

# Historic Relics Disclose Life Of Lord Selkirk Settlers

By Gordon Rajotte

In the course of a conversation with J. J. Polson last week I mentioned the limestone block at the old Angus Matheson home in North Kildonan. Grain was hulled by putting it in the basin cut into the block and pounding it as mentioned previously. Mr. Polson said that the same sort of vessels were also made out of oak. I asked him if they used any special instrument to beat the grain and he said no. Apparently they just used a stick or anything convenient. He said that the grain, once pounded, was separated from the hulls, or chaffs as it is often called, by tossing the mixture up in the air. The chaff being lighter blew away, leaving the grain.

The process of separating the chaff from the grain is termed winnowing. The only type of grain mentioned by Mr. Polson as being winnowed was barley which they used in soup and other dishes.

I have been using the word grain throughout these articles in the broader sense to include all cereal grains as there is a possibility barley was not the only thing ground up in these vessels.

Mr. Polson said he had a limestone vessel at his home on Greenwood ave. He did not know there

were any others of the limestone type lying about until I mentioned the one at the old Matheson home.

He said he would have to make arrangements for someone else to look after the vessel after he had died. He felt the best way was for an institution to look after such a relic rather than an individual.

This was something that had struck me about the Matheson relics. What is going to happen to them? There may be other relics which are still around in Winnipeg and district but which have been forgotten. Soon they may be destroyed or as good as lost forever.

Besides relics there are also descendants of settlers who have memories about relics or about the early days which would be invaluable to historians. Some of these have been written down but there may be some things that would puzzle future historians which could be cleared up now.

Just what will happen to these relics and memories is up to you. Now is the time, tomorrow may be too late. If you are interested or know of any pioneers who would be, something can be done through the proper channels, the Manitoba Historical Society, the Manitoba Museum, the History Department of the University of Manitoba.

Perhaps you have some relic or knowledge of the Selkirk Settler days. If you are interested those are some of the organizations that would be glad to hear from you. Another one is the Hudson Bay Company Museum.

Do not hesitate to contact this paper if you are interested.

Some think history is dead, but history still has a great influence on the present day. The story of the past is still unfolding too. Since this series started it has been announced that new evidence had been found as to who were actually among those slain at Seven Oaks.

At the same time it should be kept in mind that everything we do today, everything in our way of life as it is now will some day be a part of history.

In conclusion, acknowledgments are made herewith to all those who helped make this series possible.

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