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Appendix I: "Beginning of a History" (1885)

This early effort at a history was made by the editor of the Birtle Observer, who thought the pending arrival of the railway would be epoch-making. It was aimed at attracting more settlers to the area. On the front page of the November 13th, 1885 issue.

Beginning of a History.

On the arrival of the Railway it will not be out of place to give a short history of the settlement of this portion of Manitoba. It will be remembered that the first survey for the C.P.R., made by the McKenzie Government, was north of the Riding Mountains. The line was afterwards objected to as it passed through a desolate country and left the entire portion of the fertile belt, south of the Saskatchewan, without the advantage of a railway. On the accession to power of the Conservatives the route was changed and a line was surveyed south of the Mountains and along the track now followed by the M. N. W. Road. In fact on the crossing of the Bird Tail, the same ravine is used by the newly constructed railway that had been selected by the engineers of the C.P.R., and many of the old stakes are still standing. The announcement that the national line would be made between the Assiniboine and the hills caused an immense rush of settlers to the districts drained by the Little Saskatchewan, the Bird Tail and the Shell River. This fine section of the Province containing several hundred townships, is bounded on the south by the Assiniboine river and to the north by the extensive range of elevations so justly celebrated for the unexhaustable supply of spruce and poplar timber which covers their slopes for hundreds of miles and affords a valuable supply of sawlogs, which can be easily distributed in the various settlements by means of the several rivers which take their rise in the almost unexplored recesses of the mountains, and flow south through long stretches of fertile prairie until they reach the Assiniboine. The advantages of such a country were not likely to remain long undiscovered, or unappreciated, especially when about to be opened by such a road as the C. P. R. In the eastern mind the chief objection to Manitoba was the want of wood, but here the supply was abundant, for in addition to the boundless forests to the north, the whole country was arboreous, the usual belt of timber occupied the shores of the rivers and in every direction the prairies were adorned by beautiful groves of aspen which made whole townships resemble gigantic parks, while the soil

was of the very best quality. The Assiniboine river being navigable for steamers gave access to the country, and thousands of persons from the vicinity of Stratford, St. Marys, Hamilton, St. Catharines and from the finest portions of Ontario crowded in; many were well off and all were superior as a class. For a time the various settlements were exceedingly prosperous, but the change of the route of the great Railway to the other side of the Assiniboine, cast a cloud over the bright prospects of the people. The settlers were not of a character to be easily discouraged, secure in the advantages of an excellent situation, they felt assured that the district would not be long without a railway. This hope was speedily strengthened by the forming of the M. N. W. Railway Company. The bursting of the boom bubble and the disarrangement and depression which followed the collapse delayed the construction, although a portion of the road was completed. As happened in other portions of the Province, the assurance that the railroads would be extended without delay, caused many farmers to go faster than was prudent, and efforts were made to raise large quantities of grain while the settlement was yet too young and the railway much too distant. Machinery was brought in at a heavy cost and sold at double prices. The Railway Company got into difficulty and early frosts attacked the wheat here as well as in other portions of Manitoba; but notwithstanding these discouragements the people have shown wonderful fortitude and having always abundance of food little or no suffering has been experienced, although in many cases ambition has been severely checked. The prospects of the people are now very much better than they have ever been before. The Railroad is at length here with a sure prospect of further extension next season. The settlers have gained much by experience and have been taught to avoid trusting entirely to their wheat fields and all are making strong efforts to increase the number of their cattle and sheep. They have found out the fallacy of supposing that even the best land will bear continual cropping without being overcome with weeds and exhausted. They see plainly that all those who have attempted to make money by devoting their efforts exclusively to growing wheat have speedily ruined themselves as well as the land which they attempted to rob, while all those who have given part of their attention to cattle have prospered, and in the future farming in this portion of Manitoba will be conducted in accordance with natural laws and not by the direction and advice of persons who know nothing about the lessons they profess to teach. Owing to the immense sale of public lands made by the Government, some years ago, without conditions of settlement, there are large quantities of vacant ground in the counties of Shoal Lake and Russell. Finding taxes burdensome, the

owners would be glad to dispose of the farms at moderate prices and as there is now excellent railway connection with the outside world, no better opportunity will ever offer of obtaining lands in so desirable a position. Young men, farmers' sons in Ontario who would require to pay fifty dollars an acre, in the east, can here get much better land at four or five and have the advantage of starting life free of debt, instead of spending half their days in working to clear off an encumbrance on a farm in Ontario.

Appendix 2: "Old Fort Ellice." (1886)

I have selected this article, featured on page 1 of the Birtle Observer, November 26th, 1886, as an appendix because it is illustrative of the self-conscious liminality of Birtle's pioneers. They knew they were at the end of an era. The precipitous decline of Fort Ellice was linked to the decline of steamboat traffic on the Assiniboine in favour of railways such as the Manitoba & Northwestern, built into Birtle earlier that year. The article also illustrates the past importance of Fort Ellice in regards to the postal service which had existed prior to the arrival of settlers.

Old Fort Ellice.

Accepting an invitation from Mr. Manwaring who was going to Fort Ellice on business we enjoyed a pleasant drive to the historical old Fort, so well known both in England and America, although now divested of much of its former importance. Previous to the construction of the C. P. R. Fort Ellice was the distributing point to all the Hudson Bay stations westward to the Rocky Mountains, and was a prominent frontier Fort. Romantically situated near the junction of the Qu'Appelle and the Assiniboine rivers, the old Fort commands an extensive view of the valley which is about three hundred feet deep and a little over a mile wide. The Fort stands quite near the edge of the banks which are thickly covered with trees of a small size. There is about a dozen of buildings, mostly of logs, a portion of the old stockade still remains and there are yet traces of the busy days of long ago when perhaps five hundred carts with well armed and swarthy drivers, innumerable loose horses and a mounted escort of buffalo hunters would leave the Fort on the distant and dangerous journey over the plains to far away stations. The old store

still remains where in former days dressed buffalo skins were changed, each, for a plug of tobacco and the high counter still stands, where the Indians of other days delivered their valuable furs for the goods of the silent and fearless white man, and where each article was handed through an aperture like the wicket of a post office or a bank. Perhaps the most interesting relic of the past, to be noticed at Fort Ellice, is the old team dog Husky, the last of his race. He, with a number of dogs of his class were formerly engaged in carrying the mail from one point to another all over the Northwest making many journeys from Winnipeg to the Rocky Mountains. He is of immense size and has been of great strength. The joints of his legs have been developed in a remarkable manner and give unmistakable evidence of extraordinary exertion on long journeys over the vast plains on the winter's snow. The old wanderer is now wearing out the last days of his life in solitary idleness and ease beside the walls of the ancient fortification which for many years has been his head quarters during the summer months when the prairies afforded grass for the horses of the plains. Fort Ellice was erected about sixty years ago and has been three times re-built. It was once accidentally blown up by an explosion of the powder magazine and has many other interesting associations. Before the construction of the railway, the place was the head of river navigation and sometimes as many as five steam boats at one time were employed in landing goods and passengers. But steam boats have not ascended the river of late years and the romantic valley of the Assiniboine is now the home of many halfbreeds and some Indians and from the high position occupied by the Fort, the tents and dwellings of the natives can be noticed scattered at intervals along the windings of the river. The small cultivated fields supply the half wild people with grain and potatoes, a few cattle are kept, from the river can be procured abundance of fish and the woods afford all the rabbits, partridges and chickens which can be consumed. As their wants are few and easily supplied there is perhaps as much contentment amongst the rude inhabitants of that wild valley as can be found in a higher state of civilization. A pleasing object in the distance of a couple of miles was a herd of about a hundred cattle. The animals were moving in the long grass of the river valley and reminded the observer of the buffaloes of long ago which grazed over the same ground.

Appendix 3: “Refugee Indians.” (1887)

I have selected this article, from page 3 of the Manitoba Daily Free Press, August 31st, 1887, as an appendix to the section on Birtle’s background because it includes a description of the town and of the Birtle Indian Agency and its relationship to the Birdtail Sioux, whose reserve is extensively described. The article simultaneously illustrates the settler colonial attitude towards Indigenous peoples, and the perfect self-sufficiency of those described. Worth noting is that the Sioux were not parties to the numbered treaties.

Refugee Indians.

Dr. Bryce Visits the Sioux Reserve on Bird-Tail Creek—Notes of Advancement.

The Indians Taking Kindly to the Cultivation of the Soil—Beautiful Birtle.

Gentle reader, as the last century writers in their affectionate manner used to say, were you ever among the deep cut valleys and picturesque coulees of Northwestern Manitoba? These are the Manitoban Highlands! Here you have reached the second great steppe. After you have travelled the length of the Manitoba & Northwestern railway and reached this point some 185 miles northwest of Winnipeg, you will find yourself discussing with your fellow-passenger the comparative merits of Minnedosa and Birtle valleys. Fourteen years ago the writer was shown a vertical section of this region by one of the early exploring engineers of the Canadian Pacific railway, and these deep valleys of the second prairie level have it the appearance of a saw-edge. It was then said that it would take [nine] miles of a circuit to cross the Minnedosa valley, and this feature was given as a reason for diverting the C.P.R. railway to the present southern route. But what the Northwestern has lost in railway engineering it has certainly gained in beauty. The Birdtail creek, which has been softened in the name of the town into Birtle is here narrow, but its banks give a good climb of [150] or two hundred feet. Having clambered to the eastern cliff let us look at the picture before us. Up

and down in the distance may be seen the heights of the winding banks. On yonder high hill is the pretentious residence of a former member of parliament of the district. It has a considerable tower and on the top a flag staff from which on festive occasions its master’s banner floated. The house is somewhat falling to decay and is a picture of departed greatness. “Sic transit gloria mundi.” Further up the right is railway hill, when the station and other buildings are half a mile from town. Running through the valley is the small stream, but here spread out into a flat sheet of water, relieving the scene and serving the useful purpose of driving the mill, which will soon be hard at work in grinding the abundant grain of Birtle district. Some of the buildings in the town are of stone, but most are wooden, and in some cases attention has been paid to tasteful ornamentation. Two or three neat, newly-finished churches give some indication of the hopes of the town, while half a mile down the valley is the public school building of some size, whose location shows a desire to give the rising generation plenty of exercise in reaching it. Birtle has a number of very energetic and enterprising inhabitants and they are justly proud of the town and its vicinity. But we have a good journey before us today, and so, under the kind guidance of Rev. W. M. Hodnett, who is an old inhabitant of the district, we are soon on the way for some ten or twelve miles to the

BIRDTAIL SIOUX RESERVE.

The herbage is most luxuriant; the bluffs give a park-like appearance to the scene; we pass the Blenheim school-house, a dark painted and somewhat uncommon looking building, which a local Irishman described as the educational “simitery” of the locality, and amid ripe wheat fields reach a beautiful sheet of water known as “Hooper’s Lake.” This is a large lake of sweet water, and as we refreshed our “Rosinante” from its waters we saw the fine sandy beach covered with a great variety of pebbles, contrasting with the miry margin of reeds so common in the prairie ponds and lakes. A most delightful morning drive brings us to the reserve, which is situated at the junction of the Birdtail with the Assiniboine. Here the scenery is grand; yonder is the great Assiniboine valley, and we can see the buildings adjoining the well known old Fort Ellice, near which the Qu’Appelle joins the Assiniboine. The confluence of the Birdtail and the Assiniboine lying several hundred feet below us, is well wooded with soft maple and elm, whose leaves give a beautiful contrast. The winding coulees and ravines suggest localities for robber hordes or illicit stills such as were once found in the Scottish Highlands, but probably the travellers here are not worth

robbing, and the Indian is not allowed to participate in the mountain dew. Here is laid out a reserve of about one-third of a township for the band of

SIOUX REFUGEES.

The Sioux, or Dakota Indians are the most noted of the Western tribes. They resemble the Six Nations of Eastern Canada in appearance, and in their confederacy. Christian missionaries began work among them in Minnesota in 1835, and a considerable number of them were christianized. They were, however, so savage as to have received the name the "Tigers of the plains," and many a conflict between them and the Red River half-breeds proved the title a true one. The American Government did not keep faith with their Indian wards, and in 1862 the terrible outbreak, known as the "Minnesota Massacre," took place, in which many whites were murdered, and settlement checked in that State for ten years. The writer remembers seeing in 1871 settlers' houses and enclosures in Minnesota lying as they had been left in the year of the massacre of their owners. After the suppression of the outbreak a number of the Sioux fled into British territory. Much negotiation took place between the Hudson's Bay Company authorities in Red River and the United States, the permission having been at one time given the Americans to follow the refugees on British soil. This privilege, however, was never used. In 1877 Sitting Bull and his band fled to the north of the boundary line. Many of them were induced to return, but a number did not. So that the refugees from the two outbreaks remaining with us number some 2,000. They are chiefly found on Oak River, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Fort Qu'Appelle, Turtle Mountains and Portage la Prairie, and on the Bird Tail reserve we are describing. In 1874 treaties were made with the first-named and last-made bands and in later years with others, at least so far as granting them reserves, but no annuity is paid the Sioux band. The population of this Bird Tail reserve is 135, and the Sioux possess 27 log houses and 24 barns and stables. We drove around from house to house and were pleased to see so many evidences of civilization. Many of the families have given up the practice of pitching a tent and living in it during the summer, as so many even of the most civilized Indians do. The houses are built upon separate locations, and not in a village, as is done by their Assiniboine relatives near Indian Head. Beside each man's house is his farm, and the Anglo-Saxon idea of the landmark is fast gaining ground among these Dakotas.

FARMING.

The farming was most interesting. No farm instructor here comes to incite the lagging or berate the lazy, but these Sioux farm of their own motion. Our visit was paid on the 16th of August, and almost all the wheat was cut and in stook; in some cases stacking was going on. The thirty horses owned on the reserve are sufficient for farm operations, and yet are not so numerous as to suggest the roaming tendency so prevalent among the western Indians. We found on enquiry that there are about two hundred acres under cultivation on the reserve which would be an average of some seven acres per family. Take one example, "Ben." This Indian has twelve acres under crop. His wheat is excellent and partly cut. We found his son busy mending his reaper. It was not a self-binder but was serviceable. The young man had mended in a workmanlike manner a difficult part of the woodwork of the machine. The cooking stove outside the house was preparing dinner, and after partaking of this, Ben junior would attack the grain remaining. The children were cooking before the stove green ears of Indian corn of which a plantation was near. Ben had also several acres of oats, potatoes and turnips.

STOCK RAISING.

The Sioux are found engaging in mixed farming and in this show themselves wise. The writer was not able to obtain the quantity of stock belonging to private parties, as distinguished from that the property of the Government. But from the age of the reserve and the industrious character of the Sioux, it seems probable that most of the stock is private property. It will be seen that this is considerable. There are on the reserve 43 cows, 52 oxen, and 35 young stock—making in all 130 head of cattle. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of stock raising is the large number of sheep belonging to the Sioux. There are no less than 87 sheep on the reserve. The growth of sheep is perhaps one of the best indications of progress of an Indian band. The sheep need care and require protection from prairie wolves and the innumerable dogs that infest an Indian settlement. The product of the sheep can be utilized in many ways. The large flock of this reserve destroys what used to be a treasured belief of the western plains that sheep could not be reared in the Northwest. It is a suggestive circumstance, which no doubt the watchful ethnologists who see connection between the Indians and the lost Jewish tribes will note that there is not a pig on the reserve.

RELIGION

The good seed which was sown in Minnesota by the devoted missionaries Williamson and Riggs, fifty years ago has become a beautiful harvest among these Dakotas of our Northwest. The Sabbath is well observed, daily worship is maintained in many of the houses, and the people have a comfortable church. A belfry in front of the church, which is 32 x 18 feet, makes the church a prominent object on the prairie. The enterprising band have lately added a handsome harmonium costing \$80 or \$90 to their church, and are exceedingly fond of sacred music. A young Sioux named Thunder, now employed in the Indian office, Birtle, who has been away at school and has learned to play the organ, makes his journey every week to the reserve to lend his aid. The minister of the reserve is Rev. Solomon Tunkasaiyice, a pure Dakota, ordained in the United States. He cannot speak English well, but is an adept in his own tongue. Solomon of the unpronounceable name makes occasional journeys to the wandering bands of his countrymen at Moose Jaw and Portage la Prairie. In his absence several of the elders can lead the service, and at present a young student of Manitoba College, Mr. Macdonald makes a fortnightly visit to the reserve and speaks through an interpreter. Solomon, the minister, had just returned before our visit, and is not in good health.

EDUCATION

The school is under the care of Mr. Burgess, who for several years has been on the reserve, and is now becoming well-versed in the Sioux language. The reserve though not very large has the dwellings so scattered that the distances to come by a number of pupils are considerable. The number of children on the roll is 27, and the average is 11. Mr. Burgess had the good fortune to receive one of the four prizes offered to Indian schools for the satisfactory condition of the Bird-tail reserve school. Mr. Burgess is respected by the Indians, and is of much use to the Indians in helping in their church services. Mr. Burgess is unmarried and lives on or near the reserve.

MR. MARKLE'S AGENCY.

The writer has been living for some weeks within the agency under the care of Mr. J. A. Markle. Mr. Markle has his house and office in Birtle. In the office is a clerk, Mr. William Graham, son of the late Indian agent, Mr. James Graham, who was well known to older residents in Winnipeg. The office seemed to present the appearance of good order, and all information

sought was cheerfully given. There are eleven bands in the agency. It does not seem easy to keep such close supervision as in the western agencies. The heavy expenditure on Indian affairs no doubt forced the increase of officials beyond the present staff. But it must nevertheless be said that unless the Indian can be kept on his reserve there is little hope of civilizing or christianizing him. Mr. Markle has a good reputation in the Birtle district, and seems obliging and painstaking.

IS THE INDIAN DYING OFF?

This agency seems to supply some facts on this question. Of the eleven bands in the agency three have increased very slightly during the past year, the total being 13 of an increase. Six have decreased seriously, making a total of 65. Three bands have been stationary. Now this is on a total of some 1,790 Indians, so that, on the whole, of the eleven bands there is a decrease in population of about 3 per cent in a single year. Even the civilized Sioux of the Birdtail reserve have decreased 2½ per cent. As formerly noted there is in these statistics a disturbing element in the fact that changes take place from one reserve to another, yet taking the area of a whole agency the error is probably very slight. The Sioux do not seem to be a robust race, and are like the Assiniboines of Indian Head in their tendency to fall before the white man. But in a number of the bands there is no difficulty in finding out the cause. Immorality lies at the root of the evil. In the bands north and northwest of Birtle the loathsome diseases, too disgraceful to be named, which are prevalent tell why the red man is fading away. Christianity is the only agency that can arrest the evil. The white man has brought his vices among the Indians, he is bound to supply to him the gospel which alone can make noble, free and pure.

Appendix 4: "Birtle: Its Progress and Prospects." (1880)

I have selected this article, reprinted on page 1 of the Manitoba Daily Free Press, June 25th, 1880, as an appendix to the section on Birtle's Pioneers because it serves as an example of early booster literature while discussing the dynamics of early settlement in Birtle. The correspondent is unnamed, though was clearly sympathetic to the Hamilton & Northwest Colonization Society and to J. H. Wood, and may have been Wood himself.

Birtle.

Its Progress and Prospects.

Correspondence of the London Free Press.

Birtle, N.W.T.—It would appear from the number of private letters of enquiry that still come this way from Ontario, that the interest in the Northwest is still as great as ever. Probably many of your readers might appreciate a small space of the *Free Press* devoted to affairs of the Great Lone Land. Well, the spring months have passed, and the general statement is that it has been the longest, latest and coldest spring in the memory of that venerable character, the oldest inhabitant. Owing to a combination of circumstances, it has pressed heavily and caused much inconvenience to both settler and new comers. The large numbers of the latter arriving early with their teams, caused an increased demand for feed which the settlers required for spring work, and for this double demand there was no supply. The protracted winter aggravated the evil, and the result is, or was, that many of the cattle and horses perished of sheers starvation, and nearly all were incapacitated for doing the amount of work that was laid out for them, so that the amount of crops put in will fall very far short of the general calculation made about the first of March last. However, there has been a very fair investment made in the virgin soil, and we look for the largest harvest in these parts that has been heard of for the past thousand years.

The Hamilton Colonization Company has been the means of bringing a fine settlement to the land, on either side of the Bird Tail Creek, for many

miles around outside of their small reserve of three townships. Many of these who joined their colony in Ontario are up and down the Creek from the Riding Mountains to the Assiniboine River. This settlement will soon be reported as one of the most prosperous in the North-West.

The village of Birtle, in the centre of the settlement, is now becoming a place of considerable importance, and although not caricatured by the Americanized name of "city," in proportions and appearance it would lose nothing by comparison with some of those bearing the high-sounding title, and from the keenness of the competition among the colonists to get a quarter section site in the beautiful valley in which it is located, one might conclude that Hamilton or Toronto would soon be eclipsed by the juvenile competitor for immigration.

Mr. Crerar, who was doing a good business at Shoal Lake, has discovered that his business would be considerably increased by selling out there and starting here with a new stock, which he has done, and many of his old customers from the Riding Mountain and the Assiniboine have found him here. Mr. Walley, of Ingersoll, has the logs on the spot for another store, and in the meantime he has rented a house formerly occupied by Mr. Wood, the agent of the H. & N. W. Company to serve til he gets his own finished. Mr. D. W. Cumming is here at present and pushing things vigorously to have his new sawmill in operation next month, and if men and money can do it, it will be done. There are many buildings now in process of erection, all waiting for the mill to start. We are also to have a grist mill in operation during the season. These will give an impetus to other enterprises required for the convenience of the settlers. We require a doctor for accidents and interesting episodes which are [found] in most young families. As for general diseases, we have none to speak of, so that the doctor's practice might required to be supplemented by the cultivation of a small farm. We are supplied with ministers, but we want shoemakers, tin smiths, carpenters, and men who can work at all trades.

Birtle is admitted to be one of the prettiest sites for a town in the North-West. It is situated in the valley of the Bird Tail, on the old H. B. Co's trail, between Winnipeg and Battleford, which has been travelled by the Company's traders for the past two hundred years. The valley at this crossing is about three fourths of a mile wide, and the sloping hills on either side covered with verdure and skirted by a healthy growth of young poplar, gives the valley an enchanted appearance. The valley we speak of is about

twenty feet above high water mark on the banks of the rivers. At the foot of this bank there are some of the finest springs in the North-West and as good as any in the world. Mr. Wood's house is built on the bluff just above one of these, and a beautiful terrace leading from the underground story to the spring is a walk of more than ordinary beauty. Speaking of Mr. Wood I might mention that his duty as the locating agent of the H.&N.W.C. Company has been of a very onerous character. He was charged with the duty of locating the colonists who joined the company both on their homesteads and on a village lot which each settler was to have as a bonus for joining the colony. To satisfy all parties was out of the question; but to prevent one from pressing on the rights of another by what is called jumping the claim was a very unpleasant task. It is unpleasant to deal with a mean character in any transaction, and there are some men in whom the grab element is much better developed than the fair dealing principle. Such characters are apt to feel sour and say bad things when they fail in accomplishing their purposes, and we have a few of them in the North-West. People are now beginning to feel the want of municipal organization. The administration of justice, the settlement of civil cases, fencing, and school organization are all pressing on the attention of the thoughtful. In the administration of justice some of the citizens of Birtle were called to Fort Ellice a few weeks ago to act as jurors in a poisoning case where a young Indian was charged with murder. An account of the trial might be interesting if it were translated from the Sioux language, but I don't believe there is sufficient type in the *Free Press* office to spell all the names and many of the smaller words.

Mr. Copeland, the popular young Presbyterian minister, who has occupied this missions since October last, is to leave here next week for Winnie, where he has been engaged by the Y.M.C.A. to do city work in connection with the Emigration Department. Mr. McArthur, a young man from the county of Bruce, takes his place.

More Anon.

Appendix 5: Population of Rural Municipality of Birtle by Township and Range, 1901-1971

Year	Township 16, Range 25		Township 16, Range 26		Township 16, Range 27		Township 17, Range 25		Township 17, Range 26		Township 17, Range 27		Township 18, Range 25		Township 18, Range 26		Township 18, Range 27		Village of Foxwarren (1912-1967)	
Some of the Districts Involved	Rothesay, Warleigh		Gnaton		Blenheim, Wattsview		Buckleyville, Solsgirth		Mount Joy		Dunstan		Eckford, Dowsford, Toddburn		Lansburne		Bayfield, Foxwarren		Incorporated out of Township 18, Range 27	
1901	38	%	80	%	152	%	120	%	113	%	131	%	219	%	84	%	229	%	Not Incorporated until 1912	
1906	67	76.3	126	57.5	132	-13.2	196	63.3	190	68.1	140	6.9	197	-10.0	128	52.4	322	40.6		
1911	101	50.7	153	21.4	145	9.8	218	11.2	143	-24.7	190	35.7	229	16.2	133	3.9	421	30.7		
1916	127	25.7	170	11.1	126	-13.1	230	5.5	195	36.4	135	-28.9	181	-21.0	154	15.8	243	-42.3	207	%
1921	229	80.3	207	21.8	172	36.5	319	38.7	232	19.0	151	11.9	268	48.1	166	7.8	237	-2.5	277	33.8
1926	242	5.7	245	18.4	165	-4.1	317	-0.6	200	-13.8	195	29.1	247	-7.8	169	1.8	259	9.3	265	-4.3
1931	189	-21.9	209	-14.7	200	21.2	278	-12.3	239	19.5	242	24.1	238	-3.6	181	7.1	255	-1.5	268	1.1
1936	194	2.6	225	7.7	200	0.0	295	6.1	256	7.1	219	-9.5	254	6.7	216	19.3	236	-7.5	249	-7.1
1941	146	-24.7	167	-25.8	149	-25.5	277	-6.1	215	-16.0	208	-5.0	235	-7.5	163	-24.5	235	-0.4	219	-12.0
1946	165	13.0	174	4.2	148	-0.7	269	-2.9	179	-16.7	185	-11.1	230	-2.1	141	-13.5	252	7.2	268	22.4
1951	175	6.1	184	5.7	143	-3.4	281	4.5	201	12.3	234	26.5	202	-12.2	170	20.6	242	-4.0	271	1.1
1956	170	-2.9	175	-4.9	149	4.2	238	-15.3	195	-3.0	195	-16.7	211	4.5	178	4.7	216	-10.7	270	-0.4
1961	166	-2.4	160	-8.6	120	-19.5	225	-5.5	159	-18.5	180	-7.7	189	-10.4	151	-15.2	219	1.4	272	0.7
1966	129	-22.3	159	-0.6	132	10.0	214	-4.9	156	-1.9	161	-10.6	170	-10.1	124	-17.9	170	-22.4	239	-12.1
1971	114	-11.6	130	-18.2	110	-16.7	159	-25.7	132	-15.4	127	-21.1	135	-20.6	120	-3.2	336	97.6	Dissolved in 1967	

Appendix 6: The Seals of Town and R.M. of Birtle

The Town of Birtle appears to have adjusted its corporate seal over the years. The following are the versions of the seals I have encountered at various points.

Reproduction of Corporate Seal of R. M. of Birtle

[Source: "Logo Contest," *Crossroads This Week*, September 12th, 2014, page 7, via newspaperarchive.com]

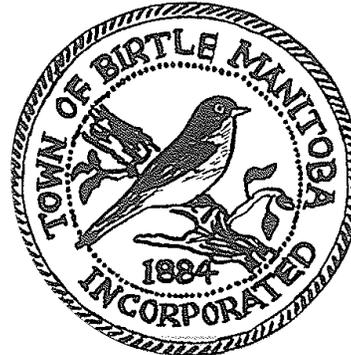


Versions of Corporates Seals of Town of Birtle

[Source: cover of *The Crawford Years, 1884-96*]



[Source: *View of the Birdtail*, vii]



[Source: "Logo Contest," *Crossroads This Week*, September 12th, 2014, page 7, via newspaperarchive.com]]



Appendix 7: “Meeting of the Council of the United Counties of Shoal Lake and Russell.” (1884)

I have selected this article, from page 2 of the Manitoba Daily Free Press, January 28th, 1884, as an appendix to the section on Birtle’s Municipal Government as an illustration of the the sorts of things those involved in this level of government were coping with at the time, along with some of their solutions, like the compromise Land Office resolution. It also demonstrates the hold partisan politics had at this level of government when it came to eligibility for sinecures. This will be revisited in Appendix 9..

Birtle.

Birtle. Meeting of the Council of the United Counties of Shoal Lake and Russell.

Correspondence of the Free Press.

Birtle, Jan. 24—The first meeting of the Council of the united counties of Shoal Lake and Russell is now in session in the Town Hall here. The hall, it may here be said, has recently been rented by the Town Council, and now affords probably the most comfortable and convenient council chamber in the Province, outside of Winnipeg, Brandon and Portage la Prairie. The session opened on Tuesday, the 22nd inst., Mr. E. Bligh, reeve of Ellice, being elected chairman pro tem. All the Reeves were present, and handed in their certificates. They are as follows:—Jas. S. Crerar, Birtle; John Mendes, Shoal Lake; James Claridge, Oak River; John F. Dinsmore, Miniota; Samuel Leslie, Archie; E. Bligh, Ellice; C. A. Boulton, Russell; Alex. Stewart, Shell River, Geo. W. Lloyd, Boulton; Wm. Crerar, Silver Creek; Thos. Young, Rossburn; J. S. Crawford, Mayor of Birtle.

Mr. J. M. Laurie was appointed clerk pro tem., and the first business of the Council, the election of a Warden, was proceeded with, the parties seeking that honor being Jas S. Crerar, and C. A. Boulton. The contest, though not of a long duration, was rendered interesting by a protest being

entered by Mr. J. S. Crawford against Major Boulton taking his seat on the ground of disqualification, Boulton being the registrar. The chairman overruled the protests on the technical ground that it had not been entered in the proper manner according to the act.

The nominees for warden was Messrs. Crerar, Boulton and Claridge, but the latter withdrew, and the vote being taken on Mr. Crerar’s nomination resulted as follows: Yeas—Messrs Crawford, Leslie, Menzie, Young, W. Crerar, Bligh, and J. S. Crerar—7. Nays—Messrs. Lloyd, Stewart, Boulton, Clarridge, and Dinsmore—5.

Mr. Crerar was declared elected and took his seat amid loud cheers. He made a brief speech expressing thanks for the honor done him, and an intention to discharge the duties of his office to the best of his ability. He explained that the most important matter to come before the Council would probably be the adjustment of the finances among the various municipalities. Being interrupted by the question, “What about the railway?” he replied that he considered his position demanded that he should be neutral in any contest, but he felt that railway communication was necessary and that we would ere long have it. He claimed that the district over which he had the honor to preside was the best in Manitoba, the land being unequalled and there being an excellent supply of timber and water. It had the largest number of ratepayers of any county in the Province, and the Council comprised more members than any other.

The next business of the Council was the appointment of a clerk. Mr. J. M. Lawrie, being the only applicant, received the appointment.

There were three applicants for the Treasurership, Messrs. J. H. Wood, A. B. McKinnon and John Brown. The vote resulted in favor of A. B. McKinnon.

The other appointments made were: C. J. Mickle, solicitor, G. F. Cole, engineer, R. H. [Climie], county constable; Dr. Morrison, Health Inspector.

Routine business was proceeded with, standing committees appointed, and other matters disposed of.

The Finance Committee brought in a report recommending that the Warden be authorized to raise a sufficient sum to meet the liabilities of the

late municipalities of Shoal Lake, Miniota and Russell, and to provide a small sum to be advanced to the municipalities for current expenditure.

The following resolution respecting the Land Office was carried; Whereas it has become a known fact that attempts are being made to remove the Dominion Land Office, at present established at Birtle, to another point in the district, Be it resolved that we deem the interests of the present settlers and of those likely to settle on lands in the Birtle district, are better served by the office remaining where it is than they would be by its removal to any other point, and that the bulk of those applying for patents reside nearer the present location of the office than to Russell, the suggested point of removal, and the settlers coming in do not suffer any inconveniences by traveling to come to the present location, as it is as nearly as possible in the path of some, and but little out of the way for the remainder.

A resolution was also adopted favoring the establishment of a second Land office in the district.

A special committee was appointed to send a memorial to the Provincial Government in reference to the Hudson's Bay Route. The committee will report tomorrow.

A petition from W. E. Crawford and others, praying for the establishment of a lock-up, was referred to the committee on Public Works, and excited a good deal of discussion. The committee proposed handing the Town Council \$250 for the purpose, the amount to be repaid as soon as the County Council should erect a suitable building. Members of the Town Council, in consultation with the committee, declined to accept this offer, and, on motion of Messrs. Stewart and Boulton, it was resolved that the matter be deferred till the next meeting of the Council.

Messrs. Stewart, Dinsmore, Bligh and the Warden were appointed a committee to look after the ferries.

Mr. J. H. Wood, treasurer of the late municipality of Shoal Lake, presented a petition for compensation for past services and for office rent. Action was deferred till next meeting of the Council.

It was moved by Councillors Boulton and Dinsmore that in the opinion of this Council the judicial boards established for the various districts of the Province are expensive and form an additional taxing body, and that as soon

as possible the duties now performed by these bodies may be performed by the county councils, and that a memorial be drafted in accordance with this resolution.

It was also resolved that, whereas the Western Judicial District covers such a large amount of territory that it is inconvenient for parties attending court, as jurors or otherwise, and the increased business of the courts demanding it, we deem it desirable to increase the number of judicial districts in the Province, therefore be it resolved, that the warden and clerk prepare, sign, and forward to the Provisional Government along with a copy of this resolution a memorial praying that a new judicial district be formed of that portion of territory consisting of the united counties of Shoal Lake and Russell.

The salaries of the clerk and treasurer were fixed at \$600 and \$700 respectively, and the auditors, Messrs. A. B. McDougall and J. A. Markle, are to receive \$4 a day while actually engaged in auditing and mileage.

Several other matters of minor importance have received attention. The Council will continue in session to-morrow and probably Saturday.

Appendix 8: "House of Assembly: Second Session—Fifth Legislature" (1884)

This article, a report of the deliberation of the provincial legislative assembly, revisits the partisan and patronage elements noted in Appendix 8. The extent to which municipal politics would be partisan was still an open issue, particularly given the nature of certain early bodies with intermunicipal functions. It should be noted that the recorder appears to have muddled E. P. Leacock's speech, as the Birtle representative would not have made the mistake of saying that Crerar, rather than Crawford, was the owner of the Birtle townsite. It appears in the Manitoba Daily Free Press, June 4th, 1884, page 3.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Second Session—Fifth Legislature.

Tuesday, June 3.

JUDICIAL DISTRICTS

The House went into committee of the whole on Hon. Mr. Brown's bill to amend the Manitoba Judicial Districts Act—Mr. MacBeth in the chair. Committee reported; report adopted, on the motion that the rules be suspended so as to allow the bill to be read a third time.

Mr. Killiam moved that the bill be not read a third time, but be referred back to committee of the whole for amendment, so as to provide that the name of Chas. A. Bolton be struck out from those composing the Board for the Western Judicial District, and that the name of J. S. Crerar, Reeve of Birtle, be submitted therefor. The honorable member disclaimed all personal or political feeling in moving this amendment, which, he said, he brought before the House on principle. An objection had been raised in the country to Mr. Bolton being on the Council, on the ground that, being Registrar, he was disqualified from a seat in the Council. The same objection had been raised, and very properly raised, to his having a seat in the Judicial District Board. A registrar is, under the municipal Act, disqualified from sitting as reeve or councillor. That being the case, it was wrong for the House to recognize a violation of the Act by one of the officers under the control of the House. by passing this clause the Legislature, in effect, recognized the violation of the law by one of its own officers.

Mr. Leacock sarcastically thanked the member for South Winnipeg for having, in the interests of his political friends meddled with his (Leacock's) constituency. As the owner of the town site of Birtle, the people in that constituency did not, for the most part, desire to see Mr. Crerar with a seat at the Judicial Board, while he would have a voice in the expenditure of County monies and other matters affecting the entire constituency. The man chosen to fill the position was a reliable, efficient, energetic man. He was, however, a good Tory, and that, was an unpardonable sin in the eyes of the member for South Winnipeg (laughter). And so that hon. member made this movement to raise a little political capital for his party. (Hear, and laughter). He (Leacock) regarded it as a direct and uncalled for interference with the

patronage of his constituency, and he appealed to members on his side of the House to vote the amendment down.

Mr. Greenway hoped that the House would abide by the principle it had already affirmed, that a Registrar was not qualified for a seat at this Judicial Board. The Legislature, surely could not wish to place Registrars in a position in which they could examine and pronounce upon their own accounts.

Hon. Brown said he wished to make a few observations on the various provisions connected with this bill. With reference to registrars being disqualified for a seat on the Judicial Districts Board, he could not agree with the proposition of the member for South Winnipeg, that because on one occasion the House should create such a disqualification, that it was not competent for them on another occasion to repeal that action for specific reasons which made such a change highly desirable. He did not know that the House was seized of the fact that the gentleman whose name it was now sought to eliminate was a registrar of the Province at all. There seemed to be something like an understanding that the Court House Board this year should have among its members some who were on the Board last year. But the wisdom of adopting any such principle was questionable. In this case the member for Birtle in the proper exercise of the patronage of his constituency had chosen to submit the name of a gentleman as his nominee for a seat on the Board, and he (the Minister of Public Works) did not know that, under the circumstances, a rule adopted by only a committee should bar the member for Birtle from taking this, the usual course. Such rules, if these were rules, operated harshly and had, in other municipalities, been put in force to the detriment of the settlers who were thereby deprived of the services of valuable officers. The hon. gentleman instanced a similar case in the Municipality of Westbourne. A gentleman against whom no one could make any objection as to his personal standing or general qualifications had been selected by the committee preparing the Municipal Bill against others of as good qualification and greater municipal experience, simply on account of this assumed rule that the new Board must be composed of members of the old County Council. While he held the selection was important he did not think it so important as to be the subject of a special act or an amendment to a Government motion. (hear.) Having pointed out that the action now taken was uncalled for, the hon. gentleman went on to notice that in the early days of the session a series of attacks had been made on the municipal

system, and hon. members opposite had charged him personally with being alone responsible for many of the provisions contained in that act. Whether that were so or not, he would remind the House that last year, as this year, there were many objections raised to that portion of the act creating county councils. They were objected to mainly on the score of expense, but he very much doubted whether the alteration made in this respect—in transferring county council powers to the Judicial District boards—would prove much less expensive. There was in especial one principle against which he desired to place his protest on record. He objected to taking power from the people and conferring it on an irresponsible body such as Court House or Judicial Boards. It was contrary to the spirit of our institutions and of the age to empower three irresponsible members of the Judicial Board to say how the people (of the Portage, for instance) shall expend funds furnished by a single county in the district alone. The hon. gentleman entered into a lengthy explanation showing that, in his opinion, the Legislature had not acted wisely in this matter, but had adopted a system which, in addition to its imperfections, would lead to consummate cog-rolling. What right, he asked, have five men of whom only one is either personally interested or responsible in any representative sense, to impose a tax (he would say, for instance) on the County of Westbourne for either the purpose of raising money to build buildings or to pay a rent to another county, especially if that expenditure is of doubtful necessity? If an expenditure was necessary, he was satisfied it could be made by men to be found in that locality, and it would not be a gain to look for them at a distance. And he ventured to predict that by next session the people would as pointedly as as positively show their opposition to many of the features now named in the Judicial Districts Act, as well as the provision for selling land for taxes which, though he was happy to say had been much improved by the amendment now before the House, inasmuch as that land would now be sold in the county where the land was situated—yet he was sorry to say that the House had not made provisions that this duty might be performed by some one residing in the county interested respectively—yes, he continued to say, there would come up from the remoter sections of the counties especially as strong an expression against many of these provisions of the present system as had come last year in regard to the system of county councils, regarding which so many sections had so unmistakeably pronounced an unfavorable opinion.

The amendment was put and lost.

Mr. Martin alluded to the anomalous position taken by the Minister of Public Works, who, as a member of the Government, was responsible for the Municipal Bill—who now announces that he disagrees with the Government policy on that measure—and yet remains in office! (hear and laughter).

Mr. Winram, seconded by Mr. Killam, moved in amendment that the bill be referred back to committee of the whole with instructions to amend it by striking out from the names of those composing the Board of the Western Judicial District, the name of Chas. A. Bolton, Reeve of Russell, and substituting therefore the name of J. Crawford, Mayor of Birtle.

Mr. Leacock and Hon. Mr. Norway spoke against the amendment, both gentlemen taking occasion to speak highly of Mr. Bolton's abilities.

Mr. Killam said that notwithstanding all he had heard, he failed to find out why this Legislature should prefer a little bit of patronage to principle.

Mr. Prudhomme, in reply to the question of law, maintained that an exemption made by our laws should be strictly interpreted. And though registrars were disqualified to sit as reeves, the law did not provide for their disqualification as members of Judicial District Boards. Consequently they were entitled to be elected. Besides, if they were disqualified, it would only be at the next election, in January, as the Legislature had provided for their acting pro. tem. till the new election. The Legislature was to choose the best men, irrespective of whether they were reeves or wardens, to fill the position, and no disqualification could be urged against those so appointed. The member for Birtle, in the exercise of his privileges, having chosen to suggest the name of a gentleman as member of that Board, it ill became other members, unacquainted with the nominee or the wishes of the people, to object to that appointment. As to the charge against the Minister of Public Works, that he differed in his colleague's opinion, there was not much in it. Members of the Opposition frequently differed in opinion on public questions, and a question of this kind, was well understood to be an open one. It was neutral ground on which all could meet and work in harmony for the best interests of the country. Municipal matters had nothing to do with politics.

The amendment of the member for South Dufferin was put and lost, and the bill read a third time and passed.

Appendix 9: "Civic" (1901)

This short article from page one of the Birtle Eye-Witness's November 12th, 1901 issue, discusses the movement around getting the town's first lighting plant. I have included it here as it was the first of many municipal projects in Birtle.

Civic.

Installation of the towns acetylene lighting plant and consequent increase of tax levy has livened interests in civic affairs and it is rumored there will be a complete change in the personnel at the council board. Nominations take place three weeks from to-day. In view of the fact that there are two sides to the question and that a large element of the citizens favor a policy that will stir the town from its sleepiness of past years even though taxes be increased while others objects to public expenditures on principle beyond the actual sums required to keep streets passable run the school and the few incidental necessary amounts to constitute a town, we will give a column space each week before nomination, to ratepayers who may take sufficient interest in town affairs to make public their views. No names of writers will be published and we shall rigidly shut out any clauses that are personal should such be sent in. A nom de plume is preferable, as signed letters on public questions after the first almost invariably drift to personalities.

Appendix 10: "New Telephones at Birtle" (1964)

This article, appearing on page 3 of the January 14th, 1964 issue of the Birtle Eye-Witness, announced the official takeover of the Birtle Telephone System by MTS. It illustrates the increasing provincial involvement in municipal purviews which occurred during the twentieth century. Birtle's municipal phone company had been the last holdout to join MTS. Note that the information regarding the first telephone in Birtle is mistaken, as telephones connected the railway

station to the town well before E. J. Wilson connected his homestead to his printing office in Birtle in 1893.

NEW TELEPHONES AT BIRTLE

A new automatic dial office was placed in service at Birtle Tuesday, January 14th, at 9 p.m. by the Manitoba Telephone System, providing the latest in telephone service to some 530 local and rural subscribers. The Birtle area was formerly served on a manual basis with service supplied to some 300 town residents by the Town of Birtle Telephone Company and to the rural customers by the Manitoba Telephone System.

Some 85 persons attended the opening ceremony held in the Birtle Legion Hall and in the new telephone building on Ninth Street. Taking part were the Minister of Public Utilities, Hon. Maitland B. Steinkopf; the Manager of Operations and Engineering and Asst. General Manager of the Manitoba Telephone System James Fenton, along with town and municipal officials.

The actual cutover was carried out in three phases at the new telephone building which houses the automatic dial equipment as well as the long distance facilities.

At phase one, the silencing of the old Telephone Exchange, was carried out by A.T. Huzzey, Councillor and Chairman of the Birtle Telephone Committee. Mayor D.G. Hart of Birtle, at the second phase, opened the new exchange by energizing the new equipment.

The Reeve of the Municipality of Birtle, A.O. Webb completed the third step when he turned the switch that brought the new long distance lines between Birtle and Shoal Lake into service. Mayor Hart then placed the first long distance call over the new system.

Telephones in the Birtle rural area will be progressively placed on a dial basis and will be completed by January 17th.

Birtle telephone numbers now consist of seven digits. For example: 842-3217. Subscribers should refer to their supplementary directory for the new numbers.

The entire telephone cable system in Birtle was replaced using more than five miles of aerial cable and wire, all in back lanes and vacant lots. The old

telephone poles and wires will be removed from the front streets, adding to the attractiveness of the town.

A unique feature of the installation is a fire alarm system, the only one of its kind in the province. Answering sets are located in the homes of five members of the volunteer fire brigade and at the business of the fire chief Elmor Honey. When the fire number is dialed, any member of the fire department can take the call and by pushing a button on the set, can trigger the fire siren.

For telephone assistance, information, long distance and repair service, subscribers can call the operator by dialling "O". The Shoal Lake telephone office handles these calls for the area.

Two of the present Town of Birtle Operators have joined the MTS with one to be located at Shoal Lake and the other at Carberry.

Speaking to the gathering in the Legion Hall prior to the cutover, the Minister outlined the telephone history in the Birtle area. He said the first telephone was brought to the area in 1893 and in 1908 the Town of Birtle Telephone Company was formed as a utility of the town. Its recent sale to the MTS at the request of town council opened the way for the new automatic installation.

Mr. Mills mentioned that the cost of the total installation was in excess of \$225,000. He said the cutover marked the retirement from service of the last switchboard in the province operated by an organization other than the MTS. "This is a proud moment for us", he continued, "for it draws us nearer the fulfillment of our goal. That is to provide service to all of Manitoba."

He paid tribute to the Town of Birtle Telephone Company and expressed appreciation for the sincere cooperation which has always existed between the two organizations.

Appendix II: "The Campaign" (1882)

I have selected this article as an illustration of the major political issues in Manitoba and of the movement from non-partisan to partisan

politics in the 1880s. This is from page 5 of the November 22nd, 1882 issue of the Manitoba Free Press. Birtle's Reformers considered asking the incumbent, staunch Conservative E. P. Leacock, to run for them. They had not run a candidate against him the previous month, probably backing his opponent J. S. Crawford for being a local man. Their conclusion, however, demonstrates the movement towards a more partisan political orientation, and Leacock was grateful.¹ Noteworthy too is their effort to avoid favouring one part of the constituency over another, and the drop in James Crerar's popularity.

THE CAMPAIGN.

Tory Caucuses in the two City Divisions.

The Battle in Other Constituencies in the Province—Victory Looms in the Near Future for the Liberals Birtle.

A letter received last night from Mr. G. E. Hargreaves, Honorary Secretary of the Birtle Reform Association, shows that the Reformers of the electoral district are not to be caught napping at the next election.

At a meeting of delegates from all parts of the constituency, held in the Town Hall, Birtle, on the 16th inst., the principles of the party were discussed, and the following platform adopted:

1. To acquire and guard jealously local and provincial rights.
2. All monopoly should be met with a firm, constant and uncompromising opposition.
3. This Province ought to have the same control over the public lands as the other Provinces of the Dominion, and equal rights and privileges in all other respects.
4. That every facility and encouragement be given for the construction of railways in a fair and impartial manner.
6. A more favorable financial arrangement with the Dominion Government.

The delegates then proceeded to ballot for a candidate, and after ascertaining the wishes of all parties, Mr. Robert Nelson, the President of the Reform Association, was unanimously elected. He then addressed the delegates on the importance of all working hard and in unity for the ascendancy of true reform principles, and as all were to enjoy the benefits from a change of government, so all should work for that end.

Great enthusiasm is felt by the party there, who are quite confident of success.

Shoal Lake Correspondence

Our correspondent at Shoal Lake sends us the following about the election in this division:

Birtle electoral division has fallen into line at length with the rest of the Liberal constituencies of Manitoba. There has been considerable stir in this part about the division of the county, and delegates were sent to Beulah to confer with E. Leacock, M.P.P., relative thereto. Messrs. A. R. McDugald, J.P., and John Templeton, J.P., were the deputation from Shoal Lake. Mr. Leacock reported the near dissolution of the House in Winnipeg, and the Reform delegates from all parts of the riding met at Birtle on the evening of the 16th to elect a candidate to contest the constituency in the Liberal interest. Messrs. Robert Nelson, Birtle; Jas. Crerar, Birtle; Mr. Dewart, Birtle, and John Templeton, J.P., Shoal Lake, were nominated as candidates. The first ballots showed Nelson 21, Templeton 10, Dewart 7, Crerar 3.

After several ballots the poll stood, Robt. Nelson, 23, John Templeton, 17, when the nomination was made unanimous in favor of Mr. Nelson by a standing vote. Quite a lively discussion was started by Mr. Templeton enquiring of the Vice President if Mr. Leacock did not intend to run again for Birtle, as he had proven himself a good representative, and should have the chance of refusing the nomination in our interests. Mr. Crerar said that our member, Mr. Leacock, would not oppose the Norquay Government, and therefore he could not again represent Birtle. The meeting adjourned, resolving to elect Mr. Nelson, and thereby strength the hands of the Liberals in the next House. Several names are mentioned for the Wardenship, viz: Doyle, of Beulah, Chambers, of Birtle, and John Templeton, of Shoal Lake. It is thought that, as the West have the Parliamentary candidate, the East should get the Wardenship.

Appendix 12: "How We Came to the Country in 1882."

These three articles appear to have been the only three in the series, despite the promise for more. "Burns" did write a number of other letters to the Birtle Observer during this time, but these were the only three in this particular series. I have selected them as an appendix as they illustrate both the importance to Birtle but also the more general frustration which was involved with the administration of the Land Office. They also give a good idea of the freight time had by Birtle pioneers in 1882, the end of the Manitoba land boom and the year of the sale of the C.P.R. sections in the Birtle Land District, when a veritable deluge of settlers descended on Birtle. The articles all appeared on page 1 of the Birtle Observer, in the issues of March 30th, April 13th, and May 4th, 1888.

How We Came to the Country in 1882.

(From our Correspondent.)

DEAR EDITOR,—I give you my experience in getting located in this country for the benefit of those now coming in, trusting that it will comfort and cheer their hearts to know that others have had something of the same kind of picnic, only a little more so. It will start from Brandon as it would take too long to tell of my journeying from Ontario by way of Detroit, Chicago & St. Paul, and how I sat in a little town called St. Vincent waiting for the water to abate in the neighborhood of Emerson and keep the steamboats from running back and forth across the track so that we would not be in danger of running into one of them. The water either went down six feet or the track was raised six feet and we got passed and arrived in Brandon on the 14th of May, being thirty days, four hours and a half along the journey. I had a carload of settler's effects. It consisted of furniture, implements, old harness, a churn, a wagon, an old railroad cart and a wheelbarrow. This assortment was all packed away in each end of the car and the crevices filled up with sundries. Each end was boarded up tight leaving a space at the doors for stock. Two large young horses, not more

than nine years old, were backed in first and put so as to lap over the cows and economize space, then two calves found room under the cows or where they could, and a chicken box and goose pen made a manger for the cows. They were all alive and right side up when we came to unload them, although they had not been off to rest for eight days. When I went to see the agent about unloading I found that he wanted forty dollars extra freight, although my car had been paid for before starting. Some twenty or more owners of cars were arguing the matter with the agent and I quietly went to work and unloaded my car and let the railroad company whistle. Either Vanderbilt of Van Horn or some other might railroad man once said the "public be d-----" and the agents seem to enjoy carrying out this order. It will always be a satisfaction to me to know that I came out ahead of a railroad company once. The accommodation for unloading stock at that time was two three inch planks eighteen feet long leaned against the car, and you backed the animals on to these and the first thing they knew they were in a heap at the bottom. Occasionally one slid off[sic] the side of the plank and lit on its beam end. However my little flock got off without any bones broken and I gave the cattle their freedom on the prairie, turned the geese out to grass and began housekeeping in a tent. I did not squander any money on hotels because they did not keep hotel the credit plan I was about strapped. Storage was rather high those days for my means, so I rented the skeleton of an ice house, 9 x 12 and ten feet high, made by setting slabs on end. It had no roof and the cracks between the slabs were three inches wide. I paid two dollars rent for it for a month and furnished the roof myself. I packed the furniture and all valuables in this and nailed down the roof and then was free to take in the town or be taken in as the case might happen. I had the two young horses and a railroad cart to speculate with. The horses were matched except that one had a white face and the other hadn't. They stood eighteen hands in their bare feet and were real curiosities. An old friend of mine was just starting housekeeping in Brandon and wanted a stove taken over to his house, so I volunteered to take it round and hitched up Joe to the cart. But Rosser avenue had no trees to ornament it and no underdrains to dry it, and we got mixed and had to unhitch and got out after a hard struggle, but too most of next day to wash the horse and harness.

(To be Continued.)

BURNS.

How We Came to the Country in 1882.

(From our Correspondent.)

The darkest hour is just before the dawn and if we were mixed, the cart was getting advertised and the next morning I had seven or eight purchasers for it. At that time a cart was supposed to be the best vehicle for a settler to buy to take his effects out to his homestead. There was not a cart for sale in Brandon but mine, the supply having run out so I had a monopoly in the cart business, but when a man offered me sixty dollars for it I took it at once and gave him the harness into the bargain. I never trade horses but during the day I exchanged the large horses for a span of very small mules called "Agg" and "Topsy" and gave the man ten dollars to help him buy oats for them, as oats were \$1.25 per bushel. I Caught a fever just then, nearly everybody had it. It was called the land fever, and men were starting away early in the morning to prospect, never telling where they were going for fear there would not be enough of land if too many went at once. Four of us farmed[sic] a syndicate and hired a buckboard for two dollars a day, bought a small tent got harness for the mules and a rubber coat each, filled the seat of the buckboard with dry socks and were ready to start for the Shell River district. The Assiniboine was too wide for the ferry to run, but there were two ways of getting over; one was take the buckboard apart and row it and our outfit across in a small boat and swim the mules behind; the other was an old scow at Grand Valley that would carry a team and light rig. We decided to cross by the scow, but we attempted it we found the wind too strong so we pitched our tent and waited from eleven o'clock in the forenoon till the following morning at six. We would not think of turning back as that too would be unlucky. We got on board without any difficulty. Two men had charge of the scow and it was managed with two oars fourteen feet long. We all pulled on the oars and went up stream a considerable distance and then pulled out into the current for the opposite side as hard as we could, and just managed to throw a rope over a post as we were going past. We then were left off, but had to drive a quarter of a mile in water eighteen inches deep before reaching dry land. Nothing happened between there and Rapid City of any consequence, except a mule got fast in the mud several times. We soon got a systematic way of taking them out. We first unhitched the traces and pushed the buckboard back; then two men took a firm hold of a tail each and the other two got an ear in each hand and with, an altogether boys out we went; hitched up and were off singing 'There is one more river to cross' We

reached Rapid City at three o'clock on the 20th May. I mention the date and ask you to notice the kind of weather we had in order that you will not be discouraged if the snow is now all off by the first of June. The wind was blowing fierce from the north and the snow came in our faces like shot. The wheels were almost solid between the spokes with frozen mud when we reached a house twelve miles north of Rapid City on the Shoal Lake trail. It took a good deal of persuasion on our part to get the farmer to keep us over night as he only had a small log house. His brother in law with his wife and three children had arrived that day and his own wife and four children made good sized family for a small house. The brother and his family slept up stairs, the farmer and his family behind a sheet and the four immigrants slept crosswise on a mattress on the floor with their feet in the oven of the cooking stove. I think the stove was number ten.

BURNS.

(To be Continued.)

How We Came to the Country in 1882.

(From our Correspondent.)

We slept soundly even if we were four on a bed, and although we waked on Sunday morning still there was no rest for the soles of our feet, for the farmer was almost out of provisions. We found the same complain almost every place we stopped, and I don't wonder at it if every immigrant carried the same kind of an appetite with him as our party had. It had frozen very hard during the night and we were just getting started when we came to a stretch of water and there appeared to be no ends to it. I had bought a pair of long rubber boots in Rapid City so volunteered to go ahead and see if it was too deep to drive through. I had difficulty in breaking the ice and went over the tops of my boots. Being wet I decided to go through and got wet to the waist. I was well laughed at and pretty well chilled while I sat on the snow and wring the water from my pants. There was nothing for it but put them on again and go back to the old shoes and walk all day to keep warm. The rubber boots got dried out about the middle of July. Nothing unusual happened during the day except we had a splendid dinner at a large farm house. It was a pleasant place with a clean floor, a white table cloth and a whole set of dishes. We travelled on after dinner and reached Shoal Lake just at sundown, where a policeman ran after us and commanded us to halt. He came up to us almost out of breath and asked us if we had any whiskey.

We were not acquainted with the liquor law and thought this was a bad case of drought. We began at once to apologize for being clean out, having taken the last smile just a little way down the trail. It was considered necessary even by temperance men those days to take a little to counteract the bad effects of the alkali water. A mile west of Shoal Lake we found a comfortable place to stay over night and two of us had a spring bed, which made us sympathize with ourselves as we reflected on the helter skelter journey from the start till now. But we never dreamed of turning back. We were off for Birtle early in the morning and reached there at noon, putting up at the Rossin House, which was then kept in a log house on the bank of the river. My first impression of the landlord was that he had just come out from Scotland on the last boat. The dining room was long and narrow, just wide enough for the table, and victuals were scarce. I was hungry and left the table hungry—the only time I have been in Birtle when I could not get enough to eat. The town was completely out of supplies owing to the number of land hunters and the bad state of the roads. After dinner we went to the Land Office, which was then in a small log house near the English church. At that time I think there was only one frame building in Birtle. We procured a list of lands open for homesteading, in townships 19 and 20 in ranges 27, 28 and 29. These townships were at that time almost vacant. We pushed on to Silver Creek that day going by way of Fort Ellice joining the Pelly trail west of Snake Creek. We stayed over night at John Fletcher's, who went with us the following day to help us find the corner stakes of the sections. We all found land to suit us and each one declared he had the best farm in Manitoba and we could scarcely rest till the next morning for fear that some person would enter for the farm before us. We got back to Birtle the following day and were very much disappointed to find the Land Office closed, it being the 24th of May. We spent another anxious night as the town was full of men waiting to enter for farms in the morning, and of course we thought several of them were after our section. Long before time for opening the office there was a crowd in front of the door and it was said that one man stood with his hand on the latch all night.

BURNS.

(To be Continued.)

Appendix 13: A Good Opportunity (1889)

The following brief article appeared in the Birtle Observer, January 24th, 1889. This was the paper's penultimate issue, with the attendant implications. In this case, he illustrates the extent to which the Birtle area continued to be sparsely settled, and traced this back to the 1882 land auction.

A Good Opportunity.

As the season is approaching when immigration to this country may be expected it will be proper to give the public some idea of the extent of the vacant lands in this portion of the province and of the excellent chances that exist for obtaining farms in the settled districts along the lines of railway. In the nine townships that compose the municipality of Birtle there is upwards of twelve hundred acres of land to every actual farmer in the district. In other municipalities a similar state of things exists, and yet it is doubtful if there is a single half section to be found that might not be considered good, while thousands of unoccupied farms are all that could be desired by even the most particular settlers. The cause of the present lack of population may be traced to the immense sale of government lands that took place at the Birtle agency some years ago. Many of the fine farms sold then have been held by the original purchasers awaiting a rise in value when railways would be constructed. The roads are now made and hundreds of farms are offered for sale on very reasonable terms. There are also a great many abandoned pre-emptions that can be had on most favorable conditions. One of the advantages of the Birtle district is the quantity of wood that is found on almost every farm and the inexhaustible supply of heavy spruce timber that exists in the mountains to the north and that can be distributed through the country by floating the logs down the several rivers. There is at present no portion of the province where incoming settlers can be better suited than along the line of the M. & N. W. railway.

Appendix 14: "Prefatory," Birtle Eye-Witness (1897)

The first issue of the Birtle Eye-Witness was published on September 17th, 1891. Birtle had been without a newspaper since the

Birtle Observer ceased business in January of 1889. Here, we have the declaration of intent of E. J. Wilson and his starting partner. The Eye-Witness served Birtle for over a century. With only three editors, and the first two a father-son combination, it was a hallmark of continuity in Birtle. E. J. Wilson claimed his political independence, but being nonpartisan did not mean being apolitical; support for women's suffrage, for example, while controversial, was clearly supported here. Less controversial was his stand against government patronage.

PREFATORY

In opening a printing and publishing office in North-Western Manitoba, we feel justified in saying that there is no better opening for such an enterprise in the province or North West Territories. The support promised us in subscriptions, commercial advertising and job work assures us that we have not made a mistake in putting a plant suitable for all kinds of work, and which, by increasing the staff, will be equal to all the work in this part of the province and that portion of the N. W. Territory tributary to the M. & N. W. Railway.

For some time past the attention of those who contemplate improving their position by following Greeley's advice, has not been directed to this part of the Dominion to the extent that the natural advantages of the country warrant. We believe this state of affairs to largely result from the want of an exponent of such advantage. This we shall endeavor to remedy by thoroughly writing up North-Western Manitoba and comparing it with other portions of the province as a field for intending settlers. In doing this it will not be necessary to write disparagingly of other places as is sometimes the case, for immigrants have different ideas as to what kind of soil and surroundings is best adapted to successful farming operations; some preferring grain raising alone, others, ranching, but the majority a medium between the extremes.

We shall devote a limited space to communications, but to insure insertion they must be short, crisp and of interest or importance to the general public and must have the bona fide name and post office address of the writer, attached, but not necessarily for publication. Articles on political

questions, will be inserted at the discretion of the management and all communications attacking individuals, as such, will be consigned to the waste basket.

We have already secured a number of correspondents throughout the counties of Shoal Lake and Russell, and trust to be able to furnish our readers with interesting and reliable news from each locality.

We shall publish weekly a report of the market price of all kinds of farm produce, and also keep our subscribers posted as to the value of wheat and other cereals in the great markets of the world.

In politics we shall remain strictly independent. We shall furnish the public with a synopsis of those measures, enacted by the Federal and Local Governments, that affect us, and at all times advise our readers to avoid the professional politician, who only wants to boodle, and select and elect only well-known, reputable and straight-forwarded business men and “women as soon as the law permits its,” to fill positions of responsibility. We recognize the fact that it is much easier to criticize legislative acts than to draft them and that it is impossible to enact perfect legislation. Observation satisfies us that those who are in, generally place the patronage resulting from being in before country and the public weal, and those who are out, do not howl, that the country is going to the dogs and find fault with every statute, because of its inherent defects and their patriotism, but to secure possession of the treasury benches and the pap that attaches thereto.

In conclusion we would say that the interest of the province of Manitoba will receive a front place in our columns and that special prominence will be given to North-Western Manitoba and that part of the Territories immediately to the west of it.

WILSON & MACHESNEY.

Appendix 15: “Committee Statement on No. 4 Highway” (1955)

This appears on page 3 of the Birtle Eye-Witness, August 23rd, 1955. It illustrates Birtle’s take on the planned location of what has since become the Yellowhead, which skipped Birtle. I have argued

that this was a turning point for Birtle’s status with the Province, and so this seems appropriate to include as an appendix.

Committee Statement On No. 4 Highway

It is not the intention of this organization or the citizens of Birtle Town to get into any controversy on the issue of No. 4 Highway. It seems only logical that we should face the facts on their merits and as they have been found through investigation over the past two years.

It is many years since No. 4 was routed north-west from Winnipeg. Birtle was, and is, one of the larger and established towns, and has the largest mailing list in the Constituency of Marquette, excluding only Minnedosa. It was to serve such towns, for example, Gladstone, Neepawa, Minnedosa, Shoal Lake, Birtle, Binscarth, and Russell, that No. 4 Highway was routed through this area.

Birtle is also the centre for a New District Hospital and is the recreational centre for a very large surrounding district, and the many accommodations that Birtle provides are considered an asset and necessity to the travelling public.

The suggestion therefore of rerouting No. 4 to bypass Birtle by seven miles to the north, with no logical support for the proposal, creates an alarming situation and the real facts should be studied and given more careful consideration.

We are given to understand that the reasons for selecting the north route are two-fold: 1— Maintenance; 2—Most direct route in the interest of through traffic.

It is not the wish of Birtle and District C of C or the Town to interfere with this policy. **but** this being the policy the most direct course would have been directly north west from Ipswich to Russell. This goes through better country for road building and would make easy maintenance. It would also shorten the route by 12 to 15 miles for through traffic.

The new construction from Russell to Binscarth eliminated that possible route.

It was after the construction of the Russell-Binscarth section that a petition was presented asking for the north route from Ipswich to Solsgirth

and to Foxwarren, bypassing Birtle by 7 miles. Previous to this the route via Birtle had been accepted as the one to be followed.

While these north and south routes were under debate, construction following the railway from Binscarth to Foxwarren took place. That construction then eliminated the next most direct route. This route would have saved some miles and would also have avoided the death-trap of bringing through traffic so close to Foxwarren school.

The north route from Ipswich to Foxwarren is a saving of approximately 2 miles in distance over the south route straight west from Ipswich to Birtle. The south route is the shortest to make connection with No. 83, and taking both Highways over one valley and river crossing, and following west along the tract to Foxwarren would shorten No. 83 by over 2 miles.

The south route, with the junction of No. 4 and No. 83 south east of Birtle, would shorten the total distance of highway construction by over 5 miles. To re-allocate No. 4 to the north route and construct No. 83 north west along the track, which is the shortest route for 83, would necessitate about 7 1/2 miles of additional highway construction.

In addition to new highway building costs, 21 miles of present highway virtually parallelling the proposed new route will require to be maintained and possibly on a basis which would tax municipal resources and be impossible without government aid on a liberal scale.

When all these facts are taken into consideration the Highway Department can hardly be justified in singling out one of the largest towns between Minnedosa and Russell and suddenly instituting a change of policy after serving all other towns that were previously served by No. 4.

The route to the new highway seven miles north would also mean the discontinuation of bus service to Birtle, as such service could hardly be expected to go 7 miles out-of-the way and off the hard surface. It would also necessitate the people of Birtle driving 7 miles away and then back the same distance in order to reach the capital city of Manitoba by Highway. Thus[sic] would effect the village of St. Lazare as well completely taking away their direct connection with No. 4.

It can hardly be said that the north route was selected because of engineering features. The original decision for the south route was changed

to the north route before any survey or soil tests were made. The decision for the north route took place during the absence of Highway Minister Bell in September of 1954. The survey was not made till the end of November and through December of the same year.

The way is still open for the Highway Department to serve this community and the north as well by selecting a central route which runs from north of Shoal Lake, 2 miles south of Kelloe, 3 miles south of Solsgirth crossing the marsh at its narrowest point, passing 1 1/2 miles north of Birtle's Main Street, and giving almost direct connection with the St. Lazare secondary highway.

This route provides the same opportunity for No. 83 and No. 4 to follow a common route along the track from Birtle to Foxwarren, thus shortening No. 83 by over 2 miles.

This route offers a splendid underpass of the railway which is of concern to both north and south. No river diversion is necessary and a perfect valley crossing is available.

The Highway Committee of Birtle and District C of C feel that a serious and expensive blunder may be committed if further impartial consideration is not given to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
Highway Committee
Birtle & District C of C

Appendix 16: "Dairy Interests" (1896)

This appears on page 1 of the Birtle Observer, February 4th, 1896. Here, E. J. Wilson explains the revolutionary steps taken by the Birtle Creamery to cut out middlemen in Winnipeg and sell produce in bulk directly to far-off consumers. Other cooperative creameries would follow suit. He notes the utility this approach could also have for the grain industry. The article is also interesting for its description of the local dairying dynamic.

DAIRY INTERESTS.

A meeting of all interested in the Birtle Creamery is called for Saturday afternoon in the Town Hall. A statement of the operations of the season of 1895 will be submitted and means for making the carrying on of the industry more successful discussed. The output for the past year was about 20,000 lbs. Considering the late start and the difficulties encountered by having a creamery northwest at Foxwarren and cheese factories four miles west at Dutton's, twelve miles south at Beulah and fifteen miles north east at Toddburn with the territory east and south east divided by Scott's creamery at Shoal Lake and Bousfield's at Hamiota, the quantity is very satisfactory.

While most creameries disposed of their product at regular periods during the summer or early fall Birtle held over and shipped past the commission houses direct to British Columbia thereby netting the patrons some four of five cents per pound more than those that sold early to the Winnipeg commission men. The company arranged for an advance sufficient to pay all running expenses and five cents to patrons monthly. This was about equal to what dairy butter would have brought during the summer months and except for those who have good storage facilities and the most improved system of manufacture the extra 10 cents per lb now being paid cream furnishers is so much to the good.

The experiment of shipping direct to British Columbia consumers, past the Winnipeg middlemen was very successful and proves that their commission charges are a myth and that they stand in for several cents on each pound handled instead of a five or ten per cent charge on the sale invoice of consignments. The difficulty has been to get past the middlemen who were so combined that they would block sales and throw other obstacles in the way of any creamery, cheese company or small dealer who attempted to find a market among the consumers. A move is now on foot to form a dairy exchange on the same line as the grain exchange. This would be a benefit to Winnipeg as it would tend to concentrate all the dairy trade of the province in the city and give the members such an influence that independent shipping would be effectually stopped.

This may be a good thing if the prices that the exchange dictates causes the cheese and creamery associations not financially in the maw of members of the exchange to work unitedly to dispose of their products and secure legislation for shipping and marketing, free of monopoly. The dairy

associations are in a better position to do this than individual farmers and any statement of disabilities they would formulate would receive greater consideration. Should they succeed in getting over the difficulty of reaching the consumers without paying middlemen a commission all the way from 25 to 75 per cent, it would encourage grain raisers to take steps to avoid the heavy tax imposed on them by the grain exchange and stop the practice of a few dealers from saying how many buyers shall be on each market and how many cents below competitive point rates shall be paid at markets where they can block competition.

Appendix 17: Comparing Lists of Birtle Businesses: 1893, 1974, 2009

1893

A rundown of Birtle's businesses in 1893 following a short historical exposition of the settlement. The full article, "Birtle" Birtle Eye-Witness, December 21st, 1893, page 1 is included in the appendices.

BIRTLE.

Birtle was located in 1879 as the headquarters for the Hamilton Colonization Co's settlement. The year previous Messrs. A. Morton, A. Bissett and Jno Richardson of Stratford Ont, settled on the sections south of the present town site which at that date were the northwestern limits of surveyed territory. The beauty of the situation, coming into the valley by the great highway of travel in those days, the Edmonton trail via Fort Ellice, at the crossing of the Bird Tail captivated every traveller, and all who passed through expressed the thought that a town of importance would in the near future there spring up.

The first work of the Colonization company when settlers flocked in 1879 under the direction of Mr. J. H. Wood was to agitate for public facilities such as post office, land office, mills, stores, schools and churches, the country being part of the territories was under prohibition so liquor licenses were not considered. The nearest lands' office was 60 mile distant at Minnedosa, the

nearest post office and store were 20 miles away at Shoal Lake, the leading station for the Mounted Police in the eastern part of the territories and terminus of the first mail division on the great overland route through Canadian territory, at this early date, a place doing a considerable trade.

In this article we shall rather give a description of the town's present status than how it has grown and prospered since Mr. B. G. Battram commenced erecting the first house. For this purpose we shall arrange the different lines and industries carried on, in rotation.

First the manufacturing interests: Here J. D. McArthur's lumbering business takes first place. The number of men employed ranges from thirty to one hundred and twenty according to the season of the year and the special tie contracts that may be secured. Mr. McArthur keeps his own teams and outfits, and during the past season, sawed at the Birtle mills 75,000 ties for the M. & N. W. railway in addition to several million feet of lumber. The lumber has found fairly good sale, Hamiota and the Beulah country taking a large quantity, and large shipments being made to points on the railway east and west. The sawing of ties has made fuel unusually plentiful many loads being teamed across to Hamiota and the price of poplar has been so reduced that but little comes in.

The Arrow Milling Co. employs five or six men and does a gristing, chopping and exporting business. Farmers come from a radius of thirty miles for grists and flour is shipped to Montreal and other eastern points. The low price of wheat and the stagnation in the flour market for months past, has caused the company to cut down expenses and depend largely on the printing and chopping trade of late.

Messrs. Lane & Roseborough do a large trade in the manufacture and sale of sleighs, wagons, buggies, farm implements, etc, in their large shops and warehouses recently erected on Main St., in addition to a repairing and general blacksmith business.

Mr. W. T. Beirnes, in his new stone block, makes harness of every style besides carrying a stock of saddles, blankets, repairs, whips and everything in the horseman's line.

Mr. T. F. Patterson is still at his old stand with the usual stock of organs, sewing machines, furniture and is ready to fill all orders in his line on short notice. Mr. R. J. Moore does a tailoring business extending from Saltcoats as

far east as Newdale and gives such satisfaction that there is no further need to send east to get fitted properly.

Mr. H. Gibson is kept busy at his shop on Main St. at bench carpenter work in winter and contracts in summer. He carries a full stock of undertaker's wares and promptly attends to all orders given.

In the merchandise line. The Right House carried a heavy stock of everything in the general store line that a consumer requires and with the branch store at Rosburn Mr. F. G. Lewis will do a business that will aggregate 20 to 25 thousand dollars annually. He does a large shipping trade in eggs and butter with the lumbering regions east of Winnipeg.

H. A. Manwaring has one of the most complete stores in the province, imposing stone building plate glass front, vaults, heated throughout with hot air, fine cellar and shelves well filled with merchandise tastily arranged.

J. Walley remains in the old block on the corner of Main and 8th, erected in 1880 for Walley & Lewis and has a choice selected stock of groceries, boots and shoes and men's furnishings in great variety.

R. A. Lepper make a specialty of dry goods but also carries a quantity of groceries and boots and shoes and deals largely in furs, Indian novelties and seneca root.

J. S. Chambers has recently started in the late Beirnes block which has been refitted for the purpose. His stock comprises moccasin, boots and shoes, canned goods and groceries, and he reports doing a satisfactory business since opening.

Arthur Doig in his large warehouse and shop, carries an extensive stock of stoves, tinware, hardware, paints, oils, building material of all kinds, glassware and takes many orders for the Hillburn furnace which he guarantees will give entire satisfaction. He also does a large trade in fence wire, binder twine, agricultural implements, wagons and buggies, tin roofing and tinker repairing.

The Drug Store has its usual supply of drugs, patent medicines, schoolbooks and stationery, also toilet wares and Xmas presents.

A. B. & H. Wood's Post Office Store contains an almost endless variety of Christmas novelties and gifts suitable for old and young. Besides wall

papers and stationery, books, magazines, periodicals and music are kept, any special ones not in stock are furnished on short notice. The store has recently been enlarged to accommodate the increasing business. In connection with the post office are money order and saving bank departments.

Mr. G. P. Smith has done a good season's business, reports the fruit trade of the past summer much better than that of previous years also the bakery, confectionery and parlor trade. Has a very complete Xmas stock on hand for the holiday season.

The purveyors of meats, too, have had a successful season. J. M. Stewart, besides his ordinary retail trade which requires from four to five animals per week, has purchased considerable for eastern dealers. He has just completed dressing some 70 beeves for winter sale. J. Nicholl commenced the same line towards the close of summer at the Birtle Meat Market stand and has a number of choice animals stowed away for winter consumption.

C. Midwinter still holds out in the jeweller line with a stock of watches, etc., and does all kinds of repairing in his line.

Beside the trade in implements by A. Doig, the Massey-Harris firm have a well filled warehouse of machinery to suit the seasons in charge of A. B. Harris who has pushed business for the Company and earned a reputation of being a very successful salesman. Last season the McCormick's took a hand in the implement line in this part, their agent Thos Wilkinson doing a very good season's trade and should the duty be reduced will make a formidable competitor to the Canadian manufacturers.

In the building line O. Wood, Gibson & Corbett and Pentland & Carpenter have had all they would do in the carpenter line and completed numerous creditable contracts. Mr. [K.] Hodnett has also competed in the carpentry line, while Messrs Larcombe and Kenward have earned a reputation as concrete builders, and Mr. M. Young does the plastering for a large section of the country.

Mr. B. G. Battram looks after the painting glazing kalsomining and paperhanging trade with shop on St. Clair. Mr. J. King has also erected a paint shop, and gets a share of the work.

Dr Green, looks after the stock and is district veterinarian. It is needless to say anything about the EYE-WITNESS, it speaks for itself.

The travelling public are looked after by Mr. J. McDougall of the Rossin House which since its enlargement is one of the best hotels in western Manitoba. Every attention is paid to guests, all trains met, the table is all that can be desired and parlors are large and comfortable, has telephone communication, livery and ample rooms. The house is well patronized by commercial men and refutes the too prevalent idea that an hotel cannot be successfully run without a bar.

Mr. Thos Vant has refitted the Leland House in latest style and is bringing to it its former popularity by close attention to the wants of the public and pandering to its taste in the cuisine.

The Grand Central does a boarding and farmers' trade.

Besides stables in connection with the hotels, Geo Campbell does a livery dray feed and sale business at the Arlington Stables, where every order is promptly filled and farmers horses are comfortably housed and cared for. He has the contract for the mail between Birtle Post office and station.

Copeland Bros. get about all the dray work they can attend to, put up ice per contract, etc.

J. de Balinhard is now proprietor of the well known stone stables and does a livery and feed business.

In addition to the foregoing, R. W. Gibson carries a complete stock of dressed lumber, lath, shingles, cedar posts, imported from British Columbia and Rat Portage. Absolom & Neatby run a chopper with their traction engine. Thos. Yeandle does a general blacksmith trade. T. Vant does boot and shoe repairing; S. Bagshawe does photograph work, J. Howson does tonsorial work and the insurance agents are legion.

In the professional line, Rev. W. G. Wislon, Methodist; Rev. R. Frew, Presbyterian, look after the spiritual welfare of the people, V. E. Latimer, M.D., looks after their physical; C. J. Mickle, their legal; R. W. Gibson, their financial, and Alfred Morton and Thos. Leese, their taxable welfare with Mayor Crawford to supervise the whole.

The town boasts of an intermediate school with two departments with over a hundred scholars on the roll; an Indian school with over twenty pupils in attendance in charge of Mr. G. G. McLare; a public library and reading

room, brass band recently re-organized, curling rink, dramatic society, W.C.T.U., A. F. and A. M., L.O.L., and two Forester societies.

During the year that is closing the town has experienced quite a building boom. The Indian school, stone, cost \$10,000, the Lane & Roseborough block including the masonic hall, stone and frame, \$2,000, Beirnes' block, a

one, \$1,600, J. Walley's residence \$1,500 and smaller buildings and improvements by J. M. Stewart, G. P. Smith, K. King, Geo. Copeland, Dr. Green, Methodist church, J. A. Markle and others will make a total of \$20,000 exclusive of the sidewalks and street improvements by the council, which is very satisfactory considering the season.

1974

From A View of the Birdtail, pages 75 and 76.

In Business in Birtle 1974.

Archer's Plumbing and Heating
 Ball Hardward
 Barker's Men's Wear
 Bicknell W. E. Ltd. Freighters
 Birtle Locker Plant
 Birtle Pharmacy
 Birtle Drive-Inn
 Boulton Bros. Snowmobiles
 Braendle-Bruce Funeral Service
 Brau's I.G.A. — Meat and Groceries
 Canadian Co-operative Implements
 Capri Theatre
 Clubley's Meat Market
 Cochrane's Radio and TV
 Co-op Insurance Services
 Dalton's Allied Hardware
 Dandridge's Birtle Furt Farm
 Doran, E. N. -- Trucking
 Deleau, Aime — Carpentry & Contractor
 Foxwarren Credit Union
 Gulf Oil Canada
 Hickman' Esso Service
 Howard's Clothing

Imperial Oil Ltd.
 J & K Restaurant
 Kelly, A. — Fire and Auto Insurance
 Johannson Pontiac-Buick
 Macleod's Ltd. Hardware & Appliances
 Maduik Bakery
 Manitoba Pool Elevators
 Margaret's Beauty Nook
 Marie's Beauty Chalet
 Marion's Beauty Shoppe
 Melnyk's Barbershop & Billiards
 Morris, W. J. G. — Clothing
 North American Lumber
 Nairn, Bill — Contractor & Carpenter
 North, Stephen — Contractor & Carpenter
 Riverbend Laundromat
 Royal Bank of Canada
 Shield's, George — Auction Service
 Swanson's Jewellery
 Twin Valley Co-op Ltd — Farm Supplies
 Walley Bros. — Groceries
 Walker, W. — Painter & Decorator

2015

The final annual business directory from the Town and R.M. of Birtle. Appears on Prairie View website, accessed September 2017: <http://cms.myprairieview.ca/Editor/>

images/Documents/doc02709020140116150835.pdf. Note that it covers more than the former town, and casts the frames of reference for a business more widely than my previous lists.

Ashcroft RV.
 Ashcroft Turf Services
 Asselstine Agencies
 Avon Canada — Kristen Graham
 Birdtail Country Museum
 Birdtail Reflections Massage — Jen Iverson
 Birtle Abattoir
 Birtle Collegiate
 Birtle Community Hall
 Birtle Community Media Co
 Birtle Curling Club
 Birtle District Community Centre (Arena)
 Birtle & District Community Development Corp
 Birtle & District Foundation
 Birtle Drop In Centre
 Birtle Elementary School
 Birtle Health Centre
 Birtle Heath Centre — Dr. Clinic
 Birtle Library
 Birtle Outlook — Local News
 Birtle Pharmacy
 Birtle Riverside Campground (seasonal)
 Birtle Riverside Golf Club (seasonal)
 Birtle Swim Club (seasonal)

Birtle Tire and Towing
 Birtle Tourist Information (seasonal)
 Blue Northern Salvage
 Braendle Bruce Funeral Services
 Brenda's Day Care
 Canada Post Corp — Birtle
 Canada Post Corp — Foxwarren
 Calrton Trail Planning District
 Corr Carpentry
 Cottingham Construction
 Creative Memories — Dana Barteaux
 Crossroads This Week — Regional Newspaper
 Desjardin Inn Birtle
 Double 'B' Glass
 Employment Resource Centre
 Endless Possibilities
 Epicure — Shannon Stainer
 Epicure — Shelly Lewis
 Finch Carpentry
 Flowers by Favel (silks)
 Flowers by Lynette
 Flynn's Construction
 Foxwarren's Leisure Centre
 Greyhound, Purolater — Bus/Courier Depot
 Garage Mahal
 Glendon Place
 Hair Junction — Becki Turner & Regan Heise
 Harmony Healing BodyTalk
 Harwood Storage
 Hill Top Greenhouse
 Jockey Clothing — Pam Naylor
 Just Dig It
 Kathy's Fin Photos — K. Langford
 Kent Hotel
 Mainline Motors
 Manitoba Agricultural Services Corp.
 Manitoba Highways
 Manitoba Hydro
 Manitoba Telephone System

Mark's Cafe
 Mary Kay — Marnie Bonchuk
 Masson, John D., Chartered Accountant
 McArthur Plumbing Ltd.
 McPhail Travel
 M.D. Hodgson & Associates, Reg Public Acctnt
 Midaga's
 Moongate Gifts
 Morning Star Day Care
 Moulson's Welding
 Municipal Office (Town and RM Joint Office)
 Nail Finesse, Terri Lane
 Norwex — Margaret Hodgson
 Peace in the Valley B&B
 Photography by Dana Barteaux
 Pioneer Lodge
 Prairie Concrete
 Prairie Dusters Aerial Spraying
 RBC Financial Group — Birtle Branch
 RCMP Administration
 Rural Municipality of Birtle
 Ryan's Roto Rooter Service
 Samtronics Video
 Sears Canada
 Services for Seniors
 Settlement Services
 Sims & Co. Law Office
 Skincerity — Darlene Lane
 Snow's County Meats
 Snow Plumbing
 Snow Spruce Construction
 Snow Trenching & Gravel
 Sparkelicious Figure Skating Boutique
 Spruce Garden Pottery
 SR Absolute Exteriors (Shawn Ranger)
 Still's Septic Service
 Sunnyside Manor Personal Care Home
 Superior Weanlings Ltd.
 The Classic Garden Inc

Town of Birtle
 Twin Valley Co-op Office
 Anhydrous Ammonia
 Gas Bar
 Grocery
 Home/Farm Center
 Petroleum Office
 Ultimate Nail Care
 Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District
 Valley Art Therapy
 Valley Recreation District
 Valley Rock Construction
 Value Shoppe
 Vanguard Credit Union — Birtle Branch
 W. E. Bicknell Ltd.
 Westman Cable T.V.
 Whooo's That Costume Rental

Appendix 18: "The Massacre of Church Music." (1889)

This appears on page 1 of the Birtle Observer, January 31st, 1889. It was the final issue of the paper, and the editor appears to have taken the opportunity to make a final jab at some practices in Birtle which he disliked, by inserting the following satirical piece. It was credited to Thomas De Witt Talmage, one of the best-known and most-followed religious figures in the English-speaking world at the time. While the examples of behaviours described then do not come directly from Birtle, the editor would not have taken advantage of his

parting salvo if he thought them irrelevant. Thus it would appear that, though a fledgling settlement, Birtle was already cultivating very high artistic ambitions in musical and other fields; and the only regular outlet for such creative activity was in liturgical settings. Birtle's Music and Drama Association was not formed for another three years. While the full weight of the artistic production of Birtle's faithful was then thrown into its church services, carefully practiced choral arrangements left the congregation with fewer means of participating in the service. This was an issue, especially given that many of Birtle's early settlers were Methodists, for whom congregational singing was an especially important part of their heritage.

The Massacre of Church Music.

There has been an effort made for the last twenty years to kill congregational singing. The attempt has been tolerably successful; but it seems to me that some rules might be given by which the work could be done more quickly and completely. What is the use of having it lingering on in this uncertain way? Why not put it out of its misery? If you are going to kill a snake, kill it thoroughly, and do not let it keep on wagging its tail till the sundown. Congregational singing is a nuisance, anyhow, to many of the people. It interferes with their comfort. It offends their taste. It disposes their noses to flexibility in the upward direction. It is too democratic in its tendency. Down with congregational singing and let us have no more of it. The first rule for killing it is to have only such tunes as the people cannot sing! In some churches it is the custom for choirs at each service to sing one tune which the people know. It is very generous of the choir to do that. The people ought to be very thankful for the donation. They do not deserve it. They are all "miserable offenders," (I heard them say so,) and, if permitted once in a service to sing, ought to think themselves highly favoured. But I oppose the singing of even the one tune that the people understand. It spoils them. It gets them hankering after more. Total abstinence is the only safety; for if you allow them to imbibe at all, they will after a while get in the habit of drinking too much of it, and the first thing you know they will be going around drunk on sacred psalmody. Besides that, if you let them sing one tune at a service, they will be putting their oar into the other tunes and bothering

the choir. There is nothing more annoying to the choir than, at some moment when they have drawn out a note to exquisite fineness, thin as a split hair, to have some blundering elder to come in with a "Praise ye the Lord!" Total abstinence, I say? Let all the church take the pledge against the milder musical beverages; for they who tamper with champagne cider soon get to Hock and old Burgundy. Now, if all the tunes are new, there will be no temptation to the people. They will not keep humming along, hoping they will find some bars down where they can break into the clover pasture. They will take the tune as an inextricable conundrum, and give it up. Besides that, Pisgah, Ortonville and Brattle Street are old fashioned. They did very well in their day. Our fathers were simpleminded people, and the tunes fitted them. But our fathers are gone, and they ought to have taken their baggage with them. It is a nuisance to have those old tunes floating around the church and some time, just as we have got the music as fine as an opera, to have a revival of religion come, and some new-born soul break out in 'Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me!' till the organist stamps the pedal with indignation, and the leader of the tune gets red in the face and swears. Certainly anything that makes a man swear is wrong—ergo, congregational singing is wrong. Quod erat demonstrandum; which being translated, means, plain as the nose on a man's face.

What right have people to sing, who know nothing about rhythmic, melodies, dynamics? The old tunes ought to be ashamed of themselves when compared with our modern beauties. Let Dundee, and Portuguese Hymn, and Silver Street hide their heads beside what we heard not long ago in a church—just where I shall not tell. The minister read the hymn beautifully. The organ began, and the choir sang, as near as I could understand, as follows:

Oo—aw—gee—bah
 Ah—me—la—he
 O—pah—sah—dah
 Wo—haw—gee-e-e-e.

My wife, seated beside me, did not like the music. But I said: "What beautiful sentiment! My dear, it is a pastoral. You might have known that from "Wo-haw-gee!" You have had your taste ruined by attending the Brooklyn Tabernacle." The choir repeated the last line of the hymn four times. Then the prima donna leaped on to the first line, and slipped, and fell on to the second, and that broke and let her through into the third. The other

voices came in to pick her up, and got into a grand wrangle, and the bass and the soprano had it for about ten seconds; but the soprano beat (women always do,) and the bass rolled down into the cellar, and the soprano went up into the garret, but the latter kept on squalling as though the bass, in leaving her, had wickedly torn out all her back hair. I felt anxious about the soprano, and looked back to see if she had fainted; but found her reclining in the arms of a young man who looked strong enough to take care of her.

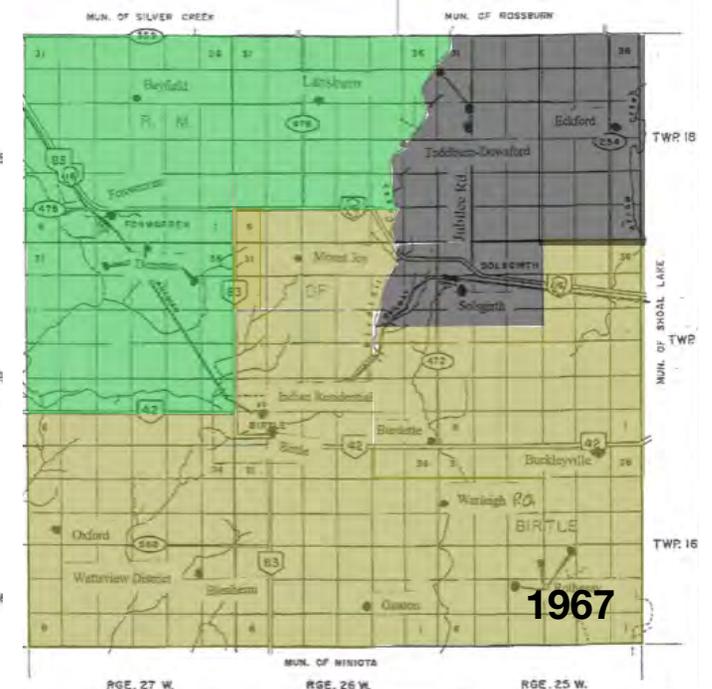
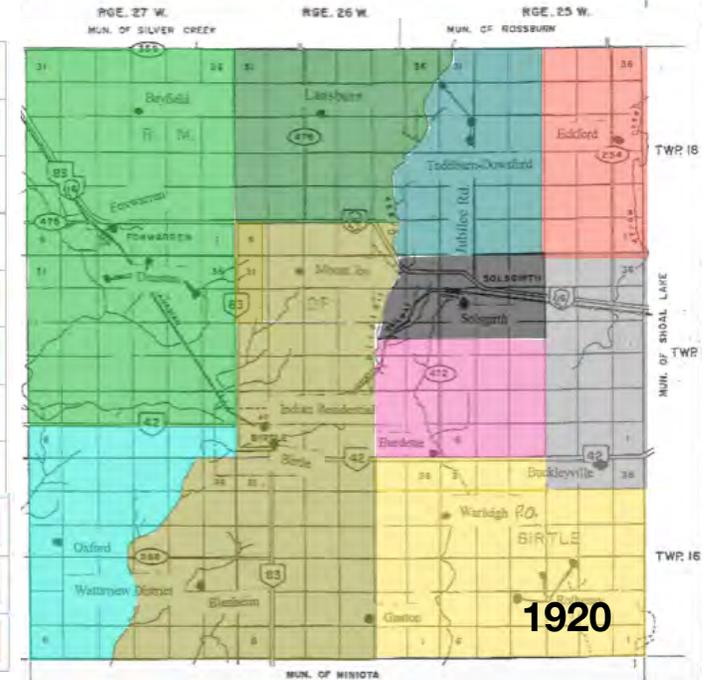
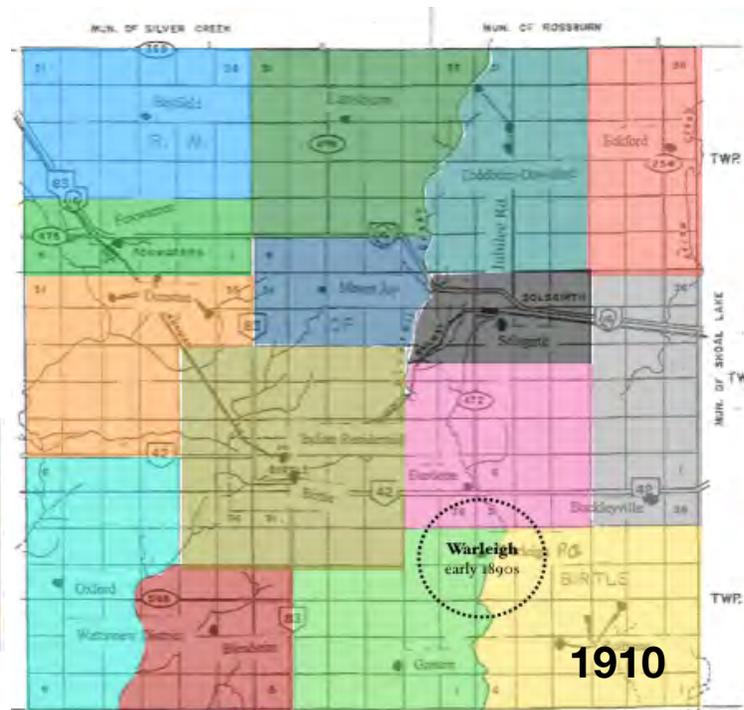
TALMAGE.

Appendix 19: Rough Illustration of School Consolidations in RM of Birtle

This visual illustration of the consolidation of school districts is meant to help convey the dynamics involved, more than it was to precisely define all boundaries of the school districts involved. Indeed, I only had written data relevant to the first, six-square-mile district centred on the Stone School in the Town of Birtle. The other boundaries are not accurate, particularly as at least two school districts, Moresby and Colonsay, included land within the RM but are not represented here at all.

Toddburn/Downford S.D. #190 (1884-1954)
Foxwarren S.D. #1274 (1904-1968, school close in 2001 (then #525))
Solsgrith S.D. #462
Birtle S.D. #132

Bayfield Protestant S.D. #525 (1887-1916)
Mount Joy S.D. #378 (1887-1915)
Oxford S. D. #257 (?-1960)
Dunstan Protestant School #379 (1884-1917)
Lansburne S.D. #806 (?-1959)
Blenheim (1887-1911)
Gnaton S.D. #715 (1887-1911)
Rothsay S.D. #350 (1884-1967)
Burdette S.D. #363 (1887-1958)
Buckleyville S.D. #1435 (1907-1965)
Eckford S.D. #1135 (1902-1959)



Appendix 20: Account of Sam Ross's Running Away from Birtle Residential School

I include this to demonstrate what it meant for some students to be at the Birtle Residential School. In this case, Sam Ross from northern Manitoba found the urban setting of the school at Brandon, and the skills it taught him, more relevant than what he was getting from the Birtle school. This is an account of when he ran away from the Birtle Residential School. He was later placed in the Brandon Residential School, which he vastly preferred, although the latter school had a worse reputation. This appeared at the opening of Chapter 39, Runaways and truants: 1940-2000, in Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 2 1939 to 2000: The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume 1 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press for Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015), 335-336.

When Sam Ross from northern Manitoba was sent to the Birtle school in southwestern Manitoba in the late 1950s, he was first put to work doing chores in the school barn. In November of his first year, he told the principal:

"I didn't come here for, to work with animals." I said, you know, "We're not used to animals." I said, "We're up north there where, what people live out, they did their living by trapping, fishing and working in the forest, cutting timber, selling wood, fire wood; but nothing, nothing to do with farm animals. We don't have that up north.

Ross was transferred to the boiler room.

I went with this guy and he taught me, for three weeks this guy taught me how to look after the boiler room. And I got used to, you know I picked up quickly you know, how to look after the boiler room. But it was a lot of work though. Every, like Friday, Saturday, I, I got on a little tractor with a trailer. I had to go about pretty near a mile out to

that railroad siding; there was a, box cars would sit there and with a full load of, they were full of coal.

He became proficient at working in the boiler room, but found it exhausting and asked to be sent home. When the principal refused to let him go, Ross, who was eighteen years old, made up his mind to run away. He located a map of Manitoba and studied train routes. He also began to set aside food and money. Aware that his mail was being read, he wrote his mother, asking her to send him

a pair of good mitts and a scarf; two thick winter mitts and a scarf and ten dollars, put the ten dollars in the thumb part of the mitt I said, in that letter. And then I, I had to go and mail that letter in town because when you give it, when you put your letter in there, their box there before they mail them out, they would read your letter. And if they didn't like what you were writing to your parents they would just throw it away or I don't know.

While he was in the midst of making his preparations, he was accused of attempting to slip into the girls' dormitory. He denied the charges and was let go with a warning. The confrontation with the principal over this matter led him to hasten his departure. He left that night, although it was winter. He had originally intended to jump onto a train when it passed through a nearby town, but he discovered that the train stopped in that town. He boarded the train as a passenger that evening and rode it to Minnedosa, Manitoba, a distance of about 100 kilometres. There, he spent the night sleeping in a corner of the train station. He overslept and missed the next day's bus to The Pas, which was 500 kilometres to the north. After selling his wallet and knife, he had just enough money to get him to Overflowing River, Manitoba, 100 kilometres south of The Pas.

When he got off the bus, he recognized some people from his home community. One of them was Edward Lathlin. "I don't forget that guy. And I asked him, he recognized me. 'Where did you come from?' he said. 'Oh I ran away from, I'm running away from school,' I said, 'I'm just about there,' I said. 'I'm stuck; and this is as far as I can go. I don't have more money,' I said, 'to buy my fare.'"

Lathlin and his friends fed Ross and gave him money to get home. After a night's rest, Ross's family took him to the Indian agent, who was angered

that the principal had not informed him or members of Ross's family that he had run away. Instead of sending him back to Birtle, the agent sent him to the Brandon residential school. Many students were critical of that school, but Ross said it was "way better than where I was before. And they even taught us how to look after our money over there. You get allowance, when you're in school. They would write down how you spent your money; they would teach you how to live."

Sam Ross was one of hundreds of residential school students who ran away during this period (from 1940 to 1998). His story has much in common with those of other students. He ran away because he was overworked; the journey he was undertaking was long and arduous; and he succeeded because he had the support of friends and family. Others were not so lucky. At least seventeen runaway students died, and many others were seriously injured. Indian Affairs was well aware of the fact that conditions at the schools drove students to run away. Underfunding of the schools intensified those pressures throughout much of this period. Officials were also well aware of the risks that students faced in running away—runaways had died in 1935, 1937, and 1939. By the 1940s, the federal government had yet to put in place clear, nationwide policies for the reporting of runaways, and for the measures that should be taken for their safe return. Shockingly, it would not be until 1971 that national policies were put in place.

Appendix 21: Health Effects of Birtle Dam (1885)

This letter to the editor appeared on page 1 of the Birtle Observer on its January 30th, 1885 issue. Dr. J. H. Morrison was the Town Health Officer, and in this capacity he wrote the following as a public warning. Notable are the vivid descriptions and choice of rhetoric, and the difficulty of getting townspeople to use the Spring rather than the river. Apart from the interesting descriptions of the matter at hand, the letter demonstrates the then small but growing knowledge of the role of bacteria in the transmission of disease.

Editor Observer.

SIR,—I beg to call the attention of the citizens of Birtle, to the very great danger attending the use of ice and water taken from the Bird Tail, in and below the mill pond. The standing water of the dam, even in the channel of the river which courses through it, is polluted beyond redemption by the huge quantities of manure and other refuse, which, during the past two years, have been dumped into it and upon the avenues leading down the decline from Centre and St. Clair Sts. Besides being a receptacle for all the natural drainage of the town, the dam receives all the impurities from the latrines situated upon the banks of the river, within the corporation. Apart from all the other impurities with which it teems, the manure, now lying in the stagnant water is in constant solution and by a process known in the language of natural philosophy as *osmosis*, permeates every drop of water as far up the creek as the back flow of the dam extends.

It is now well established in the domain of medicine, that all diseases, of an infectious, contagious, or communicable nature are caused, by the introduction into, and the propagation in the human system of exceedingly minute, vegetable and natural germs, producing its own peculiar disease. Water, holding in solution, a large quantity of stable refuse, is a perfect paradise for the production and growth of these disease germs, which multiply with most bewildering rapidity. Every citizen of Birtle knows, that when last summer, the dam gave way, and the water fell within the banks of the river, thousands of dead and decaying willows, which cover the bottom of the pond, were revealed coated half an inch in thickness, with a green, slimy, vegetable growth, which filled the surrounding atmosphere, with a most abominable stench. This vegetable growth upon the willows, is but a collection of the countless millions of germs, generated by the enormous heap of manure, constituting the approach to the bridge. Now, the condition of the water in the dam, is simply this:—The hundreds of horses and cattle owned in, and passing through the town, pick up their living all over the surrounding country. They drink the impure, germ-stocked water of every foul, stinking slough, for miles around. In the stable refuse of the town, then, there is to be found a most complete collection of the obnoxious, deadly impurities of the whole surrounding prairie; and with an utter disregard of all sanitary precaution, we have persistently, for two years, gathered up all this refuse—*concentrated essence of disease*—and with impunity, worthy of a Central African village, have dumped it into the river, from which nineteen

twentieths of the water used in town is taken. That our hotels and private families should make use of this water for household purposes, when there gushes from the bank below the residence of Mr. Wood, the purest and most abundant, sparkling flow of water known in the Province, is certainly a conundrum incapable of solution.

It is urged by some, that although the *water* may be impure, the *ice*—which was once that same germ-stocked water—must of necessity be pure, because it has been frozen. This is a fallacious belief. Disease germs like common house flies are only benumbed by the freezing process, and as soon as the ice has become liquid again, they wake up to the most astonishing activity. If tainted beef be frozen, it is still tainted beef, and unfit for food.

The disastrous epidemic of typhoid fever which occurred in the city of Winnipeg last year was due, not so much to the use of the river water in summer,—as for the most part the city now draws its water supply to the Artesian wells—but from the use of ice taken from the Assiniboine and Red River, during the previous winter.

Unless an embargo be placed upon the use of ice and water, taken from the dam in this town, I predict either in the coming or succeeding summer, a very general epidemic of typhoid fever or diphtheria. The parent who daily conveys to his home a quantity of this impure water for his little ones to drink, will sooner or later see these disease germs, blossom out in the white diphtheritic membrane, and swollen glands that will choke the throat of some loved member of his family circle; or in the sombre blotches, the dry parched skin, the hot foul breath and wild delirium of typhoid fever.

In conclusion I beg to say that no ice or water for family use, should be taken from the Bird Tail, *at any point below the back water of the Birtle dam.*

J. H. MORRISON, M.D., HEALTH OFFICER.

Appendix 22: “The Birtle Fair” (1884)

Appearing in the Free Press on October 15th, 1884 (page 4) this article gives an excellent description of the first Agricultural Society Fair held after the incorporation of the Town and RM. There is detail

in regards to proceedings, although the reporter seemed more interested in the way in which Winnipeg personalities had descended on Birtle rather than the fair itself; Birtle would not get reliable local press coverage until the Birtle Observer opened its doors in December. This was the first visit to Birtle from Manitoba’s Lieutenant-Governor. Note the address presented to him on behalf of the Birdtail Sioux by John Thunder, their Presbyterian clergyman, and the response. It should be noted is that LaRiviere was an important cabinet minister, at the time responsible for agriculture. Leacock was Birtle’s provincial representative, and his parting remarks may indicate why he chose to stand for the new, more northerly seat of Russell in the 1886 election.

THE BIRTLE FAIR

Opened by His Honor, the Lieutenant-Governor.

**A Successful Exhibition—Fine Weather and a Splendid Show—
Speeches by Provincial Magnates.**

The fourth annual show of the Birtle Agricultural Society No. 1 was held in the town of Birtle on Friday, 10th inst., and was successful in the highest degree. The weather—proverbially hostile to demonstrations of this kind—was on this occasion all that could be desired, the attendance was large and the entries numerous and excellent. In respect of the number of citizens, a very marked increase over those of the previous years was noticeable. Last year the total entries were 313; this year 599.

The town hall, in which was the main exhibition, was filled with so many first-class exhibits in the ladies’ fancy work, fine arts, dairy and manufactures departments, that the judges had in some cases great difficulty in determining to whom to award the prizes. In a large tent adjoining the hall were the grain, roots and vegetables. The display altogether was one that would have been highly creditable to many a larger place, and gave ample evidence of the fertility of the soil and thrifty nature of the community in this district. Every effort had been put forth by the directors to ensure satisfaction to all, and it

must be gratifying to them to know that their labors have bore such excellent results. The following are the officers of the society: President, J. S. Crawford; 1st vice-president, Captain Chambers; 2nd vice president, Thomas Edwards; secretary-treasurer, W. J. Richardson. Directors—D. W. Cumming, Birtle; J. L. Smellie, Binscarth; Robert Nelson, Birtle; S. W. Chambers, Wattsvie; R. Hesketh, Fort Ellice; Robert Patterson, Birtle and Wm. Grant, Dowsford.

It had been previously intimated that the Hon. Mr. LaRiviere, Minister of Agriculture, had accepted an invitation to be present, and on the morning of the fair Mr. Leacock, M.P.P., arrived in town by special conveyance with the pleasing intelligence that the Lieutenant-Governor was also en route and would arrived about noon. Preparations were at once made to welcome him and at about the hour mentioned His Honor was met just outside the town by a large delegation of residents of the town and members of the municipal organizations in the district. In addition to the Lieutenant-Governor the visiting party consisted of Hon. Mr. LaRiviere, Mr. Leacock, M.P.P., Mr. Acton Burrows, Mr. C. J. Brydges, Capt. Kirby, A.D.C., and Mr. Dugdale, a member of the British Association. After a brief greeting they all drove to the residence of Mr. L. W. Herchmer, where His Honor was formally welcomed on this his first visit to the town of Birtle. Mr. J. S. Crawford, Mayor, read an appropriate address.

The Lieutenant-Governor expressed his thanks for the welcome which had been tendered him. He was now extremely pleased that he had been prevailed upon to come, and he was glad to witness the evidences of progress that are to be seen in the country through which he had passed. He had been pleased to view the town of Birtle located so beautifully, and he hoped that all the plans projected by those who located the place might be realized, and he had no doubt there would soon be railway communication. It was, however, to successful agriculture that we must look for increase, and he was quite satisfied with the extent and fertility of the country, and was sure that all who listened to him were possessed of that pluck, perseverance and will that had made the older Provinces what they are, and would bring success here. Agricultural fairs had been productive of a large amount of good. The competitive principle encourages excellence, and though all might not be satisfied with the awards yet in the great majority of cases the decisions were correct.

Mr. Leacock, then introduced to His Honor some members of the Sioux Indians who presented the following

ADDRESS.

To His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

The Indians of the Bird Tail Sioux reserve are glad to welcome you to this part of Manitoba. They want to say to you how much they love their Queen, the Great Mother that lives beyond the sea, and how much they respect you as you come to visit us in her place. The white man is our friend and is very good and kind to us. From him we have learned to cultivate our land, and to-day we have brought from our farms potatoes, corn, turnips, wheat and cattle to compete with the white man who has taught us to live by the arts of peace. We are happy and contented and can now live with very little help indeed. We have our own church which we support ourselves, and we have also sent twenty dollars to Winnipeg to help carry the gospel to other Indians. We have a good school at which our little ones can learn to be like the white man's children. We hope you will always remember how glad we are to see and speak to you, and that you will take our kind regards to your good lady.

Signed on behalf of the Indians of the Sioux Reserve, JOHN H. THUNDER.

His Honor replied, expressing his gratification at meeting the Indians and hearing of their success. The time was when the Sioux lived by hunting and fishing, but the buffalo was now fast disappearing and they must now go on their reserves and live like the white man or be supported by the white man. He was very glad they had taken the wiser course and had now their church and school and could send aid to others. He urged the importance of the Indian being educated to the standard of the white man—copying his virtues and avoiding his vices. He thanked them for their personal wishes towards himself and his wife and commended them for their loyalty.

Mayor Crawford again came forward and on behalf of the town presented to the Hon. Mr. La Riviere an address of welcome.

Hon. Mr. LaRiviere expressed his pleasure as a member of the Government in visiting the nice and progressing town of Birtle. The Government had always an eye on the progress of the country, and when a place like this was helping that progress the Government in duty bound must come to the rescue and aid the inhabitants. He had no doubt that when

the county town question came before the Council the interests of this town would not be disregarded. The Government was using its influence with the Federal Government in obtaining assistance for railways in this country, and he believed that the land grant would be given to companies that showed themselves in earnest at ten cents instead of \$1.10 an acre. This small sum was necessary to cover the cost of surveys. He had no doubt that with this liberal grant there would be no great advance made in railway building, and that he would be able to visit Birtle by special train next year. He was pleased he had now visited Birtle and with the hearty welcome extended to him, and he assured his hearers that the visit would not be forgotten nor the interests of the town neglected by the Government.

The remarks of the Lieutenant-Governor and of Hon. Mr. LaRiviere were listened to with a great deal of pleasure. Upon their conclusion the company adjourned for lunch at the Allan House, where the ladies of St. George's Church had prepared an excellent repast. About 2 o'clock the Lieutenant-Governor and other members of the visiting party were conducted to the town hall, where, before the formal opening of the show, Mr. J. S. Crawford, president of the Agricultural Society, read another address of welcome to the Hon. Mr. LaRiviere, to which that gentleman briefly replied.

Mr. Leacock, Mr. Brydges and Mr. Acton Burrows, upon request of the president, addressed a few remarks to the gathering, after which the Lieutenant-Governor declared the exhibition open.

The judges having concluded their work—not by any means easy—the doors were thrown open and the throng passed into the hall. In respect to the show the visitors from Winnipeg stated that it was equal to any, and much better than several they had attended in the Province. The only regrettable incident of the day was an accident which happened to Della Lawrie, a young daughter of Mr. J. M. Lawrie, who was run over and her collar-bone fractured by the horse and carriage of a young man who was driving at racing speed along the street. The bone was promptly set, and the young sufferer is now in a fair way of recovery.

THE ANNUAL DINNER

of the agricultural society was held in the evening at the Allen House, and was provided by the ladies of St. George's Church in connection with their own dinner. The tables were loaded with meats, game and delicacies

tastefully spread, and presented a most inviting appearance. The room was soon crowded and the edibles rapidly disappeared before the hungry host. When the cravings of the inner man had been fully satisfied, Mr. Crawford who, as president of the agricultural society, occupied the chair, proposed the toast of "The Queen," which was heartily received, the company singing the National Anthem. Then followed "The Governor General," and afterwards "The Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba."

Lieutenant-Governor Aikins in replying referred to his neutrality on political matters. His present advisers had his entire confidence, and should the people furnish him with others he would accord to them the same confidence. The Governor, like the King, by our constitution "could do no wrong." He never attended political party demonstrations, but this was non-political and it afforded him much pleasure to be present at such an exhibition of the growth and prosperity of the country as he had witnessed in Brandon, Minnedosa and Birtle. The exhibits he had seen to-day in stock and the products of the soil had, in his opinion, been in advance of anything he had seen in the Province. He claimed to be a practical farmer. To that profession—and he considered it entitled to the dignity of a profession as well as engineering, law or medicine—he had given the early portion of his life, and was, he considered, well up in his profession. He was proud to say that the most successful business men in the country were either farmers or the sons of farmers. This was especially noticeable in the city of Toronto. He encouraged the farmers to cultivate good habits and industry, and then with a healthy constitution they could not fail to succeed. He recommended cultivating well, rather than largely, and to adopt stock-raising in connection with grain-raising, as it was safer that all the eggs should not be in one basket. He complimented the town of Birtle on its pleasant situation locally, and from what he had seen it must be in the centre of a fine agricultural district. He would carry with him pleasant recollections of his visit to the place, and hoped that next year he would be able to meet the society without the fatigues of many miles staging.

The chairman then proposed "The Provincial Government" to which Hon. Mr. LaRiviere responded. He referred to the policy of the Government which had been approved in three elections—a policy which, while placing the interests of Manitoba first have due consideration to the Federal policy. He reviewed the negotiations which had been held between the Provincial and the Dominion Governments respecting increased subsidy to Manitoba, and

explained that in an affair of such importance, some delay was to be expected. The Federal Government had submitted an offer which the Legislature of the Province had not thought fit to accept, but he had no doubt that by the next meeting of the House, an understanding would be arrived at, and Manitoba would be placed on the same status as the other provinces. He urged the adoption of this country as our future home and hoped all who came to settle here would become Manitobans. No man should be ashamed of his forefathers or his nationality, yet while thinking kindly of their old homes, all who come to this country should come as true British subjects—loyal to Canada, loyal to Manitoba. He thanked the people for the honor done to him and his Government, and promised to act always for the best interests of the province.

In response to “The Legislature,” Mr. Leacock made an eloquent and effective speech, during the delivery of which he was several times applauded. He spoke of the importance of agricultural shows, affording as they do, an opportunity for the comparison of yield with yield and produce with produce, and for the intercourse of farmers throughout the community, when each can gather valuable ideas from others. Here all meet on one common field—the field of study of the bounty of nature, of gratitude to Him who gave it. Referring to the position Manitoba holds in confederation he said that Manitobans cannot feel complete sympathy with the Dominion till they can feel that they have the same rights as all the other provinces. In reply to a statement of the claims of the Province, adopted by the Government and legislature, and taken by delegates to Ottawa, the Dominion Government did make a liberal offer, but not liberal enough to justify him in voting for its adoption, and he was happy that the feelings of every member of the House were the same as his. The refusal was given in a respectful manner, and in a manner that will lead to fresh negotiations which he felt sure would result in accord with the interests of this Province. He drew attention to the importance of an outlet for this Province by Hudson Bay, and explained the steps that had been taken for the construction of a line of railway to a port on that bay. He believed that the resources of our Province could only be realized when that railway was completed. He referred to his course as representative for this district, and said that all he had done he believed was for the best. In conclusion, he thanked the people that they had made him feel that he had now just as many friends as before, if not more.

A number of other toasts were proposed and responded to.

As the Lieutenant-Governor and party had to drive to Elkhorn to catch the morning train for Winnipeg, the party broke up early, and good-byes having been said, the visitors took their departure about 10 p. m. by carriages for the station.

In all respects, then, the Birtle show this year was most successful.

Appendix 23: “Dominion Day” (1892)

This article demonstrates the growing popularity and importance of baseball in the general area and Birtle in particular. Of interest is the substantial numbers of runs racked up, showing that the nature of gameplay has changed considerably in the intervening years. This was printed in the Birtle Eye-Witness, July 7th, 1892, page 1.

Dominion Day.

On Friday last a large turnout from all the surrounding country was on hand to take in the amusements provided. Many expressed a doubt as to whether a baseball tournament would be a successful substitute for horse racing but the number who witnessed the matches played and the interest taken in the success of the various clubs, fully justified the action of the management committee. Though baseball was the centre of attraction there were good prizes for foot racing. Messrs. Wiggins of Rossburn and P. Hodnett of Birtle getting first and second respectively in the one hundred and two hundred yard races. Master W. Hodnett took first in boys race, under thirteen, with G. Porteous second. Boys under sixteen, first W. J. Strong second A. McDonald. Boys under eight Bert. Porteous and W. Corbert. There were on[sic] entries for ladies races.

The Birtle and Wattsvie teams played the first baseball match which was in favor of Wattsvie by a score of 28 to 10, empire Dr. Wright of Russell. The Rossburn and Beulah teams played the second game, the former winning by 34 to 20. Dr. Latimer and Jay Smith umpired.

The third game was between Birtle and Beulah, the loser to be out of the race for any of the prizes. The Beulah boys were at a disadvantage having but a few minutes rest after the previous match and the score stood over two to one in favor of Birtle. The real tussle began with the fourth game for the

\$45 prize between Wattsview and Rosburn. At the end of the third innings it stood one run in favor of Rosburn with a goose-egg each. In the fourth Wattsview made thirteen runs to Rosburn's three and increased the lead to the end of the seventh innings when the score stood thirty-one to fourteen, but in the next two innings Rosburn doubled its score and held the Plains' boys to three runs. At the close the score stood thirty four to twenty eight in favor of Wattsview. The outfield of Wattsview was exceptionally good and the team play resulting from good coaching won for them the game and the Rosburn boys being much the heavier batters. Messrs. Robertson and Wiggins pitching and Messrs. W. McDonald and J. Huggins catching for their respective teams for two matches in one day, without substitutes, was splendid and Mr. Brien's work on second base and Messrs. Young, McKee, A. McDonald, and D. Robertson's heavy batting making home runs, deserve mention.

Appendix 24: Royal Templars of Temperance letter to Editor (1888)

I've selected this as an appendix as an illustration of the importance of temperance activity in early Birtle. The letter, appearing on page 1 of the Birtle Observer, April 13th, 1888, shows the extent to which business interests and political cronyism was tangled up with the temperance question. It also demonstrates the public safety concerns involved, referencing cases of drunken violence in neighbouring towns which were not officially dry. Here the Council of the Royal Templars of Temperance are opposing an effort to reopen a licensed hotel in Birtle. Worth noting is the emphasis on population growth, a pressing concern during this settlement period, and the reputation of Sheriff Adam's Arlington Hotel, which he had managed to finagle a license.

To the Editor of the Birtle Observer.

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of the 30th March there appeared a strange notice, cast in the form of a question, to the people and council of Birtle,

asking if they wished a good hotel and license in their midst. We in our simplicity had labored under the impression that the action of Birtle at the poll on the 20th day of September last had pretty forcibly answered that question. But this is one of the troubles of a certain class that they do not know when they are beaten and certainly the license men of Canada have shown a perseverance worthy of a better cause. This notice above referred to hints obscurely at something to be done or attempted on the 15th of May. No doubt the wish is father to the thought and they would like that that date or some other date would turn up something to rescue their cause from the helpless ruin to which its own sad history is rushing it. What has transpired in the history of this business since the 20th of September to encourage the most distant hope that the intelligence of Birtle will go back on its own record. We have the proud preeminence of being the first town in Manitoba taking advantage of the improved license act, and but for the left handed and unmanly course pursued by some petty and it may be interested officials in Winnipeg we should to-day be enjoying our legal rights—entire exemption from liquor license. But let this Commercial Traveller know that we do not regard this business as settled. We have not yet finished with that crookedness. We hope to be able to show that the recent license is illegal and should therefore cease immediately. With regard to this, however, we wish it distinctly understood that we hold no spite or personal malice towards any person, we only oppose the traffic.

We do not claim to be “the people of Birtle” but we are people of Birtle and think that we have our hand upon the pulse of Birtle and fail to observe any symptom indicating the most distant desire to return to a license that would give by our sanction a quasi respectability to a traffic that has deservedly the curse of God and man upon its brow. Commercial Traveller appeals to the people and council of Birtle that the brotherhood may be furnished with a good hotel and a license in it. We wonder at his modesty. Why not while he is at it go in for a palace car to fetch him here. It would be interesting to ask what is C. T's business here or anywhere else—to quaff toddy, lay himself out on a decorated divan at the Arlington and sonorously snore away the effects of his potations. Ask him, ask his master at Winnipeg or Toronto or Montreal. They would tell you that C. T. is sent here to sell goods to men who can pay promptly for them and we are of the opinion that if there was not a hotel of any kind in or near Birtle the C. T. who knows his business would certainly come. Possibly the brewers or distillers would not, but who would cry if he did not.

But what is going to happen on the 15th day of May next. Will gravitation turn the other way or the license thistle bear luscious figs. Now to be serious what developments in favor of this license business have transpired since we had it in hand last. What is the state of public opinion in intelligent communities and in what direction is the sensitive sympathetic needle pointing. Does C. T. know that the question is being seriously debated as to whether any legislature in this or in any other land has the right to grant a license or do any other thing that would legalize the poisoning or destroying of the people. We know that Ontario is not yielding, we know that the United States are not yielding, but they are on the other hand drawing the lines closer and closer upon the traffic, and are there any special reasons why we should be more favorable to the mischievous business. Has it increased our population? We know it has driven many away. Has it helped any home or any life or made any family more comfortable? We know several it has well nigh destroyed. What has it done for our neighbors in Shoal Lake? They will perhaps blame the foreigner, but who goaded, who engaged the poor defenceless Scandinavian. What maddened his brain till he dyes his knife in the blood of a respectable citizen. What consideration is due the license business in view of the tragic scene recently enacted at Binscarth where our boasted Canadian civilization is again outraged by a foul assassination and a Canadian plunges his knife into the bodies of other Canadians and these his own relatives. Is Birtle desirous of such a record. She may get it any day; indeed her record is not quite clear even now. No commuter is safe while whiskey is at large. Therefore Commercial Traveller or no Commercial Traveller we vote for no lease.

COUNCIL OF R. T. OF T.

Birtle, 9th April, 1888.

Appendix 25: "Pioneers' Reunion" (1904)

I've selected this as an appendix because, while the Bird Tail Pioneers association is not particularly pivotal, the account is of great interest. The stories given by John Haines would have been interesting — he had been imprisoned by Louis Riel back during the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870. When he eventually decided to move further west, Alfred Morton persuaded him to stop at Birtle. That Haines had

immediately followed an original composition celebrating the Boulton Scouts of the Northwest Rebellion shows the extent to which these two military conflicts were tied together within the mindsets of Birtle's settlers, and that a second composition celebrated Canadian participation more broadly in an imperial conflict shows that the early norming framework, established by these same settlers in the 1880s, continued to have a powerful hold on them. Also worth noting is that Sioux Jack was included among the obituary list — the Birdtail Sioux and Birtle's settlers had been on close terms during Birtle's pioneering days. The article appears on page 1 of the Birtle Eye-Witness, February 2nd, 1904.

PIONEERS' REUNION.

Thursday evening nearly 100 of the Bird Tail pioneers gathered in Adams' Hall to enjoy a good social time together. About 8:30 Mrs Adams had the banquet tables ready and the guests were seated having been provided with badges bearing date of their locating in the Bird Tail district. After doing full justice to the dainty and substantial viands provided Miss Easson supplied an instrumental prelude to the program first order of which was election of officers and a few minutes business meeting.

Officers elected were: J. Patterson, president; H. Turner, vice-pres; E. J. Wilson, Sec.-Treas; H. Gibson, John Walley, W. Howard, W. Miller and C. Burdett, executive committee, two with officers to be a quorum. It was decided on a motion to hold an annual gathering date etc to be fixed by the committee. The holding of a summer excursion was suggested but no definite action taken.

President Patterson took the program in hand and called on H. Gibson to read an anonymous poem of an old timer on his early weals and woes. Mr Pescod next rendered the song "Eliza" and was forced to respond to an encore. Mr J. Leggat gave two original poems on "farewell to Boulton's scouts" and "Canada's S. Africa boys" after which J. Haines and C. E. Hall responded to "Manitoba's anti Bird Tail settlement days" the former giving personal experience of stirring times of Riel's first rebellion and few subsequent years while Mr. Hall as a native recounted life as it appeared to

the boys growing up during same period. W. Miller relieved what might become speech monotony by a lively song and H. Turner recounted early days as compared with present he being the pioneer of what is now the flourishing Miniota district while his life partner was the first white girl to locate on the Bird Tail. Mrs. Headlam, the oldest native of Birtle, recited so takingly that a recall was only saved by N. Beirnes filling the place with a gramophone selection. Mr. W. Howard dealt with "Canadians as citizens of Greater Britain" in a few minutes oration. Reeve O'Keefe Ellice filled a few minutes Mr Geo Walley gave a graphic account of the trials of a winter trip from Winnipeg to Birtle in '79-80 along with Lane Bros and Jos Dutton when the motive power was ox-engines.

The secretary read regrets for their unavoidable absence and best wishes for success of the reunion from: Mr J. H. Wood, St. Clair Wood and Mrs Travis now residents of St Paul, W. G. N. Porteous Virden, Mr and Mrs Harrison Solsgirth, J. R. Cook Hamilton, Mr and Mrs Doyle Beulah, Mrs McDougall Winnipeg, F. J. Herchimer Dauphin, Mr and Mrs Alf Burdett Canby, Ore., Mr and Mrs Edwards Beechville, Mrs Miller Solsgirth, R. Lane Brandon, Alonzo Wood Tacoma and Mr and Mrs Anderson sr. Franklin. Also the obituary list of pioneers who have passed over to the great beyond since the last gathering. The steady thinning out by the grim reaper of ranks of the old pioneers whose only rivalry was in hospitality and efforts to entertain and help over the rugged places of early settlement life, those less fortunate than themselves, leaves many a heart throb and is a strong incentive to hold such reunions. Besides the number who have gone before, who attended the previous gathering and enlivened and entertained their early day associates, there are others who attended in sympathy but through advancing years or other vicissitudes of earths pathway were unable to attend in person. It is proposed to remember them by a badge recalling such early years.

The obituary list read was: D. W. Cumming, W. D. Paynter, Jos. Dutton, F. B. Miler, A. B. Harris, Mrs Alex. Preston, Mrs. J. S. Crawford, Robt Thompson, Sioux Jack.

Oscar Carpenter, Mrs Jos Chapman, Mrs S. W. Chambers, Mrs H. Patterson, Jas S. Crerar, Jos Chapman, Mrs John Peters, Matthew Young, Mrs R. R. Ross, Alex McIntosh, Alex Preston.

Among those present were:

'78ers—John Richardson, Andrew Bissett, Mrs H. Turner.

'79—John Patterson, T. F. Patterson, Mr and Mrs C. Burdett, J. C. Anderson, Wm Tait, Mrs Headlam, Mrs W. Dodge, Mr and Mrs Haines, Mr and Mrs Bell, Harry Brown, W. H. Wood, Mrs Adams, D. A. Adams, E. J. Wilson, Mr Rogers.

'80—Albert E. Bartley, And. Clyde, Alex M. Anderson, Mrs Johnson, A. J. Sheperd, L. R. Cartmell, Samuel Henderson, Mrs J. Dutton, Harry Turner, W. Miller, Geo Walley.

'81—Mrs Bartley, Mrs Clyde, R. F. Preston, W. C. O'Keefe, John Walley, Jas Aylsworth, Jos Haines.

'82—Henry Gibson, Mrs E. J. Wilson, Mr and Mrs Easson, J. M. Stewart, Arthur Doig, Andrew Doig, W. Howard, Mr and Mrs T. H. McMurray.

'83—Oscar Wilson, Mrs. R. Preston, Mrs. And. Doig, C. T. Winter.

'84—Miss Edwards, Miss Doig, Mrs A. J. Shepherd, Jas Gourlay, Miss Manwaring, Miss Burdett.

Others present were: Mr and Mrs C. E. Hall, Mrs A. M. Anderson of Franklin, Mr and Mrs Harry Wilson, Mr and Mrs Salmon, Miss Gladstone of Owen Sound, Mrs W. H. Wood, Mrs Mundell, Wm Dodge, N. Malcom, E. Pescod, Mrs Patterson, Miss Graham of Bradwardine, Mayor Clemens, J. B. Hodgson, N. Beirnes, A. M. Headlam, Miss Miller of Solsgirth.

Appendix 26: Extracts from Letter from Trooper Morrison (1885)

These appear in the Birtle Observer, June 1st, 1885, page 4. I have included the extracts as an appendix to demonstrate the role of Major Boulton's Mounted Infantry during the Northwest Rebellion. Trooper W. M. Morrison was one of the No. 2 Birtle Troop. He describes the storming of Batoche, in which he participated along with the rest of the troop. Note the end, where he shows that Boulton's Mounted Infantry had turned out a better quality than the supposedly elite group of surveyors.

The following are extracts from a letter dated at Batoche, May 13, from Trooper Morrison, of Boulton's Horse:

“We have been fighting for the last four days. We met and engaged the enemy on Saturday and fought for 12 hours straight on but did not succeed in routing them from their rifle pits. We burned several houses, held our positions, threw up earth works and slept in the trenches. On Sunday we had it something in the style of two old maids fighting over a kitten. On Monday the Infantry peppered away at the breeds all day. Our troops were out reconnoitering and were fired upon. We returned the fire with our Winchesters and the Gatling and retired when we had seen all we wanted to. We captured a breed and returned to camp. On Tuesday we proceeded to the same place with the gatling and artillery. One of the Winnipeg Surveyors was killed. I cannot account for it but I seem to live a charmed life. I have had a number of very close calls but have not been struck yet. I had a bullet through my breeches but that is a trifle. We returned to camp, swallowed our dinner and were just sitting down to read the papers which had arrived on the previous evening when an order came from the General ordering out the artillery. They were out in five minutes, followed by the gatling. Then we heard the Grenadiers cheer and we knew that they had charged the rifle pits. We were ordered to saddle and mount and be ready to move at a moment’s notice. We had only a few minutes to wait when the order came and we went out “on the living tear” and overtook the skirmishers. We dismounted, took up the right flank and carried forward the charge in a crescent. Just as we were about to enter the ranks I noticed a man coming towards us with a white flag. Some of the boys in the bush fired on him, so Hubert Wood, Travis and I ran forward to tell them he carried a flag of truce. He brought a message from Riel to the General. We heard what the messenger had to say and then sent him to the camp to find the General knowing he was not there. We kept up the charge and cleared everything before us. We would make a push and a yell and take a bluff or rifle pit, take a few shots while we were getting our breath and then make for the next objective point until we gained the outside house of the village. At this house there one fellow behind a woodpile who took a particular liking to Travis and me and proceeded to give us his individual attention, but we made it so hot for him that he soon made up his mind to secure more comfortable quarters. We rushed forward, took the house, searched it and went on. We kept this up for a mile and a half until the village was taken and the prisoners released. The poor fellows had been shut up in a cellar for seven or eight weeks. They had lived on meat and water straight for two weeks. They said they had been informed that they were to be shot that night if Middleton shelled the church, but we “busted” the little game and let the boys out. One poor fellow no sooner realized that

he was free than he snatched the arms of a wounded man and struck out to fight the breeds. By this time our Winchester ammunition ran out and we all three struck back to camp and got a fresh supply and joined our troop again on the right. We all got together in good shape and after we had all got a drink of water Major Boulton ordered us to charge a house a quarter of a mile away. We were pretty well choked up with dust but we tuned up and made the air ring with our yells, for yells they were in earnest. We made a wild dash and took the house. In less time than it takes to write it the house was in flames. They gave us a few shots as they retired. After we had withdrawn some distance Travis and I went back to secure a light express waggon to be used as an ambulance. We held the shafts with one hand and our rifles with the other and started off. The breeds give us a breeze but did not hit us and we landed the express safely within our lines. We laid around until dark and then marched down to the town. The Infantry camped there for the night and we went back and slept in our trenches. The next morning we were sent off to Humboldt to escort an ammunition train. Our victory was a complete one. White flags are now as common as newspapers at a street corner. I was the first to break into Riel’s chapel. He had it fixed up in good shape. We lost the Captain of the Russell Boys. There are three mounted corps. The General don’t say much but he always takes our corps with him when he goes out and is always putting us in important places. The Surveyors who were specially fitted out as an intelligence corps felt badly cut up when the General sent us ahead to do the scouting and sent them to the rear as a guard.

Appendix 27: Crawford to Returned Soldiers (1885)

This appeared on page 1 of the Birtle Observer, August 23rd, 1885. I specifically wanted to bring out Major J. S. Crawford's speech. As Birtle's most representative citizen, he illustrates the attitudes which those who had stayed behind in Birtle had relative to the conflict, and precisely what the soldiers' efforts and the result had meant for them.

At the picnic given in honor of the volunteers the following address was read by the Mayor:

To Major Boulton, officers and men of Boulton’s Mounted Infantry.

SOLDIERS AND COUNTRYMEN—The citizens of Birtle and the people of this district enjoy the privilege of giving you a cordial reception on your return from the dangerous expedition in which you have been engaged, and of conveying to you their sense of obligation for the services you have rendered and their very high appreciation of the courage and general soldierly deportment with which you have been credited in the report of Major-General Middleton to the Government. The readiness with which you responded to the call of your country, the rapidity of your preparation for fight, the abundance of your resources in time of difficulty and your gallantry in the contest have excited the astonishment and admiration of those most experienced in warfare. As citizens of the Northwest it was your right to stand in the front of the battle and in the face of the foe and most nobly have you done your duty.

When you left us a few months ago we were impressed with a deep sense of anxiety as to what might be the result of your first military experience. We fully recognized the subtlety and fighting ability of the foes you were to engage, but we cherished a fond hope and a lively expectation, knowing that the prayers of the christian church and the christian people of the Dominion were constantly presented to the God of battles for your preservation, and remembering that you were young Canadians, that you had inherited in a direct line of blood, the bravery, the pluck and the endurance of the defenders of our flag in the brave days of old. This cherished hope has now been

realized, and to-day we join in tendering you our hospilities, our recognition of your bravery and our grateful appreciation of the services you have rendered to us and to our common country. While all your comrades in arms are receiving similar acknowledgements from the people of the eastern portion of the Dominion, we feel a just pride in being satisfied, from the reports that have reached us of your having always been to the front in the important engagements as well as having filled the most dangerous posts to which your particular branch of the service as mounted men was exposed, that your soldierly qualities are second to none, and this fact makes it peculiarly gratifying to us to tender you this hearty welcome home.

In our gratitude and joy we have, however, one dark cloud. Some of your companions have proved that the path of glory leads but to the grave, and our home circles are not all unbroken. The bereaved ones have our earnest sympathy and fervent prayers for consolation in this their dark hour, and while we have a cheer for the victors we have also a kindly tear for those who are called to weep.

To you, Major Boulton and the men of your troop, these sentiments are offered in the hope that the services you have rendered to the Dominion will show to the Mother Country that Canadians are worthy sons of the worthy sires who defended the old flag in the days gone by, and secure to us the character of a self reliant and prosperous young nation.

On behalf of the district,
J. S. CRAWFORD
MAYOR OF BIRTLE.



**Listening to King George VII,
Coronation Day, May 12th, 1937**

A mass of loyal subjects and around 400 pupils gathered on the coronation day of their new sovereign to listen to his speech broadcast over the radio. They're on main street facing south, with their backs to the Savoy Theatre

[Source: BCM, Box People + Groups, envelope Museum, Scenes of Birtle