

High View

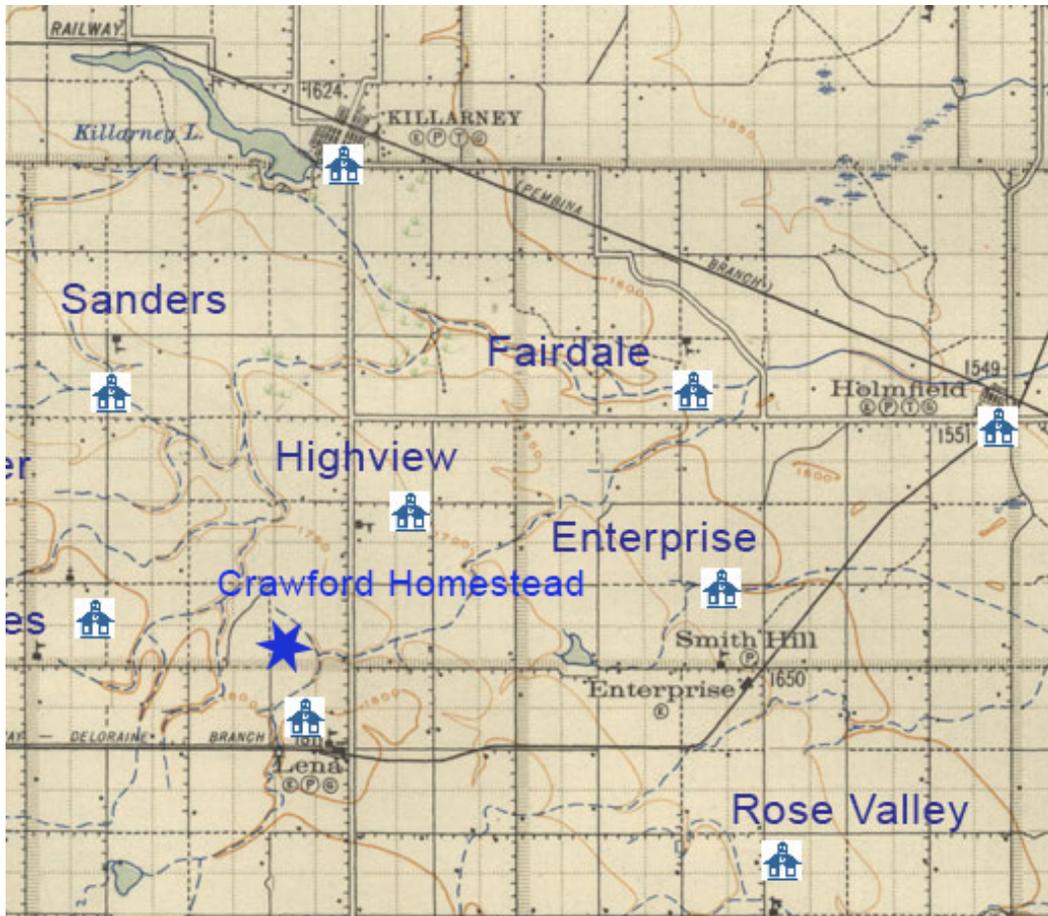
Adapted from, "Recollections of Early Days at High View" by A. E. Barnard



Highview School and the sign that marks the location today.

Mr. George Crawford came out from Exeter, Ont. to Emerson in 1880 and walked from there up through this country. There were no settlers in this district at that time. He looked around for two months then went to Ontario and came out again the next spring bringing some horses with him. He sold all of them, parting with the last team at Fifteen Mile Village for a yoke of oxen, these he brought to Crystal City and left them there, Then he, James Moir and Peter Low, set out to look for land, they walked on up to Deloraine, only to find that the land they had already picked on was already taken. They returned to Crystal City, got the oxen and again made the trip to Deloraine; this time they were successful in getting the land they had chosen. Mr. Crawford got out logs, hewed them and built a house and stable then went to Crystal City and helped his brother-in-law to take off his crop with a cradle, returning to Ontario that fall.

William Crawford, my father, came out in October 1881, walking from Emerson and on to Deloraine and took up the first homestead in what was to be the High View district. Mr. Stewart Foster and Mr. Edward Hall came into this district the same fall. My father stayed at his brothers and got logs for a house and stable. He and two Mr. Moirs bached there all winter. In March 1882 my uncle, George Crawford returned with his own and our household effects, my aunt with three little ones, also my mother with three, and my uncle Mr. Robert Monteith, with three other gentlemen who come at this time.



There had been very little snow all winter, but just as we arrived in Emerson, it commenced to snow. Father met us at the station, accompanied by John Downie, my cousin, who had come to drive a team. They got a house for us all to stay in for three days while they made a pair of sleighs and got ready to start. By the time we left Emerson the snow was deep, we travelled in a covered sleigh, stopping two nights on the way to Crystal City at Mennonites, who were very kind doing all they could for us and wishing to take very little in return.

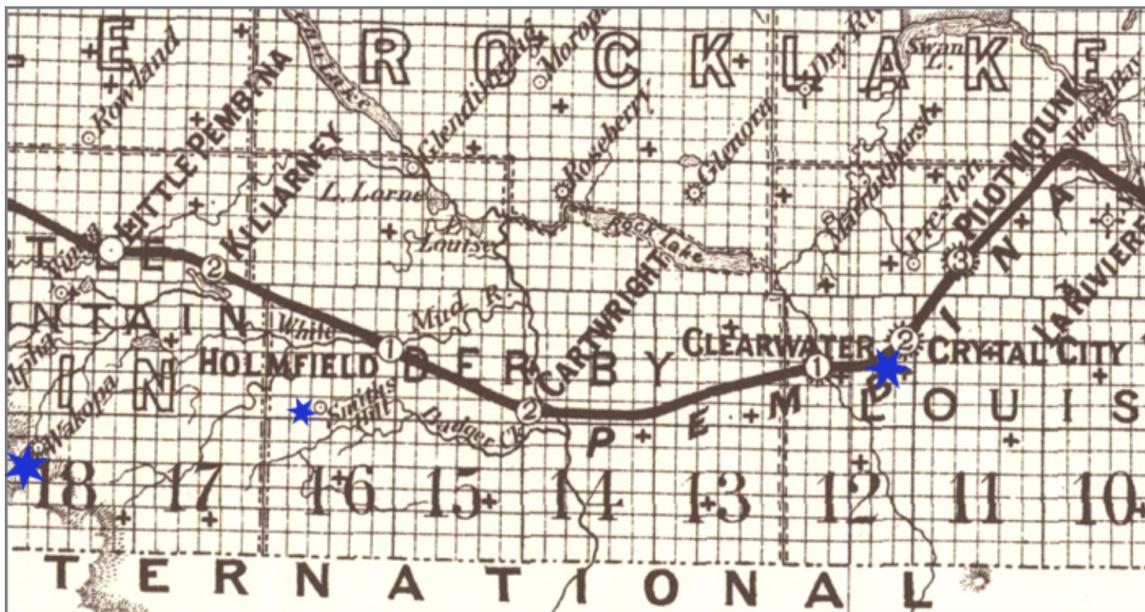
At Crystal City, the storm came on in earnest and for two weeks we stayed with friends. Coming from there we stopped all night at Cartwright and at noon on the 1st day of April at a stopping house kept by Mrs. Wm. Finlayson at Pancake

Lake, landing in the evening of that day at my uncles. On the 11th of April we, father and family, Robert Monteith and George Kilpatrick, moved to a little shanty on 24-2-17, belonging to Mr. Hall who had gone away for the winter. From there my father could work at his buildings without crossing any creeks. That was the year of the flood. I remember Stoney Creek ran full almost to the top of its banks. One of Mr. Monteith's oxen got down in one of the creeks and was drowned. As soon as he could have a look around, he walked up to Deloraine and homesteaded the southeast of 10-2-17, which he afterwards named High View. My father broke five acres, that spring and planted oats and potatoes. The oats he carried nine miles on his back on account of the swollen stream.

Mr. Forster and his son Tom came in about this time and took up land north east of us. Mr. John Stewart settled on the west half of ten. He was a brother of Rev. Andrew Stewart of Winnipeg. He had a pet hobby of gathering jack knives, of which he had a large number and many of the children around the neighborhood had toys, whittled out of a piece of wood by him with those knives in the long winter evenings.

In 1883, Rev. Andrew Stewart started services in our house, his field was from Crystal City to Deloraine. One time he was asked to go to Cartwright to marry a couple. On the way he got stuck in a creek, got his buggy broken. There was no blacksmith nearer than Crystal City, and after the wedding, the bridegroom gave him a dollar.

At first we got our mail at Crystal City, forty miles away, then at Wakopa, then Smith's Hill and afterward. Killarney.



We had had a minister of our own church (Presbyterian) preaching for some time. Mr. Gordon had moved his preaching place so as to reach more people,

and at the house in which we had service a hen used to lay in the house on the bed. One Sunday she was on her nest at church time, the lady, of the house took off her apron and laid it over her. But brave Bidy got up in the middle of the sermon and proclaimed to all the house that she had layed an egg.

There used to be a great many prairie fires. One night, two Mr. Chapmans and a Mr. Rankin moved their threshing machine to our place to thresh in the morning. There was a fire away to the southwest. The men thought it could not cross the creeks but mother kept getting up and watching it. At last she woke father, and they called the others. They harnessed a team and turned everything out of the stables, drew the machine onto some plowing and then prepared to fight fire. There were already fire breaks, they backfired from them and fought fire with pails of water and bags the rest of the night. While we were watching from the window, we could see the flames leaping as high as the top of the stacks, but they kept it back so that nothing at our place was burnt. But many others were not so fortunate. Stewart Foster lost nearly everything and others lost feed, buildings and grain stacks. In 1888 a hail storm came through the High View district, most of the crop was cut down, our fields looked as if they had been ploughed. Then in 1889 it was so dry very few had enough for seed the next year.

Bad Cow!

As a farm boy, I know that cows sometimes have peculiar and distinct personalities. Why was there always one cow that resisted being herded back to the barn for milking? And why did each herd have at least one with both the inclination and the skill to get through that barbed wire fence? But this tale by the Disney family recalls a particularly troublesome cow...

...one red cow had a passion for clothing and thereby hang a few tales. My two small sons loved the red cow and her desire to scrounge every car or buggy parked outside the fence. One day Mrs. Gus Taylor sat having tea when the red cow managed to swallow her lap rug. Just a tiny corner was showing when Mother and the boys tugged the rug back. Mother had to rinse it out and hang it in the sun and the two boys raced to tell Mrs. Taylor with Mother after them. Mrs. Taylor left with her rug – unaware of its adventure.

Lightning

One thing about rural life hasn't changed much over centuries. Lightning is still a dangerous thing.

Canada averages over 2 million lightning strikes each year. And, despite our relatively short lightning season, 9 to 10 people are killed and between 100 and 150 people are injured each year by lightning in Canada.

By reading pioneer stories one suspects that without the benefit of lightning rods and other ways in which buildings are grounded today, and given that much more time was spent out in the elements, the death rates must have been higher in pioneer times.

Even so, then as now, lightning doesn't always result in death. But no one ever forgets his or her encounter with it.

One incident that is often mentioned occurred at Farirdale School in 1911.

Robert Clarence was in class when the school was struck. Eight children and the teacher had a narrow and sensational escape. Several children and the teacher were injured.

The bolt came down the chimney, followed the pipe and smashed the stove. Two girls, the daughters of Henry Eggleton and William Chatham, were beside the stove with the dogs between them. Had it not been for the dogs, the chances are that the girls would have been killed. As it was, they were badly burned.

Robert was burned and remained unconscious for many hours. The lightning bolt went through his book and desk and into the floor at his feet. He kept his damaged book for many years. The teacher, Miss Arnott, was left stone deaf, and two dogs sleeping by the stove at the front of the room were killed.

Only two of the eight remained unscathed.

Ina Steward, of Brandon, remembers vividly the day. Her first thought was for her new white dress, with a pink sash. It was burned.

The building was moved nearly two feet from the foundation, windows were smashed and there were holes in the roof.

Numerous other accounts of buildings damaged by lightning are found in the local histories, but my favorite lightning related story is told by Albert Smith's son.

Albert came to Killarney from England about 1900.

"I recall my father telling of carrying a half a pig carcass from door-to-door, trying to sell it for \$2.00 (He finally got a dollar for it), also of selling lightning rods from door-to-door and of being chased out of one farmyard by a woman who claimed the lightning was caused by the Devil and that he (my father) was his agent. "

At The Fair

The summer's main event was "The Killarney Fair." Everyone for miles around attended at least one day. After considerable anxiety by the children concerning the weather the day usually dawned bright and clear. Chores were done in record time; lunches were packed and we were soon on our way. Arriving at the "Grounds" which were then East of Town the relatives were contacted and a place and time for lunch decided upon. In a shady spot the women spread newspapers on the grass, covered them with tablecloths and then arranged the food.

The women spent the afternoon viewing the handicrafts, chatting with their neighbours and watching the judges as they awarded the prizes for the animals and poultry. The men were even more interested in the animals but they also spent considerable time examining the new models of machinery. The 'games-of-chance' stationed along the midway were well patronized. The children crowded around the merry-go-round. Excitement reigned supreme! The afternoon parade was led by the Killarney Ladies' Band, the Mayor of the Town and the executives of the Fair Board. Following came the prize-winning animals – horses and cattle of various classes and ages – all groomed to the nth degree and led by their proud owners.

In the evening we attended the grandstand performance with its many thrilling acts. One that impressed me particularly was "The Knife Thrower." A man and woman came on the platform. The woman stood with her back to a board wall and was entirely covered by heavy paper. Standing at a distance of a few yards from her was the blindfolded man with a long-bladed knife in his hand. When all was quiet, the woman rattling the paper would designate where a knife was to be placed. This performance continued until the woman was hemmed in by knives. To create more excitement the thrower would deliberately toss a knife too high. It would disappear behind the stage. A great sigh of relief was heard when the paper was torn and the woman stepped out entirely unharmed.

Then came the fireworks and soon the men could be seen hurrying to where their horses were tied. The animals were frightened by the swish, explosion, and bright lights. It would take two men to hitch the horses to the vehicle in which the mother and children had seated themselves. The driver took his place, wrapped the reins tightly around each hand and the homeward journey began. Away from the noise and confusion the horses calmed down to a steady pace. The children closed their weary eyes and the Big Day was over.

Anne Burrows