

# Remembrances of Ashmont

by Helen Brosseau

Summarized from An Era In Review

The first Ashmont Post Office was in the farm home of Mr. Babcock located on the north-west corner of the present McConnell farm. Ashmont hamlet began before 1915 when Mr. Walter Joy built a store on his farm two miles west of the present town site. Soon the Post Office was moved there and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Adams.

The hamlet saw little growth until 1919 when "the steel" was on the way to St. Paul. In the spring of 1920 the end of the line was in Spedden. By that time, Ashmont had welcomed Dr. Valens and a dentist, Dr. Massicotte. The Bank of Commerce set up emergency banking in a tent, and saw little humor in the wind storm that 'blew the bank down', scattering confidential papers. It then moved into Percy Anderson's old shack.

George Scott operated a creamery.

In the spring of 1920 the work on the railway was renewed and Business saw an advantage in moving the hamlet to its present site. The "New Ashmont" survey is dated September, 1920.

Snow lay long on the ground the spring of '21 so buildings were moved on skids on the snow. Mr. Joy's store was moved to the north end of Main Street (#9). The Adams family moved their home and Post Office (#4). This building served as the Ashmont Post Office for many years. It was the home and restaurant of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hayes when it was destroyed by fire.

Dr. Valens moved his office into the hamlet, but soon left. The spring of 1921 Oelisle Brothers, Amos and Edward from St. Paul, opened a hardware store on Main Street. In 1922 another store was built on this site by Ed Williams. The Bank of Commerce improved on its "tent bank" by building a fine building on Main Street (#8). It burned down along with Guertin's store and banking meant a trip to St. Paul.

Between 1920 and 1923 Ashmont was a "booming" hamlet. The west side of Main Street also had Mr. Valens' law office and Mr. Cummings' real estate (#7). These offices were also destroyed by fire and the two professionals moved on as the business activity had subsided. The elevator (#62) was built by Brooks Elevator Company about 1923. The town's first blacksmith was Mr. John Inscho who came about 1923. His home (#11) later became a Red and White Store operated first by Andy Stothert. The blacksmith shop (#1), is now a historic building in a pioneer village at the Edmonton Klondike grounds.

The large house on Hotel Avenue, (#28) was built by Joe Murray in the 1920's. The back portion is a log structure. Mr. and Mrs. William Gilmore set up a small boarding house here in about 1926.

The Hayward Lumber Company opened a lumber yard about 1921. (#56) The cafe-turned-store (#2), burned in 1967 along with the buildings on either side of it. Jack Draper opened his livery barn and dray business (#15) in 1921.

Transportation in the area received a major boost with the building of Highway 28 in 1939.

## C.F.R.N. Tower by Glen Hays

The C.F.R.N. Tower was built about 1964. Ashmont was chosen because it was high and has a pathway clear of hills between here and Edmonton. Where the tower stands, the altitude is about 2100 feet.

The tower is 630 feet high. It sits on a cement base. It was built section by section. Each section is about 20 feet long. They had a crane fastened to the side of the tower. They lifted a section at a time, bolted and welded it in place then moved the crane up and hoisted up another. The reflector dish is about ten feet by twenty feet. This screen reflects the microwave beam from Edmonton to Smoky Lake, then down to the ground into a receiver dish sitting on a stand. The equipment in the building changes the frequency from microwave to Channel 12. The signal is carried in a tube filled with gas to the cylindrical cylinder on the top of the tower. The top 80 feet of the tower is antenna and weighs as much as an average car.

The tower and power lines receive numerous lightning strikes. This is the main reason for the signal going out. When this happens, a light on the building comes on as long as there is power, and can be seen by Glen Hays. By phoning Edmonton and describing the situation, Glen can

sometimes get it working again. As with everything else, the tower has had its share of wild stories. One time, Glen Hays convinced many people in Ashmont that a piece of the tower had been taken out and that is why everyone's T. V. was working better. This, of course, never happened.