

A Walk to Remember...

Part Two 1891 to 1904

Dear Diary: June 1892.... What a whirlwind year... here we are just a year in and what a change we've seen. The businesses moved from our original townsite a couple miles west and have staked their own claims to property here in town. We've got Preston's General Store, Robert Gordon's got his blacksmith shop up and running and doing a good business, although with the growth and demand a new guy by the name of Stovin has moved in to give him some competition. Guess we'll have to make the rounds to both shops each day till we can figure out where the best gossip can be found!

The CPR got their depot up and running just north of the tracks on the east side of Broadway and they put their water tank just east of that. They are already talking of moving the water tank to the west end of town though as the water supply will be better at that end.

Ballentine got his harness shop moved and the lumber man is set up and doing a grand business. Looks like Doc Campbell and that lawyer fellow, Tom Gordon are getting the finishing touches done on their buildings as well. Sounds like a dentist might be coming too. That won't be soon enough. I'm so tired of going to visit that homesteader Bishop who owns his own set of forceps. Granted he's become quite adept at using them to pull teeth for people in the district but some of the ladies and young ones might find him a little rough around the edges and scary because of his size. I know he's a big one but I still don't know whether to believe the story of him hauling an 80 pound sack of wheat on his back all the way to the mill in Souris last fall.

At least this year he can just haul to the flat warehouses in town here to be stored and shipped out. I expect Railway will be plugged with teams and wagons come harvest. There will only be a few grain cars and it'll be a slow process for farmers to hand load them after having their sacks of grain weighed at the door. There are rumblings that a bunch of locals are getting together to build an actual elevator in town soon and the Northern elevator company may put one in too by next year. Maybe even a mill coming to town. Then watch the town grow!

That new hotel they are building on Railway will no doubt be put to good use. Too bad they had to relocate it from on Broadway when they found out where the CPR was actually putting the railway, but at least the foundation they had already started was put to good use with the Red Onion bakeshop, eatery and boarding house going up there.

Dear Diary: Well the snow is falling and it's December of 1892 but life continues at a fevered pace! The school was ready to be opened on the corner of Pacific and McKinnon this fall as planned and there's already talk that the one storey building isn't going to be big enough. Not sure where all these folks are coming from but it's keeping that new Elliott Hotel hopping with rooms and meals till the new folks can get houses built or get moved out onto their homesteads. I hear the two bits for a meal or 21 meals for \$5 is still too rich for some people's blood though so they're buying soda biscuits and cheese down at Preston's rather than splurge in the dining room at the hotel.

That new Smith & Hamilton store seems to be doing all right too and the hall above it is keeping busy. Between becoming home to all the churches in town and hosting the local lodges like the Orangemen and Canadian Order of Foresters it's busy enough with meetings. Sounds like there'll be an at home party as well coming up. Super! Nothing like a good meal, some fiddle music by the locals followed by a dance to keep the community spirit going.

Well I guess I should head down to Carnduff's house and see if the mail came in. Can't believe he's stuck with being the postmaster all these years when it was just going to be temporary way back when. I guess it's not as big a nuisance now that his livery barn is right next door. I'll get down there before the town gets busy later on. Being it's Saturday I

imagine Preston's will have horses hitched to the posts outside the store til close to midnight tonight as folks make their monthly trek to town for supplies.

Dear Diary: 23 April 1893 – Well I guess you can call it home when you know its going to be your final resting place. Went to the meeting tonight where we set up the new Carnduff Cemetary Association. We're going to buy 2 acres of land from Eli Stover and then we'll sell plots for \$3 for a single or \$5 for a double to recoup the cost and assist with maintenance and upkeep. Here's hoping tomorrow I can get out of the house and slide over to that new livery stable south of the Massey Harris. Sounds like they have quite the poker parties going on there! Some of the boys slept it off on the hay in a stall with the horses. A den of iniquity my wife calls it. We just call it a time with the boys.

Dear Diary: Well it's September 1894 and threshing is in full swing. That new Dominion elevator the locals promised was coming is finally up and running and the Northern out of Winnipeg wasn't far behind. That CPR agent Elliott that was in charge when the depot station and water tower were built isn't with them anymore. Some say he was fired – the way I hear it, he was giving preferential treatment to the local elevator and the boys out of Winnipeg were none too happy and put up a fuss. He was offered a position at another community but decided instead to start his own little store opposite from the depot. Talk about thumbing your nose at them and standing up for Carnduff! Anyway, I have a feeling he'll be a great benefit to our town and we'll here more about Elliott's store in the future.

Dear Diary: What a great idea! December 1895 and weather's been good but cold. Since the CPR water tower is now at the west end of town, the section man decided to let water run down between the main line and side track and voila – Carnduff has itself its first ice rink! I guess everyone's in a great mood after a great year for crops. Wheat was yielding up to 40 bushels an acre and oats hit 60 or better for some. For a change everything didn't have to be sold instantly and farmers seem to be holding about a third back for higher prices. Good for them and what's good for them is good for the rest of us!

Got a fine shave at the new barbershop on Railway and only 10c. Have to get myself one of those fancy shaving mugs like all the other guys to put on a shelf there as I'll be back. Guess this was the last summer we'll Parkins pitching his tent for a photo gallery at least on this location. Every year folks could go and get their picture taken. Why would I want a selfie anyway? Who came up with that idea?

Dear Diary: Nothing can hurt a friendship like politics and nothing can get things wrong like politics. With the Conservatives getting thrown out of office in Ottawa, can you believe the new guys are going to move the Post Office? John Carnduff put up with it all those years when there was no money in it and now there's a little money to be had, it's being moved to the Furniture store just down the street. Even though I voted for the new government I signed the petition to try and stop the move because I think it's unfair but no doing. You can't blame the Furniture store owner – he's got a business to run and if the opportunity is there to add on a new building to his business why not? I hear his one neighbor blames him though and won't even talk to him. It's a shame all the way around.

I did try skating on that new open air rink they put in on Railway but truth be told I think I spent more time on my butt or in the tiny waiting room warming up. When they brought out those rock things and tried to introduce curling to the town on that ice – it was beyond me. I must say that Carnival thing they introduced with the children skating was a great thing though. I hope it catches on and they continue to have one each winter.

Dear Diary: Here we are, July of 1897 and already celebrating with the 10th anniversary of the Carnduff Agricultural Fair. Who would have known when it was kicked off in the old town way back in 1887 that it would catch on the way it did. The school exhibits and women's fancy goods are up in Elliott's Hall, Gordon's opened up his blacksmith shop for the crop and vegetable exhibits – we can grow some grain here – Anderson even won first place for his barley at that show in Chicago. And of course the best part of the fair of course will be the livestock show out in front of the Massey Harris and

Queen's hotel right on Railway so everyone can take it in. The Clydes and purebred cattle always show well in Brandon so it's nice to see them getting acknowledged here at home.

Also showing well is the community. We've finally got a few trees popping up. That bylaw offering a 50c rebate to homeowners who plant along their property line seems to have caught on a bit. It was so barren around here just like on the prairie what with all the fires that swept through before the land started being broken. Guess that's why it made sense that the town had to have a double fire break around it when it was built. Anyway, the town is starting to green up a bit. I especially like the maples that have started to show up from seeds brought in from Ontario. I hear the teacher has permission to transplant some of the originals to the school yard on Pacific come Arbor Day. If they make the move, Maples like that will probably be standing proudly when the town is 75 years old.

Dear Diary: Well the 1800s are coming to a close with some big happenings here in Carnduff. In March we officially became a hamlet and by head count are the biggest community in the district. I think that place down the road called Estevan was a little disappointed when we were the bigger community and announced as the centre for the new judicial district and Court House next year – but really all they've got is that lignite coal and it's too light for a lot of uses- the CPR can't even use it in their trains. So with their mine only running in the fall after the hot weather passes, and with not having much of a market outside of locals I imagine at some point they'll realize that this is where the growth is going to happen.

The school has added a second storey to deal with the overcrowding among its 61 students enrolled last year. Now they are already talking of adding a small cottage to the south for the younger kids. It won't be long at this rate before they totally outgrow it and have to consider a new school altogether. Growth is exciting but it doesn't come cheap!

And that new A.H. Foulds hardware has turned into quite the building. Amazing how 2 teams of horses and a couple wagons hauled all that stone in from south of town and David Dunn split those rocks just so to build that store. It's a great addition to the corner of Broadway and Railway and one that'll stand for as long as the town does I bet

Dear Diary: Well our population is now up to 190 in 1901 – that's almost a 20% jump in the 2 years since we became a village back in March of 1899. Guess that's what you call momentum. It helps too that everyone is so community minded. That Mr. Spencer arrives, builds a new hardware store and brick and proceeds to act as overseer for the village as if he didn't have enough to do. They say if you want a job done give it to a busy person. All I know is for the \$25 he gets per year, you wouldn't see me collecting taxes, dog taxes, acting as the police and grading the streets. I know he's got eight horses to do all the grading but it's gotta keep him busy.

And now we also have a new flour mill being built as well at the west end of the Right of Way. When Oxbow's grist mill burned down, a bunch of fellows saw opportunity and raised \$3000 as incentive for someone to come to town and build here. C.C. Smith, head miller in Souris is taking them up on their offer. It sounds like he has big plans. Carnduff's mill will run 24 hour shifts and ship flour as far as Red Deer, Alberta and even ship some back to the old country as he's going to insist on the best grade of wheat for milling but is willing to pay a premium for it. He sounds like a smart and aggressive business man but I'm not sure about his decision to hire that young lad, by the name of Partridge as one of his first millers. He's not even 21 and who knows whether he'll even stick around the community?

Speaking of smart business men that Foulds fellow has it going on upstairs too! He no sooner builds that impressive stone hardware than he sells it and buys out Mr. Shaws lumberyard and moves it down by the Red Onion. Talk about timing. Unbelievable the amount of lumber he's sending across the border to Sherwood as things open up down there. I guess it's a lot closer to get it here than have it come in from Kenmare or Minot. Probably lots of opportunities coming down the road to ship goods down there. I know they'd like to get their hands on our liquor what with them being a dry state. Somebody could make some money there.

Dear Diary: 1902 and I've always wondered at them putting 2 entrances on the north side of Fould's Hardware when it was built, but when the Merchant's Bank of Canada came to town and occupied the one corner it made sense. Surprising they aren't going to stay from what I hear. Manager Galloway's moving them out into his house of all places and then

they are going into that big Smith Block and Opera House being built at the south end of the block as soon as its completed next year.

I got a look at the new rink the Elliott brothers agreed to build for the town. It's been up for a year already but I hadn't been in it. The roof shouldn't collapse under the weight of snow with those poles running down the centre of the ice to support it, but I would think they'll make an interesting obstacle during hockey games. Our boys will probably get used to them but out of town teams may not be too happy with them. Elliott's agreed to build it and after 5 years the building will be theirs. I suspect after five years it'll need to be torn down anyway. It's kind of a make do rink but they'll probably salvage the lumber for a barn or some such thing when the time comes.

Dear Diary: Well it's 1903 and I was right about that mill owner. People may not like his tactics but he's one smart business man. First he brings in a relative E.J. Hunter to set up an elevator in partnership next to the mill. Then when he gets in a dispute with the Red Onion bakeshop and loses them as a client for his flour he doesn't just give up. He recruits Mr. Forsyth to town and we've got a new full fledged bakery pretty much across the street from the Red Onion. It's got a huge brick oven that can put out 200 loaves of bread at a time from what I understand. I've sampled their cinnamon buns. With baking like that this bakery will be around for generations. People are already talking that although the restaurant and boarding house will stay open the bakeshop in the Red Onion is done. Smith said he needed to make sure the demand for his flour stayed strong. It remains to be seen if he'll be able to compete with these big milling interests. When they ever decide to flood the Carnduff market with low prices, it'll put the Carnduff mill out of business in short order. Then the prices will go back up just like in other towns where they wanted the market.

On the plus side that new Presbyterian church looks great on the corner of Broadway and Pacific. What a change for the congregation from that tiny store building they moved to next door back in '94 for services. Grace Methodist built a couple of years ago on the other side of the street seems to be doing well too! Some of the Anglicans that don't want to travel out to Oakley for service have started having services in the Presbyterian church as well, and with growth in numbers it probably won't be long till they are building as well.

I went down to the furniture store today and checked out that new Edison gramophone he's selling with the wax cylinder music on it. There's no speaker on it and you put this little rubber tube to your ear to listen to it. I only listened to one tune as they charge you a nickel to test it out but it's kind of cool. I couldn't ever afford the \$600 anyway to buy one. Maybe some time it'll catch on where people pay a nickel to have a song played through a tube in their ear but it'll be a long time off!