

Delta Marsh History Initiative, Steering Committee Meeting  
9:00 am, 30 October 2001  
Home of Shirley Christianson, Portage la Prairie

**Present:** Barry Bills, Maurice Blanchard, Shirley Christianson, Heidi den Haan, Denzil Gamble, Gordon Goldsborough (recorder), Bob Jones, Glen Suggett

1. **Minutes** of the last meeting (25 September) were approved by consensus.

2. **Delta discoveries:** Suggett reported briefly on Terry Mowberly's "racey" lodge on Portage Creek. Goldsborough has received a short report on the history of Tundra Lodge owned by Jim Richardson. Goldsborough circulated his transcript of an article from *The News and Portage la Prairie Review* (a newspaper that published around the turn of the last century) describing a train excursion to Delta organized for Dominion Day 1901 by the Independent Order of Foresters (copy attached to Minutes). Christianson reported that she was trying to locate the historical photographs compiled by Mr. Glen McIvor, who died on 21 October. A box obtained from Mr. McIvor's room in the Douglas Campbell Home just prior to his death proved to contain only a few relatively recent photos and none of the old photos described in an inventory list located by Bills a few weeks before. Christianson is in touch with Mr. Jack Green, a stepson of Mr. McIvor, whose daughter is married to Rick Henderson (from whom Goldsborough has obtained copies of some McIvor photos). Goldsborough asked about the whereabouts of the source materials, photographs, etc. used in 1970 to write a history book on Portage la Prairie and district, because the book contains some interesting photos and hints about Delta history. Bills reported there are only three people remaining from the committee that compiled the 1970 book. There are no photos in the Portage Library, according to the librarian Percy Gregoire. Bills is checking further on the matter and will report at a future meeting. Goldsborough asked about historical materials that might be available in records of the City of Portage la Prairie. Bills reported that he had been involved in organizing some of these materials, and suggested Margaret Loewen as a contact in the City office. Goldsborough reported that a colleague of his at the University had told him about a Judge Sparling (living in Winnipeg, deceased since the mid-1980s) who hailed from Portage la Prairie and who had had a large collection of historical photos of Delta. Christianson indicated there is a daughter-in-law of Judge Sparling's who may know of their whereabouts. Allison "Foxy" Lytle (sister of Sterling Lyon) will call her about it. Goldsborough mentioned that he was approached by a Mr. Keith Campbell during the Delta Dinner in early October, who was able to identify the people in the famous Clark Gable photo from Delta. Goldsborough will contact him about further historical information.

3. **Publicity:** Goldsborough is still working on a newsletter for inclusion in some local newspapers. It will be two pages; both sides of one page.

There is not an accurate count yet of tickets sold for the upcoming Fish Fry at Delta but it is estimated in excess of 160. Blanchard will prepare food for 400 people. Christianson will approach McCains to solicit a donation of pie for dessert. Blanchard will provide coffee/tea service, will pick up a soft drink dispense from McDonalds, and tables, clothes, cutlery and plates. Setup at the Delta Interpretive Centre will commence at 9 am with Christianson, den Haan, Goldsborough, Pauch, and Suggett assisting. Bills and his wife will attend to cash-taking at the door. den Haan will arrange for a cashbox. Russ Mead (Delta Marsh Field Station) will make a couple of signs, one for the west intersection of Hwys 240 and 227, and the other for the west dike of the Portage Diversion at Hwy 227, to direct people to Delta. Suggett and Bills will solicit publicity for the event. Bills has arranged spots on CBC Radio Noon on Thursday and Friday preceding the Fry. Goldsborough will put together a slide show of historical photographs, and he and Suggett will arrange for a few large prints for display on the walls. It was agreed generally that there was insufficient time to arrange a Silent Auction during the Fry, but that it would be desirable for a subsequent one (possibly at Fort La Reine in the spring?).

4. **Research:** Garrioch told Goldsborough during a recent meeting that he will check with Ducks Unlimited to see if they could help us obtain a digital video camera. He will report at a future meeting. Otherwise, Suggett indicated that he may be able to solicit funds for the camera from the provincial government's Heritage Marsh program, which includes Delta Marsh.

There was general agreement that the list of keywords provided by Bills, and revised over the past couple of months on suggestions of committee members, was acceptable. Regarding the resource database for which the keyword list will be used, Goldsborough will investigate the database software used by the Western Canada Pictorial Index, which does similar catalogue work for historical photographs.

5. **Fundraising:** none, beside the Fish Fry above

6. **Other business:** none

7. **Next meeting:** The next meeting of the steering committee will be at 9:00 am on **Tuesday, 27 November 2001** at the home of Shirley Christianson (118 Wilkinson Crescent, Portage la Prairie).



## A DOMINION DAY PICNIC

### Crowds Flocked to Delta and Enjoyed an Outing

The Dominion Day excursion which was run from Winnipeg to Delta and intermediate points yesterday under the auspices of Court Marquette, Independent Order of Foresters was a grand success in every sense of the word. It is seldom that local societies meet with such gratifying success as the Foresters did yesterday, which goes to show what judicious advertising will do.

The weather was favorable for picnicking, being fine and warm with a clear sky and a gentle breeze, which went a long way toward making a pleasant day's outing.

About half past nine in the morning the crowd commenced congregating at the Canadian Northern depot and a rapid sale of tickets then commenced. By the time the train was due to arrive it was easily to be seen that no train could accommodate such a huge mass of jolly excursionists. The three cars which were in the yards here had long been filled to overflowing, and still there were from eight hundred to a thousand Portagers waiting for car room.

When the train arrived it was found to contain about five hundred people from Winnipeg and points west, and then there was a scramble for seats, standing room, or in fact any kind of accommodation available. The first train pulled out from the station here at 11.30 and although the seats, the isles and car and platforms were crowded full over the half the crowd was left on the platform here. A large number of daring youths had taken up their abode on the tops of the cars and on the engine tender, and in fact any place they could hang on, but still hundreds were left behind. The run was made to the lake in about an hour without an accident; beyond the loss of numerous hats, an occasional lunch basket and other sundry articles.

As soon as the cars were empty the train immediately ran back to Portage to bring out those who were left. On arriving here the second train was soon almost as heavily loaded as the first, but fortunately on this occasion all could get accommodations of some time. The second train arrived at Delta about 2 o'clock.

After arriving at the beach the first order of business was to attend to the requirements of the "inner man" who by this time was beginning to make his presence felt. After dinner boating was generally indulged in, the steamer Petrel which had been chartered for the occasion by the Foresters, proved to be a popular boat and made three excursions.

The boat left the dock at three o'clock and had on board about two hundred and fifty passengers including the local Salvation Army band, which by the way went a long way towards making the excursion a success. The Petrel proceeded about four miles out into the lake and returned, arriving at the dock shortly after four. On the second trip the boat pulled out about half past four and this trip was practically a repetition of the first. Still another trip was made by the boat, and on this occasion the excursion committee who had worked hard all day to make things pleasant for the picnickers went on board on a special invitation of the Captain and Mr. Spiers, the manager.

Those who did not patronize the Petrel used the sail and row boats while others bathed in the refreshing waters of our beautiful lake. Still there were others who spent their time in games, social conversation and visited friends who were in camp there. And when it was time to return, all were highly pleased with *(the)* day's outing.

The first train to return from lake left Delta at six o'clock and after arriving here ran back to bring in the balance of the gathering arriving here on the second trip about nine o'clock.

D. Cassels was the caterer and had an abundance of good things on sale, and while the crowd was much larger than expected, none had to go hungry, as Cassel's supply appeared to be inexhaustible.

As a result of the excursion the enterprising promoters will have a surplus of nearly \$100 after all expenses have been paid. The Foresters are deserving of much credit for the manner in which they set to work and endeavored to entertain the huge gathering, which by the way was no easy matter.

As a result of yesterday's excursion a large influx of campers at Delta may be expected, owing to the fact that but few people previously had any idea of the attractions which Delta afforded campers. The grounds although not yet in the best of condition, are being rapidly put into shape and when this work is completed should make one of the most popular summer resorts in the province."

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