



# E.J. Casey: St. Vital's king of the carnival circuit - Page 6

The

# HISTORIAN

Newsletter of the St. Vital Historical Society

600 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2M 3L5

204.255.2864 e-mail: svhs@svhs.ca

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## School adopts Tod graves

On June 23, 1943, Doug and Ernie Tod died when their Stirling bomber of the 75 New Zealand Squadron (Ake Ake Kia Kaha) disappeared somewhere in the Netherlands and were buried in the General Cemetery of Medernblik.

On, or about Oct. 3, 2017, the message light was blinking on the phone at the St. Vital Museum: the caller was from England and left a number. Call back went to voice mail, but a few days later the SVM Facebook page has a message from Jeoron Pinto, of York, UK. Pinto was responding for Peter Sasburg, a resident of Medernblik.

Sasburg had a school in Netherlands willing to adopt the Tod graves and had received the necessary funds from the town for the upkeep. Sasburg also wanted to twin with a St. Vital School. He was disappointed to learn the Tod school, Norberry, was now the home of the Louis Riel School Division.

Principal Michael Stevens said Hastings School was willing and able to twin with the Medernblik school. The role has now been taken over by Frontenac School in Windsor Park.

According to Pinto, there is also interest in the project from New Zealand.

The event shows the power of the Internet and Facebook when used properly. The event also underlines the important role played by the St. Vital Historical Society which posted the Tod story on the Museum's Facebook page about three, or four, years ago.

Before wondering why, the Tods were on the same aircraft, Doug and Ernie were not only identical, they were inseparable. They were both Warrant Officers, both were wireless operators, and both were Air Gunners.



The Tod Brothers: Ernie and Doug

A month before their fatal flight, their aircraft had crashed into the North Sea after running short of fuel en route home from a raid on Frankfurt.

"While the crew went through dinghy drill and prepared to alight on the water, (Ernie) Tod tapped out messages," reported the Winnipeg Tribune.

The message pin-pointed the bomber's position for air-sea rescue which arrived within 15 minutes of the crew hitting the water.

When the Walrus arrived, the door opened to reveal a rescuer

was a classmate from Norberry School: Ted Teillet.

"What kept you guys," the twins yelled, according Lea German, Teillet's daughter and former SVHS director.

"The air cover was already on its way when the message 'We're hitting the water' was sent.

For his actions, Ernie Tod received the Distinguished Flying Medal. The ribbon was the only way to tell the twins apart, said their mates.

About 10 days after the Tod's death, Cpl. Johnny Tod was credited with single-handedly taking 27 German prisoners.

"Ted was on lone patrol armed with a rifle," wrote Canadian Press War Correspondent Ross Munro.

"He walked down a deep enemy trench, and coming around a turn, almost bumped into a group of armed Germans."

Tod pretended to have a whole battalion behind him "and the enemy put up their hands and as other came along they trench, they did the same."

—BOB HOLLIDAY

# Letter from the Palace

This a copy of the letter sent to the Tod Family confirming the deaths of Richard and Douglas Tod whose plane was shot down during a bombing run over Holland. Though from St. Vital, the Tods were assigned to the 75th New Zealand Squadron.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

24th May 1944.

Dear Mrs. Tod,

The King and Queen have heard with sincere regret that your two sons, Warrant Officer Richard Douglas Tod and Warrant Officer Robert Ernest Tod, have lost their lives in the service of their country.

I am desired by Their Majesties to assure you of their deepest sympathy in this double loss which you have sustained.

*Yours sincerely*  
*A. Jacobs*

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# 2018



Streetcar 380 heads north on St. Mary's Road on July 1, 1952 (John Baker Photo)

## New staff member and other things

Please welcome Sarah Watkins as the new Saturday staff member. Sarah has a great museum background. She has worked at the Manitoba Museum, Dauphin, St. Boniface Museum, and is currently employed at the Human Rights Museum but she has always wanted to be involved in a community museum. Sarah is fluent in French and English.

She replaces Jenna Klassen who stepped down due to a heavy work load completing her thesis. We wish her all the luck in her future endeavours.

Fifteen members of Fort Richmond Good Neighbour Club toured during October sending the visitor total past the 900 mark, so we are en route to do more than 1,000 this year.

The group sent a very nice thank you note: A big thank you for a very interesting morning. The group thoroughly enjoyed our time at the museum. You have done a remarkable job and continue to make improvements and additions. Keep up the good work!!

Julian Roberts, of the city real estate department did a tour recently and was impressed with the changes since

his last visit. He will also help with the right city department when we apply to put signage on the museum, hopefully in the spring. We will be: cutting one of the McElhoes&Duffy signs into two nine-foot pieces; replacing the vinyl lettering with our own; and finally having signage on the front and side of the building. Too many visitors tell us the museum was discovered by chance.

Derrick Nault is becoming a valuable resource for St. Vital history. He has already sent us copies of documents containing first-hand reports of the arrest of Andre Nault, and of a Sheriff's officer who had a chance 1873 meeting with Louis Riel who was riding south to the USA.

Andre Nault, cousin to Louis Riel and descendant like Riel of the explorer Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere and Marie-Anne Gaboury (the "Mother of Red River"), is my great-great grandfather. His son, Alexandre Nault, is my great grandfather. Alexandre was married to Mathilde Carriere, a daughter of Damase Carriere (a Metis martyr at Batoche) and Marie-Pelagie Par-

teau (a niece of Gabriel Dumont). So Damase was also my great-great grandfather. My father was Bernard Gabriel "Gib" Nault. He grew up in Fort Garry, which was at one time St. Vital, as I understand it. His father was Alberic (Later "Bert") Nault and mother was Alice Patricia Vermette, sister to Yvonne Vermette Riel, who at one time lived in Riel House with her husband Honore Riel."

"I grew up in Beausejour, Manitoba. I lived there from Grades 1 to 12. Then I did my BA and MA in history at the University of Manitoba. At one point I lived in Evergreen Gardens on University Crescent, possibly right on Andre Nault's River Lot 12 without knowing it. In 1989, I entered graduate school at Queen's University in Kingston, where I completed my PhD in history in 1994. I have lived and worked in Toronto, Peterborough (Trent University), Calgary (University of Calgary), and several places in Korea and Japan, most recently in Tokyo, where I worked at Sophia University and recently began work at the University of Tokyo. (Continued on Page 4}

*In the very near future, the Museum will be searching for volunteers to participate in new and exciting programs. Stay tuned for a new look happening soon at the St. Vital Museum. Check out Page 7 for more details. Sara will be waiting.*

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# Calendars and other stuff

*Continued from Page 3*

Nault has already provided copies of several documents. "If you would like any other information let me know. I have a lot more things you might be interested that no one has used in history books, articles, or displays before. So much of Manitoba's fascinating history remains to be discovered. With digitized materials, it's now much easier to find sources that previously were overlooked."

On Aug. 30, I spoke to a gathering of about 150 principals and vice-principals of the Louis Riel School Division re: the lack of school tours. The talk received a good response with several people saying that we will be hearing from them.

The society was honoured to be part of Remembrance Week at Brookside Cemetery where 10,000 veterans of various wars are resting. George Peterson, 97, the last surviving member of the Winnipeg Grenadiers who were forced to surrender Hong Kong to Japan on Christmas Day 1941, graciously allowed us to take his uniform, chopsticks and pipe to the display. Also on display was the pasteboard honouring Sgt. Major John Robert Osborn VC. Osborn, of Guay Avenue, who jumped on a grenade to save other Grenadiers.

We have just a few more photo montages to do and the Métisse display will be complete.

The Red River cart was at the Seven Oaks Museum for the 200th Anniversary of Winnipeg's oldest settlement. Cart owner Satch Dheilly was quick to grant the request. He even pulled kids around in the cart (by hand) but his kindness resulted in the wheels needing work. He'll be a frequent sight at the museum this winter as he tightens the wheel spokes.

The Tod display is coming together. There is going to be a lot of scanning needed to finish the documents, some dating back to 1891. The display will also include photos of the Hack and Hulton families, who were among the first English-speaking settlers of St. Vital.

The musical display has been tweaked, and the other original door (1914) from the fire hall has been hung, thanks to good friend Jim Murray, who also rebuilt the basement shelving.

Don't forget that due to Remembrance Day, the AGM has been pushed back a week to: 1 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 18 in the Museum.

The 2018 SVHS calendar will be officially unveiled and for sale at the AGM. As usual, anyone renewing their membership for 2018 will receive a FREE calendar.

There is no increase in price for extra calendars which remains at \$5 each or three for \$10. If buying by mail, please add \$3.50 for postage. The calendars also make excellent stocking stuffers.

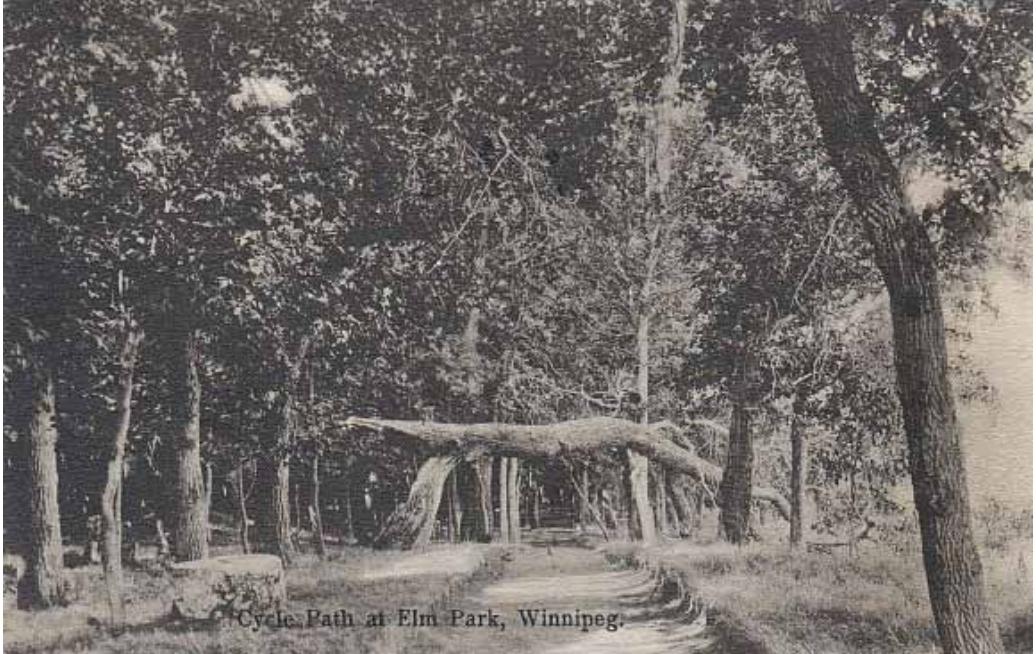
The calendar is a major fund raiser for the historical society. Please support the advertisers as they make possible the printing of the calendar and the St. Vital Historian.

—Bob Holliday

Marty Ciccioppo has a postcard in "my personal collection that will be of interest to members not only for the picture on the front but for the historical bit on the back."

The photo is entitled 'Cycle Path at Elm Park; Winnipeg' and on the back is a message written by the sender to his recipient is this: "The city has an option on this park for a public recreation ground."

"The postcard had been sent with a franked green one-cent stamp of King Edward VII and the date is March 2, 1907," writes Ciccioppo, (nee Andrews), a former St. Vital'er from her home in the United Kingdom.



Cycle Path at Elm Park, Winnipeg

## Former director Bell passes

The St. Vital Historical Society lost another pioneer with the passing of long serving former director June Bell.

She passed Oct. 23 following a long battle with dementia. Bell, 78, suffered a stroke in 2005. She passed at home in the care of husband Gordon, who was also a hard working society director.

\* \* \*

Leon St. Onge and Dave Reimer are back working on the 1939 Fargo pumper truck.

The dynamic duo are making sure the back wheel brakes are working properly.

\* \* \*

When is there too much heat? When the thermostat doesn't work and the temperature reaches a stifling 32C in the back office.

After city workers installed a couple of thermostats, the problem seems to be fixed and windows won't have to be opened when the temp outside is -35C.

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Ted Casey, sister Madeliene and mother Emmeliene beside a Casey show truck, while a man walks south past the Casey Building on St. Mary's Road during the 1950 flood. On the right is Top Hat Florists.

## E.J. Casey: St. Vital's premier showman and carney

There was a time when E. J. Casey Shows had the biggest midway and sideshows in Manitoba, or even possibly Western Canada, and the company's head office was at 567 St. Mary's Road just north of the Junction.

Edgar J. Casey got his start in the carney business working at a concession stand at River Park, then located south of Jubilee Avenue along the north bank of the Red River.

Following the First World War, Casey was advised to give up the heavy work he'd done as a carpenter at River Park when he came up with the idea of a travelling carnival. He started with one truck, but by 1932 his "hanky-pank" show" had expanded to 32 vehicles travelling to 125 shows annually.

The flood of 1950 left Casey \$100,000 in debt, but rather than declare bankruptcy he paid off creditors within seven years.

St. Vital'lers got to spend their money when the St. Vital Agricultural Society held its annual fair and exhibi-

bition on the land just south of Regal Avenue, before moving to Riel Park, where it became the Greater Winnipeg Exhibition, which in 1954 attracted 108,000 visitors. The midway was eventually taken over by Royal American Shows and included a rodeo.

There was also a time when Casey operated Rendezvous Park, located in Lockport, where thousands of students went on a school excursion to celebrate the end of the school year by going on the ferris wheel, merry-go-round and bumper cars plus the fun and crazy house.

When Casey sold the business in 1965, most of the rides were purchased by the original owners of Tinker Town on Fermor Avenue where they provided a fun time for countless family outings.

One of Casey's biggest regrets was not having a son to inherit the business: Ted and Dave both died in the Second World War.

Casey, who died in 1976, is buried at St. Vital Cemetery on River Road.

—Bob Holliday



### Dan Vandal

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Theodore (Ted) and brother David were put to work in a concession stand by father E.J. Casey. Sadly both young men died in uniform fighting for Canada during the Second World War.



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Annual General Meeting  
1 p.m. Nov. 18 in the Museum

# *Sarah wants to use experience to continue growth of SV Museum*



## **By Sarah Watkins**

Community museums are so important in telling the amazing stories that make up the fabric of any community, and for that reason I am so excited to be part of the team at the St. Vital Museum. I have worked in museums of all sizes, but so far the St. Vital Museum is one of my favourites. I have so much respect for this small museum, and I am in awe of the incredible things it has done so far on nothing but volunteer power and donations.

As Curator and Collections Manager I hope to continue the work that has already begun on preserving the Museum's collections. There is nothing that can replace an authentic artifact when we are learning about our history. It is the objects that let us feel and see the past in a way that truly connects us with those who have come before us.

I also plan to continue to develop and refresh the exhibits on a regular basis. This plan includes developing a space for temporary exhibits to encourage visitors to come back time and again.

I am also dedicated to increasing the number of visitors and donations that we receive. To do this I will be starting a lecture series in the new year, and hope to develop a curriculum-based school program that can be done either on-site at the Museum, or taken to schools. I will also be working to improve the Museum's visibility by leveraging media coverage of temporary exhibits and events.

Finally I will extend the reach of the Museum beyond Winnipeg through the use of social media and the development of a new blog available to everyone on the Saint Vital Historical Society website.

I truly look forward to lending my skills to this unique and important institution, but I can't do it alone. If you think you could help with any of these initiatives we would love to hear from you! Let's get to work!

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