



Winkler & District Chamber of Commerce Board, 1970. Left to right: A. Zacharias, W. Siemens, Alex Epp, P. Nickel, J. Hildebrand, A. Friesen, R. Janzen, J. Derksen, W. Hildebrand.

Coupled with the vigorous retail merchandising induced by the Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce assisted by the Winkler Town Council, a unique sale was started in 1963. It is known as "Old Time Value Days" and is generally held during the latter part of August. Much of the sale promotional takes the form of a bazaar on Main Street with food concessions such as breakfast pancakes, soft drink and ice cream stands, barbecued hamburger and chicken, as well as booths featuring groceries and other general merchandise at reduced prices. The clerks in the stores down town wear old fashioned costumes and generally dress up in the garb of pioneers. An Old Time Value Days queen is elected and evening entertainment is provided. The children are taken on pony, hayrack, and merry-go-round rides. During the three or four days of the sale, local stores put up prizes and generally report large increases in sales which, of course, is not surprising when we consider that the Wednesday, August 27, 1969, issue of the local weekly newspaper, *The Pembina Triangle Progress*, reported that 35,000 people attended the 7th annual Old Time Value Days in Winkler.

Winkler Customs and Immigration Offices

For many years the Customs and Immigration Office nearest to Winkler was at the small hamlet of Haskett, which is located about a mile north of the International Boundary between Manitoba and North Dakota. As the Great Northern Railway discontinued service between Walhalla, N.D. and Morden, Manitoba, and subsequently the two grain elevators and the few stores and lumber yard moved out of Haskett, the Customs office was moved east to the International Boundary on Highway 32. In 1967, through the efforts of the Winkler Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Winkler Town Council, the name of the office was changed from Haskett Customs to Winkler Customs. On Friday, July 11, 1969, Mr. E. J. Wilson, Prairie Regional Director, Regina, Saskatchewan, officially opened a new \$45,000 building to provide better service for the thousands of motorists who annually cross the International Border at the Winkler Customs and Immigration Offices.

It is of interest that in the late summer of 1875, nineteen Mennonite immigrant families from South Russia had squatted on the quarter section on which the Canadian Customs Offices are today located north of the International Boundary on Highway 32. These immigrants which included in their group Mr. & Mrs. Jacob Braun, the grandparents of the writer, trekked the forty-five miles from Emerson where they had arrived on July 14, and hastily set up their "simlins" for shelter from the blasts of the coming winter. These living quarters consisted of two to three-foot deep dug-outs with sod walls about the same height. Poplar poles were used as rafters over which alternate layers of dogwood brush and grass were placed. This was then covered with grassy sods. In the spring of 1876, all nineteen families followed Mr. David Wall to Section 6, Township 2, and Range 4, where they established a village, and possibly because someone found clover in a nearby field when they arrived there at Easter, the village was named Osterwick which in the Low German dialect means Easter vetch. By January, 1878, there were 24 families and a total of 143 people living in Osterwick.¹²



Threshermen's Re-union.