

MR. CHAS. MIDWINTER EIGHTY YEARS OLD

Dec 1931

Well-Known Resident, Born Dec. 27th, 1851, Came Here Before the Railroad—Served in Public Offices for Some Twenty-One Years

A widely-known and highly respected resident of this district, Mr. Chas. Midwinter, 335 Kelvin street, attained the eightieth anniversary of his birth Sunday, and marked the rare occasion most fittingly, surrounded by his family of four daughters and three sons, as also eleven grandchildren.

In the enjoyment of splendid health Mr. Midwinter was particularly happy and recounted with interest many of the outstanding features in a particularly active life.

Born in Hamilton, Ont., December 27th, 1851, Mr. Midwinter decided to blaze the trail of the west while he was yet in his twenty-fifth year. Thus on May 6th, 1877, he started out, and arrived in Winnipeg, which was then Fort Garry, May 21st, and has resided here ever since. The trip, made before the advent of the railway, was for the greater part by water. Reaching Windsor, his next stop was Red Lake, thence to where Grand Forks now stands, and the distance between Grand Forks and Winnipeg was made over the waters of the Red river.

During the earlier years of his residence here Mr. Midwinter travelled considerably, and covered the distance between Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie seven times on foot. He was employed with the firm of Messrs. Brown & Rutherford upwards of twenty years. At the close of his association with this firm he was, for a number of years, occupied in the pursuit of market gardening. In his present home he has resided over the long period of thirty-six years.

In the winter months he found a diversion in curling, although in these early days the devotees of the game did not pursue their rocks with the same measure of comfort as that enjoyed by the curler of today. The only ice available was on the river, and iron stones were a poor substitute for curling rocks. However, the game continued to be one of his most popular pastimes, and he was one of those who interested themselves in the formation of the Elmwood Curling club.

For some twenty-one years Mr. Midwinter served in public office, first on the school board, then on the city council and latterly on the board of control. His first office was as a member of the school board of this district at a time when the territory was within the limits of ward one, Kildonan. He was a member of the board which built the first school in the territory which is now Elmwood. The school was named the Martin school, and stood on the site now occupied by the Anna Gibson school.

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was within the limits of ward one, Kildonan. He was a member of the board which built the first school in the territory which is now Elmwood. The school was named the Martin school, and stood on the site now occupied by the Anna Gibson school. He also served on the Kildonan council and subsequently on the city council as the representative of ward seven and later still as a member of the board of control.

In the opinion of Mr. Midwinter, the mild weather Winnipeg is enjoying at the present time is not at all unusual. He remembers coming by stage from Portage la Prairie to Winnipeg on Dec. 23, 1877, wearing no overcoat. "That was an odd Christmas," he said. "It was dry weather, with not a bit of snow or frost in the ground." The following year was even more unusual. Open water remained practically ice-free and at the end of March, 1878, a boat made its way up the Red river from Fargo.

But like most pioneers, Mr. Midwinter believes winters as a rule are not so cold as they used to be. For six weeks in 1879, the coldest winter he remembers, the mercury hovered around the 50-below mark.

Mr. Midwinter invariably interested himself in politics, and it is one of his most cherished recollections that he did not neglect on a single occasion to exercise his franchise. This assertion he invariably punctuated with the added witticism that he "always voted right."

On Sunday Mr. Midwinter received the congratulations of a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, many of whose messages were transmitted by telephone.

Charles Midwinter Is Dead

Charles Midwinter, 335 Kelvin street, pioneer Winnipeg citizen, former controller and alderman, died Sunday evening at the General hospital, in his 88th year.

Funeral service will be held at 2.45 p.m. Wednesday at the Gardiner chapel with burial in the family plot, St. John's cemetery. Rev. D. G. Paton will officiate.

Born at Hamilton, Ont., on Dec. 27, 1851, Mr. Midwinter came to Winnipeg in 1877, and went to work for Brown and Rutherford. For 20 years, he remained in the lumber business, and during this period was head foreman of the firm for 17 years.

In 1885, he joined the forces which were campaigning against Louis Riel, and at the latter's trial in Regina, Mr. Midwinter, who was quartermaster of his regiment, sat within arm's length of the famous rebel.

For a time after he left Brown and Rutherford, Mr. Midwinter lived in Portage la Prairie and British Columbia, but he returned here and engaged in stock raising and real estate.

Enters Public Life

One of the promoters of early settlement in Elmwood, Mr. Midwinter moved to 335 Kelvin street 46 years ago, and had lived there ever since. He became immediately interested in public affairs, and was elected to the East Kildonan school board. As a member of the board, Mr. Midwinter was instrumental in having the first school in Elmwood erected. It was named the Joe



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CHARLES MIDWINTER

June 1939

Martin school, after the member of the Manitoba legislature from Portage la Prairie, who later became provincial attorney-general.

Mr. Midwinter's career of public service did not commence with his election to the East Kildonan school board, for when he first came to Winnipeg in 1877 he joined the volunteer fire brigade, and served with this organization for some time.

Following a term with the East Kildonan school board, Mr. Midwinter was elected to the East Kildonan council, and when Elmwood was incorporated into the city of Winnipeg and made into ward 7, he was elected to the Winnipeg city council as alderman for that ward.

Mr. Midwinter remained an alderman until 1912, when he was elected to the board of control, an office he occupied until 1915, when he was defeated. Since then, he did not stand as a candidate for any public office.

During the Great War, Mr. Midwinter helped organize the Greater Winnipeg Water district, and for a time was chairman of the board. He retained an interest in the district to the end, being owner of property on the water line.

Noted as a stock raiser, Mr. Midwinter raised poultry which won prizes at leading shows in the United States and eastern Canada. In addition, he was an enthusiastic gardener and curler, being one of the original stockholders in the Elmwood Curling club which was organized about 30 years ago. Some 50 years ago, Mr. Midwinter curled with irons on the river ice.

While he retired from active public life after the war, Mr. Midwinter, since settling in Winnipeg, had never missed voting. A member of the Army and Navy Veterans' association, he never missed marching in a Decoration Day parade, since the Riel rebellion, except this year.

Surviving Mr. Midwinter are his widow; three sons, Charles and John, of Winnipeg, and Harold of Ladysmith, B.C., and four daughters, Mrs. C. M. Treleaven, Mrs. James Letham, Mrs. C. H. A. Walton and Miss May Midwinter, all of Winnipeg.