

## **Chapter 4 - Theodore's Agriculture Foundation**

### **Introduction**

Like almost every other community in Saskatchewan at the turn of the twentieth century the industry that drove the economy was agriculture. The many hundreds of small communities that dotted the prairies all depended on agriculture, and sprang up in the early years of the twentieth century to service that industry. The importance of farming to the survival of the various communities in Saskatchewan can probably be measured by the number of column inches devoted to the subject by the many local correspondents to the province's small-town newspapers. Certainly, during Theodore's early years reports on the conditions of the crops from seed time to harvest were a regular and frequent topic in the news from Theodore in the twentieth century as were reports on the condition of the gardens throughout the district, and weather conditions.

Because agriculture was the primary reason for the existence of Saskatchewan's small communities, they were able to grow and thrive during most years of the early twentieth century, the prewar recession of 1912 and the postwar recession of the early 1920's, being the obvious exceptions. However, changes in agricultural conditions, such as the drought and depression of the 1930's, the second World War, and the many changes in farming practices of the mid twentieth century created new challenges and conditions for many of those communities that will be discussed in later chapters.

## **A General Overview of Farming and Ranching at Theodore**

It appears that the earliest settlers in the area west of Yorkton were primarily engaged in the raising of cattle, and that grain production was a secondary activity. One reason for this may have been that the Homestead Act considered that “raising twenty head of cattle and constructing a barn for the animals was an acceptable alternative” to clearing land and raising crops.<sup>1</sup> A second reason may have been that some people found raising cattle to be much less labour intensive than growing grain during those early years. Whatever the reasons for the prominence of ranching over other types of agriculture might have been, many of the early settlers chose it as a means of making a living. In 1890 when the Orkney Literary and Debating Society of Orcadia held a debate on the subject of whether stock raising or grain growing was the more suitable agricultural activity for the area, the decision of the society was in favour of stock raising.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Early Ranchers**

In the early 1890's there were only 50 or 60 persons living in the Theodore district. This left tens of thousands of acres open for grazing cattle, so it is little wonder that the raising of cattle was one of the first endeavours on most farms. According to Rachel Westerhaug when the land in the Theodore district was opened to settlement in the early 1890's cattle were allowed to roam freely until the fall when they were rounded up.<sup>3</sup> The cattle were, of course, all branded, and to aid settlers in the identification of their live stock, *The Yorkton Enterprise* published a weekly page showing all the registered brands in the Yorkton district. As more and more settlers moved into the area and fenced their land, the need for the page diminished, and it was discontinued in the early 1900's.



Edward Lingen-Burton ranch, White Sand River, north of Theodore, Saskatchewan. © Glenbow Museum # PB-133-1 used with permission

Prior to the formation of a community at Theodore several early pioneers had established ranches in near by locations. Among these early ranchers were Donald Gunn, 1887 settled on the south east side of Good Spirit Lake, Frederick Robbert Insinger, who established a ranch near Willowbrook and served in the Territorial Legislature, and Thomas Garry, who took over Insinger's ranch and also served in the Saskatchewan Legislature.

The first person to establish a farm or ranch in the immediate area of Theodore was the Reverend Charles Simpson Willis.<sup>4</sup> Little is known about C. S. Willis, except that he was a Methodist minister who continued his ministry in spite of being superannuated in 1882.<sup>5</sup> Although Gladys McVey, an early resident of Theodore, claimed that he squatted on the banks of the Whitesand River about four miles east of Theodore in 1888 before the land was surveyed,<sup>6</sup> an item in *The Regina Leader* states that he was still preaching at Pheasant Forks as late as 1890.<sup>7</sup> According to McVey, when the region was surveyed in the fall of 1888 the Willis property was purchased by E. L. Burton who proved up the homestead, and later sold it to George Erickson

who had arrived from Sweden in 1892 and had first settled on the shores of Theodore Lake.<sup>8</sup>

Whenever it was that C. S. Willis actually arrived in Theodore, *The Winnipeg Tribune* soon reported on his success in the district, saying that, “Among those who have done exceptionally well in this region is C. S. Willis, of Williston, on the White Sand river, who has a fine farm and large heard of good stock.”<sup>9</sup> Later that summer *The Winnipeg Tribune* reported that the Willis family has lost about thirty-five tons of hay in prairie fires and that hail had destroyed many gardens in the Theodore area.<sup>10</sup>

Willis was appointed Justice of the peace in 1892, and at least one case was reported in the newspaper.<sup>11</sup>

The following persons appeared before C. S. Willis, J. P., charged by the NWMP with setting prairie fires contrary to the ordinance: G. Whalley, N. Ekstrom, F. Gale and C. Gale. The case against the latter was dismissed. The three former were fined \$50.00 and costs. An attempt before another court to prove perjury against one of the witnesses in the Whalley case ended in a fizzle. The intention evidently was to so intimidate settlers that they will not inform when they know the person starting prairie fires.<sup>12</sup>

It is also known that Willis conducted several marriage ceremonies for the residents of the Theodore area in the 1890's including those of Constable Bates and Christine Frederickson, Mr. L. Westergaard and Miss K. Kristenson in 1892,<sup>13</sup> as well as for Peter Hansen and Hanna Hansen.<sup>14</sup> It is not known, however, whether these marriages were conducted in his capacity as a Methodist Minister or as the local Justice of the Peace. It is also known that C. S. Willis was reelected secretary-treasurer of the local school board in 1896.<sup>15</sup>

Another early farmer or rancher in the Theodore area was Robert Lawrie, Jr. and although there is little information about his life his influence in the district just west of the village of Theodore was such that a Rural Municipality, a bridge, and a creek bear the name Lawrie. Robert

Lawrie Jr. was born 16 August, 1855 in Perth, Scotland.<sup>16</sup> In 1869 he and his father, Robert Lawrie, Sr., emigrated to Massachusetts to work in the cotton mills.<sup>17</sup> He later took up farming near Ipswich, South Dakota.<sup>18</sup> In 1887 he married Margaret Campbell who was also born in Scotland.<sup>19</sup> Two children, Robert and Margaret were born to the couple while they lived in the USA, and a third child, Annie, was born while they were en route to Canada.<sup>20</sup>

In 1892 he and a number of settlers from the Dakotas migrated to Canada and formed what was known as the Dakota settlement located between what are now the villages of Sheho and Theodore.<sup>21</sup> An undocumented story states that when the family had reached a point about four miles west of Theodore they camped beside a small lake, and liking the location decided to take out homesteads on the land. Homesteads on NW-6-29-7-W2 and SW-6-29-7-W2 were granted to Robert Lawrie Sr. and his son to Robert Lawrie, Jr respectively.<sup>22</sup>

The house belonging to Robert and Margaret Lawrie was located about midway along the main route between Yorkton and Fishing Lake, and it became a popular stopping spot for early travelers.<sup>23</sup> It was a destination that many a traveler on a long, cold, and lonely journey was glad to reach before nightfall, and it was said that no one was ever turned away from Lawrie's home.<sup>24</sup> In addition to his hospitality, Robert Lawrie was also one of the people who guided newly arrived settlers to their allotted homesteads in the Beaver Hills area south and west of Theodore.<sup>25</sup>

So many people stopped at the Lawrie home that it became the logical site of the Lawrie Post office and Robert Lawrie served as the Postmaster from 1898 until his resignation in 1904.<sup>26</sup> The Lawrie Post Office was eventually replaced by a Post Office in the Village of Insinger.

About 1898 Robert Lawrie donated a small parcel of land in the northwest corner of his homestead (NW 6-29-7-W2) to the Ukrainian settlers for the purpose of building a church and

cemetery. Although the church no longer exists, the cemetery, now known as the Lawrie-Lysenko Cemetery, is still visited by the descendants of the people buried there.<sup>27</sup>

In 1899 Robert Lawrie became one of the first trustees on the newly established Insinger School District, no. 494.<sup>28</sup> The Ukrainian settlers in the Insinger district were at the time reported to be among the poorest in the province, and it was, therefore, difficult to collect enough school taxes to meet the expenses. Robert Lawrie, Jr. would often pay those expenses from his own funds.<sup>29</sup> The name of the school district was changed to Lysenko School District in 1921.

In 1916 Robert Lawrie was appointed to the office of Justice of the Peace, and in 1918 he became the president of the Lawrie Telephone Company.<sup>30 31</sup> Prior to 1918 the people living west of Theodore had been served by the Theodore, Springside and Beaverdale Telephone Company which was reorganized into four separate telephone companies that year.



Stables on the Seeman Ranch  
Courtesy Bruce Frederickson collection

Probably the most important rancher in area was Richard Seeman, whose big farm at Theodore has already mentioned. Seeman never lived on his ranch for more than a few months

during the summers, but as noted previously, the presence of the ranch had a major impact on the development of Theodore.

### **Raising Beef Cattle at Theodore**

As mentioned, very little land in the Theodore area was fenced in the 1890's and one of the problems that came with this open range was the fact that animals would often stray away and end up where they did not belong. Under the stray animals' act, anyone finding a stray animal was allowed to place an advertisement in the nearest local newspaper and receive reimbursement (up to \$1.00) for the price of the advertisement from the animal's owner. Failure to report a stray animal and try to keep it as one's own could lead to serious criminal charges.

Reports of cattle being shipped from Theodore occurred as early as the spring of 1894 when a story in *The Winnipeg Tribune* stated that sixty steers had been fattened for market and would be sold for export as soon as the shipping seasons began. Because the M&NWR had not been built any further west than Yorkton, cattle had to be driven to market in a manner similar to that depicted in the old Hollywood western movies. Rounding up the cattle from wherever they had strayed and keeping them together in a herd were just two more problems associated with the open range. Writing in 1929, J. S. Anderson, Theodore's correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* recalled those cattle drives.

The writer who was intimately acquainted with Beaverdale thirty and more years ago, in the days when ranching, especially raising of beef cattle, was chief, if not the only source of income to the few families who had pioneered in this district, knows of the worry and labour attached to the rounding up of large herds of cattle that ran wild in the big bush to the west, and they were wild, not having seen a living soul, in some cases, for weeks at a time. And of the wild horse-back rides through sloughs and poplar bluffs, on the long drive from Beaverdale to Yorkton, some thirty miles away, and the sigh of relief

as the gates of the Yorkton stock yards closed on the last unruly three-year-old, who could not be blamed for his reluctance to leave the “Garden of Eden” behind him.

The cavalcade that followed the herd to market in those days had representatives of every resident family in the district and the start off, when the fat animals were separated from the balance of the herd, that was to remain at home brought out not only all the male residents, but many of the fairer sex as well, who followed in the wake sometimes for a mile, sometimes for two, until the boys assured them of their ability to manage the herd without further help, leaving the women and kids to return to their homes and take up less arduous tasks.

Yes, the annual cattle shipping day was an outstanding event of the year, if not the most important in the lives of those who knew what it meant to separate one hundred head of cattle from miles of bush and scrub and drive them over a thirty-mile route to the nearest market, fighting every foot of the way to prevent one, two, or more of them from breaking from the herd, becoming lost in some of the numerous bluffs that lined the road, or laying down in some slough for a rest.<sup>32</sup>

Several reports in the Theodore news prior to World War I indicate that a large number of cattle were shipped from the village. One report from 1913 stated that fourteen carloads of fat cattle, all in fine condition had been shipped from Theodore on one day.<sup>33</sup> A report on Theodore published by *The Manitoba Free Press* and reprinted by *The Yorkton Enterprise* stated that:

Owing to the excellent shelter afforded by the bluff nature of the country, good pasture land and abundance of good water, quite a considerable and lucrative trade is being done in cattle raising, stock of all kinds being raised with success. Approximately thirty cars of cattle and about one hundred hogs were shipped from Theodore during 1909, the former realizing an average of \$35 per head. A few sheep and poultry are also raised, but for the most part these are absorbed locally.<sup>34</sup>

The number of cattle shipped from Theodore remained high during the years of the First World War. In the summer of 1918 the Bokofsky brothers were advertizing that they were prepared to buy outright or ship on consignment as many as 10,000 head of cattle and hogs.<sup>35</sup>

Although the open range had given way to fenced farms in the early twentieth century, and the large ranches such as that owned by the Richard Seeman no longer existed, large numbers of

cattle continued to be shipped from Theodore. One of the largest shipments of cattle took place at in December 1921.

723 head of cattle, the property of Mr. H. Bronfman of Yorkton, were shipped to the United States last week. These cattle have been fed on the farm of D. Dachis, three miles east of Theodore for the past month and have been shipped to South Dakota to be finished off on corn. Thousands of oat sheaves were daily fed to these cattle while here, making a market for much of the unthreshed oats.<sup>36</sup>

It is interesting to note that among the first track side facilities built by the CPR soon after its arrival in Theodore were the stock handling facilities, which allowed cattle to be shipped out by rail. The first facilities soon proved to be inadequate, and the Theodore Board of trade began pressing for improved stock handling facilities. The new facilities were constructed east of the elevators near the new loading platform in 1910.<sup>37</sup> This new loading platform was large enough to accommodate two railway cars, but too short to allow for the loading of both cattle and grain at the same time.<sup>38</sup>

By the summer of 1923 the loading facilities were again proving to be inadequate for the number of cattle being shipped from Theodore, and the village council together with farmers in the Theodore district petitioned J. K. McKay, of the CPR for a new loading platform that would accommodate at least five railway cars.<sup>39</sup> To illustrate the need for improved cattle loading facilities the Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* reported that on one Friday in September, 1923 four carloads of prime beef cattle had been shipped from Theodore and another two car loads had been shipped from Springside, because Theodore's loading platform had been "woefully inadequate to handle the business."<sup>40</sup>

## **The Dairy Industry at Theodore**

While beef cattle were among the first animals raised in the Theodore area, it wasn't long before farmers began raising dairy cattle. Early in the twentieth century farmers would sell their excess butter, eggs, and milk to local merchants who in turn sold it to the people living in town.

As the century progressed, more and more farmers began to focus their attention on dairy farming. One of the earliest dairy farmers at Theodore was James Merkley, who with his brothers arrived in Theodore in the spring of 1915 with more than forty head of purebred Holstein cattle.<sup>41</sup> Within a year of his arrival James Merkley was bringing dairy cattle into Theodore and selling them to other local farmers.<sup>42</sup> At least three sales of dairy cattle were reported in 1916 alone.

Another early dairy farmer was Fred Leonhardt who arrived in Theodore in 1919 from the village of Ebenezer, located some twelve miles north of Yorkton.<sup>43</sup> By the mid 1920's Fred Leonhardt's Holsteins were winning prizes at exhibitions in neighbouring centres. A news item dated 1925 reported that:

Mr. Fred Leonhardt is finding a ready sale at good prices for his surplus stock of pure bred Holsteins that were so successful at Yorkton and Foam Lake fair. At the former town Mr. Leonhardt won eighteen prizes with seventeen head of cattle entered, while at Foam Lake he secured the bulk of all prizes offered in this class.<sup>44</sup>

After twelve years of supplying milk to village customers, the Leonardts discontinued that part of their farming operations 1n September 1934.<sup>45</sup>

The opening of the Co-operative Creamery at Yorkton in 1921 gave Theodore's farmers another opportunity sell cream. Selling cream meant more work for the farmer, but it also meant more money, and it was thought that no farmer needed to be in debt to the local merchants if his cream cheques were coming in weekly.<sup>46</sup>

The positive financial impact the creamery in Yorkton had on local farmers is illustrated by the following news item from 1922.

Owing to a shortage of butter throughout Western Canada farmers in the West are today receiving much higher prices for cream than those in the East. The finest creamery, butter is retailing today in Montreal at 40c while the price in Yorkton is 50c. With the weather improving it is probable that prices may drop slightly soon but in the meantime farmers who have milking cows have a splendid opportunity for securing splendid return from them. Local creameries are now paying 42c per lb. for sweet table cream with the usual spreads for other grades. With the ice cream season opening there will be a premium here for this class of cream all season. The Co-Operative Creamery is now installing an ice cream plant and expects to have it in operation by May 24.<sup>47</sup>

It seems that there were enough farmers who chose to ship their cream to Yorkton rather than churn it themselves and sell the butter to local merchants to create a shortage of locally made butter. In the spring of 1923 the Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* wrote:

The remarks made by your Springside correspondent last week in regards to shortage of good dairy butter, also applies to Theodore. At the present moment it is doubtful if there is a solitary pound of good butter in the stores, and many customers have been eating dry bread for a couple of days.<sup>48</sup>

By 1924 the Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* could write:

Like so many other places in the west, Theodore has this year shipped more cream than ever before and proof of the fact that mixed farming and dairying is rapidly gaining ground here as elsewhere. One morning this week, Your correspondent noticed the large CPR truck at the station piled three tiers high with returned empty cans. The present price of cream gives the farmer a good return for his labour.<sup>49</sup>

The high prices that Theodore's farmers received for their cream and milk proved to be an incentive for the continuous improvement of their dairy herds in the Theodore area.

Mr. Guy Wilson has purchased some pure bred Ayrshire, which he has added to his dairy herd, believing that a man might as well feed a good animal as a scrub. Mr. Wilson has been gradually building up his herd until today there are few better animals to be seen in Eastern Saskatchewan, than some of those on his farm.<sup>50</sup>

## Eggs and Poultry

The Theodore district is not usually thought of as being a major egg producing region in the province of Saskatchewan. Although it appears that some eggs had always been shipped out of Theodore, specific quantities weren't mentioned until the spring of 1923 when it was reported in the Theodore news that, "Some 2,500 dozen eggs were shipped from this point on Tuesday - the collection of three days."<sup>51</sup> Three weeks later, a second report appeared in the news:

Standing at the station one day recently as the train men were loading freight, your correspondent counted 81 cases of eggs of 30 dozen each, being loaded for Winnipeg market. Considering that three freights per week carry out the produce from Theodore, we doubt if there is another town in the Yorkton district that can equal this freight shipment.<sup>52</sup>

At the end of March 1925 a branch of the egg and poultry pool was formed at Theodore. Consignment of eggs for shipping had to consist of at least three dozen eggs and a consignment of eggs had to consist of three dozen or multiples of three dozen eggs. Cracked and thin-shelled eggs were, of course, rejected, and all eggs have to be clean and fresh.<sup>53</sup> To ensure that only high quality eggs were shipped from Theodore, an egg-candling station was established in the village which examined every egg before it was shipped. The station appears to have operated in the spring and summer months only, closing for the fall and winter.<sup>54</sup>

While large shipments of eggs from Theodore are mentioned in the Theodore News during the 1920's, there are only occasional referenced to the shipment of chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. The birds were generally shipped to the Co-operative Creamery in Yorkton.

## Sheep

Although there are no reports of sheep being shipped from the village in the Theodore news column, an item in the Theodore news stated that Simeon Burnard has received a shipment of sheep through the provincial government and an advertisement in the *Saskatoon Daily Star* in 1919 stating that H. C. Markham of Theodore was selling fifty breeding ewes and twenty ewe lambs is evidence that some people tried to raise sheep in the area.<sup>55 56</sup> One reason for the lack of sheep farming in the Theodore seems to have been predication by dogs and coyotes. A news item from 1936 stated that a number of stray dogs had been destroyed because they killed sheep on local farms.<sup>57</sup> A number sticker seen on a farm pick-up truck more than a half century later advised, “Eat Saskatchewan Lamb: 10,000 coyotes can’t be wrong.”

## Theodore’s Fur Farms

It seems that the people of Theodore have always been willing to experiment with new and sometimes unusual business ventures. Some of these ventures seem to have developed of hobbies or as sidelines to other businesses. In the fall of 1925 the Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* mentioned the following people and their interests: Charles C Essar, who had a thriving apiary; D Kerstiuk, with his mink farm, George Brown and his Chinchilla rabbits, Messrs. Lewis and Smith and their dog kennels, P. Mickelson’s pure bred poultry and Dr. Turner’s racing stables.<sup>58</sup>

Although Oliver Adamson tried to start a fox farm in 1924, it wasn’t until 1926 that Charles Essar had a large scale operation, consisting sixteen black foxes housed in five pens on his property within the village limits.<sup>59 60</sup> A year later he had twenty-five high quality animals in his

pens.<sup>61</sup> A second fox farm was started by D. Kerstiuk with fourteen animals.<sup>62</sup> From the following news item, it appears that the fox farms were a successful operation.

There may not be many who know of the silver and black fox farms located here, of which we are rather proud. That owned by Chas. Essar located within the village limits, is stocked with over fifty splendid specimens of the finest variety of black fox obtainable, while the ranch of the Steppe Silver and Black Fox Co., of which Rev. D. Kerstiuk is president, and Mr. D. Lysachuk secretary-treasurer, is located on the Fernie subdivision adjoining the village limits and has now forty-eight fine animals in its pens. This company was organized only a year ago. It is needless to say that these two farms with over one hundred of these valuable animals, represents a large amount of capital.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to the fox farms Essar and Kerstiuk also raised mink at Theodore, importing their first animals from a breeder in Ontario.<sup>64</sup> By the mid 1920's George S. Brown was not only importing choice breeding animals for his own farm, he was supplying other rabbit farmers in the province with breeding stock.<sup>65</sup>

Like all other farming operations, Theodore's fur farms suffered during the great depression. In 1931, for example, a shipment of fifty-two fox pelts was sold for a much lower price than it would have received a few years earlier, and it was suggested that the market for fox fur in Canada was over supplied.<sup>66</sup>

### **Raising Crops at Theodore**

A much better picture of the quality and quantity of crops grown on the Seeman farm in 1893 can be obtained from three short reports that appeared in the Theodore news section of *The Leader* published in Regina, Assiniboia. The first of these reports stated that:

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>67</sup>

In mid autumn 1893 the Theodore correspondent to *The Leader* reported that:

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>68</sup>

The final report for 1893 states:

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>69</sup>

Like so much of the rest of Saskatchewan the principal crop in the Theodore area was wheat. The first variety of wheat grown in the Theodore area was likely Red Fife, as it had long been the baking and milling industries standard of wheat in Canada.<sup>70</sup> Marquis wheat, developed in 1904, soon replaced Red Fife because of its superior milling quality and because it matured about ten days earlier than other varieties available at the time.

Early fall frosts were, and still are the bane of farmers at Theodore and the ten-day advantage that Marquis wheat had over other varieties was an important consideration when choosing a wheat to plant. In 1924 the Theodore correspondent to *The Yorkton Enterprise* wrote:

Many reports are coming in of the heavy damage to crops by recent heavy frosts. It would seem the very best and heaviest grain is affected to the greatest extent, Truly, farming is subjected to many hard bumps, and the present season has been full of them for the grain grower. Between cold and unseasonable weather in the spring, followed by hail and severe frosts, it is a wonder that the crops survived at all. Rather causes one to contemplate a trip to the Beaverdale Homemakers next meeting and learn just "Why We Love Canada."<sup>71</sup>

Consequently, when Garnet wheat became available in the 1920's a number of farmers in the Theodore area became very interested in growing it.

Garnet wheat had two important advantages over Marquis. First, it matured about 10 days sooner than Marquis. Second, it yielded a little better. These advantages soon made it a popular choice at Theodore as reflected by the following reports from the fall of 1927.<sup>72</sup>

The fine ripening weather of the week just ending has done wonders towards ripening the crop, which a week ago was making very slow progress. Several fields are now in stook, chiefly Garnet wheat, rye and some oats on the lighter land, although Marquis is also being cut in some few cases. With a continuance of present fine weather, harvest should be general here by the time this appears in print. No damage from frost or hail has occurred, though rust has effected some fields more or less.<sup>73</sup>

Mr. John Smith threshed on Monday and Tuesday, a field of Garnet wheat which averaged exactly 36 bushels per acre of No. 1 northern. Although it was sown two weeks later than Marquis wheat grown on the same farm, it was ripe some days ahead of the Marquis. This wheat was grown from registered seed purchased last spring from Steele Briggs and grown on land broken last year, so that it is a beautiful clean sample. Mr. Smith has decided to store this wheat for sale to farmers for seed for 1928. Some Marquis wheat later threshed on the same farm is grading two Northern.<sup>74</sup>

While Garnet wheat was a popular choice among farmers, it was not a popular wheat with the millers and bakers. It gradually lost favour and was de-registered except for use as a feed grain in 2013.<sup>75</sup> One of the wheat varieties that replaced Garnet was Thatcher, a variety that was resistant to stem rust that had been developed at the University of Minnesota in 1935.<sup>76</sup> By the 1950's Thatcher had become the predominant variety of wheat grown on the Canadian prairies.<sup>77</sup>

Wheat, of course was not the only crop grown at Theodore. Barley, oats, and rye were also grown and their yields regularly reported in the Theodore news column. What may surprise some readers, however, is that some corn and sunflowers were also grown at Theodore during the 1920's and 1930's as evidenced by the following reports.

Mr. Alex Fernie, who farms a half mile north of town, left a few stalks of fodder corn in the village a few days ago, which measured 8 feet, 4 inches in height and shows no sign of frost whatever. The best example we have seen this year.<sup>78</sup>  
Farmers are busy harvesting their corn and sunflower crops and filling silos. These crops

are among the best ever grown in this district - in fact, a field of sunflowers on the farm of F. Leonhardt & Sons, looks more like a young poplar bluff than anything else.<sup>79</sup> Field corn is a wonderful crop in this area this year and farmers' silos will be overflowing. Probably the finest corn ever grown in this district for feed is now being harvested on the farm of Miles & Barrie, east of town, and stands eight feet high or more, with large, well-matured cobs fully ripened. There will be an abundance of feed this year, as hay and straw are also plentiful.<sup>80</sup>

Another crop for which Theodore was not generally known was potatoes. During these early years of the twentieth century potatoes appear to have been considered just another one of the many vegetables grown in local gardens, and there are only occasional references to potatoes of unusual size, quality or quantity, such as the following reports from 1926 and 1927.

Six huge potatoes, weighting 12½ pounds were brought into town recently by Mr. Alex Fernie. Speaking of potatoes - since our last comment on this subject. Mr. T. Seeman has shown your correspondent the finest sample of spuds seen for many a day - fine large, well shaped, and absolutely free of scab, causes one to wonder why every farmer in the district should not make an effort to produce similar crops, and thereby reap for himself a much better price for an article that would be as easily grown as the scab, stock so often seen. Mr. Seeman states he grew his crop on land that had been used for the same purpose for five or six years, but takes the precaution to formalin his seed each year, thereby securing a splendid sample of nice clean potatoes. Those interested in potato culture would do well to see Mr. Seeman before planting this season's field, and possibly they would next fall

have something to sell that would be a credit to the producer and for which the local merchants could find a market.<sup>81</sup>

Talking of potatoes, Jack Hardie handed the writer twenty-six on Saturday that made a good sized load to carry home. Six of those picked out of the sack weighed almost twelve pounds. If there are any large spuds in the district we would like to see them. Bring them in and we will roast one.<sup>82</sup>

In the fall of 1924 it appeared that there would be a scarcity of potatoes at Theodore.<sup>83</sup>

By the spring of 1925 that apparent scarcity had turned into a surplus as at least eight car loads of potatoes were brought to Theodore merchants for shipments to other points. Although there many fine samples of potatoes grown at Theodore, they never became a major agricultural crop in

the district because too many different varieties were cultivated at Theodore and this made it almost impossible to purchase a carload that would be graded as standard.<sup>84</sup> The problem of too many varieties is illustrated in a 1936 advertisement in *The Regina Leader- Post* that read as follows: “Carload Potatoes For Sale Mostly early Ohio. What offers f.o.b Theodore. Phone or write Ernie Davis.”<sup>85</sup>

## Notes

1. Waiser, Bill. *Saskatchewan: A New History*. p.105.
2. "Yorkton," *The Leader* 11 March, 1890.
3. Westerhaug, Rachel, "Guest, Thomas John Family," *Theodore and District History*. p.241
4. McVey, G. C., "A Chronicle of the Theodore District," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada. 14 May 1946.
5. Hopper, Jane Agar, *Old-time primitive Methodism in Canada, 1829-1884*. Toronto. William Briggs, 1904. p. 309 Retrieved 09 September 2014 from <https://books.google.com>
6. McVey, G. C., "A Chronicle of the Theodore District," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada. 14 May 1946.
7. "Pheasant Forks," *Regina Leader*. Regina, Assiniboia, North West Territories, Canada. 7 January, 1890. p. 1.
8. McVey, G. C., "A Chronicle of the Theodore District," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada. 14 May 1946.
9. "Stock in N. E. Assiniboia, *The Winnipeg Tribune*. 13 March , 1894.
10. Williston Park" *The Winnipeg Tribune*. 14 August 1894. p. 1
11. *The Lethbridge News* 19 October 1892
12. "Theodore," *The Leader* . 10 June, 1897.
13. "Theodore," *The Leader*. 1 December, 1892.
14. "Theodore," *The Leader*. 10 September, 1896.
15. "Theodore," *The Leader*. 30 January 1896.
16. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005
17. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 10 October, 1930.
18. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005

19. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005
20. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005
21. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 10 October, 1930.
22. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005
23. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005
24. Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 18 December, 1928.
25. Moroz, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1938*. Prairie Mapping Services, Theodore, Saskatchewan 2005.
26. "Post Offices and Postmasters," *Library and Archives Canada*. Retrieves 23 December 2017 from <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/postal-heritage-philately/post-offices-postmasters>
27. Moroze, Ken. "The Lawrie Family," *The Lawrie Legacy in Saskatchewan 1892 - 1838*. Theodore, Saskatchewan. Prairie Mapping Service. 2005
28. Woroniuk, Mike. "Lysenko School District No.494." *Theodore and District History*. p. 59.
29. Woroniuk, Mike. "Lysenko School District No.494." *Theodore and District History*. p. 60.
30. Theodore, *Yorkton Press* 7 March, 1916.
31. Ostapovitch, Matt. "Lawrie Rural Telephone Company." *Theodore and District History*. p. 31.
32. "Beaver Dale's First Market Day," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 15 October 1929
33. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 22 Sept 1913
34. *The Yorkton Enterprise* on 8 September, 1910.
35. *Saskatoon Daily Star*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. 3 July, 1918.
36. "Theodore." *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 22 December, 1921.
37. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 23 September 1910

38. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 21 August, 1923.
39. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 21 August, 1923.
40. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 24 September, 1923.
41. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 25 March, 1915.
42. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 17 February 1916
43. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 28 August, 1919
44. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 21 August, 1925.
45. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 6 September, 1934.
46. "Notes," *The Theodore Tattler*. 5 November. 1921.
47. "Farmers Receive High Prices for Cream," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 11 May, 1922.
48. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 27 March, 1923.
49. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 26 September, 1924. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 15 September, 1938.
50. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 20 July, 1923.
51. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 4 May, 1923.
52. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 22 May, 1923.
53. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 2 April, 1925.
54. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 15 September, 1938.
55. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 9 November, 1916
56. *Saskatoon Daily Star*. 29 October, 1919.
57. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 30 July 1936.
58. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 25 September, 1925.
59. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 30 May, 1924.
60. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 5 January, 1926.

61. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 16 February, 1926.
62. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 14 January, 1927.
63. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 18 November, 1927.
64. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 20 February, 1925
65. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 20 February, 1925
66. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 20 February, 1931.
67. "Theodore," *The Leader*. 6 April, 1893.
68. "Theodore," *The Leader*, 19 October, 1893.
69. "Theodore," *The Leader*, 28 December, 1893.
70. "Red Fife Wheat," *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_Fife\\_wheat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Fife_wheat) 8 November, 2017.
71. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 19 September, 1924.
72. "Garnet Wheat Has Colourful History," *The Winnipeg Free Press*. 20 July 1913. Retrieved from <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com> 8 November 2017.
73. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 30 August, 1927.
74. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 9 September, 1927.
75. "Garnet Wheat Has Colourful History," *The Winnipeg Free Press*. 20 July 1913. Retrieved from <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com> 8 November 2017.
76. "List of Canadian Heritage Wheat Varieties," *Wikipedia*. Retrieved 10 December, 2018 from <https://en.wikipedia.org>
77. Knott, D. R. "The Inheritance of Stem Rust Resistance in Thatcher Wheat," *Canadian Journal of Plant Science*. Retrieved 10 December 2018 from <http://www.nrcresearchpress.com>
78. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 5 September, 1924.
79. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 20 September, 1927.
80. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 1 September, 1938.

81. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 4 May, 1926.
82. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 11 October, 1927.
83. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 28 October, 1924.
84. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 27 April, 1925.
85. *Leader-Post*. Regina, Saskatchewan, 19 September, 1936.