

INNISFAIL PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOWDEN N.W.T.

BEFORE 1900 AD

Foreword

After becoming associated with the Bowden Historical Society the writer felt it necessary to study the history of Bowden. Being a pseudo-historian this would not appear to be a difficult task, however, it soon became obvious that finding a complete account with accurate dates and locations would not be simple. Due to lost or destroyed documents, incomplete, inaccurate or contradictory accounts, a somewhat blurred picture of events in the community prior to the turn of the century existed.

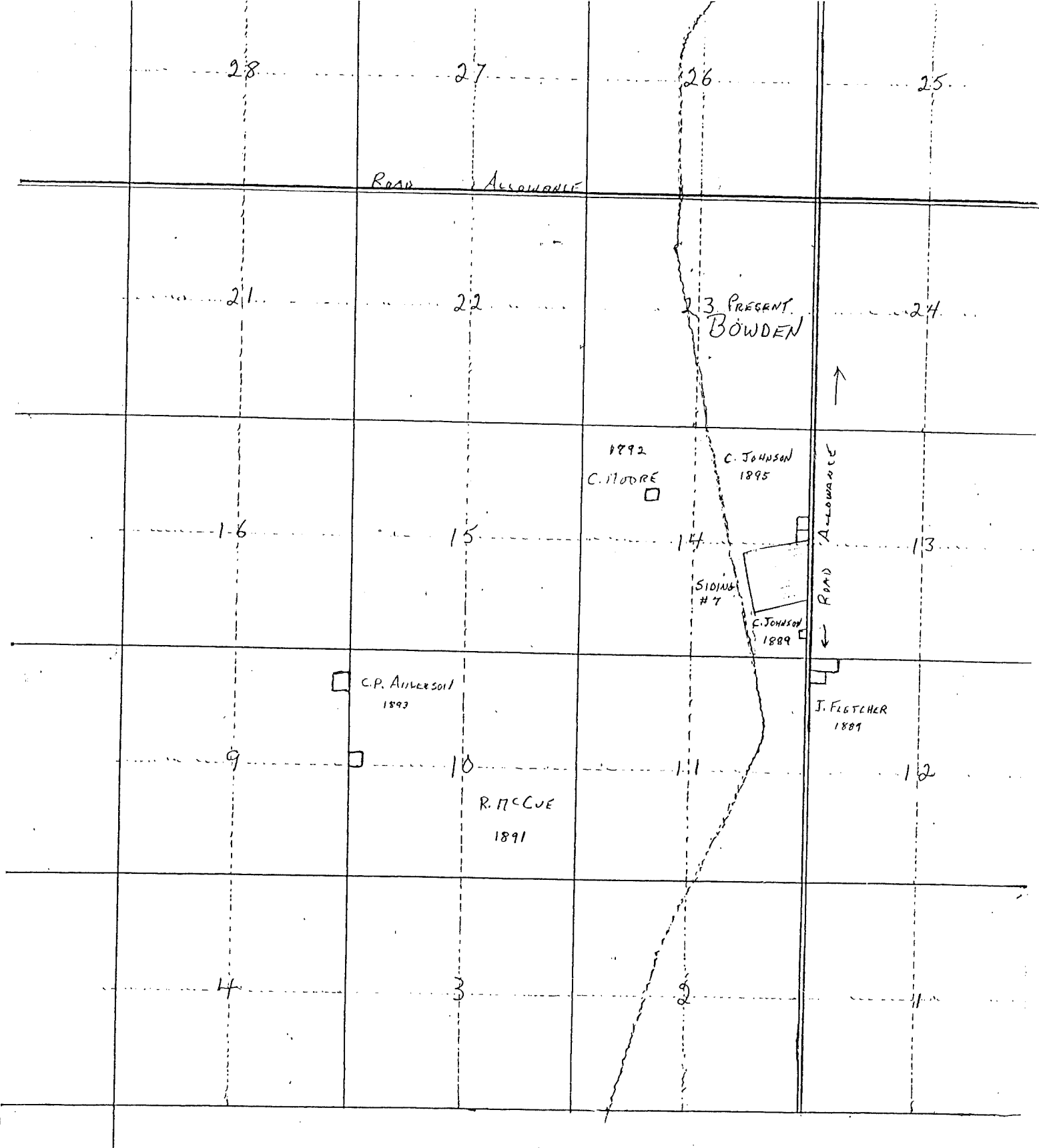
Through use of available legal documents, archival resources, family histories, church records and discussion with long time residents (not the least of which was Bill Henderson) we believe the following to be a reasonable accurate history of Bowden prior to the 1900's. A record of events occurring after the turn of the century is well documented in the book Pioneer Legacy compiled by Mr. R.F. Anderson and available at the Town Office.

For those who may find the constant reference to legal land descriptions tedious, a map of the locality is included.

To readers interested in the history of Bowden District we recommend making a trip to the Bowden Pioneer Museum to see artifacts and the many photographs of the Pioneer era taken by the highly acclaimed Bowden photographer Robert Hoare.

C. Hubschmid
Vice-Chairman
Bowden Historical Society

1/1/96



SCHEMATIC MAP of A PORTION of TWP 34-RGE 1-W52L

BOWDEN N.W.T

BEFORE 1900 A.D.



Any history about the Bowden area before the turn of the century would be incomplete without making reference to an old trail approximately 1 1/2 miles east of the present Highway 2, which was called the Wolf Track Trail. Developed in the 1870's by Methodist missionaries, George and John McDougall, during their travels from Victoria Post and Fort Edmonton to the Morley area, it became known as the Calgary-Edmonton Trail when Red River ox carts, freight wagons and stage coaches linked the two centers. It passed through the J.I. Brewster homestead on SW 24-34-29 W4 and on this location a stopping house was built in 1889 commonly called "The White House" (not to be confused with the Lone Pine Stopping House farther south). The two story house was near a spot called Bull or Buffalo Bull Springs where there was the best quality and most reliable water supply for many, many miles. A well was also hand dug there and cribbed with stones. H.E. Shenfield wrote of Rev. John McDougall relating having shot three buffalo in the vicinity on one of his hunting excursions, so undoubtedly the spring was a major attraction for wild animals as well. In one of his books McDougall mentions seeing a bull buffalo drinking at the spring which most likely led to it being so named. Incidentally, J.I. Brewster and John McDougall became relatives through marrying sisters, Mary and Elizabeth Boyd. The location of this once important Stopping House is now under cultivation, but traces of the old, old trail are still visible.

THE TOWN THAT NEARLY WAS

Bowden began not as a village, but as a loosely knit, widely spread out community in Township 34, Range 1, West of the 5th Meridian, which began settlement after the government survey in 1885.

The first commercial building in the immediate community of Bowden was a log blacksmith shop owned and operated by Sinclair Craig Sr. about 1891, located in the SE corner ~~of~~^{OF} NE 14 on land then owned by C. "Kip" Johnson (where the Bowden Agricultural Society Rodeo Grounds are now located).

The log building may have been moved there from the Craig homestead on NE 22. Johnson (the father of five children and a very hospitable person) was owner of both NE and SE quarters of Section 14 where Bowden had it's beginning. The choice of location was due to the fact that it was on the North/South road allowance (now Highway 2) and near the site of Calgary and Edmonton Railway Siding #7 to the west, equidistant between sidings where Olds and Innisfail are now situated.

In 1892 the log building was modified to become the first Bowden school and in 1894 when a new school was built, it housed a store operated by Allen Campbell until he opened the first store in the present town site in 1898. One writer records that this multi-use building finally was moved to the Teeling farm approximately one mile north of the cemetery on SE 34. Siding #7, constructed by the C & E Railway when it put a railway through the area in 1891, boasted only a box car for a station, and certainly must have been a grim welcome for settlers arriving in the district. Kip Johnson and William Campbell decided to survey a townsite on SE 14 encompassing an area between the siding and the road allowance to the east, along the most northerly portion of the quarter. This survey to create a town site was filed in 1894. (See attached a copy of survey.)

A dispute with the railway company over the property on which Siding #7 was situated, caused the failure of the plan, because in 1895 the siding was moved a mile north to Section 23 onto land owned by the railway, and the present site of Bowden.

A report in November 7, 1907 edition of the Innisfail Province reads as follows:

"The question of the townsite was causing considerable speculation at this period, and negotiations were pending between the owner of the land on which the siding was located and the C & E Railway Company. Various inducements were held out to Mr. Johnson by the company, to all of which he turned a deaf ear. Although he disposed of a share in the site to one Maloney of Calgary - as a last resort. It was understood that Mr. Johnson was offered \$6,000.00 for the land, and when this was refused the company, much to Mr. Johnson's chagrin, moved the siding to its present location. The land was eventually sold for taxes. The loss of what was then considered a fortune and which Johnson considered safe, proved a severe blow to him insomuch that it unhinged his mind and he finally was removed to the asylum."

At any rate the only business that operated in the surveyed location at Siding #7 was the first Bowden post office which was officially installed in the Johnson homestead log cabin in 1892.

Another interesting development was happening in the same time frame about 1 1/2 miles southwest of Siding #7 on the homestead of C.P. Anderson. Here was located a creamery, a store with clothing and groceries, a grain crushing mill, a church and cemetery and the beginning of a school nearby. Had the railway taken a more direct route from Olds to Innisfail on the west side of the lake, this might have become a major center of commerce.

BOWDEN SCHOOL.

The old log blacksmith shop owned by Sinclair Craig, Sr. and located on NE 14 became the first Bowden School in 1892. Students who attended this school included Elof and Oscar Anderson; Mabel and Elmer Moore; Hugh and Hector Skinner; Willie, Maggie and Jesse Craig; Grace Lyman; Lily Lewis; Austin Dart; Thad and Emily Powell; and Millie and Annie Howard.

Mrs. Marshall, a sister of James Fletcher, was the first teacher, with a salary of \$350.00 per year. A black board from the old school may be seen at the Bowden Pioneer Museum. In 1894, Bowden Public School District #302 was established and was authorized to borrow \$800.00 for the purpose of securing a school site, building and furnishing a school house, digging and equipping a water well. A frame school house was completed in 1895, on an acre of land situated close to the log blacksmith shop. The frame and floor timbers were hand hewn out of small logs and covered with rough lumber. The nails were square and there were three windows on each side with a small entrance porch. At the front was a platform about a foot high and six feet wide. A blackboard made of dressed lumber and painted black extended across the back wall. The water pail stood on a stand near the back wall, while the heater was a short distance from there as well, and of course was a wood or coal burner. The most common brand of school circulating heater was the Waterbury. The Bowden School District borrowed \$275.00 in 1896 from a Mr. Davy as a private loan which was repaid the same year. In December of that year a \$700.00 loan was made by Ossler, Hammond and Nanton at 8% interest payable over ten years which was needed for operating costs.

Trustees elected were C.P. Anderson, Robert McCue and William Hiltz.

Mrs. Nisbet was the teacher in the "new school". Classes continued in this building until 1906, when a brick school was built in the present town site.

School taxes at that time averaged \$8.00 per quarter section. The frame school house was moved into Bowden in 1907 and became part of the Wayside Inn and Bowling Alley.

Keith Charlton recalls the water well, which was circular and cribbed with stone, being in evidence until the 1940's at the site of the old school.

When the question of a school was first discussed in 1891, an initial decision was made to construct a log building on NE 10, east of C.P. Anderson's. Logs were hauled and construction began, however the structure was never completed, probably due to Mr. Craig's offer of use of the blacksmith shop. Later those attending Bowden School from immediately west became enrolled at Eagle Creek in 1896, the year that school was built; with Mr. Skinner as teacher.

CREAMERY

A creamery was built and operated by Mr. John Howard and Mr. J.A. Powell on NW 12 beside the Anglican Church grounds in 1893. A carload of cheese making equipment for the plant was shipped from Ontario to Siding #7 accompanied by Wm. Cranstone who later operated the creamery. The building was of frame construction and nicely painted.

The venture did not prove successful and probably shut down when the White Swan Creamery started up. We know it was vacant in 1898, for the Melville Sibley family used it then as their first home upon arrival in the area. Mr. C.A. Johnson records that the building sold to a farmer west of the lake and that he helped erect it there. In 1895 a cooperative company was formed to build and operate under the name of the White Swan Creamery. Names of those included C.P. Anderson, G. Montgomery, H. Johnson and R. McCue. Albert Anderson held the position of butter maker. The location of this facility was NW 10, the homestead of C.P. Anderson, in the SW corner of this quarter. A water well was hand dug at that site, and grandson, Harold Anderson, recalls having to fill in the hole before cultivating that spot. Later in the year, Mr. McCue took over ownership of the White Swan and began selling clothing and groceries as well. A grain crushing mill was also operated.

It continued on this location until 1905 when it relocated at the present townsite with Albert Anderson remaining the butter maker. From an output of 1,900 pounds of butter in 1895, it increased to 27,000 pounds in 1900 and to 145,000 pounds in 1906!

CHURCHES

The Anglicans who held their first worship services conducted by Bishop Pinkham in homes of J. Fletcher and J. Howard decided to build a church in 1893. The site chosen was in the NW corner of NW 12, on land homesteaded and owned by James Fletcher in 1889, and donated to the church. This property was approximately 1/2 mile south of the log school and on the farm now owned by Albert Brewster. The following is quoted from St. Matthew's Anglican Church 100th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet compiled by Sandy (McBlane) Hengstler:

"Logs were cut and hauled from the west country. These logs were hewn and the corners dovetailed and constructed into the church. Mr. Shenfield and his son Mark made the pews, pulpit and other furniture for the church. Working along with Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Shenfield were their sons, and also Mr. Edward Walton, Mr. Issac Depencier, Mr. Robert Hoare, and William and Sinclair Craig. The church was completed in 1894. Services were conducted once a month by the Bishop. The organist was Mark Shenfield, who played the treadle organ, which to this day remains in the church hall.

In 1904, when the town site of Bowden was moved to its present location, the church was dismantled log by log and moved to the new town site, one and a half miles north. The roof was left in one piece and moved by Mr. Fletcher with the aid of Mr. O. Anderson. At the new town site the church was rebuilt in 1905, on its current location, Lot 11, Block 5, Plan 1905H, 2137 20 Avenue. In its' original location there was also a graveyard on the church grounds. (see page 11)

At the time the church was moved, so were those interred around it.

The church was reconstructed on a foundation of rock quarried on the James Brewster farm east of Bowden. Mr. Brewster donated the stone, Mr. Lowe and Mr. Taylor quarried it and Mr. Fletcher hauled it to the building site.

At this point in time, it is worthy of noting, the entrance to the church was at the end rather than in the side, as it is now. When the entrance was changed no one

is quite sure, but, in a picture taken after it was moved to Bowden and sided, it is noted that the entrance has been moved to the north-west corner."

First ordained Minister in the log church was Rev. H. Brashier who also had charge of Innisfail, Penhold, Pine Lake and Tindastoll, and made his way over this vast territory on horseback. L. Wooden from 1895-1896 and R. Connele from 1897, until 1901.

This church continues to stand in Bowden, a tribute to the faith and vision of its' builders, founders and members.

The Presbyterians began holding services in a log building on NE 9 along the North/South road in about 1892, with Rev. G.R. Lang from Olds officiating. The plot of ground was donated by C.P. Anderson who also owned the land across the road on NW 10 where his farmstead was located. A graveyard was situated by the church, though in recent years it has been cultivated over.

Later, services were held in the frame school house on NE 14 until July 1902. A new Presbyterian church was built on the present site of St. Andrews United Church and dedicated on December 20, 1903. With the merger of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches in 1912, this building was selected as the place for worship by members of the newly formed United Church. The old original log church was sold and moved away. In 1991 the little plot of ground on Section 9 was again included in the title to the farm now owned by Schraders.

Methodist

The first Methodist services were held in homes and were conducted by students. With the completion of the school house in 1895, services were held there until a church was built in the fall of 1900 in Bowden's present location. Rev. T. Powell came to Bowden from Olds as the first minister, followed by Rev. H.B. Ward. At the time of union the former Methodist church was used as a church hall and in 1932 was sold to the Masonic Lodge.

POST OFFICE

On December 1, 1892, approval was given for the establishment of a post office in Bowden, N.W.T. with mail to be delivered by train to Siding #7. It was granted to C. Kip Johnson and located in his log house on the SE 14 until his resignation on March 30, 1893. Chas. Moore received the appointment on July 1, 1893 and operated out of his home on NW 14 until he moved the house 3/4 mile east to the road and near the school on NE 14 where the post office continued until February 20, 1900.

Mr. Moore's house/post office remained there as principal farm residence until dismantled by John Henderson in 1947.

In 1899 a petition was received by the Postal Authority to have the post office relocated to the railway station in the new Bowden site, however, it was decided to establish it on the corner of Railway Avenue and Hammond Street where H.E. Shenfield became Postmaster on April 1, 1900 in the Allen Campbell store. Sir Sanford Fleming (the father of Mrs. Critchley whose husband Thomas founded the Red Deer Lodge Ranch and in 1896 opened the initial Red Lodge Post Office in his thirteen room log house) designed and made the copperplate for the first postage stamp issued in Canada for the Postmaster General.

Postage for the early settlers was two cents for a first class letter; one cent for a local or unsealed letter. The rate was increased to three cents for a first class letter in about 1919.

Following is a list of early Postmasters

C.K. Johnson 1892-1893

Chas. Moore 1893-1900

H.E. Shenfield 1900-1912

C.A. Johnson 1912-1945

A.R. Johnson 1945-1947

Percy Scott 1947-1964

BURIALS AND CEMETARIES

The first death recorded in the district was that of a twelve year old girl in 1889, the daughter of Dr. Saggendorf. She was buried on the NE of Section 10, the Saggendorf homestead.

Being buried on the farmstead was not at all unusual before the establishment of a public cemetery or the building of churches which in early times often had an adjoining burial ground. Probably dozens of such internments took place in the area surrounding Bowden prior to 1910.

In the Red Lodge area, the 22 month old son of Hepburn Thomson (a brother to Beatrice Kure) lost his life by drowning in Olds Creek which ran through the yard. He is buried beside a spruce tree along the creek near the house.

An infant son of George Doherty lies buried in NE 26-34-2-W5 where a lone pine tree grows at the site. A short distance away, perhaps three hundred yards, is the grave of a young Stoney Indian mother and infant who passed away during the birth process.

Olive McDermid recalls having seen mounds on the quarter east of Dale Bradshaw's Guest Ranch, which she believes were the graves of Indians. Olive's own sister Pearl was buried on the original Vic Shenfield homestead south-east of Bowden in 1908.

The grave of the twin children of Frank and Nellie Webber who died at birth is located in the farmyard of John Nesom, 2 miles south of Red Lodge Park.

Alexander Thomson (Colin's brother) who passed away at 77 years of age in 1903, after spending only two or three months in Canada, was buried on a hill on NE-28-34-2-W5 near Red Lodge Park and eventually was removed to the Bowden Cemetery.

Bill Henderson tells of a grave being turned up south of town when Highway 2 was widened in about 1932. These are but a sampling of known graves in this area, but undoubtedly many, many more exist.

With the building of the Presbyterian church on C.P. Anderson land on NE Section 9 in 1892, a burial ground was established. Many of those interred on that site were

later moved to the present Bowden Cemetary when a new church was built in town. Such was the case with Mary and William J. Dunlap (Walter's grandparents). Mary in July 1897 and William In August 1908 were buried at the Presbyterian Church and later moved to Bowden.

The same is true of those buried by the Anglican Church on NW 12. After the church was moved to Bowden in 1905 and when the Bowden Cemetary was established, coffins were re-interred. A letter dated June 6, 1910 was written to the Bishop of the Diocese requesting that proceedings be taken to have that old cemetary vacated, the remains removed to the Bowden Union Cemetary and the land returned to James Fletcher.

The history of the Bowden Union Cemetary located at NW23-34-1-W5 on land originally owned by the Calgary-Edmonton Land Company is badly obscured due to the records being burned in 1925. Until 1910 there is no record of burials there, however it is possible that Indians used the site and indeed the fragmented town records show the word "Indian" on one plot. Probably there were other early burials as well which are not documented. The first indication of official cemetary status is recorded in the March 23, 1911 edition of the Bowden News where it is noted that funds were allocated by the village to provide and equip a cemetary which would have included fencing the provided area. A debenture debt of \$1,250 was used the the purpose. Evergreen trees were planted at this time as well, for it was reported in 1911 that someone accidently or by design had broken and destroyed some of them. An entry in the 1909 village financial statement shows a minor cemetary account.

In 1918 \$120.00 was allotted to re-fence and clean up the cemetary, with \$80.00 being paid to Mr. Nicholson for the fencing.

For a great number of years grave digging was carried out by the families and friends of the deceased as was the maintenance of grave plots. Groups such as the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs played a large part in clean up and maintenance as well as by organizing work parties.

Strangely, the plot of land 495 x 440 feet comprising 5 acres was not deeded to the Village of Bowden until 1951, when for \$50.00 the Calgary-Edmonton Land Company of London, England transferred it under the condition it be used exclusively as a cemetery.

In 1954 the Bowden Cemetery Association was formed with Ernie Walton as President and Mary Currie as Secretary-Treasurer, a position she still holds after more than forty years!

A further four acres of land was purchased by the town from Dale Saunders in 1992, bringing the total area to 9 acres. A caretaker is contracted annually to cut grass and make minor repairs and has resulted in the Bowden Cemetery being a well kept place of respect for the deceased of the district.

Sources of written information include:

Schools of the Parkland

Bowden Museum Archives

1907 Innisfail Province/Innisfail Historical Village

Memories of Samis

National Archives of Canada

Land Titles Office

St. Andrews United Church

St. Matthews Anglican Church

White Creek Echoes

The Bowden News (March 23, 1911 edition)

TRIVIA BEFORE & AFTER 1900

1. *Rev. George McDougall lost his life at 54 years when he became lost on the prairie in a blizzard on January 26, 1876, about 6 miles S.W. of Balzac.*
2. *David McDougall, George's son and John's younger brother came west in 1870 and often travelled with John as a camp helper. He later ranched the area north and west of the Red Deer river where Sundre is now located and is the namesake for the McDougall Flats.*
3. *Rock from a sandstone quarry on the original J.I. Brewster homestead was used extensively in the construction of early buildings; in particular the Bowden brick school*
4. *Bowden's population in 1901 was 12; in 1909 it was 300.*
5. *The original hand dug, circular, stone cribbed, bulb shaped water well on the James Fletcher homestead where Albert Brewster lives today, still exists along with the log building covering it. The well was dug over a hundred years ago in 1889. Could this be the oldest "improvement" still in existence today?*
6. *A 100 lb. sack of dried prunes sold for \$7.00 at the White Swan Creamery in 1910.*
7. *Train fare from Bowden to Wetaskiwin and return was \$2.30 in 1912.*
8. *A stage coach ran between Olds and Trochu, leaving at 7 AM on Tuesdays and Fridays, then returning on Wednesdays and Saturdays in 1910. A stage also ran between Red Deer and Rocky Mountain House.*

9. *Fred L. Harris began publishing the Bowden News on July 30, 1909, and by year-end had a subscription list of over 2,000. The paper sold throughout the central Alberta area. It operated under two other owner/operators until October 24, 1912.*
10. *Mr. C. Moore, the postmaster until 1900, took up a homestead east of Castor.*
11. *Upland game bird hunting limit in 1910 was 20 birds/day or a total of 200 birds/month!*
12. *Deer were so scarce in the early 1900's that it made the Bowden News when one was spotted in the coulee east of town. Duncan Campbell stated that deer began to appear around 1915, having come from the west.*
13. *In July 1912 town people were complaining about cattle wandering at large on Bowden's streets. It was especially annoying that they were "messaging" up the wooden sidewalks. Some of the sidewalks were raised to make the loading of goods onto wagons easier.*
14. *1909 Bowden consisted of the following: a railway station, entertainment hall, bank, newspaper, post office, elevator, 3 general stores, a jeweller, furniture store, confectionary, drug store, 2 pool rooms, 2 livery stables, a hotel, licensed bar, butcher shop, 2 auctioneers, an implement dealer, Notary Public, 3 real estate agents, a lumber yard, 2 chop mills a creamery, doctor, barber-shop, bowling alley and three churches.*
15. *At the 1912 Bowden Agricultural Society Fair, Thomas Lewis won first prize in the gopher-tail collection section.*

16. *Wrestling on horseback was one of the 1911 Victoria Day Sports Day events.*
17. *C.P. Anderson, whose brand was CPA, owned 640 acres by the turn of the century.*
18. *Dave McDougall's circle brand is the oldest in Alberta and is still in use. It was registered in the NWT in 1883.*
19. *An early Bowden settler said that he saw the first magpie in 1909, and when the magpies increased, the prairie chickens and pin-tail grouse began to disappear.*

C + E 31 LAND Co	J Pridgen 1885	C + E 33 LAND Co	T Arnold 1887	C + E 35 LAND Co	J Davis 1892
J Munroe 1904	School 29 LAND	J Munroe 1905	C + E 27 LAND Co	HUDSON 26 BAY Co	C + E 25 LAND Co
C + E 19 LAND Co	G Griggs 1893	C + E 21 LAND Co	W Lewis 1894	C + E 23 LAND Co	E Waltton 1892
J Sinclair 1897	C + E 17 LAND Co	W Boherty 1891	C + E 15 LAND Co	C Moore 1898	C + E 13 LAND Co
C + E 7 LAND Co	HUDSON 8 BAY Co	C + E 9 LAND Co	C Anderson 1893	SCHOOL 11 LAND	J Fletcher 1899
G Rands 1907	C + E 5 LAND Co	W Lorenson 1894	C + E 3 LAND Co	H Dart 1897	C + E 1 LAND Co
C + E 31 LAND Co	T Willing 1893	C + E 33 LAND Co	C McCormick 1893	C + E 35 LAND Co	E Moore 1893
E Lewis 1893	SCHOOL 29 LAND	A.M. Jensen 1893	C + E 27 LAND Co	HUDSON 26 BAY Co	C + E 25 LAND Co
C + E 19 LAND Co	A Eagle 1896	C + E 21 LAND Co	A Samis 1893	C + E 23 LAND Co	C Petersen 1900
S Carter 1893	C + E 17 LAND Co	A Hansen 1893	C + E 15 LAND Co	EE Ried 1897	C + E 13 LAND Co
C + E 7 LAND Co	HUDSON 8 BAY Co	C + E 9 LAND Co	H.P. Moore 1893	SCHOOL 11 LAND	W Ramsay 1893
J Aring 1893	C + E 5 LAND Co	O Shannon 1893	C + E 3 LAND Co	W Carnwell 1893	C + E 1 LAND Co

Twp. 34 Range 1
West 5th Mer.

Eagle Creek School

Twp. 33
Range 1
West 5th Mer.

Samis School

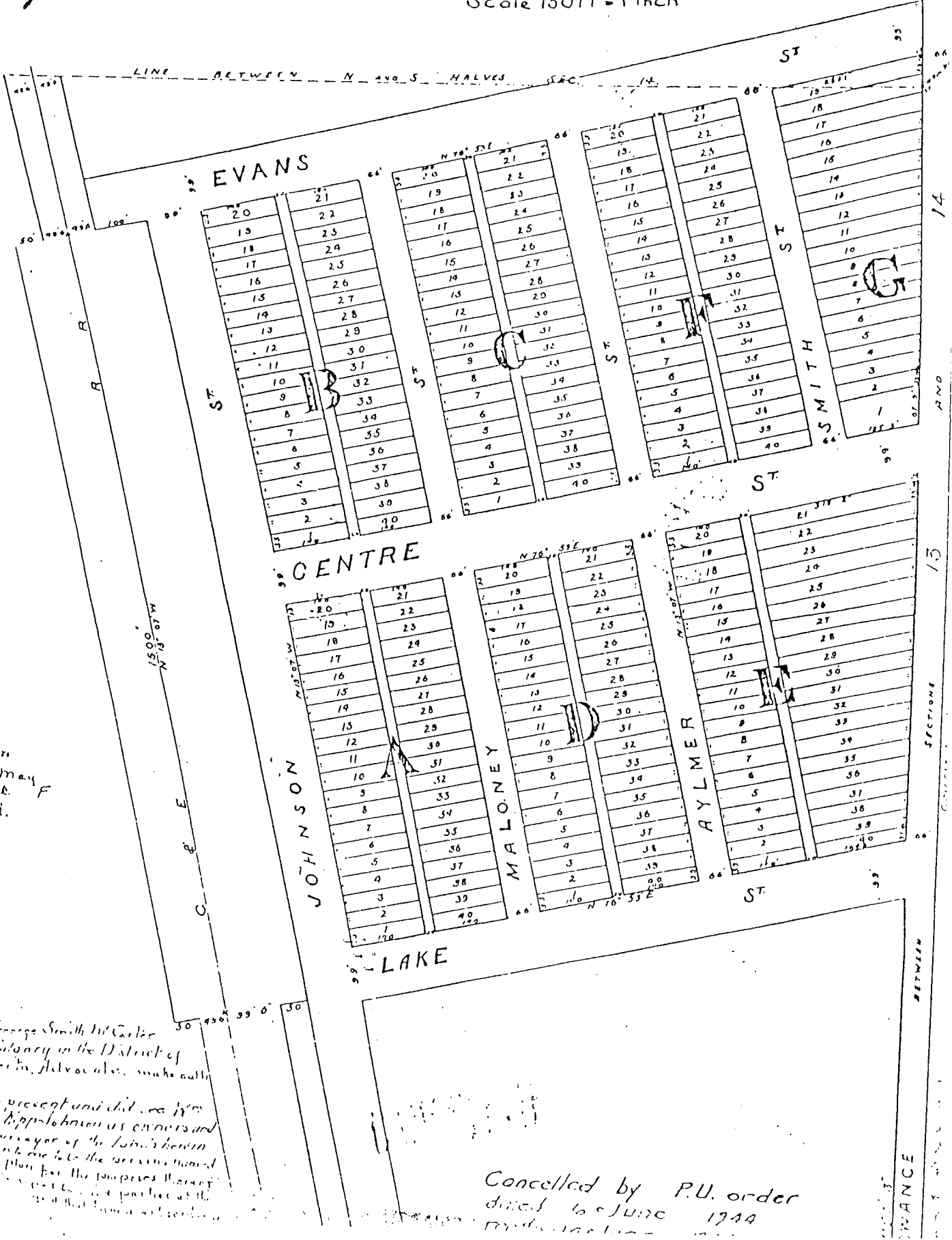
MAP INDICATING ORIGINAL LAND TITLE HOLDERS

160
29 May 1894

BOWDEN

part of the East half of
Sec 14, Tp 34, R. 1, W. 5th I.M.

Scale 150 FT = 1 Inch



10' 10"
13' 10" May F
760 ft.
cher, Ingrid.

George Smith & Co. Clerk
of City and County in the District of
Albany, N.Y. do hereby make public
notice that the above described lots
were actually present and did not
belong to the City and County as owners and
the same were surveyed by the City and County
and the same are to be the property of the
City and County for the purposes stated
in the plat for the purposes stated
in the plat for the purposes stated
in the plat for the purposes stated

Cancelled by P.U. order
dated 16 June 1944