

SOME SETTLERS FROM CENTRAL EUROPE:  
MRS DOMINICA PAULENCU  
as told by Nistor Onefreicuic to Mrs. Geo. Smellie

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**Mrs. Dominica Paulencui**

With a group of friends and acquaintances, Mrs. Dominica Paulencui arrived in Canada from Crnogitz, Bucovena Austria in 1899, a widow with three children, John, Marina and George. They lived for three weeks at Saltcoats, Sask., in the migration hall, looking for a homestead; then went to the area known now as Wroxton, Sask., to take up a homestead. They stayed there a year, but were forced to leave owing to having no water, and the men unable to find work. It was a common practise to walk over the prairie from Wroxton to Russell to find work. This they would do in two days. Bucking wood at 25 cents a cord didn't provide a handsome living.

They eventually moved to Manitoba in the Russell area, to what later became Lennard, where they took up a homestead. Life for an immigrant in those days was very hard. Trees had to be felled for space to build a shelter. This was built with the help of trees, logs and mud, no windows, a blanket over the door way, earthen floor. Bunkbeds





Home of John Paulencui, 1906.

were made from boards hewn from the larger trees. Mattresses made of straw and the cotton-like substance from cat-tails which abounded in the sloughs.

One of the first things they did was to find a higher bit of land and erect a cross. Life was meaningless without some form of a church. There they would gather around the cross and conduct their service of worship. The first homes made were just large enough to hold their few pieces of home-made furniture, made in the shape of a teepee, with a hole in the roof to let the smoke escape. Some were fortunate to have brought a few blankets with them. Later, when the men got work among neighboring farmers, shearing sheep, they could obtain at low cost some of the wool, which they would spin into yarn, to make clothing and blankets.

Mrs. Paulencui and the other women who came at that time, brought with them what they called "the plate". This was a steel plate with holes for the cooking pots, which formed the top of the home-made stoves. These stoves were made of stones and plastered with mud. Some of those old ovens are still in the country.

The men were farmers, the women were home-makers. Mrs. Paulencui brought out seeds and medicines. She was like a doctor to the community. She made medicines from the plants grown from seed they brought with them, and cared for the sick in the community.

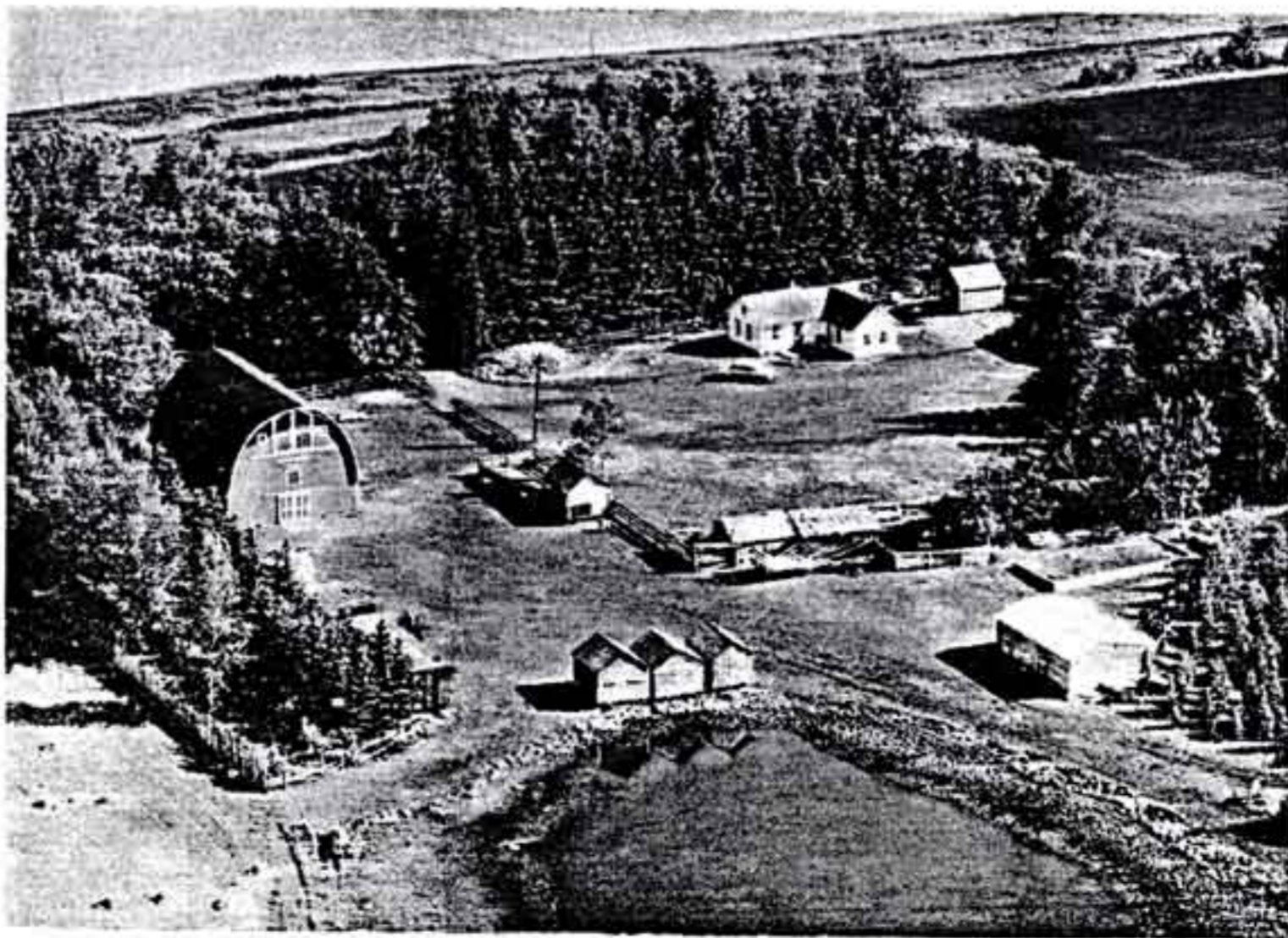
Being unable to speak or understand English proved a great handicap, and in many cases led to their being exploited. Great hardships were endured by these early immigrant homesteaders. They had sold all their possessions in the old country to make this trip and were able to bring along a few pots and pans, blankets, clothing - sheep-skin coats were very much in evidence. With the seeds they brought, they grew hemp, horse radish and medicinal plants. The hemp was sown among the vegetables and kept insects away. Cotton made from hemp, woven and bleached, was water-proof in garments. Wonderful

bread was baked in those outdoor clay ovens. They were heated by filling with wood, which was drawn out when burned. To test the oven for right temperature to bake the bread, a handful of corn meal was tossed in - if it burned and smoked, the oven was too hot. After it had cooled a bit and tested by tossing in another handful of corn meal, the oven would be right for baking. Grain was crushed for use as flour and meal by means of a mill stone.

The Stories of Mrs. Dominica Paulencui's Three children, John, Marina and George

John Paulencui married Mary Bordion and settled on a homestead near Lennard, section 24. Three others settled at that time also, Nick Pentilichuk, Eli Burla and John's brother George Paulencui. John and Mary Paulencui had ten children: Ted, Jim, Peter, Pauline, Victoria, Barbara and Ina. John died in 1939.

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MODERN HOMESTEAD OF NESTOR ONEFREICIUC - 1965

Mary Paulencui married Nick Pentilichuk. Europe, arriving here in 1899. Of their ten children, five are still living here, George, Angelina (Mrs. Chorney), Elsi (Mrs. Nevistuk), Dora (Mrs. Pclitori) and Sadie (Mrs. Zetteruk).

George Paulencui lived in the Lennard area also and had two children, Kost Paulencui and Mary (Mrs. Pentilichuk). George died in 1965.

In 1912, the first school was built at Shellbank by Albert McKay for \$950. The teacher was F. O. Zelinski, who was paid \$60. a month. In 1914 a post office was built at Lennard, named after Mr. William Lennard, a farmer in Boulton district.

The Story of Nestor Onefreiciuc - who came from the same country as the Paulencuis.

Nestor Onefreiciuc landed in Quebec June 5th, 1914, at the age of sixteen, the only one of his family to emigrate. It took Nestor 14 days to cross over to Canada, transportation - \$28.00. He had learned of Canada at school, mostly about Indians, but also of the prospect of farming which was his one ambition. He was permitted to return to Europe after three months in Canada, if he wished, but he remained.

He went to an uncle in Montreal, and after he had worked in a bottling factory at \$5.00 per month, for a couple of months, his uncle gave him transportation to Winnipeg by train - \$10.00. On the way out he earned \$1.25 by services to fellow passengers. He arrived in Winnipeg August 17, then with his \$1.25, took train to Russell. There, a farmer, John Osaski, with a hay rack, took Nestor and about sixteen other fellow passengers to his home near Lennard, where they were very grateful for a meal of bread and vegetables from



the Osaski garden. Nestor got a job on the farm of Ted Holunga at \$5.00 a month.

For a number of years he worked for various farmers, among them, Milton Setter, Y. J. Attwood and T. McLennan. With his first savings he bought a team of colts, then sold them, got a down payment and nothing more.

Nestor was ambitious, unafraid of hard work, and frugal. After nine years he had saved \$1,200., which made a down payment on a quarter section in the Len-

ard area, at \$32.50 an acre, the rest 8 percent interest. It took 30 years till he owned the farm on which he is still living.

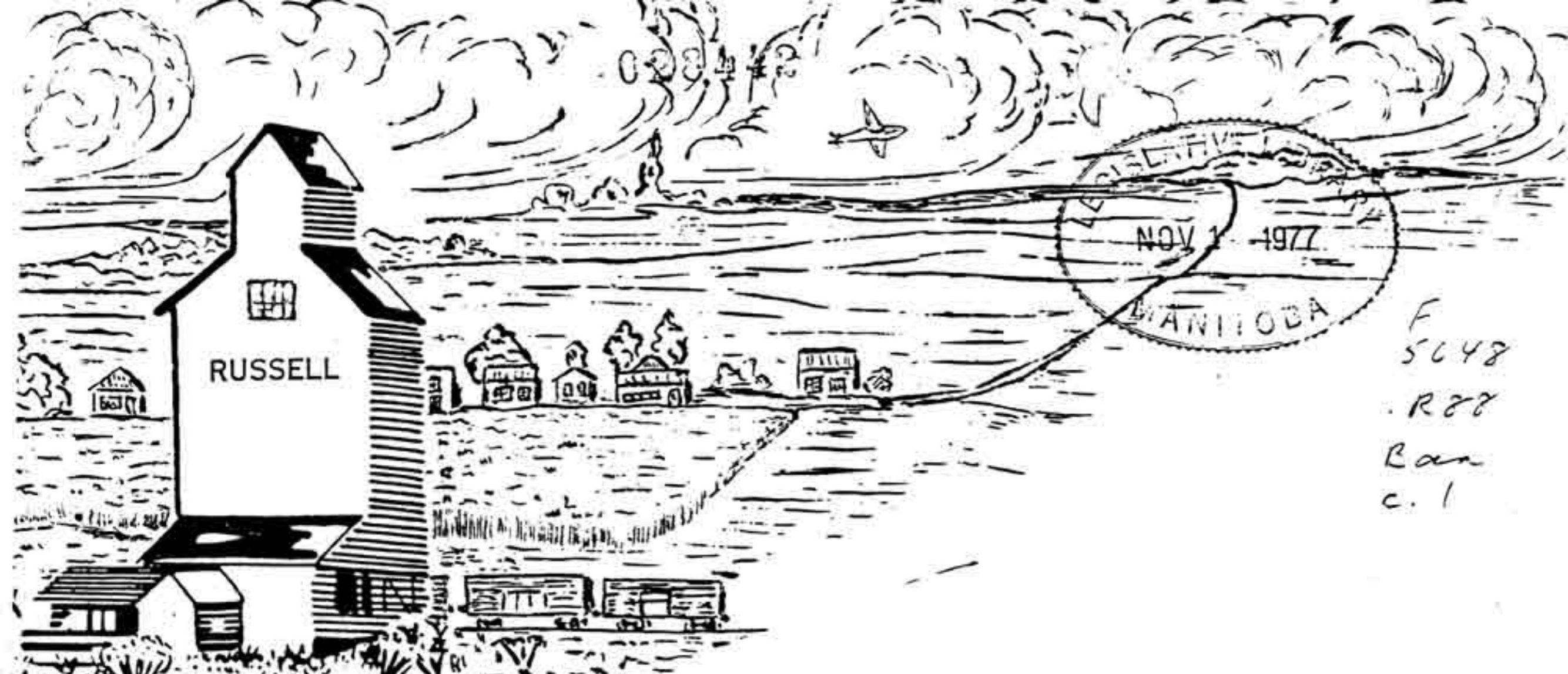
All business had to be done in Russell. Four years in succession he was hauled out. A great part of his income was from cutting and hauling wood to Russell - that, and working at \$1.00 a day for other farmers. Consequently, Sunday was the only day he had for his family.

In 1923, Nestor married Pauline Paul-

encini, daughter of John. The first seven years were very hard, no money to buy clothes, or comforts, but through hard work and economical living they managed. They had ten children: Violet, Martha, Alice, Victoria, Marion, Elaine, Jim, Martin, Peter and David.

Their present modern home and farm buildings are a far cry from the first log shanty with sod roof, oxen for farm work, hand-made furniture from boards hewn out of logs.





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# BANNER COUNTY

*History  
of  
Russell & District  
1879 - 1967*

