

The Creation of East St. Paul

*Stories from the "East St. Paul Centennial 1916-2016" book
Submitted by Mayor Shelley Hart*

In 1880, the Rural Municipality of St. Paul was established, with offices located on the west side of the mighty Red. The river was a barrier that made doing business an inconvenience, as those on the east side were forever having to travel over to the west side, now known as West St. Paul. There were no bridges in the vicinity back then, the closest was the Redwood Bridge (now the Harry Lazarenko Bridge) about nine kilometers to the south.

One of the first items of business discussed at the first meeting of the Municipal Council of St. Paul on May 3, 1880, was the need for a ferry to connect the east and west sides of the Red River, as stated in the meeting minutes: "Moved by Mr. Harrower, seconded by Mr. Monkman, that Messers H. Pritchard, A. Pritchard and the Warden constitute a committee to see what arrangements can be made for running a ferry – committee to report at next meeting. Carried." Subsequently, on May 22, 1880, Mr. A. Pritchard offered to sell a space fifty links wide from the main road to the Red River so a ferry crossing could be established. The land was to be returned if at any time the ferry service was removed.

The population was growing; more and more families arrived to settle in the area, and community spirit grew. On the east side of the river, schools and businesses were started, and people found lots of ways to get together to socialize and celebrate. The community became diversified with industry ranging from market gardening to general stores.

The time came for the east-siders to start their own administration, and in 1915, East St. Paul was created. The first meeting of the RM of East St. Paul took place on January 4, 1916, in a room in Walter Gorham's house at 2051 Roseneath Avenue. Walter was the secretary-treasurer of the RM for 33 years.

Eventually, plans were made to replace the Gorham House as the meeting place for municipal officials. In 1951, a one-story building was erected at 2127 Birds Hill Road. Almost 30 years later in 1980, the current municipal office complex was built at 3021 Birds Hill Road.



*First Municipal Office for the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul
in the home of Walter Gorham – 2051 Roseneath 1916-1980*