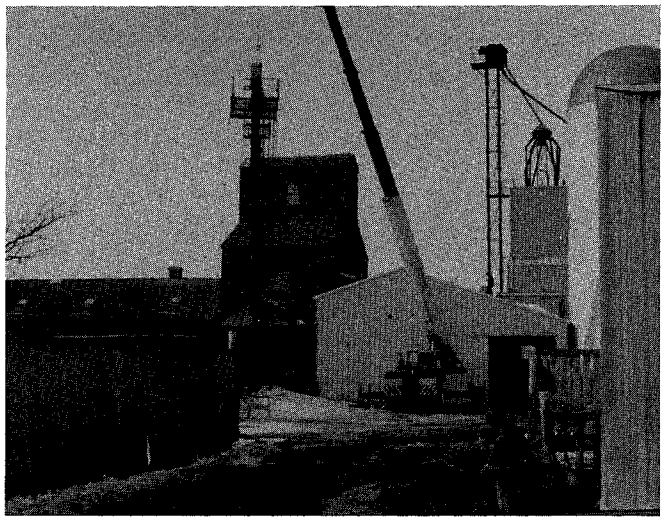
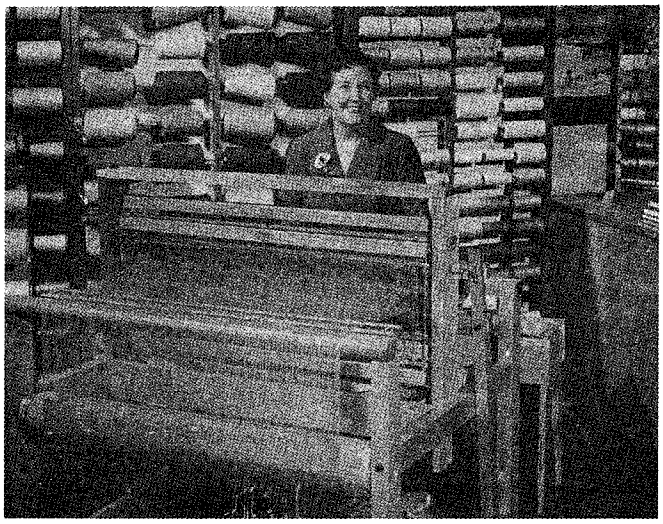




Dorothy Rankine

SEARLE HANDWEAVING

submitted by slh

In the early 1930's, Augustus L. Searle, who was then the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Searle Grain Co. ltd. set up within the company, the Research Dept. and "Crop Testing Plan".

In 1940 he decided to embark on a "home-weaving scheme" and by April of 1942 he had the program in place complete with a course of instruction to teach the craft of weaving.

Renee Beriau, the daughter of Oscar Beriau of Quebec handweaving fame, came to Manitoba in early 1942 to assist in the organization of the endeavour.

Searle Grain and Miss Beriau recruited four local farm girls to be trained as Instructors. Each of these girls were fluent in English and one other language. Two of the girls spoke French: Miss Helen Boiley from La Broquerie and Miss Germaine Chaput of St. Adolphe. While the other girls: Ann Yakimischak from Winnipeg spoke Ukrainian and Russian and Miss Laura Muirhead of Carberry spoke Swedish.

After three months of training the girls were prepared to instruct in weaving by April 1942. Each of these instructors were sent to teach in whatever area their language would best serve.

The first weaving course in this program began on April 20, 1942. The courses were taught in towns or Villages which had a Searle Grain Elevator, and the local agent set up the equipment and material when it was shipped by rail. Usually a Church basement or town hall was used for place of instruction.

The Searle Grain asked the students in each community to form a "Farm Home Weaving Circle" and membership was open to any farm woman or girl interested. The course was free but the local weaving group charged a minimal fee of 50 cents annually to cover the incidentals of the local group. Looms and weaving equipment and raw materials were provided during instruction. Searle Grain assumed the responsibility and financial cost of the operation.

The course, usually, was of six weeks duration, ran a minimum of 2 1/2 hours per day, five days per week. One group would receive their 2 1/2 hours in the morning and another group were taught during the afternoon. The instructors taught six students per session. Although the period of instruction was short, the courses were very intensive.

The Searle Grain Co. through the formation of the Weaving Circles, also tried to keep weaving active in the community after the instructor had left by requesting that the "Circle" who had had free instruction also teach freely any farm woman wishing to learn.

In 1944, the Searle Weaving Competition was held with 200 entries being submitted. They were sent to Quebec where they were judged, displayed and then returned to Winnipeg with glowing praise.

By July, 1944, 62 classes had been held, at which 794 women and girls had learned the art of weaving. These pupils purchased 246 of the 45" looms for rural use. Later that year, as a result of the newly imposed gas rationing, the weaving instruction program came to a halt. Farmers could no longer spare the gas to allow their wives to travel to town for such things as weaving lessons. Gas was being used for only essential farm work, such as increased food and stock production. The weaving Instructors and their equipment and material were returned to Winnipeg.

At the same time that the Searle Grain had developed their weaving education program, they also opened the Searle Farm Home Weaving Dept. in their head office in the Grain Exchange Building in Winnipeg. This was a retail outlet for the materials and equipment needed to practice hand weaving. The Consultant of this Dept. was Dorothy Rankine, who was responsible not only for the operation of the office, but for providing advice and assistance to weavers.

If a student of the program wished to buy her own 45" Leclerc loom, like the one she had been taught on, she could do so, from Searle at a cost in 1942, of about $48.00, which could be bought on payments of $5.00 per month with no interest.

Hugh and Dorothy Rankine.

Dorothy Rankine had been given clear guidelines to follow in the operation of her department by Stewart A. Searle (son of Augustus), and Norman Leach, who were two of the directors of the company at the time. The message was clear, "Looms and Weaving accessories were to be sold at no profit."

Searle also stocked a large variety of yarns for weaving. Linen was bought from Ireland and France, as were tweed yarns of fine wools from Great Britain.

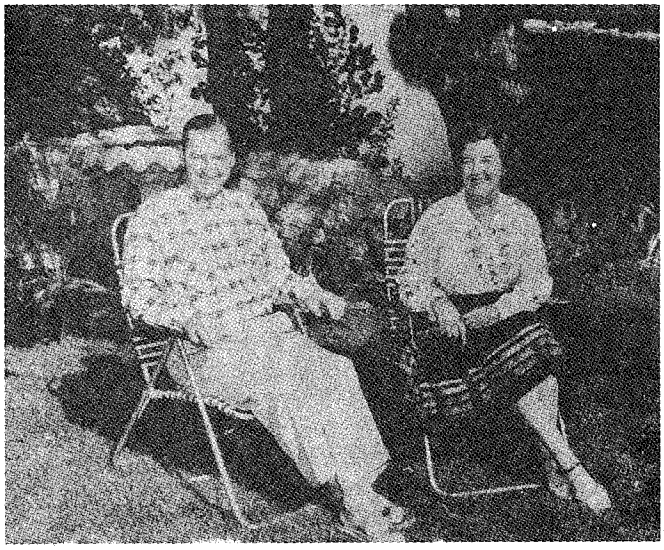
The Searle weaving section had a regular monthly newsletter entitled "Searle Suggestions", that covered a variety of topics. Dorothy Rankine included in this publication, besides a wide range of weaving information, poems, quotes, and little notes of interest that maintained a friendly contact between the weaver and the department.

Termination of the Searle Grain's involvement with weaving occurred in two stages. The education portion of the program was disbanded in 1944, but the Farm Home Weaving Service continued for another 20 years, until the fall of 1964.

On Oct. 31, 1964 the final edition of "Searle Suggestions" was mailed out and the Weaving Dept. closed its doors. However, for 3 years afterwards, letters continued to arrive from all over the continent. Therefore, Dorothy Rankine was employed for another two years on a part time basis, working out of her home, to attend to this correspondence.

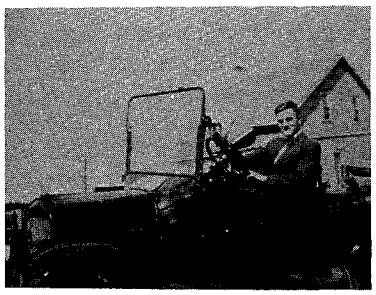
In 1965, Searle Grain and Federal Grain amalgamated.

In conclusion, the Searle project of "home weaving" was a major contribution to the weaving education in Manitoba and elsewhere on the prairies during the 1940's. Also, it was done in the true spirit and desire to better the communities they served as well as aid in the war effort. And to Dorothy Rankine, must go much of the credit and well deserved praise for her contributions and the high standard maintained throughout the years.



Hugh and Dorothy Rankine.

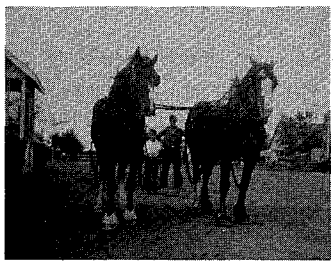
Dorothy Rankine

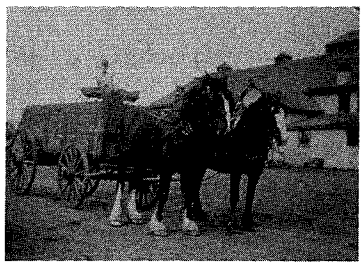


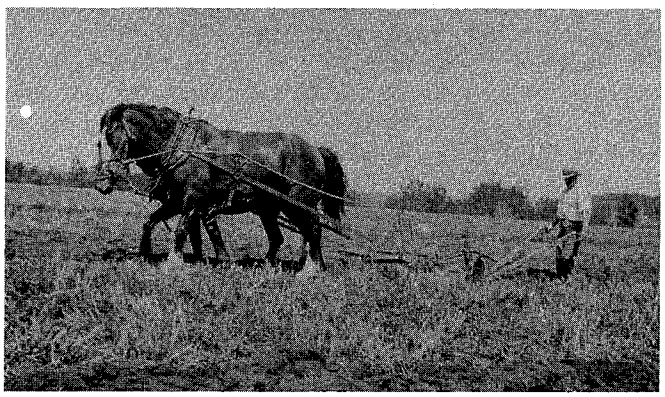
Van Horne House, 1929, Model T Ford, 1922/23.

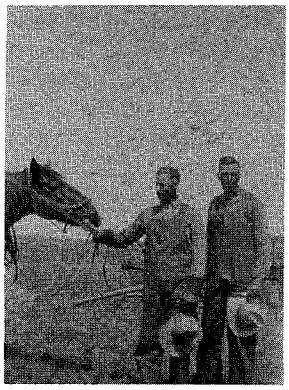
Jack Robertson and his Cousin Bessie.

VAN HORNE FARM MEMORIES

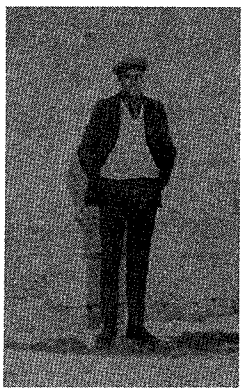



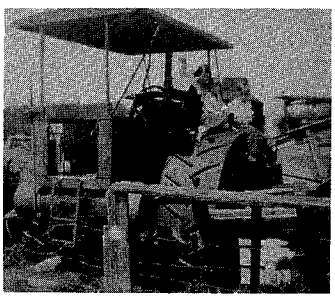


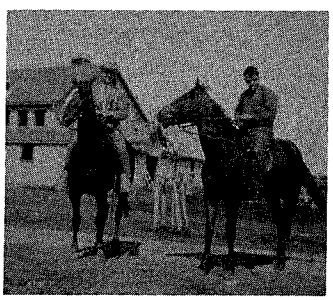
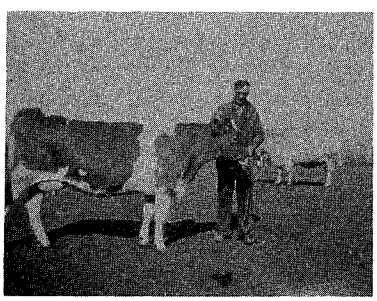








WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT ON IN ST. CLEMENTS

submitted by slh

The first appearance of electric lights in our area would be only what we could see across the Red River, within the Town of Selkirk, dating back to 1891. They didn't throw much light, but because they were spaced at intersections along Eveline Street, they were a welcome sight to those across the river. Then when the old steam railway (W.S. & L.W. Railway) electrified its 21 mile line in 1908, the town started seriously to map out a civic service and systematically squeezed the privately owned Selkirk Electric Light Company out of business. In 1911, power from the Winnipeg, Selkirk, and Lake Winnipeg Railway Co. was turned into the Town of Selkirk Municipal system and by early 1912, the new town street lighting units were in operation.

The east side of the river, within the Rural Municipality of St. Clements, could have had power at this time, had they been able to afford it, or if they had ever seriously campaigned for it.

The Tyndall Quarries were being supplied by the Winnipeg Municipal system from a Substation situated at Sadlo. This Substation was also supplying the Town of Beausejour. By 1918 the Substation had 3-300 kw transformers and a step-down voltage from 66,000 V. to 12,000 V. at 3 ph. 60 cy. Meanwhile, at the Quarry substation was 3-200 kw. transformers with another step-down from the 12000 V. to the 500 V. with a connected load of 600 kw and the demand in 1918 of some 400 kw. The energy needed for the Town of Beausejour was transmitted almost 8 miles from the Sadlo Stn. at 12,000 V.

In Beausejour they already had, by 1918, 400 (cp) lamps or street lights in town. Selkirk by 1918 could boast of about 80 cp tungsten lamps and another 300 nitro-lamps.

The municipality of St. Andrews was receiving power from the Winnipeg, Selkirk and Lake Winnipeg Rlwy. This company, which was controlled by the Winnipeg Electric Co., it should be mentioned, distributed electrical power only incidental to its main function which was the operation of the electrical railway running about 22 miles between Winnipeg and the Town of Selkirk. The electric railway had 22 miles of wooden poles strung along the west side of the river and transmitted power from the Transcona Sub. Stn. of the Winnipeg Electric Co., to the Mapleton Sub Stn. at about 66,000 V. Then, 34 miles of wooden pole lines transmitted power from Transcona to Stonewall, Middlechurch, and finally Selkirk at 13,200 V. The distribution system built totalled about 64 1/2 miles of wooden pole lines in the municipalities served. The rates for lighting were 8 cents per kwhr. with a minimum charge of $1.00 per month.

St. Clements did negotiate with the Winnipeg Electric Co. and its subsidiaries such as the Winnipeg, Selkirk and Lake Winnipeg Railway as well as the Manitoba Power Co. on several occasions. However, the cost of obtaining power and light from the electric railway, upon investigation, as early as 1923, was found to be a costly project. The municipality would have to stand the cost of constructing the main line at about $600.00 per mile. The negotiations were dropped as council felt the people on the east side, many of them newcomers by this time, could ill afford this costly service. What we needed was industrial concerns to help shoulder the initial expense of bringing in a line. In all fairness we should mention that Mr. Sangster representing the Van Horne Farm interests did make a fairly strong appeal for power and the VHF were willing to pay their fair share. At one point in 1923 the Elec. Rlwy. Co. discussed the possibility of extending the power line in order to furnish power and light to the Village of East Selkirk and the adjoining sub-divisions, providing the municipality and the Van Horne Farms would share the cost. However, it was found that the municipalities share would have been in excess of $12,000.00. Council carefully discussed this possibility from all angles and they finally decided that "the financial burden would be more than the ratepayers could stand." Finally, it was dropped without even submitting a by-law to the residents of the day.

Then, early in 1928, Mr. Sutherland of the Man. Power Co. appeared before council wanting permission to run a line along Henderson Hwy. from the Lockport Bridge to Lot 132, thence on to Clarke's Gravel Pit. The Company thought they should have exclusive franchise, be exempt from taxation and in return they would supply the people living along the route with light and power at 8 cents per kwhr. The Reeve (Geo. Frank) thought it was "too big a question to settle without some serious thought" and Council appointed a committee to go into the matter.

Then in April of 1928 Council passed a resolution which stated:

"That in the matter of granting the Winnipeg Elec. Co. the right of placing their poles on the municipal roads that this council is strongly opposed to granting them that privilege and that they must purchase their own right-of-way."

The reason council had passed their resolution was the strong protest by petition by the ratepayers from the south end of the municipality against the company wanting a Bonus of $450.00 per annum for 20 years. This had been hashed out during two public meetings of the residents. When council met during the regular monthly meeting of April, the vote to allow the electrical company into the municipality resulted in a tie with Councillors McNeill, Martin and Hoffman voting in favor of allowing the company to run their line on the roads in

order to take power to the Gravel Pit without giving service to the people. Councillors Kosowicz, Gudg and Isbister voted against allowing them to come in. The Reeve was placed in the difficult position of a tie-vote and stated he was personally in favor of allowing them to come in, but in face of the strong opposition, he would have to cast his vote against allowing them in.

The Winnipeg Elec. Co. asked for a meeting the next day and expressed surprise at Council's decision of disallowance. After a lengthy and heated exchange the Company said that in lieu of the franchise and $450 per annum Bonus for 20 years, they would be willing to come in, serve the people along the route (providing 50% subscribed) at a rate of 8 cents with a $1.50 monthly minimum.

In view of the companies agreement to drop the Bonus, Councillor Hoffman served notice that he would repeal the earlier resolution of disallowance and a special meeting was called for Friday afternoon April 13, 1928 for the purpose of considering Councillor Hoffman's notice of motion and to "further go into the matter of allowing the Winnipeg Elec. Rlwy to run their lines on the Municipal Roads."

All the members were present and the former resolution was repealed with only the Ward One Councillor still voting against it.

The new resolution was worded "That the WS & LW Rlwy be given permission to use the highways of this municipality for the purpose of constructing a power line from Little Britain to the "Clark Gravel Pit" subject to the arrangement being entered into with reference thereto between the Municipality and the Company Solicitors."

The Solicitors met and came to some type of satisfactory agreement because by May 1, 1928, By-law No. 370 was drawn up authorizing the electric company "to erect and maintain an electric transmission line to Clarkes Pit."

The CIL plant located just south of East Selkirk in 1929 received hook-up and it was the servicing of this industrial operation that made it feasible for future municipal power lines in the south end of the municipality.

It was in 1938, in December just before Christmas, when electric lights really went on for the first time in the Rural Municipality of St. Clements. A line was extended to the communities of East St. Paul, Gonor, Narol, Lockport, East Selkirk and Garson. The electrical energy was tapped off a 33,000 volt power line serving the CIL operation near East Selkirk. A new substation was built southwest of East Selkirk where the voltage was stepped down for distribution to the communities. (This substation was recently salvaged and replaced by a larger facility south of East Selkirk.)

Prior to the end of World War II the average farmer's life for the most part was one of arduous labor that began at four in the morning and ended long after dark. Just about everything was done by hand ... milking cows, loading grain, pitching hay, pumping water ... with the result that productivity was low and returns were small in relation to the hours of hard-work that went into operating a farm.

The rural homemaker fared no better as she cooked and baked over the searing heat of a wood stove; hauled buckets of water from the well and worked the grime out of the coveralls by hand on a scrubbing board.

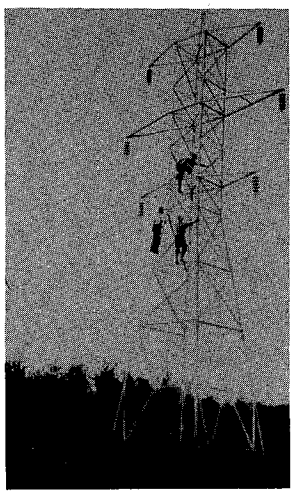
Whatever romantic notions and nostalgia maybe attached to the "good old days", hard physical drudgery was a way of life for most farmers.

Since the era of the kerosene lamp, farm life has undergone a complete revolution. And the major force behind the revolution was farm electrification.

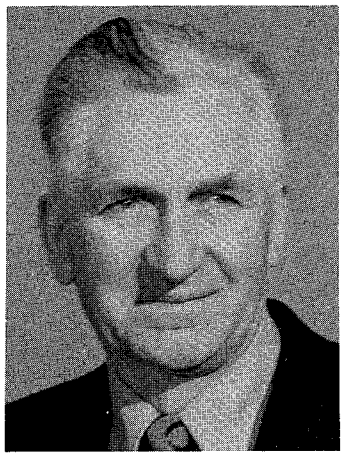
By 1938, there were few, if any, farm extensions. In fact, farm electrification in Manitoba didn't really get off the ground until 1945, even though the concept of bringing the benefits of electricity to all Manitobans had been nurtured as early as 1919.

In 1919, that was the year when the provincial government formed the Manitoba Power Commission for the purpose of distributing power in bulk to rural municipalities requesting electrical service. The Power Commission owned and operated its own transmission system and purchased the power from City Hydro in Winnipeg, and later, from the Winnipeg Elec. Company.

During the 1920's there were several rural municipalities plus a mere handful of farmers who had signed up for electrical service. Then came the financial disaster of 1929 and subsequent depression, and progress on electrification of the province slowed right down.



Power Line Near CIL Road, East Selkirk. On tower is Edgar Frost, Donivan Frost and Charlie Pruden.



Bob Henderson

Powerlines reached into the rural municipality of St. Clements at a time when the Power Commission was making an all-out effort to expand its service throughout rural Manitoba. The program was just starting to go well. Then, World War II broke out, and the electrification program was once again curtailed, this time by material shortages which lasted for the duration of the war.

The war, on the other hand, also brought about such a shortage of manpower on the farm that by 1942 farmers were not just asking for but petitioning the provincial government for electrical service.

The result was the formation of the "Manitoba Farm Electrification Enquiry Commission" which recommended a full-scale effort to bring electricity to all Manitoba farmers. At war's end in 1945 the plan got underway with a test project and by 1947 farm electrification was in full swing.

St. Clements Municipality didn't see Power Commission crews until around early 1950 with construction of a 3-phase 12,000 volt line extension going north from East Selkirk to Libau. There, first power was turned on in December 1950 followed by Poplar Park in March 1951.

Meanwhile, under construction going north along Highway 12 from Beausejour was a 33,000 volt transmission line from which distribution tapoffs would take electricity to the farm and resort communities along Lake Winnipeg. The system took about four years to complete. Thalberg, Beaconia and Gull Lake were first to receive electrical service from this source in August 1952. In March 1953 Grand Marais and Grand Beach (May, 1953) were connected and, from a new substation at the junction of Highways 59 and 11, a distribution line was extended to Victoria Beach in April 1954.

A 3-phase extension from a substation near Gull Lake was constructed in 1955 to bring service into the Brokenhead Indian Reserve (Aug. 1955) at Scanterbury. Two more beach areas received electricity when Patricia Beach (Stoney Point) was reached in November 1955 and Balsam Bay in November 1956.

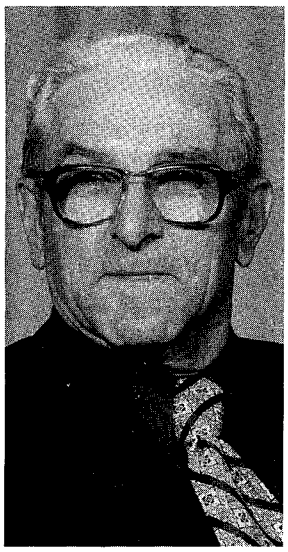
The coming of electricity to St. Clements in the late 30's sadly brought with it two tragedies which many of our senior citizens may yet remember. Herman Wenzel was the first Hydro district supervisor to operate what was then known as the East Selkirk District. Scarcely a year later in June, 1939 Herman was electrocuted while checking line clearance on a transformer pole.

Immediately following Herman's death, Bob Ingram was sent to relieve at East Selkirk. Less than three months later, on Sept. 10, 1939, he too was electrocuted while working at the East Selkirk substation.

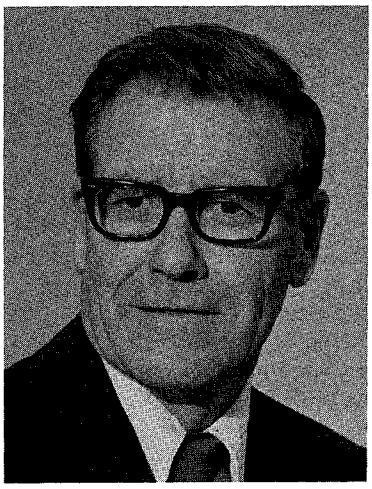
Because of Hydro boundary and district changes a complete chronology of Hydro men who have served the communities in St. Clements would be intricate. From the earlier years people will recall Clarence Chamberlain who worked out of East Selkirk from late 1939 until late 1940 and Bob Henderson from 1940 to 1950.

And there have been others, like Emmanuel Dunn, Elden Leoppky, Ralph (Pat) Patterson, Rollie Cameron, Ernie Mallard, to name a few --- men who have helped to keep the lights on in the Rural Municipality of St. Clements.

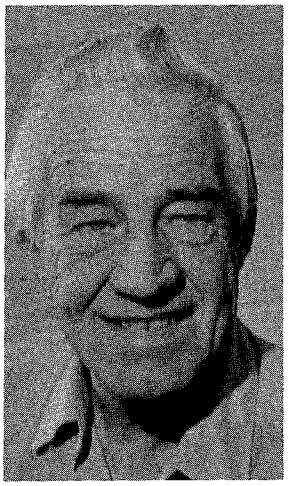
E. Dunn



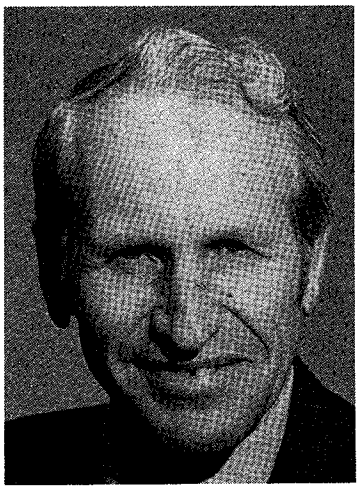
C. Chamberlain



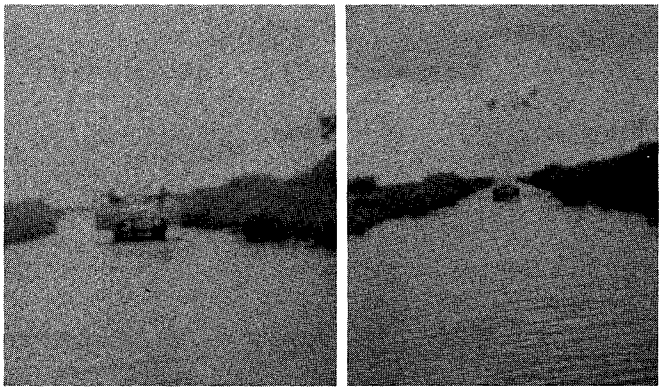
M. Dryden



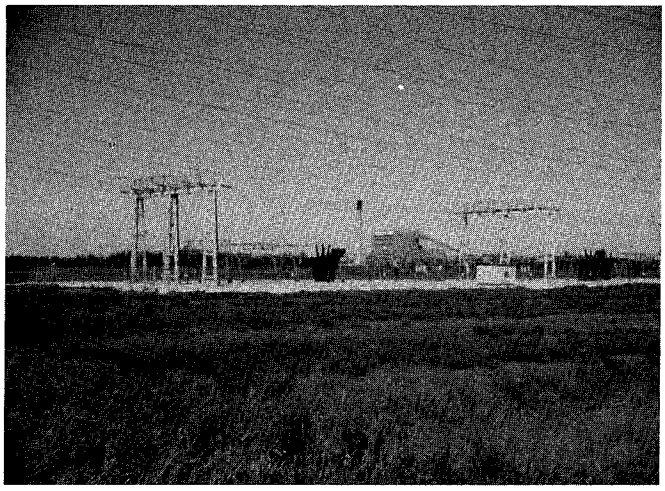
Rollie Cameron



Pat Paterson



Hydro trucks coming through the water on the old Hwy., 1953.



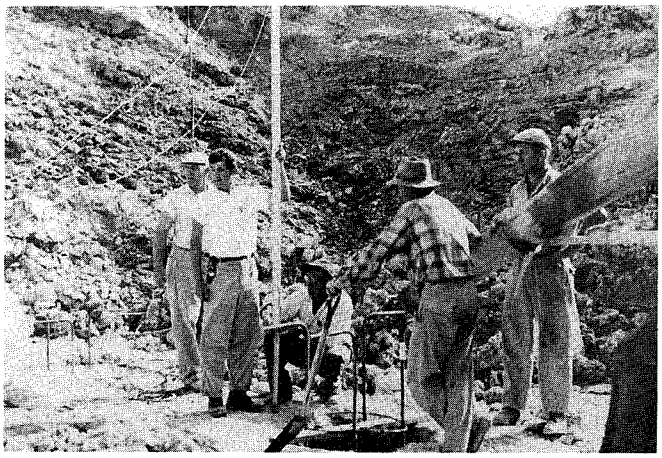
East Selkirk Sub. Station Step Down Bank 115,000 Volts to 7,200 Volts. It feeds the East Selkirk area and North of St. Peter's Road, South on Henderson Hwy., east at Lockport, down to 270 Dunnings Road, down Hwy. No. 44, and East on No. 59 to the Garson area.

SELKIRK GENERATING STATION

submitted by slh

The Selkirk Generating Station is the second largest thermal-electric generating station in Manitoba. It is located on the east side of the Red River, adjacent to East Selkirk, about 40 km (24 miles) from Winnipeg. It has a thermal capacity of some 132,000 kilowatts while its gas turbines generate about 25,000 kw. The construction was started on May 23, 1957 and it was officially opened on Oct. 19, 1960 by the Hon. Duff Roblin, then Premier of Manitoba. The General contractor was Pearson Construction of Winnipeg while the consultants were the Ewbank Partners of Toronto. The 2 wells drilled on the site are over 73m or 240 feet deep and supply the necessary water for domestic and bearing cooling purposes as well for the boilers. The 2 Gas Turbines are manufactured by Brown-Boveri with a capacity of 12,500 kw per unit. The plant has 7 transformers and its stack measures about 76 m in height or over 250 feet.

When the Selkirk station is generating at full capacity about 144,000 gallons of water is pumped per minute from the Red River, screened, passed through the condensors and discharged into Cooks Creek. From the two deep wells on site, water is pumped at various rates up to 450 gallons per minute to be used in the boilers and for bearing cooling and domestic purposes.

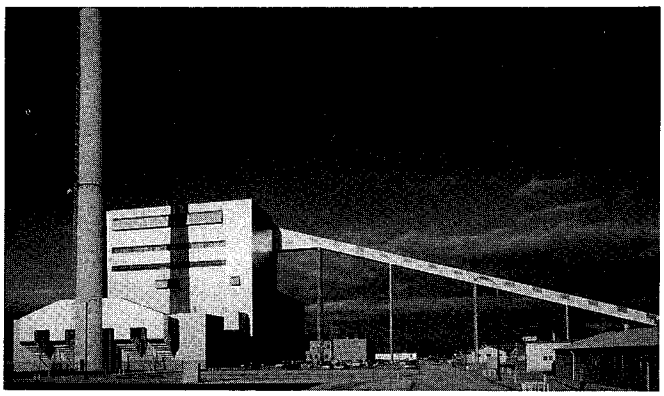


Selkirk Generating Station Project: Levels are checked prior to pouring the concrete, 1957.

Sediments and sludge resulting from the various filtering and treatment processes are sluiced to the "Ash Lagoon". As a precautionary measure against caustic or acid-like substances reaching the Ash Lagoon and eventually the river, all waste materials are neutralized with lime before being discharged from the station. The waste materials are sluiced to the lagoon by a nine-inch jet propulsion system capable of handling 120 tons of ash per hour.

It is interesting to note that the power generated at the Selkirk Plant is transmitted over 29 miles of double circuit steel tower line to the St. Vital Terminal Station which is in turn connected to the Transcona and Harrow Terminal Stations. From these switching stations, the power generated at Selkirk may be transmitted to any part of Manitoba Hydro System.

To complete the story we have added a photograph of the old Alexander Butler Rowley home which occupied a corner of the property that became the site of the Selkirk



Selkirk Generating Station.

Generating Station. The home remained there, by agreement with Manitoba Hydro, for as long as it was occupied by the elderly owner, Mrs. A.B. (Margaret Anne) Rowley, who passed away on Dec. 3, 1962.

HISTORY OF NATURAL GAS IN THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ST. CLEMENTS

submitted by Joe Smolinski

Natural gas transmission lines were first installed through the Rural Municipality of St. Clements in 1964, to serve the town of Selkirk. The arrival of the Selkirk transmission line made natural gas available in the southern part of the municipality; and in the summer of 1967, the natural gas distribution main was installed along Henderson Highway from the southern boundary of St. Clements, north to Lockport.

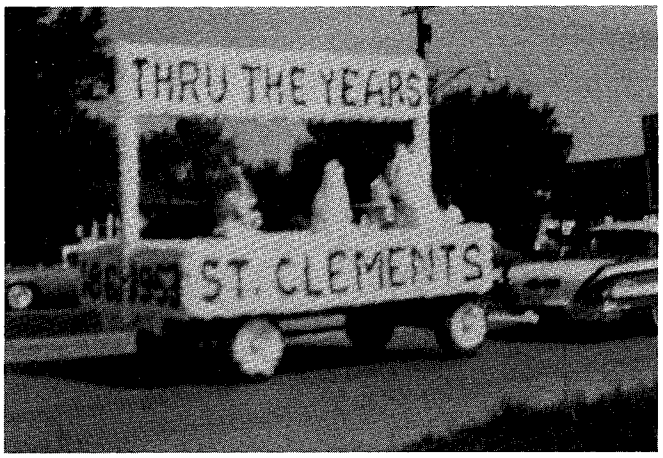
In 1972, Greater Winnipeg Gas Company extended its franchise to the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead to service the communities of Garson, Tyndall and Beausejour, which resulted in the extension of the transmission line through the northern portion of the Rural Municipality of St. Clements, and allowed the company to extend its distribution system to parts of East Selkirk, namely Henderson Highway, Coleville Road and Quarry Road.

In 1979, customers along Strathcona Road requested gas service, and the mains were installed to service that area.

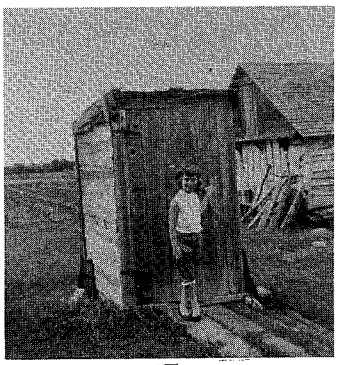
One year later, in 1980, the line on Henderson Highway was extended from Lockport Road, north to serve many customers along that section, as well as some customers along Clark and Nanton Roads.

During the 14-year period, 1967 to 1981, the company has connected a total of 449 customers in the Rural Municipality of St. Clements. Included in this total is the Red River Brick and Tile plant located on Highway No. 44, east of Lockport.

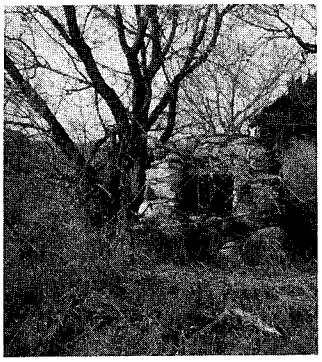
As the area expands, the company looks forward to serving more customers in the municipality.



St. Clements provided lots of running water for the residents.



... we supplied outdoor libraries.



we had bakeries.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

"GUNN'S CREEK FLOUR MILL"

by George Henry Gunn

Among the earliest and most vivid of my childhood recollections are those of my father's old watermill. And, while this ancient and primitive institution was by no means unique among its fellows, nor the first of its kind in the Red River settlement, I think it sufficiently typical and the facts connected with its construction and operation sufficiently interesting to warrant my setting down a few of them here, for the benefit of those "moderns" who were not privileged, like a few of the rest of us, to live through such scenes of "history in the making."

This primitive but ambitious enterprise was conceived and carried out in the early 1850's. My father was then a young man, newly married, and possessed of little of this world's goods save an abundance of health and strength, unconquerable optimism and the will to succeed. He had no monied capital; but, some time prior to this, his father, Donald Gunn, the historian, had deeded over to him his original homestead, lot 163, Parish of St. Andrew's, on the east side of the Red River, where the big traffic bridge over the St. Andrew's lock and dam now is; and on this farm was a creek -- or rather, a small part of one -- still known locally as "Gunn's Creek." This little stream, now kept at a uniform summer level by the backwater of the Lockport dam, today forms a picturesque beauty spot well known to travellers approaching the St. Andrew's lock from Winnipeg by the Henderson highway.

Winding sleepily in and out through beautiful groves of oak and elm, and always still as a mirror, it has little to suggest to the casual observer, of the bustle of industry or the stirring activities of commercial enterprise. But sixty years ago, it presented a very different aspect. In those days, before our ubiquitous drainage system had despoiled the marshes of their moisture and desicated the fair face of Mother Earth, Gunn's Creek was accustomed to go on periodic rampages that attracted the attention of even the dullest observer. Taking its rise in those deep and extensive morasses that form the drainage basin of the hill country to the east and south, it galloped down its tortuous, pebbly channel, in the spring of the year or during rainy seasons, like a veritable young "Kicking Horse" -- a phenomenon not long lost upon the new proprietor of the Gunn homestead.

DECIDE TO USE POWER

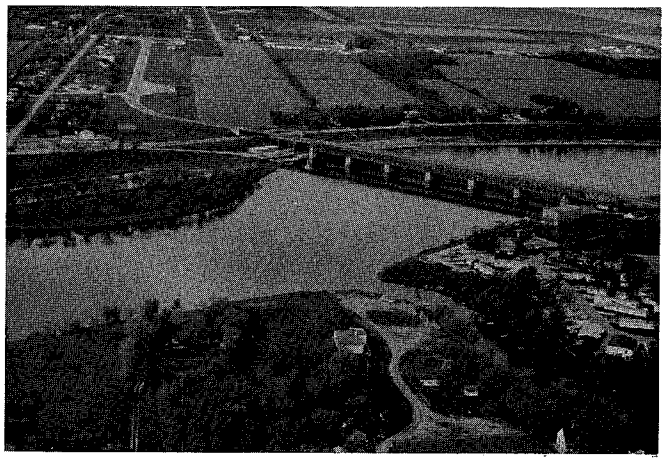
Here was water power-limited and intermittent, it is true, but sufficient for the purpose. And there was wheat to be ground, being produced in ever increasing quantities in the neighborhood. What more logical, in the premises, than a watermill? So a watermill it was to be. And a watermill it was.

This watermill, however, was not built on the original homestead. A suitable site was purchased a little farther down the stream (on Lot 167), not far from its junction with the Red River, and on this spot building operations were soon under way.

The "log" of the actual building of this old mill would be too long to give here; although I have it, in brief and fragmentary form, in the original account book kept by my father at the time. Many names figure in the record of men now long gone to their rest. They were all men of the neighborhood, all equally "to fortune and to fame unknown", and blissfully innocent of the seductive blandishments of the "walking delegate". Their wages, for the unabbreviated days of labor unrelieved by modern machinery that they contributed to its construction, ranged from 25 cents a day, for the ordinary laborer, to 45 cents or 50 cents a day for the skilled artizan, their food, presumably, being furnished in addition. "A starvation wage", according to the sophisticated "living wage" standard of today.

WORK DURING THE SUMMER

The work of constructing the dam and building of house the machinery was carried on principally during the summer, this being the most convenient reason. During the later summer it was especially convenient to work at the dam, as, the spring freshness and rainy season being past, the bed of the creek became quite dry, thus doing away with the difficulties attendant upon the harnessing of a living stream. The dam was first constructed as a wall, or dyke, of limestone, a plentiful supply of which was quarried from the adjacent river bank; this being subsequently reinforced by a heavy, sloped bank of clay, well packed in on either side. This dam was pierced, at equal intervals along its length, by



Bird's eye view of Lockport and Gunn's Creek.

three spillways about five feet wide, constructed of heavy oak posts and planking, and controlled by strong oaken gates, with oaken levers for raising and lowering them. These levers were just a stout oak sapling from the woods, about the size of an ordinary fence post, passed over a raised beam across the top of the spillway a few feet back; the business end of it being securely fastened to the top of the gate by shaganappi thongs passed through an auger hole in the framework, the handle-end of it being easily manipulated from the top of the dam in the rear. The lever controlling the "grinding gate" was an exception to this, being passed forward through the end wall of the building, thus providing for the control of the power from within the mill.

The mill building itself was of log-frame construction, about 24 by 34 feet, and two storeys high, the floor of the second storey being just above the level of the top of the dam, behind the most northerly end of which the building stood. A gap of some six or eight feet between the front of this building and the sustaining wall of the dam was bridged by a planked approach to the main entrance of the mill, which was in the second storey, about midway of its length. In this second storey were the stones that ground the flour, the sundry bins for the storage of wheat, all grists being received into the mill over the planked bridge aforesaid. In the lower storey were housed the bolting machinery and the great spindles and wheels that distributed the power to the various working parts. Here the finished product was bagged and delivered to its waiting claimants through a postern door in the north end of the building.

NO GLAZED WINDOWS

The mill building was quite innocent of glazed windows, sufficient light for operation by day being admitted through the open door and a couple of small square aperatures in the centre of the south gable. When necessary to grind at night, some sort of fish-oil lamps, suspended at convenient points, were used. By day, also considerable light was admitted between the unchinked logs; for, from very shortly after its completion to the day of its final demolition, the building remained quite destitute of the chinking and plaster that usually form the finishing touches to structures of this kind. The roof, of course, was of thatch, which was always kept in repair with difficulty, for the same reason that the walls went unchinked -- a reason that will appear later.

It may be truly said, that this old mill was "fearfully" and wonderfully made. Nearly all the machinery housed in the structure above described was, a year or so prior to the first turning on of the water, growing in the forest or reposing peacefully in its native habitat in the ages old strata of the earth. With the exception of a few small metal gear wheels, brought by Mississippi Steamer and Red River Cart from St. Louis, Missouri and some brass bolting cloth from England, every wheel and spindle and every other working part, was manufactured from local materials by local artizans. All the wheels in it, with the exception already mentioned, were constructed out of native oak from adjacent woods. These were made in the seclusion of his workshop, during the winter, by my father, who, though self-taught, was a skilled wheelwright and joiner.

MARVELS OF MACHINERY

I can well remember the marvels of these ponderous and skillfully constructed wheels. The largest was, of course, the great water wheel that furnished power. This must have been, at least, 16 feet across, with three-foot face. It was built entirely of native oak, with the exception of the buckets which were of fir or some similar wood. The spindle that it turned, on which it was built, was a great oaken timber 14 inches in diameter. On the other end of this protruding into the lower storey of the mill, was the largest of several wooden gears, similarly constructed.

This one, if my memory serves me rightly, was about six feet across, and into it was geared a succession of others, of similar material and construction, which finally connected with the imported metal wheels above mentioned. These great oaken gears, were, as has already been said, marvels of the wheelwright and joiner's art. They were built up of thoroughly seasoned native oak; the jointing of the great spokes and felloes being so perfect as to almost defy detection. Every cog of these wheels was made and mortised in separately. And some idea maybe had of the strength and accuracy of construction when, it is said, that at the time of the final dismantling of the mill, after twenty years of continuous use, they showed but little trace of wear or deterioration.

The bolting apparatus, with its revolving brushes and other parts, was also made in its entirety in my father's workshop; as were also the hoppers and casings housing and stones; and the lumber for all these things, and for that matter, every other thing about the mill where lumber was needed, being whipsawed out of trees felled in the vicinity.

The mill was equipped with two run of stones - also of purely native material and manufacture. These were ponderous affairs, five feet in diameter and eight inches thick. They were chiseled out of the native granite on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, opposite Grindstone Point, and transported by York Boat to the site of the mill; the pattern on the grinding surfaces and other finishing touches being put on by local stone cutters there.

PLASTER SHAKEN LOOSE

Only one pair, however, of these giant stones was ever run at a time after the first experiment of trying to run them both simultaneously. Upon this occasion, as I have often heard it told, it was as if a young earthquake had broken loose. The plaster and chinking of the log walls came down in showers and the entire plant was threatened with destruction. Needless to say, the experiment was never repeated. Nor was any attempt ever made to replace the plaster and chinking; it being found that the continuous vibration of the machinery - even with only one set of the stones running - made it impossible to make them stay put.

The task of installing the machinery and of giving the finishing touches to the various parts of this ingeniously

constructed flour manufacturing plant was carried out during the winter so that by the end of March it was ready for the water. At least that was the fond belief indulged by its builder. But the water came a little sooner, and in much greater volume than was anticipated. The winter's snow had been exceptionally heavy; and, early in April, a sudden thaw set in, accompanied by rain, which precipitated the accumulated water into its natural channels with unprecedented dispatch and violence. It came down Gunn's Creek with a roar of triumphant freedom that was not to be lightly checked; and, when it reached the newly constructed dam, there were things doing.

At this time there was only one spillway provided for the passage of the surplus water, the inadaquacy of which for this purpose was very soon apparent. Weak points and undetected crevices, too, were soon sought out by the insidious and insistent element; so that, between what was threatening to go over and what was threatening to go through or under, it soon began to look as if the whole dam, mill and all, would be carried into the Red River. In such a crisis, immediate emergency measures had to be taken to save the situation.

RECRUIT VOLUNTEER HELPERS

Gangs of men with barrows and shovels were quickly mustered and put to work, some wrestling with the leaks in the dam, others cutting a ditch around it to let the surplus water away. It was a strenuous days battle extending far into the night; but when morning dawned the situation had been mastered and the mill saved.

An additional spillway was afterwards put in, thus effectually guarding against any similar menace in the future.

Despite such early aberrations, however, the mill proved to be unqualified success. Having "sowed its wild oats" and demonstrated its frolicsome moods in a number of such escapades it settled down to the serious business of producing "the staff of life" for all and sundry who might bring their grist to its hoppers. I am not prepared to pronounce any judgement on the quality of the flour produced, although I consumed my good share of it. According to the uncritical standards of the time, however, it was considered good--frozen wheat and bin-heating misadventures, of course, being allowed for. The quality suffered too, sometimes no doubt, through the inexperience of the miller.

I have often heard if said, for example, that all the flour turned out for a considerable time at the beginning of its operation, was produced with the stones running backwards. I don't remember whether this original output was labelled "New Process" or not. But I don't remember anyone dying of "flour barrel consumption" or any gastric malady through its use so that it could not have been too bad, even at that. At any rate, there was soon no lack of grists. They came in squeaking Red River carts, in skiffs in dugouts and York boats, from all over the Settlement. They were there from the hand-to-mouth yokel of the neighborhood with a single bag on his back, to the York boat brigades of the Hudson Bay Company with hundreds of bushels.

In fact, in the palmy days of this old mill, it was more often the water than the grists that was lacking. In the spring of the year it came down in floods, as described above; and grinding had to be kept up by night as well as by day, in order to get the waiting grists ground, and not to lose any of the available power of its precious volume. In a dry time the grists accumulated and waited on the miller; the miller waited on the capricious favor of the "weather man". My father had a stake driven in one edge of the dam, near the shore, in the top part of which were sawed notches to measure height of the water--this primitive water-guage being known among us as "the sawed stake" and I can well remember being sent by him, on various occasions, to consult this "sawed stake" oracle, in order to acquaint him with the level of the water; the difference of an inch more or less, registered by those fatefull notches, always determining the momentous question, "to grind or not to grind?" In a period of stubborn drought, with no Elijah to intervene, the only recourse for the flour-hungry householder was a resort once more to the "querns" or the "beating-block", an alternative that not infrequently presented itself.

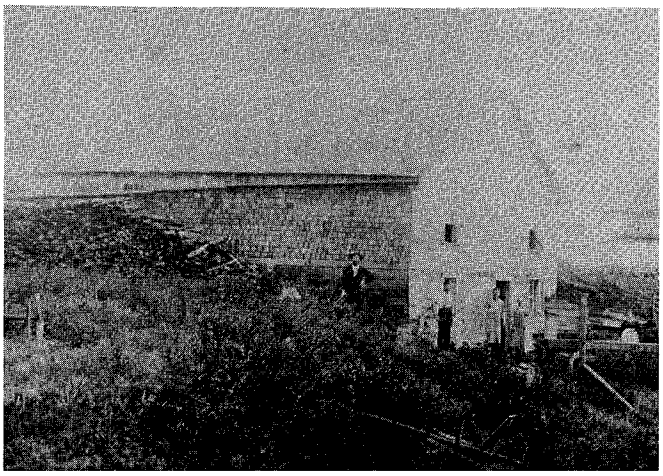
From a financial point of view, while not producng dividends comparable to those of our great flouring mills of the present day, I would judge that the venture was fairly satisfactory to its enterprising proprietor. Ordinarily, the system of payment was by moulter this instance, pronounced "mooter" that is, a certain percentage of each bushel of wheat was taken by the miller as his remuneration for grinding the balance. I very clearly remember the old "mooter measure". It was a miniature wooden tub made with staves, one of which was left standing a few inches above the others to form a hand-hold. It would probably hold about a gallon. Pound notes and gold sovereigns were also considerably in evidence; such patrons as the Hudson's Bay Company and other wealthier residents of the community probably preferring to pay in those media. Upon the introduction into the country, however, of steam flouring mills, with improved machinery and methods, the patronage of the "old mill" naturally fell off, making its continued operation unprofitable. It was accordingly closed down, and a number of years later, dismantled.

DOIDGE'S POTTERY WORKS

submitted by slh

Mr. Arthur Doidge learned his trade of Pottery in Peterborough, Ont. He came to Manitoba and settled in East Selkirk in the 1870's. He built for himself a business in East Selkirk called the "Doidge's Pottery Works" and his large plant was situated about 150 yards south of where the old CPR Right-of-Way crossed Cooks Creek. There were several brick plants in the area west of Cooks Creek leading to the Red River, but this pottery business was operated independent of any of the other manufacturers of stone or brick. It became "Doidge and Doidge" when his brother joined him in the management and operation of the plant.

The product at the beginning was coarse items such as



Limestone Quarry, East Selkirk, 1884.

Doidges Pottery Works.

flower pots and sewer-pipe type of commercial enterprise.

In the year 1889 a Mr. Richard Kingdon came to Manitoba and commenced working with Arthur Doidge of East Selkirk and they created the firm of "Doidge and Kingdon of East Selkirk."

Richard and Arthur had both learned the pottery trade together, many years earlier, in Ontario. Arthur had come to Manitoba to set up his business in East Selkirk while Richard had spent the 18 years working at his trade in Wisconsin, New York and Texas.

However, in the year 1899 when the two gentlemen merged their knowledge of the pottery business, it became an improved enterprise.

During the fall of 1896 Doidge and Kingdon expanded their pottery works business and made several plant improvements and modernization. They then started manufacturing a line of stoneware that the newspapers reported were "more equal to the imported articles."

However, as in all things, they had their ups and downs. Just as their product was becoming quite fashionable and popular, Richard Kingdon took ill. His illness was brief and his death unexpected, as he died in March 1897, before the ice was out of Cooks Creek.

Richard, during his stay, was very active in the Church and Sunday School and travelled to Selkirk where he enjoyed membership in several organizations such as the Oddfellows and Masonic.

Arthur carried on with the pottery works, but missed his old friend. Eventually, in 1906, Arthur Doidge sold his property to a Mr. Michael Starodub who had moved out from Winnipeg that year. Mr. M. Starodub purchased Lots 48 and 49 containing 10 acres, within the Village of East Selkirk.

Within a few weeks of the sale, Arthur Doidge moved to B.C. where it was reported he was involved in fruit farming on a fair scale in the Okanagan Valley.

Arthur was not really in good health when he retired from the pottery business, and in May of 1914, East Selkirk learned of his death in Summerland, B.C.

Arthur was Mayor of the Town of East Selkirk when it was really booming and all the brick plants and quarries were at full production. He was involved with some of the construction of the Roundhouse. He was quite political and enjoyed a good debate on occasion.

When Arthur Doidge was Mayor of East Selkirk in 1887 it is to be noted that his brother, E. Doidge was a Councillor at the same time.

EARLY INDUSTRY OF BRICK AND STONE

submitted by slh

At one time five brickyards operated in the East Selkirk area. They were west of Cooks Creek and run down as far as the Red River. The brick from these plants were used in the Towns of East and West Selkirk and also for the Roundhouse on the east side of the Red River. The Roundhouse at East Selkirk was built by the Government of Canada as a part of their Public Works project in the years 1877-1879. It was completed during the winter of 1879 and handed over to the Government of Canada in Jan. 1880. Stone from the East Selkirk Quarry was also used in the construction of the Roundhouse. By June 1880, the contractors for the Winnipeg Bridge had obtained permission from the government to quarry stone on the eastern town plot and very quickly had about 25 men at work in the quarry. Large quantities of lime was also being shipped from there to Winnipeg for the mason work on the bridge. By early July, 1880 the Manitoba Free Press was reporting that stone was being rushed out of the East Selkirk Quarry for the Bridge (Louise) at the rate of 30 yards per day.

According to A. McCharles (the Foot-steps of Time 1886-87) (Transaction No. 27 - Historic and Scientific Society of Manitoba) at East Selkirk there were two quarries in particular that had been worked extensively for a number of years, one at each end of a large mound about half a mile in length and most of the ornamental stone used in the City of Winnipeg for building had been taken from there, for a number of years.

Another report by J. Hoyes Panton (referring to the summer of 1883) states he visited the East Selkirk Quarries in 1883. He mentions it was but a short distance from the CPR Selkirk Station, on the east side of the Red