

The Historian

St. Vital Museum and Historical Society

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Winter 2023



Thoughts from the President



Let me start by wishing everyone a joyous holi-

day season. I love this time of year and will not be the person complaining about too many lights or too much Christmas. I do wish everyone finds some peace and contentment during the season and beyond.

We have been active at the museum these past couple of months. We held our first AGM at Norberry-Glenlee Community Centre on November 25th. It was a success.

We had a lot of issues to work through this year but we seem to be on solid footing now and we all look forward to the coming months.

And to help us get excited, the museum purchased a 5-ton truckload of display units from Oak Hammock Marsh. These will definitely spice up the look of the museum!

So, as we head into the year end, let us take the time to remember the past and all that has been accomplished. We strive to build on the legacies of Bob Holliday and others.

Remember, you can help by making a donation, asking your friends to become members, buying calendars (\$5), or volunteering at the museum. We look forward to connecting with you!

Warmest thoughts of the season!

John Hindle, President, St. Vital Historical Society and Museum

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Fun Fact

On March 4, 1966, a winter storm left snow up to the roof of houses



CTV News March 5, 2020

Manitobans dig their way out after one of the biggest snowstorms in history hits the province on March 4, 1966. Photo by Candice Masters.

The Historian

From the Desk of the Curator



With Christmas and holidays descending upon us again, I am find-

ing it quite strange. Maybe this year it is because up until mid-December I was wearing sneakers to work and not freezing every time I stepped outside, nor was I up to my knees in the snow at the bus stop.

But I think it's more than that. While many of us celebrate Christmas, where we focus on the joy that comes with the season in the form of a small babe in a manger, I stop to wonder how many other holiday traditions people know of.

Let me take you on a brief trip around the world to learn about the spookier side of this season because there are more than just the Ghosts of Christmas

Past, Future, and Present in Charles Dicken's "A Christmas Carol." I'd like to introduce you to three of my favourite winter holiday folklore creatures from around the world!

First up, let's head over to Wales and meet Mari Lwyd. Recently there has been a resurgence in the tradition of wassailing with Mari Lwyd, a skeletal Christmas Pony decorated with ribbons, who arrives at the door with her entourage to bid entry through song. Once Mari Lwyd asks for entry, it is only proper for the occupants of the house to deny the request, with various excuses, through song and it is Mari Lwyd's turn to convince them to let her in for food and drink, again through song. This volleying of songs between the two parties continues till the occupants of the house finally give in and permit Mari Lwyd entry because they are unable to think of any more reasons for her not to come in!

Next, over to Iceland where Jólakötturinn, the Yule Cat, is waiting amidst the snow and darkness. Jólakötturinn will make a meal out of those who do not receive new clothing before Christmas Eve, so I hope you are wearing new socks at the very least! This pawsome cat is believed to be first mentioned in an 1862 folklore collection by Jón Árnason but traditionally is to give incentive to the farmers to hurry processing the wool that has been collected in the late summer and fall.

Last, and my personal favourite, is Krampus who hails from the German and Austrian alpine regions who terrorizes children if they misbehave. Krampus has its roots in pagan alpine traditions, as a two-legged demonic goat creature with hooves, but as Christianity swept through the regions (and the Catholic Church was unable to fully

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From the Desk of the Curator cont'd

stop his appearance during the Christmas season), he took on the role of Saint Nicholas' assistant. Together on the 5th of December, they would begin to travel to villages to reward the children for good behaviour or to punish them if they had been troublesome or naughty.

Now you might be asking why is Krampus my favourite. Good question! I once met him as a young adult with my mom at the Christkindlmarkt Christmas Market and was instantly fascinated. Mom told me the story of Krampus after the encounter. Since then, I've learned about Krampusnacht, where young men dress up as Krampus and participate in runs and parades. Now, I really want to experience Krampusnacht for myself.

There you have three winter holiday traditions from around the world!

I hope you all can find some joy in this time of year, as I am aware that this season while

bringing happiness to many can also be a time of sadness and loneliness for some.

Thank you for letting me be the curator of the St. Vital Museum. I love working at the museum and take great pride in making you all smile when you visit. I want to wish you all the best of the season's greetings, no matter what you celebrate at this time of year, and don't forget to wear new socks!

I'll see you in 2024!

Breanna

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our AGM was held at Norberry-Glenlee Community Centre on Saturday, November 25th. There were approximately 25 in attendance. They heard president, John Hindle's, first annual report, a financial update from treasurer, Brent Thomas, and

then elected a new board of directors. The meeting was a great success and thanks to everyone who attended.

Our new board was elected as follows:

1-year term

Judy Berthman
Don Berthman
Jim Fuller
John Hindle
Ron Koskie
Kerry Pedrick
Leon St. Onge

2-year term

Cam Dempster
Sharon Golin
Darryl Resch
Wayne Ruff
Jack Scott
Brent Thomas
Jared Warkentin

Thank you to all these wonderful people for supporting and contributing to the St. Vital Museum. And a special thank you to our other volunteers who help make this all work. We look forward to a great year!

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Baldy Northcott



As we display at the museum, St. Vital was hard-hit by the flood of 1950. Due to the windings and turnings of the Red River,

Kingston Crescent was one of the hardest hit areas.

One resident of the Crescent was Baldy Northcott. Baldy and another man were standing on the roof of Baldy's house...the only part that was above the flood waters. The other guy made a joke about buying Baldy's house for cheap and it seems that Baldy was not impressed. He took a swing and apparently knocked the guy into the river. Fortunately, there were no serious consequences just a dunking in the Red.

Baldy Northcott was born in Calgary in 1908. He played in the NHL, winning a Stanley Cup in 1935 with Montreal. The team was then called the Montreal Maroons, long before the current Canadiens. He even scored a couple of game-winning goals in that series. A few years later, the Maroons folded and he ended his playing career with Chicago. In 1941, he coached the Winnipeg Rangers in winning the Memorial Cup.

That was not the end of sports for him. Those of a certain age will remember Baldy Northcott Sporting Goods located at 387 Portage Avenue across from the Boyd Building.

Baldy was inducted into the Manitoba Hockey Hall of Fame. He died in 1986.

2024 Calendars

2024 Calendars are available for sale at the museum. Please call us at 204-255-2864 or email info@svhs.ca or come down to the museum to buy one or more.

Great Christmas gifts and only \$5. All of the proceeds of the sale of the calendars goes to fund the museum, as a corporate sponsor is purchasing the calendars for us. This can be a significant fundraiser for the museum. Please help us achieve that goal!

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The History of Street Name Changes in St. Vital

Part of the fascination with history is how much things change over the years. In St. Vital, some of those changes were in the naming of streets. For example:

St. Marks Place was originally called Emmerling...which was the maiden name of Victor Mager's first wife, Elizabeth Emmerling. She was a niece of George 'Dutch' Emmerling...one of the first hoteliers in Winnipeg. Her father was an early brewer.

Sterling Avenue had originally been called De La Giglais. I heard the name was changed because news announcers had difficulty pronouncing it.

As a result of Unicity, Margaret Avenue was changed to **Molgat** because there was already a street named Margaret in Winnipeg. Molgat is named for Gildas (Gil) Molgat. He was a former leader of the Manitoba Liberal party and later was appointed to the Canadian Senate.

One street that was going to be changed at amalgamation was **River Road**. There was quite a kerfuffle over this change and some alternative names were proposed. In the end, the name was not changed. Chalk that up to historical significance.

Just north of Molgat is **Norberry Drive**...named for the school before it became the Louis Riel School Division offices. I remember my dad referring to it as Frederick West. Frederick Avenue still exists on the east side of St. Mary's Road.

A more current change, and a big one, is Bishop Grandin being renamed Abinojii Mikanah. This means Children's Way in Anishinabemowin.

There are many other street names that have been changed in St. Vital. We might highlight more of the history of those changes in future editions of the Historian. If any of our readers know of any such changes, please email your information at info@svhs.ca.

A New Display Look

We are about to present a new look at the St. Vital Museum. In early November, President, John Hindle, Curator, Breanna Vitti, and board member, Jack Scott took the trek to Oak Hammock Marsh Visitor Centre to view a myriad of display cabinets that were being sold to make room for a renovation in their facility. We were the first museum to arrive.

When we determined the prices were too good to be true, this trio purchased an entire 5-ton truckload of displays. The displays will impact many areas of the museum.

We want to thank Oak Hammock for their efforts to help other local museums and to the Association of Manitoba Museums who made us aware of this opportunity. All we have left to do now is to determine how to set up the displays! Lots of fun!



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Police Raid Cycle Club

(“Lance Exclusive Eyewitness Report” by Bob Holliday, Lance, October 24, 1973)

A shootout with members of the Inner-City Police Department Friday, resulted in four persons being charged with attempted capital murder on Monday, in Provincial Judges Court at Winnipeg Public Safety Building Monday.

Three of the men: Roger Albert Pelissier, 24, of Trent Ave.; Kerry Thomas Hannah, 21, of Goulet St.; and Donald Romeo Gagne, 24, of Beliveau Ave., appeared before Judge Anthony J. Pilutik and were remanded one day for a bail application to be made.

Allan Lebras, 22, of Beliveau Ave, the fourth person charged, was still in hospital recuperating from a bullet wound to his left arm. The wound occurred during the 10-minute shootout Friday.

According to a police spokesman, the police were executing a Liquor Act warrant on Later Ave., St. Vital, when the occupants of the house opened fire on the policemen, about 11:30 pm Friday. The police returned the fire and called in six St. Vital constables as reinforcements.

Until the call for help, St. Vital police were unaware of the raid.

Also charged with various offences following the raid were: Mark Kenneth Leguee, 21, of no fixed address, charged with possession of an offensive weapon; James Paul Chumm, 35, of Later, was charged with breach of the Narcotics Control Act; David Victor Owen, 22, of Ruby St., was charged with assaulting a police officer; Norman Brian Zest, 25, of Edison Ave., was charged with obstructing a police officer; James Richard Emslie, 25, of Ellice Ave., was charged with

possession of a dangerous weapon.

Also charged was one female, Cheryle Lynn Robertson, 19, of Archibald St. She was charged with being a material witness in connection with the attempted murder charges.

A 17-year-old girl was turned over to juvenile authorities.

Magistrate Pilutik set bail at \$3,000 for George N. Demetruk, 24, of Beliveau Ave., who was charged with possession and another charge of trafficking under the Narcotics Control Act.

In all, nineteen persons were arrested following the raid. The others were released from custody over the weekend.

Approximately 20 policemen and one dog took part in the raid. The raiding party were equipped with night sticks and riot guns, which were clearly visible.

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MP/député

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Police Raid Cycle Club cont'd



While the raid was on Later Ave., the ensuing investigation was broadened to Beliveau Ave. Both houses are known by St. Vital Police to be the headquarters of the Los Bravos Motorcycle gang.

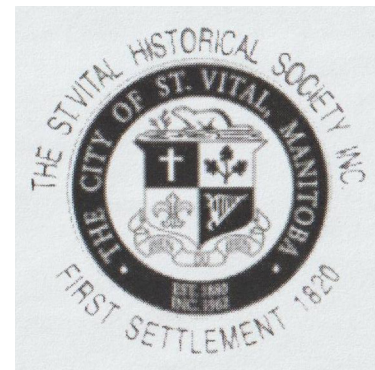
Besides a small quantity of marijuana, police seized a number of fire-arms including rifles, pistols and a whip. A number

of ammunition belts were also seized.

Shortly after 1 am Saturday morning, a man was taken from the Beliveau Ave. address in custody of two policemen. A short time later, a patrol wagon arrived, and after consultation with the three or four policemen inside the house, departed for Later Ave.

This writer [Bob Holliday] and Dick Champlone, of CKY, followed the wagon about 100 feet off Eric St., before being unceremoniously requested to desert the area.

At this time, the field on either side of Later was literally crawling with policemen in the dense morning darkness, all equipped with riot guns.



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John Hindle Honoured at Legislature

On December 5th, 2023 St. Vital Museum president, John Hindle, was honoured at the Manitoba Legislature. Jamie Moses, MLA for St. Vital, read a Member’s Statement and after he had finished, all of the MLAs rose and gave John an ovation. Here is the bulk of Jamie’s message.

Today, I recognize John Hindle, the President of the St. Vital Museum and Historical Society and the entire team.

Located within the old St. Vital Fire Hall at 600 St. Mary’s Rd., the museum shares historical narratives about influential individuals, significant places, and pivotal moments in St. Vital’s rich history.

That rich history includes the fact that my wife’s great grand-uncle, Art Martin, was the first captain of the St. Vital fire hall, a fact I was proud to share with my son when we visited the museum this past September for the annual barbeque.

John Hindle became the president earlier this year following the passing of long-time president, Bob Holliday.

John who is with us here in the gallery today, grew up in St. Vital and is an alumnus of Dakota Collegiate. His passion for baseball materialized into the creation of Home Run Sports, a flourishing national company. In 1994, he made history as the first general manager of the Winnipeg Gold-eyes Baseball Club, achieving attendance records during his eight-season tenure. Inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame in 2004, John is also a distinguished author, earning acclaim for his work, including the award-winning “Jackrabbits in the Outfield.”

I invite all Manitobans to visit the St. Vital Museum to take a look at all the amazing artifacts that have been collected that tell the story of St. Vital.

I invite all members to join me in celebrating John Hindle and the entire St. Vital Museum and Historical Society team for all the wonderful work they do to enrich our St. Vital community.

Honourable Jamie Moses, MLA for St. Vital



MLA Jamie Moses, Sharon Golin (board member), John Hindle, Nancy McQuade, Bev Hindle, Ron Koskie (board member), Kerry Pedrick (board member)



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It Remained Only a Dream

Many are the dreams we have but sometimes that is where they remain...only as dreams. Here is an example of a dream that could have dramatically changed St. Vital if it had become a reality. The location was just north of the museum along the Red River.

Back in the 1970s, a very complex idea was proposed. Across from the St. Vital Hotel which is now called the Riverside, two brothers, Richard and Earl Wear, had a rather grandiose plan for a multi-million-dollar recreation and entertainment complex. Richard was the owner of Southport Realty at 755 St. Mary's Road and Earl was a former St. Vitaler, who at the time was an architect in Los Angeles.

The project included a health spa, indoor/outdoor swimming pool, cocktail restaurant, ballroom, banquet hall and a casino. And if all that's not

enough, there would have been a concrete pier to handle a range of boats, including Winnipeg's river cruise boats.

Along with moorage for the boats, there would have been facilities for floatplanes. There would have been services to supply and refuel both boats and planes. Combine all of that with several shops and businesses that catered to tourists and parking for 300 vehicles, and you can see how substantial the proposal was.

There was even going to be a pedestrian suspension bridge that would have been longer than the Capilano Bridge in British Columbia. In fact, it would have been the longest suspension bridge in North America. People would have been able to walk from St. Mary's Road to Churchill Drive Park for the mere toll of \$0.25.

All of this was to cost six million dollars. How different would St. Vital be if this had become a reality? Was it concerns about erosion along the riverbank that torpedoed the proposal? We are not sure, but our research did come up with this interesting story!

Compiled from articles in the Winnipeg Free Press from August 24, 1971), including an artist rendition from the FP, and the St. Vital Lance from September 2, 1971.



MARKUS CHAMBERS

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James Peebles

Phillip James Edward Peebles was winner of the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physics!

Jim's early days were in St. Vital. He attended Norberry School and then onto Glenlawn Collegiate where he was valedictorian in 1953. He graduated from the University of Manitoba and attended Princeton for his post graduate studies. He remained at Princeton for his entire career, eventually holding the Albert Einstein Chair.

Jim was awarded the Nobel Prize for his lifetime contributions to cosmology. He could have received it much sooner, but for one phone call.

In the 1960s, in astronomy and cosmology, the idea of

the Big Bang was vague and uncertain. One way to provide support for it was to



identify what are essentially the whispers from the Big Bang itself. This is cosmic background radiation.

A group of postgraduates at Princeton, including Jim, were trying to develop a method to find this radiation.

While meeting with their supervisor, a telephone call

came from a couple of Bell Lab workers. They were working with a horn-shaped antenna to track objects in the sky. But no matter what they did, including cleaning out pigeon droppings, there was always some residual noise. They did not know what it was and asked if the crew at Princeton knew?

Indeed they did. It was the very background radiation these researchers were just starting to hunt for. A few months later the Princeton group was able to confirm the results through their project.

For this discovery, Penzias and Wilson got the Nobel Prize in 1978. Jim just had to wait a while longer for his.

Stavros Athanasiadis
OWNER

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Thank You

At the end of the year, we wanted to say thank you to all of our businesses, organizations, and politicians who helped support the St. Vital Museum in 2023. Their help was and is appreciated as we try to operate the best local museum we can. From Friends of the Museum packages, to ads in the newsletter, calendar and web site, to becoming business members... all of the support, especially in this year of transition, was invaluable. **We thank you all!** Hopefully more St. Vital businesses can join our community in the coming year.

Politicians

Federal MPs
Terry Duguid and Dan Vandal

Provincial MLAs

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Fun Fact

Which park was officially named to honour a Winnipeg woman who was a pioneer in the city's political history.

Answer: Florence Pierce Park (2016) formerly Harry Paul Park

A former teacher, Florence Pierce served as a councillor for 19 years in the RM of St Vital, the City of St Vital, and the City of Winnipeg in St Vital's Glenlawn ward.



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