

The Village of Cremona

1979

by Pearl Stone

Cremona, a progressive village approximately twenty-five miles north of Cochrane on Highway 22, has a population of two hundred twenty-three as recorded on June 1, 1978. The original official Cremona Post Office was under the management of Smith Jackson who was made postmaster of Cremona in 1906 through the influence of Hon. Fisher M.L.A. and his friends. "Honley" was the name chosen by Squire Jackson but was refused because of possible confusion with Hanley, Saskatchewan. The name "Cremona," named after Cremona, Italy was suggested and accepted. Thus the Cremona Post Office originated and soon the store, cheese factory, and blacksmith shop were begun.

The mail first came from Cochrane to Dog Pound where it was picked up by Smith Jackson and taken to Cremona sorted and distributed. Later the route was changed to Carstairs and the mail was delivered twice a week. The store became a social centre for farmers who came for mail, to shop, or to deliver milk to the cheese factory.

Cremona remained a "wide spot in the road" until 1929-30 when the railway was built. At that time buildings sprang up on the new site of Cremona at the end of the railway about three miles west of the original hamlet.

In the intervening space of time a period of forty-nine years, much has happened which will be reported at a later date. Today Cremona is quite a busy centre and that is what this article is all about.

Many businesses flourish. There are two garages and service stations, one at either end of town, that care for the motors of the community. At the eastern entrance to the village is Mr. Brown, at the western entrance is Mr. Black. Brown and Black are very capable and reliable and give satisfaction. They are both very busy.

Apsco Industries, which manufactures and installs industrial dust collectors, is under the management of Jack Dueck and Arnold Reimer. This firm has installed a coin-operated car wash nearby for the convenience of motorists.

Cremona has two churches. The Missionary Church established in 1932, and the United Church established in 1937. Both churches are well attended at the present time. Each has a women's group that assists in church affairs. The Missionary Church has a resident pastor, the United Church is served by the Carstairs' minister.

The Youth Group in the Missionary Church is very active in social activities and Bible study. The United Church also has a Youth Group. In some activities the groups work together. There are also groups of girls of various ages, the Brownies, the Explorers, and the Guides. Ladies of the area volunteer their services as leaders and guides. Some boys from eight to twelve years belong to Cubs also under the leadership of a volunteer. The young people of the district and the village who wish to belong are given excellent leadership and guid-

ance which augments that received in their homes.

Other places of meeting have been built through the years. The original community hall, which served for many years, has been replaced by a much larger fully modern building. The new structure was built largely by volunteer labor under the sponsorship of the local Lions Club. A smaller hall was built many years ago by the Cremona Woodmen, who hold monthly meetings there. It is used also for card parties and other social events. At the west end of the village is the Legion Hall, in front of which stands a cairn erected in memory of those who served in the two World Wars.

The Cremona school with an enrollment of three hundred fifty-seven pupils and a staff of twenty-two teachers is an excellent institution. All grades from one to twelve are taught. Many graduates go directly into the business world and are very successful. Most professions have in them a graduate from the Cremona school. One, Dr. Doug Reid, a veterinarian operates a clinic a short distance from Cremona.

Senior Citizens in the area, who choose to do so, may rent an apartment in the Pioneer Apartments in the village. It is in a convenient location very near the Post Office and the churches. Helen Whitlow, housekeeper for the unit, visits daily to see that all is well. Mr. Barlow, a retired farmer and handyman, is maintenance man who keeps it in good condition. Ev Robertson, Cremona Community Health Nurse, visits regularly to check the health of the residents, say a cheery word to each, and leave promising to return. She is also

school and baby care nurse. The Post Office, having it postal code TOMORO is staffed by Daisy Sullivan who is very efficient. She has a cheer word for all who come in. She does things today and does not put off 'til tomorrow.

Of course, there are stores, one each of hardware variety, and general store. The latter contains a laundry mat, a Treasury Branch, and Coffee Corner and Flower Shop operated by June Bernard and Vera Holbrook. These ladies can serve lunch, sell a novelty, or make up a beautiful corsage or bouquet for any occasion. Their guest book bears many signatures. These businesses are staffed by friendly, courteous persons whose motto seems to be, "We give satisfaction. If we haven't got what you want we'll get it."

Vair Whitlow sells bull oil... nothing but the best according to Vair, the Esso agent. His office is a general meeting place for men, who in the less busy periods, enjoy a visit with the staff at Esso.

The plumbing and electrical needs of the village and the surrounding are cared for by Jim Stratton who responds quickly to emergency calls day or night.

The Credit Union, located in a convenient place is managed by a staff of two. It is well patronized.

Don McLennon, welder has a shop on main street. He seems to keep very busy.

Oliver McKay sharpens anything from knives and scissors to chain saws. He also does skillful carving and leather work. A lover of wild life he feeds birds that come to his feeder.

Boyd Osborne operates a trucking business specializing

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in hauling gravel and earth for fills.

Olive Hewitt sells licences, big game, car and truck, and fishing.

Near Cremona are others who are essential to the well being of the community. Harris Gardner, owner and manager of H.G. Construction; Conforth's Welding; Ben Grainger, who operates the Cremona Transport; Robert Stone excavation and digging; Todd's Landscaping operated by Robert's son, the County Shop that ensures bus service to Cremona School students offer service when required.

The hotel is now owned by Pat and Mike (Neilson and Kelly) who took the business over from Frank and Jennie.

The hotel cafe is famous for good meals under the supervision of Jack Brown, it not prepared by him personally.

Occupation for leisure time is not forgotten. An excellent library, staffed by rotating volunteer librarians, offers a good selection of books of all types. No charge is made for membership. An outdoor skating rink keeps skaters comparatively happy. A two-sheet curling rink with artificial ice is kept in good condition by Stan Schultz. It provides scheduled curling for all ages from students to the "sixty and over" group.

The Cremona Cultural Arts Foundation, an organization for the promotion of arts and crafts, interests many. It sponsors an excellent display of work each spring which is well attended.

The town council is made up of two business men and a high school teacher. Vair Whitlow, Mayor; Wayne Black and Ken Blain. Cleta

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Haggerty, town secretary, is in the town office, a building which also houses the library and the fire hall. Volunteers act as firemen and respond quickly to an alarm.

At present Cremona has two grain elevators, the Wheat Pool and Pioneer grain. The former will no longer function after railway transportation is discontinued. However it is rumored the Pioneer Grain will continue buying from the farmers and large trucks will haul it to outside points.

The sports minded individuals are not forgotten. About sixty children fit into one of four categories - (1) Teeny Weeny ages six to eight, (2) Tiny Mite ages nine and ten, (3) Pee Wee ages eleven and twelve, (4) Midget ages fifteen and sixteen. These hockey teams are coached by young men of the community. There is also a men's hockey team.

Many sports are associated with the school. These are soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton, track and field, and cross country. Baseball is not forgotten - there are baseball teams in the village.

So education, spiritual, athletic, culture, mechanical and sustenance needs are met by community-minded persons.

Adjacent to Cremona, across highway 22, is the Mountain View Trailer Park. It was begun in 1959 by Lawrence Bergeson, but has been under the management of the present owner, Robert Bergeson, Lawrence's son for five years. It has thirty sites counting the home of the owner, and has a population of approximately sixty. It is not in the village but is a separate entity.

Cremona is an exceptionally rich village. So rich, in fact, that every blade of grass has a green back, every bird has a bill, the chimneys have their drafts, every horse has a check, and every ditch has two banks. Even the towns get a rake-off, every cloud has a silver lining, and every flower in town has a scent. When you put a five dollar bill in your pocket you double it and when you take it out you find it increases.

Now, do you want to leave here or not?

If any one or anything has been omitted it was not intentional.