

The Chapman Museum



The Chapman Museum, was started in 1967 by Ab and Harriet Chapman, and operated until recently by Lois (Chapman) Allen and her husband, Gordon Allen. It was much more than a museum. It was a history resource centre, a meeting place, a host to special events, and a keeper of the area's heritage in the broadest sense.

It was, above all, instrumental in preserving and promoting the history of the Roseville & Kirkham's Bridge community located in the southeast corner of the RM of Riverdale.

This project aims to document, celebrate, and preserve the legacy of the Chapman Museum.

Funding Provided by The Historic Resources Branch, Heritage Grants Program

Part 1: The Chapman Museum Story

IT JUST HAPPENED Text By Ab and Harriet Chapman

At the beginning it wasn't a dream, or even a thought to own our own Museum or anything of that nature. It was just a desire to acquire a set of crockery jugs from the small pint to a large five-gallon size. This started after we purchased the old General Store at Carnegie. While dismantling it, we discovered a huge five-gallon jug in one of the corners. It found a place in our kitchen and in no time was the center of a set of other sizes and trade names.



The Carnegie General Store

Then along came Canada's 100th Birthday - 1967 - with the desire to set up a small display as our way of celebrating the Centennial. Well! We had an empty "Bunk House" which had been built during the 1940's to accommodate extra harvesters needed to help with our farming operations. This seemed like the ideal spot to put the jugs, churns, and a few other articles acquired during 30 years of wedded bliss.

From there it was off and running! We were bitten by the "Bug". We came to know the fun and rivalry of Auction Sales. We found ourselves the recipients of gifts from folk who didn't want to throw

old, unused articles away, but who wished them to be kept undercover. Soon our "Bunk House" was bulging at the seams. Luckily, some years prior to 1967, we had purchased the Pendennis Railway Station, which we intended to use for grain storage. It was moved to a new location and soon became part, and full, of our collection. The "Complex" as we now call it as it seems to be "the word" nowadays, is made up of Robbinville School, a Jug House, a General Store, a Library, and Smoke Shop combined, as well as the two above-mentioned buildings. Oh yes, the "Bunk House" has been renamed-the "Glass-House". Much more sophisticated.



Pendennis Station at the Chapman Museum

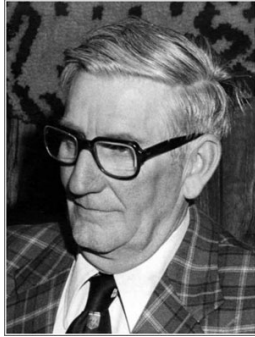
Before they knew it they had sixteen buildings that represented the scope of the region's history. The collection included five one-room schools, a store, a few houses and a church. In those buildings were treasures that tell the story of the times.

Things like; a collection of glassware and china, a huge Bible with an inscription on the cover showing it was given as a gift in 1756, a "Grain Growers Guide", from September 10th, 1919, a GTP baggage wagon, a feed cooker or pig scalding, a Raleigh's peddler's carrying case from 1921. It was an array of farm and domestic equipment that documented prairie life at the turn of the 20th century. Eventually

the operation of the museum was taken over by their daughter and son-in-law, Lois and Gordon Allen.

At its peak, the museum averaged over 400 visitors per year. Schools, Churches and Sunday Schools, Cubs, Senior Citizens, and Pioneer Groups were regulars.

In 2014, the museum closed after forty-seven years of operations.



Ab Chapman - Farmer, municipal official, archivist.

Born on the family farm near Rivers on 3 February 1918, Ab was a Councillor and Reeve for 42 years, and was President of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (1974-1979). He was instrumental in the building of Riverdale Hospital at Rivers and was its first Chairman; was the first President of WestMan Regional Development Limited at Brandon.

In recognition of his exemplary community service, he received the Manitoba Golden Boy Award in 1964, the Spirit of '70 Citation in 1970, and many such citations thereafter including induction into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame. He died on 7 August 2013 and is buried in the Roseville Cemetery.

The Tour.... As written by Ab and Harriet Chapman

The Glass House

The Glass House houses a collection of glassware from cup glass to Depression glass; china - from Ironstone (remember the large white soup plates you ate your hot porridge from each morning?) to fine English and European china; lamps - many models and sizes, including a beautiful hanging lamp complete with hand-painted shade and crystal drops; bathroom sets (mostly missing the mug that went under the bed, guess it got the most practical use); gramophones with both cylinder and 1/4 inch thick discs; stereoscopes and cards; and photograph and postcard albums. Our lady visitors seem to like the Glass House more than the other buildings.



The Library & Smoke Shop

Next in line is the library and Smoke shop. Here we have modern books as well as old, dog-eared volumes. Our oldest book is a huge Bible with an inscription on the cover showing it was given as a gift in 1756. It is written in the German language. Here also is a conglomerate of newspapers, news-magazines, farm journals, and craft magazines. There is a "Grain Growers Guide", September 10th, 1919, Volume XII, No. 37, published weekly with George F. Chipman, Editor and Manager, which has a page of Arch Dale's "Doo Dads". There is also "True Story" magazine, October, 1925, Volume XIII, No. 3, published monthly by True Story Publishing Company, New

York, New York. It has proven to be a real eye-catcher. There's many a gal who remembers avidly reading "True Story" and hiding it quickly under a pillow when Mom and Dad approached.



The Smoke Shop consists of tins, cans, and humidors that once contained that evil weed called tobacco. One tin has the price ten cents stamped on it. Imagine! Also displayed here are articles pertaining to tobacco - pipes, tobacco cutters, cigar lighter and other numerous articles. A guest book includes names from across Canada, Great Britain, and the United States.

The General Store

Let's move on to the General Store, On the way we pass a C. P, R. baggage wagon on which proudly stands a large brass school bell purchased at Gainsborough, Saskatchewan; as well as a feed cooker or pig scalding and a wooden-wheeled child's wagon.

Outside the store, a hand-wound barber pole is placed on the wall. Inside are many articles that were found in most country stores, haberdashery shops, and hardware stores. There is also a wooden apple-barrel from Ontario with a checkerboard tacked on the lid, as well as a "Whatzit". What it is, is a large, cumbersome butter roller standing on 24 inch legs, It was put out by the T. Eaton Company about 1917. There is, of course, a large pot-bellied stove in the General Store,



Robbinville School which, is the former country school in our neighbouring district. In here we have a varied collection of sealers such as Beaver, Canadian Queen, Doolittle, and Mason, as well as bottles. It's a real find to come across an embossed bottle bearing the name and address of a chemist or druggist, or an old pop bottle whose manufacturer has long been out of existence.



Robbinville School Interior

A Raleigh's peddler's carrying case of 1921 with many full bottles and tins, sits on a table. Besides it is an electric refrigerator with the cooling unit on the outside on top of the refrigerator. Shelves inside the classroom are lined with old and new school books such as a set of Canadian Readers, published by Gage and Company, Toronto, dating from 1881 to 1883, and a set of Victorian Readers, published by Copp, Clark Company and W.G. Gage Company Limited, Toronto, dated 1898. There are also map cases, chalk boxes, slates and slate pencils, and four heavy ledgers containing accounts of Christie's School Supply Limited, Brandon, Manitoba. These ledgers show the company dealings with schools all over Western Canada and Ontario. These are accounts of the years 1910 to 1916. We had hoped to set this building up as an old-time classroom, however, because it is a fairly large building and our collection is also fairly large, the additional space was used to display radios, cameras, harnesses, Indian artifacts, and war-time mementos.

Pendennis Station

Pendennis Station contains railroad lanterns, brochures for travelling by rail or steamer, mail sacks and locks, and a long pole with a hoop on one end used to pick up messages without stopping the train. Here also we see a large collection of wrenches. Many an old-timer reminisces here while displaying a badly bent finger or a hand missing a finger and pointing to the wrench that did it to him. Also on display are license plates (still with one or two missing to complete the set), tools, keys, washing machines and a string of brass harness bells, each one with its own distinctive ring and tone.

Part 2: The Photo Album

We are all fortunate that Ab and Harriet Chapman, and later, Gord and Lois Allen, carefully documented the story of their museum in photos. Lois Allen has organized the photographic record in an album that brings the story of the buildings, the artifacts, and events to life. We present here some features of the photo album. The complete album and more s online at:

<http://www.virtualmanitoba.com/chapmanmuseum/>

1. The Glass House,



This building was once used as a bunkhouse for temporary help on the Chapman farm, and was the first building to be part of the museum. It housed the extensive collection of housewares, lamps, clocks and other items.

2. The Roseville Church

The Roseville Church was built in 1884 and moved to the museum in 1979. It was dedicated to Harriet Chapman, who passed away earlier in 1979. the best photographic record available of this noteworthy building.



It served the community for nearly a century. The album represents

3. Buildings

This collection documents the individual buildings on the site with some ownership and origin details, as well as some references to the function within the museum.

4. The First General Store Building,

This building, purchased in 1963, and first used as a grain bin, was filled with artifacts depicting the feel and detail of a rural general store.



5. Robbinville School



The Robbinville School, one of four former schools, was purchased in 1973 and was the one selected to depict aspects of the one-room schoolhouse that was the heart and soul of rural education.

6. Bilinski House / Pendennis School



Many rural schools served other purposes after closing. The former Pendennis School became a home for the Bilinski family and the Foreman family, before serving as a representative farm home at the museum.

7. Harrow School



The first Harrow School was replaced in 1923 by a more substantial structure that still sits on the schoolyard. After serving as a granary it was rescued and restored to house the Museum Library

8. Westwood School



Westwood School served the Wheatland community. After school consolidation it was used for a time for church services, before finding a new life at the Chapman Museum as Chappie's General Store.

9. Poplar Hill School



Poplar Hill School was moved to the museum in 1990 from its site at the southeast corner of the Riverdale Municipality. It was used as a meeting place for the Museum

10. Special Events

The Museum served as a focal point for community events, large and small. Birthday parties, Antique Car Club gatherings, Annual Threshing Days, are presented here.



11. A Heritage Tour

The Regional Heritage Tour sponsored by the Museum in 1992 is a great example of the many facets of the Chapman Museum.



12. Anniversaries



The celebration of the Chapman Museum's 25th Anniversary in 1992 is a fine reminder of the impact the Museum had.

13. Weddings



History Themed weddings are documented. Each was unique.

14. The Grounds

Some photos of the museum grounds give us a record of the nature of the site.



15. This and That

Photos that didn't fit one of the above themes are recorded here.



16. In The Media

A Brandon Sun report celebrated the Chapman Museum in this report.

Farmer converts pastime into massive memorabilia collection

Part 3: The Chapman Museum Buildings

Approaching the driveway, a visitor to the Chapman Museum was presented with an attractively presented, well maintained collection of buildings. Some were readily identifiable as a schools, or a church, others required a closer look.



These buildings were the foundation upon which the museum was built. Most served at least two purposes. First and foremost the preservation of the structure carries with it the history of the individual building as well as presenting a representative example of the type of building and the general purposes such building served. An individual rural school or a small rural church tells us a lot about schools and churches in general, and about the broader history of the community they served.

Most of the building served a secondary purpose as a part of the overall museum, housing displays that were unrelated to the original function.

It is important to note that the Chapmans documented the purchase details and related history of each building. They generally took photos of the moving. Many of the buildings required significant renovations before being to use in the Museum.

Here we take a building-by-building look at the Museum.

Roseville Church

About midway between Brandon and Rivers, at the junction of Road 65 N and 117 W, there is a well-tended cemetery with a cairn dedicated to the Roseville Congregation and the first church in the area.



All congregations were anxious to build a church, but money was in short supply. The solution was to cooperate, so four denominations decided to share the facility. The Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists congregations each would supply the Minister on one Sunday of each month.



They called it the Roseville Mission Hall, and the spirit of cooperation went well beyond the sharing of the space. The funds and collections were all pooled and managed by a joint treasurer. Most

parishioners joined heartily in the services whether it was their particular denomination or not.

For more about the Roseville Church see the Appendix.

Pendennis CPR Station



As the district was becoming settled between 1880 and 1890, there was a boom in new railway line construction across western Manitoba.

Pendennis was a small village on the C.P.R branch line from Brandon to Lenore, established in 1902.

It replaced an earlier community / post office of that name at the crossing of the Little Saskatchewan River to the west.

It is said that the name came from a character in the 19th century novel *The History of Pendennis*.

The station was purchased in 1963 and used as a grain bin until the museum was established.

The museum displays included a selection of photos of Pendennis; the general store, the school, the elevator, and the station at the village site.

Pendennis School / Bilinski House



The Pendennis School District was established 1898 and a one-room schoolhouse operated near the village of Pendennis until 1913. The schoolhouse was used for a time as a residence, occupied successively by the Bilinski and Forman families. It was later moved to the Chapman Museum where the "Farm Home" displays.

A photo from about 1908 shows students at Pendennis School, identified (left to right) as Olive Bowman, Murti F. Stewart, Belle Robins, Eva Robins, Peg Robins, Beaty Hays, Annie McFadden, Violet Greasley, Bell Stewart, Chester McFadden, Frank Stewart, Kathleen Cousins, Covey Stewart, and Bill Bowman.



Source: Olive Bowman Lee (via James Frank)

Robbinville School



The Robbinville School District was established in 1906 and, two years later, this one-room schoolhouse was built. The school closed in 1965. The school building was moved to the Chapman Museum where it houses the "Rural Schoolhouse" Display. A monument remains at the original site.

Harrow School



The Harrow School District was established in 1886 and a school building was built on SW22-11-20W. In 1923, the present school, still standing in 2021, replaced the original frame structure. The first Harrow School building, at that time in poor condition, was moved to the Chapman Museum where it was restored and served as the Library. The school closed in July 1966.



The Harrow School being moved on to the site. Restoring it required a significant expense and a lot of work.

Westwood School



The Westwood School District #1308 was established in 1905 and a school operated in the village of Wheatland beginning in 1906. It closed in 1967 and for a time was used as the Baptist Sunday School. It was moved to the Museum in 1987 and set up as "Chappie's General Store".



Moving day.

Poplar Hill School



The Poplar Hill School District was established in 1886 as a Protestant School District. It was considered a Union School because it encompassed parts of the municipalities of Daly, Whitehead, Elton, and Cornwallis. A frame one-room schoolhouse was built on the southeast corner of the lot. A small horse barn was added to stable the horses that students rode to school. In the mid 1900s, the school was moved to the northeast corner and modern plumbing was added. It closed in June 1967. The building continued to be used as a community centre until June 1991 when it was moved to the Chapman Museum where it was used for meetings and events. A commemorative monument at the original site was unveiled on 24 June 1995.

Bunk House



This building was used on the farm to house seasonal help. It later became the "Glass House".

The Carnegie Rink Warm-up Shack / Roseville Sunday School



The first stop on the new CPR line from Forrest to Lenore was Carnegie, selected for no other reason than the business decision to provide elevators every 8-12 kilometres. The land was purchased from William Carnegie, said to be the second cousin of industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Before long it had a post office, two elevators, and a blacksmith shop, along with a section house. Watt's General Store served the small community and the outdoor skating rink hosted a

pretty fair hockey team. The post office closed in 1960 and nothing remains at the site but a cairn along the old railway grade,



The village of Carnegie. A cairn marks the spot.

After being used as a warm-up shack at the Carnegie Rink, this building served as a summer Sunday School at Roseville Church and for a time was a dwelling.

The Railway Bunkhouse



This building was once a bunkhouse for railway employees.

Small Buildings



Kerosene storage.



This former grain bin houses the Tobacco Shop and the Guest Register

This building, once a fertilizer shop in Rivers, was purchased from Bob McLaren. It served as the first "General Store" and was later known as "The Jug House"



The Stillwell Blacksmith Shop

The Stillwell Blacksmith shop was moved from Ninette.

Around the Yard – Then and Now



2021



2005

Part 4: Display Highlights

Gone but not forgotten... Some Representative Display Items

There was furniture such this attractive and functional kitchen cabinets in stained wood.

The Household

The farmhouse display featured the furnishings and appliances found a century ago in most rural homes

Although there are items that take us back to the very early pioneer days, the bulk of the displays focus on what is often referred to as the establishment period of rural life. The land was broken, towns and villages appeared, and consumer goods were available. For special items, trips to stores in the larger towns such as Rivers and even to those in Brandon were feasible. Eaton's Catalogue was there for anything that couldn't be found nearby. Sturdy frame houses, even some in brick, had replaced the first sod huts and log cabins.

There was much in the Chapman Museum to remind us of what home life was like in that era from 1900 to 1940.



This elaborate, well-designed wood-burning stove would have been an object of pride, and put to good use on a daily basis.



Items like this “boiler” would have been used in canning season or on special occasions, gatherings etc.



Coal oil lamps were an important item – many areas didn't get electricity until the late 1940's.



Fine china and glassware would be proudly put into service on special occasions.



An attractive clock might be prominently displayed in the living area.





This phone would have been connected to the party line. It might not have been a “smart” phone but it was a giant leap forward in communication

Consumer Goods

The general store displays featured an excellent collection of consumer products that for most of us might have been long forgotten. The store fixtures too, such as scale and cash registers belong to an era quite removed from today’s retail experience.

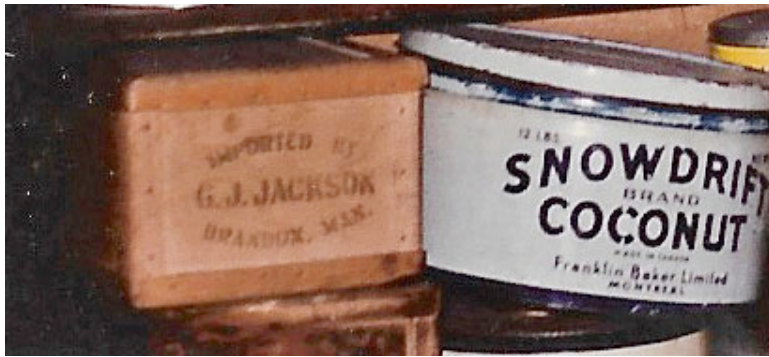
Several displays, notably those in “Chappie’s General Store” shine a light on the shopping experience of a century ago, and remind us that there were a wide variety of consumer goods available to rural families, and also that the nature of some of the staple household products has changed a great deal while other remain almost unchanged by time.



As the first example shows names like Rogers, Fleischman’s and Maple Leaf Tenderflake are still with us today, the packaging changed in some products.



Lard was always necessity for baking but the disappearance of brands like Swifts and Burn’s Shamrock likely indicate that a greater market share of this type of product today goes to plant-based alternatives such as Canola Oil.



It would be interesting to know what was in the container that reads, "Imported by G.J. Jackson, Brandon, Man." It does indicate a time when many products were produced locally, or failing that, imported in bulk and packaged locally.

The next photo highlights yet another brand of lard and reminds us that Laundry Starch was once a necessary item. The right hand side of the photo features some still- familiar breakfast cereal brands.



The displays featured some brands that are still active and several that aren't.



And tea, then as now, comes in a wide variety of types and brands.



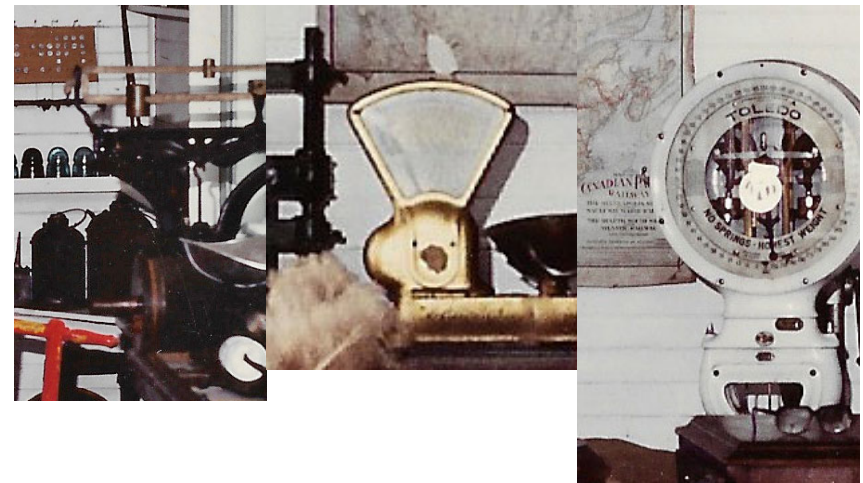
As did tobacco products that, in those days were aggressively marketed and almost universally acceptable.



Product packaging became an art in itself, with embossed glass containers setting themselves apart from competing products.

Scales

Before everything came pre-packaged, Things were sold by the pound or by volume.



Scales were an important item in any retail business. As time passed they became more sophisticated.

The more things change...

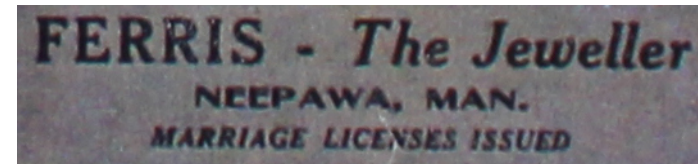
The retail business has seen constant change as new methods, new materials, and new habits have come and gone. But some things, some practices remain. A rural general store had to have everything you needed, and perhaps a few things you didn't need.



Patent – over the counter medicines have been with us a long time. Then, as now, their manufacturers touted them as miracle cures



Businesses of all types continue to promote themselves through attractively illustrated calendars.



Although, in 1929 it wasn't uncommon for some retail outlets to sell Marriage Licenses.

The Shopping Experience

The first stores in any community were aptly named “general” stores. For some time they would be the only store – so they covered all the bases by carrying everything a new settler might want. In time other retail outlets would spring up, specializing in this or that – hardware store, tailor shops, jewelry stores and more. In that way, today’s “Super” stores are a return to that retailing strategy – one stop shopping.

The most noticeable difference was the nature of the shopping experience. It would be some time before the self-serve format would change shopping. Instead of roaming the aisles and selecting items to put in your cart, you approached the counter and made your request. In the early days, most of the food was stored in large barrels – popular items such as sugar, soda crackers, tea biscuits, raisin biscuits, ginger snaps, molasses, syrup, and apples. Your purchase would be placed in the appropriate sort of bag or container by the staff. Coffee, tea and cocoa came in large square caddies and were dispensed by the pound. Cheese came in large round cakes and was sliced to order with a copper wire. Cheese along with dried apples and prunes were popular items with the numerous bachelors in a pioneer community.

As transportation service improved the railways brought in an increasing variety of conveniently packaged household items. You no longer just got “tea”. Competing brands in distinctive packaging called for your attention. For a time these were still stored on shelves behind counters, but as time marched on the products were displayed in aisles where you served yourself. The Chapman Museum had an extensive collection showcasing the variety of household good that made available.

It is also important to note that the store was more than just a place of business. For isolated farm families, shopping trips were social occasions. The store was a natural meeting place.

Farm Life

Most mixed farms had milk cows, but unless they specialized in dairy they marketed only the cream. To do that they needed a cream separator. The early ones were hand powered and operating them was a chore that usually immediately followed daily milking time.



A farm machinery display highlights the stark contrast with today's farming methods.

The very first plows carved a single furrow and oxen powered most of them. A ten-acre field took some real time and effort.



Today self-powered combines move quickly through large fields, but the first farmers had to bring the crop to the threshing machine.



A farmer was by necessity a repairman, advanced mechanical training was not required but tools were essential.

School Life

Pioneers took education seriously. They volunteered to build schools and often donated land for a school site. They applied for government funding. They arranged room and board for teachers who often came from afar and were unfamiliar with the community.



The challenge was to adapt both teaching methods and materials to the prairie rural setting. The teacher had to be a generalist – up to eight age/ grade levels all in one room with limited resources. By all accounts they worked wonders, without the benefits available in a larger school. The gymnasium was the outdoors. The library was often a shelf in a corner, as was the science lab. (which could also be the outdoors).



A close-up of one such school library reveals a fine selection of what we today call the “classics.”



At the bottom of the above photo I noticed one “classic” in particular. Although all we can read of title is “Clearing In”, because I have that book on the shelf, I know it to be “Clearing in The West” by Nellie McClung. It is a very fitting selection for a rural school library.



Along with the schoolhouse display the Museum also maintained another building as a library.

The Roseville Church was near the Chapman Farm and was the heart of the Roseville District. The Cemetery is still in use and maintained by Gordon Allen.



The church was moved to the Museum after it closed and remained as a reminder of the importance of the Church in community life.

Links to Local History

The nearest railway line was about 5km north of the Chapman farm. The small villages of Pendennis and Carnegie were located on that line in 1902. These were important in the early days in terms of access to the rest of the world. They were the closest railway villages. The stations were the link for both travel and supplies. The elevators were where their grain was marketed. Two of the buildings featured came from Pendennis and one came from Carnegie. Many artifacts came from these spots as well. Prominently displayed were collections of photos from each place – important and interesting components of the historical record.



Southwards along the boundary of the municipality, Manitoba's first hydro-electric generating station was located on the Little Saskatchewan River. The Ten-Mile Dam, built in 1901, was the first Hydro-Electric Generating Station in Manitoba and supplied Brandon with its first electricity.



The dam created a lake several kilometres long. The hydro plant ceased operation in the 1920's but the dam remained in place until it was washed away by a torrent of water unleashed upstream in Minnedosa when a dam their burst in 1948. Several photos of the plant in operation were on display.

The Korman Block was a notable Rivers business centre and the doorstep on display was a visual connection to the largest town in the region.



The penny scales from a Rivers Drug Store is one of the retained by the Allen's. A printing press is another. An extensive collection of toys features Meccano Sets and Tinkertoys, items once found in virtually every home. Several pieces of farm machinery remain, notable some threshing machines and plow that look as if they could be put into use if needed.



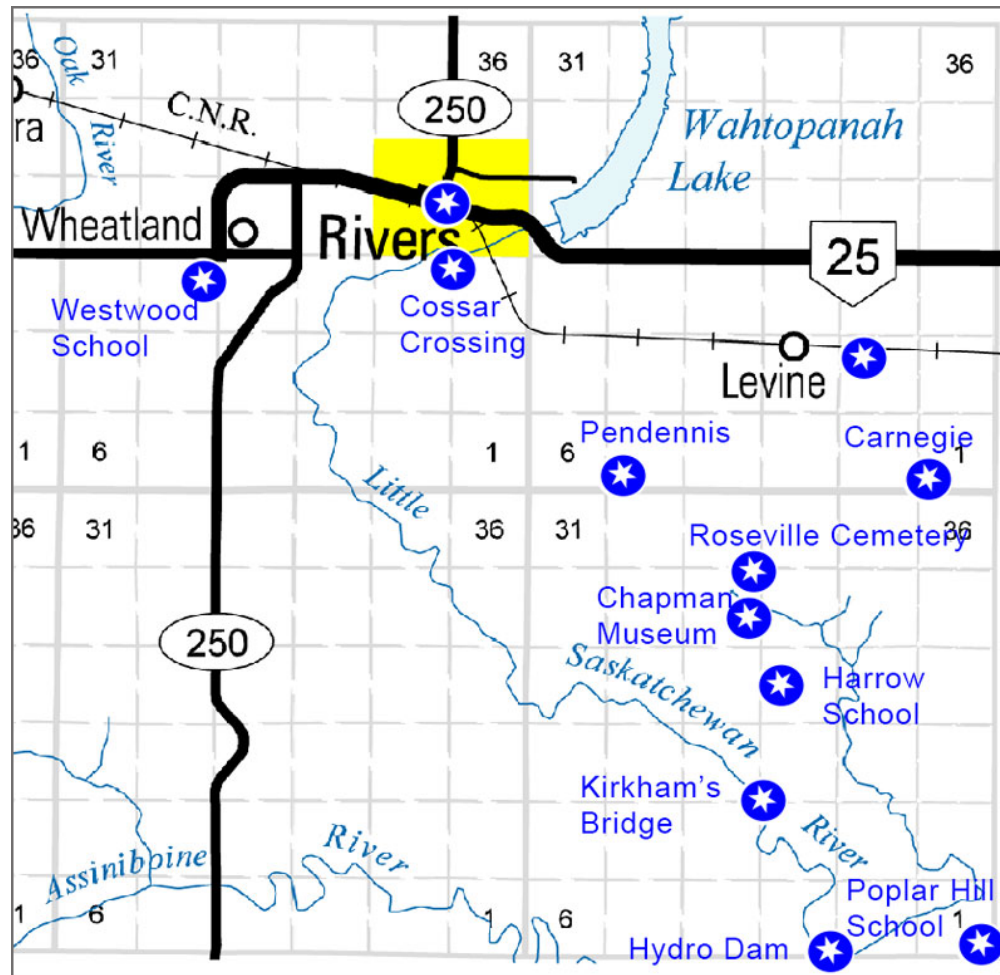
Informational displays about the original use of a building, such as the Pendennis School, were often part of the displays.



Part 5: Connecting to the Community

The Chapman Museum was always much more than a collection of buildings and artifacts. It connected to the community in many ways.

The following map highlights a few of the sites linked to displays and activities.





When the nearby Kirkham's Bridge was rebuilt, the old one was moved to Birtle. The Chapman Museum recorded the event and displayed this photo. Other community events and milestones are likewise noted.



The meeting of the Antique Car Club - 1983
When the Kirkham's Bridge Women's Institute reprinted the local History Book, a ceremony was held at the Museum.

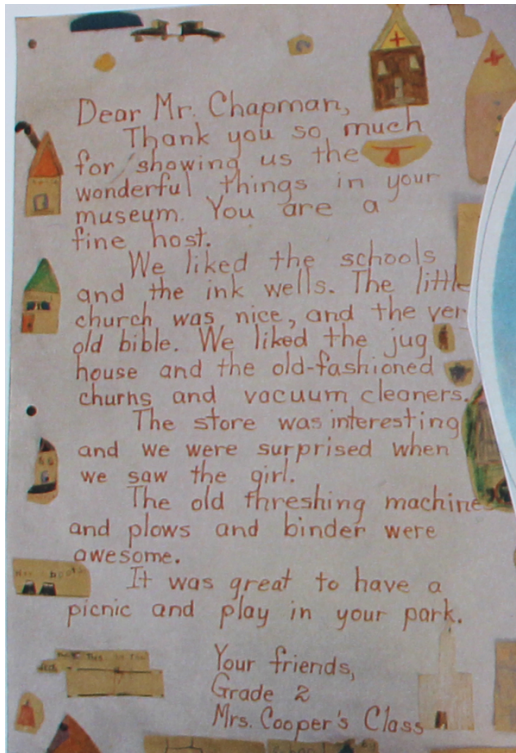


Receiving Kirkham's Bridge W.I. History Book, second printing.. 1988.

We have already mentioned that weddings, birthdays and other celebrations were held at the Museum.



Many of the beams used as foundations for museum buildings were salvaged from the abandoned bridge at nearby Cossar Crossing.



It is fitting that the Chapman Museum had acquired and used each of the schools that once served the region. And equally fitting that teachers, in the modern era, brought their students by to have a look at the past.

Part 6: Dissolution

How do you close a museum?

As we've said, the Chapman Museum was more than a museum. It was a life's work, a passion, a calling... a responsibility.

It would be hard to let go.

Some buildings could not be saved.

The Roseville Church, the Pendennis, Robbinville and Poplar Hill Schools, and the Pendennis CN Station could not be saved, the cost of upkeep and repairs was prohibitive. The Harrow and Westwood schools remain on the site, used for storing the person collections that the Allens have retained. The Stillwell Blacksmith building, originally from Ninette, was the only building not from the immediate vicinity. It is in good repair and remains on site.

A priority was finding a good home for the components. The Museum as an entity would be gone, but many of the displays, could have a life of their own.

Some special and personally meaningful items were kept.

Some items were sent to other regional museums when the items complimented the mission of the institution.

The Manitoba Agricultural Museum in Austin accepted some of the items pertaining to the Agricultural theme and the Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum in Brandon and the Artillery Museum in Shilo received some Military memorabilia. The Brandon Exhibition accepted some prize books and badges relating to their mission. The Antique Auto Museum in Elkhorn received some items. The Daly House Museum in Brandon found use for a few items, as did the Clack Museum near Rivers. Christie School Supply which has operated out of Brandon since 1882 was given some item's that originally came from their business.

An auction was held and some private sales were made.

The good news is that the Chapmans and the Allens kept detailed records and photos, from which much of this project is derived. The records include the Guest Books for each year they were open, so we not only know what was in the Chapman Museum, we know quite a bit about where it came from and who got to see it.

Part 7: Additional Resources

A selection of documents relating to the region and its history.

The Roseville Mission Hall – A Practical Pioneer Project

From Train Tracks - Stories from a Railway Town

In pioneer times, there were two main highways west, the Assiniboine River and the Fort Ellice (or Carleton) Trail. The first homesteaders to arrive chose the best land they could find close to one of those highways. Latecomers had to range out a little farther. Once here, there were two huge considerations when choosing that homestead, over and above the suitability of the land itself. Land near streams had both water and wood the essentials for getting started, so those spots were taken first. The territory running along the east side of the Little Saskatchewan valley was desirable for all the above reasons.



The Roseville Mission Hall

About midway between Brandon and Rivers, at the junction of Road 65 N and 117 W, there is a well-tended cemetery with a cairn dedicated to the Roseville Congregation and the first church in the area.

In some ways the story of the church is typical, a story repeated across the prairies. The first services were held in homes with itinerant Ministers. In this case Reverend John B. Sargent from

Brandon was sent out by the Anglican Church to Rapid City and he used to walk out to the J.C. Cousin farm.

Next, a group would start planning, and raising funds for a church. In this case Dick Cousins got the ball rolling.

Then someone might help by donating land. In this case it was the James Varcoe family, and they included enough land for a cemetery as well.

Here the story departs a bit from the standard pattern

All congregations were anxious to build a church, but money was in short supply. The solution was to cooperate, so four denominations decided to share the facility. The Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists and Congregationalists congregations each would supply the Minister on one Sunday of each month.



They called it the Roseville Mission Hall, and the spirit of cooperation went well beyond the sharing of the space. The funds and collections were all pooled and managed by a joint treasurer. Most parishioners joined heartily in the services whether it was their particular denomination or not.

Once the Mission Hall was established and serving the community, the story moves back to a familiar pattern.

The building was renovated and expanded. Sunday School classes, concerts, meetings of the Circle of Kings Daughter's, Ladies Aid,

Women's Auxiliary and Junior Auxiliary, and sometimes picnic suppers were held. The 25th, 50th, 70th and 100th Anniversaries have been celebrated.

The final chapter was played out as rural de-population and improved roads made it more convenient to amalgamate with the Churches in town. In 1983 a special service took place to unveil and dedicate a cairn, which now stands in Roseville Cemetery. A newspaper report in 1888 takes issue with the claim by their neighbours from Tarbolton that their district's new church was the first church in the municipality. The writer, Fanny Varcoe, informs us that their church was built in 1884, that indeed, the first wedding in the building took place on Dec 16, 1884, and that by 1888 there were five internments in the cemetery. And so the victory, a decisive one, goes to ...Roseville.



Kirkham's Bridge – Through the Years

River crossing, swimming hole, campground, community ... and more.

For the prairie farmer in pioneer times, the river was both a necessity and an obstacle. Many farmers had land on both sides, and while crossing in late summer was easy enough, what was sometimes a mere nuisance, could be deceptively dangerous.

During the spring flood of 1897 while the bridge was washed out, Walter Chapman had some ploughshares that he wanted to take across the river to Joe Kirkham to be sharpened. He swam the swollen river empty-handed, no problem, then return for the shares. He strapped them on his back and stepped back into the river, but this time the river proved to be too swift and the load too heavy, so a life was lost.



The remains of the earlier bridge.

In the early days, when the need of a convenient way to cross the river became apparent, surveyors were required to locate a suitable site for a bridge. In 1895 they arrived at the William Chapman home and after many measurements, they decided that the best location for the bridge was due west of his farm buildings. The bridge was named "Kirkham's Bridge" after the Kirkham family who had settled on the west bank of the river. All went well until the spring floods of 1897, when it washed out. Better footings had to be found. About 500 metres downstream suitable hardpan on which to support the piles was discovered, so the entire structure was floated down river and reconstructed on the site of present bridge. In 1906 a new steel bridge was erected.

During the 1930's this became a favorite spot for school picnics, community ball games, and other forms of entertainment. Hundreds of people gathered here on Sunday afternoons to bathe in the cool water of the river and to enjoy a few hours of relaxation while visiting with friends and neighbors. Mr. Baker who now lived the Kirkham

farm, and his family operated a small "booth", which did a thriving business, selling drinks and snacks. For years the Boy Scouts and Cubs have made this pasture their summer camping ground. Many Brandon citizens also pitched tents here, where they could enjoy the quiet unspoiled beauty of this scenic spot. Gradually the crowds at Kirkham's Bridge diminished, due to the accessibility of newer and larger resorts, and the advent of World War II. In 1951 a channel was cut in the river north of the bridge to allow a graded road to be built through the valley. This straightened the river for a short distance and changed the scenery to some extent.

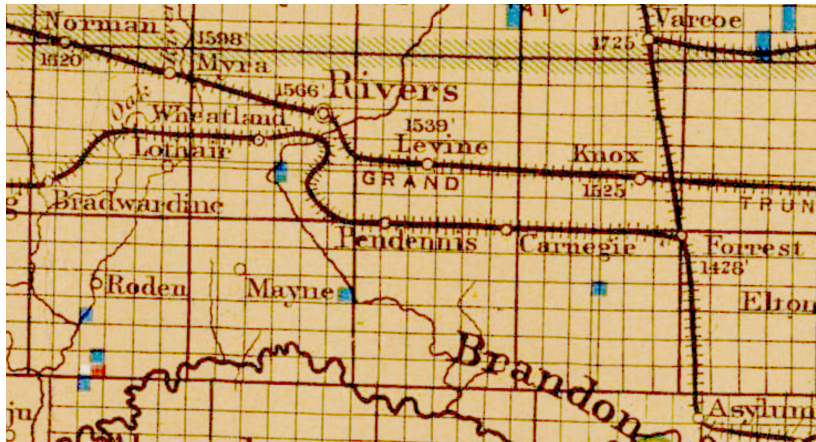
The Sixties and the Seventies brought activity once more to the area when the Riverdale Hospital Aid Auxiliary and Kirkham's Bridge WI revived interest in the picnic area. They served a cold plate supper each summer, beginning in 1964 and on into the Seventies. As many as three hundred enjoyed the meal under the shade trees and of course the visiting. At the same time ball games were popular once more in the area.

When the new Kirkham's Bridge was constructed in 1979-81 the lovely sandy river bottom was ruined and thus the huge, well loved stone no longer an attraction.

Mr. William Baker, son of Mr. Jack Baker, was the first one to drive a truckload of grain across the new Kirkham's Bridge, just as his father had delivered the first load across the 1906 bridge.

The Lenore Branch - Rail Service at Last!

As the district was becoming settled between 1880 and 1890, there was a boom in new railway line construction across western Manitoba. The first line to reach the Municipality of Daly was the Great Northwest Central, which in 1902 began a service linking the CPR Main Line at Brandon to towns to the north. To facilitate the steep climb up out of the Assiniboine Valley it actually connected west of Brandon and angled gently up the slope before turning north. The CPR later took over this line, as it did with many others.



The Grand Trunk Pacific, a Trans-Canada line which didn't arrive until 1908, created the town of Rivers. In effect, the Roseville region ended up being quite close to that vital rail link.

Carnegie

The site of the village of Carnegie reflected the NWCR business decision to provide elevators every 8-12 kilometres. The land was purchased from William Carnegie, said to be the second cousin of industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. Before long it had a post office, two elevators, and a blacksmith shop, along with a section house. Watt's General Store served the small community and the outdoor skating rink hosted a pretty fair hockey team. The post office closed in 1960 and nothing remains at the site but a cairn along the old railway grade.



Carnegie

Pendennis

The next stop was Pendennis. In this case the name was already there, or nearby, identifying a post office located near a crossing of the Little Saskatchewan River. As often happened, the Post Office moved, taking the name along with it.



On the map on the previous page, notice how that, after Pendennis, the line takes quite a jog to the north before crossing the river and heading west again.

Railways will go to some lengths, literally, to find the easiest place to cross a river. Surveyors look for a gentle grade and a short crossing. At the crossing, near the original location of Pendennis, they built a water tower and a siding called Cossar Crossing.

The site was really close to Wheatland, in fact was sometimes referred to as the Wheatland Crossing, and would only have been established because of the ready supply of water at the river.

Cossar Crossing



The Cossar Crossing site today.

Wheatland

Wheatland however did become quite a town. Like Pendennis, it had existed as a post office for some time in a location quite a distance to the north. Had the Grand Trunk Pacific not decided to build its line so close, and to establish a divisional point at Rivers, Wheatland would naturally have become the service centre for the region.



Wheatland

At one time, the Canadian Pacific Railway ran tri-weekly mixed freight and passenger trains on the Forrest/Brandon to Lenore line. The line has been long since abandoned, the rails have been removed, and the railway lands returned to agriculture. The little villages of Carnegie and Pendennis are gone while Wheatland has a few residences.

The Little Saskatchewan River and the Ten Mile Dam

From its source in Riding Mountain National Park the Little Saskatchewan River soon enters a deep valley and twists and turns its way through Elphinstone, into the man-made lake at Minnedosa, past the scenic site of the old siding at Riverdale, over another dam at Rapid City, and into Lake Wahtopanah. Up until that point it swings back and forth across its deep valley, flowing strongly in springtime, down to a trickle in the fall. For the last twenty kilometres it becomes (especially in springtime) another river, as it descends to the Assiniboine in a series of rapids.

It was never a transportation route like the Assiniboine, but the advent of settlement, spurred intensive logging in Riding Mountain and the river was ideal for transporting logs. First to a sawmill established by the Hudson's Bay Company at Elphinstone, next to Rapid City, and soon all the way to Brandon.

Dams

Dams back up a reliable supply of water for the dry seasons. By 1910, a dam was constructed just south of Rivers to ensure a dependable supply of water for railway steam engines.

The other reason for building a dam is to provide consistent waterpower. The first effort in Manitoba to harness waterpower to produce electricity happened right here, on the Little Saskatchewan, between Rivers and Brandon.

Generally called the "Ten Mile Dam", the Brandon Electric Light Company built it in 1900. The success of the Brandon Power Station may have prompted a similar effort at Minnedosa, where in 1911 a second hydro project was constructed on the river.

The dams were left in place after other sources of power became more efficient, to become swimming and camping sites.



The paths of these two dams crossed in 1948 when the Minnedosa dam was breached, flooding the downtown and causing such a torrent that it destroyed the Ten Mile Dam, far downstream, as well. Because the Minnedosa dam had proven so beneficial as a recreational site, it was repaired. The Ten Mile Dam was left to disintegrate.



The project created a lake that became a popular picnic spot



As of 2019 the concrete foundation of the powerhouse remains on the east side of the river

Today, once the water spills over the dam at Rivers, the river has reverted to its old self between here and Brandon. It has become a favorite for paddling enthusiasts, providing some of Western Manitoba's best stretches of whitewater and scenic river valleys.

The Chapman Toll Bridge

Edward Chapman Sr. followed his brothers R.B. and William to Canada, arriving in the fall of 1882. He, like his brothers was impressed with the beauty of the valley and picked out a spot for a home on the riverbank on the north-west quarter of 16-11-20. To reach this land the river had to be spanned, so he built a truss bridge costing \$200, but just wide enough for a team and wagon, and because it was a private bridge he collected a toll.

This was quite a convenience in that Kirkham's bridge was not built until 1895.



The remains of the bridge were visible in 2014

ONLINE

For more photos & resources visit:

<http://www.virtualmanitoba.com/chapmanmuseum/>

