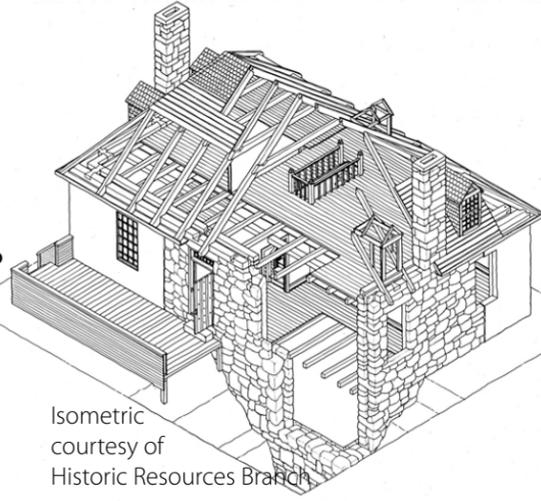


# The Story of “Victoria Cottage” (Bunn House)

Thomas Bunn was one of the early pioneers of St. Clements who devoted much of his life to shaping the development of this part of the Red River Settlement. The son of a noted leader of Red River Colony, Dr. John Bunn, he was a farmer by occupation and in later years turned his attention to the political development of the colony. He was a representative on Louis Riel's first Provisional Government and then on the first Legislative Assembly for Manitoba. The stone house he built as his home in 1862 still stands on the east bank of the Red River across from St. Clements Church at Mapleton.



Isometric courtesy of Historic Resources Branch

ground. Sand and homemade lime were used to cement the wall together.

The rafters are squared timbers fastened at the peak with wooden dowels. The lower end of each of these rafters is seated in a wooden beam that, joined with another, is anchored atop the stone wall. The main floor is separated into three rooms, a parlor, a kitchen and a dining room. The upper storey contains four rooms and is lighted by five dormer windows.

The stone for Mr. Bunn's house was quarried from the banks of the river and from local fields. The lime used to bind the stones together was also from the banks of the river. Samuel Taylor wrote of the many nights during the winter that he tended Mr. Bunn's lime kiln.

The lime kilns used in those days were usually circular in shape. The walls, made of small stones and white mud plaster, were about twelve inches thick

and twelve to fifteen feet in diameter and built to varying heights. A fire box, approximately four feet square, was built in the bottom and covered with iron rods. The kiln was then filled with limestone gathered from along the river bank. The wood fire was kept up for three days and nights, and if the heat was good enough, a blue flame would appear on the top of the kiln indicating that the lime was cooked. A large kiln could produce about 500 bushels of lime.

The house is described often in the diary of Samuel Taylor, a document which provides insight into the daily life of the settlement:

*June 1862 – I began to build Mr. T. Bunn's stone house on Monday.*

*June 23 - Very hot dry weather. I built there the whole week. Very hot every day. Mr. Bunn helped me to build and will soon be a good mason.*

*September 1863 – I finished building Mr. T. Bunn's house upon Friday 18th a fine day.*

*August 1864 – I am plastering Mr. Bunn's stone house yet. I am alone this long time. I began to build Mr. T. Bunn's chimney tops on Friday 26th, a windy day.*

*October 1864 – We put up the ceiling in Mr. Bunn's parlor on the 21st, fine almost calm day.*

The house was a well-known local landmark as the approach-road to the

river passed close by as it descended the river bank to the Mapleton ferry landing. This ferry was in operation until the lift bridge was opened at Selkirk in 1937.

In 1936, the house was sold to George Montague, a Winnipeg businessman who recognized the historical value of the house and spent considerable effort in renovation, installing modern conveniences yet retaining the historical nature of the house. The fact that the house exists today in excellent condition is a tribute to his foresight.

In 1944, the house was purchased by Dr. C.B. Stewart of Winnipeg who initially used the property as a summer residence. With later improvements of facilities and with the addition of a pure-bred Polled Hereford herd of beef cattle, the family operated a full scale farm, Victoria Dale Farm. The farm operations are currently on a reduced scale.

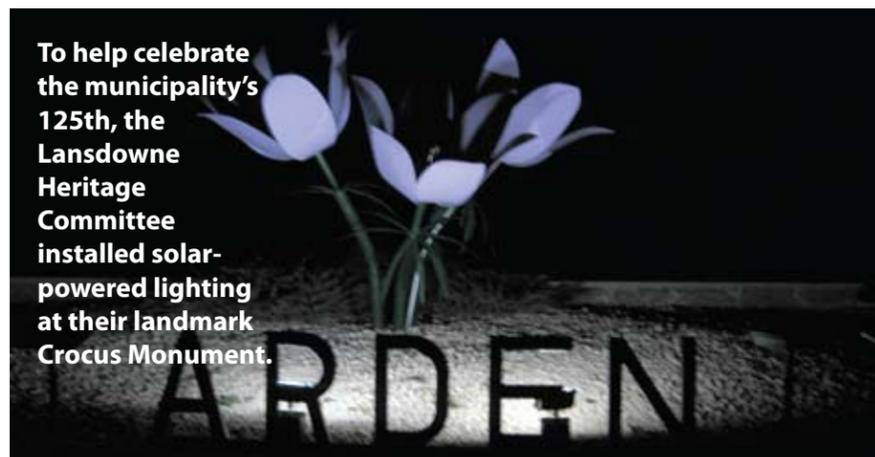
*The Thomas Bunn House was one of several heritage sites visited during the CHM conference's heritage bus tour. The site is currently owned by the two brothers Burton & Fraser Stewart. Their intent is to maintain the historical nature of the house as a tribute to our early pioneers Thomas Bunn and Samuel Taylor.*

*The Thomas Bunn house was designated a provincial heritage site under The Heritage Resources Act on April 27, 1998. For info on this and other protected heritage sites in Manitoba go to <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/prov/index.html>*

The “Great Flood” of 1852 drove many of the residents of the Red River Settlement from their homes to refuge in the hills of Birds Hill and Stony Mountain. Thomas Bunn lived with his wife, Rachel, in the Kildonan district and after that event, Thomas promised his wife to build her a house on a plot of land which would not flood. The level at this location is approximately 13 meters (40 ft.) above the high water mark.

Thomas hired mason Samuel Taylor, and in June of 1862 the men commenced to build a 1½ storey stone house high on the banks of the Red River overlooking the east landing of the Mapleton river ferry. The house was completed in August 1864 and called “Victoria Cottage” after the reigning monarch.

The Bunn House measures nine meters (28 ft.) by thirteen meters (40 ft.), with stone limestone rubble walls one meter thick and set three meters into the



To help celebrate the municipality's 125th, the Lansdowne Heritage Committee installed solar-powered lighting at their landmark Crocus Monument.

Community Heritage Manitoba (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 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
- subscription to CHM *Heritage Express* newsletter
- free information bulletins, with updates on grant programs, community support and volunteer recruitment
- voting privileges (MHAC members only)

#### Coordinating Committee

Cal Martin.....Stonewall	Charlotte Oleson.....Glenboro
David McDowell.....Winnipeg	Mark Stroski.....(ex-officio)
Doreen Oliver.....Selkirk	Ed Ledohowski.....(ex-officio)

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January 2010

- The Story of Victoria Cottage (Bunn House)
- MHAC Conference 2009 at East Selkirk
- Heritage Who's Who - Gordon Hill
- Lansdowne Crocus Goes Solar-Powered

# MHAC Conference 2009 at East Selkirk

by Teyana Neufeld

Teyana is a Boissevain area summer student who was employed for the past two summers by the Turtle Mountain - Souris Plains Heritage Association (TMSPHA). Teyana was invited to attend CHM 2009 as a guest speaker due to her experience with site history research, geocaching and website-related projects. Following is an abridged version of the report she submitted to the TMSPHA.



Andy Blicq of the Gimli MHAC presenting an overview of its summer projects

It was very helpful for me to attend this conference and to meet some of the province's notable people in the heritage business. I enjoyed chatting and networking, and getting a peek into how other heritage organizations work. Here is a run-down of what went on at the conference and what I found to be the most helpful and interesting parts.

## Friday evening (October 23rd)

was a social meet-and-greet event. It began with a guest First Nations (Peguis) storyteller, Ruth Christie, who told stories of the Red River Settlers, the early pioneers and her ancestors. She was followed by the Little Tyke Pow Wow dancers who performed a series of traditional First Nations dances. Next, provincial archaeologist, Gordon Hill identified and provided background information regarding a table full of arrowheads and other pre-contact archaeological artifacts, including some brought by conference delegates.

**Saturday morning (October 24th)** was a series of show and tell presentations from different MHACs:

- I was first to present and provided an overview of TMSPHA's recent projects. There was considerable interest and many questions. I think having this ten-minute slot was key in getting into the eye of those gathered. Many people came up to me afterwards.

- Andy Blicq and Wally Johannson from the Gimli MHAC then provided an overview of their recent summer cottage inventory, research, site designation recommendation project, which included much media interest. The project also included a well-attended open-house where the results of the inventory work and research was on display for the general public.

- Norm Plate, Councillor and member of the Lac Du Bonnet MHAC spoke on the role of councils to make a successful MHAC. The MHAC was involved in several major projects in 2009 and operated under a \$36,000 budget. They also

prepare an annual municipal heritage resource management plan which both the committee and council find useful.

- Ken Storie from the Brandon MHAC spoke next and among other projects noted that Brandon has a popular cemetery walking tour pointing out significant people in Brandon and area's history. Interesting idea. I chatted with Ken a bit throughout the day. He's very new at the job, but keen to dig in.

- Cindy Tugwell of Heritage Winnipeg talked about the City of Winnipeg's virtual tour website, which includes 85 virtual reality segments, with a 360 degree tour of that space (buildings, streets). Plus 3000 archival photos that are available to order and 85 historical vignettes. [www.heritagewinnipeg.com](http://www.heritagewinnipeg.com).

## *I enjoyed chatting and networking, and getting a peek into how other heritage organizations work.*

- Fraser Stewart of St. Clements MHAC reported that the St. Clements Geocaches have had over 150 visitors since spring. They also printed up some simple heritage postcards which they sell locally to generate some income. It is fairly low-cost and could return a profit.

**Saturday afternoon** was concerned with municipal and local history websites. Fraser Stewart talked about the content of the St. Clements municipal website which includes a sizable section

on MHAC activities and projects.

Following that, David McInnes gave a crash course in website development. I took detailed notes again, and much of what I learned I have already applied to the website we are building. This was a great workshop and it came at just the right time in the process of our website.

Ed Ledohowski spoke about and demonstrated how to properly scan heritage photographs. He outlined a system of storing/filing them on the computer. It was a helpful session for me, and I took detailed notes. I have done a considerable amount of scanning to date, but from now on I will begin doing it right.

Then, Diane Haglund from the Association for Manitoba Archives spoke about preserving the originals of archival photos, and how to correctly store fragile photos and documents. They run a restoring archival photos workshop.

**Heritage Bus Tour** Later in the afternoon we took a tour to and through many of the historical sites in the RMs of St. Clements and St. Andrews and in the City of Selkirk. It was an interesting and informative tour, on a par I would say, with the tours that we conduct and was between 2½ and 3 hours long.

Afterwards we all returned to the school to draw names for the door prizes and submit conference evaluations. And that was the end of things, save for networking and talking with delegates.

At this time I spoke with the following: David Butterfield, Historic Resources Branch, Architectural Historian. He is managing an inventory of historic buildings in Boissevain and asked me if I

would be interested in sitting in on some meetings between him and building owners. He thinks that my heritage perspective would be helpful.

I had a word of thanks with Mark Stroski, (Ed's "boss") he loves what we're doing, and is happy to give us some of Ed's attention. Chatted on and off with Ken Storie from Brandon.

I spoke with Nicola Spasoff and gave her copies of our geocache postcards and brochure. It was great to actually meet her and be able to explain the project and the few problems we've run into in person. She is very impressed with the postcards and understands the reasons why the geocaches won't be installed until spring.

Generally the conference was a great time, I think it was enjoyed by all. Very happy that I was able to go!



Ed "Whistleblower" Ledohowski on duty during the afternoon bus tour

## Heritage Who's Who: Archaeologist Gord Hill



Each new edition of the CHM Heritage Express will introduce readers to a selected staff member of the Historic Resources Branch (HRB) of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Gordon was born in Calgary and raised in Winnipeg. Gordon's love of adventure and wilderness led to a career in archaeology where he has been able to pursue other interests in heritage resource management, religion, philosophy and stone tool manufacture. He possesses a Bachelor of Arts Degree (Anthropology) from the University of Winnipeg and has 30 years of field experience in archaeology.

Gordon joined the HRB in 1981 and immediately immersed himself in discovering, recording, interpreting and educating others regarding Manitoba's cultural heritage, specifically the

vast pre-contact past. His passion for archaeology and cultural anthropology quickly becomes evident during presentations, especially when the topic of stone tools arises.

Gordon is responsible for the Heritage Resource Impact Assessment portion of the provincial Environment Assessment, reviewing approximately 1800 development projects annually for their potential to impact heritage resources. He is a frequent and popular speaker at schools, heritage events and conferences - such as CHM 2009.

Gordon can be reached by telephone at 204-945-7730 or 1-800-282-8069 + extension 7730, or by e-mail at: [Gordon.Hill@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Gordon.Hill@gov.mb.ca). For further information, visit the HRB website at [www.manitoba.ca/heritage](http://www.manitoba.ca/heritage).