

Summer Paradise  
Lac du Bonnet in the 1920s



*McArthur Falls. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*

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Lac du Bonnet has always been a gateway to the wilderness. In 1899, a *Manitoba Free Press* correspondent stood watching the sunset from the high bank of the Winnipeg River, surrounded by poplar bush, and with “dense forest” to the north and south. Among the silence and the solitude, the correspondent realized Lac du Bonnet was a “fit retreat for jaded spirits and weary brains.”<sup>1</sup>

D.A. Keizer, a Winnipeg civil engineer connected to the discovery of Lac du Bonnet, was the first to market Lac du Bonnet as a summer resort in 1900. He placed advertisements in the *Winnipeg Tribune* and *Manitoba Free Press* for reasonably priced lots with easy payment plans.<sup>2</sup> By 1902, Keizer had designed plans for an entire subdivision located one mile south of the brick plant.<sup>3</sup> These lots were largely unsuccessful, as was the concept of Lac du Bonnet as a summer resort in its current form.

Lac du Bonnet was built for industry. Established in 1898 as part of the Lac du Bonnet Mining, Developing and Manufacturing Company’s holdings, the community existed so Winnipeg businessmen could capitalize on the area’s mineral and clay deposits, ample supply of timber and water power potential. In 1901, the Canadian Pacific Railway spur line arrived from Molson. The station was located across from the brick plant and sawmill where bricks, cordwood and lumber had been stockpiled for years, awaiting the completed rail line for shipment to Winnipeg.

Referred to as “the ultimate outpost of civilization,” Lac du Bonnet was a rough place on the fringes of law and order, filled with “wandering workmen” from construction and labour

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<sup>1</sup> “A New Manitoba Eldorado,” *Manitoba Free Press* (Winnipeg, MB), April 15, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> “The New Summer Resort,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, Sept. 29, 1900.

“Reed Island Bay,” *Manitoba Free Press*, Oct. 9, 1900.

See also: Appendix A

<sup>3</sup> “Ho! For Lac du Bonnet,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 30, 1902.

camps.<sup>4</sup> Beginning in 1902 with the construction of Manitoba's first year-round hydroelectric generating station on the Pinawa Channel, Lac du Bonnet became a transportation hub, facilitating construction of five hydroelectric generating stations and two company-owned rail lines between 1902 and 1930, along with a number of logging and bush camps. The only accommodations were the Woodbine Hotel, or J.D. McArthur's 17-room boarding house. Occasionally, rooms for rent became available.

Slowly, a community formed alongside the industry. Labourers continued to move through with construction projects, though some stayed, taking up homesteads with their families in the areas north and east of Lac du Bonnet. By 1910, the CPR operated scheduled trains that left Winnipeg at 11:40 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., six days a week.<sup>5</sup> Residents and visitors had to hike a half mile or hire a horse and cutter to reach Lac du Bonnet. In 1914, the railway commission was asked to move the train station closer to the village.<sup>6</sup> The request was denied.

By 1920, Lac du Bonnet was struggling. The sawmill had shutdown in 1918. In October 1919, J.D. McArthur advertised the sale of his Lac du Bonnet holdings: the general store, sawmill, brick plant and 1,700 acres of farm land. No one was interested in the enterprise. The brick plant closed a year later.<sup>7</sup>

Seeing an opportunity, a group of local businessmen intended to put Lac du Bonnet permanently on the map. As visitors flocked to Lake Winnipeg's beaches and journeyed to Northwestern Ontario's Lake of the Woods, Lac du Bonnet became prime real estate for a unique summer resort paradise and tourist haven.

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<sup>4</sup> Rupert Brooke, *Letters from America*, Chapter X.

<sup>5</sup> "Canadian Pacific," *Winnipeg Tribune*, January 31, 1910.

<sup>6</sup> "Subway Rulings of Railway Commission," *Manitoba Free Press*, June 27, 1914.

<sup>7</sup> Aileen Oder, ed., *Logs and Lines*, 4.

"For Sale at Lac du Bonnet," *Manitoba Free Press*, October 17, 1919.

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Lac du Bonnet's first summer resort, Silver Lodge, opened in Riverland in 1921. Advertised as "a home away from home" for "restful comfort," the lodge estate had a main building that accommodated a "recreation hall, dance pavilion and dining room," and "ten small bungalows," varying in size from one to three rooms, tucked away in private spaces along the riverbank. Each building offered scenic views. Rates were \$2.50 per day, or \$15 for the week. Cheaper rates were available for June and September.<sup>8</sup>

Located on a point of the Winnipeg River, owner Nels Johnson promoted Silver Lodge to the "nature enthusiast," those who enjoyed "communion with purely natural beauty." Nels' brochures specifically warned society lovers against the lodge, despite the lodge's "touch of luxury."<sup>9</sup>



Figure 1 Silver Lodge. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

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<sup>8</sup> "Silver Lodge," *Manitoba Free Press*, July 9, 1921.

Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 381.

N.E. Johnson, *Silver Lodge*.

<sup>9</sup> N.E. Johnson, *Silver Lodge*.

Nels' wife, Christina, prepared home cooked meals for the guests. With inadequate refrigeration, Christina struggled to plan meals when weather and road conditions greatly affected the number of vacationers at any time. Located within easy access of local farms, "fresh cream, milk, butter, eggs and other farm produce" was always available for use or sale to visitors.<sup>10</sup>

Dances were held at Silver Lodge every Saturday throughout the 1920s and anyone who could come across from Lac du Bonnet was always welcome. Nels and a neighbour, Pete Lindgren, often provided musical entertainment. Other bands, like the Beausejour orchestra, were brought in for special events.<sup>11</sup>

Excursions to McArthur Falls were also popular with visitors. Advertisements stated the scenery could "only be satisfactorily viewed from the river itself." Guests of Silver Lodge were picked up by motorboat and, within minutes, were in a place of untouched wilderness. The riverbank varied from rock outcrops to thick forest and secluded pine-shaded sandy beaches, though arrival at the falls was an "unequaled delight."<sup>12</sup>

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McArthur Falls was a popular spot for vacationers and locals. Hans Johnson operated a boat livery and repair shop where he rented motorboats or canoes, and guided visitors to scenic places along the Winnipeg River.<sup>13</sup> Les Shapland, the CPR Station Agent, operated sightseeing houseboat tours on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer months. On holidays, the boat was

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<sup>10</sup> Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 381.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

"Businessmen Unite to Repair Highway," *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 17, 1925.

<sup>12</sup> N.E. Johnson, *Silver Lodge*.

<sup>13</sup> Lac du Bonnet Amateur Players, *A Country Kid*.

"H. Johnson," *Lac du Bonnet Times*, May 20, 1922.

“filled to the gunnels.” On the top deck, a phonograph played and people danced. “Sandwiches, cakes, pies and drinks” were served.<sup>14</sup>



*Figure 2 Shapland's houseboat. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*

Many summer visitors travelled to Lac du Bonnet by train and kept boats at the village dock, built at the end of Third St. in 1920. These visitors set up tents along the east side of the Winnipeg River in Riverland, most desired for its “beautiful sandy beaches, outcroppings of flat, granite rocks and trees.” They moved their camp as they “searched for secluded locations” for their summer homes.<sup>15</sup>

Fishing also attracted people to Lac du Bonnet. They camped along the riverbank, or rented cottages from summer residents. Sportsmen from Winnipeg fishing clubs were drawn to the region for the river’s plentiful goldeye, pickerel and sturgeon. The Eaton’s Angling Club rented a cabin from the Wood family for \$45.00 each season. Other fisherman set up tents on the property, or rented other cottages for \$1.00 per day.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 236.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 404.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

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The Lac du Bonnet Community Club was the first organization designed to promote the area. Formed in March 1921 with Dr. Taylor, Rudolph Robideaux, and Bob Emmett as part of the executive, the Club offered improvement suggestions to the Municipal Council, though its main objective was “to develop the tourist trade to Lac du Bonnet.”<sup>17</sup>

On January 27, 1922, the first order of business for the newly elected board of Hans Johnson, president, Frank Allard, vice-president, and Donald McCulloch, secretary-treasurer, was to establish a “printed news to tell the people of Manitoba” about Lac du Bonnet, showcasing “how pleasant it is for a summer resort.” Reeve Oscar Peterson and W.D. Halliday approved the motion to actively advertise “Lac du Bonnet’s beauty.”<sup>18</sup>

Two school teachers, Frank B. Fox of Red Deer, and Matthew J. Kavanagh of Brightstone, formed a partnership to create a monthly newspaper, *The Lac du Bonnet Times*. At the Lac du Bonnet Publishing Company office on Park Ave., Fox and Kavanagh, as associate editors, gathered information on community news and events, then wrote and edited the articles. The newspaper was printed by Reynolds Limited, 319 Elgin Ave., Winnipeg, and was distributed to subscribers throughout Manitoba.<sup>19</sup> Volume one of the *Lac du Bonnet Times* was released February 17, 1922. The newspaper ran monthly until January 1923, for a total of ten volumes. An entire page in each issue was dedicated to district news.

“The Wanderer’s Note Book” was a three-part series in the August, September and October editions of the *Lac du Bonnet Times*. The correspondent, either Fox or Kavanagh, wrote these travel columns, describing in great detail the poplar forests of Red Deer, with “winding

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<sup>17</sup> “Community Club Holds Its Monthly Meeting,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Feb. 17, 1922.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Archives of Manitoba, Business Names Registration Files, Lac du Bonnet Publishing Co. / Lac du Bonnet Times. “Organization Meeting of Teachers at Lac du Bonnet,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Feb. 17, 1922.

roads and paths” leading to homesteads, “patiently carved out of the wilderness” where “white-washed houses show beautifully in the trees.”<sup>20</sup>

Readers were then taken along for “A Day on the Lake.” Their journey began at the dock, where Hans Johnson took the group out on one of his many boats. They passed “the pleasant fields of Riverland,” went beneath the bridge, beyond “Silver Lodge with its flags flying” to a “lovely sandy beach at Newcombe” where they had a picnic lunch. The afternoon was spent exploring, either taking a boat to McArthur Falls, or staying on land to “visit the Newcombe School” before returning to Lac du Bonnet.<sup>21</sup>

The final column featured a tour of the Great Falls generating station construction site. Upon arrival, the first thing to draw the correspondent’s eye away from construction was the “beautiful border of flowers of every colour, with sunflowers standing like tall sentinels” surrounding the camp boss’s office. An observation platform built on the riverbank allowed an “extensive view” in any direction. Trainloads of rocks filled in sections of the dam. Indigenous men cut wood in an area soon to be flooded. Beyond all this, “lovely cottages with screened verandas, lights and water” to which he remarked how a “village has grown so quickly in this once quiet spot.”<sup>22</sup>

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The Municipal Picnic held on July 1, 1922 was the first Dominion Day celebration held in Lac du Bonnet and was a milestone event. The idea was first introduced in the summer of 1921 and by March 1922, planning was well underway. Initially, the wish was to bring the municipality together. Plans quickly expanded as committees were formed to cover every aspect

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<sup>20</sup> “The Wanderer’s Note Book,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Aug. 15, 1922.

<sup>21</sup> “The Wanderer’s Note Book,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Sept. 23, 1922.

<sup>22</sup> “The Wanderer’s Note Book,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Oct. 26, 1922.

See also: Appendix B

of preparations. Details of the day were published in the *Lac du Bonnet Times* in the months leading up to the event, promising a full day of sports and entertainment, including singing competitions.

A scenic path was cleared along the riverbank with benches placed at strategic locations to take advantage of the “beauty of the river.” At the municipal grounds behind the Park Avenue schoolhouse, a refreshment booth and exhibition hall were built. Mr. Danzker brought in large quantities of food and soft drinks. Friends and former residents from Winnipeg planned to make the trip out on the special train.

Although not part of the official program, the arrival of Red Deer, Brightstone and Landerville residents began the excitement of the day. Twenty horse teams, stretched out for nearly half a mile, were decked out in the colours of the schools. Each horse was decorated with rosettes, and handmade pennants flew from every wagon. At the centre of the procession, was a “very large Union Jack on a high pole.” The children of Lac du Bonnet’s school were waiting to welcome the visitors in front of McArthur’s Pioneer Store, where an archway over the main street was covered in flags and messages of welcome.

The day’s festivities commenced at 11 a.m. with a parade of children from all the district schools. It started at McArthur’s store on Main Street, turned down the Esplanade, which offered great views of the river, and headed to the municipal grounds near the schoolhouse, where the day’s competitions began. Free lunch was available to all children in attendance. Academic awards were handed out to the best student in each subject, and prizes were won for foot races, long jump and baseball. The district tug-of-war and horse races drew large, excited crowds.

Discussion was already underway to make the municipal picnic an annual event, and planning began in October for the following year. The organizers’ only regret from the inaugural

event was that the road had not been finished, which would have allowed personal vehicles and busloads of visitors to join the holiday celebrations.<sup>23</sup>

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The matter of the “very inconvenient” train station was put before the Municipal Council in June 1921 and the councillors intended to discuss the matter with the CPR.<sup>24</sup> In the meantime, construction progressed on a road network throughout the district.

By May 1922, the Municipal Council approved construction of a “public highway” that branched off the Whitemouth-Beausejour Road at Buchan before following the rail line northeast to Lac du Bonnet. Building contracts were granted to local men Fred Troughton, for Lac du Bonnet to Milner, and John Bruneau, for Milner to Buchan. Throughout 1922, anyone travelling to Lac du Bonnet by train watched the road progress week to week. By September 1922, only seven miles of road remained to be built and by late fall, the road was passable for carriages and cars.<sup>25</sup> The train was still the most reliable method of travelling to Lac du Bonnet, and in December 1922, the Municipal Council put forward a petition, asking the CPR to run scheduled trains at times more suitable to residents.<sup>26</sup>

In August 1923, the secretary of the Manitoba Motor League came out to put up official signs to “mark the new Winnipeg-Lac du Bonnet highway” as number 25 along the telegraph poles. The seventy-mile road was gravel for “two-thirds of the way” and the rest was dirt. One

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<sup>23</sup> “Lac du Bonnet Municipal Picnic,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, March 20, 1922.

“July First to be Celebrated in Fitting Manner,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, April 21, 1922.

“July First to be Big Day in Lac du Bonnet,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, May 20, 1922.

“Arrangements Complete for Big Picnic July 1<sup>st</sup>,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, June 17, 1922.

“July 1<sup>st</sup> Picnic Great Success,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Aug. 15, 1922.

“Lac du Bonnet Citizens Meet to Arrange Picnic,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Oct. 26, 1922.

<sup>24</sup> Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet Council Meeting Minutes, June 7, 1921.

See also: Appendix C

<sup>25</sup> “Public Notice,” *Manitoba Free Press*, April 29, 1922.

“New Road Ready Before November,” *Lac du Bonnet Times*, Sept. 23, 1922.

<sup>26</sup> Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet Council Meeting Minutes, Dec 5, 1922.

section of road between Beausejour and the Lac du Bonnet turnoff required horse teams to pull “the cars some distance.” At another spot closer to the village, a spring-fed mud hole required horses to get the cars through again.<sup>27</sup>

With the road completed, the more adventurous locals purchased cars. The train was still a lifeline for many in the community, though the road from the station to Lac du Bonnet was a winding path with “hub-deep” mud ruts.<sup>28</sup> The next venture in opening up the region to automobiles began, led by Lac du Bonnet’s Board of Trade president, Oscar Peterson. The plan was to alter the Winnipeg Electric Company’s tramway bridge over the Winnipeg River three miles north of Lac du Bonnet, to allow for regular traffic. This would create access for isolated settlers, and for the further development of mining areas near the Bird River.<sup>29</sup>

William Childe, on behalf of the Lac du Bonnet Board of Trade, placed regular advertisements in the *Winnipeg Tribune* and *Manitoba Free Press* throughout 1923, promoting an economical summer resort with pine-scented breezes. The Board of Trade, whose objective was to ensure “all visitors have a good time,” hosted a dance at Silver Lodge and picnic at Lac du Bonnet, with a brass band playing at both events.<sup>30</sup>

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In June 1925, Lac du Bonnet businessmen William Childe, Donald McCulloch, Hans Johnson, Alex Dancyt, Nels Johnson, Oscar Peterson and Joe Sparman, joined the movement to “advertise Manitoba,” put forward by Winnipeg mayor, R.H. Webb. In an effort to attract tourists from across Canada and the United States, an “auto tourist guide” was planned for wide

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<sup>27</sup> “A.C. Emmett...” *Winnipeg Tribune*, Aug. 31, 1923.

Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 404.

<sup>28</sup> Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 235.

<sup>29</sup> “Lac du Bonnet People Favor Bridge Scheme,” *Manitoba Free Press*, Aug. 23, 1923.

<sup>30</sup> “Lac du Bonnet,” *Manitoba Free Press*, July 13, 1923.

“Resignation of Reeve Accepted,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 16, 1923.

circulation.<sup>31</sup> They formed the Civic Service Bureau to represent Lac du Bonnet's business interests, and soon Beausejour followed their example. Secretary, William Childe, explained that the Bureau's directive was to "boost our district in a sane and reliable manner" while ensuring "visitors and tourists are made welcome to the community."<sup>32</sup>

On Friday, July 10, 1925, William Childe hosted a "large number of visitors and residents" at his First St. home in Lac du Bonnet to listen to a Winnipeg radio broadcast featuring an article on Lac du Bonnet's "possessions and future possibilities." Throughout the rest of the summer season, the Lac du Bonnet Service Bureau intended to do regular weekend reports on Winnipeg's CKY radio station, detailing highway conditions for anyone travelling to the area.<sup>33</sup>

One week later, on July 17, thirty-five volunteers, including "every businessman associated with the [Civic Service Bureau from] Lac du Bonnet and Beausejour" worked on a section of main highway route 25 damaged by recent rain. Mr. G.H. Blanchard, district engineer for the Department of Public Works, provided four horse teams and wagons, and another horse team with a grader. From early morning, through extreme afternoon heat, to late evening, seventy loads of gravel were spread over a three mile stretch of road, getting it "in shape for the weekend traffic." At the end of the day, a carload of tourists declared the road in "first-class shape."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "Lac du Bonnet Will Develop Tourist Traffic," *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 26, 1925.

<sup>32</sup> "Effort is Made to Boost East Manitoba Area," *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 16, 1925.

<sup>33</sup> "Businessmen Unite to Repair Highway," *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 17, 1925.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



Figure 3 Winnipeg-Lac du Bonnet Highway, approx. 2 miles east of Beausejour. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

That same summer, the Northeastern Manitoba Development Bureau (an amalgamation of the Lac du Bonnet and Beausejour Civic Service Bureaus, along with delegates from Whitemouth) proposed a “scenic highway to take in a string of beautiful waterfalls and other scenic splendor from Seven Sisters and Whitemouth Falls, via Lac du Bonnet to Fort Alexander,” including the popular picnic spots of McArthur Falls, Silver Falls and Pine Falls, among others, in the route. Only “two or three locations” required a combined seventeen miles of road construction before this “scenic delight” could be complete.<sup>35</sup>

William Childe also wrote two half-page promotional articles for the *Manitoba Free Press* in August and September. The first detailed the route of the Trans-Canada Highway from Beausejour to Whitemouth, then to Lac du Bonnet and around to Silver Lodge and the Riverland and Pinawa Districts, comparing the scenery to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The second article, titled “The Trail of Talking Waters,” showcased the many scenic falls of the Winnipeg River. More than half of this article is dedicated to explaining the proposed route of a road to connect these picturesque places.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> “Northeastern Manitoba Towns to Join Hands,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 22, 1925.

<sup>36</sup> William W. Childe, “The Trans-Canada Highway,” *Manitoba Free Press*, Aug. 29, 1925.  
William W. Childe, “The Trail of Talking Waters,” *Manitoba Free Press*, Sept. 5, 1925.

By November, the Development Bureau proposed a published “guidebook of the entire district” to be released the following year. Maps, photographs and advertisements were being collected and road signs were in the planning stages.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 4 Sign hand painted by William Childe. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

The “District Guidebook to North-Eastern Manitoba” was published in 1926, with 10,000 copies being distributed throughout the province. The twenty-four page guidebook featured sections dedicated to each community: Lac du Bonnet, Beausejour, Whitemouth, Garson, Tyndall and Selkirk, with a short written description of the area and advertisements for local businesses.<sup>38</sup>

In response to this tireless promotion, there was considerable demand for cottage lots throughout the region, particularly to the north and south of Lac du Bonnet. The Development Bureau facilitated discussions between the newcomers and the farmers looking to sell riverfront lots.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> “Guidebook is Suggested for East Manitoba,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, Nov. 26, 1925.

<sup>38</sup> North-Eastern Manitoba Development Bureau, *District Guidebook to North-Eastern Manitoba*.

<sup>39</sup> “Guidebook for Eastern Part of Manitoba,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, March 11, 1926.

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By 1926, Joe Sparman opened the first garage in Lac du Bonnet, and a regular bus service operated daily from Winnipeg with Stuart Bus Lines. The owner and driver, Mr. Stuart, took the residents' lists of "items needed from Eaton's" and he'd make the purchases, bringing them on the return journey.<sup>40</sup>

That same year, the CPR finally relocated the train station to the northern edge of Lac du Bonnet. To take advantage of this, Les Shapland built the Traveller's Hotel across from the station on the corner of Park Ave. The hotel had an attached restaurant and beer parlour. The grand opening party was on New Year's Eve 1927. Les's wife, Lillian, became the first woman in Manitoba to serve beer in the parlor, as the hotel was in her name.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 5 Travellers Hotel with Stuart Bus Lines parked in front. Lac du Bonnet District Museum.

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<sup>40</sup> Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 241, 255.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

"The Shaplands, Lac du Bonnet Residents for 36 Years..." *Springfield Leader* (Lac du Bonnet), Aug. 10, 1954.

Davis Lodge was built in 1926 by Boston businessman, Howard Clark Davis, on the north shore near the mouth of the Bird River. As chairman of Central Manitoba Mines, Davis travelled throughout eastern Manitoba. On one pleasure trip to Lac du Bonnet, he discovered a secluded bay with a sandy beach and wide expanse of grassland sloping gently towards the river, and promptly purchased the property for a summer home for his family and friends.

Built entirely of logs, Davis Lodge had accommodation for sixteen guests, and each room accessed a screened veranda, 180 feet long, to take in the view. The central living room, with loungers and easy chairs, had a stone fireplace on each end wall. Powered by its own generator and waterworks, Davis Lodge had electric lights, “shower baths,” and a fully-modern kitchen.<sup>42</sup>



Figure 6 Davis Lodge. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

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Les Shapland opened Holiday Beach in 1929, two miles north of Lac du Bonnet, across the river from Silver Lodge. Newly built cottages on riverfront lots were available for sale or rent by

<sup>42</sup> “Davis Lodge,” *Manitoba Free Press*, Aug. 14, 1926.

“Central Manitoba Mines is in Highly Satisfactory Condition,” *Manitoba Free Press*, June 1, 1928.

the week, month or season. Known as one of the finest and safest beaches in the area, locals and vacationers flocked to Holiday Beach to swim or attend the dance held each weekend.<sup>43</sup>



*Figure 7 Holiday Beach. Lac du Bonnet District Museum.*

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Lac du Bonnet's efforts to attract holiday seekers throughout the 1920s laid the groundwork for the next one hundred years of tourism advancements. The summer resorts thrived throughout the next decades and the number of cottagers continued to rise each year, boosting Lac du Bonnet's economy. The airline industry introduced a whole new version of tourism, with fly-out fishing trips to remote lakes. Together, they created the summer paradise that Lac du Bonnet is today.

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<sup>43</sup> "Holiday Beach," *Manitoba Free Press*, May 27, 1929.

Aileen Oder, *Logs and Lines*, 237.

Archives of Manitoba, Subdivision Plans, Shapland, L. (Lac du Bonnet) – Approved Plan.

Appendices

Appendix A: Advertising Lac du Bonnet, 1900 – 1926

**The New Summer Resort....**  
 Reed Island Bay,  
**LAC DU BONNET.**  
 Only two hours by rail from Winnipeg.  
**Lots Now on the Market**  
 ON EASY TERMS.  
 Apply to **D. A. Keizer, Agent, 490 Main street.**

Figure 8 Winnipeg Tribune, Sept. 29, 1900

**REED ISLAND BAY, THE NEW SUM-**  
**mer resort, Lac du Bonnet; lots sell-**  
**ing quickly; prices reasonable; payments**  
**easy; call and see plans. D. A. Keizer,**  
**Agent, 490 Main (upstairs.)** 20-9

Figure 9 Manitoba Free Press, Oct. 4, 1900

**Ho! for**  
**Lac du Bonnet**  
 Dominion Day, July 1

*Winnipeg's Greatest,  
 Prettiest and Healthiest  
 Summer Resort*

Plan of Lac du Bonnet summer resort, showing size and location of lots.

**Now on the Market**

A sale of these beautiful town lots at this lovely summer resort is now being held, and they will be rapidly picked up owing to their proximity to the city and the low prices they are being offered at.

**Where to Spend the Summer**  
**ONE CHANCE IN A LIFETIME**

Every resident of Winnipeg, who values a little fresh air and who appreciates being away for a short time from the cares, worries and responsibilities of an active business or mercantile life, should secure one or more of these BEAUTIFUL LOTS while there is a chance to pick and choose from a large list. Already a great many have been sold and summer cottages are already being arranged for. Excursion trains will be run under the auspices of the Canadian Order of Foresters on July 1. Plans of the lots may be seen at the picnic grounds or at the works of the Lac du Bonnet Co. during the day, so as to give visitors who are desirous of purchasing lots an opportunity for doing so. Lac du Bonnet is without doubt one of the most charming spots in the West to spend the summer months—good boating and fishing, pretty coves with sand beaches, finest bathing, beautifully wooded banks with lovely nooks for camping or picnic parties, make an ideal outing-ground or holiday resort. For further particulars see plans at picnic grounds, or at the office of the

**Lac du Bonnet Co., or Mills & Co., 530 Main St., Winnipeg**

Figure 10 Winnipeg Tribune, June 30, 1902

**SILVER LODGE**  
 LAC DU BONNET, MAN.

**The Refined Rest Resort  
 of North-Eastern Manitoba**

OFFERS:  
**Rest and Recreation**

It is best to make Your Reservations Early

**Scenic - Restful  
 Vacation Resort**

FISHING : BOATING : BATHING

**Commodious Launches at  
 Your Service**

*The Lodge opens on May 22nd*

**N. E. JOHNSON, : PROPRIETOR**

Figure 11 Brochure. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

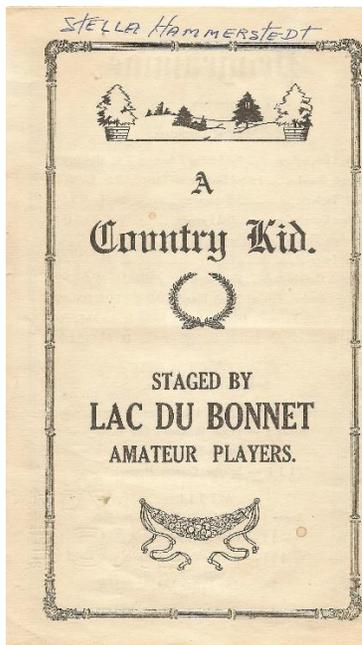


Figure 12 Programme. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

**SUMMER RESORTS**

**LAC DU BONNET**

**EASTERN MANITOBA'S SCENIC SUMMER RESORT**

**BATHING  
BOATING  
ANGLING  
CAMPING**

**THE ONE ECONOMICAL PLACE TO SPEND AN ENJOYABLE VACATION**

**COME AND ENJOY THE BRACING BREEZES FROM THE PINES**

For Further Particulars on Any Matters, Write  
**W. CHILDE**  
Sec. Lac du Bonnet Board of Trade.

Figure 13 Manitoba Free Press, July 13, 1923

**DISTRICT GUIDE-BOOK**

to  
**North-Eastern Manitoba**

THE  
**NEW COUNTRY**  
Easy to See and Worth Seeing!

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF

Address all Enquiries regarding North-Eastern Manitoba to:  
**W. CHILDE, Exec. Secy., LAC DU BONNET, MAN.**

Figure 14 Guidebook. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.

**The Trans-Canada Highway**  
BY WILLIAM CHILDE  
Secretary Northeastern Manitoba Development Bureau

With practically only that territory from Beauséjour to the lakes still to be completed, the Trans-Canada highway is moving rapidly nearer completion, and with the linking up of east and west together in this way there is not the least doubt that this move will go a long way towards welding a Dominion-wide friendship amongst all Canadians, of all beliefs and creeds.

The stretch yet to be completed between Beauséjour and the Ontario boundary to the east will prove to be one of the most beautiful scenic tours throughout the whole of the western continent.

Leaving Whitemouth, with its wonderful Old World taste of agricultural splendor, with its rolling country along the beautiful banks of the Whitemouth river, so reminiscent of the entrancing scenery of the downs of the Surrey, and Kentish country of Old England, the route will enter upon a country of virgin, primeval beauty, a veritable wonderland of lake and forest scenery, that cannot be compared on any other portion of the great American continent.

This portion of the new highway when completed will give the traveling camper a long chain of beautiful locations, where his tents can be pitched as long as they



Figure 15 Manitoba Free Press, Aug. 29, 1925

**THE AUTOMOTIVE WORLD**

**The Trail of the Talking Waters**  
BY WILLIAM W. CHILDE  
Secretary of the Northeastern Manitoba Development Bureau.

**WHERE THE TUMBLING WATERS ROAR**

Down along the trail of talking waters there is some of the most picturesque scenery in Manitoba. Above is another fine Falls, on the Winnipeg river, a beauty spot in northeastern Manitoba. The picture was taken by Gerard Dunschele, notary public of Winnipeg.

Figure 16 Manitoba Free Press, Sept. 5, 1925

Appendix B: The Lac du Bonnet Times, 1922



Figure 17 Lac du Bonnet Times, Volume One, Page One

The Lac Du Bonnet Times

Published monthly by the  
Lac Du Bonnet Publishing Company,  
at the Village of  
Lac Du Bonnet, Manitoba.

Issued monthly with the object  
of forwarding the interests of the  
municipality.

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$1.00

F. B. Fox, B.A. ....Editor  
M. J. Kavanagh .....Business Manager

LAC DU BONNET, April 21.

Figure 18 Lac du Bonnet Times Masthead, April 21, 1922

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ASSOCIATE EDITORS

F. B. Fox, B.A. .... M. J. Kavanagh

Figure 19 Lac du Bonnet Times Masthead, May 20, 1922

## THE WANDERER'S NOTE BOOK

Your correspondent has been walking through many parts of the municipality. It is a most interesting one. Every trip finds new interests, and new people. Take for instance a walk in our beautiful forests.

Where can one find a place more park like than the great woods around Red Deer. There is little under bush and fine tall poplars with scarcely a branch until the top. Winding roads and paths abound. Often leading to a cozy homestead, whose neatly white-washed houses show beautifully in the trees. A part of this forest should be claimed by the municipality for a park before it is too late. One pleasant winding path leads through Woodun. But also before going to Woodun your correspondent had to paddle through nearly two miles of water half way to his knees. Like the wise man of old he returned another way, a foot path. Here he was struck, as so frequently before, by the fine type of settlers in this district.

They have cleared swamps and made homes growing more comfortable as each year passes. They did not wait for roads before they came into this part. Their courage never went down in the face of swamps at times almost impassible and mosquitoes that are often unbearable. But they are not content with such conditions. They want to see roads and bridges linking their homes up with the great world.

As one passes home after home patiently carved out of the wilderness, he felt that, "From scenes like these will Canada's grandeur come."

We are glad to learn that Councilor Troughton had been in that section of the country, in the month of June. He held a meeting at Allegra School where the matter of drainage was taken up. A plan was set out for draining that section of the country by which each farmer would give a small sum every year for four years. By this plan a great deal of swamp land would be soon dried.

As for the great fields of water between Allegra and Woodrow. The matter is being taken up with the Government.

The draining of this land affects many farms. Many children cannot get to school because of it. The water there also shuts off a very short road leading from Woodrow to Red Deer, Brightstone and Lac du Bonnet. This makes it very hard for citizens of this part of the municipality to go to Lac du Bonnet for local business, excepting in very dry weather. We are glad therefore that the Public Works department have been looking into this matter.

Figure 20 Lac du Bonnet Times  
August 15, 1922

## The Wanderer's Note Book

### A Day on the Lake

Recently the Wanderer arrived in Lac du Bonnet. One would think that on his route he had had enough of water. Not so. As soon as invited to join in a boat ride with the popular seaman Hans Johnson at the helm he at once cancelled all arrangements. The party that assembled at the wharf was a cheerful one, not too large and not too small, some of the ladies brought their husbands who in turn brought the babies and some had no husbands to bring so brought shawls and parcels. The fears of the company of their being any accidents were stayed when we found a member of the medical profession with us, while any signs of frivolity might be expected to be nipped in the bud by three stern members of the teaching profession and two arms of the law. But as their arms were busy, not much could be expected from them. Others belonged to the large class of unattached persons, while over all was the genial Reeve. We pushed off from the shore two boats full. One piloted by Mr. Johnson and the other by Mr. Hampstead. Unlike some boat quarters there were comfortable seats, and plenty of room for the feet. It is well enough to boast of having small feet, but such as they are, one likes to have room for them.

In a little we were out on the rippling waters. The pleasant fields of Riverland passed before the view. More than any place in the West it is like the land far famed for beauty where Dr. Graham Bell made his home, Cape Breton Island, and we are told and believe, the people rival them in their hospitality.

Passing beneath the bridge we went by Silver Lodge with its flags flying, and skimmed down the lake until we came to the lovely sandy beach at Newcombe. There we had tea prepared by the Reeve, and it was good too. Everyone dined voraciously. We even think that the member of the medical profession laid aside the rules of the dietman for the day, while the members of the teachers clan cast the lingering knowledge of "How to be Healthy" into forgetfulness.

After lunch some elected to visit the Falls others to visit the Newcombe School and spend the remainder of the afternoon on the sands. The School visited we returned to find two of our number, one of the "arms" and one of the "unattached" gentlemen swimming. They

had had the wisdom to bring bathing suits. Now where could there be a finer place to bathe and no where such nice clean sand upon which to sit and dry oneself.

The Inner Man having claimed us we had more of the Reeves good tea and food from different sources. Then came the boat return with the party to the Falls. Soon we were all safely placed. The return trip was made with many wavings to other campers on the shore. We do not forget one party who displayed an enormous jug. They seemed very happy over it. We believe it was then empty.

At the wharf we parceled out our own whether it was husbands or luggage and went our several ways with good days to our genial friend Mr. Hans Johnson in whose company a trip is a pleasure.

Figure 21 Lac du Bonnet Times, Sept. 23, 1922

## The Wanderer's Note Book

"Could the Wanderer get a pass to Great Falls," was queried over the phone. "He could, but hurry as the bus pulls out in a few minutes." With that intelligence, acting as an electric spark, the few early morning people might have seen a figure hastening with winged heels to the spot where the bus is kept in hiding and was catapulted into the moving machine and forthwith transported to Great Falls.

The Wanderer having ascertained the time of departure set out to see the village that has grown so quickly in this once quiet spot. Almost the first thing that met his eye was the beautiful border of flowers of every color, with sunflowers standing like tall sentinels, that surround the office of the camp boss. But the menu of the Wanderer was not flower beds but the great electrical plant under construction.

Last Spring when here, men were digging with the aid of machinery a great hole in the rock at the side of the river. Others were erecting a wooden tower of immense size. Now the hole is where the concrete foundation of the Power House is laid and the tower is a tower for raising concrete that it may be poured in long movable spouts wherever needed.

All day long a light engine pulls cars filled with sand to a great dump to be used in mixing concrete.

With Mr. Gauthier of Lac du Bonnet the Wanderer looked on the scene from the height of an observation platform built some 20 feet high near the bank of the river. From there an extensive view could be had up and down, while right in front one could see the dam of concrete going out and over the island to the other side. All day long two trains carried rocks across the bridge preparatory to filling in that opening and making a complete dam from side to side.

In the afternoon the Wanderer saw a scene of activity. Manning the switch on the tracks were two soft voiced youths from Sunny Italy who heartily approved of Canada.

Cutting and piling wood out from the area to be flooded were Indians who had exchanged the huntsman's bow and the carefree life of the forest for the white man's toil.

Others were digging to lay the landward foundation of the dam. Ceaselessly the crane turned with its box to take up the loosened earth and rocks, emptied, and returned again.

Everywhere one found men busily working. On enquiry we learned that there were about 1500 employed. Indeed a large number have built cottages and have their families. This quarter goes by the happy name of Tuxedo Park.

The Company has built a large number of lovely cottages with screened verandas, lights and water. Sewerage is being put in as soon as possible.

The Wanderer was a guest at the Staff house. This is a commodious building where a genuine homelike feeling prevails, due to the presiding genius. At the table no end of spirited discussions seemed to be carried on. Of course the subject on the board was the Turks.

It was a misfortune that duty made it necessary to leave before the evening was over. For later the Princess Band gave first rate music and those to mirth inclined danced to the harmonious strains.

Figure 22 Lac du Bonnet Times,  
Oct. 26, 1922

Appendix C: Additional Photographs

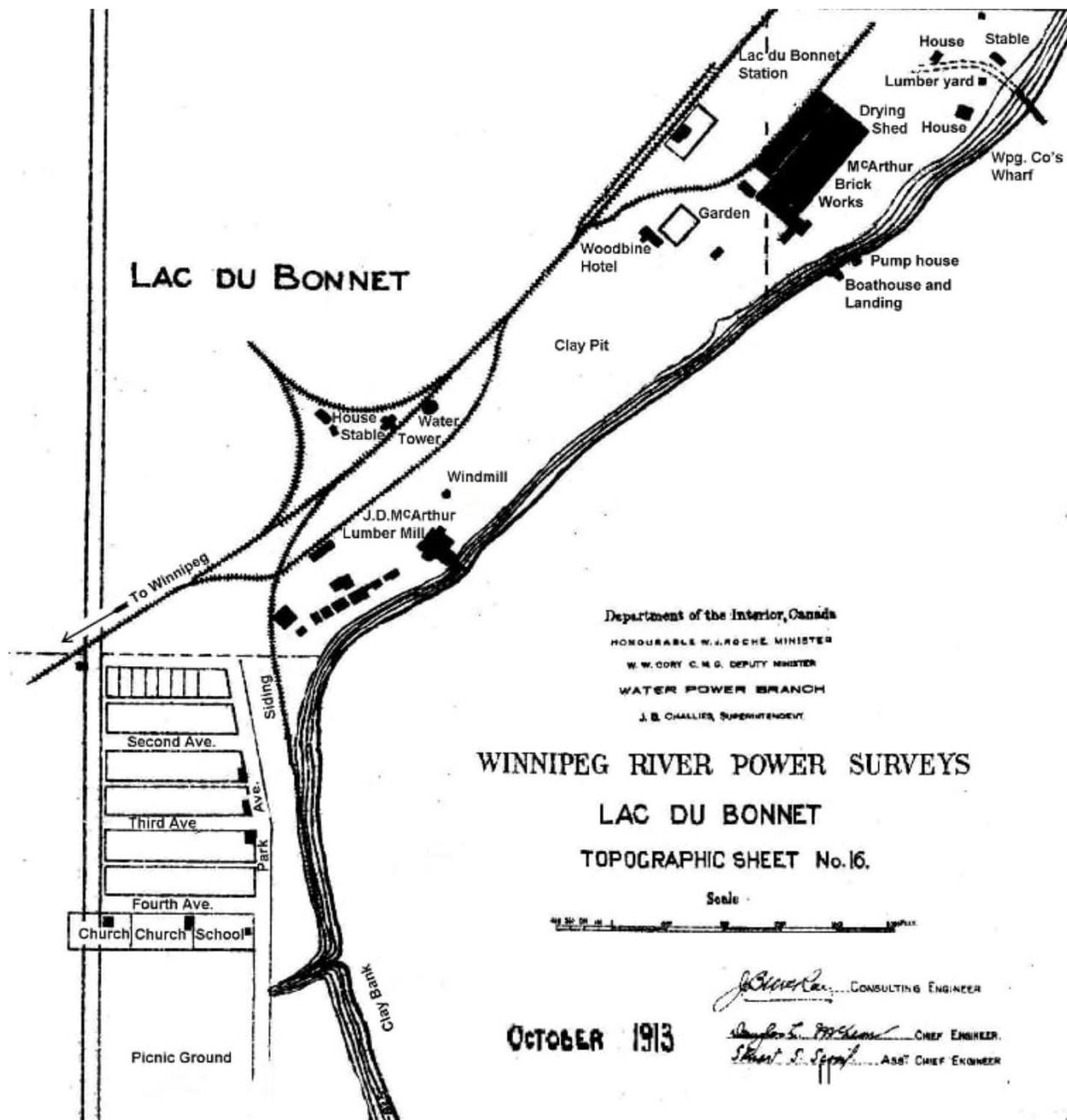


Figure 23 Water Power Branch map, 1913. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives



*Figure 24 The J.D. McArthur Pioneer Store, circa 1915. With horse and cutter. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 25 Third Street, Lac du Bonnet, 1924. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 26 A sightseeing trip, circa 1920s. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives*



*Figure 27 A picnic on the Winnipeg River, 1928. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives*



*Figure 28 Hans Johnson's charter boats at Lac du Bonnet. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 29 Lac du Bonnet dock, circa 1920. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 30 Camping at the Lac du Bonnet Narrows (Pickerel Point), 1925. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 31 Camping at the Lac du Bonnet Narrows (Pickerel Point). Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



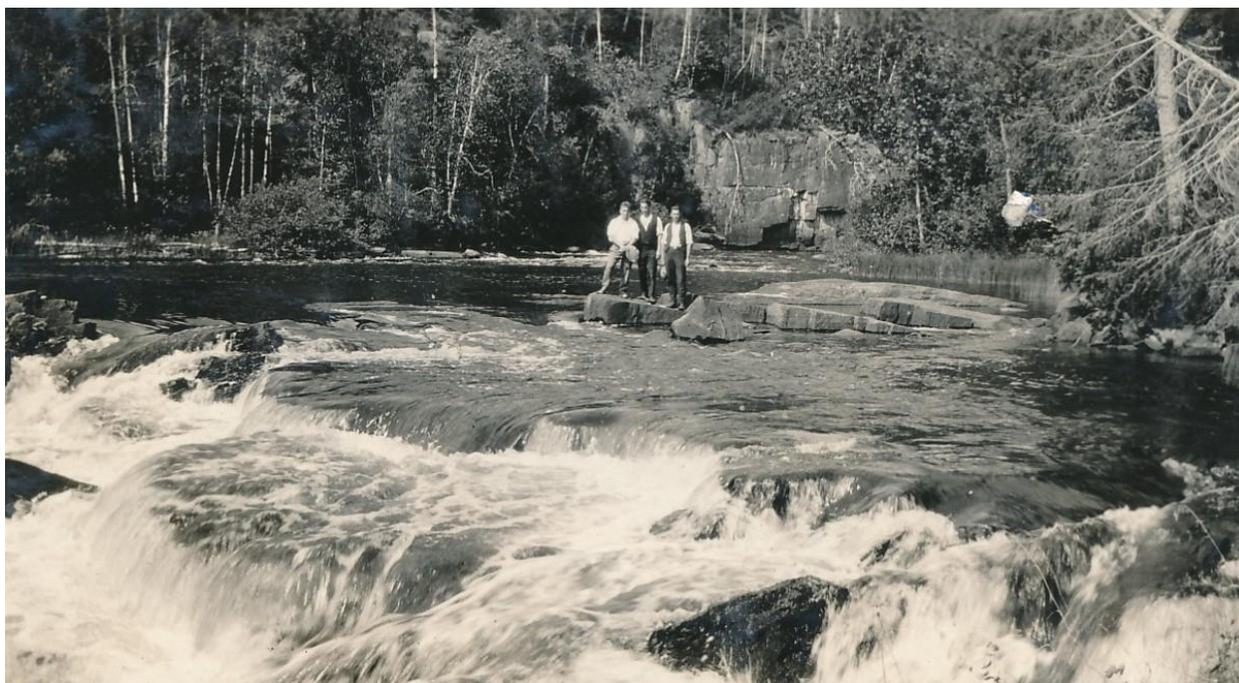
*Figure 32 Rapids at the Lac du Bonnet Narrows (Pickerel Point). Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 33 Honorable W.R. Clubb and John Keyale. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives*



*Figure 34 Canoeing near Wendigo Island. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 35 Bird River Falls, approx. 20 miles northeast of Lac du Bonnet. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



Figure 36 The hazards of being a tourist. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives



Figure 37 The second CPR station, circa 1950. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.



*Figure 38 Sailboat at Lac du Bonnet. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*



*Figure 39 At Holiday Beach. Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives.*

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- . “3<sup>rd</sup> St. LdB,” 1924. (Photograph)
- . “Bird River Falls,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Camping at Lac du Bonnet Narrows,” 1925. (Photograph)
- . “Charter boats on the Wpg River,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Holiday Beach,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Hon. W.R. Club and John Keyale,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Kitchen fatigue, camping at the Narrows,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Lac du Bonnet (group),” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Lac du Bonnet dock,” early 1920s. (Photograph)
- . “Les Shapland (motorcycles),” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Nels Johnson, Silver Lodge, Riverland,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “On the Trans Canada Hwy, 2 miles east of Beausejour,” circa 1929. (Photograph)
- . “Pickerel Rapids, Winnipeg River,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Picnic on Winnipeg River,” 1928. (Photograph)
- . “Pleasure boat, Lac du Bonnet,” n.d. (Photograph)
- . “Traveller’s Hotel with Stuart’s Bus in front,” 1935. (Photograph)
- . “Woman and deer,” n.d. (Photograph)
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- . John Bietting. “Near Wendigo Island, Lettonia,” n.d. (Photograph)
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## **Newspapers**

### *Lac du Bonnet Times*

Special Note: The *Lac du Bonnet Times* were in the Lac du Bonnet District Museum Archives. These newspapers have now been donated to the Manitoba Legislative Library for preservation.

### *Manitoba Free Press*

### *Winnipeg Tribune*