

Delta Marsh History Initiative, Steering Committee Meeting
9:00 am, 26 March 2002
Home of Shirley Christianson, Portage la Prairie

Present: Barry Bills, Maurice Blanchard, Shirley Christianson, Gordon Goldsborough (sec), Bob Jones, Glen Suggett

1. **Minutes** of the last meeting (26 February) were approved by consensus.
2. **Delta discoveries:**
 - a) Shirley Christianson received from Sandra Lamont a briefcase that had belonged to her father, John Owens. Mr. Owens was a member of the Portage Country Club in the 1950s through to the 1970s, and he had intended to write a history of the club. To that end, he borrowed Minute Books of the club going back to its founding in 1911. Regrettably, he did not complete the history before his death, and the briefcase containing the books remained with Mrs. Lamont. Goldsborough had been investigating the club history previously and had seen the Minute Books dating back to the 1950s but the earlier ones had, until now, been missing. Bills looked through the contents of the briefcase and prepared a detailed inventory. Goldsborough borrowed the briefcase to see what materials may pertain to his biography project for Donald Bain.
 - b) Shirley Christianson borrowed a copy of a privately published book, circa 1988, entitled "A Heritage of Love and Courage" by Grace Dunn belonging to George Robb, a cottager at Delta. Bills has copied a short section from the book pertaining to Mrs. Dunn's recollections of early life at Delta.
 - c) Mrs. Clarice Brown loaned three photos dealing with early cottage life at Delta.
 - d) Shirley Christianson reported that she has returned the two framed photographs belonging to Gladys Smith that we received on loan during the recent fish fry. The photos deal with a visit to Donald Bain's Mallard Lodge between 1943 and 1945 by employees of the Metropolitan department store from Portage.
 - e) Goldsborough will arrange to contact people who have told Shirley Christianson they wish him to interview them. They are: Peter Ward (former Director of the Delta Waterfowl Station, and long-time Delta resident), Jack and Lois Forsythe (long-time Delta cottagers), Jack McLean and Johnny Creighton.
 - f) Bills and Christianson reported on a collection of photographs from the Costigan family that are now in possession of the Portage Library. The Costigans resided in Portage, had a cottage at Delta, and were involved with the Portage Country Club. No members of the family remain in Portage. The photos deal with early cottage life at Delta, including at the Club. There are photos of Clark Gable during his visit to the Club in the late 1930s. Goldsborough and Bills will arrange to visit the library so the photos can be scanned. Bills observed that some of the photos may be duplicates of ones in a book entitled "Forty years of hunting" by Jimmy Robinson.
 - g) Jones spoke to John Davis, a rancher from St. Ambroise, at the recent fish fry. He has some historical photos and he will attempt to find them.
 - h) Loaned photos and other materials from Flora Bailey, Lois Scott and Vera Keys have been assigned inventory numbers by Bills and are ready for scanning by Goldsborough, who took possession of them.
 - i) Bills made a copy of an audio tape recording of Glenn McPherson, made in 1995, of his recollections of early life in and around Portage. The recording includes a short passage, about 5 or 6 minutes long, about his recollections of life at Delta. The tape has been added to our inventory of materials, and it should be transcribed when time permits.

- j) Jones found a small file among his others that contains about 10 reports on the prehistory and archaeology of the Delta area by Leo Pettipas, Tom Shay, and others. It contains information on the Sioux entrenchments on the east side of the marsh. Not all are clear copies. He will bring it to the next meeting.
- k) Shirley Christianson showed a newspaper clipping, dated 2 April 1874, that she had received from her grandmother, relating to the once-thriving port town of Totogan on the Whitemud River. It would provide interesting information for a future newsletter.
- l) Jones has a printout, provided by Heidi den Haan, of all materials contained in the library and archives of the Delta Waterfowl Station. Among these are materials transferred from the Manitoba Natural Resources office following his retirement. They should be checked for items pertaining to Delta history.
- m) Suggett has obtained updated mail and e-mail addresses for Terry Mobbeley, and has contacted him to ask permission to use his history of the Mobbeley Lodge. To date, he has not received a reply but will report at a future meeting.

3. Publicity

- a) *Newsletter* – Goldsborough circulated a draft of the second issue of *Delta History News* and asked for comments. Bills will check if it can included with the Fort La Reine *Museum News* again (there has been a change in editorship there) and advise Goldsborough accordingly. We will produce the same number of copies as for the first issue – 1200. Goldsborough will make all changes, have it duplicated and delivery copies to Shirley Christianson for dissemination.

- 4. **Finances:** Suggett forwarded a \$500 donation from Project Wild. Goldsborough will draft a letter of thanks for him to forward to other members of this group. Christianson reported that Shirley Love has \$190 from sale of fish fry tickets that she will forward to Goldsborough for deposit. Goldsborough circulated a report on the second fish fry prior to this meeting. Based on ticket sale revenue received at the fish fry, attendance was estimated as 377 people (increased to 396 based on money to be received afterwards from Shirley Love). Based on this income, our present financial status is as follows:

Manitoba Conservation grant	\$3,000.00
University account	\$853.54
Royal Bank chequing account	\$1,751.58
Receivables (fish fry tickets)	\$190.00
Total	\$5,795.12

Christianson reported that she has sent letters of thanks to McCains for donating pies for the fish fry. They indicated to her their willingness to donate pies to future events as well. Bills placed a small advertisement in the *Portage Daily Graphic*, thanking people who attended the fish fry.

5. Other business:

- a) *Student research assistant* – Goldsborough reported that he had posted a description of the summer research position with the Student Employment Center, and also sent it to the Departments of History at the Universities of Manitoba and Winnipeg. Applications received by the deadline of 22 March were examined. Some applicants did not meet the eligibility criteria of being a full-time University student who is returning to full-time studies in the fall so they were excluded from further consideration. After some discussion of the remaining applicants, Goldsborough agreed to check the references and arrange an interview with the top-ranked candidate as soon as possible and, if all prove positive, to offer the position to that person.
- b) *Next fundraising event* – After some discussion, it was agreed unanimously to host another fish fry at Delta. After consideration of several possible dates, it was finally agreed to hold it on Monday, 1 July (Canada Day) from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Goldsborough will check with the Delta Waterfowl Station to

book the use of their Interpretive Center for the day. He will also check with the Delta cottagers to see if they are interested in scheduling their Annual General Meeting to coincide with the fish fry, so we might both benefit from increased turnout. Shirley Christianson, Barry Bills, and Heidi den Haan (Heidi, you were conscripted!) will arrange a Silent Auction to occur during the Fish Fry. Goldsborough will arrange to borrow the large tent owned by the Delta Marsh Field Station, to cover the fish cookers during inclement weather.

6. **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 Monday, 6 May**.
7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.