

Delta Marsh History Initiative, Steering Committee Meeting
9:00 am, 22 March 2006
Home of Shirley Christianson, Portage la Prairie

Present: Barry Bills, Shirley Christianson, Denzil Gamble, Gordon Goldsborough (sec), Bob Jones, Cynthia Jordan, Winnie Pauch, Maurice Blanchard, Glen Suggett

1. **Minutes** of the last meeting (20 February 2006) were approved by consensus with the following correction: Duck populations in the marsh were low in the 5 or 6 years following 1959 (i.e. the early 1960s).

2. **Business**

- a) *Cuthbert books* – Christianson obtained two copies of the Cuthbert family book from Georgina Cuthbert, and provided them to Suggett and Goldsborough.
- b) *Bally DVD* – Suggett reported that the disk works in a DVD player but not a computer. It consists of photographs and some text.
- c) *Progress report* – Jones and Suggett met with Norman Cuthbert for an interview. The interview was videotaped, and Suggett has transcribed it. He was hard of hearing. It was a difficult interview, as Mr. Cuthbert did not recall a lot of detail. He talked about native artifacts found in a sandy area near his home, and on the Flee Island entrenchments. In the 1940s, he used a shovel to excavate into the entrenchments and found large numbers of muskrat bones. Suggett wondered if this indicated that native people in the 1860s were using them as food, rather than walking the long distance to Lake Manitoba, as has been previously supposed. Subsequently, Suggett contacted the provincial Historic Resources Branch (Garry Dixon) who referred him to a now-retired researcher for the Entrenchments. Suggett will contact her for an interview. Blanchard reported finding an intact human skeleton buried upright in a gravel quarry long the road to St. Ambroise circa 1956. It was said at the time to be a native man killed in battle. It was a very large man. The skeleton was later reburied in the RM of Woodlands. The daughter of Torrey Ward said he found a small carved doll, claimed to come from the Entrenchments. Norman Cuthbert said that his father or grandfather found an anchor in Cadham Bay while walking in shallow water. They retrieved it, and it now sits in Danny Cuthbert's back yard. Suggett also reported that he is transcribing past interviews, including ones done by Goldsborough with Blanchard. In that interview, Blanchard mentioned that his wife worked for Jimmy Robinson. We should interview her and Mary Lamirande (at St. Ambroise) regarding Sports Afield Lodge. Blanchard will arrange an interview with them. Suggett will call to confirm.
- d) *Other interview* – Bob Hales, now in his 80s, father to Don, lived in the west marsh area all his life. He would be a good source on early agricultural activities there. Jordan reported that Jean Hamilton Young works at Cobbe's in Portage and might have information on Clara Robinson. An interview with Sterling Lyon has been arranged for Monday, 3 April at 1:00 PM with Goldsborough, Jones, and Suggett.
- e) *Hochbaum biography* – Goldsborough was contacted by Larry Bruder, who operated the Agassiz Gallery in Winnipeg which carried artwork by Albert Hochbaum and other. Mr. Bruder is going through Hochbaum's personal papers in preparation for writing a biography on Hochbaum. He wondered if it would be possible to stay at the Delta Marsh Field Station while doing this work.
- f) *Miller plane crash* – Blanchard recalled the circa 1960 accident in which the heir to the Miller brewing empire (and owner of the Milwaukee Brewers) was killed, along with his son and pilot. Blanchard has guided him extensively in the 1950s.

- g) *Delta forest clearing* – Pauch drew our attention to an article in the *Daily Graphic* (18 March 2006, page 6) in which it was reported that Doug Connery is interested in making a parking lot south of the Delta road by the public beach – claiming that it is required to alleviate a safety concern – by cutting trees and clearing underbrush. Suggett thought that the land in question is a mixture of RM, Crown, and Delta Beach Association land, so carrying out any such plan would be complicated.
 - h) *Delta WMA* – Suggett reported that designation of much of the marsh as a Wildlife Management Area is scheduled tentatively for 23 June, to be announced by the Minister of Conservation at the Delta Marsh Field Station. An information kiosk at Highway 240 at the Heritage Marsh sign will be built in late May. Renewal of the University lease may also take place at this time, if it can be renegotiated by then.
 - i) *Friends of the Field Station photograph collages* – Goldsborough reported that the Friends of the Field Station is undertaking a project to display some of the history of the Field Station, using photographs selected from a large collection donated to the University by a great niece of Donald Bain. The plan is to prepare at least four panels of nine photographs each, on specific themes: Mallard Lodge, Donald Bain, waterfowling, and the Bain property site. Other panels would be prepared on other themes as funds permitted. It is hoped the panels can be unveiled in June. Meanwhile, the Friends' Annual General Meeting will take place on 23 April (Southwood Country Club, Winnipeg, \$20 per person including buffet lunch), where Goldsborough will give a slide show of some of the photographs selected for the panels.
 - j) *Delta Marsh canvasback print* – Suggett commissioned this artwork and arranged to make copies for promotional purposes. A copy will be framed as a prize in the raffle to be conducted leading up to this year's Canada Day Fish Fry.
 - k) *Fish fry* – It was decided to sell tickets at the door, not in advance. Raffle tickets will be sold in advance. Bills will get a permit from the City of Portage la Prairie, and provide the permit number to Goldsborough, who will prepare the tickets. The first prize will be the Vust quilt (estimated value \$1,000), second prize will be a framed canvasback print (\$500), and third prize will be a framed photo by Dennis Wiens (\$100). Other Silent Auction prizes will be solicited, including copies of the upcoming DMFS cookbook, binoculars, etc.
 - l) *Archives inventory* – Bills provided a full inventory of our archival holdings to Suggett.
3. **Next meeting:** The next meeting will be held at the home of Shirley Christianson (118 Wilkinson Crescent, Portage la Prairie) at **9:00 am on Tuesday, 18 April 2006.**
4. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.