

POINT *to* POINT

ARMSTRONG'S POINT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Respect – kistêyihtamowin

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- Solomon Ratt, Cree Cultural Teachings

Last spring, another distant connection to our neighbourhood “came back”, reaching out for information on his family’s place of origin here in Armstrong’s Point.



Riel-era Cottonwoods in East Blanchard Park

Darren’s Story

“That story: there’s something about Armstrong’s Point that Granny Great used to talk about.” Darren Gregory in Creston, BC. writes he’s been entrusted with preserving the recollections of his elders, passed to him since his childhood days in the story-telling tradition of the family.

“The Point has historical significance to our family... Armstrong’s Point and I are bonded now if you all are good with that.” We welcome that, hoping to help Darren and learn something in the process. The question: what is that bond, and how are we connected? *(continued on next page)*



Armstrong’s Point

THE HERITAGE REPORT

It’s Spring....isn’t it??...or so the calendar says!

We’re giving the East Gate entrance its planned mini-face lift this season. Although there isn’t enough ground to rival the Middle Gate Gardens, that might be made up with a different approach..... look for a pretty little “sister garden”.

This year will mark the fourth that West Broadway Biz donates their watering service to our entrance gardens. Thank-you so much, we’re grateful!

Next up - we’ve begun looking at designs for historic street signs for Armstrong’s Point, to present our choice to the City. Finally, we continue our series on historical eras / housing styles in the Point - this issue: the bungalow.

Now that summer is approaching, let’s put the gloves on and see what can be accomplished for our community.

*April McDonald-Kassum, Chair
APA Heritage / Beautification Committee*

Darren's Story

(continued from front page)

Darren's been told that his family line goes back to the Hudson's Bay Company, to his "Great Gran", Henrietta Armstrong Gregory. He also knows of "a connection to the Point and Peter Fidler's grand-child, Ann." "Who is Peter Fidler?" you may ask. Stay with us, we'll come to that eventually, but first things first...

The Armstrongs: "I found this picture of James Armstrong's headstone today. I always knew that the Point was named for Armstrong. Only recently was I able to put this two and two together."

We're able to find a reference by Miss Elisabeth Harrison (*MB Historical Society*, 1960). "All that St. James Parish now owns of the large grant given to them by the Hudson's Bay Company is the churchyard, one city block, Doreen and Tylehurst Streets east and west, Portage Avenue and the river north and south."



Photo sent by Darren Gregory

"The oldest graves are nearest the church. Here is the grave of a man who fought in the Peninsular War and at the Battle of Waterloo. He was James Armstrong, a pensioner, and, you've guessed it, he lived in Armstrong's Point." And how did a war veteran born in Ireland come to be buried here?



The historic St. James Cemetery, situated on an old First Nations meeting ground, erected in 1853 (st.jamesanglicanchurch.ca).

"I became, 'the guy'.
The watcher and the keeper
of our history stories...I've
filled some gaps and can tell
the story in bits and bites ...
for that 'book' that will go now
to my first born grand-child
when she gets the historian
torch passed from me to
her as is our way."

With his own Hudson's Bay Co. land grant for a local area called Point-à-Peltier, British Captain Joseph Hill arrived here in 1851, accompanied by a group of pensioners that included Private James Armstrong. When Hill was recalled to England, Armstrong was left in charge, and over his tenure and later that of his son Elliot, this place came to be known as Armstrong's Point. (A *Walking Tour of Armstrong's Point*, Patricia Thomson, 2011)



Armstrong's Point 1899, photo: HCD Study

Now for the Fidler side of the family tree... "Our ancestral grandfather x7, Peter Fidler, was an English surveyor who worked for HBC and became one of the original Red River Settlers. He married our ancestral grandmother Mary Mackagonne, a Cree from Norway House".

They travelled thousands of miles together, Mary paddling her own canoe, contributing to the building of forts and delivering 14 children along the way, from the shore of Hudson's Bay to the unsettled frontier that became Alberta." (Mary Mackagonne: Film by Sean Smith)



Mary Mackagonne, Peter Fidler, firstborn Thomas Fidler b. 1795 (Peter Fidler Family Tree, Facebook)

That link between Armstrong's Point and Darren's family - it's elusive. Though we've come to know and understand one another well and together we've learned a lot, determined on both sides to keep up the search, we close here, for now:

"It will be in 2022, 100 years that we've been in Creston Valley; the family left Winnipeg following the General Strike. My Father's sister is still alive and she also knows some things . . .when I get that, it will help, I'm sure, getting to the Armstrong's Point story. Best regards, high respect, Darren."

And then, not long after, all becomes clear, our search comes to an end, we have our answers..

Go to: <http://www.armstrongspoint.ca/darrensstory.html>

“Owning a bungalow is like owning a little piece of early 20th-century history.” (1)

1882 - Armstrong's Point in its early days was a semi-rural residential area of large houses and lots. By 1904 there were still only twenty homes here. Things changed with the post-war housing boom. Original lots were subdivided and a number of modern housing designs like the bungalow were introduced into the Point.



We notice there's a lot of variation in the bungalows we have here in Armstrong's Point, so we ask a neighbour who's an architect - "What exactly is a bungalow?" Well, generally, it's a smaller one-storey dwelling without stairs, but depending on the style, it can have a second storey or half-storey built into a sloped roof. Some typical features are large front windows, wide overhangs above the entrance and even broad front

porches, but we're told the definition of a bungalow isn't strict, even among architects. Though all are derived from the original "bangala" style of India, not all our houses will have all the features.

"Simple lines, natural elements and handmade quality had great appeal for family home buyers of the 50s and 60s.

As to interiors, the craftsmanship was in the details, the kind rarely seen past the 1940-1960 construction period due to their cost...elements like glass blocks, hardwood, arched doorways and coved ceilings with detailed finishes. That's what makes a well-maintained bungalow so desirable today - its vintage touches." (2)

"Midcentury modern architecture is often overlooked. These buildings deserve their place in architectural history." (3) Houses of this era now have protections here in AP, and combined with the degree of care our owners have devoted to their vintage houses, we know they'll remain desirable family homes for another 70 years, and beyond.

Sources: Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, HTFC Planning and Design, Dengarden.com (1), activerain.com (2), HGTV.com (3)

Consider some examples from the City of Winnipeg's own HCD Study:



9 Blanchard Avenue, 1948
one of our earliest bungalows



15 Middle Gate, 1953



129 East Gate, 1953 photo: Ash Raichura

Bungalow Vintage Style

Photos by Ash Raichura



BULLETIN BOARD

Commemoration of a beloved old tree

"When we moved into our home on Middle Gate in 2013 we were in awe of this majestic elm tree and could only speculate on its age. It was substantially



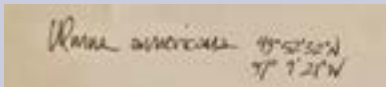
Original Tree



Cross section stamp



Final 50" x 50" print



Tree's scientific name and the coordinates of where it once stood.

larger than other elms in the area - in fact it was 11 feet in circumference! We really enjoyed the view and shade it provided but when it started to deteriorate we knew it wasn't long before we'd come home to the dreaded orange dot. Sadly the tree came down in 2020 but (with some difficulty) we were able to cut a cross section from the stump.

Earlier that year we had met Pam and Darren of NiceArtPeople who create these stunning images. They hand carved each ring to turn the cross-section into a giant stamp. The result was this fabulous 50" x 50" piece.

Along with the artist's signature, it includes the tree's scientific name (*Ulmus americana*), and the coordinates of where it once stood. We couldn't be happier with this commemoration of our 175 year old tree!" - Aleisha Reimer, 124 Middle Gate

The Gates Garden Club

was off to an enthusiastic start on May 12, with plenty of great ideas offered for future activities. For information contact: leslu@shaw.ca



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The Gallery...

Remembering Deborah J. Stacey 1960 - 2011



"Grandmum", Deborah J. Stacey

Summer is a fitting time to remember our neighbour, friend and a gifted artist. Deb, who held degrees in both Fine Arts and Architecture, practiced with Number TEN Architectural Group, then in later years returned to her painting, combining her love of bold colour with architectural forms.

She exhibited her work as a member of the Group of Eight but many of us remember her best for the 2008 solo showing at the Crebery Gallery of her beautiful "Flowers" series of paintings.



Lilies at 28 Middle Gate

Point to Point: Armstrong's Point

Community Newsletter Send contributions, suggestions to: d.irwin@mymts.net