

Acknowledgement

This booklet was originally compiled by Mrs. Nelson Gilchrist for the Ridgeville Women's Institute about 1967. At that time she obtained information from Mr. W. E. Riach and Misses Frances and Edna Stewart. Mr. Ray Empey and Mr. L. H. Riach also contributed articles, information and help in the compilation of this booklet. I have used this information and added pictures that I have gathered over the years and have tried to update the information on our village history to 2010.

Carol Wilkinson

Through the Years.....



Pages from Ridgeville's History

Through the Years

Early history of the district

The Ridge from which this district obtained its name is believed to have been the eastern shore of a large pre-historic lake which extended westward to the Pembina Hills. The first occupants were the Indians, who used it as a highway between their hunting grounds. The “Crow Trail”, their usual route, which followed the shortest overland path between St. Paul and Winnipeg, passed along the western edge of the Ridge. Later the “Crow Trail” became the St. Paul freight road from the trains of Red River cars and sledges transporting Hudson’s Bay Company supplies from the south to Winnipeg. At the southern end of the Ridge, where the sod has not been turned, there are still visible traces of the deep ruts formed by the heavily laden Red River carts.

When the Dominion government acquired Rupertsland and the North-West Territories from the Hudson Bay Company in 1869, they initiated a vigorous “Settle-the-West” campaign, with the promise of building a transcontinental railway to link the west to the east and the offering of free homesteads. By 1873, the Ridge district had been surveyed. Initially, only the even numbered sections were offered free to homesteaders but by 1890, all other land excluding that reserved for schools, railroad and Hudson Bay Company was available for homesteading.

As home seekers arrived in Emerson from the south via the Red River boats, they were told of the Ridge to the east. Some of the most venturesome decided to cross the unbridged Bradley and Jo coulees and wade through miles of undrained flats to reach this Ridge. They were favorably impressed with the good soil and water, the potential fuel and shelter, and the ample wild fruit and game. All of which out-weighed the disadvantage of having to clear the land. It is known that there were homesteaders in 1873 but it appears they did not remain very long. By the mid-seventies, settlers from Eastern Canada had moved into the district. To these can be granted the honor of being the Ridges “Trail Blazers”.

The completion of the first railway in Manitoba from St. Boniface to Emerson in 1878, now known as the Soo Line, led to rapid development in Southern Manitoba. Settlers began to pour into this district in that year and some of the descendants of those homesteaders are still in the district. It was about this time that some of those settlers, referring to their new country homes as villas, resolved to add “ville” to the commonly used denotation of “Ridge” to give Ridgeville its present name.

With the arrival of the railway to Emerson from the south in 1879, all rail travel from Ontario became possible. This induced many homesteaders to come west and this district gained increasing numbers of settlers that year and in the following years. In fact, this influx of settlers continued until all available land on both the Ridge and the flats was filled.

The Laurier government's drive for settlers for the west resulted in several new ethnic groups moving into the district from Europe. By the late nineties, the flats had been drained and the community hay meadows became the home of a group of thrifty German settlers. To the east the hardy ambitious Ukrainians settled, reclaiming many abandoned homesteads. Both groups readily adapted to the difficult surroundings and soon prospered. Thus was added a mosaic of language and culture to this district and country.

Life of the Pioneers

In today's affluent society, it is difficult to visualize the privations and hardships these early settlers endured. Many who came to this land of "opportunities and prosperity" were young and in-experienced. Others had barely enough money to pay their transportation fees. The task of clearing and breaking the land and erecting buildings proved too much for some of them and they abandoned their homesteads and moved elsewhere—perhaps across the border or to the promising new sites in Saskatchewan. However, most of these newcomers possessed those very important characteristics so very essential to homesteaders – stamina and perseverance.

With the very few tools, and even less machinery they were able to bring with them, these pioneers began their struggle for survival and eventual success. Those who had hand plows and tools shared them with their neighbors. As soon as the first furrows were turned the seed was broadcast by hand, harvested with the cradle or scythe, and threshed with the flail. Thus the district had its beginning. There were very few sources of cash income for these early pioneers. Mr. Fitzgerald, an old country Englishman, located on the present L. Weiss farm) had more money at his disposal than the average settler. He acquired considerable land and kept numerous livestock and therefore employed several men the temporary railway built from Dominion City to the Ridgeville gravel pit (near R. From's yard) in 1879, for the purpose of hauling gravel to ballast the railroad from Emerson to St. Boniface, did provide local men with extra employment and income. Some managed to obtain employment at railway and construction work at Emerson which was in the midst of a building boom. However, when it became an established fact that Emerson would not become the "Gateway to the West", this building boom came to an abrupt stop in 1882.

Even though there was little cash available these early settlers lived well and independently. The Virgin soil grew fine samples of grain which they had ground into flour at the Gretna Mill, and later at either the Hudson Bay or Pocock Grist Mills at Emerson or the Hutterite Mill at Dominion City. Gardens provided them with plenty of nourishing vegetables. Wild fruit and game added variety to their menus. Fresh meat in the fall of the year was no problem as the stubble fields were full of prairie chickens, wild ducks and geese. Most of the farmers carried a shot gun with them while they ploughed. One of the early settlers said the wild geese were so thick and so large they chased him off the field before he could get his muzzle loader ready to shoot. The resourceful homemakers made their own candles, soap, yeast cakes and cheese. They sewed clothes for the entire family and knitted all the necessary apparel such as socks, mitts and other

wool garments. Some of them even made leather mitts and moccasins from hides the Indians tanned for them.

Some of the prime projects that most men participated in were the trips to the east for logs and lumber. Usually two or three teams traveled together but at times ten to twenty teams banded together to make this two or three day trip to Sundown or Menisino. During the day there was a great deal of heavy labor involved in the cutting, loading and sawing of the timber, but the social life at night in the camps compensated for the drudgery of the day. The log bunkhouses where they spent the night were well air-conditioned for the stars were clearly visible through the roof. Perhaps they were constructed in this manner for a good purpose; because it is told that the men assigned to the upper bunks would surely have suffocated from the intense heat of the blazing fire in the barrel-type heater, fed so lavishly with huge spruce and tamarack slabs. The generous supplies of pork and beans and steak which the men took with them on these trips, kept them whole and hearty until they returned,

The trials and tribulations were many and varied. Prairie fires were not too uncommon and wrought havoc many times. Since there were no grades to check a fire, settlers had to plough fire guards to protect their buildings and feed but many times these were not effective and much hay was burned. In one particular case, Mr. Madill left all his money in his shanty while he made a trip to Emerson. While he was away a fire swept in from Minnesota. Had not his observant neighbors rushed to the scene he would have lost everything as the fire had jumped the guard and approached the buildings just as the neighbors arrived. In another instance four old friends, Phillips, Adams, Robbins and Coudill, who filed on a section together near the boundary in 1879, lost all their buildings, stock and crops in a devastating prairie fire. This so discouraged them that only Phillips had the tenacity to start again. Then there was the year, when their crop of wheat, small as it may have been, froze. This wheat when ground into flour at the grist mills, made very poor bread – dark, sticky and unpalatable. Mr. J. Morrison described it as “Bread that would not rise”. But the previous hardships were of minor significance compared to the drought of 1890. No rain fell from spring until fall. What little crop that grew, was cut with a mower. It was known as the “winter of no butter”. Some feed for the livestock was obtained from the United States and seed for next spring was imported by the Government. Fortunately the bountiful crop of 1891 compensated for the previous year’s losses.

During the early days, Emerson was the nearest town, and the only market for surplus farm products. The prices for these were very low. The price of eggs varied from eight to 12 cents a dozen. Hogs were dressed at home and sold for six cents a pound. Those who had cows set the milk in flat pans to rise. They skimmed the cream by hand and made butter in either crock or wooden dash churns. During the winter the butter was colored with strained carrot or golden-rod juice for a better appearance. Butter for sale, was packed in fifteen to fifty pound tubs and considered well sold at twelve cents a pound. Wheat averaged from thirty-six to forty-five cents a bushel.

In the late nineties life became less wearisome as new conveniences were added both indoors and out. Housewives were overjoyed at the installation of such luxuries as the cream separator and the revolving churn. The men folk welcomed the introduction of more modern machinery which greatly assisted them in the cultivation of more land. The gatling gun and broadcast seeder were replaced by drills. The portable steam thresher soon supplanted the old horse-power threshing machines. Doubtless the first wire, followed by the twine binder, created a great sensation in the district but no less so than the arrival of the first large steam traction engine and thresher. When threshing from the stook began, the cage wagon racks were introduced. The year 1895 was acclaimed as a bumper crop of wheat. Those farmers with more land under cultivation spent many long hours on the road from fall until spring hauling their bountiful crop to the Wright elevator, built in 1889 in Emerson. It was sold at thirty-three cents a bushel. This period became known as the "horse and buggy" days. There was as much status attached to the acquisition of a brand new buggy as there is in the present day to the purchase of a new car.

Before the arrival of the railroad to Ridgeville the Pedlar Wagon played a very important role in the life of the community during the summer months. The wagons were of light construction spring mounted, air conditioned, and propelled by a "Two Horse Power" motor. Average speed was six miles per hour. Mr. John Whitman and George Hinton, merchants from Emerson and Messrs. Agnew, Morkill and Scott of Dominion City, operated these wagons for a number of years. They supplied the farmers with groceries, hardware, dry goods, fancy dresses and all foundation garments. Trips were made every week and they accepted the farmer's butter and eggs in trade. This saved the people many long trips to town in the busy seasons.

In spite of hardships a very delightful social life had developed. Visiting was considered a social duty and it was not unusual to bundle the entire family into a wagon or sleigh and drive miles to pay an unexpected call to friends or relatives. After a pleasant visit the callers were not permitted to leave before they were well dined on delicious simple home-made food. People traveled surprising distances in the summer to attend picnics. At a community picnic at the Oatway farm in Greenridge, a sudden thunderstorm deposited four to five inches of snow. Immediately after the sun blazed forth in all its glory, creating a very undesirable footing for the fine ladies to swish through with their voluminous starched petticoats and skirts. Winters had their quilting parties for the ladies and pigeon shoots and hockey for the men. House parties and dances were other forms of relaxation. Local talent on the violin and parlor organ supplied the music for the quadrilles and the occasional Minuet or Schottische,. With the turn of the century, when the waltz and two-step were introduced, they were appropriately called round dances.

Growth of Ridgeville



With the arrival of the railway at Ridgeville in 1902, the hopes and dreams of the pioneers were realized. The town sprang up like a mushroom. The first wheat was loaded in railroad cars from the siding that fall, since the two elevators that were being erected were not yet completed. The next year the first store – Roy Whitman's, a



The Roy Whiman store -
under construction in 1903



The elevators, Monarch Lumber yard
and Livery
stable have been constructed.

lumberyard, and livery stable were built. Then followed the McGirr and Hinton store (near T. Lenton's residence, a blacksmith shop, I. Rosenstock store, and an implement warehouse. The post office was transferred to the village. The station, section house and the Klempke Hotel (on T. Lenton's yard) were completed. The Anglican Church and several homes sprang up. The district was being fairly well served by the start that been made. This was the beginning of the end of the pioneer stage.



Roy Whitman's store -open for business

After a few years' lull in construction, building started again. In 1911, the first closed skating rink, financed by local contributions and built by free labor, was added to the scene. In the same year fire destroyed the hotel, and the second one was built slight north of the original. In 1912 the erection of the Ridgeville Hall by



The first Ridgeville Hall, built in 1912 and replaced in 1967. It still exists on the former Art Schultz farm south of Ridgeville on the 2-mile road.

contributions of cash and labor from the community added to the social life of the district. Fire struck again in 1914, destroying three adjacent business quarters, namely the W. H. Post International implement warehouse, the Rosenstock Store and the hotel. The store was rebuilt, the implement business was re-established across the street but it was many years before Ridgeville could boast of another hotel.

The joys of the bumper crop of 1915 were minimized by the enlisting of the young men for military service in the First World War. As an added contribution to the war effort the collapsed skating rink was sold and a jumble

sale was held which netted \$730.00.

At the close of the hostilities, Model T. Fords, Overland and Gray Dort cars and Titan tractors were no longer novelties in the district. Inflationary prices came with the end of the war. Sugar sold for \$24.00 per hundred pounds. Price of land leaped sky-high.



The Banque d'Hochelga, probably Ridgeville's one and only bank, was located in the lumber yard. Lily (Wikinson) Woods was an employee there.

district's first and only banking service was instituted, when a sub-agency of the Banque d'Hochelega was established in the office of the Monarch Lumber Company. This service was discontinued in 1923.

An improvement to the village in 1920 was the completion of the first quarter mile of cement sidewalks. In 1922 lightning struck the livery barn, burning it, the original blacksmith shop serving then as a machine warehouse, the Mew residence and the Post International warehouse. The residence was re-built and in the next year a new cement garage and warehouse was erected by Mr. Post. The need for a shelter to house the teams driven to town in the winter, resulted in the building of the community horse shed in 1923. This held 28 teams tied in proper stalls, plus many more tied at random to any available post, on special occasions, as community concerts, skating or hockey nights.

The first two elevators built in 1902 by Canadian Elevator Co. and Geo. Pocock and Sons were sold to the Manitoba Governments in 1911. In the next year they were rented to the Grain Growers Grain Co. and N. M. Paterson. Eventually both became the property of Patersons, and were replaced by modern elevators in 1935 and 1947.



Those who sold farms to the government for the Soldier Settlement Board made a fortune. During the winter of 1920, many of the local farmers were able to transport and sell their wheat to the United States for record breaking prices. This was hauled to Orleans, Minnesota over the St. Paul Trail in -40 degree weather! Frozen noses were a common sight, but said Mr. Bert

Seward, "I don't mind losing a chunk off my nose if I can get \$3.50 for a bushel of wheat." It was at this time about 1921 that the

Paterson elevators and the CN Station on the right. The station closed in 1959 and the building was sold in 1966 to Roy Rettalerand in April 1967 it was moved to his farm where it still exists. Station agents over the years were: Messrs, Sinclair, Skerrat, H. Cox, Wolfe, J. Chapman, S. Hicks, Wm Adlam,

The newer elevator
(built in 1947 after
the railway line was
abandoned in 1980.
It sat in disrepair
for many years till,
in 2009, it was
restored and being
used to win feed for



Sadly it was reduced to a
pile of rubble on April 8,
2010

The Riach Bros. Lumber Yard was originally started in 1902 by the Canadian Elevator Co., affiliated with the Monarch Lumber Co. Some years later the former company withdrew from the affiliation. In 1935 the business was sold to Mr. W. E. Riach, who had been employed there as yard manager for sixteen years. In 1938 the business was increased by the addition of the fuel agency. Upon Mr. Riach's retirement in 1947, the business was transferred to his sons who rebuilt in 1955. In 1956 a Pool Room was established in the basement. Included in this family enterprises now are several custom trucks and two farms.



In 1968 Riach Bros. was dissolved and Duaine and Lynn Riach became the new owners. It is still in operation in 2010 together with their son Kyle. Later in the year, the business was purchased by Mrs. Christine Kilby.

In

1937 Mr. Ted Walters started his garage business in the Albert Wilkinson garage. In 1946 he purchased the Post garage and served the district until his move to Emerson in 1960. The building has remained vacant since then.



Ted Walter's garage built in 1932 by W. H. Post who had been in the machine business from 1911-45 when Ted purchased the business.



The Ted Walter's garage as it appears today - more or less. The interior has been cleaned out, houses a children's playground and serves as an outdoor patio area for the Club as needed.

The present Agricultural Repair Shop, owned by Mr. John Dzioba, was built in 1938 by Mr. A. Ingram who operated it for three years before selling to Mr. Dzioba. Prior to this Mr. Ingram had been blacksmithing in the Laufersweiler shop since 1930. Mr. Ingram is well remembered in the district as being the strongest promoter for the building of Ridgeville's first Curling Rink.



The
Agricultural
Repair Shop -
built by
"Scotty"
Ingram, then
owned by John
Dzioba, Ron
Spence and
finally Peter

Picture courtesy of manitobaphotos.com

The Eichmann's came to Ridgeville in 1919 and took charge of the livery barn and a little later he built his large home (on the Wm. Wachna site). For many years this house was known as Eichmann's Boarding House. In 1943 they sold to Albert Wilkinson. Some years later this was demolished by fire and the Wilkinson's re-located on the farm now owned by Gordon Goetz (later John Rempel, Darren Seward in 2010).

Mr. R. Laufersweiler began his blacksmithing in rented quarters in 1910. In 1913 he began building his own home and business buildings and continued blacksmithing until 1930. In 1926 he started trucking cream to Noyes, Minn. with a Model T Ford. During the years this enterprise expanded to reach a maximum fleet of seven modern cream trucks. In 1937 he opened a garage. In 1948-49 the business premises were extended and remodeled. In 1952, Len and Walter Laufersweiler provided the district with a large, fully modern Supermarket. Through the years they served the public with several restaurants. The business was carried on by the family until 1966 when the cream trucking business was sold to Mr. Nickel.

Mr. Harry Lenton accepted the Imperial Oil Agency in 1925 from the former agent, Mr. E. Post. In 1930 he erected the present place of business when he assumed the Massey Harris machine dealership. A few years later he enlarged the business premises. His son Henry worked for his father until he joined the Air Force. After the War, his son Tom entered the business which was recently extended to include Engro Fertilizer. In 1966 Mr. H. Lenton officially retired and the business is now carried on by W. T. Lenton and Son. Without any previous formal training Mr. Harry Lenton began his colorful career as auctioneer with the first auction sale at C. Madill's in 1921. He has continued in this trade until the present day.



Lenton's Service Station
Taken over by Tom Lenton in 1966 and later by his son

Norm's Service was acquired by Mr. Grier in 1962 from Mr. Henry Lenton who had built the garage and show room in 1946. Mr. Lenton operated this until he rented it to Mr. Min Namba in 1960.

Norman Grier owned the garage from 1962-1986 after which his son Glenn took over. Robert Schultz then purchased it and it remained in business until 2001.



After 32 years without a hotel, one was again erected by Mr. Mike Fostey and Son in 1946 that operated it until 1951. After a succession of changes of ownership, it was acquired by Mr. Ed Gretschan in 1961. He did considerable remodeling and opened Ridgeville's first Beverage Room in 1962. In 1964 fire destroyed an extensive part of the building. After a short period this was rebuilt and remodeled to the present modern state, now known as the Ridgeville Restaurant and Beverage Room.



A previous hotel, The Palmerston, was struck by lightning and burned in 1914. After the Fostey's, Ed Gretschan was the owner. It was damaged by fire in 1964, rebuilt and moved to the corner of Hwys. 201 & 59. Later owners were Fran and Willie Laniuk. It succumbed

The general store built by I. Rosenstock in 1914 was sold to Mr. Mike Fostey in 1916. He served the district with his store, ice-cream parlor and butcher shop until 1948 when he sold to Mr. Onysko. After a few months, it was resold to Mr. G. Kautz who operated it until 1957. This building was purchased by the community and demolished in 1960. The proceeds from saleable lumber were added to the Hall Fund.



Ridgeville's first store completed in 1903 by Mr. Roy Whitman, passed through a series of changes in ownership – from Whitman to Heath, to Clifford, to George Seward, to Whitman, to J. Rosenstock and Stoffmann to Whitman and then sold to John Dolynchuk in 1943. In the following year the building was destroyed by fire. One year after, a completely new modern structure replaced the old structure. This was purchased by John Tanchak in 1946

In November, 1937 Herman Ratchinsky opened his Café (located near present restaurant). Later this was sold to

Albert Wilkinson who moved it to a site near the Brown residence (present Rick Beeman home) where it served again as a restaurant. In 1947 it was purchased by Tom Lenton who converted it into a home. It was then moved to its present location and is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Lenton. Since then it was owned by John and Carol Andrusyk, Cliff Wilkinson and presently (2010) by John Doerksen.

Ridgeville likely taken from the top of an elevator. Just below is the Lumber Yard. Across the street is the Roy Whitman store, the Gerhard Kautz, store, the hotel. And the Henry Lenton garage with Tom Lenton's Imperail Oil dealership is just visible on the right.



East side of the street about 1947. At the top is Dolynchuk's Store (Tanchak Store later), Mike Fostey's Store (later Kautz'), the Ridgeville Hotel, Henry Lenton's Garage



West side of the street about 1947. W.E. Riach's Lumber Yard , Paterson elevator built in 1935

Post Office

In the early days of the Ridge, settlers obtained their mail at Emerson. The first post office at Ridgeville was established at the Bidlake home (later known as Weincke farm north and west of Billy Wilkinson's – near five-mile road). It was then transferred to the home of McMillan (Rzepka home). When this farm was purchased by Mr. J. Seward, they retained the Post Office for a short time. From there it was moved to Wm. Wilkinson farm (present Johnson home, later owned by Sid Wilkinson) where it remained until the village had its beginning. During these years the mail was transported from Emerson to eastern points by gig. When the railroad arrived and the village developed, the Post Office was transferred to the McGirr and Hinton store. Soon after it was moved to the Whitman store where it remained for many years. For a short period it was located in Fostey's Ice Cream Parlor, with Mr. McCoomb as postmaster. In 1929 it was transferred to the Stringer residence with Mrs. Stringer serving as Post Mistress for thirty-three years. The transfer to the Brown home took place in 1962. When the Browns retired in 1976 the post office moved back to the store, then owned by Andy Grier. In 1977 Eileen Spence purchased the store and became the new Post Mistress, a post she held till 1998. Although the store closed, the Post Office remained in this building and the present day (2010) Post Mistress is Louise Nicole Reimer.

Ridgeville Postmasters

John Bidlake	November 1, 1879 – May 29, 1880
Gerald Fasey Fitzgerald	August 2, 1880 – June 4, 1882
Robert McMillan	June 6, 1883 – October 12, 1886
William Wilkinson	April 1, 1887 – January 1, 1904
George W. Hinton	February 2, 1904 – March 12, 1906
Roy Whitman	June 1, 1906 – April 19, 1910
A. W. Heath	September 1, 1910 – November 11, 1911
H. B. Clifford	March 26, 1912 - October 1919
W. H. Wilkinson	January 20, 1920 – March 12, 1920
George Seward	April 21, 1920 – October 3, 1922
Roy Whitman	January 1, 1923 – July 22, 1927
Thomas McComb	December 17, 1927 – April 18, 1928
Arthur L. Stringer	August 21, 1928 – October 28, 1928
Mrs. Beatrice Stringer	April 4, 1929 – June 1952
Walter J. Brown	July 17, 1962 – May 15, 1976
Andrew F. Grier	May 15, 1976 – September 1, 1977
Mrs. Eileen Spence	September 9, 1977 – April 30, 1998
Mrs. Louise Reimer	May 1, 1998 - Present

Transportation and Communication

The spring of 1910 saw the dreams of the community come true when a group of C.N.R. surveyors moved in to survey the route that was to connect Emerson and South Junction on the main line of the C.N.R. The first survey line ran from Emerson to Friedensthal and then east on the three-mile road. This was changed and another line was made from Friedensthal, one hundred and forty rods north and then east. A half interest was taken on forty acres on Mr. Empey's farm for a town site. However political influence changed the route again to its present position and the building of the railroad commenced. This provided the district with daily service for many years. During the winter of 1908 the railroad east of Emerson became blocked with snow and was not opened until May. Since the Pocock;s were not able to move the grain from their elevator at Ridgeville, it proved very disastrous to them. With the advent of the transfer service and farm trucks competition forced the railroad to curtail its service to four days a week and finally to two days a week. The mail which it had transported during all the years began to be picked up and delivered by mail truck in 1952. The station agents who served here were: Messrs. Sinclair, Skerrat, Sinclair, H. Cox, Wolfe, J. Chapman, S. Hicks, Wm Adlam, and J. Hicks. With the transferal of J. Hicks in 1959, Ridgeville bid farewell to its last station agent. In 1966 the station house was sold and in April, 1967 it was moved to become a farm house. The section foremen were: Messrs. Horde, A. Wilson, Stadiuk, G. Russell, "Dutch" Hay, Kereliuk, Pylipiuk, Falk, M. Pamula, Anina and Nestor Bially.

In 1930, transportation in the district was supplemented by the introduction of the first transfer service, owned and operated by Mr. Les Ramsey. Three years later. W. Kirkpatrick began to serve this locality with his transfer. In 1943 he sold to Mr. Fred Felsch, who carried on the business until the time of sale to J. Krymal in 1948. Two years later. Mrs. William Wachna bought the business and has extended his services from one truck to four.

In 1934 a bus line from Vita to Winnipeg via Emerson provided Ridgeville with daily bus service to and from Winnipeg. This did not prove very successful and was soon discontinued.

The first graded road from Ridgeville to Emerson was built by Mr. Coutts along the International border with an elevator grader drawn by horses. After a number of years the two-mile road was graded and served as the main road to Emerson for many years. Before the railroad came to Ridgeville, most of the grain was moved over this road.

Ridgeville's first access to a highway came about 1945 when the four and a half miles north of town were graveled, linking it to the Morden-Sprague highway. In the following year the two-mile road to Emerson was graveled. Later the gravel road to Tolstoi connected Ridgeville to Highway 59.

The first telephone at the Ridge was located in the McGirr-Hinton store. The first telephone on a farm was at the Wm. Lindsay home. Shortly after, one was installed at the Empey farm, the services of which were offered free to local people wishing to use it.

The building of telephone lines continued until the entire district was served. A severe sleet and ice storm in the early winter of 1930 severely damaged miles and miles of telephone lines and poles. The telephone crew, transported by team and bob sleigh spent seven weeks in -20 degree weather, repairing the damage. This threat from storm damage was eliminated in 1964 by placing telephone lines underground.

Churches & Cemetery

As soon as their homes were constructed the pioneer concentrated on the building of a church. Until the realization of this, church services were held in the larger homes. The population at that tie included Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans, Salvation Army and Presbyterians.



The traveling church! This is the church that started north of Ridgeville, moved south of town, then to the north side of town and finally to just north of where the present Centennial Hall is located. It was finally annexed to the Greenridge United Church in 1976.

In 1881 the first non-denominational church was built and paid for by the people of all Protestant faiths. This was located two miles north of Ridgeville, just north of Steve Timchuk's house. It was built of one ply lumber and paper and was completed in 1889 when J. Craig plastered it and built the brick chimney. During the cold weather, the school across the road was used for church services, until the church was winterized. Later this became the Methodist Church and was moved to the hill south of town near the

Scheibe home in 1897. In 1921 the Methodists and Presbyterians voted in favor of union and this church then assumed the name of the United Church of Ridgeville. In 1947 it was moved to the northern end of the village on a lot donated by Mrs. Wm. Stowe (where the present ball diamond is). This proved unsatisfactory and was then transferred to its present location in 1958 (just north of the present Centennial Hall). During the last two decades many improvements have been made on the church as a foundation under it, new shingles, new wallboard on the interior and the installation of electricity. In 1958 an electric organ was installed in memory of George Seward. The 80th Anniversary of the Church was celebrated in 1961. IN 1976 the church was moved once again, to Greenridge this time where it was annexed to their church and used as a Sunday School room till the building of their new church.

In 1897, after the first church was moved, the Salvation Army built a hall on the same site. The services led by Mr. and Mrs. Riach were held there for several years.

The building of the Anglican Church in 1906 gave the new hamlet a touch of grace and permanence. In 1965 a Parish Hall was added to the north-east corner of the building. Renovations in the following two years included a remodeled chancel, and the erection of a new steeple to replace the one that had been blown down by a wind storm.



In 1967 a stained glass window donated by Mr. Jack Stringer was dedicated in memory of William and Rose Wilkinson and family. Two other dedications followed: silk veil burses for use in Holy Communion, donated by Mrs. L. Stringer in loving memory of her husband, Charles Stringer, and a Memorial Book, in loving memory of Dora Ellen Lenton, donated by her

husband, Harry Lenton and family.



Laura Goetz, Ethel Lindsay
and Ruth Kerda



The church was beautifully
decorated for Thanksgiving



Interior of St. Mary's Anglican Church. The stained glass window at the front was dedicated to William and Rose Wilkinson



St. Mary's Anglican Church as it appears in 2010. It supposedly was sold to a Baptist group headed by Ken Nedohin but they decided against the needed repairs and gave it back to the municipality. It now has supposedly been sold to Dennis Freeman

The South Ridge Cemetery located one and a half miles south and one mile east of the village of Ridgeville, was donated by Mr. Robert Coats to be used as a cemetery for all Christian denominations. During the summer months it is one of the beauty spots in the community with its beautiful flowers and lilac hedge. These lilacs were planted by Mrs. J. Empey and



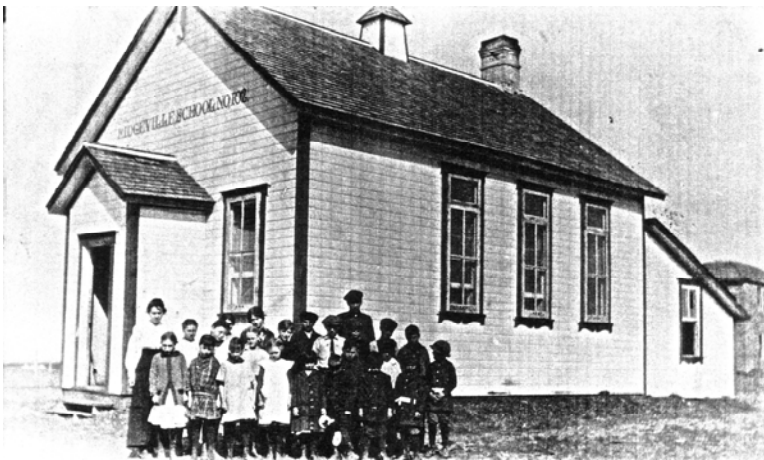
South Ridge Cemetery

were brought from her parent's home at Bathgate, North Dakota.



A unique headstone at the SouthRidge Cemetery. It is located in the bush on the east side of the cemetery and marks the graves of Mary Edna Hermiston 1886, aged 15 and James Clayton Hermiston 1889, aged 3. These are two of the

Schools



First school built 1 ½ miles north of Ridgeville about 1885 and moved in 1914 to Ridgeville

The Ridgeville School District was organized in 1880 but it seems classes were conducted only in the summer months. Apparently teacher's salaries and other expenses must have been paid by local funds for it was not until 1885 that the first Provincial Grant of \$10 was made to the Ridgeville School. The school was located on the

hill north of Ridgeville, across the road from the Timchuk residence with the assumption that this would become the future town site. In 1914 this building

was moved to the present school site. As the enrolment increased, reaching a high of 52 in 1926, it was deemed necessary to enlarge the school by adding a new section to the north end of the classroom in that year. The trustees, staunch supporters of better educational opportunities for the children, worked unceasingly until in 1928 they were able to add another classroom which was the beginning of the Ridgeville High School.

Four students in Gr. IX were enrolled as the first high school class that year. Springbank and Emerado School Districts consolidated with Ridgeville which accounted for the erection of the present building. Ridgeville now boasted a two-room high school, Gr. XII inclusive. School vans were introduced to transport children to and from school.

Second school.
No one today
remembers if it
was the old
school with the
added rooms or
a new
construction.



With the consolidation of Overstone S.D. in 1961, the Overstone school was moved to the Ridgeville school site to serve as a classroom for Gr. 1-3. The record high enrolment of 130 pupils in the school was reached in 1963. In 1966 the Zelota S.D consolidated with Ridgeville. S.D.

With the vote finally accepting the Boundary Division in 1966, the Ridgeville High School ceased to exist and the high school students were transported to the Emerson High School. In the March referendum, 1967, the Boundary Division accepted the single board system. At present the elementary grades are occupying five class rooms available in the school.

Further consolidation occurred in 1972 when Ridgeville students moved to Dominion City when the new Roseau Valley Collegiate was constructed. The new school that was built in Ridgeville, just west of the original school, about 1958 now sits vacant.



**Third school - built
about 1958. Marci
Wachna in the**



Back - Elmer Stark, Willis Wilkinson, Jerry Schoffer, Miss Lee,
Teacher
3rd - Willard (Albert) Boehler, Bev Russell, Allan Ingram, Faye
Pickell, Lilly Boehler, Dolly Ratchinsky
2nd - Annie Kostel, Mildred Riach, Irene Russell, Josie Schoffer,
Frances Bisaski
1st - Ralph Foster, Ken Ingram (?), Joe Rzenka, Ardith Wilkinson



Pauline Dzioba, Dorothy Lindsay behind Pauline, Laura
Lenton, Ethel Stringer, Lillie Boehler, Eileen Collins,
Alice Schultz, Avis Stowe, Nancy Wilkinson



Back row: Ed Ingram, Pete Stowe, Ross Collins,
Billy Wilkinson
Front Row: Keith Hicks, Bruce Ingram, Art
Schwark, Ellery Post, Bruce Empey



Back row (l-r) - Ardith Wilkinson, Lawrence Dzioba, Florence Schoffer, Mildred Riach, Willard Boehler, Irene Russell, Frances Bziaski, Josie Schoffer, Bev Russell, Mary Kostel, Miss Scheibe, Albert Boehler, Joe Rzepka
Second row - Joe Kostel, Ernie Boehler, Harvey Russell, Roy Pickell, Mary Elleck, Marjorie Laufersweiler, Audrey Schoffer, Lawrence Boehler, Earl Pickell
Front row - Wayne Lenton, Shirley Laufersweiler, Audrey Laufersweiler, Delores Wilkinson, Irene Dzioba, Reggie



About 1956

Front row: Jack Falk, Dale Seward, Donald Walters, Larrry Harder, Charlotte Timchuk, Louise Pott, Gayle Riach, Bonnie Schultz

2nd row: Rodney Klapka, Lorne Timchuk, Duaine Riach, Brian Riach, Terry Lindsay, Glenn Lenton, Dennis Casper, Elda Harder, Darlene Schultz



Sunday School Picnic

Back row: Bryce Chubaty, Brian Riach, Bobby Lindsay, Lynn Hicks, Carolyn Riach, ?, Duaine Riach, Glenn Lenton

2nd row" Aaron Lindsay, Karen Riach, Myrna Chubaty, Gayle Riach, Cheryl Lenton, Marilyn Riach, Debbie Lenton, Peggy Lenton, Betty Wyche?, Sherry Wilkinson

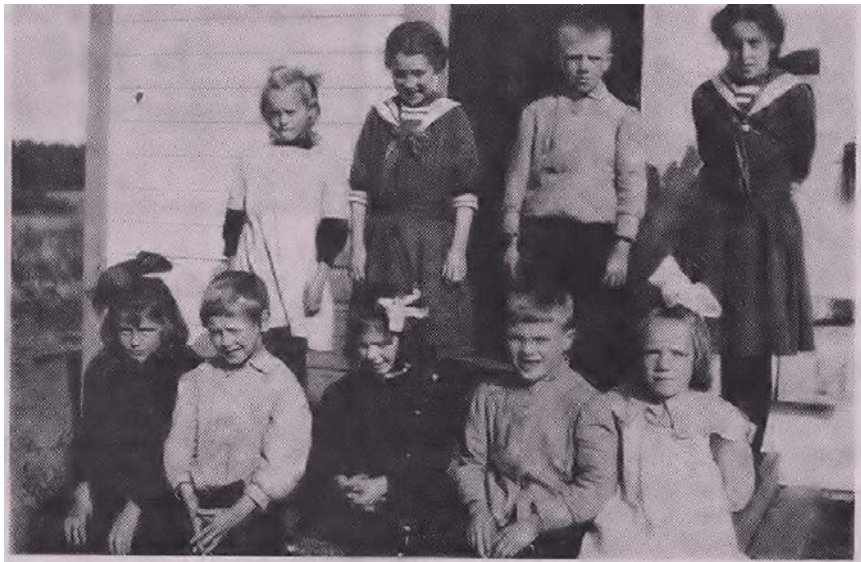
Front row: Marvin Wilkinson, Brent Chubaty, Sid Wilkinson, ?, Les Wilkinson, Allan Wilkinson



Back row: Lillian Weiss, Eleanor Zilkie,
Lillie Boehler?
2nd row: Dorothy Lindsay, Eileen Collins,
Alice Schultz, Laura Lenton
Front row: Ethel Stringer, Nancy Wilkerson



Back row: Alma Scheibe, Teenie
Timchuk, Louise Laufersweiler
2nd row: Pauline Timchuk, Adeline
Ratchinsky, Louise Seward
Front row: Eleanor Kiel, Betty Post,
Edna Eichmann, Eleanor Riach



The Overstone School class of 1914. Back row, left to right, are: Dolly Mew, Susie Smith, Bill Coates and Jean Smith. Front row: Helen Gilchrist, Jim Smith, Emma Melboro, Clifford and Ruth Coates.



Grades 3 & 4 - 1970-71

Teacher, Reesa Tolchinsky, Lawrence Knutson, Perry Schultz, Donald Bially, Terry Steg, Marcia Wachna, Tim Wilkinson, Gary Suppes, Donald Pott, Kevin Spence

Front - Cindy Grier, Belinda Spence, Dianne Froom, Wanda



Irwin, Shelley Lindsay, Beverley Grier, Candace Grier,
Lesley Grier, Delores Kohut, Evelyn Pott

Grades 1 & 2 - 1970 - 71

Back - Robert Spence, Kenten Grier, Jim Dickson, Tim
Chubaty, Kevin Johnson, Douglas Jack, Keith Yahnke

2nd - Bruce Badgley, Tracey Hildebrand, John Pamula, Gwen Mayne, Vincent Edel, Ken Fedorchuk, Rick Wilkinson, Jeff Hutt

Front - Dianne Jahnke, Carol Pott, Barb Nickel, Tracey Brown, Donna Kein, Patti Riach, Janice Hildebrandt, Annette Podolsky

In the Thirties

During the great depression of the thirties, this district suffered with other regions. Grain elevators were glutted with surplus grain and farmers received next to no income for their products. However, the two popular songs of those days “Hallelujah I’m a Bum” and “It’s a long way to the Soup-line” were not applicable here, for farmers managed to feed their families and keep them employed. In 1930 a tornado demolished the Friedensthal Lutheran Church adding to the other hardships.

However by united effort an open air skating rink and one sheet curling rink were built east of Tanchak’s store. (east of today’s Post Office) The waiting room was always packed to capacity with skaters, curlers and spectators. It was in the mid-thirties that Ridgeville became known in south-eastern Manitoba as the home of the “Ball Champs”. Under the capable management of Jim Chapman, the men’s baseball team captured most of the first prizes at Sport’s Days as well as winning the Challenge Trophy and the Beaubien Cup in the Roseau River League. The girl’s softball team, managed by Mrs. Beatrice Stringer, was not excelled by the men’s team and also brought home the first prize honors. For three consecutive years they were the victors of all the games they played until they finally met “their Waterloo” in a game against Greenridge at a Garden Party held at the Collin’s home. A few years later, Keith Hicks, ably coached by two high school principals, Harry Sharpe and F. Jacobs, won the Provincial Award for Junior Boys’ High Jump.

This was the era when young people at the Ridge were plentiful. The Young People’s Organization under the leadership of Mr. B. Empey, met in the United Church, and was most active. Their annual presentation of three plays at home and in neighboring halls proved both educational and entertaining. House parties in the winter catered to fifty or more local young folks. The throngs that attended the regular dances in the hall always reported the gayest of times.

Ridgeville Women’s Institute (from the Franklin History Book)

On October 18, 1939 23 women from Ridgeville and surrounding district met to organize Ridgeville’s first Women’s Institute. Mr. S. R. Root of Emerson presided.

The first president was Mrs. Ray Empey, first vice-president was Mrs. Roy Post, second-vice-president, Miss Annie Collins, secretary – Mrs. Roy Whitman and treasurer, Mrs. Ezra Post.

Meetings were held the second Wednesday of each month. At the present, they are still held at that time. Most meetings were held at the home of Mrs. E. Eichman. She was given 35 cents for the use of her home. Later, meetings took place at the Ridgeville Curling Club Room and now are held at members' homes.

In the early 1940s our W.I. concerned itself with projects related to war work. Much sewing, knitting and quilting was done regularly for the Red Cross. Used clothing was collected and sent to Britain. Boxes of home baking, socks, etc, were sent to our local boys overseas.

Whist drives were a popular way of raising money during the first years, also pie socials, rummage sales, hobo teas, variety programs and shadow socials. Today's means of raising money are catering to banquets, sales and business meetings.

Our present membership is 17 (in 1983). The following are the executive for 1982: President – Iris Wachna, Vice_President – Lee Chubaty, Secretary – Louise Lenton, Treasurer – Mildred Weiss, Board Member – Louise Lenton.

We work, learn, laugh together, car and share – always working for the main objective – Home and Country.

After many years serving their community, the Ridgeville W.I. made the difficult decision, due to lack of membership, to disband in 1993.



Ridgeville W.I. -
50th Anniversary - 1989
Front row: (l-r) - Agnes
Zilkie, Ruth Hicks, Edna
Hicks, Nora Johnston
Middle row: Doris Tanchak,
Alvina Strege, Sadie Froom,
Lillian Schultz, Avis Riach,
Lillian Dansereau, Juel
Pickell, Lil Wilkinson, Lil
Schultz
Back row: Faye Schultz,
Betty Turner, Lorraine
Riach, Shirtley (Solar)
Maurice, Evelyn Lochhead,
Anna Casper

War 7 Post-war Years

During the World War II, various organizations contributed to the war effort. At the end of the conflict those who returned were honored at a banquet and presented with a ring.

An engraved plaque was erected in front of the Post Office in memory of those who had paid the supreme sacrifice in the two World Wars.

In 1949 the three-sheet Curling Rink was built followed by an open air Skating Rink many years later. Due to rural electrification, the Hydro was turned on in Ridgeville November 29, 1949. In June, 1954 a wind of near gale force that blew all night uprooted trees, moved buildings and demolished some turkey barns. It was about this time that the 4-H movement had its beginning with a Clothing Club. This has expanded to include beef, seed and Home Economics clubs. The 13th consecutive Achievement Day was held in the Woodmore Hall in May

Good prices for farm products after the last war accounted for much building on both the farms and village, and the acquisition of modern machinery on the farms. However, with the low quota stipulations more farmers turned to diversified farming as a means of feeding the grain they could not sell. Larger operations of cattle, hogs and poultry were seen in the district.

Jack Gilchrist was the pioneer of the turkey industry at Ridgeville starting with a thousand poults in 1947. He was quickly followed by others and by 1957 there were thirty producers in the district, reaching the peak production of 38,900 turkeys. Ridgeville was then dubbed the turkey capital of Manitoba. The first few years the birds were dry hand-picked at home. Then the dressing graduated to the semi-scald and plucker, also operated on the farm. Both methods produced the "New York Dressed" turkey. With the growth of the industry, live turkeys were then shipped to killing plants and later to the modern killing and eviscerating plants to supply the housewife with an "Oven-Ready" bird. John Tanchak, the largest grower in the district, started in 1957 and reached his maximum production of 28 thousand in 1963. After 1947 the turkey industry began to decline. Each year thereafter, due to the easing of grain surpluses, improved cattle prices and mainly to the decrease of turkey prices and the increase of feed prices, more turkey growers dropped out until in 1967 there are five producers carrying on the industry with approximately thirty-thousand poults.

The Emerson Electoral Division was established in 1879. Citizens at the Ridge have always taken an interest in politics during the years but in the past decade, elections have created strong political views in the district. In recent elections, reporters have referred to Ridgeville as the smallest dot on the map but the "hottest place" in Manitoba. Mr. Herbert Wright, Liberal, was the first Ridgevillite to be elected to the Manitoba Legislature in 1936 to serve until the next election in 1941 when J. H. Solomon, Liberal, was elected. When Mr. Solomon was appointed Judge, he resigned his seat, and Ridgeville again became well represented when Mr. J. P. Tanchak, Liberal Progressive, was elected in the by election in November 1957. In four consecutive elections, June 1958, May 1959, December 1962 and June 1966, Mr. Tanchak was re-elected.



Charlie Stringer's house - behind the



Canada's 98th birthday, July 1, 1965, will long be remembered at Ridgeville as the day the twin tornadoes struck the town! The funnel-shaped clouds dipped down for a few brief moments just before the supper hour. The more forceful twister which concentrated on the southern end of the village shifted a house on its foundation, demolished sheds and garages and angrily uprooted trees at Len Laufersweiler's, Dzioba's, and Schultz's. More garages were damaged in other parts of town. Later in the month a severe hail storm created havoc on many grain fields.



Ted Walter's garage and Dzioba's house (in the vacant lot next to Janice Nickel) after Ridgeville's tornado.



Mr. Andy Gilchrist,
Ridgeville's oldest
citizen raising the
centennial flag with
help of Tim
Wilkinson, youngest
student at the

Around a huge blazing fire of friendship, Ridgeville welcomed the Centennial Year of Canadian Confederation. Guest speakers were J. P. Tanchak, M.L.A.Emerson, John Hunter, Reeve of Franklin Municipality and Rev. Hosking of the Anglican Church. Two torches were ignited and transported to the hall where Mr. Andy Gilchrist, ninety years old, on behalf of the pioneers, raised the Centennial Flag and then entrusted it to Master Timmy Wilkinson, the new generation, to build an even greater Canada in the second century. At midnight the old Overstone school bell and the Friedensthal Lutheran Church bell simultaneously rang in the new Canadian century.

On January 15, the Ridgeville community held a Centennial Service of Worship at the Friedensthal Lutheran Church with Rev. M. Haave, Chaplain to the Lutheran students at the University of Manitoba as guest speaker. All denominations, Catholics, and Protestants, worshipped together. On April 2, the Emerson Centennial Community Choir presented a most inspiring rendition of the Easter Cantata, "Life Eternal" at the Friedensthal Church with Mrs. Ian Milne as organist and Mrs. Isabel Forrest as Choir Director.

Ridgeville's Centennial Project, the erecting of a new hall, was the centre of much activity and progress in early April when the weather was fair and volunteer labor was available.

The Pioneers who took up homesteads in this district have all, with the exception of Mr. Andy Gilchrist, entered into their well-deserved rest. To their descendants they have bequeathed a heritage of which they may be justly proud. Through the years, the Ridge has become a district where people of differing backgrounds and heritage have learned to love and live with each other, sharing their common sense of diversities, of races, religions, interests and opinions. Each, in his own way, has contributed in some manner to the building of the community.

Tremendous changes have taken place at Ridgeville in the past few years. The population of the village has sharply declined. Several business operations have ceased to function. Life on the farm today, in spite of modern conveniences and luxuries, appeals to very few young people. The smaller diversified farms of a generation ago have give place to large and larger acreages, farmed by bigger and bigger machines. With the modern machinery a farmer can operate his farm without the assistance of his son. Farmers here, as elsewhere, are experiencing the "cost-price squeeze" and therefore

the trend of the flow of population is from rural to urban areas. Farmhouse after farmhouse that has seen three, or even four generations grow up, now stand lonely and vacant. There is a double drain up n the young citizenry of Ridgeville. First of all, there is the loss of young people into more attractive and gainful employment than farming and secondly, there is the drain into institutions of higher learning.

But seedtime and harvest will return to the land just as they did for the pioneers of almost a century ago. The fields of our forefathers still hold out a promise for those who remain.

Former Ridgevillites, now scattered over various parts of the globe, join with the present citizens in a nostalgic acclaim, “Be it ever so humble—there’s no place like home”.

Sports

Ridgeville Curling Club was formed in 1931-32 with a committee of Roy Whitman, Jim Chapman, Garry Russell, Ernie Riach, Mike Fostey, Herb Post, Harry Lenton, Herb Wilkinson, John Morrison, Bill Lindsay, Ez Post, Tom Collins and Scotty_Ingram.

The lumber, supplied by Ernie Riach at cost, was stretched to construct one sheet of curling ice and a waiting room. It was built to the east of Tanchak's store. Rocks were donated from a few of the Winnipeg clubs and some were bought from Letellier for \$15.00 a pair.

Rocks were of great importance to the curlers in those days. So much so that several of the men had their own rocks that they kept locked in a box after their games were done.

Fund raising for the first rink seems to have included a car raffle. The objective was to raise \$9000 for the construction of the new rink. A concert was held to raise money to pay for the tickets for the draw. They planned to buy a Chevrolet Coach 1931 for the draw. A picnic was held in "Kiel's Grove" (on the hill south of town –west side) to raise more funds. The draw was to have taken place on October 23, 1931 but nowhere in the Clubs minutes does it say if they managed it and who the winner was.

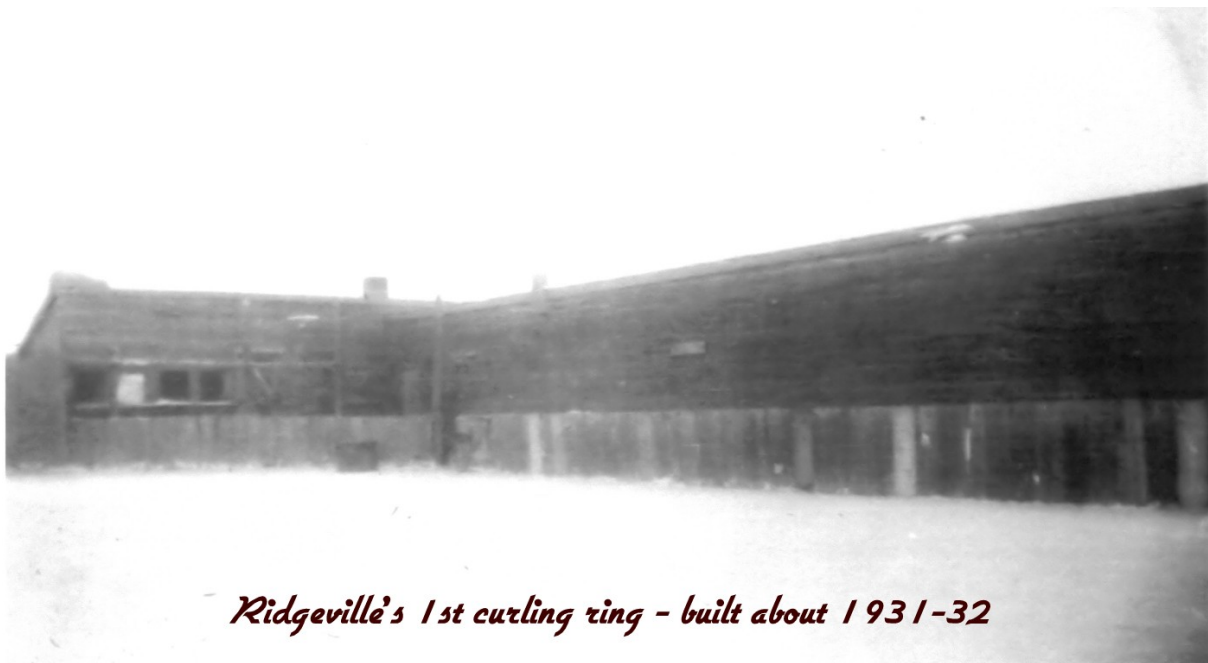
Volunteers gathered to make the dream a reality and soon curling in Ridgeville was well under way in the one-sheet rink. There were six men's rinks curling the first year in the evenings and the ladies in the afternoons. Transportation to the rink in those days was by horse and buggy – or walking.

Lots of bonspiels were held and the prizes in those days included things like a can of baking powder, a pound of butter, bacon, sugar, flour or oil.

The Beaubien Cup was a serious competition between Ridgeville and surrounding towns. Two rinks from each club competed and the winner of the trophy was determined by total points of the two games played. Ridgeville lost to Emerson the first year but held the cup for 13 years straight.

The skating rink was soon built and hockey was organized. The lighting plant always ran out of gas or gave up while the hockey game was on; it couldn't give enough light for both curling and hockey.

Sometime in the 1940s the membership had grown so that they were thinking of building a new rink. A three-sheet rink was finally decided upon and with the help of many volunteers, the new rink rose to a reality. Lumber was obtained out east from Cote's. The men traveled out east with numerous trucks, hauled the lumber out of the bush, had it planed and brought it back to Ridgeville. The rafters were bought at Boissevain and trucked to Ridgeville by the company as no one here had a truck big enough to haul those big rafters. The old rink was cut up in pieces and sold, the money realized from the sale being used to help pay for the rafters. It appears the new rink was up and going about 1950.



Ridgeville's 1st curling ring - built about 1931-32



The new curling rink, built in 1949-50



The foundation for the new curling rink is prepared in the background you can see the old Ridgeville Hall.



Raising the rafters! Not an enviable job up there on the top! But they got them all up.



Cecil Stowe, Ted Steg and Lorne Riach with some kind of table saw?



Members of the building committee for the new rink - 1950
 Front - W, T, Schultz, Frank Casper, Lorne Riach, Dunc
 Pickell, J. P. Tanchak
 Back - Bill Schwark, Lloyd Lindsay, Ted Steg, Joe Scheibe



50th Anniversary Committee - 1981
 Joe Rzepka, Lloyd Steg, Billy Wilkinson, Gordon Pott,
 Johnny Andrusyk, Russell Weiss, Norman Snead



Back - Rose Laufersweiler,
Alice Lindsay, Annie Collins
Middle - Beatrice Stringer,
Lillie Lindsay, Maude Post
Front - Ethel Lindsay, Agnes
Ingram



Emerson 1940-41
Edna (Lindsay) Lendrum,
Agnes (Ingram) Morrison,
Lillie (Lindsay) Riach,
Alice (Wilkinson) Lindsay



Bonspiel
supper
in the
old hall

Ridgeville's
new curling
rink - before
the new
furnace room
was added.





1950 Ladies Curling Club

Back - Juel Pickell, Anna Casper, Minnie Lochhead, Nancy Wilkinson, Alice Lindsay, Pearl Lindsay, Rose Laufersweiler
 2nd row - Hazel Collins, Avis Riach, Margaret Laufersweiler, Sadie Froom, Alma Scheibe, Lillian Fostey, Ethel Lindsay, Beatrice Stringer, Evelyn Schoeffler, Doris Tanchak
 Front row - Martha Lenton, Evelyn Lochhead



February 1953

Martha Schwark,
 Avis Riach, Edna
 Steg, Margaret
 Laufersweiler



March 15, 1957
 Ted Steg, Stewart
 Turner, Roy Wyche,
 Edna Steg



Ridgeville Men
 Frank Casper, Len
 Laufersweiler, Ted Steg,
 Bill Scheibe



Ridgeville Lady Curlers -
 1955
 Back - Alice Lindsay, Annie
 Wilkinson, Martha Schwark, Avis
 Riach

Front, Sadie Froom, Lily Wilkinson, Margaret Laufersweiler,
Edna Steg



Ridgeville Hockey Team - 1937

Front - Lorne Riach, George Alexander, Calvin Turner, John Stowe, Allan Fostey

Back - Henry Lenton, Layton Morrison, George Lenton



Ridgeville Hockey Team - 1939

Back - Dunc Pickell, George Alexander, Clayton Morrison, Henry Lenton, Allan Fostey

Front - George Lenton, John Stowe, Calvin Turner, Laverne Lindsay, Lorne Riach, Gordon Stewart

In the years to come, hockey remained an important winter sport. As the game became more sophisticated, players adapted by creating what was called “The Liniment League” in which there was not supposed to be any contact. This way players who were a little “older” could continue to play the game they loved. There was now no skating rink in Ridgeville so games were played in Dominion City.



Ridgeville Royals -
about 1982
Back - Robert
Schultz, Duaine
Rioach, Bob Felsch,
Glenn Grier, Murray
Pott, Les Wilkinson,
Ray Ramsey, Larry
Derksen
Front - Terry
Anstett, Sid
Wilkinson Rob Kerda

Then came the next age group. There no longer were enough to field a team from Ridgeville alone and by this time kids were attending school in Dominion City so they joined in with their classmates from school to form a team.



Back - Coach Tim Nampa, Rick Wilkinson, Murray Pott, Keith
Yahnke, Gordon Jack, Richard Loewen, coach, Kardi Sigurdson
Front - Mike Anstett, Tom Scott, Monte Keller, Marcel LeClair, Dale Ginn

Baseball

Baseball has always been an important of the Ridge life. It was played at picnics. Tournaments were arranged and teams traveled to other communities to participate. Unfortunately there seem to be no pictures of early teams. In the 1970s some former ball players were very keen on seeing that the next generation enjoyed the game of fast ball. Also at that time there were quite a number of boys in the district so Ridgeville had their own team. Coaches Gordon Pott and Archie Hunter took this team to more than one championship and then team members were chosen to play on a district all-star team and compete in the provincial championships. Later many of these players participated in another version of baseball – fast pitch. Thus the Ridgeville Mayors commenced their successful era.

The next and most recent type of ball players to have evolved are the Slo Pitch ball teams. They, according to old timers, aren't really playing ball. However, they are out there enjoying a game that can be played co-ed and having fun. Each year at the end of July they hold a Tournament when 6-8 teams coming from surrounding towns to challenge the local teams.



The Ridgeville club, runners-up in the Border Baseball League. Back row, left to right, Stan Lindsay, Ted Steg, manager; George Palmer, Wayne Schwark, Llody Steg. Front row, Wilf Palmer, Eddie Chesko, Howie Casper, Joe Rzepka and Bert Palmer. In front is scorekeeper and strong Ridgeville club booster, Mary Ann Steg.



Ridgeville Woodmore Baseball Team - 1973-74
 Back - Donald Pott, Greg Grier, Gordon Gunn,
 Ray Pott, coach, Allan Jahnke, Gary Suppers,
 Tim Wilkinson
 Centre - Donald Bially



Roseau Valley Little League All-stars - July 1977
 Back - Ron Ramsey, coach, Mark Lambert, Tim Bell,
 Rick Hildebrandt, Perry Wnuk, Larry Derksen, Murray
 Pott, Barry Fraser, Rick Wilkinson, Gordon Jack,
 Mike Wiebe, Gordon Pott, coach
 Front- Denis Trudel, Harvey Gunn, Harvey Colette,
 Mike Anstett



Roseau Valley Allstars
 Back - Omar Seed, Archie Hunter, Gordie Pott
 3rd Row - Tracey Hildebrand, Harvey Gunn, Rick Wilkinson, Doug Irvine, Keith Yahnke, Robbie Braun, Johnny Pamula, ? Mazinke, Scott Haydenluck, Marcel LeClair
 Front - Perry Wnuk, Gordon Jack, Murray Pott, Mike Anstett



Ridgeville Mayors - about 1990
 Back - Calvin Shurko, Ken Fedorchuk, Charlie Krashy, Allan Jahnke, Gary Wiens, Terry Stege, Garry Suppes
 Front - Rick Wilkinson, Andy Catellier, Larry Rettaler, Kevin Spence, Gordon Jack, Marc Dubois



Ridgeville Renegades Slo Pitch Team
 - 2006

Back - Marc Dubois, Amanda Kiss, Adam Ramsey, John Stephens, Randy Spence, Loren Jahnke, Darryl Dubois, Christian Lobsiger
 Front - Denise Seward, Lori Dubois, Melissa Dubois, Tada Decker, Louise

With the large population that existed in the Ridgeville area during the 1940s, 50s and 60s, the old hall soon outgrew its usefulness. By now, too there were many more conveniences like electric stoves, and better facilities in which to prepare meals for large crowds such as the annual Fall Supper and the Bonspiel Banquets. In 1960 a meeting was held in the old hall and it was unanimously decided to build a new hall. People worked diligently on this project and it took a few years to see the dream come true.

Finally in 1967 the new building was opened with a large gala to celebrate Canada's centennial. The Hall has seen much use over the years – socials, anniversaries, weddings, funerals, Teas and Bake Sales, 4-H Achievements and anniversary celebrations. The

W.I. was a great supporters of the Hall in the years that their organization was active. It is still very active and the people of the community are working hard to



keep it in good condition so that it will continue to be available for public use for many years to come.



The building is being sheeted in by hard-working volunteers under the supervision of Paul Kulyk of Tolstoi, head carpenter.

ee
tz, Lorraine
rtle Ganske

Building Committee
John Tanchak, Lloyd
Lindsay, Tom Lenton,
Wib Seward, Wallace
Morrison, Lorne Riach



4-H Club

In Ridgeville in the fall of 1949, the first 4-H Seed Club was organized under the leadership of Mr. Frank Casper and Mr. Ted Steg. The executive for the first year was President – Raymond Steg, Vice-President – Joe Rzepka, Secretary – Clarence Lange. By 1952 they had 18 members which included two girls, Lorraine Schwark and Mary Anne Pow (nee Steg).

In 1952 the Beef Club and Garden Club began. Leaders were Mr. Web Sewrd and Mr. Wm. Schwark. There were 14 members. Officers were President – Dennis Seward, Vice-President – Wayne Schwark, Secretary – Lorraine Schwark, Treasurer – Mary Anne Steg, Club Reporter – Danny Seward.

The Clothing Club began on September 24, 1954 with a membership of 15. Officers were: President – Lois Spence (nee Zass), Vice-President – Shirley Lane (nee Laufersweiler), Secretary-Treasurer – Joyce Drajieski. The leaders were Elsie Bodnarchuk and Mary Paley, teachers at that time. The 4-H program was implemented into the school system and each Friday from 3-4 o'clock we worked on our 4-H project. Other members for the first year were Joan Walters, Darlen Klapka, Donna, Lenore and Audrey Lauferswieler, Louella Harder, Kathy Drajieski and Delores Wilkinson. At that meeting the first name was chosen "Ridgeville 4-H Busy Fingers". Home Ec. Was Miss Lula MacLeod.

The name Ridgeville 4-H Combined Club replaced the original Ridgeville 4-H Busy Fingers sometime during the late 60's, early 70's.

Membership in 1982 was 10 members with 5 leaders and a social convener. Members were President – Shenda Grier, Vice-President – Audra Froom, Treasurer- Josephine Wieler, Secretary – Barbara Steg, Club Reporter – John Pow. Other members were Suzy Wieler, John Stephens, Wendy Lazaruk, Kori Kerda and associate member, Jeffrey Froom. Club leader and crafts leader, Mary Ann Pow, Cooking leader, Dianne Lazaruk, Clothing leader, Ruth Kerda, Special projects leader, Edie Grier and Social Convener, Jo Anne Froom. Vita Ag. Rep. is Wally Happychuk, Home Economist is Wendy Epp, Program Assistant – Marlene Drewniak.

The Lorraine Sharon Schwark public speaking trophy is presented every year since 1966 to the top public speaker of Ridgeville Club. 1966 – Lyne Schultz; 1967 – Audrey Gushuliak, 1968 – Myrna Chubaty; 1969 – Elaine Wachna; 1970 – Elaine Wachna; 1971 – Peggy Lenton; 1972,73,74 – Elaine Wachna; 1975 – Colleen Chubaty, 1976 – Evelyn Pott; 1977 – Carol Nicholson; 1978 – Wendy Steg; 1979 – Wendy Steg; 1980 – Kathy Wachna; 1981 – Shenda Grier; 1982 – Audra Froom.

The Lorraine Sharon Schwark Junior Demonstration trophy is presented every year to the top Junior Demonstration team in the Vita Area. 1968 – Tanya Petrah – Sherry Wilkinson; 1969 – Thersa Fedorchuk – Sandra Drewniak; 1974 – Cindy Grier – Colleen Chubaty; 1975 – Carol Nicholson – Cindy Grier; 1977 – Patricia Riach – Tracy Brown; 1978 – Carol Kohut – Kathy Wachna; 1979 – Doreen Steg – Shenda Grier.



4-H Beef Club from around 1943
l-r Glenn Wilkinson, Lorna Jack,
Audrey Jack, Vernon Wilkinson



4-H uniforms over the years



4-H
banners
Newest on the left,
oldest on the right



4-H members from the 1950's
Donna Laufersweiler, Mary ann Steg, Joan Walters



45th Anniversary of Ridgeville 4-H - May 13, 1994
Wib Seward, Loraine Seward, Margaret Pomrenke, Evelyn Felsch, Iona Schultz, Darlene Gabb, Ross Collins, Gordon Gaetz, Lilia Schultz, Sylvia Yahnke, Mabel Collins, Herb Schultz, Gertie Stephens, Eleanor Willis, Iris Wachna, Mary Ann Pow, Rodney Klapka, Ted Steg

Do you remember when?
(contributed by individuals)

Fredensthal

The German people of Fredensthal came originally from Russia in the 1890s to Gretna where they were employed for a few years. After they became climatized they wished to settle on their own farms, since they had all been farmers in the old country. The Emerson business men, with an eye to the future, persuaded this hary grou of Germans to move to the “Flats” east of Emerson. Chas. Ammus, a Deering machine agent, was the greatest promoter of this deal. The business en offered them all the credit they needed. This area had been homesteaded but had been abandoned due to wet conditions.

In 1896 the first settlers to move to Fredensthal were: August Sutz on the Clarence Lang farm, Andrew Kein on Donald Kein;’s Fred Weiss, father of Reinhold Weiss on the farm south of B. Walters, Gottlieb Mantie on Alf Schultz’s farm., Gus Drajieski on Drajieski’s farm and Frederick Felsch on Felsch farm. Hardships were many for the climate and farmeing were so different from what they had left behind them.

More people came in the following year, namely: Michael Jahnke, August Knutt, August Schwark, William Kreitz, Ludwig Schultz (father of Rudolf Schultz), Henry Pomrenke, August Becker, Michael Ratchinsky and August Schmtke. Two early settlers were able to obtain homesteads – Ludwig Felsch the south quarter of Bill Schiebe’s and August Schmitke the north quarter of Albert Walter’s. After this the district was completely settled.

As in all settlements life had its sorrows. Two children died in 899 – an infant of the Schmitke family and the eldest son of Michael Jahnke, four years old. The latter was buried on the Jahnke farm and thus the Fredensthal Cemetery had its beginning.

Since these people were all of the same faith, they began to plan the building of a church. In 1900 the first church was erected on the Kein yard and the parsonage followed in 1903. As the population grew, a large church was built in 1920. It was being remodeled in 1930 when the tornado demolished it. In 1931 a new church was erected across the road from the old site.



Zion Lutheran Church
Fredensthal



Interior of Zion Lutheran Church, October 1950



Zion Lutheran Church Ladies - 1950

Back - Martha Lenton, Edna Steg, ?, Jane Scheibe, Velma Schultz (Mrs. Edmund),

2nd - Lydia Steg, Sarah Kautz, Emma Marks, Mrs. Hince, Mathilda Henning, ?, Alma Hartwig, Elsie Casper

Front - Mrs. Jahnke, Mrs. Henry Schultz, Mrs. Henry Hartwig, Mrs. George Streick Sr.



Zion Lutheran Church Council
 l-r - Ted Hartwig, Emil Schultz, Bill Schwark, Ted Steg, George Marks, Emil Steg



Zion Lutheran Church Sunday School Oct. 1950
 Back - Jane Scheibe, Raymond Steg, Clarence Lange, Len Schultz, Ted Ganske, Lorna Marks, Annie Casper
 2nd - Elsie Casper, Ed Ganske, Larry Scheibe, Wayne Lenton, Leslie Schultz, Howie Casper, Ernie Casper, Jean Brown, Lloyd Steg, Evelyn Walters, Mary Ann Steg, Annie Schultz
 Front - Dennis Casper, Joan Walters, Dennis Schwark, Lorraine Schwark, June Steg, Ken Walters, Norman Walters, Sharon Lange

As the young children grew to school age, they built their first school in 1904. Pastor Henry Becker instructed the 75 pupils in the German language.

In 1901 the railroad passed through the settlement and in 1902 the station was built. In 1902 the elevator was built by the Lake of the Woods with Bill Langenase as the first agent. At first the elevator was operated only during harvest and for a short period after seeding.

The first couple to be married in the church was Ernest Kleb and Wilhemina Sitzer, a widow. They later moved to B.C.

The little village store was opened in 1914 by Ginsburg and Meir, It was situated south of the present church. In 1919 Bill Pomrenke took charge of the store. A blacksmith shop was opened in 1924 by Mr. Laufersweiler, father of Rudolf Laufersweiler. This was locate next to the store.

The hopes of a post office at Fredensthal did not materialize. Often people would go to the station at train time and the conductor would hand them their mail and accept anything they wished to mail.

Those people have seen many changes in their time, from loading wheat on barges on the Red River, to the modern elevator system and from hand seeding their first grain to the present big seed drills.

They experienced a lot of hardships but the freedom of religion and speech they enjoyed in this new land more than compensated for these for they had been a persecuted people in Russia. They shared many good times with each other as they were a close knit community. Weddings and baptisms were always a good excuse for big celebrations. Many of the wedding festivities lasted for three days and every one in the district was invited. With humble hearts they give thanks for all the blessings that have been bestowed up them. ---F.S.

The St. Paul Trail is the earliest route of overland transportation between St. Paul and Winnipeg. It was planned by James Hill before he was instrumental in the building of The Great Northern Railroad from St. Paul to Winnipeg. The trail followed the high land from St. Paul to the International Border and crossed the border one and a half miles east and four miles south of the village of Ridgeville. From the border crossing it followed the high land north to the Roseau River and made the crossing at the Rapids, nine miles north and two miles east of Ridgeville. The means of transportation consisted of a wooden-wheeled cart drawn by an ox. The freight was loaded on the cart between the wheels ---R.E.

The Springbank Well as it is called is situated on the road allowance two and a half miles south of Ridgeville. This well or spring was found by Mr. Hamilton Stewart who had land very close to it. His home was too far from this land to go home for dinner when he was working it so he took feed and water with him for his horses' noon day meal. While

his horses were feeding one day, Mr. Stewart was strolling around and noticed a small willow growing beside an ant hill and found the land around it very wet. He got his shovel and started to dig a hole and found he had struck a spring. He got a barrel and used it for a crib.

After the land west of the well became more settled the well was enlarged by the settlers for a source of water as there was no water west of the well. After some years, the demand for water became more acute so the well was enlarged again until it was over 5 ft. square and 8 ft. deep. As the well is on the road allowance it is a source of water for many people.

During the era of steam power for threshing the well supplied water for the engine for the engines. Before dugouts became a source of water supply nearly every farmer west of the well had to haul water for their stock during the winter months. Some days there would be half dozen tanks at the well at one time. During the winter of 1930 Anderson Bros. from Minnesota made a ten-mile trip every day for water.

The well has a galvanized crib now with a house over it and an electric pump with a large hose. It is rodent proof and away from any barnyard seepage. If you want a drink of good water, go to this well for you can't find any better water anywhere.

Dedicated to the memory of Mr. Hamilton Stewart. Courtesy of R. M. Empey

Fields and Wilkinson – Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Fields and daughter, Rose Martha, came from Montreal to Winnipeg by boat in 1873, they lived on what is now known as the Main Street of Winnipeg which was just a mud road then. In 1875 they took up a homestead south east of Dominion City. They lived in a sod house; every time it rained, it leaked so badly that Mrs. Fields, before rising from her bed when she wakened, would stretch her hand to the floor to see how deep the water was. One time they were unable to get supplies until they made a raft; therefore, they lived on raw scraped turnips for two days. They abandoned this homestead and took up another, S.W.1/4 27-1-4D.

Mr. Wm. Wilkinson came from England and worked for Mr. Fitzgerald. He met Rose Martha Fields and they were married July 13, 1886. They lived with the Fields. When Mr. Fields passed away in 1888 Mr. Wilkinson took over the farm and Mrs. Fields lived with them in a little log house. Mrs. Wilkinson kept the post office for a number of years.

Mrs. Fields was one of the earliest mid-wives and was called on by many people for other ailments. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wilkinson had a family of fourteen – seven boys and seven girls. They lived in the log house until 1904 when they moved into their new house which is now owned by Frank Johnston. ---Beatrice Stringer

Seward – the James Seward family came from Pakenham, Ont to Manitoba in March 1881 with a family of five children – William, Maggie, James, Robert and Louise. On Ari 11, 1881 George was born. Four children were born later – Abram, Minnie, Oliver

and Mae. This family homesteaded on NE1/4 22-1-3E. Mrs. Seward used her kitchen as a schoolroom to teach her and neighbor children. In 1887 when they moved to the Ridgeville to NW1/4 29-2-4E, they had the post office at their home for which they received ten dollar per year. William left in his teens for Montana where he taught school for a few years. He tried cattle ranching, farming and building bridges in Saskatchewan. He married Margaret Richards of near Regina. Robert, George, and Abram farmed in the Ridgeville district. Robert married Agnes Lochhead. During their lifetime they farmed on the Web Seward place. ---J.S.

Turner – Mr. George Turner, born 1859, came west in 1878 from Ontario to Humboldt, Minnesota. George Turner assisted Mr. Coutts to dig the ditch on the Boundary in 1881. Twelve horses on an Elevator Grader were used to dig this ditch which was the first ditch (into the Joe River on the Boundary line) between Ridgeville and Emerson. In 1883 George Turner married Jennie Ross. They moved to Emerson in 1889. In 1917 they moved to Ridgeville to the F. Turner place. At the same time his son George, who had been living on the S. Riach farm, moved to the farm now owned by Stewart Turner. When Frnak Turner was married in 1924 his parents retired to Emerson.---F.T.

Collins – Thomas Collins, a resolute young man of 16, left London, England in 1863 and came to Canada with the idea that he wanted to farm. He hired with a farmer at Kingston, Ont and got along very well. In 1870 he married and lived at Bath, Ont. In 1892 he came west to Emerson. He became acquainted with some of the business men of the town who informed him that the “Springbank Farm”, ten miles east of Emerson, was for sale. He was greatly impressed with the farm which had a spring in the pasture to the east and a school only ½ mile away to the south. In December 1892 his family joined him and the Springbank Farm” became the Collins’ home. The country was fairly well settled around them. The Lindsays, Morrisons, Stewarts and Empeys were some of the nearest neighbors. Mrs. Collins served as a mid-wife in many cases and was always ready to help in time of sickness. Doctors and nurses were miles away and not always available when needed. The Collins’ home was a home for many people. One young lad, when out of work, always came back to stay there. The Collins were Anglicans but attended the Methodist Church until the Anglican Church was built.

The Collins family was very musical. At many community concerts Jim, Johnny and Charlie played the violin while Tom recited and sang. The latter was accompanied on the piano by Dora or Annie. Henry was in the First World War and lost his life in September 1918.

As the years passed the family ties were broken and in 1902-03 Will, Jim and Johnny went west to homestead in Saskatchewan. The latter two married there, and later Alicia and her husband (the Alexanders) moved west too. Dora (later Mrs. H. D. Lenton), Charlie, Tom and Joe married and settled in the district and Minnie (Mrs. H. Frnaks) moved to the Marais district. Annie did not marry but helped her parents to keep the home fires burning.

Mr. and Mrs. Collins lived a long and happy life in the Ridgeville district. Mrs. Collins passed away in 1929, Mr. Collins in 1939. The "Springbank Farm" passed from one generation to another, and in 1964 Neil Collins, a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Collins sold the old farm to the present owner, Peter Kohut. ---C.F.

Jack – Mr. and Mrs. William Jack came from Langholm, Scotland to Winnipeg in 1882 with a family of three sons and four daughters. They stayed in Winnipeg for a time, then moved to their farm home, north of Ridgeville.

Mrs. Jack boarded the school teacher, Mr. Elkin, for \$5 a month. Mr. Elkin was very considerate and told Mrs. Jack to give him buttermilk, or whatever they had to eat. Teacher's salaries were very low at the time.

Later the Jack family moved to the farm home know as the Ed. Jack place.

Mrs. Jack was one of the women who was called upon for mid-wife duties. The settlers arriving from Europe to the east of Ridgeville were very poor, Mrs. Jack and Mrs. Collins told of one case they attended. They had to tear up their flannel petticoats to serve as a blanket for the baby. Petticoats were more billowy in those days.

Mrs. Jack was especially famous for her home-made cheese, ---L.J.

Stewart – Mr. Hamilton Stewart arrived in 1879 from Seaforth, Ont. He homesteaded the farm now owned by Mr. Marsh. He spent several winters working in the bush. In 1889 he married Margaret Morrison who had taught for two summers at the Bradley School located on the present Dziedzic farm. Phil Buffey was one of her pupils. There were eight children in the Stewart family. When their son, William, was married in 1921 Mr. and Mrs. Stewart retired to Emerson where they lived till they passed on, Mr. Stewart in 1949 and Mrs. Stewart in 1962. B.T

My first teacher ws Sarah McLennan. Then came Lottie Agnew from Dominion City, her boyfriend, Mr. Fallis, used to driver her to school and we small youngsters used to peek to see him kissing her good-bye. She boarded at my home and paid \$7 a month. Then followed Libby Christie from Dominion City who walked with a limp. My sister came next-about the time Ridgeville started – for I remember she and I walked to town to Roy Whitman's store. Effie Post followed and then Edith Hurd, also of Woodmore, who rode horseback with a side saddle. Gordon Maynes from Langside was another teacher. He was stuying to become a doctor and kept a skull and various other bones in his desk. Sometimes as he walked about checking our work, he had a vertebra on his finger and whirled it under our noses. Another time he threw a pail of water over the Wilkinson girls. My last teacher was Mary McLennan who later became a nurse. Out of this school, in those early days, came one dentist, Dr. John Craig, two teachers, my sister and Willie Seward, and perhaps others. The families who attended were Parkes, Seward, Riach, Harder (on Wib Seward's), Wilkinson, Craig and Lochhead. Mr. Redshaw, a bachelor, was secretary-treasurer of the school district for many years.

I remember one time, my brother and his wife and I took straight across the prairie for Orleans to a ball game. There I saw Jessie Seward for the first time, cheering on her Yankees. Another time the Yankees came across – no customs to report to – for a game of ball on the present Schiebe farm. Some of the Ridgeville players were my two brother, Dick and Billy Craig, Jim and Ed Jack. Andy Gilchrist was in the pitcher's box, being cheered on by his wife, Annie Collins and others.

One dance in the old Ridgeville Hall stands out in my memory. There was such a blizzard we could not go home until daylight so we danced all night. There was Mr. A. Beckstead, standing with his foot on a chair, in the middle of the hall, playing the violin with a trickle of tobacco down one corner of his mouth. At that time most men chewed tobacco,. He was an excellent musician. ---C. F.

In the early years, I was terrified of wolves. They were plentiful and bold and perhaps more so when Father was away. I vividly recall seeing my mother take a blazing stick of wood from the stove and throw the blazing brand among the savage animals, who had driving our dog right to the door. Mother would bring Sport into the house and shut the door (and he was not a house dog). Not even then did I feel safe. ---M.S.

As small boys, my brothers and I often played in an incomplete circle of Buffalo Skulls in the meadow. The semi-circle of heads, placed with the horns to the outside, was centered by a large stone. It is quite possible that this was used by the Indians for a "Buffalo Dance". Historians now tell us that the Indians used this means to pray for the return of the buffalo as they were being driving ever farther from the hunting grounds by the advance of the white man. --- B.S.

During the nineties and early nineteen hundreds, wild geese were so plentiful that one could stand on the hill where the "Indian Trail" crossed and see the "Flats", a moving mass of geese, feeding or flying.

My brothers and I were very anxious for a shotgun of our own. This gun, a Shattock twelve gauge, was not very expensive but money was really scarce. We dug "Snake Root" and picked mustard and occasionally Mr. Beckstead gave us a whole quarter for doing chores while he was away. Finally an aunt gave us two dollars for our fund and the gun was ours.

My brother Bill was twelve so had the privilege of the first shot, knocking over a large, grey goose. Our hunting for that day was over, for our new gun had the kick of a mule. When Bill picked himself up off the ground, he looked rather the worse for wear, and did not feel in the mood for another shot. The geese did not fly away! --- A.S.

One of the pleasant features that has disappeared from our present age, which lent charm and variety to a former day, is the sound of sleigh bells. These were open or closed bells as well as Victoria bells, Swedish or Norwegian chimes.

The Boundary road was a much traveled through though fare and we could pick out the distinctive bell sound of the different teams. Dad had rather large bells that came from Ontario. We knew them as soon as the sleigh topped the hill at the Beckstead farm. Then it was time for us boys to light the lantern, ready to put the team away. --- B.S.

Do you remember the hair-raising incident my husband experienced in the fall of 1928 when he traveled the road daily from Ridgeville to the States? This occurred between the one-mile and two-mile roads. My husband was hauling cream to the Crookston Creamery, Minnesota. He traveled this route regularly and obviously someone was watching his travels carefully. On this particular day he was stopped and attacked by a couple of hooded bandits. These fellows did mean business for they had a revolver and a black jack as weapons. After quite a struggle with my husband who was alone at the time, they were beaten off with the assistance of some pop bottles which were his only available weapon. However my husband didn't escape without injury. He had a bad cut on his forehead and was badly shaken. He was very thankful to Mrs. Jennie Lindsay, at whose home he stopped for receive first-aid. --- E.L.

In the early days, my father, the late Peter Timchuk, used to break a lot of land with oxen. He had four oxen to draw a wooden-beamed breaking plow. I used to drive the oxen for him while he was handling the plow. Once in a while the plow would get stuck in a root. We'd have to back up the oxen and get the plow off the root. We'd be going along when suddenly an ox would get tired and decide to lie down. Dad realized it was rest time for the animals. He'd remove the harness from the oxen and let them feed for an hour. Then the fun would start when we wanted to catch them again to put them back on the plow. --- F.C.

When I was staying with my great-grandmother, Mrs. M. Brisenham, at Emerson, she heard the whistle of the boat. She grabbed my hand and said, "Come, I'll show you something that you'll never see again as long as you live". We went down to the river behind the Gateway Hotel. All I can remember is the water-wheel going around and the smoke coming out of the smoke-stack of the boat. The report in the paper that said the last boat came down the Red River in 1898 must be wrong, because I know I'm not that old! --- G.C.

April shower bring May flowers but do you remember when April meant having the house reek from top to bottom from kerosene incubators, which were used each spring to hatch the annual poultry flock? From 150-200 eggs were incubated for three weeks. The eggs were candled at 10 days and clear eggs were discarded. Eggs were marked and turned every day.

In those days, they didn't know anything about feeding protein or antibiotics, so house-holders used to chop boiled eggs and green onion tops to feed the newly hatched chicks. It was a lot of hard work for very little money. --- W.S.

Many a concert and fowl supper took place in the old Ridgeville hall. Do you remember when they staged concerts every 2 or 3 weeks all winter long? Many a practice for the

one, or three-act plays was held in local homes and was ably directed by teachers of ex-teachers. With personnel like Mr. Ray Empey, playing the role of “Romeo” and the local teacher that of “Juliet”, these plays were well presented. Some of the singers specialized in composing their own songs. Roy Whitman’s booming voice could be heard above everyone else. “We don’t want a man like Wm. Lindsay, who lets the wind blow his large haystack over – nor a man like Bert Seward, who drives a Model T truck – nor a man like John Morrison who can’t raise anything else but sons”. Tom Collins became famous for his “How do you do” and “Serves you right” songs with a new version of words for each occasion.

The annual Fowl Supper, sponsored by the Ladies’ Aid of the United Church, became the leading event of the fall. With no kitchen facilities in the hall, this group of approximately 15 women catered to immense crowds for many years. The food was bundled in blankets at home and brought to the hall in relays. The admission price was 35¢ for all you could eat, but in later year was increased to 50¢. People drove miles to attend these Chicken Suppers. Wasn’t it worth it? ---W.M.

In years to come the Fall Supper became the fund raising event annually of the Curling Club. When numbers became too small and the Curling Club ceased to exist about 2000, the Centennial Hall took over the suppers and as of 2009, the price for the still delicious supper was \$10.00.

This and Thatmore Ridgeville Pictures



Grandmothers’ Tea - 1916

Back - Rose (Mrs. Wm. Wilkinson), Ida (Mrs. Thomas) Woods, Mrs. Beckstead, Mrs. Ham Stewart

2nd row - Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Delaney, Mrs. Montgomery, Ellen (Mrs. Wm) Jack

Front - Jean (Mrs. Bill) McBean, sister of Mrs. Ham Stewart, Mrs. Sam Stewart (Mrs. Bob



Anglican Church Women - 1930s
 Back - Dora Lenton, Bertha Howard, Mrs. Thomas Woods, Jessie Stewart, Mrs. Gilchrist, Martha Francis
 Center - Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Delaney, Mrs. Wm. Wilkinson (holding Cliff)
 Front - Annie Collins, Rose



Seniors' Picnic at Martha Lenton's
 Back row - Andy Gilchrist, Jim Jack, Harry Lenton, Dan Lendrum, ?, Bob Gilchrist, Fred Felsch, Louis Weiss, Henry Schultz, Bill Lindsay
 2nd row - Effie Lenton, Beatrice Stringer, Mrs. Weiss, Harriet Gilchrist, Rose Wilkinson, Amanda Felsch, Lily Jack
 Front row - Herb Wilkinson, Belle Lendrum, Alice Lindsay, Annie



Alma (Mrs. W. E.) Riach holding Donnie Turner, Gertie McNish, Belle (Mrs. Dan) Lendrum, Jessie (Mrs. George) Seward
 Front: Donald Wilkins, Joan Turner, Dennis Wilkins

Ridgeville School Re-union

by Loraine Seward

Over 700 people attended the school reunion held at Ridgeville July 1 and 2, 1972. This reunion included the former school districts of Springbank, Overstone, Emerado and Ridgeville.

Mr. Ted Steg of Ridgeville, chairman of Boundary School Division gave the address of welcome and was in charge of the short program.

Ridgeville School No. 102 was formed in 1885 and was located 1½ miles north of Ridgeville. Greenridge was formed in 1912, so the school was moved to its present site, enlarged in 1920 and in 1930 became a two-room school with Grade 11 being taught in 1933.

A new school was built in 1959 following consolidation with Emerado and Springbank, opening on Dec. 1 of that same year. Grades 1 - 12 were taught in four rooms. In 1960 Overstone expressed a desire to consolidate and their school was moved to its site making it possible to operate five classrooms.

In 1967 unitary school division was approved in this division and on June 29, 1972, when classes were dismissed for the last time from this school, an era had come to a close – 87 continuous years of education.

John Stewart of Winnipeg, a former resident and teacher, expressed a few words of appreciation on behalf of all the former teachers and pupils to those responsible for making this re-union such a success.

The program featured an old-time fiddling contest with contestants Jerry Klapka, Roy Ganske, Stewart Froom, Gus Zass, Donald Beckstead and William Beckstead. The latter was declared winner by audience applause.

Master Sidney Lenton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Lenton of Leadville, Colorado and great grandson of Mr. Harry Lenton of Ridgeville, was the winner of the baby contest for children between the ages of 9 months and two years. Runner up was Master Patrick Lindsay, 3rd son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Lindsay of Winnipeg, and great grandson of Mrs. Alice Lindsay of Ridgeville. Judging the baby contest were bachelors Carman Morrison, Brent Chubaty and Bruce Clarke.

The Women's Institute under the capable convenership of Mrs. Laura Goetz served a cold plate dinner from 4-7 p.m. Donations of food from all former school district areas were gratefully received. Mrs. Edith Kiel, on behalf of the many invited guests for this special occasion, presented a purse to WI president, Mrs. Edie Grier, to be used towards the expenses of the day.

A baseball game was held at the old ball diamond in the evening between the Vita Cubs and the Ridgeville Pirates. The home team were the victors with a score of 5 – 1.

There was an interesting display of old school registers photostats in the different classrooms, also many old pictures. A special attraction was the replica of the former Springbank School and yard by Garnet Morrison of Winnipeg.

Letters of regret were received from the following who were unable to attend the re-union: John Harder- Vineland, Ontario; Elizabeth Sahey – Minneapolis, Minnesota; Gordon Kirkpatrick – Steinbach; Annie (McKinnon) Bray, Dawson Creek, Alberta; Ruth (Coates)Lash, Muskegon, Michigan; Laura Asseltine, no address given; Dr. Jean McBean, North Ridge, California; Amy (Duff) Boehler, Woodstock, Ontario; Rosemary (Remus) Clausen-Mohr, Toronto, Ontario; Mrs. Wilma (Kautz) Baumann, St. Clair, Michigan; Myrtle (Woods) Collins, Nipawin, Saskatchewan; Lawrence Clifford, Vallais, Quebec, and Wm Fiedler, Quesnel, BC



Roll call of the oldest register of the Ridgeville School available (1902) brought forth Leonard Parkes, Alice (Wilkinson) Lindsay, Martha (Wilkinson) Clifford-Francis, Beatrice (Wilkinson) Stringer, Mae (Seward) Hermiston-Mitchell and Harry Lenton. This register contained 35 names. Most of the above mentioned are in their 80's.



Of the 43 names on the 1911 Overstone School No. 1106 record, 10 were in attendance. L-r: Frances Stewart, Bill Stewart, Helen (Gilchrist) Beckstead, Rose (Zilkie) Toews, Lily (Woods) Wilkinson, Annie Kachman, Mary Steinke, Herman Zilkie, Jack Goetz, Lily (Geiler) Bronson.



Ridgeville about 1953

Photo by Stan



Lindsay



West Main St. Ridgeville - 1947
 Riach's Lumber Yard, Paterson's elevator



East Main St. Ridgeville - 1947
 Kautz, Store, Ridgeville Hotel, Lenton's Garage



Brian Pott, Brian Riach, Duaine Riach, Johnny Fostey, Ronny Steg, Don Walters



Gayle Riach, Grand Aggregate at Field Day - 1961

This 'n That from Ridgeville's History

The first graded road from Ridgeville to Emerson was built by Mr. Coutts along the International Border with an elevator grader drawn by horses. After a number of years the 2-mile road was graded and has served as the main road to Emerson for many years. Before the railroad came to Ridgeville, most of the grain was moved over this road.

Ridgeville's first access to a highway came about 1945 when the four and a half miles north of town were graveled (Hwy 218) linking it to the Morden-Sprague highway (201). In the following year the 2-mile road (Hwy 218) to Emerson was graveled. Later the gravel road to Tolstoi became Hwy. 209, connecting Ridgeville to Highway 59.

Who's Who of the Ridgeville Area

From a letter from Francis Stewart to Lyall Badgley, dated Feb. 12, 1971 –

Angus McBean and his brother, John, were the first of their family to come. They built a house on Angus' homestead on NW 3-1-4E. John's homestead was on the NE of 10-1-4E. When David Marshall came into possession of this parcel, he bought it from a Mortgage Co., having used up his homestead privileges on the site in Gardenton. They returned to the east and came back with their father, Peter McBean Sr. in 1882. The father obtained the east half of 9-1-4E from his wife's brother, Peter Coutts. Peter Coutts, who homesteaded the NW of 16-1-4E came to the district with the crew that put in the first drainage ditches and seems to have got hold of several pieces of land for re-sale. The McBean family consisted of Angus, who returned to the east after a few years to bring back a bride, Jennie Morrison (no relation to the Morrison who lived on W 9-1-4E). John married Violet Jack, daughter of the Jack family on W 23-1-4E. They resided on NW 10-1-4E until they left for a store in Emerson known as McLean and McBean. Later they farmed at Carey, Manitoba, raising a family of 12. Angus family had been a daughter, Bertha, who taught school and married a storekeeper named Austin Blair at Alexander, Manitoba, a son, Roy, who died of pneumonia at age 16, Jean, who studied medicine and practiced as a children's Dr. in Chicago). Peter Jr. went to Saskatchewan to run a grain elevator. A daughter, Lizzie, married a civil engineer named Couch and a daughter Annie married George Gunn of Greenridge. James, who became a Dr., was killed in one of the earliest automobile accidents. William, who succeeded his father on the farm, married Nell Marshall as his first wife. Albert, the youngest son, moved to Emerson with his parents when they retired and he worked for the R.R.

William James Marshall was the second son of the aforementioned David Marshall on NE 10-1-4E. He never lived on his homestead on the SE of 1-1-4E but his older brother David Jr. did. David Jr. married Tess Riach, daughter of John G. Riach of SE 32-1-4E, later moving to Saskatchewan where they took up a homestead. William held several jobs as store clerk and similar employment. Later he became a Minister and served in a

northern Mission. Nell became Mrs. William McBean and died of TB leaving 2 small children. David Sr. also succumbed to TB after a seventeen-year battle with this disease. Catherine married Frank Miller of Stuartburn and Sarah married James Telfer Jack on SE 23-1-4E. Alexander was killed in World War I and Norman, the youngest, inherited the family farm. He married Nellie Telfer, niece of Mrs. William Jack Sr. and they farmed there until they retired to Dominion City.

Hamilton Stewart, NW 10-1-4E, and his wife, Margaret Morrison, had eight children. Of the six daughters, three were school teachers – Hazel, Annie and Margaret May. Eva, the eldest, married George Turner Jr. who lived on E 21-1-4E, later on the east half of 9-1-4E until his retirement. Alma, Mrs. Ernest Riach, lives now in Ridgeville where her late husband had the Lumber Yard. Hazel, Mrs. Harvey Sutton, lives in Roland. Annie is Mrs. Norman McLean of Emerson. Margaret May married Alder Johnson, of Emerson. After his death and a period of teaching, she became Mrs. Harry Brick of Trehearne. William, who married Jessie Sinclair of Ridgeville, lived on the family farm after his parents retired to Emerson and was killed in a farm accident. Bessie married Frank Turner of Ridgeville, Dominion City and Emerson. John Clayton, younger son, taught school for many years and now lives in retirement in Winnipeg.

Robert Lindsay, on SW 10-1-4EW, was a cousin of William Lindsay on NE 17-1-4E. He left some time in the 90's to live at St. Vincent, Minnesota.

Thomas Collins, who bought the NW 11-1-4E owned the south half of 16-1-4E which had originally belonged to David Hogg McLean. At the sale of school land, he bought it for his son, Thomas, who afterwards served as councilor and then as Reeve. The SE 11-1-4E was bought at the time of the sale by a Mr. Ritz who kept the Ridgeville Hotel. But at the time when George Suppes bought it, the deal was handled by Michael Scott. It had reverted when Alex Gilchrist bought it in 1947.

During World War I, Henry Schreder, son of Mrs. Matilda Schraeder, bought the NW of 11-1-4E from the Collins. It was Henry Schraeder who built the house that Gordon Pott was tearing down.

William Lindsay, on 17-1-4E married a sister of Jacob Empey. Of his five daughters, two were school teachers – Fanny and Edith. Alice married Frank Coates, Fanny married John Morrison, William Jr. married Alice Wilkinson and farmed his father's land. Eva married Ernest Baldwin and lived at Starbuck where they had a fox farm. Stanley married Jenny Parks, farmed the S ½ 17-1-4E and died of pneumonia when he was 38. Charles studies law. The youngest, Chaddy, is Mrs. Ray Long of Emerson.

James Lovering was a butcher and cattle buyer from Emerson. He may have bought up land for speculation as when I (Francis Stewart) was a child he owed the S ½ 24-1-4 and Thomas Woods used to rent it for pasture and hay.

William Jack Sr. came to the district in 1884, living first on the old MacDonald place north of Ridgeville. He and his son Robert acquired the SW and NW 23-1-4E. Two

other sons, William and James Telfer, homesteaded the east half of 23-1-4E. Robert signed his land over to his mother and William sold his to James. Both older sons went to Winnipeg to work. Violet Jack married John McBean, Jennie became Mrs. West of Weyburne, Saskatchewan, Ella, Mrs. McLennon, also of Saskatchewan. Mary married Wm. Hoag of Emerson and lived first in Saskatchewan and later in California. The youngest daughter, Maggie, married James Brown from across the border in Orleans, Minnesota district and died about a year later. Edward, the youngest son, married Alice Buchan, Overstone school teacher and farmed the home place until his retirement to Dominion City where he still lives with his second wife, the former Mrs. Guy Post.

Harold Jack was not related to the William Jack family but I (Francis Steward) am unable to find any information about him otherwise. He owned the W ½ 25 -1-4E.

The James Seward who homesteaded the NE ¼ of 22-1-3E is the same James Seward who bought the N ½ 29 in 1892. His wife, Mary Jane (Sarah Ann) was the sister of Robert Bingham who had bought the Wm. Phillips place and he told my mother many stories of Sarah's terrible loneliness on the homestead. It was she who used to walk out to the Indian encampments, just for the sight of another woman. This was one of the families affected by the Typhoid Fever epidemic described by Dr. O'Brian in *Saddle Bay Surgeon*. A daughter, Olive, died of this dread disease, and Mr. Bingham used to have the two younger sons, Bert and Abe, staying at his place to recuperate for weeks at a time.

During James Seward's final illness, the two "Personal Representatives" met to advise him on the disposal of his property. James Jr., who owned the farm where George Seward spent his last days, was already settled in Saskatchewan. Robert was given the farm where Wib Seward (Dennis 2010) now lives and Abraham was to have the father's farm. Then they realized that they had all forgotten George. So they stipulated that Abe must pay half the price of any buildings that George should put on land that he was still to acquire. No limit was placed on the amount to be spent and Abe never recovered financially from this burden. Finally he sold out and moved to Roland with his wife Elsie, sister of Mr. Radshawe. George married Jessie Turner of Emerson. Bert married Agnes Lochhead of Greenridge. James married Janet McLelland of Greenridge. Louise married William Gamble of Pembina and went to live in Idaho. May married Jack Hermiston of Winnipeg.

Although George Parks homesteaded the NW of 30-1-4E, he lived and brought up his family on the SW of 29 – 1- 4E. His eldest son, Silas, was a licensed steam engineer and is still living in Calgary at then ripe old age of 96. Robert, who farmed the NE of 27-1-4E at one time, moved to Winnipeg. Andrew, who did not marry, farmed near his parents and lived at home. A son, John, died while still a young man. Jenny married Stanley Lindsay, Violet married William Stowe and Mary married Fred Lindsay of Pembina. They lived farther south in America and Mary died of Spanish Flu in 1918. Leonard is still living in Winnipeg and Victor was killed in an automobile accident just after the close of World War I.

John G. Riach, on S 32-1-4E had a family of our. Ernest who farmed, ran an elevator then the Ridgeville Livery Barn and later the lumber yard. John died while still a young man. Tess married Dave Marshall and Effie became Mrs. Gafney and went to a homestead in Saskatchewan.

Ridgeville Homes



This home was built in 1906 by Hugh Smith. But it was best known as the home of Ernie Riach and family. When Mr. Riach retired and moved to Winnipeg, his son Alvin and wife Avis and children were the next occupants followed by Duaine and Lynne Riach and family, Art and Ida Dauphinais and in 2010, it is occupied by Lori and Melissa Dubois



The home of William and Alice Lindsay which they moved to when they retired from the farm. It was located next door to the north of the present home of Janis Nickel. A lovely flower garden now occupies the former foundation.



The home built by Lorne and Lillie Riach. It remained the home of Lorne Riach till 2009 when his granddaughter Kara and Evan Smith and their family became the new residents.



Home built by H. D. Lenton and later occupied by Tom and Louise Lenton and family when they operated the Esso dealership. Duaine and Lynn Riach lived in it for a short time when their new house was being built. The house was moved out of town.



This old house still stands beside the Agricultural Shop and was once occupied by Horace Pott and family. They had a fire in at Christmas time one year and it has been unoccupied since then.



This was the home of Frank and Elsie Casper and was originally located $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of the 5-mile road and 2 miles west of Ridgeville. In 1947 it was moved to town. Wilf and Evelyn Felsch and family rented it for a number of years. In 1962 it became the Post Office after Beatrice Stringer retired with Walter Brown as Post Master. When he retired in 1976, the Post Office moved to the store with Andy Grier as Post Master. Ernie Buss and family were the next owners followed by a Penner family who were only here weekends. Glenn Grier rented it as did Earl Grier afterward. It was then sold to Rick and Joy Beeman who lived in it for over 20 years. It is now vacant.



This was the home of Beatrice Stringer which was built in 1935 at a cost of \$1,300.00. In 1927 her husband Sam had applied for the position of Post Master. He was killed in a dragline accident in 1928 and Beatrice took over the job of Post Mistress which she held for 33 years when she retired in 1962. A porch had been added to the front of the building which served as the Post Office. Beatrice remained in Ridgeville until 1979. Jerry and Millie Klapka lived in the home for a number of years. Since then it has passed through a number of ownerships.



The Lenton home – thought to have been built around 1919 by H. D. Lenton. After WWII, Henry returned to Ridgeville and he and his wife Martha and son Wayne lived there. The next occupants were Norman and Edie Grier. After that Trudy Grier and children lived in there for awhile after which Les and Audra Fedoruk and 3 sons occupied it for a number of years. It has recently been sold again – to Marius Hop and his bride elect of the summer 2010.

South East Ridge History

compiled by Frances and Edna Stewart

This area consists of a deposit of century's old glacial drift that is bounded on the west by the rich clay flats which historians claim to be the bed of a pre-historic lake and on the south by the International Boundary.

Its first human occupants were the Indians who used it as a highway between hunting grounds. The "Crow Trail", their usual route, which follows the shortest overland road between St. Paul, called "Pigs Eye" in the early days to the fork of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers where Winnipeg now stands, passes along the western edge of the ridge.

This trail was later used as a freight road by the Hudson's Bay Company trains of Red River carts or sledges, hauled the Company's supplies along the Crow Trail to Winnipeg.

An old Hudson's Bay freighter, Mr. Ranvalle, who lived in Emerson, used to tell how welcome this sheltered section of the trail along the Ridge seemed after the long exposed trek across the prairies. He also used to tell of a winter storm of several days' duration which his train of loaded sledges weathered in the shelter of a thick grove of poplar on the former Dave Bredin place (SW 11-1-4E) close to the junctures of the Beckstead and Frank Turner lines. Provisions running out, they requisitioned a box of raisins and subsisted on raisins and tea.

This trail must also have been used by the Government as in 1906, a Mr. Nelson, who ran a cattle herd on the Minnesota border, found a bar of gold a slight distance over the border, with the Canadian Government stamp on it while he was prospecting for water. This reminded old timers of the early day's story of a pack train that had been massacred by Indians in the vicinity.

But the completion of the railway to Emerson from the south did away with the supply trains before the district was settled, leaving only odd relics in the shape of arrow heads and a few stone hammers with a buck-skin thong and a rusty flintlock gun that Mr. Beckstead plowed up to remind them that they were not the first to come.

The high level and the sheltering trees of the Ridge were to prove a refuge to a group of Emerson residents who camped there during the flood of 1886. They used boats to cross the flats to the hill where the Becksteads afterwards lived. But its promise of security was to be denied to three outlaws from the Bad Lands of South Dakota who, in the early seventies, managed to reach the border ahead of the sheriff and his posse. Their pursuers were relentless and the grave of the unfortunate men furnishes the Ridge's oldest brush with the Wild West.

The first settlers moved in during the late or middle seventies, most of the coming from Eastern Canada. They found the trees and meadows of the Ridge with their abundance of

wild fruit and game reminiscent of the homes they had left. Shelter, food, water and fuel outweighed the disadvantage of having to clear the land.

But the process of turning brush land into fertile fields proved too much for more than half the first settlers. Some became restless to try the new fields being opened up in Saskatchewan and others moved over the border into Minnesota.

When the Dominion government acquired Rupersland and the North-West Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1869, they initiated a vigorous "Settle-the-West" campaign with the promise of building a transcontinental railway to link the west to the east and offering free homesteads. By 1873, the Ridge district had been surveyed. Initially, only the even numbered sections were offered free to homesteaders but by 1890, all the other land excluding that reserved for schools, railroad and Hudson's Bay Company was available for homesteading.

Some of the families who got their start in farming as hired men or on a share-basis for William Fitzgerald, an old-country Englishman who applied for the homestead rights on the SW ¼ 24-1-4E in 1878 and who later bought other land, included: James Kirkpatrick, James Auld, William Wilkinson, Charles Burbidge, William Palmer, William and Bob Lindsay, Tom Brisnahan, and Henry Lenton. It is said that whenever Mr. Fitzgerald needed more money, all he had to do was write home. He had an eight-bedroom home built where the present Rich Weiss (sold by Russell and Angela Weiss in 2010) home now stands. He had his own private bathroom which was heated with a box stove and his own outdoor toilet with velvet-covered seat and also heated with a box stove. Hired help built the fires in these private rooms before the honorable gentleman used same. His cellar was always amply supplied with beer and whiskey.

Without exception, all old-timers name Aaron Madill as almost, if not quite, the first homesteader. Mr. Madill was actually located off the Ridge itself but the Madills were so much an integral part of the Ridge life that it is hard to leave them out. In 1878, Mr. Madill filed for the homestead rights on SW ¼ 4-1-4E and in 1881, acquired the NW ¼ 4-1-4E by means of pre-emption. They were always the first to call on newcomers and Mrs. Madill was the first to visit new babies. With all the available land to choose from, Mr. Madill selected open farm land without trees to clear but close to the supply of firewood, locating on what is now the Ray Empey farm, just past the middle seventies.

Some of the early settlers were William Montgomery, Robert Coats, the Gelthbraiths Colliers, Hermistons, Green, Hemptons, and Anderson. There was also a settler named Knight, and Mr. Bradley for whom the Bradley School was later named.

William Montgomery was one of the earlier arrivals. He lived on what later became known as the Harry Kreitz place (owned by Wayne Chubaty in 2010), SW and SE 1/4s 15-1-4E. Hamilton Stewart said that when he was first on the homestead, the first Mrs. Montgomery used to bake his bread. Mr. Montgomery's first two wives were sisters and both died of TB. Only one child, his daughter Laura, lived to maturity. She married Leslie Chambers and went with him to Saskatchewan. His third wife was Mattie Moore,

a cousin of the Searwards, who had come from the east to care for the younger girls when their mother died. The Montgomerys spent their declining years in Emerson.

Robert Coates was not far behind William Montgomery. He lived on NW ¼ 15-1-4E and later acquired the NE ¼ 15-1-4E. The farm was later owned by Gus Zass (John Stephens – 2010). His first building were on the gravel ridge where the South Ridge Cemetery is now located. Some of his family had been laid to rest here in a private burying ground. Mr. Coates donated this site for the Cemetery and moved his buildings up to front on the 3-mile road. His son, Frank, married Alice Lindsay and they homesteaded just inside Range. His daughter, Louise, became Mrs. Sammon and resided in Winnipeg. Herbert, the younger son, inherited the farm but the legacies his father's will obliged him to pay his brother and sister so crippled his economy that, after a few years, he and his mother moved to Saltcoats, Saskatchewan.

Across the road from the Coates, on Section 22, lived one of the earlier settlers, the Robert Hermistons. They had a son John (Jack) who served for many years on the Winnipeg Police Force. He married May Seward, daughter of James Seward Sr. Another son, George, was the hero of the greatest child hunt that the district knew. In the years '91, Mrs. Hamilton Stewart, who lived about a mile away on Section 10, drove by horse and buggy to visit Mrs. Robert Coates one afternoon, taking her two-year-old daughter Eva with her. On the way, the child saw her father cutting hay. While the ladies talked, Eva slipped away to find her father. When she was discovered missing, the news spread like wild fire and all the men in the district hunted all night without success. At dawn, George Hermiston climbed to the roof of his father's barn. On a hay coil over on SW 16 (presently owned by the Smiths of Emerson – Chubaty's in 2010) he could see a light-colored patch which afterwards proved to be the little girl's pink sunbonnet. He got on horseback and rode there as fast as possible but when he tried to approach the terrified child, she ran from him and fought like a wild thing. George Hermiston died of TB while still a young man.

You will notice an incidence of this disease from time to time, but the chances are that these early cases had started before the settlers came. Indeed, some may have immigrated to improve their health. There was also a daughter Louise Hermiston.

Near the eastern range line lived the families of Bill and Tom Darling. The Buffeys, too, were first located in the eastern district, moving to the homestead of their son Phil in the nineties on SE ¼ 13-1-4E. This eastern corner was so well populated that a school was built although not in the proper site according to the layout of districts. It was abandoned as these homesteaders left. Mr. Charles Burbidge, one of the first to come, was the only one to remain and prosper on the farm later owned by Jack Goetz.

Four old friends who filed on a section together in 1879, named Phillips, Adams, Robbins and Coudill lost all their buildings, stock and crops in a devastating prairie fire. This so discouraged them that only William Phillips had the tenacity to start again.

The others are easiest located by the present holders of their lands. The Montgomery farm now known as Harry Kreitz place, the Gus Zass on that of Robert Coats, the Gilbraiths on the Gatzon farm, Colliers, the home of Gabriel Goetz. Hermistons lived on the Berniey Empey place, Hemptons on the Geiler farm, Greens on the Bially land and Anderson on the Harry Wilkinson farm. Mr. Knight's exact location seems indefinite (possibly Jackie Gilchrist/Arnold Keyes/ John Derksen/Andy Kilby farm - 2010).

Of all the earliest settlers, Mr. John Morrison appears to be the only one still on the original homestead. Though only three years old, Mr. Morrison clearly remembers the 3rd of April, 1881 when his family arrived in Emerson. The flats were practically one sheet of water which had frozen over so that the horses broke ice with every step leaving their legs cut and bruised.

There was no school at that time. Springbank was built the following year to educate the now growing families. It was also to serve as a church. Mr. Anderson was a Baptist minister and held services there, alternating with a Presbyterian minister, usually a student who stopped over on his fortnightly service at Stuartburn. During winter both services were held in the Morrison home as the school had no stable to accommodate the horses.

Mr. Ham Stewart also came in 1881 to make his home where the George Marks (John Stephens, Sr. - 2010) now live.

Angus McBean and his brother John came to the Frank Turner place in 1882. After a couple of years they went back east to return with their parents and family, Peter McBean, the father occupying the George Turner farm.

In 1882 the Smith family, father and three sons, homesteaded a section of land, Jim and Tom Smith's homesteads now being Herman Zilkies farm and that of their father Dave Bredens place (Rod Weiler/Dave Zacharais 2010).

A little later the Jack family also settled on one section, still farmed by Jim and Ed Jack.

The eldest son of the Smith family later relinquished his claim in favor of his widowed aunt, Mrs. Sarah Gilchrist who came from Ontario in 1893. Mrs. Gilchrist was our only woman homesteader and it speaks well for feminine progressiveness that she was one of the first to exchange the laborious hand skimming for a new cream separator.

Although a number of the early homesteads were abandoned, they had not been acquired as a speculation. Their deserted plantings of currant bushes, fruit trees and rhubarb roots testified to the intention to make real homes. Many lilac and rosebushes traveled westward with the homesteaders in a cut potato or other means to keep it fresh. One example of early planting was the Hempton place. For many years currant bushes, rhubarb, maples and a riot of old fashioned roses, rosemary and southernwood grew wild.

The Collier farm had a large house and a handsome planting of Manitoba maples.

On the subject of planting, the two Zilkie farms had been the homestead and pre-emption of an Englishman named Peters. He left to settle on a farm of poorer land about three miles away in Minnesota and became a school inspector.

In 1923 a group of representatives of the State Agricultural School came looking for his Canadian home. Wherever Mr. Peters had lived, he had planted barberry bushes. This shrub was now in disfavor as a carrier of rust spores. They had traced Mr. Peters through half a dozen habitations, destroying his favorite shrub but they found no trace of it on his Canadian homestead.

Even if the first settlers on the Ridge met with many hardships, they seem to have escaped the bitter loneliness that caused one pioneer flats resident to go out to meet the Indian caravans just for the sight of another woman, notwithstanding the fact that they did not speak the same language.

Nor do they seem to have had as rugged an existence as the homesteaders south of the border. On the Minnesota side the bulk of the settlers came from Ontario and Prince Edward Island so the people visited back and forth and the Canadians were well acquainted with the story of Mrs. Moore, one mile from the border, who finding a bear in her henhouse, liquidated the intruder with a butcher knife. And with the tragic story of Mrs. Fennell who stepped out into a gathering blizzard to bring in her cow and next spring was identified by her long hair.

One of the hardest burdens they met with was the frozen wheat. When the wheat escaped the frost it was of the fine quality which made Manitoba hard wheat the standard of the British millers. But the frozen wheat, ground into flour at the Hudson's Bay Company grist mill at West Lynn, later at the Pocock Mill at Emerson, made very poor bread. Mrs. Anne McBean Gunn of Emerson says that it was dark, sticky and unpalatable. Mr. Morrison describes it as "bread that would not rise". But all the previous hardships paled into insignificance with the great drought of 1890. No rain fell from spring until fall. What little drop that grew was cut with a mower. The heads were about half an inch long.

It was known as the winter of no butter. Feed was so scarce that cows were dried off as soon as they milked to save their lives. Some feed, a mixture of ground barley and oats, was obtained from the United States.

Seed for the next spring was imported by the Government and, as though to make up for its failure of the year before, 1891 was a year of bumper crops.

During the early days, Emerson was the nearest town and there was little market for produce and the price as very small.

All the settlers had cows and the making of butter was of paramount importance. The milk was set to cool and cream was skimmed by hand. Butter was packed into tubs of

from fifteen to fifty pounds. This was well sold at twelve cents per pound. Pale colored winter butter had to be colored with a homemade concoction of strained carrot juice, to avoid discrimination.

The price of eggs varied between eight, ten and twelve cents a dozen. The only market for pigs was as dressed pork, for which a good price was six cents a pound.

Wheat averaged from thirty-six to forty-five cents a bushel although Mr. Morrison remembers a crop of the finest sample of wheat ever grown in the year 1895 that sold at thirty-three cents a bushel.

In the main the settlers lived well. All had their grists of flour and vegetables grew abundantly in the new though sometimes ravaged by rabbits and gophers.

Many made their own soap and a few their own yeast cakes. Some made their own cheese. Mrs. Jack was especially famous for her homemade cheese.

Wild fruit was supplemented with currants and rhubarb to fill the cellars with preserves and jellies.

Wild game was plentiful but so were the wolves. Well into the nineties it was common place to see a timber wolf grin at the window of an isolated farm house.

When the settlers first came the bones of elk and buffalo still whitened the land. These did not disappear by natural process. In the middle nineties a concern sent out a fleet of wagons to gather the bulk of them for industrial purposes. But the buffalo must have traversed the territory in large numbers because their paths from water hole to water hole, were so deeply grooved in the soil that they may still be seen today where the plow has not erased them.

Although the wolves kept the poultry industry from flourishing they did little damage. They were credited with the loss of a couple of calves and Smiths lost a young colt to the capacious appetites.

Settlers were permitted to cut timber for building or fuel along the Roseau River. Long lines of teams used to make the two or three day trip. Some teams coming from many miles beyond Emerson and the most used road was the International Boundary. And without exception, these teams camped at the top of the Ridge to refresh men and horses before tackling the long, unsheltered drive across the prairie flats.

Sometimes only three or four teams went, but other times parties of from ten to thirty teams traveled together.

Where the logs were cut, they stopped overnight in a log bunkhouse. Mr. Morrison says that the stars were clearly visible through the roof but so hot was the roaring fire of

tamarack that the younger men, who were relegated to the upper bunks, were nearly suffocated.

But in spite of hardships a pleasant social life grew up. Wagons and buggies traversed surprising distances to attend picnics and to visit. Whatever the type of gathering, there was always singing.

Visiting was a social duty and books were exchanged to pass the long winter evenings. They were too book-hungry to be particular and classics like *Lorna Doone* and the Waverly novels rubbed shoulders with the lighter fiction of Mary J. Holmes and Mrs. Southworth. Anyone receiving serial stores passed them on and they went from hand to hand till they fell apart.

One thing the pioneer did not lack for was law enforcement. Until 1897 or thereabouts, they lived with sound of the sunset gun of the American Army Post at Fort Pembina. Three times a week an American Customs Official patrolled the Boundary line. This was an obliging gentleman named Brady who made a practice of bringing out small quantities of supplies for the farms along his route, conscientiously buying them at the Emerson stores.

During the North West Rebellion, a Mounted Police Post was established at the Smith farm to remain for more than ten years. The Union Jack fluttered from their flag pole high above the tree tops. And this gave rise to an odd incident. Men cutting hay about a mile from the Post found some human bones. They reported this to the Mounties who took possession of them. They made such enquiries as they could with the limited facilities of the day. No one claimed the remains and the officer in charge conceived the idea of placing the skull on the top of the flag staff where it gleamed white for the entire world to see. If this was early days advertising, it had a long range effect. Several years later an American named Bob Hutchins identified it as that of his brother Art who had disappeared in a blizzard several miles south of the Border.

Aside from this the police found little to do beyond their routine patrols as the Ridge was then. It has remained distinctly law abiding. Settlers, seeing the flash of their red coats as they rode by, used to chuckle and say that they were watching for Indian uprisings.

Indians were a very common sight but were friendly enough. They sold neat, woven willow baskets; the men hunted and the women dug interminable quantities of Seneca root. Anyone who has seen a quiet and good-natured Indian baby, after a sultry day in a bark cradle on its mother's back, can ever doubt the stolid disposition of the Red Man nor his imperviousness to sunstroke.

So well did they preserve their tradition of keeping to themselves that it created no interest when part of an encampment moved off, leaving two teepees. Not till two small mounds appeared did the settlers realize that sickness and death had gone through the camp without the usual neighborly help. For several years the same families returned each summer to cover the little mounds with a basket-work of green willows.

In 1890 the first church was procured and moved to what was believed to be the future town site. This was attended by all the community regardless of their religious denominations.

Our pioneers were progressing beyond the early stages in other ways. Steam threshers were replacing the horsepower type and the gatling broadcast seeder gave way to one that sowed in drills.

But in 1892 as early snowfall blanked the countryside and the steam threshers refused to turn a wheel.

Mr. Ham Stewart had had his crop threshed by steam but he now got out his discarded horse-power and spent the rest of the fall and early winter threshing the coops of his less-fortunate neighbors.

From 1890 on, the district became more thickly populated. The Becksteads came in 1892 acquiring their farm from an Emerson hotelkeeper named Robinson. In 1893 the Gilchrist family came, Robert Gilchrist later filing on the abandoned Coudill quarter and Andy Gilchrist on the present Nelson Gilchrist farm.

In 1894 the Sam Stewart family took over the Joe Robbins quarter. In the bachelor section and in 1895 the Marshalls moved to the John McBean homestead. Mr. McBean having gone to a store in Emerson called McLean and McBean. The Marshall had lived across the Roseau River from Gardenton. Mrs. Marshall's garden was the spot that gave that town its name.

As the 90s advanced life became easier and more comfort and convenience became possible. Cream separators and revolving churns made their appearance. The Emerson stores now sent out delivery wagons loaded with staple goods to trade for butter and eggs, saving many long trips to town.

To supplement these, the pack men now included the district on their routes. These sturdy fellows trudged weary miles with a large pack strapped to their backs, stopping at every farmhouse to display their bolts of tweeds and serge with a selection of silks and satins and buttons and bows for dessert. They included hooks and eyes and braid for trimming too.

Later a Post Office was established at the Wilkinson home, north east of the present town of Ridgeville, so that news was no longer a month old when many people got it.

By the late 90s the clearing of the land had been fairly completed. At this time the district received a large settlement of immigrants from Europe. These new settlers were of German, Ukrainian and other nationalities. Their colorful native dress and old world politeness contrasted sharply with the informal ways of the pioneers. They set

industriously to work to reclaim the abandoned homesteads and to break up slough land that had been passed over in the first eastern settlement.

Some farmed with oxen but most had horses. Their picturesque thatched roofed homes had each its planting of flowers, protected by a woven brush fence and an outside oven to bake the bread. Some ground their rye flour by hand, but most got their grists of wheat. As Mrs. Chornetsky has said, "In this land we always had the white bread, though sometimes we didn't have very much".

A great deal of building was going on about this time and Adolph and Jules Zilkie added a small amount of settler's very scarce cash to their incomes by burning limestone into lime for plaster and mortar. An idea may be gained of what an undertaking this was when one considers that it took sixteen cords of wood for one kiln of lime.

This influx of new families focused the attention of the district on the need of another school, heretofore the Springbank school had served both districts. It was at considerable distance for some families. The Lentons, who had settled in the north-east corner of Overstone, after the middle nineties, being the most distant. The abandoned Bradley school was moved to its new location by volunteer teamsters and became Overstone.

The children of the new settlers proved apt pupils and in addition the parents learned from the children and soon the adults had vastly improved their vocabulary and could read as well as speak their new language.

Ridgeville proceeded Overstone by a couple of years. The railway came in 1902 and the town sprang up like a mushroom. The Anglican Church which was now built in the town gave the new hamlet an appearance of permanence and stability.

This was the beginning of the end of the pioneer stage. By 1910 such conveniences as washing machines and bread mixers, as well as newer kinds of farm machinery relieved much of the hand labor although an occasional prairie fire served to keep the earlier days in mind.

In 1912-13 a telephone line bisected the district, putting a period to the pioneer era.

Two or three phones had been installed on the northern fringe of this community earlier in the new century but they were a rarity.

Other additions to the social life were the new community Hall and the first skating rink.

In 1914 a new type school replaced the old one at Overstone which now had an enrolment of seventy-two pupils.

World War I at first did not make much impression. People said it would all be over by spring. But the war continued and as the local boys enlisted, the community got behind them with a staunch war effort.

A National Service League was formed to knit and to pack boxes of comforts for overseas.

After the close of hostilities, automobiles had come into general use. But the inflationary years following the war brought some of the hardest times the South-East Ridge had ever known. Rust and blight so reduced the crops that they could only be sold as low grade feed. The farmers soon found that this grain, fed to livestock and poultry, brought much higher returns than at the elevator. This could be said up to the time the Ridge really turned to diversified farming. The possibilities along these lines had been apparent to the pioneers but they lacked a market. This was no longer the case and so when, with the depression of the 1930s, farmers were urged to go into mixed farming as a cure for their economic ills, this part of the Ridge had already learned to live off the land and like it.

The depression came like a return to the pioneer days. "This is the way we did it in the early days," they told each other while grist mills did a land slide business, feed grinders were set to grind wheat for porridge and muffins and corn for corn bread.

Many returned to making their own soap and some made their own yeast cakes.

Handicrafts of all kinds were revived and in the eastern section spinning wheels were brought out to spin wool for hose and custom work.

Depressions, drought, and grasshoppers continued past 1940. But they had the effect of mechanizing the farms to a large extent. Scarcity of feed might account for the tractors and other power machinery but not for the power washers.

World War II found the community once more presenting a united front behind their soldiers. They were geared to produce all the agricultural requirements of a nation at war and local organizations ran on oiled wheels to relieve war's devastation.

Now with the war once more ended, the South-East Ridge looks with confidence to the future. Whether depression or poverty is just around the corner, they have been there before.

31		32.		33.		34.		35 · N W	Edward Hill		36. NW	NE Robert Dennis
			SE William Phillips					S W	Edward Hill	James Sinclair	SW	SE Wm. Jackson Barker
30.		29.		28		27.		26.		25.		
19.		20.		21.		22.		23.		24.		
18. NW	NE	17.		16.		15. NW Robert P. Coates	NE Robert P. Coates	14. NW Richard Smith	NE Denys Francis Knight	13. NW Thomas Woods	NE Stephan Krojnyk	
SW	SE					SW Wm. Henry Montgomery	SE Wm. Henry Montgo mery	SW Richard Smith	SE W ½ SE Denys Francis Knight	SW Andrew Gilchrist	SE Phillip Buffy	
7. NW Edward Sabin	NE Peter Coutts	8.		9. NW Alexand er Morrison	NE Peter McBean	10. NW Hamilton Stewart	NE David Marshall	11. NW Thomas Collins	NE John Gilchrist	12. NW Sarah Gilchrist	NE Thomas Smith	
SW Edward Sabin	SE Peter Coutts			SW William Morrison	SE Peter McBean	SW Robert Lindsay	SE William Marshall	SW Mrs. Matilda Schraeder	SE	SW James Smith Sr.	SE William Marshall	
6. NW	NE Robert Dennis	5. NW	NE Edward Hill	4. NW Aaron Madill	NE Peter McBean	3. NW Angus McBean	John Shaw	2. NW Andrew Stewart	NE Robert Gilchrist	1.	Conway & Dobbs	
SW	SE Wm. Jackson Barker		W ½ SE Edward Hill E ½ SE James Sinclair	SW Aaron Madill	SE William Robinson	SW William Robinson	John Shaw	SW Samuel Stewart	SW William Robinson	Conway & Dobbs	Conway & Dobbs	