

Albert Titus—A Napinka Character

Albert Allan Titus came with his parents to Manitoba from eastern Canada via the United States. They arrived at Old Deloraine in the late fall of 1882.

Ab, who was eighteen at the time, snowshoed to Napinka that winter to pick out a homestead. Upon his return he and his father, Samuel each filed on a quarter of the same section.

From this humble beginning, Ab eventually farmed seven quarters of land at one time, kept cattle and sheep, and imported some purebred Clydesdale Horses.

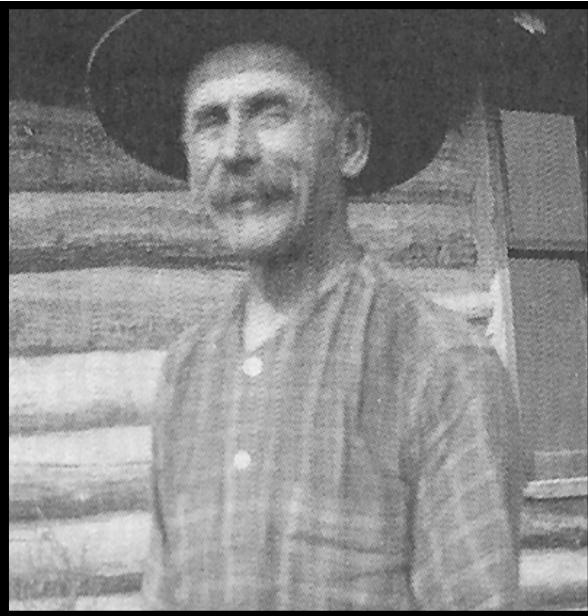
In 1929 he sold the farm retaining five acres near the mouth of the Medora creek. He built a log cabin on this property, which remained a local landmark for decades.

By all accounts he was an interesting, somewhat unconventional guy.

He loved to garden, plant fruit trees and did his own grafting. He was noted for his story telling and his many accounts of the early pioneer days; like the one about seeing the last buffalo passing by in 1884.

But his real claim to fame was as a chronicler of the times through his many articles for the local papers. The last was in the Deloraine Times 1944:

"In the fall of 1882 I attended my first dance in Ham Gage's new



Albert "Ab" Titus: ladies man, confirmed bachelor and gardener.

house, three miles east and a mile and a half south of the present Deloraine. As I did not know how to dance I just intended to talk to the girls. The music at dances in 1882 was free. In 1885 Hank Huycke from near Goodlands, the best dance fiddler I ever heard, took over at 25¢ per man playing from 8 to 12 and from 1 to 4 pm. I felt lonesome and not dressed for society.

Afraid the girls wouldn't look at me. The music turned out to be Jim Fleming, who had brought his sister, Jessie, 26 miles from home to a Stoppers' dance. After one dance with her, I felt sure the other girls would think I had class. We danced till daylight—all had breakfast and beat it."

Ab always considered himself a ladies man but remained a bachelor to the end. Another

The Rest of the Family

Ab's father Samuel Titus built the first hardware store in Napinka, which he operated until his death in 1912 at the age of 77. Sam was also the owner of the first shorthorn herd of cattle in Napinka. Ab Titus himself holds the record for having the first covered buggy in town, in 1887.

Ab's mother, Matriah, continued to reside in Napinka where she died in 1920. Both his parents are at rest in the Napinka Cemetery.

His sister Della married William Forbes who had homesteaded on the north side of Napinka where he surveyed lots right to the river hoping that the town would expand in that direction. He sold very few lots and later returned to Ontario leaving Della behind with her parents. For decades that portion of Napinka was known as the Forbes Survey.

quote from a letter he wrote might explain why:

"I shall delay marriage until spring, a wife is a bill of expense in the winter but useful in the garden."

A common sight at that time was to see Ab walking up the river hill carrying his basket on his arm with fruits and vegetables to sell and then bring back groceries. He died in 1948 at the age of 83 and is buried in the Napinka cemetery.

Sources:

Brenda History Committee. Bridging Brenda Vol. 1. Altona. Friesen Printers, 1990.
Waskada Memoirs. Morden. Morden Commercial Printers, 1967.