

A Slice Of The Parkland

circa the late 1890s-1970s

by
Edward S. Stozek

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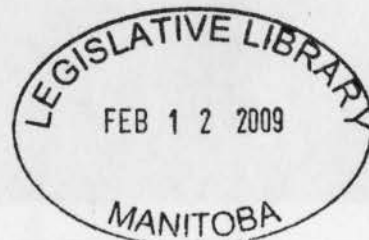
Stories circa 1899-1976

Including:

Eastern Europeans, relief camps, country stores, the
wood industry, plane crashes and crimes from the
1930s...



Photo of Semko and Malania Hutsal's horses



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A Slice Of The Parkland

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Stozek, Edward S.

1952-

Canadian History—The Parkland area in Manitoba from 1899-1976

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First edition— October 2008

Dedicated to Jan, my lifelong partner and soul mate in life, and to our children, Warren and his wife Shanie, Troy and Ashleigh.

Cover photo "Lake Of The Prairies" by Ed Stozek

Many of the photos used in the book came from the Fort Dauphin Museum. If you want to spend an interesting day basking in the past, visit and support the Fort Dauphin Museum.

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While growing up on the farm I learned to drive the Case 5 tractor at a young age. When one spends many hours doing field work, it is an excellent opportunity to reflect, think about life and use one's imagination.



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The background blurred photo is the cover of my father's passport

Forward...

After releasing my first book, *The Saw-Mill Boys, German P.O.W.'s and Conscientious Objectors*, in November 2007, the response was so positive that I was encouraged to do the research for this book. Many people phoned me with their stories, so all of the new contacts and new information really helped in "putting together" this new project.

The Parkland is a unique area that encircles the Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba. There is a great deal of history steeped within its confines. As the First Nations, the fur-traders and the European settlers came to this area, they each contributed a "slice" to the Parkland. In the late 1890s, the Eastern European settlers brought with them their hopes and their dreams. World War I contributed new problems, as these settlers who were once needed to populate the area, were now considered "enemy aliens." World War I was followed by the "roaring twenties", however, the Depression slowed the whole country down. Thousands of unemployed men travelled from coast to coast trying to find non-existent jobs. World War II would bring an end to the stagnant economy. The fifties and sixties brought in a new era of wealth and mobility which eventually led to rural de-population and the collapse of the family farm and small town businesses..

As a young boy growing up on my parent's farm in the Oakburn area, I was exposed to the rich history of the Parkland. Hydro electricity was installed at our farm when I was a baby. This was an era of transition on farms from hard manual labour and horses to more mechanized means. Farmers bought more land and became more specialized. My father operated a small mixed farm. There was no future in farming for me so by the time I was eighteen I was ready to leave the sanctity of the farm and like most of my peers, I headed to the city.

Though the work was hard and money was scarce, I now fondly reflect upon the era that I grew up in. Most "folks" planted huge gardens and raised poultry and livestock to sustain their families. Chemicals were almost non-existent. Food was pure and abundant and was willingly shared when company came.

Time was a commodity that everyone had especially on a Saturday night out on the town or after church on Sunday. People visited and conversed with friends and relatives. Along with the latest local news, it was not unusual to hear discussions of national and international topics.

Whenever we had company on a Sunday afternoon, my mother would serve a "lunch". Homemade preserves, buns, headcheese and apple pie were the order of the day. Since these were some of the times where I heard so many interesting stories, I decided to title this book, *A Slice Of The Parkland*. These stories are like the many "slices" of great food served by my mother and each "slice" contributes to the unique mosaic from the history of this area.

The historical research for the topics and the anecdotes that the people shared help to paint a picture of the trials and tribulations that they went through. These are their "real life" stories. It is my goal that the reader will enjoy these stories as much as I had in collecting them. A special thank you to the people who so willingly shared their memories. Without these generous individuals, this book would not have been possible.

Prologue To Chapter I

Patterson Lake

Katie left her home in Galicia
Boarded a steamer, rode the waves of the sea
Seeking the freedom that we take for granted
She came to these shores with her family

From Halifax town, they would be bound
On the rails that link us from sea to the sea
The promise of new land would help them to understand
The value of life and their dignity

They prayed for the health of her sister
They prayed for the health of Katie
They prayed for all of the others
The sons and the daughters of their families

A cold wind was blowing as they were unloading
On the shores of a lake on a cold day in May
And sometimes that night, some gave up the fight
In a tent with no heat and asleep on the hay

There was Joseph and Prokop and Peter and Ann
Tomko and Karl and Steve and Sam
Small wooden crosses would help keep the score
On a side of a hill by Patterson's shore

And we are the sons and we are the daughters
Of the people who came here to start a new life
We are the mothers and we are the fathers
In all of our dreams we will keep them alive

c Socan
Ed Stozek

Katie, age 8 and her sister, Marusa, age 4, were two of the forty two children who died in the epidemic.

"They prayed for the health of her sister, they prayed for the health of Katie," echoes the terrible catastrophe that befell a group of Ukrainian settlers in the Oakburn area.



The photo shows the mound of the mass grave and a headstone of six month old Joe Sitko. Along with his parents, Michael and Tekla, his sister Mary, age 10, and brothers Steve, age 6, and John, age 4, they left Poland on the ship Brasillia and landed in Halifax on May 9, 1899. They travelled to Winnipeg and after several days at the Immigration Hall they obtained their rights to their land at the Dominion Lands Office. The family travelled to Strathclair by train and then to Patterson Lake. Joe, along with the children from the other families were buried in individual graves around this area. The mound is a symbol of the catastrophe.

Chapter I

The Eastern European Connection...

Galicians and Sheep Skin Coats

The Slavic immigrants who came to Canada during the late 1800s and early 1900s and settled in the Parkland region faced many physical and mental hardships. Most left their homes in Eastern Europe because they did not want to be in the Austrian army, and the leaflets distributed by Canada's Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, promised abundant rich farm land. Clifford Sifton's Open Door Policy welcomed the "good quality" stalwart peasant born and raised on a farm, whose forefathers had been farmers for ten generations, wearing a sheepskin coat and accompanied by a stout wife and half a dozen children. Little did these pioneers know of the hardships that they would endure, which included turbulent weather, killing frosts, virulent epidemics, and prejudice. The "Open Door Policy" would soon be put on hold as the cannons of the Allies spoke against their former Austrian rulers and the Canadian Government soon deemed these new Canadians as "Enemy Aliens."



Part of a beautiful plaque located at Patterson Lake and dedicated to the Ukrainian immigrants.

Tragedy...

"Katie left her home in Galicia"

For a typical group of Eastern European settlers from Poland or the Ukraine the ocean voyage ended in Halifax in April, 1898 where they first stepped on Canadian soil. On April 25, 1899, the steamship S. S. Palatia docked at Halifax. On board were 356 adults, 210 children and 64 persons under the age of one. They would disembark and look upward toward the Citadel overlooking and guarding this sea port. After a few day's rest and some time to buy necessities such as seed potatoes, 400 headed by rail to Winnipeg and Selkirk by train. One of the groups was assigned homesteads north of Oakburn, Manitoba.

The group was billeted at Dufferin School and the train was long delayed at Winnipeg. While a cold wind was blowing, the women and children waited in the grass alongside the tracks. By the time they reached Strathclair, Manitoba on May 9, three children had died on the train between Portage La Prairie and Minnedosa. By May 11, six more children had died and four more were ill from scarlet fever. There were no permanent markers and in time the graves of the buried children were lost completely. In looking for the Strathclair graves, researchers examined cemeteries throughout the

region. Ultimately, records were found-referring to two plots- one with the bodies of eight Galician children and the other with five in the Bend Cemetery. This cemetery is located some five miles from the present town of Strathclair.

More and more children became ill and there was fear of an epidemic. At Strathclair, the immigrants were housed in a large warm barn where they slept on some hay and cooked their meals over open fires outside. Because many children were sick, families were detained and quarantined in Strathclair, while others left for Patterson Lake (originally called Brunditt's Lake) a distance of 40 kilometres. Fourteen wagons carrying women and children, with the men following on foot, left Strathclair on May 10. They were also accompanied by T. McNutt and John Bodrug (an interpreter) as well as surveyors and engineers. One of the children, Wasyl Swistun's baby, died at Strathclair. The parents kept it a secret so that they could bury the body near their future homestead. The mother held the baby in her arms as they travelled to Patterson Lake in the Olha district.

On May 10, the settlers arrived on a rainy day and were drenched to the skin. Two stoves were placed at opposite sides of the tent. It was difficult to start a fire as the wood was wet. After a meagre supper they went to sleep on the hay that was spread on the frozen ground. The drivers of the wagons had a separate tent as did the surveyors and engineers. Another tent sheltered the men who were sent by the Department of Immigration to look after the settlers. That night, a freak Canadian snowstorm, dumped two inches of snow. A rash covered many of the children's bodies and soon a virulent type of Scarlet Fever claimed more lives. The disease also claimed the lives of three adults. It was later found that since there was such a large number of immigrants, the families were billeted in a school in Winnipeg on their way to their destination and that the son of the custodian had Scarlet Fever. Many of the adults had contracted Scarlet Fever but were fortunate to recover. For two weeks death claimed all but four small children. The lucky four were Marion Woychyshyn, Sam Chichaluk, Matwey Woychyshyn and one little girl. Dan Topol-

**HONORING THE MEMORY
OF 42 CHILDREN AND 3
ADULTS WHO DIED TRAG-
ICALLY IN A SCARLET
FEVER EPIDEMIC IN MAY
1899 (10TH-30TH) AT
PATTERSON LAKE DURING
THE SLAVIC IMMIGRATION
TO MANITOBA**

Joseph, 5 yrs.-only son of Anton & Anna Kalyshyn
Prokip, 4- Peter, 2-sons of Nykola & Ksenia Maydaniuk
Anna, 4- Yurko, 1- children of Michael & Teklia Szwaluk
Tomko, 4- Semko, 2-sons of Harry & Cassie Berehulka
Dokia, Anna, Paraska-daughters of Michael & Anna Woychyshen
Karl, 4- son of Andrew & Anna Woychyshen
Marusia, 4-Katerina, 8- daughters of Harry & Teklia Glushka
Zocia- daughter of Steven & Anna Derkach
Nykola- infant son of Wasyl & Warwara Swystun
Steven, 1- son of George & Maria Chichaluk
Joseph- infant son of Michael & Teklia Sitko
Maria, 2- daughter of Anton & Josephine Sitko
Karl, 6- son of Kost & Anastasia Kotyk
Henry- infant son of Wasyl & Magda Ewanyshen
Karolka, 8- daughter of John & Petrunella Brodie
2 children of Zahery & Anna Jumaga
Magda- wife of Wasyl Ewanyshen
Mrs. Trach- wife of Stanley.
Many remain unidentified

nicky, a pioneer from Oakburn recalled in an interview in *A Tribute To Our Pioneers, From The Past To The Present*, that he was fifteen years old when the plague struck and that he and three other boys his age carried the bodies of the children for burial everyday for two weeks. Close to the tent was a fresh cemetery of considerable size. There were new graves everyday and they were marked with little wooden crosses. It was a pitiful sight to watch the weeping parents kneeling and praying by the graves of their beloved children.



Michael Swistun supervised the building of several "buddas" on his farm in the 1970s.

According to a May 25, 1899 article in the Shoal Lake Star entitled "The Riding Mountain will soon be full of Galicians," it was noted that "We will now have an opportunity of studying their customs, inspecting their morals and judging of their fitness to become settlers in an enlightened and progressive province. We took a trip out there (Brunditt's Lake) last week to size up the newcomers and see what sort of cattle was being turned loose on the country anyway. Some of the women were washing, others ironing, and still others baking. They all appeared to be very happy and contented. Some of the women were fairly good looking, bright and intelligent. Most of the women were in their bare feet, while the rest had on long boots with iron plates in the heels. A few children were sick."

As soon as the land was surveyed, the families moved to their homesteads. For temporary shelters the immigrants built huts made from wooden poles and turf. The budda (small hut) was constructed with split black poplar logs. The logs were stood on end, tent fashion, poles were placed across the top and the whole structure was covered with hay and dirt. These homes had little head room and were heated with a box stove. These were soon replaced by log houses although some families lived in the budda for several winters.

The Strongest Man In The World...

One of the children whose parents settled at Patterson Lake was Michael Swistun. He was born on November 14, 1901. His father, Wasyl Swistun, started the construction of six buddas and the family lived in one until they could build a log house. Sometimes as many as three families lived in a budda. Swistun recalled a three month baby and a seven year old boy dieing from the cold while spending a winter in the budda.

As a young man, Michael became an entertainer. He had natural charisma and eventually discovered that he could lift a bag of grain with his teeth. He performed the trick so many times that his strong jaw could bend iron bars. During the summer of 1923, Swistun's talent soon earned him a spot with the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey circus where he was billed as the strongest man in the world. Swistun went to Winnipeg to see the circus and was impressed by what the Strongest Man In The



Michał Swistun with a set of cymbaly. Photo courtesy of R. Sitko.

World could do. Swistun met with John Ringling and showed him his tricks. Along with bending iron bars with his teeth, he could also support five men on his stomach and hold two automobiles to a standstill with his massive arms. He spent thirty days touring with the circus in Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton. He was to go on to Vancouver and the rest of the world when he received a telegram telling him to come home to help with the harvest. The people from the circus could not believe that Michael would give up the chance to tour the world.

Swistun was always interested in illusions and magic tricks. As a young boy he had sent \$1.00 to Chicago to a magician's correspondence school. He was always captivated by Houdini's magic. Michael saw Houdini perform in Winnipeg and he ended up exchanging letters with him. Michael continued to perform magic tricks after harvest around the small communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan under the title, "Swistun the Magician, Master of 42 Tricks and Illusions." Michael would charge 50 cents for admission and then play for the dance after the show.

During the Depression he would go to a community and do his show for a meal and a place to sleep. In Waha, Alberta he went to the blacksmith shop to pick out six iron rods that he would later bend with his teeth. Unwittingly one of the bars had a spring. When two men couldn't bend the steel rod, Swistun asked for six men. The bar snapped and knocked out his teeth and broke his jaw. He needed surgery in Edmonton. His career came to a sudden halt. Soon his father died and Michael promised that he would take care of the farm.

Some of his tricks in his repertoire included hypnotizing animals and humans. In one incident he hypnotized several local ladies and convinced them that they were wading through deep water so they raised their skirts. The local people of the area thought that his tricks were a form of devilry and Swistun was labeled as an outcast.

Swistun used his carpentry skills to oversee the building of five churches in the area including the St. Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church near his farm in Seech. Other locations included Petlura, Rossburn and Vista. Michael was paid 65 cents an hour with each job lasting two years.

In 1980, film maker, Halya Kuchmij was travelling through western Canada in search of old timers with interesting stories. She was introduced to Michael Swistun whose story became a National Film Board project entitled, "The Strongest Man In The World." When the film was first shown in Swistun's hometown of Olha, there were two screenings with standing room only. Shortly after the film was released, Michael Swistun died at the age of 79. He had attended the film screening in a wheel chair and was no longer the clown of Olha. He was once again "The Strongest Man In The World."

Typical Immigrants...
"Seeking the freedom that we take for granted"

My grandfather, Semko Hutsal, was born in 1877 in the village of Chlopiwka, Husatin in the western Ukraine which was then under Austrian rule. At the age of seven his mother died and once his father re-married, young Semko's life was difficult due to the treatment afforded by his step-mother. At seven year's of age, Semko began work as a shepherd boy. For several years he enjoyed this life, however, he was recruited into the Austrian army. Soon he was trained in swordsmanship and in the Austrian Army he became an excellent horseman. The stint in the army lasted for over ten years. Semko emigrated to Canada in 1901 and worked at different farms in the Strathclair area. Once he made enough money for a homestead, he walked over sixty miles to Dauphin to pay his \$10.00 for his deed of 160 acres of land north of Elphinstone in the Horod area. The Horod location had many rolling hills and reminded Semko of his homeland.

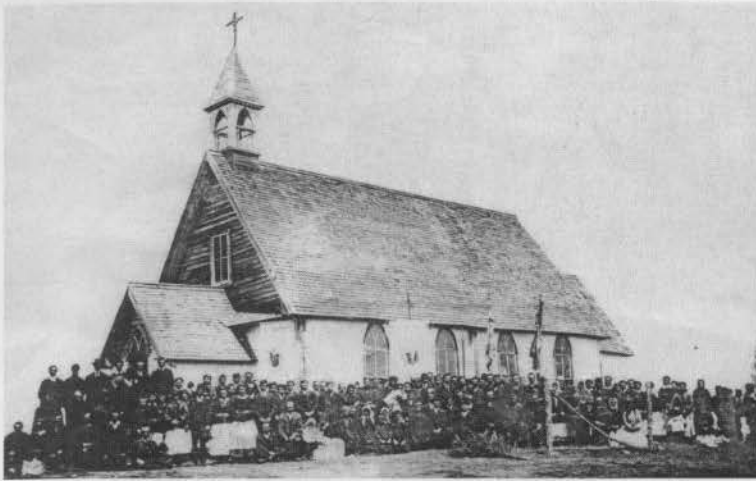
My grandmother, Malania Derenewski, was born in Trybochiwici to Polish parents who lived in the western Ukraine. She arrived in Canada in 1904 with her widowed mother, Ksenka and stayed with Mr. and Mrs. John Wozney, Ksenka's son-in-law and daughter. Ksenka lost her husband, Nicholas, when he was gored to death by a bull in the old country. Ksenka had enough courage to retrieve the body from the raging bull. She picked up an axe and as the bull charged her, she placed a blow between the bull's eyes and killed him.

Malania walked some thirty miles to Minnedosa to work as a domestic where she earned \$4.00 a month. Semko met Malania at a dance in Horod and in February, 1906, they were united in marriage at the St. John Cantius Church. They stayed with the Wozney family until they could build their own house from logs and clay and a thatched roof. Malania's mother moved in with the young couple. When they moved to their new home they already had two oxen. For extra money, Semko cut wood during the day. During the night, Semko and Malania hung a lantern on a branch and cut the wood into cordwood. When there was enough cut, Semko would hitch up the oxen and haul the wood to Strathclair where he would sell it for \$1.25 a cord.

Semko and Malania became members of the Dolony Ukrainian Catholic Church when the pioneers built it. Later, when a church was built in Horod, they transferred their membership to this church. They were blessed with six children, including my mother Annie who was born in 1913. Malania and Ksenka assisted with the chores and along with household duties helped family and neighbours deliver babies.



Semko and Malania Hutsal in 1915



The photo is of the original St. John Cantius Church

St. John Cantius Church...

The Polish and Ukrainian immigrants who arrived in 1899 and settled north of the present Canadian National Railroad Line did not remain long without the presence of a priest. In order to meet the spiritual needs of the people settling in western Canada, the Metropolitan of Western Canada, located in St. Boniface, took the task of organizing missions. In 1881, the Canadian government passed a bill that granted 40 acres of land to the

Oblate Order for the sole purpose of building a church and a school. Polonia and Oakburn became the religious centres covering a vast territory served by Redemptorist priests from Brandon.

In 1899 Archbishop Adelard Langevin requested the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate to serve the Oakburn colony. Since this Order spoke the Slavic language, Father Adalbert Kulaway, based in Brandon, was assigned to the area. He would say masses in the homes of settlers once a month. The first mass was held in Prokip Hrycak's house. Even though Prokip was a Greek Catholic, the Roman Catholic priest was welcome to hold Mass.

By 1900 the people of the Oakburn colony wanted to build a church and originally the quarter section where the Mass Grave is located, was chosen. However this spot was already claimed by a homesteader. Under the guidance of Father Kulaway, ten acres of land was purchased from Dmytro Lazarko in 1900 for \$1.00. A small portion of the cemetery was donated by P. Luhowyj. Father Kulaway was followed by Father Delaere in 1900. Father Archilles Delaere was of Belgium origin and apparently had a good command of the Polish language. Father Delaere resided in Brandon and travelled on horseback to visit settlers in Hun's Valley (Polonia), Erickson, Sandy Lake and finally the Oakburn-Rossburn area. It took him all summer to visit the scattered parish. He encouraged the Polish and Ruthenian settlers to build a church in the district five miles north and one mile east of Oakburn. This area encompassed three townships. It was not unusual to see Father Delaere helping the people to cut logs for the church. The first church was built before the surveyors arrived and unwittingly it was built on the road allowance. This first church was a 40 ft. by 24 ft. log building.

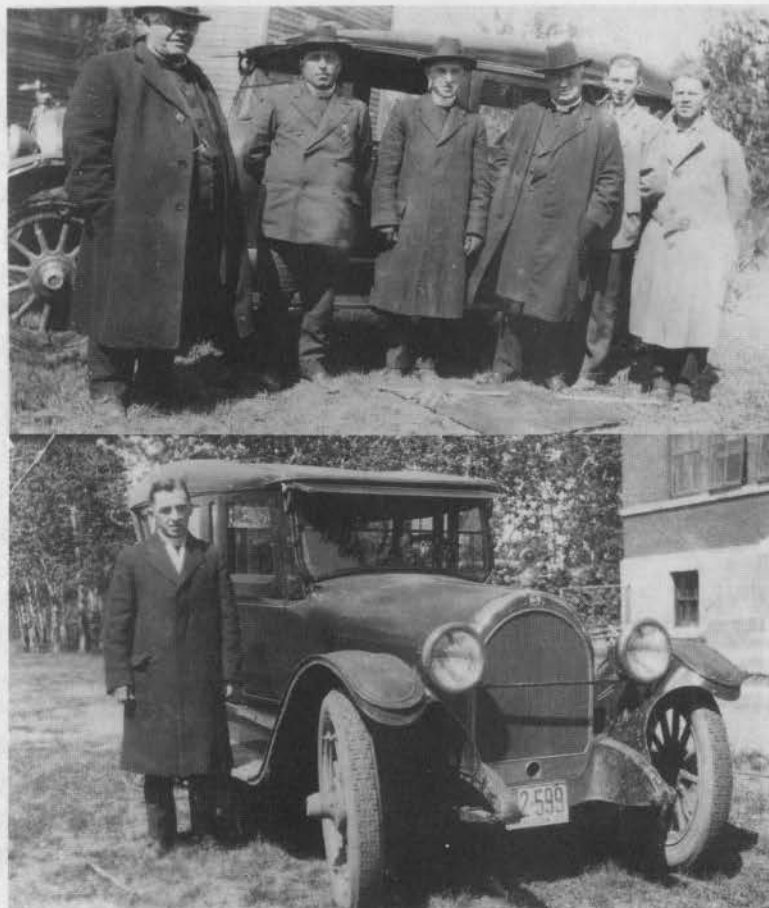
Mike Sytnyk helped Father Delaere hire a farmer, Mr. Black, from Oakburn to haul the logs needed to build the church. Sam and John Yanick, with the help of Mr. Andreychuk and some 150 parishioners built the church. The first Mass was on June 23, 1901. The church was completed in 1902 and blessed by the Archbishop on August 28, 1903 giving the name St. Jean de Kent (St. John Cantius). In 1901 there were 10 marriages, 103 baptisms and one funeral. The first recorded marriage was that of Anna Yaskiw and Michael Hrychak in 1902. The first baptism was that of Nick Macsymchuk. Church records showed that between 1901-1910 there were 178 marriages,

1013 baptisms and 76 funerals.

At one time the church was the spiritual centre for 400 families. After this, the membership began to decline as other churches in the area were built at Olha and Dolyny. Father De-laere left the mission in 1904. Due to poverty, isolation and disagreements between the missionaries and the people, there was a rapid turnover of priests. In 1910 the Brandon office recalled its priests and Rev. Couter, a Redemptorist priest from Yorkton, took charge of the parish. By 1912 Mass was still held only once a month and the parish was still looking for a permanent priest. In 1914 there were still 122 families belonging to the St. John Cantius Church.

In 1925, during his eight month stay, Father L. J. Kreciszewski convinced the people that they needed a new church as the original building was deteriorating. Under the guidance of Father W. E. Maciazek, a new church was constructed. Another reason for a new church hinged on its location on a road allowance. In 1928 the old church was torn down. On November 2, All Souls Day, as the parishioners were tearing down the old church they could smell smoke. Soon the new church was burned to the ground and once again the people were without a church. In the summer of 1929 a new church was built for a cost of \$6000 and free of debt upon completion.

On August 15, 1929, Archbishop Sinnot blessed the church and gave it the title, Our Lady Assumption. In 1938 Archbishop Sinnot turned the Oakburn parish to the priests of the Oblate Order who spoke the Polish language. Every summer for two weeks the sisters from the St. Benedict Order gave catechism lessons to the children of the parish. Father Joseph Lopuzanski was the last priest to reside at the rectory. In 1947 his successor, Father August Michalik sold the rectory and took up residence in Rosburn causing Our Lady of Assumption to become a mission of the Rosburn Parish. Since 1962, Mass is held once a year on the date closest to the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the Sunday closest to August 15. This church still stands today.



The top photo shows Archbishop Sinnot on the extreme left and Father Joe Kreciszewski third from left. The bottom photo is Father Joe with his car. Apparently the Bishop was quoted as saying that it was hard to keep up to Father Joe when he was leading the way with his car. Photos taken in 1928 and courtesy of the St. Viator's R.C. Church Archives in Dauphin.



The pump organ purchased by my father for \$10.00 for the St. John Cantius Church.

It is not hard to imagine the love that the Eastern Europeans had for their church and priests. On Christmas Eve, under the star-lit skies, the horse-drawn sleighs would pull up to the church. The families would stop to talk to their neighbours and then go into the church. Inside there would be a warmth permeated by the old box stove as well as the warmth of fellow Christians celebrating in their beliefs.

Several years ago my wife, Janice, and I, attended the 100 year anniversary of St. John Cantius Church. This was a special Mass much like a typical Mass from the past. In

days gone by, the church would have been packed as it was on this day. A generator amplified the proceedings from within the church as we stood outside. After Mass there was a procession to the cemetery where the deceased were blessed. According to custom, the procession was led by two little girls attired in white dresses, who scattered flower petals. After that, the people were treated to a delicious lunch.

Father Cieply, a Polish priest, used to come to our house when I was a young boy. My mother would make a layered casserole and Father Cieply would always devour a tremendous amount as he was fond of this particular recipe. The photo is of the first church organ purchased by my father, Stanley Stozek. Playing the organ helped him survive the Depression when he first came to Canada. When he moved to the Oakburn area in the 1940's, he once again took up playing the organ and was choir director at St. John Cantius and the Oakburn Roman Catholic Church. When my sister, Corneilia died at the age of ten in 1951, my father played that pump organ for her funeral Mass. The organ is still located in the loft of the church.

John Grzybinski...

One of the many interesting people buried in the cemetery is John Grzybinski. When I was growing up, my father and I would go on Sunday afternoons to visit old man Grzybinksi. He lived several miles from our farm. His house was located about half a mile off the main road in some thick bush. Here he had lived with his brother Joe. John had emigrated from the western Ukraine in 1910, following his brother who had arrived in Manitoba several years earlier. John and two friends, Stanley Dziver and Michael Swistun, went to The Pas to seek employment in the late 1920's. While out in the wilderness they got lost and luckily found a trapper's cabin. The men eventually "trapped" their way to Dauphin and slowly made it to Jozef's farm. When his older brother Joe, died at an early age, the quarter section of farmland was left to John. John bought some cattle and began farming in earnest. John was a hard working individual, manually doing the hay and using his strength to haul away the manure. John would walk several miles to the Seech store to buy groceries. In the winter he would pull his groceries on a sleigh.

He finally got hydro and I vividly remember going to his two room plastered house and listening to "Rawhide", a radio show on the C.B.C. John also had a collection of books, magazines and newspapers. I would peruse through these as my father and John discussed world politics in Polish. I was fascinated by the stories of Communism and the events of the "homeland." I was also entertained by the vast array of cats that inhabited the house. John treated them royally and bought them bologna while he ate a steady diet of Ritz crackers and peanut butter. Without fail, as we would be going home, John would give me a quarter. I remember going to the bank with \$10.00 in quarters.

Since John was a bachelor and always had sweet wine in his cupboards, many of the neighbours would come for a drink, conversation and sing-a-longs. On February 1985, John died at the ripe old age of 93. Several years prior to his death, the cats and John had moved to a house in Rossburn and then to a nursing home. The memory of this intellectual, kind "hermit" will always be etched in my mind.



Michael Swistun and John Grzybinski...Photo courtesy of Wasyl Swistun

Enemy Aliens...

"When the cannons roared in the war to end wars", life would soon change for many Ukrainians who had emigrated to Canada a decade earlier. All of a sudden the "Open Door Policy" initiated by the Canadian Government at the turn of the century was closed tight as Canada was at war with one of the Central Powers. The majority of the 170, 000 Ukrainians had settled on the Prairies and were working hard on their farms, raising families and establishing their niche in the cultural mosaic of Canada. Most had come from Galicia and Bukovyna and their citizenship and not their nationality could best be described as Austrian or Austro-Hungarian. To make matters worse, Bishop Budka, had the misfortune of issuing a pastoral letter, "The Anti-Canadian Nationalism of the Canadian Ukrainian", urging all Ukrainians to support the Austrian cause. (In Ukrainian the word budka means a little home so in essence the Bishop was trying to help his household-the Ukrainian congregation) The next day Austria declared war on Russia and Great Britain declared war on Germany. Bishop Budka had to reverse his stand but the damage had been done and the loyalty of the Ukrainian immigrants was questionable by Canadian authorities.

During the course of the war some 80,000 immigrants from enemy countries were registered as "enemy aliens" and were obligated to report on a weekly basis to local police authorities. They were issued with identity papers that had to be carried at all times and the penalty for non-compliance was arrest and possible imprisonment. In conversation with Mike Michalyshyn of Shoal Lake, he stated that his father, Joseph, had immigrated to Canada from Austria and had settled around Basswood where he worked on the railway. He was compelled to report weekly to Minnedosa and was under surveillance on a daily basis.

Between 1914 and 1920, 8,579 were incarcerated throughout twenty six camps in Canada. About 5000 of these were Ukrainians. At the work camps the Ukrainians and Austrian internees were assigned "second class" status. Most were unemployed workers who would be moved far away from urban centres into primitive work camps and compelled to work for the Canadian Government building roads, erecting and repairing buildings, and clearing and draining land. For their work the internees received twenty-five cents a day. In Manitoba, the internees were sent to Winnipeg which acted as a receiving centre or to a more permanent camp at Brandon. Upon each individual's arrest valuables were seized and confiscated before they went to the internment camp. Over \$32,000 was left in the Receiver-General's coffers. At the work camps the internees were denied access to newspapers, correspondence was limited and censored and they were mistreated by the guards. Once the war was over some did not return home until 1920 as these "second class" citizens were a source of cheap labour.

Having a detention centre would provide economic benefits to the city. Politicians such as Conservative M.P. J. A. M. Aikens and Brandon City Council members lobbied the federal government and their persistence paid off with a camp established in the Winter Fair Building on the corner of 10th and Victoria. This was also a moral victory for the predominant Anglo-Saxon population who had to contend with a rapid growing Slavic population in the north end of Brandon. This way they could have control over the Ukrainians and impose their British Empire values over them.

Many men from Winnipeg came to the Brandon to get employment on farms in the surrounding district. In Winnipeg they registered at the alien registration office on Colony Street. Some sought permission to leave the country and others came to make their periodical report. 250 trekked to Emerson to cross into the U.S., however, they were arrested and sent to Brandon.

By August in an article entitled "Keeping Tabs On The Aliens", it was reported that there were 824 aliens enrolled in Brandon with 156 from outside points. Many had come to ask permission to leave the city to do farm work. Other men came from Fort William and since July 1, 1915, seventy eight aliens from outside points reported to authorities. When first reporting, each man was given a card that had to be signed every month by the chief of police or justice of the peace. Thus a record of each foreigner

was kept. Should a policeman see a foreigner's card not signed he was liable to be placed under arrest for breaking parole and interned with the other aliens at the Winter Fair building. According to the article there were a few foreigners enrolled in Brandon who had not been reporting and they were hunted up and placed under arrest.

By August 1915 there were 942 men housed in the arena. The prisoners slept on cots in a single room and



The Wheat City Arena that housed "enemy aliens." Photo, Wheat City Arena, c. 1938, D-17 courtesy of the Lawrence Stuckey Collection, Brandon University.

passed their time by playing cards, telling stories and singing songs. Twice a day they were taken outside to exercise. Since there was nothing to do many men plotted to escape. In early June two interned aliens jumped fourteen feet through a window. One hurt his ankle in the fall and the other made a clear getaway. The recaptured man was Pete Dulco. The other man was Barozchuk. Both men had come from Winnipeg with the first batch of prisoners.

To escape, when the prisoners were sent to their sleeping quarters in the south end of the building, these two waited for the change of the guard. They tore the wire netting from the window and squeezed through.

Dulco was caught hiding under a veranda in the 1400 block on 14th Street. His injured foot was very painful.

A week later fifteen aliens attempted a desperate escape. The break by the men was well planned. A table knife had been filed into a saw and while some men attracted the attention of the guards, others were cutting a hole in the floor on the south side of the building. The fifteen men then dropped down through the hole into the stable next to the boiler room. Three got away from the building, five pushed themselves inside a boiler, one was shot and the other six were caught in the stable. Four rifle shots were fired. The man who was shot was Andrew Graphko, an unmarried man who came from Winnipeg after trying to cross the border at Emerson. Mike Butryn from Regina also ended up in the hospital. The other men included Steve Kalchuk, (30), Mike Kozak, (40), Don Halcki, (18), Mike Tyko, (28), Anson Ogliski, Harry Chickne, Simon Konrat, John Shusko, Nick Burger, Joe Marchuk, Mike Kelmo and John Desiki. Some excitement was caused when seven of the men were being marched to the city police cells. "Hands up!" was the command and those who did not instantly comply received a prod from bayonets on the guns. They had to stand with their hands up for a long time in the guard room at the arena and they were made to keep their hands up as they were led away under escort followed by a large crowd. It was midnight before the vicinity of the arena returned to normal.

Andrew Graphko would die two weeks later from his wound. The death was known only to a few, being kept as quiet as possible and no mention was made of it by hospital authorities until they were asked to confirm a report of his death. The funeral was conducted on a Saturday afternoon and Graphko was buried in the Brandon cemetery. Graphko was among those who slid down the hole in the floor. He was in the act of getting through the window when a guard ordered him to get back. He refused and the soldier fired at him hitting him on the side. The bullet passed along the course of a rib and up through the body to the other side passing out through the oppo-



Part of the Brandon Winter Fair Building was used to house the "enemy aliens." Photo, Winter Fair Building c. 1914, D16, courtesy of the Lawrence Stuckey Collection, S. J. McKee Archives, Brandon University.

site arm.

The other man, Butryn, spent a few days in the hospital after being hit from the butt end of a rifle. He drew a month in jail. Ten others drew terms in jail varying from one to three months while another got away and had not been recaptured.

In other camps located throughout Canada there were escapes and more deaths. Others committed suicide. For example a board of inquiry into the death of William Perchaluk in Alberta in 1916 determined that he had killed himself in a police station while being detained there pending investigations being made as to his nationality. It was concluded that his "rash act would appear to have been committed during a fit of despondency."

By April, 1916, the interned aliens at Brandon were to be out on parole to work on farms and to assist farmers with seeding. General Otter, the commander of all internment camps in Canada was in Brandon and after the inspection expressed how pleased he was with the general conduct of the camp. The order for the men to work on the farms applied to Manitoba and Saskatchewan with the men given second class fare on the railways. By April 25, 1916, fifty of the interned men were out working on farms. By this time there were only 500 men left at the arena.

By July, 1916, the headline in the Brandon Sun stated that "Internment Camp Here To Be Closed." The hundred or more aliens who were left at the camp were to be sent to Casel, Alberta. These aliens were deemed unfit to have their liberty or who were still "bent on making trouble by seditious utterances." Earlier, Major Coleman, who was in charge of the camp had also stated that the men would be going on construction work in the East and in British Columbia. Some would also work on the construction of a road between Brandon and Carberry. On July 29, Coleman would leave with 104 aliens to Castel and British Columbia. About fifteen guards were to remain in Brandon to "wind up" the camp and the rest were joining the overseas forces.



Fred Perchaluk... Photo and document courtesy of David Negrych

An "Enemy Alien" Enlists...

Fred Perchaluk was born in Canada and lived around Sclater, Manitoba. During WWI he was working for a farmer in Rivers, Manitoba whose last name was Davis. Fred wanted to join the army with his friends but he was not allowed to because his ancestry was from the parts of the Ukraine ruled by Austria-Hungary. He needed a special permit to get a job or to enlist for military service. So Fred asked Davis for permission to use his last name to sign up and hide the fact that he was Ukrainian. The recruitment officers must have known that Fred was Ukrainian as he signed his papers with an "X", spoke broken English and put down his religion as Russian Orthodox, but the most important issue was that he now had an English name.

The young soldier, who was remembered by his

J. Rank	Name	DAVIS, Fred. /	Reg'l No.	913756
Unit	Dft 197th Bn.	If in perm. Corps, What Unit?	Married or Single	Single..
Place and Date of Enlistment	Winnipeg. 8th Nov. 1916.	Place of Birth	Dauphin. Man.	
Name and Address, Next-of-Kin	Mary Davis. -	Relationship	Mother. /	
Assigned Pay Monthly \$		Payable to		
Separation Allowance \$		Payable to		
Discharge, Date and Place		Reason	Character	

19-10-16
R

Dauphin. Man. /

Relationship Mother. /

Relationship

Relationship

11026
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family as a happy-go-lucky guy loved a joke, embarked for Europe in January, 1917. "There was a girl-the love of his life," Fred's grand-nephew, David Negrych, said: 'We'll go there and shoot a few enemy and then it'll be all over and we'll come back.' The private ended up being killed in action in France on April, 29, 1918. Having no known grave he is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial by the name on his enlistment papers, Fred Davis. The Negrych family just want people to know of the prejudice and paranoia of those times.

"I'm wondering if there are any others," Negrych said. "The book, *Vimy*, by Pierre Berton says there were no Slavic people in the war. When I read that I thought: 'He's wrong- I know one.' Actually, after the article had appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press about ten years ago, several people phoned David to tell him that they also had relatives who enlisted using British names.

Fred Perchaluk was a brave man who loved his country so much that he was willing to die for it yet his country was letting him know that he wasn't a valued citizen.

Politics And Broken Pipe Lake Picnics...

Anytime a new group of immigrants came to Canada, they started at the bottom of the pecking order. As the Slavic immigrants established themselves, they were the brunt of many racial slurs and insults. In the Parkland area, there were many people of Ukrainian descent. It is interesting to note how they worked their way up from the bottom of the "pecking" order. From being called derogatory names such as "Galicians", "garlic snappers" and "bohunks" they wanted to have more influence in the decision making progress and to maintain their Ukrainian identity.

In the August 16, 1934 edition of the Dauphin Herald, the headline "Ukrainians of Dauphin May Run Candidate", was one of the lead stories. 200 delegates met at the Ukrainian Peoples' Home to discuss the running of a candidate of Ukrainian descent in the next federal election. A.T. Warnock was the main speaker and it was unanimously decided that a candidate be nominated on the Liberal-Progressive platform and a committee was formed with a view to call all Ukrainians in the constituency of Dauphin some time in September. M.N. Hryhorczuk of Ethelbert presided at the meeting. The prevailing sentiment was that Ukrainians formed a considerable percentage of the electorate of the Dauphin constituency and that the time had come when they should have representation at Ottawa. Up until that time, Dauphin had always been represented by a member of Anglo-Saxon extraction, "And while depreciating any thought of

dividing on nationalistic lines, it was felt that turnabout was only fair play."

The next year, W.J. Ward was named to contest the federal riding for the Liberal-Progressive Party. The other candidates included Dr. W. J. Harrington, M. N. Hryhorczuk of Ethelbert and A. T. Warnock of Dauphin. Both Hryhorczuk and Warnock soon withdrew their names from the race, however, both these men of Ukrainian heritage would play a prominent role in the field of politics in future years.

One of the popular events organized by the Ukrainians from the area was an annual picnic. Many people from the Dauphin area still remember the picnics that were held at Broken Pipe Lake located north of Ashville. It was interesting to note that along with the usual baseball tournaments and activities for the children, people of prominent political stature came to speak at this event. The August 10, 1933, Dauphin Herald announced that the annual picnic at Broken Pipe Lake, under the auspicious of the Ukrainian Peoples' Home of Dauphin was preparing for the visit of MacKenzie King on Saturday, August 19 and that preparations were underway to make this year's event even larger than before. Arrangements were being made with the Winnipeg Flying Club to have several airplanes present to take up passengers and to provide a program of aerobatics. A public address system was to be installed for the convenience of the speaker. King was also invited to speak at the Skating Rink Auditorium in Dauphin. King was motoring through the three Prairie Provinces addressing gatherings of citizens. He had motored through Swan River prior to coming to Dauphin.

The report in the August 24 edition of the newspaper indicated that "3000 Hear King at Annual Ukrainian Picnic." Under ideal weather conditions King started his speech at 4:00 p.m., warning the crowd about the intentions of the C.C.F. going on to say, "Liberalism tries to arrange things that people will be free to develop themselves. Liberalism does not overlook the minority, and is in keeping with the aims of the Ukrainian Peoples' Home." Later that night King took the stage in Dauphin and addressed 1200 people from 11 p.m. to shortly after midnight. He claimed that Prime Minister Bennett had strangled our trade until men were walking the streets looking for employment and farmers lost their markets. Prosperity could not return to Canada until tariffs were decreased. Money had been lost to the Dominion treasury because of the high rate of duty. This decrease in revenue had necessitated the imposition of the sugar tax and increased postage rates to meet the cost of government. In closing, King referred to the C.C.F. and that it stood for state control and state ownership while the Liberals stood for freedom.

One year later, the Seventh Annual Ukrainian Picnic at Broken Pipe Lake drew 2000 people who congregated to hear D. G. McKenzie, the Provincial Minister of Agriculture as the keynote speaker. The proceedings were halted by a thunderstorm, however, MacKenzie brought greetings from Premier Bracken of Manitoba to the citizens of Ukrainian birth. MacKenzie spoke of the contribu-



Family time at Broken Pipe Lake circa 1920...Photo courtesy of Morris Stefaniuk.

tions by the Ukrainians to the educational and cultural life of the community. He also stated of the big reduction of purchasing power of the west that had caused many industries to suffer and had helped create the unemployment problem. At the present time he stated that the world had gone crazy on naturalization and that different countries were trying to set purchasing quotas on everything, especially foodstuffs. What markets there were, were subject to keen competition and he emphasized that there was a need for the highest quality of production, not only to hold the business but to obtain the highest financial return.

In 1935, on the eighth annual picnic, of particular interest was the political rally at which the three political candidates for the Dauphin Federal Constituency spoke. The Hon. James L.

Bowman-Conservative, W.J. Ward-Liberal-Progressive and R.A. McKeller-C.C.F. were in attendance. One year later, at the 1936 picnic, it was reported that only several hundred people attended.

Mackenzie King's forays into the rural hinterland the previous year must have helped as in the Federal election of October 1937, he swept into power with 172 seats. The Conservatives won only 42, the Social Credit, 17, the Reconstruction Party, 1, U.F.O., 1, Independent 1, and three seats were still unreported on October 17.

In later years the popularity of the Broken Pipe Lake Picnics diminished and in the 1960s they ceased. Gone were the political speeches, the free admission to the grounds, no entry fee for the ball tournaments but bragging rights for the win, swimming at the lake and races for the children, ice cream for 5 cents, and bingo with prizes such as cups and saucers. On the July 1, 1937 picnic, there was a tug of war contest between the districts lying east of Highway No. 6 and the district west. The west won that year. The picnic was not limited to Ukrainians. Everyone was welcome to partake in the good old fashioned picnic.

It was interesting to note that the Tenth Annual Broken Pipe Ukrainian Picnic was held on July 7, 1938 at Halicz, located two miles north of the lake. The change was made to accommodate the aerial events. The pilot who was supposed to perform the show, Bob Gibson, was an instructor at the Dauphin Flying Club, however he was

ВИСОКОДОСТОЙНИЙ W.L. MCKENZIE KING

Є ЛІБЕРАЛЬНИМ КАНДИДАТОМ В
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

ВІН СТОІТЬ ЗА ПОЛІТИКОЮ ЛІБЕРАЛЬНИХ
ПРІНЦИПІВ І ВАС ПРОСИТЬ О ГОЛОС ДЛЯ НЕГО.

Пам'ятайте, що п. Бел, консервативний посол з Гемилтон, Онт., сказав оноді, що округ Принс Алберт складається з Австріяків, Ескімосів та богонків.

Інший визначний консерватист, Джордж Райт, говорячи з тої самої платформи, що Дост. Артур Мієн, консервативний провідник, сказав, що ніякій особі, яка не є британського уродження, не повиннося давати голосу в Канаді. Таким робом всім горожанам, уродженням деінде, хоч би й були натуралізованими британськими підданими, булоб заперечене право голосу.

Отсе є взірць, за чим стоїть консервативна партія.

ГОЛОСУЙТЕ НА ЛІБЕРАЛІВ!

Ф. В. РАЙТ, офіційальний агент.

In this advertisement in 1926, McKenzie King states that the Conservative candidate, Mr. Bell indicates that Prince Albert is over run with Austrians, Eskimos and bohunks and that only British people should be able to vote. For a man who was so against this atrocity it is interesting to note that during WWII he would deem Japanese-Canadians as enemy aliens. Article courtesy of Ron Chorneyko.

involved in the crash of his Gypsy Moth at a show in Moosimin in front of 4000 spectators. He was injured and would later die. Gibson had been involved in the search for Mike Sawchyn, whose story is covered in later chapters. In place of the injured Gibson, a pilot from Winnipeg was to perform air stunts.

The term "Galician" was a derogatory term used to describe the group of immigrants who came to Canada circa the late 1890s. As they settled in the Prairie Provinces they farmed the "difficult" land that was given to them. Through hard work and determination, they raised their families and contributed their unique culture. No longer did they have to "Anglicize" their names to get promotions in the workforce or to enlist in the army. The Broken Pipe picnics would be replaced by Canada's National Ukrainian Festival where all Canadians could experience the unique Ukrainian culture. Meanwhile, during this time period, the Mennonites, who had moved to Russia to escape persecution and practice their pacifist beliefs, would wear out their welcome and come to Canada.

Mennonite Neighbours...From Russia To Canada

One of the projects which my Grade eleven history students used to do included researching an ethnic group who came to Canada. Along with the oral presentation the students had to include some cultural aspects including music and food. I still vividly

remember one student, Cindy McGill, talk about her great-grandmother, Maria. I recently phoned Cindy's mother, Kathy McGill. Kathy gave me her mother, Elsie Buller's number. Elsie shared her interesting family story.

During the time of the Russian Revolution, the Mennonites were faced with constant persecution. Because of this persecution they were forced to leave against their will. After obtaining their papers to go to Canada, a Red Gate at a Russian train station symbolized their freedom. Once they were past this gate they were on their way. As the Mennonites approached the gate they were filled with apprehension, for the Russian Government could still hold them back and take away their worldly possessions. At the Red Gate the trains were thoroughly searched. Once past the gate they were allowed to journey to Latvia.

Maria (Issak) was born in a German village in Russia called Schoenenberg near the town of Skotowaty on September 29, 1907. She emigrated to Canada in 1926 on the ship, Montrose, with her four brothers and two sisters along with John G. Bergen. As they were travelling by wagons from their village to get the train, they had to cross a very narrow ditch and the wagon tipped over into a swollen creek. Maria's father was driving and was thrown into the water in his fur coat. He was sitting on top of the wooden crates that were being used for suitcases. They landed on top of him when the wagon overturned. He couldn't swim and as he was going down for the third time, Abraham Janzen was able to rescue him. Since the crates held all of their worldly belongings and food for the trip, the Francille, a type



Maria Issak and Cornelius Janzen— photo courtesy of Elsie and Henry Buller

of baked biscuit along with the buns that were packed into hand woven baskets were ruined. This spoiled food was sent back to feed the animals.

Villages in Russia were miles apart and the immigrants had to take the train for several days. It took 2.5 days to get the mail. In a village seven houses were built in a row and more were supposed to be built, however, with the onset of war, they were not. The school buildings in this village were also used as churches. Maria's family had lived in this village for 12-13 years. They had a communal plot for gardens, fruit trees, wheat and sunflowers. There were no fences but there were shelters for the cattle. At the community pasture the young people took turns looking after the cattle. The milking barn was connected to the living quarters by a lee-way in between the two buildings. When the war started, the Russian soldiers occupied the homes of the Mennonites and as a result some families had to live in granaries or covered wagons made from a hay rack. They had to take their grain to another village to be ground into flour. Flour was a rare commodity and had to be hidden in their village behind false walls.

To hide valuables from the soldiers, a good hiding spot was under a mattress in a baby's cradle. Larger valuables were hidden under straw. Soldiers would always be on the look out for valuables and food. One day Maria was frying fritters for supper when the soldiers came by and ate everything. She felt guilty as she was the only one of her family who had a taste.

Once she got to Canada, Maria was employed by an English family in Winnipeg who gave her a German/English dictionary. She corresponded with her future husband, Cornelius Janzen for seven years before marrying him on December 3, 1933. They then settled in the Winnipegosis district.

Their first child, Elsie was born in 1934. In 1956 Elsie married Henry Buller. Henry had been helping out with chores for several months at the Janzen farm. When they married they also settled in the Winnipegosis District. Henry's father was born in 1887 in the village of Rucenau in the Molotshna Colony of the southern Ukraine. Henry's mother, Elizabeth Peters, was born in 1892 in the Alexanderkrone village in the Molotshna Colony.

During her early childhood, Elizabeth's family moved to Terek, a new farming development in Southern Russia. This area was also inhabited by the nomadic Tartars, who resented the Mennonites. They stole Elsie's father's wagon and murdered him. Elsie's mother then went to work for her uncle and after six years of hard work developed tuberculosis. After a medical doctor gave her only several years to live, she went to a chiropractor, Dr. Jacob Wiebe, who prescribed a diet of a certain kind of honey and "half" and "half" milk and cream which she drank several times a day. Miraculously, her tuberculosis was cured.

World War I was now in full swing and the Russian Revolutionaries destroyed much of the country. At this time she moved in with her cousins where she lived through the famine of 1921. She told of digging potatoes a whole afternoon and coming home with a half pail of thumb nail sized potatoes. She also told of the frightening experiences from the "Reds", the Russian revolutionaries, who arrived at the village and came to search the home for guns. Finding none, they took clothes and other valuables. Two gunmen pointed their weapons at her as she walked to her dresser to unlock the drawers. She explained that she was an orphan and not a rich landowner. They never took anything from her.



Maria...Photo courtesy of Elsie and Henry Buller.

Henry's father was doing forestry work as an alternative to military service prior to and during the early years of the war. Henry's mother and father were acquainted in the early 1920s and were married in 1922. There was much talk of leaving Russia among the Mennonite people as there seemed little hope of a better future, especially religious freedom. With thousands of others they left Russia in 1924.

Henry Buller's parents settled in the Haskett area in Southern Manitoba. His father got a job on a farm and his mother lived with an elderly couple helping with chores and housework. In 1926 they bought a farm and Henry was born on December 2, 1926. The land was not producing good crops so the family moved to Winnipegosis in 1930, where the land was available for a reasonable price. Four other Mennonite families, the Warkentins,

Buhlers, Penners and Peters also settled there. The land had been a swamp at one time so it was not very fertile. It produced adequate hay but of poor quality. The amount of grain harvested was also very small. The Bullers lost many horses to what was called swamp fever. They had two colts grow up on their farm-Sandy and Prince—who served them faithfully for many years. The mother of these two horses was Rose, who was the only horse for some time.

One cold Christmas Eve in 1935, the Buller family was coming home from a church Christmas program. Rose was pulling a cutter with the family of seven in it. Suddenly, two miles from church, Rose stopped. Slowly, Henry's dad coaxed the horse to the home of Mr. Martens. From previous experience, Mr. Martens knew that Rose's nostrils were clogged with ice from breathing so hard. After giving her a rest at the farm they continued on their way. After a while the same thing happened again. This time, Henry's dad knew what to do.

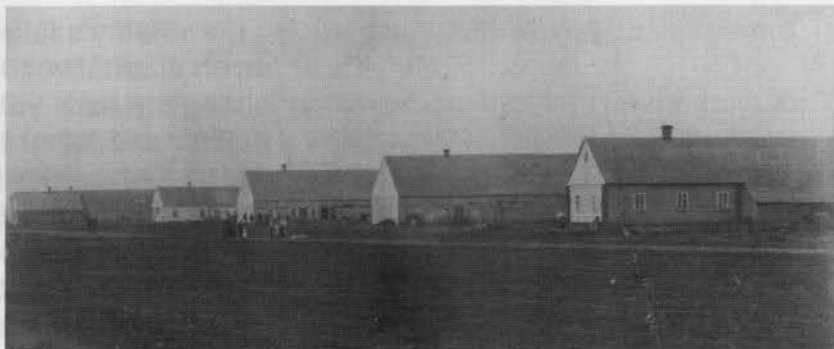
Elsie and Henry farmed until 1993 when they retired and moved to Dauphin. They were blessed with seven children.

Notes from 1926- Our Trip To Canada- Reminiscence by John G. Bergen,
written May 23, 1980.

"We lived in Russia, in the province of Tombov, where we had moved in the spring of 1914 together with fourteen other families. In the fall of that year war broke out. After the revolution of 1917 we lost our land plus many other belongings. The Government urged us to organize a workers' company and as a result of that, each family received 90 acres of land which was enough to make a good living."

Because their faith was criticized more and more, eight families and one single man decided to immigrate to Canada. To get permission to go to Canada they needed a form in Moscow but there were no forms at the office. They could, however, pur-

chase the forms for \$3.00 per person over 15 years of age. There was a problem because three men, Abe Bergen, Cornie Janzen and Abe Schellenberg were of draft age. Because of John's quick response that they were C.O.'s and were exempt from active military service, they were surpris-



The village in Russia... Photo courtesy of Elsie and Henry Buller.

ingly allowed to proceed. Following this they were allowed to apply for their passes at a cost of \$30.00 per person paid in advance. After a lengthy time of waiting and a great deal of discussion, they received notice that they could be placed in a better classification but the cost would be \$300.00 per person.

The passes had to be processed through the Tombov foreign office and get approval from Moscow. This was taking a long time so John went to the Mennonite Board of Immigration and Colonization where he met C. F. Klassen. He couldn't help so John went to the Immigration Office in Kitajgopod. Here there were armed guards asking everyone questions, so John decided to find another entrance. He walked around the building and found another door. He walked into an office and asked if the lady at the desk was Ekaterina Iwanownaas as this was the person whom he needed to see. She was the right person and after explaining the situation she started searching for the papers on her desk and at the bottom of the pile she found them. The next day he received the passports. Then John went back to Tombov to get passports for his wife and daughter. Later, an official from the office, Nickolay Ubanobir, personally brought the passport and as a token of appreciation John treated him to dinner and to the circus. John also gave him \$20.00.

Two days later they had their auction sale. At this time a policeman came to talk to John and said that he would have to be arrested. The policeman took a telephone message out of his pocket but he could not read the writing so John read it to him. It said that John was to be arrested and taken to the G.P.U. and to bring his nationalization passport along. John recognized his difficult position but because the guard could not read the writing, John was able to change the wording to, "Nazionaler Ubeshdenia" which had to do with religion. John re-dictated the letter to the policeman with the change.

The next day John set out for Tombov and went directly to the G.P.U. where he was asked for his passport. John told them that he hadn't been requested to bring it but to instead refer to the telephone message. The official then asked if John knew Nickolay Ubanobir, the chairman of the embassy and asked why they went to the circus and all the other details. John knew that he couldn't lie so he said the money was not a bribe to get a passport but a small gift for his trouble. They had a long discussion and parted as friends but John had to sign a paper stating that he was not allowed to leave the country and a court decision had to be made. Quickly, John tore the telephone message out of his book and put it into the official's file. They had already arrested Nickolay Ubanobir, the chairman of the foreign embassy.



Young people in Tambov... First row- Anna Loewen, Lena Penner, Mary Loewen. Second row- Tina (Issak) Klassen, Sarah Neufeld, Lena Loewen, Anna Redekop, Maria Janzen, Katyn Loewen. Third row- Cornelius Janzen, David Neufeld, John Bueckart, Nicolai Dyck, Abram Neufeld, Jasch Epp. Fourth row- Franz Janzen, Abe Bergen, Herman Issak. Photo courtesy of Elsie and Henry Buller.

John went home and only told his wife and parents of what had happened. He told the rest that he had ordered a box car in Mordowa for the day after tomorrow. On September 13, 1926 they left their home for Moscow some 600 kilometres away. The next day they spent the night in a big hotel where John and another man went to speak with the R.P.A. The group wanted to stay one day longer in Moscow but the R.P.A. insisted that they take the train immediately. The R.P.A. owed the group some money since they had paid for their tickets from Saratow to Gretna, Manitoba but they had come to Moscow on their own. They said that the

group could get their refund in Riga or England. They couldn't give the refund because the office had no money. The group left and came to the border station, Sebesch where they were barely inspected and so they went through the "Iron Curtain" and entered into Letland. The train stopped, the engineer changed and the group went on. Later, John received word that the R.P.A. received word from Tombov that John was to be stopped. They sent a telegram but it was too late as the group had already passed through the border.

After a three day layover they left on the ship, "Baltara" for London where they boarded a train to Southampton. They were housed in Atlantic Park, special quarters for immigrants. While the rest of the group went on, John was hospitalized for 122 days because of a skin condition on his hands. Years later John went to see a skin specialist in Saskatchewan who wrote out a prescription and for \$3.00 his rash was cured.

In the 1870s the initial wave of Mennonite families arrived from the Russian Ukraine and settled in the East Reserve near Steinbach. When this area was filled, new settlers settled in the West Reserve near present day Gretna and Winkler. The next wave of Mennonite settlers which included Maria Issak arrived in the 1920s and eventually settled in the Parkland area near Winnipegosis. Along with their Eastern neighbours, the people of Ukrainian and Polish descent, the empty virgin land of Western Canada was settled and developed. Both the Mennonites and the Ukrainians worked very hard to break the soil and raise crops and livestock in the land that was allotted to them. They also brought with them their unique and often similar cultures. Canada's cultural mosaic is much richer because of these two groups.

Prologue To Chapter II

Several years ago I wrote the song, "Old Freight Train" which was a tribute to my father who rode the rails during the Depression. He is one of the men pictured in the "extra gang" photo taken in Northern Ontario. Stanley Stozek was one of the thousands of "hobos" who would cross the country seeking employment.

Many of these unemployed men ended up in relief camps which were located in the rural isolated areas. One of these men, Henry Hlady, phoned me in January 2008. His experiences of working in Camp No. 7 are included in this chapter.

Old Freight Train

Pale moon shining 'neath the midnight sky
There's an old freight train and it's slowly rolling by
A lone wolf howls by that railroad track
He's asking when that train is coming back

Beneath the stars and the Northern Lights
The frost is coming there's a chill outside
And a lonesome freight
Is going somewhere tonight

My father rode the rails at night
He'd hop a freight and then he'd bide his time
He was cold and hungry but he hung in tough
He'd weather the storm until he had enough

Somewhere today there's folks tonight
Who are cold and hungry and that doesn't seem right
They're running from the wolf that's at their door
And if he can get some
You know all he wants is more

Pale moon shining beneath the midnight sky
There's an old freight train and he's slowly rolling by

c Socan
Ed Stozek

Chapter II...

Relief During The Great Depression...

According to a story appearing in the May 30, 1929 Dauphin Herald and Press, "In 1928 there was a record crop on the Prairies. Motor trucks and specially constructed horse drawn wagons were rolling from the harvest fields to the country elevators along the lines of the C.P.R." On September 21, they delivered 6,040,547 bushels representing 181,216 tons or six tons every time a watch ticked! The crop of '28 was the largest in the history of Canada and the C.P.R. smashed every existing grain hauling record in getting it to market. During the crop moving period from August 1 to December 14, the C.P.R. managed to move the largest and longest train of all time when one engine steamed into Arcola Yards dragging 135 loaded cars behind it. Things were looking great!

In the July 31, 1930 edition of the Dauphin Herald and Press, Sir Henry Thornton, president of the Canadian National Railway stated after his annual trip of inspection in Western Canada that, "We can't expect the sun to shine all the time; there are bound to be showers. But so many people are mistaking a shower for a cyclone." He went on to also say that we still have the same courageous and intelligent population we had a year ago. "That tells us that we have no disease, or as the doctors would diagnose it, we have nothing organically wrong and we are merely passing through a headache or a cold." He concluded by stating, "Things will probably mark time in a certain period until the public recovers its purchasing power. If we have a good crop on the Canadian Prairies this year we will be on our way."

These were brave words spoken at a time after the effects of the Wall Street stock market crash of October 24, 1929. Companies went bankrupt, hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs and panic gripped the Dominion. This "shower or a mere head cold" would last a decade and would take another World War to bring the Dominion out of the Great Depression.

The Depression Sets In...

A week later in the agricultural sector, the payments for the 1930-31 grain crop were set and announced by the Canadian Wheat Board. They were far down from previous prices of \$1.23 a bushel. Wheat was 70 cents per bushel on No. 1, Barley, 25 cents, Oats, 30 cents, and Flax was \$1.25. With an unprecedented lengthy drought on the prairies, the once productive fields dried up and crops were burned up by the sun. By 1932 wheat would go down to 25 cents a bushel, and this would lead to farmers having their land seized and sold at auctions.

By September of 1930 it was stated in the Dauphin Herald that the Canadian Pacific Railway initiated a program where nearly 12,000 men would find employment in a program of construction, maintenance and improvement from coast to coast. There would be construction work of all kinds by the C.P.R. and as well as by contractors. 8000 men would be employed in "extra gangs" where they would lay branch lines, repair and renovate bridges, tunnels, stations and other buildings. The men were recruited from as near as possible to the work site and would be kept employed until the work was finished.

By January of 1931 it was estimated that there would be 200,000 men in the ranks of the unemployed, based upon figures supplied by the Department of Labour. In a statement made by the Hon. G. D. Robertson, "200,000 unemployed and in the dead of winter 60,000 more." Under unemployment relief schemes nearly 85,000 had been taken care of in six provinces and there were an estimated 35,000 in the three remaining provinces who had been given employment. The Department of Labour had reported that 7,400 employers of labour had laid off 50,000 workers up to November 1. To combat the suffering there was still left \$8,000,000 in the Unemployment Relief Fund, and while the money had not yet been designated a purpose, one-half would be used for direct relief. If one divides \$8,000,000 into 200,000 unemployed men, it equals to \$40.00 per person!

"Of Prime Minister Bennett it can be truthfully said that his handling of the unemployment problem has left little room for criticism." This was a quote from the Minnedosa Tribune on August 27, 1931. This was in response to a special session of Parliament that Bennett had called the previous fall and had appropriated \$20,000,000 for relief. The Liberals were filled with the fear that the fund would be used for unemployed politicians and their friends. The regular session of Parliament had no fault to find with the way the money had been designated. "Again when he brought down his second relief bill in the closing days of the session just past, the only objection the opposition had to offer was the writing of a blank cheque. Fix any sum and we'll vote for it." All fears that the money would be spent foolishly for political purposes had vanished.

In talking with long time Dauphin resident Margaret Durand, she recalled many men coming to her father's farm in Rathwell, Manitoba, located south of Winnipeg. The farm was near Treherne and the C.P.R. ran through the family farm. Many men would get off the train and come to the farm to ask for work. One day, fourteen year old Margaret was driving using a binder and four horses to cut down grain. She was doing this job because her brother had joined the army. When one of the unemployed men saw Margaret using the four reins to control the four horses, and because she was doing such a great job, he turned around and went back to hitch a ride on the train. He didn't bother to ask for a job at the farm that day.

In talking to another person who grew up in Lauder, Manitoba, she stated that she would watch the trains go past her farm from a near by hill. She could see all of the hobos riding atop the box cars. Her father would bring some of them home, feed them and then go with them to other farmers to see if they could find work. Meanwhile, Olga



Picture of men working on an "extra-gang" in Northern Ontario. The man, second on the left, is my father, Stanley Stozek.

Shymanski, recalled many hobos getting off the trains in Sifton as well as in Saskatchewan, where her father worked on the C.N.R. line. Her family lived by a water tower where the trains had to stop. Her father would bring hobos to their house where Olga's mother would feed them. The transients hoped that by 'riding the rails', they could leave the cities behind and find employment in the rural areas. In Sifton, the station agent, Willard McPhedrain would leave vegetables in a tub for the hobos.

Suggestions For Work...

On September 25, 1930, D.D. MacDonald, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, strongly urged before the delegates the extreme necessity of safeguarding the rural area against any financial burden being put upon them which was bound to result in the program of public works and requests for aid from both the Dominion and Provincial governments as presented to the cities were agreed to. He concurred with his colleague, Reeve Power, that the rural situation was an economic one and "that much of the unemployment was due to that and coupled with what might be termed seasonal unemployment on too many farms. If there existed the honest degree to do so, and funds were available, much relief might result from the feeding of our low grade, almost valueless course grain."

MacDonald went on to support the gravelling of public roads in winter under the direction of the Good Roads Department and Councils and the rapid and immediate development of the National Parks by anticipating the needs of highways for the next two or three years and having the work of clearing the right of way on these, carried out in winter. MacDonald was also very emphatic on stressing the wisdom of disassociating entirely the development of the park and the construction of the Mafeking Cut-Off (building a short railway line from on or near Mafeking on the present C.N. line between Swan River and The Pas), from the \$28,000,000 relief fund appropriated by the Hon. R. B. Bennett. "There should be Dominion capital expenditure and put under way at once and on a large scale. An angle of the situation causing much concern is the stipulation of the Federal Government that the province and municipalities contribute equal sums to any obtained from the \$20,000,00 relief fund." For Manitoba to qualify



Dauphin Board of Trade picnic at "Shaw's Lookout" on May 6, 1929 promoting the Park highway.... Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum

for the \$8,000,000 suggested by Premier Bracken the province would have to undergo public works of \$6,000,000. Other recommendations at the conference to go along with the Mafeking Cut-Off included reconditioning the present C.N.R. line from Brandon via Neepawa to Dauphin and the reconditioning of the present C.N.R. line from Dauphin to Mafeking. The project was originally brought forth by the Dauphin, Swan River and The Pas Boards of Trade the previous winter at Dauphin at which represen-

tatives of the Boards of Trade and municipalities, councils from northern, western and southern Manitoba were present. This resulted in the formation of the Mafeking Cut-Off Association.

On October 23, 1930, Mr. Robertson of Neepawa moved and seconded by Mr. McFadden of Dauphin, "Whereas it is desirable that three miles of highway to connect Provincial Highway No. 5 with the Park highway now under construction should be proceeded with immediately and whereas the undertaking of this work would supply relief to a considerable number of unemployed and where as the portion of road will not be of material benefit to the Municipality of McCreary."

Relief Camps In The Duck Mountains...

In an article in the Dauphin Herald on July 16, 1931, the Anglican Synod, the Diocese of Kootenay, B.C., acting on Bishop Doull's suggestion that, "Immediate action is necessary with regard to the unemployment problem." After a lengthy debate they adopted a resolution by M. F. Turnbridge, a retired member of the Bar and a graduate of Oxford that, "As a means of relief against actual distress amongst the unemployed who are willing to work, that moveable camps be established in several parts in each province; that in said camps shelter, bed, board and clothing be supplied to those in distress who apply, that the said camps be conducted by an officer in charge and shall have full control, that all receiving relief be required to work unless physically unable to do so, that in addition to the work in the construction extension and maintenance of camps, work be provided in road building and repair, land clearing, and other work of public utility so far as such work may be undertaken without detriment to settlers and other cities largely dependent upon it for a livelihood." It was decided to send copies of the resolution to the Dominion, Provincial governments, the Boards of Trade, and other bodies likely to be influential in forming public opinion on this subject.

As stated by Steve Fyk in the book, *In Memory Of Our Pioneers, History of Garland and District, 1874-1985*, "In 1930, control of Manitoba's natural resources was handed over to the Provincial Government. It was also in 1930 that Riding Mountain Forest Reserve became Riding Mountain National Park. This halted many of the logging operations and increased the value and use of Duck Mountain. The Federal Government requested that a portion, (37 Sq. Miles) of Duck Mountain be retained by them a Dominion Forestry experimental block." When there were thousands of unemployed men during the Depression, the government set up relief camps. Camp No. 1 was on the eastern end of Singush Lake in the north-



Working at the Singush Relief Camp...Photo courtesy of Frank and Roberta Zaryski

western portion of the Dominion Forestry Block and Camp No. 2 was located in the southwestern portion of the Block.

In conversation with Ethelbert resident, Bill Burla, he mentioned that there were camps two miles east of Elk Lake and one camp at the foot of the Duck Mountains. He stated that he could still see the place where there was a shed for cold storage. Many people from Ethelbert along with Bill and his step father used to go to that area to cut down burned jack pine from a bad forest fire. Bill was very young when he went by the camp but he mentioned that there were many men from the old country who had no work, and by using shovels and horses they helped build roads such as Kuzuchar Road from Ethelbert to Elk Lake and the right of way for telephone lines in the Duck Mountain Park.

Camp No. 1 at Singush Lake housed as many as 200 men, who were mostly from Winnipeg. The camp manager was Col. Shepherd who was replaced by Col. Stevenson. Along with the food and lodging, the men earned minimum wages in return for cutting and clearing land for road building for easier fire access, bridges, survey lines for surveyors and wood for heating the camps. The roads helped increase the potential for logging and recreation. According to Steve Fyk's article, supplies for Camp No. 1 were brought from the railway track at Garland by horses in winter and rainy weather and by truck in the summer. Some men from Garland such as Nick Filipchuk, Dmetro Caruk and George Marmach stayed at the camp with their horse teams to haul wood for fuel and to transport men to and from work. Supplies for Camp No. 2 were brought in from Ethelbert. These work camps operated until 1936 when there was more employment available.

One of the men who worked there in 1937



Men eating at relief camp at Singush Lake...Photo courtesy of Frank Zaryski.

In the January 24, 1935 Dauphin Herald and Press, Neil McDermid was charged with obtaining money and goods by false pretences and with theft of clothes from the government relief camps in the Duck Mountains. McDermid was convicted and sentenced to one year in jail by Magistrate Little last Thursday. Coming to Dauphin about the middle of December, McDermid, who had been assistant to the doctor at the Garland Relief Camp, purchased about \$25 worth of goods at the local drug store. Claiming that he was still the doctor's assistant, he was able to charge the goods to the latter without any suspicion being aroused. He was later arrested by local police when he was found trying to peddle the goods around town. He had been dismissed from camp in November.

was nineteen year old Fred Gilmore. He and a group of men "rode the rails" from Winnipeg. Fred noted that around Winnipeg it was more desolate because of the drought and the closer that they got to their destination, the more green the country got. Even though the times were tough, the farmers in the Parkland were able to grow their own food. "Riding the rails" got Fred thrown in jail for a night on vagrancy charges. Fred recalled that Tim Buck, the leader of the Communist party of Canada had representatives come to the camp and that the RCMP came and escorted them out. The RCMP were armed with machine guns. Fred spent one winter at the camp and latter ended up being one of the first men to enlist with the 407 Squadron and took his ground crew training in St. Thomas, Ontario before leaving for his stint in Europe during WWII.

In June 1935, there was a report of men being on strike at the relief camps near Ethelbert. The Dauphin Herald reported that this story was greatly exaggerated. Apparently several men left the camp on Tuesday morning and made their way to Ethelbert but at no time were there more than thirty or forty men. Some may have returned to camp while other scattered groups left in different directions. Any finding their way to Dauphin were moved elsewhere. RCMP from Dauphin went to Ethelbert on Wednesday to prevent any relief men from boarding on the train. C.G. Gregory and Henry Baum were arrested at Camp No. 2 on Monday by RCMP and were brought to Dauphin. Vagrancy was the only charge held against them and under this they were remanded without plea by Magistrate Little until July 3.

Later that year, John Worochuk, George Boras, William Happychuk and William Smoiak all from Winnipeg were arrested at the Garland Camp on January 16, 1935 by R.C.M.P. and were held in Dauphin pending trial. Woroshuk refused to go to work and was discharged from camp. He refused to leave and was supported by the other three men. The next morning the majority of men in camp refused to go to work as a protest against Worochuk's dis-



Fred Gilmore, (right) and a friend working at the Duck Mountain Camp. Photo courtesy of Robert Gilmore.



Working at the Singush Camp. Photo courtesy of Frank and Roberta Zaryski...

missal and because of general dissatisfaction with camp conditions. The RCMP were called and after a petition setting forth their grievances had been read, the men quietly returned to work. The four accused had been ordered to leave camp and upon their refusal were put under arrest. Alex Katz, Dauphin Barrister, acted on behalf of S. Greenberg of Winnipeg who had been retained for the Defense. C.S.A. Rogers represented the Crown. The charge of vagrancy was dropped. Garland Camp was under the direction of the Department of National Defense. It appeared that the local men were happy to have jobs, whereas the men from the cities were more militant.

In conversation with Frank Zaryski of Ethelbert, he stated that local resident, Joe Pelechaty worked at the relief camp at Singush Lake for all of the years that it was in operation. Every day, Joe got up and milked the cow and did the chores, walked thirteen miles to the camp and walked home after work. He couldn't stay at the camp for the night as he had a sick wife and had to look after her and the farm. According to Frank, the men earned 23 cents a day, which worked out to about \$7.30 a month.

In the August 25, 1938 Dauphin Herald, a farmer, who lived only a mile from Camp No. 2, pleaded guilty and was convicted and fined the costs of court. He was charged with stealing shiplap and didn't think that he was doing anything wrong as the camp had been left desolate for two years. Everything was falling into a state of decay so he salvaged the shiplap from the two main buildings.

About ten years ago, the Lion's Club of Ethelbert and Pine River erected a fence to preserve the site of a former bunkhouse where the fireplace remained standing. It and many other shacks were destroyed by a fire during the time of the relief camps in 1937. One big log house owned by Mike Hrhoryczuk was spared. One of the log cabins from the relief camp was moved to the North Gate entrance of the Riding Mountain National Park. This building has since been moved to Lake Dauphin and is being used as a cottage. In the woods around Singush Lake there are still depressions in the earth where the cabins once stood.

The Riding Mountain Camps...

At the height of the Great Depression, thousands of jobless men were sent to

relief camps in the Canadian wilderness. A family's relief was cut for a child when he turned sixteen. Thousands of young men left home and rode the rails looking for jobs that didn't exist. Riding Mountain sustained the largest relief camp operation of Canada's national parks employing over 1200 men on various projects in the early 1930s. There would be ten camps which were under the supervision of the man in charge of national park relief work, James Wardle.

The local projects were done in consultation with the park superintendent. The camps were located where they could be easily serviced during the winter. Camp buildings were either old refurbished buildings from pre-park lumbering days or new tar and paper structures constructed



One of the shacks... Photo courtesy of Henry Hlady.

by the men when they arrived. It was interesting to note that in a survey done in 1932, 90% of the relief workers were of British extraction and that six out of ten men were from Winnipeg. A large portion of the federal funds were allocated for administration and community buildings, garages, warden cabins and staff headquarters. In the Riding Mountain National Park, 86

buildings were built between 1930-36. By 1937 the projects in the park were no longer in operation. The camps were dismantled.

In October, on the recommendation of Maj-Gen. A.G.L. McNaughton, chief of the general staff to Prime Minister Bennett, sanctioned the creation of a nation wide system of camps to house and provide work for single, unemployed homeless Canadians placed under the Department Of National Defense. The men entered the camps voluntarily through the Employment Service of Canada and were free to leave anytime. In return for a bunkhouse they would receive three meals a day, work clothes, medical care and twenty cents a day. They worked 44 hour weeks. The lumber used to build the bunkhouses was from Kippan's Mill which was located on the south western side of Clear Lake. The first funds for park relief projects were approved in early October once the fall harvest on the prairies was almost finished. The Riding Mountain National Park, which was the newest in the National Park system of Canada, was awarded \$200,000 for relief work. Being the newest park in the system necessitated new roads and new buildings which would attract tourists. Even if the grants were from the Dominion, Manitoba as a province would benefit greatly from the tourist industry.

In the December 17, 1931 edition of the Minnedosa Tribune it was mentioned that, "Riding Mountain is humming with activity. Nearly 800 men are employed in relief projects with the Clear Lake

District. Practically all men employed in the work program are single men, and it is reminiscent of army days to see the large camps and facilities provided for their accommodation. The majority of the men are employed within the national park."

The residents from the surrounding areas were sent to the park on a quota basis. It was interesting to note in



The Clear Lake Golf Course area was the site of Camp 4, where men on relief worked scrubbing and grooming the golf course... Photo courtesy of Howard and Don Bull.



Working at a gravel pit... Photo courtesy of Henry Hlady.

Bill Waiser's book, *Park Prisoners*, that sleeping arrangements were a contentious issue. "In late December 1932, another letter of complaint was received, this time by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Labour." It went on to say that the author was a member of Camp No. 6 stating that the living and working conditions should be more worthy of the Dominion of Canada. At this time men were sleeping together in double bunks. The letter resulted in the camp to carry larger stocks of clothing and to replace worn out items, especially footwear. Because the camps at Riding Mountain were in close proximity, it was much easier to make the changes than at other camps located in more remote regions.

By January, 1932, the last contingent of men had arrived to complete the army of workers engaged in the relief projects. For most of the men this would be the first jobs that they had for months. The final party, numbering 135 men, brought the total to 1300. According to George W. Northwood, Supervisor of Dominion Relief, "The park is being turned into a beautiful vacation land that will draw visitors from all parts of the continent." There were other people who disagreed feeling that the natural beauty of the park was being damaged for the sake of keeping Winnipeg's unemployed out of mischief.

To keep the men out of mischief there were many activities for them to attend and to do. News at the camp was received by radio and the most important items were at once typed and given to the men or posted in the camp. The "newspaper" was named, "The Wigwam Daily." The "Minnedosa Tribune" ran regular columns outlining some of the activities from the camps.

In the middle of March a concert party from Kelwood visited the main camp and entertained the 400 men who filled Danceland. There was also a quartette and a group singing humorous songs. Community singing was also part of the evening. Some entertainment was provided by camp members including a recitation by Dunsmore, a solo by McCormick and a piano solo by "Joe." The Camp Muskeg Band also entertained with old time tunes prior to the presentation of the one act play, "The Shutting Of The Door."

On March 12, Mr. J. C. Campbell, Director of

Excerpts from "A Weekend In Clear Lake" - March 16, 1933, Dauphin Herald by W.S. Marsh-manager...

"It was our pleasure and privilege, together with a few citizens of Dauphin who still include in their circle of friendly acquaintances to spend the past weekend at Clear Lake in the Riding Mountain National Park when we had the urge to see what the beautiful Manitoba summer looks like in winter and to note the conditions under which work of improving the park during the winter months by relief labour is carried on and we returned Monday fully satisfied in our quest."

He goes on to say that as they were going along the south shore road there were groups of men working. Roads were being straightened, drainage ditches being made, road cuts with protected retaining stone walls, beaches cleared of scrub underbrush, a new telephone line, a large museum, and lecture halls near the south entrance by 800-1000 men forced to work under the present economic conditions for their daily existence. The men got paid \$5.00 per month with board and the necessary replacement of clothing.

He also stated that the government had provided food of excellent quality prepared by experienced cooks, served in clean dining quarters. The group went

on to inspect several bunkhouses, finding them to be roomy, well aired and clean. "On inquiry we also found that very definite measures are employed to keep them clean and free of undesirable pests." There were bath houses with plenty of hot and cold water, with windows in the roofs as well as the walls to add brightness to the living and eating quarters.

The group visited four of the seven camps set up in the vicinity of Clear Lake and at meal time they were invited to eat with the men and found everything to be good.

Marsh also mentioned that sports and recreation were absolutely necessary to the contentment of such a group of men. There were four or five skating rinks prepared at different parts of the lake—fenced and kept clean with regular inter-camp matches. On Sunday there was a game played against a team from Brandon and the week before, a team from Dauphin had drawn 14-1500 fans. He also noted that football was evident and hanging outside camp walls were snowshoes and skis.

"While magazines, newspapers, jig-saw puzzles and other means of pastime are gathered from all parts of the province for the benefit of the men during the long winter evenings, other entertainment is provided also. One evening, moving pictures of the different National Parks of Canada were shown."

Publicity for National Parks Canada, showed some interesting moving pictures at the Wigwam including, "Home Of The Buffalo", "Border Trials", "Hunting Without A Gun", "Skiing In Cloudland", "Strange Doings In Beaver Land", and "Prairie Land In Fairy Land". Mr. Campbell gave short humorous preludes to each moving picture. The Superintendent, J. Smart, arranged for the show.

The next week, the Clear Lake Darkies, the camp's latest addition to entertainment, put on a minstrel and vaudeville show on a Thursday night in Danceland. 600 people, including visitors from neighbouring towns attended. The show was an all camp production under the direction of Ted Dobson and H. Marner, who designed and carried out the work of the scenery.

Old time "ditties" and modern melodies were the musical offerings from the minstrels accompanied with lively dialogue. There were also two step dances. Old time musical selections were once again given by the Camp Muskeg Band previous to the show and during intermission. The Riding Mountain National Park Orchestra took part with some modern music.

There were also hockey games with "Tiny" Watt making numerous stops in goal for the visitors. "Tiny" was the hero of the hockey game played on a Sunday afternoon between Clear Lake and a team selected from Neepawa, Brandon and camp players. In the 1932-33 provincial play downs, a Dauphin All-Star team arrived at Kelwood. The visitors were then conveyed to the Main Camp where they were the honoured guests



Hockey at the camp...Photo courtesy of Henry Hlady.



Hockey team at a relief camp at Shilo... Photo courtesy of Henry Hlady.

at a boxing and wrestling tournament. On Sunday they went to Camp 4 for dinner and Camp 6 for supper. The game was a treat for the boys in the main camp who appreciated visits from outside hockey teams. The Dauphin team had also been the

only team to beat the Clear Lake team. The Dauphin boys arrived home on Sunday night. A week later Dauphin played the Clear Lake team and beat them 3-1 and 8-2. Dauphin then advanced in the play downs by beating Flin Flon before losing to the Winnipeg Falcons by one goal in the provincial finals. The goalie for the relief team was future hall of fame star, Turk Broda.

In boxing, the cup was won by Spooky Ballantyne at the elimination contests held in Minnedosa. The cup was to remain in camp as a souvenir of the event. The Superintendent was having the names of the three entrants engraved on the cup.

In football, Camp Four's members of the team were presented with photos of their team and tobacco as a reward for being the champions of the Inter-Camp Football League. Captain Tommy McCormick, who was one of the key players for the team, replied with a few words on behalf of the team. Mr. W.A. Scott, Assistant Superintendent, wished the boys the best of luck and expressed with agreement with the park officials for the mutual good relations that existed between the boys of all camps.

That same week the Bishop of Brandon visited the camp and preached at the Sunday evening service to a good attendance of camp "boys" who found his address interesting and inspirational.

According to a newspaper article in the Dauphin herald on Thursday March 31, 1932... "Work in the Riding Mountain National Park will be resumed shortly on relief projects as soon as the weather permits. Col. George C. MacLean of the Federal Relief Office, stated today." The work will be of a gravelling nature and will apply to the new road funded jointly by the Dominion and Province, leading north from Minnedosa and to the federal road that has been built into the park west from Norgate, as well as the road leading south from Dauphin into the park. All financing of relief work will be held up until the necessary bill is passed in Ottawa.

As a highlight, in June 30, 1932... Edna Medd from Winnipegosis was the winner of \$50.00, first prize awarded in the National Parks essay competition in which 300 school children took part. Wasagamung was the name chosen by Edna for the new lake resort in the Riding Mountain. The name was approved by the Hon. T.G. Murphy, Minister of the Interior and J.B. Harkin, Commissioner of Parks for the Dominion. At the July 26, 2008, 75th anniversary celebrations commemorating the park, Edna Medd was a special guest.

Several years of work by the men in the relief camps under the direction of Su-

perintendent James Smart, paid off as in July 1933, the Lieutenant-Governor officially opened the Riding Mountain National Park. The Hon. J.D. McGregor unveiled a great stone cairn built of brightly coloured stones of the glacial period as he declared the park officially opened. 2000 parking spots in Wasagaming were filled. The chairman for the day was J.L. Bowman, M.P. for Dauphin. Also present were Hon. T.G. Murphy, Minister of the Interior and J.H. Harkin, Commissioner of National Parks.


The Public Works Construction Act was enacted in 1934 to provide \$40,000,000 in assistance during the Great Depression, with many construction projects based in Canada's national parks. This fund continued and expanded the funding that was available in the 1931 Unemployment and Farm Relief Act. Only married men or single men with dependents were to be

employed. This new policy resulted in all single men being released from their duties in the Clear Lake camps as of the last week of July. Their places were to be taken by the men who qualified. The single men were to be taken care of in Shilo and other camps now set aside for them under the Department of National Defense. The married men remained with the camp projects and due to planning, the jobs were of a more complex nature that tested the skills of some of the artisans. The men who were sent to jobs provided by the Department of National Defense began to challenge some of the mundane jobs provided for them. They demanded changes from the Bennett Government and started to voice their opinions that resulted in the On-To-Ottawa trek and the Regina Riots.

There was also a change in working conditions. All men were to be paid 35 cents an hour for an eight hour day. They would be required to pay board at the rate of 60 cents per day, leaving them \$2.20 for each working day.

With the allocation of these funds from the Dominion, Superintendent James Smart went ahead with some projects that had been contemplated for some time. It

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE
JS/GAF.


DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, CANADA
RIDING MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK

REFER TO NO. RMNR. 1.

Wasagaming, Manitoba, 193
6th June, 1935.

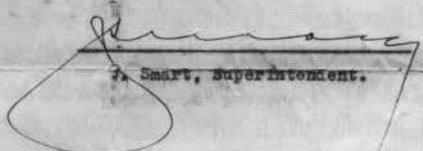
NOTICE.

Instructions have been received from the Department that all single men's Unemployment Relief Camps in the Riding Mountain National Park are to be closed as soon as possible.

Any men wishing to arrange to be transferred to other single men's camps to be continued in the Province will kindly give their names to their foreman or time-keeper at the earliest possible date.

The following National Defence Camps are available for single men:-

- Project 20, Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba.
- Project 103, Duck Mountain Forest Reserve.
- Project 110, Shilo, Manitoba.


J. Smart, Superintendent.

SAVE THE FOREST: One fire may seriously damage the forest, diminish wild life and impair the beautiful scenery of a NATIONAL PARK. Carelessness may cause such a fire. When in a NATIONAL PARK, extinguish each match, cigar or cigarette before throwing away. Guard every fire you light until it is completely extinguished.

In 1932 a relief camp for the unemployed opened for building permanent structures for a new base in Shilo. At Lac Du Bonnet, the Single Men's Relief Program provided jobs in road construction. Document provided by Henry Hlady.



Relief workers riding horses to work... Photo courtesy of Henry Hlady.

was the intention to install an electric lighting system to take care of the needs of business places, parks, streets and cottage owners. While a decision had not yet been made, it was understood that the electric plant would be established in the park and that the Manitoba Power Commission lines would not be extended for that purpose. Extensive drainage improvements were well under way and a new water system was scheduled to be installed throughout the town site. There was yet no mention of the quotas of the number of men from the different towns as it would take

time to organize the work to be done, but it was hoped that these jobs would be provided to men from Minnedosa and other towns in the Marquette district.

The January 10, 1935 edition of the Dauphin Herald stated, "Relief Camps For Single Men To Be Re-Opened". Word was received at the week end by Col. G.C. MacLean, Director of Federal Relief For Manitoba, that the Riding Mountain Camp, closed last fall will be re-opened to provide work for single unemployed men in Manitoba. Camps were first opened in 1932 and operated uninterruptedly until last September. At one time they accommodated 1200 single unemployed men who were provided for and received \$5.00 per month.

By April of 1935, Superintendent J.A. Smart stated, "There is not a man who wouldn't jump at a job. They are not spoiled." He was discussing the government relief camps. The impending spring season brought a reduction in the number of men to 480. During the winter there were 781. Smart indicated that some left and got jobs and others were taking the chance of finding something to better themselves.

By 1935, the projects at the Riding Mountain National Park were paying off dividends as there were many improvements in the roads and the various buildings. Because of better economic times and affordable family holidays, thousands of people came to visit and have holidays in the park. Throughout Canada there were 150 relief camps where the forty-four hour week, three square meals and 20 cents per day allowance was the norm. In order to reduce Federal expenditures, the relief camps were closed in 1936. By 1937 the camps were dismantled and there is little evidence today of the remnants of these camps that once housed and provided work for the unemployed men of the Depression. During WWII, the task of making improvements would be done by Mennonite Conscientious Objectors who lived and worked in one of three camps in the park. Young men such as Peter Geisbrecht, worked at Camp No. 3 and in 1941, using a pick axe and a shovel, helped build six miles of the No. 19 Highway.

Henry Hlady, Relief Worker...

It was indeed an honour and a privilege to hear Henry's voice on my answering machine. He wanted my address as he wanted to send his story of his time spent in Camp No. 7. About a week later I met Henry, who is 91, at his home in Brandon.

Henry grew up in the north end of Brandon with his two brothers and a sister. Henry's father worked for the railway and in various construction jobs and was a violinist in a band. Henry recalled that when his father came home from playing at a function they would have to shake the violin to get the nickels and dimes that were inserted in the violin by the appreciative audience. Henry's father became ill and passed away when Henry was fifteen.

Henry was fifteen years old when he left for his first relief camp job at Rivers. Using a pick and shovel, wheel barrows and two teams of horses the men built about a quarter mile of road before the first snowfall of the year. Henry recalled that a person had to be careful when operating the scoop pulled by the horses. There was one man driving and one man dumping. If the overalls got caught in the handle of the scoop, a person would take quite a spill.

Henry then went to a camp at Clear Lake. Along with eleven other young men, sixteen year old Henry arrived at Camp 7 in October of 1933. The first bunkhouse was an old logging camp hut that was left over by the men who cut ties for the railroad. Several weeks later they were billeted out to a new bunkhouse and it soon filled up with 30-40 relief workers.

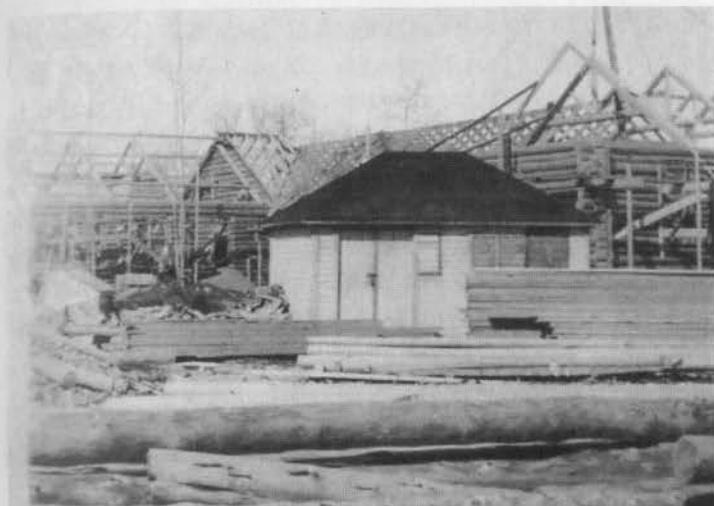
Camp 7 was so named because it was seven miles from the Wigwam in Wasagaming, the headquarters for the camps. Camp 7 was located on the road to McCreary on Highway No. 19 near Whirlpool Lake. Henry also noted that Camp 8 was eight miles from Wasagaming and located on the Norgate Road, No. 9 near the Rolling River Fire Station and Camp No. 10 was on the North Shore of Clear Lake where Highway 10 leaves the lake. Camps 4 and 5 were on the shore of Clear Lake. Camp 4 was by the Wishing Well and Camp 5 was located east of the junction of the current lakeshore bicycle path.

Henry's jobs included cutting and clearing bush on roadways and cutting



Top photo... Henry Hlady at work in the relief camp. Photo courtesy of Henry Hlady.

Bottom photo... Mary and Henry Hlady, February 11, 2008.



Construction at the camp and the camp where Henry Hladý worked... Photo courtesy of Henry Hladý.

logs for fencing and sign posts. Henry also skinned the bark off the logs and made points at the ends of the posts. Some of the logs were also used for the building of the wharf at Wasagaming, for log cabins and guide posts for roads. Henry recalled two men from McCreary. Ted Hill was a "straw boss" and supervised the cutting of logs in the bush. His brother Frank, had a team of horses and skidded logs out from the bush and to a roadway.

Henry slept in a double bunk on a straw mattress. The cabin was heated by a full forty-five gallon drum in the middle of the room. Around the heater were some tables where the men could sit and talk or play cards. Henry mentioned that the food was good and the pay was a package of tobacco and \$5.00 per month. All the winter clothes that were needed were also supplied. Most of the men were from around the district and were from as far south as Deloraine and north to Swan River. There were also men from Winnipeg, one from

Quebec and two from Ontario.

Henry also said that they went to Onanole several times for dances and that they had "a little nip from the mickey." There were also sing songs of old songs and boxing matches. Henry laughed when he said that there was a really tall guy and a short guy boxing. The little man would run between the legs of the tall man and make him angry. Camp 7 and 8 got together and put on a play for entertainment and they also did one night in McCreary. A minister would come every two weeks and conduct a church service.

Henry left Camp 7 in May and returned home to Brandon. There was no work and he rode the rails to other parts of the country such as Montreal to seek employment.

Relief In The Municipalities and Towns...

In 1930 the Unemployment Relief Act was passed which provided grants for municipal public work projects. These are excerpts from a Relief Project from *On The Sunny Slopes Of The Riding Mountains*. In the 1930s when there were many men out of work and there were no paying jobs, the Government of Canada voted a sum of

money to each area. This money was to be used for a project with the intention of giving a paying job to the locals. The Rossburn Municipality decided to use their share in Ward I with the intention to have a grade built and to cut the scrub on a piece of roadway five miles east of Rossburn.

Jim Armstrong and Jim Brown were the road bosses and Alexander McPhail was the time-keeper. Gordon Taylor supplied an Allis-Chambers tractor and breaker-plough and the fuel for the tractor. All



Sam Weytyk at a relief camp in the Duck Mountains. Photo courtesy of Frank and Roberta Zaryski

the men supplied their own transportation to the site as well as food for their noon meal. The men who drove a team of horses were to supply their own oats and hay. The wages included: 1 man= 30 cents per hour, man and a team of horses= 50 cents per hour, a tractor, plough and fuel= \$2.75 per hour. In order to give as many men as possible work, there was a limit set. A man could make from \$7-8.00, a man and team, \$12-15.00.

This is a list of the number of men who worked each day:

Nov. 5= 6 men and 17 men and teams Nov. 6=11 men and 22 men and teams
Nov. 7=19 men and 28 men and teams Nov. 8=16 men and 30 men and teams
Nov. 10=30 men and 48 men and teams Nov. 11=22 men and 51 men and teams
Nov. 12=10 men and 24 men and teams

The total paid was approximately \$1240 which included \$50.00 for culverts

Excerpts from the Village of Rossburn Council Minutes...

1931- Unemployment Relief Committee set up and headed by Ed Harris. 200 sacks of flour ordered for relief.

1934- Due to amount of relief work which Dr. Manly and Dr. Evans were called upon to do, Council decided to cancel their taxes.

1937- The curling rink was built and all labour provided by unemployed.

Reflections From Little Muddy Water-A History Of Winnipegosis

-Concern in 1931 that able bodied men were neglecting their children.

-Central Relief Committee was activated in 1932.

-1933 taxes were not paid by many persons due to poor fishing, so Council waived payment of penalties.

-On May 2, 1933, a petition of thirty names was received for relief.

-On May 19, 1933, a special meeting was called to order "that notices be posted asking for applications for garden seed as a relief measure, for their gardens... also that if sufficient applications are made to warrant action in preparing certain property by ploughing- as plots for gardens."

-In 1939 the School District and Council agreed to cancel over \$5000 in school taxes

by reason of being uncollectable.

-In some cases, wood was sold on behalf of delinquent tax payers, said funds credited to taxes; in some instances, properties were rented back to the people who lost their properties.

Relief in Dauphin...Highlights from the Dauphin Herald

In the June 23, 1932 Dauphin Herald the citizens were asked to refer transients to the Town Office as many were receiving requests regularly from these unemployed men for meals and these requests usually received a sympathetic response. Some of these men it was stated were, "Capitalizing on this good nature by remaining in town longer than they intended and obtaining a meal as required from different houses." The Town Council also wished the citizens to know that arrangements had been made for meals to these men in return for an hour's work in the park. This meant that they would leave town the same day that they arrived. The article went on to say that, "When a man applies for a meal he should be directed either to the town office or Councillor Solomon during the day and to the town police after business hours. Money expended in this manner came under direct relief, the larger portion which was borne by the government, so that there was no reason why private citizens should be put to any inconvenience or any man go hungry."

In the November 3rd edition there was mention of a Citizen's Welfare Association doing a drive to raise \$2500.00 to help alleviate the winter relief problem. There was a door to door canvas with 100 canvassers working under Ward Captains. There were also dances and other activities to help embrace the relief problem. The Citizens Welfare Association was composed of twenty three members of all churches, organizations, lodges, and service clubs in Dauphin. By the November 17 edition there was a report of the first in a series of Sunday night relief concerts that were held at the Dauphin Theatre at 8:00 p.m. The building was filled to capacity and \$38.00 in a silver collection was raised. D.H. Telfer acted as the master of ceremonies for solos, quartets, piano duets and string quartets. By November 24, \$2115.00 had been raised. Later in January, there was a Rural Relief Carnival at the rink.

During September of 1933, the citizens of Dauphin, Fork River and Winnipegosis aided in a vegetable drive for the drought stricken regions of south western Manitoba. According to the newspaper report in the September 28 Dauphin Herald, "In many districts drought and grasshoppers have left neither leaf of tree nor blade of grass. Hundreds of families are facing winter without provision of any kind for man or beast. The citizens of this area have an opportunity to assist the less fortunate brethren by a generous response." Mr. Voss at the Co-operative Creamery was to help to direct the unloading of potatoes and other root vegetables. If citizens couldn't donate vegetables than donations of cash would be taken to help defray expenses in collection and shipping. Any leftover money would be used to buy more vegetables. If citizens couldn't deliver vegetables they were to notify committee members and arrangements would be made to have the vegetables picked up. Students in the town schools were also encouraged to bring in a pound of potatoes and the response was excellent. The appeal for vegetables was made by the Waskada and Edwards Municipalities to the Dauphin

Agricultural Society and Rotary Club. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, trucks operated in a house to house canvass. In the end there were three train carloads sent to south western Manitoba. 2.5 cars were loaded by the United Church and the other .5 was contributed by Fork River and Winnipegosis. The three cars headed for Hartney, Lyleton and Crammer. Several weeks latter there was notification that the potatoes and root vegetables arrived in excellent condition and were greatly appreciated by the drought-stricken residents.

In the June 6, 1934 edition an employment and a relief department had been opened by the Town of Dauphin at the Town Hall. Anyone wanting general labourers, farm help, men for odd jobs, or women and girls for domestic work by day, week, or month were to apply at the office to help the unemployment situation.

Relief Statistics:	Jan. '34	Jan. '35
No. of families	72	105
Dependents	300	477
Fuel	\$248.50	\$376.00
Food	\$571.66	\$1082.13
Clothing	Nil	\$72.91
Shelter	\$115	\$317.50

There was a report on the Green Poplar Project as relief measures identification tickets were issued during the first four weeks of operation. The Town Council voted to purchase 1000 cords of green poplar from unemployed residents from town. There was a report of: Cutters =50, teamsters =40, wood cut and delivered during above dates=422 cords, no. of cutters registered for relief=29 of these 17 actually cut for delivery.

In the September 23 edition it was noted that the Hon. W.R. Clubb, Minister of Public Works made an appeal to assist the drought stricken neighbours in Saskatchewan. Citizens were to donate potatoes, root vegetables, dried beans and peas, home canned vegetables, chicken feed in sacks, and perishable vegetables such as canned tomatoes. In Dauphin the contributions were to be left at the Northern Elevator warehouse. By October 3 it was reported that the first train car load was shipped to Main Centre, Saskatchewan, the second to Qu'Appelle and a third was just being loaded.

In the December 7 edition the Citizen's Welfare Group reported a total of 2,134 articles of clothing donated, 49 shoe repairs, 100 prescriptions filled in addition to a considerable amount of ordinary medical supplies. Miscellaneous articles distributed included mattresses, bedding, kitchen utensils, 100 Christmas hampers, two cook stoves and one coal oil stove.

It was interesting to note that on May 30, 1935, Jack Bettry and Wilfred Houle spent seven days in the Dauphin Gaol for "riding the rods" from Gladstone to Dauphin. Right after their release they were back at the police station charged with theft of a pair of spectacles from a local hardware shop. They were given a severe reprimand and tongue lashing and were told to leave town within twenty four hours.

In the December 23, 1937 edition of the Dauphin Herald, once again the topic of relief was discussed as Councilor Watson wanted to know if there was anything that the Town could do to make people register as they come and go as residents. He thought that there should be a record of citizens who were moving into town and if there were relief prospects the town would know beforehand and would be able to tell

them to stay where they were and not come to Dauphin as they could expect no relief. Currently there was no such law and transients could come and go as they like.

Councilors Cowtun and Watson also thought that the names of those on relief and how much they got should be made public. A similar idea had been turned down some time ago as it was felt that once a man went on relief, he got figuratively speaking a black eye in the eyes of other people. This wouldn't be fair to those who were forced on relief through no fault of their own. In other words, the innocent can't be made to suffer for the wrongs of others.

In the January 13, 1938 edition the Council Committee report discussed and investigated by individual the 68 families on relief. The report recommended that some families be cut off completely and that a number should be granted reduced relief. In the previous year the highest month for relief payments was March with \$3158.00 paid and the lowest month was September with \$628.38 paid. Last year, Mr. Sinclair, field man for the Relief Commission in Winnipeg suggested an independent relief committee to be formed from four independent taxpayers who were not members of Council and who were not actively taking part in the supply of relief commodities. The board was to work in conjunction with the Council. Mayor Ramsden did not want to make a final decision and it would be discussed at a later date.

In the February 10 edition, Council reported that the cost of relief was cut from \$2258.27 to \$1528.90. (Flour cost- \$147.60, groceries- \$640.49, milk- \$172.97, fuel- \$167.00, rent- \$365.35) One family cost the town \$60.00 while the rest of the families averaged \$20-30.00. Councilors McLean, Puchalski and Voss picked out the names of individuals who were receiving relief and questioned the amounts

Meat For The Table...

The Department of the Interior established a small buffalo herd in the Riding Mountain National Park when early in November, 1931, two carloads were shipped from Buffalo National Park in Wainright, Alberta to Ashville where they were loaded on motor trucks and transported south to their new 332 acre facility enclosed by an eight foot high wire fence. Sixteen, three year old cows and four, four year old bulls were the basis of the new herd. The bulls were transported in special constructed crates built by the C.N.R. which occupied one car, while the sixteen cows were herded together in another car. The cows were first introduced to the enclosure followed by the bulls who were quick to adapt.

In the December 2, 1937 edition of the Dauphin Herald, the headline read, "Buffalo Steak". Due to the rapid increase in the buffalo herd it was necessary to kill off twenty one animals. Starting with twenty animals the herd has grown to eighty three. After the slaughter, sixty two buffalos would remain. The firm of Scrase and Son from Dauphin was awarded the contract to kill the buffalo and supply meat for sale locally. The balance would be shipped elsewhere. The hides were contracted to a large tanning firm. A temporary slaughter house was set up at the park and operations commenced at the beginning of the week. A government inspector was at the spot to inspect each carcass. Only meat suitable for consumption was offered for sale. The balance of condemned meat was destroyed on the spot. Among the animals destroyed was the original herd bull brought from Wainright. New feeding grounds were established for the remaining buffalo to the west of Lake Audy.

that they were spending on fuel and wood. One particular family of two were spending \$20.00 a month on groceries, not counting flour and milk. The Councillors' believed that this was excessive. Councillor Taylor, however, gave an example of an individual who was not able to work and the little that he got in relief was well deserved. Council on the whole was of the opinion that some relief recipients were going overboard. Mayor Ramsden ended the meeting by saying that he got word from the Superintendent Heaslip of the Riding Mountain National Park, that one of the game wardens had 800 pounds of moose meat and that he was willing to sell it cheap. Council was going to invest in the meat and the relief recipients would be dining on wild venison.

It was interesting to note that there was a shortage of workers for farm labour by December 1938. The average pay for stooking was \$1.75-\$2.00 and threshing operators received \$2.50. Girls working on farms received \$12-15.00 per month. Workers at farms qualified for The Farm Employment Scheme where a labourer would receive from the Federal Government \$5.00 a month and \$7.50 per month for continuous employment from the date placed until March 31, 1939. The farmer did not receive any compensation but would have a hired hand. According to the paper, four men from Winnipeg were placed with local contractors to cut wood.

By January, 1939, sixty men were to be employed in the construction of a relief project in building a storm sewer at Third Ave. N.W. and Main St. South. The workers were to receive the full amount of their usual relief plus 1/8 of the money received in construction. This way they could earn a little bit more money. To add to this project, a group of businessmen approached the Council to pay for 12-1500 more cords of green poplar to have in case of emergency. Under this agreement the Town was to pay the costs of the permits and in return would receive 50% of the wood cut. The cost per cord was \$3.00 per cord. At this time Council had spent \$646.89 for March for 35 families or 110 people and several transients.

In March, 1938, the guest speaker at the Dauphin Rotary Club meeting was Guy Parker, representing the Rural Training School Staff. He stated that, "Relief is at present the biggest single business in Saskatchewan and is costing \$100.00 a minute. In addition to feeding and clothing the people, the government provides fodder for the stock. The Federal Government has taken over 200 municipalities in the drought area and is paying the entire cost of relief." He noted that there are 400,000 people in Saskatchewan who are under nineteen and when they come to maturity they could have a warped attitude towards society looking back at ten years of government support. It was time to build up the morale of the youths. Little did he know that soon a World War would change the views of an entire country as the economy would improve with the need for war supplies and many of the young boys would eventually enlist in the Armed Forces. The unemployment situation as well as the economy would take an upward turn.

Sir Henry Thornton's analogy of a "shower or mere head cold" lasted a decade. These unemployed young men who were under nineteen, as well as the young men from the Parkland enlisted, trained and went overseas. Others worked on the family farm or worked in factories producing war supplies. As reliable rainfall returned to the Prairies, farms once again became viable and produced bumper crops.



Turkeys From Farm To Market...
 Top photo-Annie Stozek feeding turkeys on the farm.
 Middle photos courtesy of Steffie Maduke- Farmers in front of The Quality Store in the 1970s.
 Nathan Unickow holding a turkey that he bought from a farmer.
 Bottom document- Excerpt from Stanley Stozek's account book showing the prices for selling turkeys and chickens from Nathan Unickow at the Quality Store in Oakburn.

Prologue to "Taking Care Of Business"

The Quality Store

I remember those days,
 Growing up,
 The long days of summer or the long nights of winter
 Our farm, the trip to town and Main Street

A little boy and his father entering the Quality Store
 The smell of oil on the well worn wooden floor
 And Unickow, the Jewish merchant
 With his businesslike skin
 Smooth, pale, fingers gnarled and thin
 A short fellow wearing a black felt hat
 His shirt sleeves held up with bands of elastic
 Here was the local hero, remembered by the people
 His generosity, a man with a soft spot in his heart
 Not good business,
 But some credit to get them through the Depression,
 The 30's, the terrible years
 Most were honest folk
 They'd pay him back

And now my father, November 1961
 Bartering over the price of the poultry
 A season of work to help pay the bills
 The feeding, the plucking, the cleaning,
 And Unickow, balancing the weights of the scales
 Like the Scales of Justice, deciding our fate

I remember those days, the 60's
 Life was much simpler then,
 A season's promise, my reward
 A trip to the Quality Store

12312	Got for 35 Turkey 28 Hen 11 Tom Unickow Oct. 16	
10.50	Got for 3 hens from Bob.	" "
40.00	From Wags for the road	
167.90	For three calves	Oct. 13
138.00	For 30 Turkey Toms from Unickow	Nov. 12
15.00	For 19 roosters at Unickow	" "
10.89	For 21 roosters at Un.	Nov 14
20.91	for 94 rooster	Nov-17

Chapter III

Taking Care Of Businesses...

The country store was once the focal point in a district. It was here that the locals could congregate and catch up on the latest news. The main purpose was to pick up the supplies that were needed in the daily maintenance of the farm or town household. By the 1970s the country store as well as stores in small towns were becoming a vestige of the past. With the advent of the rubber tired tractor in the late 1940s, farmers became more mobile and bought more farm land which in theory made everything more efficient. More equipment was bought and farms became specialized. The lure of the city also beckoned the young graduates who did not want to take over the family farm.



Auction sale at the Quality Store... Photo courtesy of Steffie Maduke.

At one time if one drove down a country road there was a yard light shining its beacon every half mile indicating that a family inhabited the farm site. Now, one must drive many miles before seeing a yard light. Rural depopulation is a sad sight, as along with the disappearance of people on the farms, this domino effect also knocked out the little country store, the stores in a small town as well as the country elevator. We call it progress! This chapter deals with some of the people who worked at or owned businesses.

The Country Store...

Many of these stores started to appear in the 1920s and provided the essentials for the local farmers. Flour, salt, sugar, tobacco and coal oil were some of the essential products needed by the locals. Sometimes the stores also doubled up as a post office where many people waited in anticipation for a letter or the Eaton's Catalogue to arrive. Sometimes a church and a school would also be located in the same vicinity.

Towns were located many miles away, therefore the country store provided a valuable service. Now, the farm family did not have to travel a great distance. One of the earliest stores in the area where I grew up was started in 1921 by Peter Peech, who built a little grocery and dry goods store in the Seech area. Along with the locals, workers from Peden's Mill located on Whitewater Lake would also come and do business.

In 1929-30, John Prosak operated a small country store built on the road allowance on the north side of Seech Lake. When John got married to Mary Manuliak in 1938, he bought an acre of land close by and they built a store with living quarters.

John constructed a platform where dances were held on occasion. On Sundays, during the summer months, people congregated from miles around to listen to the entertainment. The store was open until the 1970s when John passed away and his wife Mary moved to Edmonton.

Several miles further to the south east, Mrs. Frances Mayes started the first store in Horod in 1924. She operated the store for one year. This was also a great place for the local people to meet and catch up on the latest news. Frances sold the business to Mike and Mary Gregorash. In 1938 Mike and Mary sold the store to Steve and Mary Tkachuk and in 1940 they built a new store. In 1943 John and Anne Malchuk bought the store. The store also housed the post office. Customers would bring eggs in exchange for groceries. To earn extra income, John also was engaged in general trucking, hauling wood, fuel and grain for farmers. The store closed its doors in 1976.

One of the few remaining country stores in the area that still is in business is located at Olha. While Fred Twerdun was in the process of building a store with living quarters in 1940, Stan and Helen Antonation began their general store and gas station. Both businesses started operating simultaneously. In 1947 Peter and Mary Wasilka bought the store and sold it to Mr. and Mrs. D. Prosak in 1949. In 1952 Fred and Lena Posmituck bought the store and operated it until 1963 when Walter and Nadia Swereda bought it. The present owners are Steve and Marion Koltusky who have operated the store for the past thirty seven years.

The Quality Store, 1926-76

Since the 1970s, four stores closed in Oakburn. They included the Quality Store owned and operated by Nathan Unickow, the Michalyshyn Bros. Store owned by Mike and Paul Michalyshyn, the A.T. Siwicki General Store, operated by Andrew Siwicki from 1926 and then after his death by his wife Rose, and the Sel-Rite Store operated by Steve P. Gerelus who started the store keeping business in 1926.

When Nathan Unickow died at the age of seventy three in 1976, he had owned and operated the Quality Store in Oakburn for fifty years. Because of his kindness and



Nathan Unickow at work... Photo courtesy of Steffie Maduke.

generosity, many of the people living in the Oakburn area were able to get credit for groceries during the Depression. When no one else gave credit, Nathan Unickow would. When he died in 1976 there were still many outstanding bills. After the funeral, his son came and packed many items in boxes and took them to Vancouver. The rest of the stock was sold at an auction sale. When the store was later dismantled, a park was created at the site and named in his honour.

Nathan Unickow, who came from Winnipeg, had a thriving business. He rented a room in the Oakburn Hotel and spent most of his time working at the store. It was not unusual to see him at the store at all hours of the night as he was there to provide a vital service. Some of his

customers would even steal from him but he would overlook it. The door was always open. During the summer holidays his wife and children would come out from Winnipeg and stay with him.

As a young boy I still remember going to the Quality Store on a Saturday night. The store consisted of two buildings. The store itself had oiled wooden floors and many counters filled with clothing, hardware and groceries. In this main building the clerks were there to assist the customers. Many people from the Oakburn area got their start in the workforce by working at the Quality Store. One of the workers was Steffie Maduke. She also did the book keeping and I can still remember her working in the office. In January, 2008, I stopped in to see Steffie at her residence in Oakburn.

In 1947-48 Steffie taught grades 1-8 at the Flower School. She had gone to Winnipeg for six weeks to attend school at Tuxedo and obtained her permit. The following summer she started to work at a store in Beulah when she got a telephone call to teach in Togo, Saskatchewan. In 1951, when the school year was over she started to work at the Quality Store as a book keeper. At this time the clerks were Margaret Chopotiuk, Marge Skavinski and Peter Lasuta. Steffie noted that in the back of the main building there was a furnace that used wood and a place where Nathan Unickow purchased furs. At one time the Quality Store took in furs such as beaver, mink and muskrat. It was interesting to note how the locals tried to take advantage of Unickow when he was just a "greenhorn" in the fur business. One person sold him tame minks from a fur farm. When Unickow went to the fur auction he got nothing for them. Another person told me that one year they killed many house rats on the farm. His father skinned them and told Unickow that they were muskrats. Unickow asked where the tails were and the farmer told him that he cut them off, so Unickow bought the "fur". Several months later, when the farmer came back to the store, Unickow waved his finger at him to indicate that he had been "taken."

In the warehouse, there was a section where the egg grader graded the eggs that the farmers brought. This was a full time job. Oral Kalinowich was one of the egg graders and she was followed by Steffie's brother, Walter. The warehouse was also the spot where farmers brought poultry. I still remember my father taking turkeys to this building. The warehouse also was a stor-



Steffie Maduke working on the books above the main floor... Photo courtesy of Steffie Maduke.



Walter Maduke grading eggs... Photo courtesy of Steffie Maduke.



Nathan Unickow checking out the turkeys...
Photo courtesy of Steffie Maduke.

age area for the extra merchandise. The days were long as the store opened at nine o'clock each morning except Sunday. On Saturday, the store did not close until 12:00 midnight. There were benches in the store for people to sit and chat. Many wives had to wait there until the Oakburn Hotel closed for the evening and then their husbands would come, pick up them up and head home. The store was open for a half day on Monday.

When Nathan Unickow died, Steffie ran the store for about one month. After the auction sale Steffie decided that it was time to retire. Soon after, Paul Michalyshyn came out to her parent's farm and asked if she would consider working at the Michalyshyn Brothers Store. She ended up working nine more years.

Mike Michalyshyn – Farmer's Son, Army Man and Storekeeper...

Trust and confidence were two words repeated by Mike Michalyshyn as he reminisced about his days as a store keeper. Now at the age of 86 and in the comfort of his home in Shoal Lake, Mike started off the interview by giving two examples of trust and confidence.

As a store keeper in the small hamlet of Oakburn, he knew everyone and never wanted to cheat anyone as this would ruin his reputation. When a farmer, Mr. Glushka, sold his cattle, he had a substantial amount of money. Mr. Glushka did not trust banks, so he asked Mike to keep the money in the store safe. Mike wanted to give Mr. Glushka a receipt, however, he said that he'd lose it and that the receipt should be left in the safe. Several months later Mr. Glushka picked the money up. Mike stated that he should have deposited the money in the bank. What if the store had been robbed?

Mike also related another story of trust. A rural resident, Mr. Sopkow came into the store and announced that he had sold his farm and would be moving to Winnipeg. Mike said that he was sorry to hear about the move and that he would be losing a good customer. Mr. Sopkow wanted Mike to keep \$6000 in the store safe. Mr. Sopkow was afraid to leave the money in the bank because of income tax. Mike ended up storing the money in the store safe. Several months later Mr. Sopkow came back and wanted to take out half of the money. Mike told him to take it all so that he wouldn't be responsible for it. Mike never wanted to charge interest or a fee. He just did it as a favour. However, this showed that the people of the area trusted Mike and had confidence in him and Mike, in return, showed respect to his patrons.

Mike Michalyshyn was born in 1921 and got his education at the King George School located roughly four miles north of Oakburn. During the summer Mike had to walk four miles to school. In the winter, the trek was more adventuresome. Mike and

his brothers and sister hitched up an old horse to the "van" and travelled in comfort. The old horse had a "gimpy" leg and could be trusted not to run away. Mike went to school with the north-side families such as Ewashko, Nycheck and Zurba. He also mentioned the south-side families such as Wasilka, Kotyk and Matiation.

Mike would end up going to the one room school in Oakburn where there were 72 students. His father, Joseph, was a school trustee and helped to build an additional room to the school. Mike recalled that a hole had been dug for the addition and there was a large mound of earth that was ideal to slide on. One day, his teacher, Miss Perch, rang the bell for classes to start. Mike heard the bell and was the only boy student to come to class. Miss Perch asked where the rest of his classmates were and he told her that they must not have heard the bell. She told him to go call them.

Mike returned several minutes later without the rest of his classmates. Miss Perch then proceeded to give Mike six straps on each hand. Mike asked, "What was that for?" "You were late." "But you told me to go call the rest of the class." "Okay, then you wouldn't get a strap tomorrow because you got one today."

As a student going to the Oakburn High School, Mike's ambition was to be a doctor. However, due to the economy and several years of bad luck on the family farm this dream never materialized. When Mike was in grade eleven, his father planted most of his fields with Marquis Wheat. This type of wheat was susceptible to rust. When it came time to harvest, the wheat had excellent growth but no seed. Mike's father had to burn all of the fields. The next year, there was a very bad hail storm. The hail was so big that it killed the chickens and the turkeys in the yard. Again, their livelihood was wiped out. There was just no money for Mike to further his education.

Since this was the Depression era there was no money in the Michalyshyn household. One day Mike was standing in front of the Oakburn Pool Hall. A pool game was 15 cents, however, Mike had no money. A local farmer, Dick Drul, came up to Mike and asked if he wanted a job for a few weeks to help with threshing. The normal pay was \$1.00 a day but Dick offered Mike \$1.25. Dick even offered some extra fall work. Mike ended up cultivating the fields with four horses. At the end of the stint, Mike made \$38.50. When Mike came home his father said that they had no money to pay for the taxes. Mike ended up giving his father the \$38.50. Later that fall Fred Solomon needed help on his farm so Mike went to work for him for \$1.00 a day. When the work ran out Mike took an axe and went cutting wood in the bush. After he cut enough wood for the Michalyshyn household, he cut wood for other people.

In 1941, Mike started to work as a clerk at the Quality Store which was owned and operated by Nathan Unickow. As a clerk Mike started off with a salary of \$15.00 a month. He worked up to \$20.00, \$25.00 and after two years he was earning \$60.00 per



Mike Michalyshyn

month. Mike had to put in long hours at the Quality Store, starting work at 7:00 a.m. and often working until 12:00 as many farmers and townspeople stayed at the store to visit. Unickow usually had two clerks. Mike mentioned Peter Lashuta, Steffie Maduke, Sophie Sorochnynski and Jean Borodie as some of the other clerks. Soon Mike realized that he wasn't getting anywhere with his job. It's not that he disliked the town or the townspeople, he just wanted a change.

One of the clerks from The Quality Store, George Menzies, joined the army. Mike also decided that he should join the army. Unickow was upset that Mike was leaving. Mike had a physical by Dr. Burdell of Shoal Lake and he was off to the Fort Osbourne Barracks in Winnipeg. Here Mike had another physical. He had to wait there until enough men enlisted. Once that happened, Mike went to Fort Garry and then to the Vimy Barracks in Kingston. Here the recruiting officer asked what division Mike would like to go into and what his best subject was. Mike did not want to go into the infantry. His response was "physics and chemistry." The recruiting officer said, "By the sounds of it you should go into the Signal Corps."

For the basic and advanced training Mike was sent to Woodstock where he took Mechanical Training. In London, Ontario, Mike learned city driving and then he was sent to Camp Borden to train in the Armoured Corps. Here he learned marksmanship and the use of machine guns. Then Mike was sent to Meford, Ontario on the shores of Lake Huron where the Department of National Defence confiscated 40,000 acres of orchards for a training center. Mike's job was to make sure that the soldiers were able to hit their targets of army tanks properly. In his spare time Mike enjoyed training women using Lugars and other hand guns.

Mike also liked to travel to cities such as Buffalo, Montreal and Detroit when he had time off. He had a group of guys who he was friends with and they came from an assortment of religious backgrounds. Along with the fun times, Mike always attended church. One day the Sergeant-Major walked into the barracks and said that there were no more men going overseas. War was over. Mike came back to Oakburn with an honourable discharge. While in the army Mike was making \$45.00 a month. Throughout his stint in the army he ended up sending half of his pay check to his parents which amounted to over \$3000.



Mike Michalyshyn in the army... Photo courtesy of Mike Michalyshyn.

The Store-Keeping Business

When Mike got back from his stint in the army, he became the proud owner of a store. One day Mike's father brought in a load of grain with his horses into town. He was met by M. F. Nowasad who suggested that Joseph should buy his store for Mike. The deal was made. When Mike found out that his father had bought him a store he couldn't sleep for two nights. M. F. Nowasad had bought the store for his sons with the

intention that they go into business. They chose to go into farming instead. Previously, Mike and Nick Nowasad ran the store but due to poor management they went bankrupt. With all of the previous failed attempts, Mike was very concerned. With the deal came about \$3000 worth of inventory, of which close to half was useless. However, Mike had to face the consequences.

The building that was purchased was at one time the Rutherian Co-Operative Trading Co. Ltd. organized in 1915 with 216 members. Under the direction of Father Domaratzki, the store was formed and when it closed down in 1925 there were 285 members from a large surrounding trading area reaching as far as Elphinstone, Menzie, and Rossburn. The store closed down due to giving too much credit to the members. Early records show managers such as John Chupak, Andrew Siwicky and S.P. Gerelus. The store was sold to S.P. Gerelus in 1926.

Mike's first clerk was his sister Mary. In 1947, the war was just over and the economy was booming. She was replaced a year later by Mike's brother, Paul, who had just got married. He became Mike's partner and the Michalyshyn Bros. Store went into full swing. Mike recalled that some of his first supplier's were McLean's Wholesale, Ashdown's and Western Wholesale. During the 1950's Mike worked 14-16 hour days.

During the late 1940's Oakburn was a thriving town. Mike mentioned that there were eleven stores and the Michalyshyn Bros. Store was right at the bottom. After the war, farmers needed to buy farm equipment. Mike noted that thirty-four farmers wanted tractors. The Michalyshyn Bros. got the right to sell C.C.I.L equipment. Mike Antonation bought the first tractor and John F. Drul bought the first combine. Business was booming. Farmers came from as far as Sandy Lake and Russell to buy equipment.

The Michalyshyn Bros. also bought furs from the locals and Native trappers. Mike's wife got mad at him one day as someone brought a bunch of furs to their house and dumped them late at night in the living room. From then on Mike only bought the furs in the store. People came from Rossburn, Elphinstone, Erickson and Sioux Valley. Mike's main competitor was his former boss, Nathan Unickow.

Jacob Friedman was a Jewish businessman who dealt in furs. A group of merchants banded together to deal with the Dominion Fur Auctions. There were buyers from Germany, Italy and other European countries. By joining together there was a great deal of volume. Both Mike and Jacob gained each other's confidence and Jacob would advise Mike on business. Jacob was soft spoken and often invited Mike to his home in Winnipeg where Mike was treated to caviar and fine wine.

Business was great and there was a great deal of inventory. Whenever Mike had to go into Winnipeg for business he had to borrow a car. He recalled Oakburn lawyer, Nicholas

Mandziuk, asking Mike to drive his daughter Darcie into Winnipeg. Another time, as Mike was going from wholesaler to wholesaler he

16.65	Pay for cultivator shovels at Store	May 11
1.23	Pay for " " part Verbowski	May 2
108.00	Pay for garden tiller at Michalyshyn	May 12
59.00	Pay for lawn mower at Mich	May 15
3.80	Pay for concentrate Gerelus	May
15.00		

Part of my father's farm accounts in 1964. He used his last bus driver's cheque to buy a garden tiller and gas lawn mower at Michalyshyn's Store.

got five traffic tickets. When Mike Antonation, the owner of the car received the tickets in the mail he was not very happy. Therefore, Mike and his brother Paul bought their first car, a Plymouth Bel-Air. Mike later gave the car to Paul. When Mike went to McLean, the G.M. dealer in Shoal Lake, he found out that he could save \$700 if he went to Oshawa to pick up a new car. Mike took this opportunity to take a holiday and visit some of his former army haunts.

Not much later, Mike met Jeannette. Harry Leganchuk told Mike that he knew of this nice girl and that she would be at a church dance in Shoal Lake. Mike and his car were the first to arrive. Later, Jeanette showed up and was dancing with another guy. Mike said, "It looked like had as much as a snowball in ____". He finally got enough nerve to ask her for a dance. They ended up getting married, raised four children and currently have five grand-children.

In 1977 Paul ceased to be partners with Mike. 1983-84 were Mike's top years of business. In 1985, Mike lost a substantial amount of money when the Merchant's Consolidation in Calgary went into receivership. Managers stole money. The merchants were about number four on the list to be paid when some of the money was recouped. Mike ended up getting nothing back. It was time to quit. By 1987 Mike sold off his inventory, took some shelves home, and started working on his new home in Shoal Lake. Shortly after retirement Mike was approached to run for council in Shoal Lake. In the ensuing election he got the most votes of all the candidates and became Deputy-Mayor. He proudly spoke of some of the Town Council's accomplishments and of the trust and confidence that the townspeople had in electing him.

Bull's Garage...

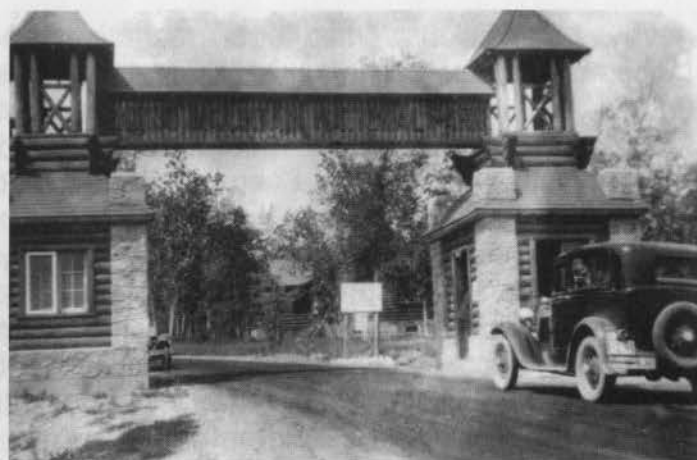
As a young boy I recall driving with my family past Bull's Garage situated on Boundary Road between Elphinstone and Strathclair. Little did I know of its interesting



The former Power House Plant... Photo courtesy of Howard and Don Bull.

history. Most of the buildings at the Whitewater Prisoner Of War Camp were dismantled and burned. Locals came with trucks to salvage nails and cement slabs. The building that housed the diesel power plant was sold. First one person bought it and could not move it. It was then bought by someone else with the same end result. At this time, Edward Hubert Bull bought the 24' x 32' building. How would he get it out of the park when two others had failed? Edward did some negotiations with Warden Dave Binkley. The Superintendent, Heaslip, put Binkley in charge. They would have to take down

some fence at the buffalo pasture. The building was divided in half and would be moved in two pieces. Jim McNulty of Elphinstone, using his 1946 Maple Leaf truck was hired to move the building. They put a swaying back on the truck box and used two sets of separator wheels to put the building on. It took several days of hard work by Ed, his sons, and others such as Jack Morton, Alec Moffat, Alf Somers, and Percy Burnell. Along with the truck, Ed Bull took his '36 Chevy. They took out the back seat to haul extra things such as camping equipment. To jack up the building and cut it in half would take some time. The men slept in the building for the first night, but when it got jacked up, they had to sleep in the tent.



The park gate similar to the one hit by a drunk... Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

There were three buffalo compounds and there was not enough room between the gates to go through. The men had to go off the road and make a hole in the fence. Percy Burnell had to open this temporary gate but there was one really big bull standing close by. Percy was extra careful that the bull did not charge him. McNulty did a great job of moving and was very careful. Howard had to go ahead in places and cut down the banks off the road with a shovel for the building to go ahead. There were places where there were some tight squeezes at bridges. Once the building reached its destination, H.T. Morton joined it together and built the door.

In conversation with Howard Bull, one of Ed's sons who was 14 years old at the time, he remembered stopping at the Horod Store where he paid 35 cents for a pair of orange and black gloves. When the crew went back to get the second half of the building, there was a long delay, as a drunk had rammed into the park gate. Don also recalled the sign at the entrance of the camp was made of tamarack poles. The sign read, Riding Mountain National Park, German Prisoner of War Camp.

The building, moved in 1946, would become Bull's Garage. In 1945 Ed purchased three acres of land from Alma Westaway. Ed and his wife Hazel, had an old farm house moved to their land on November 21, 1945.

Ed married Hazel in 1925. They had a contract to work on the Vanaulsteen farm. They



Edward Bull... Photo courtesy of Howard and Don Bull.



Howard and Don Bull inside the office of the garage. In conversation with Joe Gabski, a former German P.O.W. at the Whitewater Camp where the building was once located, he remembered two German P.O.W.'s working two shifts watching the engine. "One was a little guy and the other was a really big tough guy. One day they got into an argument and the big guy nearly killed the little guy." Needless to say, they both mended their differences and continued their shifts. Joe mentioned that there was another shift but he did not know who worked that shift and whether it was a German or a Canadian who worked the shift.

then worked for a year in Hamiota in the W.D. Vanaulsteen garage. In 1927 they went to Oak River where Ed worked at the Henry garage until Mr. Henry died. Due to crop failures at Oak River and no work, they returned to the Strathclair District and settled on Tom Burnell's farm in 1935. To help make ends meet, Ed looked after the light plant in Strathclair and then he worked for two years in the rink. He was then in charge of the rink for one year. In the winter Ed would walk to town and then home after work, as the roads were not fit for any vehicles and there was no snow plow. At times he arrived home at 2:00 a.m. in the morning. Ed ran the garage business for many years and retired in 1976. At this time his son Howard took over the business.

Howard retired in May, 2007 and on August 10 and 11 there was an auction sale. At this time the ga-

rage had been in the family for seventy one years starting from a humble beginning in 1936 when Edward started a garage on the Tom Burnell farm, a short distance from the present site.

Howard stated that he learned wisdom, knowledge and philosophy from working alongside his father since the age of twelve. Howard took a year of mechanic's education at the Manitoba Technical Institute in Winnipeg but the one thing that he learned from practice was to always be up front with his customers. "I'm not perfect, I will make mistakes." Howard stated that both he and his father believed that honesty was the best policy.

In conversation with Howard, he stated that one time a newspaper man from Strathclair asked why he didn't advertise in the paper. Howard's reply was, "Why should I, all I need is word of mouth of the job I do and I'm always busy." Howard serviced autos, tractors, combines, lawn mowers and garden tractors. Howard's wife, Edith, passed away in 2005. They both worked seven days a week often from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. "Often an extra pair of hands came in handy and it wasn't uncommon to find my wife helping with a clutch or a transmission at 3:00 a.m."

Grading Eggs In Sifton...

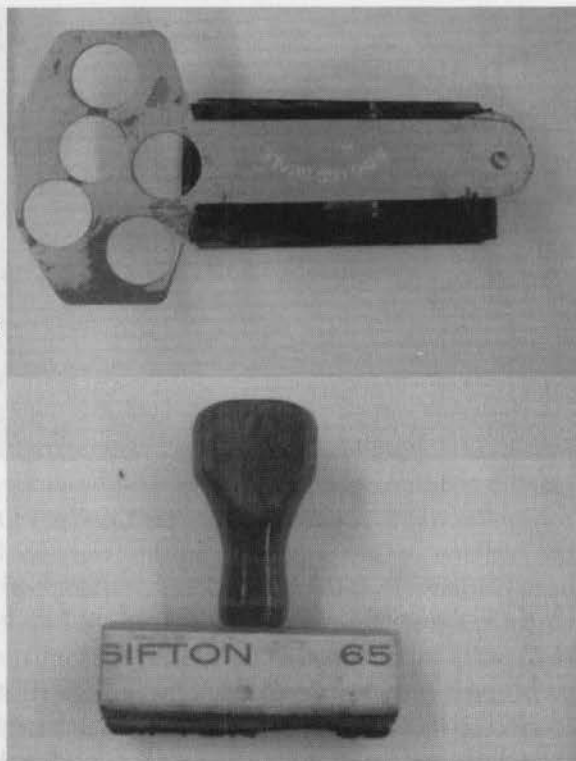
Lisa Shymanski was one of my former students who now works in the office at the school where I used to teach. Whenever I get called to substitute, Lisa is the person who "books" me. Someone mentioned that Lisa's grandmother lived in Sifton and that she had many interesting stories. On a cold day in February I made the twenty

mile trip and met Olga. She has lived in the same house since 1946 and the egg grading building is still attached to the house. Sifton is a typical small town that faces the rural depopulation crisis. There are many empty lots where fires have claimed buildings. There are also many vacant buildings.

At one time Sifton was a "booming" community. In 1935, Willard S. McPhedrain, a railway station agent and his wife Olive, started a sweater company as Willard saw the potential in the knitting world and was inspired by images from the Cowichan Indians on the west coast. The "graph style" pattern, especially #400, the reindeer, soon adorned many curling sweaters. Stella Sawychyn was the designer and knitter of the first patterns.

He named the company Mary Maxim after the family housekeeper, Mary Maximchuk. Willard asked if he could put several ads for Sifton products in her name in the Western Producer and Free Press Prairie Farmer. He thought that McPhedrain was too hard a name to spell. Mary agreed but after the first ad she didn't want it to continue because the mail got mixed up with hers. So Willard thought of the name, Miss Mary Maxim. A few years later the name was incorporated. In 1955 the company moved to Dauphin and then to Paris, Ontario in 1959.

In 1941, when Mike Shymanski went to Winnipeg as a recruit for the army, Sifton was a thriving town with many stores and businesses and a population of over 500 inhabitants. Along with the Mary Maxim factory there were many other businesses. Fred Gniazdowsky had a store that bought poultry for Swifts. At first live chickens were brought in crates but later only dressed poultry was accepted. Across the road there was a Produce of Winnipeg business. When Mike returned from his one week stint in the army, this is where he started to work by grading eggs. Here he worked for one year. Mike then moved to another store just down the street. This was the Manitoba Poultry building. Here, Mike's job was to buy live and dressed poultry. During the harvest season Mike was rarely home as this was also the time when farmers were "harvesting" their poultry. Mike would bring home the turkeys and pile them, one on top of the other, sometimes several feet high. Most of the turkeys were not eviscerated. There was not a concern for the cleanliness standards of today and yet no one got sick. The concern for the farmer was that the turkey did not have any bruises or bits of feathers as this would lower the price. Mike and Olga then moved to Wapella, Saskatchewan for six months as Mike had been promoted as a "troubleshooter" for the company. Once the problems in Wapella had been ironed out they moved back to Sifton.



Egg grading equipment including sizers and a stamp... Photo courtesy of Olga Shymanski and the Fort Dauphin Museum.



Swift's Canadian Co. personnel getting ready for the 1949 Dauphin Traveler's Day Parade...Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

Olga started to grade eggs in the basement of their residence. This was before electricity so light and cooling was provided by twelve big batteries and a generator. Farmers brought eggs to the basement. It was not uncommon to load 250, thirty dozen crates. Olga was the one that lifted them into a truck. She received one cent a dozen from the company. Olga

noted that there were seven grades of eggs, which were marked in crates with coloured tags. Grade "A" large and extra large which had double yolks were indicated by a red tag, "A" medium-green, "A" small and "B" with a blue tag, "C" with a yellow tag and the cracks and rejects with a white tag. These grades were determined by sizers and scalers. At one time Olga had four people working for her. In 1944, carloads of eggs were shipped to the railway station. First a truck picked up the eggs but later they were delivered in a dray. Each egg had to be stamped using a sponge stamp. Olga had to be careful that the stencil that said, "Canada" was straight. Imagine the extra work when Olga would do a whole row of eggs and break the last one. Then it was back to square one.

In 1947 the addition was built as the business was not allowed to operate in a basement anymore. Olga said that at this time farmers brought eggs in a variety of ways. So that the eggs would not break, they were put in the baskets in chop and pails of oats. This made it hard to get them out. The egg business came to an end when the Canadian Government outlawed the egg grading business. This was a time when farmers started to specialize by having large egg growing operations. Mike ended up working for the Manco Creamery and Cheese Plant in Dauphin until the 1970s.

Schykulski's Store in Sifton...

Joe Schykulski started a grocery business and pool room in 1939. As an interesting side note, Joe was also a "self-taught" auctioneer and was perhaps the first one in the area. Joe then sold the store to Steve Mereniuk.

Joe's son, Stanley, joined the army and served overseas in England, Belgium and Holland during WWII. After the war, the government was offering land for the men who served in the Armed Forces, however, Stanley was not a farmer. When he was discharged in 1945, he chose to take a course at the Red River Community College as a radio technician. Because his family lived in Dauphin, he worked as a radio technician in a store in this community. In 1949 Joe and Stanley decided to buy back the store in Sifton. Here they sold groceries, had a pool room and a section of the store was devoted to the selling and repairing of radios. Isabelle, Stanley's wife informed me that many times someone would bring in a radio that needed a very simple repair.

Stanley would not charge the person for his labour but the next day the farmer would bring a jar of fresh cream for payment.

In 1952 Stanley bought the store from his father. Joe ended up purchasing a rural school that had been closed and moved it on a lot across the street and turned it into a pool room.

In 1953 Stanley married Isabelle Berkvens. Isabelle was from Ste. Rose du Lac and was teaching school at Fork River. To make room for his bride, Stanley converted the back of the store into living quarters. He continued to operate a grocery section as well as radio and television sales and service. In 1953 there were eight stores in Sifton.

In 1964, Stanley and Isabelle built a new store with living quarters. Once the new store was opened the old store was demolished. Stanley and Isabelle raised two boys, Edward and Kenneth. One highlight which Isabelle recalled was taking her two young sons to the train track to watch Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip go by. Prince Phillip waved to the people. Isabelle took ten years off from teaching to help raise her family and in 1968 she took a teaching position in Sifton.

In October 1972, a Liquor Store was added. The convenience store ceased to exist. Two months later, Stanley became ill and in December he passed away. Isabelle ended up keeping the store for another five years. During the day when she was teaching she had hired help and after school she would run the store. Isabelle mentioned that her school superintendent, Mr. Metro Kozak, helped her through these difficult times. He suggested that she not make any quick changes and perhaps one of her sons might want to operate the store. In 1977 Isabelle sold the store to Archie and Pat Boguski. In 1978 Isabelle took a position at the Henderson School in Dauphin. She retired in 1990 and currently lives in Dauphin.



Schykulski's Store... Photo courtesy of Isabelle Schykulski



The new store... Why two doors? On the left side is the entrance to the grocery store. Because of town regulations, all stores had to be closed at six p.m. From six to ten p.m., customers would enter the convenience store located on the right side. Here they could buy Wynola, Pepsi, chocolate bars and other snacks. This section also was open after church on Sundays. There were benches provided for people to sit and socialize. Photo courtesy of Isabelle Schykulski.



Leo and Hnat Lokshyn... photo courtesy of Victor Sopkiw

"Cloak And Dagger" C.S.I.S. Action in Sifton...

It is not a common occurrence to get a call from a C.S.I.S. agent. On a Friday morning in October, 1991 at 11:00 a.m., the receptionist at Victor Sopkiw's dental office in Calgary took the call. Victor was summoned and Constable L. asked if he could meet with him on Monday. As Victor was working on the next patient his hands were shaking as he had no idea why C.S.I.S. wanted to question him

about his deceased Uncle Hnat's will. He quickly called Constable L. back and asked if he could meet him after work that day. At three o'clock the agent showed up at the office, wearing a trench coat. As he met Victor he flipped out his identification card just like in the movies. Constable L. then proceeded to tell Victor that he had come to get some information on his uncles, Leo and Hnat Lokshyn, who were now deceased and who had operated a service station at Sifton.

Constable L. asked Victor if he was named the inheritor of Hnat's will and if his uncles had belonged to any communist organizations. Victor replied that he didn't think that they did belong to any, however, he recalled looking through their 200-300 Ukrainian book collection and coming across their N.D.P. membership cards.

The Lokshyn family had their roots in Eastern Europe. One of their ancestors in the 1700s, beat up a Lord in Russia and thought that he had killed him. He ran away and ended up in the village of Zerebki in Galicia.

In 1939, Victor's grandmother, Martha and her children Leo, Hnat, Roman and Anastasia (Victor's mother) emigrated to Canada and bought a farm in the Sifton area. Roman would help his mother run the farm while Hnat and Leo went to work in Ontario. Hnat worked in St. Catherine's building WWII supplies where he learned to use lathe equipment. This would come in handy in his later years as a service station operator in Sifton as he was able to re-construct broken gears for local farmers in a few hours. The farmers didn't have to wait for days for new parts to come from Winnipeg. Meanwhile, Leo learned the art of being a tin smith. In his later years he would help build a steeple for the Roman Catholic church in Sifton.

After the war, both brothers ended up working in Toronto where they belonged to church choirs and the Ukrainian Labour Temple which was an organization sympathetic to the communist cause in Russia. The prevailing thought was that Russia had helped to drive the Germans out of the Ukraine during the war. The whole family wanted to move back to Russia as pointed out by Victor who showed letters written in 1946 and 1949 in Russian indicating that the three brothers were provided with Russian passports.

The family did not move back to Russia. Instead, in 1951 Leo and Hnat bought a service station in Sifton and called it the Progressive Service Garage. Here they sold gas, did oil changes and minor vehicle repairs. At the garage, the locals could play

cards, buy cigarettes, enjoy ice-cream and drink soda pop. Gerald Shewchuk, who grew up in the Sifton area, recalled taking his son Calvin to the garage and the Lokshyn's would always give Calvin a drink and chips.

During the 1950s, Roman ended up leaving the farm and started to work for a Ukrainian Bookshop in Winnipeg owned by Mr. Mokray. Here, he helped to pack and to ship parcels of articles such as material and shoes to the Ukraine. His boss, Mr. Mokray, would come twice a year to Sifton and show movies from the Ukraine at the

Lokshyn's service station. A small admission fee was charged and benches were set up. The garage was filled with the locals for a night at the movies. There was usually a feature film that showed Ukrainian heroes as well as short films. Roman also belonged to the Ukrainian Labour Temple located on 591 Prtichard Ave. The building was erected in 1918-19 by volunteer labour and financed by donations. The Association of United Ukrainians (AUUC) was a non-profit organization that leaned "left" as it was Marxist orientated and was affiliated with the Communist Party of Canada. Its focus was on Ukrainian culture and worker and farmer activism.

The Lokshyn's were not always treated very well by the locals. The people from the area were suspicious of them. The Lokshyns had come from the Ukraine and spoke proper Ukrainian and they had a good education. They did not belong to a local church and they were also sympathetic to the communist cause. For example, letters from the bank would have fine slits in them where someone had looked at their records. The brothers did not trust anyone. All of their earnings from the service station were kept upstairs in their living quarters in paint cans. Since one of the brothers would always be at home, they felt that their cash was secure.

Leo died in 1989. One summer, Victor asked Hnat how safe he felt about keeping a large amount of cash in his living quarters. It was agreed that Victor and Hnat would meet at the Dauphin Co-op parking lot at 10 o'clock the next morning. The next day Victor was there at the agreed time. However, there was no Hnat. Finally at 12 o'clock Hnat appeared carrying a suitcase full of money. They went across the street to the Credit Union and told the teller that Hnat wanted to open an account. They were summoned to a room where it took them several hours to unroll the bills that were tied up with elastics. The bills had to be flattened with weights. When the cash was counted there was \$135,000. Hnat made a face and Victor asked him what was the matter? "There should be \$200,000." Evidently the security at the house had some flaws. It was later found out that a neighbour had been helping himself through the years to \$65,000!

СВЕДЕНИЯ О ПРЕДЪЯВИТЕЛЕ
SIGNALEMENT DU PORTEUR

1. Дата рождения 15. Октября 1911 г.
Date de naissance 15. October 1911

2. Место рождения г. Червоны Тарновский, в.
Lieu de naissance Ukraine, U.S.S.R.

3. Семейное положение холост
Etat civil single

4. Специальность и род занятий фермер
Spécialité ou profession farmer

5. Последнее местожительство в СССР не был
Dernier domicile dans l'URSS never been

6. Документ, на основании которого выдан настоящий вид на жительство паспорт
на совет. Юзеф Хрош. В.С. СССР от 10.10.1945 г.
и паспорт, паспорт № 171081 от 11.10.1945 г.

7. ПРИМЕТЫ 7
Пол: мужской
Рост: 175 см
Вес: 75 кг
Цвет волос: светлый
Цвет глаз: голубой
Особые приметы: нет

SIGNALEMENT
Taille: moyen
Yeux: bleu
Cheveux: blond
Signes particuliers: no

Место для фотографического изображения
Signature du porteur
Подлинность фотографического карточка и подписанного под ней удостоверения.
L'authenticité de la photographie et de la signature est certifiée.

Консул
Секретарь

В. Грош
Г. Хрош
Г. Борош
Г. Локшин

Roman Lokshyn's passport to Russia in 1945...Document courtesy of Victor Sopkiw.



The Progressive Service Garage...Photo courtesy of Victor Sopkiw.

Shortly after Leo died Hnat wanted to take the money out of the Credit Union in cash. He wanted to take it out and to deposit it at the Russian Embassy. Hnat disappeared for a week and ended up going to Ottawa. At the embassy he wanted to talk to someone about helping him with his problems as he felt that his dead brother had not been treated right and was killed in the hospital. He also wanted to talk about investing money. The sight of a disheveled old man did not interest the Russians. He was

turned away. Hnat went back home angry and disappointed that the Russians did not want to help him and he refused to invest his money with them.

June was a typical month in a small hamlet such as Sifton. One morning a resident was cutting grass when he was approached by a man speaking in a foreign accent. He asked where Hnat Lokshyn was. The resident pointed to the graveyard. The man turned away and drove away in his car. The resident reported this to the RCMP.

At Victor's dentist office, Constable L. revealed that the Russian's activities were scrutinized by C.S.I.S. and that he was followed. Constable L. also revealed that the Russians had been running a scam. They would offer a small percent more than a bank if sympathizers invested with them. Later, when the person died, they would collect the money. Hnat was attracted to the fact that he could get better interest with the Russians. Since he was a communist sympathizer, he thought that the embassy would also help him with his problem. Because Hnat wanted to take out all of his money in cash, the Credit Union's officials said that it would take some time so Hnat couldn't withdraw it for his trip to Ottawa. The money was safe at the Credit Union.



Paul Paskaruk in front of Paskaruk's Store... Photo courtesy of Harry and Victoria Paskaruk

A Store In Mink Creek...

In 1947, Harry, along with his brothers Paul and Matt, bought a store in Mink Creek from Harry and Elsie Schur. In 1953, Harry and his wife, Victoria, became the sole owners of the store and operated it until 1976. They sold gasoline for Esso and then for Gulf, as well as groceries and dry goods. The only items that they did not sell were fresh milk and vegetables. When hydro came to the area in 1952, Victoria bought a freezer and an ice cream cone could be purchased for 5 cents. Victoria stated that when her first

freezer broke down, another freezer was purchased at Zabiaka's in Dauphin. Some fifty years later, the freezer is still working.

Several years later, an addition was built to the store and three pool tables were purchased. A game on the Boston table cost 10 cents and a game on the Snooker table cost twenty cents. Harry mentioned that there were many farm boys who came to play pool and listen to the jukebox. One lad, Ernie, would hide his school books in the mail box and play pool all afternoon.

Harry and Victoria had six children. Victoria's parents helped at the store and with the babysitting. Victoria's brother also helped at the store. The store was open seven days a week. Since the family lived next door in their house, if someone came at six in the morning or twelve thirty at night, it was only a few steps away and the customer left satisfied. In conversation with one of Harry and Victoria's sons, Mike, he mentioned that he used to take the coupons off the Beehive Corn Syrup cans. He soon had the entire collection of the Montreal Canadiens and Toronto Maple Leafs. There was a bonus to be a storekeeper's son!

Harry Paskaruk had a variety of jobs to augment the family income. In the early 1950's he bought a Fargo truck. He stated that, "The money from the pool room made the payments." From 1954-68, he had his own truck and hauled cream for the Gilbert Plains/ Dauphin Co-Op. He had three routes. On Monday and Thursday he picked up cream in the Rhodes area. On Tuesday and Friday he did the Zoria area and on Wednesday and Saturday he was in the Valley River area. Harry also tried his hand at cutting pulpwood for two years as well as working for Manco in Dauphin. He also worked with the CNR for nineteen years ending up as a foreman.

At one time Mink Creek had two stores. By the mid-seventies, people were saving their money and retiring to bigger centres. There was not enough business to survive.

Mary Perchaluk (Kurdziel)...Storekeeper At Sclater

The immigrants who came to Canada came from a variety of places and circumstances. Jan Kurdziel, who spoke several languages and his wife Mary, (Novachek) left Poland and arrived in Canada in 1911 and settled in the Sifton area. In his home village in Poland, Jan was a well respected man and played a prominent role in the area's politics.

In Canada, the Kurdziels settled on rocky land. They settled next to the Peter Boyachek farm near Sifton. Jan was a hard worker and took pride in his farming abilities. One September day in 1924, he was working with his two sons, Joe, (9 years old) and Felix (7 years old) with a shovel and a team of horses. Jan had dug a big hole and was trying to sink the stone when it crushed him. Jan sent Joe for help. One of the neighbours was driving by with a wagon full of



Jan and Mary Kurdziel... Photo courtesy of Mary Perchaluk.

grain. More neighbours were summoned and soon used a pole to pry the stone off Jan. At this time Mary was three and a half years old and still remembered how her father was put on two benches. There was blood coming from his eyes and nose. After the doctor came, Jan died, leaving behind his wife and four children. The youngest, Peter, was only three months old. Mary's mother would soon re-marry Dan Solski from Gilbert Plains who had ten children of his own. They all lived in a two room "shack." Their former neighbour, Peter Boyachek, took little Peter to live with him at Portage La Prairie. Mary went to live in Sclater.

By the time Mary was thirteen years old she was ready to go out into the world and work. Her first job was in Portage La Prairie, where she worked as a baby sitter for a family. She ended up doing all of the other household chores. Her pay was \$5.00 a month. One year later she got a similar job with another family for ten dollars a month. When she was fifteen years old she came back to Gilbert Plains to live with her mother and step-father.

In her younger years when she was living in Sclater, Mary knew John Perchaluk, who was ten years older than her. When she came back to Sclater she renewed acquaintances with John, who was a store-keeper's son. At age sixteen, in 1938, she married John. Mary joined John on his farm located one mile away from Sclater. They got \$150 in donations at the wedding as well a horse from John's parents and a cow from her mother.

The cow was in Gilbert Plains which was 80 miles away. One option was to hire someone with a truck. However, this would cost twenty five dollars. John could get a job working with a threshing outfit for a dollar a day. After some deliberation they decided to walk the cow to Sclater.

This was quite an adventure! They soon found out that the cow would only walk twenty miles a day and not one step further. This was in the fall and when John and Mary would stop at a farmer's house for the night, they would soon make new friends. Even though the farmers were poor they offered food, lodging, plant seeds and snacks such as cucumbers and tomatoes for the "road". One day, the cow had walked her obligatory twenty miles and would not take one more step. There were no farms in the vicinity so John quickly made a shelter from stooks. That night it poured rain. The four and a half day adventure was worth it as that cow would end up helping build up a great herd of cattle.

After five years of farming, John and Mary decided to move to Prince Rupert, where Mary's brother was working at the Columbia Paper Co. John was soon hired to work there. Mary's first job was to help clean 300 pound halibut. When the halibut was brought into the fish plant, they were covered with crystal "buttons." The "buttons" were lice. It was the job of three women per side, to scrub off the "buttons" on this assembly line. After three days of continual "scrubbing", Mary's hands were very swollen. She quit her job and started another career.

Mary got a job at a department store. She quickly progressed to a clerk and eventually became manager of a department. Even though Mary had no experience as a manager the owner gave her a chance.

In 1952 John and Mary moved back to Sclater. John still had a half section of farmland. His parents were ready to retire so John and Mary bought the store. At this time Sclater had four other active stores (Zarisky, Rudy, Boychuk and Hrushoway) so



Nick and Mary Perchaluk along with (left to right) John, Anne and Peter. John would later buy his father's store.

Nick's father and mother originally settled in the Trembolā area near Sifton. When Nick was a young man he was looking to buy a farm. One day one of his friends heard that there were two men quarreling over some land near Sclater. Nick went to Dauphin and registered this land for \$10.00. The farm was located along the current No. 10 Highway north of Pine River. Later, Nick and his wife would open the store some five miles away in Sclater. It was interesting to note that the Perchaluk family along with the families of Stanley Pawliski and William Reshitynyk were very good friends. Because of the hard economic times when it was time to get married the men took turns sharing one suit, the same wedding ring was used as well as the clothes worn by their brides. To this day their extended families are still friends. The original store was started over eighty years ago. It burned down several times. When it burned down the first time, there was a Native man taking care of the store. He managed to save a beautiful pump organ. No one knew how he could find the strength to lift it. Nick and Mary Perchaluk farmed and ran the store in Sclater until 1952.

there was a great deal of competition. When the old postmaster died, Mary applied for and got the position. She served as postmaster from 1952-1973. The store was sold to a Duck Mountain Co. in 1973.

Sclater is located in some great timber reserves. Fifteen to twenty families of Natives would come from Duck Bay and Camperville to Sclater for the summer months to help John and Mary cut and peel logs. The families would camp out in tents and form a small community. The native people would come to the store and buy groceries and friendships were formed. The men would cut the timber into proper length and the women and children would skin the logs. At this time a permit was needed every year. One year, another person bid John out of his permit. The Native families came and were very disappointed that there was no work for them that summer. Mary was very angry that John had spent a great deal of time finding a spot to cut timber and that someone would come along and bid them out of their timber. Mary sent a very strongly worded letter to the Conservation Officer who presented it at a meeting in Winnipeg. The laws were then changed and there were limits for each person. Since John was an operator and had chosen a spot, he received the timber rights.

Mary also mentioned of the Jewish men who came around to the store to offer deals. Mary would check the prices of clothes in the Eaton's and Simpson's catalogues. The Jewish "jobbers" from companies such as Marantz would offer "end of the line" or "seconds" for a fraction of the price compared to the catalogue prices. The "jobbers" would tell Mary that this way everyone would make a little bit. Mary

MURRAY'S MEATS AND GROCERIES FREE DELIVERY

Photo courtesy of Maxine Holbrook (Murray). Maxine mentioned that their store could not compete with "specials" given by the large stores. Instead, to attract customers, there was a small drawer that was divided and filled with books with the names of people who were allowed to purchase their groceries on credit. The groceries were also delivered to the customers.

also mentioned how everyone who frequented the store wanted credit as money was tight. Even though she gave credit to many people, she had to explain to them how she also needed money to pay to the companies so that she could replenish the shelves.

Murray's Meats and Groceries...

When Ray Murray came back from WWI he was given farm land near his home in Neepawa. The land was very stony and would not produce much. His brother had gone to Detroit earlier where he got a job at a car factory. In 1926, he told Ray to pack up and come to the U.S. Ray and his wife Birnie ended up living in Detroit until 1947. Maxine, Dick and Bill were born there.

The Murray family came on a holiday to the Parkland. Ray's aunt and uncle were part owners of the Farmer's Store in Gilbert Plains and wanted Ray to become part owner. Ray knew that this wouldn't work so in the spring of '47, Ray and Birnie bought a corner store in Dauphin. Maxine Holbrook stated that her mother had to go to City Hall to apply for a permit to make an addition at the back of the store for living quarters.

Ray was a diabetic and in 1954 at age 55, he passed away leaving Birnie and her three children to run the store. Birnie had a hard time to make ends meet, but she eventually purchased a store at Dauphin Beach and with the help of her children she operated the two stores. When Birnie died, Maxine, Bill and Dick continued to operate the store in Dauphin. Joe Griffin ended up renting

space for a butcher shop at the store. Maxine mentioned that her brother Dick enjoyed selling penny candy to the little kids who came there after school. Eventually Dick would end up working at the Liquor Commission and Bill worked at Safeway and then at Calgary. When Murray's Store closed down in the 1960s, the space was converted into suites.

Along with the disappearance of the small farm, small business in rural area would soon follow. At one time there were many small stores located in the country and in the surrounding towns. They provided the early pioneer their family's supplies as well as a place to socialize with their neighbours. Once the 1970s rolled around young people left the farm and headed for the city. This was the beginning of the end for the little general store. Even the stores in the larger centres were soon affected. Everyone seemed intent on hunting for bargains in the big corporate world. Large department stores in the malls soon took away the livelihood from the 'little man'. Farms would become bigger and more specialized and gone was a way of life that had endured the early settlement and hard economic times. Gone were the days of establishing a line of credit and bartering with the storekeeper.

Prologue to The Wood Industry And Related Stories...

According to the "old timers" the sound of the whistle from the steam engine was something special. Even more special would be the thrill for a young boy to hear the whistle while cutting logs in the bush with his father.

Hitch up the horses to the sleigh
Pack them some oats and pack them some hay
We'll be leaving in the morning,
At the break of day

Follow the road with the fresh sleigh tracks
Hit the drifts where the snow is packed
We'll catch up to the neighbours,
Have lunch with the Whiskey Jacks

And papa said there was nothing much sweeter
Than the sound of the whistle from the steamer
Calling us to work, for another day
And you can call me a dreamer
Right now, I'm a believer
I'm working with the boys and earning my pay

Our old farm dog followed us for awhile
He gave up trying after a few miles
He'll be waiting for us,
When we come back

Drive all day until the sun goes down
Run by the sleigh and try to keep warm
We'll be staying at the camp,
When the day is done

Where Papa will play his violin,
And Peter is on the accordion
And I'm just a little boy, sitting there listening
To the stories around the old box stove
I'll fall asleep under my coat
Wake up in the morning, and go to work

c Ed Stozek



The photos are courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum... The middle photo is of John and Willow Elder crossing the Ochre-River in 1910 with a Waterloo and Case Steamer.

Chapter IV

The Wood Industry And Related Stories...



Piles of wood at the Dauphin Power Plant... Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

H. U. Green was a guest speaker at a January, 1937 meeting of the Dauphin Canadian Club at the Hamilton Hotel. His topic was "The Ecology Of Riding Mountain." Green talked of the destruction of Riding Mountain National Park since 1930 and the insistence of local corporations to exploit the resources for other than local and personal use. He stated that the RMNP will revert to scrub

land of no earthly use. He added that half of the RMNP, 1,145 sq. miles has been reduced by axe to scrub land which will produce nothing. He estimated that there was only roughly 72 sq. miles of unexploited forest and that saw-log spruce would only last two more years. In 1930 he noted, that at the urgent request of a number of Manitoba citizens, Riding Mountain was transferred from the Department of Forestry to the National Parks Branch. "There is a difference between a National Forest and a National Sanctuary," adding that there is a need to retain the forest to absorb water and prevent floods. These were thought provoking words said when the majority of the residents who lived around the Riding Mountain National Park relied on wood which was needed for heat and for building materials. They also relied on the timber stands for employment. Many communities located in the vicinity of the Riding Mountain also depended on logging for employment and building products. The majority of the operations were portable sawmills that were moved into the timber area. These local sawmills operated in the 1930s were one of the few ways to make money. Permits were given to small operators and local settlers until 1946.



Train loading timber for railway ties in the Porcupine Mountains... Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

The 1880s marked the opening of the west to settlement. The largest groups of homesteaders came from southern Ontario and from Eastern Europe. As they came and staked out their 160 acres of homestead, the land was quickly cleared and permits could be obtained for cutting saw logs from nearby Dominion lands. Once the homesteaders settled and the land was cleared, the escarpments of the Riding, Duck and Porcupine Mountains

looked very attractive for the endless supply of timber that grew there.

There were three possible arrangements for timber extraction on Reserves at the turn of the century as stated in *The History Of Kippan's Mills*. The first was that of a free permit. This entitled the applicant to twenty five cords of dry wood and free building material. The second way was that of a paid permit made available not only to homesteaders but to other individuals and agencies including municipal and public works, rural schools and churches. All permit operations on reserves were under control of the forest officers. Stumps were limited to eighteen inches in height and all debris was to be piled for burning.

By 1930 there were mill sites located throughout the Reserve. Permits were no longer free and the amount of lumber allowed to farmers was reduced. Farmers were allowed 3,000 board feet of lumber for every quarter section of land that they owned. Farmers could get around the limit by asking another farmer for their limit. The third and final arrangement was one of sale. The Reserves had regulations that allowed for the sale of up to 5,000,000 feet of timber but this had to be approved by the Director of Forestry. Conditions surrounding the sale were geared to control conservation practices and eliminate speculative buying. As a result, portable saw mills were built on skids with one man needed to look after the engine, one sawyer, one kanter, and a tail sawyer. All that was needed was a person with a team of horses to skid the logs. To move the operation to another area, one only needed horses or a tractor.

In looking at a document given to me by Jeannette Stewart of Dauphin, Form 73 from the Department of Mines and Natural Resources, had strict guidelines which her great grandparents, John Forbes McLeod and Anne Margaret Morton had to follow in their saw mill operation near Ochre-River. It stated that "Under authority of Section 18 (2) of The Forest Act as amended by Cap.



T. A. Burrows operated many saw mills in the Riding, Duck and Porcupine Mountains as he acquired the majority of the timber berths. (18 of 19 berths) He was responsible for building the province's largest saw mill at Grandview in 1903. He was also a Member of Parliament and was a brother-in-law to the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton. Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.



Logs floating by Alex Kippan's Mill on the Little Saskatchewan River near Strathclair. Photo courtesy of Howard and Don Bull.

MANITOBA FOREST SERVICE

No. 5486

DAILY RECORD OF SAWING DONE AT THE SAWMILL OF Graham John Morton ADDRESS Oche River
 Mill located on S. 1/4 Sec. 30 Twp. 22 Rge. 17 P.M. Under Authority of License No. 1922

YEAR 1947	MONTH	DATE	NAME OF LOG OWNER	ADDRESS	LAND ON WHICH LOGS WERE CUT				NUMBER OF LOGS	PERMIT NO. OR AFFIDAVIT	SPECIES	AMOUNT MANUFACTURED	
					1/4	SEC.	TWP.	RGE.	P.M.			F.B.M.	LEN. FT. SIKED
April	1st		E.A. McMillian	Oche River	18	23	18			49	A00396	gerace	3034
"	"		L.R. D. coast	" "	"	"	"			52	A00667	"	3000
"	"		H.A. McMillian	" "	"	"	"			47	A00397	"	3040
April	2nd		W.A. Robbin	Rorketon	"	"	"			49	A00315	"	3064
"	"		W.H. Robbin	"	"	"	"			48	A00316	"	2986
"	"		L.J. Cody	Magnet	"	"	"			56	A00490	"	3000
"	"		H.C. Cull	Oche River	"	"	"			61	A00824	"	3000

A sample of record keeping from John Morton. Document courtesy of Jeannette Stewart.

19, Statutes of Manitoba, 1940, the following regulations were passed by Order-In-Council No. 1170-40, dated October 16th, 1940." Some of the regulations stated that no person, firm or corporation shall operate a saw mill in Manitoba for the manufacture of lumber or other forest products except under the authority of a license issued by or under the authority of the provincial Forester, the fee for such a license was \$5.00 and that it expired on April 30. The application should include the location and the source of timber from where the timber was to be obtained. All sawmill operators were to keep books and records. All logs and lumber in the mill yards owned by private individuals were to be placed in separate piles, marked and scaled. All persons obtaining lumber were to be given a loading slip or receipt signed by the sawmill operator showing the quantity of lumber, legal description of the land and if cut on Crown lands the number of the permit under which the cutting was done. Timber cut on a settler's permit "shall be used in improvements upon the land in respect to which the permit is issued. Timber so cut cannot legally be sold or bartered and any infraction of this order will subject both seller and buyer to the penalties of law in that behalf and no part of the lumber cut under a settler's permit shall be accepted by the mill owner in payment or part payment for sawing."



Shaw's Logging Camp- 1914-15. Left to right are: G. Buchanan, B. Strang, T. Marshall, F. McLaughlin, B. Miller, B. Shanks and B. Murray...Photo courtesy of Fort Dauphin Museum.

One of the early mills at the base of the Riding mountain was operated by the Shaw Brothers. James and Thomas Shaw arrived in Dauphin in 1899. They established a flour mill and a sawmill on the Valley River. Logs were cut in the Duck Mountains and floated down the Valley River, however, because there was no dam, many logs ended up in Lake Dauphin. After two years of losing money the Shaw Brothers located to Edward's Creek in the Riding Mountain where years later, Alex Kippan would start his mill.

In a newspaper article in The Dauphin Herald in 1915, it was noted

that Jack Paul, the well known wrestler was lost for three days in the mountains and had a terrible experience. He left camp at Shaw's Mill on Sunday in February for a stroll and mistook the trail. For three days and two nights he wandered aimlessly about and when found was in a state of complete exhaustion. His clothes were completely torn off. The only thing that saved him was the mild weather. When found he was immediately taken to the hospital where it was found that his left foot was badly frozen. He was also suffering from other frost bites. It was not certain if the foot would have to be amputated. Using the lumber cut from timber berths in the Riding Mountains the Shaw Brothers milled one to two million board feet per year. The Shaws then moved their operation to Saskatchewan.

Alex Kippan operated several mills during his lifetime, including one a mile from Clear Lake along the current No. 10 Highway, another located near the Native fishing grounds on the west shore of Clear Lake, as well as his large mill near Edward's Creek. Young men such as Steve Gawiuk, currently ninety one years old and living in Sandy Lake, were provided food and lodging in return for their labour. Steve spent time working at both of Kippan's Mills. He recalled the Moon Lake operation where he piled lumber, he was also a tail sawyer who took the cut lumber away, and he also had the responsibility of kanter, whose responsibility was to roll logs. He also recalled that Kippan gave him the job of driving a two ton truck in the bush. Steve had never driven a truck before! He would spend two years at the Edwards Lake Mill for several months during the winter.

Mitchell Nowalkowski currently lives on a farm near Sandy Lake. He vividly recalled how in 1937, as a twelve year old boy, he and his father hitched up the team to a flat bed sleigh, took some hay for the horses and enough food to last a week. This was during the Christmas holidays so Mitchell did not miss any school. His father John, knew the way and it took most of the day following roads and trails before they arrived at Wilson's Mill, which was located on the south edge of the Riding Mountain National Park. Mitchell and his father slept in a newly built shack which was provided by the Wilson Brothers. The shack was made from rough lumber and used saw dust as insulation in the walls and on the floor. The shack was heated by a box stove and here the frozen food packed by his mother was thawed and eaten. The men slept in their clothes as it was very cold.

Mitchell and his father would spend several days cutting the trees in the bush. At this time Mitchell's father was thirty nine years old so young Mitchell had more energy and did more than his share of cutting down the trees with the cross-cut saw. After they brought the wood into camp, it was sawn into lumber and piled on the sleigh. Mitchell recalled Bill and Fred Wilson. He also recalled Fred working around the saw mill operation using his one arm. He had lost his arm in a saw mill accident.



Bunkhouses for the men... photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

Other men such as my uncle, John Hutsal of Horod, spent time cutting down the timber at Ira Dewitt's Mill located on the south west shore of Lake Audy. In 1935, John and Mike Lukianchuk spent part of the winter cutting down the trees. Using the cross-cut saw they cut about 10,000 feet. John had the timber planed into lumber and was ready to haul it away, however, there was an early thaw that year. John had to pile the lumber and leave it in the bush as he could not use the horses and sleigh to haul it away that winter. The next fall, he took his younger brother Peter, and hauled the lumber to his father Semko's farm near Horod. Since the lumber was dry it was much lighter and they could haul away very big loads. Before they could sell the lumber they had to make sure that there was no bark on the edges. They then took it to Elphinstone where it was sold for \$15.00 a 1000 feet to the Jewish merchant, Stauffman. It was interesting to note that Mike Lukianchuk, the man who helped cut the trees the previous winter, was struck by lightning in the summer of 1936 and was killed.

In 1947, Peter Hutsal would help his brother-in-law, Victor Kowalski of Keld cut wood and get it planed at the Wilson Mill, now re-located from the Lake Audy area to a spot about one and a half miles south east of the No. 10 highway at the entrance to the Riding Mountain National Park. The lumber was

As an interesting side note, Peter's brother-in-law, Victor Kowalski, started out with a fox farm in the Keld area, however foxes were costly to feed and there was not much profit. Victor then started a mink ranch in 1937. In 1940, Peter spent a winter helping at the mink ranch. To supplement the family income, Victor would go trapping. He would leave early in the morning riding his horse. In the evening he would come walking alongside the horse as there were many coyote pelts to haul. The pelts would be taken into the house to thaw. Victor would also shoot elk. Victor and Peter would hitch up a team of horses and go to Gilbert Plains to sell the elk for \$5.00. While Victor would stop at various houses to give his sales pitch and have a shot of home-brew, young Peter had to sit on the wagon and wait in the cold. Horses were also bought from local areas to feed the minks. In later years, Peter would buy horses in the Horod and Seech areas from the farmers for mink meat. Peter recalled buying sixteen horses and spending \$67.00. He would get then get \$4.50 per each hide and 50 cents per tail. In 1952, the Newfoundland Government offered Victor free whale meat if he relocated. The minks, pens and family were packed on the train. Unfortunately, the whale meat did not agree with minks and their fur was inferior. Victor ended up not doing too well in Newfoundland.



Strang Brothers hauling wood down Main Street in Dauphin during the 1920s. Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

needed for Victor's mink ranch operation. At the game line, where a wind had flattened all of the trees, Peter and another man made a makeshift cabin of wood and tar paper. Here they cooked and slept when the day was done. Due to the cold, someone had to wake up every few hours and stoke the fire. The other man was a very hard sleeper so Peter ended up handling the fire stoking duties. One day Peter had enough and told the other man it was his turn. Later that night Peter woke up and knew that the fire hadn't been stoked but he was hoping that the hard sleeping partner would wake up. In the morning when Peter got out of bed, the other man's hair was frozen to the wall and Peter had to use a knife to pry the hair loose.

That winter there was very deep snow. Bert White and Froggy Dehane had a caterpillar and were supposed to help pull out the logs from the bush, however, the machine broke down and it took two days to finally haul it to the main road to get it fixed. The eighty, sixteen foot logs that were cut had to be pulled out by a team of horses. Due to the deep, four foot snow, they could only pull out one log at a time. Once the trail got packed down, bigger loads could be hauled to Wilson's Mill. Peter remembered one-armed Fred Wilson working hard at the planer.

Wood Problems In Dauphin...

Wood was very important to communities such as Dauphin. Wood was cut and hauled daily from the Riding Mountain National Park to maintain a supply necessary to running the power plant which was erected in 1905. During the Depression, the cutting of wood was used as relief payments to the locals in the Dauphin area. In 1937, there was a decided lack of wood and some trouble in the measurement of wood. One of the wood haulers, Matt Olynick and the town wood checker, Wesley Rutledge had a dispute. Rutledge alleged that Olynick assaulted him. The trouble started on December 16 when Olynick drove into the wood yard of the power house with a load of wood on his truck. Rutledge measured the wood and claimed that the load was higher on the outside edge than it was on the inside edge and therefore told Olynick he could only give him 7.5 feet instead of the full measurement of eight feet. Olynick then declared that there were other men in town who could measure wood and pulled out of the yard in a burst of profanity. At six p.m. Rutledge closed up for the night and started for home. He was walking on Seventh Ave. S.W. when he claimed that Olynick pulled up at a crossing, got out of his truck and after making some remarks about the wood started swinging haymakers.

In Rutledge's own words, "I tried to duck and defend myself from the next blow, I was bent down in a crouching position trying to get away from him when I was struck with something on the back of my head. This blow knocked me down. Matt



Large truck used for hauling wood. Convoys would travel from the German P.O.W. camp to Dauphin daily... Photo courtesy of the Colin Mann Collection.

tried to hit me and to protect myself at this moment I raised my feet up to keep him off because he was striking at me with something in his hand." Olynick was apparently satisfied and turned and left.

The next day Superintendent Cooil confirmed Rutlege's measurement of the wood which Olynick had deposited in the yard sometimes after the alleged assault occurred. In police court on December 20, Olynick pleaded guilty to the charge of assault but stated that he used nothing but his fists. Magistrate Little imposed a fine of \$25.00 and the cost of court with the alternative of one month in jail with hard labour and a warning that the next offence would mean real trouble.

Earlier in December, Dmytro Senchuk of Lovering Park in Dauphin pleaded guilty to theft of two cords of spruce wood from the town wood yard on Second Ave. S.E. Senchuk was sent to jail for seven days by Magistrate Little. Driving up to the wood pile late Saturday afternoon, for a final load for the power plant, Harley Dorman, town employee, observed Senchuk driving away from the wood pile with a load of spruce on his dray. Senchuk, in his hurry to get away, drove over a culvert at the corner of First Ave. and First St. S.E. and upset his load. In the meantime, Dorman had driven back and notified Superintendent Cooil and Constable Graham. After a short chase, Senchuk was apprehended and lodged in the town jail. He admitted to police that he had stolen another load of wood the previous week and had traded it at a local merchant's for merchandise. C.S.A. Rogers prosecuted for the Crown and O.V.N. Farrell defended the accused. The Chief of Police, James Anderson also testified. E.N. McGirr, Q.C. and town solicitor pointed out that Senchuk had already cost the town a substantial amount of money for hospitalization and relief.

For fifteen years previous to 1941, Dauphin instituted the policy of buying wood from local farmers and wood cutters. In those fifteen years the town had paid them \$250,000. This money was not spent on expensive equipment but on manual labour. Over the thirty six years of the operation of the power plant there were only two short periods, after WWI and the during WWII where there was a shortage of wood. As a result, the town authorities wanted to have on hand, 1000 cords of wood for use in

household furnaces as at that time there were only 250 cords. During WWII the power plant at Dauphin also provided the electricity to two flight training schools, No 7 and No. 10. In June 1944 the people of Dauphin got to vote whether to join Manitoba Hydro. The old wood burning power plant was kept on standby until 1951.



Mennonite C.O.'s arriving by bus...Photo courtesy of John Kornelson.

Other Woodcutters...

Other woodcutters in the Riding Mountain included Mennonite Conscientious Objectors. On June 15, 1941, the first busload of C.O.'s arrived in Clear Lake. John Kornelson was one of the C.O.'s and he would spend four months living in a tent at Camp No. 2 located near Moon Lake. For extra spending money,

John took in laundry and took pictures with his Brownie camera which he would sell to the other C.O.'s. Along with improving the RMNP campgrounds and roads, the C.O.'s were also cutting wood for the heating of households for Brandon, Minnedosa, Neepawa and other communities. Since Dauphin operated a fuel wood burning plant and even though the town was trying to meet the situation by using coal to generate power, apparently it did not receive any share of the wood cut by the C.O.'s.

German P.O.W. Woodcutters...

German P.O.W.'s who were captured in North Africa and ended up in the crowded conditions of Lethbridge or Medicine Hat, relished the idea of coming to a small, state of the art prison camp located at Whitewater Lake in the Riding Mountain National Park to cut wood. It was a long trip that included passing Africa, South America, landing in New York and then taking the train to Alberta. The first arrivals had to spend time in tents at Ozada during the winter months. When Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were opened there were almost 30,000 P.O.W.'s in these two camps. There were also some hard core Nazis who created a great deal of trouble to their fellow prisoners. Coming to a camp that housed 450 P.O.W.'s was a treat. The P.O.W.'s were also paid 50 cents per day for the wood that they cut. There was no barbed wire to contain them and the guards and the locals were very kind to them. The P.O.W.'s helped provide the cords of wood that were hauled to Dauphin. Local residents got paid for the use of their trucks in delivering the cord wood to Dauphin.

As a matter of interest, the P.O.W.'s also took many liberties such as making contact with the locals by "slipping" out of camp after roll-call. For other forms of recreation, the P.O.W.'s also made canoes from large spruce trees. They would use them to paddle across Whitewater Lake. One day they brought an extra passenger. It was a bear cub and it would become the camp mascot. According to former P.O.W., Joe Gabski, they built a cage for the cub and one P.O.W. was assigned as the bear keeper. The bear provided many hours of entertainment. It disappeared the second winter but was found in the spring hibernating under one of the buildings in camp. When the bear woke up it made a mess in one of the buildings. The camp su-



Group of C.O.'s in front of tent. In the middle is George Griffiths, sub-foreman, whose kindness gained the respect from the C.O.'s. John Kornelson, recalled that as they were scrubbing the ditches, George would find empty beer bottles in the ditch and put them on small branches. When the C.O.'s weren't working they threw stones at the bottles. Photo courtesy of John Kornelson.



Hans Sohn was a P.O.W. at Whitewater. After the war Hans returned to Canada where he married Erika. They eventually settled near Pinawa, Manitoba where he worked at the power plant until he retired. Hans, like many other P.O.W.'s returned to Canada because of the kind treatment that they received. Photo courtesy of Erika Sohn.



Hans Sohn feeding the camp mascot...
Photo courtesy of Joe Gabski

perintendent got into trouble for this and eventually was transferred from Whitewater Lake.

One local who used to live in Ochre-River as a young boy, remembered playing outside one day when some prisoners passed by him hand-cuffed in the back of a truck. The P.O.W.'s had walked away from the camp, and rather than walk back the long distance, would have phoned to turn themselves in and be picked up by the authorities. This was a big event in a small community such as Ochre-River.

Frank Sitko, who lived in the Seech area on the south side of the Riding Mountain National Park, used to walk to the dances at Horod and Marco. He was about fourteen years old and as he passed by neighbouring farms, other friends would join him in the six or seven mile long walk. Frank recalled seeing the German Prisoners of War attending the dances. Other locals talked of the prisoners coming out to the farms because they were lonely. One farmer in particular had a large family so the prisoners came to play with the children. They gave the children some scarves that had swastikas on them. The McPhedrain

Family from Sifton used to take a trailer to Clear Lake during the summer months. Willard McPhedrain felt sorry for the P.O.W.'s working on the highway and when the guards weren't looking, he would sneak some ice-cream for them. To show their gratitude the P.O.W.'s gave the family a carved bear and a sailboat.

The only contact that the P.O.W.'s had with families in Germany was through letter writing. According to Shirley Bradshaw in *The Most Available Reserve Of Manpower*, "I had to read critically mail German



Bear carving given to
McPhedrain Family
courtesy of Lavina Shaw.

P.O.W.'s sent and received. We had to be on the lookout for complaints about conditions in the camps. The outgoing mail was written on letter forms provided by the Red Cross. Each P.O.W. was limited to a specific number each month. In Ottawa the mail was read critically by retired school teachers who had taught German, men and women whose first or second language was German, university students with



In talking to a local Dauphin resident who was a cook's assistant for a year at the camp in 1943, he stated that the food was very good. He slept in separate quarters with the rest of the workers.
Photo courtesy of W. Mann.

a German major or minor and others. Incoming mail was examined for information about social conditions in Germany and the effects of any attacks by the Allies. Mail came from families and especially girlfriends."

David Cooley of Erickson noted that his grandfather had three P.O.W.'s working for him at harvest time at his farm near Birtle. He showed them his guns and told them that they could use them for shooting rabbits or wild ducks. One of the P.O.W.'s left the farm and when he didn't return after twenty four hours the R.C.M.P. were phoned in Birtle. They said that they would give the P.O.W. a few days and he'd turn himself in. Not all of the locals showed their confidence in the P.O.W.'s. A former RCAF nurse stated that when a P.O.W. was brought into Dauphin for an appendix operation the locals were very afraid of his presence.



German P.O.W.'s piling wood...Photo courtesy of the Colin Mann Collection.

Retired Woodsmen...

With the advent of hydro throughout Manitoba in the late 40s and early 50s, the need for fuel wood diminished. Gone were the days of local men going into the woods to get fire wood or working for men like Walter Scott or Alex Kippan.

The photo shows Walter Scott on a farm near Ashville in the 1950s. Walter operated a saw mill for many years in the Riding Mountain National Park along the Strathclair Trail. He, like all of the other operators had to move his saw mill out of RMNP by 1946.

What did some of the lumber entrepreneurs do when they got old or had to move their operations from within the confines of the RMNP? Alex Kippan retired as operator of Kippan's Mill in 1946-47. Using the fine lumber from his mill, he built and opened the Bend Theatre at Strathclair. In conversation with Harris Johnston of Winnipeg, he stated that when the theatre was under construction, his brother from Hamiota told him that Kippan was looking for a projector and projectionist. At this time Harris was thinking of leaving the Air Force. Kippan asked Harris to come to Strathclair for an interview. Harris went out by train and stayed in a local hotel for the night. In the morning the clerk brought up a bucket of hot water for a shave and then he met Kippan. Kippan told him that he could



Portrait of a retired saw mill operator... Photo of Walter Scott in the 1950's on a farm near Ashville courtesy of Leonard and Norma Thiele.

have the job if he could locate a pair of projectors. (one projector was to operate and the other was reloaded with film)

Harris had joined the Air Force in 1941. By the time that he was stationed in Winnipeg, he had been in Toronto, St. Thomas, Camp Borden as well as in Souris where he attained his projectionist license. He was able to make \$5.00 a night above his regular Supply Clerk's pay showing movies.

When the base closed in Gimli, the two new projectors were moved to Winnipeg. The two used projectors from the Winnipeg base were now available. Kippan gave Harris a cheque for \$2000.00 to bid for the projectors. Harris was amazed as to the trust that Kippan had in him. Kippan won the bid and the projectors were shipped to Strathclair. One of Kippan's longtime workers, Paddy Trim, wanted the job of projectionist. Since Harris didn't know anyone in Strathclair, and because there was no running water in the hotel or electricity, he decided that the living conditions with the Air Force were much better so he signed up again. Harris ended up being with the Air Force until 1968. The Bend Theatre became a fixture in Strathclair operating from 1947-1980. Since 1983 the Strathclair Drama Club presents an annual full length live musical production at the theatre.

Familiar Sights A Vestige Of The Past...

The wood industry was an important aspect in the Parkland during the first half of the Twentieth century. The locals cut the trees down to be used for lumber in building a variety of edifices as well as using the cordwood for fuel. Along with the Mennonite C.O.'s and the German P.O.W.'s, a tremendous amount of wood was cut down and hauled out of the RMNP. After World War II the importance of the lumber industry waned considerably. Farmers would turn their major attention to farming and with a strong economy they had more disposable income and would rather go to town to a lumber yard to procure their lumber. Hydro-electricity and natural gas would reduce the need for copious amounts of woods needed to heat buildings.



Familiar sights of horses hauling wood were rare by the mid-50s. In this photo, my Uncle Nick, (left), sisters Adell and Alice and my father, (right) are hauling wood. Notice the short tails on the horses. My father would sell the tail to the N. Unickow at the Quality Store.

We used wood to heat our house on the farm well into the 1960s. I vividly recall going into the woods with my father to cut down cords of poplar with a Swede Saw. The wood was hauled by a sleigh and a team of horses and put into piles. Later that winter my father would start up the Case S tractor and with the help of several neighbours the wood would be cut using a circular saw. After the wood was cut, it was my job to split and pile the wood so that it would cure and be ready for the box stove the next heating season. The only thing missing was the "whistle from the steamer."

Prologue To Pilots and Plane Crashes...

Climbing Up The Sky

Willie, climb aboard your Sopwith Camel and fly again
In the morning light, see the ghost like silhouette
Of you aeroplane. climbing up the sky

Over No Man's Land, in his goggles and his leather helmet, he took command
Just one more fight, just one more time
To see the Archies run, he climbed the sky

With one hand on the throttle, the other on the gun
I can still see him flying, making circles around the sun

That October dawn, near the end of the war
Against all odds, he settled the score
And four of the German aeroplanes, would never fly again
'Cause Willie was a man of valor, he fought to the bitter end

The sky was full of German aeroplanes
And Willie was the only one
They were firing round after round
'Til Willie's plane went down

c Ed Stozek
SOCAN



Willam Barker was born in Dauphin and ended up shooting down fifty enemy aircraft during WWI. On October 27, 1918, Barker found himself in the middle of a large formation of German Fokkers. He shot down four planes before being wounded in both legs and his left elbow. He survived his crash landing and for his efforts won the Victoria Cross. Barker was Canada's most distinguished war hero. He was killed in a flying accident on March 12, 1930 at Ottawa when he lost control of his Fairchild KR-21 biplane trainer during a demonstration. Photo of Barker flying with the Prince of Wales courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

**DOMINION-PROVINCIAL
WAR EMERGENCY TRAINING
PROGRAM**

This is to certify that Stanley Stozek
has been enrolled in a War Emergency Class in
Aircraft Construction
(Type of course)
Vocational School, Fort William
(Name of School) (City)
and has received instruction and attained grad-
ing as indicated below:

SUBJECTS	Number of Hours Instruction	Grading
Filing & Fitting	30	B
Forming	30	B
Assembly	20	B
Blue Print	10	B
Drilling & Riveting	90	B

Attitude to work Good

A—Excellent B—Good C—Fair

Date April 21st, 1943

(Signature)
(Superintendent, War Emergency Classes)

Fort William Vocational
(School)

T 41-2

Stanley Stozek's Aircraft Construction papers at Fort William.

Chapter V

Pilots and Plane Crashes...

In 1946 an airplane with two occupants had to land at our farm. It was ironic that the plane would land at a farm where the farmer, who had just bought the land in 1945, had worked at Canada Car and Foundry in Fort William for the war effort. As part of the war effort, Stanley Stozek worked on an assembly line building airplanes.

The plane landed on the field and taxied near the yard. The two men had dinner at my parent's house and apparently really enjoyed the meal as they gave my mother \$10.00. They loved her home made chicken soup! They were very appreciative of my parent's hospitality. A neighbour was summoned with a car and the men went to Oakburn to spend several nights at the hotel while they waited for parts.

Airplanes were a rare sight in those day and as a result, many neighbours came to the farm to look at it. When the parts came in my father helped the men with the repair. Using the field as a runway they took off to their destination. As a token of their appreciation they circled the farm and tipped their wings. Of course not all airplane stories turned out well.

Canada Car and Foundry was established in 1909 in Montreal when Rhodes Curry Co. of Amherst, N.S., Canada Car Co. of Turcot, Quebec and Dominion Car and Foundry of Montreal amalgamated. Near the end of WWI the expanding company opened a new plant in Fort William to manufacture rail cars and ships. Elsie McGill was hired in 1938 and helped design the Maple Leaf Trainer II and then the Hawker Hurricane. When the production of the Hurricane was complete in 1943, Canada Car and Foundry's workforce was 4500 of which one half were women. Over 1400 aircraft had been built. After 1943 CC&F were contracted by the U.S. Navy to build the SB2C Helldiver, but due to a continuous stream of specification changes, mass production was not possible.

A Tragedy On Lake Manitoba...

The body of George McKee, a pilot from Vancouver who worked for Western Canada Airways was found with two other passengers in Lake Manitoba on September 5, 1930. The plane that he was flying on a trip to Fort McMurray, plunged into shallow water a half mile from shore and was found floating in the waters near Reykjavik on Saturday afternoon. The body was noticed by two little girls who notified police. George McKee's body was taken from the water to Dauphin where funeral arrangements were made. The pilot was thirty nine years old and was with the R.C.A.F. prior to flying for Western Canadian Airways. The other casualties were Arthur Hunt Chute, a well known writer and Arthur Roach, an engineer for the airways. Their bodies were recovered the following day.

Bill May and Fay Baker...June 18, 1934

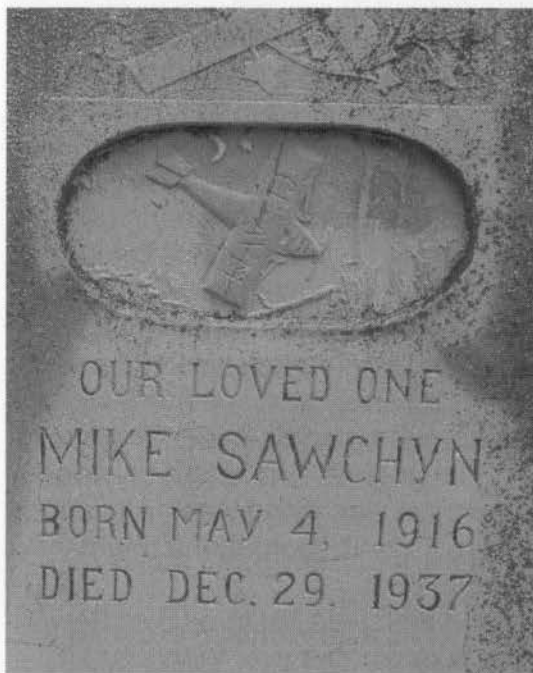
A plane piloted by Bill May and carrying famed fan dancer, Fay Baker, had been missing for several days. Leaving The Pas on a Tuesday, May was forced to land near Grenon's Harbour (Old Joe's Camp) at a point where Fred Bilenduke's winter camp was situated. The plane was forced to land due to engine problems. They couldn't take off until Saturday and in the meantime there was no possible way of getting word out that they were safe. The hospitality of the fishing camp was at their disposal as long as they needed a place to stay. They had encountered fog near Big Island and landed at Duck Bay where there was a big settlement. They stayed overnight and headed for Winnipegosis on Sunday. The relief plane had left Sunday morning to scout around Lake Winnipegosis. Shortly after, May landed. Both planes took off for Winnipeg on Monday afternoon.

No Trace Of Sifton Flier Lost Sunday December 29, 1937...

Search planes concentrating their efforts to find Mike "Spud" Sawchyn on the foothills of the Duck Mountains west of Grandview since Monday were now shifting their search eastward on Wednesday afternoon to investigate the reports of a plane that had been seen a short distance from Ochre-River on December 29, the day that Sawchyn's plane had disappeared. The planes also searched Lake Dauphin without any results. A radio message was also broadcast Wednesday to all Western pilots to check closely on the reports of planes flying in the region between Christmas and New Year's. There had been reports that a plane had been heard on or about the day in question and these reports had come into police headquarters all the way from Roblin in the west to Ochre-River in the east and it was felt that the observers had confused Sawchyn's monoplane with some other aircraft.

A farmer told police that he and a friend had seen a red plane headed in the direction of the south-east corner of the Valley River Indian Reserve last Wednesday. He also stated that the motor seemed to be giving trouble. Another report from another farmer near Senate Lake north of Bield in the Merridale District, declared that he heard something that sounded like a tractor on the day in question but that he saw no plane.

The missing pilot, son of Councillor and Mrs. Paul Sawchyn, left Souris at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 29, with only enough gasoline for three hours of flying time. "Spud" Sawchyn was last seen by RCMP at Shoal Lake and later was reported to



Mike Sawchyn's headstone in Dauphin...

have flown over a farm a short distance east of Rossburn. The next indication of his whereabouts came from J. Allen, a forest ranger in the RMNP who stated that he saw a plane that might have been Sawchyn's flying over the west end of Gunn Lake, twenty miles south of Gilbert Plains in an isolated part of the park.

One of the planes taking part in the search included a Cabin Cessna from Mid-Canadian Airways with Sam Foley, assistant district inspector for the Department of Civil Aviation, and Ben Franklin, district engineer of Winnipeg. There was also a two seat Avian from the Brandon Flying Club and a cabin Waco sent out by the Federal Department of Transport. Also with the planes were Harry Rowed, Tribune Staff Reporter and Burt Graham, Free Press Reporter.

Some two weeks later, by January 13, there was one last flight by a Starlett Airways Beechcraft plane. The five planes engaged in the search for Sawchyn had flown a combined dis-

tance of 12,250 miles. Every square mile of the immense area from Ochre-River to the Saskatchewan border and as far north as the Duck Mountains and south into the Riding Mountains were covered as many as four or five times. Up to this time this had been the most intensive air hunt in Manitoba's history. The air hunt was also supplemented by a wide spread ground search by members of the Dauphin RCMP and volunteers by car, snowmobile and on foot. The final attempt to obtain information from the general public was to scatter handbills by the Starrett Beechcraft over a large area that was covered on Wednesday. The handbills had a picture of the airplane and a \$75.00 reward offered by Sawchyn's family.

The air searchers were honoured with a dinner on Sunday night at the Grange Café. The crews of the various search planes voiced their appreciation of the splendid co-operation and assistance given by the officers and constables of the RCMP. There was also a vote of thanks to Gordon Mcquarrie of Imperial Oil from Dauphin for gas arrangements and to the Town of Dauphin for the electricity for motor heaters in the planes. Also to Bob Starrett of Starrett Airways for the Beechcraft CF-BIF for joining the search, the Winnipeg newspapers and all those who aided in the search. They also thanked Ed Haller of the King's Hotel for the accommodations.

During the middle of April, Wesley Woods, Tim Cole and William Galloway of Gilbert Plains found the crashed plane in a thick stand of poplar some twenty miles south west of Gilbert Plains. There was no sign of Sawchyn but attached to the fuselage was a note reading, "This plane flown by Mike Sawchyn of Sifton. Please leave everything in place. Have broken foot. If am lost pay Peter Lytwyn \$120.00." The note seemed to indicate that Sawchyn would not get out of the park alive. Gathering at the farm of W. Woods, fifty volunteers travelled ten miles of rough and muddy roads to search the scene of the crash. Sections of the road lay through marshy swamp cov-

ered with water over a foot deep.

The search crew arrived at the plane three hours later. Under the direction of RCMP Constables E.L.D. McDougall and G.H. Milley, the searchers spread fanwise in small groups to comb the bush but were unable to find the missing pilot. They did however, discover a small notebook some 200 yards north from the wreckage. The pages corresponded to the notes. It was also noted that the gas tank contained nearly two gallons of gas and the fuel line between the motor and tank appeared intact. The plane was broken in two sections, just in front of the landing gear. In crashing, the plane had mowed a path through a clump of tall poplar trees and a piece of one wing was still hanging from one of the branches. There were bits of wreckage strewn for 200 feet in the plane's path and there were pieces of the propeller found fifty yards in every direction. Practically nothing of the wings remained attached to the plane's body. There were bits of poplar embedded in the grooves of the radial engine. One of the plywood skis was punctured in two places. It appeared that Sawchyn was flying west. All control wires were intact but one side of the rudder was broken. They thought that it might have snapped while in the air or it may have broken on impact.

The section of the plane's cockpit was overturned and it was believed that Sawchyn had been thrown clear. When the safety belt was examined it was found that it had not been used. The fact that the pilot was not badly hurt in the crash was indicated by the fact that he was able to wrap his logbook in oilcloth to protect it from the elements. His goggles, with both lenses shattered, were neatly folded beside the plane. Sawchyn had built a small fire with a piece of the wrecked plane but it did not appear sufficient to keep him warm during the night. Heavy snowfall was starting that Monday night and it continued intermittently through Wednesday to cause postponement of the search.

The April 28 Dauphin Herald indicated that the body of Mike Sawchyn was finally found 1/2 mile from where his small Pictenpol monoplane crashed. The body was completely submerged in water under a clump of willows and only the top piece of wood that Sawchyn was using as a crutch was above water. The discovery was made about 4:00 o'clock and under the direction of Constable G.C. Harpell, a messenger was dispatched to the nearest farmhouse with a phone some ten miles away.

Sultan, the trained Alaskan dog from Headingly, proved to be a valuable member. With trainer Constable J.E. McCardle, Sultan picked up the scent from a small piece of oily cloth lying beside a stump 3/4 miles north west from the plane. This was part of Sawchyn's flying suit and he had apparently tried to light a fire with it.

Sawchyn's right leg was broken above the knee. He appeared to have no other injuries. Sawchyn had crawled the entire distance as his flying suit showed signs of being dragged. He used the plane's aileron for support. He lost his cap, scarf and mitts. Death was due to exposure. It was believed that Sawchyn had not lived long in the sub zero weather. The body was brought back by a team of horses and a wagon to the farm of W. Woods. The body was still in a good state of preservation and the autopsy was done by Dr. G. D. Shorthand of Grandview.

The discovery of Sawchyn's body ended one of the most intensive air and ground searches in Canadian Aviation history. One guess as to the cause of the crash was that the pilot was numbed by the cold and decided to land and misjudged his distance in the landing attempt. He was aiming for a large burned out area. A few yards

further and he would have made it. Local Dauphin veteran pilot Wim Aberson noted that flying over the Riding Mountain National Park poses numerous problems. Perhaps Sawchyn encountered bad weather. When this happens there are three choices. The first is to turn around and go back to Brandon, the second is to fly toward Neepawa and avoid the escarpment and the third is to go toward the Bird Tail Valley. Here, Sawchyn might have encountered a cloud bank touching the trees and this might have affected his judgment.

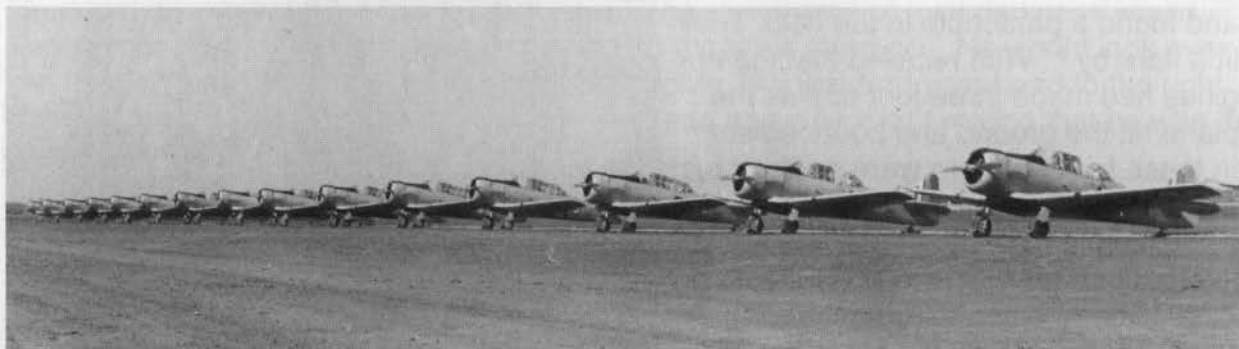
Mike Sawchyn was born in Paulson, east of Dauphin, in 1916. In 1918 his family moved to Sifton. He completed his grade eleven in 1933 and in the fall of 1934 took an aviation course in Winnipeg. He received his pilot's license early in 1935. He had bought the plane from George Kempthorne of Souris and took delivery of his plane the morning of his death.

Crashes Near Dauphin...

Since there were four training bases in and around the Dauphin area during WWII, there were numerous crashes. One such crash occurred on January 18, 1942 at 10:45, three miles west of Sifton on a Sunday morning. This was Dauphin's worst air accident to this time. Three planes were flying in formation from the Dauphin No. 10 Service Flying Training School. As they were changing positions, two failed to make the perfect change and a mid-air collision took place. One of the planes limped back to the base and the other one crashed. The collision took place in the middle of a farmer's field where there was no road access.

The twin engine Cessna trainer that crashed was responsible for the death of F.O. Thomas A. Caulkin, 21, of Victoria, B.C. and LAC D.G. Irvine, of Vancouver, B.C. The inquest was conducted by Dr. K. Peacock at the Bullmore Funeral Home. There was a short service by Flight Lt. A.J.T. Littlewood and then the bodies were flown home.

In Elsie Lesyk's book entitled, *Sifton Then And Now*, she stated that she was the principal witness as she was pumping water into a trough when she saw the three planes. The crash was deemed to be an accident. There was debris scattered all over



Harvard Trainer Planes at the Dauphin Airport... These were the first planes that were used when the airport opened. One day Wim Aberson recalled the sky was full of twin engine Cessna Cranes and Avro Ansons that were flying from the south west. These planes replaced the Harvard. They were used after the pilots graduated from the elementary flying school Tiger Moths. Fighter pilots were trained on the Harvard and Cessna. After that they became either fighter or bomber pilots. Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

the field and the bodies were never recovered. Local residents remembered two large trucks bringing in the remnants of the planes to the airport.

Later that year in July, three miles west of Dauphin, P.O. J.S. Bladon of Regina and LAC G.H. Cabush of Edmonton were engaged in a routine instructional flight in a Cessna Crane. They crashed and were both killed near G. Maynard's farm. Stanley Bladon was formerly from Dauphin and had been an all-star hockey player. In 1940 he was a member of the Regina Rangers when they won the Allen Cup. A few days later, Pilot Officer R.D. Esselment, R.C.A.F. bombing instructor, Warrant Officer R.D. Mathers, LAC and P.A. Trudel, a New Zealand airman were killed when their Bristol Bolingbroke aircraft crashed twelve miles north of the No. 7 Bombing and Gunnery School on Tuesday, July 27 at 6:20 a.m. The plane is now located at the Comfort Inn property in Brandon.

A Plane Crash And A Future Pilot...

On a Wednesday night around 11:00, July 29, an R.C.A.F. student pilot from No. 10 S.F.T.S. was killed when his Cessna Crane crashed near the main airport at Dauphin. Wim Aberson, a long time local pilot from Dauphin, still vividly recalled seeing the aftermath of this plane crash. It was family night at the theatre in Dauphin and the Aberson family were driving home from the movies. Wim and his brother Dick were with their parents, Bob and Jane. It was a cloudy night with a light drizzle. The family spotted a fire in Charlie Fisher's field. Their first thought was that it was a straw stack that was on fire. They soon realized that this was still too early for harvest and there were no straw stacks.

A plane flew over and dropped a flare to help light up the area. The flare lit up the whole field. Wim's mother wanted the family to drive to the crash site as her son, Wim's older brother Bob, was taking his training and she was afraid that he was the one who had crashed the plane. When the family got closer to the crash site the Crash and Rescue Team was coming at a high speed from the airport. The vehicles went through the ditch and through the barbed wire fence. The Abersons stayed quite far away from the gruesome crash site.

Some officials then came with lanterns and found a parachute in the field. They lit a flare by it. Wim recalled that the engines had made three foot ruts as the plane hit the ground and bounced out. In these furrows there were pools of fuel and they were burning.

Airplanes would soon become an integral part of Wim Aberson's life. In 1943, Bob Aberson's flight instructor, Art Figgures, offered Wim, his brother Dick and his father, a ride in a plane. They flew west for about ten miles and when they were coming back they buzzed some neighbours' farms. The neighbours were waving at the occu-



Rick and Wim Aberson in front of a glider at Wawanesa, Mb. in 1963. Wim's son Rick would later become a pilot with the R.C.M.P. Photo courtesy of Wim Aberson.



Wim Aberson and his grandson, Brent Simpson...

pants. Wim was so thrilled with this experience that he wanted to become a pilot. Wim would soon join the army and take basic training with the Canadian Armoured Corps in Fort Osbourne and Camp Borden.

Many years later, Austin Ingham, a former war time pilot, from the Yorkton Flying Service was looking for potential students to get a course started in Dauphin. He brought with him a Cessna 140 and a Fleet Canuck to start training. Wim's hopes of be-

coming a pilot were dashed as he had a weak right eye. In the early 1960s, Wim started taking lessons with Dauphin resident and former WWII pilot, Vic Barber. Wim worked at correcting his vision and soon got his license. Along with nine other Dauphin residents, Wim invested \$190.00 and bought a share in an airplane. Wim marveled at this group of men who took him in as a shareholder. There was no insurance for liability and everyone welcomed Wim who said that "I was poor as a church mouse. We all got along. I often wonder if this arrangement would work in today's society."

Currently Wim is in his late 70's and he is still flying airplanes. He has logged over 12,000 hours of flying time. He has given private flying lessons, sprayed crops as well as being an examiner for Class II instructors. His brothers, children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces have become pilots or have been involved with airplanes. Two of his son-in-laws are also pilots.

As for the crash that Wim witnessed when he was a teenager, he has his theories on how the pilot ended up losing his life. The first reaction was that there was sugar in the tank but that was ruled out. Wim has replayed the event many times. When the pilot took off on the cloudy night he left Runway 26 which ran straight west. The pilot would turn left into a cross wind. The night would have been very dark. The runway was lit with flare pots. As the pilot left the runway and ascended several hundred feet he was facing a "dark, black hole." The experience of total darkness would have probably panicked the pilot as he had no lights for reference. He would look over his right shoulder to locate the lights from Dauphin. "As you turn your head to the right you turn your controls to the left. As looked ahead again he didn't realize that he was in a turn. He would then go into a spiral in seconds."

Plane Crash In The Riding Mountain National Park Near Kelwood...

Sunday April 30, 1944 was a typical spring day. The day started out as gray, cloudy and wet. Flights from No. 5 A.O.S. Winnipeg base were "scrubbed" in the morning but the afternoon flights went on as usual. This was a special training flight for navigators who had to choose or plot a course for a triangular flight, using "dead reckoning" and verifying the exact location reached at the end of each leg of the flight. The navigator was LAC Webb who was in training. According to George Roper, the wireless operator, they took off into complete nothingness. They couldn't see a thing other than the wings of their Anson MKI training plane. They flew the first leg and descended

slowly when at an altitude of three hundred feet they saw a town. They flew between the elevators to get the name of the town, Melita, and they knew that they had completed the first leg of their journey. They resumed their altitude and set their co-ordinates for McCreary. In conversation with George Roper, he stated that he told Webb to go to a higher altitude as the Riding Mountains would be in their path. They flew until they exhausted the time allowed for this leg and the pilot, Sergeant H.G. Hill, put the plane into a power glide. If they were on target they should have been over level land and they could again visually verify their position. What the men did not take into account was the speed of the wind that they were going against. As a wireless operator, Roper was to report to the base every half hour. As Roper stood up to go to the radio, he glanced outside and saw the top of a spruce tree flash past the wing.



Remnants of the plane crash...Photo courtesy of the RMNP.

Roper awoke out of a dream. He was dreaming that he was back at the barracks with his friend telling him that it was time to "rise and shine." Instead he woke up to the reality of the plane crash. He was standing on his head on what was left of the roof of the airplane. As he was trying to get out he saw the body of First Navigator Webb. The plane was a twisted mess and there was a smell of gas. Panic set in. Roper took the fire axe which was under him and managed to cut a piece of the wall and both of them managed to crawl through. As they crawled out they encountered muddy, muskeg soil and rain coming down steadily. Roper saw an airman's wedge cap hanging on a small swamp spruce and thought that they already had been rescued. This was not the case!

Roper called out but there was no answer. He did, however, hear a moan and managed to locate the second navigator, LAC, H.R. Lawrence. He was under a gas tank or engine part and he was alive but his body appeared broken. Cutting away at the skin of the fuselage, Roper found a parachute, ripped it open and rigged it up as a tent. This kept the rain off Lawrence and as he came to he wanted a drink. Lawrence felt no pain, just a numbness all over. Roper cut off two pieces from the tail fin which were put under Lawrence. Roper also pulled out some seat parts and further braced Lawrence's body.

Roper then started to search for the pilot. He found him completely buried under debris. As Roper tried to pull out the body a "bone chilling" cry came from Pilot Sergeant H.G. Hill. It was like pulling a six foot long sack of potatoes but with Webb's help they managed to put the body on another strip of plywood material.

While they were doing these tasks they could hear airplanes flying overhead. Roper found the wireless radio set upside down with the antennae ripped off or buried in the muck. He tried to send an S.O.S. but he knew that it wasn't going anywhere.



Roper crawled back into the wrecked fuselage to look for the first aid kit. He found bits of the contents of the kit scattered throughout the interior and had a hard time getting out as his injured leg was starting to really hurt.

Roper knew that it would be getting dark soon so action had to be taken. They figured out that they had crashed in the Riding Mountains. Since he had grown up on a farm he knew how to verify directions in the bush and explained to Webb that he would have to walk east to get to habitation. Lawrence was awake and rational and after explaining what he was about to do, he said to go ahead. Roper tore more strips off the parachute and made a better covering for the tent.

Then Roper and Webb set off, taking the axe to blaze a trail. Webb was complaining that they were going in a circle so Roper told him to be quiet or go back. Trusting his sense of direction and a "prayer on his lips", Roper kept forging on and double blazing trees at regular inter-

vals. He knew that he was going in the right direction as he could feel the slope going downward. By now the fog was lifting and as they skirted a ravine they came upon barbed wire and a man walking. Roper yelled as hard as he could. The farmer, Hugh McCrae, offered to take Roper and Webb to Kelwood if he had enough gas and could start his truck. To Roper's relief the truck started and they arrived at the farmer's house where they left Webb with the farmer's mother. The Chevrolet had been parked for the winter. Horses were used during the winter by the McCrae family as transportation to Kelwood.

Kindness From The People Of Kelwood...

Roper, Webb and McCrae reached Kelwood around 8:00 p.m. and found that everything was closed except for the St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church where a service was in progress. Evensong was not quite over when the two airmen and a farmer burst into the church. The minister stopped the service and the people gathered around to volunteer their help. An R.C.M.P. officer who was at the service took charge. Roper got on the phone and let Winnipeg know of their fate. Most of the men didn't bother to change from their church clothes or footwear. They gathered lanterns with no thought of packing food. The R.C.M.P. officer rode his horse while the rest packed into whichever vehicles were available and drove to McQuarrie's place which was a 1/2 mile south of McCrae's.

Ab Kingdon, who currently lives in Kelwood, was fourteen years and was killing time that evening in the town. He heard about the plane crash and wanted to help. There were several other young boys who also wanted to go help look for the crashed plane. When they got to the farm the young boys were told by the R.C.M.P. officer to go home because they would end up getting lost too. Eventually several boys did help in the search on the next day.



After the search party arrived at the farm, coal lanterns were lit as well as a flashlight and a five cell that the Mountie had. It was relatively easy to find the barbed wire and pasture and to follow the ravine where Roper had blazed the trees. It was now very foggy and they couldn't see the lanterns for more than thirty feet. Roper was now riding the horse and they made very slow headway. It was 10:30 p.m. Roper went back to the cabin and helped tend to Webb. According to one of the searcher's, McKenzie Whitelock's diary, "Well we wandered practically all night except for some time spent by a camp fire in search of a blazed tree which we never did find till daylight. Early on the way we were overtaken by a Neepawa R.C.A.F. doctor and two orderlies."

Roper stated that at 4:00 a.m. a station wagon arrived from the air force base in Neepawa. They had some food supplies which Roper and Webb said should go to the farmer's wife. There were two medical servicemen and an officer/doctor who was dressed in his dress uniform with low oxfords with no thought of preparing for an excursion into the bush. He did prove to be an excellent man. At 4:30 they set off into the bush. Roper had to be helped onto the horse as his leg was very sore. The servicemen followed with a stretcher. Roper was soon on foot as it seemed easier on his leg. McKenzie's diary continued, "We also sent back under Jack McLeod and Ab Hearn's guidance the radio operator and six small boys, Hearn and McLeod to come back with grub. At 8:00 a.m. they came back with, eleven loaves of bread, Klick, sardines, tea and butter. We all ate ravenously. Then began the search anew and found one blazed tree but could not find more we then dispatched a horse and rider. We had two horses in all back for radio op. in hope he could go on from blaze on tree which was blazed two way long and short, and made camp under a spruce beside the blazed tree which was poplar this at ten a.m., we continued to hunt to no avail 'til Corp. Radio opp. came back and then after eating Issac Grewdishe's Groceries which was now the only grub at hand of some bologna soda crackers and sweet cookies we again set out."

Roper soon found the rest of the search party and as soon as they reached a slough, he knew that they were close to the site of the crash. They spread out as far as they could without losing each other and called out continually. All of a sudden they heard Lawrence call out!

According to McKenzie's diary, "After 2:00 p.m. to find Charlie McMillan the first man to discover the plane and a dead pilot but a living co-pilot with a broken thigh and



other injuries suffering from exposure. We built a fire and used scraps of plane for this from which my jack knife extricated the small name plate, pilot Sgt. H.G. Hill."

I Never Refused A Drink In My Life, Sir...

When they found Lawrence, his first words were an apology to the doctor for having to get him out into the woods in his dress uniform. Lawrence said that the pilot had died at 1:15 a.m. Lawrence had been so thirsty

that when he saw all of the water around him he managed to roll off his bed and ended up laying in six inches of water, absolutely helpless except for being able to move his head. He spent seven hours in the water, holding his head above the water as long as he could, taking a breath and letting it relax under water until he had to take another breath. The ice cold water probably had saved Lawrence's life as it prevented any swelling. Hugh McRae had brought a bottle of brandy for medicinal purposes. The brandy was offered to Lawrence who said, "I never refused a drink in my life, sir." Years later when Bob McRae talked to Lawrence he verified what he said.

Just then two civilians arrived from the Winnipeg base dressed in warm clothes and rubber boots. According to Roper, after they took pictures of the crash site, they had the nerve to sit down and take out a bunch of food for themselves and eat it in front of all of the hungry search party. They offered the officer/doctor a coke, who immediately gave it to the two boys.

The medics produced a special bag for the pilot's body and the 196 pound Lawrence was carried out on a stretcher. According to Roper the two civilian men did not help one bit. They forged on ahead because they had to report to Winnipeg. When the search party arrived at the house, the farmer's mother had tea for everyone. Roper, Webb and Lawrence took the ambulance to Neepawa. Lawrence was immediately flown to Winnipeg and after a night's sleep, Roper and Webb were flown to Winnipeg. Lawrence had a punctured lung as well as breaking every bone on his right side. He ended up serving in the army in Africa against Rommel. Webb had his teeth pushed through his lower lip and minor bruises. Roper's leg proved to be "spider-webbed" below the knee but his strong muscles supported him. When Roper got out of the hospital he found out that Webb was missing. His superiors were never able to locate him. He just disappeared. Perhaps it was the trauma of making a mistake and having the plane crash.

Roper went on to say that when everyone recovered, the two civilians from the base in Winnipeg were never let alone for a moment. Roper, Webb and Lawrence's friends made things very miserable for them because of their selfish actions with food at the scene of the crash.

The cause of the crash was attributed to a mistake in not figuring in the loss of ground spread due to strong head winds. As a result, instead of being past the Riding Mountains, they were right in them.

The Search For The Crash Site

By Bob McRae...

Bob McRae was not born until 1951, however, he heard his father Hugh talk with passion about the airplane crash and the rescue of the survivors. Hugh really admired "the guy from Alberta's" courage and determination in walking out from the crash site and when help was found, to go back with the search party to rescue the rest of the crew. Hugh felt bad for the pilot who died but was happy that he and the rest of the search party had been able to find Ray Lawrence and get him medical attention. To Bob,

the admiration for these men grew each time his father told the story. The fact that his father went to town for help, went into the bush with the search party, helped carry out the injured man and used his horse to carry out the dead pilot, added to the interest.

Shortly after the crash people came out of curiosity to the site but as time passed on the location of the crash was no longer known. Bob was fascinated with unanswered questions such as "What were the names of the four men? Where were they from? Why they had crashed? Were any of them still alive? " After Hugh McRae died in 1975, Bob never thought that these questions would be answered.

In 1990 Ray Lawrence came back to the area. He was looking for Hugh and Mr. McQuarrie who had been in the search party. When Mr. Lawrence found out that both men were dead and nobody was really interested he went back home to Saskatoon. Bob didn't find out about Mr. Lawrence until about a month later. Bob went to the air museum in Brandon for any clues as to the identity of the men in the plane crash. They had a record of the crash and only the name of the pilot.

On Saturday, July 5, 1995, the phone rang. Bob's mother told him that one of the survivors from the crash was on the line. "Hello, I'm George Roper." They talked briefly and he said that he and his wife were in a motel in Neepawa. Bob told him, "Don't go anywhere, we'll be there in half an hour." It was unbelievable that he was going to meet the man who fifty one years ago had walked to the farm from the site of



George Roper and Bob McRae at the 75th Anniversary celebrations at RMNP.



Bob Curle, Ed Stozek and Ray Storozinski at the crash site, August 2008... Photo by Denis Vrignon-Tessier.



the plane crash.

When Bob and his family met George and Bertha Roper it was a special moment. Bob handed George a small pale-green sprocket that his father had brought from the crash site. George sat on the bed staring at the object. He had tears in his eyes.

For the next two hours George filled in many details. As a result of the visit George became a close friend of the family, much like

an uncle. Bob then started to try and find the location of the crash. Bob and his daughter Kathy started making trips into the general area where the crash occurred. Each time that they went, they learned something useful. Bob thought that the crash was on the east side of the Dead Ox Trail. George Roper and his daughter Marge came on October 1995, however the crash site was not to be found.

Using McKenzie Whitelock's diary, he mentioned that the plane was about one half hour off the trail. The party headed straight northwest to a beaver dam. Off to the west of the trail was a black spruce swamp. The next day they returned to this spot. Every time that Bob went looking for the crash site he took his daughter. Today she was not with him. Instead his son, Robbie, was there. As they walked through the small spruce they encountered the main part of the plane! Pieces were spread around a large area. Bob took the radio mast from the plane and when he phoned George he told him, "Guess what I'm holding in my hands." Now the plane crash site was once again re-located.

On August 12, 2008, led by Denis Vrignon-Tessier from the RMNP, Bob Curle, Ray Storozinski and I made the trek from the Dead-Ox Trail Parking Lot. We followed a park trail and an hour later we were able to see the plane located in the boggy area. It was indeed a special moment.



Pictured from left to right are: "Doc" Stephens, Ossie Warden, Jack Bawcutt, and Bruce "Bill" Bailly. Photo courtesy of Lavina Shaw.

A "Magician" Crashes...

Lavina (McPhedrain) Shaw spent her first seventeen years growing up in Sifton. Lavina's father, Willard, was the C.N.R. station agent there. Willard was appointed the Hospitality Chairman in conjunction with the Hostess Club, which was "a home away from home", sponsored by the Dauphin War Services Association. He arranged for representatives in the neighbouring towns of Gilbert Plains, Fork River, Winnipegosis

and Dauphin for places where the airmen could be billeted. It was their only opportunity to be in a Canadian home as well as having a home-cooked meal. Lavina stated that her father arranged for thirty airmen to spend their Christmas leave in Flin Flon. He got the CN to give them free passage. The contact in Flin Flon was Mrs. Welch. Lavina still keeps in contact with Mrs. Welch's daughter. Willard also arranged dances in the Sifton Hall where everyone could get together for a social outing. Through the club, Willard also invited the overseas men to his home. No. 10 men or women had their leaves on the weekend whereas the ones from No. 7 had theirs during the week. Lavina said that their guest room was never empty during the war years. The McPhedrain family entertained personnel from all over the British Commonwealth. One of the guests, Jack Bawcutt, was an airman who came back to Sifton to work for Willard at the Mary Maxim factory after the war. According to Lavina, he later became the Mayor of Paris, Ontario for eighteen years. During the war years, he was a daredevil pilot who flew low over the railway station. Another guest, Bruce Bailey, became the Air Vice Marshall of the Falkland Island War.

On a Friday afternoon on March 16, 1945, one of the airmen from London, England, Raymond R. W. "Doc" Stephens, phoned Lavina to tell her that he would be on a solo training flight and that he would be flying over Sifton. Lavina knew him because he was one of the many airmen who spent his leaves at her parent's house and he also performed a magic show at the school. During his flight, Stephens flew too low and he couldn't gain altitude and ended up crashing his plane. Lavina's father drove out to the crash site. Lavina was very upset when she saw the bits and pieces of the pilot's body. Internment was made in the airmen's plot at the Riverside Cemetery at Dauphin on Monday, March 19, 1945. The funeral service was conducted by FL. J. F. Nute, padre of No. 10 S.F.T.S. from Bullmore's Funeral Home at 2:00 p.m. with full military honours.

As for Lavina, when she was seventeen she went to work as a Morse Telegrapher and was one of the few women in this trade. She worked in this capacity from 1946-54 at Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Flin Flon, Moose Jaw, Fort William and Port Arthur. She got married in 1949 to a train dispatcher. CN had a policy where a husband and wife could not both be working for the same company. Lavina joined CP and worked in their main office copying a lot of press for the newspapers.

Lavina was an International Director from 1998-2002 and in 2007 she finished a five year term as the International President of the Morse Telegraph Club. She was one of the first women on the Board of Directors and the first Canadian to hold the position as International President.

More Crashes...

There were many crashes around the training schools in the Dauphin area. Many of the locals remember the planes "buzzing" overhead on their training runs. It was not unusual for a plane to fly low over a farmer who was haying or harvesting. Unfortunately, there were many airmen who crashed. Many survived the crashes but some also lost their lives. Tony Kutcher, who lives east of Dauphin near the Paulson airport, recalled a plane crashing on their farm. The plane skidded and cut through some fences near the barn. According to his neighbour, Mike Marchak, the plane went through the three strand wire without breaking any. The plane landed with its wheels

up. The pilot survived and walked out with his face covered with dust. The crash site was cordoned off and a guard kept surveillance for three or four days. Since nobody came to feed him, Tony's parents took lunch out to him. One hour after the crash another plane had to make an emergency landing about a mile away. A mechanic was brought in and the next day the plane took off.

Mike Marchak's parents lived about one mile from the east-west runway at Paulson. There was always the sound of planes taking off and flying overhead. One day Mike was working outside when he heard a plane flying. The engine sputtered and caught again. Mike saw the plane do one spin and disappeared behind a bush. Mike ran about a mile to the crash site. He nearly stepped on the dead pilot who had a big gash on his head. The plane's fuselage was like an accordion. In the pilot's seat lay the dead body of the machine gunner. There were bullets all over the ground. Mike also recalled two planes colliding over Lake Dauphin. Rumor had it that they were never recovered and are still in the lake.

Plane crashes weren't just limited to the early half of the twentieth century. One January day on a Tuesday in 1957, Tony Kutcher was pitching some hay on his farm when he looked up to see three T-33 jets flying. They were doing maneuvers when all of a sudden one of the jets fly out of the pattern. He could see the plane losing altitude quickly. The plane crashed and as Tony headed toward the site he was knocked off his feet from the force of the explosion.

In the February 7th, Dauphin Herald, the lead story was titled, *Jet Crashes East Of Town Kills Pilot.* Erik M. Krogh, a N.A.T.O. student pilot with the Danish Air Force stationed at MacDonald airport was instantly killed when a T-33 jet trainer plane that he was flying crashed shortly after noon on a location approximately four miles east and one-half miles south of Dauphin. The victim was a native of Korinth, Denmark. The plane crashed on the farm owned by Thos. H. Shields. Following a large explosion and a cloud of smoke, the force of the explosion spread debris over a distance of 400 yards. According to Tony Kutcher, who farmed two miles from the scene of the crash, he stated that the land was, "Churned and blackened to a depth of two feet over a thirty foot area by the impact and intense heat." Some of the fragments from the wreckage were found later scattered over the farm. The body of the victim was later discovered a number of yards ahead of the initial impact. The body was removed to a local funeral home and Dr. R. E. Dicks, coroner, released the body to officials of the R.C.A.F. who took the remains to Winnipeg. Recently, Tony recalled seeing the body of the pilot and that it was a gruesome sight.

During the early part of the Twentieth century, airplanes were not a common sight in the Parkland. With the advent of WWII, airplanes such as the Fairy Battle and the Bristol Bolingbroke were soon a common sight especially around communities where there were training facilities for the airmen. Many of the pilots who flew the planes were dare-devils and tried to show off their skills and sometimes, a flat bed truck would pass by a farm carrying the remnants of a plane. For example, there were thirteen crashes in the Riding Mountain National Park. In the surrounding area there were countless others. Whether it was William Barker fighting the enemy during WWI, the trainer pilots during WWII, or the locals who were motivated to take lessons and buy their own airplanes, their escapades helped to conquer the Prairie skies while adding to the history of the area.

Chapter VI

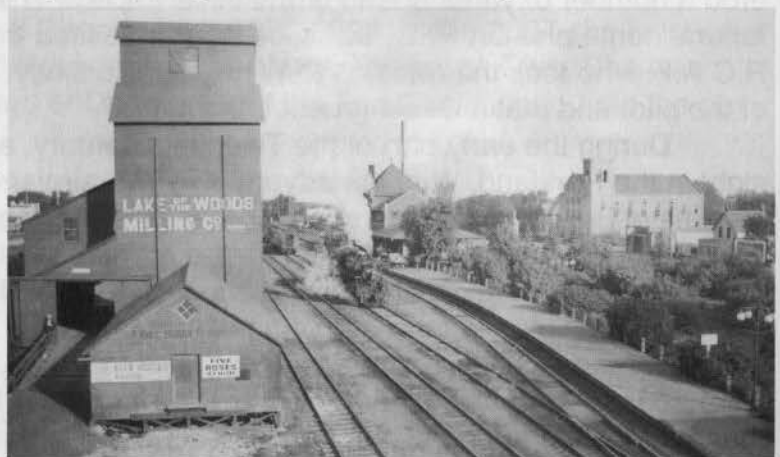
Crimes During The 1930s...

It was interesting to note some of the crimes reported in the various newspapers. Many of these crimes were the result of the Depression as there was a shortage of jobs and poor prices or no markets for the products produced. This also led to more tension in the household. Looking back at these crimes and the consequences paints a picture of society and of the treatment of the various classes and ethnic groups of people.

In the December 10th issue of the Minnedosa Tribune the 55th annual report of criminal and other offences for Manitoba was reported for the year ending on September 30, 1930. The total number of persons convicted of indictable offences and convictions were as follows: 1929— 21,079 persons convicted of 24,079 crimes whereas in 1930— 23,910 persons were convicted for 28,457 crimes. Criminal activity increased by 13.40% and crime was up 18.08%. In 1930 there were 257 culpable homicides, 115 murders and 142 cases of manslaughter. 54 were tried with 17 convictions. The Headingley Gaol was quite welcome of the honour conferred to be the home of those sentenced to the death penalty. The dates of execution for three men were set at February 1, 2, and 3. These included James McGrath of Souris and Andrew Bodz of Pine River for murdering their wives, and John Verhoski of Winnipegosis for slaying a countryman. Bodz had just been released from jail and was home at the time when his wife's body was discovered in an outhouse. Verhoski killed Peter Demschny in a case of a mix-up of Model T Fords. Verhoski thought that he was going to hold up a cattle buyer who was driving a Model T Ford and was leaving an auction at Winnipegosis. Verhoski cut down some trees on the road and ambushed the cattle buyer. Instead, he killed Demschny, a local who also drove a Model T Ford. Verhoski only got three dollars from the robbery and the noose for his efforts..

Transients and Robberies...

Soon many transients would pass through town centres throughout Canada. In Dauphin, transients would get off the train before reaching town and walk to the Vermillion Park, where they would make bonfires and socialize. This area of the park would become known as "Bum's Jungle." Just prior to the Great Depression, on April 19, 1929, three young men, C. Notoly, W.E. Douglass and A. McMillan found that sneaking rides on the railway was dangerous. The three young men hopped on a train near the vicinity of a recent bur-



The train tracks at Dauphin...Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

glary. The police were watching for any suspicious people and since the young boys were on the wrong side of the law, they were apprehended. Police later found out that the three young boys had nothing to do with the burglary but C.S.A. Rogers fined them \$5.75 each and the cost of two days liberty. As quoted in the paper, "They departed cheerfully and are now probably miles away from here."

On May 14, S.H. Johnson of Pine River and Robert Fair of Dauphin appeared before Magistrate Hawkins and were charged with practicing optometry without a license. The case was adjourned on a point of evidence. On the other hand, Peter Hrychka of Sclater was not as lucky. He drew a fine of \$100 for court costs and an additional two months jail for keeping homebrew for sale. His statement as to "it being a sovereign balm for ill health," was not received kindly by the magistrate.

Breaking into the pool room owned by William Walmsley in Winnipegosis on May 30, 1930, some one assaulted Mike Verhosky, the caretaker, while he was sleeping. After taking \$40.00 from Verhosky's pockets, the thief also emptied the till containing \$30.00. Verhosky ended up in the Dauphin Hospital suffering from serious injuries to the head, having been badly beaten about the face and one eye.

The June 12 headline of the Dauphin Herald and Press stated, "Hold up Men Quickly Caught." On Saturday night, the town constable, Chief Smith, noticed a car with license number 17315 whose occupants were entirely strange to him, aroused his suspicions, so he kept track of their movements. Early Sunday morning a hold up occurred at the Liberty Café. The proprietor, Charlie Ying, informed Chief Smith of men and revolvers. The contents from the cash register were taken and the thieves made a quick getaway in a car. Chief Smith advised the Provincial Police about the car with license number 17315. Later that night, four men were apprehended in Neepawa by the Chief of Police, Fred McLean. On Sunday morning at 4:30, Joe Wyrozub, Gregory Zachuruk, Mike Hrynychuk and Mike Barko of Winnipeg were arrested when they stopped for gas. When the men later had their court case, it was noted that Hrynychuk entered the café brandishing an automatic revolver, demanded the contents from the cash register and obtained \$29.50. J.M. Ross of Winnipeg represented the accused. Judge Bonnycastle sentenced Hrynychuk to three years and ten lashes. The other three men were discharged through lack of sufficient evidence to convict them.

On July 5, there was a fatal shooting in the stomach of Hugh McKay from Alonsa. The 70 year old farmer was shot and robbed by an unknown youthful slayer. Earlier that day the youth had come to the farm requesting money. McKay suggested that he start work by hoeing potatoes. The youth said he had enough of his own work to do. He pointed a .22 at McKay, shot him and took \$11.00. Hugh McKay died on route to the Portage Hospital.

November Was A Busy Month...

On November 6, 1930, R.C.M.P. Officer Joseph Pirt was found guilty of manslaughter, after he shot and killed Sophie Light at the Inter-Provincial picnic at Roblin on September 1. During testimony it was stated that Pirt had a beer with a Yorkton constable who was on duty at 11 a.m. Later Pirt helped three American tourists drink a bottle of Scotch three-quarters of a mile from the picnic. The Americans did not believe that Mounties were good shots so Pirt pointed his revolver at a tin can some thirty yards away and shot and hit it. He reloaded the empty chamber and then drank 1/2 of

a 40 oz. bottle of Black and White Whiskey. Pirt was now severely intoxicated. E.J. Light of Ipswich, South Dakota and Andrew Virnig of Harvey, South Dakota testified that they had seen Pirt point his loaded revolver at Mrs. Light and had also seen fellow tourist, R.J. Wallis, pushing the revolver down from the pointed position. Wallis had pushed the gun down twice when it was pointed at Mrs. Light. Mrs. Light said, "You wouldn't shoot me, would you?" Pirt shot her and then said, "She just got what was coming to her." Pirt was sentenced to prison for ten years.

On November 13, 1930 Mike Burdeny of Ethelbert and Steve Burtiak of Ashville were sentenced to three years imprisonment and twenty lashes. Each had appeared before Magistrate Hawkins. The Birch River Hotel was held up early Friday morning on November 7. Using a revolver Burdeny and Burtiak took \$43.65 from Chin Fook and escaped on an east bound train. They were apprehended by provincial police when they reached Bowsman. Mr. C.S.A. Rogers, K.C. prosecuting for the Crown asked for penitentiary sentences and lashes as he felt hold-ups and crimes of violence should be stopped with vigor and determination. With the approach of a predicated hard winter, it should be shown that theft with violence would not be tolerated or excused in any grounds no matter what the circumstances of those who commit the crime. Magistrate Hawkins stated that, "You have been convicted of the crime of robbery with violence and under provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada, you are liable for imprisonment for life and be whipped. There can be no justification for a crime of this nature and in the present case I see no extenuating circumstances which would warrant any leniency. You were not driven to stealing by want of destitution as is sometimes stated to be the motif for cases of theft."



Magistrate Robert Hawkins...Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

Jail Break In Dauphin...July 30, 1931

There was a great deal of excitement in Dauphin. Three men, Joseph Kraft and Harvey Jones, both twenty-two years old from Winnipeg and John Riordon, twenty-seven years old from Vancouver were arrested and held in the Dauphin Gaol after robbing John Gardner's Store. Jones and Riordon received penitentiary sentences and were waiting for an appeal. Shortly after eight o'clock on Tuesday morning, during the absence of a guard, the three men managed to secure a hatchet and break the lock on the cell door and walk out through the office. Neighbours noted the escape and the course taken and alarm was given to Jack Scott.

The Provincial Police, under the direction of Sergeant Rentor, gave chase and spread the news of the escape to the townspeople. The net closed in on the fugitives and they were soon enclosed in a wooded area north of the town park. The fire siren was sounded to call together a posse of volunteers. A large number of citizens re-



John Gardner's Store... Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

sponded to the scene of the hiding place.

One of the escaped men was forced from cover and ran into the arms of William Baird who captured him and held him in an arm lock until help came. The other two fugitives were in a panic and dashed for the river. Constables Harpell and Eitwyn had been anticipating a river escape and had been waiting in waist deep water for most of the evening. Imagine the sight of the prisoners with their hands held high backing away from the policemen with their

drawn 45s. Within twelve hours the three fugitives were recaptured and were once again in a jail cell.

Seven Years and Twenty Lashes For Bandit...

On September 14, 1931, the elevator manager at Ashville, Ross Green, was held up, tied to a chair and deliberately wounded. Within 36 hours, Metro Lewitski and Nicholas Demchuk were picked up and charged. O.V. N. Farrell prosecuted for the Crown and showed that Lewitski was a hardened criminal with a record of five convictions dating back to 1919 in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. He pointed out that Lewitski

was callous in the nature of the deliberate wounding and that he despised the law. He was portrayed as a thug who would stop at nothing to attain his ends, and to impose a severe sentence that would include the lash. Lewitski had no lawyer for his defence and made his own plea, trying to show his innocence and to deflect the blame on the vicious wickedness of his companion who had forced him to do this deed.

J. N. McFadden, defending Demchuk, showed how ridiculous this was, calling three witnesses from Gilbert Plains and also Demchuk's neighbours who all gave sincere testimony. There were also letters from former employers. Judge Bonnycastle sentenced Lewitski to seven years of hard labour and twenty strokes of the lash. Since the men were in the Dauphin Gaol, Lewitski made threats indicating the extinction of Demchuk and his wife as soon as he got out of prison. Bonnycastle stated that he needed more time to consider the case and remanded the case until Saturday morning. At that time Demchuk was sentenced to three and a half years of hard labour.

As a side note, in conversation with Lynn Orr, a niece of Ross Green, she said that her uncle Ross was



J. N. McFadden, Q. C. - photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

shot in the leg and when he retired, he kept the chair that he was tied up in. Long time resident of Ashville, Roy Waldorf, stated that Green managed to crawl out of the elevator office. As he was crawling through the bush toward his house he was shouting for help. Eventually someone heard him and summoned for assistance and the authorities.

That same year, at the Valley River Station, eight miles north from Dauphin, the elevator of the United Grain Growers was entered and the safe weighing 325 pounds was removed. Metro Wonotowy, the manager, reported that there was no cash in the safe, however, there were many valuable papers. The safe was taken away by an automobile or by a light truck. During that same time period A.A. Hoy's blacksmith shop was broken into in Dauphin and an acetylene welding outfit was taken. It was left at the adjoining property as the thieves had not taken the cutting torch so the machine was of no use to them.

The Unsolved Murder Of A Forest Ranger At The Deep Lake Station...

What might compel someone to kill Lawrence Lees, a forest ranger of the Riding Mountain National Park? In talking to some local residents there are many theories on the murder. One local stated that one person many years later on his death bed alluded to killing the ranger. Someone else said that a rifle was located in Ottawa some thirty years after the murder and that the ballistics matched the bullet of the murder weapon. By the time all of the owners were traced, the original rifle's owner had already died. All of the evidence pointed to revenge.

The lead story of the July 15, 1932 edition of the Winnipeg Free Press was of the murder. R.C.M.P. were assembled from all of the northwestern section of Manitoba to launch an intensive manhunt for the murderer or murderers of Lawrence Lees and of the assailant of his wife of five weeks who Thursday night was in the Shoal Lake Hospital. Rosburn, which is located fourteen miles south of the Riding Mountain had never experienced such a tragedy. Everyone in the small community knew the couple. Mrs. Lees, formerly Martese Burnette, was from Rosburn while Mr. Lees was from Neepawa.

The forest ranger was killed by a bullet from a 30-315 calibre rifle from a distance of less than one hundred feet. The assassin chose his spot carefully and deliberately in the garden which was fenced in. He rested his rifle on the fence and waited until the forest ranger appeared in his sights through the kitchen window. The bullet entered above the left clavicle severing the spine and caused instant death. The bullet then went through the house and apparently went through the front room window. Mrs. Lees



Lawrence Lees...Photo courtesy of the RMNP.

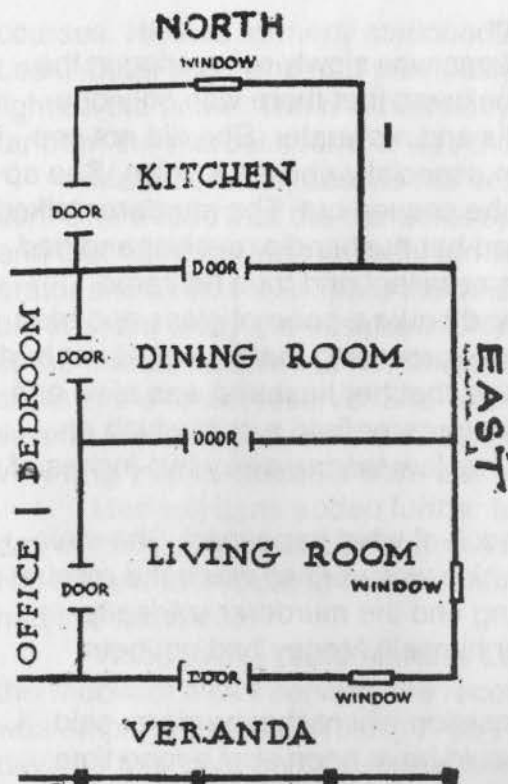


Diagram of the Ranger's house...

who barely weighed over one hundred pounds tried to get help on the telephone. The telephone line was a ranger line which ran to Clear Lake. She managed to rouse one or two rangers on the line with an incoherent appeal for help.

"Lawrence is shot," one of the rangers thought he heard her say. Her appeal ended in a scream. One story said that at that moment she was attacked by those who had murdered her husband and that one or two men entered the house and shot her at short range while another story said that she was grasping her husband's revolver and fired through the window at an assailant and then phoned for help.

Mrs. Lees was shot through the lower jaw and a portion of her face was carried away by the force of a bullet. Before she lost consciousness, Mrs. Lees stated that she saw a man in blue overalls.

All day long doctors endeavoured to build up her strength so that she could be moved to a hospital. Her mother, Mrs. Greg Eisen and neighbours from Rosssburn did what

they could to comfort Martese while the police tramped through the house.

By midnight, Thursday, no arrests had been made. Lees made numerous enemies because he was very strict with the rules. The Ruthenians believed that he favoured the Anglo-Saxons and that he picked on them. On several occasions the roads that Lees travelled were blocked by big rocks, however, it was not believed that any threats were made directly to him. If forest fires occurred that Lees believed to have been set on purpose, he would not hire locals to put the fire out. It was reported that the previous fall, one of the rangers was attacked by two men and was slugged over the head and knocked unconscious as he tried to arrest them.

There were also stories that the assailant was somebody who knew the habits of the ranger well. He evidently knew that the couple was newly married and that they would have something to eat before retiring for the night.

The nearest neighbour was a good half mile to the south and across a deep ravine. The R.C.M.P. officer in charge was Staff Sergeant G. A. Renton from Dauphin and assisting him were three constables from Dauphin, one from Rosssburn, two from Minnedosa, and two from Clear Lake. Guarding the house were Constables W. Whitnorth and J.E. Wilmot of Dauphin and W.A. Gill of Russell.

Dr. J.W. Evans from Russell was the first medical doctor and later Dr. S. Valsrub of Rosssburn was called. The nurse was Marion Day who was a close friend of the Lees. It was not until seven p.m. that Mrs. Lees was taken by automobile to the Shoal Lake Hospital. The preliminary inquest into Lawrence Lees death was held at Rosssburn on Thursday night and the body was released for burial in Neepawa. The

body left Rossburn at ten o'clock on Friday morning.

As the search went on for the killer, Martse Lees was slowly recovering in the hospital. She shed some light on the murder. She believed that there was only one man and that he was fairly tall, wearing blue overalls and a sweater. She did not see his face but there was something familiar about him especially about his voice. She apparently had quite a conversation with him before she passed out. The murderer talked to her through the window of the front room. She had her husband's revolver and had apparently fired a shot at what she thought was the assailant and then he came around the corner to the window on the west side and broke a pane of glass and tried to persuade Martese to hand over the revolver to him, promising that he would not hurt her if she complied. At this time, Martese still believed that her husband was alive and went over to the telephone. As she was talking, the murderer fired a shot which entered the back of her neck and passed out through her jaw tearing away two inches of jaw-bone and flesh.

From that time Martese did not remember much of what happened. She maintained that both front and rear doors were locked which was verified when the rescue party arrived. Some papers and a diary were missing and the murderer evidently forced his way in and left by the door locking it after himself. Money had not been taken.

Martese also recalled a portion of the conversation where the murderer said, "I had good reason for shooting your husband, he should have been shot a long time ago." When Martese had regained consciousness she thought that her husband was still alive.

On the second day of the man hunt there were police on horseback, in cars, and on foot searching the countryside. The police were checking up on individuals living roughly twenty miles along the south boundary of the park in an area where there were poor roads and trails. They were also trying to locate the rifle. Every house was visited and everyone was questioned. One of the rangers who had worked with Lees for four years was quoted as saying, "I hope when we locate whoever was responsible he puts up a fight. There will be no need for a trial." Lawrence Gandza, who now lives in Dauphin and whose parents farmed only three miles from the ranger station, recalled police coming to their house and asking to see their rifles.

On July 19, the fifth day of the hunt for the murderer, there was little new evidence. Ed Harris was the first man at the scene and found the doors locked. Martese Lees called out to break the door down. She was shot through the rear window yet the window was not broken but there was a hole in the screen. The natural inference was that the window was up, the murderer removed the screen, made his entrance, took the papers and exited locking the door behind him. To add to the problems of the man-hunt, there was a drenching rain which made the hill roads impassable and the search continued on foot.

There were many rumors in the area. A man in a military uniform was seen and that the Lord Strathcona Horse were on the job, however it turned out to be someone on furlough. Another rumor was that a Ukrainian Chicago gangster was in the hills. The general impression was that the guilty party was a younger member of the community, however there was silence among the locals.

Constable Alcock, R.C.M.P., had arrived from Regina where he was taking

courses. He was formerly stationed at Rossburn and was a close personal friend of Lees. Other men who had previously worked in the community were brought in to shed light on the crime. The rifle had not yet been found and since there was quicksand not far from the murder scene, it was thought that the rifle was disposed of there.

Martese Lees, despite her serious face injuries, was trying to add more information. She added that the murderer spoke quite good English and had a bit of an accent, and that his voice was vaguely familiar, however, since she was once a telephone operator she could have heard the voice before. She screamed and did everything possible to scare away the assailant. She also added that she had been frightened the day of the murder and asked her husband to strap on his revolver to investigate some shots in the forest reserve. She also stated that Lawrence was a man who did not believe in firearms and that he was passionately fond of all living animals and that he got very angry when animals were wantonly destroyed.

Martese Lees added further testimony. Sometime on Wednesday afternoon, the day of the murder, Lees apprehended the criminal in a violation of park restrictions. Her statement indicated that the murderer said to her, "Give me that gun your husband had this afternoon."

Through the years Martese Lees had numerous operations on her face and as the widow of a civil servant she received \$40.00 a month. She finally recovered and was employed by the Weekly Free Press. The murderer was never apprehended. Today, the tour boat on Clear Lake is named the Martese.

Homebrew...

The September 6, 1934 edition of the Minnedosa Tribune indicated that John Sefraniuk, from the Mountain Road District was found guilty in a charge of having mash in his possession suitable for the manufacture of spirits when he appeared before Magistrate Fleming. Sefraniuk was given until September 21 to raise money for his fine. Failure to do so would result in five months of jail time in Portage La Prairie. The farm had been raided several times in the past ten years, however, recently, the RCMP discovered a false wall at the rear of the barn. They found a concealed entrance at the end of one of the mangers in the horse stable. In a narrow passage behind the wall, police found the still and the mash. W.G. Ferguson prosecuted the case under the Dominion Exercises Act. No one appeared for the accused.

Skeleton Found In Keld...

In the September 13, 1934 edition, there was a headline, "Skeleton Found Suspended In A Tree Near Keld". George and Oliver Tucker, two young men from the Spruce Creek District, made a gruesome discovery when they were clearing land rented by their father. George was thirsty so he went to the Vermillion River to get a drink when he noticed the grim object hanging in a tree. Police were notified and in the absence of Dr. G. Rogers of Dauphin, Dr. L. Gendreau from Ste. Rose was summoned on Sunday. An envelope was found on the dead man's clothing with a name, Mike Jumaga, but there was no address. The writing was identified by Mrs. Jumaga, who lived with her mother six miles away. Mrs. Jumaga also recognized the clothing and valise. Mrs. Jumaga stated that her husband had left a year ago last May and that he left on

bad terms. It was believed that he had taken his life that same day. He used wire from a near-by fence to hang himself. Jumaga was 37 years old and was born in Austria of Ukrainian parents. He did not live with his wife but only came to see her occasionally and had gone to the U.S. in 1932. He returned in 1933, quarreled with his wife, who charged him with non-support of her and her three children. There was no inquest.

Gang Arrested...

A group of men were arrested in September 30, 1934 and were believed to have been responsible for robberies in Roblin, Inglis, Shell Valley and Gilbert Plains. Bill Gorda of Inglis, ringleader, was arrested earlier in the week along with four younger companions. Gorda had a previous record and had been released from doing time in Stony Mountain. The Western Chain Store operated by Sam Silvert and William Nowasad's Shop had been robbed on September 13. A quantity of goods and cash were taken, however, investigation by the Dauphin RCMP led to the recovery of the money and merchandise as well as the arrest of two more men the following day. On July 13, Cameron's General Store in Gilbert Plains was broken into as well as Mrs. J. A. McDonald's car was stolen and believed to have been used to haul away the loot. The badly damaged car was later found near Inglis. The other men involved were Jas. Polanko, Ted Gorda, Eli Lepesco, Bill Sadoway, Vic Graft, Geo. Hartly, Alec Titian and John Sadoway. Magistrate Little sentenced eight of the ten men. Bill Gorda elected to have trial by jury on September 28, and John Potenko was remanded on bail for a trial on September 27.

John Sadoway received three years in Stony Mountain. Receiving hard labour and jail time in Dauphin were Ted Gorda-18 months, Alec Titian, 15 months, Bill Sadoway-12 months, Vic Graft-9 months, John Potenko got a two year suspended sentence and Fred Gorda was fined \$25.00.

On October 30, William Gorda went on trial for breaking, entering and theft from the Cameron Store. There were seventeen witnesses and 30 exhibits. On October 25, Judge Bonnycastle sentenced Gorda to three years on each charge. He pleaded guilty to three offences: \$343.95 taken from Cameron's, a stolen car and \$62.70 of goods and \$16.67 cash from Sam Silvert.

High Speed Chase and Arrests in Minnedosa...

On September 20, 1934, an exciting two mile chase ended abruptly on Minnedosa's Main Street at Hugh Bassey's corner, early Tuesday afternoon when two men were taken into custody by Constable C.S. Speer and K. Teach of the local RCMP, when the car in which the men were trying to escape overturned as they tried to turn the corner at a high speed. The two men, Adolph Andreychuk and Joseph Losoff escaped from the Yorkton jail. When the men were picked up by police and placed under arrest, one man was unconscious and the other one was suffering from shock and injuries to his ribs. They were taken to Lady Minto Hospital where they received treatment. They were reported to be progressing favourably but would be confined to bed for a few days. They were under police custody.

The two men were alleged to have broken into the Searle Elevator at Erickson Monday evening for the second time in two days where they robbed the safe of a small

amount of money. They later stole a car owned by John Anderson, Erickson lumberman, and they headed toward Minnedosa. Mr. Anderson heard them take the car and immediately notified police, who headed out to meet the thieves. The police met the thieves two miles north of Minnedosa on Provincial Highway No. 4. The police turned around and gave chase which resulted in the capture of the thieves. Three other robberies committed during the weekend at Erickson were also being laid to these two men. They were also suspected of numerous other robberies in the surrounding area. The two men escaped from Yorkton and had been at large since early in August.

Andreychuk was later convicted of seven charges of breaking and entering and one charge of stealing a truck. He was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary on each charge and the sentence to be served concurrently. Losoff was convicted of six charges of breaking and entering and one charge of stealing a truck. He also got the same sentence. The men appeared before Magistrate Fleming at Erickson. One charge of entering the post office at Sandy Lake was dropped. Losoff requested that the Magistrate reduce the number of days for his prison sentence by the number of days that he spent at the hospital, but Magistrate Fleming did not grant that request. George E. Eakins, K. C. represented the Crown.

Later that month, Don Scarr, transient, who had a police record extending over twenty years appeared before Magistrate Fleming and was sentenced to six months in the Portage Gaol. Scarr pleaded guilty to theft of a sum of money from the home of Mrs. E. Baily two months ago. Scarr was arrested in Saskatoon and Constable Ken Trench went on Monday and escorted him back to town Wednesday morning.

Murder Near Swan River...

The headlines in the Dauphin Herald on October 1935 announced that "Constable J.G. Shaw Local RCMP Is Shot To Death". Thirty eight year old Constable John Shaw was a member of the Dauphin RCMP. He had been in Dauphin for little over two years. Shortly before his death he was transferred for a three week period to Swan River. Shaw was a veteran of World War I and carried no less than eighteen scars as evidence. Shaw was pleasant with a likeable disposition and had many friends. He was engaged to be married to Miss Jay Rzesnoski of Dauphin. They were planning to get married toward Christmas. Shaw was survived by his mother who still lived in England.

The bodies of Constable J.G. Shaw and Constable William Wainright of Benito were found Monday morning in a bush forty feet from the highway between Pelly and Arran, Saskatchewan. The murders were committed sometime after 5:00 a.m. Saturday morning and were not discovered until 8:15 on Monday morning. The bodies of the men were found by a local farmer, John Kollenchuk, who was driving a team of horses and a plough. When they reached a spot near where the bodies were, the smell of fresh blood spooked the horses and they were very nervous. The farmer went to investigate and found the bodies. Had the bodies been moved further into the bush they probably would not have been found until spring. The bodies were shot and hatched to death.

On October 5, Constable William Wainright, the town constable for the village of Benito, Manitoba and his partner, Constable John G. Shaw of the Swan River RCMP detachment, stopped four young Russian Doukhobors driving a 1935 coach. They

were Joe Posnikoff, John Kalmakoff, Pete Woiken and Paul Bogarra. The policemen had stopped the four young men for having an unlicensed vehicle. After being stopped briefly, the four young men were allowed to continue. Several hours later the two policemen thought that there was a possibility that the four may have been involved in a recent robbery in Pelly, Saskatchewan.

At 4:00 a.m. on October 5, the two police officers located the car and its occupants in Arran, Saskatchewan. The young men were dropping off two girls from a dance. Paul Bogarra was released but the other three males were put into the cruiser car without being searched. While Constable Shaw drove, one of the young males pulled a knife and attacked Constable Wainright, slashing his head and neck. Constable Wainright was eventually overpowered and was shot in the eye with his own .38 calibre revolver. Constable Shaw was shot in the back of his head with a .32 calibre revolver. The car ended up in the ditch and the bodies of the two policemen were dragged into the slough.

By the afternoon of October 7th headlines across the western provinces indicated the severity of the crime and the hunt for the murderers. The fugitives would end up near Banff where Peter Woykim and John Kalmankoff were captured after an all night hunt. Both were wounded after an encounter with a posse. The two men were killed by the sure shots from a veteran game warden, William Neish. Both fugitives were brought to a hospital in Banff and were reported to be in critical condition. Both succumbed to their injuries later that day.

The third man, Joe Posnikoff, was killed earlier that night under a barrage of gunfire from police. There had been a gun battle where Sgt. Thomas Wallace and Cst. George Harrison were gunned down by the three young farmers. Posnikoff was shot by Cst. G. Coombe who observed movement in the bushes, turned his flashlight towards the sound and shot him. Meanwhile, the two remaining fugitives sped off into the night. In the end, four policemen and three young farmers from rural Saskatchewan were dead.

Cash In A Culvert...

The Mossey River Municipal Office, the C.N.R. Station at Sifton as well as J.J. Crowe's Office in Dauphin were all broken into. At Mossey River the loss was \$300.00 cash. The valuable securities that were stolen were in the hands of the RCMP within two days. The securities were found in a culvert by the side of the highway near Fork River by some children. The securities evidently had been discarded by the thieves as they were too risky to negotiate for cash.

The Sifton C.N.R. Station was entered by a window after a catch on the door had been forced. Some attempt was made to open the safe. The station agent, W.S. McPhedrain and his family were sleeping in the adjoining room so the thieves did not want to make too much noise. According to McPhedrain's daughter, Lavina Shaw, she recalled that her grandfather heard some commotion downstairs but thought that it was his son, the station agent, putting in some overtime. The burglars got the safe out and tried to blow it up. Some tools were taken from a tool shed. At J.J. Crowe's, the safe was broken into but there was no cash or valuables in it.

Grain Theft...

In the November 25, 1937 Dauphin Herald, it was reported that "Three Young Men Get Jail Terms For Grain Theft." Three young men from Sifton were given jail terms and a fourth was released on a suspended sentence when they pleaded guilty to theft of grain before Magistrate Little in Dauphin Police Court. Mike Yaceniuk, 26, who in the Court's opinion was the ringleader, was sentenced to six months jail time with hard labour. John Halowka and Mike Kaczkoski, both 23 years of age, were given three month terms. Walter Yaceniuk, 18, was released with a suspended sentence, because the Magistrate felt he had been influenced by the older members of the group. The young men had committed a series of thefts extending over a period of several days before being apprehended by the RCMP. The farmers who were victimized were A.J. Boughen, 41 bushels of wheat, Joseph Bonk, 6 bushels, George Spencer, 10 bushels, Peter Hurman, 8 bushels, and Harvey Todoruk, 13 bushels of rye. The total value was \$86.00.

Lawyer A. Katz and a Murder In Pine River...

Mike Yatskowski was known to have left Pine River about August 4, 1937 and was believed to have been working at the harvest fields around Portage La Prairie since that time. He returned to Pine River by C.N.R. early Saturday afternoon and was arrested within an hour of his arrival. Apparently he knew nothing of the discovery of his father-in-law, Peter Senyk, whose body was found in a shallow grave near his farm. In April, Yatskowski and his young wife left Senyk's house where they had resided since their marriage the previous year. A quarrel between Yatskowski and Senyk had occurred. Senyk's wife and her two young children had also left after the squabble. Senyk had lived alone since then. Senyk had expressed the fear of being robbed after selling two oxen for \$70. Because of the fear of robbery he had deposited the money in a bank in Pine River.

On December 2, 1937, Mike Yatskowski of Pine River was committed for trial at the Spring Assizes in Dauphin. Yatskowski, who was twenty two years old was charged with the murder of his father-in-law, Peter Senyk, aged forty nine. Magistrate Thomas Little presided at the hearing which opened in Winnipeg the previous Saturday, continued in Pine River on Tuesday and concluded in Dauphin on Friday. C.S.A. Rogers,

K.C., appeared for the Crown and Alex Katz represented the accused.

Constable C.C. Klapcecki testified that a search had been made for Senyk on August 8, following reports of his disappearance. Four days later he visited Senyk's home six miles north west of the village of Pine River and after prying open the locked door found a cup, saucer, knife, and bread and butter still on the table. Klapcecki indicated that the bread was very dry. In the adjoining bedroom he discovered a stained shirt rolled up under a pillow. At the opening of the hearing in Winnipeg, Dr. Daniel Nicholson, pathologist, testified that the stains on the shirt were the blood of a human being. On Tuesday, at the Pine River hearing, Mrs. Nellie Senyk, wife of the murdered man and Mike Urbanowski, another son-in-law, identified that the shirt belonged to Yatskowski.

Constable E.L.D. McDougall told the court that on August 17, that while search-

ing Yatskowski's home, he found another shirt hanging on the wall. This second shirt was identified at Pine River by Mrs. Senyk and her daughter Louise as belonging to the dead man. Constable McDougall also stated that he found several keys and a pair of shoes on Yatskowski's premises. On return to Senyk's house he discovered that one key fitted a door leading off the kitchen, while another fitted the drawer of the sewing machine. The shoes were identified by Steve Senyk at Pine River as having been worn by the accused during the latter part of July. Dr. Nicholson had also previously testified that one of the shoes showed a stain of human blood.

Evidence as to the discovery of Senyk's body was given by Constable Wm. Mckayseff, who stated that while searching in a ravine near Senyk's home on August 18 in company with three other constables, he noticed small chunks of fresh earth in a clump of willows. Further examination revealed that at that spot the earth had been cut. Removal of a few shovelfuls of earth disclosed Senyk's body. Near the grave, a butt of a .22 rifle, an axe, and an overall smock were also found. In a nearby locked granary there was a dirt covered spade and a pair of stained overall pants.

Dr. Nicholson testified that the hair found on the axe and smock located near the grave was of the same texture as the sample of hair taken from Senyk's head during a post mortem exam. Human blood had caused the stains on the overall pants which were identified by E. McFarlene, a Pine River storekeeper, as a pair that he sold to Senyk.

Constable Klapcecki told court that when Yatskowski was arrested in Pine River on September 18, he had five keys in his possession, two of which fitted the padlock on Senyk's house and granary while the third fit the dead man's trunk.

Dr. R.E. Dicks, performed the post mortem examination declared that the cause of death was a fracture at the base of the skull, together with a cerebral hemorrhage. Scars on his head indicated that he had been struck with a blunt instrument while behind his left ear was a puncture which could have been caused by a blow from the corner of an axe or some other sharp weapon. Dr. Dicks was of the opinion that Senyk had been dead about three weeks when he was found. The cold moist earth where the body was buried had prevented rapid decomposition.

The Crown also entered as an exhibit, a certificate from police court by Magistrate T.W. Neelands in which Yatskowski was ordered to pay the court costs of an assault charge against Senyk. The .22 rifle butt was also entered as evidence and was identified by Reginald Cole of Pine River who had loaned it to Yatskowski about the middle of July. Twenty nine witnesses were heard during the three preliminary hearings.

The court case was held in March, 1938 in Dauphin. Mary Preseski, who lived on a neighbouring farm, testified that she had last seen Senyk on the morning of July 23 when he spent two or three hours shopping for a scythe. Mrs. Willam Yatskowski, sister-in-law, saw Senyk around 8:00 p.m. of the same day walking on his way to the mill. Olie Johnson, fire patrolman for the Pine River area, told Court that he visited the Senyk farm every day from July 23 to August 19 to warn Senyk of a ground fire that was burning on his farm. On July 28 he left a note on the door latch. It remained for five days but was not there on the sixth day. Mrs. Senyk also testified, stating that she did not get along with her husband and that she left her husband shortly when he and Yatskowski had a quarrel. She later found out that her husband was missing and that

Mike Yatskowski came to see her and said, "Mother, when are you going home?" "To what home can I go to, I have no home." Mike replied, "You can go home. He is not there. I killed him."

According to testimony the trouble had started with her husband fourteen years ago. He had a bad temper and would often give his kids a licking. The last argument had started when Olga wanted to scrub the floor of the kitchen but Senyk wouldn't let his daughter do it. Senyk hit her. When Yatskowski came home and heard about the incident he confronted Senyk and gave him a good licking.

Yatskowski then took the stand and testified that the trouble started after the floor incident. The older man told Yatskowski that if he wanted a licking he would give it to him. Senyk proceeded to pick up an axe handle and declared that he would kill the whole family. Yatskowski took away the axe handle and struck Senyk three times with his fist. After Senyk laid charges, Yatskowski said they became friends and would talk and have a smoke together. Yatskowski said that Senyk got angry all the time and that he would walk away to avoid trouble. Yatskowski said that he and his wife moved away in April because they couldn't stand Senyk's fits of anger. His wife packed away all of their belongings in a trunk before they moved and that he was unaware that some of Senyk's keys were taken. Yatskowski also testified that he had found keys on No. 6 highway on his way to Pine River on August 4, the same day that he left to seek work harvesting in other parts of the province. He had last seen Senyk at McFarlene's Store in Pine River on July 25 where they enjoyed a smoke together and that he had learned of Senyk's disappearance when he returned a month and a half later.

After all the witnesses were called, Justice Adamson occupied the entire afternoon delivering the charge to the jury. The members of the jury were Lloyd Blair, Robert Cochrane, Lorne Smith, Peter Doertier, E.A. Marcroft and foreman H.W. Hazell. Adamson carefully reviewed the testimony given by the twenty five witnesses and pointed out that the majority of it was circumstantial. The only piece of direct evidence was given by Mrs. Nellie Senyk when she testified that the accused told her that he had killed her husband. The conversation had taken place at the end of July. Yatskowski's own version given in court was that he had said he would kill Senyk if he caused her any trouble when she returned home. Yatskowski also testified that the blood on a handkerchief was from a cut on his hand during harvesting and the blood on his shoes was the result of frequent nosebleeds. After four hours of deliberation the jury returned the verdict of "Not Guilty".

It was stated in the Dauphin Herald that Alex Katz was brilliant in the defense of Yatskowski. Katz aroused public interest early in the proceedings by "Masterly marshalling of an array of evidence, apparently insignificant in itself, but which taken into consideration as a whole was well calculated to offset the chiefly circumstantial evidence presented by the prosecution." Katz had grown up and received his education at Ethelbert.

Katz suggested that the rifle butt that had been left near the grave indicated someone wanted suspicion to point to Yatskowski. The presence of the axe, rubbers and smock near the grave suggested they wanted the body to be discovered. Had Yatskowski killed Senyk he wouldn't have left a shirt in Senyk's house nor carried Senyk's keys in his presence. It was Katz's opinion that the blood stained shirt was a plant while finding the keys on the highway was a coincidence.

Throughout the whole trial Yatskowski was unperturbed even on cross-examination. He walked out a free man for the first time since September 18 and returned to his wife and family. He had not yet seen their youngest child born a week earlier. In a side note Mike Senyk, former Pine River youth and son of the murdered Senyk, pleaded guilty to a charge of horse and harness stealing. He was sentenced to 12 months of hard labour. The crime was committed two years ago but Mike Senyk was not apprehended until the previous month in Regina.



Dauphin Coffee Group in 1937. Some citizens who were noted in this chapter include: Judge Thomas Little, (top row, second on the left), J.N. McFadden, second row, first on left, bowler hat), Alex Katz, (second row, fourth going left to right, also see insert), Dr. Rodgers, (front row second on left), and Robert Hawkins. (front row, right, next to man holding "Good Luck Tony" sign)

Petty Theft and Homebrew...

In the April 7 edition of the Dauphin Herald, Sam Marak, a Garland farmer, with two previous theft convictions was sentenced to nine months of hard labour when he pleaded guilty to a charge of breaking and entering and theft of a pocket watch valued at \$15.00 from William Burla of Ethelbert. Marak gained entrance to Burla's house on a Friday morning by breaking a window and took the watch off the table while Burla was working. RCMP at Ethelbert were notified and arrested Marak at Garland the following day. He had the watch in his possession. Marak had received six months in 1936 for theft of a magneto and seven days in 1933 for petty theft. Judge Little pointed out that the sentence might seem harsh but the circumstances were such that he could not

overlook it.

In the same week, Andrew Budalowski of the Rural Municipality of Ethelbert was found guilty in police court of having mash suitable for the manufacture of spirits in his possession without a government license and fined \$500 and costs with six months of hard labour. In default of payment of the fine, an additional six months would be imposed. J.N. McFadden, acting for the accused, entered a strong plea for leniency and protested vigorously against certain aspects of the law and foolish red tape that bound the hands of the police, preventing the use of common sense. Judge Little said that his hands were bound by the Exercise Act and even though the sentence was a bit stiff he had to follow the letter of the law and the minimum penalty provided for in second offence cases.

On April 28, Harry Fedor was facing charges of robbing Leo Blaschuk of \$170.00. Fedor, who claimed that he was from British Columbia, was convicted and sentenced to three years in a penitentiary by Judge A.L. Bonnycastle. Following a drinking bout in Dauphin, Blaschuk accepted what he thought was a free and friendly ride to his home in Swan River. A few miles from Dauphin near Ashville, he was dropped off but managed to get the license of the car. RCMP spotted the car in Winnipeg and arrested Fedor and his two accomplices and brought them to Dauphin for trial. W. Molinski, got three months and Agnus Bjarnsiuk was not charged.

A Home Invasion In Sifton...

Even though these home invasions took place several year's apart, I have included them together as there is a pattern. During these years, it seemed that old age pensioners were a target, and police suspected that the crimes were committed by the same people who had first hand knowledge of the country and its inhabitants. A probable assumption is that the same gang were involved in both escapades.

On June 20, 1935, The Dauphin Herald reported the story, "Robbers Beat Up Sifton Couple." There was a robbery using violence at the home of Roman Mazurek, the town constable of Sifton. Shortly after midnight on Saturday morning, Mr. and Mrs. Mazurek were sleeping in their house. The house was one big room with the basic necessities which included several day beds. The robbers threw a large stone through the east window and after gaining admittance, one grabbed Mr. Mazurek and the other held Mrs. Mazurek. They demanded money or else both would be killed. Mr. Mazurek put up a fight and did not give up until he was badly beaten. The thugs repeatedly hit him with the stone that they had used to break the window. Mr. Mazurek finally told them they would find some money in a trunk.

Using a flashlight the thugs found \$3.00, a shotgun and Mrs. Mazurek's bank book. Mr. Mazurek regained consciousness shortly after the robbery and was able to notify neighbours who in turn phoned the R.C.M.P. in Dauphin. Mr. And Mrs. Mazurek were taken to the Dauphin Hospital where Mr. Mazurek was admitted in critical condition with severe head bruises, four broken ribs and it was feared that he would not recover. Mrs. Mazurek was also in critical condition with internal injuries, shock and injuries to one arm. In conversation with Olga Shymanski of Sifton, she noted that Mr. Mazurek was the town constable at Sifton for many years and was still acting in this capacity. Mazurek was a veteran and had war medals. He always proudly displayed

the medals and thought of himself as an important man, so someone suggested that he should be the town constable. One of his duties was to patrol Sifton after the nine o'clock curfew bell went and to check if there were any children roaming the streets. Olga used to stop and visit the old couple when she checked on her two cows nearby the Mazurek's residence.

At the time of the home invasion, Mr. Mazurek was 70 years old. No arrests had been made, however, it was suspected that this robbery was related to a string of similar violent robberies in the district. As to there being any money in the house, when Mazurek got out of the hospital, he took \$800.00 out of a hiding place in a hollowed fence gate post at the front of his yard. He died a few months later. One of his wishes was to be buried with his medals. The tradition was for the body to lay at rest in the house for three days, after which there was a gathering for a meal and the body was laid to rest at sundown with a service at the grave. There was a sudden panic when they tried to lower the coffin and the grave was not long enough. The coffin stood on end. Men were quickly summoned to dig a longer hole before it got dark to rectify the situation. Mrs. Mazurek died a few years later.

Murder In The Fishing River District...

Mrs. Anna Cottick, who lived near Sifton in the Fishing River district, was an excellent mid-wife and her skills were known for miles around. Because of her services it was known that there was a strong box at the house that held a fair amount of cash. In the early hours of Friday, May 13, 1938, eighty one year old Anna was brutally beaten to death on her farm in the Fishing River District. Less than twenty four hours later, there was a break in the case when one of the thugs was eating breakfast at a Gilbert Plains café and someone noticed blood on his shirt. Within twenty four hours of the murder, two young men were arrested and two days later three more men were picked up.

At 1:30 Friday morning a living room window at the home of Elko and Anna Cottick was smashed by two men who used a stone and entered through the window. One man fell over a chair and grabbed Cottick by the throat and threatened to kill him. Cottick pleaded that he had no money and putting up resistance started to yell for help. Meanwhile, a second invader, who had also entered through the window, rushed into the kitchen where Anna Cottick was asleep on another bed, grabbed her, pulled her from her bed and proceeded to throw her about the kitchen. Finally beating the aged woman into submission, the two men opened a large wooden store box and took \$20.00 that was hidden in a small compartment.

Elko and Anna Cottick were then stuffed into a small 2' x 4' cellar. When Elko recovered, he opened the trap door and dragged his wife with him unto the bed in the living room where they were discovered at 7:00 a.m. by their fourteen year old grandson who ran back to his father's house and summoned the police. Anna Cottick died on the way to the Dauphin Hospital and her body was brought back to the scene of the crime.

Police believed that one of the suspects had cut himself on the broken glass as there were bloodstains down the outside wall and a small piece of flesh was adhered to the window casing. A .32 calibre bullet was also found embedded in the window sash but neither Elko nor the neighbours recalled hearing any shots.

Harry Joss, who lived one-half mile south of the Cottick farm, reported that he was walking home at about one o'clock in the morning when a car passed him going south. The car stopped, turned off the lights, and went then north.

When interviewed in the hospital, Elko stated that the two intruders were dressed in overalls and wore masks over their heads. They also spoke Ukrainian. One man was about six feet tall and the other was slender and much smaller. He was the man that attacked Elko.

Later that same night, some eight miles further, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Plesiuk, 81 and 80 years of age respectively, were also robbed and beaten by unknown assailants. There were three men, all wearing overalls and masks who demanded large amounts of money. Bill Plesiuk, Andrew's son, opened the door, was grabbed by his throat and beaten to the ground. He escaped and ran to his brother's house some one and a half miles away. The intruders used a beer bottle and caused abrasions to Andrew Plesiuk's head. Mrs. Plesiuk was also beaten but both escaped serious injuries. They were left unconscious on the floor.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Plesiuk were both in the hospital when the police brought five suspects who were arraigned on Coroner's Warrants and other prisoners from the jail in an identification parade. Although the police said that they learned of something in the identification parade, no charges were laid. At that time there were still four patrols combing the district. Police were able to make casts of some tire tracks and match them to a Model '29 Ford which was now at Police headquarters in Dauphin.

J.S.E.P. Jones, special finger print expert from the Winnipeg Criminal Investigation Bureau, reported that excellent fingerprints were obtained from some shattered glass where the intruders had entered. When police came to view the body of the deceased woman there were many friends and relatives present at the Cottick residence. There was a strange eerie silence that came over the house as police lifted the sheet that was covered Mrs. Cottick. The battered body was exposed showing raw welts and deep patches of blue bruises that spread from head to foot. The peoples' eyes tried to look at other things, men muttered under their breath and one tiny old lady raised her voice in a wailing chant.

On June 2, Peter Korzenowski, Bill Kanuka and Dan Prytula were formally charged with the murder of Mrs. Cottick by Magistrate T. Little. The facial expressions of the three men did not seem worried at all. They had Allan Katz as their lawyer, who had defended Yatskowski in the Pine River murder case. One other suspect was held on a Coroner's Warrant for three weeks and was released from custody. Another individual, William Michalyk, was still behind bars being held as a material witness.

At the inquiry into the death of Mrs. Anna Cottick on June 9, "We the jury, inquiring into the death of Mrs. Anna Cottick, are of the opinion that she came to her death in a car on the municipal road five miles south of her home as a result of a severe beating received at her home, administered by a person or persons unknown." The foreman of the jury was L.H. Hafenbrak. Other members were William Berkis, George Lloyd, T. Bednas, William Fychuk and John Wizniak.

Dr. Medd from Winnipegosis was the presiding coroner while Dr. Dicks performed the autopsy. He stated that Anna Cottick died from suffocation, due to collapse and puncture of her lungs caused by multiple fractures to her ribs. The rest of her body was bruised from head to toe and there was evidence that she was kicked. 91 year old

Elko, husband of Anna testified, still visibly showing the effects of the ordeal and at the mention of his dead wife seemed to have difficulty in keeping himself under control. A murmur of sympathy for the old man was shown from those present at the inquiry as he was helped to his chair by members of the R.C.M.P.



Dauphin Courthouse at the end of Main Street...Photo courtesy of the Fort Dauphin Museum.

At the Preliminary Hearing, William Michalyk stated that Dan Prytula told him to say that he slept at his, (William's) place the night of May 12 and

13. The only exhibit was a .32 calibre revolver owned by Prytula, who told Michalyk to hide it. A fired .32 bullet had been discovered embedded in the window sash at the scene of the crime. Witnesses also said that Prytula had a cut on his little finger on his left hand. Michalyk had stated that there was no cut the day before. John Kufley of the Mink Creek district told the court that Peter Korzenowski and Dan Prytula had come to his place looking for liquor and were feeling "pretty good". He had not seen Bill Kanuka but was told that he was in the Ford. During the testimony of the witnesses the facial expressions of the three suspects underwent various changes. Prytula scowled when Michalyk testified.

On July 7, wax casts of the tire marks at the scene of the crime were presented. Police followed car tracks through Fishing River, Ethelbert, Mink Creek and to Gilbert Plains where by the process of eliminating different types of cars, they arrived at Mrs. M. Shmon's, (Prytula's sister) house and arrested Prytula. They found \$38.00 in his pockets as well as three .32 calibre bullets. His boots were splattered with blood and there was also blood on his shirt. He also has a fresh cut on his finger.

At Kanuka's place, a .32 calibre revolver was found in a rock pile. The revolver was sent to Regina where ballistic tests matched the bullet to the sill. Also a Gillette safety razor similar to the one taken from Plesiuk's farm was found. Dr. E. Bottomley examined Prytula and found abrasions on his face similar to those made by hand clawing.

R. Scott of Stelck's Hardware Store testified that on November 16, 1936, he sold Prytula a box of .32 short centre fire revolver shells. Mrs. Shmon, Prytula's sister, stated that her brother lived with her for two months, paying her \$20.00 for board and room. She also stated that he was not working at the time. She noted that he also stayed with his brothers occasionally. Blake Evans of Gilbert Plains testified that he had sold a '28 or '29 Ford to Prytula in April receiving \$60.00 cash. Prytula had gotten the \$60.00 from someone else. Nick Demchuk, who operated a store twelve miles north of Gilbert Plains, sold five batteries to Prytula on May 12. Peter Korzenowski and his wife were with him. The two RCMP officers entered to the Crown as evidence conversations overheard between the accused in the cells by the aid of a microphone and

a tape recorder, which was a first in Manitoba court history. The police rigged the microphone in an air register. Michalyk was also brought back to testify that, "Dan asked me if I wanted to go to Kanuka's place and then rob Cottick's." He also went on to say that Prytula said, "This night I made good money. We robbed the Kotticks and Plesiuks and beat the Kotticks hard." The case was then scheduled for the fall Assizes.

At the trial, on Wednesday November 23, Korzenowski, Kanuka and Prytula were found guilty. The jury took four hours to deliberate and the accused were sentenced by Justice A. K. Dysart to be hanged between 12:30 to 8:00 on Thursday, the sixteenth day of February 1939. The recommendation of mercy for Kanuka was forwarded to the proper authorities as he was not in on the actual beating. Korzenowski and Prytula had nothing to say and Kanuka said he didn't deserve to be hanged as he hadn't intended to kill anyone. The Defense lawyers, Katz and McFadden, entered a plea of alcoholic dementia for Korzenowski and Prytula saying that they were so affected by drinking that they were incapable of knowing what they were about to do was dangerous. It was revealed that they had drank approximately 100 oz. of liquor.

At one a.m. on Thursday, February 16, Kanuka and Korzenowski dropped through the gallows and at 1:29, Prytula followed and so ended the lives of the men who used violence in their attempt to get some cash. Not all of the crimes were as violent as the ones perpetrated by Korzenowski, Kanuka and Prytula. In most cases, the accused were given very stiff penalties which included jail time as well as lashes. RCMP Officer Pirt must have considered himself extremely lucky on the leniency of the Justice system to only get ten years for his crime.

Epilogue...

The Parkland area, which is located around the confines of the Riding Mountain National Park, has a rich and varied history. Along with the historical background research of each chapter there were many personal stories garnered through interviews. Whether it's the stories of the Eastern European immigrants and their trials and tribulations in a new land, the rural and urban unemployed of the Great Depression who ended up in relief camps, the many business people who operated businesses in the rural areas, the importance of the wood industry, pilots honing their skills during times of peace and times of war, or even the events from the crimes in the area, each contributed a piece or a "slice" to the mosaic. It was indeed a pleasure to visit and to interview the many "living history books." Each person whom I interviewed became a new friend. Pouring over the micro-film of old newspapers and local history books also made me appreciate how these people overcame the difficulties of the various eras. Somehow they survived and their efforts made Canada a stronger and a better country.

Since food has always been an important aspect of my cultural background, I grew up listening to many slices of information along with the slices of my mother's homemade pies served to neighbours or relatives who stopped in for a visit to our farm on a Saturday night or a Sunday afternoon. Through their stories, they contributed to my interest in local history and they also were an importance piece of *A Slice Of The Parkland*. A special thank you to everyone.

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Diary of McKenzie Whitelock

Anglican Journal, Vol. 122, No. 3, May 1996

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THE
OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE
NAVY

WASHINGTON, D. C.
JANUARY 1, 1905

TO THE
HONORABLE
MEMBERS OF THE
NAVY

DEAR SIR:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 28th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours,
J. D. LONG

JOHN D. LONG
Secretary of the Navy

A Slice Of The Parkland

A Slice Of The Parkland is Ed's second book pertaining to the Parkland area. His first book, entitled *The Saw-Mill Boys, P.O.W.'s and Conscientious Objectors*, dealt with some of the sawmills in and around the Riding Mountain National Park, the prisoner of war camp at Whitewater Lake and the camps of the Mennonite Conscientious Objectors. *A Slice Of The Parkland* touches on the Eastern European contribution to the local history, the relief camps during the Great Depression, the disappearance of the country store, the wood industry, plane crashes and crimes during the 1930s.

Ed Stozek is a recently retired high school history teacher. Ed currently lives in Dauphin, Manitoba and is available to do presentations to schools and organizations. The presentations include "A Slice Of The Parkland" as well as "The Ghost Of Whitewater Lake". Armed with a projector and an acoustic guitar, Ed's presentations include slides, stories and original songs that pertain to these topics.

