed. With the advances of our modern lifestyle, he had the good fortune of enjoying Pablum in his infant diet.

On September 1, 1943, Edwin, the last of 11 children, was born. He was the first one to be delivered in a hospital. Due to congenital disorders, he never developed normally. Our heavenly Father graciously took him home on February 24, 1945.

All through these years, father worked the farm with his sons' help. At heart, however, he was a blacksmith, mechanic and inventor. This creative mind made possible a variety of new labor-saving devices around the house and farm. Socializing was one of his joys and so dad acquired many friends.



*One of P. W.X. Friesen's inventions. The person on the vehicle is Peter Dyck, who had to live with a broken back until he died.*



*Typical road conditions of early 1920's. Group of Rosenort young people on their way to Winnipeg. The lady in the light colored coat is Mrs. P. W.X. Friesen.*

He dared to be individualistic. When names and mailing addresses became confused because another man in the community was called Peter W. Friesen, our father decided to end the confusion once and for all by adopting the letter "X" as his initial.

As growing children, this non-conformity would sometimes cause us embarrassment, but we could easily be identified.

In 1950, the Red River flood threatened our home. Day by day, we watched as the water rose higher. It generated a lot of excitement in our family. Some very unusual things happened at that time. The girls had to give up their bedroom for baby chickens! The livestock was moved and finally we were also evacuated and taken to the lovely home of the Jake Borns in the Kane District. We stayed there for one month, then returning home to the aftermath.

As a girl of eleven, Katherine, better known as Tina, became critically ill with acute bronchitis. She was on the verge of death, when Dr. Elias of Morris performed an emergency tracheotomy and saved her life.

Meanwhile, both Harvey and Betty, who were at home, became severely ill with infectious hepatitis. That was a difficult winter.

In the 1950's, doctors discovered a hereditary blood disease in the family. Half of the family was diagnosed as having this congenital Hemolytic anemia. Two of its primary symptoms are fatigue and an enlarged spleen. Those who required and had surgery for removal of the spleen were father, Harvey, Betty, Annie, Katherine and Peter.

Nick, the oldest, married Susie Kroeker in August of 1957. They are living in the Rosenort area, where he is farming and serving as a minister in the local Evangelical Mennonite Church.

They have two sons - Louis and Dale. Louis is locally employed and very enthused with his weight lifting achievements. Dale, an intelligent young fellow, attends the school for the deaf in Winnipeg.

The first in our family to be married was Dave. His wife is the former Sadie Wiebe. They said their vows in July, 1949. Their family consists of six children. Audrey and Gary, who are twins, are both married; Audrey to Harry Brandt of Rosenort. They have two children - Jeffrey and Amy. Gary is married to Rowena Schroeder and lives in Morris. Their two children are Candace and Keith. Gwyn is married to Larry Kornelsen. They live and work in Winnipeg. Sandra is just graduating from the

Hepburn Bible School in Saskatchewan. Mark and Donna are still at home and attending school.

Dave pastored a Mennonite Church in Morris for many years and also managed the Rosenort Credit Union. He is presently living in Steinbach.

Dora attended Bible School, later taking her Registered Nurses' training. Dora has served the Lord as a missionary in Mexico for many years. Right now, she lives in El Paso, Texas, where she ministers primarily to the Mexican people in the border city of Juarez.

Ted is a hog farmer in the Morris area. He married Georgina Plett in June, 1955. Their oldest four boys - Gerald, Mervyn, Randy and Kenneth - are out working in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The other eight children are living at home and going to school to Rosenort. They are; Julia, Lyndon, Valerie, Bradley, Cheryl, Melanie, Lavern and Gwendeth.

In May, 1956, Harvey took as his wife, Marion Klassen, of Morris. They have three daughters and one son. They moved to British Columbia in 1966 and reside in Kelowna. For years, Harvey worked for the O.K. Tire Company. Their oldest girl, Joan, married Ron Bazuk in 1977. Debra is presently attending Bible College in Regina, Saskatchewan. Bonnie and Jeffrey are still at home.

After registered nurses' training, Betty went to Mexico for a short term of Missionary service. She married John Stark in September, 1972. John is an instructor of carpentry at Red River Community College, in Winnipeg. They have one small son, John William.

Elsie and her husband, Henry Thiessen, were married in September, 1961. They live in Winnipeg where Henry is employed by a vending firm. They have three children at home - Darryl, Roxanne and Lyall.

Elmer Brandt married Anne in September 1961. They live in Rosenort, where Elmer operates a large farm. Their three children are Kelly, Ellen and Warren.

Kathy didn't change her name when she married. John Friesen took her hand in July, 1963. They live in Portage la Prairie, with their two boys, Charles and Bruce. John is a school teacher.

Peter chose to move to Flin Flon to work in the nickel mines for a time. He married Kathy Wiebe in September, 1968. They have two children - Jennifer and Jonathon and live in Fisher Branch, Manitoba, where Peter is pastoring an Evangelical Mennonite Church.

Father passed away on April 15, 1969. He had been a diabetic for a number of years and finally died following a series of strokes.

Mother is living in the Eventide Home in Rosenort and enjoying fairly good health. She still contributes to charitable relief organizations by sewing patchwork quilts. Her faithful prayers for each of us made a decided impact in all of our personal lives.

## JOHN P. FRIESEN

The John P. Friesen family arrived from the Nikopol, Molotshna, on the Dnieper River, on the Southern plains of Russia, in the year 1874-1875. Mrs. Friesen was Mary Eidse. According to the Friesen book, they came on the

'International', the ship that plied the Red River from Fargo, bringing in settlers. The children in this family were: Maria, later Mrs. Henry D. Warkentin; Anna, who died single in early adulthood; Helena, Mrs. Cornelius Sawatsky; John, married to Gertrude Plett, deceased; Abram, single, deceased; Margaretha, Mrs. Jacob Sawatsky; Cornelius, single, who lived with Peter in the bushland near MacTavish; Peter, who is single and still alive at age 89; Klaus, married to Aganetha Isaac, deceased.



*LEFT: Helena, Mrs. Cornelius Sawatsky, daughter of John P. Friesen. RIGHT: Cornelius, son of John P. Friesen.*



John P. Friesen was a man of many talents, a jack of all trades. In his lifetime, he was a farmer, a butcher, an undertaker, and a door to door (by buggy) salesman. He sold patent medicines, like Alpenkrauter, Magolo, Heil Oil, Farney products and sometimes oranges and fish. He measured land for the settlers; a surveyor of a kind.

It is reported that he wrote a diary. Among his memoirs was recorded that the mudhouses were so cold that a wet diaper would stiffen when the baby was changed!

From 1904-1918, the Friesens homesteaded at a site south across from where the Jake Bartels live today - east of Rosenort and west of MacTavish. Prior to that, they lived at the exact spot that the prospering town of Rosenort is now on from 1901-1904. As all pioneers did on arrival from Europe, the first years were spent 'in the village' - approximately 1874-1901.

In 1904, they moved to the homestead commonly called the 'Woodbury' homestead. Here, the family grew up and left the main household. From 1916-1979, the family remaining lived on the quarter of the 40 acres Peter still lives on. He has managed to retain much of the original bush land, which served as pasture for many years.

An interesting series of events told by Uncle Peter, is the birth of three Annas in the family. The first two died within a very short interval, while in Russia, one was three and the newborn arrived just before the burial of the first Anna. She was named after the deceased sister, died before the funeral, was buried, thus sharing the same grave and name. The third Anna died in Canada, while still single, reportedly very pretty and under 30.

Abram, buried in Rosenhoff, was also about 30 when he died and had been injured as a boy by a vicious kick from a horse's hoof, which affected his skull and head. He suffered in and out of hospital. After his death, his

body was shipped home by freight train. The casket arrived C.O.D., creating financial stress for the family, and needless to say, also emotional.

From the Friesen family book, we gather there were spiritual struggles as well. However, it is also reported that Grandpa Friesen, on his deathbed, refused breakfast because, he said, Jesus would have a breakfast prepared and waiting for him. He died within the hour. With such a powerful statement, after such a dramatic life, it is easier to understand the faith that upheld the pioneers!



*P.E. Friesen, on his motorcycle - 1919.*

## PETER E. FRIESEN

Peter E. Friesen was born the youngest son of the John P. Friesens on May 31, 1890. He and his brother, Cornie, were bachelors and farmed together. He is now residing at the J.F. Warkentin home (a nephew) and still drives his truck back and forth where he spends his day in a self constructed workshop or cooking his own meal in his own farm house (if weather and health permit.) He is somewhat arthritic but has a sound memory and a will to live. He is now 89.

Upon interviewing and seeing a map kept from the centennial celebrations, he filled in between the gaps. He knew of people who lived between the main farms, who were not on the map. These were the forgotten folk who came in as labourers to help the farmers - also pioneers, but often without permanent homes. He also remembers many incidents, the recent one when the wood ticks were so thick the horses would become sick from an epidemic of infestations which he believed resulted in 'sleeping sickness'.

His memories include the early days of cattle herding. Rosenort and Rosenhoff had separate herd setups. For the Friesen boys, it meant early rising, from 1898 on. John, Cornie and Peter lived at the north end of the village. With leather boots (that caused sore heels) they walked two miles south very early (7:00 a.m.) and gave bugle calls along the village road. On the way back, the farmers were expected to open the gates and let out the milked cows, calves and grazing stock. This included the whole village cattle population of about 100 head. Two dogs had been their assistants. One very intelligent dog was 'Fanny' who was so useful that they fed her exactly as the boys were fed, almost human.

For lunch, they carried homemade foods such as pearl barley, fish from the Morris River, cottage cheese, processed mennonite style into (devoye', and possibly homebaked foods.

The wages he couldn't remember (maybe \$35.00 a season possibly \$1.25 per head per summer). It was a seven day week, with Grandpa often taking the Sunday shift. Peter is an inventor by nature. The product of one of his endeavours is a horse and cart, running, lifelike and natural looking, run with electric power.

Today, he is living with the Warkentins, having his nighttime snack and trudging upstairs to his bedroom at about 10:00 p. m.



*Peter E. Friesen with his invention of an electrically run horse and cart.*

## **C.T. FRIESENS**

*submitted by Helen Heinrichs*

In 1919 at age 20, Cornelius T. Friesen left Saskatchewan, his home province, and travelled to Portage La Prairie, Man. He had been farming 160 acres at Rush Lake, Sask., but due to the dry spell was unable to continue. When he arrived in Portage La Prairie, he had 10 cents in his pocket and no job. However, at that time it was not too difficult to find prospective employers. He met one on the street and was hired for two weeks to help with the harvesting.

He worked for several more farmers into late fall. He usually worked from four in the morning to nine o'clock at night and received approximately \$5.50 per day.

After harvesting had ended for that year, a cousin, P.W.X. Friesen phoned from Sask. and wished to know whether Cornelius would join him on a visit to the Siemens' family in the Morris area where he anticipated securing a job.

The two of them arrived in Morris and walked five miles to Mrs. Peter Siemens place. Mrs. Siemens had seven lovely daughters and this may have influenced them in their decision to stay in the district.

Shortly thereafter, Cornelius was employed by Nick F. Brandt of Rosenort. He worked there for almost a year and received \$60.00 per month.

During his employment on the Brandt farm, he frequently visited the Siemens' home where the young people often gathered for games and fellowship.

Soon Cornelius was attracted to one of the Siemens girls, namely Mary. Twice a month for 3 years Cornelius pedalled 14 miles on a bicycle to see his prospective bride. Cornelius and Mary were married Oct. 22, 1922 in the E.M.C. Church at Rosenort.

At the time of their marriage Cornelius was employed by Mary's mother, Mrs. Peter Siemens. He continued working for Mrs. Siemens for the following six years. He and his wife Mary lived at the Siemens' residence during that time and the three eldest children were born there.

In 1929 they, with their 3 children, moved into their own place, located one mile north of the Siemens' residence. They moved into an older, two storey, 3 bedroom home.

Initially their farm consisted of 80 acres, however, Cornelius managed to acquire an additional 100 acres after two years.

During the first several years on their own farm, wheat sold for 27 cents a bushel. With a growing family to support, the following years were financially difficult for the family. During the winter the house was very cold and frequently the upstairs was below zero.

Tragedy struck the family in 1933 when their 3 month old son, Johnny died after a brief illness. Doctors were not readily available at that time and his death was a great shock as they had not realized that he was critically ill.

During the years of Depression there were sad times but also happy times. One highlight was Cornelius arriving home with a brand new Case tractor in 1936. It was a dream come true and was a delight to father and sons.

Cornelius acquired more land in the ensuing years and prospered with the help of his six sons. They were a great support to their father, working and planning together with him in the operation of the farm.

In 1943 Mrs. Siemens died and a few months later, the family moved back where they had their beginnings, to Mrs. Siemens' residence, which Cornelius purchased.



*Cornelius and Mary T. Friesen.*

Cornelius and Mary still lived in the same house at present, although they are retired. It is a place of many happy family gatherings, including children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The family members total 67.

Some gatherings the family will cherish for life, are the happy times experienced during summer holidays. The whole family would go to a resort for several days of fun and relaxation. There would be singing, sharing,

swimming and boating. Most of the grandchildren probably learned to waterski on such an outing.

Cornelius and Mary have always been very caring and close to their family and they have enjoyed many good years together.

The children and their families are listed below:

Pete and his wife Mary reside at Rosenhoff on a farm. They have five children, Diana, Dennis, Larry, Lonnie and Gwen. Diana and her husband Jake Dueck live on a farm at Rosenhoff. They have two children, Julie and Perry. Dennis and his wife Helen live at Rosenhoff. They have three children, Curtis, Grant and Nicole. Larry and his wife Pearl live in Mexico where they are missionaries. They have two children, Chad and Tannis. Lonnie and Gwen are living at home with the parents.

Susan lives at home with the parents and owns a bookstore in Morris.

Bill and his wife Helen live on a farm at Pleasant Valley. They have four children. Glen lives in Winnipeg. Brian and his wife Luella reside at Riverside. Terry and Randall are at home.

Frank and his wife Gertie farm at Swan River, Man. They have 3 children, Kimberly, Lyle and Daryl. They are all at home.

Helen and her husband Ike Heinrichs live in Winnipeg. They have one child, Merrilee.

Tina and her husband Pete Reimer live at Birch River. They have 5 children, Wayne, Dale, Laverne, Chris and Merle. Wayne and his wife Marilyn also live at Birch River. The other children are at home.

Len and his wife Bertha live on a farm in the Brandon area. They have two children. Julia and Muriel, both at home.

Art and his wife Ruth farm at Rosenhoff. They have three children. Cheryl, Kevin and Tanya.

Mary and her husband Allen Reimer live on a farm at Pleasant Valley. They have four children, Gene, Shelly, Renee and Gayle.

Elmer and his wife Marianne live at Kenville, Man. on a farm. They have two children, Todd and Tricia.

Laura and her husband Ed Friesen live on a farm at Rosenhoff. They have three children, Melody, Kristie and Wendy.

## **MARTIN WARKENTIN**

*submitted by John Warkentin*

Our family history traces back to Martin Warkentin, born in Southern Russia in 1824. He was married to Anna Dueck in 1846. Because of political unrest and economic pressures, they joined the thousands of mennonites, who emigrated to Canada. Here they were promised religious freedom, military exemptions and unlimited opportunities for farming.

The Martin Warkentin family left Russia in June 1874, and arrived in Wpg. in August, the same year. They had travelled by ocean lines to New York on the east coast. From there they travelled by train to Moorhead, Minn.; a steamboat, "the International" brought them the rest of the way down the Red River to W pg. (Rates in those days were, 1st class passage, quite luxurious, St. Paul to Wpg. - \$25.00). From Winnipeg supplies were bought, and

driven by oxen to their allotted settlements, in the Morris area. They homesteaded along the Scratching River.

To stay close together they divided their land in strips along the river 300 ft. wide, 3-4 miles long, east and west of river. That first winter they built a "simlin", this being a 2 ft. hole dug out of the ground. Sods were used for the walls and roof. Many farmers would divide this abode in half, keeping their cows and oxen in the other half.

In time two buildings were built, one in Rosenhoff (now Riverside) and one in Rosenort, to serve as churches on Sunday and schools on week days.

After a few years, or often, when older sons grew up and married, they would move out, onto their own homesteads. They were all so thankful for their freedom of religion, they didn't mind the hardships of pioneering, miserable roads and limited transportation.

Clearing the land was a slow process so the first year nothing was seeded. First clearing was done by oxen and plow. It took a while every morning to prepare the animals, and slowly walk to the field. You could always tell it was time for lunch! The oxen would take off for the farm at a given time, no holding back, heading straight across the yard, right into the river close by. The flies and mosquitoes were so bad, getting into the water was their only relief; this need being just as great as their desire for feed. First seeding was done by hand, scattering from a homemade canvas apron, walking along the field.

Martin and Anna had a family of 11 children. However by the time they sailed for Canada, they had only 4 living. Custom was to carry on a name from one child who would pass away, to the next one born. Thus a family register would look like this one: George, Peter, Anna, Heinrich, Maria, Heinrich, Maria, Agatha, Peter, Heinrich, Elizabeth.

Coming to Canada were:

*Anna*, already married to John T. Friesen, bringing two small children along. They had more children here and settled in the Rosenort-Morris area. Most of these descendants are located in this area, living along the "meridian".

*Agatha* remained single and died of TB at the age of 26 years.

*Henry* was 6 years old when he came with his parents. He later married Maria Friesen and had a family of 8 children, 3 of which died in their younger years.

*Elizabeth* married Henry W. Brandt, settled down in the Rosenort area, had a family of 14 children. 4 died young, one at age 11 of the 'flu. Martin was a devout man, a candidate for deacon elections. Both Martin and his wife died at a relatively young age, both in their fifties.

## **HENRY D. WARKENTIN**

Henry D. Warkentin was born to Martin and Anna on March 31, 1868 near Nicopol, South Russia. He was a lad of 6 years when they crossed the ocean as a family in 1874. They were among the first settlers to come to the Morris area. Even in later years Henry could tell thrilling stories to his grandchildren of the long voyage, from the view point of a 6 yr. old. He remembered how some food was prepared for the long trip, who knew how available it

would be in that big strange world! One staple food was toasted buns "rheuschache". (Like our melba toast of today). A day was set aside for each family in one village to toast (dry) buns by sacks full which lasted until they got on the steamboats for the last leg of the journey to Wpg. People were very nauseated while crossing the rough ocean. Many children were buried at sea, making a lasting impression on a young lad.

Grandpa Henry had a meagre education, but he learned to read and write. Before the schools were set up in separate buildings, classes were held in individual



*Henry D. Warkentin in 1940's.*

homes, where and how it could be arranged. He grew up in his father's house and learned the ways of farming.

He married Maria Friesen, (daughter of John P. Friesen). For a few years they lived on Father Friesen's land, east of Rosenort. When the opportunity came he bought 160 acres of virgin land just north of Rosenort. This land belonged to the Hudson's Bay Co. and they sold it at \$8.00 an acre. All land north of Rosenort was community pasture up until the time it was sold for farming purposes, even then it was kept for a number of years until actual clearing was complete. The John P. Friesen family (Henry's in-laws) had to take over this community service of herding all cows and calves on this pasture. Early every morning a lad would walk along the village road blowing a horn. Farmers had to bring their cattle to the main road, thus by the time he reached the pasture he had quite a herd. In the late evening he followed the same routine, blowing his horn as he came trudging home, each owner coming to the road to gather up his own cattle.

Having barnyard animals in those days was a must for basic food supplies, so Henry and his family always had something of everything. Enough to keep his children busy, and food for all. As the boys grew older, they helped out more and more in breaking and clearing the land. They had horses by now, a great improvement over the oxen that Martin had had.

Henry also did mail delivery by horse and buggy for a few years, before regular routes were established. Meeting the train in McTavish, 3 times a week, he would exchange mail bags and deliver back to Mr. Enns' store in Rosenort.

Henry was a farmer by profession, of average build and wore a beard in his later years. His pleasant, good



*Two-storey house built by H.D. Warkentin in 1921.*

nature, love for people would have made him the ideal salesman, or businessman had he been born a century later.

They had moved their first small house on to their own land when they purchased it. Some new buildings were added in those first years, mostly by their own family labor. Eventually, a new bigger 2 storey house was built in 1921. (The tiny, old house still stands in this neighborhood, used as a storage shed on a farm). They had a family of five children raised to adulthood, a few were lost in infancy. A pair of twin girls was a great delight till one of them died at 6 months of age, of diarrhea, (then the most prevalent cause of death among small children).

Grandma Maria was known to be a tall, strong woman of remarkable reputation. She was a very busy person, raising a family and dealing with all the hardships and inconveniences of pioneer living. On top of all this, she became a mid wife for the northern part of the settlement. She was compassionate by nature, thus she naturally followed in her mother and aunt's footsteps. She received excellent training even in her teen years by accompanying her elders on calls. In spite of being in her own home, she would always have her satchel packed and ready to go at a minute's notice. Grandpa Henry would have the horse hitched to a buggy, all ready, when they knew an expected birth could occur any hour. Most of the time people would come pick grandma up and return her, since they had no telephone, no advance notice was received if any emergency happened.

The last 15 years of her life were painful, having developed dropsy. She died at 53 yrs. of age, having spent only I and a half years in the new house that was such a delight to her.

Their oldest daughter Mary married Abram Loewen from Blumenort and moved next door to the parents. In this way grandma had the help of her oldest daughter, and Mary had the privilege of a built in medical woman. They had a family of 4 girls and 2 boys, when she died in child birth, only a short while after the death of her mother. Mr. Loewen remarried shortly, and the children had a good mother. They had a grain farm and dairy cows. We remember Abram Loewen driving his horses and wagon with the load of milk cans to the cheese factory, half a mile east of the church, in the '40's. The



Loewens left for Mexico with the mass exodus in 1948, with their whole family, except one. The youngest son, John, bought the home place in Rosenort and made the farm very productive. They had their family here, but in the 1950's they sold out and moved to Arborg where they continue their successful farming. Many of the Loewen-Warkentin descendants live in the British Honduras today.

Son Henry chose a bride Katharine Unger, from the Giroux area. They tried farming near Rosenort for a few years, but the wet years drowned out the crops. They moved to the town of Morris where he served as laborer and mail man to the rural areas. He served many years driving old model cars on muddy roads, horse and sleigh in winter time. At one time he even tried a mule and horse hitched together! This delivery route was a daily run, except Sunday. It was always a 20 mile route, many a frozen sandwich as lunch in wintertime. In later years they moved back to Giroux where they took up mixed farming. They had a family of 6 children. Henry passed away in the 70's. His widow lives in Steinbach now.

Daughter Anna also married a Steinbach man, George S. Kornelsen. Their first years of married life were spent with grandpa Henry, trying to help out as house-keeper and farm help. They then moved to the Steinbach area where they raised a big family. Two children are living in the Morris area today. Alvin Kornelsen has purchased a home close to Rosenort and is a teacher in the Rosenort Elem. School. The Stan Pletts (Elma) purchased the former Jac B. Kroeker residence a few years ago when Stan was employed by the Morris McDonald School Div. They have recently returned from a 2 yr. teaching project in Belize, Honduras. Anna passed away in June, 1978, her husband in 1976.

Son John followed example and married a Steinbach girl, Aganetha Plett. They had a family of 11 children, of whom only 3 daughters live in the home district now, the rest are scattered all over the world.

Son Peter married a local girl, Helen Kroeker and farmed in the district all his life. They had a family of 5, only 2 living in the home area, the rest busy in distant places. Peter passed away in Sept. 1977. His widow lives in Rosenort.



*The H.D. Warkentin family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Henry and Katharine Warkentin, George and Anna (Warkentin) Kornelsen, John and Aganetha Warkentin, Peter and Helen Warkentin.*

Grandfather Henry stayed on his homestead farm a few years after his wife died. His youngest sons were now old enough to take over. They did so for a few years but grandpa's heart wasn't in it anymore and he decided to sell. The family as a unit moved to the Steinbach region. He passed away in June 1948, having reached the age of 80 years.

## JOHN F. WARKENTIN

John was born to Henry and Maria on Nov. 13, 1903. He had all his schooling in small private schools. He walked many miles to school or drove horse and buggy or sleigh.

John and his brothers were kept busy at home with barn chores. They always had household chores besides.

John grew up on his father's farmstead, helping to break brush with his older brother Henry. John remembers the time he broke up the northwest corner of 8-6-1 East. They were clearing brush with horses, a 12" brush breaker, and walking plow handles, Henry would be at the handles, John at the reins of the 6 horses. They'd be approaching a big bushy stump, John would speed up the horses going into it - only so, they got only half-way through it. So back up, try again. A typical day! Then there was the day when John was on the field with horses, a wicked thunderstorm came up and before he could get home, it was upon him. A bolt of lightning struck so viciously somewhere close by, one of the horses fell down, stunned. It had struck the Marsh's house a few miles west and it burned down.

1918 was the infamous flu year, and John was of an age to stay healthy enough to do all the sick neighbors' chores. Although flu gripped many of his own family they were grateful there were no deaths. Mother never seemed to fully recover though.

When mother died, older ones in the family, namely son Henry and son-in-law George Kornelsen rented the farm. A tractor was bought and farming went modern. John decided he was independant for a while. He promptly went to the Steinbach area where he'd been introduced to a lovely lady, Aganetha Plett. There was a strict father in this household, who kept exact record of each of his ten daughters, so John's courtship had to be lengthened somewhat. Having relatives he could live with in Giroux, he entered a working world of many vocations. He worked on a railroad gang building up rails in the Marchand area. He progressed from shoveling gravel to being foreman of a gang, dealing with 6 nationalities. He still remembers the familiar cry of "yoo heave 'er" when 8 men 4 on each side would give the signal to lift a rail in unison. For a while John worked in a general store, gave haircuts, fixed shoes, anything that would earn him a few dollars for courting that important lady.

In the spring of 1926, events happened in a way that allowed John and Peter to take their turn at renting the farm. Their father, Henry, had remarried, built a new house in Steinbach, but kept an active role in his Rosenort farm. The older siblings wanted places of their own also. The crops the brothers seeded that year looked

good, but then the fall rains came. It rained and rained. By the time something could be salvaged, 50 % of the stooks had sprouted. That long wet fall John decided to remedy his own situation, why should two people be so lonely and far apart! Besides, travelling to Steinbach was expensive and time consuming especially in that mud! John and Aganetha got married and moved into the farmstead, in Nov., 1926.

Those following winter months, father Henry decided it would be in everyone's interest to sell the farm for a good price, and all move to another farm closer to the Steinbach area. It would bring the family unit closer together again, besides everyone's partner seemed to have come from that vicinity anyway. So, N.W. 8-6-1 East was sold to Jac D. Rempel, also a newly married man looking for a place to raise his family. Prices of land had gone up considerably from the day Henry bought it from the Hudson's Bay Co., but by now there were adequate buildings on the place, and all but 15 acres had been cleared. With this transaction an interesting foundation was laid for the future generations. A Rempel son would marry a Warkentin daughter and live in the original house (still in marvelous condition) built by grandpa Henry. Which speaks well for the type of houses built in those days, and giving rich history to the family living in it now.

John and Aganetha rented a farm close to Steinbach, which is the Mitchell District today. After renting for a while, he decided to buy his own farm at Giroux. There followed 7 years of mixed farming, hard work, and little success. These were now depression times and it was a daily goal to provide for a growing family. There came a day on that farm in Giroux, when a cow ate John's one and only cap, liking the salty taste of long use, that he knew it was time to make a drastic move again. After all, caps cost money too!

With his family of 5 children, they moved to McTavish and John started driving truck for Loewen Transfer in Rosenhoff. They'd live wherever houses were available, each time closer to his places of work. At one time he had

to walk 5 miles to get to work, often daily. If weather got too drastic he'd stay overnight at the boss' house.

After a few years of country driving, they moved into Morris town, where John drove for Morris Transfer. When the opportunity came, some years later, he went into partnership with John U. Kornelsen and bought Rosenort Transfer. Times had modernized by now, roads improved, yet not gravelled, and hauling business was in great demand. In those days transfers were dependant on farmers and agricultural development, and the economy was flourishing. Livestock hauling was an important part of the business. John recounts countless vivid encounters with angry bulls, stubborn sows, prancing horses, and crates of chickens that had to be caught in the coops. Much physical work went into the job, plus frustrations of muddy roads where tractors or horses were often used to haul the loaded trucks through rough spots.

Times were prosperous until the 1950 flood which disrupted business badly. Most livestock was gone, roads and bridges not readily repaired and trucks damaged by flood servicing. John's own house was inundated and declared unfit for further use. Their family had grown to 11 children by now, so something had to be done. Getting a good offer for their business they decided to sell out. John went into a freelance, private delivery service for a number of years.

In the meantime they bought an older 2 storey house and moved it on to a new basement. Among the tall trees, and above flood level (as was proven in the 1979 flood) it still is in use today, still a striking looking building.

After a few years John was offered a job as maintainer operator for the Rural Munc. of Morris. John loved this work and stayed at it for 13 years. One morning while preparing his machine in the usual manner, his fingers got caught and he mangled his hand quite badly. He lost half a finger, crippled up 2 others and was off work for 3 months.

That they both love old heirlooms, buildings, etc. is evident. Their house itself is 70 years old but in



*Mr. and Mrs. John F. Warkentin on their 50th wedding anniversary in 1976.*



*John F. Warkentin, Maintainer operator for R.M. of Morris.*

restored shape, their lot is the spot where once stood the old village grist mill and the community blacksmith shop. An old fashioned log building called an icehouse, covered in creeper ivy in summer is a desired spot for picture taking. An original smokehouse still stands on the yard.

John and Aganetha have a stockpile of experiences and memories and they find it rewarding that they can retell many of these for the publication of this book.

A footnote can be added. For the third time now they have had to evacuate their home due to a major flood.



*John F. Warkentin family in 1976.*

They were gone for over a month in spring 1979, but could come back to a dry home, even the basement was clear.

*Daughter Lillian*, married Levi Kroeker.

*Daughter Eleanor*, married John Rempel of Rosenort and are living in the original Warkentin homestead, in the same house. Mixed farming. They have 4 children, one having passed away in infancy. Mildred, now married to Bob Elliott, Reginald and Pamela.

*Daughter Hilda*, married to Art Schwarz of Kleefeld, Man. They have 4 children, one passing away in infancy. Kathy is now married to Con Isaac, Kurt, and Kristine. Art and son-in-law both successful apiarists. They have one granddaughter.

*Daughter Eva*, married to Henry K. Kroeker, Prominent businessman, and farmer, living in Morris. They have 6 children, Bruce married to Clarice Dueck, Bob married to Pat Klassen, Sherri married to Ron Hildebrand, Tim, Laurie, Valerie.

*Daughter Rose*, now Mrs. Art Cornelson living in Rosenort. Mixed farming and carpentry are Art's successful livelihood. They have 1 son and 2 daughters, Cam, Lynette and Arlene.

*Daughter Margaret*, married Walter Sawatsky of Wpg. For the last years they've been working for the MCC, in England and now in Germany. They have 1 daughter Natasha, and 1 son Alexander.

*Son John*, is a school teacher, married to a school teacher, Selma Peters from Ste. Elizabeth. They have 4 sons and 1 daughter. Janet, Stuart, twins Douglas and Kenneth, and Gregory. John got his education in Rosenort schools. Graduating from its collegiate. He has taught in different schools in Manitoba, at present living in Melita and teaching in the town's collegiate.

*Son Jake*, the second son to become a teacher. Married a girl Betty Geary from Mafeking, Man., also a teacher. Jake also graduated from the Rosenort Collegiate. At

present teaching in Birch River living there with his family, son Trevor, daughter Leza.

*Daughter Nita*, got married to Walter Dueck, Morris. Was a teacher in the Rosenort Elem. School, but now living and teaching in Rossburn, Man. They have a son, Christopher and daughter Tanya.

*Daughter Pearl* married to Larry Friesen, Riverside, a local young farmer. Have switched profession to missionary work, at present in language school in Texas. They have 2 children, Chad and Tannis. Their mission field is in Mexico.

## VICTOR WARKENTIN

I was raised in the community of Rosenort and am the oldest son of John and Aganetha Warkentin. This is where I received my elementary training and at the age of about 16, I started my first job in the electrical field, with Rosenort Electric, for whom I worked for approximately two years. In October, 1956, I had a tragic accident, which helped me decide that trucking wasn't for me, so in a week, I was employed by Penner Electric in Steinbach. I was signed up as an apprentice and received my training while working for them. During my six and a half years in Steinbach, a lot of things happened in my life. I became a qualified, licensed electrician, and the best of all, discovered that Betty's Grocery at the north end of town had several beautiful daughters. So I went to investigate for myself and found it to be so.



*Victor Warkentin family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Gwen, Wendy, Vic. FRONT ROW: Kevin, Marcia, Bradley.*

The second oldest, Wendy, was willing to develop a friendship with me, and later accepted my proposal for marriage. Her parents are J. Art Regiers, now living in Chase, B.C.

The Lord blessed us with two daughters and two sons. Our oldest son pre-deceased us in July 1976, by drowning in the Morris-Riverside community.

Spring of 1963, we decided to move to Rosenort to start up a business, which we named Lite Rite Electric. Our business consisted of residential, industrial and commercial wiring. We also sold the G.E. line of appliances. We purchased the former credit union building and for a warehouse we somehow got hold of the very first credit union building. Our business was growing to a point where we had to either go bigger or quit. I received an opportunity from Holding Lumber, Adams Lake,

B.C. to go as a maintenance electrician for their operation. So in April, 1969, we found ourselves packed up and on our way to B.C.

We now own our own place in Chase, and the children are receiving their education there also.

## **PETER FRIESEN WARKENTINE (1906-1977)**

Peter Friesen Warkentine was born at Rosenort, Manitoba, on September 11, 1906, the youngest child of Henry and Mary Warkentine. His mother died when he was 16.

Peter grew up at Rosenort, receiving his early education in the private school. He, along with his buddy, Cornie K. Loewen, also attended the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, for part of Grade IX. Peter withdrew, due to lack of funds.

At the early age, Peter began working outside his home community. One trip took him, Jac D. Friesen, Peter K. Loewen and Peter J. Dueck, to Kansas, to work on the farms there during the harvest. He and Cornie K. Loewen also "rode the rails" during the Depression, in search of employment. In later life, he often expressed regret that he had not obtained more education and became a teacher. Peter also worked for Henry D. Brandt and Jac R. Klassen in his early life.

Peter enjoyed playing the guitar and violin until he badly cut his finger while sawing wood.

Peter met Helena Kroeker while he was working at Peter K. Loewens. It seems he enjoyed visiting with Connie Loewen. Apparently, a birthday party was planned at Klaus Friesen's for Peter, to which Helena was invited. Needless to say, a romance developed, and on July 17, 1938, Peter and Helena were married by Helen's father, Rev. Jacob B. Kroeker. The service took place after a regular Sunday morning service at the local Evangelical Mennonite Church. The couple and their guests went to the bride's home for dinner and then greeted more guests during faspas, outside under the trees.

Peter and Helena lived with Peter K. Loewens at McTavish for a short time. Their first home was a small house located between the present homes of Peter Issac and Ed Klassen at McTavish. There, two sons were born: Donald (1939) and Elmer (1943). In 1944, Peter began construction of a home closer to Rosenort, on land given to them by Helena's parents. In 1946, Wilbert arrived during an early harvest.

The flood of 1950 was a time of both hardship and blessing. Helena was expecting a baby any day. In order to get her to the hospital, the car had to be towed into Morris. Peter, at home with three young sons, watched the rising waters. On May 1, a daughter, Lena, joined the Peter Warkentine family amid all the turmoil and excitement of a flood. A few days later, Lena and her mother were evacuated to Winnipeg General Hospital on one of the last trains to make its way through the murky waters. The rest of the family was evacuated shortly afterward. They lived first at Giroux, with Henry F. Warkentines and later with Peter C.L. Penners. The

family was able to return to their home on June 10, to begin the long clean up job. Since no crop was planted that year, Peter worked at carpentry in the city to pull his family through the winter. In 1952, a fourth son, Larry was born.

Peter drove school bus for many years. Other than this, he made his living primarily from farming. Peter farmed until 1974, when he and Helena moved into Rosenort, leaving the farm place to Donald. Peter went to be with his Lord on August 3, 1977, after several years of failing health.

Today, Helena lives in Rosenort. The farm is the home of Wilbert and Lynn-Marie (nee Barron), while the rest of the children are scattered around the world. Donald and Adeline (nee Dueck) farm near Swan River; Elmer and Elvira (nee Dueck) serve with Sudan Interior Mission in Nigeria; Larry and Irene (nee Campbell) work in Regina; Lena is in Winnipeg.



*John W. Dueck at age 21.*



*John W. Dueck in winter of 1929 in his latter years.*

## **FAMILY HISTORY OF JOHN W. DUECK**

*by Lorraine Loewen*

Mr. John W. Dueck arrived in Gruenfeld, Manitoba from South Russia, in 1875 as a nine year old lad, travelling by boat with his parents, the Peter L. Duecks, brother Peter and five sisters.

Ironically, one of his first jobs was that of a store clerk with the firm K. Reimer and Sons of Steinbach. Upon his marriage to Marie K. Kroeker, a daughter of Elder J.M. Kroeker, (of Rosenhoff) he moved to the village of Rosenhoff, where he resided the rest of his life, raising a family of six sons and five daughters - Mary (Mrs. G.B. Kornelson), Jacob K. and wife Elizabeth Plett, Susanna (Mrs. A.P. Plett), John K. and wife Bertha Schellenberg, Peter K. and wife Annie Schellenberg, Ben K. and wife Margaret Klassen, David K. and wife Elizabeth Friesen Frank K. and wife Mary Harms, Elizabeth (Mrs. J.K. Friesen), Agnes (Mrs. Henry F. Friesen, and Margaret (Mrs. P.U. Dueck).

Mr. Dueck was very active in the community, teaching school in the Rosenhoff area for 17 years and in Rosenort for 3 years. He also took the responsibility of being a song-leader in the church. An extra job was that of being an auctioneer; he sold many a farm and household goods of those who moved away.

It was during this time that he must have had the urge to make an even better life for his family, so grandfather

made the decision to start a rural country store in the year 1913. Another reason could easily have been that having a large family would prove very beneficial in getting some help out of each of his eleven children. Mary, the oldest, was taught quickly to be a clerk and to do most of the ordering.

The first building was just an old car shed lined with planks of wood on egg crates, serving as shelves. Within the next two years, the Duecks remodelled and the building expended to approximately 44 feet long and 22 feet wide. Business was booming! Some days, more than \$100.00 worth was sold and that amounted to a lot of customers, with coffee going for 50c a pound, 15C a tin for salmon, and 15C a yard for material. Soda biscuits and Carbol ointment were necessities having to do with the midwives' duties! Groceries were brought in by Mr. Dueck's Model T. truck for the first few years until arrangements were made with the P.T. Kroeker transfer around 1920.

The little country store was very well known for miles around and many an afternoon was spent visiting and catching up on all the latest news. It has been said that Mr. Dueck had a good sense of humor in that when asked for fresh cheese, he would say, "Yes, I have some" - then when asked for old cheese, he would also answer in the affirmative! One little thing his customers were *not* aware of was that they were all buying cheese off the same block, after all, it was *fresh, old, cheese!*

Nostalgic memories date back to the 15 years J.W. Dueck and Company operated the store - open jars of candy, bolts of material, and everything imaginable in the line of horse harnesses; truly it was a department store.

Needless to say, the country store was well accepted in the community; prior to this, many of the Rosenhoffers had to travel over two miles to the nearest store.



*John W. Dueck in front of his store in Rosenhoff.*

The Dueck family also has had the reputation of enjoying many hours of singing in their home, as someone who was a visitor there, recalls Mr. Dueck shouting up the stairs, asking them to keep on singing or repeating the song they had just finished.

By the year 1916, many of the family members were beginning to get married. Undaunted by numbers, there was always room for another married couple to move into the large homestead and always a lot of work for



*Family of John W. Dueck in their lovely garden in 1930.*

each to do. Almost every couple spent the first part of their married life living at home, until other arrangements could be made. Strangely enough, not one of the Dueck's sons took over the store and many decided to make farming their livelihood. The store was rented out and later sold to become the present Riverside Co-Op; prior to Mr. Dueck's death in June 1, 1932. His wife died on December 14, 1939.



*Peter K. Dueck's new model "4-90" Chevrolet, parked at the corner of the Rosenhoff school, where he taught. Mrs. Dueck and baby seated in front.*

My parents, the John K. Duecks, ventured out on their own after a few years on the homestead. At that time, living approximately four miles from your original home seemed very far away indeed and I can recall my mother telling us how lonesome they had been at first. Tragically, their first two children died at birth or shortly after. Then came Johnny, Eleanor, (Mrs. Dick Zacharias), Helen (Mrs. Abe Loewen), Gladys (Mrs. John Thiessen), Ralph, Lorraine (Mrs. Lorne Loewen) and approximately ten years later, Stanley. The family has grown too, with 22 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.

My parents, along with more than half of the original John W. Dueck family, have passed away, leaving behind a rich heritage and one to be justly proud of!

## JACOB K. DUECK

The oldest son of the John W. Duecks of Rosenhoff, was Jacob, born October 31, 1896. He married Elisabeth Plett, of Giroux, on November 11, 1923.

They lived on a farm seven miles northwest of Morris until retirement. As a young father, he would cycle to work in the neighbourhood, laboring for under 204c an hour.



*Jacob K. Dueck, tackling a new basement for a new house in 1946. Son, Edwin, is on the tractor.*

As the family grew and times became easier, mixed farming became their main objective. With two of his sons, Wilbert and Alfred, they became one of the leading custom balers of the municipality from 1955-1965. Also during these years, Mrs. Dueck became one of the foremost strawberry producers of the district, selling up to 100 pounds a day.



*Neighbors, Jacob K. Dueck with George and Elmer Siemens, making feed.*

Mr. Dueck was a hard working man, which was halted by a stroke in 1968, and a subsequent heart failure in 1969. He died suddenly on February 2, 1971, in his home.

Their oldest daughter, Elma, married Levi Dueck on August 2, 1963. They have specialized in the sow farrowing operation, besides grain farming. They have two children - Lorna and Timmy.

The other 3 daughters were not married. Helen has worked in the Morris Hospital since 1962, now employed in the kitchen. She lives with her mother.

Mary and Norma both work in Winnipeg. Mary is a nurse's aid in the Children's Hospital, while Norma is in the Grace Hospital as a practical nurse. Though the sisters room in Winnipeg, they live with Mother on days off.

Leonard, the eldest son, married Linda Friesen, daughter of Henry R. Friesen, Sr., Morris, on June 8, 1952. They moved to Riverton that same year, where they farm. They have seven children, one of whom (Leroy) was instantly killed in an accident in 1978.

Edwin and Wilbert started a joint rafter business on their parents' farm in 1959. Since then, they have increased substantially to a lumber business, extensive rafter sales and are well known arched building specialists. They both have a farm. Ed married Elsie Loewen, daughter of John B. Loewen, Morris, on October 6, 1957. They have 3 girls, Brenda, Laurie and Karen.

Wilbert married Lena, daughter of Peter J.K. Loewen, on May 29, 1960. They have 3 girls - Wendy, Valorie, Clarice, and 2 boys - Gerald and Jason.

Alfred, the youngest son, bought the family farm in 1974, after deciding to marry Marjorie Penner, of Kane on June 29, 1974. This prompted his mother and sisters to build a new house, close to Rosenort. Alfred is working for his brothers in the building business. They have a daughter, Tanya, and a son, Shannon.

## ALFRED DUECK

Alfred Dueck attended the Clover Plain School for his elementary grades. As was custom those days, he helped his parents on the farm after his initial schooling. Later on, he obtained Grade XII through correspondence.

He has been extensively involved in writing poetry; most has been published in different magazines. Recently, he published Poetic Portraits, which contains all his own compositions.

Besides grain farming, he has been employed at Dueck's Rafters for some 18 years. This also triggered his ambition to follow an outlet to built garden products. In 1977, he started off his new venture of his own. Though he expected it to be just a hobby, he suddenly found it to take up much of his home work. Wishing wells, patio tables and arched bridges were built Saturdays and evenings. His wife has helped him a lot with finishes to the products. Most furniture goes to Winnipeg, parks and display centres. Recently, he built a 30 foot arched bridge for Lower Fort Gary.

## JOHN K. DUECK

*submitted by Mrs. Helen Loewen and Mrs. Lorraine Loewen*

John K. Dueck was born in Rosenhoff on April 5, 1901, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Dueck. He attended a private school where his father taught him through Elementary School. Since his father promoted education, John continued to study for a year at Gretna M.C.1. His life at home was busy and he spent a lot of time helping in his father's local store. He was baptised on October 9, 1923 and accepted into the E.M.C. (then Kleingemeinde) church.





*Homestead of John K. Dueck.*

On November 4, 1923 he was united in marriage to Bertha Schellenberg by the late Rev. John K. Friesen. They settled on a farm 5 miles west of Rosenhoff. Dad was a farmer by trade and enjoyed both livestock and grain farming. Besides this he did custom brush breaking in the North with his TD9 caterpillar - a rare tractor in those days. He also purchased a gravel truck to do private hauling, which his oldest son, Johnny took over later on.

He was interested in community affairs and carried on the faith of his forefathers. He prompted "Jugenferien" and other spiritual rallies.

The 1950 flood proved to be a highlight in his life. The location of his farm served as a "boat dock" for communication between Rosenort and Lowe Farm. His home was opened to the weary, wet and worn flood victims and workers. Hundreds of meals were served and a comfortable nights rest was provided if necessary.



*The Melvin Dueck family, 1978. BACK ROW: Kenton, Rhonda, Cindy and Delbert Fast, Melvin, Anne. FRONT ROW: Jodi, Linda, Reg,*

## THE MELVIN DUECK FAMILY

Melvin and I, Anne Kehler, (daughter of the Abram Kehlrs from Lowe Farm) met when I was cashier in the Steinbach "P.B. Reimer and Son" Dept. Store, where he as a Bible student, bought groceries for the dormitory. The following two years I worked as a clerk typist for the Royal Exchange Assurance in Winnipeg, and Melvin graduated from the Steinbach Bible Institute. We were married Sept. 24th, 1955.

Melvin's father, Peter K. Dueck, passed away the following summer, June 5th, 1956, and our first baby, Cynthia was born Oct. 14th, the same year.

For the next three winters we did mission work at Woodlands, Man. - teaching Sunday School, Bible Clubs, holding Worship Services, etc. - a tremendous experience. We moved back to the farm for seeding and harvest, but continued the Sunday School during the summer, driving back and forth. We lived in a small bungalow on mother's yard, for the first eleven years. Melvin also farmed his mother's land. Right after the 1966 flood, we purchased the home place, where we are living at present.

In October 1958, Melvin was ordained into the ministry and two weeks later, again on the 14th of October, Reginald Melvin was born. Rhonda Joy came to join us April 7th, 1962, and Kenton Ross April 21st, 1965. during this time Melvin served as a minister in the Rosenort E.M.C.

Just before Kenton was born, Melvin was in the Misericordia Hospital for three months, with gall bladder operation, and major complications. He was on the



*John K. Dueck beside his '38 Olds.*

Dad invented the Harrow King, which became successful in the sales market. He patented it and it was manufactured by Westfield Industries. After his death, the patent was sold to the company.

He had 9 children, two of whom died in infancy. They are: Johnny and his wife Elsie Miller, Eleanor and her husband Dick Zacharias, Helen and her husband Abe Loewen, Gladys and her husband John Thiessen, Ralph Dueck, Lorraine and her husband Lorne Loewen, Stan and his wife Delorese Clement. In all he had 24 grandchildren, 2 of whom predeceased him. To date there are 11 great-grandchildren.

Dad died on May 1, 1971, thirteen years after Mom had passed away. He reached the age of 70 years.

critical list, until he was finally healed (a definite answer to prayer) at the end of April.

Although Melvin was a farmer and also a part-time plumber, he was the first pastor of the Rosenort Fellowship Chapel (from Oct. 1968-1975), when his health again failed rapidly. After many tests, x-rays and liver biopsies, the diagnosis was a chronic liver disease and chronic ulcerative colitis. During the next three years he had three major operations, resulting in a permanent ileostomy.

Jodi Rene was born on Sept. 12th, 1973.

Due to a broken back last summer, in addition to Melvin's previous health problems, we have now rented out our land and Melvin is at present starting into small time manufacturing. He is doing a variety of door hardware latches, door sealers, closing devices and door bolts, etc.

Our oldest daughter, Cindy, a secretary and organ teacher, married Delbert Fast, son of the Tony Fast (our neighbours) on May 21st, 1976. Del has his diesel mechanics license, and is employed at Rosenort Motors while Cindy is the secretary at the same place of business. Del is also the Young Peoples' leader in our church at present.

Reginald (Reg) married Linda Robert, daughter of the Sylvaine Roberts of Morris, April 1st, 1978. Reg is a welder at Westfield Industries in Rosenort, and Linda a clerk and cashier at the Rosenort Co-op.

Rhonda is a Gr. XI, Kent in Gr. VIII and Jodi in Kindergarten.

## JOHN B. THIESSEN

John B. Thiessen was born in Nebraska, U.S.A. in 1883, moving to Steinbach when he was just five years old. There, he received his education and was married to Marie Reimer in 1915. A daughter, Marie, was born to them in 1916, but tragedy befell the family when Mrs. Thiessen died that same year. Daughter, Marie, now Mrs. Pete Hiebert of Mexico, has three children.

Four years later, Mr. Thiessen remarried. He and Elizabeth Loewen made their home at Rosenort, where they spent their lives engaged in farming. Seven children were born to them: Helen, Tina, Annie, Peter, John and Abe. Susie, who was born in 1934, passed away at the age of two, due to pneumonia.



*The John B. Thiessen family.*

Tina married John Bartel of Meade, Kansas, in 1952. They resided in Rosenort until April, 1960, when they moved to Kansas. They have two children, Laurence and Arlene.

Annie married Ben Reimer, also of Meade, Kansas in 1956. They and their three children, Bruce, Ethel and Doyle, make their home in Kansas.

John Thiessen married Gladys Dueck in 1952. They have made their home in Rosenort, where John has established his own business - Rosenort Motors. John and Gladys have recently built a new home and new business premises both in Rosenort. Five children were born to them: Terry, Mark, Gayle, Pam and Michelle. Terilyn was married to Jim Eidse. They make their home in Edmonton, Alberta, with their two children. Mark is engaged in business with his father. Gayle is employed in Edmonton. Pam and Michelle are at home.

Abe Thiessen married Adella Eidse in 1954. They reside in Rosenort where Abe is engaged in trucking and farming. Adella is a nurse at the Morris Hospital. They have five children; Dwayne, Jenny, Rebecca, Barbara and Joseph. Dwayne married Debra Ladobruk in 1976, they reside in Winnipeg. Jennifer married Orville Kehler in 1975. They live in Rosenort with their two sons. Rebecca became Mrs. Ray Friesen of Steinbach in August, 1979. Barbara, an accomplished pianist, and Joe, an avid cyclist, are at home.

Helen and Pete, who remained single, lived with Mrs. Thiessen on the farmstead at S.E. 114 31-5-1 East. Mrs. Thiessen passed away in 1963. Pete has farmed in the district throughout his lifetime.



*The young Dave Enns on his Dave was well known for his motorcycle. musical abilities.*

## DAVID T. ENNS

Travelling Salesman and Sign Painter. Dave was born at Rosenort, Feb. 15, 1889 to Mr. and Mrs. Henry Enns, a member of a family of six. He worked on the farm in his younger years, during which time he became interested in music. His dad, a school teacher, noticed this desire and bought him a violin (fiddle) which added a lot of enjoyment in Dave's life, as well as for his many acquaintances, whom he entertained. He used to listen to the good old music box, the Edison gramophone, and

copied many a good old tune from its records. One of his favorite songs (some 20 verses) "The Irish Jubilee" still lingers in his memory and he can sing all verses by memory and without a hitch. He also can play the mouth organ and flute plus the jews harp.

His selling career started in 1919 when he went on the road to take orders for Neal Bros. groceries. This trade brought him in close touch with the people in the area and he was well known for miles around. In 1927 he became the Champion "Coffee Salesman" of the three western provinces. A contest sponsored by Neal Bros. made David T. really hustle, and in a 10 week period he sold 2,500 lbs. of coffee. At that time coffee sold at 60 cents a pound.

He also sold made-to-measure men's suits for Rex Tailoring Co. and from 1926 to 1942 draped 496 satisfied customers with well fitted suits, at an average cost of \$30.00 per suit.

Water-less Cookers was another line of merchandise salesman Dave peddled, selling some 150 cookers. He would give his sale pitch in his very friendly way, and many a time, stayed for the meal prepared by his customer. "Sure cut down on the food bill", he remarked.

"Sign Painter Dave" they called him in them thar days. His lettering has graced the walls of many business places, trucks, sign boards, caps and hats, etc. To this day there are still various signs in evidence, bearing his trademark.

A gifted person in more ways than one, he was a very well recognized Horse Shoe player. With his "hop, skip and a jump" delivery, he won many a game and enjoyed it immensely.

At this rip old age of 90, Dave keeps in touch with the times in closely following the news and sports on his radio. Although his eyesight is failing, he still walks up town from his present home in the Red River Valley Lodge. One can truly say of him - "Dave was my name, selling was my game."



*The beginning of the grain auger business at Rosenort. Here, Abram Plett with Oliver and Olga, prepares to deliver a load of augers in 1960.*

## **A.D. PLETT** **"Inventor"**

A.D. Plett, founder and former owner of Westfield Industries, was probably not as well known as many inventors, because he spent all his energy at inventing and very little promoting his inventions. Many of his inventions were later duplicated by others who went on to make fortunes with them.

The Rosenort inventor was born and raised at Steinbach, and he inherited his talent naturally from his father, the late Isaac **B.** Plett. Among his father's inventions were the first self feeder for threshing machines, and a helicopter. A brother, Isaac D. Plett, of Steinbach, was also an inventor in his own right.

Abram, his wife, Martha, and young family moved to Rosenort in 1932, where he assumed the position of manager of the Rosenort Co-Op store. "When we got there, it was the only building standing on the open prairie", Abram recalled. He was the manager for 10 years, until he decided to manufacture his inventions.

During the war, they were the only firm in all of Canada that was manufacturing wash machines. The other places all had contracts for war materials. Finally production had to stop because of a shortage of steel.



*Plett Industries manufacturing manually operated Victory washing machines during the war. Up to 50 were made at one time, and then shipped to all parts of the country.*



*Son, Stanley, in washing machine in assembly line.*

Mr. Plett headed his own firm, "Plett Enterprises", which existed solely to administer the patent rights and franchises on the various inventions of A.D. Plett. Many of these patents were leased out to large manufacturing firms in Canada and U.S., where they were being produced in mass quantities.

As long ago as 1918, Abram Plett invented a switch for cars. In 1928, he invented turn signals, a device which came into use only much later. Altogether, Mr. Plett lists a total of some 200 items for which he can claim the invention rights. Among them is a whole suitcase full of toys, some of which were patented and sold.

The prerequisite for a successful toy, Mr. Plett felt, was color, action and noise. Upon displaying his menagerie of toys at a show, two American toy manufacturers showed a great interest in them. It is possible that a toy your child may be playing with in the future, could have come from the inventive mind of Abram Plett.

In 1967, Mr. Plett attended the First International Inventors' Exhibition in the New York Coliseum. Since they were allowed to show only one invention, he displayed the 2' x 3' model of the "Camp-o-Matic" trailer he designed. He not only won a gold merit award for design (it was his third award) but had many manufacturers inquiring as to other inventions.



*A .D. Plett received two design awards for this camp-o-matic.*

Mr. and Mrs. Plett have eight children living. Their four sons, Frank, Stan, Oliver and Benjamin, the present owners of Westfield Industries all reside in Rosenort with their families. Daughter, Georgianna, is Mrs. Ted Friesen of Rosenort. Daughter, Virginia, is Mrs. Ed Reimer of B.C. Olga, Mrs. Pete Martin of Sask. and Leona, Mrs. Ed. Friesen of Mexico.

Mr. Plett passed away in 1975. Mrs. Plett still resides in the village of Rosenort, to which she and Abram came in 1932.

## DICK ZACHARIAS

Dick Zacharias was born in the Altona District, into a family of five brothers and four sisters, the children of the Peter P. Zacharias'.

It was April 1942 when Dick first appeared in the municipality of Morris, when he started working in the cheese factory in Riverside. During his three year stay here, he met Eleanor, daughter of the John K. Dueck's, and she became his bride in November 1946.

Work in the cheese factory in those days was all done manually; and Dick recalls the labour involved in making those 100 lb. cheeses.

In addition to working in the Riverside factory, Dick was also employed in Arnaud for a year, and three years in Rhineland cheese factory. During that time, son Richard was born (1948) in Winkler. The following year, they moved to Morris.

If working in a cheese factory was hard, shovelling gravel to make cement was even harder; as Dick discovered, as he took employment with Hoffman Construction in Morris. In 1949, Wesley was born; but the family lost him to a tragic accident when he was only thirteen. Brenda was born in 1954, followed by Lloyd in 1956. It was that same year that Dick left the employ of Hoffman Const. and started out on his own.

In 1959, son Kelvin was born, and two years later, the family decided to move to the country, purchasing the G.W. Siemens farm. 1965 was an eventful year, when daughter Shanna was born; and the founding of Rosenort Concrete Products Ltd., just 112 mile south of Rosenort. Two years later, the family home was moved to a site just south of the plant. The last addition to the family, a daughter, Holly, arrived in 1969.

Richard married Donna Thiessen in 1968; they have three children, Chris, Marshall, and Tara. Brenda married Norman Thiessen in 1972, they have two children, Rene and Rochelle. In 1977, Lloyd married Lorna Ladabruk. At the time of this writing, Rick and Donna are expecting their fourth child, and Kelvin is engaged to be married to Sue Reimer in June 1979.

Presently, all the children are associated with the family business.



*Mr. and Mrs. P. U. Brandt at their retirement home in 1965.*

## P.U. BRANDT

*submitted by Helen Friesen*

On May 5, 1914 as a young man of eighteen, our Dad, Peter U. Brandt came from Steinbach, where he grew up. He joined his older brother George, who had come a year earlier, working as a carpenter. During the next several years they were busy building numerous farm buildings and homes. Most of which are still occupied today.

The first three years Dad boarded at the Abram K. Eidses, where he was made to feel very much at home. When going home for weekends, he travelled by bicycle the forty miles. In 1917, his brother George built a shed 14' by 24' for the purpose of doing carpentry work in winter, such as making window and door frames and

building cabinets. In this building Dad built a partition at one end 8' by 14' which became his living quarters for the next year or two. Later, when his younger brothers John and Abram joined him, it got to be quite crowded.

In the winter of 1918-1919, the Spanish 'flu scourged this area, leaving tragedy in its wake. It caused many deaths. Since Dad was one of those who did not catch the 'flu, he was kept very busy in the cold of winter looking after livestock for some of the farmers who were sick. When at night he would return to his quarters for supper, instead of getting a hot meal at the end of a weary day, he would find all his food frozen because he had no one to keep the fire going in his tiny cookstove. The family his brother George married into, lost four members between Jan. 5 and 15th including George's young wife. It was an unforgettable experience for Dad to take the four coffins to the graveyard in his sleigh, over a month later, when the survivors had recovered sufficiently to hold the funeral.

In the fall of 1919, Dad moved back with the Abram Eidses. That year he bought 160 acres of land near McTavish at \$65.00 an acre, from John Reid. Later when

would move into an old house adjoining their land. While they were on the farm, John, their first-born who was about one and a half years old, became very sick with convulsions. Having no phone, and the closest neighbors being almost a mile away, the only means of getting help was to drive with horse and buggy to the nearest phone. Mother did this, rather then stay with her sick child who she felt might die at any minute. To her dismay the neighbors were not at home. Their good watch-dog would not allow her to enter the house, so she had to drive another mile and a half to the other neighbors.



*Brandt's first residence on the farm in 1929. LEFT TO RIGHT: Elizabeth Brandt, Elizabeth Brandt, Elizabeth Rempel, John Brandt, Justine Brandt.*



*Carpentry gang, 1920. LEFT TO RIGHT: P. U. Brandt, John A. Dueck, P. T. Wrens, George Bartel, Henry T. Enns.*

hard times came including crop failures, he found it difficult to keep up the land payments.

In 1920 Dad and his carpenter crew built the first Rosenort Kleingemeinde church. Quite appropriately, he and his twenty-one year old bride, Agnetha Loewen, were the first ones to be married in the new church on a balmy spring morning in March, 1921. Dad's entire family came for this happy occasion, all the way from Steinbach. The young couple moved into a small house across the road from Mother's parents, the John D. Loewens.

Mother had a good start as a housekeeper and babysitter. She was only six years when she started spending the summer months at her sister's place, looking after her children while her sister helped with the field work. At the age of fourteen, she was left to care for a household when her Mother passed away. She was happy to receive a second Mother when her Father remarried a year later.

The first five years after they were married, our parents lived in the village except for the harvest time when they

Fortunately, by the time she got back, Dad was able to report that the baby had recovered from the attack.

They had another difficult time in spring of the following year. After making her garden on the farm, Mother went back home with the horse and buggy and got badly chilled. This developed into double pneumonia. She was delirious for nine days. Dr. Ross came to see her almost every day, but could give no hope of her recovery. During this time, their second child Justina, who was



*New 1925 Ford car won by P. U. Brandt.*

about 6 weeks old, had to be fed with an eyedropper. The Lord graciously restored Mother's health at that time.

In October, 1925, the Ford Motor Company blockman and Mr. Swain, who had the Ford dealership in Morris, approached Dad about entering a "Ford Farmers' Contest" in which any farmer in Manitoba selling the most Ford cars or Fordsons till the end of December, received a new car as a prize. With some encouragement from local farmers, Dad entered the contest. Prior to this, Dad had already sold a few Fordsons, and that year before Christmas he sold sixteen more, plus three new



*Mr. P. U. Brandt in 1914.*

cars. It was a very wet fall and the farmers did not get their field work done before freeze-up, so they were forced to look for a more efficient means than horses to work their land in spring. This was the reason why tractors were selling so well. After the contest ended, Dad was notified by phone that he had won first prize - a four-door sedan with Ruxtell axle, and also an Oliver cultivator. The car was brought to Morris by the Ford people who then presented him with the registration papers and 1926 license plates. They had a parade down the streets of Morris with a number of new Ford cars and Fordsons in the procession.

Dad continued to be a sub-dealer for Swains. He sold Fordsons for a price of \$535.00, tires, service parts, as well as Oliver two-bottom plows, and a few Case threshing machines. Sometimes he got the Fordsons from the Ford assembly plant in Winnipeg. They were located west on Portage Avenue and Dad recalls driving through pasture and bush, trying to avoid travelling through city streets with the equipment. He kept his business for about ten years but continued to service the Fordsons he sold for number of years after this.

In 1926 Dad built a house on the farm near McTavish, into which they moved with their three small children. It was a two-storey house. 16' by 26', and eventually it got to be too small as the family grew. In 1941, they built a larger house which is now occupied by their youngest son, Paul, and his family. In 1962 our parents retired and



*Brandt home on the farm near McTavish in 1941.*

moved to the village.

Eleven children were born into the family, namely: John, Justina, Elizabeth, Levi, Helen, Eddie, Paul, Alice, Loreen, Leona, and Benny, who died in infancy. During our growing-up years, Dad was called upon to serve in various committees and boards, such as: school board, fire insurance board, store board, administrator, and others. In the war years he also assisted the "C.O."s which meant on occasion, he had to go to Winnipeg four times in one week for hearings. This left the responsibility of raising the family up to Mother to a certain extent.

John who is a carpenter, was the first one to leave home and marry. He married Katie Laible of Fork River and they are living in B.C. They have one son and four daughters. Justina has gone to Mexico as a dental missionary, serving there for the past twenty-two years. About two years ago she adopted a little girl. Elizabeth and her husband Peter Loewen, also reside in Mexico, where they are farming and Peter is a minister in the Kleingemeinde church. They have five children.

Levi started an oil business in Rosenort in 1949. He sold the business in 1978 and is now manager and part owner of Rosenort Agro. Ltd. Levi married Brunhilda Miller, also of Rosenort; they have a family of three boys and four girls. Lucille is married to Elmer Eidse and living at Regina, Rudy is in Edmonton and his twin sister, Rhonda, is married to Lloyd Friesen. Charles, who married Luella Friesen is in business with his Dad and he and his wife live in Rosenort. Phyllis working in Winnipeg, is married to Jim Kehler of Lowe Farm. The youngest two, Pollie and Russel are at home.

Helen married Bill Friesen, and they are farming in the Morris area. They have four sons. Eddie and his wife Violet (nee Eidse) and their family of eight children are living in Arborg, where they are farming. Paul is married to Myrtle Eidse. He is farming and in the trucking business. Murray, their oldest son is married to Muriel Toews and living on the former Clover Plain School lot. He is also farming and in the trucking business with his Dad. Their other children, all at home are: Bill, Patsy, Kerry, Tracy, Vicki, and Angeline.

Alice married Ed Siemens; they moved to Roseisle in 1966. They have two sons and two daughters. Loreen and her husband Jack Siemens are farming in the Rosenort area. Their family consists of four boys and one girl. Leona and her husband Henry Dueck have also moved to Roseisle where they have a farm. They have three daughters.

Mother loved gardening, and after their retirement, our parents spent many enjoyable hours working together on their small lot. Their beautiful flowers have been admired by many as they passed by. Mother passed away in March, 1971. In April of 1976, Dad sold his village lot to his grandchildren Lloyd and Rhonda Friesen, and moved back to the farm into a mobile home. Today, at the age of eighty-three, he is still active and alert, making his own meals and keeping his place neat.

Looking back on a full and useful life, Dad acknowledges that heavenly treasures are of far greater importance than any earthly values. In their example of this, our parents have left a rich heritage to their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.





*Brandt family in front of H. W. Brandt residence in Rosenort in 1930. LEFT TO RIGHT: Nick Brandt, Peter W. Brandt, Jake Brandt, California, Heinrich W. Brandt, Peter F. Brandt, Peter T. Brandt, California, Mrs. Peter F. Brandt, Calif., Mary W. Brandt, Mrs. H. W. Brandt, Helena W. Brandt, Mrs. Abe Classen, Nebraska, Margaret W. Brandt.*

## HENRY WARKENTIN BRANDT FAMILY

*by P. W. Brandt*

Henry W. Brandt was born to his parents, Heinrich Reimer Brandt and Anna Warkentin, September 23, 1867, in the Ukraine. He was a boy of seven when he came along with his parents, to help establish a new village - Steinbach, Manitoba - in the year 1874.

His father had learned the trade of building wagons in the old country and so taught him to do carpenter work. Klaas R. Reimer, another one of the early Steinbach settlers, did the iron work on the wagons, as a blacksmith. All the education Henry got was in the old village school, to learn to read and write and do some number work, and that in the German language only. To be successful in this English speaking country, he would have to be a self-taught man.

As a young man, Henry became a member of the Klein Gemeinde. He had also learned to know a girl, Elizabeth Warkentin, who lived in the same community in the village of Rosenort. She had come from the Ukraine at the age of two, with her parents, the Martin Warkentins, in 1874. Henry and Elizabeth were married, June 8, 1890, and decided to make their home in Rosenort, the following year.

It was believed that farming was the only occupation to make a Christian living and enabling as much as possible a separate life of self sufficiency. Of course, it had to be mixed farming. Every family had some cows for milk, butter and meat. However, there was no cheese factory in the community, that would provide cheese and also whey for their pigs. Henry Brandt saw the need and started the first one, that very year. They established themselves close to the southern end of the village at that time. This was just south of the residence today of Abe L. Loewens.

A little later, he realized that the community was much more in need of a general store. Perhaps people did not keep enough cows, for lack of pasture land. In this business, people would want to exchange eggs or butter for groceries. Mr. Brandt believed in serving his own farming community, which would justify his own choice of running a business instead of farming. It was against his Christian principles to make as much money as possible, and he became known as a businessman who would only take a very moderate profit. As it turned out,

this even increased his business, and he made a good living, although he had to work hard for it. Hard, honest work was another Christian principle of his church and people. Apparently, he had quite a bit in common with the Higgins store in Morris.

Around the year 1906, Henry W. Brandt decided to start farming. He sold the store to Johann W. Deck, who was in company with several Rempels, and they hired H.H. Enns as a manager of the store. Brandt bought a quarter section of land, east of the Morris River, from Klass Friesen, father of Peter W.X. Friesen. Brandt used his carpentry skills, and with some help, built the whole set of buildings on a site, which was on the bank of a creek running into the Morris River.



*H. W. Brandt home place, built in 1913 in Rosenort.*

By the year 1912, more changes were made. He bought a Rumley Oilpull 15-20 tractor and a threshing separator of 28 inches. He also felt that he should buy a larger farm, so he purchased 400 acres of land on 7-6-1 East, which is now part of the newer village of Rosenort. He sold the small farm to Cornelius D. Rempel and built another, larger set of farm buildings on the bank of the Morris River, moving to that farm in 1913. (today Syd Reimer, the insurance man, owns those buildings and has built a dyke around the site of 5 acres)

In addition to farming, Henry served the community in a business way as well. He had a small lumber yard on his farmyard, selling lumber, gravel and cement. He would



*Sheaf loader on H. W. Brandt farm, bought in 1915.*

also occasionally order carloads of flour, fish, apples, cordwood and coal to the station at Silver Plains and some at McTavish.

After some years, his son-in-law, Jacob T. Rempel, took over the lumber yard and the Rosenort Farmers' Association took over the other business.

As Mr. Brandt's sons grew up, he enlarged his farm by buying a half section of land near McTavish, from Jim Whitehead, around 1924. In fall and winter, the boys



*It was on a wood cutting expedition such as this that Jacob and Nick Brandt lost their way in a blizzard.*

would haul grain to the railway station and load the box cars which had 1,000 to 1,500 bushel capacity. There were no augers. The boys would do all the shovelling by hand. It took about three days to load a car, doing the hauling with horses.

To save money in the 1930's, the boys would haul the fire wood from St. Mato and La Rochelle, later from St. Pierre, as cordwood. Jacob and Nick left very early one winter morning with their sleighs. It was a very beautiful morning; the calm before the storm. When they were about half way with their empty sleighs, the blizzard broke loose. They could not see a thing, so they left the horses pretty much to keep to the road. They were well dressed, but getting pretty scared. Suddenly the horses stopped. The boys thought they had reached their destination to load, because it was around noon already. Then, to their amazement, they realized that they were right on their own home yard, near the barn door. How relieved and thankful they were that the horses had the

good sense to turn around half way and go home. It had saved their lives.

Fall plowing was rather steady and somewhat monotonous. We had to hitch six horses to a 2 bottom plow. Get up at 5:00 a.m., feed, comb and brush the horses, have breakfast and be on the field at 7:00 a.m. This would go on for at least a month, before the plowing would be finished.

Elizabeth, Henry's wife, had a hard time as a pioneer woman. She had assisted her husband in every possible way and had given birth during those years to fourteen children; four of them passing on in their infancy. During the flu in January, 1919, she had buried an eleven year old daughter, Katherine, and in addition to that, she lived through the tragedy of seeing her oldest daughter, Anna's, two husbands pass away. This caused Anna to lose her health as well. In spite of all these hardships, Mrs. Brandt, with her strong Christian faith, clung to her husband and family to continue to do her share to keep up the home. However, her health began to fail and she had a stroke, dying May 22, 1938.

In 1939, H.W. Brandt married Mrs. J.F. Unger from Blumenort, who shared his joys and sorrows for another 2 years, 7 months and 16 days. He passed away after a lengthy illness on February 22, 1942. She had brought considerable cheer into the Brandt home during those short years.

Of the H.W. Brandt family, nine children grew up. Anna was born February 8, 1891. She married David R. Klassen in 1914. After 45 days of marriage, he dropped dead of a heart attack. Anna married Jacob T. Rempel, July 29, 1917. They had 6 children, 2 of them dying in their early childhood. He had the lumber yard, sold implements, and also farmed. After 13 years of marriage, Mr. Rempel passed away as a result of a terrible accident. He was hauling lumber from the railway station. When they went down the bank to his yard, the horses began to run. Rempel's spring seat slid off the wagon and ran over him. Anna was ailing and also passed on in 1940. They left 4 children.

Peter married Agnes Kroeker and they have 5 girls, and one boy. Peter is a real estate agent, living in Calgary.

Henry married Elizabeth Kroeker. They have 4 girls and one boy. Henry is in the insurance business and they live in Rosenort.

Jacob married Erna Toews. They have 5 boys and 3 girls. He farms with his sons in Maryfield, Saskatchewan.

Mary, who is a nurses' aid in Morris Hospital, lives at Rosenort.

Henry D. Brandt was born September 16, 1894. He married Tina Rempel, December 20, 1914. They had 14 children, four of whom died in their early childhood. Jacob, who married twice, has 2 children. Henry married Elizabeth B. Rempel; they have 4 children. Susie married Jacob F. Friesen and has 8 children. Lena married Frank Friesen and has 10 children. Anna married Abe C. Loewen. They have 4 children. Tina married Pete H. Rempel; they have 2 children. Abe married Carol Elliot. Elma married Roy B. Kornelsen. They had 1 child. The Henry D. Brandts are retired farmers and live in Rosenort.

Marie W. Brandt took care of her parents until they passed away. Then she attended high school in Steinbach for two years to become a nurse. Before she completed more of her studies, she married the minister widower, Peter J.B. Reimer from Steinbach. With this marriage, she accepted the responsibility of looking after 5 children - ages 8-18.

Elizabeth W. Brandt married Peter K. Loewen in 1929. They had 6 children - William, who married Violet Hiebert. They have several children and live in Winnipeg. Leonard is single and a carpenter in Rosenort. He takes care of his widowed mother. Linda married Abe Reimer, a salesman, and lives in Winnipeg. Lorne is also a carpenter and single, living at home. Gladys married Art Friesen, salesman, and lives at Rosenort. Allan is married and has 2 children. Peter K. Loewen passed away after a lengthy illness on September 24, 1977.

Peter W. Brandt married Helena Dueck, November 19, 1933 and they farmed at Rosenort. He was a Mennonite Central Committee board member for 19 years and also a deacon in the Rosenort E.M.C. for 25 years. His wife died in 1963, after nearly 30 years of marriage. Then he married Nettie K. Dueck, in 1964. They had a happy life, too, but after 9 years, she got cancer and died. He was very lonely, but the Lord provided another wife for him and a mother for the children. She was Katherine Klassen. They were married in 1975.

Children of the first marriage were: Alvin Brandt, who married Esther Rempel. They have one daughter and three sons and are farming at Rosenort.

Betty Brandt married Glen Klassen in 1964. He is a professor at the University of Manitoba, and they have 4 children.

Doris Brandt married Alfred Friesen in 1960. Fred serves the Rosenort Fellowship Chapel as pastor. They have 4 children.

Waldo Brandt married Lorraine Giesbrecht in 1970. Waldo is a high school teacher and they have 3 children.

Lavina Brandt married Richard Kroeker, who is in construction at Rosenort. The wedding took place in 1968. They have 3 sons.

Dennis Brandt married Janet Heinrichs, August 17, 1973. He is employed with Manitoba Hydro, as an engineer. They have one child and live in St. Adolphe.

Jacob W. Brandt married Marie Kroeker in 1934. They also farmed on a fairly big scale at Rosenort.

Helena Brandt married Cornelius P. Dueck on May 11, 1941. They farmed at Rosenort and lived at her parents' place. C.P. Dueck became a minister in the E.M.C. at Rosenort in 1943. They moved to Wawanessa, where they farmed and later moved to Blumenort, near Steinbach. They have 6 children. They are: Myrna (Mrs. Harry Chudyk) lives in B.C., Sara Pearl (Mrs. Vernon Brown) lives in Winkler, Elsie (Mrs. George Brown) of Swan River, Eileen (Mrs. Brian Thiessen) of Blumenort, Harold Dueck, who married Marian Reimer, is assistant pastor of the Fort Garry E.M.C. They have one child, Mildred, who is single and lives at home.

Klaas W. (Nick) Brandt married Ida Roch on June 23, 1937. He started a garage at Rosenort, later opening a garage in Lorette. From there, they moved to Winnipeg. Nick was mainly interested in the car business, so when

they decided to move to Los Angeles, California, Nick started a car dealership and service. They had two sons, Allen and Garry, who assisted him. He retired in 1978, after selling their business, moving to Palm Desert, California.

Margaret W. Brandt married Frank R. Barkman, October 24, 1937. They farmed at McTavish, Manitoba, until Frank retired and sold the farm, due to sickness. He was a school trustee for many years, and was also involved with church committee work most of his life. They built a new house in the Village of Rosenort, but Frank died before they could move in, in 1975. They had 7 children. Walter Barkman married Betty Kroeker in 1960. Walter became a carpenter and moved to Kelowna, B.C. some years ago. They have 2 children. Henry Barkman married Mary Buhler. They have 2 children. He is in construction in B.C. Kenneth B. Barkman married Betty Siemens. He is an electrician. They have 2 children and live in Abbotsford, B.C. Leroy Barkman married Emily Friesen. They have 2 children and live in Steinbach. Ernie Barkman is single and works in a factory in Abbotsford, B.C. Ronald Barkman married Phyllis Kornelsen. They have 2 children. He works for Westfield, Rosenort. Sharon is engaged to Rodney Dueck, a farmer at Riverton, Manitoba.



*Jac W. Brandt family of Rosenort.*

## **J.W. BRANDT**

Jac W. Brandt was born in 1910, the fourth youngest of Henry W. Brandt's family. I enjoyed life as much as any ordinary boy did. I did not mind doing my share of work, which was mainly manual - like pitching hay, scooping grain and doing chores.

Our recreation was of such a kind, which did not cost money - like hockey sticks, we made ourselves, and in summer, we went swimming in the river with a bunch of neighbour boys. If we had a few cents in our pockets, well for SC we could buy a soft drink or a bar, or package of chewing gum. Most boys had bicycles, which was our transportation.

When I was about 16-18 years old, Mom and Dad had a 1925 Model Chev touring car, of which we boys made as much use as we were permitted - or a little more. Dad

was fairly lenient; the car was always filled up at his expense. This was about 1928.

Just when things were starting to shape up, the 1930's came, with grasshoppers by the millions and weather from extreme dry to extreme wet - we started seeding in July. Prices were extremely low - wheat sold for 25-30¢ a bushel, 12-15¢ for barley, 10¢ for oats. For a market hog, we got as little as \$5.00. But then, in Winnipeg, in restaurants, we could get a full course meal for 15¢. I don't think anybody suffered around here as far as I know.

In 1933, I came to realize if I ever wanted to be independent, I'd better get at it. I started going with a girl, Mary Kroeker, Frank B. Kroeker's second oldest daughter. When I asked Mary if she would take the risk and marry me - to my good luck, she said 'yes'. We were married September 16, 1934.

We were blessed with five children, all normal and healthy, and we also have 15 grandchildren, which we enjoy very much.

Our occupation is farming and we were fortunate in that we have always been able to make ends meet. Our parents helped us get started; they gave each child 100 acres of land in 1934, and some financial help, too.

The first land, we bought from Mr. Chisholm of Morris, the S.W. 112 of 20-6-1W, for which we paid between \$17.00 and \$18.00 an acre - with a small down payment and low interest rate.

In 1939, in fall, World War II, started with all its tragedies, complications and hardships. Some things were hard to get - we had to have coupons for gas, butter and sugar; and for our cars, trucks and tractors, we had to have a permit. In 1944, our house had become too small and we built a new one.

I was active in community affairs; served on the board at the cheese factory, the store, church for eight years; Manitoba Pool Elevators and at Greenbank School 15 years, as trustee, and nine years as chairman. I also served on the Credit Union board for 12 years.

We have floods, which caused us problems - in 1950 we had granaries split open on us, and floods again in 1966, 1974 and 1979.

In 1972, we gave some land to our children and started to retire somewhat. We sold our farm yard and buildings and 100 acres of land to Harry and Audrey. We built a new home just beside our farm yard, farming some land together with Harry.

Our children are: Rosileen, who married Levi Remple in 1957. Their oldest daughter is Cynthia, Mrs. Ronald Loewen, then Lorie, and a son, Brent Allan.

Our second daughter, Doreen is married to Jake L. Dueck; they married in 1958 and have three daughters; Wanda, Denise and Candice.

Elmer is our oldest son; he married Ann K. Friesen in 1961 and started grain farming on his own. His farm is located at S.W. 114 5-6-1 E. They have three children: Kelly, Ellen and Warren.

Daughter, Dianna, married Alvin Remple, a farmer and businessman, in 1966. They have four children: Robert, Phyllis, Tricia and Cora Lee.

The youngest son, Harry, married Audrey Friesen in 1971. They have a son, Jeffrey; and a daughter, Amy.

## ALVIN BRANDT

My grandfather, Henry W. Brandt, came to Canada from Russia as a 7 year old boy, in 1845. He later married and settled down in Rosenort. My father, Peter W. Brandt, was born into this family, in 1905.

As a boy of ten, he was cutting grass with a horse drawn mower, when he was accidentally thrown off the machine, into the path of the sickle. His leg was almost completely cut off, but fortunately, it healed back together. Later, as a young man he started farming on his own, his first tractor was a Massey Harris 'Pacemaker'. With this he farmed about 200 acres.

In November 1933, he married Helena Dueck, daughter of Abram R. Dueck in Rosenhoff. The first year of their marriage, they lived in a small house on grandfather's yard. Then, in 1934, they moved to the yard on which we are now living. Dad had a mixed farming operation, which included crops, milk cows, laying hens and hogs. Harvesting was by binder and threshing machine, owned together with relatives. In 1946, he bought his first combine, a No. 7 Cockshutt. This was pulled by an A.R. John Deere.

In 1947, our family made a well remembered trip to B.C. Driving through the Rockies was a breathtaking experience. 1950 was the year of the big flood, when the impossible happened. Livestock was first put on raised platforms, then moved out, when the water level kept rising. Grain was raised to higher levels, but not high enough. In the end, much was lost. Our family sent about a month, living at Klaus Reimers in Blumenort.

Mother loved flowers and spent much time in the garden in summer time.

In September 1964, I married Esther Rempel, daughter of John K. Rempels of Niverville. We have spent most of our married life, farming in the Rosenort area. We also spent several winters in Kenora, hauling pulp.

In 1968, we bought our parents' farm place. They built a new house nearby in 1967. At first, we farmed together, where I got the benefit of renting Dad's machinery. When dad retired, I took over the farm.

I enrolled in a 2 year agriculture diploma course at the University of Manitoba, graduating in the spring of 1974. This proved to be a useful tool in my farming.

The Lord blessed us with four children - Joanelle, born in December, 1965; Darrell, in January, 1967; Kevin, in May, 1972; and Curtis, in July, 1976.

## HENRY D. BRANDT

Henry Brandt was born in 1894, the son of H.W. Brandt of Rosenort. He married Tina Rempel, daughter of Martin Rempel. They moved a house to a location they had bought and began mixed farming. Later, more land was added to the first parcel to make a larger farm. In 1966, they retired from farming. In 1974, they sold the place, buying a lot and house in the village of Rosenort.

Mrs. Brandt's health has been a struggle since 1947, when she had to have surgery for a broken hip and later shoulder.



*Mrs. H.D. Brandt in her youth.*

Their family consists of:

- **Jake Brandt**, born 1915, is married and has five children.
- Their daughter, **Susie** (1918) married Jac F. Friesen in October of 1939. They are farming in Rosenort area and their sons are in cleaning seeds (grain) and manufacturing. They have 8 children.
- Daughter, **Elizabeth**, is a cook at Morris Eventide Home, lives at home and assists her parents.
- Daughter, **Lena**, married F.C.L. Friesen of the Morris area, a grain farmer. They had nine children.
- **Lydia** lives in Winnipeg.
- A son, **Henry Brandt**, married Elizabeth Remple. They live in Steinbach.
- Daughter, **Annie**, married Abe C. Loewen, who farms in Riverside area. They have 5 children - Loreena is teaching school, Joanne is a pastor's wife in Saskatchewan, (Mrs. Ron Dyck), Reynold married Cindy Remple and is in construction work, Sheila works in Rosenort after she graduated and Jocelyn is at home.
- Daughter, **Tina**, married Pete Rempel of Rosenort, who is in trucking. They have three sons - Lloyd, who is a photographer; Barry married Shirley Eidse and lives in the district, and Kelly is at home.
- Daughter, **Justina**, married Menno Giesbrecht, who works at Loewen Lumber. They have five children, among them a set of twins.
- **Abe** married Carol Elliot. They have two children. Abe is a trucker.
- **Elma** lives at Rosenort on a large pullet raising farm with husband, and former councillor, Roy Kornelson. They have one son, Ken.

## THE PETER J.B. REIMER FAMILY

Peter was born in the village of Steinbach, Manitoba, October 18, 1902, the son of Johann Rempel Reimer and Aganetha Thiessen Barkman. They came from the Ukraine to Manitoba in the year 1874. I got my



*Rev. Peter J.B. Reimer, minister, educator and historian, of Rosenort.*

elementary education in a church school immersed in the German language. My parents were successful farmers and all my brothers became farmers as well, but I had a desire for more knowledge and became a teacher. My father died in 1918, but my mother continued farming, one mile east of Steinbach.

With a Grade XI education I started to teach in the fall of 1922. After eleven years of teaching in one room rural schools, I got the position in the Steinbach School, where I mostly taught in the Junior High for thirteen years, up to 1948. Then I took a year off to go to Mexico and direct a Voluntary Service Unit for the Mennonite Central Committee. We lived in the city of Cuauhtemoc, and our Unit worked in the field of health and education.

In September, 1922, I was baptized on the confession of my Christian faith and received into the Evangelical Mennonite Church. Nearly four years later I married Elizabeth Kehler, a girl near Steinbach, and had five children with her. After a lengthy illness she died in January, 1946. That same year in June, I married Mary Brandt from Rosenort. Her father, Henry W. Brandt was a farmer at Rosenort.

My wife, Mary, was the matron of the Home of the V.S. Unit, and our youngest daughter, Charlotte, 11, was also part of the Unit. After a year's service we returned, and then moved to Rosenort in September, 1949. I did three more years of teaching in the Greenbank one room school, supervising Grade IX and X Correspondence students in addition to teaching 45 pupils from Grade I to Grade VIII.



*Peter and Marie Reimer with Charlotte (Mrs. Norman Wiens) in 1949, when they moved to Rosenort.*



*P.J.B. ReOner's house in Rosenort, built in 1952.*

In the summer of 1952, we built our own house on the bank of the Morris River. I also took my first trip to Europe as a delegate of my church to the Fifth Mennonite World Conference at Basel, Switzerland. Later I was a delegate to two more of those conferences, in 1962 at Kitchener, Ontario, and in 1967 at Amsterdam, Netherlands.

I was called to the ministry in 1944. I did not have the time to minister full time because I wanted to stay in the teaching profession. I helped to establish an un-denominational Bible School in Steinbach, and was a member of the Board for 25 years. I also served our Steinbach Church as a Treasurer for ten years. During the years of teaching at the Greenbank School I helped, as a minister, to establish our Evangelical Mennonite Conference. A main project was the translation of our old Mennonite Catechism and Articles of Faith from the German into the English.

Besides my teaching and Church work, I had pursued my academic and professional studies at home and in the Summer Schools of the University of Manitoba. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1948, and by 1953 I had a Permanent Collegiate and Principal's Certificate.

Beginning in January, 1953, I started to teach in the Grunthal Collegiate, and stayed until 1967, to retire. However, moving back to Rosenort, I helped out another year at the Rosenort Collegiate.

I became a member of the Executive of the Southeast Teachers' Association in 1959, for three years, and President in 1960.

I became interested in another organization, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, in 1958, and was elected a member to its first Museum Committee, became President of the Society 1962-1963. We have during these 20 years built up a great village Museum at Steinbach, as a centennial project of our Mennonite immigration to Manitoba.

When our province celebrated its Centennial in 1970, I felt highly honored, when the Manitoba Historical Society awarded five hundred Manitobans a Medal of Merit, and I had the honour of being one of them.

After retirement from active teaching, I made several big tours, one around the world and another to Soviet Russia and Poland, as well as the Netherlands and Germany, to look for the footprints of my ancestors. Writing my travellogues was a great pleasure. Now I'm

mostly writing history in both languages. My interest is always in people, young and old. Last year the Board of the Eventide Nursing Home gave me a plaque for serving with a weekly service and visits for over ten years.

We have five children. Elmer (Al) is a professor of English at the University of Winnipeg. He got his doctorate from the University of Yale, many years ago. He is married to Joan Fredericks, a granddaughter of the Fredericks who used to live near Morris years ago.

His two sons are, Mark, married to Nadine Dyck, and Curt. Daughter, Cynthia, is a lawyer in Edmonton.

Louise has three children too from her first husband. She has managed the Rosenort Grill for us for the last 18 years, although her second husband Clarence is in the Lodge Home, Morris, for some time now. Her oldest daughter Beverly married a Greek, Theo, and lives in Athens with two children. Bonnie married Russell Friesen, a construction man and they live in Edmonton now. Nelson works at Westfield, Rosenort.

Nita married Guy Hogue from Oklahoma. They live in Honolulu now, where Guy manages a large steel plant. They have three children, Terry, Allen and Sandra.



*The P.J.B. Reimer family, July 7, 1970. Five married children and seventeen grandchildren.*

Sydney married Helen Hildebrandt, Niverville, and lives at the old place of my wife's parents' place. He has an insurance office in Rosenort and a much larger one in Winnipeg. They have six children, two of whom are married. Daryl married Ian Wallace, Niverville. They do mission work for the MCC in Africa. Marjorie married Jim Heinrichs, who started farming recently. They have two children. Danny does construction work in Edmonton. Peter and James are in school.

Our youngest daughter is Charlotte, who married Norman Wiens, a son of Peter T. Wiens, who used to have a Post Office and a store at McTavish. He is the Co-ordinator of Education in the Morris-Macdonald School Division. They have also three children, David, Paul and Judy, who are all in school. The Wiens also live on the Morris River bank in Rosenort.

## **BIOGRAPHY OF PETER F. BRANDT**

Peter Brandt was born to Klass R. Brandts in 1878, who immigrated to Canada in 1877. His parents settled down in the village of Rosenort, where Peter was born, and later homesteaded two miles west of Rosenort. In 1901 his father died of T.B. On March 18, 1903, at the



age of 26, he married Anna Heidebrecht of Jansen, Nebraska. In 1911 his mother, who had been residing with them, moved to Rosenhoff where she lived to a ripe age of 94 years.



*Mr. and Mrs. Peter F. Brandt.*

Peter and Anna Brandt were blessed with a family of eight sons and three daughters. The oldest five children attended the Ledbank school, 2 112 miles north of home. The rest of the family attended the Rosenort and Greenbank schools.

Pete, the first son, was born on May 4, 1904. He married Anna Wiebe of Lowe Farm on July 11, 1926. Pete started a garage in Morris and later moved to Starbuck where he continued his trade as a mechanic till he retired, and moved to Kelowna, B.C. They have a family of three sons and one daughter. Nick, born February 15, 1907, married Margaret Brandt of Morden on July 27, 1934. Nick was a farm labourer in the Winkler area, where they reside. They have two daughters and one son.

Anne was born on March 7, 1909, and married Henry D. Rempel on September 3, 1927. They have a family of five sons and three daughters. Henry and Anne are presently residing in Winkler.

John, born July 11, 1911, married Helen Funk of Lowe Farm on October 19, 1930. John is well known as a road construction contractor. John and Helen are living in Santa Anna, California. They have a family of two daughters and one son.

Herman was born on October 30, 1913 and has been working in Alberta for many years. He is living at Craighmile, Alberta.

Albert was born on November 1, 1916, and married Mary Wiebe of Lowe Farm on June 23, 1940. Albert is a building contractor in the Los Angeles area. They are living at Almirado, California, and have a family of one son and one daughter.

Andrew, born April 3, 1919, married Annie Heide on May 10, 1942. Andrew is a carpenter at Abbotsford, B.C. where they reside. They have three sons and one daughter.

Elsie was born on July 26, 1921 and married Frank Siemens on November 5, 1944. Frank and Elsie bought



*P.F. Brandt farmsite, 2 miles west of Rosenort, later owned by daughter, Elsie, Mrs. Frank Siemens.*

the home place in 1950. Frank is well known in the community for his trade in pushing pipes and later starting a plumbing business. He passed away on September 10, 1966, at the age of 49. At present Elsie is still residing on the home farm. They have three sons and three daughters.

Dan, born on May 21, 1924, married Helen Gerbrandt of Steinbach on June 8, 1946. Dan is a mechanic at heart, and is presently practising his trade in Steinbach. They have three sons and one daughter.

Lillie was born December 14, 1927 and married John Gerbrandt of Steinbach on June 27, 1948. They have a family of four sons and one daughter.

Walter, born on May 28, 1930, married Alice Penner of Steinbach. Walter has been working in Winnipeg for many years where they are living.



*P.F. Brandt family, 1941.*

Father Peter Brandt was a farmer and deeply involved in the community affairs. He was president of R.F.A. for a number of years. He also was instrumental in establishing a rural mail route in the Morris district, and was involved in political campaigns and elections in the community. Peter Brandts were one of the first in the area to have a telephone, which attracted many to their home to make use of it.

In November, 1944, Peter Brandts retired and moved to Steinbach, and in 1945 they built a new house. They enjoyed travelling in their retiring years. Peter passed away on July 11, 1961 in the Steinbach Hospital.

Anna was well known for her creative ability in making quilts, knitting, etc. She always had a lot of ambition even though she had a large family, and despite her loneliness of having left her home in Nebraska, which

separated her from her family for long periods of time. She passed away on September 19, 1971 in the Steinbach Hospital.



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*Mrs. P.F. Brandt, a very active person and at the age of 83 was still quilting for M.C.C.*

## FATHER PETER KLASSEN GOOSSEN

Our father Peter Klassen Goossen was born in South Russia on the 23rd day of August 1870. When in 1874 a great number of the Mennonites who lived in South Russia migrated to Canada, the mother braved it and also followed suit with her six children. They were: Anna, Mrs. Peter Hiebert; Gerhard, Frank, Katherine, Mrs. Henry R. Loewen; Maria, Mrs. John K. Esau; and Peter, our father.

Here in Canada, mother settled at Greenfeld near to the present place of Kleefeld where they bought and farmed. Now, since mother was sickly and poor, she was forced to place her oldest children in the various homes of their relatives to save the household and have the children work for their keep. Since Peter, our father, was the youngest, he was allowed to stay home with mother.

When he reached the age of adolescence (1880), he took over the work of the farm for mother. He often felt, when he saw that their neighbouring fathers and sons worked together, he felt somewhat deprived of that relationship of father and son working together in unity and fellowship.

After about a year and a half, mother married John Hiebert and our father was blessed with a stepfather and eventually with one sister and two brothers: Isaac Hiebert, Jacob Hiebert and Mrs. Helena Toews. They all moved to Hillsborough, Kansas. The father being sickly, died on Jan. 18, 1890 due to arthritis.

In the latter part of the 1880's, father worked for his brother Gerhard who was eleven years his senior, and during this time he purchased 80 acres of land.

He worked this farm with the help of his brothers and at the same time, kept his employment with Gerhard Goossen.

Now at this time as situations improved he fell in love with Maria Froese a sister to Uncle Gerhard's wife and

got married Aug. 7th, 1892 with Minister Abraham Klassen officiating.

The year of 1908 was a hard year for our father. On August 29, grandmother Froese died at age 64. On October 19, grandfather Warkentin died at age 63. Then on December 21 our mother died at age of 36, and she left behind a family of seven boys and 2 girls. Sister Ann became the sole housekeeper with the help of some of her brothers. We were exceedingly fortunate that Aunt Anna Goossen was our next door neighbour. She ever so often came over with a helping hand and gave suggestions in the home all around. When the following spring made its seasoned appearance, grandmother Warkentin arrived from Kansas to mother the brood that was left in deep sorrow by the death of Mother. Father's sadness was extremely grave but with the faith in God, he braved the tide of sorrow.

Mother, when she was still with us, was promised a new home and one which had ample room; this she did not live to see and enjoy. So when the opportune time rolled in on 1910, father built us a good sized home for which everybody was very happy. This made life so much more pleasant and comfortable. We had a good sized sitting room in which we gathered almost every evening to sing songs to bring us closer to God and to heal the wounds of sorrows. Many of these songs father taught us and ones we learned in school still linger with us and bring back memories of life at home. The strict admonishments that we received ever so often, was really more appreciated when we became more serious and more responsible.

Father was a very hard worker and we had always enough to eat, clothing to wear and a place to sleep. He saw to it that we were fed well and clothed.

Eleven years rolled by when all of a sudden one morning the sun rose in the south, at Littlefield, Texas, in the year 1919. The news of this now was very hard for us to believe, and on November 19, 1919 it was the second wedding of my father. He brought us, when he came home, Marie Penner as our greatly cherished mother. Now our home was complete and my sister Ann's face lit up as she became second in command.

During this marriage three brothers and one sister were added to the family making ten brothers and three sisters in all. I am very happy of each member of the family.

Father was still very active in these years, but eventually his strength faded slowly and on Aug. 17, 1944 he met his Maker to be at Home. He reached the age of 74 years less 6 days. Mother lived to a ripe old age to see the nineties.

Three daughters and ten sons comprises the family, and at present time they are still all on the go. Isaak born on Jan. 19, 1906 died within two weeks of his birth.

The names of the individual members of his family are as follows: Anna (1893), Frank (1895), Peter (1896), Gerhard (1898), Jacob (1900), Henry (1901), John (1903), Mary (1907), David (1908), Abraham (1920), Bernhard (1921), Walter (1923) and Martha (1925). All of these sisters and brothers are living in the Morris Municipality except for Anna in Steinbach, Walter and Martha at Grandview, and Frank at Sinclair who is also in retirement.



*Early farmyard built by P.K. Goossen.*



*House of P.K. Goossen - later owned by son, G.P. Goossen.*

At present all members of the family, who live in the Morris area, are retired farmers except Bernhard who still farms with the help of his two youngest sons Alvin and Leroy. Abraham with his three sons operate a progressive machine shop and electric at Rosenort. His sons are: Robert, Charlie and Gordon.



*George p. Goossen, well-known school teacher for many years in the Rosenhoff district, and also councillor for the R.M. of Morris.*

## GEORGE P. GOOSSEN

The first school I taught was at Strassberg S.D., located six miles west and one mile north of Emerson. I was granted a class III permit by the Department of Education of Manitoba and my chest bulged with excitement. I was ready to plunge into work, but it was not so easy, for when I stood before the class for the first time I asked myself this question, "What now?"

Practically every seat of the school room was occupied by a youngster staring at me with bulging eyes, so it seemed to me, who watched every step that I made. Now what was the thing to do? Out into the playgrounds we went and to get acquainted with each other and the result - shyness was conquered. There were practically no helps in the library and I had no training of how to handle the situation. Emerson had a drug store operated by an elderly man to whom I related my situation. He handed me a catalogue of helps from which I could choose whatever I needed. I selected help which I thought most appropriate together with this aged gentleman and when he added up what I owed him -- it was the amount of my first school cheque!

I wanted to teach before going on to further my studies, to find how well I could adjust myself to teaching activities. The experience and work with the children and

the result obtained was very gratifying. This created in me an initiative that guided me to make up my mind to choose the teaching profession as my vocation. Thereafter I attended the summer schools wherever they were located to raise my standard and obtain the required teaching certificate.

I was fortunate to be hired by my home school of Rosenort No. 60. The building was that of the private school but renovated, and it seated forty or so pupils. Here I was blessed to teach my young brothers - Abe, Ben, and Walter. Walter often came and sat on my knee to make himself feel at home in the new life that he was facing.

I taught here for three years and was also attending summer schools during the summer holidays, after normal school in Brandon, I qualified for the Second Class Certificate.



*The first Sunday School class at Rosenort S.D. 60 in 1927.*

During these years, I met and married Sadie Hamm, and she was a great help to me, as we also operated a small farm in the McTavish area as well as teaching. Crops varied from time to time, and often money earned while teaching had to be used to support the farm, and sometimes the opposite! We worked the farm after school hours and on Saturdays, and with the help of the family, managed quite well.

After the teacher's training course in Brandon, I took over the Rosenhoff South School No. 61. It was gratifying to serve in a district where close friends of yesteryears resided. I had the privilege to teach here for twenty school years from 1933 to 1953 and had the honour to have in my class room, children's children, during my stay.

I assume that the student body enjoyed times of good will intermingled with periods of a great deal of singing practices such as for Christmas concerts and other special occasions. Through regular practices we gradually slid

into the acquired unison of singing. This practice created enjoyment and love for the message which the songs revealed, and exposed to the mind of the individual.

I introduced woodwork and sewing in school, a practise which was very much in favour of the whole school as well as the parents. The boys did woodwork, and Sadie, my wife, instructed the girls in sewing. We all were very happy of the results they brought. At the community fairs, the prizes we were given for the individual articles was very encouraging, and when they were sold at the ladies' community auction sale, they brought in good money. These sales caused inspiration to maintain this kind of exercise in school.

In 1953 after my twentieth year of teaching at the Rosenhoff South, I hired out to the Greenfarm S.D. located about six miles north east of Winkler. Here I taught Grade VI to IX. I enjoyed especially the Grade IX. These students were hard workers, and their way of thinking and arguments were fascinating. Although I enjoyed teaching here, the distance between this school and my farm was inconvenient to operate it successfully. So when Lowe Farm S.D. invited me over to accept the position to teach Junior High, I transferred positions.

The memory of the community of Lowe Farm will always be in my esteem. The school work with the students I enjoyed. There was practically never a dull day in the class room and most of the time the sky was clear and sunny, hardly ever a cloud to obstruct it or blur it.

Six years I taught in this school from '54-'60 and those were six years of pleasure and I do wish that some day I will meet some of the past students and reminisce of those days of the past.



*Watermelon by the wagon load in 1950 at Rosenhoff. Mr. Goossen with Richard and Myralene.*

I enjoyed the privilege of teaching my own children - Myralene and Richard. Myralene was in my class up to Grade IX and then she went to the Gretna Mennonite Collegiate where she finished Grade X to XII including two years of Bible Study. She obtained a First Class Teacher's Certificate, and was just below eighteen years of age when the Rosenort West School engaged her as their teacher. She taught here for three years and then went to teach in Plum Coulee, and later in Winnipeg. In the meantime, her vocation took a sudden abrupt change. She sought her future companion in Glen Loewen of Winkler, the son of Mrs. Justina Everson and the late

Mr. J.K. Loewen, also of Winkler. They got married in 1959.

They are now residing with their four children on the east side of Highway 206 across from the East Gate of the Birds' Hill Park. Their four children are Audrey (19), Cheryl (16), Glen (13), and Bruce (12).

My only son, Richard was born in Altona, Manitoba on June 28, 1942. He started attending the school at Rosenhoff South where I was the teacher, after which he attended the High School in Lowe Farm. Grade XII was taken at the Rosenort Collegiate. It was here that he met Erica Thiessen, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. John Penner. After High School, Richard moved to Winnipeg where he worked as a mechanic for his brother-in-law, Glen Loewen. He got married to Erica in October 1966. In 1972 a son Matthew was born to them.

Richard is now operating a service station on Pembina Hwy. in Fort Garry. They reside in their own residence at 5 Manitou Bay, Wpg.

A year after my retirement from teaching in 1965, the people of ward three of the municipality of Morris voted for me to serve on the municipal council. This position I held for eight years and was very happy to work with the council and do justice to whatever work that was allotted to me. The members of the council were very co-operative and I respected them right from the start and this made me feel at ease. The barrier of not being acquainted as yet with my duties, was soon broken down.

After my wife Sadie died, I quit the farm.

At present, I am busy keeping up the household responsibilities, the yard, the garden, and all around the premises in an orderly shape as much as possible.

Altogether I have enjoyed my vocation and I am very happy that I accepted teaching as my life's career.

## THE CORNELIUS E. CORNELSEN FAMILY

The Cornelius E. Cornelsen family came to Manitoba from Russia and were one of the original family settlers in the Mennonite settlement northwest of Morris. Mr. Cornelsen's brother, Jacob, moved to the United States. Both Cornelius and Jacob were the sons of Abram S. Kornelsen and Helena Eidse.

Mr. Cornelius E. Cornelsen was born November 26, 1835. His wife was the former Katrina Dueck, who was a midwife for many years until she had a stroke. She died on May 21, 1896. The children born to them were Cornelius, Jacob, Mary, Abram, Barbara and Kathrina. The children were grown up when their mother died and the next year, on July 1, 1897, he married again. His second wife was a widow, Mrs. Aganeta Wall Klassen. In about 1904, they moved to Saskatchewan, where homesteads were available in the Herbert area. Two sons of the Cornelsens; Cornelius and Jacob, with their families, also moved to Saskatchewan at this time.

Cornelius, the oldest son of C.E. Cornelsens, was born September 26, 1864, and married Anna Friesen Harms. Their children were as follows: Cornelius (1886 - died as a baby); Anna (1887) (Mrs. John Chalk); Katherina, 1889 and Margaret, 1890, both died of typhoid fever in 1908 in Saskatchewan; Cornelius (1891) died of Diphtheria in

1896; Maria, 1893 (Mrs. Abram Giesbrecht); Lena (1895) (Mrs. Abram K. Loewen of Rosenhoff); Jacob, 1898 (died in World War I in France); Neta (1901) (Mrs. Henry I. Dueck of Kleefeld); Isaac, 1904) (Married Justina Dueck and lived in Rosenort); Cornelius, 1905 (died also as a baby).

Before the Cornelius D. Cornelsen family moved to Saskatchewan, they lived where Ed Cornelsens now live. (Ed is a grandson of C.D. Cornelsens). At this time, they were quite poor. One winter, there was not enough money to buy shoes, so burlap sacks were used to cover the feet. After several years of successful farming in Saskatchewan, Mr. Cornelsen died of typhoid fever in 1908. His widow, together with all of her children, except Anna, moved back to the Morris area and settled in Rosenhoff. Mrs. Cornelsen married again, this time to Jacob K. Kroeker.

The second son of C.E. Cornelsens was Jacob, who was born May 3, 1866. He married Anna H. Friesen. Their children were: Cornelius (1890); Jacob (1892); Tina (1893); Anna (1896); Abram (1899); George (1901). They adopted a daughter, Vera. Mr. Jacob D. Cornelsen worked as a labourer on a community type pasture, seven miles northwest of Morris.

About 1904, the family moved to Saskatchewan and most of the children became land owners there. Corny, Tina, Annie, Abe and Vera have all died. Jacob and his wife live in Herbert, where they pursue their interesting hobbies as a retired couple. George and his wife, are living in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Mary, the oldest daughter of C.E. Cornelsens, married Henry W. Klassen. Their oldest son, Henry died of cancer at the age of 21. The other sons were Abe, John, Peter, Norman and Alfred; all living in Manitoba - Carman and Winnipeg areas. The daughters were Nettie (Mrs. Philip Reimer) and Mary (Mrs. Isaac Wiebe).

Abram, the third son of Cornelius E. Cornelsens, married Maria Striemer. He later moved to Idaho, where he married again after his first wife died.

Another daughter of C.F. Cornelsens, Barbara, got married to a Mr. Harder. Of the four children born to them, three died young. Barbara died as a young mother, of cancer.

The youngest daughter of the C.E. Cornelsens was Kathrina. She married John Dueck of Plum Coulee, formerly of Russia, where his father died in the Russian war. They moved to B.C., where they both passed away at the age of 77 years. Their children were John, Tina, Edwin, Ester and Alma.

Today, the descendants of C.E. Cornelsens are scattered far and wide. Only some of the descendants of C.D. Cornelsens are living in the Morris area today. They are, namely, the descendants of Isaac H. Cornelsens and Abram K. Loewens.

## MR. JACOB H. CORNELSEN

Mr. Jacob H. Cornelsen, brother of Isaac H. Cornelsen, of Rosenhoff, enlisted in the army in 1915. He was only 17 at the time, but the government was looking for young, adventurous, healthy fellows to train for their



*Private Jacob H. Cornelsen, left, during World War I. He was killed in action at Vimy Ridge. At right is Paul Rosche.*

country. He trained at Camp Shilo, near Brandon, and the next year in November, he went overseas. He was wounded once, but he recuperated in the hospital in France. May 4th, he was facing the heat of battle on the Western Front at Vimy Ridge. Perhaps he didn't realize it would be his last day. Soon after, his mother received a letter telling of her son's bravery as a soldier and that he had been killed in action. He is buried at Vimy Ridge in France, where so many Canadian soldiers fought and lost their lives.

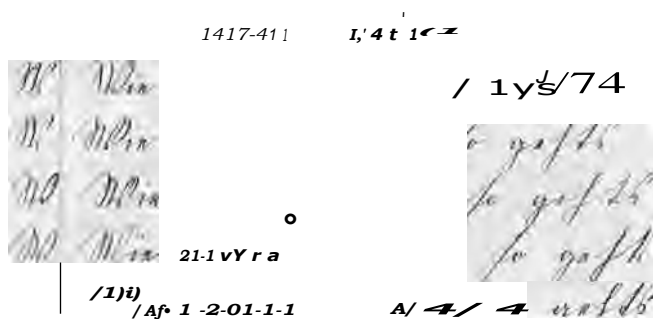


*A four generation picture. Mrs. John F. Dueck, John Cornelsen, Mrs. Justina Cornelsen with baby Lorraine Cornelsen. John is the nephew of Jacob.*

## THE ISAAC CORNELSEN FAMILY

Four-year old Isaac watched his father, Corny D. Cornelsen, and others remove a large rock lodged near the barn of the Cornelsen homestead in Saskatchewan. Little did he know that in a short time he'd be a fatherless boy back in Rosenhoff, Manitoba, where he was born in 1904. His grandparents, Cornelius E. Cornelsen's, had come to Manitoba together with the many settlers who made their new homes in the Morris area in 1874. Isaac's mother, Anna Harms, was born in Alexzanderkrohn, Russia. His father was also born in Russia.

After his father's death in 1908, in Saskatchewan, his mother returned to Rosenhoff, leaving four graves behind her. In a few brief months, her 44 year old husband, two teenage daughters, and one little son had died of typhoid fever. Her oldest daughter, Anna, remained in Saskatchewan and married John Chalk. Returning with her were three daughters - Mary (Mrs. A.A. Giesbrecht), Lena (Mrs. A.K. Loewen), Agnes (Mrs. H.I. Dueck) and two sons, Jacob, who was killed in World War I, and little Isaac. Isaac's mother married Jacob K. Kroeker in 1909 and lived on a little farm close to the site where the Rosenhoff South School was situated.



Sample of I.H. Cornelsen's handwriting at 10 years of age in 1914.

Isaac obtained his brief elementary education in Rosenhoff. His teacher was John W. Dueck, and the school was approximately where H.K. Duecks now live. Due to the hardships of the times, Isaac only attended school for about three years, then working to earn his living from about the age of 12.

In 1923, he went to work at Galt, Ontario at a Golf Club. This is where his oldest sister and her family had moved. In his pocket booklet, he listed his hours and pay. He received 40¢ an hour and sometimes made \$5.20 a day. In the fall of the same year, he worked on the west coast at Prince Rupert and Prince John, loading grain ships. Here he earned from about 90¢ to \$1.30 per hour and so could earn up to \$15.00 daily. He listed some expenses as gloves, 40¢; and shoes, \$2.25. With careful management, he could return to Rosenhof a fairly well-to-do man for those days.

Soon after, he bought land north of Rosenort and got married to Justine Dueck, the oldest daughter of John F. Dueck. Mr. Dueck was the first baby born of the Mennonite settlers in a 'similon' (sod house) in the Morris area, in January, 1874.



First farm dwelling of Mr. and Mrs. I.H. Cornelsen, north of Rosenort.

There were good years and also very difficult years, especially during the depression, but Isaac was a courageous, determined young man. His wife was also a hard working, cheerful mate. In 1937, the Cornelsen family moved to a large farm place one mile west and half a mile north of Rosenort. Because they loved trees, they planted lots of them - maples, elms, cottonwoods, and willows.

Isaac was always interested in community progress. Together with others, he saw the need for an additional grain handling facility at McTavish. After getting enough signatures from the farmers, Isaac and Mr. J.H. Friesen eventually were gratified when a Pool Elevator was built at McTavish.

Mr. Cornelsen was active in various boards, like the Credit Union, Rosenort Co-Op, colonization and Greenbank School Board. During the Second World War, he sold many Victory bonds. These Victory bonds were the contributions the Mennonites made to help alleviate suffering from the effects of war. The people in the community contributed generously, as Isaac's record book shows.

When the E.M.C. Church saw the need for an Old Folks' Home in Rosenort, Isaac soon got involved. He became the chairman of the board, serving for five years. No matter what difficulties were encountered, he showed courage and optimism. Today, Isaac's wife, as well as other local residents, enjoy the comfortable surroundings and efficient staff of the Eventide Home.

Isaac's hobbies were travel and books. He read a great deal, so his education extended far beyond the classroom situation. He was also a faithful member of the Rosenort E.M.C. Church. He and his wife, Justine, celebrated the first Silver Wedding in the church. He also had a vision for a church in the village of Rosenort, but he didn't live to see this a reality.



L.H. Cornelsen family in 1941. LEFT TO RIGHT: Anne, Mr. Cornelsen with Art on lap, John, Nettie, Mrs. Cornelsen with Jake on lap, Evelyn and Ed.



In the year 1967, Mr. Cornelsen had 112 ribs removed to make room for a pacemaker and battery to boost his weak heart. This major operation was successful, but the next year he had a stroke. After some weeks of suffering, during which he remained cheerful and trusting, he went home to his Maker on August 4, 1968, the same day his own mother died 33 years before. His four sons and their families are all living in the Morris area today. They are John, Ed, Art and Jake. His three daughters are Evelyn (Mrs. P.J.L. Friesen), Nettie Rose (a school teacher) and Anne (Mrs. John D. Reimer) of Kansas, U.S.A.

## **J.D. CORNELSEN**

*J.D. Cornelsen*

I, John Dueck Cornelsen was born in the R.M. of Morris, oldest member of the Isaac and Justina Cornelsen family.

Having grown up with my mother's side of the family they probably have been the greatest influence in my life. The Dueck family always was a very religiously devout family.

My father grew up during very hard years, and had to move out early in life to make a living. These experiences gave him a considerably more broadened outlook on life. I came to respect this more and more as I got older. His more comprehensive views about life were not always shared by his sheltered fellow Mennonites. My Father was thoroughly aware of a Supreme Being ruling the universe, and that in contrast we are here as human beings with our finite minds continuously in great need of study and development for better understanding of people. It is with this background that I understand myself a little better.

I have never been that much of a farmer, although I farm. I find myself a little bit philosophically inclined. I have always enjoyed studying other people, culture, and religions.

Sometimes we study to test our views, probably to fortify our base. We desire to know whether what we believe will really stand the acid test or not. Our forefathers considered Canada to be a country in which they wanted to raise their children. Today looking back at their decision, we are happy for the choice they made. It is truly a great country in which to make our earthly journey.

In 1949 I married a girl from Kleefeld, Manitoba. Her name was Susan, daughter of John D. Fast of Kleefeld. For the greater part of our married life, we resided in the R.M. of Morris. During the '50 flood our oldest daughter Lorraine (now married to Harvey Friesen) was born. Next we had twin boys, Wilbert (married to Beverly Remple, having two sons Marshall and Matthew), and Gilbert (married to Arlene Braun, having two sons Robert and Douglas). Our daughter Marilyn (married Wayne Penner), Stanley, and Eileen.

In 1967 my wife became ill which was later determined to be a malignant tumour, and she went to Winnipeg Hospital for surgery. In December 1969, she was readmitted to Winnipeg Hospital where medical opinion concluded that she had terminal cancer,

In June of 1970 she passed away, leaving me with too young a family to be without a mother.

In the fall of 1970 I remarried another girl from Kleefeld, formerly Mrs. Susan Dueck (her late husband Abe R. Dueck who passed away in 1967.) Susan had a family of four children, John (married Norma Paschke), Karen, Beverly, and Kenneth who still is at home.

When we were all together we had a family of ten children at our table. With a family this size I realized the value of the work ethic. Our children have all learned to work hard. Each one must and can account for him or herself.

There has been much fun in a family this size, also quite a bit of hardship. But I think it has been worth it all. We are proud of our family and also the partners they married. Our successful experience with the family would have been almost impossible in a city or town, but it was possible in an environment of good people and the wide open spaces of the R.M. of Morris.

## **ED CORNELSEN**

*by Kathy Cornelsen*

It was on May 28, 1974, that Ed was suddenly pinned beneath an overturned tractor; that the realization of the importance of spiritual values struck him.

Ed, the son of the Isaac H. Cornelsens, grew up on the parents farm near Rosenort. After his Elementary School education, he attended the M.C.I. at Gretna. At the age of twenty-one, he purchased his first truck with which he hauled pulp wood in the Kenora area during the winter, and gravel during the summer. In 1962 he commenced farming in addition to trucking. His farmyard had been the property of his grandparents the Cornelius D. Cornelsens previously. Six years later, farming became his main source of income, when he sold his last pulp truck. He still maintains a keen interest in trucking, frequently offers his services as a driver, as the opportunities arise.

In 1970, Ed married Katherina Friesen, daughter of the G.P. Friesens of Arnaud. They met when Kathy a



*Ed and Kathy Cornelsen  
with Sharon and Brian.  
1978.*

teacher, was employed at the Rosenort Elementary School. Kathy happily exchanged her professional life to become a farmer's wife, having enjoyed those same surroundings on her parents' farm.

They have two children; Brian born in 1973, and Sharon born in 1974. Doctors believed there was little hope for Sharon, as she was born ten weeks prematurely, and weighed only 3 lbs. 14 ounces. But God gave her life, and today she is a normal healthy child.

Ed and Kathy are members of the Rosenort Fellowship Chapel; being involved in its various functions. Ed is also a board member of the McTavish Pool elevator, as was his father before him.

## ART AND ROSELINE CORNELSEN

*submitted by Rose C.*

Born on May 1, 1939, the third son of Isaac H. Cornelsen, Art received his education at the Greenbank School at Rosenort, and at the MCI at Gretna.

Roseline, daughter of John F. Warkentin, also grew up in the Rosenort area, attending the Rosenort S.D. No. 60. She took grades nine and ten by correspondence and grade eleven at Greenbank. After high school she was employed at the Rosenort Co-op store.

Art and Rose were married May 1, 1960, at the Rosenort EMC. They are blessed with three children, a son, Cameron Arthur, May 21, 1961; and two daughters, Lynette Rose, Feb. 13, 1964; and Arlene Dawn, April 5, 1968.

The first winter they were married, Art and Rose attended the Steinbach Bible Institute. Three more winters were spent in Kenora on the pulp haul.

Art always loved farming, and in 1964 took over his father's farm, on which he was born. As a second trade he works at carpentry. He has constructed machine sheds, houses, barns, as well as a church. In the summer of 1972, he accidentally cut his left hand, resulting in a series of delicate operations. In order to give it time to heal properly, Art decided to attend the University. He took the diploma course in agriculture graduating in 1973.



*Art Cornelsen family in 1979. LEFT TO RIGHT: Lynette, Cameron, Art, Roseline, Arlene.*

As members of the Rosenort Fellowship Chapel, they have both been active in the Sunday School Dept. Art has been involved with community affairs such as, the Co-op Store, Credit Union, Recreation Centre, Pool Elevator, and the Chamber of Commerce.

A favorite family hobby is travelling, which has taken them to various points in Canada and the USA, and British Honduras. In 1976 they were privileged to visit a sister in London and took an extended tour of Europe.



*The Art Cornelsen's farm in 1974. Jake Cornelsen's farmsite in background.*

## THE JAKE CORNELSEN FAMILY

Jake was the youngest of the 1. H. Cornelsen clan. He was a faithful worker on the Cornelsen farm throughout his high school years. Jake was attending his second year at Steinbach Bible Institute, when he bought himself a \$300.00 1952 Chevy and 80 acres of land at \$67.50 per acre. Now he was all set to be married to Joyce Loewen in 1963!

Jake graduated from S.B.I. in 1964 and continued to farm until 1967, when he took a two year break. He and his family went out to Pelly, Saskatchewan, to aid in Evangelical Mission Conference Missions.

He came back to his own farm, just north of the home place, having missed out on that "Rice Tire" fall of 1968. In order to improve his farming, Jake took the diploma course at University of Manitoba and graduated in 1974.

Jake and Joyce's family consists of two girls and one boy, namely: Cheryl Elain, May, 1965; Valerie Grace, January, 1967; and James Wade, May, 1969.

## PETER M. KROEKER

Peter M. Kroeker was born on July 2, 1840, in Russia. In the year 1841, on April 3 or 4, was the recorded birth of his future wife, Margareta Braun, also in Russia. Married in 1860, August 2, they are noted to have moved to Bersenka, in 1873 and in this new settlement in Bersenka, Russia, Grandpa, P.M. Kroeker, was elected into the ministry, in the Village of Friedensfeld. Approximately a year later, in 1874, they came to Canada. Grandpa Kroeker died on April 15, 1915 and Grandma, on January 6, 1919, during the flu epidemic. They have five children: Frank, Jacob, Mrs. C.J. Loewen, Peter and Mrs. Abram Loewen.



*Mr. and Mrs. Frank B. Kroeker.*

## FRANK B. KROEKER

Frank B. Kroeker was the son of Peter M. Kroeker and Margareta Braun Kroeker, born in Canada on January 17, 1879. Mother, F.B. Kroeker was Aganetha Klassen, daughter of Jac B. Klassen, also newly emmigrated into the same Rosenort-Rosenhoff area. She was born on May 31, 1909.

Our parents were married and lived all their lives together at Rosenort. To this family, sixteen children were born, two of which died in infancy. It is interesting to note how similar the histories were of Frank and Jacob B. Kroeker. Besides both being into the ministry, they lived close together as neighbours. Their main occupations were farming. Father F. Kroeker enjoyed good horses and kept his farm orderly and prospered well. In March 18, 1928, he was elected as minister in the Rosenort church.

The parents retired from farming in 1950. In 1959, they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Mother spent the last twenty years of her life mostly in bed, as an invalid and died August 15, 1962 at the age of 75.

Father spent his last years in a senior citizens' home, and died May 23, 1969 at the age of 90.

The family members are: Margaret, married to Peter L. Loewen, 5 children, Rosenort; Mary, married to Jacob W. Brandt, 5 children, Rosenort; Peter, married to Margaret Loewen, 6 children, Rosenort; Annie, married to Conde P. Dueck, deceased of a heart attack, no children, age 26 years; Jacob, married to Annie Dueck, also deceased of a heart attack in June 7, 1977, age 62, 3 children, Winnipeg; Helen, married Jake L. Loewen, 6 children, Altona; Nettie, married Peter B. Remple, 6 children, Calgary; Tena, married Ben D. Friesen, died of cancer June 24, 1953, age 37 years, 3 children, Rosenort; Frank, married Annie Eidse, 9 children, one died at early age, Rosenort; Lucy, married Henry B. Rempel, had 5 children, Rosenort; Susie, married Nick K. Friesen, 2 boys, Rosenort; Evan, married Frank J.L. Friesen, 5 children, Steinbach; Elma, married Abe J.L. Friesen, 4 children, Rosenort; Abe, married Helen Remple, 3 children, Morris, died accidentally, December 28, 1961, age 37 years.



*Mr. and Mrs. Jacob B. Kroeker.*

## JACOB B. KROEKER - 1882-1978

Jacob Braun Kroeker was born after his parents, Peter M. Kroeker, had settled in the new country, at Rosenort, Manitoba, in Canada. He was born the son of a Menonite minister on December 17, 1882. In this atmosphere, Jacob B. Kroeker grew up, in respect and discipline in a Christian family.

He, himself, became a believer at about the age of 20, and was baptized by his uncle in 1903 and became a member of the Rosenort church. He married Helena K. Loewen, daughter of Peter W. Loewens from Neunanlage, near Steinbach, in 1906, November 25. He was a reserved man, who deserved the respect he seemed to receive naturally. We remember him as having a quiet sense of humour, and a twinkle in his eye.

Shortly after marriage, Grandpa Jacob B. Kroeker, became drastically ill with appendicitis and Grandma nursed him back to health, until he regained his strength.

They then moved from his parents' (Peter M. Kroeker) home to their own house nearby. They farmed with their children until their own retirement at this same farm location (presently Stan Plett's home).

In farming with the children, it is understood that they were expected to and did help with hay making, usually in company with F.B. Kroeker, who were neighbours. With setting up sheaves, the children tried to stay caught up behind the binder and four horses, if the sheaves weren't too heavy. Even Grandma brought out the baby in a carriage and helped with the sheaves. The memories are still warm and blessed.

Grandpa Kroeker was a very likely candidate for the ministry, as he was already chosen as a song leader in 1911. (forsanger) `cute verwaltung' in this position often led to assessment by fellow believers and he soon became a prime candidate, because he made a worthy reputation in being friendly but having a humble attitude. In 1921, he was elected for the position of minister, but it also led into being the first Bishop in the Rosenort Kleingemeinde, two years later, 1923. It was a difficult and demanding position and required dedication.

During this time, he also farmed to support his family, as ministers in those days were not on a salary.

Grandma was some six years younger than Grandpa. She lost her own mother, when she was only two years of age. Grandma was a young bride and losing their second baby (daughter) was a tragedy. In all, they had 12

children. Other unheavals in raising their family were Frank's hemorrhaging after having tonsils removed. He had to be rushed back to hospital. Levi had diptheria and had to be rushed to Winnipeg for medical help. Grandpa himself, never spent a day in the hospital in spite of reaching the ripe old age of 95.

The Kroekers had a long and happy marriage, celebrating their 50th anniversary with the congregation and family, and the 60th with an open house at their home. In 1966, they observed their 65th anniversary at the Rest Haven Home, where they spent the last years of their lives.

Both enjoyed the outdoors and when they retired, and built their new bungalow, east of the older house in the garden, they planted trees and shrubs. Grandma always



*Jac B. Kroeker's home. Daughter, Annie, standing in the flower garden.*

had an abundance of flowers outside and indoors as well, besides vegetables, fruit trees. Annie and Elizabeth were living with them until they moved to the Home.

Statistics show that Grandpa baptized a total of 516 persons and officiated at 90 weddings. The nature of his work involved a lot of travelling and they visited Mexico and Kansas several times.

They travelled more with the children in later life, as far as the Butchard Gardens in Vancouver Island, to California and other spots, enjoying the wonders of nature. Christmas was always a joyous occasion for all the family, grandchildren included.

Their children were: Peter, 1907-1973, married Annie Klassen; Margaret, 1909-1910; Tina, 1911, married Jac D. Friesen, Riverton; Margaret, 1913, married John F. Friesen, Morris; Lena, 1915, married Peter F. Warkentin, Rosenort (deceased); Marie, 1916, married Isaac Loewen, McTavish; Frank, 1918, married Annie Harms, Rosenort; Jake, 1920, married Elizabeth Reimer, Riverton; Annie, 1923, married Henry F. Klassen, Maryfield, Saskatchewan; Elizabeth, 1924, single; Ben, 1926, married Lena Bartel, Birch River, Manitoba; Levi, 1928, married Lillian Warkentin, Armstrong, B.C.

## P.L. KROEKER - ANNA KLASSEN

*Anna* was the oldest daughter at the Jac R. Klassen home. An older brother, John, had predeceased her in

1906 and she must have been a much awaited baby, when she arrived on February 19, 1908.

Being the oldest child, she well remembers the chores, the building of the new house, the water hauled by barrels from the river for the livestock. Later, a well was dug under the barn and the well filled by teams of horses with large water tanks on sleighs, regularly. They then acquired up to 10 cows to milk, and had some 14 horses.

For drinking purposes, the farmers cut and hauled ice from the Morris (Scratching) River. Coal was brought in by freight train to a local station, and heating was mainly wood and coal. Apples were bought by the barrel in fall, imported by rail also. Large gardens produced vegetables for canning and pickling. Potatoes and canned goods were stored in large dark earth cellars. Hog killing bees and the slaughter of beef was a neighbourhood project as folks helped each other in fall, when meat could be frozen for the winter. 'Farmer sausage' was a direct result of the need to salt and smoke meat to make it less perishable. Smoke houses were a common sight on any farm, and the wood used was chosen specifically to produce the right flavour. Native fruits like chokecherries and saskatoons, plums, were used in jams and jellies, or dried. Refrigeration wasn't common until the 40's, when hydro came in.

Anna received her schooling at Rosenort in a private school, where it was all in the German language until the system changed to public school. She was just young enough to obtain a good basic knowledge of English before she was too old to continue. It was customary to quit school early, at age 12 or 14, to help at home.

She met Peter L. Kroeker at school, but it was years later that Dad seriously began considering how to win her for his wife. He told us of how he walked on foot, following the river road, winding along the west side and across the former farmyards of Martin W. Friesen and Abram K. Friesen. He recalled the anxiety he felt, like



*Mr. and Mrs. P.L. Kroeker and son, Henry in 1931.*

every young man does, as he waited for a reply to a valentine.

Peter L. Kroeker was the oldest son of Jacob B. Kroeker, well known minister and bishop of the Rosenort E.M.C. (Evangelical Mennonite Church). He was born



*P.L. Kroeker home in 1950 flood. House was built by Jac R. Klassen, Mrs. Kroeker's father in 1916.*

on October 29, 1907 and married Mother on October 20, 1929. After some moving around the first years, they settled on the Jac R. Klassen yard and later exchanged houses with her parents. Before moving to the Klassen farm, they had already been blessed with several children and it was during this time that they experienced the sorrow of the loss of Willie, who was almost 5.

The first four babies were delivered at home by a great aunt, Mrs. A.K. Aitse. These were: Henry, Jake, Elsie and Menno. Later, babies were delivered by Mrs. William Rosche, Mrs. Henry (Unger) Brandt and when the hospital opened, by Dr. Colert.

As the boys became older, and Dad had more help, they bought more land and better implements. The oldest boys went into custom work with sugar beets, seeding and cultivating and the transporting of young people to thin beets and in fall to top beets. (cutting off tops manually.) It appeared big business then, as there were up to three trucks with from 20 to 30 people on each in one day - going as far as Kane, Myrtle and Roland. The 'gangs' were popular and well liked for the good conscientious work performed. Pay was anywhere from \$8.00 to \$15.00 a day, piecework, paid per row or acre.

Dad was active in Sunday School teaching and school trustee. Both parents took a sincere interest in education, and as a result the whole family has gone into professions besides farming.

Henry is married to Eva Warkentin. He is now in real estate and has been in the Macleod's Hardware store in

Morris; farmed the home place and is still farming. They have six children.

Jake is a school teacher turned missionary. He and his wife, Bertha Loewen, (registered nurse) live at El Paso and now go across into Mexico, to conduct Spanish church services regularly. They have three children: Lester, Yolanda, and Kelly.

Elsie, now Mrs. Ernest Funk, is a registered nurse married to a missionary serving with a family of three girls, in Paraguay. The girls are: Gloria, 15; Grace, 13; and Gladys, 19.



*Rev. Jacob B. Kroeker cultivating their garden at the age of 86 years.*

Menno is married to Dorothy Friesen. Both are school teachers. Menno is also a full-time minister in the local church (E.M.C.) and has his degree in theology. They have three children: Donnell, David and Leanne.

Edward is married to Annie Reimer, one of a set of twins - twin to Mrs. Andrew Friesen. Ed farms and has a thriving business in car body repair and painting. They have four girls: Jenny, Thelma, Lavonne and Stephanie.

Mary is employed in the Winkler School Division as a special education teacher. She has a B.A. with a major in psychology.

Peter is a school teacher turned businessman. He is in partnership with two other men; one is the youngest brother, Ronald. Peter is married to Anne Penner, a teacher also and has one daughter, Cindy. He is in the process of establishing a promising printing business called Country Graphics.

Lawrence is a missionary in Pakistan, where he and his wife, Helen, are house parents at a missionary school.

Martha has returned from teaching in Mexico. She is a secretary in Steinbach with a church paper, 'The Messenger'.

Erna is married to Henry Friesen and they farm at Beausejour. Erna was a school teacher and Henry has an agriculture course in farming. As a result, they are expanding in the sheep industry, plus grain farming. They have 3 children: Gail, Ronnie and Coralee.

Ron married Wendy Erhardt in September, 1978. They are in Country Graphics with Peter. Wendy is also an accomplished artist in the same field.

Mother maintains the lovely home Dad built for her a few years before he passed away. She is avid in sewing and quilting for M.C.C. She has various hobbies, eg. gardening, all of which are evidence of her talent and abilities. She writes letters to the scattered children, has weekend guests often and keeps the home fires burning.



*P.L. Kroeker, spreading manure by hand in June, 1926.*

## HENRY K. KROEKER

Henry K. Kroeker was born, February 8, 1931, to Peter L. and Anna Klassen Kroeker, at Rosenort. Eva, daughter of John F. Warkentin, was born at Giroux, Manitoba, in 1932. We were married in 1954 on November 28, after Henry had been into custom beet farming and spent winters in a pulp camp. We spent one winter both employed at Bethesda Mental Home, at Vineland, Ontario. For seeding time, we returned to Rosenort, and rented Grandma Klassen's house at \$25.00 a month. From farming, we went to Rosenort and took on Walter Dueck's store, owned by the P.H. Duecks. Then it was a slow progression to custom trucking, farming, selling out the store and moving to Morris. Here we enjoyed a business as MacLeods dealers in partnership with Archie Penner and B.D. Reimer, both of whom had a great impact on our lives; in positive living as Christian individuals. We left to try Bible School at Steinbach, but as the family grew, we decided to come back to our home and business in Morris.



*F.L. Kroeker's farm, April, 1967, later owned by son, Henry.*

After awhile, Dad offered the farm to the sons and we decided to move to a rural environment with our five children. We received another extra blessing in the coming of our youngest, who evened up our three and three family. Just when farming became a greater financial risk, Henry was invited to study real estate with a man by the name of Kroeker at Winkler.

Joining Block Brothers in 1976, the business expanded till it was again decided to move to town, back on MacMillan to a new home.

We miss the farm and feel too young to be in town in a new house with a lot of conveniences, but find it very comfortable, especially when all the children come home.

We have Bruce, who married Clarice Dueck, engaged to Pat Klassen, Sherrill, married to Ron Hale, Tim, now in Grade XII, Laurel, Grade IX and Valerie, in Grade IV. We have enjoyed travelling to Mexico, Europe, U.S.A. etc, and also enjoy hobbies, such as photography and writing.

Family life takes on more meaning as we grow older and mature enough to realize that someone walked ahead of us to show the way. Now, we need to look back to see

who is following and what we are presenting as goals to live by.

## LEVI L. KROEKER

Levi Kroeker married Lillian Warkentin in October, 1948. They settled down in their home, which was situated at the present site of the Eventide Home. Levi was a trucker by nature and started this profession at an early age. Having done this for a number of years, he turned to a parallel job, mechanics. He worked in Rosenort, then for Carter Motors in Winnipeg. Their home was in Rosenort and three children; Jeannette, Diane and LaVerna were born here. In 1956, another trucking offer came up and they moved to Steinbach. Levi worked for Penner's Transfer doing, long distance travelling. Four more children were born here. Randall, Debra, Beverly and Barry.

1965 was an exciting year. After a holiday in B.C., they felt a pull to move there. In definite ways, God led the family to Chase, B.C., where Levi was a mechanic. In 1974, they moved to Armstrong, B.C., to be closer to his new job - trucking again. This job allows Dad to be home every day and he enjoys the work. Mom keeps very busy at home - housekeeping, gardening, various hobbies, as well as her job at the Senior Citizens' Home in Armstrong.

Dad, Mom and several of their children are active in the Armstrong Bible Chapel.

## MEMORIES OF ROSENORT

*by A.D. Friesen*

I would like to briefly give an account of our experience in Rosenort. Our eight years there were eventful years. Our biggest problem was getting used to the heavy gumbo that often made driving impossible.

We had bought a farm at Elm Creek, where we stayed in the summer months, planning to teach during the teaching term. This was in the year 1942. One day, we read an ad in the paper, requesting a teacher for Rosenort. We decided to answer this ad.

We were hired, and as we still had cattle on the farm that we could not leave, it was decided that I would go to



*Rosenort S.D. No. 60 - Teacher, A.D. Friesen, left in back row.*





*Opal, Patricia, and Shirley, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. A.D. Friesen, teacher at Rosenort.*

Rosenort with our youngest daughter, Opal, who was seven at that time, while my wife and 10 year old Shirley would stay back and look after the place.

What we marvelled at in those days, was the wonderful behaviour of the pupils. At 9:00, they rang the school bell and went to classes. When I arrived on the scene, I always found them quiet and busy. Sometimes I came in quietly before they heard me and always found them quiet and busy. We often wonder if there is a school today where this could happen.

Teaching at Rosenort was a wonderful experience. Parents co-operated with the teacher, resulting in excellent discipline in school. We were constantly invited into their home for delicious meals, and how those Rosenort women could cook! We were invited to weddings, or funerals or any of their gatherings; the teacher and his family were not left out. We saw Christianity practiced and it reached into the schools, resulting in the finest pupils any teacher could wish for.

In the summer time, when the gardens yielded good supplies of fresh vegetables, we were given whatever we could use, whenever there was any to spare. In fall, when pigs or a steer was butchered, we were often presented with some sausage or other meat.

Our fondest memories are the Christmas seasons spent at Rosenort. The weeks of preparations at the school, in happy anticipation, were the most exciting and enjoyable times for all of us. We shall never forget them!

After the 1950 flood, we left Rosenort, having spent eight happy years there. Our two oldest girls grew up there, and were young ladies when we left, a third daughter was born there; so it is small wonder that Rosenort still means a lot to us. These are but a few of our happy memories of the wonderful years spent in Rosenort.

## JACOB D. REMPEL

Mr. Rempel's history in Manitoba begins with the arrival of his paternal grandmother, Mrs. Rempel, from Russia in 1874. She had six sons: Abram (remained in Russia), Martin, Peter, Cornelius, Jacob, Gerhard; and four daughters: Maria (Mrs. Jacob Klassen), Katharine (Mrs. Jacob Enns), Elisabeth (Mrs. Jacob F. Dueck), and Anna (Mrs. Abram Klassen). The immigrants included his maternal great-grandparents Jacob and Margaretha Friesen, and his maternal grandparents Peter and Margaretha Dueck. His father Cornelius K. Rempel married Margaret Dueck. Mr. Rempel had 11 sisters and

brothers: Katharina (1884-1964), Margaretha (1885-1958) married Abram Loewen and died in Mexico; Peter (1887-1959); Jacob (1889-died in infancy); Elisabeth (1891-1929); Cornelius (1893-1960) married Elisabeth Loewen who married Mr. Jake K. Friesen; Maria (1896-1902); Heinrich (1898- ) married Annie Brandt; Anna (1901-1972); Helena (1904- ) married Mr. John K. Loewen; John (1912- ) married Annie L. Loewen.



*Jac. D. Refuel family in 1943.*

## Jacob D. Rempel and Family

Mr. Jacob D. Rempel is one, of his generations, who thrills to live at this particular time in history. His life spans a period of marvellous advances in agriculture, science, technology, and education. Advances in the use of machines in agriculture were particularly welcome because they took the heavy toil and drudgery out of farming. His initial experiences in farming include ploughing with a team of horses and a hand plough owned by his father, and his later experiences include



*Jac D. Rempel threshing flax the year after seeding it. Note - Titan tractor and Waterloo thresher.*

discing with a four-wheel drive Massey Ferguson tractor owned by his son. At 18 he was fireman for a threshing outfit powered by steam.

In his life time, Mr. Rempel has experienced prosperous years and lean years. Lean years resulted from hail damage, drought, grasshoppers, rain and wind storms. In the 1930's, he built a platform to fit over the rear bumper of his Model A Touring, to pick up bags of poison bait from Morris. Early in the morning Mrs. Rempel would slowly circle the fields with the car while

Mr. Rempel sat on the rear platform, carefully spreading the grasshopper poison by hand. In 1945, the fields were flooding from rains during the harvest and he fashioned a



*Mr. Rempel's homemade snow blower of the 50's.*

large platform dragging behind the tractor, to collect the grain to be dried in the yard before threshing. Later, the fields were sufficiently dry to allow a combine towed by two tractors to harvest additional crops.

Without fanfare he served his relatives and the community. For about nine consecutive years up to 1941, Mr. Rempel provided free transportation for the Greenbank School's annual field trip to the Red River at Aubigny. During an exceedingly wet fall in the 1940's, his brother needed someone to haul his sugar beets. Roads were impassable, so he constructed a 'drag' and smoothed the road, six miles of dirt, to McTavish. He hauled the sugar beets and other farmers also used the 'reconditioned' roads. In the spring of 1948, after a blizzard lasting several days, he hitched his willing horses to a box sleigh and collected the folk stranded in Union



*Jacob Rempel's boat, leaving home in 1950 flood.*

Point and brought them home. The flood of 1950 demanded much of many people. Mr. Rempel used his homemade boat to transport people and goods, it was sturdy enough to carry half a ton of hay.

Speed and power always interested him. As a lad, he marvelled at the power displayed by a team of oxen; as a man of 83, he marvelled at the speed and power of the 747 jet that took him and his wife to Australia for Christmas in 1978, and he exulted in the engines that powered the Queen Mary, now docked at Long Beach, California. His first jet flight was somewhat of a disappointment: after take-off, he could no longer sense the speed of the plane.

He supported the changes in education in the schools and in the churches, in singing styles, in music, and in attitudes towards strangers outside our communities. About the year 1916, he and his brother purchased the first piano in the community. When the leading ministers requested that the piano be sold, the teacher at Rosenort, Mr. Jacob Neufeld, agreed to house the offending instrument. Mr. Neufeld's living quarters were in the second storey of the school building. One evening the staircase in the school was removed, the piano was hoisted up, and the staircase was moved back into place. For a number of years Mr. Jacob Neufeld and later, Mr. George P. Neufeld, another school teacher, were given full support in their efforts to improve standards in education.

Jacob Rempel married Lena Loewen in April, 1926, and raised a family of eight children: Elizabeth (Liesbeth to her intimate friends); John, Helen, Levi, Bertha, Alvin, Luella and Lorne.

Liesbeth, in her lifestyle, exemplifies the advantages enjoyed by a single woman of today when compared to the lives of single women of several decades ago. Initially thwarted by negative attitudes towards education in general, and education for women in particular, she struggled to become the first woman of her church community, trained and qualified to teach in the schools of Manitoba, and the first person to be the recipient of a B.A. from the University of Manitoba. She has taught various groupings of students from Grade I to Grade XII



*Elizabeth Rempel with co-tutor and students at the Teaching Training College in St. Kitts, W.I. in June, 1974.*

in Manitoba, and has spent five years and three summer sessions training teachers in the West Indies. Changing attitudes towards women and her financial freedom have allowed her to travel for her own education and in the service of others. Some areas she has visited are: Australia, Europe, Great Britain, the Panama Canal, Machu Pichu, Lake Titicaca, Bogota in South America, Tahiti, Fiji and Malta.

John was the first son of Jacob and Helena Rempel. He was born and raised on the farm (22-6-1W) that had been purchased from the Warkentin family, just before John's birth. Later on he married Eleanor Warkentin, a grandchild of the original homesteader. When the parents retired in 1966, they bought the farm, all modernized by now. The three Rempel children have a rich historical heritage, still the same house as all their great-grandparents and grandparents had. The house has



*Unloading bales on the Jac D. Rempel farm. This house was built by H.D. Warkentin in the early 1900's.*

been kept in perfect condition with timely renovations. Just recently it's been set on a new basement, above flood level.

John got his schooling right next door, the Greenbank School. It was a rare treat to take lunch along since it was only a short run through their pasture.

Livelihood was custom baling before buying his own farm, after that it included driving school van besides. Now it's grain farming, hog production and a school related job again.

They had four children: Mildred 1952 (now married to Bob Elliott); Reginald 1954; Lynette (died in infancy); and Pamela 1966. The oldest two were born deaf, Pamela is hearing and attends the local school. Millie and Reg got their formal education at the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg, technical training, bible school and now college, in the United States.

Helen studied at a business college in Winnipeg, then to return to the office of a local business firm. Her husband, Abe Kroeker, assisted in the growth of the business owned by Mr. Jake L. Loewen, one of the early dealers in cars and farm machinery. In 1957, the Kroekers moved to Morris where Abe's loyalty and business expertise promoted the development of the firm, J.R. Friesen and Son, to reach its present standard of consistly efficient service. In 1966 Mr. Kroeker became a councillor in the town of Morris and served in that capacity for about 7 years. The Kroekers have three children: Yvonne, employed in Kitchener; Gary, employed by the Department of Highways; and Curt, employed at Bumper in Morris.

Levi the second son and fourth child born October 8, 1932. Levi grew up and got his education in Rosenort area. He married Rosaline Brandt on September 21, 1956. Livelihood was trucking, till he bought a farm 3



*The Jac D. Rempel family at their Golden Wedding in June, 1976.*

miles west of Rosenort. Then he took to grain farming and raising hogs. They have a family of three children: Cynthia Rose 1958, married Reynold Loewen 1979; Lori Faith 1962, Brent Allen 1965.

In the spring of 1958, the students and staff of the Greenbank High School planned the first graduation exercises. Bertha was in that group of students who graduated upon the successful completion of Grade XI. She married Len Friesen and they have two daughters, Julia and Muriel. They are engaged in grain farming and in the raising of beef cattle on a farm between Wawanesa and Brandon. Lately Len has become a used truck dealer, shuttling trucks between Hamilton, Manitoba, Alberta, North Dakota, and California.

Alvin was born on June 20, 1939, the sixth child of the Jacob Rempel family. He received his basic education in the Greenbank School. He married Diana Brandt in 1966. They have four children: Robert 1968, Phyllis 1969, Tricia 1973, and Cora Lee 1978. Alvin farms in the R.M. of Morris and in 1973 started the Massey Ferguson dealership in Rosenort. His political career started in 1973 when he was elected councillor for the R.M. of Morris. In 1975, he became Reeve. He has served the community in various other capacities, such as in the Chamber of Commerce and the Morris Hospital board of directors.

One of the first women of Rosenort to become a telephone operator, was Luella Rempel. She was a graduate of Steinbach Bible Institute and later married Milton Reimer. They lived at Flin Flon, Lynn Lake, and in Winnipeg. Her daughter, Angela, was a year and a half when Luella died December 31, 1968.

Lorne, in his activities, combines the inherited interests in farms and in trucks. At 16, he made his first longer haul when he took a load of flax straw to the stock piles north of Winnipeg. Over the years he has owned his own trucks and he has also been employed by trucking firms. He has made the **run** to Montreal and to Toronto from Winnipeg for Reimer Express Lines, hauled gravel in Southern Manitoba, and hauled pulp at Kenora. At present he lives at Pingelly, Western Australia, is co-owner of Kirralee Transport, and hauls wool, sheep, grain, gravel (blue metal), clay and fuel oil. He is married to Marilyn, nee Salmond, and is the father of two sons, Cleon and Ryan. He is proud to establish the 'Rempel Dynasty' in Australia.



*Lorne's pride and joy, he is co-owner of Kirralee Transport - 1977.*

## JOHNNY REMPEL

John and Eleanor have experienced the difficulties of raising two deaf children. When the handicap was discovered, they began to search for solutions. Both children, Reg and Millie, started speech therapy at the Children's Hospital at the age of two. Hours, days and weeks were spent in getting pictures, word cards, matching sets of both, made up for home teaching.

When the children were six, they started day school in Winnipeg, boarding in private homes, coming home only on weekends. When the province opened the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Tuxedo, they lived at the school.



*Reg's graduation at Tennessee Temple. LEFT TO RIGHT: Reg, Eleanor, John, Pain, Millie (Rempel) Elliot, Bob Elliot.*

After graduation, Millie was sent to St. Paul, Minnesota, to take her general office course. Millie and Reg both progressed to higher learning, but since there are few institutions in Canada to accommodate the deaf, they had to go to the United States. They are both graduates of the Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga, Tennessee (Bible Dept.) Millie married a hearing man, Bob Elliott, of Florida, also a student there. She is now a teacher in the English Dept. of the deaf section. The school on the whole, is a hearing institution, of 4500 students. All three are presently working on their B.A.'s at present and Reg expects to come back to Canada to enter the profession of teaching and ministry to the deaf.

Millie was crowned "Home Coming Queen" on this huge campus of hearing people. Reg was chosen to be among the top 20 seniors and was a close runner for the title "Mr. Temple". He was also on the second all star soccer team, and won the trophy for "outstanding hustler"

The successes of these two young people can encourage other handicapped people to seek the life available, so they can live normal happy lives in today's world.

## MARTIN REMPEL

Father Rempel was born on October 27, 1847.

Mother Rempel was born on June 18, 1857. They emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1874, and were

married five years later. They lived on a half section of land, having a mixed farm of grain and cattle. They met with misfortune many times. The crops were hailed out and they recall that the cattle did not produce much income either. They retired after some 40 years of farming - somewhere around 1906. Mother Rempel was often sick, and much of their income was needed for medical bills. She was also blind, but coped well with this handicap, not complaining.

Father Rempel was a fairly healthy man until about 1915, when he became ill. He suffered in patience until his death in 1916. Mother Rempel survived until 1934.

The family was -

1. His son, Peter (1883) began farming in 1906, marrying a widow, Mrs. Frank Froese. He continued farming until his death in 1938. His wife, Liebe Rempel, was in poor health and died December 17, 1966. By their marriage, they had two sons, whom they lost in childhood - one was eight when he died and one only one and one-half years old.
2. William Rempel (1887) was a tanner. He married Anna Toews on May 21, 1914, and they had 7 children. Mr. Rempel died on May 20, 1970.
3. Jacob Rempel (1888) farmed in the Morris municipality all his life. He married Elizabeth Loewen on February 15, 1916 and they had 12 children. Mr. Rempel passed away in 1960, followed by his wife two years later.
4. Lena Rempel (1890) married Heinrich W. Friesen of Rosenhoff on December 25, 1911. During his lifetime, he was an implement dealer, a farmer, and also the credit union manager. They had 12 children. After Mrs. Friesen's death in 1964, Mr. Friesen married Elizabeth Loewen in 1965. He passed away in 1969 and the second Mrs. Friesen deceased on December 15, 1975.



*Martin Rempel, (1916) in his youth he was an avid motorcyclist, as may be noted by his attire.*

5. Martin Rempel was born on May 13, 1893. He worked in different trades, like garage work, etc. He married Lena Funk from Herbert, Saskatchewan, in 1918, and they had 9 children. He passed away in 1951. Mrs. Funk remarried and was widowed; and she is presently at the Eventide Home at Rosenort.
6. Tina Rempel (1896) married Heinrich D. Brandt, son of the Heinrich W. Brandts, on December 20, 1914.



*Son of original settler, Peter Rempel, Jacob T. Rempel, displays his first plow for sale.*

## THE FAMILY OF DAVID L. AND TINA LOEWEN

*D.L. Loewen*

My grandfather Isaac W. Loewen and grandmother (Janzen) came from Russia in 1874-1875. Since he was a farmer, he settled in the Village of Rosenort. He had four sons Isaac, John, Peter and Jacob who was my father, also a farmer 1 1/2 miles south of Rosenort. Father married Elizabeth K. Loewen who is my mother. They had four children, Elizabeth (Mrs. Jake K. Friesen), Margaret (Mrs. P.K. Kroeker), David (yours truly) and Mary who died in 1953. Father died February, 1920. Mother married Mr. John B. Thiessen of Giroux in December the same year.



*LEFT: Mr. Jac J. Loewen in 1903 at 17 years.*



*RIGHT. Original home of pioneer I. W. Loewen, where Jac J. Loewen was born.*

They had seven children (one died in infancy). Still living are: Helen (nurse), Tina (Mrs. John Bartel, Kansas), Annie (Mrs. Ben D. Reimer, nurse, Kansas), Pete (farming), John (Rosenort Motors) and Abe (trucker). We were married October 1, 1939 and built a house the same year. 1939-1940 was one of the mildest winters I can remember, when we moved into our new house in December it was a warm day so we had the windows open.

We had eight children: Ester, the oldest, has a degree in nursing and is presently matron at the Burnaby General Hospital, British Columbia. Linda died at the age of 20 in June, 1962. Ernie married Mary Ann Eidse, they have four girls, Faith, Jennie, Hannah and Monique. Ernie

has worked for Rosenort Motors for the last 19 years and is also a minister at the Pleasant Valley Church. He is completing a five year RIA evening course at the University of Manitoba. Their further plans are if the Lord wills, going to Paraguay as missionaries, to work at the Radio Station ZP 30.

Liz has been working at the University of Manitoba the last eight years and is taking an evening CIA Course at the University of Manitoba. Danny is married to Florence Eidse and they have three children, Carl, Marc and Corrina. They live in Rosenort where he is an electrician by trade, and also Sunday School superintendent at the Church.



*Three generation family picture of the D.L. Loewen family, taken in 1977.*

Edwin is married to Joy Modericker and they have one girl Christina. They left for Pakistan in September, 1978 as missionaries on a four year term. They are studying the Urdu language the first year.

Laura married Harold Thiessen and they are farming at Bowsman. They have two boys, Chucky and Steven.

Mary Anne is married to Randy Siemens and live in Rosenort. They have one girl Tammy. Randy is a plumber by trade.

In 1945, we moved to the farm 2 1/4 miles west of Riverside Co-Op where we are still farming.



*A group of Mennonites looking over the land in Saskatchewan I. W. Loewen, Rosenort pioneer, is in this group in Sept. 1903.*

PETER J. LOEWEN  
The Journal, August 16, 1967

Oar Centennial citizen this week is Peter J. Loewen of Rosenort. Mr. Loewen celebrated his 89th birthday on June 25th of this year.

Peter's parents, the Isaac Leewen's, emigrated to Canada from Russia in 1874, just four years before he was born. He grew up amongst a family of five boys, on a farm that his parents homesteaded. The farms were much smaller at that time. Isaac Loewens owned 150 acres of good farmland, and that was considered a large farm. Of course everyone kept livestock too; to have their own supply of meat, milk, butter and eggs.

"I can remember when the threshing machines were driven by horse power. Real horse power. Four or five teams of horses travelled in a circle to produce the power. The operator stood in the middle on a platform driving the horses with a whip. I, myself, drove the horses on my father's place when I was young," says Peter.

Peter started farming on 70 acres of land he inherited from his father; and this beginning grew to an acreage of 900 acres when he worked at his peak. "When I look back, it all seems like a good dream." Land was cheap then, and life was primitive, but peaceful and happy. Until 1914. "Things seemed to change after the first world war. And since then it's been nothing but talk about war."

For a time, ambitious young Peter worked as an agent selling land for the Moose Jaw Land Company. At that time he bought a section of land at Herbert and worked that besides travelling and selling real estate. "I even travelled into Kansas on business, but quit; when I found I was thinking more about farming than about selling."

At the age of 26, Peter married Annie Loewen of Rosenort. They were married for 45 years, and during that time had 10 children. Seven of his children reside in Rosenort on farms - Peter, John, Elizabeth (Mrs. Jacob Reimer), Mary (Mrs. H. R. Friesen), Isaac and Abe, Annie (Mrs. John Hempel) lives in Kola, Cornie in Riverton, Helen (Mrs. Henry Loewen) Meade, Kansas, Jacob (Loewen Mfg.) in Altona. How many grandchildren? "I'm not sure, but about 2,04," he said with a laugh. "No we're not quite sure, it changes all the time." His wife interrupted, "Don't forget their was another one born yesterday!" The closest tally at last, resulted in 60 grandchildren, and 45 great grandchildren.

"The best crop I ever had was in the '30's. My boys and I harvested 20,000 bushels of grain; 10,000 of that was wheat. And we did it all with horses. But I wouldn't want to do that over again," he said after much thought.

Peter lost his wife in October, 1949. To fill in the lonely hours spent, he commenced with his memoirs, at the age of 70. He was written a large book in long hand, in English and German, along with some poetry and stories. "I don't particularly like writing," he said, "but I thought it was my duty to write things down, to leave some sort of history for the next generations. I wish more people would do that. I often thought of burning that book," he said glancing at his memoirs. Why? "Because I wrote so much foolishness when I was a young kid of 70," he said with a laugh. He also helped to compile a family tree of his ancestors, which goes back seven generations, to 1759.

"Nowadays the young people think the old people don't know anything," he said, "But we know

a little. If a young fellow walks, he walks very fast with his nose high, and before too long he stumbles. An old man always looks to the ground when he walks because he knows better."

He married for the second time, at the age of 75 to Aganetha Barkman of Steinbach. "We lived in Steinbach for 1 1/2 years and then my wife said we should move back to Rosenort, because all my children are here. So we did." In 1956 they built themselves a new bungalow in the village. And Mr. Loewen is still keeping up with the times, driving a newer model car. Years ago, he was a bit ahead of his time, compared to his neighbors. He was always ready and willing to try something new. "That was my character," he said. "I was very impatient."



P.J. Loewen in the (1940's).



LEFT: Peter Loewen at the age of 18. He died 6 months before his 100th birthday.

BELOW: P.J. Loewen and son Isaac combining in 1930.



Clipping from The Journal, Morris, Aug. 16, 1967.



LEFT: ' Mr. and Mrs. P.J. Loewen at their home in Rosenort in 1945.

RIGHT: Digging ditches are P.J. Loewen on tractor, son, Isaac on plow, John running, son-in-law, J.P.D. Reimer, cleaning wheels.





## PETER H. DUECK SON JAC F. DUECK

Peter H. Dueck was married to Margaret T. Friesen. They came to Canada in 1874. Out of nine children they had seven that survived. These were Henry, Jacob, John, Margaret, Annie, Marie and Helen. Elizabeth and Jacob died.

Jacob F. Dueck is the father of the story now unfolding. (1868-1944) He was married to Elizabeth B. Friesen, and they had two children survive out of four. The ones who were named after the paternal parents were the two that had the grace to live!

Mother was not a strong person and had to leave the family behind when was hospitalized due to tuberculosis, when the family was very young and needed her. Margaret was fostered by the Jacob B. Rempels in 1900. Her mother's death was a traumatic experience. She had been found dead in her bed in the same position as she had been seen when she had retired for night two hours prior to her passing. Peter was raised by George Schellenbergs at Kleefeld.

As Margaret grew older she went out on housework jobs. Whenever she could, she did the chores in the evening at her foster parents, and so she proved to be a very willing worker. When Mr. Rempel passed away, the widow remarried to a Mr. Jacob L. Plett of Blumenort, near Steinbach.

This was probably how it came about that when she was working at her brother Peter's, that she met a young fellow who courted and married her. The wedding was in the Blumenort church, in a simple Sunday morning worship as was customary. There was no reception, but the custom was then, the friends of the couple would show up during the evening at the parents. Margaret was now Mrs. John Penner Siemens of Schoenfeld (Kleefeld).

In four years they decided to move back to Rosenort, to a spot close to her father's home, and where the Dick Zacharias' live today.

In fact the house still stands, where Mrs. Siemens spends part of her summers. They had a garden, and Mr. Siemens took a job at the local lumber yard, with J.T. Rempel. Mr. Siemens showed a strong aptitude for taking care of the sick and was very helpful as a father when the children were sick. Mrs. Siemens was a hospitable person and still is. She loves people and laughs easily. She is also an instinctively sensitive person who is sympathetic to others needs. She shows talent in writing and rejoices in restored eyesight after surgery, so she is busy these days writing her family story. She has poetry that she and her stepfather wrote for each other. (Mr. Plett)

Born to this marriage were: Susie, Mrs. Peter Muzel, Arborg; Elizabeth, Mrs. Victor Severson, Winnipeg - deceased; Peter Siemens of Morris, married to Tina Enns; Jacob Siemens married to Tina Koop, now in Sorrento, B.C.; Neta married to Lawrence Coates of Morris; Margaret, Mrs. Paul Blehm of Meade, Kansas; Helen, Mrs. Donald Young, Winnipeg.

Mr. Siemens passed away in 1946. She was a widow for four years when John Reimer of Meade, Kansas became her husband. She remained a Canadian Citizen, and when her husband John deceased her in 1974, she came

back to Rosenort, home - to the place of roses!

Margaret Reimer is presently living at Eventide Home where she is a valued attribute at the home, and continuing with her hobbies, well into her eighties.

## MR. AND MRS. FRANK DUECK

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dueck began to make Morris area history four years after their marriage in 1944, when they returned from an employment venture which initially took them to Hudson-by-Junchon, Saskatchewan, and then to Steinbach, Manitoba. Upon their return, they took up residence on the homestead of the A.R. Klassen farm.

In 1951, the Duecks moved to another location within the community, setting up what became their permanent residence across from the E.M.C. Church in the Rosenort area.

Their eldest child, Irwin, arrived prior to their return to the community in 1947, then in 1949, Elmer arrived. Thereafter, it was strictly girls, with Elvira arriving in 1952, Ruth in 1953, Dianne in 1957, and their youngest child, Judy, who arrived in 1961.

Their children have all married, except for Judy. Irwin married Marilyn Johnson in 1967, and two years later made Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dueck the proud grandparents of their first grandchild, Kevin Blaine and another grandson, Myron Blake, in 1971. Elmer married Christal Shalin in 1973. Elvira married Ben Dueck that same year and extended the role of the grandparents by adding their first granddaughter, Marcia Rachelle, in 1975 and another grandson, Brent Nathan, in 1977.

Ruth married Gerald Thiessen in 1974 and in 1978, Christopher Scott arrived, making Mr. and Mrs. Dueck the proud grandparents of five grandchildren. In 1975, Dianne married Glenn Friesen.

Business too, has been flourishing for the Duecks. Mr. Dueck began his initial venture into the building moving business, in 1950, which has remained his occupation. The business has done well over the years and in part, has become a family enterprise with sons, Irwin and Elmer, working for their dad during the summer while completing their high school and then becoming full-time



*Duecks moving a house. The business has grown from its small beginnings.*

employees. Irwin has remained directly involved with the moving business and formed a partnership with his father in 1968. Elmer remained with the business until he left to further his schooling in business administration and accounting in 1969, until 1976. Thereafter, he formed a partnership with the business as well and became the company accountant and business manager. A son-in-law, Mr. Ben Dueck, started employment for the company in 1968 and became part of the business partnership in 1976.

Frank Dueck was actively involved in the work of the moving crews until 1975, at which time the company made the decision to extend its role to that of crew management, business recruitment, job scheduling and business arranging.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dueck are thoroughly enjoying their residence in the Morris area, enjoying both the beautiful terrain that this particular area of the Red River Valley offers, and also the many friends and acquaintances that they have come to know over the years.

### JOHN F. AND JUSTINA DUECK (1875-1946) - (1883-1965)

Upon their arrival at Morris in July, 1874, Peter H. Duecks at once went about the serious business of survival in this unsettled, sometimes savage territory. The home for their family of four children became a simlin, (sod house) which consisted merely of a dugout in the river bank, with a dirt roof. The winter's cold was so severe, they had hoar frost on the blankets in the morning. The calf was brought into the living room, thus sharing the family's warm comfort. It was here that baby John F. Dueck, was born on January 6, 1875, that first harsh winter, and he thus became the first newborn little Canadian of the whole settlement.

At the very beginning, the Peter H. Duecks had no more than a cow and a plow. Mosquitoes were so extreme that haymaking was almost impossible. Frost and grasshoppers destroyed their meager crops the first two years. However, survive they did. Before long, little John

was in school. He attended it for four years and could read and write in two languages. John enjoyed trapping wolves, foxes, mink, skunks and muskrats. Known as the wolf catcher in the Morris Municipal office, he earned himself a dollar for a set of wolf or fox ears. Buffalo still roamed some miles north on the prairies.

In 1903, John married Justina Friesen and they lived in the Riverside (Rosenhoff) area. Their first years were difficult, but gradually things eased up as more modern farming methods were employed. Earlier, seed was scattered by hand and burrowed with heavy ash branches pulled by oxen. This was then replaced by horses and still later, by more modern machinery.

After six years, John and Justina bought a farm 1 1/2 miles west at Rosenort at a bend of the Morris River arm. This tiny river runs very swiftly and each spring, or after heavy rainfall, a dam was built as a reservoir. Here Justina enjoyed a beautiful garden with plentiful fruit. However, at times, she found it very isolated. At this time, they farmed two quarters of land. During the depression, they had a hard struggle for about five years.

Grandpa, Peter H. Dueck, lived with them for years, and was especially attached to his older granddaughters, who cared for him. In fact, he wished for them to remain at home, unmarried, until he should die, which, by coincidence, also happened. He lived to the ripe age of 94.

John and Justina were blessed with fourteen children. They lost one daughter in 1918, when twins arrived, but due to severe complications, only Henry survived. Their children are: John (died at 48), Justina (Mrs. Isaac Cornelsen, Margaret (Mrs. Abram Kornelsen), Agnes (Mrs. Jacob J.K. Loewen), Annie (Mrs. Peter J.K. Loewen), Peter, Mary (Mrs. Peter P. Loewen), Elizabeth (Mrs. Jacob Kroeker), Jacob Dueck, Henry Dueck, Corny Dueck, Helen (Mrs. Tony Fast) and Dave.

On his seventieth birthday, John F. Dueck could look back on a rich enjoyable life, albeit hard. He had progressed financially in great strides, since his early life. He had been active as a school board member for many years and a song leader for 20 years. However, by now his body gave way to infirmities and he passed away at 71. His wife later married Henry R. Reimer, of Landmark; she lived to be eighty-two.



*Rev. and Mrs. John K. Friesen, parents of Mrs. John F. Dueck, 1933.*



*Mr. and Mrs. John F. Dueck.*



*Mr. and Mrs. John L. Dueck as newlyweds.*



*RIGHT TO LEFT: Great grandfather, Mr. P.H. Dueck, grandfather, Mr. John F. Dueck, mother, Mrs. I.H. Cornelsen, son, John D. Cornelsen.*



*Mr. and Mrs. John L. Dueck, Pete, Natalie, and Anna, 1943.*



*John F. Dueck family in 1978. LEFT TO RIGHT: Tony and Helena Fast, Corny and Anne Dueck, Dave and Lydia Dueck, Peter and Justina Dueck, Jacob and Agnes Loewen, Jacob and Mary Dueck, Mrs. A. Mr. Schmidt, Annie and Peter Loewen.*

### **JOHN L. DUECK FAMILY**

*My great-grandparents from Russia came,  
Peter and Margaret Dueck were their names.  
First child born in this new land, their son  
Happened to be my grandfather John.*

*Father was the first born in the next generation,  
Also a John, as his previous relation;  
Born January 15, nineteen hundred and four,  
Brothers and sisters there followed twelve more.*

*Father got married on the 18th of December,  
Twas in 1927, though I do not remember;  
To find out how they met I did not bother  
One thing I know, he married my mother.*

*Parents moved to MacTavish, then to Rosenort  
Just west of grandparents a home to start;  
It was here that Dad in a gruesome scene  
Was crushed between tractor and threshing machine.*

*This could have resulted in his early death  
When in '51 he breathed his last breath;  
It was also here that two sons died  
Sorrow was great, could not be denied.*

*In 1937, parents moved again,  
This time to Rosenhoff, to open plain;  
Here they built up their very own farm,  
House, shed and chicken barn.*

*A year or two later, during the night  
A tornado swept through with fury and might;  
Which resulted in a new house a few years later  
But the memory of the storm will always be greater.*



*John L. Dueck, home after the tornado. Natalie in foreground.*

*Sorrow again caught up with them here  
When a daughter died in her first year;  
Then in '46 our eleven year old sister  
Passed away, oh, how we missed her.*

## ROY KORNELSEN

*In 1948, with a major migration,  
With mixed feeling, though real anticipation  
The move to Mexico was made,  
Another homestead foundation was laid.*

*Anna, in 1950, got 'flurried  
To Abe Plett, who often tarried;  
This meant half of the children move out;  
But that's what life is all about.*

*In their ensuing years ahead  
Their path to Riverton lead;  
Where they have their farm operation,  
Three sons, two daughters, their living relations.*

*Also in 1950, another son arrived  
But alas, he has not survived;  
Died in March, nineteen fifty-one  
Less than a year this small light shone.*

*Then two months later on May ninth  
Father was released from his earthly life;  
After many years of failing health  
He went to receive his heavenly wealth.*

*Mother re-married in '52,  
In one day the family grew,  
An addition of three sisters, four brothers,  
Four moved in with Father and Mother.*

*I got married in May, '55  
Mary Kornelsen became my wife;  
Two sons, three daughters to this union came  
Ebner, Gerald, Sylvia, Luella and Carol, the names.*

*In the year '57, in spring  
Parents moved to Canada, a new beginning,  
Started work at Rosenort, first year,  
Short time later to Carman, dear.*

*A year later in '58  
We also followed in similar state;  
First to Rosenort, then to Carman  
Work as a carpenter there began.*

*Parents have remained in that fair town,  
Residential roots must have grown;  
Although work originally brought them here,  
Now are in semi-retirement years.*

*After a few years, a hard fought decision,  
The Riverton areas we had in our vision;  
That's where we settled and still are as well,  
How much longer we never can tell.*

*This then is the Dueck family story  
Of which several members already in glory;  
To follow the faith of our fore fathers believed  
Shall we honor the blessing we've received.*

*submitted by Pete Dueck*

Roy Kornelsen, son of Werner and Agnes Kornelsen, grew up in the Rosenhoff district where he attended school. They were a family of seven children: Roy, Connie, Henry, Jeanne, Betty-Anne, Carol, and Shirley. Besides Shirley at home, Roy is the only one living in the RM of Morris.

In 1959, Roy and Elma Brandt were married; and they lived in Rosenort where he was employed at Thiessen Motors. Sometime later, Roy decided to go into business for himself, and began operating the BA station and bulk dealership. In 1967, the Kornelsens went into the poultry business, and a new barn was built two miles east of Rosenort. At first only baby chicks were raised to twenty weeks, but later, they added laying hens as well. The barn, which is fully automatic, houses 30,000 pullets and 10,000 laying hens.

In 1973, Roy and Elma built a new home on the property, where they reside with their 16 year old son, Kenneth Roy.

Roy served on the Municipal Council for a year, when he resigned for business reasons. He has also been active on the Rosenort Fire Brigade, on the Credit Union Board, and in the Rosenort Fellowship Chapel where they are members.



*D.K. Kroeker's homemade tractor, constructed in 1915 by a blacksmith, Mr. Buyan. Rear wheels of binders, front wheels from grass mowers, clutch either by belt or spider drive. David Kroeker behind tractor and P.L. Kroeker in front.*

## DAVID K. KROEKER

*by Fred Friesen*

My grandfather, David K. Kroeker, was the fourth child of the Kleingemeinde Bishop, Jacob M. Kroeker. Bishop Kroeker, born in the Moloshna area in 1837, was the head of one of the families that came to Canada in 1874, homesteading approximately one-half mile south of Riverside. My grandfather was a lad of nine years at that time. I can recall him keeping us fascinated by relating to us various experiences from those pioneering days.

Around 1900, grandfather moved to the Rosenort area, homesteading just north of the present Jack Loewen farm. The house now owned by Ed K. Friesen, his grandson of Riverside, was built here in Rosenort by grandfather, in 1915. Grandfather was a farmer, but in

his later years, he loved to go to Morris with his shiny Model A, peddling home grown produce and chatting with the Morris merchants.

They had three children, Peter A.L. Kroeker, Mary (Mrs. P.W.X. Friesen) and Katherine (Mrs. David R. Friesen) later remarried to Peter B. Dueck. Uncle Peter married Elizabeth Friesen from Kansas. Their children, Katherine (Mrs. Dave F. Dueck, Kleefeld), Goldie (Mrs. John F. Harms, B.C.), Betty (nurse in Altona), Peter in Steinbach, Esther (Mrs. Cecil Fast, Poplar Field) and Vernon, living in the Kroeker's home place in Rosenort. Uncle Peter passed away in 1975, and Aunt Elizabeth resides at the Rosenort Eventide home. Mary married Mr. Peter W.X. Friesen and resided at Riverside.

## KLAAS DUECK

Mr. and Mrs. Klaas Dueck left Prussia in 1817, to settle down in Muntau Molotschna, in South Russia. This Mr. Klaas Dueck was our great, great grandfather. In the spring of 1870, his son, John Dueck, moved to Bersenko. This was about 130 miles from Muntau, near Nicopol, close to the Baseluck River. Eight families lived in a village.

Abram L. Dueck, my grandfather, was the son of John Dueck, who is mentioned above, who came to Canada with his wife and three children, in 1874, when he was 33 years old. Their oldest child was 11 years old and the youngest about 5 months old. They settled down in Kleefeld, Manitoba.

In Prussia, they had been living together with his older brother for seven years, and here, they wanted their own farm and family life.

Those first years must have been hard. They came to Canada in late September, and they had to get ready for the cold winter. Their house, for the first winter, was simply a 3 foot trench with a three foot wall erected on both sides of the trench. Some kind of rafters were layed over with some straw or hay. Such a house kept the pioneers warm the first winter. I should not say warm; but it kept them alive.

They planted their first crop in spring and when it started to grow, they got so many grasshoppers that all the crop was spoiled. Because they had a wet summer, they had to move to higher ground.

## BERNHARD R. DUECK

### "Biography of the Late Bernhard R. Dueck"

*submitted by P.B. Dueck*

Born in Kleefeld in 1879; baptized in 1900; married Anna K. Friesen, of Rosenhoff in 1901; elected as song leader at Rosenhoff in 1903; elected as minister for the Kleingemeinde in 1914; and served in this capacity till 1966. He died in Mexico at the age of 90, in 1969.

Of the 19 children born to them, 3 died in infancy and Jacob died of an accident at age 24.

Our parents started farming at mother's parents' for a wage of \$150.00 a year, one mile east of Rosenhoff, now owned by the Levi Duecks. Later, they bought one-half section of land along the railroad, two miles east of



*Photo courtesy P.B. Dueck.*

Riverside. This farm was left empty in the 1960's and levelled off soon after. At the height of their farming, they owned over 4 quarters of land and due to depression years, the debt load was heavy until it disappeared in 1936. He owned 16 horses, approximately 10 milk cows plus other cattle, hogs and chickens. His first a Titan tractor, then a small Fordson, which replaced several horses.

In the years 1927-1928, and onward, father started to gift his children, a horse to the boys, a cow to the girls. Soon after this, a 50 acre piece of land was gifted to all, soon after marriage. C.B. Dueck is the only one who still owns his land. To do this, father, of course, had to buy more land.

Father was considered a strong healthy man. While making success in farming, and raising a large family, he was deeply concerned about spiritual growth of the children and church members. Specially did he warn not to run with the world, and to keep a pure and wholesome Christian walk with the Lord our Saviour. At his death, he had 331 living descendants, plus 100 adopted by marriage or otherwise adopted. All of the 16 grown children started out farming.

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. Prov. 17:6.



*H.R. Dueck farmsite.*

## THE HENRY R. DUECK FAMILY

The pioneer years were hard in the Kleefeld community. Housing was very primitive. Yet in the cold of winter in 1878, a baby boy was born to Abram L. Duecks. Young Henry was almost 12 years old when in a house near the Scratching River 'op Jand Siecr, a little girl was born to Henry L. and Anna Friesen, and she remained the 'baby' of her family. Years later, these two were to see much of each other.



*H.R. Dueck family visiting at A.R. Duecks on a Sunday afternoon in 1926. Mrs. H.R. Dueck in centre.*

Already at twelve, Henry was a big help to his father. He helped tend a herd of 40 cattle, besides going to school - both at the same time. But there was a younger brother, who grew up to do the chores, and so Henry at sixteen became a hired hand on neighbouring farms. As a youth, he received baptism at the hands of his father in 1897. He remained a humble and sincere member of the church; honest, quiet and conscientious.

Young Mary Friesen was blooming into gracious womanhood at the time Henry came to work on her parents' farm, near Morris. She was much more lively than he, even somewhat a tease. How these two, so different in years and in nature, came to love each other, one can only guess. But God must have seen that Henry needed someone to cheer him, and Mary was the one to do it. They were married on March 20, 1910 and took over the farm shortly afterward. (After Grandpa Friesen's death.)



*The H.R. Dueck family in 1937. LEFT TO RIGHT: Mrs. Dueck, Mr. Dueck, Peter, Henry, David. FRONT ROW: Elizabeth, Lena, Agnes, Dick, Levi.*

Ten children were born in that roomy house, but the first born and the last, died in infancy. Elizabeth, the oldest daughter, remained at home till she was 49, then married widower Peter R. Reimer, of Belize, who had a family of eight, most of whom were grown up. The Reimers soon moved back to Canada, settling in Blumenort. Only too soon, her Peter passed away, leaving her a widow.

Peter, the oldest boy, born in 1914, grew up to marry Elizabeth Klassen, raised a family of nine children, and become a prosperous farmer in the community. He is now semi-retired and has taken on the job of rural mail carrier for Route 1.

Henry, the second son, lost an eye, as a schoolboy about 7 years of age. He married Annie Loewen. They moved to Mexico in 1948 and from there to Belize, where they have also prospered. Their family numbers 13 children, all of whom live in Belize.

David was the fellow who daydreamed of having a modern dairy farm with a 'highway to Winnipeg'. He did not realize his ambition, but has a fair sized beef herd and a flock of laying hens on his farm near Arborg. His wife is the former Esther Kornelson and they have eight children.

Deidrich or 'Dick' used to operate a custom baling outfit in the community as a young man. He married Tina Loewen in 1952 and consequently made his home in her chosen land of Mexico. They have since moved to Belize where they raised their family of ten.

Lena is a kind lass who loves children and giving little gifts, and it seems the two complement each other. She now lives at the eventide home where she is well regarded.

The youngest daughter, Agnes, married David R. Friesen, moved to Mexico and Belize and raised six



*Henry R. Dueck with his second wife, Sarah Dyck.*

children. Dave is a farmer, income tax consultant and auctioneer.

The youngest member of the family by five years, is Levi. He was barely a year old when his mother died and three years when his father remarried. This second mother, Sarah Dyck from Plum Coulee, was a capable woman, who made quite an impact on the family, doing her best to train the children 'for the Lord'. In later years, when Father became an invalid, she cared for him at home, with help from Levi and Elizabeth. Levi also ran the farm and finally purchased it after his father's death in 1957. After mother, too, had passed away, he married Elma Dueck, and continued to farm the home place. They have two children, both in elementary school.

## PETER H. DUECK

Almost the whole community is related to the late David Klassen, who was a delegate before the immigration from Russia to Canada, in 1874. I, Peter H. Dueck, am the great-grandson of David Klassen and my wife, Lizzie Klassen, is the great-granddaughter of the same David Klassen. My wife and I are second cousins.





*Mr. and Mrs. Peter H. Dueck in 1964.*

We were married by my father-in-law, who was a minister, on October 9, 1937. We have a family of nine children - seven boys and two girls.

Walter, our oldest son, married Neta Warkentin. He is a high school teacher in Rosburn, Manitoba. They have two children, Chris and Tanya.

Henry, our second son, married Leona Brandt. He is farming at Miami, 50 miles from the home place. They have three daughters, Bonnie, Roxie and Peggy.

Daniel married Sharon Tonn and they have two children; a girl named Brenda, and a boy called Robert or Robby. Danny is hauling chickens to the killing plant in Winnipeg, a radius of 80 miles from Winnipeg.

Our fourth child, Mary, married John Dyck, a widower with seven children. Another daughter, Shauna, was born to them. John Dyck is a carpenter, and they live in Winnipeg.

Jake got married to Diana Friesen. They have two children - Julie and Perry. Jake has built two chicken barns and a house in the last year, one-half mile from the home place, where he grew up. One barn is for small chicks. He has about 8,000 chicks at the present time; the other barn is for a breeder flock. Jake has been working at Eventide Home, as manager, for several years.

Alvin married Elma Klassen, and they have three children; Jason, Trevor and Joel. Alvin has been co-op store manager for several years.

Ben is married to Elvira Dueck, daughter of Frank Dueck the Mover. Ben has been employed with the movers for a long time and has worked himself into the company, as a part owner. They have one daughter and one son: Marcia and Brent.

Clarence is married to Marlene Eidse and they have one son, Sheldon. Clarence is working at Riverbend Feed Mill at Rosenort.

Leona, our youngest daughter, has been in Winnipeg, but just recently came back into the district to work at Riverside Co-Op Store.



*P.H. Dueck residence in 1979 flood,*

## HENRY AND ELMA DUECK FAMILY AT RIVERSIDE

Our great grandparents were born in southern Russia, likely in the village of Mantau, and came to Canada in the great migration of 1874. They settled in south-eastern Manitoba.

Henry was born to Peter and Anna R. Dueck of Kleefeld, in 1912. Pedalling on his bicycle, he came to the Morris area in 1938, to cook at the Trump Oil Company. He rented a small building and set up his own restaurant. For a full four course meal, Henry charged 15C. His personal expenditures for those eight months were - \$4.00 for clothing; 25c a week for a Saturday night show in Morris (weather and roads permitting) and 50c once for a ride home to Kleefeld. At all other times, Henry depended solely on his bicycle for all his transportation, including trips home to Kleefeld, and getting all of his supplies for his restaurant from Riverside Store and Morris. By the end of the eight months of diligent labour and careful saving, he netted a profit of \$68.00.

The next spring on April, 1939, Henry got a job at Riverside Co-op, then called Rosenort Co-op No. 2. His starting wages were \$25.00 a month. Out of this he paid \$12.00 a month for his meals at Phil Isaacs, and \$2.00 rent at Mrs. Anna B. Dueck.



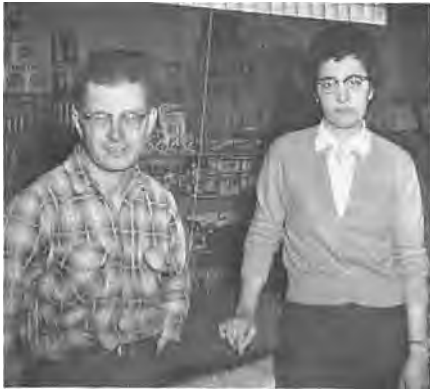
*Henry and Elma Dueck, once managing Riverside Co-Op, now managers of Betula Lake resort, 1965.*

On September 3rd, 1944, Henry married Elma Friesen, daughter of John R. Friesens, of Kleefeld. It was a memorable occasion. It rained for almost two weeks before the wedding, making the dirt roads almost impassable for motor vehicles. Serious doubts were expressed whether Henry would be able to get to his own wedding! But a good friend, John K. Dueck, with his big "cat", braved the mud and towed Henry with his 1934 coupe to the 75 highway. The muffler was lost in the process and the car totally mud covered, but Henry got to Kleefeld for his wedding. None of his Morris and Rosenort friends could come, so they got together and put on a special reception in the local school two weeks later, when the new couple came back from their honeymoon.

Henry had been saving gas coupons for this honeymoon to Kenora. Because of the war, gas was

rationed and new tires were impossible to come by for non farmers. Three times on the way to Kenora, Henry not only had to change tires, but patch them as well by the side of the highway.

Henry and Elma moved into their new cottage at Riverside. Since both came from the bush country, it took some adjusting to the vast, open prairies, the stickiness of Morris mud, the lack of well water and, in winter, the frequent blizzards and huge snow drifts. Coming back from a trip to Kleefeld, it wasn't too unusual for them to walk the last three miles or so, in the mud and rain, in the wee hours of the morning, leaving the car hopelessly mired in the mud.



*Riverside Co-Op opening new store. Manager, **Henry Dueck** and senior clerk, Marie Brandt.*

The floods were a total new experience. One May morning in 1950, they woke up to about eight inches of water on the floor of their bungalow. Elma's sister, Betty, and husband, Dave, with nine month old Leslie, had moved in with them when they had to abandon their home to the flood waters. Betty and Elma were kept busy trying to keep the babies, Leslie and Gerry, high and warm and from falling into the water. However, when backs were turned for a moment, Leslie managed to take a dive from his crib into the cold murky water! The furnace and cistern were under water - no heat - and diapers and clothes did not dry in the cool damp air.

Henry and Elma had three children born to them. Gerry, in 1949, Roy, in 1951, and Lois, in 1954.

In the spring of 1971, Henry, Elma and family said good-bye to Riverside and moved to Betula Lake Resort, in the Whiteshell. Henry had worked at Riverside for 32 years.



*Posing with his new bike, "Yash" Jacob Kroeker, in front of H.B. Dueck's home 1960.*

## DAVE K. DUECK

Dave K. Dueck was the fifth son of the J.W. Duecks and arrived on June 1, in the year 1907. His younger years were spent in Rosenhoff, and like his other brothers and sisters, he started working in his father's store at a young age.

On December 19, 1937, he married Elizabeth Friesen. They intended to live in a small one room house for the first while, which turned out to be seven years.

Although they were very busy on their farm, they felt something was lacking, so in the year 1955, they adopted two children, Paul and Grace. Of course, this brought about a complete change and kept the Duecks very busy. They were also involved in custom combining during this time.

Much has changed since those activity filled years; the Duecks are by themselves again, although the family has increased with grandchildren. Lately, Mr. Dueck has been confined to a wheelchair a lot of the time. They have a lot of precious memories and especially enjoyed the celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary in 1977.



*Mr. and Mrs. John U. Kornelsen.*

## MR. AND MRS. JOHN U. AND ANNA KORNELSEN

We were married in 1925 at Steinbach, Man. In 1936 we moved to the Morris area at Riverside. I worked as carpenter that first year. In 1937 I started to work for Trump Oil Co., and stayed there 7 years in the refinery as fireman and stillman.

Off and on I have worked as a carpenter. In 1945 P. T. Kroeker put his transfer business, Kroeker's Transfer, up for sale so J.F. Warkentin (former driver) and I bought it as a partnership. We operated it as Rosenort Transfer PSV. In 1951 we sold the business to Jac. L. Loewen.

Again I worked at carpentry and odd jobs, finally going back to Trump Oil. It had been sold to an American, this business venture didn't last too long. We were laid off work at New Year's, 1956.

In Feb. 1956 I worked as stillman for Radio Oil Ltd., Wpg. for only 6 months, the business ran into repair problems. In July, 1956 I received a phone call from Canada Wire and Cable, who needed a boilerman, and



*John U. Komelsen family on their 50th anniversary in 1975.*

since I had a class 4 Boiler Licence, I got the job. I worked for the company for 8 years.

In 1964, I started to work as custodian at the Rosenort Collegiate and stayed there for 8 years. We retired after that and are now living in Riverside.

We celebrated our golden wedding in 1975. We have a family of 10 children, all married, but only 3 of them live in the Morris area now. We also have 51 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

*Levi* (1926) and Marie live in Riverside, have a family of 5, two of them married. Levi has always been a truck driver, helping Dad when transferring. His first big job was west to Prince George, B.C. where for 1 summer he drove a gravel truck. After hauling pulp in Ontario for a number of years, he bought his own truck. He has been trucking since.

*Nettie* (1927) married to Jac. H. Klassen, living in Kola, Manitoba. Works as farmer and carpenter. Nettie is a housewife. They have a family of 10 children and 12 grandchildren.

*Florence* (1929) married to Jac. P. Friesen. Florence is a housewife. Jac part owns a seed plant and farms a large size acreage. In winter he's very busy cleaning grain at the plant. They have 5 boys and 1 girl, 3 sons married, 2 grandchildren. Living in Morris area.

*Delmar* (1930) married to Betty Friesen, have a family of 6, two children married, 3 grandchildren. They live in Riverton where they farm land and operate a big scale turkey farm.

*Alvin* (1931) married to Edna Single. They live in Wpg. where he is a trucker for the CNR Transfer. They have 3 children.

*Jake* (1932) married to Doris Loewen, live in Clearbrook, B.C. with their family of 5, one son recently married. Jake is a licensed electrician.

*Betty* (1934) married to Elmer C. Siemens and live in Kola, Man. They have 6 children, 1 married. Elmer is a foreman in the house building trade.

*John* (1935) married to Leona Loewen. They have 2 girls, 3 boys. John has been a school teacher since he was 19. He spent 4 years in Mexico, then taught many years in the Rosenort Collegiate. After this they moved to Virden, he took up teaching in Oak Lake. In 1979 they moved to

Hudson Bay where he was hired as pastor of the E.M.C. church there.

*Alda* (1938) married to Werner Rempel, Steinbach, Man. Alda has been working at a Royal Bank, first in Wpg., then in Steinbach for years, now. They have 2 girls. Werner is a school teacher, farmer, and has a share in the Landmark Feedmill.

*Lorne* (1942) married to Doris Loewen. They live in Riverside with their 3 girls. Doris worked as secretary for a few years. Lorne graduated from high school at the Rosenort Collegiate. After attending Manitoba's normal school he became a teacher. His first two years were at Clearspring School, Steinbach, a year at Pansy then to our local Rosenort Elementary where he is at present. He also serves as assistant principal when required.

## A.K. FAST

Tony Fast was born in Seaton School District near Kleefeld, Manitoba, in 1922. He met a girl who was born on the same day, month and year as he, and he married her. Helen Dueck was the daughter of John F. Duecks from Rosenort. In the years to come, nine children were added to their home. The Fasts have resided in Heuboden, Manitoba for 8 years and then a few years in Old Mexico. In 1953, they came back to Manitoba and settled down at Riverside.

Changing schools, coming back from Old Mexico, wasn't easy for the oldest 2 children, since they hadn't learned English in Mexico schools. Therefore, Mrs. Fast taught the girls English at home.

Mr. Fast was employed by John Eidse, the Allis Chalmers dealer, for two and a half years, then finding a job at Thiessen Motors in Rosenort. For a time, he rented the North side of the garage at Riverside from Peter W. Siemens until he bought the garage now known as Riverside Service.

Prior to 1967, they lived in homes rented from Nick Friesen and Peter W. Siemens. Then they bought a house from Jake L. Loewen in Rosenort, moved it onto a new basement at Riverside, having purchased the lot from Melvin Dueck. It was on this location that Sara and Margaret Friesen used to live. Sarah met her death accidentally while kindling a fire in a wood stove in 1966. Mr. Fast was the first one to witness the scene.

In 1971, Mr. Fast was elected councillor of the Rural Municipality of Morris, and is still serving in that position at this time. Mrs. Fast has kept the home fires burning and enjoys cooking and baking for the family. She has also done the bookkeeping for Mr. Fast at the garage for quite a number of years.

Soon after leaving school, the children went out to work. Eleanor was employed at the Eventide Home where she started as cleaning girl, later working as nurse's aid. She married Ben Thiessen from Mexico in 1965. They have five children: Jackie, Wendy, Anthony, Jeffery and Joanne. Mr. Thiessen is a long distance truck driver for Reimer Express Lines of Winnipeg.

Agnes worked in the Morris Hospital as a cleaning girl for 5 1/2 years. She went into nurses' training and after receiving her L.P.N., worked at the Steinbach Bethesda

Hospital. She is presently employed at the Eventide Home as Matron, or Director of Nursing.

John was previously employed at J.R. Friesen's in Morris. In 1973, he married Yolanda Penner of St. Anne. They are presently living in Marshall, Saskatchewan, where John is a carpenter. They have two girls - Charmaine and Renea Carline.

Marie worked at Riverside Co-Op until she married Henry Friesen from Stratton, Ontario, in 1972. They live in Blumenort, Manitoba, where Henry is employed as a carpenter. They have two children, Tommy and Travis.

Del helped his Dad at Riverside Service for a number of years. He married Cindy Dueck, daughter of Melvin Duecks in 1976. They are both employed at Rosenort Motors, where Del is a mechanic and Cindy, a secretary.

Linda graduated from Rosenort Collegiate. She was a secretary at Rosenort Farm Supplies, and now at Penner Foods in Steinbach.

Rose is also a Rosenort Collegiate graduate. She was employed for three years at Riverside Co-Op. She is presently seeking another vocation.

Delores is still in school and works a Riverside Co-Op during the summer months.

Henry is in grade 8. He helps his Dad at the garage after school hours, and is also a Tribune carrier.



*Threshing in 1915 at C.D. Loewens.*

## **MR. CORNELIUS D. LOEWEN (1866-1939)**

The "Great Migration" of Mennonites in 1874 from the wheatlands of Southern Russia to the wilderness of Western Canada included an eight year old lad who, no doubt, found the trip from the Old Country across the Atlantic Ocean tremendously exciting. His parents were on a spiritual pilgrimage. They had left the security of home for the uncertainties of a new country. To the young boy it was all adventure. His name was Cornelius Loewen. With him and his parents were three brothers and one sister.



*C.D. Loewen family in 1936 includes H.H. Brandt's (Tina), Wm. R. Friesen's (Lena), Henry B. Duecks (Elizabeth), C.K. Eidse's (Mary), Peter C. Loewens, J.H. Friesens (Margaret).*

The family took up a homestead approximately 4 miles northwest of where the Town of Morris is now located. They built their sod home on the east bank of the Scratching River in the village of Rosenhoff. Only seven years later the father of the family, John Loewen, passed away. Cornelius and his older brothers Abram, John and Peter all began farming in the immediate area.

Cornelius married Mary Dueck in 1888, and in a few years the new home was gladdened by the boisterous activities of three little boys ages one to four. But pioneering had a price. In the spring of 1894, within a period of 3 months, scarlet fever took its grisly toll. Three little graves mutely testified to what had been, and the Loewen home was strangely empty of children again.

In the fall of that year a little girl was born, and through the following sixteen years eight other children arrived to bless the prairie home. The youngest of them died in infancy. Until 1948 all of the eight remaining children farmed in the area northwest of Morris.

Cornelius Loewen was a progressive farmer and moved along with the advancement of technology. In the early years he farmed with a good supply of horses, later acquiring a steam engine for farming operations. This was followed by gasoline-powered farm implements.

Decisions were sometimes made quickly. After an auto accident near Steinbach involving his almost new 1937 Plymouth car, he immediately purchased a 1938 model and promptly returned to Morris! He usually knew what he wanted and when. During threshing season he is quoted as prodding his threshing gang through lunch breaks with the "swallow now - chew later" philosophy of speed in fair weather.

Mr. Cornelius Loewen passed away in 1939 after 5 decades of farming. He was predeceased by his first wife in

1932. His second wife, Helena Heinrichs, passed away in 1943.

The oldest of the Loewen girls, Margaret, married Mr. Jacob Friesen and together they farmed for many years in the MacTavish area. Some years after her husband passed away in 1973 she moved to Winnipeg to be with her daughters Betty and Helen. Two of her children, Mr. P.J.L. Friesen and Mrs. Nick Eidse, still reside in the R.M. of Morris.

Peter, the only son of the family, married Miss Anna Barkman and settled east of his father's place and to the west of the C.P.R. tracks. Here in full view of passing trains and the Trump Oil Company Refinery, they raised their family of eleven children. In 1948 they followed the urge to migrate to the highlands of Northern Mexico where they have retired. Only one son Cornelius, pastor of the Morris Fellowship, and his family now reside in the Municipality. The other children all farm either in Mexico or Belize.

Mary, who uncomplainingly spent many years as an invalid before her death in 1977, was the wife of Mr. C.K. Eidse, a well known local businessman and farmer. Some time after her husband passed away in 1960, she moved to Donwood Manor in Winnipeg. Two sons, Andrew and Ralph with their families, remain in the community. Most of the others are in the City of Winnipeg.

Anna, who was widowed in 1931 through the accidental death of her husband Jacob B. Dueck after only a year and a half of marriage, resides in the Riverside area on the yard of her farmer son Jake L. Dueck. She remains very active in the community and makes her presence known. Her other son, Andrew, farms in the Interlake area of Manitoba.

Elizabeth and husband Henry B. Dueck farmed in the area till 1948 when they also moved to the south to settle in Chihuahua State. Of their 15 children, only one has returned to this municipality. She is Mrs. Jake Bartel of MacTavish. The other children are scattered throughout Canada, U.S.A. and Mexico.

Also selling out and moving in the migration to Mexico in 1948 was Lena, with her husband William R. Friesen and family. None of the family remains here except Henry who is a businessman in Winnipeg. All others reside in Mexico.

Agnes, with her husband Ben B. Dueck, farmed north of Morris for a while but then also migrated to Mexico and later to British Honduras where most of the family members reside. None are here in the Morris Municipality.

Tina, the youngest of the remaining Loewen children, together with her husband Henry H. Brandt, farmed for many years north of Morris. Some time after her husband passed away in 1972, Mrs. Brandt and three daughters, Elma, Nettie and Lena, moved to the Town of Morris. Martha and her husband Arthur Dueck farm in the Riverside area. The other children have left the municipality.

Most of the Loewen descendants follow the farming profession. Of the 67 grandchildren alive today only 10 remain resident in this R.M. Of these 10, six are farmers by profession. Cornelius Loewen left a goodly heritage.

## LORNE LOEWEN

*submitted by Lorraine Loewen*

Lorne Nicholas Loewen was born on October 7, 1934, a first son for Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Loewen. By this time, he already had a sister, Doris, and later came two more sisters, Leona and Eilleen, and two more brothers, Eldon and Brian, making a family of six - just right! 3 boys and 3 girls!

The family enjoyed living on the home place with their grandfather, Mr. Abram D. Loewen. The house was well built in 1912 and could certainly stand the exuberant family with its many relatives and hired hands living there. Lorne spent a happy childhood attending the Rosenhoff north school, but like so many others, he did not go back to school after the 1950 flood,

In those years, farming certainly did not appear to be the answer to making money, so Lorne was off to the city to seek a fortune! A few years of this city life made farming look rather appealing again. During this time, Lorne married Lorraine Dueck on June 2, 1956. Then his mother died in 1957. Decisions were made for the rest of the family to move to Meade, Kansas, where his dad later remarried. Traditionally, we moved to the old homestead. Lorne began farming. On October 19, 1959, our daughter, Debbie was born.

Many seasons of farming have come and gone - crop failures, mostly in wet years, made it necessary to supplement the farming income. Lorne turned to construction and has been in partnership for five years. On November 5, 1977 our daughter married Garry Kroeker, increasing our family by 100%!



*1966 flood waters surround Lorne Loewen's house, which was built by his grandfather, Abram D. Loewen, in 1912.*

The farm house has aged and proven itself to be sturdy, withstanding numerous floods and again in 1979, the waves beat on the outside walls, but luckily the basement, built after the 1966 flood, proved to be high enough. Truly, the Red River Valley has a drawing force and it seems difficult to pull up our roots and leave the home of our forefathers.



*Horse and buggy. 1927 style, photo courtesy of A.K. Loewen.*

## HISTORY OF PIONEER JOHN D. LOEWEN (1862-1934)

Pioneer John D. Loewen, son of John and Anna Loewen, emigrated to Canada from Lindenau, Russia in 1875, as a 13-year-old lad together with many other relatives and friends. The two main reasons for this exodus at that time were the strong convictions that conscription and the public school system ran contrary to their Christian principles. His father chose the "west reserve" for his homestead and the family of seven - father, mother, one daughter and four sons - settled in the Morris Municipality close to the Scratching River about half way between the present village of Rosenort and the town of Morris. Only six years later, on December 2, 1881 his father passed away.

John Loewen was united in marriage to Elizabeth Kroeker on April 6, 1884 where the bride's father, Rev. Jacob M. Kroeker, officiated. Fourteen children were born to them of whom six died in infancy. Those who grew to adulthood were Anna (Mrs. Peter J. Loewen), Elizabeth (Mrs. John B. Thiessen), Agnes (Mrs. Peter U. Brandt), Mary, Lena (Mrs. Jacob D. Rempel), Jacob K. Loewen, John K. Loewen and Peter J.K. Loewen. The newly-weds took up residence close to what is now Riverside and lived there till 1904. At this time, together with their growing family, they re-located to Mrs. Loewen's parents farm where the Johnny Loewens (their grandson) are now residing choice Mr. Loewen was a farmer, and continued that occupation until his death.

The price of land for many years was approximately \$20.00 an acre, a far cry from the present price of \$500.00 or more! Taxes were in the neighbourhood of 50¢ an acre as compared to our present \$4.00 plus. Municipal roads, until relatively recently, were strictly "gumbo-coated", necessitating the use of chains on cars if and when travelling on rainy days was called for. No snow removal equipment was in evidence. But then, who needed it! Horses were the ever-ready faithful servants of the homesteaders.

Grain cutting was done by a 7-foot horse-drawn binder and a good day's cut was 15 acres. (Imagine today's farmers settling for that!) Farmers even then liked to know how big yield they could expect. They managed to

come up with a rather accurate method of estimating the size of the crop. For every pound of binder twine used per acre while cutting, they could expect 10 bushels of grain. Simple calculation indeed.

Harvesting was a company affair. Until 1911, John and his three brothers - Peter, Abram and Cornelius - owned a steam engine and threshing machine together. In 1912, John and his two younger brothers Abram and Cornelius, formed a partnership; purchasing a new threshing outfit, a Rumley gas tractor, and a six-bottom plow. The following year they stream-lined their operation by adding a sheaf loader drawn by four horses. This was a real money and time-saver. Several years later a Fordson tractor replaced the horses in front of the loader.

With growing families came the need for more farming land. Consequently, the number of acres to be threshed was too much for one machine. As a result Abram withdrew from the partnership and went on his own. This left John and Cornelius and their sons to continue as one company until John's death in 1934. More changes were made in the ensuing years.

After the death of his first wife in 1915, Mr. Loewen the following year married Mrs. Isaac Loewen, a widow from the Steinbach area. Besides his own family of eight children, he now had four more who called him father.

Two years later tragedy struck. On May 31, 1918, their house and barn (built as one unit) were totally destroyed by fire after chopping straw for the livestock. Binder twine wrapped itself around the bearing of the feed cutter and the resulting heat produced sparks that landed in the hay-mow. In a matter of minutes the barn was engulfed in flames. There was barely enough time to get the horses and cattle to safety. When that was completed, volunteer fire-fighters removed the contents of the house as much as possible, until the intense heat prevented any further salvaging. A new barn was constructed by harvest-time and a new house begun that same autumn. Both of these buildings are still in use today. His youngest son Peter who bought the farm in 1934, lived there for forty years.

That same winter the flu epidemic struck the community and took its toll. Four members of the Abram Loewen family, (brother to John), died within a week - mother-in-law, two daughters and one son. All four share one grave half a mile south of Riverside. (The homestead of the Abram Loewen family, built in 1912, is occupied by grandson Lorne Loewen.)

There has been a dramatic shift in the vocational field since the turn of the century. While a large percentage of Mr. Loewen's descendants are still involved with agriculture, many have turned to other types of fulltime employment. Today there are teachers, nurses, missionaries, pastors, businessmen, carpenters, and a variety of other vocations being filled by the third and fourth generations.

PETER J.K. LOEWEN  
(1907- )

Peter Loewen was the youngest member of the family born to John D. and Elizabeth Loewen. At the age of



seven he had the sad experience of losing his mother through death. However, when his father remarried the following year, he had not only a mother again but another sister and three more brothers! It was also about this time that he began his formal education in the local private school, situated less than an eighth of a mile from home. Completion of Grade V meant completion of schooling for him.

On November 23, 1930 he was united in marriage to Annie Dueck, daughter of John F. and Agnes Dueck. In 1929, the year prior to marriage, he purchased a 1926 Chevrolet Touring car together with his oldest brother Jacob. No doubt this was a great improvement over transportation by horse in getting to the John F. Dueck farm to see his fiance, six long miles northwest of Rosenhoff (now Riverside)! However, on the morning of their wedding day, both bride and groom arrived at the church in horse-drawn sleighs, in company with their respective family members.

Establishing a homestead was no easy enterprise, since this happened to be the beginning of the economic depression years. Until their small new frame house was ready for occupancy across the road from Peter's boyhood home, they lived with their parents. Mixed farming on their 50 acres produced only a small monetary return. Wheat was selling for about 35 cents a bushel, and barley between 15 and 20 cents. A 200-lb. hog realized a return of \$6.00 at the city market. Eggs were priced as low as 7 cents a dozen. However, the commodities to be purchased were lower priced too, although not always comparatively. A meal in a restaurant cost 15¢; tractor gas cost 14 cents a gallon; lumber was \$30.00 per thousand square feet. A used tractor complete with a 3-bottom plow was purchased for \$300.00. Peter worked part time for his father at 10 cents an hour to pay off his accumulated debts. In 1934, following the death of his father, he bought the family farm together with brother Jacob.

Peter and Annie Loewen have a family of nine children, six daughters and three sons. All but one are married: Nettie (Mrs. Abe Bartel), Bertha (Mrs. Jake Kroeker), Lena (Mrs. Wilbert Dueck), Mary, a volunteer service teacher in Mexico; Betty (Mrs. Ernie Siemens), Merna (Mrs. Dave Thiessen), Johnny and Sarah Loewen, Victor and Frieda Loewen, and Leonard and Marlene Loewen. Vocationally, the family is engaged in farming, teaching, accounting, and pastoral ministries.

Mr. Loewen is now semi-retired though he still farms about 180 acres. The new residence the Loewens built in 1974 is situated on almost the exact location of their first dwelling built in 1931. Both Mr. and Mrs. Loewen have undergone major surgery during the course of their married life, but today still enjoy reasonably good health. Sunday morning still finds them regularly attending worship services, a practice they have conscientiously followed throughout their life-time and have sought to instill in their family as well.

## DAVID KLASSEN

Our great-grandfather, according to the books, was a



*Binding sheaves are George Bartel on his tractor, hired man, Henry Harms and young sons, Abe and Jake in 1948.*



*Damming the Morris River at the George Bartel farm, to build a pond for livestock.*

delegate for the Russian Mennonites who came out in 1873-1874. The Klassen book, now widely circulated, has the full story of David Klassen, a daring man of some sixty years of age, who helped open the door to a new way of life, where his descendants and others could live in more religious liberty. It can be noted that he reached the age of eighty-seven, so his exertions must not have caused deterioration of his physical body. He was married to Aganetha Brandt - born November 14, 1816 - Deceased September 13, 1904 - at 85 years. Out of 15 children, 10 survived. (Two were adopted). One was our great-grandfather.

## JACOB B. KLASSEN

Son, Jacob B. Klassen, came to Canada from Russia, as a 16 year old boy. He was married to Maria Rempel on March 30, 1878. Maria was 18 when she married Jacob, who was just one day past 20! Looks like he was determined to wait till he was old enough! He was a farmer and is reputed to have had a barn full of good horses, taking considerable pleasure in their grooming, having all highly polished and decorated. They lived on the farm at the site of the present Elmer D. Friesen residence, and there are stories of the great blizzards they encountered. As life went on, they prospered materially, and seven children were born to them.



*Mr. and Mrs. David B. Klassen, son of delegate David Klassen, taken in Beaver Flats, Saskatchewan in 1918.*

They decided to build a new house where the P.W. Friesens lived later, and the same location where the late Katharina Klassen later lived. But Maria never moved into her new home. She died in spring of 1921, on May 18. She was brought in as a corpse before burial and kept till the funeral. She was 60 years old.

His daughter, Katherine, lived with her father, as she never married and became his good, efficient housekeeper for the remaining 15 years of his life.

The house was later moved to the P. J. Dueck site near the Morris River and later lived in by the Abe F. Eidses. Grandpa died on March 25, 1936. Children born to them were: Jacob, David, Aganeta, Maria, Katerina, Abram and Elizabeth.

## JACOB R. KLASSEN

Jacob R. Klassen was the oldest of the Jacob B. Klassen family. In 1904, he married Maria Warkentin Friesen. They had eight children; the oldest died at birth. He followed his father's Mennonite tradition of farming, but he was much more than just a farmer. His determination was exceptional, and being husky physically, it paid off when it came to challenges like cars stuck in mud. He was an inventor at heart, redesigning the



*Jacob R. Klassen, at the age of twenty. He was a farmer and a minister, and an inventor at heart.*

original plans for washing machine motors, for other purposes and car generators, for recharging car batteries. He was a blacksmith and shoed horses. He patented and manufactured his own 'totoch Schlade' an enclosed horse sled like the fore-runner of cabs on motors - the car. He was a dentist and chiropractor. His bone setting was no mean feat, because many a leg or arm was straight and good as new after being broken and set by 'Dr. Klassen'. He was an undertaker, who also designed caskets, for young or old.

His greatest challenge possibly, was that of preaching. He was known to have zesty character and a hearty laugh. With these attributes, it is small wonder that his public speaking made him an interesting and popular speaker. His preaching was sincere and earnest and he added depth to it as he began to speak more freely, with less of the accustomed reading of sermons. His ministry in preaching began by election in 1931, and he served for 31 years.



*Typical winter scene on the Jac R. Klassen farm. Note the homemade covered horse drawn sleigh.*

During this time, he developed a series of diseases and illnesses. He suffered from diabetes, heart trouble, edema, possibly some strokes. He died on August 10, 1963 and she on February 24, 1964, having lived in the Morris area all their lives. At the time of grandma's death, their oldest daughter, Anne, and her husband Peter L. Kroeker, and family raised on their family farm, later kept in the family by their son, Henry K. Kroeker, a half mile west of the present EMC church at Rosenort.



*Henry F. Klassen, youngest son of Jac R. Klassen, boating supplies during 1950 flood.*

## KATERINE KLASSEN

Because of a possible childhood illness, Katerine was hard of hearing most of her life. She was a good, efficient housekeeper for her father, after he was left behind as a widower, in a new house. She was a good cook, set a good example in cleanliness and loved gardening. In her latter years, she settled into the routine at Eventide. Her hobby was knitting. She was a friendly, cheerful person, who was well liked.

## GERHARDT SIEMENS

Gerhardt Siemens was the great grandfather to the Siemens descendants at Rosenort and Rosenhoff, in the R.M. of Morris. Some information is missing on the first marriage, but there is record of one son, Peter, an only child of the second marriage to Maria Harder. He had five children by his third wife, Aganetha B. Klassen, and with her passing away he remarried and moved with his family to Herbert, Saskatchewan. Today, there are relatives of the Siemens family in that area.

## PETER H. SIEMENS



*Peter H. Stamen's family in April, 1946.*

The story enfoldng is the story of Peter H. Siemens. He was born on December 25, 1869, and married Susanne E. Warkentin. They had 10 children. He died at the early age of 47, leaving behind a wife with twin babies, aged three, and eight older children.

Their family were:

Justina, married Peter T. Rempel; they lived in the Morris municipality until their death; they had no children.

Susanna married H.F. Brandt. After his passing, she lived by herself in her house at Riverside; is presently living in Morris Manor at the age of 86.

Peter is living with his wife at their home place (NW 22-5-1 E). They have three children - Frank, Susie, and Jake.

George married Gertrude Plett, died in 1952. They have five children.



*Mrs. Peter H. Siemens in 1910.*

Mary married Cornelius T. Friesen, living at their home place on Section SW 27-5-1 E. They had eleven children.

John married Mary F. Dueck; they have both passed away. They had 13 children.

Annie married John Harms; they farmed in Morris for a time; had two daughters. After he became ill, they moved to their daughter's place in Mitchell, living in a house trailer. John passed away in 1978.

Elizabeth married Abram F. Friesen, Morris area farmer, on SE 36-5-1 W. They have two sons and one daughter. They also operate a machine shop.

Lena married Jac B. Loewen, they farmed on SW 9-6-1 E and had one son.

Agnes married John B. Loewen, farmers in Morris municipality, on SW 27-5-1 E. They have one daughter, Agnes, (passed away in 1946). John remarried to Helen Peters.

A few years after their father passed away, mother moved to the present C.T. Friesen place. Mrs. Friesen (Mary) is the daughter, who still resides there.

Here, Mrs. Siemens built a new house, which is still in use, and began to prosper after becoming financially indebted to friends. She bought more land and successfully farmed, with the girls pitching in alongside the sons. They had seen days of poverty when they lost 35 horses in one winter, with some contagious disease. Better times were on the way. She is remembered as a successful business woman, dealing wisely and finding right direction as a widow. One fall, she harvested three



*Elizabeth (Mrs. A.F. Friesen), Agnes (Mrs. John B. Loewen), Lena (Mrs. Jac B. Loewen), Annie (Mrs. John Harms), all daughters of P.H. Siemens,*



*George Siemens, father Peter H. Siemens and Peter W. Siemens.*

box carloads of wheat, and was launched into prosperous farming.

Of those days, daughter Susanna Brandt, remembers well the importance of the heating procedures, and how even manure was used as a fuel. Does science think fuel from manure is a modern invention?

The manure piles from winter were watered down and soaked with water. Then the horses were led through and forced to knead this messy, smelly mush. Here at this stage, the children assisted in filling the pre built wood forms with the mixture, and bricks were formed. These were laid in single layers on the fields till completely dry on one side, then turned to dry out again. This was the winter's fuel...before the days of coal. In dialect it was called "mest schtricke" - the pressing of manure. It also depicts the picture of smoothing the bricks over the top of the form so it would have a uniform surface for storage.

Baking done in earth ovens was done by the burning of straw, preheated to right temperatures. Often the same smoke was utilized to cure sausages and hams that were a result of a butchering bee. Slaughtering for meat was often done in turn, helping each other out in certain amounts at different times to insure freshness. There are memories of times when large amounts of meat spoiled and this was precious waste.

Cockroaches were often a problem, as the log cabins invited the propagation of that particular pest. "Smoking out" buildings was not an uncommon method of pest control.

Church services were rotated in homes. It was common knowledge that the Sunday it was in your house, you must be well prepared. The smell of dinner cooking was a ready invitation to the congregation, and hospitality was expected. Fried ham and "pluma mousse"!

These are some pioneer memories recaptured by a visit with Susanna Brandt; now living at the Morris Manor and interviewed by Lorean Siemens.

## JOHN W. SIEMENS

John, born January 27, 1902 - died August 26, 1977.

Mary, born March 31, 1904 - died September 21, 1972.

John and Mary F. Dueck were married in 1923, and lived on N.W. 114 27-5-1E until 1964, when they built their new home at SE 31-5-1E, and retired.

John W. Siemens was a very progressive thinking individual, interested in business, in people, and farming. When Rosenort Kleingemeinde Church started Sunday School, he was one of the first teachers. As well as serving on the church board, he was community minded, and served on committees such as for the Co-Op Stores, school board, Trump Oil and Rosenort Farmers Association.

He helped many immigrants from Paraguay, Mexico, Germany, and Russia, to settle in this country, by giving them accommodation or whatever assistance was needed in the beginning. With the people coming and going, the children remember their home almost feeling like a hotel at times. Even though the Siemens' had a large family of their own, John went out of his way to help others financially and spiritually. He was very interested in people, and people would come for help or advice most any time of the day. He also had a large farm so as to keep his sons occupied at home. John's hobbies included auction sales, welding and manufacturing smaller items such as swings, scrapers, etc. He loved singing.

Mary, his wife, developed a heart condition after the flu epidemic of 1919, even so, she was very ambitious, well organized and enjoyed life. Since Mary was the oldest daughter in a family of 16 children, she was a very good cook and enjoyed baking as well. When the children were growing up, she sewed most of their clothes. Later, when they left home, she spent much time at her sewing machine, making blankets for M.C.C.

Mary bought material in large quantities and sold it locally to other housewives. She also served on committees in the sewing circle, for M.C.C. and the Invalid Home in Steinbach.

John and Mary Siemens travelled a lot, both far and near, enjoying frequent visits with relatives and friends, even though she had several major surgeries, and he was a diabetic. The children remember them as being unselfish, cheerful parents who were interested in them and their grandchildren, spiritually as well as materially.



*Christmas, 1959, at the John W. Siemens home. LEFT TO RIGHT: Betty, Mother, Father, Lorne. BACK ROW: Bill, Ernie, Susie, Jack, Henry, Lena, Ed, Clarence, Annie, Pete, Ben.*

Their children are:

Ben, who married Betty Eidse, lives in Alberta; they have 14 children.

Susie married John W. Loewen; they live at Fisher Branch - 11 children.

Pete married Laura Klassen, moved to Sanford; they have 8 children.

Clarence married Lottie Kornelsen; they are farming NW 1-6-1W (mixed) in the Morris area. They have 8 children - Reynold and Bob on the farm, Lyle and Derek in school, and four daughters; Arlene, Beverly and Joanne and Shauna.

Helena is living in Steinbach, works at Rest Haven Nursing Home. She is a licensed practical nurse.

Henry married Margaret Friesen. They farm on the east side of the Red River on River Lot 378, in Morris Municipality. They have six sons - Jerrold, and Stan on the farm, Alan, Brian, Wesley and Gordon in school and one daughter, Lynette.

Ed married Alice Brandt; they live at Roseisle with their four children.

Jack married Loreen Brandt; they farm S.E. 31-5-1E. They have four sons; Michael, Jeffrey, Patrick and Sheldon, all in school, and one daughter, Crystal.

Annie married Benny Friesen; they farm and have five children; Gregory, Janet, Danny, Ellen and Jimmy.

Ernie married Betty Loewen; they farm on N.W. 5-5-2E in Morris. Their children are: sons, Leighton and James; and daughters, Luwanna, Jolene and Sandra Lyn.

Bill married Gladys Friesen, they live in Beausejour with their four children.

Betty married Ken Barkman, living in B.C. with their two sons.

Lorne married Joan Eidse, works at Riverbend Feed Mill, lives in his parents' home (S.E. 31-5-1E) with one son, Anthony, and daughter, Natalie.

## **TWINS OR TRIPLETS? THE GEORGE W. SIEMENS STORY**

*by Laura Siemens  
submitted by Mrs. Gertrude Siemens*

Cars speed along the road from Rosenort to Rosenhoff. Teenagers love the curves and corners. They can swoop around the well-banked curves without slowing down too much. Lovely houses with gardens are beside the road. As you round the corner two miles south of Rosenort you see the big Rosenort Church on one side. On the other side is the graveyard. Almost twenty-seven years ago, Dad Siemens died of a brain tumor. He was only fifty-six years old. His last earthly remains were laid to rest here. The sun shines on his grave in summer. The rain falls. In winter the grave is covered with snow. Cars whizz by in all kinds of weather. Dad Siemens would have loved all of it.

If we follow the road to Rosenhoff we get to the store beside the river. It's called Riverside. In the next house further on lives Mother Siemens with her daughter Margaret. The house is like a little girl with freshly combed pigtails. Not a hair out of place. Everything is



*A good day's egg production. Mr. and Mrs. George Siemens and Margaret.*

neat and tidy. The flowers are always blooming - as they do all year for Mother Siemens.

Dad, George W. Siemens, was a son of Peter F. and Susanna Siemens who emigrated from Russia with other Mennonites. Mother Gertrude Siemens grew up in Blumenhof. Her parents Jacob L. and Maria Plett also came from Russia. As a girl, Gertrude got a job in the Morris area for awhile. She did housework at Corney Siemens. Corney's nephew, George, dropped in sometimes. He noticed young Gertrude. What a neat person she was! He admired her blue eyes and her fair lovely skin. What a queen among women! Gertrude was glad to see him come. He was tall, dark and handsome. He was fun to be with and had many friends. His interests were many - horses, singing, music, writing. What a leader among men! And he loved her - Gertrude!

That fall they celebrated their engagement at Gertrude's Dad's home in Blumenhof. George came out on the train. He'd lost his wallet on the way so Gertrude gave him train fare back. They were married in the old Rosenhoff School which also served as a meeting house. That was on October 3, 1920. The bride was lovely in her long dark dress, apron, and black kerchief. For wedding presents they received a frying pan, a pot, and two bowls. Of course they also got four pillows, a woollen comforter, a cow, and a calf from their parents.

The first winter they moved in with Mrs. Siemens, George's Mother. In spring they built a two-storey farm house on the barren prairie, three miles southwest of McTavish. Now they were ready to start up housekeeping on their own. Here they raised their family. They were now Dad and Mother Siemens.

The bald prairie soon changed. Dad and Mother Siemens planted trees. Soon they had shade. They started to pick fruit from their own orchard. Vines grew around their house and gave it a settled look. A big flower garden was the joy of Mother Siemens. Clipped hedges surrounded part of their well-kept grounds. Vegetables were grown every year for home use.

Dad Siemens worked hard on their little farm. He broke in horses. With horse he worked the fields. He mowed grass beside the railroad for hay. In the heat he refreshed himself from a jug of lukewarm water. Their



*Children of  
Mr. and Mrs.  
G. W. Siemens,  
about 1940.  
BACK ROW:  
Annie, Tony.  
FRONT ROW:  
Margaret, El-  
mer, Susie.*

cooler was a tank of cold water in the barn. It was very good for cooling water, 'Mos', or butter. In threshing time neighbors worked together to get their crops in. Mother Siemens did her share of the farm work. In busy seasons she fed the animals. Sometimes she drove the tractor. Dad Siemens also did plumbing jobs to supplement the farm income.

Dad Siemens loved people - visiting with them, writing about them. He was a Steinbach Post news reporter for thirteen years. When company from "Jahntseed" came, he might send a child to the pond for water for coffee. He'd probably say loudly, for the benefit of the visitors, "Be sure to chase away the frogs first".

May 9, 1929 started like any ordinary day. Mother Siemens seeded a row in the garden. She was expecting a baby. Their first baby had died. Tony was almost six years old. Annie was almost three years old. The closest doctor was six miles away. Thai was far away. So when the pains came they summoned the midwife, Mrs. Abram Eidse. What a surprise for Mrs. Eidse and for Mother Siemens! A son, Elmer, was born. A daughter, Susie, was born next. Then Mother Siemens had another son, Joseph. But Joseph didn't breathe. The boys weighed about six pounds each and little Susie, five-and-a-half pounds. The triplets had arrived. A neighbor commented, "What a nestful of children!"

Life was busier now. They needed more supplies. For the two babies they had twenty-four diapers. Twelve were

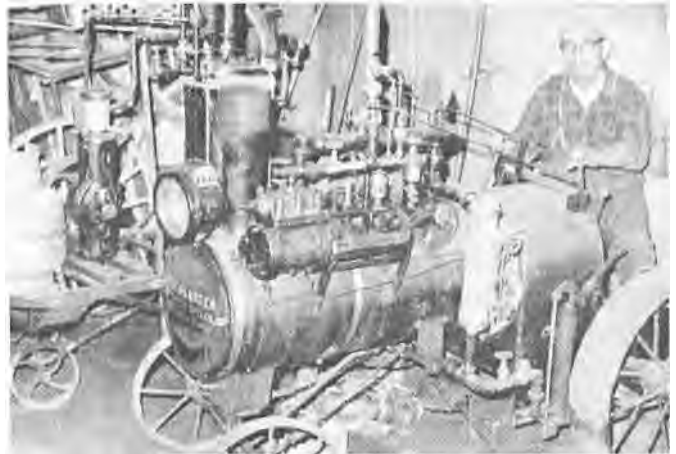
good ones for Sunday and twelve were for everyday. Often one cranky baby would wake up a sleeping one. Sometimes Mother Siemens would sit and rock, rock, rock. Two cradles - one for each hand. Back and forth, back and forth.

A few years later a double birthday was celebrated for two proud children. The two were seated on top of the table on little chairs. Each got a pair of new jeans with a big S on the pockets. But the elastic was tight. So Dad Siemens hung them in the garage. He attached weights to stretch the elastic.

Life flowed on. Margaret was born four years after the triplets. The family was now complete.

When Elmer and Susie started off to school the teacher took one look and said, "So you two are twins". "No", Elmer said. "Well, you're the same age so you must be twins", the teacher insisted. "No", Elmer explained, "We're triplets".

Now the children are all grown up. Mother Siemens and Margaret bought a small bungalow. They moved to Riverside Drive in 1962. The other four children are married. Tony married Mary Penner. They're living in Winnipeg now. Annie became Mrs. Abe Eidse. Abe passed away in 1970. Susie married Dave Eidse. They're missionaries in Mexico. Elmer and Laura Plett Siemens lived in Kola. There are nineteen grandchildren, and quite a few of the grandchildren are married. Mother Siemens now has nine great-grandchildren. It's an exciting life to see the extended family grow up, choose careers and marriage partners. Dad Siemens is missing a lot of that. But someday we hope to meet him again. And we'll introduce our children and grandchildren to him. And Mother and Dad Siemens will be together in heaven forevermore.



*Peter W. Siemens pictured on his scale model steamer, which he built in three years. This steamer was fully operative in every respect, right down to the whistle. Mr. Siemens had extensive mechanical experience, and worked as an engineer for the Trump Oil Refinery for several years. He also operated a machine shop at Riverside. One of his prize exhibits is a 100 year old walking plough, and grass shears brought by his ancestors from Russia. All the items in the Siemens museum at Riverside were sold to the highest bidder in the summer of 1979, many of them having to be restored after the flood of that spring.*



*Elmer and Susie, 1975, the two who survived of the Siemens triplets.*



## PETER W. SIEMENS CURATOR OF RIVERSIDE MUSEUM



Peter W. Siemens of Riverside is part curator, inventor and carpenter, is bent on preserving the heritage of today's youth.

The weatherbeaten dust-covered, one-room-house museum at Riverside, a few miles south of Rosenort, is not the kind of place to charge admission but the 20-year antique collection ranging in variety from wooden toys to hand plows and stone hammers would make any curator's heart race.

Peter W. Siemens of Riverside found the hammers in his sister-in-law's field near Blumenort some 20 years ago and believes they were part of a native Canadian tool collection. He has acquired most of his antiques since then but the collection bug has probably been with him for a long time. Lodged between marble scales, model T kerosene lamps, crocks and cast iron cookware are jars of sand samples from various states, sea shells and rock collections.

Three pump organs and a dozen grandfather clocks dominate one wall and ornaments, tea sets and lanterns line the other, but the most predominate of the items in the collection are the wooden toys.

He wants the young people to remember the olden days," said daughter-in-law Mrs Jake Siemens about his purpose in stashing the curios.

And it's a small wonder. Most of the toys are the great grandfather's own creation, four-foot windmills, horse-drawn carts, wooden cows and hitched oxen. Some of the figures express subtle humor, like the carved woman who seems to be ordering her family around the house and the electric-powered paper creation which portrays the wife pushing her husband to his work. Other wooden scenes show the model village of the first Mennonite settlers and a typical floor plan of the traditional farm house or Noah emerging from the ark with his animal entourage.

There was much to see in the crowded room and I took note of wooden shoes, wooden ladles, butter churns and forms, coffee grinders of all shapes and sizes, old slide projectors and electric shock machines used by chiropractors. There were antique shaving mirrors and fans, home-made bells and wash tubs and scrub boards. Somewhere in the lean-to under a pile of old furniture was the cradle Mr Siemens slept in as a baby and yellowed pictures and news clippings papered the walls.

Outside a stone oven, planter, thresher and steam-powered sawmill littered the yard. A near-by workshop complete with blacksmith stove and cupboards filled with tools harbored a cart, buggy and steam engine Mr. Siemens fashioned himself.

Later, a chat with Mr Siemens revealed a creative bent, "I would just find scraps of wood and make things for the children," he said in Low German.

"But the young people aren't really interested in these things, are they?" he asked dubiously of his mini-museum as I was leaving.

"They will be some day," I assured him.



One horse hand plow, early 1900 - photo Sam Hoffman.



Ole Titan, 1920- photo G.P. Goossen.

## SCHELLENBERG(ER)

In August, 1874, a young orphan of 17 years named Johann K. Friesen, arrived in Canada from Russia, and settled on the Scratching River with his grandparents and his remaining family, about 7 1 / 2 miles north-west of Morris. The home they built there still stands, although it has gone through changes over the years.

Johann married Justina Warkentin in July of 1876 and a daughter, Annie Warkentin Friesen, was born to them on May 13, 1888.

At the age of 17 years, Gustav Schellenberger, a minister's and mill owner's son arrived from Russia and in 1904, at the age of 19, he married Annie Warkentin Friesen (then 16 years of age). To this marriage, eleven children were born, three of whom died in childhood:

Bertha (d)	- married John K. Dueck (d)
Annie	- married Peter K. Dueck (d) (Riverside) remarried Frank Dueck
John	- married Alma Norris (Vancouver, B.C.)
Ernest	- died at birth
Martha	- married John Dueck (Riverside)
Helen	- married Jake J. Dueck (Riverside)
Elsie	- married Jake R. Dyck (d) (Winnipeg)
Tilly	- died at the age of 8 of diphtheria
William	- married Lena Bartel Eidse (d) (Morris) remarried Helen Breyfogle Smith
Arthur	- married Dorothy Schroeder (Winnipeg)
Gus	- died at birth

The Schellenbergers were prosperous farmers, residing in various villages in the Morris area (Rosenhoff, Mc-Tavish and Sanford). Gustav owned and dealt in beautiful horses and broke some broncos as well. He played violin and the family enjoyed singing. Christmas at their home was always a big event; a program was held and guests invited.

The children took their schooling at Willow Heights School (McTavish), Flowery Bank School (Riverside) and



*Schellenberg family. LEFT TO RIGHT: John, Art, Bill, Martha, Elsie (partially hidden) Bertha, Annie, Helen.*

others. They also did their share of farm work, as most children did in those days, helping with field work and the livestock.

Martha recalls a time when Bertha (the eldest - 12 or 13 at the particular time) drove the team of 4 horses and the sleigh with young Martha on it, to a halt near the house. When Bertha went inside, Martha thought she'd just pick up the reins. The horses took their cue and raced off with a startled Martha dragging behind, tangled in the reins. Luckily, there was a fence nearby to stop the horses!

Annie (mother) was a very good cook, but especially enjoyed sewing clothes for the family. The girls also remember their mother building a swing and see saw for them during their time at Sanford.

They also recall their father receiving an award for one of his grain fields one year and that in approximately 1910, his parents in Russia sent for him, as they were dividing the family estate. He revisited his old home to receive his portion of the estate and to see his parents for the last time. Upon his return, he went into the real estate business.

Annie Schellenberger died January 10, 1921 at the age of 32. Gustav died at the age of 62 in Port Hardy, B.C.

After their mother's death, the children were taken in and raised by relatives (grandparents, sister, Bertha, and aunts and uncles).



*Bill and Helen Schellenberg on their wedding day, 1941.*

## SCHELLENBERG

Annie Schellenberg died at age 32 (1920), when "Willie" was four years old. Willie was taken in by grandparents, Johann and Justina Friesen, until his sister, Bertha, married, at which time she and her husband, John K. Dueck, took Willie (aged 8) in and raised him as their own.

At 16 years of age, Willie was on his own, working on various farms and later, driving truck for Trump Oil Co.

Willie spent a year in the pulp camp at Pine Falls in 1936-37. He batched with two other fellows in a tent, during the winter. The job included cutting timber to build sleighs, working 12 hour shifts loading pulp, and driving caterpillar hauling pulp. One stormy winter night while the three men slept in their tent at the mouth of the Black River, no doubt dreaming of warmer climes, the wind deftly removed their tent from its moorings, leaving them to scramble - wide awake now - and secure the tent once more. What a rude awakening!

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*Bill Schellenberg working in the bush at Pine Falls in 1936.*

The wages there were quite good, starting at \$35.00 per month, plus board. For staying the winter, Willie received a monthly bonus of \$10.00. When the time came to break camp and go home, Willie filled his wallet, hopped the train and headed homeward. Sad to say, his wallet was filched and his spirits lowered as he arrived home, penniless after that long hard winter.

During the depression, when work at home was scarce, Willie heard of a job on a Saskatchewan ranch, paying \$25.00 a month for winter work and applied. It seemed that the job never existed, so Willie took a job on another ranch, which paid \$7.50 per month and board, on a government grant.

Another term of employment was spent batching at Falcon Lake, prospecting for gold at \$1.00 per day. Willie and his cousin, Nick Friesen, of Saskatchewan, under the employ of D.K. and C.K. Eidse of Riverside, took turns holding the diamond drill bit, while the other pounded it with a hammer. Thus the holes for dynamite blasting were made in the rock. Small amounts of gold were indeed found, but nothing really worthwhile. The boys did hunt whiskey-jacks (which stole their lunches) and deer.

Willie participated in community sports as goal tender for the Rosenhoff Pats. He was also a motorcycle enthusiast, travelling to Winnipeg for roller skating and also making some trips south to the States to escape the cold Manitoba winters.

Fortunately, Willie didn't spend his entire life travelling alone. In 1941, he was wed to Lena Bartel Eidse

in a little Winnipeg chapel. He and his young wife built a small home near Trump Oil Co., later moving it to Riverside, where they farmed. Two children, Donald and Shirley, were born in Morris.

Lightning struck their two year old chicken barn and everything inside was lost in the fire. In two weeks, with the generous help of neighbours, a new barn stood on the same spot.



*The Schellenberg home in the 1950 flood with 42" of water on the main floor.*

During the war years, the small family moved to Dryden, Ontario where, as a conscientious objector, Bill worked for the Red Cross, hauling pulp wood and working in the saw mill and as truck mechanic for Dryden Paper Co. All earnings (\$200.00 a month) went to the Red Cross for the war effort, except for the family's living expenses (approx. \$45.00 a month). In Dryden, daughter, Carol and son, Dale, were born.

In 1947, the Schellenbergs purchased the Henry C. Penner farm on the Morris River. During the 1950 flood, they remained in the home, then living upstairs until 2 feet of water covered the main floor; they were then evacuated by boat. Later, the water rose to a level of 42 inches on the main floor. For the duration of the 1950 flood the family moved to Lowe Farm. Bill was on the flood board, helping to run barges and boats out to Lowe Farm, saving cattle and livestock, checking on various farmyards. He remembers trying to get C.K. Eidse' TD6 caterpillar out of the water and ready for spring work. They had to winch it onto a barge, which sank in short order. They then built a wall on the barge and dipped water out with pails to get it afloat again and they were underway. Loading livestock could also be a wet business, if a pig decided not to stay on the barge and men and pig all got a dousing.

From 1948 to 1954, Bill farmed part time and worked as a mechanic, Meteor car and Massey Harris implement salesman for Jake Loewen in Rosenort. 1954 saw Bill working for J.R. Friesen & Son Ltd. part time at first; then in 1956 full time, becoming manager of the Morris branch in 1963.

By this time, the remainder of their family of 10 had arrived. Their children are:

- Willie Donald - married Alexis Faye Morrison (2 sons)  
Toronto, Ont.
- Shirley Anne - married Donald Ross Rempel (3 sons)  
Langley, B.C.
- Carol Dianne - married Klaus Peters (3 sons, 2 daughters)  
McTavish Man.
- Dale Eidse - married Julie Webb in England  
Aldergrove, B.C.



*Bill Schellenberg and daughter, Carol beside Dryden Paper Co. truck which was displayed in a parade.*

Barry	- single	Morris, Man.
Sandra Ellen	- married Brian Klassen (1 daughter)	Morris, Man.
John Grant	- single	<b>Haney, B.C.</b>
Bruce Randall	- married Wanda Mae Whitehead	Morris, Man.
Kelly James	- single	Morris, Man.
Curtis Neal	- single	Morris, Man.

Helen was an avid gardener; flowers and vegetables flourished under her care, as did her children. We children were clothed mostly with home sewn garments, so mother was kept quite busy at the sewing machine. As well as looking after her family, she was a church member and member of ladies' groups, quilting for the needy and being involved in various other projects. We all remember the fresh homemade buns and bread scents wafting outdoors when we arrived home from school, as well as the times the house was turned into a mini hospital as we all went through the various childhood diseases together, with Mom as head nurse.

In 1954, Bill was elected councillor for Ward II and served till 1966 as chairman of Finances and Chairman of Public Works. The family moved to Morris in 1959.

In about 1958, he remembers that the council fought with Water Control Boards to get stock watering dams built. They had bridges built higher one mile south and 2 miles south of Rosenort for easier transportation at high water. He is also responsible for the 3 stock watering dams on the Morris River.

During his term on the council, when Bruce MacKenzie was reeve, Bill recalls council appropriating enough moneys to build the Aubigny bridge and the new Municipal Office in the Town of Morris.

Bill has also participated in community affairs as member and president of the Lions Club; Chamber of Commerce, on the swimming pool board, president of Stampede board and on the directorate since the inception of the Stampede, vice-president of the Development Corporation of the Town of Morris, on credit union board for Rosenort and Morris Credit Unions (also charter member of both); also singing with the Morris Male Chorus.

After losing his wife, Helen, in 1970, Bill remarried to Helen Breyfogle Smith. Together, they have raised the younger members of the family remaining at home and have travelled widely in the United States with Helen's parents, the Lawrence Breyfogles. In 1977, they travelled to England, along with Bill's son, Don, and his wife, Faye, daughter, Shirley, and her husband, Donald, for the marriage of son, Dale to Julie Webb. They also spent some time sightseeing in England, Scotland and France, before flying home.

Helen is an outdoor person - gardening, landscaping the yard, and has a keen interest in nature (birds especially). She is an excellent cook and no one refuses an invitation to come for a meal. She has one daughter, Sylvia (Mrs. Dave Miller, of Winnipeg) and no grandchildren, other than Bill's. She inherited a rather large family when she married Dad and is always ready to help us out when the need arises.

## WILHELM CARL AND JUSTINA (NEE BRANDT) ROSCHE

Mother was always an optomist. Born at the turn of the century, on October 11, 1899, in Rosenhoff, the eldest in a family of 8 children, he parents were Henry F. and Justina (nee Friesen) Brandt. Grand-parents were the Klass Brandts and Rev. and Mrs. Johan K. Friesen. There were two more girls - Margaret (Mrs. Peter Wiens) and Anna (Mrs. George Friesen), before mother's three brothers were born. So, small and slightly built, but wiry, she was milking cows at the tender age of 6. By the time she was 12, she was doing the work of a field hand.



*Mr. H.F. Brandt with his second wife, Susanna in 1947.*

Her brothers were Henry, John and Peter. Two more sisters, Mary (Mrs. George Dueck) and Agnes (Mrs. Werner Kornelson) completed the family.

Since wells were not feasible in the village, because the water from them was unfit even for cattle, the then Scratching River (now Morris River) was a very vital part of village life. In winter, blocks of ice were cut and hauled to be melted for water. Ice houses with cellars



*Five generation picture - Great-great-grandmother, Mrs. John K. Friesen, Great-grandmother, Mrs. H.F. Brandt, Grandmother Justina Rosch (in back), Mother - Mary Rosche (centre front) and baby, Tina Rosche.*

were also filled with ice and covered with sawdust to keep in the frost. This was for summer use. Rain water was also stored in cisterns.

In 1910, Haley's Comet created an upheaval of no small proportions. It was accurately predicted, and some villagers held strongly to their opinion that its appearance would coincide with the end of the world, for its tail would set fire to the earth. Mother, then about 11 years of age, wondered what was the point of bringing in the ice as directed, if Jesus was coming so soon anyway.

School was in German only, but mother eventually taught herself English, and was a prolific reader. Meanwhile, in the village of Osendorff, Saxony, Germany, an 8 year old boy by the name of Wilhelm Rosche was saying farewell to the swans that nested by the Elster River. His father had preceded the family to Canada in the previous year, and through the generosity of his employers, the Peter D. Loewens, who put up a loan for that purpose, the family was now preparing to join husband and father. They were 5 children - Paul,



*Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Rosche, Sr., 1935.*

Wilhelm, Otto, Emma (Mrs. Bangert), and Martha (Mrs. Ernest Dreger, of Morris) and their mother Fredrica (nee Peters) Rosche. Lizzie (Mrs. Walter Stephens) was born 2 years later in Canada.

Fare had been paid for passenger ship, but they were duped into taking a cattle boat, and the crossing was not too pleasant. However, in due time, they arrived safely in Halifax. From there, the journey was by rail, and father remembers vividly, their astonishment at seeing Indian teepees in the snow, and people (Indians) actually living in them! Father was sure he would never survive this harsh country.

However, when the family arrived at the station in Morris, Manitoba, the weather here was mild for November, and there was someone with a horse and buggy waiting to take them "home". This proved to be a leanto, built onto the Loewens own house. It was intended to accommodate the hired hands, and was somewhat cramped, but at least they were all together again! Eventually, grandfather built a small house they could call their very own.

Since the boys were growing up and with little prospect of obtaining land for them here, grandfather decided to try his luck in the City of Winnipeg. Wilhelm (Bill) was now about 11 years old, and attended Elmwood school for several years.

Now there opened up the exciting possibility of buying a homestead in Gimli, Manitoba. The family worked as only people who have a dream and are striving to fulfill it, can. But it proved to be too stony soil to produce much. In order to keep alive, the boys and even grandfather went one by one, to work for more prosperous farmers. At the age of 11, Martha went to work in the city as house maid.

Two years of hard work on grandfather's part, went into cutting and squaring logs for a new house, and at last, there it stood, ready for them to move in.

Paul was married by now, and had 3 youngsters. In looking for something under the eaves one day, one of his boys lit a match to see, and accidentally set fire to the straw roof of the old house. Some of their belongings were saved, but the house burned to the ground and with it the adjacent new home!

Grandfather never quite recovered from the blow. Aging and discouraged, grandmother and he returned to live at Rosenhoff, where their son, Bill, had preceded them, and was again working as farni hand for various settlers.

The grandparents' home this time, was the old school-church building which stood across the road from the John D. Loewens and Abram Loewens, just west of the still existing old cemetery.

Grandmother Rosche had begun going out as midwife at Gimli, having been trained in Germany, and now continued this service in Rosenhoff.

Bill was in love. He working for the H.F. Brandts, and the lively Justina with the soft brown eyes, completely captured his heart. After being baptized and accepted by the Kleine Gemeinde Church as members, (for he had been brought up a Lutheran) the two were married on October 18, 1917. Their first home was the very house



*Wilhelm and Justina Rosche, a wedding portrait in 1917.*

that Grandfather Rosche had once built. It had been moved a mile west of the Morris River, to the place where the P.D. Harms family later lived.

Here their first four children were born: Liesbeth, Henry, Mathilde and Freda. At the age of about 5 months, Freda died of pneumonia.

It was tough going for Bill and Justina. The land was low and swampy; their equipment poor and old; the loan on the land high - \$40.00 an acre - and most of all, an old injury was plaguing father. Some years previously, his foot had been broken, and the pain now made walking behind the harrow almost unbearable. Coupled with his bad heart, this made work difficult. Eventually, they had to give up the farm and father again hired out to farmers, besides doing carpentry work and building chimneys. They moved closer to the village and two more children were born to them: Margaret and John (Jack).

Moving to Flowery Bank, they lived in and then bought a house, originally built by P.D. Harms. Lena was born here and was promptly nicknamed 'Lily'. Now father was offered the job of cleaning and heating the Kleine Gemeinde church, which stood on the border of Rosenort and Rosenhoff. The P.T. Remples offered two acres of land to live on, rent free, and our house was moved from Flowery Bank, coming dangerously close to falling off the bridge into the river, in the process. We were located just east of the river, about half a mile south of the Rosenort School and half a mile north of the church. Adjoining our garden to the north were the John B. Thiessens.

Grandmother and Grandfather Rosche were finding it increasingly difficult to carry on alone, so the old church-school building they lived in was partially dismantled and the rest of it moved to our place in Rosenort, where, attached to our house, they occupied the largest room downstairs and we acquired three new bedrooms upstairs and one down! The following year, grandmother Rosche passed away and was buried at the Glen Eden Cemetery, north of Winnipeg.

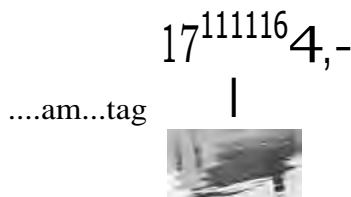
Grandfather stayed on with us, pursuing his hobbies of growing flowers, doing jig saw puzzles, and making toys and other things out of plywood. He also enjoyed reading to us in German, and taught me how to write the German alphabet.

Here, in Rosenort, Ernest, Rose Anne, Willie (Bill Jr.), Frank, and Danial were born.

Once again, it was time to move. In 1944, we acquired ten acres of land from our Grandfather Brandt. With the generous help of the community, our house was torn down and rebuilt in Rosenhoff. Even the strange looking 'square nails' of the old school-church section were recycled. Our new home stood almost straight across the river from where the school-church had originally stood.

Grandfather Rosche had sugar diabetes and was in a wheelchair; his leg having been amputated, due to gangrene. He died in our house in March of 1946. The river was at its usual spring flood level, when all the bridges were covered, so his body was placed in the coffin and taken across the water by row boat. He, too, is buried at Glen Eden.

Grandmother Brandt had preceded him a few months earlier; a double blow for us. After a few years, Grand-



*The Rosche home was hard hit in the 1950 flood. Many out-buildings, pig sly and wood pile, all floated away.*

father Brandt married Susana Siemens, at present living in Morris Manor, grandfather having died in 1960.

Following the 1950 flood at Morris, my parents, now 56 and 50 years of age, decided to pioneer at LaBroquerie, Manitoba, about thirteen miles southeast of Steinbach. There they purchased a quarter section of land and made a modest living with cattle. Living space was extremely cramped the first winter and the two oldest boys built themselves a log cabin; logs and firewood being plentiful. It is still standing.

In 1958, when all but our oldest sister, Liesbeth, an invalid, and the two youngest in the family had left home, our parents retired to the town of Steinbach, where they lived for 14 years.

In 1967, our parents, by the grace of God, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Mother's eyesight was failing rapidly, but taking it in stride, she adjusted like a real trooper. Declared legally blind and issued a white cane, she nevertheless continued knitting and with an attachment that allowed her to feel the width of the seam, she sewed her own clothes by machine. In our homes are various quilts she patiently pieced together for us.

It was in 1976 that our parents agreed a move to Winnipeg might be wise, since mother was seriously ill and most of us lived in the city, making it difficult for us to be of much help to them and Liesbeth. And so it was that our mother, this true daughter of the pioneers viewed the hard packed and cinder strewn parking space in the back yard of their new and last home, and enthusiastically exclaimed, "Here's enough room to break ground for a garden!"

In the spring, the rhubarb, grape vine, and flowers she and father had planted in the front of the house came up, but mother was no longer here to see them. On February 3, 1977, worn out by a long and active life, that great heart stopped beating and she slipped over into her heavenly home.

Father sold the house a year later and is making his home with his one remaining sister, Mrs. Martha Dreger. They live on the sixth floor of a 12 storey apartment building in Winnipeg.



## THE GEORGE LORNE LEWIS FARM 5-5-1 EAST

This farm was bought by Mr. Jos G. Lewis in March, 1909. It was the east half of Section 5-5-1 East at that time. In the fall of 1917, he bought the northeast quarter of Section 32-4-1 East, making the farm three quarter-sections.



*The J.G. Lewis home, June 1946.*

As a young man, Joe Lewis grew up clearing land of great hardwood trees, being expert in the use of axe and saw, in his home in Ontario. He was a good woodsman, later becoming a cabinet maker. He came to Winnipeg in the 1870's, and it was a little joke of his to say that he worked at the penitentiary when he first came to Winnipeg. He worked on the interior furnishings of that institution.

He married Emily Melissa Moody in 1878, having come to Morris and homesteaded on Section 23-5-1 East. In 1882, he moved with wife, daughter and son to his new house on their river lot farm. The timber of this house he drew from Emerson. It is still on the farm and in very good condition, all the basic timbers of oak, being put together with wooden pegs. He also made as a gift to his bride in 1878, a lovely sideboard and a chest of drawers.

In 1909, Jos. G. Lewis started his home on Section 5-5-1 East, having bought it from Mr. Wm. Fisher, who moved back to Ontario. He was a great lover of horses, and took great care of his teams, predominantly Clydes,



*Joe Lewis going out for straw with Vic and Norah, a favourite team.*

which provided the power to work the land until the spring of 1938, when he bought his first and only tractor, an International, from the Christison Bros. of Morris. His son, George Lorne, was more inclined to work with machines than horses on the farm. In 1942, G. Lorne took over the work of the farm, his father having passed away suddenly in September of that year.

Joseph G. Lewis married Ethel Lillian McPhaden, of Blanchard Municipality, in 1912. They had a family of four: Robert Lachlan, 1919-1952; Margaret Josephine, 1923-1976; George Lorne, born 1925 and Kathleen Mildred Emily, born 1927. Lorne married Miss Jean Brydan Hamblin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Hamblin, of Morris, in 1954. They have four children - Peggy Jean, David Lorne, John Joseph, and Kathryn Lynn. Kathleen Lewis married Mr. Edward A. Jorgenson of St. Elizabeth in 1946, and have seven daughters and one son. They are Carole Marjory (Koop), Bonnie Patricia (Dyck), Gladys Eleanor (Cadieux), Debra Arlene, Sharon Kathleen, Lori Dianne (Hisco), Brenda Marlene, and Wayne Edward.

Many hardships were encountered by the early settlers, not the least being the lack of good well water. Rain water and the Red River were their only supply until much later, when pounds were dug. They proved to be a boon for farmers especially, with an ample supply of fresh water at hand for house use and livestock. The ice harvest was also a thriving business in Morris. Now, with electricity provided by Manitoba Hydro, Morris is an up-to-date community with every convenience available, as in the city.



*D.K. Eidse truck line.*



*Mrs. Helena Eidse (daughter of delegate David Klassen) family - including oldest - A.K. Eidse family, D.K. Eidse family, C.K. Eidse family, Mrs. Lena Bartel family.*

## THE STORY OF THE EIDSES

*by Dick B. Eidse*

Our great-grandfather, Abraham Eitzen, was born August 26, 1811, son of Abraham Eitzen Sr., formerly of East Prussia. At the age of 25, he married Aganetha Enns and settled in the Village of Fischau, where they farmed. A family of three sons and four daughters was born to them, and by the time their mother died, four of the children were married and on their own.

Mennonite delegations to the Russian Government were not successful in obtaining exemption from direct military service, so migration to North America was considered and finally decided upon. Those wishing to move, sent delegates to North America in 1873, and the majority of these delegates chose the U.S.A. as their future home, but some chose Manitoba.

Delegate David Klassen chose the Scratching River for his Kleingemeinde members and Cornelius Toews chose the area now known as part of the R.M. of Hanover. During the migration to Manitoba in 1874, Mr. Eidse, with his daughter, Justina, and sons, Abraham and Henry, settled on the Scratching River, Village of Rosenhoff, just south across the road from the present Riverside Co-Op Store.

There is some controversy as to when great-grandfather changed his name to Eidse. All we know is that when he came to Canada, he was registered as Abram Eidse.

In time, Justina married Gerhard Warkentin and moved to Nebraska. Henry married Susanna Von Niessen and eventually moved to Texas, taking his father along to Abilene, where they farmed for some years. Great-grandfather died there, nearing the age of 90. Both Justina and Henry eventually moved back to Canada, and some of their descendants are still around; a few even residents of the Rural Municipality of Morris.



*Henry E. Eidse, who married Helena Von Niessen, was a son of Abram Eidse.*

Our grandfather, Abraham E. Eidse, was born in Fischau, April 10, 1857, and was a lad of 17 when the family arrived on the Scratching River on August 14, 1874. Due to the primitive life, poor food and water, he became sick with typhoid fever, which would have killed him, if other settlers had not come to their assistance.

In time he got a job driving a team of horses, scraping for the railroad company. They scraped a

railroad dam from just north of McTavish to Rosenfeld and crossed the Scratching River on S.E. 1/4 29-5-1 East, about 1/5 mile or 350 meters north of Riverside Co-Op Store. This income of \$2.25 per day, over a period of three or four summers, gave the new settlers quite a lift economically. The mosquitoes and bullflies tormented both men and horses day and night, almost beyond endurance. Much of the work area was covered by high grass, native, willow clumps, and shallow water puddles most of the summer; and when fall came around, they lived in constant fear of a prairie fire. Finally, the railroad bed was ready, but nothing further happened. It was a great disappointment to grandfather, who had expected the development of a new town at the River Crossing.

On April 6, 1879, Abram Eidse married Helena B. Klassen, the youngest daughter of Delegate, David Klassen. During the first winter in Canada, the David Klassens lived in Winnipeg, and Helena learned the English language. When Dr. McTavish found this out, he often took her along as guide and interpreter, later teaching her nursing and midwifery.



*Helena (Klassen) Eidse, midwife, bone setter and undertaker, delivered hundreds of babies in the Rosenhoff district.*

The A.E. Eidses started their farm off on the N.W. 1 / 4 16-5-1 East and before long they started to prosper and help other people. At the age of twenty-seven, grandpa was elected to the ministry of the Kleingemeinde Church, and served faithfully for well over 40 years. They raised a family of three sons and one daughter, who all settled in this area, remaining here for the rest of their lives.

Besides being a minister of the gospel and a farmer, grandpa was a good blacksmith and pioneered in the changeover from horse muscle power to wind and steam power. He also pioneered in taking the threshing machine to the stooks, instead of the stooks home to the machine. As the Lord further prospered them, he became the financial advisor and banker to many young families in the settlement, and beyond. When overseas missions had hardly been heard of in the community, he was quietly helping along in this kind of work, and when the 1920-21 famine developed in South Russia, he became an active organizer and leader of Mennonite Central Committee in this area.

Grandpa Eidse was very busy for years, when many of the destitute people from Russia were brought to Canada. They had to be settled, which took time, patience, money and a lot of encouragement in some cases.

## DAVE K. EIDSE Was a Progressive Businessman"

*by Faith Eidse with Lena Loewen*

Dave K. Eidse had the qualifications of a successful businessman, according to son Johnny, an implement dealer in Glenlea, Manitoba. 'D.K.' was both tough and soft. Tough to follow his ideas through, and soft with the people he affected on the way.

He realized early the ratio advantage of large scale farming and bought and cleared up to 2,800 acres of land sometimes at \$5.00 to \$6.00 an acre, together with brother C.K. Eidse. During busy months he hired up to 35 workers who were housed in bunkhouses and trailer cabins out on the fields.



*On the D.K. Eidse farms away from home, cabooses were used to house and feed the farm workers.*

Wife Elizabeth was an effective business partner, gardening, canning, cooking and washing, not only for the hired help, but also for a foster daughter and 19 children, including four sets of twins, five of which reached maturity. The oldest daughter, Lena, Mrs. John Loewen, recalls they emptied a 100 lb. sack of flour a week in their baking.

Other business ventures included implement dealing for Minneapolis Moline and the formation of a petroleum buying cooperative which eventually became Trump Oil Company, of which he was president until a year before his death, Jan. 28, 1950.

Mr. Eidse also had land investments in Texas and near Falcon Lake where son Johnny remembers digging for gold. Though a small vein was discovered it wasn't profitable for excavation. Today there is a gold mining operation near that site.

Mr. Eidse best demonstrated his 'tough' side after a poliomyelitis attack in 1912, Doctors had given up hope that he would ever walk again. But November 14, 1914 he walked down the wedding aisle without a cane. Immediately following, during the winter months, he and wife, Elizabeth, began building their house, hauling lumber and gravel with horse and sleigh. Son George still lives in the two-storey farmhouse a mile west and half a mile north of Riverside.

Mr. Eidse's business and community involvement - he served on the school board for many years - reflects his upbringing by parents who served the community with



*Dave K. Eidse and Elizabeth Friesen on their wedding day in 1914. Dave had just recovered from a polio attack.*

their wealth and valued learning. Abraham and Helen Eidse are reputed for giving many immigrant families a start in finding housing and offering them living staples from their own pantry which was always stocked with smoked hams.

This regard for learning was evident in Dave Eidse's library which contained the complete volume of La Salle business courses. Son Johnny recalls that his father was largely self-educated and expected his son to study the volume as well.

Mrs. Loewen also recalls evening visits to Grandmother when Mrs. Friesen postponed lighting the lamps until it was quite dark despite her grandchildren's begging. Instead she playfully stationed them at the windows and had them watch to see when the neighbors lighted theirs. Only then would she break down and light the kerosene wicks.

Mrs. Loewen remembers her grandmother as 'very loveable' and 'having a heart of gold'. She was 87 years old when she died June, 1943, leaving behind five children, 64 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.



*Mrs. D.K. Eidse and children by their home. Nineteen children were raised here, including a foster daughter. The yard here appears treeless, but is now surrounded by an evergreen planting and other large trees.*



*Plowing on the D.K. Eidse farm in late 1920's.*

## THE CHILDREN

Mrs. D.K. Eidse's strong faith and support of the Evangelical Mennonite Church during her life seems to be a tribute to godly parents and had an influence on her children. Two of her sons are missionaries, Ben and Helen (of Steinbach) have served in Zaire, Africa since 1953 and Dave and Susie (daughter of George W. Siemens) are serving in Mexico. A daughter, Eddy and Violet Brandt, have also completed several assignments in Mexico. Mr. Brandt is deacon at the Lake Centre Mennonite Church in Arborg where they have been grain and livestock farming since 1963. Frank who married Betty, daughter of Abram Schroeders, is pastoring an Evangelical Mennonite Brethren church in Langham, Saskatchewan and Nick who married Mary, daughter of Jacob H. Friesens, is a deacon at Pleasant Valley Church.

Martha joined the family at age nine when her mother, a sister to Mrs. Eidse, died. She married John J. Dueck



*Elizabeth Eidse harrowing on their farm.*

and settled at Rosenhoff. Mr. Dueck worked for C.K. Eidse's 20 seasons and the Sugar Refinery in Fort Gary 24 falls. Besides raising three of their own children, the Duecks fostered a nephew, Frank Dueck.

Pete, the first born, married Minna Rieger of Steinbach and has been working for C.T. Loewens in Steinbach for 37 years.

Mr. D.K. Eidse gave oldest child, Lena and John Loewen, the Henschel farm five miles west of the village. Travel was so difficult during the first few winters they stayed home a month at a time. Some days John had to build a fire under the car to get it started.

Sisters Tena and Betty were the first of six in the family to have double wedding ceremonies. They married cousins Jake and Ben Siemens October, 1944. The Jake Siemens settled at Riverside but the Ben Siemens, who raised 14 children, followed a wanderlust from Morris to Fisher Branch to New Norway, Alberta, as far south as Georgia and back to Alberta.

Two of the Eidse clan are widowed, Annie Eidse and Rose Eidse Kornelson. Abe Eidse passed away Feb. 28, 1970 after what seemed to be a seven year lease on life when his intestines ruptured and a chronic kidney condition was diagnosed in 1964. After 24 years together, Annie daughter of George W. Siemens, was left with seven children. Mrs. Eidse has worked at the Eventide home for a number of years.

Rose was married to George B. Kornelson 14 years before he died of an aneurism, leaving behind five young children. They live on the former Jacob F. Klassen farm on the meridian. Rose also had a double wedding with sister Violet, October, 1952.

A third double wedding in the Eidse family took place September, 1955 when twins Myrtle and George walked down the aisle with partners Paul Brandt and Elma Wiebe of Grunthal.

Paul and Myrtle Brandt are grain farmers and have a trucking business. They have met with several near fatalities including a car accident in 1965 when Billy suffered a fractured skull, Kerry was nearly scalped and Mr. Brandt's hip was dislocated. More recently he escaped with a broken leg when he was pinned under a pile of fertilizer.

Many D.K. Eidse grandchildren have settled in the community.

From the John Loewen family, Ken and Esther (nee Friesen), Joyce and Jake Kornelson and Rudy and Grace (nee Friesen) are grain and livestock farmers. Betty Ann married Elmer Friesen who has a feed bin manufacturing company, Meridian Industries, two miles west of Riverside. Doris married Lorne Kornelson who has taught at Pleasant Valley and Riverside Schools since 1963. Dennis and Helen Friesen do grain farming at Riverside. Pete married Florence Friesen and drives an 18 wheeler for Riverbend Feed.

Bryan, son of John Eidse has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree and he and wife Vera (nee Bueckert) teach at Killarney where he has made several movies with his students. Joan married Lorne Siemens also a trucker for Riverbend Feed. Kathy works in Winnipeg and Rosemary is a waitress at Burke's Restaurant in Morris.

From the Nick Eidse family, Elmer and Jim run Eidse Builders, framing and concrete in Edmonton. Mary Ann and Ernie Loewen have managed Thiessen Motors in Rosenort for years. They are now attending language school, preparing for service with Radio Z P 30 in Paraguay. Florence married Ernie's brother Danny who is an electrician. Larry, married to Sandra Groening, is principal at the Lowe Farm elementary school. Marlene's husband Clarence Dueck is a secretary at Riverbend Feed. Laverna is enrolled at Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, British Columbia. Karen, Mrs. Lloyd Kornelson, is secretary for G.K. Braun Associates Ltd., Rosenort.

In the Jake Siemens family, Marilyn and Leo Kornelson are grain farmers and haul water for the community. Glenn and Jerry Siemens run G. and J. Construction, a cribbing business based in Rosenort, and Pete is foreman at Westfield Industries. Valerie is also enrolled at CBI and Eldon is still in school.

Elwyn, son of Dave Eidse's and Annette, daughter of Frank K. Friesens, live in Pleasant Valley. He is an electrician. LaVerna married a student minister Tim Reimer of Winnipeg.

Bruce and Carolyn Kornelson married into the Waldners family. Bruce works for Riverbend Feed and Carolyn's husband, Dave, is in hog business with his dad. Brad and Dennis are still at home. Brad works for his cousins at G. and J. Construction.

One of the George Eidse daughters, Darlene, Mrs. Orville Goossen, is married. Wanda works at Eventide, and Bev, Rick and Douglas are still in school.

Paul Brandt's children are all at home as well, except for Murry and wife, Muriel, who live across the road in the old Clover Plain School. They help Dad with trucking and farming.



*The hired hand and sons of Dave Eidse taking a break during the field work.*

## **ABRAM F. EIDSE**

Abram F. Eidse and Annie P. Siemens were married on October 20, 1946, after five years of courtship. We lived in a bunk house on the D.F. Eidse farm, while Abe was farming for his dad. First son, Gordon Lee, was born on July 11, 1947.

We bought a farm half a mile from D.F. Eidse place, when P.J. Duecks migrated to Mexico. Old fashioned as it was, we loved the house. Son number 2, Wesley Allen, was born May 22, 1949.

In the 1950 flood, we were picked up by boat right at our front door. Abe stayed back a few days to move the pigs, cows and chickens. Water came up to the window sill in the house. We had put a sofa up on egg crates, and loaded it with a lot of stuff, like a box of new material, guitar, etc., but it tipped over when the water came too high. Only the plants had really flourished from all the moisture. They looked just lovely when we came to all the dirt, straw and muck all over the house.

Our first tiny little girl, Irene Frances, was the first Caesarian baby born in the new Morris Hospital on

August 10, 1951. Dr. Tony came from Altona to assist, since our doctors were not experienced enough to do the emergency surgery.

Sons, Marvin James born March 17, 1954 and Daniel Kelvin, July 4, 1955, were given to us in quick succession, close enough to be raised as twins.

Shirley Yvonne was a big surprise to us after four sons, born October 29, 1959, and Wendy, the last baby, came on October 9, 1963.

They all received their educations in rural schools. The North and South schools, the new Rosenort Elementary and Rosenort Collegiate.

In 1964, Abe was critically ill in St. Boniface Hospital, but recovered. God loaned him to us for six more years.

In the 1966 flood, we all moved to a little house on the C.C. Harder farm, north of Lowe Farm. Here, Gordon met the girl he later married. After this flood we built a new house at the 1966 flood level on the banks of the Morris River. It looked we were on the top of a hill. Abe worked at the Sugar Beet Factory for several winters.

On June 28, 1969, Gordon married Helen Harder of Lowe Farm, daughter of C.C. Harders. They now have two sons, Christopher and Trevor, with a new baby on the way. Gordon is a contractor, and they live in Calgary.

On August 10, 1969, Irene married Melvin Remple, son of Frank T. Remples, of Rosenort. They settled north of Rosenort and have two sons, Scott and Timothy. Melvin owns Remple's Service in Rosenort.

Dad (Abe) passed away suddenly on February 28, 1970 at night, from a brain hemorrhage. The small girls tried to waken him, but his soul was no more.

On May 10, 1970, Wes married Jacque, daughter of Jacob Borns of Kane. They have one son, Angelo and two daughters - Lola and Cherry Blossom. Wes has his own body shop, Wesco Enterprises, and they live near Rosenort.

Mary and Dan dropped out of school to help support the family after dad passed away. We sold all the land at \$50.00 per acre in 1971, to pay debts. I went to work at Eventide Home, to make ends meet and for loneliness sake.

On June 16, 1973, Mary married Joan Wiebe of Birds Hill, daughter of P.K. Weibes. Mary is a contractor and Joan does secretarial work. They live in Winnipeg.

Dan is working in carpentry, for his brother, Marv, and living in Winnipeg on his own.

Shirl married Barry Rempel on July 18, 1977. He is the son of Peter B. Remples of Rosenort. Barry works at Westfield Industries and they live near Rosenort.

Wendy is still at home, and attends Rosenort Collegiate, where she is taking Grade X.

## **ABRAM K. EIDSE**

Since David K. Eidse, Cornelius K. Eidse and Mrs. Lena Bartel are well represented by descendants in this municipality, I will only tell you something about the oldest son, our father, Abram K. Eidse. He was born on July 7, 1882, and by the fall of 1889, the new Rosenhoff School No. 61 was ready. He attended this school as a youngster, and later as a young adult for evening classes

in English and other related subjects. At the age of seven, a heavy timber struck his head in a swing accident, which caused permanent injury to his depth perception, and made him very accident prone throughout his life.

At the age of 30, he married our mother, Anna I. Bartel, from Kleefeld, and in spite of his handicap, he was a wise and loving father, not only to his own family, but to many other people, who stayed with us. We always had people in our home as boarders, hired help, maids, threshing crews, refugees, immigrants from overseas and people who simply needed a home. The pay was not high, but the fringe benefits were generous.

The folks did reasonably well as farmers. A herd of pure bred Jersey cattle, and a large combined family garden and orchard were Mom's and Dad's hobby. We grew lots of potatoes, vegetables and anything from Russian mulberries, concord grapes, sand and other cherries, plums, right up to full sized Morden apples.

They lost their first born set of twin boys - one at birth and the other in a tragic fire at 14 months, when he pulled a lighted kerosene lamp into his carriage. I was born in 1915, and my brother, Frank, in 1917, but the Spanish flu claimed him in January, 1919. Quite a number of people lost their lives to it in late 1918 and early 1919, and only a few people did not get sick; one of them Grandpa Eidse and the other, Mr. Peter U. Brandt.

My oldest sister, Helen, was born in 1920, and became the wife of Bill Schellenberg, automobile dealer for J.R. Friesen and Sons in Morris. She passed away in 1970, after a lengthy illness.

Our second oldest sister was born in 1921, but pneumonia took her in infancy. The next set of twins arrived in 1923, Mary and Annie, who are now Mrs. Peter S. Friesen and Mrs. Frank K. Kroeker.

My only living brother was born in 1926, Abram 13. Eidse and his wife, Matilda, are ham radio operators and a table tennis family. Our fifth sister arrived in 1928. Justina, (Mrs. C.B. Loewen) now pastor of Morris Fellowship Chapel, formerly missionaries to Mexico. Our youngest sister, Margie (1932) (Mrs. Frank P. Kroeker) is now home on furlough as missionaries to Paraguay. They are deeply involved with ham radio and getting radio station Z-P30 into existence.



*The A.K. Eidse family in the summer of 1933. In the middle of the picture is Grandmother, Mrs. A.E. Eidse. The children are Dick, Helen, Mary and Anne (twins), Abie, Margie.*



*The A.K. Eidse farm as it looked from the air in the late 1930's. In the back ground is the Henry K. Klassen place. The barn burned down in 1963 and the house has since been moved and totally renovated. The only original building left is the south part of the machine shed.*

We remember the harvest of 1915, the year when Western Canada had a bumper crop of No. 1 Marquis wheat, becoming world famous for it. On Monday, August 23, the Eidse threshing crew got started and by afternoon, everything was organized and operating smoothly. Suddenly, the baggerman signalled the engineer to *slop*, because no wheat came from the grainspout. Our father, Abram K. Eidse was the Separatorman and when he did not appear, the men looked and found him nearly dead of strangulation, with his clothing caught on a set screw. In trying to save himself, he had seriously injured his right arm, shoulderblade and back, and was laid up for a while.

On the third day of his unwanted rest, a baby boy was born to the family who was named Diedrich, after his maternal great-grandpa. Due to the family's open house policy, a young Lutheran couple from overseas, moved in with our parents a few months later. The young husband got a carpentry job not far away, and his wife helped mother with farm chores and housekeeping. By the time mother's baby was 6 months old, her helper had a baby girl whom they named Hanna. This proved to be a handy situation for mother, who now had both a babysitter and wet nurse, which left her quite free to do as she pleased with her time.

## DICK B. EIDSE

Over the next few years, more boarders and hired people implanted ideas and languages to young Diedrich, who by the age of 5 was fluent in three languages. In school, his chums and later the teacher, renamed him Dick, which still stands.

In 1923, the immigration from Russia got started, and many new families moved into this and also other areas of Manitoba. The Jacob Dycks (a miller by trade) moved from Georgsthal, South Russia, to Altona in late 1926, where Mr. Dyck got a job in the Altona flour mill. The family had been through World War 1, provided billet to various army units, the revolution and partisan wars, the German occupation, then back to more revolution,



typhus fever and famine. For this family, M.C.C. got there on time and one bowl of rice and one bun per day, stood between them and death by starvation, for a number of months. These were the memories of daughter, Anna, my future wife.

During my last year at school, our baby sister was born, and mother needed help, so Anna J. Dyck, of Altona, was hired in late spring, remaining until October, when she started working at George I. Bartel's. We had become good friends when she was working for my parents, and when I asked her to stand beside me a few years later, she was willing.

We got married in 1935, and due to the depression and other restrictive circumstances, we had a slow start. It took us twelve years before we had our own vehicle. We started off on our own by doing custom work - ice harvesting in winter, and sugar beet machine work in summer. At first, we rented land and eventually, got a toe hold in some farm property about 3 1/2 miles northwest of Rosenort.

In the meantime, the Lord had given us three children, the youngest of which was a blue baby, who died within 12 hours. Minola, our only daughter, got Licensed Practical Nurses training and worked as a nurse in Concordia, Altona and Morris General Hospitals. She had a dubious distinction of being the first open heart surgery patient in Winnipeg General Hospital and lived to encourage other people who needed it later. She married Peter F. Kroeker in 1962 and later moved out of the district. They have four children, ranging in ages from 4 to 14.

Our son, Peter, and his wife, Caroline (nee Tonn) have two teenaged daughters, Margaret and Jane, and a school aged son, Steven, who all live close to us. Peter and I have farmed together on a father - son crop sharing arrangement, where he has been in charge of the farm management since 1961. This gives me some time to follow my hobbies, such as free lance accounting, audits, and when in the mood, some story telling and a little writing.

Anna enjoys the garden and a few chicks. She used to sew quilts, etc, but cannot do so any longer because of failing eyesight. We have also done a moderate amount of travelling, here in Canada, the U.S.A. and some of Latin America. We thank the Lord for giving us reasonably good health, many friends and all our daily needs.

### **CORNELIUS KLASSEN EIDSE (October 27, 1898 - March 16, 1960)**

Cornelius K. Eidse ('C.K.' to his friends) was born on October 27, 1898 in the village of Rosenhoff, a stones throw from the Scratching River (six miles northwest of Morris.) His father, Rev. Abram Eidse, a self-supporting preacher, taught his sons among other things, to be farmers. His mother, Helena Klassen Eidse taught her sons and daughter to want good homes, gardens and the importance of healthy families.

He received a limited (German) education in the pre-public church school. He married his school mate and



*Cornelius and Mary Eidse, on their well kept farm yard in 1940's.*

neighbor, Maria D. Loewen, daughter of Cornelius D. Loewen when they both were 20 years of age.

They lived with his parents for a short period, but soon moved to the 'Thiessen farm', located in the center of Section 29-5-1 E. This was home for the rest of their lives. Both were concerned with the value of the English language, attending adult education classes, correspondence courses, reading, travelling and sharing experiences with people from all walks of life.

'C.K.' often gambled time and money to learn new things, getting his education the hard way. One example of this was when he exultingly reported to his father that he had found that by buying flax in the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, keeping it for a short period *Waiting for the Price to Go Up*, he had sold it for a good profit, cutting out all the trouble and expense of growing it. "Son, that lucky experience will cost you", advised his father. 'C.K.' later sheepishly admitted that it had cost him thousands in hard earned dollars before giving up on the easy bucks.

He became really excited about farming when he could empty his barn of horses and replace them with tractor power. He purchased more and more land, more tractors and implements, often being first with newly invented equipment in the area. He learned to weld and used this knowledge to improve factory machinery and making his own, like a self-propelled swather, garden tractor, rotary



*C.K. Eidse in 1944, with the self-propelled swather he built. This was one of the many useful implements he designed and built in his farm workshop.*

lawn mower etc. which later were produced in factories. His curiosity about new inventions was probably matched by his father. In the early 1920's when radio was still taboo in the area, he and his father were sharing a set of earphones, listening to broadcasts from all over the world, even in the German language. When his mother who was 'sitting up' with his wife who had had a new baby, awoke and found it was already 2:00 a.m. she remarked, "Abram you have to preach tomorrow, what would the church members say if they saw you." The horse was quickly hitched for the two miles home in the dead of night.

In time, old buildings were replaced by modern ones. Boards of up to 24 inches wide, used in the old house, barns and wind driven grist mill were used. 'C.K.' and his brother-in-law, J.H. Friesen, purchased the windmill for \$100.00, but because of its location on the road allowance where the new schools are located in Rosenort, it had to be dismantled. The replica of this mill can be seen in the Mennonite Museum in Steinbach. 'C.K.' often said that it would have made a good hot dog stand.

Travel, not so common in the early days played a large roll in his self-education, and interest in new things. Probably his first big trip was to Winnipeg, with his father and a team of oxen. The old number 14 highway, he claimed followed the Red River so closely because the oxen had to drink so often. Another trip, this one to Minneapolis with his brother 'D.K.' and Jac J. Dueck in

To be assured of being free to travel in the winter a turtle shaped snowmobile was manufactured in the farm's machine shop. A Manitoba Telephone Co., crawler under carriage was used, a Ford Model A motor and a modern, upholstered cab, with rear entrance, to hold up to eight people was constructed. When snow conditions were right, it could travel to Morris in 30 minutes.



"to  
This snowmobile was manufactured by C.K. Eidse and John J. Dueck in 1940.

The farm and home, however, were never forgotten. Many trees were planted to create shelter for livestock, gardens, fruit trees and birds. He took pride in raising new varieties of grain. Experimental farm experts were his friends and with their advice he was always ready to grow new crops. Early in spring he would plant 100 seeds in each window box, to check on the germination. He sold seed grain from registered stock to many other progressive farmers, shipping far and wide after each newspaper advertisement. In 1957, he was hailed as the 'flax king', in a newspaper article, as a result of winning a trophy in the Royal Winter Fair. The writer has the flax sample and Ribbons, which he values for his father's accomplishment.

Special crops like alfalfa, stacked in high pyramids until cut-up, sacked and sold to 'Swifts' for meal; row crop corn, picked often after freeze-up, husked, shelled and dried were grown for a number of years and dropped for new crops if the experience was not so good. The farm was a course in agriculture for many hired men and for family members who worked for 'C.K.'. Many persons remember long days, good meals, encouragement from the boss, under the formanship of John J. Dueck. Johawn, for many years the foreman,



Children of the C.K. Eidse in 1932. On one of the many trips with their parents. LEFT TO RIGHT: Helen, Eddy, Mary and Margaret, standing beside their new car.

1925 was made in an open touring car in the middle of the winter, without the benefit of snow suits etc. In 1936, after a good crop was harvested and the grain broker was advised to sell when a 'certain price' could be obtained, another trip was made to Galveston, Texas. That 'certain price' was reached accordingly to the Galveston newspapers and in celebration, a little extra was spent, only to find on their return that the grain broker had waited for the price to go up even a little higher, but it had not, and later the grain had to be sold to pay for the storage charges. This however did not discourage future trips. Mexico, California, numerous trips to Banff, Ottawa, Toronto, etc. were visited over the years.



John J. Dueck and another worker, cultivating the hundreds of trees that were hand planted to provide windbreak and for ornamental purposes.

was very much part of the farm and family, and made a go of it when 'C.K.' was away, getting parts for the implements, lumber for new buildings, buying land or getting involved in new ventures.

There were plenty of new ventures too. Twin City and Auto Co., Trump Oil Co., Liquid Fertilizer dealership, Farmers Protective Association, Brett-Youngs Ltd., Eidse Bros. and Friesen, Minneapolis-Moline Dealership, Dresswell Cleaners Ltd. developing a claim for gold mining on the Ontario Manitoba boundary, a producing oil well near Pecos, Texas. The oil well, in an effort to increase the crude oil flow, was treated in a special manner, but the explosion which resulted cut off the oil flow and at that time the cost was too high to continue. This one, like most of the ventures never out produced the farm. The farm, no matter how it taxed his peace of mind with crop failures due to grasshoppers, floods, draughts, early frost, wet weather, etc., etc. provided the family with a modern home, comfortable yard, new equipment, education, travel, and in the end of his lifetime an inheritance of farmland for his children.

Father passed away in the spring of 1960, Mother died in the spring of 1976 after being confined to a wheelchair and bed due to multiple sclerosis, the disease beginning when she was only 40 years of age. Of the 12 children, eight grew to adulthood. Eddy died when only 24 years of age. Mary (Jack Penner) now owns the home place, the modern buildings, not so modern anymore but still appreciated; Margaret (Ike Penner), Helen (Bert Huebner), Elma (Wilf Neufeld) and Doreen (Frank Loewen) all live in Winnipeg. Margaret and Helen are widowed. Ralph (Lenore Bartlette Eidse) and Andrew (Lillian Schroeder Eidse) both live in Morris. Each one of the family members were proud to receive a portion of Rural Municipality of Morris Soil, realizing that good things come from the land, wanting to pass on to their families, earth for *Roots* for the next generation.

## RALPH AND LENORE EIDSE

Ralph grew up having only one goal - that was to be a farmer. At the age of 14, he left school, when he convinced his parents farming was more important to him than schooling.

After his marriage to Lenore Bartlette, he discovered that two cannot live as cheaply as one - and decided to supplement his farm income by hauling gravel in summer, and pulp wood in winter.

Winter came to be an enjoyable season, packing up the family, heading for the bush (Kenora) and hauling the pulp. Living in Taillieu's pulp camp in a house trailer, was an experience all in itself. This meant outdoor plumbing, hauling water in cream cans, and when the electric kettle was plugged in at more than one trailer, bang, the hydro kicked off.

In the fifties, hauling pulp was manual labour, 20 hour shifts were not uncommon, unloading 8 cords of wood by hand (with a pickeroon) at -40°F temperatures, was a challenge. It was not without excitement - a driver had to be good to stay on the Jones Road. Icy hills and curves were an occupational hazard. Many a hair-raising story



*Ralph Eidse in 1955, hauling pulp wood in Ontario, the first of many years.*

can be told, about meeting a loaded truck coming down Tower Hill sideways in the middle of the night in a snowstorm, or how the ice on the lake crackled and groaned as the pulp trucks pulled on to dump. It was a rare occasion though, that a truck broke through and sank. Hauling pulp was a living, and it was enjoyed by most.

Upon his father's death in 1960, Ralph took over the farming of the land which was held in an estate, to provide for his mother who was an invalid. Starting from scratch for a young farmer was never easy, purchasing each piece of equipment, the overhead, the "sad sixties" when wheat sold for under \$1.00 a bushel; but eventually the day came when Ralph could afford to be a "full time" farmer.

Ralph and Lenore were well known in the district, for their achievements in a wholesale-retail sales business, which they began in 1968. Sales seminars and business promotions took them to many parts of the country, including California, Florida, Jamaica, and Spain. A wholesale distribution warehouse in their home, sponsoring sales training and business meetings, required much of their time, and after eight years of business, they decided to leave it to devote more time to the family and farm.



*Ralph and Lenore Eidse family in 1976. LEFT TO RIGHT: Grant, Darrell. FRONT ROW. Annette, Desiree.*

Their four children are: Grant and Roseanne (Simundsens) of Morris, to whom identical twin girls were born in January 1980. Annette married Brad Klassen, they live at St. Agathe with their daughter Melissa. Desiree will graduate from College in 1980 (Business Administration), and Darrell a farm partner, is at home. A son, David, born in 1971, died in infancy.

Their home was situated on the hill across the river from Riverside, on the bank of the Morris River, and as beautiful as it was, high waters were always a threat. After the flood of 1966, they decided to move their home into the Town of Morris, to be protected by the dyke.

In 1967, Lenore became the editor of the "Journal", the local paper published by Derksen Printers at Steinbach. Her column, "Up and Down the Valley" became a popular feature. Many articles of historical interest were written and published in that Centennial year, and in 1968, the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Competition awarded the Journal first prize for the best feature news.



*Karl Poersch, who came to Canada from Germany in 1887.*

## KARL POERSCH

Karl Poersch was thirty-one years old when he decided to come to Canada. His brother, William, had arrived in Manitoba a few years earlier and was working in the Rosenhoff area. Karl and some of his brothers thought this sounded like a good idea for them to become Canadians as well, but they had no money for fare. William discussed this problem with some of the Mennonites in the area, and a Mr. Eidse agreed to sponsor them.



*Here, the steel machine shed under construction. It was completed in 3 days.*



*Wedding picture of Karl and Wilhelmine Poersch, 1882.*

From 1978-1980, Lenore spent considerable time and energy writing, doing research, and editing the book "Furrows in the Valley".

In 1974, Ralph and Lenore purchased John J. Dueck's farmstead, adjacent to the Eidse farm, and went into mixed farming, more or less as a hobby. The cattle purchased in the slump and sold at high prices during the 1979 flood proved to be a profitable hobby. The old hog barn was put into use - at first just ten weanlings were bought to "try it out" - six years later a farrow to finish operation is under construction.

In 1978, the farmstead was enlarged, 2,000 young trees were planted as a shelter belt, a new high pad built, a steel machine shed erected, and steel bins followed. This high pad proved to be a Godsend - all the farm grain, seed and fertilizer was kept high and dry during the 1979 flood.

Today, the farm operation consists of a hog business, as well as 1400 acres of grain land, which includes the quarter section that Dad Eidse received from his parents. Ralph believes this land still carries Grandfather's blessings, and helped to make a grandson's dream come true.

In 1887, Karl left his home in Germany with his wife, Wilhelmine, and two sons, Herman, aged four, and Gustav, just two weeks old. They arrived in the Village of Rosenhoff and lots of courage and very little else.

With the help of the Mennonites, Karl was able to rent 40 acres of land with a house and barn on it. He cut the prairie grass on this land, tied it into bundles and sold it to the settlers to be used as roofing. With the money from the hay, and from any odd jobs he could find, he was able to manage. He also found work with the CNR as they needed men to lay the tracks from Silver Plains to Morris. Wages were low - they worked ten hours a day for 75c and were allowed time off for seeding and harvesting.

Seven years later (1894), he was able to obtain homestead land from the government for one dollar an acre; along the Morris River in the Lea Bank District.

Karl had a few head of cattle and grazing was good on his new homestead. In order to keep his cattle there, he built a small hut, just large enough as a shelter for his young son, Herman, who was eleven. This hut was made of willows from the river banks and the roof covered with the popular prairie grass. Herman's family came once a week to bring him food; the water source was the nearby river. Later, a house was built here, and the family moved in.

In winter, ice was cut and melted for drinking. A shed was built and ice was packed in here and brought in when needed. Large galvanized tanks sat in the kitchen next to the stove to hold the ice.



*Putting straw into barn loft to be used for bedding and feed for the cattle on Karl Poersch's farm.*

The virgin land had to be broken, so oxen were purchased, and a hand plow was used to turn the sod. Later, when grain was sown and harvested, it had to be hauled to Winnipeg by oxen to the Ogilvie elevator.

In Rosenhoff, there was a windmill which was used for grinding wheat into flour. One time when Karl and his son, John, aged 6, took grain to be made into flour, they arrived at about three o'clock. The wind went down and the mill stopped, so they slept under the wagon until morning, when the wind was strong enough to operate the mill.

One of the first things that was made by the parents was an outside oven for baking bread. The oven was fired by placing burning straw inside, until the clay had reached the proper heat. The clay held this heat long enough to bake the bread. After the oven was heated, a rack was placed inside and 12 loaves of bread placed upon it. What a delightful aroma filled the air!



*Hauling water for the steam engine on the Poersch farm.*

In 1901, a larger home was built as there were now seven boys and three girls; Herman, Gustav, Karl, Fred, William, Frank, John, Martha, Mary and Minnie. A large orchard was started and trees planted for shelter.

The first threshing machine was bought and run with a steam tractor bought around 1914.

Karl farmed till his retirement in 1926, when John and Frank took over. In time, the farm was purchased by John; upon John's retirement, his daughter, Wilma, and husband, Mervin Somerville, farmed the land, later buying the place. Hence the farm Karl homesteaded in 1894 is still in the family after 85 years.

## THE POERSCH FAMILY

*written by Poersch Bros.*

Our grandfather, Daniel Poersch, who was born November 8, 1868, immigrated to Canada from Germany in 1886, at the age of 18. As he arrived in Manitoba, he got his first job herding cattle for Abram Eidse in the Village of Rosenhoff, now called Riverside. A few years later, he met Auguste Mazolleck, who immigrated to Canada with her mother from Germany. They were married in 1890 in Rosenhoff, both at the age of 22, and lived there for a few years.

Our father, William D. Poersch, their first child, was born in Rosenhoff, November 9, 1892. Then they moved



*Those good old days! The Poersch family just home from school in 1937. Richard, Norman, Edith, Margaret and Robert.*

to the Lea Bank District and settled on SE. 1/4 Section 23-6-1 West, starting to farm. They had 7 more children: John, Otto, Walter, Elizabeth, Mary, Helen and Auguste. They had a tragedy in the family in 1916, when their son Walter, at the age of 6, drowned in the river next to the yard on the day of his birthday. Grandmother passed away December 10, 1938 at that age of 70 and grandfather lived to the good old age of 85, when he passed away, March 8, 1954.

When father was 25, he married Frieda Bunkowsky, who immigrated to Canada with her parents, the August Bunkowsky's along with one sister, Anne, three brothers, Otto, Fred and Emil, in 1908, from Konigsburg, Germany. Our parents were married, February 8, 1918, in the Lea Bank School, which was also the house of worship, St. Peters Lutheran Church. They lived with



*The Poersches going to church at Lea Bank in 1940. Mother and Dad, Lloyd, Robert and Norman.*

father's parents for the next three years; during this time our sister, Irene, was born, June 30, 1919.

In 1920, father built a house on SE. 1/4 19-6-1 East and they started farming on their own. It was a hard life for them, as they had poor crops, and low prices for livestock and grain, especially the years of the dirty thirties. At times, they had barely enough to eat. He only farmed 160 acres in his lifetime.

They raised a family of six sons and three daughters: Gordon, Herbert, Richard, Lloyd, Robert, Norman, Irene, Edith and Margaret.



*The Wm. D. Poersch family in 1950. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Lloyd, Norman, Robert, Edith, Richard, Herbert, Gordon. FRONT ROW: Margaret, Mother, Dad, Irene.*

Irene married Fred Johnson. They live in Winnipeg with their daughter, Beverly and a son Dennis.

Gordon, who married Alvina Harvey, lives in Fort Garry, and works for Manitoba Pool Elevators. They have three sons: Neil, Danny and David.

Edith married Arthur Neumann; they live in Kirkfield Park, and have three daughters: Maureen, Janice and Marilyn.

Margaret married William Ukrainec, and lived in St. Andrews, Manitoba. They had one son, two daughters, Diane and Susan. Margaret passed away on January 19, 1959 at the age of 32, from leukemia.

Herb, Richard, Lloyd, Robert and Norman are not married. They live together on the home place and farm

Irene, Gordon and Herbert went to the Green Bank for a few years, but had to transfer to the Lea Bank school where we all got our education.

The first land we bought was the NE. 114 19-6-1 East, in 1946 for \$25.00 per acre. In the years 1947 to 1967, we



*Taken in 1938. Herb Poersch on the family first car, a 1919 Model 7. Ford.*

completely rebuilt our yard with new buildings, and kept on increasing our acreage for the present size. The big flood of 1950 was a bad year for the farmers in this area.

We do some curling in the winter with the "Morris Farmers Curling Club" also enter a few bonspiels. When we're not curling, we do a lot of travelling to other parts of the world, to see how the rest of the world lives.

We are members of the St. Pauls Lutheran Church and attend church at Brunkild.

Father passed away suddenly on March 30, 1972 at the age of 78 years. Our grandparents and our parents are all buried in the Lea Bank Cemetery. We take care of the cemetery and in July 1976, we built a cairn in the middle of the cemetery in memory of the Lea Bank pioneers; the plaque on the cairn was donated by the "Lea Bank Ladies' Club".

We almost come to the point when we say, "Now we have seen everything"; then we think of the old saying, "You aint seen nothing yet!" What's next? In conclusion, we would like to say that farming and God, have been good to all of us and we look forward to the future, as the following few words say ...

*"We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,  
We have hard work to do and loads to lift.  
Shun not lite struggle, face it; 'tis God's gift."*



*The Poersch Bros. farm in 1968.*





*Wm. Poersch, 1918, son of pioneer Karl Poersch.*



*Mrs. Wm. Poersch with her pet cow, a dowry from her parents in 1921.*



*Wm. Poersch in 1912, with a small tractor he built from an old grass mower chassis. It was used for small jobs on the farm.*



*The bunk house used on the farm for the field hands in 1917. Photo courtesy Wm. Poersch.*



*The home of Wm. Poersch in 1925, with their car, a 1923 Model Ford.*

## **JACOB GORCHITZA FAMILY**

Jacob Gorchitza and his wife came to Canada from Poland in 1889. He worked out for a while and then he bought a homestead four miles from Rosenort. They lived in a little shack by the "Scratching River" and two years later built a two storey house.

They have five children - Jake, who was married to Josie Gebauer; John, who married Carrie Brisbane;



*The old Gorchitza house, built approximately in 1901.*

Emil, who married Abie Neiles; Greta, who married Percy Elliot; and Annie, who married Robert Fennell.

Jacob served on the council of the Morris Municipality, in 1903. He also served for 3 years as school trustee of Lea Bank School, in 1900, and as school secretary in 1906.

Jake K. Gorchitza, his son, prior to moving to California, served as school trustee of Lea Bank School



*John Gorchitza and son, Donald in 1943.*



*Jacob Gorie, son of Jacob Gorchitza, and his family in 1946. LEFT TO RIGHT: Margie, Alice, Fred, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Gorie.*

as did his other sons, John and Emil, and another son.

The father, Jacob Gorchitza, retired in 1930, and moved to Winnipeg, where he lived until his death.

Emil Gorchitza took over the family farm and farmed till his death in 1938.

John Gorchitza took over the farm from Emil in 1938, and farmed until his retirement in 1948. John and his wife, Flora, moved to Morris upon retirement.

Donald Gorchitza (son of John) farmed the land until 1970, when he and his wife, Viola, and sons moved to Morris.

Johnny Dueck of Rosenort, is the present owner of the Gorchitza farm.



*Jacob Gorchitza with grandson, Gerald in 1952.*

## FAMILY OF ELIZABETH AND JACOB REIMER

In the fall of 1926, Elizabeth, oldest daughter of the Peter J. Loewens, was married to Jacob J.D. Reimer, formerly of Twin Creek, Manitoba. Their first home was close to Elizabeth's parental home, where they lived for almost two years. Here their first daughter, Minnie, was born, September 13, 1927. The future held for her, an interesting nursing career.

It was the same year, 1927, that the young couple turned their eyes and hopes westward, and bought a quarter of section of land, the southeast quarter of 3-6-1 West, at \$30.00 an acre. The price of land was to drop during the depression years of the 1930's, and payments

became hard to make. Hard work and faith in God brought our parents through these difficult years.

They moved their little house to the new land in August, 1928, and built a farmstead near the low-lying banks of Tobacco Creek, where they are still residing today, fifty years later. This district is called Pleasant Valley.



*J.P.D. Reimer family in 1950.*

November 1, 1928, Menno, their first son, was born. He followed in his father's steps, taking up farming when he grew up. Menno married Marion Friesen, of Kleefeld, in 1953. When his maternal grandparents farm, two miles south of Rosenort, was up for sale in 1955, Menno and Marion bought it, moving from their small house on his parents' farm and settling down on the farm place his Grandfather Loewen had built. Twenty-four years later, they are still there. The old house, which had been built in 1910, was torn down in 1966, after having been in two floods. Some of the lumber was salvaged and used to build a new bungalow on a raised site, safe from spring flood waters. Their children are Julene and husband, John Wolfe; Sheryl, Reg and Darren.

In the meantime, the parents, Jacob Reimers, had also been busy acquiring more land. Both being of a very industrious nature, they worked and saved for their growing family. Mother's motto of 'save a penny, buy a farm' helped to do exactly that. They also gave of their time and talents to others. Father served as a school trustee for twelve years and as a Sunday school teacher in the local church for many years.



*Mrs. Jacob Reimer baking buns.*

Mary, the second daughter, arrived July 4, 1930. When she grew up, she chose a career in hospital work, as a central supply room attendant, and has become very adept at it.

The second son, Peter, was born on March 3, 1932. Named after both his grandfathers, he too grew up to be an ambitious farmer. He married Tina Friesen, in 1955. Their children, Wayne and wife Marilyn, Dale, Laverne, Christopher, and Meryl. In 1974, they sold their nice farm here in the Rural Municipality of Morris to brother Allen Reimer, and moved to a farm up north at Birch River, Manitoba.

The third daughter, Elizabeth, was born June 12, 1934. It is of interest to note that she too chose nursing as her career. She followed her profession at Steinbach,



*Mother Reimer and daughters in a pea shelling bee, 1956.*

Manitoba, where she met and married Francis Thiessen, in 1976.

April 1, 1936, Leo was born, followed by Allen on March 25, 1938. The little house was just too small for the growing family, and a big, new house was built in 1938.



*Father Reimer with his seven sons.*

Leo married Eva Braun, of Steinbach, in 1959, and settled on a farm next to the parents' place. Their children are Cohn, Milton, Audrey, Gerald and Darlene.

Allen married Millie Friesen, a local girl, and also started farming. Their children are Gene, Shelley, Renae and Gail.

During those early years, more families had moved west and settled close by, and the Reimers valued their

neighbours highly. One winter evening, when the family had visited neighbours and were returning home across the field, travelling with horses and sleigh, they lost their way in a heavy fog. Father got off and by watching the terrain closely, could eventually lead them safely home.

April 27, 1940, twin girls, Alma and Annie, were born. Good home nursing care kept both little babies alive.

Alma married Andrew Friesen, and Annie married Ed Kroeker, at a double wedding ceremony, August 13, 1961. The Kroekers are farming in the district. Their children are Jennifer, Thelma and Lavonne. The Friesens have moved out and are residing at Maryfield, Saskatchewan. Their children are Terence, Leon, Marcia and Kurt.

Pauline, the youngest of the six daughters, arrived August 24, 1942. She married Les Siemens, September 12, 1969. Les is a local plumber and contractor. They reside at Rosenort, Their children are Francis, Patrick and Jared.

Jake, born August 7, 1944, is the first of the sons to choose a different occupation than farming. He married Doris Siemens in 1965 and moved to Swan River, Manitoba, where he owns Reimer Builders. Their children are Lynelle, Melanie and Dawson.



*Flash flood on Reimer's farm in 1945.*

It was the spring of 1945 that the Reimers experienced the first flash flood, when their home quarter section was completely covered with water. Drainage ditches had been so improved that the spring runoff along the Tobacco Creek came so much faster that the channel couldn't handle it. They were flooded a number of springs thereafter, till the channel was dredged and straightened and a low dyke put up around the farm yard. The yearly spectre of spring flooding was over.

The sixth son, John, was born February 24, 1948. He married Connie Isaac of Morden, August 10, 1973, and together they've accepted the challenge of leaving family, friends and native soil to be missionaries to Nicaragua, Central America. Born to them in Nicaragua are Trevor and Andrea.

Lorne, born December 14, 1950, is the seventh son and the youngest in this family of thirteen. He married a local girl, Delores Friesen, in 1971. In 1978, they left Manitoba, to start a business at Cavalier, North Dakota. They have one daughter, Tawnya.

The Jacob Reimers, after over fifty years of farming, are still young at heart and enjoying life.



*The Dickson family perched on the newly dug ditchbank north of 14-5-1 W, about 1910. John and Elizabeth (Hedley) Dickson at right. Elizabeth's sister-in-law Emma (Mrs. James Hedley) (centre) and her daughter Ethel (later Mrs. Abbott Taylor) (third from left) were visiting. Resident at the Dickson farm at the time were, from left, George, Isabella (Belle), John and Robert Dickson. John Sr. died in 1909, Elizabeth in 1923.*

## DICKSON FAMILY

*W. H. Dickson*

John and Elizabeth Dickson and their children Isabella, Robert, George and John migrated from Pakenham, Ontario to Forest River, North Dakota about 1893. About 1900 they moved to a farm eight miles northwest of Morris, making the journey from Forest River by horses and buggy.

Isabella married Robert Taylor, and resided on a farm north of Morris. George returned to the United States, where he went into business. John Jr. moved to Saskatchewan, where he homesteaded near Biggar. He enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1915 and was killed in action September, 1918. John Dickson Sr. died in 1909. By this time, Robert had taken over the farm, which he operated until 1929, when he became ill and died in 1931.

Robert Dickson married Barbara Hogg of Wellesley, Ontario in 1911. They raised three children: John H., William H. and Rebecca (Mrs. F.C. Anderson). Robert Dickson was a progressive farmer who knew the value of crop rotation, and who grew a lot of clover and pasture, which helped to keep up the fertility of the soil. He built up an excellent herd of Holstein cattle and kept records of performance of milk production. He was a long time member of the Morris Agricultural Society.

After Robert Dickson's illness, his sons John and William assumed management of the farm. They added additional acreage and operated the farm as a partnership until 1976 when they sold the farm to William Dickson's three sons - William Jr., Allan and John Douglas. Allan and John D. are presently operating the farm. They are the fourth generation of Dicksons to do so.

John H. Dickson married Edythe Irvine. They raised



*John Dickson, on leave in Paris, in a Napoleonic pose. He was killed in action in 1918. RIGHT: Barbara (Hogg) Dickson (1878-1962) with infant son John (Jack), born 1912.*



*LEFT: Robert Dickson (1878-1931). ABOVE: Robert and Barbara Dickson with Jack (b. 1912), Bill (b. 1914) and Becky (b. 1918) in the early 1920's.*



LEFT: Jac and Edythe (Irvine) Dickson with their children Marian (b. 1937) and Robert (b. 1941) at Marian's wedding to Harvey Mazinke, in 1959. Marian and Harvey have two children, Scott and DeEtta. Bob, an ear-nose-throat specialist married Susan MacKenroth of Seattle in 1969. They live in Vancouver and have three children, Pamela, John Matthew and Timothy. Edythe lived in the R.M. of Morris all her life. She was enthusiastically active in church, agricultural and other local affairs almost until her death in December, 1974. CENTRE: Bill and Mildred (Loewen) Dickson's family in 1973. CLOCKWISE: Bill Sr., Bill Jr., Allan, Betty, Mildred, John. Mildred is a pianist, organist, music teacher and choir director. Bill Jr. married Sharon Col. ns of San Antonio in 1978. They work for oil companies in London, England. Allan married Joy Yarish of Oakburn in 1979. They live in the house built by Jack Dickson at NW 14-5-1 Win 1936. John lives in the house built by Robert Dickson in 1915. In 1974 Bill and Mildred moved to a new home in Morris. RIGHT: Joy (Yarish) Dickson is a U. of M. Home Economics graduate and day care centre worker.

two children, Marian and Robert. Marian became a Registered Nurse and later married Harvey Mazinke. They reside in Regina. Robert studied medicine and is a surgeon.

William H. Dickson married Mildred Loewen. They have four children: William G. who is a Geophysicist living in London, England; Allan, a graduate of Agricultural Economics; Elizabeth, now Mrs. Ron Kilmury, a Home Economics graduate teaching and residing in Vancouver; John Douglas who is completing the Diploma Agriculture Course in 1979.

J.H. and W.H. Dickson have experienced great changes in Agriculture from the horse power era, when

more than forty horses were kept to provide power to operate the farm, and from three full time summer employees to a crew of twenty or more who were needed at harvest time. Today two men, with some casual labour, can handle a large acreage and farm it more intensively.

Roads and transportation have changed from a two hour trip to town in mud or deep snow with a team of horses, to a twenty minute ride in a comfortable car or truck.

Hauling a sixty bushel load of wheat to the elevator or siding at four miles an hour has been replaced by a truck that hauls 200-500 bushel loads at 20-40 miles an hour.

The Dickson family has taken an interest in their community, having at various times served on Agricultural Society boards, School boards, Elevator Association boards and assisted in construction projects of the skating and curling rinks and golf course. Life in the Morris community has been rewarding and pleasant for the Dicksons.



*Barbara Dickson managed the farm with her two sons after her husband's untimely illness, and death in 1931. She retired to Morris in 1958, became ill, and lived with her daughter Becky until her death in 1962. Pictured with her in this wartime photo is Bill, also Jack's children, Marian and Bob. BELOW, LEFT: The Dickson clan in 1951. Bill with Allan, Mildred; Becky and Francis Anderson with Barbara; Edythe, Jack, and matriarch Barbara (Hogg) Dickson. SITTING: Bill, Jr., Bob, and Edythe's nephew Keith Craig. RIGHT: The first threshing outfit on the Dickson farm, owned by Robert Dickson (kneeling, second from right) and Ole Gilman (standing, second from left.) About 1902. Andrew Anderson No. 6 from right rear.*



SITTING: Bill, Jr., Bob, and Edythe's nephew Keith Craig. RIGHT: The first threshing outfit on the Dickson farm, owned by Robert Dickson (kneeling, second from right) and Ole Gilman (standing, second from left.) About 1902. Andrew Anderson No. 6 from right rear.



## THE LAWRIES

William Lawrie came to Canada from Scotland, from the village of Longside near Aberdeen.

I have a silver snuff box given to him by Musical Friends and Admirers, dated 1849. I assume it was a farewell gift.

Little is known of his early movements. We have a few letters, and the writings in his daily diary. There were three or four of these ledgers, but there is only one left now. The ledger, dated from Nov. 11, 1881 was kept continuously until May 6, 1887. At that date, the writing was quite shaky.

In the back of the diary, William kept an accounting of trading and money matters. He describes the daily doings of family members and neighbors. He was a tailor and singing instructor who made clothing for the family members and friends. He describes floods, the Riel Rebellion and building the railroad - the Winnipeg, St. Paul I believe.

I believe they came to Morris from Whitby, Ontario, probably by steamboat on the Red River via U.S.A. as the transcontinental railway wasn't finished at that time.

William Lawrie had a large family. He speaks of his wife only as mother; and seven boys - Mattie, Robert, Tom, Jim, Jack, George and Allan. Two daughters, Bella and Emma. He had a section of land one mile west and one mile north of Morris on the bank of the Morris River, where he and some of the boys took out homesteads. The section of land was divided into three parts, with Robert on the north, Jim the central part and Father and the other boys on the south part.

Details of the family as I know them are as follows. Robert Lawrie married Elizabeth Greig, deceased August 2, 1882, bearing a son William Robert. Robert later married Sarah Mulvey, a neighbor. Robert was a carpenter as well as a farmer and did building for himself and his brothers. He moved to Winnipeg and left the farm to his son, William Robert.

Mathew (Mattie) Lawrie had a general store purchased from Mr. Hunter, February 14, 1882. It was called



*Myrtie Lawrie holding son, Wilfred.*

Lawrie Brothers, later renamed Lawrie and Webster (about 1915?). Mattie moved to Winnipeg with his family.

Tom Lawrie settled in Carman, Manitoba.

William Robert Lawrie married Myrtle Pennoch from Brockville, Ontario, they had seven children. The farm was sold to Henry Friesen and family, and they moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba. The children of William and Myrtie are as follows:



*Wilfred Lawrie, Arthur Fanset, Amy Lawrie, Myrtle Lawrie.*



*M. Lawrie, 1893.*



*Wilfred and Keith Lawrie.*

*Alma, Jean and Amy Lawrie.*



Wilfred Greig moved to Ontario, married Fern Donaldson in Timmins. Now resides in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Family of four.

Keith Robert married Dean Cuthbert in Winnipeg, joined Army, Winnipeg Grenadiers. Died Hong Kong prisoner of war.

Alma moved to Ontario, married Leslie Burrows at Cooksville, Ontario. They have three boys.

Gladys married Neil Innis. One boy, one girl.

Amy married Tom Caldwell in Winnipeg. Three girls, one boy.

Jean married Norris Peterson. Two boys, three girls.

**Gordon married Mae Brown in Winnipeg,** Charleswood. He is joint owner of Shelmerdine Nursery.

## EXERPTS FROM LAURIE'S DIARY

July 21st Friday

A nice clear warm day with wind about West but rather changeable. Bob flooring his house. Jim and Jack hoeing the potatoes. Tommie skuffling. We were called upon by a number of Berry pickers. We had two teams from Mr. Adamsons after the balance of their Oats. We had also Mr. Ed. Mallie after his father's Oats. Had a look at Mr. Bidwell's wheat today; it promises an excellent crop, just heading out..

July 22nd Saturday

Another nice warm day with nice breeze from South. We had Mr. John Brown's Boy from the Homestead with the cow they bought from McTavish. Bob still at his house. The other boys finished the potato hoeing. And was preparing the mower for hay cutting. There were a few more Berry pickers up from Morris today. Bella went down to spend the afternoon with Miss Burrows. Jack and Tommie are away down after the mail. They are commenced work upon the Railway, bringing it into Morris. We had the P. Journal & Sentinel. Mattie came home with the boys.

July 25th Tuesday

Rather cooler after the thunder storm which lasted all night. Wind north. Tommie left with his team for the Railway work by Mr. Mulvies. Jim went down to see about selling some of the cows. As they are to reduce the stock before each goes on his own account. Jack went to see about purchasing a waggon. We had Mr. Ewart up looking at the cows. Bob was down in the forenoon and brought up lumber. Jim and Bob has commenced a stable on the East Side of the river for the horses working at the Railway. Jack and Tommie are off for Morris -- brought the Globe.

July 26th Wednesday

Clear soft looking day. Jack away with his team at the Railway. Tommie down with his team putting in Roadwork. Took down the Bella cow for Artie which he bought for forty dollars. Mr. Ewart was up for the Mennonite cow which he bought for fifty dollars. Jim



*Wilfred and Keith Lawrie with their prize Collie.*

and Bob was raking and cocking Hay. We had a call from two of the Railway folks after four Oxen which we crossed over the River. A little rain in the evening.

July 27th Thursday

Very like rain. Sprinkling a little. Wind north but the last few days very changeable. Jack is off for the Railway. Tommie mowing on the point opposite the House. We had the Mennonite cow come home before the cattle went out. Bob working at his House. Jim sent down with the rake to have it fixed. After dinner Bob and Jim covered the top of the Stable over the River. Then went down after a load of the new Self binder which they have bought. Jack and Tommie went down at night. I had a letter with Photograph enclosed from my Sister at Pitfour. Also one from Annie. And Mother's book. A little rain.

July 28th Friday

Rather dark dull morning. Like yesterday we will be tormented with mosquitoes. Wind as yesterday. Jack is off for the Railway. Bob is away to pick up the rails at the dam. Tommie mowing. Mother berrying. Bob at his House. Jim went down to ascertain about drawing down the Oats. Afternoon Bella and Emma at Morris. Bob and Jim went after some Hay. Wind went South East.

March 28th Saturday

Wind south but cold. Jack is laid up today by a Sprain he received to his leg yesterday on the Sledge among the Snow. I have been finishing G. McLairn's Pants. Wm. McCreath divided a fruit cake between Mother and Emma he brought from Scotland. Allan is working for Jack. Bob brought us another load of fire wood. J. Burrows had dinner with us.

March 29th Sabbath

Wind South. Bright and clear. Not so cold today - the wind changed around to north. We went down with Bob to Church. Mr. Douglas preached a very fine Sermon appropriate for the Season, being the Sabbath before Easter. He went over all the places and work of the Saviour during the week of his crucifixion, his death and resurrection from the grave. Jim and Annie came home with us. We had a nice congregation, more coming at night. I went over with Geo. McLairn's pants. He had them on at Church.

March 30th Monday

Wind about South. Snow falling very fast but very wet being so mild. Jack drawing lumber. Bob away after fire wood. Posted a letter for Jennie. Still bad reports from the Norwest concerning the rebellion. 12 men killed and nine wounded among the volunteers 40 killed and 40 or so wounded among the half-breeds. We attended a meeting in the White Church under the Excitement to ascertain what could be done in Morris for home protection or volunteering for the front.

March 31st Tuesday

Wind north. 1 went down with Jack as he went for lumber. Bought a bag of flour. Heard the news from the Free Press about the rebellion, not at all encouraging. Took off a Jacket and Kilt or rather material for them. Drove over with Bob and measured Willie. Had dinner and as Sarah was going down with him in the afternoon, Willie came and stayed with us until their return. Bella came up. Jack drove her down at night, Annie going along. Jim came up with them. Jack killed a pig in the afternoon.

## THE ENNS FAMILY

My grandfather John Enns, arrived with his two brothers and about a dozen other families, in 1874. They established the village of Rosenort on the banks of the Scratching River, for several reasons. The delegates who had looked over the land a year earlier, had been told that each man could file on a quarter section. They also heard of settlers being massacred by Indians in the States. Since the land they were settling on had until recently been occupied by Indians, the prospect of living on isolated farms was not very inviting.

By about 1895, much of the land west of the river was occupied, and the farmers applied for a school. The government had reserved certain lands for schools, so school Section 11-6-1 West was sold by auction, and the money used to build the first Pleasant Valley School. My grandfather bought a quarter of the school section for \$5.00 per acre and moved from the village "into the prairie" as the saying went.

My father, Peter H. Enns, attended the new school one winter. Some years later, in 1906, he married and settled on N.W. 1/4 2-6-1 West, and lived on that farm for over forty years. He took an interest in community affairs and was already on the School Board in 1908 when a new and larger school was built. He retired in 1948, moving to the West Coast and living another twenty years to the ripe old age of ninety-one. He liked to talk about the changes that came about in farming during his lifetime. He saw hand-seeding replaced by the seed-drill, the scythe replaced in turn by the reaper, the binder and finally the swather. The flail gave way to the threshing machine and then to the combine. Horse-power was predominant for many years, but finally disappeared when the combine and truck became more efficient.

Like my father before me, I attended the Pleasant Valley School. In the mid-30's I took up farming on land which had been abandoned because of a Depression.

At the organizing meeting of the McTavish Pool Elevator Association, I was elected to the Committee and later became president of the board of directors. In 1940, I answered my country's call and was sent overseas. When I was sent home, I was posted in Vancouver. I liked this part of the country; so after the end of the war, I found a job and remained for the rest of my working life.

Today the descendants of John Enns, Jacob Enns and Henry Enns, three of the founders of the original village of Rosenort, are scattered from Ontario to British Columbia and half a dozen States to the south. However, one who has spent a long lifetime in the area is David T. Enns, who I am sure could dictate a long chapter on the early days, and first hand at that.

14.

**Rosenort**  
**ROG IWO**

*Rosenort post office sign.*

## ROSENORT - OASIS ON THE PRAIRIE

*from the Journal*

It is generally conceded that in order to flourish and grow, a city, town or village must have one of the following: be located on a main railway line, be built on a good sized river or lake, be served by one or more good commercial highways, or be on a railway line.

A few miles north-west of Morris on the rich Red River plains, stands the prosperous village of Rosenort, a community that has managed to flourish in a most unusual way without the aid of any of the supposed sine qua nons.

As beautiful in every way as the flower after which it was named, Rosenort has blossomed out in the past few years into a commercial and social centre that bids fair to eclipse some of the older and more established neighboring towns.

To find the reason for this flourishing condition, a person needs to look no farther than its people. Rosenort's biggest asset without a doubt, and the reason for its virility and growth is simply its people.

Ninety percent of its flourishing business places are owned and operated by men of an average age of about 30 - 35.

Every one of the businesses is founded upon service. A farmer in the Rosenort district knows that he can get feed, seed, machinery, parts or in fact, just about anything he needs, in Rosenort.

The progress has not been easy either. The fact that the village has been inundated by five floods in 31 years, has not hindered the growth or dampened the spirits of the people.

The accent on youth, the ability and willingness to work hard, the aim to please the customer, and the knowledge that to "sell" your community to others through advertising, is what constitutes success.

# DEWET - SEWELL



*Aerial view of De Wet - Sewell taken around 1951.*

Around 1883, a railroad was to be built from Winnipeg to Gretna. In 1883, the Town of Morris and the R.M. of Morris paid the C.P.R. \$100,000.00 to change the course of the track towards the east and come through the town, and then on to Gretna.

This was one of the first railroads west of the Red River. While the railway was being built, camps were set up along the way at about six to eight mile intervals. It was usually at one of these points or sections that a siding was built.

Approximately eight miles southwest of Morris on section 1-4-1W the flag station of De Wet was put up. It was named after General De Wet, a general in the Boer War. Later it was renamed Sewell and the post office was called De Wet. In 1947, the post office was also changed to Sewell to avoid confusion of mail and location addresses.

Although the flag station was set up around 1883 it was not until the turn of the century that the district became well settled. Land was either bought from the government or was homesteaded.

One of the first settlers to take up a homestead in the area was Mr. Alex Halliday, in 1894, on the N.E. quarter of section 12-4-1W. Other settlers to the area were Johnsons, Kehls, Recksiedlers, Thatchers, Wiebes, Hieberts, Hornes and Ritz'.

By 1910, most of the land was broken up and with the growth in population of the area a need for public service arose.

Outside of the railway the post office was the first of public services to be had. Between 1912 and 1913 a decision was made to get a post office for De Wet. The post office was established on April 1, 1913. The first postmaster of De Wet was John Ritz, with Louise Ritz as the assistant.

For the first year the post office was in a granary. But in 1913, John Ritz Sr. built a large house on the southeast corner of the S.W. quarter of section 1-4-1W. Space was also provided for the post office. Prior to this the residents of the De Wet district had to go to Rosenfeld for their mail.

The Ritz' held the post office till 1920. At that time the mailing list was a good 40 families.

After John Ritz, the next postmaster was Mr. Louis Recksiedler. Mr. Recksiedler had built a store next to the Ritz house and when he became postmaster the post office was moved to the store, where it remained till its closing.

In 1926, Mr. Recksiedler sold the store to a Mr. Diamond, who had the store and combined post office only a short time.

In July of 1926, a man by the name of John A. Mazur, a former teacher of the Oakbank District, took over the store and combined post office. He and his new bride, Effie, had the store till 1958.

One of the first lessons in how to do good business the Mazurs learned the first day they arrived in Sewell. They were sitting down to lunch when in came the former



*Etta and Holly Recksiedler, Mr. and Mrs. John Shaventaski and Phyllis on platform at Sewell station, with John B. Ritz standing on boxcar. This station was the lifeblood of the small community.*



*Louise Ritz, first postmistress at De Wet - 1913.*

## Life at the First Store

De Wet's first storekeeper-postmaster Mr. Louis Recksiedler, who was also elevator manager found himself very busy with three jobs at one time. So in order to stay on top of all the work he decided to have a partner. The partner being a wife. The young honeymoon couple after being married a 'whole day' settled down into the business life. This was in October of 1920. The land where the store stood on was given to Louis as a wedding gift from his father.

There were many things for the new-at-the-business couple to learn, but being young and ambitious they managed.

Groceries were the main sale, though there was lots of tobacco and cigarettes (Turret) that went over the counter as well. Also some hardware and dry goods such as shoes, material, etc. Another item that was very popular was Wrigley's Chewing Gum with spearmint being the favourite flavour. It sold for 5e a package. There also was Coca-Cola.

A pound of coffee sold for about 75e while the economy brand sold for 50e.

Sugar could be bought by bulk for between 5e and 10e a pound.

The store's grocery order came in mostly by rail, but sometimes there were things to be hauled by wagon.

Then, there were less packaged goods since most stuff was sold in bulk.

Refrigeration was not to be had but there was an ice-box. Ice for it was obtained from Mr. Recksiedler's parents' ice house.

In comparison to today the prices were just as high as now. People often found it hard to keep up with their bills.

Since the income from the store itself was a times hardly enough to support a family, the Recksiedlers were glad that Louis also had the elevator and later also the machine agency and oil, coal and flour sales. There were also carloads of wood ordered for customers. The wage for the elevator manager was \$125.00 a month. This was

storekeeper, took their new butcher knife from their lunch table, (which happened to be a trunk since they had just moved) and sold it to a customer who needed a knife. Since there was no knife in stock Mr. Diamond did the next best thing and then proceeded to tell Mr. and Mrs. Mazur that "one must learn to sacrifice in the name of business".

After the Mazurs, Mrs. Alvina Hastman took over the store and post office till 1965. In that year the store again changed hands and the new owners were Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Janke. They had the store and post office till it closed in 1970.

## Four Mail Trains Daily

Early mail service at Sewell was very good. There were four passenger-mail trains going through Sewell daily. This meant a letter could be sent to Rosenfeld and a reply received within six hours. The farmers could ship their cream to Winkler and receive the cheque for it the same day. The passenger-mail service quit in 1956.

The post office was still open at Sewell but since the mail did not come by rail anymore it had to be hauled by car. The Mazurs were the first mail carriers to haul the mail by car for the Sewell area. The mail was hauled daily by car from 1956 till the post office closed.

Many a time these mail carriers were thankful for the service the R.M. of Morris provided through road maintenance, especially in the winter months.

Mail for the Sewell area is now delivered to Rural Route Group centers. The mail is delivered three times a week. How times have changed?! Perhaps we now can understand why the phrase 'the good old days'.

of course during the "Twenties" the wage was much lower during the "Thirties".

Some of the machinery sold were Emerson-Brantingham drills and a Mogul tractor, a Titan tractor, etc.

The Recksiedlers had three daughters born to them while at De Wet. They were Ruth (Mrs. Frank Thierman) of Winnipeg, Manitoba; Aster (Mrs. George Pullon) of Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Laura (Mrs. Jack Fraser) of Keewatin, Ontario.

After moving to Winnipeg in 1926, the Recksiedlers had a son Harold Recksiedler, now of Didsbury, Alberta, and another daughter Cleone (Mrs. Dave Crouch) of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. Recksiedler passed away in 1973.

The first store in De Wet contributed much to the development of the community, and as a service to the people.

### Sewell's Store

The first store for the Sewell District was built in 1920. It was called C.A. Recksiedler and Son. In 1942, John A. Mazur built a new store on the same site as the old one. This building is still standing at Sewell and is the home of the last postmaster-storekeeper, Mrs. Ernest Janke.

Another store to serve the district was the Wiebe's general store. It was located on the S.E. quarter of section 22-4-1W.



*First store at Sewell built by C.A. Recksiedler and Son in 1920. Pictured in front are the J.A. Mazurs who came in 1926.*

### Country Store - the Core

The store at Sewell provided practically all the provisions the local residents wanted but it was much more than just a store. It was a focal point where the people gathered usually at the time the trains came. It was a place where the latest news might be heard and also where they could visit the neighbours besides getting their mail and provisions.

On one occasion this practice of gathering helped avert a possible disaster in February of 1936. It was very cold that day - around 40° below. A fire had started around the chimney of the school house. One of the older boys



*Effie Mazur wrapping a parcel at the Sewell store counter in the late 1920's.*

from the school made a bee-line for the store for help, while the older girls took the younger children over to Dan Recksiedler's. Dan and Ferd Recksiedler had been working outside with a sleigh and horses when the children came. The two Recksiedler brothers immediately headed for the school. Due to the prompt help received from the Recksiedlers and men from the store, the fire was soon put out and damage was not too extensive, although the school was closed for a week while repairs were effected.

The store remained a local gathering spot till its closing. Many people will remember going to the store just to find out the local news.

Perhaps some of the farmers remember meeting at the store at noon and while there they matched coppers to see who would treat the lot to a soda pop. Now the farmers themselves wouldn't make too much of this but to a few fortunate kids, who just happened to be in the store at that time and who gave a real longing look with their eyes so that who ever had been caught buying would have a twinge of guilt and not pass those kids by. It's a sure bet those kids knew just when to come to the store. They also are the ones who really enjoyed the drink since treats came few and far between.

### Elevators

The first and only elevator at Sewell was put up in 1919 by the Maple Leaf Milling Co. It was a great help to the farmers. It alleviated a lot of hard work, such as loading of grain cars and cleaning of grain. It also provided extra storage space. The Maple Leaf Milling Co. owned the elevator till 1930 when Federal Grain took it over until its closing in 1967.

The first manager of the elevator was a Mr. Atkins, who was there for a year. After Mr. Atkins, Louis Recksiedler became manager. He also looked after the flour shed and the Imperial Oil oil shed which handled bulk sales.

Following L. Recksiedler, the other elevator managers in sequence were Peter Berg, George Green, Mac Morrison, Abe Klassen, John Shaventeske, John Kehler, Jake Nichol, August Recksiedler (held position of grain buyer at Sewell the longest - 14 years), Bill Harder and Daryl



Doerksen (the last grain buyer - till elevator closed in 1967.)

Another elevator to serve the district was at Smith Spur. It was built around 1904, and first owned by the North Star Grain Co. Later it was owned by the Reliance Co. and lastly by Manitoba Pool,

The elevator had the misfortune of falling over once and also burning.

Manitoba Pool added an annex to the last elevator in 1967.

Some of the grain buyers for the elevator at Smith Spur were: Mr. Ed Anderson, Romeo Pelletier, Herb Earl, John Derksen, Gorden Poersch, and Dave Friesen.

As one will notice, the businesses of Sewell started around the 1920's in the 'Boom Years' as they were called. Not only was there a store and elevator but a lumber yard, an Emerson Brantingham machine agency (held by Louis Recksiedler) and oil, flour and coal sheds as well. There was rumour of a bank too, but nothing ever came of it.

The lumberyard was built in 1920 by A.A. Thiessen and was run by John Loewen who came from Rosenfeld. Later the lumberyard became Empire Lumber and was run by Ernest Hoffman. In 1924 or 1925 Coleman Finkelstein bought the buildings of the lumber yard and the lumber era ended.

## Depression

With the end of the 20's came the 'Dirty Thirties'. It was a time of want and hardship for all. Men in their search for jobs rode the tops of the freight cars hoping to find some work out in the rural areas. It has been said that from 100 to 150 men were seen atop the freight cars as the trains went through Sewell.

People were desperate and there was no unemployment insurance to fall back on. The people on the farms couldn't make much when they didn't get much for their products. Still they seemed to fare a little better than their urban brothers. 'Make do' was a much used phrase of the 1930's era. Barley was burnt for fuel sometimes. People made their own coffee from roasted barley or wheat. If it was roasted properly it was even quite tasty.

Many a load of wood for fuel was cut and hauled from St. Malo and further east. Lots of sweat was shed in attempts to make ends meet.



## Communication



*Earl, Ervin and Len Recksiedler on wind charger tower in Dan Recksiedler's yard.*

The Sewell District first got the telephone service around 1916. The phones were only in awhile and then were given up again to be taken in the 1940's. There are two exchanges for the Sewell area. One is the Morris exchange and the other is the St. Jean exchange.

The mail service brought the people their letters as well as many kinds of newspapers and magazines. The Farmers' Advocate, Free Press Prairie Farmer, Grain Growers' Guide, Country Gentleman, Nor'West Farmer and Saturday Evening Post are some that come to mind.

In 1946, hydro came to the Sewell area. Prior to this the usual method of lighting was a lamp or lantern. Some families had windchargers that produced electrical power for lighting. Ferd Recksiedler was one of the first to erect one of these windchargers. With the hydro came the electric cook stoves, and the wood and coal stoves were put aside.

Radio, a useful and entertaining way of hearing news from far places came to the area in 1923. Some of the Recksiedler boys built the first radio sets in the area. Around the middle of the 1950's, the radio gave way to television as a news acquirer.



*A farmer (John O. Ritz) listening to the grain market prices in 1927, on his radio. Note large speaker behind him.*

## CHURCH

Sewell wasn't fortunate enough to have its own church. Most of the residents went to Rosenfeld to church. In early years for convenience sake church service was sometimes conducted in a home in the community and later in the school. Usually it was the second day of a church holiday when service was held at the school.

Sewell has a cemetery, located on the highest spot of the area, on land donated by August Recksiedler Sr. One of the first people to be buried at Sewell was Erich Ernest Hoffman.

In early times many of the funerals were held at the homes of the deceased. The people did their own undertaking and looking after the deceased. Coffins were hand built, but later on bought ones could be obtained.

## Transportation

Horses and buggies and sleighs were the first types of transportation for the area. These vehicles used whatever roads there were, when there were no roads they used prairie trails or travelled across country.

In early times the best method of travelling was provided by the railroads, especially when it came to long distances. There were four passenger trains through Sewell and nine passenger trains through Morris daily. The railway was maintained by section men. One man who deserves mention is Mr. John Manchelenko who worked the Morris to Sewell stretch for more than 50 years.

Cars became popular close to the 1920's and gained popularity steadily as time went on. With more automobiles came a need for more and better roads. The R.M. of Morris saw to it that more roads were built and that the existing ones were improved. It was in 1952, that many dirt roads were improved with the addition of gravel to them, thus making them passable especially in wet weather. Today, there are gravel roads to every resident rate-payer living in Ward 1, Sewell included.



*Henry Mazinke with team and democrat driving in Red River gumbo.*

Transportation was weather controlled at times. We remember the snowstorm of 1920, as being one of the

worst. There was snow piled high everywhere. The snowplows were stuck on the track at Sewell for three days. Then in the spring, water washed out the trestles and train service was held up for a week.

In 1960, one of the worst floods for the area washed out track from Morris to Rosenfeld in places. Right at Sewell, the track stayed intact. The C.P.R. train from west backed into Sewell bringing supplies for area residents. Sewell was nearly completely surrounded by water that year. There was one road open towards the west but that was all. There was no through train service for a month. The local roads right at Sewell stayed intact during the flood. Many flood victims from Morris were accommodated at Sewell for a month or so.



1

11.



*One of the heaviest snowfalls showing train delayed at Sewell for 3 days due to snow drifts on the track.*

## Goose Grease and Mustard Plasters

Most doctoring and nursing was done in the home in the early days. The closest doctors were in Morris and St. Jean. The people either travelled into town, or the doctor came out to see them.

Most babies entered the world with the help of the local midwife.

Some home remedies used were goose grease, mustard plasters, camomile tea (for itching and colds) and bed rest. Some medication was procured from the Watkin dealer. One such travelling salesman was a Mr. Dulmage who served the district for many, many years. He may well be referred to as a travelling newspaper as well as a supplier of many useful and needed items such as spices, camphor ointment, linament, vanilla, etc. Mr. Dulmage lived to a goodly age of over 100 years. He will be remembered by many people for his service to the community.

## Local Tragedies

The Sewell District has had its share of tragedy as well.



*Mr. Dulmage, well-known Watkins dealer who travelled all over the countryside with his red metal covered wagon, a store on wheels.*

In 1924, a house fire claimed the lives of three of the Karl M. Recksiedler's children. In 1928, Henry Mazinkes' little daughter Ruth was scalded badly when a plug from a washing machine gave way. She died as a result of this accident. In 1944, Paul Recksiedler, son of Henry Recksiedler's, died accidentally while in active service. In 1967, Billy Ritz, son of Lorne Ritz', formerly of Sewell was killed accidentally at Petersfield, Manitoba as a result of a tractor overturning. In 1954, Willis Stober, son of Rheinhold Stober's, was accidentally killed in a tractor accident close to Swan River at Bowsman. In 1955, Sam Hoffmans lost a son, Wayne, in a drowning accident at Lake Nutimik. The Stobers and Hoffmans were also former residents of the Sewell area.

Since the district is not very big, people tend to be closer and each one's sorrow is deeply felt by the whole community.

## Military

When the call came, men from Sewell served military duty. The following were in the armed forces during the Second World V'



Paul Recksiedler  
John B. Ritz  
Lorne Ritz  
Albert Manikel  
Robert Rapski



Albert Manikel  
Robert Rapski



Lorne Ritz



## Recreation and Sports

Baseball, hockey and curling were the sports much enjoyed in our area.

The first ball games were played in 1914, on the SW corner of N.E. 1-4-1W. Some of the early players were: Henry Mazinke, J.A. Ritz, C.B. Mueller, and Henry and Roy Recksiedler. In 1922, Bill Johnson pitched for the Morris Baseball Team and they won the Manitoba Championship. They did not go on to play in the east because of the busy harvest season.

In 1924, the De Wet Ball Team consisting of six Recksiedler brothers; Henry, Roy, Louis, Gus, Dan and Ferd and three Johnson brothers; Bill, Art and Ed won the Baseball tournament at the Morris Agricultural Fair day.

Baseball was the main activity until 1934, with the De Wet ball diamond being in Karl Recksiedler's pasture. The league was made up of teams from De Wet, Lorne Farm, Altona and Plum Coulee.

In 1934, hockey seemed to take over. The rink was located just east of Carl Recksiedler's, and flooding the ice was done by pail, with the water being hauled by a team of horses.

Hockey players consisted of Recksiedlers, Ritz', Ganskes, Manikels, Hoffmans and John Shaventeske.

The Sewell team played against teams from Rosenfeld, Rosenhoff, Morris and St. Jean.



*Sewell's local hockey team of the 1930's.*

## Curling Becomes Popular

As hockey faded out of the picture, curling became popular. It began with occasional curling in Morris. On March 9, 1945, a meeting was held and a motion made asking if those present would be in favour of organizing the De Wet Curling and Agricultural Club. The response was favorable, and this was the beginning of the curling club at Sewell. At the second meeting, on March 3, 1943, 14 people became the first members of the club. They were: Gus Recksiedler, Albert Schroeder, E.J. Mueller, W.F. Recksiedler, J.O. Ritz, Wm. Herman, E.B. Mueller, Lorne Ritz, Ed Mazinke, Henry Mazinke, Dan Recksiedler, J.A. Mazur, Albert Recksiedler and August

Recksiedler. From these members the first executive was chosen for the club. The first President was Mr. Don Recksiedler, the Vice-President was J.O. Ritz, Secretary-Treasurer was J.A. Mazur and the Directors were August Recksiedler and E.B. Mueller. It was also decided that the club would take up the offer of land rental from August Recksiedler in order to raise money for the rink-building fund. The land was farmed for two years.

On July 26, 1947, at a meeting, Sewell Community Club was named.



*Neighboring farmers jointly worked the land for four years, until they had enough funds to build a curling rink.*

## Curling Rink Constructed

The construction of the curling rink was started in the fall of 1949, and in January of 1951, the first curling was done on one sheet of the new two-sheet curling rink. For the first year due to lack of rocks, curling was done on only one sheet.



*The last rafter going up on a 32' X 160' rink. Over 2500 pieces were used to make the rafters.*

The first bonspiel was held on March 8 and 9 of 1951, and it cleared \$55.00 for the new club. Money was also raised by various raffles such as for a goose, a pig, blankets, etc. There even was a mink skin donated, the value of which was \$12.00.



*A curler's dream, an eight ender in the Sewell rink.*

Curling continued at the rink till 1965-1966. The last annual meeting was held in 1964, and the last bonspiel the Sewell Club put on was in Morris on April 7, 1967. It was a 32 rink bonspiel, put on in place of the Morris Shirt Sleeve Bonspiel, which netted \$79.00. In January of 1969, the rink was sold by tender to August Recksiedler.

## Sewell Produces Silver Broom Contender

Sewell boasted many good curlers, one in particular is Harvey Mazinke (now resident of Regina, Saskatchewan.) Harvey's team represented Canada in the finals of the Silver Broom at Regina in 1973.



*ABOVE: Harvey Mazinke with the Macdonald Tankard, his rink won in 1973.*



*LEFT: Harvey curling on home ice.*

In June of 1951, a dance floor was added to the rink. Thus the rink could be used both summer and winter. There were many good dances held at Sewell. One of the most popular, was the Hallowe'en masquerade. There was always a good crowd, and prizes were awarded to the best disguised people. These also were the days of live orchestras. No tapes then, but much fun and frolic. A number of wedding receptions were held there as well.



*Hallowe'en revellers at a local dance.*

Early times recreation consisted of the annual school Christmas concert, school picnics plus butchering and buildings bees, also the popular 'barn dance'. Many old-timers will remember the dances held at Bill Dregers, John Ritz', August and Willie Recksiedler's (granary), Albert Recksiedlers, Henry Mazinkes and of course the 'Fast Nachts' at Dan Recksiedlers.

There were also house parties to celebrate birthdays and the occasional card parties. Before the popularity of halls, wedding receptions were usually held in the home of the Bride, and most of the district was invited. There may have also been an 'after wedding celebration' lasting for two days after the wedding. At that time, weddings were usually in the middle of the week.

Now with the faster paced age, recreation consists of machines, such as snowmobiles and motor bikes.

## Clubs

Other clubs in the area were: the Nutsy Club from 1945-1951. It was a young peoples' community social club. Wm. Herman was the treasurer. The club helped raise money for the dance floor in the curling rink through dances, box socials, plays, etc. They donated \$50.00 to the Curling Club.

## 4-H Club

The 4-H Club was started around 1954 or 1955. It was combined with Broadview and was called the Sewell-Broadview Seed Club, later Seed and Beef Club. There were approximately 12 members. They attended the local fair and the 4-H Rallies at Dominion City and Carman. The first president was Earl Recksiedler and the leader was Mr. Wm. Irvine. The Agricultural Representative at the time was Mr. Walter Van Wynsberg.



*Sewell - Broadview Seed Club float in the Morris 75th anniversary parade in 1958.*

## Story of Coincidence

Three sisters happened to live on very nearly the same spot. They were Mrs. Henry Recksiedler, Mrs. Louis Recksiedler and Mrs. Ernest Janke.

Robert Ritz was born, baptized and had his wedding reception in the same house. That house was the home of his grandparents.

## Point of Interest - Sewell

A twister touched down on Gus Recksiedler's farmyard in 1955, and took down the garage. Mr. Recksiedler had gone out to back the tractor against the big garage doors to stop them from waving in the strong wind. While he was on the tractor, Mr. Recksiedler noticed that the garage was lifting, so leaving the tractor running, he quickly ran for the house. When he went back outside, the tractor was still running, but the garage was destroyed, as well as an old granary, and a chicken house.



*Councillor W.F. Recksiedler presenting Mr. J.O. Ritz with Centennial Citizen Award in 1967.*

## Recksiedler - Councillor

Sewell District claims one councillor in the R.M. Morris. His name is William Recksiedler. Mr. Recksiedler has held the position of councillor the longest of any of the R.M. Morris. May he be well commended for his many years of devoted service to his ward.



*Toni (Mueller) Belcher out for a Sunday drive.*



*Mrs. Ferd Mazinke and daughters Elsie, Gertrude and Alice.*



*Peter and Julia Horne, early pioneers.*



*Mogul tractor of Aug. and K.M. Recksiedler.*



*W.E. Hoffman and Mr. Hurt - 1918.*



*J.O. Ritz and Gordon Winkler, in photo studio prior to 1900.*



*Alex Halladay early homesteader.*



*1934 camping scene.*





*One of the Fleeter boys threshing - 1909.*



*The Hoffmans sawing wood in 1920.*



*Henry Mazinke and grass mower - 1954.*



*Ritz's combining in 1949 with John Deer combines.*

## THE SCHOOLS

### St. Peters

The first school of the district was the St. Peter's School No. 1031, organized in 1899. The tract of land for the school yard and was bought from a Mr. Peter Hiebert in 1899 for \$10.00 and was located on the S.V/. corner of the N.W. 15-4-12.

In 1908, land was bought from the Ritz' and the school was moved to the N.W. corner of the N.W. quarter of section 11-4-1W. It remained there till 1922 and then again was moved. This time land was acquired from Mr. Carl A. Recksiedler. The new location was the N.E. corner of the N.W. quarter of section 1-4-1W.



*The first St. Peters School, built 1899.*



### De Wet

There was another school in the district as well, It is said to have been a private school first, later becoming public. It also operated under the name of St. Peter's SD 1031. It was situated on the SE corner of the SW quarter of section 22-4-1W. It too was moved and relocated on the S.W. corner of S.W. quarter of section 23-4-1W in 1929. This time the old school house was remodelled into a teacherage and a new school was built. In 1929 the school board met at a special meeting and it was decided that the district be divided with the school on section 23 retaining the name St. Peter's SD 1031 and the school on



*The De Wet School built in 1940.*

section one being renamed De Wet SD 2182. In 1940, a new school was built at De Wet and the original first school was sold to Mr. Corny Gerbrandt. It was used as a house up until 1976. It is still standing on N.E. 1-4-2W.

St. Peter's 1031 closed in 1957 and the De Wet School in 1967.

These schools taught the usual reading, writing and arithmetic. There also were the annual school Christmas concerts and school picnics.

The teachers were of great importance since they were there to pass on an adequate education to the young.

The first teacher of 1899 was Anna Enns. Other teachers to follow were: Katie Bergen, Jos. S. Nolkof, Cora Mueller, Peter Abraham Toews, Jacob E. Dyck, Lena Mohr, Minnie Port, Miss Hiebert, Amelia C. Winger, Miss Annie Peters, William Mason, William Eidse, Henrietta Kelly, Eugene E. Ewald, John Driedger, Margaret Toews, Louise Gruenke, Andrew Swain, Josephine W. Uhrich, Margaret Walden, Elsie Jahnke, Ida J. Hoffman, Emma Scheibe, Anda Toporeck, Elfrieds Ablett, Ester Klassen, Louise Wiebe, Eva Doerksen, Ann Sametz, Dorothea Reimer, Margaret Warkentin, Velma Pomeranke, Hilda Dyck, Lillian J. Gibson, Jarvis Kischuk, Anne Kivoriak, David Friesen, Mary Murray, Grace MacKenzie, Frieda Klassen, Edith Lehman, Bernice Friesen, Arnold Mekelburg, Helen Peters, Kay Hamblin and Christine Nichols.

High school education was received at Morris, St. Jean Baptiste, Rosenfeld or Gretna. Students wishing this higher education were boarded out or driven to the above mentioned places.

In 1959, a school bus was used for the first time in the Sewell area. The children attended De Wet School from Grade 1 to Grade 8 and then were bussed to Morris for Grades 9 to 12. High school correspondence courses were given for awhile, but when De Wet School closed its doors in 1967, the children were all bussed to Morris in the Morris-MacDonald School Division. The De Wet School was bought by Mr. August Recksiedler and is now their place of residence.

After the St. Peter's School closed in 1957, the children were transported to Lowe Farm to school.



*Mrs. Anna Braun*

## **A SCHOOL MARM'S MEMORIES**

I, Anna Peters, taught school at St. Peter's School District, No. 1031, from October, 1917 to December 24,

1919. These are the names of pupils I remember: Margaret and Aganetha Friesen, Anna and Lena Wiebe, Bernhard and Abram Heinrichs, Peter Braun, and a little Jewish boy (I forgot his name) probably Donald Moscevit, from the Hoffmans, there was Willie, Sam, Alexander and Olive; of the Johnsons, Arthur, Eddie and Verna; Elma Kehl, of the Recksiedlers, there was Gustav, Daniel, Ferdinand, Adelma, Ottillie, Lena, Lydia, Willie, Albert, Henry, Pauline, Martha, Wilhelmina and August.

Equipped with a Grade X certificate, no teachers training, except the list my father gave me, I'll never forget:

1. Don't forget every child has his or her own personality.
2. Always try to see the other's point of view.
3. A teacher that teaches for money is no teacher.

Here, we came to the school. The nearest farm yard was 3/4 mile away. The large yard was void of fencing, trees or shrubs. In one corner stood the school, farther east a barn, two outhouses. I forget where we stored the coal and wood for our big heater. There was no water supply except in the deep ditch just north of school. We had a basin in which we once kept our toads for two days, to study their habits. Those days, we did not wash our hands (ha, ha).

There was no playground equipment, except for an odd ball a fellow would bring to school. We played 'hit the stick', 'stealing wedges of wood' and 'hide and seek', (there was so few places to hide), racing, etc.

The inside of the school was very plain ... three windows on the north, three on the south side. The teacher's desk and chair stood on a platform. The blackboard covered the east wall. A few small blackboards were between the windows. We had a very large stove, but in winter, when the fire had gone low, it was very cold in the morning and there were quite a few days, when we did not start school at 9:00 a.m. I always had a pair of sheepskin shoes handy and wore them, often until noon, but the children didn't. So, I encouraged them to run around the desks.

Teacher and pupils did the work of the custodian - our equipment, a broom and a little coal shovel. No electricity, no telephone, not even an oil lamp. We were at school only at daytime! The only books we had were the texts the children had, and a few of my own books the I brought along. We did not know a library. Those were the things we had to work with! What did we do with them? I had my Grade X certificate, but my conversational English had not been developed enough, which I noticed the very first day. I believe I never learned as fast as I did that first month, because the older pupils smiled occasionally over some expressions.

The grading system was poor. Out of 22 pupils, (the elder ones started as late as November) nearly everybody seemed to be in a different stage of a grade. We blundered along as best we could. The discipline problem was another case - If I had had some older brothers, I would have learned many things before, but I did not understand boys of 14-15, whom I did manage to keep busy

all the time. There must have been more trouble than I realized, for after Christmas, the three older boys did not come back. This was very humiliating to me. But all in all, the pupils were a good group!

Lena R. would act so motherly to the little people. Ed Johnson did not like the serious side of life and often helped to brighten the days with his pranks.

The little Kehl girl seemed to smile always, especially when she brought in either a crocus or a big fat toad. I had a group of Grade IX students here this winter one day; they wanted to know what I teach - well first: 1. reading, 2. writing and 3. arithmetic.

Did we have Physical training? Yes, we walked to school 1 112 miles; some walked 2 112 miles.

Did we study geography? We learned the names of countries and their capitals, but not very much about the people and their way of life.

Did we study history? I don't remember.

Did we study science? Nature study; we lived so close to the things that grow and the creatures that surrounded us (no text on this.)

What was my salary? I received \$50.00 a month the first three months. After Christmas it was \$65.00 a month and after that, I can't remember.

One thing I do remember - the teacher learned more during the 2 112 years than the pupils did!



*DeWet School class, 1928-19.*

## MEMORIES OF DE WET

*Josephine Uhrich Johnson*

Fall of 1927, was a very exciting one for me. I found my first class a very responsive one. I recall with a great deal of pleasure the Xmas concerts and the help the children gave me in planning for them.

Then there were the pranks the older boys (Grade VIII) played on me, such as decorating the class room with those beautiful mustard flowers. They gave the room a real sunshiny appearance. We enjoyed them for the day. Then the boys took down the decorations at four o'clock. A can of water was placed over the door, but I didn't get doused when I opened the door.

In the spring of the year, the younger pupils and I would go out to pick wild flowers. The violets were so lovely!

Yes, it is very pleasant to recall all the happy moments we had at the DeWet School.



*St. Peter's School No. 2 in 1925.*

## ST. PETERS - SCHOOL NO. 2

*by Tiena V. Warkentin (Mrs. A. W. Neufeld)*

St. Peters School No. 2 was built around 1930. Mr. Klaas Heide was the first teacher. Some of the later teachers were Mrs. Abram Wiebe, J.W. Driedger, Tiena V. Warkentin, Margaret Rempel, Jacob Neufeld and others.

In 1930, a new school was built at the corner of Section 23.

During those years, there was always a Sunday School taught there on Sunday mornings, and also a worship service. Bible studies, evening services, and revival meetings were held in the school. Mr. Pauls, one of the teachers, was very interested in music, so they formed choirs, and instrumental hymn singing with the youth. In 1925, youth meetings were held regularly.

When Anna Wiens of Lowe Farm, taught there for four years, she had about 60 pupils. Later teachers were: Elma Brown, Diet. Gerbrandt, Jake Schellenberg, Rev. George Groening, John Pauls, B.D. Klippenstein and others.

The St. Peters No. 2 school was closed in 1953 and moved to Somerset.



*St. Peter's No. 2 class of 1919.*

*Insert - Mr. Klaas Heide teacher at St. Peter's No. 2 in 1918.*

## THE HISTORY OF BROADVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT

In 1877, when George Churchill bought land in the Broadview district, there were only two other settlers before him - George Clubb and Joe Moody. Mr. Churchill broke land and built a house, returning to make his home there in 1899.

By that time, other families had moved in and there were then the required number of children in the vicinity for a school district to be formed. Mr. Churchill donated the land on which the school was built by Morris contractors, Robert and Alvin Starr. It was a standard one room building, with the traditional three windows in the north, three in the south, and the door facing west; not forgetting the two out-houses at the back with their supply of discarded catalogues.

William Ritchie, who was reeve of the municipality at the time, gave the district the appropriate name of Broadview.

The first board of trustees included the late John Churchill, Joe Moody, and George Clubb.

In the years that followed, these families whose names are so well known, came to make their homes in the district: James Clubb, John Fraser, T. Irvine, the Langleys and Wiltons.

The school was built to seat 28 pupils and was well filled. At one time, the grades taught in that country school were higher than in the town of Morris.

The first teacher was Miss Middlemass. She remained a very short time and was replaced by Miss Badgley from Emerson.

In 1928, the school was enlarged and brought up to date, with full basement, furnace and inside toilet facilities. In 1946, it was again very much improved, with the most modern of fluorescent lighting and stoker-type furnace.

Broadview school was always the center of all activities in the area. It was always open for social affairs of all sorts. Many a debate was keenly contested within its walls. Local dances to local music - Bill Ganski and his accordion, or Roger Bartlette, with his violin and his cousin Danny on his banjo. These dances were gala affairs in the "good old days".

The school was also used for church and Sunday School. This was started by the Rev. Honor, of the Old Methodist Church, in Morris and was much appreciated by the residents, especially in the horse and buggy days. Church service was suspended in 1919, when the roads improved, the Church Union took place in 1920; then people attended services in Morris. Sunday School was continued from some years with Rex Perkins, as superintendent.

Christmas Concerts were always the highlight of the year. A stage was built for the occasion, with planks borrowed from the lumber yard; the school children each doing their parts as the proud parents cheered them. The local adult play, put on by the young people of the district, was always much enjoyed; and also created much fun and enjoyment at practices for such events. The old fashioned Box Socials were also special events in the early days.

## II,



*BACK ROW: Alice Skoglund, Edith Brown, Alma Skoglund, Jim Irvine, Ron Skoglund, Jim Clubb, Walter Brown, Robert Rapske, Dorothy Skoglund. FRONT ROW: Erma Bergstresser, Phyllis Perkins, Irene Irvine, Ken Skoglund, Peter Wiebe, Joyce Brown, Arnold Rapske, Annie Wiebe.*

After the disastrous flood of 1950, schools suffered untold damage, and the Broadview School was no exception. A new school was built in late 1950 and opened January 12, 1951. The new building was a modern frame construction, with an oil heating system, modern lighting and washroom facilities. The school continued to operate until 1965, when the Morris MacDonald School Division was formed and all surrounding country schools were closed and pupils bussed to the divisional school.

What then, happened to our good little country schools? Some were sold and moved away, as Broadview was, to become homes, or other useful buildings; with no stone or cairn to mark the one time seat of learning or centre of local activity. Just pleasant memories remain!



*Broadview School garden. Included are: Dorothy Shewman, Fred Langley, Bill Fraser, Lloyd and Jean Shewman, Vene Churchill, Mabel Irvine, Charlie Shewman, Eva Langley, Gladys Fraser.*

## THE BROADVIEW MISSIONARY SOCIETY

*submitted by Dorothy Hamblin (Mrs. Lloyd)*

A few miles southwest of the town of Morris is the district of Broadview. "On December 17, 1914, a number of ladies of this district interested in organizing a Missionary Society, met at the home of Mrs. Jas Clubb.

Mr. Archibald had Mrs. Chestnut of Winnipeg, came down for the day to be present at the meeting to explain how work in different societies was carried on. She gave a very interesting talk on Mission Work in Winnipeg and other societies she had visited. After Mrs. Chestnut had finished, the meeting was open for the election of Officers." These are the actual minutes of that first meeting.

The minute books of The Broadview Missionary Society for forty-six of their fifty years existence had been kept and handed over to each succeeding secretary to look after. The ladies present at this meeting were, Mrs. J. Fraser, Winnifred Clubb, Maude Churchill, Eva Churchill, Mrs. Jas Clubb, Miss Houston, Mrs. R.G. Clubb, Mrs. W.R. Clubb, Daisy Churchill, Annie Langley, Sarah Langley, Mrs. Honsberger, Mrs. G. Clubb, Gladys Fraser, Miss Grant, Mrs. Thos Irvine. The Officers elected that afternoon were, Maude Churchill, President; Miss Clubb, First Vice-President; Mrs. R.G. Clubb, Secretary; Eva Churchill, Treasurer. The meetings were to take place at 3 o'clock, the second Wednesday of every month. It is interesting to note that Mrs. R.G. (Ross) Clubb was secretary many times during the lifetime of this group, the last time in 1963. On December 16, 1964, a banquet was held at Burkes in Morris, and The Broadview Missionary Society was disbanded.

During those fifty years, the Union Women's Missionary Society of Broadview, as it was known in 1916, belonging to the Union Church of Morris, was a Society, whose members were primarily farm women. At times, these women were all from the Broadview District, at other times, the circle widened to include women from the St. Jean area, Flowery Bank, and Morris. The bulk of funds and work was for the Union Church of Morris later the United Church, but many, many other causes and organizations benefitted as well. In accomplishing this, the members worked hard, but also found time for fun and fellowship.

A short resume of the fifty years, gives but a glimpse of these activities. In 1916 an Autograph quilt was made and auctioned to raise funds. This was the first of many quilts that were made, as fund raisers, given to Hospitals, Fresh Air Camps, or needy families, and it continued until 1954 when the final quilt of beautiful appliqué and embroidery sold for \$50.00. Beautiful goose feather pillows were also made and sold or sent to Fresh Air Camps and Mission Hospitals. Money was always needed and it was raised in many ways, some of which were: a Lunch counter at the Morris Fair, Bazaars, Chicken Suppers, Around the World Suppers, etc. held at the church, the school, the members' homes, or in Todd's Hall, Morris, that one, 25(C a place, everything included! Produce and Bake Sales proved popular and were held in many places in Morris such as the Jewel Store, Johnson's Hardware, Loving's Garage and Dr. Boyd's Office. October 4, 1929, this group had a Rummage Sale in Schwark and Sommer's Warehouse. Besides all of these things, the ladies sold lunch at auction sales and Pie Socials and Lawn Socials, House Parties, catered to banquets and sponsored social evenings in the Broadview School. Even cleaning and painting this school was a way of making money.

They never had a large bank account because it was given away almost as soon as it was made. The recipients were many - the Union Church; the Missionary Society in Morris and Winnipeg; the Red Cross; the Morris Cemetery; the Indian Children's School in Alberni, B.C.; Home Economics Society of Morris; Sunday School Supplies for the Sunday School held in Broadview School; British and Foreign Bible Society; Morris Memorial Rink; Aid to Russia; Milk for Britain; Children's Aid Society; March of Dimes; Unitarian Relief in Korea; C.N.I.B.; and wherever there was a need.

One special meeting in 1934 was held to determine what could be done to help the rural residents in the dried out areas. It resulted in a meeting November 23, 1934, when the members tied and bound one heavy quilt and packed five bundles of goods which were sent to the Secretary-Treasurer of Edward Municipality, Pierson, Manitoba. Larger gardens were planted and the surplus vegetables were sent to the dried out areas. Cases of eggs and cartons of home made cookies were sent each summer to Gimli Fresh Air Camps. In the two world wars they did Red Cross Sewing and Knitting and packed boxes for the young men overseas. When these young men returned home, parties in their honor, were held in the school. In 1932 the group made a Santa Claus suit, drafted Mr. Rex Perkins to be Santa and helped with the Christmas Concert in the school, December 22. Mrs. Jas Clubb was the chairman that evening. This involvement lasted until 1944.

The Broadview Missionary Society never forgot its responsibility to the church in Morris. Besides their donation of money each fall, the minutes show that when the minister's salary or the taxes were in arrears, more money was given. They gave too, towards the church organ and furnishing for the Manse. When the new United Church was built, it was this group that donated the Communion Table, with the lettering "*In His Service*" and the wine velvet Runner for the table. The lettering completed this, their final project which was and is a fitting and lasting memorial to the Broadview Missionary Society and its Fifty years of service.



*Members of the Broadview missionary society at closing banquet in 1964. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Dorothy Hamblin, Genevieve Manikel, Edith Irvine, Betty Friesen, Kathleen Hamblin, Verna Irvine, Viola Skoglund, Ethel Forrest, Faye Peters. SEATED: Beth Clubb, Emily Hamblin.*

## STEINFELD SCHOOL. DISTRICT NO. 1128

### "Dyck Family Memories"

*submitted by Helen Rigby*

Children in the Steinfeld District had a choice of two schools. Farmfeld, a private school, functioned on the southwest quarter of 29-4-1W until 1922. This was one mile north of the Martin Friesen residence. Bishop John A. Friesen reported that they studied both English and German, and except for History and Grammar, were not academically behind those on the public schools when Farmfeld closed and they began to attend Steinfeld. The parents of the children were obliged to pay taxes to support the public school, and also had to support the private school, and found it to be an economic hardship. After falling into disuse, the building was moved into Lowe Farm and used as a dwelling.

The first Steinfeld School, a public school, was located next to the old cemetery on S.E. 12-4-2W, but was moved one half mile east to a more central location. This building burned down somewhere around 1920, when a single thundercloud passed over, and a bolt of lightning hit the school. It was replaced by another building which remained in use until 1925. My Uncle Peter described the school which he attended, as having a steep roof, windows spaced on both sides, and no insulation. It was heated with a pot bellied stove and a long string of pipes which led to the chimney. This building was purchased by Diedrich Hoepfner in 1925, and was probably torn down later. By 1910, when the John I. Dyck's established their farmstead on the northeast corner of N.W. 7-4-1W., the school was in its second location, just south of them. Uncle Peter reports that his father was usually a trustee, except during the First World War, when an official trustee was appointed, due to the German atmosphere amongst the Mennonites.

The names of teachers beginning 1910, are as follows: Ben Heinrichs, Julius Toews, William Toews, Elizabeth B. Dyck, Margaret Nickel, Mr. Browne, Mr. Neufeld, Mr. Toews, Jake Hoepfner, Helen Heinrichs, Wm. Friesen, Peter D. Unrau, Peter Reimer, Peter Reimer (112 term - not same as above), Mr. Penner, John S. Schellenberg, Mary D. Reimer, Frank Issacs, Miss Giesbrecht, Ellen Groening, John Pakota, Esther C. Klaassen, Dave Duerksen, Esther C. Klaassen, Susan Krahn, Wm. P. Born, June Friesen, Abe Paetkau, Lydia Braun.

In 1925, a new, up-to-date school was built on the southwest corner of N.W. 8-4-1 (1 1/4 mile north and 1 1/2 mile east of the previous one). The new school was built to be a standard plan and boasted separate cloakrooms for boys and girls, full basement with a furnace, cistern and inside toilets with septic tanks. In the classroom, directly above the furnace, stood the lone hot air register, a desk-sized square, counter-high projectile with mesh walls on two sides and solid metal on the other two. Upon arriving at school on cold days, the children would take turns sitting on the sturdy wooden flat top of this "register" and dangle their legs in front of the mesh openings in order to warm themselves.

The north wall, between the cloakroom doors, and the east wall are lined with blackboards. Above the black-



*The Steinfeld school class in 1916, with teacher, Lizzie Dyck. Photo courtesy of Fred Wall.*

boards on the north wall, between portraits of the King and Queen, hung a case with large roll-up maps. On the west wall, to the north of the bank of large windows, stood the "library". This consisted of a cupboard with glass doors covering its upper two-thirds which held the school's entire supply of library books. Wooden doors at the bottom concealed the science equipment used by grade seven and eight students. The south wall was devoid of windows. Usually it held a sand table where the younger children might amuse themselves at recess or when their work was done if the weather was unsuitable for outside play. The wooden floor had an oil finish. Desks were of both the single and double type and they were of various sized to accommodate the children from age six to fifteen.

The furnace did not always work well, the water in the cistern froze and the children at the back of the school who sat above the cistern developed chill blanes, and the toilet system sometimes broke down. Just the same, it was the most modern building in the district and all were justly proud of it. At the same time, a teacherage, barn and outside toilets were built. There were good swings and teeter-totters.

Trees were planted all around the property. The trustees of the time, must have had progressive ideas indeed! Spruce trees, the only evergreens in the district, bordered the front half of the grounds. Deciduous trees lined the rest. The evergreens were kept alive throughtout the dry years by tanking water to them. The children watered the trees individually by carrying to them syrup pails full of water from the tank. Hyrdo and phone were installed in 1948 and 1949 respectively, when they were made available to the community.

Mud was always a problem; so each spring, a farmer would arrive with a hay-rack full of flax straw which he would scatter in front of the school door to give the children a place to be at recess time. It seemed that only flax had sufficient fibre to have some impact on that rich gumbo. By June, all signs of the straw were gone!

The children arrived at school on foot, horseback, horsedrawn conveyance from stoneboat to buggy, or motor vehicle. If a boy in the family was ten years of age,





First ones out of the school yard! Susie and Annie Friesen on their horse "Jack".

he was often considered old enough to handle a quiet horse and the children would bring themselves. Horses were bridled and harnessed at last recess. At times, a teacher might be conned into allowing the 'Teamsters' to stand at the front of the school for a faster exit after closing exercises which consisted of God Save the King and the Lord's Prayer. Then the race was on! The hero of the day was the chap who could leave the yard first. Sometimes, two buggies or sleighs would 'just' make it through the gate at the same time.

The decisions made for the school, were the responsibility of the trustees, who gave their time willingly. Some of the early trustees were: P.U. Braun, John I. Dyck, Abe Toews, P.S. Braun, John K. Gerbrandt, Martin M. Friesen, John P. Toews, Henry Zacharias and Diedrich Reimer. Later on, John N. Dyck, John A. Friesen, Nick and Corny Gerbrandt, Henry Doerksen, and Jake Harder.

It was an opinion that the quality of education in the Steinfeld School from 1910-1920, was poor. The teacher was usually inexperienced, coming straight from Normal School, because it was cheaper that way. Also, the parents, having had very little schooling themselves, didn't know what to look for and kept their children home whenever there was work to be done. This attitude then reflected back to the children. By the 1940's, absenteeism was no great problem, but there still was not much to whet the imagination in some homes and this sometimes could be the reason for poor student performances. Apart from that, in the 1940's, the quality of education really depended on the personal academic resources of the current teacher. Some, including those who stayed only a month or so, to finish off a term, were excellent. Discipline was sometimes harsh, and sometimes practically non-existent.

Naturally, the Christmas concert was a major event of the year and everyone attended. The children had spent weeks in preparation and stayed home the day of the concert. The trustees would spend the day decorating the school with the largest and best fir tree that could be purchased (or so it seemed to an impressionable youngster). As we had no hydro, candles were used to light up the tree, and two trustees spent the entire evening watching and replacing those dangerous lights. Since

most homes would not have a Christmas tree, much less commercial decorations, the children felt that they were truly entering a wonderland when they arrived for the evening concert with their families, dressed in their very best. At the end of the concert, there was a gift exchange among the students, a substantial gift for each student from the teacher bought out of the school budget, and also a generous bag of nuts and candy, courtesy of the school board budget. Unless snow came late in the year, the families would then pile into their sleighs for a frosty ride home.

The annual school picnic was the other major annual happening, and as many as four rural districts would get together in the morning for the day-long sports events. Races of all sorts, and a ball tournament were the order of the day. At the end, the adults would have their ball game. Families brought their picnic lunches and if a family, or family members were absent, it was noted. Home chores were usually late that day.

In the spring of 1939, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Canada. They were to stop briefly in Winnipeg, so plans were made for the school children to stand at a certain spot near the Legislative Buildings where they would catch a glimpse of the royal pair as they drove by. Commemorative medallions and parchments were distributed and each child was given a name tag so no one would get lost. Arrangements were made for transportation. The night before the great event, the excited children were put to bed freshly scrubbed for the early morning start. Their best clothes were laid out. When they wakened, it was raining. It didn't stop. The trip was off! 40 years later, the children still remember their disappointment.

The first students to complete grade eight in 1927 were: Carney Gerbrandt, Jake Dyck, Lillie Bergstrom, and another student. They went to Rosenfeld to write their exams. By 1940, it was not too difficult for a student to obtain a grade eight standing, but high school was a different matter. At that, it was an economic sacrifice and many competent students left school after grade eight or took grade nine by correspondence and then left. Perhaps, then, it should not come as too great a surprise that by 1952, only four students from Steinfeld School had ever completed grade 12. They were: Mary Braun, Helen Dyck, Edward Enns and Archie Harder.



J. Friesen, L. and I. Heinrichs, W. Harder, L. Heinrichs, J. Gerbrandt, W. Heinrichs, F. Friesen, M. Gerbrandt, L. Schiarnan, L. Harder, R. Harder and E. Friesen in 1951.

## DRAMA AND SPORTS

In about 1931-1932, the Steinfeld and Kronsweide young people organized a literary club and put on some fine drama and music. They performed all over the country. Involved were Jake Dyck, Sr., Jake E. Gerbrandt, Herman, Henry, Bertha and Sarah Doerksen, the Bergstroms, Peter Friesen and Pete Zacharias.

These two districts had a joint ball team from 1927-1937, and challenged all teams from surrounding districts. Some of the players were: Abe Schroeder and Peter L. Braun, catcher; John Friesen, Peter Harder and Henry Doerksen, pitchers; Jake Toews, first base; Jake E. Gerbrandt, third base; Pete Zacharias, short stop; Corney Gerbrandt, second base; John Friesen, Herman Doerksen, Jake Dyck and others, fielders.

A lot of ball must have been played over the years as Abe Dyck is reported to have been an avid ball player around 1920. Also, Elmer and John Dyck played baseball, with Lowe Farm in the late 1940's.

Most of the families attended the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church on Sunday and must have exchanged neighbourly gossip there. They also had a Farmer's phone and the Government phone for a few years in the 1920's. All government phones were removed because of their prohibitive cost in the late 1920's. It is curious to note that they did not again install the private phones. As it was, a whole generation grew up without that means of communication!

## LOCAL CUSTOMS

Weddings were a great social event and everyone was invited. They were usually a summer affair and the reception, if not also the ceremony was held in the bride's home. The writer remembers one wedding where during the evening, the 'old' folks sat inside the house and sang hymns, the young adults played 'drop the handkerchief' in the yard, and the school children danced on a hayrack behind the barn! The children were notorious for snatching sugar cubes which they would dissolve in their mouths.



*Isaac and Gertrude Brown on their wedding day.*

A time-honoured custom that died in the 1940's concerned the newly-engaged couple. The engagement would be announced only when the banns were read at church, a couple weeks before the wedding. During the intervening period, the betrothed pair would personally call on and invite their intended guests to their wedding. Another custom to be discontinued at that time (perhaps because telephones were re-installed) was the passing on **from** house to house of a 'funeral letter', giving statistics and funeral arrangements at the time of a death in the family. 'Portions' of flour might also be handed out to the neighbours by the bereaved family so that the small buns served with coffee and sugar lumps after the funeral might be speedily baked.

Naturally, with spring came the flood. There was local flooding, and trenches were frequently dug along the ditches to help speed the water on its way. The old-timers were very grateful for the high roads and steep ditches, as they had lost many crops before the drainage system had been completed through what had originally been marsh land. What caused great excitement, though, was the torrent of water that came out of the west and gushed along the dyke and spillway one-half mile south of Lowe Farm. The water would be a few feet deep and the young men in their late teens and up, in order to show their bravery, and urgent business in town. Horseback was the way to go. They would slip a gunny sack over the horse's head to keep it from shying and then would ford the spillway. Sometimes someone would take his tractor. One year, one of the senior gentlemen decided to brave it to town with his horse and buggy. He did have eggs and cream to deliver, and groceries to get. Unfortunately, his buggy dropped into a washout hidden by the swirling waters. The egg crates and cream can swam away, but fortunately the poor gentleman was rescued by other like-venturers. He'd endured a rather chilly bath.

Although dancing was officially frowned on by some, many of the young people danced. Uncle Peter writes, "I don't remember being taught to dance. But in those times (1910-1925) we made our own entertainment. If four boys and four girls were on hand, a mouth-organ or concertina (the squeeze-box) would provide the music for square dancing. Your dad (John), Abe and later I, myself, called for square dances. It was a lot of fun." He also remembers attending a dance in the Ritz' hip roof barn near Sewell. Things weren't too difficult in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Only, the music might also come from a hand-cranked gramophone. When it would wind down, the couple nearest it would quickly wind it up and dancing would continue. Therefore, when the new barn on the Dyck farmstead was finished in 1945, they just *had* to hold a dance. Lornie Ritz, Art Hintz and Rheinhold Ganske provided the fine lively music. Advertisement was by word of mouth, and people came from far and near. Nick Gerbrandt, a trustee, used the official Steinfeld School Stamp (the only one available) to mark the hands of those who had paid. At 25¢ each, enough money was realized to pay for the paint for the barn.

The families who lived in the district for appreciable periods of time from 1910-1930 were: Abram Wiebes, John Gerbrandts, Martin Friesens, Peter Friesens, Peter Hoepfners, Henry Zacharias, John P. Toews, Peter

Derksens, Nickels, Peter V. Klassens, Hubert Dolphs, Abram Thiessens, Enns, Klassens, Turblers, Bergstroms (1918-1926) and John I. Dycks. By 1952, the Wiebes and Derksens were still there: Nick and Corney Gerbrandt, sons of John Gerbrandt, were established farmers; Martin Friesen's sons, Martin, John, Peter and Jake, held farms of their own; John N. Dyck had replaced his father. Others then in the district were: Theo Schiemans, Abram Thiessens, Jake Harders, Martin Remples, Peter Unraus, Henry Giesbrechts, Bill Funks, Bill Thiessens, Henry Dycks, Peter S. Hieberts. Those who had come and left were: Peter Ginters, George Rempels, Diedrich Reimers, Martin Bergens, Diedrich Enns, Henry, Herman and Jake Doerksens and Henry Funks.

Of all those families, only three are now represented. Wilfred 'Butch' Harder took over his father's farm and enlarged it. Corney Gerbrandt lives on the farmstead earlier held by his father and then his brother Nick. John Friesen, now a Bishop of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church and his brother Carney and various descendents of theirs and their parents, Martin Friesens Sr., also farm in what was Steinfeld School District No. 1128.



*Rose Farm S.D. class of 1923. The teacher, Peter Giesbrecht, also had four boys in the class. Families represented here are the John and Frand Giesbrechts, 3 Friesen families, 2 Bergman families, Widow Dyck's, Peter Dyck's, J. Abrams, D. and Jake Harder, D. Penner, Jacob Blatz and Ben Toews.*

## ROSE FARM SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1577

*by Dan Blatz*

The early settlers had no trouble in naming their school after the first settlers who came. Rose Farm was born in 1897 and continued until 1965 as No. 1577. The ratepayers bought 2 acres from our father, Jacob Blatz, on the northeast corner of our homestead. One acre for school and one acre for cemetery. It was incorporated and is used to this day, some families having 4 generations buried there. The first school building was about 24 x 30; the northend was used by the teacher, centre as hall, and the south end as school. The school was moved from this location about 1912 to the northwest corner of the S.W. 114 9-4-2. The old building was used as a teacherage and a new school was built in 1913, which served till 1950.



*A Sunday school class, taken in the early thirties, at Rose Farm School.*

The old school at times when I attended, had a total of 63 pupils. We had 3 rows sitting 3 to a bench, and a teacher who weighed 310 pounds. Not too much space to run around in, though we learned our three R's. At one time, I remember, we had 12 to 15 cousins attending school at the same time. Education was not taught just with a pencil and a book.

The first trustees for the district varied a lot, as some people moved in and some moved out. I think my father (Jacob Blatz) must have served about the longest. Mr. Peter Bergman usually served as secretary, as the minutes were all in the German language till about 1911.

When the first up-to-date school registers were brought from the Department of Education, the bare minimum of minutes were kept. From then on, we had bilingual education till the late 1920's; English and German. I remember the English-German Dictionary was standard equipment. This period was classed as a private school. When World War I came along, the Department of Education tried to put in an official trustee, which was rejected by the ratepayers. They took the stand that they managed so far, they could manage in future, the hiring of teachers, etc. They organized a fully integrated school and it has been such till it closed its doors in 1965. Thanks to progressive ratepayers and good teachers, we received a fair education.

The total number of teachers who taught in this school is about 32. The shortest time taught was when Miss



*The new Rose Farm school built in 1950, with the elementary class of 1964.*

Gertrude Giesbrecht taught from January 1914 to June and then married Mr. Isaac Brown, the Secretary. The longest time was when Mr. Peter Giesbrecht, taught for 6 112 years, 1918-1926. Mr. Abe Heide taught high school from 1953 to 1960.

When the new school was built in 1950, a full basement, hydro and furnace were added. High school education was hard to come by, as the town high schools were full. In 1953, we organized a continuation school with a classroom in the basement, with 18 students from Rose Farm, Melba, Bloomfield districts, with grades nine to eleven. Mr. Abe Heide from Horndean, was Principal for seven years. When the large school divisions came in, the high school was transferred to Kane.

In 1965, Rose Farm schools, as such, closed its doors. It stayed in operation for about 70 years. In that time it had taught an average of 40 pupils per year, or a total of 2,800 school years.



### ROSE FARM DISTRICT "The Big Marsh Country"

To write the history of the Rose Farm district, one has to go back a bit and reminisce.

A Mr. Rose settled in the district some time in the 1870's and it is said, he homesteaded it or received it as a grant, namely Section 17-4-2 West. He must have had good financial backing or was rich in his own right. He put up very large buildings; 2 large dwellings, one for the boss and one for the hired men, a fairly large barn for horses and cattle, a large sheep shed and machine shed. He brought in two stationary steam engines, which had to be pulled across each end of the field by horses or oxen, each had a winch on the front, with a 1/4 mile chain attached to pull a turnover plow across the fields - very inconvenient. It is said they farmed in midsummer, due to wet weather and marshy land. This area was referred to by the people further west as the "Big Marsh Country".

I remember as a young lad in 1917, when my brother and the Gluck boys who lived there, were hauling those chains to Kane siding to be shipped to the smelters for the

War effort. They needed four horses and four mules on each wagon, with a shallow box.

The Rose farm was lived in by the incoming settlers, till their own buildings were ready to be occupied. My folks moved in fall, they lived there till next summer. At that time, there were four families besides the DeFehrs, who farmed only a small acreage. The rest was rented to other settlers for crops and hay land and pasture. The whole country was virgin prairie.

Other early settlers in the district came from further west, to settle here, probably from old Ontario, to Roland and Carman area, where they had relatives. They came to settle on the edge of the marsh. Mr. Jim Brooks settled on Section 7-4-2 West, Ward Brooks on 6-4-2 West, Frank McClain and brother, Tom McClain on S. 112 18-4-2 West and a Mr. Ted Service on 20-4-2 West (S.W. 114).

Jim Brooks was the first in the district in 1891. The McClains and Services in the next year or so, also the DeFehrs. Other settlers filled up the area from 1895 on. (see map) Tom Chisholm came to J. Brooks' farm from Scotland to be his foreman for 11 years (1905-1914). He joined the army in World War I; when it was over, stayed in Scotland.

Mr. Brooks was the first breeder of mules in the district. We lived 1 112 miles east from his place. Some clear mornings, you could hear his burro or jackass braying all over the countryside! (Jackass is the daddy to the mules). It was said, mule skimmers needed a special place in heaven! They are tough animals to drive.

The first thing the settlers did was plant trees; cottonwood, poplar was fast growing, also maple and ash. Wild plums and wild strawberries grew on the prairie or pastures abundantly.

Uncle Daniel Blatz and family homesteaded on 16-4-2 West, N.W. 114. His son-in-law, Isaac Dyck, on 16-4-2 West, N.E. 114, in 1895. Our parents, the Jacob Blatz' and family and Uncle John Blatz (1896), settled on N.W. 1/4 9-4-2. Later, Dad bought the S.W. 114 9-4-2. Derk Bolts came in 1896 and settled on 16-4-2. S.W. 114 and N.E. 1/4 of 10-4-2 West.

The Peters Brothers came in 1897. They built a gristmill, wind driven, for grinding grain for surrounding neighbours. Later, they moved to Saskatchewan with the Daniel Blatz family. In 1908-09, they had lived on S.E. 11 4 16-4-2 West.



*Good horse flesh was a necessity. These three purebred Percheron stallions were owned by H.B. Klippenstein in 1915.*



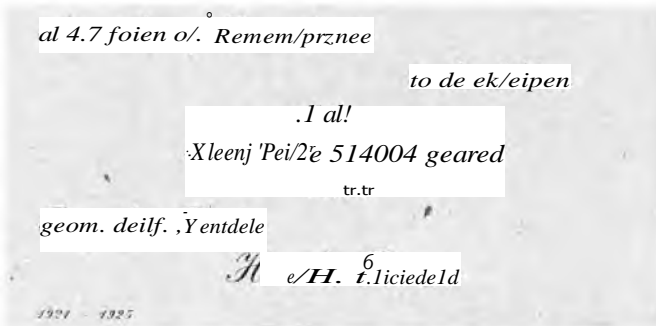




*The Rose Farm EMMC Church (originally Rudnerweidner) shortly before its closing in 1974. The church was built in 1937 on section 9-4-2 W. Missions were a strong emphasis of the church. The annual Missionary Conference was a highlight of the church activities.*

by Ed Penner. Jack Penner serves as Sunday School Superintendent and Edwin Gerbrandt and Henry Enns serve as president and treasurer, respectively, of the Young People's Group.

The church closed its doors in 1974, and members integrated with other Lowe Farm Churches.



*Mr. H.M. Friesen, teacher at Kronsweide SD 1030 from 1924-25.*



*First Kronsweide School. BELOW: Class of 1922 at Kronsweide - teacher H.M. Friesen.*



*Kronsweide School - 1930. BELOW: Kronsweide Class 1937-38. George R. Wiebe, Teacher.*





## QUEEN CENTRE SCHOOL

by E.H. Groening

Information on the Queen Centre School has been difficult to collect. Most of the people involved are no longer around and many records with the Department of Education only go back as far as 1915. Some of the material used in this report is from the Provincial School Records and some is from older people who were involved in the history of the school. Since much of the latter is of oral source, it may be subject to correction.

The Queen Centre School District No. 1219 was formed November 29, 1902, by by-law No. 126 of the Municipality of Morris, according to the Provincial School Records as supplied by courtesy of Ali Lebttag, one of the administrators. The school was located on the eastern side of section 30-4-2 W. In about 1911, it was moved to the north-west corner of Section 20-4-2 W.

No records are available of the first decade. However, most of the names of the teachers and the years they taught, have been recovered for the last half of the school's duration. A new school was built in 1917 or about on the same school grounds, by a well-known carpenter of the time, Herman Zehrvoegel, and the old school was converted to a teacherage.



*Queen Centre School - 1920. Pictured Walter and Ed Groening, Clairmont and Ivan Crouch, Herman Dyck, Dora and Mary Groening and Annie Dueck.*

In the school year, 1911-12, Isaac Dyck was teacher. The next two years the teacher was Gerhard G. Wiebe. In 1914-15, Anna Nickel, a young lady from Rosenfeld taught. Miss Nickel is remembered as a fine teacher by some of her former students. She later married a certain Henry Friesen. Mary Loewen, a cousin of Mrs. Diedrich Heppner of Lowe Farm, was teacher in 1915-16. In 1916-17, Cornelius W. Wiebe, a prospective medical student, was teacher. C.W. Wiebe later became chief physician and surgeon in the Winkler community for more than fifty years. In 1917-18, Henry Wiebe, of the same family as Cornelius, was teacher. Henry Wiebe, after all these years, is still remembered by some of his students as an excellent teacher. No records are on hand for the last few years for reasons obvious in the following paragraph.

Some of the family names in attendance as recalled by former pupils are; Dyck, Penner, Funk, Groening,

Crouch and perhaps Schnelby and Hurt. The school was located on the northern edge of the West Reserve for Mennonite settlers. In the early school years, there likely were a number of other non-Mennonite family names on the register.

In 1918, some families in the community ventured on a project which was short-lived. The motives involved relate to the long time custom of school control by Mennonites, the Federal privileges granted and the Provincial Rights of the B.N.A. Act of 1867, on which further comments space does not allow.. Nevertheless, the same carpenter who shortly before had built the Queen Centre School was hired to build a private school only one-and-a-half miles east of Queen Centre on section 21-4-2 W.

The first teacher was Isaac Epp. The next teacher was David Schulz, a young scholar of the time. Schulz proved to be a strict disciplinarian with strong leadership abilities. He later became Bishop of a number of churches in southern Manitoba, a position he held for some forty consecutive years. Another teacher and perhaps the last was Marie Wiens, from a well known Lowe Farm family. She later became a nurse and is presently residing in Winnipeg. This private school rivalled Queen Centre for pupil count and may in part have been the cause of the discontinuation of both schools. This structure of 1917, is still standing on the same location, on Alvin Penner's farm yard.

On August 5, 1919, the Queen Centre School District and the private school were consolidated with portions of Neufeld No. 1580, Bloomfeld No. 793, Kronsweide No. 1030, and the Woodvale No. 1350 by an Award of Arbitrators to form the Kane Consolidated School No. 2006. This marked the end of one-roomed schools in the western part of the Municipality of Morris. Some nine hundred one-roomed schools in the province retained their existence for another forty years, until the implementation of Unitary Division in 1959.

## CARL A. RECKSIEDLER

by Ferd Recksiedler

Carl A. Recksiedler, one of the early settlers of Southern Manitoba, came to Canada from Poland, arriving in Gretna on May 2nd, 1892, with his wife Matilda and a daughter of about nine months old.

Not finding any work in Gretna and having no money, he walked to Winnipeg where he got work at the C.P.R. railroad. Being a section man, he worked at Raeburn, Manitoba at 5.75 per day. A week or so later his wife and daughter came to Winnipeg by train and got some work at a "market garden" owned by a Mr. Magnier. Several weeks later, the little girl became sick and died. Carl insisted on coming from Raeburn to Winnipeg for the funeral, but for that he lost his job at the C.P.R. Shortly after, about the middle of August 1892, they came to Rosenfeld and Carl worked at many places, mostly doing carpentry work. They lived in Rosenfeld until 1896, when they moved to Beausejour, Manitoba where they started farming.

While living in Rosenfeld, a son Heinrich (Henry) was born on August 29th, 1893, and a daughter, Helena, was born on March 12th, 1896.

Their first power for farming was a yoke of oxen, but in a year or so they bought some horses. In 1902 they bought a quarter section of land at DeWet, Manitoba (later changed to Sewell), and in 1903 they built a house and barn all in one, and moved on to their farm. This land was all prairie, and had to be broken and disced to prepare for grain farming.

In Beausejour two sons were born, Rheinhold (Roy) on January 3rd, 1899, and Ludwig (Louis) on February 3rd, 1901, and they now had a family of three boys and one girl. After coming to Sewell, five more children were born, Gustav on February 22nd, 1904; Daniel on January 28th, 1906; Ferdinand on February 22nd, 1908; Adelina on April 11th, 1910 and Ottillie (Tilly) on April 19th, 1914. The family now included six sons and three daughters, all working and becoming quite prosperous.



C.A. Recksiedler family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Louis, Henry, Helena, Roy. FRONT ROW, Seated: Gustav, Ferdinand, Carl, Matilda, Adelina, Daniel.

More land was bought, they finally owned a total of four quarters of land. At first all this land was worked with horses, needing a total of eighteen horses for this. In 1918, a tractor was bought to help out with the heavier field work. Besides the horses, they had up to twenty head of cattle, some pigs, chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys.

It took a lot of work to grow and store feed for all the animals, but everyone had his job and worked hard at it, and on the whole everyone enjoyed his part and was happy.

Transportation until 1917 was all by horses and buggies and in winter by sleigh. It was quite common to drive ten or twelve miles for the family needs in winter, as well as in summer, and on Sunday to church. In 1917, they bought a brand new Model T Ford car, the pride for summer driving. Recreation was mostly just visiting friends and neighbours, holding some house parties and dances.

Nearly every summer there was the big outing when all the families went to the Morris "fair". This was always a big celebration, and Dad would give everyone \$.25 or \$.35 to spend as you wished.

In 1916, they built a large new modern house, so the family did not have to live in the living quarters on one end of the barn anymore.

The children were growing up and getting married, and by 1940 they were all married. Strange as it may seem, two sons, Henry and Louis, were married to two daughters of the August Pokrant family and three sons, Roy, Gustav and Daniel, were married to three daughters of the Fredrick Janke family. The family then spread to different parts of Manitoba and some went to the United States.

Carl A. Recksiedler and his wife Matilda had a venturesome and hard working life in their adopted country, but never felt sorry for leaving their land of birth. Carl and Matilda were devoted Christians and members of the Lutheran Church. When they moved to Sewell they joined the St. John's Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld, and were faithful members. They enjoyed fairly good health, and were thankful to the Lord for all the good health and prosperity He bestowed upon them.

In 1931, Matilda Recksiedler became ill and passed away to her heavenly reward and a week later Helena passed away. Four years later Carl, after a lengthy illness passed away. They both passed on with the knowledge that their early work was done with the Lord's blessing.

Carl and Matilda's family now includes twenty-seven grandchildren, many great-grandchildren and some great-great-grandchildren. Of their children, only two sons, Henry and Ferdinand and one daughter, Adelina are now living. (1979)

Carl A. Recksiedler was born in Poland, June 29th, 1859

Matilda Recksiedler, born Biehlke, in Poland, January 28th, 1869.

Carl A. Recksiedler bought his first quarter section of land at DeWet, later changed to Sewell. This was the N.W. 1/4 1-4-1 West, in 1902, and later the following: S. 1/2 N.W. 1/4 13-4-1 West, S. 1/2 N.E. 1/4 13-4-1 West, E. 1/2 2-4-1 West and N.W. 1/4 6-4-1 East. The parcels

on Section 13 were sold in 1919 or thereabouts. The balance was farmed by Carl, with the help of his family, until his retirement in 1931.

Henry, the oldest son, who was quite mechanically inclined, was delegated at the ripe age of thirteen, to operate the steam engine, which was used with the old threshing machine for harvesting. In 1918, he bought the N.W. 1/4 2-4-1 West, which he farmed for several years, and then farmed on the S.W. 1/4 1-4-1 West until 1942, when he sold and moved to Winnipeg. He worked as an engineer for the CPR until he was retired.

Reinhold (Roy) also farmed on the N.E. 1/4 2-4-1 West from 1923 until 1926, when he bought a farm east of the Red River near Morris.

Ludwig (Louis), with the help of his Dad, built a store at Sewell in 1920. He also assumed the duties of Postmaster, and for several years was the grain buyer at the elevator for The Maple Leaf Milling Co. In 1926, he sold his store and moved to Winnipeg. For several years, he was a travelling salesman for International Harvester Co.

Daniel (Dan) assumed the operation of his dad's farms in 1931, and lived on the home farm until his retirement in 1963, when he sold the farm and moved to the town of Morris.



*Dan Recksiedler standing by their McCormick Deering tractor for which C.A. designed scrapers fitted on the wheels to remove mud.*

As a point of interest, on one occasion, when he was sitting in the lunch room at St. Jean, with William Ganske, (who later became his brother-in-law) a gentleman came over to their table. After engaging them in conversation, he handed each of them a sheet of paper, on which he had drawn a perfect likeness of each of them. He also signed his name on the sheets. The name was "Norman Rockwell, who will be remembered as having drawn many cover pictures for the Saturday Evening Post.

William Ganske, who married Otille (Tilly) in 1935, farmed the E. 1/2 of S.E. 1/4 2-4-1 West for several years; also the N.E. 1/4 7-4-1 East. In 1939, they moved to a farm North of Miami, and later bought a farm near Carman, being the W. 1/2 28-5-5 West, where his son Raymond still farms at the present time.

Ferdinand (Ferd) acquired the N.W. 1/4 6-4-1 East, in 1933 and farmed this quarter until 1972, when he retired from active farming. This is the only farm still in the possession of a family member, being presently owned by Ferd's son, Larry.

## KARL MICHAEL RECKSIDLER

Karl, who was born on January 6, 1873 in Wolhynien (a state of Russian Poland) left the country in 1893, along with his cousin Jabusch because they did not want to join the Russian Army. They crossed the North Sea by hiding in a cattle boat and landed in Liverpool, England. Unable to speak English, they asked for directions to the German Consul, unaware that they were speaking to pirates looking for cheap labor on their ship, and trying to lead them astray. A German-speaking person overheard the conversation and set them straight on directions to the Consul, who in turn helped arrange transportation to Canada. They arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and were detained there for quite some time before continuing on by train to Winnipeg.

Karl's family, consisting of his parents Michael and Wilhelmena (Jabusch) Recksiedler, a younger brother August, and Uncles Diengott and Carl and their families preceded them. They first settled in the Rosenfeld area and it was here that Karl met Emma Kurbis, who also had been born in Wolhynien on September 5, 1882, in the village of Kirchspiel, Sztomir, the daughter of Rudolph and Henrietta (Glov) Kurbis. The Kurbis family arrived in Rosenfeld about the middle of May, 1893, after crossing the ocean on the Steamship Co. Spearo. Emma was confirmed at St. John's Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld on April 2, 1895, and later went to Winnipeg, doing housework to earn her living.

Karl and Emma were married in Winnipeg on July 11, 1901, and ventured out on their own to what is now the Sewell District. Purchasing the N.W. 1/4 12-4-1-W from John Gray for \$6.00 an acre, they set out to make a living for the family farming in the typical pioneer ways.

Karl and Emma became the parents of 13 children, but tragedy and hardships did not pass them by. Their first child, Albert, was born in 1903, followed by two girls, Alvina and Helen, who died very young. Then came Henry, Pauline, Martha, Minnie, August, Henrietta, Willie, Bertha, Ottillie and last of all, Huldina.



*Recksiedler's threshing outfit in 1926, with August Kurbis, Henry, Minnie, August and Willie Recksiedler, Adolf Herman and Adolf Pluchinski.*

Every member of the family had responsibilities and worked hard besides attending the St. Peter's country school. Some of the family remembers the day they came home from school and found the barn and house had burned completely. However, build again they did, not knowing tragedy would strike again. It was on February 12, 1924 when another fire claimed the lives of three of the children: Martha, Tillie and Bertha. The others managed to escape, but some suffered severe burns. This proved to be a real grief to the family, but another home was built. Shortly after, on June 2, 1926, Karl passed away at the age of 53. Emma managed to raise her family with the help of the older children and relatives.

As the children married, several moved on to British Columbia, including Henry, Pauline, Minnie, Henrietta, Willie and Huldina. After the youngest son Willie was married and took over the farm, Emma joined her children in the New Westminster area of British Columbia. She lived a quiet and peaceful life until she passed away on August 28, 1957, at almost 75 years of age.

The family that remained in Manitoba consisted of the oldest son Albert, and August. Albert still owns the farm he was born on, and resides on the same section. August also farms, with his son Allan, in the same vicinity. He lives in what was the last DeWet School building and Allan resides in the original village site of Sewell.

As we look back over the years, we realize that our forefathers had the courage to endure hardships that we do not have today in our modern world. Let us hope that this characteristic of their's will continue on in Karl and Emma's future generations, (including 22 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren), so we also may live honestly and peacefully together, helping each other along the way!



*Karl and Emma Recksiedler and son, Albert, taken in 1903.*

## ALBERT RECKSIEDLER

Albert Recksiedler was the eldest son of Karl and Emma (Kurbis) Recksiedler. He attended the St. Peters school throughout his school years. One of the most

tragic memories of these years was walking home from school and discovering the family home in flames. The fire originated in the barn and seemed contained there, until a change of wind direction later consumed the house. All the family's belongings were destroyed.

In his younger years, Albert enjoyed the sport of hunting. He often combined this with a visit to the Kurbis relatives in Greenwald. In February, 1924, he was hunting deer here, when the second fire destroyed the Karl Recksiedler family home. Three younger sisters perished in this fire. In June of 1926, father Karl passed away.

Albert married Natalia Mantie in March 1927 and rented the August Recksiedler farm in Sewell for 7 years. During this time, they lived near the old family home, which was again rebuilt. As was customary in those days, the two families shared an ice house, which was used for refrigeration. Three children (Eldora, Dorothy, Marion) were born during these years. Dr. Roy from St. Jean helped bring all three girls into this world, although all were born at home. Eldora started school and was usually accompanied by her aunt (Huldina), who was finishing her school years at this time.

In 1933, the Albert Recksiedler family to the Max Finkelstein farm and rented that half section for many years. In November of that year, another daughter, Verna, was delivered, with the help of Mrs. Paul Hoffman, who often served as Midwife in the Sewell community. In 1936, Albert purchased his own farm from Sarah and Agatha Peters - cost was \$30.00 per acre. A garage was built and a pond was dug first of all. A hip-roofed barn came next. Because most of the labour was donated by neighbours, the barn loft was offered for many barn dances in the next few years. The house was built in 1939, the same year that Alice, the last of the daughters, was born. The planting of a shelter belt of trees became a family project. The buildings and the grove of trees depict the fruit of their labours. A machine shed, chicken barn and several granaries were built in later years. Albert purchased the old family farm as well as forty acres across the road from his home.



*Albert Recksiedler's farm site.*

All five daughters attended the DeWet School and continued their education. The three oldest graduated from high school, which in those days was known as the St. Jean Convent. Two of the girls (Marion and Alice) completed their Registered Nurse's training at the

Winnipeg General Hospital; Verna graduated from the University of Manitoba as a home economics teacher and Eldora and Dorothy graduated from Winnipeg Normal School and taught school.

Albert Recksiedler lived on the family farm until his death, May 27, 1979. His wife, Natalia, five daughters and their families survive. He left behind ten grandchildren.



*Albert Recksiedler with children and grandchildren in 1975.*

## AUGUST RECKSIEDLER

*Mrs. August Recksiedler*

As did his brothers and sisters, August attended St. Peters School, and this past winter he had the pleasure of reminiscing early school days with his first teacher, Mrs. Annie Braun (nee Peters) who now resides in Altona.

Adventure beckoned at the age of 19, when August travelled to British Columbia and worked for ISC an hour picking potatoes and milking cows. After one year he returned to Sewell and farmed with his brother Willie. Other members of his family, except Albert, had all gradually left the Sewell community - so back to British Columbia went August in 1939. This time he worked in logging camps for substantially more money than his first British Columbia experience.

As always happens when the 'fairer one' stays behind, August returned again, this time to marry Erna Wonnick on October 15, 1942. Since farming was still his interest, he gave Blue Ridge, Alberta a try. Sister Minnie and family were farming there also. Circumstances proved unfavorable and after one year they returned to Manitoba.

In addition to farming land purchased previously, he worked in a grain elevator at Rosenfeld. An opening occurred in the Federal Grain elevator at Sewell so August transferred there and was the 'elevator man' for some 15 years. Two children were born during that time, Allen in June, 1944 and Elaine in 1947. Both graduated from the University of Manitoba after attending De Wet School and Morris Collegiate. Elaine obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree (returning later for a year of post-graduate work in Psychology), and Allen an Agricultural Diploma.

Having purchased land in and around the Sewell community, August returned to full fledged farming, including hogs and cattle as well as grain in 1960, after retiring from the elevator business. To this day he and his son Allen have continued this type of farming.

After Allen's marriage to Anne Thiessen of Altona, August and Erna purchased the De Wet School, a half mile down the road. They renovated the closed country school where many youngsters and teachers came and went each day.

August has actively participated in Church and community activities, such as the Sewell curling rink which was built in 1950. For many years, the people in and around the area enjoyed curling in the winter and dances in the summer. This building truly depicts the Sewell community spirit which was built and maintained by volunteer labour, both men and women.

August still enjoys curling, and though 'winning' is no longer the prime motivation, as can be seen from the scoreboard, he and his family still enjoy the prizes and trophies he has accumulated.

August and Erna enjoy their three grandsons, Kelly (born November, 1969), Jeffrey (born December, 1971) and Curtis (born January, 1976) who no doubt will carry on the family name, perhaps in the same Sewell farming community.



*August Recksiedler family. BACK ROW: August, Elaine, Allen, Anne. FRONT ROW: Erna, Curtis, Jeffrey, Kelly.*

## AUGUST RECKSIEDLER

*submitted by Joyce Harder*

August Recksiedler born a twin on February 6, 1883 in Poland. His twin did not survive and he had only one brother Karl M. His parents were Michael and Wilhelmina (Jabusch) Recksiedler.

When he first came to Canada approximately in 1895, he went to Central Alberta. Because of crop failure, August decided to settle in Manitoba. His parents made their home in Rosenfeld. In the early 1900 August started to farm with his brother in the De Wet District. August bought a quarter section of land S. 12-4-1-W for \$1,265.00 from homesteader Wm. I.M. McCullagh. In 1903, he married Emma Mazinke daughter of Wilhelm and Pauline (Pokrant) Mazinke. They had 13 children of which five have deceased. They are as follows: Helena (Mrs. Fred Pokrant) of Winnipeg, Manitoba; Ferdinand

died at 13 months old, Lydia (Mrs. Emmanuel Janke) of Rosenfeld, Manitoba; William of Morris, Manitoba; Gus of Morris, Manitoba; Elsie died at 11 years old; Leo of Rosenfeld, Manitoba; Huldina died at seven days old; Eddie of Rosenfeld, Manitoba; Ernie of Rosenfeld, Manitoba; Walter died at three months old; Laura (Mrs. Alfred Abrahams) of Rosenfeld, Manitoba; and Irma died at 13 months old.



*August Recksiedler family taken in 1943. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Gus, William, Eddie, Ernie, Leo. FRONT ROW: Lydia (Mrs. Ern. Janke), August, Laura (Mrs. Alfred Abrahams), Emma, Lena (Mrs. Fred Pokrant).*

The first few months of marriage August and Emma lived with brother Karl until they had their house built. August and Karl had to go to the woodmill in Beausejour to get the lumber which was a three day journey one way by horse and sleigh stopping at Union Point and Win-



*August Recksiedler in his new car in 1918. In front of C.A. Recksiedler's new home. Son, Willie, with white shirt and cap.*

nipeg. However, their house was completed before their first child was born in 1904.

In their years of getting established they had problem with water supply and had to haul water from St. Jean Approximately six miles. Therefore, August and his brother decided to dig a well. With much manual labor and a drilling device powered by a horse, they dug 90 feet

and hit a spring. To their disappointment it was only salt water. Then they had difficulty stopping the flowing water and with much hard work they finally plugged the hole with bags of wheat. To this day from the salt water, there is no grass growing in this area.

August was a family man and active member of the Lutheran Church. In his early days many a time he walked nine miles to attend services in Rosenfeld. In his later years he was an Elder and council member of the church.

Approximately in 1912, August, his brother Karl M. and his Uncle Carl A., bought a steam threshing machine outfit. They threshed for many years as a company. August was the main separator operator. August had the misfortune of getting his hand between a belt and a pulley and all the skin tore off.

During the threshing season the women were busy in the house cooking and baking for the extra men. Emma often drove six miles with horse and buggy to get meat for dinner for the threshing crew.

In 1925, August and his family moved to Rosenfeld. His nephew Albert Recksiedler rented the land until his son William started farming in 1933. Since 1977, August and Emma's grandson Len Recksiedler is farming this land.

August and Emma had 29 grandchildren, 42 great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. They celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary in 1953 with a large gathering of friends and relatives in the Sewell Curling Rink. Suddenly in June, 1958 August's health failed, and he died in August, 1958. Emma died in 1974.



*Mr. and Mrs. Aug. Recksiedler's 50th Wedding Anniversary in 1953, with their wedding attendants. LEFT TO RIGHT: Bertha and Henry Mazinke, Emma and August, Emma and Fred Mazinke.*

## **WILLIAM F. RECKSIEDLER**

*submitted by Joyce Harder*

William Recksiedler, born on September 15, 1911 in the De Wet District on the farm of S. 12-4-1-W, son of August and Emma (nee Mazinke) Recksiedler. He attended St. Peters School which was 1 1/2 miles from the family home.

In 1933, he married Erica Janke, daughter of Fred and Mary (nee Marten) Janke of Rosenfeld. When they first



started farming on S. 12-4-1-W they used horses. In 1934 during the depression they remember their total crop was \$275.00. Their first car was a Ford Coup Car which was built high and a great puddle jumper. In 1935, they purchased their first Fordson tractor which meant a different technique in farming.

In those early years along with the regular chores they had to cut their own firewood in the bush and haul ice for their water supply from St. Jean area.

During the 1940's William had the misfortune of having poor blood circulation in his legs. This was so serious that for a time it was thought that amputation was a possibility. Had it not been for the new drug which was obtained in the United States this might have well been the case. Nevertheless, Erica with much hard work and help from family and neighbors, was able to continue farming.



*The Wm. F. Recksiedler family in 1979.*

In 1947, William and Erica started to build a new yard on the same section but a different location. In 1948, the house and chicken barn were moved to the new location and later a new house was built.

Seeing they had one of the newer barns in the Sewell area, they held barn dances on the hayloft to help raise money to build a curling rink.

William and Erica were active in the community. They both took an active part in the Sewell Curling Rink Executive. The curling rink was a place where many hours of entertainment was given for the whole family. William served on the DeWet School Board and Broadview-Sewell 4-H Club.

In January, 1952 William became Councillor of Ward 1 of the R.M. of Morris. He has the distinction of being probably the only councillor serving on the council for over 27 consecutive years, a position he still holds. During these years he served on numerous committees, such as Public Works, Finance, Court Houses, Municipal Shed and Residence Committee and the Morris Manor Board. He served as Deputy Reeve for three years. He was appointed as Drainage Trustee for District 'G' in 1957 serving many years and at present is chairman of the Drainage Committee. He served on the board of Morris General Hospital for 20 years and

Altona Hospital for the last five years. Also, one of the Founding Members of the Morris Stampede Board and is active in the Lions Club.

Erica takes a great interest in plants and has been a member of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society for several years.

William and Erica are active members of the Lutheran Church and William was a council member of the church.

In 1977, they semi-retired from the farm and moved into the town of Morris. Their four children are:

Elda married Elmer Schroeder and they live in Mor-den, Manitoba, and have three daughters, Kimberlee, Lauren and Valerie.

Len married Willene Young and they live on the home farm S. 12-4-1-W which was first farmed by his grandfather August Recksiedler. They have two children William Dean and Tannis.

Joyce married Wilf 'Butch' Harder and they live in Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

Dennis married Ruth Bobrowski and they live in Pitt Meadows, British Columbia.



*Wm. and Erica Recksiedler on their wedding day in 1933.*

## GUS RECKSIEDLER

Gustav Karl Recksiedler was born January 7, 1914, at DeWet, the son of August and Emma (nee Mazinke) Recksiedler. He attended school in the DeWet area. In 1943, he married Ethel Janke of Morris. They bought Section 3-4-1 W at DeWet, where they lived until 1977, when he retired. He is now living in the Town of Morris and his son, Clarence, now lives on the farm.

This farm was flooded every spring till the Kronsgart Drain was built in 1968. A tornado went through the farm yard in 1955, destroying a garage, granary and chicken barn. On July 2, 1966, seven inches of rain fell, flooding the whole crop. 100 bushels of wheat was all that was harvested that year.

Gus was an active member of the Lutheran Church in Rosenfeld, serving as organist for 15 years, and on the



*Gus Recksiedler farm site now owned by son, Clarence.*

church council for a number of years. He was also a trustee on the DeWet school board for a number of years, and helped in building the Sewell Curling Rink.

Gus was an ardent curler. On January 11, 1975, he and his team of Albert Janke, Alcide Collette, and Arnold Schroeder, were stranded in a blizzard, going home from the Altona bonspiel. After spending all night in the car without heat, as the car heater had burned out, they made themselves face masks from the car roof lining and the insulation was used to wrap around their legs. Through the storm they managed to walk to Gus' place, which was only half a mile from where they were stuck. Visibility was nil and the temperature was 40° below. They had been stranded for 13 hours, and when they reached the house, their clothing was all frozen stiff.

In spring, 1979, the family had to evacuate from Morris for three weeks due to the flood, along with other residents. Gus and Ethel have eight children and sixteen grandchildren. They are:

Alvin and Joan Recksiedler of Transcona - children - Ashley, Stephen and Tracey.

Lawrence and Shirley Recksiedler of Morris - children - Michelle and Scott.

Robert and Eileen Clow of Winnipeg - children - Cindy and Cory (Kevin deceased).

Norman and Donna Recksiedler of Winnipeg - Angela, Shanon, Keith and Ryan.

Clarence and Audrey Recksiedler on the farm with the family - Darcy, Lisa, Dale and Chad.

Rene and Carol Baril of Morris - son, Jeremy.

Robert and Gloria Collette of Morris.

Brian Recksiedler at home.



*Gus and Ethel Recksiedler on their wedding day in 1943.*

## THE MAZINKE FAMILY

William Karl Mazinke, his wife, Pauline Pokrant, and five children, Gustave, Emma, August, Ferdinand and Henry emigrated from Rovno, Russia, to Canada. They arrived by boat in 1897, settling in Rosenfeld, Manitoba. William died just six years later. Pauline died in 1949.

### Ferdinand Mazinke

Ferdinand, who was born November 19, 1894, grew up around Rosenfeld, attending school during winter. He helped support the family by herding town cattle. He was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church. From 1913 to 1915, he worked for John Ritz Sr. and the next two years he worked in Hanley and Eyebrow, Saskatchewan. Gustave and Ferdinand farmed in the Morris Municipality in 1918.

Ferdinand and Henry bought a half section of land at Sewell in 1919. They built the house and barn with Uncle Ferdinand Pokrant as head carpenter. Our stepfather, Emil Marsh, was helper, bread baker and cook.

In 1920, Ferdinand married Emma Rausch of Brunkild, the daughter of John Victor Rausch and his wife, Augusta Huebner. Ferdinand and Emma farmed at Sewell for nine years. Due to wet years and crop failure, they lost the farm in 1929. Ferdinand did various jobs during the next year. His first car was a Model T, which he used to tour the district.



*Ferdinand and Emma Mazinke with their car in 1938.*

In 1930, they rented a farm from stepfather Emil Marsh, in the St. Peters District. During the depression, eggs sold for 51¢ a dozen and cows for \$10.00 each. Grasshoppers consumed crops. Water was hauled winter and summer from neighboring ponds. Babies were born with the help of a midwife.

Later, in the 30's, they were able to buy a Fordson tractor, with the whole family helping with the harvesting. Even the four year old carried drinking water to the stookers!

The neighbourhood helped each other by forming working bees. They did the threshing together, pig killing, also chicken and turkey dressing for market. They enjoyed school and church picnics, dances, weddings and card games. Visiting each other was very important.

In 1914, the Mazinkes bought a home in Transcona, Manitoba, enjoying all the modern conveniences, running water and electricity. Ferdinand worked for Dominion Malt, beginning in 1945, until his retirement in 1959.

Their children are: Elsie Dora, born December 22, 1920, married Henry Wonnick in 1945. They reside in Transcona, where Henry is retired. They have four children.

Gertrude Ida, born October 12, 1922, married Stephen Tysko in 1948. They reside in Penticton, B.C. where Steve clerks at the Liquor Commission.

Alice Lorraine, born May 18, 1934, married Leonard Salisbury Evans in 1953. They reside in Transcona. Len is M. L.A. for Brandon East, also lectures at the University of Manitoba. Their children: Brenda Ellis (teacher) Janet Joyce and Randall Leonard.

Thelma, Eleana, Verna Margaret, Wilfred Arthur and Gordon Larry all died in early childhood, from the ages of 3 to 9, of pneumonia and rickets.

After retirement, Ferdinand and Emma lived in Gimli, Selkirk, Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Santa Monica, California, before settling in Penticton, B.C. in 1965. Here they still reside in their own home, in good health. They enjoy looking after their home and garden.



*Ferdinand and Emma Mazinke.*

## **HENRY MAZINKE**

Henry Mazinke was born May 18, 1897 in Poland. He immigrated to Rosenfeld, Manitoba, in 1899 with his parents, William and Pauline Mazinke (nee Pokrant) and brothers and sister. Their first house was an old blacksmith shop with an earth floor. It had to do for a year until they could afford better. When Henry was five years old, his father passed away, making it difficult for the family to survive. At age nine, Henry came to Sewell to live with his sister and her husband, the August Recksiedler family. Here he grew up and received his education. As a young man, he was active in sports, such as baseball, and later on in life, curling. He was musical, in that he played the two-row accordian at dances.

His first venture into farming was in 1918, when he and brother, Ferd, bought a half section of land. In 1922, he married Bertha Schroeder (nee Schwark). Their home at Sewell was an older house, with no conveniences, built around the turn of the century, and they remodelled it.

Water for the household had to be carried from a neighbour's pond across the road in summer, and ice or



*Henry Mazinke farm home.*

snow thawed in winter. Water for livestock during the winter had to be dipped by pail into a tank and hauled several miles home. This system didn't change until sometime in the thirties, when draglines dug ponds on the yards and water was piped to the houses and barns.

Feed for the horses and cattle had to be hauled in every day from stacks outside. The house was heated with a cookstove and Quebec heater. In order to get fuel for the stoves, Henry would leave early in the morning with team and sleigh and go east of St. Jean, where he would chop a load of trees and get back for evening. Some of the rooms of the house were closed off in winter to conserve heat.

In 1928, they bought their first car, a Model T Ford, which made travelling considerably easier. During the thirties, life was extremely difficult with them losing part of their land, due to not being able to make payments. Although they had a small Fordson tractor some years earlier, in 1935, the complete switch to tractor was made by buying a Model D John Deere. This forced them into selling some of their favourite horses. The colorful era of the threshing machine ended in 1942, when the first combine was bought.

In 1943, land was considered expensive - a half section was bought at \$25.00 an acre! Many buildings on the yard were built with the neighbours' help, and they in turn, would help the neighbours when help was needed. Social life in these days centered around the country school and church. Henry spent eighteen years serving as trustee on the school board.

Henry and Bertha were blessed with eight children: Laura, the eldest, married Gerhard Jahnke, has a family of four and farms in the Emerson area. Ed married Hedy Kletke, has two daughters and is presently the field Supervisor with Crop Insurance at Portage la Prairie. Ruth died in a tragic scalding accident at around 2 years of age. Walter took over the home farm. He married Ina Swain and has three sons. Irene married Elmer Blanchard, a Sergeant Detective with the Winnipeg Police Department and they have two children. Harvey married Marian Dickson, has two children and owns Plains Equipment in Regina. Shirley married Peter Knip, who is a supervisor for Winnipeg Hydro and they have two boys. Art farms in the Sewell area. He married Denise Fontaine and they have a family of three.

After some years of ill health, Henry passed away in 1962. In 1971, Bertha retired to Parkside Villa, in Morris. Being a former church organist, she still enjoys playing

her organ, in spite of a stroke she suffered some years previously. She also enjoys activities at the Senior Citizens' Centre.



*Henry Mazinke family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Shirley, Laura, Eddie, Walter, Irene, Harvey. FRONT ROW: Bertha, Arthur, Henry.*

## WALTER MAZINKE FAMILY HISTORY

Walter Mazinke, son of Henry and Bertha Mazinke, was born in 1930 on his parents' farm at Sewell. After attending DeWet School at Sewell, he began farming with his Dad, eventually buying the home farm.

In 1959, he married Ina Swain, daughter of Frank and Jean Swain of Armour School District. Ina attended Armour School, Morris High School and then Normal School. She taught two years in the rural school of Barclay at Darlingford, two years in Winnipeg and one year at Armour, after which Armour School closed.

Walter and Ina have three sons. Bruce, born in 1961, Ray in 1964 and Wayne, in 1969.

In earlier years, the rural life centered around the country school, with its picnics, concerts and other social activities. With the disappearance of the country schoolhouse, rural life changed. In 1951, with the construction of the curling rink at Sewell, rural life centered around it with curling, dances and other social functions. This also led to participation in many bonspiels, which proved very enjoyable.

Over the years, the Mazinke farm increased in size as land was purchased from time to time. One parcel of land of interest was the Sam Hoffman farm, bought in 1973. One quarter of this farm was one of the first pieces of land to be homesteaded in the area by a Mr. Holiday. Another farm bought in 1976 from Julius Martel, of Rosenfeld, was one that Walter's grandmother, Pauline Marsh (nee Mazinke) began farming on in the early 1900's.

Besides the growing of grain, a hog feeder barn was added to the farm in 1969. This was a leading factor to Walter's position today as director on the Manitoba Hog Producers' Marketing Board, since 1975 and as Vice-

President of the Canadian Pork Council.

Today, the farm is incorporated as "Mazinke Farms Ltd." with the boys all taking an active part in its operation.

## ADOLPH HERMAN FAMILY

In 1914, Adolph Herman, his father, Karl Wm., and his sister, Roslia, came to Canada from Wolynia, Russia. They settled in the 1-6 district, south of Morden, where Adolph worked as hired help for different farmers, until he rented a half-section of land from Mr. Bill Melecie. He farmed this until he moved onto his own farm in the year 1920.

On June 20, 1919, we got married. My name was Huldine Mazinke and I was born in Rosenfeld in 1900. I lived all the years in the surrounding districts, Rosenfeld DeWet (later changed to Sewell). I attended school in Rosenfeld where Mr. Shopp was school teacher, and in St. Peters school, where Miss Cora Mueller was teacher for many years.

In 1916, I started to work on my own as housemaid for a couple of families, as kitchen help in the Manitou hotel, and as telephone operator in Rosenfeld for seven months. The wages of that time were \$12.00 a month.

In 1919, after Herman and I were married, we lived on his farm in 1-6 until 1926. That year, we sold this farm and bought a farm at DeWet, now Sewell. It is the S.E. 114 10-4-1 West. Also 80 acres (N.W. 114 3-4-1 West) where I am still living with my son, William.



*Adolph and Huldine Herman 1951.*

The two daughters, Edna and Velma, are married and on their own. Edna is married to Roy Rettaler, and lives in the Ridgeville district. Their family of three children are: Laverne, Richard and Barbara. Laverne is married to Dan Manson and they have three children - Tammy, Theresa and Lesa, living in Winnipeg.

Velma Herman was married to Al Gebel. They had three children - Linda, Mark and Heather, all living in Winnipeg. Velma's husband, Al, passed away accidentally in the year 1977, and in 1978, she married Mr. Bob Armitt, who works for the Post Office in Winnipeg.

When Adolph Herman passed away in 1969, of a heart attack, our son William took over the farm, where he still resides.

We have been living on this farm for 53 years. There have been good and bad years, but more good years than bad. Our poor crops were mainly due to inadequate drainage.

The harvesting was done by a threshing outfit with a crew of men from 10-15 in numbers. Our neighbours, Bill and Ed Flemmers, threshed for us for 11 years. After the harvesting was all done, there had to be a harvesting celebration and everybody was happy. What have we nowadays? Can't even sell the grain people harvest. How times have changed.



*Willie Herman driving the 'farm taxi' in 1966, with happy little passengers.*

## **J.A. MAZUR**

### **Grocer and Postmaster**

John Mazur is best remembered as the grocer and postmaster who operated the Sewell store for 32 years. He brought his bride of one month, Effie (Zwolak) to the small community in July of 1926. The store was purchased from Mr. Diamond, who had the business for only a few months. Louis Recksiedler was the original owner.

Mr. Mazur found this change in career a challenge. He had previously been a teacher for 11 years. This experience proved most beneficial when he served as secretary of the DeWet School Board - also for 32 years. The young couple arrived in Sewell to find their new home undergoing a major overhaul - a cellar was being dug under the existing house.

The grocery business changed remarkably in those 30-plus years. Cookies, sugar, rice, etc. came in bulk. The old scale on the counter was used many times. Vinegar came in barrels and during pickling time, was poured into the containers the customers provided. Farmers in the community brought eggs to trade for commodities. At one time, the price was 8¢ per dozen. The store was usually open seven days a week. On Sundays, the harvest hands had a place to meet. Many times Mr. Mazur would oblige some who had not learned to write, by writing letters for them to the folks back home.



*J.A. Mazur, longtime grocer and postmaster, standing in front of one of the first railway stations in Sewell, located in a box car.*

The post office also was a convenience for the Sewell residents. The old store provided mostly 'pigeon holes' but when the new store was built in 1941, more mail boxes with dials were provided. Catalogues were mailed a few times each year to each family. Many money orders and postal notes were written, especially to the T. Eaton Co. The Mazurs provided the convenience of completing each money order and usually stamping the envelope as well! At Christmas time, the little post office was cramped for space as the parcels arrived. In 1954, when the mail train was discontinued, the mail was transported to and from Morris.

The store also had a 'mini-garage' business and provided Esso gasoline to many customers. The original pump had a lever that required manual action in order for the pump to work. The Mazurs also took orders for barrels of fuel for farmers in the community. Further diversity was added when Mr. Mazur became the grain agent for James Richardson and Sons. At times, he also was requested to assist with the census and be an assessor for the R.M. of Morris. During election years, he also was asked by Hon. Clubb to canvass in the area.

At one time, the only telephone in the Sewell district was located at Mazur's store. Many times, they were awakened at night and asked for the use of the phone - like a call to the doctor for a baby about to be born. Although it may have seemed better when more neighbours had telephones, it often was difficult to get the line when 11 families were all on one line!

For many years, the noon hour was mail time at the store. One mail bag (west bound) was brought to the station at 11:00 a.m. and the other mail bag (east bound) at 12:00 noon. Farmers would congregate at the store each day to wait for the mail and exchange the news of the day. Children still remember the occasional treat of a bottle of pop or a 5¢ O'Henry chocolate bar.

The depression years brought another unusual sight on the railroads. Many unemployed men 'rode the rails' looking for work. They resembled pigeons perched on the box cars.

The section gang also found the store a haven for a fresh cup of water. At times, egg buyers from Winnipeg would stop over for the one hour between trains to buy the fresh eggs the farmers had brought for trade. When the mail and passenger service was discontinued, it seemed a part of the 'Sewell spirit' also was lost.

Besides the many tasks in helping with the store, Mrs. Mazur also had time to raise some chickens, pigs and a cow. The garden also provided fresh produce and some 400 quarts of preserves for the winter months. When the hydro came to the district, life became somewhat easier.

Two daughters were born during these years - Irene in 1929 and Gladys in 1935. Both girls walked the half mile each day to the DeWet School. Irene attended high school at the St. Jean convent and Gladys in Winnipeg. Both daughters became secretaries prior to marriage.



*John and Effie Mazur, when they first came to Sewell.*

After the girls left home, the Mazurs were asked to board the teachers. For six years, the following teachers were a part of the family - Miss Gibson, Miss Pomrenke, Miss Wiebe and Mr. Kistchuk.

Most people who attended both the new and old DeWet School, remember how the children looked forward to the school picnic at the end of June. The Mazurs provided the concession stand. Ice cream cones were a nickel and bananas could be purchased individually from the huge hanging bunch. Winners of the various races found this a great place to spend their rewards.

During the 1950 flood, the train was rerouted via Brandon. It was more difficult to keep all groceries in stock. To keep up with the meat demand, a quarter of beef was put on the counter and each customer sawed off his desired amount. It solved the problem temporarily.

In 1958, the Mazurs retired in Winnipeg. Mr. Mazur passed away in 1973. Besides his wife and two daughters, four grandchildren survive.

## **RAPSKE FAMILY**

Adolf and Wilhelmina Rapske immigrated from Poland in June, 1928, arriving in Morris with three sons, Rudy, Robert and Arnold. Two daughters, Ida and Violet, were born to them in Canada.

They lived in the Town of Morris where Adolf worked at various jobs that were available. They moved to Emerson for a brief time in 1930, returning to Morris, then farming in the Broadview area from 1932-37. They settled in the Sewell district on Section 7-4-I East, in 1937.

Conveniences were few - wood for heating and cooking was hauled from Dufrost, usually a three day round trip with horses and sleigh. Drinking water was supplied by hauling ice from the Red River. This was stored underground in an ice house and doubled as a cold storage in the summer. During winter months, horses and an enclosed caboose with a little wood heater, were the main mode of transportation. Mr. and Mrs. Rapske sold their farm to their son-in-law and youngest daughter, in 1957 and retired to live in Morris. Mr. Rapske passed away in 1969. Mrs. Rapske moved to Winnipeg, in 1973, where she resides in a Senior Citizens' Apartment Block.

Mr. and Mrs. Rudy Rapske reside in Surrey, B.C. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rapske reside in Vancouver, B.C. and Reverend and Mrs. Arnold Rapske reside in Edmonton, Alberta. Mr. and Mrs. Sefien (Ida) Litke, reside in Winnipeg. Mr. and Mrs. Rudy (Violet) Stork with sons, Norman and Gordon, reside in Winnipeg. They still own and operate the family farm at Sewell.

## **THE AUGUST AND AUGUSTA DREGER FAMILY**

*submitted by Louis Pokrand*

After the Canadian Pacific Railway across Canada was completed in 1885, agents of the company and of the Dominion government travelled all through Europe offering free land to anyone who would emigrate to Western Canada and settle there. This was done to populate the empty country with settlers who would produce products for the railways to haul.

Owning your own land in most of Europe at that time was an impossible dream and an unheard of thing for most of the ordinary people, for practically all of the land was owned by noblemen and lords who were able to lead a life of leisure by renting small parcels of land to the ordinary people (peasants) for what often amounted to exorbitant and excessive fees or rent. Another attraction was the fact that most of the farms rented and worked by the people in Europe were in the 20-30 acre size. This made making a living extremely difficult for a large family. In Canada a homestead was 160 acres. Another great allurements that Canada had, was that in peacetime there was no compulsory army service. In Russia and in Russian Poland, all fit and able persons reaching the age of 21 were required to serve seven or more years in the Russian army.

At that time in Volhynia and in other provinces of Poland, there were vast settlements of German Lutheran people. When youths from these settlements were called to military service they were handicapped because they did not understand the Russian language, and therefore usually received the most brutal and inhuman treatment at the hands of Russian officers. They generally had to serve thousands of miles from home and fight in small



wars that Russia was continually waging along its southern boundaries.

These two important factors, ownership of free land and no military service in peacetime, were the paramount and chief reasons why young August Dreger, who was born in Poland in 1874, left for Canada in 1894 or 1895 when he approached the age of 21 and would soon be called for army induction.

When he arrived in Manitoba, he along with scores of other immigrants, found farm work with the Mennonites who had arrived in 1874-1875 and were already operating full fledged farms.

Miss Augusta Teske who was born in 1880 in Poland also arrived in Manitoba with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Teske, during the period 1895-1897. Her parents settled on a farm northeast of Rosenfeld, and she soon found employment with a Mennonite family also.

Mr. Teske, her father, had been a lay minister and a school teacher in the old country, and also served as a lay minister in Manitoba until a church was built and an ordained pastor was obtained.

Young August Dreger at age 24 married the eighteen year old Augusta Teske at Rosenfeld on January 30, 1898.

During the years 1893-1900 a small number of Lutheran families from Russian Poland had arrived in the prairie region of southern Manitoba. There was a great and all consuming concern and an urgent desire in the minds of these poor and lowly strangers in a new land. How will we obtain land and a home? How will we make a living?

As first as already noted most of these immigrants served as farm workers with the most established Mennonite farmers. But within a few years, through hard work and great frugality, they were able to build their own primitive and modest little dwellings.

They also had great concern for a place of worship, and thus in 1900, St. John Lutheran Church was organized at Rosenfeld by 34 persons, which also included Mr. and Mrs. August Dreger as charter members.



*Augusta and August Dreger.*

A year or two later, the August Dreger family left Rosenfeld and purchased land about a mile and a half south and west of Morris. This land was in Section 27-4-1 East, which today is alongside Highway 75; presently owned and operated by Mr. Ed Bergstresser.

A few years after 1900, members of the Lutheran Church who lived in and around Morris found the distance of Rosenfeld too far to travel to attend church services, and thus they organized the Lutheran Church of the Cross of Morris, of which Mr. and Mrs. August Dreger also became charter members. We find it difficult to visualize and to comprehend how August and his wife survived during the first years on their farm at Morris. With pitifully crude and meagre tools such as a hand plow and a scrawny horse, Mr. Dreger commenced breaking the stubborn prairie sod. His belief that a man could by his own efforts support himself and his family, was put to a severe test. A few illustrations will suffice to show the excruciating and gruelling hardships they suffered.

In the spring of the first year, Mr. Dreger bought a cow for ten dollars from a farmer for whom he had worked and whom we'll call Mr. N. He could not pay cash for the cow and promised to pay in full when his small crop would be sold. In the fall, due to a crop failure, the ten dollars could not be paid to Mr. N.; who came and in spite of pleading and begging, to repossess the cow. This left the Dreger family with little more than a bag of flour with which to survive the winter. Mrs. Dreger when telling this story in later years always chuck led to herself, for she looked on the humorous side of the situation. She said that one day she would make dumplings, the next bannock, and on the next fritters.

Mr. Dreger must have been a very generous and forgiving individual. After a number of years had passed and the family had prospered, the very same Mr. N. who had repossessed the cow so unfeelingly, came to Mr. Dreger and asked to borrow \$1,200.00 (which was quite a large sum in those days). Mr. Dreger not only lent this sum to Mr. N., but didn't even ask for a promissory note or an I.O.U. Sad to say he never received one dollar in repayment from Mr. N.

Another generous act on the part of Mr. Dreger was to advance with interest, the ocean and train fare to help at least six families who were relatives or acquaintances, to come to Canada from Russian Poland. Some of these repaid their loan by working as hired men for him, while other repaid gradually as they were able, in cash.

Mr. and Mrs. Dreger and their family prospered greatly in later years. Their original farm became three quarter sections, and then another three quarter sections were purchased near Sewell. Later, two farms known as the Schuman farms situated west of Morris were added, thus making the Dreger family operating eight quarter sections in all.

The Dregers were also blessed with a large family. The names of the children that reached adulthood and the names of their spouses are as follows:

William m. Augusta Dreger (no relation) d. - Sewell  
Edith m. George Schultz d. - Winnipeg  
Thresa m. Gustav Gluck d. - Winnipeg

August m. Olga Rausch d. - farmed at Morris  
 Adolph m. Myrtle Coates - Morris  
 Leo d. m. Annie Lutomsky d. - Morris  
 Emma m. Albert Pokrant - Rosenfeld  
 Vera m. Gustav Pokrant - Rosenfeld  
 Elsie In. Carl Pokrant - Winnipeg  
 Edward m. Francis Thompson - Morris  
 Bertha (Bella) rn. Louis Pok rant - Rosenfeld  
 Fred. in. Ida Churchill - Morris  
 Almina m. Ben Busch d. - Morris  
 (m, - married, di. - deceased)

Mr. August Dreger lived on the farm at Morris until 1934 when he passed away suddenly after reaching the age of 60 years.

Mrs. Augusta Dreger continued living on the farm with members of her family until 1943 when she moved to Morris and lived with her children Ben and Almina Busch. After much suffering she passed away at Morris Hospital in 1965 at the age of 85 years.

## THE DREGERS

Adolf Dreger was born in Russia in 1874. He helped to farm the family orchard until he was called for national service in the Russian Army. He served in the army for seven years and returned to his home as a commissioned officer. In 1900 he married Juliana Piel, who was from the same area and in 1902, with an older brother's sponsorship, they immigrated to Canada. There were just the two of them as their first born child had died in Russia.

Upon reaching Canada they travelled west, and settled in the Morris area. At first he worked for Canadian Pacific Railways on the local spurline. Then he entered the farming industry, renting land in the Morris, Rosenort and Sewell areas, until his retirement at which time he settled in the town of Morris.

Adolf died in 1944, and Juliana joined him. They had 11 children, but two more died in infancy in Canada. Emma, the eldest daughter, married Adolf Huff and has two sons. She lives in Sarnia, Ontario. Next came Godfred who married Elsie Otto from Winnipeg. They farmed near Sewell for many years. Godfred passed away at that age of 59 in 1967. They had nine children, five boys and four girls. The second son, Edward P. married Linda Grams, and they farmed near Morris until Ed's retirement in 1974. After retirement they moved into the town of Morris where Linda still lives. Ed passed on in 1978. They had one son, Harvey.

The second daughter Tillie was married to William Huff, and lived in Winnipeg until her death in 1977. They had two sons. Elsie, the third daughter married Henry Bobrowski of Morris, they have one son and two daughters. They are now residing in Winnipeg. Fourth daughter Olga, married Mac McCormack and lives in Winnipeg, no children. The youngest daughter Erika married Glen Metzner of Morris. They have two sons, and live in Kamloops, British Columbia. Ewald, the youngest son, and his wife live in Parksville, British Columbia, they have no children.



*Arthur Edel's farm home during 1950 flood.*

## THE ARTHUR EDEL FAMILY

In 1926, at the age of 17, Arthur Edel came to Canada from Wolinsky Geburna, Russia. After 2 weeks on the boat "Minnedosa", his family, which included his parents (Julius and Emelia Edel) and two brothers, Albert and Richard, and two sisters, Emma and Sarah, arrived in Canada and came to Morris to help Dave and Emil Walters on their farm until 1932. George Clubb, and later his son, W.R. Clubb, hired Albert to help on their farms in the Broadview district.

In 1934, Arthur married Elsie, who was the daughter of his former boss, Emil Walters. They moved on to the W.R. Clubb farm, working for them and living in the house, which was built in the late 1800's. Their first kitchen furniture was made up of a wood stove, a shelf for a table, and apple boxes for chairs. As a wedding gift from Arthur's parents, they received a horse, named "Lady", and from Elsie's parents, they were presented with a pig, a cow and 25 chickens! They purchased two additional horses costing \$50.00 and \$75.00. Since all of the field work was done by horse, it was an important investment.

All travel in those early days was done by horse. A buggy sufficed in the summer, and in the winter a sleigh and caboose were used. There were no roads once it snowed, and they travelled to town along the railway tracks.

One of the highlights of the week was attending the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Morris. In the summer, church was held twice on Sundays - morning and evening - so they travelled back and forth several times that day. In the winter, church was only held in the afternoons. A barn was located beside the church, and everyone had his stall for his horses. The first one in church had to start the old wood stove. In the winter, when visiting friends and relatives, they would often stay overnight and go back home the next morning.

After the war, Arthur sponsored a number of people from the old country, who immigrated to Canada. Many of them stayed in their home until they could begin a new life on their own. Arthur and Elsie's home was always open to everyone, and it was a common thing to have twice the usual number at the table for meals, and a few extra visitors for the night, too.

They always kept horses, cattle, pigs, and chickens, raising crops of wheat, oats and barley. With a large garden and their own livestock, they always had plenty to eat. The first tractor was a W30, bought in 1938 for \$1,200.00.

Around 1935, Arthur bought a half section of land west of Morris. Another half section south of the W.R. Clubb farm where they were living was purchased and 240 acres acquired on the east side of the Red River. His brother, Richard, settled there. The last land purchased was in 1966, when they bought the Stan Churchill farm and moved onto it. They still live there today, enjoying all the trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens.

An experience never forgotten, was the 1950 flood. The Arthur Edel family was one of the few families that remained on their farm throughout the flood. The main floor of the house was dry, and they had a boat and raft for transportation. The barn was diked and the seeping water was pumped out 24 hours a day, so all the livestock could be kept there. One bedroom on the second floor of the house was kept full of chickens. Extra people were also living with them at this time, and supplies had to be picked up by boat from Sewell.



*Watering the horses was easy at Edels during 1950 flood.*

The Arthur Edels were blessed with 6 children. The first son, Nelson, married Beatrice Bergstresser of Morris, in 1953 and settled one mile southwest of his parents. They had 4 children, Robert, Cindy, Bonnie and Grant. Robert was killed in a farm accident in 1958, at the age of 4. In 1962, Nelson also lost his life in a tragic accident. Later Beatrice married Ralph Molderink of Saskatoon; they now reside in Winnipeg.

The second son, Leslie, was married to Ellie Neuman of Morris in 1957. At first, they resided on the same yard as his parents, later purchasing the William Fraser farm and moving one-half mile northeast. They still live there. They have 3 daughters, Karen, Beverly and Darcie.

Their third son, Melvin, was married to Elaine Rempel of Morris in 1963. They lived on the W.R. Clubb place until 1977, when they purchased the farm from Sam Myers, which was formerly owned by Howard Clubb. This was located just one mile southeast of the W.R. Club farm. They have 5 sons - Byron, Douglas, Darryl, Wayne and Gary.

Their fourth child and only daughter, Eleanor, was married to Erhard Keck, of Morris, in 1964. Erhard purchased the Morris Paint and Body Shop just prior to their marriage, and is still engaged in this business. They have 3 children - Pamela, Ronald and Steven.

The fourth son, Donald, married Shelly Paschke of Morris in 1975. They purchased the Jake Peters farm, which is located 2 miles south from the Stan Churchill farm, where Don's parents are now living. They have one daughter, Kim.

The fifth son, Edward, was married to Evelyn Hall of Morris, in 1974. They live in Morris, later purchasing land, which Ed is presently farming. They have two children - Kristie and Kellie.

It was always Arthur and Elsie's dream to have their children all living around them, and this dream has become reality. The Lord willing, 1984 will be another highlight of their lives - 50 years of wedded bliss!



*Arthur Edel family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Nelson, Eleanor, Arthur, Elsie, Melvin, Leslie. FRONT ROW: Donald, Edward.*

## THE JOHNSON FAMILY

*submitted by E.L. Johnson*

Anton James Johnson ..... April 4, 1873-1940  
Augusta (Miskowski) Johnson   **1880-1963**

At the age of 12, Anton emigrated with his parents, John Johnson from a village called Ringaktohadmarken near Oslo, Norway, to Iowa. Anton was educated in Iowa while working on Mr. Morris' ranch, where he learned to be a bronco buster. While working for Mr. Morris he brought broncos to Neche, North Dakota to sell, where he met Augusta, who was the daughter of the section foreman in Gretna, where they had emigrated in 1883 from Poland.

Anton homesteaded in the Sewell District, which was known as DeWett at that time, in 1899, and brought his bride to the homestead in 1900. During the next five years Augusta and Anton spent the summer months on their homestead and the winter months in Neche. Anton made his living during this period by farming the homestead and working for Mr. Morris, who had bought one half section of hayland, and which harvested and sold to the Winnipeg hay market. The couple was forced to move back to the United States during the winter, to a house owned by Mr. Morris, because the homestead house was only a shell.

## BERGSTRESSER FAMILY HISTORY

*Lom Bergstresser*

The danger of prairie fires added to the homesteaders hardships. A great deal of time and effort was required to protect the hard earned homestead. Some protection was gained from building the house and barn on top of the earth from the dugout, which was excavated by horses and scraper. The dugout was the only source of water for the family and livestock, the water came from the spring run off. During a dry year water was hauled from the Red River by horses and tanks.

All of their seven children were born on the homestead, except for Arthur, who was born in Neche in December, 1903. William, September, 1901; Edward, December, 1906; Verna, (Mrs. W. Pokrant) March, 1909; Anthony, September, 1913; Harvey, March, 1916; Muriel, (Mrs. W. Stevenson) December, 1922.

Anton, Augusta and their family remained on the homestead until 1930 at which time it was sold and they moved to Graysville.



*Fred and Katarina Wall with oldest son, John, in 1910.*

### FRED F. WALL

Mr. and Mrs. Fred F. Wall moved to Manitoba in 1911, with their three boys. John, Fred and Abe, from Hague, Saskatchewan. They settled in the Municipality of Morris, on the N.W. 114 6-4-1 West, which was mostly virgin land, some broken for cultivation. There were no buildings. Their children attended the Steinfeld school.

In 1918 or 1919, they sold the farm and moved to Altona. About a year later, they bought the N.W. 114 10-4-1 West. Here the two youngest boys attended the St. Peters (No. 1) School, which was situated one-half mile east of their farm. Because of frequent floods, they lost their farm and moved to Carrot River, Saskatchewan in fall of 1926 and took up homesteads there, where they lived till they passed away. John and Abe lived there too, till they passed away. Fred and his wife returned to Manitoba and now live in Altona.

Robert and Adina Bergstresser owned and operated a flour mill in the Ukraine. Following confiscation of all property in 1927, the Bergstressers emigrated from Europe via a circuitous route, arriving with their children (Paul, Harry and Irma) in Outram, Saskatchewan, in June of 1928. They were welcomed at that location by the Emil Kolke family. (a daughter is Mrs. Waldemar Bergstresser) Emil Kolke's brother, Leo, had attended school with Robert Bergstresser in the "old country". During that same year, the Robert Bergstressers moved to Frobisher, purchasing 5 quarter sections of farm land at \$20.00 per acre.

During 1928, Robert. Bergstresser's cousin, Waldemar, arrived in Frobisher; he was followed in 1929 by brother, Erwin. One brother, Oscar, remained in Europe.

A fourth child, Beatrice, was born to the Robert Bergstressers, in 1932.

Due to severe drought during the early "dirty thirties", Robert Bergstresser began looking for greener pastures. Having known the Adolf Rentzes and Fred Schlags of Morris, he visited them. He saw the good crop prospects of the Morris area and very much liked the country. Since drought and depression had left the family without funds, renting land was the only option.

Robert found farm work available in the Trump District (the Walter Stevenson farm). He decided to move the family, loading one box car with cattle and two horses, another car with machinery, household possessions and family. (the railroad kindly overlooking the human cargo). Son, Harry, and a cowboy, "Happy Jack" Wheeler, drove 12 horses and a number of colts from Frobisher to Morris (a distance of 300 miles) in 11 days. The colts developed sore hooves en route, and were loaded on a wagon, completing the journey in that manner.

All arrived at the Stevenson farm in June of 1934. There the family made hay for their livestock and worked on a threshing crew for William Paschke. In November of the same year, Robert Bergstresser rented the Edwards farm in the Broadview District.

Erwin Bergstresser arrived in Morris the following year and Waldemar Bergstresser arrived 2 years later.

In 1942, the Robert Bergstressers semi-retired, moving to Morris. Paul and Harry farmed the parents' land until 1945.

Paul Bergstresser married Frances Hoffman (youngest daughter of Wm. Hoffman) in 1942; in 1945 the Paul Bergstressers moved to the Wm. Hoffman farm in the Sewell District.

Harry Bergstresser married Emily Ziesman of Morris, in 1946. Harry worked as a welder for Henry Bobrowski in Morris, then commuted to Winnipeg. Later, he and his family moved to Winnipeg, where he and his wife presently reside.

Irma Bergstresser was secretary for Morris Agricultural representative, Doug Stevenson, and on his recommendation, became secretary for the Provincial Minister of Health, the Honorable Roberd Bend. Irma married Milton Kelm, a Winnipeg contractor, in 1970.

She continues to work as ministerial secretary.

Beatrice Bergstresser married Nelson Edel, in 1953; they farmed in the Broadview area, where two tragic farm accidents claimed their eldest child, Bobby, then Nelson. Following Nelson's death in 1962, Beatrice and her 3 children moved to Morris, later to Winnipeg. In 1966, she married Ralph Molderink, of Saskatoon; after residing in the Saskatoon area for some years, they moved to Winnipeg, where they presently live. Beatrice's children, Bonnie and Grant, live in Winnipeg; Cindy, the eldest, lives and works in Elm Creek.

Robert Bergstresser passed away in 1951; his wife, Adina, lived in Morris for some years after his death, later moving to Winnipeg with Irma. Mrs. Bergstresser now resides in a senior citizens' home in Winnipeg. The Robert Bergstressers had 10 grandchildren; Mrs. Elergstresser now has 7 great-grandchildren.

Harry's children are all married. Janet, the eldest, married Mery Falkenberg, a Winnipeg accountant. Elaine lives in Saskatoon with her husband, Jerry Friesen, a public school teacher. Jackie and husband, Adrian Martin, live in Langley, B.C., where Adrian is in pilot training.

Paul's children make their homes in Manitoba. The youngest, Lynn, has worked as Nurses' aide, Secretary, and police officer in Winnipeg, where she presently resides. Vaughn and his wife, Marlene (who was raised in the Prince Albert area of Saskatchewan), after having lived some years in Montreal, are presently based in Winnipeg, where Vaughn is an Air Canada pilot. The eldest son, Lorn, and his wife, Laura (raised in Swan River and Winnipeg), now work the family farm, having returned to Manitoba from Montreal, where he'd worked as an agronomist for a chemical company. The Paul Bergstressers went into semi-retirement in 1976, and now reside in Morris.

## THE FORRESTS

*submitted by Ethel Forrest (Mrs. R.)*

Thomas and Catherine Forrest emigrated for Kirkintlough, Scotland in the year 1902, with two sons Andrew and Tom, and one daughter Elizabeth. The voyage was long and very tiresome. They settled for a time in the Parkhill District, in Morden, Manitoba. Mr. Forrest worked for Wm. Toply, and lived in a small house on his farm.



*The Thomas Forrest family home.*

Mr. and Mrs. Forrest moved to various homes in the Red River Valley - Rosenfeld, Gretna, Letellier and

Morris. As the years passed, a family of ten children were born to them; four sons and six daughters. They lived on the farm until 1941, retiring to Morris where they resided until 1943. Both died in November 1943.

Andrew was an engineer with the C.N. Railroad until ill health caused an early retirement. He married Irene Armstrong of Vermilion, Alberta and they had one son Cleland of Winnipeg. After Andrew died in 1947, Irene made her home in Victoria.

Tom married Thelma Cutler of Zealandia, Saskatchewan, where he farmed, later becoming postmaster. Three children were born to them, Leslie, Dorothy and Douglas. Tom served in both World War, and died in 1975.

Elizabeth worked as a Telephone Operator in Emerson and Morris for many years. She married Geoffry Covernton, a farmer in the Armour District, Morris. They had two sons, Charles of Morris and Alan of Winnipeg. Betty who was widowed in 1954, makes her home in Morris.

Jean, born at Morden, Manitoba; was the first Canadian-born child to the Forrest family. She married H.M. Sweeney who died in 1968, and now makes her home in Morris.

Margaret was born in the Rosenfeld District, and educated at Letellier. She remained at home with her parents and assisted on the farm until she married Cecil Martin of Morris. They had three children: Kenneth, Ilean and Lorne. They moved to Victoria, B.C. in 1969, where Margaret makes her home. Cecil died in 1974.

William was born in the Rosenfeld District and educated in Letellier. He worked as a Customs Officer at Emerson, and served in the R.C.A.F. in World War II. He married Isobel Broadfoot of Gladstone and they had two children. Bill, now retired, lives at Emerson.

Robert, seventh member of the family, narrator of this family history, will add his story at the end.

Mary who was born at Letellier, was educated at Letellier and St. Jean Convent. She nursed after graduation from Victoria Hospital and married Ralph Cudmore of the R.C.M.P. in 1938. Ten years after Ralph's death, Mary married Roy Tillet of Sacramento, California.

Catherine, was born and educated at Letellier, later graduating from Victoria Hospital. She left Winnipeg to nurse in the United States, where she married Nat Okerlund of Seattle, Oregon. They have four children.

Agnes was born at Letellier and received her education there. She married Harvey Stevenson of Morris, where they farmed for some years. Six sons were born to them: Wayne, Dennis, Bryce, Murray, Jack and Lance. The family moved to Victoria, B.C. in 1955 and have made their home there.

To continue Robert's story: He was born and educated at Letellier. He remained on the farm with his parents. From 1923 to 1925 they farmed the Wm. Stevenson farm in the Silver Plains District, returning to Letellier in 1926 and farming there until 1943. The area was mixed farming and dairying. Milk was shipped in cans on the nine o'clock train. Later trucked to Winnipeg. Those chores!

Bob was interested in sports, particularly Hockey and Baseball, playing with the Letellier Hockey Club (Flying

Frenchmen) when they won the Malloy Cup (challenge trophy for Provencher Constituency); International League Trophy, (Hallock, Emerson, Letellier and Morris); the Tip Top Cup (challenge trophy for teams along the Lord Selkirk Highway), from St. Norbert to Emerson. He was a member of the Letellier Club, and played in the Red River Valley Baseball League - which provided competition at local fairs, picnics, and "for fun", also winning the Beaubien Cup several years in succession.

In 1941 Robert married Ethel Reid of Boissevain, teacher in the Armor District, Morris. For two years they continued farming at Letellier. In the spring of 1944, purchased the Sam Irvine farm, N. 1/2 Section 18-4-1 East and S.W. Section 30-4-1 East in the Broadview District, and they continued farming from 1944 to 1974.



*Bob and Ethel Forrest in 1941.*

Time passed and times changed - farming with horses to tractor farming; threshing machine to combine. There were poor years and good years. The Floods of 1948 and 1950 brought hardships and disaster to many in the area, but there was always the spirit to carry on and hope for the future.

Community life was pleasant - the school concerts and parties were enjoyed. Curling at the Sewell Curling Club and the Broadview Mission Band.

The family have taken an active part in all Community activities - serving as members or directors of various organizations. Broadview School Board; Manitoba Pool Elevator Association; Morris Manor; Red River Valley Agricultural Society; Big M Stampede; Morris United Church; the Masonic Lodge and the Order of the Eastern Star.

Bob and Ethel have one daughter, Marilyn Jean, educated at Broadview and Morris Collegiate and a graduate of the University of Manitoba. She married Raymond Dyck of Morris in 1970. They have two children, Ian and Mary Katherine and reside in Peterborough, Ontario.

Bob and Ethel now retired from active farming, still live in their home in the Broadview District. Bob chuckles as he remembers his first pair of skates cost him fifty-nine cents. On Christmas 1978, his little Grandson's cost \$53.00. How times change!

## PIONEERS ALL ... WM. CHURCHILL

*by Hattie Murray*

In the year 1879, my father the late William Churchill made his first trip west, and fell in love with the Manitoba prairies. He felt that this would be a good place to raise a family. However, it took him quite some time to convince my mother to his way of thinking. Finally he set out for the West with his wife and eleven children, including a little girl of fourteen months and a baby girl of six weeks.



*ABOVE: Wm. and Harriet Churchill - 1920. Wm. fought in the American Civil War and was wounded at Gettysburg.*



*RIGHT: Hattie Mae (Churchill) Murray in 1949. She was well known locally as a writer and historian.*

They came by rail from Clinton, Ontario, and arrived in Winnipeg in March, to find themselves in a strange city, without friends or accommodations. Many of the settlers were allowed to remain in the coaches until they could find a place to live. For such a large family as ours, this was not an easy task, but soon a shelter of sorts was secured, and moved into.

My father was a stone mason and bricklayer, and since he could also drive a nail with a fair amount of accuracy, he soon found work. There was a lot of construction going on in Winnipeg at that time. The wages were good and father worked all summer, but mother wasn't happy there. Perhaps it was because she and her sister who had come West with them had contracted what was called "Red River Fever" (typhoid). Mother was very ill for a long time, and her sister died.

So, because they had intended to farm in the first place, they decided to go to North Dakota, where Father had taken up a homestead. In the fall of 1882 they set out, making their trip by covered sleigh and ox team. Earlier in the summer lather and the older boys had made the trip to Dakota and built a sod shanty as a dwelling for the family. The sod but consisted of one room. Father and the older boys just stayed long enough to get things fixed up in the winter. Then they left for Rat Portage on foot, where they worked at the sawmill for the winter months. Mother and the small children were left to carry on as best they could until spring.

Though the first winter was very lonely, it was not too hard to endure, as they had plenty of food and fuel, and the weather was mild. In the spring there was great rejoicing when the boys and Dad came home laden with more food, clothes, and best of all papers, books, and letters, for ours was always a bookish family.



However, since Dad was still British at heart, the family left one by one in the early 1900's to return to Canada.

Tom came first with his wife and children to settle in the DeWett district; then John with the oldest son and his family came with Ben, to the Broadview District. John's farm became Skoglunds, Ben's the Irvine's, George build his house at the Stan Churchill place, and William settled on the Boyne Road, later moving across the river. Father bought the old Barkley farm to the south, living there until 1908 when we moved into the town where he ran a coal and wood business.

To such pioneers as these must go the credit of opening up this vast new Western land. They worked hard, had pittance for their labor, and were content.

## JOHN CHURCHILLS

John Churchill bought the northwest part of Section 21-4-1 from the government in 1896, for \$3.00 an acre. He broke the land with his team of horses, and built a house, in preparation for his family to come. The family arrived; John, his wife and four daughters coming from Langdon, North Dakota by democrat in 1898.

The original house they built by laying two by fours flat together; this remained standing until a new house was built in 1967, to replace the old.

George Churchill followed his brother to the district, and settled on the farm immediately south of John. By this time there were several families in the community, and the school district of Broadview was formed.



*John and Harriet Churchill in 1902, with daughters, Lilly, Jane, Daisy and Violet. Son Hank on John's knee.*

A school was built on a piece of land of George Churchill's about 1900. Lilly, Jane, Daisy and Violet could now attend school. Three of those girls went on to become school teachers, with Jane preferring to stay at home and help mother, as three more little Churchills had been added to the family since moving to Canada. Hank, Alvin and Vene were all born in the farm house at Broadview.



*May 10, 1950. H.D. Churchill standing on steps, a friend in boat, Stan Churchill standing at side.*

The eldest daughter Lilly who had been twelve years old when her parents moved into the district, later married Rex Perkins settling on a farm half a mile of the family farm. Jane married and moved to Cameron, Montana, where she passed away in 1967. Daisy married a farmer and moved to the Peace River Country in Alberta near a town called Berwyn. She lives in her own little cottage in town, while her son farms nearby. Violet married Knut Skoglund from Hilltop, Man., whom she met while teaching school in Lund. She resides in the Red River Lodge in Morris.

Hank lives at Crystal City where he keeps busy with his farm near Rock Lake, and his herd of Hereford cattle. He married Mary Sloane who had taught school in Broadview. They had one daughter, Ann.

Alvin became a barber. He moved to Salem, Oregon with his wife and twin daughters, June and Joan; where he lived at the time of his death. The youngest daughter Vene lives in Summerland B.C., with her husband Bill Stowe.

## THE PERKINS FAMILY

*by Ethel Korzack*

Lilly, the eldest daughter of the John Churchills, took up school teaching, which she did for eight years before she met Reginald Perkins. Rex, as he was better known, came to Morris when it was popular in England to "go west young man". He, and his friend who had accompanied him from England, worked in the Broadview district on some of the farms, before deciding to go to the west coast and on to California where they worked on the Bard Ranch. Later, he left California to return to Manitoba to marry Lilly Churchill.

Rex and Lilly bought the adjoining farm to John Churchill (29-4-1 East) and set up farming. They build a

very large hip roof barn when disaster struck. A cyclone came along in 1939 and levelled a number of big barns in the area, including theirs. Not daunted, they just decided to build a smaller one.



*Ethel Perkins in 1930, standing in front of the barn that a wind storm blew down in August, 1939.*

The pioneers did many things to have food for the winter. In the years before deep freezers, it was custom to kill a beef, pig, turkeys and chickens in the late fall when it was cold enough for them to stay frozen outside. The women always canned enough vegetables from their gardens to last through the winter; made pickles, jam and jellies from currants and crabapples that grew in their gardens. Frequently, they picked wild fruit such as plums, chokecherries, strawberries and saskatoons. One of the easiest ways to keep vegetables for winter was to put them in earth in the basement ... they seemed just like



*Aerial view of the Perkins farm.*

garden fresh. I remember how the fishermen from the lakes would come by and sell us a big bag of white fish for \$1.00. Another delight we nearly always had, was a big wooden barrel of apples that lasted all winter.

The Perkins family attended the United Church in Morris where he taught Sunday School and served on the church board. Each Sunday before the trip was made to church, and animals had to be fed, and the cows milked. Only then, could the family climb in the cutter, and head off towards town. Four miles to and from town in the dead of winter could be chilly, so hot bricks were placed

on the floor of the cutter, to keep the feet warm.

Rex and Lilly had two daughters, Ethel and Phyllis. Ethel married Peter Korzack and moved to California; and Phyllis married William Ferguson. They live in Winnipeg with their three boys. Rex Perkins passed on in 1954, but Lilly Perkins, at the age of 92, still resides in Morris, in the Red River Valley Lodge.

## THE SKOGLUNDS

*by Vi Skoglund*

In the latter 1920's, John Churchill had become interested in the trucking business, and wanted someone to run the farm. Daughter, Violet and her husband and family were asked to return to the farm from their home near Hilltop. As Knut and Violet had two little girls of school age and the school they attended was several miles through bush country, they decided to make the move. In January, 1928, the Skoglund family came to Broadview with their four children. Alice, Alma, Ranald and Dorothy. In 1929, the youngest son, Kenneth was born. John Churchill then moved to Morris, where he resided in a house on Mulvey Street, where the Nu Fashion store now stands.

The five Skoglund children all attended the Broadview School, before branching out for lives of their own.

Alice married Ross Gibson and had one daughter, Candace. They resided in Emerson, where Ross was assistant postmaster until the time of his death.

Alma became a registered nurse, later marrying Bert Wheeler and moving to Toronto, Ontario. They had three daughters; Pat, May and Beth. Alma has returned to Winnipeg and is nursing at the Victoria Hospital.

Ron Skoglund bought the farm in 1955 from his mother.

Dorothy married Carlisle Casson and they live on their farm at Greenridge. They had six children: Jim, David, Linda, Tom, Garnet, and Leslie.

Kenneth married Alice Proctor of Niagara Falls, Ontario. They had three children: Vivian, Carol and John. Ken, Alice and son John have recently moved west again and are farming near Cardale, Manitoba.

When Ron was in his late teens, World War II broke out. Ron joined the army, serving 3 years overseas. He landed in England, went on to Africa, back to Italy, up to Holland, returning to England. He finally arrived safely home in January 1946. Ron worked down east a couple of years, returning home in 1948 to start farming with his father.

The farm was surrounded with water during the 1948 flood, but water did not come into the buildings. During the 1950 flood, the farm was inundated. The family and herd of dairy cattle were evacuated to Carman for six weeks, where they waited for the water to recede. Anyone living here at that time will remember the desolate feeling of returning home to the mess. Everyone had to roll up their sleeves, start the clean-up, and attempt to return to a normal way of life.

By this time, tractors and combines had replaced the horses and threshing machines. Hydro had come into the homes, and farming was getting much easier.

Ron met his wife, Viola Edwards, marrying her in

October, 1951. They built a small house on the farm and prepared to live happily ever after. Such was not to be the case at this time.

In January 1954, Ron's father passed away suddenly, and in March, their 18 month old daughter died after a brief illness of 36 hours. One month later, their son, Larry, was born. The next summer (in 1955), Ron's mother moved to town and Ron purchased the farm.

Tragedy struck again that fall. Their third child, a little girl, was born, and she died within 3 days. But better times were ahead, as a daughter, Tracy, was born in May of 1957.

Larry and Tracy started school in Broadview. In 1965, when the school was closed, the children of the district rode the school bus to town, where they completed their education.

In 1966, Janet was born, a welcome addition to the family. Flood waters again took over the farm, causing the evacuation of everything. The family moved to Carman. The cattle had to be trucked to Crystal City, the horses to Miami, the hogs and grain to Greenridge. The flood did not last as long this time, and everything was gathered up and returned home.

Many changes have taken place over the years. A lot of dirt has been hauled in so buildings could be raised above flood level. A farrow to finish hog operation now takes the place of cattle. The granaries all sit up on a hill called a pad. A new house was built in 1967. There is a machine shed and shop built in recent years.

Larry bought his Aunt Lilly's farm and in the fall of 1978, he purchased the home quarter from his dad. Ron, Vi and Janet have moved to town to a house on Mulvey Street West, five houses down from where his grandfather lived. Ron and Larry plan on farming in partnership for a few years yet. Vi nurses in the Morris General Hospital and Janet has several years of schooling to take. Tracy was married in January 1979 to Mike Bouchard. They live in their trailer home in Morris, while Mike commutes to his Texaco garage at St. Pierre. Tracy is working in the Morris branch of the Bank of Montreal. Larry and his fiancée, Kathy Filbert, are planning their wedding for April of 1979, and will reside on the home farm. Kathy is a nurse. This young couple will be the fourth generation on 21-4-1 East.

May God bless the farm, bringing success, satisfaction and happiness for all the families whose roots are here: just as surely as he has blessed the many crops that have been harvested over the years.

## THE CLUBBS

*submitted by Ethel Al. Clubb*

James Clubb, one of the first pioneers of this area, was born on May 2, 1861 at Pond Mills, Ontario just outside London. Some years before, his father Alexander Clubb, his mother, and some brothers and sisters, had emigrated from Scotland. James and his brother George were the only members of their large family who did not remain in the London area, and around Rochester in neighboring New York State.

In 1880 when James was 19, he emigrated with his brother George who was about 10 years his senior, to

Morris, Man. At that time they loaded their entire belongings consisting of livestock, equipment and personal belongings and travelled south through the U.S.A. by way of Chicago, entering Manitoba at the Port of Emerson. James and George travelled in the box car in order to care for the livestock. Needless to say, it was a long and difficult journey, fraught with many hardships.

During the first few years James worked for Dr. Martin, a Winnipeg doctor who operated a large farm at Hope Farm, a few miles South of Broadview. It was during this time that he met and married Jennie Morrison, who with her father and two sisters had emigrated from Ontario. Jennie's mother and father had emigrated from Scotland and settled at Belgrave, Ontario. It was here that their three daughters were born, and the mother died at an early age. Following that, the Morrison family emigrated to Manitoba and settled in the Silver Plains District.



*James and Jennie Clubb in 1939.*

A few years later after he and Jennie were married, James purchased land adjacent to his brother George, and in 1897 he built his barn on what he thought was a prime location. The following spring, 1898, when the flood came upon them, the location he had picked was under water, and only one spot on his property was above the high water mark. Accordingly, he moved the barn to that location and in that year built his house.

James and Jennie had three children: Ross Gladstone who was born in 1890, Howard Reid in 1892 and James Earl in 1911. Ross and Howard took up farming in Broadview. Earl moved to Winnipeg, became a chartered accountant later moving to Ontario, where he still resides. At present he is employed on a board concerned with advising the government about importation of textiles. Howard farmed until 1955 and the land was subsequently sold.

James served as councillor from 1905 to 1910 and as a reeve from 1912 to 1914 with R.M. of Morris. He also served as Broadview School trustee for several years and was active in farm organizations, frequently as a delegate to conventions in both Eastern and Western Canada. He along with his two elder sons was active in the Masonic Lodge in Morris.

He and his wife retired to Winnipeg in 1937. James

died in 1942 and Jennie died in 1954. Both are buried in the Morris Cemetery.



*Mrs. James Clubb and son, Ross.*

### **Ross Clubb**

Ross, James' eldest son, married Beth Langley, the daughter of another early resident of Broadview. For a few years they lived two miles west of Morris. About 1919, they purchased land in the Broadview District. A daughter, Iris Eileen who was born in 1918, died of diabetes in 1924. James Ross was born in 1925 and Norman Barrie in 1935. Both James and Barrie were educated at local Broadview School.

In 1956 Barrie married Vivian Manchelenko, who was born and raised a few miles north of Morris. They subsequently moved to Morris where they still reside. They have three girls; Jo-Anne, Heather and Michelle. Heather is married to Fred Peters another former resident of the Broadview District. They have one son Stephen and live in Morris. Barrie is presently serving as councillor on the town council of Morris.

Ross and Beth retired to Morris in 1965 and Ross died there in 1971. Beth died in 1977, both are buried in the Morris Cemetery.

James who married Ethel Barclay of Souris in 1951, built his home directly to the south of his father. Six children were born to them during the course of the years. Charlotte, William, twins Sandra and Debra, Bryon and Margaret. Charlotte received her education at Broadview School, Morris and the University of Winnipeg. She is married to Ken Supeene. They are presently living in St. Adolphe, Manitoba.

Billy received his education at Broadview, Morris and Briercrest Bible Institute, Caronport, Sask. He married Wendy Kitching of Winnipeg. He was employed by his father, and was driving a semi trailer unit when he met his death near Fargo, North Dakota, September 15, 1975. He is buried in the Morris Cemetery. He has one son,

Paul William James now residing in Winnipeg with his mother.

Sandra and Debra received their education at Morris School. Debra is married to Ben Harder. They have one daughter Jennie and live in Port Hardy, British Columbia. Sandra married Ken Harder, they have one son Gregory and reside in the town of Morris.

Bryon received his education in Morris and is actively engaged in farming with his father. Margaret is presently attending Morris Collegiate.

One of the major events that affected the family was the flood of 1966. The flood waters came up into James and Ethel's home and filled the basement. A few days before this, Ethel loaded up the six children, their clothes and the pup, and headed west for her mother's home in Souris. James remained behind to sell the weanling pigs and help to hold the town of Morris against the rising flood waters.

After six weeks, the flood waters went down and Ethel and children returned. In the following year James and Ethel moved their house into the yard which had formerly belonged to Jim's parents. They raised the floor of the house to a height which is considered to be above flood level.

James served on the local Manitoba Pool Elevator board as secretary for many years, also serving as board member and president of the local M.P.E. board for a number of years. Besides farming he is also president of Jemco Transport Ltd., a transport company with international and extra-provincial authority to move bulk grain and seed.

James, Ethel and Margaret still reside on the farm which James and Ethel first made their home some twenty-seven years ago, and to which Ross and Beth came in 1919. This year 1980, commemorates the centennial of the arrival in this area of James Clubb the elder.



*Howard Clubb in 1958.*

### **HOWARD CLUBB**

*submitted by Ethel Clubb*

Howard Clubb, son of pioneer James Clubb and Jennie Morrison Clubb was born in 1892 at Morris and received his education at the local Broadview School. He took up farming with his father on the family farm and remained actively engaged in farming until 1955. He married Marion Irwin of Winnipeg in 1948. He was councillor from 1931-1937.

At the time of his marriage he moved to Winnipeg and in 1955 retired from farming. The land was subsequently sold. Howard and Marion moved to Victoria, B.C. in 1967 and it was there Howard died in 1968. He had no children.

## THE FAMILY OF MR. AND MRS. GEORGE CLUBB

*submitted by Marguerite (Clubb) Sloan*

The year was 1878 and the railroad had just been completed from St. Paul, Minnesota to Winnipeg. "Land for sale - easy accessibility by rail", were advertisements appearing in many Ontario papers. In Brantford, Ontario, these advertisements caught the eye and challenged the pioneer spirit of George Clubb, a native of Scotland and his recent bride, Alice Jex. They proceeded to purchase land in Township four, five miles southwest of the Town of Morris, in the Broadview District.



*Mr. and Mrs. George Clubb  
in early 1900's.*

In early 1880, George Clubb arrived in Emerson, Man. (He disembarked from the train there because the line continued on the east side of the Red River, via Dominion City, to Winnipeg). Emerson was the only place at the time where there was a ferry crossing over to the west side of the river.

Quotations from some of the letters to his wife in Brantford best describe the conditions he encountered in Emerson, "We got our horses off the rail car on Sunday and our goods on Monday. This is an expensive place to live in. We pay 75C a day for our horses and \$1.00 for ourselves, but five of us have got a room and we keep "batchelors hall". We cannot get across the river. The ice is partly broken, so that we cannot cross on ice or ferry. There will be an awful rush when the river breaks up. There are close to two thousand persons waiting to get over".

His Scottish Presbyterian upbringing comes to the fore when he writes, "This is a wicked place. The hotels are open even on Sunday".

In the later letter to his wife in May, 1880, he reported, "I have managed to get eight bushels of wheat and eight of oats sown. I intend to put in some potatoes and turnips. It has been a very cold and backward Spring, but I like the country. It is good for a poor man, or after the first year, an independant man - that is, if he has any luck. There are no woods to clear. All you have to do is put in the plough and sow the seed, then hope for the best in weather. Land is selling around here for two dollars an acre".

As the Summer of 1880 progressed, Mr. Clubb's letters reported other activities. For example, on July 7, 1880,

he wrote, "We had a big time here on Wednesday. They were laying the cornerstone for the Anglican Church. The Freemasons came down from Winnipeg. They brought a steam tug with them and provided the people of Morris with free excursions up the Scratching River".

On July 15, of that same year he reported, "I have a job helping to draw lumber up from a raft. The lumber is to be used to build a hotel. It is a very wet and late season. My potatoes that I planted have all rotted in the ground. Next week I will commence to build our "mansion" on our land". This reference is to a small frame, one-storey home, which served as a residence until 1896, when a two-storey frame house replaced it. This house is still standing on the original property.

In a subsequent letter Mr. Clubb reported that the house was completed and suggested that his wife Alice join him in Morris in September, 1880. He proposed to meet her at Emerson, as there was only one boat a week running from Emerson to Morris. With Alice's arrival in September they lived in the Town of Morris for several winters, where Mr. Clubb worked as a blacksmith. In the summer months they lived on the farm.

In the summer of 1882, Mr. Clubb and Mr. Charlie Weir went by buckboard to Regina, to look at land and to purchase oxen and grain. The trip took them all summer and while they were away, Mrs. Clubb returned to Brantford for a visit. She had been very lonesome for her family and on her return to the west, she brought back her three-year-old niece, Winnifred Macauley with her. Winnifred, or "Aunt Winnie" as she was affectionately called by many, remained as a dearly loved member of the family from then on.

In October, 1884, Alice and George's first child was born. He was called William Reid. Three years later, their daughter, Mina was born.



*George Clubb with son, Bill  
(W.R.) on George's first  
airplane flight in 1931 at the  
age of 83.*

Browsing through old records, diaries and account books, one is led to believe that the family struggled through some trying times for several years. There are references to prairie fires, some flooding, high prices for groceries, loneliness and privation. There is no doubt that the pioneer settlers had to be rugged to survive.

Education was of prime importance in the Clubb family and the three children attended schools during the

winter months at Hope Farm, Union Point and Morris. Higher education included attendance at Portage la Prairie, St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg for the two girls and the Agriculture College for Mina and Will. Will graduated from the second graduating class of the Agriculture College.

In December, 1913, Mina married Harry Thompson of Melita, Man., and they moved to Regina to live. Mina died in July, 1915, leaving a two-week-old daughter named Dorothy. Dorothy was brought back to live at Clover Lodge Farm in Morris. Her father, Harry Thompson, was subsequently killed at Vimy Ridge.

Dorothy attended Broadview School, St. Jean Convent and United College in Winnipeg. She subsequently married Mr. Thomas Healey. They and the members of their family reside in Burlington, Ontario, including Aunt Winnie, who is in her hundredth year.

After his graduation from the Manitoba Agriculture College, William Reid Clubb joined his father in operating the farm in the Broadview District, which the family had named "Clover Lodge". This name is still used by the members of the family to this day.

William was elected to the Morris Municipal Council, which was his first public office. In 1920, at the age of 36, he was elected M.L.A. for Morris in the Manitoba Legislature. Two years later he was appointed to the Cabinet as Minister of Public Works. In 1934 he became the first Minister of Labour in the Manitoba Provincial Government and headed up the Department of Labour for seven years.



Prince of Wales, left, on arrival in Winnipeg for a royal visit in the 1920's. W.R. Clubb with hat in hand, is amongst those greeting the prince.

It was during those years that rural electrification began in earnest in the Red River Valley. As the work progressed, a steadily-increasing number of yard lights began to appear in Broadview and other districts. As a result of this the farm families enjoyed a more visual presence of their friends and neighbours during the long winter nights.

In December, 1913, Bill Clubb married Gertrude Kastner, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kastner of Oakwood Farm, Morris, Man. Bill and Gertrude continued to take an active interest in Clover Lodge Farm throughout their lives. Bill Clubb passed away at his beloved farm home at Morris in August, 1962 and Gertrude Clubb passed away in December, 1977, at the age of 93.



Wedding of W.R. Clubb and Gertrude Kastner - Dec. 3, 1913.

Their one son and four daughters look upon Clover Lodge Farm at Morris as their roots, as do the thirty great-grandchildren and great great-grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. George Clubb, pioneers who had the will, the foresight and the energy to make a new life for themselves and their new family in the Red River valley at Morris, Manitoba. The majority of the members of the second and third generations of their family still reside in Manitoba.



W.R. Clubb family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Dr. Jack Christie, Shirley, Winifred, McAuley, Katherine, Margurite, Dorothy Thompson, Wilma (Christie). FRONT ROW: Mr. and Mrs. Clubb with grandson, Bill Christie.

## WILLIAM THOMAS IRVINE (1876-1939)

On March 9, 1876, William Thomas was born to Robert and Margaret (Beggs) Irvine who farmed in



Dundas County near Winchester Ontario. His ancestors had emigrated to Canada from Ballyclare Ireland, around 1831.

Tom was the second son in the family of seven boys. When he was twelve years of age his parents decided to come west. In the spring of 1888 they arrived at Gretna, and decided to settle at Tynor North Dakota, where they farmed.

In 1890 they moved back to Canada, coming to the Marais District. This was on Section 17-4-1 East in the Broadview District, southwest of Morris. Until his marriage he boarded with Mr. and Mrs. George Clubb, who treated him as one of the family. In the summer he worked on his land and at establishing a farmstead. In the winter he would return to the Marais.

On April 4, 1877 Susan Jane, who was nicknamed Doll, because she was so tiny; was born to William and Elizabeth McClelland, early pioneers of the Marais District. Bill emigrated to Canada from Ireland as a young man. Elizabeth Wright who was born in London England came to Canada as a young child. In 1868 Bill and Elizabeth were married in London, Ontario. When he came west as a volunteer of the Wolseley Expedition he took up land in what was to later be known as the Marais District. In the spring of 1872 he brought his wife and baby daughter Frances to live in this untamed wilderness. Elizabeth was the first white woman to settle in the Red River south of Winnipeg. Doll was the fifth child in the family of eleven, which was made up of four girls and seven boys.



*Mr. and Mrs. Tom Irvine in 1935, by their lilac hedge.*

On New Years Eve 1901 Tom and Susan (Doll) were married in the McClelland home. They took up residence in a vacant farm home owned by Tom's brother Bob. In early April assisted by Bob, they loaded up all their worldly possessions on a hayrack and a wagon, drawn by two teams of horses. The cows were tied to the back of the rack. Doll had prepared food to be eaten on the way and upon arrival. It was an all day trip. When they arrived the cows were so tired they lay down, and weren't milked until morning. After the animals were attended to, the men unpacked the stove, springs mattresses and some personal belongings. Since it was a beautiful clear

night the rest was left out until morning. Dad built a fairly large granary which had a partition dividing it into two rooms. In this building the stove was set up, and the springs and mattresses were placed on the floor. After a bite to eat all three were soon fast asleep. The "red granary" as it was always referred to, was to be their dwelling until a new home was completed in the fall. Mother said they were quite comfortable there. After seeing mother and dad settled, Bob took his team and vehicle and returned home.

Dad's farmstead was on the bald prairie, the fire guard which surrounded it protected it from prairie fires. Since the Deloraine line of the CPR ran diagonally through this area, grass fires started by sparks from the train engines were not uncommon. Mother told us of how she and Mrs. George Churchill had helped fight one of these using soaked gunny sacks.

A few days after dad and mother had arrived, Mr. George Clubb, who lived a mile east of them, came in his horse drawn democrat to visit. "I have brought you your first trees, Mrs. Irvine", he said, showing her her a bundle of switches of willow and cottonwood. Mother, who had a "green thumb" was delighted. They were planted in the fire break and some of them may still be there.

Our parents worked very hard as did all their neighbors. Those living near them were Jack and George Churchills, John Frasers, Geo and James Clubbs and the Peter Langleys. It was a close knit family community whose members visited and supported one another whenever they could. We lived 5 1/2 miles from Morris. There was a shorter trail to town along either side of the CPR track that was used when possible to haul heavy loads to and from Morris. In the winter people travelled this by sleigh, cutter and later by covered-in vans containing a small stove. The latter were warmer but were rough and noisy and on nice days were not nearly as invigorating as a cutter ride with the harness bells jingling. During the winter this road built up. When spring approached, should the cutter slip off you would be apt to be tossed out into the snow. One hand to keep a tight rein on "Harry" to make sure he didn't take off for home and leave you to resort to "shanks" ponies.

Over the years the family grew. All were born at home with a Doctor and a neighbor lady or friend in attendance. First Cecil arrived, followed two years later by Ernest, who was never well and died at the age of 17 months. When a daughter arrived, Dad was delighted, since he had never had a sister. Little did he realize there would be four daughters in a row namely, Mabel, Margaret, Elizabeth and Edythe. When Edythe was born Dr. McTavish told Dad he didn't think they would raise this one, but with the loving care she survived. What a blessing she proved to be. In 1915 the family was completed with William Robert, whom was affectionately called "Billy Bobs".

In order to keep his growing family, Dad added to his land holdings, eventually owning all of Section 17 and the S.E. quarter of Section 18. The latter he dryly called "Wide Awake". He was a progressive farmer who eventually owned and operated one of the first combines in the district. In 1912 he had a large addition built to our

house. A full sized basement was put under the whole house, containing a large cistern and a hot air furnace. Each fall he had a carload of soft coal shipped from Bienfait Sask., some of which was taken by neighbors. Mother and Dad always planted a big garden which provided us with a good supply of vegetables. They raised their own meat and fowl, eggs were packed in water glass for winter use, bread was homemade of course, butter was churned for our own use and for sale, either by crock or in pound prints. As the dairy herd grew, cream was sold instead of butter. The farmer's organization had a carload of apples shipped from Ontario each fall. We would get six or more barrels which were stored in the basement for winter use.

Our smaller barn was replaced by a large hip roofed one equipped with slings to carry loose hay into the barn loft. Dad took great pride in his horses, and of course they were his source of power until tractors replaced them. Betty was the horse lover of the family.

Times were often hard and money scarce but our parents managed with what they had. We were privileged indeed to grow up in a home where both our spiritual and physical needs were nurtured and met with loving concern.

Although mother had no formal training in nursing, she got lots of practice in that art. At first during Ernest's life, and later as she saw the rest of us through the usual run of children's diseases, and also some very serious illnesses she had to deal with. We were lucky we had local doctors such as Dr. McTavish and Dr. Ross who were available when called. In the fall of 1918 we were the first in the district to come down with that bad flu from which so many were dying. Dr. Ross called regularly, some of us weren't very sick but I guess our warm beds was the best place for us. Our kind neighbors who kept track of the situation by telephone were wonderful. They helped with the chores and brought more food than we could eat. Being afraid to come near the house, they would leave the food at the gate. When they had gone, Jack (the hired man) would go out to retrieve it. He seemed to have immunity to flu. Later Dr. Ross had him help out in several homes where no help was available. Sometimes later Mother nursed Millie Kale, (later Mrs. Bill Krueger) a young girl living west of us who was very sick with pneumonia and flu. Millie always credited Mother with saving her life.

Following a bout with Scarlet Fever, Bill who was then probably three or four years old, developed Brights Disease. He was gravely ill and Dr. Ross held out no hope for his recovery. Hearing this, mother's sister Aunt Ruth who was an RN, hastened to our home. With the Doctors consent she used a treatment she had seen used in the hospital. Wringing a blanket out of hot water she would roll Bill's naked little body in it, and a cold pack was placed on his forehead. They would cause him to perspire profusely thus drawing the poison out of his body. After a few days of these treatments the crisis was passed. Dr. Ross gave all the credit to Aunty for saving our little brother's life.

Edythe had four bouts with Rheumatic Fever. Once when she was gravely ill we were able to hire a trained nurse to relieve Mother. At that time doctors didn't have

the modern medicines to deal with that painful disease, and her recoveries were slow. The disease left her with a defective heart, which was a cross she bravely bore during her lifetime. With her keen sense of humor she often referred to herself as "the runt of the litter".



*The Irvine children, Margaret, Mabel, Betty and Cecil.*

It was a red letter day when we got a new piano. There were no radios at that time so our only source of music was a gramophone, violin or mouth organs. Mother was able to play some by ear. Then Mabel learned to play. Since Mother had a good singing voice, nothing pleased Dad more than to have the family gather around the piano and sing.

Since our home was roomy, community parties were held there. One of these was to bid farewell to three young men who were leaving for overseas duty in the First World War. They were each presented with a watch, one of the recipients being George Churchill's elder son Chester.

Over the years Dad took an active part in community affairs. He was a school trustee, a director for the Agriculture Society and served as a municipal councillor for ten years, retiring due to ill health. Both he and Mother were supportive members of the first Presbyterian and later the United Church. Mother, too, played a prominent part in the community serving as a lady trustee, and was instrumental in getting a Sunday School started in the Broadview School. She was a tireless worker in the Broadview Missionary Society, being a sentive, caring person.

The two boys remained in the district to carry on farming. All four girls took their high schooling at the St. Jean Convent where they boarded. Mabel took a stenographers course at Success Business College, after which she gained employment in the Manitoba Legislature Bldgs. She married Tom Craig and lives in Winnipeg. They have a son Keith and a daughter Ruth, both are married and have families. Margaret took teachers training in Manitou. She taught at Flowery bank, Carleton and then at Broadview. When her father left the farm and moved into Morris and she keeps house for him. In 1940 she married Elmer Kirkpatrick of Greenridge. They raised a family of four, David, Sharon, Dorothy and Donald. In 1972 Don was killed in a car accident at the age of 20.



*Sam Irvine's outfit preparing to go to field in fall of 1918.*

Betty graduated as an RN from what was then called the Winnipeg General Hospital, now known as the Health Science Centre. She later became supervisor of nurses. She married Dr. Walter Alexander of Winnipeg; they have four daughters, Susan, Elizabeth, Barbara and Kathryn. Edythe married Jack Dickson who farmed northwest of Morris. They raised a daughter Marian, and a son Robert.

In 1932 Dad suffered a severe stroke which left him physically handicapped. In 1937 our parents bought the Collins home, now owned by Tom Christison. A very short time later Mother died suddenly at the age of sixty. In the fall of 1938, Dad moved into his town home where he died on December 3, 1939, at the age of 63 years.

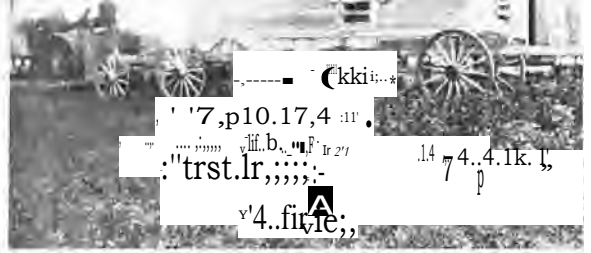
For the gift of the lives of our beloved parents, we give thanks.



*Cecil and Edith Irvine, and son, Brian, on their 25th wedding anniversary.*

## **CECIL ROY IRVINE (1902-1976)**

Cecil, the first child of Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Irvine, was born in the family home on October 4, 1902. As a child he was very active, full of fun and mischief.



*Fred Janosky and Sam Irvine moving a house from brother, Tom's, with his J.I. Case 75 H.P. steam engine in the summer of 1921.*

### **One of Cecil's pranks -**

We lived less than half a mile south of the Broadview School. It was a habit to dispose of papers etc. by tossing them into a fair sized furnace that occupied a back corner of the classroom. During the summer when the furnace was not in use, it became quite stuffed. One warm summer morning Cecil thought of a plan that might give him a holiday. Unknown to Mother, he slipped down the ditch with a few matches in his pocket. Arriving at the school, he set fire to the paper in the furnace and hurried home the same way he came, being very careful that no one saw him. Just before nine he arrived at school with lunch pail in hand to find the pupils and teacher outside. The door and windows were wide open. It being too warm inside the teacher tried holding classes outside but finally gave up and sent the pupils home for the day. Everyone wondered who the prankster was. There were several suspected, including our Uncle Hess Irvine who was working in a field across the road from the school. When these proclaimed their innocence the mystery remained unsolved.

That fall Bill Clubb, who was later to become the Hon. W.R., was ploughing in his field across the road from our home; as he sometimes did, Cecil went out to have a ride with Bill. During this ride Bill took a chance and said "That was sure a good trick you played on the teacher, Cecil." Taken by surprise Cecil quickly asked. "How did you know?" And with that the mystery was solved. Life was seldom dull where this lad was.

Cecil attended Broadview School, then he took course at the Agricultural College near Winnipeg. Coming home, he began farming with his father until Mr. Irvine moved into Morris.

On October 10th, 1938, he married Edith Satterthwaite of Isabella, Man., and brought his bride to live on the family farm. Cecil worked the south half of Section 17 and shared the farm machinery with his brother Bill. Since their family was small they had no need of the large house and later had it remodelled into a comfortable one storey home. In 1946 the large barn was destroyed by fire and replaced by a much smaller one.

Cecil was mechanical and even as a boy loved to overhaul things. He was very fond of music and although he had no musical training he played the violin and mouthorgan by ear. Their only son Brian inherited this love of music and had a good singing voice.

Cecil retained his sense of humor as long as he lived. He was good hearted, and would go out of his way to do a good turn for a neighbor or friend. He enjoyed playing baseball in his youth and later curled at the Sewell Curling Club. Both Edith and Cecil were community minded. She was a faithful member of the Broadview Women's Church group as long as it existed. Cecil served as Secretary Treasurer of the Broadview S.D., was a member of the municipal Council, was President of the local Pool Elevator Association, and a long time member of the Fair board.

Brian was not interested in farming. He began working for the Good Roads department, gradually working his way up. He made his home in Carman.

In 1950 after their home was flooded, Cecil decided that when he retired it would be to a place where there would be no flood water.

After he suffered a serious heart attack, Cecil rented his land. In 1969 he sold his farm to Melvin Edel and moved to Morden. He developed emphysema and died suddenly on November 9, 1976, at the age of 74 years. His wife Edith now lives alone in their Morden home.



*Bill and Verna Irvine with her mother, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, on their 25th wedding anniversary.*

## **WILLIAM ROBERT IRVINE (1915-1967)**

As mentioned in the story of the Irvines, Bill was the baby of the family, and from all reports he was a little rascal. He attended the Broadview School and one day during his early school years he came home quite upset. The inspector had visited the school and upon hearing the children sing he told Bill he should have his voice trained. Not realizing this was indeed a compliment Bill felt the inspector was critical of his voice. In those days there was no one in the area who gave voice lessons so Bill never got help with his talent, but during his years he sang at several weddings and on different occasions.

Bill farmed along with his Dad and Cecil, and enjoyed his work. His Dad gave him and Cecil each a half section of land. Bill had a house built on his, and on October 28, 1939 he married Verna Kirkpatrick of Greenridge. We

were blessed with 5 children, 4 boys, and seven years later a daughter. Wayne, Tom, Kenneth and Allan (twins) and Shirley. The morning after Shirley was born, Bill called upstairs to tell the boys that they had a baby sister, and they all replied at once "good we won't have to do dishes anymore."

## **URCH**



*Bill Irvine family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Allan, Ken, Shirley (Rempel), Wayne and Tom in 1978.*

In the 1950 flood, as the water was gushing in our back door, the boys and I (this was before Shirley came along) were taken by boat from our back door step to a tractor and trailer waiting to take us west. There were Mr. and Mrs. Peters, Edith and Brian Irvine, Ethel and Marilyn Forrest, and myself with the four boys. After being stuck several times we reached Lowe Farm at 10 at night. They fed us, inoculated us and sent us on to Carman as there was no room left in Lowe Farm. The next day we travelled by train, to Hartney. Bill and several other men stayed with the cattle up at Robert Forrest's.

When the '66 flood waters came up, our cattle were shipped to market, and Bill moved the pigs up to a barn at Henry Peters' at Sewell. We stayed with the Wm Recksiedlers during the time and Bill went down to the house every day to try to keep the basement pumped out.

The family took their education at the Broadview and Morris Schools. Shirley was in grade five when the Broadview School closed 1965 due to the lack of children, so she had to change to the Morris School. How she hated that first year in town.

Bill took an active part in community affairs. He was a school trustee, a Director of the Valley Agriculture Society, and President for a few years. He was instrumental in establishment of the Manitoba Stampede. He was Past Master of King Solomon Lodge No. 8, and a Past Worthy Patron of Sheba Chapter No. 51, Order in the Eastern Star, of which I belong to too.

In 1963 Bill started working for the Manitoba Crop Insurance, doing this along with the farming. In 1964 we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary with all the family home, and all the Irvine and Kilpatrick families too.

Wayne married Pat Thatcher of Winnipeg in 1965,

they now have 2 sons, Bradley and Stuart. Bill passed away, after a short illness on August 26th, 1967. After his father's passing Wayne and Pat came back to the farm; he rents my land and has bought a farm 7 miles south of here. I still live on the farm and drive back and forth to work each day. Tom and Bonne who were married at Boissevain in 1967, have a boy and a girl, Michael and Pamela. They live at Rainy River, Ontario, and Tom works on the Customs. Allan and Valorie were married at Rosebank in 1972, Allan works for the Elanco Chemical Co. They now live in Winnipeg, and have a son and a daughter, Gregory and Heather. Kenneth and Karen were married at Dauphin in 1975, they have two sons, Kristopher and Kraig. Ken is with the Highways at Dauphin. Shirley married Rick Rempel in 1976. Rick also works for the Elanco Chemical Co. in Brandon.

## HISTORY OF THE SHEWMAN FAMILY

Sylvester Shewman and his wife, Fanny, arrived in Morris in 1882 from Ontario. They took up farming on what was called the 'Proctor Farm', with three daughters and one son: William Homer (Bill). Some years later, they moved to Winnipeg.

William, who married Jennie Faux, in 1890, raised a large family.

The Faux family came to Union Point in 1877 from Ontario. Since they lived on the east side of the Red River, the children had to row a boat across the river to go to school. This school is still standing on the west side of the Red River on No. 75 Highway.

William and Jennie moved back to Morris in 1915, with their family, and bought land west of Morris, where they farmed, eventually moving into town. William was also a road contractor, and built many miles of road in the Morris Municipality.

A son, Harry Shewman, was the mayor of Morris for a number of years, on the school board and was the Conservative MLA for the constituency of Morris, at the time of his death.

William Shewman owned a large stable in Morris, where he kept his horses for road construction. In 1915, this stable was bought by a group of people, who turned it into a skating and curling rink. It served its purpose for many years, and was eventually replaced by the present rinks.

Twelve children were born to William and Jennie Shewman, of which three are still living: Dorothy Rendall, One Hundred Mile House, B.C.; Jean Dowler, Dauphin, Manitoba; and Lloyd, Winnipeg, Manitoba. There are 25 grandchildren, more than 50 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

## HARRY SHEWMAN

*Alice Poyser*

"Mr. Shewman, in his nearly 20 years in the legislature, taught his fellow MLA's much about maintaining a sense of fun and a sense of the essential absurdity of things even in the most tense of situations ... one of last of the distinctive and highly colorful breed of politicians that enlivened Manitoba politics in days past."



*Harry Shewman, MLA, auctioneer, and Mayor of Morris.*

From the Winnipeg Free Press, Tuesday, July 16, 1968.  
An editorial on the occasion of his death.

Harry was born on Toronto Street in Winnipeg in 1900, in a large house. A large house for a large family. There was a stable in the back yard to shelter a Shetland pony, a docile cart horse, and a retired fire horse. When his rheumatic grandfather had to be taken to doctor's office, 12 year old Harry was instructed to hitch the docile horse to the buggy. He hitched up the fire horse instead. The trip was uneventful until the fire brigade went by. The clanging of its bell was irresistible. The ex-fire horse and grandpa - shrieking in pain - went hell-bent-for-leather, down Main St. The punishment that followed did nothing to douse Harry's enthusiasm for horses. It was a love affair that lasted his lifetime.

In 1915, the family moved to Morris where Harry's father, Bill, kept the 300 horses he used for road construction. The road building business came to an abrupt halt when the horses were wiped out by sleeping sickness. Their bleached bones gave Horseshoe Lake the eerie appearance of a battlefield for years after.

After that tragic end to road building, Harry took up farming. It was less a matter of choice than of his father's unshakable conviction that a man was never poor if he owned land. The Dirty Thirties put paid to that idea and Harry chopped ice and traded horses to eke out a living.

Actually, the Dirty Thirties were just an excuse. He never would have been a gifted farmer. Tired of growing weeds where he planted wheat, he tried pig farming. To placate his wife, he promised her half of every litter. Inexplicably, every time a sow rolled over and smothered a piglet, it was always May's piglet that died.

About May: She was born Violet May Mitchell in 1900. Harry and May met on a sleigh ride. He pushed her into a snowbank, then jumped off to join her in the walk back to town. They eloped on February 29, 1920. Their weekend honeymoon was spent in the Empire Hotel. Three daughters later, Harry's mother advised: "You'd better quit now. No sense filling up the house with girls, trying to get a boy."

Horse-trading thinned out in the late 30's and Harry began auctioneering. Auction sales were social occasions, with lunch, neighbours to visit, and Harry to entertain. The first principle of selling was to loosen up the crowd. That's why the household odds and ends were always sold first. An appetizer before expensive things like plows and tractors. To get people into a buying mood Harry started with make-believe bidders, creating the impression that the crowd was ravenous. In truth, he bought the first few items himself and filled his basement with birdcages and coal oil lamps. When his mother-in-law was at the sale, he would shout "Sold to Jennie Mitchell". Jennie would bridle as he handed down a rusty kettle or a cracked platter. She pretended to be annoyed. Secretly, she enjoyed the attention and the mother-in-law jokes that were part of his patter. By the early 50's farm sales had all but disappeared. Harry auctioneered in Winnipeg; horses, then cars, then finally, cattle.

If horses were the love of his life, politics was a close second. He cut his political teeth as a school trustee, serving from 1935 to 1948. He was mayor of Morris from 1948 to 1954. While he was mayor, the town was flooded twice; in 1948 and in 1950. During the second more severe flood, he was also a member of the Legislature and used that position to work for flood compensation and protection.

He contested his first provincial election in 1949. He ran as an Independent, defeating the Conservative candidate and the Minister of Education. It wasn't until 1958, that he ran as a Progressive Conservative. In total, he was the successful candidate in five consecutive elections and was an MLA when he died.

In the Legislature his major interest was the promotion and introduction of a crop insurance scheme.

In addition he chaired the Livestock Marketing Committee and the Farm Machinery Enquiry Committee.

When coaxed to reveal the secret of his success as a politician, he would puzzle, and explain "I just listen a lot".

## STANLEY

George and Mary Stanley (nee Sheppard) emigrated from Ireland in 1830, settling in Clinton, Ontario. They raised a family of seven sons and four daughters.

One of the daughters, Harriet, married William Churchill Sr. and settled in Neche, N.D., later moving to Morris, Manitoba.

A son of George and Mary's, Mathew, married Mary Ann Elliott, of Godrich, Ontario. They settled in Michigan, U.S.A., where their son, Marshall, and

daughter, Lillie, were born; they later moved to Aberdeen, S.D.

In 1902, Mathew decided to take up residence in Manitoba and bought a farm in Silver Plains.

In 1908, Lille married William Pittman, a farmer in Silver Plains, where they farmed until taking up residence in Minnedosa.

Mathew sold his farm in 1909 to William Stevenson, and took up residence on the corner of Boyne and Lucinda, where he carried on a Flour and Feed business. He also drove the hearse with his team of black horses.



*Mathew and Mary Ann Stanley, beside their house in Morris.*

In 1909, Marshall married Fanny Hay of Morris. They farmed one mile west of Morris on Highway 23, where their son, James, and daughter, Oretta (Pat) were born.

In 1918, Mathew passed away, and Marshall sold the farm to John Haining. He then took up residence in the home which had been occupied by his father. His mother lived with them until she passed away in 1927.



*The Stanleys with son, Marshall and daughter, Lillie.*



In 1918, Marshall was employed as a grain buyer by the National Elevator Co., when they sold to N.M. Patterson and Sons. Marshall retired in 1945.

Oretta commenced working as an operator for the Manitoba Telephone System, in April, 1929, becoming Chief Operator in 1944. She was transferred to Portage la Prairie in 1962, continuing as Chief Operator until she returned to Morris in May, 1972.

In 1939, James married Gertrude Smith of Morris; they had two daughters, Karen and Judy. Gertrude passed away in July of 1966.

In 1964, Marshall and Fanny took up residence in the Morris Manor. Their home is still standing on the corner of Boyne and Lucinda.

Fanny passed away in September, 1965 and Marshall in February, 1966.

## THE HAININGS

*submitted by Mrs. J.G. Friesen*

John Andrew Haining was born at Hope Farm (close to St. Jean) on March 27, 1892. His parents had emigrated from Scotland, where his father, John Haining Sr., had been a coachman, and Maria Haining (nee Bell) his mother, a maid at the same estate. Beside John Andrew, they had another son William who was killed at Vimy Ridge during World War I. They had two daughters. Mary Agnes, who died in 1901 of diptheria at age 19, and Jean who married Harold Woodhead. They lived in Morris and operated a store for a time. From Hope Farm they moved to Silver Plains for a year or two. About 1905 they bought the west 114 of Section 33-4-1 East, situated one and a half miles west of Morris, and 1 year later, built a large modern house. John died in 1917, and John Andrew inherited the farm. The following year, he bought the east 114 of SEction 33-4.1 East; and the house that Stanley's lived in, was moved into town by Bob Bell, who was working as "hired man" for the Hainings at that time. Bob recalls spending many evenings playing checkers with Maria Haining while John was out courting Ada Anderson.

Ada Ann Anderson was born at Grafton, North Dakota on February 2, 1897. She had four brothers -



*The John Hainings. LEFT TO RIGHT: William (killed at Vimy Ridge in 1915) Jean, John, Maria (nee Bell), John Andrew.*

Murray, Roy, Allan and Fred, and one sister Grace. In 1900 she moved to Manitoba with her parents Alex and Clara (nee Watson) Anderson and her four brothers. Alex Anderson bought his farm Section 28-5-1 West from a Mr. Burk. They arrived from Grafton via C.N.R., and stopped at the Kastner House in Morris for dinner. Here they obtained a "four seater" livery, and set out for their new home 6 miles west and 5 miles north of Morris, in the Pleasant Valley area. Their close neighbors were Jim Johnson (now the Lewis family farm), Spayburgs, Dave Rose. Charlie Anderson (no relative) lived a few miles south. The Dicksons and Ole Gilman were neighbors not too far away. North along the river were Hanshells, Enns, Schotts and Gebauers (Pete, John, Rose and Viv).

On January 15, 1918 John Andrew Haining and Ada Ann Anderson were married by Rev. J.R. John at the Methodist parsonage in Morris and went by train to Winnipeg for their honeymoon.



*John and Ada Haining on their wedding day in 1918.*

They had four children; a son William Anderson Haining born July 13, 1920, and three daughters, Mavis Myrtle born Aug. 23, 1922, Beatrice Laura born Aug. 26, 1924 and Dorothy Joyce born Aug. 14, 1926.

John and Ada farmed their half section of grain producing land and also operated a dairy, delivering milk to the residents of Morris for 5 or 6 years. In 1929 they sold their horses and cattle at an auction sale and bought a tractor, a combine, and a model T car. They did some custom combining to help pay for their new machinery.

The children attended school in Morris. In the winter they travelled by horse and sleigh, and in summer a horse and buggy was used. As an alternative, they would walk home with the neighbors children - Lorne and Kathleen Lewis, (children of Joe and Lillian Lewis), and Mildred, Virginia, Joan and Colin Kastner, (children of John and Eva Kastner).

In 1933 they decided to move to Morris for the winter and back to the farm in the spring, doing this for 5 years before purchasing the Woodhead house in Morris. They lived there permanently, and drove out to work the farm.



*The John A. Haining children, Laura, Bill, Mavis, Joyce in front.*

The farm was sold to Tom Hamblin of St. Jean in 1957.

Ada passed away November 2, 1953 after a lengthy illness of spinal meningitis. John died in a car accident August 22, 1961.

At the time of publication, their descendants, William is living in Winnipeg, Mavis Miller is in Toronto, Laura Parsons Schley is living in Port Alberni, B.C. and Joyce who married Jacob C. Friesen, lives in Morris.

## MOYER

*by Mrs. John Moyer*

The Norman Moyer family moved into Morris, Manitoba area in March 1891, from a farm in the Niagara Peninsula, Southern Ontario. The family consisted of Grandpa and Grandma, Norman, Emma and their five year old son, Burgess. The family was of Pennsylvania German origin, having moving into Ontario around 1800.

The Moyer family travelled west by train. Their household possessions, implements and stock filled one car in the nineteen box cars of the train. The livestock included a team of oxen and a team of horses.

For two years they farmed at Lowe Farm, then moving into town and renting 160 acres, twelve miles out of town for \$33.00 a year.

In the winter of 1892, the Moyer family butchered their own hogs and a beef, as was their custom. They gave some sausage to the neighbours, which resulted in the invitation to help the surrounding neighbours butcher. Norman and Emma received \$1.50 a day for their help. They said they were pleased to do it.

Letters to their friends in Ontario, written between 1891 and 1899 tell of their many trials in the new homeland - often adverse weather conditions. The first fall, the grain didn't get threshed and was partially spoiled by spring. The year 1893 brought heavy rains and flood waters to town. Moyers had ten inches of water in

their house, and left by boat. Much damage was done, some of the homes collapsed. In 1895 there were many bad fires that swept across entire farms burning stacks of grain and sometimes buildings. They were thought to have started from sparks from the freight engines passing through. The Moyers ploughed around their farm, and did not lose their grain stacks.

Norman and Emma Moyer added a baby daughter, Anna, to their family in September 1895.

In 1896, the Moyers sold the house and lot in Morris and purchased a farm west of Morris. They reported a late spring that year. Farmers had trouble getting the grain planted.

Letters we have on file, do not cover the time from 1899 to about 1913 when Norman, Emma, and Anna returned to Ontario. (As far as I know the Grandparents died in Manitoba.)

In the meantime Burgess Moyer had married Rebecca Mabel Earl, daughter of John Earl who lived North of Morris along the Red River. Burgess, Mabel and their small family, Roy, John and Beaurtrice moved to Ontario in 1920, soon taking up farming on the Moyer farm south of Jordan.

Norman and Emma Moyer were known in Ontario and Manitoba for their enjoyment of good fellowship and friends. They were of Mennonite faith. At Christmas and New Years, their table was always full. They would sometimes entertain the teacher, the minister, the doctor and his wife or some neighbours. One of the memories that always stayed with them, was cooking on a straw burning stove. That seemed a trial all of its own. Pioneering meant lots of hard work.



## JOHN WILTON

John Wilton, for seventeen years one of the greatest individual forces in the political life of the municipality, was born in Wellington County, Ontario, in 1852. His parents were natives of Ireland, who had settled first in Quebec, then Ontario, before coming to Manitoba. His father bought land near High Bluff and began farming, becoming eventually one of the leading and foremost figures in agricultural circles of his district. John Wilton had nine brothers and sisters.

When John Wilton was sixteen years of age, he learned the carriage-making trade and followed it until 1871, when he came to the Red River District. He followed agricultural pursuits for ten years, after which time he came to Morris, to Broadview district, where he gained a place of distinction in public life. He was known as being "unwaveringly honest, straight-forward, and public spirited." There is scarcely a Municipal office in the Morris District in which Mr. Wilton had not served. He was for three years Reeve of the municipality, (1905-1907), five years a councillor (1899-1904) and two years an alderman, in Morris. He was also postmaster and mayor of the town, doing systematic and conscientious work in the conduct of both offices. During his stint as mayor, he was instrumental in having the Pontoon bridge built at Morris in 1913.

Mr. Wilton was married twice. By his first wife, he had seven children: Charles and George, who resided in Morris, Arthur, Ella, John, and two children who died in infancy. In 1893, Mr. Wilton married for the second time, his wife being Fannie Brinstead. They became the parents of three children; Sterling, who was connected with the bank in Morris, Alice and Grace. Mr. and Mrs. Wilton were members of the Presbyterian church. Mr. Wilton was prominent in the Masonic Order, and active in the affairs of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Like all officials who really serve the people, he never made his political attainments an avenue towards personal advancement, and his work for a long time had an excellent effect upon standards and methods.

### **MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM H. SPRINGFORD**

Mr. and Mrs. William Springford, their family of six sons; Charlie, Bert, James, Frank and Jack and Victor, with three daughters, Annie, Ada and Isabel, left their home in Devizes, England and emigrated to Morris in the fall of 1898. Isabel was just twelve years old and mother often spoke to us of how difficult it was to get adjusted to public school life, when she had always attended a girls' private school in England; and wondered why her parents would leave such a luxurious home in England to come to

such hardships in Canada.

The family lived the first winter in the upper quarters of the old primary school on Mulvey Avenue. In the spring, they took up farming on the Ed Paschke farm (28-4-1 East) and spent a few years farming in Broadview district. At that time, their closest neighbours were the John Churchill family. I recall mother telling us about the first time Mrs. Churchill sent over corn on the cob as a treat for their supper meal. Mrs. Churchill's instructions were to boil until tender, but Grandma finally threw it all out after she had boiled it for over an hour and the cobs were still too hard to prick with a fork!

The second eldest son, Bert, was a music teacher and readily found a position as church organist; also taught music. Many a time, mother said, they walked up the track to get to choir practice and church services. Bert married Minnie Mulvey and soon they, accompanied by James, crossed the border to make their future homes in U.S.A. The eldest daughter, Annie, with Ada's help, owned and operated a millinery shop in Morris. In 1901, Ada was wed to Claude Aston, who was working in a store up at Roland. His only means of transportation was a bicycle, so during the summer months he had cycled back and forth to Morris on weekends.

In 1902, Mr. and Mrs. Springford, Charlie, Frank, Jack and Victor, with Mr. and Mrs. E. Aston, decided to leave the farm life so they all journeyed west to Vancouver, B.C.. There they spent that winter, but the next spring, farming was still in their veins, so they all returned to Marwayne, Alberta, in 1903. The Springfords took up homesteading, while Claude Aston joined in partnership with his brother, Sperjon Aston, to own and operate the first drugstore in Lloydminster, called the 'Medical Hall', which is now owned by Claude's eldest son, Harold, assisted by his son, Douglas.

For a time, Annie continued operating her shop, but she also got the urge to go west, so she travelled out to Marwayne, where she married, settled and lived until her death at an early age. Isabel was the only one of the family who remained, spending her lifetime in the Morris area.



*Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Springford.*



*Annie Springford and friend - early 1900's.*



*LEFT: Isabelle Springford in 1905, prior to her marriage to Robert Lightfoot, right.*

## MR. AND MRS. ROBERT LIGHTFOOT

Robert Lightfoot emigrated from his home in Seascale, England, at the age of 21 years and arrived in the Morris area in the spring of 1902. He was employed on the farm of Jim Elliot, the former A. Cox farm, now owned by Clarence Siemens, Rosemort.

As Robert's ambition had always been to be a farmer, this was his main reason in coming to Canada. After he gained some experience, he became engaged in farming for himself, taking up residence one mile west and one-half mile south of Highway 23 on Section 34-4-1 East. This farm site was completely demolished when the dykes were built in 1967.



*Farm home of R. Lightfoot in 1935, with Mrs. Lightfoot and Mina.*

Brother William joined Robert about 1908 and they batched on the farm that winter. William worked for a couple of years in the Rural Municipality, then decided to go west to his brother, Harry, in Grand Forks, B.C. He returned about 1912 and worked on the John Fraser farm in Broadview, until 1914, when he joined the armed forces and served overseas. He returned in 1919 to marry Mary Affleck, former teacher, of Broadview School District. They took up farming on Mary's home farm at Crystal City. William died in August, 1964, and Mary passed away in March, 1973. Their only son, Stuart, and wife, now reside on the farm.

During all this time, Robert continued farming, and on March 16, 1909, he married Isabel Springford. Their marriage was blessed with three daughters, Grace Irene, Leta Belle and Mina Dorothy. Farming in these years was done with horses, so there was plenty of work to care for horses and other livestock, both winter and summer.



*Robert in 1931, returning home with the dairy van.*

Harvest time was an interesting season. The harvest crew moved from farm to farm, helping neighbours. This made a lot of extra work for mother and a hired girl. But when Dad bought the combine in 1935, how much easier the harvesting was. Three men now did the work of 10 or 12 men!

One joy of the winter was our cutter rides to and from school. Dad had bought "White Beauty" at a sale. She was an American bred carriage horse, so she could really travel. Stormy or fair weather, she trotted or galloped from school until we were at the back door, home safe.

Another winter job was hauling ice from the Red River to fill the cement well. This provided a cool storage place for cream and other perishable foods during the hot weather, as well as provide ice for the icebox and drinking water.

Spring was always an active season, cluck hens had to be set, and after three weeks, the eggs hatched fluffy little chicks. Later my parents bought a small incubator, which held 140 eggs. The incubator was heated with coal oil lamp. Mother turned the eggs daily, also dampened them the week before they hatched. It was a delight to see all these little chicks hatching in the course of a day or so.

It was a joyous reunion for Robert and his parents when they, joined by the rest of the family, spent the Christmas of 1921 together in England. However, Dad was happy to return to Canada at the end of his holiday.

Early in the next fall of 1922, Dad bought the brickyard property, which was owned and operated by Mr. McCutcheon. The brickyard had been in operation that summer, but due to the lack of good clay and sufficient funds, Mr. McCutcheon was forced to close his business.

Robert and his family moved onto the property in 1924, rebuilding the house the following year. Horticulture was a favourite pastime of Robert's, so he spent many hours beautifying the yard, also growing several small fruits as well as apples and crabs.

In 1929, he purchased the town dairy from Jack Haining, but sold it to Lu Andreson in about 1933. In these days, all the milking was done by hand. It was immediately poured into quart and pint glass bottles to be delivered early that same morning. The evening milk was separated to obtain the cream for morning sale.

During their lifetime, my parents found time to be members of the Methodist church and later the United Church. Dad was an elder of the church board, a town councillor, also became interested in curling. Mother was a member of the church choir, U.C.W., the Broadview Mission Band and a life member of the W.I.



*Mr. and Mrs. Lightfoot with daughter, Leta, Grace and Mina in 1936.*

In 1945, they retired and moved to their cottage at 253 Boyne Avenue. Here Dad died in August 1954. Mother lived in her home until the Manor was built, where she was one of the first resident members. She passed away in Winnipeg, February 1, 1971.

Grace clerked in the H.J. Murry store before and after her marriage to Christopher Vickers in July 1940. Chris joined the 11th Medium Battery, R.C.A. in January 1940, and served overseas, returning in 1945. They took up residence on the home farm, where they lived until their sale in 1974. At this time, the property was sold to Clarence Siemens, and they moved to Abbotsford, B.C. Their son, James, his wife, Hildegard, and Annamarie, reside in Winnipeg.



*Grace, Chris and Hildegard Vickers, James and Annamarie, seated.*

After completing her high school, Leta attended Winnipeg Normal School, graduating as a 1st class teacher. Her first school was Silver Plains, then she taught at Roland and Morris. Mina was wed to Jack Smith of Winnipeg, in October, 1947, and they still reside in their home in Winnipeg.

### **THOMAS MOODY** **Via the Dawson Trail**

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Moody came to Canada from Ireland, settling in Ontario. They embarked on their journey west with five of their children and household goods loaded behind a team of horses. In May, 1874, they arrived at Prince Arthur's Landing (Port Arthur) and continued their journey over the Dawson Trail. This route was considered to be the most arduous of any of the various ways to reach Winnipeg.

In her reminiscences, Emily Moody (Mrs. James Lewis) told of a terrible storm that erupted while they were crossing Lake Superior, and how at the height of the storm, the passengers and crew despaired of ever reaching land again. The passengers were all violently seasick and one young girl was so ill, she implored the captain to stop the ship so that she might die in peace.

There were several annoying delays along the trail, one at Lake Shebandowan, some 100 miles from the Landing and another at the northwest Angle, while awaiting transportation of their household effects across the Lake of the Woods.

It was during one of these delays that an Indian chief offered to buy the younger of the Misses Moody. The girls of the party were very careful after that never to stray too far from the wagons. There were other annoyances too, myriads of small black flies and mosquitoes plagued them along the way. They arrived in Winnipeg in June, where they operated a boarding house. Son, George, settled on a farm south of Morris, and Emily was introduced to her future husband, James Lewis.

On the farm of Thomas Moody, just south of Morris on *December 25, 1877*, there was held a community plowing match. A real celebration to mark the exceptionally mild winter of that year.

### **GEORGE MOODY** **Red River Steamboat - Fireman**

It was while my Father, the late George Moody was attending a lecture given by a Missionary, name unknown to date, on the great Northwest, that he became so impressed with the stories of the wonderful opportunities that awaited the agricultural settlers of this almost unknown land.

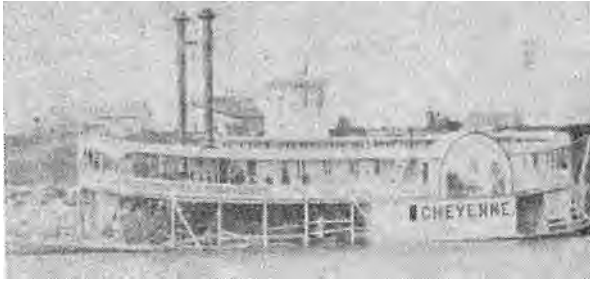
After some discussion, George and his family decided to sell their old farm near the town of Mitchell, Ontario, and migrate to Manitoba by way of the Dawson route. And so, on June 9th, 1874 they boarded a lake steamer at Goderich, Ont., on Lake Huron, and began their long and tiresome trek by way of lake and portage, across a wilderness of water, rock and muskeg.

The Dawson route was first opened by Dawson and his company to guide Sir Garnet Wolseley's British soldiers and Canadian volunteers through the Canadian wilderness to quell the Riel rebellion in 1869-1870.

After a harrowing experience of more than six weeks, the Moody family finally reached Winnipeg in August of 1874. The family at that time consisted of Grandfather, Grandmother, and their three sons and two daughters. George (my father), Thomas, and Joseph, and the girls, Kate and Emily.

Upon arriving in Winnipeg, my Grandparents with the assistance of the girls, Kate and Emily, took over the McAuley boarding house, which boarded and fed the men who worked in the McAuley sawmill.

My father, a horseman of extraordinary ability, held the honour of being the first civilian to bring a team of horses over the Dawson route in 1874, travelled on from Winnipeg to the Portage plains to locate land, finally finding a homestead close to what is now the town of Poplar Point, Manitoba. During his one year on the homestead, he experienced the grasshopper plague of that period, when all vegetation was destroyed. Here too, his team of horses, his pride and joy, contracted what was known then as Swamp Fever and died.



After this disaster, George returned to Winnipeg, and gained employment on a steamboat, plying between Winnipeg, Manitoba and Moorhead, Minnesota. It was during his term of employment as fireman on this run that he became acquainted with the settlement of Scratching River, now known as the Town of Morris. After two summers on the river, he decided to settle here and located on River Lots 313 and 315, in the Parish of Ste. Agathe, a few miles north of Morris.

It was here that my grandparents died and were buried in the old Methodist cemetery, a part of lot 315, Parish of Ste. Agathe, donated by my father to the Methodist Church of Canada.

The first land broken from virgin soil, was five acres of sod on lot 115, broken by the late John Moore, in exchange for a set of harnesses that was used on the team of horses on that historic journey over the famous Dawson route, in 1874.

Events, even in those bygone days, developed at a fairly rapid pace. Promoters were as active then as now and due to the boom of that early period, the settlement, then known as Scratching River, became an Incorporated Town in 1883.

Grandmother died in 1883, and the remaining members of the family went their separate ways. Father remained on the original farm and on June 9, 1884, he married Janet Gibb Early of Renfrew, Ontario. To this union were born four children, three boys and one girl; Wesley, Fred (deceased), George and Mabel, Mrs. William Donald. The original farm home remains in the family to date.

Among the early pioneers here at that time (as told to me by my father) were such families as the Mulveys, Moores, Turners, Patersons, Lawries, Gows, Kerchers and Swains, plus many others who have escaped my boyhood memories. Very few of the early pioneer families are left, but without exception, all of them

deserve the credit of building and pioneering far better than they knew at that time.



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*Fred Moody farm in 1951.*

## FRED MOODY

*by Georgina (Moody) Nelson*

All four of George and Janet Moody's children farmed. Wesley immediately south of Morris, but sold the farm to Orville Anderson in 1945. George farmed east of the Red River, selling his farm in the late 1960's. Mabel also resided on a farm east of the river, but is now living in the Red River Lodge in Morris. Fred, my father, remained on the home farm until his death in 1957.



*George and Fred Moody Wesley, George and Fred Moody, (seated) in their "coonskin" children of George and Janet coats. **Moody.***



*Plowing on the Fred Moody farm. Fred on the Twin City tractor, Wes Moody on the first plow.*



Donald, myself and 18 month Orville, came home for the funeral, and stayed for nine years. Kristina and Norman were added to our family. We all benefitted from the opportunity to enjoy the extended family and home farm with its rich family history. In 1967, we returned to Alberta, farming at Ohaton.

Our father, Fred Moody, married an English girl, Miriam Clark, and they had three daughters, Nancy, Joan and Georgina (myself). Joan died accidentally years ago.



*Miriam and Fred Moody in 1953, with daughters, Georgina, Nancy and Joan.*

I recall hearing about a few incidents in the past. Travellers, Indian or white, in need of accommodation, were never turned away; they were given a meal and a place to sleep, sometimes only the kitchen floor. The horses would be fed and stabled.

Trouble arose one fall, while moving the threshing machine, pulled by an old Rumley steam engine across the Red River. During the crossing, the rotting planks on the pontoon bridge began to collapse under the immense weight of the machines. Needless to say, that the



*Donald and Georgina Nelson with children, Orville, Kristina and Norman.*

remainder of the crossing was made in great haste, leaving the bridge in need of much repair.

Our mother came from Derbyshire, England in 1926. She left Winnipeg to live in Morris the following year. Mother found housekeeping on a prairie farm very difficult; there was no running water and no hardwood floors. However, she possessed courage and "stick-to-it-iveness" in great measure, and gave the finest of nursing care to our grandmother for nine years. She had only the most primitive equipment, the bed was double and low and laundry had to be washed by hand in a tub, using a plunger.

In 1975, mother and Nancy moved to Red Deer, Alberta, and Nancy continued in the Public Health Department there.

## LUDWIG PASCHKE

On August 10, 1874 in Choritzine, Russia, a son was born to Stephen and Julie Paschke, whom they named Ludwig. As a youth, his ambition was to immigrate to Canada. Thus, in 1892, at the age of 18, against the wishes of his parents, he set sail for Canada alone, arriving in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He never did see any of his family again.

Ludwig's early years in Canada were spent in helping to build railways, which entailed strenuous work, often among many hardships.

In 1903, he met and married Helen Harmel, who was a recent Russian immigrant. They lived in Winnipeg until 1905, where their oldest son, William, was born.

Shortly after, they moved to Whitemouth, Manitoba, where they took up farming, starting only with the barest necessities. While here, ten more children were born to them; three sons, Edward, Arthur and George, and seven daughters, Lillian, Lydia, Lena, Ruth, Bertha, Esther and Martha.

In 1920, after seeing better opportunities at Morris, Manitoba, they moved there, settling down on a farm 4 miles and 1 mile south of town. Soon after, they invested all they had in a farm six miles west of Morris, but due to the crops being drowned out, they had to abandon the farm.

In the 28 years that the family farmed around Morris, they rented and moved to four different farms. In 1940, they purchased a farm four miles west of Morris and moved there to live, in 1943.

In the years 1921 to 1926, three more daughters were born; Elizabeth, Helen and Beatrice. This brought the count to fourteen children.

All four sons took up farming and rented and purchased land in the Morris Municipality, farming until they retired or passed away.

William (d. 1973) married Lilly Kuhn; Edward married Lena Walters; Lillian (d. 1966) married William Miller, Edmonton; Lydia married Louie Dopf, Alberta; Arthur, married Emma Donst, Kelowna, B.C.; George, married Hattie Tiede, Morris; Lena, married Joe Gebauer, Oak Lake; Ruth, married Wm. Weiss, Killarney; Bertha, married Ed Rochul, Morden; Esther, married Alvin Penner, Morris; Martha, married Wm. Funk, Vernon, B.C.; Elizabeth, married Waldo Penner, Victoria, B.C.;

Helen lives in Kelowna, B.C.; Beatrice, married Lawrence Gruenke, Morris.

There are 52 grandchildren. In 1945, Mother Paschke passed away. In 1948, Ludwig Paschke married Ernestine Tonn, retiring from farming and moving into the Town of Morris. He passed away in 1956, at the age of 82 years.

As a family, we can remember many hard times. There were crop failures, employment was hard to find. When all fourteen children were at home, it was a job just to clothe and feed them all, but we never went hungry. We were a close, happy family, who learned to know and love the Lord at an early age. We all loved music and singing. All fourteen children sang in the church choir and the four boys sang as a male quartet for a number of years.

As Father Paschke remarked on his 80th birthday: "All praise to God for his unending love and faithfulness."

## WALTERS

In 1904, Steven Walters, his wife, Louise, and family, emigrated from Russia and came to settle in Canada. Landing in Montreal, their journey started toward the prairies. They settled on a farm in the Broadview District of Morris. Their beginning was rough, as it was for all pioneers, but they were never disheartened. Their sons, Emil, Gustav, August and Leo soon found employment, as well as the girls, Emily, Lydia, Mary, Martha and Bertha. Before too long, they scattered to different parts of Manitoba and the United States.

After a few years in Manitoba, Grandfather Steven and his wife purchased the land now occupied by Merv. Kaminski's and lived there until his wife passed away



*Emil and Hulda Walters with Reinhold (front). Daniel, Elsie, Mina, Lena and Amy at back.*

suddenly of a heart attack. He then moved to Detroit, Michigan, where his youngest son, Leo, was, and lived there until 1936, when he passed away.

In 1908, Emil and Hulda Walters were married by Rev. Albert Karlenzig at the home of his parents. For a brief period, they lived just east of Morris. It was during this time their first daughter, Lena (Mrs. Edward Paschke,

now of Winnipeg) was born. They soon moved back to the Broadview District and after a few moves, they purchased their own farm, which is still owned by their youngest son, Reinhold Walters.

During those early years, life was hard and tedious. We remember Dad telling us how he had gone all the way to St. Malo for a load of wood with a team of horses, and even returned the same day. (We better not complain about our heating bills) Of course, this was always done in the winter time.

In 1918, Dad and Mother Walters planned their dream home and began building it in 1919. The contractors were the Kroenig Bros. who later moved to Portland, Oregon. This home was in use until last year, and at the present time it is being torn down. It was in his home that many joys and sorrows were shared and most of the family was born.

Elsie (Mrs. Arthur Edel of Morris) and her husband and family, still reside in the Broadview District.

Mina (Mrs. John Zilkie) and her husband reside in Morden, Manitoba.

Daniel, the oldest son, operated a grocery store in Morris for a few years, then moved to Winnipeg. In 1969 with his wife and two sons, Gordon and Milton, he moved to Edmonton, where he was in the grocery business. In 1977, he became ill suddenly and soon after passed away at the age of 56.

Amy (Mrs. Richard Edel) and her husband and family reside in Calgary, Alberta.

Reinhold, the youngest son, his wife and son, Calvin, reside in Morris.

One son and daughter died in infancy.

In 1950, Dad and Mother Walters retired from farming. Reinhold, their youngest son, had just been married two weeks before the 1950 flood and took over the family farm. We have many memories of how we spent the first 5 weeks of our married life, rowing our way to the barn to do chores in a boat. The cattle were up in the hay loft. We were young and enjoyed it.

In 1952, Mother and Dad Walter moved to the town of Morris, where they spent their time with their flowers and trees, which was their joy.

Dad Walters was also one of the pioneers of the Emmanuel Baptist Church. It was here that he, as well as his family, loved to worship, and where he served joyfully, giving of his time and talents. We as children, are thankful to our parents for the spiritual foundations we were given in our home.

In 1958, the folks were privileged to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary together with friends and relatives. All the children and grandchildren were able to be present. It was a joyous occasion for them.

After a brief illness, Dad Walters passed away in 1968 at the age of 86. And Mother Walters passed away in 1970, at the age of 77. "Gone, but not forgotten."

## JOHN FRASER

John Fraser came from Clifford, Ontario, to Morris in 1900, as a teacher. He taught school until the end of the year, then decided to farm.

Mr. Fraser settled in the Broadview district and stayed with the George Club family until his home was completed.

In 1901, John Fraser married Jessie Mabel Ross from Clifford, Ontario. They had three children; Gladys, Jessie and William.

Gladys married Charles Quinn; they had two children; Ross and Margaret.

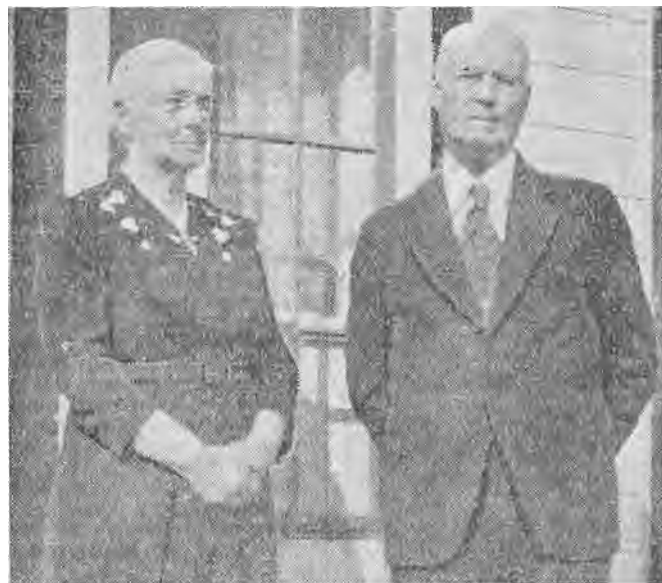
Jessie remained single.

William married Marion Vickers; they had four children; William Gordon, Marion Gayle and Donald John, and Roberta Jean.



**GEORGE  
CHURCHILL**  
1866-1955

*Pioneer farmer. George Churchill of the Broadview district. Mr. Churchill came to Broadview in 1900.*



*George and Ada (Knowles) Churchill on their Golden Wedding Anniversary in March of 1942. Son, Stanley, farmed home place until it was sold to the Edels.*



*The Isbrand Peters family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Abe, Ike, Pete and son-in-law, Henry Epp. MIDDLE ROW: Jake, Henry. FRONT ROW: Nettie, Mrs. Susan (Dyck) Peters, Isbrand Peters with grandson Victor Epp, and Susan (Peters) Epp in 1935. The Peters family came to Broadview in 1937 to section 8-4-1 E.*



*Cousins, Margery, Margaret and John Peters on farm horse at Broadview. Margery is the daughter of Jake and Fay Peters and Margaret and John, the children of Henry and Helen Peters. Taken in 1956.*



*Students at Broadview School the last year it was open. BACK ROW: Shelley Paschke, Margery Peters, Mrs. Nichols. MIDDLE ROW: Larry Skoglund, Shirley Irvine, Mary Peters. FRONT ROW: Joyce and Fred Peters, Tracey Skoglund.*

## WILHELM HOFFMAN

by Ida Hoffman

In January of 1892, to Wilhelm and Julianna Hoffman, a first child was born, a son. Ernest Wilhelm. The very next day, (Jan. 28, 1892) brother Edward came, in a state of excitement, to their house with the fateful news that the Czar had issued an edict by which all land owners, who were not Russian citizens would be "relieved" of their property. Seeing that the Hoffmans had retained their German citizenship even after departure from Germany, this meant that they would be left penniless and stranded. Their property would be sold to Russian citizens and the Crown would be a "dribble" richer.

However, sympathizing Russian neighbors came to their aid. They offered to buy the property off these German citizens, right away, (and for a fair price), before the Royal edict would become law. In less than two weeks, two Hoffman families had made their farewells to their faithful Russian neighbors and were on their way back to their homeland, Germany. But they had already decided that as soon as the proper arrangements could be made, they would join another group of people who intended to emigrate. By the middle of March they were embarked, enroute to the Land of Freedom, Canada.

The ship was small and the seas merciless to the unwary passengers. All but Julianna and her infant son became violently seasick and had to be confined to their cabins. The two older children of the Edward Hoffmans died at sea and their little bodies were lowered into the depths. They docked at Halifax and were now travelling through the unsettled wildernesses of the coastal provinces, through Quebec and Ontario. Fear clutched their hearts ... all they had ever known were densely populated areas, and here they had been travelling for many hundreds of miles without seeing a sign of life.

When they reached the wide open spaces of Manitoba, their fears vanished like a bad dream. Once in Winnipeg, which was little more than a small village, they were planning plans and dreaming dreams. All the cash Wilhelm's purse held were ten Canadian dollars, five of which he loaned to his now broke, elder brother Edward. This too, was the parting place of the two brothers. The William Hoffmans stayed in Winnipeg while the Ed Hoffmans moved to Green Bay (a "suburb" of Beausejour). To the Canadian people "Wilhelm" became "William" or "Billy". In spite of his limited education, of the three primary grades, in Germany, (before moving to Russia), Wilhelm had always been a linguist and a very apt scholar in Maths, besides having an inborn love for horticulture. Julianna, on the other hand, had a very good education in Germany. In spite of her spritely stature, (five feet one in height) she was energetic, which enabled her to accomplish a task in one half the time.

They shared a "duplex", (a shanty app. 40 by 28 feet) with another family, strangers. The wall that separated the two "apartments" was not air proof, neither was it sound proof or even vision proof. Mr. Hoffman found work in a matter of a few days, as a builder.

Early the next year, his firm contracted the building of



*Wilhelm and Julianna (Jahnke) Hoffman, with baby daughter, Olive (now Mrs. Waldemar Rempell, son Ernest, Ida and Lily (Mrs. J.J. Janzen) Lily was the seamstress of the household since the age of fourteen, and sewed almost all the feminine attire worn in this photo. Note the thunderbird hats, laden with frills, bows and flowers galore.*

Elevators in Southern Manitoba, so the Hoffmans were once more on the move. This time their "ship" was a bumpy Ox-Cart, laden with all their earthly possessions, which included a great maroon colored chest which held Mrs. Hoffman's wardrobe and all their sentimental valuables, etc. Down the water soaked Queens Highway, (now No. 75) their cumbersome vehicle groaned and swayed, as one or the other side sank axle deep into the mire, threatening, every moment, to dump the precious cargo headlong into the murky spring mud holes. Eventually they reached Morris and thence via Plum Creek trail, they arrived at their destination, Plum Coulee. Luckily this trek was made early in spring before the vast hordes of mosquitos, black flies, horse flies and other poisonous insect pests awoke, or the "move" might have run into dire trouble.

In Plum Coulee, the friendly Mennonite people extended them a heart-warming welcome. In the matter of a couple of days they were settled snugly if not spaciouly, in a two roomed shanty. The kitchen-living room had an earthen floor.

The furniture consisted of a huge floor-to-ceiling brick Kamien (kaa-mean) stove, with an enormous fire box which was fed with flax, straw, brush and brick-a-brack. Necessity had thus become the Mother of *Innovations* too. If that big Kamien was thoroughly heated during the day, it would keep the rooms warm all through the long winter nights without having to be stoked. Other fur-

niture pieces were two heavy board cupboards, a large home-made table, and benches for seating, besides a sleeping bench. (Like a rough wooden settee with a large 3 x 6 foot drawer). If you pulled the drawer out you had a Queen sized bed, which was made up at bedtime. It had a fresh straw filled mattress, covered with a heavy, home-made sheet and topped with a light feather-tick and made you sleep *like a Queen!*

The master-bedroom had a *board floor*, a large home-made bed, an enormously heavy clothes closet, and the large maroon chest, which also served as a chair or chairs. I don't remember any mirrors. We saw our freckled-faced features in glass windows or in the surfaces of clear water. In the summertime a small outdoor brick stove served as an all-purpose cooker and baker. These small outdoor stoves were still in wide spread use as late as the early 20's.

Transportation became less burdensome and safer. As coal, gas, oil, and electricity became easily available, people rushed out to buy the new work savers. Every new generation wanted to have it better than the last generation!

Back to Plum Coulee. For six more years, W. Hoffman worked for the building firm and then turned to farming. This had always been his and his wife's ambition. In spite of wages having been very low, their savings had multiplied beyond expectations. Mrs. Hoffman had proved herself a perfect stewardess and an ideal helpmate. Her luscious gardens kept her family healthy and happy. Root crops were stored in outdoor cellars which kept them garden fresh all year round. With their savings, they now purchased horses and equipment for their next venture.

They rented a farm just South of Lowe Farm and seeded it. The harvest was sparse that year. So the next spring they moved four miles North of Lowe Farm. This was one of the most isolated places. To this new home, North of Lowe Farm, the Ennses from Rosenort came to visit us. They took note of our meager beginnings and our needs, and offered helping hands. A Mr. John Enns offered Dad all the seed he needed (to seed his farm that spring) without money. When Dad asked him how much he wanted for his grain, he answered, "Oh, give me back bushel for bushel *when you can afford it.*" We shall never forget these people. They were friends in need and in deed. That fall there was a bumper crop and Dad could return bushel for bushel, the grain that had been so graciously given.

Early the next spring (1902) the chance to buy two quarters of land presented itself and Dad took it. The land was on the beautiful banks of the Scratching river (Morris River), in Pleasant Valley, (where a "flock" of venturesome Morrisers had settled). There were the Gunnesses, Gabauer, McMillans, MacDonalds, Wiers, Knights, Burks, Rutherfords, Micklejohns, the Johnsons, Fred Hill, the Shotts, the Henschells and then we, the Hoffmans came to make the district truly cosmopolitan.

For the first time, we lived in a house with three rooms downstairs and one room upstairs. But in spite of all the "grandeur", wooden floors in every room and what not, the old sleeping-bench still made the grade, and was set

up in the living room because there was otherwise not enough bedding to sleep all the children.

Living on the banks of a beautiful river was a delightful experience for the kids. The eddying waters actually sang as they tumbled over each other in their hurry to reach the Big Red some twelve miles south and east from Pleasant Valley. The thrill of bird and frog choruses was an everyday thing to them, later becoming cherished memories to be recalled.

Wilderness, correctly describes the endless marshlands and parishes, at the turn of the century. In spite of the tremendous job the Scratching River made of draining thousands of acres of marshy wastelands, it still left other thousands of acres of breeding spots for billions of mosquitos, black flies, horse flies and microbes to spawn and spread unchecked.

In a matter of ten years, vast changes were coming about. Great earth-moving machinery invaded the district ... roads were built, ditches and canals were introduced, draining the silt from the Pembina hills into our Scratching River, and burying the tree clad banks under a foot of thick mud and debris. What a price we pay for progress!



"Lunch time". The Hoffman gang custom harvesting in 1910 in Pleasant Valley.

For eighteen years the Hoffmans lived in Pleasant Valley, rising from outright poverty to fairly well-being; from a family of five to a family of twelve; Ernest, Milydia (Lily), John, Ida, Albertina (Teenie), Mathilda, Willie, Samuel, Albert (*Alex*), Alma, Oliva and Frances. Of these, nine grew up, the other three: Baby Alma died in infancy. Willie aged 17, and Alex aged 14. Both boys died, about a month apart, shortly after a tragic house fire in mid winter.

Ernest married Anna Jarske, they have eight children. Ernest is now deceased. Lily, who married Jacob Janzen, have four children, they reside in the Morris Manor. John and Martha. (Corl), are both deceased, they had three children. Teenie married Reinhold Stober; they have three children, and live in Swan River. Mathilda married Henry Schatz, they had three children. Rev. Schatz, passed away, and Mathilda lives in the Morris Manor. Samuel married Elma Neher, they reside in Morris and have three children. Olive married Waldemar Rempel. They have five children, and live in B.C. Frances married Paul Bergstresser, of the Morris area, they have

three children. Ida, the only one who stayed all in one piece, calls Morris her home. She was a teacher by trade, a business woman by necessity, a traveller by curiosity, a jack-of-all-trades on demand and lastly a free-lance writer.

I trust that by reviewing the past, we will open our eyes to recognize the very real sacrifices our forefathers made, so their children might have it better than they had it. We can never repay them in dollars and cents, but can show our gratitude by the contribution we make with our own lives.



*Waldemar Rempel in 1942 - travelling in elegance when roads were impassible for cars.*

## ERNEST HOFFMAN

Ernest Hoffman was born in Russia and emigrated to Canada as an infant with his parents, in 1892. He spent his childhood years in Pleasant Valley. At age 4, he had his first experience in formal education at Prof. Ewerts in Gretna. Here he learned the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, and development a life-long respect for learning. In 1917, he married Anna Jarschke, and together, they ran a homestead and operated a saw mill in Balsam Bay, Manitoba. A few years later, he moved to Winnipeg, having received his steam engine certificate at night school and working for a gas company. For a time, he ran a lumber yard in Sewell and in Saskatchewan.



*Sam and Ernest Hoffman in 1930's. D6 Cat pulling 94 run of drill, two 36 run, and one 22.*

Whatever his endeavours, there was always the pull to Morris and family ties. Around 1925, he purchased a small farm in the Sewell area, near the family complex, and engaged in farming. His most productive years were from 1930-1950, when he rented and later purchased a

large farm in Brunkild. Most of his children grew from childhood to young adulthood here, and it was here that he established himself as a vital part of the community. Even so, during these years, he did not abandon his Morris interests. He established a hatchery there, in partnership with his sister, Ida, and which she later purchased.

In 1951, he sold his Brunkild farm and purchased a river lot farm in Morris, which he operated in semi-retirement with the help of children and renters, until his death in 1972. He had a tremendous love of the land and of growing things, and it was significant that he died clearing a patch of scrub brush so that he might conserve the water supply for his garden.

His wife, Anna, was the mainstay of the family through their more than fifty years together, and she still spends her summers with children in the Red River Valley. Their eight living children are spread across the continent. Ervin and Earle live in British Columbia; Elvin is in Colorado; Manny, Genie and Eileen are in Manitoba; Esther is in New Mexico; and Ethel is in Connecticut. It is of interest that Manny still own's his father's Morris farm.



*John Hoffman's new Hupmobile, an attraction in the 1920's.*

## JOHN HOFFMAN 1897-1971

John was born at Plum Coulee, Manitoba on June 17th, 1897. He spent his early years working and helping on his father's farm.

After World War I he emigrated to the United States, via the Great Lakes, where he worked for a while as a sailor on freighters shipping merchandise on the Lakes.

Settling at Toledo, Ohio, he apprenticed himself as a bricklayer and secured his trade.

Here he met his future wife, Martha Mathilda Corl, whom he married in June of 1927.

John's involvement with his trade as a bricklayer led him into Union activities, and in 1934 he became President of Local No. 3 of the International Brotherhood of Bricklayers', Masons and Plasterers. He was deeply committed to union work, and served 3 consecutive terms as president of this very active local. In later life he continued his membership, and received his 25 year pin for service to the union.





*John Hoffman, son of Wm. Hoffman, bricklayer who founded concrete block construction company in Morris.*

John and Martha Hoffman had 3 children, born to them in Ohio Ida Juliana (who died in infancy), William Cori (1930) and Carol Helen (born 1938).

The depression years in Ohio was particularly difficult for the construction trades, and during those years John worked on the railroad.

In 1947, a decision was made to return to John's homeland, and the family migrated back to Morris, Manitoba, where they settled. John's first idea was to begin a concrete-block manufacturing company, but his efforts to secure backing for this venture proved extremely difficult because not much was known of concrete block in Canada at the time.

Combining construction activity with the small manufacturing unit on the banks of the Morris River, John opened business as Hoffman Construction.

Fate was not particularly kind to the family in those years, and in the winter of 1947, the initial Canadian home of John and Martha Hoffman burned to the ground - destroying all their worldly possessions. The family moved into spare rooms of Hoffman Hatchery (owned and operated by John's sister Ida).

The following spring, the Morris and Red Rivers swelled out of their banks in a prelude to other floods that would follow.

John and Martha built their home again on the banks of the Morris River and John continued his work with his fast growing construction company, with his wife Martha doing much of the bookkeeping and office work.

In 1950, the big flood came again, and the home of John and Martha Hoffman was again ravaged and destroyed. By now rebuilding was nearly a practiced thing for them, and so they repaired and rebuilt their home, continuing on with their life.

As William (Bill) their son came of age, he moved into the construction business with his father, and the company expanded to take contracts around most of Southern Manitoba. In 1958, Carol joined the firm too.

1960 provided another tragedy for the family, with the death of Martha. Soon after, John left the construction business with his children.

In the fall of 1961, John met and married Ragna Larsson. With his marriage to Ragna, he built a retirement home in Peachland, B.C. - and there settled to spend some quiet time.

John died quietly in 1971 at Peachland, B.C. - and was returned to Morris for his final resting place. He is survived by his widow, Ragna Larsson Hoffman who resides in Winnipeg, and his two children.

William Corl (Bill) resides with his wife, Gwen and two of three daughters (Teresa and Melissa) in Minnedosa, Manitoba. A third and eldest daughter Holly, (Mrs. Alan Macklem) resided in Souris, Manitoba.

Carol and her husband Fred (King), live at Thompson, Manitoba with their two children, Heather and Michael.

## SAM HOFFMAN

When Sam Hoffman was the youngest of eight children, his dad finally started farming. At Pleasant Valley he still had virgin soil or prairie land, and he helped organize and develop a few districts.

As far as Sam Hoffman is concerned, most of the roads and school had already been built, and municipalities organized, so Sam felt as though he had only been standing in the shadow of the pioneers.

It was at this time when Dad and his boys got more land, and more equipment. As Dad watched his boys plow with the big twelve bottom plow he could not help but think of the progress of agriculture in a fast moving world.

Many different persons had a part in shaping my Dad's Canadian life. There was the Englishman who first taught Dad the language; the Frenchman who bartered wood for oats and barley; the American who gave Dad two horses so he could farm; the German who offered Dad money so he could buy land; and the Mennonite who gave Dad 200 bushels of seed wheat, telling him he could pay it back bushel for bushel with no interest ... this generosity was indicative of the Canadian people at that time, and Dad wanted to become a Canadian with them.

"God bless our wide Dominion, our fathers' chosen land,

And bind in lasting union each oceans distant strand."

In 1940, while vacationing in Banff, Sam met Elma Neher, and on February 1, 1945, they were married in Carbon Alberta. They made their home at Morris.

At this time, Sam was beet farming at Sewell. Elma being a farm girl, soon got accustomed to bringing out lunch and coffee to the fields. The coffee was put in an 8 gallon cream can and transported by our 1943 Chevy 4 door sedan. Sam was given the opportunity to employ 104 German Prisoners of War in the beet fields. The P.O.W.'s were paid the same rate as any Canadian employee, except the money went straight to the Government, to help pay for their keep.

By 1957 Sam saw an ever growing demand for a bridge contractor in the Morris area. Some drains like the



*German prisoners of war (with red circle on shirt backs) working in Sam Hoffman's sugar beet field. POW is holding baby Wayne Hoffman, and remarked he had a son that age at home.*



*One of the many bridges constructed by Hoffman Bridge and Cons. This one at Kane, being inspected by Dale in 1976.*

Shannon, were dug as far back as 1910, and the bridges were not capable of transporting the heavily laden trucks of today. The horse and buggy loads of sixty to seventy bushels were long gone, and now the trucks were carrying 400 to 500 bushels.

In addition to this, more drains were constantly being built. The marsh lands the pioneers travelled on was now prime land due to the drainage.

The more drains there were, the more the demand for bridges. To date Sam has built approximately 260 bridges, ranging in size from twenty feet to a six span-bridge of one hundred and ninety-eight feet.

Although bridge building was the main root of Sam's construction company, it branched out into several areas in the passing of time, including basement digging in slack time.

The construction was no longer in Morris area only. Bridges and culverts were being constructed province wide; this was followed by the formation of Hoffman construction, in 1978 with Dale and Roland as partners.

Dale, the oldest son, has a cable laying caterpillar on contract with Manitoba Telephone System for the third year. They usually begin in May and follow through till the first snow fall.

Sam and Elma's marriage has been blessed with four children. Wayne Lowell born November 16, 1945 and died at the age of ten July 31, 1955. Daphne Constance



*Sam's sons continue in Hoffman Construction, here Roland on Backhoe and government inspector, Pat Beet on the job.*

born November 4, 1947, and now married to Willmar Keck. They live at Beausejour, Manitoba, with their two daughters Tamara and Heidi.

Dale Samuel born October 11, 1948, is now married to Mary Ann Rempel. They live in Morris and have one daughter Robyn Leah.

Roland Royce was born October 5, 1958, and he is still at the family home.

## **JOHN I. DYCK (1871-1940)**

John I. Dyck, a fairly tall, stoop shouldered man, was noted for his restlessness and quick temper, but more especially for his advanced farming methods and his inventive mind. In 1910, John, along with his auburn haired wife, the former Elizabeth Neufeld (1874-1960) and their growing family, moved from their homestead just north of Plum Coulee, into the Morris Municipality, taking up residence on N. 112 7-4-1 West, in the Steinfeld School District. This location, which at that time was wide open prairie, was to be the home of three generations of the Dyck family for 42 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Dyck must have been an odd looking couple, as Mrs. Dyck was only 4'10" tall and had a lifetime average weight of 88 pounds. Her small stature, however, did not deter her from bearing ten live, 10 pound children, eight of whom were to reach maturity. They were Elizabeth (Mrs. John F. Harder - 1894-1961), John N. (1896-), Mary (Mrs. Jacob F. Braun - 1898-), Abe (1900-), Agnes (1902-1905), Peter (1905-), Hank (1907-), Tina (1910-1919), Jack (1913-) and Bill (1917-).

John I. Dyck loved to venture. So, in 1910, he bought a Case 75-110 steam engine, the largest model made. He hitched it to a 10-bottom plow, hired men, and broke about 1000 acres of virgin soil north of Lowe Farm for Americans such as one Chester Crouch, who then rented the land to others. His young sons, John and Abe, helped by cooking and doing odd jobs, until they themselves were able to run whatever steamer their father owned. It seems they did a lot of custom breaking, as son John N. was still at it during the early years of his marriage after 1918. In time, they traded their large, romantic monolith for the more maneuverable gasoline engine. They owned a threshing outfit, threshing for many farmers, and son



*John I. Dyck at left, hired man, Jake Dyck at the controls of Case 75 - 110 steam engine with power steering, taken in 1910.*

Peter remembers that they once, unwittingly, camouflaged an illegal "still" for their employer, by threshing a stack over the framework enclosing it, by being made to think that it was for a pig-sty.

John I. Dyck's inventive mind was always at work. At one time, he acquired a bale of tobacco from Quebec and set about to build a tobacco cutter. He then retailed this product to his neighbours. All this proved to be illegal. So, men from the Excise Department arrived just in time to see this very unique machine in action, marvelled at its perfection, took it and the tobacco bale with them, and fined him. His generation, however, would remember him better as the full-bearded blacksmith, who repaired their machinery. As a school teacher, he fought for better education. He helped organize the United Grain Growers and promoted war bonds from 1914-1918.

During the winter months, John I. read novels to his illiterate wife, who took great delight in retelling the stories in great detail, to all whom she could corner.



*Stooking machine,  
invented and patented  
by John I. Dyck  
about 1927.*

The family was active in community activities. The boys took part in the local literary club, when it was active, but they especially loved to dance.

Not all the family were agriculturally inclined. So, Abe joined Elizabeth and husband John F. Harder at Herbert, Saskatchewan, where they ran a garage. Peter waged a 10 year battle with T.B., was treated at the Sanatorium at Ninette, Winnipeg and Qu'Appelle, and headed west after being cured.

By 1929, John I., along with sons, John N. and Hank, and son-in-law, Jacob I. Braun, were farming 7 quarters of land. He owned the north halves of sections 7 and 9, and rented 3 / 4 of section eight. But John I. again became restless. In order to give his second youngest son, Jack, a better educational opportunity, he purchased a partnership in a flour mill in Plum Coulee, moving his wife and youngest children to that town. His son, John N. and family, took over the family farm. However, the crash of 1929 intervened and the results were disastrous. When the convulsions reached their climax in 1933, John I. sold his remaining half section (N. 1 / 2 7-4-i), packed up his wife, two youngest sons, son, Hank and family, and headed for B.C. to join Elizabeth, Abe and Peter at Mission City in the Fraser Valley. He believed that greater opportunity

was to be found there; his tiny wife, who remembered the milder climate, the fruit trees and the mountains of South Russia, where she had lived till 1891, longed for that type of countryside, and was all for it.

Son, John N. and daughter, Mary and families, were left behind. John's older sons remember their tears at their departure. The B.C. group were not to be spared the rigors of the Depression, and with the exception of John N.'s visit to B.C. in 1934, it was to be 8 years before visits back and forth commenced. However, Elizabeth wrote faithfully and in great detail, and family ties remained intact.

But John I. Dyck never again saw Manitoba. He succumbed to cancer in 1940. His widow was to outlive him by 20 years. This tiny woman, who habitually wore three petticoats to keep warm, and was never known to be seriously ill, slipped away quickly and easily at age 86.

Abe, Peter and Hank now are in retirement in the Port Coquitlam area; Jack is retired in Vernon; Bill is a mechanic in Mission. Mary, Mrs. Jack Braun, having spent all her life in the Morris Municipality, mostly in Lowe Farm, now is in retirement in Plum Coulee. John N. whose story follows, lives in Brandon.

## **JOHN N. DYCK (1896 -)**

Of the six sons raised by John I. Dyck, John N. was the only 'man of the soil'. Unlike his restless father, he had the patience and fortitude to see his projects through to the end. He was slight in stature, had inherited his mother's deep auburn hair, and had a full compliment of freckles. In his youth, in spite of his quiet, serious free-thinking nature, he was noted for "calling" at square dances. He passed his love of dancing on to all his family and when the morality of dancing was questioned, he used to say, "It is an art, when done well."

He loved to operate his father's large machinery and "broke" a good portion of the land in the Lowe Farm area.

In 1914, he and his younger brother, Abe, fooled around with an unexploded dynamite cap, which they found in their supply of steamer coal. When Abe couldn't set it off, he took it, set it upon his father's anvil and gave it a big whack with his father's blacksmith hammer. The resulting explosion left him minus the tips of his left thumb and several fingers, and more seriously, his left eye. His mother's first concern after she knew the worst, was whether he could ever find a wife! However, on November 10, 1918, the day before the Armistice, he was married to Helena Blatz (1896-1971) second daughter of Jacob and Aganetha Blatz, who farmed 4 1/2 miles to the west in the Rosefarm School District.

Helena was a tremendously strong, energetic and hard working woman. John N. and Helena settled on the N.E. 1/4 9-4-1, in 1919. His sister, Mary and husband Jacob F. Braun, settled on the North-west quarter. The land was virgin soils and as usual, John N. proceeded to break it. They built their buildings and his wife planted a good shelter belt. Five of their seven children were born during the ten years that they called this home. The children

were: Andy (1919-), Jake (1921-), John (1922-1925), Elmer (1924-), John (1928-), Mary (1930-) and Helen (1933-).

The year 1924 was noteworthy. John N. was the first Canadian and third person ever, thanks to a newly



*John N. Dyck family, 1946. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Jake, Elmer, John, Helen wife of Andrew, Andrew. FRONT ROW: Daughters, Mary and Helen.*

developed serum, to survive the rigors of Lock Jaw. (Tetanus) He arrived home from the Misericordia Hospital the day after son, Elmer, was born. His good wife had coped with the help of a 16 year old hired hand, who had been sent for the midwife at the right time. It was also the year of the one big crop in ten, as the drainage system had not been put through, and many potentially good crops were drowned.

After the Depression had dealt its hardest blow, John N. and family, in 1933, found themselves renting the N. 112 of Section 7, land which had been owned by the family for 23 years! It was to be another 10 years before he could arrange to buy it back from the Trust and Loan Co.

Out of the depths of that Great Depression, came the Co-Operative Movement at Lowe Farm, and John N. Dyck was co-instigator, charter member, and director of every Co-Op venture undertaken in that community while he resided there.

Mrs. Dyck was a thrifty, hard working wife, making a good home in a draughty house. The large garden provided the food, sheep provided the wool for comforters, socks and mitts. Her spinning wheel whirled, and her knitting needles clicked far into the night, while her husband was away at another Co-Op meeting. She was a charter member of the Lowe Farm Women's Institute and was proud to attend regularly.

By the late '30's, the farm again was well mechanized. It sported a new A.R. John Deere rubber-tired tractor, Ford 112 ton and Massey Harris Combine. The binder was converted into a swather and the threshing machine and harvest gangs were a thing of the past.

In the early '40's, John N. began to grow sugar beets, an industry that sprang up due to the sugar shortage of World War 11. This meant that row crop equipment had to be purchased. It also meant employment for neighborhood youth and townsfolk. Transportation from

town was by way of the '36 Ford 112 ton. The boys were given responsibility early, in running the complex machinery. They did much custom work with their row crop machinery. John, especially, was his father's right hand man. During the war years, they also ran a sizeable hog operation.

In the early '40's, John N. and five others from the Altona area got together and laid plans for what ultimately became the Co-op Vegetable Oils Plant in Altona. This project had many setbacks, but the sunflower and rape fields now visible in Manitoba are due to the foresight of these men. Naturally, these crops were immediately grown on the Dyck farm. In fact, the first plot of Rape was grown just south of the yard. No one, including the field man, knew of the flowering characteristics of that plant! There was great consternation when the blossoms resembled the much hated mustard weed. Thinking that the seed must have carried a noxious weed new to the area, children John, Mary and Helen were sent to pull those dastardly weeds. The next day there were more! Finally, the field man returned with the welcome news that all was well. The children believed they were more relieved than their father!

The older boys attended St. Peters School while they lived on Section 9 and later, all attended Steinfeld. John took grade 9 in Lowe Farm. Mary took grade 10 and 11 there, and Helen graduated there from grade 12, in 1951. The older 3 boys attended the Rhineland Agricultural Institute in Altona for a winter each. All were sent to appropriate short courses and Folk Schools, when available. Helen received a diploma in Homemaking from the University of Manitoba, in 1952. John N. was Secretary-Treasurer of Steinfeld School Division in the late '30's (he had studied English at the M.E.I. in Altona for one winter and was the only literate board member at that time) and was a trustee from 1946-1952.

Andy joined the R.C.A.F. in 1943. Upon his return from overseas, in 1946, he bought into the Lowe Farm transfer business. He married Helen Giesbrecht from Rosenfeld and their two older children, Carol and Jack were born while they lived in Lowe Farm. Elmer, who had been employed at Martens Garage, joined him in the transfer business for a while. They sold their business to L. and D. Transfer and ran a trucking business for a few years. Later, Elmer worked on road construction for local outfits and also on the hydro-electric dam at Kemano Bay, B.C. Jake and John farmed with their father and purchased a quarter section just north of Lowe Farm in 1950. Mary clerked in the Co-Op store for 2 years.

However, John N. reasoned that he would never be able to properly set his sons up farming on the high priced land in the Red River Valley and had made forays to other parts of the province for many years. In 1952, the family purchased 2 112 sections of sandy soil on the northern banks of the Assiniboine River, south of Rivers, Manitoba, and on April 15, the big move took place. The Lowe Farm community gave the a big send off and they were welcomed by their new neighbours. Their advanced farming methods, their machinery, their use of fertilizer, their indifference to beef herds, were alternately questioned and marvelled at. The moved proved to be a

success and Jake, Elmer and John are still farming that land and more.

John N., at age 56, his community spirit still alive, proceeded to organize a Co-Op Seed Cleaning Plant in Rivers, a most needed service. Later, he was involved with opening a Credit Union there and was also associated with the Brandon Consumers Co-Op. He joined Kiwanis. Mrs. Dyck promptly joined the Rivers W.I. and the United Church W.A. and found her place in the community. They retired to Brandon in 1964. Shortly before her death in 1971, Mrs. Dyck was recognized by the Red Cross for her generous donations of hand made quilts. John N., his memory dimmed, took up residence in Fairview Home, Brandon. Always the community activist, he participates in all Home activities.

Andy left the family farming operation in 1954, rejoined the Air Force, accepted an assignment in France for a couple of years, and was later stationed in Winnipeg, until his retirement. Mostly, he and his family lived at St. Francois Xavier, just west of Winnipeg. He is now in private business in Winnipeg Beach.

John married Helen Dueck from Altona, in 1952 and Elmer married Lena Martens, a widow from Rivers, in 1975. Jake and Elmer both live in Rivers. Helen married Gerald Rigby, of Killarney, in 1954 and lives on a farm northwest of that town. Mary married Morley Mitchell, later the same year, and lives near her. She was widowed in 1978 and is carrying on farming operations with her sons.

## THE JOHN K. GERBRANDT FAMILY

John K. Gerbrandt was born on January 4, 1880 at Bergthal (near the present village at Niverville), the son of Klass and Margaretha (Neufeld) Gerbrandt. He grew up at Lichtfelt, southwest of Altona and married Katherina Wieler, on March 13, 1902. Her parents lived at Altoergthal, where she grew up.

Their married life began at John's parents' home, where they lived until they could find a place of their own.

In 1904, he borrowed fifteen hundred dollars at six percent interest, for which he made payments of three hundred dollars for five years, and bought a quarter on Section 24-2-3 West.

In 1916 they sold their farm and loaded up their family, which now consisted of Margaret, born 1903, John, born in 1905, Nick, born in 1907, Mary, born in 1910, and Cornie, born in 1913. They also took along their cows, horses and household goods, and moved to Herbert, Saskatchewan by way of train. Here they bought land, about seven and one-half miles northwest of Herbert.

Several dry years and poor crops later, they decided Manitoba was a better place after all, so back they came, again taking family, livestock and household goods. They left behind the small grave of their two year old son, Jacob, who was born in Saskatchewan and died there (1916-1918).

They came to Manitoba in 1919, after the war years, when prices for land were quite high, so Dad took out a



*Dugout being made on John K. Gerbrandt farm in 1929.*

loan at the Sommerfeld Waisenamt to pay for the land. Later, crops were quite poor and it took most of the cash available to keep up the payments or even the interest for some years.

The place they settled on was the northwest Quarter of 6-4-1 West, which had been the home of Fred Wall. This then remained their home for the rest of their lives.

In the twenties, when plowing time came, the boys would carry a pail with a bit of water along and whenever a small poplar tree was spotted, into the pail it would go.

Then mom and the younger members of the family would plant them around the yard and garden. They needed lots of watering and they grew tall. There were no trees of any kind on the yard when they bought the farm. Later fruit trees too found a place in the garden.

Two more members were added to the family in Manitoba, Jacob, born in 1920, and Helen, born in 1922.

In 1928, two weddings came about. Margaret married Henry D. Dyck, and they raised five daughters, Helen, Tina, Martha, Mary and Anne. Henry was a carpenter most of his working days, but now they are retired and living in Altona.

Mary married John W. Thiessen, and had a family, which consisted of four daughters, Tina, Mary, Hilda and Nettie, and one son Peter. They were farming all their married life until 1977, and they are now retired and living in Lowe Farm. Both couples celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversaries last year.

In 1932, John J. Gerbrandt married Mary Gerbrandt, and they had one son, Benjamin. John, who had suffered with reumatic fever since a young boy, succumbed to it in 1938.

Income in the thirties was as scarce as hens teeth. Dad kept records of crops he sold, and also cream, eggs, etc. For example, in the year 1933, here is part of my father's records for sales.

478 dozen eggs	\$ 45.08
309 lb. butter fat (cream)	36.26
28 chickens	7.25
19 turkeys	17.25
960 bushels wheat	589.67
108 bushels rye	59.00

The total income was used to live on, pay taxes, pay fuel, and for anything else that came tip.

In 1939, Dad passed away, leaving Mom to carry on alone. Their sons Nick and Cornie took over the work.

The horses had already been replaced by a "Twin City" tractor in 1934, at least in most cases, and some cows were kept, so we usually had food to eat, even in the depression. The good food we had was due to mom, who was a good cook and excellent bread baker and who could coax good risen buns and bread even out of the poor flour that was prevalent during the thirties.

The garden also flourished despite drought, grasshoppers and heat. One year when grasshoppers were very bad, Mom had a big flock of ducks, which were penned up, but were herded through the garden twice a day to catch the grasshoppers.

I also remember the grasshopper poison scattering machine a neighbour made. A hopper on top and a revolving scoop which was put on the back of the wagon which distributed the poisoned bran and molasses around the fields. Also there was the long trough-type drag with a back splash board. There was some oil in the trough and the whole thing was pulled by a horse at each end along the road allowance. This netted lots of grasshoppers, but never seemed to make a dent in the supply of grasshoppers that remained to plague the people.

With the forties, came better prices and better crops and things were not as tough.

In 1940 Cornie married Elsie Dyck and they stayed with the farm but built their own yard on the northeast quarter of Section 1-4-2 West. Their family consists of Zelma, John, Mary, Pete, Betty, Irvin and Dorothy.

In 1947 Helen married Diedrich Dyck, and after two years of Dick working on a dragline, they bought the N.E. Quarter of 15-5-2 West where they are still farming. They have five children Lynda, Ed, Les, Gary and Chris.

In 1950, Jake who was working in B.C. married Doris Williams in Chilliwack, B.C. Now he is a carpenter, and



LEFT: Cornie Gerbrandt on the Twin City tractor in 1935.

RIGHT: Nick and John Gerbrandt on favourite riding horse "Babe".

they live in Calgary, Alberta. Their family is as follows Jim, Robert, Linda, Ron, Helen, Gloria and Shirley.

After Mom passed away in 1965, Nick bought the home quarter and Cornie the adjoining quarter on Sec. 1-4-2 West.

In 1971 Nick passed away, so the farm needed a new owner. Cornie took over and he is farming the home place. They moved onto the yard, which is on fairly high ground, an asset, with all the water that has to move past every spring.

For our family it never did get to be spring until the ditch opened up and the water started to run.

## THE ABRAM WIEBE FAMILY

*submitted by Jake B. Wiebe*

Our grandparents the Bernard Wiebes, came to Canada from Russia in the year 1874. My parents started farming at Gnadenfeld, Manitoba where they lived till 1914. They then moved to Hope Farm, at St. Jean, Manitoba, and after 4 years they moved to Lowe Farm, where they bought the N.E. 114 of Section 6-4-1 in the school district of Steinfeld in 1918.

Their means of travel was by car, a new big Overland car, whose tires did not stand up too well in the deep hard wagon ruts. Therefore Dad traded it off on a smaller Chev, which he was very lucky to sell before the big depression. From here on, it was horse and buggy days, horse back riding or walking. When the depression came, there was many a car left to sit and rust in peace.

Our house looked like a Barred rock Cluck sitting on her brood, with her wings spread out, and after the family had all married, it looked tired from holding the brood.

The family consisted of eleven children, 7 girls, and 4 boys. Here they are listed from oldest to th youngest: Mary - Mrs. Abe J. Thiessen; Tiena - Mrs. Abe H. Thiessen; Anna - Mrs. Peter B. Klassen; John; Helen - Mrs. Alex Smith; Elisabeth - Mrs. Ed Giesbrecht; Jake; Abe; Ben; Nettie - Mrs. Abe Peters; and Dora - Mrs. Frank Nickel.

Food on the table was mostly home grown, except for yeast, sugar and coffee. Coffee was often homemade, too, from grain, with 101 different recipes. Thank God we lived on the farm! There was also a lot of sugar beet syrup made in our home, this was made from sugar beets grown in our own garden.

Transportation was very slow mostly by horse, and walking eight miles in an evening was quite common. Wood was hauled from the east reserve by horses and wagon. East reserve was about forty miles one-way from our home, and many a good horse was ruined in this way. Money was very scarce, so feed grain was often traded for wood.

Doctor expenses were just about nil in our family. I think I saw the first doctor when I was 16 years old, and that was a Dentist. Everyone of the family was born at home, and Mom was never laid up except when there was a new addition in the family. Many a time Mom had to go and help the neighbor women when the stork arrived. Although at that time, each area did seem to have their own Country Doctor.

Our first school was on the south side of Section 7-4-1 West, it was a one room school, where the teacher also made his home. The children that sat close to the pot belly stove almost roasted, and at the other end of the room they almost froze. A few years later a new school was built, a more modern school with inside toilets and a furnace in the basement. The first day we drove to school with a mule (Peggy). We had her hitched to the stone boat, and as we were coming onto the school yard, the other children jumped on the stone boat with me. We went down a big icy snow bank and the stone boat hit the rear legs of the mule and Peggy sat down very fast on me.



She sure sure was slow to get up, and I really had the wind knocked out of me.

Dad was very instrumental in forming the Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society, and it was always a problem collecting funds. At that time each member only had to pay a quarter when someone died. It seemed quite a problem getting the money together; and Dad was elected 10 do the collecting. It was said that every person had to dig seven graves to pay for his own, and I think we Wiebe Brothers have paid for ours. In winter it took a good day with a pick and shovel. Thanks to the P.K. Remples, we could leave our horses in their barn and get a hot meal.

So all in all we did not do too much for the living but we sure took care of the dead.

## THE JAKE WIEBE FAMILY

*submitted by Tiena Wiebe*

Jake Wiebe, the son of Abram and Marie Wiebe, was born in 1916 at Hope Farm. In 1918 his parents moved to Lowe Farm Section 6-4-1 West. He attended school in the Steinfeld School, and in the winter of 1940, took a course in Agriculture in Altona.

On June 18, 1944, he married Tiena Friesen, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Jacob W. Friesen. The war was still going strong, so we had to help his Dad on the farm, and in fall were sent to the M. and S. Coal Mines at Bienfait, Sask., for the winter months. When we came back in the spring of 1945, Edward was born, also we had rented a quarter section of land north of Lowe Farm on Section 9-5-2 West.

That year we moved to the farm. The buildings were poor. We were told the "bed bugs" were so bad, they were sitting on the eavestroughs waiting for company! So we moved into the granary while we fumigated the house and built a barn. We had a few cows, chickens and pigs, and the first crop was good. It was very wet when we started to thresh with a threshing machine on Sept. 9, and finally on Oct. 10, we were able to finish.

1948 in spring, Menno was born. We had a lot of snow that started to thaw about the 15th of April. When Menno decided to see daylight, we had water around the house and a lot of bridges were washed out. So he was born at home with the help of a neighbor. Jake in his excitement, took the string off the curtains to tie the baby's cord!

April 19, 1952, Irene was born. It was dry and very hot, and I had planted potatoes and some vegetables. That was the summer of the polio epidemic.

In 1955 in fall we built a new house which was very much appreciated.

1956, on Christmas Day, Kathy was born. A welcome Christmas present.

Jake drove the school bus for 8 years, served on the board as director for the Lowe Farm Credit Union and the Lowe Farm Pool Elevator. He also helped collect church fees for the Sommerfelder Church.

Edward and MaryAnn (Doerksen) now live in Tsawwassen, B.C., where he teaches Phys. Ed.

Menno and Sharon (Hudson) live in Scotland. He is working for Occidental Petroleum on the North Sea as one of their geologists.

Irene and Lorne Penner are living in Brandon where he has his own Mobile Home Service Summit.

Kathy works for the licence Bureau in Winnipeg.

Jake and I have retired and are now living in Altona.

## HENRY D. DERKSEN

In July, 1936, Sara Thiessen was married to Henry D. Derksen, son of Peter Derksens of Kleinstadt, Manitoba.

The first few years of their married life, they were living with and working for her parents. Their first home was on 28-4-2 West, where they remodeled the house, built a new barn, and a few other buildings. In the spring of 1954, they sold the yard and moved back to 22-4-2 West, where they worked very hard. The original barn was torn down and a new one built, also a new double garage.

In the fall of 1973, they sold their farm and retired, moving to Winkler in the spring of 1974. The Derksens have 6 children, all married.

Caroline, the oldest, lives in Altona and is married to Norman Buhr, who is employed as manager of C.S.P. Foods.

Leona, married Jake, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed E. Klassen, of Lowe Farm. They live on 34-6-2 and farmed here for many years. In 1970, Jake started to work for the Rural Municipality of Morris.

Eddie, their first son, married Carol Martens of Plum Coulee. He is employed with the railway.

Emmy married Willie Penner of Lowe Farm, a bridge worker. Willie is now foreman of the bridge crew for the Rural Municipality of Morris.

Menno, their second son, married Sadie Kauenhofen. They lived in Lowe Farm till the fall of 1978, and then moved to Winkler, where he is now employed at Triple E.

Darlene is working for Wiens and Cole, barristers, of Altona. Darlene is the youngest and married to Sidney Bulin, a farmer in the Plum Coulee area.



*The Marlin A. Friesen farm site in 1952.*

## MARTIN A. FRIESEN

Agatha (1913), daughter of Aron A. Thiessen, married in July 1935, to Martin A. Friesen (1910) the son of Martin M. Friesens of the Steinfeld school district. The wedding was held at her parents' home.

In fall, they moved to Section 17-4-1, renting the land from Mrs. Friesen's parents, and later bought that

quarter. There was much fixing to do on the house to make it more liveable, and this, together with farming the land and caring for the livestock, kept them very busy.

Mr. Friesen had a repair shop in his farm yard and there was seldom a day when he wasn't working at fixing motors, welding or making things, either for themselves or for friends and neighbours. There was almost always someone there getting some work done. They used horses for seeding, but purchased a tractor in fall of 1936 to plough his fields.

In 1936, their first child, a daughter, Anne, was born. She married in 1957 to Cornie W. Reimer, and they are farming near Lowe Farm.

Susie, their second daughter, was born in December, 1940. She was married in 1964 to Peter B. Friesen. They are residing on the yard, where her parents farmed and also farming that quarter.

Mr. Martin A. Friesen passed away in February 1962. Five years after her husband's death, Mrs. Friesen moved to Lowe Farm, where she presently resides.



*The Johan Harders.*

*Peter D. Harders.*

## PETER D. HARDER

The Johan Harders, my great grandparents, migrated from Russia to Canada in 1870, with a colony of Mennonites. They made their home west of Altona. They both died in the early 1900's.

The Peter D. Harders, my grandparents, were also born in Russia, coming from Heuboden with a colony of Mennonites in 1870. This young married couple homesteaded a few miles west of Altona. Grandma's maiden name was Gerbrandt. Seven children were born to them, all in Canada. They were - Peter, John, Jacob, Eva, Elisabeth, Margrethe and Mary. Grandma died somewhere around 1890, and later my grandfather remarried. His wife, formerly a Mrs. Loepky, brought 4 young children into the family with her - John, Peter, Annie and Katherina.

Some time later, my grandparents left their homestead and moved to Lowe Farm, where they made their home in the Steinfeld District. Four children were born here - Henry, Helen, Nettie, and Bertha, who died in infancy. From Lowe Farm, my grandparents moved to the Rosefarm District, where they continued farming. This land is southwest from Lowe Farm.

The children grew up and married. Peter (my father) married Margretha Gerbrandt, from Lichtfeld, 3 miles southwest of Altona. Eva married a Mr. David Falk; Elisabeth, a Bernhard Wiebe; Margaret married Jacob Reimer; Mary married Peter Martens; John, Katharina Funk; and Jacob at the age of 87 years, is still unmarried.

Grandparents retired from Rosefarm about 1912, when they moved to Plum Coulee, where they made their home. My second grandmother died in 1913, in Plum Coulee, and later my grandpa had a house built at his daughter's, (the J. Reimers) at Barkfield, west of Altona. He married again, living on the south end of the Village of Altona. The third grandma predeceased my grandfather in 1920. Grandpa was left behind, passing away in 1929, in Altona.



*Peter P. Harders.*

## PETER P. HARDER

My father was born at Halifax, just after the family arrived from the voyage, migrating from Russia to Canada, in 1870. He grew up west of Altona, where his parents homesteaded. At the age of 24, Peter married Margretha Gerbrandt, daughter of Klass Gerbrandt. In 1900, they moved to the Steinfeld District, north of Rosenfeld and about 5 miles east of Lowe Farm, where they had bought a farm.

My parents started their pioneer life there, going through many hardships and troubles. Because drainage was poor those days, my parents' crops were flooded and drowned out many times. Peter's horses died of a contagious disease. He told me later, that the vet had told him, if he would not shoot the diseased horses, he (the vet) would come and shoot them! Dad suffered from rheumatic pain and cramps, and had to go to Winnipeg for treatment in hospital.

Six children were born to my parents - Peter, Margaret, Elisabeth, and Nettie. Two died in infancy. Our mother died in 1908 at harvest time, at the age of 31 years, leaving dad and us 4 children to mourn. Our ages ranged from 1 year to 7 years. I (Peter) was the oldest and Nettie only one year old. Our grandparents, the Klass Gerbrands, became Nettie's foster parents. She was adopted by them and grew up to marry Marten Giesbrecht in 1928. My older sisters also became foster children. My dad sold his farm, living with his sisters, north of Plum Coulee. I was with my dad all the time. We moved 3 miles south of Lowe Farm, where we were batching and struggling along, on a place owned by Peter K. Rempel, who lived in Kronsweide.

We also lived on the Jacob Wiens farm in the Town of Lowe Farm, and on a farm 4 miles north of Lowe Farm.

In 1916, my father married again, to Annie Funk, a maiden, aged 24 years. Her parents were the Jacob

Funks, our neighbours. From this second marriage, 8 sons were born; 7 are living and 3 girls are still living. My parents continued farming until 1918, when the farm was sold to Mr. Peter Voth. We had a very good crop that year, so we moved off that farm and Dad sold some livestock. We moved to Lowe Farm, spending the winter in town.

In the fall and winter of 1918, there was a heavy flu epidemic all over, and many people died of this disease;



*Peter P. Harder, standing in the barn entrance, watching the children. LEFT TO RIGHT: Eva, John, Jacob busy braiding, Helen and Edmond watching.*

in some places whole families were wiped out. In the spring of 1919, we rented a half section of land, one mile west of the (North Star) Elevator, belonging to Cornelius Rempel.

In 1927, father bought a quarter section of open land 2 miles northwest of Lowe Farm for \$1,600.00 cash. The owner lived in the U.S.A. There were 57 acres under cultivation. In 1925 or 26, a small house and barn were moved to our farm. We moved to this place in 1927, so my parents finally had a farm of their own. (S.W. 1/4 12)

In the spring of 1927, Lowe Farm had 4 floods and there was no seeding done that year on our farm, so we summer fallowed the land. The next year, we seeded 55 acres of Durham Wheat. Sometime after seeding, there came a heavy downpour of rain one afternoon and the water swept onto Dad's farm, staying for about 2 weeks and drowning out most of our crop. We had a very good stand of Durham Wheat, that would have yielded over 40 bushels per acre. We threshed about 135 bushels of that wheat, just from a few high spots.

From 1928-32, my parents lived 4 miles north of Lowe Farm, near the Neufeld School. In the spring of 1930, we started off to Lowe Farm with 2 horses and a wagon. Half a mile south from our residence is a double dyke used as a drainage ditch. When we arrived at the dyke, we saw that it was full of water, probably 5-6 feet deep. We stopped and looked, and when I noticed that my dad had intentions of travelling through the deep water, I knew we were in great danger. He said, "Peter, you hold the lines", and we started off. He took the halter and gave the horses a swat, as they were afraid to go in. It was like a raging sea. When we were in the depths, my dad got

fearful and grabbed for the lines. I will still recall in Low German, what he said - "Peta, hia vesup wie noch." (Peter, here we get drowned) Just then, the wagon unbolted and the box started floating east, downstream. Dad held tight to the lines and was pulled out of the grain box. He and the horses were struggling along in the deep water, with only the horses' heads and hips showing. I jumped over the box and headed to the south side of the dyke, with only my head above the water. I made it to shore, but I had to struggle. The horses dragged dad out on the north side, where we had entered, so we were all safe. Dad went home with the team and I walked south a short distance to the Henry P. Heinrichs'. My clothes were soaked; the only thing that remained dry was my cap! Mrs. Heinrichs got me some dry clothes and hung my heavy winter clothes on the line to dry. I stayed till the water dropped and went home the next day.

The Peter P. Harders sold their farm to Erdman Klassen for \$12,000.00 cash. My dad had already bought property from Henry W. Thiessen, but he passed away on March 26, 1954, just before moving to Lowe Farm for retirement. My step-mother passed away at the age of 75 in the Morris Hospital (1967).



*Peter G. Harder at age*

*Peter G. Herders in 1936.*

## PETER G. HARDER

I married Anna Harder in 1934, on October 18, at the age of 34 years. I had a place rented before our wedding, on section 11, just west of my parents, which was owned by John Molitor, who lived in the far states. He sent us \$500.00 to put up some buildings.

After seeding time, we started building; as the price of lumber was very reasonable. Shiplap ran somewhere near \$25.00 per thousand, good siding at \$35.00 per M. and grade 3 shingle approx. \$3.00 for 4 bundles. We also got some poplar lumber at Grunthal for \$10.00 per M. For the \$500.00, we built a house studded 12 feet high and framed (16 x 24). We dug a cellar and finished it with rough lumber. The house was finished outside and inside with lumber and the barn was studded 12 feet with 14 x 28 frame. I paid A.A. Giesbrecht \$21.00 to put in the doors and windows, and paid the Leoppky brothers \$6.00 to dig part of the cellar. When we finished building, we had about \$10.00 left from the \$500.00. I dug a well and we moved onto the farm that same summer.

We had some farm machinery and started on farming with 4 horses, some cattle, pigs and chickens. In

## ROSE FARM - KRONSWEIDE



*Farm site of Peter G. Harder, later owned by Erdman Wiebe.*

November that year, a son was born, but he died in infancy.

Those were tough years. Grain prices were low, as were the cattle and hog prices. We sold our eggs for 11C a dozen and butter about 18C a pound; good milk cows were ranging from \$25.00 to \$35.00, and good veal calves from \$5.00 to \$7.00. That is how farming was going those years. Labour ranged from 50c to a dollar a day and a good farm labourer earned \$30.00 per month.

In 1937, Annette, our daughter, was born in Winkler Hospital. She became Mrs. Peter B. Friesen, from Steinbach. Katherina was born in July, 1940, and she married Norman Weiss from Friedensfeld in 1959.



*Peter G. Harder family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Abraham, Annette, Katarina, Margaret, Cornelius.*

In 1942, we moved to Arden, Manitoba, where we went into the cattle business. Margaret, our youngest daughter, was born in our home at Arden, in August, as well as a son, Abram, in 1943 and a son Cornelius Edward in 1945. Margaret married Mery Unger and lives in Winnipeg.

We made a number of other moves, but then in 1971, we sold our farm southeast of Steinbach and moved to Grunthal for retirement.



*Miss Elvina Kroeker from Lowe Farm. The first teacher in new Rose Farm School, built in 1950.*



*J.S. Schroeder in 1968 at 77 years. Lots of rain that year.*



3 A1

*Time to get more fire wood ready. Henry H. Doell in 1940.*

*Stacking hay in 1935 on Section 11 on the Peter G. Harder farm.*



*Putting up haystack at  
H.H. Doell's - 1940's.*

## THE BIOGRAPHY OF MR. AND MRS. JACOB J. HARDER

*submitted by Tina (Mrs. fit.) Peters*

Our father, Jacob Harder, was born in 1882, and grew up in the Altona-Gretna area of Southern Manitoba. His parents came to Canada from the Ukraine, South Russia, as part of the Bergthal Colony that immigrated to Canada in 1874. Our mother, nee Maria Braun, was born in 1885 near Plum Coulee, Manitoba. Her parents were also among those who immigrated to Canada in the 1870's. Both our parents had very little formal education - and that mainly in the German language. However, by the time we were of school age, they could read and converse quite fluently in the English language.

They were married in 1904 and had 10 children - 1 son and 9 daughters. Two of the latter died in early childhood. Our parents were residents in the R.M. of Morris from 1915 to 1943.



*Jacob and Maria  
Harder. He was  
known locally as  
"Tooscha" Har-  
der, a horse  
trader, jack of all  
trades.*

Our Dad, in his younger years, was sometimes referred to as 'California Jake' namely because he had the distinction of having lived in the 'Sunshine State' for several months when his parents moved there for health reasons in 1896-1897. Later on he became better known as 'Little (Kleena) Harder' because of his size or as 'Trader (Toosha) Harder' because of his many and varied dealings in horses.

His career along this line began at an early age when, much against his father's wishes, he managed to buy, on credit, a well matched team of bays for the astronomical sum of \$350.00. By the time winter set in however, his wheeling and dealing had brought him to the point where he still owned a good team and had his \$350.00 debt paid off.

From that time on, until soon after the depression, his main interest in life revolved around dealing in horses. It would be impossible to estimate the number of horses that changed hands through his dealings in the intervening years. In fact, as we remember it, no crop on our farm was ever harvested with the same horses that

had been used to put it in the previous spring.

His dealings took him over a large area, all the way from Gretna and Winkler in the south, to Morris, Rosenort, Sperling and Carman in the north.

His superb horsemanship made him an excellent driver of almost any type of horse, slow or fast, spirited or dull. Once he picked up the reins, the horse instinctively knew who was in control and responded accordingly.

There were times when our dad owned as many as 14 or 16 horses; at other times he was down to two or three. Since horses were his stock-in-trade, his fortunes must have been at an all time low when for a short time in 1915, he did not have a single horse to his name. By harvest time, however, he again owned three horses, one of which was killed in a freak accident in October of that year.

This was the state of their affairs when my parents, with a family of six, arrived in Lowe Farm on November 6, 1915. The move was one from New Kennedy, a distance of only eight or nine miles, but at that time, Lowe Farm was considered by some people in the south as being on the very outskirts of civilization. We took up residence in what we later referred to as the 'Spalding House', but which at that time was part of the Jacob H oepfner estate.

Our dad's business of dealing in horses lent itself very well to various means of earning a livelihood. There was the livery and dray business, several years of farming in the Gretna area, a ditch and road building contract at Rosenfeld in 1912, more years of farming and the making of waterponds to mention only a few. Since the water-pond was an essential part of almost every farm west of the Red River, it might be said that Jacob Harder made his most important contribution to the farming community in this field of endeavor.

In the light of today's technology, the making of waterponds with horses was a major operation. It required at least five or six well matched teams, four to six slushers, a good brush or handplow, plus at least six to eight strong men skilled in handling both the teams and the slushers. It also required some knowledge of soil makeup, and judgement as to how to shape the slopes and edges so as to be compatible with the dimensions and lasting properties of the finished waterpond. With favourable weather and no unforeseen interruptions a fairly large pond could be completed in a week to 10 days. At best it was a gruelling task for both the men and the horses, especially in the heat of midsummer or when rain made the sides very slippery as they grew steeper and steeper before the job was completed.

Consequently, there was not too much competition in this field of endeavor so that in 1916, together with his brother-in-law, P.U. Braun, he made between 16 and 20 waterponds - most of them in Southern Manitoba and a few in the area around Rosenort.

In the spring of 1917, our parents had the opportunity to rent what was known as the 'Harkins Farm', one mile south of Lowe Farm. There was much conjecture as to how 'Little Harder' intended to farm a half section of land when all he owned, at the time of take-over on April 1, was six horses and practically no implements. By the time seeding was completed, however, he owned a full

compliment of 13 horses, enjoyed a full time hired man, and proceeded to make at least four or five waterponds between seeding and harvest; besides working 60 acres of summerfallow and putting up some feed for the winter as well. Being unable to lease the 'Harkins Farm' for another term he continued to make waterponds - another four or five before freeze up which came in late November that year.

Earlier that fall he had purchased a 160 acre farm in the Rosefarm District, seven miles southwest of Lowe Farm. Due to the transaction being made after October 1 - the deadline for notice of evacuation - it was necessary to take up residence in a small house in town for the winter months. Unfortunately, during this time, the old house on the newly acquired farm was destroyed by fire, making it necessary to construct some sort of dwelling for the family before April 1. A few lean-tos were added to an almost new 12 x 16 granary and this constituted our home for the next 16 years. This was on the S.W. 114 of Section 15-4-2 W in the R.M. of Morris.

Some fairly prosperous years followed, but mostly our parents experienced the ups and downs of farming like everyone else. Good crops, bad crops, grasshoppers, rust, depression prices, and all the rest of it.

The family grew up, got married, or left home to make a living elsewhere so that in 1934 our parents gave up the farm and built a small home in town. Dad still kept a few horses with which to ply what little trade there was left. Mother took up dressmaking, which gave her a sense of achievement, and, literally speaking, some 'pin money' of her own.

In good times or bad, Mother was known for her pleasant manner and well dressed appearance and Father was her greatest admirer! She never owned a 'store-bought' dress - she did all the sewing for herself and her family. She was also a born cook, a trait and talent that stood her in good stead when, for a short time (1939-1941) they operated what came to be known as 'Harder's Cafe' in Lowe Farm.

Those were the war years, and Dad' decided there was more money to be made in a war industry job. Con-



*Jacob and Maria Harder, standing in front of Harder's Cafe in Lowe Farm, which Maria operated.*

sequently, they moved to the city in 1943. Mother continued with her dressmaking while Dad worked in the



*J.J. Harder family. BACK ROW: Annie Wilkie, Jake Harder, Hattie Buckbee. FRONT ROW: Mary Giesbrecht, Helen Melbourne, Alice Wiebe, Tina Peters.*

Cordite Plant, for the Winnipeg Sanitation Department, and for various construction firms.

After Dad's age made him ineligible for employment, he took to selling papers at various places along Portage Avenue. On his better days, which became fewer and fewer as his advancing years and progressive illness took their toll, he gave it his best.

Dad's was not a nature that could endure idleness; he enjoyed being with people and when his hearing became impaired to the point where conversation became difficult, he was often a very lonely man, especially after Mother passed away in 1958. Dad passed away early in 1963.

## JACOB B. HARDER

Jacob B. Harder, only son of Jacob and Maria (Brown) Harder, was born on April 27, 1907, in the Village of old Altona. Jacob B. Harder married Susanne Klassen, daughter of Peter P. and Katherine Klassen on June 30, 1929. Jacob and Susanne were the first couple to get married in the Lowe Farm Bergthaler Church. They had five children, Archie Harold, Donald Irvine, Lorna Laverne, Russell Roger, and Wilfred Allen (Butch).



*Jacob and Susan Harder with children, Russell, Lorna and baby, Wilfred (Butch). STANDING: Archie and Donald.*

Jacob Harders started farming in 1930 - the start of the depression. They sold their first wheat for 490 per bushel.



Times were so hard that at one point they sat on the road with what little belongings they had. They were finally taken in by Susanne's brother, John K. Klassen, for a week, after which time, Jake and Susanne found 160 acres they could rent. The buildings consisted of a 12 x 18 shanty (the house) and a barn 14 x 24, located on N.E. 114 18-5-1 West. They farmed this land for 3 years till 1933, when they lost their crop through a combination of drought, grasshoppers and flood. He finally rented the S. 1/2 of 8-4-1 West. This land and the N.E. 112 8-4-1 West, he was finally able to purchase in 1951 and this is



*Jake Harder with his horse and cutter in 1928.*

presently rented to his son, "Butch". In 1968, Jacob and Susanne moved to Morris, where Jacob is still living.

Jacob relates the following story, which is probably typical of many that took place throughout the west during the "Dirty Thirties". "Having lost our crop in 1933, a delegation of 15 farmers went to the Rural Municipality of Morris council to ask for seed grain and I was appointed spokesman for the group. We had read in the Free Press paper that the government had a program of supplying seed grain to the farmers. In the event that we could not pay, the government would pay 2/3 and the municipality 1/3. In spite of this, the councillors refused to help us, because they claimed they had done this kind of business before and lost. They also said that we were just depending on relief. I told them I had been the first one to take "Relief" (as it was called) but I got a job filling pot holes for the Rural Municipality to pay for every cent of my account in full. I told the secretary of the council to look up my account, but they refused. I also told the council that if we were just looking for Relief, as they claimed, we would not be asking for seed to put in a crop. We still did not get any seed."

Because of these various hardships, Mr. Harder became very interested and active in the Co-Op movement, because, in his opinion, this was a way in which people could join together to help themselves. Mr. Harder was elected a director of the Lowe Farm Consumers in 1936.

He also helped organize the Lowe Farm Pool Elevators in 1937 and resigned from that board in 1938, because he became active in helping the starting of the Co-Op Store, which became a reality in 1940.

Mr. Harder became a member of the Manitoba Farmers' Union, when it started in the early 1950's and was a provincial director in this organization when it joined the other provincial farm union in 1969, to become the

National Farmers' Union. Mr. Harder holds an honorary life membership in the National Farmers' Union.

To supplement his farm income, Mr. Harder started auctioneering in 1945. His first sale was conducted for his brother-in-law, Wm. Brown, on Section 19-4-1 West, presently owned by D.H. Froese.

Because Mr. and Mrs. Harder could see no future in farming, they decided that their main goal in life would be to give their children a high school education, which was all they felt they would ever be able to offer them. This was not the most popular idea at that time, because the general practice in those days was to take the children out of school as soon as possible and put them to work on the farm.

With the sudden upswing of grain prices in the early 1970's, the Harders sold their share of the farm machinery to their son, Wilfred (Butch) in 1973 and rented him the land so they could fully enjoy their retirement in Morris.

Mr. Harder is still involved in the auction business with his sons, Wilfred and Russell. He is presently on the Morris Senior Citizens' Board and feels that one should always try to participate and contribute something to the community in which one lives.

## W.A. HARDER

Wilfred A. Harder, known as "Butch" Harder, son of Jacob B. and Susanne (Klassen) Harder, was born on S.W. 1/4 8-4-1 West on December 9, 1941, and took grade school at Steinfield School (this old school yard is presently the home of his cousin, Jake H. Klassen and family).

Upon completion of high school at Lowe Farm, in 1961, Butch rented the land formerly farmed by his Uncle John K. Klassen, who passed away that summer (see history of John K. Klassen, Lowe Farm) from Died Hoepfner Estate. This was the E. 112 of 1-5-2, just west of Lowe Farm and the west 1/2 of 6-5-1, on which is situated the major position of the Town of Lowe Farm. The E. 1/2 1-5-2 was purchased by Butch in 1966 and is presently his yard site.

Butch recalls putting in his first crop in 1962. This was one of the latest springs on record, due to excess rainfall. He had seeded his first field on June 19 (the mustard was in full bloom) and finished on June 25. Butch gradually expanded his farm through purchasing and renting additional land. To ease the workload of operating the farm, Butch hired Ron Unrau in 1975. Ron is now a full time summer employee, plus renting some of his own land. Ron and his wife, Beth have two boys and reside in the Town of Lowe Farm.

In 1969, Butch followed his fathers' footsteps by joining him in the auction business.

Butch has also been active in community affairs: serving as a director of the Farmers' Union, director of Lowe Farm Co-Op Consumers and active as a Manitoba Pool Elevator delegate.

Butch married Joyce Recksiedler, daughter of William and Erica Recksiedler of Sewell, in October, 1977. Presently, Butch and Joyce live in the Town of Lowe Farm.

## REV. JACOB W. FRIESEN

*submitted by Mrs. Agatha (Schroeder) Friesen*

Rev. Jacob W. Friesen was born at Rosenheim, Man. on Jan. 14, 1893. He was the son of Rev. William and Katherina (Braun) Friesen. He had one brother, William now of Altona, four sisters, Mary (deceased), Katherina, Mrs. Erdman Siemens, Altona; Henrietta, Mrs. Peter Doell, Carman; and Mary, Mrs. Anton Penner of Paraguay.

He started school at the age of seven. The subjects taught at that time were German, arithmetic and reading. The school year started Dec. 1 and closed the end of March. He also had one year of education in English. The fact that his English vocabulary was very limited did not deter him from speaking the language though, and somehow he always managed to make himself understood. Chicken feathers were "chicken hairs" and his favorite expression was, "to leave a good front picture behind you".

On Oct. 15, 1914 he was married to Agatha Stoesz. The ceremony was performed by Rev. David Stoesz. Agatha Stoesz was the daughter of Deacon Jacob and Mary (Peters) Stoesz. Jacob and Agatha were both baptized at Grossweide, by Bishop Abram Derksen, and became members of the Sommerfelder Church.



*Rev. Jacob W. Friesen and wife, Agatha.*

After residing with his parents for a year, they moved to the Weidenfeld, Man. District and in 1920 bought a quarter section of land in St. Peter's District - Section 27-4-1 West. They moved Uncle Peter U. Braun's cowshed onto the land, transformed it into a home, built a barn the same year and so with little money but high hopes, another home was established on the open prairie. It was a home with an open door for everyone. It had not modern conveniences, but there was always room for an extra plate at the table or overnight guests. During the depression Father went from door to door asking for food and clothing, not for himself and his family, but for those less fortunate. Climbing the social ladder or gaining material wealth were not one of his priorities, but if there was an illness or a bereavement in the community he and his family were there to sympathize and help. They also cared for an elderly man with poor eye-sight in their already crowded home for a number of years.

During this time thirteen children were born to them: William (b. Feb. 8, 1916 - d. Oct. 21, 1971) married Margaret Wiebe, Morris. Jacob (b. Feb. 18, 1917 - d. Oct. 11, 1977) married Agatha Schroeder, Lowe Farm. David (b. Apr. 2, 1919) married Margaret Rempel, Morris. John (b. July 31, 1920) married Nettie Friesen, Winnipeg. Tiena (b. Aug. 2, 1921) married Jacob Wiebe, Altona. Mary (b. Dec. 23, 1922) married Ben Wiebe, Altona. Erdman (b. June 22, 1925) married Nettie Rempel, Headingly. Peter (b. Oct. 22, 1927) Ontario. Cornelius (b. Sept. 23, 1928) married Marge Toews, Altona. Dora (b. May 12, 1934) married Wes Stevens, Regina, Sask. One son and two daughters passed away in infancy.

Father was elected to the ministry on his forty-fourth birthday Jan. 14, 1937 and ordained as a minister of the Sommerfelder Church in that same year. The duties of a minister were very demanding, but he loved the people he met and had a wide variety of friends, all over Manitoba. Years after his passing, Kleni Yoakob Friese is well remembered in southern Man. communities, as well by the Hutterite "boys" who also served in the C.O. camps, to which he ministered.



*Rev. Jacob W. Friesen with boys at C.O. Camp at Campbell River, B.C. (Vancouver Island in 1942). RIGHT: Rev. Jacob W. Friesen with son, Jacob J. Friesen at C.O. Camp in B.C.*

During the war years, from the fall of 1941 to 1945 he was one of the ministers involved in working with the boys in the C.O. camps (Conscientious Objectors). He first went to Clear Lake and later to B.C. and Vancouver Island, attending to their spiritual needs, visiting with them or trying to cheer them up. His concern was not only for his own sons in camp, but for all the boys, regardless of religion or background. His numerous autograph books were filled to overflowing.

Christmas of 1944 was spent at a coal mine where two sons and a son-in-law were working at C.O.'s. He also spent some time one winter in the lumber camp at National Mills. Working as a minister in the various camps was no easy task and sometimes he was separated from his family for weeks at a time.

If times had been rough in the depression years, they were even more so during the war. Especially for his wife. With her husband and sons in camp at different times, mother was left with the burden of coping with food rationing, managing the farm and a large, very active and

verbal family. It required a special kind of courage and stamina.

With the war's end in 1945, he was able to spend more time at home with his family, helping with the harvesting and getting acquainted with his two grandsons and one granddaughter. By this time they had their own car, a Model A. It was a unique car. If it had any brakes, Father obviously thought they were not meant to be used, but the accelerator did double duty. After a hair-raising ride, many of his passengers disembarked, knees trembling, firmly believing that only through the Grace of God had they come away unscathed. But the time left for him to be among his loved ones was growing short. On Nov. 30th, 1945, early in the morning, God suddenly called him home. He was only 52 years. It was a severe shock to the family.

Mother remained on the farm for two more years. Then in the fall of 1947 she sold the farm and moved to a small home in Altona. The years of hard work had taken their toll as far as mother's health was concerned. She was afflicted with arthritis but her spirit remained undaunted. Eventually she was confined to a wheel-chair, and spent her remaining years in The Ebenezer Home in Altona, Man. She passed away Aug. 27, 1968.

Rev. Jacob and Agatha Friesen are buried side by side in the cemetery at Kronsweide, Man.

### MR. JACOB J. FRIESEN

*submitted by Mrs. Agatha (Schroeder) Friesen*

Jacob J. Friesen was born Feb. 19th, 1917 to Rev. Jacob and Agatha (Stoesz) Friesen in the Rosenfeld, Man. area. At an early age, he moved with his parents to the St. Peter's School District, where he grew up and also attended Public School. Jake was fortunate in that his parents were educationally minded, and so he was able to attend High School in Lowe Farm. However, this meant a four and one half mile walk in the summer and a cold trip by horse-drawn sleigh or caboose in the winter.

After leaving school, he worked for various farmers for some years. On Jan. 1st, 1942, he married Agatha Schroeder, the daughter of John and Agatha (Driedger) Schroeder, of Sommerfeld, Altona. Jake and Agatha were both baptized in the Kronsweide Church and became members of the Sommerfelder Church.



*Jacob J. Friesen peeling potatoes at C.O. Camp in 1942.*

In early April of 1942, Jake went as a C.O. to camp at Clear Lake, Man. Three weeks later he, with a number of other young men, were transferred to Campbell River on Vancouver Island and other places in B.C. for the duration of the war. He was in B.C. for nineteen months, during that time his wife remained with her parents. Returning from camp, he, his wife, and little daughter continued to live with them till the spring of 1946, when they bought a lot in Lowe Farm and moved to town.

He worked for a while on a gravel gang, and later became manager of the local Lowe Farm Co-op store. Then, having a natural ability and a desire to build, he gathered a crew, including his two teenaged sons, and started out in the field of carpentry.

For years he was in charge of the Red Cross drive, helping to organize whist drives in aid of the skating rink, served as secretary of the Burial Aid all on the voluntary basis.

During the 1950 Flood, when Jake was Manager at the Co-op store, the Co-op Hall opened its doors to the flood victims. The hall was adjacent to the Co-op store which was used as a supply Depot. As a result he very often worked around the clock, looking after the people's needs.

For years whenever an election rolled around, he would be asked to be one of the Deputy Returning Officers. He was known for his impartiality and was trusted by all parties to run a fair and unbiased poll.

In spring of 1969, Jake suffered his first heart attack and his days as a carpenter were over. He recovered sufficiently so he could continue with his gravel checking job in summer, for the Morris Municipality for some time, but eventually gave that up also. He kept his workshop though, creating cupboards, spoon racks, kindergarten sets, and various other items with artistic flair and meticulous precision. He excelled as a craftsman and built things that his grandchildren will be proud to inherit. You would often find him standing on his latest project, giving it the "Friesen test of strength". (e.g. Alice's dollhouse and Herman's rocking chair). He never refused anyone who came down for advice or to borrow a tool.

As soon as the roads and fields were dry in spring, he enjoyed nothing better than to take his children on a trip to the old Friesen farm to hunt for arrow heads and relive the magic of those days when he, as a boy, chased ducks and other wildlife along the edges of the old slough.

He was proud of his Mennonite heritage. He well understood the essence of some of the more humorous Low German short stories and poems. With a twinkle in his eye, and in deep, gravelly tones, he would make these stories come alive for friends and neighbours.

A part of his daily routine was a trip (or two) to Derksen's Coffee Shop to discuss the usual topics of "local interest", and it also being a gathering place for the farmers, he could keep up with current farming news.

Like his father, he enjoyed visiting, his genial personality allowing him to converse and work with all ages. It was hard not to be his friend, if you knew him. He loved life, his family, and his friends.

Jake was the father of four children: Ruth and Keith Johnson, and children, Kari, Brent, and Marla of Ed-

monton, Alberta; Paul and his wife, Adrienne (Oliviero) and daughter, Lisa, of The Pas, Man.; Herman and his wife, Carol (Klassen), and daughters, Aynsley and Melissa, of Winnipeg; Alice and Brian Brown, and daughters, Trina and Angela of Lowe Farm. *Note:* See history, P.I. Brown.

Jake passed away suddenly at his home in Lowe Farm on Oct. 11, 1977 at the age of 60 years. He is buried at the Kronsweide cemetery beside his brother, Bill, and his parents.

## MR. DAVE FRIESEN

*submitted by Mrs. Agatha (Schroeder) Friesen*

Dave Friesen was born on April 2, 1919, in the Rosenfeld area in Man. With his parents he moved to the farm in the St. Peters District, where he grew up and also attended public school. After leaving school he hired out as a laborer, working in various places.

In the early fall of 1941 he went as a Conscientious Objector to camp at Clear Lake, Man., remaining there till the end of November.

On December 7, 1941, he married Margaret Rempel, daughter of Peter and Margaret (Ewart) Rempel. Dave and Margaret are members of the Sommerfelder Church.

They lived with her parents for the first year of their marriage and then moved to Melba in 1942. A year later a house was moved onto his Father's farm and they lived there till 1946, when they settled on a farm at Plumas, Man. In 1949 they took up residence in Morris. For a while Dave was employed in an elevator at McTavish, Man., then in 1960 he became manager of the elevator at Smith Spur and has been there ever since.

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Friesen have four children (one son and three daughters, and three granddaughters).

Jim Friesen and his daughter Shannon reside in B.C. Judy and Ron Fawcett and daughter Laura, Calgary, Alberta. Joanne and Gary Irwin and daughter Dawn, Winnipeg. Janet Friesen, student, also of Winnipeg.

Besides raising their own family, they also provided a home for many foster children for a number of years. At present Margaret divides her time between household duties and occasional volunteer work at the Red River Valley Lodge, Morris.

## MRS. TIENA (FRIESEN) WIEBE

*submitted by Mrs. Agatha (Schroeder) Friesen*

Tiena Friesen was born to Rev. Jacob and Agatha (Stoesz) Friesen in 1921, August 2, at St. Peters, Man. She attended school there and was baptized and received as a member in the Sommerfelder Church at Kronsweide, Man. On June 18, 1944, a (very rainy day) she was united in marriage to Jacob B. Wiebe. After spending some time in "Alternative Service" in a coal mine in Bienfait, Sask., they returned to Manitoba. With the sudden passing of Tiena's father in the fall of 1945, they remained with her mother that year, later moving to a farm north of Lowe Farm. In 1978 they sold the farm and retired to Altona, Man.

Tiena and Jake are the parents of four children: Edward and Mary Ann (Derksen) Wiebe make their home in B.C. Menno and Sharron (Hudson) Wiebe and children,

Melanie and Ian reside in Scotland. Irene and Lorne Penner and children, Kathy and Brian, live in Brandon, Man. Kathy Wiebe is employed and living in Winnipeg.

## ABRAM NEUFELD

Abram and Nettie Neufeld, who were married in the fall of 1935, moved to the St. Peters District near Sewell, Manitoba.

Dad had a threshing machine, which he has purchased in 1925. Together with his gang of 15-20 men, he was

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*Farmyard of Abram and Nettie Neufeld.*

busy threshing for others in the community, plus doing their own farming. They raised mostly cereal grains, but always kept some livestock.

They were blessed with eight healthy children in the family - Edna, Edwin, Elmer, Edward, Esther, Eleanora, Evelyn, and Ernie. We spent our elementary school days in St. Peters and Lowe Farm High Schools. We usually travelled to school with horse and buggy, or sleigh in winter time. if the horses were being used on the farm, we would have to walk the 2 112 miles to school.

The family is all married and live in the following areas: John and Edna Kehler, farmers of Kane, Edwin and Verna, farmers at Lowe Farm, Elmer and Hilda of Winnipeg, Edward and Beverly, of Winnipeg, Perry and Esther Kuhl of Winnipeg, Ed and Elcanora Peters of Winkler, Bernie and Evelyn Penner of Altona, Ernie and Robyn of Illes des Chenes. There are fifteen grandchildren.

The family farm was sold in 1966 and the Neufelds retired to Winkler. They are kept busy caring for their large garden and by other activities.

## PETER A. KLASSEN

Peter A. Klassen was born in Russia in 1869. When he was 5 years old, his family immigrated to Fargo, North Dakota, U.S.A. Peter visited Manitoba frequently and this is where he met his bride, Katherine Klippenstein. They were married on July 22, 1890.

Peter and Katherine lived a short time in the States, but Katherine preferred Canada, and they moved back to Canada, settling in Southern Manitoba. Peter had been known as homesteading much of the land in the Kronsweide District, where they had lived most of their life.

They had 15 children: William, 1892; Nettie, 1893; Tina, 1894; Peter, 1896; Abram, 1897; Jacob, 1899;

Henry and Cornie, 1900; Marie, 1902; Annie, 1903; John, 1905; Susanna, 1907; Sarah, 1909; Isaac, 1911; and Erdman, 1913.

Peter died in January, 1932 and Katherine died in October, 1943. Children still living are: Annie (Mrs. William Braun) living in Clearbrook, B.C.; Mary (Mrs. Jake Braun) living in the Red River Valley Lodge, Morris, Manitoba; Isaac, living in the Town of Lowe Farm, Manitoba; and Ed, living in the town of Morris, Manitoba.



*The Peter A. Klassen family in 1915. BACK ROW: Anna, Marie, Jake, Abram, John, Henry. FRONT ROW: Mother and Dad with Ed, Susan, Ike.*

### **Tina Klassen**

Tina, the third oldest child of Peter A. and Katherine Klassen, was married to John F. Braun.

They lived at the corner of S. 36-4-2-W, now the home of Jake F. Klassen. They farmed and, to the Lowe Farm residents, the Braun farm was the source of fresh farm eggs and plump juicy chickens. Youngsters never objected to being sent to the Braun's for eggs because their reward was ultimately a smile, a few kind words and candy from the tin on the fridge. Although the Brauns had no children of their own, they offered their home and hospitality freely to nieces, nephews, and friends where traditional Mennonite meals and faspas were at their best.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Braun, who forfeited their own education for hard farm work, encouraged and inspired younger generations to study, learn and better themselves. Many will remember "Uncle John" in his reading corner and the present image of "Tante Trinkan" in barefoot feet and an apronful of eggs. Mr. and Mrs. Braun spent their last years in the town of Lowe Farm. Mrs. Braun passed away in September of 1970 and was followed by Mr. Braun, in July of 1971.



*John and Tina Braun.*



*Abram Klassen - Drayman for Lowe Farm.*

### **PETER P. KLASSEN B. APRIL 1, 1896, D. JULY 3, 1954**

Peter P. Klassen married Marie Heinrichs in 1916. They lived four and one-half miles southwest of Lowe Farm, later moving to a farm 3 1/4 miles southeast of Lowe Farm. Maria died in 1930, after 13 1/2 years of marriage. The same year, he remarried, to Sarah Kroeker. They lived on the same farm until 1946, when they moved to another farm, 3 1/2 miles southeast of Lowe Farm. Here they lived until 1954, when Peter P. Klassen died. Mrs. Klassen and children lived there until 1959; then she and her youngest son, the only one left at home, moved to town. After her youngest child was married, she remained living in Lowe Farm. Mrs. Klassen lived there until 1972 when she moved to Steinbach, into the Bethesda Personal Care Home, where she is still residing.

Mrs. Klassen had ten children, one of whom died in 1975. She has 45 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren.



*The four generations of Mrs. Peter P. Klassen, including Mrs. P.P. Rempel, P.S. Schroeder, and infant daughter.*

Peter P. Klassen had six children with his first wife. Their names were: Erdman, Tina, Mary, Annie, Cornie, Peter.

He had four children with his second wife, namely: Willie, Ben and twins, Jake and Susan. Erdman married Mary Derksen and died in 1975. Mary lives in Lowe Farm. They have three children and six grandchildren.

Tina married Dave Rempel and lives 3 1/2 miles

southwest of Lowe Farm. They have four children and eleven grandchildren.

*Mary* married Cornie Rempel and lives 3 112 miles southwest of Lowe Farm. They have five children.

*Annie* married Ben Wall and lives 3 112 miles southwest of Lowe Farm. They have nine children, and ten grandchildren.

*Cornie* married Sara Froese. They live 3 112 miles southeast of Lowe Farm and have five children and four grandchildren.

*Peter* married Susie Klassen. They live in Lowe Farm and have five children.

*Willie* married Nettie Schroeder. They have four children and one grandchild and live 2 112 miles southwest of Lowe Farm.

*Ben* married Justina Froese. They live in Lowe Farm and have four children.

*Jake* married Dorothy Gerbrandt. They live 5 112 miles south of Lowe Farm, and have three children.

*Susan* married Peter Froese and they live eight miles southwest of Altona. They have three children.

### Jacob Klassen

Jacob Klassen was born on January 5, 1899, to Peter A. and Katherine (Klippenstein) Klassen. In 1922, Jacob married Mary Harder, daughter of Jacob and Mary Brown Harder. They lived most of their life in the Lowe Farm District. They farmed Section 20-4-1 W from 1925-1948. They raised seven children: Mary, Agnes, Jacob, Susan, Eddy, Erny and Herman. In 1948, Jacob Klassen passed away.

Mary remarried in 1949, to John Giesbrecht, who had three children: Henry, Kay and Peter. John worked for the Rural Municipality of Morris for many years. They were married 18 years, when John passed away in 1967. As of 1979, Mary has been a widow for 12 years and is living in Morris. Her children are as follows: Mary (Mrs. John Wiebe) of Lowe Farm, Manitoba. John and Mary are farming Section 20-4-1, which was at one time farmed by her parents.

Agnes, Mrs. Dave Schroeder, of Morris, Manitoba; Jake, of Parksville, Vancouver Island, B.C.; Susan, Mrs. Harry Heinrichs, of Morris, Manitoba; Erny of Parksville, Vancouver Island, B.C.; Herman, of Delta, B.C.

### Henry P. Klassen

Henry P. Klassen was a twin son of Peter and Katherine (Klippenstein) Klassen. His twin brother, Cornie, passed away shortly after birth. In 1919, Henry was united in marriage to Katherine Froese, daughter of Peter and Maria Froese.

When they got married, Katherine got one cow and some chickens from her parents and Henry got a horse, six chickens and one-half a pig, when it was time to kill pigs. Their first house was 16 feet by 24 feet, which they lived in for 2 years. During their first two years of farming, they were hauled out once and moved to John Nymon's place, where Henry worked for Mr. Finkelstein. They lived there only one month and moved 5 112 miles south of Lowe Farm.



*Mr. and Mrs. Henry Klassen who lived south of Lowe Farm.*

The family remembers their father as a very hard worker, however, he had hardly any money when they started out, but had learned to save and do with as little as possible.

In 1930, Henry and Katherine moved 4 miles north of Lowe Farm, to Section 25-5-2 W. They had 12 children: *Dorothy* married Jake Sawatzky, living in Chilliwack, B.C., and they have four children and seven grandchildren. *Tina* married Bill Bergmann, living in Winnipeg, Manitoba. They have four children and one grandchild. *Henry* died at the age of five. *Mary* married John Esau, living in Steinbach, Manitoba. They have eight children - one died at infancy - and have six grandchildren. *Pete* married Agatha Dyck, living in Oak Bluff; they have 3 children. *Johnnie* married Ruth Siemens, living in Delta, B.C., they have three children and one grandchild. *William* married Ruth Gerbrandt, living in Oak Bluff and have three children. *Henry* married Olwine Reimer, living in Starbuck, have five children (one set of twins) and one foster child; one grandchild. *Anne* married David Affleck, living in France. They have three children (one set of twin girls). *Helena* married Ben Redekopp, living in Aldergrove, B.C. and have two children. *Isaac* married Alvina Reimer, living in Abbotsford, B.C., have three children. *Susie* died in infancy. *Annie* and *Helena* are twin daughters.

In 1949, Henry and Katherine retired and moved to Steinbach. In 1961, Henry died and Katherine now is living in the Cedarwood Apartments in Steinbach.



*Mrs. J.B. Harder (Susanna Klassen).*

### Susanne Klassen

Susanne Klassen was born on January 31, 1907, the daughter of Peter A. and Katherine (Klippenstein) Klassen, of Kronsweide District. On June 30, 1929, she married Jacob B. Harder, son of Jacob and Mary Harder. Her sons thought she was the greatest cook in the



world. They had five children: Archie of Toronto, Ontario, who has 2 children; Donald of The Pas, has 4 children and 3 grandchildren; Lorna, Mrs. Axel Kuhlmann, of Coquitlam, B.C. has one son. Russell of Winnipeg, Manitoba, has 3 children and Wilfred 'Butch' of Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

Susanne lived to the age of 71 years, passing away on March 9, 1978. See more history re: Jacob B. Harder.

## NETTIE KLASSEN - PETER P. REMPLE

Nettie Klassen born June, 1893, near Plum Coulee, daughter of Peter A. and Katherine (Klippenstein) Klassen. When she was a little girl, her family moved to Kronsweide District on S. 24-4-2 W.

On July 6, 1911, Nettie married Peter P. Remple, son of Peter K. and Nettie Remple, of the Kronsweide District. They farmed the land on S. 18-4-1 W. Nettie and Peter were very hard workers. Due to Peter's illness, Nettie spent many hours out on the field, as well as having a big garden and raising chickens. Nettie was known to have had a great sense of humour. Her family always remembers her to have been young-at-heart and felt like she was one of them. Peter was very interested in singing and for many years, was a song leader of the Sommerfelder Church.

They raised four children: *Tina*, Mrs. J.B. Wiens, (nee Mrs. P. Schroeder), living in the Kronsweide District, near Lowe Farm. *Anna*, Mrs. Ed Giesbrecht, living in Morris. *Nettie*, Mrs. Abe Schroeder, living in Plum Coulee. *Peter* married Helen Klassen, living on his parents' farm S. 18-4-1 W.

Nettie had been sick for several years and died on January 20, 1935. In 1936, Peter Remple married Mrs. Agnes Dueck, who had four children. Peter Remple died January 31, 1968.



*The children of Peter P. Rempel. LEFT TO RIGHT: Tina, Anna, Nettie, Peter,*

## Tina Remple

Tina was the oldest daughter of Peter P. and Nettie Remple. On July 9, 1931, she married Peter S. Schroeder, son of Rev. Jacob and Anna Schroeder of the Kronsweide District. Peter and Tina farmed S. 25-4-2 W.

They had four children: *Erdman* married Lorraine Summers, living in Toronto, Ontario and they have one son. *Nettie* married Willie H. Klassen, living in Kronsweide District. They are farming the land which was homesteaded by her grandparents, Rev. Jacob J. and

Anna Schroeder, and farmed by her parents, Peter and Tina Schroeder. Nettie and Willie have four children and one grandchild. *Herman* married Rosella Braun, living in Ottawa, Ontario, and have one daughter. *Beno* married Karen Manly, living in Cobourg, Ontario and have two sons.

In 1948, Peter S. Schroeder passed away. In 1951, Tina married Jacob B. Wiens. Tina and Jacob had one son, Lionel, who is married to Lorraine Wiebe, and living in the Town of Lowe Farm. They have one daughter. Tina and Jacob Wiens live three miles south of Lowe Farm on S. 25-4-2 W.

## Anna Remple

Anna was the second daughter of Peter P. and Nettie Remple. On October 6, 1932, Anna married Ed Giesbrecht, son of Peter A. and Katherine Giesbrecht. For 31 years, they farmed northeast of Lowe Farm, in the Heabert School District.

They had four children: *Abe* married Mary Pylypiuk, living in Kamloops, British Columbia and have two children. *Ben* married Judi Braun and they have three children. Ben passed away in 1970. *George* married Vivian McWilliams, living in Vernon, British Columbia and they have three children. *Margaret* married Eddy Klassen, living in Armstrong, British Columbia and they have two children.

Anna and Ed sold their farm in 1965 and moved to Lowe Farm. In 1971, they moved to Morris and now are retired.

## Nettie Remple

Nettie was the third daughter of Peter P. and Nettie Remple. On June 25, 1936, Nettie married Abe Schroeder, son of George and Susan Schroeder. They farmed in Kronsweide District.

They had four children: *Verna*, living in Winnipeg. *Betty* married Bill McBride, living in Killarney and have three daughters. *Judy* married Lawrie Hawn, living in Ottawa, Ontario, and they have two children. *Melvin*, living in Steinbach.

They retired in 1974 and moved to Plum Coulee in 1976. On November 30, 1977, Abe passed away. Nettie resides in Plum Coulee.

## Peter Remple

Peter, the only son of Peter P. and Nettie Remple, was born on October 29, 1919 in the Kronsweide District. On April 4, 1970, Peter married Helen Klassen, from Winkler. Peter and Helen are farming the S. 18-4-1 W., which was the land of his parents.

## BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN K. KLASSEN

Our father, John K. Klassen, 11th child and 7th son of Peter and Katherine Klassen (nee Klippenstein) was born on February 21, 1905, at the Kronsweide District of Lowe Farm. The Peter Klassens farmed just across the road

from the Kronsweide School, close to the Sommerfelder Church, which still stands today.

Dad was a blond, very curly-haired youngster, who didn't enjoy school all too much, but excellent in mathematics: eg. just give him the dimensions of a granary and he would orally determine the amount of grain in it almost to the precise bushel. This trait he inherited from his mother.

At the early age of 13, Dad was working like a grown up with his Dad's threshing outfit. He stayed at home and worked on the farm until he married Nettie Peters, also of Lowe Farm, on February 8, 1928. To this union six children were born.

That spring, he rented the land just west of the former Ed E. Klassen (his brother's) place, and together with brother, Ed, he seeded it with three teams of horses. (12) His father was then working his farm with 22 horses. Later on that fall, his father purchased his first John Deere tractor.

But alas, excessive rains and floods in summer caused everything to drown. Community pastures, which were a little north of here, were so wet that the cattle broke out of the pastures because of the mosquito infestation. Mom and Dad lived at home with Dad's parents till fall, when they moved 2 1/2 miles west of Lowe Farm. Since he had a crop failure, they had no feed for their cow, chickens and four horses, which Dad had raised at home from colts. So Dad hitched up the old grain wagon, went to his other married brothers and sisters and came home with the wagon filled with feed! That's real sharing!

Next year, they moved to a farm just west and south of town, close to what is now known as the Shannon. This was in 1929 and times were poor, so Dad started work on the bridges. It was while he was working on the bridges that he was asked to dig many graves, as this was the beginning of the typhoid epidemic here. While digging with pick axes, a fellow worker's axe slipped and hauled into Dad's scalp! But Dad survived, just as he also survived next year's (1930) typhoid, which both he and Mother contracted. Uncle Ed Klassen came to tend the chores and Anne Rempel (now Mrs. Ed Giesbrecht) looked after Willie, and the housework, as Mother was flat in bed. Little Nettie (baby) was taken to Anne's parents, the Peter P. Remples (Dad's sister, Nettie) for a number of months.

One day, after laspa', Dad hitched up the hay rack, they loaded everything on it, and moved to the former Ed E. Klassen place, east and north of town. Here, they farmed a quarter section. The year of 1932 was a drought year with crop failure when no kernel formed and all was chaff. That fall, Dad had \$4.00 after debts were paid. I guess you might say it was the beginning of the 'Depression'. But they had one cow, which produced 112 pail of milk per day, and Saturday mornings, mother would churn butter. Dad would take it to town and trade it for groceries and tobacco. When their 40 chickens started laying, things began to look up. This was the same year baby Tina came along.

In 1933, Dad supplemented his livelihood by working Bert Altmann's land that fall. In 1935, my parents moved to the farm just west of town. Dewey Simpsons had farmed here prior to Dad and the land took a lot of

pampering before it began producing again. Dad rented part of the section with Uncle John F. Braun (sister Trink's husband) renting the other 240 acres of this same section.

In 1936, Wm. Brauns, (Dad's sister, Anne) moved back from British Columbia and fixed up a summer cottage on the folks' yard, where they lived for about a year.

Lowe Farm also had what was known as a 'Sports Day and Circus', which took place in our pasture. This continued for a number of years; one year one act included a parachutist dropping out of an airplane.

The first tractor Dad purchased was a Model C Case, which he and Uncle Henry bought together. You must remember Uncle Henry farmed about four miles north of Lowe Farm at the Newfeld School District. Later, Dad bought a Model L Case. In 1939, Uncle Henry and Dad purchased a new combine and swather. Thus for years, till about 1949 and 1950, they harvested together. I can remember all the dinners and faspas Mom made for the fields and the men would take turns on the machinery during the meal times; Dad or Uncle Henry sometimes catching 10 minutes' snooze on the stubble over noon hour!

In 1942, the folks went into the 'milk business', supplying a lot of Lowe Farm with milk twice a day. At first, milk was 7c per quart. Sometimes they delivered (often with horse and buggy if it was muddy) 30 or more quarts, twice a day. In 1950, when they stopped delivery because only pasteurized milk was to be sold, they received 15C per quart. Quite a change from today's price of milk!

1950 appears to have been a very busy year for our family. The three oldest children, Willie, Nettie and Tina, were all married that year. That spring, Dad purchased a new TD6 International Crawler, but before he could use it for seeding, he was called upon to use it in the big flood at Rosenort. Willie and Abe (Nettie's husband) worked day and night, using this crawler to rescue people and livestock.

The previous year, Willie commenced farming a small portion of land, and like Dad, was completely hailed out that year. In 1950, both Willie and Abe started farming and together with Dad, they rented and farmed 1015 acres. Of course, as they farmed more land, bigger and better machinery was purchased.

The boys farmed together with Dad till 1959. Then Dad continued with the help of a hired hand, Jake Klassen, his nephew's son. However, throughout the years, he had employed various hired help, including Willie Klassen, (Uncle Henry's son) and Frank Giesbrecht.

Dad served various terms as a Co-Op Store board member. His motto regardless where applicable, used to be "Don't wait till tomorrow, what you can do today!"

When we were smaller, we really appreciated Dad's sweet tooth, and would be eagerly awaiting his arrival back home from town to see what goodies he had bought us now. Even our pup waited for Dad to thrust his hand into his pocket and withdraw the little brown paper bag of goodies. Lots of kids, now long grown up, will remember John Klassen having bought them an ice cream

cone in town when they waited in the cars for their Dad.

Mom and Dad had joined the Kronsweide Church or Sommerfelder Faith and there Dad remained till death parted us from him in 1961.

Shortly after his death, Mother was again hailed out in the fall, after harvest, Mother, together with Marianne and Peter, still at home, moved into town.

This is the same land Dad farmed for almost 26 years, now farmed by Wilfred A. Harder, his nephew.

Dad is survived by mother and six children - Willie, Nettie, Tina, Susan, Marianne and Peter, as well as their spouses, **plus 19 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren** to date.

## THE JACOB E. BRAUN STORY

Marie Klassen, third daughter of Peter A. and Katherine Klassen, was born near Lowe Farm, in the Kronsweide District, on May 27, 1902. Being the 8th in a family of 13, meant much work in those days. School was just across the road, but extra chores prevented Marie from attending classes very regularly. But she was luckier than many in her day, because she did learn to read and write and speak English fluently.

Field work was not only for the men in the Klassen family, but for the girls, too, and they certainly did their share, plus the many household duties.

Marie married Jacob E. Braun when she was 18 years old, on October 28, 1920, in the Kronsweide Sommerfelder Church. Marie and Jake farmed near Lowe farm, but because Jake liked the challenge of the business world, he took outside work besides the farm. He spent several years in the Lowe Farm Consumers, as manager.

Jake loved horses and had several pairs of horses plus a pony called 'Dobbin', that many folks in the area are sure to remember. When Jake's work took him to the village of Lowe Farm, to make it possible for their children Ed, Art and Betty to attend school in town, they bought a house in Lowe Farm. Marie and the boys tried to farm from town; with the car of that era - 1929 Model A, they could navigate most roads and even had milking cows at the farm (1 1/2 miles from town).

Jake took employment with the Manitoba Pool Elevators and this became his lifelong work. Marie kept very busy throughout her life in Lowe Farm. Since the town had no restaurant, the construction gangs, threshing gangs, hydro construction crews etc. usually boarded at the Braun household. Marie, at times, served two gangs of 11 and 12 men, one gang at 11:00 and another at 12:00. Coping with wood stoves etc. made this a more mountainous chore than nowadays.

Marie also sewed a lot and became very adept at quilting and crocheting, capturing many prizes at local fairs.

During the early part of World War II, they moved to Giroux, where Jake was the Grain Buyer for almost four years.

Their oldest son, Ed, had completed his Grade XII Education by this time, and was a private in the Canadian Army. Due to a back injury, he trained as a typist clerk and served in Halifax, Sydney and St. John's,

Newfoundland. In March, 1944, he married his school girl sweetheart, Margaret Giesbrecht, and they had three sons, Marvin, Gordon and Vernon, and a lovely daughter, Norma Jean.

In June of 1944, disaster struck, and the Pool Elevator, plus the CNR station at Giroux burned down and Jake was transferred to Ogilvie Elevator Co. at Rosenfeld, where they lived till Jake retired in 1960.

During their stay in Rosenfeld, Marie once again took in boarders and enjoyed the time spent with many school teachers. She took in a young foster girl, Lorna, who lived with them for several years.

Art married Lorraine Martel, in April of 1948, and they had four sons: LeRoy, who passed away, and Stuart, Lindsay and Murray. Art took up grain buying and was the Ogilvie Agent at Plum Coulee for many years, later going into Texaco business in Morden.

Betty married Harold J. Giesbrecht in January, 1948, and they moved to Niverville shortly after their marriage, where Harold has been with the General Motors car sales for 29 years. Betty became the Niverville Postmaster in 1958. They had a son, Ross, and a daughter, Lois, who are both married and live in Niverville.

Marie retired to Morris shortly after her husband passed away in 1967. She once again boarded teachers, but decided to move into the Morris Manor when work on the yard became too much of a chore.



*Johann J. Braun, with wife, Maria, and daughter, Elizabeth, and son, Cornelius in 1918.*

## JOHAN J. BRAUN SON OF JACOB AND HENRIETTA (UNGER) BRAUN

*written by Sara Peters and Tina Gollan*

### Our Family - A Five Point Star

Our father was legally married five times. Born 1868 July 18 in Berghthaler Village, Russia. He came to Canada with his parents in 1879.

1890 - Johan J. Braun married Elizabeth Funk. To this union was born John (1874) and Jacob (1895). Jacob died

in January, 1895, followed by Mother, Elizabeth (Funk) Braun three months later.

1896 - Johan J. Braun married Anna Friesen. To this union was born Jacob (1897), Anna (1899), Henrietta (1902) and Sara (1904). Mother, Anna (Friesen) Braun died January, 1906, followed by Anna in November. Henrietta died December, 1912.

1906 - Johan J. Braun married Maria Bergmann. To this union was born Anna (1907), Tina (1908), Maria (1910), Cornelius (1913), Elizabeth (1915) and Henrietta (1919). Maria (Bergmann) Braun died September, 1919.

1926 - Johan J. Braun married Mrs. Anna Kroeker. Anna Braun died April 1930.

1934 - Johan J. Braun married Mrs. Margaretha Loewen. Johan. J. Braun died August 1942 at the age of 74 years.

We lived in Weidenfeld, Manitoba before we moved to Lowe-Farm. We remember seeing Haley's Comet April 1910 at Weidenfeld. This move was made in 1914 with a family of seven. John born 1894; Jacob born 1897; Sara born 1904; Annie born 1907; Tina born 1908; Mary born 1910; Cornelius born 1913; (Elizabeth born 1915 was born at Lowe-Farm). John married Tina Klassen in 1915. Jacob married Mary Dyck in 1917.



*Mrs. Johan J. (Maria) Braun and her family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Tina, Annie, Sara, Mother. FRONT ROW: Elizabeth, Mary, Cornelius.*

The years 1914 and 1918 we lived on Sec. 1/4 18-4-1 West. East of us lived John Dycks. West was the Cornelius Dreidgers and the Bietzen family. North was Peter Remples and South was Peter Martins. We lived four miles straight south of the town of Lowe-Farm. John, 18 years old and Jacob, 16 did not attend school at Lowe-farm but Sara, 9 years old and Annie, 6 years old and later Tina and Mary attended the Steinfeld School.

We well remember walking the mile to school every day in the summertime, driving a horse and cutter with a little caboose built over the cutter for shelter from the winds in the winter, always taking our lunch in those double-decker lunch pails. Anybody living in Southern Manitoba will well realize when a storm breaks out in the winter time, you better stay home. In 1915, we did not have radio weather news.

The snow drifts in the cold winter were hard enough for the horses to walk on. Often the snow banks were above those present day telephone lines. We usually had a ten foot snow bank between house and barn and many a sleigh ride was enjoyed on the hills of snow.

Remembering the great dust storm which almost filled the ditches with dirt, was quite an experience. Our neighbors were out visiting friends when this dust storm hit our area. They always had the horsehide robe in the buggy as well as in the cutter. This couple unhitched their horses, separated them, and thought they would run for shelter. Then they knelt down and covered themselves with the robe. The horses did not go away - they just stuck their nose under the robe too and stayed with them until the storm was over. Talk about horse-sense!

Father and the two brothers John and Jacob worked the land. This meant there had to be three full teams of 12 horses plus two drivers. In harvest time after the two older brothers had married, Father would pull a hayrack and wagon into the field. The children would be playing around the hayrack, while Mother was running the binder with four horses. The two older sisters, Sara 12 and Annie 9, had to make sure the odd sheaf that fell of the sheaf holder had to be carried in the line of the stooks. This was pretty hard especially for Sara as she remained a small shrimp. During threshing they had a stook loader which eliminated the need for the field men. This sheaf loader loaded the stooks into the hayrack and the stooks had to be a straight line.

One fall season after the wheat field was in stooks we had a bad thunder storm, and one bolt of lightning hit the stooks close to the house, and they burst into flame. The hard clap of thunder must have opened the sky, as the rain pelted down so hard that the fire only burned a couple of stooks sparing the stubble field.

With a family, pranks were commonplace. One time Cornelius and Elizabeth were getting dressed in the morning, with Cornelius wearing his fleece lined underwear with a trap seat. Just being five years old, he did not have it buttoned up, so Elizabeth who was three at the time, grabbed a young kitten and stuffed it down his trap door. You can imagine the scuffle! I don't know who won, the boy or the kitten.

By 1915, some people had cars. Our grandparents from Altona were really in style because they had a four door Chevrolet. The top came down and folded up behind the back seat. For colder weather, it had snap shutters to snap over the door opening. Cars also came in handy as rat exterminators. The car was backed to a building, an extension put on the exhaust, and left running, so as to kill the rats underneath the floor. Rats built tunnels underneath any floor which did not have a basement.

While living at Lowe-Farm, Mother raised turkeys especially to butcher in December. When they were packed in a light weight coffee barrel and shipped to Eatons in Winnipeg. The proceeds from the turkeys were used to buy Christmas presents and any new clothes we needed.

Shopping for groceries with Mother in Lowe-Farm was a treat for us children. Moses, who ran the grocery store, always had a barrel of doughnut shaped cookies with red sugar sprinkled on them, and of course each child was

given one. Coffee beans were sold by the barrel - everybody had a coffee grinder. Clothes were ordered from Eatons in Winnipeg, as well as the material to sew dresses, make quilts, sheets, pillow cases, wool for knitting, and crochet cotton. Spices, pepper, liniments and salves, especially carbolic salve which was used for livestock, were purchased from the Watkins dealer that travelled from house to house.

Axle grease was another item you could not run out of, because it was used for all implements, wagons and huggies. It was even used for poultices, and to remove grease from clothing.

By 1914, there was a crop, a garden, milk, butter, cream, eggs, and we thought we were living like Royalty. All this was achieved by manpower.

After reading this epistle you will realize that with a family of 12 children, everyone had to work so there would be enough to eat. This size family was average in those times.

People found less to criticize because one had to work and plan harder for one's survival. There were no demanding things from the government, no strikes, just plain hard work, and we did it.

## WILHELM GINTER

In 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Wilhelm Ginter moved to 15-4-2, 2 miles west and 4 miles south of Lowe Farm, onto a quarter section of land they purchased for \$2,500.00. They lived on this farm until 1967, at which time they moved to Altona.

Mr. and Mrs. Ginter had seven children, Freda, Anne, Henry, Jake, Albert, Bill and Ed. Freda is a nurse in Altona. Anne (Mrs. Dave Wiebe) who lives at Kane has four daughters. Linda (Mrs. Ernie Neufeld) of Altona, Shirley, Sharon and Valerie. Henry married Evelyn Wiebe, a carpenter, in Thompson. Jake died in 1956. Albert married Justina Wolfe, they live on the home farm with their 3 sons, Robert, Ronald and Allen. Bill, who married Joyce Suderman, is a teacher in the Morris Collegiate. They live in Morris with their three children - Michael, Audrey and Steven. Ed, who lives in Vancouver, married Irene Pedroche.

## PETER P. FUNKS

*by Anne Braun, their daughter*

Peter Funk married Kathrina Groening in 1898. Their parents had both come from Russia; Peter's from Heubodon, Marianpole in 1875 to settle in the Altona District, then to Lowe Farm; Kathrina's parents arrived in 1874, and settled at Rheinland, Manitoba. They then took up homesteading in Lowe Farm District.

Father and Mother had eleven children; Cath, Abraham, Nora, Pete, Helen, Margaret, Ben, Anne, Maria, Eva and Bill. Those years took their toll in lives.

Abraham died at age 7, Margaret at 3 months, Maria at 1 year and Eva at 2 1/2 years. What hard times they were. Father and Mother farmed in the "CUtta" most of their farming days, raising the rest of their children there.

They were poor most of their lives, but after the first World War, they got on their feet. They then built a big barn and bought Grandpa and Gramma Groening's

house, which was large and comfortable. They kept horses, cows, pigs, chickens, geese, ducks, and at one time had a herd of sheep.

The farm gave them a bare living at times, but mother always had a beautiful garden, with small fruits, lots for us, and plenty left over for the neighbours!

Cath, who was an R.N., also took a course in Chicago for midwifery. She started out at Ninette Sanitorium for three years and from there to the "Misery" for training. She married Fred Tasker; they later moved to Vancouver.

Nora started nurses training, but gave it up to marry Neal Fast of Winnipeg, raising a family of four.

Pete stayed in farming for a time and worked for various people. He left to serve in the Second World War, later marrying Norah Russel. They had two children and moved to B.C., where he remarried.

Ben farmed, worked at road construction, then selling Massey Harris farm equipment in Carman. They had five children.

Unfortunately, at the age of 26, Helen was committed to the mental home in Brandon.

Anne married Paul Braun of Lowe Farm. They retired, moving to Winnipeg; are now back at farming. They had four children.

Bill joined the Air Force at a tender age and went overseas. When he came back, he moved to Vancouver, and married Kathleen Moffat; where they raised five children.

Dad and Mother enjoyed 67 years of married life together. They moved from the "Cutta" to the Friesen farm, then retired to Lowe Farm. When they were incapable of looking after themselves any longer, they spent their last years in the Home for the Aged in Altona. Mother died in 1966 at 87 years; Dad died of cancer just a few weeks short of his 93rd birthday.



*The Henry H. Doe!! family. BACK ROW: Annie (Mrs. Anton Dyck), Henry and Susie (Mrs. Ernie Winther). FRONT ROW: Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Doell.*

## HEINRICH H. AND ANNA (PENNER) DOELL

Dad and mother moved to the Morris Municipality in September of 1936, on the farm on N.W. 1/4 14-4-2 West in the Kronsweide school district, near Lowe Farm. Dad farmed with horses and he was proud of them. The

threshing was usually done by B.B. Hildebrand on which "company" he worked, going from one farmer to the other till the harvest of the company was finished. He hauled all his grain to the elevator by horse and wagon or sleigh, as the season required. He was self taught veterinarian at times, as well.



*Unloading grain by shovel into a granary in 1938, on the H.H. Doell farm. B.B. Hildebrand helping.*

Mother had a big garden to supply the needs of the family and a lovely flower garden, which she enjoyed. They also raised geese and ducks. Many a pillow and comforter was made from the down of these fowl, to keep us warm when the winter winds blow. They also had turkeys, laying hens and some pigs. Cows gave milk and cream and provided a small income as well. Dad was not a wildlife hunter, but once or twice a winter, he would like a rabbit or partridge roast.

In 1946, they moved to the Kane School district and farmed for a few years. After that, Dad took a van route for the Kane School. In summer and winter, he would drive with horse and van. In winter, he had a small heater to keep the children warm in the van. Later he used his car and then a panel truck to pick up the children. In summertime, he did odd jobs. One summer, he worked on the construction of what now is the Lowe Farm junior high school. While working there, he broke his leg, and at age 62, he went to the hospital for the first time in his life!

In the late 50's, the flood waters made their way into their home with about 6 inches of water on the floor. They did not move out, and no compensation either!

Again in 1965, the flood waters went over the dike and water filled the basement and came into the small kitchen

floor (which was lower than the rest of the house). The cattle were chased out of the barn, so they could go to higher ground. This time, dad and mother went to stay with mother's brother, Peter Penner. Dad was able to take this all, as he had a great sense of humor.

He passed away on March 20, 1967. Mother stayed in the home till May 1970, when she moved to the Highrise Apartments of Winkler, where she still lives.

Their children are:

Henry, who married Katherine Klassen. He was a farm labourer, a few years after their marriage, then a heavy equipment operator. They are now living in Morris.

Annie, who married Anton Dyck. They are farming at Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

Susan married Ernest Winther, she is a school teacher.

Ernie is a radio and T.V. technician. They live northwest of Ste. Anne.

## JOHN J. UNRAU

John J. Unrau (1920) of Rosenfeld, and Elizabeth Kroeker (1932) of Gretna were married on April, 1953. We moved to the Kronsweide area, Section 13-4-2, formerly belonging to the Henry Nickels. Farming was our chief occupation, usually having some cattle, hogs, or poultry for a sideline.

At that time we attended church in Rosefarm, a small country church which was closed in 1974. We are now attending the Emmanuel Gospel Church in Lowe Farm.

Our children are: Elaine, 1954-1978; Ken, 1957; Marlene, 1958; Valerie, 1966; Viola, 1966 and Audrey 1969. The oldest three started school in Kronsweide, later attending the Lowe Farm and Morris Schools. The others started in Lowe Farm.

All the girls have had some training on piano. Elaine and Marlene attended Winnipeg Bible College: Ken finished his carpenters course offered in high school, and Melvin is taking a power mechanics course.

We have all taken part in community activities, Sunday School, church, church board, mission board, ladies meetings, choir and youth groups. John served for some time on the Kronsweide School board.

Elaine was married to Tom Chipman of Winnipeg, in 1973, and moved to Winnipeg. She took ill with leukemia in 1976, and passed away in 1978, after a difficult but courageous battle.

One of the highlights of our life for which we thank God, was the celebration of our Silver Wedding in 1978, which all our family was able to attend.

## LIFE STORY OF MY PARENTS MR. AND MRS. B.B. HILDEBRAND

*submitted by B. W. Hildebrand (son)*

Mr. Ben Hildebrand was born in the village of Greenfarm, north of Winkler, Manitoba, in 1890, and had his schooling in a district school where English and German were taught. Mrs. Helena Hildebrand (nee Wall) was born at Plum Coulee at the home of J.F. Wall, two miles west of town. She was born in 1896, and attended a private school till the age of 12. They were married in 1915, in Grossweide in the Sommerfelder Church. They



*Mrs. Henry DoeII feeding her chickens, daughter, Suzie at left.*



farmed for 11 years 1 1/2 miles west of Plum Coulee, then sold the farm to Jacob Siemens, and moved to Lowe Farm.

Mr. Ben Hildebrand and his brother Abe bought half a section of land from the widow, Mrs. Jacob Dyck (North half of 15-4-2). The farm was pioneered by our old neighbor's father (Mr. B. Funk) on the north side of the road from where we lived. We were ten people (2 families) when we started, and somewhere around 18 or 20 when Uncle Abe moved to Rosefarm District in 1939.

The going was quite tough during the depression years - dry years and grasshoppers. Those years everything was eaten - what the grasshoppers didn't take, we ate. We had one good thing, though. Dad and Uncle Abe decided to go tractor farming. So in 1929 the old Titan was sold and several horses and a new tractor were bought - a John Deere Model D - \$1,245.00. It took them nine years to pay for it. One thing always remained with my Dad, and that was credit. Thank God he never abused it as far as I know. Mr. Charly Rosner, the storekeeper, was always willing to stand by. I even remember when Dad came home one day in January with a two gallon pail of strawberry jam. What a treat! He insisted that Dad take the jam. He said it did nobody any good standing in his store and if Dad ever had any money, he knew that he would pay for it.

Mr. Dietrich Hoepfner was another man in Dad's life. He had a fuel business, so we could always drive our tractor. He also sold binder twine - another very necessary item when the crop was ready. We had our own threshing outfit, so there was always a threshing company going in fall together with some neighbors. Later Dad bought a combine - so the neighborly business closed.

Oh yes, during the depression we also made our own fuel for the winter. Pressed manure! That was also a neighborly job. Great company and fun - although not the smell!

My dad passed away in 1953, in the month of September at the age of 63. My mother passed away six years later. They were carried to rest in Kronsweide Cemetery.

The farm was sold to Jacob Wall and is now farmed by the Giesbrechts.

## **HISTORY OF THE LATE JACOB P. GERBRANDT FAMILY**

Father was born to Jacob and Sara Gerbrandt on November 11, 1886. When he was 12 years old, his father decided to move to the new settlement in the Lowe Farm area, where land was cheap and a lot of it available. So in 1898, he, with his wife and family of 2 sons, Peter and Jacob, and five daughters, moved and settled on the N. 1/2 13-4-2 West. They started the farmyard where Marvin Gerbrandt lives at the present.

At one time, when grandfather was at his prime, he was able to increase his land holdings to a whole section, which was considered much land at that time. Due to hard times, like crop failures and consigning notes (Burgschuld) for other farmers, he lost quite substantially. Grandfather, who had been born at Heuboden in the Ukraine, in south Russia in 1853, was a farmer. He

also was one of the instigators to build the Kronsweide Church. He served as a chorister in this church until the time of his retirement in 1917, when they moved to Altona, Grandmother (nee Sara Hoepfner) died in 1927 and Grandfather in 1932.

In 1911, at the age of 24 years, father married Helena Penner, daughter of Johann and Maria (nee Friesen) Penner of the Town of Lowe Farm.



*Jacob P. and Helena (Penner) Gerbrandt.*

They took up farming as their livelihood on the N.W. 1/2 13-4-2 West, just west of his parents' farm. Here, on this small family farm, they experienced many joys and sorrows. Ten children were born to them, of which one daughter, Susie, died at the age of one year. Later in 1953, Sara, Mrs. John A. Friesen, died at the age of 40 years.

Family life was going on well until the summer of 1930, when mother suddenly became ill. Dr. McGavin was called, but all to no avail. After a brief illness of only 12 hours, she passed away. This left a very great void in the family, but especially to father. Through this, our strong, self-righteous and moral father was brought to his knees. After a long battle with himself, he finally came through a new man. His main concern now was to serve his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Together with some other men, he helped to establish the Kronsweide Christian Endeavour (Yugendfereine). Here, they hoped young people would find spiritual enrichment. For many years, he also served as chorister in the Kronsweide church.

In 1932, he remarried the former Mrs. Cornelius Giesbrecht. In 1937, when the Rose Farm Church organized, he, together with Bernhard B. Hildebrand and John P. Dyck, made up the first church board. The following year, he became minister of the Rudnerweide church, although he still continued to support himself and his family off the little farm. In those days, it was customary to itinerate from church to church. This took much travelling, but his home base was Rose Farm



*Jacob P. Gerbrandt and second wife (the former Mrs. Cornelius Giesbrecht).*

Church, where he served as minister till his retirement in 1953, when they moved to Altona.

Although father was a healthy man, he was very short sighted. This has caused many hair-raising experiences for the family. It probably was not as real a problem in the horse and buggy days, where the horses used their own sense of judgment. I don't think father realized how short sighted he really was, at least not to the extent that his family did. The steering wheel was his; even after the boys thought they were old enough to drive, father stuck to the wheel. Many a time we've sat there, cruising along, with our eyes bulging, hair standing straight up and holding onto our seats. We thought certain disaster was unavoidable, but at the last instant, he would veer to the side and all was well.

One time, when we were driving along in our 1919 Model T Ford, doing around 25 to 30 miles per hour, we noticed a tractor on the road. Father finally saw the tractor, which he missed, but what he did not see was that the man was pulling a drag, one of these adjustable steel drags, which the Rural Municipality of Morris used to let to the farmers to scrape the roads. Well, oops, oops and then bump, bump, bump and we were over the drag with two wheels. The drag wasn't any the worse after that. The only thing that happened to us was two cut tires!

Another time, he ran over a pig, although nothing happened to it. One time, after they had already retired to Altona, he drove over a bike which a child had left lying on the road. He went straight to the store and bought this child a new bike.

In those early years, it was customary for a group of farmers to band together, and set up their own private telephone company. Then, from this group, one was appointed to serve as maintenance man. At our home, we also had one of these phones. Father maintained these lines for many years. This was a very simple set-up. Wherever possible, 2 x 4's were nailed into fence posts to hold the line up. They used longer posts at road crossings, so that large machinery like threshing machines, could get through underneath.

Presently the family are Mary, married to C.P. Heinrichs, retired and living in Altona. The late Sara was

married to Rev. John A. Friesen of Lowe Farm. Rev. Friesen, with his second wife, Tina, are still living in the Lowe Farm area. Henry, in the ministry, living in Winnipeg, with his wife, Susan. Helena is married to Peter G. Dueck, who for many years, has served as minister in Lowe Farm. Jacob and wife, Nettie, farming in the Lowe Farm area. Diedrich, in the ministry, living in Winnipeg with his wife, Agnes. John and wife, Agatha, farming in the Lowe Farm area. Peter and wife, Neta, farming at Purves. Ed and wife, Mary, farming at Snowflake.

## HEINRICH FALKS

The family history goes back to the Village of Schoenwiese in the Chortitza Colony in Russia. Heinrich Falk, who was born in 1799, together with his wife, nee Maria Janzen, moved from there when the Bergthal Colony in Russia was founded in 1836. The Heinrich Falk's had nine children. The oldest seven migrated to Canada in the 1870's. The youngest daughter Helena married one H. Unger from the Molotchna Colony and no further information of them is available. The youngest son Wilhelm died in Russia at the age of 21. Heinrich Falk and his second wife, nee Anna Peters came to Canada in June 1875 on the S.S. Moravian, when they were over 75 years old. Mr. Falk died in 1895 and his second wife died in 1897 when she was about 98 years old.

The children of the Falk's were:

David Falk married Catherina Wall - they had 11 children. Their tenth child Johan was killed by lightning in 1889 near Lowe Farm. Came to Canada in 1874 on S.S. Peruvian.

Heinrich Falk married Susanna Harder - they had no children.

Peter Falk married Helena Funk - they had 6 children. Maria Reimer - they had 2 children. Elizabeth Dyck - they had 3 children. Peter and his third wife came to Canada in 1874 on the S.S. Peruvian. Some descendants have been and may still be living in the Lowe Farm-Morris area.

Anna Falk married Abraham Harder - they had 5 children.

Jacob Falk married Maria Penner - they had 7 children, the oldest of which is an ancestor of the well known Canadian actor John Friesen.

Abraham Falk (1833) married Katherina Epp in 1954, daughter of Cornelius Epp and Maria Abrams.



*Abraham and Katherina (Epp) Falk. Parents of Abram, Henry and Cornelius Falk.*

The Falks had 12 children, Cornelius, Heinrich and Abram live near Rosefarm. The oldest son died in infancy. The oldest 11 children were born in Russia in the Bergthal Colony, and David the youngest was born in Canada.

Abram Falk and his family lived in the Altona area - Schoenthal. (On 24-17 N.E. in 1882). They arrived from Russia on the S.S. Sardinian, landing in Quebec 30 July 1876.

### Abram Falk

Abram Falk their 4th child was born 12 Sept. 1860. He was married to Katherina Unrau 31 Dec. 1883. They had no children of their own but "adopted" (perhaps not in the legal sense) three children, one of whom, Nettie was severely handicapped. After their retirement they moved to Plum Coulee where they were caretakers of the Sommerfelder Church, also used their home as an old folks home for a number of years.

Both Abram and Katherina died in 1949.



*Abram and Katherina (Unrau) Falk,*

### Henry Falk

Henry Falk, the 8th child of Abram and Katherina (Epp) Falk, was born 15 April 1870. On 24 Oct. 1892, he married Elizabeth Dyck the daughter of Aron and Helena (Falk) Dyck of Schoenthal. Henry worked as a farm laborer for his brother-in-law Diedrich Wiebe of Rosenfeld and later moved to Rosefarm. Henry never had the opportunity to go to school but his wife taught him to read and write. He was a "Vorsaenger" at the Kronswiede Church near Rosefarm, in pursuit of these duties he purchased an organ, and using a music book based on numbers "Sollenboek", learned new melodies. It was he, who was generally called upon to lead the singing at graveside services during funerals, while the grave was being filled in.

During the time they lived at Rosefarm, he purchased more land and in 1917 Henry Falk purchased a threshing outfit - (Separator and Engine) and also his first car a Model T-Ford. In 1920 the Henry Falk's sold their land at Rosefarm and moved to the Hoffnungsort District about seven miles northwest of Plum Coulee. Here they farmed until he passed away very suddenly in 1931 - Mrs. Falk later remarried. She remained on the farm until her death in 1952. The property on which the Falks lived 33-3-3 - was farmed by their son Cornelius D. Falk until his retirement, and is presently farmed by a grandson, Henry Albert Falk.



*Heinrich and Elizabeth (Dyck) Falk.*

The Henry Falk's had 13 children at least 9 of whom were born at Rosefarm. The youngest two, Susanna and David died in infancy. Abram died in 1918, during the flu epidemic, and Henry died in 1974. Of the 9 still living 3 have been married for more than 50 years and Henry died the day after his 50th Anniversary.

The children: Helena (1894) - Mrs. Jacob A. Elias; Abram (1895-1918); Heinrich (1897-1974), was married to Sarah Wall; Elizabeth (1898) - Mrs. John P. Hamm; Katherina Falk (1900) - single; Aron Falk (1901) - married Helena Hiebert; Maria (1903) - married George Hoepfner; Anna Falk (1906) - single; Peter (1907) - married Tina Hiebert; Sara Falk (1909) - single; Cornelius (1911) - married Sadie Hoepfner; Susanna and David both died in infancy.

### Cornelius Falk

Cornelius Falk (1873) was the eleventh child of the Abram and Katherina Epp Falks. He married Anne Rempel the daughter of Peter and Olga (Wall) Rempel in 1901. The Cornelius Falks has 13 children, 2 of whom died in infancy. The Cornelius Falks later moved to the Rosenheim District north of Horndean, and upon retirement they moved to Schoenthal. Cornelius died in 1943 and Anna died in 1945.

Their children: Cornelius born Nov. 15, 1901; Anna born July 4, 1904, married David H. Wiens; Katherina born Jan. 21, 1906; Olga born Sept. 5, 1907; Abraham born Aug. 3, 1909, married Helena Barkman; Maria born June 8, 1911, married Jacob Giesbrecht; Peter born Jan. 19, 1913, married Elizabeth Janzen; Margaretha born Aug. 2, 1915, died Aug. 7, 1919; Susanna born June 3, 1917; Helena born Oct. 19, 1918, married Diedrich Funk; Elizabeth born Nov. 8, 1919; Agatha born Mar. 10, 1921, married Jacob Bergen; Margaretha born July 25, 1922, died July 31, 1922.

### JACOB SPENST SCHROEDER

*submitted by Mrs. Susan Giesbrecht (nee Schroeder)*

Jacob Schroeder was one of Manitoba's solid farmers. He farmed near Lowe Farm all his life - enjoying the good times and the bad. He never made the headlines in public life but he was liked for what he was - a plain, hardworking farmer - the kind that make the backbone of our Canadian West.

Jacob Spenst Schroeder was born to Rev. and Mrs. Jacob Schroeder at Schoenhoerst, near Gretna, on

November 3, 1891. His family consisted of four brothers John, George, Abram and Peter and two sisters Mary and Annie. On April 1, 1903, at the age of 12, Jacob moved to Lowe Farm with the family. Land was a little cheaper here and more readily available.



*The Rev. Jacob Schroeder family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Annie, George, John. FRONT ROW: Mary, Mrs. Schroeder, Abe, Rev. Schroeder, Jacob.*

Here he continued to go to school for a few years, but the real schooling for him was learning to farm from his dad. He was baptized by Bishop Abram Doersken in 1911 and accepted into the Sommerfelder Church in Kronswiede. When he married he transferred his membership to the Berghaler Church.

His father was a minister and as a result, much of the farming responsibility fell on the family.

There was no water available for the household or the cattle, so water was carted from the river in Morris. As soon as possible dugouts were made to solve the water problem.

At the age of 21 he started farming on his own, paying \$4,000.00 for a quarter section with a set of run-down buildings. He lived alone on his farm for a few years but found it quite lonely.

At a funeral for an uncle, Mr. Diedrich Schroeder, at Halbstadt, Jacob got to see a black haired, brown eyed, slim, young lady by the name of Helena Heinrichs. He immediately knew that she was 'Miss Right' for him. It took till June for him to make a special trip to Halbstadt to the Jacob Heinrichs residence to pursue his heart's

desire. He arrived driving a trim top buggy, drawn by a sleek brown horse and his knees were covered by a light blanket. He quickly won the heart of Helena and on October 22, 1914 they were married by Rev. Henry Ewert at the home of Helena's parents. With a sparkle in his eye Jacob used to say, "She was quite a girl, my Helena. In addition to being good looking she could also cook."



*The Jacob S. Schroeder's farmyard.*

They immediately moved to Lowe Farm, 112 mile west of Jacob's parents and started farming. In 1918 they moved to a farm 1 112 miles south of Lowe Farm.

Farming took up the major part of their time but wheat prices were good and for a young farmer, Jake became moderately prosperous for those times.

While Jacob was busy in the fields, Helena with the children as they came along, would plant a large vegetable and fruit garden. There were usually enough vegetables for the family as well as enough to sell or trade for other products. The poultry department also belonged to Helena. There were always enough chickens for eggs, roasts and soup. When a traveller would come along and want to sell material, fish or kinds of fruit which she didn't grow, she would politely but firmly tell him, "You don't buy my wares, I can't buy yours. We have no money just things that grow on the farm." Eventually a deal would be made.

In 1922, he purchased a Titan tractor but it was unsatisfactory so he switched to an Oil-Pull Rumley which was quite a machine in those days.

He was one of the first to own a car in the district and occasionally chauffeured ministers around to various churches, particularly during the time of World War I.

Around that time Jacob and a friend went to Winnipeg to buy an Overland car. They had both set their hearts on a particular model. The dealer was anxious to sell and for a good price they ended up buying three cars instead of two.

A few weeks later he attempted to buy more land from one of his older neighbours in the Rosenfeld District. He was not successful but the older gentleman showed interest in Jacob's new Overland car. So he sold him the third car at a neat profit of \$600.00.

The depression came but it didn't hurt him too much as his land was paid for and he had a few dollars. He was sensitive though to the need around him and helped where he could.

He worked closely together with his older brother John, who went into the implement business in the late 20's, but Jacob stuck to his farming.

Besides growing grain he also had a real interest in raising purebred shorthorn cattle. Cattle and horses and



*Jacob and Helen Schroeder in 1920.*



*Jacob and Helen Schroeder in 1965. Their 50th wedding anniversary.*

other farm animals had to be looked after and treated well. He also enjoyed the wild life around the farm such as rabbits, the occasional deer and especially the prairie chickens.

Jacob Schroeder used to enjoy talking about days gone by. He used to tell the time when as a boy, he took a few armfuls of hay into the Morris hotel, so he could sleep there. (The adults got the beds.) He also used to relate the story of how a horse kicked him on the head. He was rushed to Morris to Dr. McTavish to have his scalp stitched up. For this little operation he had his legs and hands tied to a table, a newspaper in his mouth to bite on and the job was done in about 15 minutes with hardly a scar to show for it.

By the time of World War II, he was farming not only his own land but also a farm belonging to an American family. They became anxious to sell but Jacob advised them to hold on for a while and he would farm it for them. This they decided to do and after the war this land sold at twice the pre-war prices. When asked why he didn't buy it himself at the low pre-war price he said, "That's not how you treat your life-long neighbours! ..

He never sought community leadership but was always willing to help. He served on the local school board for a number of years, was a charter member of the Lowe Farm Credit Union, and was on the board of directors of the Red River Valley Mutual Insurance Company for a number of years.

Jacob Schroeder was a stout man, small of stature with black hair (later bald) and blue grey eyes. He always dressed neatly with a necktie, jacket or sweater.

He enjoyed food and sharing it with friends or anyone who happened by at mealtime. He and his Helena believed in hospitality to all. They enjoyed talking to people and hearing of other places.

He was an early riser and worked long hours during the busy season. Farming to him was recreation - like golf to a golfer. He didn't believe in wasting time, especially on the road getting from place to place.

Jacob was thrifty by nature but he believed in buying quality.

He was even tempered and patient with his family of eight children - six girls and two boys. There were enough children for a baseball or football team and he would often join in. After a game, Helena would usually come out with a treat of cookies and milk for everyone.

Jacob and Helena had a real interest in the church. He was instrumental in starting the first services in the school in Lowe Farm. Various denominations took part in these. Whenever possible the whole family were at the services. If the weather was uncooperative and travel was impossible the family would be gathered around the organ to sing hymns, Sunday School verses were recited and the lesson read. The entire family was encouraged to take part in Sunday School, Choir practice and later 'Jugendverein'. They were concerned about the spiritual and material welfare of their family. They worked hard to provide for them and also to establish a future for them.

In July of 1929, he took his family for a trip to Lockport, Manitoba and caused quite a sensation on Portage Avenue when the Overland car stalled and

passers by realized his family consisted of eight children, a wife and a maid to help with the children. He also helped out with school trips. As early as 1934, he helped chaperone a trip to West Hawk Lake, together with the school principal, J.J. Warkentine. Later in 1936 and again in 1947 he took a vehicle and took students to Pine Falls, Seven Sisters, Falcon Lake and West Hawk Lake.

In the fall of 1970, the Schroeders retired to Lowe Farm. He was not well and after a lengthy illness and a stay of one week in the hospital he passed away quietly on May 24, 1971.

The Schroeders had eight children: Anna (Mrs. C.J. Neufeld) farming at Lowe Farm; Dora (Mrs. Ken Hunkin) living in Morris; Helen (Mrs. Frank Martens) living in Morris; Jake, farming at Lowe Farm; Mary, passed away June, 1970; Beno, farming at Lowe Farm; Olga (Mrs. Jacob L. Braun) farming at Kane; Susan (Mrs. Lawrence Giesbrecht) teaching at Altona and Rosenfeld.

## PETER K. REMPEL

Mr. Peter K. Rempel was born July 15, 1867 in the village of Heuboden Bergthal Colony, South Russia close to the Black Sea. His parents were Jacob and Agenetha (nee Klippenstein) Rempel. His mother died when he was just two years old. His father remarried, and together with his parents and two sisters they migrated to Canada, with the first contingent of Mennonites in 1874, settling on the east side of the Red River on a tract of land designated for the Mennonites by the government. Their first place of residence was the village of Blumengart, near Steinbach.

In 1886, he married Anna Enns; they live on the S.W. 114 section 36-7-5 P.O. Chortitz. A few years later they moved to the west of the Red River near Plum Coulee. In the district of Grosweide on S.W. section 33-3-2; on one



*The Peter K. Rempel family. BACK ROW: Son, Peter. MIDDLE ROW, Left to Right: Mrs. Rempel (Anna Enns), Mr. Rempel, Agenetha. FOREGROUND: Anna.*



*House built by Peter K. Rempel in 1903-1904.*

old receipt it is called Manchester County.

In 1898, he purchased the S.W. 114 24-4-2-W in district of Kronsweide near Lowe Farm in the Municipality of

Morris. It was virgin prairie except for a few furrows had been ploughed by the former owner. (I believe it was a Mr. Stevenson.)

There was a shallow well, and a slight depression in the soil which held some water in spring and after rainfalls. This was later, excavated with scoops pulled by horses and served as the first pond. (In 1935, Peter E. Penner deepened it with a dragline.) Most of the water had to be hauled from the Hespler Creek near Rosenheim, about five or six miles.

He built a barn 28 x 56 which was partitioned and served as living quarters as well. In the next year he purchased the S.E. 1/4 adjoining the homestead. Other settlers along the trail between 24 and 23 were the Johann Schroeders, Johann Neufelds, Peter Klassens, and on S.W. 1/4 25 were the Jacob Schroeders, later minister of the church.

The first school was built at the dividing line or the N.E. and N.W. 1 / 4 of section 23, which also served as church for the community. A cemetery was started just west of the school yard on the N.E. 1 / 4, one of the first to be laid to rest there was son Jacob in 1899. The cemetery is still in use but more land has been added.

In 1903 and 1904, Mr. Rempel built a 1 1/2-storey L-shaped house with full basement and hot air furnace. The carpenter was a Mr. Charles Nester. The lumber was purchased in Plum Coulee for \$800.00 and the dealer gave him a picture window with stained glass as a premium, providing it was installed in the side facing the road for advertising purposes, this being the first of its kind in the community. When the house was dismantled in 1976, all but eight of the original stained glass was intact, they were broken during a hailstorm in 1947.

In 1905, the first church in the community was built, situated on the N.W. corner of the N.W. 1 / 4 24-4-2 W. It still serves the Sommerfelder congregation, but the building has been put on a full basement including propane heating, modern plumbing and hydro. Mr. Rempel served as song leader for many years.

In November, 1905, Mrs. Rempel died after giving



*Peter K. Rempel family, 1910. BACK ROW: Anna, Susanna. Peter K. holding Jacob. Second wife, Margaretha (Heppner, nee Ewart) holding John. Margaretha's children, Helen and Abraham Heppner, Bernhard Rempel.*

birth to their 10th child, of which five had died in infancy.

In February, 1906, Mr. Rempel married Mrs. Margaretha Heppner (nee Ewert) widow of the late Mr. Heppner who had homesteaded on N.W. 1/4 18-4-1-W. There were eleven children born into this marriage, all but one of these reached adulthood, all were born in the farm home, and nearly all without a doctor in attendance.

Mrs. Rempel was well known in the community for serving as midwife, preparing the dead for burial and taking care of the sick. She had many home remedies which were very good. Mr. Rempel served as councillor in the R.M. of Morris from 1902-1916, inclusive.

At the time of his second marriage he still had a team of oxen, as a few years previous his horses got sick and 10 out of 11 had to be destroyed. He always liked to have a good driving horse. He increased his supply of horses by either purchase or breeding, so at one time he had 23 horses to work the land (before the tractor era.) At one time he owned a Regal car, and in 1918 he purchased a new Dodge. Many years later, he accepted a GrayDort as payment from a man who he had co-signed for.

Following are land holdings which he had at one time or another either by purchase or rental: S.W. 1/4 of section 24-4-2-W 1899 taxes were 15.20, now farmed by son David; S.E. 1 / 4 of section 24-4-2-W 1899 taxes for 1 / 2 section 33.62; S.E. 1 / 4 of section 13-4-2-W 1905; N.W. 1 / 4 of section 18-4-1-W 1906, now farmed by grandson Peter E. Rempel; N. 1/2 of section 34-4-1-W 1908, first time drainage tax listed; S.E. 1 / 4 of section 23-4-2-W purchased in 1919 from Johann Schroeder, now farmed by son Cornelius; S.E. 1 / 4 14-4-2-W; S.F. and N.E. 1/4 of 3-5-2W by rental, known as the McDermot farm; N.W. 1 / 4 11-5-2-W.

Old Mr. Shewman who built drainage ditches in the community, had a camp south of our yard and got such provisions as milk, butter, eggs, water, garden vegetables, and even bread sometimes.

In 1918, Mr. Rempel had the barn renovated and put on a foundation, a concrete floor was poured, also a



*Mr. Peter K. Rempel, at age 75 on horse drawn plow.*

track and trolley installed to lift the hay into the loft. Due to malfunction of the trolley there was an accident, the trolley came off the track and dropped down striking Mr. Rempel who was on the load below, on the head. He was knocked unconscious. Mother took care of the wound and after regaining consciousness he had remarked, "I thought we were going to unload hay." Mother had



assured him that his services would not be needed that day.

At about this time there was a controversy in regards to education in the district, the parents wanted to keep the school private and taught in the German language, but since the country had just been at war with Germany, the request was denied. The government hired a teacher Mr. Tom Black, and all classes were to be held in English. Several parents objected to this and refused to send their children. Instead, private classes were started in the Rempel's summer kitchen. It was a two-roomed building and one room served as classroom, the other as kitchen. Miss Anna Friesen was the teacher. This was only done for one season. The parents gave in and sent their children to the school, but were allowed to hire the teachers and have a half hour of German, providing this was done before regular classes.

During the busy harvest season bread had to be baked daily. Mother said she had used as much as 100 lbs. of flour a week, she did the baking in an outside brick oven which she built herself.

Father had a great interest in development of farm machinery and in 1927, the brothers, Harry and George Anderson, demonstrated straight-combining of wheat for him. At another time he had the one way discer demonstrated on his land, he also introduced the seeding of rye to the area, for which he was nicknamed rye Rempel. He also raised sheep at one time and several acres were fenced in for this purpose.

In 1931, Father had the misfortune of falling into the basement, striking his head against the base of the chimney which was made of fieldstone. His skull was fractured. Dr. McGavin of Plum Coulee was summoned. He did not give much hope for his recovery, but gave Mother instructions how to take care of him. Father was unconscious for several days and semi-conscious for several weeks, but with good care and the answer to prayers, he got well but was unable to be in charge of the farm operations. So until John and Henry went out on their own, they took charge; in the late 30's, Cornelious and David rented the land until 1962 when they purchased it.

In 1956, the Rempels celebrated their Golden Wedding. Mr. Rempel passed away in 1957 at the age of 89 years, 7 months, in his own house.

In 1961, Mrs. Rempel and Tina moved into Lowe Farm. She passed away in 1975 at the age of 91 years.



*Mr. and Mrs. P.K. Rempel on their Golden Anniversary in 1956.*

## Grasshopper Plague

In the early 30's, there were many grasshoppers in the area and it was very dry. Mother and us younger children saved some of the garden by chasing the grasshoppers out by walking back and forth along the rows waving rags thereby not allowing them to sit long enough to chew the vegetation. One day we watched a colony or swarm of grasshoppers migrating across the parched soil in the yard, they just simply marched like a regiment of soldiers. The men attached a trough to the binder and filled it with old oil and as they cut the grain the grasshoppers would fly up and land in the oil, when it was filled they would empty the container and repeat the process thus preventing them to lay eggs. Sometimes huge swarms of grasshoppers would migrate in big swarms like a cloud creating a shadow when passing the sun.

Mr. Rempel had 21 children, 10 by his first wife, 11 by his second, plus 2 stepchildren; 16 of which reached adulthood.

From first marriage: Peter 1888-1968, farmer in R.M. of Morris, died of heart attack. Agenetha 1889-1892, Anna 1891-1892, both died of diphtheria July 8 and July 10. Agenetha 1893-1973, married to Mr. William Klassen, farmer R.M. of Morris. Jacob 1896-1899. Anna 1898-1953, married to Mr. Henry Huff, died of cancer; Susanna 1901-1969, died of hypertension. Elisabeth 1901-1901, died at birth, twin of Susanna. Frank 1905-1905, died soon after birth.



*Five generations of Peter K. Rempel's family, 1953. Peter K. Rempel, aged 85, Peter P. Rempel holding P.K.'s great-granddaughter, Dianna Klassen. BACK ROW: Dianna's grandmother, Tina Wiens (formerly Mrs. Peter Schroeder) and Dianna's mother, Nettie Klassen (nee Schroeder).*

Stepchildren: Abraham Heppner 1902-1962, of heart attack in I.N.C.O. Nickel mine at Sudbury, Ontario. Mr. Heppner had a threshing machine in his younger years and did custom threshing. He also did some auctioneering and was employed by Mr. Diedrich Heppner before moving to Ontario in 1943. Helen Heppner 1904, married to Arron Thiessen, now residing in Winnipeg.

Children of second marriage: Bernhard 1906-1961, farmer, labourer, trucker, construction contractor, heart attack. Jacob 1908, farmer in R.M. of Morris up to the time he moved to Plumas, where he farmed up to the time of retirement, he also served as councillor of Plumas. John 1909-1977, farmer and laborer, heart attack. Henry 1911-1962, laborer, complications following surgery. Cornelious 1913, farmer, married to Mary Klassen. Marie 1915, married to Jacob Derksen, mechanic. David 1917, farmer, married to Tina Klassen, Katherine 1919, homemaker for parents as long as they lived, now employed at Morris General Hospital. William 1921, Associate Professor University of Minnesota, U.S.A., married to Leola Seip of Swan River. Margaret 1923, married to David Friesen, grain buyer Smith Spur. Frank 1925-1925, died eight hours after birth.

## HISTORY OF BERNHARD E. REMPEL

*submitted by Justine Funk*

Bernhard (Ben) was born to Peter K. Rempel and Margaretha (Ewart, Hoepfner) Rempel. Ben's father had married a young widow, mother of two children, when he was left to care for a family of four children after his first wife died.

Ben was the first child of this new union. His youth was spent helping out on the farm, which is presently the Dave Rempel farm. At a young age, after having left school, he met and courted Eva Dyck, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Dyck of the Horndean area. They were married in the Kronsweide Sommerfelder Church of



*Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard E. Rempel.*

which they were members at the time. Their wedding day was January 3, 1926.

Their first months were spent living with Ben's parents. When spring time came, they moved into a grainary north of Lowe Farm. After living in this dwelling for several months, they moved into the farm house which was then located where the Corny Rempel home now stands. Four children were both to them in the first four years of their marriage, namely, Helen, Jake, John and Justina.

They moved to Roland when an opportunity to work as a garage mechanic presented itself. Bad luck seemed to be with them though, and when returning home after visiting his sick father, they found their house and all their possessions destroyed by fire.

They moved to Morris into a rent free house. Their son Benny was born there. The farm house across from his

parent's place was vacant once again, so they moved back to Kronsweide. Hard times were affecting everyone. Fields were not yielding the expected crops and food was scarce. Children were sent to school with bread and lard sandwiches. For a special treat at breakfast, cereal, consisting of dried bread crumbs, sugar and milk, was served to the youngsters. Jobs were also hard to come by, so Ben had to forget his pride and ask the councillor for relief. They received the bare necessities and survived.

When a baby boy was born to them in the spring, he didn't have the strength to cope with the flu, and he died after a few weeks. Their son John fell and injured one of his eyes which became so badly crossed, that he needed surgery. The Red Cross paid all the expenses, including his glasses.

Ben was already working for other people. He had purchased a small truck and hauled grain for farmers. They had a cow and some chickens which helped in supplying their daily food.

It was in 1935 when their second daughter was afflicted with rheumatic fever. The medicine prescribed helped and much to the relief of everyone, the patient was able to walk again.

Two more daughters, Mary and Nettie, were born to them before they moved into Lowe Farm, in 1937. Ben had bought a building which had two fair sized rooms. As soon as the weather permitted, the roof of the house was raised to make some rooms upstairs. Another large room was added to the north of the house, and this served as a kitchen.

Ben had gone into partnership with Pete Martens in the garage business, but when the war started in 1939, Pete went into the army and Ben started a trucking business which did very well. When Ben was called into the service, he chose to work in an airplane factory in Winnipeg.

Another daughter, Cathy, joined the family. Ben's work in the factory was completed and he resumed his trucking business.

One day while working with some steel, a sliver got lodged in Ben's eye. When the pain got worse, he consented to see the doctor. They attempted in vain to save the eye, but because it was causing his good eye to become infected, they removed it. While he was in and out of the hospital, a son George was born at home. Christmas time was fast approaching, and when the day arrived, there was a gift for everyone. Ben was well on the way to recovery.

When the war was over, the opportunity to buy army trucks presented itself and "Rempel and sons Trucking" was formed. In summertime they were kept busy hauling gravel and grain. In wintertime they hauled ice to be put in people's cisterns.

Fate intervened, however, and Ben came down with very severe headaches which was a symptom of sleeping sickness. He was hospitalized and was watched with great concern. Everyone was greatly relieved when his fever broke. It wasn't long until he was back home and resumed his work.

New roads were being built and old roads rebuilt so Ben sold the trucks and now Rempel's Construction was begun. This was a good move, and they prospered.

Two more children, Jeanette and James, had been

added to the family. There were eleven children. All of them were healthy with the exception of Benny, who became a diabetic at the age of twelve. His mother learned to administer the insulin injections until he could do it himself.

In March 1951, their home was again destroyed by fire. They were able to move into a small vacant home until their new home was completed. This house had lots of room and most of the modern comforts. When Ben died in 1961, the house was sold to Edward and Justina Funk. They occupied it until 1976 when they sold it to the John Thiessens who are presently the owners.

Their oldest daughter, Helen, was a clerk in the Co-op store until she met and married Dave Brown. Together they were post masters for several years. Dave underwent major heart surgery twice and died after the last one on June 11, 1968. Helen continued as Postmistress for a while after which she opened up a small fabric store. She is presently employed in the Red River Valley Lodge in Morris. They have six children and three grandchildren.

Jake married Elizabeth Braun on December 3, 1949. He continued with Rempel's Construction after his father died. When the company disbanded he worked for his brother-in-law when his health permits. They have four children and four grandchildren.

John married Irene Brown in 1952. He also was in construction prior to his father's death and again after when he and Jake went into partnership. He was the manager of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op for several years. After John's death in 1974, Irene finished her education and is teaching in Stonewall. They have four boys.

Justina married Edward Funk in 1950. He was a store manager for several years and on road construction later on. He was employed by the R.M. of Morris for about fifteen years. He and Justina live near Graysville now, where Edward is the Pastor of a Mennonite Church. They have six children and three grandchildren. Justina was an active member of the Women's Institute and correspondent for two papers for a number of years.

Benny married Edna Braun in May 1956. He helped on road construction for a while but soon took a position as parts man in Martens' Garage. In later days of his short life, they moved to Winnipeg and he went to the C.N.I.B. as his eyesight was fading rapidly. After weeks of severe illness, he died on December 27, 1959.

Henry David died in infancy.

Mary Evelyn was a teacher for one year and then she and a friend decided to go to St. Catharines, Ontario. They secured work there and Evelyn met and married John VanEek on January 2, 1958. They had one daughter when John died suddenly on January 29, 1959. Evelyn and the baby moved back home. Her mother looked after the baby until Evelyn could put her in a nursery school while she worked at Great West Life Assurance Co.

Here is where she met, and later married, Dick Hunter. They are both in some form of Real Estate. They have four children and live in Winnipeg.

Nettie was employed as a bank teller in Winnipeg before she married Adrian Brunet in June 1957. Adrian is the owner of Brunet's construction in Morris. They have four children.

Cathy was also working in a bank in Winnipeg prior to her marriage to Richard McKelvey on October 4, 1958. They are in Portage La Prairie where they owned McKelvey's Laundromat. They are now both in real estate. They have three children.

George graduated from the University of Manitoba. He has his B.Sc., M.Sc., P.Eng., and is the manager of James F. McLaren Ltd. He is married to Leslie Barber since March 1964. They have three children and live in Winnipeg.

Jeanette Ann met and married a young banker, Kenneth MacIntosh on April 4, 1964. They have lived in various cities and are presently settled in St. Albert, Alberta. They have two children.

Menno James graduated from the University of Engineering. He is married to Evelyn Spalding and they live in Whitehorse, Yukon where Jim is a service manager. They have three children.

Bernard E. Rempel passed, away on November 7, 1961. His 55th birthday was on November 6. His widow is living in a modern bungalow in Lowe Farm.

### ARON A. THIESSEN (1875-1925)

Born in Russia in January, 1875, Aron A. Thiessen was 6 months old when he came to Manitoba with his parents, the Aron Thiessens. They settled near Horndean, Manitoba, but when Aron married Aganetha Wiebe, daughter of Bernard A. Wiebes near Weidenfeld, they moved to Section 22-4-2 West, in the Rural Municipality of Morris, a year later. Here he bought a quarter of land at about \$6.50 an acre. They built a sizeable 20 x 30 foot house. The ground had to be broken up and it was not an easy task with horses as the only means to do it. In 1917, Mr. Thiessen purchased his first tractor. Families were usually large in those days, and as soon as the boys were old enough to help their father, they stayed home from school for weeks at a time to help. The girls also had to stay home during the busy seasons to help their mother, as store bought food and clothes were not as readily available at the time. If they needed a loaf of bread, it



*Mr. and Mrs. Aron A. Thiessen on their wedding day, July 27, 1897.*

had to be baked and if clothes were needed, they were handmade!

School was not considered to be essential, and so if the children had attended for a few years, they had enough of an education to get along. The schools were run by private individuals, and not regulated by government.

In 1918, the Thiessens built a new home. It was an extravagant structure, using 4 carloads of brick shipped from Steinbach, and then hauled from Lowe Farm with a horse drawn wagon. The cost of the home was \$6,000.00, and as of 1979, the house is still standing and has almost never been vacant.

Their old house was then moved to Section 14-5-2 West to some more land he purchased, and it was later used by some of their children to live in for a few years, after their marriage, until they bought land of their own.



*Stone house of A.A. Thiessen built in 1918.*

However, 2 years after the completion of the new stone home, Mr. Thiessen was taken ill with a stroke and died 5 years later, in 1925.

He left to mourn, his wife, Aganetha, and their 11 children: Aron, Bernard, Aganetha, John, Abraham, Jacob, Agatha, Anna, Sara and Katharine. One baby died in infancy.

Mrs. Thiessen remarried in 1929 to Isaac Hildebrand from the Rural Municipality of Rhineland. They lived in the Halbstadt area for one year and then moved back to her homestead, living there until retiring in 1943, when they moved to Altona. He died in 1952 and his wife, in 1965.



*Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Hildebrand.*

## **ARON W. THIESSEN**

Aron, born in 1898, was the oldest of the family. He married Helena Heppner in July, 1922. She was the daughter of Abram Heppners and was born on September 1, 1904.

They lived with her parents for the first nine months of their marriage, after which they bought their own place, which was 23-4-2 West. They farmed for 25 years, after which they moved to Winnipeg, buying a home in St. Vital, where they are presently residing. On July 30, 1972, the Thiessens celebrated their Golden Wedding

Anniversary.

They have 6 children, Dorothy, Margaret, John, Harry, Mabel and Gladys.

## **BERNARD W. THIESSEN**

Mr. Bernard W. Thiessen was born in the Lowe Farm district on January 30, 1900, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Aron A. Thiessen. He had five brothers and five sisters. At the age of nineteen, he married Miss Lena Friesen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Friesen of Plum Coulee. They became the parents of seven children; one son and six daughters: Ed Thiessen of Vancouver, Helen (Mrs. Jim Robertson), Sadie (Mrs. Abe Wiebe), Erna (Mrs. Jake Hildebrand), all from Winnipeg. Susan (Mrs. Henry Hildebrand) of Lowe Farm, and Evelyn (Mrs. Henry Siemens) of Horndean. The youngest daughter, Margaret Rose, died in infancy.

Mr. and Mrs. Thiessen were members of the Kronsweide Sommerfelder Church. Their residence was two miles west and two and one-half miles south of Lowe Farm, where they farmed all their lives. He attended school at Kronsweide until the eighth grade.



*Mr. and Mrs. B. W. Thiessen.*

Mr. Thiessen was very active in public life and community affairs. In 1930, a group of local residents organized a society known as the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-Operative. They elected him as their first president, with Abram A. Hoepfner as sales manager. In 1931, he was elected as councillor for Ward 5 in the Rural Municipality of Morris, and served in that office for almost twenty years; two of those years as Reeve. Much of this time in office was during the great depression, when money was scarce and everyone had to endure the hardships of the dirty thirties. Another time of crisis for him was the 1950 flood, when people had to evacuate their homes and animals had to be rescued and brought to higher ground.

He was a faithful member and president of the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce for many years. He served as a director of the Altona Hospital for seventeen years, and as a director of the Morris Hospital for 2 years. He was an agent for the Wawanesa Insurance Co. for seventeen years and a school trustee for ten years. From 1943 until 1946, he was a director of the Lowe Farm Credit Union Society Ltd., when it was in its early stages.

He was head of the Morris flood relief and took part in civil defence organizations. He also served as a district representative for the Empire Automobile Association for many years. His interest in Provincial and Federal politics was especially great during the Diefenbaker era.

In spite of his many community and business activities, he also managed to operate a small farm and to raise a family. His wife was a warm and generous woman, a great hostess and wonderful cook. She loved to entertain guests with a home cooked meal, and made sure that no one would ever leave her house hungry.

In 1941, with the help of his family, Mr. Thiessen began to build a new house and assorted farm buildings. These were pre-Manitoba Hydro times, so he wired all the buildings and erected a forty foot tower with the thirty-two volt wind charger on the top to produce electricity for lights, washer, pumps, and iron. That was all it could handle. On windy days, there were bright lights as the sixteen glass batteries charged, and on calm days, electricity had to be rationed.

Mr. Thiessen was always proud to show off his own inventions, but they did not always work to his advantage. In 1945, Mr. Thiessen built what must be one of the first self-propelled swathers in the district. He used it for several years before trading it off. In 1938, when the old threshing machines became obsolete, he purchased a new combine and did some custom harvesting for a few years.

He was always very particular in the way he kept his possessions. Everything had an order and everything had its own proper place. If there were any fingerprints on his shiny black Oldsmobile, he would know that one of his grandchildren must be the culprit.

His life of sixty-two years ended suddenly with a cardiac arrest on August 24, 1962. In 1971, mother passed away. They are resting in the Kronsweide Cemetery, just across the field from the farm yard where they had lived all their lives.

## **HENRY W. THIESSEN**

On December 16, 1901, Henry was born to Aron and Aganetha Thiessen. He married Katharina Friesen in September, 1921.

The Henry Thiessens farmed in the Burwalde district, near Winkler, till in 1929, they sold their land and moved to Lowe Farm. He then worked for some time in the store, for the transfer, and owned and operated the White Rose gas station for several years.

In the late 40's, they moved to Winnipeg, residing there till in the late 60's, at which time they moved to Surrey, B.C., where they presently reside. In 1971, they celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary.

The Thiessen children are: Herman, Susie, Harry, Raymond, Leona, Elvira and Lawrence. Two children died in infancy.

## **JOHN W. THIESSEN**

John W. Thiessen was born in 1905. In 1928, he married Marie Gerbrandt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John K. Gerbrandt of Lowe Farm.

They farmed all their lives, renting land for the first years They farmed near Lowe Farm, Horndean and Myrtle.

Then, in 1935, they bought Section 11-4-2 West. There was much work to be done here as the buildings were old and all in need of repair.

Mrs. Thiessen has always kept herself busy as housewife, also helping outside when needed; she also likes gardening and sewing.

They have 5 children; Tena, Mary, Pete, Hilda and Nettie. In 1976, after living for 41 years at their farm, they retired to town that fall.

In October, 1978, they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary, in Lowe Farm school auditorium. They are presently residing in Lowe Farm.

## **ABRAM H. THIESSEN**

Abram H. Thiessen (1907), son of Aron A. Thiessens, was married to Tena (1909), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Abram B. Wiebe, on October 21, 1926.

The Thiessens moved first to 14-5-2 West, where they farmed for 11 years, before moving to town for 4 years. They lived in the Steinfeld school district for 8 years, after which they moved to 22-4-2 West, moving into the stone house his parents had built. In 1953, they moved to their own place (S.W. 1/4 35-4-2 West) where they farmed until their retirement in 1966, when they moved into Lowe Farm, where they are still residing. Three children were born to them: Herman, Eddie and Edna.



*Mr. and Mrs. .I.I-1, Thiessen.*

## **JACOB H. THIESSEN** **Son of Aron A. Thiessen**

In the 1930's, weddings were generally not as fancy as now in the 70's. A couple wanting to get married would have their banns read in church, and then take their marriage vows a few weeks later, following the Sunday morning church service. In the afternoon, the bride and groom went to one of the parents' homes, visiting with friends and relatives who had come to wish them well. The evening was spent dancing, till the newlyweds went to their own home.

So it was also on October 17, 1937, when Jacob (born in 1910 to the Aron A. Thiessens) married Helen (born in

1912, to Mr. and Mrs. John P. Toews). Helen's father was employed in the Lowe Farm area for many years, later moving to Winnipeg, where he passed away.

The Thiessens' first home, where Jacob had batched for nearly 2 years, was also the house that his parents had moved to Section 14-5-2 West, when they built their stone house. This house had some of the walls plastered with clay and then whitewashed. The house originally had a huge clay oven, in which all the cooking, baking and home heating was done. Straw and manure pods were used for fuel, but in 1919, the oven was replaced with a cook stove, then a modern convenience. Furniture was sparse, and for the winter, everything was moved into the 10 x 16 foot living area. But small as it was, there was



*Helen Thiessen serving lunch in the field at threshing time.*

enough room for Helen to do her cooking, cleaning and entertaining, when company came and also sometimes the unexpected guest for the night.

On December 10, 1939, Jacob and Helen had their first child, a son, Daniel. He was born at home, with Dr. Colert and Aganetha **Hildebrand** in attendance.

Jacob H. and Helen farmed here for 6 years. Land prices had risen, and in 1918, when his father bought this quarter, it cost him \$30.00 per acre. Mr. Thiessen only used horses the first spring for seeding, and in the summer of 1936, bought his first tractor. Horses were used for haying, cutting the grain with a binder, and also for threshing, which was done by someone who owned a threshing machine. The stooking of the cut grain was tedious; the women helped, very often doing most of it. There were also the daily chores to be done.

In 1943, Mr. Thiessen rented Section 22-4-2 West, his parents' place, which was left vacant when they retired. A second son, Grant Wayne, was born in the Altona

hospital on December 20, 1946. Times had changed and living conditions were much improved.

Six years later, they bought section 34-4-2 West, where they remodelled the house and built additional buildings. By now, farming methods were modern, with a swather and combine having been bought in 1945.

In 1965, the Thiessens had a new home built in Lowe Farm and semi-retired. They farmed till 1978, at which time an auction sale was held and they retired from farming.

Dan, the older son, now owns 34-4-2 West and also rents some land from his father, and his brother. In 1964, Dan married Helen, **P.J.** Martens' daughter, of Melba school district, near Horndean.

Grant, the younger son, also owns some land in the Rural Municipality of Morris, but left for the city after high school. In 1968, he married Jan Nuttall, and they are now residing in Winnipeg.



*J. H. Thiessen family, Jacob, Helen, Grant and Dan.*

## DANIEL THIESSEN

**Dan**, the older son of Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Thiessen, attended school in Kronsweide for a few years and then in Kane school district.

He took an interest in farming, working with his father for several years, and later chose it as his occupation. Land prices were an average of \$100.00 per acre in 1964, and rose gradually till in 1978, prices were \$400.00 an acre or more. Quite a difference since his grandfather Aron A. Thiessen bought his homestead in 1898 for \$6.50 an acre.

October 10, 1964, Dan married **Helen**, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Martens of the Melba school district, near Horndean.

Helen was working as a telephone operator for about 3 years before marriage. Telephones have changed quite a bit in the last 20 years also. In 1963, the Rural Municipality of Morris had the ring-down phones, which meant going through the operator for every call; then around 1965, dial phones were brought in, improving things, with the push button type phones being introduced in 1978, and in 1979, the town of Lowe Farm will be getting its private lines. It sometimes seems that ordinary things of life are looked on as past history in only a very few years!

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*Farm site of Jacob H. Thiessen, 1957. The yard was altered when the Shannon Dyke was built alongside it. The farm is now owned by Dan Thiessen.*



Dan and Helen lived in various areas, including 34-4-2 West, which they now own, and have lived in Lowe Farm, since 1971. Although living in town, he farms and his wife helps out during the harvesting season. Dan also has had various other jobs, including heavy construction work back in 1965, and later, carpentry.

On November 12, 1967, their first child, Monica Arlene, was born. Another daughter, Rhonda Jean, was born on July 30, 1971 and Stefan Wade arrived on March 29, 1973.



*Daniel Thiessen family, 1978. Dan and Helen with Monica, Rhonda and Stefan.*

In 1976, Dan was elected to the Chamber of Commerce, and in 1977 and 1978, was president of it and then stayed on as a director. He helped carry through plans for the Lowe Farm Community Park, which had previously been started.

Dan won a by-election for a seat in council for the Rural Municipality of Morris in May, 1977, as a representative for Ward 5, retaining his seat by acclamation in 1978.

## **ANNA THIESSEN**

Anna Thiessen (1915) was married to Henry J. Kehler in November, 1935. They farmed, but Mr. Kehler became ill with diabetes and died at the age of 52 years in 1959. This left a widow with one son, Jake, and 4 daughters, Nettie, Martha, Elma and Dorothy.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Kehler moved to Winkler for several years, working in the sewing factory.

Mrs. Kehler remarried in January, 1966, to Jacob A. Wiebe from Vanderhoof, B.C. He predeceased her in June, 1968, and so after only 2 1/2 years of marriage, she was once more a widow.

She remarried in May, 1971, to Jacob E. Hiebert from Blumenort. Mr. Hiebert had 11 children from his previous marriage, 3 of which are still at home.

It was also that same year that her oldest child, Nettie, died. Nettie left behind her husband, Jake Klassen, and their 4 children.

The Hieberts are presently living in Blumenort.

## **KATHERINA THIESSEN (HARDER)**

Youngest in the Aron A. Thiessen family, Katherina was born in 1919. She is better known as Tena, and married on October 11, 1938, to John D. Harder.

The Harders lived five years at Lowe Farm, then moved to Steinbach, where they spent 10 years. They then moved to Brandon, where they have resided for almost 25 years, and where Mr. Harder has been working as a painter.

The Harders have nine children; Natalie Ann, Mary Jane, Henry Edward, Nora Helen, Margaret Rose, Aron John, Katharina May, Edna Alice, and David Daniel.



*Jake and Tina Born - married two weeks, April, 1938.*

## **JACOB BORN**

Jacob Born was born north of Winkler in the Rosenbach S.D. in 1914, to Peter W. and Maria (Dyck) Born. In 1919, my parents moved six miles north of Plum Coulee.

I left home in 1933 to earn my own living, with a grade 8 education. In 1938 I married Tena Penner, daughter of Henry P. and Margaret (Wiebe) Penner of Rosefarm. We lived north, and later west of Kane. When we started farming, the times were pretty hard. Our first house was a two room 12 x 20 structure. We also had a small barn and a few granaries. In 1941 we added to our house because our family was growing in size.

We were raising cattle, pigs, chickens, and turkeys. The first litter of pigs we had, they all died except two which we had to feed by bottle, as the sow was sick. When our turkeys hatched, we managed to raise 18 of them for the market in the fall. We kept two turkey hens and one gobbler over the winter to start the flock next spring. One stormy winter night, the old barn toppled over, and our turkeys with it. That incident ended our turkey business.

In 1959, we bought the old J. B. Davidson farm, from Waldo Fredrickson. The buildings were quite old. We

dismantled the old barn in 1963 and built a machine shed. In 1967 we sold the old house and build a new one. We farmed there for 15 years, until we retired to Lowe Farm in 1974.

We are members of the Emmanuel Gospel Church in Lowe Farm.



*Tearing down the old J.B. Davidson barn, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ .*

We raised four children to adulthood. Larry married Elvera Hyde. He works in the Winnipeg Post Office, they have three children; Perry, Penny and Nancy. Margaret married Allan K. Friesen, a trucker from Kenora, Ont., where they live with their three children; Tammy, Darcy, and Carson. Jaqueline married Wesley Eidse of Rosenort. He runs a body shop. They have three children; Angelo, Lola and Cherry Blossom. Our daughter Lisa is still at home in Lowe Farm.



*Jake, Larry and George Born, hauling snow for water.*



*The Jake Born family and their "caboose" in 1945.*

## HENRY REIMER FAMILY

*by Mrs. Mary Stoesz*

Henry Reimer was born in Russia in 1873, coming to Canada with his parents as a baby. He grew up south of Plum Coulee in the Grimsby District.

As a young man, he bought a homestead in Alberta and began to farm and raise cattle and sheep. He married in 1911, and to this union was born two sons and a daughter.

In 1924, they decided to move back to Manitoba, buying a farm in the Rose Farm District. Five years later, his wife died and Mr. Reimer moved back to the same farm he grew up on (1932). He passed away on July 17, 1952.

The oldest son, Diedrich, took over his father's farm; raising four sons and one daughter there. After he died, June 17, 1966, his wife moved to Winkler.

Henry, his second son, farms in Alberta; he has 2 daughters and one son.

Daughter, Mary, married Jake Stoesz, an upholsterer from Plum Coulee. They reside there with their two daughters and three sons.

## THE BLATZ FAMILY

### Daniel Blatz

Uncle Daniel Blatz and family moved to the district in 1895. (12 years) He built on Section 16-4-2 West, and lived there to about 1907; then moved to Rosthern, Saskatchewan, with the whole family of 8 children, namely: Agatha, Helena, Kathrine, Dan, Ben, Annie, Susie, John. Agatha was married to Isaac Dyck, who lived on same section (N.E. 114). He died in 88 or 89; she then married one of the Peters brothers. (the Millers who lived on S.E. 114 16-4-2 West). They later moved to Saskatchewan with the whole Daniel Blatz family.



*Jacob Blatz, Sr. family, C. 1907. Jacob and Aganetha (nee Giesbrecht) with Mary, John and Susan. John died soon after in a diphtheria epidemic.*

## Jacob Blatz Sr.

Mr. Jacob and Aganetha Blatz (nee Giesbrecht) moved to the district in 1896, with their family of three small children, accompanied by Mr. Blatz' brother, John Blatz, who lived with them till he passed away in 1911. Names of children who came with folks to Rose Farm: Jacob (1892), Agnes (1894), Helen (1896). Born at Rose Farm were: Frank (1898), Mary (1900), Susan (1903), Andrew (1906), Daniel (1909), Abram (1911), Tina (1913), Eva (1915).

Jacob Blatz (born 1892), lived on the farm with his parents until about 1910. He went to Saskatchewan at one time, worked as a carpenter for Dukabors around Kamsack, took up homesteading some place around Roblin, but did not pre-empt it, so it went by default. He went to school at Altona and taught school there (Schoenthal) for three years, before he went into training as a dentist in 1917. In spring of 1918, he bought steam threshing outfit with Uncle Henry Giesbrecht and together they threshed that fall and he left in September for Dental School again, in Toronto.

He died of gas inhalation in an old hotel, as a result of a leaking gas pipe on September 25, 1918.



*Henry Giesbrecht, son of Frank, with his cousin, Peter Giesbrecht, son of Abram Giesbrecht, of Lowe Farm.*

## FRANK GIESBRECHT FAMILIES

Grandparents, Frank Giesbrechts, came to settle on Section 15-4-2 West, in 1897; four married children came with them. They had a total family of eleven children; the others had married earlier. Five of these came to settle in the Rose Farm area, eventually.

Jacob Blatz (nee Giesbrecht), 1896, had 11 children, 9-4-2 West. John Giesbrechts, 1914-1915, had 10 children, 16-4-2 West. Frank Giesbrecht, 1900, had 9 children, 4-4-2 West. Jacob Groening (nee Giesbrecht), 1900, had 10 children, 28-4-2 West. David Unrau (nee Giesbrecht), 1910 or 1912, had 9 children, 28-4-2 West. Jacob Giesbrecht, had 11 children, lived farther west, later moved to Killarney. Henry Giesbrecht, Bachelor, was a good horseman. For years he worked as studman in this area. Isaac Giesbrecht, had 8 children, 4 step-children and later moved to Steinbach. Margaret Giesbrecht,

married Henry Wiebe, widower, had two children and seven stepchildren. John Kehler married Helen. They had 10 children, one adopted, and lived in the Morden area. John Wall married Susan. They had 8 children and lived in the Town of Plum Coulee. Both died in Winnipeg, where they had retired.



*Henry Giesbrecht was a well known horseman and area studman. Here he and an unidentified man sit astride percheron stallions owned by H.B. Klippenstein, about 1912-15.*

## Agnes Blatz (1894)

Agnes was married to John Dyck, of Lowe Farm (Kronsweide district) on January 23, 1913. Born September 29, 1893, he died on November 1918 in a flu epidemic on their farm at Lowe Farm. Born to this marriage were 4 children: Helen, Mrs. George Hodge of Myrtle; Agnes, Licensed Practical nurse in Winnipeg, died there July 19, 1973; Jake lived on the farm with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. P.P. Rempel. Mrs. Dyck has remarried in 1936. He attended R.A.I. at Altona for one year, then married Nettie Loewen of Gretna, 1939. He enlisted in 1940 and served in the army till 1945, then moved to B.C. with his family, where he passed away, while working his Gradall machine in 1968. Sarah married Henry Derksen of Lowe Farm, in 1938; later in the 40's, they moved to B.C., Vanderhoof area.



*Agnes (Aganetha) Blatz, with her second husband, Peter P. Rempel of Lowe Farm, in 1936. Her first husband, John Dyck, died in 1918.*

### **Helen Blatz (1896)**

Helen married John N. Dyck from Lowe Farm (Steinfeld S.D.). They moved to Section 8-3-2 West (St. Peters S.D.) where they farmed and raised their family of 6 children. In 1952, the whole family moved to Rivers, northwest of Brandon, to a 2 1 / 2 section farm. Their children are: Andrew and family, Jake, a bachelor who still farms the home place; Elmer and wife, farming together with Jake; John and family; Mary, Mrs. Morley Mitchell of Killarney; Helen, Mrs. Gerald Rigby, of Killarney.

### **Frank Blatz (1897)**

Married Mary Dueck from Altona (Schoenthal S.D.) July 1922. They lived around Horndean at first; later moving to the Kane district with the family in 1938, to the Jim Miller place, later to George Millers. They have a family of 6 children; 4 boys and two girls. (see Kane history).



*Frank G. Blatz family, 1946, Henry, Dora, Frank, Anne, Jake and Norman with parents, Frank and Mary (Nee Dueck).*

### **Mary Blatz (1900) R.N.**

Mary went to school at Rose Farm and to high school at Gretna, M.C.1. During the thirties, she trained as Registered Nurse at Misericordia Hospital in Winnipeg, working at Ninette Sanitorium for a while with a Dr. Stewart, later matron at Altona Hospital and at T.B. Hospital north of Winnipeg for a while. The last thirteen years, she specialized with Dr. Paine at Ninette Sanitorium in lung operations. She passed away in 1963 of massive heart hemorrhage. She is buried at Rose Farm cemetery.

### **Susan Blatz (1903)**

Susan was married to Abram Dueck (brother to Frank's wife) of Altona, at Rose Farm, in October 1924. They farmed for a while, moved to Horndean and later to Winnipeg. They had a family of 2 girls and 2 boys; Eva, Mrs. A. Heide; Helen, Mrs. Ed Tice; Art Dyck is married, has 2 children; Walter is married and has 4

children; Helen has a family of 5 boys. All live in the Winnipeg area.



*Susan Blatz and her husband, Abram Dueck, taken in 1964.*

### **Andrew Blatz (1906)**

Andrew married Justina Toews of Kronsart S.D., October 1926. They farmed at Homewood for a while, then moved to Morden. They are involved in Fish and Game affairs for Manitoba and Morden Friendship Centre. They live in the new apartments in Morden at present. They have 3 sons and 2 daughters.



*Andrew Blatz family in 1948. Andrew and his wife, Justina (nee Toews) with children, Norma, Kenneth, Albert, Kathleen and Gary.*

### **Dan Blatz (1909)**

He was married to Edna Loeppky in 1941, of Horn-dean. They lived on the Home farm, 9-4-2 West, till June, 1967. They then moved to a farm in Graysville district, Dufferin Municipality. They had 8 children: Maureen, L.P.N, Mrs. P. Hiebert of Winnipeg; Judith, Mrs. H. Thiessen of Morden; Randolph and Mary (nee Froese) of Graysville; Sharon, Mrs. Bob Thiessen of Graysville; Kathrine, working in Winnipeg; Lorene, working at University of Manitoba, Economics Department; Craig, working in Alberta oil fields on



*Dan and Edna (Loeppky) Blatz family in 1966. BACK ROW: John, Kathy, Judith and husband, Howard Thiessen, Maureen, Lorelle and Randolph. FRONT ROW: Sharon, Craig, Randy's wife, Mary, Judith and Howard's children Brenda and Darwin Thiessen.*

seismic lines at present, loves skiing and wishes to be a sky diver; John and wife, Cheryl (L.P.N. - nee Middleton) are starting to farm in Graysville district. Randy and Mary are farming the home place (4-6-6 West, Graysville district).



*Abe Blatz with four J. Bergman sisters in 1937.*

### **Abram Blatz (1911)**

Abram married Tina Klassen at Lowe Farm, May 5, 1951. They have two children; Wilma and Melvin. Wilma is married to David Krupla and they have one child, Tricia. They both work in a bank in Winnipeg. Melvin works for Versatile machinery in Winnipeg, line superintendent, and lives with his parents at Kings Park, Silverstone, Winnipeg. Abram and Tina are retired.

### **Tina Blatz (1912)**

Tina went to elementary school at home, finished grade 8, attended Winnipeg Bible Institute for 2 years. She was a missionary in the north for Canadian Sunday School Mission. She trained as a practical missionary nurse in Quebec for the mission field. She went to Germany in 1946, worked with a Dr. Stewart for a while, then joined the Janz team. She did most of her work among women and children's camps and crusades. She is

now at home in Canada and lives in Clearbrook, B.C. She is working with the Janz team in Canada. Semi-retired; she has worked in Germany for 31 years.

### **Eva Blatz (1916)**

She received elementary education at home up to grade 8. She went to Winnipeg Bible Institute for 2 years and worked in Winnipeg for a while. She married Henry Braun from Sperling in 1941. They farmed there and at Kane for a while. In 1952, they moved to B.C., living in the Abbotsford area. They have a family of 5 children; 2 girls and 3 boys.



*John P. Bergman built this house in 1918.*

### **JOHN P. BERGMANN**

John P. Bergmann was born in the village of Gnadenthal, November 16, 1885. In 1911, he was united in marriage to Elizabeth Thiessen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Thiessen of the Shoenau district, Altona.

After their marriage, they moved to Rose Farm (4 miles south of Kane, on S.E. 114 18-4-2.) In 1918, they built a house, which is still the home of the youngest son, Cornie. As farming progressed, a big improvement was made, then he changed over from the use of the horse and plow to a new Titan tractor. In 1924, he was able to purchase another new tractor. (McCormick) He had a special interest for music and so he organized the Rose Farm choir. He worked hard till his death in 1930 at the age of 45 years.



*The Bergman barn was built in 1911.*

To continue the farming, was his son, John, (14 years at the time) and his mother and six children. Many hardships were involved for the family - grasshoppers, poor crops, etc. Through all these hardships, the family managed fairly well. It was in 1937, that mother's health failed and rheumatism set in, and she was confined to a

wheel chair for 21 years. In spite of her illness, she was always pleasant and cheerful. Many visitors called during this time, which she deeply appreciated. She passed away in 1963 at the age of 76 years.

## The Family

*Eva:* Eva faithfully took care of her mother during her illness for 21 years. Eva remained alone on the farm for almost a year. Then the estate left her 80 acres and the remaining was evenly divided in the family. Eva resides with her sister, Mrs. Jake Schellenberg.

*Katie:* In 1932, Katie united in marriage to Pete Ginter, a farmer. Presently, they are retired and live in Kane. They have one daughter, Leona, who married Garth Hay (teacher), and reside in Brandon.

*John:* John was united in marriage to Emma Born in 1939. They retired in Morden. They were blessed with two children.

Sharon married John Epp, Winnipeg (a business manager) They have four children: John, Timothy, Susan and Mathew.

Deanna married Ken Friesen, Winnipeg (a factory employee)

*Elizabeth:* Elizabeth united in marriage to Jake Schellenberg (farmer) in 1942. They also have retired and live on the farm near Kane. They have two children, Wilma and Don. Wilma married Jack Falk (a police constable) Calgary. They have two daughters, Angela and Victoria.

Don married Ann Rempel and are farming near Myrtle. They have two girls, Colleen and Michelle.

*Anne:* It was in 1945 that Anne married Jim Bueckert, farmer, of Winkler. They have one daughter, Charlotte, who married Ernie Dyck, (employed at the lumber yard in Boissevain)

*Trudy:* In 1942, Trudy married Dave Schellenberg. He made memorial stones and engraved them, collected stamps and set up religious signs. They were blessed with five children. Presently, they reside in Winkler.

Sam married Caroline Loewen. For some years, Sam was employed with the Canadian government and presently farms near Halbstadt. They have three children, Karlene, Marrika and David.

Lois married Derrick Wimble (teacher) and they reside in Ottawa.

James united in marriage to Henriette Klassen. They both are teaching and live in Winkler.

Agatha married Garry Moir, radio announcer. They now reside in Regina.

John at the present time, is attending the Bible school at Peace River.

*Cornie:* Cornie united in marriage to Tina Hildebrand in 1948. They are farming on the original family farm (4 miles south of Kane), and has rented his sister, Eva's, 88 acres. They have three boys.

Grant, an electrician, married Darlene Penner and are living in Morden.

Earl is at home farming together with his father.

Rodney, a carpenter, is planning to be married to Darlene Kehler on April 29, 1979. He is presently at Triangle Lumber in Roland.



*Cornie Bergman, his wife, Tina (nee Hildebrand) and son, Earl operate the family farm south of Kane.*

## ISAAC G. BROWN

*submitted by Alice Brown*

Isaac G. Brown was born in 1888 to Gerhard and Anna (Janzen, Brown) of Burwalde, Man. He came from a family of seven boys and four girls. Isaac Brown grew up in the Burwalde area, attending the Burwalde School, of which his father was one of the organizers in 1888. He was baptized into the Mennonite Brethren Church.

On December 13, 1914, Isaac Brown married Gertrude Giesbrecht (b. 1894) the daughter of J.J. and Anna (Toews) Giesbrecht. The wedding took place at the Giesbrecht home.

Isaac and Gertrude Brown moved into the Rosefarm area of the R.M. of Morris in 1917, where she had previously been a teacher. Buying two farms for a price of \$7,000.00, they moved a brick house from Plum Coulee to Sec. 5-4-2 and started their new home in the Morris Municipality. Their first winter here had it's difficulties. Attempting to dig a well, as had been the practice at Burwalde and similar areas, they found the water to be too salty for use. The horses had to eat snow for the first winter, while water was hauled by barrel from the neighbours for the cattle.

Isaac Brown was a quiet, reserved man. Although not very outspoken, he considered it important to become involved in the local school board and assisted in the organization of the Rosefarm Sunday School. Just as music was an integral part of the family circle as Isaac was growing up, so it was with his own children. Playing the guitar himself, his wife played the piano, with other instruments in the family including a violin and an autoharp, the children learning one or more of these.

Hard-working, a quality necessary for the successful operation of a farm with the equipment of those times, Isaac Brown impressed his children as willing to attempt any job, including the physically tough ones. His wife, Gertrude, tended more to the family matters, handling the usual problems occurring in an active family of nine children, as well as helping with the field work on occasion. He was a strict disciplinarian, however, and when his wife made a decision, he helped enforce it, and the matter was definitely settled. Enjoying sports, Mr. Brown occasionally found time to get the boys out for a good game of baseball.



Isaac and Gertrude Brown had a family of five boys and four girls. The eldest, Annie, married Arnold Hiebert of Plum Coulee, and had five children. Annie passed away in 1953 at age 37 years. Jake married Mabel Karlenzig and they have a family of eight children. Presently he has a septic tank service in Lowe Farm. George, his wife, Sophie, and eight children reside in Steinbach, where he and two of his sons have a plumbing business. John, who was a teacher for thirty-five years before his passing in 1977, lived in Winnipeg with his wife and eight children. Pete and his wife, Tillie, are living on the Brown home farm, where they raised their family of five children. Gertie and her husband, Bill Giesbrecht, are also farming in the Lowe Farm vicinity. They have two children. Hannah married Ed Penner. They are living on the Penner home farm south of Kane and have five children. Billy, a teacher at Garden Valley Collegiate, and his wife Annie have four children and are living in Winkler. The youngest in the Brown family, Luella and her husband Abe Peters, are also engaged in farming, making their home several miles west of Plum Coulee. They have three children.



*Isaac Brown family in 1937. BACK ROW: George, Jake, Gertrude (Gertie) John, Pete. FRONT ROW: Isaac and Gertrude (nee Giesbrecht) with Bill, Anna, Hannah, Luella.*

In January, 1947, the Brown home was destroyed by fire, which started while Mr. Brown was attending a school meeting at Rosefarm. Their personal belongings, family records and photos were lost in the blaze. After this Isaac and Gertrude Brown moved to Plum Coulee where he, together with his son-in-law, Arnold Hiebert, worked at the lumber yard, for almost a year. Mrs. Brown enjoyed handiwork of all kinds, and was very interested in trying new things, as when liquid embroidery first became popular.

In 1954, at age 66 years, Isaac Brown passed away of leukemia. Mrs. Brown moved to Winkler several years later, where she was employed for a time at the Salem Home for the Aged. She remarried A.B. Giesbrecht in September of 1959. Presently they are residing in the Winkler Heritage Manor.

The Browns do not run a large grain farming operation

in comparison to others of this time, but have retained more of the traditional mixed farm. They raise cattle, hogs and poultry to supplement their income from grain. Because of the livestock, Mr. Brown has kept up his early rising habits to do the choring. His interest in mechanics cuts down on the costs of maintaining the farm machinery, his blacksmith's shop serving as the repair shop. As he and his sons co-operate in their farming operations, they have the benefit of Mr. Brown's years of experience, as well as the advantage of the combined manpower.

Pete Brown has a knack for repairing small appliances and other electrical gadgets. During the winter months he spends time "tinkering" on these things. Mrs. Brown has a talent for making plants grow, attested to by the lush greenery as well as the variety of blooming plants in the house. In summer her flower beds display a wide array of colours and types of plants. The piano is often the centre of activity in the living room; aside from adult enjoyment, the grandchildren have all sat beside Grandma on the bench, learning Sunday School choruses.

Pete and Tillie Brown have five children. The eldest Virginia, born Oct. 5 (1943) and her husband Gerald Doell live in Winnipeg, where they have a hair styling shop. They have two children, Curtis and Andrea. Terry, born Sept. 6, 1946, is farming in the R.M. of Morris. He married Ricki Parkin of Dryden and they have two daughters, Jenny and Shelly. Bruce and Brian were born on Nov. 21, 1951. Bruce owns eighty acres of land in the R.M. of Morris. He and his wife Vivian (Harder) live in Starbuck, where she teaches, while Bruce commutes to his job at Ajax Farm Equipment in Winnipeg. Brian also farms in the area. He married Alice Friesen of Lowe Farm. They have two daughters, Trina and Angela. Donald, born March 5, 1957, married Geraldine Kroeker (Lowe Farm), and lives in Winnipeg. Geraldine has a job in the city, while Donald works on construction.



*The Peter Brown family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Gerald and Virginia Doell. Brian and Alice Brown, Donald Brown, Matilda and Pete Brown (seated), Bruce and Vivian Brown and Terry and Ricky Brown.*

## **TERRY WAYNE BROWN**

*submitted by Ricki Brown*

Terry and Ricki (nee Parkin) farm N.E., S.W., S.E. 28.4.2 West Lowe Farm, Terry was born and raised in

Rosefarm, attending Rosefarm School, Kane School and Lowe Farm School. Terry was employed by Transair and General Aviation at Winnipeg Int. Airport, during which time he obtained his private pilot license, played baseball and curled in his leisure hours. His interest in farming remained throughout his employment, helping his Father; later purchasing their own farm, in 1975. Children are Jenny Leigh and Shelly Ann. In his spare time Terry enjoys hunting, hockey, baseball. Ricki enjoys all domestic duties, also oil paints.

## BRIAN C. BROWN

*submitted by Alice Brown*

Brian farms the southeast quarter of Section 33-4-2 West, plus several other acreages in the R.M. of Morris. He was born on Nov. 21, 1951 to Peter and Matilda (Groening) Brown of Rosefarm. Brian attended the Rosefarm and Kane elementary schools, going to Lowe Farm for high school. In Sept., 1973 he and Alice Friesen, daughter of Jacob J. and Agatha (Schroeder) Friesen were married.

Aside from grain farming, he also raises hogs, poultry and a small number of cattle. During the winter months he works at a local seed cleaning operation, until the spring field work starts.

Always active in sports, Brian has played baseball for the Lowe Farn team for several years, as well as playing hockey in winter. Together with his brothers, he is also an avid hunter in winter. Alice is kept busy at home with their two daughters, Trina and Angela, helping where possible with farm work, and enjoying several hobbies in spare time.

## JOHN P. DYCK FAMILY

John P. Dyck was born February 28, 1886, in the Rudnerweider district, seven miles southeast of Plum Coulee, to Rev. Peter H. and Katherina (Wall) Dyck, who had immigrated to Canada from South Russia in 1875. He had 5 brothers and 2 sisters.

On July 1, 1915, he married Aganetha Wiebe, daughter of Abram C. and Mary (Dyck) Wiebe, who lived five and one-half miles south of Plum Coulee. Mother had 5 brothers and 4 sisters. Two brothers passed away in early childhood.

They lived with father's parents till the spring of 1916, when they bought a farm in the Rose Farm district N.W. 114 16-4-2 West. In March, when there was a very deep snow, they moved to their first home and started farming on their own. Their's was a typical pioneer farm, with some cattle, pigs, and laying hens.

Mother was a hard working woman and as I remember, she was very strict, but loved her family. She always had scripture reading and prayer in the morning. She had a big garden to supply the family with vegetables and some fruit. Father was a big, heavy built man, 6 feet tall. He enjoyed people, helping his neighbours and visiting. But he was not a man of many words. On Sunday morning, mother and father would always be in church with the family.

In 1918, they had a good crop, but could not get



*Mr. and Mrs. John P. Dyck.*

anybody to thresh the flax. It was all stooked; by the spring the mice had done a lot of damage, but the flax price had increased so much that father could buy a new model T Ford touring car. He paid \$825.00 for it. In 1923, he bought a new McCormick Deering 28-46 inch threshing machine. We had a Titan tractor, and we would always thresh with 4 or 5 neighbours in company. They got together 6 teams and racks, and 3 teams and grain boxes, and that way would thresh all the grain in the company. This gave a crew of 10 men for the women to feed, come mealtime, and there always was a lot of good food.

In winter, father would haul the grain to Kane with a bobsled and two horses. He took in 2 loads a day and that was a full day's work. If he hauled every day, all week, he would have 350 bushels in the elevator. It all had to be shovelled onto the box. Today, we put the auger in the bin and load a 500 bushel load in less time than it took to load a 50 bushel box.



*John P. Dyck hauling grain in winter time.*

Then the depression years came, and the tractor was mostly used for threshing. Dad would buy 2 or 3 drums of fuel for plowing and the rest of the plowing was done by horses. In the late 30's, farmers started to use tractor power to farm. I suggested that we use the tractor more. Father said that there would come a day when there would not be enough fuel. (That was in the late thirties). Today, we are seeing that come to pass.

Father was not a public speaker, but he served 2 terms on the Rose Farm school board. He was a very religious man and had a great concern for Christian living.

In the spring of 1937, they wanted to organize a church in Rose Farm. A number of people got together to decide where they would have the church service. Father offered his hay shed at the end of the barn. So it was cleaned out and they had church services in it for the summer of 1937. That same year, the Rose Farm Church was built.

Mr. Jacob P. Gerbrandt and Bernard B. Hildebrandt and father were the church board when the Rose Farm church was organized; they also served as the building committee.

John P. and Aganetha (Wiebe) Dyck had 6 daughters and 3 sons. Tena married Ben W. Hildebrandt. They farm and are in the seed business. Mary married Cornie W. Hiebert. He was a barber and jeweller in Steinbach. Anton married Annie Doell. They are farming at Lowe Farm and Myrtle. Margaret married Herman N. Doerksen. He is a retired garage operator and they are living in Mission, B.C. David married Katherine Wolfe and farmed at Plum Coulee. Helena was married David Groening and farmed at Killarney. Helena passed away at age 51 years. David Groening married Mary Giesbrecht. Eva is living in Winnipeg and is nursing. Comic J. Dyck is farming at Rose Farm and lives in Plum Coulee. Agatha married John J. Gerbrandt and is farming the family homestead.

## ANTON AND ANNIE DYCK

We were married at Anton's home on July 1, 1942, living with his family the first year and farming 115 acres. When we were first married, we drove horse and buggy (cutter in the winter time). Sometimes the drifts were a bit steep and we would upset! That meant getting our belongings together, packing them back into the cutter, and away we'd go again.

Anton used horses the first year, for his farming. His first tractor was a Walrus tractor. But he soon realized he needed something newer.

In September 1943, we moved to the Melba school district. In 1944-45, it was very wet, and farming was not very profitable. 1946 was an average year and in 1946, we had hail that took its toll. In September of the same year, we moved to Myrtle, Manitoba, where we lived for 17 years. In the meantime, we purchased the Bert Oltman farm at Lowe Farm, in 1956. We started a completely new yard, closer to town than the original one. On this farm, there still were 25 acres of virgin land that Anton broke up and seeded to grain. We still farmed our land at Myrtle, Manitoba.

At Myrtle, the soil was much lighter, so came spring, I was surprised when I went out when it was wet, and everything stuck to my shoes! Things have improved, with lawn and gravel and more gravel. It has been hard work building, planting trees, trimming etc. but it is worth it. When Jacob H. Friesen retired, we purchased his quarter of land.

We have both been active in the community. Anton has been chairman of the Lowe Farm Kane United Grain Growers local board, president and board member of the Lowe Farm Credit Union. At present, he is on the credit committee, a member of the Lowe Farm Consumers board. He has been in the mission committee and

presently on the finance committee of the Lowe Farm Berghaler Mennonite Church. I have been a member of the Lowe Farm Women's Institute, as president for a few years, member of Ladies' Christian Endeavour and member on the local Chamber of Commerce.

In April, 1974, we had the misfortune of a fire damaging our house and garage.

— 11111111MF



*Harvest, 1977, on Tony Dyck's field. Tony on self-propelled, Anton on pull type.*

Our children:

Lawrence married Thelma Fehr and is farming near Kane, Homewood and Myrtle, since 1971. Harold married Lesia Skochelias. They are farming at Lowe Farm and Myrtle. Dorothy married Warren Earl. She was a school teacher and he is in real estate.

Tony is farming at Kane and Myrtle, and Corinne is working in Winnipeg.

Tony graduated from Morris high school and Elim Bible Institute, Altona.

Corinne graduated from Morris High School and Elim Bible Institute, Altona. In high school she was involved in sports and took part in the Manitoba Summer Games in Neepawa, Manitoba.



*Anton and Annie (nee Doell) Dyck's 35th Anniversary; Tony, Dorothy with husband, Warren Earl and daughters Angela and Andrea, Corinne, Harold and wife Lesia, Lawrence and wife Tammy (Thelma) with daughters Barbara and Jennifer, July 1, 1977.*



*Jacob P. Dueck came from this Kronsart (Plum Coulee) District farm to Morris municipality in 1926. Here, he is seen, third from left, with his parents, the Peter Dyck's and brothers and sisters, around 1900.*



## THE STORY OF THE JACOB P. DUECK FAMILY

*Father*, Jacob P. Dueck, was born on May 6, 1884 in the Kronsart district, southeast of Plum Coulee, to Mr. and Mrs. Peter Dyck. His parents emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1874. Peter Dyck was a minister in the Sommerfelder Mennonite church. They had six sons and 2 daughters and two adopted sons and one adopted daughter.

Mother was born on July 5, 1892, to Mr. and Mrs. John P. Giesbrecht, of the Rose Farm District. Mother had 5 brothers and 4 sisters.

Mother and Dad were married on July 13, 1916 and made their home with dad's parents for a year or so, until they moved into their own new home across the road from dad's parents.

In 1926, when a lot of Mennonites moved to Mexico, dad bought a farm in Rose Farm from the Cornelius Thiessens, who moved to Mexico. Mother had not seen the place. When we moved in March 1927, she saw it for the first time and later confessed that, that evening she had sat down and cried. They had been living in a new house-barn combination and now they had moved into an old house and tumbled down barn. But mother was not the one to complain and lament about her situation. Together as a family, we worked hard and built up the place to where they had a nice home when they retired.

Dad never regretted the day they moved away from the sandy soil he grew up on, to the sticky gumbo of the Rose Farm area. Peter remembers the first day dad took him to the new school he was to attend. It was only 1 314 miles, but there were at least a dozen places where the water ran across the road. When they got there, they were told that school had been cancelled until the roads were better.

Mother and dad both attended private schools, where they learned to read, write and do arithmetic in the German language. Later, dad took some English night classes. Reading was always an important part of their lives.



*Mr. and Mrs. Jacob P. Dueck in 1942.*

They were also involved in community life, visiting with neighbours and relatives and taking part in pig killing bees and threshing bees. Dad also served as trustee of the Rose Farm school and as secretary of the school board for some time. During his first years as a farmer, dad and his oldest brother owned a steam threshing outfit, which they used to thresh their own and their neighbours' grain "in company" as it was called.

Mother and dad were hard working people and taught us that if a person wanted to eat, he also had to work. They may not have been rich, yet we always had food and clothing. Dad never endeavoured to get a large farm. If we had enough to live on, then he was satisfied. He would not make debts just to have what others had. That may have been one reason why he only bought his first car in 1939, and his first tractor in 1940. Mother and dad had set high principles for themselves and expected us as a family to follow them.

The church was also an integral part of their life. They attended the Grosweide Sommerfelder Church until it was moved to Plum Coulee, and then they attended the Kronsweide Church, where dad also served as "vOr-sanger" (song leader). He also served on some church committees.

Mother and dad had a large family. Twelve children were born to them, two of whom died in early childhood.

We often wonder how mother stood all ten of us at home at the same time. While our parents had a very limited formal education, they were able to see some of their children graduate from high school, college and university. It is through their children that they continue to make their contribution to the world. Five of them are making their homes in the Rose Farm - Lowe Farm area.

Peter married Helena Gerbrandt of Lowe Farm and they have made their home at Lowe Farm. Peter has also served as pastor and assistant pastor of the Lowe Farm Berghaler Mennonite church since 1957.

Mary took her training as a practical nurse and served in that capacity in Morris, Fisher Branch and Vita until her marriage to Jacob Voth of Altona.

Tena took her training as a practical nurse and worked in Altona until her marriage to Dave Zacharias of Altona.

Nettie married Jacob Gerbrandt of Lowe Farm and they are making their home on the Peter Bergman farm in the Rose Farm district.

Jacob married Agnes Goertzen of Morden and they are making their home on the family farm, where we all grew up.

John is farming the Charlie Rosner farm at Lowe Farm. He spends his winters working at various voluntary service assignments.

Jacob married Agnes Goertzen of Morden, and they are making their home on the family farm, where we all grew up.



*Farmyard of Jacob Dueck.*

Margaret trained as a registered nurse and served as a missionary nurse in Mexico for 14 years and is continuing her career in the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg.

Agatha married Elmer Groening of Rose Farm and they are making their home on Elmer's grandparents' (Henry Groenings) farm at Lowe Farm.

Lena took her training as a teacher and then later in linguistics, and has served with the Wycliffe Bible translators first in Papua, New Guinea for three years, and then at their headquarters in Calgary, Alberta, for five years, and is now back in Papua, New Guinea.

Henry took his training in teaching and later in pastoral work. He is married to Marie Kehler of Abbotsford, B.C. He has served as bible school teacher in Altona and with Mennonite Central Committee in



*Mrs. Jacob P. Dueck with her children, grandchildren in 1972.*

Winnipeg, and is now on a two year assignment as pastor with the E.M.E. C. Church, in Belize.

Mother and dad retired from the farm in 1956 and moved to Altona. Dad passed away on March 6, 1958 at the age of 73 years. Mother stayed in her home as long as health permitted, and then moved into the Ebenezer Home in Altona. Mother passed away on August 1, 1977 at the age of 85 years.

They are survived by four sons and six daughters, twenty-two grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

## **PETER P. FUNK**

Peter P. Funk, son of Peter and Cornelia Funk, came from Heubodon, Mariampole, Russia.

They left Russia, March 31, 1875, arrived in Canada, May 10, 1875. Peter, my dad, was born May 1, 1875, Canadian Calendar - he had five brothers and six sisters.

Mrs. Kathrina Funk, daughter of Abraham and Helena Groening, who came from Russia in 1874, landed at Niverville, Manitoba. Kathrina, my mother, was born February 2, 1878 at Rheinland, Manitoba. She had two brothers and one sister. Both Dad and Mother were of Mennonite origin.

The reason both of their parents came to Canada, was obviously because Russia was continuously at war and there was always conflict, and Mennonites were opposed to war, besides land in Canada was cheap and homesteads could be taken up, most of them were good farmers. Grandpa Groening took up four homesteads, one for each child. They were situated between Rosefarm, Lowe Farm and Kane. It was nicknamed the 'Cutta', Lowe Farm being their Post Office.



*LEFT: Mr. P.P. Funk. RIGHT: Mrs. P.P. Funk.*



Their education left a lot to be desired. Dad reached the great grade of three or four, while Mother only got in about 10 months, she was constantly sick when cold weather set in.

They were married in 1889, had 11 children, four of whom died in childhood, the others were Cath, Nora, Pete, Helen, Ben, Anne and Billy.

They were farming on one of the quarters that Grandpa Groening bought, their possessions were few. They belonged to the Rudnerweider Church.

Their social life consisted of going to church regularly, weddings, funerals and visiting friends and relatives. The annual killing of pigs, was work, but usually enjoyed by five or six couples - the best food was put forward, and maybe for the men, a snifter or two out of the bottle, brandy most likely, and fresh spare-ribs and liverwurst.

They both learned to read at school and at home - they spent many nights reading the Yugen Freund, Bible, the Runschau, the Nor-Western, the Almanac, a series of the Minschausen detective books, which made the rounds in the 'Cutta' and were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Mother did lots of knitting, sewing, mending, making patchwork quilts and hooked rugs. She enjoyed gardening immensely, was always up at the crack of dawn to tend her plants. I remember one particularly bad year for the gardens, (not Mother's) relatives and friends coming and loading their cars, and some came with stoneboats! One year Dad hid watermelon in the granary in the wheat and we had watermelon at Christmas - what a treat that was!

Mother was a fairly good shot, and used to shoot prairie chickens for supper, and tin cans off fence posts! She was always asked to bake buns for weddings and funerals. Delicious!!

She delivered many babies and looked after the mothers; she was asked to help with the dead, like washing bodies, dressing and fixing up the coffins, which were homemade, fixed with eyelet lace and geraniums.

Dad was a putterer, fixing things like spokes in wagons and buggies, greasing the machinery and the wheels. I always had a swing, but also, on Sundays, the gang would be down and result in another broken chair or window, something else for Dad to fix!

During the big influenza outbreak, everybody in the 'Cutta' was sick with the exception of Dad and Cath. He would go from neighbour to neighbour to feed the stock, milk the cows and bring in enough fuel to keep them warm. It kept him pretty busy.

When Queen Centre School was to be closed, Dad gave a corner of his land for a new school and enough room for a barn and playground. Mary Wiens from Lowe Farm, with a grade eight education, was the first teacher and taught grades one to eight. Later on a consolidated school was opened at Kane, and we were all vanned to school.

In the dirty thirties, we had 30 acres of oats, allotted for the milk cows. Helen and I had just finished stooking it and mother had yahoosed at us for awhile (her yahoos could be heard a mile or two.) The black clouds overhead turned into a tornado, which hit and smashed a hayrack, took every bundle of oats up twenty or thirty feet into the ditches and neighbours' fields. Not much oats left for the

cows.

Dad had cancer of the lips in the twenties and had it operated on. He liked his smokes and coffee, and the odd glass of beer or a shot of brandy. He was always very interested in his grandchildren, and what progress any of his children made. He was quick tempered but cooled off just as fast and became quite docile in his old age. He died of cancer of the throat at the age of almost 93 years.

Mother was always ready to help the sick or anybody who needed it and would give her shirt. She was a deeply religious woman and had much faith. She looked after her mother three years after grandpa died and again three years before Grandma died at 83.

They retired from farming and moved to Lowe Farm. When unable to look after themselves, (mother was blind the last eight years of her life), they were in Winkler Old Folks home for one year, then at the Alt ona home for the rest of their lives.

They thoroughly enjoyed their grandchildren and were interested in their comings and goings.

## THE HISTORY OF THE DANIEL D. PENNER FAMILY

*by Ed Penner*

It was in the spring of 1918, that Daniel and Maria Penner pulled stakes in the Hoffnunsort District near Plum Coulee and with their large family settled on section 7-4-2W in the extreme S.W. part of the Morris Municipality known as the Rose Farm District. They took with them nine children; Daniel, John, Henry, Justina, Annie, Anton, Ben, Jacob and Agatha, ranging in age from 21 years down to 3. One newly-married daughter, Mary (Mrs. Diedrich Harder), remained in the Plum Coulee area temporarily.



*Wedding picture of  
Daniel D. Penner's in  
1890's.*

The Penners left a 112 section of light-textured soil to move unto a section of deep, heavy clay. The section had been purchased for a price of \$20,000.00 from a Batchelor, Mr. Jim Brooks, whose history would make an interesting pursuit in itself.

The move was only about seven miles and made entirely by horse and wagon with the family car, a 1916



Model "T" Ford, assisting. Settling in was quite exciting, and many interesting events took place. To work a section of land with horses was quite an undertaking. About ten horses were used. Seeding was extremely early that year starting out in late March. The soil was good, but the boys grew homesick for the light soil and tired following the harrows with dirt clinging unrelentingly to their weary feet. Since the previous owner had had large herds of cattle, horses and mules, he left about 160 acres in grass and pasture. Daniel Penner proceeded immediately with hiring a sod-breaker and had 80 acres turned over. The crops turned out very well, as indeed did subsequent crops for the next number of years.

At first all grain was hauled by horse and wagon back to Plum Coulee. Later, when the siding at Kane was built, elevators constructed and some road building done, the shorter route was used. The first tractor, an I.H.C. "Titan" was purchased the following year and used to break up more grassland and also used for threshing as well as fall plowing.

But tragedy soon struck. In 1918 'flu epidemic did not bypass this family. And so it was that in the early winter on that year, the wife and mother of the family was struck and after a brief illness, passed away and was laid to rest. This left a very heavy burden on the husband and father. But, with the help of his oldest two daughters, Justina and Annie, who were aged 16 and 12, he struggled on.

In fact, feeling it was a father's bounden duty to get children established on the farm, he continued to acquire more land as the children grew older and married. At the height of his prosperity he owned 7 quarters of land.

Raising the large family almost single-handed, plus the worries of overseeing the large tracts of land caused Daniel Penner to retire at the age of 53. He did this by marrying a widow, Mrs. Maria Friesen of the village of Reinfeld and moving to that village. He had lived without a companion for 7 years. This marriage was, however, short. His weary body was no match when pneumonia struck, and six months later on the fifth of May, 1926, he was laid to rest.

The eldest boy, Daniel, got married to Helen Dyck of Plum Coulee that first spring (1918) in Rose Farm. After living in Rose Farm for one year they moved back to the Plum Coulee area where they farmed until their retirement to Gretna. Eight children were born to them during this time. Some of them have kept up the farming tradition, but others entered other trades and have scattered over the province. Both Daniel and Helen Penner have since deceased.

The oldest daughter, Mary, with her husband, followed the parents into the Morris Municipality at Rose Farm when land was made available to them there in 1919. They farmed at that location until the fall of 1942 when they moved to Steinbach. They, too, raised a large family of nine children who have made their living from the farm. Mr. and Mrs. Harder have both passed away by this time.

The second oldest boy, John, married the sister to his older brother Dan's wife. So, in 1920, John and Mary Penner moved to a farm in the Bloomfield District adjoining Rose Farm and farmed there until John's sudden

passing in 1944. Of their five children, only one, John Jr., remained on the farm. The mother, Mary Penner, now resides in the Winkler "High Rise" apartments.

Three years later, Henry married Tena Ewert of Plum Coulee. They made their home on a farm in Rose Farm. In 1927, when the estate of Daniel Penner was settled, they purchased the original homestead on the N.E. 114 of 7-4-2W for the sum of \$7,000.00, thus assuring that the family name would continue at this place for another generation at least.

They continued to operate this farm until 1960, when they retired to Winkler. Only one son, Edward, was born to this union. He, with his wife and family remained on the original homestead at this time. Tena Penner passed away in 1969. Henry Penner remarried in 1974 and still resides in Winkler.



*Ed and Hannah Penner.*

One of the girls who had worked so hard to assist Daniel Penner in managing his household decided to establish her own home when she married Frank Janzen of the Plum Coulee area in 1924. They farmed very successfully in that area until their present retirement to that village. Two children were born into this family and both of them became established on farms in the Plum Coulee District.

The remainder of the Daniel Penner children; Annie, Anton, Ben, Jacob, and Agatha moved from family to family or held various jobs until they, too, found their mates and settled down. And, strangely enough all of these resided for a shorter or longer period in the Morris Municipality.

The other girl, Annie, who had quit school at the age of 12 to help keep the family going back in 1918, got married to the T.H.C. dealer of Gretna, Mr. John J. Penner in 1927. After living in that village for three years they settled in Rose Farm and stayed on the farm until their move to Plum Coulee in 1964. The Penners now reside in Winkler and still enjoy good health. One son, Jack, was born to them. He is presently employed in the Plum Coulee Credit Union.

Anton married Elizabeth Wolfe of Reinfeld in 1929. They settled on a farm in the Rose Farm District purchasing the land from Henry Reimer. Their first years

were very difficult. With a large family coming on and the depression hitting everyone, things were rough. One extra hard blow was the loss of a young son, Davy. The other six children all grew up and have taken up various trades in our province and Alberta. The Penners moved to Plum Coulee in 1962 and now reside in Winkler.

Ben, too, married a girl from outside the municipality. In 1933, he was betrothed to Frances Buhler who was a pitcher of the Bloomfield Ladies' Baseball Club. They lived in the Rose Farm District until their move to our capital city. Four children blessed their home. Three of them have entered highly professional trades and now reside in our province and British Columbia.

Quiet Jacob also found his bride from the Bloomfield Ladies' Baseball Club. He and Annie Braun were married in 1937. They, too, farmed in Morris Municipality, but were somewhat removed from the others living in the Steinfeld District. It is interesting to note that this land was made with inheritance money obtained from the "Waisenamt" (orphan office). This evidently was a non-profit organization set up by our Mennonite forefathers to hold in trust funds left by estates for their offspring until they reached maturity. It seems that Daniel Penner had placed large amounts into this organization for his children. When the great depression hit, this organization experienced great difficulties and not all funds were realized by the benefactors. Four daughters graced their home. Because of poor health, they retired at an early age to Lowe Farm. A few years later, (1974), Jacob passed away at the age of 61. Mrs. Penner still resides in Lowe Farm alongside her youngest daughter, Ruth (Mrs. Garry Enns.) Another daughter, Laura, (Mrs. Gary Friesen) resides at Rosenort. The other children live in Brandon and Thief River Falls, North Dakota.

The baby of the family, Agatha, worked in many different homes before she found her beau - a batchelor school teacher at Rose Farm, Mr. William P. Born. They married October 4, 1936 and had six children. They moved around a lot as Mr. Born taught in many schools in Southern Manitoba. For a while during the war years he was a sensor at Ottawa. The last years of Mr. Born's life were spent at Gretna where he was a customs officer until the time of his death in 1970. Mrs. Born has now retired to Winkler while the children are scattered all over.

As stated previously the original homestead was taken over by a third generation family when Ed and Hannah Penner (nee Brown) replaced their parents, Henry Penner when they retired to Winkler. In fact, of the seven grandsons bearing the Penner surname who lived and farmed in Morris Municipality at one time or another, I am the only one left to carry on the grass roots occupation in this municipality. I married a local girl in 1947. We have been blessed with five children. The oldest two, Ken and Carole, are married and in the teaching profession at Winnipeg and Winkler. The three younger, Curtis, Cyndy and Crystal, are still with us. We enjoy farm life despite the unpredictable weather, the unreliable prices and quotas, and conniving politicians. We hope that some of our children will be able to continue in this noble profession and by grace, at this location!

## HENRY PETER PENNER

Henry Peter Penner was born in 1899 at Heuboden, to Peter P. Penner and Margaret Wiebe Penner. After marriage, Henry and Margaret lived at home with Mr. Penner's parents for a while. About 1911, they bought a farm in the southwest corner of the Rural Municipality of Morris, called Rosefarm, where they farmed for about 39 years. After the first World War, they bought the N.E. 114 of the section. They now had the East half of 6-4-2 W

Four children were born to them: *Henry W. Penner*, born 1911. Henry Jr. married Susan Wiebe of Lowe Farm. They have two daughters, Elva and Connie.

One daughter, *Tena*, married Jacob Born of Lowe Farm, on April 3, 1938, and they had four children: Larry, married to Elvera Hyde; Margaret, married Allan K. Friesen, of Winnipeg; Jacqueline married Wesley A. Eidse, from Rosenort; and Lisa is still at home.

*Peter W. Penner* married Annie Hiebert in 1943. They have two children, Donald and Peggy. Donald married Eileen Friesen of Miami, and Peggy married David Epp, of Winnipeg.

*Willie W. Penner*, of Sperling, married Tina Wiebe, in 1941. They had three sons and two daughters. Albert married Hilda Scheper, Sperling; Edward, married Erna Cornies, Sperling; Wesley, single, farming at Sperling; Elain, married John of Winnipeg; and Ruth married Jerri Bergen, of Carman.



*Henry P. Penner's 1921 Model T Ford.*

In the first years of Mr. and Mrs. H.P. Penner's married life, their cattle got lost one foggy night in the fall of the year, and they were not found by them for two weeks. They were home till the evening, six miles northeast of Plum Coulee, and they arrived at south of Neche, North Dakota, U.S.A. the next night at 5:00 p.m. Nobody knew where they were till announcements were hung up in many areas!

In 1935, the family was growing, so it was time to look for more land. Through the depression years, life was hard for the Penners. The land wasn't paid for, and Father Penner had co-signed notes to help other people along, which he had to pay for eventually. So mother Penner raised chickens and turkeys to pay debts and taxes.

In 1935, a trip was made north of Sperling to look for land. There they found a half-section of virgin land,

which was bought for \$1,400.00. That was about 25 miles from the home place. So, they drove back and forth with their Model T Ford touring car. A new Model D John Deere Tractor was bought with a 4 bottom plow and the land was broken. It turned out to be good farm land.

One time, Mr. Penner went to Winnipeg in the old Model T Ford, having two butchered steers in the back seat - head and feet off and the insides taken out. Unfortunately, the market had stopped buying meat like that, so he had to look for a restaurant that would buy the beef. He finally found a restaurant that would take the beef, but they wanted Mr. Penner to take the hide off. So Mr. Penner skinned the beef, finishing after dark. He had got lost while looking for a place to sell the beef, so now after dark, he could not find his way out of the city, to get onto the highway to Morris.

Finally he saw a policeman at a corner and stopped to ask directions, so the policeman explained the way he should go, and he took off. Then the policeman blew his whistle. "Oh, Oh", Mr. Penner thought, "now he sees I have no tail light" (the early Model T Ford had a coal oil lamp in the back.) But he turned out to be a helpful policeman and told Mr. Penner a more direct way out of the city. So Dad went home happy.

In later years, when the children got married, Mr. Penner helped the children along by buying a quarter section for each child and selling it to the children for \$700.00 per quarter section.

In 1949, the farm was sold to Isaac C. Bergen and our parents moved to Plum Coulee. They built a new house in 1951 and lived there till 1965, when father (H.P. Penner) died after a brief illness. Mother was 90 years old on June 2, 1979.

## **BERNHARD G. PENNER**

The last week in April, 1927. We moved from Rudnerweide S.D., 7 miles south of Altona, to our 160 acre farm in the Rural Municipality of Morris, in the Rose Farm School District. We lived on Section 4-4-2 on the east half of the west half section.

We were five in the family - myself, Bernard G. Penner, my wife, Agatha, Gerhard - age 3, Agatha - age 2 and Abram - 1 month old. We moved by horses and wagon. I had 5 horses, 5 head of cattle, 2 pigs, 90 chickens (approx.), machinery to plow, seed to harvest; no tractor or car.

The buildings were very old and had rats in all the buildings. I used tin cans to close the rat holes in the house and grain bins, before we moved in. We could get along with the house for a few years the way it was, but not with the barn. I was not too worried. If God would give us a good crop, I could build something, but it didn't turn out that way. Drainage was not good; we had 2 floods in spring. In fall, I had a small crop.

How about my barn? I took down the north lean-to and repaired the barn, putting 2 timbers against the walls so the barn could not fall down. The cows gave enough plaster to plaster the inside wall, so the wind could not blow through. My neighbour told me that repairs were made just for the time being; they usually last from 7 to 14 years, and how right he was. I plastered this barn for

15 years. In 1942, I bought an old barn and together with some new lumber, I built a new barn that's still in use in March 1979.

We had often poor crops - too wet, or too dry, or too much rust or grasshoppers. I remember one early morning, I walked to my late oats field and the ground was more than covered with grasshoppers. I tried to see how much I could catch with one hand and I got 28 hoppers in one hand. No wonder that they ate all my oats!

My loan on my farm had grown bigger, since I started, so in 1937, I bought a car to catch up with my debt. A 1916 model did it. I paid 3,200c for it, *not* dollars, and used it 3 years. The change from horses to car was more exciting than today, just from an old to a new car.

in 1930, I had a good crop, about 2000 bushels of wheat. The price usually was about \$1.25 a bushel, but before we had threshed, the price dropped to 75c. I had to sell, so I sold 1000 bushels and waited till spring for a better price - then I got 50c a bushel. I sold all I could, the price went down to 25c a bushel. The big crop had dried up.



*Farmyard of Bernhard G. Penner, south of Lowe Farm.*

In summer, we made bricks from manure and used it like coal in the winter, in an oven made from an oil barrel. In fall, we hauled firewood 23 miles with horses and wagon from the U.S.A., cutting the trees down with an axe.

Our children were all born here - we had no doctor, just a midwife. One baby died, one was born in the Altona Hospital. Our children are: Gerhard Penner of Winnipeg, Agatha (Mrs. H.W. Bergen of Clearwater), Abram Penner of Winkler, Tina (Mrs. Art Groening of Winkler), Neta (Mrs. Pete Gerbrandt of Purvis), Bernard Penner, farmer, or Horndean, Helena Bergman of Altona.

We moved to Altona on September 9, 1966. In 1968, our son Bernhard, bought this farm, and is still farming here.

## **PETER F. AND MARGARUETTA PENNER**

The Penners lived in the Kane School District on S.E. 1/4 20-4-2 West, first farming with horses, later farming 15 quarters, the exact location of which is unknown to me. Not all of this was grain land, some of it was used for hay.

Peter bought two 45-60 Hart Parr steam engines, each pulling 14 shares on stubble and 12 on sod, at 2 1/2 miles per hour. One man was needed on the plow to adjust the



*Mr. and Mrs. Peter F. Penner.*

shares. The plow was too big for headlands, so he used a horse drawn plow for that job. He also bought two La Cross "Happy Farmer" 12-24 tractors. I still remember how we enjoyed playing on the tractors, some of which had chain steering.

In the early 1920's, everything got flooded. Mr. Penner had a threshing machine to do his harvesting and I still remember the first time he hired a combine to harvest some of his crop. He wasn't at all pleased, because he thought too much grain was staying in the field.



*Peter Penner and his purebred stallion "Archer" in the early 1900's.*

Mrs. Penner had a large fruit and vegetable garden. For us grandchildren it was always a pleasure to go there to sample some of that fruit. Grandma was a beautiful woman, always dressed very neatly, wearing a chain of beads all the time.

Grandpa was a councillor in the municipality during 1912-1915.

They retired to Kane and later to Altona.

They had 12 children:

Sarah, who remained single, later cared for her mother.

Anna, Mrs. Henry H. Doell. They are farming near Horndean, and Lowe Farm.

Margarueta, Mrs. John H. Doell. They lived at Plum Coulee, where he is a labourer.

Peter married Sarah Hiebert and farmed in the Kane school district, till their retirement, when they moved to Lowe Farm.

Isaac married Pearl. He was in the army and a trucker of Vancouver Island, B.C.

Abraham married Henrietta Neufeld. They farmed in the Kane school district till their retirement, when they moved to Winkler.

Bernard married Gladys Harvey. He is in heavy equipment repair and sales in Edmonton.

David married Sarah Rempel. They farmed at Kane and then moved to Harding, Manitoba to farm.

John married Jean Oakes. They farmed at Kane school district, then moved to Sperling to farm.

Katherina, Mrs. Glenford Dow. He is a commercial sign painter and artist of Los Angeles, California.

Jacob married Jean Champagne. He is city clerk of Calgary. She is working in a bank.



*Peter and Helena (Giesbrecht) Heinrichs.*

## **PETER HEINRICHS FAMILY (1838-1979)**

*by Mrs. Margaret Groening*

In 1838, my great-grandfather, Henry Heinrichs, was born in Berghal Colony, Russia. With his wife, Susanna (Neufeld) he came to Canada in 1876, settling in the Rudnerweide District, west of Altona. (Rome) Peter, one of his eight children, was born in 1864. He married Maria Giesbrecht, who had also come to Canada at about the same time, with her parents. Grandfather, Peter Heinrichs, died in 1917, accidentally. His wife, Maria, (Later Mrs. Funk) died in 1935.

Father, Peter Heinrichs, was born in 1890, one of 11 children, had most of his schooling in a private school, then attended Gretna M.C.I. for a year. In 1911, he married Helena Giesbrecht, daughter of Wilhelm and Helena Giesbrecht of Kronsart, near Plum Coulee. Father was a school teacher at Gnadenfeld School, near Altona, for a year, before settling on their farm 2 1/2 miles south of Horndean. They farmed on this location for twenty years, and 11 of their 12 children were born here. Their original house is still standing, a reminder of the past.

After a rather story life, father was converted to a life of faith, and his desire became to further the work of the church. This led to the formation of a Sunday school at home, which he continued for many years; also assisting with studies and "jugendvereins".

Our mother was a kind and loving person, with a deep faith in God. She tried to instill this in us through the prayers and songs she taught us.

In 1932, during the depression years, father was one of the many who lost his land through mortgage. Sorrowfully, we packed up and left our home. We moved

to a big farm home 6 miles north, in the Rosenheim District, but it was rented land, and 3 years later it was sold.

In 1935, father bought a quarter section of land in the Rosefarm District, six miles southwest of Lowe Farm. We settled into our new dwelling, the machine shed, which was later converted into a home. Times were hard; for fuel we used bricks of manure, which were pressed by machine into blocks, then stacked and drained. To add to our sorrow, the following January mother died, following goiter surgery, at the age of 46. Those were difficult days, both financially and otherwise. Several of the older girls found employment to help out at home, while the others took care of the home and the younger sisters.

In 1937, father was elected minister of the Lowe Farm Bergthaler Church. This meant being away at meetings much of the time, on preaching tours and house visitation. The farm was often neglected, as the work of the church came first. In winter, he was away for weeks at a time and sometimes his last money had to go for train fair.



*Daughter, Nettie, doing chores with little brother, Irvin, hitching a ride.*

The two sons born to mother and dad both died in infancy, so the chores were left to us girls. We cut holes in the ice and carried water for the livestock, cleaned out the barn, hauled straw, and carried snow into the house for water. Sometimes a fellow cousin would stay at our place to help. There were good times too; chores done, we sang and joked while our needles were busy mending holes in the many socks and dresses. Music was a good pastime. With our guitars and dad on his violin, we spent many beautiful evenings together. Choir practise and "jugendverein" were our main social activities.

Our father was married to Miss Anna Rempel of Chortitz, near Steinbach, in 1941. Mother Anna was an active and devout woman, a real help to her pastor husband. She enjoyed singing and playing the guitar as well. Three children were born to them: Irwin, (1942) who married Elizabeth Loepky in 1964, has 3 children; they reside in Calgary, Alberta. Lilly, (1943) was a school teacher. She married Allen Giesbrecht, also a school teacher in 1963. They have 3 children and live in Crystal City, Manitoba. Rose, (1944) and her daughter are living in California.



*The Heinrichs' family at their father's wedding in 1941.*

Father suffered from a heart condition which led to the sale of the farm in 1951. He then moved to Lowe Farm, which enabled him to spend more time in the work of the church.

Mother Anna also developed a heart condition and was hospitalized from time to time. She passed away suddenly on December 31, 1958 at a New Years Eve program in church, after 17 years of marriage.

Father was very lonely after the younger children left home. In 1961, he married a widow, Mrs. Justina Schellenberg, with whom he shared his life for 3 112 years. Because of his failing health, he had to lessen his church work; but preached almost until the day of his death. He passed away suddenly in Morris Hospital in February of 1965, at the age of 74.

His wife, Justina, resides in an apartment in the Morris Manor. Of her 4 children, only one lives in the Lowe Farm area. Justina, who married Jim Dyck, has resided here for 34 years. Now retired, they lived in Morden and have 6 children.

Among the special events in our family, was the triple wedding in August 1944, when three sisters were married in a large tent, put up on the home place. Twenty-five years later, they celebrated their Silver Weddings, together with family and friends.



*The three sisters, Tina, Susan and Nettie on their Silver wedding anniversary.*

The 12 children born to Peter and Helena Heinrichs were:

Peter (b.d. 1912).

Helen (1913) married Jacob Giesbrecht, a carpenter, in 1934. They have five children and are living in Steinbach in retirement.

Willie (b.d. 1915)

Mary (1916) married Abe Funk, a farmer and welder. They have 7 children and live in Brandon. Abe died in 1973.

Tina (1918), who married Frank Groening in 1944, had 6 children. They farmed in the Lowe Farm - Kane area for 30 years and are now retired to Winkler.

Susan (1919) married Henry Gerbrandt in 1944. They have 4 children. They served as missionaries to Mexico, under the Mennonite Pioneer Mission, for 3 years. Henry is a minister and they are presently residing in Winnipeg.

Margaret (1922) married Eddie Groening in 1944. They have 6 children and settled on a farm in the Lowe Farm - Kane area, where they still are today.

Nettie (1924) who married George Groening in 1944, has 4 children. George is a school teacher and pastor in Chilliwack, B.C.

Anna (1927) married Norman Groening in 1947. They have 5 children, and are still farming the Lowe Farm - Kane area.

Agatha (1929) married Erwin Groening in 1947 and has 4 children. Erwin is a pastor, part-time farmer and businessman. They live in Plum Coulee.

Jessie (1932) married Frank Klassen in 1954. They have 4 children and live in Morris, where Frank is engaged in the plumbing and heating business.

Elma (1934) married John Wiebe in 1958 and has 3 children. They spent the years 1967-77 as missionaries in Columbia, South America. They are now living in Winnipeg, where John is the manager of the Fellowship Book Centre.



*The ten Heinrich sisters at Elma, the youngest's wedding in 1958.*

## THE GROENINGS OF LOWE FARM

Three brothers, Abram, Jacob and Frank Groening,

were early residents in the Lowe Farm, Kane and Rose Farm area, in Morris municipality. They had emigrated in 1874 and '75 from Bergthal, Russia, located some 25 miles northwest of the present city of Zhandov, on the Black Sea.

Abram Groening Sr. (b. 1851) and wife, Helena (Loeppky), arrived with the first settlers to Manitoba in The first born, Jacob, had been born on the journey and died four days later. He was buried in Orel, Russia, a town south of Moscow.

Abram and Helena Groening spent their first winter in Manitoba, in a sod house. Provisions were meager, consisting mostly of bread and potatoes and whatever the men were able to hunt. Abram Groening soon moved to the Altona - Winkler area, known then as the West Reserve. Abram settled in Gnadenthal, where he farmed for twenty years.

Abram Groening was a hard working pioneer farmer, with a particular interest in gardening. The construction of the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railroad in 1889 stimulated agricultural opportunities in the Kane-Lowe Farm region. As a result, Abram Groening decided to make the move and in 1897 purchased 21-4-2 West for the sum of \$8.00 per acre.

The land was unbroken and covered with prairie grass so tall, the cows would occasionally get lost. Using a sturdy team of oxen and help from sons, Henry and Abram Jr., the land was slowly broken. Abram Sr. developed such a confidence in his oxen that he found the transition from ox to horse power somewhat difficult.

Every year, Abram would take his team of oxen into the city to purchase staples, such as salt, tobacco and cloth for himself and others in the community. Abram Groening understandably appreciated the Jewish pedlars that occasionally worked the district at that time. Often, they would stop overnight at the Groening farm.

Abram's grandchildren remembered him as a kind man, willing to play hide and seek with them, and had an almost inexhaustible source of candies. When trips into Lowe Farm were necessary, Abram Groening would take his grandchildren along on a buggy, taking care that each had equal opportunity of riding with grandfather.

As Abram grew older and his share of the farm work was absorbed by his sons, he would involve himself wherever possible. During harvest, he would take the job of "busheler", filling and tying the bags of grain cleaned by the thrasher.

In 1915, Abram Groening fell ill and despite a difficult operation, he died in 1917 of cancer.

After Abram's death, wife Helena, lived for a time with her children. Later, she moved to Plum Coulee, where she lived until her death.

Abram and Helena had four surviving children; Henry born 1875, Katherine born 1878, Abram born 1883, and Helena, born 1894.

Katherine married Peter Funk in 1898. Upon their retirement from farming, the Funks moved to Lowe Farm, where they lived until Katherine's death in 1965.

Helena married Cornelius Wiebe in 1916. Cornelius Wiebe later became a well known doctor in southern Manitoba. The Wiebe's lived in Winkler until Helena's death in 1977.



## Henry Groening

Henry Groening married Maria Penner in 1903 and established a farm on the same section his father had broken. A man of slight stature, but indomitable spirit, Henry established himself as a good farmer with a particular aptitude for mechanics. Neighbourhood co-operation had helped to establish a local telephone system and Henry Groening would often be called upon to solve a breakdown in communication.

Henry Groening was the owner of a number of books, among them, Beginners Mathematics and Basic Law, as well as a subscriber to a German language newspaper, "The Norwester". With his academic knowledge and a philosophy he described as the "courage to exist", Henry Groening farmed until his death in 1940. Wife, Maria, remained on the farm for a few years, then retired to Lowe Farm. Maria Groening died in 1959.

Henry and Maria Groening had 12 children; Abram, born 1904, married Elizabeth Paetkau. Abram farmed the land his father had worked until his retirement in 1967. Using carpentry and music as inspiration, Abram and Elizabeth are spending their retirement years in Gretna.

Abram's eldest son, Elmer and wife, Agatha (Dyck), took over the farm in 1967. At the present time, Elmer and son, Harold, are operating the family farm.

Mary Groening (b. 1906) was a resident of Lowe Farm until 1963. She is now living in Winnipeg.

Dora Groening (b. 1907) married Ben Hamm and is now living in Winnipeg.

Theodore Groening (b. 1909) married Katherine Driedger and farmed in Lowe Farm district until his retirement in 1974. Theodore Groening was an active worker in the Lowe Farm Emmanuel Church until he left the community. The Theodore Groenings now live in Winnipeg.

Hilda Groening (b. 1911) died of scarlet fever in 1920.

Eddie Groening (b. 1913) married Margaret Heinrichs. Eddie Groening served, both as church worker and school trustee in Kane district for many years. He is presently farming with sons, Ralph and Tim.

Detray Groening (b. 1915) owned and operated the egg grading station in Lowe Farm for many years. Detray and wife, Mary (Dyck) now live in Winkler.

Helen (b. 1916) Mrs. Henry Giesbrecht, is now living in Winnipeg.

George (b. 1918) taught school in St. Peters, Rose Farm and Kronsweide. George Greening and wife, Nettie, (Heinrichs) are now living in Chilliwick, B.C., where he is pastor of the church.

Clara (b. 1920) married Aaron Siemens and is now living in Winnipeg.

Ervin (b. 1923) was a farmer in Kane district for a number of years. Ervin and wife, Agatha, (Heinrichs) now live in Plum Coulee, where he is pastor of a church.

Norman (b. 1925) married Anna (Heinrichs). Norman Groening served as minister of Rose Farm for a number of years. At the present time, Norman is farming in the Kane district.

## Jacob Groening Sr.

Jacob Groening Sr. was born in Russia in 1853. He immigrated to Canada in 1875 with wife, Aganetha (Siemens). After farming in Gnadenthal area, south of Plum Coulee, for a number of years, he followed his brothers, Abram and Frank, to Lowe Farm. After farming northeast of Lowe Farm, for a few years, he moved to section 28-4-2 West in the Kane district. Here he lived with his wife, until their tragic death in a fire in 1917.

The Jacob Groenings had four children; Jacob Jr., Johan, Heinrich and Peter.

Jacob Groening Jr. continued to farm the land until his retirement on the farm in about 1950.

Three of the eleven Jacob Groening Jr. children remained in the community.

Bernard Greening operated a farm north of Kane for some years.

Dave Greening worked a farm on Section 28-4-2 West until 1953, when he moved to the Killarney district.

Frank Groening took over his father's farm and operated it until his retirement in 1974. Frank Groening and wife, Tina, (Heinrichs) then moved to Winkler, where they live at present, in retirement.

## Frank Groening, Sr. (b. 1858)

Frank Groening, Sr., was born in 1858 in Russia, and married Maria Fehr in 1879. Frank Groening immigrated to Canada in 1875. In the early 1900's he operated a small store in Lowe Farm. Frank and Maria Greening had 2 children Frank Jr. and John.

John Groening remained a resident of Lowe Farm, working for the CNR until his retirement.

Maria Groening died in 1904 and Frank Groening Sr. then married Margaret Dueck. Frank and Margaret Groening had 12 children; eight surviving to maturity. All of the children left the community to establish themselves elsewhere.

Margaret Greening, Frank's second wife, died in 1922. Frank Groening remained a resident of Lowe Farm until his death in 1941.

## MR. AND MRS. A.A. GROENING

*submitted by Mrs. Walter Toews (nee Rosre Groening) and  
Mrs. Herman Brown (nee Nora Groening)*

Our mother, born April 28, 1887 in Fargo N.D., U.S.A. and dad, born March 14, 1883 in the Village of Gnadenthal, near Plum Coulee, were married December 7, 1905, and settled on Section 21 S.W. of the Lowe Farm District. On this farm they raised their family of twelve children (four died in infancy).

Dad passed away 1964 at the age of 80 years, and mom lived to the age of 87 years, passing away 1974. Two sons and a daughter have left our family of twelve, leaving two sons and 7 daughters at time of writing (1979).

Mom and Dad sent their children to a private school until the Kane Consolidated School was built 1921, then they were henseforth picked up by van.



*Abram A. and Maria Groening.*

Dad, although his formal education being limited, served on the Kane School board for 12 years. Sometimes hindered with the language was a bit of a problem, but Dad still managed to bring his points of view, on issues to be heard.

Mother was busy cooking, baking, and sewing, etc., and later trained her daughters to take over while she would relax, knit and even spin her own wool. Outdoors she tried her hand at bees, but finding that too much, chose chickens, instead, as a hobby. She never complained if the van brought an overnight extra child to the supper table. She trained her family to do their chores regardless, and when supper and chores were finished, it was fun time on the farm. If it wasn't in busy season, Dad would play ball with the children, or go for a swim with them. Mother learned how to swim at the age of 48 years when their youngest son, Art, needed watching, while learning to swim.

Farming was their life vocation. Part of section 21, the south 112 of section 32, and various other parcels of land were under his ownership at different times of his life. He never farmed extensively, maintaining that careful management made large acreage farming unnecessary.

He adapted easily to the machine age, owning a threshing machine outfit with which he harvested crops. He was one of the first subscribers, when telephone came to their area. Mother wasn't so sure that that box on the wall would allow her to talk with someone else miles away, but soon made use of it. That was the government telephone, and later on they had a neighbours farm telephone installed, which made life on the farm less isolated and very convenient for them.

Dad was interested in community endeavours. Going to church in the winter by horse, travelling the seven miles to Lowe Farm, was part of life for them and their children. Dad was charter member of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-Op. Since he was among the first in the neighbourhood to own an automobile, he became involved with the politics of the early era. His early political interests lay with the Progressive Conservatives, later tested the Liberal Party, but turned back to P.C. again.

Physically dad was average height and build, but his rather high pitched voice caused him some embarrassment when telephoning.

They were parents of integrity, and dad, not apologising easily, avoided giving offense, or gossiping foolishly. Their retirement from farming began inadvertently, when dad lost his left arm in a farm accident in 1943. A son-in-law, Pete Brown helped manage the farm until the youngest son, Art was ready to assume responsibility. Art continued these endeavours, until his untimely death in a car accident in 1972.

Mom and dad's retirement from active work gave him more time for hobbies which included woodwork, horseshoes, and checkers. When they retired in 1954, they moved into the town of Lowe Farm. Dad was a familiar figure on the streets of town, which they had called home all their life. Mom stayed in the background, knitting, and still interested in sewing, till the last years, when she had to give it up. She started to read more, and listening to her favorite programs on radio became her way of life.



*Ed Groening farm - 1927-1968, son Ken now on farm.*

Of Mom and Dad's nine remaining children, Ed and Susie Groening (children - Ken and Marlene), and Walter and Lydia Groening (children - Bonnie, Robert, Dennis,



*Ed Groening family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Mrs. Susan Groening, Ken, Marlene. SEATED: Ed Groening.*

Victor and Hardy), live in the Lowe Farm area. Carrie, the Norman Spaldings, (children - Norma, June,

Howard, and Evelyn) lives in Redwater, Alberta; Mrs. Randal Groening (Maria), (children - Olivia, Milton, Nelson, Perla, and Louis) lives in Winnipeg; Mrs. Herman Brown (nee - Nora) (children - Earl, Larry and Lloyd) lives in Winkler; Emmie, the Alex Reimers (children - Bob, Wayne, and Gilbert) lives in Winnipeg; Elvera, the John Funks (children - Muriel, Ron, Donna, Dwayne, and Wendy) lives in Calgary, Alberta; Ellen, the Cornelius Thiessens (children - Greg, Coleen, and Linda) live in Winnipeg; Dave Thiessen (Liddie deceased) (children - Myra and Josey) lives in Winkler; Tillie, the Pete Browns (children - Virginia, Terry, Bruce, Brian and Donald) lives on a farm south of Lowe Farm; Rosie, the Walter Toews' (children - Buelah, Rita, Nadine, and Yvonne) lives near Graysville; and Mrs. Art Groening (Tina) (children - Brad, Gail, Lynette, and Janelle) lives in Winkler.



*Mr. Henry B. Wiebe as a young man.*

## HENRY B. WIEBE HISTORY

Mr. Henry B. Wiebe, fondly nicknamed "The Watchmaker", was born to Bernhard and Agatha Wiebe on July 15, 1875, near Steinbach, Manitoba. Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Wiebe had immigrated to Canada from Russia in 1874. He moved with his parents, to the Weidenfeld district, near Altona, as a young child.

In 1904, he was united in marriage to Mrs. Anna Klassen (nee Bergen) and they made their home in Altona, where Mr. Wiebe practiced his profession of repairing clocks and watches. Mrs. Wiebe had a daughter, Elizabeth, by a previous marriage. To this new marriage were born six children, while they lived in Altona. They were: Henry, Ben, Tina, Dora, Susie, (Sally), and Edd.

In the spring of 1919, he purchased the north half of 34-4-2 West in the Kane school district, near Lowe Farm, and moved to the farm. His father purchased the North Half of 35-4-2 West in the Lowe Farm school district, and rented it to his son.

On March 31, 1920, a son, Peter, was born and on April 10, Mrs. Wiebe passed away, leaving Mr. Wiebe with one step-daughter, aged 20 and 7 children, ranging from 10 days to 15 years.

On August 17, 1920, Mr. Wiebe was united in marriage to Miss Margaretha Giesbrecht, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Frank Giesbrecht (nee Gerbrandt). Mr. and Mrs. Giesbrecht had arrived from Russia in 1874 and had settled in the Rose Farm district near Lowe Farm in 1898. After her father's death in 1912, Miss Giesbrecht had cared for her aging mother and made her living by sewing for her friends and neighbors, until the death of her mother in January, 1920. To this marriage were born three children: Mary, Jacob and Johnny, who died in infancy.



*Margaretha Giesbrecht, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Giesbrecht, early settlers of the Rose Farm district, and second wife of Mr. Henry B. Wiebe.*

The Wiebe family lived on this farm till 1927, during which time Mr. Wiebe served on the board of the Kane Consolidated School from 1924-1926 and also drove the school van for a few years.

In the fall of 1927, the farm went back to its former owner, a Mr. Arnold, an American, and Mr. Wiebe purchased the N. 112 35-4-2 West from his father and moved to the Lowe Farm school district.

The Wiebe family lived on this farm till September, 1944, at which time his son, Jacob rented the farm and Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe retired to his native Altona.

The Wiebe family lived on this farm till September, 1944, at which time his son, Jacob rented the farm and Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe retired to his native Altona.

During these 17 years, he continued his profession of repairing clocks and watches during his spare time. He served on the Lowe Farm school district board from 1930-34 and was actively involved in the founding of the Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society, and was also active in the Lowe Farm credit union, serving on the Supervisory Committee for a number of years. Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe were also among the initial group of people who started the Rudnerweider Church at Rose Farm.

Margaretha Wiebe passed away on November 12, 1960, at the age of 76, and Mr. Wiebe passed away on October 26, 1961. The farm was then sold to his nephew, Mr. Jacob Thiessen, who owns the farm to this day.

At the time of his passing, Mr. Wiebe was 86 years old.

His step-daughter, Elizabeth, married Jacob Peters of Lowe Farm, in 1922, and they homesteaded a farm north of Lowe Farm for eight years, and then moved to town, where Jake Peters served as the local barber for a period of thirty years. They retired to Morris in 1972 and Mrs. Elizabeth Peters passed away on December 31, 1978.

Henry Wiebe operated a dragline around Lowe Farm for some years and is now retired and living in Florida, U.S.A.



*Mr. and Mrs. Henry P. Wiebe (nee Margaretha Giesbrecht) on Mr. Wiebe's 85th birthday, 1960.*

Ben Wiebe, also a dragline operator for many years, is now residing in British Columbia.

Tina, Mrs. Ernest Fraser, married a railroad foreman and they also live in Florida, U.S.A.

Dora, Mrs. Fred Ellis, married a serviceman and she has been a widow for 24 years. She also lives in Florida.

Susie (Sally) remained single and just this past year retired from her job in Chicago, Illinois and moved to Florida.

Edd Wiebe drove a transfer in the Lowe Farm area for a number of years and then joined the Army, in which he served for 25 years. He is now living in British Columbia.

Peter Wiebe joined the Army at the age of 19. He was seriously wounded in the Second World War, and is now living in Florida.

Mary, Mrs. Dave Penner, is the only member of the Wiebe family still living in Lowe Farm. You may read about her under Peter P. Penner.

Jacob Wiebe married Miss Sadie Hildebrandt and they farmed his father's land for 16 years, while they lived in Lowe Farm. To this marriage were born 4 children: Kenneth married Judy Friesen of Morris, and they live in Morris.

Alvina, Mrs. Melvin Price, is living in Carrot River, Saskatchewan.



*The Henry P. Wiebe family in 1960. BACK ROW. Jacob, Ben, Ed, Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, Elizabeth. FRONT ROW: Mary, Tina, Dora, Pete, Henry, Sally.*

Joseph married Kathy Funk, and is living in Nipiwini, Saskatchewan.

Matthew is still at home with his parents.

During their stay in Lowe Farm, Jacob Wiebe was actively involved with the founding of the Emmanuel Gospel Church and served as its first Pastor for 11 years, after which time, he moved to Nipiwini, Saskatchewan, and served as the principal of the Nipiwini Bible Institute for 10 years. He is now living at Blumenort, Manitoba.



*Edward and Susan Groening.*

## **EDWARD AND SUSAN GROENING**

Edward's elementary school days were in Queen Centre and later in Kane Consolidated School. My high school days were in Lowe Farm, except one year, 1924-25, in the Mennonite Educational Institute in Altona. I remember the principal, Peter H. Neufeld, and I.J. Warkentin, challenging the students that, when they went back to their respective communities, they would lend their spare time to the needs of mankind, not necessarily for personal gain or fame. This challenge always lingered in my mind, and later, I had the privilege to become involved in municipal, political and educational, co-operative philosophy dialoguing. I became impressed with the Co-Operative philosophy, that seeks to establish a brotherhood of mankind, irrespective of race, creed or nationality, seeks to minimize greed, and looks forward to having man equal at annual meetings and our savings or surplus, to do the greatest amount of good to the greatest number of people. It has been my privilege in the past forty years to perhaps serve in all the various executive positions and to help in the 1930's and 40's to organize many co-operative societies in our and other communities.

I married Susan Schroeder Giesbrecht in November, 1935. Susan and I had the joy of being active some good twenty years in the spiritual and church activities in our community.

I started farming in 1927, five miles northwest of Lowe Farm, and by 1967 farmed 600 acres. On several occasions, I took an agriculture short course and on one occasion, the late Dr. Peter Olson, our instructor at the University challenged us to remember that any Tom, Dick and Harry can raise grain for the commercial elevator, but it's only a farmer that can produce seed.

This challenge lingered and plagued my mind, and as a result, I started growing Registered and Certified seed, which warranted acquiring seed cleaning equipment in 1950's and 60's. It was a partial success, later becoming known as Farmex Seed Supply, of which my son, Kenneth, assumed the responsibility in 1967.

We are now living in semi-retirement in Lowe Farm, during the winter months. In the summer months, we live in a mobile home on the family farm, trying to justify our existence in helping, wherever a spare hand is needed. We are also encouraging community leaders and friends to provide our local Chamber of Commerce historical committee with their family histories, to set up a local album.

We had two children. Son, Kenneth, born March 15, 1941, married Vicki Fedoryshen of Caliento, Manitoba on July 2, 1966. They have three sons; Myron, Patrick and Andrew. They are operating a family farm and Farmex Seed Supply, 5 miles northwest of Lowe Farm. Daughter Marlene, who is married to Bert Rondeau, is living in Winnipeg and has two children: Kevin and Tanja. Bert is a carpenter engaged in construction and Marlene is in the nursing profession.

Because of the fact that I was born in 1907 and the clock is ticking on, I do not expect to cut much ice, but am however, truly grateful for having had the opportunity to serve.



*Bernard B. Wiebe family in 1941. Sons, John, Art and Pete.*

## BERNARD B. WIEBE

We were trying to make our living after we were married in 1927, by farming a small acreage 1 3/4 miles north of Horndean; having suffered many losses from grasshoppers. In 1935, our friend, Jacob Dyck, offered to rent us a quarter section from the Altona Waisinam in the Rose Farm District, seven miles north of Horndean. We gladly accepted the offer and moved there in spring, with our two sons, John and Art.

Our first crop, wheat, suffered from rust and we had to sell it for 28¢ per bushel. That fall, the land was sold to



*David, Peter and Esther Wiebe on a Fordson tractor.*

John R. Dyck, and we had the opportunity to buy a quarter section from the great West Life Insurance Co. for \$22.00 an acre. The land was just 3/4 mile south of us, so in the fall of 1937, we moved to S.E. 114 9-4-2. We gave everything we possibly could for a down payment, including selling a slaughter hog, to raise the \$200.00 needed. The Lord blessed our efforts, as crops and prices improved. Three more children were born to us; Pete, Esther and Henry, who died in 1938 at age 3 months.

There were other firsts for us. We bought our first car, a used 1930 Chevrolet sedan, having traded in two old horses, a cow and a small sum of money! In 1945, we bought the Henry Giesbrecht farmstead (S.E. 1/4 16-4-2) a half-mile north of us, and on November 13, we decided to move. It was our son, Art's birthday, and I had prepared a bread dough. When the relatives and friends came to help - it was get ready to go! I started to pack and hurriedly put the bread dough into pans, and into the car. The cookstove was moved by loading on the stoneboat, and as soon as it arrived at its destination, a fire was lit. The result? Freshly baked bread for all the tired workers. It turned out to be an enjoyable day.

We had good crops there and one more child was born, whom we named Dave.

Our children all attended the Rose Farm School, where two of their teachers were George Groening and the late Bill Born. Our church affiliation was with the M.B. Church at Grossweicie, but we also attended the Rudnerweide Church, just across the road from us. We had good fellowship with the neighbours.

Our son, John, married Marilyn Toews of Kane. Art married Anne Blatz of Kane; Pete married Loraine Unger of Horndean; Esther became Mrs. Frank Kasunich, and Dave married Vivian Dyck of Winkler.

In 1953, we moved back to Horndean and settled on our parents' (the late John J. Kehlert's) homestead.

## THE ROBERT REID FAMILY

Mr. Robert Reid and his two sons, Robert (Bob) and Andrew, came to the Lowe Farm area, via Morris, in 1899. Bob acquired a farm two miles south of Lowe Farm and Mr. Reid had a house half a mile west of the town. (I see that house is gone the last few years)

On January 14, 1900, his and family left Thedford, Ontario and arrived in Morris on January 17. They were met by Mr. Reid and Andrew in a sleigh drawn by a team of broncos.

On January 14, 1901, Mrs. Reid passed away and was buried on the 17th in the Morris cemetery. Mr. Reid was buried there in 1922, after living at Miami and finally, Nelson, B.C.

Annie Reid, the oldest daughter, worked in the Morris Hotel for a few years. She married Hudson Fatherby and moved to Smithers, B.C. Janet, the second girl, worked in the hotel, too. She married Arthur Friday. They lived in Morris for a few years. Both are deceased.

## **FREDRICKSEN**

In April, 1925, Mr. and Mrs. Ferd Fredricksen, with their son, Waldo, and his wife Florence, came from the small town of Bennett, Iowa, to Kane. They settled on the farm, one mile and a half southeast of Kane. Three children - Gladys, Donald and Kenneth - were born to Walt and his wife, all three receiving their education at the Kane School. The family lived south of Kane until 1940, and then moving to the J.B. Davidson farm, three-quarters of a mile east of Kane.

Mrs. Fredricksen Sr. passed away in 1946 and Mr. Fredricksen Sr., in 1949. Walt farmed until 1959, when he sold the farm to Jake Born. The family moved to Morris where they lived until 1963, moving to Winnipeg. Walt was a Security Guard for seven years, retiring at seventy years of age. He passed away May 24, 1976, and Mrs. Florence Fredricksen now lives at the Rotary Villa, 528 Hudson Street, in Fort Garry. They have ten grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Fredricksen says she will always remember the years spent at Kane, and all the good neighbours who were always so willing to lend a helping hand whenever needed.

## **DAVE UNRAU FAMILY**

Dave and Mary (nee Giesbrecht) Unrau and family moved from Hochstadt, near Altona, to Lowe Farm in 1916, on section S.E. 114 28-4-2W. The children went to the Groening School (later Queen Centre), where Bishop David Schulz was teaching at the time. In 1920, when Kane School was consolidated, they took a four and one-half mile van ride, horse drawn at first, all the way to school. Nettie tells of how cold the sleigh van was in the winter. They used foot warmers to keep warm and when there were not enough to go around, they heated bricks. Lunch consisted of well soaked syrup sandwiches and milk. The sandwiches were usually frozen by lunch time.

In 1936, the family moved to the New Kennedy area about one mile east of the Rosenfeld road and just inside the borderline of the Morris municipality. The yard had one short row of trees. They were told trees did not grow well in that area. Mrs. Unrau was determined, and planted many trees and shrubs. The trees did not get very tall, but she had a good shelter belt for her beautiful flower and vegetable garden. The flower garden was divided into little patches with foot paths running through with a buggy seat under the trees nearby. Mr. Unrau had a bit of everything on the farm - cows, pigs, chickens.

In spring, there was usually a cluck and baby chicks in

the yard and also a nasty Tom Turkey who kept the grandchildren playing indoors.

The Unraus had nine children. Dave married Johannah Knapp and now lives in Windsor, Ontario. He is a Baptist Minister. Henry passed away in 1946. Willie passed away in 1945. Mary married George Born of Kane and now they are retired in Winnipeg. Nettie is a voluntary worker and lives in Winnipeg. Eddie married Netta Hyde and they are retired in Winnipeg. John married Katherine Stoebbe who passed away in 1976. He is a carpenter. Helen is a nurse in Gretna and lives in Altona.

Mr. Unrau passed away in 1950, and in December, Mrs. Unrau, John and Helen moved to Altona. In 1967, Mrs. Unrau passed away.

## **PETER I. BROWN**

*submitted by Alice Brown*

Peter Brown was born on Oct. 1, 1922 to Isaac and Gertrude (Giesbrecht) Brown of the Rosefarm area. He completed grade eight at the Rosefarm School, attending Kane School for grade nine.

Peter and his brothers and sisters were brought up learning to value regular attendance and participation in the church community. The importance of hard work and a job well done was also emphasized, with no shirking of duties or obligations. An appreciation of music was taught in the home, Peter learning to play the violin as a youngster.

On December 31, 1942, Peter Brown was married to Matilda Groening, daughter of Abram A. and Maria Groening, living three miles north of the Brown's. Tillie Groening had received her education at the Kane School. Peter and Tillie's wedding was held in the Groening home.

After their marriage the young couple took up residence on a farm north of Kane. Their stay at this farm was short, from spring till the fall of the same year. Mrs. Brown's father, A.A. Groening, had suffered an injury in a farming accident. Pete's help was needed to operate the Groening farm, so the couple moved home for a stay of four and a half years. As this was during the war years, he served his term of "alternative service" here.

During their stay with the Groening parents, their oldest child, a daughter named Virginia was born, as well as a son, Terry.

In the spring of 1947, Peter and Tillie Brown moved once again. They took over the Brown family farm, the house having been destroyed by fire several months prior. From Plum Coulee, a building was moved to the farm site on skids, pulled by a caterpillar. An addition was built to it, doubling the original size and the Browns moved into their new home, where they have remained till the present on Sec. 5-4-2.

Throughout the years, Pete Brown has gone through the usual pitfalls of farming. On one occasion a wind storm pushed the barn off it's foundation. Other years flood water has caused damage in granaries and the barn. This year (1979) although water covered Mr. Brown's entire fields, stored grain received little damage and the house, as always, remained dry. There has also been the other extreme, the very dry years.



Mr. and Mrs. Brown have taken an interest in local church functions. When the Kane Church was closed, they attended the Rosefarm Church until its dissolution in 1975. Pete Brown sang in the choir regularly, was an usher for many years, and served on a church committee. Tillie Brown was a Sunday school teacher for 10 years. Now they are attending the Lowe Farm Emmanuel Church, where Pete Brown has continued to sing in the choir, and they both participate in the worship service through musical selections, when requested.

Mr. Brown served the community in other ways than church involvement. He was a member of the Rosefarm School Board for a number of years, as well as the Kane School Board later. He also served on the Lowe Farm Co-Op Store and the Consumers boards. Actively interested in sports, he played ball as a youngster on school teams, and later his enthusiasm and pitching ability was demonstrated at the various local functions, such as the annual Co-op picnic. He also enjoyed several winters of curling at the Lowe Farm rink.

## J.P. BERGEN

Jacob P. Bergen was born to Peter and Tena Bergen (Nee Klassen) on July 14, 1893, near Plum Coulee, Manitoba. He grew up and received his school there, marrying Anna Thiessen in November, 1913.



*Mr. and Mrs. J.P. Bergen in 1920's.*

Jacob was a farmer, but was also very handy with a hammer and saw. He did a lot of building: barns, houses, furniture, coffins, and also a lot of cut out toys, which he sold. Later, the children and grandchildren were recipients of his handiwork.

Jacob was a big man, but not only in stature. If it's as they say, that a person's heart is as big as his fist, then he must have a large heart, for his hands were twice the size of an average person, and it was always overflowing with concern for other people. His wife, Anna, died in 1918, from the flu.

In July, 1919, he remarried to Mrs. Maria Thiessen (Nee Heinrichs) a widow, with four children.

Abram, who married Lena Wiebe in 1942, Horndean, Manitoba; Mary, Mrs. Died Unrau, 1935, MacGregor, Manitoba; Lena, Mrs. William Harder, 1933, MacGregor, Manitoba; Peter, who married Annie Janzen in 1937, Horndean, Manitoba.

In the 20's, he had loaned from Weisenant for a brand new house and barn, when it went bankrupt and he lost land, home and all. The Bergens moved about 4 miles south of Lowe Farm to W. 112 26-4-2 West in 1928. (rented from Peter J. Dueck of Horndean) The children went to the Kronsweide school. Then they moved another mile north to Section 34-4-2 West in 1932, and the children attended the Kane School. This farm was rented from an American, Mr. Arnold.

Dad farmed with horses, till about 1937, when he bought his first tractor, a Model B.R. John Deere, on steel. They had about 12 working horses and 2 good driving horses.

The Bergens were a poor family. During the dirty thirties, they had a real struggle. It was drought, grasshoppers or flood. Drainage was not too good; their half section flooded completely every year with 4-5 feet of water, even their yard flooded.

Dad was a chorister in the Kronsweide church for many years. In 1937, he was ordained as a minister in the Rudnerweide church at Rose Farm. In the early years of his ministry, he would go as far as 40 miles for services with horse and buggy. Later, he bought a 1928 Chevrolet to make his rounds.

They made their own fuel for winter heating by pressing manure. The manure pressed bricks were piled up to dry in summer, then used as fuel in a homemade stove, made from a 45 gallon gas drum.

Dad worked for the municipality of Morris, dragging roads in summer, which he did mostly with 4 horses and a wooden drag made of bridge planks. Later the tractor was used. He also used his tractor to haul grain to the elevator in a wagon which held about 60-70 bushels of grain. On his way home from the elevator, he would stop in town to do his shopping at Rosner's General Store, parking parallel to the store. This would sometimes give farmers, coming to town by car, an idea. They parked their car close in front and behind his rig, so he couldn't move forward or back up. Being a big man, this did not stop him. He would lift his John Deere up in front, set it diagonal to the sidewalk and with one flip of the fly wheel, he was on his way home again.

The Bergens did a lot of visitations; they had many friends.



*Jacob P. Bergen family on way to church.*

In 1948, they made an auction sale and moved to Abbotsford, B.C. They cleared a few acres of land on Clearbrook Road and built their own house. They had some strawberries and chickens. Dad also worked at the gravel pit and for B.C. Hyrdo. He remained active in church related work.

In 1964, they came back to Lowe Farm, where they settled in the former Post Office on Main Street. They were here for three years, when mother passed away.

Dad remarried to Mrs. Susan Giesbrecht (nee Harder) on December 3, 1967. He passed away July 29, 1969.

The Bergens had seven children: Henry, who married Pauline Stobbe, Abbotsford, B.C.; Tena, Mrs. David Wiebe, serving as missionaries in Bolivia; Susie, Mrs. Allen Johnston, Winnipeg; Jake, married Susie Heinrichs, Lowe Farm; Agnes, Mrs. Bernhard Heinrichs of B.C.; Agatha, Mrs. John Harder, Portage la Prairie, Man.; Anne, Mrs. Jack Clark, Edmonton, Alberta.



*J.H. Bergen family in 1978.*

## **J.H. BERGEN**

Jacob Bergen was born to Jacob and Maria Bergen, near Horndean, Manitoba and came to live south of Lowe Farm with his parents, in 1928. He attended the Kane School.

He married Susie Heinrichs August 11, 1946 in Lowe Farm Bergthaler church, where they were both members. We started married life on a farm 1 1/2 miles east and 1/2 a mile south of Lowe Farm, on Section 33-4-1 West. This farm was rented from a Mrs. Simpson, an American. We wanted to see the country, so we lived in B.C. for 13 months, (1948-49) but came back again to our farming. We moved to town in 1956.

Jake worked for the Rural Municipality of Morris as gravel checker, weed inspector, mower and planting trees. In 1959, he started work for the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-Op. He was truck driver; later Assistant Manager.

November 1, 1970, we went to work as custodians of our school and in 1974, Jake added a bus run to his duties. We have also taken care of the Bergthaler church for 12 years.

We have 3 children, who grew up in Lowe Farm. They had their schooling in Lowe Farm and in Morris. Pat is married to Harvey Edel, a farmer near Morris. They have 3 children; Donna Marie, Jeffery and Christopher. Joan



*Mrs. J.H. Bergen and daughter Pat in cutter in 1951.*

is married to Delbert Stonehouse, who is a radar technician in the Winnipeg airport. They have a son, Brian Ross. Waldo graduated from high school and received a first year apprenticeship in Auto Mechanics in June, 1978. He is now employed with Sheller-Glove in Morris.

Jake has been on the credit Committee at the Credit Union for a number of years; served on the Co-Op Services Board for seven years and still works part time at the Lowe Farm Co-Op, which we moved into in 1965. Our present house was the first school in Lowe Farm.

## **ABRAM AND AGATHA (WIEBE) SAWATZKY**

*by Cornelius Sawatzky*

My dad was born in Russia in 1860. In the year 1874, his father and stepmother were among a group of emigrants to leave to Canada (Manitoba). After a difficult journey by ship, across the Atlantic, they finally reached Quebec. Most went on by boat and train via Duluth to Fargo or Moorhead.

Here a very sad thing happened to the family. His dad (my grandfather) died after a short illness and was buried beneath a big tree. As the stepmother couldn't care for the family, my dad, three brothers and three sisters were divided among friends and kind-hearted people, and continued on the Red River to a point near Niverville. At this time, my dad was 14 years of age, and had to work for his daily bread, as meats, fats, milk and vegetables were not on the menu.

At the age of 21, in the year 1881, he homesteaded about five miles north-east of Altona. He married, and was widowed. In 1896, my father married Agatha Wiebe, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Wiebe, who were immigrants in the same group.

1, Cornelius, the second son, was born on July 3, 1899, in the village of Sommerfeld, eleven miles south-east of Altona. I was privileged to have a fair education, mostly in the German language, for six years, with good, qualified teachers most of the time.

In 1912, my parents moved to a farm, three miles north. Here I received two more years of education, in the English language.

In 1925, I changed my mind about being a bachelor and married Margaret Derkson on her 20th birthday. She was the oldest daughter of a widow, and had two sisters and two brothers. Her father had died several years before, in Russia.

The first four years after our marriage, living in the vicinity of our parents, we were planning to buy land or

rent land, but none was available because our financial situation was at zero. But when father was a farmer, his sons automatically would be farmers, so we decided to get into the farming business as there was apparently no alternative or choice.

As previously mentioned, we were very fortunate in living only two miles away from dad's blacksmith shop. At a sale I bought a two bottom 14 inch John Deere plow for 56.00. I overhauled it, completely adjusted the mouldboards, painted it green and yellow and it looked and worked like a new plow.

In time we had all the necessary farm machinery, including a buggy for little money, but no land!

In the fall of 1929, my grandfather Wiebe became seriously ill and decided to set his affairs in order. He told my dad that he wanted to sell one of his best quarter sections and it was his wish that we would buy it. All it needed was a young, strong couple like Margrete and me, ambitious and not afraid to work. He made us an offer to buy it without money, but to assume two mortgages against his property which he had incurred by co-signing notes for friends. (The mortgages totalled 53,100.00), subject to the approval of the holder of the mortgages. I could start plowing the land right away, but the buildings wouldn't be vacant before spring. With his blessings we agreed and accepted the offer.

I also had permission to put my horses in the barn and use an empty grain bin as living or bachelor quarters. I should have mentioned one disadvantage: it was 17 miles distant from where we were living. Therefore, I had to go back and forth once a week to get supplies and feed for the horses.

Margrete, my dear wife, with lots of courage and energy, stayed home looking after the family, Sara (born September 4, 1926) and Abram (born November 24, 1927), then three and two years old; and also a couple of

milk cows, chickens, etc.

In a little over a month I was finished plowing. During the winter months I would haul seed grain, fence posts (made from oak trees which I had grubbed the previous fall from a farmer near the Red River). As there was no fence on the property, I had to build one first thing in the spring.

In the spring of 1930, we moved to our new home. It was only a shed, 14 by 20 feet. However, we found enough room for our furniture, as it was an all-in-one, kitchen, dining area, sleeping room and living room. Because it was a nice spring weather-wise, we could make good progress with seeding and other field work. This gave us more time to work on the yard.

The house was number one on the list; we put in new sills, a new floor, repaired the outside walls, gave it a new finish on the inside. Though small, it was cozy, with room enough to eat and sleep.

During the summer we were able to make plenty of good hay for horses and livestock. The crop was very good, but before threshing, the price for grain kept on



*Sawatzky's hauling pigs to Winnipeg.*



*The C.W. Sawatzky family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Abram, Sara, Mrs. Margrete Sawatzky. FRONT ROW: Martha, C. W. Sawatzky and Agatha in 1945.*

going down almost daily. In spite of that, we had to sell, to pay expenses, such as lumber, twine, threshing bill, etc. At the beginning we got 66c per bushel; later on we sold for 56c, and by new year it was 29c for a bushel of good wheat. Barley was 9c. We could sell 12 dozen eggs for 96c; this was our grocery money.

A couple of years before we had moved in, there had been a revival in the community which we observed with some mixed feelings. But by coming in contact with the neighbours we could not say no when we were invited to their Christian young people's society meetings. We were very happy in knowing that it was by the Grace of God that we had two fine, healthy children, but something was lacking. Now, we became involved in partaking of singing, since Margrete and I were musically inclined. We were a group of about ten, practicing once a week as a choir. This was well accepted at the meetings which were held every second Sunday evening. We also spent many blessed hours together speaking about the Word of God and reading of His wonderful promises. These get-togethers convinced us of the Love of Jesus Christ and through the convictions of the Holy Spirit, Margrete and I found and accepted Christ as our personal Saviour.

1931 was a dry year with only a medium crop, but excellent for exterminating weeds, etc. The price for wheat, I believe, was about 40¢ a bushel, not enough to pay expenses, such as interest, taxes, payment on mortgages, etc.

Otherwise we hadn't much to complain about, enough feed for the livestock, plenty of milk, butter, meat, flour, a very good garden because Margrete had looked after it very well, cleaning it of couch grass which amounted to about 40 pails of roots which the cows readily would eat.

Some memories of the depression years include journeys to La Rochelle for firewood during the winter months. We had no money, so we would take a couple of bags of oats or barley and barter for wood. It was over thirty miles to go, and we had to stay the night with friendly Frenchmen. One morning I woke at four o'clock and thought I would get going. It was bitterly cold; the heater was cold, and my moccasins were frozen solid. With some efforts I managed to pull them on.

One time, a couple of weeks before Christmas, we had about twenty roosters nicely finished, which we dressed ourselves. One of the older neighbours still had his car in operation, and also a trailer. He was very kind-hearted and offered us a ride to the city, and also to take the roosters and a neighbour who had three hogs. The return fare was \$1.00 per person and a little extra for the hauling. The roosters netted a little over \$20.00 because Eaton's had a big demand for poultry during the Christmas season and they all graded A-1. This was unbelievable, as money was almost a novelty in those days. I bought a dress for Margrete as a Christmas present for \$3.99. It was of very good material and the right size. The neighbour didn't fare so well and netted only \$6.00.

During the thirties we had two more children, Martha and Agatha. Agatha was named after her grandmother Sawatzky. We praised the good Lord for being so gracious to us. All our four children received their training in the St. Peter's school. After finishing public school they attended one or two years of Bible school.

As the thirties ended and things began to become more normal, with good crops and better prices, we were able to build a new house, which is still occupied by the present owner.

In 1950, our only son, Abram, got married to nineteen-year-old Erna Hildebrand, and they began farming on their own. Their story follows later.

In 1954, Martha, our second daughter got married to Bill Peters, and moved to Winkler. Later on they moved to Manitou where they started farming. They later lived in Winnipeg and the B.C. Interior.

Now we began to feel rather isolated, especially during the winter months, as more and more young people started to work in Winnipeg. Sara and Agatha also left us for some five months to work in the city as clerks, but would come back for the summer to help us on the farm.

Health reasons made a change necessary and in 1955 we moved to Abbotsford, B.C. The farm was sold to Henry C. Wiebe. We have enjoyed living in B.C. very much and our health improved, and the good Lord has continued to bless us. In 1975, we celebrated our Golden Anniversary after fifty years of happy married life.



*Farm site of Abram Sawatzky.*

## **ABRAM AND ERNA (HILDEBRAND) SAWATZKY**

*by Abe Sawatzky*

In 1950, Abe and Erna Hildebrand decided to get married, and on September 24, on the farm (as was the custom at the time), a green wedding and also a silver anniversary for parents Cornie and Margrete Sawatzky was celebrated. Erna came to the farm from Vancouver. She accepted the change to farm very easily, except that it was hard to leave her mother, brothers and sisters in B.C.

In 1953 we moved to a farm on the next section (21), where we homesteaded. A house bought from the Smith Elevator Association was moved on. Soon a few more buildings were erected. The house cost \$480.00 and cost \$50.00 to move.

The same year, Ruth was born. It was a great joy and we needed a second daughter, so Esther was born in 1955. Then we needed a son, and in 1958 Walter was born.

The first years farming were very rough financially. However, not once was it mentioned that we should give up the farming business. By the late 50's the chicken (capon) business was very good, and farming proved to be fun. With the exception of a few years, the 1960's and 1970's proved to be a good experience.

Our children received most of their education in Lowe Farm and Morris schools, with Miss Anna Wiens as their first teacher. (Miss Wiens had taught me and my sister Sara for some years at St. Peter's school.) The teachers always were very good and it was a real pleasure to see that none ever failed a grade in school.

A number of times we asked the teachers if we could take our children out of school to go on trips to places like B.C., California and Florida. These trips were very much enjoyed by the whole family.

In 1971, Ruth married John Kehler, and in 1973 Steven, our first grandson was born. In 1975 our granddaughter Colleen was born. We love them as our own children.

In 1972, Esther finished high school and moved to Winnipeg and later to Maple Ridge, B.C., where she works in a bank.

In 1975 we celebrated our silver anniversary.

In 1978 Walter decided it was time to get married and his bride, Eunice Hildebrand agreed. (She is the daughter of Henry and Susan Hildebrand of Lowe Farm.) By October a new house was in the making and November 26 was the big wedding. They went to Florida for their honeymoon and came back just before Christmas. They decided to try their hand at farming and both are very



*The Abram Sawatzky family - Erna Sawatzky holding Walter, Esther, Ruth and Abram.*

interested and capable. In 1979 they built a new, larger house.

In recent years we have spent some holidays travelling. Trips to the Middle East and to Cuba were very exciting and enriching.

## CORNELIUS WIEBE

*by Cornelius Sawatzky*

My grandparents, Cornelius and Susanna (Dyck) Wiebe came to Canada in 1874 with a group of immigrants from Russia. After a difficult journey by ship, across the Atlantic, they arrived in Quebec, then went west by boat and train.

The Wiebes stayed in Ontario, where they were taken in by Mennonites and allowed to earn some money before continuing to Manitoba. Their daughter Agatha was born there in 1876. Within two years my grandparents, with Agatha, arrived in Steinbach. At first they settled on a farm about five miles south-west of Steinbach, and



*Cornelius and Susanna (Dyck) Wiebe - photographed on August 1, 1927. Cornelius, aged 74 and Susanna, 71 years, when picture taken,*

stayed on the farm for about twenty-four years. Ten more children were born there. (See table.)

In the year 1900, my grandparents decided to move to the West Reserve. In the meantime, in 1896, their daughter Agatha had married a widower, Abram Sawatzky, and they were living on the West Reserve. (They later became my parents.)

So grandfather Wiebe and my dad, who already knew where to look for good land, started out on a wagon and travelled for three days looking for land all over, west of Morris. Finally, they found what they were looking for about eight miles south-west of the town of Morris. Here grandfather Wiebe purchased half of section 23, township four, range one west. It was all prairie land, no roads, no neighbours far and wide; this again was real pioneer life.

However, they were very prosperous. By the year 1915, they owned the whole section and bought a new Rumley tractor 30-60 and separator, and threshed their own crop. One year they threshed over 10,000 bushels of grain.

Later on, grandfather bought two more quarter sections. He sold 80 acres to his son Abram, who got married.

But good times don't last forever. Old age was approaching fast; health and energy were waning. Weeds, sow thistles, wild oats, etc., were beginning to take their toll. One boy had passed away in 1914 at the age of 19. The last two boys also married and started on their own with little enthusiasm for farming. Co-signing some notes for friends left him with two mortgages of \$3,100.00 against his property.

It was in the fall of 1929 that grandfather Wiebe became seriously ill; debts, tax arrears were problems that worried him and he decided to put all his financial affairs in order, before passing away, so as to leave grandmother and family able to live decently and without headache. So one day, my parents, on coming home from visiting grandfather, said that he had told dad he wanted to sell one of his best quarter sections (n.e. 22-4-1w), and it was his wish that we would buy it. He convinced us with some difficulty, saying it was one of the best quarter sections in the area, and that all it needed was a young strong couple like Margrete and me, ambitious and not afraid to work. We bought it for no money, but agreed to assume the \$3,100.00 mortgage.

### *Family Register of the Wiebe Family*

<i>Born</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Lived in Morris R.M.</i>
1853	Cornelius Wiebe	
1856	Susanna (Dyck) Wiebe	
	THEIR CHILDREN:	
1876	Agatha, m. Abram Sawatzky	
1878	Susanna, m. Abram Funk	
1881	Cornelius, m. Helena Thiessen	until 1927 or 28
1884	Abram, m. Agatha Dueck	until death: 1940?
1886	Katharina, m. Abram Friesen	late in life

1887	Peter, m. Katharine Reimer	until 1930
1889	Maria, m. Abram Neudorf late in life	
1891	Jacob, m. Mary Peter	until 1940
1893	Elisabeth, m. Jacob Giesbrecht	
1895	Diedrich	died 25/08/1914
1899	Anna, m. Frank Sawatzky late in life	

## CORNELIUS AND SUSANNA WIEBE

Our grandparents came from Russia in the 1870's, when Manitoba was still prairie land. It first had to be cleared and ploughed. They lived in the Lowe Farm district, and had a big mixed farm with cattle, horses, oxen, pigs, chickens, ducks, geese, and even those small Bantam chickens.

Grandpa told us the story about when they came across the ocean from Russia and saw a mermaid come up from under the water, making a strange noise. Then the mermaid went down and came up with a baby mermaid. We all liked that story, as we had never heard anything like that before.

Grandma always had something for us children in her apron pocket. Grandpa made us pick bugs off the potato patches. We got 5¢ and sometimes 10¢ for picking bugs off a big patch. Grandpa, Cornelius Wiebe, died in 1929, and Grandma, Susanna Wiebe, died in 1935.

Grandpa and Grandma and their five sons; Cornelius, Peter, Abram, Dietrich and Jacob, all worked hard to keep the farm going. Of course, their six girls (Susanna, Agatha, Tina, Lizzie, Marie and Anna) worked hard and loved it, too.

Cornelius got married to Helena Thiessen (my parents) and they started a farm also. They worked hard on their farm to earn their bread and butter. They had four sons and one daughter, Susanna (that's me). Cornelius, Henry



*Cornelius D. and Helena Wiebe on their Golden Wedding in 1955.*

and Jacob were the boys. We worked hard to help our parents. We had all sorts of animals and birds there; we never had a thought of being lazy.

Dad used to work his land with oxen as well as horses. But in summer, when it became hot outside, the oxen would just take off for home, plow and all. Oxen like shade when it's hot. One time, my parents put us children in the wagon and told us they'd be back soon, but the oxen could not wait and took off with us children. But Dad ran after them and caught them, before they were gone too far.

Dad always loved to chop down trees, bring them home, saw and split the wood, then pile it up nicely. Yes, the good old days are done, and we have to face the bad times as well as the good.



*Jake T. Wiebe and his 1927 truck - courting vehicle.*



*Henry T. Wiebe.*

## C.J. NEUFELD

John C. Neufeld, Corny's father, was born at Plum Coulee in 1882, and spent his life farming 4 miles north of Horndean, where he moved in 1914. Elizabeth Bergen became his wife in 1905, and their life was enriched by their family of ten children; Abe, John Corny, Martin and Betty (twins), Henry, Jake, Peter, Annie, and Nettie.

Corny in his younger days, took a great interest in travelling to Lowe Farm on horseback in winter, and with his car, a '26 Chev in summer. At the end of that eight mile journey was a special girl, Anna Schroeder; and in 1935, she consented to become his wife.

Corny was an avid baseball player in his youth, but his baseball days were cut short by an accident that caused





*C.J. Neufeld*

the loss of vision in one eye, and resulted in loss of co-ordination and balance. But Corny remembers fondly the super baseball team that Lowe Farm had. "We could lick anybody." This fact was a source of friction between the towns of Morris and Lowe Farm...for the Morris people thought, "can anything good come out of that mudhole?"

The Neufeld's had a family of three, two daughters, and one son. Son Henry lives at Roland, he is a long distance trucker. He is married to Kay Groening, and they have five children. Irene, Mrs. Nick Neufeld, is a nurse at the Winkler Hospital, they have three children. Carol married Burnell Butterfield, they live at Red Lake, Ontario, with their two children. Carol is following in her father's footsteps in municipal politics, as she is a councillor, and welfare supervisor.

Corny and Anna farmed on sec. 23-4-2W, where they still reside, until 1953, when they rented out the land. Corny decided to go into road construction and drainage with heavy equipment, and formed Neufeld Construction, which he owned and operated until 1972. Neufeld Construction obtained the contract to build the Rosenort dyke in 1967, which was a large project, necessitating the moving of 225,000 yards of earth. While working for Churchill Forest Industries up north, building the site and also access roads through the bush, Corny found labour to be a problem, and decided maybe it was time to retire. As a result, he held an auction sale in 1972, and sold all his equipment.

Now in semi-retirement, Corny sometimes works for the Manitoba Sugar Company, but his favourite pastime is working on his old cars. With a large heated workshop

on his yard, he finds it a pleasure to restore the 1920 Model T Ford, 1925 Chrysler, and 1928 Model A Ford.

Corny is a hard working, community minded citizen. He served as trustee for the Kronsweide School for 17 years, served as director on the Co-op board, was active in the Chamber of Commerce, and director of Manitoba Pool Elevators at Lowe Farm. He served for 14 years on the municipal council, for eleven years as Councillor, and three years as Reeve.

Of his years on council, Corny recalls what conditions were like in the Municipality when he came to Council in 1947. There were very few roads in the municipality then, and drainage was almost non-existent. What was there, didn't work too well, farmers were flooded out every spring, by the water that came across country from the hills. The Shannon Creek was a constant source of problems, and the government spent a lot of money widening it in 1960. But a flood in 1962, proved that it was still too small to handle all the water that came down it. The municipal council spent many hours with government engineers to try to solve this problem. They widened the channel considerably, and this proved to be a successful experiment. After the success with the Shannon, it was decided to do the same with the Tobacco Creek and 4N drain. Councillors spent most of their time in those days with drainage problems, and building roads.

One of the projects that was a boon to Lowe Farm that occurred during Corny's years on Council, was the paving of Main Street. In 1966 when the government put concrete on the No. 23, it was figured the costs of paving all the way up to the sidewalks would only cost \$8,300. Council went ahead on the project, the results were worthwhile...no longer was Lowe Farm a "mudhole".

Corny's last venture into municipal politics was in 1977, when he decided to run for Reeve. He lost to Alvin Rempel by a narrow margin. For now, Corny is content to tinker on his old cars and observe other politicians at work.

## **CORNELIUS M. FRIESENS**

Cornelius M. Friesen wed Margaret Rempel on July 12, 1910.

Cornelius had been born in Rosenfeld in 1887, and Margaret was born in Plum Coulee in 1891. After their wedding, they loaded up all their belongings onto a hayrack, and moved to Lowe Farm (15-4-1W). The previous owner had been Peter Hiebert who had built the home.

The going wasn't easy, and the interest rates were high at 8%<sup>70</sup>, oft times it was a problem to make ends meet. In 1917, the going was so rough that brother-in-law D. Froese paid the taxes on the farm. In the early years, Cornelius farmed together with his brothers Peter, Martin, and John.

Cornelius' first purchase was that of two black geldings, to work the land. It is said that the fields were badly infested with thistles those years. In 1929 the farm had grown to become a section of land, and all the family pitched in to help. It was a big day when Dad bought the



*The Corny J. Neufeld family. STANDING: Elizabeth (Bergen) Neufeld. FRONT ROW: Henry, Carol, Irene, Mr. C.J. Neufeld.*



*Wedding picture of Cornelius Friesen and Margaret Rempel on July 12, 1910.*

McCormick Deering thresher in August 1923, and with the help of his family, Cornelius could operate this outfit without outside help.

A lot of firewood was used, and it had to be hauled in from a distance. Wood was cut east of St. Jean, and hauled by horses over the Red River by ferry, and then across country to the farm.

Six children were born to this union: Margaret, Nettie, Cornie, Elnora, Abe, and Martha. They all attended St.



*C.M. Friesen children with mother holding Martha. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Nettie, Cornie, Margaret. FRONT ROW: Nora, Abe.*

Peters school; and Mr. Friesen served as trustee for that school district for many years. During both World Wars, Mr. Friesen was exempt from military duty, as he was a member of a Mennonite church, which believed in non-resistance. Food was rationed too during those difficult years, but much food was produced on the farm, which made life a little easier.

Daughter Martha, at age 13, recalls her Dad asking her to back the truck out of the machine shed, and she took the whole door and frame off! The cause was the puny mirrors on the truck, which gave very little view. And much to her surprise, Dad didn't even complain!

Cornelius and Margaret loved gardening; their yard was a virtual orchard, with at least 12 different kinds of



*Mr. Wiebe's first car, a Model T. Family picnicing after a day of chokecherry picking.*

fruit. They planted shelterbelts, ornamental trees, until their 5 acre yard was a showplace.

In 1950, the farm was taken over by the youngest family member, and Cornelius and Margaret Friesen



*Mr. Peter Hiebert was previous owner of 15-4-1 W and built this home. C.M. Friesens were next owners and all the Friesen children were born here. Taken in 1917 - shows treeless, windswept yard.*

moved into Morris. This farm remained in the family for 68 years, until Aug. 1978, when it was sold to James R. Clubb of Morris.

Cornelius passed away in 1964, and Margaret just a year later. Their oldest daughter Margaret, Mrs. Jake C. Reimer of Kane, passed away in 1977. Sons Cornie and Abe were both farmers, but due to ill health, both retired. Cornie lives in Morden, and Abe in Winnipeg. Nettie, Mrs. A.W. Neufeld lives in Winkler, Elnora, Mrs. Paul Tonn, and Martha, Mrs. George Wiebe, live in Morris.

## JOHN F. SCHROEDER

Mr. John F. Schroeder was born in the Village of Sommerfeld, Manitoba, on July 13, 1884. He was the son of Frank and Sarah (Penner) Schroeder. He married Agatha Driedger, daughter of David and Mary (Harder) Driedger in Sommerfeld.

Agatha Driedger was born in South Russia on June 18, 1885, and came to Canada in her early teens with her parents. Her father was a teacher in Russia and also in Canada.

John and Agatha lived and farmed at Sommerfeld till the fall of 1934, when they moved to a farm that they bought in the St. Peter's District, Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

They were both members of the Sommerfelder Church, and attended at Kronsweide, Manitoba.

They had a family of six children:

Frank (b. 1906 - d. 1970) married Agatha Kehler.

Mary (b. 1911) married Edward Gluck

David (b. 1913 - d. 1978) married Agnes Klassen

Sarah (b. 1918 - d. 1924)

Agatha (b. 1921) married Jacob Friesen (b. 1917 - d. 1977)

Annie (b. 1923) married Lorne W. Ritz

There were also twenty-one grandchildren (one deceased). Father passed away in the Morris Hospital on September 20, 1953, at the age of 69 years.

Mother passed away in the same hospital on October 24, 1964, at the age of 79 years. They are both buried in the church yard at Sommerfeld, Manitoba.

## HENRY WIEBE

### A PICTORIAL RECORD



*The Henry Wiebe home, south of Smith's Spur, built in 1910, on Section 22-4-1 W. Note the ornate design of the structure.*



*ABOVE: Henry Wiebe with horse and buggy, with other members of family.*

*RIGHT: Sarah (Wiebe) Haman at right with pony and boy.*



*Mrs. Hiebert and Mrs. Wiebe, neighbours, spinning wool. The Wiebes had sheep and used the raw wool for spinning.*



*Agatha (Wiebe) Heinrichs, milking one of many cows she milked daily. She was a hard-working woman. While in her seventies, she still maintained a herd of milk cows.*

## KOHUT'S IN SEWELL FROM 1926 - 1929

Samuel Kohut immigrated to Canada from the Ukraine in 1906. Working on the Railroad in Ontario between Kenora and Thunder Bay. The wages at that time were 15C per hour and a bunk house was supplied for the workers to sleep in. Board was supplied for the workers for \$5.00 a week. As he was married in the old country, his main ambition was to bring his wife to Canada which he was able to do in 1909.

As the majority of the Ukrainian people were agriculturist, he wanted to get back to the farm. He bought 60 acres of land at Rosa, Manitoba, cut logs to build a house and a barn, broke some land to plant a garden. These were very trying for them as there was no money to be made on this type of farming. Every spring he would head out to Saskatchewan, around Filmore where he worked every summer for 7 months of the year to earn enough money to buy clothes, salt, sugar, and spices. The rest of the food had to be home grown.



*The Sam Kohuts with neighbours. Fifth from left Mrs. Kohut. Far right Mr. Kohut.*

John was born in 1910, Bill was born in 1913, Metro in 1917, Anne 1919, Harry in 1923 and Tony in 1925. Sam decided he had to do something else; he had to change his lifestyle, so in 1925 he went to Sewell with his partner, Harry Antonuik, and they rented a half section of land. This gave him a start and he decided that he would be improving himself if he moved his family to the prairies.

In the spring of 1926, he picked his family up on two wagons, loaded his belongings and took off for Sewell, arriving on the Colman Finkelstein farm in the early April. 1926 was a very good year for him, he had a good crop, was able to pay for the machinery and horses that he had, and bought a new drill and a plow. 1927 had a very wet spring and he was not able to put much crop in so it was almost a disaster, but he did manage to pull through that year. In 1928 he tried another crop, and was able to seed it and it came up nice, but in June we had a very heavy rain where a lot of the crop was drowned out. We harvested and the price was not too bad.

Sam being a bit of a wanderer, decided to look for greener pastures and went west. He found a place in Souris that he liked, and was able to rent, and we moved to Souris. John and Bill hitched four horses to a wagon and loaded as much as they could and headed west. It took them four and a half days to get there, arriving on the 15th of October, 1929.

From 1940 we were able to make some progress as we were able to acquire more land and did some custom work. Then things seemed to come together. Souris was home to us. All the boys except Harry stayed on the



*John Kohut at age 20.*

farm. Harry was operating a machinery dealership and repair shop.

At the present time John is retired in White Rock, B.C. **Bill** is also retired in Kelowna, B.C. They raised a family of four boys and three girls who are on their own and raising their own families.

Metro is still farming in Souris. They raised two boys and one girl.

Anne lives in the town of Souris. Her husband is a railroader. They have one boy and three girls.

Harry with three boys and one girl still lives in Souris running his repair shop and supplies farmers with farm machinery parts.

Tony is farming our original home farm plus a lot more, with his son in partnership. Their two girls are on their own.

Sam the father passed away on June the 15th, 1960, at the age of 80 years. He was followed by his wife Titana two years later, she was 76 years old when she passed away.

With meagre beginnings with hard work, perseverance, and God's help we are able to live quite comfortably in our senior years. Sewell gave us the start which we were able to take to Souris and carry through.

## HISTORY OF THE PETER HEPPNER FAMILY (1908- )

Peter Heppner of Bergfeld and Helena Friesen of Weidenfeld were married on March 1, 1908. They made their home 112 mile east and 2 1/2 miles south of Lowe Farm where they farmed until 1935.

Here their whole family was born. The Steinfeld School provided the education for the children. The opportunities to further their education beyond grade 8 were almost non-existent for them. Nevertheless each has made his or her contribution to the community and church where they made their home.

In 1909, Helen was born. She married Peter Dyck in 1933, and they made their home in Winnipeg. They had three children. Peter died in 1974.

Mary was born in 1910. In 1934, she married John Dyck and settled on a farm at Roseisle. After 18 years of



*Mr. and Mrs. Peter Heppner of Lowe Farm.*

farming they moved to Winnipeg. They have four children. In 1966, John passed away. Sarah arrived in 1912. She married Henry Friesen in 1934. Their family of four sons made their home a lively place. They now make their home in Winnipeg.

In 1913, their first son, Peter made his appearance. He married Muriel Rowell in 1959, settling in Winnipeg. Two sons were born to them. After Peter passed away in 1966, Muriel moved west and now resides in Kelowna, B.C.

Anton, who was born in 1915, made his home in Winnipeg. He passed away in 1957.

In 1916, Martin was born. He married Helena Dyck in 1940. They were blessed with seven children. After farming at Kane for 19 years they bought a farm at MacGregor. Now they are retired and live in the Village of MacGregor.

Tina was born in 1919, and died in infancy the same year.

In 1920, Abram was born. After being employed at various jobs throughout Western Canada he settled in Winnipeg where he died in 1977.

Nettie was born in 1922. In 1943, she was united in marriage to John Epp. They make their home in Winnipeg. They have two sons.

Diedrich was born in 1924. In 1950, he married Margaret Neufeld. While living in Winnipeg four children were born to them. They now reside in Calgary.

In 1935, they moved to a farm two miles south of Kane, where they lived the rest of their days. A tribute is due to families such as this. Raising a family without so many of the conveniences that we take for granted was not an easy task, but they did it and left their mark in our municipality.

## HISTORY OF THE MARTIN HEPPNER FAMILY

Martin, who had married Helena Dyck in 1940, worked at various jobs. Then upon the death of his mother in 1945, they moved to the home place and worked the farm. His father lived with them most of the time until his death in 1949. After living here for 19 years, Martin bought a farm at MacGregor, Manitoba in 1964.

They have lived in the generation that has seen tremendous changes in every way.

The Model A car which was the family car for years provided us with many an adventure. One such a trip was made to Winnipeg for Christmas. Leaving a great while before sunrise, with jugs of hot water and plenty of blankets around us to keep warm, we were half way to Winnipeg when we witnessed a beautiful sunrise. The newer cars with heaters and bigger speeds were a big improvement.

Machinery, too, underwent drastic changes. Martin remembers the time he built his first swather out of an old binder. This was quite the accomplishment. Then came the joyous day when he brought home his first combine. The D John Deere and "44" Massey with rubber tires were a far cry from the time he spent as a boy walking behind horses.

In the house the changes were just as great. With the coming of the hydro, many conveniences weren't long in



*Martin Heppner, swathing a barley field with the swather he built in 1956.*

coming. One of the greatest being the electric stove, which did away with the sweltering kitchen in the summer. The water supply; which used to come from the dugout and rain barrels, now was a cistern with a pump in the kitchen.

During the 19 years at Kane the rest of Martin and Helen's family of seven were born. The family consists of Evelyn in 1941. Jim in 1943, Jack in 1946, Linda in 1948, Irma in 1949, Larry in 1952 and Ed in 1956.

The school at Kane provided the education for the youngest two of the Peter Heppner family and then for the greater part of Martin's family. Martin was a part of the school van system in the district which was very unique for that time. The vans, on wheels in summer and sleighs in winter were pulled by horses and later by tractor. Later on they were used only in bad weather. To pass the time while going to school, some drivers (like Mr. Abe Penner) would bring sunflower seeds for us all and spent lots of time singing with the younger folk.

The church at Rosefarm proved to be a vital part of the life of Martin's family. They were part of the Sunday School and as the children reached their teenage years they became part of the choir and young people's activities. The emphasis of the church, together with a strong Christian home challenged the family to make a personal commitment to the Lord. The result is seen in that most of them are involved in Christian service either at home or abroad.

After teaching school four years and attending Winnipeg Bible College for a year, Evelyn married George Rodgers and settled on a farm at MacGregor. They have five children. Evelyn is involved with Child Evangelism in the area.

Jim married Martha Marion and settled in Winnipeg where he is employed by Canada Packers. They have a family of four.

After finishing Bible School and teacher training, Jack taught school for five years. He married Ruth Bergen of Clearwater and they have a family of three boys. In 1974, Jack was ordained as a minister and he and his family went to Bolivia for a term of missionary service. At this writing they are in Harrisonburg, Virginia, attending seminary.

Linda married Ed Giesbrecht from Austin, Manitoba,

after high school and moved to Winnipeg. When her parents retired in 1975, they bought the farm and settled at MacGregor as well. Linda and Ed were instrumental in starting Boys' Brigade and Pioneer Girls in MacGregor.

Irma, the nurse in the family, attended Prairie Bible Institute and then went to Nicaragua for a term of missionary service. At present, she is working toward her degree in nursing in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Larry finished Bible School after high school. Now he works at Decor Cabinets in Portage la Prairie. Larry and his wife Ruby (Dyck) and son live in MacGregor where he is a student pastor. He is planning full-time Christian service.

As an implement salesman in Neepawa, Edward has a job suited to his outgoing outlook. Edward married Esther Doerksen of Austin, and is active in his church there.



*The Martin Heppner family. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Martha and Jim Heppner, Evelyn and George Rodgers, Irma, Ed and Linda Giesbrecht, Jack and Ruth Heppner. FRONT ROW: Edward, Mrs. Heppner, Mr. Heppner, Larry.*

Martin and Helen are retired and live in MacGregor. Their home is the centre for those of us living in the area. Hardly a day goes by without some of the family dropping in. God has blessed them and they continue to be a blessing in the church and community.

## THE RITZ FAMILY

My grandfather John Ritz was the third son of thirteen children born to Jacob and Maria Ritz (nee Schneider) in Pettersheim, West Germany in 1852. In 1855 he with his parents and family came to Canada. Enroute to their destination to a farm at New Hamburg, Ontario, they had a stopover at Marietta, Ohio probably staying with some relatives for a short while.

At the age of 14 years John Ritz was apprenticed as a machinist at the Baden Foundry in Baden, Ontario. Later working as a machinist in a factory that built steam engines and harvesting and haying equipment.

In 1880 John Ritz married Mary Pieper. Their first residence was in New Hamburg, Ontario. While there four children were born to them. They were Clarissa in 1881, Adeline in 1883, Ena in 1885 and John Otto in 1888.

In 1891 John Ritz Sr. and his family lured by the call of "go west" packed up and moved to Gretna, Manitoba. There they were the owners of the Anglo-American Hotel till 1903. While in Gretna the John Ritzs were blest with three more children Lualice in 1893, Louise in 1895 and William in 1900.



*The John Ritz Sr. family on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Ed and Clarissa (Ritz) Miller, William and John O. Ritz. MIDDLE ROW: Louise (Babe), Lualice and Ena Ritz, Adeline (Ritz), Ernst Mueller. SEATED: Ernie Mueller, Mr. and Mrs. John Ritz Sr., Margaret Mueller.*

While operating the hotel at Gretna the Ritzs made many new acquaintances. One prominent person of the era that spent some time at the hotel was the Canadian poet Pauline Johnson.

The train crews had their meals at the hotel and became friends to the Ritzs. This later proved helpful when they moved to De Wet (Sewell). They could flag the train down and get a ride till Rosenfeld to pick up the mail.

Also while in Gretna my father John O. Ritz just a young boy at the time had the misfortune to fall into a kettle of hot water that was being used by the butcher for scalding chickens. His legs were very badly scalded and healing was very slow. Finally a cure was obtained from an Indian who told them to put on linseed oil and the down of the cattail plant. This was done and gradually the healing process took place. Though he couldn't walk for a year.

Later as a young teen John O. Ritz was the driver for the jitney or vis-a-vis park carriage service to and from the railway station that was provided by the hotel for the guests.

In 1900 the Ritzs bought section 11-4-1W and the south half of section 29-4-1E in the R.M. of Morris. In the spring of 1903 material for a house was pre-cut at Gretna and then hauled by sleigh to section 11 and a house was erected. That same summer they moved by wagon to the farm on section 11. The supplies and furniture were packed on the wagon. They also brought the livestock and horses. (One of these horses was used only to draw the vis-a-vis park carriage while in Gretna and after moving to De Wet (Sewell) created some exciting moments. Since this horse was trained to be ready to go at the sound of the train whistle, he was ready and off every time the train whistle blew at the siding, with or without passengers.



The first years on section 11 were spent breaking land and putting up barns and granaries. Some land was left unbroken and used as hayland. The virgin prairie grass was also the home of prairie chickens, partridges, ducks and geese. This was right up John O. Ritz's alley since he had a keen interest in hunting. He would take the grass mower and cut the tall grass in a water-filled slough, thus making a perfect blind for shooting the ducks and geese that were on their way south for the winter. There was nothing to bagging 5 or 6 ducks before breakfast. This wild fowl was delicious served up roasted with dressing and trimmings.



*John O. Ritz out hunting prairie chicken on the prairie with setter.*

One outing for the family (and they came few and far between) was going to Buffalo Creek on September 1st (father's sister Ena's birthday) for a combined picnic and hunting trip. Lunch was packed and the family set off weather permitting to have a day of fun and also meet some of their old friends from Gretna.

Since my father had a great interest in hunting there was a need for hunting dogs. One special dog of his was an English setter by the name of Toots. She was a great asset to the prairie chicken hunt. The calibre of Toots' ability as a setter was envied by many a hunter, especially the ones from the city who came out to the farm to train their dogs.

Being the eldest son of the family, most of the heavy work fell on the shoulders of my father. Many hours of sweat were spent walking behind the horse-drawn harrow during seeding. Even though there were two hired men, father as a young lad of 15 had to work very hard; not only with the harrowing but the plowing and the loads and loads of hay that had to be put up for the 30 horses and 20 or so head of cattle.



*John Ritz Sr. and sons, John O. and William with grain wagon in 1911.*

John O. Ritz not only helped his father farm section 11-4-1W but also farmed his own quarter section in the

Rosenfeld area and a quarter section on 1-4-1W in the R.M. of Morris.

To accommodate the education (particularly in music) of their daughters Lualice and Louise, my grandparents enrolled them in the convent at St. Jean. Louise "Babe" the only surviving member of the John Ritz Sr. family still teaches music at age 83 and has been organist in St. Peter's Lutheran Church New Hamburg, Ontario for over 50 years.

In early days the Morris Agricultural Fair was an annual event that was attended by the family. The women took their fancywork to be exhibited and brought home their share of prizes. There was exceptional pride in my father's sister Ena's work since she was blind (having been so since the age of six) and her work was done almost to perfection.

John Ritz Sr. lived on section 11 till 1913. In that year he traded farms with his son John O. Ritz. My grandparents lived right at De Wet till 1919 when in the fall they and four of their children moved back to New Hamburg, Ontario.

Grandfather's half of section 29-4-1E was sold to Reginald Perkins, an uncle to Ron Skoglund who now farms it.

After my grandparents left section 11 my father and mother, Cora Mueller (a former local school teacher) took up residence there. It was there that they raised their three sons John, Robert and Lorne.



*"My Three Sons", Lorne, Robert and John Ritz in early 1920's. Sons of John O. and Cora (Mueller) Ritz.*

Farming methods improved from father to son to grandsons and although mechanization started around 1912 with the Ritzs owning one of first gasoline-powered threshing outfits for the De Wet district, it increased greatly during the years when my brothers and I started to help on the farm.



*Cora Mueller in early 1900's.*

My mother, Cora Ritz (nee Mueller) who was born in Ontario in 1885 came to Manitoba around 1902 or 1903. She had come west from Ontario to teach school at the young age of 17. She taught at St. Peter's S.D. 1031 around 1903 to 1905. From 1905-1906 she taught at Hoffnungsthal and from 1906 to 1907 she taught at St. Owens. From 1909 to 1913 she again taught St. Peter's.

Members of my mother's family visited frequently at the farm. Her brother W.C. Miller (Mueller) worked at the farm and it was while there that he enlisted in W.W.I. He was wounded in the war and this caused quite some anxiety for my mother and my uncle Ernst Mueller. After the war he came back to the farm to work for awhile till he could find employment elsewhere. Later on he became interested in politics which led him to become a MLA for Rhineland and later the Minister of Education.



*Robert and Dorothea (Kletke) Ritz on their wedding day, Jan. 24, 1942.*

*Robert Ritz Jr. at age 14.*



*The Daryl Doerksen family. BACK ROW: Jackie. MIDDLE ROW: Warren, Connie. FRONT ROW: Cora (Ritz) Doerksen, Debbie, Kerry Ann, Daryl R. Doerksen holding Patti.*

My parents lived on section 11-4-1W from 1913 to 1954. They then moved to section 1-4-1W and lived there till their deaths, mother in 1962 at age 77, and father in 1973 at age 84.



*Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Ritz.*

John B. Ritz the eldest son of John O. Ritz moved to Vancouver, B.C. where he still resides. He married Doreen (Biddy) Livingston. The second son Robert married Dorothea Kletke and farms part of the original Ritz farm. They have two children, Cora Doerksen and Robert Ritz Jr. (who farms in the Sewell area also). The third son Lorne married Annie Schroeder and lives at



*Cousin, Minnie (Pieper) Gildemaster with Lorne Ritz, son, John and Annie (Schroeder) Ritz. Insert to left is Billy Ritz, deceased son of Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Ritz. Insert to right is John Ritz, Jr. son of John L. and Kim (Patterson) Ritz.*

Petersfield, Manitoba. Lorne and Annie had two sons, John L. Ritz and William who deceased at age 13. John married Kim Patterson, and have one son John Ritz also.

## THE MUELLER FAMILY

*by Margaret Mueller*

Our parents, Ernst B. and Adeline Mueller, both originally came to Manitoba from the same small town in Ontario but at separate times and by separate routes. They became acquainted here, married and settled on a farm in the Sewell District.

Mother, the former Adeline Ritz, came to the District first with her parents, John and Mary Ritz, in 1903 after spending the first years as a westerner in Gretna, Manitoba.

Father, Ernst, Berthold Mueller, was born in Brant County, Ontario in 1888, son of Rev Berthold Mueller, then Pastor of the local Lutheran Church. he moved to New Hamburg, Ontario with his parents in 1896 spending his early school years there. At the early age of 14 years, he obtained a job in the local Brass Works at the princely wage of 60 cents per day. He elected to remain in New Hamburg when his father accepted a call to the Lutheran Church in Waldersee, Manitoba in 1903 and moved the family to Manitoba. Father first came West on the harvester excursion in 1905, to visit his family and to work in the harvest. Since his older sister Cora was teaching in the Sewell District, he visited her and obtained employment with the harvest crew on the Ritz farm, where he first met his future bride.

He returned to Ontario, but lured by the promise of an opportunity to establish himself on a farm of his own - and also the memory of the dark eyed daughter of his former employer - he decided to emigrate to Manitoba in the spring of 1906. He worked in the area for a number of years as well as spending two years, 1908 and 1909, in



*Ernst and Adeline (Ritz) Mueller in 1915.*



*Ernie and Margaret Mueller in late twenties.*



*The Mueller family. LEFT TO RIGHT: W. C. Miller, Cora (Mueller) Ritz, Lulu and Ernst Mueller, Toni (Mueller) Belcher. Children of Rev. and Mrs. Berthold Mueller.*

Colorado, returning once more to Manitoba to establish himself on a farm.

On December 29th, 1915, he married Adeline Ritz, and the couple lived and farmed at Sewell until 1920, when they followed John and Mary Ritz back to New Hamburg, Ontario where they had both spent much of their childhood. They returned to Manitoba on several occasions during the years 1920 to 1929 when they came back to stay, bringing with them their small son and daughter, Ernst John, who today still farms the home farm, and Margaret, who resides in Winnipeg and is employed by the Province of Manitoba.

Not unlike the stories of others of the early settlers in the Municipality - their's had its share of joy and sadness, good times and hard times and the ups and downs that are part of a farm family's life. They lived full and useful lives until their respective deaths, mother in 1952 at age 69 and father in 1976 at age 88.



*The Carl Carlson family came to Canada from Sweden in 1894, settling in the Morris municipality.*

## THE CARLSONS OF SWEDEN

Carl Eric Carlson, and his wife Olga Dalen were both born on the same day in the same year, on the island of Oland, Sweden. They first settled in Morris in 1889 where Mr. Carlson worked on the railroad section at Morris, until they ventured into farming. That decision was made in 1894, and their land was located one mile west of Morris on the south side of the road that we now call the No. 23 highway.

They endured the ups and downs of farming along with

their neighbors, as well as raising a large family. During these years, they had 4 sons and six daughters. In 1911, they sold their farm to John Haining, and moved to Winnipeg. At present two sons survive; Verne Wilfred of Dayton, Ohio, and Edward Elmer of Winnipeg.

In 1939, Ed Carlson married Estelle Florantine, daughter of the C.E. Andersons. After completing her education in Lowe Farm, Sperling, and Morris; Estelle moved to Winnipeg, where she was employed with the T. Eaton Co. They have one daughter Carole, Mrs. Norman Magnusen.





# **LOWE FARM**

## **THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE**



## THE HISTORY OF LOWE FARM

### "Early Days 1880-1895"

The story of Lowe Farm began in the early 1880's. Around the year 1882 three Englishmen, J. Lowe, Mr. Rose, and Mr. Hope, who apparently were men of means and influence, obtained large tracts of land at very low cost in the area west of Morris and immediately north of the Mennonite West Reserve. They established farms in the districts now known as Lowe Farm, Rose Farm and Hope Farm respectively. An idea of the size of their holdings may be gained from the fact that in 1897 John Lowe held 13 sections (8320 acres) in and adjacent to what is now the school district of Lowe Farm.



*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada.*

### JOHN LOWE

John Lowe is listed in Canada's book of Who's Who in 1910. Born in 1824, in Warrington, Lancashire, England, he arrived in Canada at the age of sixteen. He was first employed as a bookkeeper in a Montreal fur house, and was a reporter for the Montreal Gazette in 1846. In 1852, he left for Toronto, where he became involved with another newspaper. He entered the civil service as assistant Deputy Minister of Agriculture, with the title of Secretary in 1869, having in charge, immigration to Canada.

John Lowe was secretary of Agriculture in 1874, the year the Mennonites were immigrating to Canada, and had established correspondence with them regarding their settlement in the province of Manitoba.

In July 1888, he retired from public office. He took great interest in Manitoba farming, and was known as the founder of Lowe Farm.

### William Stevenson - Farm Manager

Even more unique and original were the methods and devices used on the farm of Mr. Lowe. Mr. Lowe, himself, spent most of his time in the east. For years, his farms were managed by Wm. Stevenson, who had an inventive mind and was mechanically inclined. Not finding the kind of power equipment he needed Mr. Stevenson built his own.

Mr. Stevenson tried his hand at improving the methods of seeding as well as those of harvesting. This resulted in the invention of the single disk drill. The patent for this invention brought considerable money returns, but his plowing and harvesting devices and methods proved too unwieldy to be practical. For some reason the amount of land cultivated by Mr. Stevenson and his men grew less and less. It is possible that Mr. Stevenson's inventive interests took too much time from his work as manager. By the time of the founding of the village of Lowe Farm, Stevenson's first large tractor was left to lie idle. It remained in Lowe Farm for many years until it was finally sold as scrap.



*First farm buildings in Lowe Farm built by Mr. Stevenson about 1895. Dwelling is now owned by Geo. G. Wiebe.*

### Settlers Arrive

By 1885 both English speaking and Mennonite settlers began to move into the Lowe Farm area. The railway had been built in 1891 and as other land grew scarce, men were willing to try their luck on the higher sections of what was generally low-lying and not too well drained land. They had to buy the land from Loan Companies, speculators, and men like Mr. Lowe who owned large tracts of land throughout the area. Unimproved or semi-improved land could be bought for about five dollars an acre but, even as early as 1900, the quarter on which the Stevenson farm buildings were situated and half of Block One were sold for \$6,500. Some of the other English speaking settlers living in and around Lowe Farm in 1898 were R. Reid, Alex McLaren, Wm. McIntyre and Bob McGinnis.

The first Mennonites to come to the Lowe Farm area were the Funk Brothers, who settled several miles south-



west of Lowe Farm in 1895. In the years 1898 to 1901 a large number of Mennonites came in and some of the English settlers began to move out. John Peters settled north of the track on the NE 1/4 of 8-5-1W in 1898. John Hiebert settled east of St. Peters in 1899, south of the track. On section 14-4-2W Carl Karlenzig built himself a house of sods in 1897.

## The Old Waterhole

In many parts the land was swampy and the roads very poor or non-existent. In the latter part of summer, water often became scarce. Digging wells in the clay soil was useless unless you went down several hundred feet and then the water you got was invariably salty. The only way to insure a supply of water was to dig waterholes and wait for next spring's thaw to fill them. The housewife did the best she could to look after the drinking and washing needs of the family by collecting rainwater from the roof in barrels placed under eavestroughs or merely sloping boards that caught the water as it ran from the roof. For the first year or so many of the farmers had to drive their cattle for miles to water them at the small pools of water



Until the advent of the dragline, dugouts were excavated with horses and slush scrapers. This picture shows Peter U. Braun and Peter P. Harder using their horses and plow to loosen soil, while sons, Peter and Jacob Braun, and Peter G. Harder, Jacob Froese, and Cornelius Driedger Jr. removed the soil with horses and scraper. Dugout was being made at Peter P. Harder's farm in 1931.

that were to be found under the C.N.R. bridges. Mr. Stevenson's men had sometimes been forced to haul it all the way from the Red River at Morris. Sometimes they got stuck in the Lewis Coulee on their way home and were forced to let it all out of the tank so that they could get clear of the mud and go back for more.

Digging a water hole in those days was not as simple or as easy a task as it is now that a dragline can do the job in half a day. The Enns brothers, who settled on W 1 / 2 22-4-2 in 1898, took all the dirt out with a wheelbarrow and dug the whole waterhole with spades.

In Lowe Farm the first waterhole was made by Stevenson before the founding of the town. It later became known as the "old Reimer waterhole". J. Heppner made the second in 1899. One would have thought the two sufficient for the needs of the small

village at that time, but Mr. Heppner and Mr. J. Wiens, who owned the Reimer waterhole at that time, fearing that the water would not last long through the winter, made their children take turns driving their cattle all the way to Scratching River some seven or eight miles away, a task which the children naturally considered unpleasant and unnecessary. For several years the summers were very dry.



*One way to keep a supply of water on hand throughout the winter was to immerse a stove in a water tank. (E.F. Lewis farm).*



*The first waterhole in Lowe Farm just east of town with Stevenson farm buildings in the background. Picture taken about 1902.*

## Blizzards and Floods

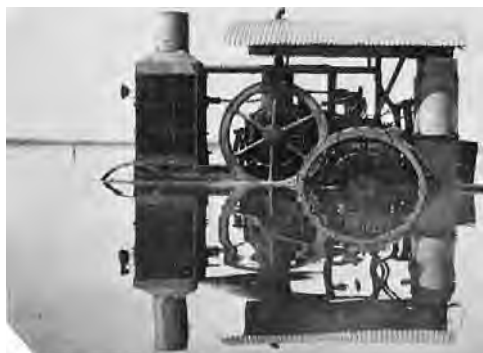
Frederick Philip Grove, who used Lowe Farm as the locale of his novel, "The Fruits of the Earth" has given some excellent description of both the blizzards and floods as they are frequently experienced in the Lowe Farm district. The large open sweep of the level prairie north-west of the village provides an excellent arena for the winter storms, in which, on occasion, the snow falls



*The spring flood of 1916, taken west of Lowe Farm.*

*The big storm of March, 1966 has joined the legendary blizzards of bygone years in the annals of local history.*

so thickly and the wind blows so fiercely that one can see only a few feet in the daytime and not at all at night. At such times, to travel, whether on foot, or by car, is to court disaster, and many are the stories told of people getting lost or nearly lost in the blizzards of past years.



Every spring the flood waters leave the Pembina Hills to cross the plains on their way to the Red River, On the way they are gathered into big spillways some ten miles west of Lowe Farm and are led due east regardless of their natural courses. As they reach the level land common to this area, the drop in elevation practically disappears and the water consequently slows down,

occasionally overflowing the snowfilled ditches and spreading out into a slowly moving stream at times a mile wide.

One of the worst floods recorded, occurred in 1913; the twenties saw one or two unusually high floods; and in the spring of 1947, a late thaw came suddenly, causing the waters to break their normal bounds and inundate fields and farm yards that had been untouched for years. At such times Lowe Farm appeared to be on an island surrounded by a sea of water covering many square miles.

Such was also the case in 1950 when as the result of a winter with an abnormally heavy snow fall and a late spring, followed by an extended rainy spell, the Red River overflowed its banks to the extent that the river's edge crept up to the road west of the Smith Spur Elevator, just two and one half miles east of the town of Lowe Farm. After the town of Morris had been evacuated and the waters continued to rise, it soon became apparent that the residents of the Rosenort village and the surrounding area would have to leave their homes.

On May 6th the Red Cross designated the village of Lowe Farm as a flood victim accommodation centre and by 10:00 A.M. on the morning of May 6th tarpaulin-covered trucks were dispatched to aid in the evacuation of flood victims in the Rosenort area. Before midnight that evening the village of Lowe Farm with a population of some 365 had accommodated approximately 370 flood victims. It was one month later that the last of the evacuees left Lowe Farm for their homes.



*The Shannon at flood in 1927. Some flooding problems have continued despite the construction of the Shannon Creek Drain in the 1960's.*

## "BUY A HIGH FARM IN LOWE FARM"



*ABOVE: Early plowing outfit near Lowe Farm, probably Bert Altman's.  
LEFT: Custom harvesting outfit of Bob McGinnis and Alex McLaren in Lowe Farm area, 1907.*



In the early years, one of the largest threshing outfits was owned by Mr. Herman Dueck who threshed for the farmers around Lowe Farm for many years. In 1905 he operated a 44-78 steam engine and a separator to match. His threshing gang consisted of some 30 men. There were 12 stook teams, six field and spike pitchers, four at the feeder, two water boys, two strawbucks, an engineer, and a heater, and the farmers belonging to the company to haul grain. When this veritable army moved into a field it

managed to clear away as much as 160 acres a day. What a change today when only two men with a truck and self-propelled combine set out to do the same task, taking several days longer, of course. Today we have efficiency and economy in our harvesting operations as well as an unimaginable amount of work less for the housewife, but the thrill and the excitement that made every boy's heart beat eagerly when the big threshing outfit arrived, is gone forever.

# LOWE FARM 1882-1908

J. Heppner 1898

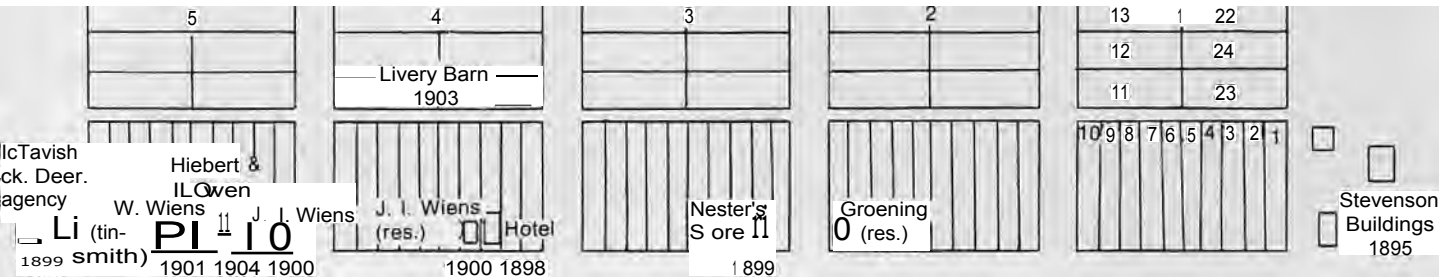
## TOWN PLAN OF LOWE FARM

Drawn up in 1898 by C. C. Chataway  
Twenty acres divided into five blocks.  
Part SW1/4 Sec. 6-5-1W. Plan 522 W.L.T.O.

I I School 1899

1907  
teachorage 17 18  
16 19

II 15 20  
(New School 1913) 14 21 Waterhole 1902



Elevator

U Station 1904

Lumber Yard 1908

Section House 1895

The town plan of Lowe Farm was drawn up in 1898 by C.C. Chataway. The townsite consisted of twenty acres, divided into five blocks on SW 1/4 of 6-5-1W. At this time one elevator, operated by C.E. Anderson, stood south of the track. Henry E. Peters built his hotel that year and Charles Nestor built a store which was run by L.

Goldstein. The section house was occupied by O. Johnson, who was section boss at the time. Robert Reid lived on the quarter just west of town. In 1898 Mr. J. Heppner purchased the quarter on which the town site was placed and built the house which still stands, moving into it next year, 1899. In 1899 Ed McTavish established



LEFT: Lowe Farm in 1904. ABOVE: Hotel, built in 1898, later a store owned by C. Spalding, then Rosners.



LEFT: Station built 1904. First agent, F. Sharpe, Monarch Lumberyard seen to right. RIGHT: Built by Bill Blakely in 1903-04, this building was owned by J. Hiebert (above), J.B. Hooge, A.A. Giesbrecht, M. Rosner and A.P. Derksen.



his McCormick-Deering agency just west of the town site and Jack Stewart had an open lumber yard south of the tracks. In the fall of the year the school was built, and the village of Lowe Farm could be said to have come into existence.

### Growth of Business

In the years 1899 to 1910 there was a gradual but steady increase in the volume and variety of business carried on in Lowe Farm. In 1900 J.I. Wiens built a store on Lot One of Block Five, which passed successively through the hands of Goldstein, Reimer and Abrams, to M. Rosner in whose possession it was destroyed by fire in 1921.

Jac. Heppner and Jac. Wiens, who purchased the Stevenson place in 1900, built a machine shop west of McTavish's and began the Massey-Harris agency in 1901. This building was shortly afterward purchased by J.C. Banman and moved to the south-west corner of Block Five.

J.W. Wiens erected a tinsmith shop in Block Five, Lot Five in 1901. Several years later he sold the building to J. Riter and C. Spalding, who subdivided it into a harness and hardware shop with tinsmithing as part of the latter. From them it passed through the hands of C. Gerbrandt into the possession of Franz Groening, who ran it as a store until it burned down in 1921.

In 1903 or 1904 Bill Blakely built a store that was also used as a post office. A few years later Blakely sold the store to Jac. Hiebert. At this time it contained a telephone office as well as the store and post office. Mr. Hiebert sold it to J.B. Hooge, who in turn sold it to A.A. Giesbrecht. Mr. Giesbrecht moved it to its present location on Lot One, Block Four. Here the front part served as a bank for a time (1919-1921), with the post office at the back and the Giesbrecht residence upstairs. Mr. McNulty was the manager of the bank but locally it was in the charge of Mr. Sweeney.

In the late 1910's J. Hiebert and J. Loewen built a store just west of J.W. Wiens' tinsmithing shop. It passed through the hands of several owners, among them M. Rosner and Ed. Anderson to M. Altman, in whose possession it burned down in 1921 shortly after he had purchased it.

### Post Office

The official records of the Canada Post Office Department show that John I. Wiens served as the first official post master for Lowe Farm from April 1st, 1900 until May of 1907. In the early years the Post Office moved around considerably, probably being first located in C. Nester's store then in Blakeley's store for several years. In 1907 Blakely sold his store to Jacob Hiebert who served as post master till 1910. In 1910 J.B. Hooge was appointed post master after acquiring the store from Jacob Hiebert and he in turn sold the store to A.A. Giesbrecht in 1914. Mr. Giesbrecht moved the building at that time to Lot One, Block Four, where it still stands today presently being owned and operated as a general store and coffee bar by the Abe P. Derksens. After serving as post master from 1914 till 1924, Mr. Giesbrecht sold the building to the Rosners, and N.J. Heide was appointed as post master. The location of the post office was moved to the Heide residence on Block Three, Lot Four. After serving as post master for thirty-four years Mr. Heide retired in 1958. David Brown was appointed as post master to succeed Mr. Heide and the post office was relocated in the Brown residence. When Mr. Brown passed away in 1968 after serving for 10 years as post master, his wife carried on as post mistress till August of 1971. Presently the post office is located on Block 4, Lot 8 in a building owned by Ben Braun who was appointed as post master on August 28th, 1971.



## Temperance Act Closes Hotel

The hotel prospered under the ownership or management, as the case might be, of Peters, Warnken, Couttes and McKormick, in turn, up until the time of the Temperance Act. The closing of the bar forced it to go out of business. It was purchased by C. Spalding and he set up a hardware and tinsmithing shop in the building. He sold it in 1921 to the Rosners who used it as a store till 1954. A few years later the building was bought and dismantled by Ike Klassen.



*UGG Elevator, built 1904. Pool Elevator, built, 1937.*

## Elevators

In 1898 Lowe Farm had one elevator. In the early years of the twentieth century there were several privately owned elevators along the track, smaller than modern country elevators. One was run by the Mark Johnson family, another by C.E. Anderson.

There were numerous elevator fires over the years. Mr. A.A. Giesbrecht, who celebrated his 90th birthday in 1979, recalled that an elevator burned to the ground in 1904 and that he, aged 15, and a friend were hired to watch the site and see that no sparks ignited a nearby elevator. An elevator burned down in 1914.

In the meantime, the Farmer's Elevator Company built an elevator in 1905. They sold it around 1911 to Western Canada Flour Mills, who completely rebuilt it and continued to operate it till they sold it to the Lowe Farm Co-operative Elevator Association who operated the elevator as Pool No. 2.

The Canadian Consolidated Grain Company built its first elevator in 1904. In 1959 they sold the elevator to the United Grain Growers. Presently there are two elevators providing grain buying and handling services, one owned and operated by the Co-op Elevator Association and the other by the United Grain Growers.

## Livery and Blacksmiths

A livery barn was built by J. Warnken who operated it for a while and then sold it to J. Loewen. This business flourished until the "horseless buggies" became too numerous. The barn held 24 horses, and at its peak as many as three or four buggies were employed in the livery business. The building was purchased by D. Heppner in 1921 and finally dismantled in the early thirties.

The first blacksmith was a Mr. Horne. He was succeeded by A.P. Dyck, who had a shop on the east side of



*Lowe Farm Livery barns with teams ready to take surveying gangs out to survey the Shannon ditch.*

Block Five. Mr. Dyck sold his shop to J.H. Martens, who shortly after moved into a larger building standing adjacent to his own, which he bought from D. Heppner in 1914.



*Lowe Farm Garage, with Marten's Machine Shop in the background at left. Taken in 1946.*



In this shop Mr. Martens served as blacksmith and machinist, assisted in time by his sons, until 1947, when a new building was erected, utilizing most of the lumber salvaged from the previous building, on the rear of the lot on which the Martens Garage was located, Lot No. 10, Block 4. After the Senior Martens passed away in 1953 his son Frank carried on as owner and operator of the welding and machine shop until December of 1969 when he sold the business to Ben Dueck and Roy Klippenstein.

The business now owned solely by Roy Klippenstein operates under the name of Lowe Farm Welding and Iron Works and specializes in the manufacture of horse and stock trailers of various sizes from 2 horse tandem to a 6 horse gooseneck trailer.



*Six horse goose-neck trailer manufactured by Lowe Farm Welding.*

## Trucking Operations

The first P.S.V. license in Lowe Farm was taken out by J.J. Schroeder some time before 1920 and the transfer was operated under his ownership for many years. The Co-ops operated a transfer for a while.



*Henry Giesbrecht drove the livery teams for Lowe Farm Livery bams, between 1910 and 1915.*

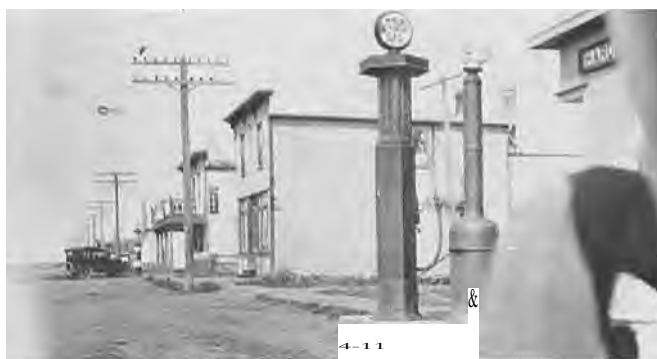
*RIGHT: Brown's Septic Tank Services of Lowe Farm, owned by J.I. Brown.*

In the 30's D. Heppner began a transfer service, which was taken over after a number of years by Alfred Hiebert. Since then it has passed through many hands, several of them not resident in Lowe Farm.

Presently the town and community is serviced by Ben's Transfer owned by Ben Reimer of Rosenort. Besides the commercial transfer services provided by Ben's Transfer, service for livestock hauling is provided by Ed's Transfer, owned and operated by Edwin Neufeld.

*Loading Henry Doell's "gentleman cow" into George Klassen's Transfer. June, 1941. BELOW: Edwin Neufeld hauls water for many Lowe Farm area residents.*





*Gas pumps in front of J.J. Schroeder's garage in foreground. Bank of Commerce, Rosner's General Store to the west, about 1925.*

## Garages

J.J. Schroeder had the nearest approach to a service station and repair shop in the corner formerly occupied by Ed. McTavish. In 1920 he built a good-sized garage on the south-west corner of Block Three and maintained it until he sold the building to H.W. Reimer, who used it for a store and I.H.C. shop.

Shirley Johnson built a garage just east of Schroeder's former garage and carried on until it burned down in May, 1940.



*Abe Groening's oil business, 1920's.*

Pete Martens and Ben Rempel started a garage on the site of the present Co-op store. Ben Rempel soon left the firm and Pete Martens enlisted.

D. Heppner built a garage on the south-west corner of Block Four. He sold to Paul Braun, who, in turn sold to Pete Martens and his brothers when they came back from overseas.

In 1949 Peter L. Braun in partnership with his brother Henry purchased a building located on the lot just north of what is now Derksens' store from Mr.D. Heppner. They moved the building to the extreme south west corner of the quarter on which the town site is located and started to provide garage services. Being affiliated with the British American Oil Company, Peter Braun was able to erect a modern frame construction service station building in 1955.



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*Gulf Station in Lowe Farm, built by Peter Braun in 1955. The garage was bought by John Reimer in 1979.*

Mr. Braun retained the station as it switched from B.A. to Royalite to Gulf. He operated it, with the assistance of his wife Justina and various mechanics, for thirty years. In 1979, the Brauns sold the business to Mr. John Reimer. At that time, the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce honoured Mr. Braun with a plaque in recognition of his business and social contributions to the community.



*Peter and Justina Braun, accepting a plaque from the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce in 1979. Mr. and Mrs. Braun have four children, born between 1939 and 1952 (Peter) Walter, Norma, Julia and Clara. Mr. Braun is the oldest of 9 children of Peter and Helena Braun. (Presenting plaque is George Klassen) (photo courtesy The Scratching River Post.)*

## Mr. Jacob J. Peters - Barber

In 1927, Jake Peters was laid up with a heart ailment, and in 1930 in response to doctor's orders, gave up farming and moved into Lowe Farm. After moving into town he developed his talents as a barber and in 1938 rented a corner in a local tinsmith shop owned by Peter P. Funk. He served the general public by providing a shave and haircut for two bits.

In 1943 he built his own barber shop on a lot just east of the Co-op Store. Later this shop was moved one block west where it remained till Mr. Peters retired in 1968.

While Mr. Peters was not kept busy all of the time in his barber shop, he managed to keep himself occupied during slack periods. Being interested in music he en-



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Peter's Barber Shop, 1953.

tertaind himself and others by singing while he accompanied himself on his guitar. A checker board on a table in the corner of his shop was always available for checker enthusiasts, and Mr. Peters was always ready to accept a challenge for a game between haircuts. Numerous checker tournaments were organized by Mr. Peters together with other local checker players and quite frequently Mr. Peters, a better than average checker player achieved top honors in the tournaments. Another recreational facility provided by Mr. Peters was a horseshoe court situated on the back part of the barber shop lot.

Besides possessing a natural talent for fixing guitars, clocks, sharpening scissors, etc. Mr. Peters also had the initiative and ability to successfully complete several interesting and original projects one of which was a windmill built in 1967 as a Centennial project.

In 1968 after serving the community for 30 years as a barber, Mr. Peters retired. At the time of this writing (1979), Mr. Peters resides in Morris.

## Lumber Yards

Although often poorly serviced with respect to its lumber needs, Lowe Farm has had a number of lumber yards. Jack Stewart's open yard in 1898 was the first one. This was followed by Ed. McTavish's, just west of his house at the west end of town. In 1908, the Monarch Lumber Co. built a good-sized lumber yard south of the track a short distance west and south of the railroad station. This was operated until it was taken down in 1924.

The Winkler Lumber Co. built its yard on the centre lot of the burned-out area of Block Five in the twenties. The manager was Mr. A.A. Giesbrecht. During the depression years it went out of business, but it started up again during the war years under the ownership of Mr. Kehler, of Rosenfeld, and management of Isaac Klassen. Later the building and site were purchased by the Beaver Lumber Company who closed it down permanently a few years later.

For several years during the hungry thirties, H.W. Reimer operated a small lumber yard in a building behind his store.

## Fabric Stores

From time to time, various residents have operated fabric stores in Lowe Farm. Being in the midst of a community full of ladies who sew, this would seem to be a viable operation, but no Lowe Farm fabric store has lasted.

Mr. and Mrs. John Reimer opened a store in their garage at the time when Mr. Reimer was manager of the Lowe Farm Co-op store. They later moved to Altona and closed the store.

Mrs. Helen Braun ran a fabric store in the front lobby of her home on Main Street, formerly the Post Office.

Mart-Enns Dress-Up was opened by the Herb Martens and Garry Enns families in the former Lowe Farm Egg Grading Station building. Hilda Martens and Ruth Enns operated the shop from 1977 until 1979, when a move to Morden by the Enns caused them to close the Lowe Farm store.



The daily passenger express was an important event for "Lowe Farmers" in early days.



*Lowe Farm in 1932, just before electrification.*

## LIGHTING UP LOWE FARM

A number of Lowe Farm businessmen got together in 1934-35 and persuaded J.H. Martens and Sons to run a plant providing power for Lowe Farm.

Before the Martens' started, various businesses had their own power plants. Rosners, J.J. Schroeder, and I.J. Warkentine had small plants that were used in their establishments. But now they wanted it on a larger scale.

This was undertaken by buying a 26 h.p. Ruston-Hornsby stationary engine, to which they hooked up a direct current (D.C.) generator. Once power was provided to the main businesses, the demand was so great that this Ruston-Hornsby generator had to be changed in 1936.

At that time, a Crompton-Parkinson alternator was purchased and was used with the stationary engine. Some homes were also hooked up at this time; primarily the ones situated along the main line which was built in the very beginning. When another improvement was needed in service, a 15 h.p. Lister stationary engine was procured, and used with the other equipment to provide power.

Problems were still numerous, as residents at the east end of town complained about the quality of power. When an average size voltage was sent out, the loss of power was too great over the distance, to provide enough power to use an appliance satisfactorily. This problem was solved by obtaining two transformers. A step-up transformer was installed at the plant, and a step-down was put on the farthest end of the main line. This plant provided electrical power for the people for eleven years.

### Power Lines Installed

When the first power line was erected, it went down the alley from the west end of town to the east. This being the main line, they had to put in a number of secondary lines. A line was put under the tracks to provide power for the pumps at the Consume] Co-operative warehouse. Pete Schroeder assisted in the installation of power lines. Poles were put in the ground the hard way - with pick and shovel. A lot of man hours were put into this project, and

in the fall of the year when the wires were strung, the older Martens boys and A.G. Schroeder were kept very busy. Most of the home wiring was done by Pete Martens and A.G. Schroeder.

After everything was installed and hooked up, the Martens family who owned the plant, took the responsibility of seeing that everything worked. Since the plant operated from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m., one member of the family had to be around all day. Believe it or not, Mrs. Martens frequently was the one to start up in the morning. Since the engine started on gasoline, and switched to diesel, Mrs. Martens had to turn the lever that made the switch at just the right amount!

The fuel that was used was a partly refined crude oil obtained from Trump Oil at McTavish. This had to be hauled in for the winter and stored. There were problems too. This crude oil thickened up in winter to the point where it could not be pumped out of the tanks. A fire had to be lit under the tanks, and the oil heated and put into barrels which were stored inside the shop.

The rig used to haul this fuel was a semi-trailer with a 500 gallon tank mounted on a 112 ton Model A Ford. Hauling was done in fall or early winter on dirt roads. Frank and Jake recall how rain and ice sometimes made these trips eventful.

The consumers were urged to use the power for lights only, though later some appliances were allowed. Ironing for instance, was encouraged during the daytime when loads were light. Engine overload happened mostly at night, when the first sign of trouble was a miss in the regular putt putt of the engine. Somebody would race to the shop and babysit the plant till the load decreased. If the illegal load was not lightened by the homeowners, the plant would be slowed down to a point where light bulbs merely glowed. People would start turning off switches and pulling out plugs, which resulted in the load being lightened. Occasionally, they would think, "he's just pulling a fast one", and as a result, the plant was stalled.

Finally, the agreement to provide Lowe Farm with electricity came to an end in april of 1946, when Manitoba Hydro took over. Progress was inevitable; but the past was at least colorful!



*The first Lowe Farm Consumer's Co-Operative building, taken in 1937.*

## Developments in the Co-operative Movement

The spirit and desire that the rural folk have a need to work together socially and economically was spread by our forefathers in the years of 1912 to 1919 when they organized a U.G.G. distribution local.

They purchased carload lots of coal, lumber, fuel, apples, binder twine, and machinery and made direct savings to their members by large quantity bulk purchases.

Mr. P.A. Giesbrecht for many years acted as secretary, but due to many hardships in their stages of trial and error, the organization passed out of existence.

## The Lowe Farm Consumers Co-operative

In 1930 a younger group made efforts to revive and reorganize under the U.F.A. with Mr. Bill Friesen, teacher at Steinfeld, acting as secretary and through study and consultation decided to form a society known as the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-operative Limited. At the helm of this new society was Mr. B.W. Thiessen who was for many years chosen as President. The provisional board canvassed for members who purchased shares amounting to \$120.00. The board then applied for a charter and after legal and registration fees had been paid, \$92.00 was left to start business. A small office was purchased and Mr. A.E. Heppner was engaged as manager. Total sales for the first year amounted to \$4,850.00. In 1935 the property of the Winkler Lumber

Company was purchased and the old lumber yard was used as a place of business, dealing mainly in gas and oil.

In June of 1938 a modern bulk Oil Station and warehouse was erected, at a cost of \$5,4488.00 which left the organization in a better position to serve their members and sales totalled \$72,985.00 for that year. In 1946 a new building with up to date office, show rooms, and oil and flour storage facilities was built at a cost of \$7,200.00. In November of 1963 this building was extensively damaged by fire and the general sales office was re-located in the garage building which had been purchased from the Martens brothers in May of 1960. After experiencing a second fire in June of 1971, a new modern steel building was erected.

In 1978, the Consumers Co-op found itself on the verge of bankruptcy. Rapidly expanding growth and inadequate management had resulted in greatly increased gross income which was not accompanied by corresponding net increase. The membership voted 109 to 41 to accept the board proposal to dissolve the Co-operative and sell the assets to the Lowe Farm Co-op Services at book value figures, minus inventory proceeds paid to creditors. Lowe Farm Co-op Services bought the fixed assets of \$75,000.00 and remaining inventory and paid the members in Lowe Farm Co-op Services 59 Ltd. equity.

By the end of 1979, the newly organized Lowe Farm Co-op Service was happy to report that its combined grocery and farm supply operations had, for the first time, grossed over \$1 million. Lowe Farm Co-op was back on its feet.



*Consumer's Co-Op in 1948.*

*Lowe Farm Co-Op Service's Farm Supply and Lowe Farm Garage in 1980.*



## Lowe Farm Co-operative Store Limited

Although the need for a co-operative store in Lowe Farm had been felt since the early thirties, it was not until the fall of 1938 that a meeting was called to consider the possibilities of starting a general store on a co-operative basis. Much of the credit for the success of the meeting goes to Mr. Phil Isaacs, who at that time was manager of the co-operative store at Rosenort. He explained how they had organized in their community and encouraged those present to form a similar organization in Lowe Farm. The decision to organize a co-operative store association was made at that meeting and a provisional board was elected. A survey showed that 72 people were willing to take shares and a meeting was called to elect a permanent board of directors.

By this time a total of \$200.50 had been collected as share capital, and the board of directors with J.B. Harder as president decided to make final arrangements to start the business. Mr. H.W. Reimer a general merchant, had expressed his willingness to sell his business, and the board was able to make arrangements with him which called for a \$500.00 down payment. To meet the payment, the \$200.00 share capital was used and the balance of \$300.00 was borrowed from one individual. On March 19th, 1940 the Lowe Farm Co-operative Store opened for business with Mr. J.B. Wiens as manager.

Things went along fine till the eventful evening of May 24th, 1940 when a fire broke out in the block and destroyed the store and most of the contents. A statement drawn up after the fire showed that the remaining assets of the organization were now a bank balance of \$62.00.

In August of the same year arrangements were made with Mr. B.W. Dyck to rent his building located on the south-east corner of Block three (H.W. Reimer's first store). With a bank balance of \$12.00 after paying \$50.00 in advance rent for one month and no stock, the directors approached the Geo. McLean Company for credit to obtain the necessary stock to start anew. With considerable reluctance, the Company agreed to let the co-operative have \$500.00 worth of groceries as stock on credit and the store opened for business again on August 19th, 1940.

By December 31st, 1941 after less than a year and a half of operation, an operating surplus of approximately

\$1,800.00 had been realized and the directors decided to look around for a building that could be purchased and used as a store. The most likely prospect was a fairly new building owned by Pete Martens. This was purchased in June of 1942 and after the building had been remodelled, the stock was moved in and the Co-op opened its door for business in the new premises.

In 1953 the building was enlarged by extending the north end of the building to accommodate the newly organized Co-op Locker Plant. The sales of the Locker Plant however did not warrant a separate board of directors and in 1958 the Lowe Farm Co-op Lockers amalgamated with the Lowe Farm Co-operative Store Limited under the new name of the Lowe Farm Co-operative Services Limited. A modern new building was erected in 1960 to replace the old building. In 1963 the locker plant operations were discontinued and the facilities were utilized to provide expanded services in the meat department. By the end of the fiscal year ending October 31st, 1973 the total sales of the Co-operative since inception amounted to \$2,396,356.00 and total assets of \$97,174.00.

In 1978, the Co-op Store voted to purchase the assets of the bankrupt Lowe Farm Consumers Co-operative for equity. In spite of the difficulties experienced in the late '70s, which were similar to those which occurred in the early days of the Co-op, the co-operative spirit remains in most of Lowe Farm's Co-op members. Without the Depression days' obvious need for local supply of reasonably-priced necessities, rural co-operators may lose the sharpness of their vision of the Co-op as a vital community resource. Apathy is the enemy of co-operation, and when the Lowe Farm Co-ops united, founding members and young members alike warned the membership of the need for education, interest and active participation in the running of the Co-op.



*The staff at Lowe Farm Co-Op Services in 1980 with the year they began working for the Co-Op. Anne Klassen (1958), Mary Klassen, (1962), clerk-cashiers, Marie Klassen (1974-75, 1977-), bookkeeper; Peter Peters (1977) retired farmer, now meat cutter; George Klassen, hired to manage the Co-Op Store in 1975 and manager of the combined Co-Op Services since 1978, Ed Froese (1978) fuel truck driver, (his wife, Christine (Martens) works in the credit union). Henry Janz (1978) farm supply. Not shown are store part-timer, Ruth Fehr and Jake Bergen, part-time at Farm Supply, and formerly Consumer's manager.*

LOPE FARM CO-OPERATIVE STORE LIB



*Lowe Farm Co-Op Store purchased in 1942.*





*Lowe Farm Co-Op Store, built in 1960. Until 1973, the Lowe Farm Credit Union was located in the eastern portion (far right).*

## **The Lowe Farm Credit Union Limited**

The history of the Lowe Farm Credit Union dates back to the spring of 1938 when a meeting was called by H.W. Reimer, Ed Groening and John F. Braun the purpose of which was to consider the feasibility of organizing a study group through which the general public might become aware of the benefits to be derived from a Credit Union.

Ten persons who applied for Letters Patent to grant a charter of incorporation were: John B. Wiens, J.N. Dyck, B.G. Funk, Jacob W. Wiens, P.O. Funk, H.B. Giesbrecht, H.W. Reimer, Edward Groening, Jacob B. Wiens, and Nick Gerbrandt.

The charter was granted on June 28th, 1938 and by December of that year twenty-five persons had been accepted as members in the newly formed Society.

Since there was no bank in Lowe Farm, the directors decided to open an account with the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-operative Oil Station. Mr. Ed Groening who was temporary manager of the Oil Station at that time consented to act as secretary-treasurer of the Credit Union until other arrangements could be made. By the beginning of 1939 the Society had received enough money as share capital to enable them to grant small loans to the members. A resolution which had been passed by the directors limited the amount of the loans to \$10.00 and

the time limit on loans was set at one month. It was soon found that even with these limitations there was not enough money to go around because most of the members found even ten dollars such a financial aid at the time that when they repaid their loans they immediately took out a new loan. For this reason a further stipulation was made by the directors that a period of two weeks had to elapse from the time a loan was repaid until a new loan could be granted.

In the spring of 1939, Mr. Groening had to return to his farm to look after his duties there, but since no one had been found to replace him as secretary-treasurer, he had to keep on looking after the books of the Credit Union.

The society, however, continued to grow, and after two years it became apparent that a secretary-treasurer would have to be found who could be contacted more readily by the members. The board of directors approached John L. Braun who was working for the Co-op Store at the time, and he consented to take over the books of the Credit Union. The fact that the members were now able to transact their banking business at their con-



*Official opening of new credit union building October 12, 1973. Cutting the ribbon is Jacob B. Wiens, charter member.*

venience and a checking service that was introduced shortly thereafter helped a lot to make the Society grow. By the end of the tenth anniversary year 1948, the membership of the Society had reached 221 with assets totalling over \$50,000.00.

Rent free office space for the Credit Union was graciously provided alternately by the Lowe Farm Co-op Store Association and the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-operative until 1960 when a new building was erected by the Lowe Farm Co-op Services and provision was made for office space for the Credit Union under a long term rental arrangement. By the time the lease had expired in 1972 it had become apparent that the rented quarters were inadequate, and plans were made for a new office building which was officially opened in October of 1973 providing facilities which the community can take pride in.

The Society has grown far beyond the expectations of its founders in terms of both membership and assets. Present membership stands at 876 while total assets are now \$4,537,069. The manager, John L. Braun has



*Charter members. LEFT TO RIGHT: Nick Gerbrandt, Jacob B. Wiens, Ed Groening, J.N. Dyck, Julius Wiens, Jacob S. Schroeder. Picture taken at the 1964 annual meeting marking 25th anniversary of the Credit Union.*

rendered over thirty years of service, the first two and a half years of which were without remuneration, and received recognition for the excellent service given by a presentation of a Gold Medallion watch. Serving on the staff presently besides the manager John L. Braun, are Christine Froese and Clifford Matthies.



*John L. Braun, manager Lowe Farm Credit Union since 1941. He and his wife, Anne (Falk) have 5 children, born between 1949-1961. Linda, Evelyn, Eileen, Marilyn and Raymond. A community leader and charter member of Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce.*



*The float celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Canadian Co-ops in the 1978 Shannon Festival Parade.*



## LOWE FARM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce was founded after World War II, when local businessmen met to find a united solution to a problem faced by all: unpaid charge accounts.

Charter members included John L. Braun, Lowe Farm Credit Union Manager; Edward Braun, Co-op Store Manager; Diedrich Heppner; the Martens brothers of Marten's Garage; and Henry Voth, owner of a general store which was later owned by C. of C. member Peter R. Hildebrand.

The roots of the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce go back to community committees that were formed in the early years for specific purposes such as to provide townspeople with a skating rink.

Over the years, the Chamber has remained small but fairly stable, with some minor fluctuations in number of members.

The Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce has built the outdoor skating rink and maintained and improved it for many years. It successfully lobbied for hydro service to Lowe Farm, and for Highway 23 to be paved. The Chamber was active in serving during the 1950 flood. It has been working for several years to have a low-rental housing unit built in Lowe Farm. One project it has worked for but has been unsuccessful in attaining up to 1980 is a water system for Lowe Farm.

Perhaps its greatest function has been the establishment of the Shannon Festival as an annual event that has raised enough money to buy and furnish a much-needed park for Lowe Farm.

## Lowe Farm Co-operative Elevator Association

The Co-op Elevator Association in Lowe Farm was formed in 1937 after a year and a half of strenuous ground work.

The local set-up and conditions, did not make the prospect for the success of a venture of this nature too bright. There were two other elevators in Lowe Farm already and during the seven years prior to 1937 an average of only 210,000 bushels per year had been handled by the two elevators. It seemed that another elevator would hardly be warranted since advice had been received from Manitoba Pool Elevators that it required approximately 100,000 bushels per year to operate an elevator satisfactorily. The wisest move then seemed to be to purchase one of the elevators in town, but after an exhausting effort this idea had to be abandoned. The provisional board then made another thorough canvass for members and were able to persuade 73 farmers to become members. Finally a delegation was sent to head office to investigate the possibility of getting a new elevator built at Lowe Farm.

In spite of all these obstacles, a new elevator was built in 1937 at a cost of \$21,250.00. In 1940 a second elevator was purchased from Western Canada Flour Mills for \$10,200.00. In August of 1953 this elevator was completely destroyed by fire, and the Co-operative is now providing grain buying and handling services through one elevator.



*The Co-Op's salute to the International Year of the Child won first prize for floats at the 1979 Shannon Festival.*

## Farm Produce

In the years prior to the early 1940's before few, if any, farmers specialized in large poultry operations, local egg production did not warrant special egg handling facilities although some of the local general stores accepted eggs in trade for groceries and other merchandise. As local egg production increased, a need arose for special egg handling facilities, and in 1942 Ike Klassen ventured into the egg station business. In 1947 D.H. Groening purchased the business and expanded the operations by enlarging the building and installing refrigeration facilities. The volume of business by this time also warranted the purchase of a truck to haul eggs to Winnipeg.



*Ed (Erdmann) and Margaret Braun of Lowe Farm Egg Grading Station with their children, Ronald, Leona, Terry, Dianne and Joyce.*

Mr. Groening sold the business to Mr. and Mrs. Ed L. Braun, in 1968. They operated it with their family until the near disappearance of small, independent egg producers in the face of large, contract operations brought about the end of nearly all local egg-grading stations. The Brauns closed the business in September, 1977 and sold their equipment and the building. The next tenant of the building was Mart-Enns Dress-Up.



*For that old fashioned flavour...*

## STONE GROUND FLOUR

*from*

**ANDERSON'S ORGANIC GRAINS**

*Box 186, Lowe Farm, Man., Canada. ROG 1E0 Phone: 746-8887*

## ANDERSON'S ORGANIC GRAINS

Organic, environmental, or bio-agriculture are all names for a system of farming which uses natural (animal or vegetable) manures, soil enrichment, crop rotation and polyculture, land rest, and a multitude of other natural and self-sustaining methods to enrich the land and promote soil fertility and good crops.

Francis and Rebecca Anderson of the Lowe Farm district abandoned the use of artificial fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides in 1967-68 and began to farm their half section "organically". The sale of their "organically grown" grains and flour to customers in the area, in Winnipeg, and beyond gradually grew into a busy sideline to farming. In 1976 their daughter Barbara and son-in-law Brian Shewchuk joined the family enterprise "Anderson's Organic Grains". Besides their own produce they sell imported flour mills and other food-related equipment not readily available in most stores.



*Ben Braun, postmaster, since 1971, has owned his own excavating company, Ben Braun Construction, since 1946.*



*This block, shown in 1908, was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1921. One life was lost.*

## **Lowe Farm Fires**

In 1899 and later, there were a number of large prairie fires. Feeding on long accumulated wastes of prairie grass, dry as a tinder in the fall, they spread rapidly and destroyed fields of grain and even buildings in their path.

Lowe Farm, in company with many other unfortunate prairie towns, has, in its short existence, suffered considerably from fires. The first place to suffer destruction was the old Charlie Nester store building on Lots Nine and Ten, Block Three, in 1908. It was used at this time as a residence.

Next came the Winnipeg Grain Co. elevator fire in 1914, it was followed by the most disastrous and the most tragic of all the Lowe Farm fires. This was the fire of May 2, 1921 in which three stores, Mr. Rosner's, M. Altman's and Frank Groening's were destroyed, and young Israel Rosner lost his life.

During the next two decades, three residences were burned, Anton Funk's, Jacob Funk's and Henry Friesen's. In 1940 flames wiped out H.W. Reimer's I.H.C. shop, the Co-op store, and Johnson's garage in one fell sweep. Lack of convenient water supply and fire fighting equipment at that time and the frame construction of all buildings in the business blocks of the town made it impossible to extinguish any of these fires until they had literally 'burned themselves out'.

Other major fires included one on August 22nd, 1953, when the Pool elevator No. 2 was completely destroyed by fire and a fire on Oct. 26th, 1956 which resulted in the loss of a garage and service station owned by Pete Martens.

Another major fire that burned out of control and completely destroyed the Red and White General store owned by Peter Hildebrand occurred on January 31st, 1959. On November 28th, 1963 fire extensively damaged the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op building and the adjacent Co-op store building. Fortunately the local fire brigade together with the Morris, Rosenort and Altona brigades were able to bring the fire under control before the buildings were completely destroyed.

On June 1st, 1971 a fire believed to have started from a grass fire that spread from a barrel of burning trash, caused considerable damage to the Garage and Service Station operated by the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op. The fire was thought to have been completely extinguished, but it apparently continued to smolder in one of the walls and burst into flames again in the early morning hours of June 3rd and burned out of control resulting in a complete loss of the building, inventory and two vehicles.

## **LOWE FARM FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Lowe Farm Fire Department has attended many large and serious fires, including the old Morris Hotel (1950's), the St. Jean elevator (where the department worked day and night for several days), the Lowe Farm Pool Elevator (1953), the old Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op (1963), the first Consumers building on the present site (1971), a hog barn east of St. Agathe (1976?), and a large barn fire north of Brunkild.

These fires totally or nearly destroyed the buildings in question, but in general, the Lowe Farm Fire Department has had a pretty good record. Of all the local house and barn fires attended over the years, only one house burned down. The L.F.F.D. stopped most of the fires.

Combine and tractor fires have occurred from time to time, but in many of these cases the Fire Department could not prevent serious damage.

The Department usually numbers ten men, although numbers have fallen to six on occasion. Fire drills are held once a month, except during busy seasons.

The Lowe Farm fire hall was built in 1953, a project that was spearheaded by Ed A. Brown. Over the years it has fallen into a state which leaves much to be desired. Among the hopes for the Eighties is a new firehall for Lowe Farm. This is planned as part of a total Municipal fire-fighting capacity re-vamp, which will include improved facilities, equipment and especially communication.



*The Lowe Farm Fire Department in 1980. Cornelius Fehr, Fire Chief, at left. On truck, Volunteer Firemen Dan Thiessen (Councillor for Ward 5), Jake Ginter. On ground, Jake Bergen, Martin Braun, Henry Janz, George Klassen.*

Some members of the brigade have served for over 20 years. Frank Martens was Fire Chief for 19 years,



*The Bert Pitman, barn just east of Lowe Farm was a landmark for many years. It was torn down in the late 1970's by the Anton Dycks, who now own the land.*

followed by Gary Friesen, Gordon Dyck, and Cornelius Fehr present chief.

*The heart of a district settled by grain farmers, Lowe Farm is a village whose people and businesses depend on agriculture for their existence. The lifeline of Lowe Farm's grain - based economy is the Morris - Hartney Rail Line of Canadian National Railways. When threatened with the closing of the rail line in the late 1970's, farmers and the officials of the R.M. of Morris joined a legion of protesters who fought to save the line. The Morris-Hartney Rail Retention Association was ultimately rewarded when, early in 1980, the Federal Government announced that the line would be kept open and upgraded.*





# HISTORY OF LOWE FARM SCHOOLS

by Win, Friesen

*Early Beginnings* - The first Lowe Farm School was built in the fall of 1899. At the first district organization meeting held on June 30, 1899, the following residents were recorded as being present: John A. Stewart, Robert Reid, Alec McLaren, Wm. McIntyre, Henry D. Dyck, Peter B. Falk, Julius Banman, and F. Huckenby. Messrs. Reid, McLaren, and Banman were elected Trustees at this meeting. At a subsequent meeting held on July 26, it was moved to 'build and seat' a school, and that \$650.00 should be borrowed for this purpose. The motion carried with no dissenting vote. Land was purchased from J. Heppner and a school (28 x 24 x 12) was built by J.C. Nestor.

School started very late in 1899 with Mr. Riske as the first teacher. He was followed by Mr. Wm. Nau in September, 1900. He stayed till March, 1904. Mr. Nau began at a salary of \$420.00 per annum which was raised to \$520.00 next year. Enrolment in the founding year reached 28, rose to 42 in 1900, and increased to 50 in 1901. Many attended only part of the term. Most of the farm children began late in fall, October or November, and stopped in April. Very few children reached the upper grades; for the majority, grades IV, V, or VI marked the highest rung attained on the educational ladder. Actually, in the ten years following Mr. Nau's term of office, the number reaching the higher grades decreased. Several factors accounted for this. Among these were the low academic standing of most of the teachers succeeding Mr. Nau, their very limited professional training and experience, and the fact that most of the older pupils spent approximately half the school term helping at home.

In 1907, a teacherage was built on the N.W. corner of Block Two, where it stood for many years. The J.B. Hooges were the first occupants. In 1913, a new two-roomed school was built in Block Two. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Bueckert were the first teachers to teach in it, with Mrs. Bueckert in charge of the lower grades. This school was described in Inspector Weidenhammer's Annual Report to the Department of Education as a modern two-storey schoolhouse containing every modern convenience available in a rural community - indoor toilets, slate blackboards, hot water heating, proper lighting and ventilation, as well as 'well-lighted' basement space for playroom use in cold weather. The policy of providing free text books was begun this year, thus placing the poorer children on an equal footing with those who were better off. The new school sparked an increased interest in academic progress; in 1919 the Board asked the teachers to fill out report cards on the pupils, and the questions of whether or not to offer grade IX first arose. A scarcity of teachers and the rising prices of farm products resulted in a considerable increase in teachers' salaries. In 1921, the upper and lower room teachers were paid \$1,600.00 and \$1,400.00 respectively.

*First High School* - Local interest in education continued to grow, and at the annual ratepayers' meeting held July 19, 1926, it was agreed to call a special meeting to deal with 'providing more room and the teaching of



1. Early rural school transportation.
2. The first high school.
3. Second school built 1913. Picture taken early 1930's.

BELOW: Grades V to VIII, 1936, Teacher H.S. Schellenberg.





School built 1955, used as high school, elementary, now junior high school. *SO,* —



School built 1962, as high school, now elementary school.



the higher grades'. The final result was that for the 1926-1927 school year a small building was rented from Mr. D. Heppner for \$15.00 a month; the district was canvassed for students to meet the minimum enrolment requirement and Mr. I.J. Warkentin, Past-Principal of the M.E.I. in Altona, was engaged to serve as high school teacher and Principal for \$1,250.00 a year and free residence.

Elementary enrolment increased rapidly in the 1930's. To accommodate this increase, a one-room building was erected east of the concrete school in 1936 and Miss Anna Wiens was hired as the additional teacher. In 1939, still more space was needed and a two-room school was built west of the other two. The lower elementary classes were moved to the new building and the concrete school built in 1913 became a two-room high school with Miss Marie Loewen as the teacher in the lower room. The small building that had served as the high school for many years was converted into a second teacherage. With the addition of a second high school room and grade XII, high school enrolment rose slowly in the next ten years from about 17 to the low 1930's.

*An Era of Rapid Growth* - Around the years 1949 and 1950 the idea of combining Lowe Farm and the

Grades VII and VIII, 1960 - Teacher, George P. Goossen.



surrounding districts to form a consolidated district began to take shape. At first there was considerable opposition in the surrounding districts. Many rural parents did not wish their children to be exposed to the town school, firmly believing that it would have a harmful influence on them. Gradually, however, interest began to grow. In 1954, a group of parents in Neufeld School District broached the question again and asked for a study and report. Strong support for consolidation came also from St. Peters School District.

In the meantime the Lowe Farm ratepayers embarked on an ambitious building program. In 1955 they constructed a four-classroom building, complete with spacious washrooms, staff room, commercial room, shop, office, science laboratory (equipped with gas and running water) and a 40 by 70 foot auditorium, to replace the two oldest school houses. By September, 1959, the high school enrolment had risen to 63, a direct result of the shift to a larger high school administrative unit and the provision of free transportation of high school students. The high school enrolment continued its rapid rise and as a temporary solution to the problem of overcrowding the grade IX and X students were bussed to Kane and the XI, XII students to Lowe Farm. In 1962, the new collegiate building was completed and all the high school students, now numbering 96, were back in Lowe Farm.

More or less concurrent with the changes brought on by the establishment of the larger unit of school administration was the continuation of pressure for the consolidation of the districts around Lowe Farm. In 1959, Heabert, St. Peters, and Lowe Farm Districts were combined to form the Lowe Farm Consolidated School District. Neufelt was added in September. The district was further expanded when Steinfeld and Kronsweide also joined the consolidation as a result of dwindling population.

Lowe Farm now had two modern schools, one for the elementary students of the relatively large newly consolidated district of Lowe Farm, and a collegiate building for the area originally feeding high school students to Lowe Farm, Kane, and Rose Farm. Although much of the original hostility engendered by these changes had gradually disappeared, there were still problems to be solved. The new system allowed for little expansion of the curriculum. The new collegiate was too small to offer a number of options without putting unreasonable loads on the teaching staff. By 1966, the University Entrance Course and the Commercial Course Students were starting to attend the Morris Collegiate. Gradually the University Entrance Course was phased out at Lowe Farm. This marked the beginning of the decline that resulted in the decision of 1973, to transport all high school students to the Morris Collegiate. That decision ended a 47-year history of high school education in Lowe Farm.

*The Curriculum* - In the early years the offerings of the curriculum were rather limited; however, except for a few brief lapses, the basic subjects were taught reasonably well. As in most Mennonite schools prior to 1916, a part of the school day was given to instruction in German and Religion. After 1916, such instruction was given outside of school hours with religious teaching during the last half hour of the school day as provided for by the Department of Education. From this time on, possibly sooner, the prescribed program of the Department was followed as closely as in most rural schools of the Province and taught thoroughly.

From its beginning the High School offered the Matriculation or University Entrance Course, IX to XI, with German as the required second language. With the opening of the second room, Grade XII was added. There was no thought of choosing easy options. Any optional subjects taken, such as shops, typing, or music, were in addition to, rather than in place of, the regular subjects.

A variety of extra-curricular activities were developed over the years, especially in the high school. Besides those mentioned earlier there was the school choir, the annual outing after final exams to interesting parts of Manitoba such as Pointe du Bois or Falcon Lake, the school paper, and the Student Council. There were also, of course, the usual softball and soccer teams, at both elementary and secondary levels. Quite a few high school students participated in curling. Although academic achievement was stressed, it was felt that the extra-curricular activities, besides providing the students with an added interest and incentive, helped to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and self confidence; all of which would remain with them and stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

Before leaving the topic of education, some mention should be made of the work of the High School Principals that began with Mr. I.J. Warkentin. In his 18 years of service he laid the foundation on which all future progress and developments were based. His interest in education and his students, his firm convictions regarding religion and morals, his scholastic background, all had their effect on the lives of those who came in contact

with him. His home with its well stocked library was always open to fellow teachers on the staff and in neighboring schools, to whom he served in the capacity of mentor and advisor. Knowing the financial problems the district had to contend with, he did not wait for or ask the School Board to provide him with special equipment or teaching aids. He provided at his own expense, an opaque projector, a movie projector, and a small power plant to produce light and power to operate this equipment. His knowledge and love of German, his fondness for German music and his interest in intellectual matters generally, made a strong impression on many of his students. After leaving Lowe Farm he taught in Steinbach for many years, serving for a brief time as Principal.

## **ISAAK J. WARKENTIN** **"... A Teacher Among Teachers"**

Isaak J. Warkentin who was born in the Mennonite farm village of Hoffnungsfeld, Manitoba in 1885, could have teathed on a pencil, for that was to be the main tool of his profession for years to come -- teaching. Isaak's parents had come to south central Manitoba from South Russia in the great Mennonite migrations of the 1870's. No doubt they had seen and endured much privation, and



*I.J. Warkentin*

instilled in young Isaak the importance of preparing for his future.

Isaak attended school in Winkler and Gretna, taking Normal School training in Altona in 1904-1905. After teaching in rural schools for three years, he attended Wesley College in Winnipeg, graduating with a B.A. in 1912. The following term found him holding the position as principal in the Intermediate School in Winkler.

Always with a thirst for more knowledge, Isaak left for Germany in 1913, to study at Leipzig University. But the tragedies of war took their toll in his life too, as he was interned as a prisoner of war in the Ruhleben P.O.W. Camp shortly after the outbreak of World War I. No doubt Isaak didn't have an inkling, that when he left for Germany in 1913 that it would be five years before he returned; and not with the accomplishment of knowledge and education, but with the taste of bitter experience.

In 1919, this seeker returned to the halls of learning at the Normal School in Winnipeg, spending a term there before he resumed his first love, teaching.

During the period from 1919 to 1953, Isaak taught in many Mennonite communities including Winkler, Altona, Lowe Farm, Steinbach and Grunthal. During his eighteen years as principal in Lowe Farm (1926-1944), he participated in everything possible, having a real desire to stimulate and motivate young people towards a better future. He loved to travel, and frequently showed slides at school, using his own projector. He supplied free textbooks to students he thought would benefit, making many sacrifices out of his own pocketbook during the Depression years.

Isaak Warkentin was married to Maria Warkentin in 1924; they had four children. Helen was born in 1925 in Altona, John was born in 1928 in Lowe Farm, Bernhard Alfred was born in 1935 in Winnipeg, and Frances Winnifred, who was born in 1936 in Lowe Farm.

The Warkentin's final home was in Steinbach, where they lived until Maria's death in 1970. Isaak passed away in 1971. The legacy that Isaak Warkentin left behind was in the lives of the many persons he taught and inspired during his lifetime.

## **A TRIBUTE TO TWO TEACHERS ANNA AND JUSTINA WIENS**

*by Helen Letkeman*



*Justina B. Wiens*



*Anna B. Wiens*

Hard work and determination can make impossible dreams become reality. Learning about the history of the parents and grandparents of Anna and Justina, we see that they had insight, determination and a willingness to work. Their efforts were not in vain. The parents realizing the value of education, encouraged and helped their children to receive as much schooling as possible. Anna and Justina, in turn, helped many children begin and continue their education. They taught and served in various schools and communities for 40 and 30 years, respectively.

The grandparents, Peter and Justina Wiens, had immigrated to Canada from Russia in 1874. Anna, daughter of J.W. and Maria Wiens was born in Lowe Farm in January 1907, and grew up on a farm near the

village of Lowe Farm. It was also here, where she received most of her education. One of her teachers, Miss Peters, had left such a favourable impression on her that she decided she would like to become a teacher.

To earn money to go to Normal School she worked as a nurses' assistant in the Tuberculosis Sanitorium in Ninette. However, the money saved the first year was needed for seed grain for her father's farm. This meant working another year for the necessary tuition money. Even after graduation from Normal School, there were no teaching positions for all who wanted to enter this field of work; so it meant going back to Ninette a third year. The following year, 1930 she was chosen for her first teaching position over 300 other applicants.

In those years classroom enrollments were high, with eight or more grades to instruct and not too much equipment to work with. Teacher and students were also in charge of janitorial work and keeping the fire in the stove going in the winter. Many interesting and humorous incidents have been related to family and friends as we would reminisce on those early years of teaching. Even to the end of her teaching days Anna would be cautious not to waste any materials, using paper carefully, remembering how one had to make do with so much less than is now available.

During Anna's teaching career she taught at St. Peter's School, Wood Bay, Stephenfield, and Lowe Farm where she welcomed many youngsters to the first grade. With forty years in the profession and spending about thirty of these in her home community, she taught second and third generation children.

In 1967, Canada's centennial year, she was chosen Centennial Citizen of the week and received a Canadian Centennial Medal for her outstanding work in the community. Miss Anna Wiens retired from teaching in 1971 when she could not continue because of ill health. A farewell evening was held in her honor at the Lowe Farm Elementary School, June 1971. A class of students acted out a play, choosing a school setting and singing some of the favorite songs learned in her classes. A plaque, in appreciation of her services, was presented to her at this time.

Justina Wiens, born in Lowe Farm in August 1913, grew up on her parents' farm. She received her elementary and high school education in Lowe Farm and her teacher training in Winnipeg. In 1937 she began her teaching career. Faithfully and conscientiously she worked in the Neufeld, Gnadenfeld, Lowe Farm and Morris School Districts until June of 1967. Ill health made it necessary for her to retire from teaching early. This was however, not to be complete retirement, for in 1969 she started another Kindergarten class in her home, which she continued for another two years. Her love for children and teaching was again demonstrated. With eager anticipation the children looked forward to the afternoon they could go to Miss Wiens' home for Kindergarten.

Both Anna and Justina were prominent workers in the Women's Institute for many years. They were actively and whole heartedly involved from the time of its inception in 1947 to its termination in 1973. They were leaders, directors and convenors in the W.I., in 4-H,

Garden and Cooking Clubs. They also contributed through catering services and took an active part in the interests and welfare of the community wherever possible.

Both also enjoyed travelling and travelled extensively in Europe, the Holy Land, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Hawaii, the United States and Canada. They brought back many beautiful slides and first-hand information from the various places to share with students and friends. Anna would frequently say, "Travel while you can still walk and see". Many friendships were made on these trips which were kept up throughout the years. Through their experience in the Holy Land they became popular with their slides. Reports, slides, souvenirs, and first hand information from the various countries were valuable teaching aids and served to entertain and enlighten friends in their home, in school and at community functions.

In summary, Anna and Justina will be remembered by family and friends through their unique characteristics and outstanding contributions. Anna was more outgoing and had a lively sense of humor. Where things needed to be improved, she would see to it that action was taken. Justina enjoyed homemaking, sewing, crafts and had a quiet friendly personality. Music, singing and taking part in school festivals were other areas of interest of both Anna and Justina. They possessed great determination and optimism which made it possible to achieve great goals in life and passed their ideals on to others.

## Sports and Social Activities in Lowe Farm

Some of the first social activities organized in Lowe Farm were brought about by the efforts of the Warnken and McLaren families, with the co-operation of the school teacher. They organized social gatherings. The first plays produced by the group were held in an old flax granary south of the railway tracks. These first efforts were organized and produced around the turn of the century (1900).

In 1927 a debating society was organized which arranged a series of debates throughout the winter, which proved to be quite interesting to a number of the members of the community.

In the 1930's a number of plays were presented by a theatrical group under the capable direction of Mrs. Phil Bourgeois.

A Young People's Club functioned for a number of years under the auspices of the local Co-op organizations. The group provided recreational and educational activities for its members.

One of the obstacles which hampered or curtailed community gatherings ever since the community was first founded was the lack of facilities in which to hold these activities. In the formative years of the community the old flax house was used. Later on in the twenties and thirties a small hall which was part of J.J. Schroeder's garage was used. Both of these buildings were inadequate and after a time no longer available.

In 1946 a hall was built above the Co-op Consumers



2

1. Lowe Farm baseball team around 1910. BACK ROW: Mark Johnson, Harry Rose, Bert Altman. MIDDLE ROW: Gib Russell, Elmer Crouch, Murray Anderson, C. Eachert. FRONT ROW: Luther Lewis, Lew Brown.

2. The only time a lady wore pants in the Teens was in baseball uniform!

3. A 1949 Low German play. Anna B. Wiens, Mrs. P.A. Falk, Mrs. J.B. Giesbrecht, Mrs. J.D. Reimer, Miss Florence Guenther, Mrs. Peter Falk (Jr.) Mrs. J.A. Braun, Mrs. Ben Braun.

4. Baseball team 1938. SEATED, Left to Right: Susie Klassen, Nettie Rempel, Nettie Klassen, Susie Rempel, Elevyn Giesbrecht, Luella Braun. STANDING: Mary Klassen, Kay Giesbrecht, Anne Klassen, Anne Falk.

5. Hockey team 1945-46. LEFT TO RIGHT: Henry Falk, John Rempel, Pete Klassen, Frank Funk, Willie Rempel, Abe Klassen, Pete Falk, Pete Giesbrecht, Ed Braun. MISSING FROM PICTURE: Willie Klassen,

Ben Braun.

6. Uniforms for this 1966 Little League team were provided by the Lowe Farm Women's Institute. BACK ROW: Marcel Hildebrand, Gerald Klassen, Lawrence Dyck, Coach; Clifford Matthies, Tony Dyck, Lloyd Brown, Bob Klassen, Tim Wiebe, George Mulko, Coach. FRONT ROW: Leslie Funk, Larry Wiebe, Mark Rempel, Mike Rempel, Ross Rempel, Wayne Penner, Jim Wiebe.

3





Baseball is alive and well at the Lowe Farm Shannon Festival! (1979 photo courtesy Scratching River Post).

building. The Co-ops made this facility available to the general public and over the years it was used for various functions and by different groups in the community. It was the community hall up until it was damaged by fire in 1963. Once again the community was without a hall that was readily available at a nominal fee. Since the fire, social gatherings, theatrical productions and meetings have been held in the school auditoriums which are much larger than the Co-op hall was.

Football was the first organized sport played by the boys and the young men but it was replaced as the foremost game of the community when the game of baseball was introduced by American immigrants who settled in the area around the year 1904. Lowe Farm had an excellent baseball team between the years 1907-1910.

A girls' softball team was organized in the early 30's. Two members of that team still reside in Lowe Farm; Olga Klassen (Braun) and Nora Hiebert (Braun). There was a lull in the interest in this team for a few years, but when it was reorganized, a team of an excellent caliber was fielded, bringing a number of honors to the community as a result of successful participation in baseball tournaments at the various sports days that were held. Members of that particular team still residing in Lowe Farm are: Anne Klassen, Anne Braun (Falk), Katherine Braun (Giesbrecht), Mary Friesen (Klassen), and Mary Wiebe (Klassen). Women's softball was revived in 1977, coached by Tony Dyck.

The community also had a hardball team during the 30's. The club was managed successfully for a number of years by John J. Schroeder. The current Lowe Farm Men's softball team is called the Astros. It was started in 1976. Harold Dyck is the coach.

Little League hardball, which was started in the early sixties and is still going strong, is divided into under 12's, under 14's, and under 16's.

Hockey has always been a favourite sport in the community, even though the game has had to be played on open air rinks. One of the first teams of note to take to the ice was organized in the 1930's. Abe G. Schroder and Ben Braun are two former members of that team still residing in the area. World War II interrupted the hockey enthusiasm as a number of the players joined the armed services.

The game was revived once again in an organized fashion in 1945. Willie Klassen is the one member of that particular team that is still a resident of the Lowe Farm area.

In the early 1970's the Lowe Farm Kings (which included players from Kane) played in the Pembina Valley League. In 1978-79 Lowe Farm players belonged to a "Linament League" (no slap shots, no checking), but currently twelve to fifteen men play just for fun, occasionally challenging teams from Rosenort, Roland, Plum Coulee or Starbuck on a non-tournament basis.

A 4-H Gun and Rifle Club was formed in 1967 with a total of 42 members. It operated for several years. The larger school districts have involved boys and girls in sports such as basketball and volleyball. The boys' basketball team brought provincial championship honors to Lowe Farm. The high school also produced a football team in the early 60's that for a brief period established



## LOWE FARM'S PROVINCIAL BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS, 1965.



*STANDING: Hardy Kehler, Art Wiebe, Harold Dyck, Earl Dyck, Eugene Hildebrandt, Barry Friesen, Paul Friesen. SEATED: Larry Gluck, Ralph Groening, Ed Wiebe, Menno Wiebe. Ed Wiebe won the Most Valuable Player award.*

itself as one of the better teams in the school division, but like its forerunner in the early 1900's, it gave way to other interests.

Winter Carnivals were held in the years 1969 and 1970. These events when sponsored were an unqualified success.

In the 1920's and '30's, annual sports days were held. With the coming of war, these ended, and nothing similar was held until the Shannon revived the custom of the annual sports day in 1973.

The Lowe Farm Curling Club was first organized in 1946. A curling rink was built by members of the community on the former Heppner property, donated by Mr. Heppner. In 1959 a new building was constructed on the same property. Since then, washrooms with flush toilets, and a full kitchen with serving counter for use as a concession at bonspiels have been added. The curling

club has remained fairly stable over the years, and in 1980, curling seems to be as popular as ever.

In 1924, a skating rink was built by a community committee. Bucket by bucket, water was hauled from a farmer's dugout to a large tank and hauled by horses to the site, where the hard-working volunteers flooded the rink. In later years an open-air skating and hockey rink was built on the same property as the curling rink. The Chamber of Commerce has sponsored it and provided improved warm-up facilities over the years. A building moved in from Myrtle was used for several years and was remodelled in 1978-79 to a fine club and warm-up room. In 1970, the rink was remodelled, fenced, and a viewing stand built. For many years, the Lowe Farm skating rink has been used by the schools for organized student skating as part of the physical education and recreation offered by the schools.



*Lowe Farm Curling and Skating Rinks in 1980.*



## ON SAFARI WITH JAKE GERBRANDT



Jake Gerbrandt of Lowe Farm was a big game hunter for over 25 years. A moose hunt in Northern Manitoba required two planes and a big truck. If the hunters could, they stayed at a sawmill camp and went out every day from there. **BIG PIC** - Mr. Gerbrandt, Dr. W. Colert and Ed Friesen shot three bull moose about 50 yards apart, east of The Pas in 1957. **RIGHT, FROM TOP:** Fishing with Dr. W. Colert; Mr. Gerbrandt shot these elk in the Riding Mountain area in 1969; Mr. Gerbrandt with foxes in 1960's. Big game safaris to the Yukon entailed hiring a whole camp including 20 pack horses, guides, and supplies for 10-14 days; Mountain goats and sheep are hard to hunt as they can climb where nothing else can go; the mountain goat and bison were shot in the Yukon. The wolf was shot on Lake Winnipeg.





*Lowe Farm celebrated Canada's Centennial Year with a Centennial Tea that included this display of costumes of the past. Mr. John N. Dyck, Miss DeEtta Anderson, Miss Tina Rempel, Mr. Jake Rempel, Mrs. Frank Martens, Miss Merelyn Braun, Mr. Lloyd Braun.*



*1969 Winter Carnival Queen Contestants. LEFT TO RIGHT: Joan Friesen, Diana Schroeder, Diana Klassen, Susie Friesen.*

## THE LOWE FARM SHANNON FESTIVAL

A local picnic type community get-together was initiated in 1973 with proceeds marked for local park development. The theme of the first festival revolved around the 75th Anniversary of the village of Lowe Farm.

Over the years, the festival has grown into the village's premier annual event. Proceeds from seven years of Shannon Festivals have purchased about eight acres of parkland just east of Lowe Farm, a cook shack, washrooms, picnic tables, a ball diamond and a sign which reads *Lowe Farm Community Park*.

Since the first year, the Shannon Festival has featured a parade with many colourful floats. The 75th Anniversary parade included a locally constructed float featuring replicas of several buildings dating back to the early days of the village.

A horse show was an innovation for the Festival and likely the first in Lowe Farm's history. During the first

show, some senior residents recalled a time when Lowe Farm had a race track. Standardbred horses had been quite popular during the village's formative years. The horse show has been a feature of the Festival ever since.

Baseball games, held during the first Festival, grew into a regular tournament with teams from surrounding towns. Cash prizes have been paid from gate receipts.

Track and field events, horseshoe, archery, checkers, tug of war, various entertainments, and the crowning of the Festival Queen have been part of the Festival over the years.

In 1978 a dog show was introduced, followed by an additional puppy show in 1979. A dunk tank to raise funds for the Little League Hardball Club was introduced in 1977.

Ham and chicken have been served every year since 1973. For two or three years in a row the chicken was so popular that it ran out before the day was over! "Plum moos" has also been featured.



# VIGNETTES FROM THE SHANNON FESTIVAL, 1978 AND 1979



*Photos on this page and below, opposite, courtesy of the Scratching River Post.*

## The Churches

The churches have always played a predominant part in the lives of the people of the Lowe Farm community. About fifteen years after the Mennonites first settled in the Altona, Plum Coulee, Winkler area some families began moving into the Rose Farm - Kronsweide districts and it was in these districts that the first private schools were built (1890-1900). It seemed natural that these private school buildings could be put to further good use by utilizing them for the Sunday morning worship services, and such was the case in the Kronsweide district.

Meanwhile in the years just prior to the turn of the century a large number of Mennonites began to settle in the Lowe Farm area although the early pioneers in this area were predominantly English speaking settlers and school records of the year 1900 show that English names outnumbered Mennonite names three to one.

The first worship services in Lowe Farm were held in 1900 with Baptist and Presbyterian ministers from Morris conducting services in the recently built school. In this year also a Sunday School was organized with Mr. and Mrs. Reid and two Misses McLaren serving as teachers of the English-speaking classes and Miss Marie Heppner, the late Mrs. J.L. Hiebert, teaching a German class.

### The Kronsweide Sommerfelder Church

The history of the Kronsweide Sommerfelder Church dates back to the late 1890's. The first place of worship was the private school located on the yard where the C.E. Rempels now live. In the early years of the 1900's the services in the private school at Kronsweide were attended by Sommerfelder and Bergthaler church members living in the Kronsweide and Lowe Farm areas and when plans were made to erect a church building the members living adjacent and north of the town site wanted the church building to be situated in Lowe Farm. The lumber had already been delivered to the site but was moved to the present location and the church was built in 1905.

One of the first ministers to serve the Kronsweide congregation was Rev. Isaac Friesen who was ordained as minister in 1896. The first locally elected minister was Rev. Jacob Schroeder. Other ministers who served Kronsweide congregation were two brothers of the aforementioned Rev. Isaac Friesen, namely Rev. Abram Friesen (ordained 1908) and Rev. William Friesen (ordained 1912); also Rev. Jacob W. Friesen (ordained 1936) son of Rev. William Friesen.

Some of the first Vorsanger in the Kronsweide Church were Peter K. Rempel, Jacob Gerbrandt, Johann Giesbrecht, and later Peter P. Rempel, Jacob P. Gerbrandt, Jacob P. Bergen, George Rempel, Peter Froese and Jacob Wiebe.

Presently serving as Vorsanger are: H.P. Harder, B.N. Wall, Jac. L. Friesen and C.W. Reimer.

In 1953 the church building was completely renovated and put on a basement.

The local resident minister is Bishop John A. Friesen and Henry B. Dueck serves as deacon of the church.



*Kronsweide Sommerfelder Church.*

### Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church

As more Mennonites moved into the Lowe Farm area in the early 1900's, ministers from the Bergthaler churches at Altona and Winkler were invited to come and hold services in the schools. By 1914 a local Bergthaler church had been organized and that same year the Bergthaler congregation held its first communion service. The first baptism service was held in 1923. On October 9th, 1928 a church building committee was elected and on December 22nd, 1928 the first church was dedicated for service. In 1949 this church was renovated and enlarged and put on a full basement. In 1964 the present church building was built and the new building was dedicated on October 18th. The Rev. J.J. Hooze, one of the pioneering ministers who had an active part in the development of the church, was present to participate in the dedication services.

The church began with an active Sunday School in its early stages and the Sunday School is still an integral part in its program today. The new building was designed to meet the need for more Sunday School classrooms.

The purpose of the church has been and is today, to preach the Word of God in such a way that people will be able to accept the gospel message; become God's children through faith in Jesus Christ and live consistent Christian lives.

The church's mission outreach has included involvement in the building program of the Mennonite Pioneer Mission in Northern Manitoba. A number of men from the local congregation have spent considerable time building houses and chapels on the Mission stations.



*Lowe Farm Bergthaler Church.*

The church is also involved with the worship services conducted at the Morris Manor, Morris Hospital and also the Extended Care Home on a regular basis. Since 1959 the local congregation has also been responsible for one monthly evening service at the Union Gospel Mission in Winnipeg.

Through its affiliation in the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, Canada and North America the local congregation is providing support to private schools, home mission ministries and foreign missionaries.

Resident ministers who have served in the church are William Heinrichs (1929), Peter P. Heinrichs (1937), John Epp (1938), D.D. Klassen (1939), George Groening (1948), Ernest Wiebe (1948), Peter G. Dueck (1957), Edward Funk (1971). Elected and ordained as deacons were: Henry Funk (1930), Abram H. Wiebe (1942), Beno H. Schroeder (1959), Peter Peters (1971).

It is interesting to note that Reverend Funk is the son of the first deacon of the church and his wife is the granddaughter of one of the first settlers in the Lowe Farm community, namely Peter K. Rempel. Deacon Beno H. Schroeder is the grandson of one of the first settlers, the late Rev. Jacob Schroeder and his wife is the granddaughter of a pioneering Baptist minister, Rev. Albert Karlenzig. At present, Minister is Rev. Peter H. Nickel.



*Lowe Farm Emmanuel Gospel Church.*

### **Emmanuel Gospel Church at Lowe Farm**

As commerce and education increase to meet the demands of a growing community, so Christian leadership looks for opportunities to penetrate a growing population with the gospel so that man's spiritual needs can be met as well.

During World War II, Mrs. Edward Groening and Mrs. Norman Spalding of Lowe Farm were concerned for the local youngsters who were not being reached with the gospel because of language barriers. The response was very rewarding when the two ladies pioneered an English Sunday School in the elementary school.

In 1949 George J. Wiebe, Ben E. Penner, and Jacob G. Wiebe sponsored an evangelistic campaign in the Co-op

Community Hall. This effort and the tent crusades in the following years did much to create revivalism and interest in starting another church in Lowe Farm. The Bill Kehlbers serving as missionaries in Alaska are examples of the fruit harvested in those early days. Weekly cottage prayer meetings were also begun in 1949 under the leadership of Jacob G. Wiebe.

In the spring of 1954 when the Jacob Wiebes returned to Lowe Farm after attending the Steinbach Bible Institute, the prayer group decided to organize an independent church. The church was to be founded on three basic principles. Firstly, it must have strong foreign missionary emphasis. Secondly, it must have local autonomy, (the right to govern all its own affairs). Thirdly, it must be a church that will use the language best suited to reach its constituency with the gospel. The matter of choosing a name, drawing up a constitution, and establishing favourable public relations was an interesting experience.

July 18th, 1954 marked the official opening of the Emmanuel Gospel Church in Lowe Farm. The morning service featured the dedication of the church building which had been moved in from Kane. The evening service featured the ordination of Jacob G. Wiebe as pastor by Rev. Henry G. Rempel of Steinbach Emmanuel Mission Church. The new church felt greatly honoured at the favourable interest and response shown by the community.

The first missionary conference was held in November. The little Booker stove had to work hard to keep the inside warm, and straw bales banked high outside tried to keep the cold drafts out. The first church council consisted of the following: Abe J. Kehler, Ben E. Penner, and Abe Falk as board of elders; Edward Groening, treasurer, and Eleanor Hyde as secretary.

As time moved on it was very interesting to see how the Lord brought school teachers and others to the church to replace the people who were forced to leave for Winnipeg due to lack of employment at Lowe Farm. In 1960 Ronald Hoepfner of Altona came to our district through marriage to Norma Spalding and was ordained as the assistant minister at the fall missionary conference in 1962.

It was with sad hearts that the congregation said goodbye to the Wiebes, their pastor, in the fall of 1965 when they left to serve the Lord on another field.

The work of the church continued under the leadership of Rev. Ronald Hoepfner, a school teacher, until the new pastor came.

May 28th, 1966 marked the arrival of Rev. Marvin Wall and family, of Hesston, Kansas. To provide a home for them a temporary school classroom from Plum Coulee was purchased and moved onto the foundation in August, 1966. Under the direction of Mr. Bill Dyck and Rev. Wall and with the help of many volunteers the classroom was turned into a beautiful home. The Walls, who had been living in the Albert Karlenzig farm home moved in on Oct. 29th.

In April 1968, after much discussion and prayer it was decided that a new church building was needed. From the July 31st, sod turning to the official dedication July 13th, 1969, Mr. Bill Dyck, Rev. Wall, the building committee,



and many volunteers, completed the present church building.

The congregation was again saddened June 30th, 1970 by the departure of the Walls who were following the Lord's call to other fields.

Rev. Henry Friesen of Pambrun, Saskatchewan, who became the next pastor, on July 30th, 1970, left after a stay of only 18 months.

Rev. Ed. Hildebrand served as interim pastor from his home in Steinbach for about a year.

July 6th, 1972, was a hi-lite in the life of the church when it celebrated a homecoming Sunday. Many familiar faces were seen, including those of four former pastors.

Rev. Herman Neufeld of Steinbach (formerly of Stuartburn) moved to Lowe Farm to become the pastor on August 31st, 1973. Present pastor is Rev. Allan Meikle.

### **The Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society**

Hard times seems to have been the reason for the origin of ideas of self help organizations. Another result of those difficult years was that people were more apt to help each other in times of distress or need. Good will was always abundant, but it seems that in the end, good will did not pay the bills.

Where the need for money was felt most urgently was when a death occurred in the family. Very often sympathizing neighbours would pass the hat at a funeral to help defray funeral expenses. This ultimately gave some sound thinking people the idea to concentrate on evolving a standard procedure whereby through group participation a predetermined amount would be paid out as a burial aid in the event of a death to help pay for funeral expenses.

Reference to this problem is found in the minutes of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op meetings of that period, indicating that discussions were held on the feasibility of forming an organization whereby a mutual fund would be established for the purpose of providing financial aid for funeral expenses. This idea was later passed on to be dealt with by the Credit Union Board which became a sort of supervisory board for the proposed organization. Acting in that capacity, they called a meeting in January 1940, at which the ground work was laid for the formation of a Burial Aid Society.

In January of 1941 a general organization meeting was called and an official name The Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society was chosen for the new organization. Henry B. Wiebe was elected as president, Isaac P. Klassen as vice-president and I.J. Warkentin as secretary.

It has been agreed that the death benefit be set at \$25.00 to begin with. The collection procedure was to levy 25 cents from every registered member after each death among the group. The area covered by this Society was a twelve mile square with the centre point being the town of Lowe Farm. The executive appointed one person in each of the rural school districts as well as for the town of Lowe Farm whose duty it was to collect the 25 cents from each member each time a death benefit was paid out.

As the membership increased, it became possible to increase the death benefit from \$25.00 to \$50.00. After a few years, an annual levy of \$2.50 per member was instituted and the death benefit was increased progressively to \$70.00 and later to \$100.00. With the annual levy arrangement it became feasible to have the secretary-treasurer in charge of the collection of dues.

Present membership of the Burial Aid Society is approximately 200. Since inception 250 benefits have been paid out, and has provided the people of Lowe Farm with a low cost burial service.



*The Ladies' Aid Society preceded the Women's Institute in Lowe Farm. This meeting was held at Charles J. Anderson's home in August, 1906.*

### **The Lowe Farm Women's Institute**

The Lowe Farm Women's Institute was organized on October 30th, 1947, with a membership of forty-seven. The board of directors for the first year were: Mrs. Wm. Friesen, President; Mrs. J.A. Braun, 1st Vice-President; Mrs. Ed Groening, 2nd Vice-President; Mrs. Herb. Braun, Secretary-Treasurer; Miss Anne Klassen, Social Convenor; Mrs. C.A. Wade, Red Cross Convenor.

Tasks such as supplying leadership to 4-H Garden Clubs, sponsoring cemetery clean-up, equipping the school playground, and sending fruit baskets to sick and shut-ins were immediately undertaken.

The W.I. has helped to canvass for the Cancer Society, Children's Aid, and March of Dimes. On the foreign field, the Institute has helped through UNICEF, sent clothes and layettes to the Unitarian Service and has sponsored war orphans through the Foster Parent Plan.

In 1950, the year of the Red River flood, the ladies of the local institute proved their worth by their involvement in the task of feeding flood evacuees and workers. When the first truck-load of flood evacuees arrived at 5:00 p.m., on May 6th, it soon became apparent that hot food would be needed, as some of the victims had not had a hot meal for days. A dozen or more women began cooking potatoes and borscht, and at seven o'clock that evening the first one hundred people sat down to a simple but nourishing meal. By 11:30 that night, our small village of 367 residents had opened its doors to 369 extra people. The sandwich committee had by this time



disposed of 60 loaves of bread and more would be needed. As the railway tracks to the east had been washed out, supplies were backed in by train from Roland, a distance of 16 miles to the west.

The ladies of the W.I. have always shown a keen interest in local recreational projects. Besides providing substantial financial support to the local skating rink they were instrumental in organizing the Little League Baseball team in 1966. Seeing the need for wholesome recreational activity for the young boys of the community they made provision in their 1966 budget for an expenditure of \$70.00 for the project and appointed Mrs. Anton Dyck and Mrs. Sid Lewis to get the project underway. These ladies canvassed the local business places and any citizen interested, for financial support and participating along the line of leadership. The response these women received was gratifying and soon the young boys were enjoying this sport under the coaching and managing done by willing and capable men of this community.

To encourage higher standards of education, a bursary to a Grade XI student and three Grade VIII awards were presented annually.

The W.I. has also contributed to adult education by sponsoring the Defensive Driving Course and also courses such as "Learn to Sew With Knits" and other tailoring courses.

Throughout the years, the W.I. has organized such social events as bazaars, Community and Borscht suppers, catered at banquets and at Annual Meetings. The annual picnic in June or July usually took the form of a sight seeing tour or dinner out, and the Christmas Party was generally a potluck supper to which family and friends of members were invited.

As the years passed, the membership roll had not increased and the elderly members were not able to play as active a part as they had in the past. Regretfully, at the year end of 1973, the remaining members decided that the Lowe Farm Women's Institute disband after 36 years of service to the community.

## DIEDRICH HEPPNER OF LOWE FARM

Diedrich Heppner was born on Jan. 5, 1889, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Hoepfner on a farm south of Plum Coulee. His parents were immigrants from Minnesota. They left the farm and moved to Plum Coulee where Mr. Hoepfner had a general store in partnership with Hiebert and Kenty. Here young Diedrich was introduced to business by the time he was tall enough to look over the counter. Education was of prime interest to the Hoepfners and Diedrich attended the Mennonite Educational Institute at Gretna. Later on he became one of the directors of the M.E.I. at Altona where he met his future wife, Susan E. Loewen, daughter of John J. and Anna Loewen.

The elder Heppner sold his share of the store and bought Lowe's farm, west of Morris. As people moved in nearby, lots were sold along the C.N.R. tracks, giving the town its long, narrow profile. The name came from the fact that they lived on Lowe's farm.



*Diedrich Heppner in his early Lowe Farm days in driver's seat. LEFT: Abram Giesbrecht, his uncle. RIGHT: Peter Giesbrecht, his cousin. Silting, another Giesbrecht cousin? (at Winnipeg Exhibition)*

Diedrich was very fond of children, and had time for his nephews and nieces and in laws, who were much younger than his wife. He initiated his nephews into the business he built up and taught them hard work and good management. He also served on the school board for many years and paid his taxes faithfully **that the** children of Lowe Farm got free books and supplies, which was not the case in other schools in the days of the depression. Mrs. Heppner also liked children and helped out in the teaching profession whenever the teachers were in short supply or ill.

He was connected with the church and served for many years as one of three trustees of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church. During the final years of the struggling Weisenamt, when it was already moving toward bankruptcy, the ministerial of the church asked Mr. Heppner and several other business men to serve as advisors to save the institution. He was also asked to come into the finance committee of the Bergthaler Church during that period. They found his advice to be sound and well thought out.

In the many years he served as a trustee on the Lowe Farm School Board he did much to shape the education of the community. When all the schools around L.F. arranged to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Canada in 1927 he MCed the first part of the program. It had been pouring rain during the night and it looked as though there would be no celebration. His remarks about two rains that day was appreciated by the children. He said, "One rain fell from the clouds and the other rain came from the eyes of the children".

D. Heppner was in public life for many years. He served for 8 years as a councillor of the municipality and as reeve for 12 years. During the flood of 1950 he saw that even those who refused to leave their flooded farms





her voice in song and her husband could tell how she was feeling by the songs she sang, even though he was a half mile away in the field.

In the home, strangers and friends were always welcomed. Died Heppner was on friendly terms with many people, so open house was the policy followed in that home.

When new immigrants arrived in the country, some of them found employment there. Here Susan taught them English while Died taught them Canadian ways of farming. It was hard work to feed the large threshing gangs, when all food had to be prepared at home, baking, canning and cooking for ten to twelve men with enormous appetites who relished the five meals a day that had to be served.

Hospitality was extended to strangers as well as friends and relatives. One stormy November day Died Heppner sent his helpers out on the highway to bring in stranded motorists and Susan had to prepare the house to receive them. (There was no hotel or motor inn in Lowe Farm.) That night every bed was occupied as eight extra people spent the night while the storm raged outdoors. Not until the snowplows came through the next day could they return to their homes in Roland and Winkler.

Susan was very loyal to the monarchy and took great delight in attending the ceremonies for King George and Queen Elizabeth in 1939 in Winnipeg. When Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip toured Canada she faithfully viewed their progress across the country on TV, and invited others who had no TV to come and watch also.



*Seeing King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in person in Winnipeg in 1939, was a thrill for Susan Heppner, as it was for thousands of adults and school children who lined the streets to see them. (photo taken by Bill Dickson, who was one of many civilians who volunteered to help with crowd control during the Royal Visit). BELOW: Feeding a threshing crew was a full-time job.*

After Died Heppner became ill, most of her time was spent at home. After her husband's death, she spent more time at her blind brother's bedside. He was ill in Winnipeg, and she came to be there with him.

In March, 1961 she went to help the ladies with their supper. She returned to Winnipeg and visited her brother on Monday, but on Tuesday morning a call came for her to be with her Lord.





*Kane in 1946, before Paterson Elevator burned down. BELOW: Kane Garage and Toews house in 1932.*

## HOW KANE GOT ITS NAME

In 1903, James Miller came from Ontario to the area which is now Kane and farmed 31-4-2W. A railway siding was constructed, and a townsite surveyed on the northwest corner of the farm.

Residents of the area wanted to call the new town Miller, but the C.N.R. insisted on calling it Kane. Walter Kane farmed a large scale spread between there and Sperling. Later, he founded Kane Equipment Limited.

An elevator was built at Kane in 1918, one year before James Miller left the area. His uncle, George Miller, farmed 5-5-2W from 1912 until 1934, when he sold the farm to Frank Blatz. Unlike Messrs. Lowe, Rose and Hope, whose farms still bear their names, Mr. Miller is all but forgotten, while the name of Kane lives on in the equipment business and in the village at the western edge of Morris Municipality.

## THE KANE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CHURCH

*by Dora Hildebrand*

Probably the first services to be held in the Kane School were by the Roland United Church during the thirties, but attendance was poor in the Anglo-Saxon and Mennonite community.

In 1939 Emmie Groening and Elda Toews held D.V.B.S. classes for the Canadian Sunday School Mission and as a result an interdenominational Sunday School was formed and held the name of Kane Christian Youth Society.

A strong leader in this Sunday School work was Henry P.Schellenberg along with F.G. Blatz, John Toews, Abram Toews, Nick Neufeld, Eddy Groening, Frank Groening, Jacob Epp, Abram Heide, G.G. Siemens. Speakes were invited from the Winnipeg Bible Institute









## KANE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The new school provided good facilities that both teacher and pupils had been waiting for, but by this time, plans in Manitoba were for the Unitary Division system. In 1959 these plans were implemented in a crash campaign, in nearly all the areas of the province. In the process of changing to the new system, there followed years when pupils were transported about from school to school to make use of classroom space to the best advantage. Situations and feelings were unsettled, and former loyalties disrupted. In 1973 the Kane School was closed with hardly a word of protest. All pupils now attend either Lowe Farm or Morris, or a special class in a neighboring town.

In 1975, the Kane School, and 5 acre grounds were bought by the community, and incorporated as The Kane Community Centre. The Centre is administered by a five member board elected at annual meetings. A social committee, also elected, handles the entertainment angle. Since its incorporation, there have been dozens of activities taking place. There have been a number of crokinole tournaments, drama nights, travel films, bridal showers, family gatherings, baseball and snowmobile meetings amongst the happenings. At one Smorgasbord held, there was an attendance of 250 people. Some of the Drama nights ran the same program two successive nights to an overflow crowd each night. One of the administrators remarked, "We've got to know our limit, we have only so much room."

In 1976, a Kane School Reunion was held. Students and teachers of former years were invited to a Homecoming Picnic. People from far and wide gathered to reacquaint themselves and reminisce. Hundreds of pictures were on display. Some form of program was held for a short period. Rain interfered slightly with outside activities for a time, but the weather improved and everything turned out fine. The rest of the time, there are all kinds of events going on to entertain.



*ABOVE: Kane Community Centre float in Shannon Festival.*

*BELOW: Paterson elevator in 1967.*

*BOTTOM: Kane businesses in 1958.*



# THE SCHOOLS

## NEUFELD SCHOOL

*submitted by Mrs. Abe F. Derksen*

The Neufeld School was built in 1912 on the S.E. 114 of Section 25-5-2 West. The school property was purchased from a Mr. Neufeld who lived there at that time.

Records do not show who was the first teacher, but Margaret Nickel taught there in 1913-1915. There were 11 students in grades 1-5. In 1916-1917 there were only 6 students.

Religion was taught between 3:30-4:00 p.m. The teachers salary was \$585.00 per annum, and the grant was \$59.15. Enrollment averaged anywhere from 14 up to 27 till the year 1935.

With the added benefit of being able to learn a second language (German) we were transferred from the Heabert School to the Neufeld School in 1935.

Having come from a school where the plumbing was located in a little out house, we felt fortunate that at the



*Neufeld School. BELOW: Neufeld students in the late thirties, with transportation. BELOW RIGHT: The new Neufeld School, built in 1944.*

Neufeld School we didn't have to make that trip outdoors in winter. Instead, there was a little room at either end of the leanto attached to the school.

The school also served as a church especially in winter, with ministers from different churches serving with the message. We were also privileged to attend Sunday School and choir practice.

Many children who lived a distance away would come to school with horse-drawn vehicles. I shall always

remember when I felt grown-up enough to go to school on horseback. At 4:00 the horse was always eager to get home. This particular day there were several students on the road ahead of me. I guess the horse kind of took over the controls and galloped ahead with me frantically pulling at the reins, and yelling for the students to get out my way. The students split up to either side of the road, but one decided to cross. I literally rode her over. I feared for what had happened to her. Luckily it wasn't too serious. I was really afraid of what my father's reactions might be, also the girl and I might never be friends again. That's all in the past and we are still friends.

At one time there were 2 little girls who got their rides to school in winter on a cardboard topped sled pulled by 2 big dogs, whose owner was the girls' uncle. The dogs however were not welcomed by the other students.

On January 17, 1944 with a strong wind blowing from the southeast, the old school burned down. However, with the wind coming from a favorable direction the teacherage was saved. It was presumed that possibly the wind had blown some live ashes against the school building. Fortunately classes were finished for the day so there were no injuries. Classes were again resumed in a few days in Henry Klassen's home, only a short walk away. Since there wasn't a very large class of students it soon became more suitable to have classes in the teacherage. It kind of cramped the teacher Miss Laura Hiebert into one small bedroom for living quarters. But being young and single she managed.

As soon as the weather warmed up a new school was under construction, and classes began in the new school next autumn.

Student enrollment remained steady and the teachers salary had increased to \$100.00 per month by 1950.

Throughout the years in addition to the academic and physical education the students were taught homecrafts for the girls and wood-working for the boys. These crafts were auctioned off at the annual Red Cross programs, which originated during the war years as a contribution to the needy.

Christmas concerts and picnics were highlights of the year by students and parents alike.



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## SETTLERS COME TO PLEASANT VALLEY

*excerpts by Ida Hoffman*

The first venturesome pioneers settled in Pleasant Valley along the Scratching River, four miles away from the nearest settlement and post office --- and 12 miles northwest of Morris, or any doctor. It took four to five hours to travel that distance in those days. This seemed to be the world's end. Just no one seemed to live north or west of Pleasant Valley. A lone wagon trail coming from Rosenort passed through Pleasant Valley and disappeared into no mans land.



*Pleasant Valley area residents in 1906, Alex Anderson, Gib Russell, C.J. Anderson, (Heabert District), Dave Rose.*

Cattle belonging to the pioneers, gathered in herds and roamed the prairies. Once, while looking for their cattle, an 11 year old girl, a nine year old boy and their big shepherd dog discovered a murdered man on the open prairies. Another time, these same children were confronted by a huge lynx. Their faithful dog held the lynx at bay while the children ran for home.

Sickness often struck families, bringing tragedy, since the Grim Reaper often beat the doctor to the door. Such was the case of the Knight family. Three times within a few months, death claimed a member of the family. The first time it was Silas, who left behind a young wife and 8

year old daughter Rosie; then, Silas' young brother Chris, and lastly, 8 year old Rosie.

A lone grave, with an illegible marker on it, about three quarters of a mile from the Knights, was kept up by the settlers for years. No one knew who rested here except that it was a young woman named Emma, who had drowned.

Early in 1898, into the western tip of Pleasant Valley, moved the Henschells. Father, mother, and seven daughters made this a lively household, though the buildings were ramshackle and old. That same year the Alex Andersons moved onto the Burke place.

Three miles west of Rosenort, along the old wagon trail, are the crossroads. The trail leading north heads to a branch of isolated village settlers who had made their homes around the bend in the river. The Toews and the Enns families had settled here. A little farther up the river were the Frondall's, Gunnesses, McDonalds and McMillans. To the south and east about a mile, stood the home of Ben Meiklejohn. A quarter of a mile south lived Fred Hill, the bachelor. One mile straight west of him was the home of the Knights; Edward Knight who was the father of Silas and Chris, and grandfather of Rosie.

Between 1900-1903, a lot of movement took place; the Meiklejohns, the Ottos, Gunnesses, McDonalds and McMillans moved out, and the Gebauers, Hoffmans, Cloughtons, Ditmans, and Shotts moved in.

## SPORTS



*Lew and Luther Lewis ready to leave for the game.*



*Glenn and Katie Lewis on stilts, 1907.*





*Pleasant Valley baseball team - Pete Gebauer, Lew Lewis, Allen Anderson, Luther Lewis, Harry Rose, Roy Anderson, Harry Anderson, Glen Lewis, Joe Anderson.*



*Girls at the bat.*



*Snowshoeing.*



*Starting off to a Sports Day. Lew Lewis, at wheel, Pete Gebauer, standing at left.*



*E.F. Lewis hired men band.*



*Ladies' hockey.*



*Ice sledding at the Lewis Coulee.*



*Horse racing.*





we brought it down to cut a few slices of ham, we could never forget to hang it up again, or else the rats and flies would be at it. You could least afford to have any meat spoil on you. Why keep the meat in the oat bin? - because it was always cool.

The gardens were very plentiful by 1914, as by now we had cultivated land. Potatoes were excellent. The only trouble was by this time, the country had also received some potato beetle eggs from somewhere. This meant another gruesome job because without chemical spray, the children had to take a tobacco tin with coal-oil and pick these red beetles off the potato plants. In a year or two the chemical Paris Green came out. This powder had to be mixed with water and by taking a nail and puncturing holes in a tobacco tin you could sort of spray the liquid on the potato plant. But most parents were too scared to use it because it was deadly poison if somebody would drink it. With small children, it was nothing to fool around with.

The first year at Lowe-Farm, we had to haul all the water including the drinking water. To this day Lowe-Farm does not have good well even if you go down 20, 30, or 70 feet. The next best thing was to slush out a water hole with horses and fresno. Of course all the neighbors chipped in. The spring run-off and the summer rain usually gave a supply of water for the livestock. But for household use, they would dig a well 10 to 20 feet away from the waterhole and put wood cribbing in; the water that filtered through the soil was our drinking water. Today the houses have basements, and they pour a cement cistern to fetch all the rain water for household purposes, or have a cistern outside underground from which you can put in the running water system.

The weekly laundry was another procedure. In the summer, the water had to be carried in by the children, either from the rain barrel or the water hole, then heating it in a boiler on top of the cookstove. The washing machine was powered by hand. In the winter, this task was performed in the summer-kitchen, which was heated with an old stove. The men would carry in blocks of snow to melt, to get water to wash with. When the clothes were dry, the tea towels, shirts, pillow cases and even overalls were starched and ironed. Later we had an iron mangle, so only the Sunday best cotton dresses had to be ironed.

For weekly chores, the children had to clean the tin cutlery with wood or coal or cowchip ashes, then wash, rinse and dry, so we had polished cutlery for Sunday best. After the lye soap laundry and the ash cleaned cutlery, you needed more than Palmolive, Dove or Lux soap for your rough hands. The luxury of stainless steel cutlery is greatly appreciated.

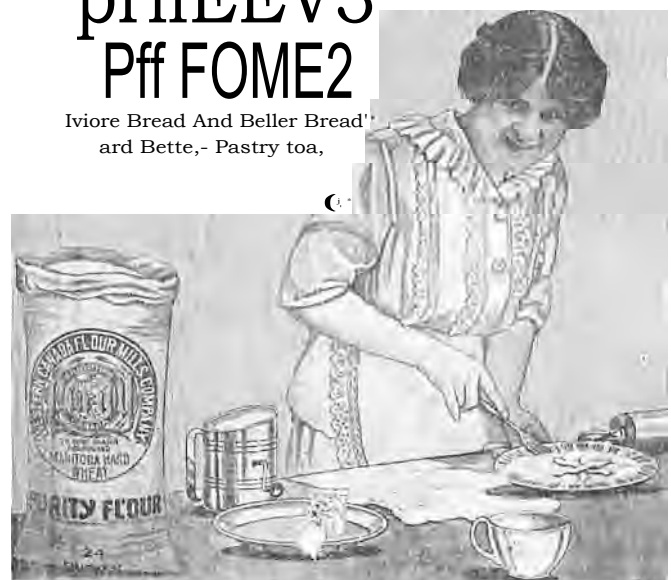
In the summertime on the bald prairie there was a shortage of firewood. Therefore on Saturdays the children had to go into the pasture carrying a gunny sack, and gather up all the dried cowchips, which is cow manure dried in the sun into manure pancakes. Another old-fashioned way of preparing fuel for next winter was to save up all the cow and horse manure during the winter, and in the spring of the year you would find a saucer shaped space in the yard. The manure was then moistened with water. Then we tied two or four horses behind each other with one rider, and would ride through



TOP: Hog butchering on the Rohrer and Sheppard Ranch about 1916. Ray Loving and Tom Stadnyk on platform. (Photo courtesy Ray Loving). ABOVE: Hog butchering at H.P. Klassen's in 1929. H.P. Heinrichs cutting sausage meat using his homemade "power meat grinder" running off his car axle. (Photo courtesy J.H. Bergen).

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*ABOVE, Left and Right: "Making coal". ABOVE LEFT: Putting manure in press one foot square and four to five inches thick, 1938. (Photo courtesy Jacob Bom). ABOVE RIGHT: Photo courtesy Peter G. Dueck. LEFT: Separating cream, 1916. (Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives). BELOW: Cutting ice for winter water supply in 1945. (Photo courtesy Anton Dyck). BOTTOM: Harnessing a horse, early 20th century. (Photo courtesy Francis Anderson).*

*FACING PAGE: Flour advertisement, 1920. The jingle might have read, "More Bread and Better Bread/and Better Pastry too./ And fabric for your Underwear/- When the Bakings Through."*



this manure in a circle until the mixture was dropping off the horses legs and hooves. This layer was usually 18 inches to two feet deep. When the trampling was finished, it was then shovelled into a neat flat box, and let stand for a day or two to let it get firm. It required manpower to take a square spade and cut it into large square sheets about 12" wide by the depth of the pile. These squares were then placed in a stook form to dry. When dry, they were piled into a shed to save for winter fuel. One thing could never be forgotten - the horses legs and hooves had to be scrubbed clean, and as shiny as polished fingernails, or else the horses legs and especially the hooves would fester.

The people that were a little more advanced already had central heating. This was a huge mud oven built out of homemade bricks. These bricks were manufactured out of clay mud, horse manure and water. This again had to be worked until it was so smooth that the feet came clean, then formed into bricks. Some people had a homemade brick machine to form the bricks, which were then dried to built the mud brick heating unit. To perform the masonry, the clay mud and manure mixture had to be made. This was your layer on and around each brick to make them stick together. When it was all built up, more mixture was used to smooth off the outside, so it looked polished. The door of this huge mud oven usually faced to the back as this unit was heated with straw. You can imagine what pleasure it would have been to be able to toss a bale of straw into this homemade furnace.

In the spring of the year, all harnesses had to be repaired and oiled. To do this the harness had to be taken apart piece by piece. It had to be placed on a wooden horse so as to clamp in the pieces that needed sewing. This required a special thread that, once threaded in the needle, was drawn over a black pitch. An awl was used to make the holes for the needle. To sew, a needle and thread was used on each side of the leather, going through the same hole back and forth. Some pieces could be riveted, others had those fancy spreader rings on the hame straps. These had to be removed before oiling the harness, then put back on again. It took a lot of ingenuity to put the harness all back together correctly.

In conclusion, let us say we are thankful for motorized farming. The farmer today does not work 365 days in the year to keep the farm operating. The exceptionally long day would be combining operations at harvest. Counting the hours of labor per acre - working the land, feeding the horses 365 days a year, fixing the harness and machinery - if a farmer today put in those hours, he would be farming more than five times the acreage.

## **KANE SETTLERS**

### **"Miller - Davidsons"**

James Miller came to Manitoba from Ashern, Ontario. In 1905, he married Margaret Johnston and then settled on 6-5-2W. Jim had built a house but had not turned any sod at the time. Tom Kirk's trees were the only ones within five miles of their home.

Mr. Miller had a picture of "Belle of the Ball" a pedigree mare who had won 13 prizes by 1875 and to whom most of their many show horses could be traced. The Millers also exhibited purebred Shorthorn cattle. The farm was sold in 1919 and the Millers moved to Carman.

George Davidson, Uncle to James B. Davidson bought sections 6-5-2 and 5-5-2 in 1903. James Miller had come with Mr. Davidson from Ashern, Ontario, and together broke the west half of 6-5-2W with oxen. The next year they bought a Hart-Parr gasoline engine and broke the E.

112 of 6-5-2W which belonged to Jim Davidson. George Davidson broke the whole section of 5-5-2W. Reg Trinder worked for Mr. Davidson in 1909.

J.B. Davidson married in 1896, at Greenback, Ontario and in 1910 came to Manitoba. Mr. Davidson was a western representative for the Manitoba Clydesdale Association and Shorthorn Breeders Association for many years and a well-known figure in agricultural circles throughout the west.

George Miller, an uncle to Jim Miller, bought section 5-5-2 in 1912. Mrs. George Miller says, "By the time I arrived in 1916, the house, barn and implement shed had been built. It was a great challenge to me, making a home and cooking for men. Having nursed, I had little experience, but trying to be wise I struggled on, and soon got used to western ways. I am sure I could think of many funny experiences especially being stuck in the mud and facing the blizzards. We sold out in 1943 to F.G. Blatz and moved to Toronto."



*Frank G. Blatz family in 1946. Henry, Dora, Frank, Anne, Jake, Norman with parents Frank and Mary (nee Dueck).*

## **FRANK C. BLATZ FAMILY**

*submitted by Dora Hildebrand*

It was in November, 1943 that Frank and Mary Blatz moved into the R.M. of Morris with their six children. The move was only about five miles, (from R.M. of Roland where they had lived for 5 years) and the school and friends did not change.

Mr. Blatz had purchased the section of 5-5-2 West, 1 112 miles east of Kane along the No. 23 highway, from

Mr. George Miller for \$35.00 per acre. This was done Mennonite style - verbal agreement.

The big house was certainly a treat, and the younger children were very excited about all the finished bedrooms upstairs. The house and three porches and the two french doors leading to the south porch which was very attractive.

The 114 mile lane to the yard was gravelled, and that was really something in the '40's. By far the most unique feature was the barn. Mr. Miller coming from Ontario,



had built the barn, and the eastern style was evident. The barn was built with the main beams notched and dowelled. There was a driveway leading to the hayloft, and the tractors with hayracks would drive up and unload the hay which was held in slings. In the middle of the barn loft was a big swing, and most of the kids growing up around Kane had many a good time on that swing in Blatz's barn! The barn was destroyed by fire in 1956 and the insurance company paid Mr. Blatz \$4,440.00. Replacement value was about \$12,000.00, but all agreed that timbers like that would be hard to find.

Mustard Pickin' Time came in early summer. Mr. Blatz would hire the neighbour children plus his own for 25¢ an hour, and they would walk the fields about 30 feet apart and pick all the wild mustard. Mr. Miller and his two hired men had done this for many years before, and needless to say, the fields were relatively clean to start with. Mr. Blatz says this type of weed control cost him about \$40.00 a year. The final work day was payday, and the kids usually each got an Orange Crush or Wynola too.

In 1964 Mr. and Mrs. Blatz left the farm and retired to Plum Coulee. Mr. Blatz still enjoyed farm life and so came back to work the fields for his sons for many years. Mrs. Mary Blatz passed away in Sept. of 1978.

The Blatz Family is as follows: *Henry* at Myrtle, *Jake* and *Helen* at Morden, *Frank* (wife Mary passed away in 1967) at Kane, *Ann* and *Art* Wiebe at Steinbach, *Dora* and *Henry* Hildebrand at Kane, *Norman* and *Elva* at Kane.

### **JAC AND HELEN BLATZ SON OF FRANK G. BLATZ OF KANE**

I, Jac Blatz, moved to Kane with my parents in 1938. In 1951, I married Helen Boehlig, of the Winkler District and moved into a house on the S.W. 1/4 16-5-2. We lived 1 1/4 miles from the Sperling gravel road, so when it rained, half the road came with us. The end was usually a walk home with big feet.

We built a new home in 1957 and in 1969, built a chicken layer barn (41 x 280) with cages. One year later, we bought Bill Dutchman's half section across the road, for \$10,000.00 per quarter.

I served on the school board for 11 years - 9 years with Kane Consolidated and 2 years with Morris MacDonald School Division. We attended the Kane Bergthaler Church till it closed its doors, also serving on the church board.

We had three children, born to us while on the farm - Terrance, 1952, Ronald, 1955 and Maxine, 1957. The children received their education in Kane, Lowe Farm and Morris. Terry started school in 1958, the first year the new school was built and opened. He married a local girl, Bonnie Groening, of Lowe Farm District. Ronald married Chris Dyck of Grunthal. They live in Winnipeg. Maxine is still in College.

We bought the farm from the Cornie Dycks, and before them, the David Enns lived there.

In 1976, we sold our farm to a German family and moved to Morden. We still farm as a sideline, but mainly

deal in John Deere sales. We lived in the Kane community as a family for 25 years.

### **FRANK D. BLATZ (SON OF FRANK G. BLATZ)**

Frank started farming in 1948, renting land from his father, F.G. Blatz. In 1952, he bought his first quarter of land south of Kane. In 1954, he married Mary Heinrichs.

In 1955, Frank bought the S.F. 114 5-5-2 West from his father. He now farms 400 acres of the home section (5-5-2W) He is also driving the school bus for his eleventh year.

They had seven children. Diane passed away at the age of 11 months, baby Lloyd lived only one day, as did the twins, Larry and Garry. The three surviving children are daughters, Joan and Linda, and a son, David, married to Judy Epp, living in Calgary. Mrs. Blatz passed away in 1967.

### **NORMAN BLATZ**

Norman Blatz bought his first quarter of land from his father, Frank G. Blatz, in 1955 - the Northeast quarter of Section 5-5-2 West, his father's home section. Norman farmed with his brother, Frank, and his father, till his parents retired to Plum Coulee in 1964.

Norman and Frank bought their first tractor together in 1947 - a 44 Special Massey, and they are still farming together.

In 1960, Norman married Elva Born of Kane, and in fall of 1964, when his father retired, Norman moved into the home place. In 1967, they purchased a quarter section (NE. 31-4-2 West) from A.J. Hyde, and moved there in May.

There was always a need to "supplement the farm". In 1966, Norman and Frank bought a new combine and truck. Together with two other combining units belonging to brothers, Jake and Henry, Norman, his wife and 2 small children, and brother Henry, took three units south in June of 1966 and 1967. They went south as far as Kansas and then moved north till their own harvest was ready.

From 1968 to 1972 he drove a school bus. In winter, Norman drove transport 6 years for Atomic transfer, and 6 years for Reimer Express, till 1970 when he built a pullet barn for 10,000 birds on floor operation and in 1974 he put in cages for 24,000 birds. The barn took the place of the trucking and they settled into real farming. Norma and Elva have four children, Dulaney, Christine, Jeffrey and Melanie.

### **GEORGE BORN FAMILY**

Mr. and Mrs. George Born moved into the Kane district in June, 1947, to take on a van route for Kane Consolidated School District. George also worked for Frank G. Blatz on the farm, and for Peter Klassen, who rented the back part of the Kane Garage.

In February 1949, George became elevator agent for Canadian Consolidated Grain Growers in Kane, after Vern Carroll. That year, all the grain at Kane, 170,000 bushels of it, was moved from the farms through both elevators in the fall and they stood empty till the next grain season. In 1950, the Wheat Board began the quota system, and grain buying became a year round business. In 1959, the agency was sold to United Grain Growers.

In 1963, George and Mary bought their own home in Kane, which they sold to the company on his retirement. George was grain buyer at Kane for 26 years. They are now retired and living in Summerland Apartments in Winnipeg. George and Mary had 8 children.

John married Dorothy Laidlaw. He's a purchasing agent for Foster Wheeler chemical on construction and is now living in New Orleans, Mississippi.

Evelyn married Wilfred Wiebe of Myrtle, now living in Winnipeg. He works for a sign company.

Leonard passed away in 1960 at the age of 21.

Elva married Norman Blatz of Kane, and they farm near Kane.

Keith married Jacon Bacon. He is a manager of the Credit Union in Sanford and has been robbed twice while working for the credit union.

Salley married Robert Nickel and lives in Altona. Robert works for C.F.A.M.

Stanley lives in Winnipeg and works in auto body for National Leasing.

Robert recently moved to Edmonton, and works at drafting.

## HENRY H. HILDEBRAND AND FAMILY - KANE

Henry and Dora Hildebrand purchased the "Mark Johnston farm" in the spring of 1959, for \$65.00 per acre (\$1,000.00 down) and started farming with an AR John Deere and a few small implements. The farm at 19-5-2 West along the Sperling road was situated just north of the first double dyke. This was familiar territory for the couple as Henry came from Sperling and Dora from

Kane.

This double dyke proved to be a hazard many springs as the flood waters coming from the Pembina Hills were just too much. In 1969, the bridge gave way and a floodway was built. In 1966, flood waters overflowed its banks and the yard was completely flooded. The water rose to the middle of the basement windows, but a sump pump kept the seepage out.

Farming was tough business in those days, the Henry (or Hank to most people) drove transport truck to Edmonton and then to Toronto, during the winter months to supplement his income, or to keep the farm going, as he used to say.

In the fall of 1970, the Hildebrands built a hen house, 284 x 40, which housed 12,000 birds. The birds came in at 20 weeks old and usually stayed for about one year of laying time. Gathering eggs kept the family busy and Henry stopped his regular transport runs in the winter at this time.

The Hildebrand's life centered around the activities at Kane, since the school, elevator, church and garage were all there. Being at the end of the school route, the children were always first on the bus in the morning and the last to get off at night, much to their dismay. When the school closed at Kane in 1973, the children went to Lowe Farm for junior high and senior high was taken at Morris.

With the use of fertilizers, and other chemicals, the grain yields increased and farming seemed to draw a better picture. The Hildebrands, like most farmers in the area, put up steel bins, and a work shop was built in 1976. In 1978, a new house was built on the same yard, as the old home though large enough, was in need of too many repairs.

Henry and Dora Hildebrand are still operating the grain and poultry farm. Their daughter, Connie, is married and lived in Winnipeg, and son, Steve, is working and still lives at home.

Although the Hildebrands have had this farm for about 20 years now, it is still often referred to as the "Mark Johnston farm along the Sperling Road."



## JACOB J. EPP FAMILY STORY

My father, Jacob J. Epp, migrated from Russia at the age of 18, in 1900, and hired out as farm hand for John J. Dyck, northwest of Plum Coulee. In 1905, he married Helena Martens.

Father taught school (German private school) southwest of Plum Coulee and farmed just west of there till 1910, at which place I was born in 1906.

In 1910, my parents moved to Lowe Farm and rented the half-section adjoining Lowe Farm to the north. Dietrich Hoepfner was the owner. The house was just a little west of the old one room school. That's where I started school. I recall a Mr. Peter Bueckert was my first school teacher.

In the fall of 1912, we moved to the Bloomfield district, 6 miles southwest of Kane; I spent the rest of my school days at Bloomfield.

I helped on the home farm till 1928, then hired out as farm hand at various places - spent some of the dirty thirties in Saskatchewan and also worked for Harry M. Mitchell at Myrtle till 1937 and farmed 3 years, seven miles northwest of Kane.



*LEFT: Jacob and Helena (Martens) Epp, about 1924. BELOW LEFT: Jacob H. Epp and fiancée, Mary Neufeld in 1939. BELOW RIGHT: Mary Epp's mother and stepfather, Abram and Maria Wiens.*



In fall of 1939, I rented the N.W. 114 31-4-2 West, adjoining Kane on the south side; the owner was James Davidson, of California.

In July of 1940, I married Mary Neufeld of Winkler. I had to take out an advance on my crop and borrow a cow, had a few chickens and so we started out as married partners. The crops were fair, so in 1945, we bought the quarter.

In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Wiens of Winkler (Mary's mother and stepfather) moved in with us, due to ill health. There were no elderly peoples' homes in those days. We took turns with Mary's brother, George Neufeld, in supplying them with a home. In 1950, Mr. Wiens passed away. After that, Mrs. Wiens lost her eyesight almost completely and passed away in June, 1954.



*Mary Epp and son, Ronald, in 1950. Kane in background.*

In 1947, our only child, Ronald, was born. He attended elementary school at Kane Consolidated school and finished high school at Lowe Farm. He worked for Norman Spalding for one season on road construction, then got a job, car and girl friend in Winnipeg. He got married in 1968 to a very nice, sensible girl, Mavis Condon. They have a boy, 9, and a girl, 5, and live in Winnipeg.

In 1960, we bought another 80 acres, 3 miles south of Kane and in 1964, built an addition to the old house, installed hot and cold running water and forced air furnace. That same year, my father passed away and Mary had to go to the rehab hospital with arthritis for 6 weeks.

In 1965, my mother came to live in a little cottage we had in our yard. She was later hospitalized and passed away in 1966. In 1968, we sold the quarter of land to Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Friesen and bought the house on 130 Boyne East, in Morris from August Rausch. We still live there, so have lived in the Morris Rural and town area for 40 years. I have served on the Kane consolidated school board for some time; was on the Kane Berghthaler church board for some time and am on the Morris Senior Citizens' committee now. Mary taught Sunday School for a number of years at Kane; was active in the Kane Mission Sisters as well.

## JANE AND BILL BRAUN

In September, 1958, I was employed as teacher with the Kane Consolidated School. In August, 1959, I married Jane Wieler of Haskett (South of Winkler). We lived in the Kane School teacherage until June, 1965, at which time, we moved to Winkler. During these seven years at Kane, I taught the students in Grades 5-8 inclusive, and served as principal of the school during the last three years as well.

In 1965, we moved to Winkler, where I worked with the mentally handicapped students in the private school. At the present time, I'm working with the Garden Valley School Division as co-ordinator of Special Services. We are living in the Greenfarm Community (northeast of Winkler) with our four children, Lloyd, Pauline, Lois and Kevin.



*John and Katherine (Schellenberg) Toews in 1936, with Art, June and Wilma.*

## A.G. TOEWS

The family moved one mile east and one mile south of Kane in 1937, from the Myrtle district. The family consisted of 4 girls: Erna, Elda, Marilyn, and Mildred, and 2 boys - Walter and Bill. All are living today, with the exception of Bill, who died at the age of 15, as the result of a farm accident.

Erna married Frank Doerksen of Steinbach, carpenter and farmer, and they have lived in B.C. for over 30 years. They have five children - 3 boys and 2 girls.

Elda married Henry Thiessen of Steinbach. They have a family of 2 girls and 2 boys. At present, he is the superintendent of Hanover School Division.

Walter married Rosie Groening of Kane. Their family consists of four girls. Walter combined teaching and farming, but as of last fall has retired from teaching.

Marilyn married John Wiebe of Plum Coulee. He has been a farmer, teacher, superintendent and now is an implement dealer in Plum Coulee. Marilyn teaches in Altona.

Mildred married Tony Geach, an engineering technologist. They have a boy and a girl and live in Winnipeg. Mildred was a teacher and social worker for many years.

After selling the farm in 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Toews retired to live in Morden. Five years later, Mr. Toews died of a heart attack. Mrs. Toews is now in a unit of the Tabor Home in Morden. In 1978, she celebrated her 80th birthday.

## JOHN AND KATHERINE TOEWS

John Toews (born 1903 - Kronsgrart) and Katherine Schellenberg (born 1905 - Altona) were married in 1927. After two years of farming at Rosefarm in summer and living at Kronsgrart in winter, they settled half a mile west of Kane in 1929. Their small house burned to the ground in 1931. A house was subsequently built in Kane for

\$275.00, the total gross income from the farm (quarter section) that year.

After being relieved of the farm in 1931 by the mortgage company, a few implements were sold, the proceeds of which were used to construct a service garage. The front section of the garage became a grocery outlet and various dealerships were taken on, the main ones being John Deere and North Star Oil, which remained with Mr. Toews until he left the business in 1960.

With the help of Bill and Herman Schellenberg (Katherine's brothers), Leonard Penner and others, the business became well established, leading to the purchase of a 1936 Deluxe Diamond T 2 ton truck (still running) and the eventual construction of a general store in 1939. The lumber for the store cost \$840.00 and was shipped directly by rail from B.C. The farm had been taken on again in 1935, but the store became living quarters for the family, soon to be 8 in total (Art, June, Wilma, John, Richard and Bill).

Although all of the family members worked in the business at some time, Art, along with Pete Harder, who started work in 1942, nurtured the business into a going concern.

They became involved in school affairs as a result of a visit by the Minister of Education, becoming chairman of the board (John) and trustee-secretary (Katherine).

The Toews moved back to the farm in 1949, in the meantime, and in 1957, a new garage was built in Kane, which Pete Harder purchased in 1960. The store was sold to J. Wiebe in 1963 and then repurchased in 1974 and refurbished. The Toews moved to Steinbach in 1974 for a taste of life on "Jan sied".

During their stay of over 47 years in the Kane area, John Toews was sought out for his ability to repair pretty well anything, and keeping inflation in check in the process. Katherine Toews during this time, boarded any number of hired help as well as raising a family. After which, at age 57, she received her L.P.N. certificate and worked at Morris hospital until the move to Steinbach.

Her interest and loyalty to the job was demonstrated by occasionally volunteering a 16 hour shift when the situation required.

## THE JOSEPH WHITE FAMILY

Joseph White came as a young man from Ireland to Canada and to Manitoba in 1918 and lived at Lowe Farm with his brother-in-law Bill Beggs, who was the station agent there. The dreaded flu was raging at this time and different people appreciated the help given by Joseph White and others who had escaped the flu.

Joseph White returned to Larne, Ireland in February, 1919 to marry Margaret Gardner. The young couple returned to Canada to take up farming south of Kane on 31-4-2, later moving just north of Kane to 6-5-2.

There were six children in the family; Alexander Gardner, Francis James (Frank), Tom Allen, Margaret, Lillie and Jean. The family took an active part in the community and all were interested in sports. Mr. White was School Trustee at Kane School 1927-1929. In 1928 the school was closed for the month of September due to **Infantile Paralysis. He also drove a school van 1928-1930. His son Alex also drove a school van for a number of years before the family moved to Miami on 13-5-7 in the fall of 1949.**

Frank White married Thelma Brown **and they have** two boys Tim and Doug. Frank is with the Kodak Company in Toronto.

Tom married Cleona Hyde of Kane and they have four children; Bob, Glenn, Daryl and Janine. Tom is with McLeod's Limited in Winnipeg.

Margaret married Doug Clarke of Regina and they have two sons Barry and Brian.

Lillie married Walter Penner and they had two daughters Carol and Audrey. Lillie passed away in February in 1968.

Jean married Joe MacDonald and they have two sons Bruce and Jim. The McDonalds live in Calgary.

Mr. and Mrs. White and Alex sold their farm at Miami in the fall of 1966 and took up residence in the town. Mrs. White passed away November 13th, 1967, Mr. White on December 8th, 1967.

## JOHN F. BRAUN SON OF JOHAN J. BRAUN

John F. Braun came to Lowe Farm in 1914. Born 1894, August 23, John F. Braun died July 24, 1974. Born 1894, December 8, Tina Klassen died on September 27, 1970. (married at Lowe Farm)

John and Tina Braun lived and farmed at Lowe Farm all their married lives. They had no family, but as they had a host of relatives living in the district, it seemed a niece or nephew always found a home to go to for school or work.

Before they retired, they lived and farmed at the west end of Lowe Farm on the south side of the highway.

John always had a very nice team of horses, especially his one matching team. When he had them ready to go out, they were more groomed with harness polished with spreaders, than any lady today, going to the opera. The



*John F. and Tina (Klassen) Braun.*

horses seemed to sense this, and walked with such dignity. John was a prosperous **farmer** in his day and age.

Tina always had chickens, milked cows and had a big garden.

John claimed she fed him so much chicken, he could crow day and night. They were both very humoristic people. When there was no excitement, John would create some. He would enter a chicken house, flap around until he had the chickens making such a noise, that Tina would come running to see whether there was weasel or a skunk in the chicken house. But to her dismay, it was only her husband, creating some fun - so he thought. John would forever be teasing, not only his wife, but all their friends and neighbours as well.

## A HISTORY OF THE ENNS FAMILY 1875 to 1979

*by John K. Enns*

My father, Cornelius B. Enns, was born in Russia in 1872. When he was three years old, his parents, three brothers, and his sister came to Canada via a passenger boat. During the voyage his twin brother died due to the poor conditions aboard. After crossing, they settled at Blumenort, north of Steinbach, where my grandfather was employed as a cow herder for the village.

In 1902 with the family almost full-grown, they moved to a homestead six miles southwest of Lowe Farm. At that time the town was practically non-existent, so groceries and lumber were bought in Plum Coulee instead. The land was broken with two work horses and a 20' handplow. While plowing, my father often dug up small saplings and replanted them during meal times. Some of these large poplar and maples are still flourishing.

Father married Helen Kehler, a girl from the Lowe Farm area, in 1909. They raised a family consisting of three boys and one girl. Their first home was a house-barn combination, and they lived in it all their married life. My mother passed away in 1934 at the age of forty-four due to terminal cancer. We laid my father to rest in 1952 at the age of eighty-one years. During their lifetime, however, hard times were experienced through the Dirty Thirties. Because of the depression the homestead was on

## THE MORRIS ALTMAN FAMILY

Mr. Morris Altman and his wife, Rebecca, came to live in Plum Coulee, Manitoba, from London, England, in 1905.

The family consisting of Morris Altman and his wife, Rebecca, his son Hyman and three daughters, Betty, Anne and Florence Altman took up residence in Lowe Farm, Manitoba in 1920, where Mr. Altman established a general store business and carried on this business at Lowe Farm, until the year 1930.

In 1931, the family took up residence in Sperling, Manitoba, where Mr. Altman operated a general store business, in that village. During the family's residence in both Lowe Farm and Sperling, Manitoba, Betty Altman attended the St. Boniface Hospital and graduated as a nurse from that hospital in St. Boniface, Manitoba. Anne Altman graduated from the Normal School in Winnipeg and taught in the rural areas of Manitoba for a number of years. Florence Altman became a secretary.



*Hyman Altman, wife, Bessie and daughter, Sharon, of Vancouver, in 1974.*

Hyman Altman resumed his studies after an absence of 12 years while assisting his father in the general store business in Lowe Farm, Manitoba, and Mr. Isaac Warkentin, who was the Principal of the high school at Lowe Farm, was greatly responsible for Hyman Altman continuing with his studies. He graduated from the Manitoba Law School with honours in 1934, was articled to the firm of Kennedy, Kennedy and Kennedy, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and became a member of that firm in 1939, under the name of Kennedy, Kennedy, Kennedy and Altman.

In the year 1947, Hyman Altman and his family took up residence in Vancouver, British Columbia, where Mr. Altman was admitted to the Bar of the Province of British Columbia in 1947, and on December 30, 1971 was appointed Queen's council. Mr. Altman has two sons, Joel Mark Altman and Morris Altman, who are both lawyers and who are practicing law with him under the firm name and style of Altman and Company. His daughter Sharon graduated with a Bachelor's Degree, and a Bachelor of Education Degree from the University of British Columbia, and a younger son, Ronald is now attending the University of British Columbia, who hopes to enter law in due course.

The Altman family moved from Lowe Farm to Sperling, Manitoba in 1931 and in 1934 took up residence in Winnipeg, Manitoba and resided there until 1946 when the senior Altmans retired to take up residence in Vancouver, British Columbia.



*Cornelius B. Enns plowing in the 1920's.*

the verge of being lost but somehow they managed to keep it.

Many luxuries present today were unheard of at that time. They travelled by horse and buggy, and during the winter a sleigh was used. All the farmwork was done with horses until 1940 when I took over the farm. The last horse was sold in 1952, since tractors had proven themselves more efficient for doing the field work.

In 1948, I was married to Mary Ginter who grew up north of Lowe Farm. We had seven children and this included two sets of twins. Wayne, the eldest son, is presently living in Halifax, Nova Scotia and is now married. They have a two year old daughter named Heidi Christa. Jack and his wife Irene are serving three years under MCC in Grenada, West Indies where he is teaching high school and university students. Edward is farming here, and Art is attending bible school in Steinbach. Henry has begun a partnership in Winkler in the field of Domestic Electronics. Marvin and Marlene are completing grade 12 at Morris Collegiate.

As for my two brothers and sister, all of them are married as well. My older brother, Cornelius, married Mary Nickel and they are now living in Abbotsford, B.C. Agnes, the only girl, married Abe Hiebert, and they are retired, living in Winnipeg. The youngest family member, Henry, married Mary Toews and they are residing in Landmark.



*John K. Enns beside the "top sleigh" used in winter.*





*Phil Bourgeois*



*Louise Bourgeois*

## **MRS. PHIL BOURGEOIS** **Community Helper and Friend**

*by Justina Wiens*

A colorful outstanding personality who did much to brighten the lives of the community during the depression years was Mrs. Phil Bourgeois, perhaps better known as Louise.

On a bleak and blustery day in April 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Phil Bourgeois arrived in Lowe Farm to take over the duty of station agent. Reflecting back on that day she stated, "Little did I realize I would get to love you all so much; the pleasant times together, working together made those the happiest years of my life."

Their "welcome mat" at the station was out from the start. Soon it was known that this couple loved to entertain, especially the younger generation. Her ready wit and good sense of humor added zest to the lively conversations or debates engaged in during the visits. If there ever was a time when we needed people with patience, tolerance and above all, a sense of good humor, it was in those trying years of the "dirty thirties."

Louise was the dynamic lender, director and producer of the Lowe Farm Drama Club. Entertainment then could not be bought but had to be made. Under her leadership, skits, monologues, picturesque tableaux and three act plays were put on. Her warm, encouraging manner brought forth the best noting qualities in each character. Her own dramatic power was in evidence when she played the leading role in "An Old-Fashioned Mother". There was not a dry eye in the audience.

She was known best of all for her self-giving personality in the field of nursing. Her great love for her fellow man was displayed in her compassionate care for the sick and the dying. Frequently she was unassisted by a doctor when delivering babies. She was skillful in handling successfully the varied first aid cases that were brought to her. Everyone knew her capabilities, so whenever the doctor could not be reached in time or could not be afforded, she would be on call. Out of town visits to patients often saw her riding on a stone boat or caboose in cold winters or by Bennet wagon in summer.

Money and jobs were scarce then. On occasion Louise overheard a conversation about the plight of a young girl who had received a job in Winnipeg but she nor her parents could afford the train fare. The result was that

the Bourgeois couple paid the fare and the happy young lady was at her job in time.

There was never a dull or idle moment in her life. This busy, jovial woman won the hearts of the citizens on whose behalf she made the varied contributions.

Her stay in Lowe farm terminated shortly after the passing of her beloved husband in 1938, but the memory of them will remain.

Presently she resides in Winnipeg and is known by the name of Louise Streight. She is widowed for the second time.

When her time comes to go, this is her final request: "I want no tombstone over my head to mark where I am laid, no music but the notes which by the winds are played. I only ask that on my grave when life as at an end shall crop the moisture of tears, the dear drops of my friends."

## **JACOB BRAUN**

With the exception of a brief residence in Winnipeg, Jacob Braun was a thirty year resident of the Morris Municipality. He and his wife Elizabeth (Bergen) spent those thirty years from 1919-1949 struggling to raise a large family of thirteen children. They moved often, but generally remained in the close proximity of the town of Lowe Farm.

Jacob's parents, Jacob and Katherine nee Schwartz, immigrated from Southern Prussia and settled in Tannau, near Niverville, Man. Young Jacob was born there in 1874, but shortly thereafter the family moved to Altona. In 1897 he married Elizabeth Bergen (born 1879) another former Tannau resident.

Twelve children were born to them between 1897 and 1919. During these years they farmed, first at St. Joseph, than near Rosenfeld, and finally in 1916 at Rush Lake, Sask. In 1919, they again settled on a farm, this time south of Lowe Farm at S.E. 15-4-5 West. Shortly thereafter their last son, David was born.

Even during their stay in Morris Municipality, mobility again reflected Jacob and Elizabeth's hard-fought task of raising a large family during difficult years in our country's economy and growth. Eleven moves were made by this family, until Jacob and Elizabeth at last settled on lot 10-P1-431 in the town of Lowe Farm in 1936. As already mentioned, ten of these homes were in or close to Lowe Farm. Only a few months saw the Braun family outside of the A.M. of Morris and that time was spent in Winnipeg.

Although Jacob still owned a quarter section of farm land while living in Lowe Farm, after 1936 he worked at other occupations as well in order to support his family. If variety is the spice of life, his was quite well seasoned, as he was employed in several quite diverse occupations. For some time he operated a butcher shop and provided a part-time transfer service for the community using his one ton Model T truck. As a transfer operator, he hauled cattle to the meat packers in Winnipeg. Also in the 1930's, drainage and bridge work was his occupation as he struggled against the Red River "gumbo" with a team of horses and hand controlled slush scraper. His last farm at N.W. 25-5-2 West which is northwest of Lowe Farm



*Family of Jacob and Elizabeth (Bergen) (seated) in 1939. BACK ROW: Jacob (missing is John), William, Herman, Henry, Bernhard, Baird. FRONT ROW: Anne, Neeta, Mary, Agatha, Tina, Elizabeth.*

was purchased in 1932, was at that time prairie hay land. A portion of this hay land was broken by horse and hand plow, and later completed with the assistance of a tractor and plow. Jacob's final occupation between 1938 and his retirement in 1948 at the age of seventy-five was as a salesman of cord-wood and fresh fish.

He out-lived his retirement by only one year and died at the age of seventy-six in 1949. Elizabeth remained in their home in Lowe Farm until 1962 when she also passed away.

During these years of hard work for Jacob, Elizabeth was also extremely busy raising her thirteen children. As they grew up, some moved away from the R.M. of Morris, but a number of them did remain in the vicinity.

Elizabeth and Jacob also named their eldest son Jacob. This boy who married Maria Klassen, farmed south of Lowe Farm until he became a grain buyer at various points in Manitoba. They had three children, Ed of Clearbrook, B.C., Art of Morden and Betty of Niverville.

John the next child, married Tina Harder and became employed in the road construction field. He died accidentally in 1938 while working in Quebec; he was operating a dragline which slipped off a bridge while crossing a river. They had three daughters, Leona of Newfoundland, Luella of Prince George, B.C., and Irene of Winnipeg.

Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, married Leslie Kitt, a railroad engineer. They lived in Winnipeg and had one son, Bob of Winnipeg.

William or Bill married Anna Klassen and remained in the Morris Municipality for many years. Together with his cousins, the Wiebe brothers and later with his younger brother Herman, Bill formed his own construction company. Bill is now retired and living in B.C. They have two daughters, Doreen of Aldergrove, B.C. and Jacqueline of Vancouver, B.C.

The next daughter, Tina, another B.C. resident, married Eddie Higgins and first moved to Montreal. Tina was a long time employee of the T. Eaton Co.

Another daughter, Agatha, also left the province. She and her husband Peter Peters- moved to Valley View,

Alberta, where she still lives. They had a daughter, Lavina, and a son, Ronald.

Mary, who married Jake Braun of Altona, who was in the home building and carpentry trade. They have three children, Valera of Winnipeg, James of Vancouver, and Gail of Winnipeg. They now live in Vancouver.

Neeta, who is not married, has also gone west and is living in Vancouver, although she lived in Lowe Farm until after her mother died.

Herman, who began his career in construction with his older brother William, married Lenora Groening. He lived in Lowe Farm until his death in 1973. They have three sons, Earl of Saskatoon; Larry, presently in Brazil; and Lloyd of Saskatoon.

The sixth daughter Anne, married William Hunt, a member of the R.C.A.F. who later was an employee of the C.N.R. Anne was an employee at the Chocolate Shop in Winnipeg for many years. The Hunts reside in Winnipeg and have one son Patrick, of Toronto, Ont.

Henry, another son, moved to Rosenfeld and later to Winnipeg with his wife Martha (Giesbrecht). They had four children, Karen of Brandon; Amy, Dennis and Tim, all of Winnipeg. Henry was employed in construction until his death in 1958. He had three years of service in World War II.

The only present resident of the R.M. of Morris is Bernhard, who was born at Rush Lake, Sask. He married Katherine Giesbrecht. Road and drainage construction has been his occupation throughout most of his life, with the exception of three years of service in the Armed Forces during World War II, and is at present the Postmaster in Lowe Farm. They have two daughters, Sandra of Sperling; and Merelyn of Oakville, Man.

The last member of Jacob and Elizabeth's family was David. He married Helen Rempel. Construction and World War II service also was his way of life and he was Postmaster in Lowe Farm at the time of his death in 1968. They had six children, Terry of Calgary; Ken of the Yukon Territories; Janice of Winnipeg; Lori of Edmonton; Randy and Curtis who along with their mother still reside in Lowe Farm.

Jacob and Elizabeth had thirty grandchildren.

## PAUL AND ANNE BRAUN

Paul's parents came to Lowe Farm in 1923, where they started farming. My parents (Peter P. Funks) were also farmers, living in the "Cutta", just southwest of Lowe Farm.

Paul and I were married in 1935, and raised four children. Times were difficult in those days; we had rented a farm just northeast of Lowe Farm, were hailed out twice and rusted out once.

In the meantime, Paul was selling Minneapolis Moline farm machinery for Henry Friesen of Rosenort. After three years of labour on that farm, Paul took over his parents' (the Dave Brauns) farm, with the help of his brother. We lived with his folks for a year, raising pigs and chickens, the proceeds of which went for a down payment on a small house in Lowe Farm.

Paul switched over to selling Massey Harris, did tinsmithing, selling wood and flour; later he and his brothers ground up grain to make chicken feed.

The first road Paul helped build was done with horse on the Morris to Lowe Farm road, before we were married. Construction must have got into his blood at that time. Later, he became a contractor and enjoyed seeing the tractors and men moving to get the job done.



*Paul Braun's first dragline, 1946.*



*Paul Braun Construction tractor inventory at the time of Braun's sale in 1968.*

Paul then bought a garage from D. Heppner and became part owner of a dragline and worked cleaning out ditches north of Lowe Farm; the Lewis Coulee and many others. He soon purchased a scraper, a bull dozer, with his first big construction job being the building of a road through the Whiteshell from Whitemouth to Seven Sisters. He built many roads, too numerous to mention, railroad beds at Red Lake, Ontario, at Watrous, Saskatchewan, Grand Prairie, Alberta, did brushing one winter and paving for a few years.

We started off on a shoe string but gradually built our way up. Along the way, we have had many trying experiences, trials, errors and hardships. With anticipation to see the next job and always the question - Would it be finished on time?

Prior to that came the bidding, throwing figures around for a few weeks, the deadline, and sweating it out to see if you'd be lucky. Then there was the joy of seeing a finished road, well built, to the engineers' satisfaction.

Paul had a few firsts. While building part of the Red River Floodway, he used two of the biggest earth movers in Canada. He built the first road on permafrost at Wekusko (which was a success) built a mile a day, with the help of other contractors from Gypsumville to Grand Rapids. This had never been done before, except on the Alcan Highway.

We had some harrowing experiences. In the Whiteshell, the men were chased by bears. On another job, Bill Braun of Grunthal was severely burned, while washing his overalls in gas, with only a screen between him and a gas lamp. Viola, our daughter, was the only one in camp, and she jumped in the truck and took him to the Morris Hospital, where he recuperated.

In the Yukon, driving back to lunch, the truck with the gang slid down a deep ravine and finally got hung up on a tree. This, no doubt, saved the men and nobody was hurt.

On another occasion, Paul drove a D8 on a barge and it tipped off into 20 feet of ice cold water. He went back to turn the motor off with only a few feet sticking out, thus saving the tractor. They worked until midnight (12 hours) with two tractors and sea divers until they got the machine out.

The worst tragedy of all was at Bellsite, north of Birch

River on No. 10 Highway, where his brother, Bill, was killed.

All in all, we were lucky, not having too many accidents. We also had the pleasure of seeing a lot of our country, meeting many people and making many friends.

After much pondering and thought, Paul decided to retire in 1968, selling his machinery. We left for Vancouver Island to buy some acreage and began building homes and a swimming pool, with the help of our son, Jim, Bobby Kiassen and Allan Hiebert. House-building was something new for Paul, but he wanted to try it. After he sold out, we came back to Winnipeg.

We bought half section north of Rosenort and farmed it for two years. After selling it, we bought the Taylor farm, north of Morris and the Earl farm a year later. Now we're back to square one, farming and gardening back in the municipality of Morris.

We raised four children, Viola, Jim, Lavonne and Betty. Viola took a sewing course and worked for



*Paul and Anne Braun on their 40th Anniversary.*

Safeway. She married Lou Piasecki, who was in the Air Force at that time. They had five children, Jamie, Davey (who passed away) Donna, Joey and Paul. Viola passed away in 1978.

Our son, Jim, worked with his dad in construction. For a time they had a trailer court; but is now involved in Bumper to Bumper stores with his dad. Jim married Bev Aikens; they have four children, Cheryl, Debbie, Jim and Terry.

Lavonne married Ron Melnyk who was a bookkeeper at the time. They have moved to B.C. where Ron is in Real Estate. They have three children, Lori, Ronnie, and Rody.

Betty was a school teacher at Dufferin for two years. She married Richard Ressler; they farm near Morris, now. Their children are Kim, Todd and Mark.

## **JACOB I. FRIESEN**

Jacob I. Friesen, wife Agatha and son Isaac moved to the Lowe Farm district in the fall of 1918. They moved to a farm out of the west end road of Lowe Farm, 4 miles north and 314 miles west. Mrs. Friesen was the former Agatha Schroeder, daughter of the John Schroeders of Lowe Farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob I. Friesen's first son was born on May 4, 1918, in the Plum Coulee area. While living on this farm in Lowe Farm, 4 children were born to them. John - June 16, 1919; Agatha - Oct. 4, 1920; Mary - Dec. 1, 1921; and on April 22, 1922, Katie was born. Dr. Gavin, the Doctor from Plum Coulee, helped in some of the deliveries.

The children attended Neufeld School District. Isaac had Miss Lee as his first teacher, and Mary's was Miss Sorry.

The Friesen farm continually flooded out year after year, and they lost all their investment.

The farm finally was sold for taxes, and in 1927 the Friesen family moved to Plum Coulee where Jake and Annie were born. Mrs. Agatha Friesen died Feb. 20, 1965 in Winkler and Mr. Friesen died on Oct. 11, 1973, at the age of eighty.



*Agatha Schroeder Friesen, wife of Jacob I. Friesen, seated in middle. With her are her brother, Anton (Tony) Schroeder, and sisters, Annie (Mrs. Martin Friesen) and Susan (Mrs. Peter Friesen (seated)). They were all children of Mr. and Mrs. John Schroeder of Lowe Farm.*

## **PETER A. FALK**

*by Peter A. Falk*

I, Peter A. Falk, was born September 27, 1897 in Altona, to Peter and Aganetha (nee Banman) Falk, the oldest of nine children. The following year my parents moved to Lowe Farm.

On July 22, 1920, I married Helena Penner, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter P. Penner. We spent our first two years of married life on a farm north of Lowe Farm. Here our son, Ed, was born on May 29, 1921. Ed and his wife Ruth (nee Murdock) and family, now reside in Calgary, Alberta.

On November 11, 1922, together with my parents, we moved to Mexico. While in Mexico two daughters were born to us, Anna, February 17, 1923; and Susan, September 26, 1924. Anna and her husband John L. Braun, and their family live in Lowe Farm, while Susan and her husband Allen Norris and their family live in Winnipeg.

In May of 1925, we moved from Mexico back to Manitoba and I worked on a farm that summer for William Deutschman who farmed two miles west of Lowe Farm. In the fall of that year we moved to Morris and I worked for the C.P.R. for a short time. While in Morris we lived in several different houses, including a short stay in a hotel situated close to the railroad station.



*Peter and Aganetha (Bauman) Falk in 1953.*

**Two sons were born to us in Morris, Henry on December 2, 1926; and Peter on December 9, 1928. Henry and his wife Geraldine (nee Knasacich) and family are presently living in Edmonton, Alberta, while Peter and his wife Susan (nee Schroeder) and family reside in Winnipeg.**

**From 1927 to 1935 I worked for C.E. Anderson on road construction, and during the three years prior to 1935, we lived on the Anderson farm a few miles east of Lowe Farm.**

**In 1935, we moved to Lowe Farm and after living in a rented house on main street for a few months, we built our own house on a lot across the road from Heppners' pond in the northeast part of town. Here another daughter, Leona was born on July 31, 1935. Leona and her husband Lloyd Henders and their family live on a farm near Elm Creek. In 1945, we constructed a concrete basement on a lot on 2nd Street and moved our house to the new location.**

**Meanwhile I had worked for the Rural Municipality of Morris since 1935, on road construction and Maintenance. In 1947, I was able to get started in the business of House Wiring, Plumbing and Heating on a self-employed basis. I continued to this type of work until 1957 when we moved to Winnipeg.**

**While in Winnipeg, I found employment as an elevator operator from 1957 to 1964. After working for Metro, taking water samples, for three years I retired in 1967.**

**Presently we are living in the Cosmopolitan Senior Citizens' Home in Winnipeg. We now have 20 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.**

## **JACOB P. FUNK**

**The Jacob P. Funks came to Canada from Russia in 1875, living and farming in the Lowe Farm area until Mr. Funk died in 1927. Prior to her moving to Steinbach, the widow rotated, staying at several of her children's homes. She resided in Steinbach until her death in November, 1950. They had a family of eleven children.**

**Their son, Jacob J.P., was born in Altona area, in 1894, marrying Elizabeth Dyck, in 1919. They had nine children. After Elizabeth's death, he married his brother Henry's widow; two sons were born to that union.**

**Peter, who was born in 1896, died at the age of 22, of influenza.**

John was born in 1898; married Margaret Giesbrecht, of Lowe Farm. They farmed for several years, later moving to Steinbach until John's death in 1965. They have six children.

Tina, who was born in 1899, died in infancy of measles.

Margaret was born in 1901. She married John B. Giesbrecht of Lowe Farm and they had three children. She died as a result of a stroke in January, 1949, with her husband, John, passing away in 1967. Two of John and Margaret's children still reside in Lowe Farm; Henry, (the oldest son) and his wife, Katherine. Henry works on road construction during the summer season and has been caretaker of the curling rink for many years. Katherine married Ben Braun and together they run the local Post Office in Lowe Farm. Ben is also the owner of Braun's Construction. They have two daughters, Sandra (Mrs. Doug Penner) and Merelyn (Mrs. Colin Hunkin). Peter, the youngest son, is stationed in Manitoba, where he is working for a construction firm.

Jacob P. Funk's daughter, Tena was born in 1903 and became Mrs. Jacob D. Sawatzky, in 1927. They had seven children, one of whom resides in Morris - the Henry Sawatzky family.

Mary, Mrs. Peter Fast, **now retired, of Abbotsford B.C.**, has four children.

Abram was born in 1908, married Mary Fehr in 1927. They had two boys, Peter and John Isaac. The two boys and their father died as a result of a house fire in 1934.

Helen married Jack Brandt in 1930. They lived in Steinbach for many years and Jack was the owner of Brandt's Construction. They are retired now and live in Santa Anna, California. They have four children.

David who was born in 1912, was married to Elizabeth Dyck, of Lowe Farm, in 1935. They moved to Steinbach, where he was employed with Brandt's Construction, prior to moving to Lincoln Nebraska with their 4 children.

## **HENRY J. FUNK**

Henry, the son of Jacob P. Funk, was born on October 13, 1904, one of eleven children. He married Tina Dyck in 1926, and was ordained as the first deacon of the Lowe Farm Berghaler Mennonite Church 4 years later. He served in this capacity until a fast cancer took him on May 11, 1941.

They had a small farm south of Lowe Farm where his widow and seven children remained for several years. The older two boys sought jobs as laborers at farms during the summer months, so they could help their mother financially. They moved into town in 1945, after their home on the farm was destroyed by fire. Two years later, Tina married Henry's brother, Jacob, who had become a widower in 1946. Together with the younger members of their families, they moved to Steinbach. The children of Henry and Tina Funk were raised in Lowe Farm and are as follows:

Their son, Frank, was born April 5, 1928. He received his elementary education in the Steinfeld School, later working on road construction and at the Lowe Farm **Consumers Co-Op.** In 1951, he moved to Steinbach to

attend Bible School there. Here, he met and married Mary Gerbrandt and they had two children. They presently live at Delmany, Saskatchewan, where Frank is a pastor.

Henry and Tina's son, Leonard, spent his youth in the Lowe Farm area, moving to Steinbach some years later. He is married to Marie Friesen and they have three sons.

Anne married William Schalla in 1953. They have 5 children and live in Creston, B.C.

Laura received her education in Steinfeld, Lowe Farm and Steinbach Schools. At present, she is an English teacher in Goshen, Indiana.

Evelyn is Mrs. John Bergen of Steinbach. They had three children, but one son died in 1961.

Esther, who married Leroy Ollenberger of Port Wing, Wisconsin, has three children.

## HENRY FRIESEN FAMILY HISTORY

Henry Friesen was born in Russia on May 11, 1869. Mrs. Henry Friesen (nee Helena Falk) was also born in Russia on July 16, 1871. They were married on July 3, 1892. Both immigrated to Canada from Russia with their respective families around 1874. They lived at Grosswiede where their children were born, 10 sons: Henry, Peter, Jacob, John, Martin, David, Erdman, Abe, William and Isaac; and three daughters: Mary, Mrs. David Klassen; Helen, Mrs. Ben Thiessen; and Tina, Mrs. Henry Thiessen.



*Henry and Helena (Falk) Friesen with their four oldest children - Mary, Jacob, Peter and Henry - before moving to the R.M. of Morris.*

The Friesen family moved to Lowe Farm in 1913, where they farmed the Jacob Reimer place, which adjoins Lowe Farm. In 1916 the Friesens purchased the land 1 / 2 mile east and one mile south of Lowe Farm where they built a large barn with house adjoining. Mrs. Friesen

passed away in February, 1922. Mr. Friesen remarried to Mrs. (Hiebert) Klassen and moved to Plum Coulee. Mr. Friesen passed away in November, 1923.

## JACOB H. FRIESEN FAMILY HISTORY

Jacob H. Friesen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Friesen was born at Grosswiede in October, 1897. Here he attended school and in 1913 the family moved to Lowe Farm into the Jacob Reimer place.

In 1921, he was married to Nettie Thiessen, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Thiessen.

Mr. and Mrs. Friesen farmed in the Lowe Farm area: in 1923 they moved to the Harkens' farm, 112 mile east and 112 mile south of Lowe Farm, and later purchased this land, where they resided until their semi-retirement. In 1966, they retired and sold the land to Anton Dyck. On their retirement they purchased a home and moved it onto the lot on the corner of 1st St. and Centre Ave. in Lowe Farm.

In the early 1930's, when farm prices were poor, Mr. Friesen supplemented his income by filling in bridge approaches with scoops and horses for the municipality, and later purchasing a tractor to operate the pile driver in the years when Mr. Diedrich Hoepfner was Reeve of the Municipality.

Mr. Friesen enjoyed politics and was a staunch supporter of the Conservative party. Honesty, integrity, and generosity were part of his lifestyle.



*This unusual house-barn combination was built in 1917 by Henry Friesen and his family. It was later occupied by son Jacob H. Friesen and his wife Nettie. The middle of the building was the barn, which housed up to 16 horses and half a dozen cows. The east end was a machine shed, separated from the barn by a wall. The west end (facing viewer) was the family dwelling. The west end of the "lean-to" was the large kitchen, with a hallway leading either to the outside or to the barn. The rest of the lean-to was feed and hay storage. The living room and one bedroom occupied the main floor of the west end. Above, on the second floor were three bedrooms. The top floor was a large hay loft, with a house attic on the west end. Abe Friesen is standing in the doorway; Jake is on the roof.*





*Jacob H. and Nettie (Thiessen) Friesen.*

Mrs. Friesen, a person with much stamina and optimism, was always a good cook and gardener in the Mennonite tradition.

Mr. and Mrs. Friesen, members of the Sommerfelder Church, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1971 with many friends and relatives in attendance.

They have a family of three sons and three daughters: Nettie, Mrs. Henry Loepky, Austin, Manitoba; Edward, married to Mary Braun, Abbotsford, British Columbia; Martin, married to Mary Klassen, Lowe Farm, Manitoba; Edna, Mrs. Ben Martens, Winnipeg, Manitoba; Sally, Mrs. Donald Lewis, Morris, R.R. 1, Manitoba; and Herman, who died in infancy.

## **EDWARD FUNK**

Edward was born in 1929 and was raised in the Lowe Farm area, remaining there until 1975. After their father died, he and his brother became farm laborers to help their mother with raising the younger children. Edward received his education at Steinfeld School, and also worked as a clerk in the Co-Op Store. He married Justina Rempel on October 14, 1950, and started working on road construction until 1959, and became the manager of the Co-Op Store. He stayed in this capacity for four years and then went back to road construction. He has worked with the Rural Municipality for many years; first as a dragline operator, then as scraper operator, and then as grader operator.

For five years he served as a part-time or assistant minister in the Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church and was then called to serve as full time minister in the Graysville Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Justina, and three of their six children moved to Graysville, after living in the Lowe Farm area for 44 years. They have six children and three grandchildren. The children of Edward and Justina Funk were all raised in Lowe Farm.

Debra Jean was born in 1952, and married Jim Hudson in 1971. Debra, who attended schools in Lowe Farm and Morris, was an avid basketball player. After she graduated from the Morris Collegiate, she found employment in Winnipeg. Debra and Jim Hudson have one son, Joshua.

Beverly Gayle and Leslie Dale are twins that were born on August 7, 1954. They also received their schooling in Lowe Farm and Morris. Beverly married David Hudson

in 1972 and now lives in St. Adolphe, with their two children, Christopher and Jennifer.

Les has attended Red River College and is presently living at Morris, where he is employed at the Day Care Centre. Les also does special sign painting and photography.

Terese Adele was born in 1959 and received her education in Lowe Farm, Morris Collegiate and Carman Collegiate. Her great interest was art and she helped create background scenery for the Drama club. She married Richard Schroeder of Lowe Farm and they reside in Roland at present.

Coleen La Verne was born in 1960 and was educated in Lowe Farm, Morris and Carman Schools. She is working as a receptionist.

Jeffrey Alan was born in 1963 and is still at home with his parents, near Graysville. He is a grade 10 student in the Carman Collegiate.

## **THE HISTORY OF ABRAM R. GIESBRECHT**

*by Margaret S. Braun*

My Giesbrecht great-grandparents were born in Holland, Europe, in the approximate 1830's. Their parents took them to Hamburg, Germany, when they were youngsters. Here, the fear of religious persecution, prompted them to flee Hamburg in the early 1850's. They had no hesitation left, would you believe, on this long trek across Germany on foot.

This trek took this group of Mennonites to Russia, to an area called "The Ukraine" to the village of Bergthal. Their rights, denied in Germany, were restored in Russia, under Queen Catherine, who gave them an option of alternative services as farm laborers, planting seeds, digging ditches, etc.

It was in Bergthal that my grandfather, Abram Giesbrecht, was born on January 1, 1860. My grandmother, Susan Braun, was born on April 6, 1862. The great grandparents died at Bergthal and there is little knowledge of the details. It was not very long before unrest again prevailed and doubts (perhaps rumors at first) about lost religious freedom prompted the 1874 Mennonite migration to Canada from Russia.

One day father came home and announced they would be leaving the country. So mother washed and packed just enough food and clothes to make a trip to some unknown place. The first leg of the journey started on a train in Bergthal, Russia, which went across Europe as far as Hamburg, Germany, a port city. Here they boarded a ship which took them to the eastern coast of England. Their faith that "God will provide and take care of us" made such a journey tolerable to mothers and fathers alike, whose main goal was to have a safe place to live and work, and watch their children grow.

When the ship docked in England, the weary travellers once more boarded a train to take them across England to the western port city of Liverpool. Here, they boarded an ocean liner on which they would spend days, even weeks, on a trip across that Atlantic Ocean to Canada, up the St. Lawrence, before docking in Quebec City in July of 1874. Can you imagine the trauma and nervous state

of these weary travellers arriving in a new country, uprooted from the only lifestyle they ever knew.

The weary travellers left the ship at Quebec City, travelling by train as far as Niagara Falls. From here, they took a boat trip across Lake Superior as far as Duluth, Minnesota, then journeying by train to Fargo, North Dakota.

Here, too, history was made, as many of the travellers decided to stay in North Dakota, while others transferred their goods to a riverboat to sail up the Red River to finally arrive in Manitoba in August, 1874. Abram was 14 and Susan 12. Their first stop was at a wharf about 3 miles north of Ste. Agathe. This wharf was special convenience, constructed to accommodate this 1874 migration, just as I'm sure were the little trading posts along the Red River, where the new Canadians could acquire a few necessities (horses, carts, etc.) to help them on the next leg of their journey. They were heading for Niverville, which was a designated homestead area for Mennonite immigrants. An agricultural administrator, Mr. Hoffman, was on hand to give assistance in Homesteading claims.

Abram and Susan worked as domestic laborers the early years in Canada. Then, due to some inequitable land distribution, many left in the late 1870's or early 1880's for greener pastures. Abram and Susan, who had married in the meantime and were to become my grandparents, were among the group that left for Niverville and homesteaded in a village called Lichtfeld, near Altona.

Grandfather was a farmer, but also for 3 years (1897-1900) he operated Giesbrecht's General Store in Altona. Every community needs a store and grandfather provided this service, as well as supplementing the family income. Grandmother helped run the store, as well as duties relevant to a farmer's wife. Not only that; the family was growing as well. Peter, Abram (my father), Susan, Jacob, Margaret and John arrived on the scene while at Altona.

In the meantime, more settlements were forming and in March, 1900 Grandmother and Grandfather decided to uproot their family of six children and settle on a farm 1 1/2 mile north of Lowe Farm. Henry and Eva were born here, to complete their family of 8 children.

The Mennonites had bilingual schools when they arrived in Canada, half a day German and half a day English. This worked very well, but by the 1930's this was changed to only half an hour daily in German, usually from 3:30 to 4:00 p.m., which was spent with Biblische Geschichte or Catechism memory work. This was enough to give students of the day a fairly good understanding of a second language. Grandfather had a reasonable knowledge of reading and writing and 'rithmetic, to do his own records and reading the popular papers of the day - Steinbach Post and Die Rundschau.

Grandmother, Susan, read German very well and as children it was a challenge and fun game to get her to read words off the funny papers - which had been used as wallpaper on the kitchen walls by the table. It was at her place I learned to read and understand low German writings. My happiest childhood memories are of holidays spent on the farm with Grandmother, and also

crying in the outdoor privy when I got homesick; but ashamed to admit it and ask to be taken home.

After Grandfather died in 1923, at age 63, grandmother continued on the farm with the help of her youngest son, Henry, until about 1933. Then it was decided grandmother would move into Lowe Farm, and her children built a one bedroom cottage for her across from the Bergthaler Church. Here she lived in excellent health to a nice old age of 92, enjoying her garden, especially her flowers, and kept up her talents of baking the best 'pfefferneusse' (peppernut cookies) which became her annual contribution to the Giesbrecht Christmas festivities.

My grandparents had been confirmed Bergthaler Church members, but when the church divided, they followed the Sommerfelder teachings.

At age 92, Grandmother's eyesight began failing, so that her last six years were spent being taken care of; first at the home of Mrs. P.S. Braun, in Lowe Farm, and later in the Steinbach nursing home, where she died on December 27, 1959, 3 1/2 months short of 99 years.

My grandfather did not have too much time for extracurricular activities, such as politics. Providing for a large family was a full time job. He was a proud man, working very hard with the boast that he never had to take "relief".

What did the Giesbrechts contribute and what impact might this family have on the community? in my mind, they were successful people - depending on how one measures success. Grandfather was a very hard working, religious and honest man. He and grandmother raised a large, God living family, who never had any serious conflict with the law - so in that respect, their impact was considerable. It has been said, "as the moral strength of the family, so goes the moral strength of the country." There are many descendants of the Abram R. Giesbrecht family. But, I would suggest, that part of the Giesbrecht saga belongs in another chapter or book.

## JOHN B. GIESBRECHT

On May 1, 1897, John Giesbrecht, the fifth child in a family of eight was born in Altona, Man. His parents, Abram R. Giesbrecht and Susanna Braun were married in the early 1880's. Both had travelled far from their native land of Holland; before reaching Canada in 1874 they had moved to Germany and later to Russia.

John and his family moved again three years after his birth, and settled on a farm 1 1/2 miles east and 1 mile north of Lowe Farm. Studying both in English and German, John was able to attend elementary school. He was employed thereafter on his family's grain farm. But in 1919 he was married to Margaret Funk and began raising cattle and grain on his own farm two miles north of his parents' farm. John and Margaret's wedding on July 27 was part of a unique double ceremony as John's sister Margaret also married Margaret's brother John on that day.

Unfortunately in the winter of 1927, the Giesbrecht family home was lost in a fire. John and Margaret managed to save very little - one trunk of belongings, one oil lamp, a hymn book and a barrel of freshly packed

meat. John later commented that in times of emergency one does not know his own strength, as ordinarily it would have been impossible to move the barrel by oneself. A new farmhouse was built where John, Margaret and their family of three children lived until 1932 when they moved into the town of Lowe Farm.

John operated a blacksmith shop in town for five years, until his health forced him to turn away from this profession. At first, he hauled grain for farmers in his 112 ton truck, but from 1938 until 1954 he worked for the R.M. of Morris. In the 1940's John operated a small feed grinding plant as well, to supplement his income. As a municipal employee, he filled two roles - the first being as transportation for bridge construction equipment and supplies and later as an operator of caterpillar tractors and road graders.

From 1956 until he retired in 1967, John worked at the Hy-way Motors in Morris as a service station attendant. After this he worked only part-time for H and W Const. of Morris, and was still working part-time when he passed away suddenly at the age of 70 in 1967. He was predeceased by Margaret in January 1949, but had remarried. Mrs. Mary Klassen (nee Harder), a widow, was his second wife.



*John and Margaret (Funk) Giesbrecht in 1919.*

John and Margaret's children were Henry, born October 8, 1920, Katherine, born July 16, 1922, and Peter, born October 8, 1929.

Henry, who married Tina Little of Portage La Prairie, still resides in Lowe Farm and is employed in road construction.

Katherine, also a Lowe Farm resident, married Bernard Braun. They have two daughters, Sandra, the eldest, married Douglas Penner, and they and their daughter Dana, live near Sperling. Katherine and Ben's younger daughter Merelyn, married Colin Hunkin, born in Cornwall, England, and they live near Oakville, Man.

John and Margaret's youngest son, Peter, is not married. He was employed by the Mannix Company of Alberta for 22 years, but is now working on road construction in Manitoba.

During his lifetime, John Giesbrecht had a definite philosophy of life and living; do things yourself for yourself and to the best of your ability. He stressed this attitude of helping oneself and of independence often. While not waiting for others to help him, he was always willing to lend a hand to those less fortunate than himself, especially those who faced illness or stress. Honesty, self-respect and respect for others were milestones of John's character.

## **HENRY GIESBRECHT - COUNCILLOR**

Henry Giesbrecht served as a councillor of the Municipality from 1954 to 1956. It was an interesting two years to serve the taxpayers, but it was impossible to please everyone. Henry thought the job was grading roads and putting in culverts, but there was a lot more to it; too numerous to mention.

His term happened to be one of the winters when we had a 100 inch (record) snowfall, so when the taxpayers get snowbound, your phone rings a lot, and at all hours too, telling you that you plow everyone's road but mine!

The Giesbrecht's have three children - Herman in Amarillo, Texas, Peter at Barrhead, Alberta, and Shirley, at Langham, Saskatchewan.

The whole family was born at Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

The Giesbrechts have lived on a farm at Lowe Farm, till 1957 and in the winter of 1957, they moved to Chilliwack, B.C., and are still living there.



*Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Giesbrecht with children, Herman, Shirley and Pete, in 1959. Henry is the youngest son of Abram and Susan (Braun) Giesbrecht.*

## **MR. N.J. HEIDE**

Mr. N.J. Heide was born in the Horndean District in April 1896. He married Anna Goertzen of Morden in 1919 in the Winkler M.B. Church.

Mr. Heide had left his farm home in 1916 to begin a teaching career. In those days it was possible to obtain a position as teacher with only a Grade VII standing.

## H.P. HEINRICHS

Mr. Heide taught 2 years each in the Heabert and St. Peters Schools. He was noted for having good discipline in school, and after teaching in Steinfeld for several months in the 1920-21 school term he was asked to exchange schools with Mrs. A.H. Wiebe. Mr. Wiebe was teaching at Kronsweide at that time because it was felt that a man of his standards would qualify to teach the 21 students in the Kronsweide private school. The school situation was quite unsettled in Kronsweide at that time. There were actually two separate school buildings in the district. The private school was located on what is now the C.E. Rempels yard, while the public school was located a few hundred yards further to the north. Because of the flag and language issue, the majority of the parents preferred to have their children attend the private school where German was the main language taught. Consequently the government school officials became very insistent that the parents should send their children to the public school. As soon as the pressure eased somewhat, the children would again attend the private school. In the spring term of 1921 the situation was such that the children changed back and forth frequently between the public and private schools.

In the summer of 1921, the Heides took up residence in Lowe Farm and Mr. Heide began his career as a postmaster apprentice to Mr. A.A. Giesbrecht who was the official postmaster and served in this capacity till September 1958, well over thirty years.

Mr. Heide took an active part in many community activities including the programs held every other Sunday in school, originally sponsored by a Literary Society which later became known as the "Christlicher Jugend Verein Zu Lowe Farm."

A memorable experience for Mr. Heide was in 1959 when he spent one month visiting his daughter Louella in Toronto. The Queen and Prince Phillip were visiting Ottawa at that time, and Mr. Heide, whose son Henry had been killed while on active duty, was invited as an honorary witness to laying of the wreath for the victims of the war.

Mr. Heide is presently living in Winnipeg in the Gannon Apartments on Roselyn Rd. while he serves as assistant caretaker. He is interested in wood work and has made a good deal of his furniture from scraps. He enjoys reading and jig-saw puzzles.

Mr. and Mrs. Heide were the parents of ten children: Henry who served in the Air Force, was killed in action; Louella is post mistress in Toronto; John is a bailiff in Winnipeg; Annie is Mrs. Sagert, and her husband is with the Neon Light Company of Winnipeg; Sara is Mrs. Walter Derwianchuk, whose husband is with the C.N.R. in Brandon; Nick lives in Brandon and is the manager of a Manpower Centre; Eleanor, Mrs. Rudolf Schlick whose husband is with the Dept. of Fisheries in Winnipeg; Frank is with the City Tax Dept. in Winnipeg; Jacob is a High School teacher at The Pas; George is with the U.G.G. in Winnipeg.

Mr. Heide has observed that his former home in Lowe Farm is the only building in the business section remaining of the buildings dating back to the early 1920's, with the exception of Derksen's Store which has however since been rebuilt and renovated.

Henry P. Heinrichs was born in 1896 at Rudnerweide near Plum Coulee. He was the son of Peter and Maria Heinrichs, one of 14 children. His father Peter Heinrichs had come to Canada in 1876 as a twelve year old boy from Bergthaler Colony in Russia.

The Heinrich's had been successful in farming, so it was only natural that Henry would try his hand at it too. He started his own farm about 1919, north of Lowe Farm.

After a few years of batching, he married a local girl, Maria Reimer, daughter of John D. Reimers on March 27, 1923. Seven children were born to them. The house they lived in, was the type that had an attached barn. Henry supplemented his income by working for the Municipality. He did jobs such as mowing, scraping dirt on bridges or culverts with a team of horses and scoop.



*Henry P. Heinrichs on tractor with scoop, Emil Fuchs with team of horses, making a pond.*

They moved a few times. First to a place rented from John Schroeder 3 miles north of Lowe Farm, and in 1932 moving to Section 7 one mile north of Lowe Farm, rented from D. Heppner. His first tractor was a Fordson, later acquiring an Allis Chalmers and Cockshut. An important purchase was made in 1935, with the arrival of a new combine and swather. The parents were very thrifty, hard working people.

Dad taught Sunday School for many years in the Bergthaler Church, having started his first Sunday School in 1930 in the Neufeld School house.

In 1940 Dad bought a half section one mile east of Lowe Farm. Three years later they rebuilt the house, and in 1951 they built a large barn. Unfortunately, this was destroyed by fire just a few years later.

They retired from farming in 1959, moving to Steinbach. Six years later they returned, and mother passed away in 1966. She was buried on the day that would have been their 43rd wedding anniversary.

Dad remarried on June 1966 to a widow, Susan Wiebe of Steinbach. Dad died on his 75th birthday on November 13, 1971.

The Heinrichs children are: Susie, Mrs. Jacob Bergen of Lowe Farm; Tena, Mrs. Abe Penner of Winkler; Dick, who married Phyllis Karlenzig and lives at Rosenort; Ed

who married Evelyn Wiebe and lives at Fisher Branch; Bill who married Joyce Cholka and lives in Winnipeg. Henry died as a result of a car accident at the age of thirty in June 1964, and Dave died as a result of a stabbing at the age of 27, in November 1964.



*Henry and Maria (Reimer) Heinrichs in 1946 with their children, Tena, Bill, Diedrich (Dick), David, Henry, Ed, Susan.*

## HENRY HILDEBRAND

Henry Hildebrand was born at Halbstadt, February 12, 1919. He is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Peter I. Hildebrand of Marquette, Manitoba.

Henry came to Lowe Farm in December, 1940, to work for his grandfather, Mr. Isaac Hildebrand. Here he met his girlfriend, Susan, who happens to be the granddaughter of Mr. Isaac Hildebrand's second wife, (namely Mrs. Agatha Thiessen), who had married Mr. Isaac Hildebrand in 1929. Susan is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. B.W. Thiessen of Lowe Farm, Manitoba. Due to a marriage, they shared the same grandparents when they got married.



*Henry Hildebrand and his bride, Susan Thiessen, shared their grandparents, Isaac Hildebrand and his second wife, Agatha (Thiessen) above. LEFT: Henry and Susan Hildebrand in 1978.*

They were baptized in June, 1943 and became members of the Sommerfelder Church, and were married October

28th that same year, moving to Winnipeg.

In 1946, they moved to Lowe Farm, where Henry worked on construction for Mr. George Klassen. At that time, living in the oldest house to Lowe Farm on 3rd Street, West, which is demolished now.

On April 22nd, 1947, Henry began working for the R.M. of Morris, as patrol operator and is still with this firm (32 years). He was just a young married man at the time, and had just become a proud father of a bouncing baby boy the previous day. Now, Henry thought he had it made, with a new baby, and a new job at 604 an hour.

He had quite an experience that first winter. All the roads were blocked with heavy snow and Henry was asked to open the roads to aid a sick lady to the hospital. The councillor, Matt Stevenson, suggested a short cut across the Red River near the old ferry. The ice broke and the snow plow (Austin Western) sank to the bottom of the river. Henry jumped out just in time and, went for help. A big hole was cut through the ice and a diver went down into the icy water to hook the cable to the frame of the snow plow, and it was towed out by 2 municipal caterpillars.

In the 1950 flood, Henry volunteered to help rescue cattle from the flooded areas at Rosenort, spending several days there, and helping sandbag the Morris Hospital.

In 1962, Henry had another close shave. He hit the ditch at a railroad crossing, with the snow plow landing on the railroad track, with the oncoming train only a mile away. His helper, Dick Heinrichs, started out walking towards the train and managed to flag it down. The train engineer offered, "If you have a chain, I'll pull you out." How often do you see a train tow a snow plow?

In 1971, Henry was presented with an inscribed gold watch from the R.M. of Morris as an award for 25 years service in the municipality.

In 1977, Henry received an award and a Silver Medal from the Queen, for his long and faithful service with the R.M. of Morris, in recognition of his contribution to his community. The Silver Jubilee Medal was struck for the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee year as the reigning Monarch of the United Kingdom.

Henry and Susan both participated in curling in their community, where Susan was president of the Ladies' Curling Club. Henry was also a director and past president of the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce, and a director of the Planning Committee of R.M. of Morris for a number of years.

They are the parents of three children - 2 sons and 1 daughter. The oldest son, Eugene, is employed at City Hall, Winnipeg, in charge of the Business Tax Department. He married Elaine Doell of Lowe Farm, in 1969; they make their home in Transcona. They have 2 children, Curtis and Lindi. Marcel, the second son, is spending the winter months in San Cristobal, Mexico, but was previously employed at the Lowe Farm Credit Union. Eunice, the only daughter, married Walter Sawatzky of Lowe Farm, in 1977, and settled down on the farm at Lowe Farm.

The Hildebrands still reside on the 1st Street East, in Lowe Farm, in the bungalow that they built in 1960. "We welcome the future; remembering the past."

## TRIBUTE TO JOHN H. MARTENS

*Mrs. Lena (Martens) St. Vincent*



*John H. and Gertrude Martens in 1920,*

Our Father, John H. Martens, came from a farm close to the area known as Rosenbach between Plum Coulee and Winkler. He decided that the farm was not for him. What he enjoyed doing was tinkering around with tools, repairing machinery, and the like. So he decided to venture forth, and Lowe Farm was the extent of his ventures.

About 1911-1912 he set up what is commonly referred to as a blacksmith shop. Being unmarried, he stayed with the Jacob Wiens family, half a mile north of town. However, a bachelor's life was not for him, so in October of 1913 he married and brought his young bride out to Lowe Farm.

A house was rented which served him partly as a residence and a shop. This was the house later occupied by Mr. Abram Klassen and his mother. Just how long they stayed here is not known. The next house was bought and was situated about a block west of here. It was purchased from Mr. Cornelius Gerbrandt. A family of six, five sons, and one daughter were born in one or the other of these houses.

Father started off blacksmithing, but, as he was handy in woodworking also, he was called on to make cutters and bobsleighs. During the influenza epidemic after World War 1, he made coffins, because a purchased coffin was unheard of in those days. Old-timers had him make coffins for their dead until customs changed and more people went to undertaking establishments.

About this time Lowe Farm suffered a disastrous fire. A number of the business places situated on the block where the first Lowe Farm Garage (and later Consumers Co-operative Garage) was built, burned down causing the death of Israel Rosner. Towns people tried to save these buildings by the bucket brigade but were unsuccessful. Dad's machine shop did not burn, but buildings nearby were in danger.

Somewhere between 1914 and 1920, he went into partnership with a Mr. Janzen and put up a new shop across the street from where he lived; later on becoming sole owner. Here he carried on with his work, and many a

plough share was sharpened, and mower and binder scythe ground. He bought a lathe and turned toward machining, making shaker shafts, for the threshing machines, also machining parts when new ones were not obtainable as was the case during World War II.

During the course of years he had people like Mr. Isaac Letkeman, John J. Funk, Pete Klassen, Abe Schroeder, Cornelius Harder, and Isaac Klassen working for him, and later, as they grew up, his sons.

In late 1920's he went into a form of partnership with the senior Cornelius Harder and opened a business, firstly selling flour and cordwood and later on also groceries. In the 1930's this business was dissolved and the building moved away.

The business people of Lowe Farm in 1933 persuaded him to set up a generating plant and supply their shops with electricity. Later on the plant was enlarged, and a large number of homes were also served. When the hydro came in after World War II the plant was dismantled and sold.

During the earlier years, he was elected to the school board for a least one term, possibly two. Chairman of the board was Mr. Jacob Wiens and the third member was Mr. Dyck (father of Henry Dyck).

He was never wanting for work and bought a welding outfit, later also an electric welder. He tried his hand at mechanics but this was not his line, and it was only developed when his sons grew up.

He also lived through the "dirty thirties". People had very little cash and when machinery just had to be repaired, quite often they would give a couple of young pigs in exchange for work. Some other farmer would provide fodder for these pigs or the cow which was kept by our family.

The years went by and the family grew up. Some of the sons were mechanically minded and turned towards garage work. So the first garage was started as a partnership between Pete Martens and Ben F. Rempel. This partnership was dissolved and the garage was carried on as a family concern but not for long. World War 11 came along and Pete, Frank, and John enlisted in the Armed Services. After the war, another garage was started under the name Lowe Farm Garage which was destroyed by fire in 1956. It was rebuilt again and sold to Consumers Co-operative Ltd. in 1960.

In 1947 having the help of son Frank, father built a new shop, this time close to Main Street. Keeping on with the work he started as a young man in the early 20's, he worked here till his death in December of 1953 at the age of 67.



*Martens Machine Shop, built in 1947.*





*J.H. Martens*



*Gertrude Martens, in 1962.*

The community showed their appreciation towards him, at his funeral when the church was filled to overflowing.

Behind every good man there is, as a rule, a woman. This woman was his wife, Gertrude, coming as a young wife of 21 to Lowe Farm in 1913. When he needed help and was not yet able to hire someone she was there to give him a hand.

What she did was not a woman's job, but she turned her hand at running the drill press, sharpening scythes, putting spokes in buggy wheels and sewing up a buggy or car top, or repairing car seats. If Dad needed an extra pair of hands, she was there.

In her way, she also served her community. As was the custom in those days, she baked buns for funerals and weddings and was called on to make coffee at the lunches. During World War II she knitted for the Red Cross and helped with the teas put on to make money. She helped with the baking for the "boys" overseas. These fruit cakes were packed, one for each boy from Lowe Farm and sent overseas for Christmas. Later on she boarded school teachers and on several occasions cooked for hydro and elevator gangs.

Both parents did their utmost toward their family. They gave encouragement and love where needed. Education was hard to come by, but there was always time and money for us to go to school. We were encouraged to do our best and later as we started in our own lives we could always come back for help.

## THE SEQUEL

*Lena St. Vincent*

Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Martens raised a family of six - five sons and one daughter. They were all born in Lowe Farm, received their education there and spent at least the first twenty-five years of their lives in Lowe Farm.

Pete, as most people know him, was born in August, 1914. After he completed his Grade Eleven, he helped his father in the machine shop. When he was 21, he married Dora Schroeder. They lived on the last lot of the same yard as his father and mother. They had two boys, Peter and Norman, who received their schooling in Lowe Farm, but left with their parents.

Since Pete was mechanically inclined, he finally persuaded his father to repair cars, trucks and tractors. However, the old machine shop was not intended to accommodate a garage, so he, in partnership with Ben E. Rempel, started a garage where the Co-Op store is located now. This partnership was dissolved after a few years. World War II came along and put an end to the Lowe Farm Garage; Pete enlisted in the Army. He came back in February, 1946, and by late spring, he had bought the garage owned by Paul Braun, and was back in business again, together with Johnnie and Frank. They decided the Braun garage was too small for their operations, and the lot across the street on the west was purchased. A garage, constructed of cement blocks, was put up on this lot, The old building was sold to B.E. Rempel, who moved the building and used it to repair his equipment. Misfortune hit this garage, when fire destroyed it in 1956. It was rebuilt and operated till 1960, when it was sold to Consumers Co-Operative Ltd, At present, Pete is operating and maintaining a fleet of trucks in Winnipeg.



*Pete*



*Frank*

Frank, born in May, 1917, also received his education in Lowe Farm. He served in the Army overseas, and came home in November, 1945, and married Helen Schroeder the following summer. He bought the Bernard Hildebrandt residence, where they had a family of two daughters, Betty and Connie. Both girls trained as nurses in St. Boniface Hospital.

Frank worked with his father before World War II, and stayed with him after the war. In 1947, a new machine shop was built behind the Lowe Farm Garage on the lot just off Main Street. The other brothers left Lowe Farm, but Frank stayed on till he sold to Klippenstein and Dueck. He is presently employed with Sheller Globe.

Lena, born in April, 1918, the only daughter in this family, had all her education in Lowe Farm. After a year of permit teaching, she took her teacher's training in the old "Normal School". She then taught one year in Lowe Farm and another year at Heabert School. When, in 1946, the Lowe Farm Garage was started, she worked behind the parts counter as bookkeeper, as well as working four years for Sperling Garage. In 1955, Lena was married to Nestor St. Vincent. After a 5 year period in Balmertown, Ontario, they moved to St. Pierre, where

they live at present. They have a family of four - two boys and two girls.

Johnnie, born in September, 1921, followed the same pattern as the other two brothers, very briefly working with his father, when the war intervened. Canada called Johnnie and he enlisted in the Air Force. He was discharged in 1946, and came back to do his share in the Lowe Farm Garage. He had married Irene Bolton the year before, so they moved into the house which was sold to Mrs. A. Sawatzky. They have four children. Two were born in Lowe Farm, two in Sperling. In the early 1950's, Sperling Garage was bought from S.O. Johnson. Isaac Klassen was taken into this partnership. These two men ran this operation for four years, when Isaac took over completely and Johnnie returned to Lowe Farm. Here he stayed in partnership with Pete, Jake and Henry. When in 1960 the business was sold, he moved into Winnipeg. At present, he is service manager at Stern Trucks.



John

Jake, who was born in May, 1923, also lived his first 25 years in Lowe Farm. He served his country in Canada, as he was required to stay at home to help in the "war effort". In other words, he stayed in the machine shop with his dad. Machinery and vehicles were kept in working order as well as possible with what materials were available. Jake married Betty Dyck in the early '50's. They had a family of a boy and two girls. Jake left the family concern in 1955. He transferred to the rocket propellant plant just outside Stonewall, where he works partly in maintenance and also in the designing department.

Henry, the last, but not necessarily the least, is the remaining member of the Martens family. Born in 1929, he was only a teenager during the war years and completed his schooling at the end of the war. He went into the family concern, and did what all the other brothers had done before him. He ended up driving the tow truck too; he was elected to take on the mail route with his particular truck. "Come or high water, the mail had to go through" and so did Henry. He married Tina Unger, and lived next door to his parents in the old Blatz house. They had a family of four boys and one girl. He left when Jake left. At present, he is with Stern Trucks in Winnipeg.

A business like the family had, depended on the farmers around them. Their fortunes went up and down with the rains, floods, and weather in the same ups and downs that the farmers had. Many a time, the work given to them by the various construction companies and the most dependable one, the Rural Municipality of Morris, was what pulled them through a tight winter. So ends the sequel of the Martens family.

## BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE J. NICKEL

*submitted by Mrs. Dave J. Giesbrecht Steinbach*

George Nickel was born to John and Margaret Nickel in Michaelsburg, Russia, on August 9, 1892. He came to Canada with his parents in 1898. He had no formal schooling, however, with a determined stubborn perseverance, he taught himself to read both German and English, during his married life.

He was married to Agenetha Penner, daughter of John Penner of Lowe Farm, therefore making his home in Lowe Farm.

They bought a farm one mile north of Lowe Farm, where he became a noted wheat farmer. However, due to two floods in consecutive years, he was forced to abandon farming, moving his family into Lowe Farm.

During the next years, being the depression years, he worked at whatever jobs were available. I remember George working for D.D. Hepner on his farm, not with tractors or even horses, but mules. The writer of this article hasn't seen a mule since. I wonder if they are extinct. He also did quite a lot of bridge building with his father-in-law, Mr. John Penner. After this he would work during summers at the grain elevator, operated by Mr. Johnson. During the long winters when jobs were as scarce as hen's teeth, he would be seen with his nose in any reading material available to him at that time. Especially we remember him constantly reading and studying the Bible. His favorite subject was prophecy and he was obviously gifted in understanding the book of Revelation which he loved. He served in church committees in various capacities. He was interested enough in politics to be concerned that we elect the right leaders. I believe he was a strong Conservative. During the years when work was so scarce, he would go west to work on threshing gangs working his way back home, being away weeks at a time. Times were not easy for a man with a large family and no education. However, George had a very optimistic personality and this helped him and his family over many a hurdle. Also he was a very hospitable man and this resulted in our home always being open to visitors, which meant that a lot of people were fed in our home, which often made it difficult for the cook!

In the fall of 1931, they decided to move to greener pastures, namely, Rosengard, close to Steinbach. After a few years they moved into Steinbach.

They lived in Winnipeg for a few years after the war, where he worked as a grain inspector. Then after all the children were married, they pulled up stakes and moved to B.C. where they spent the remaining years in comfort.

To George and Agenetha were born nine children. June 15 /14, Cora Marie, Mrs. C.K. Enns, homemaker, B.C., retired. July 15/15, John Nickel, B.C., construction. Aug. 23/16, Anne, Mrs. Dave Giesbrecht, homemaker, Steinbach, Man., retired. Oct. 30 / 17, Susan, Mrs. John Harder, Linden, Alberta, Sales clerk, secretary. Feb. 24/20, George Nickel, Montreal, Que., trucking firm, executive. June 15/22, Katherine, Mrs. Jac Wiebe, Niverville, homemaker. Oct. 27/24, Henry Nickel, B.C., house mover. May 2 / 27, Dick Nickel, Nanaimo, B.C., house mover. Dec. 18/29, Helen Laverne, Mrs. Bill Heinrichs, B.C., homemaker.



*George and Aganetha (Penner) Nickel on their 50th Wedding Anniversary.*

They also had thirty-five grandchildren, forty-seven great-grandchildren up to this point. George Nickel loved people, especially young people. His grandchildren all have pleasant memories of their grandfather.

He did not leave behind a lot of material wealth but left his family with a legacy of a strong Christian faith. As a father he was strong, honest and compassionate, a heritage that far exceeds any earthly wealth.

George was in fairly good health all his life till he died of a heart attack on Oct. 3, 1966. Aganetha died on April 7, 1971.

The writer of this article still loves to go back for visits to Lowe Farm. It's got to be one of the warmest friendliest small towns I know.

## BIOGRAPHY OF JOHN PENNER

John Penner was born on November 5, 1862 in Russia. He came to Canada with his parents in 1874 when he was twelve years old. The family homesteaded at Heiboden, Manitoba.

John was baptized on May 10, 1882. On June 4, 1882, he married Maria Friesen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. Friesen from Grossweide. They had 11 children: Mary, August 20, 1883 (Died November 14, 1959); Katherine, August 17, 1886 (Died July 11, 1954); Helena, February 20, 1889 (Died July 14, 1930); Agatha, May 11, 1891 (Died January 10, 1945); Aganetha, February 24, 1894 (Died 1971); Margaretha, April 23, 1896 (Died July 29, 1977); John, February 19, 1898 (Died Dec. 5, 1918); Henry, April 24, 1900 (Born in Lowe Farm); Jacob, February 22, 1902 (Born in Lowe Farm Died April 10, 1968); Sarah, April 19, 1904 (Born in Lowe Farm); Anna, September 21, 1906 (Born in Lowe Farm Died May 29, 1961).

Maria died November 23, 1934. A year later John married his widowed sister-in-law, Mrs. Jacob Penner.

John started working at the age of 13 when he hired out as a farm laborer herding cows. His wages for that first summer's work was a bushel of turnips. He remained a laborer until 1900 when he became a farmer on his own property, 2 miles east and 1 1/2 miles north of Lowe Farm. He tried farming until 1907 but was never very successful.

He next turned to butchering as a means of livelihood, and seemed much better suited to this occupation. (He was also the local dentist extracting teeth when the need arose.) He went on a buying trip to Yarbo, Sask. and bought 2 carloads of cattle and shipped them to Winnipeg. The market was flooded but he managed to sell one lot and shipped the other to Lowe Farm. This load was then butchered and sold locally, mostly on credit. A lot of his trade depended on credit, and many bills were never settled.

Every fall John and his wife helped the neighbors slaughter their pigs for winter food. This generally took all November and no fee was ever charged for this help.

The government began building drainage and in 1920 John went to work for W.R. Clubb, the minister of Public Works. He was to stay in this occupation until his death.

John was of average height but strong and stocky. He was rather spare of talk, disliked gossip, rather strong in his convictions, but otherwise agreeable and easy to get along with. He could play the accordion. He was an ardent baseball fan, had a great love of horses and loved fun. He was never very religious and smoked and drank perhaps a little. He took an active interest in politics.

He went on an excursion to Ninette in 1911 with Jake Hiebert. They went for a boat ride on Pelican Lake, but unfortunately for non-swimmer John, the boat capsized and he nearly drowned. His grandson, Henry Penner, is now building a summer home by this same lake.

John waited until his sons had left home before he bought his first car, a Model T. On a trip to Plum Coulee, he lost a rear wheel. He managed to find the nuts, washers and wheel and fancied himself quite a mechanic when all was assembled again.

John had been a healthy man all his life. He died in 1936 at the age of 74.

## BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY PENNER

Henry Penner was born to John and Mary Penner on April 24, 1900 in the kitchen of the John Peters' homestead. He attended school from 1907-1914. He was baptized in 1918 in a Sommerfelder church at Lowe Farm. He married Anna Loewen on October 17, 1918. Born to Henry and Anna were five children: John, December 14, 1919; Helen, January 26, 1922; Henry, January 15, 1924; Mary, October 25, 1926; Jacob, June 7, 1933.

Grandchildren number 22 and great-grandchildren 27.

Anna died October 22, 1973. Henry then married the widowed Mary Thiessen on December 16, 1973.

The first house Henry and Anna bought in Lowe Farm was 10' x 20' and cost \$450.00. This price included 4 additional lots. After 4 1/2 years they sold it and bought a 4 room house with 3 lots. This house boasted a cellar and a cistern capable of holding 52 barrels of water. They moved to Stead in 1927 and bought a house with 112 acres of land. In 1936 they moved to Dacotah to live in a C.N.R. house. In 1960 they moved to Winnipeg.

Henry started his life time career of railroading on May 1, 1919 as a laborer at Lowe Farm. The wages were 20K an hour for a 10 hour day with no overtime pay. He

became a foreman in 1927 with his first section at Stead. During the R.B. Bennett era, many sections were closed. As a result, Henry was forced to move 12 times in the next 18 months. He was a permanent foreman at Dacotah for 24 years. He retired on November 3, 1960.

Henry's main interest, even after retirement, is still railroading. He does, however, have other interests. He has always loved baseball, playing on a team when he was younger. He also curled, and has always enjoyed fishing. He always has had and still has, a genuine interest in politics. He and his wife attend Home Street Mennonite Church.

All Henry's family would agree that he has a strong interest in keeping up family ties and these beyond the immediate family to include cousins, second cousins and so on, having a great love of "visiting".

## MR. PETER P. PENNER HISTORY

*submitted by Mr. and Mrs. David E. Penner*

Mr. Peter P. Penner was born in the Plum Coulee area to Peter and Margaretha Penner (nee Wiebe) on Sept. 29, 1879. His parents had immigrated to Canada from Russia in 1874. He grew up on his parents farm and on July 9, 1901 he was united in marriage to Anna Ewert.

Anna was one of identical twins born to Johann and Helena Ewert, (nee Sawatsky) on May 17, 1884. The Ewerts had immigrated to Canada from Russia in 1875. The twins Anna and Margaretha were so much alike that their school teachers, friends and even their stepfather could not tell them apart. They remained so much alike in later years and always made identical dresses. It was amazing to see them show up at weddings or other public functions, wearing the same dresses, without having discussed it beforehand. Even their grandchildren couldn't tell them apart.



*The Ewert Twins, Anna (Mrs. Peter P. Penner) and Margaretha. In the picture taken on their 80th birthday, Mrs. Penner is on the right.*

Mr. and Mrs. Penner farmed in the Plum Coulee area, and 9 children were born to the family, Helen, Peter, Margaret, Henry, Ben, David, Mary, John and Jacob. In 1918 Mr. Penner purchased north half of Section 27-4-2 West near Lowe Farm and moved there to farm.

After a few bad crops, and a depression in the making, Mr. Penner lost everything he owned. There were born into the family at Lowe Farm 3 more children, Tina, Diedrich and Annie.

In the years following the loss of his land, Mr. Penner worked at various jobs, whatever was available. He worked some years for the R.M. of Morris, and for Drainage Maintenance hauling lumber. He also did some bricklaying. (At the age of 70 or 72 he was seen on the roof of the Bergthaler Church making a chimney). In later years he also worked for Manitoba Sugar in Winnipeg.

After living in various empty farm yards they purchased the old Moses Altman house in Lowe Farm in 1936 and moved it to the west end of main street and lived there till 1966.

When their son Henry died in 1951, Mr. Penner inherited his 1949 Austin and in the following years he was nicknamed "The taxi driver". If someone needed to go to the Dr. or Dentist and had no means of going, Mr. Penner was the man to see. Some days he made 2 or 3 trips to Morris, sometimes to Altona or Winkler or even Morden.



*"The Taxi Driver".*

After Mrs. Penner suffered several strokes and poor health, they moved to the Ebenezer Units in Altona in Jan. 1966, and Mrs. Anna Penner passed away on March 24, 1966.



*The Diamond Wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Peter P. Penner, July 9, 1961.*

## LONG TIME LOWE FARM RESIDENT CELEBRATES 100TH BIRTHDAY



*Mr. Peter Penner, who spent 30 years of his life in Lowe Farm and 48 years in the Rural Municipality of Morris, celebrated his 100th birthday in Lowe Farm on Sept. 30, 1979. LEFT TO RIGHT: He is flanked by his ten children, Diedrich, Jacob, Dave, Ben, Peter, Helen (Mrs. Peter Falk), Margaret (Mrs. John Peters), Mary (Mrs. Frank Froese), Tina (Mrs. Isaac Klassen), Annie (Mrs. Clanton Wiebe). His wife, Anna, died in 1966. Son, John died of diphtheria, aged 17, and Henry died in 1951. (Photo courtesy of The Scratching River Post.)*

Mr. Penner celebrated his 99th birthday on Sept. 29, 1978 and lived in the Ebenezer Home for the Aged in Altona.

Concerning Mr. Penner's children.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Falk (nee Helen Penner) lived for many years in Lowe Farm and are now living in Winnipeg.

Peter Penner and Margaret (Mrs. John Peters) and Mary (Mrs. Frank Froese) all live in Winnipeg.

Henry Penner served in the Army for a few years and died of T.B. in 1951.

Ben Penner married Tina Thiessen and they still live in Lowe Farm.

David Penner married Mary Wiebe and they still live in Lowe Farm.

Jacob Penner married Mary Doerksen and lived for some years in Lowe Farm and then moved to Winnipeg where he is employed by Canada Cement.

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Klassen (nee Tina Penner) lived in Lowe Farm for a few years after Isaac came out of the Air Force and then moved to Sperling. They are now living in Winnipeg.

Diedrich Penner enlisted in the Air Force at a very young age and served overseas with the R.A.F. during the 2nd world war. He now lives in British Columbia where he is employed by a pulp and paper mill.

Mr. and Mrs. Clanton Wiebe (nee Annie Penner) lived for a few years in Lowe Farm, then moving to Plums,

and from there to Winnipeg where he is self employed with heavy equipment.

### MR. BEN E. PENNER

*submitted by Mr. and Mrs. David E. Penner*

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Penner were married in 1932. Mr. Penner worked for the late Billy Deutchman and then for a number of years as a mechanic. He operated a dragline for about 25 years. He then took a course in high pressure pipeline welding, working for Western Flyer and Bobrowskys. He then retired to his workshop in Lowe Farm where he continues to serve the community with all kinds of odd jobs, such as welding and machinery soldering, etc.

They were actively involved in the organizing of the Emmanuel Gospel Church and are still active there. They have 9 children. John and Esther Penner (nee Kehler) live in Arizona. Jim and Doreen (nee Penner) Baker live in Morden, Man. Harry and Hilda Penner (nee Kehler) live in British Columbia. Walter and Doreen Penner (nee Penner) live in Minnesota. Eddie Penner is not married and lives in Calgary, Alta. Ken and Margaret Wiebe (nee Penner) live in Winkler, Man. Brian and Anna Wiebe (nee Penner) live in Calgary, Alta. Lorne and Irene Penner (nee Wiebe) live in Brandon, Man. Benny and Deanna Penner (nee Dueck) live in Brandon, Man.

## MR. DAVID E. PENNER

*submitted by Mr. and Mrs. David E. Penner*

Mr. and Mrs. Dave Penner (nee Mary Wiebe) were united in marriage on Oct. 31, 1940. Mrs. Penner is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Wiebe.

David Penner worked for the R.M. of Morris for a few years and then began work for the C.N.R. in 1943. He served in the Armed Services from Jan. 1944 till Aug. 1946 and then returned to the C.N.R. where he worked as a maintenance foreman till Jan. 1978 when he retired with almost 34 years of service. The day following his last day of work they were able to move into a new home they had built the previous summer with the able help of Mr. P.M. Wiebe and his son Bernard. Others that helped in the building project were Mr. Penner's sons and son-in-law.

Mr. Penner served on the board of directors of the Lowe Farm Co-op store for a period of 8 years.

Mrs. Penner has been active in church work and children's work as well as some community projects.

The Penners had 9 children.

Rose Marie taught school for 4 years prior to her marriage to Jim Kieper. They live at Russell, Man. where her husband is a Hereford cattle rancher. They have 3 children.

Marjorie Ann got her R.N.'s from the St. Boniface School of nursing and her B.N. from the U. of M. and taught nursing at the St. Boniface School of nursing for 3 years prior to her marriage to James Fraser and taught another 2 years after her marriage. Mr. and Mrs. James Fraser live in Winnipeg and have 2 boys.

Robert David (Bob) Penner studied to be a Chartered Accountant and is presently working in Calgary Alta. as a Tax Consultant. He married Nancy Melville and they live in Calgary and have 2 children.

Allan Henry Penner studied to be a Chartered Accountant and is now working as a C.A. in Winnipeg. He married Lynne Garnett and they have 2 children.

Leonard Bruce Penner got his B.A. majoring in geology and is presently working for the Alberta Government on Environmental and Water Pollution control. He married Elfrieda Kliever and they live in Edmonton.

Janice Gay got her R.N. from the St. Boniface School of Nursing and is presently working as an R.N. at St. Boniface Hospital. She married Jack Penner and they are living in Winnipeg.

Roxanna Ruth is a student at Winnipeg Bible College.

Loretta Jean died in infancy.

Douglas James is still at home attending Junior High in Lowe Farm.

## JOHN PETERS FAMILY

John Peters, who was born in Russia near Crimea, arrived in Canada by boat in 1875. He stayed with the people he came across with. The Peters family raised him until he was old enough to go out working to earn his living.



*John and Katharina (Falk) Peters with their second youngest child, Annie, in 1905.*

He worked at Devil's Lake for some time. He was batching for some years, but got tired of preparing meals after he got home from working the field. He found a girlfriend by the name of Kathrina Falk. After some time they got married. They moved north of Plum Coulee, where he took up a homestead. Nine children were born to them: Tena (Mrs. John Reimer) of Saskatchewan; Marie (Mrs. Dave Penner) of Morris; Helen (Mrs. Ben Remple) of Portage la Prairie; Margaret (Mrs. Friesen) of Dauphin; John Peters of Portage la Prairie; Peter Peters of Alberta; Jacob Peters of Morris; Mrs. Annie Giesbrecht of Morris and Mrs. Sara Remple of Plumas.

He bought a section of land north of Lowe Farm at fourteen dollars per acre. There weren't many buildings and land was all in prairie or wilderness. He bought a big International tractor. He had a number of horses, but needed more power. They also had a number of cows so as to keep the family with food. He also bought a separator to do his own threshing and for the neighbors as well.

Kathrina passed away in the year 1915, and in 1916, John married Nettie Wall. They had six children born to them: Henry of Morris, Fred, Abe of Kelowna, Susan of Winnipeg, Lillian of Winnipeg and Agatha of Ashern.

## MR. JACOB J. PETERS



*Jacob and Elizabeth (Klassen) Peters with their family in 1939.*



Mr. Peters, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Peters, was born November 8, 1899. His parents had moved from Plum Coulee to Lowe Farm earlier that year, having purchased a section of land for \$5,000.00, some 2 112 miles northeast of the townsite of Lowe Farm.

Mr. Peters stayed at home on his parents' farm till 1922, when he started farming on his own after his marriage to Elizabeth Klassen on July 27 of that year.

In 1927, Mr. Peters was laid up with a heart ailment and in 1930, in response to doctor's orders, gave up farming and moved into Lowe Farm. After moving into town, he developed his talents as a barber, and in 1938, rented a corner in a local tinsmith shop owned by Peter P. Funk, where he served the general public by providing a shave and a hair cut for two bits.

In 1943, he built his own barber shop on a lot just east of the Co-Op Store. Later his shop was moved one block west, where it remained until Mr. Peters retired in 1968.



*Jake Peters as Lowe Farm will Jake Peters' Centennial wind-mill.*  
*always remember him (1953).*

While Mr. Peters was not kept busy all of the time in his barber shop, he managed to keep himself occupied during slack periods. Being interested in music, he entertained himself and others by singing while he accompanied himself on his guitar. A checker board on a table in the corner of his shop was always available for checker enthusiasts and Mr. Peters was always ready to accept a challenge for a game between hair cuts. Numerous checker tournaments were organized by Mr. Peters, together with other local checker players, and quite frequently, Mr. Peters, a better than average checker player, achieved top honors in the tournaments. Another recreational facility provided by Mr. Peters was a horseshoe court, situated on the back part of the barber shop lot.

Besides possessing a natural talent for fixing guitars, clocks, sharpening scissors, etc. Mr. Peters also had the initiative and ability to successfully complete several interesting and original projects, one of which was a windmill, built in 1967 as a Centennial project.

In 1968, after serving the community for 30 years as a barber, Mr. Peters retired. On July 30, 1972, Mr. and Mrs. Peters celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary and shortly thereafter moved to Morris, where they

enjoyed their retirement years until Mrs. Peters' death in 1978.

The children are: Dorothy Roberts of Toronto, Edna Jenkins of California, Edwin Peters of Winnipeg, Walter Peters of Edmonton and Harold Peters of Edmonton.

## **JAKE B. REIMER**

Jake B. Reimer was the son of Jacob W. and Martha Reimer of Lowe Farm. Jake grew up on the farm (25-4-2) and had four sisters.

Jake married Marie Toews, daughter of Jacob A. and Anna Toews from the Plum Coulee area on October 26, 1952. They took up farming in the Morris Municipality in 1953, on 2-5-17, northeast of Kane. They remained here until 1967. After spending one year in Winkler, they moved to the Killarney area where they still reside.

They have two sons - Earl Darian Reimer of C.F.A.M. radio station, Altona, and Glenn Steven Reimer at Killarney, Manitoba.

## **HISTORY OF THE REIMER FAMILY**

Jacob J. Reimer was born June 1, 1877, in the village of Hochfeld, about 12 miles east of Niverville, Manitoba. A year or two before this event his parents, Jacob Reimers, had emigrated from the Bergthal colony in Russia to Canada. A few years later they moved to the West Reserve and settled in Schonhorst, northeast of Gretna, which later became part of the School District of Silberfeld. The early years were extremely hard for the Mennonite pioneers and young Jacob, being the eldest son, was needed at home most of the year and consequently got very little schooling.

On July 5, 1898 he married Katherina Wiens from the neighboring district of Edenburg. In the fall of 1899, her father, Jacob Wiens, bought two quarters formerly owned by Wm. Stevenson, namely, S.E. 114 of Section 6 and S.W. 114 of Section 5, which lay just east of the newly surveyed site of Lowe Farm, and moved into the old Stevenson house. In time his failing health made it impossible for him to look after the farm himself and Jacob Reimers moved to Lowe Farm to live with the Wienses and look after the farm. After Mr. Wiens' death, Reimers bought the land and continued to farm it.

In addition to farming Mr. Reimer went into partnership with his brother-in-law, Peter Abrams, husband of Mrs. Reimer's younger sister Helena, and operated a general store under the firm name of Reimer and Abrams. In 1910 the partnership was dissolved. Mr. Abrams kept the store and Mr. Reimer concentrated on farming.

In 1912 he rented the farm to Mr. Henry Friesen and moved to Foam Lake, Sask., where he and his wife's brother, Henry Wiens, built a mill and operated it for a number of years. Wiens was the engineer and Reimer the miller. The business thrived for a time but in the final years of the First World War various government restrictions and regulations made the going hard. Mr. Reimer also found that constant exposure to the dust of

the mill was beginning to have an adverse effect on his health. In March of 1919 he moved back to his old home in Lowe Farm and took up farming again. He went back to Foam Lake with his son to operate the mill one winter and then sold it to Mr. C.F. Barkman of Steinbach. He farmed the two quarters himself for several years and then rented them in turn to Peter Loewen, Henry Giesbrecht, his son Henry, and his son-in-law, Jac D. Reimer.

The Reimers continued to live in the old farmhouse until the time of his death in Dec., 1949. After her husband's death, Mrs. Reimer, who was an invalid by this time, stayed with her daughter Hannah for a while, then with Mrs. Peter S. Braun of Lowe Farm and spent her last years in the Bethania Nursing Home. She died Dec. 14, 1955.

The Reimers had four children, Jacob, born 1898 in Silberfeld; Henry, born 1901, Tina (Mrs. Wm. Friesen) 1904, Hannah (Mrs. J.D. Reimer) 1909. The last three were all born in Lowe Farm.

Jacob got his education at the public schools of Lowe Farm and Foam Lake. He helped his father in the mill and on the farm. In 1922 he married Martha Mudro (foster daughter of Rev. J.J. Hooges of the Bloomfield district). After their marriage he worked in the mill for Mr. Barkman a short period and then went into farming. With the help of his father they purchased a farm in the Kronsweide district and farmed it until they retired. On this farm their children grew up. They received their elementary education in the Kronsweide School.

Henry followed his elementary education with several years' attendance at the M.E.I. in Altona and then taught school for two years on permit. However, his major interest lay in business, for which he had gained some experience clerking in Lowe Farm before he went teaching. In 1926 he married Marie Siemens of SchOnthal. With the help of Father Reimer they built and stocked a store on Lot one of Block three and started storekeeping. For a time they lived in a three-room suite attached to the store building. Later they built a substantial home on the south end of what was then part of the family farm. His chief helpers in the store during the early years were his father and his sister Tina. In time he added a small lumber business to the store. In the thirties he sold his store building and bought J.J. Schroeder's garage which he remodelled to serve as a general store and the I.H.C. agency. About this time he became interested in farming, rented his father's two quarters and bought one of his own. His chief clerk John Harder served as manager of the store while he conducted the farming operation. He was experimentally inclined and tried his hand in a small way at raising crops that had not previously been tried in Lowe Farm. In 1946 he moved to B.C. where he carried on various activities in turn, and finally ended up with a lumber yard, which he operated successfully for many years and sold to his son when he retired.

Tina also received her elementary education in Lowe Farm and Foam Lake, and attended the Altona M.E.I. for a few years. When the high school was opened in Lowe Farm she helped to bring the number of prospective students up to ten, the minimum required to

open the school. In 1931 she married Wm. Friesen, who was teaching in Lowe Farm at the time. In 1932-34 she and her husband operated a small store in Kane. After living the life of a teacher's wife in various towns and rural school districts she came back to Lowe Farm in 1946. In 1949 the Friesens moved to Eriksdale where he assumed the duties of school inspector.

Johannah received all of high school and part of her elementary education in Lowe Farm. She took her normal in Winnipeg and started teaching. She taught at Flowery Bank, Winkler, and for a little more than three years in Lowe Farm. She married Jac D. Reimer in 1940, moved to Timmins for a while where he worked in the mines and then came back to Lowe Farm to farm the home farm. In 1956 they moved to B.C. where she went back to teaching until she retired this year, June 30, 1974.



*Jacob J. Reimer (second from left) with (Left to Right) son, Jacob W. Reimer, son-in-law, William Friesen, son, Henry W. Reimer, and son-in-law, Jac D. Reimer.*

## **"The Reimer Family Community Leaders"**

Jacob Reimer, senior, was a quiet man who served his family and the community well. He was a constant supporter of the cause of church and school. After his early retirement his role was that of adviser and helper. When Jacob needed help on the farm in spring or fall he was there to give it. When Henry needed help in the store he could be depended upon to give it. He provided labor and financial support at the time of the building, and, later, the renovation of the church. His religion was a quiet one but it was sincere and deep. His home was always a place for ministers to stay when their itinerary for regular or special services brought them to Lowe Farm, and in the horse and buggy days he made sure that their horses were well looked after.

His wife Katherina was a good homemaker, a good mother to her children and a vigorous supporting member of the community. She had an active intelligence and a quick wit. She was very strongly imbued with the ancient Mennonite virtue of hospitality. No one who came to her door went away hungry, be he a begging tramp, a neighbor, or a visitor from out of town. The quality of her cooking and baking was well known. She always kept a large garden. She practised economy at all times and had a special abhorrence of waste, whether it be of money, goods, or time.



*Katherina (Wiens) Reimer at her birthday party in April, 1949. With her are Mrs. A.A. Giesbrecht, and Mrs. Jacob Schroeder.*

The Reimer sons and daughters and their helpmates usually tried to do their share in contributing usefully to the life of the community while they lived in it. Although Jacob Reimers did not live in the district, they attended and supported the Lowe Farm church for many years. Their children later sang in the choir and participated in other church activities. For a time Jacob III conducted the choir.

Henry had a long record of community services. As young lads he and Jake were members of the local ball team. In business he helped people with credit when times were hard. When the co-op movement began he played an important part in helping it get on its feet. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Credit Union. In the year of the Literary and Debating Society he was a hard working member of the Executive. He served for a number of years as school trustee, some of them as chairman of the Board. His wife, Marie, was always a solid support to her husband and an active member of the community, especially in the work of the Church Women's groups.

Tina was an active participant in the work of the church and young peoples' groups; having served an organist, and choir member. She took part in the activities of the Literary and Debating Society and also in the dramatic entertainment later directed by Mrs. (Bourgeois) Streight. She helped to organize a Womens' Institute, as wife of the Principal of the school she had many duties that were a service to the community.

Hannah, more fully than her sister or brothers, was a product of Lowe Farm. She served the community in many ways. She sang in the choir, played the organ in the church, and conducted the choir for a number of years. She worked hard in the W.I. when such work was needed, as for example, in the time of the 1950 flood. She taught school 1937 to 1940 and participated in many other activities relating to school and community. Her husband, J.D. Reimer, was active in the Consumer Co-op, in the Credit Union, and in the Farmers' Union. His somewhat unusual reports on various conferences which he was delegated to attend used to attract considerable interest.



*William Friesen, his wife, Tina (Reimer), and children, Thelma, Richard and Irene.*

## **HISTORY OF THE WILLIAM FRIESEN FAMILY**

*W. Friesen*

My grandparents came to Manitoba from Russia in 1875. My paternal grandfather, a wheelwright and a farmer, believed in education, and four of his sons became teachers. After four years of farming experience I decided to become a teacher. I completed grade XI through private study and took a five months Normal Course at Manitou. That December in 1925 I began teaching in a rural school near Altona. After two years of teaching I took another five months Normal training in Winnipeg and earned a Second Class teaching certificate. Steinfeld S.D. in the Morris Municipality needed a teacher in the middle of the school year and I got the job.

I taught there for two and a half years. Enrollments in Steinfeld were quite heavy, usually reaching at least 50 during the winter months. This school had twice as many boys as girls and ten of the boys were named Peter; a little unusual, I thought. The grades ranged from I to VII. In addition to the usual school sports and annual picnics we had weekly softball practice by the young men and senior boys of Steinfeld and neighboring districts in the fall. We even had a soccer team one fall and winter but could not handle the more experienced Lowe Farm soccer team.

In September 1930, I was engaged by the Lowe Farm School Board to take charge of the upper elementary room, grades V to VIII, at a salary of \$1,250.00 and the rental of a small suite of rooms in J.J. Schroeder's garage. My school classroom was not large and after the enrollment reached over 50 that winter there was hardly any space left for the teacher to move around in. Although a number of students came only for the winter months, the level of achievement on the whole was quite high.

Here I met Tina Reimer. We were married at the end of the first school year on June 28. Instead of going on a

honeymoon, we moved to Winnipeg for the summer and I took grade XII physics and chemistry at the University. Tina kept house and helped to pass the time by typing my chemistry notes. We stayed another year in Lowe Farm and then moved to Kane to take charge of a small branch general store that Tina's brother, Henry W. Reimer, had opened in Kane that spring.

The trading area served by Kane was small and lightly populated; consequently, the duties evolving from the conduct of the business were not unduly pressing. As a result we had time to take a fairly active part in community activities. Tina was soon involved in the social activities of the ladies, such as teas and card parties. In a short space of time, I was asked to be secretary of the Sunday School, Bible Class teacher, secretary and phys. ed. instructor of the Young Men's Athletic Club, member of the softball team, and, finally, President of the Community Club. All this sounds like a lot of work, but actually, since the community was small none of the duties was very onerous or time-consuming.

We were in the "dirty thirties"; times were very hard for the local residents and therefore also for us. For many people in the district, incomes were extremely low or almost non-existent. Eggs were 7 or 8 cents a dozen and brought only a cent or two more delivered in Winnipeg. Ground Santos coffee cost us 200 a pound and sold for 25w; ground Rio coffee (poor stuff) cost us 15c and sold for 20e. Bread delivered by the Morris Bakery, at its lowest, cost 44 a loaf and sold for 30c. Sugar cost about \$8.00 a 100 pound bag and sold for \$8.35. By the pound it retailed for 10 cents.

Early in the new year our first child, Thelma, was born and this made the cramped living space in the north end of the store feel even more cramped. Our memory of the two short years spent in the Kane community will always stay with us as a pleasant interlude in our lives.

When we received the offer to take charge of the Alt Bergthal School near Altona, we accepted it. We sold our stock in the store and went back to teaching. That summer, while we were staying with Tina's parents in Lowe Farm, Irene was born. Richard was born two years later during our stay in Alt Bergthal. The next 12 years, all out of the Morris Municipality, were spent teaching in elementary and secondary schools, in gaining experience, and in advancing academic standing. When we moved back to Lowe Farm in 1946, I had a B.A., a Collegiate Principal's certificate, and was well on the way to a I3.Ed. degree. All of this was interesting and challenging for me, but it proved to be quite a hard grind for Tina, especially during the first years. Because of the low salaries paid teachers at the time, she stayed at home with the children, did the canning, and looked after the cow and chickens during my annual six weeks' absence in Summer School. Fortunately, the neighbors were kind and kept a watchful eye on the situation at the school house.

For the next three years after coming back to Lowe Farm I served as high school teacher and Principal. They were very busy years and on the whole happy and productive. The school set-up, with its three separate buildings and a total of five classrooms, two of them high school, functioned quite well. The students were co-operative and hard-working in academic studies, and also

in the various extra-curricular activities. Most of the latter were not allowed to usurp school time. An outstanding example of academic achievement and the students' willingness to apply themselves was the record of the 1947 Grade XI class in the June Departmental Examinations. The 10 students in the class had a total of only two sups. When these were written off in the fall we had a clear 100% pass.

On August 15, 1949, I was appointed Inspector of Schools and posted to Eriksdale. After four years at Eriksdale and four more at Stonewall, we were moved to Winnipeg where I served the remaining twelve and a half years until my retirement.

All three of our children started off as teachers. Richard is still in the profession and has served as high school teacher and Principal for many years. Tina is still quite active in a variety of community activities, most of them in connection with our local church. Our eight grandchildren are in various stages of high school and University education. After my retirement I have managed to keep with church work, historical research and various hobbies such as gardening, travel, photography, and the study of radio and television electronics.

As parents and grandparents, Tina and I have had much to be thankful for. Life has often been hard, and therefore challenging; but it has also been greatly rewarding. To our children and grandchildren, to our country, Canada, and to God, the Creator of all, for His many blessings and eternal love we give grateful thanks.

## JACOB D. REIMER

Jacob D. Reimer was born in Wymark, Saskatchewan where his father, Diedrich J. Reimer operated a General Store. Jobs were scarce in those years, and after riding the rails and seasonal work on the farms, he left to make his fortune in the nickel mines at Sudbury.

After our marriage in 1940 we moved to Timmins, Ontario, where Jac worked as a gold miner. We returned



*Jake and Hannah Reimer.*

to Lowe Farm in 1942 and began farming. Jac became active in the Co-operative movement, and the Farmers' Union. As Secretary of the Credit Union the minutes of the meetings were written down in detail regardless of the subjects under discussion, and these were varied and many. For several years he was sent as delegate to the Wheat Pool Convention, in Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

Once again I had the privilege of conducting the choir and taking part in community affairs. The Women's Institute was formed and working with this fine group of women in Lowe Farm was indeed a pleasure and a happy part of my life.

In 1956, we moved to Clearbrook, British Columbia. Jac became a carpenter and I went back to teaching until retirement.

Three children were born into our family, Kathleen, Bruce and Stewart.

Kathleen presently living in Grande Prairie is married to Herb Porter, a captain for Time Air in Alberta, and has two children, Karen and Ross.

Bruce is a chef in a Vancouver Restaurant, and Stewart an ex-logger.

The fortunes we first sought in the gold mines did not materialize. The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow also eluded us. However, the blessings in our life have been many, and with our children, we do feel life has been worthwhile.

## JACOB ESAU FAMILY

This is my life history. I was born to Jacob and Anna (Wiebe) Esau. My father was born in Russia in 1873, and Mother was born in 1876. They were blessed with a family of thirteen children, seven sons, and six daughters, which included one set of twins Abram and Henry who died when they were only a few weeks old. The oldest was Peter born in 1896, Diedrich in 1897, Jacob in 1898, and then the twins Abram and Henry in 1901. Next came a daughter Tina in 1902, Anna in 1905, Mary in 1907, myself (Nettie) in 1909, Henry in 1911, Helen in 1913, Abram in 1916, and Margaret in 1918.

The first incident I remember was when I was three years old. My brother Henry and myself were sitting on our father's knee and the rest were standing beside while we sang songs, something I always enjoyed. My mother was sewing. The sewing machine had a lid to open and mother had the oil lamp on this lid. The lamp fell off and there was a fire on the floor. But they got the fire out.

We first lived in New Bergthal then we moved to Rosenfeld and lived there for one year. My father bought half a section of land located one mile west of there. While we lived on this farm, I started school when I was seven years old. I attended only one school, and had one teacher for the seven years I attended. We lived two and one-half miles from school; in summer we had to walk, and in winter we drove in a cutter with a caboose on it. I enjoyed school very much.

I was thirteen years of age when we moved to Lowe Farm, in the year of 1922. We lived on the old Heppner farm as it was known at that time, living there three years. Then we moved to a large two story house, being



*Jacob and Anna (Wiebe) Esau with son, Henry.*

the neighbors to Isaac Giesbrecht. We lived there during the year 1928, and in the spring of that year my father suffered a stroke, and nine months later in October of 1928 he died. He was just a young man and I still miss him even though it was fifty years ago in fall.

## WILLIAM REIMER FAMILY STORY (1901-1979)

William Reimer was born to Jacob and Tina Reimer on March 4, 1876. In 1901, he was united in marriage to Augusta Conrad, daughter of August and Louisa Conrad in Russia.

Mr. and Mrs. William Reimer moved into the municipality soon after the birth of their first son, Jacob, in 1902, from Kronsart. Their home was located 2 miles east and 2 miles north of Lowe Farm. Their succeeding children were William born in 1904; John, 1905; Rudolph, 1907; Louise, 1911; and Margaret, 1913. Two daughters, both named Mary, born in 1910, and 1915, died in infancy, neither reaching the age of 2. It was after their move to Dominion City in 1916 that the youngest son, Ernest, was born.

On October 4, 1918, William Reimer died at the age of 42.

On April 27, 1919, Augusta Reimer married a widower, Bernhard Funk, and once more moved her family to the Lowe Farm district, where she resided even after her second husband passed away in 1938. This union was blessed with one daughter, Tena Funk, born on May 21, 1921, but who died of pneumonia on February 20, 1923.

Mrs. Augusta Funk passed away on February 22, 1969, at the Winkler Hospital. Both she and her first husband, William Reimer, are buried in the Lowe Farm cemetery; also their two daughters.

In 1931, Jacob Reimer married Margaret Friesen, also of Lowe Farm. They continued to reside in the area.

Their sons are Abram, James and Joseph. Mrs. Margaret Reimer passed away on October 15, 1977.

William Reimer and Nettie Esau of Lowe Farm, were married in 1929 and have lived in the Kane district and later the Lowe Farm district.

*John Reimer* remained single and spent most of his adult life as a resident of Carman.

*Rudolph Reimer* was united in marriage to Mary Siemens of Lowe Farm in 1928. Their children are; Gordon, Raymond, Ernest (deceased), Walter, William and Estelle (Roberts). In the beginning of their marriage, they resided very briefly in the Lowe Farm area.

*Louise Reimer* married Edward Martens of Horndean, in 1938 and they have resided in the Lowe Farm district since that time. Their marriage has been blessed with three boys; William (Bill), Walter, and Arthur. Arthur is still living in the district with his parents.

*Bill* married Mary Sawatsky and they are presently farming at Lowe Farm. Their children are; Barbara, John and Jim.

*Ernest Reimer* was married to Annie Thiessen of Lowe Farm in 1941. Their union was blessed with three children; Sandra (Gruenke), Timothy and David.

During the first years of their marriage, they owned and operated a general store at Kane, residing within the premises. Annie looked after the store during the time Ernest was in the army. After his return, they lived in Kane a short time, as Ernest decided to make the army his career, and they left for other parts of the country. Ernest Reimer passed away on July 28, 1977, at the age of 60.

*Miss Margaret Reimer* lived with her widowed mother, farming at the home place with her for many years. Only in the late 1960's did she take up residence in Winnipeg.

## WILLIAM REIMER

In the spring of 1929, I married William Reimer of Lowe Farm. Many things have happened since. We had eight children, of which one died when he was two and one-half months old. When we got married we lived one summer with my sister in a house three miles west and one-half miles south of Lowe Farm. Then we moved to Frank Enns' place. We lived there for three years. We had three children, John born in 1929, Edna born in 1931 and Tena born in 1932. When Edna was born, she weighed only two and one-half pounds. We could not get a doctor and she was born at home. I cared for her in the best way I could. When Edna was ten months old she weighed ten pounds, but I started giving her clear cod liver oil for a while and she perked up. It did not take long before she was very fat and healthy. My husband Bill had to go out to work to earn a living. One year and three months later Tena was born, so I had two babies and was all alone every day.

In the fall of 1932 we moved to Groening's house in the Kane District. Tena was two months old when we moved. It was during the Depression and the grasshoppers were so numerous on the land there were no plants on the whole farm, not even weeds. We tried to make a garden but the grasshoppers hatched before we sowed. Some of

the plants did come up but were eaten as fast as they came up, so that was the end of our garden. Three years later another baby was born, his name was Jacob and he was the baby that died. In June of 1936, Helen was born, and in February 1939, Margaret. They were all born while we lived at the Groening house.



*William Reimer cutting feed with his mules in 1938,*

We had no water on that yard, so I had to haul water with a Bennet wagon, with two barrels on it. We had two cows and no pasture, so I had to herd the cows too. I had my hands full but I never complained. I did it with the strength of the Good Lord, who was always with our family. We had two mules for a while. My husband went out to cut feed all winter. In summer he worked on the fields, sometimes for 50¢ per day, which was not very much to live on. Sometimes the children got sick but the Lord was always with me and the family. I sometimes think I enjoyed those years more than now. We had something to work for and we were all the same. No one had more wealth than another, but I always said we were not poor, there were always people who had less. We always had food to eat. When we did not have meat, Bill went out to shoot a rabbit. Most of the time we had a calf to butcher. We were always rich in spirit.

We moved closer to Kane, to the Fredrickson house, where we lived for twelve years. In 1945 Ernie was born, and in 1948 to 1949 Bill started to drive the school van. Times were getting better for us, and in 1949 Mary-Ann was born.

Those of the William Reimer children presently living in Rural Municipality of Morris are:

**John and Edith Reimer (Lowe Farm), children; William, Diane, Kenneth, Paul, Katherine, and Shirley. Jake and Edna Rempel (Morris), children; Dennis Richard and Shirley (Irvine), Arlene and Rob Hamblin, Terry and Lori (Baril) and Dale.**

**Jack and Tena Loewen (Rosenort), children; Beverly, Karen and Rick Authier, Cheryl and Harold Waldner and grandchildren; Michelle, Michael and Amanda.**

**Abe and Helen Klassen (Riverside), children; Gloria, Lucille and Eileen.**





*William and Nettie Reimer's family in 1973. LEFT TO RIGHT: Jake and Margaret Harms, William and Nettie (Esau) Reimer in 1979 on their Jack and Tina Loewen, Ernie and Stephanie Reimer, Jake and Edna Rempel, John and Golden Anniversary. Edith Reimer, Bruce and Mary Ann Oliver, Abe and Helen Klassen.*

Jake and Margaret Harms (Lowe Farm), children; Patricia, Josephine and Wendell.

## DAVID THIESSEN FAMILY

1932 was a momentous year for the Frank F. Thiessen family. It marked a move from the Rosenheim School District (north of Horndean) to the Kane area. Moving took several weeks since it was all done by horses. This meant a transition for the school children. Now, instead of walking to school, they were picked up by van, and they no longer went to a one-room school.

Dave received much of his education at the Kane consolidated school. When he quit school, he stayed home to help his Dad with the farm work.

December 26, 1941. This day marked another milestone. Dave Thiessen and Liddy Groening were married.



*Dave and Liddy (Greening) Thiessen in 1975.*

A short time later, Dave joined the services. After two years of training in Canada, he was sent overseas, where he served with the infantry in the Lanark and Renfrew Scottish Regiment of Canada in Africa, Italy and Belgium and Holland.

When he returned to Manitoba, he began farming in the Kane and Lowe Farm areas, beginning with 160 acres and expanding the 400 acres. Dave and Liddy have two daughters, Myra and Josey, who now reside in St. Vital.

Dave was very involved in community affairs. He began as a trustee in 1954 for the Kane Consolidated School, progressing to the Morris-MacDonald School Division until his resignation in 1974. He also served in the executive of MAST from 1964-1970 and on the Advisory Board of the Department of Education from 1965-1969.

Dave was equally involved in activities at the Emmanuel Gospel Church in Lowe Farm, serving in the capacity as usher, Sunday School teacher, Sunday School superintendent and church board member.

Dave was also a member of the Manitoba Farmers' Union and the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-Op.

In 1975, Dave and Liddy moved to Winkler where Dave changed from a farmer to a real estate salesman. Liddy passed away on March 25, 1977. Dave has one grandson, Paul David Wirch.



*Dave and Liddy Thiessen family in 1975. Josey and Ivan Wirch, Myra and Garry Meyer.*

## M. ROSNER FAMILY

*submitted by Bernard Rosner*

Moses Rosner was born in 1860's in the Province of Bassarabia, Romania. He migrated directly from Romania to Plum Coulee in 1897, where his younger brother Sam had migrated to some twelve years earlier. This brother who was known as "Uncle Sam", was mayor of the town of Plum Coulee.

Moses married in 1900 to Julia Morganstern, who arrived with her parents, brothers and sisters from a neighboring village in Romania.

In 1907 Rosners moved to Lowe Farm where they established the business known as M. Rosner and later M. Rosner and Sons, dealing in general merchandising.

Although the Rosners were not of the Mennonite faith, Mr. Rosner Sr. was very interested and instrumental up to a point in the building of the first church, namely the Bergthaler Church in Lowe Farm. A religious and God-fearing man, he enjoyed discussing religious topics and Biblical characters with the Church Elders. He respected all religions as much as his own which was Judaism, and brought his sons up in the same religion and also with a respect for other faiths. His business ethics contained high moral standards and he tried hard to impart these standards to his family.

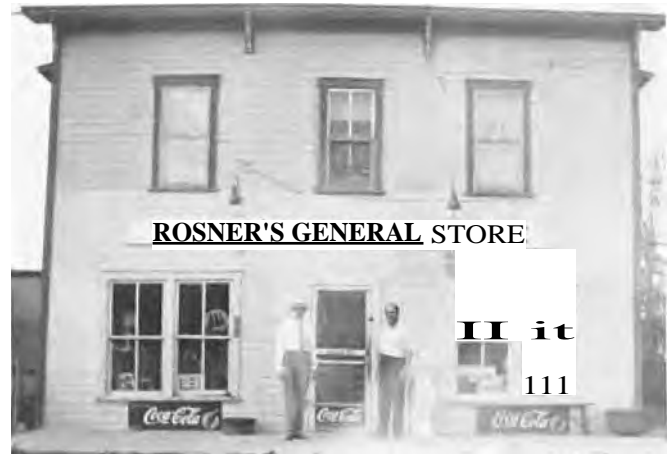
Mrs. Rosner whose name was Julia, was truly a mother in every sense of the word. She comforted and nurtured the child, she restrained the teenager and she advised the young men of her family. All this through two wars, depression, good times, tragedies, droughts and floods, in illness and in good health. With all the trials and tribulations Mrs. Rosner had a smile for everyone and to her with her optimism, tomorrow would be a brighter day.



*Moses and Julia (Morganstern) Rosner.*

They were blessed with eight sons, Charles, Israel, Sam, Saul, Irvin, Ephraim, Abe and Bernard.

In May of 1921 a great tragedy befell the Rosners. The home and store were burnt to the ground and in this fire the second son Israel at the age of 17 lost his life. Half of the business section of the town was razed. The senior Rosners with all their courage took upon themselves to rebuild and stay in the town.



*Rosner's store in 1938.*

Charles started farming in 1935, two miles west and one mile north of the town of Lowe Farm. He retired from farming in 1966. He was married to Cecilia Black and they had one son, David who was a Social Worker with the Department of Northern Affairs and is presently back at the University of Waterloo pursuing his Ph.D. in Social Work. Charles passed away in 1970.

Three generations of Rosners have lived in Lowe Farm. With the birth of David Rosner, who is Charles and Cecilia's son, the third generation was started. David is a graduate Social Worker with the Federal Government. Similarly Abe and Edith's two sons lived in Lowe Farm for the first years.

As the sons grew older, Rosner Sr. took less interest in the business and the store was closed when Abe left for Winnipeg, Mr. Rosner passed away in 1955 and Mrs. Rosner in 1965.

Sam started up in business in the town of Morris in 1927 and remained there until 1933. Apart from his business ventures he was quite active with community affairs, such as the Tennis Club, the Morris Park on the river bank and "ye old swimming hole" which was the Red River.

Saul, after graduating from University of Manitoba, pursued a business career in Winnipeg.

Irvin, after graduating as an Optometrist in Toronto, practised in Timmins, Ont. and later in Los Angeles, Calif.

Ephraim ran the Lowe Farm business after the senior Rosners retired and remained until 1949. In 1949, Abe took over the operation of the store until 1954. Abe had served with the Canadian Army overseas during World War II. Abe has two sons, one of which attended his primary grades in Lowe Farm. Gerald, Abe's eldest son, is a Science Teacher in Winnipeg and Marshall his second son, is an Audiologist with the school board.

Bernard graduated from Lowe Farm High School and then continued University to graduate as an Optometrist, and is presently practising in Winnipeg. During World War II served overseas with the R.C.A.F.



*The Rosner sons in 1947. BACK ROW: Irvin, Saul, Ephraim, Bernard. FRONT ROW: Charles, Sam, Abe.*

I would like to add this humorous incident that happened during the Dirty-Thirties: Early one morning in summer, about 2:00 a.m., the lights of a model T Ford were flashing into our upstairs windows, someone was pounding at the door and the Model T horn was tooting. I stuck my head out of the window to inquire "what was wanted." The answer was "phone the Doctor". I assumed that the population of our great municipality was about to be increased. I hastily pulled on my trousers and came out and asked "George the noise-maker" which Doctor to call. "Phone Dr. Skinner". Dr. Skinner was the Veterinarian at that time. I inquired of George what the problem was and to which he answered "My best mare just gave birth to a colt and now the mare is loosing her inards". I reported this to Dr. Skinner by telephone, to which he answered "Tell George there is nothing I can do as everytime the mare coughs she'll lose them again, as the ligaments are all torn and I'm afraid he's going to lose his mare." I reported same to George, to which he reacted in a manner that I thought the mare was his wife. I felt so sorry for him that I didn't even ask him for the nickel for the phone call. At about ten o'clock that evening George appeared in the store - "George, how's the mare doing?" the answer; "Oh, she's fine, she had twins."

## PETER SCHMIDT

Peter and Judith Schmidt settled on a farm close to Sperling, Manitoba, in 1926, having arrived in Winkler the previous year, after leaving all their possessions behind in Russia. Their children, Helen, Peter and Abe, kept them busy, as well as shouldering all the other responsibilities that go with starting a farm from scratch.

A whole new farmstead was started that year of 1927; The Trust and Guarantee Co. provided us with a loan covering four horses, one cow, and a few implements. The first few years our crops amounted to less than the cost of production, due to rain and floods. Another four children were born to them; John, Elizabeth, Agnes and a twin sister, Sara, who died soon after birth.

In 1928, when the drainage ditches were made marking sections and roads, our property became known as 1-6-2 West. Gradually, things improved financially, and we bought another half section of land adjacent to our farm, at \$5.00 an acre. Finally, after World War II, farming became a viable proposition, but by this time our father's health was gone. He died in 1945.

Mother worked very hard on this farm, helping on the field with the stooking; milking quite a few cows, as well as taking care of a large garden, canning, sewing, cleaning and what have you. She was not a very strong person and became sick shortly after our father died, remaining in poor health until her death, in 1961.

The family kept the farm together for many a year. Peter married Anne Braun of Altona, living in the Lowe Farm area, prior to moving to Winnipeg. Helen always came back to the farm to help out, but died of cancer in 1963.

John married Maria Kroeker of Lowe Farm; they farmed three miles east of Lowe Farm for several years. They were both very active in church and community work in the area, John and Maria moved to the Kleefeld area, where they operate Kleefeld Farm Sales. They have three sons and two daughters.

Surviving daughters are: Elizabeth (Mrs. Earl Poidavin of Winnipeg) and Agnes (Mrs. Henry Falk of Kleefeld).



*Peter and Judith Schmidt with their children, John, Abe, Helen, Pere, Elizabeth and Agnes (seated).*

Abe and Margaret Schmidt are the only members of the family residing in the municipality, two miles north of Lowe Farm. They operate a farm with good buildings and have a large hog operation. They have planted a large number of trees for shelter from prairie winds. The Schmidts are very active in church life in Lowe Farm. Abe has served as Sunday School superintendent, in choir and other committees such as the Bible Society with M.C.I. in Gretna, Credit Union and Co-Op as board member. Margaret has been involved in many things including the Self Help store for M.C.C. They have three sons; Walter, Lorne and Timothy, and a daughter, Elenore, (Mrs. Harley Giesbrecht) of Winnipeg.



*Abe and Margaret Schmidt and family on their 25th Wedding Anniversary.*

## C.A. SPALDING

Charles Anson Spalding, my father, was born in the Toronto area, March 27, 1880, of Scottish parents. He was second oldest in a family of seven and grew up in Preston, Ontario. He worked as an apprentice in tinsmithing and plumbing. He came west as far as Saskatchewan by train, planning to try homesteading, but found that too lonely. He left for Brandon, Manitoba, where he worked on a farm for a few years. From there, he went to Plum Coulee, where he got on as a tinsmith and plumber with Stewart Brothers.

It was at a dance in Plum Coulee that he met my mother, Mary Dyck. It was love at first sight for my dad, but mother's mother was slow in wanting her daughter to marry out of the Mennonite Church. But my dad charmed her into accepting him, thus winning her approval and they were married after a short courtship. They were married by author Ralph O'Connor on April 19, 1909. All the courting was done by horse and buggy during the spring wet season. Needless to say, there were not too many visits, since my mother lived in Lowe Farm at that time.

Shortly after they were married, dad and Mr. Reichert started a business in Lowe Farm. Reichert was a harness maker, and my dad was tinsmith and plumber. He installed quite a few hot water systems in homes in and around Lowe Farm.



*Charles and Marion Spalding with Evelyn, Norman and Grandma Voyt.*

After Rosner's General Store was destroyed by fire in 1921, my father sold the former G.P. hotel to Mr. M. Rosner. The Rosners had lost their second eldest son in that fire.

My father had a severe heart problem and was forced to sell the business because of this. His physician had given him 6 months to live, but suggested that he try chiropractic treatments. This proved to be most helpful and his condition improved greatly. As a result, he took a great interest in the chiropractic method and subsequently trained for 6 months at Davenport, Iowa. He was able to help some people after this short course of training.

In 1926, he was instrumental in getting the high school started in Lowe Farm. That same year, he bought a quarter section of land at \$10.00 per acre, north of Lowe Farm. They went through very hard times during the 1930's. To make ends meet, he went to work in Winnipeg, as a plumber for 2 winters. My mother continued to help by taking in boarders and serving meals to travellers going through town. I can remember times when she learned that her customer had given her his last 50¢ (the price of the meal), and she would give it back to him.

When my mother had these boarders, she was also the chambermaid, you might say, as there was no plumbing.



*C.A. Spalding, John L. Hiebert, and Pete Giesbrecht of Lowe Farm. Spalding house at right, livery stable in background.*

She equipped each room with a pitcher, basin and chamber pot, which had to be tended to each day. The laundry was done by one of the hand operated washers with the water heated on the stove.

My mother died very suddenly in 1937. A great shock to all of us! My father accepted and was elected councillor of Ward 5 in Rural Municipality of Morris, which helped to fill his lonely days. He had that post for 6 years.

He married Tina Friesen in 1944 and went to live in Renata, B.C. They moved back to Manitoba and bought a store in Dunrae. After a few years, they retired to Mission, B.C., where he passed away in 1954.

My sister, Evelyn, married Shirley Johnson in November 1928. He was the Imperial Oil agent in Lowe Farm.

I was married in 1935 to Caroline Groening. My dad and I farmed together all his farming years.



*Caroline Groening (later to be Mrs. Norman Spalding), on running board of A.A. Groening's first car. Ed and Walter Groening in back.*

## GEORGE J. WIEBE

*George J. Wiebe* was born in the Plum Coulee area in 1896, moving to the district of Morris as a 16 year old boy. He worked as a farm hand for a series of employers - The Klassen brothers, John Toews and Peter Funk - being responsible for the care of the animals, cultivating, plowing, harrowing, seeding, haymaking, stooking and threshing. On occasion, he milked the cows, although this work was usually considered "girls' work".

During 2 successive winters, George attended the M.C.I. in Gretna, acquiring reading and arithmetic skills. He also did some carpentry work and was the foreman on a bridge building gang.

His dream of owning his own threshing outfit was finally realized when he and his brother-in-law, Isaac Giesbrecht bought one. Later, he owned an outfit jointly with Henry Buhr, until he bought his own. Its very modern seed cleaner created a great demand for his services and he received more offers for work than he



*George Wiebe's threshing outfit.*

could handle. As a result, in winter, he went from farmer to farmer with the cleaner alone, to clean seed grain for spring seeding. At that time, he rented and lived in Section 7-5-1 West.

George was very interested in drama. In his youth, he played a lead role in a popular Low German play that toured all over the district, called the "Schultenbot". (The Council Meeting).

On June 14, 1934, George married Helena Rempel in the Lowe Farm Bergthaler Church. The Rempels' yard just back of the church, was the scene of the wedding reception. The tables consisted of sawhorses and planks of wood covered with building paper.

In 1936, George purchased the land they were living on, at approximately \$10.00 per acre. Just 2 1/2 years later, their first child, a son, (Melvin George) was born. Five other children were born to them - Victoria, Leona, who died at the age of 2; Ruth, Ron and Charles.

Son, Melvin, received his post-secondary education in Arts at the Universities of Manitoba and Toronto. He married Lola Cuddy in 1963, and they now live in Kingston, Ontario, with their son, Alexander. Both Mel and Lola teach at Queen's University, in Kingston. Vicki took her nurses' training to the St. Boniface Hospital and her degree in nursing at the University of Manitoba. In 1967, she married Allan Strong and they now have 2 daughters, Kathryn and Lisa.

Something happened that we considered a tragedy at that time. Our daughter, Ruth, at the age of five, contracted infantile paralysis. After two months in the Children's Hospital and extensive therapy, the disease

left her with a paralyzed right arm and partially paralyzed left arm. This did not daunt her, however. She attended C.M.B.C. and the University of Manitoba, taking Arts and Education. She has taught in various places, presently in Winnipeg. Ruth has a specially equipped car which she drives, and was past Vice-Chairman of the Manitoba League of the Physically Handicapped.

Ron, who married Clara Braun of Lowe Farm in 1973, lives in Morris. He farms half of his father's land, besides renting another 110 acres. Clara is a registered nurse; they have two daughters, Laurie and Jennifer.

Charles, (Tim) acquired his B.A. from the University of Winnipeg, is presently studying for his Master's degree at the University of Toronto Massey College.

Mrs. Wiebe's interests are sewing, gardening, cooking, baking and canning. She has taught Sunday School most of her married life and enjoyed it, as well as participating in the Church ladies' group.

The family has always been interested in music. Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe sang in the church choir, as well as the children. They still love to gather around the piano and sing, as well as participate in friendly conversation.

Mr. Wiebe passed away in March 1979, after a lengthy illness.



*George Wiebe in the 30's.*



*George Wiebe, 1962.*

## LOWE FARM RECOLLECTIONS

*by Sadie Wiens*

In early September, 1919, J.D. Wiens, his wife and two small daughters arrived in Lowe Farm. He left a week ahead of them to try to find some shelter for them, this being land without buildings, Hudson Bay land I believe, and bought at \$9.00 per acre.

We had a carload of horses, and a box car of implements and household furniture, which were all dumped out onto the bald prairie.

The part of Saskatchewan we left was in the heart of the "Dust Bowl". Our children, Vida and Verna, had never known rain, and as we got off the train in Winnipeg, it was raining. They were so surprised and remarked "they didn't like this water coming down on them."

There were forty acres of flax to harvest, hay to be made or bought, lumber to haul, barn and house to be built, water to haul and so many other tasks to be done, that work was never done, it seemed.

The children and I stayed in town a week or ten days, with our good friends, the Spaldings. Mary Spalding, dear soul, was Jack's cousin.

Carpenters were hard to hire, but they finally got the house half finished and we could go out to our new house. I could at least help by doing some cooking, etc. The roof was not yet shingled and it rained at times, so we paid time and a half to someone to do that. One-half was finally shingled and when it rained, we moved our beds and furniture to that part. We had the stove pipe running out of the kitchen window. Couldn't get anyone to build a chimney. Finally the place took some shape and form, but was far from finished.

That year, it turned cold in October, the sixth or eighth of the month, I believe. Snow came early. It was cold and winter set in. It was the year of the heavy snowfall. We didn't have a road to the corner road that led to Lowe Farm. Jack rode horseback to get the mail and small provisions, but when coal and heavier groceries were needed, he hitched up a team to a large sleigh and the horses plowed through the deep snow. In time, the snow was packed down and we had a road of our own.

People in town said that when the spring thaw came, the water came in the doors and windows. Jack was stout hearted and said not to worry; things were never so bad, but that they could be worse and that we lived through the dry years and would weather the wet ones, which were many.

The children and I stayed home that winter; we knew no one and were so homesick for the hills of the west that as we put on a record on the gramophone and played "Little Old Home in the West" or "I'll take You Home again Kathleen", I shed silent tears.

Spring came at last! We were invited to Spaldings for Easter dinner. We went in the big sleigh as there was more snow than water. The faithful horses got us there safely. We were among friends again.

1920 gave us a good crop and was the fall our son, Ross, was born, November 27th. We didn't have a phone, so that night Jack went to the neighbours' to ask him to go to Lowe Farm and have Charlie Spalding



phone Dr. Ross of Morris. Charlie had to show him the way to our place; hence the name Ross Charles. It was a beautiful Indian summer day and Jack was at a neighbour's helping with the late threshing. In those days, it was community threshing. Next day, we had a blizzard; snow fell thick and fast. So lucky we were.

In the seventeen years we lived on the farm, we had one crop failure after another, due to flood, rust, grasshoppers, hail and what not, in between a few good crops.

Jack, being an auctioneer, got acquainted quickly and had many good sales in Sperling, Morris, Lowe Farm, Brunkild, the Village, St. Jean, Ste. Agathe, etc. his motto was "if not satisfied you pay no commission" but there never was a complaint.

Now, to touch on politics. He and his cousin, Jake Wiens, Sr., were, to my knowledge, the only true Liberals in and around Lowe Farm. Jack worked for the good of the community, but it was said the roads, telephones, culverts, ditches, double dikes, etc., were built for us, but it was for all, and of course we were benefitted by this too.

Jack passed away in December, 1975, and I am now a resident of the Middlechurch Home near Winnipeg. Our children: Ross lives in Montreal; Verna in Toronto; Grace in Vancouver; and Vida in St. Vital.

## J.W. WIENS

Jacob Wiebe Wiens was the only son of Peter and Justina Wiens, who immigrated to Canada in 1874. The latter part of their journey was by paddlewheel boat along the Red River from Fargo, North Dakota. They disembarked in a place between Ste. Agathe and Winnipeg, where they travelled by land to the Steinbach area, where they settled.

"J.W." as he was commonly known, was born on February 5, 1879. At the age of five, his father passed away, leaving him fatherless at a very early age.

He was hired out as a farm hand in his early teens and continued in this work until he was hired to assist in building a steam powered flour mill in Plum Coulee. Here, the manager and bookkeeper assisted him in learning to read and write the English language.

He became interested in the settlement at Lowe Farm and moved there in the late 1890's. Here he met Maria Banman, daughter of Julius Banman, who had settled on the S.E. 114 36-4-2 West, in the Rural Municipality of Morris, and was married in 1900. They raised seven children to adulthood. Maria, Anna, Jacob, John, Justina, Julius and Alvin Henry.

J. W. Wiens lived with his parents on the farm, where he, the father-in-law and three brothers-in-law, built a grain crusher driven by wind for custom grain crushing, for the early settlers. J.W. also had other ambitions, such as starting a business of his own. In 1901, he built his own tinsmith shop in Block 5, Lot 5, in the Village of Lowe Farm, having had training in this trade in his early boyhood. There was a great demand for this trade, because the people depended on the storage of rain water, as this was the only source of portable water. Therefore,

eave troughs and water cisterns were in great demand. In 1905, he sold the building and business to J. Riter and Charles A. Spalding.

Grain marketing facilities were very inadequate and J. W. was instrumental in the organization and forming of their own Farmers' Elevator Company in Lowe Farm in 1905. He became the first manager. They sold the elevator around 1911 to Western Canada Flour Mills. Years later, he also took an active part in helping to organize the Lowe Farm Co-Op Elevator Association.



*J. W. and Maria (Banman) Wiens in 1908.*

In 1912, J.W. bought the N.E. 114 6-5-1 West and moved from the village to the farm, half a mile north of the Village of Lowe Farm. A few years later, he acquired the N.W. 114 5-5-1 West, which at the present time is being farmed by the grandson, Ronald Wiens. The farm was known as Maple Grove Stock Farm, also known for the herd of Registered Red Poll cattle.

J. W. worked diligently as a trustee on the school board of the Lowe Farm School district, No. 1033 for about 20 years, most of that time as chairman of the Board. Having been deprived of a formal education in his youth, he realized the importance of an education. His quotation was that "an education is something that nobody can steal or rob you of and will stay with you." It was his continued effort to improve the system. He was rewarded by having his oldest daughter, with two other

male students, graduate with a Grade 10 education, in 1916. Grades 9 and 10 were instructed after the regular day class. In 1926, the first high school was opened in what used to be a butcher shop on Main Street, in Lowe Farm.

In the 1916 municipal election, J.W. was elected to the council of the Rural Municipality of Morris and served his ward until 1919. His major interest was the drainage problem, which faced the ratepayer in his ward by the spring runoff from the Pembina Hills.

The day of the meeting dawned early for him as his transportation to the meeting in the spring of the year was an eleven mile ride on a one horse sulky. On one such journey, he had an exciting experience! When riding through the Lewis Coulee, which was swollen with spring runoff, the sulky with all its contents slipped into a washout. When the sulky and drenched councillor arrived safely on the other side, he was minus his horse's bag of oats and his lunch, but he had not let go of the valuable map and papers to be up for discussion at the meeting.

J. W. Wiens was forced in his fifty-nine years of his life to fight many battles, often successful, but the final battle for his life against cancer could not be won and so this man of vision and stamina closed his eyes in death on August 15, 1938.

Mrs. J.W. Wiens passed away in 1972, at the age of almost 92 years.

Following is a summary of the family as they grew up.

Mary left for nurse's training first to Ninette and then to Winnipeg, where she graduated as an R.N. in 1926. She later married Orval Whitney and has lived in Winnipeg ever since.

Anna took teachers training in the depression years of the 30's. She taught for 40 years and retired from that profession in Lowe Farm. She passed away in the Red River Valley Lodge on January 30, 1978.

Jacob started farming in the 1930's and when his brothers became of age, joined hands and farmed together for some time. They were also active in the Local Co-Op movement. Jacob found a marriage partner, packed up his belongings and moved in with his bride, Mrs. Tina Schroeder, widow of the late P.S. Schroeder. She had three sons and one daughter; Eddie, Nettie, Herman and Benno. The boys having grown up, all moved to Ontario. Nettie married Willie H. Klassen and they live and farm 2 1/2 miles from Lowe Farm. They raised three daughters and one son.

Jacob and Tina Wiens had one son, Lionel, who lives in Lowe Farm and farms in the area. He married Lorraine Wiebe and they have one daughter.

John is married to the former Mary Schroeder, daughter of George Schroeders. John farmed with his brothers for a few years. When the Co-Op Store was organized, he applied for manager and held the position until he took over the Bakery in Morris and moved there. After selling the Bakery, he took on the job as Secretary for the Town of Morris. From there, he moved to Churchill, Manitoba and assumed the Government Administrator's position. Three years later, he took the same position in Snow Lake, from which he retired to Winnipeg. After his retirement, he helped Municipalities

running into difficulties, until September, 1978. They raised a family of three; two daughters and one son. Mildred (Mrs. Arden Bobrowski of Vancouver) Murray in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Marcia, (Mrs. Rick Patci of Montreal, Quebec).

Justina, the youngest of the girls, was always the weakling in the family, but she had great determination. She took teacher's training in Winnipeg and taught for 30 years. She began teaching in Rural Districts first in Lowe Farm and in Morris for ten years. She was forced into retirement because of ill health and passed away in 1975.

Julius married Tina Klassen, daughter of the late Henry Klassen. They raised one son, Ronald J. Wiens, who took over the home place after his father died suddenly in 1972. Julius also took an active part in the Co-Op movement.

Alvin Henry married Evelyn Giesbrecht, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jake A. Giesbrecht. Alvin H. farmed in partnership with Julius and Evelyn taught school in Lowe Farm. Later, they moved to Altona and in 1968, moved to East Kildonan, Winnipeg. They have two sons and two daughters; Berry, Darrel, Gwen and Jennifer.



*The Cornelius Harder farm at 20-5-1 W, 1925.*

## **CORNELIUS HARDER**

*submitted by Mrs. Abe F. Derksen*

My father was born at Fargo, N.D. on October 20, 1880, son of Abram and Agnetha (Toews) Harder. He came to Manitoba at a very young age with his parents who settled in the Halbstadt area where they built a sod shack to live in for the first years. They plowed potatoes under in sod furrows, the potatoes grew flat but never the less were good food.

My mother was born at Schanzenfeld January 25, 1880 daughter of Peter and Elizabeth (Fehr) Martens.

They were married at Halbstadt in 1904 where they farmed till 1918. They ventured out to 4 1/2 miles northeast of Lowe Farm where they bought three quarters of Section 20-5-1 West in the R.M. of Morris.

Drainage ditches were few and far between. Several sloughs had to be filled in to make the land usable, also there were trees and bushes to be cleared. Several huge rocks 5 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft. were removed from the fields with the use of the old Universal Rumly tractor. The

Rumly and Titan tractors were also used for field work to help lessen the load of the horses, which usually numbered at least 9 or more.

There were some large old buildings on the yard when my family moved there. A large new barn was built in 1920 to house the livestock and horses, other buildings were later added to accommodate the scores of hogs, chickens, turkeys and sheep usually numbering between 100-300 which my sister and I faithfully tended during the summer months.

There were eleven children in our family. Nettie, married David Enns moved to Paraguay. Peter, deceased in adolescence, Cornelius, married Eva Harder, Lowe Farm. Elizabeth, married Jacob Froese, Grunthal. Mary, Winnipeg. Annie, married Peter Harder, Grunthal. John, married Margaret Falk, Winnipeg. Julius married Annie Kehler of Morris. Daniel married Annie Harder Morden. Justina, married Otto Herkert, Oak Bluff. Katharine, married Abe Derksen, Lowe Farm.

Life was quite difficult for my father when in 1924 my mother passed away suddenly leaving him with eleven children to look after. My parents were members of the



*Cornelius Harder in 1936.*

into a partnership with John Martens to build and operate a grocery store in Lowe Farm. This was helpful also in purchasing some goods in bulk for the large family that we were. However the store proved to be too inconvenient and didn't last many years before the partnership was dissolved and the store closed.

Father was interested in gardening for production as well as a hobby. He planted dozens of fruit trees and shrubs. As well we always had a huge vegetable garden.

As far back as I remember there were always a few hired hands around especially during harvest when the crew would move from farm to farm in the neighborhood with the threshing separator and Rumly or Titan pulling the machine. This was followed by several horse drawn racks also grain wagons. I recall listening for the rattle of the racks after dark to signal the days end and rest. Oh how delicious were the breaks for coffee with country cream and oven fresh buns, and homemade butter sugar cubes for those with a sweet tooth.

Those afore mentioned implements were of course replaced with combines, tractors and trucks in the late thirties.

In 1936 after several of my sisters had married and left home Father hired a housekeeper for the summer.

The single state of life and prospective lonely years in later life probably influenced him to change that. So in December of that year he sought out the maiden Sarah Heppner (who had worked in our home during summer) and made her his wife. Three children were born to them. Frank, Eva who married Abram Friesen, Margaret, married Jacob Brown.

Crops and prices improved during the forties and he purchased one and three quarter section of land in the Macgregor area, however he never did work the land himself and resold it again in 1950.

The war years of 1939-1946 brought spiritual hardships to many families, and when part of the Sommerfeld church planned an exodus to Paraguay S.A. in 1948 my parents felt the need to emigrate there taking the three young children with them, also three older married daughter (Nettie, Elizabeth, Annie) with their families. Elizabeth and Annie have since come back to Manitoba.

It was a hard struggle to make a living in that foreign country but succeed he did. After a lengthy illness and much suffering he passed away in Paraguay on his 79th birthday on October 20, 1960.



*The Cornelius Harder farm at 29-5-1 in 1942.*

Sommerfelder Mennonite Church. Christian principle were not neglected at home, even though going to church 8 miles distant regularly was not always possible with the horse drawn vehicles especially during poor road and weather conditions. At times there were church services held in our home, or in the local schools. Seeing the need, father was active in distributing the necessities to the needy through church channels.

In the late twenties he bought the south half of Section 29-5-1 West through which the Tobacco Creek drain was running diagonally. This drain was upgraded to make a double dyke in 1935 and again in 1943 when it was made into one large drain.

During the early thirties he bought the N.E. 114 of Section 15-5-2 West and the south half of Section 16-5-2 West. Being several miles away, my brothers would sometimes go there with implements to work, and stay for the week sleeping in a tent.

To help with income during the lean thirties father bought a truck and set up somewhat of a livestock transfer in the neighborhood to haul farm animals to market in Winnipeg. Also round about that time he went

## ABE F. DERKSEN

*submitted by Mrs. Edward Hare*

Abram and Katharine Derksen are longtime residents of the Lowe Farm community. Mr. Derksen first son of Aron and Maria (Friesen) Derksen was born in the Rosenfeld, Manitoba area. Mrs. Derksen youngest child of Cornelius and Elizabeth (Martens) Harder was born 4 112 miles northeast of Lowe Farm. She has lived in this community all her life. Mr. Derksen came to Lowe Farm as a farm labourer in 1936 and has remained in the community since then.

In 1940 Abram and Katharine Derksen were married in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church. Two children were born them. Verna, married Edward in Charleswood, Manitoba. David, married Martha Toews, they have two girls Shauna and Sandy; they live on the family farm 4 1/2 miles north of Lowe Farm.

In addition to raising their own children Mr. and Mrs. Derksen were Foster Parents to many young children in need of temporary homes.

They spent the early part of their marriage managing and operating a farm near Lowe Farm for Charles Rosner. Being an ambitious young couple; they ventured into farming on their own in 1942. Starting with only a small acreage, on Section 29-5-1 West, some livestock and poultry and a few implements they worked hard and the farm prospered.



*The Derksens in 1965. David, Verna, Katharine (Harder) and Abe F. Derksen.*

During the years of World War II Mr. Derksen was called upon to enlist in the army. Since he was a Conscientious Objector he was committed to make monthly payments to the Canadian Red Cross in return for staying on the farm. The money for payments was hard to come by and sometimes had to be borrowed first.

Along with the end of the war came more settled times for the country and farmers livelihood improved.

With hard work and careful planning they built up their farm and in 1950 they purchased some land on Section 30-5-1 West where they moved in order to be closer to school and a better road. Later on the farm was added to in acreage.

Mr. and Mrs. Derksen farmed till 1974 when they sold their farm to their son David and his family.

Mr. and Mrs. Derksen have been active in the community in numerous capacities. Christianity had top priority, and both have served in church as needed. Mr. Derksen was a school trustee for many years, also a director for the Co-Op organizations for many years. He took an active part in curling, and enjoys fishing and snowmobiling.

Mrs. Derksen is an excellent seamstress, and her decorated cakes are quite popular. Her other activities include Women's Institute, Mission Groups and various voluntary services.

At present the Derksens live in Lowe Farm in the new home they built two years ago. Mr. Derksen having "retired" early from farming, is Supervisor of Transportation and Buildings for the Morris - MacDonald School Division. Mrs. Derksen spends the spring months working in a greenhouse, and although she is not full time employed, is finding her varied skills keep her busy, both at home and away from home.

## THE C.J. ANDERSON FAMILY

*C. W. Anderson*

The opportunity to "secure some Manitoba land while it is cheap" as advertised by the posters of the Illinois-Manitoba Land Company, was the lure that attracted many American farmers to the Red River Valley of Manitoba around the turn of the century. Among them was Charlie Anderson of Fairbury, Illinois, who came with his wife, Christenna, and their six sons to the Lowe Farm District in March of 1904.

In 1868, at the age of 20, Charlie Anderson (Carl Anderson in Sweden) had emigrated from his native Sweden to Chicago, Illinois, presumably to escape the conditions of abject poverty then prevalent in his homeland and to seek a better life in America. He soon found himself in the Illinois corn fields, eventually renting land there and raising a family. However there seemed to be little prospect of actually owning land in this prime agricultural area, and when Anderson bought a quarter section of Manitoba following this return from



*The family of Charles and Christenna Anderson before their move to Manitoba. REAR: Andrew, Joseph. FRONT ROW: Harry, Ed, Bill and George on his mother's knee.*

an excursion organized by the Illinois-Manitoba Land Company, his sons were eager to farm the land, and urged their father to make the move to Manitoba. Prior to this, the Andersons had a brief and unhappy venture into cotton farming in Mississippi, so that the final decision to go north to Manitoba was not taken without some trepidation on the part of the senior Andersons.

The first quarter purchased was the S.W. 15-5-1 West, now farmed by Raymond Anderson. However, the farm buildings here weren't constructed until 1909, so that when the Andersons arrived at the station in Morris in March, 1904, with four carloads of personal effects, farm machinery, and 26 horses, they proceeded to a building site on the N.E. 9-5-1 West, land near their own which they were to farm for the owner, a Mr. Walton who was an acquaintance of the Andersons, and a Fairbury, Illinois businessman.



*The Walton farm at 9-5-1 W which was rented by the Andersons. The farm is now owned by Eldon and Mildred (Wall) Schroeder.*

The house the Andersons found waiting for them was far from inviting, as there was no water supply for man or beast. Snow seemed the only answer at the moment, and on the advice of the locals, they fed snow to the horses instead of watering them.

The Andersons' early farming efforts were not always met with complete success. Rust, grasshoppers and floods took their toll, but unlike many of the Americans who settled here at that time, perhaps with unrealistic expectations, the Andersons never thought of returning to Illinois. Corn farming in those days meant a great deal of hand labour, and the thought of long hard hours in the corn fields kept the Anderson boys content with their lot in Canada.

Although all of the Anderson sons spent at least a part of their adult lives in active farming, they were involved in other activities as well. Ed (C.E.), the eldest, was at



*The Anderson boys just before coming to Manitoba. Joseph, Harry, Ed (C.E.), Andrew, George, Bill, 1903.*

one time a grain buyer at Smith Spur, and Lowe Farm, and operated stores in Sperling and Lowe Farm. He also owned a drag line and other construction equipment with which he did drainage construction work for the Municipality and placed the first gravel on Number Three Highway. Even in his retirement he operated a hardware store in Morris.

The second son, Andrew, farmed for a time in the Hallock area in Minnesota and later operated a blacksmith and welding shop in Morris.

Joe (J.J.) and Bill (W.F.) owned and operated the Anderson Bros. Garage in Morris for many years as well as operating farms in the area.

Harry Anderson operated the family farm and served for a number of years on the Municipal Council. He was also a charter member of the Lowe Farm Co-operative Elevator Association and for years an active member of the Morris Agricultural Society.

The youngest son, George, was an automobile mechanic for most of his career and operated a garage in Morris.

The death of George Anderson in 1976 marked the demise of the first generation of this pioneer family. Numerous descendants remain, however, several of them continuing to farm in the municipality. Certainly the contribution of the Andersons over the last 75 of the Morris Municipality's first 100 years has been significant.



*Charles J. and Christenna Anderson. Charles died in 1919, Christenna in 1947.*

*BELOW: The Anderson home, built by Charles J. Anderson in 1909 at SW 15-5-1 W, was owned and occupied by his son, Harry and grandson, Raymond Anderson.*





*C.E. Anderson plowing with his Titan "Type D" tractor.*

## CHARLES EDWARD ANDERSON

Mr. Charles Edward Anderson arrived in the Morris area in 1904 with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Anderson and five brothers, Andrew, Joseph, William, Harry and George, coming from Fairbury, Illinois, U.S.A.

He settled on a farm one mile west of the home place and in November of 1907 was married to Josie Rose, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Baker Rose, who had settled one mile north of the C.J. Anderson home farm.

A daughter Estelle Florantine was born in 1908 and in 1915 a son Orville Lee was born.

The family left the farm, moving into Lowe Farm where he owned and operated a hardware store as well as a grain elevator and operated the Smith's spur elevator for the North Star Co. While living in Lowe Farm a second son, Melvin Edward was born.

The year 1919 saw the family moving to Sperling where "Ed" Anderson, as he became known, opened the "Bee Hive" Store (Now the Sperling Hotel). He also had a threshing outfit and did a lot of custom threshing in the area between Sperling and Morris.

The family was saddened by the early passing of Josie at thirty-eight years of age.

"Ed" purchased the "J.H. Garage" in Morris (now the J.R. Friesen building) in 1924 in partnership with John Smith and moved the family to Morris.

He married Flo MacKenzie, former telephone operator in Sperling and the family took up residence in a house purchased from A.T. Mitchell, which stood where Midtown Shell (garage) service station now stands.

Mrs. C.E. Anderson was born Flora Ann McKenzie (Flo) in 1881 at Proton, Ontario. Before coming to Sperling about 1917, she worked in Toronto, Edmonton and Winnipeg. At Sperling, she worked in the drug store

and telephone office with T. Arthur Hobbs. When the telephone exchange was moved to a separate office, Flo took charge as chief operator. She resided with her sister, Mrs. John Smith, previous to living in the telephone office building. In 1925, she was married to C.E. Anderson and moved to Morris, where she lived until her death in 1957.

She was a very kind and generous person. At the time she lived in Morris, the neighbor children recall her luscious strawberry patch. Since she always had a full cookie jar, the contents of which she shared with any small visitor who knocked on her door, she became affectionately known to them as "Cookie Anderson".



*C.E. Anderson and his second wife, Flo (MacKenzie).*

Ed sold the garage in 1928 and purchased a dragline and went into road building and drainage construction.

Having never lost his interest in farming, he bought the east half of section twenty-two, five two east and later bought river lots 382-4-6 and part of R. Lots 388, 390, 392. Some of this and is still owned by his son, Melvin.

The love of meeting people and operating a store was still with him and in 1949 he started to remodel the building (now Kohut Enterprises) and opened a hardware store. The center section of the building held a garage operated by brother George and the area at the rear contained a workshop.

Ed sold the store in 1964 when he was eighty-three years of age and retired. He still kept busy by working in his yard and garden, but you still hear people recall the expression so often heard while he was in business, "If you can't find what you want, go to Ed Anderson".

Ed had served as councillor (Town of Morris), was a member of the Board of Morris United Church and was a life member of the Manitoba Curling Association. He was also a member of the Masonic Order at one time.

Orville Lee Anderson, was born December 14, 1914, on the farm about one mile west of the C.J. Anderson home place.



He attended school in Sperling and Morris, and operated the dragline for his father for a number of years as well as for the J.N. Pitts Construction Co. at Rouyn, Quebec.

He attended Radio College in Toronto and later joined the Radio Communications Branch of the Canadian Air Force, in 1941.

Orville married Elsie Kime, an employee of the Bank of Montreal in Morris, formerly of Bangor, Sask. in February 1942. (Deceased October 1978).

Following the war they settled on their farm, River Lot 328, just south of Morris. They farmed there until retiring in 1974, then moving to Elnora, Alberta.

They have two sons, both living in Calgary, Alberta; Edward Charles, married to the former Hilda Enns, of St. Elizabeth, who have one son, Bradley.

Richard Kime, married to the former Faye Forbes, of Brandon,

Melvin Edward, was born in Lowe Farm May 27, 1917. He attended school in Sperling and Morris. After finishing school he spent a number of years helping with the farm and also operated the "Cat" and scraper working on the Shannon and Hespeler Spillways.

He married Marion Anderson, former Telephone Operator, and daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Anderson of Sperling, April, 1946. They purchased the former Lawhead Farm, (River Lots 382-4-6) from father in 1951, living in Morris until they moved to the farm in 1978.

They have three sons and two daughters; Carol Elizabeth (Mrs. Robert Dyck) living in Ontario, who have two children, Brenda and Colin.

Robert Brian, married to Kathy Begley, formerly of Morris lying in B.C.

Donald Charles, Trucker, living in Morris.

Betty-Lou, employed in Winnipeg.

Ian Bruce, at home.

## ANDREW ANDERSON

*submitted by Ray Anderson*



*Wedding photo of Andrew and Ida (Gilman) Anderson, 1907. Andrew, Ida, Joe Anderson (best man) and Mrs. E. Kopperund (bridesmaid).*

Andrew Anderson was born in Livingstone County Illinois, on Aug. 27, 1882; the second of six sons of Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Anderson.

In the month of March, 1904, at the age of twenty-two, Andrew moved to Manitoba, with his parents and five brothers, and shared in the task of operating the new farm (S.E. 9-5-1 West) northeast of Lowe Farm.

In 1906 Andrew purchased the quarter (N.W. 10-5-1 West) northeast of his parents' farm, and in 1907 he married Miss Ida Gilman, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Olie Gilman.

Although farming in the early 1900's was not an easy task, the young couple were willing and able to meet the challenge, and it was here on their new farm, that Ida and Andrew became the proud parents of their first son Clarence, on January 11, 1910, and later, their second son Leroy, on March 22nd, 1914.



*Andrew and Ida about 1920 with Clarence, Leroy and Glenn.*

Andrew and Ida liked farm life, but thought Andrew's skill of repairing machinery and improvising, could be put to better use. So in 1916, when the opportunity arose, the family moved to Lowe Farm, where Andrew opened a blacksmith shop. His skills were much appreciated by the farmers in the area.

It became apparent to Andrew, that the town of Morris was in need of a good machine shop, so in 1917 Andrew and Ida and their two sons moved to Morris.

Andrew worked there for his father-in-law at Gilmans Garage, while he finalized plans for the construction of his new machine shop. Later in 1917 the doors of the A. Anderson Machine Shop were opened for business. The shop was adjacent to Gilman's Garage, (later J.H. Garage, and presently J.R. Friesen and sons Garage). Andrew specialized in machine work, battery repair and maintenance, also selling fuel and lubricating oil.

On November 29, 1918, the Anderson's third son, Glenn was born. Business was good, but unfortunately

the sale of fuel and lubricating oil was very much better than many of his customers ability or desire to pay, so Andrew, with the wholesalers to pay, and little coming in on the accounts receivable, found himself in financial difficulty.

But this was just another fact of life that many of the pioneer business people had to face, and Andrew and Ida did so, with courage.

In 1925, the Anderson's traded their equity in the Machine shop for a farm near Hallock, Minnesota, and proceeded to move there that year.

On their farm at Hallock, the Anderson family produced the usual line of crops and livestock, plus a flock of sheep that at one time totaled two thousand head.

The Andersons soon found themselves in the middle of the drought and depression of the 'dirty thirties', those terrible years when farmers, laborers, business and professional people alike had to find the courage, strength, and ingenuity that many never before realized they possessed, just to survive from one week to the next.

But survive the Andersons did, and in 1935 Andrew, Ida, Leroy and Glenn moved back to Morris. The oldest son, Clarence remained in the Hallock area, having married Miss Mildred Norum in 1933.

Shortly after arriving in Morris, Andrew re-established himself in the farm equipment repair service, and later expanded to farm equipment sales.

In 1938 Andrew and Ida's second son Leroy married Miss Nettie Leshyshian, and made their home in Morris.

In June of 1940, the stark reality of World War Two touched the Anderson home, when their youngest son Glenn, enlisted. He was soon sent overseas, where he personally witnessed the unforgettable devastation of war, experienced by the armies and the civilians alike, in the countries of England, Sicily, Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany.

Towards the middle of the war, farm machinery was becoming very difficult to obtain on the Canadian prairies, particularly harvesting equipment. Andrew knew there was a shortage of swathers, and a surplus of obsolete grain binders, so with this in mind he bought old grain binders and converted them to swathers. Needless to say, they sold well, and until after the war ended, Andrew's swathers were in great demand by many a swather - short farmer in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

1945 was a happy year for the Andersons, for the war had ended, their son Glenn returned safely from Europe, and was united in marriage with Miss Ellen Vickers. Ellen had also served in the forces as a member of the R.C.A.F. - W.D.'s.

Spring is usually a pleasant time of the year along the "Red", but the spring of 1950 was a period of time most people living beside the Red River would rather have not experienced. For this was the year of the "Fifty Flood". Morris was totally flooded, not a single house or business escaped severe damage, due to weeks of submersion in the flood waters.

After repairing the flood damaged buildings and equipment, Andrew sold his business and retired.

On August 7, 1957, Andrew and Ida celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Two years later in 1959, at

the age of seventy-six, Andrew passed away, to be followed with the passing of his wife Ida in July of 1970.

So ends one facet in the history of a courageous couple who helped settle the Morris Municipality. Their descendants carry on.

Their oldest son Clarence, now deceased, and wife Mildred, have four children and numerous grandchildren, all residing in the United States.

Their second son, Leroy, and wife Nettie have two sons, Paul of Morris and Allan of Calgary, plus four grandchildren.

Their third son Glenn and wife Ellen have two daughters, Andrea and Glenda Anderson, two sons, David and Ron, and three grandchildren, all of Morris.

## JOSEPH JACKSON ANDERSON

Joseph Jackson Anderson was born in 1885 in Piper City, Illinois. He came to Canada in 1904 at the age of 19 with his family, the C.J. Andersons, arriving in a boxcar along with their horses and cows!

He farmed with his dad and brothers for a while. Then he went into the machinery business with his brother Bill Anderson, in Morris. They started in the front office of their brother Ed's shop and then built a garage, which sometime later was sold and then operated by Hamblins. They then bought the J.H. Garage where the present J.R. Friesen Ford agency is located: this was sold to Ray Loving around 1926 or '27. Later on, Joseph was involved in the Carman - Morden Highway construction, driving a gravel truck in 1929.

Joseph was married in 1930 to Aurilla May Brown of the Sperling area. One son Walter was born, and Aurilla died in 1932.

The brothers, Joe and Bill built another shop called "Anderson Brothers" located where the new Post Office is now. At this site they had an "Oliver and Case" farm machinery dealership and a coal business. They also operated a wood lot at that time on the site of the present locker plant and meat market. During war-time they vulcanized tires when these were hard to get.



*Anderson Brothers Garage, built in the 1930's by Joe and Bill Anderson.*

In the 1930's gardening became quite competitive among the townspeople, with Joe, being an avid gardener, always having a garden to be proud of.



*Joe and Anna (Murray) Anderson, in 1958, with Walter, Ken, Joe and Murray.*

He was married again in 1937 to Anna Murray (school teacher and stenographer) of Stonewall. They had three sons, Ken, Joe and Murray. They moved to a farm, 35-4-1 West, west of Morris in 1946 (the McNair farm).

He farmed there until 1959, when Walter and Murray took it over. He then moved back to Morris, where he lived with his wife, Anna and brother George until his death in 1966.

Walter married Bernice Shale of Winnipeg in 1958. He took over his father's farm, along with his brother Murray, in 1959. Walter and Bernice still live on this farm with their five children, Joe, who is farming with his father and Uncle Murray; Lynn, Gord, Andy and Wes, who attend school in Morris.



*Walter and Bernice (Shale) Anderson with children, Joe, Lynn, Gordon, Andrew and Wesley.*

Ken Anderson owns and operates a freight and passenger service for the Cranbrook Airport and resides in Cranbrook, B.C.

Joe Anderson lives in Vernon - Kamloops, B.C. area and repairs office equipment.

Anna Anderson was employed at Slater's Law Office for several years before moving to B.C. She is now in retirement in Haney, B.C.

## W.F. ANDERSON

W.F. (Bill) Anderson, who was born 1888, arrived with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Anderson and his five brothers, from their former home in Fairbury, Illinois, in 1904. Bill and Joe Anderson were in partnership through much of their farming and business careers. In the period prior to 1920, they broke up a number of sections of land for farming, in the Lowe Farm area. They also had a quarter section of woodland in the Vita District where they spent time in the winter cutting cordwood.

In the early 1920's the Anderson Brothers went into the garage business, operating garages at several locations in the town of Morris. In addition to doing general repairs, at times assisted by George Anderson, they sold cars and trucks and farm machinery as well as coal and wood, and during the war years they also did vulcanizing, a much needed service to the community in a time of severe tire and rubber shortage.

In 1946 the Anderson Brothers Garage was sold and the partnership dissolved, but the brothers continued to farm on their own.



*Bill and Katherine (Lewis) Anderson with their son, Charles.*

Bill Anderson married Katherine Lewis, daughter of the late E.F. Lewis of the Morris District, in 1925. They had one son, Charles, born in 1931. Charles received his schooling in Morris and later received his degree in Agriculture at the University of Manitoba. He operated the family farm for some time. He married Sheila Anderson, M.Sc., University of Aberdeen and Manitoba, a keen Botanist in 1962. Charles ceased farming in 1972 when he accepted a position with a Winnipeg grain company. He was the Reeve of the Municipality of Morris from 1967 until 1971. He and his wife now reside in Winnipeg and are enthusiastic travelers during their free time.

Bill Anderson died in 1965. His widow Katherine lives in Morris where she continues an active interest in gardening, continuing the tradition the Andersons displayed at their farm home; where by planting trees, shrubs, flowers and lawns, they beautified their farm area. The Andersons moved to their farm on Section 2-5-1 West in 1950 after the disastrous Red River flood of that year.

## HARRY H. ANDERSON

Harry Anderson was born at Fairbury, Illinois, in 1891, the fifth son of Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Anderson. At the age of thirteen, he came to Morris with his parents and brothers. This was an exciting time for a young boy in a new country. He had never seen wheat until he came to Canada.

Harry and his younger brother, George, attended Heabert School, and were the only pupils attending at that time! The teacher was also new in the country and spoke poor English. As a result, both teacher and pupils were bored much of the school day. The teacher used to go out and walk up and down the road, leaving the two boys to their own devices!

There were no luxuries in the early days. The house they lived in for the first five years had no heat upstairs. A big clay oven in the kitchen was used to bake bread and for heat. A heater in the living room was the only source of heat they had. Ice was hauled nine miles from the river with sleighs and horses. At times the Anderson boys walked to town in winter for mail and supplies.

Harry's father had purchased land that was still raw prairie. In 1909, a house and barn were built. In the meantime, the boys slept in the hay in the loft of the new barn until Christmas, when the house was ready for occupancy. Even then, there was no heat in the upstairs bedrooms.

In 1919, after his father died of a heart attack, Harry farmed the home place until his death in 1973, when his son, Raymond, took over the farm. He continues to live there.



*Harry Anderson built this snowmo-*

*was later sold to someone in the Norway House area.*

Harry was a quiet, friendly man, interested in his community, always willing to lend a helping hand, a good neighbor and friend. He served on the municipal council and acted as representative on the Morris Hospital Board. He was a charter member of the Pool Elevator and served for 25 years as chairman of the Lowe Farm Pool Elevator Board. He was also active in the Agriculture Society and was an honorary member. He loved nature and took a delight in keeping his farm yard beautiful with trees and shrubs. He has a special knack with carpentry and mechanics, and he enjoyed working with machinery. He owned the first combine in the district. His spare time was spent in his well equipped work shop, doing the things he loved.



*Harry and his first wife, Hazel (Lewis Gregory), Anderson, with her children, Francis and Dorine and their son, Raymond, (Right to Left).*

In 1928, Harry and Mrs. Hazel Gregory (nee Lewis) were married, and her two children, Francis and Dorine, joined the Anderson home. Later, a son, Raymond, was born and completed the family. Mrs. Anderson passed away in May 1948. Dorine had married Claude Norris, and Francis married Becky Dickson. Harry married Miss Ada Stanley, an R.N. of Carnduff, Saskatchewan, who survives him and continues to live in their home. She nursed part time at Morris General Hospital until 1969.

The Anderson farmstead still is kept up much as it was. The house is in use as is a lot of the furniture and other contents - treasured for the memories they recall of days now past.



*Harry and his second wife, Ada (Stanley) Anderson, in 1952.*



*Raymond Anderson*

## GEORGE O. ANDERSON

*submitted by Ray Anderson*

George Anderson was born in 1864, the sixth and youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. C.J. Anderson.

He never married, but his mother lived with him after his father's death in 1919. He was a kind son, and cared for her until she passed away in 1947, at the age of ninety years.



*George Anderson in one of the four dirt track racing cars he built.*

George loved cars, and loved racing them. He built four dirt track racing cars, the first one, built in the early 20's, was made from a Model T Ford. He increased the horsepower greatly, by installing an overhead, sixteen valve head and changing the ignition system.

His second and third cars were made from early four cylinder Chevrolet's, also modified to improve performance.

George's fourth and last car, built much later, in 1958, never did experience the dust and smoke, or the roar of the crowds on the race circuit that his first three cars enjoyed, but he did drive it in many of the opening day parades of the Big M Stampede. He raced the first three cars at Walhalla, North Dakota, Hallock, Minnesota, River Park, Winnipeg, and other tracks in the area.



*George Anderson*

His career as an automobile mechanic began at Swains Garage in Morris, and he was later employed at the J.H. Garage, (now J.R. Friesen and Sons) and was in 1976, still operating his own garage, when he passed away in his eighty-second year.



*Anderson reunion at Harry Anderson's farm in 1948.*

## **HAROLD GREGORY**

Harold Gregory was born in McLean County, Illinois, in 1891. He was one of five children born to Ira and Minnie Lanhan Gregory. Harold's ancestors were prosperous pioneering farmers who had come to the fertile central Illinois soil from the Eastern United States. Their American roots went back to the American Revolution and beyond to early 17th century settlement on the eastern seaboard.

Harold bought S.F. 13-5-2 West north of Lowe Farm in 1915. He worked in northern timber country for a time to supplement farm income. Several crops were lost, especially 1921 when the area was flooded out. He farmed a little after that and worked for Harry Anderson for two years.

In 1917 he married Frances Hazel Lewis, daughter of Edward F. Lewis, a fellow immigrant from Illinois. They had two children, Francis Clement (1918) and Dorine De Groff (1922). They were divorced in 1924.



*Harold and Hazel (Lewis) Gregory and son, Francis.*

Harold returned to his native Illinois, where he worked as a house painter almost until his death in 1963. He made annual visits to see his children (and later his grandchildren) and to inspect the land he had rented out to A.S. Wiebe. This land was eventually sold and now belongs to Abe Schmidt.

Hazel (Lewis) Gregory married Harry Anderson in 1928 and her children assumed the name of Anderson. Hazel was active in Church and community organizations (such as the Red Cross during the War, and later Farm Radio Forum), was keenly interested in politics and world affairs, a person of great originality. She died suddenly in 1948 at the age of 57 years.

Dorine Anderson attended Heabert S.D., Morris High School and Success Business College in Winnipeg. She was employed with Powell Equipment Co. before her marriage in 1947 to Claude Norris of Morris, where they raised their seven sons.

Francis Anderson attended Pleasant Valley and Heabert Schools, then Morris High School, received his Agriculture Diploma from the U. of Manitoba in 1939. He served in the Canadian Army between 1942 and 1946, with a little over one year being spent in England. He bought the N.W. 114 of 10-5-1 West in 1948 and later acquired the N.E. 114.



*Francis Anderson and Becky Dickson on their wedding day, 1948.*

He was married to Rebecca L. Dickson in 1948. Rebecca (Becky) following High School (Morris and St. Jean) completed a Secretarial course in Dominion Business College, Winnipeg in 1938. During World War 11 she worked for the Canadian Government in Ottawa and also for the British Government in Washington, D.C. She taught school in Flowery Bank district in 1945-46 and helped at her family's farm, until her marriage.

Francis was active in Community affairs and held board or executive positions in the Lowe Farm Credit Union, L.F. Locker Plant, Man. Pool Elevators, Smith's



*Francis Anderson has kept goats since 1948 - a perpetual delight to children like daughters, Barbara and DeEtta.*

Siding; Man. Farmers' Union and Co-op Vegetable Oils, Altona.

In 1967 Francis and Becky made the decision to discontinue the use of Agricultural chemicals and found themselves thereafter involved with biological farming and a growing concern for the quality of life and soil. The Andersons began stone milling of their grains into flour and supplying a developing specialty market, also selling stone flour mills.

Francis and Becky Anderson have three children: Barbara Hazel (1951), DeEtta Jean (1953) and John Francis (1958). All attended Lowe Farm Consolidated School and completed High School in Morris. John, whose interests include music (drums and piano) astronomy, electronics and skiing, works away from the farm at accounting. DeEtta completed Grade VIII Piano studies with Mildred Dickson and has continued this interest. She was married to David Ives, originally from Taunton, Somerset, England in 1974 and they and daughter, Adrienne, live in Winnipeg. Barbara married Brian Shewchuk of Lorette in 1976 and they joined the Anderson farm operation.

The Andersons and Shewchuks live in one house, built in 1953 and gradually being extended into a two-family home.



*The family of Francis and Becky (Dickson) Anderson in 1978. Brian and Barbara (Anderson) Shewchuk, John, DeEtta (Anderson) and David Ives. Adrienne Rebecca Ives on her grandfather's knee.*

## BRIAN SHEWCHUK

Ukrainian names are rare in the R.M. of Morris. Brian Shewchuk's great-grandparents brought their young families from the Ukraine to the bush and marginal farming land of northern Manitoba and northern Alberta around the turn of the century. Life was not easy for these new Canadians, and during the Depression, teenaged Steve Shewchuk and Mary Statkiwech left their rural homes. They met in Winnipeg and married during World War II. Brian, born in 1946, grew up in Winnipeg and on a farm near Lorette. He worked for ten years for C.N.R., and built up a fine, 39 acre hobby farm.



In 1976, he married Barbara Anderson of Lowe Farm. He sold his Lorette farm and moved to N.W. 10-5-1 West to become a partner of Francis Anderson and family in their farming operation and "Anderson's Organic Grains". He brought to the business his inventive and skills in mechanics, welding, machining, farming and carpentry.

Barbara (b. 1951) lived in Victoria and Winnipeg before returning to the farm in 1973. She had combined newspaper reporting and clerical work with her varied farm concerns. She is interested in community affairs, and helped to prepare this book. Brian and Barbara share interests in appropriate technology, ecological agriculture, building design, travelling and wholistic living.

## CORNELIUS KROEKER

*submitted by Mrs. Dora Wiebe*

In 1875, Cornelius K. Kroeker with his parents, Cornelius Kroekers (nee Peters) migrated to Manitoba from the Ukraine. They settled in Southern Manitoba. He married Maria Dueck in 1895 and moved to the Lowe Farm area. They farmed for their livelihood. They as other pioneers experienced good and difficult times in farming and family experiences.

Children born to them were: Aganatha (Mrs. Peter Banman); Sarah (Mrs. Peter Klassen); Cornelius, (known as C.P. Kroeker); Marie (Mrs. Isbrand Unrau); Jacob, Peter, David (died in infancy); Katherine (died in infancy); Agatha (Mrs. John Enns); Katherine (Mrs. John Ginter) now Mrs. Glenesk; Abram and Bernhard.

All but Abram and Ben raised their families in the Lowe Farm area. The Unraus, Ennes, Banmans, and the Jacob Kroekers later moved to the Steinbach area.



*Cornelius **K.** and  
Maria (**Dueck**)  
Kroeker.*

After about 1935 the C.K. Kroekers retired from the farm and moved in with their children the C.F. Kroekers (Corny and Eva). They then moved into the Kronsweide Church custodians house. In October, 1936 Mrs. C.K. Kroeker, (Maria) passed away, after a one year fight with cancer. Next spring Mr. C.K. Kroeker moved back to his children, the C.P. Kroekers. In March, 1941 he got lost in a bad snow storm and due to being badly frozen passed away a week later.

His son Cornelius married Evangeline Giesbrecht, daughter of Mrs. Abram Giesbrecht, in 1924. They had



*Cornelius P. and Evangeline (Giesbrecht) Kroeker.*

eight children. Abram 1925, married Irene Fast. Dora, married David Wiebe, a teacher in Plum Coulee. Erdman, is a credit manager in Edmonton, and is married to Alice Thompson. Emmie married Abe Hildebrand, and they are farming near Plum Coulee. Marie married John Schmidt; they are operating a farm sales business in Kleefeld. John, a social worker in Saskatoon, is married to Grace Neufeld. Alvin, a carpenter in Calgary, is married to Anne Friesen.

Father, C.P. Kroeker operated a farm till 1967. They moved to Lowe Farm to make life easier for mother, who was handicapped with arthritis. She passed away January, 1970. Father later married Mrs. Margaret Funk and moved to Steinbach. Father passed in March, 1978.

Farming was very hard, looking at a field which was covered with quack grass, and using very limited implements. It was a big job for the horses and the Fordson tractor. Grasshoppers also took their share, but after many years of hard work, fields started to produce 10 and more bushels per acre. Today they might produce 40-60. Dad's patience and willingness to work made it possible to continue.

His first new automobile was a new buggy. The wood crate that the buggy came in was made into cribs for the children. Homemade toys for Christmas were much appreciated. Instead of wood for a fireplace, wood had to be hauled for many miles to keep the house warm. Going 60 miles with horse and sleigh for wood caused many anxious moments for the wife at home, not knowing how many storms might come up, or if there would be enough good people to take them in and feed them. Fried onions weren't dad's favorite, but tasted okay when he was cold and hungry.

They also raised their own beef, pork, chickens for meat, eggs, milk, cream and butter to keep the grocery bill down. The little money there was had to go a long way. We could buy a bag of popcorn for a penny and it even had a prize in it. The cotton was selling from 8ir to 10c a yard. Pillow cases, sheets, clothing were made from flour bags. Wheat was ground at the mill at Morris in fall to serve for the following year. About 1950, the flour prices rose from \$3.00-\$6.00 per 100 lbs. During the war years Dad had to pay a monthly fee to the Red Cross to keep his son at home on the farm. Father was an ardent supporter of the Co-op movement.

Abram, son of C.F. Kroeker bought part of the home farm and started a new yard about one half a mile east



*Abram and Irene (Fast) Kroeker with (back) daughter, Geraldine and Donald Brown, and (front) daughter, Ella May, daughter-in-law, Marlene (Hildebrand) and son, Kenneth.*

S.W. 114 10-5-1-W. They operated a chicken and grain farm. Abe and Irene were ardent S.S., choir and youth workers. Abe served on Pool and Co-op business boards, on the Heabert S.D. board 1957-1959, and on the Morris McDonald S.D. board from 1975-1979. They had three children; Kenneth who married a teacher Marlene Hildebrand. They continued their studies at C.M.B.C. and the University of Manitoba. Geraldine married Donald Brown, she is the musical member of the family. They are both employed in Winnipeg. Ella May is in Junior High, living with her parents.



*Henry and Katharine Kroeker's home.*

## **MR. AND MRS. ABRAM H. WIEBE**

Mr. Abram H. Wiebe was born in 1899 to Henry and Katharina Wiebe, who at the time, lived in the East Reserve. In 1901, they moved to the district of St. Peters, three miles south of the North Star Elevator - Smith Spur Siding. Here, Abram spent his childhood and teenage years on the farm. His father was a storekeeper, also a chiropractor. His mother, blessed with a large family herself, was a midwife and since for the longest time the nearest doctor was at St. Pierre, she had her hands full delivering babies, four hundred safely, in twenty-two years.



*Henry Wiebe and his wife, Katharine, midwife.*

In the early 20's, a school teacher, Miss Anna Friesen, taught in the district and Abram persuaded her to take up housekeeping instead. They were married in 1923, lived near Altona for a year and then bought a quarter of land a mile and a half south from Smith Spur Siding. Broncos were brought in from the west to pull wagons, sleighs and machinery. The going was tough, but a new water pond did much to bring the community together. For many farmers, water hauling was a must.

During the flood years of the late 20's and the early 30's, they lost the land to the "Weisenamt". During these hard times, Abram worked as a weed inspector for the Morris Municipality. Later, his old car was turned into a "Bennett Wagon". Another venture Abram went into was a partnership with Mr. Peter F. Thiessen. They bought a Minneapolis-Moline threshing outfit and many years put in long runs custom threshing.

In 1937, after the depression, Abram and Anna bought two quarters of land in the Heabert District, where they farmed until 1962. Here was much success. Only once did the family lose a crop. This was in 1948.

Abram was an active member in the community; school boards, civic elections, club organizations, etc. He also served as deacon in the Lowe Farm Mennonite Church and since government welfare assistance was not as fully organized, often became responsible for liason among unfortunate residents and municipal government officials.



*Abram and Anna (Friesen) Wiebe, with John, youngest of their ten children. John lives in Toronto. The other Wiebe children were: Agnes (Mrs. Frank Thiessen, later Mrs. Unger, widowed twice and now living in Winkler), David, Ernest, of Springstein, Katie (Mrs. Alfred Janz of Sprague area), Bernard, Winnipeg, Rose (Mrs. Jim Abendroth, Minneapolis), Clara (Mrs. Hunston of Vancouver Island), Eldon of Edmonton,*

*Benjamin, the third youngest, was the only son to remain farming in the area. A councillor for Ward 5, he married Mary Ann Kliever and they had two children. He died in 1976.*

As was mentioned earlier, Anna had taken up housekeeping for good, because they had been blessed with ten children and in those days, you did not just pick up the phone and call a babysitter, so you could go out with your husband. She spent many hours and evenings talking and reading to her children. Only later did they realize the value of this.

In 1962, the farm was sold to John Schmidt. The implements were sold by public auction and Abram and Anna Wiebe took up residence in Morris on Charles W. Abram passed away in 1968 and Anna, in 1970.



*David, second child of Abram and Anna Wiebe, married neighbour, Dora Kroeker, a school teacher, he died in 1979 in Winkler.*

## ABRAM J. AND MARIA FRIESEN

*by Peter Friesen*

Father and Mother were born and grew up in the Ukraine, South Russia. Their childhood and youth were spent in the same village. It was here that they experienced their joy of salvation by accepting what Jesus Christ had done for them.

Mom and Dad were married in June 1920 and started farming together building their first home on a piece of land that Dad got from his parents, the John Friesens. Their first two sons, Abe and Peter, were born here. As far as nature was concerned, it was a beautiful country to live in, but political conditions steadily deteriorated, so much so that in the spring of '24, we together with our grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Peter P. Hildebrands, and other relatives, emigrated to Canada.

The big ship "Empress of France" took us to our new adopted country. Sea travelling was hard on Dad, for he was sick all the time we sailed the Atlantic Ocean. We arrived in Quebec City in the early part of August, travelling by C.P.R. to Winnipeg and on to Winkler, arriving there in the middle of harvest.

We were taken in by a Friesen family (not related) in Reinfeld, where Dad helped with the harvesting of the crop. It was there that their oldest son Abe died of pneumonia. This proved to be a great hardship to them, being new and strange in this country. But with courage and assurance Dad bought some land next spring in the village of Blumenfeld.

He farmed in Blumenfeld for 6 years. It was here that Mary, Abe, John and David were born. Peter started

public school for a few months. The dry spell that we experienced was too severe to bear, so Dad bought a quarter section of land near Lowe Farm, namely the N.E. 114 of Section 9-5-1 West. We moved here in March '31. This is where Mom and Dad, together with a growing family, farmed till they retired in the fall of '58. Tina, Betty and Helen were born here.

Farming in the early years was done 'exclusively with horses. This would mean arising at 5:00 a.m. in the morning, to do the feeding and preparing the horses for field work. Harrowing at first was done with a team of 4 horses and a 5 section harrow and walking behind them, later a 2 wheel cart was used to ride on. Plowing was done with 5 horses and a 2 furrow plow. All this was not as convenient and comfortable as farming is nowadays, but thinking back, they are pleasant memories of growing up with Mom and Dad.

One highlight that stands out to this writer is this, Dad had bought a binder to cut the grain, but this machine was not operational without an occasional repair job. With very careful budgeting, Dad was able to buy and brand new McCormack-Deering 6 foot drawn binder in '34. It was an unheard of event in our neighborhood at that time, ("de Friese kaun vot") was stated by the neighbors. This machine was brought to our yard by the dealer and we were mighty proud of such an accomplishment. It was used till the combines and swathers came into operation. During the difficult years, Dad bought an old Model T car and had it converted to a horse drawn vehicle called a "Benett Wagon". What luxury to drive on rubber tired wheels. This "modern" conveyence was used many a time to visit Uncles, Aunts, cousins, friends, and neighbors. With a good team of horses these outings were always most enjoyable.



*Abram J. and Maria (Hildebrand) Friesen.*

A new John Deere A.R. Tractor was bought in '37. This was a very exciting event to change over to mechanized farming, for, although Dad was not mechanically inclined, he took to this change quite easily. In '39 Dad bought our first car for family use, a '28 Pontiac, and he became a proficient and careful driver. With four strong boys in the family, Dad foresaw the

possibility that we could do our own threshing, so he bought a 22 in. Case threshing machine in '39. The sheaves were brought to the threshing machine, while Dad would haul away the grain, first with a car and trailer, later buying a truck to do this.

Some difficulties that our parents experienced in the early years at Lowe Farm, were the shortage of water in winter for the animals, and wood for the stoves to keep our old cold house warm. When the dug-outs turned dry, Dad would have to haul water up to 2 miles on a stone-boat with 4 or 5 barrels, whether the weather was mild and nice or extremely cold and stormy. The wood for the stoves was hauled in from the East reserve. Dad would team up with our neighbor C.F. Kroeker, and together they would go by bob-sleigh and horses coming back in 2 or 3 days, each with a load of wood.

We only lived 112 mile from our public school, Heabert S.D. No. 1282, where we children all got our grade 1-8 education. On a few occasions in winter when it was too cold to walk, Dad would hitch up "Old John" to the stone-boat, and we'd all pile in under a blanket and head for school. There we'd tie up the reins, turn old John around, and he'd head right back for home where Dad would be ready to catch him.

Being of Mennonite Brethren Church background, our folks would take us to church services in either Sperling Village, or to Grossweide in the early years. This usually took place only for special events, such as Ernte Dank-fest (Thanksgiving) or other important occasions. Later on the children attended an English Sunday School that was started in Lowe Farm.

Seeing our farming enterprise was too small for the number of children growing up, Mom and Dad were anxious that most of their children should get High School education. This was available in Lowe Farm. The students would go by horse and buggy, or in winter by a covered caboose, at times with great difficulty, through blinding blizzards, floods or rain. Later they traveled by truck.



*Abram and Maria Friesen.*

My brothers and sisters have all gone forth to fulfill their own chosen professions. Some are school teachers, government workers, bank employee, homemakers and even part time farmer. A few live in Winnipeg, others in Steinbach; one brother is bringing up his family in Northern Manitoba. The original Friesen farm has come into my possession. Together with my wife Elizabeth and our five children, we seek our livelihood by majoring in

grain growing, also having some livestock, and a poultry enterprise. We are kept busy year round, with these and other church and community related activities.

When our grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter P. Hildebrands, retired from farming they came to live in our neighborhood. For us, it was a real treat to have them live near by. A house and some pasture land was rented 112 mile north of our yard on S.E. 16-5-1 West. We would go down there quite frequently to visit them, and listen to some of their experiences in the old country.



*Peter and Elizabeth (Janzen) Friesen in October, 1978, with their children, Grace, Bernie, Wendy, Ron and Betty.*

## **THE SOMMER FAMILY CONNECTION WITH MORRIS 1914-1980**

In June of 1914, barely before the outbreak of World War I, a young newly landed immigrant couple from Europe, Julius Sommer aged 26, and his wife Emilie aged 20, stepped off the train in Morris to begin what was to turn into a life long association with the Town of Morris and the surrounding district.

Since neither of them spoke the language nor were they familiar with the customs of what to them was a strange and foreign land and further complicated by the fact that their worldly possessions were few in number, the young couple found the first years of their new life in Canada difficult indeed.

Julius Sommer spent his time as a general laborer doing whatever odd jobs were available and his first few winters were occupied in the arduous task of cutting block ice for packing from the Red River using strictly hand tools. Meanwhile, Emilie Sommer did her best to establish and maintain a homey atmosphere in the several residences that they occupied in Morris for short periods of time. She was further occupied with never ending duties related to gardening and animal husbandry which contributed considerably to keeping food on the table. By 1920, hard work and perseverance had improved their fortunes to the extent that they were able to build their first permanent residence on Lucinda Street South in what was then open territory on the southwest edge of Morris. This home they occupied until 1948 when they built another home immediately adjacent to the first one on the same property.

Also in 1920, Julius Sommer went into partnership with his brother-in-law Edward Schwark to establish the firm known as Schwark & Sommer. Their first venture was a coal and wood sales and delivery business located at the foot of James Street across from the C.N.R. station. This was soon augmented by a *North Star Oil* agency to provide fuels and oils for the slowly developing but ever increasing farm tractor and machinery population in the surrounding district. The partners were also deeply involved in a custom threshing operation



*Early 1920's steam threshing outfit, owned and operated by Julius Sommer.*



*Julius Sommer, standing on the running board of a Model "T" Ford. Fred Walters holding horse. Early 1920's.*

during harvest seasons in the 1920's using at first steam powered and later gasoline powered threshing outfits.

In 1928, the firm purchased from T. J.H. Lewis a garage property located on downtown Main Street in Morris and commenced an automobile dealership, garage and implement agency. Also in 1928, as a result of a deal involving the sale of an automobile and some farm machinery to Robt. Lightfoot, they acquired ownership of a quarter section of land immediately southwest of Morris to give them their first direct involvement in farming operations. Subsequently in 1931, Julius Sommer acting on his own purchased a half section of land six miles west of Morris from the American owner, a Mr. A.D. Hills of Illinois, which property is still in the possession of the Sommer family. The first few years until about 1936 were a constant struggle against quackgrass, grasshoppers, rust and drought but eventually the land was brought into a very productive state.

In 1933, the firm of Schwark & Sommer took over the *Ford* dealership from A.G. Swain & Son, an association with *Ford of Canada* which lasted until 1953. Then in 1934, the partnership of Ed. Schwark and J. Sommer was amicably dissolved with Mr. Schwark retaining the coal, wood and oil business on James Street, as well as the Quarter section of land obtained from Mr. Lightfoot while Mr. Sommer took over as sole proprietor of the Main Street operation which then became known as *Sommer's Garage*. Also in 1934, the I.H.C. implement agency was relinquished to be subsequently taken up by Christison Bros. and Sommer's Garage concentrated on the automobile business.

In 1940, Julius Sommer was joined in the operation of both the garage and farming operations by his son,

Elmer, who had just completed his education in the Morris school system. After becoming a full partner in 1945, Elmer Sommer assumed full ownership of the operations in 1964. After several years of semi-retirement, Julius Sommer passed away in May of 1970 after almost 56 years of active involvement in the affairs of the Morris community. A daughter, Lydia, (Mrs. D.R. Johnson) passed away in 1972. Emilie Sommer is presently a resident in the Morris Manor where she is enjoying her retirement years. Elmer Sommer is still actively engaged in both the business and farming operations established by his father some fifty years ago.

## THE CORNELIUS P. UNRAU FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. C.F. Unrau and their little son, Peter, came to the Lowe Farm area, from Plum Coulee, in the fall of 1926. Mr. Unrau, the fourth in the family of fourteen, was born and raised on his parents' farm, five miles northwest of Plum Coulee. Mrs. Unrau, nee Anna Ginter, was the sixth in a family of seven, born and raised on her parents' farm, five miles southwest of Steinbach.



*C.P. Unrau farmstead as it appeared in winter in the late 1920's.*

The Unraus settled on the N.E. 114 of S. 17-5-1 West, northeast of Lowe Farm, on the farm the Frank Harders had vacated when they migrated to South America. The Unraus brought two things into the community that not every family owned - a car and a threshing outfit.

The car was a Model T. Ford touring. Pete still recalls how that car was the means of the only auto accident he was ever involved in. It so happened Mrs. Unrau had

gone to town for groceries and the mail; on the way back, she saw the wind pick the mail off the seat, and grabbed for it, meanwhile losing control of the car. Well, it landed upside down in the ditch just east of Lowe Farm. Mrs. Unrau and Pete were unhurt, but little Annie had a cut on her lip from the broken windshield, and the car had no top after that. But it still served faithfully till 1935 when it was replaced by a 1927 Chevrolet sedan. This was a highlight for the children; they now rode in a car with glass windows all the way around.

As for the threshing outfit; it was a big Case two cylinder tractor and a wooden Sawyer Massey (with wheels 6 feet high) threshing machine, with 36 in. cylinder. When that tractor was retired in 1936, that was another highlight. Mr. Unrau bought an AR John Deere, and the down payment was the old tractor, a team of horses and a bull.

The farm house was big and very cold. By 1939, the Unraus had \$1000.00 saved, so they pulled down the old house and built a smaller new one. The size of the new one was determined by how much that \$1000.00 would pay for! Having kept above water through the depression, Mr. Unrau was taking no chances on borrowing money for the house.

While on that farm, Mrs. Unrau gave birth to five sets of twins. Of these, only one set of twins and only one baby each of two other sets, survived. Medical care was not what it is today; roads were bad and doctors hard to reach. So children were born at home under doctor's care, if a doctor could be reached in time. If not, then the only assistant was a midwife. It was hard on the parents, losing those babies in infancy, but the hardest blow was when little Annie passed away of diphtheria at almost seven years of age.

Mr. Unrau supported his family on a quarter section till the early 40's, when he had a chance to buy another 40 acres. In 1946, he bought the N.W. 1/2 of Section 17-5-1 West, just across the road from the home farm. Both quarters are now owned and farmed by his son, Pete. So Section 17 (N.W. 114) has been in the Unrau family now for 52 years.

Mr. C.P. Unrau passed away in 1976. Mrs. Unrau resides in Lowe Farm, where she moved with her husband in the fall of 1963, when they left the farm.

Their son, John, is married and lives in Winnipeg. He is employed by the Bank of Montreal.

Diedrich (Dick) and his family live in Steinbach, where he is attending the Steinbach Bible Institute.

His twin sister, Mary, and her husband, Wilfe Demke, and children farm at Thornhill, Manitoba.

Eva, the baby of the family, is married to John C. Harder. They and their family farm north of Lowe Farm.

Pete is the only farmer of the sons. Besides farming, he found time to get married to Mary Derksen from Ste. Elizabeth, and together they have raised a family. Pete has also served for 14 years as a Director on the Lowe Farm Co-Op Services Board of Directors, and the same number of years on the board, and was a committee member of the Lowe Farm Credit Union. He has also been active in the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church, as Sunday School teacher and Young Peoples' leader.

The third generation has no farmers. Pete and Mary's

son, Neil, is presently in Toronto, working for M.C.C. While their daughter, Annie, is in West Berlin, Germany, also with M.C.C.

Kathy is working in Winnipeg, while Dorothy is still at home, attending the Lowe Farm junior high school.

## CORNELIUS REMPEL

*submitted by Susan Lewis*

My father Cornelius Rempel was nine years old when the family emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1874. I remember Dad telling us later of an incident that occurred toward the end of that voyage. During a thunderstorm the ship struck an iceberg that had broken loose, causing them to be literally shipwrecked for a while, but close enough to the Canadian coast so that help wasn't too long in coming. By then they were running very low on food, but all survived pretty well.

From there Dad's family worked their way westward to Kitchener, Ontario, and they settled there for a time.

I don't know where Dad and Mother first met, but I do know that Mother also came to Canada from Russia 14 years later. I believe she was 14 years old at the time.



*Cornelius and Katherine (Friesen) Rempel with their daughter, Mary, (later Mrs. Adolph Murner) taken in the early '30's.*



On a clear, not *too* cold morning early in March, my parents, my brothers and sisters and I, left our old farmstead which was situated about half-way between St. Pierre, and Grunthal, Manitoba. We were on our way to a new home in the Lowe Farm area. We travelled with bob sleds, cutters and natural horse power, arriving in Dufrost near noon. We stopped here to feed and water the horses, and they had the chance to rest while we all had lunch and warmed ourselves in the hotel. The journey continued until we reached the Red River at Morris. We crossed on the ice as there was no bridge at that time. This ice crossing was a big thrill for all of us. It was late afternoon by now but still daylight so Dad decided to continue to Lowe Farm, and we reached our destination at sunset. Our little entourage had travelled slowly because the sleighs with our furniture and other belongings were ahead. My parents and three year old brother were in front of us, right behind the bob sleigh caravan, and my sisters and I were travelling in a one horse open cutter. We were well bundled up and had heated flat irons to keep our feet warm. I remember how excited we were when we finally reached our new homestead, the August Gebhardt farm three miles northeast of Lowe Farm. The Gebhardts were in Illinois, U.S.A.

As I was only seven years old I didn't have too much to do with the organization of our new life, but I remember how awed I was with our new surroundings. In March, we children of school age were enrolled in the Heibert School District about half a mile from where we lived. My first teacher there was a Miss Anna Giesbrecht. She later became Mrs. Hiebert - she is still living.

## 1914

Life was continuing, I was attending school - sometimes in bitterly cold weather when the snowdrifts were too high for the horses to travel. On these days we had to walk or scramble as best we could, but we always got there and back with no ill effects. There was never any question as to whether or not we should stay home on account of the inclement weather - We went to school!

Then there were the summers, always interesting for us children. We never lacked amusement or responsibility. We were kept busy pulling weeds in the garden, herding cows, and feeding pigs and chicken. In the fall we all took part in the 'butchering bees' as we called them. We helped to make the coiled farmer sausage, salt and smoke the hams and bacon, and the liver sausage. Then there was the head cheese - we made it and we ate it, but none of us really liked it.

On July 8th of this year my baby sister arrived. I was eight years by now and had to do my share of baby sitting and washing diapers. We younger girls took over some of the lighter chores now, as Mother and older sister Tina had more than enough to do with the cooking, sewing, gardening and all the other tasks that go toward making a home. At harvest time, I'm sure there wasn't a minute that something wasn't cooking on that wood stove. They'd be cooking and baking from sunup to sunset, and sometimes when we had a big threshing crew, well into the night. There were now nine of us around the table every day, and it was amazing how that table seemed to

stretch to accommodate the extra help during the harvests.

Threshing time reminds me of the day I was stooking. I could see the black clouds coming from the west, and I knew it would be raining soon, so I decided to stay out and finish the field. There were just a few sheaves left when it started to rain, so I kept going. Suddenly the sky opened up, lightening flashed, and thunder rolled. When I uncovered my head and looked around I saw that lightening had struck one of the stooks behind me, and it was burning brightly in the pouring rain. I came very close to being struck by lightening that day!

## 1915

This was the year of the 'big crop' and we all worked extra hard. Us kids had to follow the horses in the fields, and we also hauled grain to the elevator with wagons and horses. Horses were a necessary commodity in those days. I think this was the year Dad actually had some money left after all the bills had been paid. He took the train to Winnipeg one day, having about two hundred dollars in his wallet - in his back pocket. The train was crowded and he had to stand all the way from Morris to Winnipeg. About half-way there he felt a hand in the pocket where his wallet was located. He reached back, grabbed the hand, still in his pocket, and squeezed for all he was worth. Dad was a big strong man! The more the would-be thief struggled, the harder Dad squeezed, and thought he might have crushed some bones as he held on for the remainder of the trip. When he was finally able to turn and confront the man (there were actually two men involved), he complained that Dad had injured his hand, to which Dad replied, "Then why was your hand in my pocket?" There was such a crowd, and the two men just melted into it, leaving Dad's wallet and money intact. That trip resulted in a new sewing machine for mother, who ordered some yard goods, and she and Tina sewed winter clothing for all of us. That Christmas we even received some store bought presents. I wish I could remember what they all were. Imagine trying to stretch two hundred dollars that far today?

## 1916

In the spring of this year we had a flash flood. It was unnerving to say the least, to wake up one mornig to see the countryside afloat. There had been no warning or indication of high water when we went to bed the night before.

Fortunately our house was on high ground and we didn't have any water in it, though some of our neighbours were not so lucky. I remember watching small ice floes and straw stacks floating past the house. On one of these stacks was a small dog, he must have gone to sleep there and awakened to find himself cruising down the river. He was obviously terrified, and was howling as loud as he could. I wished that I could have helped him, but we were also stranded. (I learned later that he had been rescued.)

Our cows were standing in two feet of water in the barn, and we had a hectic time transferring all the stock to higher ground. All our neighbours were in the same predicament, but everyone helped everyone else. Within a week the water subsided, and life became normal and enjoyable for a while. Our family grew and there were

now twelve of us around the dinner table.

Mother had stories of her own to tell. One in particular I remember very well. It is of the murder of the bank manager in Plum Coulee in 1914. A certain Jack Krafchenko robbed the bank and shot and killed the bank manager. There was a big furor about it at the time, and it might not have remained so memorable to Mother except for the fact that she knew this Jack Krafchenko. Mother's family and the Krafchenko family came to Canada from Russia on the same ship and she remembered that they were a very nice family. Mother and her sisters became quite friendly with Jack and remained in touch for a while after landing in Canada. However, after arriving in Manitoba the families settled in different areas of the province, and they lost track of each other. You can imagine the shock Mother had when she learned of the dreadful deed Jack had committed. They had enjoyed such a happy association on the ship en route.

We experienced a few lean years after the flood in 1916. We lost stock and had one crop failure after another. Dad was not able to keep up payments on the land and buildings we were renting. Then came the day when the landlord sold the house for back taxes. I don't remember too many details other than sitting outside the house with the rest of my family, amongst our furniture and other household items. The landlord had moved us out, lock, stock and barrel. We now had no roof over our heads and nowhere to go.

Fortunately, in such instances, there is always a blessed soul who comes to the rescue. In our case his name was Mr. Harry Anderson, a neighbour. He owned an older house in which he stored grain and offered us the use of it. After he had moved the grain, we all pitched in, cleaned from top to bottom and moved in. I remember being very happy in that house. It had a friendly feeling about it.

Gradually things improved for us, and we were on our feet again, but words could never express our gratitude to Harry Anderson and his family. We lived in that house for more than three years and he never asked a penny for rent.

Those were the days when we churned butter and sold it for ten cents per pound. We sold eggs at eight cents per dozen then too.

In 1919, the 'killer flu' struck. Dad was one of the few fortunate people who escaped. Many of our friends and neighbours were very sick, and Dad was away for the better part of every day helping with their chores, and looking after the stock. He also ran an ambulance service of sorts. He would hitch up the horses and wagon and drive the doctor from one farm to another and then home again. We lost friends and acquaintances, but life has a way of going on. It really doesn't seem that long ago.

Out of our large, close family of ten children, there are just three of us left, my sisters Mary and Helen, and myself, we all still live in and around Morris, in Manitoba.

### **"Children of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Rempel"**

Peter married Susan Wiebe, two sons. Peter is deceased. Ben married Helen Peters, 3 sons, 2 daughters.

Ben and Helen deceased. Tina married Bill Heinricks, 5 sons, 4 daughters. Tina and Bill deceased. John married Vera Churchill, 3 sons. John deceased. Cornie married Anne Born, 3 sons, 2 daughters. Cornie deceased. Jake married Fay Hannah, twin sons. Jake and Fay deceased. Susan married Luther Lewis, no children. Luther deceased. Mary married Adolf Murner, 2 sons, 4 daughters. All living. Abe married Lillian Dee, 1 son, 1 daughter. Abe deceased. Helen married George Wiebe, 3 sons, 2 daughters. George deceased.

39 Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great great-grandchildren.



*The family of Edward F. and Frances (Clement) Lewis, taken around 1905-07. BACK ROW: Hazel, Luther, Ralph, Lew. FRONT ROW: Glen and Katherine with their parents.*

### **EDWARD FREEMAN LEWIS FAMILY**

It was March, 1906 when Edward Freeman Lewis and his family arrived in the R.M. of Morris. Edward was born in 1857 in Bloomingdale, Illinois, near Chicago, and lived in Crystal Lake before moving to Stillman Valley in the picturesque, rolling farm country south of Rockford. In 1883 he married Frances Clement, who was born in 1859 in Dutchess County, New York, moved to Wisconsin in 1865 and grew up in the Wisconsin Dells-Mauston area.

The Lewises rented a beautiful farm just outside Stillman Valley owned by a retired couple named Wilbur. They had six children: Luther Baker (b. 1887); Ralph Hollis (b. 1889); Frances Hazel (b. 1891); Lew Gayton (b. 1893); Katherine Clement (b. 1895); and Glenn de Groff (b. 1897). The family was happy farming the rich corn land, but Edward saw no hope of ever being able to afford his own land, at \$300.00 per acre. Through the Illinois-Manitoba Land Company, Edward bought 27-5-1 West, 12 miles northwest of Morris. It was a desirable piece of land, naturally well-drained, and cost \$46.00 per acre.

Edward and Luther came ahead by rail with farm machinery, household effects and livestock on March 3rd, and the others followed by train, arriving during a blizzard in late March and stopping at the Kastner House

until they were picked up by sleigh. The house and buildings had been built by the previous owner of the farm, Jim Johnson. The house was surprisingly comfortable, and had a large root cellar.

Lew, Hazel and Katherine went to school at Pleasant Valley. One teacher there, John Huff (1906?), to their amazement, had a B.A.! Hazel went on to take two years of Business Education in Winnipeg. Katherine followed Grade IX with a year of Home Economics at the Agricultural College, now U. of Manitoba, along with the Brown sisters, Rilla and Ella. Glenn studied at home.



*Luther, Glenn, Lew, Ralph, Katie, and Hazel Lewis.*

Besides their home section, the Lewises farmed the east half of 22-5-1 West, the north half of 18-6-1 West and half of 33-5-1 West.

The Lewises enjoyed and appreciated the friendship of their neighbours, people like John and Robert Dickson, who came over to see them the day after they arrived, and the Alec Andersons, the Charles Andersons, Roses, Judds and Gebauers.

The Lewis farm was a lovely place to grow up, with a coulee to swim in and to skate and boat on. The Lewis place was like an island of trees in a great prairie sea. To the west was a beautiful plain of grass as far as the eye could see, with a trail running through it. Before the days of manmade drainage systems, the coulee ran nicely and surrounded the "island", actually a peninsula of ash trees and wild plants.



*Boating on the Lewis Coulee. Hazel Lewis, probably with Glen.*

Edward Lewis bought the first car in the area in 1910. The family hopped into the new Model "T" and drove to Lowe Farm, where a baseball game was in progress. All the spectators left the game and crowded around the new sensation.

Edward and Ralph set up a small Ford dealership on the farm, the first in the area. Roads left a lot to be desired in those days; one had to be a good driver to negotiate the ruts and mudholes. It was mud roads, all the way to Winnipeg. Later on, improvements were made, and gravel was added. Edward Lewis was skeptical about this, his daughter Katherine remembers. "What's the use of putting gravel on?" he asked. "It'll just sink out of sight."

Being quite a distance from the nearest town produced a feeling of isolation at times. Storms one winter kept the Lewises from getting to town for two weeks! What they missed most of all was the mail - the magazines and newspapers. The arrival of the telephone in 1911 was really important - much more so than the much later installation of Hydro. It was wonderful to be able to phone the neighbours, and most reassuring, the doctor.



*E.F. Lewis with his Model "T" about 1912.*

Edward Lewis was a kind man, and a good manager. He doctored animals, shod horses and mended harness, in addition to other aspects of farming. In later years, he was known as a friend of children, his own grandchildren, and the children in Morris who flocked around him when he came to town because he always bought them candy.

Frances (Fanny) was good at economizing, contriving, and nursing children. She was a good cook, and that meant she could keep hired men. That was one reason they "made a go of it" while some with too great expectations failed.

The girls worked at home, doing housekeeping, making lunches for up to 20 hired men, driving lunches out to the widely scattered fields, and helping out in numerous other ways. After Hazel's marriage, in 1917, to Harold Gregory, Katherine handled all these chores with her mother. Katherine was married in 1925 to William Anderson.

Glenn Lewis died in 1921, aged 24, of complications following an operation. His mother, Frances died in 1926, and his father, Edward lived until 1943.



*Edward and Fanny Lewis with grandson, Francis and visiting Illinois in-laws, Ira and Minnie Gregory, in early 1920's.*

## LUTHER BAKER LEWIS

Luther Baker Lewis was born to Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Lewis in Stillman Valley, Illinois in 1887. He and his father came north with about three carloads of machinery, household effects, horses and cows - enough to start Spring work - early in March, 1906, a few weeks in advance of the rest of the family, when they moved to the Morris District (Pleasant Valley).

Luther farmed with his brothers and was involved especially with the livestock side of the farm. He loved the land and was a quiet and well liked gentleman. He was enthusiastic about baseball and played with the Pleasant Valley team, usually being the catcher. It is recalled that he was a great fan of the World Series.

Luther was married to Susan Rempel in 1943. They enjoyed their farm life, picnics, pleasant drives, including those through the old Mennonite Villages south of Altona and Winkler, as well as reading and gardening. Luther died in 1956.

Susan lived in Winnipeg, Lowe Farm and Morris after this, working for the Family Bureau, the V.O.N., and cooking in summer camps. She continues to enjoy gardening and painting, belonging to the Morris Art Club. She is now a resident of Morris Manor.



*Luther and Susan (Rempel) Lewis at the Peace Gardens.*



*The Lewises farmed in partnership for many years.*

## RALPH LEWIS FAMILY

Ralph Lewis was born in Stillman Valley, Illinois, in 1889 and moved with his parents and brothers and sisters in 1906 to their new farm twelve miles northwest of Morris. Ralph had a philosophical and inventive mind, being keenly interested in photography and the building and operating of radio receivers. In those early times, Chicago was the only station broadcasting.



*Ralph Lewis with his homemade experimental radio equipment, before 1920.*

Ralph was involved with Manitoba Pool Elevators, attended the original meeting in Brandon when the decision was made to organize. He was also an original stockholder in Trump Oil Co. With his brothers, he was soon involved with the change to agricultural mechanization, the lumbering Hart Parr tractor, the much smaller Fordsons and a big later the first John Deeres.

He worked for a time for the Steel Company of Canada and the newly opened Ford agency in Hamilton, Ontario.

In 1927 the Lewises bought a Nichols and Sheppard pulling type combine, which was one of the earliest in the area.

Ralph was married to Olive Taylor of Graysville in 1933. They started a new farm yard southwest of the old farmstead and raised their two sons, Donald (1935) and Gary (1942) there.



*Ralph and Olive (Taylor) Lewis on their wedding day, 1933. with Donald and Gary.*

Olive's interests included gardening sewing and ceramics, as well as United Church Women and the Women's Institute.

Ralph Lewis died in 1969.

In 1974 Olive Lewis was married to Arthur Enns, formerly of the old Pleasant Valley area. Arthur served in the R.C.A.F. with original RADAR in the Orkney Islands during the War, later becoming a Steam Engineer (Electronic Controls specialty) as far afield as Australia. The Ennses have retired to White Rock, B.C.

Donald Lewis, after completing High School in Lowe Farm, took the Diploma course in Agriculture, U. of M. He is farming full time and living on the site of his Uncle Luther's place, with enlargements and new buildings. He has served on Co-operative Boards, etc. and feels "That a person has to go through life in the way he is most comfortable". He enjoys hunting and fishing when time allows.

Donald married Sally Friesen of the Lowe Farm Area in 1957. She was employed by the Bank of Montreal in Winnipeg and later in Morris for some five years. Sally has been active in United Church Women and Sunday School work.

Donald and Sally have three children; Howard (1961) who is planning to enter the degree course in Agriculture, U. of M., this Fall; Linda (1963) who is studying Voice in St. Jean at the Grade VIII level; Robert (1971).

Gary worked in Thompson and operated construction machinery before beginning his involvement with commercial trucking. He now has his own tractor and trailers and transports produce, etc. in Canada and the U.S. Gary was married to Beverley Reid (nee Zinn) in 1977 and she and her son Dwayne came to live in the family home.

## LEW LEWIS FAMILY

Lew Lewis was the third son of Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Lewis, born in Stillman Valley, Illinois in 1893. He came with his family to the farm northwest of Morris (Pleasant Valley) where his nephews still live.



*LEFT: Lew Lewis. RIGHT: Lew and Myrtle (Brown) Lewis, with children, Edward and Shirley.*

Lew Lewis married Myrtle Brown of the Sperling District in 1922. They had two children, Shirley (born 1924) and Edward (born 1926). They lived on the north half of 18-6-1 West.

Lew built a Snowmobile, using a Model "T" Ford car, in 1929 and often drove the doctors (Ross and Bowman) from Morris and Carman to the Sperling area when roads were blocked with snow.

Luther, Ralph and Lew were full partners in their farming operation, involving the three farms.

After Lew's death in 1939, Myrtle and her children carried on with the partnership until Edward was 16 and he and his mother were able to take over the home half-section completely (1942). Lewis, Rance and Brown relatives helping during this period. Edward received his Diploma in Agriculture in 1948 from the U. of Manitoba.

In 1953 Edward was married to Patricia (Pat) Fleming, a school teacher from Boissevain.

Pat is active in United Church organizations, Edward on Church Boards, Pool Elevator and Co-operative Oil Boards.



*Edward and Pat (Fleming) Lewis in 1970, with (Right to Left) Cathy, James, and Donna at the Sperling Manitoba Centennial.*

Between 1965 and 1973 Edward purchased land (21-6-3 West) in the Homewood area and built a new house there in 1974.

Some folks miss the sign at the former Lewis Driveway in the Sperling District which read "Laze-E-L" and won a family contest prize of cream for Les and Shirley Green in the days when Brown Swiss Cows, Swine and Poultry were part of the scene at Eddie and Pat's farm.

Edward and Pat's son James, born 1956, is taking the degree course in Agriculture, U. of Manitoba. Their daughter, Cathy (1954) attended U. of M. (Education) and married Bill Skyhar in 1978. They live in Winnipeg and both work for the Post Office. Donna (1963) continues her education in Carman and is keenly interested in Art.

Lew and Myrtle's daughter Shirley (School Teacher and Nurse) married Leslie Green of Portage la Prairie in 1949 and raised their three children there. Les is a long time employee of the Portage Mutual Insurance Co. and has for many years been a Boy Scout Leader. Shirley works with children with special needs. Both are active in Church work.

It should be remembered that Myrtle, while still living on the farm, provided a home for two foster children. These were Linda Scott, from the age of seven to sixteen years, who was later the victim of an automobile accident (1960), and Neil Siemens from the age of twelve to sixteen years. He joined the Air Force and now works for the Ford Company in Calgary.

Myrtle retired to St. Vital after Edward's marriage and has maintained her own home there. Over the years numerous younger kin, including grandchildren, have stayed with her while continuing their education, etc. Myrtle is well known for her prize quilt making, Church work, and feeding hungry relatives who stop in to enjoy her cooking and excellent company (and perhaps a game of Scrabble) She plans to move to the Boyne Towers, Carman, in the late Summer.

## THE "BAKERS" OF HEABERT-PLEASANT VALLEY

John W. Baker, farmer and horseman; originally an insurance and real estate agent in Dwight, Illinois, farmed land seven miles west and three and a half miles north of Morris, with residence on W. 1/2 20-5-1 West.

Sometime in the early 1900's - possibly 1910, John Baker, along with a friend John Stewart, purchased the section of land, later to be known as "the Baker place". They were among several others from Illinois who bought land and settled in that area.

Primarily, the land was purchased as an investment, but soon after the purchase was made, Mr. Stewart sold his share to John Baker who then decided to come to Canada and "look after" his investment. John and wife, Minnie, would come to the prairies each spring and stay until after harvest. They left their homes in Dwight, Illinois and came north to "camp-out" at the homestead, where Minnie gave up her paved walkways for the more primitive trails in Manitoba. The vastness of the prairies was a reality!



*The John W. Baker home in Dwight, Illinois, where Walter and Dorothy were born and raised, was left behind for the bald prairies of Manitoba.*

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In 1917, John and Minnie were joined by their son, Walter; then twenty-six.

Although the John Bakers continued to commute between Morris, Manitoba and Dwight, Illinois, Walter remained in Manitoba the major part of each year to tend the 'family' farm.

Not being raised in a farming environment could have been a distinct disadvantage, but Walter listened and learned and eventually was considered a pretty good farmer, who didn't object to the "gamble" involved; whether in the wheat field or the "grain exchange".

It was a very different life for the former motorcycle rural mail carrier from Illinois.



*A frequent visitor, Dorothy (Baker) Yates.*



A regular summer visitor to the farm, was Walter's sister, Dorothy (Mrs. Howard N. Yates, who supplied much of the early information contained here in, now residing in Denver, Colorado). She was teaching school at the time, and enjoyed her vacations in Canada. Among the fondest of her memories was the large gardens, the trips to Lowe Farm for the mail on horseback, and the delicious wild strawberries that grew by the roadsides.

Sometime in the early 1930's John and Minnie Baker stopped their yearly trips to Canada. Walter had acquired a half section of land on his own by this time adjacent to the family farm, and was hiring steady help. Besides the yearly threshing crew he hired every fall, he was employing one or two men for steady work.

In 1934 Walter met and married Tean Harder of Lowe Farm. lean, although much younger than her husband, became a very capable farmer's wife. She maintained the traditional large vegetable garden, as well as adding color with her flower gardens. The farmhouse lost its bachelor look and took on some of the prettiness that came with youth and femininity.

She took over Minnie Baker's job of cooking for a 20-man threshing crew, as well as "heaving wood and hauling water". Walter and Tean had two daughters, who had continued to live in Manitoba; Louise (Mrs. Lloyd Janke) of Morris, and Dorothy (Mrs. Michael Dixon) of Swan River, Man.



*Walter Baker and his daughters, Dorothy and Louise.*

In 1939, John W. Baker passed away, leaving the "Baker farm" to his four children; Carrie and Clare from his first marriage, and Dorothy and Walter from his second marriage.

Walter continued to operate both the family farm and his own until he rented his half section to Mr. Peter Hildebrand. About the same time he purchased "the north quarter" which was as suggested, a quarter section about four miles north of the farm home. He had a special fondness for that piece of land and continued to operate it himself until he died.

The farm family endured all the hazards of every prairie farm - flood and fire, wind and hail. A fire in 1935 took the old barn one night, as well as most of the stock. Although a week of steady rain may not be classed as a flood, it was enough to ruin many fields of wheat in 1940, as well as in 1970. (no rice tires or crop insurance in those days!) There were the Sunday afternoon drives checking

the fields of wheat - ready for cutting tomorrow; then the hailstones that pounded the roof at night and sent Walter for early morning walks to check his losses.

There were also the sunny warm days, the hot dinners to pack and get to field, the grain trucks and wagons going and coming at the North Star elevator, (no quotas then!) There was the tired laughter during late harvest suppers - dishes to do at midnight. There were the faithful hired men who returned year after year; Ed, Herman, Pete and Johnny. There was something "really good" in the sound of the John Deere Din early evening, and when the combine finished the last round of the year, the satisfaction outweighed the losses of years past.

Modernization passed by the farmhouse; it never saw electricity or running water.

In 1946, Walter moved his family to the town of Morris and the Baker farm became a summer residence once more. Any remaining livestock was sold, and Walter, Tean and their two daughters spent November to May at their new residence at the corner of Main and Railroad.

The old farmhouse may not have been given a face lift, but was never lacking in the necessities of life and living.

On July 11, 1951, Walter Lewis Baker died. Left to mourn his passing were his wife, Tean, two daughters, Louise and Dorothy; no sons - consequently the "Baker farm" was sold and has faded into memories and history.

## **HERMAN FRONDALL**

We came to the Pleasant Valley School District about 1903, my dad and mother, Herman and Mary Frondall. They raised a family of five: Ernest, Winnifred, Vera, Merle and Alma: Ernest and Alma have passed on.

We got our mail at Rosenort post office. The most outstanding thing I remember as a child, was when the Scratching River would flood. We lived on the river bank. (Before the river was dried up.) One spring, the water came into our house. Our neighbours, the Schotts, got into their boat at their door and came across the fence and small willows, and stopped at our door. They came in to walk on planks we had put on blocks. The organ and sideboard were also on blocks.

I remember the picnics held at the Brown farm. I also remember the thrill we kids got when we crossed the pontoon bridge, somewhere near Morris.

Sid Sears came from England to Ontario, then Manitoba, and came to work for my Dad at the age of 16. He stayed on and made his home at our place. He worked at different places, but always came home on holidays. He went to World War I and when he came home, he came to us in Saskatchewan, still home to him.

We left Morris for Sonningdale, Saskatchewan, on November 11, 1918.



*Ernest Frondall was the oldest of the five children of Herman and Mary Frondall.*

## AUGUST GEBAUER

August Gebauer came to North America from Germany, after working aboard ship for his passage, and landing in New Orleans, Louisiana. He made his living in the Louisiana swamps by hunting alligators and harvesting moss.

August moved to Liebental, Kansas, where he farmed. It was here that he met and married Barbara Boyle. They and children, Josie, Jamie, Pete, John and Rose, moved to Manitoba around 1898, living in Lowe Farm over winter. In spring, they bought a farm from Fred Hill, located on Section 35-9-1 W. Two more children, Victoria and Joe, were born in Manitoba. Mary married Mr. Hoperaft, whose children were named, Al, Art, John, Albert, Jean, Florence, Charlie and Annie. After Mary's death, Al lived with the Gebauers and assisted with the farming until they retired.



*The August Gebauer family. REAR: Peter, John, Mary. CENTRE: August and Barbara (Boyle) Gebauer, Josie. FRONT ROW: Victoria, Joe.*

Joe moved to Wawanesa and farmed, later moving to Brandon and Oak Lake, where he now resides.

John and Pete farmed here until they retired. They remained bachelors.

Joe married Lena Paschke, to whom were born five children; Delmar, Denis, Marion, Faye and Fern.

One of the activities the Gebauers were noted for, was their wildlife sanctuary. John originally raised a pair of



*The smaller of the two ponds at "Bird House", a year after the sanctuary was started.*

geese, which he used as decoys. However, gradually over the years, by natural propagation, and by nursing to health the wounded birds, a resident flock was established. The wings were clipped to prevent migration and the flock expanded rapidly.

Al Hoperaft had the idea of damming up earth to contain water, making a pond about 4-5 acres in size. Ponds were built with horses and slush scrapers and were pumped full of water in the spring and also at other times of the year, when rains made run off water available.



*Peter Gebauer pumping water into the sanctuary pond with a homemade auger pump run by his Model "D" John Deere. BELOW: Trumpeter swans in the Gebauer sanctuary, part of a flock which resided there.*



The land was posted to prevent hunting, and gradually, the wild geese learned to use the ponds as a sanctuary during the spring and fall migrations. It was a common sight to see thousands of geese resting and feeding in the sanctuary during the migrating seasons.

Hunting and fishing activities were important to the Gebauers, originally as sustenance, and later as a sporting activity. They were active in the local Wildlife Association, recognizing the need for good conservation measures to perpetuate good hunting and fishing for future generations.

Pete and John also both served as trustees in the Pleasant Valley School District.

### THREE GENERATIONS OF BRIDGE FOREMEN

*Three generations of Penners have served as foremen of the bridge crew of the Rural Municipality of Morris. Johann, (1862-1936) was a bridge contractor as well. His son, Jacob, (1902-1968) worked for the R.M. for forty-four years. The present bridge gang foreman is Willie, who has worked for the R.M. since he was fifteen years old.*

## — Pioneer Portrait of the Past (44)

BY LAWRENCE KLIPPENSTEIN  
Alton, Man.



JOHANN AND MARIA PENNER

Johann Penner was born in south Russia in 1862, a son of the senior Johann Penners. Maria Friesen, later his wife, and the daughter of Heinrich and Maria Friesen (Pioneer Portrait 17), was also born in 1862. They were married on June 4, 1882. They came to Manitoba in the 1870's with many others at that time.

After their marriage they moved to the Heuboden community, four miles south of Plum Coulee. Later they moved to Lowe Farm, where Mr. Penner managed a butcher shop for a number of years. After that he became a bridge construction contractor also.

Eight daughters and three sons were born to the Penners. These included Maria (1883-1959) Mrs. H. Groening; Katherina (1886-1954), Mrs. C. Dueck; Helena (1889-1930), Mrs. Jac J. Gerbrandt; Agatha (1891-1945), Mrs. Henry Funk. Margretha, 1896, now Mrs. John Funk, and resident John in Winnipeg, 1898-1918), Henry b. 1900, and resident at Winnipeg, Jacob (1902-1968), Sara, b. 1904, Mrs. Abe Klassen, and resident at Winnipeg, Anna b. (1906-1961), Mrs. Henry Funk, and Aganetha (1894- ?), Mrs. Gerhard Nickel.

Mr. Penner passed away on Dec. 23, 1936 at the age of 74, and his wife predeceased him on Nov. 23, 1934 at the age of 71.



*Jacob and Agatha Penner in 1962. During his 44 years as foreman, Jacob and Agatha raised two girls, and five boys. Jake, Eddie, David, Harry and Willie all worked on the bridge gang. Agatha got up at 5:00 a.m., six days a week, to make lunches for her men to sustain them through their usual 14 to 16 hour days.*



*Willie and his wife, Emmy with Natalie and Vanessa, in 1978. Emmy is the daughter of Henry and Sarah Derkson of Lowe Farm. The Penners long sojourn in Lowe Farm came to an end in 1978 when the Willie Penner family moved to the new subdivision in Morris. Living in Morris has made working for the R.M. more convenient for Willie. During his 28 years with the municipality, Willie has personally experienced the gamut from digging and installing culverts by hand to using the R.M.'s first backhoe and piledriver, to today's modern equipment.*



# OLDEN TALES OF SPERLING



*Sperling Main St. early 1900's.*





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To The Hon. J. C. Atkins  
Secretary of State for Canada  
Ottawa

Sir

I have the honor to report the completion of the subdivisions of Township No. 6 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Range, West of the Principal Meridian, in the Province of Manitoba, which Township, contains  $8\frac{1}{3}\frac{1}{4}$  Acres of Road allowance and 23002 $\frac{5}{8}$  Acres. Well, of Clear Open level Prairie. of very good quality and well adapted for Agricultural purposes. The soil is principally of a Black Would Surfaer, with a Clay subsoil and in some places a loamy Clay. Subsoil the latter I consider the best and richest soil for Agricultural purposes. (The only draw back to this township at the present time is the absence of wood for building, fencing, and fuel: there being, not one tree growing, or standing in the Township. The nearest timber is about three miles West of this township) where there

Field notes showing the survey of township 6, Range 2, West - for the village of Sperling, done in 1873, by John Morris, Surveyor.

is a belt of Oak timber adjoining  
to a Creek but <sup>does</sup> not contain a sufficient  
quantity for any purpose worth speaking of.

This township will no doubt be soon  
settled as there is a good road leading  
from Fort Gary through this Township  
to St. Jo's Settlement. which will  
enable settlers to get in Lumber and firewood  
from other parts where it is more Abun-  
dant than in this section.

Perth  
16<sup>th</sup> January 1873

I have the H. on,  
to be tried  
Your most obedient servant  
John Morris  
By Surveyor

Commenced 25<sup>th</sup> July Ended. 7 August 1873  
By John Morris By Surveyor

## ROOTS OF SPERLING



*R.H. Waddell, who purchased the land from Sperling and Company, a British financial firm interested in the Canadian Northern Railway. Thus Sperling was named.*

### THE FATHER OF SPERLING R.H. WADDELL

R.H. Waddell was born in 1866 in Ontario. After residing in North Dakota he came to Sperling, Manitoba, and he owned land where he hoped to locate a village. He was instrumental in starting a park about one quarter of a mile east of the village in 1900, but some Hallowe'en pranksters threw garbage on his endeavor and the area became the nuisance ground.

When the news spread that R.H. Waddell and his family were packing up two carloads of belongings and moving to Pincher Creek, Alberta, in 1907, the tears flowed freely in the Presbyterian Church. It has been said that he was a millionaire three times.

One episode in his life at Myrtle is amusing. He had taken the spark plugs out of his car. Then, having to make a hurried trip to Winnipeg, he poured oil into the spark plug outlets.

Another incident -- beside the Co-op Oil there was a ramp on which one could drive a car to change oil. R.H. Waddell forgot that he was not on ground level and stepped out into mid-air. After fumbling for his glasses, he scrambled to his feet.

In 1926, his beloved wife passed away on the SE 114 of 6-7-2W.

In 1933, he loaded his 1924 Dodge with Boy Scouts to take them to camp Killarney. He visited with his sister Mrs. Elizabeth Millar before he returned the boys to their homes.

The teenagers of Sperling on their first driving trips were warned to give R.H. a wide berth if they met him in their travels. His driving left much to be desired.

His latter years were lived in the yellow house with the windmill, in the village. His death came in 1938.

"A smart man, well thought of, a go-getter."

They had two children, Alfred and Theresa.

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*In 1901, the railroad station was built in Sperling. This 22' x 42' building was the centre of activity.*

R.H. Waddell, the father of Sperling, was determined to have Sperling on his section 29-6-2W so to ensure the building of the railroad there he built No. 18, the livery barn; first operated by Robt. Smith, then Jas. Wilson, and sold to Robt. Davidson. This building was razed by fire. About 1937 No. 27 was moved on to this location



*The early 1900's depicted in Sperling. Looking at the west side of Main St., we see board sidewalks and hitching posts.*

and became a garage operated by Louie Rose. Later it became a grocery store under the management of Rogers, Wurmnest, and now Logan.

Next, R.H. Built No. 12 (the hotel) and started his brother Tom and wife up as boarding house keepers. McMonagle was operator in 1916. In prohibition years it was used as a grocery store - owned by Amos Ribordy. Al Brockman and Chas. Land were managers. Ed Anderson was an innovative owner with a system of overhead shuttles procuring change.

In 1928 it was proclaimed a hotel under many different managers viz Tom Shore, Mrs. Shore, Mr. MacLean, Walt Carr 1933, Bean, Porteous, Gunn. (He was a very exasperating man with a saintly wife. His favorite saying was, "Mill is very even-tempered. She's mad all the time.") Jimmy Lester delivered milk there. Mr. Woodley was janitor of beer parlor. Bud Myers stoked the furnace, and Frank Cretton slung the beer. Mrs. Gunn was very kindly and always left the outer door open so that children could be picked up there on a cold winter's night. Other hotel operators were Bernie Sherbeth, Strutt, Schroeder, Lobchuk, Pearce, Korne. (The aforesaid Strutt was a prankster. Late one night he phoned Awat Geswein and in a disguised voice told Awat to identify a tune. After two frustrating attempts at tunes (Golly, gee whiz!) he finally identified "Yankee Doodle". So of course Strutt declared he was a winner. In an hour or so a stranger (Strutt's friend) appeared at Awat's door posing as a C. J.O.B. photographer, flashing many poses of Awat. Next morning Awat hurried downtown to tell of his good fortune. A week later he discovered Strutt's prank.)

R.H. Waddell's next venture was building the two-storey red tin building, a general store No. 23. Above the store were living quarters for the family, also a large hall used for many years for dances, Christmas concerts and general gatherings. Many a budding actor got his first shock of stage fright on the old Sperling Hall stage. The north half of this store housed Woodruff's hardware - later bought by Steeves Brothers.

Real estate by Fonger, Bud Myers and C.B. McNulty. Smith and Delaney had Post Office and store. We believe the Peddlars were the second storekeepers - others being T.C. Sparling, Sam Swede, Gelman, Altman, O.L. Davison, George Sam Zivot. Family operated for Co-op by Jack Beck. S.O. Johnson had Garney Badger remodel the building into a garage with agents Johnny Martens, Isaac Klassen, Frank Pauls, and Ron Wroblewski.

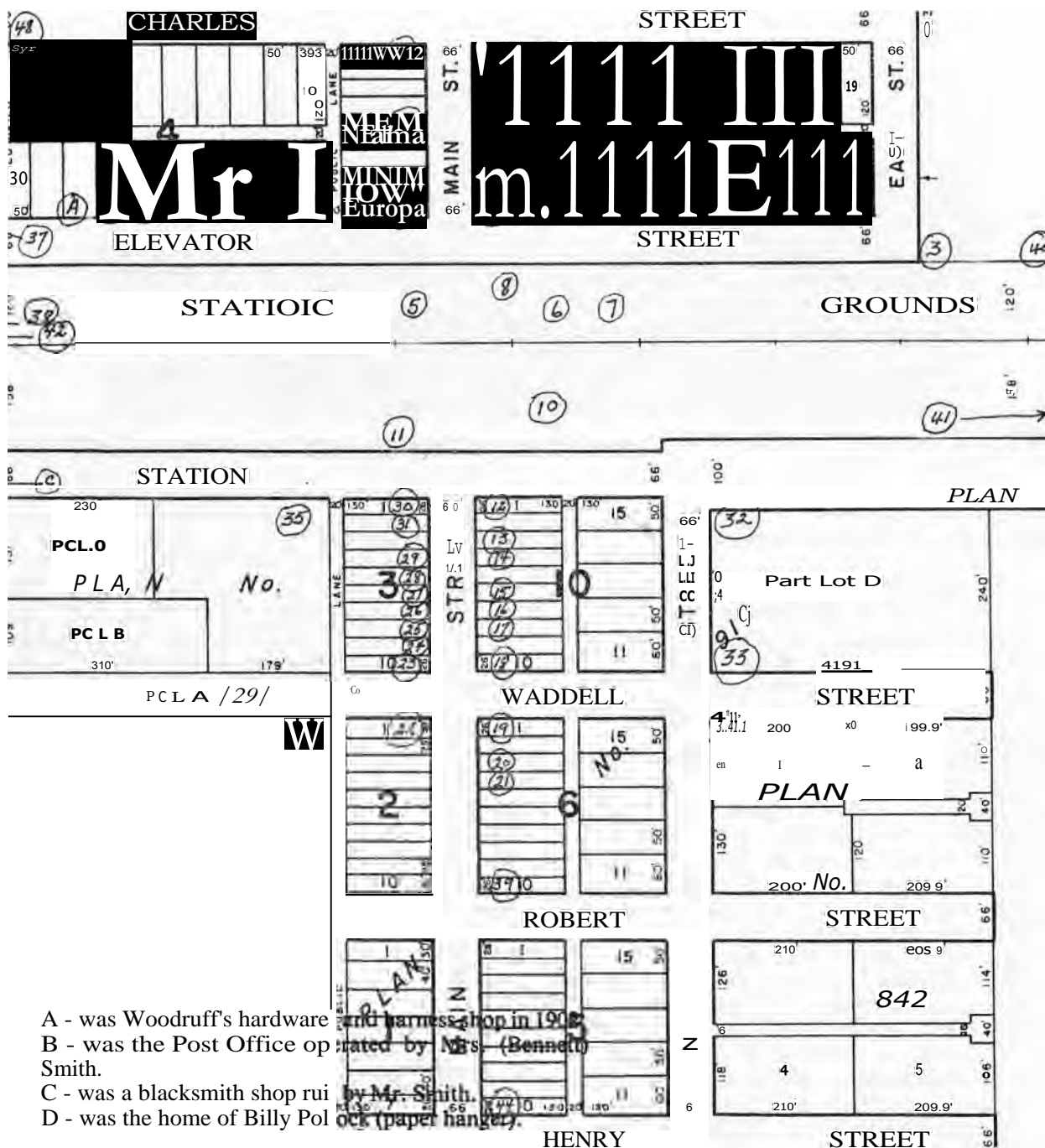
R.H. Waddell moved in No. 30 hardware store. Chas. Steeves and Ian Dickson were proprietors, also Thos. Grant. It was turned into a garage operated for many years by Reimer and Toews. Scotty Moit was salesman, Rigmor Anderson book-keeper. Finally taken over by S.O. Johnson and demolished. The back of this building was used to house the fire truck and the bell hung in front. Bodin Kasjan erected a barber shop and pool room on the site. Later he moved the building to Starbuck. Presently cement is being poured for an Auto Body Building owned by Robert Wroblewski.



*Sperling Main St. showing businesses in the 1920's, including store, drug store, cafe, implement dealer, section house and Ogilvie's elevator.*



# MAP OF VILLAGE OF SPERLING



- A - was Woodruff's hardware and harness shop in 1902.
- B - was the Post Office operated by Mrs. (Bennett) Smith.
- C - was a blacksmith shop run by Mr. Smith.
- D - was the home of Billy Pollock (paper hanger).

- 1 - was Fowler's and Mansell's blacksmith shop, later Joe Boisvert's woodyard.
- 2 - Monarch Lumber Building - known operators were Gibson, Harry Steeves, Green, and later A.K. Brown. Walter Wurmnest turned it into a seed-cleaning plant. Later owners being Gordon and Otto Anderson, Wendal Fewster, Ken Waddell. Present owner Jim Ferris.
- 3 - B.A. Oil run by Leo Jerome then Bill Killeen.
- Imperial Oil run by Rougeau, Bergstrom and Joe Anderson.
- 4 - Dominion Elevator built in 1901 and operated by John McRae, John Hamilton, Watt Steeves and Bert Gillespie.

- 5 - Ogilvie Elevator built in 1904 and operated by James Fournier. 1905-1947 the operator was Jack Hamilton.
- 6 - 1902 the Canadian Elevator was built, Some of the agents were Ervin Younger, H.M. Steeves, Roy Maxwell, Frank Kavaner, Grant Welsh, Charlie Holmes, Archie Galbraith. Later it became the United Grain Growers with Henry Bruce, Goodnough, and Ron Hebner in charge.
- 7 - Taylor-Metcalf Elevator was also a grist mill. First operated by John Hamilton in 1902. The same year he built the house on east side of Main and Charles.
- 8 - Coal sheds
- 10 - C.N.R. station with agents Wm. Wilson, McNeil





*The Main St. in Sperling in 1920's, looking south.*

and his bull dogs, Aubin, Bowman, Tully, Walsh, McArtney, Fanning, Till and Campbell Willdey. The first outdoor rink was just south of this building.

11 - The section house was inhabited by the families of Sam Wilson, Morrish, and Homick.

13 - Site of Don Galbraith's harness and shoe shop. Later Jack Wilson moved the Post Office on to this site but it had to be returned to West side. Chesney operated a cafe here. Telephone office occupied the building with Mabel Hunter, Isobel Wilson, Gertie Duncan, Marj Kennedy, Gladys Ferris, Elsie & Daisy Holmes as operators.

14 - The spot where Millichamp moved the store and Post Office from the West side. Later taken over by Haegeman as a general store - last proprietor was an Irishman - Mike Barrett. The building was razed in East side fire in '31. On the site C.B. McNulty built a Massey Agency shop - later owned by Jake Hiebert, Hank Habas - now unoccupied.

15 - Rehill and McMicken had implement and furniture business. It was then a garage owned by Chas. Stewart, later by Maloney, McMillan, and by Welsh. John Madsen and Leo Jerome were workers there, too. After the fire of 1917 a curling rink was built to the south.

16 - Was a blacksmith shop first owned by Wm. Rehill, followed by Richmond, Drayton, Pete Geswein, John Smith and Fred Cousins.

17 - The fire hall.

19 - Property was bought by the Union Bank and an impressive red brick building erected. Managers were L.E. MacKenzie and C.B. McNulty. The Manitoba Telephone System rented it in 1931 and now it is owned by the Royal Canadian Legion as the local branch headquarters.

20 - This building came from near Carman - the home of the Local Orange Lodge - also used by the Masonic Order.

21 - A lumber yard operated by Harry Morrison, Priors sold caskets, sewing machines, pianos. Thos. Brown had a lumberyard, too.

22 - Pfrimmer's Pool Room and Barbershop (with a gambling den in back). Later taken over by John Williamson. Finally Boden Kasjan was the barber with Bill Davidson managing the pool hall.

24 - T.A. Hobbs' drug store complete with an ice cream parlor. At the north side was the telephone switch board

with operators Addie Morley Tolton, Annie Peckover and Flo McKenzie. Later businesses were Jack Archibald's bakeshop, Little Henry's Cafe, Howard Morrish Cafe, Everett and Hazel Porteous Cafe, and Mae Davidson as storekeepers. Bill Killeen had a Massey business at north.

25 - Butcher shop owned first by Wm. Bates, Chas. Pumfrey, Courtenay, John Dulmage, Bob Smith, and Don Tolton. Finally sold to C. Griffiths.

26 - The White Man's Cafe operated for many years by Mr. W.C. Land, a Chinese immigrant who was a very popular citizen. Mae Skeavington had a grocery store in north half. Edna Wilson was the helper. Doug Last was the last Owner.

27 - The Northern Crown Royal Bank managed by Mr. Athey, Thorburn, Dillon (Homer Hamilton still has the gun that hung unused inside the teller's cage). Bank girls were Addie Waddell and Gladys Millichamp. This building later became Capt. MacDonald's Thompson Harness Shop. He was a stately chap and could often be seen marching with his friend Mike Barrett.

28 - Eaton's store was moved into Sperling from Bates district in 1902. One owner was Wm. Eaton, a first cousin of Timothy Eaton, the founder of Eaton's of Canada. Other operations were tin-smithing by Steeves, storekeeping by Balfour, Cliff McJannet and Foulston. Co-op purchased the store hiring managers Jack Beck and Abe Loeppky. It was sold to Henry Loeppky and torn down in early 60's.

29 - Post Office operated by Dick Burnett followed by Ken Griffiths.

31 - Massey Agency operated by J.R. Lester and Bill Killeen. Later moved across the street and incorporated into International Harvester office operated by O.L. Davison and Jas. Soutar.

32 - Ford Garage operated by Scotty Moir. As a blacksmith shop operated by Pete Geswein. Stanley and Gordon Waddell, Jack Matthiesen, Spence. Now it is a welding shop owned by Russell Nicolajsen.

33 - Masonic Temple formerly Pleasant Valley School.

34 - Sperling Rink 1921-1977.

35 - Grist Mill operated by Furber? and Tom Waddell. Interesting anecdote - Amos Davison sued Tom Waddell because of incorrect grain weights. It was necessary for Tom to walk to Carman to appear in court. He won the case and Mr. Davison offered him a ride back to Sperling. Did Joe Gates also work here?

36 - Harry and Everett Rose built a garage here. It was later moved to the Tjaden farm.

37 - Co-op Oil.

38 - Pool Elevator.

39 - Is the original Waddell School built about 1897-98. It was moved in to the village as a residence and became a Catholic Church in 1936.

40 - Stockyards.

41 - Slaughter House.

42 - Beef Ring House.

43 - Methodist Church.

44 - United Church 1943.

45 - Presbyterian Church

46 - Sperling Consolidated School.

48 - Buchanan's Case Agency.

## HOMETOWN STREETS



*West side of Sperling Main St. in the early 1920's.*



*East side of Sperling Main St. in early 1920's.*



*1935 - note the fire hall on the east side.*



*Hotel, telephone office, Millichamp's store, Implement Bros. and Blacksmith shop.*



*UPPER LEFT: Homes on Main St. east side looking north, showing the stone house, a landmark in Sperling.*

*ABOVE: Homes on west side of Main St. showing trees at an early stage of growth in the early 1900's.*



*LOWER LEFT: This bridge, built in 1916, one and one-half miles north of town, at the boundary of Morris and MacDonald municipalities.*



*In 1931, fire levelled the east side of Main St. Here, showing the devastation wrought by the blaze, causing the whole block to be rebuilt.*



*Bessie Brown and Bill Davidson, grocery store owner. Note fire bell in building.*



*Wurttnest Grocery store with Mrs. Ernie Rose, with Rob and Gerry Rose.*



*McNulty Motors with Hank Bruce and C.B. McNulty.*



*ABOVE: Sperling Garage in 1962.*

*AT RIGHT: Sperling Catholic Church.*





*Aerial view of Sperling.*

## SPERLING ... TODAY

The cycle of history would indeed seem repetitive. The readers of this history during the period of time between its writing and the bi-centennial in 2080, may even be in a better position to judge the correctness of that opening statement.

However, at the time of this writing, it is interesting to note that the community of Sperling is once again experiencing a period of growth. Like the pioneers, who preceded them, residents of the community, some of them the descendants of the early pioneers, are attempting to lay what they believe to be the cornerstones of the future of this prairie community.

As in the first years of the community, once known as Mariposa, new families have and are arriving, old established businesses have been re-furbished, new enterprises have been initiated and the building of a community centre has become a focal point of discussion and aspiration for many members of the community.

It is not the first community centre for Sperling. The plans of 1979 were preceded by an enclosed skating rink in 1921, the first of its kind in rural Manitoba. That building, however, has been demolished after many years of service. Time simply took its toll.

Just as that former building and the Act of the Manitoba Legislature, which established the Sperling Rink District was a first, the initiators of the 1979 proposal are breaking new ground in their approach to providing a community centre. Just as their forefathers had to rely on their own initiative, so it is today with these

individuals. Their actions must be seen as a reflection of that pioneer spirit, which was so necessary to initially settle successfully on the Sperling plains.

Whether today's residents are successful in establishing a new community centre will have to wait for another chapter in another book, written by a generation still unborn. But those who write today, who have known the past or vicariously experienced it through the stories of their grandparents, may remain confident that the people and the community of Sperling will remain as long as the "wheat fields bow to and fro with the frolicking summer breeze".

The pages which follow in this Centennial Year History book will pay a tribute to the early pioneers, to the generations who came before us. In those stories, we and future generations, who have come to know the Sperling, Osborne and Red River clay, will find our roots, our heritage.

As the crops grew, so were the lives shaped. All has ultimately depended on the soil. The community grew and prospered, suffered setbacks, but remained to grow again. The sons and daughters, the grandsons and granddaughters, the great grandchildren and the influx of new people assured its continuity.

While those who remained contributed to the life staff of the community, Sperling also sent its offspring out across this land and to other countries where they have become integral parts of new communities. The clays of Sperling have produced individuals of almost every

profession and walk of life.

As stated earlier the community was first known as Mariposa. It was the location (Dawson's Corner) of a post office operated by a Mr. and Mrs. Bennett. It was opened shortly after the arrival of the first settlers to this area. The first family, the Adam Waddells, originating previously from Egermont, Ontario, arrived at Taylor's Bluff in the spring of 1881.

From an earlier account written by Mrs. I. Peckover, "The Waddell family had no neighbors to the east or north, and prairie, swamp and hay lands as far as the eye could reach."

At first there was nothing, no roads, no schools, no churches, but it wasn't long before others followed. The waves of new settlers came from Ontario. They were followed by Danes, Swiss, French and Mennonites. Sperling became and remains a cosmopolitan centre.

It was not until 1901 that the community became known as Sperling. The change of name from "Mariposa" to "Sperling" came with the advent of the Canadian Northern Railway. Apparently about this time there was a dispute among residents as to whether the community should retain its name of Mariposa or be changed to Waddell. The railway decided to name the community "Sperling" after "Sperling and Co.", a British Financial firm interested in the Canadian Northern Railway.

With the railway came the first elevator, the Dominion. It was followed by the establishment of the Canadian, Taylor and Metcalfe elevators. The Ogilvies elevator was built in 1904. While these names have long since disappeared from the Canadian grain trade and were replaced by others, the Pool and United Grain Growers elevators remain an integral part of the community. The Sperling Co-operative (Pool) was built in 1926. It was one of the first in Manitoba.

It wasn't long before Sperling boasted several grocery stores, garages and implement dealers, livery stables, blacksmith, butcher shop, shoemaker, lumber yard, two banks, telephone exchange, drug store, a doctor and veterinarian.

The building which remains as the Sperling Hotel was first built as a boarding house in 1902. The Sperling Hotel today is the only hotel in the Rural Municipality of Morris. For a number of years it offered a men's beer parlour, but since 1974 it has operated under a mixed beverage room license. The license was not attained without some difficulty. A referendum which would have permitted a mixed license was turned down, then a private member's bill was drafted in the Manitoba Legislature and finally the Provincial liquor control laws were amended to allow an individual community within a municipality to decide whether or not it wanted a mixed beverage room.

Today Sperling also has a liquor mart which is located in the Sperling Grocery. While these facilities are used by individual preference they provide the community with services which would otherwise be located outside the community.

The livery barn has not existed for a number of years but there are still individuals in the community who remember the fine Clydesdale horses that were kept by a

former owner, Mr. Bob Davidson. Mr. Davidson was well known at agricultural exhibitions for his Clydesdale hitchers.

Still younger members of the community will recall the many pictures of horses which decorated the walls of Bill and May Davidson's store. Mr. Bill Davidson was a brother to Mr. Bob Davidson and he also had a life long interest in horses. For a number of years he operated the dray service in Sperling, keeping his horses in a small stable across from the Sperling Garage.

Mr. Davidson's horses were always well trained and groomed. As late as the 1950's his dray team was a common sight in Sperling, just after the train had arrived in town. Mr. Davidson always drove his team from the back of the wagon with some 20 - 25 feet of line.

While horse power has long since been replaced by tractors and now the large four wheel drive variety, the tradition of the Davidson's show horses has been carried on by other individuals in the community.

The blacksmith shops, garages and implement dealers fell upon particularly hard times with the mobility of residents during the late 1950s and 1960s, but today a resurgence is evidenced by the establishment of a new Auto Body Shop and the announced intentions of the owner of the Sperling Garage to build a new facility.

The Sperling Co-operative continues to provide a vital service to the community. It was one of the first four co-operatives dealing in fuel, oil and farm supplies to be established in Manitoba.

The readers of the history of Sperling will discover that many of the interests of today, whether they be in the field of agriculture, commerce, recreation or the social life of the community, are reflected in the past by the interests and initiatives taken by their forefathers.

Sperling remains a small community. Its residents have always had to battle with the elements for survival but through its people it has exemplified the very foundations of this nation. It has proved that determination and perseverance will overcome all adversities. Its people have shown leadership, that has in turn produced leaders with every successive generation.

We can be assured that if the "wheat bows to and fro in the summer breezes of 2080", there will be another generation in the Sperling community to carry on the account of the community's history started in this volume in the year 1979.

They will find the task difficult as this generation has, but they will persevere. Their roots are strong in the Sperling clay.

*"In the new land, wild and lonely,  
Rude the homes which they upraised.  
There they sought unto Thee only,  
There Thy love and mercy praised.  
In our fairer habitations  
May the zeal in us increase,  
While the gracious consolation  
Prove our everlasting peace."*



# SPERLING BUSINESS



*Jake Koop's Mack truck used for hauling water in 1960.*



*Sperling Grocery in 1979 - M. Logan, owner.*



*Sperling Paint and Body Shop owned by Robert Wroblewsky.*



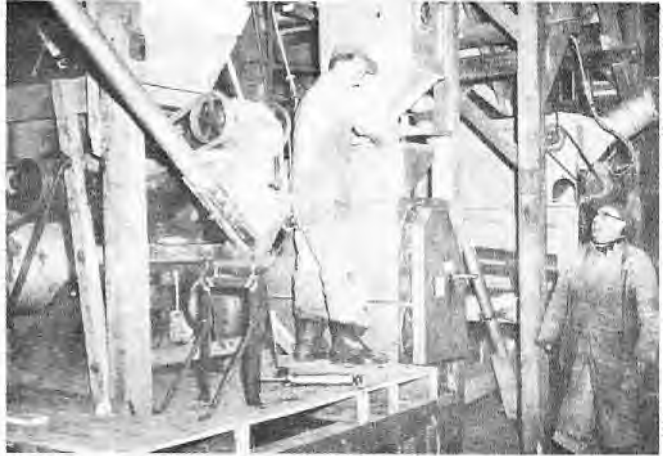
*Sperling Welding, 1979. Manager, Russell Nicolajsen in background, Clinton Nicolajsen at left, with Craig MacLean.*



## SPERLING SEED PLANT



*Garth Wilson and Gilbert Cretton, with the first load of grain being cleaned at the Sperling Seed cleaning plant in 1960. Walter Wurmnest was the owner.*



*Otto Anderson and Walter Wurmnest, manager, cleaning grain at the original Sperling Seed Plant.*



*Sperling Seed Service, 1979, managed by Jim Ferris.*



*1979 - Cenotaph of Sperling Canadian Legion No. 155.*



*A farmer picking up grain at Sperling Seed Service. This business cleans, buys and sells grain for seed, as well as sales of grain bins.*



*Sperling Hotel in 1979, proprietors are Barbara and John Korne.*

## FLASHBACKS TO THE PAST



*Sperling C.N. Depot in 1902, with a pumper car on the track. LEFT TO RIGHT: Sam Wilson, section foreman, with George Wilson and Jack McFarlin.*



*ABOVE: Marie and Pat Rose in front of L.A. Rose garage in 1939.*

*CLOCKWISE: Sperling Co-Op store in the early 1900's. Note the hitching rail on the west side of Main St. and boardwalks extended down Main St.*

*D. Swallow of Carman, with his team in 1908. He was a frequent sight in the Sperling area, here seen in front of the Orange Hall, Dressing up in Sperling, 1922. Lyn Smith, Ariel Grant, Ada Holmes, and George Cowan in front of livery barn.*

*CNR station in 1902, showing Metcalfe Elevator and Canadian Elevator.*



TJ

## MAIL SERVICE



*R.W. (Dick) Burnett, Sperling postmaster, picking up the mail from the train, about 1930.*

## SPERLING POST OFFICE

Sperling Post Office was established as *Mariposa* in 1901, the name was changed to Sperling in 1902.

### *Postmasters were*

John T. Bennett	1901
Mrs. Allison Bennet	1902-1902
Mrs. Allison Smith	1903-1906
W.H. Millichamp	1907-1920
R.W. Burnett	1921-1957
K.W. Griffiths	1957

In addition to regular Post Office business, Radio Licences and Unemployment Insurance Stamps were handled.



*Sperling post office, 1979, with Mrs. Ken Griffiths, postmistress.*

## TELEPHONE SERVICE

Sperling first appeared in the Manitoba Telephone directory in 1907. Many Sperling subscribers were listed in the Carman exchange. The community received dial telephones in 1959.

The girls who worked in the telephone office as operators were: Mabel Hunter, Isobel Wilson, Gertie Duncan, Mad Kennedy, Gladys Ferris, Elsie and Daisy Holmes, Minnie Sterna, G. McKee, Anne and Jacqueline Wilson, Marjory Waddell, Bernice Williamson, Muriel Colpitts, Mary Hayward, Rose Killeen, Doreen Ribordy, Marion Anderson, Mad Lester, Doreen Lester, and Ruth Ratliffe.



*Number please? Fern Martin, Isabel Wilson, Mabel Hunter, chief operator, Ada Holmes, in front of the telephone Office.*

## SPERLING FIRE PROTECTION

The cry of *fire!* is probably the most dreaded word in the English language for rural people. Because of distances, blocked winter roads, lack of water supply and usually poor or obsolete fire-fighting equipment, few fires are extinguished before running their course.

Until 1963 the Sperling Fire Brigade consisted of a bell (replaced by a siren in the late 1940's), two pressurized tanks of about 40 gallon capacity each and filled with calcium chloride and water. These tanks were mounted on two high-wheeled carts which were meant to be pulled by hand. The pressure to force the water through the hoses was obtained from two compressed air tanks on each unit which were valved to the water tank. Many times these carts were man handled, often through deep snow to a fire, only to discover that the air valves were frozen, or the air pressure had gradually bled down to almost nothing. In the late 1950's these units were mounted on an old truck and kept in Isaac Klassen's garage.

A fire which consumed the Jim Soutar Garage occurred in the winter of 1963 and the Rosenort Fire Brigade was in attendance. They were credited with saving the Wurmnest (Logan) Store and when the local people saw the Rosenort Department in action, it was decided by the Community to provide Sperling with more modern and efficient equipment.



*Sperling's Fire Hall, 1979.*

A community meeting was held to discuss Fire Protection with the result that the Morris Council appointed Chester Brown, Martin Gehring and Wendal Fewster as a committee, provided ten thousand dollars of capital and charged them with the task of providing the best protection possible with this money. The present heated fire hall was built and a truck equipped with water tank, pressure pump, hose, etc. was fabricated and a portable high capacity supply pump was purchased along with coats, mitts, hats and boots for ten men.

Otto Anderson served as the first Fire Chief. He was succeeded by Gilbert Cretton and the present Fire Chief is Wilfred Sessions.

The Brigade consists of twelve local volunteers. Practice and training sessions are held at more or less regular intervals.

The Community has a much more secure feeling knowing that we now have the capability of at least localizing fires, but needless to say, the best protection is still prevention.



*ABOVE: The Sperling Fire truck.*

*AT RIGHT: Sperling Co-Op.*

## SPERLING CO-OP OIL

In 1927 farmers in the Sperling area, through the efforts of E.E. Davison, found that there was a substantial saving to them by buying gasoline and "distillate" in car load quantities, so in January, 1928 a meeting was held for the purpose of forming a Co-operative Oil buying association. The temporary board which included Harry Mogk, Geo. Parker, John Smith, Ed Ferris, Fred Gehring, Fred Woodcock and Wm. Lester were given the power to obtain a site, tanks, and arrange finances for the business. Later a permanent board was elected with Ed. Ferris as president and J.F. Swanston as secretary and board members John Smith, Harry Mogk, Wm. Lester, Geo. Parker, and Ellard Bursheim. A small office belonging to Dr. Maxwell Bowman was purchased and business was carried on from there by manager E.E. Davison who continued in that capacity until 1952 when he moved to Edmonton, Alta.



*The country store at Sperling. LEFT TO RIGHT: H. Waddell, G.M. Cretton, and F. Lester, enjoying the warmth and atmosphere of a rural store.*

In the first years of operation the farmers hauled their farm fuels in barrels from the warehouse situated on the railway site, but with changing times, delivery of these commodities was made in small trucks, and later in a company owned truck. When the warehouse and scales were to be built, Ed Ferris was appointed to oversee to this building, and all volunteers were notified by the secretary of the organization to be ready for work by 8:00 o'clock in the morning. So it was up and at 'em early in the morning when you think of the chores to be done on the farms in those days.



A building housing the office and warehouse section was built later, and in 1937 was enlarged, with a warehouse built extending to the north. In depression years the going was tough, and some of the original members remember now the North Star Oil Co. supplied the organization with credit until money was available, and how a member, Joe Delaloye, lent the Co-op money so they could continue in operation.

## ELEVATORS SPERLING POOL



*Wilfred Sessions, driver of Co-Op Fuel truck, 1979.*

Present manager is Ross Anderson, who took over from E.E. Davison in 1952. Also on staff are W.E. Sessions (driver-salesman), and Mrs. M. Meldrum (secretary-clerk), daughter of Wm. Lester of the original board.

At the time of writing the association is still serving the needs of the community selling gasoline, fuel oil, hardware, oil, and live stock feeds.



*Sperling Pool Elevator in 1979.*



*Mules and horses combined, provided the draft power for the road scrapers in constructing the driveway to the first Pool elevator at Sperling in 1926.*

## SPERLING POOL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY



The above charter members received special plaques commemorating their foresight in founding the Sperling Co-Operative Elevator Assoc. fifty years ago, when the Pool movement was in its infancy.



These ladies are the wives of the founding members of the Sperling Co-Op Elevator Assoc. BACK ROW, Left to Right: Mrs. Maurice Rose, Mrs. Allan Riordan, Mrs. Chester Brown, Mrs. Peter McEachern, Mrs. Lew Lewis, Mrs. Orval Brown, Mrs. Delbert Ferris. FRONT ROW: Mrs. Jim McKee, Mrs. Harry Nichol, Mrs. Maurice Cretton, Mrs. James Lester, Mrs. George Parker.

### LICENSED COUNTRY ELEVATORS - SPERLING

Station - C.N.

Year	Elevator Companies
1911-12	Canadian Elevator Co. Dominion Elevator Co. The Ogilvie Flour Mills Co.
1926-27	Manitoba Pool Elev. Ltd. The Ogilvie Flour Mills Co.

(formerly -  
Dominion Elev.)

Dominion Elevator Co. Ltd.  
Canadian Elevator Co. Ltd.

1928-29	Manitoba Pool Elev. Ltd. The Ogilvie Flour Mills Co. Canadian Consolidated Grain Co. Ltd. No. 2 Canadian Consolidated Grain Co. Ltd. No. 1
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	1934-35	Manitoba Pool Elev. Ltd. Ogilvie Flour Mills Co. Ltd. Canadian Consolidated Grain Co. Ltd. No. 1
(ex Ogilvie Flour)	1949-50	Manitoba Pool "A" Elev. Canadian Consolidated Grain Co. Ltd. Manitoba Pool "B" Elev.
(ex Canadian Consolidated Grain)	1959-60	Manitoba Pool Elev. "A" Manitoba Pool Elev. "B" United Grain Growers Ltd.
	1962-63	Manitoba Pool Elev. "A" United Grain Growers Ltd.
	1978-79	Manitoba Pool Elevators United Grain Growers Ltd.

### MANITOBA POOL ELEVATORS - SPERLING

#### Elevator "A"

#### Elevator Manager's Names

Harold Bell  
Robert Michie  
Donald Green

#### Elevator "B"

#### Elevator Manager's Names

C.W. Harvey  
Eugene Fernes  
Harold Bell

### MANITOBA POOL ELEVATOR

Managers prior to 1932 were;

Rube Wilton  
R.F. Graham  
F. Helgason  
H. Bell  
Bob Michie  
George Green

MPE (B) - Ogilvie elevator was purchased in 1949

Managers were;

A.A. Bouchard  
L.A. Maxwell  
C.W. Harvey  
E.M. Ferens

The elevator closed in 1957.



Board members of the Sperling Pool Elevators - 1979. BACK ROW: Lee MacLean, Glen Hooper, Leonard Rance, Glenn Brown. FRONT ROW: L.L. Duvenaud, Bernard Gehring, Gilbert Cretton.

### CANADIAN CONSOLIDATED GRAIN CO.

Roy Maxwell  
Archie Galbraith  
Grant Welsh  
Chas. Holmes

Canadian Consolidated was purchased by U.G.G. sometime between 1970-75?

### OGILVIE

Jack Hamilton

### DOMINION GRAIN CO.

Jack McRae

December 27, 1978

### Sperling Co-operative Elevator Association

#### Presidents

F.B. Gehring  
Dr. J.A. Martin  
O.R. Brown  
J.H. McLean  
J.G. McKee  
L.E. Abry  
J.J. Tjaden  
Trier Andersen  
W.P. Curdt  
L.L. Duvenaud  
M.G. Gehring  
R.E. Findlay  
W.O. Waddell  
H.M. Fewster  
A. Pedersen  
E.H. Lewis  
W.J. Fewster  
K.W. Waddell  
B.J. Gehring

#### Elevator Managers

H. Preston  
T.R. Wilton  
R.F. Graham  
F. Helgason  
H. Bell  
H. Bell - "A"  
A.A. Bouchard - "B"  
H. Bell  
H. Johnson  
H. Bell - "A"  
L.A. Maxwell - "B"  
C.W. Harvey - "B"  
H. Bell  
R.G. Michie - Allan Magnusson  
R.G. Michie (to Clanwilliam)  
Geo. D. Green

Rebuilt in 1930 \$20,000.00

Started in 1926



G. Green, Manager, J. Charles, Assistant of the Sperling Pool Elevator in 1979.

## UNITED GRAIN GROWERS LIMITED SPERLING

The elevator first shows on our records in 1928. Unfortunately, it is not recorded whether Canadian Consolidated built or bought it at that time.

In 1959, U.G.G. purchased it from Canadian Consolidated. In 1964, the plants were electrified and the large cribbed annex added. In 1966-67, it was further modernized by rebuilding the outdrive, new scale and hoises. In 1979, dust equipment was installed.



*United Grain Growers Elevator in 1979.*

### *ELEVATOR MANAGERS WERE:*

Ray Maxwell	- 1928 - May 1932
	elevator closed 1932 - 1934
G.F. Kavener	- 1934 - 1940
A.W. Galbraith	- 1940 - 1949
G. P. Welch	- 1949 - 1951
C.A. Holmes	- 1951 - 1953
Henry (Hank) Bruce	- 1953 - 1959
	- 1959 - 1969

Mr. Bruce suffered a severe heart attack in May, 1969, and R.C. Goodnough was placed as relief manager to September 1, 1969, when Mr. Bruce went on permanent disability and R.C. Goodnough was made full manager.

R.C. Goodnough	- Sept. 1/69 - Dec. 1 /72
Ronald J. Hebner	- Dec. 1 /72 - 1980

In 1978 the elevator handled 11,000 metric tons.



*Ron Hebner, manager UGG - 1979.*



*David Nielsen, assistant - 1979.*



*Sperling Board of U.G.G. elevator, 1979. LEFT TO RIGHT: R. Pfrimmer, J. Kihn, J. Dales, E. Hiebert.*

## HISTORY OF SPERLING CHURCHES

During the years 1888-1898 many families set forth from Ontario to make new homes on the prairies and those who settled in the Sperling district were of both Methodist and Presbyterian faith. One of the pioneers first considerations was that they should have a place in which to worship. During the summer of 1898, church services for all families were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Amos Davison.

### Methodist Church History

In 1901 an ordained minister was sent (Methodist ministers were sent, not called) to the congregation. He was H.H. Gilbert, and as the congregation increased, he urged the erection of a church building. G.W. Webster, Amos Davison, F. Hobbs, Wm. Grose and J.J. McMahon were appointed as a building committee, and the site for the church was donated by R.H. Waddell plus a \$100.00 donation. The corner stone was laid July 17th, 1903 by Isaac Brooks, a lawyer from Carman, Rev. O. Darwin, president of the conference and Rev. Frank Stacey, chairmen of the district were also present. Other speakers were Rev. Little of the Presbyterian Church and R.P. Roblin. The church was opened in the fall of 1903 by Dr. Sparling, founder of Wesley College in Winnipeg. The cost of the building, about \$3,200.00, was mostly donated. A parsonage was bought (R.H. Waddell's house) and was the minister's home as long as needed.

J.H. McMahon was first Sunday School Superintendent and Amos Davison first Bible Class teacher. In 1904 Mrs. J.H. Hooper was appointed to the work of teaching the Bible Class, continuing in that work until the churches united and then taught the United Church Bible Class until 1941. Other superintendents of the Methodist Sunday School were W.T. Rehill, W.D. Prior, Alex Smith and O.L. Davison. During the first years of the Methodist Church in the area there were three appointments on the circuit, Century (Brigdenly), Bates and Sperling. Later services at Century were withdrawn and Bates Church moved to Homewood. Mrs. Amos Davison served as organist for the Methodist Choir for 18 years with F. Hobbs, J. Hobbs and T.A. Hobbs assisting with choir leadership.



*Sperling Methodist Church in the background of the photo taken in 1936.*

The Methodist Ladies' Aid was organized in 1903 with Mrs. F. Dracass as president. Their first project was the serving of a sumptuous supper when the church corner



*Sperling Methodist Church Sunday School class including: Edith Gardiner, Irene Drayton, Hazel Wetheral, Daisy Holmes, Greta, Alma Ferris, Mrs. Joe Hobbs, Esther Hooper, Merle Refill.*

stone was laid. In 1904, the Methodist W.M.S. was organized with Mrs. Manson Doyle as president and Mrs. W.T. Rehill as secretary. A Young Peoples' Society was formed in 1904 under the leadership of Stanley Woodruff and was active throughout the years until union.

Ministers of the Methodist Church were H. Gilbert, Manson Doyle, Dr. Coleman, D. Clare, Wm. Bunt, A. Farnsworth, Graham Tench and J.F. Palmer.

### Presbyterian History

In 1899, on May 24th, the corner stone of Egremont Presbyterian Church was laid. It was situated on the southwest corner of the southwest quarter of Section 36-6-3. The dedication of the church took place on October 8th with Rev. Mr. Sutherland of Carman preaching the opening service. Rev. Mr. Guy, a student, was first minister and made his home with Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Waddell. First elders were W.H. Waddell, George Finnie and Andrew Mogk, Sr. Managers were A. Waddell, George Peckover, Ed Ferris, Charles Peckover and D. Waddell was Secretary-Treasurer. W.H. Waddell was first Sunday School Superintendent. The choir at that time was led by R. Lawson with Mrs. G. Peckover as organist. In 1903 the church was moved to a site in the north end of the village.



*Sperling Presbyterian Church situated at the north end of Main St. during the spring flood of 1921.*



*Sperling Choir in 1910. BACK ROW: Lolia Verge, Annie Peckover, Fred Carruthers, Mrs. Tom Carruthers, Andrew Mogk, Francie Peckover, Con Mogk, Mr. T.C. Sparling. CENTRE: Roy Bowers, Pearl Peckover, Mrs. T.C. Spading. FRONT ROW: Emma Mogk, Maggie Ferris, Mr. Tom Carruthers, Effie Galbraith, Mrs. Bowers, Lloyd.*

The Presbyterian Ladies' Aid came into being in 1899 when they organized and served supper in a tent, to a large crowd. In 1907 their Women's Missionary Society was formed with Mrs. W.H. Waddell, president; Mrs. H. Mogk, vice-president; and Mrs. J. Hamilton, secretary.

The Presbyterian Young People held Christian Endeavor meetings during those early years. Ministers who served the Presbyterian Church between 1899 and 1919 were Rev. Ledingham, Rec. McLeod, Rev. D.D. Millar and Rev. C.S. Miller.

In 1919 Rev. Cowan came to the charge and remained as Minister of the Presbyterian Church for four years. Both churches felt that uniting would be beneficial to both congregations and during 1922 revival services were conducted by Dr. Crossley. Rev. Palmer the Methodist Minister and Rev. Cowan co-operated whole heartedly to promote the idea of uniting and so it came to pass that in 1924 the two congregations met and made arrangements for a new order. Elders were Robert. Nichol, J.H. MacLean and David Waddell of the Presbyterian congregation, O.L. Davison, Edgar Ferris and Mrs. J.H. Hooper from the Methodist congregation. The board of stewards consisted of W. Ennis, chairman; O.L. Davison, secretary; H. Mogk, D. Waddell, Ed Ferris and J.H. Hooper. Services were then held in the Methodist Church.

## UNITED CHURCH

The Presbyterian Church was torn down and lumber purchased by H. Mogk. In 1925 union became organic and the local church became part of the United Church of Canada. In 1943 the corner stone of the present church was laid on September 30th by Mr. A.S. Doyle of Carman and an address delivered by Dr. G.A. Woodside, others participating in the ceremony were Rev. Dr. W. Grant and Rev. W.E. McDonald, J.W. Cruikshank and W.P. Smetheram. During the year the church was being built, services were held in the school. The cost of building the church in 1943 was \$8,000.00 and is situated on a site purchased for \$125.00 on the corner of Henry and Main Street. The building committee were Mrs. A.K. Brown, Mrs. M. Lewis, J.H. MacLean, L.R. Rance, C.A. Waddell, E.J. Bursheim and O.R. Brown. On



*A gathering for Florence Altman at the United Church in 1964.*

September 22nd, 1944 dedication services of the church were held with Rev. J.M. White giving the address. From then until 1969 the congregation carried on the work of the church, building a new manse in 1963.

This manse was sold when it was found expedient to join the Carman Pastoral charge in 1969. Church services continued as usual with the ministers residing in Carman. Those ministers who have served the Sperling United Church since union have been Rev. Gregg, Rev. Boyle, Rev. Russell, Rev. Neville, Dr. Johnston, Rev. Parker, Rev. Welch, Rev. Smetheram, Rev. Cruikshanks, Rev. Holtzman, Rev. Munroe, Dr. McNeill, Rev. Mathieson, Rev. Hyslop, Rev. Jackson, Rev. Hutton, Rev. McLachlan, Rev. Lander and Rev. Thurston.

Sunday School has always been an important part in our church. Since union, superintendents have been T.C. Sparling, Walter Ennis, O.L. Davison who served in that office for 18 years and J.B. Hooper following in the same capacity for 18 years also. Robert Brown, Mrs. R. Anderson and Mrs. L.L. Rance have also given of their time as superintendents during the past several years.



*The cornerstone of the Sperling United Church (1979), was laid in 1943.*

Mrs. O.L. Davison was organist and choir leader for many years and others whose talents in music followed as choir leaders included Mrs. A. Stevens (Jean Young), Frank Giesbrecht, Mrs. H. Bell, Mrs. G.R. Brown, Mrs. A.R. Anderson and Robert Brown. Those who assisted the organist before 1943 were Marjorie Neville, Mrs. J. Wilson and Mrs. E. Thompson (Annetta Lester) and since the present church was built Keith Fewster, Mrs. J. Soutar (Mildred Davison), Mrs. J. Ralston (Ruby Russell), Mrs. H. Bell (Sylvia Lester) and Robert Brown have been organists or assistants. Robert Brown has to the present time given 27 years service to the church in the capacity as organist.

Four from Sperling have become ordained ministers; Gordon Waddell and Wilfred Waddell who were born and educated here, and Gilbert Johnson and Bruce Johnson, sons of Dr. Johnson who was minister here for a number of years.

## **HISTORY OF CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SPERLING**

*by Alice Bell*

The following excerpts are taken from a letter written to the Bishop of St. Boniface, His Excellency, Archbishop Langevin by Father Victor Joseph Joubert, who was parish priest at Starbuck in 1908. This is in the St. Boniface Archives.

\*\*\*\*\*

*respectfully submitted by Joseph Victor Joubert  
Priest, Starbuck, March 17, 1908*

"Leaving in the early morning on March 11, 1908, with my team and sleigh, I arrived at the home of Maurice Rauses, who lived five miles southeast of Sperling, many hours later.

It was there that the first mass was celebrated on the morning of March 12. About 15 people attended, three receiving the sacraments. A snow storm was blowing across the country at that time, which delayed my return to Starbuck. This perhaps was a blessing in a way, as I



*This building known as the Sperling Catholic Church, was also the first school in Sperling.*

said Mass next morning at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Kirby, who lived one mile west of Rauses. Nine people attended this mass and eight received the sacraments.

These parishioners were very anxious to have a priest visit them at least once a month, and offered to contribute the sum of one dollar each, in support of my coming to them. I was very impressed by the faith and respect these good people showed.

I returned to Starbuck on the 13th of March; the distance is around 25 miles, and longer in the winter time due to closed roads. If your Excellency so desires, I offer my services to these good people at Sperling."

The Sperling mission continued to be served by Starbuck in the ensuing years. Mass was said in private homes at least once a month. For many years, mass was said at the John Goldens, who had a large house and lived a mile south and about a mile west of the old Tremont School.

The writer of this history remembers leaving home in the dark on some Sunday mornings to arrive at the Golden home in time for mass, as we lived about six miles from Goldens. When the Goldens moved back to Illinois, about 1917, mass was said at many different homes, and also at the C.N. Station in Sperling, where Mr. Aubin was the agent. (He was the father of Gerald Aubin, who founded the Aubin Nurseries of Carman.) Mass was said also at the Emile Ribordy home at times and for years, after the arrival of the Americans from U.S.A. in the early 1920's, mass was said in the big Louis Abry home about three miles south of Sperling.

Father Leon Roy at the time always came the Saturday night before, to the Abry's home. Mr. and Mrs. Abry were very generous people and always welcomed the father.

It was in the year 1930 that Father Gustave Couture became parish priest in Starbuck and he became very enthused about Sperling having a little church of its own,

so he started to organize the people in doing something about it.

By 1935, through Father Couture's zeal and enthusiasm, they had gathered the sum of \$650.00 and with a donation of \$500.00 by Miss E. Burnie, through Catholic Extension service. Miss Burnie donated this money in memory of her sister, Miss Rose Burnie, and she asked that the chapelle be dedicated to the Ste. Theresa, known as the Little Flower of Jesus.

The building, known later as the Sperling Catholic Church, was bought. This building had quite a history in itself, as it had been the first school at Sperling, at the time it was situated at about one mile north of the railroad, and apparently known as the Waddell School. After Sperling built their large four-room school in town, the old school was moved to its present site and used for years as a private home. It was then owned by Royal Bank at Carman. Father Couture made all the arrangements to have it remodelled into a lovely little chapel.

This chapel was the pride and joy of all the Catholic Parishioners of Sperling for the following 37 years. The writer, whose maiden name is Delaloye, was married there in 1939, to Emile Bilodeau of Ste. Agathe and recalls many fond memories of this place.

Many changes took place in the latter years; many of the older people passed on to their eternal reward and many families moved away. Since there weren't enough people left to support the church, the Archbishop of St.

Boniface decided to close the chapel in 1972. Now the Sperling Catholics go to Carman. It was rather sad that times changed with what we call progress today. The priests who served the Sperling Church were: Joseph-Victor Joubert, Hormisdas Hogue, Albert Moreau, Arthur Beliveau, Leon Roy, Gustave Couture, Louis-Philippe Brunet, Mathias Messier, Lionel Joyal, Eugene Hebert, Valier Beaulieu, Olivier Valcourt, Azarie Gauthier, Clayton Purcell, and Father Jeneau.

Perhaps this rather historical building will live on and still serve the good of the town. It has been donated to the Senior Citizens of Sperling who are applying for a grant to renovate it into a hall for their many activities.



*The wedding of Emile Bilodeau and Alice Delaloye; the first held in the Sperling Catholic Church in 1939.*



*Sperling Canadian Girls in Training, 1954. FRONT ROW, Left to Right: Fern Rose, Helen Wilson, Grace Peckover, Arlene Wilson, Evelyn Murner, Suzanne Bilodeau, Marj Meldrum. SECOND ROW: May Rance, Joyce Keller, Tanis Killeen, Dorothy Skeavington, Barbara Waddell, Carroll Fewster. THIRD ROW: Bonnie Rose, Jamie Koop, Carole Peckover, Barbara Waddell, Veda Ferris, Karin Willman, FOURTH ROW: Dorothy Rose, Pat Curdt, Joyce Holtzman, Edith Murner, Helen Last, Inga Pedersen. FIFTH ROW: Beverly Finnie, Norma Archibald, Betty Phelps, Eleanor Archibald, Pauline Lewco. BACK ROW: Ruth McKee, Wilma Skeavington, Anne Nicolajsen, Evelyn Brown.*



## WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH SPERLING

In the histories of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, there is a record of the formation of the Ladies' Aid and Women's Missionary Societies in the early 1900's, as stated by Mrs. I. Peckover, when she opened the U.C.W. annual Tea for the ladies. "During more than twenty years, those whose names appeared on the membership rolls of these organizations gave of their time, talents and possessions to the work of the church; they faced difficulties, laughed and agreed with each other, giving the Martha service of the church kitchen and the Mary service of the church platform."

At one time, there was the Women's Foreign Missionary Society organized by Mrs. Saunby, whose husband was minister of Carman Methodist church, and the Women's Home Missionary Society. These two societies amalgamated and after 1924, the Ladies' Aid came into being through the efforts of Mrs. A.K. Brown with the Women's Missionary Society continuing to function until 1961. In 1948, the Ladies' Aid took on the name of Women's Association, and since 1961, the organization has carried on as the United Church Women.



*United Church Ladies' Aid in 1929. FRONT ROW: Mrs. Amos Davison, Mrs. Robt. Nichol, Marion Wilson, Mrs. Lester Sr., Mrs. H. W. Brown, Leonard Rance, Mrs. Fred Hobbs. MIDDLE ROW: Mrs. H. Mogk, Miss Johns, Mrs. Welsh, Mrs. W. Lester, Aurilla Brown. BACK ROW: Mrs. J. Wilson, Mrs. Matt Ferris, Mrs. G. Peckover, Mrs. L. Rance, Miss V. Waddell, Mrs. O. Waddell.*

### SPERLING C.G.I.T.

#### "Canadian Girls in Training - C.G.I.T."

About 1923, Miss Annie Phillips, Miss Aurilla Brown and Mrs. T.A. Hobbs, were leaders of a C.G.I.T. group. Some of the girls went on a camping trip under the grandstand at Carman Park.

In 1932, Esther Hooper was leader and took her group to camp at Rock Lake.



*Sperling Ladies' Club in 1915, at the Thos. Brown farm.*



*C.G.I.T in 1923 - Estelle Anderson, Eileen Innes, Reta Waddell, Marion Wilson, Elsie Holmes, Alma Innes.*



*C.G.I. T. at Rock Lake in 1932. Fern Marlin, Florence Altman, Idell Neville, Esther Hooper, Leader; Mildred Davison, Margaret MacLean, Marjorie Lester, Liz Gehring.*

1933, Mrs. A.E. Holmes was leader.

1938, Mrs. Carlisle Parker was leader with Jackie Wilson as assistant. Eilert Borsheim took them to camp at Lido Plage.

1941-1945, the leader was Marjorie Meldrum.

1945, Mrs. Chester Brown, with the capable assistance of Mrs. Ken Griffiths, was leader about 1945.



*C.G.I. T. in 1952, off ro Lido Plage.*

Following this period, Marjorie Meldrum and Fern Rose led a large group of girls. For some summers, we went to Lido Plage for a week. Maurice Rose's three ton truck took us bag and baggage, plus food. The girls were in work teams and none were shirkers!

One evening, an impressive devotional service was led by Wilma Skeavington; Candles (depicting our faults) were lit on a tiny floating barge and allowed to float away as we sang hymns.



*C.G.I.T. graduates in 1958. May Rance, Janie Koop, Marrilyn Waddell, Shiela Ferris, with leader, Mary Rance, Rev. Munroe and Rev. Fred Douglas.*

During the 1960's, C.G.I.T. in Sperling continued to be sponsored by the United Church. Meetings were held in the church, and the Christian Education Committee recruited leaders. The annual initiation, Vesper Service, tea, mother-daughter banquet were probably the highlights of each year. Sometime in the 1960's, policy was changed and girls graduated when they were 17 instead of 18 years old.

During the 1960's, and for varying lengths of time, leaders were Mary Rance, Beryle Peckover, Aggie Koop, Margaret Dracass, Lillian Munroe, Janie Brown, Isabel'

Tjaden, Linda Bell, Marlene Tjaden, and Carole Sandulak. Extra help with the Vesper Service was sometimes provided by Robert Brown, Jean Anderson or Fran Brown.

During the 1970's, some changes occurred. Girls graduated when they were 16 instead of 17 years old. Also, there were fewer girls attending C.G.I.T. and some years, there were too few girls to have a Vesper Service and carolling was done instead.

During the 1970's, leaders were Isabell Tjaden, Marlene Tjaden, Carole Sandulak, Marion Baleja, Kae Ferris substituted for part of one year.

## SPERLING EXPLORER GROUP

The earliest record of the Explorer group dates back to the 1930's. It was discontinued for a time and then in the late 1940's Mrs. Cruikshank, wife of Rev. Cruikshank, reorganized the group. This group was made up of girls in the age group of 9-11 years, and as long as the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church was in being, the girls affiliated each year with that organization.

Missionary projects and offerings were always an important part of their program and the group still continues with a mission studies and giving as well as taking on other projects and activities. On graduating, many of the girls continued to be active in Canadian Girls' in Training, some returning in later years to be Explorer leaders.

Among those who gave of their time to be leaders throughout the years are: Ivy Patterson, Mamie Wilson, Mildred Soutar, Dorothy MacLean, Marjorie Meldrum, Ann Last, Ruth Anderson, Betty Rance, Debbie Meldrum, Beverly Hebner, Lucille Rose, Isabel! Tjaden, Pat Lewis, Carol Halloway, Mary Rance, Shirley Fewster, Kelly MacLean, Fran Brown, Yvonne Till, Marilyn Waddell, Jean Cretton.



*Explorers group in 1968. BACK ROW: Janis Anderson, Janet Cretton, Geraldine, Laurie Nicolajsen, Shirley Fewster, Debby Bruce, Beckie Michie. FRONT ROW: Sharyn Brown, Ruthie Penner, Linda Last.*

# SPERLING SCHOOLS

## Waddell School No. 925

The first school built in the present Sperling district was Waddell School No. 925, a one-room frame building constructed in 1897-98 on S.W. 32-6-2 West. The district was the frontier of settlements spreading east from Salterville (Bates), Boyne, and Carman. There was a post office and small store called Mariposa one half mile south of the school. This school closed in 1910 although the Waddell School District had been dissolved on the sixteenth of April, 1909, to make way for the newly-organized Sperling Consolidated School District.



*Waddell school in 1901. Mothers and pupils held a farewell party when Mr. Adams left Sperling.*

The first trustee of Waddell School were Charles Peckover, W.H. Waddell, and Alex Smith, and the secretary-treasurer was John Harrison. During the twelve years the school operated there were thirteen teachers: Mr. S.H. Adams was the first and he taught for three years from 1898-1901. He was followed by (not necessarily in this order), Miss A. Stevenson, Miss N. Young, (Mrs. J.R. Waddell), Miss MacLean, Miss Marion McDonald, Mr. McMillan, Mr. McLeod, Miss Hurd, Miss Waye, Miss Isabelle Wilson (Mrs. G. Peckover), Miss N. Stevenson (Mrs. Andrew Mogk), Mr. Hoskins, Miss Smith. Some of the surnames of families attending were: Wilson, Mogk, Davison, Galbraith, Slaney, Waddell, Skeavington, Curdt, Peckover, Anderson, Webster, Gardiner, Boyes, Howes, Fred Websters, Skeleton, Smith, Tolton, Nichol, McMahon.

The old prairie one-room schools were heated by a large stove-usually the "pot-bellied" kind of heater, and the janitor was the teacher or a senior pupil who was paid from 10-25¢ a day. There were no phones and pioneers have vivid recollections of blizzards when pupils and teacher stayed all night in the school. The three "R's", along with spelling, geography, and nature study were the



*Waddell School in 1901. INCLUDED ARE: Tolton, Johnny Waddell, Edward Skeavington, Conrad Mogk, Johnny and Andrew Waddell, Jessie Waddell, Pearl Peckover, Skeavington, Don Galbraith, Neil Galbraith, Earl Tolton, Waddell, Ernest Waddell, Mr. Adams, Teacher.*

core of the curriculum with British and Canadian history started about grade V. The Waddell School and thousands like it scattered across the prairies served their purpose well.

Waddell School was built on the farm of Amos Davison which is the farm at present worked by William Nielsen whose father, Mogens Nielsen, bought it from Mr. Davison. After the school closed it was moved to Sperling where it became a house and later was used as the Roman Catholic Church from 1935 to 1972. At present there is a proposal, to remodel it as a meeting place for the newly-formed senior citizens' group. If it could only talk, what a story this tiny eighty-one year old building would have to tell!



*Waddell School 1901: Lorne Davison, Billy Waddell, Jessie Wilson, Mabel Waddell, Emma Mogk, Francie Peckover, Vina Waddell, Effie Galbraith, Mr. Adams, Isabelle Wilson, Pearl Peckover, Lynne Anderson.*

## Sperling Consolidated School No. 1488

When the village of Sperling started in 1901 with the extension of the railroad from Carman, the school-age population increased to the point where by 1910, the Waddell School could no longer accommodate the students. The Consolidated School District of Sperling No. 1488 was formed and a four-room school was constructed in the village on S.W. 29-6-2 West. Trustees were: W.H. Waddell, chairman, Robert Nichol, and



*This school was constructed in 1910, a massive brick structure. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

George Peckover, with Alex Smith as secretary-treasurer. The first caretaker was Adam Dixon. Two teachers were hired that first year,- Mr. Hurl and Miss Minnie Stewart. In 1911 staff was increased to three and in 1914 to four. In all, thirty-six teachers taught in this school from 1910 until 1924 when it burned.



Friday, May 23, 1924, a fire started in the basement seemingly caused by spontaneous combustion of damp coal. The caretaker, Wm. Wilson, was sweeping on the upper floor, but fortunately he was able to escape before the flames roared through the building. The only items saved were the large bell from the tower which was later used as a fire alarm downtown, a mirror which had been



*Sperling School Sports Day in 1923, with A.O. Wilson at bat.*

temporarily removed for use in Sparling's Hall where a play was to be presented the same evening, and the piano which happened to be in waiting room of the rink for a dance. Not one minute of school was lost. During the weekend trustees Fred Gehring, chairman; J.R. Waddell, John Wilson, W.J. Waddell, Ed Anderson, and secretary Dr. J.A. Martin, arranged for classes to begin on Monday morning; the primary grades with teacher Betty King (Mrs. A. Chase) in the basement of the church, the intermediate grades with teachers Maud Phillips (Mrs. Bob Skeavington) and Annie Phillips (Mrs. F. Foulston) in the waiting rooms at the rink, and the high school with principal. A.V. Piggott, in the Orange Hall. The new school, which is the building still in use, was planned for immediately and ready for use on November 1, 1924. It is a four-room, one-storey, brick building on a Tyndall limestone foundation and has served the hundreds of pupils well for these fifty-five years.

The house used as a teacherage was sold by the Midland School Division in 1974 to Larry and Gail Holmes and is the home of their mother, Mrs. Esther Holmes, at present.



*Jim Tjaden, Doreen Dracass, Betty Phelps, Grace Peckover, Joan Nichol, Jack Waddell, Ken Waddell, Clifford Rance, Bob Tjaden, Wayne Phelps, Charles Peckover with athletic awards run by Sperling school.*

A fifth teacher was added to the staff in 1950. In June of 1950 the high school had the outstanding achievement of having every student pass the June examinations, which in those days were "departmentals" set by the Department of Education. These pupils were guided in their studies by Mr. D.R. Thom, principal for eight years from 1944 to 1952. As well as attaining excellence in academics, Mr. Thom's pupils achieved high standards in



*High school girls in Sperling, 1934. Fern Martin, Elida Thompson, Marjorie Lester, Rigmar Anderson, Margaret Maclean, Isabel Cork, Anne Wilson, Elizabeth Gehring.*

athletics setting record performances in track and field and collecting trophies in curling, softball, and minor hockey.

In 1958, staff was increased to six and in 1959 to seven. In the 1959-60 school term the attendance reached an all-time high when 152 pupils were enrolled in the school. For the four years starting in September, 1958, and ending in June, 1962, grade 1 and 2 classes were held in the Masonic Hall and two classes of high school students



*Sperling Grads Grade 11 and 12, 1953. FRONT ROW: Jim Tjaden, Anne Nicolajsen, Wilma Skeavington, Glen Curdt. BACK ROW: Joe Gibson, Glenn Fewster, Charles Peckover, Jim Gibson, Stan Sandulak, Cliff Rance.*

were taught in the divided auditorium. In 1962-63 grade 12 was transported to Carman by J. Koop. Since September, 1963, grades 9 to 12 have been bussed to Carman and starting in September, 1971, grades 7 and 8 have also been transported to Midland Collegiate, Carman.

The first kindergarten class for Sperling students was in June of 1973 when the children were bussed to Carman

every day that month with the high school students. The same procedure was followed in June, 1974, but starting in September, 1974, kindergarten children have been bussed to Carman Elementary School every other day for the full term. With the loss of the grade 7 and 8's in 1971 - staff was cut to three and with declining enrollments it was cut to two but later increased to two and one-half.

The trustees who planned the present school, arranged for a large auditorium which was served as a community hall for dances, card parties, showers, banquets, concerts, shows, and meetings.

The highlights in the school years of the hundreds of pupils that have gone through the school are too numerous to list but most involve the annual Christmas concerts, sports days, parades and floats at fairs, Canada's diamond jubilee. Royal visits, and the innumerable pranks that school children play on each other.



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*Sperling School float at Canada's Diamond Jubilee, 1927, in a parade in Carman.*

## From the Minutes:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Feb., 1939  | The principal was requested to forbid children to ride on van sleigh runners.   |
| May, 1939   | (re-visit of King and Queen) "That Southwest Transfer be requested to take 63 pupils and 7 adults at 50¢ to city and return."   |
| Sept., 1939 | "That Sunday night picture show be tried at 55.00 per meeting until late fail."   |
| Oct., 1939  | That permission be granted to have swings erected.  |
| June, 1941  | The reading of slightly over 100 applications for the position of teacher of grades 3, 4 and 5 took considerable time ... Miss Minnie Douglas receiving first choice."  |
| July, 1942  | After considerable discussion on the matter of free school supplies for children, it was moved by R. Skeavington, seconded by Mrs. J.R. Waddell that board continue to supply same. (from Annual Meeting). Also - "The question of van drivers drinking was brought up by Mrs. R. Young, who was assured by board that a complaint issued in writing would receive prompt attention." |
| Jan., 1943  | That Mr. Smetheram be granted his request to visit the school at regular intervals with religious lectures; same to be arranged with teachers...  |

- Aug., 1943 That it would be permissible for the Cadet Corps to park their airplane in school yard provided they stood the expense of fencing that was necessary to protect same.
- Nov., 1954 'Principal requested that van drivers be requested to quit blowing their horns at 4:00 p.m. which had created a disturbance in dismissing school."
- Jan., 1961 A gold watch presented to Wm. Davidson for 35 years van driving with an unblemished record.
- April, 1963 (On a vote to send grades IX to XII to Carman, - ratepayers' meeting) "A closed ballot resulted in 47 for the motion and 32 against ... The passing of the grades from the Sperling School where they had been taught for 53 years was received with considerable regret."



Four o'clock at Midland School Division. Feeder vans from Sperling district bring students to the large bus.

### Sperling School Trustees

The following men served as trustees on the Sperling School Board from 1910 to January, 1968 when the district became part of Midland Division. Outstanding in years of service were:

F.B. Gehring	J. McKee
A.O. Wilson	W.J. Waddell
J.B. Hooper	R. Skeavington
O.L. Davison	W.H. Hamilton
J.R. Waddell	Geo Peckover

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Outstanding in years of service as secretary-treasurers were:

J.A. (Doc) Martin	1921-41
A.K. Brown	1941-68



Sperling School in 1979.

### TREMONT S.D. NO. 1127 SPERLING

Tremont School District was formed in 1902. Some of the first ratepayers were: Jas. Snider, H.M. Courtney, Ed Snyder, Jas. Rehill, Robert McKee, J.M. McConnell, Wm. J. Carnahan, and Wm. Burnett.

On August 26, 1902, \$700.00 was borrowed by debenture to procure money to build and furnish the new school.



The Tremont School District No. 1127, built in 1901, was replaced in 1937. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.

The teachers who taught here were: T. Kingsford, Miss Curry, A.E. Doyle, Mrs. E.C. Woodruff, Harry Grose, Miss McIntosh, G. Parker, M. Taylor, Mrs. Ruby Smith, H.C. Bunt, Miss Nellie Hogg, M. Einarson, Miss King, Cora Loree, V. MacKenzie, Leon Willett, Miss Livingston, Miss Baylis, Miss Morrow, Miss Ried, E.D. Woods, Edba Bales, M. Burnett, J.G. Dewar, A.J. McConnell, Miss Mae Myers, H.M. Steeves, Etta Fewster, Roberta McDougall, Margaret Martin, Fern Martin, Helen Ried, Louise Johnston, Dorothy Lehmann, Pat Jenkins, Dorothy MacLean, Ken Wilson.

The school was closed for the 1945-1946 term; Mrs. Pat Jenkins came to teach. She remained the longest, staying for 14 terms.

Salaries paid ranged from \$45.00 a month in 1906, up to \$90.00 a month in 1931, but during the depression,





*The first day of school at the new Tremont school in 1937. Fern Martin was teacher.*

salaries were again lowered to \$50.00 a month, depicting the hard times.

December 27, 1915, moved by 3.B. Golden - D.H. MacLean, that Wm. Burnett's offer of \$50.00 per acre for two acres of land be accepted as the new site for the school. The present site being southwest corner of N.W. 114 8-6-2 W and the new site one mile south on the southwest corner of N.W. 114 5-6-2 W.

The school was moved by Jas. H. MacLean and Amos Ribordy in Christmas Holidays, 1915, for the sum of \$150.00.



*A Christmas concert at Tremont school.*

In 1937, a new school was built for about \$3,000.00.

In 1964, the school was closed and the building was sold to Len Poersch, of Brunkild.

### **LONE STAR S.D. 1929 N.W. 1/4 18-6-1 WEST - SPERLING**

The first classes in Lone Star School were held in January 1914 with Ruth Bjorklund as the teacher. The enrollment was made up of five members of the H.W. Brown family; Maybelle, Evelyn, Ella, Myrtle and Chester. The trustees were O.R. Brown, R. Rance and H.W. Brown who was also secretary-treasurer.

The school operated for the next eight years with a very small enrollment, which besides the Brown children included Mary Sweet, Lilly Summerfield, Albert and Willie Gardiner, Mary, Annie, and Mike Orfinik.



*Lone Star School District No. 1629-1949. Photo courtesy Manitoba Archives.*

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Teachers for this period were Dorothy Hodkinson 1915, Lorna Gordon 1915-16, Janet McCuag 1916-17, F. Barker 1916-17, Violet Laufriann 1918, Ella Brown 1919, Suzie Hezzlewood 1921-22.

In 1922 the school was closed because of small enrollment and remained closed until September 1927. An influx of Mennonite settlers into the district gave sufficient enrollment to reopen the school. The School Board at this time consisted of L.R. Rance, L.G. Lewis and O.R. Brown. This board of trustees remained unchanged until 1935 when the administration of the school was turned over to the Department of Education, and an official Trustee.

The teachers employed over the following years were, Edythe Nevins 1927-28, Muriel Andrew 1928-29, Norma Stonehouse (Brown) 1929, Joyce Heyes 1929-30, Rosanna Orr 1930-31, Ethel Murray 1931-34, Anna Murray 1934-37, Sophie Tomick 1937-39, Eileen Howe 1939-40, Edna Reynolds 1940-41, Norma McCauley, Edith James and Irene Birney 1941-42, Marjorie Armstrong 1942-43, Virginia Huget 1943-44, Evelyn Leask (Griffiths) 1944-46, W.B. Gresham 1946-47, Connie Houston 1947-48, Olga Saunders 1948-49, Dorothy Elliott 1949-50, Mary Elliot (Rance) 1950-53, Mervin Lindsay 1953-54, Fern Rose 1954-56.

In the winter of 1929, night school was held for three months to assist the adult members of the Mennonite settlement in learning English. Enrolled in this class were



*Lone Star school class in 1954.*

Katie Martens, Lena Martins, Will Martins, Cornelius Froese, Dietrich Enns, John Olfert and Peter Schmidt.



*The Cannon School class at recess.*

OFFICIAL MATIS  
Merrill G.P.



*Cannon S.D. No. 2297, photo taken in 1954.*

The enrollment at Lone Star was quite high through the mid thirties and reached a peak of forty-two children. In 1939 Cannon School was opened to the south of Lone Star and the population was split resulting in fewer than twenty pupils attending Lone Star.



*Lone Star School picnic in 1953.*

The school was administered by the Official Trustee until 1951 when again a local board of trustees was elected. The members of this board were, W.G. Last, H. Hein, and E. Rose with L.L. Rance as secretary-treasurer.

There was agitation for a new school at this time and it was finally decided to go ahead and build. A new location on the north of 19-6-1 West was chosen; being more central in the district. It was a modern building and served as school and community centre until 1956.

In 1955 again the district was forced with declining enrollment plus a desire of some to join a Consolidated district where there would be transportation provided.

At the close of 1955-56 school year the district was dissolved with the land and pupils involved being taken in by Sperling and Brunkild districts.

## THE LEA-BANK SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 958

On June 29, 1898, a meeting was held by the rate-payers for the purpose of organizing a school district, and electing three school trustees, and auditor.

H.J. McTavish, Carl Poersch and T.S. Palliser were elected school trustees for the first term, and E. McTavish acted as auditor.

These items are included in the first minutes in the original minute book of the Lea-Bank School District. At the second meeting, a motion was made to get a loan of \$600.00 and issuing debentures therefore. The Department of Education assented to such a loan on October 6, 1898. It was moved by H.J. McTavish and seconded by Dan Poersch, that the size of the school should be 26 feet long and 18 feet wide, and that the school should be built on the southwest corner of Section 19-6-1 East.

Three tenders were received for the building of the school:

H. Cawston, 608 Spence Street, Winnipeg	\$545.00
E. McTavish, Morris, Manitoba	\$489.00
R.E. Starr, Morris, Manitoba	\$465.00

On September 24, 1898, Mr. R.E. Starr's tender was accepted.

School began on March 1, 1899, with J.F. Rose being the first teacher at a salary of \$40.00 a month.

At a special meeting held on January 23, 1904, a motion was made by K. Mazolleck, seconded by J. Gorchitza, that the school be moved one mile west of present site. However, it was not until 1908 that arbitrators advised to move the school to the southeast corner of the N.E. 114 of Section 23-6-1 W. This work was done by Mr. Robert Nichols at a cost of \$150.00.

One item of interest at a trustee meeting held on January 13, 1910, a motion was made that a tin box be made to hold books and papers belonging to the district. This box was still in use when our school district was dissolved in 1959.

This school served the district with trustees such as: McTavish, Poersch, Gorchitza, C.B. Fast, Froese, Fennell, Steinke, Tolton, F. Last, Mazolleck, Bunkowsky, Isaac, Kreitzer, Kuxhausen.

The school was remodeled and repaired in 1939, and then in 1949, a new school was built. This was a pride and joy for parents and pupils alike. However, many families moved away and there weren't enough pupils in the



*Leabank School D. 1959.*

school to get the grants from the Department of Education, so in 1959, the school district of Lea Bank was dissolved.

The school and property were sold by tender. The school was moved to an area east of the Red River. Some of the children of the district went to school at Brunkild and the others to the Rosenort School.

Our last teacher was Mrs. Fern Rose of Sperling. Other teachers remembered were Shirley Ferris, Lucy Naherney, Miss Reimer, Agnes Penner, Olga Myska, Helen Albrecht, Beulah Angst, Eleanor Schmok, Miss Gateson, Beryl Rodgers, Selma Davidson, Carrie Doughty.

## LEA-BANK COMMUNITY CLUB

*by Eleanor Bunkowsky*

Seven persons met at the home of Mrs. Emily Amenda on December 12, 1939, to organize a Women's Club. It was moved and carried that we call our organization "The Lea-Bank Community Club."

Officers were elected as follows:

Mrs. Flora Gorchitza - President  
Mrs. Viola Poersch - Secretary  
Mrs. Eleanor Bunkowsky - Treasurer

Seven members joined the club at this first meeting. By the end of the first year, we had sixteen members. We had a fee of 10¢ a month and meetings were held at the homes of the members. Lunches were to be very plain.

We made a quilt and a crocheted bedspread and raffled them as a means of making money. Some of the first items bought were card tables and chairs, when the school board of the Lea-Bank school allowed us to have. Whist drives and dances at the school. These were great social events in the winter months and we all looked forward to them. Members of their husbands worked hard to make them successful.

For two or three years, the local people, who were good actors, took part in plays which were really en-



*Leabank Community Club's 25th Anniversary. Olga Grabowsky, Frieda Poersch, Flora Gorchitza, Helen Grabowski, Mae Poersch, Jeanette Poersch.*

joyed. They also went to neighbouring communities and it was really worthwhile as many attended. It was a lot of hard work going to practise in the bobsleighs in the winter time, but it was fun, too.

In the summer time, the annual picnic was always looked forward to before the harvest began.

Many parcels of food and also cigarettes were sent to local boys in the Armed Forces. Cards and small gifts were sent to the sick in the local area.

The young people of the district always received a wedding gift when they took the big step. A piano was also bought by the club for use in our school.

The meetings every month meant so much as the members and guests got together to enjoy the social hour that followed. Once a year there was a day off for the members to go to Winnipeg on a tour of some kind; the meal afterwards was always a treat.



*Ladies at Leabank Reunion in 1956. Fern Rose, Jean Anderson, Lily Froese, Wilma Sommerville, Heather Bunkowsky, Cynthia Steinke, Douglas Bunkowsky, Viola Gorchitza and Delores Goossen.*

In June, 1965, a 25th Anniversary Reunion was held, with about 35 members, former members and guests being present. Each lady received a small corsage for being present, and we had a birthday cake. We reminisced over the things that had been done in the 25 years, and were proud of what had been accomplished.

By 1974, we had so few members left in the club, it was decided to close the books and not have anymore meetings. With the funds that were left, and donations from people who were interested in the Lea-Bank cemetery, a cairn was erected in 1976. This was directed to the memory of all the pioneers who are buried there.

## SPERLING CEMETERY

In the interest of the Sperling Community, a meeting of concerned citizens was held in the spring of 1905. A motion was passed that a joint stock company be formed at \$10.00 per share and a committee be named to purchase two acres of land. Elected to the committee were - George Dracass, George Peckover, T.H. McCallum, D.H. McLean and Mr. Eaton. There were fifty-four subscribers at that meeting.



*The funeral of Mr. Dixon, school caretaker, with all the school children in attendance.*

The Committee purchased the land from Fred Dracass at \$125.00 per acre. It is situated on the edge of a ravine, approximately 1 1/2 miles northwest of Sperling. The land was surveyed into lots at a cost of \$76.00. At a subsequent meeting, it was decided that those that paid the \$10.00 would be entitled to a free plot.

The first committee in charge of the cemetery were George Dracass, George Peckover, W. Eaton, W.H. McCallum, and Andrew Mogk. The upkeep of the cemetery was voluntary donations and \$2.00 a plot was also charged.

In 1935, trees were planted surrounding the cemetery with Dr. Martin and Matt Lathan in charge. In 1920, a 12 x 12 building was built at the end of the entrance, which housed the maintenance equipment. Enclosed in this building is a detailed map of the cemetery. This map and copies were made by Bill and Audrey Peckover, and is very convenient to those visiting the cemetery.

At an annual meeting on April 21, 1971, the committee decided that letters would be written to all plot holders in an effort to start perpetual care, on a voluntary basis. This met with a good response, and at the present time, 85 plot owners are under this arrangement.

Some improvements to the cemetery have been made in recent years. An exit road was built on the south side of the cemetery on ground donated by Ralph Mogk. Replacement trees were planted where needed. A granite plaque has been installed at the entrance, with the inscription 'Sperling Community Cemetery'.

At the last meeting held on April 28, 1978, the committee were: LeRoy Rance, President; W. Fewster, K.K. McLean, Glen Brown, Leonard Rance, Browning

Hooper, and H.A. Waddell, Secretary-Treasurer. W. Sessions and W.C. Davidson spent many years as caretakers of the cemetery and the Cubs, Scouts and Ventures have acted as custodians also. The custodians in 1978 were the Peter Wiebe family.

Letters of appreciation have been received from many people who have visited the cemetery in the summer and enjoyed the peonies and other flowers and the well kept grounds.



*Royal Canadian Legion on Main St., the former bank and telephone office.*

## BRANCH NO. 155 OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION SPERLING

*by .I. Dales*

This branch of the Royal Canadian Legion was awarded its charter on April 15, 1945 by the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Services League. The charter members were B.A. Rogers, M. Johnson, A.O. Wilson, O. Waddell, J. Mitchell, H. Hayward, R. Burnett, J. Hanna, J. Anderson and R.S. Swain.

The Branch had no club rooms, so the meetings were held mainly in Bob Rogers store and sometimes in the homes of the members, later on they were held in the Orange Hall.

The first president was B.A. Rogers; and secretary, H. Hayward. It should be recorded here that the history between the years 1945 and 1964 is from memory of members as for this period of time the records were lost. To name the Presidents of the Branch to date: Bob Rogers, Jim Soutar, Louis Duvenaud, Clayton Young, Ernest Rose, Jack Killeen, Fred Sessions, Wildred Sessions, Ross Anderson, Don Waddell and John Dales.

In 1950 the Orange Hall was sold and again the meetings were held in the homes of the members, Sperling Garage, the rink, etc. until 1952 when the membership decided they would try to obtain clubrooms. In order to raise the money for such a project they would raffle a new car, unfortunately some of the raffle tickets got intercepted in the mails, "in those days the posting of raffle tickets was illegal". Consequently the President and Secretary had their mail suspended; they both

# CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS



*Sperling Legion Members - 1979. BACK ROW: John Peckover, Chas. Peckover, Fred and Wilfred Sessions, Geo. Green, Ted Tyers, Don Peckover. FRONT ROW: Ross Anderson, L.L. Duvenaud, John Dales, Ken Griffiths, Roy Webster.*

stepped down from office, their terms of office were filled from the membership. The raffle was completed and the present clubrooms were invested in. This transaction was carried out by comrades, Jim Soutar, Louis Duvenaud, Fred Sessions. The building purchased was the Royal Bank Building, later M.T.S. offices. It should be recorded here Branch No. 155 of the Royal Canadian Legion are very grateful to the R.M. of Morris for the generosity and understanding afforded this Branch at this time.

To list the Secretaries: H. Hayward R.G. Mogk, Abe Leopky, Fred Sessions, Wilfred Roberts, Wilf Sessions, Frank Pauls, Lawrence Peckover, Ken Griffiths, Barry Davenport.

In 1956 the members of this Legion headed by Comrades Don Waddell and Kurt Jenkins organized what became the South Central Manitoba Little Fast Ball League (children up to 14 years) Kurt being coach and Don manager. At first they took in Sperling, Roland, Myrtle and Miami. As well as this activity the Legion sponsored a carnival, a turkey shoot, fowl bingos, also helping out at Sperling sports day; these activities went on till the membership of the Branch due to passaways and move aways became so small that they could no longer cope. In 1976 the Branch turned over what was left of the sports equipment to the Sperling Sports Committee.

1952 saw the beginning of the Ladies Auxiliary to Branch No. 155. The First Auxiliary President was Margaret "Rogers" Wurmnest, Secretary Audrey "Young" Carr, and Treasurer Martha Rose. The help of the ladies has been very much appreciated by this Branch.

In 1963 the Branch made plans to build a cenotaph in 1964, with the financial help of the Auxiliary and Comrade P.D. McMunn of McMunn, Man. who donated the granite stone, the cenotaph was completed in early October. Stone mason, Edward Polsarrd of Renfrew St., Winnipeg was the builder. This cenotaph



*Dedication of Sperling Cenotaph in 1964 by Rev. Martin. Provincial Command Chaplain, and Rev. Jack Mathieson and Branch Chaplain.*

was dedicated by Comrade Rev. Martin, chaplin for Provincial Command, on November 11, 1964. The regular Armistice Day service was conducted by Rev. Jack Matheson, Branch Chaplain. Since then the community joins in a service for our fallen comrades every November 11.

The upgrading of the clubrooms have been an ongoing project, but the building provides and is used extensively by community and Legion.

Branch strength at present is approximately thirty.

## **"Ladies' Auxiliary to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 155 Sperling"**

On April 7th, 1952, the Ladies' Auxiliary to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 155 was formed with a membership of thirty-five during that year. At first, meetings were held in the school auditorium and often in the homes of members. Since the purchasing of the Legion Hall by the local branch meetings have been held there.

It has been the objective of the Auxiliary to assist the Branch in all ways such a renovating and furnishing the hall, helping with Remembrance Day Services and conducting Remembrance Day Essay and Poster contest for school students. They have held pie sales, teas, bazaars, sponsored Variety Programs and made quilts. They have collected for March of Dimes, had clothing drives for the Salvation Army, remembered veterans and shut-ins, adopted veterans in Deer Lodge Hospital and assisted youth groups in the community. Awards have been made to the two top Grade XI Sperling students attending Midland Collegiate and since 1963 have financially assisted young people wishing to attend athletic camps at the International Peace Gardens. They have provided catering services and helped other organizations in worthwhile activities.



*FRONT ROW: Esther Rose, Edna Hudson, Gladys Swain, Evelyn Griffiths, Winnie Duvenaud. BACK ROW: Eva Sessions, Marilyn Davenport, Margaret Wumnest, Marion Baleja, Joyce Dales, Jean Peckover, Marjorie Meldrum.*

In 1977, following a banquet held on the Auxiliary's 25th Anniversary, thirteen charter members received their 25 Year Pins with Mrs. Eva Grundy of Carman making the presentations. Memberships in 1979 is 24 with Mrs. Mary Ann Parker, aged 98 and the oldest member still active sewing and knitting for the bazaars. The years have seen members moving to other areas and members passing away, but all are remembered for their contributions to the Sperling Auxiliary.

## PATRICIA LODGE NO. 125

There were several Freemasons living in the Sperling area, and it was only to be expected that they wanted a lodge of their own in Sperling.

After several informal meetings in the Steeves Garage, it was decided to call a meeting to form a lodge. This meeting took place February 18, 1915 in the Sperling School, at which time officers were elected and a request sent to Grand Lodge for a Charter.

It was decided the name of the Lodge would be "Patricia" and it is assumed was called after the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry Regiment, quite famous during the war of 1914-18.

Officers elected at that meeting were:

Worshipful Master	Harry M. Steeves
Senior Warden	Wm. M. Wilson
Junior Warden	Alexander L. Smith
Secretary	Adam Dixon
Treasurer	Wm. H. Millichamp
Senior Deacon	John H. Smith
Junior Deacon	Harry W. Brown
Junior Steward	Arthur K. Brown
Inner Guard	Edmond A. Barry
Director of Ceremonies	Thomas A. Brown
Tyler	George H. Verge

These officers, along with John **W.** Barry, were Charter Members of the Lodge. These officers were installed Nov. 14, 1915 and held their first regular meeting Nov. 17, 1915 and these same officers carried on for the year 1916 Patricia Lodge's first full year.

Our historical register does not show where the early meetings were held, but it does seem likely they were held in the Sperling School.

On June 15, 1916, a charter was granted. On July 27, 1916, a Charter was presented by Grand Lodge and Patricia Lodge No. 125 was formally established.

The Lodge moved its meeting place in Feb. 1921 to the Orange Hall on Main Street, and was to meet there continuously until moving to its present location on New Street in 1952.

In 1951, the lodge set up a committee to purchase a new home and the Pleasant Valley School House situated



*Masonic Hall - Patricia Lodge No. 125 in 1979.*

south and east of Sperling, no longer needed as a school, was purchased and moved onto its present site. It was placed on a full-sized basement and an addition was added to the west end.

For several years, we rented the building to the School District as a school room, which gave us the needed income to make extensive renovations to our hall. Over the years, we have continued to make improvements and now have a good heating system and modern day plumbing.

Pictures of all past Masters adorn the walls.

In 1945, the lodge presented a communion table **and** plate to the Sperling United Church.

As of December 1978, we have about 172 who have belonged to Patricia Lodge No. 125.



## SPERLING WOMEN'S COMMUNITY GROUP

The earliest records available at the present time of our Women's Community Group, began in 1929. At that time they worked as U.F.W.M. (United Farm Women of Manitoba). During the years 1940 to 1946 they organized as a War Auxiliary, making dozens of quilts, also knitting and sewing for the Red Cross. They sent parcels and letters to those of our community who served in the Armed Forces overseas and in Canada, and they arranged "Welcome Home" parties when they returned.



*United Farm Women in 1930, taken at J.I. Wilson farm.*

In 1946 with the war over, the group name was changed to M.F.A.C. (Manitoba Federation of Agriculture and Co-Operation). Finally in 1958 when so many of the most faithful members of this group resided in town, the chosen name was "Sperling Community Workers." This group makes quilts and arrange for other Red Cross sewing etc. They endeavor to send remembrances to the sick and shut-in members of our community. They arrange for showers for all of our brides-to-be. They assist with planning for and the care of our local cemetery. They planned the 50th year celebration for Sperling in 1951, and in conjunction with our local Legion and Recreation Society members, they have helped to arrange the 60th years celebration.

## SPERLING

*Norman Sperling from Boston in Sperling to telescope Eclipse*

Sperling observers for the total eclipse, Monday, Feb. 26 were most fortunate to have had Norman Sperling, an astronomer from Boston explain in detail each phase of the "eclipse", while it was occurring in our area.

Several residents of Sperling and some from surrounding areas, gathered in front of the Sperling Co-op Store, where he had his telescope set up, which cast the eclipse against the building during its entirety.

Spectators gazed in amazement, as the brightness of the sky grew darker, casting brilliant hues on the earths surface which was like a white blanket, as the moon passed across the face of the sun, obscuring its brilliant light.

Then as totality of the eclipse was taking place, the temperature had dropped approximately 11 degrees. Spectators stood breathless, as they gazed into the pearly-like illusion overhead, while the sun's corona danced around the black shadow of the moon. The stars shone brilliantly in the darkened sky. For two minutes less one second, at 10:46 a.m. there was a complete hush and a silence amongst those gathered, as Mr. Sperling explained each second of the spectacular experience, of this rare solar spectacle. It was truly a breathtaking and beautiful experience, and with Norman Sperling's knowledgeable explanations, we were indeed fortunate to have had him select Sperling as his location to telescope the eclipse seen in Manitoba.

## SPERLING SCOUTS AND CUBS

The Scouts were organized in 1914 by George Millichamp, a nephew of Mr. Millichamp, who was postmaster and ran a general store.

There were about twenty members, consisting of Priors, Steeves, Waddells, Rances and others. They did some of their scouting and cookouts where the present United Church stands.

The group was later led by Mr. Athey, manager of the Northern Crown Bank. On their hikes, they usually went to Myers Farm (W.J. Forresters), J.H. Hoopers, north of town, or some other close farm. The reasoning here was the delicious donations of pies and cookies given by the housewives.

In the late twenties, Rev. I. Neville, Minister of the United Church, organized the club again, assisted by Brownie Hooper. He became leader in 1929, was assisted by Stan Sessions, who later started Cubs, Club rooms were over May Davidson's store, vacated at that time.



*Coming home from Scout camp at Killarney in R.11 Waddell's car. Stan Wilson, Martin Fewster, and Chester Waddell,*

Camping trips were to Delta Beach and Killarney, Manitoba, travelling via Model A Ford and four wheel trailer. We borrowed tents from Fort Osborne barracks. Camps were well organized, with patrols and groups responsible for cooking and camp ordinance. We practiced first aid, trail blazing, and digging latrines (and falling in them).



*Scouting at Delta Beach in the late '20's. Martin Gehring, Martin Fewster, Brownie Hooper, Sandy Johnson, Stan Sessions, Don Waddell.*

The greatest challenge to leadership discipline was the mating call of Sperling C.G.I.T.'s across the lake at Killarney. Our older boys could not resist the chance to row across after curfew. At Delta, it was the Graysville C.G.I.T., just a few rods around the lake shore.

Parents helping on these trips were Fred Gehring, Andrew Mogk, R.S. Young, Rev. E.W. Johnson and Gordon Waddell. The groups became very active, both locally and district wise, attending Cubarees and Jamborees.

Don McKee was appointed assistant district commissioner and nine boys elected Queen Scouts - Doug Ferris, Jim Taylor, Allen Rance, Lyle Rance, Clarence Rhymer, Kevin McKee, Dennis Webster, Blaine Rhymer, Gordon Brown. Doug Ferris earned the right to attend World Jamboree in Greece. Boys from Brunkild and Homewood became members and contributed much to the groups.



*Cub leaders, Henry Buss and Browning Hooper, with Cub Scouts of Sperling.*

Venture groups were formed in 1969, with Glen Brown leading them. The boys planned a centennial canoe trip in 1970, starting at Minnedosa, via Minnedosa River to Brandon, then Assiniboine to Winnipeg. This was a real experience for the boys as they were on their own. Taking part were Lyle Rance, Gordon Brown, Kevin McKee, Wes Penner, Blaine Rhymer and Darrell Rance. A second group made a similar trip in 1972, on the Pembina River from La Riviere to Morden. The boys were David Nicolajsen, Stan Brown, Darrell Rance, Jim Lewis and Tom Hudson.

There was an active group committee, which did an excellent job of financing for the boys. They arranged registrations, camping and transportation to district events, provided the annual banquet, and gave general support in all projects. Some of the secretaries guiding this committee were Thelma Nicolajsen and Margaret Webster, who served for ten years.

The boy scout group which operated from the fall of 1968 - 1976 under the supervision of Leonard Rance and Preston Arsenault, had about 10 - 15 boys active in it.

Many good winter evenings were spent in the Sperling School, studying the regular scouting activities, such as learning the various knots, studying proper camping procedures, finding out how to use a compass, and how to care for an injured person. Several evenings were spent planning campouts. Several boys spent from Friday evening to Saturday noon in a winter campout on which everyone ate, slept and played in -10 degrees F. The night was spent in snow houses constructed in the afternoon. Several boys spent a week at Scout Camp Alloway in the Whiteshell area in July, where they learned the fundamentals of canoeing.

About three weeks before Christmas, the whole group made wooden toys which were sent to Swan Lake for children's gifts. These were very much appreciated and the boys did a good job. Several summers were undertook to mow the Sperling cemetery to earn money for camping equipment.

Through the various activities, and the association of boys with boys, and boys with leaders, the Scouting Organization no doubt played a part in preparing young people to go out into the world as responsible citizens.

## **SPERLING 4-H BEEF CALF CLUB 1951-1965**

The Sperling 4-H Beef Calf Club was organized on October 20, 1951. Leaders appointed were J.B. Hooper and Martin Gehring. Officers elected were Victor Rance, President; Ken Waddell, Vice-President; and Helen Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer.

In order that every member have a fair start, calves were purchased at the union stockyards in Winnipeg and allotted by numbers drawn by each member. There were 22 members in the club the first year. A rally was held at the Sperling school grounds and awards were presented. Due to the foot and mouth epidemic that year, the Carman rally was cancelled, and the fat calves were sold at the union stockyards.

In future years, each member obtained his individual calf to be fed and shown at the rallies. The club carried on under the leadership of J.B. Hooper and Martin Gehring, until 1962, when Mr. Hooper retired and Mr. Ken Waddell succeeded him as leader. In 1963, Mr. Gehring retired as leader in favour of Gary Hooper. Gary and Ken carried on until interest waned and the club ceased to operate in 1966.

The club thrived through sponsorship and generous donations by the local pool elevator and faithful support of the parents and community at large.

Each year the local club rally was held in conjunction with the Sperling Sports Day and each year, with the



*Sperling calf club in the early 50's. BACK ROW: Bill Tjaden, Clary Skeavington, Gilbert Last, Ken Last, Ken Waddell, Victor Rance, Owen Rance, Inga Pederson, Helen Wilson, FRONT ROW: Bernard Gehring, Dennis Peckover, Larry Rose, Jim Ferris, Garry Hooper, Larry Waddell, Louis Laferriere, Carroll Fewster, May Rance, Suzanne Bilodeau.*

exception of the first year, took part and participated in all competitions at the Carman agricultural rally.

Several awards were won at the Carman rally by the members through the years, such as the John Wilson trophy for Showmanship, won by Ken Waddell in 1959, and Gary Hooper in 1960 and 1963. The Champion Calf of the Carman rally was won one year by Gary Hooper and another by Wendy Ralston.

On different occasions, the Sperling club boasted having the reserve champion of the Carman 4-H rally, besides winning awards for Group of three and placing first or very near the top most years in the 4-H parade.

There were also individual awards won by the members, such as attending summer 4-H camps, Gold watch awards and being selected to participate in the 4-H competition elsewhere in the province.

The leaders were also rewarded for their efforts - Mr. Hooper, by being awarded a trip to the Minnesota State



*Janie Koop and Bonnie Rose demonstrating their sewing project at 4-H.*

fair and Mr. Gehring, by being awarded a bus trip through Alberta and Banff.

The members held regular business meetings, judging classes and went on several educational trips, held many fund-raising events, such as card parties and dances.

All those participating, members, leaders and parents, can recall many rewarding experiences in being part of the Sperling 4-H Calf Club.

## INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EXCHANGE ASSOCIATION TRAINEES IN THE SPERLING COMMUNITY

The first agricultural trainee, James Burtt, visited our area in 1974 and spent the summer with the Rance families. James farms in England.

In 1975, Carsten Jensen from Denmark, spent the six months with the Rances and Einar Perrson from Sweden was with the Fewsters.

1976 - Micheal Schoeder from Germany was with the Vic Rance family and David Macky, New Zealand, was with the Fewsters.

1977 - Joel Karlson from Sweden was with the Fewster family and 1978 saw Wilf Rohlfing, from Germany at the L. Rance farm.

This International Agricultural Exchange Association (I.A.E.A.) has its headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark, with 15 countries participating. The young people, aged 18-28, pay their fare to the host country and the farmer gives a working allowance, plus training and welcomes the young person as a member of the family.

This is also a cultural exchange, and the participating families have learned much about the home country of the trainee.

This programme is open to girls as well and has Home Economics, Mixed and Horticultural categories.

It is hoped that soon Sperling young people will participate in this exchange.



*Clary Skeavington, holding a huge snapping turtle found in a ditch in Sperling in 1974. It weighed 40 lbs. and was later released to enjoy its freedom, in the Morris River.*

# THE SPERLING REPORTER

A SECTION OF THE DUFFERIN LEADER PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE VILLAGE OF SPERLING

Bey, Iteprrepresentative.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1.

Subscription Price, with The Leader, \$2.00

## FOUR PERISH IN FIRE SATURDAY

Mrs. R. Cates and Three ChB.  
dress Victims of Shocking  
Fatality at Spooling.

The residents of the town of Seer. ling and the community at large were shocked mid horrified when news became current M on early hour Satur. day morning of thy death of Mrs. (I. Cates and three of her children In a fire which tystroyel their dwelling m the film, of Jon, "Dandier. o few Olin onathsten of the town. That n11 of the seven children of Mr. and Mn Catea wen nollmna was due to the entre). heroism of the eldest child, Bethel, aged 14, who opened a window and lifted three of the children through it to safety and then made her own ewepo when she meld no; longer remain in the burning house.

The fire broke out early in the morning when all of the family except Mo. Cahn were still In bed. He had roe, to attend to the form. thorn, hut lighted a are in thy kitchen stove be fore going out to the barn. With hl. employer, Fir, "randier, and the other lulu on the farm, he was busy in the Lore for sumo time, Oho Ramos had enveloped the dwelling before the men Femme aware of the fire. Mon work. ing at the buildings no the Fred Gehring farm, dimity south of Mr. Grundly's buildings, discovered the Ore 00 olonst the same time Mr. Cotes and Mr. trundler did, but when they readied the silo of the rat. demi/inn they were powerless to give any as. Aston. Bethel then was Mirkle with her brothers Rer and Everett and Iar Meter B.rtyl, whom she hold: erTeuett

Mr. Cates attempted to reach in through the window of his weide .1.50111 to the bed which stood close b; the window, but he could not noon any of the children, although the body of the baby was later found on this bed. Mr. Coln burned his hands and nem. very fir rely in this aRem91.

Roused by Explosion  
The fundy, 0 is belluved were un- aware of the tire until they were 'roused from their deep by the noise of an explosion. This Is believed to have been due to the bunting of a eon containing coal oil, which was new the atave, and from which Mr. Cates took some oil with which tol.

ti. for. The daughter, 00-11, hurrid to investigate and found the flames raging in the kitchen. Her mother also came and attempted to fight the Santeee with water. Bethel succeeded in getting Everett. age 11, Beryl, age 9, and Ray, age n cut through a window near which they :dept, nod she caught up Patricia, age also, but the child broke from her groan and eon to find her mother. lice body Won found litter near the spot where Bethel Inst her hold of her. Mrs. Cate. wan apparently overcome by the smoke and Test while attempt- tug to light the and perished with oho three children, Patriot., Will. One. age 3, and Virgil. age seven mnth,

The building was a three-roomed single-story dwelling, of light om, struction, lined with beaver-board, and IM1 rapidly consumed.

Cann. From Illinois  
Mrs. Caws sink a native of Illinois and was 33 years of age. lire maiden name was Lela Johnston. She n in, Hod Crites fifteen years kink and nine years ago they comy to Manitoba. handing at Lowy Farm. After farm- ina in Lowe Farm district five yttites, they moved to Sperling and farmed thyr for two years. Then for a year they resided in Illinois and a year,

ago retuned to hirmitoba. Mr. Cates had taken hie Mitten ,with Mr. Grundke lust recently.

Mrs. Cates leaves three Aika, Mr.. Tim Smith of Sperling, Mrs. Chester Crouch of Normal, Ill., and Mn. Welter Hurt of None, alan two brotherk Oro Johnston of Chimgo, and Maxsion Johnston of Anning tic- trick

Funeral Held Monday

The people of the whale Sperling ilistrit were deeply affected by the tragedy and all bustneW 0111 . in the town were riotel while the funeral service Won being hold at Sperling United Church Monday afternoon, This sent. was 0000 largely attend- ed, And the single casket containing the remains of all four of the victims wan literally buried heneeth Coral I tokens. Rev. John Russell spoke vi nri feelingly from the 15th chapter of Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. Front all over the community airs- Napa or rmpathy have come to the bereaved father and children, and the ether relatives al .

Mrs. Crouch wan visiting her lister of None at the time, and way able to be here for the funeral.

Pallbearers were H. Gehring, J. Tiede, C. Mille, E. Ribordy, J. Grundlar and Cleorgo Jenkins.

An investigation of the tragedy was made Saturday morning by Constable M. P. McDonald and Dr. F. L. Jamle- sun, coroner, of Carman, who decided that an inquest wan not necessary.

Mr. Cates and the children ore stnt. Inc at 'regent at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Tim Smith. Owing to his seve- re 'entries Mr. Cates will he ineapa. chided for some time.

## SPERLING TRAGEDIES

Lyle Brown, brother of A.K. Brown, drowned in a dugout on their farm, south of Sperling. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Colpitte drowned. Robert, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Tjaden, drowned in cistern.

1922 - Helen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Tjaden, drowned in dugout.

1924 - Simon Anderson burned to death when his clothing caught fire from a gasoline engine.

1927 - Mrs. Cates and three children perished in a fire which burned their home.

1937 - August 1, Retha Stewart slipped into the dugout on their farm east of Sperling. Her father, Mr. Thos. Stewart jumped in to save her - both were drowned.

1940 - Gordon, younger son of Mr. and Mrs. O.R. Brown died from injuries he received when caught in a moving wagon wheel.

1941 - June 24, Peter, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. David Hildebrand drowned in the dugout on their farm northwest of Sperling.

1943 - August 31, Mr. David Hildebrand died in Carman Hospital as a result of a combine accident. He was survived by his wife and eight children.

1967 - Mrs. Ribordy died while trying to get aid to her son, Maurice.

1975 - Kevin McKee killed in car accident.

1977 - Hank Habas froze to death.

## The Monarch

### "Lifetime" Granaries

Cost Leas Money and Give a Life-Time of Service.

Note Dew They Ire 4ot Skids; foil Stud, and Joists: 2x6 Plotee Top and Diclion: If roonng:ag Drop Siding; Sheathing, Nn. 111,01 Cedar Shingles itboy will last a lifetime), la Ridge Board extending one foot 00000 each end, an este, lot of rafters for each end, and 1 201.1 for lookuuts to support cud projection: Corner 'amnia: Removable lamrds for large doer and 102 strips to bold them plate. /a Utckrte for door etoots.

## A Complete Granary

Why experiment with untired texteroile tow granaries, and pay more money for them, when tool rail buy to Monarch "Lifetime" Granary, 12%12-8-foot sunk which will hold 940 bushel, fit n low mice

Plume or nil al our yard for tent, They will awe) to you.

## Monarch Lumber Co'y

A. K. Brown, Manager, Sperling

## Farm Lands

I have enquiries for equipped farms. If you are interested in selling your 1411(1 and equipment kindly .give me a listing and I may be able to secure a buyer.

I also have some good farms to sell to buyers with equipment. These farms are in first class shape. A large plot of the acreage is in summerfallow, which is a big benefit to the purchaser the first. year.

If you are interested write me, or phone 30, Sperling.

"Bud" Myers, Notary Public, Insurance, Etc.  
in connection with office.

## M. C. Fonder

Loans, Real Estate. Sperling

## Of Local Interest

C.N.B. painters end house delineators err here and have brightened the appearance of the station with a trash coat of point on the wctorior, and the interior in now receiving attention with vernith and wall paper. The section foreman's ho W. New Dreamed by C. C. Morrish is to receive a like treatment.

Gordon Campbell accomponim! Dan Peckover to Ninette last wrelwend to make a friendly coil on those who were . kind to him while he was patient in the Sanitarium there. Don was on a business trip but found the "business" no eve...sive that they were unable to RETURN till the following Monday. They med. the inneneF ontOr.

White the ratepayers ore helping to pay for the construction of the parent highways in this province, those who enjoy quiet pleasure driv- ing are ferect to lenge the road in favor of the speeder and truck-driver, who fire allowed full ming. Inne- driven vehicles, such an school vans, are often compelled to take the

The first ear of new wheat for tab, ...on was consigned from the farm of E. Nikkei over the C.P.R. to the Lake of the Woods alining Co. The wheat Woe of the Germ. variety and yielded 12 bushels to the are, and was grown on 10W 11iad wrl ch wne flooded after being sown. The higher land is expected to The ob.. 90 bushels to the nen,

British university students of to minimal number comprise the ituotil who are arriving weekly to help garner this sinea's crop. They have run. plea to obtain drat hand infor. nalinn as to farming Colditlink, in thy west, and had they loten on the job 'mince CL, seedins began they would sure nture potted.

it was photo for the last usur of The Reporter when we discovered that Jerk Williams, and family hood or. vived hock safely from their els. wen's motor camping trip through western (Ontario. Fir report: 0001110 fine, health inspiring trim and although not bpi, able to put on as much weigh! Juring his vocal., o del Bob Nickel, the sun , rays had the effect of tan- ning his Minplesion twisiderably. They Warned by Sarnia and through - the States.

On Ed. Ferris', (sent on the high- way is to be seen n 15-wore field of swem clover whirls in indeed mite to look at. It is tall, thick and clean slid will require nu small antrum of twine to tie it when hativ,tied, On Johnston Morrisone form is also iield of flea, the like of which is yett widow wen. It is perfectly vitae, wish D,aly an old pieowd tmeurum above il Slnnby We11,141 is 0-100001-



ABOVE: Train wreck on July 1st excursion east of Sperling in 1912.

BELOW: Spring flood of 1921 east of townsite.



## SPERLING SPORTS

### HOCKEY - SPERLING

by Ralph Mogk



*Sperling Rink, built in 1921 and used for 56 years, until it was torn down in 1978.*

*BELOW LEFT: 1925 Sperling Interprovincial Champions. BACK ROW: Geo. Peckover, Chas. Griffiths, Jake Tjaden, C.B. McNulty, A.K. Brown, W.G. Burnett, Bud Myers. MIDDLE ROW: George Brown, Roy Hinkel, Smoky Harris, Dick Turner. FRONT ROW: Wilson, John Kuhn, Leo Jerome. Taken in front of Royal Bank Sperling.*

*BELOW RIGHT: Sperling hockey team - 1930's. BACK ROW: Don Waddell, Percy Tully, C.B. McNulty, Lawrence Peckover, Sandy Johnson. FRONT ROW: Lloyd Peckover, Roy Morris, Ralph Mogk, Stan Wilson. Martin Fewster, Chester Waddell.*

The first hockey team played on an open air sheet of ice by the C.N.R. Station. Some of the players were, Al Wilson, Bill Waddell, Frank Dillion, Tommy Andrews, Ernie Gibson.

In 1921 the Sperling Rink was built for \$23,000.00. The rink board at that time consisted of John Smith, Art Brown, George Peckover and Bob Nichol. The first caretakers were John Smith and Joe Gates.

Hockey was soon organized and in three years grew almost to professional status, winning two Manitoba Intermediate Championships. The driving force behind this team were the seven members of the hockey committee. They were George Peckover, Charles Griffiths, Jake Tjaden, C.B. (Mac) McNulty, Art Brown, Billy Burnett, Bud Meyers.

Mr. McNulty was the manager of the team, and had the respect and co-operation of the players.

The players of this team were Johnny Kuhn, Scotty Moir, Leo Jerome, Smokey Harris, Roy Hinkel, Johnny McVicar, George Brown, Darky Anderson. Smokey Harris went on to play for Boston Bruins, of the National League. Roy Hinkel was with the Canadian team that won the World's Amateur Olympic Championship in 1932.

### Wins "Intermediate A" Championship

In 1926-27, an Intermediate Hockey team was formed with C.B. McNulty as coach and manager. They played in a league with the Monarchs and Vics of Winnipeg.

The Sperling team had some outstanding players, such as "Smokey Harris", who went on to play with the Boston Bruins. Other players on the team were George Brown, Johnny Kuhn, Roy Hinkel, Leo Jerome, Dorkey Anderson, Dick Turner, and Johnny McVicar. This team won the "Intermediate A" Championship.

From 1930-1945 various hockey teams were formed in conjunction with the school of Sperling. The personnel of one such junior hockey team consisted of; Ralph Mogk, Chester Waddell, Don Waddell, Roy Morrish, Stan Wilson, Percy Tully, Lawrence Peckover, Charlie Holmes, Lloyd Peckover, Johnny Foulson. Mac McNulty was again Manager and coach of the team. World War 2 interfered with any serious attempts to organize hockey after this time.







ABOVE: Sperling Hockey Team, Manitoba Junior B Champions, 1953-54. BACK ROW: Marc Rajotte, Gerald Assler, Wayne Phelps, Clark Pierson, Howie Larke, Edward Little, Jack Waddell, Murray Elves, Don Waddell, Coach; Gilbert Cretton, Manager. FRONT ROW: Jim Tjaden, Mac MacDonald, Pat Ginnell, John Anderson, Art Grundy, Peter Boulet, Blake Bachelor.

BELOW, LEFT: Presentation of jackets to Sperling's Manitoba Jr. B. Championship Hockey Team, 1952-53. Don Waddell at mike, Gilbert Cretton, centre, Jim Soutar, M.C., in bow tie.

BELOW, CENTRE: Abbie Coe, Secretary of Manitoba Amateur Hockey Association, addresses celebration banquet for 1952-53. Junior B championship team, C.B. McNulty behind him.

BELOW, RIGHT: 1952-53 Manitoba Junior B Champion team celebrates its victory in the dressing room.



*Sperling Wins Championship - Sperling vs. Yorkton - 1952-54*

A Junior B hockey team was formed in 1952, with Don Waddell as coach and Gilbert Cretton as manager. The team, which consisted of local Sperling boys and some from surrounding towns.

The team entered the Provincial Playoffs and defeated Foxwarren in the finals in two straight games. A challenge was put out for a sudden death game to Yorkton, Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan champions. This was the first time such a play off was held. Mr. C.B. McNulty, a member of the M.A.H.A. association made

the arrangements. The game was played at the Amphitheatre Rink in Winnipeg, with a capacity crowd of spectators to witness the event: Sperling winning the game - 5 to 3.

The following year, Sperling won the Junior "B" title again, defeating Dauphin in the final game.

The Yorkton Hockey team also won the Saskatchewan title, so another challenge game was organized, with the final game to be played in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Sperling was given permission by the M.A.H.A. to add one player to bolster their team. Pat Ginnell was selected from the Dauphin team. Yorkton was victorious.





*TOP: Young and old celebrated the 1952-53 provincial championship victory of Sperling's hockey team.*

*MIDDLE: Sperling's 1954 Hockey team. BACK ROW: Ken Waddell, Bill Tjaden, Wayne Phelps, Dick Gehring, Jack Denischuk, Jim Tjaden. FRONT ROW: Bill Bell, Larry Waddell, Doug Holmes, Jim Ferris, Ted August.*

*BOTTOM: Sperling's 1959 hockey team. BACK ROW: Bernard Gehring, Tom Kirk, Coaches Ken Tjaden and Garry Hooper, Jake Hildebrand, Sandy Soutar, Victor Klassen, Jim Meldrum. FRONT ROW: Harold Archibald, Joe Bilodeau, Ken Hiebert, Glen Pederson, Lyall Wilson.*

*TOP, RIGHT: Sperling Boys' Hockey Team, 1960. BACK ROW: Don Waddell, Coach; Grant Rose. MIDDLE ROW: Calvin Cates, Roy Waddell, Doug Ferris, Philip Killeen, David Hamilton, Murray Klassen, Mac Duvenaud, Don Cates. FRONT ROW: Rick Soutar, Johnnie Struts, Jack Meldrum, Bob Soutar, Brian Waddell.*

From 1955 to 1957, Tom Thumb, Bantam B (14 and under) and Bantam A (15 and under) teams were organized in Sperling. Tom Thumb tournaments were held in Roland, Miami, Carman, and Sperling. Wendell Fewster and Gilbert Cretton were the coaches. Bantam A and Bantam B teams played in the Provincial Playdowns. Don Waddell and Les Friesen were two of the coaches.

In 1957-1958, Bruce Jenkins and Ken Tjaden from Sperling and Ken Fredrickson from Kane, played for the Dominion City Midgets, where they won the Manitoba Championship. Don Waddell and Don Thom were the coaches. Curdt Jenkins drove many hundreds of miles taking us back and forth to play and practice that winter. Players were from Sperling, Morris, Kane, St. Jean, and Dominion City, several of whom went on to play Junior Hockey for the Estevan Bruins in Saskatchewan.

From 1958-1960, the team pictured, played Bantam B and Bantam A. They played many exhibition games against Sturgeon Creek Community Club from Winnipeg and also reached the provincial finals, where they lost to Hartney. Because of mild weather, the final game couldn't be played in Sperling and had to be played in the Olympic rink in Winnipeg.

Bus trips to Brookdale, Pine Falls, and Hartney were enjoyed by all. Tom Kirk from this team went on to play with the University team in Winnipeg. Ken Hiebert played goal in the Southeastern Manitoba Hockey League for Carman Beavers, Pilot Mound and more recently, with Elm Creek. Lyall Wilson played for one year with Carman in 1969 and Ken Tjaden played with Carman from 1964-1973.

Another team evolved about this time also sparked by coach Don Waddell. This team consisted of Doug Holmes, Goalie; Ken Waddell, Bill Tjaden, Wayne Phelps, Richard Gehring, Jack Denischuk, Jim Tjaden, Bill Bell, Larry Waddell, Jim Ferris, Ted August, 1960-61 - Lyall Wilson, Harold Archibald, Joe Bilodeau, Bob Mogk, Bernard Gehring, Grant Rose, Sandy Soutar, Ken Heibert.

After several years of competition, interest appeared to wane, caused no doubt by closing the High School in Sperling and bussing the pupils to the larger school division of Milland Collegiate, where they were swallowed up by the sheer volume of competition.

## SPERLING GIRLS' HOCKEY 1924

Few people realize that during the early part of the century, Sperling had a pretty fine girls' hockey team. They challenged teams from other towns such as Carman, Roland, Miami, winning their share of games. Some of these players were: Mae Skeavington, Goalie; Eva Aubin, Vi Burnett, Eldred Mogk, Reta Waddell, Vi Skeavington, Norbert Tomley, Mabelle Brown, Anne Phillips, Evelyn Brown, Maude Phillips and Daisy Holmes.



*First ladies' hockey team at Sperling. Margaret Hobbs, Maggie Smith, Miss Skeavington, Mrs. Alec Davidson, Miss Richmond.*

## CURLING IN SPERLING

Curling had its beginning in Sperling in 1916, when a two sheet rink was built a block west of the barber shop and pool room, across the street from the Waddell home. With generous help and instruction from some of the Carman curlers, the game took a firm hold on the men of the district and continued to hold a prominent place in the winter time community activities until 1969, when the club was deactivated.

Due to a tragic fire, the rink burned down in February, 1919, with one of the members, Mike Steeves, receiving very severe burns to his hands and face and lesser burns to a few other members.

For one winter, 1920, a one sheet rink was built beside Charlie Stewart's garage and in 1921, a new modern skating rink and two sheet curling rink were combined under one roof. At that time, it was one of the most modern in Manitoba. One of the members who worked on the committee to establish the rink was Jack Swanson, who unfortunately, died the same year. The curling club's first trophy for competition was named "The Swanson Memorial Cup". Other citizens who worked hard to establish the rink were George Peckover, Robert Nichol, Art Brown, the Burnett Brothers, Charlie Stewart and John Smith, to name only a few.

Over the years, a rink or two from the area attended the Manitoba Curling Association Bonspiel, held in Winnipeg with little or no success, and it wasn't until the Peckover Brothers, William, Earl, Lawrence and Lloyd, started curling as a team, that Sperling to some extent as a curling centre, was put on the map.



**TOP TO BOTTOM:**  
"Bonspiel Headquarters"  
- the Sperling Hotel Pub!  
**BACK ROW:** Harry Shewman, Louie Rose, Earl Peckover, **FRONT ROW:** Dan Peckover, Maurice Cretton, Mogens Nielson, Charlie Holmes, Harry Oriman, Espen Espensen. Peckover Bros. Rink, 1947. Lawrence, 2nd; Bill, Skip; Earl, 3rd; Lloyd, Lead. Sperling winners at Morris 'Spiel: Martin Gehring, Louie Rose, Emile Bilodeau, Alfred Pedersen. Early 1950's. Centennial 'Spiel, 1970. Victor, Betty, Mabelle and LeRoy Rance.



*Councillor Gilbert Cretton and R.M. bridge foreman Willie Penner inspect the walls of the cistern underneath the front of the Sperling skating and curling rink in 1974. The building was later demolished.*

Rinks from the local High School took part in the Annual High School bonspiel once it was established in Manitoba and on one occasion, the Jerry McNulty rink won the Dan Davidson Trophy.

The annual Past-Presidents' Bonspiel, a one day affair, is held in December each year in Winnipeg, and for several years, a large number of our past-presidents attended, making it a Christmas shopping day for the wives, and for the men, a meeting and curling day with friends, usually at the Granite Curling Club.

The late George Peckover was slated to receive an honorary life membership from the Manitoba Curling Association but he died about three weeks before the award was announced. Robert Nichol was nominated in his stead, at that time. Two other members from Sperling have also received this high award: C.B. McNulty and Wm. G. Peckover.

C.B. McNulty, Wm. G. Peckover and A.K. Brown have been vice-presidents of the Manitoba Curling Association.

During the war, 1939-45, the Curling Clubs donated of their time and talent towards raising money for the Red Cross. In 1944-45, \$2,188.00 was sent to the Red Cross Prisoner of War Fund, and about \$3,300.00 in other years - nearly \$6,000.00 from a small curling club seems like a real effort.

Another accomplishment for the club and its members was the establishment of a fund to buy new rocks for the two sheets. In the early days, most members bought their own set of rocks, which were boxed, and if they played in the Winnipeg bonspiel, they took them along to be transported from rink to rink -- a monumental task for the cartage company in the city. After a few years of careful management, rocks were purchased for two sheets and some members reimbursed for their old rocks. Largely though, the members just donated their rocks to the club.

It was through the efforts of the curling club that clubrooms were built above the waiting rooms, with volunteer labour, which eventually were used by all organizations using the rink.

It was always the club's custom to elect a new president every year, but the office of secretary usually stayed in the hands of one person for several years. C.B. McNulty was secretary from 1940-45; A.O. Wilson for one year; W.G. Peckover for 12 years; Wendal Fewster for 8 years and for the last few years of the club's existence - Jim Ferris.

Our first annual open bonspiel was held in 1937, with A.O. Wilson, president and Harold Porteous, secretary; and the 31st annual bonspiel was held before curling came to an end in 1969. These were very popular events - it took a lot of juggling on the part of the drawmasters to get rinks on the ice - the farmers had their chores to do, while the school teachers, van drivers, bankers, etc., couldn't curl till after five o'clock, but it was managed.

A banquet served by the ladies at the school hall was part and parcel of the bonspiel, and when the minutes are read of the meetings that were held to organize these affairs, one comes to realize the supreme effort that went into making them a success.

Visiting other clubs and having visitors to the local club, were always highlights of the curling season. The late Robert Nichol donated a trophy to be used as a good will ambassador among clubs in a thirty mile radius, which was well received.

But the big attraction was the O'Grady - the big buffalo. This was a two rink affair - total points, and had to be challenged for well into the future. Many miles were travelled in search of this elusive cup, but finally two rinks brought it home in 1963. Personnel of these rinks was:

Otto Anderson **Bill Tjaden**  
Awat Geswein **Jim Ferris**  
Maurice Ribordy **Larry Holmes**  
Oscar Keller **Vic Baleja**

Two years later, two rinks went to Portage la Prairie and were successful in bringing the O'Grady back again. Rinks on this occasion were:

Lloyd Peckover **Earl Peckover**  
Ken Griffith **Ron Nichol**  
Gilbert Cretton **Henry Buss**  
Glenn Brown **Louis Duvenaud**

The club defended it twice, against Edwin and Roland, but lost it to Altamont.

It can't be recalled that an eight-ender was ever made in the Sperling rink, but back in 1917, a rink accomplished this feat in the Winnipeg Bonspiel. Members of this rink were Duncan Stewart, George Peckover, Bud Myers, and Dan Peckover.

A few curlers still go to Carman periodically to curl with their club.

The old rink has been demolished and an attempt to raise money for a new complex was a failure. Possibly, when a new rink is built in the area, the sport of curling will be revived.

## SPERLING LADIES' CURLING CLUB

This may not be an accurate coverage of the ladies' curling club, as all the records were lost in the fire not long ago.

In the early years, the ladies curled in the old rink with the men, and later had a ladies' club. The first president was Mrs. Jake Tjaden; the first secretary, Mrs. Doc Bowman. Some of the ladies that curled then were: Mrs. J. Tjaden, Mrs. Bowman, Miss Martin, Mrs. Lynne Brown, Mildred Burnett, Mrs. Verge, Mrs. Harry Steeves, Mrs. Lorne Davison, Mrs. Frank Kavener, and Mrs. T. Hobbs. They had the occasional bonspiel and one time, Mrs. Brown won a prize of a pair of heavyweight silk stockings, which she never got to show, as the ladies wore long skirts - also coats and toques.

The rink burned down in 1918 and was replaced in 1921. The contractor was a Mr. Hanson, who lived on the land where Pfrimmers now live, and came from U.S.A. The new building had two sheets of curling ice, and all of the other necessary equipment. The ladies again curled with the men until 1928, when the ladies organized again. Times were tough and the club folded. Some ladies curling were Mrs. Foulston, Mae Skeavington, Mrs. Graham, Minnie Griffiths, Evelyn Lathan, Margaret Nichol, Hazel Bausman, Lynne Brown, Gert and Beth Gehring and some of the High school boys.

The ladies tried again in 1934 and since that time have had a strong active club. They have been a member of the M.L.C.A. for many years, a few of the ladies having served on the M.L.C.A. board as district representatives. Girls from the high school, ladies from Homewood and Brunkild, have curled with the Sperling gals at different times.

The men's bonspiel was always a very busy time for the lady curlers. They provided and served some of the lunches during the week and also served the 'Big Banquet', which many curlers said were 'the best banquets ever served at any bonspiel'. I would be very remiss at this time if I did not mention the ladies of the district who worked and also helped to provide the food for the banquet.

In 1963, the club's first life members were honored - 30 years of active curling and a dedicated interest in the club. They received a life membership certificate and gold bar. Mrs. Lynne Brown and Hazel Pederson were the first to receive this honor. Many ladies have received their certificates and bars since, 25 years being the membership criteria now. Some of the ladies are: Mrs. A.K. Brown, Hazel Bausman, Beth Waddell, Kae Ferris, Beryle Peckover, Sylvia Bell, Margaret Wurmnest, Mamie Wilson, Aggie Koop, Anna Tjaden, Winnie Duvenaud, Anna Dennischuk, Evelyn Griffiths, Jean Cretton.

The ladies have had wonderful cooperation from the men during the years and for this we can proudly say, "Thank you fellow curlers". Each year, the ladies had a local bonspiel when rinks were invited from the surrounding towns. Then we had a few open bonspiels, where no invitation was required. It was great until the number of rinks wishing to curl could not be accommodated on six sheets of ice. Each year the Marg

Wurmnest trophy was presented to the rink winning the most games in the winter's curling.

A number of the ladies have competed in the zone playoffs - a few made it to the final playoff, only to fall by the wayside.

In 1975, the Sperling rink was torn down and once again, there was no curling. The ladies joined with the Brunkild ladies. In 1977, Brunkild decided to use their ice for skating so once again the club is no longer active.

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*Sperling Ladies' Curling Bonspiel, 1954. Alice Bilodeau, Margaret Dracass, Alma Fewster, Kae Ferris (Skip).*

## BASEBALL

Baseball was organized in 1910, with Mac McNeil as Manager. The first team consisted of Bill Waddell, Joe Duffy, Ernie Gibson, Alex Beecham, George Kirby, Mac McNeil, Andrew Mogk, Con. Mogk, Ed Berry, Hans Wagner. Teams played were Morris, Roland, Carman, Brigenly and Lowe Farm. The rivalry between Carman and Sperling was pretty keen at this time, with frequent explosive confrontations, sometimes an opposing team having to be escorted out of town, for the continued safety of everyone involved!

Joe Duffy pitched on this team for two years, then Alex Johnston took over. Johnston was quite a fast ball pitcher and Billy Waddell, the catcher, used to put a piece of steak in his mitt to protect his hand. Bud Meyers, Fred Gilbert, Sam Dracass and George Parker joined the team in 1912. The executive of the club at this time was Art Hobbs, Secretary; T.C. Sparling, President; and Frank Dillion of the Northern Crown Bank. The home games were played in R. H. Waddell's pasture.

There were league competition between towns in the surrounding districts, and ball tournaments played at country fairs, at this time Sperling won their share of the laurels.

Some of the players on teams from 1914-1922 were Harry Nichol, Sheldon Waddell, Joe Anderson, Earl Waddell, Waddy Watson, Al Waddell, Tom Curdt, Harry Rose, Wilbur and Burb Snyder, Tom Cox, Jack Warkentin and Johnny Davidson, who went on to play in Winnipeg and was considered one of the best pitchers in the Senior League, being the only Winnipeg pitcher to defeat the House of David team.



*TOP: Early Sperling ball team, 1900.*

*ABOVE: 1910 team. STANDING: Ed Barry, Alex Beechamp, Mr. T. C. Sparling, Don McNeil, Billie Waddell, SITTING: Wagner, Tim Anderson, Ernie Gibson, Joe Duffy, George Kirby.*

*TOP, LEFT: C.B. McNulty, first baseman on 1922, Morris Baseball Club, Senior Amateur Baseball Championship of Manitoba.*

*TOP, RIGHT: Sperling ball team, late 30's? Alex MacLean, Stewart Young,*



*Sperling Spinners, 1979. BACK ROW: Clive Dales, Jeff Nicolajsen, Ken Kellar, Steve Nielsen, Bill Tjaden, Brian Dracass, Lee MacLean. FRONT ROW: Clary Skeavington, John Korne, Russell Nicolajsen, Jerry Charles, Jack Meldrum, Jim Curdt, Mel Ferris, Brian Waddell.*

*Lawrence Peckover, Sandy Johnson, Lloyd Peckover. FRONT ROW: Curt Jenkins, Don Waddell, Charlie Holmes, Bob Waddell, Homer Bausman. ABOVE: Sperling Boys' ball team, 1958. Coach M. Gehring. BACK ROW: Bernard Gehring, Ken Hiebert, Dennis Pederson, Sandy Soutar. MIDDLE ROW: Harold Archibald, Norman Bruce, Lyall Wilson, Glen Pederson. FRONT ROW: Bob Mogk, Kerry Young, Joe Bilodeau, Glen Hooper.*

Mac. McNulty came here from Morris in 1922. He formed a team acted as a playing coach. Some of the players playing under him during Mac's colorful sports career were: Scotty Moir, Smokey Harris, Leo Jerome, John Tjaden, Les Welsh, Don and Buck Hay, John and Marvin Fonger, Andy Mulligan, Murray Waddell and Percy Curdt. This team played some outstanding baseball in a league consisting of Portage la Prairie, Roland, Carman and Miami.

In 1937, a team was organized with Winston Mogk as Manager. It consisted of Milt Awrey, Ralph Mogk, Curtis and Charles Jenkins, Grant Welsh, Lefty Reynolds, Murray and Don Waddell and Murray Mogk. Milt Awrey was an outstanding pitcher for this team. The last war broke this team up. Other players on this team were John Tjaden, Lawrence Peckover, Charlie Holmes, Roy Morrish, Len Awrey, Homer Hamilton and Alex MacLean.

After the war, Minor Baseball was organized with Don Waddell and Curt Jenkins, the first President and Secretary of the league. Teams consisted of Roland, Sperling, Miami and Myrtle. Equipment and uniforms were provided by the local legion. During the last few years this league expanded to include six more towns, which included 23 teams of different ages. Later the coaches consisted of Martin Gehring, Ken Tjaden, Hank Bruce, Maurice Hyckaway and Don Waddell. The personnel of this team was: Bernard Gehring, Harold Archibald, Ken Heibert, Norman Bruce, Lyall Wilson, Dennis Petersen, Glen Petersen, Sandy Souter, Bob Mogk, Kerry Young, Joe Bilodeau, Glen Hooper.

During 1965-1978, interest in hardball fell off. With the introduction of television and various other sources of entertainment, plus the fact that playing ball is strenuous and hard work has caused baseball tournaments to become a thing of the past in this district.



## SPERLING GIRLS' BASEBALL 1920

Girls' softball also flourished in the early 1920's. These girls attended local sports days and fairs in the neighboring towns. The personnel for these teams were: Lillian Swanston, Mae Skeavington, Vi Skeavington, Norbert Tomley, Daisy Holmes, Eva Aubin, Jessie Smith, Bessy Curdt, Evelyn Peckover.



*Sperling Girls' Baseball team - 1920. BACK ROW: Jessie Smith, Bessie Curdt, Mae Skeavington, Evelyn Peckover. FRONT ROW: Lillian Smith, Daisy Holmes, Norbert Tomney, Eva Aubin, Vi Skeavington.*



*The 1950 team. BACK ROW: Margaret Skeavington, Mona Tjaden, Harriet Baleja, Jean Jackson, Irene Foster, Joan Nichol. FRONT ROW: Percy Curdt, Manager; Eileen Curdt, Yvonne Rose, Marion Dracass, Melva Skeavington, Doreen Dracass, D.R. Thom, Coach.*



*Sperling Girls' Softball team, 1955-. BACK ROW: Marg Rogers, Arlene Wilson, Barb Waddell, Kathy Wilson, Tanis Killeen, Inga Pedersen, Wilma Skeavington, Grace Peckover, Dot Rose, Verla Ferris, Helen Wilson. FRONT ROW: Norma Archibald, Bonnie Rose, Janie Koop.*

## SPERLING SKATING CLUB

The skating club was formed in 1950, with Debbie Mogk as president, and Mr. Petack and Ruby Skelton as teachers.

The teachers in following years were Evelyn Dollan, Joan Nichol, Albert Walker, Connie Hunt, Edwards Sisters, and Donalee Darlinger, Tanis Killeen, Kathy Wilson, Bonnie Rose, Janie Koop, taught for a year or so, until they joined the Pembina Skating Club. The older girls were allowed to tour Southern Manitoba with this group.

In 1955, the club put on a program without any professional help. This was a real accomplishment for Janie Koop, Kathy Wilson and Bonnie Rose, who compiled the show.



*ABOVE.. Tanis Killeen, Kathy Wilson, Bonnie Rose, Janie Koop, Darlene Cates as the "Dungaree Dolls". LEFT: Sandra Mogk, Noreen Bell, Judy Buss.*



*LEFT BELOW, Birdies: Linda Cates, Olive Holmes, Marlene Rose, Cheryl McKee, Corie Colpitts, Judy Dales, Debbie MacLean, Colleen Colpitts, Rhonda Ribordy, Gail Cretton. Taken at 1957 Sperling Carnival.*





## RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT, THEN AND NOW



### DANCING IN SPERLING

*Maude Skeavington*

Sperling dances were held for some years, before 1924, in Sperling's Hall above T.C. Sparling store, located where Sperling garage now is. After Sperling rink was built in 1921, some dances were held in the waiting rooms there. Luckily the school piano was in the rink when the school burned (and is still in use at the school). When a dance was planned for Sperling's Hall, six or eight men rode with Robert Davidson on his dray and brought the piano from the rink or school, and carried it up the long flight of stairs to the hall. Many dances were held in homes north of Sperling; also in Foulston's store.

*Hamilton, Bessie Brown, Aggie Koop, Alice Nicolajsen, bowling, 1976-77.*

*RIGHT: The com-huskers provided music at many Sperling dances. BELOW: Sperling Indian pageant at Carman Fair, July, 1929.*



*ABOVE: The cast of the skit "Sardines", 1934. Berniece Williamson, Etta Fewster, Fern Martin, Eldred Mogk, Dorothy Wilson. Mabelle Rance, ready for the Carnival. The Rose family snowmobiling. FAR LEFT: Annetta (Hobbs) Waddell on snowshoes. LEFT: Anna Denischuk, Helen*



## **SPERLING HISTORY**

### **A Tribute to Those Who Toiled**

The many pioneers of different origins and cultures who came to settle in this area, some before the turn of the century, found themselves living on a barren land, yet unbroken. Not even "One Tree Existed", neither growing or standing. A new country, yet to be developed. Yet, most of the early settlers stayed, despite the many hardships that lay before them.

It was through determination, hard work and faith that they made a livelihood for themselves and their descendants.

One has to marvel at the progress made by these pioneers, which even surpassed their most optimistic hopes, dreams and expectations.

The odds they faced, the obstructions they met during those early primitive years, is very difficult for us living in this present era to comprehend.

The heritage they left to the succeeding generations is indeed a rich tribute of sacrifice.

The achievements of our pioneers is a silent reminder that - "no man has builded alone", for by working and labouring together, they laid the cornerstones of our community today.

May we develop a better understanding and appreciation of the contributions of those who toiled for us, as the many pioneer stories are told in the following pages.

## **HISTORY OF THE DANES OF SPERLING**

In 1898, when the Mogk family came here from Ontario, there was a Dane by the name of Hans Pedersen, who had eighty acres of land on what is now known as the Wilson farm. A year or two later he sold it to the man who owned the other eighty, and bought the quarter section where George Webster now lives. Four or five years later he sold this and moved to Penticton where he bought a fruit farm. This is the first of the Danes known to have settled in or near Sperling.

In March 1914 Hans and Julie Andersen of Odell, Illinois, U.S.A. decided to move to Canada. Land agents told glowing stories of Manitoba, but forgot to tell of the hardships. Hans and his nephew rode in the boxcars (freight cars) and looked after the livestock. It took eighteen days. They were side-tracked on sidings several times. A month later Julie, her daughter Anna, and two year old son, Charles, also came north, by train. In the summer of 1915, Julie's parents, Lauretitz and Anna Lauritzen came and lived with them. Grandma passed away in Sept. 1919, and Grandad in Nov. 1920. In the fall of 1919 Hans Andersen bought land at Fannystelle and moved there.

Hans and Julie Andersen and their two boys Charles and Norman moved back to the States leaving their daughter (Mrs. August Schuman) Anna at Fannystelle, where she and her husband lived until they retired, moving to Winnipeg.

Quite a few families of Danish origin came with a trainload of Americans in 1920, and bought land around Sperling. Among these were Chris Sorensens and Jens and Peter Andersens. The latter's son Simon met a very tragic death by burning in 1923. Peter Andersen died in 1924.

Chris Sorensens farmed till 1928 on the farm later known as the Trier Andersen farm. They had their adopted son Leslie Hansen living with them, and in 1928 they returned to the States.

Peter Andersen's farm was what was known as the farm which Harry Ortman farmed, Harry Ortman later bought it, Harry first went to Saskatchewan in 1925, before coming to Sperling. Another Danish fellow lived with Harry and worked for him in the summer. Espen Espensen was his name. Harry died at the age of eighty-four.

Mogens Nielsen was the next to come. In 1919 he came to the Elie, Fannystelle area and from there moved to a farm two miles north of Watts along the river. He was joined by his brother Andrew and Anton. They batched in poor accommodations which offered little in the way of comforts. The Watts were a great help in those early years of hardship. Mogens later married Magna Pedersen. In those early days life was a struggle and luxuries non-existent. It was a very lonesome time indeed. Mrs. Watt taught her to make bread, etc. and Magna taught Jean Watt to embroider, crochet, etc. The Nielsen home was home to many Danish chaps. They later moved to S.W. 24-6-2. From there they moved to the Monarch Farm, S.W. 4-6-2. In 1932 they moved to the Davison farm, S.W. 32-6-2. They maintained this home and one in Winnipeg till 1965, when their son and his wife and family took over the family farm. Their daughter married Jack Swain and live on the E. 1 / 2 15-6-3. Magna Nielsen died in 1972, and Mogens died in 1974.

Anton Nielsen, Mogens Nielsen's brother stayed in Canada for about 6 years, returning to Denmark to care for his aging mother. He spent some time in the Danish army and died in Denmark.

Andrew Nielsen, Mogens' brother spent several years in Canada's north and guided the first Government survey ship along the shores of Great Bear Lake. He suffered many hardships while there, and wrote many short stories. His book (Danish version) was sent to Denmark at the time of the German invasion. Unfortunately it was never published. There was also an English version. He married and later moved to Flin Flon where he and his wife and family of six, resided for many years, where they both died.

Carl Nielsen came in 1924, moving to Winnipeg and later to Sperling. He farmed east of Sperling for a few years, and then he and his wife, who was also Danish, moved north of Sperling. They retired to the village of Sperling in 1957, moving to Winnipeg in 1967. They both died in 1978.

Jens Miller came to work for Yankee Brown's in 1928. He later farmed on the Herman Hein's place, moving to Sanford in 1936, from there to Hazelridge. He and his wife retired to Winnipeg and later to the west coast.

Swensen, the barber, started up a barbershop in the Sperling Hotel. Haircuts then were 25¢. He stayed for



*Danish church service at the home of Albertson. LEFT: Rev. Boigger, O. Jensen, Anita Nielson, Maja Anderson, Ada McGhie, Trier Anderson, Anne Nicolajsen. RIGHT: Anderson, Tena Nielson, Mogens Nielson.*

two years, then moved to Brunkild. He later returned to Denmark, where he married.

Pete Hansen came in 1928 and worked for both Pete and Carl Nicolajsen, Fred Gehring, and Trier Andersen. Then he moved to Ostenfeld where he bought 5 acres, returning to Sperling for the summers, and later retiring in Ostenfeld.

Henry Burgwald farmed the Grover Farm, where Pete Nicolajsen farmed and lived for 26 years.

Pete Nielsen farmed in the Sperling area for several years, later moving to Seven Sister Falls to work for the town. He and his wife had a family of 2 boys and 1 girl. They both died when their families were young. They were raised by Mogens and Magna Nielsen at Sperling.

Erhardt Ankersen worked for a number of farmers in the Sperling area in the late 1920's, he moved to Winnipeg and worked as a baker for years. He returned to Sperling to help on the farm and later retiring to Winnipeg.

Carl Albertsen came to Sperling in 1924, he worked around Sperling for several years before buying a farm. In 1936 he married Minnie (Bausman) and they lived on a farm southwest of town 8 years. They later moved to N.E. 114 17-6-3. They had three girls. Carl died in 1951. He is survived by his widow, Minnie and the three girls, Louise (Mrs. John Stewart), Else (Mrs. Floyd Manz) and Carol (Mrs. Brian Dickinson) and four grandchildren.

John Madsen (known as big John) came to Canada in 1924. He came to Elie and later to Sperling where he had a garage and machine agency. The garage burned in 1935 and John moved to Selkirk where he married. They have a family of four boys. John worked as a mechanic in Ontario, Saskatchewan and later moved back to Sperling for a few years. They now reside in Winnipeg.

Ingwold Burskow worked for Trier Andersen, Mogens Nielsen, Carl Albertsen, and also for Earnest Findlay, he later bought the southwest 114 of 14-6-3 where Ervin Mauseth now farms. He later married and moved to Winnipeg.

In 1926, two brothers, Pete and Carl Nicolajsen came to Sperling, and worked in the district for a couple of years. Together they farmed the Golden farm, where John Chop later farmed. Pete married in 1928, and

farmed the Burgwold place for twenty-six years. In 1955 they moved to one further east, moved to Sperling in 1967. They raised two children, Peter, and Anne (Mrs. Arthur Last). Pete and Alice Nicolajsen enjoyed four trips to England (Alice's homeland) and Denmark. In 1975 the highlight of the trip for Pete was to show Anne and Arthur his home and surroundings, where he was raised. They retired in 1974. Alice passed away in 1978.

Carl Nicolajsen farmed northwest of Sperling in the Garnett district, for a number of years, later moving to the Morrison farm 36-6-3 two and a half miles west of Sperling. He retired to Sperling in 1974.

Elif Jorgensen left Denmark for Saskatchewan in 1929. He later bought a farm southwest of Sperling in 1934. Moving to Sperling in 1975, where he still resides.

Aage Jensen came to the Sperling area in 1924, returning to Denmark to be married in 1927, they lived in Canada for a few years, and then returned to Denmark.

Trier Andersen came with his wife and two daughters in 1923, but settled first in Saskatchewan. They came to Sperling in 1926, they farmed east of Sperling for quite a number of years, in 1934 they moved to S.W. 17-6-2 and retired to Sperling in 1973. Otto was born east of Sperling. Trier passed away in 1977.

There were several other Danish chaps who came to work in the Sperling area during the summers. Rudolph ??? worked for Alfred Pedersen, Johannas ??? worked for Carl Nielsen, Jens Paulsen worked for Martin Gehring for a few years, John and Peter Matthiesen immigrated to Manitoba in 1929. Both were qualified journeymen, blacksmiths and machinists, but had to promise to work as farmhands due to immigration policy. John was hired by Walter Jacobsen, Oak Bluff, and Peter worked at the Leslie Dairy farm in the same district. After eighteen months Peter decided that he did not like Canada and returned to Denmark, where he got married and took over his step-father's business. In 1930 John worked for John Madsen in Sperling, following that he worked at Brunkild, then for Kane Construction in Fort Garry. While with Kane Construction he spent some time during 1936 working on the building of the Mafeking highway in Northern Manitoba. In 1937 he bought a blacksmiths shop in Sperling from Gordon Waddell and continued in business there until the outbreak of World War II, when he accepted employment with McDonald Aircraft in Winnipeg. He worked as a foreman for McDonalds until the end of the war. In 1942 he married Jean Watt and they made their home in Old Kildonan until 1950 when they moved to Calgary. In August 1977, he was accidentally killed in a tractor accident. He is survived by his widow, Jean and two daughters; Mrs. Helen Harvey who is a high school teacher and Mrs. Barbara Howes, a petroleum engineer, and three grandsons.

Alfred Pedersen came to Sperling in April 1927, he worked for Amos Ribordy for one year, then bought a half section of land and worked for Trier Andersen for a few years and used Trier's machinery to put his own crop in. Crops weren't good in those years, so Alfred went to the bush to cut wood to make enough money to put the next years crop in. It took twenty years to pay for a half section plus his machinery. In 1937 he married Hazel

Hausman. They raised five children, Inga (Mrs. Roy Livingston) Starbuck, Dennis of Newdale, Glen of Calgary, Peggy (Mrs. Ken Worth) Stettler, Alberta, and Shelley, of Stettler, Alberta. In 1961 Alfred sold his farm at Sperling, and bought a section of land at Newdale, retiring in 1965 due to ill health, and moved into Newdale. Alfred passed away January 14th, 1972. He is survived by his widow, Hazel and family and 5 grandchildren.

Vlademar Pedersen, Alfred's brother came over with Alfred, spent some time at Sperling, and later worked in the mines in Ontario. He died there in 1971.

For quite a few years they held Danish Lutheran Church once a month in the various homes, a Danish minister coming out from Winnipeg to conduct the services, and having a good social time among themselves. All the Danish children arriving in those years were baptized at those services. Now the ones living here are all Canadian Citizens, and able to speak the language, and take their part in the community together with others of different origin.



*Gathering of Americans at "Yankee" Brown's farm.*

#### SWISS AND t SETTLERS

It was in 1906 that Maurice Rose and J. Delalaye first arrived in Sperling. They had left Switzerland in 1901 and had settled in the U.S. It was there they met Joe Grundler who told them of the opportunities in this district. They brought some farm equipment with them. In a year or so they were followed by Emile Ribordy and the Martinets. In 1912 Maurice Bourgeois came and in 1921 Maurice and Marcel Cretton came to this district directly from Switzerland. These people mentioned above are French- speaking Swiss. Only one French family came here to live permanently, this was Claude Duvenaud who arrived with his family in 1913. Louis Lafond also from France lived for a number of years in the district.



*Swiss Reunion with the M. Cretton and L. Motile families.*

## THE MENNONITE SETTLEMENT SOUTHEAST OF SPERLING

*by Harry Olfert*

*"Yes, we, settlers at Sperling, had great hope, after one crop failure to receive a good harvest, but we had set our expectations too high. The Lord had willed it differently ... We still hope even now, because our God is still alive and He can also do miracles today. He that waits on the Lord, will not be disappointed." I.*

These words are written in 1928 by one of the pioneers or first settlers in the Mennonite settlement southeast of Sperling. They reflect the hope and the faith which sustained the settlers through those difficult years.

They were the Russlaender. The ones who had left their motherland to come to a new and unknown land to gain for themselves and their children a new life - a life that would give them their daily needs, a life that would allow them to work and to prosper, a life of peace, and above all a life in which they would be able to enjoy the freedom of worship. This home had lessened the pain of leaving the old country, friends, and relatives, as well as the difficulty of the ocean passage and the temporary family separations due to Canadian immigration requirements. The arrival in a new land was, however, not the end of hardships and difficulties. Many adjustments had to be made. Not only did they have to gain the acceptance and the co-operation of the environment, but also of their new neighbors. After all they were foreigners in a new land; they were the Russlaender. The story is told of a teacher at the Neufeld School asking his students, "Where is Russia?" One of the students apparently was quick to reply, "Three miles north". Thus it was that this new settlement came to be referred to as "Little Moscow" by some neighbors, as "The Settlement" by others, and by the new settlers and their children simply as "The Bunch".

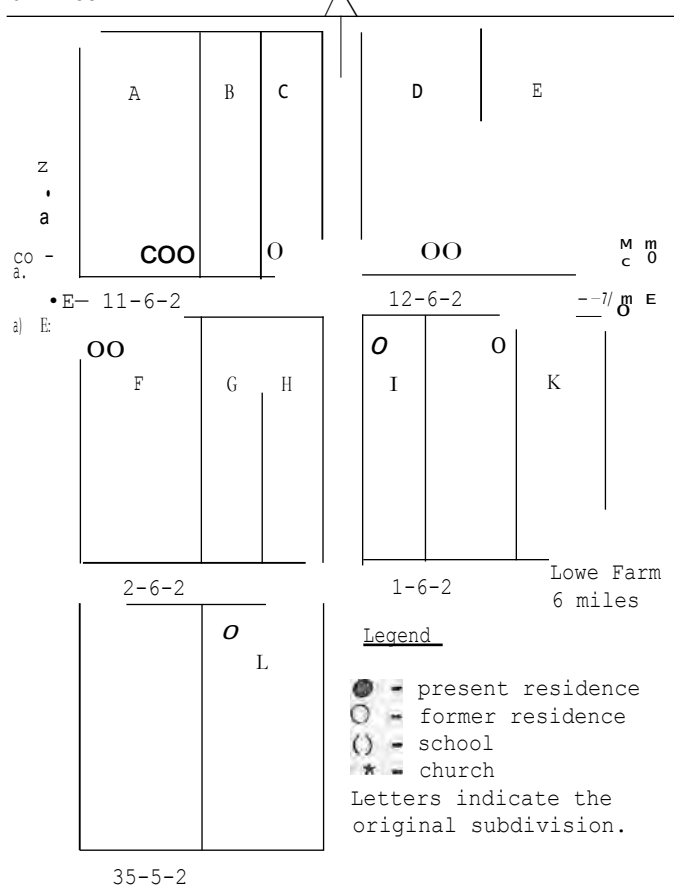
The settlement sprang up on land legally described as being Sections 1, 2, 11 and 12 of Township 6, and Section 35 of Township 5 in Range 2 West. (Fig. 1) The new settlers were all recent immigrants from the different Mennonite colonies in Russia, who through the assistance of the Mennonite Board of Colonization and Immigration, now found themselves forming a new community in a new country.

Wilhelm Martens, one of the new settlers, was appointed to negotiate with the land company. It was



Mollard  
5 miles

NORTH



#### SECTION 2-6-2

Parcel F - Johann Olfert (Sr) 1927  
John Olfert (Jr)  
Dietrich Enns  
Ronald Enns - south quarter 1979  
Henry Bartel - north quarter 1979

Parcel G - Johann Olfert (Sr)  
Dietrich Enns  
William Schroeder (rented by D. Enns)  
Dietrich Enns  
Ronald Enns 1979

Parcel H - Henry Falk 1927  
Johann Martens (Sr)  
George Martens  
Herbert Martens  
Clarence Siemens 1979 (Herb Martens own and lives on the original farmyard)

#### SECTION 1-6-2

Parcel 1 - Johann Martens (Sr) 1927  
George Martens  
Art and Hilda (Martens) Kasper (80 acres)  
Rudy Martens (80 acres) 1979  
Henry Bartel (80 acres) 1979

Parcel J - Dietrich Warkentin 1927  
Wilhelm Martens  
Henry Bartel 1979

Parcel K - Peter Schmidt 1927  
Abe Schmidt  
John Schmidt  
Ken Loewen 1979

#### SECTION 35-5-2

Parcel L - Wilhelm Martens  
and  
Johann Martens (Jr) 1927  
Jacob Peters (rented??? owned???)  
Anna Koop  
and  
Peter Koop  
Klassen Family (This land was farmed by the Matthies for many years)

NOTE: Of the original four and a half sections only one and five eighths are farmed or owned by families who can trace their ancestry to the original settlers. Today's residents are: David Froeses, Edward Froeses, Herb Martenses, Abram Paetkaus and Johanna, Henry Bartels, Ken Loewens, Dietrich and Ronald Enns.

Original subdivision and history of ownership.

#### SECTION 11-6-2

Parcel A - David Froese (Sr) 1927  
Cornelius Froese  
David Froese (Jr) 1979

Parcel B - Cornelius Froese 1927  
David Martens (East 80)  
David Froese (Jr) 1979

Parcel C - David Quiring 1927  
Johann Martens (Jr) 1979

#### SECTION 12-6-2

Parcel D - Abram Olfert 1927  
Isaac Friesen  
Abram Paekau 1979

Parcel E - Isaac Penner  
and  
Johann A. Olfert 1927  
Jake Janzen  
Dietrick Enns  
Ken Loewen 1979 (D. Enns owns and lives on the 20 acre farmyard.)



Star, maybe this school should be called the First Sunbeam. The name was finally handed down by government of the day as Cannon. (It appears that this was in honor of one of the government ministers whose name happened to be Cannon. Thus Cannon School District No. 2297 had come into being. The school at first administered by an official trustee, however, in 1948 the operation of the school was turned over to local control. A board was elected and Dietrich Enns was elected chairman with Abram Paetkau as secretary-treasurer. (Paetkaus had moved on to the west half of Section 12-6-2. This section had originally been owned by Abram Olfert; later Isaac Friesen farmed here and then the Paetkaus arrived in 1948).

The beginning of the end came in the fall of 1955 when the John Olfert family moved to Winnipeg reducing the school population to about half a dozen students. The school remained open for one more year and then was consolidated with Lowe Farm. In due course the building was sold on auction to Johann Martens, as was the land. This land had earlier been purchased from the Martens.

Perhaps the feature of the community which at first caused some dissension but later was a unifying force, and a force which caused the immediate community to draw in a much larger community, was the church. The first settlers were all Mennonites, yet associated with two different Mennonite churches. Some were adherents of the General Conference Mennonite Church while the others were adherents of the Mennonite Brethren Church. In the early days before they had a church building the services were held in the homes on an alternating basis. The services were also lead on an alternating basis, i.e. on one Sunday the General Conference Mennonites were responsible for the service and next Sunday the Mennonite Brethren were in charge. Later on the two groups met separately. On June 3, 1932 the local Mennonite Brethren became officially affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Manitoba, and in 1938 a building was purchased for a sum of \$500.00. This building was the Old Tremont School and was moved to the location on the southwest corner of 12-6-2. The church became a focal point for many families in the surrounding area. The spiritual leadership was in the hands of the local residents such as, Johann Martens (Sr.), Abram Olfert (Sr.), Johann Martens (Jr.), Peter Hildebrandt, and others.

It is interesting to note in reports written of weddings and funerals in the early days that the community fathers were not only fulfilling their roles as father in the home but were also involved in serving in the church as ministers, choir leaders, etc. For a period of time Rev. Gerhard Neufeld of Steinbach and Rosenort served the church as minister. Throughout the history of the community the church was dependent on the services of travelling ministers. In letters to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* during the early days of the community special mention was made of the services rendered by Jacob A. Penner from Osborne, Jacob B. Penner from Kronstal, Elder Bueckert, Elder J.B. Klassen, Herman A. Neufeld, and Wilhelm Dyck from Gnadenthal. In later years most will remember the services of the Steinbach ministers Epp and Schroeder, the Elm Creek ministers

Enns, Funk, and Wiens, as well as Rev. Heinrichs from Lowe Farm. In the later years the Sperling M.B. Church officially became an affiliate of the Elm Creek Church. On May 11, 1967 the church had its last membership meeting. At this meeting it was decided to dissolve the church since two more families (the George Martens and Peter Hildebrandts) were planning to move to Winnipeg. The building was sold on public auction in 1968 to David Froese. (David Froese is one of the two residents at "The Bunch" today who arrived in 1927 as a child and is still living there, even though he did spend one winter in Winnipeg. The other resident is Ditrich Enns, who sold his farm in 1975 and today is living on the old farmyard in semi-retirement.) Since the dissolution of the church and changes in the community, the residents of today are worshipping in the churches of the surrounding communities of Lowe Farm and Rosenort.

Today the cemetery located next to the old church site is a quiet memorial of the many people who lived in this community or were attracted to it by church, school, or friends. Thus the names of Grauman, Janzen, Klassen, Goertzen, Hildebandt, and others bring back memories of the larger community of "The Bunch". The immediate community always experienced change. These changes have been outlined on Fig. No. 2. As children grew up they married and moved elsewhere. Others left to go to high school, university or simply to get a job. Few stayed to farm. 1955 saw not only the Olfert family move to Winnipeg but also the Wilhelm Martens family. The Olfert fram was left vacant while the Martens farm was sold to the Henry Bartels from Meade, Kansas. A short time later the George Martens and the David Froeses moved to Winnipeg, but this only for one winter. When the Johann Martens moved to Winnipeg their farm remained vacant. The Schmidt farm, after having been farmed by Abe and then John, was sold to Ken Loewen of Rosenort. The Loewens together with the Bartels injected another Mennonite denomination into the community during the late 50's and 60's.

In the early days the towns of Sperling and Lowe Farm were the centres of business and postal service, however, now Rosenort must be added to the list of service centres.

This writer has been away from "The Bunch" since 1955, however, together with others was instrumental in organizing a fiftieth anniversary and reunion in July of 1976. It became apparent during the organization period and during the celebration that the one-time residents or participants in the community life at "The Bunch" were now spread over all of North America, and some had even lived on other continents. It was amazing to see that from this 1927 farming community we still had some farmers, but others had entered a variety of vocations and professions, yet all the celebrants were able to share experiences of their roots at "The Bunch". Many were awed by the sacrifices made by their forefathers, who gave up everything in Russia in order to come to Canada to raise their children in peace and freedom, particularly the freedom to worship God. Their dedication and fortitude is an inspiration to the younger generations of the 70's. When heavy rains caused the destruction of their crops, they worked even harder to establish a home for their children. It was this memory which was honored by



*Dedication of the cairn at Mennonite settlement at Sperling. Speaker is Rev. Peter Schmidt.*

the erection of a cairn on the cemetery site. The words chosen for the plaque were taken from Romans 5:4 and 5.

*"Tribulation produces patience  
Patience produces experience  
Experience produces hope  
This hope does not disappoint."*



*Unveiling of the cairn in 1976 by David Froese, John Martens, and Rev. John Martens (oldest living original settlers).*

Following the dedication, one of the surviving pioneers remarked that the most important part of the verse had been omitted. That part of the verse says "This hope does not disappoint, for God has poured out His love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us". He was telling the younger generations that the achievements of our forefathers were not to be credited to the people only, but to the God they worshipped and walked with day by day. And thus, as memories of the early days, of Peter Olfert's store, of Dave Martens' fur farm, of school days at Lone Star and Cannon, as well as Lowe Farm and Rosenort, of thanksgiving celebrations and the accompanying ball game, of the joys of births, and the grief of deaths flood our memories we are challenged to put our hand in the hand of God so that the present generation may have the same dedication and fortitude to build homes, communities, and yes, a country of which we all can be proud.

FOOTNOTE: 1. These quotations have been taken from the *Mennonitische Rundschau* and translated into English.

## A HISTORY OF THE ABRY FAMILY

*submitted by Peter B.*

As the second decade of the 20th century drew to a close, the price of land in the State of Illinois was soaring to unprecedented high levels. Consequently many farm folk were attracted to the much cheaper but equally productive land in the Province of Manitoba.

One of the American citizens to come to Manitoba at this time was Louis Elmer Abry, who had been recently married to the much younger school teacher from Livingston County in Illinois, Miss Frances Elizabeth Coleman. Married on October 5, 1915 at the St. Thomas the Apostle Roman Catholic Church on 55th and Kinbark Avenue, Chicago, they purchased the south half and northeast quarter of Section 8-6-2 from Arthur King Brown on August 15, 1919, and moved to the Sperling community the following year, arriving in the City of Winnipeg on the Great Northern during a typical March blizzard on the second day of the month.

In February of 1920, through the General Passenger Agency of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, Louis Abry organized a trainload of settlers and their possessions to come to Sperling to begin a new life here. Consisting of 44 freight cars and two coaches, this train left on the first of March and the group arrived at Sperling on a beautiful day just after the storm, on March 6, 1920, with people from Fairbury, Pontiac, Odell, Dwight, Gardner and Joliet.



*Mr. and Mrs. Louis Abry.*

Louis Abry, born on March 28, 1882 in Nevada Township (Odell), proceeded to cultivate his land with all the equipment purchased from A.K. Brown. The northwest quarter of this section, leased by Mr. Abry at this time, was still partly unbroken pasture and used as pasture for his cattle until he broke and back-set it after a few years.

Frances Coleman Abry was born in Chicago on the 22nd day of February, 1892, of a well-to-do family, and was fortunate in being able to obtain a good education in a fashionable boarding school (Saint Xavier) destined to become a lawyer, but settling for the teaching profession when family fortunes broke. She taught school for three

and a half years in Livingston County prior to her marriage and coming to Sperling.

On September 5, 1930, Louis Edward, their only child, was born in the old Carman Hospital, and was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. Since there was no Catholic church in Sperling until 1935, services were attended in Carman and St. Jean from time to time, but, the distance being prohibitive, local families sought to establish the St. Theresa Catholic Church in the town of Sperling. At that time there were about nine families involved, who each contributed towards the purchase of a local residence gone up for taxes and available for \$750.00. This building was subsequently renovated and given the appearance of a church sanctuary with the addition of an appropriate steeple.

Both Louis and Frances Abry were active in community affairs. Louis was an active member of the Manitoba Pool Elevator Association and served on its Board for a number of terms in the years from 1934 to 1947, including one term as the President of the Board (1943-45), and also served two terms as a Director of Sperling Co-op Oil and Supplies in the late 30's and early 40's. He passed away on January 11, 1954 after some years of ill health and a year's hospitalization due to a hardening of the arteries condition, and was laid to rest at the St. Boniface Basilica on January 14, 1954.

After the passing of Louis Sr., Frances C. Abry continued to live in the house on the farm another nine and a half years, at which time she moved into her own house in Sperling built for her by Peter Giesbrecht of Carman. Just previously, in November 1962, through the agency of Cornelius B. McNulty, Mrs. Abry sold the south half and rented the northeast quarter of Section 8-6-2 to Peter B. Paetkau. She continued to live in her house in town until the time of her sudden death on September 1, 1968. Her funeral took place in our Lady of Mount Carmel in Carman, Father Jeanneau officiating. Louis Jr. continues to live by himself in the house in Sperling.

## **ROBERT ANDERSON (BOB)**

Born in Auguston, Ontario in 1885, one of a family of eleven children. Bob came west to Manitoba in 1904.

He married Elizabeth Cowie, a native of Motherwell, Scotland, who came to the Sperling District in 1916.

Bob and Elizabeth raised four sons and three daughters. They farmed in the Sperling area some forty years except for a few years at Lydiatt, Man. He passed away in March 1951. Elizabeth now lives in the Legion Lodge, Carman, Man.

*Gordon Charles:* Born July 31, 1920. Married Ruth Jackson of Rosebank, Man. 1951. Previous to her marriage Ruth worked in the Bank of Commerce at Carman. They farmed at Sperling for fifteen years, then moved to Carman where Gordon is employed at Carduff Farm Serve, and Ruth works as bookkeeper for Circle Three feedlot near Carman. They have two children; *Jill* born in 1952 - married Allen Halstead of Myrtle in 1975. They reside in Morden. *Robert* born in 1953 - married Deborah Rose of Kane, Man. They reside in Carman.

*Andrew Ross* Born Oct. 31, 1921. Served in World War II. On his return he came back to the Sperling area where he married in 1952 to Jean Jackson of Rosebank. Ross has been manager of Sperling Co-op Oil since 1952. Jean taught many years in the area and is now principal of Sperling School. They have one daughter Annabelle, born in 1953. *Annabelle* chose banking as her career. She was married in 1978 to Roland Bauche. They reside in Portage La Prairie.

*Marion* Born July, 1923. Worked for Man. Telephones at Sperling and married Melvin Anderson of Morris. They farm at Morris. Marion and Mel have been community minded folks, devoting their time and talents to many organizations in the district. Marion and Mel have 5 children - 3 boys and two girls.

*June* who was born June, 1928, taught school briefly on permit, then married Wilfred Roberts of Homewood. They farmed in the Homewood area for a number of years - then moved to Winnipeg where Wilf is employed by the City of St. James. June is Staff administrator for the three municipal hospitals. She had taken up nursing after the birth of their seventh child. They have 6 girls and one boy: Linda, Karen, Joan, Barbara, Frank, Nellie-Daune and Sandra.

*Betty* was born May, 1931. She taught school for two years on permit then was a dancing instructor before her marriage to Wm. Jewell. They live at Rosser, Manitoba, and have a family of three boys and two girls, Billy, Terry, Jamie, Shirley and Ruthie. Betty's love of animals has been passed on to her children and their farm is a veritable zoo. Betty never refuses any animal a home, even Lisa the Lioness, who was temporarily sheltered at the Jewell farm.

*Robert Jr. (Bob)* was born September, 1933. He married Corinne Shilson of Carman, Manitoba, in 1958. After some years in Winnipeg they were transferred by Hudson Bay Wholesale to Victoria, B.C. They have two sons, Jimmie, now working in Calgary, and Brent at home attending school, and one daughter, Dona, also attending school.

*Allan* born May, 1936. Worked for Sperling Coop Oil for a short while, then after a stint in the Airforce, married Marion Rudd of Morden, Manitoba, in 1958. Worked in various areas of Manitoba and Saskatchewan with machinery companies and is presently working with John Deere at Olds, Alberta. They have two sons and one daughter. Glenn is with the Navy in Halifax and married to Linda Jenkins. Dennis and Shelley are at home.

## **THE ARCHIBALD FAMILY (1911-1979)**

The Archibald brothers, Angus, Jack and Fulton (known as Archie and William) were born in a little town in Debert, Nova Scotia. They had two sisters, who stayed in Nova Scotia, Angus, the oldest, came west on the harvest train, in 1911.

They played stunts on the train - he told about going into a farmer's turnip field and pulling them and throwing them in the train; also pulling a plug on a molasses barrel and the black stuff ran all over the station platform.

Angus worked the first fall for a farmer in the Oakville district then went back to Nova Scotia after the harvest and came west to Sperling in 1912, where he resided.

He worked for Alfred Mollard, for whom Mollard Siding was named.

In the 20's, the three brothers farmed east of Mollard Siding, then in 1928, they were hailed and flooded out.

Angus went to Sperling and worked for Robert Davidson's local Dray, delivery service. In later years, Angus bought the business. In the early days, all the produce, groceries, coal and lumber came by train; it was the work of the local drayman and his helpers to unload the cars as quickly as possible. They also had the delivery business and in the winter it was team and cutter, as transportation.

The doctors Cunningham, Jamieson and McGavin, came from Carman and Angus or Robert Davidson drove them around the district and to neighboring towns, often going to Brunkild, Manitoba.

In 1918, the year of the flu, they drove the doctors almost day and night to the farm homes, often arriving too late. Also many babies were born at home, and the doctors were called at all hours.

He often mentioned that Dr. McGavin always carried a big bag of chocolates in his fur coat pack to nibble on and I believe he never took the flu.

On another trip, he was driving Dr. John Martin, the Sperling local veterinarian. They had been to see several sick animals and on the way home, north of Mollard, they got lost, as it was storming and bitterly cold, so 'Doc' as he was called, got out of the cutter, took the horses by the head and tramped around till he found the road. Then Angus let the horses take the reins. They arrived back in Sperling, cold and weary and hungry.

Angus drove a school van for many years and he often told us how the children would pile on one side to make the van upset in the deep snow. The school van was also used to drive the young people to the dances at the small country schools. What fun that was!

In 1934, Angus married Janet, known as Jean MacLean of Sperling. We had five children: Clifford, Eleanor, Norma, Delle and Harold. All are married now and we have fourteen grandchildren. In 1942, we went to Homewood and farmed for Dr. Arnold Stobart, a government veterinarian. They were happy years as Angus loved the farm, as we all did.

After eleven years, we moved back to Sperling and Angus was caretaker of the school for eleven years. At that time, all local activities were held in the school. It was school all day and activities at night, lots of extra work.

He retired in October, 1963, and he passed away in March, 1964 in Winnipeg, after spending the winter in Powell River, British Columbia.

## **JACK ARCHIBALD**

Jack Archibald came west and worked for Mr. T.C. Sparling on a farm. When the war started, he joined the Army and went overseas. He came back to Sperling when the war was over. He farmed and then got married. He

and wife, Zoe, went into the bakery business in the former Art Hobbs drugstore.

He moved to Port Arthur for years. He retired and is living in Victoria, British Columbia.

They have five children living. They lost one son, while living in Sperling. Archie took off after the farming experience to the United States. He joined the Army and went overseas. After the war, he lived in Chicago, Illinois. He married and had one son and three grandchildren. He passed away in 1958. His wife, Nora, resides in Long Beach, California.

Their youngest brother, William, came to Sperling. He went and joined the army, went overseas, and never returned.

## **BAUSMANS**

*submitted by Minnie Albertson*

In the year 1908, Thomas Bausman came to Sperling from Wabash, Indiana, and bought one section of land five miles south of Sperling. It was pretty wild country; no roads, just a trail. He went back to Indiana for the winter, and in 1909 he brought his wife Elizabeth and two sons, Ike and Irvin. They built a house and barn and became residents of Manitoba.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bausman went back to Indiana in 1916, and Irvin and Ike went to Alberta. They bought land at Athabasca, Alberta, and were married out there. Irvin raised two girls. Ike later went to California where he died.

Frank Bausman (a brother) and his wife Georgina, lived at Sanford in 1912, and later moving in 1912, and later moving to Carman, where they lived till 1923. Then they moved to Detroit, where he passed away.

In 1907 Edward Bausman, (another brother) came to Sperling from South Dakota, and bought the northwest quarter of 29-5-2. He went back to South Dakota for the winter, and came back with two carloads of furniture and livestock in March, 1910. On April 8th, his wife Mary and two daughters Edna and Ruby came to join him. It was beautiful weather the first week, but then were hit by a big snowstorm. The girls started school at Tremont the same year. Miss Nellie Hogg, later Mrs. Frank Roberts, was their teacher. They were taken three miles to school in the winter, and walked in the summer.

The nearest neighbor was D.H. MacLean who lived one mile north and half a mile east. Another neighbor Tom Brown lived two and a half miles north.

It was real pioneer life, lots of work and not much social life. In 1912 Hazel was born, 1913 Minnie came along, Roy in 1916, Homer in 1918, Floyd in 1921, and Pearl in 1925. Edward Bausman passed away in 1942, and Floyd passed away in 1944.

Mrs. Bausman stayed on the farm till 1947 when she had an auction sale. In 1948 she bought a house in Carman, where she lived till her death in 1974.

## **THE BELLS**

*submitted by Sylvia 1. Bell*

July 31st, 1935, Harold Bell of Homewood and I were married in Sperling United Church Manse - and in 1938

became permanent residents of Sperling, purchasing a small bungalow on Main Street of the village.

My early recollections of Sperling are those of a little girl of seven years, leaving my home to attend school in Sperling and boarding with my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wilson. I spent the years 1916 to 1918 as a student, taking the remainder of elementary schooling plus Grade IX at Garnett School, Dufferin. My high school education was completed in Sperling Consolidated School, and then to Carman to train as a nurse - becoming an R.N. in 1933.

Harold took part of his high school education in Sperling too.

We spent twenty-five happy years in the village and district. From 1938 to 1942, Harold operated the dragline for Drainage District V and dug many ponds in the district as well as operating for Claydow Construction. In October of 1942, he became an assistant to Fred Helgason, agent of Manitoba Pool Elevators. He became an agent in February 1943, and retained that position until health reasons made it necessary to change positions. He was employed in Manitoba Pool head office in Winnipeg in October, 1963 - retiring in 1970.

When we moved to Sperling, Billy, our oldest child was a little over a year old; Jack, our second child, was born in 1941, and in 1945, our third child, a daughter, Noreen arrived.

During the twenty-five years in Sperling, our family enjoyed good schooling, as well as plenty of recreation - skating, hockey, curling and baseball. The entire family was active in curling - participating in bonspiels at home as well as in surrounding towns.

During our early residence and prior to TV, we supplied our own entertainment. Harold directed several plays.

Billy and Jack took part in Scout activities, and Noreen in Explorers and C.G.I.T., and was a member of the choir.

I was active in the activities of the church - being president of Ladies Aid in 1948, the W.A. in 1954, the U.C.W. in 1961. I was honored in 1956 by being made a life member of W.A., later transferred to U.C.W. I was a member of the choir as well as leader for a short period, and assistant organist.

Bill Bell married Margaret Lynn Swanton, R.N., of Carman and live in Carman with their three children: Allison, Miles and Mary Ann. Jack Bell married Iris Guspodarchuk of Winnipeg - former resident of Buchanan, Saskatchewan - and they live in Winnipeg with their two boys Jason and Justin. Noreen Bell became the wife of James Geekie of Winnipeg - they live in Edmonton, Alberta with their two girls, Andrea and Carolyn.

## EILERT J. BORSHEIM FAMILY

*submitted by Lewis A. Borsheim*

Eilert J. Borsheim was born in Minnesota, October 19, 1893. His parents had immigrated to Minnesota from Norway in the 1880's. He attended the University of Minnesota and Dunwoody Institute, Engineering and

Mechanics, Minneapolis, Minnesota, he came to Canada 1916.

He worked for the Twin City Threshing Machine Co., Winnipeg Branch. He travelled western Canada, as a Thresher specialist. In the summer of 1917, he came to Sperling to service a Threshing machine and large Minneapolis gas tractor, that Joe Grundler had purchased.

Eilert unloaded the threshing rig from the railroad car at Sperling, and drove the tractor and separator out to the Grundler farm, and set up the equipment ready for threshing. Mr. Grundler hired him to run the outfit.

The winter of 1917, he worked for Mr. Harry Stearns, who farmed two miles south of the Grundler place. He stayed there that winter, kept house, and took care of the two Stearns boys, (Everett and Homer), and hauled them to the Tremont School with horse and cutter. Mr. and Mrs. Stearns spent the winter in Florida.

Eilert rented what was known as the Marvin section from Mr. Marvin in the spring of 1918, (Mr. Marvin was married to Harry Steves sister, Gert). (Harry Steves farmed the farm, that is now known as the John Tjaden place.) Harry Steves was the Borsheim childrens first school van driver. Eilert was a bachelor, and his first hired help was Mr. and Mrs. Alf Kyle.

Eilert Borsheim and Ellen Riordan were married in June 10th of 1918. They moved to section 15, southeast of Sperling in 1921. This farm was owned by Tom Kasher of Bloomington, Illinois.

Eilert was considered a large farmer in the 1930's (7 quarters). He was a trucker and also agent for Cockshutt and Oliver farm equipment. He also did custom threshing and combining. The threshing ring included, Tom and Billy Burnett, Jimmy Tanner, Elif Jorgensen and Bobby Young. Some of Borsheim's hired help on the farm were, Marcel Cretton, Al Waddell, Lame Ed. and Albert Lenning (Curley), and Tommy (Pete) Burnett, Violet



*Borsheim Threshing Outfit.*

Burnett and neighbors May, Maurice Sr. and Louis Rose.

He was a member of the Orange Lodge, and Sperling United Church. Also, one of the original Directors of the Sperling, Co-op Oil.

The Borsheim's had 10 children; Lewis, Fargo, North Dakota; Earl and Francis (Frank), Wheaton, Minnesota; Joyce (Mrs. Elmer Rutter), Portage la Prairie; Arthur, killed in Italy, World War II; Glenn, Lee and Harold and Dorothy (Mrs. Earl Lewis), all living in California.



*Louis Borsheim, 1974.*

Waldo died in California in 1977. The Borsheims moved to Wheaton, Minnesota in 1945. Eilert died September 24, 1947. Ellen now lives in Anaheim, California.

## MIKE BOROSKI FAMILY

In 1913, Michel (Mike) Boroski and his brother-in-law (wife's brother), Gus Hein, came to Canada from Wojynow, Wollnien, Russia. Leaving his wife in Russia, he came to find a better life in America.

He worked in the coal mines in Nova Scotia. In 1914, he came west to the Morris area where he found work as a farm labourer. In 1918, he and his brother-in-law started farming in the Fannystelle area. After three years, they decided to give it up and sold out. He came back to the Rosenort area in 1921, working on a farm for Alfred Martinal.



*Mike and Emily Boroski and daughter, Olga Boroski trying out*



*George Sutton's guns in 1936-37.*

Mike had lost all contact with his wife, Emilie, during the war years. After much searching, she was found in a hospital at Danzig. She had been in Russia during the war and revolution. She came to join Mike in Canada in 1922.

They bought the Martinal farm, (S. 112 and N.E. 114 34-6-1 West) and farmed there until 1936. During the depression, mortgage payments couldn't be met, so the farm returned to the Martinals, and Mike rented it.

In 1931, they purchased the W. 112 28-6-1 West, that was still prairie. In 1934, he got a lease to work N.E. 114 20-6-1 West and three years later, purchased the S. 112 29-6-1 West. There was only a wagon trail between sections 28 and 29 then. They built a new house and farm buildings on W. 112 26-6-1 West, moving there in the late fall of 1936, where their descendants are still living today.

They worked very hard during their years of farming and were proud to have had all this for their work. These are a few points of interest during their farming years. In 1923, a bay gelding was purchased for \$82.50. Money had to be borrowed from the bank at 8% interest. In 1930, they purchased their first new tractor, an 11-20 Twin City.

A motor driven Maytag washing machine was bought in 1935 for \$159.00. In 1936, he traded his 24-42 threshing machine for a new Waterloo 28-48, that cost \$1,075.00 plus \$700.00 trade in allowance. Bank interest at that time was 7%.

Mike had just ordered his first combine before he died in 1941. He spent all his years working with horses. He didn't like to drive the tractor, but he did drive the car and truck.

Emilie Boroski continued farming until 1943. She and Adele moved to Morris, where she had a house built next to the Lutheran church. Having had to clean up after two floods, 1948 and 1950, she sold the house and moved to Winnipeg, living there until her death on December 24, 1972.

They had two children on the home place; Olga (Mrs. Jack Kihn) and Adele (Mrs. Norman Schmeichel) of Winnipeg.

The spring when Olga was born, Dr. Bowman of Sperling came by horse and buggy in deep mud to deliver the baby. Mrs. Fred Last was in attendance and she gave Olga her first bath.

## MAURICE BOURGEOIS

Maurice Bourgeois (Maggie) was born in Maztigny, Switzerland on November 27, 1888. He came to Canada at an early age to visit his cousin, Maurice Rose Sr., of Sperling, Manitoba. While here, he worked for various farmers around the district: Joe Grundler, Pete Martinal, Jack Wilson, and Fred Gehring, to name a few. Being handicapped with the English language, when sent to the fields with horses, he couldn't pronounce their names except "Maggie", so he would call all the horses by that name. As a result, the men that worked with Dad nicknamed him "Maggie", which remained with him.

Helene Derez was born in Floriffe, Belgium on June 6, 1897 and came to Canada with her parents in 1902. In 1916, she and Dad were married and worked in Sperling,





*Maurice Bourgeois with a deer caught by the dog and held down until he rescued it and later released it.*

Swan Lake and surrounding towns before moving to Rosenort to farm for themselves. They later moved to Aubigny, renting a farm again, remaining there for a few years. Loading their few worldly goods into a couple of wagons, a team of horses, a cow and a couple of pigs, they moved to Sperling, where they farmed until 1941.

During the depression, Dad drove the school van and mother made butter, sold eggs and cream to Frank Foulston's store in order to buy groceries. We kids used to pick mushrooms and would deliver them to Charlie Land, who owned the Chinese confectionary store. He, in return, would fill the container with goodies which were handed out sparingly. A store-bought cookie was a real treat in our lunch pails for school. The family got most of their schooling in Sperling.

In 1941, we moved to Oak Lake, Manitoba, renting the farm of Dr. C.W. Burns of Winnipeg. Land being lighter and sandy, crops were good and the future looked brighter. They built up quite a herd of cattle and for the first time, they felt they were getting ahead. They retired in 1947 to live in Brandon, Manitoba.

From this marriage, they had seven children: Marcel, who died accidentally at an early age, Louise, who married Albert Lenning (Curly) who worked for E.J. Borshein in Sperling when they were married. Albert as raised under the guidance of Mr. and Mrs. Metzner, of Morris. They have a son and a daughter, in Alberta, are



*Bourgeois family. BACK ROW: Louise, Isabelle, Rene, Mrs. Bourgeois. FRONT ROW: Irene, Mr. Bourgeois, Leo, George.*

themselves retired and live in Oak Lake, Manitoba. Isabelle married Jim Nicholson, living in Morden, Manitoba. They have no family. Renie married Fred Shaw, living in Brandon with no family. George is a widower and lives in Brandon. He has three girls and two boys, losing a son at birth and a son of 12 years by accident. His wife, Mildred, died in July 1976. Irene married Ken Cullen, living in Brandon. They have two daughters. Leo is a confirmed bachelor, living in Brandon.

Helene Bourgeois suffered a stroke and passed away on June 3, 1965. Maurice passed away on December 4, 1973, after a brief illness. They are at peace in Brandon Lawnsite cemetery.

## **HISTORY OF HENRY (HANK) BRUCE FAMILY**

Henry Earl Bruce (Hank) was born at Gladstone, Manitoba on December 15, 1914. He married the former Verna Grace McEwan, of Altamont, Manitoba, on June 28, 1944.

Hank moved from Beausejour to Sperling on January 5, 1953, to take over management of the Canadian Consolidated elevator from Charles Holmes. Together with his wife, Grace, son Norman Earl age 7, and daughter Winnifred Joan, age 21 months, took up residence in the former Paul Rose home, corner of Charles and Main Street north.

Thomas William was born at Carman Hospital, July 1, 1953, Daniel Roy was born February 14, 1956 at Morris Hospital and Debra Jane was born August 20, 1957, at Morris Hospital.

In 1959, United Grain Growers bought the Canadian Consolidated elevators and Hank continued to work for them. In the spring of 1959, the company built an annex, with the capacity of 100,000 bushels. The annex was opened, with the roof still not finished, three days before the end of the crop year. Hank, with the help of fourteen year old Norman, and a helper, the second day, took on 75,000 bushels in three days. It took three extra days and nights to bring the books up to date. In November 1959, United Grain Growers bought the C.B. McNulty home

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*Tom, Hank, and Bruce after the big snowstorm on March 4, 1966.*

on Elevator Street west and the Bruces moved in, in December.

In October, 1958, Grace, with the help of Fran Brown, organized a UNICEF collection and a party for the children at the United Church. After 1959, when they had a larger house, the parties were held at Bruce's until they left in 1970.

Grace was active in church work, taught Sunday School for most of the years they lived in Sperling, sang in the choir and solos at weddings.

Norman married Gail McDonald on April 22, 1967 at Sperling. They now live in Minitonas, Manitoba, where Norman is secretary of the Municipality. They have a son, Jeffery Earl, born August 1, 1968, and a daughter, Alana Michelle, born September 23, 1970.

Joan teaches grade four at Robert Smith Elementary School at Selkirk and lives in Winnipeg. Tom resides in Carman and is a mechanic at Porters' Garage. Dan married Brenda Lyons on January 20, 1979. They reside in Carman, where Dan is a mechanic at Ron's Bike and Muffler. Debbie is in her fourth year of a degree course in Physical education at the University of Manitoba.

On May 14, 1969, Hank suffered a severe heart attack and was unable to resume his job. The Bruces stayed in Sperling until June 1, 1970, when they moved to Carman, where they still reside. Hank keeps occupied with his hobby of refinishing furniture and doing some upholstery. Grace does alterations for Harris Clothes Shop and custom sewing in their home.

## THE BUNKOWSKY FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. August Bunkowsky came to Canada from Germany in October, 1908, with their family of five, namely: Frieda, Otto, Fred, Emil and Anne. They settled in Brunkild, Manitoba, where three more sons were born; Eric, Arthur and Henry.

The Bunkowsky family farmed in the Brunkild, Rosenfeld and Lea Bank areas for a number of years and retired to the Town of Morris in 1933. Mr. Bunkowsky died in November, 1937 and mother lived in Morris until her death in 1944.

Frieda married William D. Poersch, of Rosenort, and they raised a fine family of nine on the home farm, where they spent all their lives.

Otto married Mary Poersch, a sister of Wm. D. Poersch. They had a family of three. They farmed in Rosenfeld, Brunkild and Lean Bank. Otto was councillor for the Rural Municipality of Morris in Ward 6 for a number of years.

Fred married Katherine Seib of Rosenfeld, where they farmed for a short time before going to Lacadena, Saskatchewan, to farm. They retired to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, where Fred died in December, 1973. His widow still lives in Saskatoon.

Emil passed away in March, 1926, at the age of 26 years.

Anne married George Seib of Tuberose, Saskatchewan, where they farmed until George passed away in 1965. Anne has been living in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan since then.



*Bunkowsky's in 1960, Eric, Fred, Anne Seib, Frieda Poersch, Otto, Henry Renton.*

Arthur married Ivy Cowan of Regina, Saskatchewan. They are presently retired in Victoria, B.C.

Henry married Edna Williams of Tuberose, Saskatchewan. They were in Kyle, Saskatchewan for some time, but have been living in Carlyle, Sask. for a long time, where they still reside.

Eric married Eleanor Marsch in Brunkild in October, 1939. We started farming in the Lea Bank district. In 1942, we move to the former Fred Last farm on 35-6-1 West, our present home. We have three sons: Robert (known as Bob) who married Heather Steine of Brunkild in 1963. They have a family of five daughters and one son; Angela, Lisa, Heidi, Lorelei, Shannon, and William. Bob and Heather now live on and farm the former Otto Bunkowsky home farm. They also have the original Fennel section that they farm.

Brian, our second son, married Kristine LeClair of Brunkild in 1971. They live on the former J.P. Grabowski farm in the McDonald Municipality. They have a family of two sons: Derek and Joel, and daughter, Faye.

Douglas is our youngest son and is still at home. At the present time, he is working as an apprentice to become an electrician.

There has been music in the Bunkowsky family for a long time, as Henry and Art used to play for house parties and dances in the 1930's. Bob and Brian played for 2 to 3 years in a small group called "Polka Partners" and later in a band known as "The Southern Comfort". Douglas also became a member of this band, which was together for about five years. At the present time, Bob and his family are known for their singing talent.

One thing I must write about is that in the 1950 Flood, we were able to stay in our home, when most of our neighbors had to leave when the water was at its highest peak. Our basement filled up with water and we had water all around us.

The chickens had to be put up in the hayloft, as was the feed and other grains. The cattle were taken away to neighbours about 4 miles north of us. The water was at its

highest peak on May 13. Seeding did not begin until June 15. Barley and oats turned out to be a good crop. Durum wheat was a complete failure.

However, we have had many good crops since 1950, for which we are very thankful. With all the newer methods of farming, who knows what is in store for us all?

## **OTTO BUNKOWSKY FAMILY**

Otto was born to August and Rosina Bunkowsky (nee Satler) in 1894, in Kainesburg, Germany. They came to Canada in 1908, when Otto was fourteen years old. He had two sisters, Frieda (Mrs. Bill Poersch) Annie, (Mrs. George Sieb), five brothers; Fred, Emil, Eric, Art and Henry. Eric, Art and Henry were born in Canada; the others in Germany.

The Bunkowsky family settled in the Brunkild District at first, where Otto worked for the Karlenzigs and the Smiths in Rosenfeld. He married Marie Poersch, daughter of Daniel and Augusta Poersch, in 1918. They farmed for two years in Rosenfeld and had the misfortune of losing their first home, due to fire. In it, they lost all their possessions. After this, they moved to Brunkild and farmed on the Julius Gabrowski farm for seven years.

In the winter, Otto drove his sleigh and horses to work in the bush at Nobe's at Shoal Lake, Ontario. They then moved to Rosenort and lived on the Fennell farm, renting it for quite a few years. Otto also rented a 314 section of land from a Mr. Bangs from the United States, which he later bought for \$5.00 an acre.

Three children were born to Otto and Marie - Elmer who is married to Alice Harder of Domain, Manitoba; Viola, who is married to Donald Gorchitza, of Rosenort; and Dolores, who is married to Brian Goossen, of McTavish. Otto and Marie have six grandchildren. Garry and Pamela Bunkowsky, Gerald and Bruce Gorchitza, and Steven and Jeffrey Goossen.

Otto and wife, Marie, returned to Germany for a visit in 1951, to visit his relatives. This was a real highlight for them.

He served as a councillor of the Morris Municipality from 1952 to 1965 and also as a deputy reeve from 1955 to 1965. Otto was active as a church member in the St. Paul's Lutheran Church, in Brunkild. He loved to play his accordin and sing as his grandson, Bruce, would dance for him.

Otto retired from farming in 1964, due to his health, and passed away April 25, 1965.

## **BURNETTS**

Mr. Burnett and Samuel came out to Manitoba in 1897, from Madoc, Ontario, and settled on the homestead 3 1/4 miles south-west of Sperling on 12-6-3. In 1900, Bill (8), Tom (14) and Dick (12), came out west and joined the rest of the family in Sperling. Jack came out with a car load of settlers' effects - furniture, pigs, three head of cattle and some lumber - as far as Carman.

Then he had to load it up and take it back to the homestead at Sperling by team and wagon. They had a pair of oxen, a team of horses and some broncos.

A couple of years later, Mrs. Burnett, Sandy, and sister, Jean, came out to join them.

For three winters in '05, '06 and '07, they had a wood camp at Leary's near Roseisle. They also got wood from the Jickling Ranch at Wingham. They drew their grain to Myrtle. If they weren't home by dark, Mrs. Burnett would put a burning light in the south window for their guidance and they always made it home safely.

When any one in the district wanted water, they would call on Mr. Burnett or Tom to go out and witch a well for them. They always reached water for them.

When Dick quit school, he drove the team of oxen (back setting). In those days, it was "break it and replot". Dick never swore; by the time he had said "you long-horned lantern-jawed, lop-eared" the oxen would lay down on him and the only way to get them up was to call the dog.

Adam Burnett and family came out west and settled in the Tobacco Creek district in 1908. In 1912, Mr. and Mrs. Burnett and Samuel moved from Sperling to the Tobacco Creek also and farmed there along the Creek. Samuel was single and lived with his mother and dad. Jack was married in 1911, to Blanche Sulvester, and lived along the creek also. Tom stayed on the home place at Sperling. He married Mary Wreford from England in 1919.

Bill got married to Nettie Davidson in 1905, who came from Michigan with her parents. They had two children, W.T. Thomas (nicknamed Pete) and Violet (Skinny, and still gets it). Violet married Archie Gibson of Rosebank and have eight children (5 boys and three girls). Pete still makes his home in Sperling.

Dick and Sandy joined the forces in 1915, enlisting with the 90th Winnipeg Rifles. Later, to the First Canadian Mounted Rifles. They were in the 3 bloodiest battles of World War I. The battle of the Somme, Arras and Vimy Ridge. Dick and Sandy never parted until the morning they went into Vimy Ridge disaster of April 9, 1917. The same shell killed Sandy and wounded Dick. Dick had his hip shattered and leg amputated below the knee. Dick was in the hospital in England for a year and one-half.

He returned home to Sperling in 1918 and married Mildred Parker, from Toronto. They had one daughter, (Betty) Mrs. A.K. Brown, who met the train the morning it arrived in Sperling, and took Dick out to his brother, Bill's, for dinner.

In 1921, Dick built a house in Sperling, where Mrs. Trier Anderson is now living. Dick also took over the post office from the late Mitichamps and looked after that for 37 years. (1920 - 57) Kenneth Griffith took it over from Dick and Kenny is still on the job. The Burnetts were all good Orangemen, members of the Loyal Orange Association.

Mr. Burnett married Mary Tanner in 1876; they were of Irish descent.

In 1900, a pile of stones was where the railway is now and that was the only identification of Sperling at that time.

*TAKEN FROM THE DUFFERIN LEADER*  
- September 13, 1906.

On Monday of last week, the 15 year old daughter of Mr. William Burnett of Sperling met her death in a way that has a mystery connected with it. Mr. Burnett states that his wife had sent the girl that evening on a message to a neighbour's house. The girl rode off on a pony, reached the house of the neighbour, Mr. Snyder, and started back home. Late in the evening, as the girl had not returned, a search was made for her. The pony was found near its own stable and the girl was picked up in an unconscious state on her father's farm. Dr. Pert was called and rendered all possible assistance, but the child died the next morning, without regaining consciousness. It is supposed that the girl fell from the pony's back and struck her head on the ground, as a slight mark on the side of the head was the only sign of injury. The pony was a very quiet animal and is not thought to have kicked the child.

### **PIONEER DAYS OF THE H.W. BROWN FAMILY**

It was April 9, 1907, when my parents, Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Brown and their seven children, Orville, Aurilla, Chester, Ella, Myrtle, Evelyn and Mabelle, ranging in age from 17 years down to 2 years, left Rockford, Illinois, to come to Canada.

It was spring when we left Rockford, but in Winnipeg, the snow blocked the train tracks, causing us to spend five days in the Immigration Hall, near the C.P. Station. We finally arrived in Sperling, only to spend two more



*H.W. Brown family in 1911. BACK ROW: Myrtle, Orville, Ella, Chester, Aurilla. FRONT ROW: Evelyn, Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Brown, Mabelle.*

days during a blizzard at the Hotel, with the owners, the Stevens, who had only just arrived themselves!

Looking back on it, I can see what a strain this move must have been for my mother. Reared in a family of eleven children, she had never been very far from home and always had her mother and sisters to help her when

she needed them. Here, she was a thousand miles from anyone she knew, and she couldn't even get a good cup of coffee.

My father had been in Manitoba the fall before and had located our two sections of land (7 and 8-6-1 West) by finding the mounds in the deep prairie grass. It was about equal distance from Sperling, Lowe Farm, Brunkild, and McTavish. On the northwest corner, nearest Sperling, he erected a small stable and a shack. He had brought some equipment, a team of horses, a cow, a plough and tools. He started to make the foundation for a real house when he suddenly became homesick and leaving the stock with Lesters, north of Sperling, he took the first train back to Rockford. He is quoted as having said, "Fan (his wife), I will never go back to that Godforsaken country."

However, by spring, my mother had bolstered his courage and so, on the 18th of April, we were riding out to our new home in a bob-sleigh, drawn by our black team, Sam and Dick. it was a calm sunny day, and the reflection from the snow gave us real sunburns.

Twelve feet of snow had drifted over the door of our shack and had to be shovelled away, and we could run right up on the roof of the stable. The house was 16' x 24', one storey. In Rockford, we had a fourteen room house, so this was quite a change. Papa built bunk beds across one end to make sleeping space, and furniture was piled clear to the ceiling on the other walls. For lack of an oven, my first birthday cake in Manitoba, had to be fried. It tasted pretty good, too.

Our carloads of goods arrived somewhat later. There were sixteen more horses, four cows and there had been a cat and her kittens, but somehow the cats had escaped in St. Paul. One boxcar contained a dismantled barn from



*Mrs. H. W. Brown in their first house.*

our farm in Rockford. Each beam and timber was numbered to facilitate its re-erection, and the following summer it was rebuilt to make a barn 108 feet long. We younger children had the task of finding and bringing home the stones for the foundation. We could see the stones on the newly burned off prairie surrounding our place, and were given a spade and a horse and stoneboat for the job.

Well, spring came quickly at last, and as our land was all unbroken prairie, my father rented a farm over north



*H. W. Brown home, then and now, NW 7-6-1 W.*

of Myrtle, from Mr. S.P. Hinch, of Carman. The Myrtle neighbours were kind to us, giving us vegetables from their gardens and helping us in various ways. I remember the Halsteads and Pfrimmers, especially, and also a good neighbour named Strutt.

During the first summer, a road was put through past our place. Billy Shewman (the father of Harry Shewman, M.L.A.) had an elevator grader and horses for work. I think there were 20 horses on each grader, but I'm not sure. A large tent for the horses, and cabooses for the men and family, made up the caravan, and with this outfit, they camped wherever a road was to be made. It was wonderful for us to have children to play with. We enjoyed Lottie, Lily and Harry Shewman so much, and it was a lonely day for us when they moved on.

Of course, we couldn't build the house we had planned, and Papa raised the roof on the shack, so we had an upstairs, and lived there for eleven years. To make it warmer, we lined up the inside with layers of newspaper and built up around three of the outer walls with sod. Prairie flowers grew out of the sod, and we also had wild cucumber vines growing over them, so eventually our shack looked rather picturesque.

Papa built a sod hen house and hog barn, too. He used lumber only for the door and window frames, and to hold the roof.

The first winter we lived on the farm, we had to haul water for our stock from the Morris River, a bit more than five miles away. We had a wooden tank with a pump on it. I think we had to make a trip every second day! Before winter came, we built a pond. It was very hard work for both horses and men, with only the simple, slush or dump scrapers, but it was made big and deep, and I do not remember that we were ever out of water after that winter.

Whenever we teased for a new house, Papa would say, "When we get 40 bushels per acre, we will build one." Well, in 1915, it happened, and as we had a large acreage into wheat, that crop built our brick home, which was completed in 1918. A dream come true.

My father was called "Yankee Brown" by the Sperling people, but we were also known as "East Browns", to distinguish us from the Tom Brown family who lived directly south of Sperling.

The telephone lines came through in 1910, but the telephone company turned down our application. We

made do by riding horseback three miles to Grundlers until we got permission to hook up a phone line to the top wire of Grundler's fence. It worked, too.

We were in Manitoba over two years before we started to school, which was five and a half miles distant. Papa undertook to teach us at home during the winters, but if he ever fell asleep, we would play cards. Our land was in the Pleasant Valley district, but we never attended there because there was no road, only unbroken prairie, so when we did start, it was at Tremont. It was wonderful to have companionship, and we certainly enjoyed those winters at school. Spring, when we had to stop and help with farm work, always came too soon.

Prairie fires were a hazard in those early years. One night the fires were on three sides of us and close enough so that the temperature on our weather thermometer went up. We understand and were grateful for the fire guards which Papa had ploughed around our buildings.

Around 1910, my father purchased his first tractor, an International, and a little later, a HartParr. Then, we were able to have our own threshing outfit and need not wait for the steam-powered machine we had hired for the first few years. Inefficient drainage caused flooding in those days, and a bit later, it was the black rust, which would hit a lovely looking field of wheat and it simply did not fill or mature. So, it was hard to make much financial progress.

My mother was always a very devoted Christian and concerned about her family missing so much Sunday school and church. Seven and a half miles was a long way, with our slow farm horses, and although the church people invited us, and the ministers of both churches, Methodist and Presbyterian, called on us; we did not manage to attend regularly until 1912, when we got our first car, a Model T Ford. In winter, the roads blocked up for car travel, but we always made the trip with the team on a bob-sleigh, to be at the concert on Christmas Eve.

Probably some of you remember the winter of 1915-1916, with its extremely heavy snowfall. Trains had a hard time, as storms were numerous and often there were days at a time when none came to Sperling. We all got snowshoes that winter and we really used them.

Spring was late and came with a rush. On a Sunday afternoon, April 16th, Chester went for a horseback ride but came rushing back to tell us that a flood was coming. Sure enough, a regular wave of water was coming from the west. It struck our place about 4:00 p.m., and simply swept our huge snowbanks away. The places where the snow was ten feet deep on Sunday, were gone on Monday. Our woodpile started to go that same way, so we had to throw it into the shed to save it. Like Noah, we built a boat, and for two weeks, it, a raft with a horse trough were tied to the bell post in front of our kitchen door, three times a day.

Looking back, one might think we suffered hardships in those early days. Well, in a way we did, but I think that each generation has problems and it is the spirit in which these problems are met that really counts.

Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Brown have been gone for many years. There are three surviving members of the family: Mrs. Myrtle Lewis, Mrs. Mabelle Rance, and Mrs. Evelyn Steeves. The descendants of Mr. and Mrs. Brown

include 19 grandchildren, 63 great grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. The majority reside in Southern Manitoba, but are also represented across Canada, from Montreal to Victoria.

The buildings on the original homestead are now occupied by two grandsons, Glenn and Robert Brown and their families.



*Sleeves team at the Browns in 1929.*

## EARLY MEMORIES OF SPERLING

*by A.K. Brown*

About 1916, the district, then in a period of reasonable prosperity, built a two-sheet curling rink, using subscribed funds and local labour. A few of the citizens had curled a game or two in Carman, and proceeded to teach the rest of us the game. I believe we formed about eight rinks, two or three worth mentioning.

The local Methodist preacher had the druggist and two of the more or less virtuous citizens with him. The doctor had three of the young wild sons of farmers. We called the preacher's rink the "Old Ladies" and the other one, "Dr. M's Colts" (Harry Nichol, Dan Peckover, Alton Boyce) and another one, the "Elephants" (Jack Hamilton, Jake Tjaden, Harry Steeves) and many wild and hilarious games were played, with rules of curling broken. We were in one another's way, sometimes falling down among the rocks in our efforts to sweep the other skip's rocks out of the rings.

On February 18, 1918, there was to be a practice game in preparation of attending the Winnipeg Bonspiel. On arriving at the rink, the fire was low, and a young student, in attempting to replenish, used the gas can instead of coal oil. Poof! No rink! and four badly burned curlers. The drug store was turned into a hospital with doctors, nurses and general commotion. The old Carman doctor stated to one of the anxious citizens that first night, that two of the four victims might not survive. However, all lived; one with badly crippled hands, afterwards became a teacher. One of the victims, a south of town farmer, sold his farm in 1919 and moved to town, proceeding to learn the techniques of a small country town, which included the small town poker game,

generally held after hours in the offices of the elevators. The poker game, at which the Doctor was fairly adept, called for liquid refreshment.

The country at that time was dry, and the only way to get liquor in drinkable quantities was from Kenora, Ontario, which was shipped by express. When the parcels arrived on the station platform, they were thoroughly examined by the local citizenry, so they would know who were the bad boys, etc. The ex-farmer from the south wishing (hypocritically) to beat the so-called curious citizens, was advised by the Doctor to have a shipment sent to Brunkild, where he had a friend (we will call him Jakie), who would deliver it to Sperling. When Jakie arrived with this rather large consignment, he quickly unloaded it in the office of the lumber yard, where he had intended to buy lumber. It was delivered to local private homes of the thirsty, who had an interest in the shipment.

The Doctor, who declared that anything Liberal was not for him, was an admirer of John Bracken, who was at the time, Premier of the combined Liberal-Conservative Government. Two or three of the local Liberals persuaded the Doctor to go to Brandon to hear the Premier speak on the immediate political questions. All went well, until starting time, while outside was threatening a winter storm. However, we started out and arrived in Brandon after considerable trouble, very late at night. One of the party, a Frenchman whom we will call Amos, knew all the bootleggers in Manitoba, and so the party continued on into the morning. We were a fairly sore bunch going to hear Bracken at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, but Doctor said it was a wonderful speech, and preparations were made to start home.

The form of transportation was the ex-farmer's car, which he drove south from Brandon to the Log Cabin (a filling station), leaving the car pointing in the right direction for home and turning it over to the Doctor and his Brunkild friend, J.P.G. A terrific storm was raging. J. J.T., Amos and I, were in the back seat. The drivers kept reporting that they were on No. 2 Highway, and were asking progress for about two hours, when one of us noticed we were going over a narrow bridge with high railings. There were no bridges of this description in Manitoba. Everybody, particularly the driver, was not too well pleased to realize we were lost, but decided to inquire at a farm house, as a light could be seen in the distance. On inquiry at the house, we were informed that we were eight miles east of Redvers, Saskatchewan. It was 4:00 o'clock in the morning, and we had to have gas. The storm was clearing. We drove on to Redvers and finally got a five gallon can of gas, as the filling station was out of gas. We turned for home. Breakfast in Souris. Supper in Carman and home. Deep snow - getting pulled out, arriving home in the morning of the third day. Everybody fairly crusty!

Dialogue, The Frenchman, talking to our informant at the light, "You say we are in Saskatchewan? Woman, are you crazy?" Woman, "I certainly am, or I would not have stayed here this long."

The news of our adventure got wafted around and the ribbing we received from all sides did not improve the crustiness. We were hardly speaking for some time. The Doctor more or less squared things off by shanghaiing



yours truly to a dressed-up Conservative meeting at the Roblin farm, addressed by Mr. Erick Willis, the next summer.

The Sperling Consolidated school was started in 1910, and was, I believe, the first consolidated school in the district. Dr. Martin was secretary-treasurer, which position he held from 1921 to 1941. On his demise, he was succeeded by A.K. Brown, who tried to carry on as his friend would have.

Arthur K. Brown was born September 19, 1886, and came with his father, Thomas Brown, to Manitoba in 1899, to S.W. 114 8-6-2 West. T. Brown later retired to California. A.K. Brown was married in 1913 to Lynne Anderson. They sold the farm to L. Abry in 1919, and moved to Sperling, where Mr. Brown started a lumber business in partnership with Mr. Millichamp. He later became agent for the Monarch Lumber Co., which position he filled for 36 years. Lynne Anderson was born December 19, 1889, at Shelburne, Ontario. She came with her family to Carman in the late 1800's. They stayed in Carman for two years, then moved to the Sperling district to N.W. 114 9-7-2 West. She remembers walking three miles to Waddell School. Mr. and Mrs. Brown sold their house to P. Arsenault in 1971 and moved to Carman. They raised one daughter, Yvonne Jorowski, of Winnipeg. Mr. Brown passed away in July, 1977. Mrs. Brown is living in the Legion Lodge, Carman, Manitoba.

## THE ORVILLE R. BROWN FAMILY

*submitted by Glenn Brown*

Orville was the earliest of the H.W. Brown family. He came to Sperling with the family in 1907 at the age of eighteen. He spent the rest of his life on the farm which was settled by his family. From the mid twenties until the time of his death in 1953, Orville and his brother Chester, jointly operated the farm as "Brown Bros."

Orville was very active in community affairs. He was a founding member of the Sperling Cooperative Elevator Association and served on the boards of other local Cooperatives. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and served for many years as secretary. He was also secretary-treasurer of the Lone Star School District for several years.

An active member of the Sperling United Church, Orville was an elder and a member of the board of stewards.

In 1929 Orville married Norma Stonehouse and together they faced the difficulties of the "dirty thirties". Their younger son, Gordon, died accidentally in childhood. The three oldest girls are married to Manitoba farmers: Alice is Mrs. Ken Larson, of Teulon; Carol is Mrs. Doug Brown of Otterburne; and Evelyn is Mrs. Brian Watt of Morris.

Marion lives in Winnipeg and is a child Psychologist at the Children's Centre. Beverley is currently a Cereal Chemist with Robin Hood Multi-Foods and resides in Toronto. The oldest son, Glenn now resides with his family in the home built by his Grandfather. After Orville's death, Norma moved to Winnipeg and now lives in an apartment in Fort Rouge District.

## THE GLENN R. BROWN FAMILY

*submitted by Fran and Glenn Brown*

I am the eldest member of the Orville Brown family and my first half century has been spent on the farm which was originally settled by my Grandfather and his family. Being born during the Great Depression, I do not really remember the problems of the Dirty Thirties. My childhood memories are mainly happy ones related to my playmates and to Christmas's at Grandpa's house.

I received my elementary education at Lone Star School which was about a mile from home. My sisters and I travelled by pony and cart in the warm weather, and with a little sleigh in the winter. I still remember the cold ride to school, and usually the school was cold when we arrived.

For High School I went to Sperling. As we were outside the district, it was up to me to get the nearest van, which was at Maurice Rose's, two and a half miles away. I travelled by bicycle in the warm, dry weather and by horseback when it was muddy or snowy.

Following High School, I spent two winters at the University of Manitoba taking the Agricultural Diploma Course. Following this I returned to the farm that has been my home. In 1952 Fran Fleming and I were married and settled in a small bungalow in the home yard. We lived there for three years and then moved into the big brick house. My father had passed away, and Mother wishing to be nearer high schools for the benefit of my younger sisters moved into Winnipeg. It seems that after we moved into the big house we made a real effort to fill all the rooms. Our children are: Gordon, Sharyn, Stanley, Terri, Ross and Nancy. We built our own truck camper and took several long trips and enjoyed many short camping holidays as a family.

At the time of my father's death we took over management of the farm. Fran and I put in many long hours the first few years. We had to have all varieties of livestock, (so we thought) so there were cows to milk, pigs to feed, eggs to gather and hay to bale, besides the business of growing grain.

Eddie Lewis, my cousin and close neighbor, was always ready to lend a hand. We joined forces for haying and harvesting, a plan which proved beneficial to both of us. As time went on with better machinery and experience, we became more efficient and things went easier. We eliminated the livestock except for hogs, and this eased the pressure of doing chores considerably.

As our children grew older, we had family help. Gordon was able to run the combine when he was thirteen and things went very well. Now after more than twenty-five years, our family has been getting smaller. Gordon married Mona McLelland and is farming with me. Sharyn and Richard Last were married in 1976 and live on a farm southeast of Carman. Stanley has a position in Edmonton and Terri is in her last year of school.

What the future may hold is uncertain, but I feel that we have been privileged to have had a part in the Golden Age of the Family Farm. We feel that care of the land is a trust handed down from generation to generation and are

pleased that our farm is now in the transition of passing from the third to the fourth generation.

## HARRY P. COLPITTS

Harry P. Colpitts came to Manitoba from Petitcodiac, New Brunswick, in 1906, working at Hartney and Elgin with the Ed White family.

He came to Sperling District in 1912, working with Charles Colpitts on S.W. 114 28-5-2. He started farming on N.W. 114 27-5-2, which he purchased from Dan Stewart.

In 1919, he married Viola Snider. The same year, Willis Stillman and his wife (Harry's sister, Caroline) came to live on 28-5-2. Later, their children, Gordon Colpitts and Frances Stillman were born. Alex Renwick and his wife (Harry's sister, Nina) farmed for a short time on next farm north.



*Harry Colpitts' 2 bedroom home, built in 1921 on 27-5-2 and later moved to Carman area.*

In 1920, Harry Colpitts bought E 112 6-6-2, moving there in March, 1921. This farm was just across from Tremont School. Eileen and Marie were born here. In October, 1934, the Colpitts moved to Boyce District.

At Sperling, we used dug-out water and outside cistern for rainwater. Often, we hauled drinking water from a



*H. Colpitts melting snow in 1917 on an outdoor straw burning heater.*



*Mr. and Mrs. Harry Colpitts.*

well, one mile south. In winter, we would melt snow for the house and use a snow melter, which burned straw, for the stock.

After moving to Boyne, the Stillman family were on the Tremont farm for a few years. Later, Gordon and Ina Colpitts farmed it. Their family is Robert, Joyce, Brian and Calvin.

## CHAS. COLPITTS FAMILY

Many years ago Robert Colpitts and his wife Margaret Wade Colpitts lived at Norton, Durham Co England. During the revolutionary war they moved to Newcastle on Tyne where they waited the end of hostilities.

In the year 1770 they emigrated to New Brunswick and in 1783 they settled on a homestead five miles out of Salisbury.

Charles Heath Colpitts was of the fifth generation of Canadian Colpitts and the son of James T. Colpitts and his wife the Adeline Loraine Rexton of Bangor, Maine. Charles spent some time working in lumber camps in Maine but his father grew 900 bushels of wheat one year, an unheard of amount in that area. This settled the question for father. "Go west young man" was too strong a call to be resisted any longer so father arrived at Sperling on the harvest excursion of 1909 and took employment with Wm. Burnett. After harvest he went west again to the Okanogan Valley of British Columbia. He spent two years at a logging camp and on Collicut Bros. Ranch. However he couldn't forget that wheat, so returned to Sperling and rented land on east side of the James Snider farm.

The year 1912 was a wet one. The stooked sheaves stood in water up to their midribs. It was impossible to harvest them so they froze in, that way. During the winter the men chopped them out of the ice and threshed as best they could. Much of the crop was harvested the following spring and turned out better grade of wheat than that done during the fall and winter.

On January 8, 1913 Charles married Gladys Edna Moon, daughter of E.J. Moon of Roseisle, Man. who was also of pioneer stock. E.J. had come to Carman as a

baker from Farrington, Gurney, England in 1890. He married Minnie Wiltshire of Ebercreich, Wales in 1893 and took up a homestead at Roseisle where Gladys was born and reared with three brothers and four sisters.

Charles and Gladys moved to the Perry Wanless farm Sec. 28-5-2 at that time and rented there for four years. They at times awakened to find snow on their bed.

On January 9, 1914 a son Frank was born to them. In May 1915 he followed the family dog to a small water pond and was drowned. A daughter Hazel Evelyn was born to them also on the Wanless farm. In 1917 the family moved to Sec. 6-6-2 in the Tremont district and three miles south of Sperling. Three other children Muriel Edna, Stanley James and Albert Arthur were born to them.

During the 1930's we had plenty of grasshoppers and one terrific hailstorm that killed a great many turkeys and knocked the chimney off our house.

In October 1947 Mr. and Mrs. Colpitts retired from the farm and purchased a home in Carman. Charles passed away in February 4, 1954.

1. Nicholas and Hazel Froebe, of Homewood, had four sons and one daughter. Nicholas was killed in a spraying accident in June of 1959.

*Franz Fredric* married Ellen Davies, daughter of Ernest and Marguerite Davies of Carman. They have Joanne, Aric, Tara and Shane. All at home to date and attending Carman Collegiate School. Live on C.J. Froebe farm at Homewood, which they farm, also Nicholas Froebe's land.

*Wendell Paul* married Dawn Park, daughter of Mel and Mary Park, of Carman. They had two children, Kathryn Ann and Michael Terry. Dawn passed away in February, 1970. Paul remarried, this time to Evelyn Giesbrecht of Carman. They have Jason and Pauline. They all live at Mandan, North Dakota on a strawberry farm.

*Charles John* married Bonnie Strachan, daughter of Alfred and Nina Strachan, of Carman. They have two daughters, Karla Mairi and Nichole Angela. They live in Homewood and farm the Vida Froebe land and former Ruby Ralston property.

*Roger Lou* married Audrey Scott, daughter of Robert and Ada Scott of Winnipeg. They have two children, Heather Michelle and Scott Michael. They presently live in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

*Lisa* married Alexander Penner, son of F.D. Penner and Marie Penner of Homewood. They have two children, Darryl Alexander and Monica Lynne. They have a home in Carman, and farm north of Homewood and Roseisle also.

*Hazel* lives in Homewood, Manitoba.

2. R. Ernest and Muriel Findlay have four children.

*Barry Allen* married Pat Le Patoural of High River, Alberta. They have three children, Christine Mary, Clay Allen and Joel. They live on the farm site previously owned by Arnold McCutcheon and are grain farmers.

*Gerald Blair* married Thelma Olson of Arborg, Manitoba. They have three children - Shawna Tobi, Robert Andrew, and Mark Blair. They took over the

Ernest Findlay farm, which was formerly the George Burnett place. They produce both grain and cattle.

*Judith Anne* married Donald Johnson of Great Falls, Manitoba. They live in Winnipeg. He is a "traffic light" engineer and Judith is one of G.M.'s repair trackers.

*Patti Dawn Lee* is at present living and working in Brandon.

3. Stanley and Lois Colpitts live and farm south of Sperling on 8-6-2. Stan also drives a school bus and Lois is manageress of the Carman Collegiate canteen. Come blizzard or hailstorm, they always seem to be on the job and their efforts are really appreciated by students and parents alike. They have two daughters.

*Colleen* married Michael Ort of Calgary. They have two children, Kristine and Michael.

*Cork* married Calvin Pritchard of Roland, son of Elgin and Jean Pritchard. They have one daughter, Denise Lynne, and are living in Flin Flon at the present time.

4. Albert lives on and farms the old home farm in summer and spends winters in Carman with our mother. He has given up aerial spraying, but drives highway transport vehicles at times.

At 86, mother still does her own work in the home and out. Her health is good except the odd bout of arthritis.

## CHOPS CHIPS

John and Anna Chop and their son, Albert, came from Elma to the Golden Farm, south-west of Sperling in 1938. Their son passed away in 1941.

On Christmas Eve 1948, Sam and Mary Kazuk's house burned just east of the Monarch Lumber, so John Chop bought that portion of land (10 acres) from Kazuk's.

Their nephew, Leonard Zenith, lived with them for two years, attending Sperling school.

John remembers Charlie Land always having extra coupons on hand for sugar etc. in war time.



50th anniversary celebration of Anna and John Chop with Warner Jorgenson reading congratulations messages.

He also recalls getting a message "to come home at once" and he presumed his mother was ill. It was Saturday night and he only had a few gasoline coupons, but Shirley Johnson gave him an extra ten gallons.

When Nick Froebe was digging Stan Colpitt's basement, John waited until he was finished, then escorted him into the village. John stepped out Ills property and then had Nick dig the basement where three lots met, consequently, his house now sits on three lots. They moved to town in 1950.

Now they have sold the Golden Farm and Ken Waddell farms their 10 acre holding.

In 1975, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

## THE CRETTON FAMILY

The Cretton family history dates back to the XIII century. The family originated in the Rhone Valley, the Canton of Valais, Switzerland.

Michael Ernest Cretton and his wife Angeline, nee Barman, were farmers of Batiaz, which has since been incorporated with the city of Martigny. They had three sons, Maurice, Jacques and Marcel.



*Micheal Ernest Cretton.*

Michael Maurice Cretton was born on November 18, 1893 in Batiaz. He attended school in Batiaz and then



*City of Martigny, Switzerland, where Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Cretton were born.*

took an apprenticeship in shoemaking, receiving his certificate on May 1, 1910. During the 1st World War, he served in the Swiss Army, and married Ida Louise Corthey, the daughter of Jules and Aime Corthey of Martigny in 1920.

Contemplating going to Canada to the Peace River country, Maurice and Ida decided to immigrate. Prior to



*Michael Maurice Cretton, right, with his father-in-law, Jules Corthey, wearing their Swiss Army uniforms in World War I.*

leaving, Maurice met a Mr. Fred Martinal who had returned to Switzerland from Manitoba for a visit. Mr. Martinal said, "Why don't you go to Sperling, Manitoba and look up Emile Ribordy, (who was known as Amos) he will give you a job." Maurice took his younger brother Marcel with him, and Ida was to stay behind until he could find her a home.

The journey in those days was a long one. Taking the train for Le Havre, France, they boarded ship for Canada, continuing on by train to Manitoba onto the flat prairies of the Red River Valley, arriving in Sperling in May, 1921.

Maurice started working for Emile Ribordy, and Marcel for Joseph Delaloye. Arrangements were then made for Ida, who arrived in July 1921.



*City of Martigny, Rhone Valley in Switzerland, looking northeast.*

Maurice and Ida worked for Emile Ribordy for a couple of years, spent a short time at Maurice Rose', farmed on Sec. 14-6-1 W and then worked for Joe Grundler before moving on to Sec. 25-6-2 W in 1925. They stayed there until 1962, when they took up residence in Sperling.



*Pitching hay are Maurice Cretton, Marcel Cretton and Gilbert Cretton, approx. 1935.*

Maurice enjoyed all sports. Before coming to Canada he participated in gymnastics and wrestling. After arriving here, he always enjoyed following the local teams to baseball or hockey games. He started curling



*Gilbert Cretton at 2 years.*

when it was a ten mile trip by team and sleigh to the local rink.

Maurice and Ida had one son, Gilbert Maurice, born in December 1921. Maurice passed away in June 1967 and is interned in the Sperling Cemetery. Ida continued living alone in Sperling until 1978 when she took up residence at the Boyne Lodge in Carman, where she now resides.

Marcel Cretton worked for Maurice many times through the years, beginning with Joseph Delaloye and Elert Borsheim. He spent some winters in the bush



*Maurice and Ida Cretton in 1963 in their home in Sperling.*

camps, before starting to work for Pickle Crow Gold Mines in Ontario and then going on to Red Lake, Ontario where he worked for the Madsen Gold Mines until his passing away in December 1964. Internment in Sperling Cemetery.



*Maurice Cretton with son, Gilbert and Henri Corthey swimming in flooded ditch, now the Forester Drain, in summer of 1927.*

Jacques Cretton, the other brother who remained in Switzerland, eventually moved near Chamonix, France where he is now living. He is married and has two sons.

Gilbert Maurice Cretton was born on December 17, 1921. I attended school in Sperling and St. Boniface



*Gilbert Cretton with his dad's first car, a 1927 Model T.*



*Gilbert Cretton with his dad, Maurice, repairing mower, 1945. Note farm buildings and woodpile in the background.*



*Gil Cretton combining rape in 1979.*

College. One of my first experiences at school was learning to speak the English language.

After completing school, I worked on the farm and in 1949, I married Jean Elizabeth Galbraith from Carman. We lived on the farm on NE 114 of 23-6-2 W for approximately ten years before moving to town. We continued farming Sec.25-6-2 W, the land my Mother and Dad settled on, until November 1979 when the farm was sold to Mr. Franz-Josef Dewey of West Germany.



*Home of Gilbert and Jean Cretton on Main Street in Sperling, built by R.H. Waddell in early 1900's.*



*Gilbert and Jean Cretton on their 25th anniversary.*

We have three children, their names are Gail Elizabeth, Maurice Kent and Janet Marie. They all attended school in Sperling and Carman. Gail married Lee MacLean, they are farming south of Sperling. They have two children, whose names are Derek Lee and Ashley Brent. Kent married Candy Buckler of Winnipeg and they reside in Headingley, Manitoba. Kent is employed with Hyster, City Machinery Ltd. Janet is employed with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, living at home and commuting to work.

I enjoy sports and have been active in baseball, hockey and curling. I'm a councillor for the Rural Municipality of Morris, elected to office in October 1967. We reside in Sperling on Main Street, Lot 3 &4.

## **MORRIS CURDT**

*son of Jacob Curdt*

My father, Jacob Curdt, came to Manitoba from Durham, Ontario about 1892. He worked for a neighbour, W.H. Waddell in summer and in Winnipeg in winter. Mother was from Scotland. She came to Winnipeg and worked there for some time. They were married on April 23, 1895 and moved to the farm (SE 114 31-6-2 W) that dad had bought in 1893.

I was born March 2, 1896. It was all prairie then, no trees whatsoever. The land was broken with oxen, which I can still remember. The first crop was hauled to Carman and a load of poplar poles for firewood brought back. One load of wheat would go to the grist mill in Carman for our year's supply of flour.



*The Jacob Curdt farm, 1946.*





*Mrs. Elsie Curdt with Mrs. R.B. Waddell.*



*Jake and Elsie Curdt family.*

Father's first stable was made of sod. It stood until 1904, when he built a good-sized barn. He had 12 horses, a few head of cattle and hogs.

Water holes brought mosquitoes and black flies. Men wore veils over their faces. The horses wore fly sheets (bran sacks).

Lots of prairie chickens - nests all over the place some ducks. Some horses were lost with hay fever or colic. No vet here. Doctored horses with linament or raw linseed oil.

As granaries were built, the grain was hauled there in two bushel bags. Some people had granary doors up high. They would stand on the platform and lift those bags, dumping them into the bin. Dad made himself an elevator and ran it with horse power. By then, we were hauling grain loose in wagon box. This made the work much easier.

People bought green and black tea. Green coffee was roasted in the oven at home, and we had a little hand mill to grind it.

Pack peddlars were men who came around selling dry goods, watches, rings, odds and ends. Some of the material was very good. Ladies made dresses and clothing for all the family. Another travelling begging class was called gypsies. They picked wild berries and seneca roots,

told fortunes and made predictions from "palm reading".

As we worked with horses in the field, we would find arrowheads, stone hammers and odd Indian relics.

After the coming of the railroad in 1901, the village of Sperling grew. Mother and Dad sold milk to the villagers. They also sold butter and eggs, Some people made their own cheese, too.

In the spring, with a walking plow making one furrow, we would notice water in the furrows. Then came the dirty thirties, when we had drought. There were some hard times, but we always had enough to eat.

The first large rink was built in 1921 by Hansen (Boss). Material was purchased from the local lumber yard. It was started in the spring and finished by fall. Previously, we had skated on an outdoor rink at the station. The J.R. Watkins man called frequently winter and summer, with pepper, tea, coffee, medicine for humans and animals alike. We put him up for the night - fed both driver and horses. After the railroad came through, there was a train twice daily. We would go to Carman before 11 a.m. and



*Jacob Curdt children - Morris, Percy and Clarence about 1902.*



*Percy and Alice Curdt.*



*Jim, Pat, Eileen Curdt, children of Percy and Alice.*



*Curdt family - Cora, Clarence, Bessie, Morris Percy. In front - Florence.*



*Morris Curdt in 1959.*

return by 5 p.m. Folks drove to Carman with a horse and buggy. We had a good red bay horse named "Bird". She would make the trip in 50 minutes. We used sleigh in winter time. Special events were:

July 1 - Carman Fair

July 12 - Orangemen's Day

Church picnics

Mother passed away - August 26, 1946

Father passed away February 8, 1949

Percy and I still live on the family farm which is worked by Percy's sons, Glenn and Jim. There are ten grandchildren and many great grandchildren; some even great great grandchildren.

This is the family of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Curdt.

Morris Curdt - March 12, 1896

Emma Curdt - July 2, 1897

Clarence Curdt - May 12, 1898

Percy Curdt - Mar. 20, 1900

Florence - February 8, 1903

Bessie - July 22, 1904

Cora - Sept. 26, 1907

Florence and Emma deceased.



*Cora and Pete McEachern.*



*Reg and Bessie (Curdt) Beenham and Joyce.*

Percy married Alice Waddell and besides their three sons, they had four daughters - Eileen, who married Lowell Winter (live at Oak Lake); Jill, who is married to Brad Perkins; Judy, who is a nurse; Maureen, who is married to Bryce Buckley; Chris, Wade and Mike are at home.

Pat, who married Andy Lecuyere, live at Shilo and their children are Don, Mark, and Linda.

I attribute my longevity to hard work, interest in Sunday School and socializing.

## WALTER WESLEY DALES

*by Jean Dales McMunn*

Walter Wesley Dales, our father, was born in the County of Bruce, Ontario in 1878. His father was William Dales, his mother was Anne Hill. There were seven children in father's family, four boys and three girls. I believe his father had a market garden, as Father talked about an orchard and bees. In later years father reminisced about his days on the grain boats on Lake Superior, hauling grain from Fort William to Eastern Ontario. He left for the West, arriving in the Village of Sperling in 1903, buying a farm. Farm life in those days, consisted of very long hours and hard work. So much work was done by hand. The grain was stooked by hand, horses were used to plow, seed and bring the sheaves to the steam engine and separator. There were about twenty men on the threshing crew, which travelled from farm to farm. Can you imagine the amount of food to be prepared for three meals and a carry-out lunch?

Some highlights of those days: When father bought a Titan Tractor and a Separator to do his own threshing. He also bought a Touring Car, a Chevy. Then, we only used the horse and buggy when it rained. We still used the horse and cutter in winter. The roads were packed with snow, winters were terribly cold, with high drifts of snow. I remember the rope from the house to the barn, so father wouldn't get lost in the storms, when he fed and cleaned the animals.

*Entertainment:* Story telling by mothers and fathers in those long winter evenings, and picnics at the church in summer.

*Food:* There wasn't any refrigeration. Meat, usually pork, was cured with brown sugar and salt. The hogs were butchered in March, and if you were old enough, you helped rub the sugar and salt into the meat. It took about six weeks to cure. Then it was put into cotton sacks and hung in the coolest shade. This cured pork was soaked in milk before you cooked it. To make butter, milk was cooled in crocks and the cream skimmed off. The first churn we had, was a crock with a wooden dasher, which you pumped up and down. In summer we picked saskatoons in the Carman bush. In fall after frost, there were wild plums. In later years we grew raspberries and strawberries in the garden.

*Health Care:* The first Doctor who lived in Sperling was Dr. Maxwell Bowman. He would come to our home whenever we were sick. He eventually left Sperling and later became Minister of Health in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Doctors from Carman which was sixteen miles away, had to be called. This was risky, especially in a severe winter.

## THE ADAM DAVIDSON FAMILY

The Davidsons went from Leeswater, Ontario to Midland, Michigan. They came from there in 1903, Mr. and Mrs. Adam Davidson, George, Alex, Bob, Bill and Nettie settled in the Sperling district. The other six of the family stayed in Michigan.

Alex lived north of Hoopers and also moved south of Sperling. When they retired, they moved into the house in which Mrs. Elizabeth McKee is now living on the southwest corner of Henry and Main. Alex Davidson built that house. Alex married Jane Lopley. Bob Davidson married Nettie Tanner of Ontario. They lived in Sperling, had a livery barn, and did some draying. That was in the horse and buggy days.

George lived in Winnipeg and was caretaker of blocks for 11 years, retiring in 1953. He served with the Canadian Expeditionary Forces in the First World War. When he returned, he married Elizabeth Francis McNamara from Halifax. Nettie Davidson married Bill Burnett and had a family of two, Thomas (Pete) and Violet (Skinny). Violet married Archie Gibson of Rosebank, had a family of 8; 5 boys and 3 girls. Bill Davidson made his home with Bob and Alex. Bill helped with the draying and farmed.

Bill married Mae Skeavington in 1937. They owned a store in Sperling for 28 years. Bill and Mae drove vans. The school trustees presented Bill with a lovely wrist-watch for 35 years service of van driving before his retirement. Mae passed away in 1965 and Bill passed away in 1970, the last one of eleven children.

## A GLIMPSE OF DAVIS

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Davis, who came to Sperling in 1905, bought section 20-7-2 West in MacDonald Municipality, but first living in the R.H. Waddell house (furthest west on Waddell Street). For a short while, they lived on 20-6-2 West before moving to their own farm in 1910. Everyone knew him as "Dad".

Percy Downes became their trusted farm hand and after he went home to England and brought out his bride, Mrs. Davis's cup overflowed when young John Downs was born.

Mrs. Davis had been a school teacher in Illinois and was quite concerned by the fact that there was no van to take John to school. Consequently, when Dr. Martin needed a housekeeper in 1925, and since Mrs. Davis had become widowed in 1920, she and John moved into Sperling.

She was a wonderful cook, making mounds of french fried potatoes for our noon lunch. Her boysenberry pie and fried chicken was something else! When you would ask her how she felt her pet answer was "now how".

This grand old lady lived to be 99, passing away in 1957.

## AMOS DAVISON AND HEIRS

In March, 1898, Amos and Clara Davison arrived from Whitfield (Hornings Mills) Ontario, with their three children; Lorne, 9 years; Evian, 2 years; and Edna, a baby in arms; to settle on a homestead half mile north of the present Town of Sperling. Following are excerpts from a write-up by Lorne Davison, describing those early days.

"Our family arrived in March, 1898, our car of chattels comprising 4 horses and a few necessary articles. We were in the capable hands of Mr. Lewis James. In those days, neighborliness started at once, hence we were taken to John Anger's farm until our future home was thawed out and fit to live in. Our house measured 12' x 16' and served as kitchen, dining and living room, and accommodated a hired man, a family of 5 and later, for a short time, an extra family of 5. Our furniture consisted of chairs, which when our meals were over, hung from the ceiling, and a table, which was hinged to the wall and folded up when not in use. Refrigeration? - Ours was a hole in the ground covered over by a trap door in the floor.

We were hardly in the door of our new home before our nearest neighbor, Jake Curdt came to tell us he had a good well of water, and we were welcome to it for both man and beast. At that time, we were the most Easterly of all settlers, but later that year, Mr. and Mrs. Mogk located half a mile east of us.

For those first few years, all our grain was bagged and drawn by team and wagon to Carman; 13 miles west. We left before daylight and got back after dark, and then filled up the bags again for the next day's loads. I remember this tired 9 year old boy had to hold the lantern, bags, etc. Most of our grocery needs were bought at Carman, but a Mr. Bennett toured the countryside with his ponies and democrat, with merchandise such as overalls, boots, etc. Mr. and Mrs. Bennett later built a little store on the corner of our farm and had the post office there under the name of Mariposa. This building was destroyed by fire one Sunday, when the Bennetts were away, but a new building was erected, and upon the arrival of the railroad, was moved to Sperling.

Education and spiritual needs were looked after by concerned pioneers and a school was built on the nor-



*Amos and Clara Davison on his 72nd birthday.*

thwest corner of our farm, where our first teacher, Mr. S.H. Adams, tried to instill some knowledge into our young heads. He did not stay the full year, but left to study law, and later he became Mayor of Calgary. The old school is the present Catholic Church in Sperling. The janitorial duties fell to me, and every day I walked the half mile and fired the old wood stove for 10C a day. I can still recall the aroma of butter sizzling as we thawed out our frozen lunches in the drum of the old stove.

Church services were held in our home for some time, and later in the school, until the churches were built; the Presbyterian in 1899 and Methodist in 1903. My mother was organist and our first minister was the newly ordained Reverend Leach. Thirty years later, he officiated at my brother, John's, marriage to Eva Burns of Winnipeg. Besides shouldering a big share of the responsibility for church and school education, my father also served as Justice of the Peace for the area for some years.

The "red letter" day was the arrival of the railroad in 1901. The means of securing a much needed box car, before the station was built and an agent installed, was by tossing a bag containing a couple of pails of grain into the open door of a car when the freight arrived. Woe betide anyone who dared to toss in a second one!! It mattered little what time of day or night the freight arrived, for there were often more farmers than empty cars - no quotas in those times.

It wasn't long before merchants realized the business possibilities of the district and Woodruff Brothers of Carman opened a hardware and harness shop; and Walter Campbell of Carman, a little grocery and dry goods store. Farm machinery agencies by Joe Bates and Chas Furber and a lumber yard filled a need.

### **"O.L. Davison"**

Amos Davison had been plagued with ill health over those early years and in 1919, he and his wife, daughter Edna, and son John, who was born in Sperling, moved to Carman. The homestead was farmed after his retirement, first by Evian and later by Lorne, until 1931, when it was

sold to Mogens Nielson. The Amos Davisons returned in the mid 30's to take up residence in Sperling, where Amos died in 1941. Clara Davison stayed with her son, Lorne, until her death in 1961.

*Lorne Davison* married Beatrice Diehl, a vocal teacher of Cypress River, in 1915, and they bought and lived on half section of land, one mile east of the homestead. Their lives were full of music for church and community. She was choir leader and organist for most of the years of the United Church in Sperling, and held a life membership in the W.M.S. He was Sunday School superintendent for as many years and was a choir member, church elder and served on many church boards. He was also a school trustee. They moved into Sperling in the spring of 1932, and he became the dealer for International Harvester farm machinery - a business he retained until 1960. In 1945, he expanded and bought the additional dealership in Carman and they sadly said good-bye to old friends and moved to Carman that year. Verner Carroll first, and then later, in 1947, Jim Soutar, his son-in-law, ran the Sperling operation in a partnership until its closure in 1960.

Mr. and Mrs. Davison had one daughter, Mildred, who took all her education in Sperling and who married Jim Soutar in 1945. Theirs was the first wedding in the newly built United Church in Sperling. Following Jim's release from the R.C.M.P., in 1947, they returned to Sperling, to take over the machine business and remained there until 1964, when they moved to Carman. They were active participants in community life in Legion, church and Lodge organizations. They had 3 boys; Sandy, Rick and Bob and 1 daughter, Peggy, all of whom received their elementary education in Sperling. The boys were active on the local hockey and baseball teams, but it was left to their sister, Peggy, to win national acclaim. She won the National Championship in the Bantam Division of 5 pin bowling at the age of 12 years. Her biggest supporters at the event in Toronto, were her brothers. The family are now all settled in vocations of their choice in Alberta and British Columbia.

*Evian Davison* married Grace Woodman in 1919 and farmed the homestead until 1928, when Ev became the first manager of Sperling Co-Op Oil and Supplies, and



*Lorne, Evian and John Davison.*

they moved into Sperling. He was a concerned community worker and his presence was left on Rink Committees and Church Boards. Grace Davison had a very artistic touch and was on call for flower arrangements for many church and community affairs. She taught art classes in Sperling and her many paintings still adorn the walls of homes in the district. They had one son, Mel, who served with the R.C.N. and R.C.A.F. during war years, and who after his release, joined his father at the Co-Op. He married Dorothy Stewart in 1947 and they made their home here until 1950, when they moved to Edmonton. Dorothy is an excellent artist in the medium of oils and water color, and their four daughters; Colleen, Susan, Shelley and Patricia have become very proficient in the art also. In 1952, Ev and Grace left Sperling for a new career in Edmonton, where Grace still resides. Ev died in 1967. Mel and Dorothy now live in Kindersley, Saskatchewan.

*Edna Davison* took her schooling and musical training in Sperling before moving with her parents to Carman in 1919. She became a well known piano teacher until her marriage to Harry McMahon of Swan Lake, in 1926, and her subsequent move to the U.S.A. they had 2 sons, Tom and Dick and 8 grandchildren.

*John Davison* received his elementary education in Sperling before the family moved to Carman. He became a well known baseball pitcher and his career with the "Elks" of the Winnipeg pro league in the '20's was followed with great interest. In 1929, he married Eva Burns, and they have called Winnipeg their home ever since. They have 2 daughters, Arlene and Yvonne, and 5 grandchildren. His most cherished antique is the gavel his Father used in his capacity of Justice of the Peace in the early years of the century.

## JOSEPH HENRY DELALOYE

Joseph Henry Delaloye was born in Ardon, Valais, Canton, Switzerland, in the year 1878. His parents were considered prosperous Swiss farmers. Growing grapes for making wine was their main means of livelihood, but they also kept some cows and sold milk for making cheese.

Farming the vineyards was back breaking work, as it all had to be done by hand. The soil had to be spaded every year and some of it even carried back up the mountainous slopes after heavy rains. So, in spite of his father's objections, (he was an only son with four sisters) in the year 1901, young Joseph with several other companions from Ardon, decided to sail for America, the land of opportunity.

Joseph first went to Colorado Springs, where he worked in a hotel as a waiter. From there, he went to St. Louis, Montana and worked on construction of the World's Fair buildings in 1903. However, he was a farmer at heart, so he moved on to Odell, Illinois, where he worked on farms.

It was here he met people who had been to Canada, one of them Joe Grundler, who spoke so glowingly about the beautiful prairie around Sperling. Therefore, in 1905, after receiving a small inheritance when his father passed



*At the Joseph Delaloye farm after a wood cutting bee in 1918. LEFT TO RIGHT: Camille Massinon, Hans Anderson, Valentine Delaloye, Joseph Delaloye, Maurice Rose - children, Suzanne, Alice, Jean Delaloye.*

away in Switzerland, he decided to try his luck in Canada.

Joseph bought some horses and equipment in Illinois and loaded it on a freight car leaving for Canada. He arrived at Morris, Manitoba in the early spring and unloaded what equipment he had brought, bringing it across country to Sperling. The roads were practically non-existent in those days, and with several creeks to cross on his way, one can only imagine his dilemma.

After renting land for a year or so, he bought the S.E. 1 / 4 9-6-2, which he broke from open prairie. A few years later, he bought the N.W. 1 / 4 3-6-2 and also the N.E. 1 / 4 4-6-2, breaking all this land from prairie, with horses.

In April, 1908, he sent for his fiancé, Valentine Lonfat, of Finhaut, Switzerland. Her people owned a small hotel there. Valentine never imagined what she was getting into. They were married in St. Boniface upon her arrival. When they arrived at their destination, a small shack, she had to be carried to it as there was water everywhere! Mother told us repeatedly about all the hardships she had suffered.

She had never even baked bread before, as back home she had three brothers who were bakers. So she had to learn fast, or go without. She also learned to drive horses and walk behind a harrow.

They had three children in the next few years. Money was so scarce that it was almost non-existent. One year (1912) after waiting for the threshing machine or so long that the snow and the rains arrived while the crops were still in the stooks, she told us how they went out in the winter and chopped the stooks out of the ice for feed for the horses and cows.

Mother never learned to speak English for many years, but always liked to tell people later about the hardships they had gone through. I remember being very embarrassed when she told about how cold the shack was, and how there was frost all over under the beds. She used to say "We have de ass under de bed". Then she wondered why our good neighbour, Mrs. Fred Gehring, (who we were all so fond of) laughed so heartily. Mother said, "Those English people are so rude."

The following years finally brought some success and in 1920, my father bought the W 1 / 2 of 9-6-2. By that time, he owned 960 acres of good farm land. In 1925,

Dad made a trip to Texas and bought a small acreage in the Rio Grande Valley, thinking they might move there to get away from the intense Canadian cold. The following year, he and mother and Suzanne (my sister) spent the winter there, but mother wasn't impressed with the ideas of growing oranges and grapefruit, so they decided to stay in Canada.

In 1927, they returned to Switzerland for a three month visit, I think my dad was a little homesick when they returned to Canada.

By 1929, the depression was starting, and after two crop failures in 1927 and 1928, times got bad again. Hard times were a way of life. What with worry and hard work, dad took sick, after several operations, he died in Ninette Sanitorium at the age of fifty.

His son, Jean took over the farm at the age of 21 and continued to farm it until about 1965, when he sold the old home and moved to Beausejour, Manitoba. He lives at Cloverleaf now.

Suzanne Delaloye married Albert Lecuyer of Ste. Agathe in 1934 and still lives there. She raised 14 children.

Alice Delaloye married Emile Bilodeau of Ste. Agathe also. They took over the W. 112 of 9-6-2 in 1939, which was part of the Delaloye farm, and lived there till Emile died suddenly in 1952. Alice and her five young children continued to live there till 1966, when she married again and moved to Winnipeg.

Their oldest daughter, Suzanne, married Joe Schroeder of Steinbach in 1959 and they are still living on the W. 112 9-6-2, which was part of the Delaloye farm. Arthur Bilodeau and Marie Bilodeau live in Winnipeg and Joseph lives in Claresholm, Alberta. Anne, (Mrs. Alfred Phaneuf) lives in St. Jean. Valentine Delaloye passed away in 1959 at the age of 84 years.

## ANNA AND BILL DENNISCHUK FAMILY

Bill Dennischuk came to Sperling in 1944. His wife, Anna, and son, Jack, came to Sperling in 1945.

They purchased a home from Mr. and Mrs. Jake Koop. Bill worked for the CNR. Jack attended school and was also employed with the CNR.

In 1967, Jack married Eleanor Frank from West St. Paul, Manitoba. They have two children - Russell and Roseann. They live in Winnipeg.



*Jack, Bill and Anna Denischuk.*



*Jack and Eleanor Denischuk with Roseann and Russell.*

Anna has devoted many years of her life to caring for her family members. Her mother lived with them for four years and passed away in 1948. A crippled brother, John, lived with them, passing away in 1963. 'Auntie' made her home with them for 17 years, passing away in 1973, at the age of 95. Bill died in 1975.

Anna has also found time to assist ladies in their household duties. She thoroughly enjoys bowling twice a week. On Thursday afternoon, her companions of many years were Aggie Koop, Alice Nicolajsen, Bessie Brown and Helen Hamilton; together with these ladies Esther Rose, Evelyn Nichol, Fern Rose, Anna Tjaden and Winnie Duvenaud, they formed the Rummoli Gang.

Anna picks up a carload of ladies for bingo at Winnipeg, St. Claude, Morden, Swan Lake, Miami, Vita - anywhere! Curling is another one of her sports.

## DUVENAUD FAMILY

In April 1913, Claude Duvenaud, along with his wife, Josephine, and five year old son, Louis, came directly from France to Sperling, working for various farmers southeast of Sperling.

That same fall, they settled the E. 112 of 27-6-2, about three miles east of Sperling, where they lived until the spring of 1921. They acquired the N. 112 12-7-2 about five miles northeast of Sperling, where they lived until the spring of 1930. They then moved to what was then known as the Grundler farm, where Louis is still farming.

Their daughter, Adele, was born in November, 1918. In the fall of 1940, she married Fernand Laferriere, who came to Sperling from Aubigny. They are now living in Rapid City.

In January 1942, Louis married Miss Winnie McIntyre of Oxbow, Saskatchewan. They had 3 children; Marlene, now Mrs. Ken Tjaden; Lorraine, now Mrs. Chip Hand; and John, who was mostly known by his nickname, Mac, who in August, 1976, married Miss Karen Kristjanson, of Gimli.



## BARRY DAVENPORT



*Marilyn and Barry Davenport and sons, Stewart and Gregory, formerly from England.*



*Home of Marilyn and Barry Davenport on Main St. S.*

## GORD FERRIS

Gordon and Kae Ferris moved into Sperling from the farm; their elder son having purchased the land previously homesteaded by his grandparents, Edward and Leah Ferris, who had come west in 1897, from Shelbourne, Ontario. Gordon and Kae lived in Sperling until 1974, moving to Carman, where they still live. They have three children.

Shirley Jean was born in 1935 and married Ross Johnston of Manitou in 1956. (Ross is the son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Johnston.) They live in Thompson and have four children - Tanis, Sharon, Murray and Wayne.

James Edward was born in 1938. He married Kathleen Ruth Russell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Russell

of Carman on July 9, 1960. They lived on the farm until 1974, and now own and operate the seed plant in Sperling. (Sperling Seed Service.) They have two children. Russell Edward, (the name Edward having been carried down for five generations) and Donna Kay.

Douglas Gerald was born in 1947 and married Sandra Ganske in 1970. Sandra is the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. William (Bill) Ganske of Rosebank. They live in Burlington, Ontario and have three children: Shawna Lynn, Denise Gayle and Douglas Lance. Doug is an electrical engineer and works in Toronto.

Gordon, not unlike his father, was very active in the Sperling community, serving on the board of Sperling Pool Elevator, Co-Op Store, Sperling Rink, Sperling School and later served 13 years as trustee on the Carman Midland School Board. In 1961, Gordon joined the Manitoba Crop Insurance as an adjustor, retiring in September, 1978. He enjoyed curling, hockey and the community club. He was active in the drama club. Gordon now spends his time golfing.

Kae also took an active interest in the community, especially curling, and received her life membership certificate and gold pin in 1964. She served on the MLCFA for four years as representative of our Zone. She bowled with the gals and they won many trophies! (because of her high handicap.) Kae now golfs in Carman. She was active in the Dufferin Agriculture Fair, 4-H Calf Club, the Boy Scout movement and the activities of the United Church. In 1955, she joined the Carman Chapter No. 4 of O.E.S. and in 1970 was honored to serve as the Worthy Matron. Kae now spends her time with crafts and loves to paint. She was honored to have one of her paintings selected to hang in the Art gallery at Panama City Beach, Florida.

Gordon had one brother, John Raymond, who passed away very suddenly in 1974, while holidaying with his wife, Frances (Murta) in Australia. They had two children.

Donald Gordon married and living in England, and Sheila Anne, who lives in Vancouver with husband, Andy, and their three daughters.

Gordon likes to talk about the 'Spanish Jack Ass', that his father bought. In the early years, the good horses that were brought from Ontario were dying of the 'Swamp Fever', so Ed bought the 'Jackass' in Missouri for \$1,000.00 and had him shipped in a wooden crate to Manitoba. He raised many mules for himself and for other farmers. The farm became known as the Mule Farm. A large mule was painted on the north end of the new barn and many people still remember the painting. The farm work was done mostly with the mules and in the early 1930's, there were over 20 mules still on the farm.

In the late 1930's, self-propelled combines appeared on the market. Ed, Gordon and Raymond, who all farmed together, purchased a Model 21 Massey Harris combine from Louie Rose, who was the agent at that time. The price of the combine and header pick-up was \$2,424.00. This was the first self-propelled combine in the area and farmers came from miles around to see and try it out. The combine proved to be very popular, especially with the women who were accustomed to cooking for 12-20 men during the previous harvests and now had 3 or 4.

The years passed quickly. Ed's health began to fail and he passed away on September 6, 1943; Leah Ferris on October 20, 1961.

## THE FEWSTER FAMILY

*by Wendal Fewster*

My father Milford Fewster came west with his parents Jim and Mathilda who had lived near Oshawa, Ontario. In 1903 they took up farming in the Myrtle-Roland District where they lived until they retired about 1930. Milford moved to Sperling to farm (N.W. 20-6-2) in 1925. In 1929 he married Alma Ferris, eldest daughter of Edgar and Nellie Ferris who were then farming in Macdonald Municipality on (S.W. 8-7-2).

Alma and Milford raised four boys, three sons Wendal, Keith and Glenn and a nephew Delbert, a son of Martin (Dad's brother) and Mary Fewster. Mary died of



*Milford and Alma Fewster, Keith, Glenn and Wendal.*

T. B. and Del came to live with us at about six months of age.

Wendal married Doreen Watson of Rathwell, Man. We have four children. Rick, the eldest married Deborah Dunn of Carman, Man. They have a daughter, Colleen and are living in Renfrew, Ont.

Shirley married Bill Pipke of Brandon, Man. where they now reside.

Garth and Marsha are still living at home and attending Carman Collegiate.

Keith married Mary Babey of Dryden, Ont. They have two sons, Bob and Bill who live in Calgary, Alberta.

Glenn married Beverley Finnie of Homewood, Man. They have two children, Susan and Mark who live in Winnipeg, Man.

Del married Maria Margits of Winipeg, Man. They also have two children, Laura and Steven who live in Winnipeg.

Since retirement, Alma and Milford have spent their summers at Hillside Beach, Man., and have wintered in Pine to Palm Park, Weslaco, Texas.



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*Milford Fewster with his prize winning Clydesdale horse at Morris Fair.*

## H.M. FEWSTER'S FORTE

Milford Fewster came from Roland to Sperling in 1925, farming in partnership with his uncle, Dr. J.A. Martin, on location 20-6-2-W, half a mile south of Sperling.

During the summer of 1926, they entered their purebred Clydesdale horses at Morris Fair, winning a first prize ribbon in all classes entered. Since a considerable number of Sperling Sports fans had attended the baseball tournament at the Fair, that evening on returning home with the horses, most of the cars returning from the tournament stopped along the way to congratulate and present the weary horsemen with a bottle of beer. Result - "they had a well oiled trip home." This same gang had congregated at the farm, complete with chickens provided by the players, Leo Gerome, Smoke Harris and others, with Jake Tjaden as cook, all helping to celebrate their achievement at the Fair. This was the beginning of several years of showing horses at the various fairs, namely, Carman, Morden, Miami, Roland, Sanford and Morris, culminating in their winning the Provincial gold medal for registered Clydesdale Championship Mare.

When the war started and Milford tried to enlist, he was frozen on the farm, therefore, when the boys who did serve returned, he felt obligated to show them some recognition. Consequently, he attempted to have a welcome home party for each one. No doubt some were missed, but not intentionally.

## THE DUNCAN GALBRAITH FAMILY

*by N.O. Galbraith*

Duncan Galbraith was the second son of Janet and Neil Galbraith, born June 23, 1861, on the 14th concession of Egremont, Ontario, in the County of Grey. On December 29, 1886, Duncan married Mary McCannel, daughter of Annie and Donald McCannel, born October 31, 1867, Durham, Ontario. They farmed the original Galbraith homestead near Mount Forest and Proton



*Duncan Galbreath family, 1917. BACK ROW: Donald, Lena, Neil, Effie. MIDDLE ROW: Duncan Galbraith, John, Mary Galbraith. FRONT ROW: Gordon.*

Station, Ontario, previous to coming to live in the Sperling area in 1898, known then as Mariposa.

Six children were born to them. *John*, the eldest, was born at Durham, Ontario, November 30, 1887, and married Lillian Ulrich in 1917. He was employed as a crane operator for the Edison Co. at Pekin, Illinois, U.S.A. Lillian passed away in 1964 and John in 1970. They are buried in Groveland Cemetery, Pekin, Illinois, U.S.A. Surviving are three daughters.

*Effie* was born at Durham, Ontario in 1889. She was a telephone operator at Carman for a number of years and also worked in the Woodsworth Store. She married Robert McFee and they farmed in the Carman area, retiring to the Galbraith family home with mother. Robert passed away after a short illness, and Effie passed away at the Boyne Lodge in Carman, July 4, 1978. They are buried in the Greenwood Cemetery at Carman.

*Donald* was born in 1891. He learned the harness trade in Sperling with Sam J. Woods, and was an admirer of horses. In July, 1918, he went overseas with the 16th Highlanders Battalion and was killed in action October 1, 1918 at Cambrai, France. Buried in the Sancourt Cemetery, France.

*Neil* was born November 21, 1895, the last child to be born at Durham, Ontario. Farmed at Sperling, and later took over the family farm in Carman in 1919. He married Dorothy Virtue in 1921. They had three children. Donald married Ellen Bruce and resides on the family farm at Carman. Jack and Jean were twins. Jack married Lorna McGregor and they reside at Hudson Hope, British Columbia. Jean married Gilbert Cretton and resides at Sperling. Neil and Dorothy retired to Carman in 1968, where Neil still resides. Dorothy passed away July 22, 1979 and is buried in the family plot in Greenwood Cemetery, Carman.

*Lena* - born in 1901 in Sperling. She was employed at

the Land Titles Office in Carman, and married Allan W. Lawrie of Morris in 1922. They had two daughters.

Mrs. Ted Beighton (Mary) resides in Winnipeg. Mrs. Bob Morton (Patricia), Seven Sisters, Manitoba. Allan **M.** Lawrie passed away in 1932. Lena married A. K. Stratton, who had three sons. Two children were born to them. Mrs. G. Slutchuk (Barbara) and David, who is married. They both reside in Winnipeg. Lena passed away September 8, 1948, and is buried in Stonewall Cemetery.

*Gordon* - the youngest, was born in October, 1908. He married Marion Orufrechuk. Gordon served with the Canadian Forces in World War II overseas for two years. Upon his discharge, he worked for the G.M. and **O.** Railroad Co. in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., and until his demise in November 17, 1975.



*Duncan Galbraith with Monarch Percheron Stallion at Carman fair.*

*Duncan* - lost his life at Brandon, August 5, 1935. (Excerpts from the Brandon Herald) "Injured in a cyclone that swept through the North Brandon district August 10, 1935. "Monarch No. 10386, Canada's most Outstanding Percheron Stallion with more than 40 Grand Champions to his credit - died today." Mr. Carl Roberts of the Morris area was the horse's owner. Duncan Galbraith had been the groomsmen for the past five years.

*Mary* passed away at her residence in Carman on April 7, 1949. They are buried in the family plot in Greenwood Cemetery, Carman.

Janet Galbraith (Orr), mother of Duncan Galbraith, died in 1897 and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Carman.



*The Duncan Galbraith family home.*

My father, Duncan Galbraith, first came to Sperling, then known as Mariposa, in 1897, and worked as a farm hand for Mr. J.P. Garnet. The many acres of fertile land to be cleared and broken, was a challenge to him, with a promising future, so he returned to Ontario to inform his family of his intentions of moving west.

In the spring of 1898, he returned with his wife and family and their belongings in a freight car, and arrived in Winnipeg.

Two nephews had accompanied them. Jim and John Wilson, sons of Wm. Wilson, two adventurous young lads, and somehow, they missed the freight car as it was pulling out, heading for Barnsley Siding, which was as far west as the C.N. Railway had been built, and the closest point to their destination. Finding themselves stranded, there was only one recourse, "Shanks-Ponies". So they followed the tracks to the end of the line, arriving sometime later with blistered feet.

A rig had waited for them and they were joined with the other members of the family, who were met by earlier pioneers from the east. They continued their journey by horse drive wagons, through swamps, mosquitoes and trails for some sixteen miles, to the home of Andrew H. Waddell, where they were welcomed. They resided there until a frame house and a sod barn had been erected on the SW 114 33-6-2 W. It wasn't long before they were settled, and as mother often said, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home".

With a walking plow and a team of horses, which Dad had brought from the east, the land was broken and ready for planting. Neighbours were always ready to lend a helping hand. They found wheat yielded the best crop, so usually, "Red Fife" or Marquis was sown, and they broadcasted oats for the stock, until more land had been broken.

The grain was threshed by a generated steam powered separator, minus a feeder and a blower, which had to be operated by hand. A "Bucking pole" with a horse at each

end took the straw away from the machine and put it into piles. This straw was later used in stables for bedding the livestock. Father was a good separator man and often recalled the twenty-man outfits it took to reap the harvests. The grain was bagged in two bushel or larger "Bemish Bags", which were loaded into democrats and wagons and sold to grain buyers along the road leading west to Carman.

Before the railway came, groceries, medicines, clothing and household needs were purchased from peddlars who drove through the area in horse driven carts. Often a hot meal and warm bed would be exchanged for a much needed article. Wood for building purposes and firewood for the homes were hauled from the west. Many rigs would head west at daybreak, often as far as 20 miles, gathering the remains from brush fires and bluffs along the way, often not returning until dark, or the following day. Those were the days of murderous swarms of mosquitoes, floods and prairie fires that could be seen for miles, and real Manitoba blizzards. To be out in one in those days, was serious, for there were no landmarks and the blizzards would last for days.

In 1906, my father sold that quarter and moved to SW 114 31-6-2 W, where he farmed until 1910, taking up residence in the town of Carman on 1st Street south-east, also acquiring the former Van Mier farm (SE 114 15-6-5) where my own family were raised, and has been the family farm for the past 58 years.

Being the last surviving member of the Duncan Galbraith family, the years our family spent in Sperling hold many fond memories. One recalls the happy times, good neighbours, old friends, school days, the best things in life, which far outweigh the hardships, however difficult. There were good things, the Sunday School picnics, family get-togethers, a game of Shimmey and the odd horse race. Everyone joined in a kindly community spirit, welding friendships that have lasted down through the years.



*Steam powered threshing outfit - operated by sixteen men, including William Wilson on water tank and Duncan Galbraith standing on top of separator.*

## OUR SPERLING DAYS

*by Archie and Amy Galbraith*

My first recollection of Sperling, when I arrived in February, 1941, was the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Gunn, owners of the hotel, where I stayed until our furniture arrived from Harrowby, Manitoba, where we had farmed for six years. Archie had been sent a month previous as agent for The Consolidated Grain Co.

Our first home was a Block 1, Lots 3 and 4, then known as the Kavaner house. This was later sold, so we moved up above the old Bank building and later bought a small house, moving it to Block 4, Lots 11-14, on the north side of the track, on the old church site. The winter was severe. Many mornings the water in the pail and wash basin would be frozen solid in our kitchen, and our first blizzard we shall never forget. Having come from the bush country, we had never experienced a prairie storm. It was on a Saturday night, and I was going to the telephone office in the old Bank building to phone. The wind and snow blew so hard that after a half block, I turned and went back home and thus learned what a prairie blizzard meant.

We lived in Sperling until February 1949. In the winter, we curled and sometimes took the Hockey Special to Winnipeg, where there were spiked soft drink bottles flowing freely, both coming and going from the City. At that time, the snow banks would be six feet high and just cuts through, where the highway went. Coming home by car from Winnipeg on a Saturday night, we were stranded in Sanford along with many other motorists. We stayed with Pete and Alma Borne, where people were sleeping everywhere. The men congregated at the Station house to make room for the women and children and they played cards all night. The next day, we took the Sperling train home, as the road was impassable until the snow plows came through.

We would recall the lack of pettiness in this community. Anne Tjaden would one week be making soap for the Catholic charities and next week for the Protestants. Everyone seemed to work together, regardless of race or religion.

Summers were fun weekends. I remember the time the Roses bought a 21 foot diskier in Carman, and made a bet with Archie that we wouldn't drive it down Main Street, pulling it behind our 1937 Ford. Wanna bet; he did.

On our few trips to Fargo, where our Sperling girls would compete in softball, Archie would take a carload to participate or watch. Maurice Ribordy got a bit out of hand on one occasion, so Archie and Awat Geswein tied him hands and feet, and put him in a wheelbarrow, threatening to dump him in the river. Of course, just in fun. That same night, a few of us went downtown in Fargo, and when we got back, Ribordy was sleeping on a rollaway in the entrance to the motel. He was ready to get up, and when we told him it was only 11:00 p.m., he remarked, "I sleep fast". The same time Archie kept teasing girls, so they dragged him, clothes and all, under the shower, and gave him a good dowsing.

On special occasions, a group would get together and decide we would have a party, so off we would go. The men would raid chicken coops and provide enough

chicken for the big feed. We would congregate at someone's home, and with plucking and cooking, would have a meal "fit for a King".

They were not all fun days. Our first experience was after about two months at the elevator. Archie got his arm caught in the cleaner. Jack Hamilton rushed him to Carman hospital and fortunately, his arm was saved.

During the war years, we were a well organized dedicated community. I cannot tell you the number of quilts we made, balaclavas, mitts and socks, that were knitted. We wrote letters and sent parcels to our men and our one girl, Sirie Anderson, who were in the service. Volunteers would sponsor a service person and regard them as their own special person. Each month, the cycle would change, so each month, we would sponsor a different person. When our boys returned home, each one was given a welcome home party and presented with a ring.

These are some of the outstanding experiences during our life in Sperling, where we still visit and cherish the good friends we have made.

## THE GEHRING FAMILIES

### "F.B. Gehring"

Mr. Fred Bernard Gehring was born November 2, 1884, in Oneida, Illinois, U.S.A. He was one of a family of four; two boys and two girls.

After graduating from high school, Fred enrolled in Brown's Business School in Galesburg, Illinois, for further education. He decided office work was not very attractive and, favouring outdoor life, and farming, went back to his father's farm to work.

Farming consisted mainly of stock and mixed grains, with corn being the main crop. Fred became skilled in the art of corn picking and was known throughout the area as an excellent and speedy picker. He entered many contests which were often the entertainment of the times. Among other hobbies, was the raising of well bred and speedy driving horses, and his escapades were often a worry to the family.

In 1905, a Minneapolis Land Agency, which was encouraging settlers to buy land in Canada, persuaded his father (Martin Gehring) and a cousin, to visit Manitoba.

This resulted in the purchase of two quarters of land in the Sperling District. One quarter section (S.W. 15-6-2 West) was the original homestead.

Fred welcomed an opportunity to start out on his own, so in 1906, he came to Manitoba with a team of horses, two mules and some implements to break the prairie land.

He lived with a Peters family, one half mile west of the present farm. He recalls some pretty primitive living in a small shanty roof shack. The bread was baked in a large oven built of brick and fired with flax straw, and he remembers it as some of the best of home baked breads.

When the fall work was completed, he returned to Illinois for the winter months. The next spring, he batched with a new settler from Dwight, Illinois, Mr. Grundler, who had purchased land on the south side of the Gehring quarter.

The Grundler homestead became a camping ground for American settlers in the following years. Among these, he recalls a family by the name of Wagner. They had a small boy of about five years, who required an emergency appendix operation, and his experience of holding the kerosene lamp for Dr. Cunningham to perform the operation on the kitchen table.

In 1908, he rented out the land in Canada and stayed in Illinois (as we understand there were more attractions there). In the fall, he returned to Manitoba and rented another 200 acres. During the winter, he stayed at the hotel and assisted in running the poolroom, while the owner went east for a holiday.

In December, 1910, he married Lydia Werteen from Galesburg, Illinois, and in March, 1911, he returned to Manitoba with his bride. Their first home was the place where Mr. Gehring had stayed on coming to Canada. New buildings had been erected, and this was their home until 1915.

In the year 1915, he built his own house and barn on the quarter section which is now farmed by his grandson, Bernard. (the original homestead).

To this couple were born five children; Mrs. R. Aitken (Gertrude) of Winnipeg; Martin of Carman, Mrs. Howard Waddell (Elizabeth) of Sperling; Mrs. Melvin Smith (Margaret) of Calgary; and Richard of U.S.A. All were raised and educated at Sperling.

Mrs. Gehring had been born and raised in a city and had many new experiences living on a farm in a new country.

One of the first she recalls is asking her husband to get a pail of drinking water for her house. She watched him go to the roadside ditch and thought that was a strange place for a well. She soon decided to use her wedding gift of money to purchase their first cow.

One of their long time friends, Mr. Bob Nichol, recalled the couple's arrival in Sperling. The new bride, who was not accustomed to the cold in Manitoba, was dressed for style rather than warmth, and wore a beautiful plumed hat. The local gentlemen passed the remark, "Wonder how long she will stay here." However, Mrs. Gehring remained until the time of her passing in June, 1967.

Most of the settlers were unable to own and operate their own threshing outfits, so it became a joint project, with one outfit moving from place to place. Everyone joined the threshing crew. Cooking for these large crews was a full time job, especially for Mrs. Gehring, who had little experience, but as she said, "There was no choice but to become an expert at cooking, especially making bread."

Mr. Gehring was an active member of the community. He served as one of the first directors on the local Pool Elevator Board, also on the Co-Op Oil Board, and was a Trustee on the school board for many years. He also served on the Municipal Council.

In 1945, Mr. and Mrs. Gehring moved to Sperling, when their son, Martin, took over the farm.

In 1960, they celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary with Open House for friends and relatives.

There are seven grandchildren and Grandpa Gehring lived to see two great-grandchildren. He enjoyed fairly

good health during his later years, and passed away in December, 1975.

### **"Martin Gehring Family"**

Martin was born and educated at Sperling, Manitoba, and followed in his father's footsteps as a farmer. He married Etta Fewster, who had taught school in the district for several years.

They had one son, Bernard, and their niece, Caroll Fewster, lived with them and received her education at Sperling. She went on to become an R.N. and married Brian McGill, in 1963. They farmed at Homewood and have three children.

Martin took an active interest in all community affairs and particularly the 4-H Calf Club and aiding in Minor Sports.

In 1967, Martin began employment with Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation. He and Etta are now living in Carman.

### **"Bernard Gehring"**

In 1967, Bernard Gehring married Gayle Ferris, of Homewood and took over the operation of the farm which was purchased by his great grandfather in 1905, homesteaded by his grandfather, F.B. Gehring in 1906, and taken over by his father, Martin, in 1945.

Bernard and Gayle have two little boys, Eric and Chad.

## **JOE GRUNDLER STORY**

I came to Sperling, Manitoba in the spring of 1907, which was a very wet, cold, backward spring, one that would have shaken the confidence of a more timid man. I broke and backset the section I am living on, which is section 10-6-2 West; put on all buildings. I rented out this



*The Joe Grundler's barn.*

section for a term of five years and devoted my time to improving and cropping other lands. Two years ago, I settled on this section again; in 1914, I raised over 10,000 bushels of wheat, 5,000 bushels of oats, and 3,500 bushels of barley, besides I had 100 acres seeded to timothy hay and had 20 acres of corn and summer fallow, about 80 acres. Last year, 1915, I had the same number in meadow and summer fallow but worked an additional





*On Joe Grundler's farm, Gilbert Cretton with dog, Maurice Cretton, Marcel Corthey, Marcel Cretton, others unidentified.*

160 acres and threshed out 17,200 bushels of wheat, 7,500 bushels of oats and 600 bushels of barley. As the price of grain during the last two years was good, I certainly got good returns on the acres I had in crop.



*Gilbert Cretton on the Joe Grundler farm.*

## THE HAMILTON FAMILY

Mr. John L. Hamilton, one of the pioneer members of the Sperling district, left his birthplace of Lakefield, Ontario, in March, 1895. He arrived at Roland, Manitoba by train on his 18th birthday, St. Patrick's Day, March 17. Met at the depot by his cousin, Andrew Waddell, they skipped across the frozen prairie in a horse and cutter, dodging from snow patch to snow patch, till they arrived at the homestead of David Waddell, 2 1/2 miles west of Sperling.

In the spring of 1895, crops were sown, hay harvested and fresh prairie soil was broken by ox team. Prairie fires often raged across the prairie, mostly started by lightning storms. Furrows sometimes had to be hastily turned in the night to save the small farm buildings from being destroyed by fire.



*J.L. Hamilton, grain buyer for Ogilvie Flour Mills elevator, 1904-1947.*



*J.L. Hamilton in later years.*

The grain grown from the virgin soil was hauled by team and wagon to the elevators in Carman, which totalled nine, including an elevator and mill run by steam, called the Farmers' Elevator. Screenings from the mill were fed back to the firebox to heat steam for the engine. Other grain elevators were run by horsepower.

In 1899, Mr. Hamilton was employed as a helper in the Ogilvie elevator and in 1905, became the buyer in the new Ogilvie elevator in Sperling, serving in that capacity till his retirement in 1947.

In June, 1905, Mr. Hamilton married Sadie Kilpatrick daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kilpatrick of the Homewood district. A daughter, Norma Winnifred, was born in 1906, but passed away in September of that year. A son, William Homer, was born in 1913. Mrs. Hamilton was very active in community affairs, especially church work and the Women's Missionary Society. She was a member of the Order of the Daughters of the British Empire. During World War I, Mrs. Hamilton was active in overseas help for Canadian soldiers. Unfortunately, she passed on in 1920.

Mr. Hamilton lived on in Sperling and took part in community and civic affairs in the town at that time, as Sperling was a thriving district, and quite sports minded, winning the Southern Manitoba Hockey championship several times.



*Home of the late J.L. Hamilton, 1929.*

Mr. Hamilton was one of the original members of the Sperling Patricia Masonic Lodge. He was Ogilvie's longest serving grain buyer when he retired in 1947. Mr. Hamilton spent his retirement years, partly with his son and family in Sperling, and his brothers and one sister in his birthplace of Lakefield, Ontario. After a short illness, Mr. Hamilton passed away in December, 1956.

His son, Homer Hamilton, attended high school in Sperling and Dominion Business college in Winnipeg, in 1932, becoming manager of the Ogilvie Flour Mills elevator in Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. Returning to Manitoba in 1935, he was for a short term, stationed at Hazel Ridge, Manitoba. Taking up grain farming in the spring of 1936, Mr. Hamilton continued in that occupation till 1963. During that time, he was active in municipal work, being appointed the Drainage Maintenance trustee for Dufferin Rural Municipality in 1946, continuing till 1966. In 1959, Mr. Hamilton was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as the Progressive Conservative member for the riding of Dufferin; a position he held through three elections, till the riding of Dufferin was dissolved by redistribution in 1969.

Mr. Hamilton married Helen Wickend, R.N. of Saltcoats, Saskatchewan, in 1940. They have 3 children, Sherryl (Mrs. Ed Puchlik of Oak Bank), and grand-daughters, Colley and Lindsey; Joanne (Mrs. Bruce Athim, of Charleswood) and Constable David Hamilton, R.C.M.P. of High Prairie, Alberta and his wife, Alenka, their daughter, Jennifer.

Mr. Hamilton is still active, being at present constituency secretary for Jack Murta, MP for Lisgar Federal constituency.

## HANDLON FAMILY HISTORY

James William Handlon, a former Chicago policeman, and his brother, Tom, arrived in Canada in April, 1918. They started farming one mile north of Kane, Manitoba (S.E. 114 12-5-3 West) in the Roland Municipality.

This land had been previously purchased by his father, James Andrew, of Illinois, U.S.A. James William purchased an Emerson tractor, lived in a tent, and had only a tractor and bicycle for transportation. He was followed later, by his wife, Marie, and their two children, James Thomas and Mary Frances. They resided in a home owned by J.B. Davison, at Kane. Tom returned to the U.S.A. a couple of years later.



*James William Handlon in his wheat field in 1937.*



*James Thomas Handlon in his wheat field in 1965.*

James William purchased the W. 1/2 of Section 7-5-2 West, one mile north of Kane (Morris Municipality) in 1919, where he and his family lived until 1933. He then purchased the E. 112 7-5-2 West and W. 112 8-5-2, Morris Municipality, where he farmed and resided until his death in 1964.

His son, James Thomas, married Eva Bowman in 1943, had two children, Janet Marie and Richard James.

Mary Frances married Allen Johnston (Myrtle, Man.) had four children, Sheila, Bill, Joanne and Geraldine.

The Handlon family farm was sold in 1974. James Thomas and wife, Eva, retired to Silver Falls, Manitoba. Mary Frances and husband, Allen reside in Carman, Manitoba.

## BEV AND RON HEBNER FAMILY

In December of 1972, Ron was asked by the United Grain Growers to manage the elevator in Sperling. He accepted the post and we moved into the United Grain Growers house, which was formerly the home of the McNulty family many years ago.

Ron was born in Gilbert Plains, Manitoba. He is one of four children and the only son of Mr. and Mrs. James Hebner of Gilbert Plains.

I was born in Dauphin and named Beverley Anne Smaluck. My parents are Mr. and Mrs Walter Smaluck, of Dauphin.

In 1971, we were married in Dauphin and moved to Foxwarren, where Ron was employed with the United Grain Growers for a year. After a year of married life, we came to Sperling in 1972. In August of 1973, we had our first son, Shaun Ronald. Then in September, of 1977, Chad Wayne was born.

I became Explorer Leader when we first moved to Sperling. I am presently a Sunday School teacher and have been for the past four years. I also try to take an active part in our U.C.W.

We all enjoy outdoor sports, camping and travelling and do as much of it all as time permits. In winter, we enjoy ice fishing, tobogganing and skating with our boys. We usually spend Christmas break in Dauphin.

Shaun is in grade one in Sperling School this year and really enjoys it. We all are very happy with our move here.

## E. HEINRICHS AND FAMILY

Erdman and Nora Heinrichs moved to the Sperling area in 1968 from Rothern, Saskatchewan. We purchased the farm located on SW 31-6-2 W. The community cemetery is on our property. It is always beautifully kept, a beauty spot in spring.

As we do mixed farming, we have a large hay barn.

Erdman is the youngest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Heinrichs of the Altona area. I, Nora, am the daughter of the late Bernard P. Wiebes of Plum Coulee. We were married there in 1946.

Six children were born to us - two daughters, Verna and Esther - 4 sons, Albert, Bernie, Menno and Dennis.

Verna has excelled in music and is married to Bob Wiebe, a music teacher in Dauphin.

Albert married Phyllis Higgins and they live in Killarney.

Bernie is presently working for Harry Lepp of Elm Creek.

Esther, Menno and Dennis are attending Midland Collegiate; the latter two receiving scholarships in mathematics.



*The Hein's flower garden.*

course, Bill could not stop her and the store was closing, so the manager drove him one and one-half (of his eight miles home) and let him out to walk. Mosquitoes were terrible, but Bill trudged along for some five miles, where a neighbor spied him and drove him home.

Erna is now an efficient cashier in the Carman Co-Op. They sold their farm, keeping the farm site, a few years ago, but enjoy spending their summers there and living in Carman in the winter. They stock their dugout with fingerlings each spring and reap the harvest in the fall.

Their oldest daughter, Jean, is married to Al Hunter and they have three children - Sharon, Allison and Jonathon.

Their second daughter, Sharon, is married to Herman Yaeger.

The youngest daughter, Barbara is married to Don Krentz, and they have two daughters, Jennifer and Melanie.



*Home of Wm. Hein, 1978.*

## WM. HEINS

In 1926, Bill Hein came to the Brunkild area and stayed with the Gus Hein Family.

In 1930, he bought half section of 33-6-1W and in 1960, an extra quarter.

In 1940, he married Erna Kihn, who was an extremely fastidious lady. She has been known to take clean work pants out to Bill in the field - make him change, then and there, so that she could launder his dirty ones.

One of the interesting episodes in their lively marriage was when Erna was to pick up Bill in Rosenort, when she returned from her job (working in the hospital in Carman.) Driving into Rosenort from the north, she made a quick circle around, and not seeing Bill, who had his grocery bag beside him, she drove off to the west. Of

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*Boating on the farm dugout, 1979.*



*Swathing on the Hein farm, 1978.*

Jake Hiebert came to Sperling July 2, 1957, and was employed by McNulty Motors until Mr. McNulty passed away in 1964.

He took over the operation of the garage at this time, under the name of J. Hiebert's Garage. From 1968 to 1970, he was in partnership with G. Anderson in a Minneapolis-Moline farm dealership. This dealership, though short lived, was operated under the name of "Triangle Farm Service". Jake then continued operating the garage on his own until the end of June, 1971. At that time, he sold the garage and the house to H. Habes of Winnipeg.

Jake and his wife, Violet, and their daughter, Sheila, moved to Carman in July, 1971, and at the time of writing, Jake is head mechanic with the Midland School Division bus garage. Their daughter, Sheila, married Dennis Banman and they are now residing in Winnipeg.

## THE HOBBS FAMILY AT SPERLING

*by Harold Hobbs*

My grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William Hobbs, moved from Valentia, Ontario about 70 miles northeast of Toronto, in 1900, coming to Manitoba with their family.

Grandfather was a general storekeeper and also a blacksmith in Ontario, and he brought much of his blacksmith tools with him.

Little is known of exactly how they arrived in Sperling. There were no roads of any kind here at that time. The only marks on the land were cement blocks on the northeast corner of each section, so there must have been a survey of some kind years before. There were some settlers north and west of the village, which was named Mariposa. The C.N. Railways from Winnipeg just came to the curve in the tracks which now run through Sperling.



*At the Hobb's home.*

The Hobbs family included my grandparents, two girls, Ethel and Beatrice, sons, Joe, Fred and Arthur. They later moved to Carman, where Ethel clerked in a store. Beatrice was a school teacher and taught near



*Early farm power at the Hobb's farm.*

Roland. A son, Arthur, apprenticed in Milt Sanders' drug store in Carman, later becoming a druggist in Sperling.

My father, (Fred) and his brother, Joe, both were experienced in the blacksmith trade to some extent, and my father worked part time in a shop in Sperling. He would walk the four miles to town and then home again. There was no stable in town for the horses. Horse-shoeing was a very necessary job in those days.

My father bought the northwest quarter and my Uncle Joe bought the southwest quarter. The first house was built on Joe's quarter, and the two families lived in it for a while. Joe had no family at that time. My mother and father had two boys, myself (Harold) and my brother, Morley, who was a little over a year older than I.

The land the Hobbs got was virgin soil and had never been broken. My father broke the sod with a walking plow and a team of horses, and my uncle had one horse, one ox, and a walking plow.

The homes were built very cheaply, just one ply of lumber. In the winter, the frost would coat the inside of the house. Father said he often had to thaw his moustache from the bedclothes before he could get up in the morning. The barn was made of sod. One time, a machine agent came to see Dad, and mother sent him to the barn. The snow was so deep, he drove right over the barn. Dad was inside!

I remember a station house quite well, also the road construction outfit. It worked right past our home. It was quite a sight to see eighteen horses on the elevator grader. This was the first sign of any road allowance. Later, the motor driven drag-line worked in the area.

Water was always the big problem. It was very strong with a type of salt which seemed to be poisonous to horses in particular. Dad would be paying for horses years after they had died. It did not seem to affect the cattle as much. The government had sent out a drilling outfit. They drilled holes about twenty inches in diameter and around 140 feet deep, but the water was still very salty.

The Tremont School was about one mile west of our buildings; and the children went there. We shopped at

Sperling. Two churches had been built there, the Methodist and the Presbyterian. Dad was choir-master at the Methodist church. The Hobbs brothers and Lorne Davison were a popular quartet. Mrs. Amos Davison was the organist.

The doctors were sixteen miles away at Carman, and there were no telephones.

The Hobbs moved from Sperling in 1921, to a farm near Carman. The Joe Hobbs moved to Miami. They had three girls Alice, Anette, and Mildred.



*Mrs. Joe Hobbs with her father, Mr. Swain, and her daughters, Anetta and Alice.*

## HOBBS HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hobbs lived on the south half of 9-6-2 W, from 1900-1916. Mrs. Hobbs' sister was Mrs. George Webster, who lived some five miles north and west. She would ride her bicycle to go to visit.

We had a horse and buggy and a little cutter that Dad had made. In this, we attended Tremont School.

Once, there was a terrible blizzard. It let up a little, so we had to go to a church 'do'. Blizzard came up again and we just got as far as Tom Brown's farm, one mile west of home. But the stock had to be fed! So Dad let the horses have their head and they headed off across the field and home.

When we got a new Ford car, our old mule was so curious to look over the car. But when it started, he just rolled over on the ground in fright and would never meet a car after that. He even took the clothes pegs off the clothes on the clothesline. His favourite trick was jumping over the manger, so we had to do away with him.

There were three daughters in this family. Alice, who said she enticed Roy Skelton to marry her, with her delicious chocolate cake and pie. They live in Carman and have two sons: Ron married Bess Reynolds, with children, Karen and Blain; Jack married Nadine Lewco.

Anetta married Cliff Waddell. They resided in Sperling Village until Cliff's passing. Anetta is in Boyne



*Mildred, Alice and Anette Hobbs with their 1925 car.*

Lodge. They had two children: Ken, who married Marlyn Cutting. He is a farmer and still farms the original land around the townsite of Sperling. They have two daughters, Jacquie and Jo Ann.

Mildred, the third daughter, married Roy Reynolds and they have retired to Victoria, British Columbia.

## THE HOLLOWAYS

*Carol and Bob Holloway*

I want to very briefly tell you the story of Bob and Carol. Of when and how and why they came to Sperling. Where they lived and what they did ... and what they tried to do ... and how they plodded on in true pioneer fashion, even though they happened by about a hundred years late.

Well, my friends, I have to tell you at the outset that we're talking about a couple of city people. Carol was born and raised in Vancouver, Bob in Winnipeg, where they met and married in 1974. She worked as a social worker, he as a kind of theatrical manager-promoter. They liked what they were doing for a long time, but eventually they became bored with the routine of it all; and they began casting about for something with a little more challenge and variety ... and that was how it came about that they bought the quarter section farm of Peter Nicaiajson in 1975 - land, buildings and machinery.

It was good for them that they didn't know how little they knew about farming, because that would have frightened them off for sure. They went about their merry way, doing a lot of dumb things, making myriad mistakes, and inevitably getting bailed out by kindly neighbours. In time, though, they began repeating their mistakes less frequently, and after planting, nurturing and harvesting their third crop, it seemed as though things were beginning to come together. At least as a casual passerby might have been fooled into thinking so if he didn't linger on the roadway too long. And while Bob and Carol had for these several years been continuing to live and work in the city, and only coming out to work their farm in the summer months, they now became so brimfull of self-confidence that they decided to build a house right on the farm and move their residence there permanently. Which they did in the summer of '78.

And just so they wouldn't get too lackadaisical with the joy of it all, they bought the movie theatre in Carman along the way, which they operate four nights a week; and in 1977 they had a son, Robert Ivan III, a brother for Karen.

And so they live, happily.

## THE HOLMES FAMILIES

*Larry Holmes and Doug Holmes*

The Holmes family first arrived in the Rural Municipality of Morris in 1913 settling in Sperling, Manitoba.

Alfred James (Bobby) Holmes and Blanche Emma Passmore were married in England in 1905. She was from Barnstable, Devon and he from Bideford, North Devon.

They emigrated to Canada in 1912 and at that time had three children, Daisy born in 1906, James born in 1908 and Elsie born in 1910. They had planned to come to Canada earlier, but the sinking of the Titanic scared Blanche and she refused to sail. They crossed the Atlantic on the King Edward Steamship. After arriving in Halifax they travelled by train to Winnipeg, and from Winnipeg by train to Brunkild. Brunkild was their destination at this time because Blanche's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Passmore, had settled in Brunkild a couple of years earlier. He was the CNR section foreman and lived in an old boxcar. The Holmes' moved a boxcar in beside theirs and lived there for about a year. On May 8, 1913 Charles Alfred Holmes was born in this boxcar.

At about this time, the Passmores moved to Moosehorn, Man. to try farming but a bush fire wiped them out. They then moved to Winnipeg where he was employed by the Hudson's Bay Co. The Holmes at this time, (1913), moved to Sperling and took up residence in the house that was later to be owned by Awatt Geswein. They lived in this house until 1915. During this time there was another son born, Aubrey, who died in infancy.

In 1913 Grandpa Holmes obtained his first work on a farm, working for the Boyce Family. It was a very wet year and farming was difficult with the sheaves frozen to the ground. Grandpa's first assignment was to harness a horse, a task he knew nothing about. After some time his progress was checked. The horse was not harnessed. Grandpa had spent all of the time trying to get the croupier over the horse's neck.

In 1914 Grandpa obtained employment with the CNR section gang in Sperling. Grandma and Grandpa were also the caretakers for the Union Bank and the Royal Bank (presently the Legion Hall) and for the Methodist Church, which was situated on the site of Bill Davidson's barn across from the Sperling Garage. They were also the caretakers for the Presbyterian Church which was situated where Ken Keller (Charles and Main) now lives.

In 1915 Grandma and Grandpa purchased their own home on the corner of Railway Ave. and New St. In 1916 a daughter, Ada, was born in the Carman Hospital. In 1918 there was a severe flu epidemic and Jim and Elsie became very ill. It was also the year that World War I ended and, although there was prohibition, Mrs. Sparling put on a large party to celebrate the soldiers safe return. It was in 1920 that another son, Lawrence, was born at home.

Alfred and Blanche Holmes lived in Sperling until 1940. There were many periods of very hard times during this period. It was not uncommon that the main meal of the day, supper, consisted of fried porridge which had been left over from breakfast. In 1940 they moved to St. Norbert where he worked on the section gang with Mr. Morrish. They remained in St. Norbert until 1946, at which time he retired and they moved back to Sperling.

Grandma passed away in 1953 at 74 years of age. Dec. 24, 1878 - Mar. 13, 1953.

It was after Grandma passed away that Grandpa honed his skills as a wine maker. Several of the local children would contribute by picking dandelions in the spring. The appropriate mixture was then put in crocks and left to age. Grandpa used to eat his dinners at Charlie's and one day a young Larry Holmes was sent next door to Grandpa's to tell him dinner was ready. This short trip took longer than it should have, and when Larry got back home he seemed to be suffering from some dizziness as he couldn't seem to get into the house. He had arrived at Grandpa's just when the aging of the wine was being tested. Grandpa Holmes was not world famous but he had a little parlour caper where he would, "Swallow his pocket watch" attached to a long chain. Those who saw it believed it. For those who missed it, would you believe it?

On Nov. 4, 1961 at 80 years of age, Alfred James Holmes passed away, May 8, 1881 - Nov. 4, 1961.

The oldest daughter, Daisy, married Cyril Woodley in 1925. They had four children, Harold, Jim, Bill and Mary. They resided in Winnipeg where Daisy still resides. Cyril passed away in 1957.

In 1928 Elsie married Garnet Badger in Morris, Man. Where the couple resided. After a short time they moved to Winnipeg. They had one daughter Jerry and two sons, Brian and Wayne. Garnet passed away in 1954 and Elsie in 1970.

In 1930 James was married to Betty Bonny. They did not have any children. Jim worked for Eatons for 23 years until his retirement. Jim passed away in 1967.

In 1934 Ada married Harold Spencer. They lived in Winnipeg where Harold was employed by the Hudson's Bay Co. In 1945 they transferred to Vancouver. They still reside there enjoying retirement. They have one daughter, Marlene, who also lives in Vancouver.

Lawrence remained single and resided in Sperling until about 10 years ago when he moved to Vancouver where he now lives.

Charles Alfred (Charlie) Holmes married Esther May Sessions in 1932. Esther was the daughter of William and Elizabeth Sessions, William being a butcher by trade, having a slaughter house in Sperling and also looking after the local beef ring.

In 1933 Charlie and Esther's first son, Douglas Charles Alfred, was born. In 1944 Hilton Lawrence (Larry) was born. In 1948 the unexpected happened and the twins, Olive May and Gail Blanche were born.

After completing school, Doug worked for Consolidated Grain for a short time and then as a helper with Herold Bell at the Pool Elevator. He then moved to Winnipeg and worked for McDonald Bros. Aircraft for a year before he joined the St. James Police Dept. in 1955.



He married the former Gladys Mazur of Sewell, Man, in 1957. They have three children, Dana, Sherri, and Leanne. Doug is still employed with the City of Winnipeg Police Department.

Larry completed his schooling and then moved to Winnipeg in 1963. He worked for Co-op Implements until 1970 and then Northern Electric for two years. He joined the St. James Police Dept. in 1972 and is presently employed there. Larry married the former Gayle Ferguson of Winnipeg in 1968 and they have one son Jason.

Gail Holmes completed her schooling and then attended Red River Community College obtaining a Laboratory/ X-Ray Technologist Certificate. She then obtained employment in the hospital at Eriksdale, Man. in 1970 and has remained there since.

Olive completed her education and then worked for Manitoba Telephone System in Winnipeg for 5 years. In 1972 she married Mel Ferris of Homewood. They presently live on the Ferris family farm and have two children, Michael and Kendall.

Charlie Holmes lived all his life in Sperling. As a young man and throughout his life he was well known for his mechanical abilities as a mechanic who could fix most anything. Prior to being married, Charlie "Rode the Rails", travelling as far east as Toronto looking for work, but the depression times were hard and there was no work. He worked for several local farmers earning as much as \$5.00 per month and as little as \$2.00 per month. In the late 30's he tried farming, renting some land from Jack Mitchell. The crop was a failure. He tried farming again in the early 40's renting some land from Mogen Neilson. This was south of town near where Tjaden's south farm is and also near the spillway. Because of the excessive rain that year all of the crop ended up in the spillway.

At that time Charlie hired on with the Pool Elevators on a construction gang. He did this for quite a few years travelling throughout Manitoba. It was at this time that Charlie began looking after the rink during the winter months. When he quit the Pool Elevators he worked for Consolidated Grain in Sperling as an elevator agent for two years. He then worked for C.B. McNulty operating his farms for him, also working as a mechanic in the garage. After Mr. McNulty passed away he worked for Jake Hiebert as a mechanic. When Jake sold out Charlie got a job with Co-op Implements in Carman as a mechanic and was employed there until his untimely passing.

Throughout his life Charlie was involved in sports in the community, baseball, hockey and curling. As a young man Charlie, a lefty, was quite a pitcher. He was also quite a hockey player and it is "rumoured" that he could shoot the puck from one end of the rink and break the boards at the other end. In one game that took place in Winnipeg there was a collision between Charlie and a well known player by the name of Bill Juzda. Charlie was knocked completely over the boards and suffered three cracked ribs, landing in the second row of seats.

Charlie was known as a person that would help anyone that needed help. During the approximate 20 years that he was caretaker of the rink every youngster in the

community got to know him well. He tied and tightened thousands of pairs of skates. He was never too busy for the kids.

Charlie's wife, Esther, was also involved in sports, playing baseball and with the Woman's Curling club, being the first secretary. Prior to the Woman's club being formed they had curled with the men. Esther was the secretary-treasurer of the Legion Ladies Auxilliary for 15 years and also the caretaker of the Masonic Hall for 20 years.

Charlie became ill in 1965 and passed away March 7, 1967 at 53 years of age. A great loss to family, friends and community.

Esther Homes still lived in Sperling in the former School Principal's house.

Regardless of the many hardships through the years, there were also many good times. The Holmes families will always have many happy memories of Sperling and will always refer to Sperling as HOME.

## THE HOOPER FAMILIES

John Henry Hooper arrived in Winnipeg, via rail, from Mariposa, Ontario, March, 1892, with a team of horses, his sole possessions, amid mud and slush. He travelled on to Carman, Manitoba, where he sold the team.

He was able to get work with Andrew Graham, in Roland district, and also worked as a drayman, delivering freight to businesses and driving doctors for the Fuller Stables, of Carman.

He left the draying job in harvest season, which consisted of stacking and stack threshing. Stacking became an art, as well as a competition; no prize awarded, just the reward of achievement.

John bought one quarter section in 1897, now owned by Lloyd Peckover, of Sperling. Here he erected a sod shanty, and sod stable, where he housed the oxen he used to break his quarter. Later, he sold this quarter and bought the N.W. 1 /4 33-6-2 West, which became the Hooper home. This was also broken with these oxen.

John was able to build a frame granary, where he lived with this sister, Elizabeth, though still using a sod stable. In 1900, he built a new house, living here with Elizabeth.



*John Hooper, 1925, and his wife in inset.*



*Building Hooper's barn.*

In 1903 John made his first trip back home. No one knew that he had other things on his mind besides farming. He proposed to Marion Browning Prior, a school teacher from Oakwood, Ontario, and they were married on December 30, 1903. For their honeymoon, they travelled to Pennsylvania, U.S.A., returning to their Sperling farm in March, 1904.

By this time, John had horses, a frame barn, and was becoming established. He acquired another quarter section, N.E. 114 33-6-2 West, which was broken, along with necessary machinery, a two furrow riding plow (Cockshutt) a Von Brunt 20 run hoe-drill, and harrows. (no cart) "Horses were more important than men".

Our parents had a hard life, but in the west, if they worked hard, there was a good future for them. The Hoopers bought another half section and raised their family, Esther and Browning. Esther taught school, married William Webb of Myrtle, raising two children; Marion Smith, of Winnipeg and John Webb of the Myrtle district.

Browning married Margaret Young of Sperling. They operated the home farm and raised four children; Gary is farming at Sperling, Lois of Winnipeg, Glen on the home farm at Sperling and Phyllis of Carman.

Our parents provided a good home for their children, based on honesty, discipline and work, with a strong religious background. It is eighty-eight years since John

Hooper migrated west, along with other pioneers. They have left an inheritance for their children and their children's children. The foundations they built must be preserved by us, if we hope to survive as a nation.

## **ESTHER HOOPER'S GEM**

*The revelation of the following story  
is credited to A.K. Brown*

J.H. Hooper was one of the last horsemen to yield to pressure in the matter of purchasing a car and in 1919, bought a Ford - The 'Tin Lizzy' variety, but this one did give the revolutionary self-starter.

However, the story, has it, that one day as a group of men were conversing on Sperling Main Street, John Hooper drove up with his Ford, drew into the curb, swerving out, and headed away from town. One of the men remarked that he bet Hooper had forgotten how to stop the thing. Later, when challenged with this, Mr. Hooper admitted this was the case, and that he had gone home and headed the 'darn machine' into a hay stack! The family remained ignorant of this for years.

In the early days of the Methodist Church, when picnics were held at the various farm homes, there was the difficulty of transporting the delicacies over rough roads. For years there was a considerable dip in the trail about 112 mile south of the Hooper's farm. It was there that Mrs. Doyle's lemon pies came to grief. Apparently the egg crate in which the luscious lemon pies were lovingly packed, slid in the bag of the buggy, with disastrous results.

Hooper's horse 'Net' was a personality in herself. Mrs. Hooper was never sure whether the horse with attached buggy would be available after the shopping was done. There was better than a 50-50 chance, that the outfit had been driven off by one of the Prior boys with an admiring group of followers - to be returned after a trip around the block, or at least as far as the Myer's farm.

The Hooper driving horses were always in fine fettle and in the winter time when word got around that Mr. Hooper was in town, there was always a string of boys and sleighs waiting for a ride. It was wonderful when Mr. Hooper did a 'power turn at the corner in front of Sparling's store and Davidson's livery barn.

Merle and Lewis Rehill were among the youngsters adding spice to Sperling happenings, when they weren't out at the Hooper farm, doing the same.

Anyway, the Rehill cow used to be tethered out along the 'track' or in some spot where pasture was available. Of course it was one of the 'chores' for the youngsters to bring her home. I'm sure Mrs. Bob Smith, the Presbyterian minister's wife, one day wondered what had taken over the usually quiet backlane. They didn't know of rockets or drag strips, but had they, I'm sure they'd have bet on its being either, or both, as the Rehill cow, yards of tether chain, a small wagon and two youngsters hanging on for dear life, swinging around the corner of the Methodist Church shed, on up the lane to the barn at the end of the block! I never heard about the quality or quantity of milk in the Rehill house that night!

I remember the terrific storm, about 1920, when the whole school population were billeted in town. While



*Horseback riding are Esther and Browning Hooper on Nellie and Betsy in 1919.*

arrangements were being made, Mr. Pigott, the Principal, read to the high school students the Kipling 'Just-So-Stories'. We all set out from school together, children being being carefully taken to houses on the way. The two young Ribordy girls were having a hard time in the wind and snow, so Mr. Pigott took one under each arm like sticks and carried them. Alma Ferris (Mrs. M. Fewster), Ella Peckover and I stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Tjaden in the 'stone house'. I remember Mrs. Tjaden's delicious fried chicken. Vans called the next morning and took the children home.

Vans! - being upset, and rather having fun out of it; singing all the way, all the songs we could think of - there were the Dale girls, Edith McMunn and the Wilson girls - with the rest of us joining in we really had a chorus.

Christmas Concerts - they've never been so wonderful - drills, choruses, recitations. Mrs. Rehill says she still remembers crawling under the platform that was built out over the altar-rail in the old Methodist Church - the object? - to get John Webster out from under there.

The flowers grown by Mrs. Boyes on the place where Bert Nichols lived, were beyond prairie dreams of the time. At least once a summer we would drive over in the buggy and come home with it literally full of blooms.

## HENK HABES



*Home of Hank and Motsy Habes.*



*Family of H. Mengerink. BACK ROW: Margie and Henry Mengerink. CENTRE ROW: Henk and Matsy Habes, Sharon and Michael Habes.*



*Mrs. Alice Hubner moved to Main St. S. in Sperling in 1979 from Lancashire, England.*

## THE GEORGE JENKINS FAMILY

George Edward Jenkins, one of eight children, was born to Thomas and Mary Jenkins, March 8, 1880, in Round Grove Township, Dwight, Illinois. His wife, Fanny Charlene McFarlane, was born State Line, Pennsylvania, October 5, 1885, the only child of Michael and Abigail Holcromb McFarlane. They were married in Erie, Pennsylvania, in June, 1906. During his early working years, my' father was Superintendent of construction for Western Union Telegraph lines through Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York State. As this was new territory, he covered these states on foot.

Two years after my parents' marriage, Dad decided to leave the Western Union, return to Dwight, Illinois, and to farming.

In the spring of 1918, he moved with his family, also Mrs. Abbie McFarlane, (my mother's mother) who made her home with us after the death of my grandfather McFarlane, to Linesville, Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, the family operated a large dairy farm (50 milk cows).

In the spring of 1919, the family moved to the Sperling area, where my father purchased and farmed the west half of Section 35-6-2 West. It was virgin prairie. He broke, cultivated and seeded the land to wheat, oats and barley. He built a set of buildings for his family to live in.

In the spring of 1932, the family moved to what was later known as "Mollard Siding" and farmed one and one-half sections of land there. They lived on this farm until the spring of 1949, when my father retired from farming and moved into the village of Sperling. My parents resided in Sperling until their health failed. My father was a patient in Princess Elizabeth Hospital, Winnipeg, for 18 months, passing away December 22, 1965. My mother made her home with her three children after my father's passing. She passed away in Carman Hospital February, 1967.

Three children were born to this couple: *Harriet* married Charles Martin of Lucan, Ontario. They have three children; George, Helen and Miriam. *Charles* married Dorothy Wilson of Sperling. Dorothy passed away in Brandon, Manitoba, September 30, 1977. They have three children; Janice, Gail and Gwen. *Curtis* married Patricia Anderson of Myrtle, Manitoba. Curtis passed away July 7, 1964. They have one son; Bruce.



*Oscar with his 15 1/2 lb. Northern Pike, caught at White Lake, which won him the "Master Angling" Award in 1959.*

## ALINE AND LEON KELLER FAMILY

The Keller family came from Lakin, Belgium with their family of 8 children in the spring of 1923. They lived in Grand Clairier until that fall, then moved to the Garnett District. They moved to their Sperling farm (34-5-2 W) in 1934 and coincidentally they both passed away in 1946.

Their family consists of Louis, Mary, Raoul, Andrea, Eloi, Oscar, Emma, and Rosa. Three are still living: Rosa in St. Norbert, Raoul in Winnipeg and Oscar in Sperling.

Oscar and his wife, Margaret, have resided on the family farm since 1940. Their children (Glenn in Transcona, Ivan in Garson, Ken in Sperling, Joyce Minski, in Winnipeg, and Louise at home) attended Tremont and Carman schools.

Ivan and Carol have Miles and Mimerberley.

Glenn and Darien have Andrew and Adam.

Joyce and Bill have Leroy and Candice.

Ken and Shirley have Lisa and David. Lisa is married to Eddie Schellenberg.

Oscar has always enjoyed nature hunting (fishing, elk and deer).

Ken is busy with his spray coupe - having sprayed 5200 acres in 1979.

Oscar was interested in assisting Doc Martin in his veterinary practice and became quite adept in that field.

Mrs. Keller Sr. crocheted beautiful lace bedspreads.



*David, son of Shirley and Ken Keller, plays for the Carman Junior Cougars. He has won numerous trophies besides the award for "most honest and hardest worker" and the "most valuable player" in 1979.*

## THE JACK KIHN FAMILY

Jacob (Jack) Kihn was born in Friedensfeld, south of Steinbach, Manitoba. He grew up in Hochstadt, southwest of Steinbach, on the farm. He came to Lea Bank in 1939, and worked as a farm labourer for Herman Hein and David Kuxhausen.

In 1942, he married Olga Boroski. They started farming in 1944, on the former Mike Boroski farm. In 1953, they purchased the W. 112 28-6-1 West and later on purchased the N.W. 1 / 4 29-6-1 West.

When hydro came to the farm in 1950, farming became much brighter and less backaches. The ice house was replaced by a freezer. The Maytag washing machine got an electric motor, and the new cream separator turned itself. No more will the baby's bottle have to be warmed at night by holding it over the coal oil lamp.



*Jack Kihn's first '46 Willys Army Jeep used as school van.*

About 1949, a Willys Jeep became the most prized possession. It replaced the horse, because it could go through deep gumbo mud, snow and water. During the children's school years, before gravel roads, it was used as a school van; although it was rough and dusty, it always got the children to school. It was also used as a field sprayer for weeds and grasshoppers. Jack owned 3 different jeeps. He sold the last one in 1977.

They have three daughters; Sylvia, married to Ed Leask, a pilot in the Canadian Armed Forces. Virginia, who married Ron Braun, a farmer in the Starbuck area,



*Jack Kihn and Herman Hein going to Brunkild during 1950 flood on No. 3 highway.*

and Rosemary, who married Gary Epler, a farmer in the Brunkild area.

In 1978, Ed and Sylvia Leask purchased part of the farm and started building a new home. They started part time farming in 1977. As this farm is turned over to the third generation, "May God bestow his blessings on them and on future generations, if it be His will."

## MRS. JEREMIAH KILLEEN

*submitted by Rose Killeen*

In 1892 a beautiful, blond, sixteen year old Norwegian girl boarded a ship captained by her brother, in Oslo Norway, destined for New York. She had succumbed to "American fever". Anna had longed to see the great land. Anna Knudson, as she was known then, and later Mrs. Jeremiah Killeen of Elm Creek and later of Sperling, Manitoba, set sail and landed with a shipful of Norwegian immigrants at Ellis Island, New York. Anna's brother told her that anytime she wished return passage to Norway she had only to ask.

After a formal introduction to America via Ellis Island, Anna left for Minneapolis with a group of fellow Norwegians by train. Buying a stick of gum from a vendor on a train proved difficult for Anna, especially when the vendor could not understand Norwegian nor she English. Anna Knudson had aunts, uncles, as well as cousins in Grafton, North Dakota, and passed up the trip to Minneapolis to visit with them for a while. Anna spent six years in Grafton, and during that time she met Jeremiah Killeen from Corkery, Ontario, Canada and was married.

Wm. J. Willeen (Bill) was born in Grafton in 1899. Jeremiah Killeen was the owner of a livery stable in Grafton. However, there was a lure for the good land of Manitoba, 5th Province of Canada.

Manitoba, in 1900, was now a respected center of Agriculture and Commerce; and Canada was Jeremiah's homeland. Hundreds of American families were moving North and the transition by train was not too difficult. The Killeen family settled 2 112 miles from Elm Creek. However, Jeremiah considered the water bad, and moved 8 miles west of Elm Creek hoping for better land and crops,



*Jeremiah Killeen family. LEFT TO RIGHT: Lilly, Bill, Rose, Mother, Jack, Violet.*

Harvesting was always an exciting time. The steam powered, belt driven threshing machine was said to be under repair two days for everyone it worked, during which time the threshing gang ate the farmers out of house and home.

By this time Lily (Mrs. Benson Smith), Violet (Mrs. C.B. McNulty), Rose and Jack were born. The Killeens were a very sociable and musical family, and added much to the life of the community. At the age of fifteen, young Bill was much sought after to play the violin for a dance and later barn dances. The Killeen horses were the pride of the prairies, and everyone was a horseback rider, girls included. Jerry and Anna's family of five, **Lily**, William, Violet, Rose and Jack all received their early education at Wingham's one room school. Lily, Violet and Rose completed their formal education graduation from St. Mary's Academy in Winnipeg. Rose later entered St. Boniface Hospital as a nursing student. Jeremiah died in 1925 and was buried in the Roman Catholic Cemetery in Fannystelle. In 1938 Mrs. Killeen sold the farm at Elm Creek and moved with Jack and Rose to Sperling. Anna Killeen never saw Norway again after her sixteenth birthday, even though she had a free pass home for many years. She loved her new country and the prairies, and was completely dedicated to her Church and family. At the age of 93 Anna Killeen (nee Knudson) died.



*John Killeen*

## THE JACK KILLEEN FAMILY

In 1937, my father, John Killeen, son of Anne Knudsen and Jeremiah Killeen, moved from the Wingham district, near Elm Creek, Manitoba, where he had been engaged in farming, having taken over the family farm at the time of his father's death. His first year at Sperling was spent working with his brother, my Uncle Bill, who was the B.A. Dealer, and his brother-in-law, C.B. McNulty, husband of Violet Killeen, the Massey Harris Dealer.

The following year, he moved his sister, my Aunt Rose and Grandma, to the friendly village, where they lived for many years beside Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gehring, until they retired to Winnipeg in 1958.



**Wingham School, 1911. Bill Killeen extreme left and Mrs. C.B. McNulty (nee Violet Killeen) center with dark dress.**

Dad farmed east of Sperling until he joined the Royal Canadian Artillery in 1939, taking his basic training at Shilo, Manitoba. Dad married mom, Delores Winnifred Wurmnest, in January, 1940, and their first child, Tanis Daisy Marie, was born in July, 1941. Dad left for overseas duty in November of that year, serving in England and the Italian campaign. On his return home in September, 1945, he and mom lived above the general store, owned by Beck's. I was born October 5, 1946.

We left town for our second home on the Ralph Mogk farm, east of Sperling in 1948. Our neighbours were Louie and Marie Rose and Maurice and Ida Cretton. Tanis travelled to school by a horse drawn van, driven by Camille Rose. Dad's harem got a pleasant surprise when Phillip Byron John arrived on October 11, 1948.

The Paetkau farm became our third home, located west of Louie Duvenaud's and Martin Gehring's. Dad was driving the South-West Transfer then.

In 1950, Dad and Mom bought the old Dave Martin home and moved it into town on a lot next to Mrs. Elizabeth McKee and we were "town folk" again. Here, our family reached its completion with the arrival of Shelley Rose in October, 1954, and Tricia Michelle, in March, 1956.

Going to Delta with Clayton and Audrey Young or packing lunch to spend the day at the annual Carman fair, were big trips back then.

I remember Tanis relating that she will always remember driving home with the gang from many successful baseball tournaments with faithful Awatt at the wheel and skating as the Dungaree Dolls in the Southern Manitoba carnival circuit with Kathy Wilson, Darlene Cates, Janie Koop and Bonnie Rose. Also hoeing sugar beets with Janie Koop and Carole Peckover at Mutcher's farm, earning money to enter St. Mary's Academy and later nurse's training at the Misericordia hospital.

Tanis married Richard Rummery from Winnipeg in March, 1963. They lived at Lac du Bonnet, where Richard worked as conservation officer. Richard passed away in 1970. They have two daughters, Rox Anne Louise and Leslie Anne. At present, Tanis and the girls live in St. Norbert. Tanis is still pursuing her nursing career.

The simplest of pleasures then are my fondest memories now - jumping off the muddy banks to learn to swim in Sandra Mogk's pond and the many occasions on which almost the entire community would gather in the United Church. The church used to echo with giggles from our Explorers and CGIT groups and ring with voices in song at Vesper services, weddings and funerals. It always buzzed with excitement at teas, showers and fowl suppers, smelling of fresh coffee and goodies of all sorts laid out.

In country terms, I married "the boy next door". Douglas lived in Brunkild, 8 miles away and we married in 1968, after which I went to teacher's college and taught for 4 years. We have two daughters, McGuire Delores and Kourtney Reed and one son, Karver Moxwell. We live in River Heights.

The good life of country living always includes animals and I'm sure Mrs. McKee will always remember Phillip's passion for pets. For some reason, his pigeons preferred her roof to his carefully built cages and her lettuce always tasted better to his rabbits than ours. In harvest time, all the town kids would run for miles in the surrounding fields as they helped burn stubble. It was an exciting annual event that always brings to the heart and memory the glow of fires, sparks flying, pals calling each other and the smell of smoke. We were very proud of Phillip as he pitched in many a fine game for the Sperling ball team. Phillip married Joan Duffy from St. James in 1969. They have two daughters, Tanya Louise and Alison Dana. Phillip is a locomotive engineer with the CNR and they reside in St. Vital.

Shelley and Trish were very close in age and fondly remember their education in the 'little red school house'. Their equestrian training came from their good friends at the Thelma Nicolajsen farm and the two country bumpkins had a lot to compare when the Killeens moved to St. Boniface in 1967. Shelley married Ted Kaptein from Ile de Chenes in 1978, and they live in St. Vital. Tricia has taken up a career in Cosmetology and lives in Winnipeg.

Dad passed away in 1976 and mother lives in St. Boniface. Our original home is remodelled and owned by Mr. Giesbrecht, and we never go by Sperling without passing by it.

The old adage "you can take the boy out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the boy" rings true for many of us old Sperlingites. Our years there are only treasures now - sweet to recall - how lucky we all were to be there together.

## GROWING UP IN SPERLING

*by Marion (Wilson) Kirk*

If you were a child your town was your complete world. One did not take off for Carman, or Winnipeg at a moment's notice. The car had arrived, but was not used for travel as it is today. My early recollections of Sperling were when it boasted ... two churches, two banks, two general stores, a drug store and telephone office, implement dealers, a large garage, three elevators, hardware store, lumber yard, butcher shop, blacksmith shop, livery



stable, barber shop and pool room, our own veterinarian, and later our own Doctor.

The train played a most important part in the life of the town and the district, as it was our link with the rest of the country. Anyone who happened to be in town when it was due to arrive would generally go to meet it. Just to see who was leaving, or what it had brought for the local drayman to take to the stores. I recall the large wooden boxes filled with bread, four loaves together. Were they ever good; a real treat from the homemade bread we had most of the time. I loved to go to the station just to hear the telegraph key ticking away, it was all a great mystery to me. Our station master, a Mr. Aubin, was such a friendly man. In those days you could ride to Carman in spotless cars, sitting on *real plush seats* for about 25%. I did this from time to time to visit my Grandmother who lived there.

I recall going to Winnipeg by car in the fall to be outfitted for the winter. We had a touring car with only the side curtains to protect us from the cold. These were made of the same material as the top with mica (similar to plastic) to see through. They were fastened to the car with snaps, which as I recall, seldom worked. No roll up windows or heaters in those days, but we made it just the same. We would stay in a hotel overnight and Dad would take us to see a play at the Winnipeg or Walker Theatre. One Western was too real for me, and when they shot the lamp and all was dark, I stood up and started to cry.

The following day we would stop at Robinson or Eaton's Stores and at every opportunity ride on the sliding stairs, as we called them. There was a great deal of shopping by mail and Eaton's Catalogue was in every home and elsewhere. Christmastime one would see large parcels arriving at the Station or Post Office. Eatons was just a household necessity.

The Churches were the centre of community life, and being Presbyterian at that time, I attended the little white frame church which was situated at the very north end of main street. Little girls would come to Sunday School wearing pretty cotton dresses with straw hats with ribbons hanging down the back, and little boys wore cotton suits and knee pants. I remember singing in this Church in aid of Victory Bonds. Dorothy, Isabel and I, in our white embroidered dresses with red, white and blue sashes, carried Union Jacks over our shoulders, sang "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and "When the Boys Come Marching Home Again" and others. I thought the audience large and the building huge, but I know now it was a very small place.

The day we heard the War had ended, I had gone to town with Dad and Isabel in the buggy and I recall the scene in Sperling's Store. A Mr. Verge, who lived at that time on S.W. 114 28-6-2W, was so happy, as his son Morton would be coming home. He had lost one son over there. The men bought cigars and they bought us chocolate bars. When we went home, we put flags on the veranda and a general gladness was all over the district. Going to see Uncle Al when he got back, was a real experience. We were much in awe of this stranger, who had *actually* flown an airplane. We all know by the Honor Roll who served us at that time, and Ormie Waddell added a year or so to his age just to get in.

Christmas Concerts in Sperling's *Hall*, where we performed for our parents, drills, marches, plays, and recitations were very exciting. We had the usual big tree and Santa Claus arrived on time after numerous telegrams as to his progress from the North Pole. We all received a bag of candy and peanuts. These bags were made of a cotton mesh and by the time we received them the candy and shells had stuck to the bags, but that did not bother us, as candy was a real treat. We arrived and returned home in sleighs or cutters to the music of sleigh bells, all snuggled up in buffalo robes and straw, in the care of our trusty horses and drivers, who needed no lights to guide them.

Dances in this same hall were frequent and lively, to music supplied by Annie Peckover, Dunc Clarke and Everett Rose. We were taken as Mother and Dad went and there were no babysitters then. I recall seeing Mr. and Mrs. Amos Ribordy dancing at one of these functions. The girls were all fashionably dressed and I remember the lovely georgette blouses and silk skirts, and also the high-topped laced boots made of what they called champagne kid. Helen Riorden (Mrs. Borsheim) was a real beauty, and I thought if I could just grow up to be as pretty as her I would not ask for anything else.

Remember the early plays performed in this hall under the direction of Mr. A.V. Piggott? 'Home Ties' featured Norbert Tomney, Miss Arthur (a teacher) Les Welsh, Eddie Maloney and Mac McMillan and others. Joe Bergstrom and Bert Gillespie, could have made it in the acting profession. Joe's imitation of Charlie Chaplin will never be forgotten by those who saw him perform.

Dramas in the new school under the direction of Mrs. Bob Davidson and Mrs. Art Brown saw such locals on stage as Ethel Lowery, Tina McDonald and Cliffie Woodworth (teachers) Mrs. Davidson, Alex McEachern, Dan Peckover, Gordon Ferris, Kenneth Waddell, Scotty Moir, Dr. Martin, Mrs. I. Peckover, Isabel Wilson, Earl Peckover, Bernice Williamson, Etta Fewster, Mrs. Haywood and myself. We would put out plays on at home and then take them to other towns. We had a lot of fun doing this, and it produced some pretty fine acting also.

Local Sports days were well attended and the games hotly contested. One Sports Day, a very early one which was held in Clifford Waddell's pasture field opposite the school, I remember seeing Billy Waddell's Model T. Ford all decked out in flags and ribbons, getting first prize. Jake Tjaden's new Case Car, was considered the height of luxury. Sunday School Picnics at Dave Waddell's started the holiday season for us. Ice cream, lemonade, suckers and peanuts. Racing for five or ten cents to buy more. I must say that I never won, as Isabel Wilson and Ella Peckover were always in first.

Later, when D.S. Woods was our school inspector he started a programme of Field Days, Ice Meets and School Fairs with Musical Festivals in his Division. We were in the '13' Group which took in Myrtle, Elm Creek and for part of the programme, Roland. Here we made new friends or enemies depending on the events of how they turned out.

In 1924, the school burned in the month of May and this meant that the pupils had to finish their year in other

surroundings. The Primary Class went to the Church basement, the Elementary to the Rink and the High School to the Orange Hall. I wrote my Grade Eight that year along with others sitting at long tables. I believe we all passed, but we had a very good teacher in Miss Annie Phillips.

July 1st was Carman Fair and everyone went to that. Who will forget the 1921 rain? How they got home without benefit of gravel, was a wonder. When Dad was showing horses, we spent hours making roses and polishing the brass to decorate the teams. Dad and Uncle George Peckover were directors for years. Local entries were watched with great interest and we were sure the judges made many mistakes.

When the Chautauqua came to town, the big tent was pitched on the school yard, and for a few days we were treated to some very fine acts. One trio I recall was called the Georgian Singers, three lovely girls who joined our local choir the following Sunday to render two numbers.

All brought the Harvest excursions from the East and the District hummed to the sound of the threshing machines. It was a common sight to see the line up of grain wagons at the elevators waiting to be unloaded. The ladies cooked endlessly for the always hungry men and it seemed to disappear as fast as you cooked it. Gardens were large, and pickling and preserving the order of the day. Picking saskatoons was another thing I didn't mind at all. We all ate our share.

Nor will we ever forget the gay days of the Mike McNulty era, which really put us on the map. The days of the big hockey team and the excursions to Swan Lake and Winnipeg. Remember the night we waited for the team from Winnipeg to arrive until very late, but they couldn't make it due to roads and snowmobile trouble and then the next day we were allowed out of school to see the game.

February saw the town grind to a halt as the Curlers left for the Big Spiel in Winnipeg, and we at home listened to radio reports and read the papers and were proud of them all. Our local Carnivals were real spectacles and who will ever forget the costumes that came out of the H.W. Brown house.

To our district came many from other countries, some to stay and others to return; Joe Grundler with his set of gold teeth, the Lohrs, the Dransfelds, the Abrys, the Jenkins and others from the U.S.A. Who will ever forget Mrs. Abry with her beautiful blonde hair and her coonskin coat? Those who stayed all became a real part of the district. Church Union brought the churches together and a large group to become members of the newly formed church.

Radio was a wonderful thing when it arrived, especially for those who could not see, and here I think of my Grandfather Wilson; Amos and Andy, Fibber Magee and Molly, the Lux Theatre to say nothing of Ma Perkins and The Guiding Light. Going to neighbors to play cards or even to dance at a house party were all part of the social scene.

The Bus Service came into being around 1922 or 1923 with Elmer Clay, Garry Lewis and Bert Kemp as drivers. Living as we did one half mile from the main road we had to meet the school van there, and we did not dress then as

one would now for the cold. Slacks, etc., were just not known, we wore sweaters, coats, and even long underwear, this latter I loathed. Thank goodness someone said it was O.K. for women to put on slacks and ski pants.

Sperling has always been a friendly place, people helping people. Times change, but people don't.

## THE KOOPS

Jake Koop and his brother, Peter, came from Russia to Niverville, Manitoba. In March, 1930, they arrived in Sperling to find mud up to their knees. On foot, they headed for the Mennonite Settlement and were fortunate enough to have Jack Wurmnest pick them up. They soon discovered why, as Jack needed their muscle power to push his car through the double dike.

Jake farmed for 5 years and then decided to buy a truck to haul their grain, and to do custom hauling for others. Previously, they had hauled grain with horses from Sperling to Grunthal, which was a 40 mile trip.

In 1940, he married Aggie Janzen, who had been working in Winnipeg. When her parents came from Russia to Goossens at Rosenort, the family had to separate for one year, each working for different families for their room and board. In 1924, the family settled near Crystal City. Later they farmed in the Sperling area. Mr. Janzen was a welcome hand to the local vet, Dr. Martin. In Russia, he had learned to "bleed" horses, which was unethical, but much in demand by farmers who had horses stricken by encephalomyelitis.

Jake began a water hauling business at \$7.50 for 1000 gallons. There was no other means of obtaining water at Sperling then hauling from Winnipeg, Carman or Homewood.

One day, Aggie and her friend Corie Pauls journeyed to Winnipeg for a tank of water. After performing many errands for friends, they returned to Curt Jenkins' farm south of Sperling to unload the water. But to no avail - they could not get the water to flow. Reason - she had forgotten to fill the tank!

In 1970, Jake was putting on a tire that had been incorrectly fixed. It exploded, seriously injuring him. When someone asked him if he had had brain damage, Jake quipped, "I must have, I'm still trucking."

Aggie is artistically inclined. She has become proficient in cake decorating and painting. Her first cake, which was made for Mona Tjaden's wedding, netted her two tea towels as payment! She also paints beautiful pictures.

Jake retired from trucking in 1979. They have one daughter, Janie, who is married to Robert Brown. They have four grandchildren - Arthur, Michael, Toni and Kathy.

## L. LAFOND FAMILY

In 1924, Mr. and Mrs. L. Lafond (a sister of Mrs. Maurice Bourgeois), moved to SW 114 28-6-2 W with their two children, Joe and Mary. In 1928, due to a flooded crop failure, they moved to Vassar to find work

chopping trees. Later, they bought E 1/ 2 27-6-2, where they resided until 1951. Here Madeline was born.

Mr. Lafond, or Joe, drove a schoolvan for many years. Mary and Madeline worked for W.C. Land; Mary also at Sperling Hotel.

In 1943, Joe and Ulysses Laferriere went to train in the reserve forces in Brandon.

In 1949, Mr. Lafond passed away. Later, Mrs. Lafond returned to her native land, Belgium, where she married Mr. Douxtreppe. They returned to Winnipeg. He died in 1978.

Joe married Laura McDougall and they have two children, Bob and Vicki. He was employed in boat making and making neon signs. In 1977, he and Laura moved to Salmo, B.C., where he is employed in mining operations.

Mary married Lawrence Chartier. They live in Winnipeg, as do their children, Lillian and Maurice. Mary is severely crippled by arthritis, but always cheerful.

Madeline married Lawrence Marsch, who had been employed in the Sperling area at Harry Mogk's. He is a bus driver in Winnipeg. They have two sons, Leonard and Keith.

Mrs. Lafond recalls how they would all be sitting out at the shady east side of their home on a Saturday summer evening. About 9:30 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Sutton would come tootling along in their Model T truck, minus the cab and a little box seat at the back. An invitation to the careless Lafond's to accompany them to town? No hurry. Suttons patiently waited until the five got ready and off they went for a big night in Sperling.

She also recalls raising huge flocks of turkeys and hens. These were sold directly to Eaton's, in Winnipeg, and the money used for the yearly Christmas shopping spree.

## THE LACKS

Mae (Rose) Crettex had left Sperling in 1930 with her husband, Louie Crettex and son, Maurice, for Switzerland. After her divorce, she married Albert Lack, who owned a dairy store in 1945. In 1947, Mae and Albert came to Sperling and bought Section 34-5-2W. They hoped their sons, Roger Lack and Maurice Crettex, would be interested in Manitoba farming, but such was not the case - so Albert and Mae worked it alone.

On one of their trips back to Switzerland, Albert purchased a scythe, which he carefully carried home on the plane. He wasn't accustomed to the Canadian waste, and sickled down every stalk of grain that the combine missed!

One night, Albert had his evening smoke as he sat enthroned in the outdoor two-seater. Imagine his chagrin in the morning to note the absence of the building. Yes, a careless spark had burned down the toilet! Mae had to go scrounging around the district for a replacement, finally finding one at Brownie Hooper's. She took a great deal of ribbing about this incident.

Son, Roger, became quite a renowned gentleman in Montreal, and requested his folks to send him a dressed suckling pig, planning to roast it whole. Mae bargained with her brother, Charlie, for the said piglet. When they

had it butchered, scraped clean of hairs and disembowelled, they hung it in the back shed to cool or set.

Fern Rose arrived on the scene and nonchalantly remarked that the dogs were playing with something that looked like a pig. Mae and Albert rushed out in dismay to the rescue, only to find that Fern had been "pulling their leg".

They sent the famous pig to Roger and were later informed that it had been necessary to behead the pig before they could get it into the oven.

Another evening, Mae and her cronies (Alice Nicolajsen, Edlin Delaloye, Hazel Pedersen, Winnie Duvenaud, Etta Gehring and Marie Rose) were playing cards when a tapping could be heard on the unused front door. The ladies were terrified, especially when they opened the door a crack and dimly saw two horrid looking creatures seeking some gasoline. The gals fled out the back door, leaving Marie Rose's baby, Nancy, behind. The two pranksters were Anna Tjaden and Fern Rose!

In summer, Mae worked as a cook for Spalding's highway crew near Kane and also near Headingley.

In 1964, they sold their farm and moved to Winnipeg to work for Mr. and Mrs. Schacter. Mrs. Schacter had multiple sclerosis and Mae was very kind to her; so much so that in 1968, when it became necessary to take Mrs. Schacter to California's warmer climate, the Lacks took out their papers and accompanied them. Schacters returned in 1970, but Lacks continue to live in Los Angeles.

Mae's philosophy, "I am happy wherever I live."

## FREDRICK JAMES LAST

*submitted by (Mrs. A.) Jeanne Laudin*

Fred Last arrived in Winnipeg from the village of Butley, Suffock, England in March 1894. He went to the Carman area, where he spent two years cutting cord wood. After buying his first farm in the Homewood area in 1898, he made his home there for the next few winters.

In 1897 he travelled to the "Scratching River" for the first time, and stopped at the Geswein farm on 8-7-1 West. From there he travelled south and east a few miles to the Lea Bank area where for the next few years he bought parcels of land, breaking 30-50 acres each year and reselling it.

In 1904 Fred bought Section 35-6-1 West, which was to be the family home until his death in 1942. He now broke about 100 acres of land each year. Until 1909 his wife and children spent the summers on this farm, living in a granary. In the winter the granary was used to store harness and other equipment not required until the next summer. The family moved back to Homewood, taking all the animals with them. Several times during the move back in the spring, due to the flooding, water reached almost to the floor of the buggy.

When Fred Last moved to the Lea Bank farm in 1909, he built a 2 room house which was referred to as the "Shanty". During those early days the groceries were purchased at Homewood. The story is told that during the summer, Sarah would hitch up the horse, stash the

grocery list safely in a box under the seat of the buggy and send the horse the 17 miles to Homewood. The horse always returned the next day with the groceries!

In 1910 Fred bought his first car, a 1908 McLaughlin Buick. This car was put to use campaigning for municipal councillor. He was elected to the Morris municipal council in 1910, and in 1912 and 1914 he served two terms as Reeve of the municipality. He attempted federal politics but failed, and devoted the rest of his life to the farm. There was a 3 years period in the late 1920's when he didn't farm. The farm was sold to an aristocratic Russian family, but due to mismanagement Fred got the farm back. Fred Last died in 1942, the result of a farm accident. After his death the farm was rented and subsequently sold.

Fred Last married Sarah Cole, of Tobacco Creek near Miami, May 12, 1897. As a young lady Sarah learned a great deal about nursing by assisting the local doctor on his rounds. She was called on many times to sick beds, and to deliver babies. Their marriage was blessed with four children, Lydia, Samuel, Hilda and Gordon.

Lydia, Sam and Hilda attended school at Homewood until they moved to Lea Bank where they completed Grade Six. To complete their education Lydia and Sam went to Agricultural College in Winnipeg. Lydia studies cooking and housekeeping, and Sam took an engineering course for three winters. Hilda and Gordon went to school in Morris.

Lydia married Henry Coates of Morris in 1919. They made their home in Morris, and had five children. Lydia died in 1932.

Sam married Hazel Castor of Fannystelle in 1925. They lived on the original Last farm at Homewood until his death in 1939. They had four children.

Hilda married Alfred Galley of Niagara Falls in 1936. They lived in Vancouver, having three children. After Alfred died in 1949, Hilda moved to reside with her daughter in Kelowna, B.C.

Gordon married Hildur Bergkvist of Sanford in 1927. They bought Section 31-6-1 West from his father in 1930. The farm had been cleared many years before but had been allowed to grow back to prairie. As a result, Gordon had to rebreak the whole section. Gordon and Hildur had nine children. They retired from active farming in 1968, selling the farm in 1972 and retiring to Sanford.

Their farm background no doubt influenced the children's choice of careers. Although none of the boys went into active farming, they are all engaged in farm related occupations. Two of the girls married farmers in nearby communities, and all the family are living in close proximity to the Morris Municipality.

## THE LIVES OF THE LESTERS

William J. Lester was born in Dromore, Ontario, in 1880, son of William and Mary Ann (Hay) Lester.

In 1903, he arrived in Sperling from the east and worked first for R.H. Waddell and later for Robert Nichol. Deciding to go farming for himself, he operated N.W. 114 60-6-2 directly south of the village. In 1908, he moved, to farm in the municipality of McDonald, then in

1912, to the farm in Dufferin municipality, where he lived till his death in 1949.

He was a sports enthusiast and played football with the Sperling team in the early 1900's. He was also a great bicyclist, having won a trophy in a contest in the east in 1897.

His interest in the Sperling community was always evident, as he served on the first board of directors of the Sperling Co-Operative Oil and Supplies, when it was formed in 1928, and was also a director of Sperling Pool Elevator.

His marriage to Jessie Wilson took place in 1908. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Wilson, pioneers of the district, coming from Ontario in 1898. Jessie attended the first school known as Waddell School and in her later teen years, kept house for her brother, James Wilson. Following Will's death, she returned to the Morris Municipality in 1953, making her home with her daughter, Marjorie, until her death in 1965. She too, was always interested in Sperling, taking part in church and community organizations.

Will and Jessie raised three daughters and one son: Sylvia Irene, Mrs. Harold Bell; Mary Annetta, Mrs. Everett Thompson; Marjorie Ethel, Mrs. James Meldrum; William Elroy, resides in Sperling, but still farms the farm in Dufferin where he was born and raised.



*Marriage of James Lester and Emma Mogk of Sperling in 1918.*

## JAMES R. LESTER

James R. Lester was born in Dromore, Ontario, and came to Sperling in 1904. He worked for Robert Nichol, Billy Rehill and George Peckover in the years immediately following his arrival in the west. He later worked with his brother, William Lester and also farmed the "Town farm" of A.H. Waddell.

In 1920, he became agent for the Massey Harris Company for the district, his office being situated on the



*Jim Lester driving stook loader.*

west side of Sperling's Main Street. His marriage to Emma Mogh took place in 1918.

In 1928, they purchased the N.W. 1/4 26-2-2 West, which adjoined the village, and while on the farm, he delivered milk to the residents of Sperling for many years.

Jim and Emma were interested in church and community activities. He served as secretary of the Cemetery Committee and also as a member of the Sperling United Church board of stewards. In early years, Emma was a member of the Presbyterian church choir and active in all women's organizations.

They had no family of their own, but provided a loving home for their niece, Shirley (Mock) Bunce. Their home was also a "second home" for other nieces and nephews throughout the years.

Following Jim's death in 1961, Emma sold the farm and moved to the village. In 1968, she took up residence in Boyne Lodge in Carman, remaining there until her death in 1979.



*Jim Lester delivering milk, 1935.*

## **HARDIE LESTER**

A brother of William and James Lester was born in Dromore, Ontario. Coming west in 1910, he worked in the Sperling district before going on to Calgary, Alberta. When the first World War broke out, he enlisted in the army and served overseas.

Returning to Sperling after the war, he married Lillian Webster, in 1919. They lived for one year at Otterburne, then farmed the N.W. 1/4 28-6-2, for several years before leaving the Municipality of Morris. Lillian died at Elm

Creek, in 1936 and Hardie died in Calgary, Alberta, in 1975.

Four children were born to them, the oldest, Edna, died in childhood. Melville married Dorothy Coad; they reside in Red Deere, Alberta. Donald married Iris Johnson. They lived in Sperling while Donald was employed as mechanic with McNulty Motors, but now live in Geraldton, Ontario.

Doreen was telephone operator at the Manitoba Telephone System office in Sperling, prior to moving to Calgary, Alberta, where she married Goldwin Hargraves. They reside in Vernon, British Columbia.

## **TENA MACDONALD** **"Gems of Sperling"**

*written by Tena McDonald*

First - The Diamond Jubilee of Canada, 1927. Carman Agricultural Society put up a prize of \$20.00 for the best school float. We set out to capture that prize, which we did. The four-horse team was John Wilsons, driven by him and Earl Peckover. As I remember it, everyone helped with the float and the costumes in the parade. The provincial Coat of Arms were drawn and painted by someone in High School I think. The maple leaves were colored and cut out by school children. They were put on factory cotton tacked onto a flat bottom made by some good soul or souls. As I recall the ideas were mostly hatched at Bob Davidson's where Ethel Lowry, Cliffie Woodworth and I found ourselves most every evening. And I'm sure Mrs. Bob helped with sewing and in many other ways, and was just as proud as we were when we won the prize.

The next year's Field Day, at Miami, was anti-climax. We begged an old wreck of a car from Scotty Moir. Someone built a frame on it, and over this we had a most beautiful shroud of white paper roses with a lovely *Sperling* in red roses. With (I think) Bill Peckover at the wheel we embarked for the ride to Miami and on the way had at least one flat tire, and it seems to me, a bit of engine trouble. We were almost late for the parade, and arrived more than a bit 'mad' at Scatty for sending us off in such a rattle-trap. No prize that time.

Then there was the hockey, under McNulty, with the whole district behind him. When Sperling was in the finals - I think it was Intermediate, with two teams from Winnipeg. No proper road to Winnipeg, but someone dreamed up a snowmobile with cab to transport the team, and thereby hangs a few weird tales. It was the vehicle which got stuck bringing a team from Winnipeg for an evening game. Everyone - and I mean everyone - was at the rink waiting for hours, and the team was somewhere between Winnipeg and Sperling. Finally it got there, I think well after midnight. The game was played in the wee, small hours, lots of spectators, and the Winnipeg team went back to Winnipeg by train, the next day. There was to be a dance (in school auditorium) I suppose after the game, so a lot gave up on the hockey and went to dance before the game. There must have been school the next day, for Ethel and I thought we'd better go home to bed after the dance, and not to the game, which was still in progress, but a wild roar from the rink changed our

minds and we got dressed and went to finish the game. I don't know who won.

And there was a game played 'between trains' - in the days when there was a daily both ways. It was going strong at noon so all - or most all' - the school children dashed to the rink. Mr. McIntyre, Ethel and I were there. So was most of the school board. The game was fast, furious and close, and nobody wanted to leave. With Mr. McIntyre's blessing I asked some school board members if we could stay to the end. We all, pupils and teachers, did, but poor Cliffie had not gone to game and was back at school practically alone. I don't think the final school results suffered.

I went to Sperling, fresh out of college, the fall of 1926, and left the end of June, 1928, so I could finish my 1st Class Prof. and hopefully, teach in High School before I forgot all I knew.

I remember the Music Festivals, where Sperling, under Mrs. Lorne Davidson's training and guidance, was right at the top, and carried off many prizes in solos and duets and chorus. Wasn't Sperling fortunate to have Mrs. Davidson!

## **SHELDON McDONALD**

Sheldon McDonald came to board at the Sperling Hotel in 1939, as he was replacing Jack Cairns as South West Transfer driver.

In 1944, he married Martha Geswein and they lived above the Co-op Store, later trading dwellings with the Jack Becks who lived in the Monarch Lumber house on North Main.

Later, Martha's mother died, so they went to keep house for Mr. Fred Geswein and Awat.

Sheldon became seriously ill and had to have two-thirds of his stomach removed. After his recovery, he was not able to carry on his duties at the Co-op Oil but worked for Cornie Pauls. He and George Jenkins set up machinery for C.B. McNulty. He was custodian of Sperling School - 1963-73.

They had bought Isaac Klassen's house and Bob Davidson's house on Charles Street and Sheldon gives his 16 year old daughter, Sharon, the credit for getting these houses together and making a cozy home out of them.

Their children were Sharon, Gail, Beverly, Sandra. Sharon married Ed Lannoo. They live in Winnipeg and have two daughters - Debgie and Lori. Gail married Norman Bruce. They live at Minitonas. Their children are Jeffrey and Lana.

Beverly married Wayne Spencer of Carman. Their children are: Tracey and Boden. Sandra married David Allinson of Starbuck. She is bookkeeper at Golden Plains in Brunkild.

Martha passed away in 1968.

## **DOC MARTIN'S CHUCKLES**

Dad came to Sperling in 1912, as a veterinarian. He was fortunate in obtaining a boarding place with Mr. and Mrs. Robert Davidson. One of his earliest anecdotes was of his Ford runabout. Upon seeing him go thirty-five



*Doc. Martin's first car, 1915.*

miles per hour, Eilert Borsheim announced, "That fool will kill himself." Another 'runabout' affair. Dad bet Uncle Geordie Peckover that he could beat his "Hudson", so they took off on the west road, going north. Somehow, Uncle Geordie lost control at Mogen's corner, took off through the ditch, then discovered to his dismay that the can of cream he was taking to the station had bounced open. What a mess!

In 1915, he married Emma Peckover, youngest daughter of Charles Peckover, who lived on N.E. 11 46-7-2. He was one of the earliest settlers. They had first lived in a sod shanty and their greatest fear was prairie fire.

In 1917, Emma passed away, when their daughter, Fern, was born. Fortunately, Doe's sister, Margaret, came to the rescue and lived with them until 1925, when she married Wellesley White of Thornhill.

In Sperling, Margaret was active in W.I. and W.M.S. work, curling and 4-H millinery teacher. When her sight failed in 1963, she returned to Sperling to board with her lifelong friend, Mrs. G. Swain. Not being able to see to quilt, she would remain at home and listen to "General Hospital" then rush to the church and wildly announce the day's happenings on the serial. She made the best of her limitations. She passed away in 1965.

Most kids will remember Dad always having P.K. chicklets in his pockets for them. In this instance, he overspent his P.K. by offering five year old Lawrence Peckover a whole 50 piece, if he would discontinue his profanity. On Dad's next trip, Lawrence was still swearing in good form, and Dad solemnly inquired, "Didn't I give you a nickel to stop that swearing?" To which Lawrence quickly replied, "I lost the nickel".

As Bob Davidson also owned the livery stable, his lively team were Dad's winter horse power. On one extremely cold night, he and Stan Tummon, the driver, were returning in the cutter from a trip to Brunkild, when Dad decided he desperately needed a chew of Piper Heedsick, so holding one fur lined gauntlet in his teeth, he went through layer on layer of heavy clothing and robes, until he reached his pant pocket and the chew. Courteous as always, he offered Stan a chew, whereupon Stan took a bite and absent-mindedly threw away the plug.



Dad had a square black medicine case which contained a number of corked vials. One night, Angus Archibald was the teamster, and they had finished doctoring a horse at Amos Ribordy's - Dad uncorked a vial and offered Amos a drink, which he flatly refused, so Dad, winking, passed the vial to Angus, who took a big swig, as did Dad. Poor Amos stood there, thirsty and dumbfounded. Too late, he realized it had been "Teacher's Highland Cream".

Many times after Dr. Bowman left, Dad was called upon to perform medical duties for villagers. Annie Kazuk got a three inch sliver in her posterior as she slid down the school slide. He retrieved it! Poor Joe Boisvert! "Huge and cumbersome" with a swollen muffler around his swollen face, tears streaming down his cheeks, came many times before he could finally let Dad extract his tooth, "minus any type of freezing."

Rev. T. Neville was his favourite curling skip, especially at banquet time, when by sitting next to the Reverend, Dad would receive an extra cigar and drink.

Once a year, he enjoyed spending an afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. George Sutton (8 miles east). They were termed 'squatters' as they didn't own their own land. They had close to a hundred cattle, no fences; so Laura herded them on horse back. One wintery day, she in her long skirt, came walking to town behind a flat-bottom sleigh, pulled by her skinny team and accompanied by her hound dogs. Up she came to our door, carrying a cow's stomach for Dad to diagnose the dead animal's sickness. Guess he did!

Must not forget Dad's bosom pal, Matt Latham. Dad had the ideas and Matt carried them out. I think Matt planted the two rows of trees south Main Street, to the school and many of the trees at the local cemetery.

Another pet project of Dad's was a six year old Al "Fat" Wilson, who accompanied him everywhere (was known to eat eighteen bananas at one time) and in whom Dad took a great delight, teaching to smoke and chew. (I visited Al in California in 1965 and he has neither bad habit today.) Al was a prize in handling horses and loved to accompany Milford Fewster, Bill Davidson, and Harvey Mart, etc. on their fair tour - Roland, Miami, Morden, Carman, Sanford, Morris with Clydesdale horses from our farm.

Another protégé was Leonard Geswein, for whom Dad would get up at noon any day to give him a dollar for standing first in his class.

Dad enjoyed promoting checker tournaments, sometimes local, and sometimes including players from other towns.

Another hobby, was his love of bridge, with his cronies, Matt, Trier, Mr. and Mrs. A.K. Brown, Mrs. Tjaden and Mr. Geiss, of Brunkild.

In the early thirties, we went through the depression years, but I'm sure it made us better people. Many of our farmers friends could not pay their bills in cash, so instead, they brought us very welcome farm produce. In one instance, I remember how fortunate we were in having Mrs. Bausman's fresh sweet butter every week.

Excerpt from Doc Martin's account book:

January 24	to credit with meat on acc't	\$12.00
June 13	to trip (2 miles) to treat colt	3.00
Aug. 14	to trip to vaccinate XIII horses	6.50
Oct. 19	to trip to cow	3.00
Nov. 27	to treat colt's neck	3.00

## FERN ROSE'S RAMBLINGS

*Nee (Martin)*

We don't have the match fire hazard today as we did when I was five. Dad and Matt Latham played cribbage (using matches instead of pegs). It was one of my bad habits to climb up on top of that glass-doored desk, take the matches and light them. So I got the kids (George Cowan, Len Smith and others) to remove their shoes and stockings, made a nice pile and set it on fire! Mom woke Dad up (probably 1:00 p.m.) and he dealt the punishment. He got one of those three large box packages of matches and I had to sit on the sidewalk and light every match one by one. I was one tired little girl when that afternoon was over. But it was a lesson! When I was 12 Dad used to cut sweet clover stalks into cigarette lengths and dole them out to us kids, and I had to get the Russell or Johnson boys to light mine.

*Beef Ring* The meat was divided into shares and we got one quarter of a share every Wednesday morning. This meant steak for supper - a roast to be hung down the well until tomorrow and the rest canned for the weekend. This didn't mean as much to me as the Beef Ring Supper and Dance. It was at this event that Bob Davidson had the patience to teach us all to dance - the highlight of my life!

In 1934 I'm afraid I tried my dad's patience to the fullest. We XI students were up in arms over the School Board's attitude to an excellent teacher - Orville Holmes. So we sent a letter to this effect via Bill Wiley to the Dufferin Leader. The petitioners' names were circled to be omitted, but inadvertently they appeared in block letters, mine at the top. Speaking of High School days, some of you will remember the day we made rotten-egg gas, put it into the cold-air system, hoping to derive a holiday. O.E.H. detective allowed all the school to be dismissed *except* Grade XI and we sat and suffered in the aroma.

On a hot day in June while we were waiting for 2:00 p.m. exam time to arrive, we noticed little black dots moving in a field one mile west of town. Yes, they were the Room 11 hookey players (George Roseveare, Garth Wilson, Marcel and Rene Rose, Clarence Boxall, Ross Anderson, Eddie Geswein and others) (hope this list is correct?). Of course we took off in cars for the swimming culprits. You never saw such a sight! Naked kids running for clothes, others running for the railroad tracks. Some of the little fellows were made to run in front of the cars back to school. No more truancy!

That fall Mr. and Mrs. Woodley had a much-coveted radio and always had an open door for us to watch the World Series. Mrs. Woodley (Tillie Mogk Waddell) had the misfortune to have a leg amputated but her jovial personality was an example to us all. When Mr. Woodley kidded her about how she would get out in case of fire, she just chuckled and said, "I'd fall on the floor and roll

for the door." What a sense of humor. 1938-41 Another home where many of us spent enjoyable hours was at Marj and Ken Waddells. With Marj at the piano, Isabel Wilson leading the singing, Howard Waddell playing tinkling music with fine glass tumblers on chair backs - we made our fun.

Charlie Land's hardwood floored dance hall with its nickelodeon was a wonderful meeting place. We could hike down there any evening, and for a nickel could have a couple of hours of dancing and fun.

Should I mention our chicken feeds when I would hold the flashlight while Beth Gehring would snatch a couple of hens from their roost, and we'd throw them in a sack for a feed tomorrow night? And those neighborly rides to town in Joe Lafond's van - although we didn't have any telephone relay; just went out and listened for the harness sounds in the frosty air, bundled up the kids and jumped in along with others from the east for an evening in the village.

In the winter of 1929-1930 Maurice (my husband) and Louie Rose loaded up 30 pigs in 2 sleigh boxes lined with straw and covered with boards, and headed for Canada Packers. Reason could have been poor prices of pigs vs. freight rates, or no truck traffic due to impassable roads. It was an adventure! They stopped at the Sanford Church barn at midnight to feed the horses - but they were too lively and nervous, so they just went on. Arrived at the Packers at 8:00 a.m. Since then we have achieved glassed-in trucks complete with car warmers - but January, 1967, when I returned from watching John Madsen's four sons curling in the Sperling bonspiel, I heard a loud motor and looked out to see our daughter, Bonnie Grabowski, accompanied by her 7 year-old son, Guy, driving over the snowbanks on her Skidoo. Yes, she had driven all the way from Winnipeg, 38 miles, in a little more than an hour.

In 1946 and 1947 Maurice and Paul Rose loaded their combine and headed for Kansas. It was quite an experience. The Americans were not able to purchase new combines at that time so were glad of Canadian help.

Maurice and I were married in 1939 and have four children. Bonnie, who is married to Don Grabowski and lives at Lorette. They have two children, Guy and Lori.

Jack tried California for 10 years but was happy to return to a trailer in Sperling with his wife, Lucille, and daughter, Brenda. He works for Simon Day, travelling by plane over Western Canada.

Grant and his wife, Doris, also live at Lorette from where he commutes to Winnipeg, working for Unemployment Insurance Co. They have two children, Kristin and Ian.

Kim lives at home on the farm S.W. 114 28-6-2 W with me and commutes to work at Drummond McCall in Winnipeg. He is engaged to Darlene Karlowsky.

At intervals, when seemingly insurmountable troubles faced me, I would go to my neighbour, John Tjaden, for advice. His theory was, "Who are you, to think adversity won't come your way?" It's not the troubles you are dealt, but how you deal with your troubles. Excellent counselling!

When Audrey Young moved into our corner, I always remember her proud reaction, when handed a shopping

bag of good used clothing for her baby's arrival. She wasn't going to accept charity. It was anything but charity. It was the neighbourliness of her new friends who expected the bag to be passed on to them when the need arose. My son, Jack has often wondered how we could afford to outfit him as a Cub, Scout, ball player, etc. Same pattern - we used 'hand-me-downs'.

Maurice and I enjoyed working with the skating club. Once when roads to Morris were impassable, he gladly drove the girls via Winnipeg. Another of our pleasures was cooking for the ball girls in Fargo. We were happy to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary with our friends. Snowmobiling with such a grand group of young people was Maurice's delight, until his passing in 1973.

Now, in my retirement, I enjoy the company of a group of gals who love travelling. Maritimes, Europe, Florida, Barbadoes, Arizona!

## **DUNCAN HECTOR MACLEAN'S MANITOBA HOMESTEAD AT 32-5-2 WEST**

As the final minutes of the 19th century ticked away, Duncan Hector MacLean and his wife, Mary Ellen, sitting in their farm kitchen at Clegg, Manitoba, felt pretty smug. During the past year, 1900, they had successfully sold their dairy farm near Finch, in Stormont County, Ontario, had moved their family of 5 boys and 4 girls along with stock and machinery, to Manitoba, had settled in at this rented farm next to the Clegg country schoolhouse, and had purchased 640 acres of unbroken, flat prairie, with rich black soil, located some 18 miles away in a straight line distance.

They had secured 640 acres of rich unbroken prairie land at only \$8.00 per acre. They had most of the stock and farm machinery that they needed. They had a fine base of operations in their rented farm at Clegg, but best of all, they had a strong family unit that could build up their own farm.

Their oldest boy, David Alexander, age 20, had the drive and maturity to help his father in every way. Then came James Hector (Hector), age 18, who had attended high school in Ontario, and who was ambitious, intelligent and resourceful. John Duncan (Johnnie), age 16, was handsome and had a certain charm and style that was the envy of all. Annie Margretta (Gretta), age 14, was old enough now to provide much assistance to her mother, as was Janet Ellen (Nellie), age 12. William Hamblin (Willie), age 9, and Sarah Christina (Sarah), age 7, were coming along very well and already took on many of the small farm chores. Finally, Fitzroy Donald (Roy), age 5, and Flora Jane (Flora), age 3, were the joy of the entire family because of their boundless energy and huge enjoyment of prairie farm life. Yes, Duncan and Mary, parents, age 44 and 38, had every right to feel smug as they looked forward to the approaching century.

In 1902, their dream farm at 32-5-2 West at Sperling, did gradually develop, through the efforts of hard work by every member of the family. The land was broken, using 2 horse walking plows, mostly by Alex and Hector. A house, barn and many outbuildings were put up, a

grand avenue of shade trees was planted, leading in from the road, beside a fine ornamental wire fence.

At the beginning, they lived in a tent at Sperling, commuting back and forth to Clegg. All their efforts did not lead to success, and there were many difficulties and setbacks. The first, and the greatest of these, was the death of Duncan's cherished wife, Mary Ellen, in November of 1901. It occurred two months after she gave birth to their first Manitoba baby, Mary Eliza (May), the family's tenth and last child. Mary died while they were still living on the rented farm beside Clegg schoolhouse and never did get to live on their own farm. This removed the woman he loved from Duncan, and a key member of the working family unit.

1904 was also a year of tragedy for this family. Duncan had, two years previously, returned to Ontario and had brought out 45 head of young cattle. Then in this fateful year, the price of beef dropped very low and that winter was very long with excessively cold weather. Many cattle were lost, but worst of all, Duncan's oldest boy, Alex, contracted Tuberculosis and was moved to a California sanitarium. Three years later, he returned and died. A loss of his oldest son and a cattle enterprise was, indeed, a great family setback.

Duncan remarried in 1905, to Annie Grace HuIslander, of Finch, Ontario, then age 38, but she was never able to take the place of affection and respect in the hearts of Duncan's family that had been occupied by Mary Ellen. Annie provided Duncan with three daughters between 1906 and 1909, but all died within their first year and never became part of the family.

Gretta died childless in 1911. She had moved to Winnipeg and had married Fredric Ardies, and died at age 25.

May, the family's youngest, and a great favourite, died of Bright's Disease, at age 12, in 1913.

Fitzroy Donald never married and was killed at Passchendale, France, in 1917, at age 22, during the First World War.

James Hector purchased land next to the family homestead and farmed there all his working life. He and his wife, Pearl, raised a family of four children; Kenneth, Margaret, Donald and Marion.

John Duncan married early and also farmed near Sperling for most of his working life. He and his wife, Frances Peckover, sister to Hector's wife, Pearl Pechover, raised a family of 10 children; Jean, Alex, Earl, Cameron, Douglas, Harold, Clifford, Audrey, Anna Marie and Hugh Alan.

Janet Ellen (Nellie) moved off the farm and lived in Winnipeg for the remainder of her life. She married a Sherman Weaver, who was killed in World War I. She never remarried until the retirement portion of her life. She had no children.

William Hamblin bought the southern half of the homestead farm from Duncan, and farmed until 1920. He married an American girl named Minnie Grate, in 1916. After a year or two of business ventures in the U.S.A., he settled down in Winnipeg and was a commercial traveller for the remainder of his working life. They retired to Victoria, B.C., where they completed their life span. They raised three children; Evelyn, Duart

and Alison.

Sarah left the family farm, became a school teacher, married another school teacher, Leon Willett, and then farmed in Saskatchewan for the remainder of their lives. They raised a family of five; Mary, Donald, Gwenyth, George and Glen.

Flora left the farm and married a Winnipeg Jewellery salesman, Homer Britton. They retired to California for the rest of their lives. They had one child, Jack.

Duncan continued farming, using hired help and gradually retired in 1919. He travelled quite a bit in his later years, revisiting the farm in Ontario where he grew up, and also back to the Isle of Mull, Scotland, where his father had been born. He eventually died, in Winnipeg, in 1928, at the age of 72. His second wife died in 1936.

None of the migrating family are still alive (1979), but their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are very numerous. The descendants of Duncan and Mary form a "MacLean Clan" which holds an informal reunion every year, and have done so for about 25 years. I wonder if Duncan and Mary, in their planning of their activities for the twentieth century, realized the host of fine descendants that would result from their marriage?



*J. Hector MacLean*

## **J.H. MacLEAN FAMILY**

J. Hector MacLean married Pearl Peckover in 1910 and they farmed on Section 5-6-2 West. Their first child, Florence, was born in 1914 and passed away in 1916. Their first son was Kenneth.

On November 6, 1948, Kenneth Kitchener MacLean and Dorothy Adeline Lehmann, of Carman, were married and moved into the family farm. At this time, Hector and Pearl moved to Winnipeg.

They had five children: Philip Lee, born November 20, 1949; Debby Lou, born March 31, 1951; Kathy Lynn, born January 5, 1953; Kenneth Kraig, born October 8, 1955; and Marnie Mae, born October 10, 1962.

Lee, who now resides on the family farm, married Gail Elizabeth Cretton, of Sperling. They have two sons;

Derek Lee born July 27, 1971 and Ashley Brent, born February 13, 1973.

Debby married John Lester Meldrum of Sperling. They have two children; Phillip James, born January 16, 1971 and Nicole Lee born July 1, 1974. They reside in Sperling.

Kathy, who has been employed with the Provincial Government since 1971, resides in Winnipeg.

Kraig, who is self employed in the trucking business, has a daughter, Holly Michelle, born October 5, 1974.

Marnie is presently attending Carman Collegiate in Grade XI.

Dorothy passed away in May, 1972.

Margaret, the second daughter of the J.H. MacLean's was born in 1918. She taught school for one year and then married Ernest Schepp in the Marchwell district; later moving to Brandon. They have two children; Sandra, who is a capable Blood Technician with the Red Cross, and Brian, who is a machinist in Brandon. He is married and has three children; Chris, Nicole and Kevin. Ernest passed away in 1979.

Don served with the air force and now works with C.C.I.L. He and his wife, Jean, live in Beausejour. They have three sons; Rob, Glen and Roy, the latter two presently attending Red River College.

Marion is an R.N. and continues in the field in Ottawa. She married Hector McDonald and they have two children; Diane, who is a city planner, in Ontario, and Ian, a student.

Hector passed away in 1953 and Pearl passed away in 1964.



*Farming at Ken MacLean's.*

## **SARAH MacLEAN**

Sarah MacLean was born in Finch, Ontario, on June 1, 1893, daughter of Duncan MacLean and Mary Hamblin. Her parents were married in Glengary County in 1879 and with nine children, came by train to a rented farm north of Morden, in April, 1900.

Her mother died suddenly in 1901, and in 1902, her father moved the family to the Tremont district near Sperling. He built a two story, frame house, where Alexander, Hector, Johnny, Gretta, Nellie, Willie, Sarah, Roy and Flora and May would establish themselves under a kind and loving hand.

Sarah, Roy and Flora rode on a white pony to Tremont school where a beloved teacher, Nellie Hogg, was an

inspiration to them. Gretta and Nellie took over the household duties, baking bread, churning butter, scrubbing board floors with homemade soap, ironing starched ruffled dresses and linen tablecloths with sad irons.

Those were the days when everyone went to church, even the babies. To hear Sarah, it seemed the Presbyterians were next to the Methodists in godliness. There were prayer meetings, Young Peoples' Society and choir practise on weekdays.

The fun times were going to dances until the break of dawn, card parties sweetened with pull taffy and practical jokes played on one another.

The gang of harvesters were exciting. When the last of them had left Brown's, A.K.'s mother would get in the buggy and spend two days with Gretta baking bread, pies and two big crocks of sugar cookies.

The most anxious times were the winter blizzards, which struck at a moment's notice. One balmy night in 1905, her father had taken Gretta and Nellie to a prayer meeting in Sperling. The ones at home woke in the morning to a raging storm and no sign of horse or cutter. There were no telephones and it was another day before it subsided. By after dinner, this gave them time to get home if they were alive. Hector stayed with four frightened children, while Johnny hitched up the team to find some news of them, when who should appear in the lane, after a dozen more hands of "500" and another batch of biscuits, but "the family safe and sound". Her father had given the horse her head and soon they saw a light in a window - the small abode of Art Brown and his father. They took turns sleeping in the two bunk beds and the hospitality was unlimited.

Sarah attended high school in Carman. She enjoyed her new friends, Ginger Cochran showed her how to speed skate and she won many fun races in later years. She went to Manitou for her Normal training and got her Permanent Certificate while teaching Grades IV, V and VI at Sperling. She loved all her students, but there were three who kept her on her toes, Jamie Millar, Don Peckover and Ormie Waddell. She studied music theory and with her natural alto voice, combined with her choir training, worked wonders with new found voices.

Her most cherished friends were Lynn Anderson, Jessie Waddell and Pearl Peckover. She and Lynn loved to play tennis. Those were the days of the Hobbie skirts, but Sarah overcame that by buying a riding habit, which was a divided skirt. Her brother, Willis, took the four teachers in 1914, 'across the line' to shop in his new car. For \$25.00, Sarah bought a gorgeous dress for dancing. It was pale blue, three layers of chiffon over taffeta. Tiny pink pearl beaded rosettes encircled the gathered bodice.

She kept abreast with world affairs and after listening to Nellie McClung, she knew how she was going to vote.

She left Sperling in 1915 to teach Grades VII and VIII at Treherne, Manitoba, before marrying Leon Willett in October, 1917. She returned to Sperling while he was an instructor with the R.A.F.

They left in 1919 for Summerberry, Saskatchewan, where both taught the two room school - Grades I to XI. In 1920, they moved to a farm ten miles north of Payton, Saskatchewan. They had five children; Donald, Mary,

Gweneth, George and Glen.

With her savings, she bought a new piano, and in the great Sperling tradition carried on with skating parties, dancing and singing. She organized a basketball team and pitched for the ladies' hardball team, put on 3 Act Plays, boarded the school teacher and taught three Classes of Sunday School.

She passed away on October 3, 1962, in North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

## ROBERT McKEE FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Robert McKee and family came west from Kinmount, Ontario, near Peterborough, in 1898. Their family of five children were: Jim, Ruth, Anne, Jean and Bill. They settled in the Sperling district on a farm (SE 18-6-2) and built a two storey house that is still being lived in by his grandson, Donald McKee, and his family.

Mrs. Robert McKee passed away in 1903, and Robert McKee moved to Winnipeg in 1918, living with his daughter, Jean. He passed away in 1920. They are both buried in Greenwood Cemetery, in Carman.



*Robert McKee*

A few years ago, Mr. and Mrs. L. Fric (nee Ruth McKee), and Mrs. J. McKee returned to the homestead at Kinmount, where the log house of Mr. and Mrs. Robert McKee still remains.

Anne McKee married Howard McMahon and lived at Arnaud and Morris. They had three sons, Gerald, Roy and Jim. She now lives in a Senior Citizens' home in Chilliwack, B.C., where her youngest son is a doctor.

Ruth McKee married Bob Young and lived on a farm (NE 17-6-2) south of Sperling. They had three children - Margaret, Hugh and Stewart. She passed away from pneumonia shortly after Stewart was born in 1916.

Jean McKee married Bill Sanderson and they lived in Winnipeg. They had one daughter, Lucille.



*Family of Robed McKee. LEFT TO RIGHT: Bill Sanderson, Jane (McKee) Sanderson, Elizabeth (nee Rance) McKee, Bill McKee, Edna (Bates) McKee, taken at the home of Elizabeth and Jim McKee in Sperling.*

Bill McKee married Edna Bates and they lived in Fort William (Thunder Bay) where he worked in a paper mill. He is now retired, and they still live in their home in Thunder Bay.

Jim McKee married Elizabeth Rance in 1918 and took over the family farm of Robert McKee. They had a son, Donald, and a daughter, Ruth. Donald married Dorothy Bates of Homewood in 1948, took over the farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim McKee and Ruth moved into Sperling. Ruth married Lawrence Fric, they live in London, Ontario. They have two daughters, Laura and Kathryn.

Donald and Dorothy had four children. Cheryl married Barry Bigus and lives in Winnipeg. They have one son, Jeff. Lynn married Alan Giesbrecht and also lives in Winnipeg. Kevin was accidentally killed in a car accident January 31, 1975. Heather married Bill McEachern and lives in Regina. They have one son, Kyle.

Jim McKee passed away in 1953. Mrs. McKee still lives in Sperling.



*D.R. McKee's farm, 1979.*

## C.B. McNULTY

*submitted by Jerry T. McNulty*

My father, Cornelius Bartholomew McNulty, was born in Melbourne, Ontario in 1882 of Irish parents. He was better known to the Manitoba sports world as Mike, to his business acquaintances as C.B. or Mac, and to family as Bart. At the ripe age of 19 he left Ontario by train to take up his training duties with the Union Bank of Canada at Simpson, Saskatchewan, which had been arranged by the local parish Priest and his Mother.



*C.B. McNulty, left, at the bank where he worked at Simpson, Sask. in 1911.*

In 1911 Banks in the small towns on the prairies were very primitive compared to today's marble monuments; one day a bank and the next day a granary. The wood frame buildings varied in size from town to town and lot to lot, however, a good estimate to size would be 16' by 20'. Paint appeared to be unheard of, it was so seldom used. Inside, the popular fireproof metal walls; a lamp hanging with reflector was available for a late-balancing of the books; and very often a teller's cage of narrow bars to prevent the John Dillingers of the time from jumping into the cash cage! On the walls would be four or five calendars. One, 1916 for example, had King George V



*A typical small town bank in 1916, in which C.B. McNulty worked. Above is the manager.*

advertising a 10(t plug of chewing tobacco with the slogan "a sure winner". A pot-bellied stove in the middle of the Bank provided the heat. Housing accommodations for a bachelor was the local boarding house, where the special was bread pudding once a week. Bowler hats, high stiff collars and handlebar mustaches were the style.

With World War I in full swing my father volunteered for military duty, however, was rejected for medical reasons. In 1918, after serving his banking apprenticeship at Simpson and Maryfield, Dad was made Manager of the Union Bank of Canada at Morris, Manitoba, and became very involved in sports. Morris won the Manitoba Senior Amateur Baseball Championship in 1922 (gold rings were the winners laurels). Dad played first base and relief pitcher.

My father's last banking move was to Sperling, Manitoba, a thriving bustling farm community with hockey club and curling rink. Hockey was the name of the game in Sperling. Special C.N.R. trains from Winnipeg and other points filled with Manitoba sports enthusiasts would crowd the Sperling rink for playoff hockey games. Dad coached and managed the Sperling Hockey team to the Inter-Provincial Championship in 1925, with several players later turning professional in the U.S.A. and other World Championship teams. In 1932, Dad's rink won the Gourley Curling Trophy; competition is limited to Past Presidents. In 1946 Sperling High School won the Dan Davidson Trophy, skipped by Jerry McNulty. An inveterate sportsman, my father was Past President of the Manitoba Amateur Baseball Association, Honorary Life Member of the Manitoba Curling Association.

Dad married Violet Killeen, daughter of Jeremiah and Anna Killeen of Elm Creek. Their family consisted of my sister, Sheila and myself, Jerry.

Sperling was one of the few small towns that had electricity. However, its water supply was limited to the C.N.R. well in summer, and melted snow in winter. Fires always plagued the small prairie towns especially when a high wind was up. Sperling was no exception. Fire protection consisted of a town bell which could be heard all over the village. The bell had very little fire prevention powers, nor did the so called fire fighting tank. It was usually covered with snow in winter. I remember the night my Dad held me on his shoulders in front of Charlie Griffith's Butcher shop as the East side of the street burned to the ground.

Saturday was always the big night of the week. Both sides of the street would be lined with buggies, wagons, Model T's and Model A's, and wall to wall people. In winter, the church barn was filled with steaming horses and sleighs. Saturday night grocery needs were purchased at Foulston's store while Charlie Land sold hot dogs by the dozens. Tarzan Comic books and Chicken Dinner Candy bars. During the evening, a disagreement often occurred between certain townspeople especially after 10:00 p.m. Sheila's and my allowance was 10¢ paid every Saturday. However, I subsidized my income by returning old coke bottles to Charlie Land's for a penny a piece.

The depression in the thirties was taking its toll. The Union Bank closed its Sperling Branch, the Doctor left, the drug store closed, and the Bank (Manitoba Securities



Company) my father had opened, closed. Things were very tough for everyone, but eventually times improved.

Dad contributed his time to child welfare in the province and was past president of the Children's Aid Society of Manitoba and honorary president of the Children's Aid Society of Central Manitoba. He also served on the advisory board for the Department of Welfare, and was president of the Progressive Conservative Association for the provincial riding of Morris.

After a full and exemplary life my father died in 1964, leaving his wife, Violet, Jerry and Sheila, of Los Angeles, Calif., and eleven grandchildren.

## THE STORY OF JIM MELDRUM AND FAMILY

James Meldrum was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1915. His boyhood was spent with his parents on a farm at Lockwood, Saskatchewan.

On coming to Sperling, he worked first for Jack Wilson and then for John Gunn, at the Sperling Hotel. In 1942, Jim joined the Army, enlisting with the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals.

He married Marjorie Lester in 1943, who was chief operator at the Manitoba Telephone System office in Sperling, and while Jim served overseas from 1944-46, she continued in that position. He received his discharge from the army in 1946.

They lived in the municipality for a few months, then left, as his work as a grain buyer assistant took them to Sanford, Manitoba, and later as Manitoba Pool Elevator agent, to Gordon, Manitoba. Illness forced his retirement from work in 1948 and they and their two sons, Jim and Jack, returned to Sperling in 1949. Jim died that year at age 34.

Since 1952, home for Marjorie and the boys as they were growing up, was the house situated on the corner of



*Marjorie Lester, Jim Meldrum and Mildred Davis on the "Bull Moose".*

Henry and New Streets in Sperling. During the boys' school years, they took an active part in Cubs and Scouts, and participated in baseball, hockey and curling. Jim now lives in Calgary, Alberta. Jack married Debby MacLean and lives in Sperling with their two children Phillip James and Nicole Lee.

Marjorie, for the past 21 years, has been employed as bookkeeper for the Sperling Co-Op Oil and Supplies.

## HENRY MENDERINK



*Christmas at the Margje and Henry Mengerink's in 1978.*



*Bob Wilson*



*H. Mengerink home at Sperling.*

## HARRY MOCK AN EARLY PIONEER

*taken from Tales of Sperling*

I left Mount Forest, Ontario in 1896 and came to Carman. My mother and father, and other members of the family, followed in 1898. To begin with, I worked for Bachelor Bill Waddell for a year, and then three years for his brother Dave.

In 1900 the School Section No. 10 and 29 were put up for sale by auction at Miami. Sales of school sections occurred about every 10 years. I drove to Miami by horse and buggy. It was at that sale that I purchased the farm on which I still live.

After breaking the land, I spent the winter at Fisher Bay working in the bush, driving a team of horses from Winnipeg to Fisher Bay, the journey taking 7 days. The next spring we started to work the home quarter.

In 1900 the first store was built at Mariposa at Mogens Bluff. In 1897 a one room school was built, located about 112 mile north of the store. The first Post Office was at Bates (now Matt Bates), remaining there until 1898 and then moved to the Mariposa Store.

Grain was drawn to Carman by horses until 1901. Sometimes there would be as many as 60 loads turning the corner north of Carman, leaving at 6:30 in the morning and arriving back about 6:30 at night. The teamsters all ate at the old Starkey house in Carman, where a good full course meal could be bought for 25C. Bread sold for 16 loaves for \$1.00 in those days as well. 40T to 50C per bushel was considered a good price for wheat.



*Mrs. Harry Mogk and Murray churning butter in 1936.*

We also drew cordwood from 9 miles northwest of Carman, leaving at 3:00 a.m. and taking our lunch, which froze on the way, but was eaten none the less.

I was 21 when I first came to Sperling, married in 1903 to Elizabeth Waddell, who died in 1940.

In 1928 I was one of a group, instrumental in starting the Co-Op Store in Sperling, which is still in business today. The first office was located in a building 14' by

12'. The price of gasoline dropped 5C a gallon when the Co-Op started in Sperling; in fact the first barn I built was made of sod which was drawn from the present townsite.

There was nothing but trails; no graded roads - but - taxes on a quarter section of land were only \$14.00. We used two horses and one oxen to pull our binder, having to put boots on the horns of the oxen to keep it from hooking the horses.

About 1905, three Englishmen, who lived where John Tjaden lives now, had fighting roosters. On Sundays they put on fights, the roosters having steel spurs and combs cropped off close to the head. All the young fry attended these fights, until the police at Carman stopped them.

I will close with one last item that I remember about the early days - that Morris Curdt was the first baby born in this part of the Morris Municipality.

There are many other stories that I recall as I look back over the years, but unfortunately the best must be left untold for a book such as this.

## A PIONEER REMEMBERS SPERLING

*submitted by Ralph G. Mogk*

This is an account of the early days of Sperling, as recounted by Mrs. Jim Lester (nee Emma Mogk) a 91 year old resident of the Boyne Lodge in Carman, Manitoba.

We came by train in 1898 from Mount Forest, Ontario. I was eleven years old at the time. Our family consisted of Father (Andrew Mogk), Mother (Elizabeth Heinrichs) and three brothers, George, Andrew (his son, Ralph, lives in Carman, his daughter, Shirley, lives in Winnipeg) and Conrad (his children, Ross and Helen both live in Winnipeg) my sister Mathilda and myself.

My oldest brother, Harry had already come out west (his son Murray now lives in Carman) 2 years earlier. Our parents came from Germany, as sweethearts, they were married over here. The family name was spelled Moogk



*Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Mogk Sr.*

but somehow got shortened to Mogk. My brother Harry used to say, it was because they were so poor, we couldn't afford the extra ink for the second "o".

At this time Harry had employment working for Dave Waddell. My two oldest sisters, Annie and Mary, remained in the east.

My family used a whole box car for their "Settlers Effects" - consisting of a team of horses, and the feed for them, lumber for building a house, furniture and enough food to feed our family of seven for the week spent on the train. The family rode in the coach of course.

Some of the lumber we had brought was left over, and it was used to build the first school in Sperling. That school today, is the Sperling Catholic Church, which is no longer in use.

The train (C.P.R.) stopped at Elm Creek, Manitoba. The section used by the Mogk family and their belongings was uncoupled from the rest of the train. The engine was also uncoupled, and then coupled onto this section, and we were taken on to Carman, Manitoba. I understand that the ending then returned to the main train for the rest of the Settlers and their effects, and they continued on to points further West.

We arrived at Carman, at midnight, and stayed overnight at a place called Fuller's Boarding House. We had breakfast and dinner before leaving the Boarding House the next day. A Mr. William Wilson hitched our horses to his democrat and drove our family to Sperling. (Alvin Wilson, formerly of Sperling was his son).

It was a very cold day in the latter part of March. We went directly to Dave Waddell's place, where my brother Harry was working. Mrs. Waddell had been a close friend of the family down East in Ontario and we had all attended the same school. Her name was formerly Harriet Fettes.

Dad got busy right away to locate land and bought the S.E. quarter of 32-3-2 from a man named "Cooper". This land had only 25 acres under cultivation. We stayed at the Waddell farm for 2 weeks. Then we moved into our new home, a two storey house built in four days. It was just a shell of course, we could see daylight through the boards anywhere. We thought we would be eaten alive by the mosquitoes and the moths!

My father built the house with the help of the neighbors - the Peckovers and two or three families of Waddells, who had been our friends in Ontario. Father had a carpenter to keep things straight, a man from Carman by the name of Jim Miller, also from Ontario.

Once we were settled, work began breaking the land, and making improvements on the house. This house was to know many heart breaking events. My three brothers, George, Harry and Andrew took typhoid fever our second year there. They did recover however. A few years later my brother George married and after only three short months he took sick and died of ruptured appendix.

The first year in Manitoba we had a team of horses to break the land, but later on we had a team of oxen as well.

This team of oxen brings to mind a story. One very hot day my father had been out breaking the prairie sod. At noon he bought the oxen over to the well near the house. The poor brutes were so hot and tired that one of them

saw the open kitchen door, he thought it might be cooler there and tried to step in. Naturally, when he tried this, his shoulders stuck in the doorway. I was standing tending something for Mother at the stove at the time. I heard this noise behind me and, on turning, I saw this huge head with the big horns and staring eyes. It was swinging around very close to my back. I made a hasty exit through the front door and Father came to the rescue and the oxen were very soon safely put away in the stable. This memory has stayed with me through the years.

When we came here in 1898, there was no school closer than Garnet School. (approximately 5 miles west). That same summer a school was built on the farm, some of you remember as Mogan Neilsen's farm and farmed today by his son, William. This original school was later moved into Sperling and became the Sperling Catholic Church, for many years.

It was indeed nice to get back to school and meet other young people of pioneer families. One of my fondest memories, as a child was seeing for the first time the wild flowers of the prairies. Few people realize that we had never seen wild roses, tiger lilies, blue bells, crocus and cow slips growing wild in the east. Today, because of the wide use of chemical sprays, and cultivation of the Prairies, these wild flowers have become very rare.

We had no Post Office closer than five miles, and it was on the John Bates farm. It was called Bates Post Office. Mail came in once a week. That first year it was the job of my brother Conrad and I to walk the five miles to pick up the mail every Saturday.

Then the General Store went up on Mogan's Corner, across the road from Jake Koop's home today. A Post Office was set up there and called "Maripossa" The name Maripossa had been transplanted from a Post Office with that name in the East, from which some of the early settlers had come. This Post Office was in operation at least 2 years. The mail being brought in by horse and buggy from Carman twice a week.

In 1901 the tracks were laid for a railroad from Winnipeg to Learys' Siding, and the train was indeed a welcome sight. I myself, saw the first train come into Sperling in 1901 and I also saw the last passenger train go out in 1952.

The day the first train arrived, the men were still working on the tracks. It consisted of the engine, one coach, and the little red caboose. The coach carried the railroad dignitaries and could only come as far as the curve, just east of Sperling today. At that time there were no tracks further on, and certainly no Sperling. However there had been talk of a village being started at this site. I am not certain how Sperling got its name, but it had been rumored that there was to be a spur going across country in a South Easterly direction to Morris, thus forming the "Spur" of Sperling. However this is not authentic.

After the arrival of the railroad, things began to progress rapidly. Elevators were being built, homes were going up, and businesses were started. Then too, we had an influx of Americans buying land.

Real Estate agents from Carman could often be seen driving the American land seekers around the country, in their big democrats (a two seated buggy drawn by horses). In those days Sperling was a very busy place.

The hotel in Sperling today was originally a boarding house, run by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Waddell. They had several children, one of which was Mrs. Addie Myers who lived in Sperling before moving to Winnipeg. At that busy time Mrs. Waddell often had to feed as many as eighty or ninety men at one meal.

However, by this time there were two General Stores. One was operated by a nephew of Timothy Eaton. The other was by a man named Millichamp. We could buy some of the necessities and I remember we bought bread at twenty-five cents for four loaves.

In 1910 a four room school was built where the present school now stands. This school burned down in 1924, however classes continued in the rink, the Orange Hall and in the Church basement. That same year the present school was built.

During my years in Sperling I have seen many changes, such as the passing of old friends and the coming of new. I have known Sperling as a hive of activities. During this time the Church was the centre of our Community with all its happy memories. Not only my own "United Church" but the Catholic Church as well, has contributed to make Sperling a nice place to call Home.

It is sad to note, that with the coming of faster cars, busses and all the different modes of travel, not only do our businesses suffer, but our community life as well. At times lately, this same Sperling has seemed like a ghost town.

Such is progress!

Now, only one family of Mogks live in Sperling. Robert Mogk, Grandson of Andrew Mogk and his wife, Margaret (Savage) Mogk.

## MOCK

*submitted by Ralph G. Mogk*

I was born in Carman, the son of Andrew Mogk and Mrs. Natalie Mogk (nee Stephenson).

My father was born in Mount Forest, Ontario and moved to Sperling in the year 1898. He purchased the



*Ralph Mogk family, Bob, Sandra, Marcia, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Mogk.*

West 112 of Section 31-6-2, where he farmed until retiring in 1945.

He married my Mother Netalie Stephenson of Miami in 1911. My mother passed away in 1930. At that time I was 14 years of age.

Their family consisted of two boys and one girl. Winston, who married Delle Meyers of Sperling. They had four children - Arthur, Dianne, Linda and Andrew. Ralph, who married Willa G. Hartley of Carman. They had three children - Robert, Sandra and Marcia. Shirley, who married Jack Bunce of Winnipeg. They had two children - James and Lynne.

My son Bob married Margaret Savage of Carman. He is the only living Mogk now living in Sperling. He is farming in the district.

Our eldest daughter Sandra married Joseph Bilodeau of Sperling. They now live in Claresholm, Alberta, having recently purchased the Claresholm Hardware. They have two daughters - Tannis and Tara.

Our youngest daughter Marcia married Barry McKay of Carman. He is with the Edmonton Police Force. They live near Edmonton at New Sarepta. They too have two daughters - Jodi and Sandi.

After farming in the Sperling District until 1968 we decided to change our surroundings and moved to Carman, where we reside at the present time.

## ROBERT NICHOL FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nichol left Mount Forest and came to Sperling in 1903. Their family consisted of 2 daughters and 3 sons. Mr. W.H. Waddell met them in Carman and brought them to Sperling.

The Nichols lived in what is known as the "butcher shop" on Main Street until their house was ready on Waddell Street, which belonged to R.H. Waddell then. The house, barn and windmill have been removed and Ken Waddell lives there.

Soon after coming to Sperling, he purchased a quarter section of land west of Sperling and farmed from town. This land is now owned by his grandson, Jack Nichol.

While living in Sperling, they made many friends and were both interested in community and church work. They attended the Presbyterian church, which was located near the Johnston Morrison farm, west of Sperling.

When, in 1899, the Presbyterian church was built, the minister, Reverend Lidingham stayed with them. The Methodist church was built across the street from their home. The children went to both Sunday schools as they were at different times.

In 1909, they moved to their home north of Sperling, living there until 1942, when Mr. Nichol sold his farm and retired to Carman.

Mrs. Nichol passed away in 1917. In 1919, he married Mrs. Barbara McEachern (Mrs. Nichol's sister), who passed away in 1931. Mr. Nichol passed away in 1964, Harry in 1973 and Bert in 1977. Jean Nichol lives in Vancouver B.C. and Rita (Mrs. Binkley) lives in Shannavon, Saskatchewan.

## HARRY NICHOL AND FAMILY

Harry Nichol, son of Robert Nichol, bought the west half of 35-6-3 in 1929. In 1936, he married Evelyn Ferris, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Ferris of the Homewood District. They had two sons, Jack and Gary. In 1961, Jack married Karen Casemore of Winnipeg and they took over the family farm. Jack and Karen have three sons, Keith, Glen and Brian. Gary married Carol Hill of Winnipeg and they live in Winnipeg, where Gary is employed by the Federal Government. They have two children, Dayna and Reid.

Harry and Evelyn moved into Sperling, where Harry spent his leisure time playing pool with A.K. Brown, Clifford Waddell and Trier Anderson. Harry was interested in all community affairs. He was a founding member of the Sperling Pool Elevators and the Sperling Co-Operative.

Harry passed away in 1973.

## NEIGHBORLY NIELSENS

After having farmed in different locations, Mogens and Mina Nielsen settled on the Davison farm, half a mile north of Sperling, also operating several tracts of land, south of town. Besides their own family, Mary and William, they raised Harvey, Glenna and Bretta Nielsen, whose parents had passed away. They were successful farmers, kind neighbours and a real asset to the community. Mogens served on rink executive, Pool Board, Co-Op Oil and was always ready to lend a helping hand to anyone in need.

Mina was ever ready to assist in any community effort. This couple deserves special consideration for their whole-hearted support of the community.

## PETE NICOLAJSSEN



*Pete and Alice Nicolajsen's 50th wedding anniversary in 1978.*



*First harvest for Pete and Alice Nicolajsen on NE 28-6-2 Win 1929.*



*Pete and Alice Nicolajsen's farm on 26-6-2 W.*

## GEORGE W. PARKER

*written by Geo Parker in 1961*

I first saw Sperling in the fall of 1907, when a few prospective settlers came from Illinois to Carman via C.P.A. We were met by Sperling livery with two democrats and horses, were driven to Homewood, then worked to the North and East and were soon in open prairie. There were no roads at all, and we had quite a time finding the bridge over the drainage ditch to get to Sperling. We got to the Hotel about 8:00 p.m., cold and hungry, and enjoyed a wonderful supper, except for the coffee? which turned out to be black tea made with rain water. It really tasted terrible, as I was used to green tea and deep well water.

Next day, we drove east and south of town, still mostly open prairie. We met Ira Grover, Jake Tjaden, who was plowing with a huge gas tractor with wheels about 7 or 8 feet high (was a crude looking machine beside today's tractors). Joe Grundler was turning over the land with a big steam engine and horses. Met Emile Ribordy and saw Browns in the sod house they lived in at that time. Those people were all strong boosters of the country.

I came back again in 1908 for another look around. The real estate people had a private sleeping car, in which we slept and ate.

In March, 1909, I came as a settler, having bought a section of land, all prairie, 5 miles northwest of town. Jim McMicken and Roy Bower came with me as settlers, and Tom Anderson, Bill "Cody" Craig and Chance Jacobs came to work on the land. Between us, we had 5 cars of settlers' goods, farm machinery, some household goods and 30 mules and a few horses. Roy Bower moved onto the place where Wendel Fewster now lives; Jim and myself went a mile and a half south, across the road from Tanners.

We wondered how we were going to lead all those mules out, so decided to turn them loose and herd them out. Mules are supposed to herd like cattle, but those *did not*. They simply ran wild and hee-hawed and rooled and kicked up their heels in about every backyard in town. I can bet we were blessed by every woman that day. I can recall Mrs. Rehill and Mae Lewis out with brooms and I couldn't blame them, as they had a wash on the line. After lots of running, we finally got the mules out of town, home and stabled.

The first night, we decided to stay with Bowers; quite a storm came up during the night and we woke up in the morning to find snow on our beds. After breakfast, we had all the machinery to unload and set up, feed and seed to be found and bought. Jake Tjaden and Joe Grundler were a big help there, as were able to get most of the feed and seed from them. All this time, the snow was going and one morning, on going to the stable, we found the mules standing in water to their knees.

We had rented more land 7 miles northeast of Sperling, then known as the Lee place, with lots of stable room so had those mules to move again. You can bet we did not try to herd them this time. We tied a long hay rope to the back of the sleigh, the other end to the saddle of a well trained saddle horse and tied the mules in pairs to this rope. Rather an odd looking outfit, but we got there with no trouble.

McMicken and myself rented considerable land in partnership, and after finishing with seeding, we split up and went to our own farms to start breaking. My land was 5 miles northwest (11-7-3 West). Wests were the closest neighbours, then Skeavingtons and further away were Peckovers, Nichols and Waddells.

After building a granary to live in and a shed for the mules, I started breaking; we found the prairie pretty tough and did not get along too fast.

Had to haul all the water from the Boyne ditch, a mile and a half away. It was pretty desolate country in those days; all prairie clear to Fannstelle and we saw lots of grass fires and did lose the odd stack of hay in spite of fire guards.

We joined forces again for the harvest and cut 1000 acres of wheat and 160 of oats. Jack Burnett did the threshing for us, and he really threshed. Had a full crew, 10 stock teams, 5 or 6 field pitchers and two spike pitchers. Mrs. Burnett did the cooking, along with the help of a hired girl; they had a cook car at the machine. Breakfast was at 5:30, the machine started at 6:00; half hour off for dinner, then on until 9:00 p.m. and supper; also had lunch both forenoon and afternoon. They were a pretty rough gang, mostly lumber jacks. After threshing we had plowing to do, then went back to

Illinois for the winter.

Next spring I brought back a few more mules, but the breaking and back setting seemed too slow, so I bought my first tractor, an International single cylinder outfit, rated at 4 plow power. That helped some, but the following year, I traded it in for a larger one, which I had for several years.

That summer my dad bought a section of land (12-7-3) and I bought a 30-60 Rumely Oil Pull, with power to pull 10 bottoms, so we did not lack power and soon had two sections broken and backset. That fall, I bought a separator and from then on, did my own threshing.

Then 1912 came along, with a wonderful crop which we did not get. We got a terrific rain early in harvest and our land was all under water. That fall, I mounted the binder on a wagon, a small Cushman engine to turn the binder works and six mules to drag it through the mud. We cut the oats that way; most of the wheat was cut before the rain, and we never got 200 acres of flax. We threshed in the mud and pulled stooks loose from ice in water and threshed. We practically lived on ducks that fall, as they were plentiful. We gave up the threshing on New Years Day, and got some more done in the spring, but between the rodents and weather, most of it was burned.

In the fall of 1911, Molly and I got married and to heck with the bachelor life. If we are spared until fall it will be 50 years together.

I could ramble on a lot more, but this pretty well covers my start in Manitoba.

## GEORGE AND MARY PARKER AND FAMILY

*by Edna Hudson*

My mother and dad farmed in Dufferin Municipality until 1956, when they retired to Sperling. They celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1961, and enjoyed town life. Dad died in 1964 and mother lived in her house alone until 1974, when she moved to Parkview Manor in Carman, where she still lives. She celebrated her 98th birthday on October 12, 1978, and enjoys reasonably good health and is still able to make quite a few entries in the Carman fair.

We were a family of three; my half-brother, Jack Reynolds (now deceased), myself, Edna, and Francis (Buster). Buster joined the American Army and later farmed in Wisconsin, Manitoba, for two years, finally moving to Laramie, Wyoming, where he is still living.

I was married to Bill Skeavington, who died in 1947. We had two sons and a daughter. Clarence lives in Sperling with his wife, Carol, son, Gary, and daughter, Valerie. Murray died in 1956, at the age of 20.

Dorothy married Wayne Rodgers of Sanford, where they lived with their family of Doreen, Janet, Nancy, and twins Robert and David.

In 1955, Murdo Hudson and I were married and had one son, Tom. We farmed in the Garnet district until Tom married Lynn Bridges of Carman, in 1976 and took over the farm, so we moved to Sperling. Murdo passed away suddenly in September of 1977.



## WM. G. PECKOVER'S

*submitted by Wm. G. Peckover*

We moved into my grandparents (Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wilson, Sr.) home in 1945 and left to live in Winnipeg in 1966, having lived in the village of Sperling for 21 years.

The family as of 1945 - I was 35, our children, Carole and Glenn were 5 and 1 respectively.

Our home on New Street was in the centre of town, real handy to church, school and the community rink.

The children were educated in Sperling - in fact, Glenn was a member of the last Grade XII class before the high school was transferred to Carman.

I had always lived in the area, just half a mile north of the R.M. of Morris, so our transition wasn't great.

My grandparents, the Wm. Wilsons, had lived in Morris Municipality since 1895, first on a farm and then in the village.

My father, George Peckover, had always been a supporter of events in Sperling; in the building of the first consolidated school there, as well as the skating and curling rink.

My wife Audrey, was born in Sanford and we were married in 1939. Our folks on both sides of the family were Anglo-Saxon, so our children are a mixture of English, Scottish and Irish.

I had been a farmer all my life, but eventually we rented our land. I started in the life insurance business in 1949 with Great-West Life.

We took part in almost all activities of the area, the children in all the youth projects, Audrey in the women's activities and I in the farm organizations and sporting affairs.

As secretary of our curling club, I had a major part in running our open bonspiels, and in keeping the curling rink operative.

I joined the Masons in 1942 and was one of the committee that bought the Pleasant Valley School and moved it into Sperling for our Lodge building. During the years of school expansion, it came in handy as a school room.

Audrey and I were members of the Order of the Eastern Star, but had to go to Carman for the meetings.

Our daughter, Carole, is now living in Brighton, Ontario. Her husband, Captain James Anderson is with the Canadian Armed Forces and they have two boys and a girl - David, Derek and Lesley.

Our son, Glenn, is now living in Toronto. His wife, Janet Handlon, was a former resident of the Morris Municipality. They have a daughter and a son, Jennifer and Andrew.

Reference will be made to the Wm. Wilson, Sr. family elsewhere in the book. My brief account of my Mother's life in the R.M. of Morris follows:

Her name was Isabella, born in Proten Station, Ontario and she came to reside with her parents on a farm northeast of Sperling in 1898. Her first school in Manitoba was Waddell, two miles across country and she received her high school training in Carman before attending Normal School in Winnipeg. She taught in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

In November, 1909, she was married at the home farm to George Peckover, a widower, living just north of the R.M. of Morris, with three daughters - Margaret, Eveline and Mary.

Mrs. Peckover moved into the village of Sperling in 1952 and resided there until ill health required her moving to Boyne Lodge, Carman. She died in 1974.

Over the years, she was quite active in church affairs: U.C.W. and W.M.S. and on the church session. Many a time she was called upon to compose an address or a speech for some person in need of her talents.

Besides her step-daughters, she had four sons - William and Earl, now living in Winnipeg, Lawrence, who farmed in the Homewood area (now deceased) and Lloyd, who still lives and operates the home farm north of Sperling.



*Mr. and Mrs. C. Peckover and daughters, Pearl, Francie and Anne.*

## THE PHELPS FAMILY

Albert was born at Pipestone, Manitoba, the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Phelps. In 1924, they moved to the Boyne District and three years later, to the Homewood District.

Albert worked as a carpenter with his father, building and repairing houses, barns and also building cupboards.

In 1935, he married Violet Skeavington of Sperling, and they lived in a house owned by Mr. Jas. Woodly, now the Gilbert Cretton residence. The Phelps played for many dances, anniversaries and concerts. Throughout the years, the dances used to start at 8:00 p.m. and kept going **until** 2:00 a.m. The take home pay was \$2.00 each. However, these were the good times they shared with their many friends at Sperling, Tremont, Garnet and Homewood.

In 1942, the Phelps moved as a family, to the home of Andy Mogk. They went to help with the harvest for three weeks and ended up staying for 25 months.

In 1945, they bought the Jim Cork house, in the northwest corner of the Town of Sperling, where they lived for 27 years.

Vi and Abe were blessed with two children, Wayne and Betty. Both were active in sports. Wayne was active in baseball, hockey and curling. Betty was active in baseball, fancy skating and curling. Both were active in track meets.

Wayne was also talented in the music field, playing both violin and guitar. In 1947, Ab and Wayne entered in the Old Time Fiddlers Contest in Carman. Ab placed first in the open contest and Wayne placed first in the Junior section. Wayne was 12 years old at the time.

Wayne married Joyce Brown of Morris in 1958. They have two daughters, Lori Lynn and Leanne, who live in Winnipeg.

Betty married Owen Murray of Carberry, who is a barber. They have two children, Shelly, a daughter, and Kelly, a son.

In 1972, Albert had open heart surgery. This same year they moved to Carman.

Albert is still quite active in carpentry work. He also keeps pace with the times with his fiddle. Vi enjoys the Friendship centre and taking part in the choir. However they both have a very warm spot in their hearts for Sperling and their friends there.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PAETKAU FAMILY

*by Peter Paetkau*

Predecessors of the Paetkau family have been traced back for over 300 years. After being in the service of the Dutch East Indies Company in Eastern Asia for many years, Paulus Petkau was among the first hundred immigrants to arrive in the city of Danzig with Governor Jan von Riebeck. In September 1652, when a Dutch sergeant was disposed due to his disobedience, Riebeck, esteeming Petkau very highly, named him the sergeant's successor and committed him to important political obligations.

While Paulus Petkau is the earliest known ancestor and bearer of the family name, the earliest known direct predecessor was Jacob Paetkau, 1715-1790. A grandson, Jacob Paetkau, 1799-1818, was among the first immigrants of Mennonites to settle in southern Russia (Ukraine) in 1789. Jacob was born in the village of Tiegenhagen, in Prussia, just east of the city of Danzig.

Jacob Paetkau had a fair-sized family of five sons and two daughters ranging in age from 4 to 19 years and maintained his livelihood as a small farmer and shoemaker. At the time of his settlement in Russia in 1789 his property is known to have consisted of six horses, ten head of cattle, two sheep, five pigs, a small plow, a harrow, one wagon, 50 Tschetwert of grain (1 Tschetwert = 204.8 Kilograms) and 23 loads of hay. Originally he settled in the village of Chortitz, but as the colony expanded, and new villages were founded, he moved to Burwalde, established in 1803.

The fifth child, Johann, 1799-1882, was my great-great-grandfather, and his only son, Abraham, 1837-1911 was my great-grandfather. In turn, Peter, born in 1881 and the second youngest son of Abraham, was my grandfather. Born and raised in Burwalde, he made the



*Helena Schmidt (1881-1957) wife of  
Abram Paetkau, related to Russian  
poet, Alexander Blok.*

move to the more outlying settlement of Central in 1909, only three years after his marriage to Helena Schmidt, a contemporary and not too distant cousin of the famished Russian symbolist poet, Alexander Blok.

Peter Paetkau, 1881-1922, was a minister of the Mennonite Church, and has served as elder, minister, evangelist and choir director during his short lifetime. When evil times came upon Russia after the Revolution of 1917, a wide-spread typhoid epidemic broke out all over the country. While on a preaching engagement in the nearby settlement at Arkadak his visitation was cut short by a contraction of the dreaded disease in the late autumn of 1922. After arriving at home he succumbed to it, and died at the age of forty-one.

At this time there were two sons in the family: Abram, born in 1908, and Peter, born in 1910. In 1926 the boys still in their teens decided that they would like to emigrate from Russia, and so our grandmother sold their property and journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean aboard the "Empress of Scotland" with her two boys to establish a new home in Canada. They settled in Manitoba, near the town on Winkler, in the village of Reinfeld, and for a



*Wedding of Mr. and Mrs.  
Abram Paetkau, June, 1939.*

year hired out as farmhands, before attempting to farm on a rental basis. Apparently the farming venture prospered and they were able to purchase their first automobile in 1929.

In 1939, Abram, my father, was married to Helena Schmidt, originally from Gruenfeld in the Baratov - Schlachtin settlement in the Ukraine but now a resident of the Maria Martha Home for Girls in Winnipeg while working in the homes of the well-to-do. Their first homestead was at Kleefeld, south of Plum Coulee, where they lived briefly until it was possible to purchase land at Sperling through the agency of C.B. McNulty in 1941. At that same time our grandmother also bought some property near Sperling but remained living at Reinfeld until Peter married in 1943 and moved to the farm at Sperling with his mother. Abram bought the S. 112 of Section 16-6-2 for \$6,700, and Peter bought the W. 112 of Section 13-6-2, on which he remained until 1950, when he bought property within the former Neufeld School District at Lowe Farm. Meanwhile, Abram was able to rent some land, with the option to buy, in the Mennonite Settlement in 1945. During this time Grandmother took the notion to buy a house in the town of Niverville but did not stay very long because she did not like to live so far away. With the purchase of the land in the Settlement in 1948 our family moved here, and a house was built on the yard for Grandmother to live in until her death in 1957.



*Mr. and Mrs. Abram Paetkau and children, Johanna, Judith and Peter,*

Into the Abram Paetkau family there were born three children: Peter (1940), Helen Judith (1942), now living at Henderson, Texas, and married to Norman Hiebert, the owner of Hiebert Construction Company, and Mary Johanna (1943).

Again, in 1962, I, Peter, was able to buy land the Sperling district through the McNulty agency. Land prices were just beginning to climb at this time, and the price of a half a section of land now was \$25,000.00. The property, located along PTH No. 336, formerly belonged to Thomas Brown and Louis Abry.

In July 1967, the Canadian Centennial Year, I was married to Mary Anne Dyck of Roseisle, Manitoba, and took up residence on the farm three miles south of the

town of Sperling. In 1979 there are five other members to our family: Mary Melanie (1969), Brian R.P. (1970), recipient of a Manitoba Centennial Citizen plaque on Centennial Day in Sperling as youngest resident, Randolph W.S. (1972), Helen Melinda (1974), during the year of the Mennonite Centennial in Manitoba, and Leanne Melissa (1977).

Since coming to live here I have taken some interest in community affairs and church activities, having served two terms as a Director of the Sperling Co-op Oil and Supplies and Secretary of the Berghaler Mennonite Church at Lowe Farm for a number of years until my resignation in July 1971, at which time church affiliations were changed to the Gospel Light Mennonite Brethren Church in Carman. At the present time I am serving here as the Mennonite Central Committee representative and also the Church Correspondant. In 1969-70 I was a



*Mr. and Mrs. P.B. Paetkau. BACK ROW: Brian, Melanie. FRONT ROW: Melissa, Melinda, Randy.*

member of the Toastmaster's International Red River Club at Morris, and invited the same to a sitting in the town of Sperling.

One of my long-time interests lies in the field of writing and the various areas of historical research. As such I have been associated with the publication of the Winnipeg-based publication, the Mennonite Mirror, very soon after its founding in 1971, and am presently serving my third year on its Editorial Committee. The course of my writing endeavours have been channelled into broader areas of activity by my association with the Mirror. It was through the encouragement of its first editor, Dr. Roy H. Vogt, that I continued to pursue my aspirations to write, and have since written articles for a number of other publications, including the Scratching River Post, published at Morris. Due to my interests in the history of the Mennonites, I have been a participant in a number Mennonite History Seminars, and am a founding member of the recently organized Mennonite Brethren Historical Society and the Mennonite Community Orchestra, now in the its first season.

While raising five children easily is a full-time chore, Mary Anne continues to find some time to devote to the local UCW group and our church women's fellowship, along with her keen interest in raising house plants and summer gardening activity. The plant sale of her unit in the UCW annually takes place at our house.

## MOLDS OF THE FUTURE CAST IN OSBORNE CLAY

*story of M.J. Penner and Doug Penner  
submitted by John Harder Penner and Douglas John Penner*

History is the story of mankind. In the life of any generation the present is seldom completely documented, because at the time the events may seem insignificant or better forgotten. The story of any civilization, family or individual at its best has a beginning lost in time. The first chapter is never written. Some stories have more chapters but the very beginning is forever elusive.

Thus no history is ever complete because the beginning is lost and even if it were available the documentation would present a mammoth task which would never be completed in any generation or number of generations.

Just as the beginning is locked behind closed doors, the future is also obscure behind doors which the writer cannot open or even imagine to be waiting.

The contributors to "Furrows in the Valley", a history of the first 100 years of the Rural Municipality of Morris have undertaken a worthy project, but it will remain incomplete, not due to a lack of interest or dedication, but simply to the limitations which are placed on any recorder of history.

It is with this premise in mind that the writer will try to relate in brief, a partial history of a family in which the writer's roots are found.

It may not be comprehended by future readers of "Furrows in the Valley", but what is happening today will affect their lives, their destinies, just as the events of the past have left their impressions on this generation and this period in history.

The significance of any event varies in importance with the impact it makes on the particular individual.

It was the impact of drought during the late 1930's which convinced John Harder Penner to purchase a farm in the Red River Valley, more specifically in the Rural Municipality of Morris, south and east of the village of Sperling (S-112 of 4-6-2W). He and his bride the former Margaret Jean Oakes of the Miami, Manitoba district has spent their first years of married life (married 1938) on a farm near Windygates, Manitoba. The land was fertile

but a combination of drought and then poor markets convinced John Penner that the light sandy soils were not for him.

Leaving the farm at Windygates, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in the fall of 1939. Two years later he



*John H. Penner of Sperling served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War 2.*

left the service with an honourable discharge to operate his mother's farm near Kane. His father, Peter F. Penner had passed away in the fall of 1941.

In 1944 John Penner purchased the farm at Sperling, where he and his wife would raise their family of a young son, Douglas John and a yet unborn daughter Linda Jean. Linda Jean was born in the fall of 1944. Her twin brother Morris, did not come home from the Carman Hospital. Twenty years later his father would not return from the same Hospital to the family farm at Sperling. Linda Jean was later found to be suffering from an injury caused at birth. She would never be able to walk normally, although she would later spend many of her childhood years in the Shriners' Hospital at Winnipeg. Douglas John, the eldest was born in his grandfather Oakes' log house at Miami without medical aid. Hospitals were viewed with some skepticism.



*John H. Penner's first self-propelled combine purchased in 1951 at \$4,500.00.*



*Linda Jean Penner*

The year 1944 was not a good year. The crops were good but a wet fall left the stooks standing in water. It was the year of the ducks. With only a handful of shotgun shells, John Penner futilely shot at the ducks to relieve some of the frustrations which he and his wife felt. The ducks would rise with the shot, circle the yard and land once again.

If the drought of the 1930s at Windygates had made an impression on John Penner, he would find the threat of excess rain and flooding to be an equal disadvantage, but there never was a complete crop failure in his 20 years, on the old Monarch Lumber Farm. His concern and frustrations with crops drowning in water would, however, affect the next generation's outlook on farming, just as his own father's bankruptcy in 1929 had made him particularly cautious. John Penner recounted those experiences to his own family.

His father, Peter F. Penner of Kane had owned 13 quarter sections of land during the 1920s. He had seven tractors, four of them new in one year. Then one day in 1929, it was all gone except for a half section of land. The tractors were gone and the remaining half section was to be farmed with horses again. It was a blow that Peter F. Penner would never recover from, and one which his second youngest son, John would never forget.

Despite the setbacks from adverse weather and his tendency to be overly cautious, John Penner built a viable farm operation from the Sperling Osborne clays. The half section operation expanded to three quarters and finally a section with a quarter section located at Rosebank, Manitoba.

In 1948 and 49 the Penner family spent their winters in Winnipeg, while John attended the University of Manitoba, taking a Diploma Course in Agriculture. He graduated with honours and left University determined that higher education should be of primary importance to his own children. Education would provide them with an escape from the dependence on weather and markets, which had proven to be adversities in his own farming operation. "Become a professor", was his advice to his son, "and then you can own a farm if you like."

If the weather is unpredictable, so can be the course of a child's interest. Young Doug wasn't interested in

becoming a professor, nor was he really interested in driving a tractor for miles on end around a field. His interests were more with livestock. Stories about Grandfather Peter F. Penner's Clydesdale stallion "P.F. Brown Archer" never failed to maintain his complete attention. His questions were not about tractors, threshing machines and combines, but about the wild broncos which had been shipped in from Alberta. His grandfather Oakes had exhibited horses and fowl at exhibitions as large as the Toronto Royal. Visits with Grandfather William Oakes drifted into the early hours of the morning. The topic was always the exhibition of livestock and fowl. John Penner could never figure out what his father-in-law and his son had to talk about at 2:00 a.m.

It would later become evident, as the whole family became involved in preparing for the annual trek to the Carman Fair with a truck load of chickens, rabbits and horses. In the years to follow the horses would become the main interest and the number of fairs or agriculture exhibitions taken in would expand from the annual trip to Carman to 15 and more shows.

At the time of this writing, 24 years after the first pilgrimage to the Carman Fair, Doug and his wife Sandra (formerly Sandra Maureen Braun of Lowe Farm) still maintain a small breeding herd of show horses consisting of registered purebred and partbred Arabians. Their horses have done well in competitions bringing home a number of provincial championships. One of the horses raised from their own breeding stock is named "Royal Archer". The memory of Peter F. Penner's Clydesdales stallion "P.F. Brown Archer" remains.

It is odd how the seeds of interest are planted and once imbedded, surface, even though they may appear to lie dormant for years. Mrs. John H. Penner (Jean) though primarily occupied with raising her family, keeping her farm home, tending to a garden (at first encircled with ragweeds), and assisting her husband in the fields, found time to pick up her pen and record her feelings, experiences and observations in verse. Her own father, William Oakes had been noted for his articles appearing in horticultural periodicals.

For her own reasons, Jean would submit her poems to the farm periodicals such as the Free Press and the Western Producer under nom-de-plumes. Perhaps it was simply a feeling that the harsh prairie and its people would not be willing to accept a poet in their midst. After all wasn't it necessary to direct every effort to eke out a living from the clay. There was no room for delicate flowers and wasted effort. Then again, perhaps it was just a feeling of modesty, not wanting to attract any undue attention.

At any rate it has not been until these most recent years, that Jean has allowed her poems to appear under her own name. Later this year she will be publishing her first book of poetry, "Life's Winds", which will consist of 79 poems from a collection which now numbers in the hundreds. Her writings reflect the country, the life and her own feelings.

It was her interest in writing and her father's which in turn kindled the interest of her son's. Like most aspiring writers, Doug's first venture into the field were returned



*Peter F. Penner's Clydesdale stallion "P. F. Brown Archer".*



*Mrs. Jean Penner with granddaughter, Dana Robin Penner, reading her book of poetry "Life's Winds".*



*Sandra and Doug Penner with daughter, Dana, in January, 1978 just prior to the publication of the first issue of "The Scratching River Post".*

by the publishers. It was not until 1970, that he was finally successful in finding someone who took an interest in his writing. That individual was Mr. Eugene Derksen, the owner of Derksen Printers at Steinbach.

Mr. Derksen encouraged Doug to submit guest editorials to his newspapers. It was a beginning, the birth of the column, "Speaking Out", which Doug has written on a weekly basis for the past nine years. It was also the end of Doug's active interest in grain farming. His every effort would be put into writing, with the hope that one day he would be able to write for a newspaper on a fulltime basis. The column, "Speaking Out", proved to be his calling card. At one time it was carried by the Morris Journal, Steinbach Carillon, Beausejour Beaver, Altona Echo, Pembina Times and the Valley Leader.

Branching into the field of feature stories, his opportunity finally came to write on a regular basis, when he was employed by the then Dufferin Leader at Carman as a reporter in 1974. Doug spent the next four years with the Dufferin Leader, which later became known as the Valley Leader. He had been the editor for two years, when he left in 1978 to start his own newspaper in Morris.

Morris and the surrounding area had always held an attraction for Doug. After all, his family had their roots in the Rural Municipality of Morris, with his Grandfather Peter F. Penner establishing his farm near Kane in 1893.

The establishment of Post Publishing Ltd. and The Scratching River Post was a family decision, involving Doug and Sandra and their parents. While Doug had learned the various aspects of the publishing trade during his tenure at the Valley Leader, Sandra was ready to provide the bookkeeping and financial management skills. Like the family farm, The Scratching River Post would be a family newspaper. At this time the newspaper is in its fledgling stages. Its progress may only be recorded in the future.

Today, a third generation, Doug and Sandra's daughter, Dana Robin is finding her beginnings on the farm at Sperling. It is not the same farm. The ragweeds her father and grandmother gathered to burn in the old kitchen cook stove and used once as a Christmas tree have disappeared. The 35 years at Sperling and 86 years her family has lived in the Rural Municipality of Morris are history. She may never have the same experiences, but to some degree her future will be shaped by that very history.

Her interests may vary from any of those of her predecessors, but then again she may find her roots in farming, poetry, journalism, equestrian activities,



*Doug Penner with Penner's Champion Arabian Stallion "Mantaib".*



athletics (like her mother Sandra) or in the field of organizations and public life.

Her Great Grandfathers Peter F. Penner and William Oakes served on municipal councils and school boards. Grandfather John H. Penner and Grandmother Jean Penner were active in the Manitoba Farmers' Union Local at Sperling, the Sperling Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and the Legion Ladies Auxiliary. Her parents Doug and Sandra Penner were instrumental in founding two horse organizations, the Manitoba Arabian Horse Association and the Agassiz Arabian Horse Club. Doug was also involved in local Manitoba Farm Union activities at Lowe Farm, served on the Provincial Board of the M.F.U., was President of the Student Council at the Lowe Farm Collegiate, Director of the Canadian Arabian Horse Association, a Director of the Valley Agricultural Society (today Sandra is the Chairman of the Light Horse Committee for the Valley Agricultural

a.



*Doug Penner receiving award after successfully competing in Toastmasters Competition.*

Society), President of the Morris Constituency Progressive Conservative Association, a charter member of the Red River Toastmasters Club and W.P.M. of Patricia Lodge No. 125 AF & AM.

Dana Robin may find her future in the Rural Municipality of Morris or she may decide as her aunt Linda Jean did, that her future lies elsewhere. Today, Linda Jean resides and works in Winnipeg. Throughout her life she has had to contend with a physical handicap which often restricted her participation in community activities. Despite this, she participated in the 1966 Manitoba Farmers' Union Queen Contest and was chosen Queen of District VIII.

The aspect of dates is often over emphasized in history. It is not the dates which are important, but the realization that our present and our future are linked to the past and is influenced by the events which determined the course of our forefathers. Dana Robin Penner is here today because her great great grandparents decided to leave Russia and Scotland. She finds her roots in the Rural Municipality of Morris, because her Great Grandfather Peter F. Penner took up farming at Kane in 1893 and her Grandfather John H. Penner experienced the drought of the 1930s at Windyges.

This is her beginning. Her children's children may be present to continue the story in 2079,

Family Tree:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter F. Penner of Kane had a family of fourteen children. Mrs. Penner was the former Margueta Harder. Their children were Henry, Sarah, Anna, Margueta, Mary, Peter, Isaac, Abraham, Bernhard, David, John, Katherina, Jacob and Susie.

John Harder Penner the second youngest son married Margaret Jean Oakes in 1938. They had three children, Douglas John, Linda Jean and Morris John.

Douglas John Penner and Sandra Maureen Braun were married in 1964. They have one child, a daughter, Dana Robin.



*Original homestead of Richard Rance.*

## THE RANCE FAMILY (JANUARY 1979)

*submitted by (Mrs.) Mabel Rance*

Richard, Ada, and children Elizabeth 13, and LeRoy 7, came to Manitoba March 22, 1911 from Plainfield Ill., U.S.A. The first night was spent at Roy Bowers on the farm 112 mile south of Sperling, now the home of Wendel Fewsters.

Richard had previously bought 112 section of prairie land five miles east of Sperling but for three years he rented 1/2 section from Joe Grundler 2 miles east and 2 miles south of Sperling. Louis Duvenaud now owns this farm. While living here, Richard Rance and neighbor Fred Gehring shot a large black bear which was in the field. It was used as a rug for many years.

The next three years the Rance family spent on the Rehill farm 1 1/2 miles south of Sperling now occupied by the John Braun family. Farm power was six mules and eight horses brought from Ill. Buildings were constructed on the Rance 112 section in 1915, and the following year they moved to their own farm. In 1918 another 112 section was bought and a large barn was built.

Richard Rance served for seven years as a member of the Morris Municipal Council. He was opposed and defeated by the late Emile Ribordy, but upon the demise of the latter, was re-elected in 1934 for a two year term as councillor, but died in 1935 during his second year in office. His wife Ada died October 1954.

Elizabeth became Mrs. James McKee, and when LeRoy and Mabelle Brown, daughter of H.W. Brown (Yankee Brown) were married in 1927, they took over the



*Rance children with their school van in 1943.*

operation of the family farm and his parents moved to Sperling.

As the older generation had found, farming was a precarious business with either too much rain, too dry, grasshoppers, etc. It was some time before conditions co-operated after LeRoy started farming on his own.

LeRoy's and Mabelle's family grew steadily starting with Leonard in 1928 Thelma in 1931, Clifford in 1934, Victor in 1936, Owen in 1938, May in 1941 and last but not least, Allen in 1949. All the children helped on the family farm. Each youngster had work assigned in order of size; such as wood box filler, egg cleaner, milking, etc. All children attended Lone Star School, 1 1 / 2 miles from the family farm, travelling by horse and home-made van in winter. Jeeps were valuable for transportation when roads were still low and never cleared in winter, and during spring and summer muds.

Farm Forum was a highlight of winter sociability. Neighbors gathered once a week to listen to the broadcast, play cards and partake of a bountiful lunch.

Leonard married Mary Elliot, a teacher from Stonewall District teaching at Lone Star School, in 1952. They are presently farming on the section adjacent to the original family farm. Their children are Lyle, Darrell, Laura, Shelley and John (foster child).

Thelma married Peter Nicolajsen Jr. in 1951. She is presently living at Sperling and nursing at the Grace Hospital in Winnipeg. Her children are Russell (married to Linda Allen in April 5th, 1975), Clinton (married to Michelle Hetherington, September 11th, 1971), Deborah (married to Kirk Haegeman, May 10th, 1975), Laurie (married to Terry Barlow, September 9th, 1978), David and Jeffrey.

Clifford married Ivy Patterson, a Boissevain girl teaching in Sperling, in 1956. He is Assistant District Supervisor of the Manitoba Pool Elevators in the Dauphin area. Their children are Phyllis (married Dennis Boulton on May 6th, 1978), Phillip, Bruce and Blair.

Victor married Betty Armstrong, a Carman girl who taught in Sperling for a year after their marriage in 1959. Their children are Keith, Wanda, Bradley, Alison and Tanis. Victor carries on farming on the original family farm.

Owen married Barbara Moran, a St. Boniface girl, in 1961. Owen is employed by Transport Canada as a Flight



*Leroy and Mabelle Rance's 50th anniversary - Nov. 16, 1977.*

Service Specialist in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Their children are Richard, Virginia, Christine and Terrance (and one more to arrive in June).

May married Jerry Winters in 1979. May presently living in Winnipeg is a Social Worker with the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg.

Allen married Brenda Briggs from Winnipeg in 1970. Allen trained as a Registered Respiratory Technologist. He is presently employed as the Administrator of Shoal Lake Hospital and Senior Citizen's Home. Their children are Tara and Shannon.

LeRoy and Mabelle built a home in Sperling where they retired in 1965, or semi-retired would be a better word. A large garden in Sperling and commuting to the farm kept them well occupied. LeRoy kept an active interest in farming. They celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary in November 1977. LeRoy passed away the following June.

There are seven great-grandchildren.

## REHILLS

My grandparents, James and Eleanor Rehill, with six of their nine children, (three sons: Albert, Robert and John, three daughters: Louise, Frances and Ethel) came



*The James Rehill family. FRONT ROW: James Rehill, Ethel, Frances, Louie, Mrs. Rehill, Will. BACK ROW: Robert, John, Lizzie, Albert, Maggie.*



*Mrs. Eleanor Rehill and three daughters on their Flanders Studebaker,*

to the Sperling district (then known as Mariposa) in 1898, from Artemesia township in the Georgian Bay area.

They left a stoney little farm, where the use of cradle and hand binding of sheaves was still the method of harvesting. They had a team of oxen, but we have no record of what else they brought. They settled on a half-section of S.W. 17-6-2, two miles straight south of the present village.

One story of their first years, I recall. Their son, Albert, had gone east to buy horses. He returned, bringing with him the dread smallpox. I remember grandma telling that he was cared for in an outbuilding and neighbours left food at the farm fence to take care of family needs. No one in the community contracted the disease and my uncle recovered.

Three years later, in the fall of 1901, my father, William Rehill, with his wife, Alma, infant daughter, Arlene, and sister-in-law, Mae Lewis, a girl of eleven, arrived from Painseville, Ohio, where he had learned the blacksmith and carriage trade. The Canadian National Railway tracks were just being laid, but the village had not been surveyed. Dad and his partner, John Smith, set up their smithy on land owned by Chas. Waddell - "Sperling's" first business establishment. The horses they shod were often broncos which had never been broken. I remember Dad saying, "I used to boast that no bronco had even beaten me, but they did alright." (Dad later suffered from a crippling inflammation of the spine, which eventually caused his retirement at middle age, and many years as an invalid.)

That first winter was bitterly cold, with no snow until March brought blizzards. The shanty they lived in could not be heated sufficiently and Dad took very ill, so they had to move in with Grandma and Grandpa, making a household of 12.

In the spring, mother planted a garden and the men building the railroad came to her, asking to buy fresh vegetables and begging her to cook their meals. So, from Carman, mother bought a large table and set it up in the shanty, where it took up most of the floor space, but mother was earning to get some of the things she wanted.

Another daughter, Doris, was born, but whooping cough claimed her at 5 months. Her grave was the first in the Sperling cemetery in 1906. Arlene died at the age of 8 years from scarlet fever, in January, 1909.

The railway coming through changed both name and location of the little settlement. Two churches were built: the Methodist, a red brick building south of the tracks, the Presbyterian, a white frame structure, north of the tracks. Both buildings reflected the strong affiliation with church, the early settlers felt. Dad and Mother were both very active in the life of the Methodist church; mother as a teacher in Sunday school and member of the Ladies' Aid and W.M.S. while Dad served as superintendent of the Sunday school and secretary-treasurer of the board.

Most social events centered about the church. Cards, as such, were frowned upon, but crokinole, "Lost Heir", "Pit" and "Finch" were good substitutes. At parties, charades and word contests were popular.

The Sperling I remember, approximately 1913-1920, had an active business section. On the west was Pfrimmer's (later Williamson's) barber shop and pool room, T.C. Sparling's general store, Art Hobb's pharmacy with ice cream parlor in the rear, and "Central" at the side; Bob Smith's butcher shop (later Griffith's) the post office and Grant's hardware store. On the east was an Orange Hall, Union Bank (built late in the decade), Davidson's Livery Stable, my father's blacksmith shop and his farm implement shop, Millichamp's general store and the hotel. A train from Winnipeg came out each morning around 10:00 o'clock and returned at about 2:30 p.m.

But these were years of change. My father, recognizing the need and market for larger farm machinery, had in 1908 taken on the agency of several farm implement companies. He had a wide territory and a thriving business, but his summer hours were very long as he would be called at any hour to set up or repair a binder or cream separator. His blacksmith shop, he rented to another smithy. It was during this period that heaters were replaced by furnaces, oil lamps by first - private electric plants, later hydro, and the horse and buggy were giving way to the automobile. Our first car was a Flanders Studebaker, brass rods and all.

Shortly afterwards, he took on the agency for Overlands. He had the reputation of being a reckless driver and speedster. I remember him coming down the home stretch at forty miles per hour, to everyone's horror.

World War I brought its change. Nearly all the young men were gone from the community, although a farmer could claim exemption for his son. Then 1918-1919 brought the "flu". Doctors were fifteen miles away and nursing help unavailable. Few households escaped. It was while the epidemic was at his height that the curling rink burned down and two of our young men were severely burned.

They were affluent days - people began spending money on luxuries. A piano in the home became a must. A music teacher, Miss Bunn, came out from Winnipeg each week and for two days gave lessons to the young of the community. Ladies were kept abreast of fashion trends by frequent visits to the city and by extension services of the Agricultural Society.

A sufficient water supply was always a problem. Rain water from the roof was collected and stored in cisterns. This, filtered, was our drinking water. In winter, snow and ice blocks were melted in barrels near the kitchen



*Wm. Rehill and Jas. Rehill homes in Sperling, 1912 on S. Main St.*

stove to supply our washing needs. Chemical toilets began to replace the frigid outhouses.

R.H. Waddell had built some two storey homes on Main Street. One of these my parents bought, and my grandparents the one next door. Their house has been replaced, but the one in which we three last children were born - Merle, 1909, Lewis, 1910, and Norma, 1919 - although it has undergone many changes, is still a comfortable and attractive home.

Dad loved the land, and because of this had acquired a half section of prairie, seven miles east of town. This was his hobby, and it proved an expensive one. Drainage was poor, the soil, though very fertile, was very heavy. One year, a beautiful crop almost ready for harvest, stood rotting in flood water. The stench was indescribable.

My grandfather retired from active farming when I was a very small girl, so he must have been both a good farmer and good manager. He and Grandma lived comfortably for many years without benefit of Old Age Pension, owning their own home in Winnipeg and the Sperling farm, which was first rented, then sold to Trier Anderson.

My father, too, had prospered. As the pressure of business increased, he took a partner, Mr. John Smith, in 1917. But ill health forced him to sell the business and retire to Carman in 1920.



*Mr. and Mrs. D.B. Rose's first home.*



*Mr. and Mrs. D.B. Rose on veranda of their farm home.*

## **MR. AND MRS. DAVID BAKER ROSE**

Eunice Flora Rose was born on October 22, 1867 near Champaign, Illinois, the daughter of Milan and Jane (Bailey) Tillbury.

In 1883, she was united in marriage to David Baker Rose from Owensboro, Kentucky and to this union were born three children.

Harry David Rose, late of Canton, Illinois, was born at Fairbury, Illinois on July 5, 1891. Died 1964 at the age of 73.

Everett Rose, late of Greeley, Colorado, born at Fairbury, Illinois and died at Greeley, Colorado about 1958.

Josephine (Rose) Anderson, born in 1885 at Fairbury, Illinois and died at Sperling at 38 years of age in 1923.

David and Flora Rose moved to the Morris area in 1904 with their family and settled on a farm one mile north of the C. J. Anderson home place. Later on, they moved to Sperling area and settled on Section 34-6-2 West, where they farmed for 25 years.

Flora and David Rose made a happy home and meeting place for friends and neighbours. Flora began her practice of ministering to the sick, a profession she took up again on returning to Ipaava, Illinois in 1923. After David's death in 1929, she nursed full time, until her retirement at age 70.

Following her retirement, she made her home with her son, Harry, and his family until her death, September 1, 1942, at the age of 74.

Harry Rose was married November 8, 1928, to Evelyn Woods of the Miami District, who still lives in their family home at Longwood Court, Canton, Illinois.

Also surviving, is Everett's widow, who lives in Greeley, Colorado, with grandsons, David and Danny Rose.

Mrs. Deanna Menne, daughter of Evelyn and Harry Rose, is living in Canton, Illinois.

Mrs. Estelle F. Carlson, Orville Lee Anderson, Melvin E. Anderson, are children of C.E. Anderson and Josie Anderson.



*Maurice Rose Sr., Maurice Jr. and Bonnie at lunch time in harvest 1941.*

## MAURICE ROSE, SR.

Maurice Rose was born in Orsures, Switzerland, April 14, 1879, coming to the United States of America in 1901, landing in New York and travelling to Odell, Illinois, by train. During the following years up to 1905, he worked for farmers, one being Louis Abry, Sr. That midsummer, (1905) he met Mr. Grundler, who asked that he go to Sperling, Manitoba, Canada to break some land on 10-6-2-W1 and as he wanted to come to Canada, he took the job, breaking seventy-five acres of land and returning to Odell.

In the spring of 1906, he came back to Sperling by box car, with horses, buggy and plow, breaking more land, travelling back for another carload, then back to Sperling in December. They unloaded at Morris and travelled across country to the farm. This was the beginning of sixty years on 14-6-2. He was married in Switzerland in 1908 to Marie Crettex, bringing her to Sperling in 1909. Mae, Maurice Jr., Louis, Paul and Ernest were born of this union. Mrs. Rose died in 1918.

Mr. Rose bought the home quarter on 14-6-2 in 1916 for \$4,000.00 and the balance in 1924 for \$9,000.00. He married Esther Rouire and in 1926 and 1927 they went to Florida, purchasing land from Mr. and Mrs. McMonagle (who formerly owned Sperling Hotel). In 1932, a quarter on 28-6-2 WI was bought from Mr. McKenzie, building a house and barn, and selling it later to Maurice Jr. In 1934 they returned to Switzerland on a trip. In 1939, Maurice bought all of Section 19-6-1 building a house and barn on it and selling it to his sons, Paul and Ernest.

In the middle 1930's, he traded his property in Florida for a house in St. Vital, then through Les Welsh, he traded this on a half section in Starbuck. A bumper barley crop was grown there that year, and it was later sold to Wilfred Masse.

By 1940 the Roses were a happy family of fifteen children, Margaret, Marcel, Rene, Charles, Camille,



*"Bull Moose" at M. Rose Sr.'s. It is believed there had been only five of these made. You could drive this around the field to pick up sheaves.*

Yvonne, Henry, Alfred, Dorothy and Raymond, with twelve of the children being born on the home farm.

In the 1940's, a half section was bought on 23-6-2 and sold to Louis, a half section on 31-6-2 was bought and sold to Marcel. In 1948 Mollard Siding was bought and sold in 1960 to Rudolph Reage. In 1952 a quarter section at Barnsley was purchased and sold in 1957.

Through all these years, he had a threshing machine, a gang of 12 to 16 men for harvest and during the rainy years, the threshing would easily last two months - imagine breakfast at 6 a.m., lunch at 10 a.m., dinner at noon, lunch at 4 p.m. and supper at 9 p.m. A rainy day was used for butchering a pig a week and also a quarter of beef! He always kept cattle, pigs and chickens and were always a busy family. The men would care for 20 to 25 head of horses as well as threshing for the neighbors.

Mr. Rose helped many a neighbor and young farmer, for example, selling a cow and calf for \$25.00 and only \$5.00 down. He was truly a man of the land, he travelled extensively and whenever he stopped by a roadside, he would pick up a handful of soil, examine it and note the vegetation of the area. Truly, a farmer at heart!

Mr. Rose died in 1966 at the age of 87. Also deceased are his sons, Maurice, Marcel and Rene. Mrs. Rose survives him and resides in Sperling. Mae and Camille live in Los Angeles, California, Louis, Paul and Dorothy in Winnipeg, Ernest in Minnedosa, Margaret and Charles in Sperling, Yvonne in Calgary, Henry in Kane, Alfred in Carman, and Raymond in Portage la Prairie.



*Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Rose stop for lunch while travelling in 1952.*

## RUSSELL FAMILY HISTORY

Rev. John Russell was born in Urquhart, Scotland in 1968. He came to Canada in 1887, working as a draftsman with CPR and other companies till 1892, when he entered Manitoba College as a student minister for the Presbyterian Church. After further studies in Princeton, U.S.A., he was ordained at Plum Coulee in 1899, as a student he served at Posen, Little Britain, Meadow Lee and Poplar Point, in Dominion City for 2 112 years, where he married Bertha Oatway. She predeceased him in 1907, while a minister at High Bluff, Manitoba, leaving five children. In 1910, he married Edna Threadkill, of High Bluff, Manitoba. They lived in Oxbow, Broderick, Saskatoon, Sperling, Dugald, Mekewin, Griswold and Basswood. He retired to Portage la Prairie in 1943, where he died on June 5, 1950, leaving behind his wife, Edna, (92 years) now residing in Central Park Lodge in Winnipeg and the family: Jean, Clarke (died in 1968 and 1955.)

Muriel, who worked for Art Hobbs in the drugstore at Sperling and now of Victoria, British Columbia and has no children. Bertha of Winnipeg. Ruby married Clarence Adam Waddell in 1939, son of Adam and Harriett Waddell, and lived on the home farm. Clarence died in 1948, leaving two girls, both nursing now in Richmond, British Columbia Merrylin - Mrs. Ian Moody, and Lynda, Mrs. John Clymo. Ruby remarried in 1950, to James Ralston of Scotland, and they had one daughter, Wendy, now Mrs. David Casson.

In 1968, the farm was sold to 'Froebe Bros.' of Homewood and Jim entered the Pool Elevator, and now resides at Cypress River, Manitoba.

Marjorie, Mrs. J.A.M. Lennan, two girls, Winnipeg. Audrey, Mrs. H. Stephens, three girls, Winnipeg. Jack and Gladys, two boys and one girl, Sorrento, British Columbia. Arthur and Olive, two boys and one girl, Brandon, Manitoba. Cliff and Betty, one girl, Elkhorn, Manitoba. Ralph and Sigrun, two boys and one girl, Selkirk, Manitoba.

Twenty-six Annual Manitoba Conference said this of 'Rev. Russell': His message to his generation was a faithful declaration of the sovereignty of God and His tender redeeming love, and the efficacy of His saving grace, after 47 years in the ministry.

## RIORDAN

*submitted by Lewis A. Borsheim*

Charles Riordan was born at Odell, Illinois, Nevada township December 23, 1879. He came to Canada in 1912. He brought several carloads of mules from Missouri to St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba for the Kane farm.

He worked for Mr. Kane the summer of 1912, 1913 going back to Illinois in the winters.

Charlie came to Sperling in 1914 and was employed on the Grundler Farm as foreman. The Joe Grundler place was on section 10, two miles east and two miles south of Sperling. (Now known as the Louis Duvenaud place). Mr. Grundler was from Dwight, Illinois.

Mrs. Charles Riordan (Louise Bockman Riordan) and daughter Ellen 14, and son Allen 12, arrived October 14, 1914, by train from Illinois. Mr. Riordan met them at Morris with team and wagon.

Ellen Riordan later (Mrs. Eilert J. Borsheim) spelled Bursheim while in Canada, remembers October 14, 1914 as a beautiful day. The men at the Grundler farm were digging a pool (Dugout) just south of the house 400' x 200', largest in the Sperling district. The pool was used for livestock, also water for the house. The water was carried to the house in buckets. Mrs. Riordan cooked for 25 men, baking bread every day. Ellen and Allen attended Tremont School. Miss Hogg (Mrs. Frank Roberts), was their first teacher. Miss Hogg stayed at the A.K. Brown farm, which was later known as the Abry farm. Louis and Francis Abry came to Sperling from Odell, Illinois, and were friends of the Riordans. Mrs. Abry had been Ellen's school teacher back in Odell.

Ellen recalled her pastime was snow shoeing and horseback riding her favorite horse (Buck), a buckskin given to her as a present by Mr. Grundler, also visiting Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gehring who then lived 1/2 mile west of Grundlers. This farm was later the Maurice Bourgeois place. Ellen also recalls, a bumper crop in 1915. Even though they had frost every month of the year.

The Charles Riordans had three children born in Canada, Joe born in 1916 died in 1932 of a hunting accident near Carman. Rita, born in 1921, now Mrs. Stephen Palinchak, of Bucyrus, Ohio. Paul, born 1922, now living in Sacramento, California. Allen Riordan passed away in 1974 in Ontario.

Mrs. Riordan had three brothers, Jack, Henry and Al Bockman, who came to the Sperling area to farm. They later moved back to Illinois. She also had a sister Rose (Mrs. John Leonard). The Leonards farmed south of Sperling. The Charles Riordans moved back to Illinois in 1940.

## THE RIBORDY FAMILY

*by Anne (Ribordy) Cribbs*

Emile Ribordy first arrived in the Sperling District in the year of 1908. He had left Switzerland in 1906 to come



*Emile and Angeline Ribordy, 1910.*





*Ribordy children, 1920. Marie, Maurice, Francis, Eunice, Anne.*

to Odell, Illinois where several Swiss families had settled. While in Odell, he worked as hired help to Mr. Joseph Grundler. It was there he first learned to speak English.

There was a great attraction at that time for Americans to come to Manitoba. Mr. Grundler was one who could well afford to speculate. He gave Emile the opportunity to migrate to Canada. Showing enthusiasm, and not afraid of hard work, Emile was promised that he also could rent a half section of land but he must marry and settle down. He was able to rent Section 462 S.W.

In November 1909, he returned to his homeland where on March 10, 1910, he married Angeline Rossier. I well remember our mother telling us, "Your Father promised I would be fairly close to my sister living in St. Louis, Missouri". It took ten years before she ever got her wish to visit St. Louis! Mrs. Ribordy left her native land not speaking a word of English, to settle in what was a very sparse and lonely district. Her neighbors were a considerable distance away, but as other Swiss families had already settled, time and loneliness passed.

When the Ribordy children were born - Anne in 1911, Maurice in 1912, Marie 1913, and Eunice in 1914, family life was in full swing. As youngsters their Mother tongue was French, as the section of Switzerland both parents had come from spoke French. I remember my Father being so proud of being a Swiss and he disliked people referring to him as a "French man".

In the year of 1918, the family moved to a half section east of Sperling to be closer to a larger school. Education for the children was of the utmost importance to the



*An aerial view of Ribordy farm in 1957.*

parents. Francis was born the summer of the move. That was also the year of the dreadful influenza epidemic. The Family called this farm "Home" from then on.

In 1926 Emile Ribordy was elected Councillor for the Municipality of Morris. He took his duties responsively and acted in that capacity till May 1933, the year he so tragically lost his life in a car accident.

The family remained on the Home Place with Maurice and Francis farming the land. In 1943 Francis joined the Air Force. He was badly wounded on D-Day in Holland and when finally he returned to Canada he settled in Sperling. He purchased his own land, married Doreen Saudulak and has two daughters Rhonda, in Vancouver, and Robin, in Portage La Prairie. He remained in the Sperling area till 1953, when he moved to Edwin, Manitoba. Francis farmed there for several years and he now resides in Portage La Prairie.



*Maurice Ribordy in 1973.*

Maurice followed in his Father's footsteps and was elected Councillor in the Municipality of Morris in 1946 where he served for 23 years giving his Community good service and loyalty.

In the year 1967, tragedy again hit the family. Maurice suffered a severe stroke. He was unable to either farm or take an active part in Municipal affairs and was forced to retire from his Councillor duties due to ill health. At the official opening of the Municipal Chambers in Morris, he was presented with a special plaque - in recognition of his "faithful duties and long service". Maurice spent six years in Boyne Lodge, Carman, until his death November 14th, 1974.

Mrs. Ribordy had lived with Maurice on the farm all the many years, and it was a sad day when she was found dead in her home at the time Maurice suffered his first stroke.

There are remaining, these members of the Ribordy family. Anne, Mrs. Charles Cribbs of Winnipeg is proud of her three children, Donald of Regina, Gary of Winnipeg and Charlyn Bastin of Winnipeg. There are nine grandchildren. Marie, Mrs. D'Arcy Jameson is living in Ottawa. Eunice, Mrs. John L. Peter makes her home in Tucson, Arizona. Francis is living in Portage La Prairie.

The farm has since been sold, but all the members of the family have fond memories of wonderful people, wonderful times and a great tie to all in the Sperling community,

## EARLY PIONEER, TEDDY SCOTT

It has been noted that Harry and Andy Mogk and Teddy Scott worked out as hired hands before they purchased their land, so must truly have been among the early settlers in our community.

Teddy lived on section 26-6-2 W, before working on the CNR section, at which time he lived on the northernmost street. At one time, his wife became ill and the only means of transporting her to the train was by wheelbarrow. It is said that the CN cut his wages so he cut an inch off his shovel handle.

His daughter, Mina, married Bill Sawyer. His son, Billy, often played bones at the hotel corner. He also played the drum, leading the children from the school to Sperling's hall to practice for the Christmas concert.

For half a century, he has been blind and deaf. He resides in the CNIB building in Winnipeg and one can only communicate with him by printing in the palm of his hand.

## ALEX SANDULAK FAMILY

Alex Sandulak came to Canada in the spring of 1911, from the village of Myskow, in the southwestern part of the Ukraine. He worked at numerous jobs in western Canada till 1914, when he married Yustina Lewco. They homesteaded the north-east quarter of 7-20-1 E, near the village of Narcisse, Manitoba for thirteen years, having paid \$10.00 for that homestead.

They raised a family of six children while living at Narcisse.

They moved to the prairies in 1927 and farmed 22-7-2 W near Brunkild till 1931. They moved again to the Sperling district and farmed 11-7-2 W to what most people will remember as Mallard Siding and what is now the Roy Baleja farm.

The remainder of their family was born at Sperling - one daughter and two sons.

All of their nine children went to school in Sperling at one time or another.

There were many hard times as well as good times, raising a family of nine children during the dirty 30's. Then in 1948, we moved again to what was then the Henry Penner farm (25-6-2-W) two miles south of Mallard Siding. This farm was also homesteaded by George Jenkins at one time. This was the first time the Sandulak family farmed in the R.M. of Morris. Our parents farmed this land for 12 years till 1960, at which time they sold it to their son, Joe, and moved to Carman.

Dad passed away October 24, 1961 at the age of 73 years. Mother passed away October 10, 1964, at the age of 69 years.

All of their family are still living, but only one of us still lives at Sperling.

Peter and his wife, Joyce (Sutton) have four children - three sons and one daughter - and live in Winnipeg. Marie is married to Roy Bausman. They have one son and two daughters and live in Winnipeg. John and his wife, Wilma (Roth), have six children - four daughters and two sons, they live at Carman. Bill and his wife,

Betty (Bilakrole), have four children - three daughters and one son. They live at Foam Lake, Saskatchewan. Doreen is married to Francis Ribordy, they have two daughters and live at Portage la Prairie.

Olga is the only one in our family who never married. She lives and works in Winnipeg. Stan and his wife, Terry (Thompson) have no children. They live at Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A. I am not the youngest, though I am the last one in this story. I put us all down according to age. I, (Joe) and my wife, Coral (Warden) have two sons. We lived on the old home farm (35-6-2) till 1976. We bought the Harry Ortman farm (34-6-2 W) and have moved onto it.

I am sure that all my brothers and sisters have very fond memories of Sperling and district and of all people who have lived here.



*Mary and William Sessions.*

## SESSIONS FAMILY (1881-1979)

*submitted by Esther Holmes*

William Sessions (Dad) was born in London, England, September 2, 1881. He was orphaned at an early age and was raised in Dr. Barnardo's Home for Boys. It is not known what happened to his parents.

In 1893, Dad came to Canada and to a foster home in Mount Forest, Ontario. In 1906, he decided to head west and came to Sperling. On arriving, he worked for Jake Curdt for two years. He then moved on to Carman and worked for Charlie Miller in the butcher shop. They used to deliver meat by horse and buggy to the outlying areas, including Sperling.

It was at this time he met Mary Elizabeth Ashton. They were married in St. John's Church in Carman, March 10, 1909.

Elizabeth was born January 26, 1885, in Glossop, England. Her parents, Fredrick and Esther Ashton both worked in a textile mill; he as a machinist and she as a weaver. Mum had a twin brother, Albert, and another brother, William. The family came to Canada in 1905 and settled in Carman.

After getting married, Mum and Dad continued to live in Carman.

Their first son, Albert, was born June 2, 1919 and their second son, Fred was born January 8, 1912.

In 1913, Dad decided he wanted to try farming, so bought a homestead at Oatfield, in the Interlake and moved there. The land was covered with bush and had to be cleared by hand. During this period, they drove with horses and wagon to Carman, a distance of 160 miles, to the Mallory farm to help with the harvest. A third son, Stanley, was born at Oatfield on December 15, 1913.

Dad remained in Oatfield until 1915, returning once again to Carman and Charlie Miller's butcher shop. On October 11, 1915, a daughter, Esther, was born. Her twin brother died at birth.

In 1919, the family moved back to homestead. More land had to be cleared and some grain was sown; enough for feed for the cattle. Some land was left as hayfields and some land was muskeg. To make extra money, Dad would drive by horse and buggy to Eriksdale to work for Jim Forsythe as a butcher. On June 6, 1920, a fourth son, Wilfred, was born. While Dad went to work, we kids had to do the haying and feed the stock. It was while the hay was being cut that Stan had his leg caught in the mower and as a result, lost his leg. Mum was alone and didn't have any phone in those days. So, on instructions from a doctor in Eriksdale, she packed his leg in flour until he was transported to Winnipeg by train and to hospital.

The school we went to was 3 112 miles away, so we walked there and back every day, winter and summer, never missing a day. This was quite a trip, as the country was very desolate. There were bears, timber wolves, coyotes, deer, moose and many other wild animals, constantly seen prowling the bush and even up to the farm buildings.

In July, 1926, Dad had enough of homesteading, so came to Sperling and worked for Charlie Griffiths. The family followed and we went to live on Dr. Martins' farm, where Wendal Fewster now lives, later moving into town. About this time, Dad started as the butcher for five beef rings. There were two at Sperling, one each at Homewood, Barnsley and Central.

In about 1930, we moved to the Bud Myers home, later the Cates home, then to the house next door, now owned by Gilbert Cretton.

In each house we lived in, there was always the sweet smell of curing bacon and hams, as this was done in the basement. There was a smoke house in the back yard, where they were smoked after curing. People would come from all over with their pigs to be slaughtered and cured.

As well as being a butcher, dad was a repair man and painter; also drove a school van. He was also caretaker of the local cemetery for many years.

Mum was active in the community, doing a lot of work for Missionary Society and Red Cross. During the war, she was constantly quilting and knitting for the men overseas.

Around 1951, Dad and Winston Mogk traded homes and Mum and Dad moved into the house that Ross Anderson now lives in. The house was on the lot at the southeast corner of the same street.

In 1956, Mum passed away at the age of 71 years. Dad passed away at 86 years of age, in July, 1968.

Albert married Agnes Dodds of Morris. They had two

sons, Ivan and Billie, who resides in Winnipeg. He is married and has two children. Ivan passed away in 1978 and Albert in 1968.

Fred married Evelyn Morrish. They remained in Sperling, except between 1942-1946, when Fred served in the air force and was stationed on the west coast. They raised a niece, Pam, who is married and living in British Columbia. Fred farmed south of town for a few years, retiring to later live in Mrs. Peckover's home. Evelyn passed away in 1977.

Stan married Bernice Williamson. They have two sons, Denis of Winnipeg, Kirk of Calgary. Stan worked for many years in the post office in Winnipeg. He is now retired.

I married Charles Holmes in 1932. We had four children: Doug, Larry and twin girls, Olive and Gail. Charlie passed away in 1967.

Wilfred joined the air force in 1940 and was stationed in Trenton and Labrador, before going overseas to England. While at Trenton, he met and married Eva Sine, of Belleville, Ontario. He left the air force in 1946 and farmed south of town until 1966, moving into town and working for Co-Op Oil. They had two daughters: Betty, married to Albert Lannoo of Fort Whyte. They have one daughter, Kim. Marion, who is single and works in Winnipeg.

Stan is the only one who left Sperling and entered the business world. All other members of the family chose to remain in Sperling, where they raised their own families.

Sperling has given us a lot through the years and we hope we have given a little to Sperling.

## SHORE SHENANIGANS

*by Fem Rose*

**In April 1928, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Shore and daughter, Jackie, came to Sperling. They were proprietors of the hotel when the first beer parlor opened (on the south side of the building). Some of those employed there were Evelyn Brewster, Minnie and Martha Geswein and Matt Latham.**

**Mr. Shore was out shovelling snow on November 1, 1929, when he suddenly succumbed to a heart attack. The government allowed Mrs. Shore (the only lady who held a permit for such an enterprise) to cut an opening between the dining room and beer parlor and continue to run the business. She continued for a few years, but was forced to give it up. She successfully became a teacup reader over Ringers Drug Store on Portage Avenue.**

**Jackie recalls discovering two sets of blinds on the hotel windows when they purchased it from Amos Ribordy. Apparently, Charlie Land was managing the place and doing a little bootlegging on the side (caching the bottles between the blinds). Another party recalls that Charlie got caught bootlegging and paid "Lame Ed" to go to jail for him. When Ed arrived in prison, he discovered Joe Boisvert, (400 lb.) an inmate for a similar offence. Joe was doing kitchen duties and used a broom stick to stir the spaghetti. When Joe returned to Sperling, his home was completely covered by snow.**

**Charlie Land had a one armed bandit, Las Vegas brand, and at the age of 11 years, she spent all her money**

there, winning clocks, etc. Someone reported it to the police and Mme. Shore was taken to court for allowing such a young child to indulge in these activities. She tells of saving shinplasters (paper 25cr) to buy a fur coat. Her cousin, Velma Woods had baked a cake which was a flop, so she gave the kids 25Q each if they would eat it. Jackie in turn took her shinplasters and bought huge amounts of ice cream to go with the cake.

Do you remember Charlie Land's punch boards, with their little keys to punch out the round holes which contained slips of paper disclosing the amount you owed for your prize?

Charlie also had a loud speaker out in front of the cafe, which was usually blaring "Walking My Baby Back Home" at the same instant that Mme. Shore would be out hunting for her daughter. Many young folks remember tipping out principal, Mr. Haywood's, biffy. Then quietly filling his back shed with wood, blocking the door. Quickly pounding on shed door, running to take front steps away so that Haywood was completely trapped indoors. Next day at school we were all informed that our punishment would be a jail term.

How we enjoyed the sleigh rides with four sleds attached behind Doc Martin's horse and Percy Tully alongside with his dog and sled. We'd ride out to Ribordy's have lunch and return.

Jackie took her later schooling in Ste. Agathe and in 1940, married Bob Hutchinson. They had one son, Tom.

It must go on record that she has cared for 72 children from the Children's Aid. She took in a five day old baby, who had very bad eyesight many years ago and he is her pride and joy now. After her husband's passing, she remarried Ken Millar. She still does her bit for humanity in caring for the elderly at Conquist Nursing Home.

## JOHN SKEAVINGTON

In the year 1892, my parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Skeavington, with three small children came west to Manitoba from Little York, Grey county near Toronto, Ontario, and settled on the N.W. 114 36-6-3 in the Bates post office district. The land belonged to Wm. Kinnear, my mother's brother, who, with his family came west three years previous. Grandma, Mrs. Alex Kinnear also came with them.

We lived in a two-room shanty and had a sod barn. There were many hardships - blizzards, frost, swarms of mosquitoes, etc. I remember my father hauling wood from Poplar Point, a round trip of 60 miles. We had a good team of horses, Nick and Nan. Father would leave home at midnight, cut his load and arrive home at night about 10:30 p.m.

I can remember Mother washing the floor. All she had for a light was a woollen cloth in tallow in a tin lid. She baked bread for the men in the district. People were friendly and helped each other. When a baby arrived, there was Grandma Black, always ready with a helping hand, though she had a family of her own. There was a one-armed Dr. Morrison who came on horseback. He was with Dr. H.C. Cunningham.

We started to the Garnett School, 2 112 miles to walk. Mr. Todd was our teacher. We had our picnics in the Wm. Garnett grove and what a nice time we had! We went to Eastland Methodist Church, which was moved to Homewood in 1912. It was moved with horses and rollers. My husband and his brother, Fred, and Sam Dracass, had teams on.

When my uncle sold the farm, we moved into a log house beside them and in 1900, we moved to the Mariposa District, two miles north and one mile west of where the town of Sperling now stands. There were seven children - three boys and four girls, and a girl born in 1901, now Mrs. Albert Phelps, living at Sperling.

My parents owned the farm N.E. 114 1-7-3. They built a frame house and barn. The Mariposa post office and store were half a mile north of where Sperling now is and the school was half a mile north of the store. Mr. Adams was our teacher. The Egremont Presbyterian Church was on my uncle's farm. The mail was taken to the post office by Mr. Cook with horses and buggy. For years, Sperling was a thriving town, a good farming district. There were no telephones or automobiles and money was not plentiful, but neighbours were good. A neighbour of ours was taken to the hospital in Winnipeg. My folks kept their three small children until their mother came home.

We had our picnics at Mr. and Mrs. David Waddell's grove for many years and what good times we had!

Each fall, the prairie fires were a threat. I remember one fall, my brother, Robert, fell from a horse and broke his arm. Father took him with horse and buggy, 15 miles to Carman. Dr. Cunningham Sr. was at Swan Lake, so they had to remain overnight. The prairie fire was coming close; we had no fire guards, but our neighbor, Mr. John Harrison, and his hired man left their supper and came to plow fire guards, otherwise, our buildings and our feed stacks would have burned.

My mother and father retired to Sperling in 1934 and my brothers, Robert and William, took over the farm. My parents lived to their mid eighties. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 5, 1937 at the home farm. My mother passed away on August 9, 1941 and my father, August 3, 1943. Their youngest son, William, died October 3, 1947 and the eldest son, Edgar, on May 19, 1950.

## HISTORY OF MR. AND MRS. JACOB SMITH AND FAMILIES

*submitted by Reta I. Metcalfe (nee Smith)*

Jacob, Matilda Smith and their four sons, Alexander Lundy, George Francis, John Henry and Frederick Howard lived in Belfountain, Peel County, Ontario.

In 1896 when Alex was 30 years old and George was 19 years old, they answered the "Call of the West" and ventured out by train to Carman, Manitoba. They were welcomed by their father's sister, Martha and her husband Thomas Cutting, to their home five miles east of Carman.

The following year, Alex and George settled on the land approximately 11 miles east of the Cutting farm, which is now S.W. Section 33-6-2 Morris Municipality.



Mrs. Jacob Smith, Tena, John (cousin) Bessie, Alex, Katie, Fred and George. FRONT: May (granddaughter).

The brothers labored long hours breaking the prairie sod with a walking plow pulled by "often times" stub-born Ox and a horse. They tied an old boot on the ox's horn to prevent it from hooking the horse while they worked the land. They built a one room frame house, with a ladder fastened to one wall, allowing an entrance to the bedroom above. A shed provided shelter for their animals. Alex and George had the reputation of being "good bachelors". They kept a tidy house - baked their own bread and biscuits - churned their cream. In busy seasons they walked to Mrs. Jake Curdt's for her delicious bread and pies. They also walked to their Uncle Tommy Cutting's and to Bates Post Office.

Carman was the nearest town and railroad - a trek of 16 miles for all supplies - medical and professional help. Grain had to be bagged and hauled by team and wagon.

Wood was their sole source for heating and cooking. a trip to Roseisle - 30 miles west for cordwood entailed hard work, long hours and two days of travelling with a team of horses pulling a wagon or bob-sleigh.

The first store and Post Office in the area, was on Amos Davidson's farm and was called "*Mariposa*", which being interpreted means "Mary's posies".

In 1899 the first school named Waddell was built, and Alex was one of the Trustees. That same year the Smith brothers enlarged their house and prepared for the arrival of their parents and younger brothers. Jacob, now 62 years old, Matilda 55 years, John 21 years and Fred was 16 years of age. What a happy re-union for the Smith family!

There was also great rejoicing among the early settlers in 1901 when the C.N.R. laid a track from Winnipeg to Roseisle. This provided so many more conveniences. The only sad part about it for the Smiths was the fact that track went through their farm yard and garden. Consequently their buildings had to be moved 112 mile farther east. They built a larger house and had a separate building used in summer called the "Cook-house". A large bell was mounted on the roof of the cook-house, and was rung by pulling the bell back and forth with a rope. This bell was a great means of communication, for whenever it was heard, it was a summons to come to the house as quickly as possible.

The new barn was much larger and contained a hay loft with a "weather vane" on top of the roof. Nearby a windmill was constructed to pump the water from the deep well. Their stock of horses and cattle had greatly increased by now.

Many stories have been recalled about the acts of kindness and helpfulness of their neighbors to the Smith brothers, and later to their parents. Some of their nearby neighbors and families were: Wm. Wilson Sr., Duncan Galbraith, Ira Grover, Harry Mogk, Amos Davidson, Jacob Curdt and John Hooper.

Alex was active in church and community affairs. The family attended the Methodist church built in 1903 and Alex served for many years as Superintendent of the Sunday School. He was also Secretary-Treasurer of the School Board when the Sperling School was built in 1910. Later he was a Councillor for R.M. of Morris. Many were the trips he made by pony and cart to carry out his duties and to attend meetings in Morris. Alex and John later were Charter Members of the Masonic Lodge.



George Smith's first car, Alex and Harry Loewetz and George.

George was proud of both his first car, which had to be cranked to start, and his "Case" steam-engine. George did custom threshing for their neighbors.

In 1906, when the people of the community decided they should have a Cemetery, they appealed for financial support and Alex and George each purchased a plot. In 1911 their father, Jacob, died and was buried in his oldest son's plot.

As each of the younger brothers left the home to be married, Alex remained with his mother. When John's wife, Tena, was critically ill in their home, Dr. H.C. Cunningham, the much-loved Doctor from Carman came 16 miles by horse and buggy to see her many times. He recommended that Nurse Bertha V. Graham come to care for Tena. As a result of her excellent nursing, Tena recovered, but Alex was "*smitten*" with "*heart problems*", caused by the jovial and witty Miss Graham.

Alex, too, recovered. He and Bertha were married in May 1919 and he brought her to the farm where they lived for one year.

Then in 1920 Alex, Bertha and Mother moved into a large home in Carman. Alex continued to farm and hired married couples to assist him. He drove back and forth to Sperling in his small truck. Finally in the 1930's he sold the original family home to a married couple, Mr. and



*Bessie Smith, May (daughter of John), Alex and parents, Matilda and Jacob Smith.*

Mrs. Thomas Stewart - newcomers from Ireland. They had an only daughter named Retha.

All went well for the Stewarts and they were a respected family in the district. Then on a very hot Sunday afternoon in August 1937, tragedy struck! Retha slipped into the farm dug-out. Her father, who couldn't swim, jumped in to save her, but they were both drowned! The Sperling community was shocked and saddened. They sympathized with Mrs. Stewart who had lost her complete family in an instant. The Smith families, for the remainder of Mrs. Stewart's life, were her Canadian relatives. A few years later Mrs. Stewart sold the farm to Alfred Pedersen.

The "Smith Homestead" was sold again. This time to C.B. McNulty and then to the present owner Brownie Hooper and Sons. The latter owners were tractor farmers and did not occupy the buildings, so they gradually deteriorated and crumbled. A few years ago the Hoopers had them torn down and uprooted the trees. Now nothing visible remains of the "Early Settlers" - Alex and George Smith's home. Nevertheless I believe they would be happy to know that the *Son* and *Grandsons* of John Hooper, one of their highly respected neighbors, is the present owner of the land they loved!

Matilda Smith enjoyed good health and hoped to live to celebrate her 100th birthday. She was Carman's oldest resident when she died in April 1938 - just two weeks short of her 95th birthday.

Alex died in August 1942 and his wife Bertha in December 1960. Their only daughter Frances Margaret, married Andrew J. Sayer of Roland, and they now reside in Carman. They have one son and three daughters.



*Mrs. Jacob Smith and her sons, John (back) and Alex, Mrs. Smith and George (front), taken in 1933.*

## GEORGE F. SMITH

*submitted by Reta I. Metcalfe*

George married Catherine (Katie) Clark, formerly from Dromore, Ontario, in April 1914. He purchased the former Wm. Wilson Sr.'s farm from his brother John, and he and his bride moved there.



*Alex and George Smith's farm.*

As they were on the next Section to Alex and the "home" place, it was very convenient for the two brothers to help each other with the farm work.

George and Katie had one daughter Reta, and a son, Kenneth, born within the first four years of their marriage. One of Reta's earliest recollections, is having ropes tied around Ken's and her waists. These ropes were securely fastened to the front steps of the house. Their parents' greatest fear was that the children might go to the dug-out and be drowned. Many small children had died that way, so we can now appreciate their concern. Shortly after this their Dad built a yard with high wooden walls - similar to a huge "play-pen" with a gate. He put in a sand box and other play things, but Reta can still remember thinking it was a *prison* and resented being locked in there!

In 1920 George sold the farm to Simon Anderson from Illinois. He had come with his two small children and his parents. In 1924, everyone was saddened to learn about Simon's death. His clothes caught on fire from the flames of a barrel of gasoline that had exploded, while he was working in the machine shop on the farm.

From 1920-24 George and family lived in Carman. In the summer George and brother John, tractor farmed land near Mollard Siding, which they aptly named as "Hard Scrabble".

In 1922 George and Katie's younger son, Lloyd George was born.

In the spring of 1924 they rented their home in Carman and moved back to Sperling - this time going south of the town 1 1/2 miles east to the Robert Young farm. Reta was in Grade II and had just been in the Sperling School for a couple of weeks when it burned!

It was a novel idea to attend day school in the basement of the church! What fun to sit on long wooden benches that had one end pushed against the wall. The desks, likewise, were long tables with a continuous shelf underneath to hold the books. Whenever a child was late or



had to leave before the other pupils - everyone had to sit forward on the bench to allow the child to walk on the back of the seat to the end of the row.

There were no gravel roads in those days and what a mess in the spring or after a heavy rain! Many a time the school vans and cars would be mired in that heavy "gumbo" clay!

There were some difficult times when the crops failed or were drowned out by the flooding Boyne River - but all the bad times were compensated by the thoughtfulness of kind, concerned neighbors and friends. There were so many special events that took place in the United 'hurch and the Community; which we thoroughly enjoyed. It is impossible to mention all the happy memories.

In 1930 George, Katie and family reluctantly bade farewell to Sperling friends and returned again to the Carman area.

Katie had her poor health for many years and she passed away in March 1937. Reta married Wm. Floyd Metcalfe of Carman in October 1941 and her father, George, lived with them in Winnipeg until his death in August 1962. Floyd and Reta have a son and daughter.

Kenneth married Myrtle (Mickey) Stirrett in Port Arthur in 1949. They had three daughters and one son. Ken passed away November 1974. He had lived in Winnipeg.

Lloyd married Edna Stuart of Heward, Saskatchewan in October 1948. They lived in Seattle, Washington, and had three daughters and two sons. Edna died in August, 1974. Lloyd married Bernice Offutt in April 1976 and they and Lloyd's two youngest children live in Tacoma, Washington.

In conclusion, all of Jacob Smith's families left the Sperling area - the place that held so many happy memories for them.

Later Jacob and Matilda's family except the youngest son, Fred, returned to the land they loved, and their "earthly remains" lie in Peace in the Sperling Cemetery. Jacob, Matilda, Alex and Bertha lie in A.L. Smith plot No. 32.

John, Christena, George and Katie and buried in Geo. Smith plot No. 31.

They are again surrounded by many of their dear friends and neighbors - a fitting resting place for those 'Early Pioneers of Sperling".

## FRED H. SMITH

*Reta I. Metcalfe*

Fred, the youngest son of Jacob and Matilda Smith, had homesteaded in Adanac with his older brother John.

When John returned to Sperling in 1911, Fred remained and managed a lumber business. In 1912 Fred married Mary Millichamp of Sperling. Mary's father was owner of a grocery store in Sperling.

In 1920 Fred transferred his business to Togo, Saskatchewan. Then four years later in 1924 he moved with his wife and three children to Elsinore, California. Mary was not well and the doctors had suggested a warmer climate would be beneficial.

In Elsinore Fred started the Pioneer Lumber Company, which his three children - son Glenn and daughters Frieda Holtan and Mildred Basiger, still own and operate.

Fred's wife Mary, passed away in 1953 and he died in 1969. He is survived by his second wife Elsie and his three children.

Mary Smith's mother, Mrs. Millichamp also moved to California after the death of her husband. Another daughter Mrs. Woodruff, whose husband had operated a hardware business in Sperling, as well lives in California. There were two other Millichamp girls - Gladys and Dell.

Other Smith cousins who were 'Early Settlers' in Sperling were: Robert A. Smith - Butcher - who married Margaret (Maggie) Waddell, daughter of Thomas Waddell. Bob and Maggie had three children; Jessie McVey (deceased); Melvin of Selkirk, Manitoba and Lyndon of Bowsman, Manitoba; Mrs. Daniel (Hattie) Tolton - a sister of Bob Smith; Alex S. Smith - nephew of Bob Smith; Mrs. Roy (Bessie) Tolton - niece of Jacob Smith. Mrs. Tolton celebrated her 90th birthday in August, 1978 and resides in Metropolitan Kiwanis Courts in Winnipeg.

## JOHN H. SMITH

*Reta I. Metcalfe*

John was born at Erin, Ontario in 1878 - the third son of Jacob and Matilda Smith.

He arrived in the Sperling District with his parents and younger brother Fred in 1899. In July 1905 he married Christena McKenzie, who came from Proton, Ontario, to the home of her cousin Mrs. Duncan Galbraith, who lived 1/2 mile east of Smith's.

John and Fred farmed on the section south of their parents before going to Adanac, Saskatchewan to homestead in the spring of 1906. Their cousin Jack Blair had taken a homestead there in 1905. They were joined by cousins Will and Matilda Cutting - also Billy Wilson and George Mogk, who later married Mabel Waddell, daughter of W.H. Waddell of Sperling. Each homesteader had a 1/4 section.

Mrs. John Smith, with infant daughter May, six weeks of age, followed in July, travelling by train to North Battleford. From there the trip to Adanac was made in a wagon drawn by one horse and one ox - a distance of 40 miles, which took two days!



*John, Tena, daughter, May and Bessie Smith (John's house).*



*Windcharger at M. Rose Sr.'s. Wind generated power to operate electric lights in home prior to hydro's coming in 1948.*

1. Mae married Loui Crettex and they have a son, Maurice, living in Switzerland. She is now married to Albert Lack, living in Los Angeles.
2. Maurice (deceased) married Fern Martin (family write-up elsewhere).
3. Loui married Marie Walsh. Their children are Pat, Larry, Judy and Nancy.
4. Paul married Audrey MacLean. They have a daughter, Elaine, and granddaughter, Carol, and reside in Winnipeg.
5. Ernest married Martha Law (deceased). They have two children, Gerry and Rob.

Ernest is now married to Elsie Cooley and they live in Minnedosa.

6. Margaret married Bob Rogers (deceased) and is now married to Jack Wormnest. They live in Sperling.
7. Marcel (deceased) was married to Joyce Kennett. They have one child, Marlene.
8. Rene (deceased) married Sadie Wormnest. They live in Los Angeles, and have four children.
9. Charles married Agnes Lapointe (family write-up elsewhere).
10. Camille married Shirley Magistri of Kenora. They live in Los Angeles and have three children, Greg, Cindy and Tommy.
11. Yvonne is married to Eldon McCrimmon. They have two boys, Brian and Darcy, and live in Calgary.
12. Henry married Evelyn Murner. They live at Kane, Manitoba. They have three children, Debgie, Barry and Tony. Debgie is married to Rob Andersson.
13. Alfred (Ted) married Marlene Grundy. They have 5 children: Jeff, Cheryl, Michelle, Bruce and Jim. They reside in Carman.
14. Dorothy resides in Winnipeg.
15. Raymond married Barbara Stout. They have two children, Rodney and Cathy. They live at Portage la Prairie.

## **JOHN THOMAS ROSEVEARE**

*submitted by Emma Roseveare-Osman*

In 1905, John Thomas Roseveare, a courageous young lad of twenty-one, immigrated to Canada from Saltash,

Cornwall, England. His butcher training took him to his first employment in Canada, the Harry Burton's butcher business in Carman.

His love soon grew for the land and he worked as a hired man for families in the Sperling area, the Hudsons, Waddells, Wilsons, Mogks, Peckovers, Gardiners, spending much time with the Charlie Peckover family.

John had been a tenor choir boy in England, with his love for music and song, soon made friends and participated in the good old family sing songs around the piano.



*Mr. and Mrs. John T. Roseveare at the christening of their first baby, Arthur George, 1920.*

Under the Land's Act John Roseveare sought adventure in farming for himself, and located on a quarter section 6 miles north of Bates School. This was a trying distance and struggle. In 1910 he moved to the Jack Hunter farm, N.W. quarter from the cemetery. The Curdt boys hauled his grain during harvest, and with the helping hands of friends, all went well. In 1912 the area was flooded out. It was a great crop loss, and for him this was disaster, as he was just getting established.

When the war came in 1914, he left his personal and treasured belongings with the Curdt's and went away to join the army, the 17th Winnipeg Rifles, serving overseas in France. 1918 when the war was over John went to England, his Mother had passed on and he returned to Sperling.

In 1919 officiated by Rev. D.D. Miller, he married Dorothy Adele Fletcher of Brighton Sussex, England, who had immigrated to Canada in 1912. She was at that time employed as Mrs. Jack Wilson's hired girl.

They took up residence in Sperling, temporarily over the store next to the Post Office (known then as the "Rooms"), while renovations were being made of the home and property purchased from Levi Eby, across from the rink. (presently known as the late Chester Brown residence). They awaited furniture purchased from the Bill Anderson home.



*J. Roseveare and caretaker of Sperling School and Alex MacLean.*

John purchased a team of horses, had a barn and sheds built, and soon had a Delivery and Haulage trade. He hauled freight to and from the stores, did general draying, hauling coal, and providing transportation for the Doctor, etc. He was Caretaker of the School, and one term driver of a school van. No job was too small or too big for John, his willing hands went into many of the roots of Sperling, even in building the side walks. When Homer Hamilton was a young boy, it was then he learned to drive nails. With the horses and rig of cable, planks and lumber were pulled, in the reconstruction of the elevators that had burned.

Mr. Wm. Wilson Sr. had a wood business, and his eye sight had failed. So John Roseveare established the business, by ordering cordwood by the boxcar from Roseisle and Poplarfield etc., sawing, delivering wood from the woodyard, the N area of the property.

The purchase of a Model T. Ford was transportation for people, and a luxury for the family. A memorable experience was when the freight train went off the track south of Mollard Siding in 1929 and people were driven to and from to see the wreckage. Sunday was treat day for the family, with a car ride to Carman, or out in the country, and an ice cream cone after attending Sunday School.

Renting a piece of property behind the rink from Cliff Waddell, he had space to stack hay for his horses and cow, and with pride cared for his garden. Working long hours to provide for his family was his goal. He had seven boys and three girls; George, John, Tom, Emma, Charlie, Adele, Jim, Leslie, Wallace, and Edith was born after they moved to the farm. Mrs. Wm. Wilson Sr. and Mrs. R.B. Waddell fulfilled their role of "loving grandmas" for the family.

A brother Charlie Roseveare came out from England, worked for Charlie Peckover for a short while, returned to England and passed on.

A nephew Bill Roseveare came to Canada in 1921, worked for his Uncle Jack and then Charlie Peckovers and Fred Gehrings as a hired hand until November 1924, when he returned to England and joined the navy.

In harvest time 1929, in the elevator area, grain was being loaded into the boxcars. The operation was unattended and children allowed to play, thus Tom Roseveare mangled his left hand.

In September 1931, John Roseveare purchased and moved from the town of Sperling to the Charlie Peckover farm, N.E. quarter of 672, C.B. McNulty was the realtor, who encouraged him to go farming with his family of boys, who were still little.

In November 1931, struggling to get settled and winter already set in, they were saddened by the sudden death of their dear little son, Leslie Edward, (Paddy) born St. Patrick's day 1930.



*Mrs. Roseveare and Emma with Sperling Rink in background.*

Work, trials, long hours, perseverance and faith was the way of life. The children walked the half mile, were picked up and went by van to Sperling School.

In 1932, a scarlet fever epidemic broke out in the district, and the Roseveare family were no exception. All were sick and in quarantine for two months. The Health Nurse made calls, and only Dad and his dog Jacko, made trips back and forth to town with the horses to bring provisions and pick up the mail.

For his labors, by raising cattle, pigs and produce along with farming, John Roseveare achieved and burned the mortgage for his farm in 1943.

His sons joined the army in World War II, George in the RCASC and John in RCA, both returned home safe and then moved on.

Charlie, Tom and Jim unmarried, remained at home with their parents until their father's death in 1960 and their Mother's death in 1963. The farm was sold in 1974.

Adele passed away in 1967, George in 1976. There were 19 grandchildren and five step grandchildren.



*Sperling School*

Quoting from the Adanac Jubilee book, "The settlers were unprepared for the notorious winter of 1906-07 (September to May). The only fuel was green poplar poles hauled 15-20 miles from Round Valley. Some burned twisted wisps of hay."

Tena Smith baked bread for all the bachelors from Sperling. The nearest doctor was at Battleford, 40 miles away.

Tena returned to Sperling in 1908 for the birth of her son, who died suddenly when he was 15 months of age.

When the homesteading duties were fulfilled John and Fred moved into the village of Adanac. The Cuttings returned to Carman. George Mogk had died suddenly so his widow Mabel, and Billy Wilson went back to Sperling.

In 1911 John also returned to Sperling and purchased Wm. Wilson Sr.'s farm, which was on the next section east of his older brothers Alex and George.

Then in 1914 John sold their farm to his brother George, who had just married, and John moved into Sperling Village. He went into partnership with Wm. Rehill in an implement business. He also purchased a house from A.H. Waddell. Due to ill **Mr. Rehill** was forced to retire, so he, his wife and family moved to the town of Carman. John, then returned to farming again. He and his brother George tractor farmed land near Mollard Siding.

In 1924 John started the first bus between Carman and Winnipeg. Later Gary Lewis took over the run and this was the beginning of the Grey Goose Bus Lines.

In 1932 John and Tena moved to Winnipeg. They were the last members of Jacob Smith's family to leave Sperling. John was employed by the Good Roads Department of Manitoba Government, until his death in 1949.

Tena passed away in 1969.

Their daughter May, Mrs. Robert Monteith resides in Regina. She has a son and daughter and two grandchildren.



*Mr. and Mrs. Robert Smith 1903.*

## ROBERT AND MARGARET SMITH FAMILY

Robert Smith was raised in the Erin Village District of Ontario. He came west in 1898 in Otterburn, where he homesteaded. The following year, he moved to Emerson, where he worked as a meat cutter in the local meat market. He moved to Sperling in 1902, where he built a livery and feed stable.

From a letter from Mel, Robert Smith's son:

"He shipped in about three carloads of broncos at a time. They were right off the range, so had never been handled. He had a fenced in yard behind the stable. A farmer would go out there and point out the team he wanted. Dad would catch them with a rope and sell them 'Halter Broken' or 'Harness Broken'. Halter Broke was just a halter on and tied to the back end of the farmer's wagon.

'Harness Broke' was harnessed and hitched to the front of the farmer's wagon. Many a farmer got a merry ride from behind that team of so-called 'broken horses'! But after a few days on the plow, they settled down and proved to be good farm animals.

Dad bought his first car to drive livery for doctors, travelling salesmen, who made up most of his business. A salesman would get off the train, call on the stores, hire



*May and Jessie Smith.*



*Bob Smith's 1909 McLaughlin's car.*

the livery to drive him to the next town. The odd family would hire the car to go visiting.

Mr. Sparling came from Roland and hired Dad to drive him and his family there for a Sports Day. At the gate, Dad looked around and they were the only car there. Suddenly a batter hit a foul ball and yes! it went right through the only windshield.

Grocer Pedlar had a good fast driving horse. He used to watch for Mother and Dad to go car driving. Then he would catch up to them. The horse would put its head over the back seat. The car couldn't go fast enough to get away from the horse. Pedlar would laugh himself sick in the buggy."

In 1903, Robert married Margaret Waddell at Carman. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Waddell, who had come to the Homewood District in 1892, where his father had taken up a homestead. They moved to Sperling in 1901 and opened the first hotel to board the men who were building the local elevators and railway lines.



*Mr. and Mrs. Bob Smith, 1950.*

Robert Smith sold his livery and feed stable to Robert Davidson and again went into business in the local meat market with his brother-in-law, Dan Toltan. After a number of years, they sold their business to Charles Griffiths, who carried on the business until his retirement. He also built a large hog feeding plant and was active in the cutting up of meat in the local beef ring.

After 26 years in the district, Robert sold his home in 1928 to Jack Williamson, the local barber, and moved to Bowsman, where he purchased a meat market, which he operated until his retirement in 1951. The children were Jessie, Mel and Len.

## SNIDER

*Edward* and Mary Snider moved to Sperling from Meaford, Ontario in 1899, and settled on S.W. 114 18-6-2, with their family. *James*, the eldest son and wife *Agnes* also came at this time. They farmed on the next farm in Dufferin. *Ivan*, *Viola* and *Russel* were born in Ontario. Twins, *Wilbert Wallace*, *Jim*, *Olive*, *Gordon* born here. Second son, *Horatio*, and *Elizabeth* and family, *Mabel*, *Ila*, *Gertrude*, *Orva*, *Elda*. *Gerald* living on S.W. 114 7-6-2. Later moved to Alberta.

*Serrano*, *Stella*, *Myrtle*, *Emma* were with their parents.



*Snider family. BACK ROW: Uncle Charlie Taylor, Emma Richmond, Cyrus Richmond, Uncle Bert McCartney. SECOND ROW: Aunt Myrtle McCartney, Lea Richmond, Grandpa Snider, Aunt Esther Taylor, Grandma Snider. FRONT ROW: Anne Richmond, Glen Taylor, Iva Taylor.*

*Serrano* married *Edna Taylor* in 1908 and lived on the family farm. The parents moved to Sperling in a small house across from the church. Their family were *Orval*, *Ferne*, *Guy*, *Robert*, *Ewart* and *Everet*.

*Edna* passed away in 1925. In 1927, he married *Iva Douglas*. They had a daughter, *Dorothy*. They moved to *Boyne District* in 1918.

*Emma Snider* married *Cy Richmond* and lived in *Sperling*, operating a blacksmith shop, later moving to *Winnipeg*. Their four girls were *Etha*, *Lena*, *Annie* and *Margory*.

*Stella* married *Robert Downing* and moved to *Maymount, Saskatchewan*.

Fall of 1912 was so wet that little harvesting was done. Stooks were frozen in ice. *Jack Burnett* had his outfit set on a high knoll on the *Serrano* farm. There he threshed for all farmers who could bring sheaves. A huge straw stack stayed there for some time.

*Russell* and *Irene Snider* lived on S.W. 114 7-6-2. Their family are: *Eric*, *Ruth*, twins *Delbert* and *Dulcie*. *Richard* was born after they moved to *Miami District* in spring of 1943. Four of the family reside on farms near *Miami* and *Mrs. Snider* is living in town.

## THE SPARLINGS OF SPERLING

*Mabel and Eleeda (Sparling)*

*A Sparling anecdote we have been requested to relate  
But any personal highlights are vastly out of date.*

*We lived above our General Store  
But now that building is no more.*

*Eggs by the dozen we unpacked and crated  
And in between, on customers waited.*

*On Saturday nights we were 'open' till twelve  
With the family all working - no 'serve yourself',  
Footsore and weary then to Hobb's Drug Store we'd flit  
There to enjoy a luscious Banana Split  
Then on Sunday to church we all went along  
Dad led the choir in Anthems and song.*

*Eleeda played the organ, and pumped with might and main  
 Oft it would wheeze and falter and then start up again.  
 Mother loved to give parties, for very special times  
 Easter, St. Patrick's Day and St. Valentines.  
 She worked for weeks on decorations, contests and prizes  
 And then invited everyone, all ages, sex and sizes  
 These parties were always held in the 'Sparling Hall'  
 Real community affairs - come one, come all.  
 However, in turning back the pages of yesteryear  
 Memories come crowding in - we brush aside a tear  
 Our childhood years in Sperling we fondly recall  
 With socials, dances and parties in the Sparling Hall  
 Fowl suppers with salads, shimmering jellies and pies  
 Box Socials, with ribbons and bows to tempt the innocent  
 guys  
 Our first moving pictures (silent) were exciting and new  
 Though the machines always spluttered and died half the  
 way through  
 Skating on ponds in the moonlight, so frosty and clear  
 These were our pleasures, year after year  
 With no 'Drive-in' Movies, private clubs or T. V.  
 In our Memory Book there's a page for Dear Mother and  
 Dad  
 The most wonderful parents three daughters had  
 Long since they've gone to rest, and now Pearl has joined  
 them too  
 So of the Sparling family, there remains - just two.*

## STEINKE

The history of the Steinke family is quite hard to piece together, but as far as I can gather, the following facts are true.

Four Steinke brothers came from Russia to North America in the late 1800's. On arrival in the U.S.A., they parted ways, and William Steinke was one of the brothers who came to the Morris-Rosenort area, where he worked as a farm hand. Later, he acquired some land and settled



*Hilda Steinke cutting grain with binder and four horses.*

in the Lea Bank district across the road from the Lea Bank school.

In 1902, William married Hilda Henschel from the Pleasant Valley district, when she was seventeen years old and he was thirty-one. They have five sons and two

daughters: Carl, Leo, Hilda, William, Tilly (who died in infancy), Adolph and Albert. They also raised a nephew and niece, Jack and Dora Lemm.

In the 1920's, Mr. Steinke decided to build a new house and barn. The neighbours all got together to help build it. All the lumber for the new house was stored in the barn. A thunder storm came up and lightning struck the barn, and everything was destroyed. Mr. Eidse loaned them the money to build again.

In 1927, Mr. Steinke was bringing home a wagon load of hay. Close to the yard, the horses went wild and Mr. Steinke was thrown to the ground and killed by the wagon running over him. Mrs. Steinke died in 1941, the day she was to see her first grandchild, but she never did.

In the mid '40's, the remaining farmstead was sold to J.M. Poersch.

Of their children, only two settled in Manitoba. Hilda married Leo Citron and settled in the Sanford area, then retired to Winnipeg. William married Elsie Grabowsky and farmed in the Brunkild area. They had two children; Cynthia and Heather. Cynthia farms with her mother, Elsie, and also works in Winnipeg. Heather married Robert Bunkowsky and they live in the Rosenort area with their six children.

Carl settled in Portland where he and his wife, Arona, raised a family of three. Leo, Albert and Adolph moved to Detroit. Albert and Helen had a family of five, who all settled around Detroit. Adolph and Edith raised a family of three and they also are all in the Detroit area.

Leo had no family. Jack Lemm also moved to Detroit and still lives there with his wife, Dorothy and two children. Dora married Bill Kroeger and lives in Winnipeg.

All the children of William Steinke and Hilda Henschel died at a relatively early age, as did their parents. This factor is the main reason why it is difficult to get a history together. It seems evident that people found themselves too busy to write things down, so no accurate records were kept. From this family, Cynthia Steinke and myself are the only two remaining direct descendants in Canada.

## HARRY STEEVES FAMILY

Harry Steeves came west from New Brunswick in 1890, settling at Rosebank. Other members of the family came later.

In 1909, Harry and sons, John, Harold and Frederick, moved to Sperling, along with two brothers, Watt and Chas, and his sister, Gertrude Steeves, who kept house for him.

The brother bought the Hardware Store from the Woodruff Brothers, which was known as H.M. Steeves and Co. Hardware. They sold the store to Thos. Grant in 1917.

Harry was manager of the Monarh Lumber Co. and agent for Canadian elevators. Watt was agent for Dominion elevator, later moving to Saskatchewan.

Chas went to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, where he was travelling salesman for Marshall Wells. He married Lalia Verge, also of Sperling.

Gertrude Steeves married H.M. Marvin at Sperling, but they made their home in Kalamazoo, Michigan. John





*Gertie, Watt and Harry Steeves.*

served in the forces overseas during World War I (1914-1918).

February of 1919, the Sperling rink burned and 3 people were burned. Harold was one with severe burns, but he finished school and attended normal school in Manitou, making teaching his profession.

Harry helped to organize the Masonic **Lodge and** was the first Master of Patricia Lodge No. 125. He was also a member of the school board for several years. In June, 1919, Harry married Gertrude Johnson. It was the year of the strike in Winnipeg and Harry was called for jury duty in January of 1920, and had to stay until around April 1st.

We moved to the farm (Section 22-6-2 West) in April, 1924. Homes weren't modern then - it was carry wood, empty ashes, carry water from pump, the daily routine. Farming was a busy life, getting up early to curry, feed and harness the horses for field work in the fall, often changing another four horses on the binder to get the grain cut.



*Harry Sleeves moving separator through mud in 1926.*

We drove the school van, in good weather with our car, in rainy weather with horses, and often the driver would have to push the mud from between the hub and body of the van and spokes of the wheels (Sperling Gumbo). In the winter, the van was on sleighs, and we had foot warmers and fur robes to keep the children warm; a lot different from the heated busses of today (1979).

In 1925, John married Olive Snider and in 1930, Harold married Evelyn Brown. Harry and Gertrude had

five children; Miles, Vernon, Glenn, Shirley and Elsie. Miles was born on the farm of 22-6-2 West in 1926. Later Frederick and Miles served in the forces overseas during World War II.

Watt celebrated his 100th birthday, September 21, 1975 at his home in Vancouver, B.C. He passed away at age of 102.

## THE GEORGE SUTTON STORY

Mr. and Mrs. George Sutton lived in the S.E. corner on the South Half of Section 29-6-1 West. He did custom threshing with an old Rumley.

They had many cattle until the prairie grass was broken by the homesteaders and they were forced into a smaller area. One winter day, when one of their cattle died, Mrs. Sutton donned her heavy dress and sweater, hitched the team to a stoneboat, trudged along beside, well surrounded by hounds. She took off to the local vet Doc Martin; with the cow's stomach, hoping **to find the** cause of death.

Their fuel was corn cobs; evenings entertainment was their crystal set "radio".



*Maurice Rose Sr. and Geo. Sutton with oxen in Florida.*

In 1938, they took off with one big and one small horse hitched to a wagon laden with trunks, camping gear and his beloved gun case, and set out for Florida. By fall, they had reached Mississippi and some kind soul had given them some laying hens so they had fresh eggs along the way.

## TANNER MEMORIES from "Tales of Sperling"

Mr. and Mrs. James Tanner, Senior, and family, came west to Manitoba from Sterling, Ontario in 1901. They made their home 1 112 miles south of Sperling, farmed N.W. 114 17-6-3, N.E. 114 13-6-3 Dufferin.

The tin barn built in 1912 - both it and "shanty" now demolished.

Daughter Nettie - married in 1912 to Robert Davidson.

There was "life" on the farm in those days, horses, cattle, pigs, ducks, bourbon red turkeys, rhode island red chickens, dogs, cats, rats, mice, flies, mosquitoes and grasshoppers aplenty. Mrs. Tanner Senior would take

lantern and pitch fork, go to the hen house after dark, "spear" the rats.

People enjoyed the art of walking a few miles and thought little of it - walk to town for mail. Saturday nights looked forward to with great anticipation, shopping done at the local stores; more than twelve stores then - and visiting with the neighbors was enjoyed.

Two passenger trains went through Sperling every day. Carman Fair was July 1st. The Orange Lodge celebration and parade July 12th - Christmas school concerts - Carnival and fancy skating at the rink - picnics - Red Cross knitting and sewing and quilting. Took horse and buggy to the bush to pick saskatoons - curling - Church suppers. The year 1928 and on, poor crops - poor prices. Those depression years were lean - little cash - taxes as always.

Butter and eggs taken to store Saturday nights to pay for groceries. No radio or television, no electricity - meant wood cook stove, heaters - wood splitting, ashes, never forget the kindling for morning. Dug out water - chore for wash day - carried the day before to let "settle". Wash boiler to heat water - wash board - wooden hand wash machine - melted snow and ice for winter house supply of water.

Refrigerator? Milk house, small "doghouse" like building with deep pit dug in centre - tank sunk in the pit - sand in bottom - covered crocks held various foods, butter, cream, etc. When rain came the tank would fill up! Hot summer days butter would keep nice and firm suspended down the well. The well water was clear as crystal, but only suitable for stock.

Much rain made the south road impassable with mud and ruts. Many were storm stayed at the "Shanty" - among them Mrs. A.K. Brown and young daughter Yvonne were once overnight guests. Haying time - busy building stacks, filling the barn loft to have lots for winter feed. Fencing was "fun", working with barbed wire staples, posts etc.

Seeding, gardening, hatching chicken process complete - the next - harvest. Cutting with horses and binder - hired men to stock. The weekend - ? dead beat. Did the necessary chores, filled lamps etc., then settled for a leisurely Sunday. Believe it or not - at end of day, eleven cars had been in the yard and thirty-two people fed.

Threshing time - 4:00 a.m. - Andy Waddell's car lights would be seen on the old highway coming to the farm on those mornings to waken the gang, bang on the caboose door "Get up you men, half the day gone and nothing done yet." 24-26 men to feed and take morning and afternoon lunch to the field besides - no deep freeze! The men slept in the caboose, the more "genteel" preferred the clean hay in the loft.

The men were nice to have around, and would stop at the door on their way out at the finish and say a thank you. Fall work - ploughing and canning garden produce etc. Rows of potatoes would be ploughed out in the morning and again at noon, would be the "pleasure" of the lady of the house to pick and bag them ready to be stored when chores were done and supper over in the evening.

Tanners were staunch "Orange" people. James Jr. served as Past Master in the Orange Order - also in the

Masonic Order. Served as school trustee and chairman for many years on the Sperling School Board - and furthered all community activities.

Mr. J. Tanner Sr. died Jan. 30, 1927 - Mrs. J. Tanner Sr. died October 2, 1933. Son Jim died January 13, 1939 - Daughter Nettie died 1955.

## THE TJADENS

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Tjaden arrived in Sperling in the spring of 1904. It was necessary for them to remain in the Sperling Boarding House, run by Mr. and Mrs. Thom Waddell, until Mr. Tjaden recovered from small pox.

At that time, they moved one mile south to 20-6-2 West, where their first son, John, was born. Excerpts from reports sent back to Illinois by Mr. Tjadin, following their next move are included here:

live within three miles of Sperling 23-6-2 West, where they have a consolidated school. The van comes out for my children in the morning and brings them home in the evening. This gives my children the advantage of a high school. I have a telephone, an automobile and will soon have free mail delivery. I have a good wife, a happy home; what more does any man want?"

A daughter, Helen, was born in 1906, but tragedy struck shortly after when a baby boy, Roy, was drowned in a farm cistern. John and Helen attended St. Boniface College and St. Mary's Academy, respectively. In the summer of 1922, after practising for a 4-H Rally, the group went for a refreshing dip in the dugout on 8-6-2 West. Tragically, Helen was drowned.

In 1928, John married Anna McConnell and in those depression, they remember burning barley in a Booker Stove. At this time too, Jake Tjaden, known to the community as "Daddy Jake", spent many hours constructing "stick horses and CN trains", which found their way into almost every home with a child.



*John and Anna Tjaden, 1963.*

John and Anna had six children, as follows: Helen married to Gordon Stewart, lives in California. They have 3 boys: Jim, Doug and Cameron, who has the first great grandchild, Bridget.

Mona married to Randy Bilton, who lives in Fort Garry with three children, Bill, Ron and Cathy.

Bob, the oldest boy, is a Neuro Radiologist in Kelowna, B.C. He married Marguerite DeMasson and they have three children, Joanne, Janice and Ted.



*Mrs. McConnell, Mrs. Tjaden, Anna Tjaden, Mona, Bob, John.  
FRONT ROW: Helen, Jim.*

Jim, living in Charleswood, is married to Dorothy Hodgson of Myrtle. Their family consists of Dianna, Shawna, Kevin and Lisa.

Bill, the third son, lives on the home farm, 22-6-2 West, and is married to Isabell Robertson. They have two daughters, Karen and Susan.

Last but not least, is Ken, who is married to Marlene Duvenaud. They have just moved to N.E. 114 17-6-2 West, where they have an egg producing venture. They have three daughters, Lynda, Tracy and Brenda.

John and Anna spent 40 years on the same farm, taking an active part in sports, with their family. John was noted for deerskin gloves, he made until a stroke suffered in 1967 curtailed this hobby. He spent some time in Boyne Lodge and passed away in 1977. Anna still lives on the home farm, where her specialties of "home made soup and oven mitts" have earned her a spot in the news.

## EVERETT THOMPSON FAMILY

*M. Annetta Thompson*

Everett Melville Thompson, born December 10th, 1912 at Bredenbury, Saskatchewan, came to Manitoba in the fall of 1939. He enlisted in the armed forces in November, 1942, went overseas and was wounded while on duty in France. He returned home October, 1944, and in June, 1945, married Mary Annette Lester - daughter of William and Jessie Lester.

Annetta, born April 23rd, 1911, received her high school education in Sperling, later working as part-time clerk in the O.L. Davison grocery store. She was also organist at the United Church at that time. During 1943-44 she was employed as clerk at the Co-op Store.

Everett and his wife were residents of Sperling for one year while he was employed as a mechanic at Johnson's Garage before moving to their farm in the Boyne District in 1947. They have two daughters; Mary Kathleen and Janet Marlene.

## HOWARD TOLTON FAMILY

The Tolton family moved into the Morris Municipality in 1903. Howard (1861-1925) of English Scottish descent,

with his wife, the former Elizabeth Gregson (1860-1935) bought one-half section of land on the Scratching River in the predominately German and Ukrainian District of Leabank, and with their six children, Roy, Beatrice, Ewart, Earl, Olive and Russell established a home. Their oldest daughter Margaret had died in 1901 at age 14 following an operation for appendicitis performed by the doctor in their home in Sperling. All of the children except Russell were born near Guelph, Ontario where the Tolton family lived following migration from England in 1830. Elizabeth's family had sailed from Ireland to the U.S.A. but had settled in Ontario before she was born.

After their marriage in 1884 the young couple had rented farms near Guelph until Howard came west in search of land in Manitoba in 1897. He came first to Emerson in a spring of a Red River flood and found dry land with Ontario friends near Carman. Elizabeth and the children arrived in the fall, coming by train to Winnipeg, well fortified with food packed by relatives in Ontario. The young mother with her small children had an uneasy night in the noisy Manor Hotel in Winnipeg and then took the morning train to Carman. Two years later Russell was born.

He remembered the road out to their home in Leabank, a prairie trail for nine miles east of Sperling, across the Boyne swamp where the water often came up to the bottom of the buggy box and wild ducks would fly up to scare their team on trips back to Sperling for supplies, or to attend church functions. He remembered that Mr. Coates from Morris graded the road to Sperling with 18 horses on a grader in 1905. They camped at the Tolton farm in order to water their horses at the river. Russell wrote further of his memories from his Carberry home in 1969. "The year I was five years old Father and Roy went to Winnipeg. Ewart was cutting some weeds with a scythe and I got in the way, had the cords cut and some of the bone on my left leg, and badly cut on the right one. Mother wrapped my legs in sheets and took me to Carman, 22 miles with the horse and buggy. I stayed at Dan Stewarts and Dr. Cunningham looked after me." He wrote further, "In 1967 our son Douglas attended a funeral in Virden; an elderly lady heard the name Tolton and asked if it was the family that used to live east of Sperling. She remembered when she was a little girl that Mrs. Tolton had brought a badly cut little boy to their home, and Dr. Cunningham had given him chloroform and stitched his legs on their dining room table." Russell recalled that their only drinking water was from the river in summer and melted ice in winter. When he was eight years old he and his sister Beatrice (later Mrs. D.E. Smith) both got Typhoid fever and spent several summer weeks in the hospital in Carman.

The youngest daughter Olive later became Olive Earl of Morris and gave us other memories when she was recuperating from illness at the family home of Harold and Verna Earl in Silver Plains, summer of 1968. She wrote, "At the time we lived on the Morris River I remember going back to our first home in Carman to pick cranberries that Mother made into jelly and jam. We would drive there one day, pick berries all the next day and drive home the third day. It was always my sister Beatrice and I who picked the berries." Then, "Mother

had ducks and geese and we milked nine cows. We had a sod milk house to churn and keep the cream in. Mother made and sold butter and we also made our own cheese. I remember the cheese press Father made at the back of the house. The cheese was white but later on Mother bought coloring for it. Often after walking three miles home from school, my brother Earl and I would walk a mile or more along the river, one on each side, to drive the geese home and shut them up for the night."

"While living there Grandpa Gregson passed away in Ontario and Mother got \$300.00 as her share of the money. She said she was going to buy a bedroom set - she had always wanted one. But the money went to buy seed grain and help pay for other things until she only had one dollar left, and with it she joined the Morris Fair. Mr. Laurie the storekeeper, gave a special prize that year, a solid oak three piece bedroom set for the first prize on a ten pound **crook** of butter. Mother entered a crock of butter and won first prize. That bedroom set was a treasured possession."

She added, "the last few years we lived there Father rented 300 acres of land from Mr. Lehane, an American who bought up a lot of land to rent. Threshing then was a big job, we stook threshed with neighbors Mr. Freeze and Mr. Last. We had 23 men for three meals a day and lunch; breakfast by five in the morning and supper at nine or later at night. My sister Beatrice and I did the cooking for the threshers at the Lehane farm in a granary and Mother did all the baking at home. Lunch was most always buns, ginger bread and coffee. Just for fun we counted thirteen buns one man ate, and he drank nine cups of coffee."

She wrote about school "we were three and a half miles from school and had to walk when the weather was warm. During the winter they took us in a sleigh with horses. Lots of times our ink would be frozen in the bottles and we would sit around the stove until 10 or later to get warm. Father built a footbridge that cut the distance down to three miles and later a bridge was built across the river. The last three years we lived there the school was moved to the corner of our farm. After that we boarded the teacher." And "we always went back to Sperling for picnics, concerts and fowl suppers. Also to the Presbyterian church, except when Mr. Stewart would come from Carman and have service in the school and spend the week-end with us. We learned to skate - our first skates were spring skates. He had skating parties with young folks coming from Sperling. We also did a lot of sliding down the river bank. We lived there eight years until I was fifteen."

So the young Tolton family grew up and in 1910 Roy bought a farm at Otterburne, an English speaking district where his Uncle Dan Tolton lived. In the fall of 1911 Howard Tolton sold his farm on the Scratching River and moved the entire family to Otterburne.

## THE TYERS "Happy Wanderers"

**In 1936, a young business girl by the name of Fame Jamieson, met a young Royal Air Force man by the name of Ted Tyers. In 1939, they were married.**



*25th Wedding anniversary of Fame and Ted Tyers.*

**One-half of this union was a wanderer and the other half a homemaker. Fame has made many homes, both in the U.K. and Canada. World War II broke out in 1939 and the first home was established in the north-east of England, namely, Stockton-on-Tees.**

**A couple of points of interest regarding Stockton. It was in this town the first complete railway line and station were established, between Stockton - Darlington, approximately 14 miles. The ticket office and boarding platform are a tourist attraction today. Secondly, the High Street was the widest High Street of any town in the U.K. Thirdly, it had the greatest number of English Pubs accessible from this High Street.**

**However, in 1947, Fame was visited by her sister, Mrs. W. Mackey, of Montreal, P.Q. She had been in Canada since World War I (1918) and was a true ambassador for Canada. She suggested that they emigrate to Canada. This was brushed off by such remarks that Canada was just snow and Indians. Also, Ted was still in the R.A.F.**

**In 1948, Ted was discharged from the Air Force and worked for Mectro Politon Vickers Engineering, Stockton, England. It looked as if the wanderer had come home. This only lasted up to the fall of 1949, when another visitation was made by Fame's sister, together with her husband. Now this was man to man talk, but it soon turned to woman to woman, because by November, 1949, Ted was in Canada. Fame was to follow.**



*Tyers family picture taken June 1979. LEFT TO RIGHT: Brian, Debbie holding Stewart, Fame, Ted.*

Due to the time of year, jobs were at a premium, so the wanderer carried on wandering until he met up with an old friend, whom he had met during the war years. He was still in the Royal Canadian Air Force. He soon filled Ted in with the details. So Ted joined the RCAF in January, 1950 and was transferred to Centralia, Ontario.

In 1951, Fame came to Canada with two children, Marian and Brian. Home was set up in Centralia until February 1955, when Ted was transferred to Winnipeg, where they stayed until 1960. During this stay in Winnipeg, Marian met and married Pat Baleja, he being an established farmer just outside of Sperling. They set up a home which was then known as the second home for Ted, Fame and Brian, and still is!

In 1960, Ted was transferred to Greenwood, Nova Scotia. In 1965, he was discharged, only to move to St. John, N.B. Then in 1969, he moved to Calgary, Alberta. 1971 came around. It was decided that Ted and Fame should go back to England. This was done. Going back to Stockton where Fame's brother, sisters and friends were.

This lasted until 1977, when Canada came to the front. This time, without any encouragement from anyone! It was a simple matter to decide that they return to their second home as previously stated, Sperling.

During the travels since 1970-77, the trend had been to return during harvest time. (These visits were when the crops were poor.) It was during these visitations that a long and slow friendship had been established. When residence was taken up, they were made to feel as if this had been home for years.

Fame has made a home again. It looks as if the wanderers have come to rest in Sperling.

Fame and Ted's life in Canada has been enriched by the addition of five grandchildren - Sandra, Glen, Erika and Linda Baleja.

Son, Brian, lives in Edmonton and has a son, Stewart.

## ANDREW H. WADDELL STORY

A.H. Waddell was born in Ontario in 1861. By 1897, he was well established on his farm on S.E. 114 6-7-2 W. In 1899, he married Annie Hill in the neighbourhood of Bates. They had four children: Cliff, Eva, Bertie and Reta. He is remembered as having a gruff voice, and drove a white horse to town - a really good fellow.

Their son, Clifford, was born in 1900 and attended Waddell School. When his father died in 1919, Cliff moved the family into the village. He married Annetta Hobbs in 1934 and they had two children, Ken and Barbara.

Ken still farms the S.E. 114 6-7-2 W and the land surrounding the village of Sperling. He married Marilyn Cutting and they have two daughters, Jacquie and JoAnn.

Barbara married Ken Kee and they have a son, Jason. They reside at Belleville, Ontario. Ken has become a Flight Lieutenant Col. Their daughter, Eva, married Buster Bergstrom and they operated the Toulston' store almost as a hotel. The famous hockey players, Hinkle, Jerome, boarded there. Bergstrom's spent most of their



*The Waddell family. BACK ROW: A.H. Waddell (Cliff's father), W.H. Waddell (Ormie's father) R.H. Waddell (father of Sperling). FRONT ROW: T.H. Waddell, (Mrs. Art Myers' father), Mrs. Miller of Killamey, John Waddell (he never lived at Sperling).*



*ABOVE: Annetta Waddell and son, Jen, 1978.*

*LEFT: Clifford, Bertie, Eva, children of Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Waddell.*

life at Prince Albert. They had three sons, Arnold, Leonard and Gerald. Buster passed away and Eva lives with her sister, Rita in British Columbia.

A second son, Bertie, farmed in Sperling area; also used heavy equipment to haul into gold mines at Bissett and Northern Alberta.

He married Evelyn Latham and they have three children - Jim, Glenda and Fay. They lived in British Columbia. Bertie passed away in the early 1970's.

Reta was well known for her graceful and speedy skating. In 1944, she married Bill Killeen.



*Jacquie, Marilyn, Joanne, 1978.*



**ABOVE:** Ken Waddell with his new 1977 International tractor.  
**LEFT:** Ken Waddell on his farm.



**R.B. Waddell, then W.J. Waddell home built in 1899.**

## R.B. WADDELL

R.B. Waddell was born at Peterborough, Ontario, on January 20, 1848.

In January, 1872, he married Isabella Slessar, in Fairburn Presbyterian Church, Greyco, Ontario. From 1872 through 1889, they farmed in Mount Forest, Ontario area, and raised a family of eight; all born in the Collingwood, Egremont, and Mount Forest area.



*Tom Waddell family. BACK ROW: Jack, Margaret, Jessie, Andy, Elizabeth. FRONT ROW: Adeline, Tom, Alvin, Mrs. Waddell.*

In 1891, this family moved west by train. They looked over land in the Souris area, but decided on land in the Sperling area. This W. 9-6-3 West in Dufferin Municipality, one mile west of Sperling.

In the first year, a house was built and sod barn. That quarter section was broken with oxen.

The first years of farming, there was no Village of Sperling and no post office. The school was located 2 miles away, about 1 1/2 miles north north of where Sperling is now.

In the first few years, the grain was hauled to Elm Creek, through the winter months. They followed the prairie trails, leading in a northwesterly direction. When the CNR came through in 1901, the new Village of Sperling was to have all the necessary facilities and soon all the prairie trails were gone.

In 1899, the new buildings were completed on 30-6-2 West in Morris Municipality and the family moved to this site. This was near of the Village of Sperling with a new Post Office, School, churches, etc.

Through their life in the community, the R.B. Waddell family were supporters in every way of the local presbyterian church. In those days, the churches were the high point of activities in the surrounding area.

In the years 1904-1912, R.B. kept a diary, and made daily entries. This gave an interesting account of daily life in those days. One interesting point was the taxes paid on this quarter section of 1904, came to a total of \$23.00.

From this farm, the family grew up and they, in turn, married and left for other areas.

Of this family, three members remained in the Rural Municipality of Morris - W.J. (Billy) Waddell, Charles Waddell and Labina Waddell.

R.B. Waddell died April 1913. His wife moved to Elm Creek for a few years; then had a new house built in Sperling. She lived in Sperling until her death in July, 1936. Of that original family, there were thirty-five grandchildren.

There are no members of this family living in the Morris Municipality today.

## W.J. WADDELL

W.J. Waddell was born March 19, 1887 at Mount Forest, Ontario, youngest son of R.B. Waddell.

In 1891, the family moved to Manitoba, at first to break the land and settle on 29-6-3 West in Dufferin Municipality. A few years later, they purchased the N.E. 112 30-6-2 West, in Morris Municipality. It was on this land that new permanent buildings were built. They moved in, in 1899.

The school was one mile northeast of this site; at that time there was no school in Sperling. The school building was later moved into Sperling and used for a Catholic Church.

W.J. "Billy" was active in community sports, especially baseball. This was the most popular game at that time, so very keen competition was carried on between towns in the area. Later a curling rink was built



and it was well patronized. This was a popular sport, though it was for winter only, as in those days there was no T.V. or radio. This building was burned down and a new full sized rink was immediately planned and erected. In this project, W.J. (Billy) Waddell was an active supporter. On many occasions, he was called on to help overhaul the power plant, (when the lights failed) even during a hockey game.

On December 6, 1911, he married Elizabeth Wilson in Winnipeg. Two sons were born to this marriage - Kenneth and Chester.

In the early years, it was difficult to wait for a threshing outfit, for your turn. So in 1910 (approx.) a new steam outfit was purchased in company with brother John R. Waddell.

So, in turn, they were able to do much custom threshing through the years. The last year of use was in 1936. Billy ran this engine for 22 harvests. For the remaining harvests, it was operated by his youngest son, Chester. It is believed to be the last steam outfit to be used on this side of Morris Municipality.



*Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Waddell.*

In the early years, there were many Sunday school picnics held on this farm, as it was located near Sperling and there was a lawn large enough for this purpose.

In 1928, the Sperling Sports day was held on this farm, as the school grounds were partially flooded. On that same day, an airplane from Holly Aviation, of Winnipeg, took up passengers - nearly all for the first time.

In later years, the new Pool Elevator was built on two acres of the southeast corner of this farm.

In 1929, another plot was purchased by Sperling Co-Op Oil, in the same corner. Both these businesses remain today.

Billy Waddell was a founding member and secretary-treasurer of the Sperling Beef Ring; a local co-op way to have a fresh meat supply. The buildings for this venture were also on the south side of this land. This business closed down at the beginning of World War II.

Along with these activities, he was also a school trustee for quite a number of years, and was on the school board, where the new school was built.

The oldest son, Kenneth, was married in 1924 to Marjorie Neville of Sperling. He was employed in



*Chester and Kenneth Waddell.*

Sperling Co-Op Oil Co. until 1939, when he joined the R.C.A.F., serving until the fall of 1945. He was in the road building business for some time. He then went back to aircraft work with MacDonald Brothers (Bristol) of Winnipeg, and for a short time with Trans Canada Airlines.

Of this marriage, there were three sons and one daughter born - Douglas, Arnold, Doreen and Ron.

The youngest son, Chester, was married in 1939, to Alice Coutts of East Bay (Dauphin), Manitoba. Chester farmed until July 1940, then joined the R.C.A.F. and served until October 1945. On return, he took up farming for eight years, then joining the staff of Trans Canada Airlines (later to become Air Canada) and remained in that business for ten years.

In 1963, he purchased a Hunting-Fishing Lodge at Rocky Lake, north of The Pas, Manitoba, and carried on this business for 10 years.

The next five years were spent in employment of Transport Canada, at The Pas airport. In 1978, he moved to Carman for his retirement.

Of this marriage, there were one son and two daughters born - Gerald, Barbara and Thelma, all residing in Calgary.

W.J. Waddell died on October 10, 1950. His wife, Elizabeth, died on October 2, 1976. The eldest son, Kenneth, died in July 1965.

Of this family, there are no members living in Morris municipality today.



*Billy Waddell farm NE 30-6-2.*

## CHARLES WADDELL

He bought the N.E. 114 29-6-2 and built new farm buildings, marrying Matilda Mogk in 1905.

This farm had some of the land taken over by the Village of Sperling and presented quite a problem, when it came to having the deeds registered. Charles also had a quarter section in McDonald Municipality, two and one-half miles from the home buildings.

They had one daughter, Gladys, who died in her mid-teens of pneumonia. Charles died at age 35 in 1919. Matilda moved into Sperling, for a few years; then to Winnipeg, where she resided until her death.

## WADDELL, GORDON E.

*Rev, Gordon E. Waddell*

I was born on the farm 36-6-3 in the municipality of Dufferin in 1911, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Waddell, who spent their declining years in Sperling. I moved to Sperling when twenty years of age and opened a general work shop. The first year, 1931, the workshop was in Jim Woodley's garage and I batched with him during my stay there.

In 1932 I bought the machine shop of Scotty Moir and opened it as a blacksmith shop, also repairing shoes and harness. The six years I was in the repair business were happy and fruitful ones. From 1932 to 1937 I boarded with my grandmother, Mrs. R.B. Waddell and Aunt Vina Waddell in Sperling.



*Rev, and Mrs. Gordon E. Waddell, 1943.*

My office was always open for the High School boys of the day. Cards were the chief way of entertainment.

During my stay in Sperling I worked some with the Rover Scouts, managed Junior ball teams and served time as President of the local and district Young People's Union. I was a member of the Church Session and also for a time as Church Steward. I enjoyed drama and took part in at least three plays sponsored by community groups. The Young People often took over the evening Church Service and this led me into the decision of becoming a minister of the United Church.

I sold the shop to Jack Mathieson in 1937 and entered United College; was ordained to the ministry in 1943 and



*Rev. and Mrs. Gordon E. Waddell, 1979.*

in the same year married Olive Fawcett. We raised a family of three, George, Ruth and James.

I retired in 1976 and my wife and I opened a Community Resource Centre and Library in the town of Newdale, Manitoba.

### VILLAGE OF MY YOUTH

*S mall village I remember,  
People of my youthful days  
Excellent in many ways.  
R eal fond memories  
Linger in my mind  
I n ever flowing sequence.  
N ew days will bless you,  
G od be with you now and always.*

*Rev. Gordon E. Waddell*

## THE WATT FAMILY

*submitted by Jean M. Mcathiesen*

On November 15, 1920, Helen and Alex Watt took up residence on the farm, which is still in the family, the legal description of which is Section 10-6-1 West. Mr. Watt had actually plowed the first furrow and harvested the first crop of this piece of land in 1910 when it was owned by Mr. Joseph Grundler who lived in the Sperling District.

Mr. Watt subsequently returned to his native country, Scotland, and served in the British Army during World War 1. Following cessation of hostilities he returned to Manitoba, and in June 1920, he was joined by his wife and daughter Jean, from Aberdeenshire, Scotland. From 1920 until 1925, the farm was rented, but when it was offered for sale in the fall of 1925, Mr. Watt purchased the farm.

Mrs. Watt and Jean crossed the ocean on the "S.S. Sicilian" to Montreal, and from there by train to Winnipeg and Sperling, from there by a team of horses to the Grundler farm. The trip to Section 10 in November was luxurious for the early Case car owned and driven by Bill Grundler - son of Mr. J. Grundler. However, that was the end of luxury travel for many years to come.



*Hauling gravel for the Alex Watt home in 1925.*

## **"Members of the Family"**

*Alexander Watt* Born March 3, 1880, Fyvie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Died Nov. 18, 1968, Morris, Manitoba.

*Helen Watt* Born August 11, 1888, Turriff, Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

*Jean Watt* who married John Matthiesen in 1942. Widowed August 1977. Resides in Calgary, Alberta. Has two daughters: Mrs. Helen Harvey and Mrs. Barbara Howes. Mrs. Harvey has three sons. John, Michael, and Peter.

*Alexander Munro* Born June 24, 1928 in Winnipeg. Died Feb. 10, 1929 in Winnipeg.

*Helen Agnes* - called Nellie: Born May 25, 1921 at the home farm. Died June 16, 1925 in Winnipeg.

*Brian S. Watt* who married Evelyn Brown in October 1959. They have one son, Alex and one daughter, Margaret and reside on the home farm. Also one son Grant Keith, born Jan. 30, 1964 and died Feb. 12, 1964.



*Alex Watt on the stack of the threshing operation of his farm.*

The Watts operated a mixed farm right from the start, and always kept several milk cows, horses, chickens, turkeys, pigs, and usually a few ducks. With the help of neighbors, the family learned how to butcher their own meat, and a garden provided vegetables. Much of the meat and poultry had to be preserved in sealers, and smoked hams were often stored in the granary where feed oats were kept. Ice was "put up" in winter in the ice

house and it was very helpful for storing cream, milk, butter, etc. All work was performed under primitive conditions and required a tremendous amount of heavy manual labor.

Horseback was the main mode of transportation for Jean - for school, mail, and groceries from Rosenort store, herding cattle, and many other errands.

Rosenort store and Post Office was owned and operated by Mr. Jacob Enns and his family. Mr. Enns was a decent and honorable man, and is remembered with respect and affection, as indeed, are all neighbors, past and present.

Other forms of transportation were the buggy: shafts were used for the use of one horse, and a tongue when two horses were used.

Grain and other commodities, such as wood and coal were hauled in wagon boxes - wheels in summer and on sleighs in the winter. A lighter weight sleigh was used in winter to transport people and it was called a "cutter".

The first modern vehicle was a 1929 Model A Ford truck purchased in 1931, and was known as "Frankie". Rosenort store where most groceries were purchased was three and one half miles distant, McTavish about seven miles. Grain was hauled to McTavish by horses, also cans of cream to be shipped to Winnipeg. In later years the Rosenort Transfer picked up the cans of cream at the farm, and delivered the empty cans on the return journey. What a boom! In 1925 a new John Deere Modile D tractor replaced Horsepower. This it did faithfully until 1948.

The nearest doctors were located in Sperling, 12 miles away, and at Morris, about 14 miles distant. If a doctor was required he usually used the local livery stable, and the family paid the doctor's fee and the livery charges, as well.

The year 1925 proved a very expensive year in medical terms for the family: Nellie, who born in May 1921 became ill with scarlet fever in February 1925. The illness was accompanied by complications and she died in the King George Hospital, Winnipeg on June 16, 1925.

From 1920 until 1926 the family lived in what can only be called a shack. In summer it was a never ending battle to keep the dwelling reasonably free from flies. Fly "stickers" which hung from the ceiling were used extensively, also "Fly Pads". These were brown circular pads which were placed on plates and kept wet - sometimes a little sugar was sprinkled on them to entice the flies to the poison! Attached to the shack was a "lean-to" which held a spare bed but used mostly for storage.

A granary was attached to the front of the shack, and in summer the cook stove was moved into it, which helped to keep the house cooler. In winter both the cook stove and a heating stove were used to keep the place warm. After a blizzard it was not unusual to find mounds of snow inside which had seeped in through windows and doors.

Calcimine was used for interior decoration, as paint was too costly. All of life's activities were performed within the confines of this dwelling - baking, cooking, laundry, personal hygiene, etc. Water had to be carried from the pond - the only water available - for humans and animals alike. Accommodation for the animals was



Alex Watt on boat and Donald Isaac on doorstep of the Watt home in 1950 flood.

better, as a large barn had been built during the 1914-1918 period and used until 1963.

A proper house was built in 1925.

Pleasant Valley school offered elementary education - grades one to eight inclusive but thanks to Mr. James Hamm, teacher, seven of the local young people completed grade nine under his very able instruction. Jean later completed her education at Sperling High School and in Winnipeg.

Brian also attended Pleasant Valley, as did Alex for grade one, and Margaret was in the first grade one class in the Rosenort Elementary School.

Evelyn has been working as a para-professional from 1969 and Brian has been a bus driver on a school bus from 1968 till present.

M.P.E. (Manitoba Pool Elevator) has been an interest of the Watts for many years. Brian has served on the McTavish board for 24 years and on the district council for 10.

Brian also has served on the Board of Morris United Church at various times. He was the official board chairman for the years 1977-78.

Besides these interests, Brian has been a member of King Solomon Lodge in Morris since 1957 and served as Master in 1963.

The Watt farm remains much the same through the years, that is, mixed farming. However much of the back breaking work has gone out of it with the coming of electricity and modern machinery.

## PAUL AND OLIVE WOOLLEY

Soon after emigrating to Canada in April 1975, Paul obtained employment in Carman, Manitoba, where we lived for two years. Both Paul and I were raised on farms in Northern Ireland and Andrew and Grace were born there, though already they feel that Canada and, Sperling in particular, is home to them. Our moving to Sperling was almost an accident - though not of the unfortunate kind! After a couple of years of searching for a challenging job, Paul was successful in obtaining a position with a leading manufacturing company. His job entails considerable travelling and we felt that we could

partly ease this by moving closer to Winnipeg. However, our planned move did not take place, and instead we moved to Sperling. We both enjoy country living and are very glad to have the opportunity to pass this appreciation on to our children. We also enjoy the recreational opportunities available in Canada and camp, fish, golf in the summer and skate, ski and bowl in the winter when time permits.

We are very happy in Sperling and look forward to the continued growth of one of Manitoba's most friendly small communities.

## "MY PRAIRIE HOME"

by Ethel Hunter (nee Webster)

*It was a land of:*

*Huge fields of golden grain gently waving in the breeze,  
The morning mirage - when you could see for miles,  
The Aurora Borealis in all its beauty  
Warm summer days, followed by cool, starry nights,  
Some cold winter days, and the occasional blizzard.  
The meadowlark with its cheery song, yes and even the  
fascinating gopher.*

My father and mother, James and Caroline Webster, came (with other settlers from Shelburne Area, in Ontario) to the west in the spring of 1899. They were among those who brought livestock with them, via rail. The women came in coach cars, the men stayed with the horses and cattle. They met in Winnipeg a week later. My parents stayed a short while in Carman, when bought the quarter section now owned by their youngest son, Roy.

The farms were sturdily fenced soon after they arrived, to keep the livestock out of the grain. I can remember minding the cows on the roadside in the tall prairie grass with the tiny shells crunching under my feet.

My father acquired a number of horses and cattle and in 1912 decided to build a new barn. When the structure was about half way up, strong winds passed through, levelling it to the foundation. Some of the lumber was found nearly half a mile away.

My mother was not a registered nurse, but was sort of "on call" if there were any new arrivals expected, or sickness in the neighbourhood. When the flu epidemic was rampant, she left the younger members of the family in the capable hands of my eldest sister, Lillie, and went out to help wherever she was needed. Pneumonia was often a part of this type of flu. She no doubt knew how to deal with it, having pulled me through a severe case of pneumonia (after Red Measles) when I was three.

We attended the Methodist Church; in summer in a surrey (without a fringe) but which had lanterns on each side we could light, when we attended the evening service. In winter, we used the big sleigh, which would accommodate more than one family. I was among the first group of children christened in the Methodist Church.

My father drove the school van for a time. It was the old type high van and easily upset in winter. The route was long and we had to leave early. We had foot warmers or hot bricks to keep our feet warm, and always a supply of robes or heavy quilts.

## THE WEBSTERS

*by Glen Webster*

George Webster came to the Sperling District in March of 1899. They came from Valentia, near Lake Scugog in Victoria County in Ontario. The family, with Mrs. Webster, consisted of two children, Velma and Wilbert (Bert). Bert was about 10 years old at the time. They were accompanied by J.J. McMahon (a brother-in-law) and his family.

They had come to Carman in a "Colonist" car with their settlers effects accompanying them on the same train. They travelled to their farm about due north of the present Sperling site by team and sleigh.

Their home was an abandoned surveyors shanty. It was very cold, well below zero (Fahrenheit) the day that they arrived, and they could view the great outdoors through the knot holes in the walls. One of the men had gone on ahead to clean things up, and when they tried to wash the floor, the water froze. They had to lay carpeting over the frozen floor and make their beds on that.

Until the railway came through, about 1901, grain and all supplies had to be hauled by team to and from Carman. Wood for fuel had to be cut and hauled from west of Carman.

The first Boyne ditch was dug the first year they were there, and passed quite close to their shanty. The dredge, tender, supply and living quarters were on floats, and as the water filled as the ditch was dug, the flotilla floated up to the digging "face". The dredge was fired with wood that had been stockpiled ahead of time along the route. The ditch proved to be less than effective and created real flooding problems.

The first store in the area was on the corner of their farm. It was named Mariposa and was a distribution point for the mail that was brought from Carman by team. The school was only about a quarter mile from the store which was the center for school supplies, kiddies treats (when they could be afforded), etc.

The McMahons lived with the Websters for the first year, then got their own farm about a mile away.

In summertime it was not uncommon for the women and kids to take a horse and rig to the Boyne River where wild cranberries were plentiful, and pick their years supply for jams, jellies, pie fillings, etc. In later years some who had been kids at the time couldn't stand even the look of a cranberry.

Another job in the summer was going into the marsh to the east, to cut hay. (and fight mosquitoes) The grass was so long that it was necessary to stand on the mower seat from time to time to see over it to get ones bearings until they had gotten their patch cut around.

The overflow from the ditch caused such flooding, that in 1905, both the Websters and the McMahons moved to land that they had purchased in Township 4 - Range 4 which was near Roland.

## DADDY WELSH AND FAMILY

In 1921, Les Welsh came to work in the Union Bank in Sperling with C.B. McNulty as manager. Later, he went into partnership with Ed Maloney in a Ford Garage.

Les married Helen McLeod, an accomplished pianist, and they moved to Winnipeg in 1932. He was a C.L.U. for London Life for some 40 years.

They have two children - Fred and John. Fred owns and operates a drug store at Pine Falls. They have two children. John is an insurance company manager in Edmonton. He also has a family of two.

In 1925, Mr. and Mrs. F.C. Welsh (Les' parents) Alvin and Grant, came from their farm at Baldur to reside just south of the teacherage. He worked in Les' garage until the 1931 fire demolished it. He became caretaker of the school until 1948. Children fondly referred to him as "Daddy" Welsh. Mrs. Welsh did a great deal of church and community work.

Alvin received all his schooling in Sperling and in 1938, he decided he would return to Baldur and try farming. This was short-lived as he enlisted with the RCAF in 1941. After the war, he married and had two children. He was employed by Stovel and later in the printing business with Moore's Business Forms. He has two children.

After Grant's graduation from Sperling High, he enlisted in the army in 1940. Upon returning home after four years overseas service, he became Canadian Consolidated grain buyer in Sperling. He had a sign he hung over the furnace room door - "verboden rookers". This was one of his mementos from Germany, and meant "forbidden to smoke".

In 1947, he married Chris Williamson. They had two children, Jim and June. In 1951, they moved to Deloraine, where Grant was grain buyer for 27 years. Due to ill health, they now reside in Winnipeg. Jim is with Indian Affairs in Winnipeg. His family consists of Terry and Tanya. June also lives in Winnipeg. Her husband is Gary Tyhy and they have two boys, Steven and Kevin.

## THE WILSONS "A Pioneer Family"

William Wilson Sr. was born in Grey County, Ontario in 1855, son of James and Annie (Mutch) Wilson. On February 19, 1879, he married Annie Galbraith, daughter of Neil and Janet (Orr) Galbraith. Lured by the invitations of adventurous relatives who had already settled in Manitoba, to come west, he brought the family west in 1898, settling first on N.E. 1/4 31-6-2 in the Rural Municipality of Morris, then buying the N.W. 1 / 4 34-6-2.

William began the task of breaking the prairie sod with a team of oxen, and later with a team of horses. It is difficult to express in words and contributions the pioneers made to the growth and development of their community. They were not content with things as they were - they braved the wilderness, the prairie loneliness, privation, hardship and danger, that they might have better living conditions for their children. To that class Mr. and Mrs. Wilson belonged.

He was handicapped by an unfortunate accident in 1892. While at work in a saw mill, he suffered the loss of his left arm below the elbow. While it proved a definite handicap, it was remarkable how skillful he became with



*Wm. Wilson Sr. family. BACK ROW: Jack, Jim, Will, Isabelle, Jessie. FRONT ROW: Mr. Wilson, Alvin, Ethel, Mrs. Wilson.*

an iron hand. He wore out many axe and fork handles as he continued to engage in every form of work on the farm, and in community enterprises; helping build the many things that become part of the community life.

William Wilson served as a manager for Egremont Presbyterian Church and Mrs. Wilson taught a class of girls in Sunday school. Every Sunday found the family in church, the younger ones in the family pew, the older ones in the choir. Later on, their interest was in the United Church, but following the loss of his eyesight, Mr. Wilson did not attend church, rather he heard his church service on the radio. An ardent radio fan, he never missed Reverend Kerr's sermons from Augustine United Church, Foster Hewitt's hockey broadcasts on Saturday night, and such programs of that time as "Maw Perkins" and "Pepper Young's Family".

Though unable to see, he recognized voices immediately.

During World War I, Mrs. Wilson knit many pairs of socks for the soldiers overseas and with every stitch was a prayer for their safe return, for among their number was their son Alvin Orr.

She followed in her mother's footsteps as a capable nurse, and many were the calls she received when the stork was on his errand. Oftimes, the doctor came second in the race, but found on his arrival that the precious bundle had been cared for very well. Those were horse and buggy days and when a life was at stake, the hours seemed endless until skilled help arrived.

In 1911, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson moved to Sperling. During the years that followed, grandchildren boarded with them, while attending Sperling school or while working in the village, and many happy hours were spent in their grandparents' home.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were the first couple in Sperling to celebrate their 60th Wedding Anniversary. In 1939, after a brief illness, he passed away, and her death occurred in 1944. Both were buried in Sperling cemetery.

Stories of the Wilson's sons Jake, William and Alvin and also those relating to their daughters, Jessie and Isabelle, are found elsewhere in this book.

Their eldest son, James, married Jane Wilson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Wilson, who were residents of Sperling in the early 1900's. Moving from the Municipality, Jim and Jane lived in Gilbert Plains, Neepawa, and Shoal Lake, before retiring to Haney, B.C., where Jim died in 1971. They had 4 children: Muriel, Mildred, Bruce and Murray.

Their youngest daughter, Ethel, after receiving her education, in Sperling, taught school for a number of years in other parts of the province. She returned to teach in Sperling Consolidated School in 1932.

In 1934, she married Samuel Jamieson and for four years, they farmed N.W. 1 / 4 34-6-2, which had been the homestead for her pioneer parents, before leaving the Rural Municipality of Morris.

Her husband, Sam, passed away in 1960. She resides in Winnipeg as do daughters Moira and Diane. A son, Edward, lives in the United States.



*Billy Wilson's family. BACK ROW: Stan, Anne, Alvin, Edna. FRONT ROW: Billy, David, Margaret.*

## WILLIAM WILSON FAMILY

William Wilson (better known as Billy) was born on February 11, 1883, on the 18th Concession of Egremont Township near Dromore in Grey County, Ontario.

In 1898, at the age of fifteen, he arrived in Manitoba with his parents and some of the family. They travelled by train from Ontario to Winnipeg and to Sperling by teams of horses and wagons.

His father bought a quarter section of land northeast of Sperling. Billy helped his father break the sod, first by oxen and later with a team of horses.

Life in the early years at Sperling was an ordeal for then pioneers, especially in the winter, as there often were fuel shortages, no communication services, and the nearest doctor was miles away. As there was no railroad in Sperling, the grain was hauled to Carman by teams of horses and wagons, all supplies had to be purchased there.

In 1901, Billy and his brothers, Jim and Jack went north to work in the logging camps; possibly they just worked for the winter months. For a time after this, Billy worked in Winnipeg for the Fairhead Plow Co.



In 1905, Billy, along with Jack and Teenie Smith, George and Mabel Mogk, and Fred Smith, moved to Adanac, Saskatchewan, where they homesteaded for a number of years. In 1912 or 1913, Billy left Adanac and travelled west to British Columbia, where he worked with a construction crew, building a bridge at Harrison Hot Springs.

In 1915, he married Margaret Hart Ferguson. Margaret was born in Largs Aryshire, Scotland, in 1895 and came to Canada in 1914. Their first home was on Main Street in Sperling. This later became the Telephone Office (which burned in 1931). It was in this home that the first Sperling charter of the Masonic Lodge No. 50, was held. Billy, at that time, was made Junior Warden, he joined the Masonic Lodge in Saskatchewan in February 1911.

For the next few years, Margaret and Billy lived in Winnipeg, La Riviere and Carman, returning to Sperling in 1923.

They had three sons and two daughters: Stanley Gerald, born in 1916, Anne Isabella in 1917, William Alvin in 1919, Edna Olive in 1921 and David Alan Hart in 1931.

Stan married Alice Firby. They live in Vancouver, B.C. and have a son and daughter. Anne retired from Manitoba Telephone System and lives in Winnipeg. Alvin married Alma Ellis; they with their family of two sons and five daughters, live in Los Angeles, California. Edna married Bill Arnason and they have one son and four daughters. David married Vi Solmonson and they have two sons and a daughter. Edna and David and families reside in Winnipeg.

Our life in Sperling as children was centered around the church, school and rink. Our church activities were the Young Peoples' Society, the Explorers, C.G.I.T. groups, and Cub and Boy Scout troops. During the winter, the rink was open six nights a week and Saturday afternoons for skating, hockey and curling. The school events were - field and sports days.

Some of the highlights of the year were: the Christmas concert, the fowl supper, the Beef Ring dinner and dance, the Sunday school picnics, skating carnival, hockey games, curling bonspiels, Three Act plays, C.G.I.T. and

Boy Scout outings and the Friday night and New Year's Eve dances in the school hall.

Margaret and Billy and family moved to Winnipeg in 1938. They celebrated their Golden Wedding on March 31, 1965.

Billy passed away in August of 1966 and Margaret, January, 1972.

## THE JOHN WILSON STORY

*by Marion Kirk*

John Wilson was born at Dromore, Ont., the second son of Wm. and Annie Wilson. His early years were spent in the vicinity of Hopeville and Proton Station.



*The Wilson brothers. BACK ROW: John and Jim Wilson. FRONT ROW: "Buffy" and Wm. Wilson.*

Jack and his brother Jim came west with the Duncan Galbraith family in the spring of 1898. The Wilson family followed a week later. They were met at Carman by Charles Peckover and Jack and Jim. (Charles was married to Jessie Galbraith sister of Annie Wilson). The Wilsons stayed with the Peckovers until a house was built for them.

Duncan Galbraith and Wm. Wilson bought a quarter section each (West half of 34) and with a yoke of oxen began to break the prairie sod in the spring of 1898, with Jack and Willie helping. Their first winter on the prairie, the Wilsons cared for the W.H. Waddell's school age children while the Waddells visited in the East. (Mrs. W.H. also a sister of Mrs. Wilson).

In 1900 Jack helped his father, and that spring the land where the town is situated was sold; a quarter each to Harry Mogk and Charles Waddell, and a half to R.H. Waddell.

In the spring of 1901 Jack worked for R.H., and he broke the land where Sperling is today. He also helped



*Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wilson on their 50th anniversary in 1965.*



*Jack Wilson's Studebaker, SEATED IN BACK: Margaret Peckover, Dorothy Wilson, Maggie Knox. ON SIDE: Isobel Wilson. FRONT ROW: Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Marion.*

haul the lumber for the R.H. house which was to become later the Methodist Parsonage, and then the Griffith home. That fall the railway came through.

Jack bought his first threshing machine in 1902, a Waterloo Steam, straw fed hand feeder with no blower. That fall they threshed fifty six days ending with Timothy Hay for Geo. and Alex Smith who farmed east of town. Jack continued to be a thresherman for many years, and in spite of the work and worry, enjoyed it all.

Jack bought the farm north of Sperling in 1904, (N.E. 31-6-2) and he farmed there for the rest of his life.

Mrs. Wilson was the former Grace Young, daughter of Wm. and Mary-Ann Young who came west from Meaford, Ont. who settled first in the Garnett District and later farmed south of Sperling on what is now the Ken Tjaden farm.

Jack served on many local boards and they were both active in the early United Farmers Movement. Jack was known for his ability to handle horses and was often called on to break the wild ones. His love of horses was instrumental in his becoming involved in the Dufferin Agricultural Society as an exhibitor. He later served as President of that Society and then became President of the Western "B" Class Circuit. Through this work he made many friends throughout the West.

They were always interested in music, singing in the very early choirs and on into later life, the United Church Choir. At one point in time Mrs. Wilson had the opportunity to record her voice, she did not take it, but this opportunity was unusual in those days.

They had four daughters, Dorothy, Mrs. Chas. Jenkins (Deceased 1977); Isabel, Mrs. T.R. Wilton; Marion, Mrs. C. Kirk; and Jacqueline, Mrs. Geo. Ritchie.

Five Grandchildren: Janice (Jenkins), Mrs. R. Cox of Seattle, Wash.; Gail, Mrs. T. King; and Gwen, Mrs. L. Sanderson of Winnipeg; Donna (Kirk) Mrs. W. Stinchcombe of Calgary; and Tom Kirk of Winnipeg.

Mrs. Wilson passed away suddenly February 1948 and Mr. Wilson died in St. Boniface Hospital May, 1956. They lived a life of service to their District, giving unstintingly of their time and talents.



*Alvin Wilson in World War I.*

## ALVIN ORR WILSON FAMILY

*submitted by Kathleen Leathers*

Alvin Orr Wilson, youngest son of William and Annie Wilson, came to the Sperling District with his parents at the age of one year. He attended Waddell School, travelling with his sister, Ethel, by horse and cart to the farm of their brother, James, to stable the horse and from there on foot across the footbridge to the school. Later he attended Sperling School graduating from grade eleven. He played both hockey and baseball for Sperling and worked in Sperling's store.

At the age of nineteen, Alvin enlisted in the Canadian Army (Engineers). After some time in the trenches in France he applied for transfer to the R.A.F. (Royal Naval Corps). After only a few months training and one solo flight he graduated and served as a flying officer until the end of the War.



*Alvin Wilson's marriage to Mae Manes, 1920.*

Alvin Wilson returned home to Sperling in 1919. He married Ellen Mae Marles of the Otterburne District in 1920. He purchased land five miles north of Sperling where they built the first Aladdin house in the area. This house and a barn are still standing on the farm now owned by Art Chase. In 1930 they purchased land one mile south of the town of Sperling where they lived until 1957.

Al was active in community affairs. He trained air cadets during the Second World War, was joint purchaser of the area's first road grader, served as School Trustee for many years, curled and was Master of the Masonic Lodge in 1956. Al and Mae retired from farming and moved to Winnipeg in 1957.

Of the couple's five children only Garth, the eldest, has remained in the Sperling District. Garth left school to farm with his father. He married Mary Grace Rempel of Carman in 1941 moving to his own land, Section 12-6-3 in 1943. In 1949 Garth and Mamie moved to the town of Sperling where they lived until 1957 when they returned to the family farm where they still reside.

Both Garth and Mamie have led active community lives participating in curling and the hockey, baseball and skating activities of their children; Mamie as Sunday School teacher, Explorer leader and U.C. W. worker; and Garth as Masonic Lodge member, Master in 1968, and for a time proprietor of the Sperling Hotel.

Their two daughters Kathleen, Mrs. Winston Leathers, and Wendy both live in Winnipeg. Their son, Lyall, the only grandson bearing the Wilson name, married Janet Malcolmson of Carman in 1968. He has two daughters Tess and Lyn, and teaches school in Shoal Lake, Manitoba.

Al and Mae's second child, Alva Elaine, completed her schooling in Sperling and trained as a stenographer in Winnipeg. She married Jack Mutch of Winnipeg in 1953. Recently widowed, Alva and her two children, Shelley and Grant live in Norwood.

Keith, the second son, farmed briefly with his father. He married Joyce Havard of Carman in 1951. They have a daughter, Candy. Keith left Sperling in 1953 to work for Manitoba Pool. He has for the past ten years been Manager of Country Elevators in the Winnipeg office. Joyce and Keith have one granddaughter, Amanda and live next door to Al and Mae on Oxford Street.

Two younger daughters, Arlene and Helen, were both educated in Sperling. Arlene married Gerald Reinsch who farmed briefly in the Brunkild District. They now live with their three children, Andrea, Todd and Jon, in Tswassen, B.C. Helen, Mrs. Don Springer, has one son, Matthew Wilson Springer, and lives in Burbank, California.

## JOHN PETER WURMINEST AND WALTER WILLIAM WURMINEST

*submitted by (Mrs.) Leta Cleora McDowell*

In the fall of 1917, my grandparents Conrad and Barbara Wurmnest of Elpaso, Illinois, were approached by a land agent describing farm acreage in Manitoba. Consequently my grandfather and Uncle Walter journeyed by train to Canada, viewed the land and purchased it. Walter did the fall plowing that year before returning to Illinois.

On Feb. 26, 1918, my father's seventeenth birthday, the two brothers arrived in Sperling by train via Winnipeg. They worked the farm that year returning to Illinois again in the fall where my father pursued his romance with Daisy Maud Sumpter.

Shortly after their wedding in March, they came to Sperling to begin their life-long career of farming Section 29-5-2 in the Morris Municipality. When they arrived at the C.N. Station in Winnipeg they were advised that accommodation at the McLaren Hotel was the place to go and the 'price was right', so they walked from the



*Wedding picture of John and Daisy Wurmnest in 1919.*

station to the hotel only to find alas - no rooms. So they walked back to the station where Mother slept with the women and Father with the men in space provided for such unfortunates. Not a pleasant way to spent the first night in a new country and on your honeymoon to boot!

Mother was pleasantly surprised to find white people instead of Indians in the majority when they got to Sperling. By the next spring their first child, Delores Winnifred was born. The brothers worked together sharing expenses, good times and misfortunes of the times, i.e. July flood, 1921, sleeping sickness which killed several work horses, and the grasshopper plague. I can see my father spreading poisoned bran by hand along the fields and ditches.



*Farm buildings and Hart Paar tractor of John and Walter Wurmnest.*

Field work was done largely with horses to begin with, although they had a Hart-Parr tractor. Buggy and mule team provided transportation before cars came on the scene.

I (Leta Cleora) arrived as a pre-Christmas gift in 1925. Mother was assisted by Mrs. Sorensen, a neighbour. The doctor who had to come from Carman, arrived several

hours after my birth. Sadie Norene was born three years later - again the doctor arrived too late.

We lived 6 miles from Sperling, and 2 1/4 miles from Tremont School where we received our grade one to nine education. We either walked to school or rode in a two wheeled cart, sleigh or 'podnuk' cutter in winter. Every spring the spillway between our farm and the school ran with water to a depth of several feet. When we crossed in the cart we kids would have to hold up our feet as the water flowed into the cart.

Times were hard - Mother used to cook wheat for several days before serving it as breakfast cereal, apples were for Xmas and oranges hardly ever. One Easter my Dad skated to Sperling on the frozen ditches and bought us a dozen eggs for .60c for a treat.

Tremont Community Club provided entertainment in the way of debates, plays, cards and dances. All the family attended - when the young ones grew sleepy they were laid on the women's coats on stacked up desks in the corner. Music for dances was anything from a harmonica to 3 and 4 piece bands. Not to be forgotten was the annual Xmas concert. In the late 30's a night of skating in the closed in rink after a 6 mile ride by team was a treat - they even had music! It was nothing to walk a mile pulling a toboggan to coast on a straw stack.

My brother John Terrance was born (only child born in hospital) in 1938. At that time, we were still threshing with a threshing machine which my Dad and Uncle had built themselves.

Delores married Jack Killeen. She lives in Winnipeg. I married Russ McDowell, we farm at Sanford. Sadie married Rene Rose, she lives in Los Angeles. Terry is on the home farm with his wife Constance Elledge. Mother passed away in 1956 and later Dad married Margaret (Rose) Rogers. They reside in Sperling. Dad retired from farming in 1975 having farmed the same land for 58 consecutive years.

Uncle Walter's wife Lily did not stay in Canada long, and for years he lived a bachelor style life until he married Mary Margaret Grant in 1958. He passed away in 1972.



*Margaret and Jack Wurnnest with Mary and Walter Wurnnest.*



*Walter William Wurnnest (standing) John Peter Wurnnest (seated). Born at Elpaso, Illinois, farmed in Sperling area.*

## **ROBINSON STEWART YOUNG**

Hugh and Mary Anne Young came to Manitoba from Meaford, Ontario about 1900, with some of their grown family - 3 sons and a daughter. They lived first in the Garnett School area, settling later, south of Sperling on a quarter section, later buying another quarter section. Their son, John Young, died in 1903. Hugh Young (father) died in 1907. Son, Robinson Stewart, carried on the farming operations. Grace Elizabeth Young married John Wilson, a Sperling farmer. Robinson Stewart married Marion Ruth McKee (Sperling) in 1909. They had three children, Margaret, Hugh and Stewart. Marion Ruth died in 1916. Robinson's second marriage was to Clara Martin of Portage la Prairie, and they had two children: Charles Clayton and Phyllis Jean.

Robinson Young sold the farm to George Smith in 1919, and the Young family moved to Portage la Prairie. However, they returned in 1930 to Sperling to the original "Young" farm. Clayton finished his schooling in Sperling and Jean received all her education in Sperling School. Margaret married Browning Hooper, a farmer, of Sperling.

The Young boys, Hugh, Stewart and Clayton, served in the armed forces during World War II.

Mr. and Mrs. Young retired to live in Sperling in 1947; their son, Clayton, carrying on the farm.

Clayton married Audrey Garlick of Toronto, and the Young farm became home for them and their six children.

Robinson Stewart Young died November 30, 1961 and Mrs. Young on February 8, 1969. The "Young" farm was sold in 1967 to Trier Anderson, and is now owned by Ken Tjaden of Sperling.

## HISTORY OF THE CLAYTON YOUNG FAMILY

*submitted by the C. Young Family*

Charles Clayton Young, son of Robinson and Clara Young, and his wife Audrey lived on the Young farm (N.E. 114 17-6-2) south of Sperling. They had six children Sandra Lynn, Kerry Clayton, Clifford Bruce, Marleen May, Leigh Wayne and Dennis John, who spent most of their childhood in Sperling. They were active in Explorers, C.G.I.T., Cubs and Scouts.

Clayton was born on the home farm in 1919, and shortly after his father sold the farm and the family moved to Portage la Prairie. They lived there until 1930 when they returned to the farm at Sperling. Clayton attended school in Sperling, was a member of the United Church, served a term as president of the Sperling Legion, playing baseball and was a member of the curling club.



*Charles Clayton Young in his RCAF uniform.*

He enlisted in the R.C.A.F. in June 1940 and trained as an Air Gunner. Clayton had forty-five operational flights out of England and Malta and was a Flight-Lieutenant when discharged after the end of the war. He farmed from 1946-1955. The farm was sold to Trier Anderson in 1966.

Sandra now resides in California with her husband Bob and two children, Robin and Bryan. Kerry and his wife Valerie and son Randy live in Winnipeg. Bruce also lives in Winnipeg. Marleen is married to Glen Russell of Barnsley and lives in Calgary with three daughters, Lorie, Jane and Tricia. Leigh and Barbara, daughter of Bill and Frances Neilsen of Sperling, reside in Winnipeg. Dennis and his wife Cheryl, daughter of Jack and Leona Wilton of Roland, live in Carman.

Clayton now resides in Victoria and Audrey (now Mrs. Cliff Carr) lives in Carman.



*Early settlers, Charlie Peckover and Wm. Anderson.*

## DESCENDANTS OF EUGENE JOHNSON SR.

The Crouch Brothers, Alvin, Elmer and Chester arrived in Manitoba in 1907-08 from Fairbury and Bloomington, Illinois. They dealt in real estate, bought and sold land from Morris to Roland. Alvin returned to the States to bring back a carload of cattle and en route to Manitoba the train was derailed and he was killed. Elmer remained for a few years, then returned to the States to live. Chester Crouch was married to Cora Johnson and farmed in the Kane area. They had three sons: Ivan, Clairmont and Stanley. Their belongings came to Manitoba by freight train. When they arrived in Lowe Farm the tracks were only visible above the usual spring flood. The furniture sat on the box cars for a week and they finally unloaded it wading in water. The piano was dropped in the water but survived the ordeal.

Other members of the Johnson family to follow were first Ora Johnson who settled in Lowe Farm. Ora and Hazel had 3 children Ronald, Keitha and Don. Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Johnson Sr. came and made their home with Ora and Hazel. Ella Johnson was married to Tim Smith and their family was LaV ern, Melvin, Deane and Donna. Rula Johnson was married to Walter Hurt and their family was Hazel, Estelle and Kenneth. Lela Johnson married to Reather Cates arrived in Lowe Farm in 1916 and settled in Kane area. Their family was Bethel, Everette, Beryle, Ray, Patricia, Willeen and Virgil. Mark Johnson came in 1908, then returned to the U.S. and served overseas in the First World War. Mark came back to Manitoba in 1919 and settled on a farm north of Kane.

The Simpson Brothers, Charlie and Dewey came to Manitoba from Illinois in 1924 farming at Lowe Farm. They lived in the same house that Ora Johnson had lived in, on the west edge of town on Main St. when he arrived in Lowe Farm in 1908. Ora Johnson had returned to the States to live. Charlie Simpson married Hazel Hurt and in 1930 moved to Sperling, Manitoba and lived on a farm one mile east of Sperling. Walter Hurt moved to Sperling around the same time.

Reather Cates and family moved to Ohio in 1924, then coming back to Canada in 1926. They lived at Sperling on what was known as the Joe Grundler farm. It was on this farm that the tragedy of their home being destroyed by fire and Mrs. Cates and the three younger children burning to death.



*Early Sperling settlers.*

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