

**A momentous human rights milestone was reached on January 28, 1916.** On that day, Manitoba women became the first in Canada to have their right to vote acknowledged.



# Sharing Their Stories

## Some of our historic firsts

***Women were able to serve as school trustees in Manitoba from 1890, even though they didn't gain the vote until 1916.*** The Manitoba School Boards Association would like to thank and acknowledge the generations of women trustees who have defended and advocated for the public education system in Manitoba. The outcomes of their dedication and commitment remain testament to the power of community voice in school governance.

We have collected some of the names and stories of these political pioneers.

## Special Thanks/Acknowledgements

A project such as this would not be possible without the support and assistance of several individuals. First and foremost, we owe a significant debt of gratitude to Linda McDowell for collecting, telling and sharing the stories of our women trustees. For several decades, Linda has served the important role as local historian and researcher, documenting the role of women in the public education system whether as trustees, teachers or as champions of human rights. The vast sum of information showcased on this website is a tribute to Linda's interests and enthusiasm as a historian and storyteller. We could not have done this without her.

We would also like to extend a special word of thanks and acknowledgement to the family of Inez Stevenson. As an association, we are honoured to play a small role in ensuring that the legacy of your mother and grandmother is preserved for all future generations. Thank you for sharing her story and for permission to use the biographical and photographic representations featured on this website.

Several hours were invested by staff in the Provincial Archives and Legislative Library of Manitoba, where our association's historical journals and other documents are stored for the posterity of future generations of Manitobans. We are grateful to staff for taking a special interest in our 100th anniversary celebration and for locating and retrieving these archives for us.

Many of the individual stories that are told on this website include important acknowledgements to local community, cultural and historical organizations, without whom the information that has been collected and shared would not have been possible. Please consult each of the stories for special acknowledgements in relation to each one.



## **Rose Cherniak Alcin (Elkin)**

### **Teacher**

Rose Alcin was born in Moghilos, Byelorussia on January 20, 1882. Her parents were dissidents and were active in leftist groups. The family came to Canada in 1904 where they became active in radical Jewish circles such as the Arbeiter Ring (Workman's Circle) School Committee and the Jewish Civic Representatives to the Fiftieth Anniversary of Jewish Settlement in Canada. She and her husband, Max Alcin, were committed to Jewish cultural and political causes and they were often called "socialists".

Rose taught at I.L. Peretz School, a school that had been founded by radicals in 1914 and wanted to teach Yiddish culture rather than Hebrew. In 1919 she accepted the nomination for the Labour Party's school trustee in Ward 5. She was the first Jewish woman in Canada to run for political office.

The 1919 civic elections were very dramatic because of the Winnipeg Strike. The elections were actually held during the same week as the trials of the Strike leaders. To make matters more contentious, several of the strike leaders were running for public office and some actually won seats as aldermen. In fact, John Queen, one of the strike leaders running on the Labour ticket, spoke on Rose's behalf.

Rose was in a tough battle. Her opponent was the incumbent, Max Steinkopf, a well-known businessman and supporter of Talmud Torah School. Rose's father was employed at Talmud Torah and feared her candidacy might cause him to lose his job. It was a hot campaign with nasty anonymous letters and a hostile media. For this reason, Rose rarely spoke in public. Those opposed to her used the "little wife and woman" arguments as well as the arguments that she was not well-educated, did not speak English and was "probably" a member of the Socialist Democratic Party of Canada. Just after the Russian Revolution this was a powerful weapon and the newspapers used inflammatory language – Winnipeg children would be educated as "slaves of socialism".

Surprisingly, Rose won with a majority of 679 votes in Ward 5. Rose worked on the Supply Building and Management Committee. After two years on the Board, she decided not to run again but continued her work with Jewish cultural and political causes.

Rose Alcin died November 28, 1964.

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## **FRONTIER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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**LINDA BALLANTYNE**, Chairperson

Linda was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Manitoba. She was born on September 17, 1954.

She attended Grand Rapids School until Grade 9 and as there was no high school there she completed her secondary education through Frontier School Division's Home Placement Program graduating in June 1966 from Lac du Bonnet Collegiate.

After pursuing some post-secondary options (RRC's Secretarial Science Program, and the U of M Faculty of Education), she decided that she wanted to work. She was hired at Grand Rapids School as a P.E.N.T. Student and it was through the P.E.N.T. Program that she became a teacher.

Linda taught at Grand Rapids School and at Mountain View School in Barrows. After teaching for eight years she began working for Misipawistik Cree Nation (then known as Grand Rapids First Nation) as Director of Education, a position she continues to hold today.

It was at that time that she became a member of the Grand Rapids School Committee and soon after became a Trustee.

In recognition of her membership on the Grand Rapids School Committee she received her twenty year service award at the February 2007 School Committee Conference. Linda has been a member of the Grand Rapids School Committee for twenty-nine years.

In addition to serving on the school committee she was elected to the Frontier School Board, serving her first term from January 1991 – October 1993 and her second term from November 1995 to the present (for a total of 23.75 years).

Linda has been married to Reginald (Roxy) for thirty-four years. They have three children Reg (25), Jessica (29), Monica (36), three granddaughters Ainslee (12), Linlea (3) and Amanda (1) and two grandsons, Terry (4) and Tyee (1).

When asked why she wanted to be on the school board, Linda stated that she believes that Frontier School Division is the best school division in Canada and that she believes in all the things that Frontier is trying to do – treat all staff fairly and equitably, that students in every school should have the same access and opportunity to quality education, and that parents must be informed and involved in their child's education.

(revised January 4, 2016)



## **Mary Dyma**

### **Teacher**

Mary was born in Ukraine in 1899 and emigrated to Winnipeg in 1920. She was an orphan of the First World War and came to Winnipeg to live with her aunt, Joanna Westlake. She enrolled in St. Mary's Academy at the Gr. 11 level to learn English. She obviously learned quickly because she graduated with a B.A. from the University of Manitoba in 1923, having done four years' work in three! She was the first woman of Ukrainian descent to graduate from a Canadian university.

She taught in Stuartburn for one year and was school principal in Ethelbert the following year. In 1925 she married Dr. Bronislaw Dyma, a Winnipeg physician and surgeon. They had two sons.

Women were not usually allowed to teach after marriage. Her career in teaching was short but, like many other women teachers, she used her skills and knowledge in other areas. With her husband's support, she ran as an Independent candidate for the Winnipeg School Board and was elected. She served as a trustee from 1931 -1935. During that time she also became President of the League of Women Voters, working with such Winnipeg leaders as Margaret McWilliams.

Mary Dyma was very active in the Ukrainian community. In 1928 she organized the Ukrainian Handicraft Guild (affiliated with the Canadian Handicraft Guild); in 1944 she became one of the founding members of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada and was its first national president. In 1944 she was a founding member and first national president of the Ukrainian Canadian Women's Committee (an umbrella organization uniting all Ukrainian Women's organizations in Canada.) She was president of the organization from 1944-46; 1951-53 and 1961-64. A Ukrainian chapter of the I.O.D.E. was established in her honour and she attended the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in London. She and Dr. Dyma helped many displaced persons to settle in Canada.

She received many awards for her service to the community – the Shevchenko Medal, a Centennial Medal, and a papal medal, "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice". The Mary Dyma Education Foundation assists girls/women pursuing religious studies in Canada, United States and Europe. She was featured on the Manitoba Women's Directorate poster as an outstanding contributor to life in Manitoba.

Mary Dyma died October 12, 1998.

With grateful thanks to

Vicky Adams, Chair of the Mary Dyma Scholarship Committee,  
Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada  
and

- Gloria Romaniuk, Archivist, Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Winnipeg



### **Marie-Antoinette Lemaire (née Lamoureux)**

Teacher

Marie-Antoinette Lamoureux was born on September 8, 1886 in Saint-Norbert, Manitoba. Her parents were Hubert Lamoureux from Quebec (of French parents) and Marguerite Jolibois, daughter of a fur trader from North Dakota. The family originally consisted of two daughters and three sons but two of them died in the diphtheria epidemic of 1894.

She attended l'école Saint-François de Sales #975, where she learned Polish from some of her Polish classmates; she also studied at the Couvent des Soeurs Grises de Saint-Norbert. In 1905 she attended

l'École normale de Saint-Boniface.

At age twenty-one she began her career at l'école de Saint-François de Sales #975. It was a challenging assignment for a young teacher who had 52 students of different ethnic groups – French Canadian, English, Métis and Polish! Fortunately she was trilingual, having learned Polish as a student. Two years later she moved to l'école Laramée de Saint-Adolphe #972, (15 students), and seven years later she was principal of l'école de Saint-Claude #988; from there, she went to Aubigny where she taught until she married Paul Lemaire in November, 1917.

Marie-Antoinette used her skills as a teacher in raising her own children but she was still able to give her time and talents to the community. She was a trustee for the school district of Barkman for eighteen years and secretary-treasurer for the same division for twenty-one years. During this time she never failed to attend the executive meetings of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. She was also pleased to “board the teachers” and discussions with them enabled her to keep up with the subjects close to her heart.

After her husband's death in 1948, she decided, at age sixty-two, to return to teaching and this new career lasted for more than twenty years. She started a kindergarten class at Saint-Norbert, then was hired at St. John's Ravenscourt to teach English, and later took charge of early years at a private school - l'école du Précieux-Sang in Norwood for the last fifteen years of her career.

Marie-Antoinette died on October 11, 1983 at the age of 97 – a life well-lived.

FEMMES DE CHEZ NOUS Les Cahiers d'histoire de la Société historique de Saint-Boniface (#4)  
Les Éditions du Blé, Saint-Boniface pour la Société historique de Saint-Boniface et la Ligue  
Féminine du Manitoba, 1985

# MARIE-ANTOINETTE LEMAIRE

(née Lamoureux)

1886-1983

*L'éducation chère à son coeur*

Marie-Antoinette Lamoureux vit le jour à Saint-Norbert, au Manitoba, le 8 septembre 1886. Elle était la fille d'Hubert Lamoureux, né au Québec de parents originaires de France et de Marguerite Jolibois dont le père était un pelletier du Dakota du Nord qui faisait commerce avec la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson. La famille Lamoureux comptait deux filles et trois garçons mais perdit deux d'entre eux lors de l'épidémie de diphtérie, en 1894.

La petite Marie-Antoinette alla d'abord à l'école Saint-François de Sales où elle apprit, entre autres, le polonais avec ses camarades de classe. Plus tard, elle continua ses études au Couvent des Soeurs Grises de Saint-Norbert; c'est Monsignore Noël Ritchot, alors curé de l'endroit, qui y enseignait la religion. En 1905, Marie-Antoinette entra à l'École Normale de Saint-Boniface, rue Masson, dont Roger Goulet était directeur. Une trentaine d'élèves de langue française fréquentaient alors l'école. Dès l'année suivante, Marie-Antoinette, qui avait tout juste vingt ans, commença à enseigner dans sa première petite école de Saint-François de Sales. Elle avait cinquante-deux élèves d'ethnies différentes, des Canadiens-Français, des Anglais, des Métis et des Polonais. Il était bon que Marie-Antoinette fut trilingue! Cependant assez découragée, elle alla voir M. Goulet qui lui dit: "Pauvre petite fille, t'as pas fini de pleurer si tu continues à enseigner." Cette remarque saisit Marie-Antoinette qui affirme: "Je n'ai plus jamais pleuré."

Deux ans plus tard, Marie-Antoinette se retrouva à l'école Laramée de Saint-Adolphe et après cinq ans, elle était directrice de l'école de Saint-Claude; puis elle partit pour Aubigny où elle enseigna jusqu'à son mariage.

C'est le 28 septembre 1917 que Marie-Antoinette Lamoureux épousa Paul Lemaire, né à Vire en France, qui était le fils du docteur Octave Lemaire de Saint-Norbert. Les Lemaire

qui vécurent dans une ferme près de Saint-Norbert eurent trois enfants: — Jeanne, Marcelle et Henri. Mme Lemaire pouvait pleinement mettre à profit ses talents d'éducatrice auprès de ses enfants; elle leur donna en sus le goût de l'enseignement. Cependant ses activités débordaient le cadre de la famille. Elle fut commissaire d'école pour la division scolaire Barkman pendant dix-huit ans, et secrétaire de cette même division pendant vingt et un ans. Elle ne manquait jamais non plus les réunions du Comité exécutif de la "Manitoba Trustees Association". C'est aussi avec plaisir que Marie-Antoinette Lemaire hébergeait les institutrices du lieu avec lesquelles elle pouvait s'entretenir de sujets chers à son coeur.

Cette vie de mère de famille et de fermière active allait prendre fin avec la mort de Paul Lemaire en 1948. Courageusement, Marie-Antoinette qui avait alors soixante-deux ans décida de retourner à l'enseignement. Cette nouvelle carrière allait durer une vingtaine d'années et encore Mme Lemaire continua-t-elle à donner des leçons particulières jusqu'en 1970 alors qu'elle avait déjà 84 ans.

Après 1948, Marie-Antoinette Lemaire a enseigné à Saint-Norbert, puis elle a commencé chez elle des classes de jardin d'enfants. Elle donna ensuite des cours à St. John's Ravenscourt et surtout, elle prit charge de la première maternelle à l'école du Précieux-Sang et y resta quinze ans.

Les intérêts de Marie-Antoinette Lemaire ne se confinèrent jamais à l'enseignement. On la retrouve à l'Amicale, parmi les Femmes Libérales de Saint-Boniface, chez les Dames de Sainte-Anne, et aussi présidente du local Languevin. Pendant la guerre, elle s'était jointe aux dames de Saint-Norbert pour l'oeuvre du "Secours de la France".



Marie-Antoinette Lemaire est une femme qui a toujours répondu "présente" aux devoirs imposés par la vie. Son entrain, son zèle, son ouverture d'esprit, l'ont toujours fait aller de l'avant pour le plus grand bien de ses contemporains qui ont su reconnaître ce qu'ils lui devaient et qui lui ont rendu hommage à maintes occasions. Elle reçut de l'Association d'Education des Canadiens-Français du Manitoba la médaille d'or et l'Ordre du Mérite Scolaire, de la Fédération des Associations de Parents et Maîtres de langue française du Manitoba, un diplôme de membre honoraire à vie; elle fut également nommée membre à vie des commissaires d'écoles, des Femmes Libérales de Saint-Boniface, de l'Amicale, de l'Union Nationale Française.

En 1970, Marie-Antoinette Lemaire se retira au Foyer Vincent mais ne devint pas pour autant inactive. Elle fit partie du Club Saint-Joseph, du Club Horace, du Club du Chapelet et de l'Armée de Marie, et demeura toujours un membre actif de la Société Historique de Saint-Boniface et de la Ligue des Femmes Catholiques.

Marie-Antoinette Lemaire s'éteignit paisiblement le 11 octobre 1983 à l'âge de 97 ans après une courte maladie résultat d'une chute dans son logis, épreuve qu'elle accepta dans un grand esprit de foi.

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**Margaret Ethel Manns (née Simmonds)**

Trustee/Administrator/Member of the Executive, MSTA/First Life Member (1946), MSTA

It is a far cry from the lovely hills and dales of Kent and Sussex to the level prairie lands of Manitoba, but from the former there came in August of 1906 a young woman who was to make a valuable contribution to the rural life of the province: That young woman was Margaret Ethel Simmonds – now Mrs. E. J. Manns of Edrans – daughter of Clifton

Simmonds, Squire of Brookland Romney Marsh, and Seven Oaks, Kent. She was born at St. Mary-in-the-Castle, Hastings, Sussex in 1882 and was educated in Warwick in the Chapel House, Atherstone, a private boarding school for girls. Even in those days she was interested in education and actively engaged in instructional work among children.

In November, 1906, a few weeks after arriving in Canada, she was married to Mr. E. J. Manns in Christ Church (Anglican), Winnipeg, and settled on a farm near Edrans where, after 39 years, she and Mr. Manns still reside. They have two children, both married, Clifton at Hamilton and Edith in Toronto.

During those 39 years Mrs. Manns has taken a keen interest in every phase of community life. She has given generously of her talents in music and elocution and has been a staunch and active supporter of the Anglican Church. She organized the Edrans Knitting Guild during World War I and interested herself in Red Cross working during World War II, being secretary-treasurer of the local society for a number of years. Of special interest to her have been sewing classes for girls and she has the distinction of having ten out of a class of eleven win prizes in a contest, in addition to one girl's winning a second place in a Dominion-wide contest.

In the field of education her activities have been many and varied. Since 1927 she has been secretary-treasurer and trustee of Deer Range S.D., and for the past ten years a member of the executive of the Manitoba School Trustees' Association. For three terms she has been a member of the Advisory Board of the Department of Education, and was the first – and is now the only woman on the executive to represent the rural schools of Manitoba. She has also served on the Curriculum Revision Committee for elementary schools. To all of these tasks she brought intelligence, understanding and boundless enthusiasm, and being keenly aware of the needs of the country children has particularly interested herself in rural school problems.

Conventions, executive meetings and board meetings have made heavy demands on the time and energy of a busy farm-wife and mother, yet Mrs. Manns has found both time and energy to raise her family, care for her home and help with the farm work. She harnesses a horse, puts up a good stook, or makes a speech at a convention equally well.

So strenuous a life, however, has taken its toll, and under orders from her doctor, Mrs. Manns is soon to give up all activity and retire with her husband to enjoy a well-earned rest. One feels, however, that neither her interest nor her influence will retire with her but will still extend themselves on behalf of the boys and girls of rural Manitoba.

*Source: The Manitoba School Trustee*



### **Nina Partrick**

Trustee/ Executive Secretary & Office Manager, MSTA and MAST

Nina was born in Ukraine June 29, 1907, and first came to Canada in 1912 with her mother, Pauline, to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, where her father was teaching. Andrew, her father, had preceded his family to Canada five years previously to establish himself before calling his family. Only two months after arriving in Canada, Nina and her mother returned to Ukraine, returning to Canada in 1914 just prior to the outbreak of the First World War. On their return to Canada, they lived in Theodore, Saskatchewan where she attended Poplar Leaf School and junior and senior high school at Theodore School, graduating in 1925. The family moved to Winnipeg in 1925 and her father set up his Dr. of Naturopathy practise in Winnipeg's North End.

Winnipeg is where she met her future husband, Norman, and they were married in 1932 in Knox United Church, and enjoyed 52 devoted years of marriage. They were blessed with two children, Shirley and Donald.

In addition to being a loving wife and devoted mother, Nina was extremely active in business and community. Through 1942-1951, Nina and Norman operated three different stores in the North End and East Elmwood. In 1951, she actively pursued a political career being elected to the Winnipeg School Board (three terms), and rising to Vice-Chairman of the School Board. She resigned in 1957 and was nominated as a candidate for the Liberal party in the 1957 federal election. She was not, however, successful against the Conservative candidate. Of note, she was the only woman in Manitoba to run that that election.

In 1958 she then accepted the challenge of Executive Secretary and Office Manager of the Manitoba School Trustees Association (M.S.T.A.). She was instrumental in the reorganization and uniting of rural and urban school trustees to form the Manitoba Association of School Trustees (M.A.S.T.). While in this position, she was also the editor of the association's monthly magazine. Retiring in 1965, she was acknowledged with an honorary life membership of MAST.



### **Elva Bell**

While Nina Partrick was MSTA's very first woman executive director, there was one other woman who performed the director's duties on an acting basis, just before Mrs. Partrick was hired by the executive committee.

In 1958, Elva Bell served briefly until Nina Partrick came on board in a permanent capacity. So while Nina certainly was the first woman to be hired as Executive Director, she was not the first to perform those duties!

*Source: The Winnipeg Free Press*

Source: *The Black Experience in Manitoba: A Collection of Memories*



## Inez Stevenson



ne of the first locally elected Black politicians in Manitoba, Mrs. Inez Stevenson, served as a school trustee in The Winnipeg School Division No. 1 from 1974-1981. Her enthusiasm and tireless dedication to all children went unmatched.

Inez Stevenson was born in Montreal, Quebec in 1929, and passed away after only fifty-two short years. The legacy of hard work and service she left behind, continues to reflect on the soul and strength of Manitoba's biggest school division.

Inez came to Winnipeg at a very young age and resided in Winnipeg's north end on Austin Street. She attended William Whyte and Norquay Schools up to grade 8 when she left school to help support her family.

She was an affable and unselfish person in her youth who was actively involved in a variety of young peoples' groups including Brownies. As a young woman she met her future husband, Jimmy. They married and had four boys Jimmy Jr., Gary, Darryl and Bruce. Jimmy Sr. worked for the Canadian National Railway and VIA Rail for over thirty years as a porter, and in charge porter. His job involved being "on the road" one week, and off the next. It must have been no small feat for a mother to raise four growing boys, but, Inez did a tremendous job.

Inez was a member of the John M. King Parent-Teachers' Association for a number of years in the 1960s and 70s. It was this association which was to further Inez's interest in local politics.

She was a member of Canada's Reserve Militia. She took part in many military exercises that occurred in Shilo, Manitoba. She also belonged to the Canadian Order of Foresters and the Daughter of Elks.

As her parents were from Barbados and St. Vincent, Inez had a keen interest in Winnipeg's West Indian community. She was a member of the Cari-Cana organization in Winnipeg for a number of years and assisted in many cultural events including Folklorama.

Perhaps Inez's biggest contribution to society was her role as a member, and later vice-chairman, of the Winnipeg School Board. For over eight years, Inez tirelessly worked helping implement much-needed programs with the school division. She was well-respected by children, parents, teachers and her fellow trustees.

John A. Jack wrote in his tribute to Inez Stevenson:

*Inez was committed to multiculturalism. She fought for equal opportunity and justice for all races, colour or creed and especially for her own Black people. She was one of the major contributors to the N.D.P.'s (provincial) Multiculturalism policy.*

Bono Emeruwa, former President of the Afro-Caribbean Association of Manitoba and currently a member of the teaching staff at the College of Advanced Education in Minna, Nigeria added:

*Among the Black people of Manitoba, Inez Stevenson occupied a singular position; she was our own public figure. Within her political landscape, she was the ground fighter, the happy warrior. Her cause was the cause of the weak, the down-trodden, and the repressed.*

Harold Marshall, Communications Officer for The Winnipeg School Division No. 1, and a dear friend of Inez, wrote a moving piece when she passed away. It captures wonderfully the whole essence of Inez and what she so passionately stood for.

*People who are in the public service of others at the present time are all too often taken for granted.*

*All too frequently they have to deal with the cynical who rarely create opportunities for themselves, but make it difficult for those who are dedicated to service.*

*It takes a person of rare character and distinction to separate the suspicious and the unbelieving from those who are able and willing to understand their motives to service.*

*In Trustee Inez Stevenson, The Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and its community had a person whose devotion and*

*dedication to the improvement of their condition was unquestioned. She saw it as her duty to service a system which is in a state of constant change and being challenged to authenticate itself.*

*Specifically, the constituents to whom she gave her first service were the young people in the schools. She saw them, not only as her first priority, but as the essential motivating thrust to her purpose in life.*

*There was nothing stringent nor arbitrary in her firm resolve to make the school system a better place for the young people; and at the same time to bring to those with dull faith and languid perception an appreciation of what she was attempting to do.*

*She was dogged of will and determined of spirit to discover ways and means by which the quality of life for everyone was made better than the way she found it.*

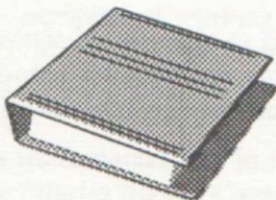
*She was a stout defender of those she felt may have been discriminated against, and would take to the offensive to ensure that their right of privilege was safeguarded.*

*Her manner of expression was without sophistication of phrase. This was her characteristic and it was a mark which bore the indelible imprint of the inner sanctum of the soul from which she spoke.*

*In many ways, hers was a unique personality and she sought to discover a meaningful course for her constituents in truth and in equity.*

*A person of laughter and an inbred humour, she loved the life she lived and she gave unstintingly of herself to those who needed her. She was selfless in her purpose to serve the division. In the truest sense, she was of the earth.*

*Her seven years of public service as a school trustee from 1974 - 1981, is a permanent testimony to her unique character.*





## **Kristjana Thordarson**

Kristjana Thordarson was active in the suffragette movement and was President of the Gimli Suffrage Association in 1916 where she was instrumental in achieving the women's right to vote in Manitoba. It was with this association that she worked alongside Margaret Benedictsson, editor of *Freyja*, the only women's suffrage paper published in Canada.

Kristjana Thordarson was born in Þingeyarsýsla, Iceland to Sigurður Erlendsson and Guðrún Eiríksdóttir in 1870 and emigrated to Canada with her family in 1876. They first settled at Sandar on Hecla Island before moving to Lundar in 1902. It was in this area where she met her husband Bergthór Thordarson. They married in 1894 in Selkirk and homesteaded in the Lundar area until 1908 when they moved to Gimli and remained there.

Bergthór served as mayor of Gimli from 1916 – 1920 and Kristjana's brother Jóhannes Sigurdson was the first mayor of Gimli.

Kristjana was first elected as a school board trustee in 1920 and served on the Gimli School Board. She passed away in Gimli in 1955.

*Sources: Gimli Saga, Cemetery Project, Icelandic Appeal web site, Evergreen School Division*



### **Jane Potter Asselstine, Manson, Manitoba**

Jane Gertrude Potter was born in Langbank, Saskatchewan in 1893. She trained as a teacher and taught in Fairfield, Saskatchewan until she married Herbert Asselstine on December 31, 1913.

They settled on a farm at Manson, Manitoba where they lived until 1940, moving to McConnell and retiring in Hamiota. Their five children were born while they lived in Manson.

In 1917 the community applied to the Department of Education to form the Consolidated School District of Manson, No.841. It was comprised of School District of Manson, the School District of Pleasant View, NE1/4 5-14-29 and two half sections taken from the School District of Archie. This school district lasted until 1968.

The first years of the Consolidated district were very busy ones, with transportation a major concern. Herb Asselstine drove one of the school vans. In the early years when he was busy on the farm, Jane often drove the school van instead, staying in town to help at the local store until it was time to drive children home.

The local history proudly announces that, in 1921, "Mrs. Fisher and Mrs. Asselstine were the first ladies on the Manson School Board."<sup>1</sup> They would not be the last. This area has had a number of women board members through the Consolidated School period, and also after they joined Fort La Bosse in 1918.

Mrs. Asselstine continued to be involved in community activities in McConnell and in Hamiota where they retired. She died in 1968.

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<sup>1</sup> *A Century of Memories: Manson, McAuley and Willen.* p.37



### **Martha Kady McLean**

Martha Kadey was born in Watford, Ontario in 1867. She came west with her parents who were among early settlers in the Forrest area. She completed her education in Forrest and then attended Normal School in Brandon.

Like many women who became early school trustees, Martha Kadey McLean had experience as a teacher. She was the first teacher at Chumah. Chumah was one of the districts of the Crandall area and was settled in 1883, mostly by families from Huron County, Ontario. In 1890, Miss Kadey married Joseph McLean, a successful businessman in the area and they had seven children.

Martha Kadey McLean served on many organizations such as the W.I., the Ladies Aid and the first Hamiota Hospital. Mrs. McLean was an adventurous person who claimed to have been the first female to ride the return trip to Brandon on the first train to enter Hamiota. She also had her first ice cream cone at the first Calgary Stampede. It was not surprising that she was the first woman school trustee in the area, elected with John Lemon and J. Delbridge in 1917 to a two-year term as trustee for the Hamiota School District No. 892.

Mr. McLean died in 1938 and Mrs. McLean moved to Winnipeg in the early 1940s. She died in 1965 at the age of 98.

Images is courtesy of photo reproduced from Hamiota: Grains of a Century 1884 to 1984, p. 590