

Gimli MHAC Researching History of Cottage Development - continued from page 1.

"The most beautiful cottage of the number is owned by E.W. Derby, of Winnipeg, who opened it for the season last week. His summer residence is situated close to the town park. This park is a beautifully wooded area of closely growing spruce trees.....Building operations have commenced on a cottage for W.J. Osborne of the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Company. A number of cottages, the lumber for which is on the ground, will be built shortly. Among those who have already located their summer homes in Gimli, on Loni Beach, are A.F. Andrews of the Ogilvie Flour Mills company, D. Ernest of the R.J. Whittla Company Staff, Henry Downing the well-known real estate dealer, Albert Johnson, A.S. Bardal, undertaker, J. Vopni real estate dealer and building contractor, P.D. Harris of the teaching staff of Central Collegiate, Dr. Stephanson M.D, J. Hiebert of Altona and others."



Early photograph showing the Gisli Sveinsson farmhouse, and two summer cottages. The Sveinsson homestead was subdivided to create the Loni Beach cottage subdivision just north of Gimli.

The attractions of the lake are simple and enduring. Today, on summer weekends, it's common to find children playing where the Government Ditch spills into the lake on the old northern boundary of the town of Gimli, just as they did in 1920, when the following picture was taken.

Early summer tourism on the lake included day-trippers who arrived by train, travellers on the large boats that carried freight and people up and down the lake, and those 'campers' who saw an investment opportunity and limitless fun in buying a lot and building a summer getaway. The value and demand for those lots and buildings has continued to grow steadily over the last century. The lake was and is a proven provider for those who make a living on it, and a salve for those who want a place where they can leave their work behind during the short, sweet summer season on the prairies.



Canoeing on North Government Ditch in Gimli, 1920. (Archives of Manitoba photos.)

Celebrate Manitoba Day, May 12th, 2009

Did you know on May 12th, 2009 Manitoba will celebrate its 139th birthday? Plan a Manitoba Day Event and you will be eligible to win a Made in Manitoba Gift Basket Sponsored by the Association of Manitoba Museums (AMM). Your event will be posted on the AMM website www.museumsmanitoba.com. The Gift Basket draw will be held at the AMM Office, May 12th, 2009. Please send your event details of your event to Elaine Kisiow, Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport, Main Floor, 213 Notre Dame Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3B 1N3, Telephone: 1-205-945-8755 or Toll free 1-800-282-8069, ext. 8755, Email: Elaine.Kisiow@gov.mb.ca. On May 1st click on the Manitoba Day link at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/> for Manitoba Day community events.

Our province's earliest legacy is marked in our name. Manitoba originated in the languages of the Aboriginal people who lived on the prairies and travelled the waters of Lake Manitoba. On May 12, 1870, The Manitoba Act, creating the Province of Manitoba, received Royal Assent in the Parliament of Canada bringing Manitoba into Canadian confederation. The Métis leader Louis Riel, widely regarded as the Father of Manitoba, envisioned a province that embraced all cultures. This dream is shared by Manitobans and marked on Louis Riel Day, each February. Our provincial flag was dedicated and unfurled for the first time on May 12, 1966, and that day was officially proclaimed Manitoba Day in our Legislature on Manitoba's 116th birthday in 1986.

HERITAGE HOTLINKS:

Interesting web sites worth checking out.

The web site located at: www.flickr.com/photos/manitobamaps/ contains a large and growing selection of early maps of Winnipeg and rural Manitoba. Low, medium and high resolution downloads possible. Be prepared to spend hours scrutinizing this wonderful set of maps.

The Preservation North Dakota (PND) web site located at: <http://prairieplaces.org/> contains much useful and interesting information about PND's numerous activities and programs. Information about the annual PND Preservation conference, a three-day, comprehensive affair is also available.

The Heritage Canada Foundation web site at: www.heritagecanada.org. offers information on the Foundation's services, news, projects and includes comprehensive listing of links to heritage sites and organizations across Canada.

A copy of the Special 1906 Census of the Northwest Provinces, is available at: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/databases/census-1906/index-e.html> Census records from 1825 to 1901 are also held at the National Archives of Canada and are available to the public. Those of 1901 were digitized in 2002, and can be viewed online at: www.collectionscanada.gc.ca

Gimli MHAC Researching History of Cottage Development

by Andy Blicq

The Icelandic settlers who first landed on Lake Winnipeg's Willow Island in 1875 paid dearly for their courage and determination to find a new life. The hardships of their first winters spent in simple log buildings are almost unimaginable. And the sorrow and suffering of the smallpox epidemic that claimed 100 lives in the new colony must have severely tested their resolve to stay. But stay they did and by the first decade of the 20th century, the first crude log shacks and simple shanties were being replaced by more substantial homes and businesses in the young community of Gimli.



Gimli, circa 1906

CHM is a province-wide association of Municipal Heritage Advisory Committees (MHACs). These committees are established by municipal councils to advise them on community heritage matters.

The goal of Community Heritage Manitoba (CHM) is to support member MHACs in their efforts to identify, protect and interpret the heritage of their communities.

Member benefits:

- reduced registration rates to the annual CHM conference
- reduced registration rates to CHM-sponsored workshops and seminars
- subscription to CHM "Express" newsletter
- free "On Track" information bulletins, with updates on grant programs, community support and volunteer recruitment
- voting privileges (MHAC members only)

Coordinating Committee:

Cal Martin.....Stonewall
David McDowell.....Winnipeg
Doreen Oliver.....Selkirk
Charlotte Oleson.....Glenboro
Mark Stroski.....(ex-officio)
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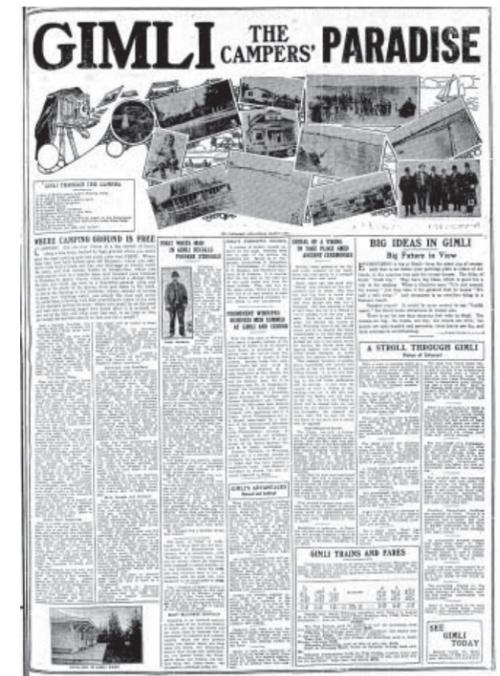
Now, the Rural Municipality of Gimli's Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee has been awarded a research grant by the Manitoba Government's Historic Resources Branch to learn more about the construction history of some of those early buildings - with special attention to be paid to summer cottages and homes. In addition, there was funding allocated to do some development work around identifying some of Gimli's best old buildings - specifically, to find 10 properties that, based on a rigorous evaluation process, qualify as significant historic sites.

Little is know about who built many of those buildings and where the materials and plans came from. Researchers are now collecting oral history, photographs, newspaper reports and archival documents to change all of that. From the beginning, it was clear that while Gimli has grown and changed dramatically, the things that drew people to vacation in the community almost a century ago have stayed the same.

The arrival of the Canadian Pacific rail line in November 1906 cemented the town's future and established Gimli and the other communities on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg's south basin as

summer destinations for recreation. Developing land and providing goods and services to those newcomers provided a welcome additional source of income for those who relied on fishing and farming to get by. The railway offered Winnipeggers quick and easy access to Lake Winnipeg's sandy beaches and cooling breezes. A day trip to Gimli (about two hours each way) must have been a welcome relief from the crushing heat of homes and offices in the City of Winnipeg, in the days before air-conditioning. Just as it is today, many of those who came for a day visit, or a vacation, decided that they would like to find a permanent place of their own in the community.

A full-page 'advertorial' in the May 24, 1913 edition of the Winnipeg Free Press describes Gimli as 'The Campers' Paradise.'



The tone is upbeat, promising that the town has 'a big future in view.' In the May 25, 1912, edition of the Manitoba Free Press, a list of prominent Winnipeggers, many of whom had become rich in the boom years that accompanied the settlement of the Canadian West, are listed as summer residents of the town and a new cottage development just north of the community called Loni Beach. Among them are prominent members of the Icelandic-Canadian community, now residing in Winnipeg, but still wishing to have a stake in the town their elders worked so hard to establish. The unknown Free Press writer said the following: (continued page 4.)

Carberry and area's heritage site inventory continues to grow.

By John McNeily

Carberry continues to be a test site for some of Manitoba's heritage projects.

Monday February 2, Carberry's Municipal Heritage Advisory Council met with David Butterfield, the historian from the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport, and Ken Storie, a consultant who has been preparing a Community Heritage Site Inventory for Carberry and North Cypress. They had brought the first draft of the Inventory, to show and have checked.

The whole idea of an inventory of heritage sites is to try and winnow out from the many thousands of places in the province with some age and history, the things it would be best to preserve for posterity. It all starts with a list of the things in a community that have any claim at all to historical interest.

The buildings that have been designated in the Main Street Historical District and the other buildings of that sort are or course listed, but Ken Storie went through the town from one side to the other, and out into the RM as well, with his camera and a notepad, trying to get as much detail as possible and prepare a basic list of the things that might deserve a bit of recognition and preservation. He added more than fifty sites to the existing list of just over forty designated sites.

What David and Ken brought, then, was a list of between ninety and a hundred places in the Carberry area that have historical interest of any kind. Its' not complete, or even necessarily accurate, but it's a good start.

Would your place be on the list? Are there places you know about that might have missed the list or not be fully documented? Why not go and see the draft list at the EDO's office in the Old Town Hall, and add your feedback? It's a big loose-leaf binder of pictures and text, and it's an interesting read all by itself.

Though the list will continue to be a work in progress for years, it is right now, before it gets settled and distributed to various centres in town, that it would be best to check the facts, and make sure any historically interesting site you know of is included.

The end result of the inventory will be to take the list – the long list – and select from it a short list of places which deserve the support necessary to keep them preserved and interpreted as part of our heritage. It not only serves to draw funds from heritage-minded departments and foundations, but it serves as to generate discussion of just what makes us special.



A view of the west side of Carberry's well preserved Main Street, and the heart of its new heritage district.

HRB WHO'S WHO

Each new edition of the *CHM Heritage Express* will introduce readers to a selected staff member of the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage Tourism and Sport. This edition we meet Nicola Spasoff, one of the Branch's newest staff members.

Nicola Spasoff joined the Branch last September as the Municipal Liaison Officer under the federally-funded Historic Places Initiative. She grew up in eastern Ontario, but hopes Manitobans will overlook that defect as she was born in Saskatoon and both of her parents were born and raised on the Prairies.

In addition to a lifelong love for old buildings, she has an educational background in art and architectural history, and also recently spent three years in Chicago (the Winnipeg of the South), where she completed a degree in Historic Preservation. She moved to Winnipeg last summer and has quite enjoyed the Manitoba winter.

In the Historic Resources Branch, Nicola provides guidance to municipalities working to identify, protect and celebrate their heritage in various ways, partly through the Heritage Matters grant (next application deadline: June 1st). Nicola is always glad to talk to anyone wanting to carry out a heritage inventory, develop a heritage walking tour, or otherwise help their communities understand and appreciate their heritage sites. If you are thinking about a project of this kind, please feel free to call Nicola at 945-2981 or 1-800-282-8069 ext. 2981, or e-mail her at nicola.spasoff@gov.mb.ca.



Nicola Spasoff
HPI Municipal Liaison Officer

Heritage Resources Act Update

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, 12 new municipal heritage sites were designated under *The Heritage Resources Act*, along with one new provincial heritage site. As of April 1, 2009 there are now 343 municipal heritage sites and 124 provincial heritage sites in Manitoba. The pace of municipal designations has remained relatively constant at about a dozen each year since of *The Heritage Resources Act* was first proclaimed in 1986.

Significantly, this past fiscal year also saw several Manitoba's First Nations communities become actively involved in identifying and protecting local heritage sites. Previously, sites located on federally administered "Indian Reserves" could not be designated and protected under *The Act* because, as provincial legislation *The Act* does not apply to federally administered or owned properties. However, late in 2008 a process and template acceptable to all parties was worked out. On March 18, 2009, the O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi First Nation. (Crane River I.R.) near Winnipegosis became the first Aboriginal community to designate a local heritage site under *The Heritage Resources Act* using the new Band Council Resolution (BCR) template and process. In this case, it involved the site of the community's first Roman Catholic Mission Church and cemetery.

A second Aboriginal site designation is currently in-process. This one involves a provincial designation on the Sagkeeng First Nation (Fort Alexander I.R.) near Pine Falls. Christ Anglican Church is a rare surviving example of a Manitoba church built using the Red River Frame log construction technique.

Because of it's unusual construction technique and great age (it was built in 1870, making it 139 years old), provincial level designation was clearly warranted. And, although virtually surrounded by reserve land, the church site predated the establishment of the reserve, and the site legally titled in the name of the Synod of the Bishop of Keewatin. Therefore full provincial jurisdiction applied in this case, and the normal provincial designation process was possible and undertaken with the Bishop of

Keewatin's consent and blessing and the congregation's enthusiastic cooperation.



Christ Anglican Church, built in 1870 on the Sagkeeng First Nation.

Among the other municipal level designations completed during the 2008-2009 fiscal year were: the Miami Railway Station designated in the RM of Thompson; the Ens Mennonite Housebarn in the RM of Stanley; the Harley House in the Town of Swan River; the Strathclair Agricultural Society Bandstand in the RM of Strathclair; the Richer Roman Catholic Church in RM of Ste. Anne; the former Oak Point Quarry in RM of Coldwell); Union Point United Church in the RM of Morris; Lakedale Holy Ghost Ukrainian Catholic Church in the RM of Silver Creek; Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the RM of Brokenhead; Riverland School in RM of Lac du Bonnet; and Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church Sundown in the RM of Stuartburn.



Former Miami Northern Pacific & Manitoba Railway Station, RM of Thompson.



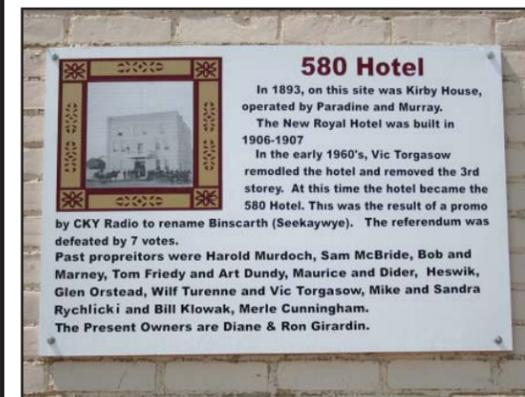
Riverland School, RM of Lac du Bonnet.

Our Landmarks - Some Considerations.

by Dave McDowell, Past President Heritage Winnipeg

Another year, and it's time to take a look at our communities. Homeowners look around and see what needs to become part of the summer to-do-list. Businesses take inventories and plan to move out old stock and take in new, In heritage circles, we need to do a similar exercise, but since we are the custodians of what is valued in our culture, we need to take stock of what should remain and needs to be fixed up, and shown off to all who will come to our communities, and listen to the tales associated with what makes us distinctive.

Where do you start? Take a friend, your committee, a member of your council, and your camera out on to your streets and look around. What is intriguing about your village or town? What breaks the horizon as we approach our communities by road? By nature, Manitobans love something that creates the vertical in our horizontal landscape. Is it the church spire, or, more rarely today, the grain elevator? Are there collections of buildings that seem to enhance the beautiful surrounding that we are blessed with? Then go back to your group with pictures of what you've seen. Talk to the local historical person or committee. Check if they have archives of former community pictures. Often a committee can spend a winter ferreting out what buildings were on what lots in the past, and have disappeared. As they did for the Hamiota and Binscarth Centennials, create sign boards with names of previous occupants, or if now an empty lot, a picture of what was there.



Signboard on the former New Royal Hotel in Binscarth.

Armed with an updated list of what is important in your town, work with your council to have a heritage list of buildings that should be preserved because that add to the charm of your town, or embody important architecture or history of local notables. Consider establishing tax relief for those owners seeking to sympathetically maintain such landmarks, and consider helping your local foundation to set aside funds each year to encourage the upgrading and interpretation of these landmarks.

In this set of tasks, look for help from concerned citizens, community members who have a talent for good maintenance and sympathetic renovation.

Call on CHM to help you find that expert who can advise on the better route to take in the work. Look for information, such as the "How to" preservation articles in magazines such as *Heritage Canada* (*Heritage Winnipeg* has a good stock of the back issues, and <http://www.heritagecanada.org/eng/main.html> "contact us" will allow you to ask for a query of their magazine index for your desired topic - example- "dealing with wooden windows".

We need to encourage our communities to include buildings in the recycling style of life. Start now, and have fun in being proactive. It's better than rushing to stand in from of the bulldozers when we wake up to an issue that should have been thought out ahead.



Signboard sponsored by the Royal Bank of Canada at site the former bank site in Binscarth.



Community Heritage Site Inventories

Heritage Site Inventory guidebook produced by the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport.