Transcona Yesterday and Today

(compiled by the Transcona Historical Museum)

The name **"Transcona"** was chosen to commemorate the railway to which the town owes its existence. It is claimed that the name "**Transcona**" was chosen from thousands of contest entries and was a combination of "**Trans**continental" and "Strath**cona**". "**Trans**continental" - either for the CPR Transcontinental trains that passed through the area or for the National Transcontinental Railway who constructed the shops in cooperation with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. "Strath**cona**" was for Donald Alexander Smith, also known as Lord Strath**cona**. He headed one of the groups responsible for constructing the Canadian Pacific Railway. In 1885, Lord Strathcona drove the last spike into the CPR railway.

Establishment of the Town-site

In 1906 or 1907, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway surveyed an area in the Suthwyn district for the future site of the western repair shop and the town of Transcona. In 1907 or 1908, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway purchased 800 acres of land located 8 miles east of Winnipeg from John Henry Kern for the construction of the railway repair shops and the future town-site.

Early Municipal Development

The prospect of steady employment brought hundreds of men to the area beginning in 1909. The area was quickly covered with the tents of construction gangs and hurriedly constructed shacks. For those intent on making Transcona their home, men brought their families only after they were established. In 1910, the Transcona post office opened and the town population was reported at 1,600 people. There were two boarding houses, a bakery, butcher shop, bank, two churches (Methodist and Presbyterian), and a two-room school in the Saunders Block. Joseph Maranda who owned a lumberyard built the first three-story house in 1910. For many years, Mr. Maranda operated the jitney service (a car transportation service that ran prior to bus lines) between Transcona and Winnipeg. On February 10, 1911, the Transcona Board of Trade was inaugurated.

Town of Transcona

A charter officially incorporated the Town of Transcona on April 6, 1912. Transcona's first Mayor, Mr. C.J.E. Maxwell, was the only candidate running for the position of Town Mayor. He was declared elected by acclamation on May 13, 1912. The first Transcona election was held on Monday, May 20th, 1912. Two polling booths were situated across the town, one in the North end at a new store on the corner of Regent and Oxford (currently Day Street) and the other in the South (in South Transcona) in the barbershop opposite the Springfield Hotel. Six town councillors were elected as follows: Peter Watt, J.W.Gunn, C.Fieldhouse, Alex Campbell, Ovide Broduer, and Matt Hall. Nineteen-twelve saw the construction of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, the opening of the Transcona Municipal Offices and Fire Hall on November 12, and the installation of the first electric lights and power. On January 18, 1913, the Transcona Shops were officially opened. Central School constructed between 1912-1913 was officially opened September 8, 1913. The Ukrainian Catholic Church was also constructed in 1913. The

town continued to invest in building miles of wooden sidewalks. In 1914, the sewage system was installed. The Transcona Cemetery was surveyed in August and approved by the council on October 7, 1914. By the end of the first year, 22 burials had been made in the new cemetery. Between 1914 and 1918, over 400 men from Transcona enlisted in service to King and Country. Between 1915 and 1918, the Transcona Shell Company and Eley Cartridge Company engaged in the manufacture of munitions. The town experienced severe economic hardship during the 1920s and went bankrupt in 1921. The Mayor and Council were required to resign. The Province administered the Town of Transcona until 1927 when a Town Council was elected.

During the Depression of the 1930s, the community faced chronic unemployment, railway layoffs, and many economic hardships. To provide employment to able-bodied men, Regent Avenue was paved as a "relief" project. The new cement highway was paved from Transcona to Winnipeg at a cost of $135,000. From 1939-1945, the townspeople pulled together to support the nation at war. Over 800 men and women from Transcona served in uniform. Others worked at the Cordite Plant, on the armoured train, or helped with the Transcona War Efforts Committee. According the October 27, 1955 issue of the Transcona News, new signs placed at Dugald and King Street, Regent and Hwy 59 (Panet Road), and Dugald and Superior (close to the Cemetery) celebrated Transcona's population as "8,000 happy people."

Growth to a City

The population continued to grow so that by 1961, Transcona had 13,000 citizens and was granted its City Charter. Transcona celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1961. The slogan "The Park City" was officially adopted through a motion passed by Mayor Harry Fuller and Alderman C.J. Perry, Paul E. Martin, William Dzyndra, and M. Sharpe on October 3, 1966. The motion stated, "that the words 'Park City' would be included on all letterhead". A few months later, as part of a campaign to further promote Transcona's park-like image, the Transcona Post Office provided the City administration with a postage tape bearing the official slogan "The Park City". The City of Transcona existed until January 1, 1972 when it was amalgamated with the City of Winnipeg along with 11 other communities. Today, Transcona is a large urban community in the City of Winnipeg with a population of approximately 40,000 people.

TRANSCONA: THE PARK CITY

Transcona was officially named the Park City on October 3, 1966 and that according to local legend, had more parks per capita than any other City in Canada (circa 1960). In 1970 Redonda Street Park was renamed Crocus Park, Manitoba's provincial flower, as part of Manitoba Centennial Celebrations. Crocus Park is situated on a former municipal landfill site. Between 1911 and 1920, the Town of Transcona built a garbage incinerator on the site at a cost of $25,000. While the incinerator was never fired, teenagers dared each other to climb the old ladder inside the smokestack. In 1939, the incinerator chimney was toppled over as a safety measure. Kern Park and Memorial Park Circle were the first two parks in Transcona. Other names for the parks include: "Town Park", "Crescent Park", "Central Park Circle", "Memorial Park", "Park Circle", and "Circle Park." The original Transcona Baseball Stadium, home of the Transcona Baseball Club was located in Kern Park. Named after George Olive, mayor of Transcona in 1933 and 1938 to 1945, this 16-acre site was set aside for preservation in 1977. Since Transcona's early days, locals have commonly called the marsh in the park the "Transcona Horse Pond". Between 1994 and 2001 the Transcona Horticultural Society (renamed the Transcona Gardner's Club) has cleaned the site, hand planted 4,000 wildflowers and specialty grasses, transplanted endangered tall grass prairie, planted bluffs of trees and shrubs.

Sometime around the 1940s or 50s, the residents of Yale Avenue West played card games on Saturday evenings to raise money to purchase playground equipment and a one-of-a-kind **"Y"** sign for the park. Kiwanis Park was created as the Transcona Jubilee project of 1961, thanks to the special efforts of all Kiwanis members including Thomas F. Copeland, the Mayor of Transcona. The Canadian National Railway donated the No. 2747 Locomotive to the City of Transcona a symbol of appreciation for the support from the community. The site of the Rotary Prairie Nature Park was originally earmarked to become a roadway until the service club became involved as part of a "Preserve Planet Earth" campaign. The park includes a pathway, interpretive plaques, and over 80 different plant species. Today, just 1/20th of 1 percent of Canada's tall grass prairie remains. Today, Transcona has approximately 65 parks, playgrounds, tot lots, pocket parks, natural areas, water parks, and public green spaces that many people enjoy each and ever day!

For decades, Transcona has been called "The Park City". The historical origins of the nickname are quite uncertain. The nickname (which is familiar to generations of Transcona residents) was acquired years ago when it was widely noticed that Transcona had an abundance of playgrounds, park-like areas, and green space. Today, there are 63 public parks and green spaces in Transcona that are maintained by the City of Winnipeg. Furthermore, Transcona's many tree-lined streets enhanced the reputation of the "Park City". Today we enjoy a lasting gift from the early residents of the town of Transcona, many of whom were the founding members of the Transcona Horticultural Society who planted trees along many of the streets and boulevards in and around the downtown area

during the 1930s. Of course, over the years, the Horticultural Society (today known as the Transcona Gardner's' Club) along with local residents and businesses has enhanced the beauty of our community by planting flowers and shrubs.

In 1966, the City of Transcona adopted the slogan "the Park City". According to the Council minutes from October 3, 1966, members of the Transcona Council including Mayor H. Fuller, and Alderman C.J. Perry, P.E. Martin, W. Dzyndra, and M. Sharpe passed a motion "that the words 'Park City' would be included on all letterhead whenever reordering [sic] of supplies is required". A few months later, as part of a campaign to further promote Transcona's park-like image, the Transcona Post Office provided the City administration with a postage tape bearing the official slogan "The Park City".   On February 20, 1967, the Transcona Municipal Office (then located in the building which now houses the Transcona Historical Museum at 141 Regent Avenue West) dispensed the first letter with the slogan.

While the actual City of Transcona ceased to exist on January 1, 1972, the community of Transcona still calls itself "The Park City" and today, motorists traveling west on Dugald Road, pass a sign on the north west corner at Ravenhurst, which welcomes people to the "Park City". The slogan for the sign (which is sponsored by Transcona M.L.A. Daryl Reid) is also referred to in his Transcona Views articles, in a column, which he calls the "Park City Report".

Several other businesses and organizations have adopted the reference to the Park City including "Park City Heating" on Larche Avenue, "Park City Systems" on Regent Avenue, and the "Park City Community Club in the west end of Transcona. Likewise, Park Manor Personal Care Home in the East End and Park Pontiac Buick GMC. Ltd on Regent also conjure up the image of Transcona, the park community.

On an interesting note, a look in the White Pages of the MTS 2000 directory will show a listing for a former Transcona business: Park City Bakery, Regent Park Shopping Centre. While the bakery has changed ownership and is now called "KUB Bakery", the business still has the old phone number for the ease of longtime Transcona customers. It just goes to show that Transcona still is "The Park City".

Transcona During the Wars

At the turn of the 20th century, the railway was the most important method of moving goods and people across Canada. Major repair facilities were essential to service all types of steam locomotives and railway cars carrying freight and passengers. In September 1909, the Grand Trunk Pacific and National Transcontinental Railways (later forming the Canadian National Railway) began construction of their western repair shops on the open prairie seven miles east of Winnipeg. The Transcona Shops, which were officially opened in 1912, quickly attracted a large force of workers. Following the arrival of railway workers, real estate developers, and merchants, the town of Transcona rapidly developed. By the time it was incorporated in 1912, Transcona had a population of 1600. Attracted by the prospect of permanent employment, many men - some single, others married with families - came to Transcona seeking an opportunity to work for the railway. At the time of the official opening of the Transcona Shops in 1913, over 400 men were employed by the founding industry of the town.

During the first half of the 20th century, working for the railway was a way of life for most people, except during the war years. Only a short time after Transcona was incorporated, war broke out in Europe. Following the June 1914 assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and Germany's invasion of Belgium as part of an attack on France, Britain declared war on Germany. Canada automatically entered the war as a member of the British Empire. In 1914, Canada's military force was ill prepared for war. With only 3,000 permanent soldiers and 60,000 volunteer militia, Canada began recruiting new volunteers to sign up. Between 1914 and 1918, 625,000 Canadian men were sent to war in the battlefields of Europe. Communities across Canada contributed huge quantities of foodstuffs, military supplies, along with large numbers of troops. The new town of Transcona was no exception. In the summer of 1914, scores of Transcona's men volunteered to join Canada's Forces.

Many were former employees of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway shops. Most believed the Allies would achieve a quick victory and many hoped to be home for Christmas. Few people foresaw the terrible extent of the war. Canada's railways played a vital role supporting the war effort as military supplies and personnel were transported across the country by rail. At the Transcona Shops, workers serviced the locomotives, boxcars, and passenger cars that shipped thousands of people and supplies.

In addition to transporting military goods, railway passenger cars were converted to serve as military hospitals during World War I. Perhaps Canada's greatest industrial effort between 1915 and 1918 was the production of munitions in support of the war. In Transcona, a portion of the railway shop was transformed to a war munitions factory. Employees of the **Transcona Shell Company** produced thousands of 18 lb artillery shell for use at the front. This is an example of one of the 18 lb artillery shells produced at the Transcona Shell Company. Production took place in the former paint shop of the car department, where ships of labourers worked around the clock. The industry provided employment for hundreds of men from Transcona and surrounding area.

First Shipment of Shells – Heavy shipments of shells were transported by to the east coast of Canada and then shipped across the Atlantic to the distant shores of Europe for use by Allied forces on the battlefields. Between 1914 and 1918, over 300 men from Transcona enlisted in the army in service to King and Country. Many men left their employment with the railway to serve in uniform. These brave men fought for the cause of freedom overseas in the trenches of Europe as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.Working on the railway was considered an essential service and many men continued employment at the Transcona Shops. Beginning in 1916, the National Service Board was established to permit or forbid the enlistment of men depending on the value of their current employment to the state. Registration Cards were assigned to every male of military age.

Back at home in Transcona, locals provided support to those in service on foreign soil by writing letters, wearing regimental pins for family members serving in uniform, and attending sacred concerts in Park Circle. They also provided aid to soldier's dependents by planting vegetables in vacant lots and purchasing coal for winter heat. Seventy-six heroes from Transcona were killed in action fighting in the trenches in Europe during World War I. They paid the ultimate price in service to King and Country.

Following the declaration of peace and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, the world, saddened by heavy losses and shaken by the destruction, prepared to welcome home the returned soldiers. In Transcona, citizens celebrated a civic holiday, which included a parade from the downtown area to the town park and a solemn sacred service.

WWII

Between 1939 and 1945, the world was again at war. Canada was allied with Britain, France, U.S.S.R, China, and the United States in the fight against Germany, Italy, and Japan. Once again, the citizens of the town of Transcona rallied together in support of our nation at war. "The ordinary citizen gave up their sons and daughters to the country, went without food and supplies, rationing, and supported the war effort."

<div align="right">

Margi Bacon, WWII Veteran,
Transcona Legion Member

</div>

"Many parents had children who never came home. For them, there was no closure."

<div align="right">

Paul Martin, WWII Veteran,
Transcona Legion Member

</div>

At home in Transcona, much hard work went in to winning the war and supporting Canada's armed forces serving overseas and along Canada's endangered coasts. Transcona residents were employed to produce munitions and an armour plated train to patrol the Skeena River in British Columbia.

"We have obligations to see that our own country is made as immune from attack or possible invasion as we can reasonably expect to make it."

William Lyon Mackenzie King,
Prime Minister of Canada.

Just east of the Transcona, the British and Canadian government invested 20 million dollars in the construction of "The Cordite Plant" in 1940. Completed in 1941 with its own hospital, staff quarters, and electric generators, this facility employed over 2,460 people to manufacture cordite, a highly explosive material made with Nitro Glycerin. The plant was set up as if to be a separate town it had shops and its own sports teams. Special tools were made out of the metal Beryllium, which dose not produce sparks when used on metal surfaces. The Plant even had it's own paper, The Cordite Review. In an article from the paper, it speaks about people's loyalty to their jobs and how this helped lad the allies to victory. "To be absent from your job without leave is to help Hitler. Absenteeism slows production of planes, ships, guns, tanks, ammunition, and all other materials of war." Once again, the railway proved important, as it was the only main route to get to and from the plant. The CNR set up a special train that ran to and from the plant around the clock. The plant itself ran three 8-hour shifts, 24 hours a day and was heavily guarded. Because there were so many people dealing with extremely dangerous materials, accidents were bound to happen. Thankfully, most of them were not very serious. However, some lives were lost as stated in the newspaper article. The "Cordite Plant" or the Defense Industries Limited as it was officially called was shut down on March 7, 1945.The city of Transcona wanted to convert the plant for "civilian use" such as a dairy plant. The government wanted no trace of the site and took down all 230 buildings using some of the lumber to build 72 houses for returning vets.

When Japan entered World War II in the Pacific, Prince Rupert, B.C, quickly became an important port for shipping supplies to Alaska, and was the host to large numbers of Canadian and American forces. The major concern of the time was the security of the CNR 'North' line linking Prince Rupert to Terrace, B.C., which followed the Skeena River for 80 miles to the Pacific Coast. The fear of the time was that Japanese fishermen could have given detailed information to the Japanese Navy about the coastline. This information could have been easily used to sneak troops inland, and destroy the rail line. To protect the vital rail link, the Canadian Army Engineering Branch came up with what was later known as one of the best-kept secrets of the war, Canada's No. 1 Armoured Train. In the spring of 1942 construction at the Transcona Shops began, shifts of railway men dutifully worked around the clock, seven days per week, for ten weeks to armour plate the rail cars and engine. The plan was to build a train of seven cars with the motive power and a steel boxcar featuring the train's radio room and a commissary for 200 people at the centre of the train. The remaining six cars were essentially a mirror image of each other with an armoured boxcar and two gun-carrying gondolas on either end. On July 22, 1942, the first six cars were delivered to Terrace. BC and put into service seven days later. The base of operation was originally Terrace, BC and the plan was to run one day and one night trip between there and Prince Rupert. Shortly thereafter, this was trimmed to once a day, because the trip took 12 hours, which meant no rest period for

men or equipment. Also. The lack of proper headlights made night trips impossible. On August 6, it was decide to move the base to the halfway point at Tvee. This meant the train could he closer to the mouth of the Skeena River, thought to be the most to be a vulnerable area. On June 20, the National Defense ordered the train to be dismantled. The approval was given and the cars were returned to the CNR. With that, Canada's only armoured train was retired.

The HMCS Transcona was one of ten diesel powered "Bangor" class minesweepers used as escorts built for the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). The Transcona was built in Sorel P.Q. and was the last of its series (1940-1941 Programme) to be commissioned.
The Ships were named after towns and cities across Canada, as long as the town / city would sponsor the ship by forming a war efforts committee. Although no one from Transcona served on the ship, the town adopted all the troops as their own.
Mrs. G. Olive was invited out to christen the ship. Lieutenant Commander A. E. Gough asked the town to come up with a logo for the ship. The three finalists were Leonard Klingbell, showing a locomotive in the act of administering the coup de grace to a U-boat. Robert MacKay's entry was a picture of a big sledge smashing into the hull of the sea raider. This is the winning entry sent in by Miss N. Francis whose picture was used and is shown here."Tag Days" and "Whist Drives" were held to raise money in support of the war effort.

The money raised by in Transcona was donated to the War Efforts Committee to purchase cigarettes, playing cards, magazines, clothing, and phonograph records, which were sent overseas to local men and women in the service as well as to the "adopted" crew and officers of the H.M.C.S. Transcona. The crew of the Transcona had an account set up for them through Eaton's and some large items such as a phonograph, a radio, and even a silver tea set were sent. In a letter from Commander Gough thanks the town for their efforts."It is very gratifying to hear of the kind and very thoughtful work that the ladies of the War Effort Committee have done with the sweaters. The Boys will greatly appreciate them in the coming cold weather." The HMCS Transcona ran many routes along the eastern coast between the U.S. and Canada. The ship had only one real brush with the enemy. After the war the RCN had no use for the minesweepers, however they were still very new ships so eight of the remaining nine were given to the RCMP and the other to the Department of Fisheries.

"The Transcona War Efforts Committee was comprised of delegates from every organization in town. The efforts put forth to raise money for every request the government asked for, a mobile canteen, the Red Cross, the Lord Mayor of London Fund, the Victory Loans. Each effort put forward was oversubscribed."

Mr. George Olive,
Mayor of Transcona during WWII.

Transcona's Hometown Heroes served King and Country in uniform. Over 800 men and women from Transcona are known to have enlisted in the navy, air force, army, and merchant marine. These people, the finest of their generation, fought for the values we regard so highly today: freedom, peace, and democracy. Thirty-four Transcona heroes were killed in action fighting the war in Europe and the Pacific during World War II. They paid the ultimate price in service to King and Country.

Following the end of the Great War in 1918 and the Second World War in 1945, the people of Transcona vowed to remember the people who lost their lives in service to King and Country. The Transcona War Memorial Committee has made many commemorations through the designation of a Field of Honour in the Transcona Cemetery, the dedication of parks and playgrounds, and the naming of streets.
In 1931, the community erected a war memorial, the Transcona Cenotaph at Regent and Oxford (now Day Street). The granite monument was moved in 1954 to its present location in Memorial Park Circle. On November 6, 2000, the Transcona Historical Museum dedicated a Book of Honour naming all known sons and daughters of Transcona who enlisted and served in World War II. It is on permanent display in the Transcona Historical Museum at 141 Regent Avenue West.

CN2747

On September 27th, 1958, the Kiwanis Club of Transcona was granted its Charter and immediately took to the tasks of sponsoring and equipping school patrols with belts and raincoats, distributing toys and candies at Christmas, supporting the Transcona Public Library, supplying film strips to local schools, and supplying equipment to community playgrounds. On the eve of Transcona's 50th anniversary celebrations in 1960, the Club undertook a special project of great magnitude: to acquire the historic CNR locomotive "No. 2747" as a permanent exhibit for present and future citizens of Transcona. As a lasting contribution to the community, the Club built a new park to feature the attractive exhibit.

In March 1960, the club surveyed an area in the west end of Transcona along Kildare Avenue, King Street (since renamed as Plessis Road), and the CNR Beach Track. To compliment the historic "No. 2747" exhibit, development plans for the park included a wading pool, climbing tree, slide, swings, monkey bars, teeter-totter, merry go-round, railroad tie pyramid, culvert tunnels, a wishing well, picnic tables, trees, green space, and a parking lot for 18 cars.

Taking a step back for a minute, you might ask "What made the "No. 2747 so special and why did the Kiwanis Club want it?" Well**, the "No. 2747" as it was known, was the first steam locomotive ever built in western Canada for any railroad** and perhaps of even greater significance (at least to locals) it was completely built in Transcona at the CNR Shops by Transcona people. In fact, the famed "No. 2747" was the first of 38 steam locomotives produced in the Transcona Shops between 1926 and 1938.
By 1960, the steam era in the railway industry ended and hundreds of old steam locomotives were retired from service waiting to be demolished in the Transcona Yards. The fate of the "2747" proved to be different. After 34 years of service in Western Canada, Canadian National steam locomotive was retired from service and saved from the scrap heap. As a result of the request put forth by the Kiwanis Club, the CNR brought the "2747" back home for its retirement and presented the iron horse to the Town of Transcona for a "permanent exhibit testifying to the skill and energy of its citizens" in Transcona's Kiwanis Park.

While the CNR's gift was likely a gesture of appreciation to the citizens of Transcona for their years of dedication and loyal service, it was also a very generous one. According to the Transcona Golden Jubilee book of 1961, the approximate scrap-value of a large locomotive ran close to $6,000 and the CNR was receiving an "increasing number of requests from cities and towns all across the Dominion for old locomotives, especially those in some way associated with the growth of the area". It seems that many citizens wanted "to see these in local parks as a tangible reminder of progress." While many requests were denied, Transcona's was granted!

Now, the gift itself was expensive but so was the park exhibit. All parties involved, the Railway, the Town of Transcona, and the Kiwanis Club understood that the cost involved in the year-round maintenance of these massive monuments was not easily met by many communities, yet they agreed that the "2747" merited such a commitment from Transcona and they continued the project. The railway advised that for such an exhibit, "a suitable base of concrete and steel-track has to be laid and the dead engine set in position by a running diesel and tractor, a project amounting to some $2,000. Regular painting is also necessary to preserve it from rust and dust of time and weather. Another important item not to be overlooked is that the new owners of the old must take out public liability insurance locomotive. Also "the monument" must be protected from vandals." (Transcona Golden Jubilee book).

In 1960, the Town of Transcona and the Transcona Kiwanis Club accepted the challenge and made a huge commitment to get the locomotive exhibit in a place of beauty and recreation, for the benefit of present and future citizens of Transcona. The Kiwanis Club was likely quite influential with their decision making ability, especially seeing as its 36 members were the prominent businessmen, civic leaders and municipal administrators of the day. Many members had direct connections to the Town of Transcona including Mayor Thomas F. Copeland, former Mayor Paul Martin, Chief of Police Joe Teres, the Secretary-Treasurer for the Town of Transcona Jack Walden, and the Superintendent of Public Works, Mr. P. Pisnook, (Superintendent of Public Works). The support of the project by the Club, the Town, and Transcona residents seemed to ensure that the "No. 2747" would be maintained, preserved, and protected in the years ahead.

A lot has happened in forty-one years however. The elements (wind, rain, ice, snow) and forces of nature (gravity) along with vandalism have led to the deterioration of this once majestic community treasure. A lot has changed too: the Town / City of Transcona no longer exist and neither does the Kiwanis Club of Transcona for that matter. And while the City of Winnipeg no longer owns the locomotive (the Winnipeg Railway Museum owns it now) the City still maintains the park for the use of all residents and tourists to enjoy.

Today Kiwanis Park, or "Train Park" as some youngsters like to call it, is still a place where children of all ages can see a real steam locomotive – and experience its awesome size – up close and in person. Moreover, while the real 2747 can still be seen there, the "2747" has become an important cultural symbol in our community. Its likeness is seen in many places – the artistic wall mural painting on the TD Bank on Regent at Bond, on limited edition t-shirts (which were sold as a fundraiser up until a few years ago), and at the Transcona Historical Museum in our displays, on our letterhead, the cover of our cookbooks, and on souvenir coffee mugs. The "2747" remains vivid in memories and recollections of many Transcona residents. It is a strong part of our community identity. Recently, there have been some discussions regarding the question *what to do with the "CN 2747"?* Yes, it is in deteriorating condition and it does require restoration and will need protection. While the past does not predict the future, taking a look back to the year 1960 helps answer the question of how and why we got the CNR Locomotive No. 2747

in the first place. Hopefully, having this understanding will help concerned citizens in our community answer the next very important question "what about it's future?"

Transcona Historical Museum

From its auspicious start in the basement of the Transcona Public Library, to its welcomed residence in the former Bank of Toronto building, the Transcona Historical Museum has seen tremendous progress since its establishment 35 years ago this month.

It all began on April 10, 1967, when Alderman Paul Martin at a City of Transcona Council Meeting declaring the need for a community museum made a motion. Within a couple of weeks the Council approved the creation of a Museum 'in principle', and plans for Transcona's Centennial Project surged ahead. Mayor Harry Fuller met with the Board of the Transcona Public Library to discuss potential arrangements for the location of the new museum. Soon after, it was agreed that the basement of the Transcona Public Library, which was under construction at that time, was a suitable location for this worthwhile endeavor.

The official opening of the Transcona Historical Museum took place on Wednesday, October 16, 1968. About one hundred guests were on hand to attend the opening ceremonies. After a brief ceremony, Deputy Mayor George Albert cut the ribbon held by Museum Board members Mrs. P. Sosiak and C. S. Quelch declaring the Museum open. Board Members operated the Museum, collected artifacts from the community and set up exhibits. Volunteers served as museum attendants and supervised the displays three evenings per week.

In 1970, expansion of library services, together with the growth of the museum necessitated relocation to a larger area. The decision was made to set aside space in the Roland Mitchener Arena at 1131 Wabasha Street to house museum collections. After months of tremendous effort by dedicated community members, The Transcona Historical Museum re-opened on Wednesday, March 22, 1972 in the basement of the newly constructed recreation centre. Mrs. Mona Dudderidge was appointed as the Museum's first official curator, responsible for museum collections and interpretation. Visiting hours were Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00, with group tours by appointment.

By 1979, the Museum was again in search of a new home – one that provided greater accessibility and space for museum collections and exhibits. At this same time, the old Transcona Municipal Office at 141 Regent Avenue West, which was originally built in 1925 by the former Bank of Toronto, was designated a Class III Historic Building by the City of Winnipeg. Little time was wasted in assigning this heritage building as Transcona Historical Museum's new and final residence. After a second major move, the Museum officially opened its doors on Sunday, June 25, 1983 at its current location.

Over the past 35 years, the Transcona Historical Museum has seen tremendous progress. The Museum now houses over 45,000 items of cultural and natural significance. Visitation and attendance at special events and educational programs has grown to over 7,000 children and adults annually. Exhibit upgrades are constantly being undertaken

and new ideas explored. Through the years, there have been countless people to thank for the Museum's success including the City of Winnipeg, and former City of Transcona, the many staff members, and most importantly, the dedicated volunteers. These volunteers include Museum Board Members and other organizations and individuals within the community who have committed their time, energies and financial support to assist in all aspects of museum operations, and/or donated items to the Museum for display. Today over 50 volunteers donate in excess of 1500 hours of their time each year.

United Church

Fifty years ago, the Transcona News reported Transcona Memorial United Church was filled to overflowing during its Sunday service. The date was September 13, and the occasion – the official opening of the new church building at 209 Yale Avenue West. Rev. H. Moore conducted the Dedication Service, and L.C. Brewster, chairperson of the building committee, presented him with the keys.

Although the Transcona Memorial United Church itself is a mere half-century old, its origins go back over one hundred years to the construction of the Springfield Presbyterian Church in 1880. Decades later, Springfield Presbyterian along with three other churches - Suthwyn Presbyterian, Knox Presbyterian and First Methodist Church – would unite to form Transcona Memorial United Church. Fittingly, Transcona Memorial has named its halls and auditoriums in honour of these four founding congregations.

Suthwyn Presbyterian Church, erected just south of Springfield Presbyterian, opened its doors in 1900. These two churches provided Service to the outlying districts of Oakbank, Birds Hill and Suthwyn. The development of the Railway Shops and ensuing population boom in Transcona, led to the further construction of two other churches in 1910. Knox Presbyterian was erected on Harvard Avenue and First Methodist Church on Yale Avenue West. Upon the formation of the United Church of Canada in 1925, these churches would become Knox United and Yale Avenue United.

The congregation of Knox United Church grew quickly. By 1938, Suthwyn Presbyterian Church had closed its doors, and joined with Knox United. Five years later 'Valedictory Services at Yale on Sunday' headlined the front page of a November 1943 issue of the Transcona News. Yale United said farewell to their old church building and joined with Knox United Church. Thus, three churches had amalgamated as one, with the congregation of Springfield soon to join in 1951. It became evident that the time for rebuilding and expansion was upon them, and plans for the construction of a new Transcona Memorial United Church building surged ahead.

The former Yale Avenue Church was torn down, and a new place of worship for the congregation of the Transcona Memorial United Church was erected on its site. According to an historical sketch by J.R. Armer, chairperson of the Board of Stewards of Transcona Memorial in 1943, the construction of the Church captured the imagination of the town's people. Volunteer labour played a very large part in the building, with many donations of time and money received from people outside the congregation. Mr. Armer goes on to reminisce. 'It was a glad day for us all when the Church was dedicated on September 13th, 1953'.

Since its opening, Transcona Memorial United Church has seen a number of changes including an extension built in 1963 to accommodate a growing community, and the installation of an elevator in 1985 to help increase accessibility. Recent upgrades to the

church building include a new roof and stucco in 1998. Most important, however, is the work that Transcona Memorial United Church and its now 884 members have done in the community and abroad. The Church has supported a number of assistance programs including those delivered from the North End Community Ministry on Stella Avenue, and the New Chance initiative, which has provided the opportunity for a mother and her young family from Guatemala to begin a new life together in Canada. Transcona Memorial further delivers the Transcona Food Bank service, and from its doors operates the Children's Choice Nursery School, Mothers Connecting Program and a host of boys and girls programs including CGIT (Canadian Girls in Training), Explorers, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers.

Entertainment in Transcona

The Transcona Theatre (1911) later became the well-known Apollo Theatre. This movie house was a Regent Avenue landmark from 1912 until 1960. Mr. Triller operated the theatre. Many times the show was lined up down Regent and around the corner along Day Street. Many people remember "Country Store Night" on Saturday evenings, when bags of groceries were given away to the lucky winners of ticket draws.

Sports

History

The name Transcona Nationals has been around since 1912. The Transcona Nationals name derived from the Transcontinental Railway, which had its railway shops in the heart of Transcona, Manitoba and is known as the CNR shops today.   While the war was going on, the Transcona Nationals were put on hold for a few years.   It was not until fall of 1957 football was reborn in Transcona.   With only a couple of dollars in the bank, three men started a boys sixteen and under team in a league together with Fort Garry, St Vital, Ravens Court and Transcona.   March 25, 1958 was officially when the Transcona Nationals Football Club was formed with elected Directors.   Later in 1958 the Greater Winnipeg Midget Football League had started.   In the same year, the Transcona Stadium Commission granted permission to the Nationals to play at the Stadium field. East End Community Club and the Transcona Curling Club also allowed the team to use their fields and clubhouse as a dressing room.   A Tag Day was held to sell tickets and accept donations helped fit the Midget Team with uniforms in traditional blue and white of the original Nationals.

The league scheduled six teams, players all under eighteen years of age.   That year the Nationals won nine out of ten games only to loose in the sudden-death final.   In 1959, the Midget League had grown to eight teams. Later that year, with help from the Transcona Nationals the four team Greater Winnipeg Bantam League was formed.   Nineteen sixty would have the Transcona Nationals placed a third team out of Nationals club.   This one would be in the Manitoba Juvenile League.   The Nationals Juvenile team was fully fitted with equipment from Harry Sucharov owner of Transcona Motors.   The Transcona Ramblers was the name of our juvenile team.   In 1960, Transcona and Fort Garry were the only two districts in all of Manitoba to sponsor football for boys in the three age groups, the Bantams, Midgets and Juvenile.   The Transcona Nationals moved to various locations until the Optimist Park at 875 McMeans Ave. East became their present home to more than 200 players and cheerleaders.

1912-1950
The Transcona Nationals Football Club was established in 1912. Rumour has it that the team was sponsored by the Canadian National Railways, hence the name Nationals. The early history of the football club is largely unknown. In 1941, the Transcona Football Club won the Intermediate League Championship against the St. Vital Bulldogs with a score of 9-0. For unknown reasons the Transcona Nationals Football Club fielded no teams from 1951 to 1957, although there were a few informal attempts in 1956 and 1957. In 1958, the Transcona Nationals were officially restarted with a Midget team. The Nationals were very successful during this first year, winning all of the regular season games. Unfortunately, they failed to win the championship game that year against the St.

Vital team. Since funding was scarce, Tag Days were held to raise money for uniforms and operating expenses. Players were not required to pay for their uniforms, which in the 1950's and 1960's cost about $70 for each player. The club relied almost solely on donations. This box held tags that were given to people donating to the club. The Transcona Nationals have been very successful in the last two years winning the championship both years. The game ball for 1995 has been signed by all the players and coaching staff. The Transcona Nationals bought one of the old White Ribbon busses when the company went out of business which they used it as a canteen during the home games and as transportation to away games.

Cal Gardner

On October 11, 2001, Canadians lost a hockey legend when Cal Gardner passed away at the age of 76. Regarded by many Transconians as a hockey hero, Cal Gardner's greatest moment on ice might have been scoring the Stanley Cup winning goal for the Toronto Maple Leafs in 1949 – a dream-come-true for professional hockey players. Cal Gardner is especially remembered for his loyalty to his hometown of Transcona, Manitoba.

Cal Gardner was born and raised in Transcona. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Gardner and the younger brother of Hal. In the 1940s, the Gardner family resided at 43 Melrose Avenue East, in what was then the small, closely-knit town of Transcona, Manitoba. Cal Gardner was educated at Central School and regarded by many as a talented athlete, having played on the Transcona Baseball Club and local hockey teams. He was nicknamed "Ginger" because of his red coloured hair.

Cal played hockey with the Winnipeg Rangers in 1943 where he won a Memorial Cup with the team. He then joined up with the navy and served one year in the armed service during World War II. Following his honourable discharge, he began his career as a professional hockey player with the New York Rovers, the Eastern League affiliate of the National Hockey League's New York Rangers. In 1945, Cal Gardner was promoted to the N.Y. Rangers where he played for three years.

In October 2001, David Leeder wrote a full-page article in the Globe and Mail national newspaper, describing Gardner's 1945-1957 NHL career highlights. Leeder wrote: "Gardner was a smooth skater with a wealth of offensive skills that included a deft passing touch. It was that blend of brawn and ability that attracted the interest of Leafs general manager Conn Smythe." Shortly thereafter, the Toronto Maple Leafs acquired Gardner for the 1948-49 season. His Maple Leaf teammate, Howie Meeker said, "He was the greatest stop-and-go hockey player I've ever seen. He could stop on a dime and make the perfect pass no matter what the situation. He used to say 'just go to that spot and I'll make sure you get the puck at just the right time.' He never failed."

During the fourth game of the Stanley Cup final in 1949, the Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings were tied 1-1 in a fierce game. With 15 seconds left to go in the second period, Cal Gardner scored the Stanley Cup winning goal for the Toronto Maple Leafs. Gardner went on to play two more seasons with Leafs, then briefly in Chicago, and finally in Boston where he finished his NHL career in 1957. Cal Gardner continued making hockey his life for some years thereafter as a player, coach, and colour commentator on a Boston radio network.

At many times during recent years, I have heard museum visitors recollect Cal Gardner's skill and talent as a professional hockey player in the NHL and amateur baseball player on the local men's team. To the people who knew him, his loyalty to his hometown of Transcona during his radio, television, and newspaper interviews was always appreciated.

"He was a real classy guy," recalled Ed Sokal during one visit to the museum. "Cal Gardner always said he was from Transcona, Manitoba - he could have said Winnipeg, but he made a point of saying *Transcona* throughout his life." While Cal Gardner was very proud to have come from Transcona, those words meant a lot to many friends, acquaintances and fans back at home in Transcona. It seems clear that the community has always been proud to call him "one of our own!"

Football

Before officially becoming a town in 1912, it likely that somewhere on an open field in Transcona, one could hear the shouts and hard knocks of a good old-fashioned football game underway. However, it was not until 1913 that the sport's popularity led to the organization of Transcona's first Football League, with Mr. E.W. Bassett as president. The flourishing local league was made up of four teams – Grand Trunk Pacific, Sons of England, North Transcona (Dominion Tar & Chemical Works), and Knox Players. The quick and skilled Grand Trunk Pacific's were the first club to receive the coveted Ross trophy, presented by Mr. D.A. Ross (M.P.P) himself during a May 19, 1913 banquet.

By 1914, the quest for strenuous and keenly contested games led our local League to enter the intermediate division of the Winnipeg and District Football League. Initially, Team Transcona was made up of a variety of players from each of the four local leagues. When the Transcona's hosted their first game on the playing fields of Park Circle, the media reported that one gratifying feature of the game was the presence of a large concourse of spectators. Encouraged by the hearty support of the football-loving public, a third league was formed in 1915 called Grand Trunk Pacific Works. Motive Power A and B, Car Department and General Offices kicked, passed and scored during their regular skirmishes on GTP grounds.   Then Canada was called to war…

Between 1914 and 1918, many of Transcona's players enlisted, some of them making the supreme sacrifice on a different type of field. The old football pitch at Park Circle was transformed into a beautiful retreat, as the community awaited the return of their young men. After the war, the game resurfaced, as Transcona rejoined the Winnipeg and District League. The team went on to become Manitoba Champions in 1923 and 1926. During this same decade, employees from the Boiler Shops, Repair Track and Car Shop also took up the sport forming teams in the league's second and third divisions.

By 1939, the game 'football' took on a new meaning in town, as players picked up the ball and ran with it for the first time, thus introducing rugby to Transcona. The newly formed Local Rugby League boasted four teams – Elmwood Blue Bombers, St. Vital Bulldogs, St. James Roughriders and Transcona Tigers. Our own Tigers blocked and kicked their way to victory in 1941 to become crowned provincial champions. By 1943, interest in the sport had waned, and the league folded.

It was not until fifteen years later, in 1958 that the Transcona National Football Club was formed and the future of football in Transcona was secured. The Transcona Stadium Commission granted permission for use of its field, the East End Community Club provided a dressing room in their clubhouse, and fundraising provided uniforms for each member of the Transcona Midget Team in the traditional blue and white. Since 1958, the Transcona National Football Club has seen tremendous success, having grown to include more than two hundred players and cheerleaders ranging in age from seven years to adult.

For nine decades now, players and spectators alike have enjoyed football in its various forms on Transcona's fields. Undoubtedly, the spirit of the sport will be kept alive in years to come as we remember and admire the sportsmanship, prowess and dedication of our local teams, both past and present.

Cost of Living

Well times were sure different back in the 1930s, including the cost of living. Here are a few of the prices from the early 1930s.
A shopping trip to Safeway for groceries would look a little like the following:

- Apples were 25¢ for 7lbs.
- Oranges were 23¢ for a dozen.
- Butter cost 35¢ per lb.
- A 7lbs bag of Red Rose Flour would cost at 35¢.
- A 4lbs bag of sugar would run at 25¢ a bag.
- A ½ lb of side bacon was 14¢.
- A can of Campbell's Tomato Soup would cost 10¢.
- Three packages of Kellogg's Cornflakes were only 25¢.
- A Hip or Rump Roast Beef was sold at 10¢ per lb.
- Pork Spare Ribs would be priced at 5¢ per lb.
- Ten rolls of toilet rolls could be purchased for 25¢.

Some everyday toiletries and medicine were found at Robert's Drug Store in Transcona:

- Toothpaste could be purchased for 25¢ each.
- Buckley Cough Syrup was priced at 40¢ and 75¢.
- Bayer's Aspirin sold for 19¢.

Clothes

- Men could find a Handmade Three Piece Suit at Berkal's for $30 and more.
- Men's Dress Oxford ranged in the price range of $3.99.
- A Ladies' Flat Crepe Dress would cost $2.95
- Ladies Step-In Pumps sold for $2.29.

Hair Care

- A man's haircut at the Capitol Barbershop would cost 25¢.
- A woman would visit Mrs. Garner at Vimy Block to get a permanent wave, a fairly new innovation, which would run around $4.50.

An Evening out on the Town:

- An Adult admission to the Apollo Theatre cost 25¢.
- A Child admission to the Apollo Theatre would cost 15¢.

Housing

- Renting an apartment in the Queens Court Suite would start at $8.00/month.
- Renting a 2,3 or 4 bedroom suite at the Vimy Block would run around $12, $15 and $20 for the month.
- To purchase a four room cottage (without the land) would cost $479.00

Furniture

- A 9-piece Walnut Dining Room Suite, which included a buffet, a china cabinet, a long oblong table and 6 chairs was priced at $97.50.
- A Chesterfield Suit including a couch and an ottoman chair would cost $69.50.
- A Moffat Electric Range with four burner would run around $109.50.
- An All Felt twin mattress would start at $5.95

Cars

- The asking price of a Used 1926 Chevrolet Sedan was $275.
- The asking price of a Used 1929 Plymouth was $575.
- An Oil and Car Greased would start at $1.80.

Trips
- A 37 day personally conducted- all expense tour of Europe and the continent which included the steamer fair, rail fairs, hotel, meals, transfers and care of baggage for the low price of $395.

One would seek all of these deals in the community newspaper in the advertisements.
- A one-year subscription, which included 52 issues, would cost $1.50.