

Chapter 7 - Cultural, Religious, and Sporting Groups

Other Church Related Activities

Ladies' Aid Groups

Each of the churches in Theodore had a women's group, generally referred to as the Ladies' Aid, that played a key role in the social life of the church and the community. It was the general custom that almost everyone in the community would attend the social events sponsored by the various ladies groups. In an age when few women were independently mobile and were dependent on someone else, usually a husband or male relative, for transportation, the meetings of the Ladies' Aid groups provided rare opportunities for the women to gather together, and were, therefore quite popular. At one meeting of the Lutheran Ladies' Aid held in 1918 there were thirty members in attendance.¹ In addition to the social benefits the ladies, themselves, received from their membership in these groups, there was a social benefit to the entire congregation. When the Lutheran Ladies' Aid would hold one of their picnics at J. P. K. Jensen's farm large numbers of people would attend and the Theodore band would sometimes attend to provide the music.² Other social events included basket socials in the winter and ice cream socials or lawn socials in the summer.

In addition to the role played in the social life of their various denominations the Ladies' Aids also played a key role in the social life of the whole community. It was the general custom that almost everyone in the community would attend the social events sponsored by the various ladies group. The annual fowl suppers that each of the ladies groups held attracted diners from every religious organization in the village as well as a great many from the rural areas surrounding

Theodore and gave those attending an opportunity to renew acquaintances with people they may not have seen for some time. Part of the attraction to these suppers was the generally low cost of the meal, about 35 cents for adults and 20 cents for children. Other events included ice cream and strawberry socials, concerts, and plays. In addition to suppers held as a church event, suppers might also be held in conjunction with the annual sports day, or some other special event.

A second group of activities each of the ladies' group sponsored was a series of bazaars and sales of various items. Rummage sales appeared to have been popular as were sales of home baking and other cooking. From the various items in the Theodore news column it appears that the largest of these bazaars was the one sponsored by the United Church Ladies' Aid at which such items as aprons, house dresses, embroidered centre pieces, pillow cases, vanity sets, tea towels, nightgowns, cushion tops, bags, and fancy needle work of all kinds was offered for sale. Because this sale was always held in early December, it was often advertized as an excellent opportunity for one to do one's Christmas shopping.

The ladies of the Union Church Ladies Aid sometimes had competitions for the best decorated boot at their bazaar, and on one occasion, Mrs. Bokofsky, the wife of one of Theodore's Jewish merchants, was asked to judge the booths.³ In 1921 the ladies of the Union Church raised about \$230 at their December bazaar and in 1922 they raised about \$180 at the December bazaar.^{4 5}

In addition to meeting some of the social needs of the community, the events sponsored by the various Ladies' Aid groups proved to be a significant source of funds for their respective churches. In 1926, for example the United Church Ladies' Aid raised \$604.90 from their activities, and spent \$592.62 on church related needs.⁶

The Ladies' Aid of the United Church, played a very nice "trick" on their minister's, family

by secretly installing a beautiful kitchen range in the Manse on Saturday evening to replace the original, which had been brought over from the little rented cottage of a few years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Congdon were invited out to supper and when they returned got a real and welcome surprise when the White panels of the new stove met their eyes.⁷

Young Adults

While there is no evidence that there was sustained effort on the part of the churches to sponsor a group for young adults, such a group was gathering together independently of any church involvement for social events. In the fall of 1921 a group of people met in L. L. Larson's ice cream parlor several hours dancing to music on one of Mr. Larson's phonographs.⁸ Then, a week later it was reported that Mr. E. F. Westerman, school Principal, and his wife had entertained a number of young people at cards and dancing at their home until midnight.⁹ There was also a "500" drive was given by misses Ella and Minnie Hanson at which five tables of progressive 500 were played until midnight.¹⁰

In October of 1921 an ecumenical Young People's Society (AAPSS) was organized in Theodore by the Rev. N. L. Melander of the Lutheran Church, the Rev. E. R. May of the Union Church and Mr. W. H. Austin. According to *The Theodore Tattler*, the main objective of the organization was the spiritual uplift of the young people which was to be achieved by providing meetings based on four themes: Christian Endeavour, literary discussions, missionary work, and social events. The organizing meeting attracted more than forty young people who reportedly enjoyed the program and the lunch.¹¹

At one of the December meetings in 1921, Mr John Yatchew, teacher of Insinger school, addressed the AAPSS on the subject of "Ukrainian Literature" in the hope that the information

he provided would enable Theodore's Young people to better understand the people they saw daily on Theodore's streets still dressed in their traditional clothing which he said represented hundreds of years of suffering and oppression.¹² He also explained how the history of the Ukrainian people influenced their poetry and prose and translated several poems into English for his audience.¹³ The religious subjects focused on such topics as "Has the Church Failed?" and "Musical Instruments of the Bible."^{14 15}

1. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 7 February, 1918.
2. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 15 July, 1920.
3. "The Local News," *The Theodore Tattler*. 17 December, 1921.
4. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 22 December, 1921.
5. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*, 5 December, 1922.
6. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 29 March, 1927.
7. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 28 December, 1928.
8. "The Local News" *The Theodore Tattler*. 10 September 1921 p. 8.
9. "The Local News" *The Theodore Tattler*. 17 September 1921 p. 8.
10. "The Local News" *The Theodore Tattler*. 17 September 1921 p. 8.
11. "C.P.S. Hold First Meeting," *The Theodore Tattler*. 15 October, 1921.
12. "Theodore," *The Yorkton Enterprise*. 22 December, 1921.
13. "The Local News," *The Theodore Tattler*. 17 December, 1921.
14. "The Local News," *The Theodore Tattler*. 31 December, 1921.
15. "The local News," *The Theodore Tattler*. 14 January, 1922.