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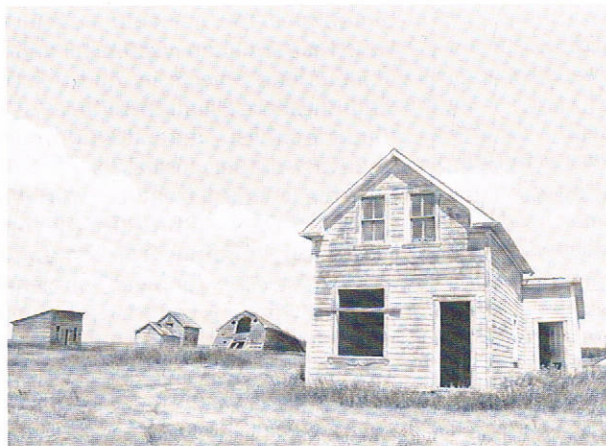
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Simon James Dawson was appointed by the Canadian Government in 1857 to explore the country from Lake Superior westward to the Saskatchewan. His report was among the first to attract attention to the possibilities of the Northwest as a home for settlers. He was later to build the Dawson Route from Lake-of-the-Woods to Winnipeg, Manitoba.

William George Richardson Hind accompanied his brother, Henry Youle Hind, as official artist when the latter was in command of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan exploration expedition of 1858. W. Hind revisited the Northwest in 1863-64 and did numerous paintings of the people and general scenes.

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FROM THE EDITOR	2
EDITORIAL by Paul C. Thistle Records of the AMM	3
ETHNIC HOMESTEAD MUSEUMS by Ed Ledohowski A Plan for a Decentralized Provincial Heritage Park	4
THE PICTORIAL PRESENTATION OF PRAIRIE SETTLEMENT by W. J. Carlyle	9
BEYOND THE BROOM CLOSET by Elizabeth Blight Establishing an Archival Program in a Museum Context	17
SUCCESS STORIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL by Neal Putt	20
SHOULD WE FIX UP, ADD ON, OR MOVE OUT? by David McInnes A look at building projects for community museums	23
PREPARING A COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES MANUAL by Claire Zimmerman	26
VISUAL LITERACY IN MUSEUM EDUCATION by Liz Coffman	29
INTEGRATING NATURAL HISTORY IN MUSEUM EXHIBITS by Maureen Rodgers	32
MANITOBA FOCUS	34
NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS	36



COVER

Abandoned Icelandic farmstead near Hnaua, Manitoba. Such farmsteads are only now being recognized as potentially valuable cultural and tourism resources.

Photograph by Ed Ledohowski

Records of the AMM

by Paul C. Thistle

Judith Robinson has written about an old Canadian proverb which holds that a fool and his (or her) heritage are soon parted. There are numerous other hoary aphorisms which might be inflicted upon the reader here, but this one should suffice.

The issue at hand is the need for the Association of Manitoba Museums to look to its own institutional heritage represented by the records created over the past seventeen years since its establishment. The AMM was incorporated in 1972; however, there are also documents in existence from an earlier period which take us as far back as a September 1959 Volume 1 Number 1 issue of the *Manitoba Museums Newsletter* distributed by Barbara Johnstone of the old Hudson's Bay Company Museum. These too are of interest and should be collected and preserved.

Being a heritage organization, the AMM should be particularly sensitive to the need for positive action in the effort to preserve its own history. Our sister organization, the Association of Manitoba Archivists, although eight years our junior, has already embarked upon this process. It should go without saying in our community — even among those of us who are not archivists — that there are important ethical, legal, scholarly, administrative, and financial imperatives for this course of action.

In the spirit of the move in 1988 to revise our constitution, and in the absence of any formal commitment in this regard, the following by-law has been proposed. "RECORDS: The records of the Association and any of its committees, regardless of physical form or characteristics, kept by its various employees and officers are the property of the Association. The records shall be administered by the President according to retention and disposal schedules approved by Council and/or as required by law. Records no longer required for operational purposes shall be donated to the Provincial Archives of Manitoba."

It should be acknowledged that the records of the AMM are just as much the property of the Association as are the pieces of equipment in the office or the membership fees on deposit at the bank. Indeed, we must consider good stewardship of these documents to be of even greater importance than our obligation to pay due care and attention to the proper handling of money or material goods; because the

former are in fact irreplaceable. Records created in the line of Association duty still in the possession of individuals are held in trust for all the members who have a right of access. These documents should not be abandoned to be cared for as personal property.

The records of our Association are irreplaceable, and our failure to act before important elements of our history are misplaced or destroyed would be unforgivable as well as foolish, especially in light of our own stated purposes as a heritage institution.

Despite the fact that the proposed by-law is not yet in place, Association President George Lammers has requested that anyone holding AMM records contact the office with a description of the materials. It has been suggested that the AMM make its first deposit in the Provincial Archives in 1989.

This initiative should also give our member museums cause to consider the state of their own records. How many have systematically collected, preserved, and arranged for easy access the founding instruments, board minutes, correspondence, annual reports, and other records which document the history of their institutions? Those that can answer in the affirmative can also testify that there are many benefits, not the least of which is the facilitation of filling out grant applications!

This is another call for all AMM members to support the adoption of the records by-law at this year's annual meeting; to collect and turn over to the Association any inactive records which might still be in your possession; and, no less importantly, to ensure that the records of your museums are properly preserved and organized for your own use.

Given the very purposes of our institutions, we might very well be regarded as fools if we fail to do so.

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Dawson & Hind invites submissions and responses to "Editorial." Letters may be edited for purposes of space or clarity. Please address your correspondence to the Editor, *Dawson & Hind*, 440-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0T6.