

## **Chapter 2 - Theodore's First Settlers**

### **How Richard Seeman Put Theodore on the Map**

#### **Seeman's Life Prior to his Arrival in Canada**

Although he is often referred to as a London capitalist or a London banker, Richard Seeman was actually of German descent. According to his great granddaughter, Tessa Ferguson, nee Seeman, his full name was John Ernest Richard Seeman, and was born in Rathenow, a town in the district of Havelland in Brandenburg, Germany in 1843. (Rathenow is located about 45 miles west of Berlin.) He was the elder son of Theodor Nicholas Seemann(1810-1887), who was the Lutheran pastor there and grandson of Johann Dietrich Seemann (1770-1836) who farmed near Rathenow.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of his many years as a resident of London and working in Canada, Richard Seeman retained his German citizen ship until 1906 when he needed a British passport in order to take up a temporary mining job in Spain. Because he had been the first post master of the Theodore Post Office in the district of Assiniboia, in Canada's North West Territories, he assumed that he was automatically a British subject. However, the official from The Home Office who called at his home in connection with his passport application thought otherwise, but after some discussion the passport was eventually granted.<sup>2</sup>

Sometime in the 1860's Richard Seeman visited his sister, Anna, and her husband who had left Germany due to court intrigue and had settled in Horta, a city in the Azores.<sup>3</sup> While in the Azores he found work with the American Consul who was short staffed at the time and is listed as a Consular agent in the annual report of the American Secretary of State for the year 1867/68.<sup>4</sup> At

some time in the 1870's he stopped working for the American State Department, became the Consul of the Kingdom of Hawaii in St. Michael's in the Azores. His resignation from that position after ten years of service is noted in the Report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the year 1892.<sup>5</sup> While the official reason for the resignation is stated as a change of address, a great grand daughter, Tessa, states that he had moved his family to England in 1887 because he did not want his children to marry Roman Catholics.<sup>6</sup>

Seeman had relocated to Ponta Delgada in 1878<sup>7</sup> where he met Harriet Webster Ivens. She was the daughter of William Ivens and Mary Ann Hickling and had been born on 22 Mar 1844 in Ponta Delgada, Portugal.<sup>8</sup> The couple were married on 1 September, 1879 at All Souls Church in Hampstead, an area that includes parts of Greater London, London and Middlesex in England.<sup>9</sup>

According to great grand daughter, Tessa, Richard and Harriet Seeman had the following children: Elsie Anna, Otmar Ulrich, Waldo Theodore, Eric William, and Lewin Ernest. She also states that although all of their children were born in Ponta Delgada, they were technically German citizens. She goes on to state that because her great grand father had a strong interest in mining and because he owned, or at least had a financial interest in mining property in Canada and South Africa, he insisted that all four sons earn degrees in mining engineering. Only one child, Waldo Theodore, was interested in the Seeman property at Theodore.

Seeman's interest in immigration appears to have begun while he was living in the Azores. According to great granddaughter Tessa, Seeman had set up his own business in Ponta Delgada by 1878 and had developed a close link with a labour recruiter named Hoffnung. It is possible that this was the same Abraham Hoffnung who was, at that time, recruiting people to work as

labourers in the Hawaiian pineapple plantations and who would later become the Commissioner of Emigration in Great Britain for the Kingdom of Hawaii.<sup>10</sup>

According great granddaughter Tessa, Seeman advertised free passage for anyone wishing to emigrate from the Azores to Hawaii, and so many people applied that he had to charter several ships in order to accommodate them all. Apparently, the emigration of so many labourers meant the end of cheap labour in the pineapple fields of the Azores, thereby annoying the pineapple growers in San Miguel and making Seeman very unpopular.

Seeman's success in recruiting labourers for the Hawaiian pineapple farms may have led to his return to England in 1887 where he opened an office in London and where he became involved with helping people from Russia emigrate to Brazil.<sup>11</sup> Again his efforts in recruiting emigrants were quite successful, and according to *The Winnipeg Tribune* he was responsible for bringing half a million immigrants to that country.<sup>12</sup>

In an interview conducted by the *Tribune* in 1893 "Mr Seeman explained that he had been, previous to last year, almost entirely occupied with immigration to Brazil and the Argentine Republic, but owing to political disturbances in those countries and the consequent opposition of European Governments, emigration on a large scale in those directions had practically stopped. He had therefore turned his attention to the Canadian Northwest and is now testing its capabilities on his own farm at Theodore, a few miles beyond Yorkton, on the M. & N. W."<sup>13</sup>

### **Seeman and the Manitoba and North Western Railway**

Richard Seeman seems to have had the ability to see various business opportunities as they presented themselves and the financial resources to take advantage of them and his acquisition of

125 sections of land for \$80,000 has been recounted in Chapter 1. Although the M&NWR was able to continue operations for another decade it did eventually run out of money, and in 1900 the M&NWR line to Yorkton was leased by the Canadian Pacific Railway for 999 years.<sup>14</sup> By the end of November, 1893 Seeman had disposed of 43,000 acres of land and over the ensuing decade and a half he was able to recoup his investment by selling his land at prices that were often three times higher than the original purchase price.<sup>15</sup>

Under the terms of the sales agreement, Mr Seeman was given his choice of land on either side of the line between Gladstone and a point some twenty-five miles west of Yorkton.<sup>16</sup> It seems that one very important expectation in the deal was that the M&NWR would extend its line west from Yorkton to Sheho Lake a distance of about 45 miles. This extension of the railway line, had apparently been promised to the settlers of the region several years earlier, but since no specific date for its completion appears to have been set, and the railway did not seem to be in any hurry to keep its promise, the line was not extended until the fall of 1903, and in early January of 1904 the first train ran from Yorkton to Sheho. Consequently, attempts were made on a fairly regular basis during the 1890's to influence the company to keep its promise. In a letter to the Editor of *The Winnipeg Tribune* dated 6 February 1895, F. Gale, the secretary of the New Denmark Lodge of Patrons of Industry at Theodore, wrote the following:

Sir - Would you be kind enough to place the enclosed proposition before the public. In explanation I may state that this settlement, New Denmark, is 27 miles northwest of Yorkton, on the proposed extension of the M. & N. W. Ry. There is still another settlement, Sheho Lake, 23 miles further on. These two settlements were started in 1890 upon the understanding that the railway would be built the following year, but the promises have not been fulfilled. There were 60 families in the latter settlement and hundreds more ready to come from South Dakota, but through the non-completion of the aforesaid road 35 families have gone back to the States, not likely to increase the population of the country, and there are still another 10 families to go away in the early

spring, so you can see how urgently the railway is needed if the government wish to keep the settlers in the country. Yours respectfully, F. Gale, Sec.<sup>17</sup>

Another expectation seems to have been that a spur would be built to the Seeman property located at Section 1, Township 28, Range 7, West of the 2nd Meridian.<sup>18</sup> In her account of her family's history in the Theodore history book Seeman's granddaughter, Beryl Seeman, mentions both the existence of a railway siding on the Seeman farm where she grew up, and the fact that she could wave to the train engineers from her home.<sup>19</sup>

When Seeman purchased his large tract of land from the M&NWR in 1892, he believed that the railway would be extending its line west from Yorkton within a few years, and in 1894, Richard Seeman had intimated to his agent that he had arranged with the railway company for the line to be extended.<sup>20</sup> However, when the railway was not extended as Seeman had hoped, he announced a plan to build a graded road from Yorkton to Theodore. In reporting this plan on the front page of its 8 January 1895 edition *The Winnipeg Tribune* stated:

“His [Seeman's] object is twofold, first to find employment for the settlers which are already here; second, to induce settlement by making the land easy to access by this graded road. Most of the settlers are in accord with him in this matter. Some think, however, that the road had better be made along the M&NWR Survey for two reasons: First, when the M&NWR are prepared to extend their line to this place they will find it already graded. Second when the railway reaches here a separate graded road will scarcely be needed as all the traffic will be to the different stations and not to Yorkton, the present terminus; and further, the railway and a graded road through a settler's homestead will be a serious matter, and will no doubt meet with strong opposition from the settlers whose homesteads are affected. Mr Seeman has assurances of help from both the Dominion and Northwest governments.<sup>21</sup>

The resolution passed by New Denmark Lodge of Patrons of Industry mentioned above and reported in *The Winnipeg Tribune* on 6 February 1895 states that Seeman's proposed graded road from Yorkton to Theodore would be an acceptable temporary alternative to the extension of

the railway, but continued to support the completion of the railway extension. The resolution also supported the proposal that the work of building the road be given to settlers already there because they could barely make a living and that it not be used as just an immigration scheme.

In spite of the interest the notion of the graded road generated when it was announced, it soon disappeared as a topic of conversation. As the Theodore correspondent to *The Winnipeg Tribune* noted some weeks later, “We do not hear anything about the Seeman straight graded road from Yorkton to this place these days.”<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that, like the railway extension, the graded road between Theodore and Yorkton was not built until some years later. When it was finally built, it did not follow the railway right-of way, but rather, was built on the road allowances provided for in the original survey of the territories and was designated as Highway 14. In the early 1950's Highway 14 was rebuilt and did run parallel to the railway. It was renumbered as Saskatchewan Highway 16 and designated the Yellowhead Highway.

### **Seeman and Immigration to the North West Territories**

Having secured such a large tract of land, it became important that Seeman find buyers for it. Consequently, he and several other entrepreneurs met with representatives of the Canadian government and presented a scheme whereby a number of immigrants would be brought to Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.<sup>23</sup> Two important aspects of the scheme were that it had the encouragement of both the Canadian Pacific and the Manitoba and Northwestern Railways, who would stand to profit from the increased traffic on their lines, and that the scheme would attract relatives of settlers who have already taken up homesteads in the Northwest.<sup>24</sup>

A similar, but somewhat more detailed account of the meeting was carried in *The Leader*, a semiweekly paper published in Regina.

Hon. Messrs, Abbott, Carling and Dewdney were waited on the other day by a delegation composed of Messrs. Daly, Ross, McDonald, Davin, Lariviere and Senator Perley, accompanied by Fred Brydges and Mr. Seemans. The later is a German capitalist who has submitted a scheme in which he proposed to make a contract with the government to settle any number of immigrants in Manitoba and the North-West. Mr. Abbott promised to inquire into the merits of the proposal. Mr. Seemans has already achieved a great success in the same line of work, having brought half a million immigrants to Brazil under contract with the governments of that country. He will make it a feature at the outset to bring into Canada the relatives of settlers who have already taken up homesteads in the North-West. He is endorsed by the Canadian Pacific and the Manitoba and Northwestern.<sup>25</sup>

The success of Seeman's scheme can be judged from a brief news item that appeared in *The Winnipeg Tribune*, the following spring. It stated that Seeman had brought a number of German and Polish settlers to Canada and had found homes for them in the Yorkton district.<sup>26</sup> One of these Settlers wandered away from home, got, lost and ended up at Sheho several days later.

During the 1890's and the early years of the twentieth century Richard Seeman continued to seek buyers for his land and in 1895 he and the Manitoba and North Western Land Company received many enquiries from the United States. Several factors account for the interest American farmers living in the Midwestern and Western states had in moving to the Canadian prairies.

Seeman was not interested in simply recruiting settlers to Western Canada, and selling his land to them. As an astute business man, he realized that it was to his advantage to see to it that they did well and prospered in their new homes. One example of his willingness to support the settlers he helped bring into the Canadian West was a plan outlined in a 1894 news article. Under the plan Seeman gave a certain number of cattle to local farmers for three years, and at the end of those three years the cattle were to be sold and the profits split between the farmer and Seeman.<sup>27</sup> Further evidence of this concern for the new settlers is shown in the two brief news items below:

"R. Seeman, of London, who has a ranch at Theodore, and who has done a good deal of work in settling the country along the line of the M. & N. W., will arrive in Winnipeg in the beginning of May. He will bring with him a number of farmers' sons, who will work out with farmers along the line of the M. & N. W. during the coming summer, and then the following spring start out for themselves. Mr. Seeman will assist them in

locating in every way possible.”<sup>28</sup>

“Mr. Watts, manager of the Seeman farm is doing the settlers a good turn by threshing their grain. An outfit from outside came in and threshed out the best and left the other poor fellows to do the best they could. No doubt they will have good memories next year.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Life on Seeman’s Farm at Theodore**

The year 1892 not only marked the beginning of the Seeman ranch, headquartered just a few miles from what would, ten years later, become the site of the Village of Theodore. It also marked the beginning a new community. According to Seeman’s granddaughter, Beryl Seeman, the farm was named “Theodora” for Seeman’s sister,<sup>30</sup> and the name “Theodore” was soon used by newspaper in Regina and Winnipeg for the new community that sprang up around it.

Of the 125 sections of land Seeman purchased from the M&NWR, only three of them were kept for his own use. The rest were sold at a considerable profit. According to McVey, five hundred acres, or almost an entire section of prairie, was broken for cultivation under the direction of Mr. J. MacMillan, the ranch foreman.<sup>31</sup> McVey also states that the labour was provided by a number Polish immigrants who were paid \$150.00 per year.<sup>32</sup> It may be assumed that at least some of the labourers were among the group of Polish immigrants mentioned above. *The Winnipeg Tribune* noted that a the second section was used as a cattle range and the third section was kept as a hay meadow.<sup>33</sup> While the raising of cattle was a major part of Seeman’s operations at Theodore, it was gradually phased out and in late 1909 it was announced that all the land on his farm at Theodore would be broken for seeding the following summer.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout the 1890's the news papers in Regina and Winnipeg posted regular reports on the size and condition of the crops raised on the Seeman farm. The first such report occurred near

the end on 1892, the first year the Seeman farm was in operation. It stated that, “Mr. A. McMillan, manager for Mr. Seeman, has threshed, and from two comparatively small stacks they realized 1200 bushels, which was a great surprise to all who saw the stacks.”<sup>35</sup> In the spring of 1893 *The Winnipeg Tribune* carried a report stating that the intention was to crop nearly a whole section of the Seeman farm that year.<sup>36</sup> Later that fall it was reported that, “Mr Seeman expects a total yield of wheat, oats, and barley of forty thousand bushels”<sup>37</sup>

Seeman’s expectations seem to have been fulfilled. The following short items from the Theodore news section of *The Leader* give a idea of the quality and quantity of crops grown on Seeman’s farm in 1893:

Mr. A. McMillan is about through hauling seed grain for the Seeman Farm. This farm was taken up last spring, when a large portion of the section was broken and part of the same cropped, which turned out fairly well. Being broken in the fall it is in good condition for crop this spring.<sup>38</sup>

All crops have been good through this section of country this year, especially on the Seeman farm where they have taxed the large force employed to gather them in. Some threshing has been done on this farm and oats yielded 106 bushels per acre. Who can beat that? Let us hear from them. Mr Seeman expects a total yield of wheat oats and barley of forty thousand bushels. All the farmers are smiling over their large crops.<sup>39</sup>

Threshing is through except on the Seeman farm, where the crop has been so immense they could not find granary accommodation for it, so they have left it in stack. Having a steam thresher they thresh as required.<sup>40</sup>

As indicated above, the raising of livestock was an important aspect of the farm from its very beginning. Both swine and cattle were successfully raised there in the 1890's and the news papers in both Regina and Winnipeg carried reports on their condition, whether or not they had been kept indoors or out doors, and how that had fared during the previous winter. For example, In the spring of 1895 *The Winnipeg Tribune* reported that the 250 head of cattle had been fed under cover the previous winter and that another 200 head of cattle which had been overwintered

outside and were in fine condition.<sup>41</sup> The report goes on to state that sixty fat steers would be sold for export as soon as the shipping seasons began, and that a herd of sixty hogs, which had been allowed to “run out” all winter, had also done well.<sup>42</sup> Livestock of unusual size or quality, such as the 500 pound Berkshire hog that was butchered in 1894 was also mentioned in the news.<sup>43</sup>

McVey, states that Scotty MacDonald, an early employee on the Seeman ranch, herded six hundred head of cattle in 1892 and was responsible for eight hundred head the following year. She goes on to state that during the first autumn (1892) a contract for 1400 tons of hay was made with Donald Gunn, a rancher who had settled beside what was then called Devil’s Lake in 1887, at a cost of \$1.25 per ton. The arrangement was that 400 head of cattle were to be moved from the Seeman ranch to the north shore of Devil’s Lake, where the hay was to be delivered and the cattle were to be kept over the winter. Ranch employees, Fred Gale, George Quinton, John MacMillan, Scotty MacDonald and Mike Delay, were responsible for moving the cattle, and on October 20, 1892, with eighteen inches of snow on the ground, a start for the feeding ground was made.<sup>44</sup>

According to McVey the cattle feeding venture was not a success because the following winter was particularly hard on the livestock, and that in the spring 1893 only fifty poor cows were headed for home.<sup>45</sup> McVey goes on to report that herding the cattle back to the Seeman ranch was also a difficult operation. “High water and spring floods caused another two weeks delay and the accidental drowning in the Whitesand River of Mike Delay. When nearly home, a May blizzard halted them. Scotty spent the night with Rev. Willis and in the morning found that thirteen more cattle had perished in a sheltered coulee during the 12-inch fall of snow. MacDonald swam the river and with the remaining cattle, was welcomed back to his ‘Home on the Range.’”<sup>46</sup>

From time to time the Winnipeg Tribune would report on the various buildings and equipment on the farm. One early description from the fall of 1893 stated that, “The five hundred head of cattle on the ranch were allowed to run til November 15, when they were all stalled in two large stables which are fitted with underground pipes to convey water, etc., beside a complete set of steam fire apparatus.”<sup>47</sup> The fire fighting apparatus, however, did not prevent the destruction of a large, uninsured stable, together with the contents, by fire the spring of 1895.

What might have proved a very serious and disastrous matter took place on the Seeman Farm. Messrs Mitchell and Watts were busy crushing grain when a spark from the engine falling on the roof of one of the buildings was quickly blown into flame by a very high wind. The fire rapidly spread to the tank house and the building in which the crushing machine was fixed. Destroying the crusher, tank, house. Wind mill etc. Live coals were carried by the wind to a large stable (in which were housed nearly ten hundred pigs) which was soon a mass of fire from one end to the other. The pigs were saved with the exception of one or two small ones which ran back into the fire. Credit is due to the hired men, C. Eriksen and also to Mrs. and Miss Watts for their efforts to save the property, of the loss, which was about \$800, would have been much greater.<sup>48</sup>

One of the first facilities important to the life of the community that was growing up around the Seeman farm in the early 1890's was the establishment of a post office on the Seeman ranch. The efforts to have a post office established in the district began in the summer of 1892 and are mentioned by the Theodore correspondent to *The Leader*.

We have been asking for a postoffice for over six months. From 50 to 60 persons would receive mail, but so far no postoffice. Could not N. F. Davin, Esq. help us by touching up the Postmaster-General? Sheho mail drives right by the route.<sup>49</sup>  
Post office at last! After a year and a half of waiting the Government granted the settler's petition. Three month was abundance of time to fix up that bit of business, as Sheho mail was running weekly through the settlement.<sup>50</sup>

Richard Seeman was appointed Theodore's first postmaster,<sup>51</sup> and years later, his appointment to the position eased his way to acquiring a British passport.

Prior to the establishment of the post office the district had frequently been referred to as “Little Denmark” because of the number of Scandinavian settlers that were being attracted to it.<sup>52</sup> In 1890 the *Scandinavian*, mentioned above, had called attention to New Denmark, stating that it was located about 50 miles northwest of Saltcoats on the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway.<sup>53</sup> With the establishment of the new post office which was to have originally named Theodora but changed by postal authorities to Theodore, the old names, Little Denmark, or New Denmark, gradually disappeared from use.

In addition to the newly acquired post office, a second important facility on the Seeman ranch was a general store that was operated for the benefit of the neighbouring settlers. In late summer 1895 *The Winnipeg Tribune* carried the following item:

Petty thieving has been going on the Seeman farm for time past, in fact almost ever since it commenced, and a few nights ago it culminated in breaking into the store and stealing the till and cash, which unfortunately for the thief was only a few dollars. The miscreant did not understand the combination of the till, hence he bore it and contents away bodily, unbolting it from the counter. Suspicion attaches to some parties not far off, hence they had better mend their ways or they may find themselves in jail. The matter is in the hands of the police.<sup>54</sup>

It has not yet been determined how long the store of the Seeman ranch remained in operation, but it is unlikely to have survived after the establishment of the Village of Theodore in 1903. In 1906 the William Mercer family used it as a temporary residence<sup>55</sup> until moving into the Village in 1907. A large house by the W. T. Seeman family was eventually built on the site of the old store.<sup>56</sup>

It appears that the Seeman ranch was a target of local thieves on several other occasions. Prior to the theft from the store there had been reports of livestock and farm implements being stolen from the ranch and on one occasion a number of logs. The Theodore correspondent to *The*

*Leader* commented that, “This is not the first theft that has been committed on this farm; as harness and parts of harness and grain also have been missed.”<sup>57</sup>

During the winter of 1893-1894 it was announced in at least two newspapers that plans had been made to add a third important facility, a grist mill, to the farm. The plan was that the mill would be for the use of both the ranch and the settlers in the district.<sup>58</sup> *The Leader* asserted that the proposed grist mill would be a great boon to the settlers, as there was not another mill within 60 to 80 miles of Theodore.<sup>59</sup>

No evidence has been found to suggest that the grist mill was actually built on the Seeman farm. Two newspaper reports from 1906 concerning the Lake of the Woods Milling Company indicate that no grist mill existed at the Seeman farm. The first report simply stated that “The Lake of the Woods Milling Co. will erect a large flour mill at Theodore, Sask. in the centre of a great wheat producing country.”<sup>60</sup> The second report was much more detailed stating that:

The Lake of the Woods Milling Co. will erect a large flour mill here this summer, the site having been staked by the representative of the company last week. This will supply a long felt want and save many a long and cold drive for farmers who previously have been compelled to go to Yorkton.<sup>61</sup>

It does not appear that The Lake of the Woods Milling company build a flour mill at Theodore either because in 1907 another newspaper report indicated that a few enterprising settlers like Herman Fritski were willing to grind grain for his neighbours,<sup>62</sup> and the second report from 1907 states that:

Flour is being shipped in from Winnipeg by the carload as it is almost impossible to procure it any closer. Among those who have received shipments or expect shipments are A. W. Wylie, A. D. Tracey, A. D. Eckhardt, J. S. Anderson.<sup>63</sup>

In 1916, almost two decades after Seeman announced his plans for a grist mill, an item in the *American Miller and Processor* stated that “At Theodore the Bokofsky Flour Mill & Grain Company has been capitalized with stock of \$20,000.”<sup>64</sup>

While the newspapers in Winnipeg carried regular accounts of Richard Seeman’s travels between that city and his ranch at Theodore, there are only two newspaper stories to indicate that Mrs. Seeman ever visited the farm. The first simply mentions the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Seeman for Yorkton Assiniboia, where they would reside for the summer of 1894.<sup>65</sup> The second stated that “R. Seeman and wife leave for Winnipeg to-morrow after a most enjoyable stay of three months.”<sup>66</sup>

Seeman’s great granddaughter, Tessa Fergusson states that her great grandmother refused to stay on the farm because she found it too isolated, and McVey states that the reason was that the farm was so very different from her palatial abode in London.<sup>67 68</sup> McVey describes the end of what appears to be Mrs. Seeman’s one and only visit to her husband’s ranch at Theodore:

“She made a hurried decision to leave one afternoon and in order to make train connections with the last boat of the season, had to reach Yorkton within two hours. Orders were given to hitch the fast black mare. Mrs Seeman took the reins and caught her train. The twenty-five miles were covered in one hour and fifty minutes. The horse lost its sight but kept its good name.”<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps it is safe to say that Mrs. Seeman did not enjoy her stay in Theodore that summer quite as much as the newspaper correspondents thought she did.

Mention has already been made regarding Scotty MacDonald, an employee on the Seeman ranch. McVey recounts the story that one day while attending to his duties he lassoed a brown bear some five miles from home. “Much excitement followed during the attempt to lead him home alive. About one half mile from the cook-house the horse had to give up the endurance contest

and the bear seemed content to climb a tall poplar tree, to which the rope was securely tied. On being informed of the big game, Mr. R. Seeman hurried to the spot and shot the bear.<sup>70</sup>

This incident was also reported in *The Winnipeg Tribune* which left out some of the details and simply stated that: “The cowboys on R. Seeman’s ranch at White Sand River shot a bear last week weighing 200 pounds. The bear was first caught by a lasso by a cowboy on horseback and afterwards dispatched with a rifle.”<sup>71</sup>

Finally, it appears that the Seeman ranch was also a favourite location for social events such as public meetings of all kinds. “On Wednesday night a crowded gathering assembled at Seeman’s ranch, Theodore, Rev. Mr. Wilson in the chair. Senator Perley and Mr. Hawkes championed the Conservative side, and Mr. Insinger, MLA, and Rev. Mr. Willis (Methodist) spoke as Liberals. The audience was keenly interested, and the company did not disperse till two in the morning.”<sup>72</sup>

While the activities on the Seeman farm at Theodore were regularly reported during the 1890's, they almost disappeared from the Winnipeg, and Regina, news papers after the turn of the twentieth century, and the news from Theodore in *The Yorkton Enterprise* focuses primarily on the activities in the newly established village. There is, however, one news paper story that may explain this disappearance. A reporter from the *Manitoba Free Press*, travelling from Yorkton to Sheho on the CPR line in 1907 wrote of a “deserted” ranch he saw from the train. It should be noted that the seeman ranch at Theodore was the only large ranch that could clearly be seen from a train on that line.

A deserted ranch, notice as the train sped on, served as a reminder of the days prior to the railway connection, when the rancher had the country for his own. There they were, the log stables innumerable, the numerous sleeping cabins for the men, the cook’s demesne,

with its contiguous dining apartment, and, in a central position, the more pretentious log residence of the erstwhile proprietor. But now thousands of acres of former grass lands are growing oats and wheat, and the mixed farmers are maintaining smaller but more numerous herds of cattle.<sup>73</sup>

Richard Seeman died on 22 December, 1909 while visiting St. Boniface, Manitoba on business. "The funeral took place in St. Boniface and he is buried in Winnipeg.

## Notes:

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