



Cows Break Loose from Intercon

Some of the earliest memories of Montgomery Place would be the period from about 1957 to 1959 when cows would escape from the pens at Intercon and come rumbling through our yards in the area around 3117 Ortona St. There were no fences or trees. As pre-schoolers we spent most time outdoors in the yards and our mothers would rush around getting us back into the house while the workmen from Intercon would round up the wayward cows that came huffing and puffing through our yards. The cabbage heads would kind of explode as the hooves smashed them. The mothers would get upset over the cows stomping through the gardens. (like there was no room for loss in the half acre gardens) There was not much shopping for fruits and vegetables as the harvest from gardens was canned or frozen and basement cold rooms stored food over the winter.

The cow chasing noise and activity caused by all the yelling from the workmen along with the snorting and balling from the cows was a significant diversion from the quiet tranquil summers. It was always very quiet as there was only one car per family and even at that there was much carpooling. The lots were so large that the density of development was very low so there was never much source for noise.

Steam Locomotives

Another big change from the late 50s is the old black steam locomotives that used to pull trains of brown and white cattle cars down the tracks along Dundonald Avenue. There was a great deal of train activity along those tracks.

Manure Fertilizer

During the late 50's and very early 60s Intercon would pile manure along the south side of the tracks north of 11th Street and homeowners would back their trucks and trailers up to the large piles of manure and load up to haul it back home for the gardens. The yards were barren and people hastily planted perimeter tree lines as the lots were too big for fencing. The preference was for Manchurian elm trees because they grew fast and most quickly converted the area from a bald prairie rural area to an urban subdivision.

Barren Prairie Fields to Residential Neighbourhood

There was a rush to get the area developed for a number of reasons. Trees would provide shelter from the wind and sun, provide lot identification, create play areas for kids to climb, and provide habitat for birds. An interesting lesson was to plant native trees in order to get birds. In those early days it was possible to look out the living room window and watch the radar light from the airport rotating around in the night sky.

Horse Drawn Milk Wagons

There was daily milk delivery and the milk wagons were pulled by horses. The milkman did not need to drive the wagon as the horses new the route and routine and made all the stops without any steering required. In the very early 60s milk trucks started replacing the horse drawn wagons, to the dismay of Curly the milkman saying "in some ways it will be good but in other ways not so good." Many houses had milk chutes where the empty milk bottles and were placed for pickup, and money and a note were left instructing the milkman on what to leave.

Montgomery Roads

The roads were always bad, either dusty or rough. It was good when graders went by because for a brief period there were some smooth spots to ride bicycles. Once the roads were too dusty they would get dust proofed with sticky black tar. Then for a few days all the vehicles would get plastered with the tar and it got tracked onto driveways and sidewalks. Then once the stickiness was gone the pot holes started showing up. That was mostly the road condition until they were paved; dust free with pot holes everywhere. The pot holes would get filled with asphalt every once in a while, but the roads were always rough and sometimes dusty.

Bike races always included a loop down Gamlin's (3121 Ortona) concrete driveway as it was the longest smooth surface in Montgomery Place.

Early Resistance to the Area

There was some reluctance to settle in Montgomery Place. My father had two brothers that had also served in the war and both passed on moving there. The area was new and nobody really knew how the area would evolve or what to expect, but things did not generally look very promising. First the location was viewed as out of town similar to Sutherland but no university nearby. It was a long distance from

downtown or employment sources. It was seen as an industrial location on the other side of the tracks. There were a number of railway tracks that needed to be crossed to get there as well as industrial areas passed through. 11th street was the main and only practical access as Circle Drive did not exist and Dundonald Avenue was only a gravel country roadway which ran from south to north straight past Saskatoon.

Montgomery Place was located on the far side of Dundonald Avenue. The closest urban development was in the area of 20th Street and Avenue W.

Property taxes were to be low because the area was only to have basic municipal services. There were to be no sidewalks and only open ditches for storm drainage. Fire hall, police station, and high school were all long distances away and buses ran infrequently.

Strong sense of Community

The area overcame all obstacles largely because of the hard working industrious veterans who settled there. There was a strong sense of pride in, and of, community with solid commitment to **community** and strong family values with firm resolve to make a go of it. Owners who did not meet those criteria seemed to move out and on to other places.

The area seemed to function as a bit of a large family because the vets had much in common beyond being vets. They were similar in age with similar backgrounds and socio economic status. As one vet put it "we were all poor with nothing, and were starting out at the same time from scratch."

The area seemed to mature as a family. The idea of recycling and hand-me-downs was prevalent as families were of similar ages. I always appreciated how Mr. Dunbar (3133 Ortona Street) purchased good equipment for Bill because once Bill was finished, Dave would get it and then me. I remember watching Bill's hockey games and while everyone else would be cheering him, thinking come on Bill ease up on the rough stuff that's hard on the equipment.

I always had a soft spot for Mrs. Little (3219 Ortona Street) because she always purchased high quality jeans for Tom, much better than we would get new.

Neighbourhood Aged Together

Families seemed to evolve similarly. In the early 60s automatic washers and dryers became popular and many families got them around the same time. I remember Mrs., Doherty got hers about the same time as us because that is when Russ came to school with a couple of new shiny silver teeth. Apparently the dryer door got the better of his smile.

Montgomery School

The school was a focal point through the 60s Montgomery school had the reputation of being the highest utilized school in the public school system. In addition to daytime classes the building was full of evening activities. The auditorium and mudrooms accommodated many functions. There was a Monday night cub pack, a Friday night cub pack, Scouts, Brownies, Guides, and other activities including

craft nights where parents and older kids taught younger kids how to make model airplanes and cars, leather belts and wallets etc. In addition to that, there were other activities such as bridge clubs that rotated through members' houses.

The teachers parked along Currie Ave and it always seemed strange how the principle Mr. Orge left his car running all winter long. He always drove a Mercedes and they had diesel engines. The diesel engines in the 60's were not well suited to Saskatoon winters as they would not start if left to cool off. So while everyone else froze walking home Mr. Orge was the only one traveling in winter comfort.

Rink

The rinks were also very busy through the 60s. First there was only one rink which was serviced by the paddling pool building. There was public skating while the loud speaker played organ type music such as Sentimental Journey, Dreaming of a Four Leaf Clover, and the like. There was a schedule circulated where each household in Montgomery Place took turns opening up the shack and getting the music going. After a few years when skaters got crowded out by hockey players a second and better rink was constructed with another rink shack. Then a third rink was made for the skaters.

While the skating rink was for leisure and relaxing the hockey rink was for team practices and occasional games. When it was not being used for those purposes activity at the rinks was pretty much survival of the fittest. That is probably one of the reasons Montgomery Place always had very competitive and winning hockey teams. In addition to good coaching the kids were well practised in skating and puck control forced on them by avoiding the big guys and all the pucks flying around. There were also acts of guidance and kindness with the big guys giving small guys gifts of pucks or sticks etc.

One thing of note was the way Howie Riddell used to take his motorcycle to the rink. It was very unusual that anyone had any kind of vehicle at the rink but it was the greatest thing ever to get a ride home on it. It was sad when Howie stopped coming to the rink, because there seemed to be no purpose in going anymore, because there was no chance in getting anymore rides home on the motorcycle. Now every time I see a black Suzuki I think of how Howie drove his in the middle of the winter. That was in contrast to Mr. Orge who had to leave his car running all winter in order for it to properly function.

Even though some of the big guys were only two or three years older, at ten or twelve they were seen to be much more worldly with the best advice, such as Jim Maloney's advice on when the team jerseys are being passed out don't go for number 9 because everyone wants Gordy Howe's number. So go for number 6 because that is 9 upside-down and it is good luck. That proved to be good solid advice that has lasted a lifetime.

It was during the mid 60s that Montgomery Place probably had the first ever girls hockey team.

Montgomery Place Confectionary Store

During the mid 60s there were no credit or debit cards so all merchants had to be proficient at making change. During this period the store at 11th street and Elevator Road was operated by a proprietor who was drunk Saturday nights and when handing out change would ask "is that enough." Most often it was

more than enough, but a small group of 12 year olds parlayed that routine into a regular cottage industry while honing their own math skills and developing practical business acumen. There was no need for an allowance from parents because a thriving currency exchange business had been developed with the operator of Montgomery Place Confectionary. That was a very lucrative period for a select few because it was a venture deliberately kept quiet to discourage competition from other kids. It must have been disappointing for following customers when the till was short of cash, but it was always emptied with the full support of the proprietor as an active participant who willingly handed the cash over.

Resistance to Church Construction

It was a long time before the church was constructed in the mid 60s. Apparently there was a shortage of support for it. There was never much discussion in our house about the possible church construction but a United Church minister active during those years indicated there was trouble getting the church built because of lack of support from vets who took the position they would not support a god that lets things happen that they witnessed during the war. As kids the only truth we knew were the choices on Sunday morning were either go to church or work in the yard.

By Darpl GENEREUX