

*View from the Clock Tower*



*What would Alice have seen?*

Compiled by Ina Bramadat & Nikki Falk (C/D MHAC)

Toews Printing

## WHAT WOULD ALICE HAVE SEEN?



Early 1900s, a store occupies the NE corner of Fournier St. (1<sup>st</sup> St. SW) and Maple Ave. (1<sup>st</sup> Ave. SW), now site of the Library.



Fournier St. looking north from the bridge, early 1900s. Ryall Hotel on left.

Once upon a time, back in the days when streets were still named after people and trees and the like, Carman didn't have a public library. Think about it - how could we hold a "Mad Hatter" dinner if no one had read about the adventures of Alice? The inspiring story of the transformation of the corner of Fournier Street and Maple Avenue from the site of a store to a busy, progressive 'information hub for the community' is recorded on the Library website ([boyneregionallibrary.com/about-the-library](http://boyneregionallibrary.com/about-the-library)) and reproduced in these pages. We've added lots of pictures so you can see what Alice would have seen if she had climbed up the clock tower in Carman rather than falling down a rabbit hole.

The Library website tells us that *"The Boyne Regional Library was first organized by The Young Citizen's Group in 1943. The Young Citizen's Group was led by President Alfred J. Strachan and Secretary Margaret Burnett who began gathering a collection of donated books, and for lack of library quarters these books were displayed in local store windows. Initially the books were displayed in the window at the local drugstore, F.W. Humphries. Once the library collection outgrew that window they relocated to Art Hand's Insurance. During this time the staff at these businesses acted as librarians."*



Fournier St. - arrow marks F.W. Humphries' Drug Store - first library loan books.



Memorial Hall, location of library before 1970.

*"When the library outgrew the insurance office it moved into the community room in the Memorial Hall. The Young Citizen's Group made freestanding shelves and they were soon able to move in. Mrs. Earl Taylor was the volunteer librarian three times a week for several years. Lucy Saunders took over as librarian after a few years."*

Meanwhile, in 1914-15, a stately new Dominion Post Office had been built on the north-east corner of Fournier St. SW and Maple Ave. SW. *"It was built of Tyndall Stone and brick from Medicine Hat,*

*Alberta. The clock in the tower was made by A.E. Joyce and Company of Whitechurch, England. It was shipped to Manitoba from England where they forgot to unload it and it went back to England. They realized their mistake and sent it back to Manitoba therefore crossing the ocean three times before finally reaching its destination. For many years the clock was manually wound twice a week. Volunteer Frank Graboweski looked after the clock for 18 years, installing motors in 2005 to eliminate the need to wind the clock. The weights are automatically adjusted by the motors yet the clock is still 100% original in regards to the mechanical operation of the clock. The clock now only requires maintenance a few times a year which is performed by Stanley Reitsma.”*

From its viewpoint high above the town, the clock tower has been privy to much of Carman’s history.



Looking east towards the Livery Barn - soon made obsolete by all those new cars.



Carman has always loved a parade. 1927- Fournier St. looking south to corner of Maple Ave.



Watching with pride and sadness as local soldiers march off to war.



Harris' men's store, north-west corner of Fournier & Maple (1924-82).

*“The library soon outgrew the Community Room and they began thinking of a permanent building. A new post office was being built in Carman in 1970 and The Town of Carman and RM of Dufferin arranged to purchase the now vacant old post office for \$5000.00. Renovations began and the library was officially opened on November 4, 1972. “*

*In 1968, to be eligible for provincial funding, the library became part of the Regional Library System. “The first paid librarian was Marjorie Catt, who graduated from Red River College. She began while the library was still in the Community Room at the Memorial Hall. Rosella Semple was employed at the library from 1975 until her retirement in 1993. Helen Stewart started working at the library in 1977 first as a volunteer and then became Head Librarian in 1992 until her retirement in 2006. Sandra Yeo started her employment at the library in 2003 and became Head librarian in 2007.”*



Over the years, the clock tower saw lots of activity across the street at the Ryall Hotel.



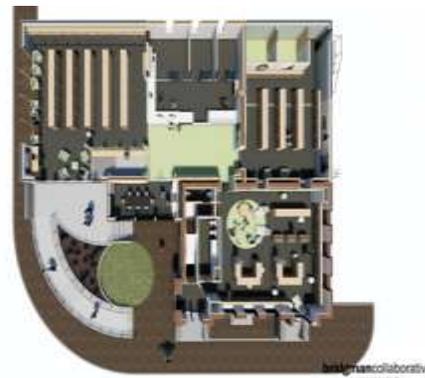
View from the water tower. Note Carman Hardware is now relocated from the corner to east of P.O.

*“Two extensions have taken place over the years. One in 1985 that included expanded room for adult books and a new children’s section that was officially opened by Dr. Paul Hiebert on November 15, 1985. Secondly an addition including the sunroom was opened in 2000.*

*“The library purchased the Rusty Spur property in December 2007 with the Town and the RM of Dufferin removing the old building and creating a green space for future library expansion.”* The building was recognized in 1990 as a Designated Historic Site. Renovations have been made in consultation with Manitoba Heritage to maintain the integrity of the site.



Showing expansion area west of Library (with ‘Rusty Spur’ still on site).



Planned expansion

*“The Boyne Regional Library has seen many changes over the years including a computerized system in 1994, public internet access, online databases and digital collections. The library has responded to the needs of the community by offering additional services, expanding the collections and providing up to date technology. Today the library is a busy information hub and center for the community. With over 40,000 visits per year, a circulation of 132,000 and 500 children participating in the summer reading program the library continues to be relevant and one of the busiest rural libraries in Manitoba.”*



Today, 'Nine Lives' occupies the NW corner of the intersection, Ryall Park in background.



Ryall Park with band stand and other facilities

Now, just in case you missed it, the moral of this inspiring story is that, in rural communities such as Carman/Dufferin, progress is no fairy tale. The 'fairy godmothers' are dedicated, hard-working members of the community, supported by municipal and provincial governments. In lieu of magic wands, volunteers organize fundraisers. The happy part of this story is that, like every good fairy tale, this one has a happy ending.

#### Acknowledgements

History of the Boyne Regional Library: [boyneregionallibrary.com/about-the-library](http://boyneregionallibrary.com/about-the-library)

Photographs: Dufferin Historical Museum; S. Snider (photo of 'Nine Lives'); I. Bramadat (Ryall Park)

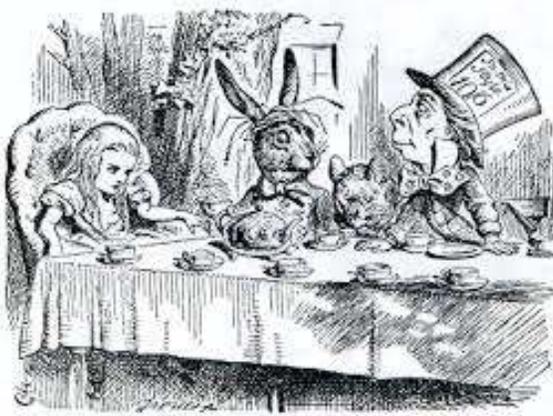
Cover: M. Toews

Checking dates and places: S. Snider

Table \_\_\_\_\_

*Mad Hatter's Dinner*

August 16, 2019



*We were there!*