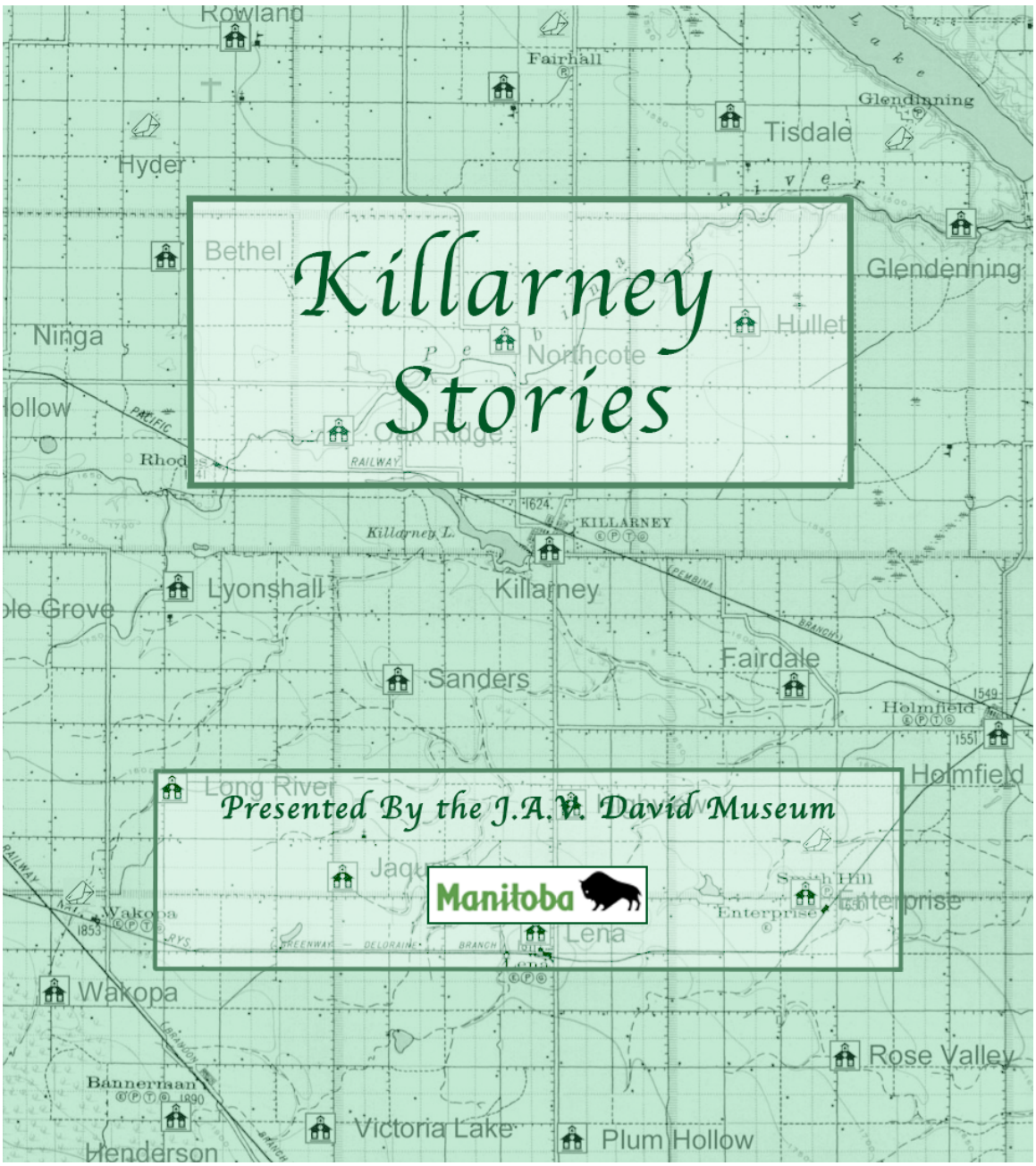

Killarney
Stories
Presented By the J.A.V. David Museum
Manitoba
Rowland
Fairhall
Tisdale
Hyder
Bethel
Glendenning
Ninga
Hullet
Northcote
Oak Ridge
Killarney L.
KILLARNEY
Lyonshall
Killarney
Sanders
Fairdale
Holmfield
Long River
Lena
Wakopa
Rose Valley
Victoria Lake
Plum Hollow
Bannerman
Henderson

# Pioneer Stories: Killarney – Turtle Mountain

About this Project

A little volume entitled, Stories of Pioneer Days in Killarney, first published long ago by the Oak Ridge Women's Institute, is special in that it is a collection of first hand accounts. The writers were the pioneers. They saw it happen.

The stories cover the origins of Killarney and the communities surrounding Killarney with factual detail. Names are named, places are described, and stories are told.

You cannot replace the memories once the bearer of those memories has passed on. You can't bring them back.

What we might do is make use of some resources that were not available to those pioneer writers. The digital revolution has given us access to a wide array of photos and maps that were once not easily accessible. Museums and archives and historical societies have collected, preserved and displayed those resources and more.

The goal of this project is to reproduce highlights from this excellent account with additional stories, photographs, and maps. Many of these additional stories come from records created prior to the publishing of Killarney's excellent local histories and carefully preserved by the J.A.V. David Museum. While these may not all have been first hand accounts, they were submitted by the close relatives of those early pioneers and have the ring of authenticity about them.

Ken Storie
2021

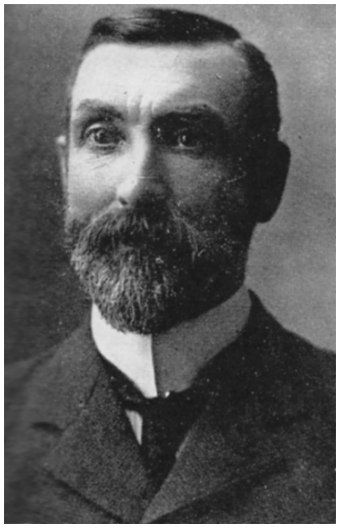
*"The early days were busy, but nor without its happiness as well as its drawbacks. There were no telephones, radios, or television, just the pleasures and conveniences they made for themselves. But I believe they lived it as happily as at the present time, with no regrets for having lived through pioneering of the prairies of Western Canada. " (Harrison)*

# Contents

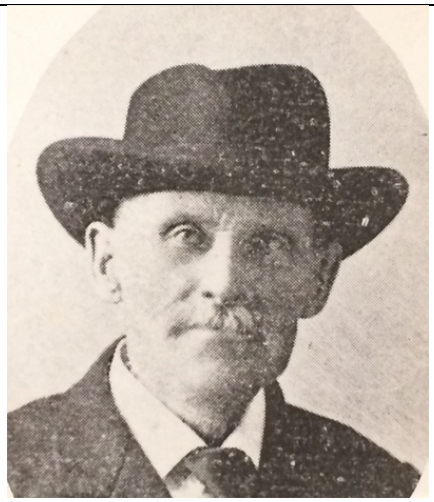
Where “Stories of Pioneer Days in Killarney was a the primary source, I have credited the author responsible – with gratitude for their part in keeping our history alive.

## Early Days

Adapted from, “A Few Notes on Early Days in Killarney by T. J. Lawlor.



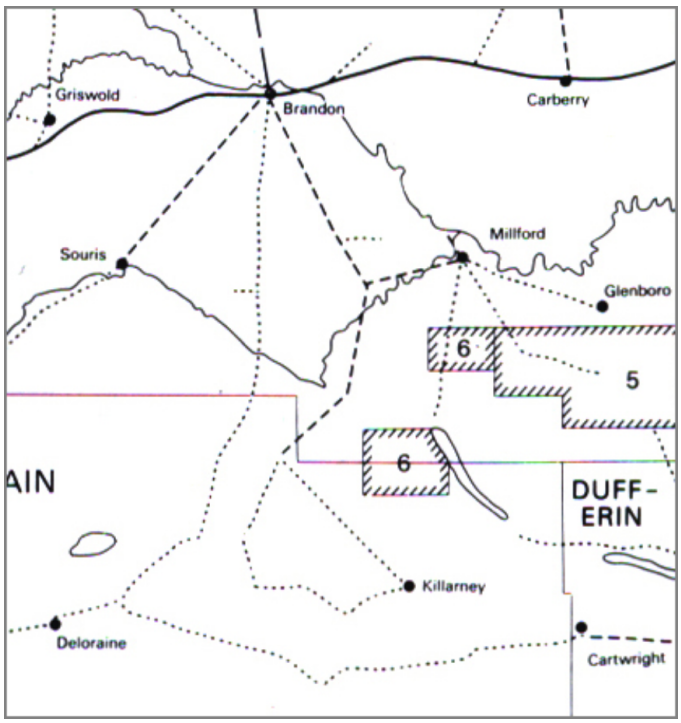
T.J. Lawlor



John Sidney O’Brien

Killarney is situated about twelve miles north of the Boundary line, and between Cartwright and Deloraine. The original name was Oak Lake, the present name was the result of a conversation jokingly carried on between three pioneers, one of whom was the late John Sidney O’Brien, Land Guide, and which ended by one party saying to Mr. O’Brien, “I suppose you would like to call it ‘Killarney’, after the lakes in Ireland,” so, Killarney it has been ever since. That would be in about 1882.

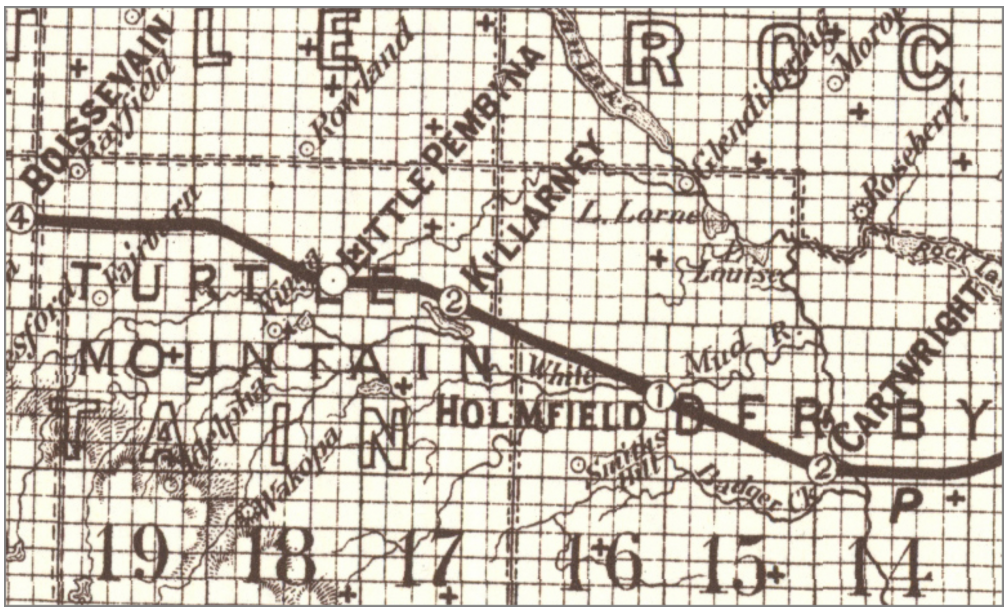
The Municipality of Turtle Mountain was created in 1882, but was not fully organized until the next year.




*Stage lines and Mail Delivery routes prior to 1885.*

Late in 1883, the CPR ran a branch from Rosenfelt to Manitou, which was the end of the track until 1885. That fall the road was continued west and south of lakes Rock, Louise, Lorne and Pelican, passing through Killarney in December and reaching Boissevain January 1st, 1886. At that date, the road was taken over from the contractors, and opened for traffic.

Canadian and United States investors had obtained a charter, known as the Manitoba South-Western Railway. The route, starting from Winnipeg, proceeding westward, a few miles north of Carman, then turning south west and running north of the first three lakes previously mentioned, following the valley of the Pembina, and coming out of the prairie at Tisdale. The survey continued westward to the Height, or Rowland district, about north of Ninga. The town of Tisdale was surveyed and lots were sold, but the railroad was not built yet. Between 1882 and the fall of 1885, the CPR acquired the charter, and instead of building north of the Lakes, they continued their Rosenfeldt - Manitou branch, via La Riviere, Crystal City, Killarney and Boissevain. It was extended to Deloraine in 1885 and that remained the end of the road for several years.




*By 1887 transportation lines had changed. The mail came by train and was delivered to rural post offices from Killarney*.

On January 2nd, 1886, T. J. Lawlor arrived at Killarney station with a car load of general merchandise and building material. In the meantime, he had arranged to have his store in Tisdale taken down and brought over to the new town.

The Land Commissioner gave him information as to the exact location of the CPR Station, and from there, he located his lots on the North East of South Railway and Broadway avenue, and other buildings following the same direction, the town grew North and South instead of East and West.

The location of the lake, within a half a mile of the track, was an inducement for people to seek homes in the town.

In January 1886, the CPR townsite surveyors arrived and surveyed the first part of the town. The site had been homesteaded and pre-empted by George Geates, on the north half and John Williams on the south half. They entered into arrangements with the CPR to have the town site and station on Section 2. Both homesteaders retained a western portion of their lands, which was not included in the town site.

<u>1886 – A Busy Year in Killarney</u>

While saying that a town sprang up “overnight” might be a bit of an exaggeration, it’s hard to imagine just how quickly Killarney went from beings a few scattered lakeside shacks with a nearby school and post office, to a busy commercial centre with a street lined with shops and services.

It all started with railway service and a temporary station. Mr. Mills, of Gretna, was the first carpenter on the scene, and with the lumber of the Tisdale store, and a supply brought from Rosenfeldt, he proceeded to erect the first building on the townsite for T. J. Lawlor in January 1886.

Later in the month the CPR townsite surveyors arrived and surveyed the first part of the town.

James McCann, who had previously been in Nelsonville and Morden, secured lots on the East side of Broadway, and built the Leland Hotel.

*J. McCann*

Following him were the Coleman Bros, William and Richard, Samuel Rowe, A. Wilson, Samuel Pierce, T. G. Dixon and Jas. Harrison. The Grand Central Hotel, built and conducted by Alex Goldie, of Gretna, came next, that summer. Mrs. John Melville has conducted a public boarding house on Williams Avenue

Next to Mrs. Dufty's on Railway Street was a store built by Frank Rollins, who previous to that time had a store down by the Bay. The next business place was a hardware store, whose proprietor, Mr. Bird came from Emerson.

Then followed a building put up for Dr. Fawcet, where he ran a drug store and occupied the upstairs as a dwelling.

William Pritchard, who supplied the railroad contractors with meat and vegetables, came to settle in the town in the summer of '86. He built the place known as Pritchard's Hall, the first floor of which was used as a butcher shop. On the rear of the lots he placed a small dwelling. He was the first to buy and ship cattle and produce by the carload.

George Robinson had a store immediately south of Pritchard's Hall. Next to him were Messrs. Kirkpatrick and Wallis who had at first opened a small store at the north side of the lake.

Early in 1886, J. W. Smaill also started a Real Estate, Insurance and Collection agency, and built a home on Williams Avenue.

In 1886, Ogilvies built a plank platform and were represented by Frank Simpson and James Dunsford, who were on the market for one season only.

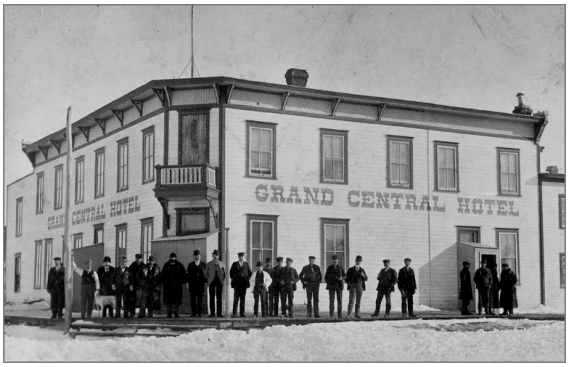
Finlay M. Young and his brother, Donald, were also on the market, for Winnipeg dealers, during the winter of 1886.

In the fall of 1886, Mr. Bate moved the post office into town and later built a dwelling and office on Williams avenue.

A small paper called “The Southern Manitoba” was printed for a short time in the summer of 1886, by an American from Dakota.

By the end of that first year, the region’s homesteaders, who had endured long trips to buy supplies and market their crops, could simply come to town – where they could get almost anything they needed.

*The Leland Hotel*




*The Grand Central Hotel*


*And early street scene.*

# *The Melville House*

*Killarney residents might recognize this building that until fairly recently could be found at 427 Williams Street. It served for many decades as the Killarney Hotel, but before that it was Mrs. Melville's Boarding House.*

*Today's modern conveniences such as microwave ovens, refrigerators and vacuum cleaners allow even the domestically challenged to fend for themselves. But in pioneer times days it just wasn't efficient to live alone. Bachelors might well have no idea how to cook and do laundry. Single ladies would have the skills, but in those days before affordable labour-saving devices it just made more sense to have those services provided. Before setting off to work one would be served a real breakfast. After a hard day's work the guests came "home" to an evening meal served at the dining table. While it is true that busy singles today have the option of picking up burgers and fries at a drive-through, or popping some frozen concoction into a microwave, does that really seem like progress?*

*That's why in any new prairie town boarding or rooming houses were one of the first services to appear. In 1886, right after the arrival of the railway created the town, Mrs. John Melville opened for business.*

*She had some experience*

*John Melville filed for a homestead near Wakopa it as soon as the Land Office opened at Deloraine in 1880. The following spring he brought out his wife and*

*family. Jane Melville was the only woman for miles around and she baked and washed, not only for her own family, but for others who stayed with them and for neighbouring bachelors. She baked bread every day, boiling hops to make yeast, and kneading the bread in a large trough.*

*After the railway came to Killarney, Jane Melville capitalized on her experience feeding the hungry on the homestead and opened a boarding house in the rapidly growing town.*

*She still sold bread. Eleanor Bate (Mrs. A. M. High) remembers, "We bought big loaves of home-made bread from Mrs. John Melville for five cents a loaf."*

*Promoted as a "high class boarding house" Mrs. Melville, a strong and capable woman whose "Home away from Home" was patronized by many having Killarney on their regular beat. The "Melville House" porter was something to see. Dressed in a uniform and a fine hat, with buttons and braid, one of his duties was to meet the passenger train morning and evening, with a push cart in summer and a sleigh in winter to carry the valises of travellers past the hotels to the homier atmosphere of "The Melville House".*

*In 1901 it narrowly escaped being destroyed by fire, but was repaired and a new double decker verandah was built on, enhancing three sides of the building.*

*It operated many years until it was converted to the Morden House, and then to the Killarney Hotel.*

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## The Card Family….

You do what you have to do….

*George arrived in Killarney with no more capital to his mane than a $5 bill in his pocket and a cobbler's outfit bought with borrowed money. He secured a small space in Lawlor's General Store, whittled a piece of wood into some semblance of a boot, painted it, hung it outside as his sign and took in shoe mending for a lttle ready cash. One wonders where in the midst of cutting and hauling logs from lakes and building his new home he ever found time to mend shoes in town.*

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*Olver and Carson's Store on the left.*


*Dr. Fawcett's building.*

# *A Trip To Town*

*Those of us who grew up on farms rural Manitoba in the 1950's fondly remember that Saturday night trip to town. After a week, or sometimes more, without much human contact outside of the family, except perhaps the classmates in the one-room school, a crowded sidewalk and a busy store were welcome sites. Farm life had a sameness that may have been comforting and purposeful, but we all need a little variety in our lives. As a six-year old, recently transplanted from Winnipeg, those first Saturday nights were an experience I haven't forgotten.*

*If they were special to those of use who grew up with the conveniences of telephones, radios and automobiles, imagine what trips to town might have felt like to a child growing up in a time when farm families were really isolated.*

*Mrs. Elizabeth Priestley tells the story of such a trip to town.*

*A shopping trip to Killarney in our childhood days was a very important event. Mother usually had butter and eggs to be taken in to Rueben Cross, produce dealer. Butter came from the cool depth of the well, was wrapped in cold wet cloths, many layers of paper, and packed in a wooden box. This went under the seat of the buggy, out of the sun, and always got to town in good condition. There were usually plowshares to be sharpened at Stilwell's Blacksmith Shop. Mother drove the buggy with us children set on a small "jump" seat at her feet.*

*The "trails" then went cross-country, through the neighbours's yard. Mrs. Hawthorne would greet us as we drove past her door, calling, "Bring out mail please". Then Walter Constantine from his door would call, "Bring me a plug of tobacco and a pan of bread, and our mail please." Old Mrs. Ditchfield, next, would come out for a chat. The trail went past Northcote School, and dipped down into the valley of the Little Pembina River, and over the wooden bridge. This was a beautiful place, with trees and flowering shrubs full of birds, and yellow waterlillies on the river.*


*Kilpatrick's store in 1886*

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**The Circus**

A memory by Anne Burrows:

*The circuses that came to town, especially the loading and unloading of the circus equipment, the parades, and the watering of the elephants and camels down at the Bay were wonderful attractions for the young fry. The minstrel shows and plays such as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" presented in the old Orange stone hall just north of the school grounds provided additional entertainment at long intervals for old and young. Fly-by-night barkers selling quack medicines on platforms erected on the town dray in front of the Leland Hotel, with their quick sale harangues interspersed with negro and banjo music, drew and delighted large crowds at various times.*

# *Shopping at Mr. Lawlor's Store*

*In 1885, when settlers in the Killarney region learned that the much-anticipated railway would proceed from Manitou, south of the Rock Lake and pass by Killarney Lake, Mr. Lawlor of Tisdale wasted no time. Tisdale would soon be a ghost town, so he dismantled his thriving store at and re-established his business in Killarney, arriving with merchandise and building materials on January 2, 1886. His was the first "real" building erected in the newly-surveyed townsite, on the corner of South Railways Street and Broadway. While waiting for that he did business on the sidewalk.*

*The first stores in any community were aptly named "general" stores. For some time they would be the only store – so they covered all the bases by carrying everything a new settler might want. In time other retail outlets would spring up, specializing in this or that – hardware store, tailor shops, jewelry stores and more. In that way, today's "Super" stores are a return to that retailing strategy – one stop shopping.*

*The store was typical for the time and differed from today's retail outlets in several key ways. The most noticeable difference was the nature of the shopping experience. It would be some time before the self-serve format would change shopping. Instead of roaming the aisles and selecting items to put in your cart, you approached the counter and made your request. Most of the food was stored in large barrels – popular items such as sugar, soda crackers, tea biscuits, raisin biscuits, ginger snaps, molasses, syrup, and apples. Your purchase would be placed in the appropriate sort of bag or container by the staff. Coffee, tea and cocoa came in large square caddies and were dispensed by the pound. Cheese came in large round cakes and was sliced to order with a copper wire. Cheese along with dried apples and prunes were popular items with the numerous bachelors in a pioneer community. Clothing, furniture, and a host of household items would be available.*

*Another very important departure from big city and modern stores was that the store bought items directly from customers as well as selling to them. Butter, eggs, chickens and other foods were often taken in trade. This was a practical arrangement at a time when it made no sense to ship supplies from far away when they could be sources from right nearby. It helped many a struggling farm family to stay afloat in those crucial first few years.*

*As was the custom in pioneer towns, Mr. Lawlor offered credit. This was essential both for the survival of the store and the nature of farm finances. Bills were paid at harvest time. In years of crop failure, that might mean … next harvest.*

*The proprietor awaits your request…*

*Other services were also provided. Lawlor installed a large safe in the rear of the store where grain buyers and other businesses could store cash. Scales were available at the rear of the building to be used for cattle, grain and other produce for a nominal fee.*

*Last, but perhaps not least, the store was more than just a place of business. For isolated farm families, shopping trips were social occasions. The store was a natural meeting place.*

*And what else might have been available to enhance the shopping experience and make a trip to town more interesting?*

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**Mary Card recalls a few things about food.**

I remember Dad buying a big barrel of brown sugar. Mom used to cook with brown sugar and would make syrup with it. We like brown sugar with bread and butter. I remember stealing brown sugar out of the barrel and eating it like candy. We never had any oranges in those days but a few years later you could by them as a special treat at picnics. Our main meat was pork – fat and all, fresh in the winter, salted in the summer and kept in brine. We always had lots of lard and oodles of doughnuts. Mother cooked potatoes in the black pot and at Christmas, boiled the plum pudding in one of them. She put the pudding in a cotton cloth, white of course, tied it with a strong string, leaving lots of room to rise, put a plate in the bottom of the pot in boiling water and put the pudding into water on a plate. As it boiled, the plate kept up a continuous clatter. If it stopped, that was bad. That would man the water was not boiling and that would spoil the pudding. To me it was as music to my ears to hear the Christmas pudding boiling and when the cloth was taken off the pudding was a round ball – a big one, too – and oh it tasted good!

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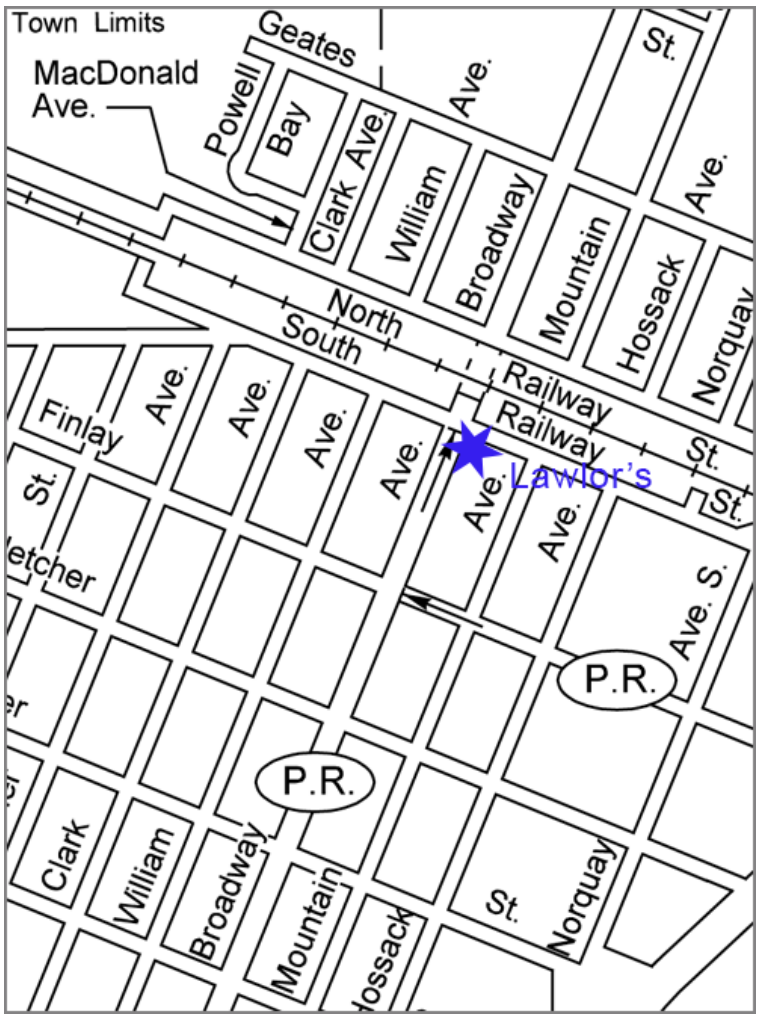



*Downtown - surveyed in 1885.*

Soon after the town was started, the government arranged for a County Court district, and sessions were held at intervals. A small stone building, which served the purposes for council meetings and a jail was erected about 1904 on Mountain Avenue. Previous to that a boxcar was occasionally pressed into service to accommodate disturbers of the peace.

In 1903, Killarney was incorporated as a village.

# Charles Bate – Justice of the Peace and Postmaster

*Charles Bate was born in Plymouth, England, and entered the Royal Navy in 1853 where he served for twenty- six years, retiring in 1879 with a pension and two medals.*

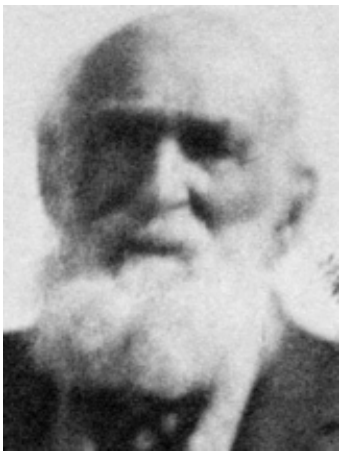
*In 1880 the Bate family ventured forth to Ottawa where they spent two years. It was there that Charles met John Sydney O'Brien who told him about Killarney. In the spring of 1882, Charles came to Killarney where he filed a claim to E 4-3-17, part on one side of the lake and part on the other. He had a house built of poplar boards from the mill at Wakopa. His wife and daughters left Ottawa October II and he met them at Emerson wearing a peaked cap, grey shirt, and red bandanna neckerchief. His wife was horrified. She had never seen him in public except in navy uniform or with top hat and cane.*

*We were unbelievable greenhorns," wrote his daughter, "When we did not know how to get the chickens killed for the winter, my elder brother Charles solved the problem by shooting them with his revolver. When a calf or a pig had to be butchered our neighbour, William Riddell, came over and helped. Mother had learned to make bread before leaving Ottawa, and at a stopping house on the way she had observed a woman making butter. She proceeded to make butter, colouring it with carrot juice and packing it for the winter in large ornamental vases Father had brought from China. She made pie from rabbits we children snared in the bush and prepared standard English food like roast beef and suet pudding. (Alas! the day C. W. Gordon chanced to stay for a meal she had nothing in the house to offer him but potatoes.) But whatever the fare Mother always set the table with a white cloth and table napkins."*

*They had hardly any money. What Charles saved from his navy pay was all spent, mostly on equipping the farm, and his pension and salary were infinitesimal. But they all worked and the older children, Charles and Aquila, contributed to the family exchequer.*

*Charles Bate was elected to the Council of Turtle Mountain Municipality in 1883, appointed Justice of the Peace, and was one of the first trustees of Killarney School, later serving as secretary- treasurer until 1906.*

# David Hysop's Good Idea



***David Hysop***

*In the early years of railway travel, passengers were often impressed by the gardens they saw when the train steamed into a station. What most would not know is that it was David Hysop of Killarney, Manitoba, who suggested the idea.*

*Hysop came west with a Grand Trunk Railway survey party, and later he took a position with the CPR, before homesteading in Killarney. William Whyte, Superintendent of Western Lines, commissioned Hysop to investigate claims made by farmers for damages to their homes and livestock caused by fires started by sparks from the locomotives. Hysop in his report advised that fireguards be ploughed along the right of way.*

*When someone suggested planting grass on the right of way to advertise the good quality of the prairie soil, Hysop cautioned that it would be better to keep the fireguard plowed and, instead, plant gardens at the stations. He suggested that the vegetables and flowers could be used in the dining cars and shown at fairs. Whyte took steps to have the gardens established and appointed Hysop the superintendent of gardens from Brandon to Golden.*

*The gardens became a matter of local pride. They were practical and attractive – a perfect promotion for a growing town.*

*The company encouraged employees to plant and care for the gardens. During the thirties, with crop failure and desolation around them, the grass and flowers at the station became a symbol of faith in the country and hope for the future.*

*Sadly, as the importance of the trains to the economy and lifestyle of prairie towns declined so did the need for the gardens and they began disappearing in the 1950's.*

*Although his duties sometimes took him away from Killarney, David and his wife were important figures in the life of the district and could always take time to be good neighbours. In several of the stories written by other pioneers the statement occurs, "Mr. and Mrs. David Hysop were our first visitors," and in one "They brought us some eggs and some butter, and we were happy because that meant we could have a cake for Christmas."*

*****For more on the Railway Gardens see the excellent article by Aileen Garland in Manitoba Pageant, Winter 1977***


The First CPR Station

The first lumber yards were owned by Robert Rolston and Fred Davis. Mr. Davis only remained a few years. Mr. Rolston erected a residence on the corner now occupied by the “Guide” office, and later a home on Clarke Ave. After Mr. Rolston’s death, the Wholesale Lumber Dealers carried on the business until it was bought out by A. M. High.

*A.M. High*

Robert Rolston built and owned the first livery barn, known as the “Bronco Stable.” The first furniture store was built by A. Leitch, north of the track, where he also built a double house of stone. The first blacksmith shop was opened by Edward Machon.

The late George Treleaven opened the first harness shop. He built the Treleaven Block on Broadway Avenue and a brick cottage near the bay.

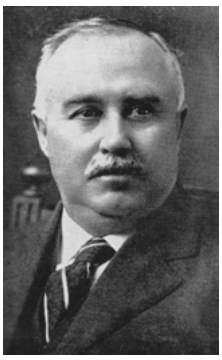

*An early photo of Killarney*

The honor of buying the first grain at Killarney belongs to the Ogilvie Milling Co.

In 1886 Ogilvie's built a plank platform. Then followed D. H. MacMillan & Brother. They erected the first grain warehouse. Finlay M. Young and his brother, Donald, were also on the market, for Winnipeg dealers, during the winter of 1886.

The first elevator was put up by the Harrison Bros. The next elevator known as "The Farmers" was built by James Hatch. He leased it, and bought for S. P. Clarke, of Winnipeg. Mr. Hatch also gave bin accommodation to other buyers. Nichol & Son, of Boissevain represented by Hugh Sutherland, and several, who came and were here but a short time.

Then came a gristmill north of the track. Woodrulf & Sons, of Ontario, built and equipped this mill. Young Bros. & Buck took possession and also erected an elevator on a spur track. This enabled them, with their roller mill process, to supply local and export trade, and at times to handle most of the grain on the local market.



Thomas Buck - Businessman

*Killarney High School*

The late Finlay M. Young, after representing the Constituency of Killarney for two, or more terms, part of which time he was Speaker of the House, was later called to the Senate at Ottawa, which position he filled till 1916. Mr. Young erected a fine brick dwelling on the corner of Clarke Avenue and Finlay Street, Alex Middleton's home today.

A school house, built in 1883 by Andrew McNamee senior, was replaced in 1891, by a wood frame, brick veneered, four-roomed school. In 1906, the present High School of solid brick was added.

Previous to 1883, the nearest post offices were Smith's Hill, on the east, Wakopa, on the west and Glendenning on the north. Mr. Chas. Bate opened the first post office in this district, in his house on the farm on the north shore of the Lake, April 1, 1883. When first the post office was opened the mail was fetched from Wakopa. It was brought by rail to Brandon, thence to Deloraine by courier. Another courier took it to Wakopa, and a third brought it from Wakopa to the newly opened post office at Killarney. Later it was brought in from Brandon, via old Souris City and Langvale. In the fall of 1886, Mr. Bate moved the post office into town and later built a dwelling and office on Williams Avenue. Here the post office remained till 1923, several years after Mr. Bate's death.

*Post Office and Bate Residence – later the Museum*

The first English church service in this district was held in the schoolhouse in September 1883. The church, without the chancel, was built in 1890 and opened in December of that year. The chancel was added, and the building brick veneered

Before the church was built, the Presbyterians worshipped for a time in Pritchard's Hall, McNaughton's Hall and the old Methodist church. The stone church, Erskine, was erected in 1898, Rev. Dr. Pitbaldo, of Westminster Church, Winnipeg, conducted the services, when the church was opened and dedicated. Rev. M. P. Floyd was the first settled pastor in the new church. He was followed by Rev. Dan McIvor.

*McNaughton's Hall*

A small paper called "The Southern Manitoba" was printed for a short time in the summer of 1886, by an American from Dakota. Later we had another, also short lived, printed by Rev, Charles Whyte. In 1896 the "Killarney Guide" came into existence.

To our surrounding district belongs much of the credit for this progress. Killarney district was a large one, and the town drew trade from an area extending from Cartwright to Boissevain, and from the Boundary line, to well on towards Brandon.

Though life in the pioneer days was hard, and many privations were borne, they were also happy years. Neighbors were all friends in these days, and a visitor could always be sure of a welcome, and the best the house afforded, though sometimes the best was not very good, especially when the potatoes were all frozen, and bread made from frozen wheat flour was to be found in every home.

Mrs. John Williams tells of her first start in poultry raising. Securing a setting of eggs from a neighbor, she found a wild duck's nest and a prairie chicken's nest, and traded eggs with the nest owners with the result, that in due course, every

egg but one brought forth a little chick, which was watched for, and carefully tended in the house, until able to fend for itself.

We had picnics in those early days, which were red-letter days especially the Sunday School picnics, when Mr. James Finlay would lead the procession of wagons playing on the bagpipes, and fonts came for miles to join in the fun.

We had an occasional concert too. The first concert was held in the school, in March 1885, as a farewell to Rev. Andrew Stewart, the first minister to hold services in this district. We also had a banquet and concert in September of the same year, to say goodbye to Charles W. Gordon, then but a student, never thinking that he would become, as “Ralph Connor”, such a noted writer in later years. The centre of community life, in the early days, was the church service, and every one attended, no matter what the denomination of the preacher. Some of the early settlers will remember how J. G. Smith used to get the right tone for the hymns from his tuning fork, and how, once Mrs. John Williams started “Nearer My God to Thee” to the tune of “Robin Adair.” It went well, too.

A Literary and Musical Society was started in 1886, which lasted for five or six years.

The first boat to be placed on the lake was built for Mr. John Williams by Milo Harris from lumber brought from Portage la Prairie; Mr. Williams brought it on a Red River cart, drawn by an ox. The boat, which was called “The Pioneer”, was built in Mr. Williams house in 1883, and had to be put through the window. There were several home-made flat-bottomed punts on the lake, previous to this, but no real boats.

Looking backward, we have much to be thankful for, and looking forward, we think of the young people, whose duty it will be to carry on. May they take up the burden, with hearts full of song and press onward, singing in all sincerity, “O Canada, we stand on guard for thee.”

**Reminiscences of Agnes G. Grant, daughter of Thomas J. Lawlor**
**Pioneer merchant of Killarney. Oct. 16, 1961**

Thomas James Lawlor was born in North Sydney, Nova Scotia, in 1853. He received his early education in North Sydney and later attended Commercial College in Boston, Mass. Upon completion of his education, he operated a general store in Dartmouth, N.S., until 1882. In that year he heeded the "Go West, Young Man" call and travelled to Manitoba with high hopes.

Upon arrival in Winnipeg in 1882 he entered the employ of Thibaudeau's Wholesale Grocery firm, as a salesman. His selling route took him as far west as Regina, and in the course of carrying out his duties, he was often forced to travel great distances on foot to meet his widely scattered customers.

In 1883, Mr. Lawlor built a two-storey structure at Tisdale, north of Killarney, for use as a general store. The store at Tisdale was dismantled in late 1885 and on January 2nd, 1886, Mr. Lawlor arrived in Killarney with supplies of merchandise and building materials.

On November 6th, 1886, Mr. Lawlor married Sarah Frances Brown in Winnipeg. Upon arrival by train in Killarney, the bridal couple was escorted by a torch-light procession of early pioneers to the Grand Central Hotel. The bride and groom "honeymooned" at the hotel for a week, while the newly plastered walls of the upstairs of the store dried sufficiently for occupancy.

Lawlor's store naturally was a hub of activity in the new town. Many of the farm families were carried on credit with the hope that fall would bring a harvest sufficiently bountiful to take care of the store account. If the harvest was poor, it meant that Mr. Lawlor simply awaited the next harvest.

General stores were few and far between in south-western Manitoba in these early days. Farmers came from great distances to the store, bringing produce such as butter in large wax-lined wooden pails, eggs, chickens, turkeys, etc. to exchange for groceries, tobacco and clothing.

In 1892 the Lawlor family moved from the upstairs of their store building into their first house. Furniture for the house was brought by train from the Hudson's Bay Store in Winnipeg. China, cutlery and linen came from Halifax, along with the most valued possession, an organ, 'round which was held many a happy sing-song and choir practice. Love of reading brought to the home a fine library. In the living room was the old family bible, a stereoscope with numerous pictures, fancy brass and flower bedecked coal-oil lamps, and a Singer sewing machine, one of the first in the district and in constant use for over half a century.

In the kitchen was a large Majestic coal and wood stove where all the family cooking was done. On one side was a reservoir for hot water and on the other a

large reservoir where huge blocks of ice were melted for the family washing in winter. Ice was cut from the lake and sold at a dollar for a bob-sleigh load. A large cistern in the basement provided rain water in summer, running off the roof into eave-troughs and being piped down to the cistern. No one worried about fluoridation!

In the fall of the year the basement was filled with chopped wood, coal, home-grown vegetables, barrels of applies, shelves of homemade jams, jellies, fruit and pickles, and crocks of home-corned beef. The back kitchen stored supplies of frozen pork and beef. A one hundred and sixty foot well provided the family and several neighbors with good drinking water.

In pioneer days, buildings were heated with cordwood brought from Turtle Mountain by sleigh and burned in box stoves, with pipes going into the rooms. The pipes were extended in fancy shapes called drums to give more heat. Later furnaces were installed and coal brought in by train. Registers were set in the floors and made for warmer homes, with a continuous heat.

T. J. Lawlor took an active part in the Killarney Fair, which was third largest in the province and considered exceptionally good, and drew crowds from great distances. He belonged to Masonic, Foresters and Old Fellows Lodges, and took an active part in all town and community affairs, acting as mayor for two years.

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***About Card Games….***

A Memory from J. C. Treleaven

*There was no such thing as bridge or rummy in the early days, as cards in the eyes of many of the good old Scottish Presbyterians were "tools of the devil", but in later years some of us graduated from checkers and dominoes and croquinole to the games of Five Hundred, Euchre, and Whist. Incidentally, George Treleaven was at one time the champion checkers or drafts player in southern Manitoba.*

# A Gathering of Notables……

This photo, taken in 1902, and given to the J.A.V. David Museum by Mrs. Finlay Young on March 1, 1920, puts a face to many of the names of Killarney's influential people in the town's early days.

*Members of the Killarney Liberal Committee - 1902*

*First Row: Frank Squair, John T. Finlay, T.H. Buck, S.T. Kellaway.*
*Middle Row: George Winham, A.G. Hay, Robert Monteith, Finlay Young, A. Mc Queen, Jr., P J. Sherlock.*
*Back Row: J.H. Monteith, J. Percival, J.W. Smaill, Dr. J.T. Whyte, T.J. Lawlor, Dr. A.B. Alexander, G.B. Monteith.*

# Reminiscences of an Early Homesteader

## By Alex Rankin

In the days of which I write, Wakopa was the metropolis of the Turtle Mountain district. There council met and parliamentary nominations were made. At our first political meeting Arthur Rollins was asked the question, “What are the boundaries of your constituency?” To which he replied, “They begin at Clearwater, on the East and end at sundown on the West.”

Harrison Bros. saw mill was built in 1879. Later on they built a grist mill, George Bennett, a freighter, brought in the first and second pairs of stones for this mill from Emerson. One of these trips was made with oxen. I have made trips to Nelsonville for grists in September 1881. Also to Glenora, Crystal City, Deloraine and Wawanesa.

MAIL CONTRACT!

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the Postmaster General, will be received at Ottawa until noon, on 26th September, 1884, for the conveyance of Her Majesty's Mails, on a proposed contract for four years, once per week each way, between Turtle Mountain and Wakopa, from the 1st November next.

The conveyance to be made in a suitable vehicle. The Mails to leave Turtle Mountain every Monday at 8:00 a. m, and arrive at Wakopa at 2:00 p. m. Leave Wakopa every Tuesday at 8:00 a. m. and arrive at Turtle Mountain at 2 p. m.

Printed notices containing further information as to conditions of proposed contract may be seen, and blank forms of tender may be obtained at the post offices of Turtle Mountain and Dakopa, or at the office of the subscriber.

W. W. MCLEOD.
P. O. Inspector.

Post Office Inspector's Office, Winnipeg, Aug. 11th, 1884. 3in

*Portage La Prairie Press, Sept. 5, 1884*

The first team of horses in the Turtle Mountain district was owned by a man named La Riviere. His nephew, Jeremiah La Riviere, a big. husky freighter, drove them to Emerson for store goods. On the return trip the horses played out at Badger Creek (now Cartwright). The driver walked to Wakopa for a bundle of hay, and a sack of oats, which he carried back to the horses, a round trip of sixty miles. At one of the stopping places on the way, before coming as far as Badger Creek, there was a free for all fight. La Riviere saw that he was not going to be

able to get any sleep indoors, so he went out side and scooped out a hole in the side of a snow-bank, rolled himself up in his buffalo robe, and slept peacefully till morning in 15 below zero weather.

I had a trip in the fall of 1881 from Crystal City to old Desford and back, and had dinner and supper in one meal at Joe McKibbon's, Badger Creek. All the country was burnt black, not a blade of grass to be seen A prairie fire had swept the country, starting about where the town of Melita is now, and extended to Cartwright before it was brought under control.

A man by the name of Hill, a Hudson Bay trader, was out five days in a blizzard his legs were badly frozen to the knees, and his arms to the elbows. He crawled from Wood Lake to Wakopa, a distance of five miles. The Indians found him and took care of him. They daubed the frozen parts with a knife before thawing, so that the congealed blood would ooze out in thawing, the parts healing perfectly.

La Riviere, who owned the horses, was a Justice of the Peace, and a commissioner for aflidavits, could speak seven dialects of the Indian language, also French and English, but could not write his own name.

*A Cairn marks the corner of B.B. LaRiviere's property*

Our first July First celebration was held in 1883, at Wakopa. The races took place on the road on the west side of the creek. Jim Cowan's pony being the winner, with Bob Weir as jockey, I built a granary that my neighbor, Jim Gordon, said I might fall down and worship, and not commit any sin, as there was nothing like it in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth.

Mr. Rowsom, when telling Mr. Gordon of the new game laws, expressed the opinion that it was quite right for the prairie chickens to be protected, as they stayed here all winter, but the ducks, being here for he summer only, didn't need protection. Mr. Gordon could not see eye to eye with him there, his opinion being that a bird that could fly, and hadn't sense enough to get out of this country for the winter didn't deserve protection. In expressing an opinion on returning

borrowed articles, he said it wasn't right to break the laws of the country, if people wanted their things let them go after them, and be mighty thankful that they knew where they were.

It has been decided to place a patrol of Mounted Police along the International line east of the western boundary of the Province of Manitoba. Hitherto the Mounted Police have not operated within the Province, but horse stealing has become so prevalent in Southern Manitoba that it was deemed advisable to station a force of twenty men at Wakopa, who will watch the boundary as far east as Emerson.

*The Nor'Wester – July 24, 1884*

Lyonshall was the first school built in the district in 1882. Miss E. A. Jones, now Mrs. Alex McKnight, was the first teacher. Miss Reeves was the next teacher.

*Lyonshall School*

Many people used to come to Wakopa mills, bringing grain to be ground into flour, or buying lumber at the saw-mill. Meals were served at the Harrison home, at La Riviere's, and at Mrs. J. Melville's boarding house.

The first church services were held in the Hudson Bay trading post, and were conducted by a young Presbyterian student by the name of Patterson, now Dr.

Patterson, of Toronto. The church was built in Lyonshall in 1897. I remember being at a box social held in the school house, where T. J. Lawlor acted as auctioneer.

## Fire!

A prairie fire was one of the early settlers' great fears. The grass being quite tall, the fire could be seen blazing skyward at a great distance, the roar and crackling heard, the heat intense.

During one fire when her husband was away, Mrs. Montieth, thinking the house was going, gathered the children together around her knee and sat watching it come closer. All that saved them was the freshly dug earth around the newly built house. Another time they ran nearly half a mile and jumped into a big slough until the fire went over.

## *What's In a Name?*

*Who named our villages, communities and landmarks? Officially, once settlers began and applying to the Federal Government for Post Offices, that Department had the final say. They would take the suggestions, check their records, and if necessary ask for changes. That happened in the new community of Manchester in the southwest corner. The locals had settled on a name – someone had even drawn up a survey and started selling lots in the proposed town, but as happened quite often, that name was taken elsewhere in Canada. The local settlers had to go back and reconsider. How about Melita? That was OK.*

*Sometimes a name had to be changed for a similar reason. Rowland was pretty well established when the Post Office named was changed to Hyder. Apparently with a town called ROLAND some distance to the east, it was just too confusing.*

*So while we have a record of how names get to the point where they are in official records and maps, the real process of how the names were arrived at in the first place is sometimes a little less clear.*

*Take the case of Wakopa. The name was in place some time before there was a Post Office. We have a few accounts as to how that happened - all gathered, like so much of our local history, from recollections of the pioneers.*

*George Monteith, the son of a pioneer, and the author of a short history of the Killarney region, tells it this way:*

**In the early days, a Frenchman named Lariviere came there as a fur trader. There was also a post of the Hudson Bay Co. fur traders there. Lariviere gathered a force of half-breeds and they had a fight with the Hudson Bay Company and defeated the company men and drove them out. The name of the fight was called the Battle of the Broken Wheel, a Red River cart having overturned and a wheel broken. The name Broken Wheel is the Indian name for Wakopa.**

*We're not sure where Mr. Monteith got his information but Mr. Henderson, also a pioneer, passed down this story of his first visit…*

**There was a little village started, a house and a store were there, built by a man by the name of Lariviere. The village was at first called Lariviere, afterwards named Wakopa by an old Indian, who thought a lot of Laraviere, Wakopa meaning "White Feather".**

*In the Johnson family, yet another version is told.*

**"Wakopa – a small village five miles from the U.S. boundary, through which runs what is known as the old "Commission Trail" up which in the Rebellion of /85 the half breeds from the U.S. ascended to the North West. Inhabitants suffered greatly though fear. Its Indian name means Running Water.**

*In the story of Peter Bryan we come across a variation of our first example.*

***The necessary groceries he got from Wakopa, which was the community centre of that time. Wakopa is the Indian name for Broken-Wheel. A few years earlier the Indians and half breeds under La Riviere had fought a battle on this very spot. During the fray a wheel of one of the Red River carts was broken. Hence the name of the town that sprang up.***

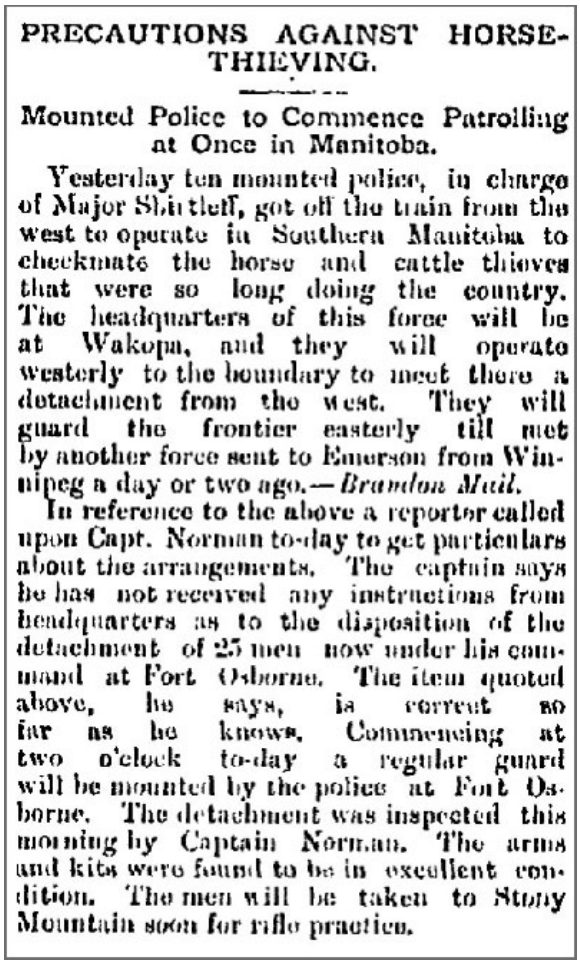
*So what are we to believe?*

*There is probably an element of truth in most accounts, but details get mixed and memories get hazy with time. There are no verified historical records of a battle at Wakopa, especially with HBC traders. There were, however, some serious battles between Metis and the Dakota elsewhere, and there may have been skirmished here and there. There was not much, if any movement of Metis or Aboriginal warriors travelling from the U.S. to take part in fighting that took place in central Saskatchewan, but at the time there were fears that such might happen.*

*In the case of nearby Killarney were have a more unanimous recollection in that the lake was called Oak Lake and at time Hill Lake. We also seem to agree that John Sidney O'Brien suggested the name Killarney for the lake and thus the town. Apparently everyone was OK with that.*

# Horse Thieves

In 1882, when absent from homestead duties, I took part in a hunt for horse—thieves, and three stolen horses. The thieves had stolen the horses from a man of Calf Mountain, near Morden, and were travelling westward near the boundary when overtaken by the sheriff. They would not surrender either themselves or the horses, but told him to take them dead or alive if he could. The sheriff did not shoot, but called out some of the nearest settlers to help him, and the thieves were over-taken beside a large slough; but they still defied the sheriff to take them, alive or dead. Some who had rifles wanted to shoot, but others restrained them especially a young man by the name of J. W. Smaill, from Crystal City, who, strongly advised them not to shoot, for if they should happen to kill the men they could be tried for murder under British law, even though the men were



PRECAUTIONS AGAINST HORSE-THIEVING.

Mounted Police to Commence Patrolling at Once in Manitoba.

Yesterday ten mounted police, in charge of Major Shirtleff, got off the train from the west to operate in Southern Manitoba to checkmate the horse and cattle thieves that were so long doing the country. The headquarters of this force will be at Wakopa, and they will operate westerly to the boundary to meet there a detachment from the west. They will guard the frontier easterly till met by another force sent to Emerson from Winnipeg a day or two ago.—*Brandon Mail.*

In reference to the above a reporter called upon Capt. Norman to-day to get particulars about the arrangements. The captain says he has not received any instructions from headquarters as to the disposition of the detachment of 25 men now under his command at Fort Osborne. The item quoted above, he says, is correct so far as he knows. Commencing at two o'clock to-day a regular guard will be mounted by the police at Fort Osborne. The detachment was inspected this morning by Captain Norman. The arms and kits were found to be in excellent condition. The men will be taken to Stony Mountain soon for rifle practice.

*The Nor'Wester – Aug. 8, 1884*

thieves. In the meantime, while the sheriff and settlers were parleying with the outlaws, two brothers, by the name of McKitrick had crept close enough to the horses, through the long grass to stampede them, so the horses were caught,

but the thieves escaped. The sheriff was satisfied to get the horses, and let the men go. The thieves traveled about seven miles east that night, and stole three horses from the Lynes brothers. They then went a few miles west and crossed the boundary into Dakota.

The next morning the men of the settlement, well armed, followed their tracks, resolved this time to get them. There was not a man left but myself and a young fellow by the name of Alex Mutch. When the women of the district realized that all the men were away, and that they had no provisions or extra clothing, they got us to take a team and wagon and go around the settlement gathering up provisions. We started out, well supplied with bread, tea, pork and flour, also overcoats and quilts, as rain had come on, and they expected the men would be away for several days and the nearest settlement in Dakota was at Devil's Lake, sixty miles away.

We met many of the men returning, their ardour to catch the outlaws being dampened by the rain and chill. However, we continued our journey until we overtook the leaders of the party, just before dusk.

When it became too dark to follow the tracks further, we unhitched our horses and tied them around the wagon, and prepared our own supper. Then we spread our quilts under the wagon, and laid down and tried to sleep, but the rain trickled through the bottom of the wagon box and sleep was out of the question. We moved out into the open, so that the rivulets could not reach us. With two horse blankets on the ground, and our quilts over us, we tried to sleep in the drizzling rain. There were eight of us, the ones behind crowding out those in front, so that he, too, got in behind, and thus we tried to keep warm, as we were chilled to the marrow although it was the last week in June.

With the breaking of the day we had our breakfast, and then resumed our tracking. We followed the tracks until well on in the day, and they led us away to the south-west, toward Bismarck. We changed our course south for Devil's Lake, or Fort Totten, where we might get assistance from the militia, or the Indian scouts.

We camped on the north side of the lake that night, crossed over by the ferry in the morning, reaching the fort, and found that the men we were seeking had been there all night; having travelled around the end of the lake, and had left only an hour before we arrived. We asked the major in command if we overtook the men, and they would not give up the horses, if we had the right to fire on them, even if' we should kill. "Oh", he said, there is no law in the United States protecting horse thieves; you take your own chance. There we had the difference between the law of the United States and the law of Britain.

The Lvnes boys offered seventy-five dollars reward for their three horses, or twenty-five for each horse, and the commandant sent some of the Indian scouts

with us. We came on our men where they had camped for dinner. The Indians had spread out, and came on them from different directions. The Indians drew their revolvers and the thieves surrendered. They made them deliver their guns, and give up the horses, then to our great surprise, they let the men go.

When they returned to the Fort they were asked why they did not bring in the men too. They replied, “Reward for horses, no reward for men.”

They were given the seventy-five dollars, and the officer in charge allowed them to keep the guns and revolvers they had taken from the men and the Indians were happy. We were happy too, as we started back over the trail, and we reached home safely on the first day of July.

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## Lyonshall Church

A Presbyterian Church was built at Lyonshall. The whole community went there whether they were Anglican, Methodist or Presbyterian. The young people walked to and from church gathering others as they walked along until there would be twenty or more by the time they reached the church. The girls walked ahead and the boys trailed behind, each engrossed in their own conversations. Sometimes the Plymouth Brethern held services in the Long River School when Ministers would come for a week or so from the States.

A story is told of one Minister having ties his horse to the fence where he could watch it out of the window as he conducted his service. Being a hot, sultry day with plenty of mosquitoes, the horse was very restless. Near the end of the service it had become so upset it might have got into trouble at any minute. In pronouncing the benediction the Minister concluded with “Whoa” instead of “Amen” for which an explanation seemed in order.

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## *Peter and Mary's Love Story*
### *- A Romance on the Prairies*

*Before we had online dating apps, personal ads, and even singles bars, romance sometimes took a little longer to develop. May be that was a good thing? Either way it seems that even on the lonely prairie, they is still hope of finding a soul mate.*

*Peter Bryan operated a successful dry goods store in Liverpool, England, before he was lured to the Canadian West, influenced by the descriptive promotional literature and tales of great opportunities (and perhaps adventure?) in Western Canada. After working on railroads for some time he ended up in the Wakopa area.*

*Mary Harrison came to the same area with her family. She helped at the store run by the William's family.*

*That is where they met and it seems some mutual attraction developed.*

*But, according to Mary's daughter, Mary was an attractive girl and others had noticed this as well. One in particular, a "gallant young Scotsman" named Robert Douglas would also drop by the store, sometimes with his, "prancing steed and gig" to take Mary for a ride.*

*All was going well until the day they went across the line to St. Johns and young Robert made a serious mistake. He went off and got drunk, leaving Mary to find her own way home.*

*That, as they say, was that. With Peter waiting in the wings, Mary had options.*

*Things went slowly. Mary had moved with her mother to her Uncle's farm. Peter lived nearby. On a fine day he would take his gun over to Victoria Lake and later drop by with a few ducks, which Mary would roast and they all would enjoy a tasty meal.*

*Life went on this way for some time until Mary decided to be a bit more proactive.*

*According to her daughter, Mary had a sense of humour and was fond of jokes, "practical as well as verbal." She tells the following story, - a classic happy ending…*

*"…One chill Halloween afternoon she ambled over to Peter's shanty with a bundle of rags under her arm. He was busy in the field harvesting. She climbed to the top of the shack and stuffed her rags into the smoke-stack. She then returned home. Peter came from the field ravenous and lit a good fire. To his*

*consternation the shack was soon full of smoke. We leave it to you to imagine how he unraveled the plot. But mother's little joke worked and she got her man."*

*As with any good romance movie, there has to be that final scene, where the happy couple rides of into the sunset. In this case they seem to have made quite a fashion statement while doing so.*

*"on the morning of May 29, 1889, they set of for St. Johns North Dakota, in the wagon drawn by Dad's pair of prancing blacks – Prince and Maude. Sitting on the spring seat they made a jaunty pair. Mother wore a beautiful wine basque which reached to her ankles – with high-buttoned black shoes. On her head she wore a black sun bonnet beneath which dangled golden curls. Dad wore a suit fashioned in his Liverpool tailor shop. It consisted of pants in fine woolsheperd's check with high waist after the style of sailor's pants. His coat was a black swallow-tail and his vest was white. His hat and gloves made his costume complete. On reaching St. Johns the only minister they could find was a Catholic priest, and he agreed to marry them"*

*By all accounts they lived happily ever after.*

*Cue the final credits*

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## Brotherly Advice

*John Stewart was the brother to Reverend Andrew Stewart. One day the Reverend came up to John when he was having a difficult time plowing and suggested he would do quite as well without the profanity. John offered to let his brother try.*

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## *Professional Baseball*

Killarney had a professional baseball team in the early days that lasted until their defeat by the Winnipeg Maroons resulting in the bankruptcy of the club. Jess Trip, later Saskatchewan M.L.A. and druggist at Oxbow, was the catcher and Cal Dwan was one of the hired pitchers. (J.C. Treleaven)

# The Lena District

Adapted from, “Pioneer History of the Lena District”, by Mrs. W. Lyons

Many are the stories told of the nights spent with Mennonites on the drive from Emerson to the Lena district. At that time (in the early 80’s) Emerson was the end of the railway. The balance of the journey had to be made by ox team or horses, if the new settler was fortunate enough to possess that luxury.

Having to pass through the Mennonite settlement, many spent the night in their homes, where they always found a kind welcome, plenty to eat and a warm feather bed to keep the weary travellers warm.

I think we who at that time were children, will always remember the night spent on the way.

The new home was sighted with joy, even if it was only a sod shack. Some houses in this district were built from lumber drawn from Emerson, others were log built from logs cut in Turtle Mountain. We also depended on wood from these mountains to keep our fires burning.

In the spring of 1882, a young couple drove from the Emerson district by ox team, settling on a farm near the boundary. Their home was a sod shack with mother earth for floor. It was built from one-ply boards banked up on the outside with sods. As sod shack building was new to this young man, he did not build them properly; with the result the sods spread away from the lumber leaving a space between for the cold winter winds to get in and penetrate through the one ply walls.

Their bed and table were made from boards and nailed to the wall. The boards had previously been drawn from Emerson by ox team. In this shack, their first child was born.

Among the earliest settlers in this south district near the boundary line, were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rowsom. Mr. Rowsom was a carpenter by trade and besides helping out in building, he made the coffins that held the early dead.

Mrs. Rowsom held the first private school in her home in 1886. The next summer, Mr. J. W. Magwood taught school in the old Barber house west of where Victoria Lake school now stands. Children drove for 5 miles to attend the classes.

In 1889 the Plum Hollow School was built. It was named after a district by that name in Leeds County, Ontario, where one of the first trustees attended school.


*A display in Killarney's J.A.V. David Museum*

Mr. W. Smallicombe was a tailor and drove over the whole district with his pony and buckboard, making suits and coats for the homesteaders. Many of the pioneers will remember his jolly laugh.

When Colin and Robert Finlayson came to Emerson, they had nothing but a trunk with their belongings in. They bought a team of young unbroken oxen, put a yoke on them, cut a plank in two, made a stone boat by nailing them together, hooked the oxen up to it, put their trunk on the planks and drove up to their homesteads, walking beside the team to urge them along.

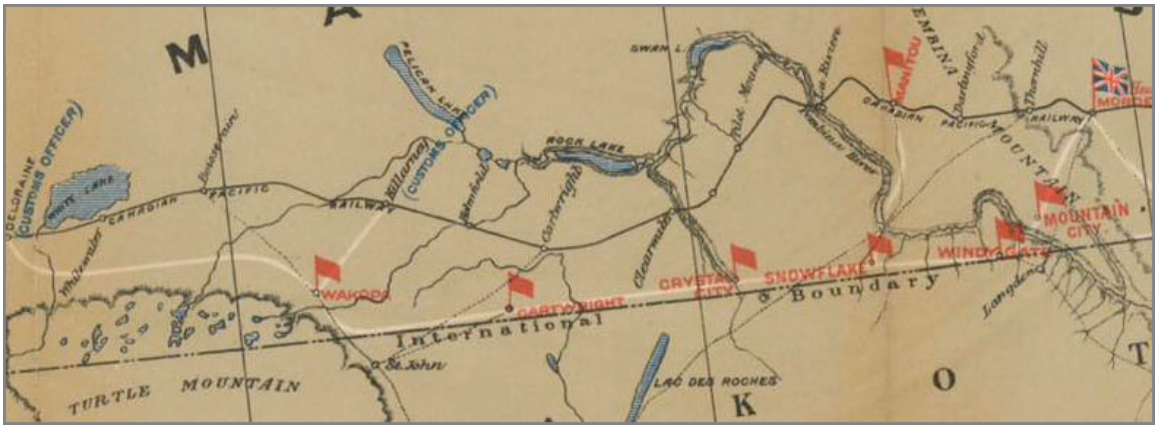
The Finlayson family were the very first settlers in the Victoria Lake district, coming in 1881. Mrs. Finlayson was doctor and nurse combined for a number of years. We have many happy memories of the kind old lady coming to our homes to help relieve the sufferings of our dear ones. Her sons, Colin and William still live on their homesteads. Robert resides here in town.

T. S. Menarey of Cartwright was the first storekeeper. William Barber was a plasterer and bricklayer. He built chimneys and plastered houses over the whole district. Many of the pioneers will remember his buckskin ponies and greyhounds. He did a great deal to keep the wolves from getting troublesome. When a wolf was sighted word was, sent to “Bill” as he was then known. He lost no time in getting on the scene with his fleet ponies. Soon the wolf would be run down and killed.

Wat Nichol was a noted violinist in these days and whenever a dance was held, Wat would be invited to come along and bring his “fiddle”. Many are the pleasant evenings spent dancing to his music. His sons today furnish music for our old time dances, which the middle aged people still enjoy.

Fred Burrows opened a post office in his house one mile south of Lena in 1892. Up to that time the settlers had to drive to either Killarney, or St. John, N. D. for their mail. For 13 years, Mr. Burrow’s home was a community centre, where friends and neighbors met once or twice a week to get their mail and to talk of crops and weather. In 1935 the post office was moved to Langenfield's store, Lena.

The R. N. W. M. Police played a very important part in that south district in the early days. They patroled the boundary every day, giving us a feeling of protection. Their red coat was a welcome sight to the lonely settler. While the early settler admired and honored the Mountie, the Indians were terrified of them and kept out of their way. They also did good work in stopping smuggling and horse stealing.




*Police stations along the boundary.*

In 1885, the time of the N. W. Rebellion, a “home guard” was formed, It consisted of farmers in the south district, and the object was to enable each man to protect his home and property from the prowling Indian, who was out to steal anything he could carry away. The government supplied to each man an Enfield rifle, bayonets and ammunition. Once a week they met in Wakopa for drill. It was a

good idea, as it furnished firearms for each home and taught the people the necessity of protecting their homes and property. When the Indian knew the white man was armed, he kept away from the homesteads. Those of us who were children in 1885, still fear and hate the Indian.

In the early 80's, religious services were held occasionally in farm homes, but after the Plum Hollow School was built, it became the church centre.

*The Church*

In 1904, the Lena branch Railway was built from Greenway through Lena and Wakopa and on to Deloraine, giving the farmers a market within 3 or 4 miles, making a vast difference to them.

A, B. Langenfield built the first general store. He handled all kinds of merchandise, in fact everything the farmer needed, saving them the long drive to town. Today this district is considered one of the most prosperous districts in Manitoba.


Lena – after the railway was abandoned.

## *What is Rattlesnake Pork?*

*The Watson family explained it this way….*

*People lived by the gun, off their gardens, and on salt pork fro Brandon. It was called Rattlesnake Pork, the reason being that pigs can kill rattlesnakes because poison can't get through fat.*

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# *Pancake Lake*


*Pancake Lake is situated along what used to be the Boundary Commission Trail east of Killarney. In the late 1870's the trail had become the main "highway" for settlers departing from Emerson for homesteads to the west. The spot was named by pioneer Harry Coulter, as he ate his dinner on its shoreline. In 1880, the federal government put up four portable shelters here for the convenience of travellers through the area, the RCMP, settlers, and Indigenous people.*

*Robert Finlayson squatted near Pancake Lake before he took his homestead, put up a shack, 18 by 22 feet, and operated a stopping house. Charles Bate recalled a time when thirty-four people were storm-stayed there for four days in 1882. One traveller insisted it was twenty below…in the shanty.*

*Apparently Pancakes were on the menu (or perhaps they were the menu). He had no stove so he cooked them over a fire, on top a stone.*

*Still, it was much appreciated by weary travellers and often mentioned in their accounts of travelling that route. One such traveller was C.W. Gordon, known to many by his pen name Ralph Connor. Long before he was a best selling author, Mr. Gordon was very well known Minister in southwestern Manitoba.*

*"Early April," wrote Dr. Gordon, "found me in my mission field in Southern Manitoba, rounding up the scattered settlers into congregations and Sunday Schools, organizing Bible classes, baseball teams, and singing classes. It was a glorious summer."*

*"The first Sabbath's work," he wrote in Knox College Monthly of February, 1886, "began at Chesterville, three miles from the boundary at 10 o'clock with Sabbath School and Bible class, immediately followed by service at 11, at which the attendance varied from twenty to fifty. After crossing a couple of streams and riding seven miles north, we reach Cartwright where, at five, Sabbath School, Bible class and services were held.*


*"The next Sabbath's work began with a ride of about sixteen miles straight west to Pancake Lake, where service was held at 10:30. After a hasty lunch and crossing two streams we reach Killarney - one of the prettiest spots in Southern Manitoba.*

*Sources*

*Personal Reminiscence: The Finlayson Family, The Harrison Family*
*Garland, Aileen, Trails and Crossroads to Killarney*

# *A Stranger Calls*

As we have mentioned elsewhere, rural Manitoba was relatively crime free in pioneer times. That could be partly because the first farm families were not exactly flush with cash –- in short, there might not have been a lot of valuables to attract thieves. At the same time the isolation that farm families experienced left them vulnerable and they felt it. And as with the episode of horse stealing recounted elsewhere, proximity to the US border was a factor.

Submitted by Anne Burrow

*In those early days strangers often appeared at a farmer's door and asked for a night's lodging. No one was refused but sometimes a sleepless night would be the result if it happened to us. One late afternoon a man's request for food and shelter was granted, but as the evening advanced it became increasingly clear from his furtive movements and restless watchful eyes that all was not well. This uneasiness worried my parents so that when it was time for the evening chores my father requested to him that he might help. Outside the stranger walked around the house, the woodpile, granaries and stables., then carefully examined each horse. Finally, pointing to one he remarked that that one should be able to run. A negative reply was given.*

*During their absence Mother had put the children to bed in her room, also taking the gun and a box of ammunition. The stranger's bed was made up on the couch in the kitchen. Soon the light from the coal oil lamp was extinguished and all was quiet - but not for long as the uneasy man began his wanderings. Knocking on my parents' bedroom door he called, "Boss, Boss". No reply was made although both were awake and fully dressed. Then he walked to the foot of the stairs and said, "Come down. I know you're up there". When no reply was forthcoming the worried man opened the door and went outside. Returning to the house he'd lie down for a short time, then rise and follow the same procedure as before.*

*At last the long nigh came to an end. After breakfast the stranger removed two revolvers from his holster. These revolvers were unloaded, cleaned, reloaded and replaced. Then to the great relief of two anxious, weary persons the man continued on his way.*

*Later that day two American policemen came by. They were searching for a man who had killed a little boy in Virginia and had escaped custody. The description proved that it was the man we had befriended. The Americans kept out of sight when they arrived in Killarney, but suggested to some townsmen that if a man answering to the description should appear at the hotel he should be treated at the bar. This was done and soon the inebriated man was relieved of his weapons and handcuffed. The following day the three Americans returned to the U.S.A.*

# *Church's Brickyard*

*In most Manitoba towns the first commercial buildings were of frame construction, erected quickly to meet immediate needs. Once the town was established, merchants often turned to brick construction or at least brick facing. It seemed more permanent, more substantial. Killarney's main street was once lined with such brick storefronts, and today quite few of them remain, sometimes with the bricks hidden under "modern" renovations.*

**Brick buildings line Broadway in the early days.**

*What really came in handy was a nearby supply of bricks, or more importantly, a good supply of suitable clay and a person who knew what to do with it.*

*In Killarney, that person was Robert Church.*

*Robert Church came with his parents to North America in 1858, first settling in New Jersey, where Robert, who had learned the brick-making trade at home in England.*

*After the death of two siblings, a doctor advised the family to move further inland where the climate was not so damp. They selected Toronto, where after twelve years and more tragedy (three young children died during a diphtheria epidemic) they came west. Arriving in Emerson, where they homesteaded, but more misfortune awaited them. Robert was assisting a sick neighbour when a doctor arrived and diagnosed smallpox. Robert had to be quarantined for three months.*

*That taken care of, Robert left his parents in Emerson and took a homestead in Fort Garry, but the very first year the Red River flooded his land and he decided that this was no place to try farming.*

*A bit of good luck seemed to make its appearance in the form of a stranger who offered to trade the flooded homestead for one 70 miles further west – ten miles south of the where Killarney would soon be located.*

*Little did he know that the flooded farm he left behind would one day be part of Pembina Highway. That might appear to be a rather noteworthy lost opportunity, but in any case the move to the Killarney area was the beginning of a reversal of fortune that was long overdue. Winnipeg's loss was Killarney's gain.*

*As he was beginning to establish his farming operation his brick-making experience came in handy when he noticed that the texture of the clay on his land was ideal for making bricks.*

*Lacking capital, It took some pioneer ingenuity and a lot of hard work to get things started.*

*The necessary equipment had to be made by hand, and the wood for firing had to be hauled from Turtle Mountain with a home-made sleigh. He had to creat his own lime kiln to made the necessary mortar for building.*

*Within a year he had made 20,000 bricks. By 1884 as settlers began building "real" houses, and each one needed a brick chimney or two. From that time until 1903 his bricks were used in most of the brick buildings in Killarney and area.*

*Robert and his family's place in the community was now well established. He served on the local school board, Mrs. Church served as a midwife. They supported the Methodist Church.*

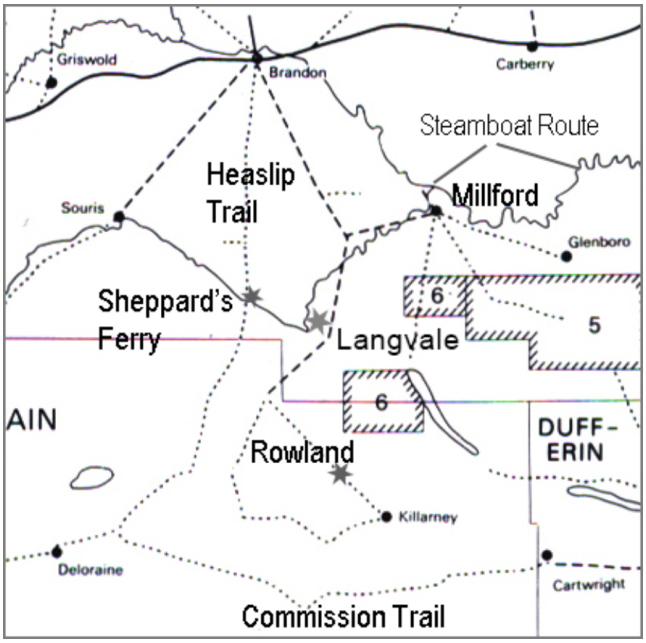
*Sources:  Personal Reminiscence: Church Family*

# The Rowland District

Adapted from, “Pioneer Days in the Rowland District “ by J. E. Haight

*George and Nancy Haight – Rowland pioneers.*

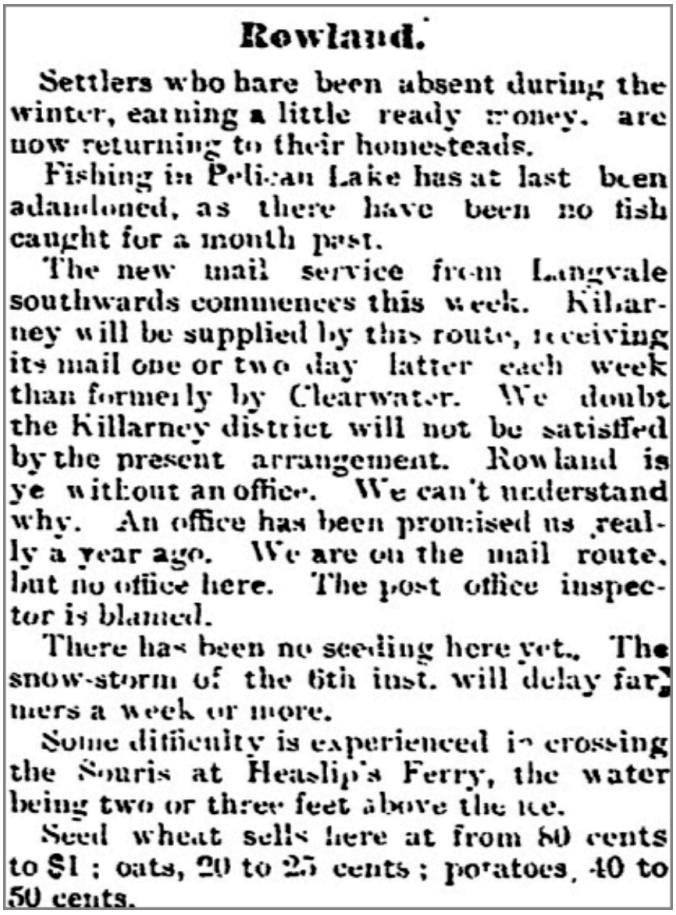
The nearest post office was at Langvale, about 13 miles away and some of the young husky fellows thought it nothing to walk over in an afternoon for the mail for themselves and their neighbors, especially when they were expecting a letter from the “girl I left behind me.”




*Trails in the Pre-Railway days*

When the post office was established at Rowland in 1883, with Geo. Haight as post master, the late Mr. Chas. Bate was appointed in Her Majesty's Service to carry the mail from Killarney to Langvale and Rowland. Later Mr. James Russell, with his faithful old grey horse, "Dan" and backboard took over the service.

In 1882, it was fully expected that the Manitoba Southwestern Railway would pass from Glendenning through the southern part of Township 4 westward, so with high hopes what was expected to become a thriving town was located on Section 10-4-18. A stopping place, store, blacksmith shop, with Neil Johnson as first smith, a large feed and sales stable; consisting of poplar poles and prairie brick, and a commodious tent were erected. This location was in a direct line from Brandon to the historic village of Wakopa and the international boundary.



**Rowland.**

Settlers who hare been absent during the winter, earning a little ready money, are now returning to their homesteads.

Fishing in Pelican Lake has at last been adandoned, as there have been no fish caught for a month past.

The new mail service from Langvale southwards commences this week. Killarney will be supplied by this route, receiving its mail one or two day latter each week than formerly by Clearwater. We doubt the Killarney district will not be satisfied by the present arrangement. Rowland is ye without an office. We can't understand why. An office has been promised us really a year ago. We are on the mail route, but no office here. The post office inspector is blamed.

There has been no seeding here yet. The snow-storm of the 6th inst. will delay farmers a week or more.

Some difficulty is experienced in crossing the Souris at Heaslip's Ferry, the water being two or three feet above the ice.

Seed wheat sells here at from 80 cents to $1 ; oats, 20 to 25 cents ; poratoes, 40 to 50 cents.

*Brandon Sun, May 16, 1884.*

But alas, the long cherished hopes of the pioneers were not to be realized, for in 1885, the railway came, leaving Rowland, the nucleus of a busy, prosperous, commercial center four miles north of its iron way. Thus the verification of the thought as expressed by the poet, "Hopes are allusions and not what they seem." Today there is nothing left to mark the spot.

*Rowland United Church - 2012*

Some notable persons were entertained in the humble farm homes in those days. Among them were Lord John Pollock, of London, Eng, Professor Tanner, of Edinborough, Scotland. These two were accompanied by Mr. J. W. Dafoe, later editor of the Winnipeg Free Press. He was on duty as reporter. It was Mrs."Geo. Haight, who did the entertaining on this occasion.

When Professor Tanner returned to his home in Scotland, he wrote a poem about the great west country, part of which I here quote: “There a man is a man, if he is willing to toil. And the humblest may gather the fruits of the soil. There children are plenty and he who hath most hath help for his fortunes and riches to boast. There the young may exult and the aged may rest, away far away in the land of the West.”

Those were the good old days, there, was friendliness and companionableness, for every man was as good as his neighbor, they had hearts that could feel for his neighbor’s woe and share in his joy with a friendly glow, with sympathies. large enough to enfold all men as brothers. They were bound together by one common tie in the days of the early eighties. If one was unfortunate and behind with his work, the word was, “come on boys, we’ll help him out,” With no thought of how much are we going to get for it.

## *Drinking Problem?*

*The family of Robert Crummer, who homesteaded in the Rowland area remember their father telling them that… "There was a hotel and blacksmith shop on the 1/4 of 4- 4-18 where George Crummer lived. The hotel had a whiskey they called "Oh Be Joyful". People walked for miles to bring their plow shares to be sharpened at the blacksmith shop."*

*The location mentioned is adjacent to the proposed townsite of Rowland. We know that there was a "stopping house" operated by Rowland pioneers, the Haights's, and that locals sometimes referred to these as hotels. Although one could get a meal at stopping houses, they certainly aren't generally remembered as places to get alcohol. Nowhere in other writings by Rowland pioneers do I find mention of the beverage in question.*

*It makes one wonder a bit about all the reminiscence that we use as the basis for local history. Were the accounts perhaps sanitized a bit? Did they leave out some of the good bits?*

*The Rowland district had its early beginning in the year 1881 and 1882 situated on S.W. corner of S.W. quarter 10-4-18, and across the road on N.W. Quarter 3-4-18. The townsite was located here owing to a survey for a proposed railway to Brandon, and was named Rowland by George Haight on account of the rolling contour of the surrounding countryside.*

*At that time it consisted of a Post Office, a store managed by Hugh McKellar, a blacksmith shop, with Neil Johnson as village smithy, who used to walk seven miles to and from his homestead, and the Haights, stopping house where everyone was assured of real hospitality.*

*Hospitality, yes…but…booze?*

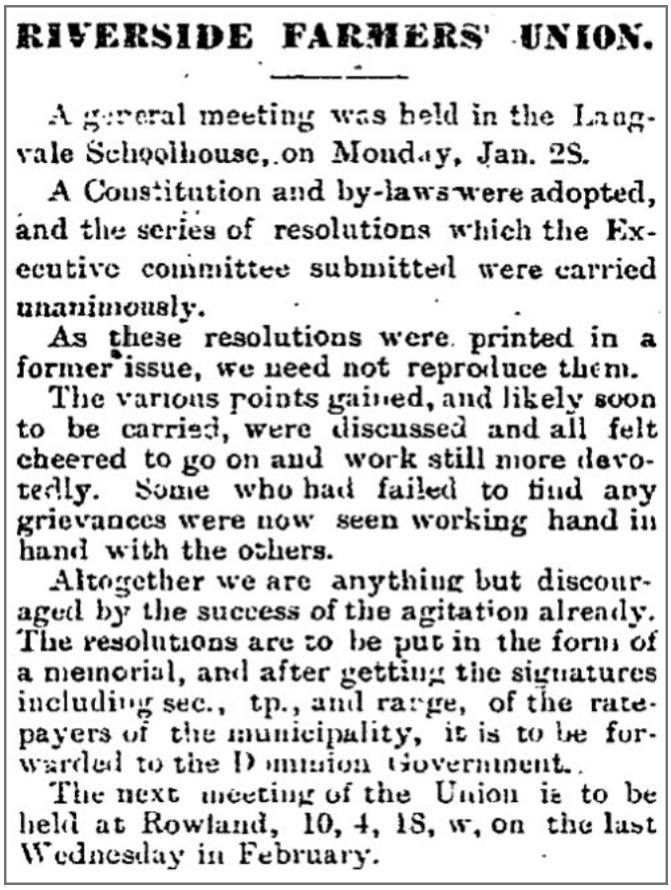
*And what about that fanciful nickname, "Oh Be Joyful"?*

*Well, Google informs me that "Oh Be Joyful" was one of the nicknames Civil War soldiers used for hooch, along with other names like Forty-rod and Blue Ruin.*

*We know that many of the pioneers enjoyed a drink or two - sometimes more than two. Nellie McClung describes a Dominion Day picnic in Millford marred by public drunkenness. Years later she spearheaded efforts at prohibition.*

*Yet it is rare to find mention of alcohol, or problems with alcohol in pioneer writing. I suspect that a lot of this writing was put down on paper at a time when it just wasn't polite to mention it.*

One amusing sight the writer saw was a horse and an ox hitched to a top buggy conveying a man and his wife to church service, on Sunday. The preacher was no less a person than the late Dr. Stewart who later became professor in Wesley College. Winnipeg. The meeting was held in what was then called a “house”, dimensions, 10 x 12. Divine services were held in stopping places and in private homes until Rowland School was built in 1886 and Bethel School in 1887.



**RIVERSIDE FARMERS' UNION.**

A general meeting was held in the Langvale Schoolhouse, on Monday, Jan. 28.

A Constitution and by-laws were adopted, and the series of resolutions which the Executive committee submitted were carried unanimously.

As these resolutions were printed in a former issue, we need not reproduce them.

The various points gained, and likely soon to be carried, were discussed and all felt cheered to go on and work still more devotedly. Some who had failed to find any grievances were now seen working hand in hand with the others.

Altogether we are anything but discouraged by the success of the agitation already. The resolutions are to be put in the form of a memorial, and after getting the signatures including sec., tp., and range, of the ratepayers of the municipality, it is to be forwarded to the Dominion Government.

The next meeting of the Union is to be held at Rowland, 10, 4, 18, w, on the last Wednesday in February.

*Brandon Sun, Feb. 16, 1884*

The first political meeting ever held in the district was in the stopping place under the auspices of the “Farmers Union,“ Mr. James Lang of Langvale was the speaker. The Municipality of Riverside in which lies the Rowland district never had a place where liquor could legally be sold. It came under Local Option in the early days as the result of a petition circulated by Rev. Mr. Kinley and Mr. A. Mitchell, such solid men as Mr.Thos. Morrow, late of Killarney, the McMillans, Mitchells, Loves, Chesters, Bills, Hopwoods and many others, upheld the temperance cause, when an effort was made to repeal in 1908 and it failed.

Game was plentiful in the pioneer days; geese, ducks, sandhill cranes, and chicken. Fur-bearing animals were also numerous, red fox, of which the writer dressed 32 in one winter and the pelts were sold at from $1.50 to $2.00 each. Mink, badger and there was also in evidence that very much despised little

animal which when danger approached had the faculty of effusing an extremely obnoxious effluvia which plainly said, please let me alone and all will be well.

Sometimes the graceful jumping deer might be seen leisurely strolling over the prairie and in the timber areas, moose and elk were to be found.

In concluding these memories of the pioneer days, I have, to say that most of the brave men and women who turned the virgin soil of the wide open prairie into fields of productiveness, who endured the hardships and privations of pioneering, built homes, churches and schools and made it a goodly land in which to live, these have left their mark and passed on, showing that this is a world of change. In thinking of this, it seems to me that I might fittingly quote these words. “Like as a plank of driftwood, cast on an angry main, another plank encounters, meets, touches, parts again. So it is with life forever o’er life’s dark troubled sea, we, meet, we greet, we sever, drifting eternally.”

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## The Squires of Fairhall

Our home seemed to be a meeting place for the district, where the neighbours gathered to play baseball. The Orangemen also built a small lodge on the corner Dad’s property, where we danced and held concerts.

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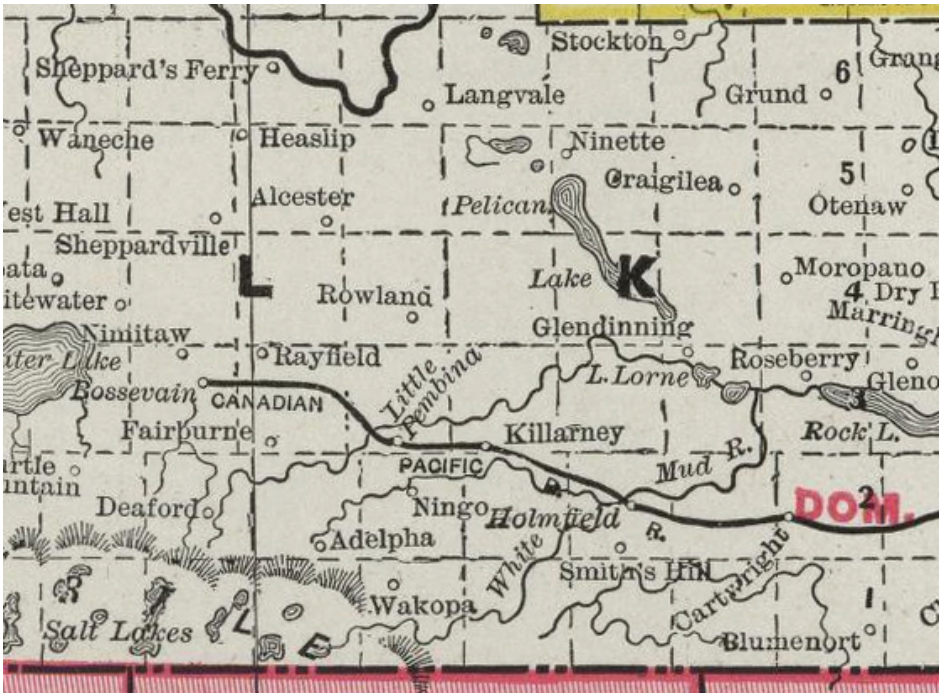
## Fun and Games

The chief school games were association football and baseball, prisoner’s base, pon-pom-pull-away, and steal the wedge, and evening games in the downtown lots and byways amongst the boys were “smuggle the gag” and “hoist the sail”. Skating and ice boating on the lake and Bay and tobogganing on both sides of the “Mountain” south of the lake were great winter sports engaged in by many. In the good old summertime many a happy moment was spent in swimming and fishing, in canoeing and sailing, and midnight cruising and dancing on the lake. Canoe fights and moonlight canoe parties were enjoyed by the participants in the water and the on-lookers sitting on the north bank of the lake in front of the John Williams’ cottages.

A memory by J. C. Treleaven

# *Railway Roulette*

*Check out the Killarney area on a recent Manitoba Travel map and compare it with this map from the 1887. A rail line had just been completed through Cartwright, Killarney, and as far as Boissevain. Those names remain on today's maps, while the names Glendenning, Alcester, and Rowland, which were all much more well-known prior to 1884, have disappeared.*




*That's because the location of some of those first settlements was based on an expectation that a railway would pass their way. The railway seldom came where it was expected. That was partly by design, partly based on simple geography and landforms.*

*In 1884 settlers in the Turtle Mountain region expected that the much-anticipated railway link connecting them to Winnipeg, and the great wide world, would pass north of Rock Lake, through valley south of Pelican Lake and serve the new communities of Tisdale and Rowland. In 1885 the resident of those communities were surprised to find that plans had changed. The new route would proceed from Manitou, south of the Rock Lake. New towns would be located at Badger Creek (Cartwright), Killarney and Boissevain.*

*Tisdale was the community that came closest to actually becoming a town.*

*Mr. Lawlor the storekeeper wasted no time. Tisdale would soon be a ghost town, so he dismantled his thriving store and re-established his business in Killarney, arriving with merchandise and building materials on January 2, 1886. His was the*

*first “real” building erected in the newly-surveyed townsite, on the corner of South Railway Street and Broadway. While waiting for that he did business on the sidewalk.*

*Reminiscence by some of the settlers reveals that they were quite aware of the process.*

*“What decided these newcomers to settle in this area just west of the Pembina Valley was the fact that a railway company had made a survey that came up between the river and the lake, continuing on west. However, after a store, blacksmith shop, sawmill, and a couple of homes were built, a rumour began that the railway people had changed their plans. This proved to be true, and the railway finally was built much farther south by way of Oak Lake, as the present Killarney was then known. What was to have been the townsite called Tisdale (after the surveyor), with its few buildings, then faded away,,,”*

*The railway stated that it was too expensive to build a line up by the Glendenning Valley. That might have been so but some settlers suspected that time, it might be the means of cutting off competing lines from the south.*

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## *What Rowland Might Have Been*

*If the railway had followed through with their original plans, settlers taking the train from Winnipeg would have passed through the new town of Manitou (formerly Manitoba City but relocated a short distance and re-named, in 1882 when the railway arrived). Then the route would have taken them along the north side of Rock Lake through, or near, Glenora a community established in 1879, through the valley at the south end of Pelican Lake and into the booming town of Tisdale, where a well-stocked store and a boarding house was ready to accommodate the traveller.*

*Moving westward, the next settlement would be Rowland. Also ready and waiting for the traveller.*

*The last stop before leaving the Killarney district might have been Alcester, home of Reverend W.R. Johnson who homesteaded there in 1882 before deciding to pursue a career in the Church.*

*In this alternate outcome of the railway plans, the settlement along the little lake to the south called Oak Lake might today be in the history books as a memory, an old name on an older map. Or perhaps a small village on a branch line.*

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# Oak Ridge

Adapted from, “The Oak Ridge District“ by Mrs. Harriet David

The school district of Oak Ridge was formed and a school built during the year 1888. Mr. John Rigby known for many years as Captain Rigby called the first meeting for organization and afterwards built the school. All the neighbors turned out to draw lumber, some of which came from Brandon and some from a sawmill at old Wakopa. Miss Bate, still resident in Killarney, was our first teacher.


*From a display in the J.A.V. David Museum.*

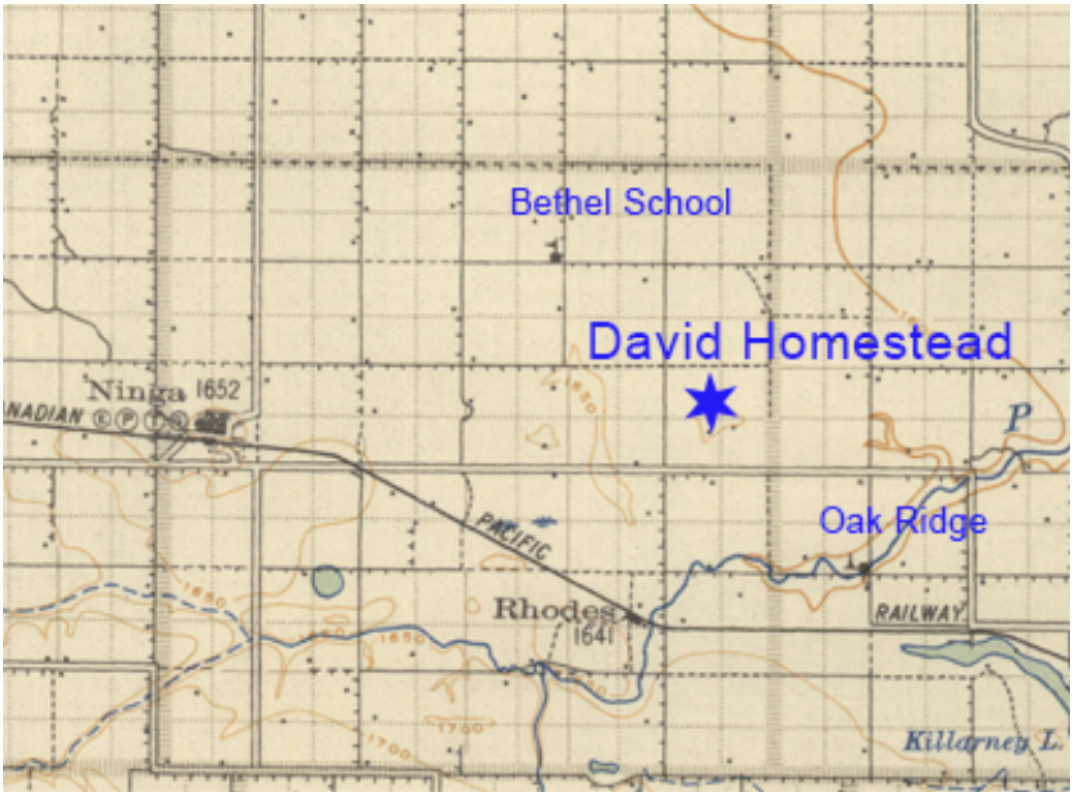
*The David homestead*

Though we had not a church in those early days, service was held in different homes.

The hardships of those early days, before the railroad came were many, the closest market was Brandon and the home store was Wakopa, where all goods had to be freighted in. The doctors were few and far between, and the nearest neighbor had often to fill in as best they could with kindness, perhaps instead of knowledge. However, the joy and fun of roaming the wide prairie, hunting geese and ducks, that were here in thousands or gathering fruit or even hunting up the latest homesteader to see where he came from or possibly if he needed a helping hand, all helped to make the days go past, and still makes many an old “pioneer” speak of the days as “the good old days." The good old ox, many an hour did he help pass away, if only trying to get him on a few miles for a load of wood, or to draw the family to Church.

The first year, one would break as many acres as they could, some planted potatoes on the pit they managed to break. Little by little, by hard work and patience we had enough land ready to put into crop. Hay was plentiful, so cattle and pigs were brought in. The houses around were built of logs, cut from oak or poplar trees, on the bank of the Pembina River. Most of the furniture was homemade and lucky for the wife if her husband had the ability to make what was needed. The stables were built of anything available, some straw, some sod and a few logs.

The following are a few experiences of the writer: We left Brandon with all our earthly possessions drawn by a team of horses with a pair of oxen tied on behind. After three days on the road we arrived at Section 24-3-18, unloaded the wagon, tied the horses and oxen to it and called it HOME. During the three days drive we had lots of time to look over the country. The sun was bright and warm, but the world looked lonely. While on the road I was given the lines and told to keep on the road, and drive for a change, while my brother and husband rode on the oxen, suddenly we came to water, it looked a lot but I had been told not to leave the road, so kept on. It got deeper and deeper, the horses lost their footing, but found it again, and got safely through, right on the road. 0n looking back, found that the boys on the oxen had been nearly drowned as the oxen had to swim. But such were the roads in those days, and we were all very optimistic for the future.




## *John Rigby*

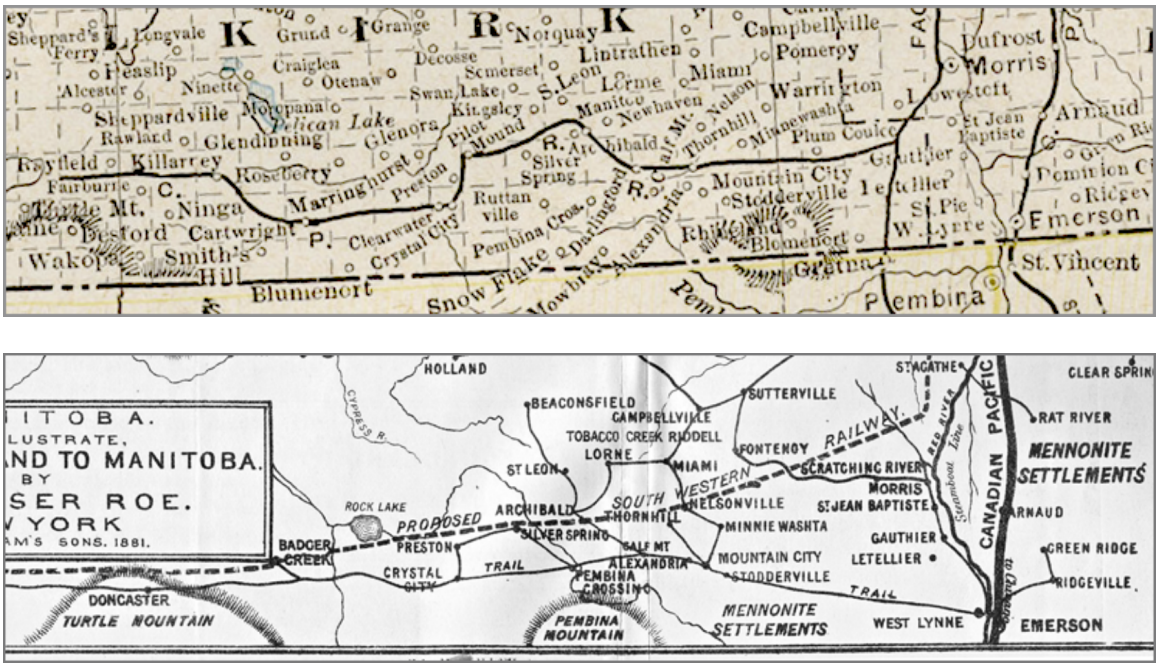
John Rigby, known as Captain Rigby came from Montreal where he had been captain of the steamers Princess and Dagmar, on the Ottawa River. He arrived in Emerson, on March 1882.

In a letter to his sister in England, dated July 23, ‘82, Mr. Rigby says: “While in Emerson we looked up our old friend Mr. McQueen, and found he had gone to church, so we made ourselves at home until his return. When he opened the door and saw the four of us sitting there he gave us a great hand shake and a royal welcome.

We were delayed in Emerson eight days, waiting for our baggage, which had been snowed up at St. Vincent, two miles south of Emerson, roads and trains were blocked in every direction, the storm being the most severe they had had all winter. When the storm cleared up we left for the Turtle Mountains, having bought our outfits. Mr. Vipond buying a team of oxen. But before we got to the night stopping place the wind got up and we had to travel the last mile through another blizzard. The oxen nearly played out. Next morning the wind had gone down and we continued on our way.

When we arrived in Wakopa, we learned the land guide had taken up land in the Oak Lake (Killarney) district, so we decided to go there and see him. We fortunately met him on the way and he told us the land around Oak Lake was not opened up for homesteading yet, but we could locate what suited us and squat on it. He also gave us the numbers of the vacant lots and showed us where to erect a tent in the woods near the lake, as there was no house where we could stay,

We found a place in the bush where the long grass was not covered with snow and with the oats we had the oxen got enough to eat. Between the wind, snow and sun, our faces were tanned and chapped so badly, that afterwards the skin peeled off. This condition continued until the end of April.



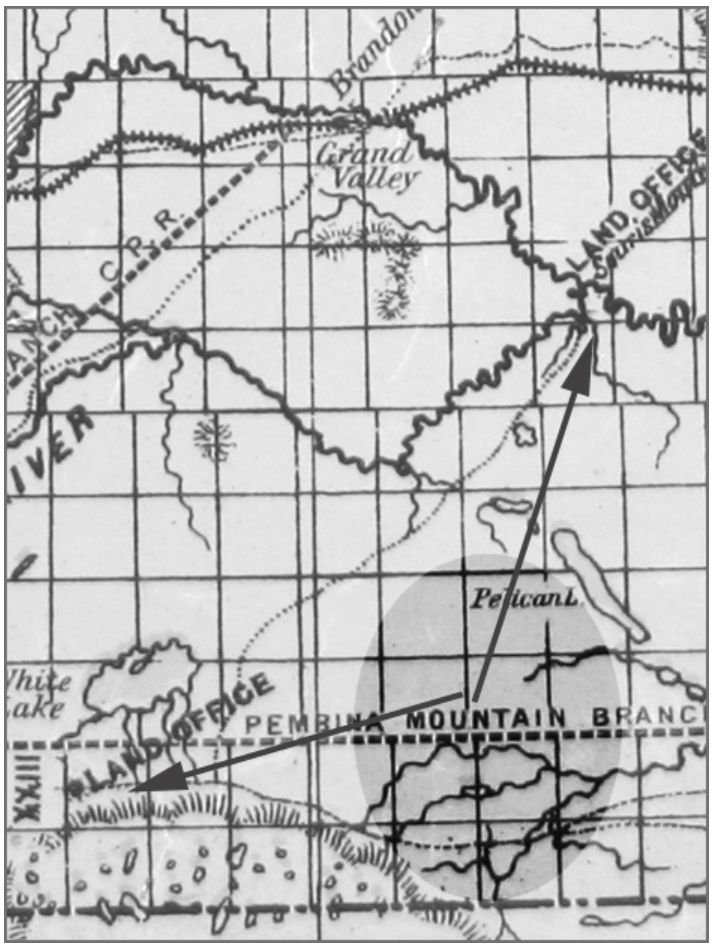

*Two routes. The bottom maps shows the Boundary Commission Trail and a proposed railway. The top map shoes where the actual rail line went.*

The next day we took compass and field glass and started out to l locate our homesteads. There was nothing to be seen but snow, not a tree, except on the banks of the small river that we crossed, and to‘ the east, 10 miles away, we could see a dark line that belted Pelican Lake. We found lots that suited us and decided to squat. We had a very tiresome walk back to our tent six miles through deep snow, which the sun had started to melt, sometimes going knee deep in the soft snow. Next morning we started back for our land, and had only got to the end of Oak Lake, going up on the ice, when it began to blow and snow from the north east. When Vipond and I reached our destination we could not see the others, so we turned back and found, them stuck in a hollow, They were digging a hole in the snow to make shelter for themselves and oxen for the night. We decided to go to the river and camp in the bush leaving the load where it was.

When we got to the valley, I looked around and saw smoke on the opposite slope about a mile east coming from a house, so we made for that and to our astonishment, found it the home of an Englishman and his family, Mr. C. Richards, where we found shelter for both ourselves and oxen for which we were very thankful, as we were drenched to the skin. We were made very welcome.

Next day we got to our land, and Vipond returned to Wakopa for a load of lumber and the balance of our things we had left when we came on to Oak Lake. I put up a tent and a shelter for the oxen. You can imagine what it was like to sleep in a tent with only, a small stove (16 in long) in the winter. We laid down like a trooper’s horse, boots and all went to sleep wet and got up wet, this taking place for weeks. When the spring floods came, it was almost as bad.

We got word on June 20th that the land was open for homesteads, and were at the land office, a distance of 45 miles, the next day at 2 p.m., entering for the land, paid our money and got back 10 miles, on our way that night, where we camped by the roadside as happy as kings. It removed quite a load from our minds as now we can go away for six months at a time without fear of losing the title to our land.




*For most settlers, the Deloraine Land Office was closest, but still quite a trip.*

We are now having the finest weather since spring came. The country all around assumes the richest garb. No one can form any idea of the beauty of these prairies in the summer unless they have seen them. Each month seems to bring forth its own peculiar flowers and the season its game. At times the country is swarmed with wild fowl of various kinds.

About the latter part of April, a kind of purple flower, in shape something like a snow drop. I do not know the names, but there are scores of varieties that I have never seen before. Now the prairies are covered with the wild rose, red and white, orange lilies, bluebells, marigolds and morning glories and in other places the grass is as high as my waist.

# *Entertainment & Culture*

*Reminiscence by the Priestley family*

*Lot has been written about how folks in the good old days "made their own fun." It's certainly a cliché, but that element of the pioneer experience is perhaps just as telling a point of contrast with today's world as are the stories of privation, hard work and loneliness.*

*Here Beth Priestly describes one aspect of the experience and offers some pertinent details….*

*Their (the Lillews) home was "open house", and their help prompt and generous, to all that needed it. Mother told of parties held there with all the neighborhood invited, and each contributed his "bit" to the entertainment. Our people all loved to sing, and my father's most popular number was "Clementine". Mr. Lillew, with his round rosy face, and large red moustache, was a true comedian. His favorite songs, in a rich Cockney accent, were "My Patent Hair-Brushin' Machine" and Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet" – which he later used to sing to me.*

*The Boyds got a harmonium – a small folding organ with foot pedals and a short keyboard. It produced a reedy tone, but they both played well, and made good use of it. It was often folded down and taken about with them to sing-songs. Later on we got a "Karn" organ with a bracket at each side of the music rack on which rested fancy coal-oil lamps filled with red coal oil for effect. Mother played well, and now the sing-songs and Sunday evening hymn session were often at our home.*

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## *English Roots*

*As a child Beth Priestley was particularly aware of her English roots. (She had a pony named "Punch".) Her memories remind us that the settler came from widely varied backgrounds and arrived with widely varying resources, both social and financial. They were, at first, predominately British in origin, but we must make a clear distinction between the British (English, Scottish & Irish) and the Canadians. The Canadians, were, of course from the same stock, but they had either been born in Canada (Upper Canada primarily) or had been well-established there. Both sides were well aware of the differences and there is no doubt that they were aware of those differences. Her memories bring that out clearly.*
*…*

*The Boyds and ourselves made up a little colony of England, transplanted. Conversations usually turned to "home" and events all had shared there. We*

*children felt we knew all out English kin very well. Letters and papers were exchanged regularly, and huge, exciting boxes always arrived from Aunts and Uncles at Christmas. Though most of the plain shopping was done in Killarney, Mother sent to England for our "best things", and for our shoes, measuring our feet by standing us on sheets of paper and drawing round them. Neighbors visiting England often brought things back for us.*

*There was always a warm welcome in our home for anyone from the "old country" – the only requisite for admission that they be English and lonely. In those days a number of well-educated young men from good homes in England were often sent to Canada because of indiscreet behavior at home. Most did not take to farming well, and soon looked for more congenial work. Our house entertained its share of these young men, and when they moved on, sometimes left belongings with us for safekeeping. So it was we kept a violin for a young man who never returned for it; a revolver for one who did; and once a trunk of clothing and books, with the key, for Mother to send articles to him as called for. The clothing consisted of things he considered right for farming in Canada- heavy tailored whipcord breeches, leather leggings, boots and tweed jackets! Mother fed, washed and mended for them all. Father gave good advice, liberally sprinkled with sound religion.*

*Across the road from Lillew's farm lived Mr. Constantine and his son Walter, then a middle-aged man. They owned a cotton mill in Lancashire, had a fine home and good education. They suffered a business failure, and unable to face the humiliation, had come to Canada. Both were totally unfit for farming and did not succeed at it. They were among the lonely Englishmen who visited our home. Old Mr. Constantine died in poverty and distress. Walter went back to England, helped by Mr. Lillew, but returned after several years, and made his home with Camerons till his death.*

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## Wildlife

The Jordan's were settlers from England. One of Alfred Jordan's chores was to haul water with a horse and stoneboat. As he was getting the water one day, he saw an attractive little animal, so he killed it and brought it back to the house. He stopped in front of the door, and Mrs. Widford rushed out crying, "Oh Alfred, you have killed a skunk." So Alfred was hurriedly banished to the granary with bath water and a change of clothing and had his dinner sitting out on the doorstep.

At first I was a bit taken aback at the line…"he saw an attractive little animal, so he killed it", but we have to remember that it was a different time, and killing animals was just a way of life.

Aside from that, this little episode does prompt some questions….

What is a stoneboat?

Do they not have skunks in England?

The answers:

Stoneboats, as I remember them, were heavy sleighs that were also used in the summer for heavy loads that a wheeled vehicle couldn't handle. We used ours to clean out the barn and haul things in the winter, but I think the name implies the original purpose.

Settlers from Ontario were pretty excited about the fact that the open prairie, unlike much of eastern farmland, was treeless. Starting a farm there involved clearing the land first. They soon found out that, although we didn't have many trees to impede the plow, some areas had plenty of rocks.

In the old days there were some farm tasks that were just a little bit less fun than the others. Picking stones was one of those tasks. It was like a new crop of stones grew each year.

…….

Skunks are not native to Europe. They do have polecats that although not closely related do also excrete a foul smelling liquid.

# Pioneer Days

On September 2nd, 1882, two homesteaders journeyed across the prairie driving a yoke of oxen and a wagon containing food, clothing and house-furnishings for a car-roofed home, 12 x 14 previously built of one ply rough lumber by Mr. Allan Hobson. The lumber had been brought in by Mr. Fowler.

Following the corner posts of the sections to find their section, 18-4-17, they skirted a shining sheet of water, on which plenty of wild ducks were enjoying their freedom. Nearby this pretty lake on their homesteads were two homes, at the east end that of Mr. and Mrs. A. Robinson and family who provided many a good meal for hungry travellers, and on the north side that of Mr. John Williams and family. This was the beginning of Killarney.

As the homesteaders passed by this lake among the trees, no thought of the future came to them. They were only concerned with their own bit of land, and the tiny roof-tree they were so anxiously hoping to reach before night came. This they did, and unloaded their stove, put it in place, made a fire, had supper and started their homesteading, quite proud of their large acreage, though most everything else was small.

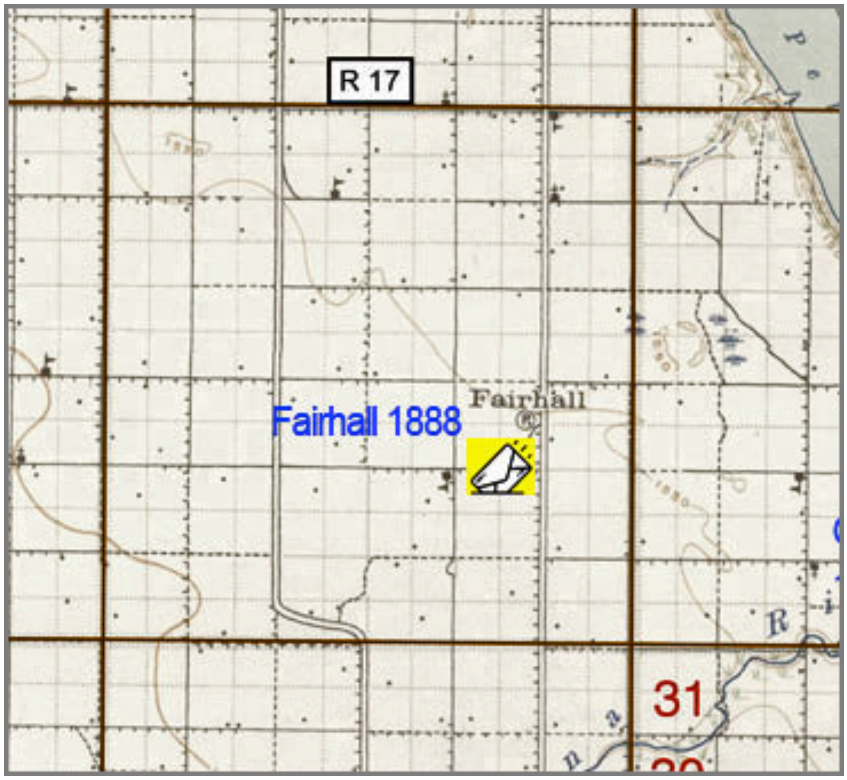
However, here they learned many useful lessons, and found how dependent they were upon others. Their nearest neighbor was Mr. John McKay, who with his young wife had taken a homestead two miles, south of their place. Later on, other homesteaders arrived and during part of that first winter four of them, viz: Mr. Bailey, Mr. Cuthbertson, Mr. A, Squires and Mr. F. Squires lived together in one little house. Sometimes for a little change, they had a bit of bread baked by the wife of the homesteader, who had contrived to bring such a possession with him, but most of the time they were dependent on their own cooking. It would, be hard to say which they enjoyed most, the cooking or the eating. Both were done in a way that only a pioneer of those early days knew anything about. Their next neighbors were three more men, Johnny Martin, Charlie O'Neil and Arthur Reynolds, who brought them books and magazines.

Our first taste of Pelican Lake fish, weighing about ten pounds was brought by Johnny Martin. For this dainty dish we had no salt, as our supply had run out, and we were in the grip of a very cold spell. Never mind, we had some fine meals without the salt for which we longed so much, as well as many other things without which we had to do, in that never-to-be-forgotten first winter which was cold, so cold.

After a while another homesteader arrived. He and his good wife and baby girl, now Mrs. W. J. McKnight of the old neighborhood, came to live with us, and the gladness that came to our small home will never be forgotten. The companionship of others made our world new again and especially after not

having seen a woman's face for three months. These homesteaders brought their mail. The end of February is a long wait for Christmas mail, but it was very welcome even then.

With the welcome company of this little family the memorable first winter soon ended and on March 25th, 1883, the first baby boy in Township 4, Range 17, now W. A. McKnight of Killarney gladdened the hearts, and little home of Mr. and Mrs. H. McKnight.




*Township 4, Range 17, home to the KcKnights, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Cuthbertson, Mr. A, Squires and Mr. F. Squires, Johnny Martin, Charlie O'Neil and Arthur Reynolds.*

# *The Crofters*

Many of us have often been on Highway 18 heading from Ninette, southwards to Killarney, Perhaps you have noticed, that just as you are approaching Road 24N, if you look off to the west you can catch a glimpse of a white church. If you take Road 24 to the next grid road, you will get a better look at a simple unadorned building on a well-kept yard. This is Knox Bellafield Presbyterian Church, situated roughly in the middle of what used to be known as the Crofter Settlement.

Once known locally as the Gaelic Church, is a direct link to the Crofters, a group of Gaelic-speaking families settlers from the Isles of Lewis and Harris in the Western Isles of Scotland. The Killarney group lived near Stornoway on Lewis Island. Another group, from Harris Island, settled at Hilton.

They sailed aboard the ships Corean and Buenos Ayrean to Montreal and came by the Canadian Pacific Railway to Killarney in 1888. They brought their Gaelic language and Presbyterian beliefs to a place they called Bellafield (Bella is Gaelic for “beautiful”) and by 1890, under the guidance of Robert Smith, they had erected a church from local fieldstone.

It was built with a mortar consisting of lime and sand with the technique used in Scotland. However, the walls were damaged by frost and the building was torn down. The stones were sold and a lumber church was rebuilt of wood in 1906 incorporating the foundation and roof of its predecessor. The Church is still used on special seasonal occasions. Morning services were conducted in Gaelic until 1939.

When they first arrived, about 90 percent of the women could not speak English. There was a certain desire for “keeping the old language alive.” However, English was a necessity because Gaelic was not practical for business dealings


***Lewis and Harris*** *is a Scottish island in the Outer Hebrides. It is the largest island in Scotland and the third largest in the British Isles, after Great Britain and the island of Ireland, with an area of 841 square miles (2,178 km$^2$), which equates to slightly under 1% of the area of Great Britain. The northern two-thirds is called Lewis and the southern third Harris; both are frequently referred to as if they were separate.*

*Hard times in Britain during the 1880s' prompted governments and philanthropic organizations to assist families to emigrate from depressed areas. The Imperial Colonization Board was formed to help establish families from the Island of Lewis in the Hebrides on farms in western Canada. The government put up £10,000 on condition that £2,000 by contributed by private benefactors. Lord Aberdeen alone contributed £2,000.*

*T. J. Lawlor visited Scotland in 1888 to encourage the organization to send some settlers to the Killarney area, and his efforts were successful, one group being located in the Bellafield district later in the year.*

*Lawlor and James M. Baldwin, the banker, met them at the station and took them to tents which had been set up for them. The Colonization Board had arranged that J. M. Baldwin would supply them with a small sum of money, and with this they bought from T. J. Lawlor what food and furniture they needed, also poultry, a plough, and seed grain. Hired wagons took them to their allotted quarter sections.*

*In all, twenty married couples (three of them recently married) with fifty-three children, seventeen single men, and six single women came to this area directly from Scotland.*

*Although they were called Crofters, a term which in the Highlands of Scotland designates one who rents and tills a small acreage, their descendants state that only three were crofters. The others were labourers or fishermen with no experience of farming whatever.*

***In** some respects, however, they had advantages over the early homesteaders; they could market their grain at Killarney; schools had been established, they had neighbours from whom some of them soon learned the accepted methods of farming on the prairie, so different from their misty home land. Farming techniques were different from anything in their experience. The early nineties were not prosperous years for any farmers in the district because of poor crops or low prices for their produce. Some of the newcomers spoke only Gaelic and they were naturally clannish.*


**The settlement centred around the church, which was still standing in 2020**.

*When Lord and Lady Aberdeen visited Canada in October 1890, they drove from Brandon to see how their protégés were faring.*

*Lord and Lady Aberdeen had been told that some of the crofters were dissatisfied, but their efforts to discover what complaints they had were not very successful. One man replied, "Yes, it is cold in winter and hot in summer, and the dust makes me wash my face twice in the week."*

*They visited John MacLeod who had been reputed to be one of the grumblers. To Lord Aberdeen's inquiries MacLeod replied, "Well, my Lord, I can tell you it was a lucky day for myself and my family when we went on board the steamboat that took us out of Scotland and landed us in this fine country. We have three yokes of oxen, several cows, and young stock. We will have about 900 bushels of wheat this season and an ample supply of oats, barley, potatoes and different kinds of vegetables and will have 150 acres under cultivation next season. We are only three miles from timber at Pelican Lake. There is any amount of fish in the lake and a large quantity of ducks and geese and plenty of wild turkey on the wheat fields. We have no landlords here, no old country gamekeepers to arrest us for shooting game.*

*Lady Aberdeen was concerned about the loneliness of the settlers on the prairie. An organization called The Lady Aberdeen Association for Distributing Literature to Settlers in the West was formed and eighty-two parcels were sent out before Christmas. Some of the Killarney pioneers remember receiving books which were read aloud during the long winter evenings and passed on to neighbours.*

*Unaccustomed to paying direct taxes or to receiving credit, many of them soon found themselves deep in debt, not only to the Colonization Board which apparently was willing to wait for its money, but to the municipality for taxes and to storekeepers and implement dealers. Implement dealers pressed them to go into debt at exorbitant rates of interest for farm machinery they could ill afford, then seized the machinery but still tried to collect on the notes.*

*In The Killarney Guide, of January 22, 1897, a letter appeared in defense of the crofters declaring that their debts were due to unscrupulous men. The suggestion was made that some payment be made to storekeepers but none to implement dealers still trying to collect on repossessed farm machinery.*

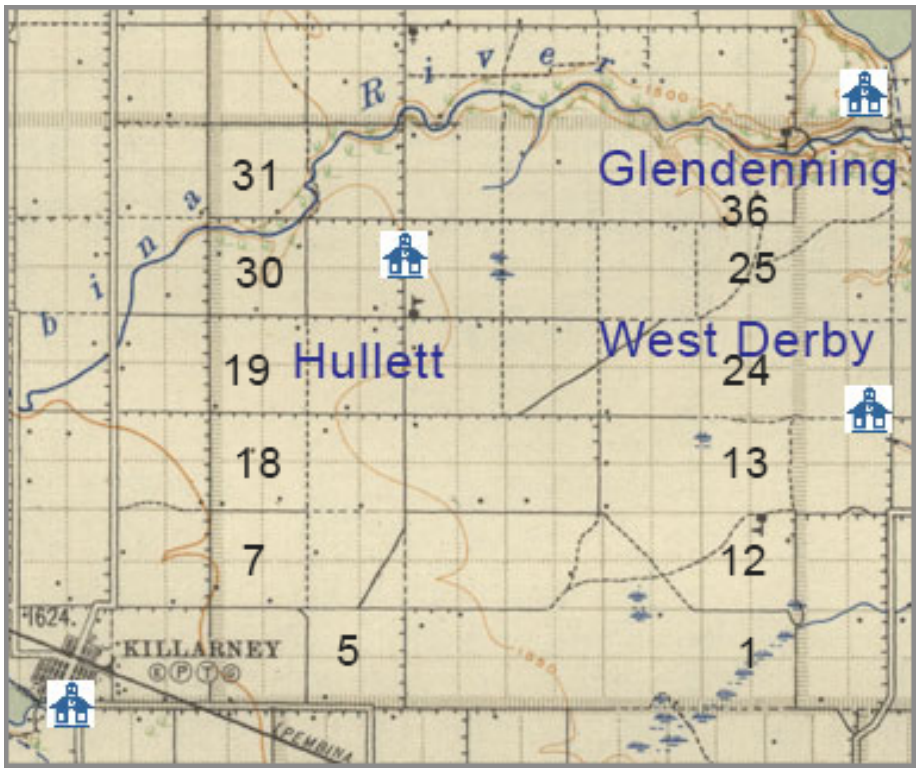
*The Killarney Guide of February 26, 1937, in paying tribute to T. J. Lawlor when he died, made the following reference to the crofter settlement: "After many vicissitudes and some failures, most of the families became excellent settlers. To T. J. Lawlor must be given a large share of the credit for the final emergence of these people from the difficult position in which they found themselves in a new land; he provided necessary provisions on credit to tide them over the winters and bad crops, and acted as friend and advisor until they became established and independent farmers."*

*Although a few gave up and returned to Scotland and others moved on, most of them, remained in the district and many of their descendants are still there.*

# The Hullett District

Adapted from, “Hullett District” by Mrs. M. Christian

The commencement of settlers in what is now know as the Hullett District commenced in the spring of 1881, when two brothers, Peter and Alex Finnen homesteaded on 34-3-16.




*Township 3, Range 16 – The Hullet District*

In March 1883, Mr. Hobson’s family, and the remainder of the Fowler family came, also Mr. William Crawford and Mr. Hicks.

The writer can recall one rather amusing but unpleasant experience to Mr. Hicks who one cold winter day, 35 below, was wending his way to Pelican Lake bush with oxen and sleigh for wood, sitting reading the newspaper and his nose frozen.


*The site of Hullett School*

In 1884, Mr. Geo. Beacom went to Brandon to meet his future wife, she having the honor of being the first bride in the district.

In the early times Mrs. Fowler was to be found at many a sick bed for miles around and was very often sent for before medical assistance was called. Word of illness in any home was sufficient to cause her to saddle up the old white pony, often in the middle of the night and ride miles over practically unmarked prairie on her mission of helpfulness and service.

Hullett School, built in 1892, so named because several of the early settlers came from Hullett Township, Ontario. The nearest land office in the early days was at Deloraine and several of the first settlers walked from their homesteads and back to file on their land. Up to 1885, Brandon was the nearest railroad.

Hullett School

## A Notable Person

The first teacher at Hullett School was Miss Lillian Benyon, from Hartney, who later became Mrs. V. Thomas, a well-known writer and feminist.

In 1905 she joined the Manitoba Weekly Free Press, where she became editor of the Women's Page. Her column "Home Loving Hearts" which she wrote under the pseudonym "Lillian Laurie" provided a forum for the discussion of the problems of rural women, and brought the debate about the rights of women to households across the prairies.

She was one of a group of women, including Nellie McClung, who formed the Political Equality League and fought for, and gained, the right to vote in Manitoba.

# *The Donnelly Connection*

*The decision to leave an established home in Ontario or in Britain was not something that was taken lightly, especially if you were established, had a steady job or owned property. It was a gamble and the decision usually would involve a combination of "push" and "pull". "Pull" represents the combinations of forces that are attracting one to the new place. Advertising, reports from friends, the prospect of a good deal. The "Push" is the negative circumstances that one might want to escape. Sometimes that would involve a business failure or a lack of prospects. As an example, many Ontario farmers found that although their farm was sufficient to feed their family and offer a good life, the shortage of good farmland made prospects dim for their children.*

*And sometimes, there were more pressing circumstances.*

First, lets check a bit of Ontario History….

The "Black" Donnellys were an Irish Catholic immigrant family who settled in Biddulph township, Upper Canada, in the 1840s. The family settled on a concession road which became known as the Roman Line due to its high concentration of Irish Catholic immigrants in the predominantly Protestant area. The Donnellys' ongoing feuds with local residents culminated in an attack on the family's homestead by a vigilante mob on 4 February 1880, leaving five of the family dead and their farm burned to the ground. No one was convicted of the murders, despite two trials.

Information about the family and the events surrounding their deaths was suppressed locally for much of the 20th century, due to many residents possibly having ancestors who were involved. In 1995 the Lucan and Area Heritage Society formed to document and preserve local history, and the organization opened the Lucan Area Heritage & Donnelly Museum in 2009.

The story of the "Black" Donnellys has a Killarney connection.

In fact it led to a number of families relocating to the Killarney area. Included in this migration were members of the Blackwell, Fairhall and Hodgins families.

*One night in 1875 a rap sounded on their door of the Blackwell home in Lucan Ontario. It was after midnight. The door was barred but, when a voice assured him the visitors were friends, Samuel Blackwell opened it and in stepped Andy Brown, who owed him $600.00 rent. Andy had eight men with him, their faces blackened with lamp black. In his hand was a rope, which he put around Sam Blackwell's neck and then declared "I want a receipt for $600.00." Samuel Blackwell could not write a receipt, for he did not know how to write. The ruffians*

*led him half a mile away to a tree where a halter was put on his neck.*

*"Mark X on this receipt or we'll hang you by the neck to that apple tree," snarled Andy Brown. Blackwell signed.*

*When Sam Blackwell took the case to court, Andy Brown swore that he had given the $600.00 to Mrs. Blackwell and that she had hidden it in the rafters, and he had the receipt to prove it. The Blackwells lost the case.*

*Later men they believed to be Andy Brown and his gang burned their house and barn. "Father was no coward," asserted his son, "for he met the ruffians as they came away from the barn. Mother rushed back into the house and carried out the Bible that Father had carried in his pocket from Ireland."*

*Little wonder that the Blackwell family decided to leave Lucan for a more peaceful area.*

*Robert Blackwell once said that his father would look north at night towards Lucan at the fires lighting the horizon and say "I wonder whose barn is burning tonight."*

*The violence that seemed rampant in the Lucan area was related to The "Black Donnellys", their feud with other citizens, and their generally lawless behavior. Law enforcement seemed powerless to stop them and eventually in 1880, local vigilantes attacked and killed most of the family. No one was ever convicted.*

*Another factor in the feuding seems to have been animosity between Catholics and Protestants.*

*Whatever the reasons for the violence, the Blackwells were certainly encouraged along with a few other families to make their way to the Killarney area and seek a better life. Which is what they did.*

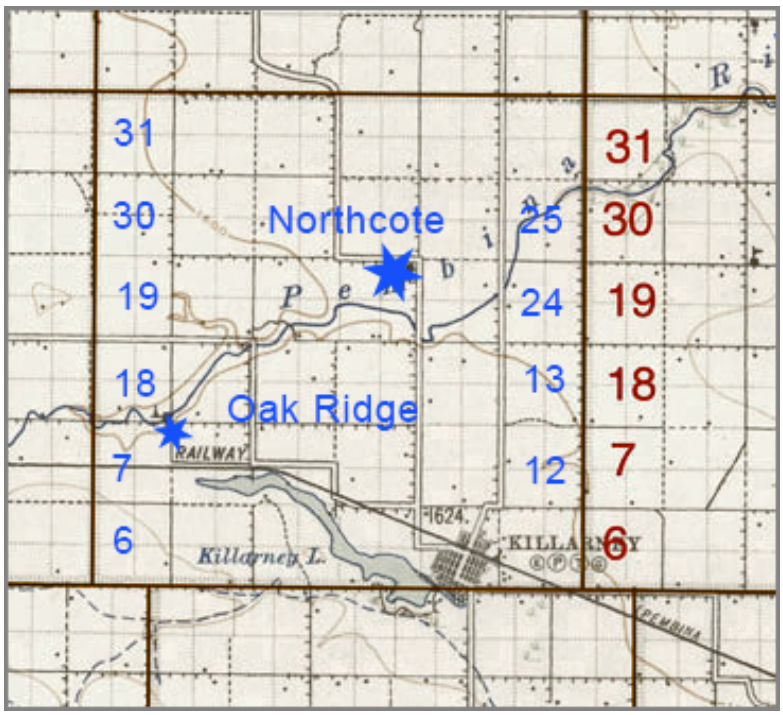
# The Northcote District

Adapted from, “Pioneering in Northcote“, by W. J. Schnarr

The Schnarr family, about 1925. Standing: Wilfrid, Raymond, Margaret and Herman; Seated: Kathleen, W.J. Sgnarr, Mrs. Shnarr.

On May 29th, 1882, a party consisting of James Dempsey, Fred Finkbeiner, J. W. Atkinson, Henry Gann, Andrew McNamee and myself left Crystal City to locate homesteads. We had a yoke of oxen, a plow, stove and provisions for a few days. Our destination was Moose Mountain.

The spring of ’82 was very wet, what bridges had been constructed previously had in many cases been washed out by the floods that spring. Getting stuck in sloughs was a frequent occurrence. The streams had to be forded. I remember crossing the Badger at Cartwright. The water was quite high and when in the middle of the stream the drawbolt broke, all hands had to get down and push. Needless to say, we all got soaking wet. We arrived at A. J. Rollins, at the east end of the bay on June 1st. After looking around at some vacant lands we headed for Deloraine the next day. We got a list of lands in 4-20, north west of where Boissevain is now. The land did not suit us, so we came back to Oak Lake, as Killarney Lake was then named. After tramping over many miles of country, Mr. Dempsey and Fred Finkbeiner located on Sec, 24-3-17. The first settlers in this district came in in 1881.




*Township 2, Range 17*

The nucleus of what is now the town of Killarney was formed when Mr. A. J. Rollins opened a store in an addition to his house on his farm across from the end of the bay early in March 1883. The goods were freighted in by ox teams from Brandon. It took six days to make the round trip. In 1884, A. J. and Frank Rollins built a store just across the road on the north bank of the bay. The same year John McLeod opened up a blacksmith shop and Mrs. Dufty built a boarding house. After the school was built in 1886 it was made the centre of entertainments, etc.

Northcote School

The name originally intended for the school district was “Maple Lea ”. This was rejected by the Board of Education as there was already a district by that name. They suggested “Northcote”.

*Northcote School*

This was the year of the Riel Rebellion in the Northwest. When spring opened on the Saskatchewan River the military authorities equipped the small steamer “Northcote” as a miniature battleship to steam up the river and relieve some of the northern posts, hence-the name.

The contract for building the school was let in the spring of 1883.

# *Peddlers*

*Before Amazon and Purolator, before Sears and Eaton's, home delivery to lonely farm sites was provided by independent peddlers. These were seen by some as a welcome service, by others as a nuisance, and by a few as a danger.*

*Beth Priestley provided us with one story….*

*Although Killarney town had telephone service since 1903, it was not extended north to our district till about 1910. It was hailed with delight, ending isolation for womenfolk. Before this they always dreaded peddlers or strangers on foot, or on horse, when the men were away. Stories were told of atrocities and assaults. After the phone came the women called a warning to each other in time to summon husband or neighbours. The peddling business became unprofitable.*

*On one occasion, before the phone, a pedder (mother always called them Syrian peddlers) came to our door about supper time. The men had been away all day and were late coming home. Mother was frightened and kept us children behind her. The peddler offered his wares wares and she said, "No, thank you". Then he said, "Me come in me very tired Missus". Mother replied firmly, "No I cannot let you come in, very conscious that he probably knew she was alone. Then, "Me very tired Missus, me stay all night". Mother said, "No, I'm sorry, we have no room". Finally he asked, "You Christian lady?" She replied, "I hope so". Then "Me Christian too, me stay all night", he said, but Mother was firm, and he left, walking slowly. She watched him out of sight, then barricaded the door. Almost dark and we heard the wagon coming. Father and Uncle were returning. When they came into the yard the peddler was with them. They had picked him up on the road. He had a good supper and was given a roll of blankets to sleep in the granary all night.*

The Cluff family had a different perspective…

*Perhaps one of the more or less forgotten incidents in the life of the early settler is the peddler. Of these there were various types. The more common is the far eastern fellow, usually a Syrian, who tramped from farm to farm carrying two heavy cases. These contained a variety of articles – needles, pins, cheap jewelry, staples such as tablecloths, scarves, towels, etc. He would stay overnight and pay with a few baubles for the children*

*Another type was the man with horse and covered cart. His wares were in grater demand as he had an assortment of kitchen utensils, farm tools, etc. His visit was often opportune and save a long journey to buy them.*

# The Huntly and Glendenning Districts

Adapted from, “Huntly and Glendenning” by William Cummings


*The site of Glendenning School, on the west side of Pleasant Valley.*

The district of Huntly was named by Mrs. Wm. Easton from Huntly Brae, Scotland, who has gone to her last resting place twentyfive years ago.

To begin with, I landed in Emerson Sunday, May 14th, 1882. I started out to walk to the Marringhurst plains but was overtaken by a commercial traveller from Montreal, driven by a young man by the name of Joe Saddler. I came from the little village of Durham, Chateaugay Valley, Que, now a nice thriving town called Armstown. Quite a number of the Killarney residents came from the same place, the Coulters, of Wakopa, Cowans, Weirs, McGills, Fasburgs, Travers.

I accepted a ride from the traveller and we arrived in Calf Mountain that night after a drive of fifty miles. Many times the horses were so deep in mud and water that it was hard to tell whether they were swimming or walking. We were forced to tie our horses outside that night and managed to get the comfort of a bed on the floor for ourselves. The next night we reached Pilot Mound, here our ways parted and I got a ride from there with R. S. Thompson, at that time a resident of Marringhurst Plain. The first house to be seen as we came out of the Pembina Valley was that of John A. Wilson. The old house has long ago been replaced by a new one and is still occupied by his youngest son, James. There I was only four miles from my destination, the home of my uncle, John Cumming; who landed on the Plain the year of ’79. He afterwards sold his place to Mr. Jas. Fraser of Pilot Mound and moving west to the Huntly district, where he still lives, now in his eighty-eighth year.

Among the pioneers of the district I might mention Wm. Stark, John O. Bell, David Maxwell, who turned the first furrow in that district, Jock Cumming who has resided since the fall of eighty on his present site, also Wm. Maxwell and Jim Graham.

I have attended picnics and dances in Huntly district where the crowd had gathered from as far west as Glendenning and east to Glenora, altho' the only means of travel at the time was oxen.

The first school was built in the spring of 1887, the lumber being hauled from Glenora by John Cumming, a distance of thirty miles, assisted by any neighbor who had a team of horses. The first teacher was Miss Kate McPhail, long gone to rest. The only families attending were those of Wm. Easton, Lancelot Williamson, David Maxwell and John Cumming.

George Cramer of Baldur was our first thresherman, with a horse-power outfit. He thrashed from John Wilson's on the east as far west as Cameron's at Tisdale. The threshing lasted all during the winter months, with the thermometer registering anywhere from twenty- five to forty degrees.

Our grain when thrashed had to be hauled to Pilot Mound or Gregory's Mill to be ground, a distance of thirty or thirty five miles. Our first Wheat was marketed at either Manitou or Brandon, fifty or sixty miles. The price paid for our wheat was not very encouraging but hope was high in the hearts of the people at that time.

Our first sawmill was built at Rock Lake by John Montague with Wm. Price as Montague's engineer. Mr. Price still lives in Baldur.

The names of Poe Nechin, of Neelin and John Harrower, who is still clerk of the Municipality of Argyle should be mentioned with the pioneers. –

I remember seeing T. J. Lawlor in his store in Tisdale before Killarney was started. The first time I visited Killarney, Mr. O'Brien was the only resident down by the lake. I now make my home in Belmont, my wife having passed away five years ago.

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## To the Glendenning Valley Store

Mrs. Franck often told of her grandmother, Mrs. John Stephens, walking from her farm home to a little store in the Glendenning valley and carrying her butter and eggs for trade. This was distance of eight or nine miles.

# Tisdale & District

Adapted from, “Tisdale”, by Byron Mason

The writer arrived at Emerson about the 25th of March 1881 after a somewhat slow and tedious journey from Halifax via Intercolonial Railway to Montreal, then via Toronto, Chicago, St. Paul and Milwaukee, Pembina and Emerson.

After staying a day or two in West Lynne to secure an outfit consisting of a yoke of oxen, sleigh and numerous other articles, we started west with two set of sleighs (my brother meeting us here).. The objective being Pelican Lake, about 130 miles. Our party consisting of my two brothers, Harry and Jack, the latter having travelled from the Old Country with me, and Mr. and Mrs. J. Stephens their son, Will and the writer.

Passing through the Mennonite villages and coming by way of Calf Mountain, Nelsonville, Dead Horse Creek (at which place was a store kept by one Asher by name) through Crystal City and Pilot Mound (the old sites), crossed the Valley at Wilson’s, through the Marringhurst district, and so on to Pelican Lake to the house of Mr. H. Knight, on the west side of the lake. This house had been built during the summer of 1880, Mr. Knight bringing up his family that fall, consisting of Mrs. Knight and family of three, two sons and one daughter, who had been living recently in the Morden district,

*The south end of Pelican Lake – settlers hoped a railway would cross here and create towns at Tisdale and Rowland.*

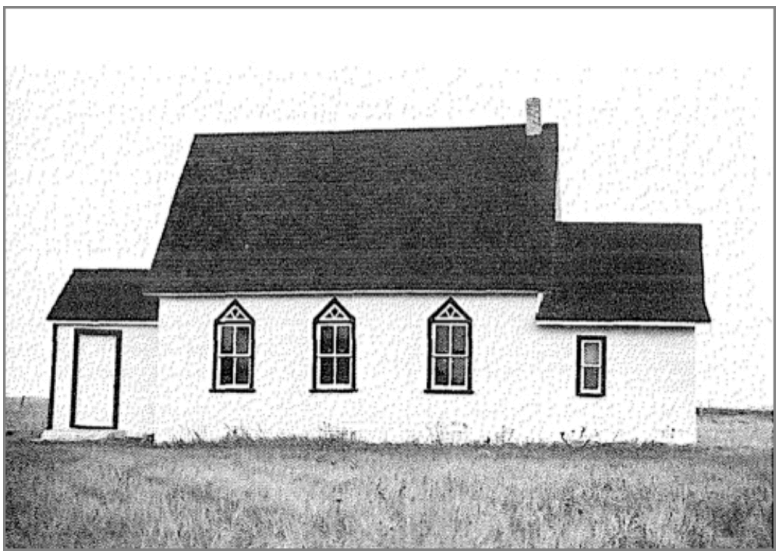
This was the only house west of the lake, hence a stepping place for all travellers, and I think he was the first homesteader west of the lake for a good many miles.

All mail had to come through the Post Office at Marringhurst, 25 miles east and there being no regular courier it was carried by any one who might be passing east or west. F. Armstrong and Boucher settled in Glendenning valley and built a house and store, and a sawmill close to the west bank. This mill was run at intervals for a few months, or until the supply of logs gave out.

The CPR had surveyed their line through this district, and every one expected to have a townsite of their own, little else was talked about. But it was the Cameron Bros; who did more than talk, they, with the help of T. P. Murray, real estate man of Winnipeg, surveyed the town site of Tisdale on the West half of section 2-4-16, this having settled the question of where the town would be, activities commenced on all sides, a large house of logs being built, the bringing of a portable saw mill, overland from Brandon, one Thomas, of Millford (on the Souris) opening up a large general store.

T. J. Lawlor also built a frame two-storey building, in which one could buy almost anything from a “needle to an anchor.” Also, one Rogers (of Crystal City) built a store, but which was later burnt down. E. Machon built a house and shop in which he carried on a blacksmith’s business for some time. The proprietors of this site had not overlooked the comfort and necessity of the present and future generations seven acres being surveyed and laid out for a public park and recreation ground.

I think I will mention a rather amusing incident in connection with a service held at Tisdale. A young bachelor of the district decided to go to church that morning, remembering that his syrup can was empty, took it along to have it filled, and presented it at one of the stores, remarking that he would like to have it ready to take back after the service. The weather being cold and the storekeeper having a few minutes to spare, placed the can under a 56 gallon hogshead and turned on the tap, intending to turn it off before leaving for the service. Being one of the main singers and a leader of the choir he made haste to be at the service in time for the opening hymn, service being held in the boarding house, he forgot all about the tap. All went well until the last hymn, when half way through the first verse, he remembered the syrup. Having no music at that time, he held the key to the situation; and each verse was faster and faster, and the congregation wondered why the haste. Needless to say, he did not stay for the Benediction, but left quietly by a back door making the quickest time he had ever done, for the store; However, they found things not too bad, the bachelor got full measure, and the floor got some, but I do not think the loss was very serious, but it was a good ' joke around town and country for some time.

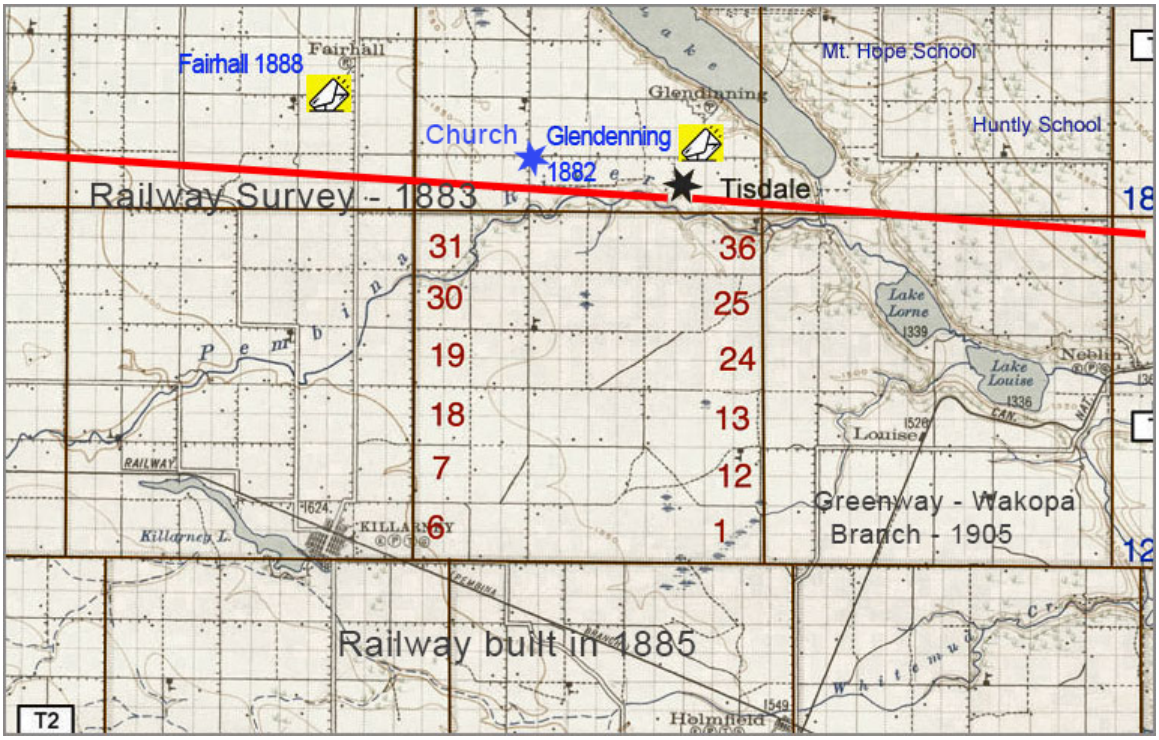


*The church services mentioned above would have been in homes, as the Tisdale Anglican Church was built in 1903. The "village" was long gone but the community remained.*

*A cairn, situated on the intersection of Road 19N 92 W, a few kilometres west of the former village, reads.*
*"In memory of the pioneers of Tisdale.*
*St. John's Anglican Church*
*1903 - 1964*

During the winter of 1883 rumors began to circulate that the CPR had changed their plans, and would take a more southerly route. All rumor were set at rest as they began to grade the present line from Manitou, which had been the end of the track since 1882, the steel being laid through Killarney the fall of 1885 and Deloraine the next fall. From this time the town of Tisdale began to fade and the boom was over. T. J. Lawlor dismantling his building and moving it to Killarney.

Now that the railway and townsite had been definitely settled, people turned their attention to improving their lands, by breaking more land and drawing out wood and logs for building purposes from across the lake, and each spring saw the erection of many new buildings. As they were always built by having raising “bees”, it was the place where one would hear the latest gossip, good-natured chaff and jokes, some having a special gift that way, while the supply seemed to be limitless.




*Railways – Surveys and Built – 1883 – 1905. It was not uncommon for railway companies to change their minds.*

Recreation we had in various forms, picnics in summer and dances at any time. The writer remembers a let of July at the house and grove of Mr. Knight, all kinds of games, races, etc., being on the programme, a race for oxen making the fastest time, ridden by the owner, also one for the slowest ox under the same conditions, and all kinds of foot races for old and young, jumping of all kinds, throwing the hammer, tossing the saber, etc. Dancing was indulged in by both young and old, as there were no school houses or community halls they took place in private houses, people coming from far and near.

# MANITOBA SOUTHWESTERN.

## The Route which the Line will Take Defined.

## MOBERLY AND CARMAN GET THE GO-BY.

The last of the surveying parties sent out last fall, to survey and locate the line of the Manitoba Southwestern Railway from its present terminus to the western boundary of the province, returned to the city yesterday.

■ ■ ■

The road continues in a southwesterly direction, passing north of Swan Lake and crossing the Pembina Valley a, the west end of Rock Laket in the centre of township three, range 14. Passing south of White Water Lake, it continues west to the boundary of the province. The line is almost an air one, only diverging to avoid hills or rocks. Commencing from the terminus and going west the first 70 miles runs through a country covered with poplar and scrub. The balance, 105 miles, is through open, rolling prairie. The length of the line from Winnipeg is 230 miles. Of this amount 45 miles are already constructed.

The line passes five miles south of the town-site of Tisdale, and 1,000 feet south of the edge of the section on which the famous town site of Moberly was located.

The engineers and surveyors are preparing the plans and reports, which will be shortly sent to the manager and directors in Montreal for inspection and approval.

*Of all the ghost towns in rural Manitoba, the life span of Tisdale is likely the shortest. This above story from the Winnipeg Daily Sun, Jan. 10, 1884 is the only mention one can find of it in the press. The "famous town site of Moberly" doesn't count because, unlike Tisdale, it never existed except on paper.*

# *Bear Stories*

*We all know about the virtual extinction of the buffalo. To the first settlers in the Killarney area, that was recent news. It was dramatic and the reasons for their disappearance had little to do with the settlement process.*

*There have been, however several other less dramatic changes involving the wildlife of our region. Some species just don't mix well with humans and don't cope well with the changes brought by farming. Others were hunted until they retreated westward. Grizzly bears were common in the early days of the fur trade era. Pronghorns were quite comfortable here until farms fences and hunting arrived. They like a wide-open range.*

*It is interesting to see how some species seem to be returning to the southwest corner – perhaps now that farm houses are few and far between they feel more secure roaming our neighbourhood. I see many more coyotes now than I ever did as a kid on the farm. Moose are even elk are much more common. Eagles were unknown around my childhood home, and I now see them quite regularly*

*Black bears seem to be more common these days than at any time in the past 100 years. But the first settlers often encountered them, sometime with comic results.*

*The Freeman family offers this report…*

*In the early days bears were quite plentiful, so there have been quite a lot of bear stories among the old-timers. One was told about Jim Freeman. There was a big black bear coming east down by his place. When it got quite close Jim took down his rifle, took aim and shot. The bear dropped, as he thought, right in its tracks. So when the smoke cleared away, Jim thought he would go and look at his prey. He gave the bear a kick with his foot. The bear jumped up. Jim turned and made for the shanty, with the bear close behind, both doing their best. Luckily there was a horse rake between the shanty and where the beard was, so Jim made a dodge around the rake, and when he looked back the bear was lying dead on the other side of the rake.*

*The Wilson family often enjoyed telling the story of "Polly and Jack" – two bear cubs:*

*One time when Jim Wilson was still batching, he and some others went across to the other side of the lake , and while there they shot a bear. They found three wee cubs had been left. Jim took them home to his shack. One cub was given to a neighbour lady, Mrs. Joe Johnson, but the other two remained as playful pets in the Wilson cabin.*

*In those days, milk was out in pans to set until the cream gathered. One particular day when no one was at home, the milk, as usual, was some pans upstairs (where also a wash tub of feathers were stored) the bears Polly and Jack crawled up the outside wall to an open upstairs window, went inside and enjoyed the cream. In the meantime they got into the feathers etc. and when discovered feathers and cream were everywhere. Sensing they were in disgrace, the two little bears cubs were found crouched together under the bed.*

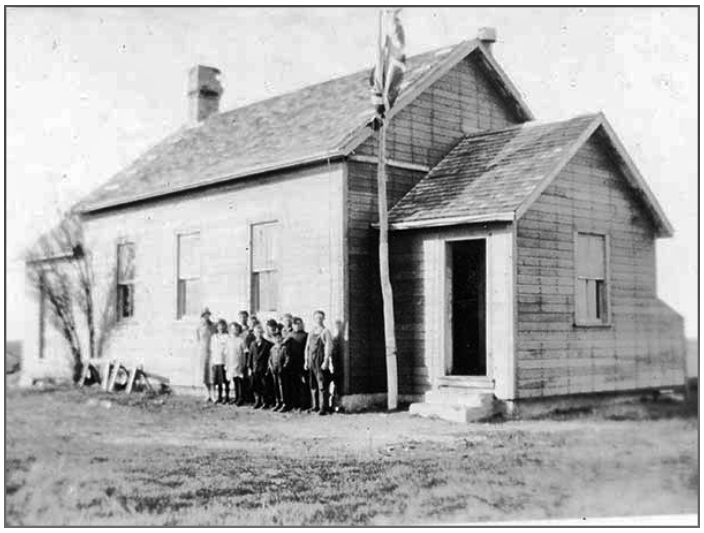
*Later on, Mr. Wilson took the bears to Brandon and sold them for twenty-five dollars. He told how the bears followed him on the streets in Brandon and sometime afterwards when he was in the city again, he went out to see them… On calling Polly's name, she seemed to know him and came to him to be petted.*

About this time a post office, Glendenning, was established, at the house of J. Moir, Mr. Fraser of Pilot Mound acting as courier. This office remained in the valley for a year or so, or until Mr. Moir moved to Virden, when it was transferred to the house of Mr. Knight, later the mail was brought in via Killarney, J. S. O'Brien having the contract. In those days people thought nothing of walking, some of the women going almost every week for the mail, both to the valley and later to Mr. Knights, sometimes carrying a plow share as far as the blacksmith's. I have known my old neighbor, Mrs. Stephens to do so. There were several ways of travelling, one had the choice of either a wagon, red river cart, stone boat or a hay rack, all of which the writer has seen used, and with oxen as the motive power, which though slow, one might generally depend on getting to their destination, unless the mosquitos were bad, which was often the case. The writer has seen oxen so covered with them it was hard to tell what color they were, and if space would permit, I could tell of many exciting times I have experienced. At the same time I still have quite a lot of respect for the oxen of the early days, for as a rule they were hard working, patient beasts, easily kept, and did a lot of hard work in opening up this settlement and others. The first harvesting that was done was cut with a cradle, then followed the reaper, and later the self binder.

The first threshing was done by hand power (flail). Robinson Bros. of Cartwright operated the first horse power machine, which had no straw carriers and when threshing near a building would take about six men and a boy to keep the straw away. McCool and Richards operated one later of a more modern type, although both threshed into bushels, the bushel man keeping tally by pulling a string through a hole in a board, a knot on each end for every bushel he emptied. This method often caused rows and arguments. J. Stephens operated the first steam outfit.

Of all the houses that the writer assisted in the raising of, only two are occupied at the present time, the Butcher Bros. are still living in the house built in 1881, and Guy Compton is living in one that T. Hamilton built on his homestead in 1883, both are built of oak logs. Of all who came to this district in those early days, none are on their former homesteads now, except the writer, Mr. P. Finnen having moved to Killamey last year, the rest having passing on to that place from which no one returns, Of the events that took place during the first ten years of this district, which is as far as this history deals with, I might mention: R. Freehorn's death, who was instantly killed from the kick of a horse near Mr. Knights, as he was going to the bush on the 23rd of January 1889. The death of Mrs. T. Hamilton in January 1889. The death of E. Douglas, during the winter of 1886. The death of Mr. Johnston; father of Joseph Johnston, in June 1885, The death of F. Corley, who was killed at the Tisdale sawmill 1883. All of these with the exception of F. Corley (who I think was taken east) were buried on a point of land on section 12 overlooking the lake, three of them have been re-interred.

Of the public buildings since that time are: Tisdale school house in April 1895, and the Anglican church in 1903, the Rev. W. R. Johnson, who had been holding services in this district for several years, being in charge.



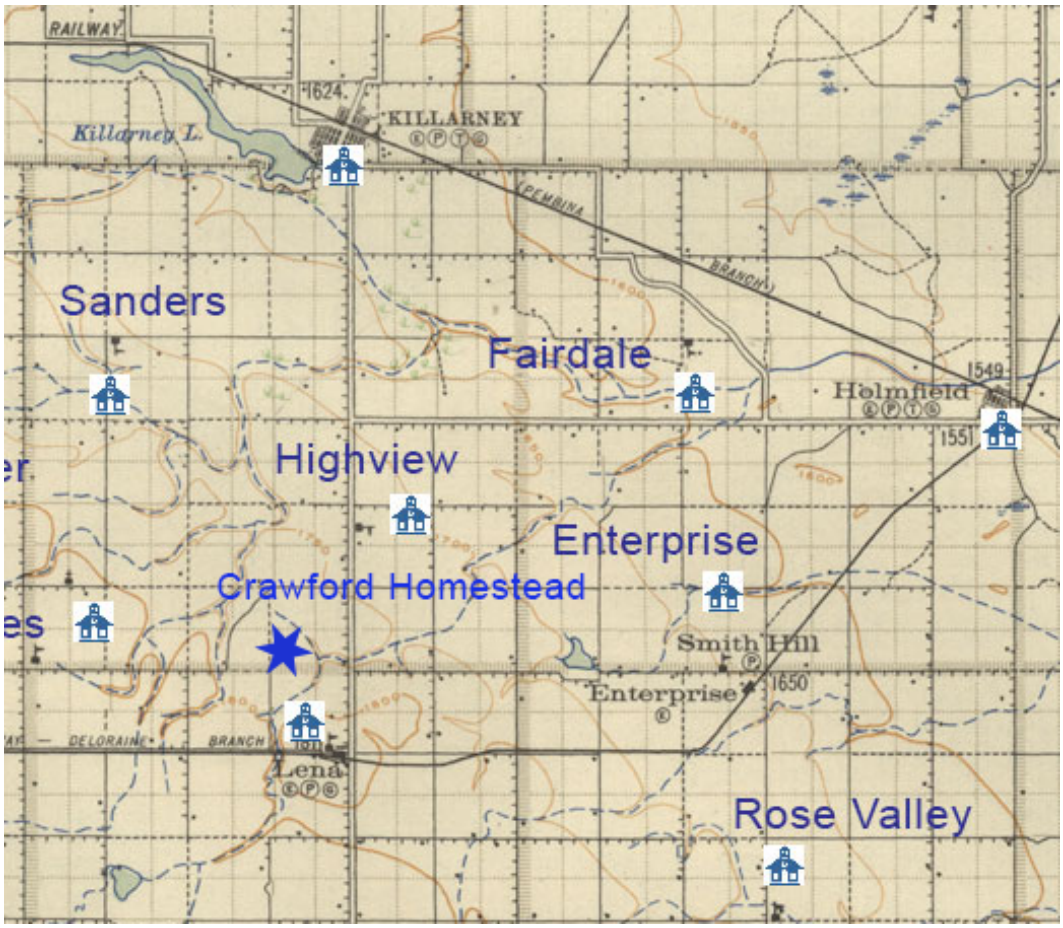
# High View

Adapted from, ”Recollections of Early Days at High View” by A. E. Barnard


*Highview School and the sign that marks the location today.*

Mr. George Crawford came out from Exeter, Ont. to Emerson in 1880 and walked from there up through this country. There were no settlers in this district at that time. He looked around for two months then went to Ontario and came out again the next spring bringing some horses with him. He sold all of them, parting with the last team at Fifteen Mile Village for a yoke of oxen, these he brought to Crystal City and left them there, Then he, James Moir and Peter Low, set out to look for land, they walked on up to Deloraine, only to find that the land they had already picked on was already taken. They returned to Crystal City, got the oxen and again made the trip to Deloraine; this time they were successful in getting the land they had chosen. Mr. Crawford got out logs, hewed them and built a house and stable then went to Crystal City and helped his brother-in-law to take off his crop with a cradle, returning to Ontario that fall.

William Crawford, my father, came out in October 1881, walking from Emerson and on to Deloraine and took up the first homestead in what was to be the High View district. Mr. Stewart Foster and Mr. Edward Hall came into this district the same fall. My father stayed at his brothers and got logs for a house and stable. He and two Mr. Moirs bached there all winter. In March 1882 my uncle, George Crawford returned with his own and our household effects, my aunt with three little ones, also my mother with three, and my uncle Mr. Robert Monteith, with three other gentlemen who come at this time.




There had been very little snow all winter, but just as we arrived in Emerson, it commenced to snow. Father met us at the station, accompanied by John Downie, my cousin, who had come to drive a team. They got a house for us all to stay in for three days while they made a pair of sleighs and got ready to start. By the time we left Emerson the snow was deep, we travelled in a covered sleigh, stopping two nights on the way to Crystal City at Mennonites, who were very kind doing all they could for us and wishing to take very little in return.

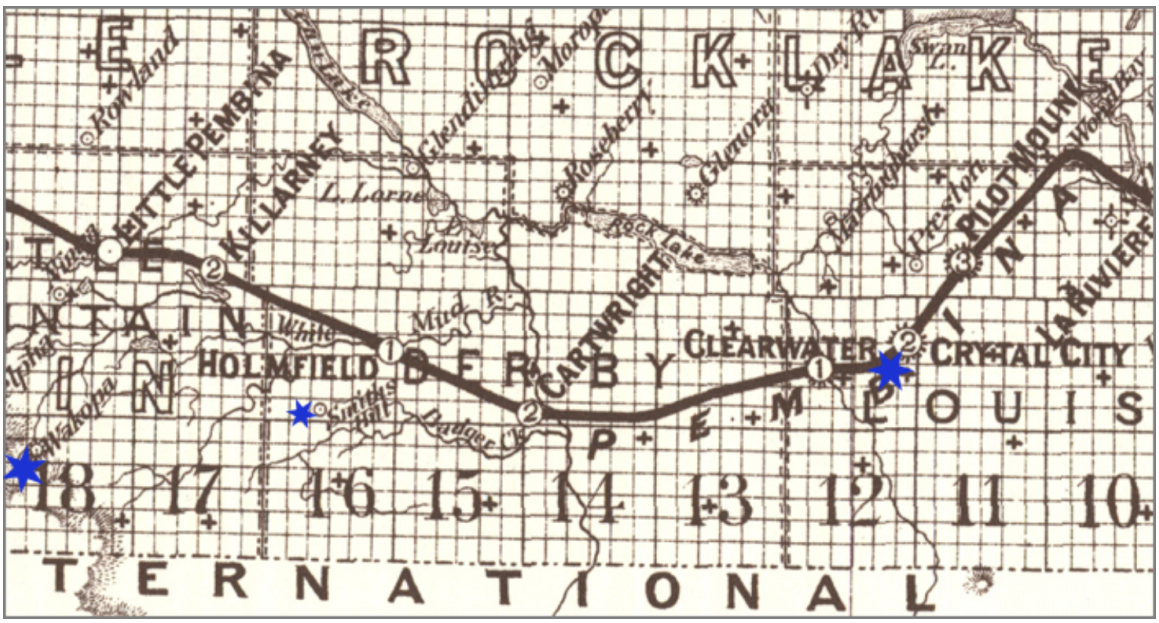
At Crystal City, the storm came on in earnest and for two weeks we stayed with friends. Coming from there we stopped all night at Cartwright and at noon on the 1st day of April at a stopping house kept by Mrs. Wm. Finlayson at Pancake

Lake, landing in the evening of that day at my uncles. On the 11th of April we, father and family, Robert Monteith and George Kilpatrick, moved to a little shanty on 24-2-17, belonging to Mr. Hall who had gone away for the winter. From there my father could work at his buildings without crossing any creeks. That was the year of the flood. I remember Stoney Creek ran full almost to the top of its banks. One of Mr. Monteith's oxen got down in one of the creeks and was drowned. As soon as he could have a look around, he walked up to Deloraine and homesteaded the southeast of 10-2-17, which he afterwards named High View. My father broke five acres, that spring and planted oats and potatoes. The oats he carried nine miles on his back on account of the swollen stream.

Mr. Forster and his son Tom came in about this time and took up land north east of us. Mr. John Stewart settled on the west half of ten. He was a brother of Rev. Andrew Stewart of Winnipeg. He had a pet hobby of gathering jack knives, of which he had a large number and manv of the children around the neighborhood had toys, whittled out of a piece of wood by him with those knives in the long winter evenings.

In 1883, Rev, Andrew Stewart started services in our house, his field was from Crystal City to Deloraine. One time he was asked to go to Cartwright to marry a couple. On the way he got stuck in a creek, got his buggy broken. There was no blacksmith nearer than Crystal City, and after the wedding, the bridegroom gave him a dollar.

At first we got our mail at Crystal City, forty miles away, then at Wakopa, then Smith's Hill and afterward. Killarney.




We had had a minister of our own church (Presbyterian) preaching for some time. Mr. Gordon had moved his preaching place so as to reach more people,

and at the house in which we had service a hen used to lay in the house on the bed. One Sunday she was on her nest at church time, the lady, of the house took off her apron and laid it over her. But brave Biddy got up in the middle of the sermon and proclaimed to all the house that she had layed an egg.

There used to be a great many prairie fires. One night, two Mr. Chapmans and a Mr. Rankin moved their threshing machine to our place to thresh in the morning. There was a fire away to the southwest. The men thought it could not cross the creeks but mother kept getting up and watching it. At last she woke father, and they called the others. They harnessed a team and turned everything out of the stables, drew the machine onto some plowing and then prepared to fight fire. There were already fire breaks, they backfired from them and fought fire with pails of water and bags the rest of the night. While we were watching from the window, we could see the flames leaping as high as the top of the stacks, but they kept it back so that nothing at our place was burnt. But many others were not so fortunate. Stewart Foster lost nearly everything and others lost feed, buildings and grain stacks. In 1888 a hail storm came through the High View district, most of the crop was cut down, our fields looked as if they had been ploughed. Then in 1889 it was so dry very few had enough for seed the next year.

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## Bad Cow!

As a farm boy, I know that cows sometimes have peculiar and distinct personalities. Why was there always one cow that resisted being herded back to the barn for milking? And why did each herd have at least one with both the inclination and the skill to get through that barbed wire fence? But this tale by the Disney family recalls a particularly troublesome cow…

*…one red cow had a passion for clothing and thereby hang a few tales. My two small sons loved the red cow and her desire to scrounge every car or buggy parked outside the fence. One day Mrs. Gus Taylor sat having tea when the red cow managed to swallow her lap rug. Just a tiny corner was showing when Mother and the boys tugged the rug back. Mother had to rinse it out and hang it in the sun and the two boys raced to tell Mrs. Taylor with Mother after them. Mrs. Taylor left with her rug – unaware of its adventure.*

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# *Lightning*

*One thing about rural life hasn't changed much over centuries. Lightning is still a dangerous thing.*

*Canada averages over 2 million lightning strikes each year. And, despite our relatively short lightning season, 9 to 10 people are killed and between 100 and 150 people are injured each year by lightning in Canada.*

*By reading pioneer stories one suspects that without the benefit of lightning rods and other ways in which buildings are grounded today, and given that much more time was spent out in the elements, the death rates must have been higher in pioneer times.*

*Even so, then as now, lightning doesn't always result in death. But no one ever forgets his or her encounter with it.*

*One incident that is often mentioned occurred at Farirdale School in 1911.*

*Robert Clarence was in class when the school was struck. Eight children and the teacher had a narrow and sensational escape. Several children and the teacher were injured.*

*The bolt came down the chimney, followed the pipe and smashed the stove. Two girls, the daughters of Henry Eggleton and William Chatham, were beside the stove with the dogs between them. Had it not been for the dogs, the chances are that the girls would have been killed. As it was, they were badly burned.*

*Robert was burned and remained unconscious for many hours. The lightning bolt went through his book and desk and into the floor at his feet. He kept his damaged book for many years. The teacher, Miss Arnott, was left stone deaf, and two dogs sleeping by the stove at the front of the room were killed.*

*Only two of the eight remained unscathed.*

*Ina Steward, of Brandon, remembers vividly the day. Her first thought was for her new white dress, with a pink sash. It was burned.*

*The building was moved nearly two feet from the foundation, windows were smashed and there were holes in the roof.*

*Numerous other accounts of buildings damaged by lighting are found in the local histories, but my favorite lightning related story is told by Albert Smith's son.*

*Albert came to Killarney from England about 1900.*

*"I recall my father telling of carrying a half a pig carcass from door-to-door, trying to sell it for $2.00 (He finally got a dollar for it), also of selling lightning rods from door-to-door and of being chased out of one farmyard by a woman who claimed the lightning was caused by the Devil and that he (my father) was his agent. "*

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## At The Fair

The summer's main event was "The Killarney Fair." Everyone for miles around attended at least one day. After considerable anxiety by the children concerning the weather the day usually dawned bright and clear. Chores were done in record time; lunches were packed and we were soon on our way. Arriving at the "Grounds" which were then East of Town the relatives were contacted and a place and time for lunch decided upon. In a shady spot the women spread newspapers on the grass, covered them with tablecloths and then arranged the food.

The women spent the afternoon viewing the handicrafts, chatting with their neighbours and watching the judges as they awarded the prizes for the animals and poultry. The men were even more interested in the animals but they also spent considerable time examining the new models of machinery. The 'games-of-chance' stationed along the midway were well patronized. The children crowded around the merry-go-round. Excitement reigned supreme!
The afternoon parade was led by the Killarney Ladies' Band, the Mayor of the Town and the executives of the Fair Board. Following came the prize-winning animals – horses and cattle of various classes and ages – all groomed to the nth degree and led by their proud owners.

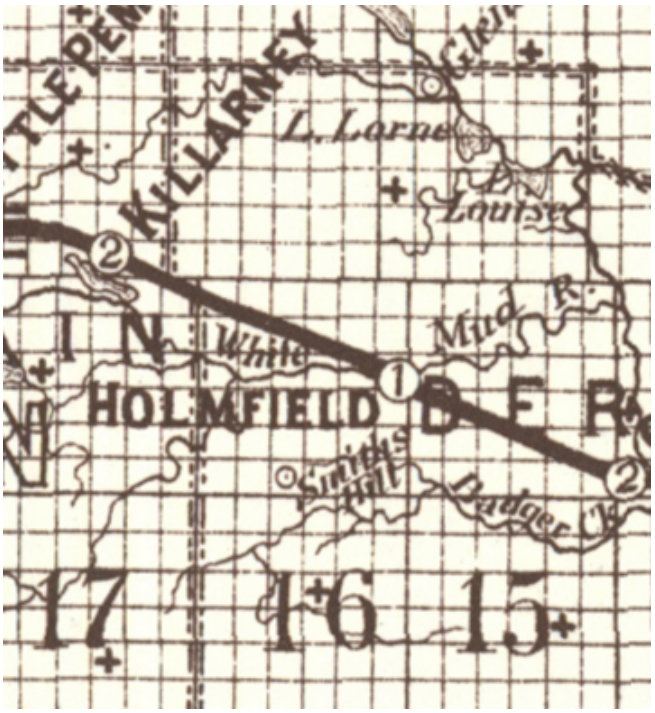
In the evening we attended the grandstand performance with its many thrilling acts. One that impressed me particularly was "The Knife Thrower." A man and woman came on the platform. The woman stood with her back to a board wall and was entirely covered by heavy paper. Standing at a distance of a few yards from her was the blindfolded man with a long-bladed knife in his hand. When all was quiet, the woman rattling the paper would designate where a knife was to be placed. This performance continued until the woman was hemmed in by knives. To create more excitement the thrower would deliberately toss a knife too high. It would disappear behind the stage. A great sigh of relief was heard when the paper was torn and the woman stepped out entirely unharmed.

Then came the fireworks and soon the men could be seen hurrying to where their horses were tied. The animals were frightened by the swish, explosion, and bright lights. It would take two men to hitch the horses to the vehicle in which the mother and children had seated themselves. The driver took his place, wrapped the reins tightly around each hand and the homeward journey began. Away from the noise and confusion the horses calmed down to a steady pace. The children closed their weary eyes and the Big Day was over.

Anne Burrows

## *Smith's Hill*

*On almost all the maps from the 1880's one will find a place called Smith's Hill, the site of a Post Office established in 1884 and operated by a Mr. J.N. Hewitt. Like many of the other locations identified on maps in the 1880's and 90's, wasn't town, but it was a community.*




*In addition to the Post Office operated by Mr. Dodd and a store run by Mr. Hunter. Dave Cullen had a small blacksmith shop where he pounded shares for breaking plows for twenty-five cents apiece.*

## *Criminal Activity?*

*But there seems to have been a more interesting anecdote about Smith's Hill.*

*According to Killarney historian and pioneer George Monteith, this just could be the only place name in the southwest corner to be named after a train robber.*

*It all stared when Joe Smith took up his homestead about ten miles southeast of where Killarney would later be located.*

*On the northwest corner of his quarter was large sand hill, so when the Post Office was established adjacent to his farm along with a store operated by a Mr. Hunter, it was called Smith's Hill.*

*"Smith came in the summer with his two horses, some lumber, two or three carpenters and a load of furniture and built a cottage and a stable, and then his wife came. He never did any work, but every evening he took his horses out, got on horse back, first placing a barrel, pulled out a gun and could hit the bull's eye every time. I have seen him do this. Finally two men came around enquiring for him. He was gone. His wife said she did not know where he was. They said they had a warrant for him. They stayed about a month watching night and day, watching the mail.*

*Then one morning his wife was gone. A short time after, one of the women got a letter from her. There had been a big hold up in Montana: a train carrying the money for the miners was held up. A sheriff and posse pursued the robbers, got them surrounded in the hills. Joe Smith was one of the robbers and was killed.*

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*The Smiths Hill Post Office closed in 1887, the name disappeared off the map, only to be reborn re-born in the early 1900' when the new community of Enterprise was located on the branch line between Holmfied and Lena. They needed a Post Office and the old name was used again.*


*Sources: Monteith, George B., A History of Killarney and Turtle Mountain, 1950*
*Personal Reminiscence: Jessie (McClue) Church*

## Pioneer Entrepreneurs

Much has been written about the ingenuity of the pioneers as they found ways to survive and thrive…

*In 1885, the railroad was built through this area and passed across their land, so the Hunter children pitched a tent near the tracks and from here did a flourishing business, trading butter-milk to the cook for cookies.*

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## Jones' Post Office

In the nineties and continuing into the turn of the century my Grandfather established a Post Office on the farm. A porch was built on the house where neighbours could post letters and get their mail from the wicket. He had a horse and jig in which he carried the mail from Ninga and later Killarney every day.

# Aboriginal Neighbours

A settler from Ontario in the early 1880's could be forgiven for arriving in this new land with a bit of apprehension regarding the Aboriginal People who called the region home. Those settlers, in most cases, were not well informed about the process by which this huge territory had, quite suddenly, become Canadian territory. The Canadian West had largely escaped the decades of highly publicized "Indian Wars" that had taken place south of our borders, not far from Southern Manitoba. But settlers were well aware of those battles. There were lots of stories about Indian raids on settlers, but not so many about the massacres perpetrated by the US Army. So, given the way those "Indian Wars" were reported, the new settlers couldn't help but have a very negative view of the people who were, in fact, the former owners of their new homesteads.

Knowing that, it is rewarding to read through the many first-person accounts of the relationships between settlers and Aboriginal people. To be sure there are plenty of hints of a subtle and not so subtle racism, but there is also lots of evidence of goodwill and understanding. We present here just a few representative recollections from family histories.

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There were many Indians around at that time and the younger boys would often spend time with them, learning many Indian customs. They hunted wild animals and fowl and learned to cook the food over the coals of camp fires Indian fashion. The Indians were always moving They never did any harm but often startled the settler's wife by popping up very quietly on her doorstep, ask for something they wanted and when given them went away peacefully. Indians were well liked by the settlers and in turn the Indians liked the people. (Fox)

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… sometimes Indians passed, but they were friendly and Mother used to give them home-baked bread and once a fruit cake. She gave them a large pitcher of milk when they had a sick boy with them. The Indians insisted that they have some of their food out a big pot, and after they had eaten Father made the mistake of asking what was in it - and when heard that it consisted of badger and black snake, Mother was sick. (McCool)

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Over on Uncle's quarter there was a huge buffalo stone, a deep hollow worn round it where the buffalo had walked in to rub themselves. Near it, every spring grew masses of prairie crocus. There grew, also, a quantity of Seneca root. Mother told of her fright, when, soon after she came to the farm some Indians came to the door asking permission to pick the root. They wanted it to sell for its

medicinal qualities.  Permission was given, and they returned for several years to gather Seneca. They asked to buy bread, and Mother baked and sold it to them. (Priestley)

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“During those troublesome times on the prairies (1885 and The Metis Resistance in Saskatchewan), the relation with the Indians was of prime importance. Robert Church and his family did not fear the Indian, but preferred to make friend of them. In 1885 when every settler was given a rifle and a hundred rounds of ammunition, with which to protect his home, Robert Church refused to accept the rifle. The fact that he trusted the Indian seemed to have a sobering effect on them. The Indian said, “No gun” meant a friend, a “gun” meant an enemy. The Church home was often a halfway house for many an Indian who soon learned that food and rest could be obtained there. At no time did any Indian ever betray that trust.

# Charles Havelock

Charles William Havelock came to Killarney in the 1930's as Principal of the High School. While here he founded the Killarney Collegiate Museum, of Natural History. Much of the large collection involved donations from students, and was the work of Havelock himself, as he taught himself taxidermy to preserve the specimens. What began as a collection used as a teaching resource became the foundation for the creation of the J.A.V. David Museum that now houses his extensive collection.

Havelock went on to pursue his educational career in Ontario.

# The Photo Studio

Take a look at the inscription on this old photo. It is credited to P.C. Edwards, Killarney Man. One finds that notation on many old photos from the region. In the early 1900's, Killarney had a Photo Studio.


Technology has always had a tendency to eliminate jobs, when labour-saving machinery, as the term implies, reduces the need for… labour.

Businesses fade away when technology gives people the tools to do previously highly specialized tasks.

Once settlers got established and their basic food and shelter needs were met they went looking for less essential amenities, like family portraits. Cameras were expensive and required training, so people looked for a professional.

Change started when the Kodak Brownie, an affordable and easy to use camera, was introduced in 1900. There was still a need for a professional photographer, but the business changed. Those Brownie snapshots still had to be developed. They could branch out into retail. There was still a demand for formal high quality portraits and commercial work.

The end result was that a photography business could still be viable in larger centres such as Killarney, until improved transportation links, especially cars and roads, made it easier for shoppers to find better deals and selection in the cities.

# Percy Charles (P.C.) Edwards

P.C. Edwards was born into a large family in England. He started in photography at an early age in a large studio in London. There he became an accomplished photographer and technician and remembered working on many portraits of Queen Victoria, other Royalty and heroes of the Boer War.

In 1903 he came to Canada, intending to settle on a homestead in Saskatchewan, but decided to get off the train in Boissevain. He worked on a farm and in a tinsmith shop that winter and came to Killarney in 1904 to open a studio with a Mr. Scott. Scott left for the US in 1910 and P.C. operated the studio until his death.

The studio was first located upstairs on the east side of Broadway about where No. 523 is now. In 1917 a fire destroyed several businesses in that part of the block and he lost everything as well as all of the negatives of the early days of Killarney. Many prints of these negatives are around today, especially in the JAV David Museum. P.J. Sherlock rebuilt the building, and the studio reopened on the ground floor.


**Edwards Photo Studio – second floor of the (first) Sherlock Block**

P.C. saw many changes in photography, from the days of glass plates to roll film. In early days he would load up a buggy and drive around the country taking pictures of the threshing outfits so workers from the east could send home pictures of the wild west. He also operated studios in Cartwright, Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Manitou for many years.

**At Killarney Lake - Edwards was fond of outdoor photography, which offered special challenges.**

*Numerous Killarney scenes are available in the J.A.V. David Museum Collection.*

## An Anecdote from "Trails & Crossroads"

The first mixed train reached Killarney on January 3, 1886, according to the records of the Canadian Pacific Railway. This was a great day for the people of Killarney. New arrivals came in reasonable comfort by train, and the day of the long trek to Brandon was ended. The first regular passenger train arrived on March 28, 1886. It came three times a week, and going down to see the train come in became a favorite pastime. Often, however, the train was late. When W. J. Wood brought his family from England, they had been delayed by icebergs, and his daughter and her husband failed to meet them. They were standing wondering what to do when P. C. Edwards, the photographer, spoke to them and called Mr. Wood by name. He recognized him because he had enlarged a photograph of him and was able to direct him to the home of his daughter, Mrs. Thomas Howell.


*A photographer did not make much money during the thirties and many a chicken or quarter of beef was traded for Christmas portraits. With the war years, business picked up and most of Killarney's servicemen and women had their portraits taken by P.C. before they went over-seas.*


*Many towns had photographers, but many tended to not stay long. Mr. Edwards made Killarney his home and got involved in all aspects of community life. He documented cultural and social events and highlighted natural attractions over a long period of time.*


*P.C. Edward's portable tripod camera – in the J.A.V. David Museum*

*Ruby Stilwell worked for P.C. Edwards for a time - likely prior to her marriage in 1916. She was active in drama productions and Mr. Edwards took several photos of such productions over the years. She is seen here about 1914.*

# The Capture of the Strangler

Erle Leonard Nelson, 'The Strangler', whose list of murders included a large number of women in the United States and two in Winnipeg, was captured at Wakopa on June 15,1927.
Originally from San Francisco, he was the first recognized serial killer in North America. Moving form place to place he, would rent rooms in Boarding Houses, then kill the land lady and steal her husband's cloths. He crossed into Canada, and after killing two people in Winnipeg he went to Regina, and from there…

*The story of his capture is told by Lawrence Smith …*

" he hitchhiked with a travelling salesman coming all the way down the back roads, cops looking for him all over the place, but they can't cover all the roads, he hitched to Boissevain, and at that time the railroad ran south into Bannerman down into St. John's, he was trying to get back to the States. He got as far as Wakopa and Mrs. Morgan,( he stopped in at the Morgan's store), Mrs. Morgan said she got a real funny feeling in the back of her neck about this character so she told Les and Mr. Dingwall to keep an eye on him. He was hiking down the old railway line. Les went up on top of the elevator to keep an eye on him while Mrs. Morgan phoned the police. And they caught him in Bannerman."

*Mr. Smith also has some insight into his final day….*

"At that time U of M was right across the street from the Vaughn Street Jail, and the ladies residence overlooked the wall into the prison yard. And I got his from a very good source because my mother was in residence. And the girls were renting the rooms out so people could peer out the window and watch this guy take the big drop."

And so it happened that not only did a Killarney resident have some interesting details about The Strangler's final moments, it was in Killarney and Wakopa that the final chapter of his international criminal career took place.

*His story continues in "Refections" …*

Following a three-province search, Nelson was caught thanks to the quick thinking of Albert Dingwall, Wakopa grain buyer and L.H. Morgan, the Wakopa storekeeper.

Recounting the experiences, Mr Dingwall said the CN train had just left when he met a stranger who had just left the Morgan store. 'It was the boots he was wearing that made me suspicious', said Dingwall. 'I told Les (Morgan) who I thought the man was, and suggested to Mrs. Morgan that she should phone the police at Killarney.

Morgan and Dingwall started to follow him to see where he was going. Jim Whiteford was driving a team and wagon going to Bannerman and gave him a lift, so it was presumed Nelson was heading back to the United States.

Sgt. W.B. Gray with Const. Sewell of Killarney detachment affected the capture and lodged him in Killarney jail, in the basement of the town hall.

Mr Dingwall, who now resides in Willow Lodge in Killarney, still has the letter he received advising him of his share of the reward money. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Dingwall each received $300. Two other persons also participating in the capture, George Dickson and Dunc Merlin, each received $150.

There was great excitement in town during the evening.

Residents tell us the town constable Willaim Dunn, who was in charge of the jail, left the cell block for a few minutes to purchase fodder for his pipe. That was all the time the Strangler needed. When Mr. Dunn returned, Nelson had disappeared.

After an all-night manhunt, the suspected Strangler was captured about 9 o'clock the next morning just as a special train arrived with a score of police and bloodhounds from Winnipeg. His escape and capture made an exciting experience. Every man in town and countryside for miles around had joined in the search.

After his escape from the Killarney jail, Nelson sought shelter in a barn where he discovered a pair of boots and skates. As he was in his stocking feet, he took off the skates and wore the boots.

Early that morning, Alf Wood a local resident, reported a stranger had accosted him for the makings for a cigarette. As soon as he could, Mr. Wood got word to Constable Gray where he had seen the man.  Gray, accompanied by Constable Renton of Crystal City detachment headed for the last place Nelson had been seen. Just then the whistle of the train was heard and Nelson emerged form his hiding place in a local lumberyard, thinking the train he heard must be a freight and a means of escape. He was immediately captured and placed on board the train.

Nelson was tried and sentenced to hang Friday, January 13, 1928.

# A Murder, but no Mystery

The city of Morden has an impressive old courthouse. Like all growing towns a century ago, it also had a jail. So did Killarney, but it seems that the accused in serious cases were sent to Morden for trial, and in one notable case, for the carrying put of the sentence. Murder was fairly rare on the Canadian frontier, but it happened. And when it did happen the penalty could be death by hanging. Between 1874 and 1851 there were 52 executions in Manitoba. Most of them (35) happened in Winnipeg. A few took place in Dauphin and Brandon. Only once was an execution carried out at the Morden Jail and that murder happened on a farm near Killarney.

While the pioneer era was a peaceful one, as time passed and more people were attracted to the region, there were bound to be issues. One in particular made the news of the day.

Georgina Brown was a single thirty-six year old woman who kept house for her brother on his farm near Killarney. Twenty three year old Lawrence Gowland was a former Barnardo Boy, one of many orphaned or destitute children sent from England to places all across Canada. Many ended up working on farms.

While the charitable organization operated by Dr. Barnardo had a worthwhile purpose and many success stories, it also had its problems. Some children ended up being poorly cared for and essentially used as cheap labour. Some were troubled souls, and didn't adapt well to their situation.

After lunch on May 21, 1907 John Brown left his home to go to Killarney, leaving his sister Georgina, and the hired man, Lawrence Gowland at home.

Upon returning a few hours later he found Gowland severly injured and bleeding. At first he thought that his sister had gone to visit the neighbour, something she had planned to do, but not finding her there he returned and found her dead in her room. All the evidence pointed to Gowland as the killer.

While being attended to by the coroner and Dr. White, he confessed and said he had tried to kill himself with a butcher knife after killing Georgina.

He survived to stand trial in Morden for his crime.

After recovering from his suicide attempt he had reportedly decided he would rather live, and indicated life in prison would be preferable to hanging. He didn't get his wish, and after his conviction he was the only person to ever be hanged in that place on Dec. 13.

The newspapers of the day covered the trial in detail, as they generally did.

The Winnipeg Tribune, in describing the execution, mentioned the prisoner's courage in facing his fate.

"The doomed man went to the scaffold without a tremor. As early as six o'clock in the morning a number of persons had assembled outside the prison, and before daylight arrived those summoned as jurors had taken their places in the sheriff's office." Winnipeg Tribune Dec. 13 1907,

He is interred in the prison yard of the Morden jail.

It was reported that he was troubled, perhaps even repentant by his situation, but the newpaper reports don't offer many insights into who Lawrence Gowland really was, and why he might have become a killer. We did learn that he had spent a year on the Barnardo Farm at Russell, and afterwards worked for a farmer north of Manitou. He was considered, "rather intelligent, but possessed of a violent temper. He is said to have suffered intense mental agony since that time, and is almost a wreck of his former self."

Georgina is buried in the Killarney Cemetery.

# The Inventive Mr. Kent

F.A. Kent came to Killarney in 1889. From an early age he demonstrated both a creative and an entrepreneurial turn of mind. While still a boy he had one of the first fret saws in the community, made for him by his grandfather out of a sewing machine. He used it to make and sold picture puzzles, shelves, brackets, cabinets and chairs. He also became interested in making candy, a skill he later turned to good account in his business. He was of an inventive turn of mind, one of his inventions being a glass enclosed rack for holding large spools of lace.

He worked for Angus McQueen for a time before he bought the Bakery and Store. He closed the bakery and started a candy manufacturing plant in the back of the store. "Kent's Corner" was the grocery corner for almost 80 years.


During World War I he attended Flying School in Chicago, and later assembled the first airplane ever seen in Killarney. It was a makeshift construction using a used engine

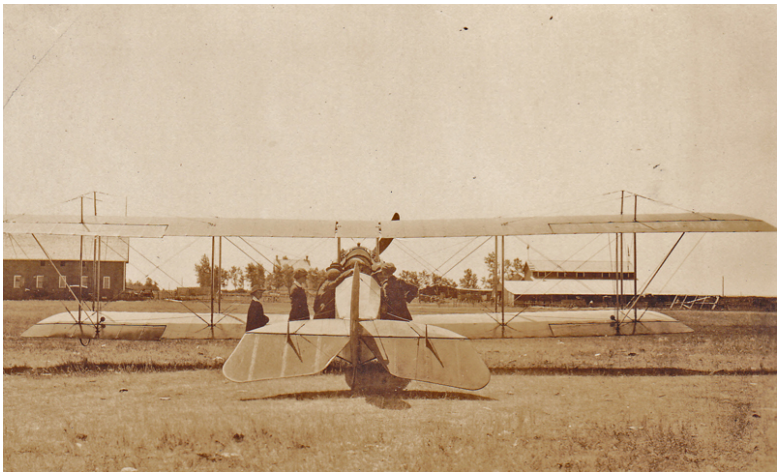
Over three summers, beginning in 1915, Charles experimented with his creation. It was difficult finding good level places for test flights. He started with taxiing and learning to steer the craft. There were mishaps, one quite serious one when he hit a pothole. Repairs were required. On another occasion one of the wheels came off. He persisted and was able to get off the ground a few times, and practice landing. The real test came and he was 100 feet in the air when the radiator began to boil. He started to turn back, but banked a bit sharply and was force to attempt a landing on a little knoll. There was damage as the wheel came through the wing, but although Fred was wedged awkwardly into the seat belt he got out unharmed. But there was no doubt…the machine would fly!

W.J. Kellaway, whose pasture he had been using politely asked him to try elsewhere as he was scaring the cows.

Fred moved to the fair grounds and continued his practice. In the winter of 1918 he deicided that the ice on the lake would make a nice level practice field.

His efforts continued until engine problems put his experiment to rest.

The J.A.V. David Museum has the wooden rudder from his plane, which was damaged when a wheel came loose and the plane flipped while taxiing. It was ash, planed to the proper size and soaked in a cistern a few days to soften it. The covering for the whole plane was bleached cotton treated with banana oil.



He was a very community minded citizen, and put both his creative mind and energy to tasks that would have a real impact on his home town.

He was one of the founders of the Golf Club and acted as secretary for many years. He also took an active part in establishing the present Fair Grounds and Erin Park and in having waterworks installed in Killarney.

He was responsible for convincing the Provincial Government that Killarney should be the site for the central hospital for the district.

There is no doubt the town wouldn’t be the same without him.

# The Killarney Safeway Store

The following photo tells us a bit about business in Killarney in the 1930's. Prominent in the foreground is the "Sam's Dairy" truck, a reminder of the days when milk was delivered to your door. A little to the right of Sam's nifty customized delivery van we see another aspect of local commerce – the Safeway Store.


In a way we see the past and the future of food marketing, with Safeway representing the first widespread attempt at placing "Chain Stores" in rural communities.

Safeway Stores were located in medium-sized towns in the early 1930's and after about a decade, most were taken over by independent businessmen and often put to other uses.

The Killarney Safeway Store – operated until 1941. It was bought by Dan Hall, Cyril Letts and Harry Powell and operated for many years as the "Fairway Store"

As of 2021, the building remains – easily identified by the standard Safeway roofline adornments, most of which have survived renovations, and can be found in main streets of other towns like Minnedosa, and Boissevain.


*The former Killarney Safeway*

*The iconic Safeway roofline – seen here in Boissevain.*

# Rev. A. H. Anderson

Rev. A. H. Anderson came to Manitoba in the spring of ’80. They went by oxcart from Winnipeg to Brandon, - a terrible trip – spring floods – and the only places where they could stop for the night were someone’s house or shack. You paid fifty cents or twenty-five cents, according to what part of the floor you could get to spread a blanket on and lie down for the night; men, women and children where they could find space. My mother decided she and the baby would sleep outside in the wagon. She and the baby caught a terrible cold and were sick when they arrived at Brandon.

The first summer was spent helping to break land and put up houses or shacks, in the Rapid City district.

*After time spent at Nelson, Portage, Snowflake and the Cypress Hills, often setting up a new congregation, the Andersons moved to Killarney.*

I think Father was three years preaching at Killarney. Then he had to resign on account of health and some trouble with the powers over him. So he bought the 160 acres and we moved out on the farm. He had only a couple of drivers, a cow, a buggy and cutter and a family of small children. It was July when he moved out, and he only got 10 acres broken that year. It was done by members of his church. You can imagine what a trying time it must have been. I know he only had $250.00 a year coming in from his superannuation fund. He got $125.00 in January, and $125.00 in July, and that’s all he had to start on. By hard work and grim determination, we did pull through. One thing I think must have looked odd and amusing to the neighbours was the fact of Father always wearing a white collar and stiff stove pipe hat when working on the land.

Father only had a year off, and then he was on call to fill in for someone sick, or lack of a minister for some church. A good half of his time he was away preaching. I think there weren’t many schools around that Father hadn’t preached in, even old Oak Ridge. He got the debt on the old frame church paid off, and then Killarney Church started, and he worked hard to get the new (present) church underway. The old church records must have information on how it was done.

I remember a cold winter night and the minister having to close up the service on account of a terrible smell and many folks started sneezing. The janitor and some of the men of the church went down to see what the trouble was but couldn’t find anything wrong. Next day they took the furnace apart and cleaned pipes. Father, coming home at noon, told us all about the work they had done and couldn’t find anything wrong, lit up the furnace again and no smell. Well, crime will out, they say. My youngest sister had taken a box of snuff that someone, for a joke, had sent father. Reta had it in her coat pocket, and pulling out her handkerchief, the box of snuff came too, and fell on the hot air register. She didn’t know what to do, so quickly brushed it all down the register and then went

to her seat. When she got home, she told Mother what she had done and didn't want Mother to tell Father. Mother promised to keep the secret but on condition Reta would walk the straight and narrow path in future. We gals had many a good laughs over it.

Another time, they, Theo and Reta, took some pepper tied up in the corner of a handkerchief and the idea was to put it on some certain person's collar. She had it loose lying on the hymn book and when getting up for the hymn the pepper blew off and not where intended to go. I believe dear old Grampa McLean got most of it and he started to sneeze and couldn't stop and had to go out. We often wondered if he suspected what had happened, for later, when talking to someone he said, "I like those girls but they are awful devils."

This remark was quickly brought back and told to us, and we couldn't understand why Grampa McLean should say such a thing.

Father was always sent to open up new districts or to pull a church out of debt and get it going again. He always seemed to manage that, and he used to be away from home a lot. He kept splendid driving horses and they went all over southern Manitoba.

Father was Irish and loved a good joke and had he not been a minister, would have been a rip roaring old politician. He dearly loved election time. He was always chairman for whoever was electioneering. When George Lawrence was M.P., he and Father worked together often. When Geo. Lawrence took the holiday trip back to Ireland, he brought Father back a black thorn walking stick which we kids all called his "shillalay."

Father's rule when company was around was to be seen and not heard and only speak when spoken to. A grim old rule that I am sure had a bad effect on us. We used to keep out of sight and calling whenever we could, often sliding down a plank from an upstairs window if no other way of getting out was possible.

When we were extra naughty, Father would say, "Those children of yours are needing attention," to Mother. We were always her children then, but if we were good and did something worthy of praise (once in a while we did), we were his children. We all loved Father and were very loyal to him, but we liked being Mother's children best. When I used to kick over the traces and say what I thought of things in general, Father would look grieved and say, "I'm sure I don't know where you get such a rebellious spirit from. I'm sure it's not from me."

Mother's folks back East used to send a barrel of things. For several years when first on the farm we got this barrel. It would have a large bag of dried apples, a big square tin of honey and several blocks of maple sugar, also some pieces of cloth, and a large bundle of knitting yarn, from which Mother knitted Father's socks, our mittens and caps. I guess it saved the day for Mother.