

CHILLON HISTORY MANITOBA POOL from 1927 to 1972

In 1927 negotiations began to form a Cooperative Elevator at the Chillon Siding. Forty-seven members signed up immediately, with one more in 1928. The first Board of Directors consisted of:

E.P.Clark - President

Robert Irwin - Vice President

L.R.Ryan - Secretary

Ed Dupont, John Reinhart, Dave Hall, Sid Tibbatts, Frank Ryan

The first meeting was held in John Irwin's home (Lloyd Tibbatts 1982). In February 1928 the elevator and residence was purchased from N.M.Patterson Co. for \$10,000. It was renovated, new machinery was added, a well dug and electricity added making a grand total of \$19,750. It opened for business on Aug. 25 of that year, with F.T. Abbott as the first operator.

In March 1929, the C.P.R. announced that more grain was shipped from Chillon than from 80% of the other stations in Manitoba. Chillon was made a flag station for passengers and freight, and many a can of cream was thrown in the door of the baggage car as the train came almost to a halt. Due to the depression, the elevator was closed Dec. 1, 1931 and Mr. Abbott was dismissed. It wasn't closed for long however, for in August of 1932 it re-opened with P.K. Peterson as operator. P.K. was a good choice indeed, for he had worked untiringly for the cause of the farmer while farming at Erickson, and was instrumental in establishing there the first farmer-owned elevator to ship grain through the Manitoba Wheat Pool. Pete or "P.K." was an expert with the grain cleaner. If there was any way to raise the grade of the farmer's grain to bring a better price, P.K. would do it. Many times the cleaner ran night and day. On one occasion, Pete reached in to correct something in the cleaner while it was running and only his brute strength saved him from being pulled in. He was left with just half a shirt and the collar still around his neck.

In 1938 a fatal accident occurred when a transient was decapitated as the cars were being spotted at the siding. He was watching from a boxcar and as the cars rammed together, the door on the boxcar slammed shut with such a crash that the man was killed. It took some time before Police could identify the man as he had nothing on his person except ^a ~~the~~ crucifix ^{and what he} ~~he~~ was wearing.

Sidings were always a welcome sight to the section men on cold winter days. It was a place to get warm, catch a bite to eat and spin a yarn or two with the operator.

"P.k." was to stay until 1943, a period of eleven years. Other operators were: Clarence Good, Ken McCullough, George Armstrong, Hap Congdon, Vern Warkentin, Clem Windsor, John Williamson, Cecil Nickol, and Dennis Hunter.

In 1936 a stable was built for the operator, where P.K. kept a milk cow, some pigs and a pony for the children. This burned in 1955. For sixteen years there was a sub-station handling twine, coal, flour, shorts, hardware and suoolies. The dividend realized from this business amounted to 13%. It closed in 1958. A new house was built in 1947 and Norman Turnbull purchased the old house after his house had burned. In 1952 a three-bin, 30,000 bushel annex was built for added space, and in 1960, the United Grain Growers elevator and annex were purchased for \$16,000.

Chillon was instrumental in having the Pool colours changed from the dull red to the white we see now.

In 1963, water and sewer were added to the cottage.

In June 1969, the Chillon farmers voted for their elevator to become a member of the new Manitoba Pool Elevator system, turning over the facilities to them. In May 1971 Chillon Pool was closed and the membership was absorbed into either Binscarth or Foxwarren. The

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Annexes were sold and the elevator dismantled in 1972. The house, garage and lot were sold ~~and-the~~ to Jim Zegers.

In the forty-four years thath Chillon Pool was in operation, 217 farmer members used its facilities.

Notes on the History of United Grain Growers

at Chillon Siding, Manitoba

Prepared by D. H. Fraser, November 1982

History of Elevators

The earliest summary of elevators available, 1910-11 crop year shows Chillon with one Manitoba Government Elevator. We do not have record of when it was built. The Grain Growers Grain Company leased this elevator in 1912 and operated under lease until the winter of 1920 when it burned. In April 1921 we built our own elevator on the same site. Annex was added in 1951 and in 1958 major repairs were made.

N. M. Paterson & Company built in 1920. Pool bought the Paterson plant in 1928.

The siding remained U.G.G. and Pool until March 1960 when the two companies entered into a major trade of elevators involving some 7 from each company. Pool took over our elevator at Chillon. Pool operated for a few years and then closed both elevators.

Elevator Managers

Unfortunately, our record of Elevator Managers at Chillon is missing.

Through recollection and by checking with others, the following partial list has been compiled.

	<i>1922 - 1923</i>
<i>? Young</i> Clarence W. McCallum	Aug. 1925 to Jan. 1926
Charles K. Nicoll	Jan. 1926 to Sept. 1928
Thorpe A. McPherson	Sept. 1928 to Dec. 15/29
(McPherson back again)	Aug. 15/30 to Aug. 1/31
<i>? Barber</i> ← Wm. John Brown → <i>31-32</i>	Aug. 1932 to July 31/34
Cecil D. Kelly	Aug. 1934 to July 1/36
Howard Blayney (Spike) Tibbatts	July 1/36 to Sept. 30/37
(load went through scale - point closed for a period)	
Wally Lazenby	July 1938 to May 1947
R.O. (Bob) Feasby	May 1947 to May 1952
Alex Creror	July 1952 to March 19/60
(Elevator traded to Pool)	

Local Board

Chillon was attached to Foxwarren for Local Board purposes.

EARLY HISTORY OF CHILLON SIDING AND ELEVATORS.

[Per courtesy Man. Pool Elevators]

* = Approximate Date.

1. Siding Built with loading platform *1906 -1908
2. First Elevator [Government] *1911 Jack Richards- Binscarth first Operator.
3. Destroyed by fire Spring.... 1920
4. Rebuilt in time for harvest " "
5. Purchased by United Grain Growers 1924
6. N.M Paterson Elevator built *1925 - 1926 Campbell Malcolm of Birtle First Operator.
7. Man. Pool Bought Paterson Elevator 1928.
8. Man. Pool Elevators Bought U.G.G Elevator 1960 @ \$ 16,000.
9. The original Board of Directors at Chillon 1928 -29: [Pool Elevators]

President - E.P.C lark

Vice-Pres. - R.J.Irwin

Secretary - L.R.Ryan

Directors -, S.Tibbatts Jr.

J.Reinhart

D.Hall

E.Dupont

F.C.Ryan

Addenda

The Pool Elevators ceased business and were closed 1971. They were dismantled *1972 -73.

N.L.T.

Agents: - 1928-1931 F.G.Abbott

1931-1942 P.K.Peterson

1942-1946 C.E.Good

1946-1947 K.A.McCullough

1947-1951 G.A.Armstrong

1951-1956 O.W.Congdon

1956-1959 W.C.Windsor

1959-1966 J.W.Williamson - Currently a District Manager for M.P.E. at Morris

1966-1968 W.C.Nichol

1968-1971 D.W.Hunter - Currently a Region Manager for M.P.E in Winnipeg.

The last Board of Directors for the 1970 - 71 Crop year at Chillon:

President - Frank Horeczy

Vice Pres. Elmer Ryan

Secretary Robert O.Turnbull

Directors;

David Pizzey

Gordon Orr

Carman Ryan

Melvin Tibbats

EARLY HISTORY OF CHILLON SIDING AND ELEVATORS.

Norman Turnbull.

PREAMBLE:

It would be approximately 1906 give or take a year or two when the loading ramp was built by the C.P.R between Binscarth and Foxwarren. Who gave the Siding the name Chillon, is unknown. Lord Byron , the poet, named one of his sonnets, "The Prisoner of Chillon." A Chateau or Castle at the Eastern end of Lake Geneva, Switzerland. How the name came to this area is conjecture.

The first elevator to be built at the site was built by the Government. We remember that as 'The Wet Year' which would be 1911. In July of 1912 the United Grain Growers leased the elevator. It was destroyed by fire in early 1920. It was rebuilt in time for harvest and in 1924 The United Grain Growers purchased all of the Government elevators.

Despite the convenience of the elevator considerable grain was still loaded 'over the platform.' There were times when this manner was subject to various interruptions. Sometimes the elevator agent would load a car, start to move it downgrade toward the siding, the car would gain momentum and before the agent could clamber up to the top of the car and set the brakes it would crash into the cars being loaded on the siding. Many of our early homesteaders were not lacking in profanity and to have a car shunted out of 'spot' in such a manner gave rise to expressions not used in "polite society." More especially so if one's team of horses took a notion to head back home with half a wagon load of grain trailing behind them. A more serious accident took place one harvest afternoon. A way-freight travelling east from Binscarth ran into an 'open end' switch at the west end of the siding and struck two cars which were in process of being loaded. A neighbor,

*App. 1909
Joe Smith*
~~Red Orr~~, who was "shovelling back" in one car suddenly found himself propelled some fifty feet into scrub to the west of the siding. Two teams immediately left for safer pastures, three badly frightened farmers stared in horror as their grain was spilled over the right of way. One of the crew on the train was badly hurt and it took a while to untangle the wrecked cars and get the siding in use

once more.

When needing cars at the siding adjacent farmers put their request to the local station agent either at Foxwarren or Binscarth. The cars came in two sizes; seventy two thousand pounds, twelve hundred bushels, and fifty four thousand pounds, nine hundred bushels. Farmers ordered the size of car they thought they would require. When the cars were 'spotted' at the siding there were times when several farmers might arrive to claim their order. The first man to put a bag containing the kind of grain he was going to ship, into the car claimed it as his car. This system was usually honored by the neighbors in the early days. However there were times when neighborly consideration was thrown to the wind and the bag of wheat was hauled out and replaced with a whole load. This was infrequent, but it did happen. The offender was dubbed a 'Car stealer.'

The early method of loading grain 'Over the platform' was by muscle power. 'Grain doors' were provided by the railroad company and these were placed on the inner side of the car door jambs and nailed in place. Inserted to about two thirds of the door opening they allowed some slope downward from the farmers wagon box which by the use of a portable wooden chute about thirty inches wide and six feet long made for much easier shovelling until the car was at least two thirds full. The last third was an uphill job and there must have been uncounted sighs of relief when cars were finally filled. To load farmers used either the long handled shovel or a 'scoop' that held about half a bushel to a bushel. This had a bottom and two sides about ten inches in depth and width. One end was closed and had a handle in the form of a loop at the top. There was a free swinging handle across the middle of this contraption that allowed for a somewhat freer motion in 'scooping.' Although one could unload more quickly with this, -it held about three times as much grain as the 'long handle' - it also required considerable more back bending and stooping.

The following passages are quotations from a History of Chillon and the Government Elevators, sent to me by Wm.S. Scarth who, like this writer, "Grew up with the Chillon Siding and Elevators.'

Quote : "Our community was selected as one of the points for a Government Elevator. We never questioned this decision - no doubt everyone was delighted to feel that the loading of cars by hand was over. Several years earlier our district had raised a considerable agitation to secure a 'loading platform' as provided under the Manitoba Grain Act, and perhaps the authorities felt that we should next be given a little 'guinea pig' treatment with one of the new Government structures.

The railway, in its wisdom, decided that the location would be adjacent to the loading platform, known as Chillon Siding. As far as one can ascertain there appears to be no special reason for the name "Chillon", and one rather doubts any reference to the poetic muse that inspired Byron's immortal work. There would be occasions of course when the elevator agent's existence may have been a solitary, prison-like vigil, but this was generally taken for granted by a succession of very good operators. More than one of them might close up early on a winter's afternoon and travel via handcar with the C.P.R. section crew to enjoy the brighter lights of Binscarth over the weekend. If my memory serves me right, Mr Jack Richards of Binscarth was the first elevator agent at Chillon.

By an amazing piece of good luck the elevator site was but a short distance from our road to Balmerino School - in fact where the old trail crossed the C.P.R. tracks. This provided us with a summer of new interest, and long before the construction was completed, we were experts in many of the finer things in elevator building. In addition to our daily observations, we usually joined the groups of visitors that gathered each Sunday afternoon to observe progress. So the exuberance of youth became well blended with the wisdom of age, and we were able to discourse learnedly on almost any occasion when the topic of elevators came up.

It will be difficult to credit this today, but few of us had ever seen concrete poured in the large quantities required for the foundations. Up to that time, most of the sub-structural work on buildings was stone and mortar, and there were

EARLY HISTORY OF CHILLON SIDING AND ELEVATORS.

Norman Turnbull.

conflicting local opinions as to how this new-fangled stuff was going to stand up. The grain pit was also concrete, and as it later turned out, this would present a problem with moisture and leakage, as we were then going through a cycle of wet years in Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. If little was known about concrete, less than nothing was known about making it water-proof.

As experts, we were a little disappointed in the shape and appearance of the elevator as it rose above the prairie. Our ideas of architecture would be classed as 'Traditional,' and the new structure departed from this. Instead of the squat, box-like building with the square cupola sitting squarely on top, this newcomer extended its airy height like a New York skyscraper. The cupola was an integral part of the upper framing, and to our youthful view the entire structure had a lopsided appearance. Another departure was that, after it was sheeted with tin-- the standard practice at that time - it was not painted red. We felt that an unpainted elevator verged on the indecent.

However, there were plenty of assurances that the inner works of this new wonder were of the latest and most up to date design. For one thing it had one of the largest gas engines that any of us had ever seen - of Fairbanks ancestry - indeed an imposing monster of huge gleaming flywheels, rods, springs, and gadgets. It was cooled by the traditional large galvanized water tank and a maze of connecting pipes. Starting this giant called for all the brute strength, dexterity and vocabulary of the operator, and it was a fascinating ritual to watch. After twiddling with various levers, opening relief valves, priming with gasoline, and muttering some sort of incantation, the Agent would balance on a spoke of the flywheel, and throwing his full weight backwards, force the piston in against compression. If all was well, there was a terrific exhaust explosion, followed by a second and third, and it was off for a spell of work. If not, the wheel balancing process would have to be repeated again and again, and if for any reason the engine had been

EARLY HISTORY OF CHILLON SIDING AND ELEVATOR.

Norman Turnbull

stopped while very warm , it beacame extremely temperamental.

Those were before the days of the impatient trucker, and it was not uncommon to see a line-up of ten to fifteen teams and loads, with the teamsters down in the engine room giving advice and assistance to get 'Old Faithful' started . These periodic delays were, of course not unwelcome to the grain haulers. While the modern coffee break did not exist as such, this spell provided good opportunity to exchange neighborly news, discuss politics, the C.P.R., the price of wheat, and varied fortunes of the threshing outfits. Occasionally, an unusually zealous farmer undertook to find out for himself what the hold-up was and appeared in a buggy behind a foam flecked steed to make anxious enquiry. Such a visitation caused only a minor ripple of interest as the new arrival was absorbed into the waiting concourse of wagons. Of course if this interlude was too prolonged the threshers in the vicinity ground to a halt for the lack of grain teams. This initiated the practice of having a portable bin available as an emergency standby.

An innqvation in design in some of the Government elevators was the installation of an 'automatic' dump' for weighing the grain just before it went into the car. In theory and on drawing boards this device must have appeared simple and ingenious, but in actual practice it fell far short of the inventors dream. The grain to be loaded was elevated to the top bin in the usual manner, then delivered to a special scale hopper, which, on reaching the set weight, automatically dumped it into another spout for final delivery to the car. However having been stopped halfway for the weighing process, the grain had little kinetic force behind it and merely dribbled from the spout in the vicinity of the car door. This necessitated shovelling every car, and the final outcome at Chillon elevator was that an Agent with a mechanical turn spent a fruitful Sunday installing his own direct spout from the gerber to the car. No one was any the wiser for a year or so, when the automatic was found buried under a deep layer of dust, unhonored and unsung.

EARLY HISTORY OF CHILLON SIDING AND ELEVATOR. Norman Turnbull

An elevator agent's job has never been an easy one, but in those days he had to combine a variety of talents that almost classified him as 'Superman.' A native shrewdness and knowledge of grain had to be mellowed with a pleasant personality. An almost supernatural strength of will and muscle was essential to push box cars around, start the engine and hoist the wagon loads of grain with the old chain and sprocket device then in use. While a crude form of the 'man-lift' was installed for getting upstairs, it's operation was temperamental and it's occupant might have felt that he was in the first stage of a rocket blast-off. Along with all his other qualities he also needed more than average mechanical ability.

The original elevator at Chillon was destroyed by fire in the early 1920's. When the site was finally cleaned up in the spring, the only visible reminder of Chillon's first government structure was the monstrous old gas engine with it's now flattened water tank and twisted pipes. Before these were hauled away for scrap I have no doubt the echo of heartfelt blessings and maledictions must have been heard returning on the prairie winds to haunt it's final resting place. There would be other echoes too--of the long crossing whistles of the 'Flyer,' the Great West Express, on it's way to and from Edmonton and Winnipeg in the dark hours, and the old local from Russell that came down in the morning and back at night so regularly that when working in the fields we could set our watches by it." Unquote.

WM. S. SCARTH

My thanks and appreciation to all those who helped me compile this M.S.S. on Chillon. Especially to Will Scarth of Victoria B.C. whose father, Mathew Scarth, was one of the continuous patrons of the U.G.G at Chillon while he farmed. The quotation I used was from Will Scarth's Manuscript "BINS-CARTH---1970"

Norman Turnbull

For Chillon Lchny. History

Manitoba Pool Elevators

P.O. BOX 9800, WINNIPEG, CANADA R3C 3K7 • AREA CODE 204, PHONE 947-1171



November 24, 1982

Mr. Norman L. Turnbull
BINSARTH, Manitoba
ROJ OGO

Dear Mr. Turnbull:

We are pleased to forward to you the following information as requested in your letter of November 4.

1. The date of purchase of the N. M. Paterson elevator at Chillon was 1928. I am sorry that I am not able to add any further information re: cost, but our records are a bit vague for 1928.

2. The UGG elevator was purchased in 1960 at a cost of \$16,000.

3. The Chillon Association was closed on July 31, 1971.

4. The Original Board of Directors at Chillon 1928-29:

President - E. P. Clark
Vice-Pres. - R. J. Irwin
Secretary - L. R. Ryan
Directors - S. Tibbatts, Jr.
J. Reinhart
D. Hall
E. Dupont
F. C. Ryan

Agents: - 1928-1931 F. G. Abbott
1931-1942 P. K. Peterson
1942-1946 C. E. Good
1946-1947 K. A. McCullough
1947-1951 G. A. Armstrong
1951-1956 O. W. Congdon
1956-1959 W. C. Windsor
1959-1966 J. W. Williamson - currently a District
Manager for MPE at Morris
1966-1968 W. C. Nichol
1968-1971 D. W. Hunter - currently a Region Manager
for MPE in Winnipeg.

Manitoba Pool Elevators

Mr. Norman L. Turnbull

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November 24, 1982

The last Board of Directors for the 1970-71 crop year at Chillan:

President - Frank Horeczy
Vice-Pres. - Elmer Ryan
Secretary - Robert O. Turnbull
Directors - David Pizzey
 Gordon Orr
 Carman Ryan
 Melvin Tibbatts

I hope this information will assist you and the R.M. in the preparation of your municipal history. Good luck with your centennial celebrations!

Yours truly,



Trevor D. Winters,
Manager Field Service and Member Relations

TDW:VL

P.S. My records indicate that Chillan began operations in 1929, but these records may not be complete.