Memories of Growing Up in Cartwright in the 1950s

by Forbes Newman

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The Baby Boomer Generation

I think most people agree that the "baby boomers" were those children born between 1946 and 1960. In my personal opinion, based on absolutely no research whatsoever, the "class of 1947" were the first major crop of baby boomers. That was certainly the case in Cartwright. I was born on June 16, 1947, which puts me right in the middle of that first crop, along with with Jim and Jerry Askew who were born on June 18, 1947. I believe we were part of the largest number of babies born in one year in the history of Cartwright.

The class of 1947, for the most part, started school in 1953 and graduated from high school in 1965. This being the 50th anniversary of that "historic" event, I thought it was time to do some reminiscing. What follows is my somewhat disjointed and rambling attempt to describe what it was like to live and grow up in Cartwright during those years.

Here are some of the things I remember.....

Jim Trembath's Milk Wagon

Anyone who grew up in Cartwright during the 1950s will remember Jim Trembath's milk wagon. Every day of the work week Jim's milk wagon, pulled by two horses, made the trip around the village. In the summer, if you were lucky, you might get to ride on the back of one of the horses or help to deliver the milk. In the winter, everyone wanted a chance to hitch their toboggan or sleigh to the back of the wagon. And shocking as it may seem now, no one wore a helmet and parents did not have to sign a consent!

The choices were simple. In fact there was no choice. The milk, delivered in 1 quart glass bottles, was pasteurized but not homogenized. At the top of the bottle there was about 2 inches of pure cream and, if you wanted to homogenize the milk, you simply had to shake the bottle to mix the cream and the milk. There was no such thing as 1%, 2% or skim milk. Milk was simply milk.

The two horses were very special. They knew the route by heart. They knew when to start and when to stop. And the stops sometimes were very long as Jim enjoyed visiting with people along the way. I well remember the many often lengthy visits that occurred between Jim and my mother over the fight to keep the high school in Cartwright. However, times were, as they say, "a-changing". The stores began to offer *more* choices and, by the early 1960s, Jim stopped delivering milk. Shortly after that the creamery closed. It was the end of a wonderful era.

School Field Day

Every year, around the end of May, there was an annual field/sports day. Each year it would be held in a different community—either Cartwright, Mather, Neelin or Holmfield. All schools

would participate, including the many one-room schools that existed at that time. These are the ones that I remember—Chesterville, Mylor, Hazeldell, South Derby, North Derby, East Mountain, Huntly, Rock Lake.

Every Field Day would begin at the local school with the grand parade of each school to the sports ground. Prizes would be given for marching, one for the best town school and one for the best country school. As far as I can remember among the town schools, Cartwright always came last. The reason was that we were the largest school (large being a relative term) and it was impossible to make us all march in time.

Cartwright School (the old white school that was recently torn down) was relatively new at the time and had a small gym. The gym was on the bottom floor on the north side of the school and was the equivalent of two large classrooms put together, which is what it eventually became. To prepare for the parade, I can remember the entire school marching around the gym, with the younger children placed between two older students. The idea presumably was to make sure that the younger children would march in time. All I can remember was being intimidated by the fact that I was squeezed between two students in grade 12 when I was in grade 1. But round and round the gym we marched, in the vain attempt to move Cartwright School out of last place. It never worked.

Once we arrived at the sports grounds, the competition between all the schools began. The events included long jump, high jump, pole vault, individual foot races, relay races and baseball. There was even a competition for folk dancing! At the end of the day all the scores were tallied, to see which of the town schools and country schools had the highest overall scores.

It was great fun for everyone while it lasted, but times again they were a-changing. By the end of the 1950s many of the country schools had closed, and the need or desire for an annual field day disappeared.

Snow and More Snow

Whether you believe in climate change or not, there is no doubt in my mind that in the 1950s Manitoba used to get a lot of snow. It was not uncommon to get two or three or more feet of snow at one time. And when the snow fell it did not melt.

I think there was a law against shoveling snow! At least I don't remember anybody shoveling their snow. I know for certain we did not. And so the snow just kept falling all winter long, and by the end of the winter I can recall walking on what in the summer would have been the tops of hedges. The sidewalks, which believe it or not in those days were made of wood, were about four feet underneath.

And then one day, as if by magic, it was spring. It seemed as though someone threw a switch and winter stopped and spring began. The temperature went from -20°F to +40°F in about one day. Centigrade had not yet been invented! The ditches became instant lakes, and you needed a boat, tall rubber boots or hip waders just to get from your house to the road.

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The Picture Show

Before the advent of television, a major place of entertainment in Cartwright was at the local "theatre", otherwise known as the Legion Hall. This building was located where Badger Creek Lodge now stands. Movies were shown most nights of the week, with admission being the grand total of 10 cents for children and 25 cents for adults! Percy Lowe was in charge of running the projector and Mary Hill was responsible for selling the tickets.

For some unknown reason, it was the unwritten rule that boys sat on the left side and girls sat on the right. With older teenagers and adults sitting at the back of the theatre. It was customary for everyone (children that is) to bring their favourite comic books to share before the show began. Archibald's Cafe was just across the street, where you could buy chocolate bars, licorice, popcorn or pop to eat or drink during the show.

As more and more people acquired a television, going to the movies became less and less popular and and so, by the end of the 1950s, the "Last Picture Show" was shown and the local theatre closed.

Remembrance Day in the 1950s

We were too young to have memories of the war but our parents, many of whom had fought in the war, certainly did. And so, Remembrance Day was a very important event in Cartwright.

School began as usual in the morning until about 10:30, when we would march to the Cenotaph, where all the veterans of the war as well as many others would be gathered. At precisely 11:00 AM the service would begin, with the playing of "The Last Post and Reveille" over loudspeakers. The names of those who had died in the war would be read out, appropriate speeches would be made, a wreath would be laid, O Canada and God Save the Queen would be sung and then we would all file into the United Church for the remainder of the service.

During the service one of the students from the school would be selected to read the poem "In Flanders Fields". This was considered a special honour. After the service we would march back to the school and classes would resume. Like so many other traditions, this type of observance unfortunately did not last and, by the time I reached high school, I think all we did was stand at our desk and observe one minute of silence at 11:00 AM.

The Arrival of Television!

The first time I saw a television set was on a trip "across the line", as it was called in those days. We were in Devils Lake, North Dakota and I saw a black-and-white television in the store window. It was pure magic! From that day forward I dreamed of the day when we might own a television. I had to wait quite a long time!

One of the first people to own a television set on our street were Isabel and Russell Wright. It is hard to believe now, but they opened their house every evening to anybody who wanted to come and watch television. It was almost like having a small movie theatre on our street. My parents would let me go to their house every Friday and Saturday evening, where I would sit on the floor surrounded by many other neighbours to watch our favourite programs. The ones I remember

were “I Love Lucy” and “Saturday Night Wrestling”. Russell and Isabel were very special people! Televisions in those days were full of glass tubes (cathode ray tubes) which required frequent replacement. The only place to buy a TV in Cartwright was at Bernie’s Electric, which was owned by Bruce Bernie. His assistant was Irene Linnell. Whenever something went wrong with your TV, which happened all the time, it was Bruce and Irene to the rescue! They would arrive with their truck load of tubes and testing equipment to fix whatever was wrong.

You could always tell who owned a TV by the presence of a large aerial on the roof of the house. For the first few years the only TV station was in Brandon. Television came on at 5 p.m., with the first program being “Howdy Doody” (for children of course!) and ended at 10 o’clock after the CBC news. Some people bought aerials with motors which would allow the aerial to turn and change directions. That made it possible to receive signals from the television station in Minot, North Dakota. Switching channels was clearly not a simple matter of pushing a button on the remote control.

Cartwright School in the 1950s

There were approximately 21 of us in the grade 1 class of 1953. We probably hold the record for being the biggest grade 1 class in the history of the school. The school was new at that time and consisted of five classrooms on the second floor. Each classroom had between one and three grades. The second floor also contained a small laboratory for the high school students and a library. The bottom floor contained the gym as well as a multipurpose room and two washrooms.

The gym was a major addition to life in Cartwright. In addition to its primary use for school sports, it was also used for community meetings and school concerts, as well as a meeting place for the Cubs and Scouts.

The arrival of the baby boomers clearly put a strain on the resources of the school. I can remember when I was in grade 3 that our teacher, Mrs. Anne Drewry, had a total of 45 students in three grades. As a result, Mrs. Drewry had to run a very tight ship! She was an excellent teacher, using traditional teaching methods, so that by the end of the three years most of us could spell, knew our times tables, could add, subtract, multiply and divide, had a basic understanding of grammar and could write a proper English sentence!

By the end of the decade many of the country schools around Cartwright had closed. Those students then began attending school in Cartwright, with the result that the population of the school increased so much that the gym and the multipurpose room were converted into normal classrooms.

What follows are a few random thoughts of what life at school was like in the “simpler” days before the revolutionary changes of the 1960s and ’70s. First of all there was no such thing as a school trip or a school outing. There were no teacher Professional days or Teachers Convention. Other than the Christmas and Easter vacation, the only break in the school year was one day off for the Field Day and for the Music and Drama Festival, both of which occurred in the spring of the year. Other than that, it was school day in and day out Monday to Friday.

There was also very little or no communication between parents and teachers during the school year. Parents were only allowed info the school twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring for what was called Parents' Day. There were no parent teacher interviews! On the appointed day, parents were allowed to come into the classroom during the afternoon to see the class in operation. Teaching went on as normal as was possible in the circumstances. Parents would wander about the room looking at student assignments that were posted all along the walls. We, or at least I, would dread the moment when our parents would come into the room. We hoped that they would quickly come in and quickly leave, without saying a word and particularly not speaking to the teacher.

Another event in our otherwise tedious school year was the unexpected and, as far as we knew, unscheduled visit of the dreaded Inspector Floyde! Every school district had its own inspector whose job it was, I suppose, to make sure that students were learning what they were supposed to learn and standards were being kept up. He would suddenly arrive unannounced and we would immediately stand up and say "Good Morning (or Afternoon) Mr. Floyd". He would usually say "Carry-on class" and Mrs. Drewry, or whoever the teacher was, would continue teaching while he would glide or, as I used to think, creep about the room to inspect our work and watch the classroom in operation.

This would go on for an hour or so, following which he would speak to the teacher, make a short speech to the class generally along the lines about the importance of getting a good education and then quietly disappear. In retrospect it doesn't seem like it was such a big deal. But at the time it felt like you were being inspected by a prison warden. In any event, when the visit was over classes resumed and everyone heaved a big sigh of relief.

Report cards at that time were about as big as a typical greeting card. How things have changed! Report cards came out three times a year, once at Christmas, another after Easter and then the final one at the end of the year. "Reporting was very simple. Comments were short and to the point—"John/Sue/Andy is doing excellent work, needs to work harder if he/she wants to pass to the next grade, needs to pay more attention, talks too much in school etc. etc.". Since only one line was provided for comments, nothing more could be said or was expected to be said. Grades were given in each subject by percentages and, at the end of the year, the report card simply stated whether you had passed to the next grade or not.

I should also mention that grades were also given for penmanship. Yes, penmanship! When we got to grade 3 we were given a bottle of ink, a pen with a steel pointed nib and a blotter. There were a number of tedious exercises that we practiced every day to learn how to form our letters. Eventually we graduated to fountain pens. Before long we were using ball point pens and by then the bottle of ink and the fountain pen had largely disappeared.

The Battle to Keep the High School in Cartwright

By the end of the 1950s, Cartwright School had become part of the Turtle Mountain School Division. The battle lines were drawn as soon as it became clear that the intention was to build a large high school in Killarney and close the high school in Cartwright. Jim Trembath, the trustee representing Cartwright on the division School Board the fight to keep the high school. It was a classic replay of the biblical story of David against Goliath. You would be correct if you guessed

that Jim was David and the School Board was Goliath. Jim had a lot of support from Cartwright, but nevertheless he fought a long, tough and lonely battle.

Eventually David won the battle and the school board very reluctantly agreed to build a small three-room high school in Cartwright for grades 9, 10 and 11. Students would have to take a bus to Killarney for grade 12. The school also contained a small lab and library. But there was no gym. It would be another 10+ years before Grade 12 was taught in Cartwright and a gymnasium was added to the school.

In my opinion, if Jim Trembath had not been as strong and stubborn as he was and had not fought hard as he did, Cartwright would not have a high school. I think it would be a very good idea to rename the Cartwright high school after Jim Trembath. It would be an appropriate way to honour his great legacy.

The Battle to Bring Waterworks to Cartwright

The issue of whether or not to install a modern water and sewer system in Cartwright began to emerge around 1958 or 1959. Many businesspeople felt that, if the village was going to survive and prosper, it was important that it become more modern. Nevertheless, the issue was very controversial. Many residents who had lived through the Depression, and had strong memories of what had happened during that time, were very fearful of increased taxes and the village incurring debt.

Most homes at that time, including ours, did not have indoor plumbing. That meant drinking water was obtained from a town pump. We had two choices in our neighbourhood. We could either get water from the pump that was located beside the United Church or from the pump located next door at Jack Gemmil's. His water was the best water in town as far as we were concerned, and he gladly let anyone get as much water as they wanted from the pump.

Water for washing was a different matter. Most houses had a large concrete cistern located in the basement of the house. In the summer all the rainwater poured into the cistern. Every kitchen had a pump so that water could be brought up as needed. Water was heated on the stove. Wastewater was collected in a pail under the sink and was carried out by hand and dumped in the backyard. In the winter, when the rainwater had been used up, the Iceman would bring large blocks of ice that had been obtained from Rock Lake. The ice would melt and would supply enough freshwater until the rains came in the spring. One beauty of the system was that both the rainwater and the ice-water were soft!

Every house at that time had an outdoor toilet or "biffy", as it was usually called. From early spring until late fall everyone used the outdoor toilet. When winter came it was a different matter. Every bedroom had a chamber pot under the bed and for everything else there was a very basic toilet in the basement. The contents of both had to be emptied outside every day. It probably was not very sanitary and was less than ideal, but there was no other choice.

Most houses like ours had no separate bathroom. You washed your face and hands in the morning at the kitchen sink with water pumped from the cistern. You got a bath once a week in a

tub on the kitchen floor with water from the pump. Water was heated on the stove. Needless to say, the tub was not filled to the top.

Eventually my father had a separate bathroom built that had a bathtub, sink and what was known as a "pail a day toilet". This was a complicated business, which involved installing a septic tank under the toilet and then a septic field out into the yard to allow the waste to be absorbed into the earth. To make the system work efficiently, a pail of water had to be poured into the toilet every day. Twice a year the septic tank had to be drained completely. A large vacuum truck would arrive at the house with a hose that would be put through the bathroom window and into the toilet. When the vacuum was turned on my mother would open all the windows in the house to try to get rid of the horrible smell. We had to leave the house for a couple of hours before it was safe to go back.

I think it was written in the Bible somewhere, perhaps it was the 11th Commandment, that washday was always on Monday. In our house, as was the case in just about every other house in town, the process for washday was quite labor-intensive. On Sunday night the washing machine was hauled into the middle of the kitchen floor and was filled with water. An electric heater was placed in the water so that by morning it would be hot. A tub of rinse water was placed on a chair at the back of the washing machine. Washing took up all of Monday morning and everything was washed in the same tub of water.

Mom started with the whites and the sheets and continued with the darker clothes, finishing with the mats. Everything had to go through the wringer to get the soap out before it could go into the rinse water. Then everything was taken out to the clothesline where it was hung out to dry. By the end of the morning the wash water was absolutely black. When I came home from school at lunch, my job was to drain the washing machine and the rinse water, which meant carrying the water out pail by pail to the back.

So, you can see why the possibility of getting indoor plumbing with hot and cold running water would be a *very* attractive idea. The bylaws of the village required that only owners of property were entitled to vote and approval of the bylaw required a majority of at least 60%. This was a very difficult threshold to achieve. As I recall, there were three separate votes over several years before the bylaw was finally approved.

Emotions ran very high during this time, which often pitted neighbour against neighbour. The bitterness and anger ran deep and lasted for years after the waterworks had been installed. One example of this was the relationship between our family and Jack Gemmil, who lived right next door to us. We had been friends for years. Jack was adamantly opposed to the waterworks for what he thought was a very legitimate reason. Part of his farm east of the village was being expropriated for the new sewage lagoon that was part of the project. As I look back on it now, I probably would have felt the same way. My parents, however, were strongly in favour of the waterworks.

When the bylaw was approved, Jack was so angry that he immediately placed a sign on his pump saying that anyone who had supported the waterworks would have to pay five cents for each pail of water. For many years my parents and Jack did not speak and, until the waterworks had been installed, I carried our water from the pump at the United Church. The gate between our yards,

which had probably existed since the beginning of time, was permanently closed. To drive the point home Jack placed a large box of stones in front of the gate. As long as my father lived in the house the box of stones was never moved.

Nevertheless, over time, relations between us gradually began to improve and the bitterness slowly went away. I think this was true in the town generally. The waterworks became a fact of life and the world did not end. Life just went on more or less as it always had. But I can still remember the day when the waterworks was turned on and I could fill the bathtub as high as I could. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. I wasn't the only one.

Jack got the last laugh, however. Many years later, when my wife and I came to Cartwright with our two children to visit my father, Margie always insisted on getting our drinking water from Jack's well because she felt that it tasted much better than the town water! On this point I had to agree.

The Telephone Office

The Telephone Office was in many ways the nerve centre of the village. Most homes had a telephone, usually mounted on a wall in the kitchen. If you wanted to make a phone call, you simply turned the crank on the side of the telephone to reach the operator in the telephone office. For as long as I can remember the two main operators in Cartwright were Dorothy Sherlock and Iris Goodhew. As the office was open 24 hours a day there must have been other operators, however Dorothy and Iris are the only two that I can remember.

When the operator answered, you gave the number you wanted and were connected to the person you wanted to speak to. The numbers were very simple. Our home number was 30. My father's office number was 56. My Grandmother's number was 28. Newton's Store was 2. If you lived on a farm you would have a party line, with as many as two or three people on the same telephone line. If your number was for instance 416 ring 2, if the phone rang twice you would know that the call was for you. If it rang once or three times you would know that the call was not for you. This was long before Canada's privacy laws came into effect and so it came to pass that, on very rare occasions, one neighbour would listen in on the conversation of another neighbour! The clue that this was happening would be a tiny click on the line while your conversation was going on. But as this happened very rarely the police were seldom called.

Local calls within the village and surrounding area were covered by a monthly bill charged by the Manitoba Telephone System. This meant you could call as often as you wanted and talk as long as you wanted. Long-distance calls, on the other hand, could be quite expensive depending on how long you talked and where you were calling. There was no such thing as a long-distance plan and there was no competition for your business. The result was that long distance calls were usually limited to emergencies and when calls are made they were very short.

When I was at university in Winnipeg I almost never called home and my parents rarely called me. These were the days when you corresponded by letter! When I went to school in Toronto I probably phoned home at the most twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Placing a long-distance call from Toronto to Cartwright was a complicated process, involving operators in Toronto, Winnipeg, and finally Cartwright.

Phoning home to talk to my parents was obviously very special. But what also made it even more special was when the Cartwright operator finally answered. It was usually either Dorothy or Iris and they would often say "Is that you Forbes? Good to hear your voice. Are you calling for your mother? I don't think she's at home because I just saw her going to your father's office. I will put the call through there". I doubt if anyone will ever be able to develop an "App" on your iPhone to replicate that kind of service.

With the arrival of dial phones in the mid-70s, the local telephone office closed. It was obviously progress, but I must say that I miss hearing the voices of Dorothy and Iris on the other end of the line!

The Disappearance of the Steam Engine

Until about 1959 Cartwright, like almost every other town in rural Manitoba, had a train station and daily passenger train service. The train in the morning was going to Winnipeg and the train in the afternoon, which brought the mail and the newspapers, was coming from Winnipeg.

Winnipeg of course was the centre of the known universe as far as we were concerned! All the trains were pulled by steam engines. Who can forget the sound of the train whistle and the ringing of the bell as the train pulled into the station? For a young child the arrival of the daily trains was a time of great excitement. It didn't take much to amuse us in those days. In the summer, when school was out, it was exciting just to be on the station platform to watch the train arrive and to see who would get on or get off and watch the baggage being unloaded. Sometimes we would even place a penny on the track before the train arrived. After the train left, you would try to find the now completely flattened penny in the midst of all the hot coals and cinders that the train had left behind.

I think *every* child dreamed, or at least I did, that one day you would be the one to actually get on the train and go somewhere! My lucky day arrived when I was about six or seven years old. My mother took me on a trip to Winnipeg. I can still vividly remember the motion of the train, the sound of the steam whistle and the ringing of the bell as it stopped in *every* town all the way into Winnipeg.

However, as roads got better and cars became more reliable, people began to travel by train less and less. By the end of the decade, daily train service had stopped and had been replaced by the Greyhound bus. It was only a matter of time before the steam engine itself disappeared. It was a sad day indeed when the last steam train went through Cartwright. Somehow a diesel engine pulling a freight train did not generate quite as much excitement as a passenger train being pulled by a steam engine with a bell and a whistle!

Not long after daily train service stopped, the train station itself was closed and was later torn down. The train station had always been a beehive of activity in the town. When the train arrived from Winnipeg it not only brought passengers, it also brought the mail, the newspapers and other products that would later be delivered by truck.

Every town had a station agent who lived in a house that was attached to the back of the station. The station agent for most of the 1950s was Keith Thompson. I was a friend of his son Gerald

who was in the same grade at school. As a result, I had lots of opportunities to see the train station in operation. It was a magical place. My favourite memory was the constant tap tap tap of the telegraph machine. Being members of the local Boy Scout troop, we were both "experts" in deciphering Morse code. Needless to say, the messages were going back and forth so fast we couldn't decipher even one. Our lives as secret agents would not have lasted *very* long. It was one thing to learn Morse code as a hobby and another to watch Mr. Thompson actually use Morse code as part of his job.

It was also *very* important to make sure the railway tracks were kept in good repair. This was the job of the linesman. The linesman in Cartwright at that time was Alvin Hodgson, who was responsible for maintaining and repairing the tracks between approximately Mather and Holmfield. He would patrol his area of the track *every* day on what was known as a "jigger", which was a hand operated small railway car. It had a large lever which he would pump up-and-down to make the car move forward. His family lived in what was known as the Station House. In a recent issue of the *Review*, I read that a new home is being built where the Station House once stood.

Going Downtown!

It was just one of those things that didn't make any sense. There was nothing either up or down about it, but when you wanted to get something from the store you always said you were going "downtown" And in those days going to get something from the store meant going to the store in Cartwright. Remember this was long before the days when you could make a quick trip to Brandon or, God forbid, Killarney! You did all your shopping at home.

Cartwright at that time had three grocery stores. Most people did their major grocery shopping at either Moore's Red & White Store or Newton's Solo Store. You could also shop at Lanchbury's Grocery Store, which was located in the building now occupied by the Cartwright Library.

Moore's Store was a large stone building located immediately across the street from the United Church. It was owned and operated by Ray and Irene Moore. As I recall, Irene mostly ran the cash register, assisted by Dorothy Moore. People in those days usually had a strong loyalty to either Moore's or Newton's store. My grandmother Newman always did her shopping at Moore's. When that was no longer possible she relied on Norman Sellers, who also worked at the store, to take her grocery order and deliver it to the door. Norman always stopped to visit, delivering news as well as groceries.

Newton's Store was much like a department store. It was owned and operated by Ralph and Dorothy ("Dot") Newton. The clothing department was managed by Millie Drewry. The meat department, otherwise known as the Butcher Shop, was managed by Tom Poole. Attached to the Butcher Shop was the large cold storage locker room. In those days nobody owned a freezer of their own. As a result, many people rented one or more lockers in the locker room in order to store large quantities of meat and poultry for the winter.

The locker room was really one gigantic freezer. My mother would sometimes ask me to go and get a frozen chicken or roast of meat out of our locker. Tom Pool would open the door to the locker room to let me in. I can remember when the door closed how absolutely silent and cold it

was. I was always worried that Tom would forget to let me out and I would freeze to death. Fortunately, that never happened!

The hardware department was in the part of the store that is now occupied by the Corner Pocket Restaurant. At Christmas time Millie Drewry would transform part of the department into a toy store. It was pure magic to wander through the department, dreaming about what toys your parents might possibly get to put under the tree for Christmas. Later, when the department was enlarged, it was moved into the part of the store that is now occupied by the pool room.

I also remember that, before the customs office was moved to the border, the office was located in the same area. As a result, anybody wanting to travel to the United States had to go through customs in Cartwright. That meant a lot more traffic going through the town. I remember, especially on weekends, what seemed like hundreds of Americans with big boats would go through town on their way to Rock Lake. And on Sunday night they would stream through town again, checking in at the customs office before returning to the United States. Our Sunday night entertainment was sitting in our glassed in front veranda to watch the parade of large American cars pulling their large boats returning from their weekend of fun! I think we were all slightly jealous as most people in Cartwright did not have large cars or large boats. We certainly didn't!

Continuing on our trip downtown, immediately south of Newton's store was my father's insurance office, R. J. Newman's Insurance Agencies. A very impressive name for a small office! Rusty sold all manner of insurance, from household to automobile and hail insurance, as well as life insurance. He later sold the business to Raymond Vincent who sold the business to Kim Kemp. By then my father's little office had been torn down, and Kim renamed the business JK Insurance and built a much larger office located at the east end of North Railway. The post office was next door to my father's office, and next door to that was a watch repair business operated by P. A. Watts. This building had been the original post office.

Next to it was Davidson's Drug Store. It was owned by Hugh Davidson, who was also the druggist. Hugh was the brother of Dr. Andrew Davidson, who was the local doctor for many years. The Drug Store was a mini department store in itself. In addition to all the items you would normally find in a drugstore, such as greeting cards and cosmetics, it also had a large lunch counter where you could buy coffee, sandwiches and snacks, as well as ice cream cones, milkshakes, ice cream floats, banana splits etc. I well remember that a single scoop ice cream cone cost five cents and a double scoop cost ten cents! The drugstore was also the local licensed liquor outlet. With so much to offer, is it any wonder that Davidson's was a popular gathering spot for the community.

Beside the drugstore was the W. I. Restroom (short for Cartwright Women's Institute). It is now the Cartwright-Mather Merrymakers Clubroom.

Cartwright had three grain elevators. In fact, every town along Highway 3 had one or more elevators. They were all different sizes, shapes and colours. When you were going to or from either Winnipeg or Brandon, you always knew which town you were coming to by the number, shape and colour of the elevators. The elevators in Cartwright were all lined up on the north side of the railway tracks. Each elevator had an operator. The only two that I can remember during

that time were Cliff McLeod, who was operator of the Federal Elevator and Ron Richards, who was the operator of the Paterson Elevator.

Going further downtown was the most prominent building in town—the Toronto Dominion Bank, which was and still is on the corner of North Railway and Broadway. Next door to the bank was Lanchbury's Grocery Store. It later became the Cartwright Library. The next building was the office of the *Southern Manitoba Review*, which was owned and operated in those years by Harry Wallace and his mother Isabel. For many years Isabel was also the Mayor of the village. The *Review* is now owned by Vicki Hayward, a daughter of Harry Wallace. Vicky is the third generation of the Wallace family to own the *Review*.

Next door was Tony's Garage, owned and operated by Tony Wallace. East of Tony's Garage was Henry's Bake Shop, owned by Henry and Martha Epp, capably assisted in those years by Emily Jamison. People came for miles around, even from "across the line", to buy Henry's excellent bread and those wonderful oatmeal and date cookies. Bread cost 16 cents a loaf!

Moving right along we come to Bruce Burney's Television & Repair Shop. Bruce and his capable assistant Irene Linnell not only sold televisions but, as I have said, were in constant demand for repairing them when they broke down, which they constantly did. They sold many different models of TVs. The only two that I can remember were the Electrohome and Sylvania models. The main selling feature of the Sylvania TV was that it had "halo light", which was simply a fluorescent tube that surrounded the screen and was supposed to make it easier to see.

Next door was the Roy Lees Hardware Store. It was later sold to Hugh Chesney. Beside the hardware store was the Barber Shop and Pool Room, originally owned by Harry Bradley and later owned by Harold Aiken.

Then we come to Askew's Garage, which was owned by John ("Johnnie") Askew. John also had the Ford Dealership. The last building on the block was Marchants Store, a two-story red brick building which had living quarters on the top floor. The store had a grocery section as well as a lunch counter and coffee shop. Just around the corner was Todd's Shoe Repair Shop. Scotty Todd (his real name was Claud) could repair any shoe no matter how badly damaged. This was a good thing as shoes were expensive and had to last. In the winter he was also the man who sharpened your skates.

Across the street from Marchant's Store, on the northwest corner of North Railway, was Calvin Hill's Blacksmith Shop. It was probably one of the oldest buildings in town. Calvin was very experienced in his craft. It was very exciting to watch Calvin as he worked—the blazing fire for heating metal, Calvin with his goggles and thick leather gloves lifting the red hot metal from the fire and dipping it in the cold water with a huge sizzle and then hammering the metal into the desired shape. When Calvin retired, it was not only the loss of a business, it was the also the loss of an ancient and noble profession.

Immediately south of Moore's Store on Broadway was the Cartwright Consumers Co-op Garage and Lumber Yard. The two managers of the Co-op that I remember were Jim Trafford and later Jim Barrett. Both Patsy Trafford and Bob Barrett were in the same grade as me. Both families lived in the apartment that was on the top floor of the building.

Memories of Growing Up in Cartwright in the 1950s
by Forbes Newman

Continuing on our virtual tour of the village, immediately west of the Anglican Church was the Telephone Office and beside it was the Egg Station. As a child I never really knew what went on in the Egg Station, and to be honest I still don't. I think eggs were delivered to the station and were sorted for delivery to the stores, but I will have to rely on other people's memories to tell the complete story.

Going east from the United Church was the new and *very* modern Municipal Building, which contained the offices of the Village of Cartwright and the Rural Municipality of Roblin. Duffie's Electric came next. It was owned by Duffy Ellison and operated by Duffy and Mac Robinson. Last but not least on that street we come to Archibald's Cafe. Merle and George Archibald managed the cafe for many years. As far as I can remember, you could get breakfast lunch and dinner there. It was also another place to get coffee and ice cream etc. and was the "go to" I place for snacks and candy when you were going to the movies at the Legion Hall.

I have probably forgotten many businesses that were in Cartwright at that time. But I will mention the final three that I can remember. First of all, there was Nan Howell's Beauty Salon located just north of the United Church. For many years Nan operated her business from home. In the early 1960s she built a new salon on the corner of the property, which later was later sold to Susan Ransom and renamed Susan's Beauty Salon.

A *very* important business during those years was located at the southeast corner of the village, right adjacent to Highway 3. That was the Cartwright Creamery, operated for many years by Milt Shewfelt and later by his son Gordon. The creamery supplied cream, milk and butter to all the stores in Cartwright and surrounding area. Unfortunately, by the early 1990s the creamery had closed, along with just about every other creamery in rural Manitoba.

Across the street from the creamery was Fred Clarke's Service Station. Fred did small repairs, but his business was essentially a gas station. Fred was also open for business on Sunday, which was very unusual in those days. My father always stopped in to have a visit with Fred on Sunday. I think it was his excuse for not going to church!

And finally, can anybody remember the Cartwright Hotel? It was located on the spot presently occupied by Borderview Lumber. Unfortunately, it burned to the ground sometime in the early 1950s and Cartwright was without a hotel until the Cartwright Motor Hotel was built in 1963.

George Ackland

One of my less pleasant memories of those years is of George Ackland, sometimes very disparagingly referred to as "Black George". He was in effect the town hobo. I don't know where he came from and I don't remember when he died, but I do remember very clearly the shack he lived in on the north side of the old skating rink. The skating rink and the shack stood where Cartwright School is located.

George did odd jobs, mostly the jobs that nobody else wanted to do. I don't know what he lived on or how he survived. The shack was very ramshackle, poorly insulated, and looked like it could blow down at any moment. As a young child, I was always torn between feeling somewhat sorry for George but at the same time also a little afraid of him. He was a very solitary figure, always

alone. Although people in the town were generally good to him, I think he must have been very lonely. I wonder if anybody ever asked him to come to their house for Christmas dinner? We never did. I remember my mother telling me that when George got sick, he was always taken to the local hospital where the nurses and doctor would look after him until he was better, get him cleaned up, and then send him on his way. After George passed away, the shack was torn down. It was certainly gone by the time the new high school was built. A sad end to what must have been a very sad and lonely life.

Some Final Random Memories

Throughout the year community dances would be held on a regular basis in the Legion Hall. Local orchestras would provide the music. The two that I remember were the Robertson and Towns Orchestras. Dances never started earlier than 10 o'clock in the evening and usually finished about 2 o'clock in the morning. Lunch was served around 12:30 AM. The lunch of sandwiches and coffee, supplied by people who came to the dance. I don't think the admission charge was very high. Entire families would come, and young children and babies would eventually be put to sleep on piles of coats on benches or on the stage. There were no conveniences in the hall, so when nature called you simply had to go outside and do what you had to do. The sale of liquor and beer was strictly prohibited, but the prohibition laws did not seem to prevent the consumption of liquor, which "occasionally" happened at the back of the hall and outside!

Red Cross swimming lessons at the "swimming hole", now known as Badger Creek Park, marked the official beginning of summer. It was usually blisteringly hot for the first two weeks of July. Long before the invention of sunscreen, we would emerge from school as white as the driven snow, become instantly sunburned and blistered and somehow emerge at the end of the two weeks of lessons looking as brown as a baked potato! At the end of the two weeks there would be the presentation of the badges, as we passed from beginners to juniors, intermediate or seniors. The finale was always the big wiener roast. There would be a huge bonfire, with free hotdogs, and unlimited supplies of grape, cherry or orange "Freshie" (similar to Kool-Aid). Everybody would hunt in the bushes to find a branch that could be made into a stick strong enough to hold your wiener for toasting over the bonfire.

In the early 1950s skating and hockey took place in what was simply called the Skating Rink, which was located where Cartwright School now stands. The rink was pretty basic by today's standards. The building was covered by tin, had a skating surface that I suspect was not regulation size, and had a waiting/dressing room that had a wooden floor scarred by generations of skaters walking across it. There was a very small area on the north side for people to stand in order to watch hockey games. Every night of the week during the winter, except when hockey games were being played, the rink was open for general community skating. The rink was full every night with people, young and old, skating around the rink. Music was supplied through loudspeakers suspended over the ice. During the winter months, other than the Legion Hall for movies, the Skating Rink was the place to go to see and to be seen!

Another major event during the winter "season" in Cartwright, was the annual Winter Carnival. The highlight of the event was the crowning of the Queen of the Carnival. Usually, three girls from the high school would be nominated as candidates to be Queen. It was really a popularity

contest as well as a fundraiser for various community causes. Whichever candidate could raise the most money was elected Queen, with the other two being princesses. It was all in good fun and, as far as I can remember, there were no hard feelings by the princesses.

The Carnival Queen was crowned with as much pageantry as the village could muster. With appropriate music being played over the loudspeakers, the soon to be crowned Queen and the two princesses, each with a long "velvet" train carried by two young pageboys, processed into the skating rink. At the front of the procession was another pageboy carrying the glittering Crown on a velvet cushion. It was considered a great honour to be selected as a pageboy perhaps because of or often despite having to be dressed up in a fancy "Royal" costume!

The Skating Rink was torn down in 1959 to be replaced by the first "Clipperdome", which was destroyed by fire several years ago and was rebuilt as part of the Mac Robinson Sports Centre.

Sunday in the 1950s was truly a day of rest. Everything in the village was shut tight, except for Fred Clarke's Service Station. The Skating Rink and Curling Rink were closed and there were no restaurants open. So, everybody (well not everybody, my father being one of the very few exceptions) went to church! There were two churches in town, the United Church and the Anglican church, which is still the case today. One of my "fondest" memories of Sunday morning was the compulsory attendance at Sunday School in the United Church! Sunday School (and school as far as I was concerned was the correct way to describe it) began promptly at 11 o'clock. Believe it or not, the entire church was filled with children. The church was divided into a series of classrooms separated by large curtains. We would begin by singing a number of children's hymns. "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so", "God sees a little sparrow fall, it meets his tender view", "Jesus bids us shine with a strong pure light, like a little candle burning in the night. In this world of darkness so let us shine. You in your small corner and I in mine", are just a few of the ones I remember. Wonderful evocative hymns that bring back a lot of memories. I wonder if any of them are still being sung by children in church today?

After the hymn singing, the curtains went up and we were off to Bible class for the next hour. In retrospect, Sunday School was a good experience. I was taught the fundamentals of the Christian faith and many of those lessons, hymns and stories have stood me in good stead over the years. At the time, however, it felt like just one more hour of school on Sunday when all I wanted to do was stay in bed and sleep in! Church for the adults was at seven in the evening.

Sunday was certainly not a day of rest for the minister. Cartwright was part of what was known as a four-point charge—Cartwright, Mather, Holmfield, and Neelin. Services were held in each of those four communities every Sunday. Sadly, Cartwright United Church is the only one remaining today.

If Sunday was a day of rest, Saturday night in Cartwright during the summer was definitely not. On Saturday night, all the stores stayed open late, many farmers and their families would come to town and people would do their shopping, visit with their neighbours, go to the picture show at the Legion Hall, and generally have a chance to relax on a hot summer evening after a very busy work week.

Memories of Growing Up in Cartwright in the 1950s

by Forbes Newman

The Class of 1947 were not born in Cartwright, because Cartwright did not have a hospital. I was born in the Crystal City Hospital. The building of the hospital in Cartwright was a major event in the life of the village. It was our very first hospital. From then on, all babies were delivered in the hospital by Dr. Davidson. Like every child, I dreaded a visit to the doctor. But "Doc Andy", as many people referred to him, was a very gentle and talented doctor. He seemed to be able to diagnose and treat just about anything.

In those early years the hospital was staffed by Nurses Cora Barber and Marion McGill. They were extremely capable nurses, ran a very tight ship, maintained very high standards and were highly regarded in the community. Percy Lowe was the hospital maintenance man and was also responsible for creating and maintaining the large and very beautiful hospital grounds.

We were very fortunate in those days before universal healthcare, because Dr. Davidson was an employee of the Municipality of Roblin. This meant that anyone living in the municipality could visit the doctor without paying a fee. Medicine was not free nor was a stay in the hospital, but the actual visit to the doctor was free.

I think it is ironic that both Roblin Municipality and the Village of Cartwright which, since the beginning of time or even earlier had voted for the Conservative party, were in the vanguard of socialized medicine!

We Baby Boomers were also very lucky to be able to receive the Salk vaccine for polio. I don't think any of us enjoyed lining up in the gym for the dreaded needles with the vaccine (I think there were three shots all altogether), but the alternative was not an option! I cannot remember anybody in Cartwright getting polio. I know that there was a virtual polio epidemic in Winnipeg.

We were certainly more isolated at that time and did not have public sanitation. There is an old saying that says you have to eat a peck of dirt before you die. I wonder if living a somewhat less "sanitized" lifestyle may have been a good thing by building up our immune systems?

Tuberculosis was another disease that was very much a concern at that time. I remember that about once every year a medical x-ray van would arrive at the school. We would all go into the van to have our chests x-rayed to make certain we were not infected with the tuberculosis virus. Fairly soon there was a vaccine for TB as well and we no longer had to have the annual x-ray.

The Legion Hall was also frequently used for community variety concerts. It was really a talent show where anybody who could sing, play the piano, violin, banjo, mouth organ or guitar would take part. One performer everyone looked forward to hearing was a recitation of poetry by Mrs. Brogden. To hear her recite one of her many poems was truly the highlight of any concert!

Very few people will remember, but located on the second floor above what is now the Corner Pocket Pool Room was the Oddfellows Hall. It was the meeting place for the Oddfellows Lodge as well as its sister organization the Rebekah Lodge. It was also frequently used for other community events such as cribbage tournaments etc.

Some Final Reflections

When you start taking a trip down memory lane the memories just keep coming, and the lane just gets longer and longer. At some point you just have to stop, and I think this is as good a place as any. Although I believe the Class of 1947 were the quintessential baby boomers, anyone born between 1946 and 1960 will be able to relate to some or all of these memories. I am certain that many people will want to add to and/or correct some of these recollections, which I welcome. I don't want to push the analogy too far, but I believe that those of us who grew up in those years were living almost as if it was in a bubble. Time seemed to move more slowly. Even change, when it happened, seemed to happen gradually.

Somewhere in the 1960s things seemed to go on fast forward. I don't need to list the changes that have occurred between 1965 and 2015, because we are all only too aware of them. Perhaps someone from the Cartwright Class of 2015 will look back in 2065 and reflect on the intervening 50 years. Will they also say that living in Cartwright in 2015 was like living in a bubble, when the pace of life was slower and change happened gradually? If someone does this, I hope they will remember to send me an email copy—to wherever I happen to be at that time!

Memories of Growing Up in Cartwright in the 1950s
by Forbes Newman

Forbes Newman, beloved husband, father and grandfather, passed away peacefully at home after a long illness. Forbes was born to Raymond and Anna (Forbes) Newman in Crystal City, as there was no hospital in his hometown of Cartwright.

Forbes attended university at United College (University of Winnipeg) for his BA, followed by an MA from Queen's University and an LLB from the University of Toronto. Upon graduation Forbes made his way west where, apart from the first two years, he spent his entire career at Ballem McDill Madnnes LLP (Gowling WLG), with a practice focused on oil and gas and corporate commercial law. In 1979 he married Margie (Robson) and later, as a father, took great joy in introducing his sons Andrew and Peter to skiing and golf.

His genuine interest in and concern for others resulted in his involvement on the boards of Wood's Homes and Calgary Family Services, including terms as Chair of both. He was deeply committed to his church, serving as a member of Vestry, Warden on two separate occasions and Chair of the Education Committee, as well as leading the Meditation Group. Forbes joined the Christ Church Choir in 1974, remaining in the tenor section until March 2020. He also sang in Festival Chorus for a number of years.

Forbes was diagnosed with MS over 20 years ago and bore his ever-decreasing mobility with grace and dignity. Despite the physical limitations placed upon him, he maintained his compassion, keen sense of humour and interest in people of all ages, always determined to help them anyway he could. Further medical complications arose over the past year which he accepted without complaint.

The joy of Forbes' life was his family. He is survived by his wife Margie, sons Andrew (Jordi) and Peter (Niki); and was Papa to four grandchildren, Robson, Holly, Andy and Heidi.

LOVINGLY REMEMBERED
FORBES NEWMAN
JUNE 16, 1947 - AUGUST 12, 2021