

WESTWARD TRAINS Inferior Direction				MIAMI SUBDIVISION				EASTWARD TRAINS Superior Direction			
FIRST CLASS	Miles from Morris	Bulletins, Conl, Train Registers, Water, Wyes	STATIONS	Train Order or Phone Offices	Telegraph Calls	Car Capacity 40 ft. Av'ge		FIRST CLASS			
32 Pgr. Daily Ex. Sat. Sun.						Sidings	Other Trucks	31 Pgr. Daily Ex. Sat. Sun.	55 Pgr. Sat.		
L 19.15	0.0	B,C,W,Y	MORRIS Jct. with Letellier Sub. 9.9	T	SU	61	222	A 9.02	A 15.32		
19.39	9.9		LOWE FARM 6.3	T	M F	42	44	8.41	15.11		
f 19.52	16.2		KANE 4.9					f 8.27	f 14.57		
s 20.03	19.3	W	MYRTLE 4.7	T	M Y	67	39	s 8.16	s 14.46		
s 20.15	21.1		ROLAND 3.0	T	RD	65	58	s 8.05	s 14.35		
f 20.24	25.8		JORDAN 4.9					f 7.55	f 14.25		
s 20.35	28.8		ROSEBANK 5.9	T	RK	30	45	s 7.44	s 14.14		
s 20.50	33.7	W	MIAMI 9.5	T	MA	67	51	s 7.30	s 14.00		
s 21.18	39.6		DEERWOOD 5.3					s 7.02	s 13.32		
s 21.33	49.1		ALTAMONT 4.5	T	A	57	45	s 6.48	s 13.18		
21.43	54.4	W	HUBBELL 3.2					6.38	13.08		
A 21.55	55.4	B,C,W,Y	SOMERSET Jct. with Carman Sub.	T	M R	39	46	L 6.30	L 13.00		
Daily Ex. Sat. Sun.								Daily Ex. Sat. Sun.	Sat.		
32								31	55		

Special Instructions:

See Letellier Sub. trains at Morris and Carman Sub. trains at Somerset. The junction switches at Morris and Somerset are in normal position when set against Miami Sub. trains.

Speed Restrictions

Trains must approach and pass through Morris and Somerset yards prepared to stop unless the main track is seen or known to be clear. Passenger trains must not exceed one (1) mile in two (2) minutes at any point. Mixed and freight trains must not exceed (1) one mile in three (3) minutes at any point. Eastbound passenger trains must not exceed one (1) mile in two (2) minutes and thirty (30) seconds, and eastbound freight trains must not exceed one (1) mile in five (5) minutes between Mileage Forty-nine (49) and Forty-three (43).

Spurs

Spurs	Mileage	Capacity	Connected
Moyer	3.7	13 cars	East end
Smiths	6.0	14 cars	East end

Railway Crossings at Grade

With Canadian Pacific at Mileage 0.2 (Interlocked).
With Canadian Pacific at Mileage 26.3 (Interlocked).

Yard Limit Boards

Morris—3000 feet west of the wye west switch.
Somerset—3000 feet east of the wye east switch.

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD.

TIME TABLE—Taking effect on Sunday, Dec. 18, 1934.

MAIN LINE.

N. Bound. Read Up		STATIONS.	S. Bound. Read Down		
Freight No. 153. Daily.	St. Paul Ex. No. 107 Daily.		St. Paul Ex. No. 108 Daily.	Freight No. 154. Daily.	
1.20p	3.15p	0	Winnipeg	12.15p	6.30p
1.05p	3.03p	3.0	*Portage Junc.	12.27p	6.17a
12.42p	2.50p	9.3	*St. George	12.40p	6.07a
12.22p	2.38p	15.3	*Cartier	12.52p	6.25a
11.54a	2.22p	23.6	*St. Agathe	1.10p	6.61a
11.31a	2.13p	27.4	*Union Point	1.17p	7.02a
11.07a	2.02p	32.5	*Silver Plains	1.28p	7.15a
10.31a	1.40p	46.4	..... Morris	1.45p	7.46a
10.03a	1.22p	48.3	..... St. Jean	1.58p	8.25a
9.23a	12.59p	58.0	..... Letellier	2.17p	9.13p
8.00a	12.30p	65.0	..... Emerson	2.35p	10.15a
7.00a	12.20p	68.1	..... Pembina	2.50p	11.15a
11.05p	8.35a	163	..... Grand Forks	6.30p	8.25p
1.30p	4.55a	223	..... Winnipeg Junc.	10.10p	1.55p
	3.45p	453	..... Duluth	7.25a	
	8.40p	470	..... Minneapolis	6.45a	
	8.00p	481	..... St. Paul	7.25a	
	10.30p	883	..... Chicago	9.35p	

MORRIS-BRANDON BRANCH.

E. Bound. Read Up		STATIONS.	W. Bound. Read Down		
Ft. No. 130.	Ex. No. 128. Thurs., Sat.		Ex. No. 127 Mon., Wed., Fri.	Ft. No. 127	
1.20p	3.15p	0	Winnipeg	12.15p	6.30p
7.50p	1.30p		..... Morris	1.50p	8.00a
6.59p	1.07p	10	..... Lowe Farm	2.15p	8.44a
6.49p	12.42p	21.9	..... Myrtle	2.41p	9.32a
5.23p	12.32p	25.8	..... Roland	2.53p	9.50a
4.39p	12.14p	32.6	*Rosebank	3.10p	10.23a
3.53p	11.58a	38.6	*Miami	3.25p	10.54a
3.14p	11.38a	49.0	*Dearwood	3.43p	11.44a
2.51p	11.27a	54.1	*Altamont	4.01p	12.10p
2.15p	11.09a	62.1	*Somerset	4.20p	12.51p
1.47p	10.55a	63.4	*Swan Lake	4.36p	1.22p
1.19p	10.40a	74.6	*Indian Springs	4.51p	1.54p
12.57p	10.30a	79.4	*Mariapolis	5.02p	2.18p
12.27p	10.15a	86.1	*Greenway	5.18p	2.52p
11.57a	10.00a	92.3	..... Baldur	5.34p	3.26p
11.12a	9.58a	102	..... Belmont	5.57p	4.16p
10.37a	9.21a	109.7	*Hilton	6.17p	4.53p
10.13a	9.05a	117.3	*Ashdown	6.34p	5.23p
9.49a	8.58a	120	..... Wawanosa	6.42p	6.47p
9.39a	8.49a	123.0	*Elliotts	6.53p	6.64p
9.05a	8.35a	129.5	..... Rounthwaite	7.05p	6.57p
8.23a	8.18a	137.2	*Martinville	7.25p	7.13p
7.50a	8.00a	146.1	..... Brandon	7.45p	8.00p

Number 127 stops at Baldur for meals.

Train schedule.

Canadian Northern Railway was providing passenger service through Lowe Farm with two trains daily in each direction. With the incorporation of 1919, Canadian National Railways continued with passenger service, but on a lesser schedule. Passenger service in 1929 consisted of an eastbound service that operated daily, except for Saturday and Sunday. Westbound service operated on a daily basis as well, except Saturday, Sunday and Monday. In addition, one west-bound passenger train operated on a Saturday only schedule. By 1957, only one mixed passenger train remained operating. It was shortly after this time that passenger service was discontinued entirely.

The railway station in Lowe Farm was in operation from 1904 until around 1970. Gustav and Olly Knutt were the last tenants to occupy the building. Gustav at the time was engaged as a sectionman with the railway. The Knutts lived in the station until bought from the railway by John Martens in 1970. In April, 1972, Diedrich Dyck began the task of dismantling the old station.



Dave Penner on a railway car similar to what was used in Lowe Farm

Although the rail line continues to operate through Lowe Farm, its future is very much in doubt. As with many other prairie branch lines it has become scheduled for abandonment by the Canadian National Railway, much to the dismay of the communities the rail line serves. Although its future may appear bleak, there is a glimmer of hope. The Miami Subdivision through Lowe Farm could become a private sector short line railway, thus continuing to provide the valuable rail service so essential to the viability of an agricultural community.

LOWE FARM ELEVATORS

Submitted by Butch and Joyce Harder

In 1898, Lowe Farm had one elevator. In the early years of the twentieth century there were several privately owned elevators along the railroad track, smaller than the modern country elevators. One was run by the Mark Johnson family, another, run by C. E. Anderson, burnt in 1914.

In 1905, the Farmer's Elevator Company built an elevator in Lowe Farm and sold it around 1911 to Western Canada Flour Mills, who completely rebuilt it. In 1940, this elevator was purchased by Manitoba Pool Elevators and called MPE- No.2.

The Consolidated Grain Company built its first elevator in 1904. In 1959, they sold the elevator to United Grain Growers. In 1976, MPE and UGG did some trading and the Lowe Farm United Grain Growers Elevator came under the ownership of Manitoba Pool Elevators, and was demolished on May 7, 1984.

There were numerous elevator fires over the years in Lowe Farm. A. A. Giesbrecht, who celebrated his 90th birthday in 1979, recalled that an elevator burned to the ground in 1904. Mr. Giesbrecht, 15, and a friend were hired to watch the site and see that no sparks ignited a nearby elevator.

A Manitoba Pool Elevator office burnt on February 28, 1941, and Manitoba Pool Elevator No. 2 in August 1953.

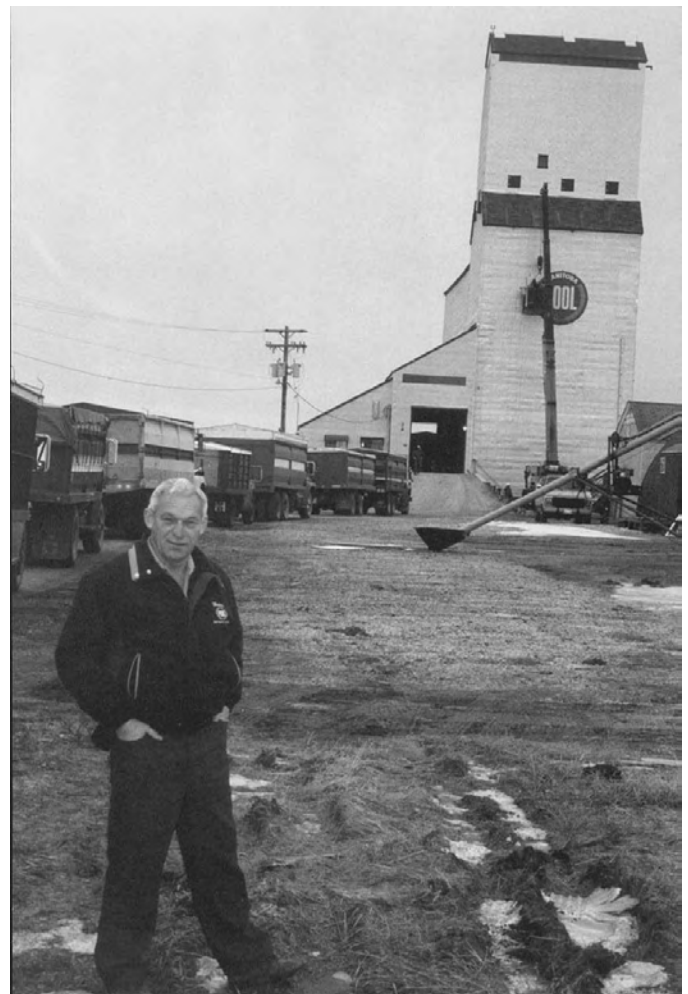
In 1924, Manitoba Pool Elevators formed their company in Manitoba. In 1936, some farmers in the Lowe Farm area had many meetings and discussions in forming a Co-operative Elevator Association in Lowe Farm. Ed Groening has letters, which were written from Manitoba Pool Elevators, and he was asked to attend the Annual Meeting of MPE in October of 1936, so he could learn more about the structure of the company.

In 1936, there were two elevators, Canadian Consolidated Grain Company and Western Canada Flour Mills in Lowe Farm and MPE was going to purchase one of the elevators, but both companies declined to sell.

In 1937, after a year and a half of strenuous ground-work, Lowe Farm Co-op Elevator Association was formed. The fact that a lot of old-time farmers took a pessimistic view of the proposed venture made the organization difficult. It also seemed the local set-up and



Three Lowe Farm elevators.



Butch Harder, Director for Manitoba Pool Elevators in foreground while crew removes the MPE sign. The name changed to Agricore in 1998.

conditions did not make the prospect for the success of a venture of this nature too bright. Also, with two elevators in Lowe Farm already, with an average handle of 210,000 bushels per year, it seemed that another elevator would hardly be warranted since advice had been received from MPE that it required approximately 100,000 bushels per year to operate an elevator satisfactorily. The provisional board then made another thorough canvass for members and was able to persuade 73 farmers to become members. A number of meetings were held with Don Richmond, field man for Manitoba Pool Elevators and a delegation of farmers went to head office. The officials at head office were very doubtful the organization would be a success with such a small membership. However, the delegation was not easily discouraged and



Lowe Farm Manitoba Pool Elevator damaged by wind on July 20, 1998.



Unidentified men in front of an early elevator.

insisted that they receive good consideration. They told them they would visit the head office daily until they would consent to build an elevator in Lowe Farm.

In spite of all obstacles, a new elevator was built in 1937, at a cost of \$21,250. In 1937 - 1938, board and management consisted of the following: agent J. Morrison, secretary J. E. Brown, president Ed Groening, and vice president, Harry Anderson. The directors were: J. B. Harder, J. F. Braun, P. G. Funk, J. W. Wiens and A. A. Groening. When looking into the records it was noted that Ed Groening was president for two years, vice president for three years and secretary for 15 years.

The following is a quotation taken from a letter written in 1979 to Butch Harder from Arthur Enns, formerly of the Pleasant Valley district - northeast of Lowe Farm. The letter offers one person's opinion of events, which led to the formation of the farmer owned "Pools."

"The young farmers do not remember how the elevator agents treated their fathers before the days of the Pool. If the farmer did not like the grade or dockage determined by the buyer he might be told to drive to another elevator. If he did, the chances were that the original buyer had phoned his competitor! The farmer had to settle for a lower grade. It was rumored that if the elevator agent did not make up his salary by cheating the farmer he would be out of a job. The buyers also worked hand in glove with some of the station agents who doled out the empty grain cars. The farmers who wanted to load their grain into cars often had to wait and wait to see cars at the loading platform. One time my father had to supply his own lumber to make doors and attached a bill for that lumber to the bill of lading. The result? His car of wheat was moved from the platform and remained on the siding until he made out a new bill

of lading without the lumber invoice.”

The Lowe Farm producers, as well as many other producers across Western Canada thought the only way they could have some control over their destiny and maximize their profits out of a bushel of grain was by working together to form a co-operative elevator system.

The history of the Pools in Manitoba was somewhat different than in Saskatchewan and Alberta because Manitoba elevators were called a local association that gave each community a lot of control of their local elevator in terms of management and finances.

Seeing that the elevator was its own profit center, it could create a very good earning in a good year, but the reverse is true in a lean, or bad year. Therefore, if the associations joined into one company it would, in the long term, enhance their ability to survive. It also gave them better access to capital. While this system would strengthen MPE as a company, it would reduce local member control. By 1968, it was thought the Alberta and Saskatchewan model would strengthen MPE as a company, although it would reduce, to some extent, local member involvement.

The Lowe Farm Co-operative Association, as did most co-op elevators across Manitoba, formed together in 1968 to form a line company with MPE. In July of 1998, another dramatic change took place in the history of the Pools. Manitoba Pool and Alberta Pool joined to become one co-operative grain company known as Agricore.

As this is being written, the prairie landscape is undergoing a tremendous change. The wooden elevators that once dotted the landscape every six to 10 miles are gradually being replaced by huge concrete and steel structures with many times the capacity of their wooden cousins. The reasons for this are many. One of these reasons is that farmers with larger trucks and better roads are able to travel much farther in the same time that they would have 60 years ago.

The only similarity these elevators have to their older cousins is that the farmers still drive onto a scale and the grain is weighed and dumped into a pit or loaded directly onto a rail car. Everything else however, has changed or is being changed dramatically. The scales that were once 26 feet long are now up to 100 feet in length. Trucks which once unloaded 60 to 300 bushels at a time are now being replaced by trucks that unload 600 to 2,000 bushels at a time. Scales that once had had a sliding weight on a beam are now replaced with digital computers and automatic print outs. The grain which was once directed into various bins by turning a wheel is now channeled by looking at a computer generated screen and simply pushing a button.

The cash tickets that were once hand written by the elevator managers are now spit out by a computer printer. Protein and moisture testing have also advanced to being done electronically.

Grain cars which once took an hour to load can now be loaded in eight minutes in these modern elevators.

While many welcome this new technology, this will, in the end, have a devastating effect on small communities such as Lowe Farm. A lot of small prairie towns owe their existence to the elevators whose presence was the focal point for the growth of the community. As the smaller elevators gradually disappear from the smaller prairie towns, so will the commerce that surrounds them.

While farmers and grain companies drive some of these changes, many are driven by the railways and the federal government who are presently engaged in a binge of deregulation. The railways, which were once used as a vehicle for development and indirectly as an instrument to unite the country from sea to sea, are now viewed as just another profit center and have absolved all of their responsibility to the government and the small prairie towns who created them.

The Morris/Hartney rail line that runs through Lowe Farm was upgraded with government money some 18 years ago to make it a viable line well into the 21st Century.

The federal, provincial and municipal governments have yet to come to grips with the increased road costs that will result from this wholesale abandonment of rail lines across western Canada, as well as the economic costs to communities such as Lowe Farm.

In this environment, the cooperative Prairie Pools are faced with tremendous challenges. Generally, they have been the last to abandon the rural communities. This is mainly due to the fact that they are owned by the farmers and “head office” faces a lot of criticism from its farmer members when elevators are closed.

The Pools are now faced with a challenge of large U.S. based (well financed) grain companies coming into Canada. These companies are locating only on main lines and care little about the future of the community that they serve. Their main preoccupation is their net profit at the end of the year. In many cases, with the more advantageous freight rates on main lines, they are able to lure farmers away from their local elevator by offering small premiums for top quality grain and leaving the rest for the local elevator. This, for the farmer, means short term gain with long term pain. It is almost certain that once the local elevators disappear the attractive freight rates and incentives offered by larger stations will gradually disappear as well. (We see this happening in the U.S.).



Early elevator in Lowe Farm.



A UGG elevator is demolished in Lowe Farm, 1984.

Manitoba Pool (now Agricore) is meeting this new environment by building modern elevators on main lines but also striving to keep stations such as Lowe Farm open as long as possible by using them as feeders (or satellites) for the larger stations. This situation will ensure the presence of a local elevator as long as local farmers continue to support it. This support surfaced dramatically in Lowe Farm when a huge wind (some say a mini tornado) seriously damaged the top of the elevator on July 20, 1998. The local Pool members immediately moved into action, by writing letters and making phone calls to the MPE head office in order to encourage them to repair their station. The MPE director for the district, Butch Harder, also put strong pressure on the company to do the repairs. In the end the repairs were done in record time. There were two main reasons which resulted in this decision; it was good business to do this, and, it

had not gone unnoticed that Lowe Farm producers had always shown a strong co-op spirit and support for their elevator.

Some would argue that not much has changed in 30 years. The station is still struggling to maintain a viable handle. Unfortunately, in recent years the station has not reached full potential due to poor rail service and low car allocation.

Lowe Farm farmers (mostly second and third generation) should be very proud of the elevator their forefathers created. They should not allow themselves to be lured away by a few shekels of silver. Lowe Farm Manitoba Pool Elevator, since its inception, has handled over 569,000 tonnes (22 million bushels) and allocated back to the community over \$1.4 million. While this is an impressive record by itself, it does not take into account the additional savings to the local farmers for not having to travel 10 to 20 miles extra to deliver their grain.

Butch Harder, who served as a director for Manitoba Pool Elevators from 1986 to 1998, says, "There is another benefit the pool and other local co-ops have had in our community which local residents probably don't appreciate enough. This is the opportunity to serve on local committees and boards. These are an excellent training ground for freedom of democratic expression which are useful not just for those who stayed in the community but for those who have moved elsewhere. One only has to visit the local coffee shop or attend a local meeting at Lowe Farm to realize that freedom of expression, open debates, straight-forwardness and good humor are still very much a trademark of our community."

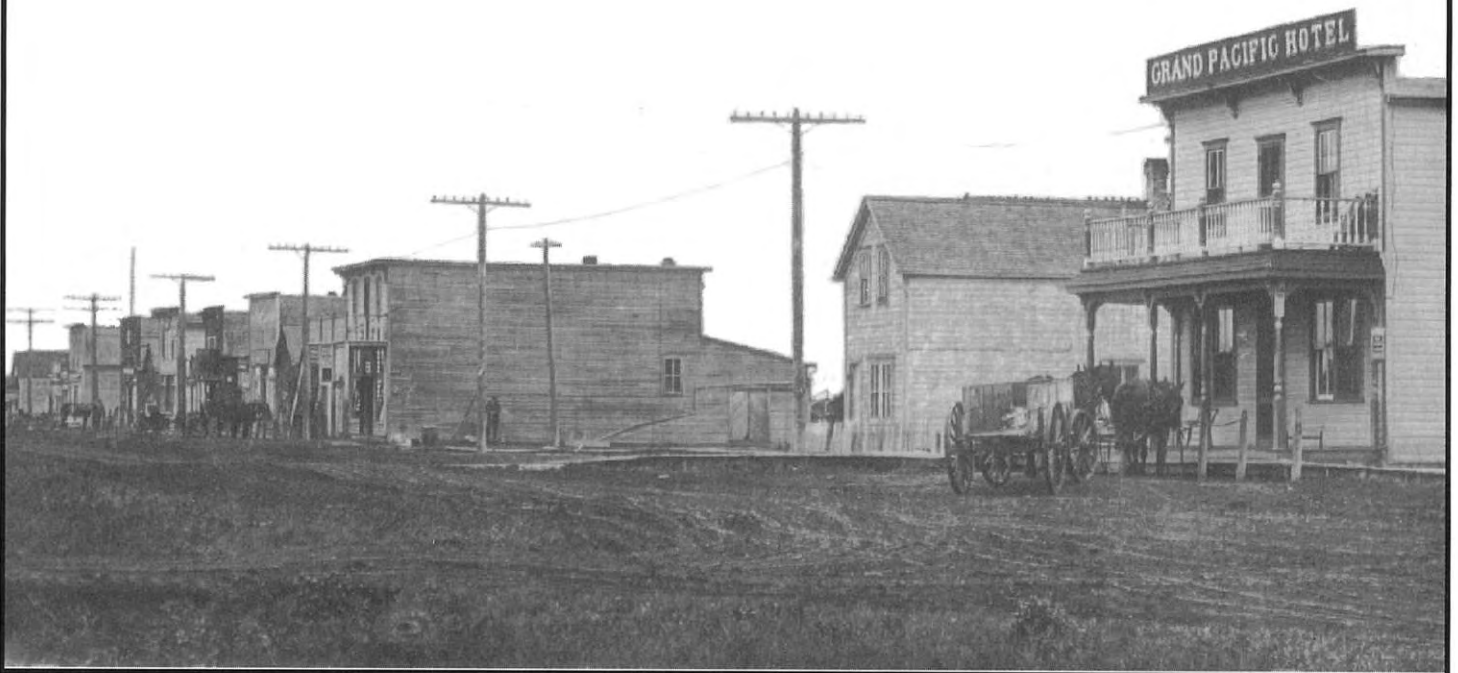


Ed Groening house, Co-op, Klassen's Machine Shop.



Three grain elevators.

BUSINESS and COMMUNITY LIFE



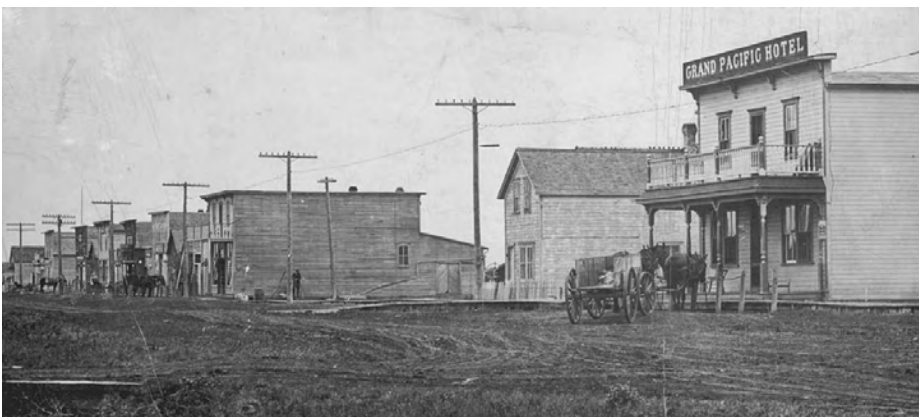
BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LIFE

THE GRAND PACIFIC HOTEL

Submitted by Paul Joyal



The Lowe Farm Hotel. (l - r) C. A. Spalding, (hotel owner), Corn Kroeker, (farmer) John Funk (later the grain buyer), Bert Obtman, (farmer) and Jim Beggs (CN station agent).



The Grand Pacific Hotel on Lowe Farm's Main Street.

In 1898, Henry E. Peters built the one and only hotel in Lowe Farm. This establishment prospered under the ownership or management of Mr. Peters, Warken, Couttes and McKormick in turn, up until the Temperance Act of 1916 forced it to go out of business. The hotel, at the time of construction, had the distinction of being the only place of business north of the rail line in Lowe Farm.

After its closing, the hotel came into the possession of Charles A. Spalding in 1918. He set up a hardware and tinsmithing business on the main floor, with rooms for rent on the upper level. In 1921, Mr. Spalding sold the building to Moses Rosner who used it as a store until 1954.

Besides having served as a hotel and a store; the building also served as the post office, telephone office, bank and a residence. In 1963, Ike Klassen purchased the landmark Grand Pacific Hotel, dismantling it shortly thereafter.

THE STEPHENSON HOUSE

Submitted by Paul Joyal

The oldest buildings north of the rail line were built before the village of Lowe Farm came into existence. William Stephenson, farm manager for John Lowe at the time, had purchased the half section of land that would eventually become the village. Sometime prior to 1895, Stephenson built his house and barn east of the yet to be surveyed town site.

In 1898, Charles Clifton Chataway, Provincial Land Surveyor, was engaged by Stephenson to draw up plans and survey the town site. On January 20, 1900, a business transaction carried out in Minneapolis, Minnesota, saw Stephenson sell off part of his land holdings to Jacob Wiens of Lowe Farm. This transaction included the SE 1/4 of Section 6. Also included was the east half of Block One in the SW 1/4 of Section 5. The purchase price was \$6500.

Over time, failing health made it impossible for Jacob Wiens to look after the farm himself. His daughter Kathrina and son-in-law Jacob Reimer moved to Lowe Farm and lived with her parents. After the death of Jacob Wiens in 1949, the Reimers bought the house and land and continued to farm it.

Around 1950, the house was sold to George G. Wiebe, in whose possession it remained until it was once again sold, this time to Peter K. Doerksen. The land on which the Stephenson house was located was divided into two lots. One lot was purchased by J. S. Hiebert, the other by Cornelius Friesen. Sadly, in July of 1987, this historic Lowe Farm house, built almost a century earlier, was demolished.



The Stephenson house.

THE GRAND OLD LADY OF LOWE FARM

Submitted by Paul Joyal



The oldest standing house in Lowe Farm, owned and renovated by Paul and Doreen Joyal.

Throughout its history the community of Lowe Farm has seen many changes. From its earliest beginnings a century ago people have been born and raised in the community. While some have moved away, others have stayed to raise families of their own. Buildings too, have come and gone. While some have succumbed to the ravages of fire, others have simply outgrown their usefulness and were torn down or moved away.

One building has withstood the test of time. Originally built as a school, the building located on First Avenue served in this capacity from the fall of 1899 until July of 1913. On July 9, 1913 the school building and approximately one acre of land were sold to Charles E. Anderson for the sum of \$450 by the School District of Lowe Farm. In the summer of 1914, a basement was dug and poured and the building was placed onto its new foundation. Next, the roof was removed and the second story, complete with dormers, was added. A porch on the west side, and a unique two tiered veranda on the east complete with a tin floor on the upper tier were then built, giving the house an appearance of grandeur.

Other interesting features of the house include



"The Grand Old Lady" in the 1930's.

stained glass windows incorporated in the upper portions of the dining room and living room windows. A fireplace built diagonally along one wall in the living room adds a touch of warmth, while pocket doors that separate the living room and dining room, and the living room and hallway, along with 10 foot ceilings give the entire main floor an open spaciousness. Another stained glass window at the bottom of the staircase highlights the hallway. The second floor consists mainly of three bedrooms and the bathroom.

After the departure of the Andersons to Sperling around 1919, the house has been residence to several other families. The George Schroeders were the first to occupy the house after the Andersons. In succession the other families have been: the John B. Wiens', the Henry Voths, the Bernard Funks, the Jake Wiebes and the Jake Bergens.

On March 26, 1986, my wife Doreen and I took possession of the house. From day one the house has become a labor of love. Wanting to renovate the house while at the same time maintaining its integrity has been both challenging and rewarding. The use of energy efficient doors and windows was essential, as was the use of maintenance free materials such as vinyl siding and a new metal roof. The windows chosen had to, as closely as possible, reflect those of the original. The artistry of Les Dyck helped us maintain the original stained glass windows while at the same time incorporating them into our new windows. Window casings and sills had to be re-incorporated as well. We were very pleased with the end result. From plumbing to lighting fixtures, flooring to wall coverings, my wife Doreen has used her talents and expertise throughout. The house is slowly recapturing its turn of the century charm.

Although the renovation is not complete we are pleased with the results so far, and are looking forward to bringing them to a successful conclusion.

This article has been written not so much for the building itself, or the renovations that have taken place, but more for the role she has played in our community. For ten decades the Grand Old Lady of Lowe Farm has embraced the students that were taught their education, and the families that have had the privilege of calling her home. She has certainly earned her place in history.

LOWE FARM CO-OP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Submitted by Margaret Gluck

Welcome to the 67th annual meeting of the Lowe Farm Co-op Services (1959) Ltd.!

Your board has met 18 times during the past year with 15 regular meetings and 3 special meetings. We meet usually on the third Wednesday of each month. We have accepted 27 new memberships during the past year.

Some improvements have been made in the Farm Supply and the Food Store. A new furnace has been installed in the Garage; the meat department at the store has been slightly remodeled to include a new meat display case. New cash registers were purchased for the Food Store and the Farm Supply.

1999 brings the 100th Anniversary Celebration of Lowe Farm and the publishing of a Centennial History Book. The Board of Directors is pleased to have assisted in the financial groundwork of these projects and is looking forward to the Celebrations and to the published book! We appreciate the efforts of the community-minded folks who are actively involved in these worthwhile projects!

We have seen some staff changes this year; we said farewell to Betty Switzer in June 1998 and Eugene Peters in January 1999 and are now in the process of hiring a General Manager.

At this time, we express our appreciation for the hard work and efficiency of all the Staff. It has been a pleasure to work with you. We also thank you, the membership, for the support you have given. We hope you have found the service satisfactory, and we hope to count on your continued support. Thank you.

Board of Directors

Ralph Groening, Chairman
Howard Brown, Vice-Chairman
Peter Falk, Secretary
Dennis Friesen
Margaret Gluck
Dennis Rempel
Alvin Wiebe



Early Lowe Farm Co-op. Inset, Manager J. B. Wiens.



Lowe Farm Co-op Farm Supply, 1937. (l - r) John F. Groening, Ed Groening, Walter Groening, P.B. Klassen, Cornie Gerbrandt (on tractor).



Co-op gas storage.

YEAR	CONSUMERS	FOOD STORE
1931	\$4,850.00	
1936	\$47,443.00	
1941	\$29,774.00	\$19,892.00
1946	\$65,738.00	\$51,025.00
1951	\$95,191.00	\$81,596.00
1956	\$121,435.00	\$84,895.00
1961	N/A	\$125,964.00
1966	\$194,603.00	\$166,426.00
1971	\$214,319.00	\$164,008.00
1976	\$727,798.00	\$270,625.00
1981	\$1,132,211.00	\$416,193.00
1986	\$1,906,661.00	\$592,645.00
1991	\$1,550,703.00	\$666,753.00
1996	\$1,731,126.00	\$600,910.00
1998	\$2,839,913.00	\$609,038.00

Lowe Farm Consumers Co-operative

Co-operative history began in 1884 when 28 weavers of Rochdale, England founded the co-operative system that is now known around the world. These weavers agreed on a plan to establish a retail store to be owned and operated by the members and to be run without profit. This plan for co-operation for mutual benefit has become the basis of the co-operative movement as we know it today.

In accordance with Rochdale Principles, the co-operative movement has placed its emphasis on people rather than on institutions of property, money or government. Well-organized co-operatives make it possible to raise the standard of living through increased purchasing power and to enable all members to meet freely and have equal voting rights.

In thousands of communities around the world people have adopted the cooperative way of democratic control of the means of distribution. The first attempt to do this in Manitoba was in 1930 in Lowe Farm, a small town with a population of 350 people. In that year, when a co-operative oil station was first proposed, the notion was ridiculed and the organizers were branded as a "follower of Moscow" and not

considered a wise venture at all.

A number of meetings were held in Lowe Farm in 1930 to plan ways in which farmers in the area could minimize the impact of the depression conditions. One of the topics of discussion was reviving the "group buying" methods that had been organized about 30 years before by the Farmers' Buying Club. This club, an outgrowth of the United Grain Growers, had purchased carload lots of fuel, twine and other bulk supplies needed by their members.



Expanded Lowe Farm Co-op store.



Lowe Farm Co-op, 1943.



Lowe Farm Co-op Services Ltd. , 1980.



Lowe Farm Co-op store today.



Lowe Farm Co-op chemical distribution center.



Co-op staff, 1999. (l-r) Gloria Mattbies, Jackie Friesen, Jesse Siemens, Ruth Febr, Lorraine Wiens.



Lowe Farm Consumer Co-op staff, 1999. (l-r) Ray Champagne, Ron Hildebrand, Marie Klassen, Ron Ginter, Dan Dyck.

The study group reviewed the former buying club and what lessons could be drawn from the experience. What was needed was a soundly based organization with very definite rules and regulations, and an association with members who had democratic control and efficient management. Thus came the idea of establishing a co-operative bulk oil station based on the Rochdale principles.

Upon inception of the Lowe Farm Consumer's Co-operative it was expected that all members would be sufficiently interested to "preach the co-operative way" to others in the community.

This organizing group selected a group of directors and elected their first president, Mr. B.W. Thiessen who served as president for many years. The Lowe Farm Co-op received much valuable advice and encouragement from a Mr. Hindson, who was a fieldman for the Manitoba Co-op Wholesale formed in 1927.

The existence of a well-recognized need is a basic condition for any social or economic change, and there should be individuals capable of capitalizing on the need and promoting a solution. It is known that their job of co-operative education has been the key to the successful formation of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op.

The first roster of members showed a total of eleven! Sales of shares totaled \$120. Of that amount, \$28 was used for obtaining a chapter, leaving them with \$92. With this very small amount of money the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op acquired a small office and was in business!

1931 was the first year of operation and sales for that year totaled \$4,850 and the membership had increased to 60. By 1952 the membership had risen to 345, or almost 100 per cent of potential members in the district. Sales for 1952 totaled \$93,000. During the period from 1931 - 1952, the Co-op had paid out savings to its members totaling \$19,767.

A fire in 1963 damaged the building and the general sales office was relocated in the garage building which had been purchased from the Martens brothers in May of 1960. After a second fire in June 1971 a new modern

steel building was constructed.

In 1978 the Consumers Co-op was on the verge of bankruptcy for reasons of rapid growth and inadequate management. The membership voted 109 to 41 to accept the board proposal to dissolve the Co-operative and sell the assets to the Lowe Farm Co-op Services at book value figures minus inventory proceeds paid to creditors. Lowe Farm Co-op Services bought the fixed assets of \$75,000 and remaining inventory and paid the members in the Lowe Farm Co-op Services (1959) Ltd. equity.

By the end of 1979 the newly organized Co-op reported operations grossed over \$1 million. Fiscal year end of 1998 the gross sales were \$2, 839,913.



Top: Pete Peters, Ann Klassen, Mary Friesen, Marie Klassen Bottom: Ed Froese, Henry Janz, George Klassen Co-op Staff Late 1970's

LOWE FARM CO-OP FOOD STORE

One of the most important services in a small community is the General Store. It was not until the late thirties that a meeting was held to consider starting a general co-operative store. Phil Isaacs, manager of the Rosenort Coop, store explained to members attending the meeting how the Rosenort Co-op got organized in that community. The decision was made at that meeting to organize a co-op store in Lowe Farm. A meeting was called to elect a permanent board

of directors and 72 people chose to take shares. By this time \$200.50 had been collected as share capital, and the board of directors, with J.B. Harder as president, made the final arrangements. On March 19, 1940, the Lowe Farm Cooperative Store opened for business with John B. Wiens as manager, in a building purchased from H.W. Reimer. In May of 1940, a fire broke out, destroying the store and its contents. A statement after this fire showed the remaining assets were now a bank balance of \$62.00. In August of that year arrangements were made with B.W. Dyck to rent his building. Upon retaining credit from the Geo MacLean Company for credit to obtain stock to start again, the store opened for business again on August 19, 1940.

After less than a year and a half of operation, an operating surplus of \$800.00 had been realized. In 1942 the Board of Directors purchased a building in owned by Pete Martens. In 1960 a new building was constructed and in 1963 the locker plant operations were discontinued and facilities remodeled to provide more service in the meat department. By the fiscal year end of 1973, the sales of the Cooperative amounted to \$2,396,356.00 with total assets of \$97,174.00. In 1978, the Coop store voted to purchase the assets of the bankrupt Lowe Farm Consumer's Co-op for equity. Through this difficult time, the co-operative spirit remained with the members. When the Co-ops united, all members were reminded of the need for education, interest and active participation in the operations of the Co-op.

As of this writing, the Coop Food store still remains an active and vital part of the community of Lowe Farm. The community of Lowe Farm is proud to boast one of the area's best food stores, with competitive prices, good selection and variety of groceries, and great service to customers. At fiscal year end for 1998, the net sales were \$609,000.00.

Presidents of the Lowe Farm Coop Store from inception in 1938 until amalgamation in 1978:

J.B. Harder
B.W. Thiessen
Ed Groening
P.A. Friesen
C.E. Rempel
Nick Gerbrandt
A.F. Derksen
J.B. Wiens
B.J. Heinrichs

Managers of the Lowe Farm Coop Store from 1938 until amalgamation in 1978:

J.B. Wiens
Ed Braun
John Rempel
J.C. Green
Al Owen
Jake Friesen
John Reimer
George Sawatzky
Bill Unrau

Presidents of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op until amalgamation in 1978:

Ben W. Thiessen
J.B. Harder
Ed Groening
P.A. Friesen
Nick Gerbrandt
A.F. Derksen
J.B. Wiens
W.H. Funk
A.D. Sawatzky
P.G. Unrau

General Managers of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op until amalgamation in 1978:

Abe Heppner
Ed Groening
Jacob E. Braun
Benjamin Giesbrecht
Ed Braun
Bill Braun
Dick Froese
Dennis Epler
Bob Hiebert

Presidents of the Amalgamated Coops from 1978 until the present:

Abe Sawatzky*
P.G. Unrau*
Rick Giesbrecht*
Lionel Wiens*
Ken Reimer*
Ralph Groening*
Howard Brown

Managers of the Amalgamated Coops from 1978 until the present:

George Klassen
Lorne Zacharias
Eugene Peters
Brian Penner

Some excerpts from the minutes

of the Lowe Farm Coop Board of Directors Meetings:

From January 1953 minutes: "A discussion was held: One of the directors claimed that he had Co-op flashlight batteries in his flashlight and they leaked, and before he knew it, his flashlight was ruined; he said that he knew of other people having the same trouble".

And from the same meeting...

"The directors had an argument regarding the coffee that is being served at the lunch counter. One director had the nerve to state that the coffee of our opposition tasted better, and the president claims that the coffee his wife makes tastes better. The assistant manager hinted to the manager that he should bring his wife along, and let her try her skill and knowledge with the equipment we have in the store!"

March 1956 Board of Directors meeting:

"A lengthy discussion was held on sports and recreation activities by employees of the Co-op Store"..... "It was generally felt by the Board that our employees should and could, when desired, take part in local activities, but it was suggested to limit these activities in out of town places, and especially in business hours or on Co-op time".

From the 1956 annual meeting:

"On the question of handling Simplicity or Butterick patterns, a vote was called The Ladies were in favor of the Simplicity, but the men seemed to outvote them in the Butterick patterns; however, the chairman ruled the men out of order, and the Simplicity patterns will be stocked in the store in the near future."

LOWE FARM LOCKER PLANT

In 1953, the Lowe Farm Locker Plant was organized, and the north end of the Co-op Store was enlarged to accommodate it. In 1958 the Locker Plant amalgamated with the Lowe Farm Co-op Store under the new name of the Lowe Farm Co-operative Services Ltd. In 1963 the Locker Plant services were discontinued, and the facilities were utilized to provide expanded service in the meat department and the Food Store. Managers for the Locker plant were Ed Braun, A.H. Kehler and John Rempel. Presidents of the Locker Plant board were J.D. Derksen and C.E. Rempel.

**TOTAL SALES STATISTICS FROM 1931 - 1957
LOWE FARM COOP, LOWE FARM CONSUMERS,
AND LOWE FARM LOCKER PLANT**

YEAR	COOP OIL STATION	COOP STORE	LOCKER PLANT
1931	4,850		
1932	5140		
1933	7828		
1934	14,811		
1935	31,515		
1936	47,443		
1937	98,272		
1938	72,985		
1939	29,840		
1940	28,594	9,889	
1941	29,774	19,892	
1942	44,809	33,350	

1943	45,146	37,107	
1944	44,225	41,602	
1945	46,141	44,858	
1946	65,738	51,025	
1947	74,887	65,967	
1948	77,141	62,772	
1949	86,469	61,763	
1950	84,650	75,596	
1951	95,191	81,596	
1952	93,036	80,593	
1953	97,774	80,994	
1954	90,242	73,751	10,060
1955	102,820	77,125	9,226
1956	121,435	84,895	10,435
1957	124,333	95,291	11,870
1958			

**TOTAL SALES STATISTICS FROM 1959 - 1998
LOWE FARM COOP, LOWE FARM CONSUMERS,
AND LOWE FARM LOCKER PLANT**

YEAR	CONSUMERS COOP	COOP STORE
1959	53,918	
1960	125,986	
1961	125,964	
1962	125,056	
1963	125,801	
1964	193,468	140,784
1965	187,029	147,981
1966	194,603	166,426
1967	230,621	163,096
1968	219,029	172,842
1969	235,658	187,928
1970	218,732	170,387
1971	214,319	164,008
1972	255,429	191,187
1973	471,320	231,271
1974	688,219	264,458
1975	662,489	271,368
1976	727,798	270,625
1977	703,853	293,073
1978	697,445	336,338
1979	685,042	338,328
1980	864,479	395,962
1981	1,142,211	416,193
1982	1,325,664	504,798
1983	1,425,008	572,100
1984	1,633,608	591,875
1985	1,911,009	583,721
1986	1,906,661	592,645
1987	1,975,284	623,437
1988	1,993,246	651,767
1989	2,159,876	639,592
1990	1,956,513	672,921
1991	1,550,703	666,753
1992	1,550,703	666,921
1993	1,718,186	577,040
1994	1,848,652	593,862
1995	2,433,176	586,397
1996	2,731,126	600,910
1997	3,011,256	641,866
1998	2,839,913	609,038

HISTORY OF LOWE FARM CONSUMERS COOP REMINISCING BY ED GROENING FEBRUARY 12, 1971

Submitted with permission by Ed Groening

Prior to 1930, perhaps around 1919, a distribution local was organized in our area. Carload lots of coal, lumber, kerosene, gasoline, and binder twine were purchased. P.A. Giesbrecht acted as Secretary for many years, but with many frustrations, he quit. Sponsors were under the auspices of U.G.G. and U.F.M.

Then in 1930, a younger group of farmers were encouraged by a farmer from Western Manitoba, possibly Boissevain, Mr. Hindson, who was also encouraging locals to form a Co-op whole to do the purchasing for the various locals. The Chairman was B.W. Thiessen and Bill Friesen, teacher at Steinfeld School District. acted as Secretary. Meetings were held and 11 members purchased shares to the amount of \$120.00. The first board could have been J.N. Dyck, J.W. Wiens, B.W. Thiessen, P.S. Braun and J.E. Braun and A.E. Heppner was the manager. B.W. Thiessen, elected Chairman, headed the organization for many years. The 1930-31 sales were \$4850.00.

In 1932, at the annual meeting at which I was not present, I was elected to the Board. One more year and I will have served 40 years. The reason they elected me was they were in need of a Secretary who could write English. I was a slow learner and still attended High School at 26 years of age. I remember the meeting the Board had held in the School. No board room was available, and after we were ridiculed (in "western" style) with such questions as "What have the farmers decided today?" Sales in 1932 were \$6,140.

In 1933 our sales were mainly Co-op wood, flour, fence posts, Red Head Oils and a little kerosene gasoline. We had the B.A. sub-agency from Morris. Competition in oils was very keen as Imperial Oil, North Star and Canadian Oils had tanks and warehouses in Lowe Farm. Our fuel was trucked in from Morris in 45 gallon drums. By then we had crude warehouses at the north end of Third Street. The ground floor held about 20 barrels. The padlock became faulty and the manager was threatened (again, in "western" style) if he did not repair it in a given time. The 1933 net sales were \$7,828.

In 1934, the Manager position was in tender and I was encouraged to apply. My application was accepted. I had to supply my own truck. Wages were on commission, but if sales expanded, I had to share commissions. The Winkler Lumber Company had their property for sale, including a lumber and coal shed with scales. We were now in a position to sell coal and binder twine. Trump Oil agency acquired John Deer Machinery. Our sales were up a little to \$14,811. Again, in western style, the President and Vice President came from Morris in a tip-top mood, irked the Manager and Assistant, and had to be discharged from the office, which caused the entrance door to collapse.

In 1935 we were starting with new facilities and more agencies, including Binder Twine Trump and BA Gas and Oils. A few new Directors were elected. Things

looked promising, with a very promising crop. However, a rust plague almost wiped out the wheat which was called Cares wheat. And again, western style, the manager by now was old enough to have a girlfriend. We were asked to an ice-cream party at her cousin's. The pretty lady was Susie Giesbrecht, whom I could flatter enough to become my wife. But at this great occasion, two business colleagues decided to hide my vehicle in the darkness of the night, and I had to humbly walk my date home! This episode caused a serious rift, but was never tried again. Our sales, however, had not suffered and were \$31,515.

In 1936 we started surveys and explored the possibilities of adding a new department store, Co-op Elevator, Credit Union and Burial Aid.

The following was presented at the 1971 Lowe Farm Co-op Annual meeting by Ed Groening:

"It is with a certain amount of pride that I have written this "history" of the Lowe Farm Co-ops. Actually I do not want to take responsibility for "writing"; all I have done is some digging, researching and compilation of a colorful and interesting story about some resourceful and hard working pioneers who got a good thing going! It was with perseverance, determination and fortitude shown by these people and the generations to follow that the Co-ops remain an integral part of this community. I am proud to be a member of the Lowe Farm Co-operatives, and proud to belong to a strong organization with such a sense of community.

I have done my best to provide an accurate history; when a person does this kind of research there is an element of risk in having misinformation or missing information. I apologize for any errors or omissions that have occurred. I have thoroughly enjoyed the time spent on this project, and I acknowledge and thank all the sources of information. Special thanks to Ed Groening who has, over the years, carefully kept an album of great Co-op memorabilia that has been a priceless resource."

SALES STATISTICS IN DOLLARS LOWE FARM CO-OPERATIVES

(Increments of five years from inception until present)

YEAR	CONSUMERS	FOOD STORE
1931	4850	
1936	47,443	
1941	29,774	19,892
1946	65,738	51,025
1951	95,191	81,596
1956	121,435	84,895
1961	Not available	125,964
1966	194,603	166,426
1971	214,319	164,008
1976	727,798	270,625
1981	1,142,211	416,193
1986	1,906,661	592,645
1991	1,550,703	666,921
1996	2,731,126	600,910
1998	2,839,913	609,038

LOWE FARM CREDIT UNION

Submitted by Evelyn Rose

Past Presidents



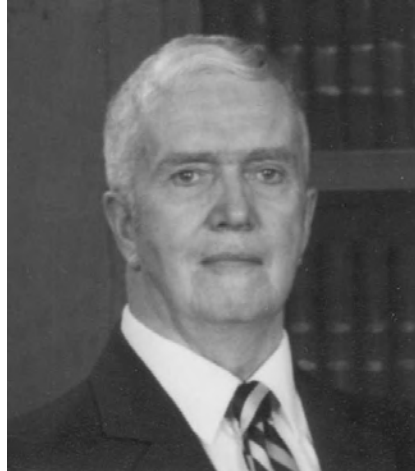
Henry W. Reimer, 1939 - 1945.



William Braun, 1946 - 1947.



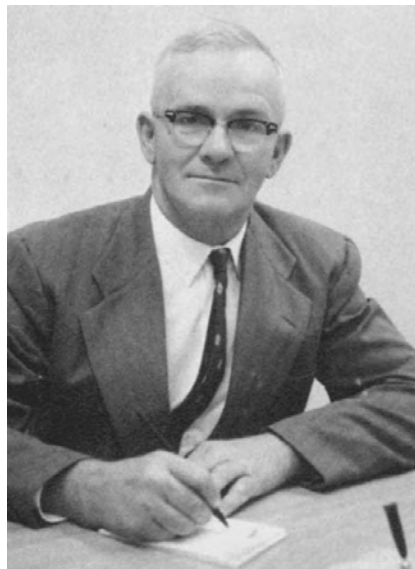
Henry W. Thiessen, 1948.



Edward Groening, 1949 - 1951.



Jacob B. Wiens, 1952 - 1962.



Walter Groening, 1963 - 1967.



*Bill W. Giesbrecht, 1968 - 1969
and 1974 - 1976.*



Anton W. Dyck, 1970 - 1973.



John E. Kebler, 1977 - 1984.



Cornie Paetkau, 1985 - 1989.



*Walter Sawatsky, 1990 - present.
Credit Union Managers*



Ed Groening



John L. Braun



Annie (Falk) Braun



Dennis Matthies

The credit union movement in Lowe Farm began in 1938 when three men, Edward (Ed) Groening, Henry W. Reimer and John F. Braun, decided to initiate a meeting to determine public interest in the credit union concept.

The failure of financial institutions such as the Mennonite Insurance Company and the Waisenamts (trust fund societies) during the Great Depression of the 1930s left a dire need for some type of financial assistance for the rural area. It was this need the men sought to address.

The men were encouraged to consider the credit union movement by Father Benoit, a parish priest in St. Malo (1936-1941) who organized the first credit union in Manitoba, a *caisse populaire* in St. Malo. J.J. Siemens of Altona, another well known co-operative movement leader, encouraged the men to organize a group to study the feasibility of credit unions.

Two credit union characteristics which appealed to the men immediately were that they had local boards, and membership was open to everyone regardless of nationality or creed.

This was in sharp contrast to many earlier financial institutions which had only regional offices and were deemed to lack a clear understanding of the rural areas and their people. Often these institutions were also closely associated with the church and quite denominational.

After a thorough study and much discussion, a credit union charter was applied for. Eleven men signed the Application for Letters Patent of Incorporation of a Credit Union Society under the Companies' Act. The men signing the application were: Jacob W. Wiens, John N. Dyck, Peter G. Funk, Bernard G. Funk, Jacob S.

Schroeder, Henry B. Giesbrecht, Henry W. Reimer, Julius Wiens, John B. Wiens, Edward (Ed) Groening, and Jacob B. Wiens. Nicholis (Nick) Gerbrandt's signature did not appear on the cover page but he was listed among the applicants as a shareholder. Julius Wiens and Jacob S. Schroeder's names were not listed as Charter members but Nick Gerbrandt's name was included as one of the 10 charter members. Ten was the minimum requirement to issue the Charter.

The charter was granted June 28, 1938 by Provincial Secretary John Bracken. By December of that year the newly formed society boasted 25 members.

The directors opened an account with the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op. Credit Union funds were credited to its Co-op account and in turn deposited into

the Co-op's account at the Bank of Montreal in Morris. Later the Credit Union would have its' own account at the bank.

By the beginning of 1939 the Credit Union had received enough money as share capital to grant small loans to members. A loan was limited to \$10 and had to be repaid in one month. In early 1940 the maximum amount of a loan was increased to \$15. The demand for loans was greater than the supply. Members were repaying their loans and immediately applying for new loans. In an attempt to slow the demand the directors added a stipulation requiring a two week waiting period between the repayment of a loan and the application for a new one.

Ed Groening, who was temporary manager of the



Anton W. Dyck at the Grand Opening of the Credit Union Building



Six of 12 Charter members of the Lowe Farm Credit Union. (l - r) Nick Gerbrandt, Jacob B. Wiens, Ed Groening, J. Dyck, Julius Wiens, and J. S. Schroeder.



Sod turning for new Credit Union building. (l - r) Pete Friesen, Abe Schmidt, Bill Giesbrecht, Anton Dyck, Johnny Kebler and John Braun, April, 1973.



John and Anne Braun with Linda, Evelyn, Eileen, Marilyn and Ray, 1970. John was the second Lowe Farm Credit Union Manager.



Crowd at the 60th anniversary of the Lowe Farm Credit Union, July 24, 1998.



Application for Letters Patent of Incorporation of A Credit Union Society Under "The Companies Act"

To the Honourable the Provincial Secretary
of the Province of Manitoba.

The Application of

*Jacob W. Wiens
John N. Dyck
Peter H. Gunk
Bernhard H. Gunk
Jacob S. Schroeder
Henry B. Liesbrecht
Henry W. Reimer
Julius Wiens
John B. Wiens
Edward Groening
Jacob B. Wiens*

respectfully showeth as follows:

The undersigned applicants are desirous of obtaining letters patent under the provisions of "The Companies Act" constituting your applicants and such others as may become members in The Society thereby created a body corporate and politic to be operated as a credit union society under the provisions of Part VIA of "The Companies Act" under the name of

Lowe Farm

Credit Union Society Limited, or such other name as appears to you to be proper.

Application for letters patent.

Co-op Oil Station in 1938, agreed to act as secretary-treasurer for the Credit Union until a replacement could be found. In the spring of 1939 Mr. Groening had to return to his farming duties. As no replacement had been found, he carried on as best he could. It became more difficult for people to transact Credit Union business as Mr. Groening was not readily available.

With the increase in Credit Union activity it became apparent an individual had to be found who would be readily available to members. In 1941 the board asked John L. Braun, a Co-op employee, to take over the Credit Union duties in addition to his regular duties. Mr. Braun agreed to do this without remuneration. Members could now carry out transactions at their convenience. About this time the Credit Union also added a chequing service which further encouraged membership activity. John L. Braun became a full time employee of the Credit Union in 1942.

Increasing the share capital was extremely important to insure the stability of the Credit Union. In the early years, members over 16 were required to deposit 25 cents a month into their share capital. The amount was later increased to one dollar. In an annual meeting report it was noted that some did this willingly, others had to be reminded while still others did not do it at all.

In 1947, the Credit Union purchased Life Savings and Loan Protection Insurance from the Credit Union Association. This was done to encourage members to deposit their savings in the local Credit Union where they would now receive life insurance protection to an amount equal to the member's total savings in the

Credit Union.

The Lowe Farm Credit Union began with meager facilities in 1938, using a portion of the Consumers Co-op office to transact their business. In 1942, the Consumers Co-op and the Co-op Store began to alternately provide the Credit Union with its own office, rent-free. This continued until 1960 when Co-op Services built a new store. The new building included office space for the Credit Union on the east side of the building complete with a street entrance and a long-term rental agreement.

Over the years the Credit Union experienced slow but steady growth. Even before 1972, when the lease would expire, it was obvious the rented facilities were no longer adequate. The Board decided it was time the Credit Union had its own building. A new 38 foot by 50 foot facility was constructed just west of the Co-op Store at a cost of \$40,000 excluding furnishings. The new Credit Union Building was officially opened in October of 1973.

Credit Union assets at year-end in 1939 were \$383. By 1998, year-end assets had reached an all time high of \$11,481,095. Membership stood at 1,056. Loans totaled \$9,009,322. The highest interest ever paid on loans occurred in 1981 when borrowers paid a whopping 21 per cent. Interest rate on savings went as high as 18 per cent. Loan rates averaged out over the year were 18.3 per cent and savings were at 12.5 per cent and 14.5 per cent.

Even though Lowe Farm is a small community, the Credit Union continues to grow. Manager Dennis Matthies says member loyalty is a big factor. Members move away but continue to deal with the Lowe Farm Credit Union.



Lowe Farm Credit Union today.



Grand opening of the Credit Union.

Many people feel more comfortable dealing where they are already known. He also points out that changes in technology allow people to conduct business from wherever they live.

The Lowe Farm Credit Union received the T. H. Funk Memorial Trophy for achieving the highest growth in member deposits (38 per cent) in the Southern Manitoba Credit Union Chapter during the year 1996.

The Lowe Farm Credit Union celebrated its 60th Anniversary in 1998. It is the oldest continuously operated open bond (public) credit union in Manitoba.

Although the Credit Union has now been in existence for 61 years, there have only been four managers. Ed Groening (1938-1941), John L. Braun

(1941-1942) and (1945-1984), Annie (Falk) Braun (1943-1944) and Dennis Matthies (1984- present).

In 1943, John Braun entered Alternative Service. The position was then filled by Annie Falk, another Co-op employee, who relinquished the position upon Mr. Braun's return. (Annie Falk was the first female employee at both the Co-op and the Credit Union.) Dennis Matthies was promoted to General Manager upon Mr. Braun's retirement.

Credit Union Employees

People employed by the Credit Union in the last 61 years

Edwin Thiessen	Mary Ann Klassen
Irene Penner	Dennis Matthies
Barb (Klassen) Kehler	*Ray Braun
Elaine (Braun) Janz	Sandra Pokrant
Chris (Martens) Froese	Ed Froese
Hilda Martens	Paula (Friesen) Melanson
Bev Brown	Janice (Kehler) Doerksen
Irma Friesen	Chris (Dyck) Janke
*Gary Friesen	Regina Brunet
*Cliff Matthies	Tammy (Harder) Reckseidler
Marcel Hildebrand	Jodi Griffith

*Several of these employees went on to obtain higher positions at other Credit Unions. Gary Friesen is the General Manager of the Rosenort Credit Union. Cliff Matthies was a Lethbridge Credit Union Branch Manager and Ray Braun is the Commercial Loans Manager at the Winkler Credit Union.

John L. Braun

Submitted by Evelyn Rose

John L. Braun was the first official manager of the Lowe Farm Credit Union. He was born in 1917 at Chaplin, Saskatchewan. His parents were originally from southern Manitoba and moved back when he was about three years old, settling in the Lowe Farm area.

John received his elementary education at the Steinfeld School, a one room school house near Lowe Farm. Grades IX - XI were taken at the Lowe Farm High School. Since Grade XII was not taught in Lowe Farm at the time, he acquired his Grade XII through home study.

John was working for the local Consumers Co-op store when he was approached by the president of the credit union board asking him to serve as secretary-treasurer for the credit union in addition to his regular duties at the store. He accepted the responsibility.

In his memoirs, John said the credit union transactions were relatively few in number in the beginning, so he was able to handle the bookkeeping fairly easily in his spare time.

In 1942, the Co-op store provided the credit union with an office rent free. Up to this time, a portion of the Co-op store office was for credit union business.

With the establishment of a separate office, John became a full time credit union manager and was paid a salary.

Then in 1943 - 1944, he went into Alternative Services. During this time Annie Falk, also a Co-op employee, took over his duties.

Prior to leaving for the Service a friendship was developing between John and Annie. This friendship continued to grow and ultimately led to marriage in 1945.

Annie (Falk) Braun said they had to wait to get married until the war was over so John could get regular pay again. Working in Alternative Service paid only \$25 a month. Mrs. Braun chuckled as she said, "I quit my job (at the Credit Union) to let my husband (to be) have it back."

Annie was born in Mexico in 1923 to Peter A. and Helena (Penner) Falk. In 1925 the family returned to Canada and settled in the Morris-Lowe Farm area, moving into Lowe Farm when Annie was about 10 years old.

During his years in Lowe Farm, John was very active in the community. He was one of the founding members of the Lowe Farm Board of Trade, later changed to the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce. He served as secretary-treasurer for seven years. He was also a school trustee for nine years, seven of which he was chairman of the board. John was very involved in the local Berghthaler Church as a Sunday School teacher, member of the choir, treasurer and various other committees.

Annie was also very involved in the church. She sang in the choir, taught Sunday School and was a member of the church's ladies group.

The Brauns raised four daughters and one son. Linda married Larry Reimer and works as a Licensed Practical Nurse at Tabor Senior Citizen's Home in Morden. Evelyn married Robert Weaver. She is a lawyer and works for Great West Life in Winnipeg. Eileen married Dave Pederson and is a social worker in Winnipeg. Marilyn married Albert Bergen. She is a homemaker and lives on a farm at Crystal City where they raise hogs. Raymond married Trudy Friesen. He is the commercial loans manager for the Winkler Credit Union in Winkler.

John retired from the credit union in 1984 after 41 1/2 years of service. The Brauns now reside in the Oakview Terrace in Winkler.

Manager's credit union interest steeped in family's association

*By Evelyn Rose,
courtesy Crow Wing Warrior/
Scratching River Post*

The Lowe Farm Credit Union didn't have to look very far when they were looking for someone to succeed retiring general manager John L. Braun. They chose Dennis Matthies, a local young man already in their employ.

Dennis began working for the credit union when he was 20 years old. Only four years later he became the new credit union general manager.

The youngest of Abe and Marge Matthies' three children, he was raised at Lowe Farm. He received his elementary education in Lowe Farm then attended Morris Collegiate from which he graduated in 1977.

Dennis is the third member of his family to be involved in the Lowe Farm Credit Union. Dennis' father, Abe, was on the Board of Directors for many years. His brother Cliff also worked for the Lowe Farm Credit Union for a time (before Dennis) and later served on the Board of Directors.

Since working for the credit union, Dennis has completed many courses offered by Credit Union Central and attended many conferences. "Training is ongoing," he said. In May 1998, he attended the Canadian Conference for Credit Union Executives in Whistler, British Columbia.

The enjoyment of working with people was what attracted him to seek employment at the credit union.

His interest in working with people also extends to younger people. For the last three years Dennis has spent time at the local school talking to students about business, his experiences and the benefits of staying in school and furthering one's education. In the fall of 1997 he was presented with the Rural Consultant of the Year

award by Junior Achievement Canada.

Dennis is also actively involved in community affairs. He serves on various boards and committees. Included are the Ag Expo Committee and the Valley Agriculture Society. He was Finance Chairman for the Red River Valley Health District Foundation and spent five years as Chairman of the Community Consultative Group. He sits on the Southern Manitoba Credit Union Chapter Board and is a delegate representing District II on the Manitoba Credit Union System.

Dennis resides in the community he serves.

BUSINESSES

THE BLACKSMITHS

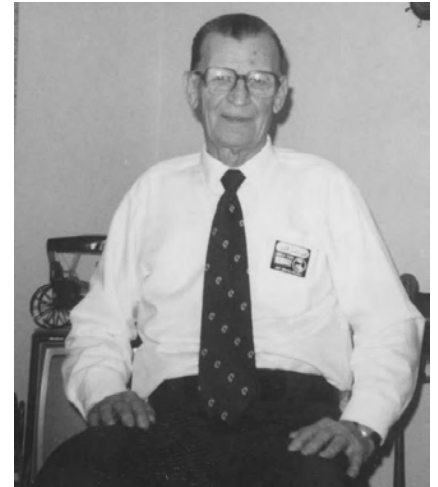
The first blacksmith in Lowe Farm was a Mr. Horne. He was succeeded by A. P. Dyck, who had the shop on the east side of Block Five. Mr. Dyck sold his shop to Mr. J. H. Martens, who shortly after moved into a larger building standing adjacent to his own. Mr. Martens purchased the building from Diedrich Heppner in 1914.

In this shop, Mr. Martens served as blacksmith and machinist, assisted at times by his sons, until 1947 when a new building was erected, utilizing most of the lumber salvaged from the previous building. The new building was located on Lot 10, Block 4, the site of the Martens Garage.

After the senior Martens passed away in 1953, his son Frank carried on as owner and operator of the welding and machine shop until December of 1969. At this time the business was sold to Ben Dueck and Roy Klippenstein.

The business now solely owned by Roy Klippenstein, who operates under the name Lowe Farm Welding and Iron Works, specializes in the manufacture of horse and stock trailers, from two horse tandem to a six horse goose neck trailer.

JACOB J. PETERS - BARBER



The Barber- Jacob J. Peters

Jacob Peters, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Peters, was born November 8, 1899. His parents had moved from Plum Coulee to Lowe Farm earlier that year, having purchased a section of land for \$5,000, some two and a half miles northeast of the town site of Lowe Farm.

Mr. Peters stayed at home on his parents' farm until 1922, when he started farming on his own after his marriage to Elizabeth Klassen on July 27 of that year.

In 1927, Jacob Peters was laid up with a heart ailment, and in 1930, in response to doctor's orders, gave up farming and moved into Lowe Farm. After moving into town, he developed his talents as a barber and in 1938 rented a corner in a local tinsmith shop owned by Peter P. Funk. He served the general public by providing a shave and a haircut for two bits.

In 1943, he built his own barber shop on a lot just east of the Coop Store. Later this shop was moved one block west where it remained until Mr. Peters retired in 1968.

While Mr. Peters was not kept busy all of the time in his barber shop, he managed to keep himself occupied during the slack periods. Being interested in music, he

entertained himself and others by singing while he accompanied himself on the guitar. A checker board on a table in the corner of his shop was always available for the checker enthusiasts, and Mr. Peters was always ready to accept a challenge for a game between haircuts. Numerous checker tournaments were organized by Mr. Peters together with other local checker players and quite frequently Mr. Peters, a better than average checker player achieved top honors in the tournaments. Another recreational facility provided by Mr. Peters was a horse-shoe court situated on the back part of the barber shop lot.

Besides possessing a natural talent for fixing guitars, clocks, sharpening scissors, etc., Mr. Peters also had the initiative and ability to successfully complete several and original projects, one of which was a windmill built in 1967 as a Centennial project.

In 1968, after serving the community for 30 years as a barber, Mr. Peters retired. After his retirement Mr. Peters moved to Morris for a while, however he returned to Lowe Farm in 1982 and moved into the newly constructed Prairie View Apartments. Mr. Peters was honored by cutting the ribbon to officially open the new facility. Jacob J. Peters passed away on September 2, 1989.

LOWE FARM LIVERY BARN



Lowe Farm livery barn.

A livery barn was built by J. Warnken who operated it for a while and then sold it to J. Loewen. This business flourished until the "horseless buggies" became too numerous. The barn held 24 horses, and at its peak as many as three or four buggies were employed in the livery business. The building was purchased by Diedrich Heppner in 1921 and finally dismantled in the early 1930's.



Lowe Farm Livery barns with teams ready to take surveying gangs out to survey the Shannon ditch.

THE COFFEE SHOPS

Submitted by Paul Joyal



Klassens Store and Coffee Bar, now Nettie's Cafe.

To the many small towns and villages scattered across the vast prairies, the local coffee shop has become the meeting place for local residents. Aside from providing employment within the community, they also provide a welcome refuge for the weary traveler looking to relax and enjoy the local hospitality.

The coffee shop provides an outlet for conversation amongst area locals. Grain prices, condition of crops, the weather, harvest forecasts and other agricultural discussions are held at length. Arm chair coaches discuss a variety of sports, while others may discuss events unfold-



Nettie's Café.

ing in the political arena. Whatever the topic, there is never a shortage of people eager to express an opinion. Usually, all of this is taking place sipping a cup of coffee or while enjoying the cuisine.

The first coffee shop in Lowe Farm quite likely would have been located in the Grand Pacific Hotel built in 1898. In 1918, the hotel came under the ownership of Charles A. Spalding who made available meals and lodging for the traveling public. This service was provided by the Spaldings until the 1930's.

From 1939 until 1941, Jacob J. Harder operated a coffee shop, then known as "Harders Cafe." After the Harders moved to Winnipeg, Eric and Mabel Trinder opened a coffee shop on Main Street. Voths Red and White store operated some form of restaurant, also in the 1940's, until at least 1955. Located somewhere along Main Street at the west end of town was another restaurant simply known as Star Lunch. Lowe Farm Co-op Store had established a small coffee bar located within its premises from 1956 until 1963.

In early 1963, Ike and Olga Klassen purchased the former Rosners Store and residence. The old store building was demolished but the residence was completely renovated, and in 1965 an addition was added to the west side. Once the renovations were complete, a small store and coffee shop emerged which would become known as Klassens Coffee Shop and Bar. The Klassens operated this facility for a 10 year period from 1963 until 1973. Abe and Mary Doerksen purchased the store and coffee bar from the Klassens in 1973 and continued to operate it as a restaurant.

In 1983, the now familiar coffee shop would once again change hands, this time into the possession of Jake and Dorothy Klassen, who would provide the restaurant service for the next several years. On December 31, 1988, Jake and Dorothy sold the restaurant to a Henry Abrams who operated it for a very short period of only three months. The present owners, Dave and Netty Wiebe, have maintained the restaurant since they acquired it in 1988.



The Red and White Store.

LOWE FARM EGG GRADING STATION



Egg grading station in Lowe Farm.

In the years prior to the early 1940's few, if any, farmers specialized in large poultry operations. The local egg production did not warrant special egg handling facilities although some of the local general stores accept eggs in trade for groceries and other merchandise.

As local egg production increased, a need arose for special egg handling facilities. In 1942, Ike Klassen ventured into the egg station business. In 1947, D. H. Groening purchased the business and expanded the operations by enlarging the building and installing refrigeration equipment. The volume of business by this time also warranted the purchase of a truck to haul eggs to Winnipeg.

The egg grading station would later be owned and operated by Ed. L. Braun, who acquired the business from D. H. Groening in 1968. They operated it with their family until the near disappearance of small, independent egg producers. Large contract operations brought about the end of nearly all local egg-grading stations. The Brauns closed the business in September of 1977 and sold their equipment and the building.

FABRIC STORES

From time to time, various residents have operated fabric stores in Lowe Farm. Being in the midst of a community full of ladies who sew, this would seem to be a viable operation, but no Lowe Farm fabric store has lasted.

Mr. and Mrs. John Reimer opened a store in their garage at the time when Mr. Reimer was the manager of the Lowe Farm Coop Store. They later moved to Altona and closed the store.

Helen Braun ran a fabric store in the front lobby of her home on Main Street, formerly the Post Office.

Mart-Enns Dress-Up was opened by the Herb Martens and Gary Enns families in the former Lowe Farm Egg Grading Station building. Hilda Martens and Ruth Enns operated the shop from 1977 until 1979, when a move to Morden by the Ennses caused them to close the Lowe Farm store.

GARAGES



P.L. Brauns, owners of a Lowe Farm garage in 1949.

In the early days, J. J. Schroeder had the nearest approach to a service station and repair shop in the corner formerly occupied by Ed McTavish. In 1920 he built a fair sized garage on the southwest corner of Block 3 and maintained it until he sold the building to H.W. Reimer, who used it for a store and IHC shop.



P.L. Braun garage.



Lowe Farm Coop Services, 1999.

Shirley Johnson built a garage just east of Schroeder's former garage and carried on until it burned down in May of 1940.

Pete Martens and Ben Rempel started a garage on the site of the present Co-op Store. Ben Rempel soon left the firm and Pete Martens enlisted.

Diedrich Heppner built a garage on the southwest corner of Block 4. He sold to Paul Braun, who in turn sold to Pete Martens and his brothers when they came back from overseas.

In 1949, Peter L. Braun in partnership with his brother Henry, purchased a building located on the lot just north of what is now Netty's Cafe, (formerly Derksen's Store) from Diedrich Heppner. They moved the building to the extreme southwest corner of the quarter on which the town site is located and started to provide garage services. Being affiliated with the British American Oil Company, Peter Braun was able to erect a modern frame construction service station building in 1955.

Mr. Braun retained the station as it switched from B. A., to Royalties, to Gulf. He operated it, with the help of his wife Justina and various mechanics, for 30 years. In 1979, the Brauns sold the business to John Reimer. At that time, the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce honored Mr. Braun with a plaque in recognition of his business and social contribution to the community.

John Reimer operated the service station from 1979 until August 31, 1997. Since that time Mr. Reimer has semi-retired, working part time at the Lowe Farm nuisance grounds.

Lowe Farm Co-op Services has for several years operated a garage at various times, under several different owners. Since April 1, 1997, Lowe Farm garage has operated under the management of Ben Klassen.

HARDER'S AUCTIONS

Jacob B. Harder started the auctioning business in 1948. His first sale was conducted for his brother-in-law, William Brown, on Section 19-4-1w, presently owned by Ken Reimer.

His son Wilfred (Butch) joined him in the business in 1969 after graduating from the Reisch American School of Auctioneering. As Jacob Harder gradually phased into retirement in the 1970's, Jake's son Russ joined the business after receiving his auction diploma from the Reisch Auction School. The company is now known as Harder Brothers Auction Ltd. The Harder spouses have always been actively involved in the business by doing the clerking, cashier, and other paper work. When Jacob Harder fully retired, Howard Brown joined the business after receiving his auctioneer diploma.

The auction business, as with anything else, has seen many changes over the years. At one time an auction sale was done by taking the list of items for the sale and advertising the list on a simple hand bill. On the day of the sale, Mr. Harder would simply do the auctioning, while the clerking and cashing were supplied by the property owner.

Today many auctions require full colored posters, as well as newspaper and radio advertising. The auction business now also supplies a portable office, washrooms, and complete accounting staff. The auctioneer also uses a portable sound system (on the back of pickup truck) as well as ring man to solicit bids from the crowd.

The one thing which has not changed is the fact that it is still somewhat of a community event which people attend not only because they want to buy something, but to meet their friends and neighbors to say a pleasant farewell to the people who are having the sale.

The intensity and rapid exchange of bids still excites the auctioneer and the crowd. The fact that, in a matter of hours, one can dispense the majority of ones assets in a very open and fair manner, to the satisfaction of the buyer and seller, makes this a very satisfactory occupation.

KEHLER'S SHOE REPAIR SHOP

Submitted by Bill Kebler



Kebler's shoe repair shop, second from left, in 1938.

In 1926, when my parents were a young couple with one baby, my dad got word that a Mr. Doerksen was trying to sell his shoe repair business in Lowe Farm. They were living in Horndean at the time and work was scarce, so Dad inquired about the possibility of purchasing the business. After looking it over, he decided it was something he would like to try. He purchased the business, bought a lot, and with the help of Mom's brothers built a house and began his work.

The shop was located on Main Street, situated between two other businesses, one being the local Post Office on the west, and the other Funk's Machine and Hardware on the east. Business was slow and Dad went to work on the railroad and worked nights in the shop. When the job on the railroad ended they decided to rent the house and move back to Horndean to work with the municipality, building and repairing bridges. Then in 1937, once again, the family, now with six children, moved back to Lowe Farm to re-open the shop.

"Kehler's Shoe Repair Shop" did not fully describe this entrepreneurial enterprise. Dad did a lot more than just repair shoes. He sewed a variety of things, such as slippers, mitts, gloves, and harnesses. He sold new shoes and boots as well.

Since Lowe Farm was a rural community, many farmers took advantage of this little shop. In the fall they brought in rolls of swather and combine canvass to be repaired. Usually these were emergencies and that meant the job needed to be done immediately. This was time consuming and kept Dad busy for hours, many times long into the night.

In winter when the town rink was flooded, he kept skaters happy by sharpening their skates. He also cut and sold felt insoles to be used in boots and shoes during the harsh winter months. In the spring the roads and streets were always muddy and messy and few could manage without rubber boots of one kind or another. To some he sold new ones, but for many he spent hours patching boots to get them through another season. Once school activities were in full swing and the weather warmed up, balls became an important

item. Since the school grounds were just about 100 yards from the shop, it was simple to bring in the soccer and soft balls in to be repaired. Many a softball was salvaged for a fee of only 25 cents.

Dad handmade most of the tools and equipment used in repairing anything that was brought to him. In fact, during those early years, most of the sewing was done by hand. In order to keep the cost down for the customer, he braided strong threads then waxed them together to make a heavier strand. This was a time consuming process and required considerable skill to make the thread strong enough to withstand the strain when used in sewing big heavy things. Since these were the "horse and buggy" days, harnesses were made from "scratch" and many were made and mended in our shop using this kind of thread. Before any harness could be sewn, the holes had to be pre-punched with an awl, then using two needles, he finished the job. I am not sure which of the children helped with this project, but I know one spring when I asked for a new pair of red rubber boots (everybody had them), Dad gave me the job of sewing harnesses. After a full day's work and 15 sewn, I had my rubber boots. I was a happy camper indeed! What a day when Dad finally purchased a sewing machine capable of doing these and many other heavy tasks. By the way, the traces made excellent "straps," depending on your vantage point. Fortunately straps were rarely used in the Kehler household. (Whether we needed it was another matter.)

The repair shop turned out to be quite the place for socializing. Dad always made sure to remove any usable leather from the counter, since without thinking, customers would doodle away with their pocket knives unaware that they were cutting up expensive leather in the process. Many a "world" problem was discussed

and solved, or so they thought, without ever stepping outside the door.

When the economy of the country improved, people had more money to spend. Tractors and cars replaced the horse and buggy. There was less need for repair of any kind, and so this coupled with Dad's soft payment policy (pay if you can, when you can), and his offer of a job with the Co-op led to the shop being closed. Thus ended a service to the community that had lasted some 20 years.

LUMBER YARDS

Lowe Farm has not always been well serviced with respect to its lumber needs, but the community has had a number of lumber yards. Jack Stewart's open lumber yard in 1898 was the first one. This was followed by Ed McTavish's, just west of his house at the west end of town. In 1908, the Monarch Lumber Company built a fair sized lumber yard south of the track a short distance west and south railroad station. This was operated until it was taken down in 1924.

The Winkler Lumber Company built its yard on the center lot of the burned-out area of Block 5 in the 1920's. The manager was A. A. Giesbrecht. During the Depression years it went out of business, but started up again during the war years under the ownership of Mr. Kehler, of Rosenfeld, and management of Ike Klassen. Later the building and site were purchased by the Beaver Lumber Company who closed it down permanently a few years later.

For several years during the hungry 1930's, H .W. Reimer operated a small lumber yard in a building located behind his store.

SIEMENS AUDIO AND VIDEO

Submitted by Frank Siemens



Frank Siemens, owner of Siemens Audio and Video, installing a sign on his new business, 1994.



Siemens Audio and Video on Main Street.

The owner, Frank Siemens, started this business in the garage of his home in 1991. When he saw the potential this business carried, he had a shop built at the corner of Fifth and Main Streets. The grand opening of this new business was held in January of 1994.

Siemens Audio and Video is a repairing business. He repairs a wide range of equipment that falls under audio and video, and also a variety of appliances to accommodate the needs of the people in the community.

TRUCKING OPERATIONS



209. Lowe Farm transfer with unidentified drivers.

The first Public Service Vehicle (PSV) license in Lowe Farm was taken out by J. J. Schroeder some time before 1920 and the transfer was operated under his ownership for many years. The Lowe Farm Co-op also operated a transfer for a while.

In the 1930's Diedrich Heppner began a transfer service, which was taken over after a number of years by Alfred Hiebert. Since then the transfer business has passed through many hands, several of them not resident to Lowe Farm. For several years the town and community were serviced by Ben's Transfer owned by Ben Reimer of Rosenort. Besides the commercial transfer services provided by Ben's Transfer, Edwin Neufeld operated Ed's Transfer with the purpose of hauling livestock.

Today the community of Lowe Farm is serviced by several different transfer services which include: Rosenort Transfer, Gardewine North, Federated Co-op and Puralator Courier.

CHURCHES

LOWE FARM BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH



1940 Choir

Back row, Left to Right: George J. Wiebe, Ben Hildebrand, Corny Gerbrandt, Peter Harder, Henry Bergen, Jake Hildebrand, Benno Schroeder, Isaac Harms, Jake Wiebe.

Second Row: Tina Bergen, Margaret Klassen, Margaret Friesen, Esther Wiebe, Jake Giesbrecht, Peter Braun, John Braun.

Third Row: Agnes Wiebe, Susie Heinrichs, Helena Martens, Caroline Reimer, Eva Blatz, Susan Rempel, Annie Banman, Olga Schroeder.

Front Row: Annie Wiens, Marie Reimer, Martha Reimer, Mrs. Corny Gerbrandt, Mary Loewen (choir director), Mary Braun, Lydia Groening, Sadie Hildebrand, Mary Wiebe.

The Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church had its beginnings when members of the Altona and Gretna area moved to Lowe Farm in 1900 and the "Mother" church began to send ministers to nurture its members there. Services were held in the school, led, not only by Mennonite ministers but also by Baptist and Presbyterian ministers as well. Sunday School was taught in English and in German.

In time the Bergthaler Church began to send its ministers to Lowe Farm on a more regular basis. Among them, Rev. H.H. Ewert, teacher of the Mennonite Collegiate in Gretna, seems to have visited Lowe Farm quite often. According to the Bergthaler Church Ministerial minutes, Lowe Farm was considered to be a regular preaching center by 1905. This is the date we have taken as our beginning. Other ministers who served during this early era were Henry Hildebrand, John J. Hooge, and Henry Born.

On Sunday, October 11, 1911, the first recorded Thanksgiving service was held. In 1912 Lowe Farm was included in one of the areas represented at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. The first baptism service held in Lowe Farm took place in 1923. Until that time baptism candidates had to go to either Winkler or Altona to become baptized.

Worship services during the early years were held in the school. The need for a church building continued to grow and in 1926 this need was presented to the Ministerial and Brotherhood meetings of the Bergthaler Church. Lowe Farm appealed for financial help to enable the local people to embark on a church building project. The response of the Central Brotherhood was favorable. It was agreed that the Lowe Farm people take the initiative to get the project underway by collecting \$1,000 during the 1927 crop year. Unfortu-

nately, however, because of the lack of organized effort at the local level to canvass for funds, no money was collected and the central Brotherhood decided to postpone further consideration of the matter; the Lowe Farm church building plans were postponed indefinitely.

In October of 1928, the Central Brotherhood, in view of the apparent decline in enthusiasm on the part of the Lowe Farm local with respect to church services, (there were neither baptism nor communion services conducted in 1927 or 1928) decided to give further consideration to plans whereby the Lowe Farm people would be able to acquire a church building. The building project took the form of a joint community effort with substantial contributions coming from non-Mennonites, including Jewish merchants.

The construction of the church building began in October of 1928 and the building was dedicated only 10 weeks later on December 22, 1928. Although the church building had been constructed with economy in mind, the total cost of \$4,029.28 was considered to be a substantial amount. Because of the tough economic times of the "Dirty Thirties" the building was only painted in 1936. In October of 1947, after an upturn of the economy, the local Brotherhood decided to build a basement, and in 1949 the church was moved onto the basement. The total cost for basement and renovations was \$7,300.

By the early 1960's the need for expanded church facilities had become apparent and in 1964 a 40 by 60 foot church building with full basement was constructed at a cost of \$48,000. The new building, with its large sanctuary to accommodate larger gatherings, and its provisions for more comfortable Sunday School classrooms, was dedicated in October of 1964. By this time, financial control of the Bergthaler Church had slowly begun to migrate to the local



Ladies Christian Endeavor, 1978

Back Row, Left to Right: Irene Kroeker, Nettie Wiebe, Elsie Setter, Tina Falk.

Second Row: Betty Wiebe, Tina Toews, Susie Reimer, Helena Wiebe, Helen Dueck.

Third Row: Kate Gerbrandt, Tina Peters, Justina Braun, Mary Penner, Margaret Wiebe.

*Fourth Row: Aganetba Paetkau, Anne Hudson, Mary Murner,
Mary Friesen, Erna Sawatzky.*

Front Row: Annie Braun, Margaret Braun, Margaret Groening, Susie Bergen.



Sod turning ceremony for new addition, September, 1994

L-R: Tony Dyck, Art Hiebert (lay minister), Cornie Paetkau, Ron Penner (Parkside Lumber), Ron Schroeder, Jake Penner, Gary Wieler.

leadership. Finally, in 1967, all authority vested in the Central Brotherhood was transferred to the local congregation, including the right to baptize, serve communion, and ordain ministers.

In the late 1980's the local membership again began discussing the need for more space and in March of 1995 the new church addition was dedicated. This 40 foot by 40 foot addition provided a much larger foyer for more comfortable socializing before and after church services, an accessible pastors

study, a washroom, and a quieter nursery on the main floor. The removal of the previous nursery and the addition of a ramp made it more accessible for funerals as well as wheel chairs. On the basement level it provided a larger gathering area, much larger kitchen facilities, and brighter, roomier Sunday School classrooms. The total cost of the addition came in at \$164,000.

In the early 1980's, it was decided by the membership to build a parsonage. By 1984, it was built across the street to the north of the church building. In 1988 the interior of the basement was completed.

The church began with an active Sunday School in its early stages and the Sunday School is still an integral part in its program today, with classes for everyone from pre-school to adult. Personal Bible study is also emphasized with group studies taking place in the church as well as home Bible study groups. The Ladies group has also been active in Bible study as well as outreach programs. There are also regular youth group meetings and socials to involve the young people in the work of the church as well as to teach and guide them in spiritual matters.

The church's mission outreach has included involvement in the building program of the Mennonite Pioneer Mission in Northern Manitoba that now goes under the title of Native Ministries. Programs are also brought to the Union Gospel Mission in Winnipeg and the Red River Valley Lodge personal care home in Morris on a regular basis.

Local mission emphasis has included involvement in a joint clubs program, and in recent years in a joint Daily Vacation Bible School program together with the two other area churches.

People from our church have gone out as missionaries to places such as Mexico, Jordan, Korea, and Venezuela. The church also continues to be active in Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite

Disaster Service, and the Canadian Food Grains Bank. Through its affiliation with three conferences, including the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, and the Mennonite/General Conference, the local congregation is providing support to Canadian Mennonite Bible College, home mission ministries and foreign missionaries.

The church has also been involved in refugee projects. Two families were sponsored, one from Vietnam and the other from Romania. One of the refugee couples from Vietnam, Hoa & Lan Chau went on to become involved in Mennonite Ministries and were a part of a group of other refugees who started the first Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Winnipeg which in turn has planted another seven churches back in Vietnam. These have been enriching experiences for the church.

Music has always played an integral part in the church not only in congregational singing but also in the form of adult choirs, children's choirs, quartets, trios, and the inclusion of many different types of musical instruments.

In the spring of 1997, the church ministerial began working on a vision statement for the church. It reads as follows: "God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as a caring, welcoming and discerning community of faith, so that God's healing and hope may flow through us to the world."

The church is composed of many different people with many different gifts, all of which are needed for the church to function. Each person in the congregation plays an important role in shaping the Christian values of its members, through their contributions of time and talent in all the different aspects of the church's life. It is this kind of dedication that brought the church into being in Lowe Farm and continues to keep it vital today.



Church Addition in progress, 1994



Completed church addition.



Parsonage built in 1984.

The following is a list of ministers who served the Lowe Farm Berghaler Mennonite Church on a regular basis: William P. Heinrichs 1929-1936 (leading minister); David D. Klassen 1936-1937 (interim); Peter P. Heinrichs 1937-1957 (leading minister, brother to William P. Heinrichs); John Epp 1937-1967 (assistant minister); George Groening 1948-1954 (assistant minister); Ernest Wiebe 1948-1957 (assistant minister); Peter Dyck 1957-1975 (leading minister) 1975-1980 (assistant); Edward Funk 1971-1975 (assistant minister); Peter Nickel 1975-1984 (first full time salaried minister); Peter L. Braun 1980-1984 (assistant minister); Art Hiebert 1985- present (lay minister) 1994-1995 (interim); Glenn Nickerson 1985-1991 (leading minister); Henry Paetkau 1991-1994 (leading minister); Glen Klassen 1995-present (leading minister).



First church building, 1928.



Renovated Church building, 1949.



Church dedication, 1964.

KRONSWEIDE SOMMERFELD CHURCH

Submitted by J. F. Friesen.

As the West Reserve began to fill up in the 1890's Mennonite families looked further afield for settlement. Between 1895 and 1900 a number of families moved north to the Kronsweide district just south of Lowe Farm.

Here they began meeting for church services at the Johann Schroeder residence. When the private school was completed in 1895, services were held here. This was the beginning of the Kronsweide Church, the first Sommerfeld Church outside the Reserve area. Families came to worship from the Rose Farm, Kronsweide and Lowe Farm areas, making it a community church, rather than just a Lowe Farm church. Services were well attended, often to the point where people just couldn't get in. One of the first ministers to serve this congregation was Rev. Isaac Friesen from the Rosenheim district. The first song leaders were Peter K. Rempel, Jacob Gerbrandt, Henry Falk, Henry Friesen and Johann Giesbrecht.

The first baptism service was held in 1901 with nine candidates. By 1922, just 21 years later, a total of 270 candidates had come forward for baptism at Kronsweide.

Early in the 1900's, as the congregation rapidly grew, Herman Dyck of Altona was employed to build a new church building. Bishop Abraham Doerksen dedicated this church in August of 1905. Thanksgiving and Communion services were held here in the following weeks and in succeeding years were held on a regular basis. The first caretaker was Jacob Schroeder until he was elected into the ministry in 1908. He passed away in 1941.

In January, 1937, Jacob W. Friesen was elected into the ministry. He became well known for his work in the Conscientious Objectors camps during the war years. He died suddenly in 1945.

In June, 1937, Abram F. Wiebe was elected into the ministry. He moved away to Chortitz, south of Winkler in 1949.

In July, 1949, John A. Friesen was elected into the ministry. At Rev. Friesen's encouragement a Sunday School was formed in 1951 with Edward Martens and Abram Neufeld as the first teachers. Classes started in April, 1952, with 84 students. Because of the overwhelming support and rapid growth more space was needed. In 1953 the church was extended, completely renovated and placed on a full basement.

In April, 1955, Rev. John A. Friesen was elected as bishop. He retired in 1993 after 43 years of service.

In February of 1958, Rev. Peter A. Friesen and Deacon Henry B. Dueck were ordained. Rev. Friesen passed away in 1972. Deacon Dueck passed away in 1978.

Young Peoples, with leaders C. H. Klassen and Peter G. Unrau, started in July 1967.



Sommerfeld Church, 1905-1953.



Sommerfeld Church, 1953-1984.



The Kronsweide Sommerfeld Church today.

Partial English classes were started in the spring of 1980. Services changed entirely into English in the spring of 1987. At this time an organ was installed. The first organists were Wendy Friesen and Ann Unrau.

In 1983 the congregation decided to build a new church. This building was completed with much enthusiasm and dedication. In March of 1984 Bishop John Friesen dedicated the church. The scripture plaque on the wall behind the pulpit reads, "For mine house shall be called a house of Prayer for all people" Isaiah 56:7.

In April, 1995, Ken Rempel was ordained as minister at Kronsweide. He resigned and left the church in 1996.

On July 26, 1998, the Kronsweide congregation celebrated 100 years of service. A large tent was erected for the occasion. The program consisted of a morning worship service, an afternoon history presentation followed by Sunday School and Young Peoples items. Then there was an evening program of praise in song. It was a beautiful day for celebration and over 500 people were in attendance.

Presently Rev. Peter Wiebe of Lowe Farm is the local resident minister, serving a congregation of about 180.

Singing has always been a very important part of the worship service at Kronsweide Church. Current song leaders are Henry Harder, Jake L. Friesen, Peter H. Klassen, Peter G. Unrau, Dave Friesen and Randall Reimer. Organists are Wendy Friesen, Barb Wiebe and Bertha Wall. Young Peoples leaders are Ken Reimer and Dave Friesen. Sunday School Superintendent is Dan Dyck. Church caretakers are Dan and Esther Dyck.

LOWE FARM EMMANUEL GOSPEL CHURCH

Submitted by Dora Hildebrand with information taken from "Lowe Farm 75th Anniversary" and "A Time To Remember" (EGC 40th anniversary book).



The first church in Lowe Farm, the Emmanuel Gospel Church, 1967. Photo courtesy Provincial Archives.

July 18, 1954, marked the official opening of the Emmanuel Gospel Church in Lowe Farm. The morning service featured the dedication of the church building which had been moved in from Kane. The officiating clergyman was Rev. John J. Neufeld of Grossweide. Rev. Ben D. Reimer, principal of the Steinbach Bible Institute, was the guest speaker at the missionary rally held in the afternoon. A highlight was the ordination of Jacob G. Wiebe as pastor by Rev. Henry G. Rempel of the



The 50th anniversary of Sadie and Jacob Wiebe, the first and founding pastor of the Emmanuel Gospel Church, 1992.

Steinbach Emmanuel Mission Church at the evening service. This independent church was founded on three basic principals. First, it must have strong foreign missionary emphasis. Second, it must have local autonomy (the right to govern all its own affairs). Third, it must be a church that will use the language best suited to reach its constituency with the gospel.

The seed that grew into the Emmanuel Gospel Church was likely planted during World War II when Susie Groening and Carrie Spalding pioneered an English Sunday School in the local Elementary School. Other events which led up to the founding of the new church were: the Olaf Erickson meetings at the Kane Interdenominational Church in November of 1948; an evangelistic crusade in the Lowe Farm Co-op Hall with evangelist Erickson as the speaker in January of 1949; cottage Bible Study, prayer and fellowship on Friday nights starting February of 1949; street meetings in Manitoba towns started in the spring of 1949 by the group now called the Lowe Farm Gospel Group; the first tent crusade with J. J. Regehr of Omaha, Nebraska as speaker, held in 1952. It was after a three day crusade in the Kane Church that



Sunday School Christmas Concert, 1994.



The Emmanuel Gospel Church and parsonage, 1994.

the group (of approximately 25 adults, plus youth and children) felt the Lord was leading them to organize a church.

A simple one page constitution was drawn up and Jake Wiebe looked after the formalities that were involved in becoming registered with the Manitoba government. In the middle of May, 1954 ten people were accepted into membership of the Emmanuel Gospel Church at the home of Ben and Tina Penner. The charter members were: Jacob and Sadie Wiebe, Ben and Tina Penner, Abram and Agatha Kehler, Ed and Susie Groening, Agnes Hiebert and Abe Falk.

There were many "firsts" during the eleven years (1954-1965) that Rev. Jacob and Sadie Wiebe were in the pastorate. The first Sunday School had an attendance of sixty under the leadership of Peter H. Braun, the first superintendent. The first church council consisted of Abe J. Kehler, Ben E. Penner and Abe Falk as board of elders; Edward Groening as treasurer and Eleanor Hyde as secretary. The first missionary conference was held that November with Henry G. Rempel (regional counselor of West Indies Mission) as main speaker. First church newsletter (later *The Challenger*) was printed December of 1954. First baptism was held in July of 1956. The Ladies Missionary Fellowship was organized in the fall of 1956. First missionaries sent out from the home church were Bill and Dorothea Kehler in August of 1958. The 10th Anniversary of the EGC was marked with a tent crusade in Lowe Farm with Dr. John Wesley White as the evangelist.

Rev. Ronald Hoepfner, a school teacher by profession, together with his wife Norma, served as assistant pastor from 1962-1966. They were especially active with the Youth.

Rev. Marvin Wall with his wife Mary Ann of Hesston, Kansas (1966-1970) was the first full time salaried pastor of the church. During his ministry a temporary school classroom was moved in from Plum Coulee in 1966 and turned into a friendly home for the Wall family and a meeting place for the Youth in the basement. The Homemakers Fellowship (young ladies group) was organized in February of 1967. A new church was also erected and then dedicated on July 13, 1969.



*Sod turning ceremony for new church:
(l - r) Abe Matthies, Ben D. Penner, Ed Penner, Norman Blatz
and Les Dyck, building committee.*



*Pastor Jim and Valerie French,
Lowe Farm Emmanuel Gospel Church.*

Rev. Henry Friesen and wife Tina of Pambrun, Saskatchewan was the next pastor from July 1970 to January 1972. The church was very involved with the Morris Centennial Barry Moore Crusade in August of 1970 where the average attendance was about 2,000 every night and many found Christ as Savior.

Rev. Ed Hildebrand and wife Eileen served as Interim pastor from his home in Steinbach from November, 1972 to the summer of 1973. He came (and his wife whenever possible) twice a week - Sunday mornings with dinner and visitation at various homes and Wednesday night Bible Study and Prayer Meetings.

Rev. Herman Neufeld and his wife Helen came to Lowe Farm in the summer of 1973 after serving in Stuartburn, Manitoba and stayed until the summer of 1977. It was during this time that the churches in Kane, Krongard and Rose Farm closed and EGC greatly benefited from it. A new constitution was also voted in. Renovations to the church included new floor coverings for the sanctuary, new pews, new song books and modern washrooms.

Rev. Allen Meikle and wife Gail came to us from Alberta and served here from 1978-1980. Eventful happenings during this time included the church celebrating their 25th anniversary in the summer of 1979, the week-long Mission Conference was shortened to the present 4 - 5 days (also in 1979), and our "Boat People," the Ma family, were with us from January to late summer of 1980.

Rev. Jacob Reimer and his wife Lena from Saskatchewan pastored here from 1981-1985. The most vivid memory of this time was the loss of our church building due to a fire in March, 1982 and the building of the new church that summer. All church services were held in the Kane Community Centre during this time and the dedication of the new church was on December 19, 1982. The Building Committee consisted of Norman Blatz, Abe Matthies, Les Dyck, Ed Penner and Ben D. Penner. A garage and entrance were added to the parsonage in 1983.

Gary and Eleanor MacKay from Pambrun, Saskatchewan served in the church from September, 1986 to May of 1991. The Mortgage Burning Ceremony took place on October 16, 1988. The church was again very much involved in the Wes Aarum Crusade that was held in the Lowe Farm Community Centre, Rosenort School and the Big "M" Centre at Morris in the spring of 1990. Many were counseled regarding assurance, rededication and salvation.

Al and Sheila Harder came to Lowe Farm from Steinbach in May of 1992 and served the Lord in the Emmanuel Church until August of 1997. On July 17, 1994 the church celebrated its 40th Anniversary and new song books were introduced in 1995. We all remember the Flood of the Century and our church family was engulfed in the work that came with it. The army made our church basement their "home" and the pastor was

available for counseling to all. A vote was taken on May 13, 1998 to join the "Free Church of Canada" conference and it was defeated.

John and Joyce Dyck of Blumenort consented to fill in as Interim pastor from September, 1997 to the end of May in 1998. Since the Dycks were still considered full time with Janz Team Ministries, they came out on Sundays and Wednesday nights when possible.

Jim and Valerie French from Caronport, Saskatchewan (originally from Newfoundland and New Brunswick) were called, and started their work at Emmanuel in June of 1998. Interior painting, new carpeting and proper drainage had been done at the parsonage prior to their coming.

Through the years, the founding pastor, Rev. Jacob G. Wiebe has always been available for service when needed and this has been especially welcome when the church was without a pastor and the church had a baptism, or when installation or ordination services were held.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

THE LOWE FARM BURIAL AID SOCIETY

During the late 1930s the people in and around Lowe Farm, as in many other communities in southern Manitoba, had learned that by banding together and forming Co-ops, Credit Unions and similar organizations they could cope with problems created by the depression. In this same spirit, we find that a group made a contract with the Concordia Hospital for hospital services paid for by annual fees. This service was later replaced by a locally formed Hospitalization Group. This Group provided hospital service at cost to its members who paid equal annual dues based on actual amounts paid out to hospitals on behalf of members of the group and their dependants.

Hard times seems to have been the reason for the origin of ideas of self help organizations. Another result of those difficult years was that people were more apt to help each other in times of distress or need. "Good will" was always abundant but it seems that in the end, "good will" did not pay the bills.

Where the need for money was felt most urgently was when a death occurred in the family. Very often sympathizing neighbors would pass the hat at a funeral to help defray funeral expenses. This ultimately gave sound thinking people the idea to concentrate on evolving a standard procedure whereby, through group participation, a predetermined amount would be paid out as a burial aid in the event of a death to help pay for funeral expenses.

Reference to this problem is found in the minutes of the Lowe Farm Consumers Co-op meetings of that period, indicating that discussions were held on the feasibility of forming an organization whereby a mutual

fund would be established for the purpose of providing financial aid for funeral expenses. This idea was later passed on to be dealt with by the Credit Union Board, which became sort of a supervisory board for the proposed organization. Acting in that capacity, they called a meeting in January, 1940, where the ground work was laid for the formation of a Burial Aid Society. Involved in the planning were people who had quite a bit of experience in organization work. Henry W. Reimer, local I.H.C. dealer at the time, H. W. Thiessen, manager of the Consumers Co-op, John B. Wiens, manager of the Co-op Store, Ed Groening, H. B. Wiebe, J. N. Dyck, I. J. Warkentin, Jacob J. Peters, and a number of others, contributed a lot of time and energy in this effort.

In January of 1941 a general organization meeting was called and an official name, "The Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society," was chosen for the new organization. Provisional by-laws were drawn up and adopted and an executive of three was elected. Henry B. Wiebe was elected as president, Isaac P. Klassen as vice-president and Isaac J. Warkentin as secretary.

It had been agreed that the benefit be set at \$25 to begin with. The collection procedure was to levy 25 cents from every registered member after each death among the group. The area covered by this Society was 12 square miles, with the center point being the town of Lowe Farm. The executive appointed one person in each of the rural school districts as well as for the town of Lowe Farm, whose duty it was to collect the 25 cents from each member each time a death benefit was paid out. Collection agents appointed were Henry B. Wiebe for Lowe Farm School District, Isaac P. Klassen for the town of Lowe Farm, Peter P. Bergman for the Rose Farm School District, Frank G. Groening for the Kane School District, Peter P. Klassen for the St. Peters School District, Abram B. Wiebe for the Steinfeld School District and Jacob W. Reimer for the Kronsweide School District.

As the membership increased, it became possible to increase the death benefit from \$25 to \$50. After a few years an annual levy of \$2.50 per member was instituted and the death benefit was increased progressively to \$70 and later to \$100. With the annual levy arrangement it became feasible to have the secretary-treasurer in charge of the collection of dues.

In 1943, Jacob J. Peters, the local barber, was appointed as secretary-treasurer. Since Mr. Peter's barber shop was centrally located in the business section of Lowe Farm, most members found it quite convenient to pay their annual dues in person. After Mr. Peters retired in 1968, Gary Friesen, who at the time was the assistant manager at the local Credit Union, served as secretary-treasurer for a few years. Jacob J. Friesen next served as secretary-treasurer, while Jacob J. Peters served as president. Jacob J. Friesen served as secretary until 1975, when he resigned his position and was replaced by Bill Martens, who acted as secretary-treasurer from 1975 until 1986. Alvin Wiebe next served as secretary-treasurer from 1986

until 1993. Helen Rempel replaced Alvin Wiebe in that capacity from 1993 until 1996. In 1993, John C. Harder was elected as secretary of the Society, a position he is still holding. With the death of Jacob J. Peters in 1989, Jake Falk was elected as president of the Burial Aid Society. He continues to serve in this capacity. Lorraine Wiens is currently the treasurer. The board of directors of the Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society consist of: Jake Falk, John C. Harder, Dave E. Rempel, Henry Hildebrand and Alvin Wiebe.

At the annual meeting of the Society in October of 1998, the board of directors decided that because of a declining membership, the 58 year old Lowe Farm Burial Aid Society would be disbanded by October of 1999. With a membership of approximately 55, it was felt membership fees would have to increase substantially to continue to make the Society a viable operation. Rather than place such a demand on the membership it would be simpler to merely disband the Society.

LOWE FARM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Submitted by Lionel Wiens and Paul Joyal



The Lowe Farm curling and skating rinks.



The Lowe Farm Community park.

The Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce, originally known as the "The Lowe Farm Board of Trade," was established in 1948 in response to the problem of unpaid charge accounts. A number of local businessmen were convinced that by working together, a solution to this problem could be found. In addition, the objective of the Board of Trade was to promote the economic, civic and social welfare of the people of the community and district and the furtherance of the development of their resources.

The first meeting of the Board of Trade was held on January 22, 1948. In attendance at this meeting were: Diedrich Heppner, Henry C. Voth, Andy Dyck, Jake D. Reimer, H. C. Charlie Johnson, Abe Rosner, Henry W. Thiessen, Pete Martens, Peter L. Braun, John L. Braun, Diedrich H. Groening, John B.

Wiens, Henry L. Braun and John P. Friesen.

At this first meeting, John B. Wiens was elected chairman, with Henry L. Braun elected as secretary.

The second meeting of the Board of Trade was held on February 20, 1948. Discussions were held on the advisability of organizing the Board. A vote was taken at this meeting for those in favor of establishing "The Lowe Farm Board of Trade." Unanimous approval was given by those in attendance. John B. Wiens was elected as the first President of the newly formed Board. Peter L. Braun was elected as Vice-President and Abe Rosner as Secretary.

Several other interesting items formed the agenda of this meeting. These included a motion to formally adopt the name "The Lowe Farm Board of Trade." Motions were also made that membership fees be set at \$5 for the year 1948, and that the newly formed Board join the Manitoba Associated Boards.

A model constitution was also discussed and the secretary was asked to draft a constitution in time for the next meeting. In addition, it was decided that for the present the membership be limited to business men only or business organizations.

Two important motions were passed at the meeting on March 22, 1948. A motion was moved by Pete Martens and seconded by Diedrich Heppner that the constitution drawn up by the Secretary be adopted. The motion was carried. Another motion put forth by Henry C. Voth and seconded by Pete Martens that the name "The Lowe Farm Board of Trade" be changed to "The Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce," was also carried.

On September 13, 1948, a motion was presented to the Chamber of Commerce by Ed Braun on establishing a pool hall in Lowe Farm. After a lengthy

discussion as to location and licensing by the Rural Municipality of Morris, the Chamber gave unanimous approval to the project, provided the pool hall be located on Main Street.

As early as 1948, the Chamber of Commerce had addressed plans for a new school for Lowe Farm. At the meeting held on December 13, 1948, Diedrich Heppner headed the plans for such a new facility. It was only in 1955, however, that Lowe Farm finally acquired its new school. Ed Groening and Jacob Reimer acted as the committee members for this project.

Although the organization was originally established to deal with the problem of unpaid charge accounts, the Chamber of Commerce became an integral part of the community.

Over the years, the Chamber of Commerce became involved in discussions with Manitoba Telephone System regarding which telephone exchange should include Lowe Farm. Guest speakers were brought in to address the community on the topic of developing local industry. Discussions were also held on the benefits of a Grey Goose bus route through Lowe Farm. The Chamber of Commerce was instrumental in the building of the local skating rink, and later the curling rink. For many years the skating rink had been located at various locations throughout Lowe Farm.

This problem was resolved, however, when land was purchased from Abe Harder for \$345. The permanent site of the skating and curling rinks would be located on First Avenue immediately west of the Harder residence. Since the early 1990's the former curling rink has been turned into an indoor skating rink. The former outdoor skating rink, which had fallen into a state of disrepair, was torn down.

In April, 1952, the Chamber made a motion to establish a fire brigade for Lowe Farm. A maximum of \$6000, acquired from the Municipality, was used to construct a 24 by 28 foot fire hall, as well as to purchase a truck and the related fire fighting equipment.

The Chamber of Commerce became actively involved in the establishment of a campaign committee for the Red Cross. Letters of opposition were written to the Canadian National Railroad in 1964 with respect to rail line abandonment through Lowe Farm. The Chamber was also successful in lobbying for the reconstruction and subsequent paving of Highway 23.

Other notable achievements of the Chamber of Commerce were the installation of street lighting for Lowe Farm and the implementation of a protective shelter belt along the northern perimeter of town. Ornamental street lighting was made available along Main Street for the town, for use during the Christmas season. The widening of Main Street enabled the establishment of parking zones at business locations. Stop signs and yield signs, located on various streets within town would control these intersections.

There were two projects that seemed to be but a

dream for many years, but became realities in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The idea of a community park east of Lowe Farm along Highway 23 was first discussed in 1967. After many years of fundraising, land was purchased in 1978 and the work of erecting buildings, planting trees, and establishing a baseball diamond began. Discussions on a water and sewer system for the town had also been ongoing for many years. After numerous meetings with the municipal council, the Chamber of Commerce was informed that the proposed project for Lowe Farm had an excellent chance of becoming reality. Members of the Chamber surveyed residents door to door and found them excited about the potential of water and sewer for their community. The much anticipated system became operational in August of 1982.

In the late 1980's, the Chamber of Commerce undertook the responsibility of numbering houses in Lowe Farm. Once the numbering system was complete, the Manitoba Telephone System was approached and subsequently the numbering system was included in the telephone directory.

The Shannon Festival, initiated by the Chamber of Commerce, became an annual event. Its function was twofold: firstly to raise funds for community projects, and secondly it provided the opportunity for the community to get together and enjoy a day of sports and relaxation.

The need for funds was always increasing. In 1983, the Chamber of Commerce decided to raffle a farm tractor with respect to raising some much needed funds, however, during the course of the raffle there were anxious moments when ticket sales were really slow.

The Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce has a proud history in the community. Lowe Farm has been fortunate to have had so many members willing to give of their time, and share their ideas to make a difference to the people of our community.

In the early 1990's, the Lowe Farm Chamber of Commerce was replaced by what would be known as the Lowe Farm Recreation Commission. The responsibilities of the Chamber would be handed over to this new entity. Since this time, the Chamber of Commerce has become somewhat dormant. Perhaps in the future, the Chamber will once again be organized and help serve the community as it has in the past.

LOWE FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE

Submitted by Paul Joyal

In December of 1982, Lowe Farm Junior High School fell silent to the sounds of education. Gone forever were the classroom chatter, the screeching of chalk on a blackboard and the cheers of fans at a basketball game. The building, condemned earlier by the school division, had a bleak looking future. The beleaguered 30-year-old structure was, however, about to get a new lease on life

as a community center.

Plans initiated by the Chamber of Commerce had called for the construction of a community centre on Main Street. Its location would have been located to the west of what is now Netty's Cafe. Pledges totaling \$22,000.00 had been raised for the acquisition of the required property and construction of the building. The necessary government funding needed to complete the project, however, was not approved and the project was discontinued.

In 1984, the vacant school and property came under the ownership of Lowe Farm resident Pete Falk, who acquired the building and property from the Morris Macdonald School Division.

On December 9, 1985, a joint meeting held between the Chamber of Commerce, the Community Centre Board and Pete Falk, addressed the future of the retired school. At this meeting, Mr. Falk offered to sell the building, plus 45 feet of adjoining property, for \$50 - if a decision could be reached that evening. Approval was given by those in attendance to accept the very generous offer. Lowe Farm it appeared had acquired a community centre.



The Lowe Farm Community and Friendships Centre.

In December of 1985, the Lowe Farm and District Community Centre Committee, turned their attention to remodeling the newly acquired premises. Pledges previously raised within the community were offered back, or, if residents chose could redirect them to this new venture. The first phase of remodeling included replacing the flat roof on the gymnasium with a sloped roof, along with new soffits and fascias at a cost of \$15,000. An additional \$5,000 was spent on insulating the attic, installing new floor and ceiling tiles and upgrading the washroom and kitchen facilities to provincial standards. At the same time the community centre was connected to the town sewer and water system at an additional cost of \$ 6,500. Painting the interior of the gymnasium completed the remodeling project. Much of the work carried out during this time was done by the committee members involved and by volunteer labor. In February of 1986, with renovations complete, the Lowe Farm Community Centre became available for public use, thus ending three years of indecision and frustration.

With the first phase complete, the committee pondered what to do with the rest of the building. The north wing, that housed classrooms, the office, and washrooms, was also badly in need of repair. Expensive to heat in winter, combined with a leaking roof, left the committee in a quandary about what to do. The newly formed Lowe Farm Friendship and Willie's Woodworking were already occupying space and paying rent. Should money be spent on remodeling or should they demolish and reconstruct? This question remained unanswered for several years, until June 30, 1992, when a motion carried to demolish the existing north wing and reconstruct. The decision to construct new was made after much consultation between the executives of the Commu-

nity and Friendship Centres. Funding became a shared venture between both parties with the focus being on best value for dollars spent.

Once an agreement had been reached, the project moved rather quickly. On September 2, 1992, tenders appeared in the local newspapers for construction of the new centre. After reviewing tenders submitted, Rosenort Building Centre was awarded the building contract on September 26. The building, remodeling and demolition permits required were received by October 7. With permits in hand, demolition was carried out and completed by the third week in October. RJW Enterprises of Lowe Farm carried out the bulk of the demolition work. Construction on the new facility began almost immediately and continued throughout most of that winter. Once again, committee members and volunteers were present to assist in any way possible during the construction period.

Finally, on February 21, 1993, after many long months of planning and revisions, the Lowe Farm Community Centre along with the Lowe Farm Friendship Centre held grand opening ceremonies. The Honorable Bonnie Mitchelson, Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, attended the ceremony to officially dedicate the new facility. Also in attendance at the dedication were: Rural Municipality of Morris Reeve Dan Thiessen; Councilor Harold Dyck; the Community Centre Board of Directors; the Friendship Centre Executive; and several interested residents of Lowe Farm and surrounding area.

Thanks to the foresight and hard work of the many people involved, Lowe Farm Community Centre has become a valuable asset to the entire community. From its opening the community centre has provided a much-needed venue for the many cultural and social activities held in the community of Lowe Farm.

LOWE FARM FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

Submitted by Paul Joyal



A birthday party at the Friendship Centre. (l-r) Pete Brown, Tillie Brown, Anne Klassen, Helen Dyck, Johanna Paetkau and Anna Hudson.



*The men's turn to serve birthday dinner at the Friendship Centre.
Men: Al Joyal, Cornie Rempel, Jake Falk, Ben Braun. Women: Susan Hildebrand, Olga Joyal, Mary Penner.*

The Lowe Farm Friendship Centre was formed under the New Horizons program in 1984. New Horizons is a federal program administered by Health and Welfare Canada for the benefit of older and retired Canadians.

Its design is to give retired people an opportunity to share their interests, skills and talents in developing and carrying out projects of their choosing. The program encourages the development of creative leisure time activity, self-determination and democratic decision making.

The Lowe Farm Friendship Centre was first established in the Prairie View Apartments. Shortly after the school building was acquired by the community, the Friendship Centre re-located to this new location. The two west classrooms were rented from the Community Centre board and would become its home for the next several years. In the wake of the proposed changes being considered for the Community Centre, the Friendship Centre became actively

involved in the project. Working together with the Community Centre board they held meetings, reviewed and discussed plans and completed the funding arrangements, to the best interest of both Centres.

The grand opening of the Lowe Farm Friendship Centre was held in conjunction with those of the Community Centre.

From its inception in 1984, the seniors meet every Wednesday afternoon to relax and enjoy each other's company, play pool, shuffle board or card games. In addition, a lunch is served by the women of the centre. Not to be undone however, the senior gentlemen have also provided the women with their version of 'faspa.' The senior gentlemen have also been known to serve a fairly hearty lunch at some of the birthday parties that have taken place over the years. Celebrating a birthday at the centre is one of the highlights of their activities.

Some of the other activities the seniors have been involved in include outings to Carman for bowling, trips to Frost Fire Mountain, North Dakota, The Forks in Winnipeg and an excursion along the Red River aboard the River Rouge. The seniors have also worked together with Community Centre in sponsoring the annual Fall Supper, and at other times have held plant and bake sales.

The Lowe Farm Friendship Centre has been created by and for the senior citizens of our community. Their energy and enthusiasm have created a role model for succeeding generations to follow. Let us hope the next generation can follow their lead.

THE LOWE FARM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Submitted by Justina Funk



A Women's Institute picnic. (l - r) Mrs. P.A. Falk, Mrs. Jac Braun, Mrs. Wm. Friesen, Mrs. George Schroeder, Mrs. John I. Dyck, Mrs. Jac Peters, Mrs. Henry Friesen, Mrs. Frank Martens and daughter Betty, Mrs. J. A. Braun, Mrs. John N. Dyck, and Mrs. John Schroeder.



Posing for a camera at a centennial antique display in 1967 are (l - r) Mrs. Peter P. Rempel, Mrs. Eva Rempel and Mrs. George Schroeder.

The Lowe Farm Women's Institute was organized on October 30, 1947, with a membership of 47. There was no women's organization at this time and a number of concerned ladies saw the need for such an organization where certain needs of the community could be dealt with.

The needs to be met by the Women's Institute are "For Home and Country," and with this motto in mind, they strived to improve and help organize a variety of programs in the community.

It was beneficial to have a number of teachers as well as Teachers' wives in the organization because, through seeing the children at school, they often realized what was lacking.

The Women's Institute organized a boys baseball club, supplying uniforms. They also saw to it that funds came in for cemetery maintenance.

The Women's Institute in Lowe Farm was only three years old when the Flood of 1950 hit Morris and surrounding area. The need to feed the many workers and evacuees was evident and the ladies worked many hours in filling this need.

The regular meetings were held in the Co-op Hall. It was a special treat to take "armchair" trips to many lands abroad via pictorial presentations by Anne and Justina Wiens and others. The meetings usually had a special feature such as: book reports, cake decorating, liquid embroidery, quilting, and other features.

Every Christmas season, the spouses and children were invited for an evening of singing voluntary items by the children, bags of goodies for the children and a delicious lunch.

Every convention featured a time when members would remember the ones who had died during the past year by placing flowers in the vases placed in front of the hall. (Just imagine how many flowers would be placed at this date!)

The Women's Institute held bake sales, usually at Easter and at Christmas time. The money realized was used to support a foster child in India. UNICEF also profited from the efforts of the ladies through a clothing drive as well as funds. Catering at various functions also was a fund raising effort.

Bursaries were awarded to deserving Grade XI and Grade VIII students. A number of educational courses have been sponsored such as: Defensive Driving, Learning to Sew Knits, Hair Dressing, Typing, and others.

In Commemoration of Canada's 100th Birthday, a Centennial Tea was organized by the Women's Institute in Lowe Farm. Many antique items were on display, and a Fashion Show was also featured.

There was also a "quilting party" skit with Kay Derksen, Anne Wiens, Eva Rempel and Marie (John) Giesbrecht. There have been many ladies who have been in the President's Chair of the Lowe Farm Women's Institute. Just to mention some of them who were presidents for many terms: Tina Friesen, Hannah Reimer, Anne Wiens,

Hattie Green and Anne Dyck. Many have served shorter terms, but listing them, I'd most likely miss one. The community has greatly benefited from the many hours of work each member has donated "For Home and Country."

It was with regrets that the Lowe Farm Women's Institute terminated in 1973 due to the lack of membership.

LOWE FARM SPORTS

Submitted by Harold Dyck



Lowe Farm Curling Rink under construction in 1959. It was entirely a volunteer effort.



A makeshift kitchen at the Lowe Farm Curling Rink, 1960. (l-r) Susan Wiebe, Kay Braun, Anne Klassen.



An early Lowe Farm baseball team. Back row: (L-r) Ory Johnson, Harry Rose, Bert Oltman. Middle: Gib Russel, Elmer Crouch, Murray Anderson, Marshall Eickert. Front: Luther Lewis and Len Brown.



Founding members of the curling club. (l-r) C. G. Giesbrecht, Jake Thiessen, Ed Groening, Ben Braun, P.M. Wiebe.

Sporting activities are an important part of most communities and Lowe Farm is certainly no exception.

Baseball was introduced to the community by American immigrants around 1904. From the earliest times to the present there were years of active and inactive participation in this sport. One of the early teams existed between in the years 1907-1910.

In the early thirties a team managed by John J. Schroeder was quite successful. These teams played baseball against teams from rival communities.

In 1971, Lowe Farm organized a fastball team and joined the Pembina Valley Men's Fastball League. The original teams to play in the P.V.F.M.F.L. consisted of

teams from Lowe Farm, Kan, Myrtle and Roland. Over the years the league expanded to include many of the other surrounding communities. The first coach of this team was P.L. (Peter) Braun and named the Lowe Farm Astros. The caliber of play improved over the years and the league became quite competitive. The Lowe Farm Astros won the league championship in 1971, 1974, 1979, 1980, and 1985.

From 1976 to the mid 1980's the team coached by Harold Dyck then became known as the Lowe Farm Blues. Nineteen eighty-five became the leagues last year of operation. Most teams were unable to field enough players to continue in the league. In 1986, the communities of Kane and Lowe Farm combined their respective players and joined other teams in the area and became a member of the South Eastern Men's Fastball League. Teams in this league consisted of Lowe Farm, Winkler, Morden and New Hope. The Lowe Farm Blues played in this league until 1988, capturing the championship once.

Little league baseball was introduced to the community by the Women's Institute in 1966. Seeing the need for wholesome recreational activity for the young boys of the community they made provisions in their 1996 budget for an expenditure of \$70.00 for the project and appointed Annie Dyck and Mrs. Sid Lewis to get the project underway. These two ladies canvassed the local business community and any interested citizens for financial and leadership support. The response they received was gratifying and soon the boys were enjoying this sport under the coaching and managing done by willing and capable men of Lowe Farm. Over the years there have been teams involved in 10 and under, 12 and under, 14 and under and sixteen and under.

In 1966, a team coached by Dave Schmidt, Tony Rose and Rod



Lowe Farm Astros, champions. (l - r) Pete Stoesz, Bill Kebler, Gordon Dyck, Gary Friesen, Dennis Braun, Rick Giesbrecht, Eldon Thiessen, Peter L. Braun.



An early Lowe Farm Kings hockey team.



Ladies Baseball team, 1938. Seated: (l - r) Susie Klassen, Nettie Rempel, Nettie Klassen, Susie Rempel, Evelyn Giesbrecht, Luella Brown. Standing: Mary Klassen, Kay Giesbrecht, Anne Klassen, Ann Falk.

Bergman won the Pee Wee C. Provincial Championship. The little league program still continues in Lowe Farm as players are available in the different age groups.

A girl's softball team organized in the early thirties played ball in Lowe Farm until interest in this team diminished for a few years. When reorganized a very competitive team emerged, and enjoyed considerable success at sports days held in the community and the surrounding area for several years. In 1977, women's softball was revived under the coaching of Tony Dyck.

In 1985, the Lowe Farm girls had their first opportunity in many years to play organized community baseball. Lynda Schroeder and Alice Brown began to organize the girls in the spring of 1985, hoping to provide their daughters and other girls in town with the chance to enjoy the sport. That first year the team consisted of girls from Grade 6 to Grade 9. Since the team, not registered with any league, arranged and played games with teams from neighboring communities.

In 1986, the Lowe Farm girl's team registered with the Border Girls Fastball League in the 13 years and under category. Because of the wide range of the Lowe Farm team, 10 years to 14 years, they played under an "affiliated" status. This would prevent the team, however, from participating in the Provincials should they win the league title. Considering that the teams competing in the league were from much larger communities and had players that were generally 12 to 14 years of age, no one though this would present a problem. However, due to hard work and determination of the girls, the team went on to win the league. They did not compete provincially but this was the start of many years of enjoyable and competitive baseball for the Lowe Farm girls.

The team that played together in 1986, with the addition of some players from Morris went on to compete as a team until 1992. The oldest girls had graduated and many were working, but continued to enjoy the camaraderie and competition.

Over the years Lowe Farm managed to field girls' teams in various age groups as interest was high. Many volunteers have coached, raised funds and supported the sport. At one point there were three age levels competing in various age groups in the same season, with the addition of some players from Morris. The teams also left the Border Girls Fastball League to join the CMR



Lowe Farm Hornets, 1996 Pee Wee Champions.

Back row (l-r) Coach Dave Schmidt, Assistant Coaches Rod Bergman and Tony Rose, Manager Rose Eubank. Middle row: Lionel Eubank, Bobby Siemens, David Schmidt, Joshua Plett, Dustin Rose, Tyler Heinrichs, Borck Groening. Front: Trevor Wiebe, Darren Friesen, Karl Bergman, Mike Bially, Cody Reimer, Matt Dubar and Andy Regier.



Lowe Farm – Kane hockey club, Morden Liniment League Champions. Back row: (l-r) Earl Braun, Rick Rempel, Milton Braun, Larry Gluck, Gary Dyck, Tony Rose, Brian Brown, Dennis Rempel, Les Dyck, Norman Blatz. Front row: Ken Reimer, Rod Bergman, Howard Brown, Cornie Paetkau, Barrie Rose, Barry Friesen, Rick Giesbrecht and Hank Hildebrand.



Southeastern Manitoba Fastball League. Back row: (l-r) Curtis Penner, Rick Rempel, Dennis Rempel, Gary Dyck, Dennis Matthies. Front row: Ron Braun, Brian Brown, Ralph Groening, Tony Rose, Earl Bergman, Jerry Brown, Ron Friesen.

(Carman/Miami/Roland) League. Currently interest and the number of girls available to play has diminished, but Lowe Farm continues to field a team.

In 1986, Lynda Schroeder and Alice Brown also introduced a program for the younger children, boys and girls, which ran once a week immediately after school. The following year these players went to Morris and Miami to play some "coach-pitch" games, but program was generally kept within the community. The after school baseball program has continued to operate, operated by parent volunteers and provides an opportunity for skill development for young players.

Hockey was another sport played within the community. Although there has never been a minor hockey program in Lowe Farm, a senior team did exist in the early 1930's. The Second World War interrupted this team, but was re-organized in 1945.

In 1970, the Lowe Farm Kings became founding members of the Pembina Valley Hockey League. The team played their home games on the outdoor rink, and in later years rented ice in the Roland Arena. The team was never very successful on the score sheet, but provided the players with an invigorating form of recreation.

In 1946, the first curling rink was established in Lowe Farm. A grain annex was bought, torn down and the lumber from it used to construct the rink. The curling rink was located on land donated by Diedrich Heppner. Volunteer labor from within the community carried out the bulk of the construction.

In 1959, a new curling rink was constructed at the same location as the previous one. Many successful curling bonspiels have been hosted in Lowe Farm with the participation of men's, women and mixed teams.

In the mid 1980's, it was becoming increasingly difficult to form enough teams to continue curling. This regrettably led to a decision to suspend curling in Lowe Farm in 1988. In the years since that time the former curling rink has transformed itself into an indoor skating rink, providing a sheltered area for the children of the community to enjoy skating.

Whether skating, baseball, curling or hockey, none of these activities could have taken place in Lowe Farm without the support of many community minded volunteers. The untiring efforts of these individuals has provided an arena for the young and old in our community to participate in recreational exercise.



(l-r) Harold Dyck, Lorne Penner, Ron Heinrichs.

THE SHANNON FESTIVAL

Submitted by Ben Braun

Since 1973, the Lowe Farm Shannon Festival has been a significant annual celebration for the village. The festival has been highlighted with a variety of interesting events, and has been a fund-raiser for the purchase, development and maintenance of the Lowe Farm Community Park, located east of the school grounds.

The events of the festival have varied from year to year. Horse shows, dog shows and various sports events have all been crowd-pleasers at the festival. Archery, horseshoes and other sports events have attracted spectators and participants over the years. The baseball tournament and children's activities and races are current favorites. In the past, a parade and a queen contest were also featured at the Shannon Festival.

Good food and fellowship have been staples of the festival since its inception. A breakfast is offered, and it has often been sponsored by the Lowe Farm Credit Union. A barbecue supper is also served; plumi mousse is everyone's favorite dessert at this meal. These meals provide a

perfect setting for the citizens of Lowe Farm to meet and enjoy each other's company, as they celebrate the Shannon Festival each summer.



Ben Braun's cutter at the 1970 winter carnival.



Carnival queen and runner ups, 1970. (l - r) Joan Friesen, Alice Friesen, Carol Hildebrand and Miss Funk.



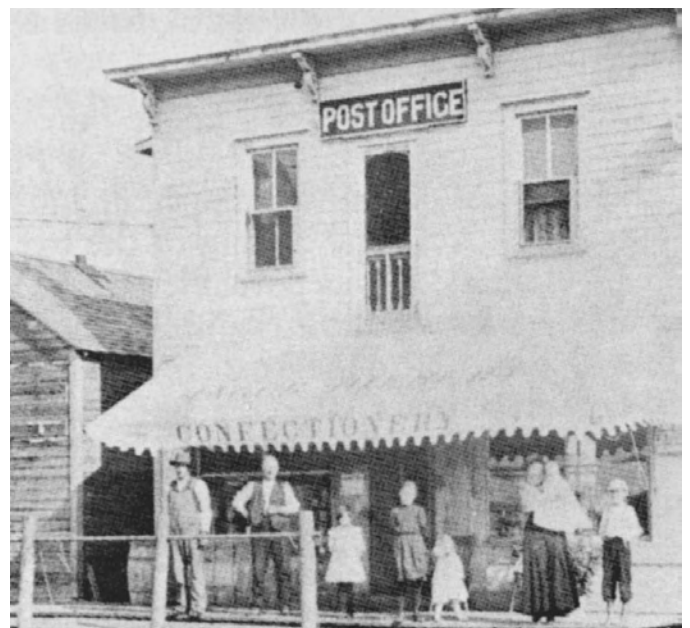
Gordon Dyck, 1974 Shannon Parade clown.



Butch Harder in the 1974 Shannon Parade.

LOWE FARM POST OFFICE

Submitted by Paul Joyal



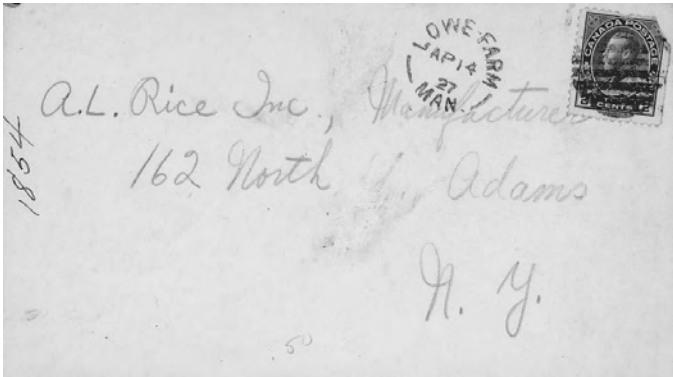
Built by Bill Blakely in 1903-04, this building was owned by J. Hiebert (above), J.B. Hooge, A.A. Giesbrecht, M. Rosner and A.P. Derksen

The official records of the Canada Post Office Department indicate that John I. Wiens served as the first postmaster for Lowe Farm from April 1, 1900, until May 18, 1907.

In the early years the Post Office moved around considerably, probably being first located in C. Nester's store and then in Blakely's store for several years.

In 1907, Blakely sold his store to Jacob Hiebert, who served as postmaster until March 14, 1910. In 1910, J. B.

Hooge was appointed postmaster, after acquiring the store from Jacob Hiebert. He, in turn, sold the store to A. A. Giesbrecht in 1914. Mr. Giesbrecht moved the building at that time to Lot 1, Block 4, where it still stands today. The building, now owned by Dave and Netty Wiebe, continues to operate as a coffee bar as it has in the past.



A stamp from the Lowe Farm Post Office soon after the date of establishment, April 1, 1900.



Ben and Kay Braun, post master and post mistress.



An early Post Office.



Early post office and telephone exchange, courtesy Manitoba Archives.



Current Post Office inside the Co-op store.

After serving as postmaster from August 12, 1914, to March 3, 1924, Mr. Giesbrecht sold the building to the Rosners, and Nicolai J. Heide was appointed as postmaster. The location of the post office was moved to the Heide residence on Block 3, Lot 4.

After serving as postmaster for 34 years, from May 1, 1924 to September 1, 1958, Nicolai J. Heide retired.

David Brown was next appointed postmaster and the post office was relocated to the Brown residence. David Brown served as postmaster from September 1, 1958 until June 11, 1968. When Mr. Brown passed away after serving 10 years as post master, his wife carried on as postmistress from June 11, 1969, until August 27, 1971.

Ben Braun was appointed as postmaster on August 28, 1971, and the post office was relocated to Block 4, Lot 8, where it stood for many years.

After serving as postmaster for 11 years, Mr. Braun retired, and was succeeded by his wife, Kaye, who served as postmistress from 1982 until mid 1987. Upon the retirement of Mrs. Braun, Anne Dueck served as interim postmistress from July 16, 1987, until June 18, 1991.

Unfortunately, Canada Post decided to do away with many small rural post offices in Manitoba, including the one in Lowe Farm. Retail Postal Outlets would replace the familiar Post Offices of the past. Businesses bid on the acquisition of these outlets, which would provide for the postal services of the community. Since the closure of the Post Office, the postal outlet has been located in the Lowe Farm Co-op Store.

TELEPHONE

The Bell Telephone Company took over a small privately owned telephone system in Morris in 1901. The first listing for Lowe Farm appeared in the Telephone directory for April, 1906. The telephone was located in W. E. Blakely's store, but was for everyone's use. It was referred to as a Toll Office, which was similar to a pay phone, but without the slots for coins. W.E. Blakely was the local manager.

In 1908, the Provincial Government purchased the telephone system from Bell and the name was changed to Manitoba Government Telephones. The first subscriber listing was for Warnken, T.J., on Main, which appeared in the April, 1908 directory. The agent at that time was Jacob Hiebert.

Lowe Farm converted from a Toll Office to an exchange in 1910. By March, 1911, there were listings for seven businesses and two residences in Lowe Farm, as well as 20 rural subscribers.

By 1916, telephone subscribers in Lowe Farm were listed under the Morris Exchange, except for a Public Station (pay phone), listed to A. A. Giesbrecht.

In 1921, the name of the telephone company, still owned by the government, was changed to the Manitoba Telephone System (MTS).

Telephone service continued to improve and by January of 1967, dial telephones replaced the old crank type sets in this area. With the new automatic service also came the Direct Distance Dialing Network. This meant subscribers on the Morris Exchange could now

dial their own station-to-station long distance calls. Those on party lines, however, still had to give the number they were calling from to the operator. This became unnecessary in 1990 when the sharing of a line, known as party lines, became a thing of the past. Each telephone subscriber now had a private line. Dial telephones also became obsolete and were replaced with touch-tone service.

MTS had a monopoly on telephone service for many years but in 1993 the Conservative Government, led by Gary Fill-in, opened the door for competition in providing long distance calling service. Subscribers now had a choice in selecting their long distance provider. While many companies vied for the long distance dollar, MTS was still the only company to provide both long distance service and local service.

OFFICIAL	
Telephone Directory	
No. 1	
APRIL, 1908	
89	LETELLIER
1 Taylor, Saul	Livery, Railway
2 Todd, J.	Residence, Pembina ave
42 ring 13—Toms, J. C.	Farmer, S.W. 5-4-9
46 ring 13—Waldie, Robt.	Farmer, N.E. 6-4-9
41 ring 3—Webber, Wesley	Farmer, N.E. 21-2-9
44 ring 2—Wightman, Wm.	Farmer, N.W. 7-3-9
38 ring 6—Wilson, T. C.	Farmer, Snowflake
41 ring 12—Windsor, Frank	Farmer, W. 20-2-9
41 ring 4—Windsor, H.	Farmer, N.E. 30-2-9

LASALLE—Toll Office—M. Gaudry, Agent	
LAUDER—for Subscribers see Hartney.	
LENA—for Subscribers see Killarney.	

LETELLIER—D. J. Parent, Agent	
Comeault, N.	Letellier Mercantile Co., Main
Fraser, P.	Residence, Main
Guilbert, A.	Post Office, St. Albert
Jatras, Rev. Father	Residence, Church
Parent, J.	Residence, Church
Robert, G.	Hotel, Main
Sisters of the Mission	Residence, St. Albert

LOWE FARM—Jacob Hiebert, Agent	
Warnken, T. J.	Main

Read the Directions for Using Telephones, and Rules and Regulations, on Page 3.	

The Manitoba Government sold MTS in 1996 through the sale of shares. The name of the now privately owned company became Manitoba Telecom Services Inc. (MTS). In 1999 the telephone company came full circle as MTS and Bell Canada signed an agreement which gave Bell Canada a minority interest in MTS.

THE OLD WATERHOLE

Submitted by Paul Joyal



The first waterhole in Lowe Farm, east of town with Stevenson farm building in background, 1902.

In the late 1800's many parts of the land in the Lowe Farm area was swampy and the roads very poor or non-existent. In the latter part of summer, water often became scarce. Digging wells in the clay soil was useless unless you went down several hundred feet and then the water was invariably salty. The only way to insure a supply of water was to dig waterholes and wait for next spring's thaw to fill them.

The housewife did the best she could to look after the drinking and washing needs of her family by collecting rainwater from the roof in barrels placed under eavestroughs or merely sloping boards that caught the water as it ran from the roof.

For the first year or so after people moved into the area, many of the farmers had to drive their cattle for miles to water them at the small pools of water that were to be found under the Canadian National Railroad bridges. Sometimes local water haulers were forced to haul water all the way from the Red River at Morris. At times they got stuck in the Lewis Coulee on their way home and were forced to let all of the precious water out of the tank so that they could get clear of the mud and go back for more.

Digging a water hole in those days was not as simple or as easy a task as it is now that a dragline can do the

job in half a day. The Enns brothers, who settled on W 1/2 22-4-2 in 1898, dug a water hole with spades, taking out the dirt with wheelbarrows.

In Lowe Farm the first water hole was made by William Stephenson before the founding of the town. It later became known as the "Old Reimer Waterhole." Jacob Heppner made the second in 1899. One would have thought the two water holes would be sufficient for the needs of the small village at the time, but Jacob Heppner and Jacob Wiens, who owned the Reimer water hole at that time, feared the water would not last long through the winter and made their children take turns driving their cattle all the way to Scratching River - some seven or eight miles away. This was a task which the children naturally considered unpleasant and unnecessary.

For several years the summers were very dry, and conserving water was a priority. Many water barrels were required to meet even the thriftiest needs of a family. Eventually most homes built cisterns, large tanks made of concrete or steel, capable of holding several hundred gallons of water. During the summer months, these cisterns could be filled with rain water, channeled of the roof via eavestroughs and downspouts. During the winter, snow or ice could be added to the cisterns to help maintain a constant supply. Usually the cistern was located in the basement of the house, or in close proximity outside. Although this system worked quite well for many years, it became increasingly apparent Lowe Farm needed a reliable source of water. From 1938 until the mid 1950's Abram Klassen served as the drainman in Lowe Farm, delivering ice in the winter and water barrels in the summer with a team of horses and a stone boat.

In the late 1970's the Chamber of Commerce put in to motion the plan to provide Lowe Farm with an adequate supply of water. The plan entailed the digging of a large reservoir and then basically pumping the water to residents. Members of the Chamber of Commerce canvassed residents with the proposed project. They outlined the costs and the benefits to individual homeowners and the community at large. After all the leg work had been done by the Chamber, an overwhelming 80 per cent of residents were signed up for the new water system. After all of the meetings, consultations, and studies had been completed, the Rural Municipality of Morris gave the green light and the project began in earnest. J. R. Cousins was hired as the consulting engineer for the project, while Jack Klassen of Lowe Farm was hired as project supervisor along with Ken Rempel and Jake F. Klassen as assistants.

Tenders were then received from several contractors for digging of the reservoir. Beaudry Construction Ltd. of St. Agathe was awarded the contract. The reservoir was constructed immediately south of the Manitoba Pool Elevator.

Work started late in the fall of 1981 on the 14 foot deep, 22,000,000 gallon reservoir and was completed

before winter freeze up. With the reservoir in place, Q.M. Brothers of Altona were awarded the contact for the pumphouse and filtration station that were needed. The pumphouse drew water from the reservoir and sent the water via a three inch pipe to the filtration station which is located just north of Reimer Service on Main Street. Here the water was filtered, chlorinated and stored within a 35,000 gallon concrete reservoir. The purified water could then be fed into the village water system and subsequently to the homeowners. Adam Jet Ltd. installed the pumps and related equipment, while Prairie Water Services supplied the pipe and fittings. South Central Electrical Ltd. did the necessary wiring. Dig All Construction of Winkler carried out the installation of the main water and sewer lines throughout the town site.



Abram Klassen, Drayman for Lowe Farm.

Once all related equipment was in place the task of filling the reservoir could begin. Two four inch gasoline pumps and one six inch diesel pump were employed to fill the reservoir, with water taken from the Shannon ditch. Pumping was delayed due to cold water experienced the week of April 5 - 9 that year. Jack Klassen vividly recalls spending one long cold night in stormy weather with volunteer Ron Unrau in a makeshift shelter, manning the pumps. At 10 a.m. on April 15, 1982, after three days of almost non-stop pumping, the reservoir held 18,000,000 gallons of water. The reservoir was not filled to capacity in order that the finishing work could be completed around the outside edges. With a noticeable drop in the Shannon ditch, Jack Klassen stated that they filled the reservoir just in time.

Finally on August 20, 1982, after all testing and inspections had been completed, Lowe Farm residents were able to turn on their taps and draw water from "Lake Lowe Farm".

As the main water lines were being installed in the town site, sewer lines were being installed as well. The sewer system would come into operation June 2, 1982. The R.M. of Morris constructed two sewage lagoons east of the town site, north of the nuisance grounds, in preparation for the sewer system. A two-compartment septic tank located on homeowners property separated solid and liquid waste. The liquid waste, known as "grey water", was delivered to the main sewer line via an effluent pump. Gravity then fed this water to the lagoon. Once every two years the solid waste is pumped out of the septic tanks by Brown's Septic Service of Lowe Farm which has provided this service since 1982.

In normal years, the sewer system worked well, however in a spring with

heavy runoff or a heavy rainfall, the sewer system would become overwhelmed by all the extra water. Unable to cope, the system would back up, causing septic tanks to overflow and basements to flood. The problem, however, was alleviated with the installation of a lift station at the eastern edge of the village. The lift station is comprised of a 1,500 gallon tank and a pump. The main purpose of a lift station is to aid the sewer system to work more efficiently by discharging sewage into the lagoon more rapidly.

To many residents, the new sewer system ended the old system of the "cash-and-carry", while to others it meant the end of the little house outdoors and the cold memories they seated in their minds.

With the completion of the Lowe Farm reservoir, one would have thought the water needs of the community had finally been addressed. Unfortunately, this would not be the case. At first, free of natural contaminants, the reservoir was capable of delivering high quality, good tasting water to the community, with very little maintenance. However, as natural vegetation increased in and around the reservoir, problems began to arise. During the hot months of the summer and early fall algae formed in the water giving it an unpleasant odor and taste. Algae formed on the intake pipes in the reservoir restricting the flow of water and ultimately plugging the filtration system. Expensive chemicals were needed to control the algae. The high cost of maintenance, such as filling the reservoir each spring, purchasing chemicals to treat the water, and repairs to the pumps, filters and related equipment, and the fact that Lowe Farm simply was not using enough water, were factors that would make the reservoir a liability rather than an asset, both to the community and the municipality.