



THE
History of
Hamiota



Compiled by the Hamiota
Women's Institute

The History of Hamiota



IN the later part of the 19th century, word was proclaimed to all and sundry in European countries and the British Isles, that Western Canada was in need of settlers and the doors were flung wide open for people to enter. Canada was described in glowing terms as a land flowing with milk and honey. Settlers streamed in from all directions, many from across the sea and from the Eastern provinces of Canada. Beside the trails which led across the prairie in every direction small settlements and trading posts were established. Thus the Prairie Provinces became settled.

A family by the name of Hamilton struck camp three and a half miles south-east of the present site of Hamiota. There a post office was opened bearing the name of Hamilton.

Meanwhile settlers continued to locate homesteads nearby. These pioneers realized, in their own way, that here would eventually be a great farming district. All that was needed was more settlers and a railroad.

The name Hamilton caused some confusion, as there was a city by that name in Ontario and mail was being continually sent to the wrong place. It was thought expedient to change the name of the new settlement. The first syllable of the original name along with the Indian word "iota" meaning "plenty" were combined, thus meaning many Hamilton teepees—Hamiota.

The present townsite, twenty miles from the already established town of Shoal Lake to the north, thirty miles from Birtle to the north-west where all homesteads had to be registered, thirty miles from Rapid City and fifty from Brandon, the heart of the already cultivated wheatlands, was laid out in 1890 and the Great North West Central Railway was built from Chater to Hamiota. Owing to lack of money and many other causes, the railroad was not

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Hamiota

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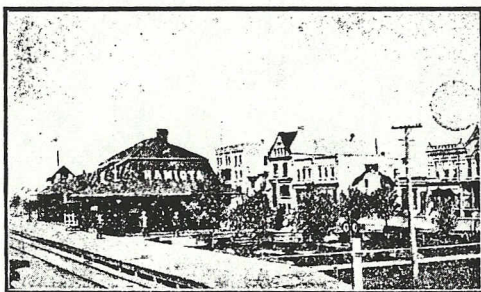
operated. After a long, drawn-out period of weary waiting, petition and pressure, while lawsuits, litigation, etc., had their way, word was received that a train was to operate. Mrs. J. McLean writes in a paper, *I Remember*: "On a cold December day in 1891 a sound as that of an approaching storm was heard. The people of the new settlement looked and wondered. Finally a column of black smoke appeared on the horizon and the shriek of a locomotive rent the heavens, the earth, and Hamiota." The first train arrived. The station was first situated where Roy Houck's gas tanks now stand.

On this train as passengers, were Wm. Todd and Tom McKellar, who brought with them lumber to build a livery barn; John Jones, the station agent, and John H. McConnell. The train crew was made up of Jim Fenwick, the conductor; Palmer

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The
Canadian Pacific
Railway
Station at Hamiota

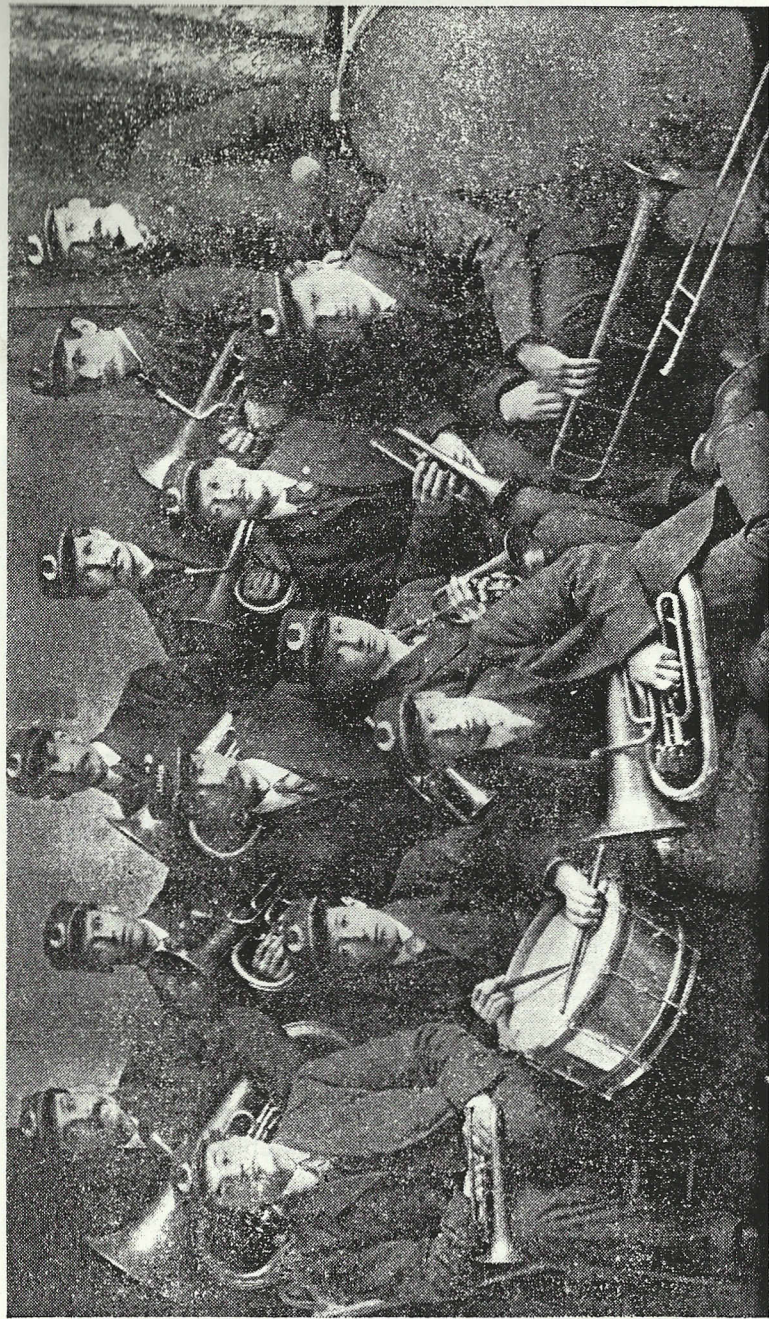
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Lindsay, engineer and James Woodcock as fireman. Hamiota for a few days presented a very busy appearance; farmers came from all directions to see if the report of a train actually arriving was true.

Ollie Fraser, a farmer east of town, and his hired man, heard the train whistle, jumped on horseback and rode into town. They, along with others, knew that now they would not have to haul their wheat thirty or forty miles to market. Joe Shier, another farmer, was the first man to load wheat onto the train, James Park being a close second.

With the coming of a train, the question of eating and sleeping became one of vital importance. The few settlers opened their



HAMIOTA'S FIRST BAND, 1898

JAS. A. STEWART A. COCHRANE W. J. ATKINSON C. W. VENABLES W. DAVIS J. R. BELL
J. B. HISEY C. HINGSON E. A. ALSON (Bandmaster) A. HEISTERMANN W. HEDDESHEIMER F. SQUIBB R. E. HUNTER

doors and gave out hospitality as best they could. Mrs. Colin McMurachy gave sleeping accommodation to twenty, the men bringing their blankets and sleeping on the floor. Another woman, Mrs. McRae, on one of those days, cooked and served a whole quarter of beef and, when all other provisions were eaten, served the hungry men with soda biscuits, butter and tea!

The first house in Hamiota came into the settlement in April 1891, on wheels, from Colin McMurachy's farm thirteen miles north and was set down on the site where it still stands as the present residence of James Gradwell and family. This house was the first stone in the foundation of the village.

In May of the same year, Wm. Hawthorne moved in and lived for a short time in the station, until he built a small house and the first blacksmith shop on the corner of the Hotel Cecil property. He later built a house on E. M. Tennyson's corner. John McRae came into the settlement on the 24th of May, living in the station until he too built a small car-roofed house on Fred Venable's lot. Later, McRae, seeing the need of a place to board and sleep for trainmen and travellers, built another car-roofed building in front of the train, with bunks along the walls. Here he often accommodated as many as forty men for the night. The regular boarders were usually twenty-five.

In the following spring Jerry Pangman built the Whitely House (situated on what is now the garden lot north of A. Cumming's residence). A hotel called the "Kelly House" was built on the site of the present Memorial Grounds, but was burned down in 1906. John McRae built the "Central House" which still bears that name.

With the coming of the train into Hamiota, building operations began in earnest. George Elliott had had a cellar dug for his store—"The Pioneer Store" for two years, but when no train arrived, decided to do nothing further until the railroad trouble was over. When in August a handcar arrived, he thought the train would follow shortly, so had his men lay foundation, but again the train failed to come and operations were delayed. When at last the train did come, he had his place cleared of snow and ice, laid a floor on the foundation which acted as roof, moved his

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stock into the cellar and opened up for business. As Mrs. J. McLean said in her *I Remember*, "We walked the plank into the basement where basement bargains were the order of the day on a cash and carry basis, cash being represented by the stock exchange of butter and eggs. The post office occupied a corner of the store".

Mr. Scott, of Shoal Lake, was on the grounds shortly after the train arrived, buying a lot where E. J. Venables and Son are now located. Mr. Scott hauled his lumber from Shoal Lake where it had been lying for a year and immediately started to build. Mr. Colin McMurachy bought a pail of syrup in the new store, thus claiming to be the first customer.

John McConnell built the present "McConnell's Hall", an implement warehouse with an opera house above, in 1897. He started the first lumber yard, but sold out to the Hanbury Lumber Company in 1903.

George Anderson coming in on the second train, December 19th, 1891, became the first resident carpenter and contractor in the village. He built the house he now occupies in 1892.

Fred Venables opened up shop in 1892 as the first harness maker in what is now Jasper's Electric. At this time Main Street at that place was used as a croquet ground. Mr. Venables moved in the following year to where the Hamiota Second-hand Store now is situated.

Mr. James White of Rapid City opened the first hardware store in the present *Echo* Office. The rooms above were called the "White's Town Hall". Besides being used for concerts, this hall was used for a time for church services every Sunday evening.

The first church serving the community was built on what is now the George Park farm; the Presbyterians and the Methodists taking turns for services. Up to this time, church services had been held in the settlers' homes, with an itinerant minister in charge. When Hamiota was moved to its present site, there was felt a need for a church in the new settlement, and with this objective in mind, five men: Messrs. D. D., Hugh and Clark Fraser, Philip Kerr and Mr. F. Middleton formed a committee to plan the first Presbyterian Church. On July 24th, 1892, the new

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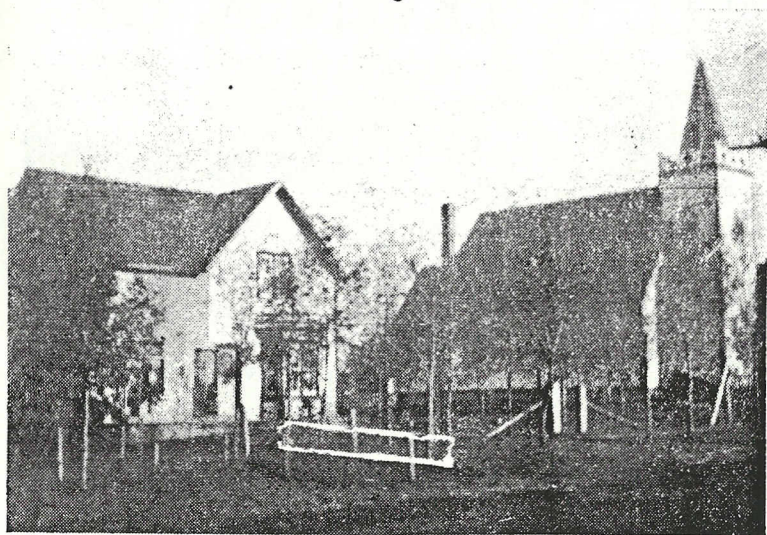
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 FOR SERVICE, PHONE 51 HAMIOTA 

church was opened for services, when Rev. Dr. King conducted the first service. Services were held regularly in this church until May 1905, when the building was moved to Arrow River, where it still remains a place of worship. The Presbyterians built a larger building during that year, which they called Knox and used until June 30th, 1930, when it was closed on the occasion of its union with Zion Church.

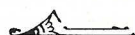
The first Methodist Church was opened for services in 1895, with Rev. James Woodsworth officiating. This building was burned in February 1914, and the present building built and opened for services in December, 1914. This church is now called the United Church of Hamiota.

Christ Church and Rectory, Hamiota



A small band of Christ Church worshippers, 14 in number, banded together and held worship in a log house seven miles from Hamiota with a Rev. Lowrie acting as incumbent. Later, Scotia Church was used for services, then the Village of Hamiota being started and the Presbyterian Church built, Christ Church adherents held their services in the village in this church for nine years. It

L. S. TAYLOR



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HAMIOTA

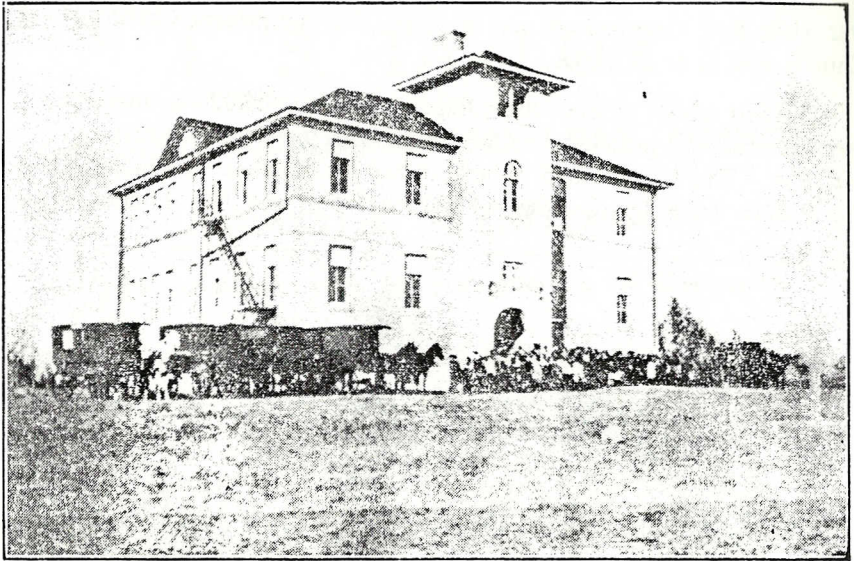
MANITOBA

was while Rev. Cunningham was in charge that the present Christ Church was built in 1900.

The first school to serve the village was built in 1892—a one-roomed structure, presided over by a somewhat poetic gentleman, Mr. Pye. The school stood on the corner lot of what was then the Pedlow farm but is now the garden lot of the late James



Stewart estate. The need for a larger school was felt as the years passed, so a brick structure was built where our present school stands. An east wing was added in 1908. In 1914, when several rural schools consolidated into Hamiota School, a north wing was built, bringing the school up to its present size. In 1930, Grade XII was added to the grades thus giving the children of Hamiota School District a decided advantage over other small town schools. That people have availed themselves of the opportunity to give



Consolidated School District of Hamiota No. 692



TRUSTEES

P. C. Fraser, chairman
 I. P. Strickland, sec.-treas.
 W. J. Pollock
 G. J. Smith
 W. W. Cochran
 Wilmot Kirk
 Gordon Allen

TEACHING STAFF

G. H. Ruttan, principal
 Douglas Bridge
 Miss A. Lavery
 Miss N. Fraser
 Miss M. E. Jones
 Mrs. G. Fraser
 Miss J. B. Cummings
 Miss O. Smith

their children, boys and girls alike, the privilege of Grade XII standing, may be seen by the past years' enrollment records.

The first town newspaper *The Hustler*, was sponsored by H. Stovel in company with H. C. Clay of Rapid City and edited by F. Middleton on or about 1892. *The Hustler* changed hands



CHRIST CHURCH, HAMIOTA, WOMEN'S AUXILIARY, 1913.

Front row—Mrs. Wm. Hern, Mrs. Greenaway and daughter Peggy, Mrs. W. J. Stevens. Back row—Miss R. Botell, Mrs. R. J. Brooks, Mrs. and Rev. Chas. Wood, Mrs. P. Heddesheimer, Miss Alice Stevens, Mrs. E. J. Venables, Mrs. J. T. Venables.

several times in a few years, also changed its name from *Hustler* to *Herald*. In November 1902, Charles Venables started another paper called *The Echo*. Two papers in the village being found unnecessary, *The Echo* bought out the *Herald*. In 1907, Ed Stone bought out *The Echo* and was proprietor for four years. Charles

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MAN.

HAMIOTA ECHO

C. W. VENABLES

W. H. JOSEY

Proprietors

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The first newspaper in Hamiota was "The Hustler," started in 1892 and owned by A. C. Clay, and later by Frank C. Middleton; about 1899 it became the "Hamiota Herald" (J. R. Ross, proprietor). In 1900 The "Hamiota Echo" commenced business with C. W. Venables, proprietor. Ed. L. Stone ran it for five years. The present owners took over in 1913.

Venables and Walter Josey finally purchased the plant and have been putting out *The Echo* ever since 1913.

Herbert Inman started a private bank in 1893 and in 1901 built the Inman Block, now being occupied by C. Jamieson and Son. He conducted this private bank until the business was taken over by the Bank of Hamilton in 1898 with Mr. Inman as manager, which position he held until his death in 1904. The "Union" was the first chartered bank to open its doors in Hamiota, this was in 1898. In 1905 the present bank building was completed (now the Royal Bank of Canada). The "Union" opened its doors for business with Alex Lowe as manager.



FIRST MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF HAMIOTA METHODIST CHURCH.

Front row—Mrs. (Rev.) McKim Young, Mrs. Harold Shier, Mrs. Jos. McLean, Mrs. VanDusen, Mrs. (Dr.) Reid. Children—Marjorie Venables, Mary VanDusen, Hazel McLean. Back row—Miss Barber (Mrs. Ed. Hazelwood), Mrs. Robt. McLean, Mrs. Allan Eby, Mrs. Chas. Venables, Mrs. J. Couke, Mrs. T. Mitchell, Mrs. Thos. Allshire, Mrs. J. A. Neelands.

The first grain elevator was built by Parish and Lindsay in 1892, but was burned in 1907. By 1895 there was three elevators and a fourth under construction, two flat warehouses, a grist mill, built by G. Basler and S. Armstrong, and a creamery erected. The first grain buyers were: S. Armstrong, Joseph Henry, John Scott, J. B. Thompson and George Avent.

SWEID'S STORE

HAMIOTA

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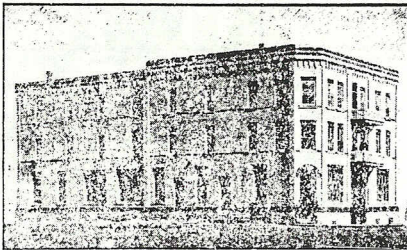
J. D. CALDWELL & SONS

Phone 52

HAMIOTA

John Houck came into Hamiota on Christmas Day, 1891, and opened the first butcher shop in partnership with T. Morrison, where the Co-Op. warehouse now stands. Mr. Houck found business anything but brisk, so he employed himself between times, digging wells and loading cars. Wm. Todd, east of town, had the first well in the settlement, dug by Jack Gibbs and T. Thompson. The first drilled well was drilled on the farm of R. Van Alystine, six miles north-west of Hamiota in 1907 by a government driller, T. Sheridan.

The Hotel Cecil, a well appointed, three storey building, was built in 1904 by Hamilton and Thompson. Filled with modern fixtures, boasting forty bedrooms and three sample rooms to accommodate the commercial trade of the town, this building was an asset to the village. A disastrous fire razed it to the ground in 1928 and now the Caldwell Motors has a business on the Hotel Cecil site.



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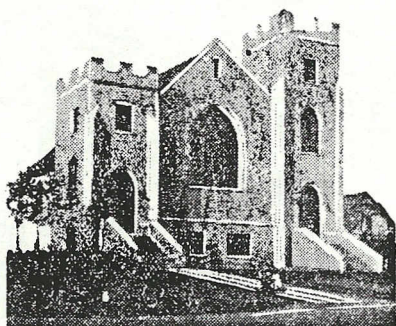
The "Hotel Cecil" stood on the site of the present Caldwell's Garage. Fire destroyed it in 1928.

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The first railway "Y" ran behind McConnell's Hall, as far north as George Anderson's corner and back by Lorimer and Tennysons'. Mr. Miller, who owned the bakeshop, wished to enlarge his business, so asked that the railroad be removed to another site. This the railroad did to the mill site and later to their present position.

The President of the Great North West Central owned the townsite of Hamiota. He promised a town lot to the first child born in the new village. This lot should have been given to Maggie Pangman, but through carelessness of the party entrusted with this matter, she never received it.

The mail for Hamiota was for many years driven from Griswold via Oak River three times a week. Mr. McMillan, familiarly known as "Dad", carried it from Griswold one day and returned the next. The tinkle of the little bell fastened to his horse was eagerly listened for. No matter what the weather or how long the trains were blocked "Her Majesty's Mail" would arrive in Hamiota without fail. "Dad" was rewarded for his years of faithful service by the citizens of the village by being presented on his retirement with a gold watch. James L. Fraser was the first to carry mail to Oak River and back. It was in April 15th, 1900, that the C.P.R. acquired the G.N.W.C., and on May 1st, the mail was brought in to the village for the first time by rail.



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HAMIOTA UNITED
CHURCH

ERECTED 1914

✠

It would be wrong to intimate that during these very interesting years the growth of the village was always a sober, serious business. Although everyone had to work hard, many were the pleasant gatherings they had during the long winter months. The Orange Hall, opened in April 1892, was the scene of gay festivities in the way of concerts and balls. (At that time a dance was formally termed a "ball"; now it is simply called by the very unimaginative name "dance"). Among the first local "stars" were such people as Wm. Ferguson, then M.P. and Mr. Baskerville, both performing at the organ; George Anderson, contractor and builder, as violinist and Mayor Chambers with the cornet, getting together to form a volunteer orchestra. The happy fun loving Sam Dinsmore acted as floor manager. Those attending such functions could not help but have a good time.



DESIGN & PHOTOS
BY CHAS P HOWDEN

Top row—W. Todd, F. T. Venables, J. T. Venables, C. Harvey, J. Nairn, Jos. Andrew, J. H. Houck, R. J. Bell, J. P. McDonald, R. E. Hunter, E. J. Abbott, D. A. Jackson. Second row—W. J. Hyndman, J. H. McConnell, I. C. McConnell. Third row—E. A. Alsm, Miss Gutteridge, Dr. E. D. Hudson, F. C. Bennet, Rev. Egan, Rev. McKinney, Rev. Crozier, M. B. Jackson, Dr. Jackson, Miss Delaney, A. Grant. Fourth row—C. P. Howden, W. Hassard, W. A. Thompson, W. Whyte, M. A. Whimster, W. Chambers (Mayer), W. Ferguson, J. A. Stewart, A. Kelly, R. E. Anderson, T. Lorimer. Fifth row—J. Hibbert, G. A. Warren, C. Sheardown, B. R. McNaught, Ed. L. Stone, J. Scott, R. H. Lawton, J. Lemon, P. Heddeshimer. Sixth row—W. Wright, Dr. H. M. Reid, J. E. Wright, W. B. McLean, C. Thring, F. C. Grant, J. R. Stalker, Jos. McLean, C. Gillis, A. Eby.

A few interesting items regarding the Hamiota School

Gathered by Principal Geo. H. Ruttan from old School records.



If some omissions and inaccuracies occur in this review of the history of Hamiota School, the reader is requested to attribute them to the fact that some of the early records are not readily available.

The first school building of Hamiota District was constructed by Mr. George Anderson in the fall of 1892. This building was located on the south-east corner of the farm of Mr. James Stewart, but when it ceased to be used for school purposes, was moved to the residential section of the village. It is now the home of Mr. E. P. Venables, the present Mayor of Hamiota.

Hamiota School, as it now appears, was constructed in three separate stages. The south-west corner, consisting of two rooms and a basemeet, was built in 1899; its counterpart, the south-east corner of equal size, was completed in 1908. When the Consolidated District of Hamiota was formed in 1912, it became necessary to provide for an increased enrolment, and the north portion of the school was added in 1914. Consolidation brought in the rural schools—Watson, Kerr and Chumah.

The first teacher of Hamiota School was W. E. Pye, and was followed by J. H. Fraser, who for many years afterwards and still is, Dr. Fraser of Crandall. The earliest school registers on file—1906-07—show that Stephen Windsor was Principal then, and the assistants were Miss Ada Venables and Miss F. M. Cochrane. The Trustees then were: John Muraay, John Houck and William Pedlow. John Nairn

was Secretary-Treasurer. In September 1907, W. Van Dusen was appointed Principal, and held that position until June 1913, when he was succeeded by T. A. Neelin.

The names of the Principals who followed Mr. Neelin : Charles Cresswell, 1916-1919 ; W. E. Rogers, 1919-1921 are : J. G. Johannson, 1921-1925 ; H. L. Albright, 1925-1927. In September 1927, Geo. H. Ruttan, Principal at date of writing, was appointed.

The names of teachers most familiar to many, are Miss Ada Venables, Miss F. M. Cochrane and Miss S. A. Sproat. One of the present staff (1948-49), Mrs. Gladys Fraser, taught one year at Kerr School and four and one-half years in Hamiota School when she was known as Gladys Houck. She joined the staff again in 1926.

The following, in the order named, have been Chairmen of the School Board ; John Murray, M. A. Whimster, J. M. Fraser, F. C. Bennest and P. C. Fraser. The School Board as at December 1948 is P. C. Fraser (Chairman), William Pollock, Gordon Smith, W. E. Kirk, Wilford Cochran and Gordon Allan. The following have been Secretary-Treasurers of the district : John MacKay, John Nairn, L. S. Taylor, F. H. Squibb and I. P. Strickland (the present Secretary-Treasurer).

High School grades were not taught in Hamiota School until the year 1909. In 1929, with Geo. H. Ruttan as Principal, Grade Twelve was made available to students. The fee for this grade was one hundred dollars, later reduced to seventy-five dollars, then to fifty dollars and finally cancelled altogether.

Those who desire to examine the records of Hamiota School and test the value of its contribution to the training and guidance of its youth, will find a living testimony in the lives of the young men and the young women who have gone out from this school and are rendering a service in their respective communities that should make Hamiota experience a feeling of genuine pride.

HAMIOTA VILLAGE COUNCIL**CONGRATULATES****The Hamiota Women's Institute**

**on their having published the
History of Hamiota**

E. P. VENABLES, Mayor

J. M. WILLIAMS

MAX McCONNELL

T. JASPER

J. COOMBS

WM. T. ANDREW, Sec.-Treas.

Hamiota Agricultural Society

1893 — 1948

President	:	T. J. Strachan
Vice-President	:	F. Wyatt
Secretary-Treasurer	:	I. P. Strickland

Honorary Directors:

John Killoh
Clark Fraser
James Reid
Wm. Mathison
John Rankin

E. W. McConnell
O. J. Fraser
Alf. Sutherland
Andrew Riddell
Geo. Y. Rankin

Dr. E. D. Hudson
Robt. Pearson
Wm. Pearson
John McLellan

The first concert was held in "White's Town Hall" (over the *Echo* Office), a charity affair; it was a successful event. Reeve John Houck delighted the audience with the comic song, "Oh, Moses!" Mrs. Joe McLean sang, "No, Sir!", and Mrs. Dr. Lawson and Wm Chambers gave an organ and cornet duet.

The first celebration took place on Dominion Day, 1892, when a special train was run from Brandon. The sports were held on the Allen estate, where the residences of Wm. Chambers and James Scott were later erected. One of the chief attractions was a lacrosse game between the local team, with Charles Steele as captain, and the Rapid City boys. The home team won the game much to Hamiota's credit. The citizens, in order to improve the town for this event, arranged to lay sidewalks, (the mud holes were legion). Each man bought his own lumber and did the labor. The walks were for the most part two planks about a foot apart, a forerunner of the solid plank sidewalks later laid along all the streets by the town. In order to have the walks done in time the work went on steadily most of the night.

The first carnival, held in an open air rink made by the united efforts of all the citizens, was an interesting event. As there was no gas nor electric lights in those days, the men carried lanterns for the purpose of illumination and a pretty sight they made. The scene was a gay one and was thoroughly enjoyed by young and old. A stranger to town, Miss Green, sister to Mrs. Dr. Lawson, was the winner of the first prize for her presentation of "NIGHT". Since that first carnival such an event has become an annual festivity.

The Agricultural Society organized on June 1st, 1893. On the first board of directors were such names as: Messrs. Philip Kerr, James Milne, James Anderson, Sr., Walter Whyte, David Henderson, Sr., S. C. Dinsmore, Wm. Ferguson, Mark Ellerigton, Josiah Shier and Robt. Hamilton. S. C. Dinsmore was later appointed first president; Wm. Ferguson, secretary-treasurer, and Frank Middleton, auditor. The first exhibition was held in Dinsmore's warehouse on Tuesday, September 26th. The present fair grounds were started in 1901. Since that time the Agricultural Society has played no little part in the growth of a community, set as it is in the midst of a rich agricultural district.

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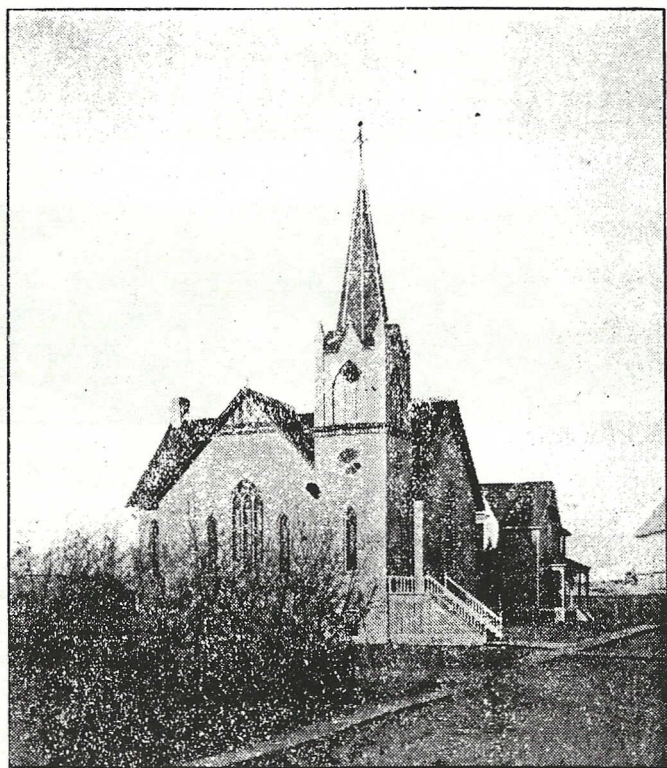
Hamiota

Phone 3

Manitoba

In these stirring days the town boasted its own band, which could be seen and heard on every civic occasion. The small lot west of the station was used as a miniature park by the children of the town for many years. There, among the shade trees and the green grass, the band had its stand. In this bandstand the local boys would render lively airs and instrumentals at every opportunity. Our modern Hamiota has no band, a decided lack in the community.

Knox Presbyterian Church, Hamiota . . . now Decker United Church.



The first council, of any sort, in the settlement was called in 1884 with J. Clarridge as Reeve and the following as councillors: J. H. Shoebottom, T. Hamilton, Geo. Elliott and Walter Whyte. The first rural council meeting was held in the home of Colin Mc-

The RED & WHITE STORE

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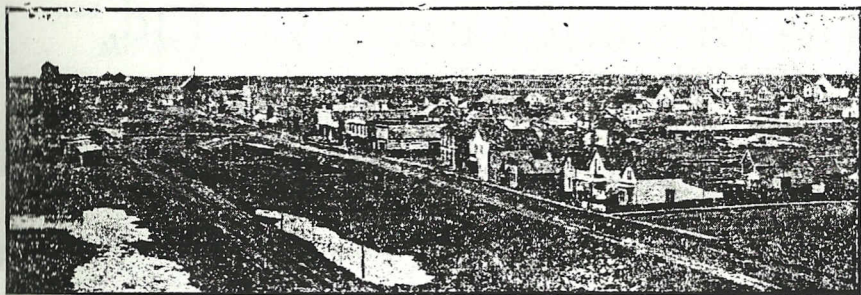
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Hamiota, Man.

Murachy on August 8th, 1891, and was composed of the following men: W. J. Cowan, Reeve; W. Whyte, H. W. Gray, Jas. Kirk, Wm. Armson, Robt. McConnell and W. H. Decker as councillors. Mr. J. Andrew received the appointment of Secretary of the village and rural municipalities at the first meeting in 1884 and continued to hold that position in the years which followed until his retirement.

Malcolm Turriff was the first real-estate agent in the village. As the town increased in size and importance it was deemed necessary to separate the town and rural councils and to become incorporated. Steps were taken and in the spring of 1906, letters of incorporation were granted and the first election for mayor and councillors took place in December of the same year, all members being



A view of Main Street, Hamiota

elected by acclamation. Wm. Chambers had the honor of being the first mayor in the newly incorporated town. The first council was composed of: Wm. Ferguson, G. Anderson, Dr. M. Whimster and James Stewart, all of whom served the village well. The first council was held in January, 1907, and the following town officials appointed: health officer, Dr. Lawson; chief of police, John Scott, assessor, A. F. Nesbitt. During the first year many improvements were made, such as better drainage system; streets and sidewalks improved; new sanitary regulations adopted and a fire hall and a council chamber was erected, which has functioned as such up to the present time. In August of that year a volunteer fire brigade was formed with the following officers: Chief, L. Tisdale; Assistant Chief, A. Malcolm; Engineer, A. Heistermann and eleven firemen.

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Prior to this date, three disastrous fires had swept through the town. The first in 1897, which burned John McRae's blacksmith shop. It was described very aptly by Mrs. J. McLean in her paper, "I Remember": "In the absence of a town bell or an electric alarm, a man in scanty night attire and with a voice resembling the Bull of Bashan, proclaimed to the village that McRae's blacksmith shop was on fire." The second fire in 1898 burned T. Atkinson's General Store, H. Inman's private bank, "The Hustler" office and Todd & McKellar's livery barn. A third fire, in 1900, wiped out the whole block from the Bank of Hamilton west to the Hotel Cecil. When, in 1907, an "Ever Ready" chemical engine was purchased, the town had for the first time a system of fire protection.

The first veterinary doctor in the village was Dr. Brownridge, who was succeeded by Dr. M. Whimster.

Mr. Wesley Lewis drew in the first wheat from Chumah district to the train, and his son, Charles, was the first child to have a ride on the Hamiota train.

In writing the history of any small western town, the mention of livery barns and blacksmith shops is unavoidable. Just as the modern garages and machine shops keep our cars and tractors conditioned, the blacksmith shop kept the settlers' wagons, rigs and horses in condition and the livery barns housed the teams from far and near. Very familiar to the older people was the smell of hot iron and hoof parings, which was wafted out of the open blacksmith shop door. The livery barn, too, had its fascinating noises, smells and sounds. For many years Charles Sheardown operated the only blacksmith shop in town, which was later taken over and remodeled by Robt. Beattie. The present blacksmith and repair shop managed by D. Beamish stands on the site of the original shop. As for the livery barns, at one time there were four in operation: McKellar & Todd's on Main Street, later converted into the business place now operated by Marks Brothers; Wright's barn on the east side of Ross Street, which, after its days of usefulness were over, was torn down and the material used for a dairy barn on the estate of Argo Smith, once known as the Middleton Place; the Ernie Wilson barn on the west side of the same street, converted into a garage after the first world war and later destroyed by fire, and the Warren feed and livery barn, taken over by the McConnell Brothers and now the property of the town and rural councils,

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Dr. Lawson was the first medical man in the field. His home and office is now the residence of Ted Venables and family. He also built a drug store on the site of the present Duncan Beauty Parlor, which was operated in partnership with B. R. McNaught since 1901. Dr. E. D. Hudson, graduate of Winnipeg Medical College, arrived in Hamiota in 1907 to take up the practice of medicine. His son, Dr. Ed., and wife, came to join in his work in 1945. As the town grew there was felt a need for some sort of housing for patients who could not be cared for in their respective homes. This need was answered by the ladies from the different churches holding a joint meeting in April, 1908, to see what could be done. At this meeting it was decided to ask the Mayor to call a meeting of the citizens in order to discuss the matter fully and to determine the public opinion on this important issue. The result of the meeting called by the Mayor was that an investigation was made at once into the cost of building, etc. The ladies were ready to help in this worthy project, so on April 21st the Hamiota Hospital Aid came into being with the following officers: President, Miss F. J. Fraser; Vice-president, Mrs. C. Thring; 2nd Vice-president, Mrs. J. McLean; Secretary, Mrs. Wm. Chambers; Treasurer, Mrs. J. G. McConnell. Honorary Presidents, Mrs. McLenningham and Mrs. J. T. Venables. By the following year there were about sixty members enrolled. The ladies worked untiringly to put their project over. They received the whole-hearted support of the town and district. They raised funds by sponsoring shows, catering to sports and citizens' days by serving lunches and meals. They also undertook the gigantic task of serving meals to the crowds at the Annual Agricultural Fair. Their bank account grew steadily.

Early in December, 1908, the Ladies' Aid was called on for the first time for help. Typhoid fever broke out in a family ill-prepared to have the sick ones nursed in the home. A house vacated by Mr. Heddeshimer was rented, partly furnished. The Ladies' Aid completed the furnishings, making a public and a private ward. Everything was made clean and cosy and a committée formed to see that everything was kept in order. The town Council secured the services of Mrs. Esslemont, graduate of Aberdeen Hospital, as matron and housekeeper. Mrs. Esslemont proved efficient and capable. By February the emergency was over, but it was decided to use the temporary hospital as a permanent hospital to serve the community

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and district. The cost was estimated at \$80.00 a month, for maintenance. The Ladies' Aid chose the first board of directors: Dr. Hudson, F. C. Grant, C. L. Thring, Ed. L. Stone, J. G. McConnell, R. H. Lawton, L. S. Taylor and G. S. Anderson for town; T. Morrison, W. Stevens, H. A. Fraser, T. Riddell, E. Alexander and John Murray for the rural. The ministers, Mayor and Reeve were honorary members.

The Ladies' Aid acknowledged sincere appreciation to Ed. Stone, proprietor of "The Echo", for his publishing, free of cost, anything pertaining to the hospital, and for allowing the ladies one special edition as a means of raising money for their society.

The Ladies' Aid was instrumental in the final decision, when the question of a new hospital arose. This hospital erected under the direction of W. Stevens, architect, on two lots donated by Mrs. J. H. McConnell, was formally opened on December 11th, 1913. Since that date, the Hamiota Hospital Aid has kept it well supplied with working material, in the same way as the members of the newly organized Ladies' Aid did in the early days of the town, by catering to the visitors at the Annual Agricultural Fair and by putting on teas, etc., to raise funds. The hospital was a great venture but it proved its worth many times over. Great credit goes to the women who decided in 1908 that they would have to do something to alleviate the suffering and to nurse the sick. Dr. E. D. Hudson has been house doctor ever since the first hospital was opened. He has served the community well all through the horse and buggy days, when he covered a wide territory to administer to the sick; through the desperate days of the 'flu' epidemic in 1918; through the depression years and finally through a second World War. Now he has the satisfaction of seeing his son, Dr. J. E. Hudson, stepping in his footsteps by car or by plane, to administer to the same district and to serve the same community.

What the Ladies' Aid did for the sick, another organization did for the home and community. On December 16th, 1910, an organization meeting of the Home Economics Society, with Miss Juniper, of the M.A.C., in attendance, was held. The officers elected were: President, Mrs. J. G. McConnell; Vice-president, Mrs. G. Fraser; Secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Thos. Lorimer; Directors, Mrs. C. Thring, Mrs. Wm. Ferguson, Mrs. Jos. McLean, Mrs. W. J. Stevens and Mrs. A. Sutherland.

During the first years, the Home Economics Society aroused the community interest in the health of the children, the mothers and the citizens as a whole. In the minutes of the meetings, there is found that papers and talks were given on subjects pertaining to the betterment of the homes, health topics, household management, literature in the homes and allied topics.

When war broke out in 1914, the Society not only maintained its active interest in the home and community but also took on war work, knitting and sewing, first aid classes, packing parcels for soldiers and raising money for the Red Cross and other War Charities. The years 1914 to 1919 were very full ones indeed for all the members.

In 1919, the Home Economics Society changed its name to the Women's Institute and has continued under that name ever since. Their motto "For Home and Country" has ever been their theme song.

During the widespread and disastrous depression in the thirties, the Hamiota Women's Institute had as their objective—"To Meet the Depression". This they did in the same courageous and understanding way with which they had met every emergency during the life of the organization. As far as they were able, they supplemented the relief meted out to the needy families with milk, hampers and clothing; they collected, repaired and passed on good used clothing to those in need and they did all they could to find employment for those out of work. The Institute sponsored various projects such as the "Tack and Hammer Club" and did see some worthwhile results. The work of the women during this critical period was indeed very commendable.

When the war again became a certainty, the Institute accepted the extra burden cheerfully, mixing strenuous work with fun and relaxation. In September, 1946, a grandmothers' meeting was held. A good programme was prepared by Mrs. Alex. and Mrs. William Park. In it was included a story in song of the Institute since its inception as Home Economics Society in 1910. There were thirty grandmothers present, the oldest being Mrs. I. Strachan, 92. When asked how many grandchildren she had, she said she had lost count, but she had 32 great-grandchildren. Mrs. T. Pedlow was the new-

est grandmother present. Such meetings as this were typical of the pleasant interludes the members planned along with their almost overwhelming duties.

Another project the Hamiota Institute undertook during the war years was to secure a Rest Room. Up to this time the Rest Room and the Library had been moved from one building to another. With very few funds, but a great deal of enthusiasm, the members set up committees to work on this project and finally on January 8th, 1946, the first meeting was held in the Rest Room. This building also houses a general library and a children's library.

The Women's Institutes, which have grown tremendously during the past years, have become a world-wide force. In the post-war years each separate unit will do its utmost to promote the cause of peace with the central point—the home—ever in the foreground.

As the town grew in size, a system of lighting was necessary. On May 11th, 1909, an agreement with the Acetylene Light Co. of Hamiota, was signed and the town was lit by gas light. Mr. A. Heistermann, as lamplighter, was a familiar figure, winter and summer, going the rounds, up one street and down another, lighting the lamps. In 1928 the main part of the town and a good percentage of the residences were wired for electric lights, lighting being generated in a power house located where the present Co-Op store now stands. Later, the Hamiota lighting was taken over by the Manitoba Hydro Power Commission. At the time of writing, rural electrification is being carried throughout the Hamiota district.

As the horse and buggy days passed away and cars and trucks came into their own, garages took the place of livery barns. Tractors replaced horses on the farms and service shops opened up in several places in town. The blacksmith shop no longer smells of hoof parings, for broken implements are to be found there, instead of the horses one used to see. As modern methods appear and are adopted, Hamiota, as well as all other small towns, must adapt itself to the trend of the times.

The history of Hamiota cannot be written without a word about the rural community and some of its farmers. Such names as Hamilton, Riddell, Rankin, Fraser, Kirk, Pearson, Hanna, Middleton,

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McConnell, Park, Shier, Kerr, Whyte, Rutherford, Anderson, Angus and many more, far too numerous to mention, helped make the community what it is today. The very life of the town depends on its agriculturists and the farmers about Hamiota contributed to the best of their ability to the progress made. The late Cora Hind, in one of her famous rural reports, once described Hamiota District as the "Garden Spot of Manitoba". This not only adequately describes the town itself, but also the sections and sections of fruitful acres surrounding it.

Away back in the early days the only trees to be seen in the settlement were the few in the north end of town on the Jackson property (now the property of Ted Venables) and the "Middleton Bluff". C. A. Steele, a member of the Chambers Co., when buying his own home, was the first man to beautify his surroundings by planting shade trees. In order to make this possible, he had 100 loads of earth hauled to fill in the grounds. He received trees from George Rankin, Sr., in 1904. Such a good example did he set, that in a short time every home had its grassy lawns, beautiful flowers, hedges and shade trees. The Hamiota Horticultural Society has done much to foster this spirit of beauty. Today, Hamiota stands out among other towns of its size on the prairies for its freshness and beauty during the summer months. This love of beauty and general well-being is also seen about the many well-kept farm homes. The Hamiota Cemetery, which was laid out shortly after the townsite was chosen, comes in for its share of beauty. The carefully and artistically laid out flower plots; the well-trimmed and cared-for trees and the shorn grass help to make this hallowed spot a compliment to the village. The Memorial ground, on which stands a cenotaph erected in memory of those who fell in the First War, is also a beauty spot during the summer months.

There was a general drift away from Hamiota after the First War. Boys and men leaving the farming community to enter the forces were reluctant to return to a quiet life after seeing the world. When World War II broke out, the same thing happened. More than two hundred youths, boys and girls, left the town and district to enter the forces. Countless others left their homes to do war work or to take positions in cities and camps, leaving the farmers and local business men short-handed,

When the second war ended there was a noticeable drift back to the towns and farms. Home boys returning from the forces have opened up businesses for themselves or have taken farms under the D.V.A. Hamiota, like other prairie towns, is being enriched by this new, enterprising spirit of a younger generation. Old businesses are expanding and new ones being undertaken. New homes, too, are being erected and younger men and women are taking their places in the organizations which go to make up a village.

This short history of Hamiota could be closed with these words: "Our fathers, who laid the foundations of our village, builded better than they knew".

PEARL A. McCONNELL

Teacher of Piano

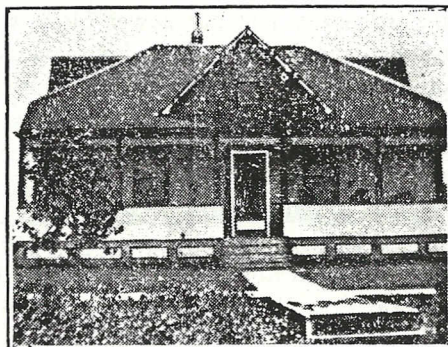
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Hamiota

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