Manitoba History

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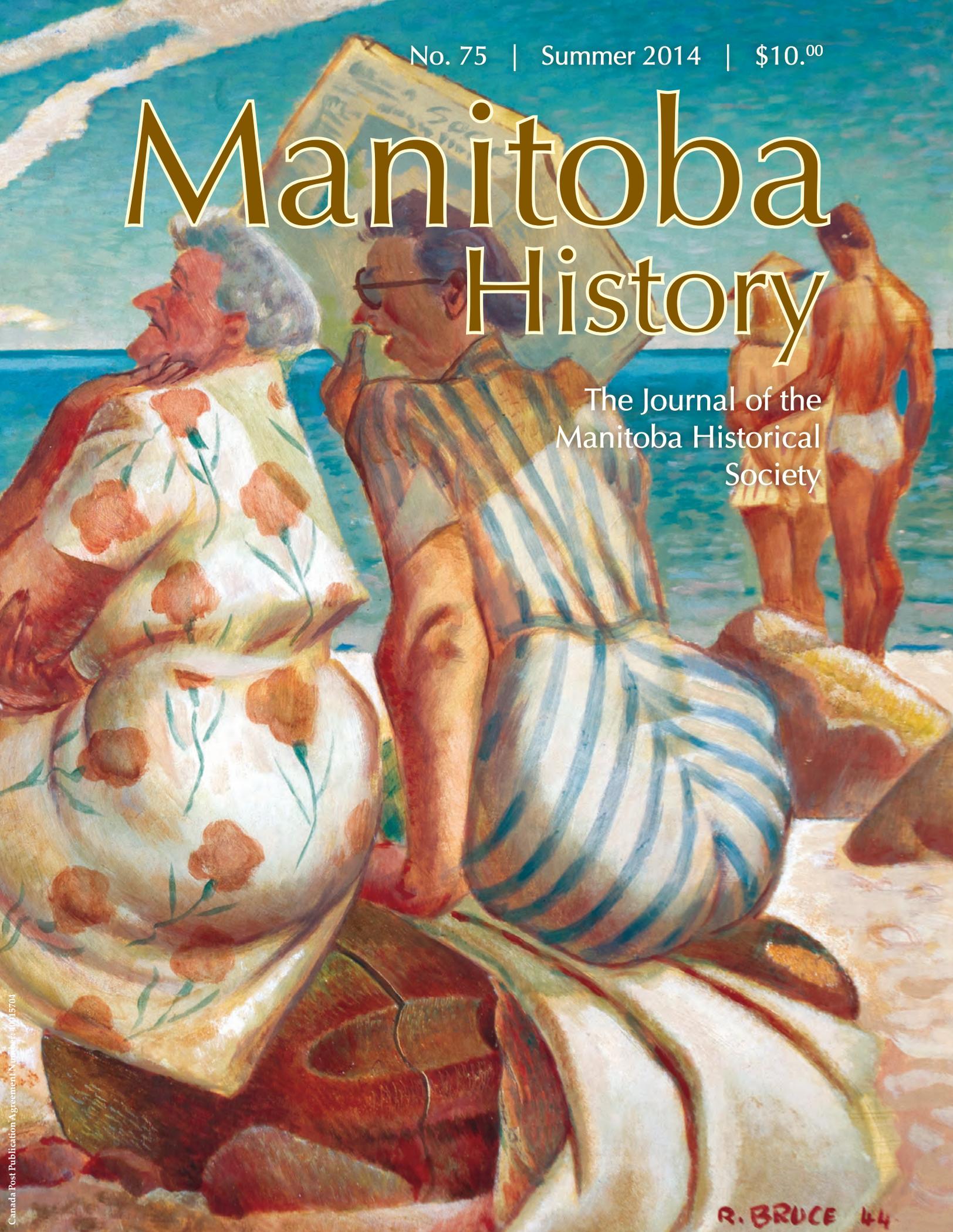
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- promote and encourage public interest in Manitoba and Canadian history
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Ladies at Victoria Beach, 1944
by Robert D. Bruce (1911–1980)

From the collection of C. Auld and T. McLachlan.

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"The past is never dead. It's not even past."

William Faulkner,
Requiem for a Nun, 1950

A Tale of Two Houses:
The Rise and Demise of the Legislative Council of Manitoba, 1871–1876

by Major David Grebstad
4th Canadian Division Headquarters, Toronto

Given the rancour that has erupted over the past year concerning fiscal improprieties in the Canadian Senate, along with the more recent decision by the Supreme Court to reject a plan to reform the federal upper chamber through a unilateral act of Parliament, it may surprise Manitobans to learn that their familiar unicameral legislature was not always thus. Upon its entry into Confederation, the government of the Province of Manitoba was exercised through a bicameral legislature whose existence was destined to be fraught with challenges. Five years after its inception, the upper chamber voted itself out of existence.

In the face of immense financial difficulties, the unpopular Legislative Council was abolished in 1876 in an expeditious quest for fiscal responsibility. This resonates with modern-day Canadians, amongst whom the question of the utility of bicameral legislatures has been reinvigorated due to the shocking Senate scandal that plagues the federal government. The story of the creation, existence and contentious abolition of the Legislative Council involves much more than simply dollars and cents. It is a story that is, unfortunately, often overlooked although it offers useful insights into the value of a bicameral legislature in the Canadian parliamentary system. This paper will attempt to remedy that.

Beginnings

The institution of the Legislative Council stems from British parliamentary tradition. The British Parliament itself is bicameral and has served as the model of government upon which modern Canadian institutions are founded—each of the settled colonies that comprised British North America in the late 19th century had a bicameral legislature.[1] Given that these provincial legislatures mirrored the British

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Parliament, it is unsurprising that when the Fathers of Confederation began deliberations on the creation of the Dominion of Canada, the structure of the new Dominion Government would naturally reflect the bicameral nature of the British model. Consequently, in 1864 when the provincial delegates to the Quebec Conference produced their seventy-two resolutions that formed the foundation of a proposed Confederation, they determined that the future Canadian Parliament would be bicameral in nature, and that members of the upper house would be appointed by the sovereign for life.[2] These resolutions were confirmed in the *British North America Act* which created the Dominion of Canada and established the bicameral nature of the Canadian Parliament with an elected House of Commons and an appointed Senate. The Act also stipulated that the Province of Canada would be split to form the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, the legislature of the former to be unicameral, while the legislature of the latter was to remain bicameral. The legislatures of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, both bicameral, were to remain unchanged.[3] Notwithstanding the unicameral legislature of Ontario, the predilection for bicameral institutions at both the provincial and federal level would play a role in the structure of the Manitoba Legislature.

The Manitoba Act

On 12 May 1870 the Governor General signed *An Act to amend and continue the Act 32 and 33 Victoria chapter 3; and to establish and provide for the Government of the Province of Manitoba,* more commonly known as the *Manitoba Act*. It was the result of a series of negotiations between Dominion Ministers and delegates from Fort Garry who represented Louis Riel's Provisional Government of Assiniboia. This singular document ended what had been seven months of strife in Fort Garry, and resulted in the creation of the Province of Manitoba. The delegates from Fort Garry had significant input into the development of the Act, and consequently, it reflected their political aspirations and intent.

The design of the Provincial Legislature, as dictated by the *Manitoba Act*, included an upper house—the Legislative Council of Manitoba. The inclusion of an upper house was a key part of the document and was not only the result of the established political tradition in Canada but also a

ffManitoba History

Meetings of Manitoba's Legislative Council were held in the provincial courthouse, on the west side of Main Street near its intersection with William Avenue. Built in 1873, the courthouse was used until 1882 when the court moved to a new facility beside the Vaughan Street Gaol. The building was used for a time as a variety theatre. Boot and shoe merchant Thomas Ryan (1849–1937) built the four-storey Ryan Block to the south of it, on the former jailyard, in 1883. The following year, entrepreneur John Clements (1838–1926) demolished the former courthouse and erected the Clements Block on its two-foot-thick foundation. The Block was destroyed by fire in April 1979 and the site is now open space beside the Paterson GlobalFoods Institute of Red River College.

reflection of the interests of the inhabitants of the Red River Settlement and a guardian of minority rights in a culturally diverse province.

The delegates who represented the Provisional Government demanded that the government of the new province include an appointed upper chamber, but there is some confusion as to where the impetus for this came from.[4] The delegates—Father Ritchot, Alfred Scott and Judge John Black—had several documents to guide them in their negotiations with the Dominion of Canada and which indicated the political aspirations of the inhabitants of Red River. In early December, 1869, a convention of French and English Delegates met and agreed to a Bill of Rights created by Louis Riel.[5] Later, in February 1870, a "Convention of 40" was held in Fort Garry consisting of forty representatives—twenty English and twenty French—representing the parishes of the Red River Settlement. This convention produced another "List of Rights" which was delivered to Donald A. Smith, a representative of the Dominion Government.[6] This List of Rights stated that "the

country shall be governed, as regards its local affairs, as the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec are now governed, by a Legislature elected by the people, and a Ministry responsible to it, under a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the Governor General of Canada."[7] As Ontario employed a unicameral-style government, and Quebec a bicameral style, this obviously created some confusion as to which style of government the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia wished to pursue. As it turns out, a bicameral legislature was a critical element of the delegates' conditions.

Some clarity concerning the interest for a bicameral legislature may be found in a number of developments in Fort Garry. After drawing up the List of Rights, the Convention of 40 then determined what the actual structure of the Provisional Government of Assiniboia would be. The convention produced thirteen articles, none of which called for the establishment of an upper house, but only an elected assembly that consisted of twenty-four members, twelve English and twelve French.[8] Having established, loosely, the structure of the future Provisional Government, the

next few weeks were filled with parish elections while the executive, who had been nominated by the Convention of 40, went about the business of governing the settlement. Once elections were over, the new representatives were invited to attend a meeting of the Council of the Provisional Government on 9 March 1870.[9] Upon assembly, the representatives debated the structure of the Provisional Government and by 26 March the Council had accepted a preamble to a constitution that stated that "all legislative authority be vested in a President and Legislative Assembly composed of members elected by the people; and that at any future time another house, called a Senate, shall be established when deemed necessary by the President and the Legislature."[10] This indicates that while the requirement for an upper house was not specifically indicated in the List of Rights, the founding fathers of the Provisional Government of Assiniboia had at the very least considered the possibility of an upper house.

During 23–24 March 1871 the delegates of the Provisional Government departed for Ottawa, accompanied by Donald A. Smith and Bishop Alexandre Taché. Curiously, however, the delegates were armed with a completely new set of instructions called "Terms and Conditions" that, while not wholly at odds with the "List of Rights", were nonetheless slightly different. In the "Terms and Conditions" that were issued to the delegates by Thomas Bunn, the Secretary of State for the Provisional Government of Assiniboia, no mention is made of the actual structure of the legislature whatsoever, other than the qualification to vote in elections and that the legislature, and Lieutenant-Governor, should be bilingual.[11] The Terms and Conditions did, however, state that Assiniboia will join Confederation only "as a province, to be styled and known as the Province of Assiniboia, and *with all the rights and privileges common to the different Provinces of the Dominion* [emphasis added]."[12] One can infer from this instruction that the political leaders in Fort Garry aimed to emulate the political structure of their provincial confreres upon entering Confederation.

Further proof of support for a bicameral legislature emerged once the delegates had departed Fort Garry. In the intervening period between the departure of the delegates and their return with the *Manitoba Act*, the Provisional Government, known by this time as the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, constituted the *de facto* government of Red River. Between 26 April and 6 May, the Legislative Assembly reconvened and spent a good amount of time reviewing and enacting laws for the administration of Assiniboia, even debating whether or not a Senate should be established.[13]

The question of an upper house for the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia was taken quite seriously. The Assembly went so far as to suggest that the Senate of Assiniboia should be "composed of ten members, appointed for two years each—that the two bishops and their successors should be members for life, and that in the absence of either bishop he might depute a person to act for him in the Senate."[14] The Assembly even named possible members for the Senate, including Bishops Taché and Machray, Salomon Hamelin, Roger Goulet, Andrew McDermot, Patrice Breland, John Sutherland, a Mr. McKenzie of Portage la Prairie and either Mr. Truthwaite or Captain Kennedy.[15] The question of the creation of a Senate was mulled over by the Legislative Assembly, and then tabled for discussion in a later session. Before the question could be addressed and finalized, however, the delegates to Canada returned to Fort Garry bringing with them the tidings of the *Manitoba Act* and thus pre-empted any requirement of the Government of Assiniboia to finalize the structure of the Senate. Nonetheless, these actions clearly indicate that there was support amongst the political leaders of Assiniboia for an appointed upper chamber which would have been known to the delegates sent to Ottawa.

While the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia was mulling over the structure of a Senate in Fort Garry, their delegates to Ottawa were fully engaged in negotiations with the Dominion Government. The Fort Garry delegates found that their federal counterparts—John A. Macdonald and George Etienne Cartier—had significantly different views about the future structure of the Provincial government.[16] Although initially at an impasse, negotiations persisted and both sides offered concessions which eventually resulted in the first draft of the *Manitoba Act.* The discussion of the structure of the government eventually settled on the issue of its construct. Macdonald and Cartier suggested that the government should be unicameral, composed of elected members, and appointed members. Judge Black recommended that the delegates accept this option; however, Father Ritchot disagreed and demanded a bicameral legislature. Although Ritchot's diary states that the delegates presented their reasons for refusal, Ritchot does not go into any further detail. The fact that, just prior to this, the discussion centred on whether or not Manitoba would enter as a territory or a province, with the Fort Garry delegates refusing to compromise their demand for provincial status, indicates the insistence on a bicameral house was likely based on a desire to enter Confederation with a political structure akin to the other provinces. After prolonged discussion, a bicameral legislature was finally accepted by Macdonald and Cartier.[17]

The bill for the *Manitoba Act* was brought before the House of Commons by the Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, himself on 2 May.[18] When Sir John rose to introduce the bill, he included a very interesting

> **Notwithstanding the unicameral legislature of Ontario, the predilection for bicameral institutions at both the provincial and federal level would play a role in the structure of the Manitoba Legislature.**

Archives of Manitoba, Legislative Council 1870, No. 1, N16739.

Officers of the Legislative Council, shown here in a photograph from 1876, included (L-R): Victor Beaupre (Usher of the Black Rod, who summoned council members to the legislative chamber), Colin Inkster (Speaker), and Thomas Spence (Clerk).

observation while discussing the negotiations concerning the structure of the Provincial Legislature, worthy of inclusion here at length:

> With respect to the Legislative body, there was considerable difficulty and long discussion whether it should consist of one chamber or two; whether, if one chamber, it should be composed of the representatives of the people and of persons appointed by the Crown, or Local Government, or whether they should be severed and the two chambers constituted—all these questions were fully discussed. After mature consideration [this comment produced a laugh from a Liberal MP], it was agreed that there should be two chambers.[19]

Sir John's comments indicate that during the negotiations, some degree of Crown-appointee representation was considered necessary as a check on the power of pure popular democracy. The biggest question seemed to be whether or not that appointed element should exist in single or dual chambers, with the latter being settled upon. The whole structure was oriented to attain a system of checks and balances, ensuring that neither house gained ascendancy. For example, Sir John went on to inform the House that the *Manitoba Act* allowed for a membership of

seven persons in the Legislative Council, but provided for an increase in that number to no more than twelve, after four years. The aim of this constraint was to ensure that the Legislative Council could not grow to such as size that would allow it to create a deadlock between the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.[20]

The bill did not pass through the House of Commons with ease, however. The opposition, led by Alexander Mackenzie, took issue with a number of facets of the Act, including the bicameral nature of the future Provincial Government. Foreshadowing the fiscally constrained tone he would take in relations between Manitoba and Ottawa upon his premiership, Mackenzie argued "if they were to carry on Government economically, it must be in the shape rather of one large Municipal Council, than a Provincial Government." Later he added that in his view there was no need to have two houses for a province with such a small population.[21]

Mackenzie was supported in his wish to economize by a number of other Members of Parliament. No less a personage than William McDougall, who was originally designated the Governor of Rupert's Land but was barred from entry by the Métis, vehemently disagreed with the proposed structure of government. Speaking, he claimed, as one with intimate knowledge of the region, he observed that the "people were not prepared for, and did not want so cumbrous and intricate a system of Government, and it was absurd to impose it upon them." He claimed to be shocked at the inclusion of a second house given the expense of the one in Quebec and the efficiency of the unicameral legislature in Ontario, and he hoped the Government would change that aspect of the bill.[22]

The *Manitoba Act* was resubmitted on 4 May. In its second incarnation the Act reflected a number of changes suggested by the opposition, namely an expansion of the provincial boundary to include Portage La Prairie, and the allocation of more land to the Métis than was originally intended. It is curious that, despite the objections to the structure of the Provincial Government that were raised by the opposition, the Government refused any more

> **One can infer ... that the political leaders in Fort Garry aimed to emulate the political structure of their provincial confreres upon entering Confederation.**

amendments and the plan to proceed with a bicameral provincial legislature remained enshrined in the Bill. The *Manitoba Act* passed the two houses and was signed into law by the Governor General on 12 May.

Why were the clauses pertaining to the upper chamber kept in the *Manitoba Act*? Clearly the government was willing to countenance some adjustment to its scheme, as evidenced by its willingness to adjust the boundaries of the

province. It is true enough that the Fort Garry delegates demanded an upper chamber—likely based on their fervent desire to ensure Red River entered Confederation as a province rather than a territory, and thus requiring a structure similar to that of the other provinces. Although Macdonald and Cartier initially rejected a bicameral government, even the original federal proposition called for appointed members, albeit in a unicameral government. Presumably, as Ottawa's goal was to create a territory rather than a province, they would have preferred a government that did not resemble its eastern counterparts. Nonetheless, their eventual acceptance of the bicameral structure and their subsequent refusal to amend the bicameral clause in the face of opposition from Mackenzie et al. illustrate the importance the government ascribed to *some* degree of appointed membership. But, why was this important? The answer lies in the experience of one of the key negotiators of the Manitoba Act, George Etienne Cartier.

Cartier was an influential member of the Dominion Government from its outset. Although supportive of the Lower Canada rebellion of 1837, afterward he became one of the most outspoken supporters of Confederation. As the Minister of Militia and one of the key ministers of Macdonald's cabinet, he also played an immense role in the negotiations that produced the *Manitoba Act.* His belief in the protection of minorities imprinted itself on the structure of the new Province's legislature.

The influence that Cartier brought to bear during the negotiations and subsequent debates on the *Manitoba Act* was very much shaped by his own experiences. In fact, shortly after Macdonald introduced the bill to parliament he fell ill, and it was left to Cartier to pilot the legislation through the House. Father Ritchot's notes reveal that numerous times during the *Manitoba Act* negotiations, Sir John was indisposed and Cartier was left to negotiate on Canada's behalf, alone.[23] Cartier was the champion of the French minority in Canada, and was wary of the ability of a popular chamber to crush the minority culture. He would have been intimately familiar with the contentious recommendation of Lord Durham after the rebellions of 1837 to merge Upper and Lower Canada. Durham recommended a popular government for the unified province because it was "only by a popular government, in which an English majority shall permanently predominate, that Lower Canada, if a remedy for its disorders be not too long delayed, can be tranquilly ruled."[24] Durham intended to extinguish the French culture through the use of an overwhelming English majority.

The threat of assimilation reinforced in Cartier the need for an upper chamber to balance the power of the popular chamber. For example, during Confederation debates concerning the requirement for an upper house in the new Legislature of Quebec, Cartier said "In Lower Canada… we are Conservative Monarchists, and we desire to take means to prevent the popular chamber from ever over-turning the state."[25] Later, during debate on the *Manitoba Act*, Cartier responded to the opposition's proposed

amendment that would reduce the voting eligibility from a one-year habitation in Manitoba to one month by calling the suggestion one that was "calculated to drown out the half-breeds."[26] Cartier had the prescience to foresee the imminent arrival of settlers whose voice would drown out the local minorities even before the first legislature had sat.

Cartier was not alone in his desire to safeguard the minorities and the cultural composition of the new Province of Manitoba. In fact, the protection of the rights of the French Roman Catholic population in Manitoba was a key element in the policy of the Macdonald government.[27] To protect the Catholic population, an Education Clause was added to the *Manitoba Act* guaranteeing religious education to the settlers in Manitoba.[28] During debate on the *Manitoba Act*, the opposition tabled an amendment that would remove the Education Clause, to which the member for Quebec County, the Hon. Mr. Chauveau responded that it was:

> ... desirable to protect the minority in Manitoba from the great evil of religious dissensions on education… It was impossible to say who would form a majority there, Protestants or Catholic. If the population were to come from over the seas, then the Protestants would be in a majority. If, as had been asserted, Manitoba was to be a French preserve, then the Catholics would be a majority.[29]

The upper house was seen as a tool that would both prevent the infringement of minority rights and ensure that the essential composition of the state would remain relatively unchanged. This was, of course, essential for a new province on the fringes of the Dominion soon to be inundated with settlers from Eastern Canada and beyond. As Mr. Chauveau observed, while it may have been the intent to maintain Manitoba as a French-Canadian bastion, the future was not clear on the subject, and some degree of minority protection was required for *whomever* might be the minority in the future. With this in mind, the bicameral nature of the Manitoba Legislature remained unchanged throughout the House of Commons debate on the *Manitoba Act.*

On 24 June, Father Ritchot arrived back in Fort Garry and addressed a special sitting of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, Judge Black and Alfred H. Scott having not yet returned. He presented the Assembly with the *Manitoba Act* and delivered an address to the assembly in which he observed that the *Manitoba Act* differed to some degree from the Lists of Rights that were presented to Ottawa, but felt that he had to "thank the Canadian Ministry—particularly Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier—for the liberal Bill framed by them, with the assistance of the delegation."[30] After he spoke, and the Assembly reviewed the bill, the Honourable Louis Schmidt moved "that the Legislative Assembly of this country do now, in the name of the people, accept the Manitoba Act, and decide on entering the Dominion of Canada on the terms proposed

by the Confederation Act."[31] The motion passed, and the Assembly adjourned. On 24 August, the vanguard of the Wolseley Expedition, a military force dispatched to occupy the settlement, arrived causing Riel and several other members of the Assembly to flee. Shortly thereafter, on 2 September, the new Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Adams G. Archibald, arrived and set about establishing the government of the new province.

The Manitoba Upper House

Archibald's task was no easy one; for the first seven months of his tenure in Fort Garry he was the *de facto* government of the new province in a community riven by acrimony and mistrust. Manitoba had just emerged from what was essentially a civil war, and the hatreds of the old regimes died hard. Historian Gerald Friesen described the atmosphere of disparate interests as a political culture that was "constructed on conflicts between the Métis and British-Ontarian newcomers, between French-speaking Catholics and English-speaking Protestants, and between a 'West' possessing newfound economic interests and an 'East' determined to shape the growing national economy as it saw fit."[32] Amid such divergent interests, any success in the first provincial government would need to be based on balance and inclusiveness.

To achieve this balance, Archibald received only minimal guidance from the Federal Government. In early August the Secretary of State for the Provinces sent Archibald a letter containing eighteen instructions for the administration of governance in Manitoba. The closest the Secretary of State came to providing any firm guidance on the composition of the Legislature can be found in instruction number one, which states that "in the Government of Manitoba you will be guided by the Constitutional principles and precedents which obtain in the older Provinces, and with which it is assumed you are sufficiently familiar."[33] Thus Archibald was to use his own political experience to determine the shape and structure of the first Manitoba government.

Archibald's first task was to appoint an Executive Council, a cabinet, to assist him in getting the machinery of government up and running. He turned his attention to this almost immediately and on 17 September he appointed Alfred Boyd, an English merchant and representative of the English population, as the Provincial Secretary and Marc-Amable Girard, a French-Canadian notary and former Mayor of Varennes, Quebec, as the Provincial Treasurer.[34] His selection of these gentlemen is indicative of his deft handling of the fractious elements in Fort Garry and his attempt to chart a navigable course amongst the political sensitivities of the settlement. On 17 September he wrote to the Secretary of State for the Provinces that "it was now time to organize a Government… I have chosen

> The threat of assimilation [of the French-speaking population] re-inforced in Cartier the need for an upper chamber to balance the power of the popular chamber.

a man representing each section of the population here, and appointed them Members of my Executive Council."[35] His desire to ensure all factions were represented in the government would continue when it came to selecting the Legislative Council.

The Secretary of State had instructed Archibald that "when [the] Executive Council is complete and the Heads of Departments have been selected, you will appoint the Members of the Legislative Council as provided by the 10th section of the [Manitoba] Act."[36] The creation of the upper house was a task that demanded substantial political caution given the disparate nature of the new province. Consequently, the composition of the Legislative Council was interesting and eclectic.

Archibald's selection of the Legislative Councillors attempted to give representation to all the major cultural elements in Manitoba. He selected members who would provide a representation of the major cultural groups in the province—French and English; Roman Catholic and Protestant; Métis and descendants of the Selkirk Settlers. The first Councillors were James McKay, a Scottish Métis of Catholic descent; François Dauphinais, a French Catholic Métis who had been a member of the Council of Assiniboia and later the Vice-President of the Provisional Government; Salomon Hamelin, another Métis and Hudson's Bay man who had maintained some degree of neutrality during the troubles; three English Protestants and descendants of the "old settlers" of Lord Selkirk—Colin Inkster, Francis Ogletree and Donald Gunn. Finally, the seventh councillor, Dr. John H. O'Donnell, was a recently arrived Irish Catholic Anglophone from Montreal.[37] By composing the Legislative Council thusly, Archibald conformed to the spirit of the *Manitoba Act*'s tenth clause which established the Legislative Council as a check on hasty legislation and a protector of minority rights. His selections as Legislative Councillors resulted in a balance of representation between the predominant cultural groupings of the province.

The Short Life of the Legislative Council

The Council was not very well received by the population of Manitoba. Like the official opposition, many Manitobans thought their province too small to warrant an upper chamber, especially in light of the successful use of a unicameral legislature in the much larger Province of Ontario. The population's objections echoed those of Alexander Mackenzie and centred on the fiscal imprudence of having a bicameral legislature. On 22 March 1873, the *Manitoba Free Press* ran an editorial calling for the abolition of the upper house saying "no one can shut his eyes to the fact that far too much of our money is spent in legislating. The machinery is entire too cumbersome for the work done. We have power within ourselves of amending this. Let us

Archives of Manitoba, Legislative Council 1870, No. 1, N16738.

Members of Manitoba first—and only—Legislative Council were illustrated decades later in a collage assembled by Winnipeg photographers Harry H. and Margaret J. Bryant.

"believing that the system of Government now established, is more expensive than it ought to be, considering the circumstances of the Province, the Ministry will promote the passage of an Act to abolish the Legislative Council."[40] Despite the Girard Government's commitment, the Bill to abolish the Legislative Council passed the Legislative Assembly but was overturned in the Upper House. The editors at the *Manitoba Free Press* were apoplectic. "As it was not unnatural to expect," they fumed, "our 'House of Lords' are making a determined strike against their abolition."[41] Further, they quoted an unnamed Member of Parliament who observed that "of all the absurdities of the Manitoba Act, the creation of the little Upper House, to ape the British House of Lords, was the greatest."[42]

The *Free Press*' colleagues at *The Nor'Wester* at least attempted to make a logical argument for the removal of the upper chamber. On 17 August 1874, the editors of *The Nor'Wester* wrote:

… the machinery of our Local Legislature is altogether too cumbersome for the size of the Province, and the expense of carrying it on deprives the country of many benefits. We find on looking over the estimates that $3700 is put down against Legislative Council expenses. Now, if we aren't very much mistaken, that sum does not cover all the expenses incurred on behalf of that body, for during the last year, we think it amounted to between $7,000 and $8,000. This is a large sum for so little good gained.[43]

Unfortunately, any pretense to dispassionate debate ended there, and *The Nor'Wester* editorial team finished their argument on a sour note saying "we believe [the Legislative

commence by topping off a branch of the Legislature—the Legislative Council."[38] The *Free Press*' call did not go unheeded.

A flurry of political upheavals in Manitoba followed. In January 1874 the administration of Premier Henry Joseph Hynes Clarke collapsed, and Marc-Amable Girard was called upon to form a new government.[39] The focus of Girard's government was on the reduction of expenses, and to this end he issued a number of "pledges" that his government would follow. In these pledges, he stated that

Council] was introduced at first only as a means of refuge for pets to be shovelled into office."[44]

Despite Girard's best efforts, the Legislative Council refused to vote itself out of existence. The Girard government fell in December 1874 and Robert A. Davis was asked to form a government, which he did. Davis then promptly went to the polls to attain a mandate from the population, and in March 1875 Robert Davis became the elected Premier of Manitoba. He soon pulled John Norquay off the opposition benches to become the provincial secretary.[45] In April 1875, John Norquay introduced yet another bill to abolish the Legislative Council. The bill passed the Assembly unanimously, but was once again defeated in the Council by the vote of the Speaker Dr. John H. O'Donnell.[46]

While it is easy to attribute this result to simple self-preservation, Dr. O'Donnell's defence of his vote against abolition, if it is taken at face value, indicates there was more at stake than political perks. Fearing the overwhelming popular power of the French population in Manitoba, and the coalition into which certain English representatives had entered with French members of the Assembly, O'Donnell warned that the coalition "will prove most disastrous to [Manitoba] if the council is not kept intact to guard the legislation for the next Parliament… by this recent change the Government are put entirely in the hands of the French."[47]

This truly was the crux of the matter, although time would eventually demonstrate that it was the French population of the Province that would require protection. The argument ostensibly centred on the protection of minorities and a sober second thought against the will of the majority, which as this paper has demonstrated, was a key point of the establishment of the upper chamber. In covering the debates of the Legislative Assembly, the *Manitoba Free Press* carried the following observations by MLA John Sutherland who rose in the Legislature on 13 May 1875 to say:

> … the gentlemen of the Upper House [have] in several instances made amendments to important bills that they had no right to make. The [Legislative Assembly] represented the people of the Province and when they passed a bill almost unanimously it was out of place for the Upper House to interfere in the way and manner they had done on several occasions.[48]

Although the debate that was forming in the arena of public opinion was, in the main, an ideological one, the culminating point in the demise of the Legislative Council came from the Province's ledger. With insufficient income and a frugal Alexander Mackenzie in power in Ottawa, the death knell of the Legislative Council was sounded.

The End of the Upper Chamber

In January 1876 the Premier advised the Legislative Assembly that the amount spent on the machinery of government in 1875 was approximately $86,000 which considerably exceeded the Province's revenue, which was a mere $7,000.[49] In order to make ends meet, the Province had to petition Ottawa for assistance in early 1876. The Province argued that they received almost no internal revenue, the only source of funds being from the sale of marriage licences, law fees and liquor licences. The latter had decreased drastically due to the enactment of stringent liquor laws, and with the incorporation of the City of Winnipeg, the transfer of the responsibility for the sale of liquor licences in the city proper to the municipal government. Exacerbating the challenge of diminishing revenues, the cost of administering the Province had skyrocketed as the population exploded from 12,000 to 36,000 souls between 1870 and 1875.[50] All of this was used to justify an increase in subsidization from the Federal Government.

In discussions with the Federal Government, R. A. Davis provided an estimate of expenditures, which involved $50,000–$60,000 on the machinery of government while only $40,000–$50,000 was proposed to be expended in the services of Justice, Education, Agriculture, Public Works and Charity.[51] In response to this, the Minister of Justice Edward Blake, as chairman of the Sub-Committee of the Privy Council investigating the subsidy request, remarked "it appears to the Sub-Committee that the expenses of carrying on the machinery of Government as proposed… are disproportionately large… the present form of Government should be simplified and cheapened by the abolition of the second Chamber."[52] Blake's recommendation became the *sine qua non* of the Federal subsidy to the Province of Manitoba.[53] Consequently, Davis determined to introduce yet another Bill to abolish the Legislative Council.

The next session of parliament opened on Tuesday, 18 January 1876. In his speech from the throne, the Lieutenant-Governor, Alexander Morris, indicated the government's intent thus:

> With a view to harmonize in some measure the expenditures with the revenues, and in pursuance of an understanding to that effect come to with the Privy Council in connection with the negociations [sic] already referred to for an increase of the annual grant from the Dominion, a measure will be submitted to you intended to secure the transaction of the public business by means of a single chamber only, and you will be asked to consider the proposed measure with all due gravity in light of the information that will be laid before you, and bearing in view the actual necessities of the Province.[54]

Premier R. A. Davis submitted *A Bill to Diminish the Expenses of the Legislature of Manitoba* to the Legislative Assembly on the same day. Despite the financially oriented title of the bill, its simple goal was the reduction of the expenses of the legislature through the elimination of the Legislative Council. Once again, the Bill passed the Assembly unanimously.

The bill arrived at the Legislative Council on Thursday, 27 January where it received first and second readings and then was put to debate for its third reading on Tuesday, 1 February 1876. On this date, Dr. John O'Donnell rose to protest the bill stating, "Mr. Speaker—I object to the motion being put to the House. The Legislative Council can have no right to diminish their power, for that is co-eval with their conventional existence and therefore clearly beyond the scope of implied commission."[55] His argument suggests that he did not believe that the Legislative Council had the authority to abolish itself, as it flew in the face of the reason it existed in the first place. Moreover, in his memoirs, *Manitoba as I saw it*, O'Donnell stated that minority rights were his true concern. He wrote that he "opposed the abolition of the Legislative Council… I am of the opinion that it was a mistake at the time, when so many conflicting interests had yet to be adjusted. The French half-breeds are the ones that have suffered most severely."[56]

Dr. O'Donnell was in the minority, however. The votes were taken and the motion passed, but it is important to note how each of the councillors voted. Of the four supporters of the bill, one was a Métis of Scottish Catholic descent—James McKay, and three were English "old settlers"—Colin Inkster, Francis Ogletree and Donald Gunn. Of those opposing the bill, two were of French descent—François Dauphinais and Salomon Hamelin, along with the recently arrived Irish Catholic anglophone, John O'Donnell. The fault line between the supporters and opponents is starkly illustrative of the changing nature of Manitoba; in favour of turning the machinery of government over to the popular chamber were, in the main, the Anglo-Saxon Protestants, whilst opposed were, predominantly, the French and Roman Catholics.[57] Moreover, ideology was only one of the motivators behind those councillors' support of the bill. Perhaps even more enticing were the promises of prominent political positions offered by the Premier. Certainly it is telling that the four councillors who supported the bill went on to political sinecures whilst the three opponents experienced no such windfall. It is ironic, or perhaps hypocritical, that the demise of a chamber referred to as a place to "shovel pets" was brought about only by the judicious application of patronage appointments.[58]

The die had been cast. On 4 February the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council were prorogued, the latter never to reconvene. Before the Councillors moved off to their new jobs, the Lieutenant-Governor offered a word of encouragement to those concerned about the protection of minority rights in the province:

Speaker's Chair. In 1962, Mary Inkster was photographed with the chair used in the Legislative Council chambers by her grandfather Colin Inkster (1843–1934).

I sympathize with those of both Houses, who assented, as I am aware, to the change with reluctance and hesitation, regarding as they did the Upper Chamber as a check and protection, but yet did so, in the belief that the necessities of the Province required the step to be taken. I trust, however, that the members of the Legislative Assembly, deeply impressed with the importance of their duties, enhanced as these are by the withdrawal of the Upper Chamber, will act with the utmost deliberation and care, so that the results of this experiment, may prove, that all classes and sections of our people may count, as it has been in the past, on being dealt with, with generosity and British justice, as regards all matters that may in the future, be submitted to the consideration of the Legislature.[59]

What If?

If the Legislative Council was created to protect minority rights in Manitoba and ensure that the constitutional construct of the new province remained consistent, perhaps the form and function of the early Manitoba legislature contributed to the redundancy perceived in Legislative Council. Like Adams Archibald's selection of Legislative Councillors, the original structure of the Legislative

Assembly was designed to provide cultural, rather than popular, representation to the new province. Initially Manitoba's electoral divisions corresponded very closely to the old parish boundaries and therefore provided equal representation between French and English districts.[60] This began to change in 1874 with the redistribution of electoral boundaries which caused the French and English parishes to each give up two seats to new, predominantly anglophone settlements.[61] Cultural groups tended to settle together; so a compromise was arrived at shortly thereafter, in the form of electoral boundary redistribution. In this case, electoral boundaries were recreated that allowed for the three main demographic groups—French, old settlers and new settlers—to have eight seats each in the legislature.[62] Disparity in the actual popular representation of those demographic groups was accepted in order to give an equal voice to the disparate cultural cohorts. The cultural safeguards this structure provided were not to last, and rumblings amongst the ascendant anglophone population for representative government began early.

The emergence of popular representation in Manitoba can be traced to the seemingly unavoidable growth of the number of eastern immigrants in the province. According to the 1871 census of Manitoba, the new province's population consisted of 11,963 people, defined in the census as 558 Indians, 5,757 Métis, 4,083 English Half-Breeds, and 1,565 "whites." The population was divided between 6,247 Catholics and 5,716 Protestants.[63] The census numbers demonstrate that, in 1871, the settlement was a cultural mosaic with a wide variety of inhabitants whose interests and aspirations for the settlement were as diverse as their heritage. Also important to note, presuming that at least some of the "whites" were French, that the predominant culture in Manitoba was French and Roman Catholic. Most importantly, at the start of the 1870s, almost 90% of the population was Métis.[64] That was not to remain the case for long.

The conclusion of the Red River Rebellion opened the North-West to an influx of settlers. Immigration to Manitoba in 1875 numbered 11,970.[65] Despite a small setback in the years immediately after 1875, the number of Ontario and British settlers arriving in Manitoba grew steadily: 11,500 in 1879; 18,000 in 1880; and 28,600 in 1881. Conversely, between 1874 and 1887, only 2,000 French-Canadians immigrated to Manitoba.[66] The influx of settlers from Ontario and the British Isles, bringing with them a different political and cultural outlook, subsequently resulted in the Métis' cultural estrangement from their new neighbours. As a result, a large number of Métis emigrated northwest and settled in the Saskatchewan valley.[67] By the end of the 1870s, the dominant cultural group within Manitoba

had changed from French Roman Catholic, to English and Protestant; and from Métis to British Ontarian.[68]

Despite the compromises of the mid-1870s that saw electoral boundaries redistributed while maintaining equal cultural representation, the cry for representation by population could not be ignored forever. Eventually under Marc-Amable Girard, the final electoral redistribution occurred which "signaled the French Catholic community's acceptance of representation by population and the end of ethno-religious dualism grounded in the old parish system."[69] The emergence of representation by population, coupled with the newly established anglophone Protestant majority, produced concomitant political changes and tensions within the new demographic order. In particular, the original religious schooling system ended and the use of French as an official language was curtailed—both clauses that were enshrined in the *Manitoba Act*. It is important to note that both issues came to pass under the existence of a single, popular chamber; and both resulted in a political structure that diverged substantially from that which was prescribed in the *Manitoba Act.* It is impossible to know if the Legislative Councillors of Manitoba would have blocked these policies, but it is certainly possible that the unelected members of the upper chamber, not beholden to popular whim, may have refused to assent to these particular acts. Consequently, history could have evolved in a decidedly different manner.

Despite the financially oriented title of [A Bill to Diminish the Expenses of the Legislature of Manitoba], its simple goal was the reduction of the expenses of the legislature through the elimination of the Legislative Council. Once again, the Bill passed the Assembly unanimously.

Conclusion

Regardless of the potential benefits of keeping the Legislative Council, it was doomed to live a short and turbulent life. This truncated lifespan, however, does not equate to a lack of drama or historical interest—quite the opposite. The machinations that resulted in Manitoba's establishing a bicameral legislature and the protracted struggle between the Legislative Assembly and the Council over the latter's existence is interesting, and enlightening of the political *zeitgeist* in both Manitoba and Canada in the late 19th century. In the end, there was more to the Legislative Council than just a place to "shovel pets". It emerged from an earnest desire amongst the inhabitants of Red River to join Confederation as a province, with all the inherent rights and on par with the already established provinces of the Dominion. It represented a tool to protect minority rights and give equal voice to the diverse cultural factions in the young province. Finally, it was abolished to placate bearish provincial and federal political leaders, but only after the demographic landscape of Manitoba had drastically changed. Certainly, its short existence represents a little known, yet interesting and unique part of the history of Manitoba. �

Notes

1. Nova Scotia had an upper house, styled the Nova Scotia Council, from 1751 to 1838 when it became the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia. Likewise, the upper chamber of the New Brunswick government was the Legislative Council of New Brunswick that existed from 1751 to 1891. Ontario and Quebec, at the time united as the Province of Canada, also had a bicameral legislature.

2. *Report of Resolutions adopted at a Conference of Delegates from the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, and the Colonies of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, held at the City of Quebec, October 10, 1864, as the Basis of a proposed Confederation of those Provinces,* http://cos.canadiana.ca, accessed 20 December 2013.

3. United Kingdom. Parliament. House of Commons. *An Act for the Union of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and the Government thereof, and for purposes connected therewith* (1867), s. 69-88.

4. Rev. N. J Ritchot, "The Journal Of Rev. N.-J. Ritchot March 24 to May 28, 1870" in *Manitoba, The Birth of a Province,* W. L. Morton (ed.), Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Society, 1965, p. 138.

5. Alexander Begg, *The Creation of Manitoba: Or, A History of the Red River Troubles*, Toronto: A. H. Hovey, 1871, p. 110

6. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

7. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1870, No. 12, "List of Rights", p. 11.

8. Begg, *Creation of Manitoba…, p.* 270.

9. *Ibid.,* p. 312.

10. *Ibid.,* p. 331.

11. "Terms and Conditions" in *Correspondence Relative to The Recent Disturbances in the Red River Settlement,* London: William Clowes & Sons, 1870, p. 130.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Norma Hall, Clifford P. Hall and Erin Verrier, *A History of the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia/le Conseil du Gouvernement Provisoire* located at http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/pdf/mbmetispolicy/laa_en.pdf, accessed 20 December 2013.

14. Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, Sessional Papers, 1871, p. 46.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 45-46.

16. Ritchot, "Journal…", pp. 131-160.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

18. Frank Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba*, 1913. Reprint, Miami: HardPress Publishing, 2013, p.285.

19. Canada, Parliamentary Debates, 1870, Vol. 1, p. 1291.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 1291.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 1298-1299.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 1301-1302.

23. Ritchot, "Journal…", pp. 131-160.

24. United Kingdom, *Report on the Affairs of British North America from the Earl of Durham, Her Majesty's High Commissioner,* 1838, p. 98.

25. George E. Cartier quoted by John Boyd, *Sir George Etienne Cartier, bart.; his life and times. A political history of Canada from 1814 until 1873, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of Sir George Etienne Cartier's birth*, Toronto: Macmillan and Co, 1914, pp. 266-267.

26. Canada, Parliamentary Debates, 1870, Vol. 1, p. 1540.

27. Boyd, *Sir George Etienne Cartier…*, pp. 302-303.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 302.

29. Canada, Parliamentary Debates, 1870, Vol. 1, pp. 1546-1547.

30. Begg, *Creation of Manitoba…*, p. 379.

31. Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, Sessional Papers, 1871, p. 51.

32. Gerald Friesen, "The Manitoba Political Tradition" in *Manitoba Politics and Government, Issues, Institutions, Traditions*, P. Thomas and B. Curtis (eds.), Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010, p. 38.

33. Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, Sessional Papers, 1871, p. 3.

34. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1871, No. 20, p. 16.

35. *Ibid.,* p. 16.

36. Canada, Sessional Papers, 1871, No. 20, pp. 2-3.

37. F. A. Milligan, "The Establishment of Manitoba's First Provincial Government", *Manitoba Historical Society Transactions,* Series 3, 1948-49, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/provincialgovernment.shtml, accessed 22 December 2013.

38. Editorial, *Manitoba Free Press,* 22 March 1873.

39. Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba…,* 327.

40. *Manitoba Free Press,* 11 July 1874.

41. Editorial, *Manitoba Free Press,* 18 July 1874.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Editorial, *The Nor'Wester,* 17 August 1874.

44. *Ibid.*

45. Schofield, *The Story of Manitoba…,* 328.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 328. Ditto.

47. *Manitoba Free Press,* 19 September 1874.

48. John Sutherland, "Legislative Assembly," *Manitoba Free Press,* 22 May1875.

49. "Legislative Assembly," *Manitoba Free Press,* 29 January 1876.

50. Canada, *Sessional Papers,* 1876, No. 36, p. 2.

51. *Ibid.,* pp. 2-3.

52. *Ibid.*

53. "Legislative Assembly," *Manitoba Free Press,* 29 January 1876.

54. Manitoba. *Journals of the Legislative Council of the Province of Manitoba.* Winnipeg: Alexander Begg, 1877, p. 7.

55. *Ibid.,* p. 26.

56. Dr. John O'Donnell, *Manitoba: As I Saw It. 1869 to Date,* Winnipeg: Clark Bros. & Co., 1909, pp. 55-56.

57. Manitoba. *Journals of the Legislative Council…,* 26.

58. Murray S. Donnelly, "Manitoba's Legislative Council" in *Manitoba Pageant,* (Vol 4, No. 3, April 1959), http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/pageant/04/legislativecouncil.shtml, accessed 21 January 2014, and M. S. Donnelly, "The Story of the Manitoba Legislature" in *MHS Transactions* (Series 3, No. 12, 1955-56) http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/legislature.shtml, accessed 21 January 2014.

59. Manitoba. *Journals of the Legislative Council…,* p. 39.

60. *Ibid.,* p. 140.

61. Gerald Friesen, "Homeland to Hinterland: Political Transition in Manitoba, 1870 to 1979", in *Historical Papers*, vol 14, no. 1, 1979, pp. 33-47.

62. *Ibid.,* p. 36.

63. Canada, *Sessional Papers,* 1871, No. 20, p. 91.

64. Gerhard Ens, "Homeland to Hinterland: The Dispersal of the Red River Metis after 1870", in *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century,"* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996, p. 139.

65. W. L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957, p. 176.

66. *Ibid.,* p. 177.

67. Ens, "Homeland to Hinterland…", pp. 139-174.

68. Although Canada became a nation in 1867, most Canadians, particularly those of British descent, considered themselves "British."

69. David Burley, "The Emergence of the Premiership, 1870-1874", in *Manitoba Premiers of the 19th and 20th Centuries,* Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2010, p. 22.

Midwives in the Mennonite West Reserve of Manitoba, 1881–1900

by Conrad Stoesz
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In 1892, having already borne five children of her own but still a vigorous thirty, Aganetha [Reimer] volunteered, along with two other young women to take a church-sponsored six-week course in midwifery from Justina Neufeld of Mountain Lake [Minnesota], who had been a professional midwife back in Russia. For the next 35 years Aganetha attended births and prepared the dead for burial with unflagging energy, dedication and deep compassion. With her little black medical bag she went out in all weathers, summer and winter … and not only delivered the baby but often stayed a day or more to look after the mother and baby, cooking, washing the diapers, if need be, and doing other necessary chores. … Altogether, she delivered close to 700 babies, and according to her own records, in all that time she lost only one mother.

Al Reimer, 1996 [1]

Midwives played an essential role in Canadian society and became an area of study as part of the increased interest and research into the history of medicine in the 1960s. As part of this research, the transition from apprenticed female midwives to formally trained male doctors attending births was known as medicalization. Scholars such as Wendy Mitchinson became experts in the field and focussed on the role of midwives as a group in Canada. Mennonite scholars have also contributed to this research, most notably Marlene Epp. Katherine Martens and Heidi Harms' compilation of interviews focussing on the experience of Mennonite women giving birth also adds to the discussion.[2] Most of these works focus on midwives and their role as a group, and name a few well known examples. This is largely due to the fact that records created by midwives are scarce. The memory of midwives in the 1800s has been largely forgotten or tucked away in community and family memories. However, a record from the community in the Mennonite West Reserve of southern

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Manitoba includes new data and insights into the activity of these women as it provides the names of all the midwives serving at 884 births from 1881 to 1883. The record shows that midwives worked in the regions usually associated with their residence. A few midwives had extensive ranges of influence and could have been recognized for their medical skills other than attending at a birth. The Mennonite community of southern Manitoba had many midwives who served in this capacity in the late 1800s. It is an example of a close-knit immigrant community that was served by women who provided essential maternal care while operating in a legal grey area in Canada. Pragmatic and experienced midwives functioned within defined geographic boundaries to provide care to birthing mothers. Some had a larger repertoire of knowledge that included healing.

The growth of medicalization in the Mennonite community happened gradually, starting in Russia, as midwives introduced new techniques that were proven to be beneficial. In Canada, Anglo-Canadian doctors in the neighbouring areas grew concerned about the success of the midwives and advocated for the enforcement of regulations curbing the growth of progressive and pragmatic midwifery. While midwives were very important to the success of a community, much of the historical research is based on the medical establishment's own records, due to the fact that midwives of this era have left few records.[3]

Between 1874 and 1880, approximately 7,000 Mennonites emigrated to Manitoba. Adding to the stress of immigration were numerous deaths and births as the pioneers crossed the Atlantic and half the continent to reach Manitoba. Midwives were part of these life-and-death situations. The set of privileges that the Canadian government offered to the Mennonites was foundational to the Mennonite community in Manitoba. They sought to recreate their communities as they had in Russia without outside interference. With some success they recreated traditional communities with their signature street villages. The Hamlet privilege allowed the Mennonites to hold land in common, rather than having to accept the Canadian plan of populating the prairie west with pioneers on isolated homesteads. This allowed for concentrated settlements which fostered more effective mutual aid, including help from midwives.

When Mennonites arrived to settle on the west side of the Red River, in 1875, they had a six-week layover at Fort Dufferin, just north of present-day Emerson. Here they organized themselves into the Reinlaender Mennonite Church and planned their village locations. They elected

A group of Sommerfelder Mennonites visiting in Rosenbach, Manitoba, 1919. On the fenced porch is (L-R): Frank Enns, Isaac Wiens, and Rev. Wilhelm Friesen. Front row: Johann Braun, Maria (Bergmann) Braun, unidentified child, Katharina (Braun) Friesen, Katharina (Esau) Wiens, and Elizabeth (Esau) Enns. The woman on the far right and the children in the background are not identified.

officials including a *Dorfschulze* (mayor) for each village and an *Obervorsteher* (overseer) for the entire area. Isaak Mueller was elected as overseer and skilfully served until his retirement in 1886. Mueller, together with treasurer Franz Froese and secretary Peter Wiens, constituted the *Reinlaender Gebietsamt* (the office overseeing municipal affairs) and worked in harmony with the church leadership.[4]

In 1880, the Manitoba government amended the 1873 Municipal Act. It drew up new municipal boundaries and asked residents to elect their representatives.[5] The Rural Municipality of Rhineland included the Mennonite portion

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The memory of midwives in the 1800s has been largely forgotten or tucked away in community and family memories.

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of the West Reserve.[6] For the Reinlaender Mennonite church this threatened to usurp the power of the *Gebietsamt* and the influence of the church. Because of this outside pressure, some church members reportedly threatened to emigrate, if this were forced upon them.[7] Government officials travelled

to the West Reserve and met with church and civic leaders. The Mennonites accepted an offer that allowed them to nominate the current *Gebietsamt* official, Isaak Mueller, as warden along with six other officials.[8] With this new title came new responsibilities such as the reporting of more frequent and detailed census data. This revealed that Rhineland had the largest population of any municipality in the province at that time.[9] The register of vital statistics for 1881-1883 was recorded under the direction of Mueller, serving as Warden of the Rural Municipality of Rhineland and *Obervorsteher*. In Mueller's circular of 10 June 1882, he reminded the village mayors to record detailed census information for the government including births, midwives, deaths, causes of death, marriages and witnesses.[10] Thanks to Mueller, who kept a copy of the government-requested statistics, we now have a unique dataset. Mueller remained Warden until the beginning of 1884, when the Municipality and the *Gebietsamt* chose separate slates of officials coinciding with a change in boundaries. However, the *Gebietsamt* continued issuing directives and collecting information as they had done in the past.

The *Giebestamt*'s record of births and deaths documents 884 births for the years 1881-1883. In 1873, the Manitoba government was moving away from relying solely on the mainline churches to keep vital statistics. According to the

Act Respecting Registers of Marriages, Baptisms, Burials, and Vital Statistics in the Province of Manitoba, "Children of those who did not baptise should be registered with the clerk of the County Court by the attending physician or midwife, or parents."[11] While midwives were acknowledged in this case, the 1871 Medical Act in Manitoba outlawed unlicensed midwifery. It gave the ability to license medical practitioners to the trained doctors who made up the Provincial Medical Board, later the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and was revised in 1886 to force midwives to become licensed if there was economic gain or hope of reward.[12] At the time, the medical profession was made up of elite men of British descent, men who were not disposed to issue licences to immigrant woman midwives who did not have the "right" formal training.

The 1881–1883 record provides valuable information about the midwives in the Mennonite community in the RM of Rhineland. Fifty-two midwives who attended a birth are listed in this document with thirty-one serving at three or more births in this three-year period.[13]

Included are two men, Heinrich Bergen and Gerhard Doerksen, who are listed as the midwives who each served at one birth, likely as a last resort as these are the only two cases and they both happened in the harshest time of year, February and December. The 1881–1883 record uses the German word *Hebamme*, or midwife. These midwives were likely classified as "granny midwives," who apprenticed with older midwives.[14] The role of a midwife and lay doctor were the only two public roles that women were encouraged to fill in this patriarchal society. Women in these roles often felt they had a divine calling and special gift, and were supported by the community.[15] William Rempel, for instance, of the West Reserve Village of Reinland wrote in 1882 that "Mrs. G. Neufeld, a lady doctor from Mountain lake, Minnesota, has graced us with her presence. She has helped many sick people. God bless her and her work."[16]

While these women were well respected in their communities, the term "granny midwife" was used in a derogatory manner by the medical elite.[17] The majority of Mennonite midwives in this cohort gained their experience in Russia. They were mature women born between 1821 and 1842 (39–62 years old) with three younger women born between 1848 and 1855 (25–35 years old). One of the common qualities for midwives included not only being a mother but also being a mother of several children.[18] In this cohort the midwives had between four and fifteen children, with an average of 9.3 children each.

Some of the midwives working in the RM of Rhineland attended at 128 births over three years while others attended as few as one. In this small window of three years it is difficult to determine the full extent of a midwife's career; the women listed only once may have been recognized midwives or simply helpful neighbours who never again attended a birth. Among this group there is, however, a clear distinction among the midwives serving at multiple births. Many served within their own village or nearby villages. Historian Royden Loewen has noted that a pattern of matrilocality existed in early Mennonite villages. Women and their kinship networks were important factors in the makeup and establishment of villages.[19] Because midwives served in close geographical proximity to their residences, it is possible the presence of a midwife may have been a factor in the planning and makeup of a village.

In Rhineland, the most active midwives had a geographical range that tended to be oriented on a north/south, rather than east/west axis. As the midwives were "fetched," they would have travelled along paths that connected the villages to get to the women in labour. The most active midwives were Susanna Martens (1836–1917) who helped deliver 92 babies, Elizabeth Fehr (1821–1903) 128 babies, Helen Hiebert, (1830–1896) 104 babies, and Katharina Enns (1823–1909) 66 babies. The midwives' areas of influence show very little overlap. It is not known whether these areas of influence were prescribed by the Reinlaender church or if there was a "lady's agreement" where each would serve, such as Scratching River area midwives Maria Warkentin and Helena Eidse who each agreed to practise "… in her own territory."[20]

Although the environment was harsh, it seemed to have minimal impact on how the midwives with the largest areas

Preservings No. 10, June 1997, page 14.

Pioneer midwife Katharina Hiebert (1855–1910) with husband Jacob Hiebert (1833–1906) and son Johann, circa 1896.
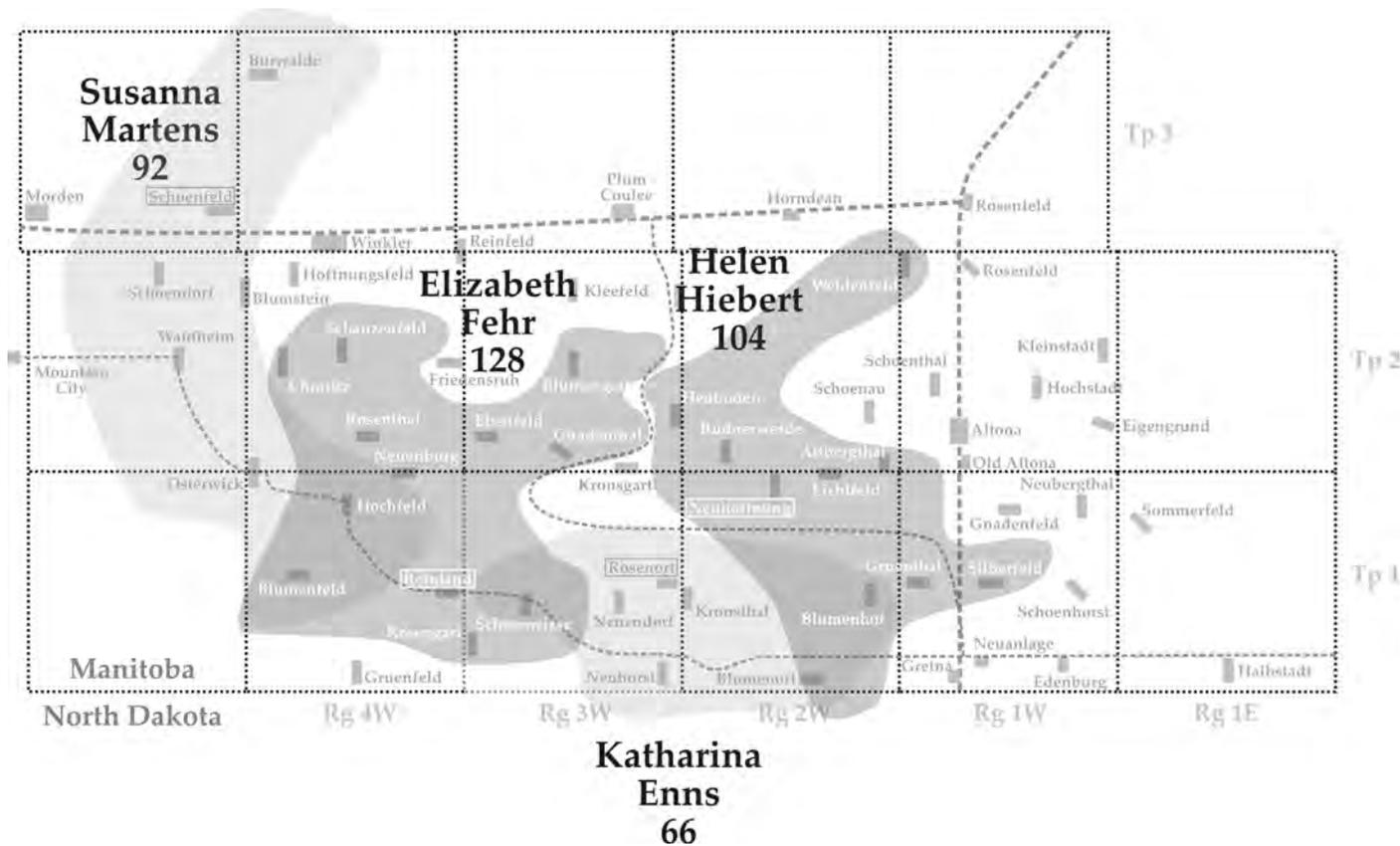
Areas of influence for the four most active midwives in the Mennonite West Reserve. The dotted squares are 6 miles by 6 miles. The dashed line, from Gretna to Plum Coulee, is the "boundary" between the Reinlander community on the western part of the Reserve and the Bergthal community on the east. Heavy dashed lines are railways. The Post Road is the thin dashed line along the US border. Village names with a box around them indicate the village of residence for each midwife.

of influence functioned. They continued to travel great distances, more than 15 miles in the coldest months, to help with a birth. In fact, their workload increased in relation to the number of births in the months of December, January and February. When comparing the workload of certain midwives with the rest of the midwifery community, the four most active were busier when travel was most difficult, even though there were other midwives close at hand. For most months of the year their workload mimicked the proportional number of births. For example, during the period between 1881 and 1883, the month of September averaged 7.65 percent of all births. In the same month, these four midwives served at 7.69 percent of births. The difference is seen in the months of December, January, and February which typically have the most severe weather conditions, when they assisted at a higher percentage of births. For example, in January an average of 9.95 percent of births occurred; yet, these midwives served at 12.7 percent of the births. The harsh climate appears to have had little impact on the most active midwives.

While women became known as good midwives due to their knowledge in helping bring forth life, they were deemed exceptional midwives—and even doctors—if they had the knowledge and skills to extend life. The most successful midwives also served as healers and even undertakers. If people tended to have more illness in the

months of December, January, and February, it would be understandable that the healers—the midwives—would then be the most active in their visitations. While serving at the bedside of a sick person, they could be called to another home to help with a birth. For this reason, midwives were also more active in the winter months to deal with the increased illness in the population. However, a detailed dataset over a longer period of time would be needed to fully test this hypothesis.

While midwives were acknowledged ... the 1871 Medical Act in Manitoba outlawed unlicensed midwifery.

Midwives were known for their healing knowledge and abilities. Aganetha Reimer (1863-1938) of the East Reserve[21] is remembered as serving as a community midwife, healer and undertaker for thirty-five years. "With her little black medical bag she went out in all weather, summer and winter..." according to one source.[22] A midwife on the Scratching River Mennonite Settlement[23], Helena Eidse's (1861-1938) medical bag contained "... a liquid given to

women so that they would not haemorrhage, ties for the umbilical cord, soft white cotton cloth, several steel instruments for bladder problems, needle and thread... handmade bandages... thermometer, two scissors (1 to cut the umbilical cord), sulphur powder, sterile olive oil... small pieces of wood for finger splints, Castoria, homemade cotton balls, Vicks Rub, Red lineament, Rawleighs or Watkins lotion, Antipain oil, and a jar of goose grease and fever pills." According to writer Lori Scharfenberg , Eidse also sold "... rubbing alcohol, Wonder oil, Lydia E. Pinkham's Tonic (for women)... Schlachwasser, Alpenkreuter, Magensterker,... and fever pills (quinine tablets)."[24] Some of these items are also in the list of supplies some midwifery texts suggest to have in a dedicated bag always at the ready.[25]

During the early 1880s, the face of the West Reserve changed rapidly. The Reinlaender Mennonite church became one of only two Mennonite church communities. Starting in 1878, a second group of Mennonites, the Bergthal Mennonites, relocated from the East Reserve to the West Reserve. The settlement experience in the first five years on the East Reserve was extremely difficult, punctuated with successive crop failures due to early frost, poor drainage, grasshopper infestations and poor agricultural land. Wooded and stony land, obviously poor land for farming, was the dominant land feature in five of eight townships in the East Reserve.[26]

The new arrivals settled on the eastern portion of the West Reserve, where 90 percent of the land was surveyed as class one, high-prairie agricultural land with well drained woodlands and stone-free grassland. In contrast, only 35 percent of East Reserve land could be described in this way.[27] An estimated 2500 people relocated, most initially settling in the typical street villages.[28] But soon these villages broke up and families moved onto their homesteads. This shift is reflected in the 1881-1883 registry of births. In one instance, the location for a birth is given as "farm" rather than a village. Initially there was a good rapport between the two groups, with Reinlaenders offering aid to the new settlers.[29] However, this soon faded as friction between the groups began to form.[30]

Midwives tended to serve within their own Mennonite denomination, either Reinlaender or Bergthal, as expectant mothers were more comfortable with attendants they knew. However, the "boundary" between the two groups was not impermeable as some midwives served both groups. The division appears to be more a case of geography and personal preference, rather than differences in the denominations. Most midwives served in one or two neighbouring villages. The four most active midwives practised within an area where they had little crossover with each other but substantial overlap with the less-active midwives who had smaller spheres of activity. The midwives' geographic regions generally corresponded to their home residence. A few midwives served in both the Bergthal and Reinlaender communities, but Helen Hiebert was the midwife who served both communities the most

Preservings No. 18, June 2001, page 19.

Pioneer midwife Justina Neufeld (nee Loewen), earlier known as Justina Bergen (1828–1905), pictured here with her with second husband Gerhard Neufeld (1827–1916).

frequently. Her residence was Neuhoffnung which is next to the "boundary" between the communities. In some cases a midwife from one community would serve at a birth in a community much farther away. These were usually one-time occurrences. For example, Katharina Enns lived in Rosenort, situated in the south-central portion of the reserve. On 1 January 1881, she helped Maria Neufeld enter the world in the village of Wiedenfeld, eight miles distant "as the crow flies" in one of the most difficult months of the year. Katharina Guenther, of Schoenwiese, three miles west of Rosenort, travelled the 15 miles east to Schoenhorst to attend to Katharina Doerksen as she gave birth to a daughter, Katharina on 26 February 1882. Maria Quiring, of Gruenfeld, seven miles west of Rosenort, travelled the long 19 miles east to the home of William and Anna Vogt in Edenburg to help with the birth of David on 27 February 1882.[31]

Giving birth placed a woman's health in a precarious situation, but it was only one of a number of causes of death for women. During this time, men had a higher mortality rate. Of the 478 deaths that occurred in the RM of Rhineland between 1881 and 1883, 68 were adults while the vast majority were children who succumbed to the diphtheria epidemic that was sweeping through the Mennonite community.[32] Of the 68 adult deaths, 31 were women aged 19 and older, and 37 were men of the same age range. (See the table for a list of diseases and mortality rates among men, women, and children in the Manitoba Mennonite community.)

Death rates between men and women during this time were comparable due to the high death toll attributed to

typhoid. Death rates in the Reinlaender community during its first five full years in Manitoba (1876–1880) show a large difference based on gender in the age range of 19 to 55. In this period there were 29 female and 18 male deaths. This may point to higher-than-normal maternal death rates in an immigrant population working at establishing itself.[33]

Maternal mortality in the period between 1881 and 1883 was 11.3 deaths per 1000 births. How this rate compares to the Canadian average is difficult to ascertain because Canada only began to track maternal mortality in 1921.

Midwives tended to serve within their own Mennonite denomination, either Reinlaender or Bergthal, as expectant mothers were more comfortable with attendants they knew.

In Alberta, in 1921, there were 111 maternal deaths and 84 of them were in rural areas.[34] Some hospitals had even higher rates. The Ottawa Maternity Hospital saw 5000 births between 1895 and 1924 with a maternal mortality rate of 11.4 per 1000 births.[35] The New York Maternity Hospital in the 1870s had a maternal mortality rate of 41.66 per 1000.[36] Maternal mortality rates varied by location and through time.[37]

In 1926, Dr. Helen MacMurchy, of the Canadian Child Welfare Division of the Department of Health, undertook a study to highlight the problem of maternal mortality in Canada. In 1925, Canada's maternal mortality rate was 5.6 per 1000 live births, the highest of the fourteen countries polled. She found that of her research sample of 1,532 women who died giving birth, 1,302 had no prenatal care at all.[38] Her solution was to increase the medicalization of childbirth by educating the public that pregnancy was a condition with risks that needed medical supervision.[39] She advocated for a world where "doctors and nurses must be able and willing to give advice acceptably and mothers must be ready and anxious to receive it."[40] MacMurchy highlighted three main medical conditions that caused the majority of maternal deaths, all of which could be better treated in a medical facility, she believed. Puerperal sepsis accounted for 33 percent of deaths. It is characterized by an infection causing high fever, chills, rapid pulse and breathing. The second highest cause, at 23 percent, was haemorrhaging large amounts of blood during or after labour. Thirdly, toxemia or eclampsia accounted for two percent of deaths and occurs when toxins form in the body during pregnancy and can create complications during pregnancy and labour. It is characterized by high blood pressure, retention of water, protein in the urine, vomiting, coma and finally death.[41]

Some of these diseases are detectable in Mennonite diaries of the late 1800s. Diedrich Gaeddert's American diary covers the period between 1860 and 1879. On 21 June 1878, he recorded that his wife, Maria, experienced difficult labour. She gave birth to a stillborn son that had occupied the birth canal for 15 minutes. Maria died two weeks later

Diseases in the Manitoba Mennonite community between 1881 and 1883. Source: *Gemeinde Buch, Births, Marriages & Deaths, Mexico Mennonite Record Collection*, Mennonite Heritage Centre, 1881–1883. Transcribed by Clara Toews and Glenn Klassen.

Disease[85]	German name	Children	Men	Women	Total
diptheria	*Halskrankheit, halsbraeune*	292	1		293
childhood sickness	*Kinderkrankheit, kinderschwaeche*	49			49
tuberculosis	*Auszehrung* or *schwindsucht*		2	4	6
child birth	*entbindungs* or *wochenbett*			10	10
heart disease	*herzenskrankheit*	12	4	2	18
pneumonia	*lungensucht*	2	2	2	6
typhoid	*nervenfieber*	9	12	10	31
edema or dropsy	*Wassersucht*		2	2	4
sickness	*Krankheit*			1	1
old age	*altersschwache* or *jaerige krankheit*		5		5
fever	*Fieber. fieberkrankheit*	6	1		7
multiple causes?	*gebruestig*		1		1
encephalitis	*gehirnentzuendung*		1		1
lung disease	*lungenkrankheit*		3		3
stomach sickness?	*ma..krankheit*		1		1
sleeping sickness malaria?	*schlafkrankheit*		1		1
stroke?	*schlagfluss*		1		1
unknown	*Unbekant, unbewusst, nicht zu wissen*	19			
other		21			
Totals		410	37	31	478

Katharina Braun (1890–1927) with her children and husband Jacob Braun (1887–1950) standing around the coffin, 24 March 1927. She died due to a strangulated bowel brought on by her pregnancy. This photo is an example of the difficult reality that pregnancy was not without risk and the death of a mother left a large gap in the family.

on 4 July. Gaeddert's diary provides enough information to surmise she died of eclampsia, perhaps combined with puerperal sepsis. The entries also show how the community was involved in supporting the family.[42]

Death during or after childbirth was a real concern and something MacMurchy and others were trying to address. During the same period in which Dr. MacMurchy's studies in maternal mortality were undertaken, the Manitoba and Ontario governments were also looking into maternal mortality rates. In 1929, Manitoba's maternal mortality rate was 6.8 per 1000 live births.[43] These two provincial bodies found five key factors to the survival of childbirth. First, women who survived were between the ages of 20 and 29. Second, the first pregnancy and any more than 3 pregnancies carried the most risks. The second and third pregnancies were statistically the safest. Third, the occurrence of a stillborn birth decreased the survival rate of the mother. The time of year the birth occurred played a role, with spring and summer being the optimum seasons when infections were less frequent. Last, the health of the mother was important. Mothers who were impoverished,

had poor diets, or were overworked were more likely to die in childbirth.[44]

The factors outlined by the Manitoba and Ontario government research can be seen in the maternal deaths in the 1881–1883 sample. Of the ten women who died in childbirth, four were over the age of 29. In nine cases the death happened in the first, sixth, seventh, or ninth pregnancy. The exception was Elizabeth Fehr who died on 18 June 1881, after giving birth to triplets on the 9th and 10th of June. Of the three babies, one survived. The third finding that impacted survival of the mother was the live birth of the child as opposed to stillborn. In six of the 10 cases, the birth was not recorded in the birth register (1881–1883) and some were not recorded in the church family register, possibly suggesting that a live birth did not occur. If it can be assumed that the births not recorded in the detailed church registers represent stillbirths, then the maternal mortality rate drops to 4.5 maternal deaths per 1000 live births.

The time of year does not seem to have had a large impact on the cases, as only four of the maternal deaths occurred in fall or winter (1 September, 2 November, 1 December). The fifth factor, the physical well-being of the mother, played an important role in the survival of the mother in the 1881–1883 dataset.

The ten maternal deaths were evenly distributed between the Reinlaender and Bergthal communities. However, proportionally they represent five of 610 births for the Reinlaender and five of 274 births for the Bergthal community. The maternal mortality is then 7.25 of 1000 births in the Reinlaender community and 16.13 in the Bergthal community—more than double (not taking into account stillbirths). The years between 1881 and 1883 in the life of the Bergthal community on the West Reserve were arduous. Difficult farming conditions (e.g., flooding) on the East Reserve pushed settlers out; and the open fertile land of the West Reserve attracted them.[45] Having to start over again from scratch within five to seven years of immigration to Canada, including breaking land and building shelters, took a deadly toll on expectant mothers. Immigration-like conditions increased maternal mortality.

While the Bergthal people were working at re-establishing themselves, the Reinlaender community became established and began to prosper. Tax assessments for the years 1881–1883 show an increase in mechanization and cultivated land. Jacob Kroeker lived in the Reinlaender village of Schoenwiese. Between 1881 and 1883 he increased the number of acres he owned from 160 to 320. The total amount of land Kroeker cultivated increased from 38 to 108 acres.[46] By 1883, he owned a seeder and self-binder. His total assessment increased from $673 to $1512.[47] Under these conditions, expectant mothers' survival improved.

An additional stressor for expectant mothers was a diphtheria epidemic that was sweeping repeatedly through the province, hitting the Mennonite communities harder than other communities; the close habitation spread the contagious disease faster. Children ages three months to

Pioneer midwife Anna Toews (1868–1933) with daughter Margaret standing beside a cold frame used to start plants, circa 1912.

five years were the most at risk, while adults were usually immune.[48] Even if diphtheria did not make many adults sick, the high level of care and worry in addition to the pioneering circumstances no doubt played a factor in the physical and mental well-being of the pregnant women.

The village settlement pattern allowed by the "Hamlet Privilege of the Dominion Lands Act" provided improved circumstances in comparison to those of the people in western Canada who lived on individual homesteads. Homesteaders could be 20 to 28 miles from help. This distance proved too much in some harsh conditions. In addition to the remoteness, doctors charged $25 for a house call and did not help with household duties, as many midwives were known to do. Neighbour women, husbands, and even the farmhand, often served as the birth attendant out of necessity, working in conditions lacking privacy, heat, and knowledge. Marion Cran, a visiting English author, commented that if women were to become aware of the conditions in western Canada, it would deter them from coming to the prairies. No other aspect of life on the prairies endangered women's lives so much as did childbirth.[49] When a mother died she often left behind children. In the Mennonite context there were traditions and institutions in place to help the bereaved

family. Not only was there a community of like-minded people, but the *Waisenamt* was a long-standing institution that took care of families and the estate after the death of an adult. Under their direction children were cared for and assets divided evenly between the surviving spouse and the children regardless of gender. Historian John B. Toews suggests that "under such circumstances, vulnerability to diseases and death was possibly not as fear-inspiring as we might suppose."[50]

In contrast to the Mennonite block settlement pattern, the isolation of homestead women also hampered the natural passage of knowledge from the older generation to the younger. Letter writing was the main form of communication to family and friends who were miles or even a continent away. But many expectant mothers did not know the questions to ask. Talking about pregnancy was a social taboo. Women kept their pregnancies hidden as long as possible.[51]

While homestead families suffered from isolation, Mennonites who remained in villages were part of the social hub that the village environment created. For example, in January 1885, Elizabeth Kornelson gave birth to a daughter. The first day she left the house she visited her sister and the next day visited her mother-in-law.[52] By the mid-1880s, however, Mennonite villages were dissolving and families were opting to move onto their own homesteads. Only the more traditional families living in the close-knit villages continued to reap the full benefits community life offered to mothers.

As faith in the science of medicine grew, the role of the midwife began to diminish, as formally trained doctors attended more births. Midwives had little agency to resist this transition. There were no recognized training opportunities in Manitoba for midwives or an organized body that could advocate on their behalf. Under the law they were not allowed to charge for their services unless they were licensed, which was under the authority of the doctors, who tended to be elite men of English background.

The early work exploring the transition of birthing from midwives to doctors has been characterized by a binary approach that saw female midwives, employing non-invasive techniques vs. male doctors who used medical techniques that focussed on the process of labour and used instruments and drugs.[53] Medical historian J. T. H. Connor suggests from the Ontario context that this binary approach is not adequate to explain this transition. Connor asserts that doctors were not opposed to midwives, but to untrained midwives who did more harm than good.[54]

Historian Wendy Mitchinson views the situation differently, acknowledging that midwives readily incorporated new techniques they learned from doctors, textbooks, and other caregivers.[55] She further points out that midwives were not simply passive attendees. They were active in the birthing process with encouragement, techniques and medicines.[56]

The example of the midwives in southern Manitoba shows an openness to medical techniques that were

incorporated by some of the Mennonite midwives. These midwives were pragmatic and slowly incorporated a medicalized approach in their work. As a result, some of the doctors in the neighbouring communities felt threatened by these midwives because of their success and the community loyalty they enjoyed.

Doctors needed patients for their business to succeed; so, doctors tended to set up their practice in urban areas.[57] The heavily populated RM of Rhineland, with a high

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Neighbour women, husbands, and even the farmhand, often served as the birth attendant out of necessity, working in conditions lacking privacy, heat, and knowledge.

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birth rate, would have appeared to be a prime location. However, the Mennonite community, especially the Reinlaender Mennonite Church community, sought to be self-supporting and continued to see the privileges outlined by the Canadian Government in 1873 as ensuring this view.[58] The Mennonites were not opposed to new medical ideas, but sought to incorporate them on their own terms.

For example, Mennonites were not opposed to medical advancements such as formally trained doctors. In 1837, in the Russian Mennonite colony of Chortitza, the church leadership hired Dr. H. V. Grosheim to establish a practice centred in Neuenburg.[59] In 1860, church leader Jacob Epp records the use of Karl Braunscheidt's Lebenswekker (life awakener) machine, which was a device that was strapped on to treat a number of ailments.[60] In 1870, church leader Jacob Epp records that a trained Russian midwife, "... who had developed a reputation in our area from previous visits..." served the Mennonite community. In his diary Epp laments the lack of trained Mennonite midwives.[61] The Mennonite community in Russia was pragmatic and open to new medical innovations. This pragmatism continued in Canada.

In 1881, Dr. Justina Bergen from the Mennonite community of Mountain Lake, MN, visited the West Reserve.[62] At the age of 14 she began to accompany her father, Dr. David Loewen, who had travelled to Danzig, Prussia for training. By the age of 15 she was acting as a midwife's assistant. Dr. Bergen, as she was known, visited the Manitoba Mennonite community again in 1884 and 1892, making house calls as recorded by Bishop David Stoesz of the Chortitzer Mennonite Church on the East Reserve.[63] During the visit in 1892, the East Reserve male church leadership invited Dr. Bergen to Manitoba to provide a six-week midwife training course to several new volunteer midwives on the East Reserve.[64] Many home remedies were recorded in notebooks during this course. Student, Aganetha Barkman, also used this book to record the approximately 600 births she attended as a

midwife.[65] This church-sponsored initiative deviates from the classical "granny midwife" pattern of apprenticeship and the handing down of knowledge from an older women to a younger one. In this instance, a course was offered.

A second woman who took the training was Anna Toews. She became a prominent midwife and healer collecting and growing plants for medicinal purposes.[66] Toews' notebook is filled with herbal recipes, as well as some manufactured medicines. The notebook includes attention to cleanliness in washing the mother, instructions for complicated and dangerous births, and remedies for ailments afflicting men and women.[67]

Just as medicinal herbal knowledge was a staple in Aboriginal communities, it had become important with some Mennonite healers. The Aboriginal contribution to settler communities has been undervalued according to historian Kristin Burnett. There is compelling evidence that settlers in Western Canada relied on Aboriginal healers for knowledge of plant remedies, healing and childbirth.[68] A Mennonite midwife who incorporated aboriginal knowledge was Katharine Hiebert, who was invigorated by searching the woods of her new East Reserve Manitoba home for plant material used for medicinal purposes. She had her own recipes as well as recipes from an Aboriginal healer. Hiebert also spent several weeks with an Aboriginal woman who healed her cancer.[69] Through these encounters Hiebert incorporated considerable herb healing knowledge in her practice.[70]

The Mennonite community in southern Manitoba sought to be autonomous in many aspects of life including

Mennonite Heritage Centre.

Pioneer midwife Katharina Thiessen (1842–1915).

health care. They had a pragmatic approach to healing and medicine; new approaches and ideas were allowed to be tested and were incorporated if proven helpful. With this understanding, Dr. Katharina Thiessen quickly became a highly regarded doctor and midwife. She handled difficult births, performed limb amputations, administered chloroform, used forceps, and provided medical prescriptions. [71] At the age of eighteen, Thiessen (1842–1915) travelled from Russia to Prussia for training in midwifery, chiropractic and naturopathic techniques. In 1874 she and her husband Karl Thiessen immigrated to Peabody, Kansas and then, in 1885, to the West Reserve village of Hoffnungsfeld. She continued her medical training by acquiring many medical textbooks and by travelling to Cincinnati, Ohio for further training. Some of her medical textbooks remain, including *Lehrbuch der Geburtshülfe für die preussischen Hebammen*, published in 1878.[72] The textbook for midwives is based on a medical understanding of childbirth. The attendant is instructed to watch the woman's body for changes,[73] and stages of childbirth are to act as markers.[74] The focus on the woman's body as a machine that needed fixing is a central theme in the medicalization process.[75] Instructions on how to deal with various difficult births and emergencies are also discussed throughout the text.

When Katharina Thiessen arrived at the medical college in Cincinnati, the doctors assumed she was there for treatment. [76] The climate for females attending medical training was difficult and at times hostile. In one example, students brought a sheep into class saying "... that they understood that inferior animals were no longer to be excluded [from medical school]."[77]

Although she became a successful doctor, building a large home to accommodate her patients, Thiessen continued to attract negative attention from the medical establishment. Doctors from Morden and Gretna complained to the Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons, demanding they put a stop to midwifery and the use of informal doctors. They saw this body as providing "protection of the brotherhood."[78] Dr. Burnham was concerned that Katharina Thiessen and Mrs. Bergen might "... take considerable money out of our practise and if there is any way of stopping them I will be glad to assist you."[79] The doctors' main goal—to curtail the practice of midwifery—was for personal gain. After considerable badgering by doctors B. J. McConnell, and F. W. E. Burnham, of Morden, and doctors Donovan and James McKenty, of Gretna, the College acquiesced and proceeded to investigate Katharina Thiessen and Dr. Abraham Hiebert. However finding witnesses to testify against them was difficult. Nevertheless, area doctors pressured the College of Physicians and Surgeons to prosecute Thiessen and others and on their third attempt were successful. The Mennonite community resisted by employing the help of MLA Valentine Winkler, who not only paid Thiessen's fine but threatened to introduce new legislation that would exempt Mennonites from observance of the Medical Act.

In 1898, Winkler submitted a petition to the Manitoba Legislature on behalf of almost 500 people in the Mennonite settlement who wished that "... Miss Susie Isaac be licensed as a physician or midwife."[80] Winkler eventually worked out a compromise that ensured the College would not prosecute unlicensed midwives in exchange for not introducing legislation that would exempt Mennonites from the College's jurisdiction. The Mennonite community continued its practice of midwifery well into the mid-20th century. However, with the successful prosecution of Dr. Thiessen, the natural process of self-sufficient and pragmatic midwifery in the community was curtailed.

The example of Katharina Thiessen and the acceptance she experienced in the Mennonite community concurs with historian Charlotte Borst's theory that places agency within the immigrant community. It was the community that embraced medicalization; it was not foisted on them by doctors from outside the community.[81] Because cultural considerations were important to the mother, attendants—including doctors who had similar cultural values—were welcomed into the community to deliver babies. However, in this example the doctor in question was a woman from within the Mennonite community.

The Manitoba example is different from the Ontario experience in which historian J. T. H. Connor claims that doctors were primarily concerned about good care for mothers and their babies, and therefore insisted that midwives be licensed. Conner downplays the argument that doctors were threatened by the success of the midwives which cut into the doctors' income, claiming that doctors in general were supportive of midwives and that no Ontario doctor has ever taken legal action against a midwife.[82] Dr. Thiessen was embraced by her community due to who she was and because she provided good care. The letters written by the English doctors in the railway towns of Morden and Gretna clearly show that their criticism of Dr. Thiessen was for personal gain and was less about what was best for the pregnant mother. The doctors continued to advocate for the prosecution of Katharina Thiessen.

A clearer picture of the role that midwives played in the Manitoba Mennonite community can now be drawn. Using an assortment of records created by the Mennonite midwives and their community, a detailed and interesting portrait emerges of the midwives who served their communities. First, midwives were highly valued members of the Mennonite community. They provided good maternal care and some were recognized as healers. Second, midwives worked in geographically defined areas of influence. The hamlet provision that allowed Mennonites to live in villages rather than on isolated homesteads, allowed for a supportive network for mothers, keeping kinship connections intact. Third, the Mennonite community did not resist medicalization; it was open to medical innovation, acquiring knowledge from trained doctors, midwives, and Aboriginal healers. The Mennonite midwives were pragmatic in their acceptance of new ideas coming from societies around them. Fourth, English

doctors were threatened by the success of the midwives and the strong community support they enjoyed. The wider Canadian context at the time gives evidence of a society that had a negative view of midwives and females with medical training. Fifth, for commercial and sociological reasons the English doctors used their networks to prosecute the most prominent midwife in the area, hoping to influence all midwives, but the community pushed back. Receiving help from their local MLA, who advocated on their behalf, midwives were allowed to continue practising. In the end, the natural progression of pragmatic midwifery was severely curtailed, but not extinguished. An element of the Mennonite population continued to use midwives into the 1980s,[83] and ostensibly up to the year 2000, when midwifery became a recognized and licensed profession in Manitoba.[84] ❧

Notes

This paper could not have been written without the record of births between 1881 and 1883 that included the midwife's name and the location of the birth. This document was preserved by the Reinlaender church leadership in Manitoba for 40 years and then taken to Mexico in 1922, because the Reinlaender church members believed they could not trust the Canadian government. The increasing amount of control the government appropriated from the Mennonites pushed them to emigrate. The Mennonites believed they had been promised the fullest privileges in exercising their religious principles which, for the Mennonites, extended to most areas of life.

In 1992, Bruce Wiebe located this document in a large collection of materials in a trunk in the workshop belonging to former *Vorsteher* Jacob Froese of Gnadenfeld, Manitoba Colony, Mexico. With the permission of Froese and *Vorsteher* Heinrich Dyck, and Bishops Jacob Loewen and Franz Banman, Wiebe was allowed to borrow selected items dating 1875–1922 for microfilming in Manitoba. This was done at the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in 1993.[86]

The births portion of the register was transcribed by Clara Toews in 2011. The deaths portion was transcribed under the supervision of Glen R. Klassen. For a period in 1882 only the last name was given such as "Frau Fehr." Based on births and the location of these births for the years 1881 and 1883 an educated guess was made as to which "Frau Fehr" served at these births. This method provides the fullest dataset, acknowledging that there are bound to be some errors.

1. Al Reimer, "Johann R. Reimer (1848-1918): Steinbach Pioneer," *Preservings* 9, December (1996), p. 41.

2. Katherine Martens and Heidi Harms, *In Her Own voice; Childbirth Stories from Mennonite Women,* Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1997.

3. J. T. H. Connor, "'Larger Fish to Catch here than Midwives': Midwifery and the Medical Profession in Nineteenth-Century Ontario", in *Care and Curing: Historical Perspectives on Women and Healing in Canada,* Ottawa, Ontario: University of Ottawa Press, 1994, p. 105.

4. Adolf Ens and John Dyck, "Obervorsteher Isaak Mueller 1824–1912," in *Church, Family and Village: Essays on Mennonite Life on the West Reserve,* Adolf Ens, Jacob E. Peters and Otto Hamm, eds. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2001, pp. 67-79.

5. *Ibid.,* p. 76.

6. John Dyck and William Harms, eds. *1880 Village Census of the Mennonite West Reserve,* Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1998, p. 3.

7. Ens and Dyck, *op. cit.,* p. 76.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Ens and Dyck, *Ibid.,* p. 77.

10. Notice from the district office of Reinland: 1. That all births, deaths, and marriages which occurred between 19 December 1881 and 20 June 1882 should be registered. 2. Register the person who assisted in the birth. And the person present at the death and what the cause of death was and who the church official was who officiated at the marriage and register one family present at the engagement of the couple and two families present at the marriage. These should be submitted to the district office by 24 June. 3. Jacob Dyck from Neuendorf should publish the coming marriages 4. Peter Fehr from Grünthal should be notified during the year about any changes to the register. 5. The villages which have not maintained the roads should do so upon receipt of this notice so that the machinery can be used elsewhere. On 10 June 1882, Isaak Müller District Official. Rosenort village papers, Mennonite Heritage Centre, volume 1099 file 29, 10 June 1882, translation by Bert Friesen, 2011.

11. "An Act respecting Registers of Marriages, Baptisms, Burials, and Vital Statistics in the province of Manitoba" *Manitoban and Northwest Herald,* 22 February 1873, p. 2 www.manitobia.ca. Accessed 26 January 2012.

12. Hans Werner and Jenifer Waito, "'One of Our Own': Ethnicity Politics and the Medicalization of Childbirth in Manitoba", *Manitoba History* 58, p. 7 (June 2008).

13. In a few cases the identity of the midwives was not ascertainable.

14. An example of the apprenticeship of the granny midwives would be "Mrs. John P. Friesen (1850-1934)... trained her daughter and her daughter's sister-in-law". Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley: A Centennial project of the Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980,* Morris: Inter-Collegiate Press, 1980, p. 328.

15. Werner and Waito, *op. cit.,* p. 5.

16. William Rempel, "Manitoba, Reinland," *Mennonitische Rundschau,* 1 September 1882, p. 1. Translated by Elfriede Stillger, 2014.

17. Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, *Prescribed Norms: Women and Health in Canada and the United States since 1800,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010, p. 107.

18. Alma Barkman, "Free Home Deliveries" in *Mennonite Memories Settling in Western Canada,* Lawrence Klippenstein and Julius G. Toews, eds., Winnipeg: Centennial Publications, 1977, p. 237.

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20. Eidse, *op. cit.,* p. 328.

21. The East Reserve was another portion of land set aside for Mennonite settlement by the government. It lay on the east side of the Red River and was therefore known as the East Reserve. The East Reserve is in the current-day Rural Municipality of Hanover area where Steinbach is the central city.

22. Reimer, *op. cit.,* p. 41.

23. Scratching River Settlement is located near current-day Rosenort, MB.

24. Lori Scharfenberg, "Helena Eidse's Medical Bag", *Preservings* 9, (December 1996), p. 53.

25. J. E. Burton, translator, *Handbook of Midwifery for Midwives,* London: Minister for Spiritual, Educational, and Medical Affairs, 1884, pp. 76-77.

26. Lawrence Klippenstein, "Bergthaler Mennonite Resettlement to the West Reserve 1878-1882" in *Settlers of the East Reserve: Moving In—Moving Out—Staying.* Adolf Ens, Ernest N. Braun, Henry N. Fast, eds., Winnipeg: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 2009, p. 305.

27. *Ibid.,* p. 309.

28. *Ibid.,* p. 312.

29. Maria Klassen, "Moving to the West Reserve" in *Mennonite Memories Settling in Western Canada,* Lawrence Klippenstein and Julius G. Toews, eds., Winnipeg: Centennial Publications, 1977, p. 70.

30. Peter Elias diary, translated by William Kehler, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Volume 3523 file 7, p. 5.

31. Note: Midwives who served in a village only once are not reflected on the maps.

32. Glen R. Klassen and Conrad Stoesz, "Diphtheria epidemics of the 1880s in the Mennonite West Reserve in Manitoba", *Preservings* 31 (2011), pp. 41-48.

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35. Suzann Buckley, "The Search for the Decline of Maternal Mortality: The Place of Hospital Records" in *Essays in the History of Canadian Medicine*, Wendy Mitchinson and Janice Dickin McGinnis, eds., Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988, p. 150.

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37. Wendy Mitchinson, *Giving Birth in Canada 1900–1950,* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002, p. 262.

38. Langford, p. 171, endnote 7.

39. Buckley, pp. 151-152.

40. Buckley, p. 153.

41. *Ibid.*

42. See Diedrich Gaeddert diary translation pp. 211-212, Mennonite Heritage Centre, volume 5562 file 15.

43. Mitchinson, *Giving Birth in Canada*, p. 262.

44. Buckley, pp. 157-158. Irvine Loudon challenges this conclusion that claims that social class, poor diets (not malnourishment) and poverty do not lead to higher maternal mortality rates. He claims that limited access to good birthing care and the occurrence of virulent strains of *Streptococcus pyogenes*, the bacterium that causes puerperal fever, are the biggest factors in maternal mortality rates. Sulfonamide drugs that controlled puerperal fever were introduced in the 1930s and were responsible for a long and lasting reduction of maternal mortality. Irvine Loudon, "Maternal mortality in the past and its relevance to developing countries today", *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Vol. 72 No. 1, July 2000, p. 243s. http://www.ajcn.org/content/72/1/241S.full.pdf+html accessed 16 February 2012.

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47. Old Colony tax assessment for the village of Schoenwiese, Mennonite Heritage Centre microfilm #654.

48. Glen R. Klassen, p. 44.

49. Langford, pp. 148-151.

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52. Loewen, "The Children, the Cows...", p. 367.

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56. Mitchinson, *Giving Birth in Canada,* p. 9.

57. Kristin Burnett, *Taking Medicine: Women's Healing Work and Colonial Contact in Southern Alberta 1880–1930,* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010, p. 55.

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64. Cathy Barkman, "Anna Toews (1868-1933): Midwife" *Preservings* 10, June (1997): 53. See also Martens, p. 27 in Martens' interview with Sara Kroeker about her midwife mother Aganetha Barkman. The length of the course is "around three weeks" whereas, in the reference in Cathy Barkman's article on Anna Toews, the length of the course is six weeks.

65. Martens, p. 27.

66. Cathy Barkman, p. 53

67. Anna Toews midwifery notebook, translated by Edward Enns, 2011 in possession of the author.

68. Burnett, pp. 51-52.

69. Regina Doerksen Neufeld, "Katherina Hiebert (1855-1910): Midwife", *Preservings* 10, June part 2 (1997): 14-16.

70. Epp, *Mennonite Women in Canada*, p. 41.

71. Shirley Bergen, "Life of Mrs. Dr. Thiessen (née Catharina Bornn) -1842-1915", Mennonite Heritage Centre, volume 5028 file 7.

72. *Lehrbuch der Geburtsh*ülfe *für die preussischen Hebammen*, Prussia: Ministerium der Geislichen, Unterrichts – und Medizinal-Angelegenheiten, p. 1878.

73. Burton, pp. 80-81.

74. *Ibid.*, 78-87.

75. Mitchinson, *Childbirth in Canada*, pp. 304-305.

76. Bergen, Mennonite Heritage Centre, volume 5028 file 7.

77. Warsh, p. 213.

78. Werner, p. 6.

79. *Ibid*.

80. "The Legislature", *Daily Nor'Wester*, 5 April 1898. www.manitobia.ca accessed 25 January 2012.

81. Borst, p. 11.

82. Connor, p. 117.

83. Elizabeth Krahn (born 1953) had her second child at home with the help of a midwife, and Evelyn Rempel Petkau had her third child while living in Altona, at home in 1986. Martens, pp. 40, 52.

84. http://www.cmrc-ccosf.ca/node/19, accessed 13 March 2012.

85. Disease translations provided by Glenn R. Klassen.

86. Email from Bruce Wiebe to author, 25 August 2011.

Right of Way to Back Lane:
The Strange Life of Scotland Avenue

by Laura Lamont
Winnipeg, Manitoba

In his 2007 film *My Winnipeg*, Guy Maddin showed the viewer Lorette Avenue, describing it as "the hermaphrodite street. It's half front street, half back lane."[1] For on the north side of Lorette, every house faces south; however, on those narrow lots between Lorette to the north and Scotland Avenue to the south, the frontage flips back and forth, some houses facing Lorette and some facing Scotland. The filmmaker's collection of Winnipeg's real and imagined oddities does not account for why Lorette is this way; yet despite Maddin's words, Lorette is relatively normal. It's Scotland that's confused. It has undergone a much different evolution, tracing its existence from a railway right-of-way running from Pembina Highway to Cambridge Street, to a mishmash of houses, garages and a few businesses on the few blocks it now spans. This progression, from bordering a railroad on the prairie to suburb, came about as a result of the post-Second World War growth in Winnipeg's economy and population.

Scotland Avenue's story begins during an earlier time of expansion: the railway boom of the early 1900s. With the backing of Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier's government, in 1903 the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (GTPR) began planning a railroad that would run from Winnipeg to the Pacific coast as an adjunct to its eastern line to Moncton.[2] The east-west line went through the neighbourhood of Fort Rouge along what was then called Woodward Avenue, with Scotland as the right-of-way. By May of 1908, it was possible to travel from Winnipeg as far west as Saskatoon, and trains were running regularly between Winnipeg and Edmonton two years later. Just south of the GTPR's line, the Canadian Northern Railway's tracks looped out of the Fort Rouge yards which ran along the Red River, and crossed Pembina Highway to run west out towards Portage la Prairie (see Map 1).

The GTPR succeeded in building its line from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert, BC but, by 1915, both the GTPR and Canadian Northern were struggling financially. The GTPR's parent company, the Grand Trunk Railway, could no longer afford to operate the Moncton-Winnipeg line it

G. Goldsborough

Front and back yards. In a curiousity featured in the 2007 film *My Winnipeg*, the house at right faces south onto Scotland Avenue while its neighbours face north onto Lorette Avenue.

had leased from the Canadian government, while Canadian Northern was on the verge of bankruptcy.[3] In August 1917, the government nationalized Canadian Northern and the subsequent Grand Trunk Acquisition Act brought the GTPR and Canadian Northern into the federal fold in 1923 to form the Canadian National Railway (CNR). From then on, CNR operated the GTPR line as its Harte subdivision and the former Canadian Northern line as its Gladstone subdivision. Later, after years of economic depression and war, the need for two lines would be re-examined and internal forces would necessitate consolidation.[4]

Metropolitan Winnipeg's census data echoed the economic times. Data from 1921 show the population of metropolitan Winnipeg as 229,212, almost 60% more than in 1911. The following decade saw that growth slow considerably, and between 1931 and 1941 there was very little change in the population: a mere 2.4%. By 1951, however, the population had risen 17.2% and that growth accelerated through 1961. The city recorded a head count of 475,989 in that census year, 34.4% more than ten years before.[5] These people needed a place to live.

A decade and a half of depression and war had left much of Winnipeg's urban landscape drab and dreary, and the city in 1945 looked not greatly different from in 1914, only much more worn.... Only 2303 dwelling units had been constructed in the five years to 1943, while 13,429 couples had married.... In the half-decade after the war, metropolitan Winnipeg experienced a higher per capita

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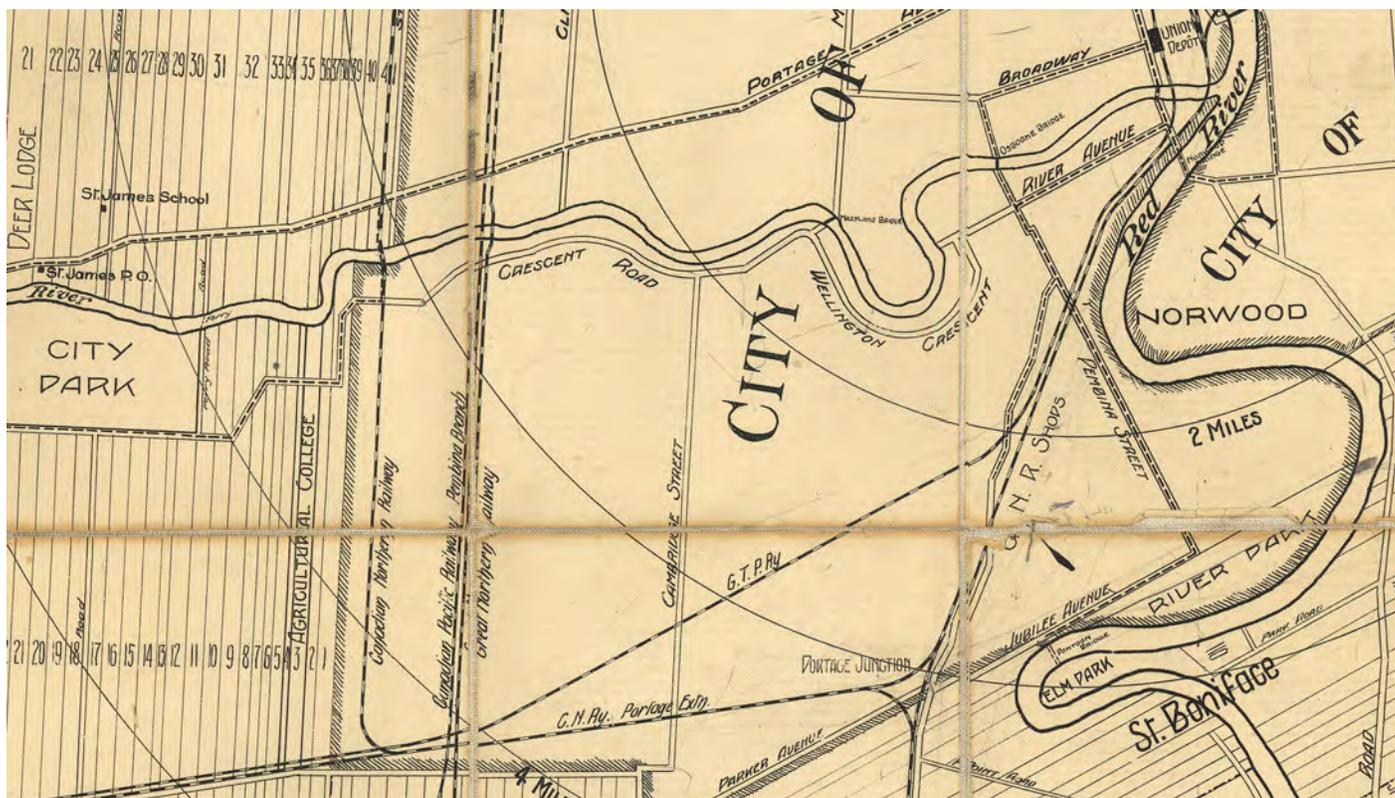
McPhillips' Outline Map of Winnipeg & Vicinity, Manitoba. Winnipeg: [R. C. McPhillips], 1909. University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections.

Map 1. A portion of a 1909 Winnipeg street map includes the railways that criss-crossed the city, including the Grand Trunk Pacific and Great Northern railways that passed by the Union Station at the upper, right corner of this view, then headed southwest, passing through what is now Fort Rouge but was then largely undeveloped land populated by squatters.

rate of new house construction than any other major Canadian city, and the number of households increased from approximately 70,000 to 90,000."[6]

Winnipeg's Metropolitan Planning Committee took a serious look at the city's present needs and potential growth and released a series of maps in 1946 that made clear that the committee targeted the area west of Guelph Street and south of Corydon Avenue for new housing (see Map 2). CNR's separate, duplicate lines were therefore problematic—unless the railway could be persuaded to give one up. Even if CNR viewed the Harte spur as redundant, the railway had the right to keep the land south of Scotland Avenue unused whether or not there was a track on it;[7] in any case, CNR Gladstone would need to be modified to carry the increased rail traffic.[8]

A difficulty which could not easily be charted was what to do about the residents of Rooster Town, a collection of shanties that lay between CNR's two tracks. While early maps show this area as already divided into the streets and blocks that have since been built, it was in fact undeveloped: those carefully laid-out rectangles were the speculative dreams of city officials and cartographers. If they had gone to the last streetcar stop at Corydon and Wilton, they would have stepped into bush to the south. Until the 1950s, the prairie was still wild enough that "[i]f you joined Cubs or Brownies your leader could take your group into the prairie to learn safe fire-making and bush survival, or to

identify plants and animals … all sorts of tests out in the prairie."[9] The only water source available to Rooster Town inhabitants was a pump where Grant Avenue now meets Wilton Street, and the various illnesses consequent on such poor sanitation regularly afflicted the area's children.[10] Over on the far side of the southern set of tracks, close to McGillivray Boulevard, was Tin Town, another shanty town in what are now called the Parker wetlands.[11]

By comparison with the railway, Rooster Town residents were cheap to deal with; the last families were paid off in cash in 1959 by the city, between $50 and $75 each.[12] With CNR, however, the Winnipeg city planners had to negotiate not only the purchase price of the land, but make the deal attractive enough to the railway to compensate it for moving a line. By 1955, it had succeeded although from 1953 to 1954 there were conflicting reports in the *Winnipeg Free Press* regarding the status of any agreement between the city and CNR.[13] A pressing point for the city was that if the Harte subdivision remained in place from Pembina Highway to Borebank Street, the city would have about 30 authorized level crossings to build or maintain.[14] With only the Gladstone line in place, the only remaining crossing would be at Waverley Street.

Once the Harte line was gone, the Planning Committee's original intention was to set up Scotland Avenue as the long-desired main thoroughfare joining Cambridge to Pembina and leading to the new Midtown Bridge.[15] There

Going for water. In December 1951, children from a Rooster Town family walked three-quarters of a mile from their squalid shack to fill a can with potable water.

would be a small jog at Cambridge to meet Grant Avenue, which at that time ran west from Cambridge to end at a small park at Kenaston. This new thoroughfare would move traffic more easily from the south River Heights and Charleswood suburbs, the latter growing rapidly due in part to the development of a Veterans' Land Act project,[16] to the downtown. In 1954, that was still the plan.[17] Scotland had several businesses located on it, including a Red River Grain Company elevator, a Winnipeg Supply outlet, a trailer vendor, two grocery stores, and a Winnipeg Hydro substation at Stafford Street, as well as many houses which fronted sometimes north, sometimes south.[18] However, by 1957 the emphasis had changed to extending Grant Avenue.[19]

What happened to change those plans? The developers, Arle Realty, wanted their development to span the right-of-way[20] and had already waited until the tracks had been removed to give their new shopping plaza, Grant Park, better access.[21] A clue comes from Basil Rotoff: "The City of Winnipeg had acquired the property, but subsequently failed to exercise any controls and sold off the land piecemeal to the developers as they came along."[22] The city, unsurprisingly, wanted to recoup the $350,000 cost of the land purchase from CNR and hoped to get $500,000 for it.[23] The proposed developments were Arle Realty's $10-million
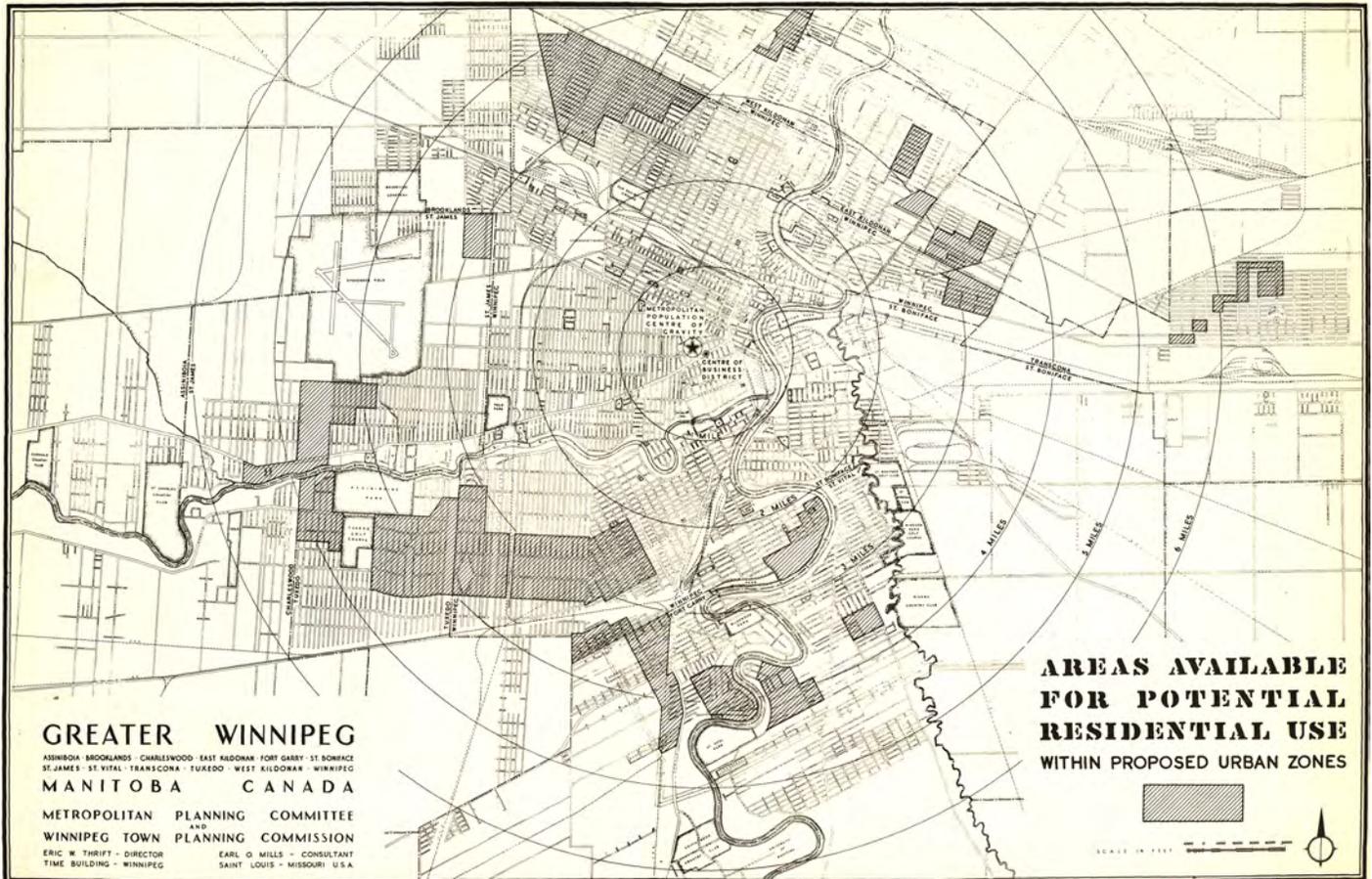
Map 2. A 1948 Winnipeg map identified areas for potential residential development, including the southwest part of Fort Rouge.
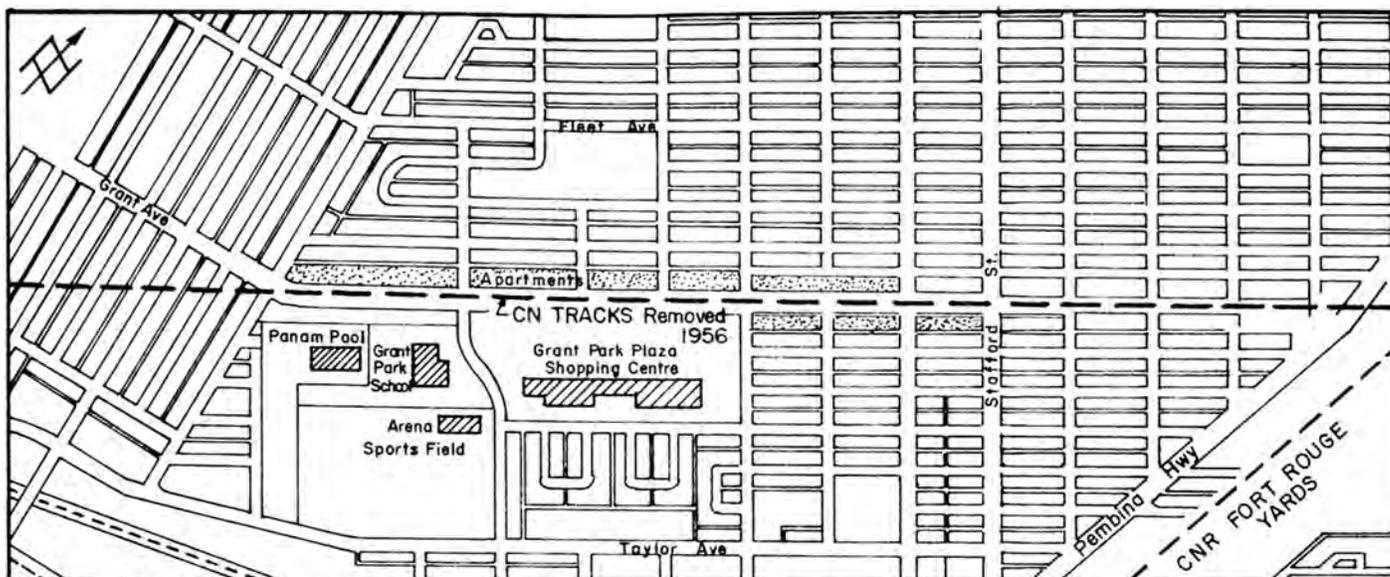
Map 3. Grant Avenue in the southwest part of Fort Rouge follows a former Canadian National Railway line, removed in 1956.

shopping centre and $3-million worth of housing, including 400 houses and 30 apartment blocks, as well as service lanes on both sides of Grant Avenue.[24] Indeed, the first building to go up on Grant Avenue between Cambridge and Pembina was an apartment block in 1955. It was followed by many more; other new construction included Grant Park High School in 1959 to accommodate the new area residents' children, as well as new churches such as the Ukrainian Catholic Church at the corner of Grant and Harrow Street in 1962.[25] The new buildings sprouting along Grant quickly overshadowed Scotland, as can be seen on Rotoff's rendering from 1974 (see Map 3).

While Scotland still touches Pembina in the east, on street maps it now terminates at Wilton Street to the west. The grain elevator is long gone, and for much of its length Scotland could be mistaken for a back lane. Within the city, the Harte line is mostly forgotten, with the exception of a length of the Trans Canada Trail in Charleswood named for it. After the removal of the Harte railway subdivision in Fort Rouge, Winnipeg gained important room for development in the city's southwest but Scotland Avenue lost its history. ✿

Notes

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2. A. W. Currie, *The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957, p. 396.
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19. *WFP*, 17 April 1957, page 1.
20. *WFP*, 21 May 1955, page 3.
21. *WFP*, 26 May 1956, page 38.
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Victoria Beach and the Cottage Experience: Early Years and Beyond

by Sheila Grover and Greg Thomas
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This article is from the recently published book 100 Summers on Lake Winnipeg: A Resort History of Victoria Beach *by Greg Thomas and Sheila Grover. In describing the history of the cottage experience at "VB," the article looks at the layout of the original cottage lot grid, early cottage architecture and furnishings, as well as daily life and train travel to and from the lake. It is part of a larger popular history which traces the resort history of Victoria Beach from its inception to the present day. To purchase copies of* 100 Summers, *visit their website at www.vbhistory.ca. Eds.*

For some cottage dwellers in the planned community of Victoria Beach the experience may not have been altogether positive. The original cottages are just that: modest, boxy and often old-fashioned, if not actually primitive. They are situated on lots 75 feet wide (23 metres) packed into busy avenues that churn with kids and adults, bikes and dogs. Crows wake you early in the morning. It's so dark at night that you can't see your hand in front of your face. You are not allowed to drive your car in the summer months. There are bats. There are skunks. Did we mention the bugs? The poison ivy?

But for those who share the founders' vision, it is a little slice of heaven. Situated along the shores of Manitoba's Lake Winnipeg, with white sand beaches, sparkling water and an infinite horizon, the summer resort is a leafy peninsula in an ancient boreal forest brimming with ecological diversity. Intense development of cottage lots along the winding lanes has created a community where socializing is made easy. Engaging in community life is as simple as choosing an ice cream cone at the Moonlight Inn, buying fresh bread at the bakery, and groceries at the general store. It means participating in kids' games, bridge or yoga, playing golf or tennis, or simply dangling a fishing line over the pier—these are experiences we value. We appreciate the interaction with nature because it isn't urban, it's natural. It may not always turn out perfectly, as

Auld family

Auld cottage and yard at Victoria Beach, 1925.

Donaldas ...

... a quirky name for quirky little structures common in the early years of VB. Half-tent, half shed, they owed their origin to the military for field use. Much more comfortable than camping in a traditional tent, donaldas measured approximately 10 x 10 feet. They featured roofs of canvas and walls of beaverboard and screen, with 2 x 2 segmented framing over a raised wooden platform. They served new property owners for a summer or two before they could erect their permanent cottage. Unable to withstand a winter snow load, donaldas had to be collapsed in the fall but might later be refitted as bunkhouses. A few were later adapted with solid wood walls and have survived to the present.

anyone with road rash from a night-time bike crash can tell you, but it's how we like it, if only for a precious few days or weeks in the summer.

Early Years

The original cottage development, which is now defined by the restricted area where cars are not allowed in summer, evolved from a campsite on Pier Point and followed the shoreline north. As surveyed within the Victoria Beach Company plans, the cottage area formed a grid of eight avenues crisscrossed by three (later four) roads leading to beaches of the same name: Arthur, Patricia, King Edward and later, Alexandra, to continue the royal lineage. Connaught Beach was a later addition. This grid was laid over a horseshoe-shaped land form mainly looking west across the expanse of Lake Winnipeg. The area developed incrementally in response to the demand for cottage lots. Early on, Arthur Road was the primary axis to Sunset Boulevard. Running east-west, this road was the link from the permanent settlement to the east, right down to

the shore at its western terminus. Arthur Road continued beyond 8th Avenue as a path running through thick forest to the local school and beyond to the year-round properties. It broadened to a wagon trail, then later a road and is now the final approach of Highway 59 and the entrance to the vehicle parking lot. Arthur Road crosses 8th Avenue, which runs due north and is a sectional boundary in the original purchase of the Company from the Crown.[1]

Roads were cleared from the dense forest on an 'as need' basis. If you examine the original plan, it appears that the avenues run straight on the grid but this is not the case. Winding roads were an integral part of the original vision of a picturesque country village. The roads were cut to accommodate heavy glacial erratic boulders (which can be seen on any avenue) and large clumps of trees to form gently wandering routes with as little loss of vegetation as possible. Local labourers did the heavy work, using hand tools and wagons pulled by horses. It was strenuous employment, best done by strong young men employed throughout the season under the direction of the Company. The roads themselves were pure sand by the time the crews were finished, and in dry periods they cast up a great deal of dust.

There were many wagons making deliveries in the beach during the 1920s, as well as Reeve Sprague's own Model T Ford. To reduce the spread of dust, and to keep people safe, especially children, 'inside paths' were cut through the bush within the road allowances which had wisely been set aside along each block. The forest has reclaimed many of these paths, but vestiges remain in secret places between cottages. These small paths, and other informal trails developed by cottagers, acted as shortcuts to the water pumps and beaches. They stitch the community together and are well known to locals as 'skunk paths' or 'witchy paths'.

Roads were oriented to the lake to facilitate access to the beaches and lake views. In the earliest years of development (1916 to the early 1920s) lots along Sunset, First Avenue and Arthur Road were acquired and cottages constructed. This was followed by the opening of the other avenues and, where they intersected with Sunset, one can still find some of the oldest cottages. Within the practical constraints of clearing the roads, individual lots were made available as new owners identified their choice of lot on the Company's map, at a price point they were willing to pay. Hop scotching between the lots acquired,

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Cottage living room, 1940s.

Beech family

the Company owned extensive properties under the names of their brokers.

Once a lot was purchased, its new owners were allowed to camp there for a season. A few hauled in railway boxcars, while others erected half-tents with canvas walls over a raised platform, the iconic 'donaldas'. This allowed the owners to arrange for the permanent cottage construction while enjoying their new summer property. Lots identified for new construction had to be cleared of enough trees, stumps and rocks for a site to build on, and the building footprint levelled. For the first three decades, the Victoria Beach Company controlled both the supply chain of building materials and the contracting of most cottage construction, which explains the similar look in many of the older cottages. Initially, most cottages were built of rounded logs, either tamarack or spruce, locally sourced and somewhat resistant to insect bores. Fortunately, many of these old beauties remain, scattered throughout the restricted area and sometimes disguised with a frame addition built over and around the log portion.

The next cottage genre to emerge was frame construction, under a hipped roof, and commonly made of B.C. fir brought by rail to the Company's lumber yard near the railway station. This wood was economical, sturdy and highly adaptable. Frame cottages were constructed over a post-on-pad system well-suited to sandy soils and relatively easy to level if the cottage sags in one direction or another. Early cottages were generally small, simple in layout, often incorporating whimsical details and designed to accommodate future expansion. Shiplap exterior siding, fir partitions, three-inch fir flooring either painted or covered in 'battleship linoleum', stone or brick fireplaces and chimneys, and expansive casement windows, were typical design elements. A fancy entrance with stone steps was considered a design upgrade. Work was done by local crews clad in overalls who soldiered on without electric tools. Each rafter was sawn on the spot, each wall and fireplace built by hand; each outhouse dug deep using only a shovel.

Early Cottage Construction and Use

Victoria Beach benefitted from the expertise of two main builders with their supporting crews. First on the scene was James Paulson, who arrived from Balsam Bay before the resort development took hold. Besides clearing the first roads, Paulson worked with contracted surveyors to lay out the cottage lots. James Paulson later turned over his business to nephew Oscar Paulson and Alex Jonsson, who both carried on building successfully for many decades. Another Company contractor in the mid-1920s forward was Albert Larson, a carpenter raised in Sweden where wood-working was elevated to a high level of craftsmanship. After building grain elevators as a young man, Larson worked on many cottages in the beach, lived on 8th Ave., raised his family here and participated fully in the local community. Following his death in 1979, he was buried in the VB cemetery.[2] Anyone fortunate enough to own an old cottage from these master builders can consider themselves lucky.

Several other builders also worked in the resort, but on a more limited basis. Even before the railway stopped running in 1962, the Company released its tight grip on real estate sales and rentals, as well as the supply of building materials. The construction business had developed new methods and materials resulting in a greater variation in cottage design in the post-war period. From the late 1950s onward, cottages remain almost exclusively wood frame construction but tended to be larger with features such as decks, bigger kitchens, living rooms and even bathrooms. Pre-fab units and factory-made components sped up building while keeping costs for recreational property accessible for many people. Decks and screened verandas came into common usage during this time.

Besides minimum lot dimensions, there were requirements defining a 30-foot setback from the road and 10 feet from the sidelines and rear of each lot. There was also a minimum standard of design, and latrines prescribed for each new cottage construction.[3] No guest houses were allowed nor any commercial structures, and only one single-family dwelling per lot permitted, although bunkhouses were tolerated as overflow sleeping quarters. Any outbuildings must be behind the cottage. National fire

Outhouse / biffy / backhouse / outside closet

In 1927, provincial standards suggested 'outside closets' should be "constructed in a workmanlike manner, should be fly-proof and placed at the far end of lots. They are not to be nearer than 20 feet from any dwelling or other occupied buildings. The doors must be self-closing and the sills and bases should be well banked with earth to prevent flies and insects from getting into the closets. The seats should be provided with self-closing covers."

VB News, 18 June 1927

Meeting the train at the Victoria Beach station, 1925.

Auld family

codes regulated the installation of wood stoves as well as the construction of fireplaces to safety standards which were overseen by the Municipality's building inspector from 1919 forward. Roofs were likewise constructed to exacting specifications for snow load support. These regulations, placed as caveats on property titles by the Victoria Beach Company, were designed for the protection of the community as well as to insure an acceptable standard of building construction. The Municipality generally adhered to building codes as they were refined and upgraded since the early 1920s until formal municipal planning replaced them in the 1960s, and this has served the community well.

In the 1920s, lots could be purchased for $250 in many avenues in the beach. A simple cottage might set a family back upwards of another $300 to $500. While these prices seem laughable today, they were not in those days. Banks had little interest in providing mortgages for summer residences but the Company was usually able to offer building loans. For the cottage-owners themselves, recreational property was a major investment that required careful saving. Cottages were frequently rented out to offset the cost, arranged through the Victoria Beach Company's office at 317 Portage Avenue in Winnipeg or in the Company's office at the beach.

In the first four decades of resort development, the Victoria Beach Company's control of the supply chain even impacted the choice of paints available to cottage owners. Colour options of the durable lead paints reflected availability, or perhaps the rural roots of the founders, where farm colours in primary shades could brighten a yard over dreary winter months, or help to identify the barn or outbuildings in poor weather. Other cottages wore the brooding industrial maroon of the CNR line, mute testament to their owners' place of employment. Once cottager owners had access to a broader palette, many responded with variations of earthy shades in colours that blend with the natural environment, while others kicked it up with saturated hues that pop in the sunshine and contrast with the verdant surroundings.

Cottages consisted of three distinct zones: a kitchen/eating area with a cook stove, a living area and sleeping quarters. A screened veranda was a coveted luxury, perhaps added later, and brought the outdoors in, minus the mosquitoes. Bear in mind that because people usually had only two weeks vacation and the concept of recreational property was new, seasonal cottages were occupied by owners only a limited number of days each year. As most cottage residents lived quite simply, cottages were modest in scale and features. Early cottages were fitted out with basic furnishings, possibly purchased new or

recycled from their city homes. A certain raffish ambience was appreciated and possibly even cultivated. Mismatched crockery, diminutive metal beds, dark, lumpy furniture and the ubiquitous 'Toronto couch' were the norm but no one thought much about it. Woe betide any guest who sniffed at the decrepit furnishings because traditions set in very early and cottage owners were loath to change.

If there is one style of furniture that could be said to typify Victoria Beach early on, it would be the sturdy oak Craftsman style, which was readily found in the Eaton's catalogue for the first decades of the cottage boom. White wicker as well captured the breezy (and suggestively British) style of a summer home and was both economical to purchase and inexpensive to ship. Open shelving on built-in cupboards was common, allowing the artistic arrangement of a few nice pieces. Paintings were modest in scale and often depicted pastoral scenes or references to First Nations life in hopelessly romanticized settings. The Union Jack often fluttered in regatta flags or was tacked to the wall, this in the days before there was a Canadian flag. Aladdin lamps, fuelled by kerosene, perched on small ledges and side tables. Brass hammered plates, horse harness tack and other relics from rural days past were popular. Fireplace tools had to be functional and sturdy and were usually jammed into woodboxes by the stove or fireplace. Hooks or even nails pounded into the wall stood in for storing clothing in lieu of full closets. Metal hangers responded to the marine micro-climate by rusting and staining textiles left on too long.

As cottages were occupied almost exclusively in the summer months, cottage windows opened wide, integrating structure with landscape and ushering in the cooling breezes. Windows were fitted with good quality screening against the many insects. In response to the warm weather, interior partitions stopped short of the ceiling to promote air flow and, effectively eliminate

Rob McInnes

A novelty postcard illustrated the young and old who lived, worked, and played at Victoria Beach through the years.

privacy. Cooking was done on the wood stove, which had to be fired up frequently even on the hottest days. Stoves and fireplaces also provided welcome warmth when the weather turned. A wood pile could be found in the rear of every property. Some cottages had cold-storage pits under the kitchen or out the back door, but most cottagers relied on regular ice delivery, hauled in from the wagon or truck with giant tongs, to keep their iceboxes cool enough to preserve perishable food.

Water reached the cottages in a number of ways. Initially people had to haul it from the lake in pails. As early as 1920 the Municipality built a pumphouse at the foot of 8th Avenue to draw water from the lake.[4] Lightly treated, this water flowed through a network of pipes to public taps, to be used as wash water. Deep cisterns, found in several locations throughout the beach, were filled with drinking water that individuals pumped to the surface and into the pail. Eventually, water was piped to individual properties and hooked up for a fee plus an annual rate. Hauling pails of water from public pumps was a job for kids when possible, but meeting neighbours at the pump for a chat was also a welcome event. Many cottages also had eavestroughs


What's on your window ledge?

bones of fish or birds and small mammals
feathers of all colours
shells
pretty stones
sea glass
cans of tennis balls
lucky stones with holes
paperbacks with curling covers
golf balls (but not for long)
pinecones
tin of OFF!
tiny bird's nests
dead bugs, especially moths and fishflies
souvenirs from trips
cold beer
sunglasses

to capture water from the roof into a big galvanised metal rain barrel located at the rear of the cottage. A line and tap ran this water into the cottage. While not fit to drink, stored rainwater was used to wash clothing and dishes and was especially wonderful for washing one's hair. Outhouses, often called biffies, provided sanitation for all but a tiny number of cottages where a bathroom was installed.

Laundry, particularly for those with babies in diapers, remained an onerous task. A few cottages had hand-cranked wash tubs in the early days, later followed by an array of decrepit Maytag ringers featuring heavy rubber rollers to trap fingers. For those who could afford it, there was the Rumford Laundry Service available well into the 1940s, with local pick-up and delivery. Quinton Cleaners and Launderers, locally owned by the Quinton family, also advertised their services in the city. Most families, usually women, heated water in a reservoir or big pot on the wood stove and used the kitchen sink to hand wash the laundry. Swimming remained the best way to keep clean. Outdoor showers, much coveted in Victoria Beach, continue the joyous tradition of bathing in the great outdoors.

Many of the best services came right to the door. Pedlars sold a healthy variety of local products such as fresh berries, vegetables and pickerel fillets. Crescent Creamery brought milk products to the cottages early each morning. Deliveries were made in horse-drawn wagons, a delight for city children who were allowed to climb aboard for the
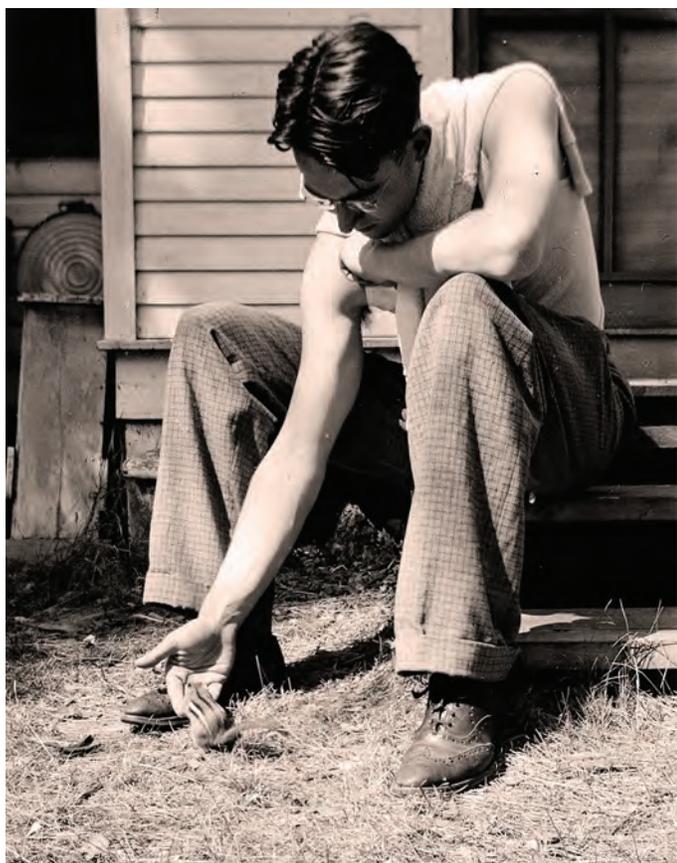
Murray Auld feeding a chipmunk, 1941.

Auld family

Stone Fireplaces

Many VB cottages feature beautiful stone fireplaces. In new construction, the fireplace would be built first to anchor the cottage erected around it. Skilfully constructed from weathered rocks gathered on the beach, the fireplaces are functional time machines as the softly-rounded rocks had long tumbled in sand and ice in the lake. The specific sources of the fireplace rocks were proprietary and the stone masons seem to have toiled anonymously during the cottage contractors' formative years. In the post-war period, John Ateah specialized in stone fireplaces crafted with great skill and an artistic sense of colour and placement.

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trip along their own block. Wood and ice delivery were the domain of the older teens, working for the Andersons and Ateahs.

With all the dray services, there were many horses within the district, and a good number of cows as well to provide milk for the local families. The livestock needed pasture and stabling, especially in summer when they were working hard. Land at the foot of Bayview could be counted on as pasture most years, behind makeshift fencing, with children collecting their own cows for milking each morning and evening. The marsh immediately south of here dried out so much in the 1930s drought that all the land from what is now Pelican Point to the rail line became a vast meadow for grazing the livestock. In the shoulder seasons, livestock was often left to roam, to find their favourite areas, which was often on the old RCAF field.

While fire is a critical threat to any forested community dominated by a building stock of wood, for most of the year cottages slumbered within a closed loop of security. From cottage closing, as early as September when the trains went to a reduced schedule, until opening in May or June, there was little threat to the buildings. The roads were not plowed in winter and the trains were infrequent. There were neither electrical lines to catch fire nor water lines to freeze and flood. Break-and-enters out of season were rare. While storms can cause trees to crash through a roof or flatten an outbuilding, the results would likely be localized and would not cause a fire. That is not to say that cottages were immune to natural forces such as lightning, or human mishaps related to smoking or overheated stoves.

As mice try their utmost to gain entrance to cottages in the fall, the discovery of their droppings or mouse damage in the spring is common. Birds and squirrels occasionally descend open chimneys and cannot retreat, which can wreak havoc over a winter. One family opened up their cottage one winter day, surprising a pine marten that had found a comfy spot on the top bunk where it was dining on soda crackers. When the humans suddenly appeared,

the marten slithered up an interior wall and beat a hasty retreat. Skunks are prone to dig nests for their litters under cottages and bears are especially fond of barbeques and garbage bags, or pet dishes innocently left on a deck. Wasps may nest under eaves and carpenter ants find the nice, dry cottage wood irresistible. The closer a cottage is to the lake, the denser the infestation on its screens by fishflies, which arrive every July all in a rush. Cottage dwellers may feel they walk a line between communing with nature and being overwhelmed by it.

Land around the lake peninsula undulates gently, depositing soil here and there over the sandy loam and generating a diverse array of trees and bush that changes from block to block. After clearing vegetation for construction, cottagers later set about to shape their own landscape. Letting a bit of sunshine into the lot was understandably a priority. As roaming cattle and horses remained an issue for many years, those who put in gardens often protected them with fences and gates, as anyone coming from a farm would do. Trees and bushes were isolated and pruned into borders and features, paths and flower beds were developed and architectural elements such as stone birdbaths, pergolas and woodsheds erected. Courts for playing croquet and badminton may eventually be installed, or a basketball hoop erected. The larger glacial boulders tended to stay where they were while growing luxurious coats of lichen and moss. Hammocks, swung between trees, symbolized a leisure that contrasted starkly with city life.

Cottage Life

Travelling to the beach on the train had its advantages. You took your belongings by suitcase or trunk, or in a big roll secured with rope, to Winnipeg's Union Station. While baggage could be brought and stowed in advance, passengers arrived to meet the scheduled departure in a streetcar, taxi or automobile. The station bustled with activity as trains arrived and departed, carrying excited passengers of all ages. The fare to the beach was set for a round-trip, but canny passengers could sell their return 'stub' if there was a willing buyer on the other end. While relaxing to a point, the ride north took place in the oldest rolling stock that the CNR owned: 'rattlers' that bumbled along at low speeds behind huffing coal-burning steam engines, with seats in the railway's sombre maroon upholstery that carried a particular cachet from ages past.

The train's first stop was Transcona to collect railway families who travelled on passes. After crossing the Red River, it chugged along to East Selkirk, Libau and Scanterbury[5] (with stops as needed) before arriving at Grand Marais and Grand Beach, where some of the cars were side-tracked. Following possible stops at Belair, Hillside and Albert Beach, the train moved slowly along the unstable road bed through the marsh, and arrived, bell clanging, in the Victoria Beach station up to about five hours after departure. 'Through trains' were much preferred in the summer months as they reduced travel time to about

Beech family kitchen with wood-burning stove, 1940s.

two and a half hours. 'Newsies' sold papers, candy and cigarettes in the coaches and on the platform. Cottager Dr. James Mitchell recalls the train ride as great fun for children, but adds one sobering memory. Kids would poke their heads out the windows, enjoying the breeze until a hot coal cinder from the steam engine blasted them in the face.[6]

Large baggage carts jostled on the platform to unload the luggage and commercial supplies. Local transfer services awaited the carts adjacent to the platform in their wagons and later, their trucks. Meanwhile the engineer would oil parts of the steam engine, and refill its water tanks from the wooden tower up the track. Then, if all went well and the engineer was in a good mood, children were allowed in the passenger cars. The train backed into the 'Y' siding in the bush past Bayview to turn around for the return journey. Excited kids were theoretically obliged to sit properly on the seats and could drink water from white cone-shaped paper cups. This was the northern terminus of the CNR line; its 'End of Track' sign was anchored in a pile of cinders under the present-day spruce tree near the play structure on the Village Green.

The train schedule regulated the daily rhythm of life at the beach. The VB railway station, painted white with green trim, and built to a CNR standard plan, was identical to the one in Grand Beach. It featured a passenger waiting room and a large baggage handling area, all beneath broad eaves. The station master's rooms on the second floor included a gable window that offered a clear view of the track. A pyramidal roof covered the station and gave it a dynamic, welcoming appearance. The broad wooden platform was the gathering place where guests and family members arrived and departed, where plans were made and services arranged for. Immediately across from the platform and its lovely flower garden were the stores and the commercial services. It was here that one could arrange for wood or ice delivery, have an ice-cream cone, pick up groceries, meat and bakery goods, order wood or shingles and arrange for it all to be delivered. Friday night's Daddy

Special train turned into Sunday night's sad farewell, at least for the working man.

During the summer months, dawn comes early, and the birdsong begins in earnest. 'Sleeping in' may not have been so much a foreign concept as an impractical reality in a small cottage with half-walls. If morning coffee or toast was to accompany breakfast, the stove had to be lit. Hauling water for dishes and laundry, restocking the wood pile, sweeping out the sand and rinsing the straw from the ice block delivered to the back door were routine jobs. While meal preparation, getting groceries and mail, cottage maintenance and repair, chopping and piling wood could fill a cottager's morning or be shared among assorted family members, there was usually plenty of time for leisure as well. Adults may garden or pick berries, take a canoe out on the water, explore, read or pursue hobbies. Kids often had many playmates and a range of options for activities. The beach itself was a great gathering place for young and old, as it provided shared space for visiting, sunbathing, playing, swimming and beachcombing. As cottagers settled into their summer retreat, it was hoped that their skin bronzed, their feet toughened, their legs strengthened and their minds relaxed.

First generation cottage development in Victoria Beach took place during Manitoba's years of liquor Prohibition from 1916 to 1923.[7] Definitely the resort investors never expressed any predilection for a beer parlour or a bar within the beach. While some of the summer population would be earnest teetotallers, alcohol was part of many cottagers' social interaction. 'Happy hour' became a popular event possibly after returning dry from an afternoon swim or a round of golf.

While weekday dinners were mostly simple affairs, the weekend might feature

a roast from Kilpatrick's Butcher Shop. A useful array of tinned foods from the local grocery stocked kitchen cupboards. Cooked food was prepared on the stove, which required someone, usually the woman, to come up from the beach to light it, stoke it to the right temperature, prepare and put on the meal. Barbeques did not make an appearance until the 1960s although some fire pits did exist. When the dishes were done and the stove burned down, it was time to light the kerosene lamps, from fuel purchased at the grocery or lumber yard. Aladdin lamps came in a variety of styles using combustible fuel and textile wicks. They cast a beautiful golden glow but it was a struggle to read by them. The weekly cleaning of soot from their glass chimneys was a kid's job. Evenings were 'grown-up time' on the veranda, when older people and parents could kick back, visit and perhaps have a game of Scrabble, a singsong or a game of cards.

Taking tea with one's friends remained a pleasurable pastime for many, but 'tea' could translate into a cold beer, a sandwich on the lawn or even a gin and tonic. Because access to a summer place was much less common, people staying in cottages were often generous in sharing lake time with city friends and extended family. This was especially true during the war years when cottagers opened their places to servicemen on brief furloughs and to the families of troops serving overseas. Perhaps it was easier to have guests come for a stay by train (this, arranged by post or phone calls within the city). Perhaps life was kept more simple and expectations more modest.

One young girl and her two sisters were each allowed three or four friends to stay in the cottage for 'their week' to share in a summer holiday with children who would not otherwise get out of the city.[8] Tents on the lawn could accommodate overflow and provide young children with their first camping experience. Bunkhouses were the domain of teens; sneaking out at night signalled a passage into one's teenage years. Beach friendships tended to be firm and intense while beach romances sometimes evolved into beach marriages. Beach rivalries, especially with local teens, could be volatile and sometimes violent. Where teens may rough it up in the Clubhouse yard after the dances, adults entered pitched battles on the baseball diamond on Sunday nights, locals against summer residents, after the train had departed.[9]

Rainy days may refresh a dusty summer but too many in a row drove parents and kids to distraction. Books, puzzles, hobbies, crafts, games, playing instruments, building forts and playing cards wiled away many hours

Victoria Beach Man.

Mark Strople

Postcard of the Patricia Beach slide, 1920s.

Ice

Before electric refrigerators, cottagers kept perishable food cool with ice. Kitchen iceboxes held ice within enamel compartments lined with sheets of zinc. As the ice melted through the day, it dripped into a pan underneath that needed to be emptied frequently.

Harvesting ice was a dangerous and labour intensive business undertaken by local men during the winter. Sam Ateah's memoirs recall sawing huge blocks of ice from the lake, hauling them on sleighs, and storing the ice packed in sawdust topped with straw in the ice house at the foot of 8th Avenue, or at the Ateah icehouse at the northeast corner of the Ateah quarter-section. Sam and his helpers (teen-age boys) delivered the ice on their daily rounds, for many years on a horse-drawn wagon and later on his truck. Ice deliveries were done in the morning, followed by a sweep-out before picking up cartage from the noon train, and then on to wood (and later propane) deliveries.

By the late 1940s, the Department of Health monitored the storage and handling of ice for public health, forcing one local ice house operator to relocate the ice house farther away from a cattle barn for fear of contamination.

in the years before TV and electronic games. People were more inclined to make their own fun, and some of that was creative, verging on eccentric. Weekend warriors on 4th Ave. strung rope across Alexandra Road for their games of 'caveman tennis'. Local teens formed a glee club, the 'VB-ites', with performances at each other's homes or the Clubhouse. Elaborate ceremonies and plays were staged, with roles for children and pets.

Sunny days provided numerous distractions. Walter Thomas, and later the Trainor's Shamrock Ranch, offered riding horses for hire. Captain Thomas also piloted excursions to Grand Beach or north to Black River on his sloop, the Valtannis. Grey-bearded labrador Trixie and her family hosted annual dog parties where neighbouring dogs had to wear costumes and their excited young humans were treated to popsicles and cookies. 'Golf ball runs' involved building serpentine routes with drawbridges and trapdoors down the shoreline banks. Bird-watching and star-gazing seemed to happen spontaneously. Exploring on foot or perhaps on bikes is as likely today as it was in summers past. Bonfires on the beach were popular for late-night gatherings for teens, and skinny dipping just might follow.

Then, when day is done, cottagers young and old find their way to bed and sink into the darkness. When there was little moonlight, and before electric lighting, the district grew extraordinarily dark and devoid of most human noise. Lake breezes ruffle the leaves and stir the waves, in a range of intensity up to almighty winds that sway the treetops and pounding surf that can be heard throughout the peninsula. The birds begin early.

During the railway era, most residents of the resort community were gone by the end of August to pick up their city lives. Kids returned to school and parents, presumably refreshed from their holidays, settled back into their daily lives. Few cottages were used beyond the Labour Day weekend. Closing down the summerhouse became an annual ritual of individual servicing: removing the foodstuffs, securing windows and doors, possibly with shutters, draining any waterline and taps, blocking the chimney and storing the bikes. The wagon or truck was summoned to load the cargo and reluctant cottagers for the journey to the train station to end the season for the 'summer people.' ❧

Notes

1. Section 10 Township 20 Range 7E, Department of the Interior Lands Patent Branch, Fiat for Patent 98997, 31 March 1910.
2. *From the Beaches to the Falls*, John Albert Larson, 1888–1979, p. 397–98.
3. Rural Municipality of Victoria Beach (RMVB), Minutes of Council, By-Law 9, 1919, and 39, 1923.
4. RMVB, Minutes of Council, 1920. Locations for water wells were chosen by a government expert hired by the municipality.
5. See advertisements in the *Manitoba Free Press*, June to September, 1916–1925.
6. James R. Mitchell, "311 First Avenue: Some Personal and Happy Memories of Life at Victoria Beach, 1921 to 1960", a personal memoir.
7. George Siamandas, "Manitoba Bans the Bottle—The 1928 Liquor Act", Time Machine. Siamandas.com.
8. Ella McGregor Carmichael, oral interviews, 2012.
9. George and Dan MacKay and Allison Bloomer, oral interviews, 2012.

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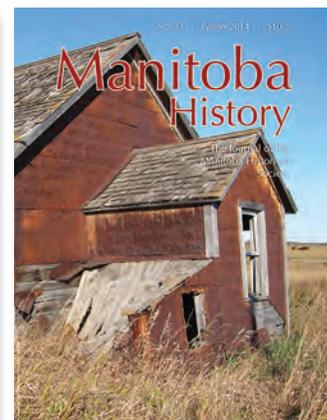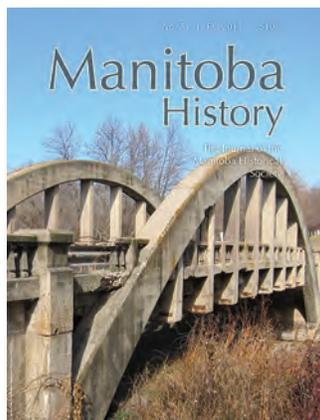
Not All Down Hill From There: The Shoal Lake Aqueduct and the Greater Winnipeg Water District

by David A. Ennis
Winnipeg, Manitoba

This is the second of two articles on the history of the Greater Winnipeg Water District and Shoal Lake as its water source. The first article appeared in Manitoba History *No. 72 (Spring-Summer 2013). Eds.*

The City of Winnipeg, along with the City of St. Boniface and five surrounding municipalities, formed an inter-municipal corporation known as the Greater Winnipeg Water District (GWWD). It was authorized by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature in the first half of 1913. By the end of that year, the partners had made the decision to spend $13,500,000 (probably equivalent to $450,000,000 to today's voter) to build an aqueduct from Shoal Lake near the Manitoba-Ontario border, some 150 kilometres away, to Winnipeg. The project was completed by the end of 1918, and despite Shoal Lake being 90 meters higher than Winnipeg, implementing the decision was "not all down hill from there." The terrain between Shoal Lake and the prairie country 25 kilometres east of Winnipeg was treed, crossed by rivers, and included some 80 kilometres of muskeg or swamp. For the most part, the region was uninhabited and difficult to access. The engineers, administrators, and contractors executed a unique project that is remarkable for its scope and its lasting ability to serve the needs of the City of Winnipeg. In so doing they were confronted with and overcame unique physical and environmental conditions using creative design, testing, and construction processes.

The elements of the Winnipeg Aqueduct, following the direction of water flow, were as follows: a soft-water source at Shoal Lake that required no treatment for potability, colour, or hardness; a 2.4-kilometre dike across a portion of Indian Bay and a 840-metre channel excavated between Indian Bay and Snowshoe Bay to divert the water

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of the Falcon River; an intake structure on the edge of Indian Bay; a gravity-fed, enclosed, concrete conduit that conveys water, primarily in an unconfined channel but with some portions under pressure, from the inlet to the City of Winnipeg's McPhillips Street water reservoir over a distance of 155 kilometres; provision for an equalizing and storage reservoir at Deacon approximately 21 km east of the McPhillips reservoir; crossing the height of land that is the western boundary of the Shoal Lake watershed and going under seven rivers, including the Red River in Winnipeg; and a railway along the full length of the project from Winnipeg to Indian Bay that enabled the initial construction, and is now instrumental to the ongoing operation and maintenance of the system.

We are fortunate that many of the records kept and the photographs taken in the process have survived. It was a significant and high-profile project carried out expeditiously. If the project was to be proposed today the environmental assessment and approval process alone, especially given the number of river crossing, would likely take longer than the time it took to design and build the project in the 1910s.

The Right-of-Way and Routing

The right-of-way selected was generally 300 feet (91 metres) wide with the railway located 40 feet (12 metres) from the south boundary. At the easterly end, which had more construction challenges such as the depth of excavation, the width was increased to 500 feet (152 metres).

The Act of the Legislature establishing the GWWD saw to it that progress on the project would not be stalled by the acquisition of right-of-way. The enabling section reads:

> In no case shall the progress of the works or undertaking of the corporation be hindered, enjoined or delayed in any way, or by any court, on account of any pending arbitration of dispute or disagreement as to damages or value regarding any privilege, water or land entered upon or taken, or proposed to be entered upon or taken, for the purpose of the undertaking authorized by this Act, but the corporation may enter upon, take possession of, hold, use or occupy and enjoy all such land, water and privileges as they are by this

View of a trench bottom before place of the concrete conduit. Although much of the soil volume was excavated by steam-power draglines such as the one seen in the background of this photograph from June 1916, the last few inches had to be removed by hand so the underlying soil was undisturbed.

Act authorized to do for all the purposes of the undertaking pending any arbitration or settlement of any dispute or disagreement as to damages or value aforesaid, subject to giving up possession of the same in case of default of payment as above provided.

The legislation did not vest the GWWD with the right to dictate terms of land acquisition. It still had the obligation to be reasonable in its offers which could be subject to arbitration. However, it did have the opportunity to occupy an owner's land without becoming mired in legal proceedings. One wonders whether the project would ever have been built had such delays prevented the start of major construction until after the beginning of the First World War.

The preliminary routing was established by a 1912–1913 survey and investigation by the Winnipeg City Engineer H. N. Ruttan, "to determine the practicality and cost of procuring a water supply for Winnipeg from Shoal Lake." His 1913 report stated that "the project is not only practicable, but that the conditions are more favourable than expected." The report included for the first time a precise figure for the difference in elevation between Shoal Lake and the McPhillips Reservoir: 293.19 feet (89.42 metres). The final route selection was made in 1914 by the GWWD using survey information collected during the winter of 1913–1914. The GWWD survey parties accomplished 95 miles of precise levelling measurements, 362 miles of transit lines, 1,317 miles of general levelling, and 380 square miles of topography. Anyone who has surveyed during a Manitoba winter with survey instruments of that era will appreciate the ordeal that those surveyors endured. Through that effort, an alignment was established by March 1914 for which over 30% of its length was very close to the average slope of the ground line and with a length that was only 8% greater than the straight-line distance.

Railway and Telephone

Having a railway and the telephone system was fundamental to the implementation of the project. They were both installed by the GWWD before the major construction started and followed the route of the aqueduct. The railway was substantially completed in 1914 so that major construction could proceed in 1915. The telephone line was also built in 1914. The Chief Engineer noted that many sections were built twice, as the line often preceded the railway with the wire being carried on men's backs and strung on trees until poles could be delivered by rail.

The railway system included nine sidings and five water tanks to supply the steam locomotives. The telephone became an invaluable communication tool for the GWWD

staff as it enabled direct contact between the field operations and the head office in Winnipeg. After the completion of the project, the railway became a source of revenue for the GWWD by transporting materials to Winnipeg and servicing the settlements that grew up along the route.

Infrastructure

Shoal Lake is connected to Lake of the Woods. The location on Shoal Lake where the aqueduct begins is on Indian Bay on the lake's western edge. The longer dimension of Indian Bay is east-west and on the south side is an east-west oriented promontory of land. On its south side is Snowshoe Bay. The narrowest portion of the land between the two bays is about 840 metres and is close to the western shore of Shoal Lake. The Falcon River discharges into Indian Bay immediately south of where the water for the aqueduct is withdrawn. The Falcon River is the outlet of Falcon Lake some 10 kilometres to the west and also drains much of the muskeg area in between.

A dike and channel diverts the Falcon River water, which is coloured brown by the muskeg, into Snowshoe Bay and away from the aqueduct intake. The alternative would have been additional $1,000,000 expenditure (in 1913 dollars) to extend the intake further into Indian Bay. The intake is a dual-opening system with each one capable of accommodating 380,000,000 litres of water per day should the other side be out of service.

The dominant feature of the Winnipeg Aqueduct is the cast-in-place concrete conduit that conveys the water over the 118-kilometre distance from Indian Bay to a point 27 kilometres east of Winnipeg. The conduit consists of a parabolic arch resting on a concave slab that, when finished, was mounded over with earth fill to prevent frost penetration during winter. Mostly unreinforced, the conduit has some steel reinforcing at road crossings and undeveloped road allowances. When backfilled, it is generally above the natural ground level and would block the flow of streams or ditches in the local drainage pattern. The method used to lead the water across the right-of-way was a siphon that passes under the conduit. Siphons (technically, inverted siphons) were also used to cross the rivers—five of them—that intersected the route of the main conduit. In that case the conduits went under the river.

The portion of the aqueduct from approximately 27 kilometres east of Winnipeg to the McPhillips Reservoir, which is under pressure, was known as the Red River Siphon. The conduit in this section other than for the crossing of the Red River itself is made of precast concrete. An important and significant feature of that section is a pressure relief facility, a surge tank with an overflow system, located on the east bank of the Red River in St. Boniface—a unique structure for its day. To reach the McPhillips Street Reservoir in west Winnipeg, the conduit crosses underneath the Red. It crosses the river in the

Cement store. Thirty-six kilogram bags of cement manufactured in Winnipeg were transported to the construction site for in-place casting of the aqueduct conduit sections.

limestone bedrock some 24 metres below the banks and 6 metres below the river bottom. For that portion the conduit is a cast-iron pipe. Its profile consists of a vertical section built in a shaft on each river bank and a horizontal section built in a tunnel in the rock.

Engineering

There is little doubt, given the challenges of the terrain, that the engineers responsible for the implementation of the Winnipeg Aqueduct were faced with uncertain situations and finite resources. The GWWD engineers and their Chief Engineer W. G. Chace had the benefit of the conceptual design routing in the Ruttan report that was the basis for the 1913 decision to proceed with the project, and the ongoing but intermittent advice of New York consulting engineer James H. Fuertes, but there were still challenges.

The parabolic arch which is the hallmark of the main conduit length, and which was featured in the GWWD's logo, is notable because the concrete in the arch is always in compression so it did not require reinforcing steel. This feature saved a great deal of money and also lessened the chances of deterioration of the concrete due to corrosion of the steel. The engineers were also careful to keep the arch thickness to the optimum because they had estimated that

a one-inch increase in conduit thickness would have cost an additional $400,000.

As part of the route selection mentioned above, the engineers had to factor in the depths of excavation along the route while striving for the most economical length and optimal gradient. They also had to design, test, and monitor the most efficient concrete mixtures based on local aggregate (gravel) sources and Portland cement supplies. They focussed on low permeability concrete to minimize conduit leakage while maintaining sufficient strength and durability.

To build the 136-kilometre conduit between Deacon and the intake, the engineers divided the overall job into five contracts, each of which took into consideration the terrain, site conditions, and complexity of the work. The call for tenders was advertised nationally and internationally and bidders were allowed to bid on one or all five contracts. Tenders were received in September 1914, a month after the beginning of the First World War, and awarded in October. The timing allowed successful bidders enough time to prepare for the start of construction on 15 May 1915.

As it happened, the low bidders on all five contracts were from Manitoba. The three easterly—and most difficult—contracts went to the Winnipeg Aqueduct Construction

Winnipeg Water and Waste Department, GWWD #195.

Alternating sections of the concrete conduit were cast in place. First, the invert or base slab was poured on the bottom of the excavated trench. Then, steel forms—such as those visible in the centre of this photograph—were erected to pour the arch section. Finally, the completed conduit was covered by soil. Reinforcing steel was not usually added to the concrete.

The Shoal Lake Aqueduct

Dental surgery at siding 8, mile 82. Contractors were obliged to provide medical benefits to their workers, in return for which they could deduct 75 cents per month from wages owed the worker. These services were supposed to be meet the "satisfaction of the Chief Engineer." One wonders to what extent the procedure shown in this photograph from June 1917 received supervisory approval.

Company, a joint venture of Northern Construction and Carter-Halls-Aldinger (later Commonwealth Construction). Low bidders on the other two contracts were J. H. Tremblay and Thomas Kelly and Sons. Kelly was also later awarded the contracts for the surge tank, Red River crossing, and the section from the Red River to the McPhillips Reservoir. The Winnipeg Aqueduct Construction Company got the contract for the section from Deacon to the Red River.

Another aspect of the engineering department's responsibilities arose from the decision, as a quality control measure, to supply materials to the contractors. The major components were aggregates (sand and stone) for the concrete and base fill, and Portland cement powder. Both required close coordination with the contractors. The gravel operation was based in pits developed by the GWWD in the vicinity of the project and involved excavating the material, screening it, and delivering it on time by railway to specific locations. The scheduling of the cement delivery was just as critical. Bags of cement had been manufactured by the Canada Cement Company at its Winnipeg plant. As part of the quality assurance program, the cement was monitored and tested on an hourly basis.

While the construction was under way, each contract was monitored by a division engineer and crew with responsibility for establishing the lines and grades for the contractor and also monitoring and inspecting the work.

It is reported that grades were set at 30-foot intervals. If so, that would have involved at least 14,000 settings. An indication of how closely the work was inspected is a statement from the Chief Engineer that "These inspectors, in order that they may be present at all times on the work, live in tents at each point where work is in progress."

Perhaps the most critical aspect of the on-site presence was to assess the foundation conditions—which could range from solid rock to quicksand—and determine the appropriate solution to unexpected and inadequate situations. Sometimes the solution was to drive wooden piles to support the conduit.

Construction

Just as the engineers struggled to surmount problems as they arose, the contractors also had challenges arising from uncertain situations and limits on resources. It is one thing to draw lines on paper to represent the engineer's design; it is another matter to turn them into a physical reality. The shear volumes of materials used during construction were impressive: 7,500,000 cubic yards of earth excavated and backfilled, 16,000 cubic yards of rock excavated, 455,000 cubic yards of concrete, 10,000 tons of reinforcing steel, and 575,000 barrels of Portland cement. The Chief Engineer noted that "throughout the entire construction approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel

were moved for concrete manufacture, for building up trench foundations where firm soil was at too low an elevation, and for backfill where native and local materials were scarce." To put that volume in perspective, it would fill a Canadian football field to a depth of 300 feet (93 metres). All of that work was accomplished with steam power, horses, and manual labour.

Manual labour was a major contributor to the construction effort. At one point, 2,500 men worked on the project. Anticipating labour problems, the GWWD had laid down clearly defined rules. For example, contractors were required to pay their workers a wage in accordance with a Fair Wage Schedule stated in the tender documents, with employment preference given to local residents. (Later, when the war effort affected the availability of labour, that requirement was lifted.) Carpenters received a minimum of 35 cents per hour and were not required to work more than 10 hours per day. The number of hours to be worked per month was later clarified following a 1917 grievance to the GWWD Administration Board, wherein "260 hours

work should constitute a month on any work under contracts." Contractors were also required to provide board and shelter for their workers at a cost of $5 per week. This meant that a carpenter would have to work 14 hours to pay for his week's food and lodging. The worker's sleeping accommodation was required to provide at least 300 cubic feet (8 cubic metres) of space per occupant. The contract also required the employer to "employ the necessary duly qualified medical practitioners, furnish and provide all necessary medicines, surgical instruments, and hospital accommodation to the satisfaction of the Chief Engineer." In exchange for providing medical service, the employer was allowed to deduct 75 cents per month from the employee's wages.

Excavating and dewatering ground for the main conduit section, with conditions ranging from prairie to a nine-kilometre-long muskeg, was a major accomplishment, especially given the capabilities of the equipment available in those days. A requirement of the contract was that the bottom six inches of the excavation were to be excavated by

Pipe manufacturing in South Transcona, June 1917. One of the more controversial engineering decisions for the Aqueduct, endorsed by the consulting engineer, was to change the design of the section from Deacon to the McPhillips Reservoir. The original design called for a steel pipe. Concerns over electrolysis effects on steel from electric street railways, as well as price, caused the design to be changed to precast, steel-reinforced concrete pipe manufactured locally using local materials.

hand so the foundation would be placed on undisturbed soil. It was also to be free of water. Neither condition was always met. Much of the bulk excavation was accomplished with steam-powered draglines. Unlike modern equipment, thse draglines did not have tracks but moved on rollers supported by timber rafts.

The concrete portions were formed and poured in two sections: the invert, or base, section and the arch on top of it. To allow for working room, the work proceeded in leapfrog fashion. The forms were made of steel and were reusable. The system was an efficient means of repetitive forming but still required over 70 setups for a kilometre or about 8,000 for the entire project.

While there was a great deal of physical labour in the excavation phase of the project, there was probably just as much involved in the mixing and placing of the concrete. Other than the actual mixing, which was powered by steam, the handling of materials was all by hand. The contractor's light rail system was used for moving the mixed concrete alongside the trench for placing.

D. Ennis

Surge tank. This cylindrical structure at the foot of Tache Avenue in St. Boniface provided a means whereby the pressure from 24 kilometres of water flowing through the Aqueduct at a significant velocity is relieved automatically if the rate of discharge of the downstream system is reduced. Without the tank, the conduit would burst.

The surge tank presented a much different construction challenge than the other parts of the project. It involved a deep excavation, caissons dug to bedrock, precise placement of reinforcing steel, and special formwork ability. The formwork was for two concentric walls: one wall formed the tank and the other wall provided the catchment system to drain the overflow water to the river.

As noted earlier, the conduit for the river crossings is cast-iron pipe placed in a tunnel. While the work of tunnelling in rock under a river was no doubt unprecedented in Manitoba, there was another interesting construction aspect. The space around the pipe had to be completed filled with concrete to ensure there would be no movement. The final sealing was accomplished by a process know as tremie. Holes were drilled through the river bottom to the cavity above an initial encasement of the conduit and pipes were installed so that fluid concrete could be poured. When the concrete began to rise in an adjacent pipe, the cavity would be full.

Conclusion

In the end, engineering and construction was an integrated process. And tension between engineers and contractors was inevitable. Nevertheless, a statement by one of the on-site engineers speaks to the collaboration that developed on the project. He wrote that in some of the more arduous site conditions "theory was of little use and reliance had to be placed on experience and sound judgement," adding that the involvements of the contractor's superintendent and the Chief Engineer in applying their experience and judgement was critical to getting the job done.

The GWWD began delivering water to the McPhillips Reservoir in December 1918—a remarkable accomplishment in just four construction seasons. However, because of a concern that there might be an adverse effect on the industrial boilers in the City due to a change from hard to soft water during the height of the heating season, the start-up was delayed. Water began to flow into the McPhillips Reservoir on 29 March 1919 and the system was officially opened by the Prince of Wales on 9 September 1919. ❧

Notes

The One-Legged Lighthouse Keeper of Plunkett Island

by Anthony Plunkett
East Yorkshire, England

Harry Plunkett died suddenly at Swampy Island lighthouse in April 1906. Reverend Thomas Neville, the local missionary at Berens River on Lake Winnipeg, later recalled that, "in charge of the lighthouse was a scion of a famous English family—Plunkett by name. He had lost a leg during an adventurous life and hobbled on a wooden substitute. He died suddenly at his post and we crossed the water at great hazard on floating ice to bring his body ashore. There, wrapped in the Union Jack we buried him."[1]

Neville ventured further to say that "John Doggie of Rabbit Point was put in temporary charge of [Plunkett's] duties. Some time after John had been installed, I went over to see how he was getting along. I found him in the top of the tower sitting on the trap door entrance. He explained that he could only get away from Plunkett's spirit that way. To my amazement he declared that the very first night he took charge, he heard Plunkett's peg leg striking the floor as he made his rounds on the tower. Plunkett proceeded to shake the lights and to walk around in a very business-like way. The wooden leg struck hard as its possessor proceeded to inspect the quarters—chiefly at night. So John Doggie always retreated to the tower where he closed the trapdoor and sat on it to keep the restless phantom of the old lighthouse keeper away. While I was around there, I must say I never heard or saw anything of this but perhaps I was not as familiar with metaphysics as old John Doggie!"[2]

What's in a Name?

Swampy Island Lighthouse seems to have been the name most commonly applied during its twenty or so years of operation, but other titles—official or otherwise—have also been used, resulting in some uncertainty, not only in relation to its name but also its location. Evidence of its intended inception lies within records held by Canada's Department of Interior, to the effect that the "Department of Marine and Fisheries intends building a light house
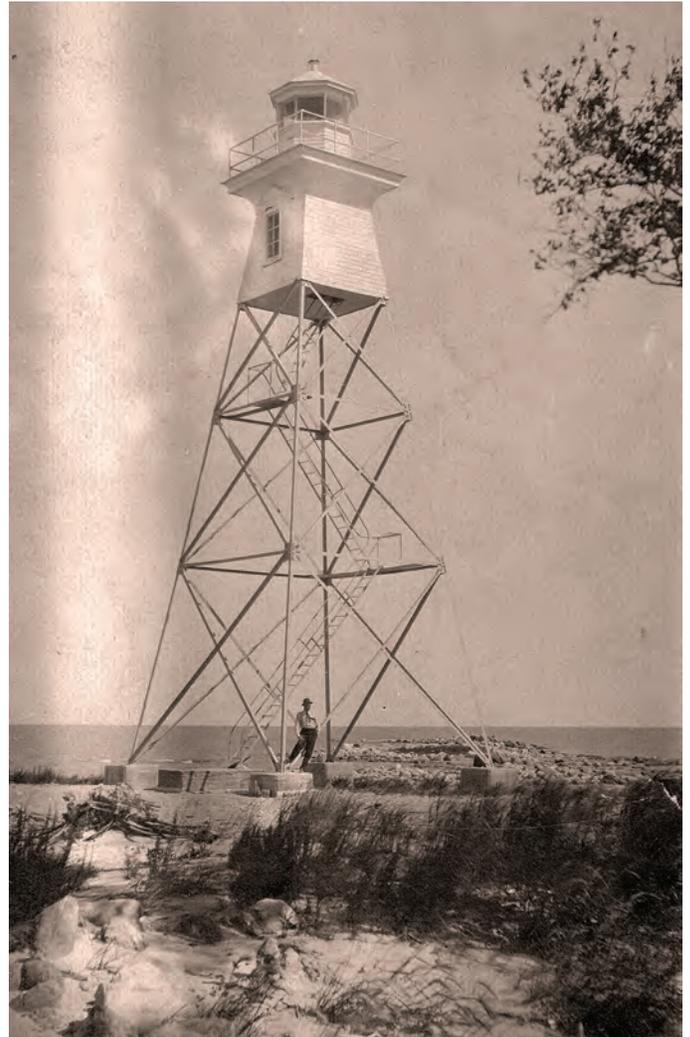
Archives of Manitoba, J. H. Avent fonds, #84.

The lighthouse at Plunkett Island might have looked something like this one at an unknown location on Lake Winnipeg, 1911, although it had a "dwelling attached" in which the Plunkett family lived.

on Swampy Island, Lake Winnipeg and asks that a piece of land be reserved for that purpose." Within this small file, a letter dated 11 September 1883, from the Deputy Minister, Marine, to the Department of Interior, confirmed permission to build the lighthouse.[3]

Records further show that on 1 June 1884, Harry Plunkett, having just celebrated his 36th birthday, was appointed by the Ministry of Marine & Fisheries as "Keeper of light" at Swampy Island, with a salary of $350 per annum.

Anthony Patrick Plunkett was born in Kingston upon Hull, England in 1939. He attended the Hull Grammar School and is a retired civil servant, married with two sons. He is a grandson of Sidney Plunkett, featured in the article, and Harry Plunkett is his great grand uncle.
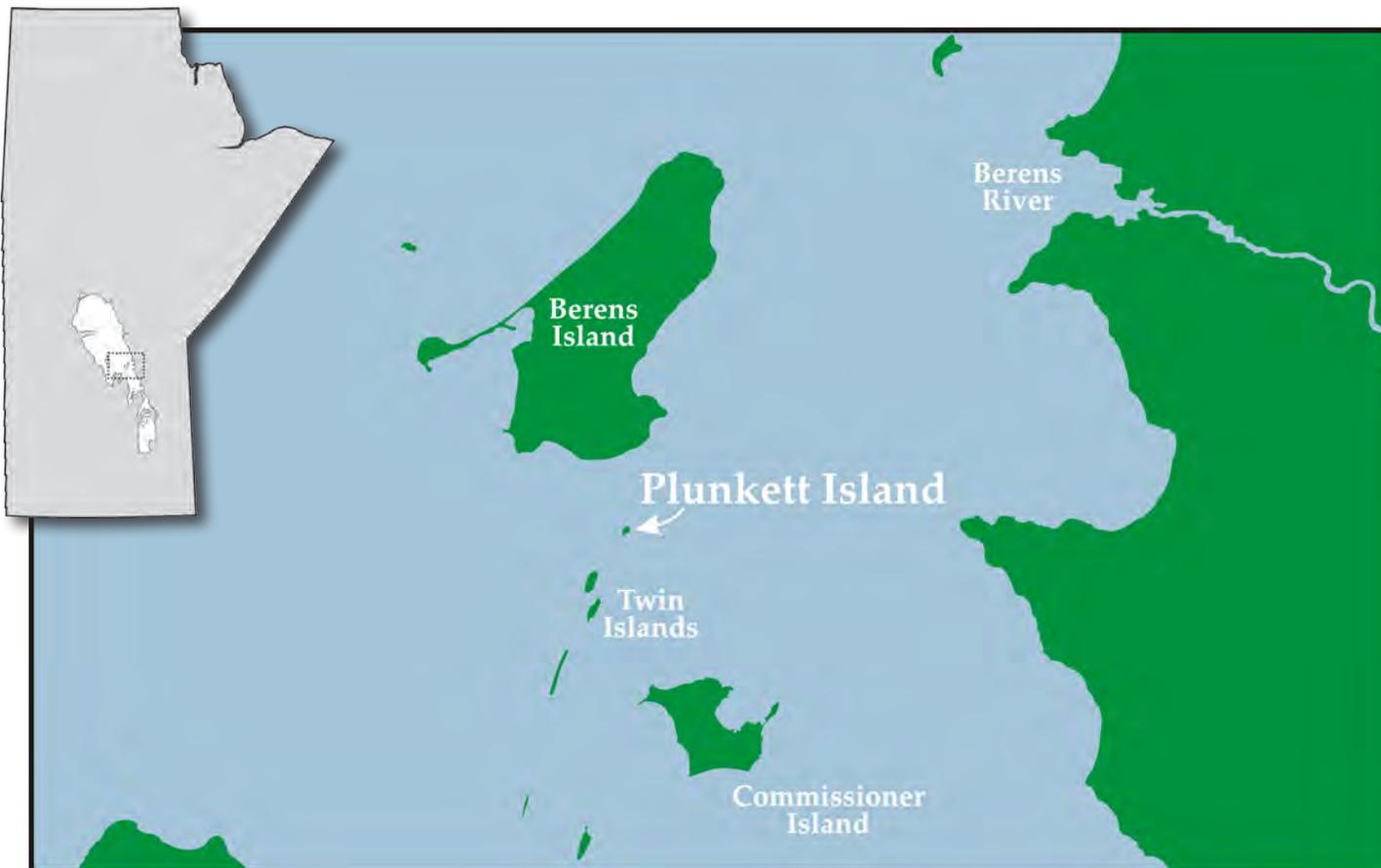
The middle of nowhere. In the centre of Lake Winnipeg, only 730 feet (220 metres) from end to end and 160 miles (260 kilometres) as the crow flies from Winnipeg, Plunkett Island hardly seems a place that anyone would want to live, much less with a wife and family of four children, year-round. But one-legged Harry Plunkett did it for several years, serving as the lighthouse keeper on this small, chunk of rock that would later be named for him.

The new lighthouse, situated off the mouth of Berens River, became operational a few days later. It was described as having a fixed white light elevated 34 feet above water, with a visibility of 11 miles from all points of approach. The building was of wood, painted white, consisting of a tower 33 feet high with a dwelling attached.[4] Swampy Island—a somewhat irregular shaped piece of land about 15 miles in circumference—was the popular but unofficial name for what is, in fact, Berens Island.

In 1888, the lighthouse was in only its fourth year of operation when it was completely destroyed. A brief report in a Toronto-based national newspaper stated "William McKay of Berens River has arrived in the city from the north and brings news of the destruction of the lighthouse on Swampy Island, Lake Winnipeg on 12 March. The caretaker lost all his effects. Navigation on Lake Winnipeg will be exceedingly dangerous unless the lighthouse is immediately reconstructed."[5]

No official record of a rebuild has thus far come to light but there is no doubt that it did occur. Much later, a local newspaper feature on names and places carried the statement: "PLUNKETT - an island with a lighthouse in Lake Winnipeg between Berens and Commissioner Islands. It was named after H. E. Plunkett, one of the lighthouse keepers."[6] On the same theme, a database maintained by

the Manitoba Government, using a 1933 publication as its source, claimed that Plunkett Island was named "in 1889 after H. E. Plunkett, a local lighthouse keeper,"[7] and Canada's 1902 official record of navigational aids, listed a lighthouse established in 1884, located on the western end of Plunkett Island, omitting any reference to Swampy Island.[8] Adding further to the confusion, the Auditor General's Reports (documenting government expenditure) listed H. E. Plunkett working at Swampy Island Lighthouse during 1890 to 1896, but then as the Channel Island lighthouse keeper from 1897 until 1906, the year of his death.[9]

However, it seems almost certain that the original lighthouse (and its replacement) were both erected on the nearby smaller island, which only later became known as Plunkett Island. As it had no name at the time, and was only about one mile south of Swampy Island, the lighthouse was probably given the name of the adjacent larger island. (There are similar examples where a lighthouse or other establishment has taken the name of a nearby, but better known, landmark.) It can also be argued on grounds of improved navigational safety, that locating the lighthouse on the much smaller Plunkett Island, rather than on Swampy Island, would have made much greater sense; it was closer to the shipping lines between Berens River and the rest of the lake, and therefore better placed to indicate

the reefs and other potential hazards in the path of vessels plying the lake to and from Berens River.

References to Plunkett Island and its lighthouse have been few and far between, possibly because of its relatively short spell of operation, but perhaps more likely, the name Swampy Island, simply remained in popular use. (It was replaced by a new lighthouse on Cox Reef, around the time of Harry Plunkett's death, presumably for navigational advantage.) However, a reference does appear in an account of an epic canoe journey in 1912, of some 2,000 miles to Hudson Bay, which covered the length of Lake Winnipeg. It included the following brief, but emphatic statement: "October 28—Saw Plunkett Island Lighthouse".[10] Another reference cropped up much later in a press article of one Thomas Sinclair, former ship's carpenter and long-term employee of the Selkirk Navigation Company, who became a captain on Lake Winnipeg steamers. It was reported that Sinclair was "well known to Harry Edward Plunkett who recently came into prominence in connection with a title and inheritance in Ireland. He (Sinclair) met him on his first trip aboard the SS Princess. Plunkett operated a lighthouse on Plunkett's (sic) island, a small rocky isle half an acre in size, a mile south of Swampy Island and eight miles west of Berens River."[11]

Life at the Lighthouse

Perhaps of equal or greater relevance than the name of the lighthouse is that evidence suggests Harry Plunkett, along with his wife Mary Anne and their children, were permanent rather than seasonal residents of this tiny and remote island. His ability to perform his duties and responsibilities—the traditional "keeping of the light" and provision of rescue services and sanctuary—would clearly have been dictated by the elements, as Lake Winnipeg freezes over during the winter months making navigation by boat impossible. As the actual "navigation season" varies from one year to the next depending upon the timing of the break-up of the ice, it might reasonably be assumed that he would have been required to operate as a keeper only during the summer months.

But surviving correspondence which Harry sent to his "long lost" orphan nephew, Sidney Wilmot Plunkett, during the early 1900s, indicates that, leave periods apart, he and his family lived there pretty much the year round. All four of his letters are headed with the same "reply to" address, namely, "Channel Island, Lake Winnipeg, via West Selkirk, Manitoba." The first letter was written in the middle of summer, but the other three bear January/February dates. Writing on 31 July 1901, Harry stated, "If you make up your mind to come, let us know and I will give you instructions how to reach us … the best time to arrive here is about the beginning of July. I shall be able to get a couple of weeks leave then to meet you, but don't start for Canada during winter as nothing can be done." Seven months later, clearly encountering postal problems, he wrote, "It is surprising to me you did not get the papers I sent you, I put enough stamps on them to reach you. Where
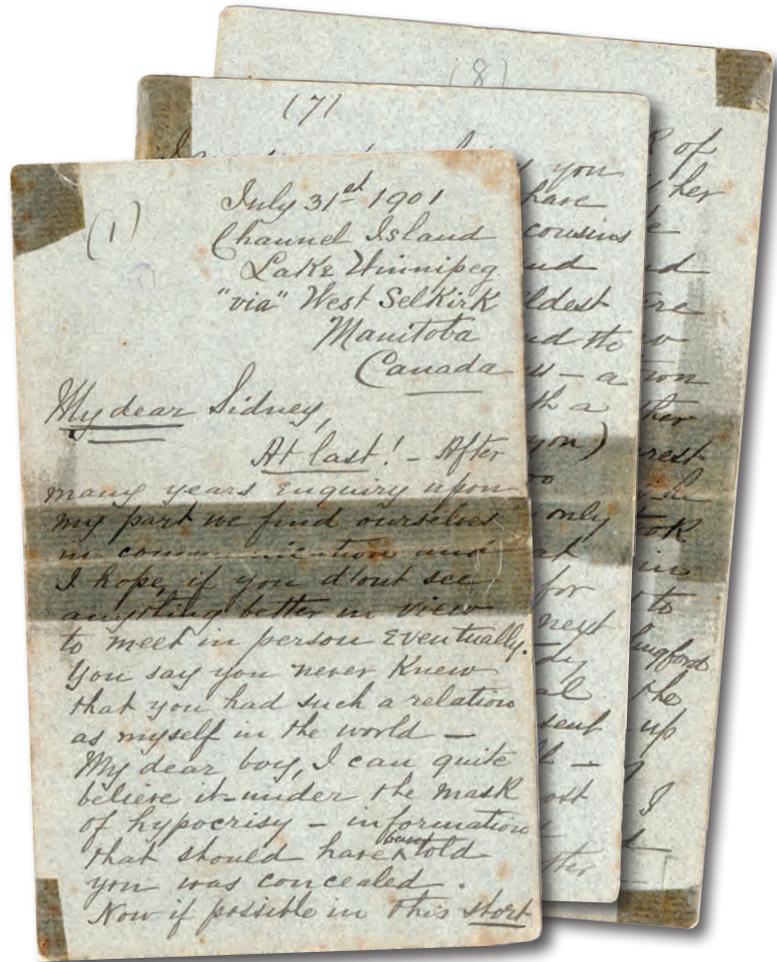
Letters from nowhere. What little we know about life on desolate Plunkett Island comes from a few short letters that Harry mailed to his orphan nephew Sidney Plunkett back home in Britain.

we are, that is your aunt and I, we can't do anything until we go into Winnipeg about two hundred miles from here. But next summer when the steamers commence running, we will forward you photos, papers etc." Later that same year, he wrote, "I expect to leave here by the autumn of next year if all goes well as it is getting too lonely now all the family have left." But all did not go well, as more than a year later, on 28 February 1904, he wrote, "if your aunt and I can make some arrangements I will let you know … we are a long way from Winnipeg … (and) one of us must be in Winnipeg to meet you."[12]

It should also be pointed out that there is no trace of a census record in Canada for Harry Plunkett and family in 1891, probably because the family unit—the eldest of the four children was then age 12—was living at their remote quarters attached to the lighthouse. But ten years later on 31 March, when the census was next taken, Harry, his wife and the two youngest children were listed together in Selkirk, Manitoba.[13] Perhaps this coincided with a spell of leave. Selkirk would certainly have been a convenient location for the family, being the main southern terminus for the shipping vessels on Lake Winnipeg.

In August 1890, in his professional capacity as keeper, Harry's name appeared in an official report, following an incident involving a police sailing vessel, the *Keewatin*—newly purchased that year for the North West Mounted Police for patrolling Lake Winnipeg. The boat ran aground onto submerged rocks off Pigeon Point during a severe storm, and two policemen aboard were drowned. Captain Matthew Watts lashed himself to the side of the boat, only to die later from exposure. He was taken off the wreck twelve days later by some passing Indians. Detailing the widespread search undertaken and the location of wreckage, the report stated, "we left a letter with Mr. Plunkett at the lighthouse, near Swampy Island, to be forwarded as soon as possible to Hon. John Schultz, Lieut.-Governor of Manitoba, informing him of the probable wreck of the police yacht, 'Keewatin'."[14] Note particularly the term, "the lighthouse, *near* Swampy Island."

On another occasion, a reflective newspaper article described a boat trip on Lake Winnipeg, which included the paragraph: "At Gull Harbour, about ten miles from the mouth of the river, the government has in the course of construction, a much needed lighthouse which is expected to be finished in a month or so. Gull Harbour is a pretty spot with a long sandy beach, well sheltered. The next spot we touch is at Black Bear Island. Here another lighthouse is being constructed. This is a pretty island deriving its name from the presence of several black bears. About 10 o'clock at night we passed Swampy Island lighthouse. This is under the charge of a gentleman who is connected with one Lord Plunkett, and a near relative of the late Archbishop of Derry."[15]

Harry's Background

It seems that Harry must have been asked occasionally about his ancestry, but for whatever reason, it clearly led to some inaccurate reporting. He certainly had "blue blood" but was not related to "Lord Plunkett" as suggested above. (This was a possible confusion with Dublin-born William Lee Plunket, who became Lord Plunket on inheriting his family's title in 1897, and was later Governor of New Zealand.) Nor, in fact, did Harry hail from "a famous English family" as the Rev. Thomas Neville was quoted in the opening paragraph.

Henry Edward Plunkett (known as Harry) was, in fact, a grandson of the Anglo-Irish peer, Thomas Oliver Plunkett, 11th Lord Louth, whose 3,500 acre estate, at Louth Hall in Ireland, was in County Louth, some thirty miles north of Dublin. Harry was actually born "at sea" on 1 May 1848—probably aboard a troop ship. His father was the Hon. Edward Sidney Plunkett, then a Lieutenant in the British Army. He was serving in the British colony of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) with the 95th Derbyshire Regiment, and had married on the island—in the city of Kandy in 1846—an English-born woman, Caroline Mary Templer, from Devon. Unfortunately, she died in 1861 at Fort Beaufort, a town in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, where his father, then newly retired from the Army, had become the local

barrack master. Harry, eldest of three brothers, was 12 years old when his mother died, and summed up his formative years thus, "I always lived with my father (and was) amongst soldiers all my youth up to 23 years of age. I have been in many parts of the world and roughed it with the best of them. I never let care nor worry bother me much."[16] It seems that he had an extremely eventful upbringing, as during this time, his father served throughout the Crimean War in Russia (1854–1856) and was later with his regiment in India, during the Mutiny (1857–1858).

By the time of his father's death in County Dublin, Ireland, in 1875, Harry was working in the United States, on "a railroad survey through one of the wildest parts of Northern Wisconsin, under Colonel Rich, Chief Engineer, running a line through the woods and forests and lakes and rivers in two of the hardest years of my life. I was one of the staff, and we had 100 men under us to chop out survey line, pack grub, canoe and hunt game (deer) for crowd."[17] A couple of years later he returned to Dublin, and subsequently married a barrister's daughter, Mary Anne Smith from Dalkey, County Dublin. They emigrated to Canada the following year, living firstly in Toronto, Ontario where they raised two daughters, before moving to Winnipeg where a third daughter and a son were born. Harry seems to have been remembered as an outgoing, sociable character, and was later described as "a popular Winnipegger with many acquaintances in the city." It seems that he maintained this positive, outgoing attitude throughout his professional life, as the report also stated, "For the past 22 years his hospitable house has been a welcome refuge for the wayfarers on Lake Winnipeg."[18] In a letter encouraging his nephew to contemplate emigration to Canada, Harry wrote, "I am not able, holding a small but comfortable Government position, to go to much expense, but you may be quite sure, you will not want for a home, bite or sup, or a pound or two while with us. It is astonishing how well off a young fellow gets in this splendid country as long as he behaves himself and keeps away from drink."[19]

Beyond the Grave

Despite the relative isolation of his existence, occasional references to Harry Plunkett continued to occur in the press, not only during his lifetime but also after his death. In November 1935, it was reported that:

> "… a howling blizzard obscured the fate of ten men stranded in the snowy reaches of Lake Winnipeg. Two of the men, Donald Sayre and his assistant are lighthouse tenders on lonely Cox's Reef, 140 miles north of the mouth of the Red River. Their lighthouse, according to fishing colony legend, is haunted by the ghost of a wooden legged man named Plunkett who first tended the beacon. ["Legend" falsely connected Harry with another lighthouse, but why spoil a good tale!] The others are Capt. Roy Purvis and the crew of the ice-bound

steamer Lu-Berc, who started out to bring the lighthouse tenders back to civilisation some weeks ago. They were forced to abandon their ship when it became jammed in the frozen lake. Six days ago the eight sailors started a 130-mile trek by dog team, down the frozen lake and its snow blanketed swamps, to the little northern fishing village of Gypsumville (off Lake St. Martin)".[20]

Plunkett's name again appeared in October 1950, when it was reported that the editor of *Debrett's Peerage* was actively trying to trace Harry Edward Plunkett (who would have been 102 years old, had he still been alive) as he was second in line to the family title. The search occurred at the same time as Harry's son, Arthur, then 64 years old and an engineer with Canadian National Railway, was shortly due for retirement. It was reported that he was experiencing some difficulty proving his age to the pension board, given that the "Plunkett family bible had been lost in a fire at Swampy Island lighthouse in Manitoba" back in the late 1880s, when his father was the keeper, and son Arthur, about two years old.[21]

Postscript

Today, Harry's descendants reside mainly around the west coast of the United States and Canada. His four children, all of whom spent some of their formative years at the lighthouse, married and brought up their own families. After Harry's death in 1906, his widow lived mainly with eldest daughter, Edith Caroline and her family. Mary Anne outlived her youngest daughter, Mary Randalina, (who seems to have died by 1916, although no death record has been traced) but eventually passed away in 1932, at the age of 77, in Hartford, Snohomish, Washington. Her death preceded that of daughter, Edith, who was 68 when she died in 1948, in Everett, Snohomish. Her remaining daughter, Nora Kathleen, was 80 years old when she died in Los Angeles, California in 1961. Son Arthur Charles Sidney died at the age of 83 in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1969.

Harry Plunkett was a lighthouse keeper for more than twenty years. It involved spending lengthy periods of duty, supported by his wife Mary Anne, in the harsh environment of Lake Winnipeg, particularly during winter. When corresponding with his nephew, whom he was never destined to meet, he referred to his wife with obvious affection, stating in 1901, for example, "she stands at my side today, a clever and excellent wife and your loving aunt, who had you in her arms as a baby" (in Dublin, more than twenty years earlier).[22] Nevertheless, spending so much of their lives together in such a remote location must have inevitably placed a strain on their married lives. In 1903, Harry took out the following notice in the newspaper:

"My wife Marianne (sic) Plunkett having deserted me, I hereby forbid any credit being given to her on my account, and I refuse to become responsible for any debts contracted by her. [Signed H. E. Plunkett, Channel Island, Lake Winnipeg]"[23]

It reads like the desperate cry of a man marooned two hundred miles away, on a remote island. Fortunately, in the final letter Harry sent to his nephew, in February 1904, he was able to state, "your Aunt and I are well" and he closed "With love from Aunt and myself." Perhaps confirmation that her desertion was short-lived and that marital harmony was restored to their remote lighthouse home. ☙

Notes

The author expresses his gratitude to Michel Forand of Ottawa, Ontario for expert guidance on lighthouse matters and Lake Winnipeg, and to Fran Saler of Minnedosa, Manitoba for unfailing help and advice on family history issues.

1. "The old timer talks," *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 6 July 1940, page 4.
2. *Ibid*.
3. Department of Interior, Library & Archives Canada.
4. Canada Sessional Papers No. 9, 1885, Order in Council, 12 October 1884
5. "A lighthouse destroyed," *Globe & Mail* (Toronto), 13 April 1888, page 1.
6. "Plunkett Island," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 30 July 1947, page 3.
7. "Plunkett Island," *Geographic Names of Manitoba*, Manitoba Conservation, 2000.
8. List of Lights, 1902.
9. Reports of Auditor General, 1890-1906.
10. Ernest Carl Oberholtzer. *Toward Magnetic North: The Oberholtzer-Magee 1912 Canoe Trip to Hudson Bay*. 2000. Marshall, MN: The Oberholtzer Foundation.
11. "Oldtimer, 83, despite lack of schooling, reads his Bible through three times," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 27 November 1950, page 2.
12. Harry Plunkett's letters to his nephew, Sidney, were dated 31 July 1901, 12 February 1902, 1 December 1902, and 28 February 1904. The letters were amongst Sidney's effects when he died in Hull, England in 1955. Only his first letter is of substantial length and represents Harry's first-ever communication with a nephew whom he had been attempting to contact without success over many years. The nephew was his late brother's only child, who became an orphan at the age of 18 months, in 1879. He was in his early 20s before he became aware of Harry's existence. Harry makes no mention in the correspondence that he was a lighthouse keeper, nor how or when he lost a leg.
13. Census of Canada, 1901, Automated Genealogy, www.automatedgenealogy.org
14. Canada Sessional Papers 1891, No. 17a.
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Manitoba and the "Great Crusade:" The Invasion of Normandy, 6 June 1944, 70 Years Later

by Major David Grebstad
4th Canadian Division Headquarters, Toronto

You are about to embark upon a great crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers in arms on other fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower,
Address to Allied Troops, 6 June 1944

Seventy years ago this June, 156,000 American, British and Canadian soldiers, supported by thousands of sailors and airmen, fell upon a stretch of Normandy shoreline to begin what General Dwight D. Eisenhower called the "great crusade." Unknown to their loved ones at home, amongst the ranks of those assaulting the beaches were a score of Manitobans.

Two Storied Manitoba Regiments

Five divisions landed on D-day: two American, two British and one Canadian—the 3rd Canadian Division. Amongst the assaulting elements of the 3rd Canadian Division who stormed a beach code-named "Juno" were two storied Manitoba Militia regiments that represented the very fibre and history of the province of Manitoba—the Fort Garry Horse and the Royal Winnipeg Rifles.

The Fort Garry Horse traces its lineage to Boulton's Mounted Corps, an ad hoc cavalry unit created to serve in the North-West Rebellion in 1885. Originally created as the 34th Regiment of Cavalry in April of 1912, after a number of name changes, the title Fort Garry Horse was eventually settled on in 1916. During the First World War the Fort Garry Horse fought in France and Flanders as part of the 1st Canadian Cavalry Brigade. At the outbreak of the Second World War, the regiment was mobilized, having turned in their horses for tanks, and arrived in England in November, 1941. The Fort Garry Horse formed part of the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, and on 6 June 1944 it went ashore on Juno Beach supporting the 8th Canadian Infantry Brigade.

The Royal Winnipeg Rifles are almost as old as Manitoba itself. Originally created as the 90th "Winnipeg" Battalion of Rifles in November 1883, it too saw service during the North-West Rebellion. During the First World War this unit provided a large number of soldiers for a variety of overseas battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. By 1935 the name Royal Winnipeg Rifles had been settled on, although the unit nickname of *The Little Black Devils* had existed for some time. In May of 1940 the regiment was mobilized for active service, arriving in the UK in the fall of 1941. The Royal Winnipeg Rifles joined the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade and was one the brigade's two assault battalions on 6 June.

Courage Under Fire

Both the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and the Fort Garry Horse boarded ships in the Thames two days prior to the invasion, and then spent the intervening period being tossed and turned in swelling seas as a gale blew through the channel. The roiling surf and resulting seasickness made the commanders of the Fort Garry Horse nervous about the state their tank crews would be in once they landed ashore, a concern shared by the Royal Winnipeg Rifles commanders. At 4:00 AM the Winnipeg Rifles were issued a small breakfast of tea and a cold snack, and an hour later, clamoured aboard their landing craft to begin the run-in to shore. Likewise, the Fort Garry Horse tanks, loaded aboard tank-bearing landing craft, were lowered into the sea and both Manitoba units began their approach to the beach.

The Fort Garry Horse were divided into four squadrons, A through D, who went ashore in support of the 8th Canadian Brigade's three infantry battalions: the Régiment de la Chaudière, the Queen's Own Rifles, and the North Shore Regiment. The Fort Garry's and their supported infantry landed between the towns of St. Aubin-sur-Mer and Bernières-sur-Mer while farther west, in the 7th Canadian Infantry Brigade's sector, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles came ashore between the towns of Courseulles-sur-Mer and Graye-sur-Mer. Despite overwhelming fire support from aircraft, battleships and even artillery guns firing from the decks of landing craft, the assault was heavily contested by the German defenders. Both Manitoba regiments had a hard fight ahead of them, and it was only through courage

Canadian troops disembark from landing craft in an orderly manner onto the beachhead at Normandy, June 1944.

and determination that they were able to win the day. In both units examples of this courage was readily available. Sgt. Martin of the Fort Garry Horse had his tank hit by a German shell and was forced to reverse his tank into the channel to extinguish the fire. This subsequently flooded the engine and he and his crew found themselves stuck in the surf, but continued to fire on enemy positions until the rising tide forced them to swim for shore. In the Royal Winnipeg Rifles' War Diary, the unit diarist remarked that "not one man flinched from his task, no matter how tough it was—not one officer failed to display courage and energy and a degree of gallantry. It is thought that the Little Black Devils, by this day's success, has managed to maintain the tradition set by former members." By nightfall, the Fort Garry Horse and the Royal Winnipeg Rifles were secure in Normandy and preparing defensive positions for the inevitable German counterattack.

Manitobans by Sea, Air and Land

The members of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles and the Fort Garry Horse were not the only Manitobans in Normandy. Manitoba boys were present in each of the three services that participated in the operation. They could be found working on the decks of the vessels of the Royal Canadian Navy that provided fire support, transport and mine-clearing to the invasion armada. Likewise, Manitobans in the Royal Canadian Air Force provided fighter cover to the Allied landing and interdicted German reinforcements that were rushing to the beaches. Manitobans could also be found amongst the Canadian Army combat support personnel who landed on the beach. Manitobans manned

the guns in the Artillery, cleared mines as Engineers, cared for the wounded as Medics, and parachuted into enemy territory with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion. The roles of the Army, Navy and Air Force support elements were critical to ensuring the assaulting elements had the support they required to seize the beachhead.

The Home Front

When their fathers, sons and brothers were storming the beaches of Normandy, the majority of Manitobans were still asleep in their beds. They awoke to newspaper headlines proclaiming the invasion had begun, although strict censorship rules prevented them from knowing what units had gone in on the assault. The news was met with a mixture of hope and trepidation. The *Winnipeg Tribune* told of Brownie Sabo who was pleased the invasion was on, but expressed worry for the fate of his brother who was overseas. The night manager of the *Nanking* restaurant was overjoyed at the news and passed out cigars to his clients. Crowds gathered around to discuss what the invasion portended, and church services were held to comfort the anxiety of those awaiting word from loved ones. The stark reality of war was reinforced by the daily casualty list released by the RCAF that informed the city that Flight Sergeant Arthur Barnes of Roseberry Street in St. James was missing in action.

The Ultimate Sacrifice

The invasion of Normandy was a success, due in no small part to the role played by Manitobans—but that success came at a price. After the Winnipeg Rifles' diarist had praised the gallantry of the Little Black Devils, his next line simply read "Casualties for the day exceeded 130." In all, fifty-seven Manitobans, along with twenty-nine non-Manitobans serving in the Manitoba regiments, made the ultimate sacrifice. Eighty-six of Manitoba's sons were lost—*on a single day*.

The fallen came from all elements and units. They included Lieutenant Lloyd Adams who parachuted into Normandy with the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion; Flying Officers Irvine Caskey and Melsolm Gee of the RCAF; and Private George Henderson of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps. The Fort Garry Horse and the Royal Winnipeg Rifles lost fourteen and fifty-six, respectively. The average age of Manitoba's fallen was just twenty-five. One soldier, Selkirk's Private Harry Franko, was only nineteen. They came from the length and breadth of the province; every corner of Manitoba felt the stinging pain of the loss of a loved one. Those who fell were interred in war graves in Normandy.

Seventy years have come and gone since those brave Manitobans gave their tomorrow, for our today. Many more were to perish in the war's remaining eleven months, and those who did come home bore the scars—physical and emotional—that war had given them. On 6 June, take a moment to remember the sacrifice of Manitobans who risked it all at the beginning of the "great crusade." ☙

Reviews

Christopher Adams, Gregg Dahl and Ian Peach (eds.), *Métis in Canada: History, Identity, Law & Politics.* **Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2013, 530 pages. . ISBN 978-0-88864-640-8, $65.00 (paperback)**
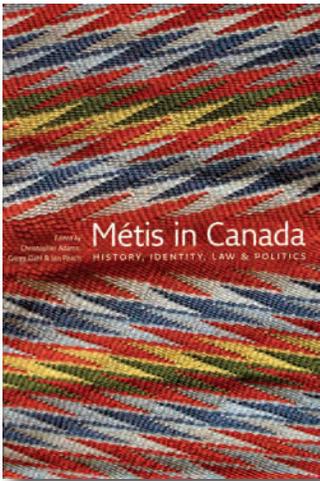
In 2003, the Powley decision from the Supreme Court of Canada laid out what became known as "the Powley Test," a set of criteria defining what it means to be rights-bearing "Métis." In order to be recognized, Métis groups no longer need ties to Rupert's Land, or to the Red River Settlement with its particular brand of nationalism that culminated in Louis Riel's 1869 provisional government. Instead, Métis groups are designated based on substantive circumstances and require evidence of existence as historically dynamic and distinctive communities. These legal developments have had a great impact on Métis scholarship, spawning discussions about their implications for Métis rights, how the lines are drawn around "Métis" and what the label means politically, socially and legally.

These emerging conversations about legal classification led to the compilation of twelve essays by editors Christopher Adams, Gregg Dahl and Ian Peach. *Métis in Canada: History, Identity, Law & Politics,* aptly described as a "forum" by its editors, combines the works of many scholars, several of whom are newcomers to Métis studies, and offers readers an assemblage of fresh, innovative perspectives. The interdisciplinary collection includes papers by scholars of fields including history, art history, sociology, political science and legal studies, enabling it to express and promote dialogue between academics often divided by disciplinary boundaries.

As a whole, the collection tackles —and problematizes —the question: Who is Métis? The complexities of the category "Métis" (or sometimes "métis," or even "Metis") is reflected throughout the book. The authors do not share the same terminologies or theoretical frameworks and are careful to define their terms. Effectively, this linguistic diversity demonstrates that the very notion of stable identity —and stable labels —remains contested. Significantly, the authors frequently disagree with each other, continually emphasizing that "being Métis in Canada cannot be captured by a homogeneous set of rules and descriptions [but a] modality accompanied by diverse histories, identities, laws and political dynamics" (p. xviii).

The book's essays are organized into four sections: Identity, History, Law, and Politics. The first section, "Identity," includes material dealing with personal and perceived Métis identities. Gloria Bell starts off the collection with her discussion of historical artistic depictions of Métis peoples in the Great Lakes region. She examines paintings both as evidence of self-representation, via clothes and jewellery, as well as colonial depictions for non-Aboriginal audiences, pointing out the importance of who tells a story and for whom it is told. Laura-Lee Kearns explores feminine Métis identity in her poem, which deals with personal family history and accentuates the fluidity and diversity of Métis experiences. Finally, Gregg Dahl takes on some of the issues surrounding Métis labels. He traces the development of the term "half-breed" with which he proudly defines his own identity in order to "honour [his] relations' acceptance of that label" (p. 94) as English-speakers in the Red River Settlement, and because it reflects his pride in the Constitutional recognition of the term. Effectively, the section expresses the complexities of Métis identity in personal and scholarly ways, accentuating their overlap.

Essays in the "History" portion of *Métis in Canada* emphasize that politics have always affected how and when Métis peoples have been written about. In this vein, Darren O'Toole examines revisionist, historical narratives about Métis identity formation. He compares differing approaches and their consideration of class and occupational niches (namely fur-trade work for the North West Company), concluding that institutional structures and practices played an important, although inadequately addressed, role in the development of Métis collectivity. Equally revisionist, Liam Haggarty demonstrates how the traditional fur fur-trade economic narrative "obscures as much as it reveals" (p. 206) and does not account for the diversity of Métis histories and experiences. The section is concluded with newly discovered letters and poems written by Louis Riel ranging in date of origin from 1858 to 1885, presented, contextualized, and edited by Glen Campbell and Tom Flanagan.

The book's section on "Law" is particularly interesting for the issues that arise out of legal categorization. "All encompassing identity categories … are too abstract to reflect the complex reality of being Métis" (p. xxv), which may not simply mean bearing legal rights but may cover aspects including self- identification or asserting political power. In this context, Ian Peach provides a history of Métis Aboriginal rights jurisprudence in Canada. He

focusses on how court actions since the Powley case seem to reflect a change in thinking about Métis people as 'not quite' First Nations to a distinct group, a move that was slowed by the lack of legislative records of recognition. Conversely, Jeremy Patzer challenges Powley as a key moment of Métis recognition. Instead, he claims that the essentialist characteristics put forth by the decision gloss over complexities and divides previously united people by drawing new lines between them, problematizing the very notion of legal classification.

Works in the "Politics" section begin with Kelly Saunders' essay on how Métis organizations evolved from early self-government endeavours. She stresses that Métis people have continually pushed against state-imposed boundaries, using all available tools. However, she highlights the problems that come with over-reliance on Western-influenced political structures. Siomonn Pulla also provides a historical overview of Métis associations but does so in a broader context; she maintains that Métis movements "cannot … be examined completely in isolation from coexisting Indigenous political organizations and the development of a national Canadian Indian policy" (pp. 397-398). Legislation, including the Indian Act, from which Métis peoples were largely excluded, left them comparatively unrestrained. Janique Dubois looks at the evolution of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S), the

MN-S Constitution, and *The Métis Act* in Saskatchewan. She describes them as legislative tools allowing for the realization of measurable Métis self-determination. Lastly, the final essay by Christopher Adams employs "interest group" theory and uses interviews with Métis leaders across Canada to discuss the tools used by Métis groups for the purpose of lobbying, advocating and taking legal action in order to influence governments and public opinion on key issues.

The individual essays are, perhaps inevitably, injected with the technical vocabularies of the authors' respective fields. Even so, the authors appear to have gone to some lengths to make their ideas clear to interdisciplinary audiences. Additionally, the helpful introduction explains many of the texts' broad arguments in more accessible terms. Consequently, the collection is a valuable source for any professional interested in Métis scholarship. However, the compilation's style and diction are targeted towards an academic audience, which may deter more casual readers. Similarly, the book will be better appreciated by readers previously exposed to academic research on the Métis. Nevertheless, *Métis in Canada* is a must-read for anyone, in any field, who is interested in critical perspectives on the Métis reality in Canada.

Joanne DeCosse
Carleton University

Ernest Oberholtzer, *Bound for the Barrens: Journal of the Ernest Oberholtzer and Billy Magee 2,000-mile Canoe Voyage to Hudson Bay in 1912.* **Edited by Jean Sanford Replinger with Nancy Paddock, Marshall, Minnesota: Mallard Island Books, 2012, 248 pages. ISBN 978-0-9849052-0-1, $19.95 (paperback)**
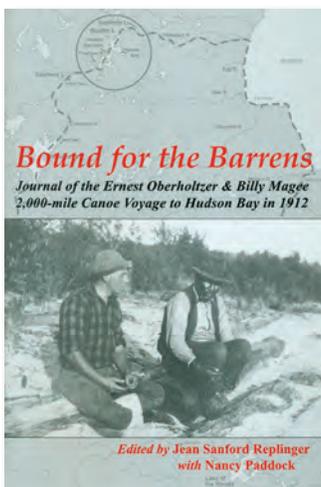
As the title of this book indicates, in the early 1900s American traveller and author, Ernest Oberholtzer, and Anishinaabe traveller, Billy Magee, undertook a journey of some two thousand miles: from central Manitoba, north to Nueltin Lake, east on the Thlewiaza River to Hudson Bay, south along the coast to Churchill and York Factory, and then southwest along Hayes River to Gimli on Lake Winnipeg. This was a remarkable journey for any time. Not only was it accomplished in one season (133 days), but it was done at a time when sections of this route were largely unmapped and had not been travelled by Euro-North Americans since the expedition of English explorer Samuel Hearne and Chipewyan leader

Matonabee from Churchill across the Barren Grounds to the Coppermine River in 1770–1772, and later by surveyor J. B. Tyrrell of the Geological Survey of Canada in 1893 and 1894.

But the title does not tell the whole story, of course. The book has three parts: a prologue, the journal with photos, and an afterword. The former deals with utilitarian matters of the book's production, but does not provide a comprehensive overview of the journey, its inception and aftermath—an omission at a point that I found to be unfortunate, as the journal itself does not make thrilling reading.

The journal outlines quotidian activities and understates the inherent complexities and struggles of exploratory travel; however, readers familiar with the North's challenges will readily realize the magnitude of the canoeists' accomplishment. Oberholtzer's prosaic recounting minimizes the resolve and gruelling exertions required to paddle/sail and portage a canoe and all supplies in unknown territories, extreme conditions, and without a guide. Given the difficulties of the journey and the energies expended in daily navigation, it is noteworthy that

Oberholtzer left such a good daily written and photographic record.

The final section of the book was, to me, the most interesting. In addition to ancillary documents, the afterword contains a synthesis by Robert Cockburn, which explains the significance of the events dispassionately described by Oberholtzer.

The twenty-eight-year-old Oberholtzer prepared for his trip by voraciously studying travel accounts of the Barrens. He engaged the services of Billy Magee, without whom he would not have embarked on this journey. Fifty-one-year-old Magee had previously been Oberholtzer's canoeing companion in the Rainy River district. The present journey was undertaken in an eighteen-foot Chestnut "Guide Special," made by the Chestnut Canoe Company of Fredericton, New Brunswick. It is sobering to think that the loss of the canoe or supplies in rapids could have resulted in a very different outcome. Oberholtzer's decision on 8 August 1912 to substitute the original intention of following Tyrrell's route to the Kazan River with a trip down the Thlewiaza to Churchill was critical in their survival and success. A demanding part of the journey was finding the exit from Nueltin Lake to Thlewiaza River without a map and without a current to follow. At another crucial point 120 miles from Churchill, they were greatly helped by an Inuit family headed by Uturuuq (*Bite*) and Tassiuq; without this timely assistance it is doubtful whether Oberholtzer and Magee could have succeeded. A copy of Oberholtzer's map of this largely unexplored territory (at a scale of three miles to the inch and accurate given the circumstances of its compilation) was sent to the Chief Cartographer in Ottawa, who did not seem to recognize the scale of the accomplishment and the importance of this information.

The utility of *Bound for the Barrens* lies in making the journal and excellent photographs accessible as a primary reference, as Oberholtzer did not publish any of these materials, despite his best intentions.

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Verna J. Kirkness, *Creating Space: My Life and Work in Indigenous Education.* Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013, 194 pages. ISBN 978-0-88755-743-9, $34.95 (paperback)
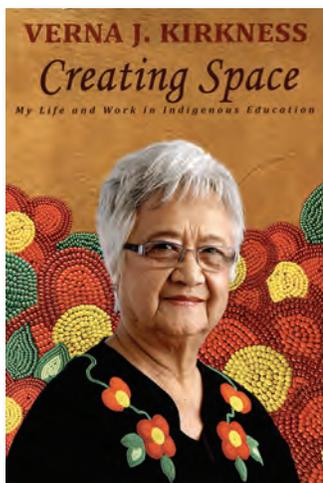
This is both a very important book and a timely one. It documents thoroughly and systematically the development of Indian Control of Indian Education from the perspective of a gifted innovator and tireless advocate in the field. The detailed chronology of accomplishments provides an incentive to continue this critical endeavour and to safeguard the gains made over the past half-century. Moreover, these milestones should be instructive in the current debate over federal legislation that could mandate greater Aboriginal control of education, the most crucial factor in the continuing struggle for Aboriginal self-determination today.

Verna J. Kirkness was born in Fisher River, Manitoba. Her love of school surfaced there when, as a preschooler, she hoped to enroll in the neighbourhood school by knocking on the door, but was denied entry because of her age. When she was finally admitted, signs of her ingenious nature came to light almost immediately. Verna translated nursery rhymes into her original Cree and then recited them at home to the delight of family members.

Kirkness' passion for learning quickly evolved into a desire to teach that led her to Manitoba Normal School, where she gained a teaching certificate in 1957. Kirkness later obtained a Master of Education degree and a tenured position at University of British Columbia (UBC), the position from which she retired in 1993, although she continues to further Indigenous education to this day.

During the course of her career, Verna taught at two residential schools, one of which she was unable to attend as a student because she was non-status at the time. She counselled school children in Winnipeg and supervised teachers and schools in Manitoba's Frontier School Division, where she initiated the hiring and training of Aboriginal aides and recognized the need for more Indigenous teachers. Soon after, as a freelance consultant, Kirkness and University of Manitoba educator, Bruce Sealey, translated provincial curricula into Cree, which resulted in the Manitoba Native Bilingual Program that was in place for eleven years before being cut by Indian Affairs.

Kirkness supported the Manitoba chiefs' opposition to the 1969 White Paper and was involved in composing their position paper entitled *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows.* This move resulted in the joint method of decision making on educational matters that henceforth included the Manitoba government, the Department of Indian Affairs and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood (MIB). After a brief stint as director of education for the MIB, Kirkness became the first director of education for the National Indian Brotherhood

(NIB) where she worked closely with NIB chiefs George Manuel and Harold Cardinal.

By her own admission a 'take-charge person,' Kirkness brought innovation and change to every position that she embarked upon. She became notorious among her UBC colleagues for her continuous supply of ground-breaking ideas, and it was here that her greatest strides were made. She became the first Aboriginal person to supervise UBC's Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP). Under her leadership the program expanded to include six additional field centres throughout the province. Verna recalls recruiting a mother for the NITEP program who was waiting on a beach to collect her children from school. She also noted that NITEP influenced the regular teacher education program at UBC, specifically in its placement of students into practice-teaching situations at an early stage in their programs.

In addition, Kirkness developed and taught in the graduate program named Ts''kel ('golden eagle') that prepared students to work in band schools. She introduced students to, and engaged them in, experiential learning long before it became adopted by the wider university community.

Recognizing the pivotal role of culture in learning, Kirkness stopped at nothing in order to broaden, deepen and increase the relevancy of education for Aboriginal students. To this end she was instrumental in setting up UBC's First Nations House of Learning and, through arduous fundraising efforts and planning, realized her dream of establishing a longhouse on campus in 1993.

An ardent researcher and writer herself, she instigated and chaired *Mokakit* ('in search of wisdom'), a forum where Aboriginal academics could develop and discuss research projects and interests. Kirkness expanded the parameters of Aboriginal education to the international level. In 1987, she organized the first World Conference of Indigenous People in Education. This conference is currently known as World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education (WiPC:E).

Kirkness' dedication to family and friends parallels her love of education. The personal history of her life is woven seamlessly into the narrative of her iconic professional journey, adding a colourful and endearing human dimension that is liberally sprinkled with humorous anecdotes and a substantial photo collection.

This volume is well organized and accessible to both educators of all levels and to the general public. Carefully balanced with endeavours that were not entirely successful, including her release from a job in her own community, this narrative tends to be evaluative in nature and always acknowledges co-workers and the team effort that went into all undertakings.

Throughout her career Kirkness has published widely. Conveniently, the appendices include her archival materials and lists of publications, honours and awards. Verna Kirkness is clearly a woman ahead of her time and one that has unbolted many doors in order to 'create space' in the education system for Indigenous Peoples. Her past and continuing work both inspires and informs the burgeoning number of stellar educators who have followed in her footsteps.

Denise Fuchs
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William J. Buxton (ed.), *Harold Innis and the North: Appraisals and Contestations.* Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013, 432 pages. ISBN 9780773541641, $32.95 (paperback)
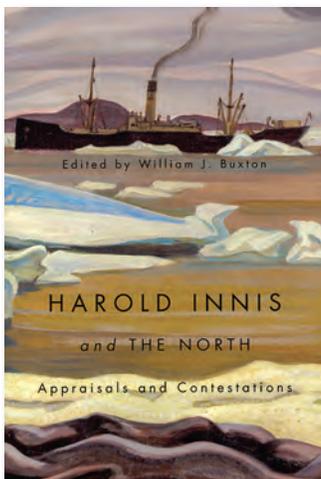
Few early-20th-century figures continue to stand as tall in Canadian historiography as Harold Adams Innis. Widely recognized for developing the 'staples thesis' through books like *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930) and *The Cod Fisheries* (1940), his principle contribution was in showing how the distribution of resources and the network of Canadian river basins together have guided the exploitation of the North American continent by international markets. For Innis, the political territory of Canada emerged along an east-west axis already shaped by the successive demands for different staple goods that had drawn Europeans into the interior. Though a self-effacing economic historian, it is Innis's contribution to this broad national imagination that has shaped his legacy. He offered a theory that his contemporaries and followers eagerly took up: that of a Canada based on its geography. Historians after Innis either recognized powerful deterministic environmental forces described by the Laurentian thesis, or analyzed the forces of centralization and dispersal borne out in Canada's metropolis-hinterland settlement patterns. Innis remains an important figure for those hoping to understand Canada's resource economy, which makes this book, edited by William Buxton and his eleven contributors, a timely volume. Together they read Innis through an equally timely concern—the place of the north in Canada—hoping to investigate what the con-

nections reveal. Most of the essays address this question admirably, although not always according to the blueprint set out by the editor.

Through the 1920s and 1930s, Innis made a series of summer voyages to the Mackenzie River, Yukon Territory, northern Manitoba, and Labrador. These trips mark the departure point for many of the essays in this volume. They argue that Innis's time spent in the north, and the considerable effort he made thinking about it for the remainder of his life (even travelling to Russia as a northern expert with the Soviet Academy of Sciences in the 1940s), deserve greater credit for shaping his writing and role as a public intellectual. Buxton's introductory essay helpfully lays out what this re-appraisal means, insisting that Innis's thought was guided by what he witnessed in the north: a second industrial revolution unfolding around the changes propelled by gasoline engines and advancements in transportation. He finds how, rather than noting the influence of physical environment on cultural development, Innis borrowed from the influences of possiblism and the development theories of Thorstein Veblen to examine how, "industrial technology prevailed in the building of civilization, in spite of Canada's daunting natural terrain" (p. 15). The "cyclonic" development of shipping on the Mackenzie or the Hudson Bay Railway to Churchill was for Innis evidence of a north-south axis of development, not an east-west one as so many historians and others have interpreted. This is just one of the misconceptions Buxton aims to dispel from the traditional hagiography on Innis (established by his reverential colleague and first biographer, Donald Creighton). Buxton suggests that, by breaking apart the larger stories of Innis's life and writing into "micro-narratives," we can see his preoccupation with the north, including his development of northern studies at the University of Toronto, his work on the Arctic Survey, his contributions to Canadian state agencies, and his ardent public campaigning for development in the northern frontier. Even his opus, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, is reopened for questioning, repositioned as "a work that was still in progress" as part of a larger thinking about the north (p. 25).

Some of the chapters in *Harold Innis and the North* take up the mantle of 'appraising' the historiography. George Colpitts considers how Innis's writing on the economics of conservation might have influenced the staples thesis, Jeff Webb ties his northern travels to the undervalued work on the cod fisheries, while Jim Mochoruk measures his work as an advocate who helped to rescue the north from being seen as a marginal 'wasteland' to the rest of Canada. Other essays seem to draw their analyses from elsewhere, many citing Matthew Evenden's 1999 article, originally published in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, "The Northern Vision of Harold Innis," reprinted in Buxton's collection to add completeness to the volume. This clearly leads the 'contestations' group, as Evenden is less willing to accept Innis's scholarly distance. He suggests that a northern imagery is more appropriate, showing how Innis accepted older mythologies of the north as a place of regeneration and wove these into a narrative about the rebirth of Canada through a new industrial frontier. Here we also see Innis carefully crafting a career for himself as a public intellectual and booster for northern development, showing scant concern for the 'marginal' peoples and First Nations indigenous to the north. Innis's northern travels bear this out – he conducted interviews with Hudson's Bay Company officials and mining engineers, reifying what he already expected to see in the frontier. Liza Piper's comparative essay on the gender barriers faced by Irene Biss, Innis's doctoral student, shows how important positionality and privilege were in constructing this northern vision.

There is a wealth of interesting content in this book. All the essays are terse, engaging, and consider new material. However, readers sitting down with this thick volume may not be surprised mid-way to find a recognizable fatigue set in at the prospect of reading yet another essay that begins by retracing Harold Innis's northern itinerary. This makes the final two chapters of the volume by Shirley Roburn and Peter C. Van Wyck a welcome change. What makes these chapters different is they consider not what the north meant for Innis *then*, but what Innis means for the north *now*. Both seem to willfully disobey the rules by delving into Innis's 1950s texts on media, empire and communications to think about the knowledge economy that structures contemporary relations between north and south. Van Wyck's chapter (also previously published) considers what insights Innis may have for outsiders who study the north and must learn "how to narrate a place and a time as a stranger" (p. 348). Roburn's essay considers a similar matter—how Innis's thought on unconscious biases and knowledge economies may point the way to repealing the uneven geography of communication between the southern Canadian state and northern indigenous communities. Roburn is less concerned with valorizing or critiquing Innis, arguing instead that his greater contribution is not specific to the north, or even Canada: "Innis set an example for academics, encouraging them to be actively involved in shaping the institutional arrangements that define how knowledge is discovered and circulated" (p. 319). It is no small wonder that Innis is such an abiding figure of interest.

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Aya Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity: Japanese, Ukrainians, and Scots, 1919-1971.* Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012, 256 pages. ISBN 9780887557378, $27.95 (paperback)
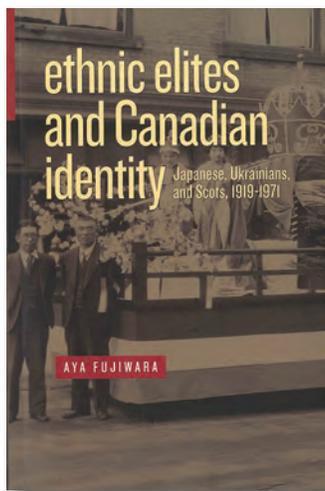
In this book Aya Fujiwara sets out to contextualize ethnic group leaders in Canada as they laid the groundwork for modern Canadian multiculturalism prior to the 1960s. Elites in the various communities were essential for communicating the needs and promoting the values of each group (both to themselves and mainstream society).

The study compares three groups: Japanese, Ukrainians, and Scots, each with very different group experiences. While the Japanese were racially defined in their early period in Canada and made up a very small percentage of the population of the western provinces, the Ukrainians were defined by the mainstream more for their religious and linguistic differences, and they made up a significant proportion of the prairie demographic. These differences between the groups are well discussed, with clear repercussions for later political inclusion and activism in Canada. More description of the initial reasons for immigration of Japanese and Ukrainian settlers would have been helpful at the outset, since these reasons may help us better understand later developments.

The Scots were a very different case, having a much longer immigration history in Canada and with huge numbers, making up a good proportion of mainstream society. Ethnic consciousness, such as it was, relied mostly on a handful of politicians and scholars who hoped to retain Scottish myths and symbols. The choice of Scots as a comparative element in the study is interesting, and Fujiwara relates a number of times that people of Scottish background did not form an ethnic community. This inclusion of the Scots does, however, provide a mainstream contrast, as well as ways to conceptualize ethnicity other than as a tool for group political action.

Throughout her analysis, Fujiwara is sensitive to the conflicts and tensions within the ethnic groups she studies. Among the Japanese there were tensions between the *issei* and *nisei* (first- and second-generation), while among the Ukrainians the dominant conflicting groups were nationalists and communists. It is telling that this type of intra-ethnic tension was absent from Scottish descendants, who helped define the mainstream and whose "ethnicity" was not used for self-protection or political aims.

For some Ukrainians and Japanese the constant references to the homeland went hand-in-hand with nationalist tendencies, and this created a dangerous complexity in times of international conflict. Many *issei* tended to identify with the Japanese Emperor and the myth of common descent with the Yamato race. Japanese imperialism in the 1930s and 1940s severely tested this fidelity, and the internal dynamics were forever changed with the Second World War and Japanese-Canadian experiences of internment and property confiscation. Leaders of the Ukrainian National Federation in the 1930s hoped that the Nazi regime might redraw national boundaries in Europe, potentially liberating Ukraine from Soviet rule. Once the war actually began, however, most Ukrainians in Canada whole-heartedly supported the Canadian war effort. This event was used by Ukrainian organizations afterward to promote the "Third Element" of Canadian culture (all the ethnic groups that were not British or French in origin) in a bid for true multiculturalism. Communist Ukrainian-Canadians, on the other hand, made it clear they felt ethnicity was transient and at worst isolationist, making it at odds with the promotion of an international communism.

Chapter 6, "Ethnic Movements and the Road to Multiculturalism," is the strongest chapter in the book and outlines in considerable detail the rise of multiculturalism as national trope and the part ethnic elites played in this development. Fujiwara reminds us that "all parties promoted the concept as Canada's new identity" (p. 156), including mainstream Canadians. Inspired in part by post-war Human Rights developments and their own experiences, ethnic elites nevertheless emphasized very different visions about what multiculturalism meant. While Ukrainian nationalists were the most active in seeking "collective rights" and acceptance of linguistic and religious differences, Japanese Canadians and Ukrainian communists sought basic human rights regardless of ideology or race. The Canadian government felt real pressure in the 1960s as a result of changing demographics in the nation, of Canada's explicit commitment to the Declaration of Human Rights, and of the rise of Quebec nationalism. Fujiwara presents a subtle analysis of the implications of ethno-nationalism and multiculturalism in this context. Multiculturalism was eventually somewhat successful in actually diffusing "collective rights" movements that promoted regionalism and separation, while at the same time acknowledging the lack of Canadian cultural homogeneity and the worthiness of different ethnic backgrounds.

Ethnicity is notoriously difficult to define, and early in the book the very idea of what is "ethnic" is explored as a necessary starting point for the entire study. Fujiwara's

analysis is useful because it does not rely on a single defining element. Homeland memory, rhetoric, religion, symbol use, and myths (old and new) are all investigated as tools of ethnic identity construction and negotiation with a larger society. Among scholars, ethnicity is often seen as an instrument for achieving group objectives. Other definitions view ethnicity as a primordial set of dispositions that bind people together based on shared memories and

values, especially during times of social stress. It can of course be both things, and ethnic identification (adaptable as it can be) is generally most strongly represented during times of discomfort or conflict with the host nation-state. Fujiwara's book makes this dynamic clear.

Roland Sawatzky
The Manitoba Museum

Letter to the Editors

As a researcher with 35 years of experience with oral history and, disclosing my personal involvement frankly, Alison Marshall's research collaborator, I found Stephen Grandpre's review of Marshall's *The Way of the Bachelor: Early Chinese Settlement in Manitoba* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2011) problematic. Though the review begins with a good synopsis of the book's contents, its conclusion descends to a polemic showing a poor understanding of critical historiography's practices since at least the 1980s. I trust that *Manitoba History* readers will consult *Bachelor* themselves, and judge its merits with a better recognition of current scholarship than this reviewer's. Here are my concerns.

First, Grandpre seems puzzled that despite Marshall's (correct) assertion that her book is not *only* "a record of racial discrimination and tasteless prejudice," it nevertheless contains "extensive discussion of experiences of just this kind" (Grandpre, p. 39). Surely any accurate record of the history of Chinese experiences in Canada must address such crucial issues.

Second, he asserts that "Marshall relies on oral interviews" "[d]ue to the lack of extensive primary sources" (Grandpre, p. 39). At least since Jan Vansina's *Oral Tradition* (1961), the fallacy of oral testimony as a source of last resort and necessarily inaccurate (with the generally unexamined corollary of print documents as fundamentally truthful and authentic) must be set aside. Grandpre's "major concern" about "the lack of reliable documentation" (p. 40) illustrates unfamiliarity with ethical principles enjoining that research consultants' names and identifying information must not be disclosed without their express consent. Marshall should be congratulated for earning the trust of the individuals and communities she worked with, not vilified for practicing necessary ethical discretion.

Third, Grandpre calls *Bachelor* "far more impressionistic than explanatory" (p. 40) suggesting again his lack of sophistication in historiographic discourses. At least from Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973), historians recognise that their own positions and ideologies affect the history they write, and that a conventional, apparently simple, linear account is by no means unbiased. Grandpre also objects to Marshall's use of "I," a practice which frankly recognises that history (like other scholarship) derives from the individual who writes it, as well as from the sources s/he encounters. Grandpre's own use of "one," in "[o]ne

cannot ignore the feeling that..." (p. 40) betrays that even he cannot avoid his own subjectivity; he simply chooses to couch it as if it were general and shared, not his own personal position.

Fourth, dismissing *Bachelor* as "anthropological" (Grandpre, p. 40) posits anthropology and history as antithetical, and ignores their productive interplay in works by notable historians like Natalie Zemon Davis, and luminary anthropologists like James Clifford. Their inflected accounts, like Marshall's, foster critical thinking about both disciplines.

Finally, the presumption that "prosaic theories and terms (such as 'social heat' and 'homosociality')" would be "incomprehensible to" (Grandpre, p. 40) Marshall's Chinese community research consultants—in essence, that all members of a sociocultural collectivity lack academic background—betrays the reviewer's own narrow worldview.

Pauline Greenhill
University of Winnipeg
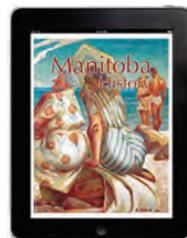
Rare Footage of the 1939 Royal Visit: The R. A. Storch Films

by Wayne Chan
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In April 2013, the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections acquired six 16-mm films from Peter Wachniak of Peter's Auction Sales, Ltd. in Winnipeg. The films were from the estate of R. A. (Rudolph Alexander) Storch, a graduate of civil engineering from the University of Manitoba (1927), who went on to become a teacher and vice-principal at various schools in Winnipeg. Upon Storch's passing in 1988,[1] Wachniak purchased the estate and sold off most of the contents in the intervening years, but these films remained in his possession.[2]

Of the six films acquired by the University of Manitoba, three mainly showed local school track and field events and the old Osborne Street stadium,[3] but it was the remaining three films that were of the most interest and which will be the focus of this article. They depict the visit to Winnipeg of King George VI and his consort, Queen Elizabeth, in 1939. One film is in black & white[4] and one is in colour,[5] with the third film being a duplicate of the colour one.[6] The colour and black & white films are both slightly over four minutes in duration and are in remarkably good condition, considering they were stored in paper boxes in an unheated and un-air-

Winnipeg Evening Tribune, 20 May 1939, p. 8.

Map of the royal procession route along Sherbrook Avenue. Black bars indicate location of school groups, and black dots represent first-aid stations. Cecil Rhodes students were assigned to the west side of Sherbrook between Notre Dame Avenue and Sargent Avenue.

conditioned trailer since 2004, and prior to that were stored in an unheated warehouse.[7]

The University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections transferred the original 16-mm films to digital video and released the film footage to the public on 20 May 2014,[8] to coincide with the visit to Winnipeg of Charles, the Prince of Wales, and Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall. In contrast to the relatively low-key visit of Prince Charles and his wife, the reception for his grandparents 75 years earlier was anything but low-key. By all accounts, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth arrived in Winnipeg on 24 May 1939 to a raucous welcome. Over 100,000 people were on hand to greet the royal couple,[9] and thousands of schoolchildren were bused in from rural areas for the event.[10] These numbers included an estimated 20,000 Americans, who came to Winnipeg for the royal visit.[11]

A significant part of the king and queen's visit to Winnipeg consisted of a 26-mile procession through the city.[12] The Storch films show parts of this procession as it made its way through the West End of Winnipeg. Featured prominently are elementary and high-school-aged students waiting for the arrival of the procession.

We clearly know when the films were shot, but where exactly in Winnipeg were they shot? The limited field of view of the camera, the transitions in the footage, and the geographical changes that have taken place in the last 75 years made it challenging, but most of the places seen in the films were eventually identified, based on a detailed analysis of the footage and historical research.

The black & white film presents a narrative of students from Cecil Rhodes School going to watch the royal

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A: UMA, R. A. Storch fonds, PC 334 (A13-23), Box 2, Item 1. B: Google Inc. C-F: UMA, R. A. Storch fonds, PC 334 (A13-23), Box 2, Item 1.

Rare images from a royal visit. *A:* Cecil Rhodes students standing on William Avenue West, behind the original Cecil Rhodes School No. 1. *B:* Google Street View image of same building, May 2012. *C:* Schoolchildren on Notre Dame Avenue near Sherbrook. A North Star Oil service station and Somerset School are visible in the background. *D:* Schoolchildren and other spectators on the west side of Sherbrook Avenue, in front of the Tremont Block at 694 Sherbrook. *E:* Students posing for the camera. In the background on the right side is the "Uneeda Transfer" garage, which was located at 671 Sherbrook Avenue. *F:* King George VI and Queen Elizabeth passing by on Sherbrook Avenue.

procession. It begins with a group of mainly older students walking on William Avenue W. behind the original Cecil Rhodes School No. 1, which is now the Adolescent Parent Centre on Cecil Street. In the next segment, we see a group of young children walking past streetcars on Notre Dame Avenue, heading east towards Sherbrook Avenue. A North Star Oil service station, which was at the corner of Notre Dame and Sherbrook,[13] is evident, along with Somerset School in the background. The remainder of the B & W film shows the Cecil Rhodes students and other spectators waiting on Sherbrook Avenue for the arrival of the royal motorcade. Schools were assigned to specific reserved areas along the procession route, and Cecil Rhodes School, where R. A. Storch was a teacher at the time, was assigned to the west sidewalk on Sherbrook Avenue, between Notre Dame and Sargent Avenue. [14]

The colour film starts with a group of schoolchildren standing in front of the Tremont Block at 694 Sherbrook. Many of the Cecil Rhodes students are wearing blue and white beanie caps with the letters "C.R." on them, while other students can be seen wearing a crest with the initials "C.R.S." A little later, we see the royal motorcade pass by, with the king and queen riding in an open car. The segment afterwards shows the royal procession travelling down Main Street, near the present-day turnoff to the Disraeli Freeway (which did not exist in 1939). The location was established by the tall building in the background with a sign on its roof that read, "Bible House." This was identified as the British and Foreign Bible Society Building at 184 Alexander Avenue.[15] The building still exists and is now the Ukrainian Cultural and Education Centre.

In the brief segment that follows, the colour film portrays the Hudson's Bay Company "rent" ceremony at the Upper Fort Garry Gate, in which the governor of the HBC paid the customary tribute of two elk heads and two black beaver skins to the king.[16] The camera then shows Union Station across the street, with members of Lord Strathcona's Horse visible in brass helmets and red tunics.[17] Next, we see a shot of a passing train (possibly the Royal Train leaving the city) and an unidentified road stretching into the distance.

This marked the end of the footage concerning the royal tour. At the 3:00 mark, the colour film cuts to a scene of a woman walking to the front of a house. This was ascertained to be the Storch residence at 7 Leslie Avenue in GlenElm.[18] The film ends with a group of people (possibly the Storch family) on an outing. The man who is seen kneeling and then reclining in front of the others (time index 4:00) bears a resemblance to R. A. Storch, based on his 1927 University of Manitoba yearbook photo.[19] These final segments may have been shot on a different date from the footage of the royal visit.

The R. A. Storch films are less about the royal visit than they are about the people who were there on that day. The films offer a rare and invaluable glimpse into the lives of everyday citizens on one memorable day in the history of Winnipeg. Looking at the footage 75 years later, one cannot help but wonder what happened to the children in the films, even the youngest of whom would be in their late seventies now. Their excitement on that day is palpable, and is made no less poignant by our knowledge of the world events that were to transpire in the months and years ahead. ◈

Notes

1. *Winnipeg Free Press*, "Rudolph Alexander Storch" (obituary), 17 January 1988, p. 28.

2. Peter Wachniak, personal communication, 28 May 2014.

3. University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections, R.A. Storch fonds, PC 334 (A13-23), Box 2, Items 3-5.

4. *Ibid.*, Box 2, Item 1.

5. *Ibid.*, Box 2, Item 2.

6. *Ibid.*, Box 2, Item 6.

7. Wachniak, communication, 28 May 2014.

8. *Winnipeg Free Press* – Online Edition, "U of M Archives Release Never-Seen-Before Footage of Earlier Royal Visit," http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/U-of-M-archives-release-never-seen-before-footage-of-earlier-Royal-visit--259979831.html, Accessed 2 June 2014.

9. *Winnipeg Free Press*, "Their Majesties Captivate Hearts of Winnipeg," 24 May 1939, p. 2.

10. *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, "Royal Procession Changes Are Made," 17 February 1939, p. 3.

11. Bousfield, Arthur and Garry Toffoli. *Royal Spring: The Royal Tour of 1939, and the Queen Mother in Canada*, Toronto: Dundurn, 1989, p. 43.

12. *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, "Route and Times of Royal Procession Shown in Map and Official Program," 20 May 1939, p. 8.

13. *1938 Henderson's Winnipeg Directory*, Winnipeg: Henderson Directories, p. 1000.

14. *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 17 February 1939, p. 3.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 581.

16. *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, "Old Days of West Recalled as King Gets Tribute From Hudson's Bay Co.," 25 May 1939, p. 8.

17. *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, "'Straths' Rehearse," 18 May 1939, p. 3.

18. *1938 Henderson's Winnipeg Directory*, p. 1155.

19. University of Manitoba Students' Union. *Brown and Gold 1927*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Students' Union, 1927, pp. 75, 141.

20. *1938 Henderson's Winnipeg Directory*, p. 1193.

The two Storch films are available for viewing on YouTube:
(colour) www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqqC5rLRtew
(B&W) www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yB6pH-D1cI

The University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections has a lot more than University records.

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http://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca

Robert Donald Bruce (1911–1980)

Artist and illustrator.

Born at Grandview, Manitoba on 17 April 1911, son of Robert A. Bruce and Alice M. Coxworth, he grew up in Winnipeg. He was enrolled at the Winnipeg School of Art from 1928 to 1931. In the mid-1930s he departed for London, England, where he worked as a freelance illustrator. He returned to Canada in 1940. Shortly thereafter he became head of art at the *Winnipeg Free Press*. In 1943 he painted his first Winnipeg mural, and murals always were his most important work. He served as an official war artist during the Second World War although he never went abroad. After the war he studied in New York City, then taught art at the University of Buffalo from 1949 to 1955. He returned in 1955 to teach at the School of Art at the University of Manitoba, retiring in 1976. He and wife Melba Armour Cumberland had two children, including artist Katherine Bruce. He died at an artists' colony at Tacambaro, Mexico on 30 October 1980 and was buried there. A collection of his papers is held at the University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections.