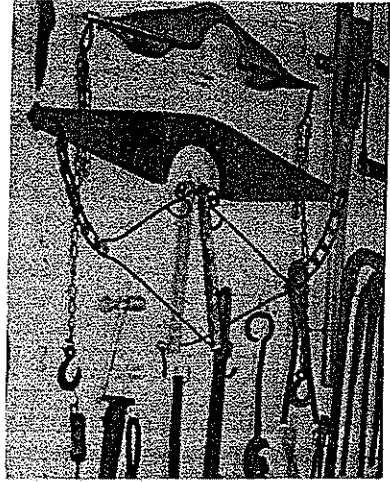


The C.P.R. Station, a Treasure House of Artifacts

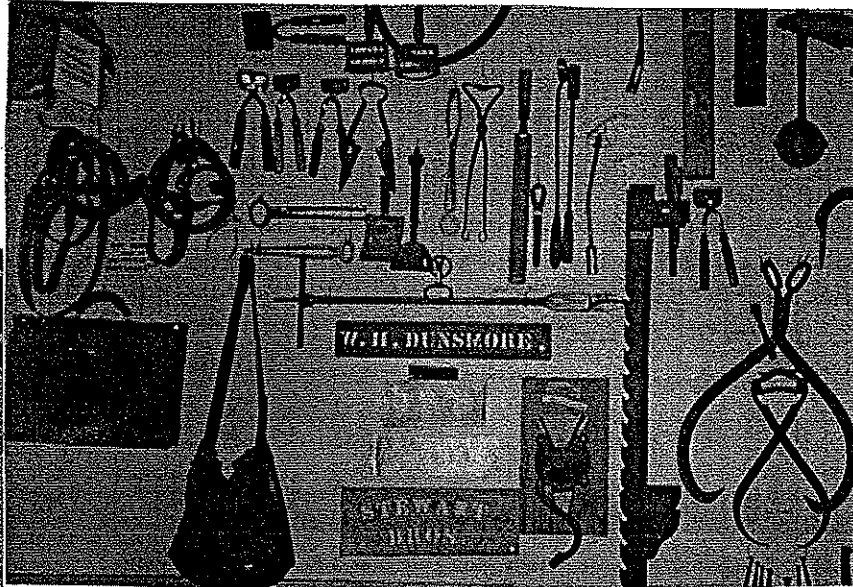


These pictures show a small sample of the artifacts to be seen in the CPR station.



The Museum receives some funding from a grant provided by

Saskatchewan
LOTTERIES



Museum News

Published by
Rocanville and District Museum
Society Inc.

Box 490, Rocanville, SK S0A 3L0

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Half-tones by the World-Spectator

Moosomin, SK

We invite anyone to submit material to be printed in future issues. Any signed material will be read and if suitable, will be included as space permits.

When we think of a museum we have visions of a collection of antiquated farm machinery of all descriptions, some operating, some cannibalized and still others in various stages of restoration. It would appear that these items are more spectacular, can be made to run and present a greater challenge to workers to seek that wonderful satisfaction of restoring life to an object which had been long since abandoned to the elements.

But there is another side to what a museum has to offer, which too often lies in the shadow of these more active artifacts. These are the static displays, items assembled in the thousands and shown as a great variety of articles of farm and home use, tools and kitchen aids, containers of all descriptions, and small and large appliances which were used in former times and which tell us a great deal about life in that period and of the people who used these articles.

And what more appropriate place could be found to display these goods than in an old C.P.R. station, itself a relic of the past and an object with which past generations were familiar and which played an important part in all of our lives?

The old familiar atmosphere is still noticeable as one enters the building. A visitor might expect the agent, with the usual vest and C.P.R. buttons and visor cap to appear at the wicket to greet his customers. The signal arm is in place by the door, the Leave and Arrival board is shown in a prominent place and the usual pot bellied stove, the long hard benches which were always found in the waiting room are still at hand.

In the days gone by, the station was the central location around which the business and activity of the town seemed to revolve. It was from here that the mail and express were picked up and taken to the Post Office. Farmers came to pick up or leave the cream cans. Many young people or idlers were known to visit the station at train time, just out of curiosity and many will recall the happy greeting and fond farewells associated with the station.

So it is to be expected that railroad artifacts would be the first to deal with at this time. You will recognize the platform hand wagon with its iron wheels, the hoops with which the agent delivered train orders and messages to the crew as the train passed through at high speed, and the huge locomotive bell which heralded the arrival of the passenger or local of the time.

Further along, a massive steam whistle centres a display of railroad equipment. Our curator has an excellent tape recording of the sounds of the old, familiar steam whistle and other train sounds. Ask to hear this. There is a good collection of trainman's lanterns, engineers oil cans and section staff tools and

do not miss the long handled bar with which the elevator man moved empty cars single handedly to his loading dock.

Possibly the next artifact of general interest would be the Telephone Switch Board. Although often taken for granted in its day, with the operator known as "Central", it contributed a great deal to the community life of the period. The unit consists of a narrow table on which the many switches were mounted, and from which the flexible cables, or lines, extended and were numbered accordingly. It was simply a matter for the operator to take the line of the person calling and plug it into the jack of the number being called. A system of minute lights, one on each circuit, indicated when the call was completed. A speaking and hearing device, or headset, for the operator, rows of switches and ringing levers with the all important clock completed the switch board equipment.

But this simple version of the board does little to indicate the value to the community of the always pleasant, courteous operator. She not only handled the switching equipment and long distance work, but was expected to know a great deal of local information as well. Frequently she was asked the time of day, the date and hour of local functions and all sorts of information pertinent to the well being of the community.

Prominently displayed in the main room is the "Yoke", not for oxen but for the use of those whose job it was to carry water from the distant well. Hand carved from wood to fit well the shoulders of a person, it was equipped with a hook on each end with which to attach a pail. We still use the word "Yoke" to describe a burden.

Nearby is found several sets of dog harness, not built for sporting activities, but used for dogs which actually did work.

An assortment of veterinary tools is the next to catch one's eye. A huge injection syringe, and equipment for holding the horse's mouth open while the files on display nearby were used to grind ailing teeth. There is no evidence of any device to freeze gums to eliminate pain, a simple "twitch" was merely looped to the animal's upper lip and twisted to keep his attention away from the painful work being done. What a cruel device; but some thought it necessary.

There are axes of every description and for various jobs. First the common single blade one for falling trees, next the two faced axe, which was often called a Liberal or Conservative axe, depending on one's political affiliation. There is an adze which was used for stripping logs and peeling work. There are others for fitting corners for log buildings. Below is found a collection of cutting tools and hammers from the age of