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Autumn 2019

Remembrance for Many Things

Anglican church built in 1885, Cannington Manor, SK, 5 September1956. Everett Baker collection.

he was the same guy as Solomon Muskrat—without the costume and wig Alan looked like an entirely different person. Alan and Debi have been married for 18 years, and have fond memories of the role *Cannington's Manners* played in their romance.

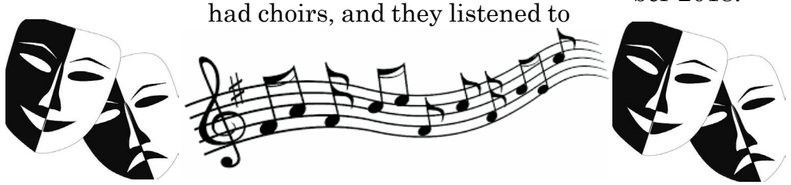
For Amy Tallmadge, *Cannington's Manners* was "part of the path to deciding to do this [acting] as my life's work for sure." She thinks about the experience frequently, often wishing she had some of the songs to use for audition material—"the casting people have heard the songs from *Wicked* a thousand times, but they haven't heard "We have a dream." She concludes, "It was a great experience. I am so glad I got to have it."

Michael Hamann called *Cannington's Manners* "one of the best experiences of my young adult life. It truly has never left my mind. I still fondly look back on it, and catch myself singing some of the songs once in a while. I still get quite emotional about it. It was an amazing experience. It helped to shape me into the person I have become." Hamann believes he can speak for everyone who participated on the *Cannington's Manners* cast and crew, and their response would be the same: it was that much of a wonderful, community-building experience for all of them.

Before this production, Michael Hamann commented, various churches in Weyburn had choirs, and they listened to each other at the carol festival. But the nondenominational experience that *Cannington's Manners* provided brought them all together. It was a great experience for the people. M. Isabelle Butters, whose role was integral in bringing the production to Weyburn, said "They were all local and a "Community Choir" came out of the experience. It is still 'singing' twenty-five years later." The dream of performing the play annually in perpetuity may have died, but the community the play created—that is something that has carried on.[8]

Endnotes

1. Phone interview with Michael Hamann, 30 November 2018.
2. Phone interview with Amy Tallmadge, 9 November 2018.
3. Phone interview with Alan Hamann, 6 November 2018.
4. Phone interview with Amy Tallmadge, 9 November 2018.
5. Phone interview with Amy Tallmadge, 9 November 2018.
6. Phone interview with Michael Hamann, 30 November 2018.
7. Phone interview with Michael Hamann, 30 November 2018.
8. Email to the author from M. Isabelle Butters, 28 December 2018.

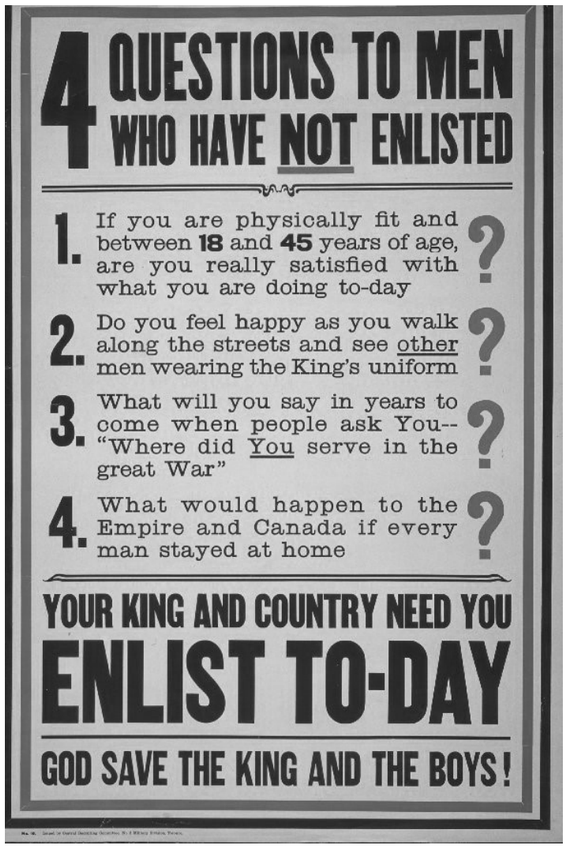


Service to Country: John G. Diefenbaker and the Great War

By Keith Thor Carlson

KEITH THOR CARLSON is past president of the Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society.

In July 1936 John G. Diefenbaker was one of more than 6,000 Canadians who traveled across the Atlantic to be present when King Edward VIII dedicated the majestic Vimy Memorial. There Diefenbaker stood shoulder to shoulder with other veterans and their families on the site where nearly two decades earlier Canadian troops had won a decisive battle, fighting for the first time as a unit under Canadian command. Throughout the interwar years, Diefenbaker did what many military veterans of that era who aspired to political office did – he reminded people of his overseas service in the Great War. Diefenbaker explained to voters that he had been injured in a trench while serving overseas, and as a result had been sent home to Canada before the War's end. And while this story is technically true, it does not tell the full story of Diefenbaker's military service. What Diefenbaker's story does do, however, is open a window that allows us to better understand the way Canadians remembered, tried to forget, and chose to communicate, information about veterans' military service record in the years following the great conflict of 1914-1918.



Canadian First World War recruitment poster, http://www.ww1propaganda.com/ww1-poster/4-questions-men-who-have-not-enlisted-enlist-day-0. Accessed October 12, 2018.

Canadians responded in different ways to Canada's call to arms. In the opening days of the conflict UofS president Walter Murray penned an open letter in the student newspaper *The Sheaf,* calling on young men to "rejoice that honor rather than necessity has involved the British Empire in this gigantic struggle." Honor, for Murray, was less as a personal characteristic than an inherited trait tied to ethnicity. In the president's mind the Empire's cause was just, and the division between German barbarism and British civilization clear.

Murray provided additional enticement to potential recruits by promising each enlistee the gift of a wristwatch as a "token of lasting remembrance befitting the days of chivalry… to emulate the valiant

deeds performed by Arthur and his Knights of old." So intertwined in Murray's mind were Britishness, honor, and civilization, that he felt confident in asserting that all those who had heeded the call to arms must of necessity have been "inspired by the highest ideals of the Anglo-Saxon race." Seen in this light, it is not surprising that the majority of the young UofS students who initially enlisted were British born. By the end of the war 253 students had found their way onto the Canadian Expeditionary Force's role calls (56% of the university's male students). Of these only 29 were drafted.

John Diefenbaker, whose paternal grandparents had migrated to Canada from Germany, could perhaps be forgiven for not rushing to enlist. Resentment towards Germans was high in Canada. In Saskatoon women signed public pledges vowing not to patronize German-owned stores. Many Canadian citizens changed their German last names to make them sound more British. The author's maternal grandmother, for example changed her name from Anna Marie Kammer to Marie Cameron.

Whatever his reasons (and not unlike many other UofS students at the beginning of the War), the 19-year-old Diefenbaker chose not to enlist and instead settled into his studies. It did not take long, however, for those who had remained on campus to come to appreciate that the war in Flanders was nothing like the Arthurian tales, and that their classmates would not be returning home as heroes by Christmas. By the time Diefenbaker completed his bachelor's degree in 1915 students were reading regular updates in *The Sheaf* listing casualty figures and detailing the horrors of modern industrial warfare.

John Diefenbaker and his two friends Hugh Aird and Allan MacMillan standing in a field in England, November 5th, 1916 – one week before Diefenbaker is hospitalized. Aird was later wounded and MacMillan killed in action. Image from Diefenbaker Archives, University of Saskatchewan, http://greatwar.usask.ca/islandora/object/usask%3A6375. Accessed October 11, 2018.

Immediately after graduating Diefenbaker enrolled in a master's program. The pressure to enlist, however, only increased. Across Canada certain female students formed "White Feather Leagues" to shame their male classmates into joining the Canadian Expeditionary Forces by tucking goose feathers representing cowardice into young men's breast pockets. Newspapers not only printed the names of local enlistees, but on occasion also endorsed a technique where military officers went into cinemas and other public places to demand that all able-bodied men in civilian clothes stand up and explain why they were not soldiers. As additional incentive, in 1916 the University of Saskatchewan's Board of Governors granted a year's credit to students who enlisted, and a full degree to those who enlisted during their final year. On August 25th, halfway through his two-year graduate degree, Diefenbaker enlisted.

According to his military records, when Diefenbaker arrived in Britain, he stood 6'1", weighed 145 lbs, and had a 32-inch chest. And while he was overseas when he was injured, it was, according to his official military medical records, while digging a practice trench in England (and not in the trenches of Flanders), that he was "hit in the back with pick axe."

During recovery Diefenbaker exhibited other symptoms that troubled the infantry's physicians. He easily became short of breath and occasionally bled from the mouth after mild to moderate exertion. In his dossier doctors described him as being "unable to climb a hill or do physical training owing to dyspnea [shortness of breath] and general weakness." As a result, he was diagnosed with "cardiac disease."

In the spring Diefenbaker was declared overall physically unfit, and so roughly a year after his enlistment he found himself back at the UofS where, having received his master's degree *in absentia*, he enrolled in the College of Law.

John Diefenbaker, dressed in University of Saskatchewan baccalaureate graduation regalia, 1915. https://www.usask.ca/diefenbaker/johngdief/john-diefenbaker-and-the-university-of-saskatchewan.php. Accessed October 13, 2018

Diefenbaker's attendance at the Vimy Memorial dedication in 1936 represented the first time he had ever set foot on the battle fields of Europe. Diefenbaker's biographer Denis Smith has concluded that the injuries and illness were largely of Diefenbaker's own making, but whatever the reality of his health, his inability to serve on the battlefield clearly haunted him in later life. Lieutenants were expected to lead their platoons over the top and into the spray of machine gun fire, artillery shells, and poison gas that defined no-man's-land. Their casualty rates were notoriously high -- much higher than the average enlisted man's. In 1969 (upon his formal retirement from federal politics) he told a reporter that "I wouldn't be here, no possibility; the possibility is so remote. We went overseas with 182 lieutenants and twelve weeks later there were 33 living. Utter slaughter. Young officers going over the top."

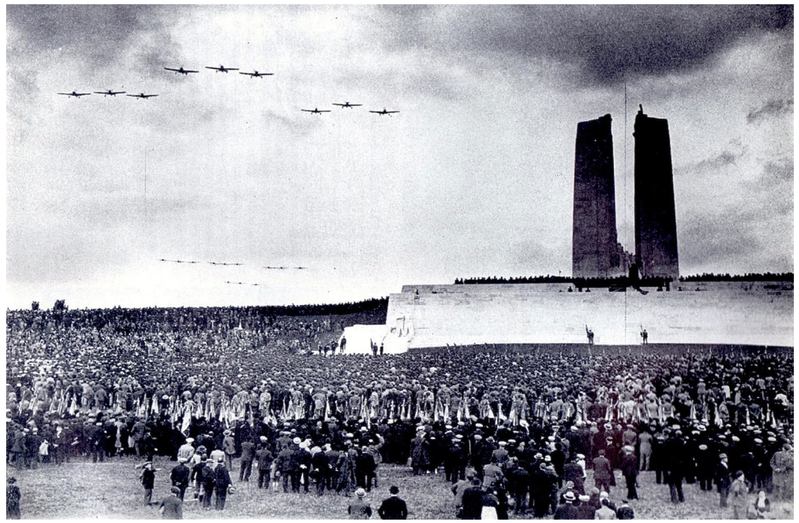
While we will never know for certain what Diefenbaker learned, or did not learn, from his military service, his experiences in England may have helped shape the way he thought and behaved subsequently. After graduating with his law degree in 1919 Diefenbaker spent much of the rest of his life as an outspoken defender and advocate of the rights of average Canadians, women, ethnic minorities, and Indigenous people. Perhaps as someone who had himself been dismissed as "weak" and incapable, Diefenbaker was better able to empathize with others who were regarded as inferior by Canada's economic and political elite because of their ethnicity or gender.

As prime minister, Diefenbaker passed the Bill of Rights, extended the vote to First Nations people, and appointed the first woman to the federal cabinet. Internationally, he broke with American policy and opened trade relations with the People's Republic of China, and he refused to support American hostilities against Cuba. In the Commonwealth, he supported the aspirations of non-white colonies to gain independence, and he led the

international community's opposition to Apartheid in South Africa.

When Diefenbaker was defeated in the 1963 election he lost to Lester Pearson, another Great War veteran who also never saw combat. Pearson served two years as a stretcher bearer in a quiet region of Greece before transferring to the Royal Flying Corp in 1917. While still in flight training he was hit by a London bus during an air raid and then declared psychologically unfit for further military service and sent back to Canada. Pearson would go on to win a Nobel Prize in 1957 for his work organizing the first UN Peace Keeping force. As prime minister, Pearson introduced universal health care, student loans, and the Canada Pension Plan, all the while navigating complicated diplomatic waters to keep Canada out of the Vietnam War.

The First World War was a slaughter that destroyed men's bodies and minds on an unprecedented scale. Throughout the four years of unrelenting violence some found the courage to transcend their fear and perform amazingly heroic deeds. Others succumbed to their human frailties. Most simply obeyed orders, did their duty, and prayed they would survive to return to their homes and loved ones. None of us today can say with any certainty how we would have performed under those circumstances.



Thousands of Canadian pilgrims attended the dedication of the Vimy Memorial in 1936. Image from *The Epic of Vimy*, (Ottawa: Legionary, 1936), 89.

As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War we are presented with the opportunity to reflect upon the individual and collective struggles that an earlier generation faced. Had Diefenbaker (or Pearson) not been sent home in 1917 there is a good chance he would have been killed in battle, and, given his later accomplishments, the world today would be a diminished place.

Perhaps the greatest pity is knowing that each of the nearly 60,000 Canadians who ended up dying on the bloody battlefields of Europe prior to the Armistice on November 11, 1918, also had within them the potential to go on and do things, big and small, to likewise help make the world a better place. They gave their lives and made the ultimate sacrifice in a conflict that is no longer regarded as a noble conflict between good and evil, between civilization and barbarism, but as a largely pointless waste of human lives and potential.

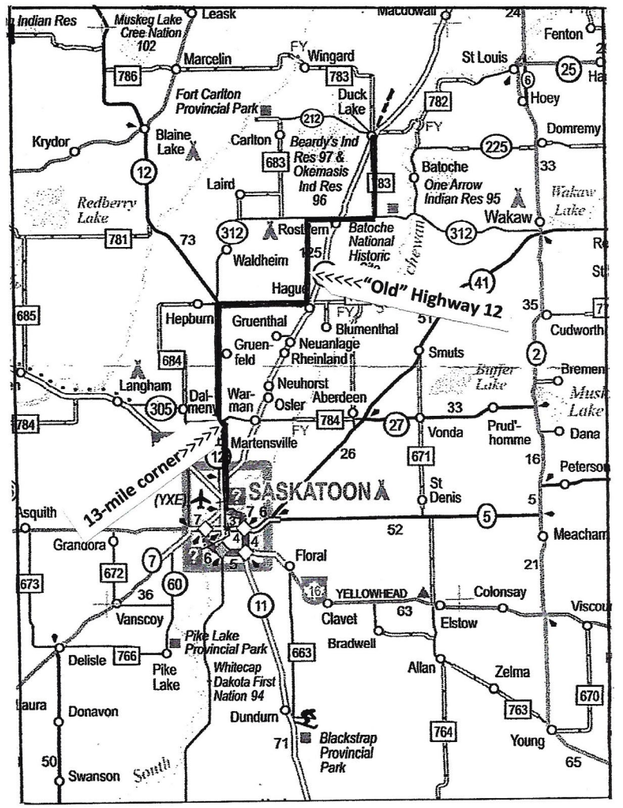
Landmarks – And Then They're Gone!

By Carl A. Krause

CARL A. KRAUSE is a product of Saskatchewan. He spent his years working in education and more recently has given his attention to researching projects in local history. He is a frequent contributor to Folklore. *He and his wife Lily live in Saskatoon.*

From my earliest memories, I recall our family making occasional trips to Saskatoon, whether it was to shop, to attend the Ex or other events, or for medical appointments. Because we lived approximately 50 miles (80 km) north of the city, these trips were no easy undertaking. First, there was the Carlton Road, five miles (8 km) of questionable gravel and potholes. Then we turned west onto the Town Line which, in turn, led past Waldheim and, eventually, after another 16 miles or so (25 km), connected to Highway #12 east of Hepburn. Here Highway #12 appeared to be a highway in name only, a rough 14-mile (22 km) stretch of gravel littered with ruts and numerous potholes.

And ***then***, then we reached the 13-Mile Corner! This corner located 13 or so miles (20 km) north of Saskatoon marked a major intersection with roads seemingly converging from all directions. Here, too, was Teuscher's Service Station, a spot that often necessitated a stop, if for no other reason than to use the biffy. But perhaps, more importantly, this marked the end of gravel and the beginning of PAVEMENT! For the next 13 miles we traveled on a two-lane highway, a roadway without shoulders, a roadway already displaying considerable patching. But no matter. It was dust-free pavement, and everyone breathed easier.



A recent highways map of Saskatchewan with the "old" Highway #12 superimposed from Duck Lake to Saskatoon. Note the 13-Mile Corner directly north of Saskatoon. Courtesy of the author.

And finally, the move from imperial to metric measures in the 1970s rendered the 13-Mile