



REFLECTIONS OF

LOWE FARM

1899



1999

REFLECTIONS OF LOWE FARM
A Centennial project of the Community of Lowe Farm
A history of the Lowe Farm area
1899 – 1999

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A special thank you to all those who submitted valuable information and timeless photographs in helping to make this publication possible.

The evolution of this book marks the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the community of Lowe Farm. Persons of diversified ethnic origins founded this community and, as in most prairie communities, there are many colorful stories to tell.

If it weren't for individuals who were totally focussed and committed to a job well done, histories like these would never be formalized into a published document.

Paul Joyal has been the driving force behind this book. He is a relatively new citizen of Lowe Farm and has been the person "behind the scenes" to whom we owe our thanks for the completion of this book. Paul has spent a considerable amount of time in researching, typing, photographing, and making sure the copy deadlines would be met. (i.e. bugging us all to make sure our stories were completed!) Paul has interviewed many Lowe Farm Residents and has studied and researched the many facets of this community history to create an outstanding finished project.

On behalf of the citizens of Lowe Farm, we gratefully acknowledge and thank Paul for his time and effort in publishing Reflections of Lowe Farm.

PREFACE

One hundred years ago our ancestors arrived to farm the vast expanse of the prairie land. Most arrived with little more than a vision, a deep faith in God, and belief in themselves and each other. Far removed from their homeland, their courage and resourcefulness would be taxed to the limit. Through their determination to succeed, the community of Lowe Farm slowly evolved. It is to their memory and their visions that this history book is dedicated.

By preserving the past we are reminded of how deeply we are indebted to it. To paraphrase the words of John L. Braun, who wrote in the 75th Anniversary Book, "By telling us what our forefathers did, history inspires us in two directions. To respect their achievements, great in their day, and to inspire us to strive to equal their resourcefulness and courage."

This book is dedicated to the Lowe Farm Pioneers.

It is our sincere hope that through written text and photographs we have been able to capture in some measure the rich and colorful heritage of Lowe Farm.

In this our Centennial Year, may we, as modern day pioneers, pass along to succeeding generations the resourcefulness and courage handed to us by our ancestors. Let our visions, our faith in God, and our belief in ourselves and each other continue to inspire to make Lowe Farm a strong and vibrant community.

Paul J. Joyal



Parliamentary Secretary
to the Minister of Indian
Affairs and Northern Development



Secrétaire parlementaire
du ministre des Affaires
indiennes et du Nord canadien

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
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DAVID W. IFTODY
M.P. / DÉPUTÉ
PROVENCHER

January, 1999

Lowe Farm Centennial History Book Committee
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Dear Committee Members:

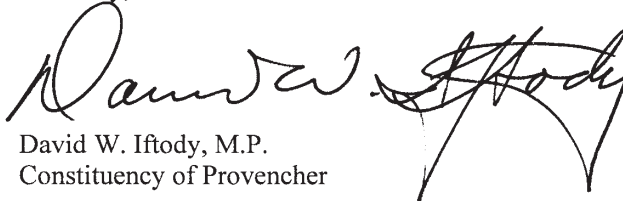
It gives me great pleasure to extend my most sincere congratulations to you on the occasion of the Centennial of the community of Lowe Farm.

100 years ago your community was founded largely by Mennonite immigrants whose desire for a better life led them to settle in Lowe Farm. Today, many of your residents are direct descendants of those hard-working settlers and you have much reason to be proud of your traditional roots.

Indeed, this history book will chronicle the early years of the local residents and will serve as a reference for those who seek to know more about their background and the lives of those who have lived in the local area. It is truly an ambitious undertaking for a small community to publish a thorough history. Your committee has tackled the job and the result is a wonderful history book that all can be proud of and that many will cherish for years to come.

I wish you all God's greatest blessings as you begin the next 100 years of Lowe Farm's history.

Sincerely,



David W. Iftody, M.P.
Constituency of Provencher

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LE GOUVERNEUR GÉNÉRAL
THE GOVERNOR GENERAL

RIDEAU HALL
OTTAWA

I am pleased to send my best wishes to everyone in Lowe Farm as you celebrate the town's 100th anniversary. This is a chance for you to learn about your history and to come together, as neighbours, to show your pride in your beautiful and vibrant community.

Your celebration recalls the founders of a community whose determination remains a model for Canadians today. They and other pioneers like them, who were motivated by strong convictions and principles, contributed to the fabric of our great and diverse country. I think they, too, would be very proud of how the area has developed over the years.

I wish everyone in Lowe Farm continued success and prosperity in the next century.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Roméo LeBlanc".

Roméo LeBlanc

July 1999



It is an honour and privilege to contribute a message into the Lowe Farm Centennial history book. On behalf of the entire Rural Municipality of Morris, please accept my congratulations on the celebration of your centennial.

One hundred years ago, Lowe Farm was a farming community and over all these years, farming has remained the mainstay and the basics of the community. Lowe Farm can be well proud of it's past, it's heritage and it's forefathers that built and created Lowe Farm.

Over the past many years, there have been many hurdles which have had to be overcome. There have been many difficulties facing the agricultural industry in the past. There has always been the pull of people into the larger cities and there are many other issues which all affect the survival of small towns. Lowe Farm has weathered them all and has maintained its status. Where many small centres have diminished and disappeared, the uniqueness of Lowe Farm has allowed it to prosper and grow.

Lowe Farm has shown its community spirit many times over the years. But none shows greater than during the flooding of 1950, 1979 and 1997 in which the people of Lowe Farm took in flood victims and helped others to sandbag and protect their properties. The great spirit of coming together to feed and shelter others in a time of adversity is a town that can be well proud of itself.

The future is always an unknown and this unknown creates our challenges that are yet to come. Lowe Farm and its people will meet those challenges and have a rich and full future.

As Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Morris and on behalf of the residents of the Rural Municipality of Morris, I congratulate Lowe Farm on its centennial and our best wishes on your future.

Herm Martens,
Reeve,
Rural Municipality of Morris



PREMIER OF MANITOBA

Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
R3C 0V8

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER OF MANITOBA

For many Manitobans, the ties between past and present, between the arrival of their ancestors in this land and the modern communities where they live today, are maintained by memories and family history passed on by word of mouth. Such connections are vivid and personal but they are also imperfect and fade in time. Writing down these histories in black and white both keeps the past in focus and helps us share our own stories with generations to come.

Therefore, as Premier and the son of immigrants myself, I welcome the publication of a history book celebrating the founding of Lowe Farm 100 years ago this year. This documentary record and the dedication of a special summer weekend to commemorate the community's centennial are a fitting reminder of Manitoba's pioneer heritage.

The story of the early days and more recent development of Lowe Farm is, of course, especially significant and poignant to longtime residents of the Red River Valley, as it recounts the challenges and achievements of the region's settlers. To others across the province, it emphasizes the enduring values of hard work and determination, close-knit communities, and a shared vision of the future – the bedrock our province was founded upon.

I commend all those involved in producing this notable contribution to the historical and cultural understanding of Manitoba.

Gary Filmon

July 2, 1999





Message from
The Honourable Franklin P. Pitura
Minister of Government Services
MLA for Morris

It gives me great pleasure to extend greetings in this book chronicling the history of Lowe Farm.

The Community of Lowe Farm has a rich and colourful history. The community's leadership role in the co-operative movement in Manitoba is well proven with the oldest credit union in Manitoba being the Lowe Farm Credit Union. This book chronicles the hard work and dedication of the pioneer families of Lowe Farm. The vision and hope for the future recorded by the stories in this history will affect those families today and the future generations of this great community that read this book.

I believe that Manitoba's greatest asset is the people of Manitoba and this book proves it.

Congratulations on this great project.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Franklin Pitura".

Franklin P. Pitura



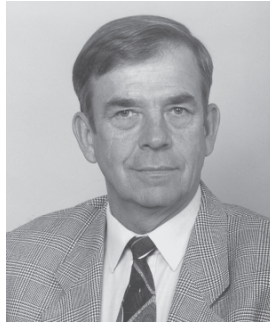
PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to everyone celebrating the 100th anniversary of Lowe Farm, Manitoba.

For one hundred years, area residents have shared their hopes and dreams, building a better life for their children and their children's children. As you gather on this festive occasion, you will doubtless take the time to reflect on the vibrant history of your community. Our past holds the seeds of our future, and it is appropriate that we should honour those who have come before us by keeping their memory alive and cherishing the traditions that have shaped our heritage.

I know that Lowe Farm will continue to grow and flourish as part of our strong and vigorous nation. Please accept my best wishes as you prepare to meet the challenges of the years to come.

OTTAWA
1999



LOWE FARM AND AREA: AN HISTORICAL POLITICAL OVERVIEW

By Emerson MLA, Jack Penner

When the town plan for Lowe Farm was drawn up in 1898, Manitoba was still the “postage stamp” province. Even so, as the boundaries of the province would grow and change, the political constituencies within which the prairie town of Lowe Farm would fall would remain the same for the next 100 years.

The Rural Municipality of Morris, in which Lowe Farm is located, was founded in 1880. In the last decade of the 1800’s, the R.M. of Morris was experiencing a period of rapid growth, of which the establishment of Lowe Farm was a part. The continuous influx of new settlers required the creation of new schools, such as the Lowe Farm School, opened in 1899, and the building of new roads around the region.

One of the major forces behind the growth and development of the R.M. of Morris during this important period was Reeve Henry Snarr, an exceptional farmer who was also known for his friendliness and hospitality. Snarr held the position of Reeve first in 1893, and then from 1894 to 1898 and again from 1901-1904. During his tenure, land tax and drainage legislation was passed that proved beneficial to the municipality.

In the 100 years that Lowe Farm has been a part of the R.M. of Morris, it has been served by many other distinguished municipal officials, but perhaps none was more special to the community of Lowe Farm as Bernard W. Thiessen was. A farmer of the Lowe Farm district, Thiessen served for sixteen years as a councillor, and was Reeve from 1950-1951. Thiessen was also a very active within the community of Lowe Farm. He was president of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op, the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce and director of the Lowe Farm Credit Union Society.

Thiessen’s term as Reeve coincided with the flood of 1950, which caused great damage and chaos throughout the municipality. As a result, the major issue of this period for the residents and municipality became the discussions with the federal and provincial governments for flood damage compensation.

In the arena of provincial politics, Lowe Farm has consistently found itself within the Morris Constituency, and as a part of this area, has been served by many accomplished Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The first MLA to serve the people of the Lowe Farm area was a Liberal by the name of Stewart Mulvey. However, he served only one term in office, and the election of December, 1899, brought in Conservative MLA Colin H. Campbell, who would hold the seat until 1914. Campbell became an important member of the Conservative Party caucus, holding the position of Attorney General from 1900-1911 and then serving as Minister of Public Works until 1913.

Another Conservative, Jacques Parent, followed Campbell as the MLA for Morris. He served until 1920, when Farmer candidate William Reid Clubb won the seat, after four years of service on the R.M. of Morris Council. He went on to hold this legislative seat for 21 years, earning him the honor of being the longest sitting MLA from the Morris Constituency. Over that time, he ran under the United Farmers of

Manitoba (UFA), Progressive, and Liberal-Progressive banners as the political coalition to which he belonged evolved.

In 1922, under the banner of the United Farmers of Manitoba, and led by John Bracken, members of this movement won control of the legislature. This ushered in an era of 'non-partisan' government in Manitoba, which would last until the 1950's. Clubb, known for his political aptitude for dealing with farm interests, became a key player in the Bracken Cabinet. He was Minister of Public Works from 1922-1940, as well as Labor Minister from 1932-1940.

Clubb's successor in the Morris seat was farmer John Cameron Dryden. He was first elected in 1941 as an independent candidate, but sat his second and last term as a Liberal-Progressive. Dryden was also a member of the provincial cabinet, as Minister of Education from 1944 to 1948, and later served as Provincial Treasurer.

In 1950, Harry Proctor Shewman took over the seat, and served the people of the Morris Constituency for 19 years. Shewman, who was also the Mayor of Morris from 1948 to 1954, ran originally as an independent candidate, but later became a member of the Progressive Conservative caucus, as traditional partisan politics reemerged within Manitoba in the early 1950's. He became the first of a continuous line of P.C. MLA's to be elected by the people of the Morris Constituency.

From 1969 to 1981, Walter H. Jorgenson served as the Morris MLA, after having spent several years as a Member of Parliament. He was Government House Leader from 1977-1979 and was then named, first as Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and later as Minister of Government Services.

In November 1981, Clayton Manness, a farmer from the Domain area, was elected to the Legislature from the Morris Constituency. Like many of his predecessors, he became an important member of his caucus and of government. During his fourteen years at the provincial legislature, Manness served as Government House Leader, Minister of Finance and Minister of Education and Training.

Today, as Lowe Farm celebrates its 100th anniversary, the Honorable Frank P. Pitura sits as their Member of the Legislative Assembly. He was first elected in 1995 and in 1997 was appointed Minister of Government Services.

This history, in my view, clearly demonstrates the importance of the Municipality of Morris and the community of Lowe Farm as having a profound impact in directing the destiny of the province of Manitoba, as well as Canada.

The people of Lowe Farm are to be congratulated for their contributions to the well being of the nation, as well as recognizing its past history and all the people that contributed to it. May Lowe Farm grow and prosper for another 100 years.



Town of Lowe Farm from NE angle



Lowe Farm 1908

JOHN LOWE

FOUNDER OF LOWE FARM



JOHN LOWE

Founder of Lowe Farm

Submitted by Ralph Groening and Paul Joyal

Source: Dictionary of Canadian Biography



John Lowe

(photo courtesy of the National Archives of Canada)

John Lowe was born February 20, 1824, in Warrington England, son of James Lowe and Anne Clarke. After studying in a private school, he set sail for Montreal in 1841, where on arriving found employment in a fur trading - house. He soon discovered that he preferred literature to business and began a lifelong habit of reading for five or six hours every evening.

In 1848, he put his interest to work as a reporter and assistant editor of the Montreal Gazette. In 1851, he left for Toronto to become editor of the British Colonist, the first daily newspaper published in Canada.

On August 16, 1852, John Lowe married Almira Chamberlin in Frehligsburg, Lower Canada (Quebec). Within this marriage were born four children, two sons and two daughters.

On November 1, 1853, Lowe along with his brother-in-law, Brown Chamberlin, joined with a co-owner of the Gazette, James Moir Ferres, in buying out the other partner, John Milne. On April 1, 1854, Lowe and Chamberlin, with financing from Lowe's father-in-law, bought out Ferres and became owners and co-editors of the paper.

The editors rapidly made changes. They moved into larger quarters, bought a new steam press and began publishing daily throughout the year. In 1855, they launched the Canadian Mail or Montreal Weekly Gazette for Europe. The Gazette flourished affording Lowe a comfortable living.

In May of 1867, Lowe and Chamberlin sold the Gazette to a new entity, the Montreal Printing and Publishing Company, which was in fact the principal investment of the firm Lowe and Chamberlin.

On May 1, 1869, Montreal Printing and Publishing bought the Montreal Evening and Commercial Advertiser. By February of 1870, employees of Montreal Printing and Publishing had defrauded the company of at least \$ 14,000.00. The telegraph was bankrupt and Lowe and Chamberlin were in financial ruins. At age 46, John Lowe was wiped out.

During his time in Montreal, Lowe made many influential friends including Christopher Dunkin, Federal Minister of Agriculture. Dunkin rescued Lowe by offering him a position as census staff officer. On July 9, 1870, John Lowe began his career in the civil service. On February 8, 1871, he was named temporary secretary of the Department of Agriculture, and on May 7, 1873, the appointment was made permanent. The job was favor, but for the civil service Lowe was an inspired choice. He enjoyed gardening, plant breeding and agriculture in general, and had also produced statistical publications. Moreover, Dunkin had especially wanted him to take responsibility for immigration, a job to which his writing, promotional and managerial skills were well suited.

Population growth was essential to the financing of capital projects and to the development of the Dominion's vast resources. Given a free hand, John Lowe threw his boundless energy into directing the web of immigration agents stationed in Canada and abroad. He developed strategies to succeed in the competitive market for desirable immigrants, and negotiated special arrangements for their passage with his Montreal friends, Hugh and Andrew Allen, of the Allen Steamship Line.

John Lowe's enthusiasm for promoting Canada was redoubled by a visit on departmental business to the northwest and Manitoba in 1877. The company of his friend William Watson Ogilvie had shipped its first load of wheat from Manitoba that year. In January of 1878,

Lowe would tell Ogilvie that the vast region was “destined immediately to become the great wheat growing region of the North American Continent....I saw...black Alluvium over 10 feet in thickness.” Lowe’s knowledge, liking for agriculture and entrepreneurial drive combined in his determination to get a piece of the Manitoba dealings.

By 1878, Lowe had persuaded his brother James, an affluent merchant in Manchester, England, to invest in Manitoba land and establish their sons on it to farm. He used his departmental contacts in Manitoba to acquire settlement land and Metis scrip until in 1879, he held 16 sections of land at the present day village of Lowe Farm and properties in town sites nearby. By 1881, James Lowe had invested over \$50,000.00 in the scheme with almost no return. Damage caused by early frost, drought, drainage problems and fire was compounded by the evident unfitness of either of the Lowe boys for farming. Later attempts by Lowe to market a steam plough and sustain an irrigation and drainage company would also fail.

In the 1880’s, during the second Conservative administration of Sir John A. MacDonald, Lowe managed a tremendous campaign to attract immigrants, particularly farmers and farm laborers, for Manitoba. The number of immigrants peaked in 1883 at 133,600, and immigration expenses reached over half a million dollars in 1884-85. However, depression, government restraint and the North West Rebellion of 1885 had precipitated a cutback in spending and immigration levels by 1890.

In the midst of this decline Lowe’s responsibilities increased when on July 1, 1888, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Agriculture. John Lowe’s initiative effectively complimented the enterprise displayed by John Carling, Minister of Agriculture from 1885 until 1892.

The year 1895 was not a good one for John Lowe. In August 1895, while visiting Manitoba, the 71-year-old Lowe read in the Manitoba Morning Free Press that he was to be replaced as deputy. Outraged he appealed to political friends, but on December 1, 1895, John Lowe was superannuated (retired) and succeeded by William Bain Scarth, a political appointee.

The death of his beloved wife, Almira, added a further burden in this grim year. He, none the less, remained vigorous; he continued to garden and write and tried to salvage his encumbered Manitoba farm.

The functions of the Department of Agriculture, which included patent and trademark registration, immigration and agriculture seem disparate, but for John Lowe and his contemporaries they were closely related. Canada was engaged in a struggle with other colonies

and the United States to attract labor. The Department viewed every cow as an advertisement as well as income for Canadian farmers. Statistics were used as a measure of the Dominion’s success and as ammunition in the immigration campaign. The volume of inventions measured the ingenuity of Canada’s entrepreneurial sector and provided new means to exploit resources.

John Lowe himself, not content with a steady civil service job, took part in the risk and opportunity. His personal and professional life became almost indistinguishable in the 1880’s. Lowe Farm was meant to be not only an investment, but also a model farm and a testing ground for farming innovations. Its early progress was even documented in the Department’s Annual Report.

John Lowe managed to outlive all of his children. At age 89 years he became ill and passed away on November 7, 1913, at his home in Ottawa. He was buried at the home of his friends the Chamberlins in Frehligsburg, Quebec.

John Lowe devoted all of his personal and professional resources to an integrated and national goal; the peopling and development of Canada, particularly Western Canada. He was responsible for the immigration process, acted as liaison between the Federal Government and the Russian delegations of Mennonites and outlined the responsibilities of the government toward Mennonite immigrants coming to Canada to settle.

Unfortunately for John Lowe, the time was not ripe for the realization of his schemes, but he should be remembered for the talent, energy and unshakable belief in the future of Canada. The Village of Lowe Farm will always be proud to bear his name.



Department of Agriculture,

IMMIGRATION BRANCH,

Ottawa, 23rd July 1873.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour under instruction of the Hon: the Minister of Agriculture, to state to you in reply to your letter of this day's date the following facts relating to advantages offered to settlers, and to the immunities afforded to Menonites, which are established by the Statute Law of Canada and by Orders of His Excellency the Governor General in Council, for the information of German Menonites having intention to emigrate to Canada via Hamburg.

1. An entire exemption from any military service is by law and Order in Council granted to the denomination of Christians called Menonites.

2. An Order in Council was passed

Messrs.
David Klaassen,
Jacob Peters
Heinrich Wiebe
Cornelius Toiv
Menonite Delegates from
Southern Russia.

passed on the 3rd March last to reserve eight Townships in the Province of Manitoba for free grants on the condition of settlement, as provided in the Dominion Lands Act, that is to say "any person who is the head of a family, or has attained the age of 21 years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated Dominion Lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof."

3. The said reserve of eight Townships is for the exclusive use of the Menonites, and the said free grants of one quarter section to consist of 160 acres each, as defined by the Act.

4. Should the Menonite settlement extend beyond the eight Townships set aside by the Order in Council of March 3rd last, other Townships will be in the same way reserved to meet the full requirements of Menonite immigration

immigration.

5. If next Spring the Menomite settlers in viewing the eight Townships set aside for their use, should prefer to exchange them for any other right unoccupied Townships, such exchange will be allowed.

6. In addition to the free grant of a $\frac{1}{4}$ section or 160 acres to every person over 21 years of age on the condition of settlement, the right to purchase the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ of the section at \$1⁰⁰ per acre is granted by law so as to complete the whole section of 640 acres, which is the largest quantity of land the Government will grant a Patent for to one person.

7. The settler will receive a Patent, for a free grant, after three years residence, in accordance with the terms of the Dominion Lands Act.

8. In the event of the death of the settler the lawful heirs, can claim the Patent for the Free Grant upon proof that settlement duties for three years have been performed.

9. From the moment of occupation, the settler acquires a "homestead right" in the land.

+ 10. The fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Menonites, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever; and the same privilege extends to the education of their children in schools.

+ 11. The privilege of affirming instead of making affidavits is afforded by law.

12. The Government of Canada will undertake to furnish Passenger Warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for Menonite families of good character, for the sum of \$30⁰⁰ per adult person over the age of 8 years; for persons under 8 years, half-price, or \$15⁰⁰; and for infants under one year \$3⁰⁰.

13. The Minister specially authorizes me to state that this arrangement as to price shall not be

be changed for the seasons 1874, 1875, and 1876.

14. I am further to state that if it is changed thereafter, the price shall not, up to the year 1882 exceed \$40⁰⁰ per adult and children in proportion, subject to the approval of Parliament.

15. The immigrants will be provided with provisions on the portion of the journey between Liverpool and Coltingwood; but during other portions of the journey they are to find their own provisions.

I have the honour to be,
Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant

John Lowe
Secretary of Department of Agriculture

EARLY HISTORY of LOWE'S FARM

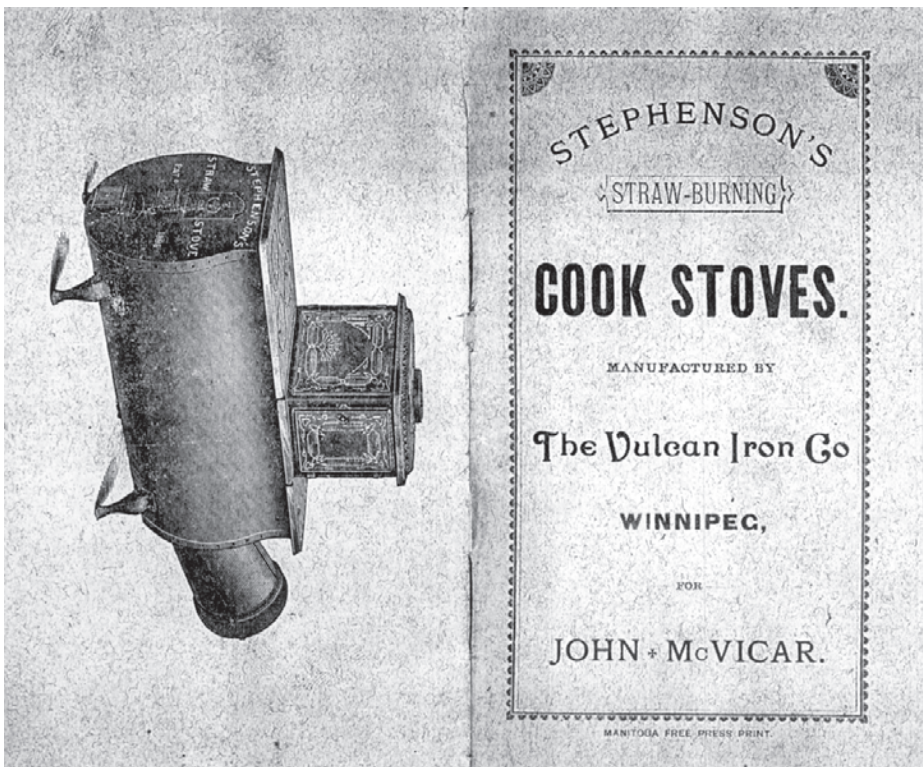


EARLY HISTORY OF LOWE'S FARM

Submitted by Ralph Groening



The John Lowe Farm house. (National Archives photo)



Stephenson's cook stove. (National Archives)

As secretary to the Minister of Agriculture, John Lowe had the opportunity to become familiar with the immigration of Mennonites to Manitoba. John Lowe wrote all the early letters to the Mennonite leaders. John Lowe and other officials in Ottawa observed the development of the Mennonite people with great interest. Perhaps it was the visit of the Governor General of Canada, Lord Dufferin, to the East Reserve in 1877, that gave Lowe the impetus to become involved in the development of southern Manitoba. These were boom times in Manitoba. Winnipeg had grown from a town of 750 people in 1872, to 5,000 by 1875. The problems with Louis Riel and his provisional government in the early 1870's had been temporarily solved by the use of troops. The development of western Canada had begun and John Lowe, being a man of vision, hoped to benefit from this opportunity.

Unfortunately, John Lowe had limited resources. However, his brother James offered to provide the finances required to develop John Lowe's dream. With the help of different agents, John Lowe began to purchase land in southern Manitoba. Two major parcels of land were purchased in the Rural Municipality of Morris. John Lowe acquired sections 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 34, 35 and 36 of township 6, range 2 west, located southeast of the present village of Sperling. A cart trail, used by early settlers travelling to Winnipeg from Nelsonville, went through this land.

The expansion of the railroad network in Manitoba had begun and John Lowe hoped that this property would be used to run a rail line to the west. Unfortunately, the rail line, when built, used a route a few miles north. John Lowe's disappointment was apparent in letters written to land agent and immigration specialist, William Hespeler.

Letters written to the municipal administrator in Morris in the mid 1880's complain about taxation policies. Apparently not all properties in the municipality were being taxed and yet the swampy lands in township 6 range 2 were being assessed. Without drainage, this land was of no value, John Lowe argued.

John Lowe also purchased half share in the village of Pembina Crossing and the town site of Clearwater in western Manitoba. The hope again, was that future settlement encouraged by the expansion of the railroad would add to the value of these properties. Unfortunately, the dollars spent on these properties was wasted, and by 1890 John Lowe had lost \$10,000 in the western Manitoba venture. Various river lots along the Red and in the towns of Morris and Emerson were also purchased at this time. None of these properties proved to be of any particular value to John Lowe

and his financial fortunes.

The major purchase of land by John Lowe was in the Lowe Farm area. By 1881, he owned sections 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 30, 31, 32, and 33 of township 4 range 1 and sections 23, 24, 25, 34, 35, and 36 of township 4 range 2. By 1881, John Lowe, with the help of his brother James, owned 15,000 acres in the R. M. of Morris bought at an average price of 68 cents an acre.

In 1879, John Lowe hired Colonel Asa Westover and his wife to coordinate the development of the acreage at Lowe Farm. Col. Westover was hired for a two-year term and was paid \$1,000 per year plus board and lodging costs. Joseph Bertrand was hired as farm manager and paid \$40 per month plus board and lodging for himself, his wife and two children. Mrs. Bertrand was to do all the housekeeping for the first year as part of the contract. Joseph Bertrand made a homestead on SE 6-5-1w and purchased SW 6-5-1w. This included all the land, which later became known as Lowe Farm. The development of the original Lowe Farm took place at N 31-4-1w a few hundred yards east of the yard owned today by Tony and Joyce Dyck. There is no evidence left of the original Lowe Farm.

In the spring of 1879, Col. Westover and Joseph Bertrand began the work of creating a farm site. Carpenters were hired to build a house. Granaries, a blacksmith shop and a barn were also built. Four hundred acres of prairie were broken in preparation for seeding the following year. The first year of work went well, and the plan was to keep a number of men on staff for the winter months to care for the animals and bring in hay that had been cut in the fall.

However, the winter of 1879 – 1880 was very cold and stormy. Mrs. Westover wrote in February, 1880, complaining that they have had 38 storm days to that point in the winter. In another letter she complains about the cold, stating that a cat had frozen in the house overnight, and that the mens' beards were freezing to the bed clothes overnight and creating considerable inconvenience.

The spring of 1880 arrived with great welcome. The farm home was completed. Originally, the house was intended to be constructed of brick from the factory in Morris, and some bricks were delivered to the farm site. However, the decision was made to construct all of the farm buildings with wood.

The house was a full two and a half story building, measuring 32 by 36 feet, with a 20 by 26-foot addition. Insurance records indicate its value in 1882 at \$6,000 and John Lowe wrote in a letter to his wealthy brother, James, that the accommodations at Lowe Farm would be very adequate for James and his wife. There is no indication that James Lowe, the investor, ever visited the farm.

Four outbuildings were also constructed. They measured 32 by 36 feet, 30 by 62 feet, 14 by 62 feet, and 20 by 32 feet. Their total value was listed at \$4,000 in 1882.

One hundred and seventy acres were seeded in 1880. Eighty acres of Red Fife wheat, 60 acres of oats, 20 acres of barley, 10 acres of buckwheat and half an acre of potatoes. All of the seeded acres were on the north half of 31-4-1w. However, 1880 was a very wet year. Only 100 acres were broken and there was general discouragement about farming in Manitoba.

Better drainage was essential and Col. Westover sent a request to John Lowe requesting a surveyor's level. Some drainage east along the second baseline road (present day highway 23) was completed in 1880.

John Lowe also wrote a letter to the municipality asking for money to build a bridge over the Lewis coulee near Morris. That winter, Joseph Bertrand was hired by the municipality to build a bridge. Despite the problems, the farm expanded. A new Watrous steam engine, four Osborne self-binding harvesters and two Osborne mowers were ordered. Mr. Massey of Brandford, Ontario, visited the farm to evaluate the success of his seeders and harrows. Twenty-five men worked on the farm during the summer of 1880. The average wage was \$20 per month. John Lowe visited the farm in October of 1880, and wrote his brother James about the disheartening struggle with the elements.

After the disastrous winter of 1879 – 1880 the decision was made to lay off all workers for the winter and hire a Mr. Minty to watch over the property. Despite his efforts, considerable theft of grain and household effects took place. Letters suggest farm workers from the previous year were responsible.

The year 1881 was crucial for the Lowe Farm. Four hundred and eighty three acres of crop were seeded and a reasonable return was essential. John Lowe now owed his brother James \$50,000. The farm had generated very few dollars and James had apparently lost confidence in the investment. There was one other factor. One of the original considerations in the creation of the farm was to give the wayward sons of John and James an opportunity to develop to their potential.

Willie S. Lowe, son of James, homesteaded NE 26-4-2w and John B. C. Lowe, son of John Lowe, homesteaded NE 27-4-2w. Very little mention is made of John B.C. Lowe, other than his homestead application.

Willie S. Lowe did make somewhat of an effort. Willie had broken 100 acres of NE 27-4-2w in 1879 with the help of four workers, and built a house on the NE 27-4-2w. Since this was his cousin's quarter, there is the possibility that the two men were working cooperatively.

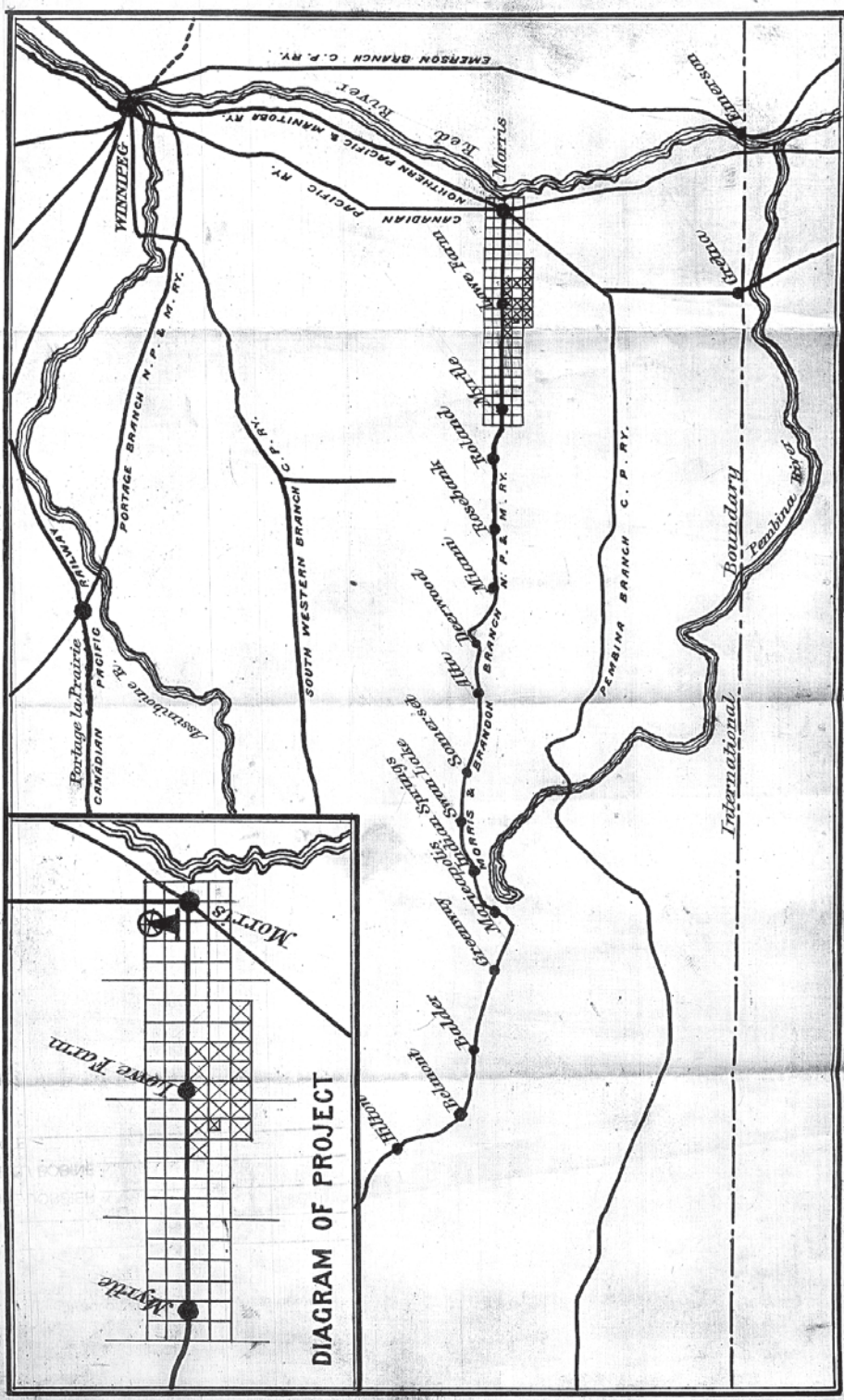
Willie complained bitterly in letters to his Uncle John about the management of the farm. Willie suggested that everything was in shambles at the farm and that John Lowe should come and see for himself. He concluded the letter by asking for three months of allowance. The money was apparently not always spent wisely and John Lowe in writing to his brother James, suggests that Willie will not learn farming in Winnipeg. Occasionally, Willie would bring his Winnipeg friends out to the farm for

some relaxation. This created problems for Mrs. Westover and the kitchen help. One maid complained that no self-respecting woman would work at the Lowe Farm because of Willie Lowe and his friends. Col. Westover established new farm rules for the 1881 season apparently in response to some of these problems. Willie was limited to the use of one room in the house and was not allowed to bring any of his friends to the farm. Strict limitations were also placed on the consumption of alcohol. The year 1881 was Willie S. Lowe's last attempt at farming in Manitoba.

The crop on NE 27-4-2w looked reasonable, but apparently pigweed took over the crop. The solution to this problem, apparently, was to mow the pigweed with it grew taller than the wheat. Timing was crucial and Willie happened to be in Winnipeg during this time and because of this, lost the crop. Willie injured his hand during the winter of 1881 and wrote a letter to his uncle, asking him to write the Interior minister requesting an extension of his homestead claim. In the spring of 1882, John Lowe purchased NE 27-4-2w for \$10 an acre, higher than the market value, in his opinion. James Lowe, with his son Willie now out of the farm, lost interest and requested a settlement on his brother's indebtedness.

In 1882, John Lowe paid out his brother with a \$60,000 loan, received from George Burland, a Montreal financier. Of this money, \$50,000 went to James and the other \$10,000 was used to continue operating the Lowe Farm. Total value of the farm buildings and equipment in 1882 was \$22,000. This, plus the 15,000 acres that John Lowe owned, still put the business in a close to break even position. Lowe had offered up the land at \$3 per acre the year previous, but had no takers.

John Lowe now decided to hire a new farm manager. William



This water project map was part of Lowe's plan for the "Lowe Farm Hydraulic Colonization Syndicate." (National Archives)

Stephenson, from Dundas, Ontario, was hired in February, 1882, for \$1,000 a month, plus \$500 for room and board. Stephenson was a mechanic and inventor and used his new position to help further the development of his patents.

Stephenson and his son worked with Col. Westover in 1882 and then took over the entire Lowe Farm in 1883. The Lowe Farm netted \$624 profit in 1882.

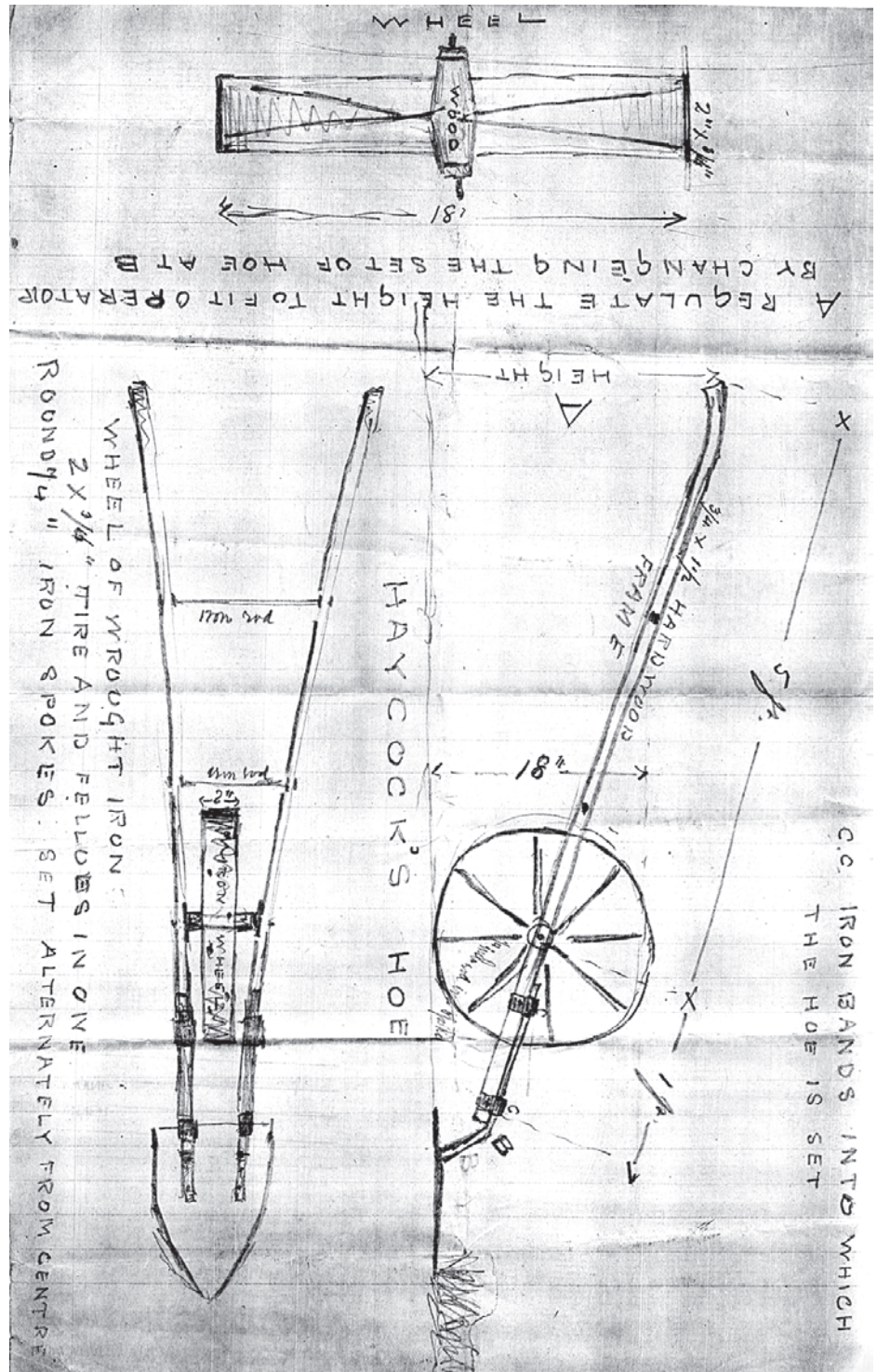
Stephenson introduced greater mechanization to the farm. Despite greater mechanical power, 1883 yielded very little profit because of an early frost. In 1884, Stephenson and his sons put in most of the crop themselves using hired help only for harvest, and managed to net \$1,050 for the farm.

In 1885, farm operations netted \$700, plus an additional \$1,200 earned custom harvesting. The year 1886 was a drought year, and again yielded very little profit. The wheat crop averaged 18 bushels an acre with a price of 52 cents a bushel.

John Lowe wrote a letter in the fall of 1887 to George Burland, describing the misfortunes on the farm, and indicating that he would be unable to pay the interest on the \$60,000 owed. There was reason for optimism, however. The R.M. of Morris had begun drainage projects in 1885 with a budget of \$1,600. Stephenson had also purchased a New Erie grader from the railroad for \$500 and this machine was used to create many of the early drainage canals. The machine scooped dirt from the ditch and deposited it by means of a rubber belt to the center of the road. This machine must have been used quite extensively in the Lowe Farm area, because it was described as the "Lowe Farm grader." The machine was often hired by the municipality at eight cents per cubic yard of dirt, or approximately \$18 a mile.

The province of Manitoba also became more active in land drainage after the federal government passed the "Better Terms Act" in 1885 which transferred back to the province all federally owned swamp lands after they had been drained. The purpose was to provide additional tax dollars to the province from the newly created lands.

Rumors of a rail line past the Lowe Farm proved to be accurate and by the fall of 1889, the Northern Pacific rail line from Morris to



Haycock's hoe diagrams found in John Lowe's personal papers. (National Archives.)

Hartney was completed. Grain could now be conveniently shipped to market and a trip to Winnipeg was now hardly more than an hour away. Twice daily service from Winnipeg to Lowe Farm was sometimes available. Some years, however, the train did not stop at Lowe Farm at all. In 1891, John Lowe wrote a letter to the deputy Post Master, asking why Myrtle and Roland were receiving daily mail and not Lowe Farm.

In 1891, William Stephenson and John Lowe began working on a partnership arrangement for managing the Lowe Farm. The decision was to lease out

the land either to Stephenson and his son John, or other interested individual. George Moyer, a Mennonite from Ontario, was given special consideration in the agreement for the purchase of 320 acres. The agreement spelled out charges for custom harvesting, and breaking sod for new settlers. Custom harvesting charges were \$1.25 per acre and breaking sod charges were \$1 an acre. Stephenson and Lowe were also very busy trying to negotiate a contract with the CPR for plowing fire guards, using Stephenson's new steam engine and plow. These discussions were never successful.

In 1891, John Lowe wrote a letter to Rudolf Diesel, the inventor of the newly patented engine, asking whether the diesel motor could possibly be used for a steam engine substitute. There is no indication whether a reply was ever received.

Farm operations changed during the 1890s at the Lowe Farm. Stephenson concentrated on his inventions and the production of flax. The Mennonites had been successful at growing flax as a first crop after the sod had been broken. The price varied between \$1 and \$1.50 during this period, and Stephenson claimed to be growing 20 to 25 bushels of the flax per acre.

Unfortunately for John Lowe, the entire agricultural venture in Manitoba, and particularly at Lowe Farm, proved in the end to be a huge financial drain. By 1894, Lowe owed George Burland \$140,000, plus \$14,000 interest, calculated at seven per cent. The entire debt was rewritten to be payable in full by July, 1900. It was time for one more venture in an attempt to save the business. John Lowe and William Stephenson formed the Lowe Farm Hydraulic Colonization Syndicate. The plan was to trench a five or six inch water line from the Red River at Morris to Lowe Farm or Myrtle, depending on the success of the share venture they were planning to offer. By purchasing two miles of land on either side of the present #23 highway, and offering these lands as improved with access to water, the company planned to entice new settlement into the area. This company was to offer shares in England as well as New York City. George Burland was offered stock in the company to cover part of John Lowe's debt. He wisely declined, and instead insisted on the land owned by John Lowe be collateral. By 1895, almost all of the Lowe property in Manitoba transferred to George Burland. The water project never materialized for lack of investor interest.

The year 1895 was a difficult year for John Lowe. He lost his job as deputy minister of agriculture at the age of 71, his wife Almira passed away, and his final business venture failed. John Lowe was unable to pay George Burland in July of 1900 and the land ownership transferred officially.

In 1899, the R.M. of Morris began listing Lowe Farm as a separate village in its tax books. This is the first official acknowledgement of Lowe Farm. Settlers moved into the village and surrounding area. During one of John Lowe's final trips to Lowe Farm in August, 1900, he

traveled to the Mennonite settlement near 27-4-2w and observed the new settlers working. The land had been purchased for \$10 an acre. These were the people who would develop the land to the potential that John Lowe had hoped for when he began accumulating property in 1878.

WILLIAM STEPHENSON

The history of the village of Lowe Farm dates back well over a century. During this time John Lowe, who was Deputy Minister of Agriculture in the Dominion Government, was buying large sections of land west of Morris and immediately north of the Mennonite West Reserve.

To manage his vast land holdings, Lowe employed the services of William Stephenson. Being mechanically inclined and possessing an inventive mind Stephenson put his talents to work and successfully built a single disc seed drill. The patent for this invention brought in considerable money returns for Stephenson. Along with the creation of the seed drill, Stephenson made attempts at improving the methods used in plowing and harvesting crops grown in the heavy soil around Lowe Farm. These devices however, proved too cumbersome to be of satisfactory use for purposes intended.

During his time in Lowe Farm, William Stephenson made use of two steam tractors he managed to obtain. One tractor, using five foot rims and an 80 horse power boiler, was a long unwieldy-looking steam tractor that could draw 16 bottoms without sinking too far below the surface. Stephenson's second tractor may as easily have been at home in the military, as on the farm, as it somewhat resembled a crude looking cannon. Both of these monsters, however, proved useful in helping to break up vast areas of virgin prairie soil around Lowe Farm. Unfortunately, the first of these tractors lay idle for many years and was eventually sold as scrap. The second tractor, however, rendered several more years of service in Saskatchewan.

During The winter of 1884 – 1885, Stephenson invented a straw burning stove, which was used to heat the house. William Stephenson worked in partnership with Vulcan Iron Company of Winnipeg to manufacture these stoves. Assembly of these stoves took place during the winter months on the Lowe Farm. Profits generated from this enterprise were used to help finance the development of his own steam engine.

William Stephenson, given a free hand, next put his inventive mind to work and constructed an attachment that cut the prairie grass ahead of the steam engine. The cut grass could then be used as fuel for the boiler. In an attempt to expedite harvesting, he placed a threshing machine on a platform built on to the side of the tractor. As this device moved along, field hands pitched the sheaves on to a platform near the cylinder where the sheaves were cut and fed into the machine. Traveling along a field, the grain was bagged then placed into a chute that let a certain number of these bags fall at given

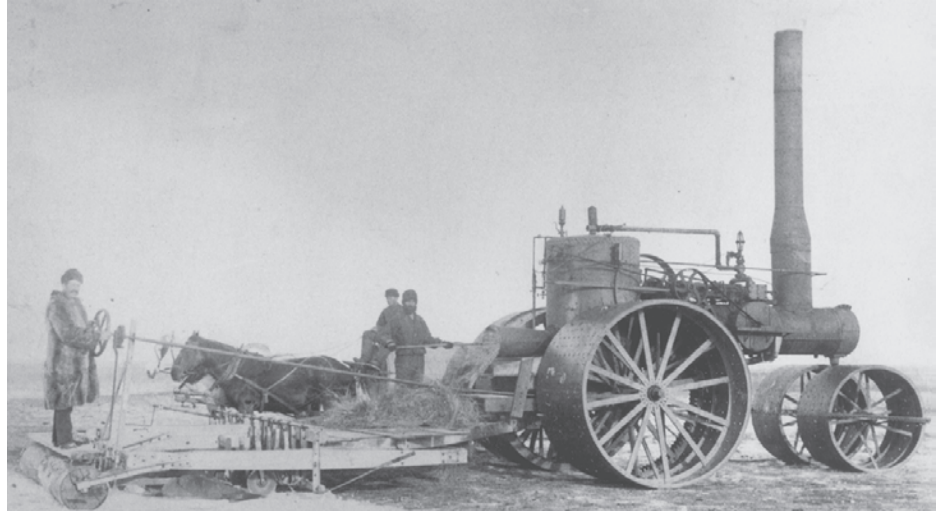
intervals to the ground. The grain filled bags were then placed onto an old fashioned wagon consisting of two parallel beams and no floor. There is, perhaps, some justification to the claim made that Lowe Farm became the first district to use a combine.

Besides managing John Lowe's farm, William Stephenson was buying land of his own. On July 26, 1882, he bought two quarter sections of land from a Joseph Bertrand who was also in the employ of John Lowe. This namely being the SE quarter and SW quarter of Section 6, part of which would become Lowe Farm. During the year 1897, William Stephenson built a home to the east of the unsurveyed town site.

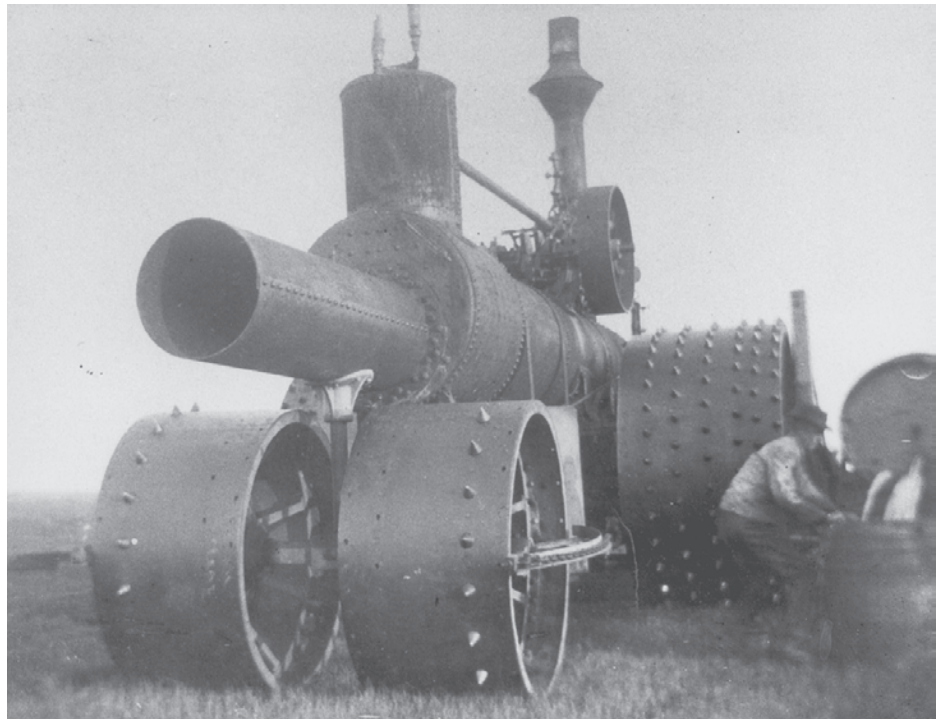
In 1898, perhaps wishing to diversify his equity, Stephenson engaged the services of Charles Clifton Chataway, Provincial Land Surveyor, to draw up plans for a town site. Twenty acres of the SW quarter of Section Six, divided into five blocks, would become incorporated into the plan. On June 16, 1898, at 1:40 p.m., the newly surveyed town site of Lowe Farm entered into the Winnipeg Land Titles Office as Plan Number 522. It would not be until 1899, however, that the village Lowe Farm would come into existence.

William Stephenson contemplating leaving Lowe Farm, began to liquefy his assets. The first part of liquidation involved the major portion of the town site. On October 24, 1898, the majority of the newly surveyed town site of Lowe Farm was sold to a Jacob Heppner. For the next couple of years, Stephenson continued to farm and maintain his home in Lowe Farm.

William Stephenson, by this time an elderly gentleman of 61, would make his final sale in Lowe Farm. On January 20, 1900, a business transaction carried out in Minneapolis, Minnesota, would see Stephenson sell the SE quarter of Section Six along with the E half of Block One in the SW quarter of



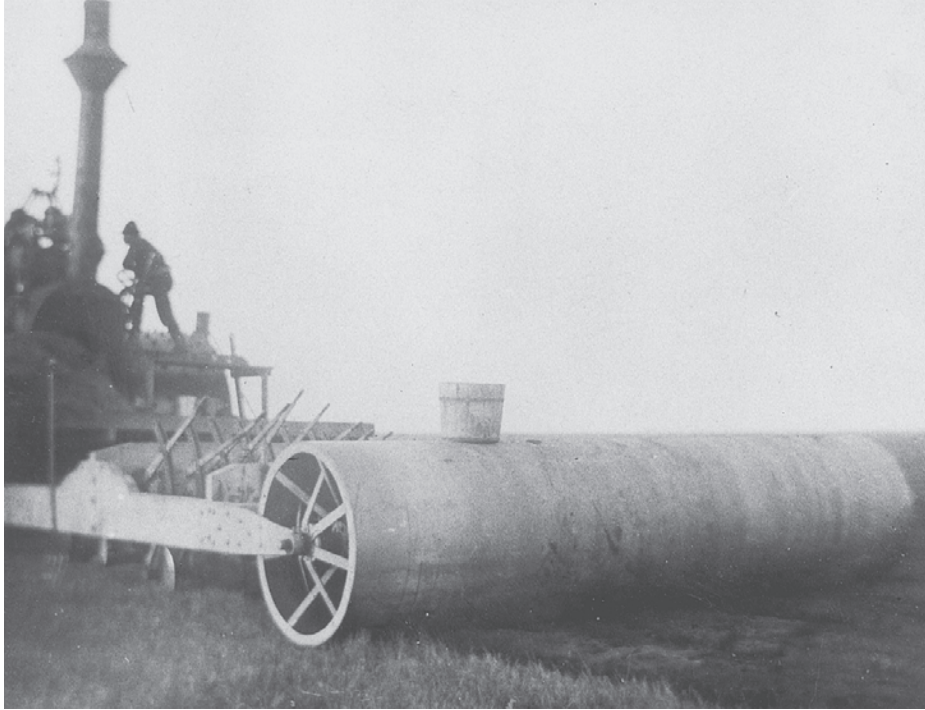
*Steam tractor used by William Stephenson on the Lowe Farm.
(Photo courtesy National Archives.)*



This 80 horse power steam engine had five foot rims on the wheels was used on the Lowe Farm. It could draw 16 bottoms and could traverse the wet low-lying land without sinking too far below the surface. (Photo courtesy National Archives.)

Section Six, to Jacob Wiens of Lowe Farm. At the time of this sale, William Stephenson was living in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis, working as a supervisor for a company called Monitor Manufacturing.

If John Lowe is recognized as the founder of Lowe Farm, William Stephenson should be remembered as the architect. Not only did he help manage and farm Lowe's vast holdings, he used his ingenuity to aid the advancement of farming. In a quiet, competent manner, he also orchestrated the events that led to the creation of Lowe Farm. William Stephenson, farm manager, inventor, and architect, is in every respect one of the true pioneers of Lowe Farm.



*William Stephenson used this early seed drill and packing roller on the Lowe Farm.
(photo courtesy National Archives.)*



*Teams of horses and oxen preparing for the day on William Stephenson's farm.
(photo courtesy National Archives.)*

LOWE FARM PIONEERS



LOWE FARM PIONEERS

JACOB J. & MARIA (BRAUN) HARDER

Submitted by Tina (J. H.) Peters



Jacob and Maria Harder, standing in front of Harder's Cafe in Lowe Farm, which Maria operated.



J. J. Harder family. Back row: Annie Wilkie, Jake Harder, Hattie Buckbee. Front row: Mary Giesbrecht, Helen Melbourne, Alice Wiebe, Tina Peters.

Our father, Jacob J. Harder, was born in 1882, and grew up in the Altona-Gretna area of Southern Manitoba. His parents came to Canada from the Ukraine, South Russia, as part of the Bergthal Colony that immigrated to Canada in 1874.

Our mother, Maria Braun, was born in 1885, near Plum Coulee. Her parents were also among those who immigrated to Canada in the 1870's. Both our parents had very little formal education, and that mainly in the German language. However, by the time they were of school age, they could read and converse quite fluently in the English language.

They were married in 1904 and had 10 children, one son and nine daughters. Two of the latter died in early childhood. Our parents were residents in the Rural Municipality of Morris from 1915 to 1943.

In his younger years, our dad was sometimes referred to as 'California Jake' because he had the distinction of having lived in the 'Sunshine State' for several months when his parents moved there for health reasons in 1896-1897. Later on he became better known as 'Little (Kleena) Harder' because of his size or as 'Trader (Toosha) Harder' because of his many and varied dealings in horses.

His career along this line began at an early age when, much against his father's wishes, he managed to buy, on credit, a well matched team of bays for the astronomical sum of \$350.00. By the time winter set in however, his wheeling and dealing had brought him to the point where he still owned a good team and had his \$350.00 debt paid off.

From that time on, until soon after the depression, his main interest in life revolved around dealing with horses. It would be impossible to estimate the number of horses that changed hands through his dealings in the intervening years. In fact, as we remember it, no crop on our farm was ever harvested with the same horses that had been used to put it in the previous spring.

His dealings took him over a large area, all the way from Gretna and Winkler in the south, to Morris, Rosenort, Sperling and Carman in the north.

His superb horsemanship made him an excellent driver of almost any type of horse, slow or fast, spirited or dull. Once he picked up the reins, the horse instinctively knew who was in control and responded accordingly.

There were times when our dad owned as many as 14 or 16 horses. At other times he was down to two or three. Since horses were his stock-in-trade, his fortunes must have been at an all time low when for a short time in 1915, he did not have a single horse to his name. By harvest time, however, he again owned three horses, one of which was killed in a freak accident in October of that year.

This was the state of affairs when my parents, with a family of six, arrived in Lowe Farm on November 6, 1915. The move was one from New Kennedy, a distance of only eight or nine miles, but at that time Lowe Farm was considered by some people in the south as being on the very outskirts of civilization. We took up residence in what we later referred to as the 'Spalding House', but which at that time was part of the Jacob Heppner estate.

Our Dad's business of dealing in horses lent itself very well to various means of earning a livelihood. There was the livery and dray business, several years of farming in the Gretna area, a ditch and road building contract at Rosenfeld in 1912, more years of farming and making of water ponds, to mention only a few. Since the water pond was an essential part of almost every farm west of the Red River, it might be said that Jacob Harder made his most important contribution to the farming community in this field of endeavor.

In the light of today's technology, the making of water ponds with horses was a major operation. It required at least five or six well-matched teams, four to six slushers, a good brush or hand plow, plus at least six to eight strong men skilled in handling both the teams and the slushers. It also required some knowledge of soil makeup, and judgement as to how to shape the slope and edges so as to be compatible with the dimensions and lasting properties of the finished water pond. With favorable weather and no unforeseen interruptions a fairly large pond could be completed in a week to ten days. At best it was a grueling task for both men and the horses, especially in the heat of midsummer or when rain made the sides very slippery as they grew steeper and steeper before the job was completed.

Consequently there was not too much competition in this field of endeavor so that in 1916, together with his brother-in-law, P.U. Braun, he made between 16 and 20 water ponds, most of them in Southern Manitoba and a few in the area around Rosenort.

In the spring of 1917, our parents had the opportunity to rent what was known as the 'Harkins Farm', one mile south of Lowe Farm. There was much conjuncture as to how 'Little Harder' intended to farm a half section of land when all he owned at the time of take-over on April 1, was six horses and practically no implements. By the time seeding was completed, however, he owned a full compliment of 13 horses, enjoyed a full time hired man, and proceeded to make at least five or six water ponds between seeding and harvest. Besides this, he was working 60 acres of summer fallow and putting up some feed for the winter. Being able to lease the 'Harkins Farm' for another term he continued to make water ponds, digging another four or five before freeze up which came in late November that year. Earlier that fall he had purchased a 160 acre farm in the Rose Farm District, seven miles southwest of Lowe Farm. Due to the transactions being made after October 1, the deadline for notice of evacuation, it was necessary to

take up residence in a small house in town for the winter months. Unfortunately, during this time, the old house on the newly acquired farm was destroyed by fire, making it necessary to construct some sort of dwelling for the family before April 1. A few lean-tos were added to an almost new 12 by 16 foot granary and this constituted our home for the next 16 years. This was on the SW 1/4 of Section 15-4-2w in the Rural Municipality of Morris.

Some fairly prosperous years followed, but mostly our parents experienced the ups and downs of farming like everyone else. Good crops, bad crops, grasshoppers, rust, depression prices and all the rest.

The family grew up, got married, or left home to make a living elsewhere so that in 1934 our parents gave up the farm and built a small home in town. Dad still kept a few horses with which to ply what little trade there was left. Mother took up dressmaking, which gave her a sense of achievement, and literally speaking, some 'pin money' of her own.

In good times or bad, Mother was known for her pleasant manner and well dressed appearance and Father was her greatest admirer! She never owned a 'store bought' dress. She did all the sewing for herself and her family. She was also a born cook, a trait and talent that stood her in good stead when for a short time (1939-1941) they operated what came to known as 'Harders Cafe' in Lowe Farm.

Those were the war years, and Dad decided there was more money to be made in a war industry job. Consequently, they moved to the city in 1943. Mother continued with her dressmaking while Dad worked in the Cordite Plant, for the Winnipeg Sanitation Department, and various construction firms.

After Dad's age made him ineligible for employment, he took to selling papers at various places along Portage Avenue. On his better days, which became fewer and fewer as his advancing years and progressive illness took their toll, he gave it his best.

Dad's was not a nature that could endure idleness; he enjoyed being with people and when his hearing became impaired to the point where conversation became difficult, he was often a very lonely man, especially after Mother passed away in 1958. Dad passed away early in 1963.

NOCOLAI J. & ANNA HEIDE

Submitted by Justina Funk

Nicolai J. Heide was born in the Horndean district in April 1896. He married Anna Goertzen of Morden in 1919 in the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church.

Nicolai had left his farm home in 1916 to begin a teaching career. In those days it was possible to obtain a position as teacher with only a Grade VIII standing. He taught in the Heabert School for two years, then in the St. Peters School for two years. He was noted for having

good discipline in school. After teaching in Steinfeld for several months in the 1920-1921 school term, Nocolai was asked to change schools with Mrs. A. H. Wiebe who was teaching at Kronsweide at that time. It was felt that a man of his standards would qualify to teach the 21 students in the Kronsweide private school.



N. J. and Anna Heide.

The school situation was quite unsettled in Kronsweide at that time. There were actually two separate school buildings in the district; the private school where German was the main language taught, and the public school. It was only when the government school officials became very insistent that the parents would send their children to the public school. As soon as the pressure eased somewhat the children would again attend the private school. In the spring term of 1921 the situation was such that the children changed back and forth frequently between the public and private schools. In the summer of 1921 the Heides took up residence in Lowe Farm and Nocolai began his career as postmaster as an apprentice of A. A. Giesbrecht who was the official postmaster at that time. In May of 1924, he was appointed as official postmaster and served in this capacity until September, 1958.

Nocolai took an active part in many community activities including the programs held every other Sunday in school, originally sponsored by a Literary Society which later became known as the "Christlicher Jugend Verein zu Lowe Farm."

A memorable experience for Nocolai was in 1959, when he spent one month visiting his daughter Louella in Toronto. The Queen and Prince Philip were visiting Ottawa at that time and Nocolai, whose son Henry had been killed while on active duty, was invited as an honorary witness to laying of the wreath for the victims of the war.

He was also interested in wood work and made a good deal of his furniture from scraps. He enjoyed reading and putting together Jig-saw puzzles. Nocolai died in September, 1983.

Nocolai and Anna were the parents of 10 children. Henry, who served in the Air Force, was killed in action; Louella, John, Annie (Sagert), Nick, Eleanor (Schlick), and Frank, all live in Winnipeg; Sara (Derewianchuk) lives in Morris; Jacob lives in The Pas and George is deceased.

Heides' former home in Lowe Farm is the only building in the business section remaining of the buildings dating back to the early 1920's with the exception of Derksens' Store (which has since been rebuilt and renovated).

DIEDRICH HEPPNER

Submitted by Mary J. Loewen

Diedrich Heppner was born on Jan. 5, 1889, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Hoepfner on a farm South of Plum Coulee. His parents were immigrants from Minnesota. They left the farm and moved to Plum Coulee where Mr. Hoepfner had a general store in partnership with Hiebert and Kenty. Here young Diedrich was introduced to business by the time he was tall enough to look over the counter.

Education was of prime interest to the Hoepfners and Diedrich attended the M.E.I of Gretna. Later he became a director of the M.E.I. at Altona, where he met his future wife, Susan E. Loewen, daughter of John J. and Anna Loewen of Winkler.

The elder Hoepfner sold his share of the store and bought Lowe's farm, west of Morris. As people moved in nearby, lots were sold along the Canadian National Railway tracks, giving the town its long, narrow profile. The name came from the fact that they lived on Lowe's Farm.

Diedrich Heppner was very fond of children, and had time for his nephews and nieces and in-laws, who were much younger than his wife. He initiated his nephews into the business he built up and taught them hard work and good management. He also served on the school board for many years and paid his taxes faithfully so that the children of Lowe Farm got free books and supplies, which was not the case in other schools in the days of the Depression. Susan Heppner also liked children and helped out in her profession whenever the teachers were in short supply or ill.

Diedrich was connected with church work and served for many years as one of three trustees of the Berghthaler Mennonite Church. During the final years of the struggling Waisenamt, (Orphan's administration - a Sommerfeld church organization which helped orphans and the elderly with financial management) when it was already moving toward bankruptcy, the ministerial of the church asked Diedrich and several other business men to serve as advisors to save the institute. He was also asked to come into the finance committee of the Berghthaler Church during that period. They found his advice to be sound and well thought out.



Photo taken from Diedrich Heppner's yard, 1929.

In the many years he served as a trustee on the Lowe Farm School Board he did much to shape the education of the community. When all the schools around Lowe Farm arranged to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Canada in 1927 he was the Master of Ceremonies of the first part of the program. It had been pouring rain during the night and it looked as though there would be no celebration. Diedrich's remarks about two rains that day was appreciated by the children. He said, "One rain fell from the clouds and the other rain came from the eyes of the children."

Diedrich was active in public life for many years. He served as a councillor of the Municipality and as reeve for many years. During the flood of 1950, he saw that even those who refused to leave their flooded farms were cared for, even though riding a small boat on the widened Red River was very risky in the high winds. People and animals were rescued and brought to Lowe Farm and other dry places. He also managed the Red River Flood Office in Morris to see that the rebuilding could go forward.

In spite of all his community, school and business activities he also managed the farm. Diedrich had not only horses but also a pair of strong mules to plow the gumbo. In the beginning he used part of his barn for his business and started fuel distribution to help the farmers. The 1929 stock market crash and general depression hit him very hard. H. J. Gerbrandt recalls Diedrich telling his father that he would be willing to trade his four quarters for one if his debts could go along with the trade. However big his own problems were, he was very active during that time to save other people from going bankrupt. He worked with various farm credit corporations and government departments which he used to help farmers stay away from bankruptcy.

H. J. Gerbrandt says, "I recall how my father had his own debts and those for whom he co-signed (securities). With the collapse of the Waisenamt and the depression, the people began to collect. About nine o'clock one evening the sheriff came from Morden to tell us that our farm would be seized. Next day my father went to see Mr. Heppner. It was not long before Mr. Heppner had worked through one of his organizations to finance the farm. As better years came along my father was able to liquidate his debts."

There were many other people in the Lowe Farm community who owed their livelihood and the farms they kept during the Depression years to Diedrich's intervention on their behalf. It took until 1947 before Diedrich paid the last of his Buergschuld (securities for others) but he paid to the last penny. He never went through the debt adjustment board but had to mortgage his own farm many times. However, he let people run up bills for their fuel, and many unpaid bills were burned after his death.

Diedrich was a friend to people and trusted them to be as honest and above-board as he himself was. It will never be known how many he helped

through small loans. When money was hard to come by and someone needed a suit to join church or be married, many would go to him. He would pull out the required amount and not ask for a promissory note. Some were appreciative of his trust and kept it by repaying him when they had the means. Others thought he was an easy mark and used him until he found his trust was utterly misplaced when he tried to collect or refused to help any longer.

Whenever there was a need to get the doctor or to take a patient to hospital it was considered a natural thing that the "Father of Lowe Farm" should be ready. As a wedding gift from the Loewens the Heppners received a car, so he used this car as a mission vehicle in the service of others many times.

Diedrich was also the notary public for a number of years and was always considered to be a man who knew the law and could give sound advice. One story he liked to tell was this one: In his employ was a man by the name of Hoepfner. One day a man came in and asked for Heppner. The employee asked, "Which one do you want?"

"The wise one", was the terse reply.

Even after his health was failing, he was busy intervening for others. Mr. Gerbrandt reminisces, "My two younger brothers had bought land through an agency which had not done its homework to clear the titles. They had invested \$1,000 and then discovered that the land was to be sold on a certain date. My father went with his two sons to Winnipeg to try to negotiate a new deal with this man, who was now going to sell the same land he had sold to them. Once more Diedrich was brought into the picture in rather a strange way. My father and my two younger brothers were standing on Portage Avenue after having seen the lawyer and having failed to persuade him not to sell that land.

Accidentally Diedrich drove by, stopped and asked, 'Why do you stand there as 'aufyereyente Hones' (rained on roosters)?' They got into the car and told him what had happened. Diedrich said they would go back and see this man. After explanations were given, Diedrich pulled a cheque book out of his pocket, asked the man what he wanted for the two quarters, and then bought them on the spot for cash. He told my brothers that he would settle with them later. He had shared with them that he had another business deal going which would give him the \$1,000, which they had lost in the deal. In the end this saved them the farm and I am told he did not lose on the deal."

He could also be sarcastic on occasion. One morning someone asked him if he had been in church on Sunday morning. His answer was, "No, I couldn't go. I had to keep the garage open to service the cars of all the other Christians who wanted to go on trips on Sunday."

Diedrich was a shrewd administrator in municipal work. The Rural Municipality of Morris is benefiting to this day from programs he initiated. When discussing municipal affairs with the mayor of Winkler one time, the mayor mentioned that he had problems between the demands of strong church groups and the rest of the community. When asked if he had the same problem, Diedrich replied, "To a lesser extent, but one thing you have to bear in mind; are you running a church or are you running a town?"

Heppner helped many Lowe Farm people get established in businesses, especially construction and quite a number of them turned out to be very successful.

Every community needs a Heppner. Unfortunately they don't all have them, and it is only once in a long, long time that one comes along.

SUSAN HEPPNER



Susan Heppner and Mrs. Warkentin digging potatoes in Heppner's garden, 1930.

Susan Heppner, nee Loewen, came to Lowe Farm in the year 1917 as the bride of Diedrich Heppner. What was the background of this tall blue-eyed, brown-haired woman who came to be the mistress of the big farmhouse on the north side of the village?

Susan E. Loewen was born in Altona, October 28, 1895, the oldest child of John J. and Anna Loewen. Her father sold machinery to the progressive farmers in the area. She attended the local school. Next she had a year of school in Regina where the family moved so that the father could increase his business opportunities. One memento Susan brought back to Manitoba was this school rhyme which she taught her younger siblings:

*"Brandt, Brandt is a great big giant
He goes to church on Sundays
He prays the Lord to give him strength
To whip the kids on Mondays."*

The family returned to Altona and in 1905 moved to Winkler where Susan completed the elementary grades. She attended the Mennonite Educational Institute, a private Mennonite boarding school in Altona where music, drama and literary evenings aroused much interest among young people. She developed ability in piano playing, singing and reciting in this school.

After completing Grade X, it was necessary to go to the teacher training center at Morden for a few months, where the inspectors trained the teachers for their districts. When qualified, Susan accepted the country school at Haskett. Her next position was in Altona, where she met her future husband who was attending the neighboring school.

In those days married teachers were not permitted to teach, so her desire to teach found satisfaction in substituting when no teacher was available. This she did at Lowe Farm and at the Mennonite Educational Institute. Susan also gave organ lessons to children. She fostered education by taking students as boarders during the winter months when they could not go home to their families on the farm. I'm certain no homework was neglected under her watchful eye.

She also expressed love of music by singing. When she had to bring the cows home to milk, she would raise her voice in song and her husband could tell how she was feeling by the songs she sang, even though he was half a mile away in the field.

In the home, strangers and friends were always welcomed. Diedrich Heppner was on friendly terms with many people, so open house was the policy followed in that home.

When new immigrants arrived in the country, some of them found employment there. Here Susan taught them English while Diedrich taught Canadian ways of farming. It was hard work to feed the large threshing gangs, when all the food had to be prepared at home, baking, canning and cooking for 10 or 12 men with enormous appetites who relished five meals a day that had to be served.

Hospitality was extended to strangers as well as friends and relatives. One stormy November day Diedrich Heppner sent his helpers out on the highway to bring in stranded motorists and Susan had to prepare the house to receive them. (There was no hotel or motor inn, in Lowe Farm). That night every bed was occupied as eight extra people spent the night while the storm raged outdoors. Not until the snowplows came through the next day could they return to their homes in Roland and Winkler.

Susan was very loyal to the monarchy and took great delight in attending ceremonies for King George and Queen Elizabeth in 1939 in Winnipeg. When Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip toured Canada, she faithfully viewed their progress across the country on TV, and invited others who had no TV to come and watch also.

After Diedrich Heppner became ill, most of her time was spent at home. After her husband's death, she spent more time at her blind brother's bedside. He was ill in Winnipeg, and she went to be there with him.

In March, 1961, she went to help the ladies with their supper. She returned to Winnipeg and visited her brother on Monday, but on Tuesday morning a call came for her to be with her Lord.

JOHN & GERTRUDE (HEPPNER) MARTENS

Submitted by

Betty (Martens) Hinkema for Lena St. Vincent

My Grandparents, John and Gertrude Martens, were one of the pioneering couples who settled in Lowe Farm. They helped the founding fathers make it what is today. John Martens came to Lowe Farm in 1911 as a single man, and set up a blacksmith shop. Besides working as a blacksmith he also built cutters, bobsleighs and, for a short while, wooden coffins. In 1913 he married Gertrude Heppner, and they proceeded to raise a family of five sons and one daughter, who were all born and educated in Lowe Farm.

Grandfather tried his hand at many different businesses. He sharpened ploughs, machined new parts, and did some welding. For a short while, he was involved in selling cordwood, flour and even some groceries. If he needed an extra pair of hands, Grandma was there to

help him, becoming quite adept at repairing car upholstery.

In 1934, the businessmen of the community persuaded grandfather to run a plant that would provide electric power to the town of Lowe Farm. Businesses were supplied first, and then wires were strung to the homes that had been wired by Pete, one of the Martens sons, and A. B. Schroeder. This power plant was usually started by my Grandmother at 7:00 a.m. and run until midnight. We still remember stories of how the lights would be blinked off and on to warn people that the power would soon be turned off. This method of supplying electrical power continued until April 1946, when Manitoba Hydro took over.

During World War II the three eldest sons, Pete, Frank and Johnny enlisted in the service with Pete and Frank serving overseas. The other two boys, Jake and Henry, were too young to enlist, so they stayed behind to complete schooling and help their father with the business. Lena, the only daughter, was studying at Normal School and then teaching in Lowe Farm and St. Hebert. Grandma used her knitting skills to help the Red Cross and helped bake fruit cakes, which were sent to the boys overseas.

After the war, the boys came home with new mechanical skills, so another shop was built and the Lowe Farm Garage was established. Their reputation as good mechanics was well known. Frank stayed with his father in the blacksmith shop and together they ran the business until grandfather passed away in 1953.

In 1951, with financial support from the Rural Municipality of Morris, the Martens brothers converted a Ford truck into a fire truck by adding a 750 gallon water tank. In the same year, a brick building was built to house and warm the fire truck. Frank took over the job of Fire Chief in which capacity he served until 1969. The Volunteer Fire Department attended several large fires such as the Pool Elevator in 1953, but also saved some homes from being ignited by chimney fires. The fire siren was tested everyday at noon, but when it rang at night it had an ominous sound, alerting the volunteers to the fact that they were needed.

In the late 1950's, the Martens children slowly left Lowe Farm. Lena got married in 1955 and moved to Ontario where she lived for five years before moving to St. Pierre, Manitoba. She currently lives in Steinbach. Pete followed her to Ontario in 1960, moving again to British Columbia and returning to Winnipeg where he died in 1990. Johnny moved to Winnipeg where he worked for Stern Trucks until his retirement. He passed away in 1996, the same year as his brother Jake. Jake had moved to Stonewall where he worked for Bristol Aerospace. Frank stayed in the blacksmith/machine shop until 1969, serving the local farmers and bridge gangs with fast, efficient repairs and manufacturing of equipment. He passed away in 1998.

Grandma stayed in her house in Lowe Farm where

she took in different boarders, planted a huge garden every year and make the best "kompst borscht" ever! She left her grandchildren with a strong work ethic and memories of family gatherings, hand knit sweaters and a listening ear. She passed away in 1962. Even though there are no more of the Martens clan living in Lowe Farm, we wish you well in your Centennial year. We know it will continue to be a safe and happy place to raise your families

A tribute from the family of John Martens

We, the members of the John H. Martens family, would like to pay a tribute to our parents. As pioneers go, they did not start the village of Lowe Farm, but, in their own particular way they helped make it what it is.

Father, who came from a farm close to the area known as Rosenbach (between Plum Coulee and Winkler), decided that the farm was not for him. What he enjoyed doing was tinkering around with tools, repairing machinery, and the like. So he decided to venture forth, and Lowe Farm was the extent of his ventures.

Here, in around 1911-1912, he set up what is commonly referred to as a blacksmith shop. Being unmarried he stayed with the Jacob Wiens family, half a mile north of town. However, a bachelor's life was not for him, so in October of 1913 he married and brought his young bride out to Lowe Farm.

He could not very well board with a family, so a house was rented which served partly as a residence and also as a shop. This was the house later occupied by Abram Klassen and his mother. Just how long they stayed here is not known. The next house was bought and was situated about a block west of there. It was purchased from Cornelius Gerbrandt.

A family of six, five sons, and one daughter were born in one or the other of these houses.

Father started off blacksmithing, but, as he was also handy in woodworking, he was called on to make cutters and bobsleighs. During the influenza epidemic after World War I he made coffins because a purchased coffin was unheard of in those days. Old-timers had him make coffins for their dead till customs changed and more people went to undertaking establishments.

JACOB J. REIMER & FAMILY

*Originally submitted by
Wm. Friesen*



*Kathrina Reimer and her daughter
Hanna Reimer with granddaughter,
Kathleen.*

Jacob J. Reimer was born June 1, 1877, in the village of Hochfeld, about 12 miles east of Niverville, Manitoba. A year or two before this event his parents, Jacob Reimers, had emigrated from the Bergthal colony in Russia to Canada. A few years later they moved to the West Reserve and settled in Schonhorst, northeast of Gretna, which later became part of the School District of Silberfeld. The early years were extremely hard for the Mennonite pioneers and young Jacob, being the eldest son, was needed at home most of the year. Conse-

quently he got very little schooling.

On July 5, 1898 Jacob married Katherina Wiens from the neighboring district of Edenburg. In the fall of 1899, her father, Jacob Wiens, bought two quarters formerly owned by Wm. Stephenson, SE 1/4 of Sec. 6 and SW 1/4 of Sec. 5, which lay just east of the newly surveyed site of Lowe Farm, and moved into the old Stephenson house.



*Kathleen and Bruce Reimer,
Hanna's children.*



Tina and Bill Friesen.



Bill and Tina Friesen with their children, Thelma, Irene and Richard in 1940.

In time his failing health made it impossible for Jacob Wiens to look after the farm himself and the Jacob Reimers moved to Lowe Farm to live with the Wiens family and look after the farm. After Jacob's death, Reimers bought the land and continued to farm it.

In addition to farming Jacob went into partnership with his brother-in-law, Peter Abrams, husband of Mrs. Reimer's younger sister Helena, and operated a general store under the firm name of Reimer and Abrams. In 1910 the partnership was dissolved. Peter kept the store and Jacob concentrated on farming.



(l - r) Jacob W. Reimer, Tina (Bill) Friesen, Hanna Reimer and Henry Reimer.



Bill and Tina Friesen with their children, Thelma, Irene and Richard.

In 1912, he rented the farm to Henry Friesen and moved to Foam Lake, Saskatchewan., where he and his wife's brother, Henry Wiens, built a mill and operated it for a number of years. Wiens was the engineer and Reimer the miller. The business thrived for a time but in the final years of World War I various government restrictions and regulations made the going hard. Jacob also found that constant exposure to the dust of the mill was beginning to have an adverse effect on his health. In March of 1919, he moved back to his old home in Lowe Farm and took up farming again. He went back to Foam Lake with his son to operate the mill one winter and then sold it to Klaas Barkman of Steinbach. He farmed the two quarters himself for several years and then rented them in turn to Peter Loewen, Henry Giesbrecht, his son Henry, and his son-in-law, Jac. D. Reimer.

The Reimers continued to live in the old farmhouse until the time of his death in December, 1949. After her husband's death, Katherina Reimer, who was an invalid by this time, stayed with her daughter Hannah for a while, then with Mrs. Peter S. Braun of Lowe Farm and spent her last years in the Bethania Nursing Home. She died December 14, 1955.

The children of Jacob Reimer:

Jacob got his education at the public schools of Lowe Farm and Foam Lake. He helped his father in the mill and on the farm. In 1922, he married Martha Mudro (foster daughter of Rev. J. J. Hooges of the Bloomfield district). After their marriage he worked in the mill for Mr. Barkman a short period and then went into farming. With the help of his father they purchased a farm in the Kronsweide district and farmed it until they retired. On this farm their children grew up, receiving their elementary education in the Kronsweide School. Jacob W. died in 1985. His wife, Martha, died in 1977.

Henry followed up his elementary education with several years' attendance at the M.E.I. in Altona and then taught school for two years on permit. However, his major interest lay in business, for which he had gained some experience clerking in Lowe Farm before he went teaching. In 1926, he married Marie Siemens of Schonthal. With the help of Father Reimer they built and stocked a store on Lot One of Block Three and started storekeeping. For a time they lived in a three-room suite attached to the store building. Later they built a substantial home on the south end of what was then part of the family farm. His chief helpers in the store during the early years were his father and his sister Tina. In time he added a small lumber business to the store. In the thirties he sold his store building and bought J. J. Schroeder's garage which he remodeled to serve as a general store and the International Harvester Company agency. About this time he became interested in farming, rented his father's two quarters and bought one of his own. His chief clerk John Harder served as manager of the store while he conducted the farming operation. He was experimentally inclined and tried his hand in a small way at raising crops that had not previously been tried in Lowe Farm. In 1946 he moved to British Columbia, where he carried on various activities in turn and finally ended up with a lumber yard, which he operated successfully for many years and sold to his son when he retired. Henry passed away in 1981 and Marie passed away in 1995.

Tina also received her elementary education in Lowe Farm and Foam Lake, and attended the Altona M.E.I. for a few years. When the high school was opened in Lowe Farm she helped to bring the number of prospective students up to ten, the minimum required to open the school. In 1931 she married Wm. Friesen, who was teaching in Lowe Farm at the time. From 1932 - 1934 she and her husband operated a small store in Kane. After living the life of a teacher's wife in various towns and rural school districts she came back to Lowe Farm in 1946. In 1949, the Friesens moved to Eriksdale where he assumed the duties of school inspector. Wm. Friesen is deceased and Tina, at 95 years of age, lives in Stonewall.

Johannah received all of her high school and part of her elementary education in Lowe Farm. She went to Normal School in Winnipeg and started teaching. She taught at Flowery Bank, Winkler, and for a little more than three years in Lowe Farm. She married Jacob D. Reimer in 1940, moved back to Timmins for a while where he worked in the mines and then came back to Lowe Farm to farm the home farm. In 1956 they moved to British Columbia where she went back to teaching until she retired on June 30, 1974. Johannah died in 1994 and Jacob died in 1999.

The Reimer family made many contributions to the economic, social, educational and spiritual life of the Lowe Farm Community.

Jacob Reimer, senior, was a quiet man who served

his family and the community well. He was a constant supporter of the cause of church and school. After his early retirement his role was that of advisor and helper. When Jacob needed help on the farm in spring or fall he was there to give it. When Henry needed help in the store he could be depended upon to give it. He provided labor and financial support at the time of the building, and, later, the renovation of the church. His religion was a quiet one but it was sincere and deep. His home was always a place for ministers to stay when their itinerary for regular or special services brought them to Lowe Farm, and in the horse and buggy days he made sure that their horses were well looked after.

His wife Katherine was a good homemaker, a good mother to her children and a vigorous supporting member of the community. She had an active intelligence and a quick wit. She was very strongly imbued with the ancient Mennonite virtue of hospitality. No one who came to her door went away hungry, be it a begging tramp, a neighbor, or a visitor from out of town. Her home was a home away from home for the ministers who came to preach and teach in Lowe Farm, and for their wives when they accompanied their husbands. The quality of her cooking and baking was well known. She always kept a large garden. When her children demurred at the extra labor involved she reminded them of needy families in the district with many mouths to feed who would be able to put any surplus potatoes or other vegetables to good use. She practiced economy at all times and had an especial abhorrence of waste, whether it be of money, goods, or time.

The Reimer sons and daughters and their helpmates usually tried to do their share in contributing usefully to the life of the community while they lived in it. Although Jacob Reimers did not live in the district, they attended and supported the Lowe Farm church for many years. Their children later sang in the choir and participated in other church activities. For a time Jacob III conducted the choir.



Jacob and Katherine Wiens and family.



Jacob and Katherine Wiens.

Henry had a long record of community service. As young lads, he and Jake were members of the local ball team. In business he helped people with credit when times were hard. When the co-op movement began he played an important part in helping it get on its feet. He also helped to get the Credit Union started. In the year of the Literary and Debating Society he was a hard working member of the Executive. He served for a number of years as school trustee, some of them as Chairman of the Board. His wife, Marie, was always a solid support to her husband and an active member of the community, especially in the work of the Church Women's group.

Tina was an active participant in the work of the church and young people's groups in the years before the church was built and she took her turn as church organist before and after it was built. She sang in the choir when there was one and occasionally sang duets with her sister. She took part in the activities of the Literary and Debating Society and also in the dramatic entertainment later directed by Mrs. (Bourgeois) Streight. After returning to Lowe Farm in 1946 she helped to organize a Women's Institute, which carried on many years of successful and useful activities in the community. As wife of the Principal of the school she had many duties that were a service to the community or that helped her husband to serve the community, which she carried out faithfully.

Hannah, more fully than her sister or brothers, was a product of Lowe Farm. She served the community in many ways. She sang in the choir, played the organ in the church, and conducted the choir for a number of years. She worked hard in the Women's Institute when such work needed, as for example, in the time of the 1950 flood. She taught school from 1937-1940 and participated in many other activities relating to school and community. Her husband, J. D. Reimer, was active in the Consumer Co-op, in the Credit Union, and in the Farmers' Union. His somewhat unusual reports on various conferences, which he was delegated to attend, used to attract considerable interest.



Jacob W. Reimer and Martha on their wedding day.



Henry W. and Marie Reimer.



Henry W. and Marie Reimer with Donald and June.

JACOB WIEBE (J. W.) & MARIA (BANMAN) WIENS

Submitted by Justina B. Wiens



Jacob and Maria Wiens



J.W. Wiens

Perhaps no other pioneer settler of Lowe Farm would be more proud and thrilled to see the present co-operative establishments built along Main Street today, than the late Jacob Wiebe Wiens, the man with a vision greater than his community real-



The J.W. Wiens house on Main Street.

ized. His ready quote would be, "Do you see, men, what can be done when we pool our ideas, interests and resources to work for the good of all?" as he pushed his battered hat back revealing a shock of silver-gray hair, flashing brown eyes and a satisfied smile on his face.

Jacob W. Wiens was the only child born to Peter and Justina (Wiebe) Wiens in the village of Schonsee in the East Reserve on February 5, 1879.

He did not relate many stories of his unhappy childhood. Being an optimist he would much more prefer discussing and planning for a happy future. But he did mention being fatherless at the early age of five and by the age of twelve his stepfather hired him to the neighbors nearby. This child laborer helped supply the 'bread and butter' to a fast growing family at home. Consequently his formal schooling was ended and he was educated for the adult world, 'learning by doing'.

Besides farming, he learned trades such as woodworking, building, blacksmithing and later on the work of machinist. One of his favorite trades was that of tinsmithing. It was amazing to see the products and utensils he made. After his mother's death in 1896 the young lad of seventeen was invited to live with his aunt and uncle. Here he assisted in the construction, operation and maintenance of a steam powered flour mill in Plum Coulee.

Jacob inherited mechanical ability from his father Peter Wiens who, in 1876 helped Johann Braun build the first steam powered mill near Chortitz (East Reserve) so settlers no longer needed to buy their flour from Winnipeg. Jacob did not mind the long hours of hard work for he loved his job at the flour mill. Here he also had an opportunity of learning to speak and read the English language as well as assisting with the Miller's bookkeeping and accounts, for he loved mathematics. All this learning proved very helpful to him later in his business. But the best was yet to come, for when he joined the Sommerfelder Church in 1900, he fell in love with a shy young girl from Lowe Farm who was baptized at the same time.

On July 17, 1900, he married Julius Banman's daughter, Maria ("Mitchje" she was called), our mother. The wedding took place in the house which Maria had helped to build in 1898 south of Lowe Farm (SE 36-4-2W). As yet there was no church or school.

The J. W. Wiens family included: Maria, Jacob, and Peter (died in childhood), Anna, Jacob, John, Justina, Julius, Frank (died as an infant), Alvin, and Henry. Julius and mother passed away in 1972.

J. W. Wiens lived on the farm where he, along with his father-in-law and

three brothers-in-law, built a wind driven grain crushing machine to do custom work for the early settlers. But young J.W. was restless to start his own business and in 1901 built his own tinsmith shop in Block 5, Lot 5. Once more he was busy at the trade he had learned in his boyhood.

The community was hard pressed for water because the wells dug brought forth only brackish water that was not fit for neither man nor beast. Therefore rain water helped to meet the need. Consequently a tinsmith was very much in demand to construct and install the necessary eavestroughs, pipes and cisterns. In 1905, he sold the building and business to J. Riter and Charles Spalding.

Grain marketing facilities were very inadequate and J.W. turned his attention to the farmers and helped them organize and form their own Farmer's Elevator Company in 1905. J. W. Wiens became the first manager. They sold the elevator around 1911 to Western Canada Flour Mills. Years later, in 1937, my dad also took an active part in helping to organize the Lowe Farm Co-op Elevators.

J. W.'s various business ventures were never a roaring success, nor was this exactly his goal. His aim was to please the ones he was dealing with and to stay on friendly terms, meanwhile making enough to keep his family provided. The homes we lived in were far from palatial, but what they lacked in size and comfort was made up for with plenty of happiness and love within. Surprisingly, the walls withstood the boisterous games of family and friends at play. Young people were encouraged to enjoy their socials in our home, even if it meant moving out 'some in the way' piece of furniture. Although we were crowded, whenever someone came who needed shelter and food, he was accommodated even if it meant that someone in the family would have to sleep at the foot of the bed.

In 1914, the family moved to the farm where J. W.'s grandson, Ronald J. Wiens now farms NE 6-5-1w. Only one of the original buildings built by J.W. in 1920 remained. This hog barn, somewhat changed, was used to house J. W.'s registered Red Polled Cattle, noted for good beef and rich milk.

Farming then, as now, had its ups and downs. Pests such as grasshoppers, rust, droughts, floods and poor marketing prices brought great hardships to the family but the necessities of life were provided for in some way. In 1928, when the wheat crop had never looked better, a cloudburst drenched the fields and resulted in a crop failure. In desperation as to how to provide for the winter, J.W. and Charles Spalding decided to take up their well-known trade of tinsmithing again. They found work to do in the city of Winnipeg; repairing and installing furnaces.

J. W. Wiens worked diligently on the local School Board for about twenty years, serving as its chairman for much of the time. He was determined to raise the level of formal education in this community. His accomplishments during his period of service were several. He convinced the School Board to purchase textbooks and school supplies for pupils and requested the teachers to fill out pupils' report cards. He helped with the intro-

duction of night school classes for Grade IX to XI to be taught in Lowe Farm. As well, J.W. encouraged the formation of "Boys and Girls Club" (1920). In August 1926, Mr. I. J. Warkentin was personally interviewed by J. W., which resulted in this dedicated educator becoming the high school teacher and principal. His contributions to this community are many and varied and shall not be forgotten.

It was during the years of the First World War that J.W. served as the Lowe Farm representative on the council of Rural Municipality of Morris. Meeting days always dawned early for him. The spirited Bronco had to be fed, curried and harnessed to the two passenger sulky. On one such a journey he had an exciting experience. When riding through the swollen Lewis Coulee, the sulky with all its contents slipped into a washout. When the rig and drenched councillor arrived safely on the other side he was minus his horse's bag of oats and his own lunch but he had not let go of the valuable drainage map and papers to be up for discussion at the meeting. During his term of office there were improvements made but the drainage system was not corrected to his satisfaction.

For many years J.W. served the community as a thresher. He had purchased a new one-cylinder International tractor that easily pulled six bottoms and a new threshing machine. Every fall, whenever there was custom threshing to be done, he had his outfit ready for the early ripened crop and kept going until he was forced to stop because winter was setting in. One year when it was time to overhaul the machinery, Isaac J. Warkentin, the school principal, volunteered his services. "I would like to donate my time as I have found it relaxing and could reminisce of my days on my father's farm," was his remark to J.W.

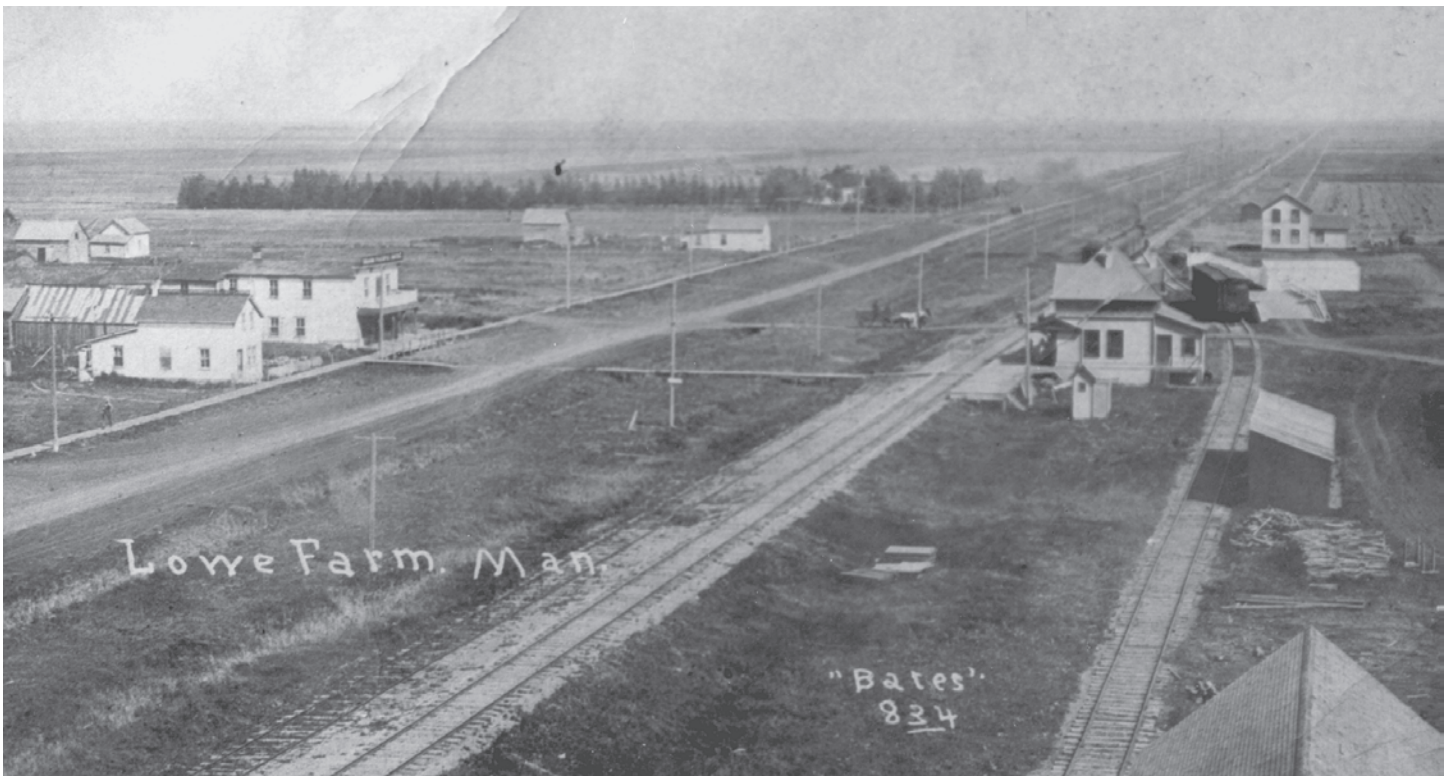
During the years of the depression, neighboring farmers formed a co-operative threshing "bee". This method of banding together to cut costs and make work easier proved quite successful. J. W. envisioned cutting the cost of food supplies, fuel and gas by the co-operative method. Long discussions, planning and finally organizing on a small scale followed, and J. W. volunteered the use of his downtown tinsmith shop as the place of business in the fall of 1929. He sold flour and coal while continuing his tinsmithing work. The following spring gas and oil was sold in bulk. This was the initial start of the present organization, Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op. It was presented with a charter in 1930 with Bernard W. Thiessen serving as president and A. E. Heppner as first sales manager.

J. W.'s interest in provincial and federal politics was especially great during the election campaigns when he and his cousin J. D. Wiens, the well-known auctioneer of the time, would join the Liberal Party Bandwagon. There was enough local Conservative opposition to make it a most heated battle.

J. W. Wiens was forced in his fifty-nine years of life to fight many battles. He was often successful, but the final battle for life against cancer could not be won and so this man of vision and stamina closed his eyes in death August 15, 1938.



Lowe Farm Main Street 1930's



Lowe Farm around 1904

PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE FAMILY HISTORIES



FAMILY HISTORIES

JIM & DOREEN (PENNER) BAKER

Submitted by Doreen Penner

I am the daughter of Ben and Tina Penner, granddaughter of Peter P. and Anna Penner.

After completing my education at Lowe Farm and the Provincial Normal School, (Only those of a certain generation will understand that term) I taught school for five years. It was during this time that I met Jim Baker, who later became my husband.

Jim took his barbering/hairstyling course in Winnipeg, after which time we settled in Morden, where he has been our local barber for the past 39 years.

Our four children were all raised in Morden. They are all married and have presented us with 10 grandchildren.

Our oldest son, Terry, and his wife Margaret Ann (McKerlie) live in Winnipeg with their two little girls; Lisa, 8, and Terry, 4. Terry is working at Eldorado Hospices, and Margaret Ann has a secretarial position at the University of Manitoba.

Our daughter Joanne and her husband Larry Dyck, with their children, Tyler, 15, and Brittany, 12, live in Morden. Joanne is a hairdresser, working with her dad. Larry has an upholstery business in town.

Joanne's daughter Nicole and her husband Lee Perreault live in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Nicole is also a hairdresser and Lee is working with his dad in their abattoir.

Our son Tom and his wife Cara (Scammell) and their two little boys, Steven, born March 12, 1997, and Joey, born August 11, 1998, live in Fort St. John, British Columbia. Tom is a youth pastor.

Bob and his wife Darlene (Jacobs, Titchkosky) and family, Brent, 12, Stephanie, 10, and Kristen, 8, live in Morden at the time of this writing, but intend to move to Winnipeg. Bob has been hired as a constable in East St. Paul, after serving in that capacity in Morden for the last five years. Darlene, who is our local Justice of the Peace, is in the process of transferring to Winnipeg as well.

JULIUS & ANNA (ENNS) BANMAN

Submitted by Sarah Banman

Julius Banman, 32, and his wife Anna Enns, 25, arrived in Canada July 27, 1874 aboard the S. S. Nova Scotian, which docked in Quebec. They had two children with them; Julius, 1, and Ann, 4. They had come from Russia and were listed in the 1843 - 1876 Berghthal Gemeinde Buch.

At first they lived east of the Red River. In the 1881 census, they are listed as living at Blumengard. Their family at that time included Anna, 10, Anganeta (Aganetha), 5, Kathrina, 2, and Maria, one month. By this time Julius had died.



The Banman brothers and sisters, taken February 2, 1969, at the time of Peter Banman's funeral. Back row: (l - r) Jake, Jule, John, Henry, Pete; Front row: Mary, Kay, Ann, Sarah.



Four generations, 1977: great grandmother Aganetha (Nettie) Banman, grandfather Peter Banman, father Greg Banman and son James Banman.



Four generations, 1979: great grandmother Aganetha (Nettie) Banman, grandfather Peter Banman, mother Marian (Kozuska) Kish, and son, Jonathon Kozuska.



Four generations, 1980: great grandmother Aganetha (Nettie) Banman, grandfather Peter Banman, father, Orlando Banman and son, Patrick Banman.

Sometime after 1888 and before 1899 the family moved to the Lowe Farm area. In 1888 their youngest child, Peter, was born at Blumengard. In 1899 Julius was a school trustee in Lowe Farm. They farmed one mile south of the west end of Lowe Farm. The family was larger now, including: Anna, born in 1869 and married to Heinrich H. Dyck; Aganetha, born in 1876 and married to Peter Falk, they later moved to Mexico; Kathrina, born in 1879 married Jacob W. Wiens; Franz, born in 1884, married Maria Kehler; Susanna, born in 1886, married Schroeder, Hildebrand, and Peters; Peter was born in 1888. He married Aganetha Kroeker.

Julius died in October, 1901 and Anna died in December, 1904.

Franz Banman and his wife Maria died in 1922, leaving two children, Frank and Mary.

Frank married Verna and lived at Innisfail, Alberta, where they raised four children; Sherry, (married with two children), Marlene, (married with one child), Jim, and Bonnie. All of the children live near Innisfail.

Mary married Isaac Friesen and lived in Lavenham, Manitoba. They had four children, including; Mary (Massey) of Brandon, Anne (Leask) of Nevada, Jake (Claudette) in Alberta, and Susan (Ostopowich), who makes her home in Portage La Prairie.

Both Frank and Mary have died.

Peter was 12 years old when his father died and 16 years old when his mother died. He married Aganetha (Nettie) Kroeker on October 22, 1914. At first they lived with her parents half a mile south of the east end of Lowe Farm. Later they moved four miles north of Lowe

Farm where they built a house, barn and other buildings. They were living there in 1919 when Jake was born. They lived across the road from the Neufeld School where Peter was the secretary. After having repeated crops drown because of a lack of drainage, they moved south-east of Lowe Farm, across a large drainage ditch to the north of Aganetha's parents, the Cornelius Kroekers. They moved there in about 1923. Some years later they moved two and a half or three miles further south. The final move was about the fall of 1930 when they moved their house north of Lowe Farm onto the land of J.W. Wiens, Peter's sister. Peter did odd jobs to feed his family. The children grew up and started to work. Henry, Ann, Julius, Sara, Pete and John all worked in Sanford at one time or another. At different times, all of the boys and Jule's wife Susan worked at Leitch Gold Mines in Beardmore, Ontario. In June of 1953, Peter got a job at the Leitch Gold Mines. He worked there for 10 years. When he retired, they moved to Steinbach. Peter died in 1969 and Aganetha died in 1981. Both are buried in Steinbach. They had 11 children. The first two boys, Cornelius and Peter did not live to reach their first birthdays.

The rest of the family included:

Mary, 1918, who married Frank Yuzwa and lived in Toronto. When they retired, they moved to Walkerton, Ontario. Both have died of cancer. They had three children: Gerald lives in Calgary and has two children, Eric and Lara; Francie (Mann) lived in Neustadt, Ontario and had two children, including Monica, who married in September 1998 and Andreas. Francie died of cancer in February, 1996; Kim (Yuzwa-Rielly) has a daughter, Anne, and lives in Cranbrooke, Ontario. Her Post Office is Brussels, Ontario.

Jacob, born in 1919, started farming at Plumas in the late 1940's. Henry was also there. They farmed in summer and worked at the Leitch Gold Mines in the winter. Around 1958, Jake stayed on the farm for the winter. He has now retired and lives in Neepawa. He married Kathrine Funk who had a family: Menno, Rudy, Harry, Fred, Florence and Norman. Jake and Kathrine had four more children: Jim works on the farm; John lives in Souris and has two children, Jennifer and Jacob; Dorothy (Falk) lives in Brookdale and has three children, Shannon, Dana and Kyla; Marion (Kolesar) lives in Arden and has two children, Jeremy (Mission, British Columbia) and Rachel. Kathrine died in 1986. Jake remarried Sarah McGreevy in 1993. She was Sadie Dyck who went to school in Lowe Farm.

Henry was born in 1921. He worked with Jake for a couple of years on the farm and in the fall went to work at the Leitch Gold Mines. He married Dorothy Graves and moved to Bannerman, Manitoba, southwest of Killarney. There he worked for Claude Blixhaven for three years. From there he moved to work for his cousin, John Wiens, as a baker at the bakery in Morris. When John sold the bakery, Henry found a job with Manitoba

Pool Elevators. After working for Pool Elevators for 26 years, he retired while living at Moore Park. Dorothy died in 1985. She brought to the marriage five children: Bill lives near Drayton Valley and has four children. All are married and some have children; Mary (Lewis) lives on a farm at Medora, Manitoba. She has two children and has grandchildren too; Tom lives in Edmonton and has four children. All are married with children; Anna (Kowbel) lives in Brandon and has two children. She also has grandbabies. Henry remarried Sarah Banman (see Peter) in 1991 and lives in Winnipeg.

Anna was born in 1923. She married Gordon McDonald from Sanford. They farmed at Sanford and Wakopa, Manitoba before moving to Grande Prairie, Alberta. They still live there, and celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in October, 1998. They had eight children: Carol died in a car accident with her husband; Alex (Sandy) has two children, Shannon and Ferron, and lives in Grande Prairie; Barb (Tarnowski) lives in Grande Prairie; Don has one daughter, Charlie, and lives close to Grande Prairie; Marie (Froelich) has three children, Erin, Clinton and Jessica. They live close to Grand Prairie; Andy has a daughter, Shawna, who has two girls, Anjoulee and Samantha. All live close to Grande Prairie; Jo-Ann (Miller) has two boys, Shamus and Dana. They live at Slave Lake; Jacquie (Grunke) has two boys, Ben and Cole. They live in Edmonton.

Julius, born in 1925, married Susan Falk and lived at Beardmore, Ontario, working at Leitch Gold Mines. After the mine closed they worked in bush camps. When they retired, they built a house at Kleefeld and moved there, where they still reside. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in May of 1998. They had two children: Lorraine (Franz) lives in Kenora and has two children,



Three Banman children celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries. Photo taken November 22, 1998: (l - r) Gordon McDonald, Ann McDonald, Elwin McDonald, Sarah McDonald, Susan Banman, Jules Banman.

Duane and Zandra. Both are married and have two children each; Wayne lives in Ear Falls, Ontario and has five children, Jonathan, Jeffery, Joelle, Joshua and Jana.

Sarah, born in 1927, married Elwin McDonald. They farmed at Sanford until 1976. In 1991 they moved to Winnipeg. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in November, 1998. They had four children: Terry lives in Winnipeg; Miles lives in Winnipeg. He has a daughter, Lori, and a granddaughter, Cheyenne, living in Winnipeg; Murray lives in Yellowknife, North West Territories. He is married and has two stepchildren, Adam and Audrey; Mark lived in Morris. He died in May, 1998; Vincent was adopted. He is Terry's son and lives in Winnipeg.

Peter, born in 1929, married Sarah Parker from Sanford. He worked in Sanford for Jim Cuddy. After he married, he went to work for Leitch Gold Mines. He worked there from 1953 to 1965 when the mine closed. He then moved to Winnipeg and worked for Canadian Tire until his health dictated he retire. He died in August of 1988. There were five children:



Wedding photo of Aganetha (Kroeker) and Peter Banman, October, 1914.

Greg has seven children, James, Aaron, Joshua, Jared, Heather, Natasha and Katie. They live in Barrie, Ontario; Kim has two stepchildren, Jonathan and Rebecca. They live in Grand Prairie, Alberta; Wright lives in Edmonton; Orlando has two boys, Patrick and Shawn. They live in Port Moody, British Columbia; Marian (Kish) has two boys, Jonathon (married) and Nathan.

They live in Winnipeg.

Kathrina, born in 1931, married Henry Falk. They lived in a variety of Manitoba towns while Henry worked for Canadian National Railways. After retiring they moved to Killarney where they still live. They have four children: Irene lives in Winnipeg; Sandra also lives in Winnipeg; Ronald lives in Boissevain; Karen lives in Winnipeg.

Johan Cornelius was born in 1938. He married Susan Kilborn. They lived mainly in mining towns where John worked. They first lived in Beardmore as John worked at Leitch Gold Mines. They moved to Elliot Lake where they lived for about 30 years. They now live at Whitefish, Ontario, near Sudbury where John is employed. They have three children: Rosemarie (Albert) has two children, Dorion and Desiree. They live at Val Caron, Ontario, north of Sudbury; David has two children, Jeni-Lee and Adam. They live at Wawa, Ontario; Norman lives at Sudbury.

JACOB P. & MARIA BERGEN



Jacob P. and Maria Bergen, 1964.

Jacob Bergen was born to Peter and Katherine Bergen on July 14, 1893, near Plum Coulee, Manitoba, where he grew up and received his schooling. He married Anna Thiessen on November 16, 1913. Anna died in 1919.

On July 3, 1919, Jacob remarried to Maria Thiessen (nee



Spring flooding at the Bergen farm, 1948.

Heinrichs), a widow with four children; Abram, Mary, Lena and Peter. In 1928 the family moved to Lowe Farm and the children went to school at Kronsweide. They also attended the church at Kronsweide.

In 1932 they moved one mile farther north to Section 34-4-2. There, the children went to Kane school.

Dad farmed with horses until about 1937, when he bought his first tractor, a model BR John Deere, on steel. He also had 12 working horses and two good driving horses.

The Bergens were a poor family. During the thirties, they had a real struggle. There was drought, grasshoppers and flooding. Drainage was not too good and their half section flooded every year.

Dad was chorister in the Kronsweide church for many years. In 1937 he was ordained minister in the Rudnerweider church at Rose Farm. In the early years of his ministry, he would go as far as 40 miles for services. Later he bought a 1928 Chevrolet to make his rounds.

They made their fuel for the winter heating by pressing manure. The manure pressed bricks were piled up to dry in the summer and then used as fuel in a home made stove. This stove was made from a 45-gallon gas drum.

Dad worked for the Municipality of Morris, dragging roads in the summer, which he did mostly with four horses and a wooden "drag", made of bridge planks. Later the tractor was used. He also used the tractor to haul grain to the elevator in a wagon that held about 60 - 70 bushels of grain. On his way home he would stop at Rosner's General Store, where he would park parallel to the store. This would sometimes give farmers coming to town by car an idea. They would park in front and also behind his rig so he couldn't move forward or back up. Being a big man, this did not stop him. He could lift his John Deere up in front, set it diagonal to the sidewalk, and with one flip of the wheel he was on his way again.

The Bergens did a lot of visiting. They had a lot of friends. In 1948 they had an auction sale and moved to Abbotsford, British Columbia, where they cleared a few acres of land on Clearbrook Road and built a new home. There they grew strawberries and raised some chickens. Dad also worked at the gravel pit on King Road. He worked for B.C. Hydro and also remained active in church work.

In 1964 they came back to Lowe Farm where they settled in the former Post Office on Main Street. They were here for three years when Mom passed away. Dad remarried a third time to Susan

Giesbrecht on December 3, 1967. Dad passed away on July 29, 1969.

The Bergens had seven children: Henry married Pauline Stobbe in Abbotsford, British Columbia, where they reside. Tina married David Wiebe. They served with New Tribes Mission in Bolivia for 34 years. They now live in MacGregor. Susie married Allen Johnston and they live in Winnipeg. Jake married Susie Heinrichs and they reside in Lowe Farm. Agnes married Ben Heinrichs and lives in Vernon, British Columbia. Agatha married John Harder and lives in Portage. Anne married Jack Clark and resides in Edmonton, Alberta.

JACOB H. & SUSIE (HEINRICHS) BERGEN

Submitted by Susie Bergen



Jake and Susie Bergen's family at the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, August 11, 1996. Back (l - r) Glen, Joan, Brian, Donna, Waldo, Jeannie, Pat, Debbie, Jeff, Harvey, Chris. Front: Jake, Erin, Susie, Laura.

Jake was born to Jacob and Maria Bergen near Horndean, Manitoba. He came with his parents in 1928 to live south of Lowe Farm. He attended Kane School.

Jake married Susie Heinrichs on August 1, 1946, in the Lowe Farm Berghaler Church. We went to live in Abbotsford, British Columbia from 1948 until 1949, but came back to the farm. In 1956 we moved into town.

Jake worked for the Municipality of Morris as gravel checker, weed inspector, mower operator, and planting shelterbelts. In 1959 he started working for the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op, first as truck driver and then as assistant manager.

In November of 1970, we went to work as custodians of our school, and in 1974 Jake added a school bus run to his list of duties. We also took care of the Lowe Farm Berghaler Church for 12 years. In addition we were custodians of the Prairie View Apartments.

We have three children:

Pat married Harvey Edel (deceased 1998) and lives on a farm near Morris. Their children are Donna, Jeffrey and Christopher.

Joan married Del Stonehouse. They live in Winnipeg and have one son, Brian. Joan has her own business, Puma Transport, where they service highway tractors. They also own their own truck.

Waldo married Debbie McLeod. They have two daughters, Laura and Erin.

Waldo works for Beaver Bus Lines as parts manager, while Deb works for Manitoba Telecom Services Inc. (MTS).

Jake and Susan built a new house in 1985, and are currently enjoying retirement in Lowe Farm.

JOHN P. & ELIZABETH (THIESSEN) BERGMAN

From Furrows in the Valley



John P. Bergman built this house in 1918.



The Bergman barn was built in 1911.

John P. Bergman was born in the village of Gnadenthal, November 16, 1885. In 1911, he was united in marriage to Elizabeth Thiessen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Thiessen of the Shoenau district, Altona.

After their marriage, they moved to Rose Farm (four miles south of Kane, on SE 1/4 28-4-2). In 1918, they built a house, which was later the home of the youngest son, Cornie. As farming progressed, a big improvement was made when they changed from the use of the horse and plow to a new Titan tractor. In 1924, John was able to purchase another new tractor. (McCormick) He had a special interest for music and organized the Rose Farm choir.