

In our day, when a girl fell in love, she'd want a real dandy; a dandy catch that is, meaning excellent and pleasing. My name? Clara Henderson. From Lyleton.

I fell in love with James Dandy at first sight. We married, and I became Clara Dandy in 1895. Everyone in our community, except perhaps his mother, called him Jim. Jim was quite the catch, and, as you'll find out, quite the loss as well.



## Jim and Clara

Jim first moved to Pierson from Ontario with his birth family in 1891. Six years later, at the age of 31, he built and operated Pierson's first hardware store. A year later he expanded the store to include furniture and a lumber yard, and he made space for the post office. Yep! My Jim was Pierson's first Postmaster! And when our two children allowed, I was in the store with him a lot.

By 1899 business was booming and the Dandy hardware store was said to be the best lumber yard in southwest Manitoba! We lived above our store until our new house was built in 1901. Every night, up there, Jim worked with numbers, building plans, and business ventures.

Pierson was a going concern in the early 1900s. A major stopping, and restocking spot. Salesmen, adventurers, surveyors, came through; folks moving into and around promising settlement areas. More rooms were needed. So, my Jim built what our local paper called 'one of the best hotels in the West!'

The Anondale took up three lots. Opened its doors in 1901. It was grand! A two-story frame structure with a dining room, reading room,

kitchen and lobby on the main floor. Twelve rooms on the second floor each offered a bed, dresser, washstand with china pitcher and basin, and, a chamber pot.



## The Leland Hotel

Sadly, we lost our Jim when he was only 49. He set out on a trip to Scotland in 1914, with his friend Chris Halliday. They boarded the Empress of Ireland passenger ship in Quebec City, unaware they would be part of one of the most tragic maritime disasters in Canadian history. It's been called 'Canada's Titanic'.

Due to heavy fog the Empress was struck by an oncoming coal vessel just hours after it left the harbor. The ship took only 14 minutes to sink. My Jim survived by swimming the icy waters of the St. Lawrence long enough to be rescued. The tragedy claimed over 1,000 lives, including our friend Chris.

Jim came home. But he was so very weakened by his time in that water. Our family and our doctor tended to him best we could. He died a year later.

But wasn't just *my* dandy though. He was *our* Jim Dandy; a community leader striving for excellence in everything he did!

Betty Sawatzky and David Neufeld adapted ..... from a story written for Vantage Points