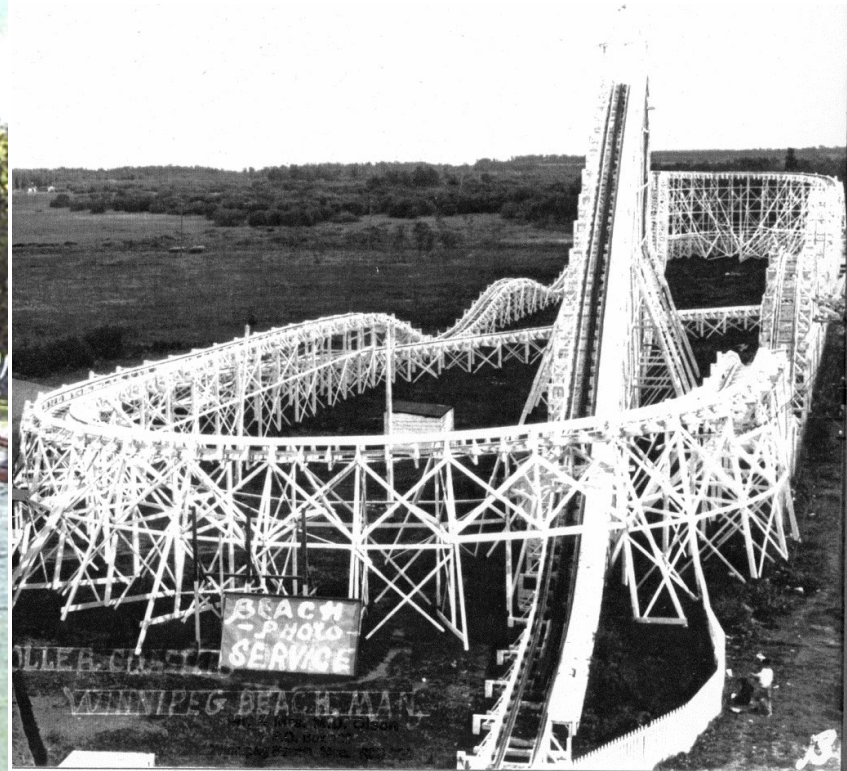


THOSE WERE THE DAYS



A Pictorial History of Winnipeg Beach

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A Pictorial History of Winnipeg Beach



This project was developed on behalf of the Winnipeg Beach Centennial Committee.

The author, Wally Johanson, would like to acknowledge the ongoing guidance and support from the Province of Manitoba – through the staff of the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection and the Heritage Grants Program, which provided funding for the project.



The Town of Winnipeg Beach is grateful for this support.

2014

“Those were the days my friend
We thought they’d never end
We’d sing and dance forever and a day
We’d live the life we choose
We’d fight and never lose
For we were young and sure to have our way.”

Lyrics by Gene Raskin

Winnipeg Beach was the summer of our glorious youth, and we thought it would never end. But it did. This booklet is a retrospective and pictorial look at what Winnipeg Beach was, what it is today, and what has survived from that glorious youth.

During the first decade of the 1900s, the City of Winnipeg was a boom town, and its civic leaders were convinced that it would become “the Chicago of the North.” By the census of 1911, Winnipeg was the third largest city in Canada, and in the midst of a building and land speculation boom. It had tripled in population within a decade.

William Whyte, the Canadian Pacific Railway’s General Manager for western Canada, created Winnipeg Beach. In 1900, he discovered the three mile crescent of wide and fine sand beach on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, and had the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) purchase 330 acres of beachfront land. Whyte’s intention was to beat the Canadian Northern Railway which planned to build a line to Lake Manitoba to service a beach resort there: “...the Canadian Northern will be at Lake Manitoba next year, and unless we have something to offset this, at least as early as they arrive at Lake Manitoba, they will secure the business and keep it indefinitely. It is a case of who gets to the nearest watering place first. Their linkage to Lake Manitoba will be 70 miles as compared to our mileage to Lake Winnipeg of 40 miles”. (Letter from C.E. McPherson, passenger agent CPR, to William Whyte).

By the fall of 1902 the CPR had extended its Selkirk branch line north to the site, had built a station, dance pavilion, and cleared land for cottage construction. However, the first excursion train of 11 coaches with over 500 passengers did not arrive in Winnipeg Beach until June 6, 1903. In 1903, the CPR developed the first subdivision, consisting of the business section and cottage lots from Ash Avenue to Park Avenue. By 1905, the Beachside and Boundary Park developments north of the CPR subdivision had begun selling lots, which they advertised as being exclusive.

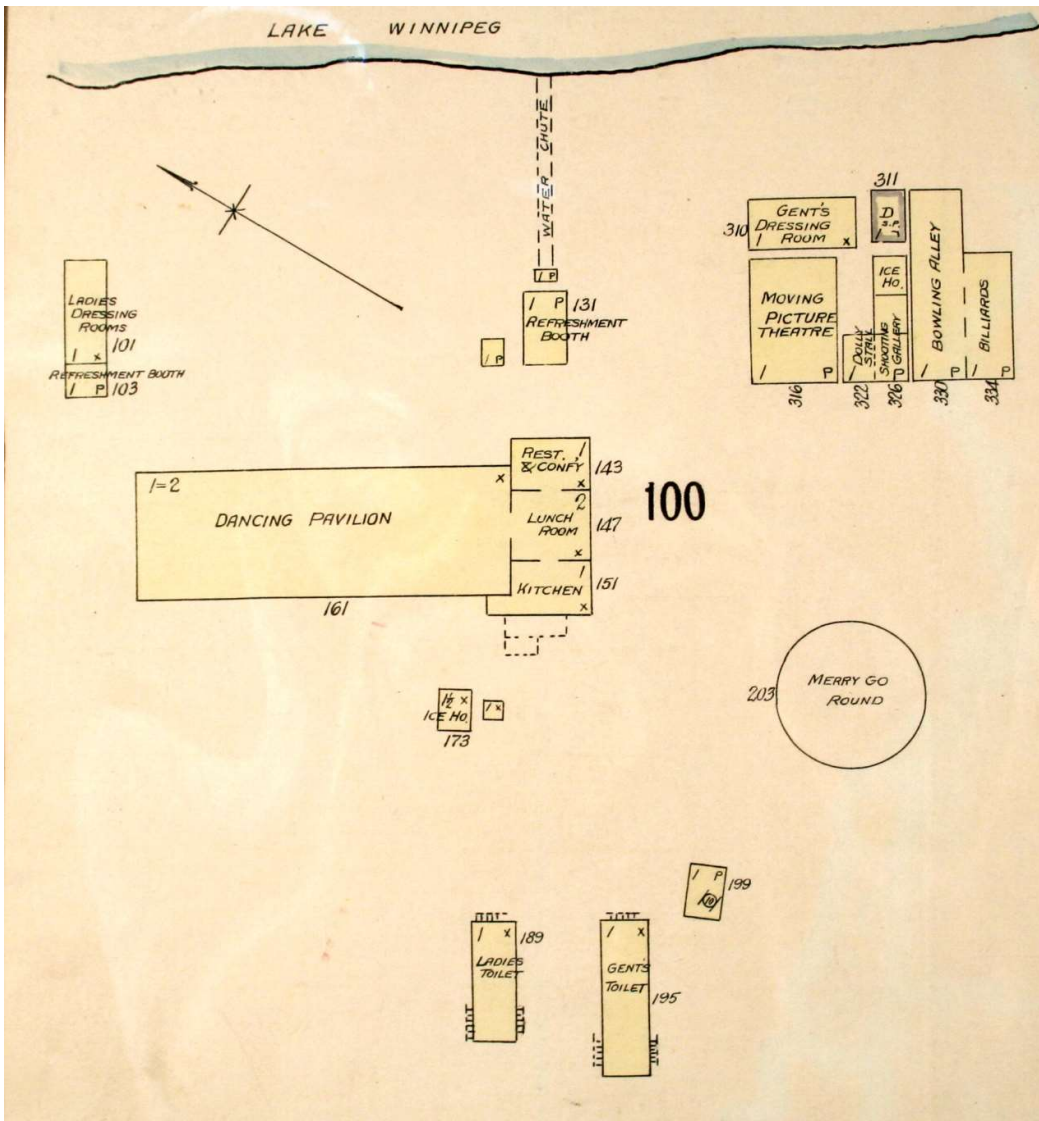
The CPR made money from three different groups: cottagers, picnickers and day trippers. The campers or cottagers leased CPR lots and bought cottages constructed by the CPR's contractor S.B. Ritchie. Picnickers came out on excursion trains with their company, church or fraternal organization, and the CPR provided catering services in the park or Pavilion. And day trippers were provided a midway, dancing in the pavilion, and rented bathing suits, towels and lockers for swimming, and canoes, rowboats and sailboats for lake activities. There were up to three picnics a day by 1907. Everyone paid fares to travel to the beach. Travel by car did not become common until the mid-1920s. On Dominion Day, 1920, it is probable that 30,000 people travelled by 11 special trains to Winnipeg Beach. There were 15,000 paid fares, and children travelled free. The romantic "Moonlight Specials," first mentioned by Winnipeg newspapers in 1907, carried eager young men and women to the resort for the evening dances in the Dance Pavilion.

A Winnipeg Beach Souvenir Album of 1908 shows a multitude of substantial cottages, tenting and picnic grounds, boardwalks, fine hotel facilities, the first Pavilion, the CPR or "Steamer" Pier, and an abundance of recreational facilities such as boats, tennis courts, and well-landscaped grounds maintained by the CPR gardener.

The Western Canada Fire Underwriters Association maps of 1915 show every building in the business section and the CPR cottage subdivisions from Ash to Laurel Avenues east of Gimli Road. Most lots had cottages and cottage names are shown. The midway area was partially developed, and was located just south of the original Pavilion.



This aerial photograph taken for the Dominion Government in the 1920s shows the main features of Winnipeg Beach in their heyday – the roller coaster at the far right, townsite in the centre, dance hall and hotel in the upper centre the various beachfront amenities.



Fire insurance plan from 1915 showing some details and situation of the Dance Pavilion.

Some notable people have strong association with the development and history of Winnipeg Beach.

Sir William Whyte

Sir William Whyte, General Manager of all CPR lines west of Lake Superior in 1896, and later promoted to Assistant to the President, is recognized for discovering and developing the resort community of Lake Winnipeg Beach. Whyte was created a Knight Bachelor in 1911.

Captain William Robinson

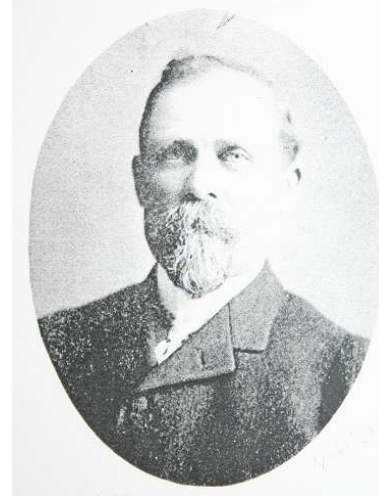
Robinson assisted Sir William Whyte in discovering Winnipeg Beach. He is known for building the first general store in Winnipeg Beach, selling groceries, dry goods, lumber, building supplies and cottage lots and plans. Captain Robinson was also President of the Northwest Navigation Company, and operated several vessels on Lake Winnipeg as well as a general store and lumber yard in Selkirk.

E.F. Stephenson

E. Frederick Stephenson, a Crown Timber Agent in Manitoba, was one of the first cottagers in the Winnipeg Beach area. He built the first cottage at Stephenson Point in 1898, a substantial two-storey log structure with later additions, which was used by Stephenson and family until his death in 1950.



Sir William Whyte



Captain William Robinson

W.J. Wood

One of the major entrepreneurs of the town, W.J. Wood arrived in Winnipeg Beach in 1904 and started a business in flour and feed, farm equipment and cordwood. He later branched into real estate insurance and cabin rentals. Wood served as first mayor of the village (1910-12), and chaired the school board for over 40 years.

S.B. Ritchie

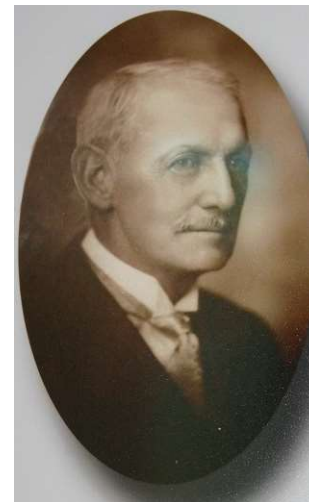
Mayor of Winnipeg Beach 1915-20, Winnipeg contractor, S.B. Ritchie is noted as the architect of “residential” Winnipeg Beach.” Prior to the First World War, he leased about 20 lots a year, laid out streets and built roads and sidewalks. In the end, Ritchie constructed and sold almost 300 cottages, as well as being contracted to erect other cottages for summer residents. Between 1906 and 1908, he also created Ritchie Park complete with a tennis court.



E.F. Stephenson



W.J. Wood



S.B. Ritchie

By 1925, the advertising brochure boasted that Winnipeg Beach was now “Western Canada’s greatest resort . . . Manitoba’s Summer Playground and Residential Resort.” It now had miles of well-graded streets, five miles of granolithic [concrete] walks, two parks with bowling greens and shale tennis courts, the grand Empress Hotel, the New Dips Roller Coaster, “Canada’s Finest Summer Dancing Palace – 14,000 square feet of Dancing Space”, Golf Course, and “Fast Frequent Train Service.”

The *Winnipeg Beach Gazette* of July 27, 1934, contained advertisements from 15 establishments that offered rooms for rent and/or room and board. And some cottages relied only on word-of-mouth advertising, so there were far more than 15 boarding places. A wide variety of businesses had developed to provide goods and services to cottagers and day-trippers, and to the farmers of the rural hinterland. There were now nine shale tennis courts, and three tourist parks. The resort was busy, even in the depth of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Winnipeg Beach declined as a tourist resort for many reasons. World War II produced restrictions on tourist rail travel. The development of other resort and park areas meant Winnipeggers had a wider variety of entertainment options. The dancing craze of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s petered out. And the development of the provincial road system, and pent up demand for cars after the war, reduced rail travel drastically.

In 1952 the CPR sold its interest in the Pavilion and Boardwalk concessions to private interests who operated them until they closed in 1964. The last “Moonlight” travelled the line to the beach in 1955, when the resort was in decline. The last passenger train left Winnipeg Beach on Labour Day, 1960. During the last few years, the Pavilion was reduced to having roller skaters on its magnificent hardwood floor. The Pavilion and boardwalk amusements were wooden structures which were not being maintained, and becoming decrepit and a fire hazard prior to their closure. In 1966, the province bought the 32 acres of lakefront, which included the Pavilion and attractions, from the estate of Harry Silverberg who had been running them through Beach Enterprises. The following year the Pavilion and concessions on the boardwalk were demolished, and the province developed a park along the waterfront. The glories of the past are commemorated by heritage panels erected along the new wood boardwalk. The only CPR structure which remains is the 1928 water tower, now a Provincial Heritage Site.



A postcard illustrating the crowds at the Winnipeg Beach regattas that were held from 1907 to 1912. Up to 10,000 people could attend these weekend events.

First CP Railway Station 1903

While the company was completing the extension of the CPR line from Selkirk to Winnipeg Beach, the station, shelter, pump house and water tower were being built between the beach and Railway Ave., across from the William Robinson store. Station and shelter and water tower incorporated standard CPR designs. Passengers would disembark in the midst of the main commercial district, and the amusement area around the first dancing pavilion, the CPR Pier and the beach, and Lake Winnipeg. The first excursion to the beach arrived on June 6, 1903. Early amusement facilities consisted of ladies and gents bathhouses, with bathing suits rented by hour or day, bowling alley, rifle range, toboggan slides into the lake, boat rentals, and merry-go-round, all generating additional revenue for the CPR.



First Dance Pavilion 1902

About 300 yards north of the station, and adjacent to the picnic grounds, the company built a dance pavilion measuring 80 by 130 feet. It was two stories in height with a double-alcove roof. The original structure included a dance hall 60 feet wide by 120 feet long, built to accommodate 2500 dancers. It was enlarged in 1907 to 161 feet in length since it could not hold the deluge of Winnipeg day trippers which descended upon it. Electric lights now illuminated the entire building. The pavilion also included offices, a restaurant and confectionary and lunch room and kitchen. By 1915, the amusement facilities had expanded to include a moving picture theatre and billiards. Beach Attractions Ltd., established by the CPR in 1904, ran the Pavilion and amusements.



First Hotel 1903

The King Edward hotel was built prior to the arrival of the first excursion train, and was located at the NW corner of Railway Avenue and Robinson. By 1906, the three-story Alexandra Hotel was being built at the SW corner of Prospect and Park. It boasted 396 feet of verandas on each floor, covered with mosquito netting, a dining room accommodating 100 patrons, and a dancing room. The Alexandra obviously tried to cater to the “better classes” since it established, in 1909, a Manitoba Free Press box for cottagers to drop off society notes (signed). The Boundary Park Hotel, later called the Waldorf, had also been built. It provided deluxe service, a 20 passenger bus to meet the trains and pick up guests. The new Beach Hotel was built in 1935 by Sam Kelly, replacing the old hotel which burned the previous fall. Two stories high with 33 rooms, it had hardwood floors, a fireplace in the rotunda, and baths and showers throughout the building.



Captain William Robinson or Pioneer Store 1903

Captain Robinson, in addition to his co-discovery of the beach together with William Whyte of the CPR, was a major entrepreneur in the pioneer days of the resort. He built his large store, with John Eaton as manager, across from the CPR station on Railway Avenue. The first general store in the town contained the post office, which meant everyone had to visit the store almost daily. It also sold groceries, dry goods, hardware, flour and feed, building supplies, and lumber. Deliveries were made daily to cottages distinguished by place names, since they lacked street numbers. Real estate offices in the store had cottage plans for viewing, and desirable lots for sale in Winnipeg Beach, Whytewold and Matlock.



W.J. Wood Building 1904

In a brief history of Winnipeg Beach written in 1955, W.J. Wood described his entry into business. "My brother David had built a large warehouse and office on Central Avenue for me which I still possess. At that time I started in to do business in flour and feed, ox harness, farm machinery and cordwood. During the first winter I sold 45 sets of farm sleighs, wagon drills, binders, harrows, fanning mills, straw cutters etc. as well as 15 carloads of flour and feed, and took cordwood in exchange, which I shipped to Winnipeg and country points. During the winter of 1909 I bought and shipped 105 car loads of cordwood... The following year, 1914, the writer built the first garage, corner of Stitt and Central, and operated it for 20 years, then went into the real estate business, insurance and cabins, where it wasn't necessary to work eight hours twice a day."



Winnipeg Beach School, 1906

The School District of Winnipeg Beach was created March 4, 1905. However according to W.J. Wood, the first school classes were held in 1903 in the second story of William Robinson's store, with James Hume as the first teacher. Mr. Wood served as chair and John Kernsted as secretary treasurer of the school board, both for many years. The first school was built in 1906 at the corner of Robinson and Gimli Road, the site of the current school yard. It was first occupied June 1, 1906. The building was attractive, the interior well lighted by numerous windows, with a bell tower centred on the front entranceway. The school board hired Miss E.M. Griffs as first teacher in the new school, with an enrollment of 70 students. Most students were of Ukrainian or Icelandic origin. At that time, Mr. E.E. Best was the school inspector. An addition was built around 1916 due to the increased enrollment of 84, and there were now two teachers, the principal being P.R. Loutit.



Town Hall 1911

Until 1910, Winnipeg Beach had been part of the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews. As Ward 6, it was entitled to one councillor to represent its interests. Being primarily a rural municipality, St. Andrews gave little attention to the needs of the rapidly growing little resort, so in 1909, Winnipeg Beach residents had the Village of Winnipeg Beach incorporated. W.J. Howes was elected as the first mayor; A.C. Duke, Helgi Sturlaugson and J.O. Stacey were elected as councillors. The first meetings of the new council occurred on January 4, 1910, in the store of A.C. Duke. For years, there was political conflict and rivalry between the local residents and the summer resident cottagers. For the first election, the Winnipeg Beach Club, prominent Winnipeg businessmen, put forward a slate of cottager candidates, and mistakenly assumed it would control the council. Due to continued growth of the community, it achieved town status in 1914.



TOWN HALL
WINNIPEG BEACH. MAN.

Mr. & Mrs. M. D. Olson
P.O. Box 100
Winnipeg Beach, Man.

Ritchie Park 1914

According to the Real Property Act of 1914, Sinclair B. Ritchie and Robert Lorne Richardson transferred lots 3 to 8, and lots A to E, block 5, Subdivision Plan No. 729 to the Village of Winnipeg Beach for use as a public park. This area was located on the waterfront east of Hazel Avenue. The village developed tennis courts and lawn bowling greens within the park, and named it after Ritchie, who had donated most of the land. Women were not permitted to lawn bowl. Tennis tournaments were held here in the early days. By 1934 there were nine shale courts in the town. After play finished, the young men dressed in flannels would be served tea in the verandas of cottages of socially prominent ladies. Veranda teas had become fashionable. The local boys and city boys used to congregate at the park in the 40s and 50s.



The Beach

William Whyte chose the location as the site of “Winnipeg’s Beach” because of its magnificent crescent of sandy beach. Records of Lake Winnipeg water levels show that from 1913 to 1945, the glory days of the resort, lake levels were from one to three feet lower than the long-term average. The beach was huge, and the water shallow out to the end of the CPR Pier, so it was an ideal area for children to frolic safely. Day trippers, cottagers and picnickers all came here for the sun, sand and water. Bathing suits, canoes, row boats, sail boats were for rent and motor launch and steamer provided rides out onto the lake for a price. In the early period, adults dressed quite formally on the beach, and the CPR police enforced order and proper attire. Unlike the bikinis of today, both men’s and women’s suits exposed very little of the body. And many of the adults simply took the sun, what little they could get in formal dress. Or they promenaded on the beach and CPR pier.





WINNIPEG BEACH.

The Beach, Continued





CPR “Steamer” Pier 1907

Almost directly east of the Pavilion lay the wooden promenade to the CPR Pier which was built in 1907. The pier ran 500 feet into the lake with a perpendicular section at the end. The CPR provided electric lighting that same year. The pier became a favourite promenade for young ladies in all their finery, and young men clothed in flannel trousers and boaters. Steamers docked in the sheltered area inside the end of the dock. Between 1913 and 1945, water levels on Lake Winnipeg were one to three feet below normal. The beach was immense compared to the present narrow beach, and was ideal for sunbathing and picnicking. Photos from the period show bathers out almost to the end of the pier standing in water only up to their knees. The result was that families tended to congregate around the pier. Concessions at the entry to the pier developed additional revenue.





Picnics 1907

By 1907, the CPR was hosting up to three picnics a day. This was one of the three chief sources of revenue for the company. The park-like area north of the pavilion was ideal for large picnic groups. Cheap rates for excursions attracted a huge variety of organizations. Tables, table clothes, dishes, cutlery were provided at a price. The CPR Employees' Picnic would attract 6,000. The annual picnic of Eaton Employees, Eaton Athletic Association, featured a thousand young ladies clad in the traditional Eaton colours of blue and white. The most famous picnics were the Caterers' Picnics, always held in July, in Grand Beach or Winnipeg Beach. Members of the Caterers Association were wholesale grocers. They organized tug-of-wars for the men, healthiest baby and bathing beauty contests for various age groups including young girls, with a prize for the largest family present. Races were organized on the beach and athletic fields, and scrambles were held. Caterers handed out free ice cream and candies to the children.





Preparing the Table for Dinner

ENF - GRANDS
WINNERS

CL

Change Houses 1903

As part of its early development of the resort, the CPR built Ladies and Gents Bath or Change Houses in 1903, and Ladies and Gents Toilets. That season of improvements brought the development of athletic fields, “artificial amusements” and beach bathing. The change houses later, after public complaints, rented bathing suits and towels by the hour or day, and provided checking facilities for clothing. Gentlemen’s bathing suits and towel were rented for 15 cents per hour, ladies’ for 25 cents, and children’s for 10 and 15 cents.



Water Chutes Ca.1908

A large water chute was built immediately east of the original pavilion. Children could hurtle down this twisting chute into the shallow waters off the beach. This was a great attraction, and three more chutes were ultimately built.



Regattas 1907 to 1912

The Winnipeg Beach Club, an organization of prominent Winnipeg businessmen, organized the first regatta or water carnival held on Saturday, August 3, 1907. Eight thousand spectators crowded the pier and beach. It may have been one of the greatest water events in western Canadian history. Forty three events included sailboat, motorboat, canoe and rowing races, diving, swimming, and children's races. This was followed by a parade of decorated boats, a mock battle between motor boats and sailboats, and fireworks. Kegs of gunpowder hung above stacked firewood were ignited creating huge bonfires on the beach. After 1912, the resort lost much of its elite, which moved south to the more exclusive resorts in Ponemah, Whytewold and Matlock, and the regattas ended.





Empress Hotel, 1908

The Empress Hotel was built by the CPR and Edward Windebank, who became the first manager, to provide accommodation for the social elite of Winnipeg, the “better classes”. Socially prominent young ladies stayed here because their maids refused to come out to their cottages, and the hotel provided maid service. The hotel was located 200 feet north of the Dance Pavilion close to the beach, just south of Ash Avenue. The plans of Hooper & Walker provided for a three story hotel, 131 feet long by 68 feet wide. Its magnificence is illustrated by a huge dining room, smoking room, and rotunda, all with fireplaces. Its 65 bedrooms all opened onto 12 foot wide verandas running around three sides of the building on all floors. The hotel was lighted by electricity, had hot and cold water throughout the building, and had fire alarms on all floors. A wood frame structure, it was painted white with green trim. The hotel was renowned for the most lavish bar in western Canada. Mr. and Mrs. Windebank put on a concert every weekend which was the social event of the week. A bonfire on the beach provided the finale, with young men (with banjos and mandolins) and young ladies in canoes providing a sing-song. Patrons had exclusive access to the hotel tennis courts, bowling green, and a sailing yacht. In 1915, the CPR turned over management of the hotel to Beach Attractions, which was already running the amusements. The hotel burned in August of 1935.



EMPRESS HOTEL WINNIPEG BEACH

Government Pier and Lighthouse 1910

After years of pressure from the village, the federal government constructed a breakwater and made harbour improvements at the mouth of Boundary Creek. Later, a lighthouse was built at the end of the pier and a shelter was constructed on the middle of the pier. The annual Wrigley Swim used end here, having begun at the CPR Pier. And a marina developed in the harbour.



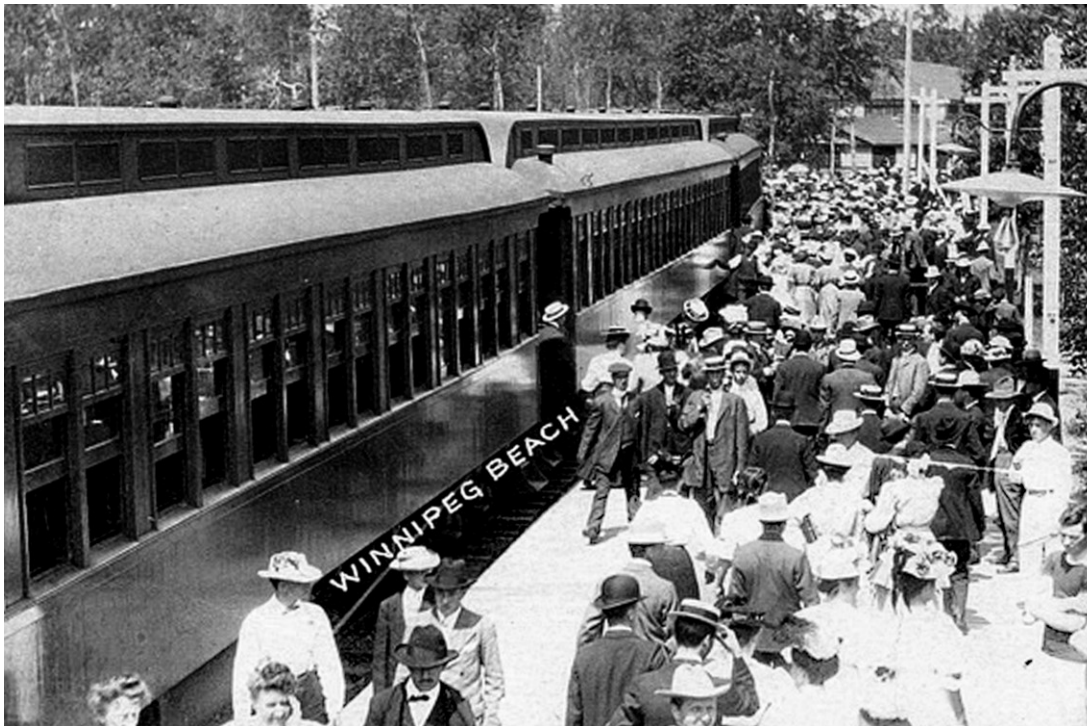
Rooming Houses Ca.1915

The Western Canada Fire Assurance Underwriters' Association published a map in 1915 showing every building in the area of Winnipeg Beach south of Boundary Creek, the area owned by the CPR. It shows three rooming houses on Railway and Central. The Winnipeg Beach Gazette of July 27, 1934 contains ads for 15 rooming houses, some of which also offered board. And there were other rooming houses which did not advertise, but relied upon word-of-mouth, such as Park-A-While on Park Ave. and Linger-Longer on Grove, operated by sisters for an exclusively Jewish clientele. Several existing heritage cottages have numbers on doors, and/or are subdivided into small rooms, indicating that they formerly functioned as rooming houses.



Second CPR Station 1911

By 1911, the site of the first station on the waterfront was becoming too crowded to handle the amount of traffic that the resort was generating. The company built a larger station, shelter, water tank and six tracks to handle the huge volume of passengers. The station was built west of Stitt Street, directly west of the pavilion. A 17 foot wide boardwalk carried passengers to the pavilion area. For Dominion Day in 1920, 17 trains travelled to Winnipeg Beach. About 15,000 fares were sold, and since little children travelled free, perhaps 30,000 excursionists crowded the community that day. The CPR Winnipeg Beach line was the most profitable line in Canada during this period.





Red Cross Convalescent Home/ Aquatic Club 1911

In August of 1910, the Winnipeg Beach Club voted to spend \$5000.00 to build a clubhouse. It was built on stilts on the south side of the harbour, across from the government pier. It was taken over during World War I for the care of wounded soldiers. In 1936, Lieutenant-Governor W.J. Tupper officiated at its reincarnation as the Aquatic Club. It served as a social club for a restricted membership and their guests.





CANADIAN RED CROSS HOME, WINDING BEACH, MANITOBA

BEACH
PHOTO
∞

Midway Ca.1915

By 1915, Beach Attractions Limited., on behalf of the CPR, had developed an amusement area near the Pavilion. It included a merry-go-round, moving picture theatre, billiards, shooting gallery and Dolly Stall. Later the midway was moved to the waterfront, across from the restaurants, amusements, and businesses on the west side of Railway Avenue, to the area previously occupied by the CPR station and rail line. Now called the Boardwalk, the midway had a restaurant, movie theatre, Penny Pitch, Shooting Gallery, Bowling Alley, Merry-Go-Round, Bumper Cars, Aeroplane Ride and Pony Rides. Every day the calliope, a mechanical steam organ, would begin playing to announce the opening of the Boardwalk. Local young people had to work the concessions for up to 12 hours, at low wages, to supplement family incomes. Unlike the summer residents, they had little time to play.

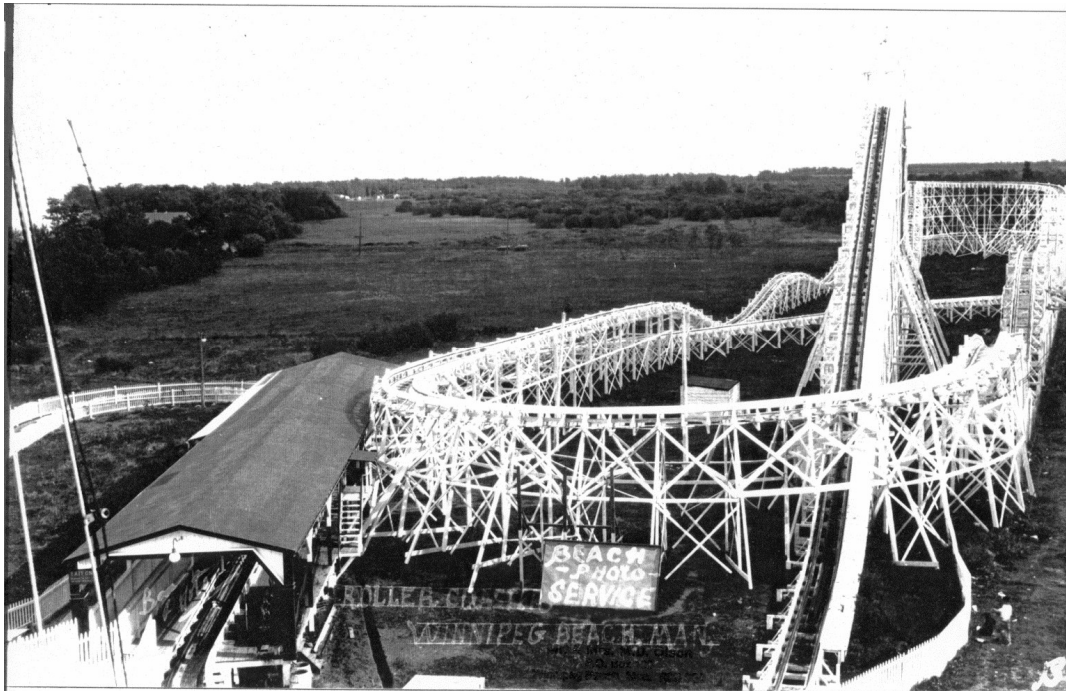




Winnipeg Beach, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. - 53.

Roller Coaster 1919

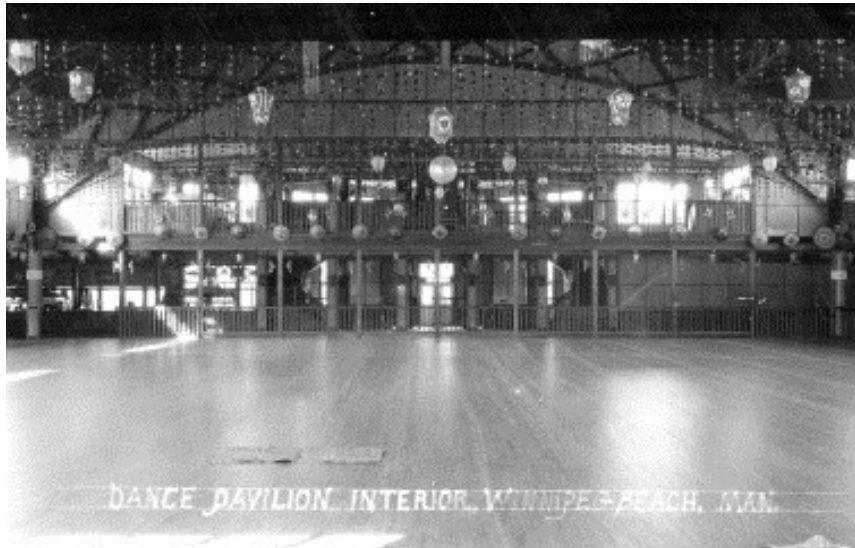
Arthur Jarvis, the man who designed largest roller coaster in the world at Coney Island, also designed the huge Winnipeg Beach Roller Coaster for the CPR. The wooden structure cost \$45,000 to build, was 3,000 feet long and 80 feet high according to the Manitoba Free Press report. It was located at the south end of the Midway or Boardwalk. In 1924, new dips were added. It was the premier attraction partly because the wooden structure flexed as the cars careened over dips or around corners, adding to the thrill for excitable youngsters. Due to declining business and lack of maintenance, it closed in 1964 along with the midway and Pavilion, and all were dismantled in 1967.





Second Pavilion 1924

Because of the dancing craze which began after the World War, the old pavilion was inadequate to handle the crowds. Designed by a CPR architect, the new pavilion was built with a concrete foundation, and fir frame construction. The maple floor provided 14,000 square of dancing area, with a wide promenade encircling it. Turrets ornamented the exterior and a second floor balcony provided views of the lake. In the middle of June, 1924, 3,000 people attended the opening of the largest dance hall in Western Canada. Peavy's Roseland Orchestra performed for the opening. Dances were 5 cents a dance or 12 for 50 cents. Each dance lasted about two and a half minutes. Local big bands such as those of Marsh Phimster and Don Wright, with Paul Grosney, played the Pavilion. The Moonlight Special and the Pavilion created much of the allure and romance of Winnipeg Beach, which endured for a generation.





Special Place Sites

In partnership with the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, the Winnipeg Beach Heritage Advisory Group has undertaken a project that focused on our community's historic buildings.

The following list of buildings constitutes the group's recommendations about those places that have major claims for local heritage significance. Each building listed below is also presented on the following pages, with an accompanying Heritage Value Statement that elucidates that building's key heritage attributes.

- CPR Water Tower
- Winnipeg Beach United Church
- St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church
- Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Church
- Playland
- Weynoke Cottage (73 Kernested)
- Intermezzo Cottage (128 Hazel)
- Passamaquoddy (139 Laurel)
- Sandells Cottage (164 Prospect)
- Lavallie Cottage (446 Spruce)
- Markdale Cottage (441 Oak)
- Wavecrest Cottage (140 Park)
- Jasper Haven II (245 Ash)
- Charge Cottage (350 Prospect)
- Epsilon Villa (352 Epsilon)

The development of this short list of significant sites was the result of careful and studied deliberations using standard heritage evaluation criteria, processes and scoring regimes. This work was carried out by the Winnipeg Beach Heritage Advisory Group with assistance from our heritage consultant, Mr. Wally Johannson and staff of the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection. We are grateful to the branch for their generous support and patient attention in this particular endeavour.

As a collection, these 15 buildings define many aspects and themes from Winnipeg Beach's past, and do so through places that are at once significant, but also interesting and attractive. These are places that the people of Winnipeg Beach can look to with pride. These places remind us of past glories, but also suggest an enduring sense of community, and are a beacon for its future.

CPR Water Tower



The Winnipeg Beach CPR Water Tower, a riveted steel storage tank on a braced skeletal steel frame, is the best example of its type in Manitoba and the only structure that remains from the various facilities built by the CPR to develop Winnipeg Beach into a premier lakeside resort. The site's vast sandy shoreline, supplemented in the early 1900s by the CPR's amusement, recreation and other amenities, made it a perennially popular destination for summer excursions and vacations. The water tower, designed and built by Vulcan Iron Works Ltd. of Winnipeg, added a highly visible feature to the shoreline, as well as a source of pressurized lake water for railway use and local firefighting.

Winnipeg Beach United Church



Built in 1907, and originally serving a Presbyterian congregation, the United Church is a strong reminder of the earliest days of the community. Although recently resheathed, the overall form, with its broad roofline and handsome candlesnuff tower, is a landmark. The church, which was built by S.B. Ritchie and Hugh McPherson, still contains its traditional Gothic windows and original altar.

St. Bartholomew Anglican Church



St. Bartholomew Anglican Church, built in 1908, is one of the oldest surviving buildings in the community, recalling the earliest years of activity here. Recently recovered on its exterior, the church still exhibits its original informal and inviting character, with its broad main facade and offset tower. Inside, the church still features its original altar, some stained glass, wooden pews and bell.

Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church



Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, from 1936, is a striking example of the Baroque church architecture that informed the church designs of so many eastern European church communities in Manitoba. With its multi-domed form, and cruciform plan, Sts. Peter and Paul is a textbook example of the type. Its high levels of integrity, outside and in, are also a testament to a congregation that continues to honour its roots.

Playland



Built in 1941, Playland is the best remaining example of the kind of modest commercial structures that once lined Main Street. Serving up fast food and entertainments to Winnipeg Beach cottagers and visitors, this wall of simple facades, facing onto the lake, and also onto the various amenities there, like the roller coaster, was a major feature of Winnipeg Beach for more than 50 years. Playland is a good reminder of the type, seen in so many small Manitoba towns, with a large squarish facade punctuated with simple rectangular windows, but with a slight variation: the use of large main-floor openings that would be lifted in the summer months to create a seamless transition between the sidewalk and the joyous noises within.

Weynoke Cottage



Weynoke is the most important building in Winnipeg Beach. Constructed in 1898 for the family of Edwin Frederick Stephenson (making it the oldest building in the community), this large, rambling building recalls the earliest Canadian sensibility for a country escape from a place like Winnipeg. The basic house-like external form belies the interior, which is a veritable treatise on the rustic, picturesque construction and decorating qualities of the day, with exposed log beams and a majestic stone fireplace, as well as countless other features and details of that era.

Intermezzo Cottage



A subtle variation in a basic rectangular plan—the angling of the two ends to the street—creates one of Winnipeg Beach’s most striking cottages. One of the oldest in the community, from 1905, the cottage is also one of the largest, and the original elegant interior has been carefully preserved for more than century.

Passamaquoddy



Passamaquoddy, named for First Nations peoples of New Brunswick and Maine, is one of the best Winnipeg Beach examples of a classic Manitoba cottage type. With its shallow pyramidal roof and long line of screened openings facing into a verandah, this kind of cottage can be found in all Manitoba summer resorts. Passamaquoddy is an exceptional example of the type, built by S.B. Ritchie, the C.P.R. contractor who constructed many Winnipeg Beach cottages. The elements of the form are clearly visible outside but also inside, where the original construction—exposed wooden frame and rafters—and a variety of ingenious wooden features and built-in furniture are all open to view. This is one of the oldest cottages in the community.

Sandells Cottage



A nearly perfect example of the traditional Manitoba cottage, with shallow pyramidal roof and long line of screened openings facing into a verandah, is here enriched with attention to subtle details. Built around 1908 by S.B. Ritchie, the C.P.R.'s major local contractor, the cottage also has been preserved inside, and the high levels of physical integrity that attend the original construction materials, features and details are an ongoing tribute to a family that has honoured this summer place for more than a century.

Lavallie Cottage



Lavallie Cottage is an excellent representative of one of the typical small cottage types from the early decades of the community, in this case to 1936, when it was built by a Mr. Weatherby. Small, charming and still revealing many of its original design and construction qualities, the cottage effectively suggests the delight of such places. From its simple plan, basically a box, to its straightforward gable roof, the building is a model of efficiency. But it also boasts original fenestration, a nearly original interior with bare wooden walls, which in places even reveal the original lumberyard mark: Abbotsford Lumber.

Markdale Cottage



One of the oldest cottages in Winnipeg Beach, from 1920, Markdale Cottage recalls the kind of small but crisply designed cottages that so many early residents called home for the summer. In this case, the cottage is remarkable for the retention of nearly all of its original architectural qualities. From its overall form, distinctive hull-shaped roof and especially its many windows and numerous original features of its wooden interior, the cottage is a clear and proud reminder of early building traditions.

Wavecrest Cottage



Wavecrest is an important local example recalling how familiar Manitoba cottage forms could be transformed into something more impressive. Built in 1930, this handsome building presents the traditional motif—a shallow pyramid roof and long line of screened openings—but enlarged with a six-sided parlour section that not only enlarges but also dignifies the form. Wavecrest is also an excellent example recalling the kinds of materials, features and details that defined cottage architecture in these early years. And inside, the building still retains those qualities, with an open, airy sensibility created with its exposed wooden frame, all open to the roof rafters, many original built-in components, all with the highest levels of physical integrity.

Jasper Haven II



Built in 1930, Jasper Haven II is a minty little building, whose simple form, roof line and other traditional cottage elements easily transport one back to the first decades of community life at Winnipeg Beach. Its wall of large windows, suggesting openness and light, are reinforced inside, where original qualities are still intact. Original wooden construction materials, so common at that time, are still apparent, as are any number of other features and fixtures, including even original wiring.

Charge Cottage



Built in 1921 for Wilfred Charge, a buyer for Eaton's Department Store in Winnipeg, this cottage is one of the grandest in the community. The large and impressive building recalls how the community was not only a modest summer escape for many, but also could for some be a place where impressive architectural statements could be made. Still clearly a cottage, the formal appearance, broad roof and wealth of windows lifts this building to a slightly different plane.

Epsilon Villa



The traditional shallow pyramidal roof and long line of screened openings facing into a verandah that defines a Manitoba summer house is visible at Epsilon Villa, but with a major twist – here with a striking second floor cupola that appears as a lookout tower. This feature has made the Villa, built around 1920, a local landmark, and also recalls the variety of forms that ingenious cottage owners might use to make an architectural statement, in this case by a chief of police for his bride to be.

Those were the days my friends

We thought they'd never end



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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

All photographs from Archives of Manitoba, except those Special Places Sites photos from the Winnipeg Beach Inventory.