

Time Lines

The Manitoba Historical Society Newsletter

Vol. 43 No. 2
January / February 2011



The Prime Fundraising Event of the Manitoba Historical Society

46th Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner

Saturday, 12 February 2011
Provencher Room,
Fort Garry Hotel

6:00 pm Cocktails (cash bar),
7:00 Dinner
Silent Auction



International bestselling author **Ken McGoogan**, author of the recently published book *How the Scots Invented Canada*, will be the featured speaker at the 46th Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner on Saturday, 12 February 2011.

President's Message

As I write, Winnipeg's Museum of Human Rights, still a good two years away from opening its doors, is again in the news. This time it is because of determined attempts to force the Museum to mount a large permanent exhibit about the famine that Joseph Stalin deliberately imposed on the people of Ukraine in 1932–1933. For those of us who have high hopes for the Museum, it is a discouraging development, for it reminds us of how hard it will be for the Museum to be what it is trying to be, a Museum of Human Rights, not a Museum of Human Wrongs. From the beginning, it was clear that many groups in Canada expected the Museum to enshrine their mindfulness of atrocities drawn from their own histories. But museums cannot be simple foci of human emotion, as statues, cenotaphs, and other memorials are. The intention of the Museum's founder, the late Mr. Asper, was to educate people about human rights. His point



MHS President
Dr. Harry Duckworth

Macdonald Dinner Tickets

Complete the order form on the back of this page and mail to the MHS office.

OR send e-mail to info@mhs.mb.ca with your ticket order. We will contact you to complete the financial details.

OR call the MHS office at 204-947-0559 and speak to Jacqueline Friesen. (If no answer, please leave a message and we will call back.) Please call before 7 February 2011.

of departure, to be sure, was the Holocaust, and one of the few things that we know for sure about the Museum is that there will be a permanent gallery devoted to that dreadful episode of recent history; but he and the tireless supporters of the project clearly intended that the Museum would play a much wider role than that of a Holocaust Museum.

Although the press has tried, from time to time, to get detailed information about the content planned for the Museum of Human Rights, those responsible have been remarkably circumspect, and most of us are left just to speculate and hope. I am one of the speculators, I have benefited from discussions with friends and I find myself developing a kind of wish list of what I hope to see. For me, most of the space in the Museum should be concerned with the historical developments that led to our modern concept of human rights. No aspects of history are neither more interesting, nor more relevant to modern life, than the stories of how our civilization moved from the shapeless cruelties of the Dark Ages to the freedoms and respect for the individual that we enjoy today. These stories remind us of how much we have gained, how hard it was to make the gains, how a few courageous individuals took the most important steps, and how easily our gains can be lost.

What would my Museum of Human Rights contain? The first gallery would be devoted to the concept of Human Rights, a concept that would have been baffling to the medieval mind. Central in the gallery would be Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, published in 1791. Before Paine's famous essay, there were many thinkers who were troubled by the

injustices they saw, and pushed to correct them, but it was Paine who gave these feelings a framework, a set of principles that abolished doubt and encouraged those who wished to right the wrongs of the world. After *The Rights of Man*, progress on many aspects of human rights was rapid and sustained.

My next gallery would be devoted to the rule of law. For several months in 2010, a copy of Magna Charta was on display in Winnipeg, as a kind of test, I suspect, of one of the Museum's potential themes. Prior to Magna Charta, at least in England, what laws existed were used only to solve disputes between persons of equal rank, while the monarch could always have his way with his subjects, and the great would always prevail against the little. Correcting these inequities in the way the law works has been a long and fascinating process, still not complete—money still gives access to better legal advice—but even those modern nations that groan under the feet of tyrants have constitutions that give lip service to equal rights under the law.

My third gallery would be devoted to slavery. The tendency of one human being to exploit another is inherent in the species, it seems, and new means of exploitation are constantly being invented, but the development of the slave trade to the New World, followed by the worldwide abolition of slavery (in theory if not in practice), is one of the seminal themes of western history in the last four hundred years. The story is not really over yet: the Americas are still struggling with the aftermath of the slave trade. A vast amount of effort by professional historians has laid the details of the story bare, and there are many



The 46th Annual

Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner Tickets

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artefacts, images and heroes to bring it alive in a museum gallery.

My fourth gallery would be devoted to the rights of women, again, a great historical theme that has received much careful attention by scholars. Women's rights under the law, women's right to vote, and the central question of how women are viewed and treated in different world cultures, are all potentially rich sources of material for the exhibits in this gallery. We all know that much is left to do before all parts of the world have an acceptable level of rights for women.

Other galleries, in this personal vision of the Museum, would be devoted to the development of voting rights; of labour rights; of language rights; of the uses and abuses of nationalism; of standards for the treatment of criminals and prisoners; and to the far from settled question of what governments owe to their citizens, particularly to the sick and the poor. Something interesting could be made of the tendency of new technical discoveries and ideas to be subverted so as to damage human rights. The concept of eugenics, for instance, a well-meaning scientific notion of a century ago, was quickly adapted by the Nazis to justify their evil doctrine of a master race. Modern electronic communication methods now raise new threats to personal privacy. There are all kinds of possibilities.

I wish the Museum of Human Rights well. Those entrusted with making it a reality have a heavy task, for they must take ideas and make them tangible and vivid to every visitor. Canada, the world's great experiment in social engineering, is a particularly suitable country to maintain such a museum, for Canadians are in the midst of a constantly shifting debate about human rights, weighing our willingness to be tolerant against our feelings of what must be defended at all costs. Here in Manitoba, and especially Winnipeg, we have had our own episodes of intolerance, but we can also be proud of the long line of social activists who have driven the cause of human rights. This is the natural place for the Museum to be.

MHS Multi-Cultural Dinner

The always-popular Multi-Cultural Dinner will be held on Tuesday, 19 April. This year the MHS is partnering with the German Society of Winnipeg for the event. Watch for more information in the next issue of *Time Lines* and on the MHS website.

New Legislation Would Enhance Protection of Historic Properties in Winnipeg

New legislation is being proposed that would enhance the City of Winnipeg's ability to preserve and protect historic properties, Local Government Minister Ron Lemieux announced on 26 November.

"It is important to preserve, protect and develop our heritage," said Lemieux. "Historic buildings and sites provide us with a sense of identity and teach us about the people and events that make up our shared past."

Currently, the City of Winnipeg only has the authority to designate buildings as historic properties. Through this legislation, that authority would be expanded to allow also sites such as parks and cemeteries to be designated as historic. The legislation would also require the city to register historic designations of buildings and sites on property titles. The minister noted the city requested changes to the legislation to ensure that property owners and others with an interest in the property are aware of potential development restrictions of a property with an historic designation.

"We are pleased to work with the city to safeguard buildings and properties that hold special significance from the past to preserve them for future generations," said Lemieux.

The proposed legislation would give the city the same power as all other municipalities, which already have authority to designate sites and are required to register historic designations on property titles.

Newsletter Mailings

Members are reminded that *Time Lines* is available on our website www.mhs.mb.ca/info/pubs/timelines. Members have the option of opting out of receiving the mailed copy of our newsletter or reading the newsletter on line.

If members wish to place their name on our "Do Not Mail Newsletter" list, please contact us by calling 204-947-0559 or emailing us at info@mhs.mb.ca

Please note that this does not include our journal *Manitoba History*, which is presently available only by regular mail.



Google Streetview

The 128-year-old Shanghai Restaurant building is under threat of demolition to build a residential complex for Asian seniors.

Historic Building Under Threat

The 128-year-old Shanghai Restaurant building on King Street, between Pacific and Alexander avenues in downtown Winnipeg is under threat of demolition. As reported in the *Winnipeg Free Press* on 3 December, owners of the building want to close the restaurant and sell the building to Chinatown Development Corporation, which, in turn, would demolish it to make way for a parking lot, and eventually a housing development for Asian senior citizens.

Built in 1882 during the city's real estate boom, and owned by merchant John Higgins, the building was the site of council chambers and the mayor's office during construction of the first City Hall, from 1883 to 1886. The stone and brick building was given a Grade III heritage ranking by the City following an assessment in 2009. Heritage Winnipeg opposes the demolition.

On 6 December, the city council's Property and Development Committee voted unanimously to allow demolition of the building when its owner provides a development plan for the site, despite the absence of an engineer's report in the city's recommendation that would confirm the building was not worth repairing. On 15 December, the City Council approved the committee recommendation, subject to the submission of a site plan by the Chinatown Development Corporation. Councillors Jenny Gerbasi, Harvey Smith, John Orlikow and Ross Eadie, who believed that a decision should await a report on the structural integrity of the building, opposed the move.

No demolition will occur until a site plan is submitted and a building permit is issued. The city will not allow the site to be used as a parking lot in the interim between demolition and erection of a new building.

Heritage News

The *Selkirk Journal* reports that a 1200-pound granite millstone mounted with several plaques of historical information was unveiled in November 2010 next to the Half Moon Restaurant near the banks of Gunn's Creek in Lockport on Henderson Highway. The stone was used in a gristmill established by Donald Gunn in 1854. Gunn came to the area in 1813 to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. From 1871 to 1876, he served on the Legislative Council of Manitoba. Gunn's mill was powered by a water wheel until the mid-1870s. The stone remained near the mill site but it broke into three pieces. The **RM of St. Clements Heritage Advisory Committee** collected the pieces of millstone and had them pinned together and mounted. The committee was assisted in their efforts by provincial funding and the resources of Manitoba Heritage branch and by local volunteers. It is hoped that the monument will reinforce the greater awareness of local history that developed during St. Clements' 125th Anniversary celebrations in 2009.

Virden's Downtown Heritage District Project is in its early stages. The first step in the creation of a Downtown Heritage District was the completion of an inventory of the buildings within the proposed boundaries of the district. That inventory included research into origins, builders and owners, as well as



St. Clements Heritage Advisory Committee

Gunn's millstone and plaques with (from left) David Truthwaite, St. Clements councillors Larry Drobot and Ray Frey, Mayor Steve Strang, and Fraser Stewart of the St. Clements Heritage Advisory Committee.



Gordon Goldsborough

Virден's Alexandria Hotel, built in 1907, is one of the buildings being evaluated in a new inventory of noteworthy heritage assets in the town.

information about materials, and renovations. The proposed heritage district includes the area between Sixth Avenue and Eighth Avenue from Queen Street to Raglan Street and some selected sites outside of this area. Following the completion of the inventory, Heritage Value Statements are to be prepared by each owner. These statements draw upon research and consultation to explain the significance of each building. Historian and researcher Ken Storie presented his report to the Virден Town council on 16 November. An interesting collection of information and pictures is to be found on the project website: www.kenstorie.ca/VHDP/inventory

Virден began in the 1880s. It grew quickly and was soon an important service centre for a rapidly expanding agricultural community in the region, and a wide range of commercial enterprises commonly found in larger centres, including a grist mill, were established. Virден was known for its large-scale brick-making operation. The bricks were first used in town in 1892 on Higgenbotham's new Drug Store on Nelson Street. The brickyard closed in 1902 and was re-opened in 1906. Virден's bricks were widely used on local projects and exported in quantity to places like Regina other booming western communities. The modern history of Virден has been influenced by the discovery of oil and the resulting far-reaching economic impact. The first successful well in 1951 was followed by a significant population growth in the next few years. Growth continues because of more oil discovery in western Manitoba and the town's

significant location on the Trans-Canada Highway. Now the *Westman Journal* reports that "as a sign of progress Virден is considering an old-fashioned face lift for its downtown area".

A very special book is missing from **Kelvin High School in Winnipeg**. The book contains a list of all former Kelvin graduates who served in the Second World War, with names from M to Z. The first volume with the list of names from A to L is safely stored at the school. Each name is handwritten and each page is painted by hand. According to the current principal, Jim Brown, "To the best of my understanding the book was taken in the late '80s. Someone broke the glass display case in our vault which is kept in the alcove of the building." The information found in volume I indicates that former Kelvin Art teacher Mr. E. W. Sellors did the general layout and design. Mr. J. W. Young did script lettering. Acknowledgements were from the Honour Roll Committee, Kelvin Technical High School on 3 April 1946. As preparations are underway for the 100th anniversary of the school there is a special plea to anyone who has the missing volume or who has information leading to its recovery to contact Kelvin High School or drop it off anonymously at the school, 155 Kingsway. For more information call 204-474-1492 or email Kelvin@wsd1.org

Anna Lenters, vice president of the board of **The Costume Museum of Canada**, reports that the museum on Pacific Avenue in Winnipeg has closed and moved because of funding problems. There is now a lack of suitable storage space for the costumes and other artefacts. Anyone who is willing to provide storage space is asked to phone Anna at 204-989-0072. The museum continues with travelling shows and "museum in a suitcase" for schools and Margaret Mills co-ordinates fashion reviews.

Centennial Farms

Boissevain: Glen & Doreen Hicks N 7-3-18
WPM 1895

Neepawa: Garry & Sheila O'Brien SE 4-15-16
WPM 1893

Roblin: Ian & Arla Livingston SE 26-25-29
WPM 1903

Northern Tourism in the 1930s Comes to Life

Rearview is a website exhibit that showcases intriguing Manitobans revealed in records held by the Archives of Manitoba. Recently Gertrude Perrin (1903–2001) has become the seventh Manitoban to be honoured in the exhibit. Perrin was born in Hartney, Manitoba. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts from Wesley College in 1925 and then the Provincial Normal School in 1926, she taught in Emerson and Oak Bluff, Manitoba, for roughly a decade. She then received secretarial training in British Columbia and returned to work as secretary to Errick Willis, Minister of Public Works and Minister of Agriculture and Immigration in Manitoba. In the early 1960s, Perrin returned to university and earned a Bachelor of Library Science at McGill University, and then worked at the Manitoba Legislative Library. Before retiring in 1972, she was an instructor and the first co-coordinator of the Library Technician Training program at the Manitoba Technical College (later Red River College). She was a member of the Manitoba Historical Society and, after her retirement, a volunteer at Dalnavert Museum. Perrin was an avid traveler, visiting many countries throughout her life.

From 1933 to 1941, the Hudson's Bay Company's RMS *Nascopie* provided facilities for tourists for the first time as well as cargo on its summer northern cruises. Over a hundred sightseeing tourists enjoyed the experience. During the summer of 1936 Perrin was one of a small group to travel for seven weeks on the *Nascopie*. The exhibit features her diary and scrapbook that show her great interest in the environment, landscape and people of the Canadian North. In addition, we get a glimpse into the life of Gertrude Perrin, a young, working woman and adventure-seeker that frequently enjoyed socializing (dancing and card playing) with other passengers in the captain's mess, and activities such as golf and mountain climbing with fellow travelers. Tourists on the *Nascopie* were fascinated with the unknown Arctic and the romance of the fur trade.

MHS Book Club Schedule, 2010–2011

Unless noted, meetings are on Mondays 7–9 pm at Dalnavert Visitors' Centre. Please confirm attendance with Judy at 204-475-6666. WPL = Winnipeg Public Library

14 February 2011

Donna G. Sutherland, *Nahoway: A Distant Voice* (2009) (WPL 3 copies), guest Donna Sutherland, led by Shirlee Anne Smith

14 March 2011

Icelandic heritage; George J. Houser, *Pioneer Icelandic Pastor: The Life of the Reverend Paul Thorlaksson* (1990 WPL 1 copy; others available at the January/February meeting for a \$10 donation to the Young Historians funds) led by Joe Upton

11 April 2011

Charlotte Gray, *Flint & Feather: The Life and Times of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake* (2002, WPL 5 copies) led by Céline Kear

9 May 2011, 6 pm

Potluck dinner at Dalnavert, choose books for next year

Society to Recognize Farms at 125

Since the Society's Centennial, in 1979, there has been a program of recognition of those farm families that have enjoyed continuous ownership of at least 50 acres for one hundred years or more. Upon application and submission of proof of that ownership, The Manitoba Historical Society's Centennial Farm Committee, under the leadership and research efforts of Anne MacVicar, have helped this celebration with a commemorative plaque, and on about 2/3 of the occasions, with attendance by a member of the committee. These events are a joyous time for the family and community, and are often graced by local and provincial dignitaries. Many

Important Reminders

- Renewal invoices are sent to members, and are payable on receipt. Members are encouraged to help us reduce costs by checking their labels and sending in renewals when due. Renewal can be done by mail or phone. Payments can also be made in person at the reception counter at the Dalnavert Visitors' Centre during regular operating hours, Wednesday to Sunday. Cash, cheque, Visa or Mastercard are accepted.
- Your donations are needed to support ongoing work of the Manitoba Historical Society. Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$10.

farms also qualify for a large gate sign presented by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

To keep a farm in a family these days for one hundred years or more is no mean feat. In the past decade, we have seen a decline in numbers of applications, largely due to the rapid changes in our agriculture communities. However, there are still some intrepid families carrying on the family tradition, and at the November Council Meeting, it was agreed that we should be extending our recognition of those families that have continued for 125 years or more. This will see MHS matching Manitoba Agriculture's new 125 Program, and ensure that the work of the Manitoba Historical Society gets publicity outside of the Winnipeg Perimeter yet again.

To this end, it was agreed that upon application, we would work with PlayAll awards to have a 125 disc ready to apply to the family's Centennial Farm Plaque, and again Committee members have the option of attending a family event to trumpet the achievement.

The program does have costs, particularly the travel expenses of committee members to get about our rural areas. Donations are gratefully accepted, and qualify for the usual tax receipt. It is hoped that Society members see the benefit of this outreach program and will support this initiative.

Silver Screens on the Prairie

Historian Russ Gurluck is doing research for a book to be titled *Silver Screens on the Prairie: An Illustrated History of Motion Picture Theatres in Manitoba*, and he is looking for people to share their memories of movie houses across Manitoba from the early 1900s until now. The book will celebrate the stories of palatial picture palaces, exotic atmospheric theatres, now-legendary drive-ins, and the dozens of small-town and neighbourhood theatres that thrilled kids at Saturday matinees, were the inevitable destinations of countless teenage dates, and brought drama and excitement to the lives of Manitobans of all ages.

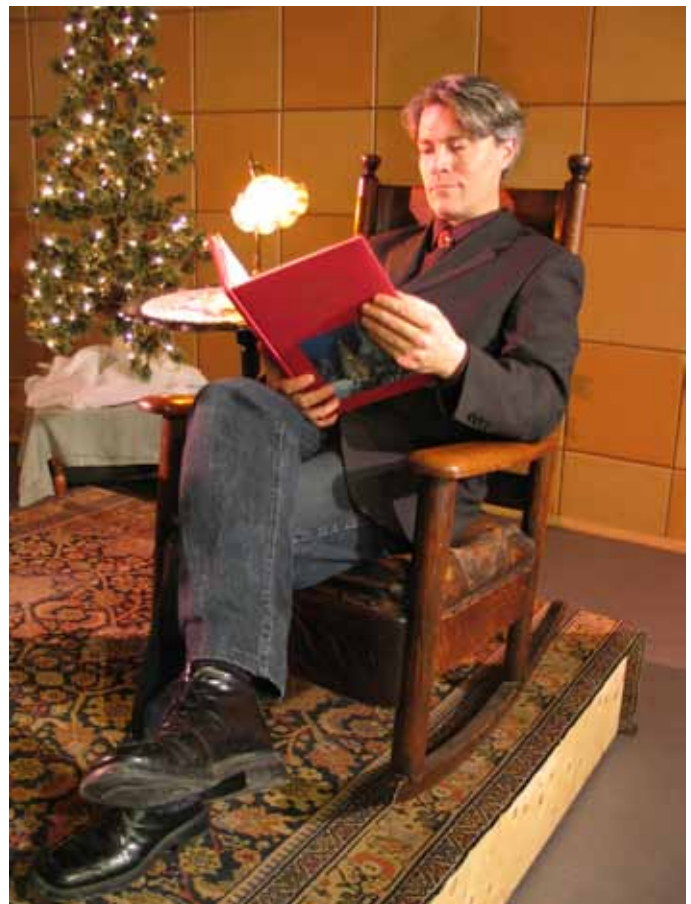
Russ would like to chat with people who owned theatres, worked in them or simply enjoyed attending them. He is also interested in obtaining photos, particularly of theatres that no longer exist. The interviews will be by phone and interviewees will be able to preview passages that include their comments before the book is finalized. If written

permission is given, recordings of the interviews, along with most of the other research material for this project, will be donated to the University of Manitoba's Archives and Special Collections.

Russ can be reached at russgourluck@shaw.ca or by phone (weekdays 9:00 to 4:00) at 204-339-2493.

Dalnavert Museum

The Dalnavert Museum was proud to have five of Winnipeg's talented performers bring Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* to life between December 14 and 23. The readers were: 14 and 15 December Celeste Sansregret, 16 and 17 December, Ron Robinson, 18 and 19 December Debbie Patterson, 20 and 21 December, Gordon Tanner and 22 and 23 December Ian Mozdzen. Christmas refreshments were served. Before the readings the audience members toured the museum and on some nights enjoyed carol singers from the Winnipeg Glee Club and the Holy Trinity Church Quartette.



Gordon Goldsborough

Gordon Tanner, Winnipeg actor and MHS member, was one of five actors to read Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* at the Dalnavert Visitors' Centre during the holiday season.

The Manitoba Historical Society est 1879

I want to renew or join* the MHS as a:

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* See our web site (www.mhs.mb.ca) for annual membership rates in the USA and other countries

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Calendar of Events

For updates on upcoming events, see www.mhs.mb.ca/news/events.shtml

- 10 January 2011 MHS Book Club: John Boyko, *Bennett: A Remarkable Life*
- 12 February MHS Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner at the Fort Garry Hotel, guest speaker Ken McGoogan
- 14 February MHS Book Club: guest Donna G. Sutherland, *Nahoway: A Distant Voice*

- 11 April MHS Book Club: Charlotte Gray, *Flint & Feather: The Life and Times of E. Pauline Johnson, Tekahionwake*
- 19 April MHS German Cultural Dinner

Online News

For more Manitoba historical news, go to "The Past Lane" on the MHS web site: www.mhs.mb.ca/news

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Manitoba Historical Society, est 1879

www.mhs.mb.ca

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