

## The Hourie Home

The family of the late John G. Hourie donated the Philip Hourie Home to Fort la Reine Museum. This home was built in 1890. The farm celebrated 100 years of continuous Hourie family ownership and operation in 1959. During that year a new house was built into which Jim and Audrey Hourie and their children moved. This old home was left vacant to stand as a reminder of many long years of pioneer living.

In 1970 the Hourie Farm was recognized as “The Farm of the Century” when it was selected as part of the Province’s Centennial Celebrations. A cairn was erected at the family farm commemorating this event and may be seen to this day.

Moved to its new location on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1977, the building was restored by the L.I.P. Project “ACE”, the staff at the Museum and the Ladies Auxiliary. Displays depict the rural way of life at the turn of the Century (1900’s) and include an appropriate recognition of the history of the house, and the family who made it what it is: a symbol of pioneer farming in the High Bluff area dating to 1859.

Before entering the home, children might like to check the mailbox out front. Inside the home is an old-fashioned telephone and an old Portage la Prairie phone book. Notice the different telephone numbers in those days; also note the old radio and batteries. In the middle of the dining room floor is a trap door that goes to the basement or root cellar where potatoes and other vegetables would be stored. Guests would be entertained in the parlour where the piano and pump organ are located. There are lots of utensils here including an apple peeler, a butter mould, and another odd looking pot scrubber. There



is an ice box, a bird cage, an old ironing board, and a butter churn. See the strap hanging on the wall for sharpening razors and a tool for beating rugs. This house had an indoor pump for water.

The summer kitchen was used for cooking in the summer to keep the heat out of the house. Note the baby sleds, and an old carpet sweeper. Back in the main kitchen is a water distiller, butter paddles and butter moulds.

Continuing upstairs, you will see a landing area and three bedrooms with typical furnishings of the time. One bedroom contains a collection of old toys. The chamber pots under the beds are always an item of interest, especially to children who are amazed to learn the home has no indoor bathroom!

### **This is a description of the home by Evelyn Smith (nee Hourie)**

*This home was the third built by the Hourie family since receiving their land grant from the Hudson Bay Co. in 1859. The two preceding were of log construction. The home grounds are six miles east of here on High Bluff river lot 69 which extended two miles from the Assiniboine River.*

*As you enter the living room, notice the hole in the ceiling. Pipes went through that hole into the upstairs bedroom then to the chimney. The entire home was heated in the winter by a large “box stove”*

*in the living room and a cookstove in the kitchen. Many times the pipes were red hot and flames shot out the chimney. That was very scary as there were no fire extinguishers in those days. Dad would crawl on the roof, there were always ladders to each chimney, and dump salt down. It took a while but would put out the fire. The china on this table was used by our mother on special occasions.*

*The room on the left is the parlour. It was only used in the summer. The piano, a wedding present given to our Mother by Dad, occupied a place of pride and was moved to the living room during the cold winter months. Someone was usually taking lessons, or in earlier days played for dances when the neighbours arrived. The mats rolled up and with Mother and Dad (on the violin) supplying the music, a great old time dance was enjoyed. There is a picture taken of Dad on his wedding day. I don't know what happened to Mother's. The other picture of Philip Hourie (the original settler on the property) and his two brothers, Tom and Peter, was taken in 1885 in Winnipeg.*

*On to the kitchen. We were very fortunate to have the pump right in the house and a sink with a drain to the outside. No carrying out the slops or dish water. Occasionally in the winter the drain would freeze, but a little boiling water cleared the pipe. The "prime" was let down in the pump at night during the winter. This big room was heated by the cookstove similar to this one, but the fire was not kept going during the night, hence everything froze in the room. It was a pretty miserable job to be first up to light the fire and warm the room ready for breakfast.*

*Off the kitchen was the porch which we called our summer kitchen. All the cooking was done in here on hot days. The large box was what the piano came in. Fay, the youngest in the family, owns the piano now and that instrument is as good today as the day it was purchased. The box was used to hold flour. Dad would take the wheat to the mill and bring back enough flour and bran for the entire year. The first bread was pretty heavy, as the flour hadn't time to cure. The aroma and taste of that fresh baked bread cooked in the old cookstove was fantastic.*

*On upstairs, mind the steps as they are very steep and narrow. I don't know how we had the nerve, but using Mother's big bread pans we slid down the steps. We had a time hammering the dents out of the pans before next bake day. Some of the older kids took a few tumbles down them while trying to see the dancing and hear the music when the old-time parties were taking place. The big room above the kitchen was closed during the winter so a double bed was put in this large landing and the younger kids slept here. The short hall to the big room was then curtained off and the commode put there. Sure beat going outdoors to the biffy. Our parents' room was first on the right, the bedroom straight ahead was used by the girls. The one at the end of the longer hall was used by the boys.*

*There are many stories, lots of happiness and some sadness to be told by those who lived in this old home. Built in 1890, it later housed a family of ten. It is a privilege to share some of these memories.*