

The Carlton Trail was used by countless persons who have made Canadian history. Besides the many thousands of settlers and buffalo hunters, Indians and Metis, gold prospectors, military and North West Mounted Police patrols a few individuals stand out: Sir George Simpson, Ralph Connor, Canada's Gov.-General Lord Lorne, Cpt. Palliser, Sen. T.O. Davis, Prof. Hind, Earl of Southesk, J. Trow, MP, John Macoun, artist Paul Kane, Sanford Fleming, Cpt. Butler sent to quell the Riel Rebellion, Dr. Cheadle and Lord Milton, the two McDougall missionaries. Due to competition from railways in the 1890s and early 1900s traffic over the trail degenerated to short distance and local hauling and finally ceased altogether.

Today's tourists coming from Clear Lake headed for Winnipeg, Brandon, or similar destinations frequently stop in the Highway 10 and 4 parking lot on the north slope of Minnedosa Valley. Often I see them standing quietly there gazing with wonder at the panoramic vista below. With camera many attempt to record for the future this scenic delight. Each time I wonder if they also hear the creaking of Red River ox carts or thunder of Indian ponies along the Carlton Trail, whether they see the Minnedosa River being forded at Old, Tanner's, and Hare's Crossings, or Indian teepees surrounded by happy children on the flats below, whether they realize Odanah Pass is but a short stone's throw to their left. And do they, I wonder, also see the old Indian cemetery four hilltops beyond the pass where in the words of Kerry Wood "The Four Winds could blow away the evil spirits and down in the valley the Spirit Guide could paddle his Ghost Canoe to carry the Spirit of the departed, westward to the Land of the Setting Sun?"

2. MINNEDOSA FARMERS' FESTIVAL

VALLEY VISTAS column, Brandon Sun, July 30, 1971

"Minnedosa's Farmers' Festival," says festival chairman Bob Bertram, "began in 1961 as a gesture by the townspeople to show appreciation to surrounding farmers for their support during the year."

Undoubtedly it's a time of festivities. As local ag-rep Lin Boyes puts it, "the annual festival has both social and entertainment value."

This annual "gesture by townspeople to show appreciation to surrounding farmers" proved remarkably successful during the last decade and has attracted attention far beyond this immediate area. It has boasted events like boat racing and sailing regattas, Canadian and Manitoba water ski championships, parades and soap box derbies, ball tournaments and water ski shows. Minnedosa Agricultural Society's annual summer fair usually precedes it.

Kicking off celebrations this year Minnedosa's 89th exhibition was scheduled for July 28. Besides the usual cattle and horse shows, ferris wheel and concession stands, flower and baking displays, tricycle and bicycle races common to country fairs, the exhibition again featured the highly-popular saddle and chariot races, local band and baseball tournament. An added feature was a demonstration by home economist Rilla Murchison. Erickson's perennially-popular Viking Valley Fair is another instance of a rural summer fair not about to disappear for a long time yet.

"Summer fairs," feels Lin Boyes, "also have social and entertainment value though possibly now play a less direct educational role than in bygone days when they originated." Obviously they bring town and farm people together for leisurely enjoyment, possibly for many to re-live for a day nostalgic memories of childhoods when the living pace was less rapid. And anything which contributes to better understanding between farm and townspeople during a time when urban-rural relations on this continent are frequently strained must have some value. Seemingly the diminishing educational role and possibly a failure to recognize important social values caused some urban areas like Winnipeg to discontinue summer agricultural fairs and our government recently to seriously consider reducing grants to them. Personally, I like country fairs.

The 4-H movement, originally strictly a rural phenomenon, has replaced some educational aspects of country fairs and is becoming a potent force for strengthening communications between rural and urban dwellers. Minnedosa's home economist Carol Burton, the local riding club, Erickson and Sandy Lake's snow toboggan clubs are a few successful 4-H ventures attesting to town-rural co-operation.

July 29 was designated Railroaders' Day in Minnedosa. Highlights included a horseshoe tournament, Rotary Club's beer garden, free coffee and ice cream, fireworks, model train display and concluded with a teen dance at night and free dancing to the Syncopators and Bunny Girl for adults.

Today, with the exception of a gala farmers' festival dance at night, is children's day. A children's parade highlights the morning with contests like decorated bicycles, soap box