

Fatima et le Grangers

Fatima aka Grande Prairie, Notre Dame de Fatima and Stead



Marie-Claire Granger

Fatima et lé Grangers

Fatima aka Grande Prairie, Notre Dame de Fatima and Stead

By Marie-Claire Granger

June 2009 – August 2014 Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dedicated to my mother Cécile (November 1932 - February 2009)

and my father Hercule (May 1925 - January 1978)

As remembered and told by most of my siblings: Lucienne, Emile, Alphonse, Henriette, Juliette, Louis, Monique and Joseph, cousins Charles aka Chuck, Colette, and Juliette aka Bobbi Gentes, uncle Jules Granger and his wife Yvette Fontaine, aunts Juliette and Cécile Granger, aunt Louise (Gousseau) Granger, aunt Jeannette St-Vincent, cousin Rachel St-Vincent, Célima (Grégoire) Bruneau, Henri, André and Georges Fontaine and their wives Rita, Marie and Cécile Lussier, Simone (Fontaine) Gauthier, Emile Fontaine, Marcien Ferland, Orile Vincent, Eliane (Bosc) Boulet, Harry Prokopec, Carol (Prokopec) Lesko, Laura Thomson, Wanda (Hiebert) Bornn, Aimé Boiteau, Louise (Chevrefils Dubé) Belin, Laurette (Nadeau) Sorin, Réal Bérard, Thérèse (Vincent) Pelletier, Edmond Barnabé, Cécile (Sorin) Flegel, Diane (Vincent) Dubé, Thérèse (St-Onge) Hébert, Olive (Beaudry) Comeault, Fr Robbie McDougall, Kenneth Molinski, Dan Zirk, Jean-Charles Fontaine, Mary Anne (Roman) Shipley, Odile (Vincent) Dubé, Roger Bouvier, Cathy (Kowalke) Kintop, Marc Beaudry, John and Doreen Hildebrand, George and Gerald Hiebert, Art Gaffray and Wilfred Chevrefils. Sorry if I missed anyone! Everything typed in italics was emailed to me mostly in 2009, some in 2010 and later. Information taken from books “From the Beaches to the Falls” published by the Winnipeg River Historical Project 1989, “Prairie Pages” written by Germaine (Fontaine) Lussier 1999, “Et la Riviere Coule Toujours 1892-1992” written by the Vincent Centennial Committee 1992, “St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church 60th Anniversary” 1997 and “Cordwood and Blueberries, A History of the Village of Stead and Vicinity” (unfinished, with stories written by the villagers), both by Robert W. Niblock, “THE HOMESTEADERS GRANDDAUGHTER” written by Jean Matchizen-Zakaluk 2010 and "Municipalité de St. Francois Xavier Manitoba 1880 Our First Hundred Years" written by the History Committee of St. Francois Municipality 1980. Additional information from the Archdiocese of St-Boniface (Fr Léonce Aubin), The St-Boniface Historical Society (Gilles Lesage), the archives at St-Georges (Elise Bruneau Zolinski), Manitoba Archives, the RM of Alexander (Joanne) and of course, the internet. Appreciated general help and information from friends, especially Philippe Beaudin and George Newman, and encouragement from my dear old friend Juliette Hébert. Thank you all!

Cover photo – Hercule Granger, likely his first crop 1952

Definition of "granger"

farmer: a person who operates a farm

My dad Hercule purchased property at Fatima, Manitoba, in the summer of 1949. Fatima was 7 miles east of the village of Stead and 11 miles southwest of St-Georges. It was one hour and 10 minutes away northeast of St-Boniface. It was a new parish founded in 1949 by the St-Boniface Diocese. I'm glad I grew up there. There were good memories, bad memories. But most important for me, there was freedom. It was real. And free. That is the force that pulls me to this place of long ago.

The Grangers who lived in Fatima consisted of the grandparents, Zotique born in 1892 and Juliette Barnabé 1894; their sons Marc 1939 and Henri 1917; their daughter Aline 1924 and husband Gérard Gentes, children: Charles 1943, Colette 1945, Juliette aka Bobbi 1949, Gisele 1953; my parents Hercule 1925 and Cécile 1932, their children: Lucienne 1956, Robert 1957, Emile 1958, Alphonse 1960, Marie-Claire 1961, Henriette 1962, Juliette 1963, Louis 1964, Monique 1967, Joseph 1968 and Cécile 1970. Eight of the children were born at Pine Falls Hospital, Alphonse and Marie-Claire at Beauséjour Hospital and Henriette at home. Lucienne, Emile, Alphonse, Henriette and Louis were baptized in Fatima; the rest of us kids at St-Georges.

In the 1930's, possibly earlier, Fatima was known as "Grande Prairie". It has been said that at one time a fire swept across the area and cleared a large opening. On a map dated 1908, where Fatima came to be, we see on the north end flat marshy country covered with tamarak and willow. Further south going east was rolling country covered with white poplar, some small tamarak and black spruce. It's possible there was a fire after that time and that's what gave us a "Grande Prairie".

The natives who had trapped and hunted there informed the local farmers from St-Georges about this area. The families of Louis Vincent, Georges Chèvrefils and Ephrem Dupont were the first settlers from Québec to come to St-Georges in 1882. Alphonse Vincent heard about this large prairie which was ideal for the harvesting of wild hay. In the summertime he and his son Philorum and the Chevrefils (Etienne) harvested the wild hay. They would travel across the muskeg, from St-Georges to Grande Prairie, cut the hay and stack it, living in tents, and in the winter after the swamps were frozen would haul it by sleighs with horse teams to their farms for feed. In 1934 several families from St-Georges started talking about buying government land in Grande Prairie. No land was for sale until 1948. Eméric Bouvier, Oscar Vincent and other local farmers built a road to Fatima in the mid 1930's. They worked on it when they were on their way to Grande Prairie for the week. When needed they built corduroy roads to get thru and dug ditches for drainage. It was named "Bouvier Trail" by either Rev Picton or Fr Méthe when one of the two made a map of the area. Today there is a road off highway 304 going to St-Georges with the name. Philorum hoped someone would set fire to the peat moss. In 1936 folks from St-Georges saw huge clouds of smoke coming from Grande Prairie. Some believe it was Philorum who started the fire.

Philorum married Marie-Anna Vinet in 1913. Their 15 children were Edgar, Hector, Aimé, Josephat, Agnes, Sévere, Rosa, Dorilla, Thérèse, Alma, Fernand, Sylvio, Jean, Rodolphe and Alexandre. In 1938 they moved to St-Malo. Edgar and Josephat had land at Fatima in 1948 or sooner. They both farmed there many years, possibly into the early 1970's. Agnes and her

husband Philippe Barnabé (a relative of mine) also had land there. They had land in 1949 for a short while.

From the WorthPoint website: In the early 1900's attention was focused on the potential wealth of forest and hydroelectric resources in the area. Construction of a newsprint mill in Pine Falls and the construction of massive hydro dams at Point du Bois, Great Falls, and Powerview demanded a large workforce, which was mostly immigrants. Temporary settlements like "Tin Town" (Powerview), soon gave way to more permanent villages.

In 1926 the Pine Falls Pulp and Paper Mill opened. In 1927 the Pine Falls mill began production, one year after the building of the Canadian National Railway line. The line came from Beconia to the new mill site.

From a Winnipeg Free Press website: Frost shields burst onto the automotive scene in the winter of 1926-27. They were squares of plastic -- slightly raised -- with an adhesive strip around the edge. You stuck them to the inside of your car windows and the vacuum created in the space between the plastic and the glass kept the inside of the window from fogging or frosting up in the cold. In 1937, it became law your windshield, rear window and front-row side windows had to be fitted with frost shields from Dec. 1 to March 31. When spring came, the car owner then had the unenviable task of trying to remove what was left of the shield and its adhesive residue. As windshield defrosters became more commonplace in the 1950s and rear-window defrosters in the 1970s, the demand for frost shields diminished.

During the 1930's Manitoba's economy suffered from the depression and from severe droughts. In 1939 World War II begins. The Second World War brought an explosion in the demand for Canada's forest resources, including paper, and Pine Falls was booming.

Below I list the people who came to Fatima, where they came from, the year they came and left, where they went to, etc. CF-came from, B-born, M-married, C-came (came date is date of purchase or date they started squatting, squatting was pre-1948), L-left (some left sooner and this is the sold date, some left on year shown but sold later), WT- went to, D-deceased

1930's: Michael Shady C-1936 L-1974; Rémi Vincent (farmer) & Thérèse Wilcott & 6 kids C-1939 L-1943, came back 1945 L-1968

1940: Lucien Lussier aka Grand Lucien CF-St-Georges & Irene Fontaine (sister of Hector) M-1940 C-1940 L-1967; Brothers Donat & Conrad Bouvier C-1940's L-before 1949; Eméric Bouvier CF-Fisher Branch & Rose-Anna C-1940 L-1965?; Henri Gauvin CF-St. Eustache, bachelor C-before 1940 L-1944 or later; Léo Brulé B-1910 & Fabienne Catellier B-1914 D-2007 CF-St. Malo C-1940 L-1942? Before 1949; Elphege Beaudry & Marthe Leclerc (Pierre's sister) D-1944 & 10 kids CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache/Ste. Rose du Lac C-1940 L-1944 ; Wilfrid Fontaine (brother of Hector) & Stella & 2 kids CF-Maple Creek C-1940 L-1945; 2 Lapointes CF-St. Malo C-1940 L-before 1949; Aldéric Gauthier C-during the war to hide C+L-early to mid 1940's, Uleric Gauthier likely same person; Victor Leclerc (Pierre's brother) CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache B-1891 & Dolorès Bouvier M-1916, 10 kids, landowners only C-1940's L-1946

Rémi Vincent came to Grande Prairie in 1939. He was squatting, like the others there. He plowed around the quarter acre, marking his land one might say. He built his house with poplars 6 inches in diameter.

In 1940 a group of people from around St-Georges was after the government to open up the land at Grande Prairie. Those years saw little rain and it was very dry. Farm-hands worked for \$1.00 a day. Fish on Fridays was the norm. I imagine the residents of Grande Prairie valued Catfish Creek - the spawning fish from Lake Winnipeg followed the creek and ended up in the ditches nearby. There was lots of fish, mostly suckers. It's been said Lucien Lussier aka "Grand Lucien" was the first to live in Grande Prairie in 1940. He lived in a shack with his wife Irene Fontaine and their children. In the early 1940's Rev Pierre Picton came to celebrate mass at Elphege and Marthe Beaudry's home. He was not the priest from St-Georges but he filled in for him sometimes. Rev Picton was the assistant to the priest at St-Georges from 1936-1939. He was replaced by Fr Louis Henri Phaneuf, who was there until 1944. Rev Picton is famous for his research of Manitoba's French and Métis families. Two other priests, Donat McDougall (a Métis from Lorette) and Fr Dufort, also came to celebrate mass. The three rotated so there would be a mass every month. They also came to see how the new parishioners were doing. The three were there together in August of 1942. Donat McDougall became the priest of St-Georges in 1931 and left in 1952. He was a second cousin of Fr Robbie McDougall.

Elphege Beaudry's family used horses for work and travel, he built corduroy roads when needed to get thru rough spots. Claire, a daughter, worked as a cook in the bushcamps. Olive Comeault, another daughter, says in 2013, "It was hell. They were bad years. La misere noire."

1941: Wilfrid Lussier & Germaine Fontaine (sister of Hector) & 4 kids C-1941 L-1945; Omer Lussier & Laura Vincent & 5 kids C-1941 L-1945; Jean Fontaine B-D 1941; Roger Lussier B-1941 L-1945; Edmond Beaudry aka Le Rouge & Red (farmer) bachelor B-1910 C-1941 1944? L-1966; Maurice Lussier (labourer) B-1941 L-1967 or sooner

Some of the settlers kept sheep, the Wilfrid Fontaine family being one of them. In 1940-1944 three Leclerc brothers and Eméric Bouvier operated a sawmill across from where André Fontaine later would live, on the southeast end of Fatima. Two of the Leclerc brothers later settled in Fatima (Victor and Pierre). I was told some of their sons were bootleggers. No land was for sale during the war, but people were looking it over.

1942 – 13 families: Joseph Fontaine (Hector's father) CF-St-Georges & Hermeline Dion D-1952 C-1942 L-1950 WT-Mud Falls/St-Georges back to Fatima C-1953 L-1966; Raoul Vincent & Marie-Louise (5 kids+?) C-1942 L-1945; Léo Brulé & Fabienne Catellier L-1942? 1950's?; Alice Fontaine B-1942 L-1945; Eva Lussier B-1942 L-1967 or sooner

1943: Lilianne Fontaine B-1943 L-1945; Jeannette Lussier B-1943 L-1945; Orile Vincent B-1943 L-1965; Elzéar Boulet & Rose-Alma Wilcott C-before 1944 L-1948?

Listed are some members of the Fontaine and Lussier families: Joseph Fontaine (Hector's father); Wilfrid Fontaine (brother of Hector); Lucien Lussier (brother of Wilfrid) & Irene Fontaine (sister of Hector); Wilfrid Lussier & Germaine Fontaine (sister of Hector); Henri Fontaine (son of Hector) & Rita Lussier (sister of Marie); André Fontaine (son of Hector) & Marie Lussier (sister of Rita); Georges Fontaine (son of Hector) & Cécile Lussier (sister

of Rita).

In 1942 the t-shirt is introduced and we see the first cures using penicillin. Mass production of penicillin begins in 1944.

Winter was one of the coldest in 1943. Sometimes wells ran dry, which meant having to melt snow for household use and for the farm animals. In the spring the land would flood because there were no drainage ditches. The roads were all dirt roads. Because there was no schoolhouse for the children, parents were homeschooling and some students took correspondence courses. There were enough kids to merit a school, but with the war being fought this was not a priority. Some residents moved away so their children could attend school. It was not easy to find places for kids to attend school. Most babies were born at home during those times, with other women assisting as midwives. In one case that I read about, the midwife could not come in time for Germaine Lussier. Her husband Wilfrid assisted.

1944: Paul Boulet (Elzéar's son) C-around 1944 L-before 1948; Lucille Lussier B-1944 L-1945; Rita Lussier B-1944 L-1967 or sooner; Elphege Beaudry & Marthe Leclerc & 10 kids L-1944 WT-Winnipeg/Elie

In 1944 and the following years some people started to move away and others started talking about it, especially the ones with school age children. It would have been different had there been a school and better roads. Some folks stayed with the belief things would change for the better soon. Some said they would leave and possibly come back when things got better. What I hear nowadays when I ask why people left is that some people moved to small villages in the first place to hide from being drafted and when the war ended they came out of hiding and moved on. It was said that Aldéric Gauthier did just that.

In 1944 ballpoint pens go up for sale.

From the The RM of Alexander website: The LGD of Alexander, an area comprised of approximately 600 square miles, was incorporated under the "Local Government Districts Act" ...on December 28, 1944 and became effective January 1, 1945. At that time, the District was administered by a government-appointed Resident Administrator and supervised by the General Supervisor and staff of the Local Government Districts Branch in Winnipeg. In 1945, there were 21 Local Government Districts in Manitoba, made up mostly of unorganized districts in the eastern and northern parts of the province.

The first Administrator appointed to the LGD of Alexander, Edward LaFortune from Vassar, Manitoba, was requested by the Minister of Municipal Affairs to open an office in this area. In the early years of Local Government Districts, the office of the Resident Administrator moved from place to place; many Administrators ran their offices from their own homes. However, LaFortune met with Father Donat McDougall, a parish priest from St. Georges who was actively promoting business in that community. As a result, the first LGD of Alexander office was opened in the St. Georges Creamery which was owned by Father McDougall. The office remained there until 1950. That was when the Creamery was demolished because of the

flooding of the Winnipeg River by Manitoba Hydro for the construction of the Pine Falls Generating Station. The office was relocated to a number of different homes on Chateaugay Street in St. Georges and then in the old St. Georges Convent. Finally, in 1951, a new office was constructed along P.T.H. No. 11 and the LGD of Alexander had found a permanent home.

The original building was 24 feet square and was considered a great improvement to the area. It was heated with an oil space heater, had a small sink in one corner, a small vault, and an outhouse in the backyard. This building served the District well until 1969 when the first addition became necessary.

At that time, many of the Administrators throughout the province were concerned with using their personal cars for road inspections and other travels on the often rough and sometimes impassable back roads of the districts. Therefore, many of the Local Government Districts in Manitoba purchased their first vehicles that year. The addition to the District office was built to house the new ½ ton truck which was purchased for the use of the Resident Administrator.

It wasn't until 1972, when a third addition was constructed, that indoor washrooms were finally installed in the office.

In the early years, administration of the District included mostly tax collection, administration of Local Government District lands obtained through tax sale, and assisting ratepayers with local problems. Funds were very limited and staff was not available to provide Public Works services. Roads were constructed and maintained by the Department of Highways on a 50-50 cost sharing basis. The local School Districts which were administered by locally elected School Trustees, decided which roads would be constructed and the District would levy the necessary funds. At the time of incorporation, the LGD of Alexander was comprised of 20 School Districts.

The Resident Administrator did not have the luxury of extra staff for busy times of the year. Their families were often required to assist with the preparation and mailing of tax statements (written in long-hand) and numerous other office duties, all without pay. The wives and families of the first Administrators should be recognized for their devotion and patience. It wasn't until 1968, that the Local Government Districts Branch decided each Resident Administrator should have an assistant to help with the operation of their District and to be in the office while the Administrator was away on office business, holidays, etc. He would also be trained to eventually replace the Administrator upon his retirement.

Now that the wards had representatives residing locally, the demand for services increased rapidly. Requests for culverts, roads, drainage, gravel, mowing, grading, and snow removal were being discussed at the monthly meetings. This resulted in an increasing tax levy. In 1945 it was \$20,136.73 and rose to \$76,742.00 by 1969. The total budget levy in 1988 was \$2,464,882.14.

The LGD of Alexander became the Rural Municipality of Alexander in 1997.

1945: Adélarde Chevrefils (brother of Isidore) & Lillian Gordon & 4 kids C-1945 L-1955; Charles Desbiens (farmer) & Léonide Savard (Tremblay 1st marriage) moved to St-Georges from Shell River, SK in 1945 C-1945 (with 11? kids), Léonide had a daughter from a previous marriage living with them, unmarried and worked as a maid (Antoinette Tremblay B-1918) L-1966; Andrew Neggers (labourer) CF-Edmonton AB C-1945 & Thérèse Desbiens C&M-1945 L-1963; Paul Desbiens (mechanic/welder/farmer) & Elizabeth Kelly CF-Ireland M-1945; Emile Lussier B-1945 L-1945; Aldéric Gauthier L-mid 1940's; Robert Lussier B-1945 L-1967 or sooner; Henri Gauvin, bachelor L-shortly after 1944; Wilfrid Lussier & Germaine Fontaine & 7 kids L-1945; Raoul Vincent & Marie-Louise & ? kids L-1945; Wilfrid Fontaine & Stella & 4 kids L-1945 WT-St-Georges/Lac du Bonnet; Omer Lussier & Laura Vincent & 7 kids? L-1945 WT-Lac du Bonnet/Winnipeg

“We came out to Fatima in the fall of 1945 with my dad's brother Isidore. We lived in Felix Vincent's old cold house until our log home was built. Felix Vincent lived across the road from us. I was only 6 or 7 when we moved to Fatima. It was late fall when they built the log house that we would call home until 1955. I remember how cold the cabin was that first winter because when they plastered the outside of it, the plaster froze and fell off, so there were snowdrifts inside the house after a snowstorm. There were 3 stoves in the house and it was still cold. Remember that in those early days the roads were terrible and in the spring there were many times that we couldn't leave. I was the youngest so I spent a lot of time with my mother. I helped her with the cleaning and learned to cook at a very young age. We put in a large garden and did about 500 jars of canning. My brothers and I would get annoyed because we had to come back home after school as there was so much to do. (This was after the school moved into a small log house on the Desbiens property, before the school/church was built.)” (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

The first school classes were taught by Mme Desbiens by correspondence courses in Adélarde Chevrefils' home in the mid to late 40's. *“...the building is the first school, but not where the first classes were held. The first classes were held in our back bedroom. There were only a few children in Fatima then so even tho there were no teachers Mrs Desbiens taught us our ABC's. We had the basics of reading, writing and Arithmetic.”* (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

In 1945 after the war ended, the government started giving out family allowance cheques to help cover costs of basic needs for children under 16. It was about \$5 and up per child, depending on their age. The general hourly adult minimum wage in 1945 was 35 cents for a male, in 1952 - .60 male, 1960 - .61 same for male and female but less for rural folk, 1966 - 1.00 same for everyone and in 1973 - \$1.90. Horses working in fields were a common sight until the end of the Second World War.

1946: Isidore Chevrefils & Flavie Lacoste & 1 kid CF-Powerview C-1946 L-1950; Pierre Leclerc CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache B-1886 & Alice Giasson B-1892 M-1916 D-1934 C-1946 L-1961, their unmarried daughter Agnes worked as a maid; Frida Vincent B-1946; Caroline Neggers B-1946 L-1963; Victor Leclerc & Dolorès Bouvier L-1946 WT-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache; Philippe Vincent (siblings are Félix & Bella) B-1914 & Denise Wilcott (widow of Felix Vincent) M-1969 C-1946 L-1974

1947: Horace Chevrefils D-1947; Paul Desbiens C-1945 & Elizabeth Kelly C-1947 L-1965; Uldéric (Alderick) Alarie (farmer) CF-Elie & Léa Vincent M-1947 C-1947 L-1966 Uldéric is Aurelius' brother, Michele's dad, who moved to Powerview in 1952 & they had a brother Paul & sister Yvonne Dupont who lived in Powerview; Lynda Negggers B-1947 L-1963; Gerald Desbiens B-1947 L-1965; Irene Alarie B-1947 L-1966; Joseph Fontaine (Hector's father) CF-St-Georges & Hermeline Dion D-1952 C-1942 L-1947 WT-Mud Falls/St-Georges back to Fatima C-1953 L-1966

CKSB-AM signed-on as a French-language commercial station in 1946 broadcasting from St-Boniface, Winnipeg.

From a Statistics Canada government website:

In Manitoba in the year 1946 there were 224,919 farms, in 1971 there were 131,202.

In 1946 the monthly wages without board for male farm labour was \$103, in 1973 it was \$394. In 1958 there were 701 grain elevators, in 1973 there were 540.

In April 1946, the first baptism was performed. In 1947 an Oblate Father, Jean Méthé, was recruiting French Canadians to buy land at Fatima to settle the area. In the late 1940's work started on the Main Drain after a study by engineers in 1946-1947 and it was expanded in the 1960's.

“My brother died in Aug of 1947 from a burst appendix, but because he died in the Pine Falls Hospital he is buried in the St Therese cemetery. He had to be taken by horse and wagon to Thomson Landing, cross Catfish Creek by boat then wait for the train. He died that same night. One of the tragedies of living so far away from anywhere.” (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

Paul Desbiens worked as a mechanic and welder at a garage in Thalberg owned by Albert Gunning, Ross's uncle. It was said Paul was smart. Mom said he was a very kind man.

1948 – 8 students: Steve Zakaluk & Jean Matchizen M-1948 C-1948 L-1953; Clarence Fiedler C-1948 L-1953; Paul Leclerc (Pierre's son) CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache & Rita Vincent B-1936 C-1948 L-1954; Félix Vincent B-1905 D-1963 & Denise Wilcott M-1927 (7 children) had 4 lots C-1948 L-1957; Paul Boulet L-before 1948; Thérèse Negggers B-1948 L-1963; Marie Lussier B-1948 L-1967; Elzéar Boulet & Rose-Alma Wilcott L-1948?; Olivier Boulet aka Bazzé (Elzéar's son) C+L-?; John Molinski (Kenneth's uncle) landowner only C-1948 L-1961, son Bob now owns; Wilfrid Vincent C-1948 L-1972; Peter Sinavich C-1948 L-1973; Ernest Dupont & Maria Boulet (Elzéar Boulet's daughter) landowners only C-1948 L-1974; Josephat Vincent B-1918 D-2007 & Gabrielle Boulet B-1922 M-1940 C-1948 L-1974; Joseph Leclerc (Pierre's son) CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache B-1919 D-1993 & Alyce Boris CF-Richland B-1921 M-1940 D-2010 C-1948 L-1959; Steve Krawchuk CF-Stead C-1948 L-1977; Edgar Vincent (son of Philorum) & Eugénie Boulet C-1948 L-1970's, son Ronald B-1946 owned & worked the land later on

In 1948, when the settlers were allowed to choose their quarter sections, they wasted no time staking their claims. The province had decided to grant title to the settlers there. Rémi Vincent paid \$800 for his quarter section. Some squatters left, not wanting to buy. The other available land was quickly bought up. People beyond Winnipeg were buying. Shacks were going up and it was starting to look like a good place to settle. The war had been in full

force and it appeared the government did not want to sell the land then because they did not want the area populated. That would have meant a need for roads and a school. Priests from surrounding areas were now pushing people to go. They promised roads and a school - it was not to be for another few years.

The Ed Sullivan Show started airing on TV. It ended in 1971.

Info taken from "THE HOMESTEADERS GRANDDAUGHTER" written by Jean Matchizen-Zakaluk 2010

Jean married Steve in 1948 and they moved to Grande Prairie. They lived there until 1953. Their house was a 12 x 18 one room shack. An addition came soon after. There were house parties with square dancing in the area. Those years were very wet. Some residents were making moonshine all the time. They used a horse and sleigh to get to the store in winter. The first winter Steve worked nearby cutting cordwood and firewood for Mr. Thomson, 5 miles north of Stead. Steve also worked in the city in the wintertime. In 1950 it cost them \$20 to get a room in the hospital in Winnipeg when Larry was ready to be born. In 1950-51 Steve started working building the hydro lines. He worked at Pine Falls in the power plant with 2 Leclercs. Later he worked at McArthur Falls. Bill Wittmier ran a store in Stead. In the fall of 1952 the bills were piling up and Steve convinced Jean it was time to sell the land. They sold 1/4 of their land to her father John. They still had one section which they rented to a neighbour and moved to Winnipeg. Some Leclercs from Grande Prairie worked with Steve in Winnipeg. In 1957 the Zakaluks moved to Stead. In 1959 they sold the rest of their land in Grande Prairie to Joe Romanchuk, Steve's cousin. Jean and Steve later moved to Gull Lake.

The first school records found for Fatima at Manitoba Archives are for the fall of 1948. Mme Desbiens was the teacher. The Secretary-Treasurer was Isidore Chevrefils. In December there was only 7 days of school. Lots of very cold and snowy days I imagine.

1949 – 64 Catholics, 55 French, 14 families, 11 were French families, 9 students: André Saurette CF-Letellier & Madeleine Deschênes M-1950 C-1949 L-1950; Philippe Barnabé (a relative) & Agnes Vincent (daughter of Philorum) CF-St-Malo B-1919 M-1939 D-2011 C+L-1949; Albert St-Yves B-1928 D-1993 CF-Willow Bunch SK C-1949 L-1949? WT-Willow Bunch; Jean-Charles Boucher B-1923 D-2000 C-1949 L-1949? WT-Thunder Bay; Alphonse Mercereau CF-Carlton SK C-1949 L-1949? WT-SK; Arsene Dubé (uncle of Arthur) B-1896 D-1979 CF-Duck Lake SK C-1949 L-1949? WT-St-Boniface; Antoine Bérard (father of Réal) CF-St-Pierre, landowner only C-1949 L-1951; George Fiedler C-1949 L-1950; Edmond Napoleon Doucette C+L-1949; Aimé Boiteau CF-Letellier C&L-1949; Alex Pelletier C-1949 L-1959; Henri Granger B-1917 bachelor CF-Letellier C-1949 L-1964 M-1993; Ernest Mercereau C-1949 L(sold)-1972; Denis Leclerc C-1949 L-1960's; Gregory Lesosky C-1949 L-1976; Amédée Cécillon D-1976 & Olga Samletzki (sister of Laurence) B-1910 D-2000 CF-Duck Lake SK (Roseanne, Louis, Lucille) C-1949 L-1959; Graziella Baril C-1949 L-1964; Pierre Baril B-1913 CF-St-Jean Baptiste C-1949 L-1964; Napoléon Baril B-1903 D-1978 CF-St-Jean Baptiste C-1949 L-1964; Michael Roman C-1949 L-1964; Armand Leclerc (Pierre's son) CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache B-1924 homeowner C-1949 L-1964; Marcel Robert B-1926 (my uncle) M-1954 Germaine Granger

B-1936 C+L-1949 Sold-1966; Sylvio Lafreniere B-1905 D-1980 C-1949 L(sold)-1972; Hercule Granger (woodcutter "lumberjack"/farmer CF-Letellier & Cécile Grégoire CF-St-Jean Baptiste C-1949 L-1973 WT-Ste. Agathe/Winnipeg; Alfred Doucette C-1949 L-1959; Gordon Cutting aka Jack (plasterer) CF-Plum Coulee C-1949 L-1965 & Yvette Desbiens C-1945 M-1949; Patricia Desbiens B-1949 L-1965; Wilfred Alarie B-1949 L-1966; Laurent Desbiens (farmer/woodcutter) B-1925 & Rolande-Alma Vincent B-1933 M+C-1949 L-1966; Marcel Dupont C-1949 L-1974

Some new landowners may have stayed in tents in the summertime. *"If Arsene bought land I know nothing about that. I can't ever remember meeting him. He married twice (1) Yvonne Pelletier (deceased 1948) and (2) Odile Langlois 18 June 1951 in Duck Lake Sask. He lived in St Boniface after his second marriage."* (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

Notre Dame de Fatima was founded in 1949. Grande Prairie was the name the locals from St-Georges and Fatima used, it was never an official name. For many, if they were talking about work they said Grande Prairie, but for church related events they said Fatima. Maryann Roman from Stead who is older than Lucienne knew it as Fatima. She had never heard of Grande Prairie, until more recently. She is Steve's daughter and rode the bus to school with us.

"Hercule and Henri were working at a logging camp in Sioux Narrows, Ontario during the winters of 1948-1950. Hercule bought crown land from His Majesty The King 1949 May 9 and 1962 July 12 -- sold both parcels 1973 Nov 6." (Lucienne Granger Gunning). The quarter section purchased in 1962 was north and adjacent to our existing quarter section. Dad did not winter at Fatima between 1949 and 1951. At that time he was logging at Sioux Narrows and the Pine Falls area and later vacationing with his father Zotique in Québec.

As told by Aimé Boiteau October 30, 2009:

Father Méthé *pushed* people to go to Fatima. Dad and his brother Henri, and himself were some from Letellier who purchased land at Fatima in 1949. André Saurette, a friend/relative from Letellier, also purchased land in 1949 and let it go up for taxes in 1950. Dad and Aimé went together and lived together. They were friends. Zotique came along to assist them for a short time. Aimé's property was adjacent to Dad's (this is the 1/4 section Dad purchased in 1962). Their home was an 8 x 10 foot modular shack located on Dad's property. This shack was a take-down shack that was built in Letellier and transported to Fatima in Aimé's truck. Aimé stayed until August. He received his \$200 deposit back from the Crown. He figured he could not make a go of it. He compared the experience to Pioneer Quest: A Year in the Real West (2000), a reality-based TV series that chronicles two couples' experiences as they live the lives of prairie settlers in the 1870's. "It was hell" were his exact words. He said it was a bad move. If they would have gone five years later it would have been better - there would have been more improvements in the area. They did little socializing, as they had no time. The Main Drain was their water source. It was a very dry summer.

I found out in 2014 that Marcel Robert from Letellier also purchased land in Fatima in 1949. It looks like he did nothing with it. He later married my dad's sister Germaine. No family or relatives know anything about this purchase. Possibly it was a Marcel Robert from St-Georges, but I don't think so.

“Hercule started doing “du cassage” at Grande Prairie (the original name of Notre-dame-de-Fatima mission) in June 1949. In 1951, Hercule labelled his photo album “Fatima, chez nous”. Hercule was logging in the Pine Falls area during the winter of 1951. He likely wouldn’t have wintered in Fatima prior to 1951. Hercule, Zotique and probably Gérard Gentes and others from the community built the school/church during 1952. Monseigneur Baudoux blessed the new Fatima church on December 7, 1952 and classes began in January 1953.” (Lucienne). “Mission” was the term used at that time, later it was used for native settlements only. Non-native settlements became known as parishes.

Dad purchased the property, a quarter section (SW Section 17-17-9E, Alexander Unorganized) because it was affordable. Dad found the land tough for growing crops. There was not enough drainage. It was hard to work as it was all buffalo grass and other wild grasses. It was virgin land, full of moss (3-4 feet of it). Dad burned the peat moss so he could plant the crops. In some spots of Fatima the peat moss was 6 feet deep. Before there was a road Dad would walk to Stead - before freeze-up he took a big stick with him for safety. There was a peat bog 3-4 miles long on the way. It would move under his feet as he walked. He couldn't stop or he would sink.

“Henri bought crown land 1949 July 16 -- sold 1962 July 12.” (Lucienne). He spent a few summers in Fatima.

“Before Juliette and Zotique arrived and before we moved to “Notre Dame de Fatima” (as the parish was called in the early days) I remember visiting Hercule, Henri, maybe Zotique in a small one room building. Since there was no woman to prepare their food they called this “batching” which was a popular expression at the time.” (Colette Gentes).

In 1949, a shack that was on the Desbiens property was used as the school and church for the new parish. There was a mass every Sunday in this small granary. Léonide "La Vielle Desbiens" taught at Fatima until the summer of 1949. Eliette Monchalain from Notre-Dame de Lourdes taught in 1949-50 and boarded with Isidore and Flavie Chevrefils. She later married Maurice Muller from her home town. She was paid \$1100. School trustees were Rémi Vincent, Adélarde Chevrefils and Lucien Lussier; Secretary-Treasurer was Isidore Chevrefils. Money was being raised by the residents for the new school/church building. They would have house parties and card games and charge admission or ask for donations. Some business owners donated large sums. Adélarde Chevrefils offered a portion of his property for the location of the new building.

Father Jean Méthé and Rev Joseph de Rocquigny visited the parishioners and recorded marriages, births, lifestyles, etc in a book called Liber Animarum. From these recordings and others we see Jean Méthé in Fatima from 1949-1951. Jean spent some time in 1954 as well. Recordings show residents having priest visits during the years 1949-1955, 1957-1959, 1964 and 1973. In 1973 the priests initials are E. H. (L'abbé E. Hébert) dated 1/25/73 and 2/22/73. There were no visits shown after that when I checked in 2009. On the occasion of the rally in honour of the Virgin Mary held in Winnipeg September 25, 1949, Mgr Georges Cabana believed there was not a more beautiful occasion to officially give the name of Notre-Dame du Rosaire de Fatima to this new parish that was about to be founded. I have not come upon records showing this name was actually ever used.

In 1949 Jules Granger occasionally picked up Fr Méthé at Thomson Landing, a few miles away, to take him to Fatima. He took Dad's vehicle which was a Hudson's Bay delivery van,

built in the early 1940's. Dad had removed the passenger seat so he could haul construction material and supplies from Letellier to Fatima. He never rebolted the seat. Fr Méthé bounced around all the way to Fatima as the roads were very bumpy.

Many farmers who resided elsewhere and had land in Fatima would build a shack and stay in the summertime while working the land. The landowners from St-Georges who lived closer would come and do their work for a few days and then return home. A few of Antoine Bérard's sons worked the land with him. Réal, born in 1935, a younger son who would later become famous for his hand-drawn canoe route maps, would come to visit and ride back home with Jean Méthé to St-Pierre. Réal wondered how Jean could drive and recite the rosary at the same time. Réal presently lives in St-Boniface.

From the Galerie Riviere-aux-Rats website: Réal Bérard's original artworks have been exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions within Manitoba, and are represented in both public and private collections throughout Canada and abroad. His work has been awarded medals by the Art Director's Club of Winnipeg and the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society. Recent honours include «le prix Saint-Éxupéry» and «le prix Riel», as well as a number of awards for his animated film «Jours de plaine». He has also garnered many awards of excellence for his snow sculptures, placing first time and again at national and international snow sculpture competitions. Since he left the Ministry of Tourism in 1990, he devotes himself to illustrating canoe trails.

In 1949 farmers here were growing wheat, oats, barley and alfalfa. They were getting at least one hundred dollars per acre for their alfalfa. In 1949 the generating system came to Pine Falls. It was completed in 1952 with a cost of \$23.5 million.

1950 – 9 students: Leon Samletzki (brother of Laurence) CF-Carlton SK C-1950 L-1959; André Saurette & Madeleine Deschênes L-1950; George Fiedler L-1950; George Fiedler C-1949 L-1950; Clarence Schmidt CF-SK B-1926 C-1950 L-1952 or later; Stanislaus Fontaine CF-St. Agathe, not related to Henri B-1887 D-1951 & Adele Gagnon B-1900 C+L-late 1940's didn't do anything with land, owned it with a Dupuis of St-Jean Baptiste (son Jean-Charles B-1922 M-1959 1st wife Blanche Saurette CF-Letellier (André Saurette's cousin) worked at the Pine Falls paper mill & dam, lived at St-Georges) WT-Ste-Agathe; Arthur Dubé CF-Duck Lake SK C-1950 L-1955 before he married he stayed a while with brother Philippe & his wife, then with Adélarde Chevrefils family; Isidore D'auteuil CF-Iles des Chenes C-1950 L-1956; Philippe Dubé CF-Duck Lake SK (farmer/bus driver) C-1949 stayed with Leon Samletski short while & Graziella Desbiens M-1950 L-1966 at one time seeded 14 acres on parish land - 25% went to the parish; Albert Gunning (woodcutter/ran garage business, grocery/hardware store & trucking business in Thalberg) CF-Thalberg, landowner only C-early 1950's L-1966 D-1966?; Adrien Joseph Vincent C-1950 L-1954; Laurence Zakaluk B-1950 L-1953; Alice Desbiens B-1950 L-1966; Noella Fontaine B-1950; Isidore Chevrefils & Flavie Lacoste & 1 kid L-1950 WT-Powerview

1951 - 8 students: Jeannette Leclerc B-1951 L-1959; Fred Froehlich C-1951 L-1959; Laurence Samletzki C-1951 & Carmen Desbiens C-1945 M-1951; Antoine Bérard L-1951; Albert Desbiens & Marie-Anne Kirouac C&M-1951 L-1959?; Henri Desbiens B-1951 L-1959; Paulette Desbiens B-1951 L-1965; Heather Cutting B-1951 L-1965; Doris Alarie B-

1951 L-1966; Léon Desbiens B-1951 L-1966; Albert Leclerc (woodcutter/farmer) CF-Baie St. Paul parish of St. Eustache C-before 1952 & Adéline Vincent L-1965

In 1950 Stead and the surrounding main roads were dirt roads. In 1951 they were gravelled. There was a trail going all the way from Stead to St-Georges.

In January 1950, there was only 3 days of school. Eliane Bosc taught in 1950-51/1951-52. In the fall of 1951 and earlier, we were the School District of Stead – Stead Special. Eliane was paid \$1100 in the fall of 1951 and \$1300 in the spring of 1952. In the spring of 1950 school trustees were Rémi Vincent, Adélard Chevrefils and Lucien Lussier; Secretary-Treasurer was Isidore Chevrefils. In the spring of 1952 the Secretary-Treasurer was Laurence Samletzki. We were now the School District of Fatima no. 2334 in the municipality of Alexander, Lac du Bonnet. In the fall of 1959 we were part of the Agassiz School Division no. 13. Eliane later married Paul Boulet of St-Georges. Years later when I started school, Alphonse and I were in the same class as their daughter Brigitte. The teacher failed Alphonse in grade one, so we were in the same grade thereafter. Eliane did some substituting at that time. Fr A Plamondon OMI, the missionary at Fort Alexander, performed a baptism and marriage at Fatima in November 1951, the time that Jean Méthé was away. We see Rev Joseph de Rocquigny, the resident missionary in Fatima from 1951-June 1955. Philippe Dubé's wife Graziella Desbiens was the organist at church. "Chemin Granger" is the name a priest used in their records to give a location of where two residents lived - Rémi Vincent and Albert Leclerc. In the 1950's Fatima saw a resurgence. There were house parties in those days, home brew, no police or speed limits.

"I met Arthur Dube in 1951 when he, his brother Philippe, Lawrence Samletzki, and Clarence Schmidt came from Sask. They bought land and farmed there. Arthur and Philippe bought my uncle Isidores quarter section when they moved back to Powerview. My aunt didn't really like living in Fatima very much. Their farm was on the same road as the Gentes family across the road, behind Felix Vincents land. We lived in the old house on the property while our log cabin was built. When the four men arrived from Sask both Phil and Art bought the farm at #11 (9 17 9 on new map) and as there was a house on the property the 4 lived there until Phil was married. Lawrence and Clarence bought land further back closer to Steve and Jean Zakaluk. I was only a kid when all of this was going on. Art lived with Phil and Grace for a short time...later Art moved in with us. It was a bit crowded, but a lot of the men worked in the bush during the winter and on the transmission line during the summer and were away so we managed. I left school in 1952-53. I stayed at home and helped mom with things around the house." (Louise Chevrefils Belin). Philippe and his uncle Arsene Dubé came out in 1949.

1952 – 56 Catholics, 12 families, 1 Polish family, 7-13 students: Hermeline Fontaine D-1952; Laurence Samletzki D-1952; Gérard Gentes & Aline Granger & 3 kids C-1952 L-1956; Alexandre Milette CF-St. Adolphe D-1990 & Beatrice Giasson (sister of Alice) B-1904 CF-Baie St. Paul Parish of St. Eustache M-1921 landowners only C-1952 L-1959; Laurence Samletzki Jr B-1952 L-1963?; Noella Desbiens B-1952 L-1965; Denis Desbiens B-1952 L-1966; Simone Lussier B-1952 L-1967; Claire Vincent B-1952 L-1968; Hector Fontaine (farmer) CF-St-Georges & Rose-Alma Lussier & 9 kids C-1952 L-1980 (Hector's father Joseph moved in with them C-1952 L-1966); Clarence Schmidt L-1952 or later; Maurice Fontaine (farmer) B-1940 & Ghislaine Bélanger CF-Québec M-1970's? C-1952 L-1973 with brother Georges had dad's property until 1973

Dad's sister Aline moved to Fatima with her family. She and Gérard had married in 1942. They lived where André Fontaine resides today. *"Sometime prior to our arrival, I suspect your dad, my Dad and Pere Z built the house in the summer of 52. Our house was initially finished with tar paper, and a gray brick asphalt siding was applied in early 53. I do not know who the previous owners were, however I am quite sure that the land was bought for back taxes. When we moved there, your Dad had a small shack, probably no bigger than 6 ft by 8 ft. Your dad had previously been irrigating the land...I do not believe he wintered there that winter (52-53) as I remember seeing a sign on the door, "Back in an hour" with 4 feet of snow piled in front...Our house in Fatima was 1 1/2 miles east and 1/2 mile south of your place. I remember walking that road many times. The little shack was west of the house and closer to the road than the house. I refer to the little house as the shack. That is what it was called by the adults at the time. I have fond memories of going there for a sleep over with mon oncle Hercule, eating Irish bread and Spam for supper. I too am very fond of our heritage and ancestors."* (Chuck Gentes).

"Aline and Gérard Gentes moved there in the fall of 1952 (Colette Gentes) "November" 28 (Chuck Gentes) with their children, Charles 9, Colette 7, and Bobbi 3. Another child was born in April of 1953, Gisèle (originally named Linda but mon oncle Hercule and others - I don't remember who - argued that it was too English so they named her Gisèle). The family Gentes left in June 1956 because they could never make a go of it. The soil on our farm was not sphagnum moss but hard and rocky soil not much of it still in the forest state. I remember we grew some hay and some kind of grain because I remember a threshing machine and a threshing crew. The animals kept dying probably because there was not enough feed and it would not stop raining. It rained all the time we were there. Just sinking mud holes that cattle got stuck in and rubber boots. By the way there was no electricity for at least the first year we were there. I remember the fridge and stove we had in Letellier being installed in our house. What a luxury!...When we first moved there school was held in a one room "shack" across the road from where the church/school later stood...It was across the street from where the real school/church was so I guess it wasn't finished yet. There were no hooks for the coats, everybody just threw them in a pile on the floor. I remember being taken aback by that and discussing it with my mother on the evening of the first day. I was also appalled at the outhouse filled with snow...Funny that I don't remember where church was. I have small recollections of something like work crews of people from the community working to put up that building." (Colette Gentes). *"We used to go to school at the Desbiens house for the first while in Fatima."* (Chuck Gentes). There was a fire one morning in the shack but it was put out in time. The stove was kept burning overnite during the coldest months because it would have been too cold for the kids in the morning. This shack was also used as the church. Aline took on the job of laundering the linen for the alter at church.

There were 3 grave sites in the Fatima cemetery. Laurence Samletzki (1952) - Dad was likely part of the group of men who tried in vain to save his life when he was pinned under an overturned tractor on the Main Drain in October. Raymond Desbiens was stuck on the Main Drain in his car. He went to Leclerc's to get a tractor. Laurence helped out by driving the tractor and the tractor overturned, suffocating him in the mud. The other two grave sites were for Nicole Dubé (1955) infant daughter of Philippe and Graziella, and Lucien Lussier (1962).

Anna Lansard taught in 1952-53. She came from Lorette and later married Jean-Marie Hébert. They presently live in Toronto. She had a first year permit and was paid \$1100 for the year. Secretary-Treasurer was Philippe Dubé. Eliane Bosc and Anna Lansard boarded with the Adèlard Chevrefils family. Anna and Hercule dated while she was there. *"Yes your dad courted Anna that year and we saw a lot of him as she lived with us. What happened there I'm not sure of, but I don't really think that she saw herself as a pioneer. If you look at the time that the teachers stayed in Fatima it was only one school year and if they wanted to continue their teaching career they would have to continue their training. Because they were only able to teach the lower grades I did grades 9 and 10 thru correspondence and it was pretty hard as there was no one to help me. My older brother, Roland had left home to work in Powerview."* (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

Construction of the church/school started September 12, 1952 with Frère Labelle directing the project. At their sawmill the men had prepared 12,000 feet of lumber and collected \$600. The building was built by the settlers themselves with the timber they cut and made boards out of. Their kids helped by straightening used nails. Zotique, Dad, and either Uncle Henri or Marc are some who helped with the construction. A canteen was open during the project. The workers were paid \$1.00 per hour. It was a large building on 3.75 acres measuring 80 x 22 feet. There were separate quarters for either the priest or teacher. Msg Maurice Beaudoux the Archbishop of St-Boniface officiated the opening on December 7, 1952. He was accompanied by Father Piché, Father Aimé Lizée, l'Abbé Désorcy and Rev Joseph de Rocquigny. More than 100 people attended. Some came from Stead, St-Georges, Pine Falls, St-Boniface, St-Eustache and Elie. Denis Desbiens who was born November 27, child of Rolande and Laurent, was baptized after dinner by Msg Beaudoux.

The new school/church building was also used as a community center. There were movies shown and card games played. The first bingo game was December 14. Through the years Hercule sang and directed at church and helped with the liturgy. Zotique did as well when he was there. Nowadays, I hear people from Fatima and St-Georges say that Dad was a very good singer.

1953 – 61 Catholics, 13 families, 16-22 students: Gisele Gentes B-1953 L-1956; Lloyd Cutting B-1953 L-1965; Annette Dubé B-1953 L-1966; John Matchizen C-1953 L-?; Arthur Baril C-1953 L-1959; Clarence Fiedler C-1948 L-1953; Zotique Granger & Juliette Barnabé & 1 kid C-1953 L-1956-1958; Kenneth McLean C-1953 L-1974 2004?; Steven Chuckry & Olga C-1953 L-1983, later operated by sons Bill & George; Steve Zakaluk & Jean Matchizen & 1 kid L-1953 WT-Gull Lake; Ben Matchizen (Jean's brother) CF-Thalberg B-1928 C-1953?

1954 - 22-20 students: Giselle Leclerc B-1954 L-1959; Elzéar Boulet D-1954; Paul Leclerc & Rita Vincent M-1954 L-1954 WT-Keewatin ON; Giselle Leclerc B-1954 L-1959; Donna Desbiens B-1954 L-1965; Marcel Dubé B-1954 L-1966; Aimé Fillion & Thérèse Lapierre CF-Mariapolis C-1954 L-2000 landowner only; Adrien Joseph Vincent L-1954

The school opened in January of 1953. The school district paid \$30 per month to hold classes in the building. Teachers were hired by the school board. Some resided in the building, others boarded with a resident. Aline Gentes was the president of the school district in 1954, possibly other years as well. Dad also had the position many times thru the years. He was also a school trustee. *"I remember three teachers there. The first full year*

September 53 to June 54 was a lady teacher with glasses and I remember Marc interacting with her. The second teacher was a very charismatic man and we did lots of singing and lots of plays but nobody passed "Le Concours Francais". The third teacher in September 55 was a Mlle St-Onge from St Agathe. She was the first "qualified" teacher, the other two taught "on permit" straight out of high school. She boarded with us and I remember vividly that taking in the teacher provided the money to send my brother to the "Juniorat". (Colette Gentes). Lorraine Gagné (deceased) from St-Georges taught in 1953-54. She later married Joseph Guêtré, Lorette Larocque's brother. Lorette taught Alphonse and I in grade 1 and 2. Lorette is half sister to Rex Guêtré (he was in the same class as Lucienne in elementary school for a while, Cécile drove into the back of his car while driving in the 90's or around there). Rex's daughter Jennifer is married to my third cousin Chris Laramée. They live in St. Eustache. How we are all connected! Lorraine was paid \$1600 for the year. Secretary-Treasurer was Philippe Dubé. Cécile Sorin from Aubigny taught the first few months in 1954. She is Jules Sorin's sister. She did not stay the whole year because she got sick. Joseph Desrosiers taught the rest of that school year. His annual salary was \$1400 for the year, for Mlle Sorin it was \$1600. Paul and Laurent Desbiens and Dad were trustees; Secretary-Treasurer was Philippe Dubé. In the spring the Secretary-Treasurer was Hector Fontaine. Cécile Sorin boarded with the Desbiens. Mlle St-Onge (Thérèse Hébert) told me she saw a bear during her stay and that the Gentes family were wonderful people. Thérèse is the aunt of my cousin's (Philippe Beaudin) ex-wife.

"I know your Dad was there in the summer of 53, living in a small house, to the west of the main house which he later built...In 53, your dad did plant a crop and built the house. I suspect that the grandparents and Marc moved in during the summer of 53. The grandparents were not already established in Fatima when we moved there..." (Chuck Gentes). Dad, the grandparents and their youngest son Marc lived in the third "shelter" my dad had built in the summer of 1953. The previous two were shacks. The two shacks were basically at the same spot. The first one was the modular shack; the second may have been this same one, but added on to and upgraded. The shacks were not on the home place but near the hydro tower, closer to the Main Drain. Zotique went to Fatima to help Dad. He also wanted to farm, as opposed to doing carpentry and odd jobs in Letellier. Jack-of-all-trade jobs in the Letellier area were getting scarce. Henri Granger spent some time at Fatima that summer as well. *"I remember Juliette living in the house and making clothes out of old garments. I also remember an organ in the house."* (Colette Gentes). During the early years of my grandparents time at Fatima, they had considered opening a store and post office along the main road.

Marc went to school in 1953-54. He didn't attend very often. He went about half the time. He was 14 years old and in grade 5. He worked on the farm with Dad. He would gather with Hercule and Cécile at the Fontaine's for celebrations. *"I know Marc went and worked in a wood camp for one winter while in Fatima."* (Chuck Gentes). Marc loved to drive his Model T with friend Henri Fontaine and chase deer at Fatima.

In 1953 a road was built and gravelled going all the way from Stead to St-Georges. Before that it was only a trail. It was still gravel in 1973 when we moved.

In 1953, Jules, another brother of Dad's, spent one winter with him, the grandparents and Marc. Jules did not want to live in Fatima. He said it was hard to earn a living there and he did not want to farm.

Hydro was connected to our house in 1953. Electricity had come to Stead in 1952. In 1954 the only social organization in Fatima was the Farmers' Union. They held monthly meetings.

1955 – 81 Catholics, 13 families, 24 students: Hercule Granger & Cécile Grégoire M-1955; Albert Leclerc & Adéline Vincent M-1955; Nicole Dubé B&D-1955; Richard Alarie B-1955 L-1966; Guy Desbiens B-1955 L-1966; Lucie Vincent B-1955 L-1968; Arthur Dubé & Louise Chevrefils M&L-1955 WT-Powerview/Port Alberni/Campbell River BC; Adélard Chevrefils & Lillian Gordon L-1955 WT-Powerview/Port Alberni BC

My mom Cécile Grégoire St-Vincent, a French and Métis woman, joined the Grangers at Fatima after she and Hercule, a Frenchman, married on June 11, 1955. Mom was raised on a farm in St-Jean Baptiste, Dad was raised in the village of Letellier. They had dated for less than a year, saw each other on Sundays and wrote each other letters. Dad talked about buying or renting property for them in Pine Falls after they married, but Mom wanted to stay in Fatima. She thought he wanted this just for her.

Her St-Vincent parents gave them a cow. Mom's sister Jeannette says Dad had no cattle at the time. Mom's parents had been paying a life insurance policy for her. When my parents got married, they cashed in the policy and used the money for farm expenses. Everything we owned was paid for except for the land. We don't know when it was paid off. Dad banked at the Caisse Populaire at St-Georges. He bought his last two tractors at Thalberg. When we sold the farm there was a lien to pay for some hospital bills - childbirths and Alphonse's broken arm.

“I was married in Oct of 1955 and moved back to Powerview the next day. We all moved to Powerview. My brothers were working away from home so there was just mom, dad, and I in Fatima. Dad had sold the farm to someone from Stead. Arthur and I came back a few times to visit then left the following Oct by train, when my son was a month old, and came out to the coast. We only went back once before Art died.” (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

In 1955 a western drama TV series starts named Gun Smoke. It ended in 1975. In the mid 1950's gas was 35 cents per gallon; ground beef 29 cents per pound. In 1955 the provincial government permits instruction in French from grade 4 to grade 12 in certain schools. In 1955-56 the Secretary-Treasurer for the school was Hector Fontaine. In the mid 1950's to 1961 Henri Granger lived at and worked for a friend/farmer (Jutras) in Letellier.

1956 – 11 families, 23-16 students: Olivier Leclerc B-1956 L-1965; Marcel Desbiens B-1956 L-1965; Roger Lussier B-1956 L-1967; Lucienne Granger B-1956 L-1973; Art Kemball B-1924 & Bella Vincent B-1927 M-1948 C-1956 L-1988 rented & sold in 2005?; Gérard Gentes & Aline Granger & 4 kids L-1956 WT-Letellier/Brandon; Isidore D'auteuil L-1956

1957 – 61 people, 21 students: Leonard Leclerc B-1957 L-1959; Edward Neurenberg CF-Lowland (Lac du Bonnet) & Gladys Fiebelkorn M-1953, 4 kids C-1957 or sooner L-1974, lived there 1957-1960?; Claude Breton (labourer) C-1957 or sooner & Carmen Desbiens (Samletzki 1st marriage) M-1957 L-1963 or later; Leonard Leclerc B-1957 L-1959; Raymond Desbiens B-1957 L-1965; Hubert Vincent B-1957 L-1968; Félix Vincent & Denise Wilcott L-1957; Robert Granger B-1957 L-1973; Zotique Granger & Juliette Barnabé & son Marc L-1956-1958

1958 – 74 French Catholics, 12 families, 18-23 students, 27 over age 21: Raymond Desbiens (farmer) C-1945 D-2010 & Suzanne Laurencelle M-1958 lived with his parents at first; Emilie Leclerc B-1958 L-1965; Gordon Cutting B-1958 L-1965; Emile Granger B-1958 L-1973; Florent Vincent B-1935 L&M-1958; Maurice Lussier C-before 1959 L-1960's?; Jean-Guy Raymond C-before 1959 L-1960's possibly he just went to mass at Fatima

1959 – 78 Catholics, 77 French, 13 families, 22-23 students: Danielle Breton B-1959 L-1963 or later; Marian Leclerc B-1959 L-1965; Michel Desbiens B-1959 L-1965; Suzanne Dubé B-1959 L-1966; Nicole Desbiens B-1959 L-1967; Amédée Cécillon & Olga Samletzki L-1959 WT-Windsor ON; Leon Samletzki L-1959; Alex Pelletier L-1959; Arthur Baril L-1959; Alfred Doucette L-1959; Joe B-1910 D-2001 & Mike Romanchuk B-1914 D-2004 L-mid 1970's (Joe kept farming until 2013) bachelors, landowners only C-1959 L-2013; Albert Desbiens & Marie-Anne Kirouac & 1 kid L-1959? WT-La Broquerie; Fred Froehlich L-1959; Alexandre Milette & Beatrice Giasson L-1959 WT-Fisher Branch; Joseph Leclerc & Alyce Boris & 5 kids L-1959 Sold-1974 WT-Beauséjour

"Les Belles Histoires" (Séraphin) was a soap opera, black and white and color, and aired between 1956 and 1970. Before coming to television, it was broadcast on Radio-Canada for 24 years. Another soap that started that year was The Edge of Night, an American television mystery series. It went until 1984. It was 30 minutes long and started at 4 pm weekdays. In 1956 women were allowed in pubs that were for women only. In 1957 they were allowed to be in pubs with men.

Lucienne stayed at Grandma Anna's in St-Jean Baptiste while Mom was at the hospital for the birth of Robert. Aunt Jeannette then returned with Lucienne and stayed one month with Mom and family. Jeannette came out on other occasions to visit and help out. As she became a nun in 1958, she was not able to come out as often as she would have liked. Uncle Marc carried Hercule and Cécile's first two babies home (a mile and a half) from the main road when Mom and baby came home from the hospital. The road to the house was impassable in the winter in those years. Mom talked about Marc with appreciation and gratitude - Marc was a nice, pleasant young man she said. He left Fatima between April 1957 and March 1958 and went to St-Jean Baptiste.

Marcien Ferland who was from St-Boniface taught 17 students up to grade 7 in the one room school in 1956-57. Classes went up to grade 8 but there were no students in grade 8 that year. Marcien had done some roofing work prior to teaching at Fatima. *"Dad was a school trustee (he was President of the School District) and signed his paycheques. Marcien would come over to get his pay and would party with the parents (party meant singing and story-telling and maybe a little homebrew if there was any available)."* (Lucienne). In 1955-56 the Secretary-Treasurers for the school were Hector Fontaine and Dad.

From a story-telling by Marcien Ferland on June 18, 2009:

The story of Fatima is so humble. It was in the middle of nowhere. The folks in the parish were poor but they were making a living out there. They were hardworking people with no leisure time. They were settlers, homesteaders. It was like pioneer days. They had the basics to live. It took courage.

It was from scratch that they broke the land, making agricultural land out of virgin

forests and fields. They had to burn the peat moss to get to the soil. It took years to burn. It would smoulder, during the wintertime you could see the smoke come out of the snow. As a city boy, he was impressed. There was a slough one section northeast of our place named Fatima Slough. Marcien incorrectly thought the area was named Fatima Slough.

Drinking water in the wintertime came from snow, melting it on the stove in a big pot. Every farmhouse had one. In winter the men went to the bushcamp to work, the women stayed home with the children. Not everyone farmed there. Some of the Desbiens sons did not, among others. The horse shacks were not built with planks but with logs - they were the size of a bathroom.

Marcien went out there because he needed a retreat, needed to feel life. Because this was his first teaching job he had to get a permit to teach. He didn't know anything about teaching so he went to see the nuns in St-Georges to get info on what and how to teach. He was 19-20 when he taught there, not much older than the kids. He smoked a pipe and grew a moustache to appear older. He was very busy with the kids. He took them to the city for a two-day field trip because most had never been there - they had never seen an elevator or airplane. He was like their big brother.

Some of the kids used to catch fish on their way to school. They would knock them out, put them in their bag or pants until they got to school and then put them in the rain barrel. By the end of the day the fish were swimming around again so they would knock them out again and bring them home for supper.

Marcien lived at the back of the school building but had his meals at the Desbiens home across the road. He purchased a cow for milk and kept it on their property. The deal was they would look after it and milk it and he would leave it with them when he left Fatima. He was a greenhorn. He learned a lot about farming from them. He looked after transporting water from Stead that came from an artesian well. The ladies would ask him to pick up supplies while there - sugar, flour, etc. He had to look after heating the school with wood that he thinks came from Dad. He was like a missionary, a colonizer.

It was boring for Marcien, nothing much to do in the evenings and weekends when he did not go to Winnipeg to visit friends. He enjoyed “veillées” with my parents and grandfather Saturday nites, playing church hymns on the trumpet with Dad. Zotique made home brew and would offer some to Marcien, calling it antifreeze. Zotique was quite humourous Marcien says. Hercule and Zotique were his best friends and he learned about farming from them. They were born of the land and were of the land, they knew so much. He would ask them how many udders a cow had and other questions.

One winter evening when he was at the school he saw a lite on the road from our place coming closer. It was Dad on the caterpillar pulling a wooden sled with Mom on it. Mom was sitting on a beam on this sled, in labour. The road where the school was located was plowed but our road was not. Dad knocked on his door asking if he could drive them to the hospital. Mom's water had broke so he quickly drove them to Pine Falls Hospital. Dad hitchhiked back the next morning to his place and handed him a cigar saying he now had a son (Robert).

The community could not get decent teachers. The pay was \$110 a month. Dad offered Marcien \$120 per month to stay the following year - he declined. He enjoyed learning about teaching and farm life. His time there marked him - it made him mature and allowed him to see life.

Marcien chummed with Marc Granger and Georges Fontaine. Marc was only a few years younger than him.

In 1956 there were 11 families in Fatima: Granger, Fontaine, Desbiens ("Le Vieux et La Vielle Desbiens" and two married sons Paul and Albert), Vincent, Lussier, Dubé, Alarie, Samletzki and Cutting.

In the mid 1950's Rev Joseph de Rocquigny felt no one seemed to care about the movement for colonization in Fatima. He wanted to see more people living in the community; he wanted Fatima to grow. During the years 1955-1956 Rev. Alfred Chlebowczyk (1915-1992) celebrated mass in Fatima and Stead. He baptized Lucienne. L'Abbé Louis Morin who celebrated mass in St-Georges replaced Rev. Chlebowczyk in 1956. Louis Morin officiated as a guest/honorary priest at Hercule's funeral in 1978. Hercule had been very fond of him. Rev. Gédeon J Trudeau replaced L'Abbé Louis Morin in August 1964.

"I grew up in St Georges, and my grandfather Emeric Bouvier was one of the first farmers in the Fatima area, opening up his land in the late 1940s. There were many families who farmed in the Fatima area but lived in St Georges. I used to attend the church in Fatima from time to time with Father Louis Morin who went to say mass on Sunday mornings. We attended as altar boys." (Roger Bouvier).

In 1957 Harry Newman, my friend George's great-uncle, and his wife Margery lived in Stead. He worked as a sectionman for the CNR, inspecting the tracks. He retired in 1959 after he slipped under a locomotive and lost his leg. He was likely in his 50's at the time.

As in the shack, the teachers had to put the school desks along the walls Friday after classes and set up for Sunday mass. In 1957 the parish had a debt of \$2844. The school district paid \$40 per month to hold classes in the building. Dad looked after field days (track and field). He took the school kids to Gull Lake and neighbouring schools.

The teacher that taught after Marcien was Suzanne Laurencelle from La Broquerie in 1957-58. She later married Raymond Desbiens. She, then Mme S. Desbiens, taught the following fall until October 14. André Martin continued from there (1958-59). His annual salary was \$2000; she was paid \$10 per day. The Secretary-Treasurer was Dad. André Martin boarded with the Desbiens. He later became an announcer at CKSB, a French radio station. He had that position for five years starting in 1959 then he became the director of programming in the mid 1960's to the early 1970's.

"During the summer of 1956 friends of my parents Mr and Mrs Felix Ethier and their son William returned to visit family and friends. (They had lived in St. George, left to work in various places before settling in Port Alberni B.C.) They mentioned that there was a lot of work in B.C. as the Paper Mill was expanding. My dad, mom and brother, Roland left in August for a holiday in B.C. The men found work and decided to stay. I was awaiting the birth of my older son, Paul and wasn't able to travel. Arthur, myself and newborn baby along with Joy Dupont (later to become Roland's wife) left in October and settled in Port Alberni as well. Christmas of that year brought my older brother, Charlie out on a holiday

and he too decided to stay.” (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

“We left Fatima July 56 and moved back to Letellier. Mom never talked about our stay in Fatima and because Mom would get upset neither did Dad. As it turned out, selling the house in Letellier in 52, and moving to Fatima was a mistake. Mom and Dad, like all Grangers were very hard workers and they put their souls in this homestead only to fail in the end.” (Chuck Gentes).

“Maman Granger, Juliette left the farm...to go look after her sister Alphonsine Grégoire in St. Jean Baptiste Manitoba. She had cancer. Zotique remained in Fatima for some time because when we returned to Letellier in 1956 Maman was still at tante Alphonsine's.” (Colette Gentes). Alphonsine died March 10, 1959. In March 1956 Grandma was gone one month to help out a niece (Berthe Goertzen) who had given birth. Grandma left after Lucienne was born (March 1956), but before September 1956. It's possible she never returned after the stay at Berthe's. Grandma wanted to leave earlier but Grandpa wanted to stay. She found it difficult living in Fatima. There is a recording dated June 15, 1958 of Zotique singing at church in St-Georges with Hercule. He likely left around November 1958, based on records I've seen. In 1959 the grandparents moved to St-Boniface.

Near Emile's birth, Mom spent some time at Louis and Lorette Larocque's home in St-Georges. Lorette taught me and Alphonse in grade one and two. This was possibly her first teaching position. She had returned to school as a wife and mother and finished her grade 12 at Powerview Collegiate in 1966. *“Mom told this story while walking and walking and walking when she decided that Cécile was overdue and should be born already. Mme Larocque apparently had walked and walked and walked with her in St-Georges 12 years earlier when Emile was expected. She didn't want to take the chance of giving birth at home with only Zotique 'knowing' what to do. May 19th would have been during seeding time and Hercule (and Zotique) would not have been close to the house anyway if her time came. Louis was a childhood buddy of Hercule's at Letellier and spent a lot of time at the Granger house so Zotique would have known him quite well too.” (Lucienne).*

Rural polling division in Stead (included Fatima) - preliminary list of electors November 1958, 189 names are listed counting those scratched off (4). Voting age at that time was 21. The names of people from Fatima are:

Alarie Ulderic and Mrs/Farmer, Beaudry Edmond/Farmer, Belanger Marc/Farmer - crossed out with an X, Breton Claude and Mrs/Labourer, Desbiens Charles and Mrs/Farmer, Desbiens Paul and Mrs/Farmer, Desbiens Laurent and Mrs/Farmer, Desbiens Raymond/Labourer, Dubé Philippe and Mrs/Farmer, Fontaine Hector and Mrs/Farmer, Fontaine Joseph/Retired, Granger Zotique and Mrs/Retired - crossed out, Granger Hercule and Mrs/Farmer, Leclerc Albert/Labourer - with an X, Leclerc Peter/Retired, Lussier Lucien and Mrs/Labourer, Neurenberg Edward and Mrs/Farmer, Trembley Antoinette, Vincent Rémi and Mrs/Farmer.

In 1958 until 1966 a game show airs on TV named "La Poule aux oeufs D'or". In 1959 a pack of 25 cigarettes cost 25 cents. Charles Desbiens and Philippe Dubé were the trustees of the church; the church received \$500 in rent.

1960 – 80 Catholics, 22-23 students: Leander Zirk (Dan's brother) C-1960's L-2003?; Lise-Anne Breton B-1960 L-1963 or later; Rachel Desbiens B-1960 L-1966; Alphonse Granger

B-1960 L-1973; Jean-Guy Raymond L-1960's; Maurice Lussier L-1960's?

1961 - 22 students: Pierre Breton B-1961 L-1963 or later; Liliane Leclerc B-1961 L-1965; Darrel Cutting B-1961 L-1965; Julien Alarie B-1961 L-1966; Lionel Dubé B-1961 L-1966; Gilles Desbiens B-1961 L-1967; Robert Thomson & Ruth Adams M-1954 CF-Stead, landowners only, some sod & soil C-1961? (sons Robert & David with wives have taken over); Robert Dubé (woodcutter) grandson of Léonide (Savard) Tremblay Desbiens & Frida Vincent M-1961 C-before 1961 L-Jan 1966; Marie-Claire Granger B-1961 L-1973; Pierre Leclerc & Alice Giasson C-1946 L-1961 WT-Lac du Bonnet/Fisher Branch; John Molinski L-1961

1962 – 90 Catholics, 13 families, approximately 100 residents, 24 students: Lucien Lussier D-1962; Jules Granger landowner only C-1962 L-1965; Anna Leclerc B-1962 L-1965; Anita Desbiens B-1962 L-1965; Louis Desbiens B-1962 L-1967; Henriette Granger B-1962 L-1973; Henri Granger L(sold)-1962, farmed with Jules Granger until 1964; Joseph Vincent C-1962 L-1976; Joe Rachuk & Margaret, landowner only, sold sod & peatmoss C-1962 L-1982

Laurette Nadeau from La Broquerie was the teacher in 1959-60. She had a conditional permit and her annual salary was \$2000. Dad was Secretary-Treasurer. Laurette later married Jules Sorin. They sold us eggs in Ste-Agathe. They moved to St-Boniface in their later years. I had the opportunity to get to know a very beautiful couple when he came to visit Laurette at the Tache nursing home. Marguerite Royal came next (1960-61, 1961-62). She was an older lady who never married, possibly from Winnipeg. The school closed in June 1962. Secretary-Treasurer was Dad in the spring of 1961 and 1962. Laurette Nadeau said her students were good, pleasant kids. Wilfrid Alarie thou sometimes would get himself into a bit of trouble. Marcien testified to that telling us how Wilfred once got into the church wine. He was found out because his sticky hand was as sticky as the door handle. An interesting story came from Orile Vincent. They lived almost a mile away from the school. He told me they had a dog named Prince who would bring them to school on a sleigh. In the afternoon, when Prince new it was time, he would go back for them to take them home. In the fall of 1962 Patricia Desbiens was the only resident from Fatima going to Powerview Collegiate. She was in grade 9.

Here's a rundown of the teachers at Fatima - Léonide Desbiens mid 1940's possibly, to 1949; Mlle Eliette Monchalain 1949-50; Mlle Eliane Bosc 1950-51 & 1951-52; Mlle Anna Lansard 1952-53; Mlle Lorraine Gagné 1953-54; Mlle Cécile Sorin beginning of 1954, Joseph Desrosiers 1954-55; Mlle Thérèse St-Onge 1955-56; Marcien Ferland 1956-57; Mlle Suzanne Laurencelle 1957-58; Suzanne (Laurencelle) Desbiens beginning of 1958, André Martin 1958-59; Mlle Laurette Nadeau 1959-60; Mlle Marguerite Royal 1960-61 & 1961-62.

Mme. Desbiens, a neighbour, attended as the midwife for Henriette's birth. *"As far as what Mom told me was that it was about 6:00 am and there was no time to get to a hospital, as I was ready to be born. One push and I was out."* (Henriette).

In the early 1960's the Albert Leclerc family lived across the road from us. They rented the house that was moved on the property for them which was owned by the Thomsons of Stead. They lived there a couple of years and there were 6 kids. They separated and left in

1965. The house was gone around 1968. I remember the property being flooded around that time. Robert took the boat he built on the water there with me. Albert's ex-wife Adéline returned to the Stead area in 1974. Ernest Dupont owned farmland beside us. Our cows would sometimes get loose and go on his property. He would get upset because the cows trampled his crops. He had a shack on the property but did not live there.

In 1962 Henri Granger's land in Fatima was going to go up for tax sale because he and Hercule could not make the payments or pay the taxes. This land was located in the RM of Lac du Bonnet and was taxed at a higher rate than the home place which was in Alexander Unorganized Territory. The property was both Henri's and Dad's. They each had a quarter section. It could not be subdivided so it was in Henri's name only. Hercule's portion had been partly paid by the wood permit "cutting tax" (the government had timber rights). When Dad cut the timber on his land the paper mill bought the wood, paid the RM and these payments were applied towards the purchase of the land. *"I believe Jules bought some property in the Fatima area and had Henri work it in the summers. I am not sure but I think the building that your Dad stayed in in the early years was moved to Jules' property. Jules later sold the land."* (Chuck Gentes). Zotique talked to Jules about Henri's land going up for tax sale. Jules felt that too much had been invested in the property so he paid the taxes, purchased it and had it subdivided. Dad's quarter was forested land allowing him to cut the timber to sell and to heat the house. When Dad no longer had his bush property he would cut wood from across the Main Drain at the end of our road and in Belair Forest. Henri grew crops on Jules' land with his help from 1962 to 1964. In 1964 Jules sold one quarter to Peter Denisiuk (Hercule's wooded quarter). In May 1965 he sold the remaining quarter to Steve Roman (Henri's cultivated quarter). A quarter section sold for \$2000 in those days.

"Henri's shack was about 3 miles from our place. He used a cream can buried in the ground as his fridge. I think we brought him milk and butter and maybe some meat because his fridge didn't preserve fresh food for very long. I think I remember him cooking on a campstove. He drank a lot of tea and always gave Robert and me his Brooke Bond cards when we came to visit. He grew crops of rye - the plants were taller than me." (Lucienne).

In the 1950's and 1960's the province moved from more than 2,000 school districts to about 60. This was the last major reorganization of school districts in Manitoba. Many small schools had been closed by the new larger districts. Closing a school in a small rural community is a serious blow and may threaten the community's survival. In 1960 the birth control pill is approved by the FDA. In the early 1960's a 24 case of beer cost \$5.40. Starting in 1962, family allowance cheques are mailed in bilingual form, nationwide.

The highest population at Fatima was in 1962 with approximately 100 residents. The Fatima school closed in the spring of 1962, just before Lucienne was to start. The large number of school children now warranted a bigger school. The parents, including Dad, felt their children would get a better education in St-Georges. Dad was a school trustee at that time.

Some students from Stead started going to Powerview Collegiate in the fall of 1960. Some parents including the Lesoskys felt Powerview had a better school than the ones in Thalberg and Brokenhead. The students went to Powerview in a station wagon owned by Johnny Pereum. In the fall of 1961 there was a bus. When the Fatima school closed, we rode the same bus with some students from Stead who went to school in Powerview. Most from Fatima went to St-Georges. The French ones went to school in St-Georges, the others to

Powerview. We went to school in St-Georges up to grade 6, to Powerview School for junior high and high school. In Lucienne's time she went to junior high, grades 7 and 8, at Leonard School, just beside the high school. In the fall of 1963 or soon thereafter, the school at Beauséjour became an option for the kids at Stead. The parents had the choice on where to send their kids to school. Mary Anne Roman and Carol Prokopec from Stead rode the bus which stopped at our place. They described the stop as a long one. A child came out one at a time. The driver was ready to go, shifting into gear and out came another child. Mike Rachuk and Daniel Zirk, both also from Stead, took the bus with us. Mike is younger than Lucienne. Dan started going to school at Powerview in 1961 for his grade 11. He remembers being on the bus with some Desbiens. He was in the same class as Phil Fontaine.

From a Wikipedia website: Phillip Fontaine was born at the Sagkeeng First Nation on the Fort Alexander Reserve, about 150 kilometers north of Winnipeg...he graduated from Powerview Collegiate in 1961 (*1963 is the correct year*). In 1973, Fontaine was elected Chief of the Sagkeeng community for two consecutive terms. Upon completion of his mandate, he and his family moved to the Yukon, where he was a regional director general with the Canadian government. In 1991, he was elected grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and served for three consecutive terms. In 1997 he was elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations for the first time. He completed his third and final term as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 2009. He was made an officer of the Order of Canada on December 30, 2012.

Lucienne, the first born, did not speak English when she started school in St-Georges. She learned it there, as did the first few older kids in the family. I imagine I knew how to speak English by school age when it came to me in 1967. *“Sometimes I had to walk the mile and a half from our house to the gravel road because the bus driver refused to travel on our dirt road after a heavy rain. In winter I boarded with neighbours who lived along the gravel road so that I could go to school. I guess my dad lobbied the school board and the municipality because by the next September the road was gravelled all the way to our house.”* (Lucienne).

Sometimes the combination of burning peat and morning fog would result in the local school bus driver having no visibility when driving the kids to school. It would stop the bus for hours until it lifted. On one occasion a student, Louis Lesosky, walked alongside the bus with its door open to guide the driver. Harry Prokopec from Stead was the first bus driver, his daughter Carol thinks. He drove for a year and a half. Johnny Pereux from Powerview owned the bus. Philippe Dubé from Fatima was another bus driver. Philippe Desautels was the next one, followed by John Dubé from Powerview who drove in 1971. He was still driving when we moved in 1973. Our bus number was 42. Philippe Desautels' brother Henri delivered gas to Lesosky's store and farms in our area.

1963: Dennis Leclerc B-1963 family L-1959; Roma Leclerc B-1963 L-1965; Jacqueline Cutting B-1963 L-1965; Gizelle Desbiens B-1963 L-1966; Marc Dubé B-1963 L-1966; Lorianne Dubé B-1963 L-1966; Yves Desbiens B-1963 L-1967; Juliette Granger B-1963 L-1973; Andrew Neggers & Thérèse Desbiens & 3 kids L-1963 WT-Ontario; Claude Breton & Carmen Desbiens (Samletzki) & 4 kids L-1963 or later WT-Ontario; Arthur Wooster C-1963 L-1965; Wild Rice Developments Ltd C-1963 L-1981

Wild Rice Developments Ltd purchased land at Fatima in 1963. It was owned by 10 or so people. They had several sections of land, about 2,000 acres. They were running it by around 1967. Some owners came from Silver Falls; Art Gaffray was one. He owns the airport at Silver Falls with his son. Gus Carlson and Bill Williams were also part owners. This group harvested rice in nearby lakes and wanted to try growing rice in a paddy. The RM of Alexander had a thriving wild rice industry. Wild rice is actually a grain.

To get started they built a dam on Catfish Creek. They drained it and backed up the land 3 feet high or so. Then they diked the creek about 4 miles up. Pumps were used to get the water into the fields. There were problems with that – in the springtime there was a rush of water and then nothing later on. Waterhens (we called them Poule D'eau) and ducks were often seen in the water there. One time the owners decided to seed first and flood later. The blackbirds ate many of the seeds. They had to reseed a second time. The rice did not grow well in peat, there was not enough nutrients. They did not use fertilizers, it was not something that was even talked about. The business went for about 3 years. They were not successful. In 1972, they started getting the land ready for crops and grew canola for a few years. Henri Fontaine combined for them. They sold some land to McEwen Bros Ltd in the 1990's.

1964 – 86 Catholics, 85 French: Peter Chuckry C-1964 L-1965; Henri Fontaine (farmer/woodcutter) B-1939 & Rita Lussier M-1964 lived in Powerview, returned 1966 to present, farmed with brother André 1966-2000; Christiane Dubé B-1964 L-1966; Herman Zirk C-1964 L-1966; Graziella Baril L-1964; Pierre Baril L-1964; Napoléon Baril L-1964; Michael Roman L-1964; Réal Dubé B-1964 L-1966; Louis Granger B-1964 L-1973; Peter Denisiuk C-1964 L-1971?; Armand Leclerc L-1964 WT-Quesnel BC; Horace Smith C-1964 L-1978

In 1964 the Beatles made an appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show.

In 1964 le Vieux et la Vielle Desbiens' house burned to the ground; they rebuilt. They left Fatima in 1966. This house is the one that André Fontaine moved to where he is now; he added on since.

A basement was put in under our house in the early 1960's - before that we just had a cellar. The telephone line came to our house in 1964. *"I remember the phone we had - the party line - and how we had to listen to the rings to know if it was for us or for the neighbour."* (Juliette). L'abbé Morin gave Dad our first TV in 1964 or so. We only had CBC at first. In 1965 we had a well drilled with the money Mom received from her adopted mother's estate (Anna Grégoire St-Vincent). Along with the well came the indoor plumbing and flushing toilet. The pantry was now a bathroom. This second well was drilled around 90 feet deep and was a flowing artesian well. There was no need for a pump. The first well we had was an open well that had been dug by hand and was quite shallow. We had to lower a bucket and lift it up with a rope to get the water. Then it had to be hauled to the house and barn. Dad purchased a black and white TV in 1965 or 1966.

1965 – 58 Catholics, 9 families: Mr Dufour C-mid 1960's L-?; Bernie Lefko C&L-?; Steve Roman CF-Stead, some sod, landowner only C-1965 L-1988?; Georges Fontaine B-1944 (worked at the Pine Falls paper mill) & Cécile Lussier M-1965 C-1967 L-1981; Marlene

(Alarie?) B-1965; Ginette Dubé B-1965 L-1966; Claire Desbiens B-1965 L-1967; Claude Fontaine B-1965; Peter Chuckry L-1965; Orile Vincent L-1965; Albert Leclerc & Adéline Vincent & 6 kids L-1965 WT-Grand Beach; Paul Desbiens & Elizabeth Kelly & 10 kids L-1965 WT-BC; Gordon Cutting & Yvette Desbiens & 5 kids L-1965 WT-Winnipeg; Jules Granger landowner only L-1965; Eméric Bouvier & Rose-Anna Juneau B-1895, 9 kids L-1965?; Arthur Wooster L-1965; Zotique Granger D-1965

1966 – 26 French Catholics, 4 families - Hercule Granger, Rémi Vincent, Irene Lussier, 3 Fontaine families (Henri, André and Hector; Henri the only one married with children at home): Daniel Zirk B-1944 CF-Stead & Gloria landowners only C-1966 to present; Joseph Fontaine L&D-1966; André Fontaine (farmer/woodcutter) B-1941 & Marie Lussier C&M-1966 to present, farmed with brother Henri 1966-2000; Nick Roman CF-Stead B-1930 D-2000 & Mary, he lived there in late 1970's C-1966 Sold-2000 earlier they moved to Selkirk; Jules Fontaine B-1966 L-1981; Linda Fontaine B-1966; John Molinski (Kenneth's uncle) landowner C-1966, son Bob now owns; Adolph aka Ed Pusiewich C-1966 CF-Winnipeg L-1968; Orile Vincent & Lorraine Gervais M-1966; Robert Dubé D-1966 & Frida Vincent & 2 kids L-1966 WT-Powerview/SK/AB; Edmond Beaudry L-1966 WT-BC; Philippe Dubé & Graziella Desbiens & 7 kids L-1966 WT-BC; Charles Desbiens & Léonide Savard & 1 adult kid L-1966 WT-BC; Laurent Desbiens & Rolande-Alma Vincent & 7 kids L-1966 WT-BC; Uldéric Alarie & Léa Vincent & 4 kids L-1966 WT-Winnipeg/Selkirk; Albert Gunning L-1966; Herman Zirk L-1966; Marcel Robert L(sold)-1966

Some Fatima residents went to school with Gérald Laroche in Powerview. Gérald was born in 1959. In 1972 he was in grade 8 with Emile. In 1973, they were in the same grade but not the same class. His father Lucien was the principal and a teacher at Leonard School when Lucienne started there in 1968. In the 70's he was the vice-principal at the high school.

From miscellaneous websites: The Juno Award winning master of the harmonica...Gérald Laroche grew up in Powerview in northeastern Manitoba. At eleven years old, he discovered the harmonica and the blues. His musical career began at age seventeen. From his Powerview Manitoba beginnings to performances around the world, Laroche's performances are history presented in a most unique way. With over 60 harmonicas and unique instruments such as penny whistle, jaw harp, fiddle bow, the rarely seen Indian mouth bow, his feet and mouth noises and electro-acoustic technology, stories begin to emerge - tales of fancy and legends that arise from the lives of the French and Métis voyageurs who are his ancestors. Since completing studies in graphic Arts at Red River Community College in Winnipeg he has participated in a variety of exhibitions and has conducted workshops throughout the province. Gérald Laroche lives in St. Boniface.

The last mass was in June of 1966. It was unlikely on the sixth because that would have been on a Monday. There were 86 Catholic parishioners at Fatima in 1964, 58 in 1965 and 26 in 1966. In May of 1966 it was reported to the Archbishop by the visiting pastor that 3 more families would be leaving that year. In January 1967 it's noted in the "Spiritual Report" that the priest is waiting for authorization from the Archbishop to close the mission. The building was sold that winter to an Evangelist settlement at Black River for \$1200; it was moved late in the year. The proceeds of the sale went to the St-Georges parish. Dad and André Fontaine were the trustees. Dad was very angry about the closure. I visited Black

River in 2011 and was told the church had burned years prior. The name "Fatima" went with the church and the area became know as Stead. After the church closed we attended mass at Powerview and St-Georges, occasionally Stead. The mass at Stead was in Polish. *"It is interesting that the community was absorbed into the town of Stead. When we were there Stead was a small community about 7 miles away where we got our mail and bought groceries in the Lesosky store."* (Colette Gentes).

Many families left in the mid 1960's and moved to Port Alberni BC to work. One left and their extended family followed. Some of these families were unable to get good drinking water or any water at all from their wells at Fatima. The settlers were looking for new opportunities. Life was easier in bigger towns and cities; there were more jobs and conveniences. Farming was a difficult full-time job and the weather and crop prices were unpredictable. In 1964 their was a thirteen cent reduction in the wheat board price of wheat. Most of the farmers at that time could not afford to buy much land. The majority of the land in the area was good for agriculture, they just would have needed more of it to make a better living. Some said there was too much peat moss.

The families who stayed hoped to rebuild the community. I heard and read many different accounts about why people left, in the 1940's and again in the 1960's. I imagine they all have their own story.

"Philippe and his family (he married Grace Desbiens) lived there until 1966 when they left and moved out to Port Alberni B.C. When Art died in 1966 Philippe came for the funeral and while he was on the coast his house burnt down and like a lot of the farmers there, there was never much money so decided to give it up. Andrew Negars never really farmed, and they built a house in the field near Paul Desbiens place. A lot of those people moved to Port Alberni B.C." (Louise Chevrefils Belin).

There was a store in Stead called Pine Site Store, besides Lesosky's, and there was a post office. Pine Site Store was owned by Harry and Pearl Prokopec; the post office was run by Mrs Tennie Soluk. The Soluks were the parents of Mrs. Prokopec. We shopped mostly at Lesosky's. They sold gas. For big shopping trips we went to either Pine Falls (it had a Marshall-Wells store), Beauséjour or Selkirk. Stead also had two churches, a skating rink and a community center.

Majority of information below from Laura Thomson's school project of 2002 (daughter of David and Irene):

The railroad came in 1924 and was completed in 1926. It extended the line from Beaconia to Pine Falls to service the new paper mill. The town was named after the head surveyor, Alexander Stead. Until that time, it was known as Thalberg. Five grocery/general stores, a sawmill and implement and automotive dealer opened shortly after 1926. At that time, probably the peak, the population was approximately 500. By 1940 there were only three grocery/general stores. Prior to 1926, the school was the only public building. During the 1920's and later, there were two churches (Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Church, a Polish church built in 1927 and St. John's Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, built in 1937, used regularly until about 1980), 2 church halls, Brodie School (1917), a post office (opened in July 1926), a grain elevator (it opened in 1947 and was torn down in the early 1970's), the Scottish Co-op House (housed the employees of the grain elevator), a Train Station (the train ran

6 days per week, picking up the mail and stopping until the 1970's, it came through Stead on its way to Pine Falls when the paper mill was in operation until 2009, the train tracks were removed in the area in 2012), a livery stable, a Forestry Station with an underground bomb shelter, Pine Site Store (opened in the 1930's and closed in 1993), Lesosky's General Store (opened in the mid 1930's and closed June 2001, Peter's son Ken and his wife Aline ran the store when Peter retired in 1979) and a small general store named Knelman's. The merchants at times bartered for cordwood, blueberries, eggs, etc. Some customers were billed for their purchases. When the crops were sold by the local farmers, the bill was paid - thou it is said some bills were never paid. I'm told that in the 1940's to the 1960's, timber from Belair Forest went to Selkirk, Winnipeg (East Kildonan), Kenora and Sault St. Marie for processing. This timber was the saw logs used for dimensional lumber. The smaller diameter timber went to Pine Falls for pulp. There were a couple spur lines/sidings/landings in Belair Forest. One was close to Murray Hill, at the bottom, meeting the main track northeast of Stead. It was named Murray Landing. I believe there was a siding much further north and to the west in Belair Forest. The post office was relocated from the Soluk home to Pine Site Store in a back room in 1972. Harry Prokopec purchased the store in 1958 and named it - it had operated with no name prior. The first two operators of the post office were men. Mrs Tennie Soluk operated it in 1952 until 1972; Mrs Pearl Prokopec in 1972 until 1993, when the store closed down. The post office then went in a tiny building on the main road beside Peter Lesosky's home. Nowadays Irene Thomson operates it; Susan Bodley works part-time. Jeannette (Bruneau) Smoluk worked there a while. She is related to Mom. Brodie School came to be used as the community center around 1975. The original school was built in 1917 and burned in 1950. It was soon rebuilt. The two stores (Lesosky's and Pine Site) were the only businesses that remained opened after the mid 1960's. In 1966 there were 80 Catholics, 3 French & 2 Metis in Stead; 1967 likely counting Fatima – 97 people; 1968 – 72 Catholics, 3 Metis; 2002 – 120 residents. In 2009 there were 52 mailboxes in use by residents. At this time there are two churches, a community center with a rink in the winter, a post office and a body shop that's been in business for approximately 10 years named In Stead Autobody. It's owned by Rick Smyrski from Gull Lake. The RC church has no cemetery in Stead, it's on Highway 12.

The train going to Pine Falls which stopped in Stead was both passenger and freight. It also carried the mail. Sometimes when the roads were impassable in winter, Dad would walk to the rail stop, 6 ½ miles, to drop off cream that he sold. He carried it there harnessed on his back. They would exchange his full cream can for the empty one from the previous drop. During the boom years (early 1960's) the Beauséjour Creamery had someone pick up the cream cans in the Fatima area on a weekly basis. The Stead train station was also where we picked up the baby chicks and ducklings in the spring that we purchased every year. There was a train stop with a siding north of Fatima at Mile 12 near the rice paddy. The landing there was known as "Thomson Landing" because a recluse lived close by (Robert Thomson's uncle). *"The train stop in Fatima at the northern end of the Main Drain that Jules referred to as "Thomson Landing" may have been used during the early 1950's but by the time that the road between Stead and Fatima was built there wasn't much of a need for a train station there any more. I remember a shack by the tracks with a bench and a wood stove in it in the 1960's but I don't remember the train making stops there."* (Lucienne).

In 1966 the first of two amendments to the provincial Public Schools Act (the second taking place in 1970) reintroduce French-language instruction. It is said that many did not follow the law prior. If an inspector came by, the students were told to hide their French books; they were taken out again as soon as the inspector left.

Orile Vincent hunted prairie chickens in the field on his and uncle Felix Vincent's land. He went with his horse in the late fall. The chickens ate the leftover grain in the field. They had 8 inches of tall grass to hide in - the remaining stalk after harvest. The horse found them and chased them then Orile shot them, from atop his horse. He got 3-4 chickens each time. His mom got tired of eating prairie chickens he says. Orile also hunted ducks where the rice paddy was.

1967: Monique Granger B-1967 L-1973; Suzanne Fontaine B-1967; Richard Fontaine B-1967; Ed Hackie & Helen CF-Saint-Norbert, sod landowner only (now operated by Russ Hackie & Joan along with sons Caleb and Ezra) C-1967 to present; Frank Molinski B-1914 CF-Thalberg, landowner only C-1967; John Petals C-1967 L-1969; Irene Lussier & 2 kids L-1967 WT-Winnipeg; Raymond Desbiens & Suzanne Laurencelle & 5 kids L-1967 WT-BC

The Archdiocese of St-Boniface and The School District of Fatima owned 30 acres at Fatima, a narrow section of land facing Stead Road at the corner where the church was, going north one mile up. This would include where the Cuttings lived, the cemetery and the next lot. In May 1957 the Archdiocese had 3 titles of land. In January 1967 sixty dollars rent was paid to the church for the house the Cuttings had. I imagine that would have been for six months. Irene Lussier's husband Lucien died in 1962. She sold and moved across the road in 1963 I believe, to one of these lots. In January 1967 Irene Lussier paid \$35 rent to the church; in September 1967 she paid \$40.

Wearing a uniform to school was no longer the rule when I started. For Emile and the older ones in my family it was. At school in St-Georges some of my teachers were nuns. I had one in grade 3 and I had the same one again in grade 5, Sr Imelda Hébert. A nun was a principal there in my time, Sr Milette. I had some nuns for teachers at Powerview School as well, the 2 1/2 months I was there.

The three people who were buried in Fatima were moved to the St-Georges cemetery November 21, 1967. The wooden cemetery cross stayed behind and was seen until June of 1972. It was eventually burned and the remains cultivated into the ground as the property once again became farmland.

In 1967 making wine at home becomes legal, something many have been doing for many years already. In 1967-1978 the Carol Burnett Show airs on TV. Several landowners in the area start growing sod in the late 1960's.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's my brother Robert shot gophers and I think he brought them in to the local municipality and got 25-50 cents per tail. They paid a bounty to those who turned in gopher tails. Gophers in large numbers destroy crops. There were prairie dogs at the back of our half section, hundreds of them. They made holes everywhere. There were also cranes that damaged the crops. Dad got upset when he saw them in the fields.

Marc Granger married Louise Gousseau in 1967. His first wife Pauline Guenette died in 1965. They were married in 1963 and had one child named René. With Louise they had 4 - Paul, Léo, Marc and Denis. *"Oui, ton père était très fier des années qu'il a passées à Fatima. Lui et ton oncle Marc en ont souvent parlé avec émotion. Les mois d'hiver à couper du bois en forêt, les cordes et les cordes de rondins empilés, la mousse sur la surface de la terre qui prenait si longtemps à bruler pour qu'ils puissent trouver de la terre fertile en dessous, les grand jardins de légumes que ta grand-mère a délogé de Letellier pour combler les appétits des travailleurs sur la ferme à Fatima. J'en ai souvent entendu parler."* (Louise Gousseau Granger).

1968: George Hiebert & Dorothy Harder & 5 kids (grain/pig farmers/evangelist) CF-Niverville/Powerview 1967 C-1968; Joseph Granger B-1968 L-1973; Gisele Fontaine B-1968 L-1981; Mitro (Dan) Fosty B-1911 CF-Lowland & Anne Buchko C-1968 L-1980 WT-Beauséjour; Michael Gusta & Winnifred, landowners only C-1967 to present, family has taken over; Rémi Vincent & Thérèse Wilcott & 3 kids L-1968 WT-BC/AB/St-Georges/BC; Ed Pusiewich L-1968

"My parents bought the section of land from Ed Psavich (spelling), Joe Psavich's brother. What I remember about Ed is that he lived in Wpg and was a diabetic. I'm guessing that's why he sold the land. Joe farmed at Stead for a long time. I don't think Ed had any kids, he was a "bachelor" when he sold the land to our family but came to visit a few times and was with a lady that he introduced as his common law wife. When Ed Psavich was farming the section and living there, he lived in that 3 room house (that we lived in for a year) but only in the summer. There was no well or septic on the land then, just a dugout and an outhouse. I don't know how long Ed owned the farm, he bought it from Ed Neurenberg who still farmed the land one mile east next to the Fontaine land. Ed N lived in Lac du Bonnet." (Wanda Hiebert Bornn).

"George Hiebert sold his family farm in Niverville to come to Stead to do evangelical mission work in Black River, Fort Alexander and later in Powerview with his wife Dorothy." (Daniel Zirk)

It is interesting that no resident of Fatima identified themselves as Métis, based on records I've seen. I know there were some. Lillian Gordon was Métis. She was the wife of Adélarde Chevrefils. In 1968, when Stead included Fatima, 3 residents identified themselves as Métis. My mother is a descendant of Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière and Marie-Anne Gaboury; they are the grandparents of Louis Riel. Their daughter Josette married Amable Nault. We have ancestors with the name Richot and Vandal. We are Métis.

From the Manitoba Métis Federation website: The Métis are a people of North American Indian and European ancestry who coalesced into a distinct nation in the northwest in the late 18th century.

The Métis were a prominent and independent people in the 19th century and rose to resist the takeover of their homeland. Unfortunately, the immigration from Ontario, the United States and Europe was too strong and destructive, and the Métis Nation was defeated following a second resistance by Louis Riel.

From the Métis Family Services Surrey BC website: Métis are often referred to as the

rainbow people, for they are a people of many colours and shades...Denial of our heritage is a woeful part of Métis history. Métis, like other Aboriginal peoples, have suffered racism and prejudice that has poisoned our people. Neither completely Indian nor completely non-Indian, Métis have struggled with their unique legacy. Sadly, it has often been easier for Métis who could do so to pass as Québécois, Scottish, Irish or whatever other non-Aboriginal heritage they could trace.

On July 4, 1885, Louis Riel stated: "My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back."

1969: Marie Fontaine B&D-1969; Bryan Fontaine B-1969 L-1981; Lucille Fontaine B-1969; John Petals L-1969 let the land go up for taxes; Henri Vincent landowner only C-late 1960's? L-2007

1970's: Cécile Granger B-1970 L-1973; David Fontaine B-1970; Peter Denisiuk L-1971? D-1971; Edward Neurenberg & Gladys Fiebelkorn 4 kids L-1974 WT-Lac du Bonnet; René Fontaine B-1971; Norman Fontaine B-1971 L-1981; Raymond Fontaine B-1972; Maurice Fontaine & Ghislaine Bélanger L-1973 WT-Notre Dame de Lourdes/Leaf Rapids/Portage la Prairie?/Thomson?; Ernest Mercereau L(sold)-1972; Sylvio Lafreniere L(sold)-1972 WT-Kenora; Wilfrid Vincent L-1972; Peter Sinavich L-1973; Orris Sinavich C-? rents out to Ken Matchizen; Hercule Granger & Cécile Gregoire & 11 kids L-1973 WT-Ste. Agathe/Winnipeg; Jim Pusiewich C&L?; Ernest Dupont & Maria Boulet L-1974; Marcel Dupont L-1974; Denis Leclerc L(sold)-1974; Gordon Roman CF-Stead C-1973 L-1978; Josephat Vincent & Gabrielle Boulet L-1974; Michael Shady L-1974; Philippe Vincent & Denise Wilcott L-1974 WT-St-Georges; Gary Krawchuk CF-East Selkirk C-? rents it out; Gregory Lesosky L-1976; Horace Smith L-1978; Chuckry's Sod Soil & Hauling C-before 1973 L-late 1980's?; Merle Haugerud & Grace Fontaine D-2009? C-1978 L-2011; (John) Hildebrand Sod Farm CF-Stead C-1974 to present; Kenneth Mclean L-1974 2004?; Edgar Vincent & Eugénie Boulet L-1970's, son Ronald B-1946 owned & worked the land later on; Léo Brulé D-1974; Joseph Vincent L-1976; Steve Krawchuk L-1977; Minnie Krawchuk C-? rents out to Ken Matchizen; Cal Schade (had bees/hailed sod), landowner only C-1978 L-1980's; Robert Jr "Bobby" Thomson CF-Stead C-1978 to present; Hercule Granger D-1978; Rose-Alma Fontaine D-1979

Dad purchased a blue 1961 Chevy Biscayne 4 door around 1969 and used it until 1971 or so. In 1969 a loaf of rye bread cost 9 cents, a dozen eggs 19 cents, gas 45 cents per gallon (9.7/litre) and a 25 pack of cigarettes 75 cents. In 1969 the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau enacts the Official Languages Act which gives English and French equal status in the government of Canada. In 1970 the legal drinking age is lowered to 18. Manitoba becomes one of the first provinces to reduce the eligible age to buy liquor from 21 years of age.

In 1970 the automatic washer and dryer were purchased and Dad added on to the house - an attached garage, open laundry room and 2 bedrooms. In this new addition electric baseboard heaters were installed. The older section of the house was heated with a wood furnace in the basement. We added coal so it would heat all nite. We used coal until 1968 or so, when we got baseboard heaters. A second dugout in the back field was added. Dad bought a brand new Case tractor in Thalberg. We had a really good crop that year (timothy). Financially, some years were better. It all depended on the crop.

On the farm we had approximately 60 head of cattle (lots of milking cows in the earlier days), goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese.

Monique remembers seeing a bobcat or lynx on the property. From the internet "In 1973, a small 2-year-old male lion "cougar" was killed on a farm near Stead..." There was a cougar sighted in the summer of 2010 in the Gull Lake area. There are also wolves, coyotes, moose, deer, bears and snowy and grey owls in the Fatima area.

Crops that we seeded included wheat, barley, oats, timothy and alfalfa. We grew our own vegetables. In our garden were potatoes (we had an abundance of potatoes because they grew well in peat moss, Dad sold and donated some for fall suppers at St-Georges), beans, peas, cabbage, lettuce, corn, onions, carrots, kohlrabi, turnips, beets, tomatoes, radishes, rhubarb, cucumbers, melons, etc and fruit (raspberries and currants). We filled two freezers in the basement with our variety of meats and vegetables. When Mom's uncle Laurent Grégoire visited from St-Jean Baptiste (he was also Dad's brother-in-law), he brought us cucumbers because we couldn't grow them. *"The peat moss was too rich or too acidic or too alkaline or too whatever. The plants grew nicely but the blossoms usually rotted off and didn't produce cukes. Occasionally we got a few baby cukes..."* (Lucienne).

For my family, breakfast consisted of oatmeal. Sometimes we had puffed wheat. Dad did not eat oatmeal. Mom made him eggs, toast and porc salé (salt pork). If there was no salt pork he had leftover meat. Mom served him at the table. If he wanted something he was not one to get it himself. We bought whole fish at Beconia and we fished close to home and Pine Falls. Robert liked to hunt - he came home with prairie chickens and geese quite often and the occasional rabbit. Dad came home a couple of times with a moose. We ate fresh and natural eggs, meat, milk (goat milk too), cream, butter, bread, vegetables and fruit. Nothing ever went to waste - yes, we ate cow tongue, heart, kidney, blood pie, headcheese and all that other good stuff. Mom made jams, jellies, relishes and cottage cheese. She made chocolate and plain puddings with all the milk we had. She sometimes even made ice-cream!

I remember the slop pail, that was for feeding the pigs. I guess what was put in there was mostly what we nowadays compost. I remember Dad cooking up some wheat and potatoes for the pigs in a big pot over a fire outside. Mmm...

On the farm Mom was busy having babies, feeding and diapering babies, keeping babies out of harms way, cutting our hair (she was very talented at many things), sending us off to school and all the rest associated with kids. When we had earaches she would put a pillow in the oven to warm it up then we would lie on our side with the pillow against our ear. How soothing that was! She did the cooking, baking (40 loaves of bread per week made in a washing machine tub, the wine was made in that as well), laundry, cleaning house, seeding, weeding and harvesting the garden, mending, etc, etc. She sometimes made soap. I remember seeing her with a large container standing close to the pig while Dad slashed its' throat. She would collect the blood to make blood pie. She was a brave and tough woman. I don't remember her ever complain about any of it. Don't remember her ever yell, be impatient with any of us. She had 11 children in 14 years. We had 2 babysitters and one homemaker come in to help Mom at times starting in the early 1960's. Simone Fontaine and occasionally her sister Nöella babysat us.

“Marie Lussier was hired as a mother’s helper. She was about 15-16 years old. She would stay a week at a time and help with household chores. She would also run the house when Mom was in hospital having babies. She went to the hospital with Mom and Dad when Monique was born just in case the birth happened in the car on the way to Pine Falls. Mom was in heavy labour by the time Dad got the car started in the extreme cold. Apparently they got to the hospital just in time. Simone Fontaine was also at our house that morning and she looked after us. Mom needed two mothers helpers- there were already 8 kids under the age of 11.

Simone Fontaine was the other babysitter. She and Marie were cousins. Simone would babysit while Mom and Dad went to the Armoury in Pine Falls one evening a week.” (Lucienne). Marie Lussier left Fatima in 1967 and Simone Fontaine in 1968. Since 2009, I occasionally see Simone in St-Boniface.

Dad was busy with calving, milking the cows, caring for the chicks, feeding the animals, slaughtering the pigs and cows, smoking the pork, castrating the animals, working the land, seeding and swathing the crops, baling (Dad made a "traineau" that was pulled by the tractor to make groups of 5 or 7 bales - this made loading the bales onto the trailer a much easier job as it reduced the number of stops during pick-up), adding on to the house and building sheds and chicken coops, fixing machinery (he built his own lawnmower) and the out-buildings, planting trees and flowers, seeding, weeding and harvesting the garden (he grew and dried his own tobacco year round in the early years), etc, etc. Dad would come home all black in the face from the dust when doing fieldwork – it was an open tractor.

Yes, work was hard and times were hard but my parents did have some good times. I imagine they had little leisure time - she most likely less than he. Dad, like his father, was a music conductor. He conducted the singing for masses at Fatima and later in St-Georges. In 1954, possibly earlier and/or later, Dad attended the monthly meetings for the Farmers' Union. He and Cécile joined the armoury in Pine Falls in the early 1960's. Marc Beaudry tells me Dad had philosophical talks with him on a couple of occasions at school in St-Georges. Marc was Lucienne's, Alphonse's and my grade 6 teacher. He taught Robert in grade 5. Since the 1990's, I occasionally see Marc Beaudry in St-Boniface. Dad smoked a pipe, hunted (I remember Uncle Marc coming over to hunt with Dad and Robert for geese), skated and played pickup hockey games at Stead in 1969 and 1970 (a pickup game is when friends get together and play), played the cornet, watched Séraphin - "Les Belles Histoires" and hockey on TV and sang with Cécile. She sang more than him - she usually was singing when peeling the potatoes, washing dishes, cooking, etc. She sang "Quand le Soleil dit Bonjours aux Montagnes" often. It was Lucille Starr's hit in 1964. Mom played the violin. I don't recall other personal downtime activities. She loved nature, the open space, singing, us kids. It must have been important to Mom because we subscribed to La Liberté, on a regular basis I believe. La Liberté is the only French provincial weekly newspaper in Manitoba. It is a Winnipeg newspaper founded in 1913 by Archbishop Langevin of Saint-Boniface. In 1970, the publication was taken over by Presse-Ouest Limitée which is owned by the francophone cultural organization la Société Franco-Manitobaine. It cost 7 cents in 1960, 10 cents in 1965 and 15 cents in 1971.

A song Mom and Dad sang together in their earlier years -
Prendre un p'tit coup c'est agréable
Prendre un p'tit coup c'est doux

Prendre un gros coup ca rend l'esprit malade
Prendre un p'tit coup c'est agréable
Prendre un p'tit coup c'est doux...
A song Dad sang -
J'en arache, j'en arache
Je tire le diable par la queue
J'en arache, j'en arache
Que voulez vous
Je suis malchanceux

Income to support the family was had by selling cream, vegetables, cattle, pigs and grain. Dad worked in the fields for Robert Thomson and Steve Roman. Dad also did some painting and helped with some rough carpentry for the Thomsons and Hieberts. When he worked enough hours (for someone else) he was able to collect Unemployment Insurance (as it was called at the time). Pete Sabada from Thalberg did some combining for Dad. Once a year in the fall Dad made the mortgage and tax payment. Many men from the area worked in the bush to supplement their income. The women stayed home when their husbands left to go work in the bushcamps. They looked after everything: the home, children, and farm. There is a story of Mme Vincent (Thérèse Wilcott) going thru snow up to her thighs to feed and water the animals. Dad did work in the bushcamps in his bachelor days, but after that I imagine he would have been too busy with the farm and the growing family. Lucienne worked at the camp in Albert Beach part of one summer for her own pocket money.

Work for me and my siblings included helping to plant the garden, digging up the potatoes, picking vegetables and preparing them for freezing, getting the chickens, geese and ducks in the fall time ready for the freezer (chopping off their heads, soaking them in hot water and plucking them, cutting them open and taking their insides out). We also helped Mom and Dad by cleaning out diapers, housecleaning, straightening nails to be reused for some other building project, feeding the animals, driving the tractor with a square wooden platform behind it so Dad could pile up the bales on it, etc. Emile and Alphonse had the job of milking the cow.

On the farm I witnessed cattle and pigs being slaughtered and butchered, bulls and pigs being castrated and calves being born (if needed Dad would put his hand in there, up to his elbow, tie the legs of the calf together and help pull). Out on the fields I saw seeding, swathing and baling. Some of us kids helped with those chores. I hung around with Dad a lot on the farm. Followed him to the barn in the snow, in his footsteps, to feed and look after the animals. I straightened lots of used nails for him, fetched tools, watched him work. I enjoyed being with him.

Games we kids played consisted of Hide and Seek, Simon Says, Tag, Marbles, lots of card games (Animaux - we picked an animal name and if we put down the same card number as another player we had to say their animal name, with lots of players it was confusing as there were lots of long names), War, etc. I remember play-acting (Little Red Riding Hood was one), catching fireflies and tadpoles, making string figures (The Witch's Broom, Jacob's Ladder, and one that took two people), sliding down the hill of the dugout on a car hood, sliding across the kitchen floor after Mom had waxed it, going to Gull Lake Beach, blowing up Raid cans in the fire, catching buckets of crayfish by hand at the bridge on the Main

Drain (mmm), swimming in the Main Drain (sliding down slippery clay to the water and coming out full of leeches), rolling down the ditch inside a big metal drum or tire, jumping onto piles of hay from the roof of the barn, watching my older siblings climb the ranger tower on Murray Hill in Belair Forest (in 1959 a fire went thru there from Beaconia; Gordon Emberley was the forest ranger in 1953, Arthur Carriere D-2010 (Alfreda) in the early to mid 1960's, they both lived at Stead; the tower was taken down near the end of 2002), picking blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, chokecherries and other wild fruit in Belair Forest and along the way to St-Georges in Brightstone Sand Hills Provincial Forest, walking along the train tracks and checking out the shack there, Emile riding the pigs and riding his bike on the barn roof (later on he was joyriding with the tractor in the yard with me hanging on), looking for 4 leaf clovers in the grass, trying to catch the wild kittens up in the barn loft, watching late nite movies on TV, sliding down gravel piles (3 miles south of Henri Fontaine) and picnics in the front yard and on the rocks on the way to St-Georges. In the La Liberté newspaper it was me who got the "La Page de Bicolo". It was a page for kids. I don't remember having to fight for it with my other siblings. Butter making time was fun. All us kids would have a little jar with cream and we would tumble it back and forth from one side to the other on our lap until it lumped up together. Voila, butter - and delicious buttermilk. Some of us went to Camp Notre Dame at Albert Beach a couple of times. We put chickens to sleep by putting their head under their wing and rocking them. At home we learned how to make whistles from willow tree branches, how to make sling shots, tap maple trees to collect the sap, bake and make "grenouilles" (fried dough).

When I was 10 years old or so I made Dad a Father's Day Card with this written in it - Your a farmer from the campagne You do your train + you pull your cow This morning when you got up the time was heavy + you weren't in your plate. Translated in French it says - Vous être un fermier de la campagne Tu fait ton train et tu tire ta vache Ce matin quand tu te lever le temps était pesant et t'était pas dant ton assiette. I don't know the origin of this French poem. I guess I wrote it in English to be funny (maybe my older brothers said it that way). It makes sense in French, but not when it is translated in English directly.

No relatives lived close by therefore we rarely saw them. For the most part they came over as opposed to us going there. I only remember visiting grandma Granger and uncle Henri in those days. *"I remember the occasional visitors: Memère Granger avec Mon Oncle Henri, Mon Oncle Marc en passant pour aller à la pêche, Mon Oncle Laurent qui était venu jaser, Jules et Yvette venus faire un tour, Soeurs Cécile et Marcelle en habits de soeurs. Mon Oncle Lucien venait nous voir assez souvent. J'amais surtout les visites de Memère St-Vincent. Elle prenait "le bus" de St. Boniface jusqu'à Gull Lake et mon père allait la chercher. Elle restait chez nous plusieurs jours (semaines, peut-être?). Elle nous chantait des vieilles chansons et chacun des enfants prenait son tour à "s'assir sur ses genoux" pour se faire berçer. She would bring us a bag of marshmallows for a treat. She was a wonderful Memère! I remember Hercule calling her Sainte-Anna!...I remember occasional family trips in the old car to St. Boniface to visit Memère and Pepère Granger. I don't think we visited anyone else. Mon Oncle Henri lived with them and we always had lots of fun with him. Memère would be busy cooking and preparing a meal, Pepère would be talking with Hercule and us kids would be getting pinched and teased by Mon Oncle Henri. Thinking about him always brings a smile to my face. When I was about 10 years old, I stayed at their apartment for about a week so that I could go to the dental out-patient clinic at the St. Boniface Hospital for free tooth extractions. It was Mon Oncle Henri who took*

me there by bus and also took care of me afterwards. I remember Memère still busy cooking and preparing a meal...Almost every year my mom would go to the hospital for a few days and would come back with yet another baby. This was always exciting maybe because it meant relatives would be asked to be god-parents and would come to visit us. It was always exciting to see somebody from the outside world.” (Lucienne).

“...Favorite memory at Matante Cecile’s house: I remember when I was even younger, the time that we spent Christmas at Matante Cecile’s house. I remember Matante Jeanette had brought these Christmas socks made out of plastic that were filled with candy and surprises. The house was FULL of kids running around everywhere and we had a blast. I don’t know how Matante Cecile was able to keep up! I also recall eating the best rabbit stew I have every tasted before! Since then, I always wanted to go back for Matante Cecile’s special stew. I don’t think I ever had rabbit stew again. I also remember the many times that we visited Matante at the farm in the summer time and played in the hay bales and in the mud and getting ourselves all dirty then running back in the house. Poor Matante I now really wonder how many times she had to clean that dirty floor after us!” (Rachel St-Vincent).

In 1970, shortly after Cécile was born, Mom had a bad episode of arthritis. Both feet were very swollen and she could barely walk. A group of ladies from St-Georges “de la ligue des Femmes Catholiques” which included Mme Bruneau, Elise's mother, came to help out and did a big cleaning. After that, one came out twice a week until Mom got better.

From the Canadian Dimension website: This article appeared in the July/August 2012 issue of Canadian Dimension magazine. Medicare was born in Saskatchewan on July 1, 1962. It would be the first government-controlled, universal, comprehensive single-payer medical insurance plan in North America. It was a difficult birth. The North American medical establishment and the entire insurance industry were determined to stop Medicare in its tracks. They feared it would become popular and spread, and they were right. Within 10 years all of Canada was covered by a medical insurance system based on the Saskatchewan plan, and no serious politician would openly oppose it.

Mom and Dad both developed health problems in the early 1970's. Aunt Jeannette says she came to help out for 2 weeks when Mom returned from the hospital the day before Christmas in 1971. Ina Stubel from Gull Lake came to look after us and the home when Mom was away at the hospital and later recuperating. Two men from Stead (brothers Frank D-1999 and Bert Smoluk D-2005) were hired to help look after the farm when Dad was incapable of doing so.

From the Wikipedia website: Manitoba Public Insurance is a non-profit Crown corporation based in Manitoba that has provided basic public auto insurance since 1971. The basic automobile insurance product offered by MPI is known more informally as Autopac. Basic automobile insurance is compulsory in Manitoba and is only available through Manitoba Public Insurance.

Mom had a tubal ligation in March 1972. Other methods she had tried to stop conceptions did not suit her (or Dad) or work well.

"...As for the post office, I'm sure that I drove to Stead one spring when I was 16 to pick up the baby chicks and ducklings that had come in with the mail. Dad was busy on the fields so I went to pick them up. Mrs Soluk the postmaster didn't want those chicks in her post office any longer than absolutely necessary. I was 16 in 1972..." (Lucienne).

Miscellaneous information from a school project Lucienne did in June 1972:

Ethnic groups in the Stead area consist of: Polish 33%, Ukrainian 30%, French 20%, German 13% and others 4%. Ages are: 60 and over 30%, 40-60 20%, 30-40 10%, 18-30 4% and 0-18 36%. The soil was very fertile. A few years after settlement began in the early 1950's, new roads were built and old ones repaired.

Monique went to school in Powerview for kindergarten classes in 1972. St-Georges did not offer it. Joseph was in kindergarten in 1973. They went home at lunchtime in a taxi. Dad was paid \$15 in 1972 for the month of conducting he did at St-Georges.

For the Christmas concert in grade 6, December 1972, Alphonse played a thief. The teacher, Marc Beaudry, says Alphonse did not want to sing so had Alphonse speak the defending lyrics of the song "L'orange" by Gilbert Bécaud. I must have been part of the group singing at the back, accusing him of stealing. Marc says many in the audience were crying during the show. People of St-Georges still speak about this very touching event.

In September 1973 schooling for me in Powerview included going to school in Lac du Bonnet once a week for Home Economics. Cooking and sewing for the girls; for the boys it was drafting, sheet metal and electronics. I don't remember being asked and given an option on which courses I wanted to take.

My whole family went to see Les Intrépides in concert Friday February 2, 1973 in the Powerview School gym. I imagine it would have been exciting for Mom and Dad to see Marcien Ferland again. The evening did not end well unfortunately. We were stopped on the way home by the police. They checked our gas in the tank. It was purple. Not legal in cars. Purple gas was less costly and was only for farm vehicles and machinery. Purple gas was legal in trucks, which were considered farm vehicles. We couldn't all fit in a truck. We were poor, so we used purple gas on occasions. Daniel Zirk, a farmer from Stead who knew Dad, says to me in 2013 that the whole episode wasn't fair.

Sometime along the way in 1973, a decision had been made to move. Lucienne did not want to switch schools mid-year, so she went to stay with cousins in September (Nestor St-Vincent) at St. Pierre where she decided she would go to school. This was when we knew we were moving to Ste. Agathe. It had no high school. My uncle Lucien's house happened to be for sale there. We left November 17, 1973, on Mom's 41st birthday. Ste-Agathe was a small town 15 minutes south of St-Norbert (Winnipeg). No pets came with us. We squeezed into the station wagon that we had, a white Dodge Plymouth. Dad and others went in the moving truck, supplied and driven by Mr. Hiebert. The property, a half section, sold for \$38,000. Gordon Roman from Stead purchased our property. He rented out the house to Merle Haugerud and his wife Grace Fontaine. She was native and not related to the other Fontaines there. They had four kids. Merle ran a wrecking yard, besides hauling sod for Hackie. The house burned down in 1977. I believe the tenants purchased the land after that and put up a new house. André Fontaine did some baling for Merle. Bobby Thomson

purchased the land in 1978, less 5 acres with the home. I may have incorrect info as to the year of the fire and sale of property. A child of Merle's daughter Sharron drowned, on the property in the dugout I believe. Grace died and Merle hitched up with another woman. They were there until 2010. Mike from Winnipeg moved in the fall of 2011. He was there only a couple of months. Vance Mailman has been there since the spring of 2013. Mike is related to Merle and/or one of his wives. Vance Mailman is the son of one of Merle's wives.

In 1974 me and my family went back to Stead for the annual summer picnic. I remember some of us kids got "Stead" t-shirts. I was very proud to wear mine back in Ste-Agathe. *"When I was 19, I attended a community picnic in Stead (near Fatima) with my family. This is where I met my future husband Ross Gunning."* (Lucienne).

1980's: Cal Schade L-1980's; Ken Molinski (Frank's son) CF-Thalberg B-1946 & Merle Pottinger CF-Ashern, landowners only, rented some land a few years since 1980's, presently owns and rents to Steven Fosty, keeps some land for hay; Bill Fosty & Cindy CF-Brokenhead area & 2 kids Brendan & Jolene B-1980's C-early 1980's L-2001? WT-Stead/Beauséjour; John Fosty (Bill's father) B-1917 D-2014 & Teenie CF-Brokenhead area, landowner only 1980's? WT-Beausejour; Joe Pusiewich, sod, landowner only 1980?-1990?; Mitro Fosty L-1980; Steven Fosty (Mitro's son) CF-Lowland & Lynn Patzer M-1973 C-1980's? to present, landowner only; Georges Fontaine & Cécile Lussier & 4 kids L-1981 WT-Powerview/Lac du Bonnet; Wild Rice Developments Ltd L-1981; Hector Fontaine L-1980 D-1981; Joe Rachuk D-1982; Ben Matchizen L-1980's?; Ken Matchizen B-1964 (mechanic/farmer) & Betty C-? to present; Steven Chuckry & Olga L-1983; Leon Samletzki D-1985; Frank Molinski D-1986; Florent Vincent D-1987; Denis Heckert C-1987; Steve Roman D-1988; Henry Roman C-1988? L-2002

In 1980 Marcien Ferland was awarded the Manitoba Order of the Buffalo Hunt and in 2009 he was a recipient of the Order of Canada.

From a Government of Canada website: Marcien Ferland has spent over 50 years working to preserve and promote French and Métis culture in Manitoba. His collection of songs, entitled *Chansons à répondre du Manitoba*, as well as his book, *Au temps de la Prairie*, represent an invaluable compilation of traditional music and the history and culture of the Métis. A talented playwright, he received the first Riel Prize for his musical comedy, *Les Batteux*, part one of his historical trilogy, *Manitoba*. As a composer of symphonic music, among other genres, and founder of the *Chorale des Intrépides*, he has delighted and inspired audiences with his music.

1990's: Edward Gusta & Iona C-1990; McEwen Bros Ltd (2 sisters who own sod company) C-1991 or so, to present; Ed Hackie D-1990's; Juliette Barnabé Granger D-1992; Gerald Hiebert (son of George) & Marilyn & kids, worked with his dad on farm, purchased other land L-1993; Aline Granger Gentes D-1994; Gerald Zirk & Lana landowners only C-1994; Tamara-Jo Thomson C-1996; Jason Zirk landowner only C-1998; Henri Granger D-1998; Antoine Bérard D-1999

In 1990 some of the roads on the south end of Fatima were given names - Zirk, Chuckry and Roman. I noticed today in December 2013 on Google Maps that the Main Drain is called Overwater Road.

In November 1992 Codie Simard (a Métis born in 1929) died at the intersection of the Main Drain and Stead Road. There is a marker with a Métis flag. A Mr and Mrs Louie Simard lived at Stead in the year 1972.

Mr Miller from Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation replies to my email and informs me that "the relocated portion of PR 304 was constructed in the early 1990's and surfaced in 1993." Part of this highway was the dirt road that was behind our property with grass growing down the middle, the road we travelled after church in St-Georges to check on the crop. It became a highway that goes to Powerview from Beaconia at the 59 highway. *"...the new highway completely bypassing Stead had a negative effect on business there."* (Lucienne).

2000's: Ed Smolarski CF-Stead C-?; Gina Downie (Dan Zirk's daughter) C-? to present; Nick Roman L-2000; Robert Granger D-2001; Henri Vincent L-2007; Bill Fosty & Cindy & 2 kids L-2001? WT-Stead/Beauséjour; Funk C&L early 2000; Randy Pusiewich CF-Stead C&L early 2000 he added fish ponds on property WT-Stead; Ben Matchizen D-2000; Henry Roman L-2002; Art Kemball D-2014 & Bella Vincent D-2012 L-2005?; Lloyd Yang CF-Winnipeg C-2004? L-2006? Rented? Sold-2011; Dorothy Hiebert L-2000 WT-Pine Falls/Winnipeg Nursing home D-2012 & George Hiebert L-2005 George remarried WT-Powerview/Winnipeg; Brad Murray & Kelly & 4 kids CF-Powerview C-2005 (traded properties with G. Hiebert, they were friends); Gerard Gentes D-2006; Sheila Paseska (Dan Zirk's daughter) C-2006 to present; Paul Boulet D-2007; Marc Granger D-2008; André Saurette D-2008; Adéline Vincent D-2008; Aimé Fillion D-2000 & Thérèse Lapierre L-2000; Lionel Fillion (Aimé's brother) CF-Winnipeg landowner only C-2000 L-2010 sold 1/2 section for \$224,000; Cécile Grégoire Granger D-2009; Grace Fontaine D-2009?; Brightstone Hutterite Colony C-2000's to present; Greenwald Hutterite Colony to present; Merle Haugerud D-2011 & partner L-2011 WT-Swan River; Mike CF-Winnipeg C&L-2011; Ryan CF-Winnipeg landowner only C&L-2011; William CF-Winnipeg C-2011 to present; Joe Romanchuk L-2013; Robert Niblock C-2013; Gerry & Jason Zirk landowners only C-2013; Vance Mailman C-2013 to present; Ruth Thomson D-2013; Clarence Schmidt D-2013; Aimé Boiteau D-2014; 2014: 5 households, 10 people

For some time now there are many businesses in the area selling sod, peat moss and topsoil. Blue Grass Sod Producers Ltd is a third generation family owned and operated business that was established by Ed and Helen Hackie in 1967. They lived at Fatima in the summers and went back to Saint-Norbert in the fall. Ed passed away in the 1990's. The business is now operated by Russ and Joan Hackie along with their sons Caleb and Ezra. Merle Haugerud hauled sod for Hackie. Gusta Seed and Sod Farms started in 1969. Michael Gusta and his wife Winnifred started the business. Ed Gusta and his wife Iona took over. Their son Glen and his wife April presently run the business. They live in Thalberg. The Brightstone Hutterite Colony has purchased possibly 3 sections of Gusta's property north of highway 304 recently. Chuckry's Sod Soil & Hauling (Kyle) was in business before 1973 and quit possibly in the late 1980's. (John) Hildebrand Sod Farm started in 1974 with his sister Doreen. Hildebrand cuts and sells the Thomsons' sod. I believe he also grows some of his own. John says it's a very busy life in the summer. His father considered purchasing our property when it was up for sale in 1973. John started by hauling sod for others in the beginning. The Thomson's from Stead, brothers David and Bobby, presently are in the grain

and topsoil business. Their father's sod business started in 1974 or 1975. Steve Roman had land by the Main Drain where he grew sod (the land he bought from Jules Granger). It was sold to Gusta in 2002. Joe Rachuk was in the peat moss business in the late 1970's, possibly until the early 1980's. He sold sod as well. Joe Schure hauled for Joe Rachuk. Joe Pusiewich was in the sod business around 1980 to 1990. McEwen Bros Ltd in West St Paul is run by two sisters who own 2,000 acres in Fatima, since 1991 or so. They purchased land from Wild Rice Developments Ltd, north of highway 304. The one lady I talked to says she has been there twice since and had never heard of Fatima. (Peter) Gerbrand Sod Supply hauled sod, starting the business in the late 70's. He recently sold to Jeff Fast. Rita and Marie Fontaine worked for the Thomsons and Hildebrands on their sod farms for many years. The village of Stead is known as the "sod capital" of Manitoba. Stead ships and distributes sod and peat moss to folks as far south as Texas. All of the sod and peat moss comes from Fatima. Besides growing sod and selling topsoil and peat moss, present landowners in the Fatima area seed canola, soybean, sunflower, etc. Other businesses in the area included two marijuana grow-ops which were shut down. One was shut down around the year 2000 and the other in 2006. They were both on the same property, the southeast end of Fatima.

From "The Lac du Bonnet Leader" 2006

“Another North Eastman marijuana grow operation has been shut down by police. Powerview RCMP raided a residential farm house in the Stead area Nov. 3 and seized 57 marijuana plants and various other pieces of drug paraphernalia. Police have charged 37-year-old Tung Hoang Ho with production of marijuana and possession for the purpose of trafficking. He has been remanded in custody and the investigation continues. Const. Brian Gulay said it's been close to a year since Powerview police have found a grow-op in the area.”

There were 4 households at Fatima in 2009: Rita and Henri Fontaine, Marie and André Fontaine, Brad and Kelly Murray and children from Powerview who came in 2005, and Merle Haugerud and his partner. Haugerud's property was for sale in August 2009 and he left in 2010. There are five households at Fatima as of the summer of 2014. William moved in 2011 and Vance Mailman has been there since the spring of 2013.

With the Pine Falls paper mill permanently closed in 2009, the railroad track was removed in 2012. Sherwood Forest at Gull Lake is the only store left in the area. The next closest would be Clark's Corner at Powerview on one end and Wavers at Brokenhead on the other.

Anna (Leclerc) Lachance presently lives at St. Eustache and is a cousin of Paul, Albert, Joseph and Armand Leclerc. Her mother was Dolorès Bouvier of St-Georges, her father Victor of Baie St. Paul, parish of St. Eustache. Victor had land at Fatima in the 1950's which his brother Pierre later farmed. Pierre had 4 sons who had land at Fatima: Paul & Rita Vincent (Remi's daughter), Albert & Adéline Vincent (Rémi's daughter), Joseph and Armand. Marthe Beaudry (Pierre's sister) & Elphege lived there as well. Pierre's wife Alice Giasson died young, leaving many young children. Their daughter Alice was adopted by Hermangilde Laramée and Béatrice Leclerc, Béatrice being her aunt. They lived in St. Eustache. Alexandre Milette married Beatrice Giasson (sister of Alice Sr). Jean Giasson (Alice Giasson's brother) operated the St-Georges ferry for a few years in the 1930's. He married Alice Bouvier. Joseph Giasson, oldest brother of Jean and Alice, married Délima Auger in Dollard,

SK. Délima is a cousin of Jean-Baptiste Grégoire, my mother's father.

In 2014, landowners in the area who do not live there include the Zirks, the Thomsons, Ken Matchizen and Steven Fosty. There are others, plus all the sod companies.

Hutterites are buying up land in the area recently. The majority of landowners are now from the Stead area. Land has gone up in price big time. A quarter section of agricultural land is worth approximately \$250,000.

In 2013 Ken Molinski from Thalberg tells me he admired Mom and Dad, they tried hard. My brother Robert used to visit him after we left Fatima. Ken looked forward to his visits. Robert no longer visits as of 2001, when he passed away.

I am very proud of my parents Hercule and Cécile. They sure worked hard! And they took the time to make and enjoy special moments. From them and my experiences of living at Fatima I learned to love the land, animals and nature, acceptance of different nationalities as it was a mixed bag out there, strength of character is a must wherever you are, hard work doesn't always pay off financially but it does pay off in some way or another (e.g. this story - it's proving to be part of my healing journey). I learned to love yellow roses, old pick-up trucks, homemade vegetable soup, old French songs, plaid, the smell of burning straw, the moo of a cow, open space, the sound of nothing going on except the buzz of insects, simplicity, realness, baby animals, wild flowers, the magic of life. Fatima and the people there have influenced me greatly, in many good ways. I am very grateful to have lived there for my first almost 13 years of life.

I've talked to many people about their time in Fatima. They obviously all had different experiences. For most folks it was good, for some not so good. I had always believed/remembered that all there ever was in Fatima was a school/church building, a few homes and that the land was not very useful. Researching this story, I was surprised and excited to learn otherwise! It definitely was an interesting little community from its beginning as Grande Prairie - with many fascinating people and stories. Settlers came in the early 1940's and some left after 5 years or so. They started settling again in the 1950's and most left after approximately 15 years. Presently it is primarily farmed land with the owners living elsewhere. It is a "Grande Prairie" of wheat, canola, etc. My refuge for peace and quiet...the farmers are out only for a short period of time, twice a year.

The end

A special thank you to my sister Lucienne Gunning for her ongoing help with this story.

June – September 2009. Worked on and new info added until August 2014.

Please feel free to email me at memetis7@gmail.com or phone 204-233-2094 with any additional information, corrections, comments and questions. Thank you.

Marie-Claire Granger

After words...This started out as a short story with basic memories for me and my siblings. It has taken a turn all over the place. It had me talking to all sorts of people, near and far. Lots of strangers, in person and over the phone. It has evolved into what it is today because it had to. I was only the tool - it carried me where I had to go. It has become a historical story with family genealogy. Fatima and the people there will not be forgotten.

Emails received

November 16/09...and that you're enjoying putting together your family history. That is certainly a benefit and a gift to the entire family. Lorette Larocque Miller (my grade 1 and 2 teacher)

Jan 7, 2010 I'm glad that you found the information on Fatima/Stead useful. I thank you for the map of Fatima, People in Fatima and the Fatima Days et les Grangers. Everything will be kept on file at the Archdiocese. The best to you in your project. Léonce Aubin, Chancellor

2012 Un très grand merci pour l'information que tu m'as fait parvenir....fort intéressant et ça rappel des souvenirs! Au plaisir, Thérèse (St-Onge) Hébert (teacher at Fatima)