

# A History of Stuartburn Manitoba

by Anne Sherman

*The history of the sleepy community of Stuartburn is an interesting one that follows its initial settlement, development into a thriving, active centre and the eventual dwindling of population and business. Many young people moved to the city, one by one the stores and shops closed and in 1967 even the school was boarded up. The Carillon reporter for the area, Anne Sherman, grew up and has lived most of her life in the community and experienced a slice of its history. Since she values highly the roots of the settlement and its early pioneers, she has through the years displayed a keen interest in the collection and preservation of history, first-hand from the older folk (to be passed on to the younger generation. In The Carillon's final community profile in this series, Mrs. Sherman thoroughly details the settlement of Stuartburn in three parts.*

*Note: These articles were published by the **Carillon News** in May and June 1984, and are reprinted here with permission.*

Stuartburn, named after the first family man, Stuart Millar, and the Scottish word "burn" for river, is situated two miles east of Highway 59, some 60 miles south of Winnipeg.

This small century-old hamlet is divided by Highway 201, east to west, and by the lovely Roseau River that winds its way from southeast to northwest, adding beauty to every yard along its banks.

The first white family to settle on the banks of the Roseau River about 1½ miles southeast of Stuartburn as the crow flies, were Mr. and Mrs. William Stuart Millar with their children Bill, Jim, Frank and Mina. The Millar family came from Petrolia, Ontario in 1879 and Mr. Millar took employment on construction of the Soo Line Railway, shovelling gravel onto wagons at \$1.25 a day.

The Millar family moved to Stuartburn in 1881. Their homestead was the SW 16-2-6E where the Millars built their first one-room log house. Its flat roof was covered with sod and sand; the walls were mud plastered. At times the family were not sure whether they were stirring sugar or sand in their tea cups.

Upon their arrival the Millar family found two bachelors, William Webster and Bill Wylie, who were the only ones living there. They soon became very close friends. One of them was taken into the Millar home in his older age.

In time, son George took over the homestead to continue farming. This is presently owned by George Palmer. Sons Jim, Frank and George lived here all their lives. Myrtle Smith (nee Millar), resident of the Middlechurch P.C. Home is the only living child of the William S. Millar family. Granddaughters are Ethel Pawloski, who operates a grocery store in the village, and Fern Horobetz who lived here until their recent move to Emerson. Her sister, Louise Lenton, *Carillon* reporter for Ridgeville, and Grace Millar are descendants of that very first pioneer family.

A list of other English families who followed included names like Ramsey, Froom, Hamblin, Alcock, Darling, Stock, Johnson, Dodds, Stuart, Noelski, and Marchad. Some took up the hard task of clearing the stony land; others went into cattle ranching. Although many English families

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took up homesteads during the pioneer era, only George, Frank and Jim Millar lived there all their lives. Due to lack of drainage most every farm had a slough that produced swarms of mosquitoes. Besides clearing land, the picking of stones seemed like an endless job and most of these early settlers moved away.

## Ukrainian Immigrants

The second stream of settlers began Aug. 8, 1895, when the first Ukrainians began arriving from Europe. The ocean voyage took three weeks, up to 40 days if the ship got off course. Coming from the Ukraine, the newcomers included young families, men who left their families behind, single men and a few single girls. The majority had no schooling or very little. However, they were a hardy people and willingly braved the language barrier as they built their humble homes which were crude but warm. Homes were built with little more than axe and lathe, as they only had the tools they brought with them. Nails were handmade pegs and they cut swamp hay with a sickle for thatching the roof of their clay plastered homes. Their beds were of roughly hewn logs and straw made the mattresses. Pillows, bedding and a few other essentials, as well as seed for those first garden plantings, were brought from the Ukraine. When husbands left to find work, women and children were left to fend for themselves in strange wilderness surroundings.

Among the first to settle in Stuartburn district were Ivan Prygrocki, Joseph Bzovey, Semeon Salamandyk, Yakiw Shelep, Wasyl Zahara, Michael Prygrocki, Fedir Horobetz, Hryhory Prygrocki, Nykola Kohut, Fedir Demianyk, Ivan Storoschuk, Nykola Vysochynsky, Ivan Negrych, Ilash Prokopchuk, Wasyl Salamandyk, Nykola Prygrocki, Onufrey Smook, Ivan Tomashewsky, Vasyl Stefura, Maksym Stasyshyn, Fedir Pidhirny, Ivan Salamandyk, Nykola Maykowski and Kyrilo Genik, a school teacher, who was appointed as the group leader and interpreter on their journey from the Ukraine to Canada. Another 10 families arrived (names unknown) before the year ended, making a total of 37 families during the year 1896. Upon their arrival in Winnipeg, they spent two weeks in the immigration hall while chosen delegates went to examine the land in Stuartburn. However, they got as far as Steinbach and were told the land was similar. It was suitable. They did not know that a few miles south of Steinbach, farm land was stony from there on.

These families left Winnipeg by train to Dominion City. From there they were taken by wagons. Men walked while women with children rode with their belongings. Along the way, which was only a trail, they stopped to break branches with which to brush mosquitoes off before continuing on their trip. It was Aug. 11, 1896 when these families arrived and were offered shelter with Mr. Dodge, manager of Ramsey's stock farms. They camped in large sheds until the men picked their homesteads and quickly built their crude log homes. Women cooked and washed outdoors and tended their children. This campsite was on the farm half mile west of Stuartburn on the south side, known to many in later years as Rosenstock's and then as Unger's place. The abundance of bush land made these new settlers very happy. It meant a lot to them. Firewood had to be bought and was hard to come by back in their native Ukraine where they lived in villages on small lots of land. By 1900 the settlement here consisted of English, French, Mennonite, Jewish and Ukrainians. A few Polish families settled here soon after. By 1900 there

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were 3,000 Ukrainians in Stuartburn and surrounding districts. The English settlers had lived elsewhere in Canada before coming to settle here, so most of them could afford to buy horses to work the land. Ukrainians on the other hand were mostly quite poor and toiled to have a roof over their heads. The men soon left home to find work with English and Mennonite farmers. Some of the latter spoke Ukrainian and were able to converse. Money earned at harvesting bought flour, cornmeal, sugar, salt, coffee and kerosene for the winter, a cow to supply milk, also an ox or two in time. Due to lack of money, the early pioneer was often forced to harness a cow and an ox or an ox and a horse to start working the land. The flow of Ukrainian settlers continued every year, and these newcomers spread out to Gardenton, Vita, Tolstoi, Rosa, Zhoda, Caliento, Arbaaka and Sundown. On April 16, 1897, Palm Sunday, the first Ukrainian settlers were informed of the arrival of a priest. They erected a wooden cross and a small altar about a half mile east of Stuartburn on the south side of the present Highway 201 in readiness for Sunday mass. Little did these pioneers know of the unpredictable April weather in Canada. A severe overnight snowstorm forced Fr. Nestor Dmytriw to have the Sunday service at Houle's store. The faithful braved the stormy weather to attend their first Palm Sunday mass in Canada. Although the soil in the area was good but very swampy and stony, and because of high taxes, most of the English settlers moved away by early 1900. Quite a few Ukrainian families left before 1910 to take up residence in Saskatchewan and Alberta. By 1915 Theodosy Wachna and Joseph Rosenstock, both storekeepers, were doing a thriving business selling groceries, housewares, footwear and clothing.

## Local Government Office

Due to the vast difference in land between east and west, farmers in this area were unable to meet the high tax assessments of the Franklin Municipality. It was in 1902 that petitions were granted and the municipality of Stuartburn was formed. The office was taken over with a debt of \$13,000. The first government office committee included H. Prygrocki, P. Maykowski, S. Saranchuk and J. Machnee with Theo. Wachna as secretary. J. L. Ramsey presided as judge. The LGD office was moved to Vita in 1908 for a more central location. The first provincial constable appointed to this area in the early 1900's was John F. Toews, and later Frank Millar.

Not very often were the road allowances fit for use and for many years, trails led the traveller from homestead to homestead. This meant opening and closing numerous gates along the way, especially from spring to late fall to keep the cattle, horses and other animals where they belonged. Spring time always meant plenty of water holes and muddy trails, but those were the horse and buggy days.

The present 201 Highway, once known: as the Morden-Sprague, was also just a trail in its beginning. Much travel was done along the river and just west of our garden there once was a cabin for passersby to take rest and shelter. First improvements of our 201 Highway were done by Jim Millar who always had good strong teams of horses: to work the scraper. Quite a few others worked with their teams of horses and oxen. In the early 1900's this highway had a very low area 1 ½ miles east of Stuartburn. To make travel possible, logs were laid across the road, topped with manure and earth. In the 1920s gravel was hauled from a farm 1½ miles north of

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Stuartburn. It was shoveled, then drawn by horses and wagons. In the 1930's gravel was taken from the William Storoschuk farm, one mile north. The method of loading and hauling was still the same. Jackiw Mykytiak of Vita was perhaps the first to operate the highway grader (maintainer) using four horses to pull the grader between Vita and Stuartburn once a week. Side road improvement began in 1947. Bad spots existed on the second mile east of Stuartburn and ever spring John Bodz and Alex Buck had to have their horses ready at all times to pull stuck vehicles out of a mud hole. These problems came to an end in 1961 when Schreyer Construction rebuilt our Morden-Sprague road and it became Highway 201. Hard top surfacing was done in the fall of 1972, which meant an end to dusty conditions, an inconvenience to those living along the highway, especially on washdays.

Until Highway 59 was constructed, the best way to get to Winnipeg was to go west through Letellier and Morris. It meant crossing the Red River ferry in spring and summer, and slippery high banks in winter. Travel between here and St Malo was often impossible in springtime into the early 1940s. It was still quite rough going in 1950; although it meant cutting back on mileage, it got your insides shaken. This route is such smooth riding now, thanks to the improvements since Boundary School Division came in. Most side roads have been upgraded and more constructed.

## Religious Services

Presbyterian student ministers out of college came during summer months and held Sunday services at the Millar or Ramsey homes, later in the schoolhouse and in the hall which was built in 1892. This is where the Baptist services were first held. Fr. A. Kulawy had the first Roman Catholic mass at the Frank Pawloski residence in Stuartburn December 22, 1898.

Building of the first Ukrainian Catholic Church was begun in 1898. Among those cutting logs for the church were Ivan Sokolyk, Tymko Ircha and Ivan Podolsky. Michael Dumansky donated 1½ acres of land for the building site two miles east of Stuartburn. Nykola Kohut and Hryhory Prygrocki supervised the volunteer work in the building of the Holy Trinity Church. Due to financial needs, it took two years to complete the church.

In November, 1899 Fr. Damaskyn Polywka visited the parish to officiate holy mass. During his brief stay here, he baptized children, gave confessions and married 13 couples. Among them were Sam and Wasylyna Gorman and John and Wasylyna Salamandyk.

A steady flow of Ukrainians to this area continued. Before long disagreements, arose due to varied reasons, making it necessary to close this church. With money donated, land was bought from Michael Dumansky, a short distance to the south, and another church was built in the summer of 1911 by carpenter Damaskyn for \$300. This church was completed for the sum of \$1,400. First holy mass was held Aug. 2, 1911 with Fr. Dydyk officiating. The first Ukrainian Catholic Bishop, N. Budka, visited in June of 1913, the church's Feast Day.

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The pioneer church was bought and dismantled by Joseph Kohut and Wasyl Zaporzan. The residence, bought by John Probizanski, was moved to the village of Stuartburn and became their home in 1923. Many bishops and missionaries have visited Holy Trinity Church that is now 72 years old. Many priests have come and gone over the years. Fr. Eugene Rudachek has served the parish since November 1978. Fr. Rudachek, besides serving the Rosa and Sarto parishes, serves the Vita, and Sundown districts.

The long-time record of having services every second Sunday and on Holly Church Days has been broken. Now church services are few and far between.

The cemetery site chosen by the first Ukrainian pioneer settlers in 1896 is 2-1/2 miles east and a half-mile north of Stuartburn, in the southeast corner of Nykola Kohut's farm. A few family graves also formed a small cemetery along the north side of the Saranchuk farm, north of Gardenton corner. The first site was located in the middle of a section with no convenient way of approaching it. Ivan Probazinski, who lived a mile south of the First Ukrainian Catholic Church, donated a piece of farm land along a road allowance to begin another cemetery around 1902.

During horse and buggy days, poor road conditions, due to stones and water holes, were tolerable. As years progressed, a few became owners of cars and getting to the cemetery at times was impossible. In 1927 a third cemetery was begun on the land where the First Pioneer Ukrainian Catholic Church was built. The church site is marked by a cairn as a historic site. A few burials took place at the First Pioneer Cemetery in the 1920's. Some family burials are still taking place at the south cemetery. It has an improved road built 20 years ago leading to it.

## **Other Churches**

The Sommerfelder church was built in 1936, one mile west and one quarter mile north of Stuartburn. Donations were received and volunteer work was done by Henry Hildebrandt, Jacob Hildebrandt, Diedrich Unrau, John Nickel, William Thiessen, Henry Giesbrecht, Peter Penner and Henry Gerbrandt. Two acres of land were bought from Henry Loewen for \$200 for this church site.

Opening ceremony was by Bishop Peter Toews of Altona. Members of this church included forty-two families. A cemetery was in the church yard.

With a growing congregation there was need for a larger church. In January of 1968 a church was bought and moved from Osterwick. The present Sommerfelder Church is 2-1/2 miles west of our village. Two acres were donated by Abe Zacharias for this church and cemetery. Opening ceremony was by Bishop John Friesen of Lowe Farm. Services are held every Sunday and Bible studies on Wednesday evenings are all conducted in the German language.

The Rhinelander Church is situated along Highway 59, two miles north of Highway 201. It was built in 1960 with the volunteer work of its members Henry Hildebrandt, John Giesbrecht, Peter

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Sawatzky, Jacob Reimer and sons Henry, Bill, Dave and Jake. Opening ceremony was by- Bishop Cornelius Nickel of Halbstadt, now in Bolivia. Some 10 families left for Bolivia about 16 years ago. This lessened the church membership a lot. They are few but hold services every Sunday and Sunday school in the German language.

## **EMB Church**

In spring of 1943 Joe Wiebe's family came to Stuartburn as missionaries and took up residence in Ward's house at the west end of the village. They later moved into the Andriash house, just west of Pawloski's store, and held meetings in their home until the mission with attached living quarters was completed in 1945. The Wiebes continued in the work until 1946 when they left and the Peter Martens took over. It was in 1952 during Jake Hiebert's ministry, that the original mission was enlarged with attached residence. In 1953 the name Stuartburn Gospel Chapel was chosen, and this group joined the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference with a charter membership of seven. In 1955 during the ministry of Rev Wm. Peters, the present parsonage was built. In 1965 the congregation decided they needed a bigger church and bought the old Kornelson School in Steinbach. It was dismantled and the material moved to Stuartburn to build the present church, which was completed in 1968. It was on April 21, 1968, during the ministry of Herman Neufeld, that the new church was dedicated. Speaker for the dedication service was Rev Wm. Peters of Grunthal. In the mid 50's one of the church members donated a piece of land for the cemetery, called Grace Cemetery, situated on the north side of Highway 201, 3/4 mile west of Stuartburn. From the time the Joe Wiebes came, till now, there have been twelve pastors. The present pastor is Rev Wilfred Unruh who came here in May 1981.

## **Mennonite Settlers Arrive**

Among the first Mennonite families to settle in the early 1900s were Hiebert, Dyck, Wall, Falk, Bergen, Runke, Boschman, Klippenstein, Loewen, Schwartz and Janzen. Coming here in 1932 from the Altona district were the Henry Hildebrandts, later followed by his brother, Jacob Hildebrandt. They settled on farms about two miles northwest of Stuartburn. Since the 1960's many more young Mennonite families settled here. And like the early pioneers, some of them stayed, but a few families moved away in search of better prospects. The Mennonites, too, were a hard-working people and had to put a lot of effort into the stony farm land. Only a few of the children who came with their parents have chosen to continue life on the farm in Stuartburn. Most young people left to seek jobs and assured incomes, others pursued studies and some have gone into mission fields.

## **Lady Millar Bridge**

The first bridge was built next to the William Stuart Millar property called The Lady Millar Bridge. In 1900 a bridge of timber was built to span the Roseau River in the village. The job was contracted by Bill Stuart and Wesley Yeo took the job of driving piles with his team of horses. However, Jim Millar with his team of strong horses had to take over to finish the job. Driftwood and ice floes weakened this bridge and it was replaced by a bridge of steel in 1902 by Hamilton

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Bridge Construction Co. Hung up high was a sign on this bridge saying, "Anyone driving over this bridge faster than a walk, will be fined according to law. "With the improvement of the highway in 1911, this bridge was dismantled. A bridge of concrete and steel was built by Husky Bridge Construction Co. of Winnipeg, just to the south of the old one.

A small ferry built south of the present bridge was used by people before 1900 in crossing the river. Travel by teams of oxen or horses had to be done by way of the Lady Millar Bridge before 1902 and when water levels were low, the river could be crossed at lower slopes in the village. The Toews built an open air dance pavilion in 1923. Behind R. Smook's present home, along the river bank about a quarter of a mile, where the water wheel was built was a nicely kept area known as Toews Park. Picnics and social gatherings were held; also school picnics into the 1930s. Ownership changed with the years, and became a garden and pasture.

Built in 1892, the community hall was sold in the early 1900s and became the Ukrainian National Home. Square dancing was very popular. Today's older generation recalls Jim Millar playing the violin and Albert Smith calling the square dances. Other events at the hall were school Christmas concerts, whist drives, locally-presented Ukrainian plays, Ukrainian dance lessons (by Poharecki). Movies were shown for some time, gymnastics, weddings and other social activities were held. Also high school was taught in the hall, 1938-39, while the third room was being built on to the school.

## **Mills Drew Farmers**

In 1900 Johann F. Toews and his family moved here from Steinbach and built the first stone mill west of the present Steve Chubaty store. In 1902 equipment was brought from Steinbach by horses and wagon and a flour mill was built on the west side of the river, just behind the present Roman Smook garage. It became a three-storey structure in a few years. Sons Henry, Roy and Peter helped their father in the mill and Mr. Layman was the millwright. Farmers from near and far brought their red fife wheat to be ground into flour. In 1914 this mill was sold to Rosenstock, with Wes Hurd as certified Fireman engineer. William Kelly took this job over in the early 1930s. This mill was sold to Julius Kisser in 1920 and with the help of his sons, they kept the mill in operation day and night in busy season. The Derkach family took the milling business for a short period of time and in 1935, Ewaniuk and Nick Baryliuk bought the mill. Business had slowed down due to another mill at Gardenton, so this mill closed down about 1937. The mill property was sold to John W. Smook and the mill was dismantled in 1951-52.

It is recalled that in 1930s farmers from Sarto and Pansy districts brought their wheat by team and sleigh, unloaded the grain at the mill, found lodging with friends for the night, picked up their flour and left for home the following day. Henry Toews lost his hearing when he was two years old as a result of scarlet fever. Being mute did not set Henry back any. He fulfilled his ambition when he set up and operated a grain crusher.

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Farmers from around the area brought their oats and barley to be crushed into chop for cattle and hog feed. Henry had a very pleasant disposition and although he could not talk, got along with customers and friends by using sign language. He was alert and sensitive to vibration. By the feel of his hand he determined trouble in the motor. He was born in 1883, son of Johann Toews. Henry never went to school but learned to sign his name. His crusher plant was next to Peter, his brother's place, east of where the Jake Hildebrandts now live.

Mr. Jewel started up the first blacksmith shop about 1898, then began to build living quarters but sold the business and property to Frank Pawloski in 1900. He operated the shop business for about 18 years. Then R. Pankiewich took the blacksmith shop over. Others who followed were Adolph Smith, Mr. Kravetz, Jake Wall and John Zacharias who built his own shop. About a year later he sold the shop tools to Joe Horobetz who started the blacksmith shop on the original shop place in April 1936. He continued a successful business until his retirement in the fall of 1978. In latter years Joe was the only blacksmith for many miles around.

## **Cheese Factory**

In 1895 a small cheese factory was built by Cote from St Pierre on the spot where Pawloski's store is. Cheese makers were Tinkess and Alf Slater. They turned out 300-400 pounds of cheese daily during summer months. One-pound packages of cheese were made to order. After sufficient curing time, the cheese was taken to Dominion City by team and from there by train to Winnipeg. In 1902-03 Peter Kroecker bought and operated the factory with Peter Toews as his helper. Milk was hauled in 15-gallon containers by oxen or horses. Milk was weighed in a large barrel on the scale, selling at \$1 per hundredweight. Whey was taken home for hog feed. The factory closed down in 1904.

Tom Holgate bought this building and operated a private butcher shop for a short period of time. In 1905 Theodosy Wachna bought it to start up his first store. The first telephones on record in our village were in 1911.

In 1965 telephones were installed in many local homes and a telephone booth was set up next to Horbul's store. The booth was relocated to Chubaty's General Store and post office where it remained for about three years. The booth service was discontinued and removed in the fall of 1983. Our telephone exchange office is located in Vita.

In December of 1884 Leonard J. Ramsey became the first postmaster of Stuart burn, until 1898; followed by Mathilda Ramsey, 1899-1911 ; Theo. Wachna, 1911 - 1913; Thomas Holgate, 1913-1915; L.J. Ramsey, 1916 - resigned after four months; J.F. Toews, 1916-1923; John Probizanski, 1923-1950 (daughter Jean Horbul filled in); Dmetro Chubaty, 1951-1969 (resigned, Steve Chubaty filled in); Mary (Brodoway) Kyrzyk took over in October 1969. The very first mail was brought by Stuart Millar with horses and cutters or Democrat from Emerson. Later Roy Simpson of Dominion City delivered the mail from D.C. by team. About 1906 Albert Smith took over the

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local mail delivery to and from the Gardenton Railway Station with his team of horses. In time his sons Wilfred and George took over mail transportation Monday, Wednesday and Friday, by team and then with their old model truck when road conditions permitted. Daily mail delivery by truck, referred to as Piney to Winnipeg Highway Service, commenced June 1, 1965. This changed to Steinbach to Vita, July 1, 1968 but was terminated July 30, 1977. The Winnipeg to Vita route commenced August 2, 1977.

## **Immigrants Unnerved By Murder**

Over the years of the Stuartburn district tragic fatalities have left sad notches in its history: the murder of a man and his four children in 1898, six miles northwest of Stuartburn in their home. This was a deeply shocking and frightening blow to the newly arrived immigrants. A shooting incident occurred in 1912-1913 and another in 1923. During the reconstruction of Highways 201 (Morden-Sprague) a life was accidentally taken in 1961 by an earth-moving machine moving in reverse. The Roseau River claimed young victims in 1954, 1957 and 1977. A car-pedestrian fatality occurred in 1979.

John F. Toews built a waterwheel on the bank of the Roseau River north of the bridge about 1918. This was used to generate electricity. In 1920 their home had electricity and three streetlights. This waterwheel was in use for only a few years, then discontinued. Electricity (Manitoba Hydro) came to our village and community in about 1955. Before that were the mantle or table lamps and lanterns for outdoors, using kerosene. Night lights, handmade of an ink bottle filled with kerosene and a wick of thick thread, worked like a charm. These were called Protzyk by the Ukrainians. Candles were also used but were more costly. The mantle lamps that gave off a hissing sound when pumped up gave a nice bright light' compared to that of ordinary kerosene lamps. And yet that's the kind of light we all studied by, worked and visited by. With electricity, streetlights were more recently changed to vapor lights.

## **Saw Mills**

In 1900 logs were cut in the Sundown district, shipped by boxcar to Gardenton, unloaded and floated down the river to Stuartburn. There they were stopped by a boom, raised and lifted out by a pulley cable and horses, loaded onto a wagon and hauled to the J. F. Toews' sawmill west of Smook's garage. Pete Bouchard was a logger and Toews' helper. Logs were sawed up into lumber. Boards were sold for \$4 per thousand. John W. Smook also operated a sawmill on his farm in the thirties where people brought their logs to be sawed up into desired lumber. This was an all-winter job.

In 1922 Stephen Gawronski set up a barber shop for men and women, presently Pawloski's Store. One day a young lady came in to get her hair cut, laying her gaily decorated hat aside. During the cutting procedure the barber's youngest daughter got hold of the hat and absolutely stripped it of its finery. Quite frustrated at the time, the lady now jokingly relates her experience at the barber shop. Around 1935 Jake Machnee started up a shoe repair shop. He also sewed

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good quality men's work boots for a few years. In the early years of the Second World War, John J. Probizanski bought and hauled scrap metal to Winnipeg.

## **Prohibited to Cross Border**

Early pioneer settlers hauled their milk to the cheese factory by oxen and horses. Later each farmer took his supply of cream in the same manner to creameries at Vita, Tolstoi and Gardenton. In the 1900s it is recalled that many folks took their cream to Caribou, Minnesota by horse and buggy. That's where they got a better price, whether the cream was sweet or sour. In time they were prohibited to go across the border. Still for some time they managed to carry it across, much to their benefit. It was in the early 1930's that local fellows took to cream hauling with their half-ton trucks. Among them were Nick Oryschak, Redge Ward, Harry Chubaty, John Bodz and Peter Janzen.

Before the days of transfers, cattle were bought at the farm by buyers, driven to the nearest railway station by the owners, loaded into boxcars, and shipped to livestock markets in Winnipeg. This process was time-consuming and patience testing to the farmers. Steve Chubaty operated the Stuartburn Transfer from 1937-1962 when Gardenton Transfer proprietor Bill Podolsky took over. Presently Vita Co-op serves this area.

Johann Toews had the first threshing outfit and with his sons, they did custom work in the early 1900s with a Watrous steam engine and a 36" Case separator. Others doing custom work over the years were Stoyko, Peter Pawloski, and John W. Smook. Up until two years ago Dick H. Boschman did his own threshing with an International separator. Threshing was undertaken with planning ahead, anticipation and with the youngsters, a great deal of excitement. The housewives' preparation of food was always done fresh due to no refrigeration in those days.

## **Garages**

The first garage business was started by Gerbrandt, taken over by Jacob Dyck and then Bachynski. It was destroyed by fire in December of 1950, rebuilt in 1951 but went out of business. John W. Smook bought the flour mill property, dismantled the mill and built a garage in 1952-1953, which he operated until his retirement in 1967. Tony Wagenhoffer had his garage business moved to Altona in January, 1984. Stuartburn Auto-Body Shop is owned and operated by Roman Weremchuk. Anton Wagenhoffer, who worked as garage mechanic for Geo. Chobotar at Tolstoi for 14 years, decided to open his own garage business in January of 1976. These successful businesses are an advantage to the tiny village and residents wish them continued success.

## **Bakery Suffered**

In about 1937 Max Kelly, son of Bill and Margaret Kelly started up a bakery, east of where Jake Hildebrandt now lives, which he operated for about two years. How nice it would be to have a

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local bakery now, when people can better afford to go out and buy. In those days most every housewife baked her own bread once or twice a week, depending on the size of her family.

The Frank Millar home was the best known to many who found a home away from home. Mounties, travelers and teachers stayed for many years at the Millar home. Teachers also stayed with Nawolskis, Ungers, Pawloskis, D. Chubatys, Ottawas, Horbuls, Dycks, Horobets and Pawloskis.

The first bus service to link Stuartburn with Winnipeg was in 1935 when a touring car took passengers to and from the bus in Emerson. By 1937 a small bus came here by way of Emerson, later through Carlowrie and Dominion City. A bus route through St Malo and Rosa was very trying for the bus driver in spring or any wet weather time, for getting stuck was a cinch. Since Highway 59 became a reality, driving is a pleasure *for* all. Daily bus service was available until two years ago when Grey Goose cut back Monday service completely. Right now another schedule change in bus service has taken place for a trial period.

Peter Toews bought the old cheese factory that was closed down and started up a Massey Harris implement shop in 1915. After some time he moved his business to the north side of the highway, onto the property of his parents, John Toews.

Peter Toews organized the Manitoba territory for Renfrew Machinery Co. of Regina, Sask. And he sold ranges, cream separators, washing machines, also Singer sewing machines and installed lightning arrestors. Peter was seed agent for Brett- Young for 25 years, his territory being from the Red River to Fort Frances, Ont. Agent for International Harvester was Frank Millar in earlier years.

Auctioneer in our area was John Probizanski for many years. Edward Manness moved to our village around the early 1930s and Ed started up a second-hand store of miscellaneous items. He also took to auctioneering at which he was very good. A short distance west of our village, Jacob Unger operated a second hand clothing store for many years.

## **Flood of 1950**

In 1950 the Roseau River overflowed its banks and flooded the village and countryside to a depth of about 12-18 inches. Water level was flush with the highway and in places flowed across the highway. Every basement and cellar was full of water. Firewood and other objects tended to float away. No serious damage was experienced.

## **Stores**

About 1890, Houle, a Frenchman from Letellier built and started up the first store with Charles Ennis as the first clerk. This was situated on the west side of the river where M. Horbuls had their garden, about 100 yards or so south of Highway 201.

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This store was sold to Muldoon, then to Wainstock and later to Rosenstock. It was during the time that Rosenstocks and Wachna operated stores, that peak business was done as there were no other stores for miles around. People from Caliento, Vita, Zhoda, Rosa, Tolstoi, and areas came to sell and buy.

People brought eggs, butter, Seneca root and onions in large amounts. The stores sold groceries, sugar and flour in 100 lb. bags, other household needs, clothing, footwear, feed, fence wire, kerosene and other items. Rosenstock's also carried men's suits and overcoats. Because this store was often full of milling about people it was necessary to hire Frank Millar, who was an appointed provincial constable, to act as store detective, preventing people from walking away with store goods.

In 1918 this store was sold to John Probizanski and a new store was built with attached living quarters in 1923, closer to the highway. They took over the post office that same year. John Probizanski was in the store business until his death, December, 1950, when daughter Jean Horbul took over. Mike and Jean sold the store business to Patrick O'Brien Nov. 1971. This 50-year-old structure was destroyed by fire July 6, 1973.

Theodosy Wachna with his wife Anna and three children left their farm in 1905 to open up a small store in the closed-down cheese factory across the road from Rosenstock's store. Before long, Theodosy built a new store and living quarters immediately to the south of the cheese factory building. They, too, were doing a thriving business, as they also carried a varied supply of goods to meet the customers' wants. Here farm women also brought seneca roots, eggs and butter. In the fall onions by the bags were brought to the stores in exchange for staples and if customers were lucky enough to have anything left over, they got a little bit of cash.

Besides helping her husband with the store and being housekeeper, Mrs. Wachna was a mother of 15 children. Because money was hard to come by, seneca root was considered the gift of God.

Ukrainians patronized Wachna's store since they too were Ukrainians, it meant being able to converse. Besides getting their needs at the store, Theodosy also made out their land deeds and translated important letters for the people. With no dentist in the area, people came to him. Without any anesthetics, Theodosy, with a set of dental pliers, pulled teeth whenever people asked him. He charged 25 to 50 cents and at times did it for free if the person had no money. He considered this goodwill and good for his business. Theodosy was also notary public and secretary-treasurer. He later operated a store in Gardenton, while wife Anna, with the help of their growing children, ran the business here. *She* retired to live in Gardenton in 1945. Brothers Henry and Ed Loepky rented the Wachna store and went into business in 1947. This business was bought by Adam and Polly Kolodnisi in 1950, selling out to John and Nellie Sokolyk in 1965.

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On Dec. 19, 1968 this store and dwelling were destroyed by fire. A landmark was gone. On the east side of the river, J. W. Yeo had started up a small grocery store soon after the Ukrainian pioneers began arriving, before 1900. They carried everyday needs and willingly sold in small quantities, if that was all a person could afford. This store was across the road from Steve Chubaty's store, the place once owned by Klippensteins, Dycks and now by Henry Loeppkys .

By 1911 Jacob Unrow also started up a small grocery business and he named it Red Store. This closed down before too long. Later Carlsons lived there, then W. Maruschaks and now Mrs. A. Hildebrandt.

In an old building on the west side of Stuartburn hall, which at one time was the residence of the Yeo family, a family by the name of Friesen moved in about 1930 and also tried a grocery store business, but left here before too long. Then around 1936 Ed Manness bought this place. Ed, being an auctioneer, set up a miscellaneous auction mart and held auctions every Wednesday evening. In 1942 the Steve Chubatys bought this property and after some renovations, went into a small general store business and took over the post office in 1951 housed in the store. This dwelling was destroyed by fire in the fall of 1963. Postal duties were carried on in their nearby home and the store and attached residence were rebuilt where postal duties and store business continued. Rice and salt are still available in bulk at Chubaty's store. This is a nice reminder of days gone by.

## **Frogs Provided Pocket Money**

In the 1930s frogs were caught and sold to dealers at varied prices. One buyer would pay 20 cents a pound and the next one 25 cents a pound. Frogs were plentiful and the money was needed desperately.

It was around 1927-1928 that Alex Andriash's family left their small farm 1½ miles north of Stuartburn to move into the one-time barber shop, which they bought and began a small grocery store. Here, too, the farm woman was able to bring her basket of eggs in exchange for groceries, sewing and embroidery thread, lime for whitewashing the plastered walls of their homes, yeast in compressed rounds or squares. Most necessities for the housewife's kitchen needs were sold by the bulk in all the stores.

In the spring of 1947 Sam Pawloski bought the Andriash place. The store was enlarged and renovations done. It was in August of that year Sam and Ethel opened their general store to the public. Although the store was not all that big their stock consisted of just about everything one needed for the home. Groceries, hardware, lamp or lantern, tub and washboard, feed, gas and some dry goods. Sam also dealt with Ashdown Washers.

Since the loss of her husband several years ago, Ethel continues a good business and renovated the store exterior two years ago. From early spring to late fall Ethel's store is the only place where numerous customers come to get the best tasting, dipped cone of ice cream. Ethel has discontinued the bus agency, although parcels off the buses are left here. She also has the

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Perth's Agency with once a week pickup and the only gas bar in our village. Living quarters for Ethel's aging parents, Jim and Edith Millar, were built onto the store and residence in 1960-61.

## **Progress, Education Affect Stuartburn**

Leonard James Ramsey donated 1½ acres of land and he built a one room school in 1888, the Stuartburn School, No. 536. The first teacher was Henry Johns and the pupils were Mina, William, James and Frank Millar, Alice Hamblin; Grace and Matilda A. Ramsey; Elizabeth Darling; George Froom; Minnie, Albert, William and Robert Alcock, James and George Riach and Oliver Stock.

Eight years later in 1896, with the arrival of Ukrainian settlers to this district, the first Ukrainian pupils to register at the school in August were Gregory Zahara, Dmytro and Jackiw Niwrencki and Michael Hawryliuk. School trustees in those early years were H. H. Atkinson, W.S. Millar, John Johnston, A. Dodds, Thos. Alcock, Thos. Pott, J. W. Yeo, C. Ennis, J. Ramsey and Hryhory Prygrocki.

This one-room school was enlarged in 1918, still a one-room. It later became a junior room for grades 1-4 when another room was built on from the east side by Peter Kroeker in 1929. This new room for grades 5-10 was later called Intermediate Room. The high school room was built on from the south side for grades 9-11 in 1939. The highest enrollment at this school was 85-90 pupils.

## **Schoolhouse Activity**

In the beginning Presbyterians held their religious Sunday service at the school. Also there were school concerts, school bingos and dances. Walter Wachna intermediate room teacher taught Ukrainian classes after school hours for a few years in the 1930s. Practices for Ukrainian plays, after school in 1938-1939 were directed by teacher Effie Koroluk. A 4-H club was also formed. During summer holidays, home economics was taught at the school in which classes on cooking on a wood stove and sewing on treadle machines were carried out by students. Excitement always rose high among the students as the day of the school concert neared. Then there were the field days, parade, sport practices and final exams that got crammed into the month of June.

The only graduation exercise held in Stuartburn was in May of 1955. Staff for that 1954-55 term were principal Alex Shewchuk, intermediate room teacher, Maurice Yarmie, and junior room teacher Anne Reimer. Student council president was Michael Nawolski, valedictory address was given by Betty Toews, acceptance of the torch was by Allen Pott, editor of the yearbook was Elsie Kohut. Other graduating Gr. 11 students on that memorable occasion were Josephine Machnee, Norma Dyck, Alice Sluzarchuk, William Chubaty, Margie Mandzie (wrote the *Farewell* poem for the yearbook, Tony Schewchuk and Sara Wagenhoffer.

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Teachers who came and went were numerous, over the 79 years. The list of names would be interesting but lengthy. I believe that Wm. Matichuk, who taught in the intermediate room for eight years, very much liked by his pupils, was the teacher who worked there the longest. Students from Stuartburn School, who continued their education, went into practically all professions like doctors, dentists, teachers, nurses, preachers, electronics, and business. At times there were local teachers but the majority over the years came from a distance, to take up board and room in our village. Students, after completing grade 8, came from Rosa, Plankey Plain, Prawda and Beckett schools to continue high school in Stuartburn.

Many of our country children walked to school, up to a distance of three miles, summer and winter. In heat, rain or winter storms, depths of snow or water, they braved it all. Occasionally it meant "10 o'clock scholars". Most children came from poor families, so they lacked warm clothing and proper footwear, laced rubbers turned rock-hard walking in winter's bitter cold, and the first pupil walking had to break the snow trail. With today's good farm and country roads, very few children walk any distance to catch the school bus.

## **Boundary Division**

Boundary School Division and busing of school children to Vita began in September of 1967. For about two years previously, meetings were held in regards to forming a Boundary School Division. The ratepayers repeatedly voted down that idea. All this debate came to an abrupt end when it was decided to condemn the school. By closing the school the change brought a sudden stark quietness to our village. After 79 years, there was no more school bell and were no more children's voices that signified morning, noon, or recess hours. Instead there was a sad silence. The last three people to sign the Stuartburn school registers for the 1966-1967 term were, principal Roman Smook, intermediate room teacher, Wm. Matichuk and junior room teacher Miss Ann Shewchuk. The three-roomed school was bought and dismantled by Wm. Germaine. On the former school property is a new home, and neatly kept property where the Anton Samborskis live.

## **Prawda School No. 1792**

Two acres of land were bought from Sam Chubaty for \$10. and the Prawda School was built in the northeast corner of the farm, three miles north of Stuartburn. The first committee members were, secretary Harry Paskaryk and trustee Sam Chubaty, Steve Kohut and John Panchyshyn.

In 1914 carpenter Peter Kroeker of Stuartburn, assisted by Joseph Dolinski, built the one-room school and porch, including a cement foundation. He hired Sam Chubaty to haul stones. The carpenters also put up a very long flagpole secured to the roof. All this was done for \$90 plus \$10 for painting the school name and number on the school. Harry Paskaryk chose the name Prawda meaning "truth" in Ukrainian.

The school term commenced September, 1914 with Alex Klymok as the first teacher. He boarded at the Dmytro Kohut home. In 1921 teacher Felice Hyrniwick: took up board and room

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with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Chubaty. From then on, with the exception of perhaps four or five years, all the teachers continued to stay with the Chubatys until 1967 when the Boundary Division came in and the Prawda School was closed down along with the rest of our schools. Teachers who did not stay with the Chubaty's lived across the road to the north of the school. When he acquired his parents' farm, he had the opportunity to buy the school property back for \$20. The school house was bought and dismantled by John Chubaty in 1968.

## **Svoboda – Beckett Division**

First meeting held by the ratepayers for the purpose of electing trustees was December 26, 1903 at the house of Fedor Pihirny. Trustees elected were Simeon Smuk, Theodore Saranchuk and Kost Diduch. Simeon Smuk was secretary and Theo Wachna, secretary.

Presumably the first schoolhouse called Svoboda S.D. #1248 was built in 1904.

Minutes of a meeting held December 26, 1904 read that Theodosy Wachna act as secretary/treasurer for \$20. a year and that Jacob Unrow be paid \$29.60 for hauling lumber, Steinberger be paid \$2.95 (or books and seal. Postage on same was 7 cents and a permit was 25 cents.

On January 16, 1905 there were 33 ratepayers present at this school meeting.

In 1908 a teacher salary was \$40 a month from June to the end of the year with no vacation. At a school meeting, Feb. 9, 1909 trustees decided non-resident pupils John Smuk and Mike Stadnick, attending Svoboda School had to pay 50 cents a month.

In January 1910 four cords of wood were bought for \$10. The sum of \$80 was borrowed from Theo Wachna at 10 percent interest, to pay the teacher's two-month salary.

In 1908 Mary Storoschuk was paid \$1.50 for washing the school floor and the soap used cost 5 cents. Wasył Smook was hired as teacher in 1913, April 1 to December 31 at \$2.50 for each teaching day. It might be of interest to know the signature of Nykola Kohut (signed in Ukrainian) was on these minutes. He chaired the meeting. Vasil Smook, a teacher, received a salary of \$500 for the year 1914. In 1915 Jas. B. Cahute took over as secretary-treasurer for \$10 a year.

At a meeting July 17, 1916, inspector Hall Jones notified the secretary/treasurer from the department of education that the present school, 14 feet by 24 feet with an enrolment of 57 children, was too small. Ratepayers said they could not build another school because they were too poor. The inspector made a mistake because the building was 18 feet by 28 feet and there was room for another row of desks.

In March of 1918, at a special ratepayers' meeting, it was decided to build on another 12 feet to the school room with the approval of the department of education. It was decided Petro Burdey should build on according to the plan. *Svoboda* in Ukrainian means "freedom". The name was changed to Beckett S.D. No. 1248.

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A new one-room school was built on the same schoolyard between July 10, 1920 and July, 1921, according to the minutes of the annual meeting of the ratepayers held Nov. 18, 1921. William Zaporzan was chairman at the time.

This newer school burned down in the winter of 1949-1950. It was rebuilt in 1950 with Alex Sherman and Nick Kohut as carpenters. The last school teacher was Miss Helen Kozachenko of Vita, who taught 1961-1967, grades 1-8. The enrolment had declined from about 22 pupils in 1961 to 12 in 1967.

The Svoboda School, built 1904-1905, was bought and dismantled by Peter Stefanchuk in 1962-1963.

## **Concerts**

Every one-roomed country school prepared a program. A stage was prepared for the day with a decorated tree. Excited youngsters presented the Christmas- carols, plays and recitations. In the end the sound of jingling bells was heard and Santa Claus with a big sack on his back appeared in the doorway with a "Ho! Ho! Ho!" Excited youngsters received gifts and bags of goodies in little mesh sacks.

## **World War II**

With the outbreak of war, ladies of our village and district formed a Red Cross organization, knitting mitts, gloves, scarves, balaclavas, helmets, socks and pullover sweaters. The ladies met in, homes once a week for the duration of the war. Later the group became a sewing circle for several years.

In the school hallway hung an honor roll listing the names of those who were in the service from this area. Of this group John Stefanchuk in the air force and Maurice and Nestor Probizanski died in action overseas.

## **Epidemics**

There was a scarlet fever epidemic in 1897. In 1904 children were dying from swollen throats; another scarlet fever epidemic occurred in 1911. Diphtheria struck in the early 1920's. Isolated cases of small pox were recorded in 1926 and there was one case of typhoid in 1938.

## **Baseball Teams**

The first baseball team was formed in 1916. During annual picnic days, local team played visiting teams for many years. Baseball competition here must have been discontinued in the 1950s.

A skating rink was created when snow was cleared off the river ice and board walls were put up. Many, well cheered-on games were played. Around the 1960s the school boys decided to put up

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boards and flood a rink by hauling water from the river. A local school team played versus a visiting school team. This came to an end soon after our school got closed down.

## Changes and Progress

Pioneer farmers mostly took only a quarter section of land as a homestead. The English settlers took more land if they went into cattle ranching. Ukrainian pioneers, on the other hand, were mostly poor people and at times bought only a "half farm" (80 acres). Just about every farm in this area had a bit or a fair amount of slough on it, due to poor drainage.

As the land was cleared of brush or trees, rocks and stones of all sizes showed up. These were gathered by hand into piles or hauled to form a fence bordering the farm. They were hauled by ox or horse with a handmade wooden sled about 4 feet by 5 feet, called a stone boat. This sled was also used for hauling manure directly from the barn or winter supply pile in the spring. It was spread with a manure fork in the field before being cultivated. This sled was also used at times for short-distance transportation. If the one-horse set-up, with no pole or bar to steady it, had only a light load and kept going from side to side, at times the passenger was left sitting neatly in the snow.

Eventually the pioneer farmer bought a team of oxen or horses. At times one of each made up a team for that first walking plough, to turn the first furrows of the virgin land. After preparing the soil, grain seed from a sack slung over the shoulder, was scattered by hand. When the first acre was sown, a well-branched tree limb was used as a harrow, dragged back and forth to cover the seed. It was cut with a sickle or scythe and threshed with a flail and winnowed.

The first poplars and oak trees were cut by axe, the roots with a grub hoe. Much later this type of clearing called for a strong team of horses and a logging chain to get the tree stump out of the ground. With this process it took days to clear five acres of land. A gang plow and strong horses were used in breaking up the land. After that came the tedious and seemingly endless job of pulling the roots protruding everywhere. At that rate, it took years to get 40 or 50 acres under cultivation. With today's costly, large, modern equipment trees are neatly ploughed into rows that are later burned. In early years the wood was precious and used for fuel or cut up into cordwood and sold. New modern machines bury the stones beyond sight.

In the pioneering era people and animals had to contend with hordes of mosquitoes in spring and later horseflies. Nose guards were made for the horse and branches tucked under the harnesses. Smudges in the field, in the barnyard and next to the house had to be made daily, as long as mosquitoes lasted.

The pioneer farmer, other than adding more stock and the most-needed essentials, did not get ahead too soon, but paid out his farm and tried to avoid debt. Nowadays investments are made into large convenient machinery.

Mixed farming in the area has been the livelihood. It meant cultivating, seeding, planting a large garden, raising cattle, milking by hand; but in the past 20 years milking machines are doing the

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job in almost every farmer's barn. Years ago it meant raising pigs, sheep, turkeys, geese, ducks and chickens. Most of the poultry was marketed in the fall. Today mainly one type of poultry is raised and often none. At one time one found milk, cheese, cream, butter and eggs fresh on the farm. Nowadays a lot of farm folks are buying some or all of these items.

Laying hens on farms are not too many and the early morning crowing of the roosters that were heard from neighboring yards all around, are also few and far between.

Milk shipping began about 1960 from here while some still ship cream. Others have gone into raising beef.

Wheat, barley, oats and small patches of buckwheat were sown. If the summer was appropriate enough - rain, no hail, rust or smut or grasshoppers - the farmer enjoyed a yielding crop. Farmers in this area did not do spraying of any kind for many years. In recent years, farmers around here have turned to seeding corn, sunflower and buckwheat. Cereal grain is seeded in small quantities.

## **Advances in Farming**

Three years ago, 1981 being a wet spring, John Parker, owner of the John Rekunyk farms got a man to do his buckwheat seeding by plane. It was hard to believe what we were seeing. Many came or just stopped to watch this modern seeding procedure, commenting, "Whoever would have thought that seeding by plane would ever take place here?"

Of the once well-wooded farms, many have been bulldozed, taking on a prairie look. We used to be well sheltered from winter weather.

Now the wind blows freely and we miss that shelter of the past. Sowing by hand has been replaced by modern seeders, combines and balers.

## **Hay Mattresses**

Back in those days bed springs were boards sawed into the desired length, placed across the steel frame bed. For some, a bed was all handmade of wood. Mattresses were made by the pioneer women who sewed a cover and filled it with plenty of nice, clean hay. Covered with a sugar or flour sack bed sheet, how we thrilled over the crunch of hay with every move! Flour sack pillowcases covered the feather-filled pillows and often a feather comforter *pearyna* kept members of the family cozy and warm.

## **Plastering Bees**

Once the log house, barn and other buildings were completed, they needed to be plastered to keep the cold out and the heat in during the winter and vice-versa in summer.

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The husband hauled enough plastering clay of a certain color and texture. A certain amount of water was poured over a mound of clay, then an even layer of old straw was spread. The young and older Ukrainian pioneer women worked the straw into the clay by constantly walking around in it.

The mound of clay was about 12 inches deep and circular. Small, often sharp rocks, felt underfoot were picked out by hand and discarded. Water and straw was continually worked in with the feet (men used manure forks to keep turning the clay over.) until it became of the right consistency. It was now ready to plaster the ceiling and walls, both inside and out. At this time, neighboring women were asked to help out. Not too many men worked on these plastering jobs. Mixed clay was brought next to the work area, picked up and plastered by hand while they kept spreading and smoothing the clay on. Sharp and rough pebbles gave the palms a hot, tingly sensation. This is how plastering of the inside and outside of the house ceiling proceeded. Barn and other building walls were done from the outside and the ceiling from the top side. Once thoroughly dried, a finishing coat of clay was added to make walls smooth. Everyone worked for the sake of helping each other.

Next limestone was bought and prepared. A bit of diluted square of blueing was added to make the limestone solution whiter. With a handmade brush made of a swamp straw, the lady of the house commenced to whitewash the ceiling and the house walls. The helpers' reward was a hot meal and the pleasure of working together. It was a painstaking job. In time repair jobs of plastering had to be done. Whitewashing was done twice a year inside and once on the outside. For one woman it was a large area to cover. They were strong and hardy women. Often with her husband away from home, working during summer, the woman tended to her family and housework like baking, cooking and washing. She drew water from the well by pail and sweep, milked the cows, tended to the clucking hens and in time, the baby chicks. She ironed clothes with the sad-irons that were heated over the stove. If a husband did not leave any wood ready for the wife's use, she would have to drag a few lengths of wood from the bush and saw them into stove lengths before she could burn it.

Often the young mother left the children alone at home and hurried off for a couple of hours to dig Seneca root. She dried the roots and sold them at the store for whatever the price was. In 1937 it sold for 19 cents a pound. Prices varied from store to store. The women had no babysitters so they did a lot of worrying about their children, no matter what they were doing - digging seneca root or going to the store for needed supplies.

## **Then Versus Now**

Walking up to three miles to school in all kinds of weather was replaced by riding the school bus. Scrubbing clothes on washboard and tub is unnecessary due to automatic washers. Instead of nature's "dryer," many have clothes dryers. Wood cook stoves, tin and coal heaters, the peech (outside bake oven) have been outdated by fuel oil, electrical heat and microwave ovens. We've gone from the excitement brought on by a tone on the wet battery-operated radio to color television. Since the school bus, most roads have been upgraded and drainage ditches are

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being constructed in answer to the farmer's pleas. Some farmers in the area put up with waterlogged conditions on their farms long enough.

Trucks pick up milk every second day. During the past few years, newcomers to this area have come from England, Holland and from western Manitoba. In crop seeding, the farmer is constantly taking a risk, such as in late seeding at the mercy of spring rains and early fall frost. Those who turned to raising dairy or beef cattle stand a better chance of success. Discouraged farmers tended to move on elsewhere. Presently Stuartburn Post Office has some 90 mailboxes. Village activities at one time non-stop, took on a gradual quietness as one by one businesses ceased to operate for one reason or another. The saddest hush fell on the tiny village when the school closed down in June, 1967. Then the sound of the blacksmiths trip-hammer stopped when Joe Horobetz closed his shop.

Now the only hum we hear is the fairly steady flow of motor vehicles along Highway 201. The busy "humming era" of this small hamlet is gone but all of us who live here, some 52 souls, prefer to live and enjoy this peaceful country life, with nature's beauty all around us.

Very few would trade places for life in the city. Since 1974 a few of our youth who had left to seek jobs in the city now have married and have families of their own. They have moved from the City of Winnipeg to take up residence in their home district. We are proud and happy to have them with us. Most of them commute daily to their jobs in the city. They are now helping to keep the community wheels rolling.

Better homes, some beautiful ones, have long replaced the clay-plastered walls and straw thatched roofs. Conveniences replaced the back-breaking jobs. We owe so much to our pioneer parents and grandparents.

If we still have them, let's pay them a visit, talk to them, and ask them about their own life experience.

## **About Anne Sherman**

Things have changed a lot in the almost 30 years Anne Sherman has been writing the Stuartburn column for *The Carillon*.

The community was once a far more active place and a home for many residents and businesses alike. Back in November, 1954, Anne says she was asked to take over the column. Being very unsure of herself, she wrote, then worried, re-wrote and worried some more about her first submission. Now she laughs at herself and the misgivings she had then about the responsibility.

Anne never finished high school and was not confident of her grasp on the English language. She still writes her column while consulting the dictionary and the thesaurus. She remembers the first cheque she received for writing her columns totaled \$7.50 - and a grander sum had never been welcomed by Anne. "I was so happy I could buy some things for the children!" she recalls.

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Another time when the correspondents were awarded \$5 prizes for writing up the most humorous incidents or the most newsworthy stories, she once won the \$5 prize for the week. Walking back home from the post office, she opened up the envelope and found \$5 inside. "I just hugged that money, I couldn't believe my fortune."

Ann has always been a hard worker for a woman trying to raise a family, \$5 and \$7 were absolute windfalls in those days. Her husband, Alex, although now retired, was a carpenter. She used to clean and paint houses all day long for a meager \$10 to supplement his income.

Although her family might not have been raised in the most extravagant of settings, the children turned out just fine, bringing pride to their parents. Daughter MaryAnn married John Prociuk. They have three children and live in Oakbank. Son Peter and Gail live in Ottawa, where both are employed. Peter works for the Mitel Corporation, testing computerized phone systems. Norm and Jan of Winnipeg, both work for the Royal Bank.

Anne says she was born and raised less than a mile from her home now and has always lived in Stuartburn except for a three-year period in Winnipeg. She makes no bones about the fact she didn't like the city. She says Stuartburn is quiet and peaceful - a place where one can "hear the birds." She says she "adores" knowing her neighbors and visiting with them. For 25 years the Shermans looked after a well known Ukrainian pioneer woman, Wasylyna Gorman, who lived nearby. They helped her with meals, getting wood, doing her hair and other activities until she died at the age of 97 in 1982. They also tended to Alex's parents who lived next door for 24 years. Dmytro Sirman passed away in 1965 and Anna, his wife, followed in 1981.

Anne takes a special interest in the pioneers of the Stuartburn area. "I get along well with older people" she says. She feels it is important to find out as much about life in the old days, history and family roots, then record it for younger generations, before the first-hand sources are lost. She has written a number of articles for *The Carillon* in the past, outlining the lives and lifestyles of pioneers.